



The Epistle

November 2018

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway
A community growing in Christ, called to worship, learn, and serve.

Parish Information Meeting Sunday, December 2

9:00 to 10:15 a.m.

Report to the Congregation from the Vestry about the 3-Church Initiative

Please read, digest and prayerfully consider the *Report to the Congregation*. This was mailed (both electronically and in print) to everyone on the congregation's mailing list in late October. There are copies on the black table in the Narthex and posted on the Action Wall in the Narthex. Listen to the Wardens' and Vestry Members' talks at church. Once you've done so, ask your Wardens and Vestry Members questions. Corner us before or after church, e-mail us, telephone us, and text us with your questions.

From Fr. William Heisley

In the time that lies before us

An article in the *New York Times* on Sunday 14 October 2018 told the story of the newest museum in Berlin, Germany. It is located on the site of the Palast der Republik, the East German parliament built in the 1970's and torn down ten years ago.

I was there in 1985 and visited the shabby, glitzy home of the East German government – there really was nothing for them to debate, so *parliament* seems like a silly term. And I was there years later to see a giant crater in the ground where the building used to stand. Up until the bombings of World War II the Stadtschloss, (Berlin Palace) stood there. During the pre-war and war years much evil emanated from that piece of real estate.

The *Times* article tells the story of Iris Weissflog, age 58, who grew up in East Berlin. One day she studied an old photograph of the Palast der Republik, the smoked-glass-and-steel travesty of her youth. She remembered that it was not only a government center but also that it housed concert halls, an ice-cream parlor, a bowling alley, and theaters. From the stage of one of those theaters the 14-year-old Iris sang. Now, with her granddaughter on her knee, gazing at a photo of the Palast, she wept.

"I know it's good to move on, but it means leaving the past behind," she said.

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Moving on. Transitioning from this to that, now to then. It means leaving the past behind.

But if we are honest with ourselves, we will acknowledge that the past is already behind us. It cannot be otherwise, given the exigencies of time. The question is not, “Where is our past?” but “How can we build our future?”

St. James is in a long and intense period of transition. The letter that you should have received recently both through the Postal Service and via email, along with its attachment, indicates that while we constantly emerge from the past we also need to constantly look to the future. How can we build our future?

My title is “Transition Priest” for a reason. St. James, as every parish, every institution, every community, every person, is transitioning to the future that God lays before us. What does it look like? I don’t know. But this, too: You don’t know. None of us knows. We only work diligently to learn what is best for the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus the Christ in this place in the time that lies before us.

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Of course, this will be based upon what has gone before: on our history. But if our history, if our desire to continue to live in an “historic” fashion, to live exactly like our forebears did, paralyzes us, we will die. If we open ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit working through the community, through all of us, working together, making the savagely difficult rational decisions that, I promise you, will be necessary, then we will live. But more: the Love of Christ will live and shine through us.

***... the power of the Holy Spirit
working ... through all of us, working
together, making the savagely
difficult rational decisions ...***

This might sound like I am advocating for one position or another *vis a vis* the decision to continue discussions with Lake Nokomis Lutheran and Living Table UCC. I am not. I really, truly, frankly am not.

My position in your midst is not to tell you what the Spirit is saying, what to do. It is to listen *with* you.

So: Attend the Congregation Meeting at 9 a.m. on December 2. Attend not with a plan, not with an agenda, but with the eagerness of mind that will allow us to openly investigate what this next step in our cooperation with others means. To be sure, it does not mean that anything has been decided. The more we talk, the more questions arise. It means only that we will think about whether this is something that *we should continue to discuss – or not!*

“I know it’s good to move on, but it means leaving the past behind,” she said.

But in *every* moment the past is behind us.

How can we build our future?

From Senior Warden Louis Hoffman

Update.

Communications and Congregational Life.

Ruth Anne Olson is breathing new life into our website, and is now looking to add photos. Please her know if you can help.

No one has stepped forward to be our Social Media Wizard, beefing up our Facebook presence and creating an Instagram and Twitter presence. Could this be you? Spend a lot of time on social media? Do it for St. James!

Karen Alexander volunteered to call families in the membership directory who we don't see very often. Our goal is to get them back involved in the life of St. James, in our new children and youth programs (see below), and to formally welcome them into the community. Will someone volunteer to organize a gathering for new families ("new" going back several years....) and a service to welcome them into the church?

