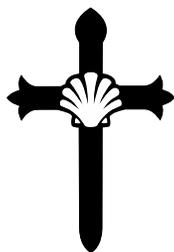




*See, I Am Doing a New Thing*

## **Annual Report 2022**

*A Celebration of Mission and Ministry at St. James'*



**St. James' Episcopal Church  
Parish Annual Meeting  
November 13, 2022**

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*The St. James' mission is to bring people together to be transformed by and to proclaim Christ's love through worship, spiritual formation, and service.*

*The St. James' vision is to be a place where all are welcome, to feel God's love and share God's love.*

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# St. James' Parish Annual Meeting

## November 13, 2022

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### Clergy and Staff

Rector .....	The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner, rector@stjamespotomac.org
Assistant Rector.....	The Rev. James S. Isaacs, james@stjamespotomac.org
Curate .....	The Rev. Catherine Manhardt, catherine@stjamespotomac.org
Director of Music Ministry and Parish Rentals.....	Newton Lewis, newton@stjamespotomac.org
Sunday School. ....	Sundayschool@stjamespotomac.org
Youth Director.....	Rachele Stanfield, rachele@stjamespotomac.org
St. James' Children's School Director.....	Astrid Crookshank, preschool@stjamespotomac.org
Parish Administrator.....	Grace Lo, office@stjamespotomac.org
Communications Asst.....	Kirsten Hall, kirsten@stjamespotomac.org
Sunday Sexton.....	Jerome Childress, office@stjamespotomac.org

### Wardens, Vestry, and Diocesan Delegates of 2022

Senior Warden .....	Lori Minasian
Junior Warden .....	Ken Van Valkenburgh
Vestry members .....	Chris Coleman, Anselm Hennis, Doug Holy, Andrew Huck, Courtney King, Brad McCullough, Bill Murphy, Trish Powell, Lindsay Ragheb, Carolyn Ragland, Kara Smigel
Vestry Officers.....	Tracy Lively, Treasurer; Sheryl Cooper, Secretary and Registrar
Diocesan Delegates.....	John Combs and Ann Venton, Delegates; Yemi Agboola and Jennifer Nordin, Alternates

# ANNUAL REPORT

## Rector's Reflection

*The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner*

*November, 2022*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Church consultant Susan Beaumont published an article this fall called, "Hoping for a Robust Return," a reflection about where churches find themselves as they come out of what she calls, "pandemic mayhem." Beaumont says we are currently in a liminal period—between the normal of the past, and the normal of the future—a time when new structures and practices are emerging which reflect our identity as it's been reshaped by our experience of COVID. She encourages us not to be dismayed that "this isn't over," but to instead focus on the hope and energy around what's emerging, using it to innovate and find new ways to live into God's call.

Which brings us to our theme this year, from Isaiah 43.19, where God says, "See, I am doing a new thing." In this text, God is assuring the people that God will deliver them just as God has always done before. And this is good news—both then and now—knowing that God is active with us as we move forward in these still somewhat uncertain times.

So where are we, and what new things is God doing at St. James'?

- We returned to full in-person worship, and we rejoice in the ability to worship and pray together again. We also are able to live stream our worship, so that those who cannot physically be with us can continue to participate in our worship community. The Altar and Flower Guilds are growing, we have a set of new acolytes, and the number of St. James' Ringers has multiplied.
- We welcomed a new clergy person to our team, The Rev. Catherine Manhardt. Catherine has become an integral part of our mission and outreach, racial justice and care for creation work, bringing new insights and energy to the work we are doing.
- Faith Talk is back in person this fall, while our Thursday "Exploring our Faith" bible study group continues on zoom. Sunday School is meeting in the undercroft during worship. The Youth Group continues with their activities—looking forward to a mission trip, hopefully this summer.
- Our Mental Health Ministries continue strong. This year we added prayer videos to our website. The Stronger Together group continues to meet on zoom, offering support to one another. And we have scheduled nature walks and craft days for members to connect in person, helping us care for ourselves and for one another.
- Our Racial Justice Committee will be focusing on the importance of relationships, beginning a three part series on December 4. They are studying our history, and are planning to offer another round of Sacred Ground beginning in January.
- Our Care for Creation Commission is exploring the free installation of solar panels on our parish hall, thereby reducing our energy bills and providing power to the surrounding community. We are also continuing to nurture the native plants in our back parking lot and we have plans to reduce our use of disposable paper and plastic products now that coffee hour is in person.

