



The Epistle

March 2018

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

Worship is a Spiritual Workout

The Rev. William Heisley

It's 9 AM on a cold, soon to be snowier, Saturday and I have an appointment with my trainer in an hour. I'm thinking about the need to write something for this column and until now I've had nothing to say. Then I think, "I got a trainer to teach me how to better take care of my body, how to get stronger and healthier, how to be happier with the person that God has made me to be. What can this say to the wonderful people of St. James?"

A few weeks ago I talked about my trainer, Josh, in my Sunday sermon. I sent him a copy of the sermon and he told me that he was really honored to be mentioned. Some of the worshippers who gathered on that Sunday told me that they had workout routines that take them to the gym almost daily. One in particular talked about how caring for his body in his workouts is parallel to his being fully participant in worship at St. James every Sunday. No exceptions outside of sickness or travel. Caring for God's gift of our bodies involves caring for body, mind, and spirit.

Worship is a spiritual workout.

Going to the gym 5 days every week, being challenged by weights and durations that seem to be too much, and nevertheless conquering, succeeding, is something that I would never have predicted in all of my nearly 69 years for me. But I do it.

Not that it's been easy. It hasn't been. Or, maybe, it wasn't. In the first weeks it was a real struggle to get out of the

house. Who wants physical stress and sweat and muscle pains? I'd rather be reading. But I'd have someone there telling me that what I was going through was good for me, is necessary. Hearing repeatedly that I can do it keeps me going. And that I'll not only grow from it, I'll grow into it. It'll become a part of me.

Now, I almost look forward to going to the gym. It's not so difficult to get out of the house. I know that while I'm there what I give will be important. I know that all of the energy that I spend will not deplete me, but will strangely enough energize me. That I will get more than I give.

But, at its core, that's not the real reason, the important reason to work out. I work out because God has blessed me with a body to use, energy to spend to the glory of the Creator of me and of all.

Lent is a lot like those first few weeks at the gym with a new workout routine. We are told that for our own good we should simply get ourselves to church, to worship, to exercise our spirits by participating in life in The Spirit.

My workout routines are somewhat repetitive. Yes, Josh changes things up from time to time. But overall, he simply tries to guide me through what is best for me, according to what the wisdom of science and human psychology has taught him.

And I think, "Dare I say that I'm a bit like Josh? I change things up as the

seasons change with the guidance of the Book of Common Prayer so that our spirits might be exercised and our sins exorcised. And it's all according to the deep, venerated, even holy traditions of the Church."

Here's the point: We need to be together, to worship together, to have difficult discussions together, to mourn our losses together, to study scripture together, to bathe neophytes and to eat and drink a heavenly meal together.

But it's sometimes hard to get out of the house on Sunday morning. Maybe we'd rather read, maybe lingering over the paper with coffee and then wending our gentle way to brunch. Maybe we'd rather catch up with the quotidian tasks of the week that we have missed: dusting, paying bills, running errands.

But we take those paths at the detriment of our spirits. We walk in that direction to the detriment of the Body of Christ, St. James, that counts on us to be present and to participate for the good of all, in praising God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And in this Lenten season we risk losing a deeper understanding of the power of the Easter celebration that will come, no doubt, whether our spirits are ready or not.

Be ready. Join with us on Sundays at 8 or 10:30 AM, or on Wednesdays in Lent at 6:30 PM. Be prepared. The tombs of our lives are about to be broken open.

From the Senior Warden Louis Hoffman

Blazing a Clear Path Together

...and by what we have left undone.” You recognize this from The Confession. In the context of the Vestry’s work for 2018, what I hope our goal will be this year is that a lot of things left undone over the years will be done. This includes coming to grips with the changing church world in which we find ourselves. We all know the challenges that St. James faces. This month, I’d like to talk about how we’re facing them.

At the ECMN Lay Leadership Day in February, the Rev. Bob Leopold, Priest of Southside Abbey, a “dinner church” in Chattanooga, Tennessee, said that “if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” Clearly, we’re *not* going fast. Our challenges aren’t new. *But are we working together enough to go as far as we need to go?*

The Palm Sunday congregational meeting in 2016 resulted in nearly 400 ideas. Distilled by ACORN/2020 down to a much smaller number of related ideas, we initially pursued seven. Five weren’t feasible. So we’re moving forward on two: the Abrahamic Tri-Faith initiative and various permutations of the Three Churches initiative. This fits

into another part of Fr. Bob’s presentation: show up with half an idea and empower others to join in, flesh out, and refine the idea.