Karen Murdock and Karin Spencer have volunteered to be Pizza Masters. We're looking into funding sources, including ECMN grants, and regulatory hurdles.

Community Service and Social Justice.

Anne Scheible continues to spearhead our community service ministries:

- Families Moving Forward with Lake Nokomis, Living Table and Minnehaha United Methodist.

- First Nations Kitchen with Lake Nokomis.
- The Giving Garden with the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association.
- Minnehaha Food Shelf in which we partner and whose Board Anne chairs.
- The St. James Crafters.
- The school supply drive.

I'll join Anne on the Committee after I step down as Senior Warden in January. It'll be a Committee of two. Can we make it three? Or five? There aren't meetings in case you're holding back because you're meeting-phobic. Committee members will help Anne organize and promote participation in these activities.

It's important to note that, at St. James, important community service and social justice like the Haiti Committee and the Abrahamic Tri-Faith group happens outside of the Community Service and Social Justice Committee.

The Nokomis Serves partnership with Lake Nokomis, Living Table, and Minnehaha United Methodist is crucial in expanding the reach of all four churches' ministries. I replaced Anne as the St. James

representative on the Nokomis Serves steering group. Our plans are to get Nokomis Serves out of the paper catalog and online and in social media and to devise strategies to encourage people to get involved in community service and social justice activities at our partner churches. Do you have fond memories of St. James doing Loaves and Fishes? We don't have the people to do it any more. But they do it at Lake Nokomis if you want to help.

Faith Formation for Children and Youth.

The PrayGround has been slowed by delay in the Better Space Task Force's work. Our hope is to have it physically in place by Easter, to use it informally thereafter, and to have full programming in place come Labor Day 2019.

Are you interested in faith formation for children and youth? People will be needed to sort through the materials and supplies in the Education Annex and build the PrayGround – physically and programmatically – by Labor Day 2019. Can you help Beth Harvey, Anne Sween and me to make it happen?

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Partnerships.

The Giving Garden, Nokomis Serves, and the 3-Church Initiative are discussed above. We also have a new lease with Mandala Montessori that increases, clarifies and separates space use and provides for increased rent.

Mary Anderson Better Space Fund.

After moving a bunch of stuff around, a lot of decluttering, making the Gallery and Narthex into more inviting spaces, and eight new chairs,

you may have noticed that BSTF work has stopped — because of Beth's illness and my frequent travel recently.

Work is moving forward behind the scenes. We expect to order the rest of the chairs and choose paint colors soon. Our goal is to do the paint and woodwork during Mandala's Christmas vacation in December. Yet to-be-planned are pew removal, refinishing the tile floors, installation of ceiling fans in the Narthex, several miscellaneous items,

and more decluttering. We hope to have all of this work done by Easter. This'll also require about \$3,500 in addition to Mary Anderson memorials and three gifts from members.

It's often said that St. James punches above its weight.

Tons of stuff happens because of our work at St. James. Our plans for the coming months and years are ambitious. I'm in. The Vestry is in. Are you in?

From Treasurer Tony Morley

Financial report: July - October

As fall began, St.James finances were much better (by \$14,000) than forecast in the budget. The bright spot was non-pledge income — Mandala rent and special individual donations. Not so bright were pledge payments, still about \$3,000 behind; that will change, if laggards can catch up by Christmas. Expenses remain well under control, and even with major property repairs expected, we should end the year with a bottom-line surplus. Thanks to all from your Treasurer!

	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	over/(under)
Pledged Income	98,418	95,252	(3,166)
Other Income	50,068	65,763	15,695
Total Income	148,486	161,015	12,529
Expenses	145,656	143,873	(1,783)
NET	2,830	17,142	14,312

Meanwhile, our non-budget, non-operating funds are in healthy shape too. Piotrowski memorial for music, \$700; Piotrowski memorial for altar, \$1,800; Mary Anderson Better Space fund, \$2,400; Haiti Fund, \$7,000; Tri-Faith balance, \$3,900.

From Junior Warden Pat Morley

In with the storms (windows). Out with the cold.

As I reported last month we have completed the first phase of a mold remediation project underneath Chapel Hall. The mold has been removed and the area sealed and painted.