- The Mission and Outreach Commission began the program year with a toiletries drive for Interfaith Works. They hope to offer other similar opportunities, while continuing to support Bon Samaritan L'acul in Haiti, Interfaith works, as well as other organizations in the community.
- Our largest mission, St. James' Children's School, continues to thrive, providing quality childcare and preschool education to families in our community.
- The following committees have shown resilience in the ways they have accomplished the critical work of helping us care for each other. The Pastoral Care team has kept us connected to the home bound. They have continued to support those who are grieving, and hope to offer a spirituality of aging class later this year. Our prayer team lifts our prayer requests, and offers in person prayers on Sunday mornings. The Men's Breakfast and Bible Study group continues to meet online on Wednesday mornings, and our book club meets virtually, once a month.
- Also, we are blessed by the leadership of our Executive Committee and Finance Commission, who have kept watch over our finances; along with our Facilities Commission which continues to keep up our buildings and grounds; and of course our Vestry—whose wisdom, courage and faithfulness is unparalleled.
- And finally—our Building Initiative Committee has been meeting with our architect, Intec, to begin the process of renovating and adding to our Church building. Our Senior Warden says more in her report.

As we recognize where we've been, what we've endured, and where we are, we can celebrate our new discoveries, knowing that God is with us, calling us forward. It has been a difficult two years—but we are moving through this wilderness together to the exciting new life God has to offer. God is indeed doing new things at St. James'. I am blessed to travel this road with you.

May God bless you, and may God bless St. James'.

*Rev. Meredith*

## Senior Warden's Report 2022

*Lori Minasian*

Hello people of St. James',

I am excited to update you about our Building Improvement Initiative.

As you know, through the past ten years, we have discussed the need and desire to refresh our church building. We are fortunate to have received two very generous gifts from the Shepard sisters, allowing us to turn this dream into a reality.

You'll recall, prior to the COVID pandemic, all of us were invited to walk through every nook and cranny of the church building with fresh eyes and provide feedback on the physical space. We were asked to consider how it reflects (or not) our congregation and our spirit. Then during the pandemic, we came to realize that our church community is more than the physical space. And now as we return to our in person worship, we come with a renewed understanding that our church community is about warmth, welcome, and joy as we experience and share God's love. Rev. Meredith has talked a lot about how we are poised at this time, to do a new thing. In applying this to our facility, we are seeking to refresh this space to reflect that warm and welcoming spirit.

We have taken several concrete steps to make this dream a reality. The Vestry approved the first phase of work with an architecture firm, Intec. This firm has extensive experience with church renovations and their staff has demonstrated their commitment to helping us understand the process. They have already spent many hours in the church and undercroft measuring and assessing the current space.

In order to ensure that the design for our church reflects who we are, Intec has begun a visioning process. A small group of church leaders had a wonderful and energizing session where they laid out a wide variety of photos of different things to get a feel for what fits us and what does not fit us. It was fun, and to our surprise the exercise was very effective in helping us see how the architects can reflect our warm and joyful spirit in their design.

And, yes, we definitely talked about the bathrooms! Additionally, we are exploring how to remodel our space so that all of our ministries have what they need, as well as examining creative ways to connect our buildings to meet the needs for ease of entrance and exit, creating coherence between our two buildings.

Our next step will be to reach out to members of different ministries so the architects can better understand how we use our space and what functionality we need in the renovation.

We are officially in phase I of this process and the architect firm will deliver a design for our church at the end of this phase. We anticipate that the design will be available in the spring and we will share the plans with the congregation. At that point, we will identify how and what to move forward based upon finding the money. In addition to the Shepard fund we are exploring other resources including grants and a possible capital campaign.

