



# St. James' Notes



February & March 2021



*Empowered by the Holy Spirit to be faithful disciples of Jesus, St. James' serves as a beacon of God's love and as a caring Christian family for the community, the nation and the world by seeking to restore all to unity with God and one another and by proclaiming the Good News through worship, witness, education, fellowship and service.*

St. James' Episcopal Church at Mount Vernon  
A parish church in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Dear People of St. James',

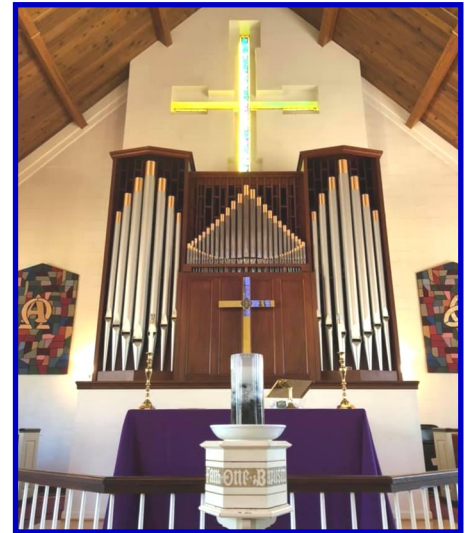
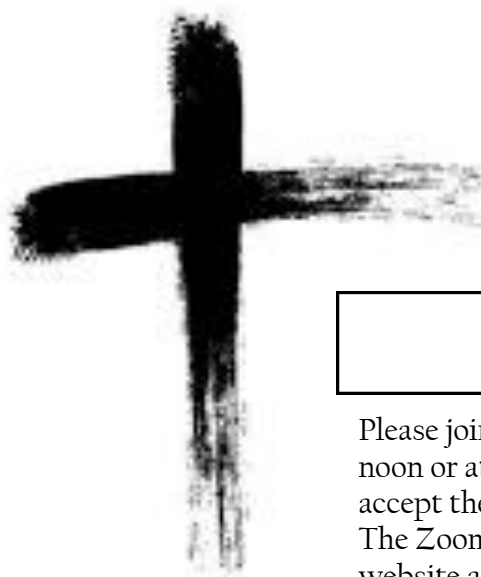
Once again, we stand at the beginning of Lent. This annual season of self-reflection and repentance is a familiar part of our life together.

But this year will be different, as we enter Lent without without being able to gather for the sacraments and actions that support us and shape the season.

This strangeness will be nowhere more noticeable than in our observance of Ash Wednesday. We will not be gathering in person for the traditional imposition of ashes. We won't experience that sacramental gesture of humbling ourselves and acknowledging our mortality before God.

Sacraments express in outward and visible actions an inner and invisible truth. And because we won't have the outward sign of the sacrament, we will be asked this year to bring an even greater focus and intention to the inner truth of Ash Wednesday. We don't have to have ashes imposed on our foreheads in order to realize the spiritual truth that they embody. Perhaps by taking a fast from the ashes this year, we may experience an even greater truth through our inner humbling.

In Christ,  
Charles+



## Ash Wednesday

Please join us on Ash Wednesday, February 17, either at noon or at 7pm, for our Ash Wednesday service, and accept the invitation to the observance of a Holy Lent. The Zoom link will be made available on the church website and via email.

# St. James' Episcopal Church at Mount Vernon

The Diocese of Virginia

The Rt. Rev. Susan E. Goff  
Bishop Suffragan &  
Ecclesiastical Authority

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer  
Brooke-Davidson  
Assistant Bishop

