



The Epistle

November 2016

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

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

An Introduction from our Transition Priest

The Rev. William Heisley

I walk the puppy in the first light of day. I notice that the night's rain has coated the now yellow leaves of the three bushes by the front door. Leaves that were green, now transitioned to a brilliant, autumnal glow.

Preston the puppy and I sit in the small room I call our Library, bathed in the soft, dim, grayness stealing in through the northern and western windows. The warmth of summer now transitioned to the embracing cold dampness of the fall.

Across the room is a peace lily. It has often seemed happy in this place. But yesterday I noticed that it was fading, drooping, for lack of water. In my forgetfulness it got none. Now it continues its transition to an unattractive limpness. Unhappy.

I think in the gentle silence of this morning about transitions. I think about St. James on the Parkway and how it – you – we – are in transition from what was, to what will be. The thriving parish of the last century becoming something else. Gray? Wilt-ing? Entering the autumn of its years?

That is not necessarily so.

(Here I take a break from writing to water the peace lily. To turn on a light. To take charge of some of the transitions that surround me. I'll be back in a minute.)

I've watered the peace lily and all the plants. It seems like it's the least I can do to encourage a healthy transition into the new day for the flora that I love.

So it is with the transitions that comprise – not mark, not characterize, but comprise – our lives and the lives of our institutions. We are continually transformed as our cells are replaced, our bodies change, our understandings grow, our emotions develop.

Our institutions are continually transformed as society evolves into something that it has not been, and then, again, into another new something. And we feel the need to control, to wrestle to the ground, these changes that, at least for some, seem threatening, even deadly

I came away from the October meeting of St. James' Acorn 20/20 task force feeling almost light-headed as the power of the love that its people feel for each other and for St. James and especially for our mutual ministry carried me homeward. It was a powerful, thoughtful, insightful, tender, funny, encouraging, Spirit-filled evening. I thank God for Acorn 20/20, as the

work of the transitions that comprise St. James carry us into the future.

I am not saying that any of the transitions, the changes, the marchings onward of history, will be easy. They will be difficult. Difficult like giving up old habits that have become unproductive. Difficult like moving from one comfortable city to a new one. Difficult like looking in the mirror and marking the years: 25, 45, 65, 85.

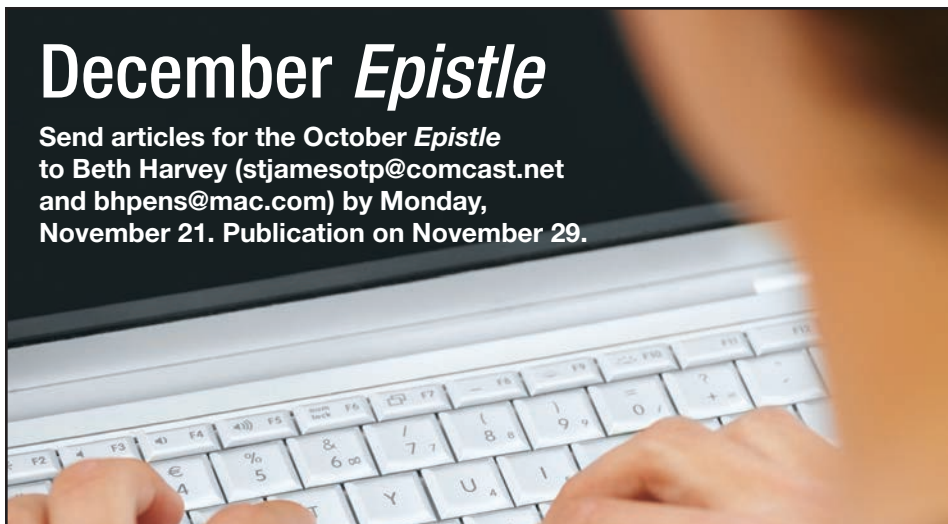
Difficult, but necessary. Difficult, but in the great and glorious and ever-present power of the Spirit of God, Holy.

We know that we will have to let go of some things that we will long to keep. We know that we will have to adapt to things that are alien to our nature.

But it is my solemn joy to remind us repeatedly that we will also be walking together into the beautiful light of a new day. Together. The Body of Christ for the world.

December *Epistle*

Send articles for the October *Epistle* to Beth Harvey (stjamesotp@comcast.net and bhpens@mac.com) by Monday, November 21. Publication on November 29.