This is what’s happening with both of our initiatives. The Abrahamic Tri-Faith Initiative focused on reaching out, building partnerships, and staging *This is America* on Independence Day. It was a huge success. It hasn’t led to there being an Abrahamic Tri-Faith center at St. James. But it’s led to deepening relationships, learning, and a goal of deciding whether it’s something we’ll pursue by the end of the year.

The Three Churches initiative is on a similar path. We’ve made progress on pooling our service ministry with Lake Nokomis Lutheran and Minnehaha United Methodist. You’ve seen the *Nokomis Serves* catalog. Twelve St. Jamesians will be helping Lake Nokomis Lutheran with its next *Families Moving Forward* week in April. We’re looking at how to move *Nokomis Serves* forward. A different Three Churches initiative has also started. We’re talking with Lake Nokomis Lutheran and Living Table United Church of Christ about partnering to share administra-

tive, educational, and service ministries in one building. The goal is to figure out if this is something all three congregations want to do by the end of the year.

At the same time, we’re digesting the *Building Assessment* done by MacDonald and Mack Architects. It’s possible that we may decide not move forward with the Abrahamic Tri-Faith and Three Church initiatives at the end of the year. Knowing the state of our building, working with Mandala on freeing up Chapel Hall for their use, making better use of the Gallery, Narthex, and Nave for our use, and a future in—or out—of our current building are also things that we also have to consider in 2018.

So we’re not moving fast. But we are moving together. There’s a consensus that we need to blaze a clear path by the end of the year. Among ourselves. With our Jewish and Muslim friends. With three churches in the neighborhood. And with our Mandala partners. Will you join us in blazing this path? Look at the back of the Service Bulletin, where it lists contact information and the church’s leadership. Above the Wardens and Vestry are you: “**The People of St. James**, The Heart and Hands of Christ.”

Adult Forum: What’s Next? Where We’ve Been. How it Works

Adult Forum is a grown-ups gathering that meets almost every Sunday in Chapel Hall from 9:30-10:25. We usually start with something obvious in our tradition, then poke and probe it together for new questions and better understandings.

Some recent pokes and probes have taken on the Ten Commandments (are they actually promises?), virtue and vice (is either one “only human”?), and how religion connects or conflicts with nationality (is America a Christian country?). Don’t expect easy answers, ever!

During March we’ll continue in that (Holy) Spirit. **March 4:** Rabbi Alan Shavit-Lonstein on Jewish ways of prayer; **March 11:** three church and school leaders from Haiti for mutual Q and A with us; **March 18:** facing up to bad stuff in the Bible; **March 25:** why Palm Sunday? What was Jesus thinking?

Adult Forum is easy to be part of. It’s a nourishing follow-up after 8:00 o’clock worship and an early focus for 10:30. Come try it out. Hear what’s on your neighbors’ minds; make known your own 2¢ worth. There’s coffee, too, sometimes even a snack.



April Epistle

Send articles to Beth Harvey
(stjamesotp@comcast.net
and bhpens@mac.com) by
Wednesday, March 21.

From the Junior Warden Pat Morley

Snow Removal and Spring Cleaning at the same time?

Hello Friends - Our property is, as our professional assessment from Mack & MacDonald states, in generally solid shape. Most of our challenges really center around unavoidable design problems and past neglect, and of course, the effects of age. Consequently, maintenance continues to be our primary focus, though the Property Committee has met to review the aforementioned report to see what planning can be done towards prevention of future problems and efficiency of care.

With the recent snowfalls have comes some small challenges that we are addressing primarily with simple snow removal from roofs and other areas. Nonetheless, you may notice some spots where we have had some leakage. We are working to address those problem areas.

Another simple, but important, maintenance task is to de-clutter our spaces over time. We currently have a number of items in the basement of chapel hall that need to be hauled. To save expense we are not going to get a dumpster and spend additional corporate time and energy getting rid of junk. Rather, we will be removing items piece-meal by individuals over time and asking congregation members to help. If you can take one or two items to simply dispose of (or use if you feel so inclined) that would help tremendously. The goal is to truly clean up our spaces both for aesthetic and safety reasons.

