



# The Epistle

June 2017

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

## Critical Mass = YOU!

The Rev. William Heisley

As I write this I am sitting in my car in the parking lot at the Cathedral Church of St. Mark. I've arrived too early for a meeting, so I'm setting some thoughts down in pixels. The carillon just struck Noon and three Easter hymns then pealed out across Loring Park. A beautiful, a glorious sound, rising above the din of traffic, traffic, traffic.

This reminds me that sometimes it's difficult to feel the Resurrection, really feel the power of the Resurrection in your bones. Instead, there's just traffic.

Several days ago it was 75 degrees and there was not a cloud in the sky. Today it's in the 50's and dark and gloomy, with a threatening breeze. And the news is just as gloomy. News from Washington, from around the world, all is bad and threatening to be worse, just like the weather. The din of traffic.

Of course, I think about St. James. I think about St. James a lot. I think about how difficult it is to be a small, aging congregation in the midst of a changing urban scene. I think about how St. James is nevertheless a thick congregation. I wrote about that last month. Thick, meaning that we are a group of people with a purpose, with a mission, with a vision, with various

rites and habits and cultures that draw us together and keep us together. We gather to rise above the din of the world and to feel, to taste the Resurrection.

But then there is this: attendances at St. James have been sinking in the last weeks. Graduations happen, along with the first weekend forays of the season into the wilderness, road trips, and so much more. All of these things are justifiable, and in fact, are to be celebrated as God's empowerment of our lives. But at the same time, all of them can diminish the thickness of St. James in tiny ways.

A term I have long used for this problem is "Critical Mass." While I always laugh to myself about the fact that there might be a Mozart Mass, a Bach Mass, a Haydn Mass, there is also a much-needed Critical Mass in congregations.

When pews are too empty two things are obvious. First, people are not present to be renewed and prepared by the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus to face the onslaughts of the week's quotidian wars. Second, others are denied their presence, a presence that is a necessary part of community. Critical Mass is not attained. It might be pleasant to have a pew to yourself, but to have half the church to yourself can be just plain depressing.

Last Sunday I drove home from St. James at a slightly earlier hour than usual. Suddenly I was caught in multiple lanes of traffic at a suburban crossroad, traffic inching along in all directions, state troopers trying to help things move. I rolled down the window and asked one of them what was happening. "Church is leaving out." I could have cried. I was at the edge of a Baptist mega-church campus in Chanhassen, it was early Sunday afternoon, and the roads were blocked with the faithful.

We, the people of St. James, are no less the faithful. We have been called to do so much ministry, to be a thick congregation, that we sometimes are exhausted. I can't do anymore. I've spent a full day at church this week, I worked 60 hours, I need a day to sleep in. I get it. But I also know that there is a tremendously positive gift that is share in being present in the midst of the Body of Christ, the Church. Without being there, being in, being with, leading and being led, we are less. We are simply less as we have less energy and a decreased passion for the gift of life itself.

I need to be with you on Sundays. I need you. And I – we all – need you, too! Because Christ is Risen, the deathly din of the world loses. We are alive!

From the Senior Warden Neal Cuthbert

# Duality of the future with our present

As I write this, Louise and I are on a road trip for our daughter Kate's college graduation. We happen to be in Kentucky, not because that's where she went to school but because a week before her graduation the team she captains is playing in a national tournament. Simultaneously my sisters and I are trying to work together to figure out my Mom's declining situation that needs to be addressed and change in the next few weeks. It's a duality many people face in their lives, beginnings and endings, and how to keep moving between the two while tending to your

own life. But duality also applies to the life of a community and an institution like St. James. And boy, as I write this, I think I'm witnessing one of our biggest dualities yet.

On the one hand, if you haven't heard we have an incredible event this July 4th, exemplifying partnership and possibility, called This Is America. This forward looking and vision and heart-filled event came about because of the planning work spurred by the Acorn 2020 process. Information on the event is below and I ask and urge you to attend, volunteer for it, and get involved

in whatever way you feel moved to. It will be a very special event for our parish, for our faith partners, and for our community. It comes at an important time in the life of our country and our parish. Again, volunteer, attend, tell your friends and bring them on the 4th!!!

However, this little missive of mine is not only about this event that points directly at our future, but about the duality of the future with our challenging and fragile present. In the present we operate as a small faith organization heavily heavily reliant on your



July 4th - 1-4pm

St. James on the Parkway, Episcopal Church, 3225 E. Minnehaha Pkwy, Minneapolis, MN 55417

One block west of 34th Avenue on the south side of Minnehaha Parkway.

Activities for the whole family / fellowship and community building / food trucks

Guest appearances by Regina Marie Williams, Ali Gray, Mark Bloom and Brother Ali



From the Junior Warden Ted Gerold

## Doing God's Work

donations and the efforts of many volunteers. So, with my other hand, I have been witnessing incredible and often unheralded and often exhausting work with our education ministries by Rosemary Casper (who also leads Altar Guild), and the maintenance of our building and grounds led by Ted Gerold with a great assist from Steve Spencer. If you've noticed the excavation of our playground over the past few weeks, these guys (and some other work horses) have been carrying that load (literally) to help meet our obligations and responsibilities as the landlord of our great tenant, Mandala. This is the hard side of the duality, too much work for too few hands. What's at stake is the possibility of a new and exciting future that's peeking out over our horizon that we could very well lose to an over burdened present.

