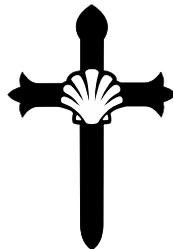




## **Annual Report 2023**

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



**St. James' Episcopal Church  
Parish Annual Meeting  
November 12, 2023**

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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 12, 2023

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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.....	Maddie Weber, maddie@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

Senior Warden .....	Lori Minasian
Junior Warden .....	Ken Van Valkenburgh
Vestry members .....	Brian Fox, Doug Holy, Andrew Huck, Courtney King, Brad McCullough, Bill Murphy, Jennifer Nordin, Susan Olson, Trish Powell, Kara Smigel, Walter Weaver
Vestry Officers.....	Tracy Lively, Treasurer; Sheryl Cooper, Secretary and Registrar
Diocesan Delegates.....	John Combs and Ann Venton, Delegates; Yemi Agboola and Dan Zimmerman, Alternates

# ANNUAL REPORT

## Rector's Reflection

*The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner*

*November, 2023*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last year at our annual meeting, I reflected on the new structures and practices that were emerging as our identity was being reshaped by our experience of the pandemic. This year, although the concerns of the world feel very heavy, here we are—the beloved community of St. James'—faithfully living into God's love in transforming, unpredictable and exciting ways.

The most significant observation I can make about where we are today is our response, as a community, to God's call to love, through our engagement with issues of social justice. This is evidenced by the efforts we've made in the areas of Racial Justice, Care for Creation, Mental Health Ministries, and Mission and Outreach.

- Our Racial Justice Committee continues to explore what we as a community can do to create a fair and just society for all. Through film, education, celebration and action we have focused on building relationships beyond differences, and are exploring opportunities to create change and bring justice in Montgomery County.
- Through our Care for Creation Commission we have lived into God's call to care for creation: planting native plants, putting out a call for new trees, and educating our community about the harmful effects of natural gas and the overuse of salt on our roads in the winter. Provided we pass the structural tests which began last week, we'll have solar panels on our roof (at no cost to us) by summertime. This will reduce our energy bill to some extent, but more importantly will reduce our carbon footprint by about a third.
- The Mission and Outreach commission continues to connect us to organizations in the area through which we can make a difference. This year we filled backpacks for children, volunteered at Interfaith Works, donated food to the Manna Food Center, collected toiletries and cold weather clothing for the needy. We also continued our support of Bon Samaritan Parish L'Acuil in Haiti, The Bishop Walker School, as well as other organizations in the area.
- Our Mental Health Ministries strives to reduce stigma around mental illness, providing resources to support and educate parishioners. Not only did our Stronger Together group continue to meet online every Thursday, we made an effort to include the Suicide Prevention hotline number (988) in our bulletin each week, and lifted those living with mental illness in our prayers of the people each Sunday. The group also organized nature walks and craft days, helping us connect in person, and care for ourselves and one another.

*Continued on next page*

*Rector's Reflection continued*

It is clear that God is using us to share God's love through justice work. But that's not all God is up to at St. James'! Just as we connect with our community through our call to justice, we continue to keep connected to God, and to each other, through our other ongoing parish ministries:

- Through our Worship Commission, we offer meaningful worship each week, both in person and online.
- We provide spiritual formation through our Sunday School, Youth Group, Faith Talks, "Evolving our Faith" studies, and Men's Bible Study, as well as special series such as The Path Ahead.
- St. James' Children's School continues to provide quality childcare and preschool to over 80 children in our community.
- Our Fellowship Commission has recently revived, offering opportunity for fellowship and connection. Furthermore, our Pastoral Care Team continues to offer grief support, prayer, meals and care for those in need in our parish.
- And of course the business of being church continues, as we care for our facilities, manage our finances, and plan for the future of our church building. Special thanks to our Vestry members, Officers, and Staff who continue to wisely lead and support our efforts throughout the year.
- Finally, we continue to find ways to celebrate our community with joy: A paper bag Pageant with a Christmas donkey; a Potluck and Bingo Shrove Tuesday Celebration; and a picnic commemorating 60 years as a parish, and 30 years with our school!

All of this says so much about God's presence in this place, and the way God calls us into the future. I am grateful and blessed to make the next faithful step with you. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless St. James'.