If, in the course of your ministries here at St. James, whatever they may be, you bring items to church and that ministry requires you to store or leave items in the church, please be thoughtful about where you need to keep things. Common areas cannot be storage areas. If you are uncertain please feel free to contact me and I will

help you figure out how and where best to keep those items. What we must be aware of at all times, particularly as we are also a landlord that rents space to others, is keeping all exits clear and accessible at all times.

Our next maintenance day convenes Saturday, March 24 at 10am. I will be making reminder announcements in church on Sundays until then. The maintenance days (or work days) typically cover small but important tasks such as lighting, cleaning, moving

furniture if necessary, or hauling the previously mentioned items to vehicles or trash, and other tasks as they arise. As always, we warmly welcome another set of hands so if that is something you feel you can provide please feel free to let me know or just show up on that Saturday prepared to do a little work.

Thanks again for all you do at St. James in whatever manner you do it. May the Peace of God be with you always.

St. James' Curb Appeal

by Louis Hoffman

This is a Realtor® thing. St. James has it. It's one of the reasons that the Hamblin-Hoffman family is at St. James. It's how some members found us. And, when you tell people you go to St. James, the response is often "oh, it's that cute little church on the Parkway, right? That's such a pretty church!" There's one little thing that we can do to enhance our

curb appeal. And that's to park on the parkway in front of the church. So whether it's Sunday morning, Tuesday night Vestry meetings, Wednesday night choir rehearsal, whatever, please park on the Parkway to let passers-by know that there's something going on at St. James. Because there is!



Nokomis Serves

Homeless or Hungry: How to Help Here

by Tony Morley

“Nokomis Serves” is an Episcopal-Lutheran-Methodist collaboration in community service by three neighborhood congregations. On the ushers table is a catalogue of all three churches’ service opportunities. Pick one up, and browse! Before that, here are three specifics to consider:

Families Moving Forward (FMF) needs volunteers, March 27-29 (Holy Week!) to help set up the space at Lake Nokomis Lutheran for overnight shelter of four homeless families the week after Easter. No special training is required. (Ten St. James volunteers have already trained for direct interaction with the families.) Morning, afternoon and evening shifts available. Phone or email Anne Scheible for details and sign-up: 612-722-0468 or annebillscheible@gmail.com.

Besides hands-on service through FMF, Beacon Interfaith (the FMF sponsor) is a policy advocate on Minnesota housing and homeless issues. It seeks volunteers to help lobby legislators at “Homeless on the Hill” in

St. Paul, March 6. To learn more and perhaps lend a hand, phone or email Kat Vann: kvann@beaconinterfaith.org or 651-789-6260 x 214.

Minnehaha Foodshelf took in some \$5,000 at its pasta-dinner fundraiser in January. A capacity crowd of more than 300 took part. The Foodshelf board, has three seats for each of the three sponsoring neighborhood churches. Anne Scheible (vice-chair) and Ginny Bouvette represent St. James, but our third seat is vacant—an obvious opportunity for community service. The board meets about nine times a year on a weekday morning. Again, Anne Scheible (see above) is the person to call.

And in case you missed the pasta dinner, support our Foodshelf any Sunday with cash or a check in a yellow envelope from the ushers table. In-person volunteers are welcome too, 10:00 to 3:00 every Tuesday morning at the Methodist church. Don’t forget: March is Foodshelf Month. Checks should be made to Minnehaha Food shelf.

Treasurer’s Financial Report — January

The year is young, and this report covers only one month. But that month was good, and at end of January so were the numbers. Here they are:

| | YTD Budget | YTD Actual | over / (under) |
|----------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Pledged Income | 30,050 | 27,233 | (2,817) |
| Other Income | 4,065 | 7,312 | 3,247 |
| Total Income | 34,115 | 34,545 | 430 |
| Expenses | 14,923 | 13,341 | 1,582 |
| Net | 19,192 | 21,203 | 2,012 |



Easter Flower Dedications

Our Easter flower decorations depend on the generosity of our parishoners. In order to be printed in the bulletin, dedications are due in the office by Palm Sunday. The recommended cost for flowers is \$20 per pot—any amount is welcome. Make your check to St. James and mark “Easter Flowers” in the memo line.