So here's my pitch. Please volunteer for July 4th, please come to July 4th, and please bring your friends! If you're not already excited, come and get even more excited about the future of St. James! In the meantime, if you're not involved, there's a lot of different ways to get involved here. Do you like to bake? Sing? Count money? Greet people? Teach kids? Would you like to be part of Sunday service by reading, preparing the altar or bearing the chalice? Work on food ministries? How about work on quirky buildings? Or going to meetings with fun and interesting people and eating cake? All of these great things and more are available to you here at St. James, just let a member of the staff or vestry know of your interest, and you'll get connected!!!

Thanks for being a part of St. James, see you at church, on the 4th, and thanks for being excited and a part of St. James' future!

When Jim Young asked me to become Junior Warden, I didn't know exactly what it meant or what the position involved. I took some time to think about it and to discuss it with my wife, and then accepted the position. I soon met with Jim over lunch to discuss the needs and expectations of being Junior Warden. We talked about maintenance and upkeep of the building and grounds and the practical considerations. Jim then gave me the most valuable and important piece of information and advice. He said to view this as a spiritual calling, not just one of labor. I took that advice to heart, and think of it often. It has served me well in my time as Junior Warden, and I've never regretted my decision to accept.

I still didn't know just what to expect, but I learned as I went. Sometimes I made it up as I went, adapting to challenges as best I could. All the time, I knew that I

wasn't alone in this. God was with me, guiding and helping me. When I needed help, He sent people to help me with their hands and backs, talents, advice and support. I soon realized that being Junior Warden was bigger than me, more important than cleaning up water in the basement. I was doing God's Work. WE were doing God's Work. We ARE doing God's Work.

God does marvelous things through us. Together, we have cleaned up, fixed, cleared, replaced and renovated things on our property. There will always be problems to address, and opportunities to improve. Getting to "the end of the list" isn't the goal or expectation, and we'll continue to do God's Work as it comes. We may get exhausted, we may get frustrated, but we can take comfort in knowing that God won't give us more than we can handle - together. Thanks be to God.

## Community Garden Open House June 15th

On Thursday, June 15th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. there will be an open house at the newly expanded community garden at St. James. The garden has been a cooperative effort between NENA (Nokomis East Neighborhood Association) and St. James. Ted Gerold from the St. James vestry, Lauren Hazenson from NENA and a group of very dedicated volunteer gardeners from the Nokomis East neighbor-

hood have raised and improved the five existing beds and added new beds. On May 21st. the beds were finished and the gardens were planted. The vegetables will be going to the neighborhood food shelf.

Join us at the open house to see the gardens and find out how you can be a part of this exciting project.

# Rave Reviews for the April 30 ELDERFEST

By Tony Morley

“The table settings, the food, the fellowship — wonderful day!” So wrote Jinny Bouvette about ELDERFEST, April 30. She was clearly not alone in that feeling. “Make it annual!” added one of the many volunteers who helped; others voiced the same wish.

Seventeen of the 24 St. James Elders (75 or older) were present for the party. The day began with honoring all Elders in the 10:30 Eucharist. It concluded with luncheon served in the narthex at decorated tables. During and after lunch were many lingering and reminiscing conversations. Each table had a centerpiece petunia and

treats to take home. Each Elder had a personal name tag with fancy script and flower decoration.

Here are the 17 guests of honor who came to ELDERFEST: Marguerite and Muriel Barrie, Jinny Bouvette, Bonnie Carleen, Evelyn Carlson, Urve Daigle, JoAnn and Jim Grilley, Peg Hanson, Mary Heltsley, Tony Morley, Ruth Anne Olson, Joe Ordos, Maxine Richmond, Ted Schroeder, John Selover, and Harlan Sween.

Only distance, family commitments or current illness kept away the few Elders who could not attend. Of recent St. James pastors who were invited,

James Young and Susan Moss were able to be present. Michele Morgan and Theo Park both expressed regrets that they could not.

A single sad note for all was the sudden death of Martha Marlowe just three days before. At 92, Martha was a longtime St. James “regular” and had of course expected to be present. All guests received copies of her Elder Profile from 2002. Her funeral followed ELDERFEST at St. James by just a few hours.



Pictured left: Marguerite Barrie, Muriel Barrie, Jinny Bouvette  
Pictured above: Elder nametags

Photo credit: Leah Morley

# International Investment Bankers Needed Mark September 10 on Your Calendar Now

Now that we have your attention, we wanted to let all youth and families know about the Sunday School/Youth Group kickoff on Sunday, September 10. It'll involve transforming our youth into international investment bankers. No, St. James hasn't come upon a big pot of money. Instead, we're making plans to start investing nearly \$3,000.00 in the Parish's Kiva account.