This "new thing we are doing" is exciting, and I look forward to sharing more with you as we move ahead.

Thank you.

*Lori Minasian, Senior Warden*

# A SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR

## Worship, Special Services, Events and Activities

### Sunday worship average attendance

- Current average Sunday attendance of 124, combined virtual and in-person worship
- Resumed 8:00 a.m. services September 18 (9 services in 2022); Avg. Sunday attendance: 11.

### Special services and programs

- Potomac Area Interfaith Community (PAIC) Virtual Thanksgiving service
- Advent
  - . Advent Lessons and Carols
  - . Online Advent devotional
  - . Advent Kitsch contest
- Christmas Eve Services and recorded Christmas Pageant
- Lenten services and events by Zoom:
  - . Shrove Tuesday Bingo Night
  - . Ash Wednesday and Ashes to Go
  - . Lent Madness: The Saintry Smackdown
  - . Lenten Word Clouds
  - . Seven Locks Rd. Lenten Ecumenical Series, "United We Stand"
  - . Outdoor Stations of the Cross
- Holy Week and Easter services:
  - . Palm Sunday
  - . Maundy Thursday
  - . Good Friday and Quiet Day Devotional
  - . Easter Sunday
- Feast of Saint James worship with popsicles and trivia after church
- Return of the Prayer Desk in the side chapel, September 2022
- Rally Day celebration and parish picnic
- St. Francis Day drive-through Blessing of the Animals and pet video
- All Saints Day Remembrance worship

### Fellowship and Community Life

- Parish said thank you and goodbye to seminarian Iva Staats (April)
- Rev. Meredith celebrated five years at St. James'! (June)
- Rev. Catherine joined parish as curate (August)
- Celebrated eight high school graduates

### Sacramental Events

10 Confirmations; 2 Weddings; 3 Funerals



Rev. Meredith T. Heffner, Rector  
and Rev. James S. Isaacs, Asst. Rector



Rev. Catherine Manhardt, Curate



Greening of the Church



Graduating Seminarian Iva Staats  
with Rev. Meredith

## Faith Formation and Discipleship

### Children's Programs

- Monthly St. James' Children's School Chapel
- "Advent Adventures" virtual Sunday school program in 2021
- Christmas Pageant 2021
- In-Person Sunday School resumed in February
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Summer Vacation Bible School with St. James' Children's School
- Began Fall/Winter Sunday School program with monthly Learn, Bless, Go, and Worship weeks where kids explore scripture, do service projects, learn about ministries of the church, and celebrate God with music

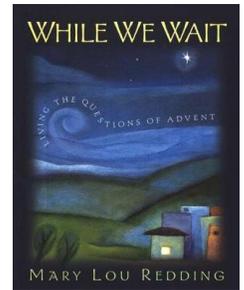
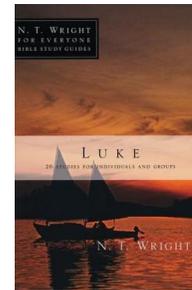
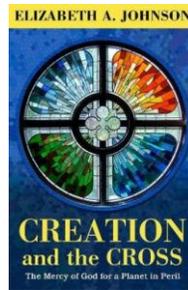


Sunday School and Vacation Bible School



### Adult Faith Formation

- Advent 2021 series: Who Needs Jesus?
- Lent 2022: Finding Purpose in the Wilderness
- Lectionary Bible Study through summer
- Resumed in-person FaithTalks in September in hybrid format to enable Zoom participation
- Mission Possible! Series exploring the history of Christian mission and how we at St. James' are called to participate in God's ongoing work
- Thursday "Exploring our Faith" Bible Study topics:
  - *Advent: While We Wait: Living the Questions of Advent*, by Mary Lou Redding
  - *Grateful: The Subversive Practice of Giving Thanks*, by Diana Butler Bass
  - *Luke: Twenty-six Studies for Individuals and Groups* by N.T. Wright



