



The Epistle

May 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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ECMN officials consent to the consolidation of St. James and St. Luke’s

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From Fr. William Heisley

What will “church” be in the future

It was an incredible morning. On Saturday, April 18, the Central Metro Area Mission Gathering was held online. I was assigned by the leadership team of two clergy and two lay leaders from our eleven faith communities to serve as host. Estimates are that we doubled the number of participants from last year, and certainly from recently previous years.

We began with a warm welcome and a prayer by Bishop Brian Prior. Then we went to a presentation by Stephen Richards from St. Luke’s who looked at our current situation in light of biblical history and theology. More about that below. Then we went to a time for each of the faith communities to introduce itself to Bishop-Elect Craig Loya, who joined us from his home office in Omaha. Then, we heard from the Bishop-Elect as he spent considerable time introducing himself to us. Finally, we engaged in a period of questions and answers with him.

Part of what he said was about us. He was extremely moved by the power of Steve’s presentation and the conversation that followed. So was I.

I want to tell you a bit about what Steve said.

He started by talking about how Easter didn’t feel the same to him this year. Rather than a time for joy it had become a time for lament. Lamenting how we could not be together. Lamenting how a celebration that is historically (biblically!) communal, had become impossible to celebrate in the way we have always done.

Steve pointed out that we need to express “our sense of loss” as an important part of grief. That’s what the writer of the book of Lamentations did when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BCE and took many of the Israelites into captivity in their land, a foreign and strange land.

Continued on page 2

What will “church” be in the future

But “our faith is grounded on the hope that life is always greater than death.” For instance, there are the dry bones to which Ezekiel is commanded to speak: “Prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says...I will put my Spirit in you and you will live.’”

Richards touched on a number of other biblical narratives such as Moses and God’s people, the Jews, constructing a tabernacle in which God could live. And God promising to be with them always. Everywhere. Anywhere they went.

He talked about the first temple in Jerusalem that lasted until it was destroyed by the same Babylonians in 596 BCE and was later rebuilt by a pagan, Cyrus of Persia.

Steve talked about several other examples because there seems to be no end of stories about God doing new things. Out of destruction, out of plague, out of drought, earthquake, lightning, flood, and yes, even war, God always gives us hope. For Christians that hope became a human being in Jesus of Nazareth. His body, like humans, the natural world, and even the world of spirits, was beset by every possible scourge so that he might give us one gift: the knowledge that all will be well for us.

Post-COVID-19 we will need to rebuild our lives, our church, our culture, and our business. How can we ever hope to do all of that?

Steve: “Our God is a Creator God. In the midst of change our natural go-to place is fear. We fear change. We lament and grieve what has gone. This is normal, but we also need to remember that God is the source of life. Our God is a gardener. Our God likes things to grow. This is why the invitation to ‘not fear’ is given by God in the presence of something new happening. Don’t worry...I’m here...I’ve got his!”

So. What will “church” be in the future? I am certain that it will be different. Already we are seeing

higher attendances in worship and learning and fellowship events online than we have recently seen in person. Already people are dreaming about what might be as we mourn the impossibility of being together and of hugging our way through the peace of Christ. Already we are getting used to a new thing.

How will things develop from here? God is setting before us a huge opportunity to become evangelists in a new way. Nothing is clear apart from that fact.

God is doing a new thing. It’s what God does. It’s what the Resurrection of Jesus is about. Now it’s up to us to joyfully listen, learn, and do!

From Junior Warden Ted Gerold

Focusing On What We Can Control

We are all doing our best for ourselves, our families and our community in uncertain times. There are many things beyond our control in our lives but we remain focused on the things that we can control. The St. James Real Property Sub-Committee is drafting a report to the Consolidation Steering Committee on the process and progress toward handing over St. James real property to the Episcopal Church in Minnesota (ECMN) as of July 1st. To that end, I have met with representatives of the ECMN Standing Committee and Board of Trustees to learn and understand requirements, timelines and protocols.

A timeline will be developed, with the goal of July 1st to complete the transfer of property. However, it is recognized and accepted that we may not be able to meet this goal due to

things beyond our control such as Covid-19 developments and related government decisions. We will build in contingency plans to permit access to the building as needed beyond July 1st for necessary work.

Plans are in place for the Giving Garden to continue operations under ECMN stewardship after the transition. On Friday, April 24th, the cracked water pipe for the garden faucet was replaced. It’s great to know that this wonderful ministry will continue.

