St. James Parish

WITH ST. MARK'S MINISTRIES

Epistle



APRIL 2025

Rector's Message

"What a believer says is, 'I live because of Jesus, in Jesus. The person I am cannot be understood apart from Jesus. I am baptized: I received my name, my identity, in the process of immersion in the Easter event." – Resurrection: Interpreting the Easter Gospel by Rowan Williams.

The Right Reverend Rowan Williams, 104th Archbishop of Canterbury (2002–2012), is not only a bishop and priest but something of a theologian, to say the very least. His book, *Resurrection*, really crystallized for me not only the importance of Christ's Resurrection but of its beauty and promise. Jesus, in Resurrection, was seen and heard, He ate food and could be touched. He said to Thomas in John's Gospel, after His Resurrection, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Lent, which we will be in for a while longer, leads us to the

Easter promise: Christ has died!
Christ has risen! Christ's rising to life again gives us the assurance that nothing can separate us from the love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness of God. Jesus resurrected has a Body and bears the marks of His crucifixion in that Body, reminding us that our life with Jesus is, first and foremost, a physical relationship, as we experience the power of Christ's victory over death together, in Baptized community.

spiritually. Jesus appeared, post-Resurrection, and walked with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 23:13-30), He ate fish in front of them (Luke 23:42), and He showed them His hands and feet. We meet Jesus in the Church, in Christian community, we encounter the Risen Christ in our families, friends, the homeless woman on the street, the immigrant (documented or not), and in the cries of the poor and disenfranchised. Jesus tells us, in Matthew 25, that where we meet the hungry, the naked, the prisoner ... there will we find Jesus. All these images are incarnate, fleshy, human, and very real. Jesus's disciples could not believe that He was there, talking to them, offering them peace, and breathing His Spirit upon them in love and blessing. The empty tomb means that Christ is not there where death can be found, rather He is life that breathes and animates even those that had been dead, spiritually or literally. God in

Christ has brought to us the peace of that heavenly city. Christ's overwhelming death and rising to life again has, in other words, brought to us the possibility of new life now and in the life to come. New life is a beginning, a renewal, a fresh start, and promise for us. The tomb is empty, let us make ready, and rejoice that He who was dead is alive. May we come alive because He lives.

In Christ, Fr. George+

Now, the above may sound a bit complicated, but let me try to make it plain: we experience the Presence of Christ physically as well as

Warden's Corner

Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

I once repeated to an Augustinian scholar one of the saint's more well-known aphorisms: "He who sings prays twice." I was immediately corrected and told that what Augustine actually wrote was: "He who sings well prays twice." I am happy to say that, from my perspective, we are indeed praying twice on Sundays. I say that not simply because I happen to be part of the choir, but because, in general, I experience what I like to call an "orientation toward excellence" in the doings of St. James. I write about this because I think it is something about which we ought to be fully conscious. I grew up in a parish where the mentality: "Only the best for God" was pervasive. In the intervening years I have often thought God was getting the leftovers as our country has increased in wealth.

The tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures is that God is offered the "first fruits." These are reserved for God not only because they are the best, but also the first fruits are most desirable as they are eagerly anticipated. Jesus, of course, made this orientation to give to God more poignant and thoroughly spiritual with the story of the widow's mite. Lent is a time focused on sacrifice, among other things. The season ends with the commemoration of God's supreme sacrifice. "For God so loved the world ..." There was no need for any sacrifice on God's part, let alone to give up his Son to be tortured and put to death. What we give up in order to give to God is so paltry by comparison. There is much to ponder and Lent is intended for that. We spend most of our time considering what we want God to do for us. God wants us to do that because he loves us and cares about our needs and wants. But perhaps once a year it is good for us to spend some time thinking about what we are doing for God and how we are doing it, the quality of our efforts. Stewardship is explicitly about "things." I want to call attention to the rest of it, specifically, our lives of prayer and good works. Is God getting our "first fruits" or the leftovers?