### Youth Group Activities

- Stars for our Troops service project
- Christmas Party
- Wreaths Across America
- Volunteering at Manna Food Bank
- Movie Nights
- Dinners at California Tortilla
- Made cards for seniors
- Peeps Diorama contest
- Adventures at Sky Zone and Mini Golf
- Game and Conversation Nights
- Preparing bag lunches for people without homes



Youth Confirmation at National Cathedral

## Parish Ministries

### Building Improvements Initiative

- Re-gathered, chose an architectural firm, and began conversations about priorities
- Vestry approved a donation in thanksgiving for the gifts from the Shepherds to support Scotland AME's re-building project

### Care for Creation

- Hosted Creation-themed summer Vacation Bible School (crossover with Children's program)
- Developed Creation Care calendar for Lent
- Hosted Easter FaithTalk series on creation care topics: regenerative agriculture, healthy soil, climate change mitigation, native plants, pollinators, and the Episcopal Climate Footprint tool
- Focused on native plantings and parish grounds:

- Planted native plants in memorial garden (about two dozen plants)
- Eradicated grass and installed two native plant gardens (about 60 plants) in islands in parking lot behind church to protect biodiversity
- Removed non-native plants from church grounds
- Installed a rain collection box on a downspout to reduce water runoff, and are consulting on ways to improve grounds maintenance

- Created guidelines for environmentally responsible and humane coffee hour food offerings
- Established Care for Creation page on St. James' website
- Arranged outings to Cabin John Park stream clean-up, Montgomery County recycle center, and Common Root Farm (regenerative farm) and participated in Chesapeake Watershed Forum
- Partnered with community groups for cleanups in Cabin John area
- Currently working with the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Interfaith Power and Light, and Montgomery Green Bank to install solar panels on the parish hall roof



John and Karl Lehning caring for the grounds;  
Group visiting Common Root Farm



Parking lot islands converted to native plantings;  
Tour of Montgomery County Recycling Center



## Communication

- Posted services and events on Facebook, 561 followers (up from 534)
- Broadcast worship to YouTube and posted worship videos on YouTube and Vimeo; 142 YouTube subscribers (up from 112)
- Offered regular Rector's Reflection emails while services were virtual
- Began regular posting of services on Instagram
- Shared Musical Moment videos/Newton's Pick of the Week



Bennett Soundararajan, Broadcasting



Sophia Fox, Flower Guild

## Facilities

- Maintained our buildings
- Tended our grounds, including the Memorial Garden
- Replaced a 40-ton condenser for the church sanctuary
- Removed three dead trees along the back property line, and three dead trees outside the school for the safety of our students



Hibiscus in St. James' Rain Garden

## Fellowship

- Spring Community Rummage Sale
- Summer Tai-Chi
  - Coffee hour, first outdoors, then indoors September 25
- Trunk or Treat (walk-up style!)
- Men's Breakfast and Bible Study (weekly)
- Book Discussions by Zoom
  - *A Tangled Mercy*, Joy Jordan-Lake (November)
  - *The Transcendent Kingdom*, Yaa Gyasi (January)
  - *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Willa Cather (February)
  - *There There*, Tommy Orange (March)
  - *The Lincoln Highway*, Amor Towles (April)
  - *Klara and the Sun*, Kazuo Ishiguro (May)



Susan Olson and Sampson Annan at Rummage Sale; Agboola family at Trunk or Treat;



- *One Italian Summer*, Rebecca Serle (June)
- *Euphoria*, Lily King (July)
- *The Sentence*, Louise Erdrich (August)
- *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, Steven Galloway (September)
- *The Women of Copper Country*, Mary Doria Russell (October)



### Mental Health Ministry

- Supported members of the parish through 50 “Stronger Together” weekly zoom discussions
- Hosted February FaithTalks
- Spread the word about new National Crisis Hotline
- Sponsored three nature walks and a parish picnic to promote wellness
- Offered “Craft and Project Time” gathering to build supportive community and offer ways to de-stress and be creative
- Offered twelve “Prayer on Demand” videos
- Hosted two virtual Strategies for Trauma and Awareness workshops through Eastern Mennonite University on Trauma and Resiliency



