



# The Epistle

January 2019

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

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## Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup> • 9 – 10:15 AM

St. James will meet as a Congregation in its constitutionally mandated Annual Meeting, to act on regular yearly business, i.e., election of officers, receiving of reports, etc. We'll also decide whether to continue to participate in the 3-Church Initiative. (See below).

Everyone is invited to attend. All Qualified Voters are invited to vote. Qualified voters are members at least 16 years old who have received Holy Communion in the church at least 3 times in the last year. (Bylaws of St. James)

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From Fr. William Heisley

## Darkness and a truth of incarnation

I may have written this on these pages in one of the previous two January Epistles. I can't remember. But it's still true. I love the darkness of this season. As I write, I'm waiting for tomorrow, the longest night of the year following the shortest day. I just saw a post on Facebook from a teacher in Alaska noting that tomorrow the sun will not rise until 10:59 AM and will set at 2:40 PM. That's 3 hours and 41 minutes of sunlight. Daytime. Work hours. I don't know. Maybe I wouldn't like darkness enough to live that far north. But the Twin Cities is great.

This whole darkness thing has me thinking about how it comments on the season of Advent and how Advent

inspires us to celebrate Christmas and how the truth of Christmas teaches us to live. On the Second Sunday of Advent I preached about how the season is not about preparation for Christmas. It is about the joyful hope for our future, living in Christ, with Christ, and for Christ. And hope forms us into children of prayerful action, not quietly waiting for the future to beset us, but celebrating yesterday's future as our today.

As I think about this in my daily Advent devotions, reading lesson after lesson from both the Old Testament and the *Epistles*, I feel a certain tension.

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## Darkness and a truth of incarnation

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The season is to be about joyful anticipation of our salvation. But scripture points out and reality demands an additional dimension to our understanding of this dark time.

### In this now we need to recognize the profoundly painful realities of our

situation. Some of us think that we live as a people that is unique on the face of the Earth. Special. We have a Manifest Destiny, to use a political term from U.S. history. Others believe that we are not unique at all. We are sinners who are put upon by the multiple forces that surround us with their evil machinations and we are spinning out of control.

In the darkness of Advent and the darkness of our lives, both of these views are true. And both are false. The Incarnation of Jesus, God-become-a-human-being, demonstrates that God's creative force, God's eager forgiveness, God's deep participation in our lives, are real. We are special and we, along with all the peoples of the world, have a manifest destiny: to live loving others

without fear for ourselves. And we are people who sin, and in our sinful helplessness we have little to say about what tomorrow may bring to us. Helpless and hopeless.

### But the Incarnation stands us up in front of a far greater truth and tells us

to look *at* it, not *beside* it, not beyond it, not closing our eyes, not squinting. To look at it forthrightly and boldly and to see that this truth, that God loves us and all of God's creation far more than we can understand, this truth is the most valuable treasure possible. We are loved. The Incarnation proves it. The darkness that swallows up the sun will never swallow us up. Instead we are cradled along with the Holy Infant in the loving arms of a mother who prays for us, a father who blesses us, and a common humanity that calls us to total immersion in its pains and its joys, its sorrows and its nobility.

I just read an article about the life and the witness of the devoutly Orthodox Christian composer Arvo

Pärt. The essayist writes: *Flourishing life is predicated upon death, yet the final word is never death. It is life. That conviction is pervasive within what Orthodox call the "bright sadness" of Christianity: as much as joy is intertwined with sorrow, sin, and corruption, the final word will be stillness, forgiveness, redemption, hope.*

Jesus is born to live for us. And to die for us. And to live for us in a new way. We mark these things throughout the year and one necessarily leads into another. Now, during the Twelve Days of Christmas (December 25 to January 5) God's continuing gift of life is laid before us promising the death of death. Along with the ancient Latin hymn we chant a hymn of praise to God Incarnate in Jesus:

*Today, as year by year its light bathes all the world in radiance bright, one precious truth outshines the sun: salvation comes from you alone.*

*The Hymnal 1982, No. 85, Vs. 4*

## 3-Church Resolution

The 3-Church Initiative (St. James, Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church and Living Table United Church of Christ) is discussing whether to share certain facilities and costs. Click here for the report: <https://contacc/2D3UOah> Paper copies are available in the Narthex.

At the Annual Meeting on January 27 we will vote whether to continue to participate in the 3-Church Initiative. Whether to:

**IDENTIFY** one or two additional members of St. James to participate in the ongoing discernment planning and background work.

**PARTICIPATE** in a member survey regarding how joint space might be used and what services and functions would be required to provide our church with necessary support.

**CONTINUE** participation in planned joint activities and shared ministries.

**COMMIT** \$5,000 to pay for consulting architects and the preparation of pre-construction drawings as part of the plan to move forward in 2020. (Note: Expenditure of funds is contingent upon execution of a covenant by the partner churches defining the relationship and formalizing the process.)

From the Senior Warden Louis Hoffman

# What is to be done?

This is my last message to you as Senior Warden. Canon Law, in its wisdom, provides for term limits for Vestry Members and Wardens. After four years – one three-year term on the Vestry and one year as Senior Warden – I’m canonically prohibited from additional Vestry service. This doesn’t mean that you won’t see me. With Kerry Nelson, I’ll be joining Anne Scheible and others on the Community Service and Social Justice Committee and may continue to be St. James’ representative on the Nokomis Serves working group. I’ll be involved in completing the Better Space Task Force work with the new Vestry’s authorization, including setting up the new PrayGround. And I’ll be continuing, again with the new Vestry’s authorization, as one of the two lay representatives from St. James on the 3-Church Discernment Team *if*, at the Annual Parish Meeting on January 27, the congregation decides to move forward.