The Rt. Rev. Porter Taylor  
Assistant Bishop

The Rev. Charles F. Brock  
Rector

## Staff

Jenny Kennedy  
Parish Administrator

Alan Moser  
Director of Music

## Vestry

Chris Marbaker (2022)  
Sr. Warden, Admin & Finance

Andy Wormser (2023)  
Jr. Warden, Plant & Property

Mckayla Braden (2022)  
Mission & Outreach

Mary Bramley (2023)  
Evangelism & Publicity

Chad Duffield (2024)  
Fundraising

James Eustis (2023)  
Parish Activities

Mary Lowe (2024)  
Christian Education

Mike Morgan  
Treasurer

Susan Clark  
Register

## Trustees

Peg Iber  
Lib Mueller  
Ray Smith

## Grocery Cards

The Rev. Pedro Cuevas has been delivering Prepaid Grocery Cards to families in need in the Latino community. If you would like to support his ministry, please mail Grocery Cards or a donation to the St. James' office. If you send a check, please write "grocery cards" in the memo line. Thanks.



## Support Rising Hope Church

Please remember the homeless and hungry in our community and consider making an online donation to Rising Hope Mission Church, who supports so many in our community. <https://risinghopemc.org>

## Online Yard Sale

The Virtual Yard Sale is going strong! Items are being sold on eBay and Craigslist. Just a few ideas of fast and popular items: Anything Pokemon, Nintendo, White House Ornaments, Old Star Wars or GI Joe figures. Old video games are also good sellers. Email or text Marghe with photos and a short description, Marghe will answer you. You could also look up your item yourself on eBay. Contact Marghe Bowker (703) 799-1567



## St. James' Book Club



Book Club is still reading. Members will be contacted before each meeting to determine the best place to meet either outside or at a member's house and takes steps to insure social distance. Please call Lib Mueller (703) 360-0561 or Marghe Bowker(703) 799-1567 if you want to know more. All are welcome!

Here is this season's reads:

January Summer's Lease by John Mortimer.  
February 11 The Return of Eva Peron Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul  
March 11 Wrapped in Rain by Charles Martin  
April 8 A Woman of No Importance by Sonia Purnell  
May 13 Jones Point by John Wasowicz  
Summer This Tender Land by William Kent Kruegger

## Online Giving is Convenient!

We welcome your on-line donations through a button on the church's web home page: [www.stjamesmv.org](http://www.stjamesmv.org). You may use this for your regular pledges or for making one-time gifts. You may also mail your pledges to the church office (5614 Old Mill Road,



## From the Senior Warden

In January the new vestry met for a short organizational meeting to sign the vestry oath, choose each member's roles for the coming year, and vote on the Wardens' election. For 2021, Andy Wormser was elected to Junior Warden's position, and I was elected to be your Senior Warden. In addition to our duties as a Warden, Andy has graciously agreed to take on Plant & Property, and I will have Administration & Finance.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Vestry to help St. James get through the pandemic and the challenges we may face. If you have a question or comment regarding the church or what is happening with the vestry, please give me a call or send an email. I can be reached at (703)678-9136 and my email is [chris.marbaker@gmail.com](mailto:chris.marbaker@gmail.com).

*Chris Marbaker*



Look for Zoom links on the church website  
[www.stjamesmv.org](http://www.stjamesmv.org) and in emails.

## Sunday Worship

10:00am Online Morning Prayer with St. James' followed by Zoom fellowship time.

## Wednesdays

11:30am Join us online for 30 minutes of Bible-centered study and conversation.

Noon Online Noonday Prayer and fellowship.



# Mission & Outreach

## First Quarter Mission 2021

Episcopal Relief and Development "Gifts for Life" fund. Your donations will help needy families across the world alleviate hunger and be able to grow/their own food. Make your checks payable to St. James' Episcopal Church, noting what gift you would like to give in the memo line, and drop it in the mail to the church office. Or you may donate online through our "Give Now" button on the church's website. We'll tabulate all, combine partial gifts, and announce the results of our campaign in April.



\$15 will provide nourishment for one child supporting tomorrow's minds today.

