



The Epistle

December 2016

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

Nearing the Beginning

Advent begins the Church Year, every year. In 2016 the First Sunday of Advent is on November 27. The first words of scripture we hear that day are "In days to come." A beginning. Advent is about nearing that beginning, over and over nearing it.

St. James has been in a stated time of transition for something like five years. It seems to me, as I get to know you and your ministries, you and your joys, you and your sorrows, you and the power of the Holy Spirit working in you, that these years have been good ones. My belief is that you have dealt well with what was St. James and no longer is; what dreams you had for the parish that did not happen; and you have had time to gather together in groups large and small, around Word and Sacrament, around coffee and conversation, to share these things.

This is so, so healthy. It seems to me, after nearly two months with you, that you are so healthy.

That does not mean that you are without pain, angst, struggle, or anxiety. It means that these things do not define you, but instead help you to grow by giving you the practice it takes to develop ever-greater skills of conflict resolution and discernment. This is transition ministry.

As the one currently called to accompany you on your journey as your Transition Priest, I seek to be in step with you, to work so that I do not lag behind, and perhaps even to step out one or two strides ahead of

you occasionally when I perceive that a little more assertive leadership is needed.

But I assure you that the leadership of St. James is strong and leading in healthy ways, working well with each other and doing that work with integrity and coming repeatedly to a place of peace. Ah! Now we're done this good task. We stand here together and breathe, embrace, reenergize for the next steps and then we move on. Move on as we near a beginning.

What is this beginning? we ask. It is not yet defined, but it is a thing, a direction, a path, that is being discerned at this moment. When it is made clear to us, we will know it.

Every time I have met with the St. James Vestry and with the Acorn 20/20 Committee I have gone into the next day's ministry with renewed vigor and hope. I am convinced that we are not only nearing the beginning of a new

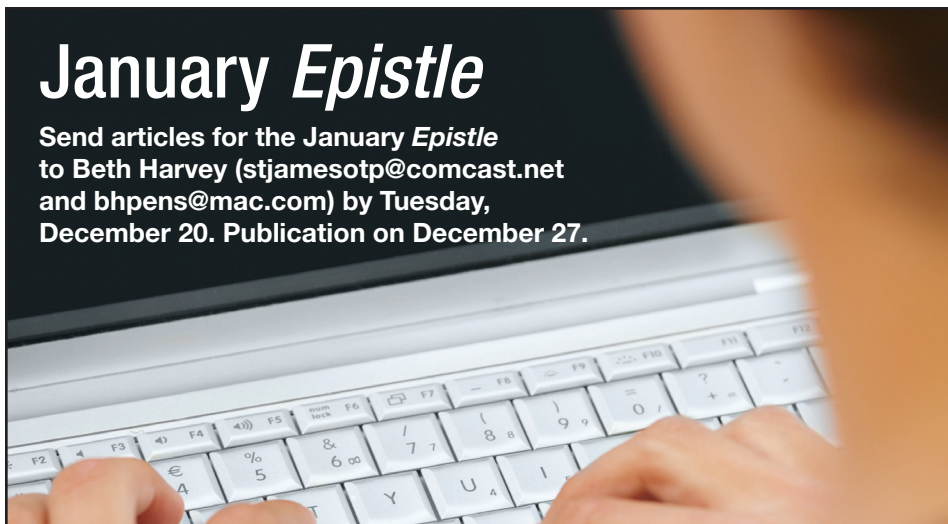
year of grace in Advent 2016 but also a new year of the presence of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. God is with us.

On the day of this writing, just two days after the recent elections, I attended a meeting of interim clergy. As the fifteen of us went around the table introducing each other we were asked to name where we find our hope. Most people commented on their confidence in the strength of our political system. I cannot yet do that. But I can do this; I said this: My hope is in the presence of God in and for and with the people of St. James to lead us into a new beginning. I know it will happen. I don't know what it will be. I know it will happen to our country. I don't know what it will be. But I know. I know about God's love because I feel it hear, in and through you.

"In days to come..."

January Epistle

Send articles for the January Epistle to Beth Harvey (stjamesotp@comcast.net and bhpens@mac.com) by Tuesday, December 20. Publication on December 27.



Advent and Christmas at St. James

The First Sunday of Advent was November 27. Blue, the ecclesiastical color of hope, gives character to our worship, along with the glorious prayers and lessons of the season.

The Advent Pageant, a hallmark of St. James' seasonal worship, will be a part of the liturgy at 10:30 AM on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 18.

At its recent meeting our Worship Committee discussed the liturgy schedule for Christmas Eve, a Saturday, and Christmas Day, a Sunday. It was decided that there will be only one Christmas Eve Liturgy at 7:30 PM. While carol singing will not precede the service, it will be packed with all of the essential congregational music of the feast.

The Christmas Day Liturgy will be celebrated in the main Church at 9:00 AM. The 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM services are cancelled so that we might join together as one on that happy morning.

Please note these times and events and mark them on your hearts and on your calendars so that you'll be sure not to miss anything!

