



The Epistle

March 2020

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

A community growing in Christ, called to worship, learn, and serve.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 • St. Luke's Consolidation Vote Results
 - From Junior Warden Ted Gerold: We are St. James! And what about the building?
- 2 • April *Epistle* deadline
 - Adult Forum: Thinking into Lent in a Year of Great Change
- 3 • From Fr. William Heisley: A knee and a parish – learning to ski in unfamiliar waters
- 4 • From Treasurer John Heintz: 2019 Financial Results
- 5 • From Treasurer John Heintz: Financial Report: January 31, 2020
 - Transitions: Decisions for our future
- 5 • Celebration: Save the Date: Saturday evening, June 17
 - Lent and Holy Week at St. James
 - A Morning at St. Luke's: Central Metro Mission Area Gathering
- 7 • Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!): Carnival in Haiti!
- 8 • What's coming up: March calendar

St. Luke's Consolidation Vote Results

With 55 qualified members voting, 85% voted in support of the Vestry recommendation to work toward consolidation with St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis.

From Junior Warden Ted Gerold

We are St. James! And what about the building?

We are St. James on the Parkway! As we continue our journey to our new future, let's keep this in our hearts, minds, words and acts. It's been several years since we collectively realized that we could not indefinitely maintain the path we were on, and decided to act. We have discerned, prayed, discussed, researched and sought counsel. We have moved forward with a mix of uncertainty and confidence. We have endured disaster in our building beyond what we could have imagined, and we have persevered. We grieve and we celebrate together. All these things and more make us St. James on the Parkway. Let's be St. James until we are no longer.

In this time of transition, there is uncertainty and anxiety. There are questions about what will happen with our building

and grounds, our furnishings, pastoral items and artifacts. We don't know all the answers, but we are learning. On February 8th I, along with Senior Warden Kerry Nelson and Transition Coordinator Ruth Anne Olson, met with Jay Nord, a real estate consultant hired by the Episcopal Church in Minnesota (ECMN). This was a first step toward handing stewardship of our building to ECMN on June 30th, when responsibilities of ownership and management will become theirs.

What can we take with us? Good question, with a few answers. Except by special permission, anything a part of, or attached to, the building must stay. Items otherwise moveable will be built into our consolidation plan. There is distinction

Continued on page 2

We are St. James! And what about the building?

Continued from page 1

between liturgical and non-liturgical items. St. James and St. Luke's will work as equal partners with ECMN

St. James and St. Luke's will work as equal partners

in this process. This means that both parishes will do the same discernment regarding our furnishings, liturgical items and artifacts. We came away from the meeting with a clear understanding that our consolidation planning is key to our success. We must be explicit about the what, the how and the why of things we want to include in our consolidated future.

As we toured the building with Jay, I relived the challenges, adventures

...giving up responsibility will come as a relief

and joys of being Junior Warden. I and others have many times walked in these shoes, which often seem to have rocks in them. While I have great love and reverence for this building, giving up responsibility for it will come as a relief to me. Jay mused that the building could have a future use as a community center or church, but those decisions are yet to be made. He foresees that Mandala and the Giving Garden will be able to maintain their presence and operations, with formalized partnerships with ECMN.

We are St. James on the Parkway! Think of your favorite story, movie or book about people facing uncertainty and claiming their identity. They stood up, or stepped forward, or raised a fist and cried "I am Spartacus!" or "We are the Titans!" or "Wolverines!". On June 30th we turn a page and step forward. We'll take with us loving

memories as we go. But that time is not yet here. We've come a long way, and the journey continues. We have a party to plan, let's celebrate! Let's be St. James until we are no longer.

— Let Christ guide us.

April Epistle

Submission Deadline:
March 27

Send submissions to:
Ruth Anne Olson
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Publication Date:
April 1

Comments or suggestions
are always welcome:

Content: Ruth Anne Olson
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Adult Forum

Thinking into Lent in a Year of Great Change

By Tony Morley

Adult Forum is the serious but informal time between Sunday services (9:30-10:25 AM) when grown-ups talk together. March offers five Sundays in Lent.

March 1, election day at St. James — about possibly consolidating with St. Luke's.

No formal topic for Adult Forum, but informal talk about dealing with change in where or how you worship.

March 8, the 2nd Sunday in Lent. Is this a Lent for spiritual rest, not spiritual extras? We'll use this day to talk about that — how to rest.

March 15 the 3rd Sunday in Lent. Fully recovered from surgery now, Fr. William will choose the topic and be discussion leader.

March 22, the 4th Sunday in Lent. This Sunday's Psalm is No. 23, an all-time favorite for

many church people. Let's look at alternate translations and talk about what the words mean to us.

March 29, the 5th Sunday in Lent. Ezekiel's vision of a valley of dry bones is one of this Sunday's readings. It's memorable, but what might it have meant to Jesus? Adult Forum will search for answers.

