



The Epistle

October 2016

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

An Introduction from our Transition Priest

The Rev. William Heisley

It is an honor to be chosen as St. James on the Parkway's next Transition Priest. I truly look forward to meeting you, worshipping with you, and working with you to continue your, now our, ministry of building the Church of Jesus Christ in our hearts, our homes, our neighborhood and beyond.

I come to St. James having spent nearly 35 years as a Lutheran pastor. While this might surprise some of you, my walking in ministry with you is a happy outcome of the historic agreement, Called to Common Mission, ratified by The Episcopal Church (United States) in 2000 and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1999. Under this agreement clergy of either denomination are given permission and authority to serve in congregations of the other denomination.

But I am not a newcomer to the Episcopal Church. I served my period of Clinical Pastoral Education in New York City in the summer of 1977, living at The General Seminary and making lifelong friends there. I continued to return to General often over, relishing worship in the Seminary Chapel. Over the years I have had long-standing relationships of admiration and respect with Episcopal priests and musicians. The Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal 1982 have long been some of my favorite liturgical and musical resources. There seems to be no end to their richness and depth.

On September 27 I met with Bishop

Brian Prior who has endorsed my service with you. Having met with St. James' Vestry and having learned about the directions that are now being shaped for ministry in the future at, in and by St. James, I told Bishop Prior that I recently reread the "Articles of Faith" (The 39 Articles) in the back of the Book of Common Prayer. I wholeheartedly endorse and seek to live by their precepts. They demonstrate clearly the great commonalities between Episcopal and Lutheran theology.

In short, The Episcopal Church and St. James in particular feel like a good fit.

It will not be my goal to redirect your ministry. Rather, I seek to join with you and your leaders as the excellent process of discernment that has been undertaken continues. What

shall St. James do next? Who shall be the next leader? How should St. James' facilities be maintained and upgraded? These are large and important questions that have been asked and are being answered in the ongoing power of the Holy Spirit.

I therefore ask your prayers for me as I enter your community. I ask your prayers for your leaders as they listen carefully to you and to the neighborhood and to each other, and make decisions that will set the direction in which together St. James will travel.

And I ask that you pray for yourself as I pray for you, that God, who blesses us more vastly than we can comprehend, might shower mercy, grace, peace and joy on all that we do, all that we are.

+ In the Name of Jesus +

November *Epistle*

Send articles for the October *Epistle* to Beth Harvey (stjamesotp@comcast.net and bhpens@mac.com) by Wednesday, October 19. Publication on October 30.



Thanks and Best Wishes to David Lesniaski

by Ruth Anne Olson

On Sunday, September 25 St. James said good-bye to music director David Lesniaski. Since the fall of 2002, David has directed our choir and enriched our worship with piano and organ — often with music he has, himself, composed or arranged. “I like both to write music and to make music,” David says. A half-dozen or so organ pieces we’ve heard over the years have been David’s own creations — also a choral piece for All Saints Day. Often, too, he’s arranged other’s compositions, for piano and organ and to fit the strengths of the St. James choir. “The choir has always let me know what they like,” David explains. “Early American music was at the top of that list.”

While St. Jamesians have enjoyed David’s talents as composer, director, organist and pianist, his special interest in the clavichord has been largely hidden from view. Popular from the early 15th to early 19th centuries, the clavichord’s quiet sound is especially attractive to David. He explored, tinkered and eventually built two of these stringed keyboards — an expression of his interest in the mechanical aspects of instruments as well as the musical.



Asked to reflect on his 14 years at St. James, David talks of his regret that he never found a way to do more education. Several times he gathered folks during adult education hour (9:30 on Sunday mornings) to learn music theory and new hymns. On some Sunday mornings he opened the 10:30 service with a 10 minute congregational music lesson. “But it never quite worked,” David recalls. “People enjoy having a bigger tool kit for appreciating music, but I never quite made it happen.”

David leaves St. James to become music director at Gethsemane Episcopal Church in downtown Minneapolis. Gethsemane is similar to St. James in size; like St. James it has two Sunday services. A quick look at their website shows a photo of a choir, slightly larger than ours, wearing familiar-looking choir robes that could have come from our own choir closet. “Gethsemane and St. James have much in common,” David says.

Aware of our Acorn 2020 process, David is intent on leaving one parting thought for St. James. “I have very high hopes for St. James,” he says. “I believe there will always be a St. James. I’ve been around a lot of churches, and at St. James there is a special and unique sense of community. We’ve had wonderful celebrations. We’ve had terrible tragedies. But St. James faces each of those as a community, not just as individuals. I have no idea how to advertise that to the larger world. But it’s special, and I’m convinced that, in some form or another, St. James will always be.”

We wish David and his wife Lisa a rich and music-filled future in their new community of Gethsemane.

Service Committee Report

October Focus: Knitting and Food Shelf

First of all “thank you” to all the volunteers who helped out at First Nations Kitchen this summer. Ritchie Two Bulls, who organizes the volunteers for FNK, has been very appreciative of our help filling in on Sundays when they have been short handed.