It’s that upcoming decision about which I’m writing today. I want to, again, make it clear that *no decisions have been made*. If we move forward with the 3-Church Initiative on the 27th, we do so only to determine the condition, marketability, and value of our three properties and how we might architecturally adapt Lake Nokomis Lutheran or St. James to serve our needs—three distinct congregations who will worship separately in their own traditions but who will share community service, faith formation for adults, children, and youth; lay staff; social justice; and space while reaching out to the community and to the world. If we proceed on the 27th, we commit only to that one-year step. And next year at this time, we decide whether we want to proceed to the next step.

I’m going to use this space, granted to me as Senior Warden, to share my personal opinion on this decision and tell you how I’m going to vote and why.

## How I got to St. James and why it’s important to me.

I was raised as a non-practicing Jew and Rebecca as a Unitarian. Not cradle Episcopalians! Before we came to St. James, we attended Unitarian churches and a Congregational church. In February 1998, I was visiting my father in Florida, and Rebecca visited St. James on the Sunday I was gone. We talked that evening. She said “you’ll love it there.” I did. We joined. Rebecca and I, along with our younger son, Radik, were baptized at St. James. Rebecca and I, for most of the last two decades, have been very involved in the life of the congregation. *We all have our St. James stories that form the basis for our deep attachment to this place. We must honor all of them. And we should share them.*

## But what is “this place?”

We’re not hunters and gatherers. Modern society isn’t nomadic. We build stuff. At this point in human history, we’re big on places. Our homes, our cabins, our parks and schools, and so many other places that are landmarks in our communities and our lives. Like St. James. These are very personal to us in very different – and important – ways. So, when we say “St. James,” we need to ask ourselves how important is the building versus the community of people and God’s work that we, as a community, do in the community and the world? If it’s the building, which voraciously consumes more than a quarter of our budget, we have to know why. *I know this is a terribly difficult question to ask, let alone answer. The building is a*

*physical manifestation of our community, of who we are.* It’s a big part of our lives. For me, as much as I love the building, I’ve concluded that it’s not the or an essential requirement. And that the energy and money that we pour into the building could be spent expanding our mission to do God’s work in the community and in the world working with our like-minded and not so theologically different neighbors.

## What is God calling us to do?

The Vestry adopted a budget for 2019 that has a substantial deficit. This is with a part-time priest, minimal staff, and limited maintenance on an under-maintained building that wouldn’t serve our needs even if it were pristine and will cost a lot to make it so. You’ve all read the McDonald and Mack Building Assessment. Look at the budget and see what we spend most of our money on. 52.3 percent on staff. 26.9 percent on property. And 20.8 percent on everything else. God’s work in the community and in the world is supported by our time and talent. But not so much by our treasure. And it’s not clear how the 2020 budget will be balanced without significant new income or significant spending cuts. Who’s willing to make that big additional financial commitment to St. James? What more do we – or can we – cut? As much as I love St. James – the building and land – the financial and human resources that the building demands deters us from our mission to worship, learn, and serve. *God can’t be calling us to maintain this building at all costs. God is calling us to leave what is comfortable and familiar, to take the*

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## From the Senior Warden Louis Hoffman: What is to be done?

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*cross to the marketplace, to do God's work in the community and in the world.*

### How will the 3-Church Initiative help us better do God's work in the world?

We've learned from Nokomis Serves that our neighbor churches have so much in common. First, although we use different words, our missions all focus on worshiping, learning, and serving. Second, there's so much overlap in our community service and social justice ministries: focuses on food and hunger and assisting those with housing insecurity. As Nokomis Serves flowers, I believe that it'll grow to include other churches, secular organizations, and people from the community who participate whether or not they attend a church. This is good. So I submit to you that Nokomis Serves is a blueprint for what the 3-Church Initiative has to offer.

So, beyond creating a potential community service and social justice powerhouse in South Minneapolis, how might the 3-Church Initiative benefit St. James in other ways? People mentioned the growth of the church at the Parish Information Meeting on December 2. If we weren't spending more than a quarter of our budget on property, not to mention the free labor involved in the property, might we spend that money on a full-time Rector? Or a Faith Formation and Outreach Director? Or both. Who could focus on programming that would keep and attract everyone, but especially families with children, who are in very short supply. Or working with our partner churches on a combined faith formation program? Or on supplementing the labor devoted to community service and social justice with money? We contribute labor generously to the First Nations Kitchen

and the Minnehaha Foodshelf. But First Nations Kitchen just had a fundraiser and the Minnehaha Foodshelf's fundraiser is from 5:00 – 7:00 PM on January 9 at Lake Nokomis Lutheran. Our time and talent is great. But a little treasure would sure help both of these important ministries.

Since the current discernment process that led to the 3-Church Initiative started on Palm Sunday 2015, there's been a focus on our mission and who we want to be. We've avoided framing the decision about money and property. But it seems that we can't escape that conversation. And we shouldn't. Members who attended the Parish Information Meeting on December 2 said many things. Those that stick in my mind are that:

- St. James is the people and not the building (although not all of us, understandably, agree).
- Jesus called his Disciples – *and us* – to follow him outside of our comfort zones. The Scripture we hear on Sundays isn't just stories. It's how we live our lives.
- The financial and human resources that we devote to the bricks and mortar that Jesus probably never imagined His Church would find so important is unconscionable and would be better spent on worshipping, learning, and serving.

I strongly encourage you to attend the **Annual Parish Meeting at 9:00 AM on Sunday, January 27** and support proceeding with the 3-Church Initiative in 2019.

