

Here's an excerpt from John's and Michael's letter to St. James's Staff:

As we look back, we see so many accomplishments worth celebrating. And we want to offer our infinite gratitude for your long, often unseen hours of work during the thorny and rocky vineyard that was the COVID pandemic. A few highlights come to mind.

1. The clergy and staff provided regular weekly worship through several different online viewing options. The quality of these broadcasts continued to improve throughout the year as the staff learned to utilize this new medium. While we will be returning to public worship, this aspect of ministry will continue to be important as we find new ways to bring the good news of the gospel to the church family and seekers who are looking for a vibrant and active faith community.
2. Our Youth and Children's ministries moved forward in new and creative ways that varied from a virtual trip with the Holy Family prior to Epiphany to a recent running club and a virtual Holy Peeps contest.
3. We inaugurated a new format of worship with the establishment of House Churches with over 150 St. Jamesers and visitors taking part in small groups in the backyards of church family members, and some virtually.
4. Our outreach ministries did not take a break during the pandemic. We made masks with our friends at Beth Ahabah and our Servant Sunday this past fall had over 100 church members serving with seventeen different non-profit agencies from our Children Center to CARITAS.
5. Over the course of the pandemic our website and communications have improved each week, as our staff worked assiduously to reach out effectively and consistently to our church family. We are pleased that this work will also result in a new website for St. James's in the coming month.
6. The staff gained approval of safe reopening plans, which allowed the Children's Center to reopen in June and St. James's to be ready to reopen – which was critical when we received surprise permission to reopen for Easter this year. Reopening plan approvals also allowed the church to hold community worship at Rock Bottom and in the St. Francis Open-air Chapel in the fall.
7. Our fine staff also worked together to provide two professionally produced and broadcast presentations for our two major feasts of Christmas and Easter.
8. St. James's excellent music department worked each week to provide a variety of music with singers in church, online, and in our Memorial Garden, always working and innovating to provide the highest quality and finest music possible.
9. The St. James's Facilities staff did an excellent job of keeping the campus and buildings clean and secure with much reduced manpower and the challenge of maintaining 66,000 square feet and its plumbing and HVAC systems.
10. And even with the challenges of running our annual giving campaign remotely, the Finance and Stewardship staff stepped up to the plate and provided the administrative and program support necessary to bring off a successful campaign and maintain the financial health of the church.