



The Epistle

August 2017

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

Walking the Cosmic Labyrinth

The Rev. William Heisley

When it was time to write for this issue of the Epistle I was eager for Senior Warden Neal Cuthbert to submit his article before I set finger to keyboard so that we would not duplicate thoughts. He wrote and I want you to read his excellent missive before you go on with mine. Here it is:

Dear Friends,

When I was a youth growing up in the Episcopal Church I remember being told by one older parishioner that Episcopalians tended to take a summer vacation from church. While I don't think that's an actual or good thing, we Minnesotans do tend to get busy out of doors in the summer which often means the indoors church participation can seem a little light. Adding to this is that typically our main programs and activities gear up and kick in during the fall and winter, so the contrast of activity and attendance can feel even bigger. But for St. James there's always a big "however." However, like many things about St. James while church attendance suffers a little during the summer (please do come to church during the summer!!!) we are never content to just be normal, in fact during these summer months we are in the midst of two major institutional efforts that are all about our future!! One you've already helped with, and the second is one I'm going to ask for your help!

If you were among the hundreds of people who attended the July 4th "This is America" event you know it was an amazing success. Loads of people came and found it to be a meaning-full and hope-filled event, and many were heard saying they can't wait for next year! It was all over the media, quickly became a new idea and model for other congregations, and a Lutheran friend said he told his church council all about it. It's clear the idea is timely and relevant and will spread. This event came out of the door we opened as part of our planning process, Acorn 2020, and the energy of a committed and visionary group of St. Jamesians who were joined by people of other faiths to bring it into reality. When we started Acorn, we didn't know where it would lead but we wanted to trust to the spirit. When we committed to hosting the July 4th event, we also didn't know what would happen, but again, we put our trust in the spirit. Moving forward we will continue in this fashion as the tri-faith group considers what happened and what should happen in the future. On behalf of the vestry thank you all for your openness and belief in the Acorn process and in the wisdom and vision of the tri-faith group.

A second major institutional effort is about our dear beloved building. Referred to as Hogwarts by some for its complex and multi-layered construction, it has been the home for St. James for many decades. It was designed and built for a much bigger congregation at a much different

time. For years we have gotten by with minimal maintenance and patches and our ability to tend to the building's needs has stretched us thin people-wise and finance-wise. Again, as part of the Acorn process, we decided it is time for us to get a reality-based assessment of our building's condition and what repairs it requires. This too is all about our future. We have much anecdotal information about the condition of our building but few hard, professional numbers. We have contracted with a firm to do a professional assessment so that we will know exactly what we are up against and what our options are. And this is where you can help.

A proper building assessment is not cheap. The total cost is about \$13,000 to \$14,000 which we do not have in the budget. We are doing a special appeal to raise funds to cover this additional cost for what is a very important project for discerning St. James' future. Next to the Tri-faith work, this is vitally important for us. So far, several members of the congregation have made generous donations and we are at the halfway mark. If you are moved, please contribute to this. Please let me or Ted or William know if you are interested and able to participate in this effort.

We already appreciate all you do for the parish, and anything extra to help with this would be wonderful!

In the Spirit,
Neal Cuthbert, Senior Warden

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Walking the Cosmic Labyrinth

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Now, let me say that I strongly agree with everything that Neal has written. Not a word would I change. But I want to go a step further.

I have written and spoken on several occasions about my admiration for the tenacity, strength and eagerness to grow and change I witness among the people of St. James. I redouble those sentiments here and now.

When I was growing up my family would go to the south side of our valley in the Appalachian mountains, the south side of our farm, several times a summer to spend lazy, hot, humid Sunday afternoons in the shadiest, coolest place available. Fishing Creek runs at the foot of the valley, separating the mossy, dim and eerie depths of the precipitate Blue Ridge Mountain from our fields of corn. Our family always gathered at an ell in the creek, called Spooky Hollow. (The proper pronunciation of that name is not transmitted by these simple, obvious spellings. You'll have to ask me in person so that you can hear it for yourself.)

The creek there is about 20-30 feet wide and 1-3 feet deep. It is often icy, at least to toes accustomed to the heat of a Central Pennsylvania summer. I

would stick a toe in to test the water. Then a foot. Maybe I would sit down, but rarely would I fully submerge myself for fear of what creatures might lurk in the shadows. (And creatures there were. It was not uncommon to come out of the water with a leech affixed to one's leg, ripe for our grandmother's picking.)

I knew what the summer heat felt like and, although I didn't like it, I knew how to handle it. The water, the ever moving, ever changing body that flowed through darkness at the edge of light, I didn't trust.

That's a feeble image of where we are as a parish. We know how to handle the uncomfortable reality of a few people who love the Lord Jesus and seek to serve him in a building, the burden of which sometimes seems too great. We know how to patch things up and limp by, winking and laughing at the way things look, knowing that it's the ministries that count. And ministries we do – so many and so well!

But to leave the uncomfortable yet reassuring reality of the heat of our parish lives and to explore new possibilities, to stick our communal toe into icy waters, waters that seem to change with every blink of an eye, to dare to sit in the unknown shallows, risking some sort of trouble for simply daring, that takes energy and nerve and a certain willingness to see that there is more to the present than meets the

eye.

