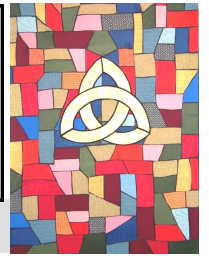




St. James' Notes



September 2020



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',

The last time we gathered in person was on Sunday March 8, the 2nd Sunday in Lent. It is now approaching six months that we have been separated from one another.

Nonetheless, we are still being the church. We are still worshipping, gathering virtually via Zoom. We are still lifting one another up in prayer. We are still serving one another, checking in and making sure that each of us has what we need. We are still remembering the least among us, collecting gifts and donations for Rising Hope, United Community, and hungry families. We are still caring for our church property, a vital sign of our presence in our neighborhood.

The coronavirus pandemic continues with us, and shows no signs of abating. It is likely that we will still be dealing with restrictions on our gathering into next year. We will continue to explore ways to stay connected, to worship God together, and to serve in the name of Jesus. Together we will continue to be the Church, made present and real in this our church of St. James'.

In Christ,

Charles+

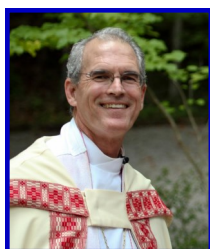


Welcome Bishop Porter Taylor

Bishop Taylor joined the Diocese of Virginia as Assisting Bishop on July 1, 2020. He shares with Bishop Goff and Assistant Bishop Jennifer Brooke-Davidson in episcopal visitations to churches, schools, colleges and retirement communities; the support of clergy and congregations; and development of clergy teaching days around diocesan mission priorities.

Bishop Taylor maintains an office in Northern Virginia. He and his wife Jo, an artist, live in Arlington.

Bishop Taylor was ordained a priest in 1994 in the Diocese of Western North Carolina. From 1994-96, he served as Assistant Rector of St. Paul's Church in Franklin, Tenn. He then served as Rector of St. Gregory the Great in Athens, Ga., from 1996-2004. In 2004, he was consecrated the sixth Bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina. Following his retirement as Bishop in 2016, he joined the faculty of Wake Forest University Divinity School.



In addition to his Master of Divinity from University of the South, Sewanee, Bishop Taylor also holds a B.A. in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, an M.A. in English from the University of South Carolina, and a Ph.D. in Theology and Literature from Emory University. He is the author of *To Dream as God Dreams: Sermons of Hope, Conversion, and Community*, and *From Anger to Zion: An Alphabet of Faith*.

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 Rev. Charles F. Brock
Rector

Staff

Jenny Kennedy
Parish Administrator

Alan Moser
Director of Music

Vestry

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Sr. Warden, Christian Education
dianacourtney3@gmail.com

Chris Marbaker (2022)
Jr. Warden, Plant & Property
chris.marbaker@gmail.com

Mckayla Braden (2022)
Mission & Outreach
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Mary Bramley (2023)
Administration & Finance
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James Eustis (2023)
Evangelism & Publicity
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Andy Wormser (2023)
Fundraising
andywormser@gmail.com

Mike Morgan
Treasurer
mike007morgan@yahoo.com

Susan Clark
Register
clark5034@aol.com

Trustees

Peg Iber
Lib Mueller
Ray Smith

Online Yard Sale

St. James' Yard Sale 2020 has already made \$600 with virtual sales on eBay. Until we can be together again, we will continue raising money with sales on eBay and Craigslist. Items that sell best are anything collectible, valuable, vintage, good jewelry, art, and folkcraft. Smaller, non-breakable items are easiest to sell and mail. Sterling silver is valuable now. Also some books, toys, and desk items will sell. Email or text Marghe with photos and a short description, Marghe will answer you. You could also look up your item yourself on eBay. Let's meet our goal of \$2020 in 2020!



We still hope to hold an in-person Yard Sale in April 2021, so continue to sort, clean, label, and price your items. The suggested price list is on the Church website (www.StJamesMV.org) under Events, Yard Sale, or you can contact the church office to have one emailed or sent to you. Sorting closets, drawers, toy chests, attics, or garages is a perfect activity while you are stuck at home. Items we can sell include: household, tools, toys, games, vintage, books, smaller furniture, sports, jewelry, and crafts. No clothes or shoes. Please - clean, test (attach a note regarding the condition), and price your items. Store them in your house until next spring.

Contact Marghe Bowker (703) 799-1567 marghebowker@gmail.com or the church office if you have questions.

Marghe Bowker

Grocery Card Donations

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!



Prayer list



Prayers are offered each Wednesday during our noon day service. 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 & David, Raquel and her family, Rowan and his family.

Stay Connected

Want a Directory?

We have printed directories. They are updated monthly and you can email Jenny and she will send you a pdf or a printed version. Just ask. Office@stjamesmv.org



From Your Vestry

Dear St. James' Friends,

Your Vestry has been meeting every month via Zoom. Here is some of what we've been discussing.