What is Kiva? It's an international non-profit organization headquartered in San Francisco of 1.6 million lenders that has made micro loans of as little as \$25.00 but totaling \$981.2 million to 2.4 million borrowers, 81 percent of whom are women, in 83 countries on five continents with a repayment rate of 97 percent. Its mission is to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty. Please learn more about how Kiva is funded, how it operates, and what it does at [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org).

St. James has nearly \$3,000.00 in its Kiva account with nearly \$600.00 in outstanding loans. We haven't made a loan, or checked up on the progress of our lenders, in several years. So the plan is to turn our youth into the Board of Directors of the St. James International Bank and decide where in the world our money will be invested. The youth will decide whether they'll invest as a group, as small groups, or as individuals. They'll decide what types of activities to fund and where.



We're not sure how many youth read the Epistle. So in case yours don't, please share this information with them and plan on being at church on Sunday morning, September 10, 2017 as the St. James International Bank has the first meeting of its international lending committee. As befits a bevy of bankers, breakfast will be served.

## Financial Report: April

by Kerry Durkin, Treasurer

St. James continued to experience favorable operating results through April 2017. Total income is favorable due to a combination of favorable pledged income and loose plate offerings.

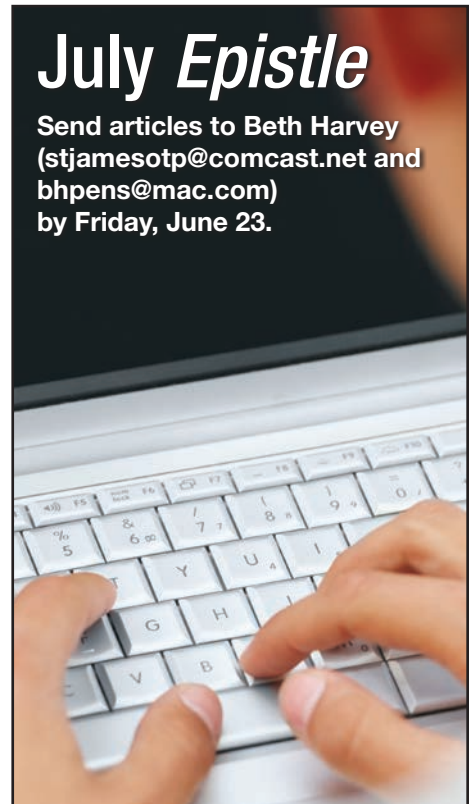
Expenses have also been slightly favorable, mainly as a result of an open staff position. Other variances are mostly timing differences.

The outcome is a net surplus which is favorable to budget by \$14,000. Here is a summary of the YTD April results, showing all amounts rounded to the nearest \$100.

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance Fav. / (Unfav.)
<b>Pledged Income</b>	\$ 61,900	\$ 53,900	\$ 8,000
<b>Other Income</b>	29,200	27,700	1,500
<b>Total Income</b>	91,100	81,600	9,500
<b>Expenses</b>	62,300	66,900	4,600
<b>Net Surplus</b>	\$ 28,800	\$ 14,700	\$ 14,100

## July Epistle

Send articles to Beth Harvey  
([stjamesotp@comcast.net](mailto:stjamesotp@comcast.net) and  
[bhpens@mac.com](mailto:bhpens@mac.com))  
by Friday, June 23.



# 'Nokomis Serves' Gets to Work; Plans Three-Church Catalogue This Summer

By Tony Morley

Lay leaders in community service from three neighborhood churches began work in May to coordinate activities and strengthen outreach under the shared title "Nokomis Serves." The leadership group, chaired now by Anne Scheible, began work May 12, with representatives from St James Episcopal, Minnehaha Methodist and Lake Nokomis Lutheran.

Committee members quickly identified four kinds of service that the three churches already support: ministries related to food and hunger; affordable housing; international ministries; clothing and other family necessities. Church members' wider knowledge of opportunities and needs in each

of these areas would help strengthen them all, the committee agreed.

As a first step in common communication Nokomis Serves plans a three-church comprehensive catalogue of service programs under the four headings above. The catalogue will include descriptions of the work and its importance, ways to be involved and contact information. The plan is to "roll out" the catalogue in early August at the churches' joint worship in Minnehaha Park and distribute it thereafter in all three congregations.

Examples of ministries to be included are Minnehaha Foodshelf and First Nations Kitchen (hunger); Inter-

faith Emergency Housing and Simpson (housing); the Haiti partnership and Lutheran "accompaniment" with a Nigeria congregation (international); collecting school supplies and knitting hats and scarves (family necessities).

Looking further ahead, Nokomis Serves envisions a logo and common website among other ways to promote community service and advocacy work. To help with the leadership committee in this important work, contact Anne Scheible ([annebillscheible@gmail.com](mailto:annebillscheible@gmail.com)). Other members include Kurt Hall, Sue Maas (Episcopal); Renée Beymer, Maureen Trepp (Methodist); Roberta Becker (Lutheran).



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