### Mission and Outreach Initiatives

- Bishop Walker School Juneteenth giving campaign and holiday gift cards for students and families
- Episcopal Relief and Development disaster relief and refugee assistance, and support for Ukraine
- Weekly Manna Food Center collections
- Samaritan Ministries holiday gift cards drive
- Collected cold weather clothing and made nearly 100 knit hats for Interfaith Works
- Packed 144 toiletry kits (plus extra supplies) for Interfaith Works shelters
- Collected donations for Manna Food Center each week
- Hosted the Celebrate Ability summer program
- Supported Cub Scout Pack 1306
- Supported Shepherd’s Table in Silver Spring with financial contribution
- Support for Bon Samaritan Parish in Haiti, and *Pilgrim* article to communicate their status and needs with the congregation



## **Racial Justice Committee**

- Began exploration of parish property
- Black History Month section in each February news email
- Began planning a second offering of Sacred Ground
- Planning December 4 *Finding Fellowship* film screening and Advent FaithTalk series

## **St. James' Children's School**

- Provided a full day preschool education and childcare program for 96 Students enrolled throughout the year
- Offered a School Age program in the parish hall through the summer, supporting families with older siblings including a new one-week Vacation Bible school program with church families
- Employed 26 full-time and eight part-time teachers to provide care 11 hours a day for working families in our community.

## **Pastoral Care**

- Widows or Widowers "WoW" March, May, and October events
- Connected to parishioners through phone calls and emails
- Provided meals for parish community
- Gave over 20 prayer shawls and blankets

## **ST. JAMES' PARISH MINISTRY LEADERS AND GROUPS 2022**

St. James' continues its mission and ministries thanks to the work of many parishioners. Thank you to all who give of time, talent, and treasure for St. James'. Though we tried to include everyone in the list below, we apologize for those whose names or ministries were accidentally omitted. To get involved, more information is available by contacting the parish office at [office@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:office@stjamespotomac.org) or 301-762-8040.

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**Administration Commission and Nominating Committee.** The commission is responsible for these projects:

- Annually assembling a nominating committee to recruit parish members to run for the vestry and for diocesan delegate and alternate positions.
- Identifying personnel matters that need vestry approval.
- Updating the personnel manual.
- Ensuring that recommendations are in line with the parish by-laws. This year the committee drafted updates to the bylaws and presented them to the vestry for their approval, and will present to the parish for vote at this annual meeting.

*Commission members:* Joyce Nohowel, Co-chair and Trish Powell, Co-chari and Vestry liaison; The Rev. Meredith Heffner, Rector; Jennifer Nordin; Grace Lo, Parish Administrator

*Nominating Committee:* Dawn Iype and Carolyn Ragland, co-chairs; Sampson Annan, Donna Judkins, and Amy Metcalf.

**Care for Creation** (formerly Earth Stewardship). This group of interested parishioners explores ways to be better stewards of the Earth, “our island home.” They sponsor volunteer activities, maintain the church’s rain garden, identify ways to make our church more “green,” and teach us creation-friendly practices so we can make a difference at home.

*Mission statement:* We believe that our world is sacred, having been created by God, through Christ and in Christ. We are therefore committed to promoting respectful care for God’s creation and in particular to work against climate change and on behalf of climate justice.

*Group members:* Doug Holy, Chair and vestry liaison; John Combs, Donna Judkins, Jeanne Lehning, The Rev. Catherine Manhardt, Susan Olson, Marta Vogel. Special thanks to parishioner John Combs and vestry member Courtney King, who are spearheading our effort to install solar panels.

*Webpage:* [stjamespotomac.org/parish-ministries/care-for-creation](http://stjamespotomac.org/parish-ministries/care-for-creation).

**Children’s School:** A mission of the Church, St. James’ Children’s School is a state approved non public school for nursery and preschool classes ages 2 to 5, with full day child care for infants and toddlers. In addition to general school readiness, Bible curricula, and enriching school activities, there is a chapel service for older children and Spanish classes for children over 2. Separate karate and soccer programs are onsite and available for families. The school uses the state approved Creative Curriculum in all classes in addition to foundational social emotional activities to make sure every student is ready for Kindergarten. *Director:* Astrid Crookshank. *Website:* [stjameschildrensschool.com](http://stjameschildrensschool.com).