For the month of October, we are going to finish our knitting (for Simpson House) and focus on the Minnehaha Food Shelf. The goal is for at least 75% participation from the congregation. Each week will have a theme. For the week of Oct. 2, the theme is “Soup” and we want donations of canned soup, broth, stews and

crackers. The week of Oct. 9 will be “Better Breakfast Week” and donations could include canned juices, cereal, oatmeal and shelf stable milk or soy milk. The week of Oct. 16 will be “Pantry Staples Week” and donations could include rice, beans, pasta, canned tomatoes, tuna etc.

Upcoming events. We are planning some type of Christmas gift program similar to the Adopt a Family program that we used to participate in. Also watch for a Service Committee meeting announcement.

Acorn and the Search for Partners

Meeting August 24, Acorn 2020 reviewed three reports from ongoing partnership explorations, looked forward to the St. James priest, when named, joining Acorn's work, and briefly considered whether traditional elements of Episcopal worship space might be problematic for possible partners mentioned in discussion so far.

As a team, Ruth Anne Olson, Max Athorn and Monica Herrera are looking at examples of Christian-Muslim-Jewish cooperation and talking with local leaders to envision a multifaith center located on St. James property. Clearly, they report, there is widespread interest in ways members of the three faiths can work with each other while strengthening, not diluting, their distinctive faith traditions.

Tony Morley and Louis Hoffman will seriously explore stronger partnership ideas with counterpart lay people appointed by the pastors or boards of neighborhood Lutheran and Methodist congregations. The Acorn intent is to make the exploration truly mutual from the start, with a six-person three-parish work group.

Anne Scheible has talked with Fr. Wilson at Holy Trinity Episcopal, St. Paul, and in September will follow up with Fr. Two-Bulls at All Saints Indian Mission, Minneapolis. Further conversations, or approaches to other Episcopal parishes, will depend on interest and the participants' sense of emerging opportunity.

In lively discussion Acorn members compared personal notes as to what makes a place of worship Episcopal rather

than something else. Whatever it is, members agreed it is important to our parish. But since all Acorn scenarios assume a space for continuing St. James worship and none proposes a worship merger with any other denomination, there's no threat of a "deal-breaker," the members present felt.

In the mid-summer lull, no new activity was reported from the two other partnership explorations, children's education and an arts-oriented neighborhood center. In five interest areas Acorn seeks potential partners whose mission is compatible with St. James history and values and with ability to help address the building and budget realities here.

Acorn strongly invites parishioners with interest and ideas in any of these areas to join in the work. The five explorations and Acorn contacts for each are as follows:

- Children's Education —
Rosemary Caspar (rlcaspar@gmail.com)
- Partner Neighborhood Congregations —
Tony Morley (ajm.tony@gmail.com)
Louis Hoffman (hoffman.louis@comcast.net)
- Partner Episcopal Congregations —
Anne Scheible (annebillscheible@gmail.com)
Victor Gonzales (vxgonzales@gmail.com)
- Multi-faith Center —
Anne Scheible (annebillscheible@gmail.com)
Ruth Anne Olson (olson248@gmail.com)
 - Arts-oriented Neighborhood Center —
Joe Ordos (joeordos@gmail.com)

St. James Delivers Program

St. James Delivers started eight years ago as a grass roots ministry to support parishioners during times when life asks more of us than we can easily handle on our own: birth of a child, illness, death and dying, or an accident. We deliver meals, provide transportation, childcare, and a sympathetic ear. We now want to make this an official ministry at St. James, in part to make sure that we are reaching all who are in need of our support, and to be certain that our efforts are sustainable.

Here are the ways in which you can be involved:

- Add your name to the growing list of St. James Delivers volunteers by

contacting Beth Harvey in the parish office. Please include your email address and cell phone number, so that we can communicate via email and text. If you don't text, no worries, we still want you to join us!

- Please let Fr. William or Beth Harvey know if there is someone you feel is in need of this type of help. Be sure to ask for help for yourself when needed.
- Consider being a coordinator. If you'd rather share your organization skills than culinary skills, please consider the coordinator role. This does not mean you would coordinate the whole program, but that you are willing to provide this service on a

case-by case basis. Training will be provided.

- If you are not able to deliver meals or provide transportation, we are also in need of folks who are willing to make meals that someone else can deliver.

Thank you for considering joining us. Please contact Casey McGuire with any questions you may have or Beth Harvey to provide your contact information.

Beth Harvey can be reached in the at 612-250-9795 or stjamesotp@comcast.net or bhpens@mac.com. Casey McGuire can be reached at mcguire.levi.casey@gmail.com or 612-298-5895.

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

St. James Meets Bonne Nouvelle's New Priest

by Louise Robinson

Last year brought a change in leadership to our partner parish of Bonne Nouvelle, when Pèr (Father) Kerwin Delicat was promoted to the Honorable Kerwin Delicat and assigned to the Cathedral parish in Port au Prince. It's a lovely accolade for him. Pèr Kerwin was the priest at Bonne Nouvelle when we started our partnership eight years ago, and he's been instrumental in its development.