A knee and a parish – learning to ski in unfamiliar waters

I've been thinking that there are some similarities between my experience of getting a new knee at the end of January and what the people of St. James are going through right now. Sounds strange, I know. But there are parallels in so much of our living.

My surgery was long postponed. I've known that it would happen for quite a few months, but I scheduled it, knowing that I would need to take at least a month off, for what I expected to be the slowest period at St. James. I didn't want to be absent from the deliberations taking place in regard to our consolidation, but I had to do it. Some people at St. James have long felt that we should leave the Parkway pronto. Others have felt that we should stay for at least another year. In its wisdom, our Vestry elected to choose the date most likely to work in the normal flow of life in the parish, the end of the school year. And the congregation has very wisely concurred. Thus, we will close our doors on 30 June 2020.

My choice of surgeons was narrowed down to two, both of whom have credentials that are

... a difficult decision to work with one and not the other

glowing. I made the difficult decision to work with one and not the other based on my thorough research. She is, it turns out, highly regarded by her colleagues and has a delightful bedside manner. In choosing St. Luke's

as St. James' consolidation partner much the same thing happened. The Consolidation Team did exhaustive and thorough research, far beyond what any one person could have done. And while the decision was difficult, since both parishes are wonderful places doing wonderful things, we needed to choose. We bit the proverbial bullet (a euphemism coming from the days before anesthetics were available for surgery) and chose.

Preparations for the surgery seemed to go on ad infinitum. There was always another doctor, physician's assistant, nurse, or pharmacist to see. There were lots of things to read and absorb and exercises to do to get my body ready for the most rapid recovery possible. I needed to sort out how I would live at home where there is a flight of 16 stairs to the second floor. And what would I do in my time of convalescence besides physical therapy? When St. James decided to consolidate with St. Luke's there was not a feeling of elation. Of course, there is joy in knowing that there is much clarity about our path into the future. But there is a profound sense of sadness mixed with joyful memories (It was a good old knee...). And there is also a recognition that there is much work that lies ahead. It will involve physical things like how the building works for worship and education and more. And there will be the profound challenge of uniting two excellent communities, parts of the Body of Christ. How best shall these two become one?

Every day at home or at the therapist's office in February has

been a delightful challenge. I am given the opportunity to recognize my pain, to understand it, and to do what needs to be done to overcome it, thus

... opportunities to recognize my pain, to understand it, and do what needs to be done to overcome it

uniting my new titanium and plastic joint with the rest of my body. I pray that St. Luke's and St. James will be able to welcome each other into a common space, with newly developing leadership, goals, sources of inspiration and fellowship, and joy in living as the Body of Christ.

I cannot count how many times I've heard comments like this in the past few months. "Oh, you're getting/you got a new knee! I know so many people who have done that and they love it! In fact, my neighbor has two new hips and two new knees, and he loves to waterski on Lake Minnetonka, when he's not working in his garden." (The neighbor reference is a direct quote from one of my therapists.)

It is my trust, hope, and belief that in our consolidation we will soon be skiing on Minnetonka. We'll continue to do the hard work that is necessary for the integration of congregations and we'll continue to pray, not to make what I (or you... or you...) want happen, but that God's will be done.

Now, polish your skis.

2019 Financial Results

Balance sheet

Cash on hand for current operations (cash-total liabilities) is \$43,540, enough for about 2.5 months of average expense. Dahl Endowment now stands at \$358,973.

Annual Activities (income statement)

Operating Income ended the year about \$2,000 below budget. Pledge income ended up \$3 thousand better than budget, while unpledged income is was \$4,200 under budget. Donations for Expenses (including the Mandala lease) was \$1,800 under budget, other miscellaneous income was \$1,200 over budget, and our draw from the Dahl fund was as budgeted.

Operating Expenses ended the year about \$5,400 over budget. Salary lines were about \$5 thousand under budget in total, the lion's share due to not hiring an Education Director as planned. Property ended the year about \$3 thousand over budget, including the cost needed to replace a furnace that heats our rented space. Most other expense categories are somewhat under budget.

The largest expense changes from budget came in the Service category, where the Vestry chose to make additional contributions from the parish's cash balances to our Haiti project (\$12,000) and our various hunger ministries (Minnehaha Food Shelf-\$2,500, First Nations Kitchen-\$1,000, Families Moving Forward-\$1,000).

Bottom line

Our reported operating deficit was \$26,384, about \$7,400 worse than budgeted. Given the additional unplanned spending for the furnace and the year-end decision to make additional contributions to our Service ministries, I find the results surprisingly good. Our cash position is such that we end the year in solid position to finance our planned activities in 2020 until our planned consolidation with another parish in the second half of the year.