You may submit a name for remembrance whether or not you make a donation! It is easiest if you email your dedications to stjamesotp@comcast.net. It helps Beth be sure all the names are spelled correctly!

In memory of ...

In thanksgiving for...

From...

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

The Haitians Are Coming!

by Ruth Anne Olson on behalf of St. James
Haiti Committee

Gather winter jackets, hats, gloves and warm socks. Arrange for folks to help with transportation and to interpret Creole/English conversations. Put clean sheets on the beds. Make sure the icy spots on our sidewalks are sanded. Get to the airport before the ETA of 1 AM on March 2. And then watch it all fall into place before seeing our friends off at midnight to return to Haiti 11 days later. That's part of the long to-do lists for St. Jamesians as we plan for an early-March visit from our partners of Bonne Nouvelle School and Church in Bigonet, Haiti.

It's fair to say that all of St. James is excited to, once again, see long-time friends Louis Noncent, Ceder Nelson and Renise Impert. Since 2008 14 St. Jamesians and 10 of our friends from elsewhere throughout Minnesota have stayed with Louis', Ceder's

and Renise's families and friends in Bigonet. They've introduced us to their church, school and village. They've fed us well, helped us traverse the River Cormier, kept us safe on mountain trails, and offered laughter, prayer, song, and the intimacy of their life stories.

Louis, Renise and Ceder first came to St. James in 2013, and they're eager once again to visit new friends and old in Minnesota. They'll begin their stay with Trinity Lutheran Church —our partners on the North Shore in Hovland. There they'll visit with Grand Portage elders; learn of a local fish hatchery project; worship in the beautiful new worship space designed and built by Trinitarians; try out snowshoes, snowmobiling and more.

Back in Minneapolis, they'll visit with students at Anwatin Middle School and with elders at The Kenwood Retirement Community. We're lined up for an evening of bowl-

ing; a visit with Andrew Johnson, City Council member for the St. James neighborhood; maybe St. Paul's Farmer's Market and/or the blockbuster movie Black Panther, and whatever other interests we can fit into the schedule.

Before this Epistle goes to press, all St. Jamesians have probably received a schedule of events with the invitation for you and your family to join the fun as it's convenient for you. Most important, on Sunday, March 11 we look for all of St. James (and we hope you'll bring family, friends, colleagues, classmates and neighbors) to come to church. Louis, Renise and Ceder will join us in worship (both 8 and 10:30 AM) and adult ed (9:30 AM). We'll host a community potluck at noon and anticipate an another enlightening and joyful Q and A with our guests—as curiosities pass both directions: we of them and they of us!

Rejoice and join in the fun.



Louis Noncent --
Principal of Bonne Nouvelle School



Ceder Nelson --
Lay Leader of Bonne Nouvelle Church



Renise Impert --
Farmer, Leader of Bonne Nouvelle Church

A Special Invitation from the Tri-Faith Committee

by Max Athorn

The second phase of work for the St. James Tri-Faith committee is off to an energetic start. With Ruth Anne Olson's leadership, we are regaining energy and momentum as we meet with new potential partners and strengthen the bonds that we've made in the last year. Most especially, we are excited to welcome Rabbi Alan Shavit-Lonstein, the founding Director of By The Rivers to teach—and preach—at St. James on March 4. Rabbi Alan was one of our first collaborators when we began tri-faith discussions in late

2016, and a driving force behind the success of the *This is America* event on July 4, 2017.

Rabbi Alan will be preaching on the Old Testament lesson during the 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM services, and he will also be leading a forum discussion on the Jewish approach to prayer—the origins, goals, shape, and key words—during the 9:00 AM education hour.

Have you been looking for a good day to invite a friend or neighbor to join you at St. James to see some of the work we are doing firsthand? Choose March 4, and help us welcome Rabbi Alan.



