



# The Epistle

November 2017

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

## Bringing Hope for a Better World

The Rev. William Heisley

In early 1992 I announced to my first congregation, whom I had served for 12 years, that I would be leaving, going to a different town, a different congregation. As a going away gift the priest at the Episcopal Church of St. Giles, just a few blocks away, gave me a several days retreat at Emery House, the rural retreat near Newburyport, Massachusetts, of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, a monastery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I trudged off to do my time with some considerable reluctance.

When I got to Emery House the guest master told me that I would live in my own tiny house across the meadow with no electronics. I was to pray with the monks whenever I chose, to dine with them at the appointed hours, and to read whatever I longed to have time to ingest. He suggested murder mysteries!

And all of this, with the exception of worship, was to be done in silence.

I did all that he suggested and discovered a place in which I could revel in God's ever-present love for me, for us, for the world. I feel some of that right here as I write this, the snow flying horizontally across my field of vision, the wind howling around the house, the puppy asleep at my feet. All is well and all shall be well and all shall be very well.

Except.

The world breaks in. Most recently our Haitian sisters and brothers in Christ, those whom we long to host and continue to support, have been denied visas by our government this week. Maybe the denial is justified. But in any case, it hurts.

So-called tax cuts threaten all of us who are not in the 1%: will my/our taxes and those of all middle class people increase as reports warn? Will Medicare be cut? And more and more...

But perhaps most destructive, the people of our country are encouraged to believe that the truth is a lie and lies are the truth. And some do. Perhaps all of us do in one way or another. Behind words, behind actions, behind so much today, evil lurks, its greedy heart seeking its own good, not that of society at large, the world in its totality.

Lutherans around the world will celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the German Reformation this week. Luther lived and worked and preached and wrote 55 volumes of sermons and theology and more in a situation that held some likenesses to ours. Power was corrupt and taxes were unfair and the poor got poorer as the rich got richer and everyone felt put-upon. For him the breaking point was when, on July 2, 1507 at about 22 years of age, on the way home from law school, he was caught in a thunderstorm and thrown to the ground by lightning. He cried out, "Help me, St. Anne' I will be

come a monk." And off to the monastery he went.

Here in the silence of the storm that howls outside my window, thrown to the ground or not, I believe that God is calling every one of us to be of the same mind: to worship devoutly, to work tirelessly, to be of better cheer, to act like we actually believe that the prayer was offered at our Baptisms will be answered: *Grant, O Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ your Son may live in the power of his resurrection and look for him to come again in glory.*

May we be given and led to live in that power today, bringing hope for a better world to the seeming hopelessness of our times. Amen.

### December Epistle

Send articles to Beth Harvey  
([stjamesotp@comcast.net](mailto:stjamesotp@comcast.net) and  
[bhpens@mac.com](mailto:bhpens@mac.com)) by  
Tuesday, November 21.



From the Senior Warden Neal Cuthbert

# What a year it promises to be

This is the reflective time of year. We look back at what happened over the course of the last year while simultaneously turn our attention to the promises and possibilities of the upcoming year. And oh my, what a year it's been and what a year it promises to be! In last year's November *Epistle* I wrote the following:

We as a community could allow ourselves to feel a mere pawn to the larger forces in the world but we don't. We could huddle together and try to just hang on for ourselves, but we don't. Instead, we reach out, even as far away as Haiti, across the planet, helping people we have come to know and love and care about. We could let an old and charmingly funky building be our demise, but we don't, we group together and begin to imagine a future where our community can be sustained and even more energetic than ever. We are a hope-filled group.

As a demonstration of this hope, in this last year we conducted in-depth assessments of our building, examined our finances, began collaborative work with our neighboring churches, began collaborative work with people of other faiths, put on a hugely successful July 4th event, listened to and participated in a wonderfully revived music program, food ministries, had lively education discussions, and the host of other activities and events that happen week in and out at St. James. Let me re-phrase my previous observation: We are a hope and energy filled group! You have much to be proud of as part of this remarkable community, and in spite of our size, we are an example to other parishes considering their state and looking to their futures. And the upcoming year promises more of the same!

So I have three requests of you. The first is to come and attend every Sun-

day and try to come when the Bishop visits us on the 5th. It'll be quite a service. There'll be a baptism, and our special St. James All Saints Celebration with the big angel and the reading of the names of our dearly beloved, and of course, the Bishop! Second, it's also the beginning of stewardship season. Pledge letters and forms will soon be going out and you'll hear talks and get phone calls from your friends in the parish talking about the meaning of this remarkable place in their lives. So begin considering your annual pledge and help us meet our goal. And third, we're having some routine turnover on the vestry and we are looking for a few new members. Think about it, it's a fun group, you'll get a peek behind the curtain, and most importantly you'll likely make some new friends at St. James. All great stuff!!

I look forward to seeing you on the 5th and other Sundays too!!