There are many things that we can control and that we can do for ourselves, our families and our community. We can act with compassion and love. We can look to a better future that will surely come. We can focus on our plans to create a new community with our consolidation partners. We can know that God is with us.

June Epistle

Submission Deadline:
May 26

Send submissions to:
Fr. William Heisley
whesley@mac.com

Publication Date:
June 1

From Senior Warden Kerry Nelson

Everything is different, yet much going on

What a strange time we are all living in right now. Everything is different than it was 6 weeks ago and probably will never be quite the same. It is a time for reflection on what is truly important or necessary in our lives; a time to reach out to others; a time to be grateful; a time to slow down. There is so much going on at St. James even though we are not physically there. Thank you to Beth Harvey for figuring out Zoom and how to hold our services virtually. I love that we have live and interactive services rather than just watching a video. Our coffee hours are lively and full of St. James members past and present across the country. Thank you to Liz and Cliff Athorn for providing us with music each week including guest solos from Max Athorn and Jane Hoffman. Thank you to Rosemary Caspar who put the Alleluia back on the altar as well as all the Easter lilies and then delivered the lilies to some of our members. Tony Morley is back leading Adult Forum via Zoom with its usual liveliness and timely topics. Thank you for doing that again, Tony. These efforts help us regain the community feeling of St. James that we were all missing when we did not have church for those first two weeks.

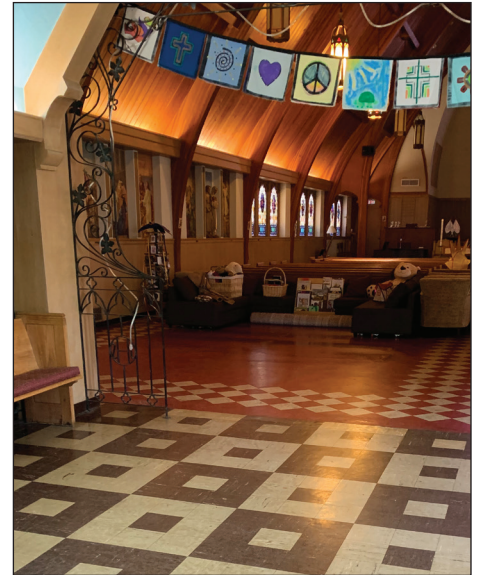
The Vestry had their meeting via Zoom on April 14th. We were able to accomplish all our business. One motion was to approve the appointment of myself and Ruth Anne Olson to represent St. James on the Consolidation Steering Committee. As a result, we have been meeting with our counterparts from St. Luke's (Michelle Krakowski, Dianne Pikula and Sharon Rost) weekly. Rosemary Caspar, Cliff Athorn, John Heintz, Tony Morley, Anne Scheible, Father William, Louise Robinson, Kurt Hall, Liz Athorn and Ted Gerold are all representing St. James on one or more

of the sub-committees as we flesh our detailed plan for consolidation. Thank you to all of them for their efforts.

With the church itself remaining unoccupied, our Sexton, Vince Nelson, has taken the opportunity to do some deep cleaning. Both the Gallery and the Narthex have had their furniture removed and floors mopped with disinfectant. The pictures included in the *Epistle* are before and after. Thought everyone would enjoy seeing the puppets, peace flags and gathering spaces. Mandala is hoping to start up again on May 4th but will probably not have the same numbers as before. The Giving Garden is also getting started.

Work has begun on tidying the beds with volunteers working two at time in staggered shifts.

I miss seeing all of you in person but am grateful to have the Zoom capabilities to keep connected. Reach out to one another and remember that God walks with us and loves us all.