From the Senior Warden Neal Cuthbert

Between Connection and Isolation

Today, October 30th, I was struck by William's sermon talking about how we all struggle with our own personal deserts, in spite of how things might appear to those outside of us. As I was reflecting on that feeling in my own life I was struck by how our own desert can contrast with a world full of seemingly endless activity and energy. This contrast can at once seem overwhelming, engulfing, exciting, and exhausting, as well as reinforcing the desert and our sense of disconnection. But today on the opposite side of the desert I was warmed by the beauty of the choir, the lovely space we gather in, familiar friendly faces, and meaningful

time to reflect. This duality, between connection and isolation, between feeling a part of and a part from, are things we all struggle with and the importance of feeling a connection, together in something with others, is part of what binds us together at St. James. We as a community could allow ourselves to feel a mere pawn to the larger forces in the world but we don't. We could huddle together and try to just hang on for ourselves, but we don't. Instead, we reach out, even as far away as Haiti, across the planet, helping people we have come to know and love and care about. We could let an old and charmingly funky build-

ing be our demise, but we don't, we group together and begin to imagine a future where our community can be sustained and even more energetic than ever. We are a hope-filled group. And that's something for all of us to remember, it's something to appreciate, and it's something that we have to keep fueling for one another, because it's what makes St. James St. James. As they say in the theater, there are no small parts! Every one of you makes our community happen! Thanks for your part in it!!

In the spirit,
Neal Cuthbert



A Tasty Way to Help Bigonet!

St. James Bake Sale is November 13th

During Coffee Hours at 9:00 AM and 12:00 noon

Bake your favorite goodies to sell. Come prepared to buy treats for yourself, your family, your colleagues at work or as a gift. Whether you're a baker, a buyer, or both — this bake sale is for you.

Would you like to bake something, but can't get to church to deliver it? Contact Jinny Bouvette

by Thursday 11/11, and arrange for her to pick it up at your home. Phone: 612-722-8229

Email: jinnybouvette@gmail.com

If you can help set up or conduct the sale during St. James two coffee hours (9:00 and noon), contact Debra Ramos.

Phone: 612-722-8229

Email: debbier582002@yahoo.com

All proceeds will go for hurricane relief to our partner parish in Bigonet Haiti.

Get out your cookbooks. Put on your aprons. And bring your appetites to church on November 13!

Two Active Partner Searches Underway

by Tony Morley

Of the five partnership ideas for the future of St. James that Acorn laid out a few months ago, two have uncovered sufficient wider interest to warrant continuing exploration. Three others are still “on the table” but currently without a clear course ahead to actualize the vision that got them started.

There is lively interest outside St. James in the concept of a Christian-Muslim-Jewish multi-faith center at the present St. James location. Ruth Anne Olson, Max Athorn and Monica Herrera are the Acorn work-group for this idea. As currently imagined, such a center might include work and worship space for each of the three faiths, along with common facilities that could serve them all. In the Twin Cities and elsewhere are varied start-up examples of mutual work and learning among the three faiths, with no agenda in mind of conversion or merger. Members of the Acorn work-group continue to meet with local Jewish and Muslim leaders to explore the vision further.

Likewise there is already a tradition of limited collaboration among three

neighborhood Christian congregations — St. James Episcopal, Minnehaha United Methodist and Lake Nokomis Lutheran. Acorn seeks to envision and explore a much stronger relationship, again with no agenda of conversion or merger, but continued rich worship in each tradition and enhancing each other’s strengths in service and learning. Louis Hoffman and Tony Morley are the Acorn work-group for this idea. With support from all three pastors they are meeting with lay Lutheran and Methodist counterparts to identify common values and envision practically how a robust partnership might work. Existing national agreements among the denominations — especially Lutheran-Episcopal — lend momentum to this exploration.

Still “on the table” but less active now are three other Acorn explorations. In children’s education St. James and Mandala Montessori work well together as landlord and tenant, and by sharing information and volunteers, for example, both parties want to expand the collaboration. Rosemary Caspar is the liaison for Acorn and St. James and will continue to work

toward such goals. Financial realities, however, are a prohibitive obstacle to Mandala playing a larger role in addressing the building and budget challenges at St. James.