Pèr Sonley Joseph was appointed to Bonne Nouvelle last fall, and we've been corresponding with him by email since. Since none of us at St. James is fluent in Creole, we're fortunate that Pèr Sonley's English is very good. Bonne Nouvelle Principal Louis Noncent has joined us in explaining to him the unique characteristics of our partnership.

Like most Episcopal priests in Haiti, Pèr Sonley is in charge of multiple parishes, and four of his seven parishes have partnerships with Episcopal churches in Minnesota. Each partnership is unique, and ours stands out in several specific ways.

1. When U.S. churches visit their Haitian partners, it is common practice to stay in guesthouses in nearby towns—to make day visits to the partner church and school. But when St. James visits Bonne Nouvelle we stay in the village, hosted by local families. This was a challenge at first, with new logistics to address: sleeping arrangements, language and cultural differences, and issues around food preparation and water supply. Seven years later this has become rather routine for all of us; but it wasn't at the beginning!

One anecdote to share. At the end of the day on our first visit to Bonne Nouvelle, we received a phone call from Pèr Kerwin, asking if we were okay. He seemed a bit incredulous. "Are you sure you're all right?" he asked repeatedly. I think his major concerns were about any illness due to water or food reactions. We assured him that all was well!

2. It's common practice in Episcopal partnerships for the U.S. church to focus financial support on the Haitian school and, whenever possible to fully fund the school's teacher salaries. It's no surprise, then, that since 2008 St. James has targeted our monetary contributions for Bonne Nouvelle's school.

What is a surprise, to Pèr Sonley and maybe even to Pèr Kerwin before him, is that St. James never committed to fully fund teacher salaries. We simply are not able to provide that level of support, nor do we aspire to do so. We provide

roughly half their payroll expenses each year (approximately \$8,000), with the other half paid by parents, an arrangement that provides a strong sense of partnership. Principal Louis Noncent is proud to use our support in a positive way to help leverage parents' commitment. At the same time, Bonne Nouvelle does not turn away ANY student who is unable to pay. Our support helps make that possible. It's important to note that the Haitian government provides no financial support for education in Bigonet.

3. We've also built and maintained a very transparent relationship with our partners: through our visits back and forth, email communication, and monthly phone calls. As Louis is fond of saying, in our partnership "everyone knows what everyone knows."

This is Pèr Sonley's second assignment as a priest and, as mentioned above, he's in charge of several partnerships. For him, we're a bit of an orange mixed in with several apples. It's clear that he has been trying to figure this out in our email correspondence during the past year, and our June visit to Bigonet provided the first opportunity to talk face to face – Pèr Sonley, Principal Louis Noncent, and St. Jamesians Kurt Hall and Louise Robinson. It was terrifically productive and helpful. We talked about his background, which is quite extensive and impressive, and we shared with him the history and nature of the partnership.

Simply said, we all left our meeting with big smiles and a clearer understanding on all fronts. Our time together to learn from each other continues to be important to our shared work. It's one of the ways we maintain the transparency that is important – and valued – by all.



More Partnership News

by Sue Maas

Thanks to all who attended the Sept. 18 discussion

Huge thanks to all parishioners and friends who took part in the Sept. 18 conversation with 2016's St. James delegation to Bonne Nouvelle. If you were there, you know that first-time travelers Declan McGuire, Will Scofield and Kurt Hall – along with veteran travelers Louise Robinson and moderator Ruth Anne Olson – had lots of illuminating observations, insights and memories to share from their time with our Haitian friends.

The overarching theme, which has been a key theme of this partnership from its inception, was mutuality. This is a friendship of two communities with lots of differences and lots of things in common, and we're privileged to continue learning from it – and from our friends in Bigonet – every day. Toward the end of the Q & A, parishioner Anne Scheible wisely reflected that as St. James moves through the Acorn 2020 process and this time of great uncertainty, our Bonne Nouvelle partners have much to teach us about resilience and making do with less. We're lucky to have them in our lives.



Looking Ahead: Art Sale(s) and Next Committee Meeting

Please mark your calendar for our next Haiti Committee meeting: Thursday, October 13 at 7 p.m. in the rector's office at St. James. All are welcome; you can attend a meeting to learn more about our work with NO commitment to joining the committee! (Really! We promise!) Among the key items on our agenda is preliminary planning for the 2017 visit from our Bonne Nouvelle friends.

And stay tuned for information about upcoming art sales with sculptures and other items from the June trip to Haiti. We're in the process of scheduling sales at St. James as well as other neighborhood churches and longtime friends of the partnership (such as Anwatin School and Kenwood Apartments).



Minnehaha Food Shelf Needs Donations



Although canned and packaged goods are always welcome, the food shelf can stretch cash further than donations of food. You can write checks and place them in the collection plate. Be sure to clearly mark the check for the Minnehaha Food Shelf on the memo line. Or you can mail the check directly to the Minnehaha Food Shelf, c/o Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 East 50th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55417.

For further information, check the bulletin board and brochures in the narthex.



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