



ST. JAMES'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

June 2021

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus forever and ever.

--Ephesians 3:20, 21

Dear Parish Family,

As we welcome the summer, your rector and wardens want to give you an update on our plans for the next few months as we continue the careful process of re-opening our church and buildings at St. James's.

We first want to express our profound appreciation to every member of our church community who has continued your strong financial support of our church and its ministries during the many challenges of the past thirteen months. We are humbled and grateful for the way that all of you have responded to the needs of St. James's in these difficult days.

Last March, none of us fully grasped the impact the COVID pandemic would have on our community and world, but your clergy, staff, vestry, and other lay leaders were committed to continuing to do all that we could to offer worship experiences and ministry to our members and local community.

No doubt these efforts have not always been perfect, but we believe in a God who is able to take our fragile jars of clay and renew them through the power of God's Holy Spirit. Our time in the wilderness has also taught us many things about how St. James's must be nimble and responsive to the ever-changing needs of our church family.

Our church community has displayed extraordinary courage this past year and while the Christian vision of success is different from this world's, we remain confident that our witness to the healing power of Jesus' love and grace through each one of you will continue to do infinitely more than we could ever ask or imagine.

WORSHIP AND PASTORAL UPDATE:

Now a few words about our worship services in the next few months at St. James's. We are grateful that we are now able to have in-person worship in our church sanctuary. From now through September 5th, we will have two worship offerings on Sunday mornings: A 9 am service in the Memorial Garden and a 10 am service in the church, both with Eucharist. All are welcome. No masks are required. No registration. No limits on singing. And no seating restrictions.

We will continue to offer online worship experiences at 8:30 and 10 am on Facebook, YouTube, and Doers.org. We are actively working on improvements to our audio and video equipment so soon you will be able to view the livestream from our services.

You should also be aware that around 80% of those attending in-person worship report they have received the COVID vaccine.

As infection rates continue to drop and vaccination rates increase (if you have not received a vaccination yet we are encouraging all of our church members to get one as soon as possible as long as you do not have a medical condition that prevents it) we are planning for a special kick off to our new church program year on Sunday, September 12, 2021. It will be a similar celebration to the one we had when our

church reopened after the fire 24 years ago. There will be more details in the coming months so please make sure you are receiving our weekly eChimes and we will also be mailing another parish update in August.

Because we have not been gathering in person as we typically would, the clergy and staff of St. James's may not always be aware of the various health or pastoral needs of our church family. If you have a crisis or need one of our clergy, please do not hesitate to call the church office (804-355-1779) or contact us by email.

We also have a brand-new lay ministry of pastoral support for church members called Stephen Ministry. Nine men and women from our church have received special training to help support any church members who feels their lives have been broken by life's circumstances. This ministry will bring a new dimension to the power of Jesus' healing love and grace and we are excited that it is now available to our church community.

VESTRY UPDATE:

Your vestry has held its regular meetings remotely throughout the past year. Our new class of vestry members was elected at the annual meeting in January and began work shortly thereafter. In May of 2020 and on March 20, 2021, the vestry met in Zoom mini-retreats to organize six Ministry Teams. These teams have been set up for your vestry members, clergy, and staff to more effectively develop and execute the essential ministries of St. James's. We enclose a list of these Ministry Teams, their chairpersons, vestry members and staff liaisons. It is our hope that the chairpersons and key clergy and staff will report directly to all parishioners as part of our Adult Forum program. We also invite all parishioners to listen to or read the Ministry Teams' reports when they are published to learn about the extraordinary amount of work ongoing in St. James's ministries. The vestry welcomes your input and questions.

OTHER UPDATES:

In closing, your rector and wardens remain grateful for your prayers and support this past year and we are excited about the plans we are making for the future ministry of our vibrant community of faithful doers.

At the same time, we need more than ever to continue to hold each other in prayer and to show that same level of courage that has helped all of us ensure that this pandemic has not been the final word on the mission and ministry of this church.

Our third century of ministry beckons all of us, and we must be ready to answer the call of Christ in our lives and the lives of those who call St. James's their parish home and all who look to us for leadership and guidance in the city of Richmond.

Last summer when our rector preached about the famous wrestling match between Jacob and the angel, he said, "And we should all remember despite the uncertainty of these times, that our God is a God of infinite compassion, forgiveness, and love. Our God knows our struggles and will not let go of us, as long we continue, like Jacob, to hold on to him".

We remain confident that all of us will make it through this long night, we will see the dawn, and we will all cross that river together to a new and better tomorrow.

With every good blessing, we are
Yours in Christ,

The Reverend Dr. John F. McCard, Rector
Laura McCoy, Senior Warden
John Conrad, Junior Warden

ST. JAMES'S MINISTRY TEAMS 2021

WORSHIP

Chair: Sherwood Bowditch
Trevor Cox
Campbell Delk
Leigh Hulcher
Ann Rawls
Staff: Hilary Streever, Blake Singer

ADULT & YOUTH FORMATION

Chair: Lile Benaicha
Andy Bennett
Campbell Delk
Christie Hartwell
Katie Morris
Staff: Hilary Streever, Blake Singer

FELLOWSHIP & CONNECTION

Chair: Andy Bennett
Sherwood Bowditch
Trevor Cox
Christie Hartwell
Leigh Hulcher
Staff: Hilary Streever, Blake Singer

SERVICE & OUTREACH

Chair: Katie Morris
Susan Coogan
Newnie Rogers
Tracy Schneider
Harry Warner
Staff: Blake Singer

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

Chair: Leigh Hulcher
Lile Benaicha
Rob Reed
Newnie Rogers
Tracy Schneider
Staff: Jay Sandusky, Michael Smith

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE

Chair: Rob Reed
Susan Coogan
Cheryl Guedri
Elliott Harrigan
Ann Rawls
Harry Warner
Staff: Michael Smith
Development Director TBD