We've been doing that, however, and it is a thing of joy! Neal and I are encouraging you to help us to continue. We need to have the assessment about which Neal writes and we need to pay for it. Our recent success and excitement over This Is America has opened new doors of possibility. The next step is getting behind the study to be done by the highly reputable architecture firm of MacDonald & Mack, paying for the study, and following through on its recommendations.

There is great energy at St. James right now. There is real interest in seeing our various ministries not only continue but grow in the service that they provide to the Lord Christ and His Church.

Now we must join together to boldly dip toe, then foot in unknown waters. The next steps will be fraught with questioning and discernment, with leech like bits of fright. But we grandchildren turned to our father's mother for leech removal, we turn to God and our future will be blessed by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The prophet Isaiah speaks God's words to us: Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

All we need to do now is to live in the covenant.

Worship at the Falls

Our summer opportunity to worship with our partners in ministry at the Minnehaha Falls

bandshell will be August 6th. There will be no services at St. James on that date.



The Episcopal Church in Minnesota Annual Convention

The 2017 ECMN Convention will be held in Duluth on September 15 and 16. Father Heisley, Deacon Greeney, Debbi Ramos and Jinny Bouvette will represent St. James. Look for a full report of events in the October *Epistle*.

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

Bonne Nouvelle Friends to Visit

By Ruth Anne Olson on behalf of the Haiti Committee

Our friends of Bonne Nouvelle have once again accepted St. James' invitation to visit Minnesota. Based on their leadership in the church and school, the community has selected four individuals who will now begin the arduous process of applying to the U.S. Department of State for tourist visas: payment of a \$160 application fee (a sum double the salaries of most of Bonne Nouvelle's teachers); completion of an online application form including personal and family history, employment, education, home ownership and much more; presentation of passports and photographs; and a personal interview with U.S. Embassy personnel.

The four include:

- Shiller Fils-Aime, a former student of Bonne Nouvelle, and a teacher since 2007. Shiller currently teaches mathematics in the 3rd level fundamentals, and helps with administrative duties.
- Jonas Jean is also a Bonne Nouvelle alumnus, and has also been teaching since 2007. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, in 2016-2017 Jean helped with discipline ... maybe what we would call a vice principal.
- Chanica Louissaïnt is a graduate of Bonne Nouvelle and, at present, teaches kindergarten.
- Joseph Voltaire Pierre Louis is a former Bonne Nouvelle teacher. He is currently president of the "Men and Maguillè" of Bonne Nouvelle church, a position that we think is comparable to the Sr. Warden of St. James.

Bonne Nouvelle's principal Louis Noncent described in a recent phone conversation the responsibility the four feel as they begin to plan — a commitment to represent the school, the Episcopal Church and the whole community when they visit Minnesota.

Our St. James Haiti Committee will now develop a packet of materials to send to the U.S. Embassy in Haiti to support our friends' visa applications. Current U.S. government strictures on foreign travel in the U.S. add new levels of anxiety to this process.

We also continue to raise money to pay the visa application fees and other expenses for our friends' travel. There's lots to be done for Bonne Nouvellians to visit St. James in October. We're on our way!



Visa applicants with Bonne Nouvelle's priest: Joseph Voltaire Pierre Louis, Father Joseph Sonley, Shiller Fils-Aime, Chanica Loissaïnt, and Jonas Jean.

A Day Spent Celebrating America



Photographers:

Cliff Athorn, John Heintz, Louise Robinson, Anne Sween

Media links about This Is America:

Star Tribune, July 4: <http://strib.mn/2ujAVEw>

KARE-11, July 4: <http://www.kare11.com/news/tri-faith-party-celebrates-unity-in-mpls/454184795>

Star Tribune, July 5: <http://video.startribune.com/multi-faith-community-gathering-to-celebrate-the-fourth-of-july/432582863/>







FIRST NATIONS KITCHEN

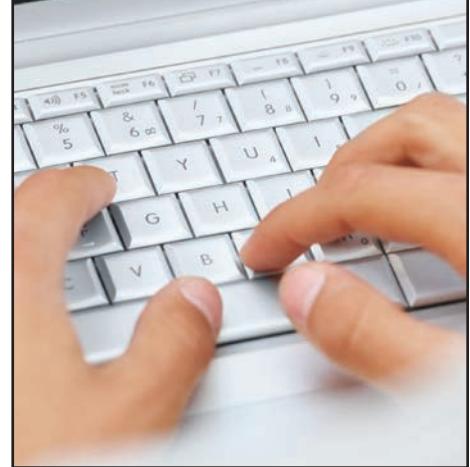
First Nations Kitchen – August 13

Our next scheduled meal at First Nations Kitchen is on Sunday, August 13th. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the Chapel Hall door. If

you have questions, please contact Anne Scheible: annebillscheible@gmail.com.

September *Epistle*

Send articles to Beth Harvey
(stjamesotp@comcast.net and
bhpens@mac.com)
by Monday, August 21st.



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

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