> Sincerely in Christ, Stephen Hard, Co-Warden

Church School update

Please continue to encourage your children to attend Church School as we are always doing something meaningful and interesting. We always strive to have something available for varying age groups on any given Sunday! The past weeks have been full. We have discussed temptations, learned about Jesus's and heard the story of multiplying loaves and fishes. We learned about Lent and Ash Wednesday, made crafts, played some fun games, and made Lenten boxes with things to do each day during Lent. Looking forward, we will be continuing our lessons reflecting on Jesus's life, death and resurrection, and continuing to prepare for Easter. Please continue to check the bulletin for important announcements on planned events surrounding Palm Sunday and Easter.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have been so generous with their time in helping to lead our children. A gentle reminder that we are always in need of Church School Teachers, especially through spring, so if you have not signed up to help, please do so via our SignupGenius link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0E48AD https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0E48AD</a

Faith & Fries!

We usually come together on the 4th Tuesday of each month at Puente American-Latino Pub at 81 South Main Street in Unionville. We will



gather on Tuesday, April 22nd, from 7–8:30 pm. Come for dinner, have a drink or snack, whatever is comfortable for you. We invite all to come as they are able and please,

feel free to invite a friend, neighbor, or coworker! Call the church with questions.

Jesus through the eyes of Mark

We are sharing a five-part series again this Lenten season. On Wednesdays April 2nd and 9th, we begin at 5:30 with fellowship and a light supper of soup and salad (maybe some bread) that folks will take turns providing, as we have done for a number of years. A program begins at 6 pm and concludes by 7:15 pm so that choir folk, if they choose, can participate.

This year, we are exploring the entirety of Mark's Gospel in what is hoped to be a refreshing approach. Over the course of the program, folks will be encouraged to read the Gospel of Mark (16 chapters in total, so an average of 4 chapters per week). We are looking at Jesus through the lens of the other characters in Mark, people like Peter, Matthew, and James, but also various lepers, demon-possessed persons who are healed by Jesus, the Syro-Phoenician woman, and so much more. How is our view of Jesus changed, stimulated, enhanced, etc. by our reading and conversations together? Join us for one night or for the whole series. No sign-up is needed to join. We meet in the parish hall.

Readers for Holy Week needed!

Holy Week is the dramatic lead up to the pinnacle of the Church year: Easter. Holy Week helps ensure that we don't take a short cut from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday and thereby miss the opportunity to share in Christ's Passion. The story of our salvation is held between Palm Sunday and Easter. There will, accordingly, be a full complement of services during Holy Week,



beginning on Palm Sunday, April 13th. We have traditionally asked folks to

read various parts during the several services of Holy Week. To read at a service, please sign up at https://bit.ly/StJHolyWeek25. We ask that you sign up for one service at this time so that we may offer the openings to as many folks as wish to take part. Fr. George will send you the section/reading you will be responsible for based on what you sign up to read (Narrator vs. Character). Please consider doing a reading.

Altar of Repose

On Maundy Thursday (April 17th), following our 7 pm service and the Stripping of the Altar, our Lord lies in repose, in the Blessed Sacrament, in the Melissa Jane Inrig Memorial Chapel from the moment the service is over until the following morning at 7 am. We have traditionally had sign up times, where people come in person and sit an hour with Jesus during this time, memorializing the first night he spent in the tomb. All are invited to sign up for a time on the parish hall ramp bulletin board. Multiple people can sign up for any time, but it is the late night (2, 3, 4 am) slots that are the more challenging to fill. Materials for prayer and reflection are available in the chapel, so that you may pass the Holy Hour faithfully. A brief, special time of prayer will be held in the Chapel at 7 am on Good Friday morning to conclude the Vigil.