The next phase is to address the source of the moisture outside. In November we will be doing work around the front steps at our east entrance on the Parkway, to properly drain run-off away from the building. We expect that to resolve the issue for some time.

Before the snow flies, we also expect to repair the small flat roof area over the hallway

between Chapel Hall and the Education Wing. And speaking of snow and cold, in October we put on the storm windows and stored our screens for next spring, cleaned out the gutters and are ready for winter.

All the contracted work was not budgeted for this year so we are incurring expenses that were not planned. However, we have a sufficient cash cushion that will soften the blow, and we signed a lease with Mandala Montessori School for the next year that has an increase in rent that will help on the income side of things.

I encourage all to look at the Financial Report (page 4) to get a clear picture of the impact of these projects on St. James financial health.

We'll soon begin the pew removal project to create a bigger space for small children in the Main Church. We're calling this area the "PrayGround" and we anticipate the space will give us more flexibility in our worship services and the use of the space in general.

As always, a special thanks to all who chip in their time and talents to help keep our buildings and grounds welcoming and inviting to all.

Adult Forum

Coming up in November.

Sundays in November will stitch together several topics we've touched already in the past few weeks.

On Nov. 4 Fr. William will continue discussion of the "building blocks" that make up our weekly Eucharist — and the different ways that different Christians in different traditions put them together.

One building block is the reading and preaching of the Bible. On Nov. 11, we'll explore three Prayer Book patterns for reading the Bible in or out of church. Tony

Morley will introduce and lead the conversation.

On Nov. 18 and 25 Fr. William will wind up our series on liturgical action and Holy Communion.

Advent starts December 2. Instead of Adult Forum that day, all St. James will join a **Parish Information Meeting** about ongoing neighborhood 3-church discussions.

Adult Forum meets most Sundays from 9:30-10:25 in the Gallery. Our pattern is to start with something familiar



in church tradition, then poke and probe it together for new questions and better understandings. Coffee and self-provided treats are part of the curriculum. There is always a discussion leader/facilitator, but the model is to learn from each other.

Which will work even better if *you* take part.

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

What happened to Haiti's trees?

by Ruth Anne Olson on behalf of the Haiti Committee

Lots of us have seen photos like this one — a sharp line delineating Haiti's arid mountains on the left from the abundant green of the Dominican Republic on the right. At the October parish Q & A with St. James Haiti travelers, a questioner asked, "Why?"

The answer may surprise you. For most of Haiti's lush mahogany forests are now in France. "How in the world," you may ask, "did they get there?"

In brief. Spain took possession of Hispaniola in 1492 after Columbus ship-wrecked off the northern coast. Eventually Spain ceded the western portion of the island to France, who was eager to exploit the region's abundant resources. For the next 100 years, France relied on African slaves (an estimated 790,000 in all) to create for them one of the richest colonies in the history of the world. (More about that in a future *Epistle*.)

Among the products for which the slaves gave their lives were millions of mahogany trees — most of which became the mansions and museums of western Europe that, even today, are admired for their beauty. By the mid-19th century, Haiti's mountains had been stripped bare. And in the 200 years since, global economic forces, corrupt governments and poverty have joined forces to foil most large-scale attempts to reforest Haiti.



Beyond the loss of beauty, spiritual connections and cooling breezes to temper tropical heat, the people of Haiti continue to pay the price of soil erosion, loss of soil fertility, watershed protection, and river sediment.

This history frames our respect for our partners in Haiti, for we must not forget the ways in which our own fore-bearers shaped the poverty of Haiti. We honor the people of Bigonet for the pockets of green they nurture around the school and church. We support Bonne Nouvelle's commitment to give students the resources to plant and care for trees in their own neighborhoods. And we celebrate the River Cormier Women's Group which works to reforest their mountainside.



The Community Garden

The last of the chard.

by Anne Scheible

As weather cools and the leaves fall, it's time to reflect on this season's garden. At the Giving Garden meeting recently, it was reported that we delivered 467 lbs. of produce to area food shelves this season. This is an increase of about 4½% over last year, and we have one small delivery yet to make. Minnehaha Food Shelf received the bulk of the produce; deliveries also went to the Groveland Food Shelf and to Riverview Senior Apartments.

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Giving Garden, continued

We'd love more volunteers next season. This is the kind of project where "many hands make light work" and from my experience, also more fun! I'll be honest, there were times when I wondered if the garden was worth the effort, but those doubts



were always erased when I saw that our veggies were practically the only fresh produce at the food shelf.