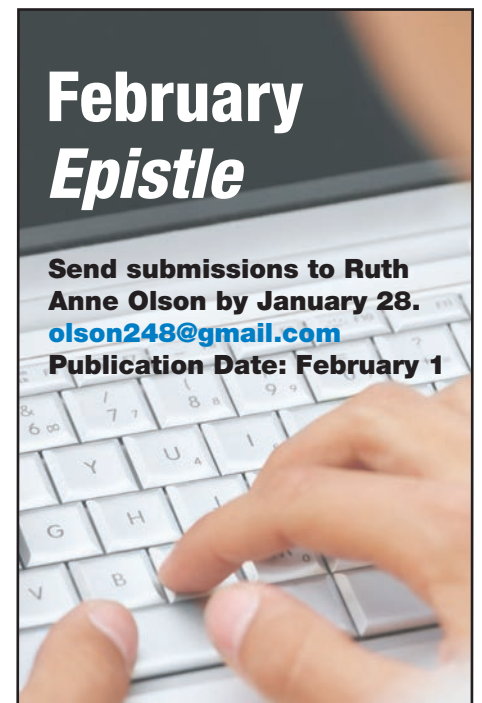


## Liturgical Season

# Epiphany Pageant

By Louise Robinson

Mark your calendars for the St. James Epiphany pageant, Sunday, January 6th during the 10:30 service. Join us for this annual production, inspired and performed by the young adults of our parish.



From the Junior Warden  
Pat Morley

## Out with the old

The time has come to unload a lot of junk that has accumulated over time (years in some cases) at St. James. We have had items staged in the basement of Chapel Hall for the past year for folks to remove for themselves or for recycling. Some of it has gone, but most remains. We will be hiring a junk remover to clear it all out from all levels in all buildings. I can assure you these items are not of any real value but I will make an announcement in church in January giving anyone interested one final opportunity to review anything they think they might want. But if they cannot take it that day, they will have to make solid arrangements for its removal.

Be assured that the removed pews are not going anywhere and



will be stored with care. Also be assured that the hauler we will use will recycle or repurpose as much as they can (furniture items for example).

In the past month, we have repaired a leaking roof area of the hallway between Chapel Hall and the Education Wing, as well as added a small gutter and downspout in one area to divert water away from the foundation. A re-grading project slated for that same area has been deferred to next spring.

One final note, on handicap accessible bathrooms. The restroom of the former office space in the southwest corner of our building, now occupied by Mandala Montessori School, is accessible via the ramp on the west side of the sanctuary. There is space for walkers or a chair to access that bathroom, and it is open during all services.

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.

From the Treasurer Tony Morley

## Financial Report: January-November

As year-end drew near, St. James finances for 2018 were strong. We continued a pattern of falling short on pledges, but staying ahead with non-pledge income. The pledge side got worse; let's hope we partially caught up around Christmas. The non-pledge side got cheerfully better, with an unexpected donation of almost \$10,000. So on Nov. 30 we had a welcome black-ink bottom line. Here are the numbers:

	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	over / (under)
<b>Pledged Income</b>	115,878	108,415	(7,463)
<b>Other Income</b>	63,612	86,597	22,985
<b>Total Income</b>	179,490	195,012	15,522
<b>Expenses</b>	178,573	178,857	(284)
<b>Net</b>	917	16,155	15,238

St. James endowment and non-budget funds were healthy too. Dahl Endowment (Sept. 30) was \$346,200. Piotrowski fund for music, \$700; Piotrowski fund for altar, \$1,800; Mary Anderson Better Space fund, \$2,500; Haiti Fund, \$9,000; Tri-Faith balance, \$3,900.

# An open forum: Thoughts about our future

For several months, mailings and meetings have told the people of St. James about the 3-Church Initiative, in which we've been involved for the past year. If need be, jog your memory about the details: <https://conta.cc/2D3UOah> Part of the process has been a widely-conveyed invitation to submit your own reactions and ideas to an Open Forum.

Here they are ... each contribution printed in the order received. Read. Ponder. And come to the Annual Meeting on January 27, ready to help make decisions.

## From Joseph C. Ordos

In 1940 St. James ceased being a missionary church and built the building we now call Chapel Hall. Under Father Huefner's leadership the congregation grew, and in 1952 the "big" church opened.

My suggestion is that we return to "our roots" and move back into Chapel Hall. It is the right size for us. Many of the stained windows are from the small church and the beauty of the Chapel could be restored.

My suggestions:

1. Chapel Hall is a better fit for our congregation and would be easier to maintain.
2. The larger building could be sold and/or demolished and the land sold.
3. The money from the sale of the land could be used to renovate Chapel Hall, the undercroft and the kitchen.

So many of our families married, buried and baptized family members at St. James and the memories are many.

I propose that the Vestry create a committee to study "Plan B" making Chapel Hall our main worship space and permanent home.

## From Kurt Hall

It is my understanding that the 2019 budget, that we will be presented with at the Annual Meeting, will include a deficit AND will draw from the endowment, with a combined total in the \$40,000-\$50,000 range. I do not think this makes us good stewards of the endowment that the Saints we honored in October left us with.

The thought of spending almost \$1,000 a week so that we can continue to worship in this space is something I personally find unconscionable, and I don't know how long I can be a part of such actions.

## From Janis and Roger Martin

We are so impressed with the work being done to find answers to dwindling resources, dwindling parishioners and an aging building. To us, to end discussions about the 3-Churches Plan now doesn't make sense. In the beginning, I naively thought and hoped that the three church plan would become one church (of course at St. James) with a couple of services on Sunday combining the liturgies and congregations to please everyone. Yes, I was dreaming.

I love the thinking outside the box now. We should contribute the \$5,000 to continue the process. We are open to whatever is decided because when you are unable to be part of the process you must trust those who are doing the work to come up with the plan.