Abrahamic Tri-Faith Center Exploration

By Rebecca Hamblin
and Ruth Anne Olson

St. James continues to explore development of an Abrahamic Tri Faith Center that could be located on our building and grounds. Leading this effort are Max Athorn, Rebecca Hamblin, Pat Morley and Ruth Anne Olson of St. James, along with Rabbi Alan Shavit-Lonstein and Beth Gendler.

An immediate task of the working group is to identify interested Muslim leaders. This is a critical step following resignation from the group by Tamara Gray, who has moved out of the U.S. to engage in international activity, and Nausheena Hussain who's focusing her time as Executive Director of the non-profit organization Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood of Empowerment (RISE). Though their leaving the working group was not a surprise, we were sorry to see them go. We are also looking to add more Jewish partners.

In February, we sent emails to people who filled out interest forms at our July 4th *This is America* event—inviting them to work with us in a variety of ways.

An important centerpiece of this exploration is our own education and relationship-building with Abrahamic people and activities in Minnesota. Rabbi Alan's morning with St. James on March 4—like Nausheena's presentation to us in December—is an example of this work.

Toward a similar end, we're delighted to find an opportunity to work side-by-side with Muslim colleagues at the food shelf sponsored by Al-Taqwa Mosque in St. Paul. Pat Morley and Ruth Anne Olson gave it a try in January and were moved to meet Imam Mohamed Elfallal's daughter Sarah who had arrived in Minnesota just 12 hours earlier. Sarah, age 15, had travelled by herself from Egypt and was clearly happy to be with her father whom she had not seen for more than four years. Father and daughter looked forward to a week together before Sarah's return home. February at Al-Taqwa brought a similar adventure as we shared the work with twelve 20-somethings from Saudi Arabia. Lots of good conversation! The food shelf is open from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM on the

3rd Saturday of each month. To learn more, check with Pat or Ruth Anne.

The working group is also looking at other opportunities for 3-faith activities: maybe attending a play at the Jewish History Theater in St. Paul, visiting the Somali Museum on Lake Street or the Somali exhibit at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, or maybe a road trip to Omaha Nebraska to visit their Tri-Faith Initiative. Check out the Initiative at trifaith.org.

By year's end, the working group will make a recommendation to the St. James Vestry regarding continuation of this exploration. That will be informed by progress in developing commitments of Abrahamic partners to (a) a vision and organizing charter, (b) creation of an organizational entity whose by-laws assure parity among all three faiths, and (c) other specifics that suggest commitments to move forward with bringing the Center to reality.

Have questions? Ideas? Pick up an informational flyer on the usher's table in the narthex, or contact Max, Rebecca, Pat or Ruth Anne.

Hoffman, Ramos, Morley Meet, Greet and Harvest First Fruits From ‘Lay Leadership Day’

by Tony Morley

Senior Warden Louis Hoffman, Vestry Member Debra Ramos and Treasurer Tony Morley joined some 75 other Minnesota church people, Feb. 17, for information- and question-sharing about opportunities and challenges in their different faith communities.

“Lay Leadership Day” brought congregation leaders together with more than half-a dozen diocesan staff as resource coaches and discussion leaders. Workshop topics ranged from youth-group and camping ministry, to pledge-drives and audits, to a free-floating “dinner church”, to parish life without traditional clergy, to finding non-church allies and creativity in innovative neighborhood service.

In a workshop on adult education, Debbie Ramos asked about using teaching techniques from Godly Play in a grown-up setting such as Adult Forum. She’s already moving forward at St. James with that idea. Tony Morley will

apply “best practices” Treasurer advice for the first audit here in several years.

Louis Hoffman came away with the concept that blessings invariably come with change and that, therefore, without change there are no blessings. He details that thought in “Starting New Things,” elsewhere in this Epistle.

The leadership meeting was held at the new diocesan headquarters, West Broadway and Emerson Av., North, in Minneapolis. An upbeat emphasis throughout the day was on being alert to new opportunity and overlooked leadership skills, not on feeling defeated by shrinking budgets and declining membership. Everyone present received an 80-page Vestry Resource Guide. Everyone present had a chance to share stories with people from other parishes facing similar challenges.

Clearly, Lay Leadership Day was meant to be a rich lay day for St. James.