**Christian Education and Formation:** This commission includes Thursday “Exploring our Faith” Bible Study, Sunday FaithTalks, Ecumenical Lenten series, and Children’s Education. Children’s formation occurs through Sunday School, Children’s Chapel, and other special events. Nursery care is also provided. Middle and high school students receive further fellowship and education through our Youth Group and participation in our annual mission trip.

*Sunday School:* St. James’ Sunday School meets in the undercroft at 10:30 a.m. during worship. Children preschool age through grade five are invited to participate, and older children (and adults!) are invited to volunteer. Contact [sundayschool@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:sundayschool@stjamespotomac.org).

*Children’s Ministries:* Lindsay Ragheb, vestry Liaison; The Rev. Meredith Heffner

*Youth Group:* St. James’ youth participate in games, lock-ins, service projects, discussions, and a summer work camp mission trip.

*Youth Director:* Rachele Stanfield, [rachele@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:rachele@stjamespotomac.org)

**Communications Commission:** This commission promotes timely transmission of information through a variety of media. The commission works to make more sophisticated use of digital communication, social networking, video recording and live-streaming of worship. They also manage our website and produce welcoming materials that explain our ministries, encourage participation, and invite members to share their talents. If you have an interest or experience in video, graphic design, social media, web design, marketing, or journalism, come share your talents with us!

*Commission members:* Kara Smigel, vestry liaison; Dawn Iype, Kirsten Hall, Sean Stanfield. Contact [kirsten@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:kirsten@stjamespotomac.org).

**Facilities Commission:** This commission oversees maintenance and work on the parish hall, the church building and grounds, and the Memorial Garden. Occasional work days are held for painting, cleaning, and garden care. Anyone may adopt a section of the property for ongoing care or volunteer for other one-time or ongoing property maintenance responsibilities. If you have expertise to share with us on issues like electrical or plumbing, are handy with tools, or love gardening, we would love to hear from you! Contact: Ken Van Valkenburgh, Jr. Warden

**Fellowship and Commission:** This commission helps coordinate parish activities, including lunches and dinners, which promote fellowship among our members. Some ongoing fellowship groups are the Men's Prayer Breakfast, and Book Club. Fellowship Commission also creates newcomer gift bags and helps coordinate and plan special receptions and events such as movie nights, Trunk or Treats, Saint James Day picnic, and Rally Day.

*Commission members:* Lindsay Ragheb, Dawn Iype, Kara Smigel, and many others.

*Book Club:* Cheryl Stafford

*Men's Breakfast and Bible Study:* Sampson Annan and Doug Holy

**Finance Commission:** This commission is responsible for assisting with the overall financial management of the parish. The commission, working closely with the treasurer of St. James', reviews revenue and expenses of the church and oversees banking, audit, record keeping, bonding, insurance, and other financial requirements in accordance diocesan requirements. Responsibilities include:

- Assisting with the Annual stewardship campaign
- Coordinating the process of preparing the operating budget, along with the vestry and other commission chairs
- Monitoring fundraising activities such as the Food Certificate Ministry
- Counting all financial contributions and other monies coming into St. James', with the assistance of a dedicated group of Tellers

*Commission members:* Rev. Meredith Heffner; Tracy Lively, Treasurer; Lori Minasian, Sr. Warden; Ken Van Valkenburgh, Jr. Warden; Bill Murphy, vestry liaison; and Sandy Soundararajan, Chair; Margaret Blaine, Ed Ellis, and Dan Zimmerman, members.

*Rentals:* Newton Lewis

*Tellers:* Jane Lorenz, Chair; Beverly Bartolomeo; Elaine Buschor; George Dick; Alice Morrison.

