



The Epistle

February 2019

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

3225 East Minnehaha Parkway • Minneapolis, MN 55417 • 612-724-3425 • www.stjamesotp.com • stjamesotp@comcast.net

From the Annual Meeting of January 27th

Vestry and Officers

Senior Warden: Ruth Anne Olson. **Junior Warden:** Pat Morley.

Vestry Members: Karen Alexander, Julie Brauning, Jeanne LaBore, Jim Larson, Katie Mytty, and Kerry Nelson. **ECMN Convention Delegates:** Jinny Bouvette and Rosemary Caspar.

ECMN Delegate Alternate: Debra Ramos. **Treasurer:** Tony Morley. **Clerk:** TBN.

By-laws amended as proposed. 3-Churches exploration will continue.

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From Fr. William Heisley

The huge variety of life

On January 21, 2019, the day that was set aside to remember the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I was in the Minneapolis Armory sitting in the peanut gallery at 7:00 AM. I sipped somewhat decent coffee as I looked out over the tables of black and white and first nations and Hispanic and Asian faces arrayed on the broad floor below. I was a little envious of the breakfast they would soon have down there in the expensive seats, but I was very happy to have such a view. A view that was at one and the same time exhilarating in its variety and depressing in what I think was its lack of representation of our region. It seemed like a far higher percentage of the communities of people of color in Minnesota were there than the percentage of white folks. Maybe I'm wrong. But I don't think so.

.... white people should
be stampeding to get
into that event.

That makes me sad because white people should be stampeding to get into that event. We need events like that. Speakers, musicians, and artists, challenged business leaders, elected officials, high school students and everyone gathered there and at remote church and synagogue breakfast sites, and those watching on TV at home, or listening on the radio. But especially being there to have the full experience of what our glorious diversity can look like.

Continued on page 2

The huge variety of life

Continued from page 1

Everyone was upbeat, awake (!), and ready to participate. The main speaker for the event was CNN host and personality Don Lemon. He talked about all the people who had said “No” to him in his life because of his skin color. He talked about how hard it was to get where he is today, and he talked about how glad he is to be able to look back and say to them, “See, black people CAN succeed.” My belief is that black people MUST succeed, because the success of society is not about one race being strong and protecting, or worse, using the other races. It’s about all of us being equals, working, living, playing, together.

The next evening I was honored to have dinner with a group of people from St. James at the At-Taqwa mosque in St. Paul. Our hosts were gracious and eager to engage in conversation and to share the wonderful foods of their Middle Eastern heritages. The evening was delicious in every aspect. I came

away having my understanding of Islam vastly improved by spending time with, sharing a meal with people who are different from you, different from me, yet still the same. We eat, we drink, we pray, we celebrate life day by day.

**We eat, we drink,
we pray...But oh,
the divisions.**

But oh, the divisions. People of color are beset every day by invisible and very real, harsh barriers – walls – that white people have little or no idea they raise. We white people need to turn our no’s to yes’s. We need to remove barriers that impede growth, and human and societal development. We need to eagerly engage with people who worship differently from us and who structure their lives around tenets

of faiths different from ours. Through their eyes we will learn just how blind we are to certain truths about the unity of humankind.

I use the word “need” with intent and care because I am loath to say what others should do. Except this: the racism and Islamaphobia inherent to our society must be addressed. Not for selfish reasons, but for holy reasons: each of us is, all of us are, created from the same stuff of flesh and blood, and we are shaped by the same forces of nature and human society, and we all owe all of these things to almighty God, the Creator.

During this long Epiphany season open your eyes and see the brilliant light that God shines into our world in the huge variety of life that populates the human community. And search your heart, your soul, and your values to begin to see that God’s light shines through others, all others. And in God’s light, we see light.

From the Treasurer Tony Morley

Financial Report: Full year, 2018

St. James finances ended strong for 2018. Pledge payments caught up quite a bit in December (but not up to budget). Non-pledge income continued far better than budget. And total expenses were exactly \$3 less than budget! Therefore, at year-end, we had very fine black-ink bottom line. Here are the numbers:

	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	over / (under)
Pledged Income	125,000	121,527	(3,473)
Other Income	71,175	95,501	24,326
Total Income	196,175	217,028	20,853
Expenses	194,200	194,197	(3)
Net	1,975	22,831	20,856

St. James endowment was a different story. Our withdrawals plus low oil royalties and an overall bad year in financial markets left the Dahl Endowment total at \$310,000, down \$36,000 for the year.

St. James restricted non-budget funds were \$22,100 at year-end: Piotrowski fund for music, \$700; Piotrowski fund for altar, \$1,800; Mary Anderson Better Space fund, \$1,800; Haiti Fund, \$13,900; Tri-Faith balance, \$3,900.

From the Senior Warden Ruth Anne Olson

What will “big” mean?