I have heard some talk about switching spaces with the school — we take over the chapel and they the main church. This we aren't comfortable with. The only reason being emotion. Not valid but honest. We haven't been able to visit the PrayGround yet or the new chairs, but we applaud these changes.

We love St. James, but our visits to church will become more and more difficult. Our input should be taken with a grain of salt as the reality of health issues now takes our full time energy. We're here cheering for those of you doing the work. You are the real treasures.

## From Urve Daigle

Change is a fact of life. Life is process, life is change.

I breathe in, breathe out. I breathe in and the red blood cells in my body extract some of the oxygen molecules from air and move them around in my body. That is what keeps me alive. It is a process. I exhale and some of the oxygen molecules leave my body in the form of carbon dioxide. Plants like the carbon dioxide, they absorb it and release oxygen.

In early June I see very small grasshoppers. In August I see huge grasshoppers. What is happening? Grasshoppers molt. The tiny grasshopper resorbs part of its exoskeleton, hard outer skin, sheds the thin skin that is left. It is vulnerable as it expands and grows a new hard exoskeleton. This happens several times in the growing season. In between the hard exo-skeletons, it is vulnerable. Some grasshoppers do not survive this vulnerable stage—yet enough do, the race continues through centuries.

Is this the time for St. James to molt?

I have no idea, but I like looking at processes of growth in plant and insect worlds. The process of growth, change, is life.





When I ponder this continuous change that surrounds us, that is the very essence of life, I enter a different consciousness. I step away from the often repeated wisdom that change is hard, and feel a sense of awe at this process that we ourselves are. Life, change. Molting.

### From Tony Morley

Three things St. James must think about this year: our property, our life together, our money. These are holy gifts. I find it helpful to think of them together as a stewardship challenge. How can we be faithful stewards?

**Property.** Beautiful building, beautiful grounds. How put them to best use not only for ourselves but for witness to God's love in the world? There are many possible faithful answers. One is to share the property with other Christian congregations. Quite another is to cash out the property and apply the cash to God's purposes somewhere else. Both can qualify as responsible stewardship.

**Community—Our Life Together.** This probably is the gift we treasure most, the hardest to sustain and the easiest to lose. At a minimum, stewardship of our life together means keeping it vibrant, not throwing it away. Even here by ourselves, that's a hard-work challenge. Here or wherever, we are 50 households responsible for and to each other in lives of growth together. This year's stewardship drive is to make sure we will still do it well.

**Money.** This includes our annual pledges and our permanent Dahl Endowment, about \$350,000. There are legal restrictions, but stewardship of Dahl and stewardship of pledges, means using the money through St. James to actualize God's love in the world. In 2019 let us brainstorm those ways.

**All together.** Good stewardship for any one of these gifts must strengthen not weaken our care of the other two. Achieving that balance is St. James' assignment for the year ahead.

### From Max Athorn

I left the December discussion about the 3-church initiative energized because I saw a representative number

of St. James parishioners turn out, and lean in to a difficult and uncomfortable conversation. I am optimistic because the energy feels proactive and creative – not just a recycling of our past discussions that have previously found us kicking the can down the road.

We did not say enough that day to honor the hard work of Louis, Fr. William and others who have ventured into this wilderness on our behalf. I am grateful for their leadership.

Our long term viability would be jeopardized by inaction. It's time for us to put everything on the table, recognizing that collective hesitancy to change could have serious consequences.

We understandably approached the conversation by addressing all three aspects of our mission ("the braid"), but I am ready for us to simplify that analysis:

- With Anne Scheible's leadership, our service ministry has grown and will continue to do so with the creation of Nokomis Serves. This is exciting, and I think unrelated to the discussion of shared space.
- Our children's and youth education programs suffer from low participation at all ages. Having more individuals in our greater community interested in learning will improve our potential, regardless of space.
- This, to me, is about worship. Can we lean in and figure something out? What will require our compromise? What concessions would jeopardize our identity? I think those are the emerging questions in this next phase of our journey.

### From Stacey Athorn

Musings from a modern mother.

- Do I have to choose? Can't I have it all?
- Faith, freedom, AND a church community?
- Safe, educational opportunities for my children that aren't too structured?
- Serving the greater community alongside my children as a family?

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# Thoughts about our future: an open forum

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- Building character and compassion? Teamwork, but without competition? Empathy?
- Does time and energy focused on faith have to be separate from time and energy focused on family?
- Different expressions of faith: Maybe Claire takes communion while I go plant some flowers?
- Giving to the community based on one's own strengths – do we need what I have to offer?
- Building our family's values as a family?

## From Phil Briggs

I am glad there are more opportunities to do good works with Lake Nokomis Lutheran and Minnehaha Methodist and others too.

I would welcome sharing our building with another congregation. It would be hard to lose our church building home, although it is not as important as the people and the mission of the congregation.

Part of me wishes that the congregations could merge, although I know this is not really on the table. Mainstream Protestants are all contracting, I do wish for a larger congregation sometimes and feel like the specifics of Episcopalian, Lutheran etc. are a lot less important than all we have in common. When I helped with the Families Moving Forward this summer, it was nice to be with more like-minded people.

And, maybe an ecumenical church could have more variety in liturgy and music, while of course having the same common core rituals etc. But, I know that this sort of merger is not really feasible without a much bigger conversation.

Sharing resources and having e-church (or more) services seems like a nice thing to continue.

Outreach to the broader community and to other faiths could be a way to grow, or stop shrinking.