**Membership Commission:** The Membership Commission works with the rector to coordinate parish programs that strengthen and build the membership of this church and the commitment of its members in supporting its ministry and mission. The commission welcomes newcomers, encourages membership at St. James', and maintains a welcome table.

*Commission members:* Kara Smigel, vestry liaison; Lindsay Ragheb and Dawn Iype, Yemi Agboola, Carolyn Dick, Joyce Graf, Sarah Hnatov, Katherine Weaver, and Rev. Meredith Heffner.

### **Mental Health Ministries:**

This commission plans programs to support and educate parishioners about mental health in order to reduce stigma, provide resources, and better understand how to care for one another in times of mental illness and stress. *Mental Health Leaders Group:* James Isaacs, Chair; Anselm Hennis, vestry liaison; Sampson Annan; Brian Fox; Kirsten Hall; Jeanne Lehning; Lisa Peterson; Sandy Soundararajan; Alex Trouteaud.

**Mission and Outreach Commission:** The Mission and Outreach (M&O) Commission helps coordinate parish programs for volunteer service and oversees the distribution of St. James' funds to benevolences outside the parish. It also supports our Mental Health Ministries, Good News Jail and Prison Ministry, Shepherd's Table, Samaritan Ministries, Manna Food Center, Interfaith Works, and the Bishop Walker School. We are excited that in-person and hands-on outreach opportunities have resumed.

*Commission members:* The Rev. James Isaacs, Chair; The Rev. Catherine Manhardt, Brad McCullough, vestry liaison, Anselm Hennis, Grace Huff, Jack Linehan, Alice Morrison, Harley Venton, Bill Wallace.

**Music Ministries:** The St. James' Singers (choir) has become the St. James' Chamber Singers, meeting only on Sunday mornings as able and providing choral anthems and leading the responses in the liturgy. They sing music from a variety of traditions and would certainly welcome any new members to the group. St. James' Ringers (bell choir) has been rehearsing on regularly on Wednesday evenings at 6 and have been playing monthly as a group and additionally in small groups to augment music at some services. We have also brought in instrumentalists such as a brass group for Saint James Day, various string players such as a quartet for Christmas Eve. And who could forget the Christmas Eve marimba player!? *Director of Music ministries:* Newton Lewis, newton@stjamespotomac.org

**Pastoral Care Commission:** St. James' is blessed with a loving and caring community that provides care to its members during times of need or crisis. Pastoral counseling and spiritual care have always been the responsibility of the parish clergy. Carolyn Ragland is vestry liaison and co-chair with Elaine Buschor.

*Requesting Pastoral Care:* If you have a specific need, or know of someone who does, please let us know. You may contact the parish office, or you may also request care by using our the "Contact Us" form on stjamespotomac.org. You will receive a confirmation email once it is submitted and then be contacted by a member of the clergy or pastoral care team. Lay ministries include:

*Food Ministry:* Donations of homemade meals are appreciated and will be called for as needed. Please contact the office if you would like to be notified of a parishioner's need for meals. A list of all ingredients must accompany the meal, and re-heating instructions are much appreciated. Contact: Elaine Buschor.

*Grief Ministry:* Using Stephens Ministry resources, appropriate grief support services are distributed to those who have lost loved ones in our parish. Contact: Jean Da Costa.

*Lay Eucharistic Visitors (suspended in 2022):* Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs) visit and administer communion to those parishioners who are unable to attend services either temporarily or long-term. LEVs: Marge Combs, Jeanne Lehning, Deb Talley.

*Phone Call Chain:* Volunteers assist the pastor in maintaining phone contact with members who want regular conversation and companionship whether related to the sudden circumstances of the COVID Epidemic or ongoing personal needs or physical needs. Contact: Carolyn Ragland.

*Prayer Shawls:* Each year, the Prayer Shawl Ministry lovingly and prayerfully knits prayer shawls that are blessed during St. James' worship services and then distributed to members, family, friends and neighbors in need. Kirsten Hall, coordinator; prolific stitchers: Carol Barrick, Beverly Bartolomeo, Elaine Buschor (delivering shawls), Deborah Talley, Mindy Van Valkenburgh, and others.