I write this one day after our Annual Meeting. And, frankly I love the sense of anticipation with which we move into the coming year.

For more than five years, St. James has moved toward change, carefully building a foundation of relationships and information to prepare for something big. It's now likely that our Annual Meeting of 2020 will present the opportunity—indeed the obligation—to decide what “big” means. To decide the actual shape of our future. Likely even to say “yes” to one option—“no” to others.

To prepare for that day, at the vestry's February meeting, I'll offer three goals for the coming year.

... it's important that every “i” is dotted, every “t” is crossed

One is that we get our legal process in order. The Canons of the Episcopal Church of Minnesota (ECMN) and our own St. James By-laws define who, when, and how to make decisions. As we move toward January 2020, it's important that every “i” is dotted, every “t” is crossed — that the legality of our decisions will be unquestioned.

The second is that every choice before us be framed by St. James decades-long mission statement: “A community growing in Christ, called to worship, learn and serve.” We're blessed with amazing people, a healthy endowment and stunningly-beautiful property. How will each option that we consider in 2020 speak to the long-term opportunities for those assets to do the most good in the world?

... continue the creativity, respect, laughter and transparency that best define us

And finally, let's commit ourselves to continuing the creativity, respect, laughter and transparency that best define us. In the thirty years since I first walked in the door of St. James, our scrappy little community has faced several very tough and inherently-divisive decisions. But, year after year, we hang-in there, a people who really do care about one another and about the work we do together. May it ever be so!

As most of you know, I anticipate that my term as senior warden will be shorter than the one-year term for which I was elected. Some months ago St. James member Kerry Nelson offered to stand as senior warden once she retires from her long-time career in July 2019. My interest in serving as senior warden was influenced by that offer. Be assured that Kerry and I will be working together for a smooth flow of leadership throughout the entire year.

Please. Before the next vestry meeting—before *every* vestry meeting—seek out your elected representatives. Tell us what you worry about and what you hope for. And pledge your support for the hard work in which we'll be engaged. Even come to the meeting to hear our discussions first-hand. The 2nd Tuesday of each month. 7:00 PM in the Gallery.

Adult Forum

From now till Lent: ‘Spirituality’ and us

By Tony Morley

From now till Ash Wednesday (March 6) “spirituality” will be the focus in Adult Forum, Sunday mornings, 9:30 – 10:25 AM in the Gallery.

Of course there are as many spiritualities as there are people, but they all have to do with how each person relates to the Divine. That's religious experience and religious practice. Its many varieties find expression in different religions, traditions, local cultures, and beliefs—from Muslims to Buddhists, from quiet Quakers to noisy Baptists, from Mormons to Methodists, from Pentecostals to Roman Catholics.

Is there an Episcopal spirituality? Yes. It too is a house with many mansions, but an overall architecture of its own.

On four February Sundays Adult Forum will explore that architecture and on March 3 meet with a special guest to consider meditation as one variety of Christian spirituality.

Here is the schedule for describing and discussing Episcopal spirituality:

- 2/3 Spirituality:
always communal
- 2/10 Spirituality:
always sacramental
- 2/17 Spirituality:
always pastoral
- 2/24 Spirituality:
always mystical

Pious or irreverent, you have a spirituality. Join us any Sunday and dig into it deeper.

From the Junior Warden
Pat Morley

Out with the old: part two

As I mentioned last month junk haulers took away a lot of unwanted odds and ends, mostly furniture. But much remains, so we will continue that cleansing. For those who might be wondering, the hauler we use commits to recycling or re-using as much as possible, so a sizeable portion does not necessarily wind up in landfill.

The City of Minneapolis and CenterPoint Energy have notified us that they will be replacing a gas main underneath 33rd Avenue in the summer of 2019 and have begun the preparations for that project. For St. James that entails moving our meters from the basement to the outside of the buildings. This work will likely start in the spring so there will be a brief interruption of gas



Water & ice ... likely no parking on the east side of 33rd Avenue until spring.

service to the buildings. For us that means no hot water and no use of the already infrequently used stove in the basement kitchen. If the work is done when we still need heat there will be an interruption to that as well. I have been informed it will not be an extensive interruption in any case. It will also very likely occur during the week so should not impact Sunday services in any way. I will keep all informed as the project moves along.

Just a reminder that we do have handicap accessible bathrooms. The restroom of the former office space now occupied by Mandala Montessori School, on the west side of the

sanctuary, is accessible via the ramp on the west side of the main church area. There is space for walkers or a chair if necessary to access that bathroom, and it is open during all services.

As always, a special thanks to all who chip in time and talents to help keep our buildings and grounds welcoming and inviting to all. If you have not been part of that group in the past and would like to join us please feel free to contact me or just talk to me some Sunday during coffee hour. Peace be with you.

All Praises to Jesus.

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 and 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.