Faithfully,

*Rev. Meredith*

## Senior Warden's Report

*Lori Minasian*

Dear people of St. James',

Greetings! It was wonderful to worship in person through 2023. Our experience during the pandemic taught us to be flexible and improve our capacity to livestream the services and have remote meetings. Even as we return to in-person worship, we continue the livestream to allow greater access to our worship services.

This summer, Reverend Meredith had a three-month sabbatical allowing her to rest, relax, and return refreshed and reinvigorated. She brings renewed energy and joy. Thank you to everyone who provided extra effort to assure that our programs and activities continued through the summer. A very special thank you to Reverend Catherine for stepping in and serving as our rector and to Reverend James for providing his steadfast calm and continuity.

Update on the Building Initiative:

Last year, we began our Building Initiative when we hired the architecture firm, Intec, to help us re-envision our space to reflect the warmth and welcoming nature of our church community and address the many necessary facilities improvements in our church. We experienced some of these facilities issues as we worshipped in the parish hall waiting for our HVAC system to be repaired and then returned, again, in the fall when the church lighting had its own challenges.

Our architect team has been working hard to address the need to refresh the sanctuary, incorporate bathrooms on that level, and still meet the various new codes required by Montgomery County. Recall, that before the pandemic the congregation was invited to walk through the physical space of the church and parish hall and provide input. One major recommendation was to have bathrooms on the same level as the sanctuary. Easier said than done, but this is at the top of the list of improvements.

Throughout the year, the Intec team has provided initial design aspects to the Building Initiative Group and the Vestry and they have responded diligently to our input. They have been working through multiple different challenges and we are planning to have them present a preliminary design in early 2024. We will plan a parish-wide meeting to display the plans and provide an opportunity for questions and feedback.

Once the plans are presented and discussed, we will close phase 1 of this project. We will have an estimate of the cost for turning those plans into reality. Then, we will need to look very closely at the budget. Fortunately, we are blessed to have the Shepard Fund with significant resources, but probably not all the resources needed to turn the plans into reality.

Why would we consider a refresh and remodel at this time? Our church community has been discussing ways to improve and upgrade our facilities for over a decade. We have seen the need to address the facilities as we have experienced firsthand. Our facilities need to be improved and in a way that can show our warm and welcoming nature. In 2024, as we give of our time, talent and treasure to our church community, we can take the next faithful step to make these improvements a reality together.

Sincerely and with much gratitude,

*Lori Minasian, Senior Warden*

# A SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR

## Worship, Special Services, Events and Activities

### Sunday worship average attendance

- Average Sunday attendance of 127
- Combined virtual and in-person worship, 8:00 and 10:30 services (Jan-September 2023)
- Worship at 10:30 broadcast on YouTube

### Special services and programs

- 2022 Potomac Area Interfaith Community (PAIC) “Together in Hope” Thanksgiving service; “Harvesting Peace” will be hosted by St. James’ November 15, 2023
- Advent
  - Advent Lessons and Carols
  - Advent Quiet Day
  - Online Advent resources and devotionals
- Christmas Eve Services and Paper Bag Christmas Pageant with visit from a donkey
- Lenten services and events by Zoom:
  - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Super and White Elephant Bingo
  - Ash Wednesday and Ashes to Go
  - Lent Madness: The Sainly Smackdown
  - Seven Locks Rd. Lenten Ecumenical Series, “Together Again: Praising God Day by Day”
  - Stations of the Cross
  - Online Lenten resources and devotionals
- Holy Week and Easter services:
  - Outdoor labyrinth
  - Holy Week Worship:
    - Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday
    - Easter Sunday and children’s Easter egg hunt
- Pentecost “Peace Be with You” in many languages
- Humor Sunday
- Bishop’s visitation
- Feast of Saint James worship and parish picnic
- Anniversary /Rally Day celebration and picnic: 60 Years St. James’ and 30 Years St. James’ Children’s School
- St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals worship in back yard
- All Saints Day Remembrance worship

**Sacramental Events:** 3 Confirmations, 2 Receptions, 3 Funerals, 2 Baptisms



L-R: Rev. Catherine Manhardt, Curate;  
Rev. James S. Isaacs, Asst. Rector;  
and Rev. Meredith T. Heffner, Rector