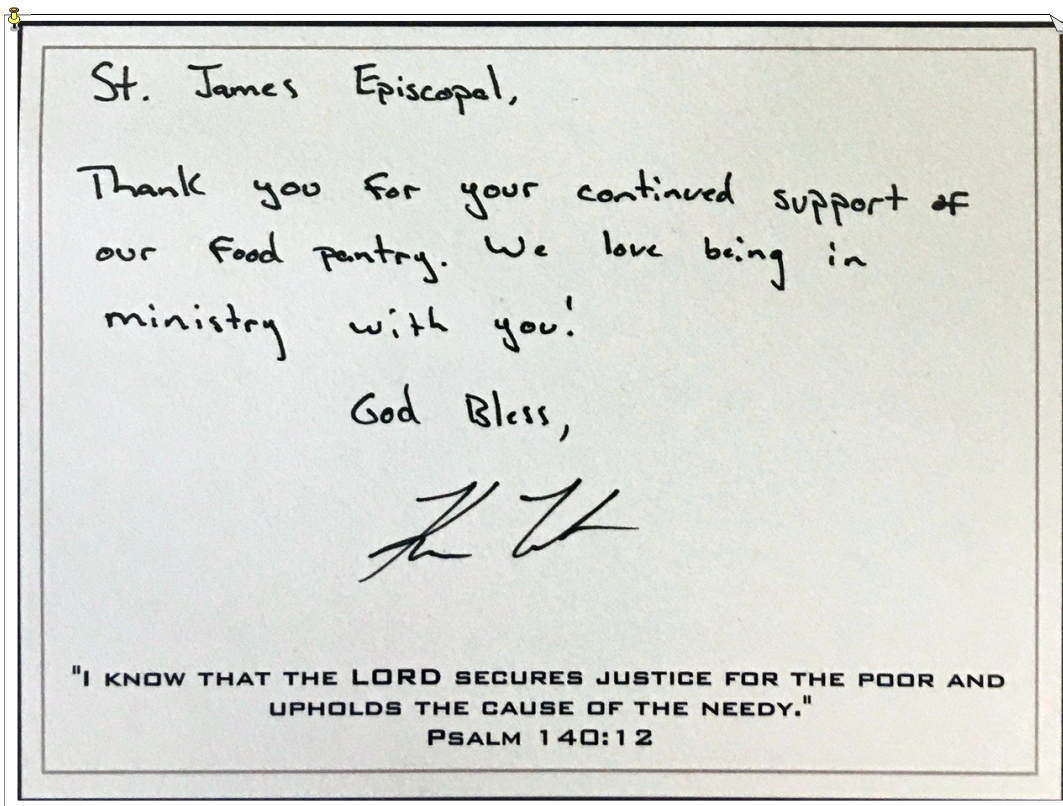
\$35 will provide a family with life's most basic necessity - clean water.

\$35 will provide care for a vulnerable mom and her baby.

\$80 will provide a family in need with a goat. A goat can provide a family with a stable source of food and earnings.

## Note of Thanks from Rising Hope

We recently received this thank you note from the Rev. Kameron Wilds, the new pastor at Rising Hope Mission Church.



# Choir Notes

Dear St. James' friends,

To state the obvious, it's been a strange year. The ground hog has popped up, looked around, and we're in winter for another month and a half. We have worshipped together, but from a distance, yet not lost a sense of community that hallmarks St. James'. I think that the liturgical ground hog has also popped up, looked around, and we are in a season of fasting from worshipping together in person for a few more weeks or months. Maybe what we are doing is the very thing we discussed last year as we entered Lent – continuing a season of penitence and forgiveness in preparation for the coming observances of our Lord's passion and resurrection and continuing to recall our own preparation and Holy Baptism, and continuing a new season of concern for the spiritual and physical needs of all those around us. Maybe we need that liturgical ground hog to keep us rooted in some of those practices year-round!