## The Bishop Is Coming! All Saints Sunday, Nov. 5th

The Right Rev. Brian N. Prior, will visit St. James on the Parkway on All Saints Sunday, November 5, 2017. Plan to be in Church that day, to participate in the Adult Forum, and to celebrate our unity with Episcopalians and Christians of every stripe across our beautiful state!



**Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)**

# Decision. And Disappointment

By Ruth Anne Olson on behalf of the Haiti Committee

“Application denied.” Stated reason, “Did not qualify.”

This morning’s dawn brought high hopes as four of our Bonne Nouvelle partners prepared for a 7:30 AM interview at the U.S. Embassy which, we hoped, would yield non-immigrant tourist visas allowing them to visit Minnesota in November. They (and we) had already spent countless hours preparing for this opportunity. Each had gotten a Haitian passport and had gathered information from family, employers and others to complete the U.S. Department of State’s on-line application. Each had gotten the requisite photos, had paid the \$160 fee, and had attended to countless small details in preparation for the interview.

St. James, too, had scrambled to make it happen. Our friends Maria and Roullo had read and re-read application drafts to make sure facts and Creole-English translations were correct. We’d raised money to cover the interview fees (which equal 2-3 times the monthly salaries of each of our friends), and had created a packet of information for the Embassy: background information, letters of support from Senator Al Franken, Bishop Brian Prior, and lots of others.

Then at about noon, we got the news. “Applications denied.”

We’re crushed. Uncertain. Maybe even angry. But, sooner or later, we’ll get our heads around this reality and go back to the drawing board. The partnership of St. James and Bonne Nouvelle rests on relationship. This is a set-back, for sure—and each of us needs time to process our sadness,

disappointment, anger, grief. But friendship will guide us to know when-and-how to move forward.

But, there’s also good news to report.

By the time this *Epistle* is published, Trinity’s 2017 supper (and the hymn sing that follows) will all be over. Praise be to God.

An important partner in our relationship with Bonne Nouvelle is Trinity Lutheran Church in Hovland— on the north shore of Lake Superior. A cornerstone of their support is a yearly community fish supper—this year, on October 28. Last year more than 100 people showed up for this event: for herring freshly-caught in Lake Superior, fresh-baked bread, homemade apple crisp, and for fellowship-from-afar with the people of Bigonet.

## St. James’ Abrahamic Tri-Faith Exploration

by Ruth Anne Olson

Our July 4 celebration *This Is America* has come and gone, leaving the 8-person Jewish, Christian and Muslim steering committee in a state of recovery from the press of time, energy and excitement that went into that event.

But now we’re gearing up again. Using funds from a grant from ECMN (formally known as “the diocese”), we’ve contracted with steering committee member Rabbi Alan Shavit-Lonstein to guide us through several activities till the end of 2017: to define a vision for an Abrahamic Tri-Faith Center, to consider the implications of the St. James building assessment which is now underway, and to plan next steps for 2018.

St. Jamesians Max Athorn, Rebecca Hamblin, Monica Herrera, Pat Morley and Ruth Anne Olson will be active in that process. Over the

next two months, look for reports from us, and feel free to contact us with your questions and ideas.





# Adult Education at St. James

by Louis Hoffman

Officially, adult education at St. James is from 9:30 to

10:20 AM from September through May in Chapel Hall. But unofficially, it's not quite that simple. The 8:00 AM service in the Chapel moves about twenty feet north and, with coffee and doughnuts, and adult education starts. The current topic is the Gospel of Thomas. It's heresy. So I suppose it shouldn't be mentioned in an official Parish publication. But here you have it. Except, sometimes, the conversation strays. Then, at around 9:30 AM or so, others begin arriving and the topic may stray yet again. And there are heated discussions too regardless of the topic. So we'd like to encourage all to come early for adult education. Just know that you may have to assert yourself to get in a word during one of these lively conversations.

You may remember that we had another well-attended book conversation. This featured the "usual suspects" but also a few dozen other members and some folks from outside the Parish.

Which leads to the observation that there are lots of topics that would be very timely in the interesting times in which we live, right? These include a whole host of social justice issues not to mention the role of gender-specific pronouns in our worship service that some have been concerned about.

There's been some interest in a more focused approach to Sunday morning adult education. But the current free-flowing conversation works for "the usual suspects." So, aside from new suspects trying out the free-flowing conversation, are there people that, say, quarterly, or even monthly, might be interested in having a more focused discussion on a book or topic? One member has already suggested an Advent conversation about Bill McKibbin's book *Hundred Dollar Christmas: The Case For A More Joyful Christmas*. Another has expressed interest in helping. For those commitment-phobes, this doesn't mean that you're "in charge" of anything. Although it'd sure be great to have a volunteer to coordinate adult education. But

it does mean the thoughtful selection of a topic and book, maybe some facilitation, a few announcements, oral in church and written in the *Epistle*, Thursday e-mail, and Sunday bulletin, and maybe doughnuts. Please contact Louis Hoffman at [hoffman.louis@comcast.net](mailto:hoffman.louis@comcast.net) or 612-618-7206 to find out more or to help.