Advent Pageant: December 18th – 10:30 AM

Christmas Eve Liturgy: December 24th – 7:30 PM

Christmas Day Liturgy: December 25th – 9:00 AM



Acorn 2020

“Review and Listen” December 4 and 11

by Tony Morley

Working toward its final report to the Vestry in January, Acorn will hold two Review-and-Listen sessions for interested parishioners on December 4 and December 11. Each session will cover the same material—between services on December 4 (9:30-10:25 AM),

and after 10:30 AM Eucharist on December 11 (extended coffee hour).

At each session Acorn members will review what inspired the five areas of possible partnerships it has been exploring, and the results of those explorations to-date. Questions, comment and discussion will follow.

As reported before, the five areas are children's education

(especially Mandala Montessori School), other Episcopal parishes (especially Holy Trinity and All Saints), the neighboring Lutheran and Methodist congregations, a multi-faith center (Muslim, Jewish, Christian), and an arts-oriented neighborhood center.

Don't miss “Review and Listen” in Chapel Hall, December 4 or 11!

Service Projects at St. James

We just completed two successful drives at St. James on the Parkway—a fall food drive for the Minnehaha Food Shelf and a winter hat and scarf drive for Simpson House. The results were great! We collected 262 items for the food shelf for a total of 312 lbs. of food. In addition, there were cash donations of \$322. Last week 56 hat and scarf sets and 41 knit hats were delivered to Simpson House. The hats and scarves were hand knit or crocheted by members of St. James.

The next project is the Holiday Wishes program with Simpson House. We have adopted two families during this holiday season. During Epiphany we will participate in the Baby Bins program, also with Simpson House, where we put together laundry baskets of baby clothes and supplies for moms and their new babies.



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.



Altar Guild Update

This Advent you will see a new set of permanent Advent candles in the main church. These were purchased with funds from the Carol and Joe Piotrowski Memorial. Like our new Paschal candle, they are refillable with oil, and will save us money as they do not need to be replaced. This year we will have wax candles in the chapel Advent wreath.

Flower orders are due in the office by Monday, December 12! Sign up for poinsettias for the holiday. Order forms are in the Sunday bulletins.

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

Bonne Nouvelle Moves Forward in Gratitude and Hope

by usan Maas for the Haiti Committee

Heartfelt thanks to all who've contributed to hurricane relief efforts in our partner parish of Bonne Nouvelle, Bigonet, Haiti. That includes the St. James 8 o'clockers who put on the November 13 bake sale, our friends at Trinity Lutheran in Hovland who held a fishcake supper benefit, the St. Jamesians and friends who've written checks directly, and all within our church – and far, far beyond – who've contributed online via the Crowdrise site (<https://www.crowdrise.com/meals-and-seedlings-for-hurricane-ravaged-haitian-community/fundraiser/stevescofield1>), which is still active and accepting donations. We've raised an astonishing \$11,000 so far! Please continue to spread the word.

In a phone call with school principal Louis Noncent and lay leader Ceder Nelson November 15, we learned that the community has been putting the resources sent thus far to good and swift use: providing hot lunches three times a week to schoolchildren, distributing staples like rice and cooking oil to area families, and preparing for distribution of peanut seedlings to community members. There's also talk of baby goats at some point.

When we conveyed that the money raised has come not just from St. Jamesians but from many, many other friends in Minnesota and across the country, they said, "We know that and we appreciate it! It's one reason we are extending our help beyond [families within] the church and school."

They thanked us for the video of St. James parishioners singing "La pè nap chache/It's peace we seek" in honor of their November 13 annual

parish fete, and said the gathering was joyous and well attended – some 1,500 community members, including "new" priest Per Sonley and another priest, came to celebrate!

Visit the Haitian Art Sale in Chapel Hall on December 4

Haiti is not defined by earthquakes, hurricanes, and hardship. The country's vibrance, creativity, and spirit shine through in its rich artistic traditions – including sculpture, paintings, and decorative arts. We invite you explore the beauty of Haitian culture on Sunday, December 4, at an art sale following the 10:30 service.

The St. James Haiti Committee will be in chapel hall selling artwork brought back from this year's St. James visit to Bigonet, Jacmel, and Port au Prince. The handmade artwork includes intricate metal wall sculptures made from recycled oil drums, car bodies, and food tins: They're lovely and affordable (similar pieces are

sold in boutiques and in catalogs at significantly higher prices).

You'll also find artwork incorporating wood, fabric scraps, palm fronds, shells, and other found and reclaimed objects. All make beautiful Christmas gifts.

Proceeds will help support our partnership with the Bonne Nouvelle community. Given that Hurricane Matthew has taken everything from our friends – their crops, their sustenance, their livelihoods – this partnership is more important than ever.

Buying art for your friends, loved ones, and/or yourself is another opportunity to stand in solidarity with our Haitian partners as they begin the long process of hurricane recovery – and it will bring you joy. See you on December 4!

At this writing, additional art sales are planned for St. Mary's Episcopal in St. Paul, the Kenwood apartments in Minneapolis, Anwatin Middle School in Minneapolis, and at Minnehaha United Methodist Church.







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St. James on the Parkway**

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