As for partnership possibilities with other parishes, Anne Scheible has researched the idea with the parish priests at Holy Trinity in St. Paul and All Saints Indian Mission in Minneapolis. St. James has historic connections with each of these, the one African American and the other Native American. Mutual involvements (First Nations Kitchen, for example) are still fruitful and rewarding, but, again, financial realities stand in the way of achieving a larger vision.

Acorn’s fifth exploration and partnership vision — St. James as home for an arts-oriented neighborhood center — remains speculative only. It may still strike a spark, and if it does, Joe Ordos for Acorn will help fan it to a flame.

Acorn meets the fourth Wednesday of each month. It will make its year-end report and recommendation to the Vestry in December.

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.

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

Remember MDG? Millennium Development Goals?

by Ruth Anne Olson for the Haiti Committee

In 2000 the United Nations General Assembly announced eight goals to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030: universal primary education, gender equality, environmental sustainability and the like. In 2007 the people of St. James stepped onto the international stage to participate in this worldwide effort, when Anne Scheible, Karen Murdock, Kurt Hall, Julie Braunerger and Heather Saliba participated in MDG leadership training offered by the Diocese of Minnesota.

Do you remember a lively Saturday meeting at St. James — way back when? Kiva, the Beijing Circle, Episcopal Relief and Development and other options for work-in-the-world. Discussion, impassioned advocacy and multi-colored dots on newsprint. Our leadership team led us through a parish-wide MDG process which, one could argue, was life changing for St. James.

As reported by New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristoff (The Best



News You Don't Know — 09/22/2016) the MDG campaign was never a pie-in-the-sky abstraction, and evidence shows that it's making substantive changes in the lives of millions of people worldwide. Among other statistics: the number of people living in extreme poverty tumbled by half in two decades; worldwide illiteracy dropped from 50% to 15% over a slightly larger period.

For St. James these notions came solidly down to earth in 2008, when our partnership with Bonne Nouvelle Episcopal Church in Bigonet became a reality. For nearly eight years, our work has been chronicled in discussions, bulletin inserts, issues of the Epistle, presentations, newspaper articles and websites. There's no reason to repeat all the outcomes here, but for sure we can look with pride and gratitude at what one small group of folks, Haitian and Minnesotan, has accomplished through mutual commitment.

As we meet the writer's deadline for the November Epistle, it would be easy to look with despair at the situation in Bigonet. Two weeks ago Hurricane Matthew rampaged through Haiti leaving some of our friends, once again, homeless — many more, once again, hungry.

Matthew destroyed houses, trees, mountainsides and Bigonet's economy. But in fact this glass is well-more than half full.

For what this hurricane could not destroy was the relationship of Minnesota and Bigonet. It could not destroy



our friends' confidence that we would fear for their well-being and that we would quickly inquire how to walk alongside them in recovery. It could not destroy the ability of Bonne Nouvelle's leadership to tell us what they need: food for their school children and the poorest of their poor — seedlings to rebuild their agriculture. It could not destroy our knowledge of how to negotiate the complexity of technology, language and banking structures to get money to our friends quickly. And for sure it could never harm (in fact it has strengthened) the network of St. James, Trinity, St. Mary's, Anwatin School, Kenwood Retirement Community and the array of friends, family and colleagues that are now reaching out to help our friends and partners.

Kristoff concludes his column, "... let's pause for a nanosecond of silence to acknowledge the greatest gains in human well-being in the history of our species — not to inspire complacency, but rather to spur our efforts to accelerate what may be the most important trend in the world today." As you read this article, the people of St. James are looking beyond the temporary feeling of despair when first we learned of Hurricane Matthew. We are moving forward, indeed we are accelerating, our commitment to justice, compassion, love and plain old-fashioned friendship.

Update on Fundraising for Hurricane Relief

Thanks to all who are giving — and thanks to all who are spreading the word about the hurricane destruction in Bigonet. As of Monday, October 31, 67 individuals have answered the call, with 3/4s coming from outside St. James.

Total raised to date: \$8,597

Plus \$ still to come from Trinity Lutheran's Fishcake Supper, St. James Bake Sale, Anwatin School's coin drive and more.

The Crowdrise Site is still active:

<https://www.crowdrise.com/meals-and-seedlings-for-hurricane-ravaged-haitian-community/fundraiser/stevescofield1>

Please continue to tell friends, family and colleagues about this opportunity to make a difference.





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