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income		
Pledged Income	120,326	117,500
Unpledged Income	17,807	22,000
Donations for Expenses	35,057	36,919
Other	1,521	300
Investment Income	20,399	20,400
Income Totals	195,110	197,119
Expense		
Staff – Clergy	54,517	56,620
Staff – Lay	51,902	54,636
Property	61,672	58,675
Office Totals	10,555	10,925
Diocese of Minnesota	18,721	18,806
Service	16,500	400
Worship – Music	5,472	6,601
Worship – Altar	1,024	2,000
Education	52	1,000
Welcoming	300	1,000
Stewardship	273	260
Vestry	507	5,150
Expense	221,495	216,073
Surplus/(Deficit)	(26,384)	(18,954)

Financial Report: January 31, 2020

Balance Sheet

Net cash on hand for current operations (cash-total liabilities) was \$51,825, enough for about 3.0 months of average expense. I expect cash to decline fairly quickly as we make our various budgeted service payments; will need to watch it carefully and draw from our TD Ameritrade brokerage account and make our budgeted Dahl Fund withdrawals to manage it. Please keep your pledges up to date to help us manage the transition.

Dahl Endowment now stands at \$361,774. Haiti Fund now stands at \$13,054.

Operations

Operating Income YTD of \$27,497 is over budget by about \$4,500. Pledge income was about \$7 thousand over

budget (reflecting the booking of prepaid pledges), and unpledged income was also \$900 over budget; other income was \$2,200 below budget in total.

Operating Expense \$19,212 is now over budget by about \$1,800. I don't see anything unusual in spending just yet, simply normal monthly variation for the most part.

Bottom line

Our current reported operating surplus is \$8,285, which is about \$2,700 better than budgeted, again, the consequence of taking prepaid pledges into income in January. Next month we'll be back to deficit spending for the duration.

	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	over / (under)
Pledged Income	\$15,839	\$22,620	\$6,781
Other Income	\$7,081	\$4,877	(\$2,204)
Total Income	\$22,920	\$27,497	\$4,577
Expenses	\$17,358	\$19,212	(\$1,854)
Net	\$5,562	\$8,285	\$2,723

Transitions

Building on the past, and for a future

By Ruth Anne Olson,
Transition Coordinator

With the parish vote now complete, we're on our way to consolidating with St. Luke's.

On March 7, St. James and St. Luke's Consolidation Teams will meet together. The agenda: to look at the assets which live in abundance in both congregations, and determine how best to integrate them into a consolidated parish on 46th and Colfax.

Stories promise to be a center point of this work. What are their stories; what are ours? How will our histories shape our future: For something so small as deciding what furniture of St. James might find a place at 46th and Colfax. And so big as how each person will find a place in the future of a shared home. On the agenda

Stories promise to be a center point

will be the same seven areas about which you've been hearing so much in the past several months: worship, education, service in the world, music, finance, governance and property.

Also on the agenda on March 7 and beyond: our relationship with officials of the Episcopal Church of Minnesota (ECMN)—as we seek their required written consent for consolidation and as we strive to be good stewards of our building to the moment on July 1 when we relinquish its ownership. We've worked hard to lay groundwork for that relationship. Now we look to learn much from one another as we move forward.

And, always on the agenda at St. James: how can we support our fellow parishioners who choose a spiritual home other than a consolidated parish with St. Luke's? And how to support long-time members whose health keeps from active participation in any of these activities?

Watch for a multitude of ways to be part of this process. Whether you're a story-teller or story-listener. Whether your talents lie in making lists, planning parties, moving furniture. Whether you already know what you want in the months to come or are still muddling your way through. Wherever you are at this moment in time, there's a place for you in the months ahead. Listen for opportunities. Voice what you most need.

St. James...

Let's Celebrate!



Celebration

Save the Date: Saturday evening, June 17

By Louis Hoffman, Host Extraordinaire

Trust us, you won't want to miss this! Please mark your calendar and plan on being at St. James on Saturday evening, June 27. There'll be a big party on the Great Lawn under a tent (rain or shine!) from early evening until the wee hours with fellowship, food, drink, music, and stories as we move on to whatever's next.

This party is for St. Jamesians present and past. We're going to e-mail and mail information to everyone for whom we have an address. So reach out to family, friends, neighbors, and anyone you know or know of who's been part of St. James' 94 years! Please get contact information to the Church Office. We want everyone there. But

we'll need to know who's coming to have enough to eat and drink. Not everyone can pull off that loaves and fishes thing....

Speaking of loaves and fishes, we'll need volunteers to help reach out to St. Jamesians present and past, cook, set up, clean up, and do all of the things that make a party on to remember.

Lent and Holy Week at St. James

Lent began on Ash Wednesday, February 26. This year we will not conduct midweek services until Holy Week. Here is our schedule.