Easter Memorial Fund

God conquered death on Easter. Christ's rising from the tomb makes all the difference in the world because it trumpets the Good News that we matter, that we will always matter, that God is with us in life and in death. Easter is, then, a particularly appropriate time to remember loved

ones who have died by giving flowers in their memory. Any contribution is welcome, a gift of \$35 or more is asked to cover the expense of the



Easter flowers. Names of memorials and gifts received by Monday, April 14th will be listed in the Easter bulletins, and we will pray for those remembered throughout the Paschal season. Please use the form below to designate your gift. Make checks payable to *St. James Parish* marked "Easter Flowers". Thank you for your generosity.

Please print the info as you want it listed.
In memory of
OR
In thanksgiving for
Given by

Palm crosses, Easter eggs, stuffing, & a Hunt!

We have a few preparation events leading into Palm Sunday and Easter you are invited to join!

On or before April 6th:

Egg and candy donations needed! Please place cartons of (raw) egg donations in the parish hall refrigerator and label them "for Easter". We are also seeking candy donations which will be used to stuff plastic eggs for our annual Easter Egg Hunt! Please also label candy donations "for Easter" and leave them in the parish kitchen for Sunday, April 6th.

Thursday, April 10th:

We are looking for a few people to help stuff the plastic eggs with candy in preparation for the egg hunt. We will gather in the parish hall at 10 a.m. and stuff eggs over coffee, donuts, and conversation. 4–5 helpers should do!

Saturday, April 19th:

We will be dyeing Easter eggs in the parish hall starting at 10 a.m. All are welcome to participate! We are in need of the following items: 8 plastic covers for our round tables, 3 rolls of paper towels, 10 egg dye kits, and 2 jugs of white vinegar. Any of these items can be placed in the parish hall kitchen labeled "for Easter." We also need 2–3 volunteers to help with set–up and clean–up.

Sunday, April 20th:

There will be no Church School this Easter Sunday, and we are hoping all families and children will join us after the 10:15 a.m. service



for our annual Egg Hunt! We could use some help from our teens and a few adults to set—up the hunt beforehand.

Thank you for your help and participation! Please contact Brigitte Cadigan if you would like to bring items, volunteer, or participate in any of these events.

Stations of the Cross for Lent

The Stations of the Cross has a history dating back to at least the early Middle Ages and was an attempt to emulate the Via Dolorosa or the Way of Sorrows, the Via Crucis (Way of the Cross). The original idea was for anyone who could make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and walk

the way that Jesus walked in His Passion, beginning with His condemnation by Pilate and ending when he is placed in the tomb. The inability for most to journey to the Holy Land gave rise to churches being built with "stations" of the Cross, containing fourteen places that attempt to

mirror Christ's travels to Golgotha. The practice became popular, over time, as a Lenten devotion on Fridays, a Lenten day of holy obligation where everyone was asked to fast, pray in penitence, and say the stations of the Cross in church. For many years the Stations of the Cross varied in number but ultimately was set at fourteen. The prayer devotions for our Stations come from the St. Augustine Prayer Book, first assembled by the Order of the Holy Cross (an Episcopal monastic order) in 1947 and revised and reprinted many times over the years. Forward Movement revised and began to publish the Prayer Book in 2014, which is the edition from

Our Stations of the Cross project from last year is on display for all to enjoy again. The Stations project meant so much to so many and it is joyous to have it up again this year!

Centering Prayer

which our stations are drawn.

On Saturday, April 12th, from 9–11:30ish,
Celeste Calabotta will return to continue our work
on Centering Prayer. Celeste is a Certified
Spiritual Director, Peer Supervisor in Spiritual
Direction, and a longtime retreat and spiritual
leader. Celeste was here in February and now
will continue the work we started then, going
deeper in the work of Centering Prayer. Please
join us, whether you were present at our first
session or not. Much still to learn and do!!