“Starting New Things”

by Louis Hoffman

This Lay Leadership session was led by Steve Mullaney, the ECMN Missioner for Young Adult and College Ministries, and The Rev. Bob Leopold, who founded and runs Southside Abbey, a dinner church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. It’s an amazing organization. Please look them up at www.southsideabbey.dioet.org to find out more. It’s sort of like First Nations Kitchen on steroids! Southside Abbey, and other groups like it, like Table 229 in the Twin Cities, is new things. Far from the traditional brick-and-mortar churches. A few key points – and some of my takeaways – from the conversation:

- Old ways of doing things don’t always work. What worked at St. James in 1968 isn’t working in 2018.
- Sometimes one needs to do more than taking what works and improving upon it. Yes, there’s a lot that we do well. And we can and should improve upon it. But we’re called to do more than tinker around the edges.
- New things don’t have baggage. Like an aging and inefficient building.
- Our mission is more than saving what we have. Lots of what we have is good. But what we’ve done that’s most successful is what’s new. Think “This is America” last Independence Day.
- Our mission isn’t to fill seats on Sunday morning but to “take seats to people.” This doesn’t mean that we move out and become a storefront church. Although it could. It means that we need to figure out how to move our

mission outside of our walls, to the 167 hours per week that we’re not at St. James, and to people who aren’t at church on Sunday. Like the NENA volunteers who tend the Giving Garden.

- Our goal isn’t membership but to become members of our community. Think our Giving Garden partnership with NENA, Nokomis Serves, and the Abrahamic Tri-Faith Initiative.

The session starting out with an exercise on naming blessings in our life. It was pointed out that many blessings – birth, starting school, graduation, starting a job, marriage, buying a house – are big changes. Thus the point that blessings often equal change and that there aren’t blessings without change. The session ended with a discussion about ideas. Not complete, fully-formed ideas. But half ideas. The point was to show up with half an idea. Enough to excite people. But not so much as to choke out participation. To empower others to finish crafting the idea and buying into it. Palm Sunday 2016 generated nearly 400 ideas. They’ve been distilled into several upon which a number of us are working on. And, not surprisingly, they involve change and reaching outside of our building.

Gazillion Roles

This session was led by Karen Olson, the ECMN Missioner for Discernment and Transition. ECMN has put together a booklet called “Lay Ministry Roles, Ministry of All the

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“Starting New Things”

Continued from page 7

Baptized: Using Your Gifts for God’s Mission.” It’s essentially a guide to what you can do in the church. And it’s not complete. There’s a church, for example, that has a chocolate ministry. The point of the presentation is that there’s something for everyone to do whether it’s named or not. Look for this booklet in the Narthex. You can also find it at the ECMN website.

Save the Date: Wednesday, May 2 for a Three Church Dinner

by Louis Hoffman

You may recall a letter you got around the first of the year from Fr. William and former Senior Warden Neal Cuthbert about conversations that St. James is having with Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church and Living Table United Church of Christ. All three churches have “issues.” We recognize that it might be a good idea to explore sharing space, staff, and other resources to better focus our resources on our ministries. Where there’s some overlap, especially in community service and social justice.

The group, the three clergy and three lay members, have met twice and will meet again on March 7. The goal is to decide by the end of the year whether this is worth pursuing and, if so, how we might proceed and towards what end. We’re hoping to interview people at Spring House Ministries in the Whittier Neighborhood. Spring House is three Christian churches sharing

one building with shared administration, education, service, and social activities but with three separate ministers and services. We think that what they’ve done could be a model for us and could help us in our exploration by learning from the process that they went through.

The other activity we’re planning is a Three Church Dinner on Wednesday evening, May 2 to let folks from Lake Nokomis, Living Table, and St. James meet. Not many plans have been made beyond the date. But it’ll be planned and cooked by the best cooks in all three churches. So you won’t want to miss it! You’re a great cook? Great! If you’d like to help, let us know! If you’re interested in the overall process, let us know too. The three clergy-three lay group was meant to get the ball rolling. But this is a big idea and anyone who’s interested in helping is welcome. Please contact Louis Hoffman at hoffman.louis@comcast.net or 612-618-7206.



**The Episcopal Church of
St. James on the Parkway**

3225 East Minnehaha Parkway
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417-1498

612-724-3425

Office: stjamesotp@comcast.net

Website: www.stjamesotp.org

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