How can you help during the next growing season?

- Be part of the watering rotation — a one-hour job every other week.
- Help on garden work days — held once a month for three hours.
- Help harvest and deliver — twice a week for ½ hour to two hours.
- Show your creative side — spruce up the shed and make signs.
- And, anytime, donate canned fruits and vegetables — items that are always welcome at the food shelf.

Treasurer Tony Morley

Memorial gifts enrich and strengthen.

You've surely noticed some better chairs and other changes as improvements take shape in the Gallery and Narthex where St. James now gathers for coffee hour, potlucks and community events. Perhaps you've noticed too that replacement parts and reconditioning have strengthened the piano music that accompanies and precedes Sunday worship.

Both these advancements have been made possible with funds given in memory of long-time parish members.

Over many decades, Carol & Joe Piotrowski were leaders at St. James. Carol sang in the choir for 60 years; Joe was many times a Vestry and special-projects leader. There are two Piotrowski funds; one for choir and music, the other for altar and other worship needs. Piotrowski music money enabled the recent piano upgrade.

Mary Anderson was also a beloved choir member, and for many years a tireless central figure in putting together social gatherings at St. James. Recently the Vestry combined money given in memory of Mary with unused consultant funds to create the Mary Anderson Better Space Fund. That money now helps underwrite the improvements you see in Narthex and Gallery.

Unrestricted memorial donations support our day-to-day expenses. Or memorial funds may be restricted — designated for special purposes, by family, donors or the Vestry. Such funds are separate from the parish operating budget.

And even as this *Epistle* goes to press, we're receiving donations in memory of Charlie Fox, yet another long-time St. Jamesian, who died recently.

Abrahamic Tri-Faith

“During the prayers, especially, I could feel God.”

by Ruth Anne Olson

“It was awesome. And we *knew* — Muslims, Christians and Jews — we *knew*, that we are *all* children of God,” Katie Mytty explains.

Was it the tapestries — visual representations of each of the three Abrahamic faiths? Was it the prayers — offered in Hebrew, Arabic and English? Was it the room full of people sharing friendship and food? Or was it the music of three cultures — “music that we *all* could really get into,” reflected Katie, “that somehow, brought us all together?”

All this was part of the Abrahamic Dinner, hosted by Turkish-American Niagara Foundation. Katie and fellow St. Jamesians Debra Ramos, Urve

Daigle and Jeanne LaBore attended the event at Sabes Jewish Community Center in Minneapolis on October 25. And three days later their feelings of wonder and joy — also a touch of surprise — dominated their descriptions of the evening.

“I was so moved, during the prayers especially,” said Debra. In three languages, from three faiths and cultures. “During the prayers, I could feel God. I think we forget — whether we’re Christian, Jewish or Muslim — we’re all God’s children. I feel like sometimes we let religion get in the way of *people*.”

“I wish more St. James people had been there,” Debra concluded. “The evening was *awesome*.”

What's Coming Up?

November (and a tad beyond).

Sunday Schedule:

8:00 a.m. Worship: Nave
9:30 a.m. Adult Forum: Gallery
10:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal: Choir Rm.
10:15 a.m. Nursery Available: Ed. Wing
10:30 a.m. Worship: Sanctuary
11:45 a.m. Coffee & Conversation

11/01 7:00 p.m. Finance Committee: Gallery
7:00 p.m. Haiti Committee: Office

11/04 **Daylight Saving Ends**
See Sunday Schedule above.

11/07 7:15 p.m. Choir Rehearsal: Choir Rm.

11/11 See Sunday Schedule above.

11/13 7:00 p.m. Vestry: Ed. Wing

11/14 7:15 p.m. Choir Rehearsal: Choir Rm.

11/15: 6:30 p.m. Yarn Crafters: Gallery

11/17 11:15 a.m. Food Shelf: At-Taqwa Mosque

11/18 See Sunday Schedule above.

11/21 7:15 p.m. Choir Rehearsal: Choir Rm.

11/24 10:00 a.m. Building Work Day
Gather in the Gallery

11/25 See Sunday Schedule above.

11/28 7:15 p.m. Choir Rehearsal: Choir Rm.

12/2 9:00 a.m. Report to Congregation
about 3-Church Initiative.



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