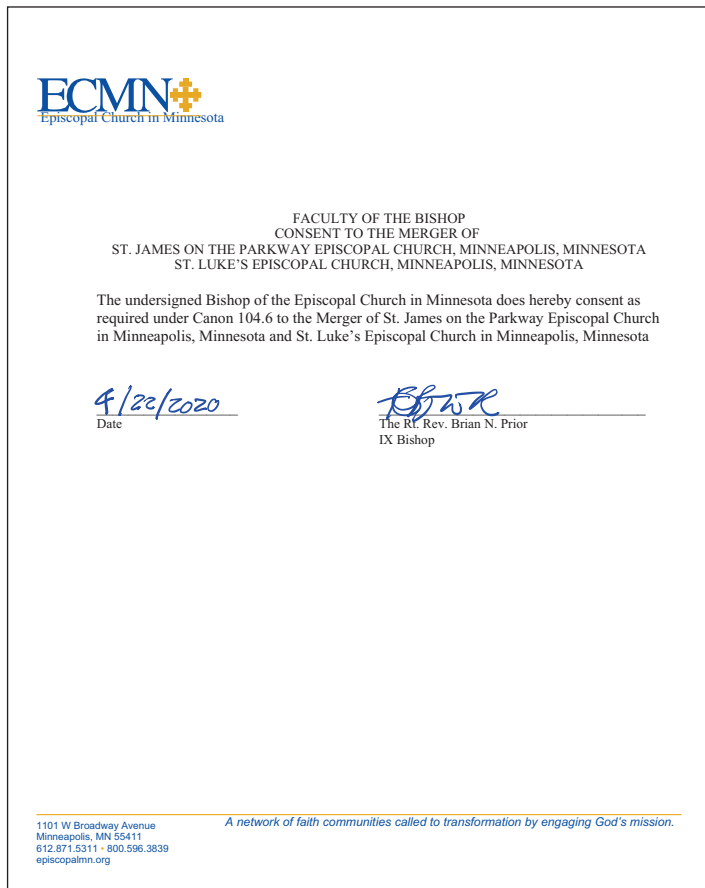
ECMN Consents to Consolidation

By Ruth Anne Olson,
Transition Coordinator

Official word arrived on April 22: that both the Standing Committee and the Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Minnesota (ECMN) have formally consented to the proposed consolidation of St. James and St. Luke's. This is extraordinarily welcome news, coming after a year-long journey of careful planning and transparency of our Vestry, Consolidation Team, Steering Committee, as well as the prayers and connectedness of our people. Bottom line: St. James and St. Luke's have now met the requirements for consolidation, as defined by ECMN's Canon Law. To see our commitment to ECMN, see pages 5 – 7. The Bishop's consent and the Standing Committee's consent are pictured below.

What does ECMN's consent mean?

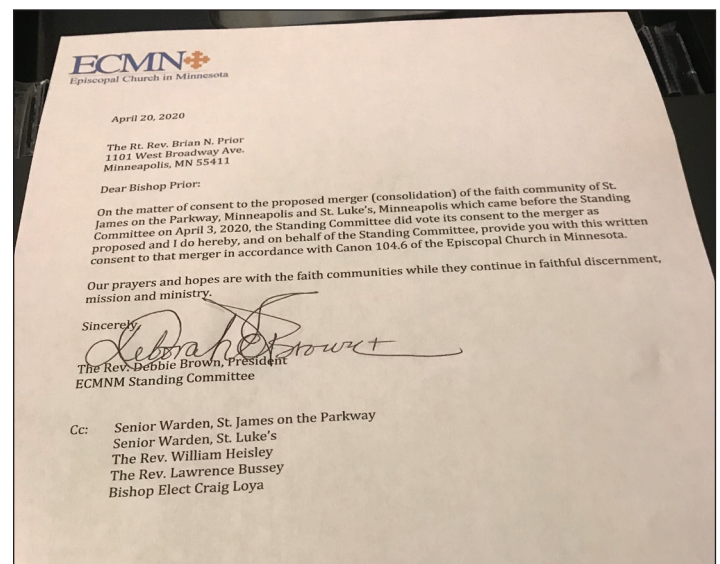
We've long known that one effect will be the July 1 transfer of St. James building and grounds to ECMN's Trustees. For reasons well understood by all, this fact is both wrenching and welcome.



ECMN's consent also means that the parishes of St. James and St. Lukes now have the opportunity to come together as a single integrated parish—with the ministries, traditions and financial assets of both kept intact. Development of a detailed Consolidation Plan is being guided by the Steering Committee and conducted by the sub-committees about which you've heard much in the past month. In mid-May, you'll learn the details.

ECMN's action now hands to Vestries of both parishes, a decision of whether to approve the detailed Consolidation Plan. St. Luke's Vestry meets May 11; St. James Vestry meets May 12. If both elect to move forward, the Vestries will distribute the Plan to their members in preparation for parish votes to be completed on May 31. Yay or Nay? If members of both churches vote Yay, consolidation will move forward. If either parish votes Nay, the Plan will fail. In that case, ECMN Canon Law likely will require St. James be designated a "closed congregation," a process that assigns all our assets to ECMN.