## Fellowship and Community Life

- Rev. Catherine celebrated her first ordination anniversary (July)
- Celebrated seven school graduates
- Celebrated Rachele and Sean Stanfield's service to St. James' Youth Group
- Welcomed Maddie Weber, new Youth Director
- Women's Movie Night
- Trunk or Treat (with 171 lbs food donated to Manna!)
- Coffee Hour fellowship, fun, and friendship conversations
- Coffee hour prayer sharing
- Men's Wednesday morning Bible Study and Prayer
- Summer Tai Chi
- Parish Surveys:
  - . Racial Justice
  - . Mental Health Anxiety Management
  - . Adult Education preferences
  - . Fellowship interests
- Book Club Discussions by Zoom
  - . *Chronicles From the Land of the Happiest People on Earth*, Wole Soyinka (November)
  - . *Taste: My Life Through Food*, Stanley Tucci (December)
  - . *The Arsonists' City*, Hala Alyan (January; skipped Feb.)
  - . *Sea of Tranquility*, Emily St. John Mandel (March)
  - . *Writers and Lovers*, Lily King (April)
  - . *The Feather Thief*, Kirk Wallace Johnson (May)
  - . *A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories*, Flannery O'Conner (June)
  - . *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf (August)
  - . *Lessons in Chemistry*, Bonnie Garmus (September)
  - . *The Nest*, Cynthia D'Apris Sweeney (November; skipped October and moved meetings to first Sundays)



## Faith Formation and Discipleship

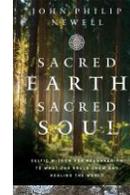
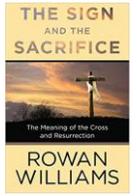
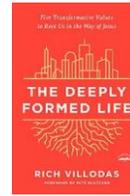
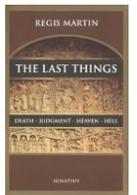
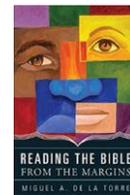
### Children's Programs

- St. James' Children's School Chapel, two times per month
- Sunday School during 10:30 worship: "Weaving God's Promises"
- Summer Sunday School: "50 Instant Bible Lessons"
- Summer Vacation Bible School "Taking the Bible to the Beach" with St. James' Children's School



### Adult Faith Formation

- Advent 2023 series: "Repairing the Breach" Racial Justice Conversations
- Epiphany: Lectionary Bible Study, "Christ made manifest"
- Care for Creation series
- Congregational Book: The Deeply Formed Life
- Thursday "Exploring our Faith" virtual study group:
  - . *The Last Things*, R. Martin
  - . *Reading the Bible from the Margins*, M. A. De La Torre
  - . *The Sign and the Sacrifice*, R. Williams
  - . *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul*, John Philip Newell
  - . *The Book of Joy*, The Dalai Llama and Desmond Tutu
- Continued in-person FaithTalks in hybrid format to enable Zoom participation



### Youth Group Activities

- Game and Craft Night
- Blanket Making
- Rise Against Hunger
- Interfaith Works
- Movie Night
- Peep Dioramas
- Earth Day Project
- Volunteering with Manna
- Museum Outing
- Youth Group Picnic
- Wreathes at Arlington Cemetery
- Cookout and Campfire
- Pumpkin Decorating
- Garage Night



## Parish Ministries

### Building Improvements Initiative

- Building Initiative Team shared priorities with our architects, Intec.
- Intec drafted various versions of plans, which were reviewed and are in the process of being changed based on feedback from the Team, the Vestry, the staff, and leaders from committees and commissions.



### Care for Creation

- Worked to increase the number of native plants on our parish grounds
- Continued to maintain the memorial garden as well as the native plant beds in the back parking lot
- Clearing the hillside to prepare for more native plants
- Organized two parish work days to remove non-native invasive species
- Coordinated with parish staff and leadership to facilitate the donation of seven trees to replace the five that were removed last year
- Led a four-week adult formation series during the season of Easter. Sessions included caring for creation as a spiritual discipline, integrated pest management, ethical and sustainable food choices, and green burials
- Continued to provide education and consultation around sustainable and humane food choices for parish events
- Enabled composting at several large parish events including coffee hour for the Bishop's visitation and the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper
- Partnered with Action in Montgomery to host a nitrogen dioxide testing and education event in the parish hall kitchen
- Partnered with Friends of Cabin John Creek to provide space and artistic vision for the "Paint the Plow" watershed preservation project
- Continued working with the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Interfaith Power and Light, and the Montgomery County Green Bank to install solar panels on the parish hall roof