You may have noticed a new look to the emails sent from the Church Office. We are now using a service which allows people to subscribe and unsubscribe. Thanks to Jenny and Charles for researching this service and getting it up and running.

The removal of the carpet in the hallway from the Gallery to the preschool has been completed. The result is a much brighter hallway and the elimination of a tripping hazard caused by the old carpeting. We can hardly wait to stomp our feet on the new flooring when it's safe to gather again.

The HVAC unit in the Braxton Hall attic had a malfunction and caused water to collect and collapse a ceiling tile outside of the kitchen. It made quite a mess! The problem has been addressed, the tile has been replaced, and all looks good as ever now.

The Vestry has approved several landscaping projects around the church, which has dramatically improved the appearance of the church from the street. Be sure to drive by and see.

We are getting good usage of the e-Giving link we provide on the church's website. We are looking into new ways for non-members to make financial donations to the church. Andy and Mary have a few ideas that they will continue to research and pursue.

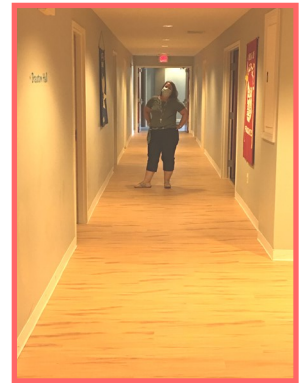
Revenue for the first half of 2020 was down, due primarily to the Vine Preschool's having been closed, but also due to a shortfall in pledge contributions. We are confident that the pledges will largely catch up. In addition, we expect that the Payroll Protection loan will be forgiven and will help us cover the deficit. We are grateful for all the support that comes from the people of St. James'.

We continue to follow guidance from the Diocese on plans and protocols for in-person gathering. In the meantime, we will continue with online Sunday Morning Prayer with the congregations of the Potomac Region churches.

We miss seeing your faces and would love for you all to join us during Noonday Prayer on Wednesdays so that we can see you and catch up with you. The Zoom links for Sunday Morning Prayer and Wednesday Noonday Prayer can always be found on the [St. James' website](https://www.stjamesmv.org).

Sincerely,

Your Vestry



The new floor in the hallway and classrooms. It looks great and is easy to clean.

Diana Courtney (2020)
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Mary Bramley (2023)
Administration & Finance
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Andy Wormser (2023)
Fundraising
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Chris Marbaker (2022)
Jr. Warden, Plant & Property
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James Eustis (2023)
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Mike Morgan
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Mckayla Braden (2022)
Mission & Outreach
mckayla.braden@gmail.com

Mary Jane Van den Berg (2021)
Parish Activities
mjvdb@yahoo.com

Susan Clark
Register
clark5034@aol.com

From Mckayla, Mission & Outreach

I am happy to report that we have done well - under these trying circumstances - with our Mission and Outreach. Our Treasurer, Mike Morgan, reported that we collected \$915 during the 1st quarter of 2020 for **Episcopal Relief and Development**. Most of the checks were given for the purchase of goats, a popular donation, followed by water and training.

Rising Hope was our program for the 2nd quarter, collecting \$1,250. However, we know many folks gave directly to Rising Hope and that amount is not included in this total – but it has been a blessing to Rising Hope Mission Church and they are so thankful. Please continue to support Rising Hope, our neighborhood mission, one that very much needs our help.

The church collected \$125 for Pedro's efforts to purchase **grocery cards for the students** who remained at the Virginia Seminary during the Covid shut down. This was sorely needed with some students stuck in Virginia for months, and far away from their homes.

As I write this, it is the middle of the 3rd quarter. As the new school year approaches, many Fairfax County school children are without the structure and support of physically being in school. With this in mind, Mary Bramley recommended **“Collect for Kids”** for this quarter's mission. “Collect for Kids” is a coordinated school supply drive for students in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). Nearly 60,000 FCPS students live at or near the poverty level. Your financial contribution provides kits of supplies for these students which will be delivered to them before the start of school. A donation of **just \$10** provides one student with the basic supplies necessary for academic success. Please help us make sure all students have what they need to be creative, and successful, in school. You can make your donation through our “Give Now” online button or send a check to the church office and put Collect for Kids in the memo line. The kits are purchased and distributed by the campaign. The Collect for Kids campaign is part of the "Kids in Need" program via the Foundation for FCPS. The Foundation for FCPS is the 501(c) 3 for Fairfax County Public Schools. Please consider contributing as the need is great. We will support this effort through October.

Our 4th quarter mission of the quarter will be **“United Community”** ministry (UC) as we have done in the past for November and December including the Angel Tree gifts for kids. We will make arrangements to do this remotely, watch for details in late fall.