## From Liz and Cliff Athorn

We appreciate all the energy that has gone into this process so far, from St. James leaders and parishioners, and from our neighbors and friends at Lake Nokomis Lutheran and Living Table. We've enjoyed the joint worship services, and the opportunities to participate in community service projects within a larger group. We're keenly aware of the burden that our building is creating for a small group of very dedicated volunteers within our parish, and realize that we can't simply hope to maintain the status quo for very much longer. Something will need to be done.

Our primary concern in this process is to find a way forward that will allow us to maintain the personal bonds that we all feel and value within the St. James community, and to ensure that those bonds continue to be grounded and nurtured in our shared worship within the Protestant Episcopal tradition. Perhaps the second part of that for-

mula (shared worship in the Episcopal tradition) is not as important, or as clear, to everyone at St. James as it is to us. To oversimplify for the sake of brevity, we'd suggest that the Episcopal worship tradition is pretty well embodied in the Book of Common Prayer, the current Hymnal, and the broader tradition of Anglican Church Music.

This focus on maintaining our worship traditions raises the question of maintaining a "critical mass" within the community, just as we're being forced to confront the problem of shrinking numbers as we focus on our challenges with the building. (Perhaps it's also true that we're starting to experience a "critical mass" threat in our Education programs, which form the third thread of our St. James' mission braid).

So the question we'll be trying to answer for ourselves, as we decide how to move forward, is whether any new arrangement will present us with new opportunities, and a realistic path forward, toward building and re-vitalizing the Episcopal Church of St. James. We hope that it might, and will try to muster as much energy as possible to help our community move towards that goal. But we hope that there are many others in the parish who share this goal, and the values upon which it's based. We also hope that we will all be realistic as we assess our prospects, and open to other options if necessary. In particular, we'd suggest that continued conversations with Episcopal Church of Minnesota (ECMN) and other Episcopal parishes in South Minneapolis might be worth additional consideration.

## From Ruth Anne Olson

I'm ambivalent about the 3-Churches Initiative. I'm totally okay with the idea of joining with Lake Nokomis Lutheran and Living Table to learn and serve. I might even be "mostly-okay" about giving up our beautiful building in the process.

What I fear is that in doing so I'll lose my community. I fear that, for a myriad of reasons, most folks of St. James won't come along on the journey.

With the people of St. James, for decades I've worshipped and sung, wiped tables at First Nations Kitchen and Loaves & Fishes, searched for meaning in passages of Scripture in adult forum, and lugged Haitian art in/out of countless sales to raise money for Bonne Nouvelle. You and I have served sandwiches at funerals. I've seen your kids since they were toddlers, and celebrated their successes after high school. The list goes on and on.

A few months ago, Sunday attendance at St. James fell to a new low – fewer than 30 people in the pews, as I counted from my seat in the choir. If so few people can come to our own building any more, why in the world would they ever follow along to Lake Nokomis Lutheran?

But the past few months have brought us new energy. New people are coming, and "old" people are starting to return. Coffee hour is once again lively. The garden was gorgeous, we have new chairs, and plans for PrayGround lure us into a new year.

I'm hopeful.



## Adult Forum

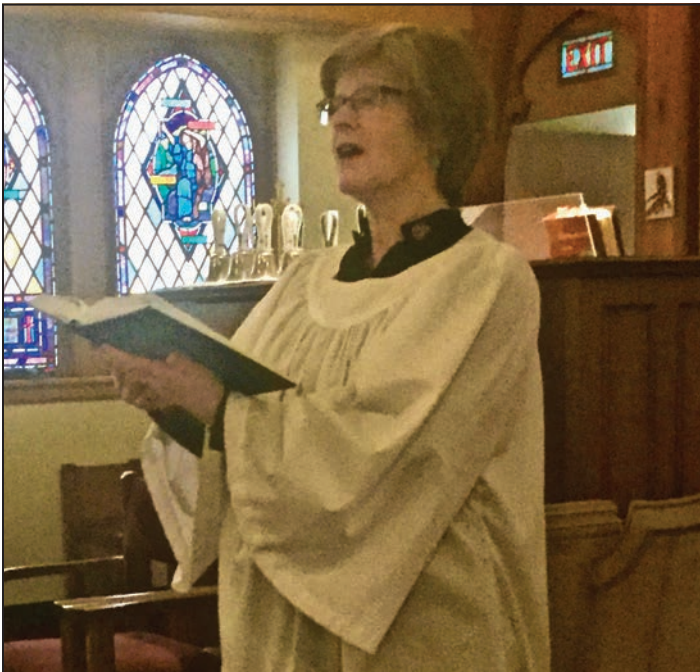
# Just two Forum Sundays, but good ones

By Tony Morley

With the Epiphany Pageant commanding attention on January 6th and the Annual Parish Meeting on January 27th, Adult Forum will meet this month only on the Sundays in-between—the 13th and the 20th. We'll continue a style of learning that we tried with great success in December.

That style relies on looking together at snippets from the Bible. Each Sunday we take four single verses, one from each reading in church that day. We ask what sorts of life perspectives those verses reflect. We wonder how a Bible world-view may fit or clash with ours. We ponder possible implications for individuals, families, church, nation and world. We think what to accept, what to reject.

In our January verses we'll touch the minds of Isaiah, some psalms, and Saints Luke, John and Paul—not to mention each other. Don't miss! You're bound to be better for it! In the Gallery, 9:30 – 10:25 AM, January 13th and 20th, with always coffee and sometimes more.



## Did You Know?

Soprano Jane Hoffmann has been singing in the choir for 39 years. She celebrated this anniversary in early December.

## Food Shelf Fundraiser

Save the date!



## Pasta Dinner

donated by Fat Lorenzo's

Plus Door Prizes, Accordion Band & More!