**Racial Justice Committee:** This group, in response to a call for a racial justice initiative, is working to develop the vision and response of the St. James' community, to create a fair and just society, and to heal divisions, so that we may live in justice and peace. The Commission is engaged in a number of projects, including:

- researching whether the land on which our facility stands has a history that includes episodes, patterns, or events of racial injustice;
- developing relationships with neighboring congregations (again focusing on issues of racial and social justice and harmony) using the documentary *Finding Fellowship*;
- working on a stjamespotomac.org web page dealing with racial justice issues;
- considering possible books to read as a group; and
- exploring whether there might be a more condensed program that is similar to Sacred Ground.

*Commission members:* The Rev. Meredith Heffner, The Rev. James Isaacs, The Rev. Catherine Manhardt; Brad McCullough, vestry liaison; Sampson Annan; Ed and Linda Ellis, Heather Hennis; Wendy Hicks; Doug Holy; Beda Jean-Francois; Tracy Lively; Susan Olson; Trish Powell; Susan Schuck; and Katherine Weaver, Chair.

**Worship Commission:** This commission plans and prepares for all worship services and coordinates those who support and assist in worship. This includes musicians, ushers, flower guild, altar guild, lectors, intercessors, acolytes, our Sunday Morning Prayer Team, and Lay Eucharistic Ministers. Many of these ministries were put on hold or adjusted during 2021 as we adapted to COVID. To participate, contact John Eisold through the church office, [office@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:office@stjamespotomac.org).

*Commission members:* The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner; John Eisold, Chair; Lori Minasian, vestry liaison; Sampson Annan; Kirsten Hall; Sam and Jane Ireland; Jeanne Lehning; Newton Lewis, Music Director; Amy Metcalf; Maureen Murphy; Sarah Padgett.

*Acolytes and Candle Lighters:* The Rev. Meredith trains new acolytes ([rector@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:rector@stjamespotomac.org)); we currently have a crew of eight acolytes to carry the cross, light candles, and assist at the Eucharist.

*Altar Guild:* This team of men and women work behind the scenes to prepare for and clean up after Sunday worship and special services. *Members:* Sam and Jane Ireland, Chairs; Brad Au, Carol Barrick, Elaine Buschor, Cathy Cardno, Kirsten Hall, Jean Jackson, Susie Jones, Alice Morrison, Susan Olson, and Lisa Peterson.

*Flower Guild:* Guild members purchase, arrange, and distribute flowers for worship services. They respond to requests for special arrangements and assist with baptisms, funerals, weddings, and other special services. Members are Carol Barrick, Sophia Fox, Joyce Graf, Kirsten Hall, Yolanda Lavery, Jeanne Lehning, Charlotte Soundararajan, Maureen Murphy and Sarah Padgett, Co-Chairs. We give thanks for the work of retiring members Susan Olson and Krista Stammeyer.

*Lectors and Intercessors:* Kirsten Hall, coordinator. Lectors read portions of the scriptures and lead the intercessory prayers during worship.

*Lay Eucharistic Ministers:* Rector trains and Kirsten Hall coordinates. In non-COVID times, LEMs serve the chalice and sometimes bread at the altar during communion.

*Continued on back*

*Music Ministries:* Newton Lewis (see Music Ministries, above)

*Prayer Team:* Sampson Annan. This ministry resumed in September, 2022, and new team members are needed to offer prayers individually for anyone who comes to the kneelers during communion.

*Special Liturgies:* Jeanne Lehning. This ministry aims to deepen our worship with meaningful liturgies, music, and ways to mark special days.

*Ushers:* Amy Metcalf. Ushers greet parishioners, guide them to seats and communion, and respond to emergencies during the worship service. They keep a headcount and monitor the facilities, clean up the pews after worship, and ensure that the building is secured.

*Video Recording and Live Stream Worship:* Dawn Iype, Kirsten Hall, Kara Smigel; new broadcaster Bennett Soundararjan began training (and excelling!) in September. We welcome volunteers to learn how it works. See Communications, above.



## **St. James' Episcopal Church**

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