## And Reminders About Youth Education...

A reminder that Sunday School is at 10:30 AM on the second and fourth Sundays of each month except for the fourth Sundays in November, December, and May. Youth Sunday is the first Monday of the month except for Easter Sunday. Youth Choir rehearsals are from 12:00 Noon to 12:30 PM after church on Sundays except for Youth Sundays. Look for details about the Epiphany Pageant, which will be on Sunday, January 7. Specific dates and any changes will be in the weekly e-mail, the Sunday bulletin, and the *Epistle*.



## Thanksgiving Eve Service

St. James will again join other congregations in South Minneapolis to give thanks for the richness of our lives in a special service to be held on Wednesday, November 22, at 7 PM. The service will be hosted by Bethel Lutheran Church at 4120 17th Avenue South in Minneapolis. A massed choir will meet to rehearse at 6 pm. Our congregation is also asked to bring 3 pies for the social hour after the liturgy. If you can help with a pie, let Father Heisley know!

# Service at St. James

by Anne Scheible

## The NENA/ St. James Food Garden

This first year of the garden partnership with Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA) was a great success. Four new beds were built and the soil was amended in the old beds. Our harvest deliveries to Minnehaha Food Shelf and the Groveland Food Shelf totaled 446.75 lbs. We now have a name – The Giving Garden and the garden committee's last meeting for the season was October 24th. While there are no plans to add raised beds, the committee is intending next year to utilize prime sunny areas along the parking lot and fence. You may have noticed the areas roped off. Committee meetings will start up again in January.

## Food Shelf News

On October 24th, 115 lbs. of canned goods and staples were delivered to the Minnehaha Food Shelf as a result of "The Power Up with Protein" food drive. In addition, there were several cash donations. Thank you to all of you who have donated food. If you didn't get a chance to participate there will be another food drive near the holiday season.

## Miscellaneous

Approximately 100 sets of knitted winter scarves and hats were delivered to the Minnehaha Food Shelf and the Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul. Dawnlynn Greeney made the majority of those sets. Thank you, Dawnlynn!

We will be partnering again with St. Christopher's for First Nations Kitchen in 2018. Dates should be determined soon.



## Dates to Remember – Upcoming events to put on your calendar:

**January 10, 2018** will be the Food Shelf Pasta Dinner Fundraiser From 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Minnehaha United Methodist Church

**April 1 – April 8, 2018** – We will be helping Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church with hosting "Families Moving Forward".

# Families Moving Forward – A Nokomis Serves Opportunity

by Anne Scheible

Nokomis Serves has borne its first fruit! You all remember Nokomis Serves? It's the service cooperative between Lake Nokomis Lutheran, Minnehaha United Methodist, and St. James. Under the Nokomis Serves banner, members of any of the three churches may participate in the service ministries of the others. This, for example, lets St. Jamesians who want to help with Loaves and Fishes and Simpson House – former St. James ministries – do so with our neighbors from LNL and MUM. If you don't remember Nokomis Serves, please pick up a Nokomis Serves catalog on the information table in the Narthex.

Lake Nokomis Lutheran hosts one week of Families Moving Forward. They'd like to volunteer for a second week but think that they need help. So they've invited MUM and St. James to help them host a second week of FMF. What is Families Moving Forward? It's a ministry of Beacon Interfaith ([www.beaconinterfaith.org](http://www.beaconinterfaith.org) for more

information), which works with homeless persons, to help homeless families transition to permanent housing. They've asked us to help with one or two nights during the first week in April from Sunday evening, April 1 (Easter Sunday) through Sunday, April 8.

What's involved? Each week typically serves 12 to 16 guests. Volunteers are invited to join the guests for dinner. Four or five people are needed to shop, cook, serve, and clean up dinner and five or six people are needed to provide activities for the families. This depends on the ages of their children. LNL volunteers will be with us each step of the way and "guest hosting," as we're being invited to do, is how LNL got its feet wet in FMF.

Several people have stepped forward already. But we're a long way from nine to eleven! If you'd like more information or would like to volunteer, please talk to Anne Scheible at church, call her at 612-619-9692, or e-mail her at [anebillscheible@gmail.com](mailto:anebillscheible@gmail.com).



## Giving Garden Blessing Celebration: Thanks to Oxendale's Market for the Chicken

A last note on the successful blessing and naming of the Giving Garden on October 8th. Among the many pot-luck offerings at the heavily laden buffet table was fried chicken donated by Oxendale's Market, our neighborhood grocery store, at 5025 – 34th Avenue South. Oxendale's is a big supporter of community activities, hosting the Nokomis Block Party in September, the Nokomis East Christmas tree in December, and it's always a great place to get Boy Scout popcorn, Girl Scout cookies, and raffle tickets supporting Lake Nokomis Community School. Please stop into Oxendale's if you're not a regular shopper and be sure to thank them for their support of our Giving Garden.



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