### Communication

- Social Media:
  - . Posted services and events on Facebook, 681 followers (up from 561)
  - . Posted services, events, and photos on Instagram

- Broadcast worship to YouTube and posted worship videos on YouTube and Vimeo; 159 YouTube subscribers (up from 142)
- Offered weekly News and Notes emails with links to parish worship and events
- Website updates: Care for Creation and Racial Justice page updates, and Stronger Together blog to stjamespotomac.org
- Continued posting of website photo galleries and events calendar
- Shared “About Today’s Music” /Music Sneak Peek

## Facilities

- Summer parish hall worship while awaiting AC repairs
- Maintained our buildings
- Tended our grounds, including the Memorial Garden
- Replaced faulty air conditioning compressors for the church sanctuary
- Raised funds to replace the trees that were removed in the previous year



## Mental Health Ministry

- Strengthened supportive community and promoted mental health education through 50 “Stronger Together” weekly zoom discussions
- Led six nature walks to support and promote mental wellness and appreciation of creation, with plans to continue monthly in 2024
- Walked the Rio NAMI walk for Mental Health awareness
- Posted weekly “Stronger Together” topics on the website Mental Health page
- Included information about the National Suicide Prevention hotline and 988 in the weekly service bulletins
- Incorporated mental illness issues into over 12 sermons through the year
- Added prayers for those living with mental illness and those who love them into the weekly Prayers of the People at worship to pray for them as well as reminding everyone in the services about our ministry



## Mission and Outreach Initiatives

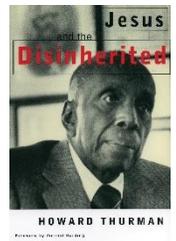
- Purchased and filled 40 backpacks for children in need in Montgomery County, distributed by Interfaith Works
- Volunteering at the Interfaith Works Clothing Center
- Collected many bags of cold weather clothing for the Interfaith Works Clothing Center



- Donated money to, and prayed weekly for, our partner church and school in L'acul, Haiti, Bon Samaritan, to feed children and support the employees
- Wrote Christmas Cards and gifted \$25 Amazon gift cards and \$50 Giant gift cards to all (about 80) of the students at the Bishop Walker School
- Donated toiletries to people in need in the area
- Donated weekly Manna Food Center collections at the Sunday services
- Supported Cub Scout Pack 1306
- Financially supported Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington, Shepherd's Table, Interfaith Works, The Bishop Walker School, Virginia Theological Seminary, and the Good News Jail and Prison Ministry (totaling over \$20,000)

### Racial Justice Committee

- Hosted the *Finding Fellowship* documentary film screening and conversation with Dr. Kish Davis from the Quince Orchard Project
- Facilitated an Advent FaithTalk series exploring our diocesan reparations resolution
- Completed a second course of Sacred Ground, including the following books:
  - . *Waking Up White*, Debbie Irving
  - . *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Howard Thurman
- Published a parish-wide survey to evaluate our collective interest in social justice work
- Worked with other local congregations to support the Interfaith & Social Action Pavilion at the Scotland Juneteenth Heritage Festival
- Added resources for prayer and education on our “Racial Justice” webpage
- Continued to explore ways to learn about the history of our parish property
- Began planning the ongoing Love & Justice conversation series exploring justice issues in our region, and hosted our first conversation with Executive Director Cynthia Marshall and Organizer Pilar Olmedo Gordon from Action in Montgomery



### St. James' Children's School

- Provided a full day preschool education and childcare program for 93 Students enrolled throughout the year
- Offered a school-age program in the parish hall through the summer, supporting families with older siblings including a 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

- Connected to parishioners through phone calls and emails
- Delivered holiday care packages
- Provided meals for families in need
- Sent grief booklets to those who have lost loved ones
- Gave over 12 prayer shawls to those in need of comfort

## ST. JAMES' PARISH MINISTRY LEADERS AND GROUPS

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).