And finally, the last step in this long string of events will be a church-choice made by each individual in the community of St. James. We've known from the get-go that geography and a panoply of other forces will lead some among us to choose a spiritual life somewhere other than our newly consolidated parish. It's this fact which has made the past year so hard. But we'd all agree that each choice is grounded in love, respect and faithfulness. Wherever we go, the community of St. James will continue to influence our lives.



Dear Fellow Members of the Community of Christ:

For many years the people of the Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway in South Minneapolis have sought to redirect and revivify their ministries. They have prayed and worked diligently, seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit. On March 1, 2020, following an ever-intensifying process of discernment, the people of St. James decided to work towards a consolidation with St. Luke's Episcopal Church in South Minneapolis. Following numerous interactions with the consolidation team from St. James and internal conversations, St. Luke's has affirmed its shared interest in working towards a consolidation.

Therefore, pursuant to Canon 104.6, we, the undersigned clergy and senior wardens, request the written consent of Bishop Brian Prior and the ECMN Standing Committee for consolidation of the Episcopal Churches of St. James and St. Luke's, both in Minneapolis. Our new parish will be located at 4557 Colfax Avenue South, the current site of St. Luke's. Real property currently owned by St. James at 3225 East Minnehaha Parkway, will be transferred to ECMN on July 1, 2020.

We understand the great challenge that such a venture presents, but we also believe and trust that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide and inspire us as we learn to worship, learn and serve together. This is a point of confidence since, in our discernment we have experienced the truth that our congregations are in many ways quite similar, including but not limited to: worship and music; social services; Christian education and the care of youth; issues of justice and peace. We look forward to bolstering ongoing ministries carried on by both congregations, to edit those that are obsolete, and to walk boldly together into new paths of evangelism and parish life. Of course, these things will happen in support of the broader mission of ECMN.

Upon written consent of the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Episcopal Church of Minnesota, the vestries of St. James and St. Luke's will develop detailed action steps for each of the following categories of consolidation:

1. Collaboration with ECMN's Bishop, Standing Committee and Trustees.

Collaboration and transparency have been hallmarks of our work within-and-between our two parishes. We look forward to carrying these elements into our work with ECMN as we work in relationship to fulfill our goal of consolidation.

2. Worship, ministries and spiritual assets

Worship and liturgy; service in the world; adult, youth and children's education; and rich musical traditions — all are assets that live in abundance at St. Luke's and St. James. Leaders in both congregations will integrate these programs into the new consolidated parish.

3. Real property

The new parish will occupy 4557 Colfax Avenue South in Minneapolis, the current site of St. Luke's.

Ownership of 3225 East Minnehaha Parkway in Minneapolis, property currently owned by St. James, will be relinquished to ECMN Trustees on July 1, 2020. This includes the building and grounds, relationships with current tenants as agreed in writing prior to July 1 and, except by mutual agreement of St. James, St. Luke and ECMN, all items currently affixed to the property (i.e. those whose removal would require use of tools).

4. Personal property

Both congregations will inventory items of liturgical significance, designating their assignment, in order of priority, to:

- (a) serve the new parish or
- (b) be given to the stewardship of ECMN.

Likewise, both congregations will inventory non-liturgical items designating their assignment, in order of priority, to:

- (a) serve the new consolidated parish and its ministries,
- (c) be offered in sale to members of either/both parishes, (with proceeds to go to the new parish), and
- (d) be given to the stewardship of ECMN.

5. Financial assets and records

Vestries of both congregations will develop an interim budget for the new parish: July - December, 2020. They will offer a fully combined budget to the new parish at its 2021 Annual Meeting.

Financial assets (bank accounts, endowments, PIF accounts, etc.) and parish records of both congregations will be entrusted to the stewardship of the new parish.

6. Staff

Representatives from the two consolidating parishes will discuss staffing needs and develop a plan for staffing the consolidated parish. As it relates to clergy, those matters will be reviewed with the Standing Committee and the Bishop.

7. Governance

Vestries of the two consolidating parishes will name an Integration Team to serve the new parish beginning July 1.

The Integration Team will develop a process and timeline for writing by-laws to serve the new parish as well as attend monthly Vestry meetings.