Looking ahead to 2021 our 1st quarter mission will again be **Episcopal Relief and Development**. One last thing, please remember, **“Nets for Life”** in your giving plans.

Thanks to everyone for their ongoing support.

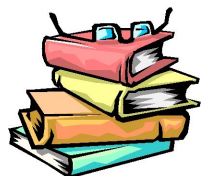
Give Online!

We welcome your on-line donations through a button on the church's web home page: 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, Alexandria VA 22309). Thank you all for all the ways in which you support St. James'.



Book Club

The St. James Book Club is back to books starting September. The plan is to meet socially distant at an outside space. Details will be shared soon. The book for September 10 is **Mt. Vernon Love Story** by Mary Higgins Clark. The book for October 8 is **A Thousand Splendid Suns** by Khaled Hosseini. Please call Lib Mueller (703) 360-0561 or Marghe Bowker (703) 799-1567 if you want to know more. All are welcome!



Choir Notes

Dear St. James' friends,

One of my professors recently asked us to reflect on, among other topics, the greatest hope that we see coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Borrowing his prompt, here are some observations that I would like to share with you.



"I wouldn't have wished this pandemic on anyone, but this has been an opportunity to . . ." slow down, look and listen to the world around me. I spent almost two months in the Houston area from May through July, and some of the things I heard or saw were cicadas chirring in the distance, mourning doves with their distinctive coo, squirrels' nests in the trees, baby lizards looking for a place to get a drop of water or to hunt a fly, and mockingbirds singing from the top of a streetlight. Among all these, though, there was music - the words and notes of hymns and canticles that came to mind as I spent time just listening, just "being." I bet you know them - "Taste and see how gracious the Lord is" or "Be still and know that I am God" - maybe there are others that come into your mind from time to time.

In any case, it's always amazing to me how little bits of our hymnody come along to guide or comfort us in our daily lives. Take a moment to "just be." I hope that you find similar notes playing in your mind.



Soli Deo Gloria!

Alan Moser

From James, Evangelism and Publicity

Greetings St. James family,

I hope this letter finds each of you well, and that you and yours are staying healthy and positive. The Eustis family has been adapting and taking things day-by-day ("hanging in there" is our official motto of the summer). Going out to explore we've found new watering holes to kayak and fish; built more Legos and learned more about Pokemon than I ever imagined.



I'm writing this from my backyard, on what feels like an oddly normal afternoon during days which are anything but. As I write I'm listening to the sounds of birds chirping, the breeze blowing, and of course, lawnmowers humming. These little things are surprisingly comforting; a reminder that although our day-to-day lives have been upended, the world - and our lives - goes on.

In his August 9 sermon Father Charles spoke about these sounds of silence; he went on to pose God's question to Elijah "what are you doing here?" After a few weeks of shellshock, I can say my family has grown together and learned more about one another than we ever could have, if we weren't bunkered down together. Before schools closed, Owen was a competent bicyclist - at this point Katie and I are convinced his next stop is on a BMX tour (whenever that happens again). We've watched our youngest, Henry, build more contraptions with odds and ends than I thought possible, learning that bits of string or paper towel tubes lying around can be repurposed into functional and stylish home décor.

As I settle into this 'new normal' and realize that the world continues to spin I'm reflecting on "what am I doing here," and how I can one day look back on this strange time and say it made me stronger. Finding ways to be at church - if not in church - is one. Being on the grounds with fellow congregants gives me a feeling of normalcy and connectedness to one another, and to God, even while the traditional way of doing so remains elusive. The church of tomorrow will likely look different from the church of the past; this is a hard pivot but with that comes opportunity, and I embrace that. There is much work to be done - in our world, country, church, and family - I'm determined that this COVID-induced crisis will not go to waste. Onward!

Regrowing the Garden Fund

Have you driven by St. James' lately? You may have noticed some big changes in the garden. In the summer months, we have been busy making sure the grounds of the church received much needed attention, to show that the church is still bursting with life. Overgrown shrubs have been removed from in front of the church windows, and overgrown gardens have been cleared and planted over. The Memorial Garden has been carefully tended to and the masonry refurbished; our front yard has been transformed, and the rest of our yard is slowly transitioning to its former glory. Volunteers have begun to clear and prune the gardens along the edge of the road. And the beautiful "secret garden" outside of the kitchen is in bloom and beautiful. The carefully tended property announces to our neighbors, St. James' is alive and kicking! If you have the opportunity, drive by and notice our fresh appearance from the street!

But, we have more work to do! We are collecting gifts to continue the projects over the next year and a half as we curate our outdoor space.