Every Sunday in Lent

Holy Eucharist will be observed at 8:00 and 10:30 AM

The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday, April 5th

Holy Eucharist will be observed at 8:00 and 10:30 AM.

Maundy Thursday, April 9th

There will be one liturgy at 7:00 PM

Good Friday, April 10th

There will be one liturgy at 7:00 PM

Easter Sunday, April 12th

Holy Eucharist will be observed at 8:00 and 10:30 AM

A Morning at St. Luke's: Central Metro Mission Area Gathering

It is a happy circumstance that we are invited to spend a morning with fellow Episcopalians from the Central Metro Mission Area on Saturday, April 18. Gathering at 9:00 AM, the meeting begins at 9:30 AM with a brief explanation of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota budget for the year. Then we move quickly to at least an hour's conversation with Bishop Elect Craig Loya, our first opportunity to be with him in such a setting. The final hour will be given to a presentation by the Dream Team from St. Luke's. They will talk about their exciting work in Evangelism and Mission in South Minneapolis. This is going to be a moment for all of us to remember. Therefore, YOU ARE INVITED!

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

Carnival in Haiti!

By Susan Maas, on behalf of
the St. James Haiti Committee

Every year, in the days leading up to Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday, Haitians throw a grand party: Carnival. Colorful parades are held in towns and cities around the country, with the largest celebration – among the biggest in North America – taking place in Port au Prince. Incorporating elements of both Christianity and Vodou, Carnival includes floats, food stands, costumes, plays, comedy, and a wide range of traditional and contemporary music.

It's also an economic opportunity for Haitians: dressmakers' workloads expand dramatically; food purveyors do brisk business; musicians' careers are launched or elevated. Tourists visit the country specifically for Carnival. And maybe most importantly, it's a time for Haitians young and old to forget their cares and just have fun.

After many, many months of staggering inflation and political unrest in Haiti, it seems even crueler that this year's much-needed diversion was canceled early due to violence – for the second year in a row. Last month, gun violence between police protesting their working conditions and soldiers in President Jovenel Moïse's newly reconstituted army led to more than a dozen injuries and at least two deaths, prompting the government to scrap Carnival 2020. And as this issue of the *Epistle* went to press, protesters demanding Moïse's resignation were blockading streets in Port-au-Prince, with tire fires and overturned vehicles replacing floats and musical performances.

Meanwhile, our friends and prospective guests from Bigonet were preparing for their travel visa interviews at the embassy in Port-au-Prince. Those interviews, of course, are among the many



hurdles that would-be travelers from Haiti to the U.S. must face – hurdles that don't exist for us. As hard and intentionally as we strive for mutuality in our partnership with Bonne Nouvelle, true reciprocity isn't yet possible given past and present conditions of colonialism and U.S. institutional racism.

So, we have a lot to reckon with, pray about, and work for. As this article is being written, we pray for our friends' safety in the capitol city. We pray that this time, unlike two years ago, our friends' daunting, expensive, time-consuming appeal to come spend time with us in Minnesota is rewarded – and that we'll soon be hosting Bonne Nouvelle educators in our city and our homes. And we pray for real leadership and justice, in both Haiti and the U.S. That last piece, at least, is something we can actively work for as well.

Sad News

By Ruth Anne Olson, on behalf of
the St. James Haiti Committee

Since November, we've been working with four teachers and church leaders in Bigonet to make application of the U.S. Embassy to receive a non-immigrant travel visa that would allow them to visit St. James in upcoming months. It's a grueling process that involves countless documents, online applications, letters of support, hefty fees and, finally, an interview. That last step, at 7:30 AM on Friday 02/28, ended with their being denied a visa. No explanation, just "Denied". Everyone involved is feeling a bit numb.



Sunday Schedule

8:00 AM Worship: Sanctuary
 9:00 AM Coffee & Conversation: Gallery
 10:15 AM PrayGround for kids and youth of all ages: Sanctuary
 10:30 AM Worship: Sanctuary
 11:45 AM Coffee & Conversation: Gallery

3/1 See Sunday Schedule
 Noon: Ballots due for consolidation vote
3/2 7:00 PM Haiti Committee Meeting:
 3505 35th Avenue South
3/4 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary
3/7 9:30 AM Joint St. James/St. Luke's Consolidation
 Team Meeting at St. Luke's
3/8 See Sunday Schedule
3/10 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting: Gallery
3/11 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary
3/15 See Sunday Schedule

3/18 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary
3/19 6:30 PM Yarn Crafters, Gallery
3/21 11:15 AM Food Shelf, At-Taqwa Mosque,
 1608 Como Avenue, St. Paul
3/22 See Sunday Schedule
 1:30 PM Laughing Waters Friends Meeting: Gallery
3/25 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary
3/28 10:00 AM Building Work Day
3/29 See Sunday Schedule



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