Epiphany has been a season of thinking about light, healing, and renewal. One hymn that captures much of that thought is "I want to walk as a child of the light," whose words and music were composed by Kathleen Thomerson. Here's some of the rest of the story. Kathleen Thomerson (b. 1934) was living in St. Louis in the summer of 1966 when circumstances caused her to drive her visiting mother back home to Houston. The story recounted by Ray Glover tells of her inspiration for the hymn and imagining the harmonies for the tune that would become HOUSTON during the drive south. This hymn has great images of Christ, the light of the world and is a strong testament of personal faith. It is one of discipleship, witness, and fellowship – all tenets of St. James' mission statement. One hymn scholar has noted "biblical passages that support the text: Isaiah 42:6c, 'I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations.'; Malachi 4:2, 'But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings'; Revelation 21:25b, 'And there will be no night there,' and 22:5b, 'They need no light of lamp or sun.'" Another describes HOUSTON as "a gospel hymn of ... elegant simplicity" and "a folk-like melody." This melody and text may be melodically and linguistically simple, but the hymn is not simplistic. It conveys a childlike faith that seems to be required to understand or accept the unfathomable mysteries of Christianity. In addition to any Sunday whose readings deal with the light of Christ as in Epiphany, this hymn may also be appropriate for ordinations and for a less-dreary expression of faith at funerals as it "looks for the coming of Christ" and acknowledges "When we have run with patience the race, / we shall know the joy of Jesus."

In the meantime, best wishes for a holy, healing, and renewing Lent. Don't forget to let your light shine in the darkness!

Soli Deo Gloria!  
Alan Moser

## Prayers

*Happy Birthday*

February

- 1 Jordan Iber
- 8 Sam Brock
- 8 Rachel McDonald
- 20 Jeremy Iber

March

- 1 Andrew Richard
- 2 Suzanne King
- 2 Douglas Smith
- 3 Mike Nostrand
- 6 Barbara Riley
- 8 Penny Norman
- 13 McKayla Braden
- 24 Sara Thompson
- 27 Zachary Thompson



Prayers are offered when we worship. Please let the church office know if you would like to add a name to the list.

We pray for strength, guidance and healing for: Esther, Muriel Sue, Paula, Lynn & Dave, Fred, Karla,

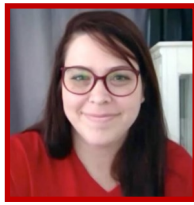
*Happy Anniversary*

March 6, 1965, Ray & Marge Smith

# Your Vestry



Chris Marbaker (2022)  
Sr. Warden, Admin & Finance



Mary Bramley (2023)  
Evangelism & Publicity



Mary Lowe (2024)  
Christian Education



Andy Wormser (2023)  
Jr. Warden, Plant & Property



Chad Duffield (2024)  
Fundraising



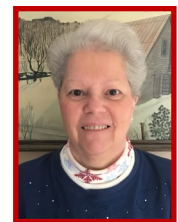
Mike Morgan  
Treasurer



Mckayla Braden (2022)  
Mission & Outreach



James Eustis (2023)  
Parish Activities



Susan Clark  
Register

# Annual Meeting In Review

St. James' held its Annual Meeting of the Parish virtually during the Sunday morning worship service on January 17. Treasurer Mike Morgan reviewed the financials for 2020. Mary Bramley, Administration & Finance Chair, presented the Budget for 2021. Chris Marbaker, Junior Warden, presented the nominees for Vestry: Chad Duffield and Mary Lowe, were unanimously elected to three-year terms. Fr. Charles spoke briefly about the health of the church during this year of the pandemic. He thanked the Vestry for the budget preparations and expressed gratitude for the Vestry and the support of staff.



Fr. Charles and Junior Warden Chris Marbaker expressed thanks to Diana Courtney and Mary Jane Van den Berg for their Vestry service and presented them with tokens of appreciation. The gifts were beautiful photos taken by David Batcheller.

There was discussion regarding the proposal from Fairfax County to compensate St. James' for work to be done (including storm drain easement and tree removal) to accommodate the new bike trail being built on Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway. Motion to accept the proposed payment offered by Fairfax County was approved. The meeting was adjourned, and the worship service resumed.