Abrahamic Tri-Faith Exploration

We went to dinner

By Stacey Athorn

I should have asked a few more questions before blindly agreeing to “a dinner thing”, but as it turned out, it didn’t really matter.

As we parked the car, I asked Max, “Wait, what is this place again?” He replied, “At-Taqwa. It’s a mosque.” My first thought was, “Oh no, am I dressed okay for this?”

I was welcomed by our host (one of eight At-Taqwa folks at the event) and offered coffee as we made our way to a nice seating area. There, I found some familiar St. James faces, already engaged in pleasant conversation with people new to me. Max and I were a little late, but it seemed like it didn’t really matter.

One man asked about my family and knowingly agreed as a shook my head and told him I had a toddler...

One man told a hilariously animated story about how Minnesotans are different from San Diegans.... A mother and daughter talked openly about the daughter’s joys and frustrations at her Minneapolis Public High School...

The conversations, the food and our spirits were so warm and lively, you hardly noticed the chilly air.

When it was time for dinner, we moved to a temporary dining room, a foyer of sorts. The normal banquet space is being remodeled to better accommodate large events, which are at the heart of this faith community. But, it didn’t really matter. The conversations, the food and our spirits were so warm and lively, you hardly noticed the chilly air. We had a delicious Mediterranean buffet catered from a local restaurant. We found ourselves mixed among three tables with three different conversations; family, faith, country of origin, favorite meals, school, religious youth education, weather, the Quran, spoken language and what happens at a religious service. These are just some of the topics I was able to pick up.

After dinner, we were invited to observe an evening prayer. Our host explained that while on Fridays, there is a sermon given, tonight (Tuesday) would just be prayers. He shared that the people who attend At-Taqwa come from 22 different countries and speak almost as many languages. But, that doesn’t really matter because the prayers are always recited in Arabic.

Imagine, standing in a line of people, none of whom, maybe, speak the same language, but reciting prayers together in shared faith – in that moment, the only thing that really does matter.

Last month’s *Epistle* included a piece titled “We’re invited to dinner,” which described St. James growing relationship with the people of At-Taqwa Mosque. Stacey and Max Athorn were among the eight St. James folks who responded to At-Taqwa’s invitation to join them for dinner on a cold January evening. Others: Kerry Durkin, William Heisley, Pat Morley, Tony Morley, Ruth Anne Olson, and Chris Opp. For more information, contact Ruth Anne, olson248@gmail.com.

March *Epistle*

Submission Deadline: February 23
Send submissions to Ruth Anne Olson
olson248@gmail.com
Publication Date: March 1

Comments or suggestions are always welcome:
Content: Ruth Anne Olson
Design & Publication: Beth Harvey

The urgency of action

By Sue Maas, St. James Haiti Committee

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released a terrifying report. Among other scientific predictions, it foretells the loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives – “climate genocide,” as one panel representative put it. And the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization, warns of ongoing and worsening food shortages in 39 countries – including Haiti.

Haiti comes up often in discussions of climate change, for many valid reasons and a few less-valid ones. As a longtime member of St. James Haiti Committee, one who had the privilege of visiting our partner-village of Bigonet in 2010, I have for years worried about climate change’s disproportionate impact on our parish partners and their countryfolk.

**... a story about Haiti ...
at best, oversimplified,
at worst perniciously
misleading**

As Ruth Anne Olson wrote in St. James November *Epistle* (“What Happened to Haiti’s Trees?” <https://conta.cc/2DfvfmG> and scroll to page 6), most of us have absorbed a story about Haiti and deforestation that is, at best, oversimplified . . . and at worst, perniciously misleading. It’s got racist undertones, and it’s been perpetuated for decades by media outlets, academia, charitable organizations and religious imperialists. And it perhaps allows Americans like me to do some unconscious victim-blaming when it comes to the effects of climate change on people who live in materially poor countries like Haiti.

As described in detail by journalist and author M.R. O’Connor, the



Bigonet’s re-forestation. Inset: Bigonet farmer hoeing his mountain field.

story has two parts. One is that Haiti is wholly denuded everywhere – ugly, parched, nothing but dirt. But, as anyone who’s visited our Bonne Nouvelle friends knows, that’s just not true. Bigonet is lush and green, nothing like the poverty-porn pictures that always seem to accompany news stories about Haiti. It’s not lush and green because it’s easy to grow things there – it isn’t. It’s lush and green because our friends – particularly the women of the local environmental collective, the River Cormier Women’s Group—are smart, conscientious stewards of the land.

The other part of the misleading Haiti story is that Haitians essentially did this to themselves. Ruth Anne’s piece debunks this beautifully, describing colonialism’s role in stripping the land of its mahogany forests.