**Wednesday, January 9th**

**5:00 – 7:00 PM**

Adults: \$15 | Ages 10 & Under: Free

**New Location: LAKE NOKOMIS LUTHERAN CHURCH**

5011 S. 31st Ave. S., Mpls • [www.minnehaha.org/foodshelf.html](http://www.minnehaha.org/foodshelf.html)

At the corner of 31st Ave. South and 50th Street in South Minneapolis



## *Are You a Newcomer to St. James on the Parkway?*

*If so, this is for you!*

*Come to a Newcomer's Brunch*

**Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup> • 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

## *Altar Flowers*

**Members of St. James may make requests for flowers to honor a birthday, anniversary, baptism or in memory of a loved one. With at least 2 weeks notice fresh flowers will be used instead of silk arrangements. Here is the procedure for requesting fresh flowers:**

- 1.** Contact Beth by email at [stjamesotp@comcast.net](mailto:stjamesotp@comcast.net) and [bhpens@mac.com](mailto:bhpens@mac.com) or phone at 612-724-3425 or 612-250-9795 and let her know the date you are requesting flowers for. Please give us at least 2 weeks notice. Please provide the name(s) of the person you are honoring. This will be printed in the bulletin on the Sunday you are requesting a flower memorial.
- 2.** For one vase of flowers make a payment of \$20, which can be included with a pledge payment or separately. After the 10:30 AM service you will be given the flowers you have requested.
- 3.** Beth will contact Rosemary to let her know that fresh flowers have been requested. You can also let Rosemary know yourself! She will arrange for flowers from Soderberg's or another flower supplier.





From the Treasurer Tony Morley

## 2019: Counting on cash reserve

Facing continued high property costs, but encouraged by plentiful cash on hand and expecting higher pledge income, the Vestry adopted a hold-the-line deficit budget for 2019 on December 11. The deficit expected is \$19,000.

Included in the budget are cost-of-living pay increases for all paid staff, a large increase for property expenses, and a small new provision for children, youth and adult education. A new item of \$5,000 is entirely contingent on a Parish-Meeting decision, January 27, to continue the neighborhood 3-Church Initiative described elsewhere in this *Epistle*.

Meanwhile St. James "fair-share" contribution for the Episcopal Church in Minnesota as a whole drops 8 percent from 2018 in the new budget.

Increased property expense comes on top of Vestry-approved overspending in 2018. Vestry sentiment seems strong that keeping the property usable, attractive, comfortable and safe for the short-term is a proper priority, even while the long-term use remains uncertain.

On the budget's income side a pledge total of \$117,500 for 2019 is higher than pledges paid in 2018, but how much higher will not be known till the 2018 books are closed. Also Included in budget income are a 3 percent increase in Mandala School rent, and an 11 percent drop in money withdrawn from the Dahl endowment.

The bottom-line red-ink figure, \$19,000, can be comfortably accepted for a year, Vestry members decided,

because more than that is already available in extra cash withdrawn in recent years from the Dahl endowment. Members also noted, however, that a year from now such a cash cushion is unlikely to exist.

The full budget for 2019 is posted in the narthex and will be distributed at the Annual Parish Meeting, January 27.



**Sunday Counters:** Jim Larson is one of our weekly Sunday counters. We would love to add to this group of counters. If you are interested it takes about 15 minutes after the service for a team to count the cash from the offering. If you are interested, please email Beth at [stjamesotp@comcast.net](mailto:stjamesotp@comcast.net).



# Learning from master teachers

By Ruth Anne Olson,  
on behalf of the Haiti Committee

With some regularity, our Haitian partners do something that gives me pause. “Would I be so strong? Would I think to do that for *my* neighbor? Where have they learned such patient persistence? Could others count on me if *my* life was so fragile?”

In November, U.S. news media were reporting riots in Haiti. They started in Port au Prince. Moved slowly to nearby small towns. And eventually there were even bylines from Bigonet’s largest neighbor Leogâne. Rioting. Burning. Looting. Killing. The situation had become sufficiently dangerous that St. John’s Episcopal Church in Linden Hills cancelled a long-planned trip to Haiti.

Early in December, Louise Robinson & Kurt Hall talked by phone with Bonne Nouvelle principal Louis Noncent – and they asked him about their first three months of school. “The middle of November,” Louis said, “Haiti was a mess.” People in Leogâne were killed. Roads were blocked. And “throughout the entire country, schools closed their doors.”

But not Bonne Nouvelle. “No other school was open,” Louis explained. “For two weeks everywhere in Haiti, schools closed.” All except Bonne Nouvelle — which Louis and his leadership team decided to keep open.

Asked how he made that decision, Louis explained. “It was tough, but I made it based on my experience. Violence involves people that do not have hope, because they didn’t go to school.

Those who are instigating the violence are those without education. We



need to have the school open, so the students can benefit. All they have as Haitians, is to try to get an education. It was tough to make that decision. But education is hope.”

Hope is a word we’ve heard a lot in Haiti. In 2010 – some months after the earthquake that destroyed nearly every building in Bigonet – Louise Robinson, Sue Maas, Tony Morley and I went to Bigonet. Among other amazing experiences of that trip was a conversation with 8-10 women. Over and over, we heard stories



Three who’ve changed our lives.

about effects of the earthquake. Of loss. Of destruction, fear, and casualty. But then, one of the women smiled – chuckled softly – and said, “But we always find hope. Where we find hope, we can see a future. And for the sake of the children, *above all for the sake of the children*, we must believe in the future.”

St. James is helping to change the lives of children in Bigonet. Because of St. James, Bonne Nouvelle’s teachers are paid. Because of our partnership, the school has a library, a playground, a sewing class and more.