A consolidated vestry will be elected at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the new parish.

8. Parish life & communication.

Throughout the coming months, lay and clergy leadership in each congregation will develop appropriate pastoral activities to acknowledge experiences of both grief and celebration in each parish. They will also determine details of integrating parish life of both congregations following July 1, into a full and fruitful life as a consolidated parish.

9. Name of the new parish.

The Integration Team will consider the question of a name for the new parish and, if appropriate, will offer a plan to be considered at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the new parish in accordance with Canon 107.1.

10. Approval by Congregants

A final plan for consolidation will be presented to both parishes for final vote.

11. It is our intent that all canonically required steps will have been implemented.

We look forward to your consent and to working with Bishop Prior and Bishop-Elect Loya, the ECMN Staff, and the Standing Committee in all these things.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Bruce Boehm Carlson
Senior Warden, St. Luke's

Ms. Kerry Nelson
Senior Warden, St. James

The Rev. Larry Bussey
Supply Priest, St. Luke's

The Rev. Dr. William Heisley
Transition Priest, St. James

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

Haiti Partnership Pledge Drive

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

Please watch your mailbox in the next few days for your 2020 Haiti partnership pledge letter.

Nothing is normal this year, to put it mildly – and that includes our annual Bonne Nouvelle pledge drive.

Starting on May 3 and continuing through May 17, we'll be taking a few minutes after the Sunday online liturgy to enjoy slideshows celebrating our one-of-a-kind partnership with the community of Bonne Nouvelle.

As our friends at St. Luke's put it, over the past 11 years we've built, with our partners, "a well-established ministry in Haiti that is based on relationship rather than charity—a ministry that is the envy of many Episcopal churches in Minnesota."

We hope that in this time of transition, you can find it in your heart to make or renew a commitment to this world-changing work.



Celebration

Big Bash?

By Louis Hoffman

In these uncertain times, we have no idea whether the Big Bash will proceed as planned on Saturday evening, June 27 on the lawn at St. James or whether it'll be postponed. It's hard to think, after weeks of quarantine, of having hundreds of convivial people celebrating, drinking, eating, entertaining, and, yes, mourning in person and not on a Zoom screen! So please continue to save the date. But please know that your intrepid party planners and the Vestry will be monitoring Governor Walz's executive orders, direction from ECMN, and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other reputable civil and public health officials to determine what's legal, prudent, and safe to do and when.

St. James Historic Photos

You may remember that there were a bunch of old photos and other St. James memorabilia in the Gallery just before in-person church was suspended. There are three groups:

- Meticulously labeled and albumized photos from maybe the 1940s and 1950s.
- Semi-organized, sometimes albumized, but not labeled photos from maybe the 1960s and 1970s.

- More recent photos that aren't labeled but that many of us can identify.

Is there anyone, especially longer-time members, who'd like to pore through them and identify people and events? There aren't that many. I'd be happy to deliver a box – or more – to help you pass time during our quarantine.

Please contact Louis Hoffman at hoffman.louis@comcast.net or 612-618-7206.

Pledges During This Time



During this time of Zoom worship, you can mail in your pledge or stop by the church and drop it in an envelope through the mail slot at the 33rd Ave/Playground entrance. John Heintz is regularly checking the mail and making deposits.

Service at St. James

How You Can Help Your Community

Minnehaha Food Shelf

The Minnehaha Food Shelf has been able to continue to serve the Nokomis community these last few weeks in spite of the COVID19. Many of our volunteers had to stop working because they are in the high risk categories but new volunteers have stepped up to the plate, including several from St. James. Donations have continued throughout March and April. NENA promoted a successful fundraiser for us which has helped us to cope with the increased needs for food. If you want to help, you can connect with the Minnehaha Food Shelf at: www.minnehaha.org/foodshelf.html or @MinnehahaFoodShelf (on Facebook).

First Nations Kitchen

First Nations Kitchen is not serving meals for April and May. They are participating in GiveMN's fundraiser: Give At Home MN. Their GiveMN page is <https://www.givemn.org/organization/All-Saints-Indian-Mission-1>

Consolidation

Barbara Buehl, from St. Luke's, and I have started to work on the consolidation plans for community service. If you have strong feelings about some of the community service activities, please let me know. Anne Scheible at: annebillscheible@gmail.com