One thing is certain, though: climate change already hits Haiti harder than

it does most other places in the world. And it’s going to get a lot worse. As a middle-class, car-driving, meat-eating, air-travel-loving friend of Haiti and Haitians, I’ve got to think harder about meaningfully shrinking my carbon footprint. I’m also going to have to up my advocacy game, big time. For while individual actions have a role in mitigating climate change, guilt-tripping ourselves over the ways we fall short may actually derail us from demanding needed, systems-wide governmental and corporate change.

I’m feeling the urgency of climate change more than ever. I’d love to connect with fellow St. Jamesians, and fellow Haiti partners, about ways to push myself—to focus on action, not guilt. Please share with me what you’re doing—or thinking about doing—to fight this threat. Together let’s explore whether/how we might join forces to amplify our impact.

Epiphany Pageant in pictures



Welcome to the PrayGround (and, can you help?)

by Louis Hoffman

As the Better Space Task Force has transformed the Gallery and Narthex into more inviting and useful spaces for Adult Forum, coffee, conversation, and gathering, we've also opened up the back of the Nave for the PrayGround. Sorry to the faithful whose traditional pews were removed! Faith Formation for children and youth, including nursery care, have moved into this still-under-development space in a very soft opening as we furnish it and develop programming. I think you'll be able to see how it's going to work when you see the setup.

Where did the idea come from? We learned about it from our neighbors at St. Luke's Episcopal at the ECMN Central Mission Area Gathering at St. James last spring. It was St. Luke's response to declining Sunday School attendance and the difficulty of having a traditional Sunday School with irregular and low attendance.

These are issues that we face too. It's been a great success at St. Luke's, even attracting older youth. At St. James, it also eliminates the awkwardness of getting newcomers to the Education Annex for nursery and Sunday School: Go through the double doors, hang a left when you get into the Nave (who knows what a Nave is anyway?), go through three more doors through the Chapel (past Mandala's fully equipped classroom. . . .), make a right, go down the stairs, make a right, and then go up or down. . . .

What needs to be done? First, we need to finish combing through the Education Wing for furnishings and materials. Second, we need to reach



out to St. Luke's, put programming together and recruit and train adult and older youth volunteers to work with Nursery Attendant Quinisha Ryines, who'll be staffing the PrayGround. Third, we need children and youth to participate. I'll be out of town in the early part of February. But I hope to start recruiting people for this important ministry starting in mid-February. Until then, please feel free to reach out to me with comments, questions, and to help.

I hate to use the word "committee." But what we really need is a group of people to be the church's Faith Formation Committee. So if you're a parent or grandparent of St. James children and youth, a parent or grandparent of former St. James children and youth who are now adults, are interested in the children and youth of St. James, or are interested in a healthy future for St. James, this ministry is for you.





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.

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!



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.



FIRST NATIONS KITCHEN

First Nation's Kitchen

Volunteer Opportunities

by Anne Scheible

First Nations Kitchen (FNK) provides a weekly community meal on Sundays at All Saints Episcopal Church at 3044 Longfellow Avenue in south Minneapolis. While all people are welcome to First Nations Kitchen, their primary goal is to provide healthy and organic food to indigenous people.

St. James has been providing volunteers to FNK for several

years, usually partnering with St. Christopher's Episcopal Church of Roseville. Our first date for hosting in 2019 is Sunday, February 24th. The sign-up sheet is posted on the Action Wall. We will need volunteers for these shifts:

Food Prep: 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Bread Run: 2:45 – 3:30 PM
(St. Christopher's usually does this.)

Dining Room Set Up: 4:00 – 5:00 PM
(May include dishwashing)

Dinner Service and Clean-up:

5:00 – 7:30 PM

Please note that the Dinner Service includes Clean-up. If you can't stay for the whole shift, please find someone to do the Clean-up portion from 6:30 – 7:30 PM.

The other dates that we have for 2019 are: May 19th, September 8th and October 27th. For additional information contact Anne Scheible annebillscheible@gmail.com or call 612-619-9692.



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 PrayGround for kids and youth of all ages: Sanctuary
10:30 AM Worship: Sanctuary
11:45 AM Coffee & Conversation: Gallery

02/03 See Sunday Schedule above

02/06 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary

02/07 5:00 PM 3-Churches Discernment Team: Lake Nokomis Lutheran
(Info: hoffman.louis@comcast.net)

02/10 See Sunday Schedule above

02/12 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting, Gallery

02/13 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary

02/16 11:15 AM Food Shelf, At-Taqwa Mosque, 1608 Como Avenue, St. Paul
(Info: olson248@gmail.com)

02/17 See Sunday Schedule above

02/20 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary

02/21 6:30 PM Yarn Crafters, Gallery
(Info: Debbier582002@yahoo.com)

02/23 10:00 AM Building Work Day Gather in the Gallery

02/24 See Sunday Schedule above
1:30 PM Laughing Waters Friends Meeting in the Gallery

02/27 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal: Sanctuary



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