But, if we stop and listen, we can see that the people of Bonne Nouvelle are offering to change our lives too. Courage, faith, generosity, hospitality, community, sacrifice. They’re hard lessons to learn. But we can be confident that our teachers are experienced.



## Abrahamic Tri-Faith Exploration

# We're invited to dinner

By Ruth Anne Olson

If you're following the *Epistle* or website in the past few months, you've seen that St. James is building a relationship with the people of At-Taqwa Mosque in St. Paul—across the street from the Minnesota State Fair Grounds.

Part of that is volunteering at their food shelf. Another part is sharing dinner with one another. During Ramadan, At-Taqwa invited St. James to the mosque for an Iftar dinner. Two people were able to go. In September,

St. James hosted At-Taqwa in The Gallery, and three people came. Now they've invited us again to the mosque: for dinner at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, January 22.

These conversations are lively—laced with curiosity, laughter and good will. It's obvious that we're starting out small; and that feels like a good thing.

We don't yet know how to think about numbers for the upcoming dinner in January. But if you might like to attend, talk to any of the following: Max Athorn, Rebecca Hamblin, Fr. William Heisley, Pat Morley or Ruth Anne Olson.

## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Breakfast

**Monday, January 21, 2019**

**7:00 – 9:30 AM • \$5.00**

This year's keynote speaker is Don Lemon, Emmy Award-Winning CNN Anchor.

Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul hosts neighborhood breakfasts featuring live broadcast of the Convention Center event and local programming.

Be part of this St. James tradition and attend, this year at:

Mount Zion Temple,  
1300 Summit Avenue, St. Paul

Register now at:

[interfaithaction.org/mlk](http://interfaithaction.org/mlk)

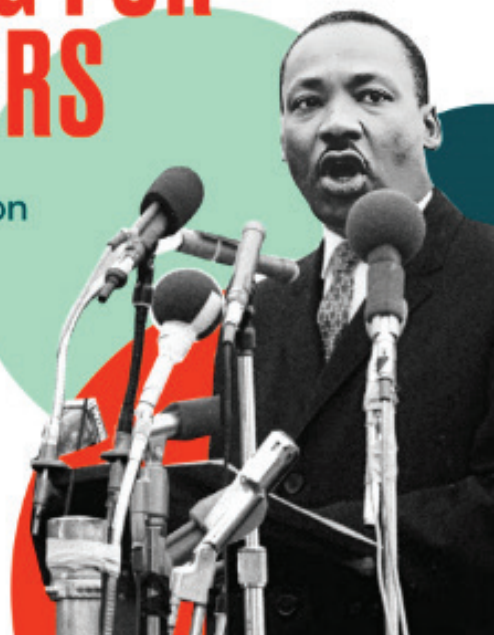
Scroll down to Mount Zion Temple

# DOING FOR OTHERS

A Call to  
Social Action

29TH ANNUAL

Dr. Martin  
Luther  
King Jr.  
Holiday  
Breakfast





# Two Signs of St. James

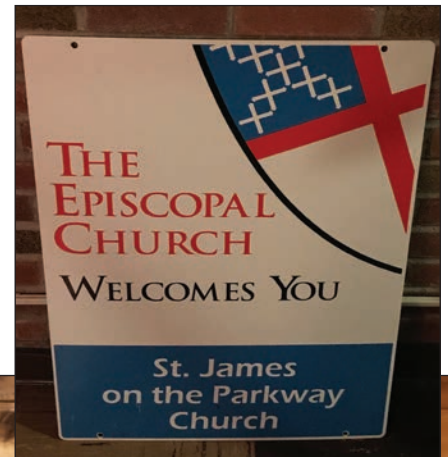
By Louis Hoffman

Those of you who have been in the Undercrofts beneath the sanctuary and Chapel Hall know there's a lot of stuff there. The decluttering of the gallery, sanctuary, and narthex happened at the expense of the Undercroft. A lot of it will soon be gone as part of the ongoing decluttering of the church. But among the odds and ends are two signs.

The first sign isn't a mystery. ECMN gave one to each faith community a number of years ago. Ours was never put up. Is there anyone who'd be willing to build and install a real-estate type wooden sign along the Minnehaha Parkway sidewalk at 33rd Avenue South in the spring?

The second sign is a mystery except, maybe, to some of our longer term members. Does anyone know the history of this sign? Who made it? When? And where did it hang?

This steel sign weighs about a ton. You laugh? Try it! A few of its letters are bent, and it needs some repair work and paint. It also needs a way to display or hang it. I'm not sure where it could be displayed and how. But it's a great piece of St. James past that we can all see, celebrate and make part of our future.



From the Altar Guild Director

## Help wanted: the altar guild needs you!



By Rosemary Caspar

The Altar Guild at St. James serves an important function in our worship life. Before each Sunday service the altar and chancel are prepared for our common liturgy and our Eucharist. Who does this?

Well, less of us than there used to be! We need you! At both the 8:00 AM and the 10:30 AM service there are opportunities to serve. Training and mentoring is always provided.

Each member generally serves one Sunday a month, with some preparation time on Saturday or before the service on Sunday. Women and men, adults and teens are encouraged to

consider this ministry to our parish community. Training and support will be given.

Here are the names of our current members: Bonnie Carleen, Cheryl Lewis, Karen Murdock, Rev. William Heisley, Jinny Bouvette, Rosemary Caspar, and Louise Robinson.