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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-chair and Vestry liaison; The Rev. Meredith Heffner, Rector; Jennifer Nordin; Grace Lo, Parish Administrator

*Nominating Committee:* Dawn Iype, Trish Powell, Lindsay Ragheb, Carolyn Ragland, and Ken Van Valkenburgh.

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

*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, spearheading our effort to install solar panels.

**Children’s School:** A mission of the Church, St. James’ Children’s School is a state approved non-public school for nursery and preschool students 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 and Sunday School assistance is provided by Shirine Kohan. 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 coordination:* Jennifer Nordin, vestry Liaison; Marisol Castro, Sunday School teacher; The Rev. Meredith Heffner.

*Youth Group:* St. James' youth participate in games, lock-ins, service projects, discussions, and a summer work camp mission trip. This year we welcomed Maddie Weber as our new Youth Director and gave thanks to Rachele Stanfield (and Sean too!) for many years of service.

*Youth Director:* Maddie Weber, [maddie@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:maddie@stjamespotomac.org)

**Communications Commission:** This commission promotes timely transmission of information through 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.

**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, Feast of Saint James picnic, and Rally Day. This year the group began offering conversation and prayer circles at coffee hour, to build supportive and friendly community.

*Commission members:* Yolanda Lavery and Brandi Page (we welcome you!).

*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; Courtney King, Ed Ellis, Ann Venton, and Dan Zimmerman, members.  
*Rentals:* Newton Lewis; *Tellers:* Jane Lorenz, Chair; Beverly Bartolomeo; Elaine Buschor; George Dick; Alice Morrison.

### **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; Brian Fox, vestry liaison; Sampson Annan; Dee Barish; Jeanne Lehning; Lisa Peterson; Sandy Soundararajan, and Doug Throckmorton. Alex Trouteaud continues to lead the “Stronger Together” group by Zoom. This year the group looks forward to planning events such as Mental Health First Aid training, more nature walks, and prayer meetings.

**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.

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

**Music Ministries:** *Director of Music ministries:* Newton Lewis, [newton@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:newton@stjamespotomac.org)

*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. New members are welcome at all times!

*The St. James’ Ringers* (bell choir) has been rehearsing on regularly on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. 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 the Capital City Strings, David Chentian on cello, brass musicians, our own Brandi Page on violin and Steve Linehan-Reckford on cello, and more! If you want to share your talents and enrich our worship, please contact Newton Lewis.

**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 are the responsibility of the parish clergy. Susan Olson is vestry liaison and chair.

*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](http://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: Susan Olson and Carolyn Ragland.

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

*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), Joyce Graf, Deborah Talley, Mindy Van Valkenburgh, and others.

**Racial Justice Committee:** This group 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. *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.

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

*Acolytes:* The Rev. Meredith trains new acolytes; we currently have a crew of ten acolytes to carry the cross, light candles, and assist at the Eucharist.

*Altar Guild:* This team works behind the scenes to prepare for and clean up after Sunday worship and special services. *Members:* Carol Barrick, Beverly Bartolomeo, Elaine Buschor, Cathy Cardno, Pat East, Jill Fritz, Kirsten Hall, Sam and Jane Ireland, Jean Jackson, Susie Jones, Alice Morrison, Susan Olson, and Lisa Peterson.

*Flower Guild:* Guild members purchase, arrange, and distribute flowers for worship services, and requests at baptisms, funerals, and weddings. *Members:* Carol Barrick, Sophia Fox, Joyce Graf, Kirsten Hall, Yolanda Lavery, Jeanne Lehning, Charlotte Soundararajan, Sarah Padgett, and Elizabeth Riel. We give thanks for the work of retiring chair Maureen Murphy.

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

*Lay Eucharistic Ministers:* Rector trains and Kirsten Hall coordinates. LEMs serve the chalice and sometimes bread at the altar during communion.

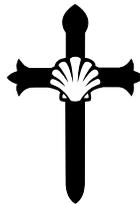
*Music Ministries:* Newton Lewis (see Music Ministries, above)

*Prayer Team:* Sampson Annan. 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 Black Metcalf, coordinator. Ushers greet parishioners, guide them to seats and communion, and respond to emergencies during the worship service. They note attendance, 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, and Bennett Soundararajan. We welcome volunteers to learn how it works. See Communications, above.



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

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