Due to the meeting being virtual, we were unable to have the usual pot luck luncheon following the meeting. We truly missed the food and fellowship!

*Susan Clark, Register*

P.S. Visit our website to read or download a copy of the 2020 Annual Report [www.StJamesMV.org](http://www.StJamesMV.org)



# Remembering the Rev. Ruth Walsh

I have been asked to tell our St. James' family about The Rev. Ruth Walsh. If you read about her in the newspaper or online you will learn she was quite a person. To St. James' Parish, Ruth was a healer and a friend. I met Ruth in the early 1990's. St. James' had lost its rector. It was a troubling time. Feelings were hurt; disbelief was rampant. We faced a lengthy time of assessment and search for a new rector. I served on the committee to chose a priest to serve during our interim period. Three priest were interviewed — Ruth was one — and the only one who mentioned God and Christ in our conversations!

Ruth came to the job, promising with God's help, to serve us! She was a great fit for St. James' and St. James' was a great fit for Ruth. She helped us heal. She helped us become a family again. She reminded us what CHURCH means. And Ruth became a member of that family!

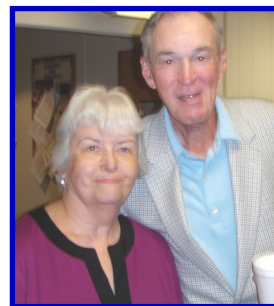
A rector was called. Ruth was no longer our interim rector, but she never left the family. Ten years passed. Ruth helped other parishes. She shared her expertise with Seminarians.

St. James' was once again in need! The rector had resigned after a time of disagreement and discord. The congregation split. The St. James' family needed help! The Bishop decided we did not need an Interim during this search period. He suggested four priests to conduct our Sunday services. Ruth was one of the four. She did her Sunday duty. But, she also volunteered to have regular office hours every Wednesday. She was available for counseling and any help. Help she did! Once again, Ruth was helping the parish heal. Our troubles were deeper this time! With Ruth's help we were once again able to function as a parish family. St. James' was once again a welcoming, God centered parish.

Over the next ten years or so Ruth moved south, semi-retired, became a full time grandmother. So, the third time when St. James' was in trouble she did become our Interim. She worked as the friend she was, helping as a member of the family, helping St. James' heal again. We had another search and called a new rector. His name is Charles Brock. Charles knew Ruth. Ruth's life and work was a wonderful example of God's love.

Julia, Ruth's daughter, told us that Ruth left St. James' a gift — she considered St. James' her home church. She will always be in the family's heart and remembrance!

*Peg Iber*





**St. James' Episcopal Church**  
**Mount Vernon, VA**  
**5614 Old Mill Road**  
Alexandria, VA 22309-3332  
703-780-3081      [www.stjamesmv.org](http://www.stjamesmv.org)

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## **Grace in the Wilderness**

### **Lenten disciplines for times of disruption**

Wednesdays during Lent, 7:30-8:30pm, beginning February 24.

This Lent, please join in a shared on-line Lenten program prepared by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and The Living Church Institute. Over the course of four sessions, we will explore the traditional Lenten disciplines of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, as relevant and powerful gifts for drawing closer to Christ at a time of profound change in the church and wider society.

The series will be led by the Rev. Mark Michael, editor of The Living Church and a priest in the Diocese of Washington. Each session will explore a traditional Lenten practice, tracing Scriptural foundations, its place in our spiritual tradition, and its practice as an opportunity to learn and grow in these unusual and challenging times. Course participants will be invited to engage in guided practice during the weeks between class sessions.

Access to this program will be through Zoom. The Zoom link will be emailed to the St. James' email list before each session. If you are not yet receiving St. James' weekly email messages and reminders, please visit the church website [www.StJamesMV.org](http://www.StJamesMV.org) and sign up!

The St. James' participants will have the opportunity to share our personal learnings and reflections during our online Coffee Hour on each Sunday following each Wednesday program.