- ◇ Continue to tend to the gardens out front
- ◇ Cleaning the overgrowth in the parking lot
- ◇ Ensuring the Memorial Garden remains a peaceful, beautiful place for our loved ones and friends buried in those holy grounds
- ◇ Fix the spigots around the church to ensure plants can be appropriately watered
- ◇ Have excess funds for continued and unexpected maintenance, such as a dead tree or a fallen limb

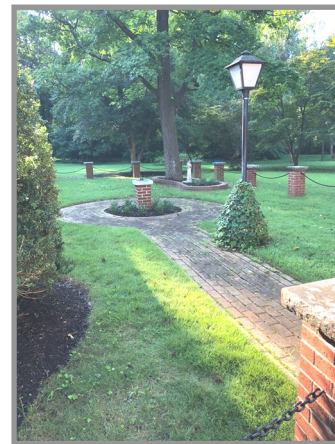
Here is how you can get involved:

- ⇒ Make a donation either by mailing a check to the church office and note in the memo it is for the "Regrowing the Garden Fund" or online by selecting "Landscaping on myEoffering.com.
- ⇒ Adopt a Spot in the garden that you can help with maintenance over the course of a year.

Our goal is to raise \$10,000 for our gardens. We have already raised \$4,000 towards these projects, and we have put that money to good use in improving some of the grounds.

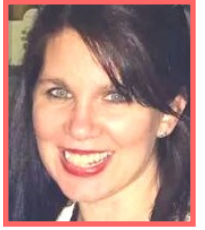
All donations will go towards the Regrowing the Garden Fund. The money will be used to continue to beautify and maintain our parish gardens.

If you have any questions, or are interested in adopting part of the grounds, please contact James Eustis, Chris Marbaker or Andy Wormser.



From Diana, Senior Warden

August 11 will mark five months since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the CDC. Many of us are getting anxious to get back to our “normal” routines. And while I’ve heard people say that getting back to normal “won’t be any time soon”, I am convinced that it won’t be at any time at all. We likely will never go back to what we knew as “normal”, but in fact have a new normal. And that’s ok with me, because there is great promise in living a new normal.



I can't help to think of the Galatians when I think of the state that we are in now. They too had a hard time adjusting to the new normal. As followers of the Jewish law, the law was all the normal that they had known. But after Jesus came and died for them, they were presented with a new normal to live by faith. Yet we know from Galatians chapter 5, that Paul had to remind them of their new normal *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."* Paul reminds them to not be burdened again by the yoke of slavery- the old ways- the dependence only on the law- the “normal” that they knew.

I think we can take comfort in the promise that a new normal can bring. Just think if the Galatians had not embraced a new normal they would not have known a life saved through Christ's blood. So while I am looking forward to a day that has some resemblance to the daily routines that I once knew, I am also looking forward to embracing the new that God will create out of all of this. It's my hope and prayer that you also see the beauty and promise that God will create with a new normal.

From Mary, Administration & Finance

To write this newsletter article, I went to Youtube to listen to some hymns. I have heard of people listening to Christmas music to keep their spirits high. I haven't hit that point of quarantine yet, but I am enjoying listening to different choirs sing. Currently, I am listening to Hymn 412 "Earth and all the stars." A hymn that perfectly gets us in the spirit of what the fall will bring. It reminds me of playing viola in high school orchestra, going to football games, pep rallies, and attempting to learn something, anything, in chemistry. However, this is not what the fall is going to look like for many students. Learning will take place socially distanced, virtually, or a combination of in and out of class. But the hymn reminds us that "He has done marvelous things" and we should "praise him with a new song."



While we wait to see exactly how we will praise him with a new song, I have enjoyed attending Zoom church, noon day Wednesday service, and then morning prayer and compline during the week. Not only do I have a chance to meet with my St. James' family, but I have built new friendships with members from five of the Potomac Region churches. It does not completely replace in person worship, as I routinely go online to listen to my favorite hymns, but we still have a strong and faithful community. I hope those of you who have been unable to attend will be able to jump on for the next Sunday service!

As I finish writing this, my YouTube playlist is on "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah," I realize that as we might all be pilgrims in "this barren land" as we figure out what the next normal is, our faith will guide us there because we

Blooming along the Fence



There is a new addition to the gardens at St. James': a wild lily planted by Suzanne Synnstedt along the white fence in the parking lot. Suzanne has planted a few other wildflowers as well. This one is called Limsonweed and is a type of Thornapple. It was rescued and transplanted from Suzanne's condo area and is very happy in its new home. The pretty pale purple flowers open up each day to say, "Hi!"



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MOUNT VERNON, VA

Zoom on Sundays

10:00am Online Morning Prayer with our neighboring Episcopal churches followed by Zoom fellowship time

11:15am Online Holy Eucharist at the Washington National Cathedral.

Zoom on Wednesdays

11:30am Join us online for 30 minutes of Bible-centered study and conversation (beginning Wednesday, September 16.)

Noon Online Noonday Prayer and fellowship.



Look for Zoom links and videos on the church website
www.stjamesmv.org