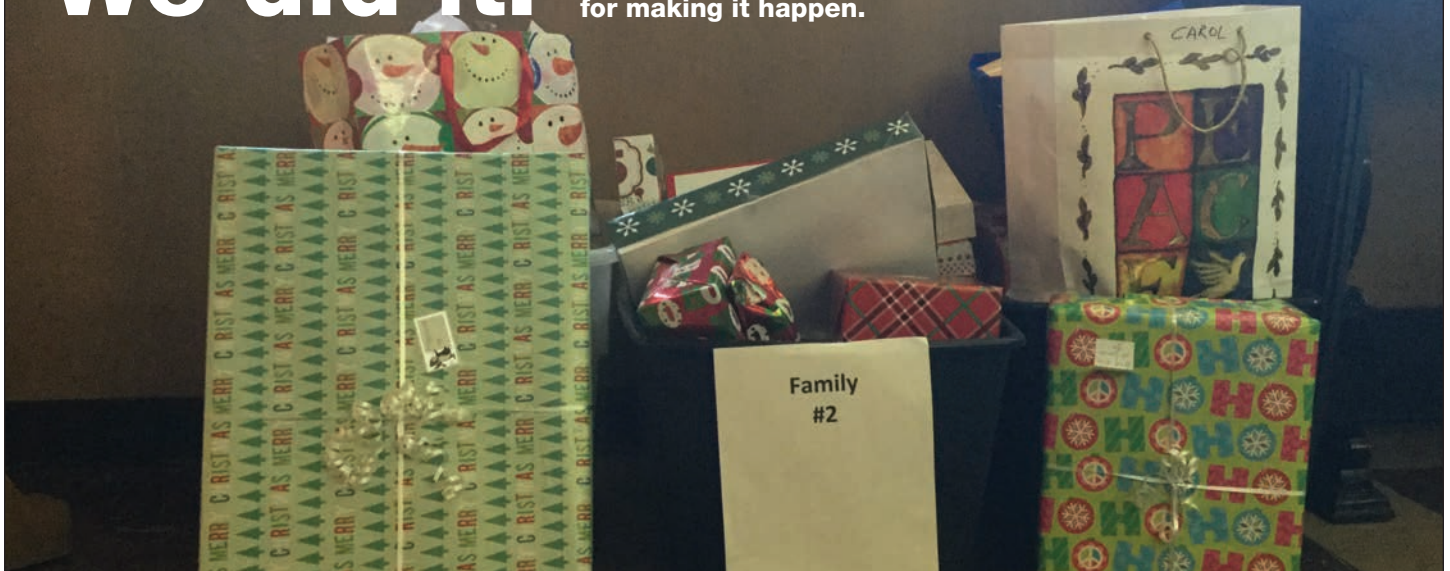
Please feel free to ask them about the Altar Guild. And please contact me if you would like to join our ranks. My home phone is 612-722-8230 and my email is [rlcaspar@gmail.com](mailto:rlcaspar@gmail.com).



Adopt a Family

# We did it!

St. James' generosity brought Christmas gifts and groceries to three Longfellow-area families. From babes to parents, twenty four people in all. Many thanks to Anne Scheible & Kerry Nelson for making it happen.



Coffee Hour at St. James

# Enjoy! (and maybe serve?)

By Kerry Durkin

**After the 10:30 Service?** We all love participating in the coffee hour gatherings here at St. James. It's a lovely opportunity to catch up with our fellow parishioners or to meet and greet newcomers, while enjoying a cup of coffee and a treat (or two!). We gather each week after the 10:30 service in the Gallery, so please feel free to join us.

Coffee hours are hosted by a rotating crew of about eight teams of volunteers. This means that people are scheduled to host only about once every other month; and we are always looking for additional members for the crew! The more teams we have volunteering, the less frequently any of us needs to host, :-)

The duties are fairly simple and involve bringing a treat, setting up the table beforehand and cleaning up afterwards. We have several seasoned veterans to answer questions on any given week. So, if you are willing to check it out and possibly lend a hand, please contact Kerry Durkin at [kdurkin2@aol.com](mailto:kdurkin2@aol.com).

**After the 8 AM Service?** You, too, can enjoy a cup of coffee. And feel free to add your treats to the table on any Sunday.

Thanks!





## Sunday Schedule

8:00 AM Worship: Nave  
 8:45 AM Coffee & Conversation: Gallery  
 9:30 AM Adult Forum: Gallery  
 10:00 AM Choir Rehearsal: Choir Room  
 10:15 AM Nursery Available: Education Wing  
 10:30 AM Worship: Sanctuary  
 11:45 AM Coffee & Conversation

**01/02** 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary  
**01/06** 10:30 AM **Epiphany Pageant**, Sanctuary  
 See Sunday Schedule  
**01/08** 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting, Gallery  
**01/09** 5:00 PM Food Shelf Fundraiser,  
 at Lake Nokomis Lutheran,  
 5011 31st Avenue South  
 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

**01/13** See Sunday Schedule  
**01/15** 7:00 PM Finance Committee, Gallery  
**01/16** 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary  
**01/17** 6:30 PM Yarn Crafters, Gallery  
**01/19** 10:30 PM **Newcomers' Brunch**, Gallery  
 11:15 AM Food Shelf, At-Taqwa Mosque,  
 1608 Como Avenue, St. Paul  
**01/20** See Sunday Schedule  
**01/21** 7:15 AM Martin Luther King Breakfast,  
 Mount Zion Temple,  
 1300 Summit Avenue, St. Paul  
**01/22** 6:00 PM Dinner at At-Taqwa Mosque,  
 1608 Como Avenue, St. Paul  
**01/23** 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary  
**01/24** 7:00 PM Haiti Committee Meeting,  
 Gallery  
**01/26** 10:00 AM Building Work Day, Gather in the Gallery  
**01/27** 9:00 AM **Annual Meeting**, Sanctuary  
 See Sunday Schedule  
**01/30** 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary



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A Community Growing in Christ,  
 Called to Worship, Learn, and Serve.