Outreach Corner

Connecticut Foodshare Walk Against Hunger on Saturday, April 26th at 10 a.m. at Dunkin' Park in Hartford. St James will again have a team, The Saint James Heelers. Everyone from the parish is invited to participate in this fun, family-oriented event. The Walk Against Hunger is the largest anti-hunger event of its kind in Connecticut. There are estimates that more than 1 in 8 Connecticut residents struggle with hunger, and more than 1 in 6 children are food insecure. Foodshare works through a network of community-based programs such as soup kitchens, food pantries and shelters to distribute nutritious food to people in need. Team participants are encouraged to raise funds for the walk. All in-person walkers need to register. Please invite your friends, family and even coworkers to get involved by walking with us or

join us on walk day, you can still support us by donating online.

by donating. If you are unable to

TO REGISTER TO WALK OR TO DONATE:

- 1. Go to ctfoodshare.org . After Events-Walk Against Hunger... click LEARN MORE
- 2. Under Walk Against Hunger ... click REGISTER NOW
- 3. You can then choose to:
 - A. Register to walk click JOIN A TEAM Search SAINT JAMES HEELERS to join our team.

You will be prompted to complete the registration.

You will be able to donate if you would like. If asked for an agency or organization to receive these funds, we frequently will put Farmington Food Pantry or Friendship Service Center, but you can put any participating group.

B. To make a donation only to support our team, click DONATE NOW.In the space for crediting the donation, put SAINT JAMES HEELERS.

Thank you for supporting this very worthy cause. If there are any questions, please call Kathy Bullard.

Prayer Team

From time to time, the Prayer Team shares some of what they find helpful, in the hope that you might find it helpful too ...

This month we share a little more on the practice of Centering Prayer. Last month, you may remember that we had attended the first of three workshops on Centering Prayer being held at St. James, and facilitated by Celeste Calibotta, We had defined Centering Prayer as prayer without words, expressing the intentional desire

of one's heart to simply be in God's presence.



There is a simple 4-step method of Centering Prayer:

- 1. Because our minds are so attached to thinking, it is suggested that we choose a "sacred word", as a symbol of our intention to consent to God's presence and action within. The sacred word is not sacred because of its inherent meaning, but because of the meaning we *give* it as the expression of our intent. It will be used as a means of returning to our open silence whenever conscious thoughts intrude.
- 2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word.
- 3. Allow thoughts to come and go without attaching to them. When thoughts come, return gently to the sacred word.
- 4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes. A period of 20 minutes is recommended, but start with 10 minutes, if needed,

Remember that this is not a goal-oriented exercise. Let go of expectations. It is not about achieving anything at all. There is no way to "succeed at Centering Prayer," except to return again and again.

Our next session on Centering Prayer is Scheduled for Saturday, April 12th, from 9 amnoon. All are welcome; attendance at the first session is not required!

> In Christ, The Prayer Team: Pat Clark, Carol Kirkwood, Donna Paye

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of February 20, 2025

Present: Fr. George Roberts, Kathy Bullard, Stephen Hard via Zoom, Linda Mason, Skip Mason, Doug McDowell, EJ Ososki, Molly Sherman, Bonnie Sudell, Bob Sudell and Dave Tompkins. Absent: Ed Preneta.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's Report – January 2025 Summary of EJ's Report

- January income slightly under budget (\$1.5K less than expected)
- January expenses \$6K less than expected
- Financials not very meaningful as payroll changes were not reflected, some expenses were not captured, there was significant upfront cost for the copier change and the Balance Sheet comparison now reflects the merged Parish
- Thanks to Jerry, Dave, John, Sue and all who have been working through the details of the merger

Bob made a motion to accept the report as presented. Molly seconded it. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Outreach - Update from Kathy

- Church by the Pond February 22nd
- Walk Against Hunger April 22nd
- Speaker from Prudence Crandall Center arranged by Dianne Antos March 23rd between our two services
- Outreach meeting May 4th after the 10:15 service

Building and Grounds - update from Bob

- S K Lavery will sell us two (2) refrigerators at cost.
 - Bob made a motion to spend \$2,196 to purchase two (2) refrigerators. Linda seconded it. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Fire Detection System Bob was unable to obtain a quote from ADT, despite numerous phone calls. Sonitrol's quote is \$43,865, plus \$845 for annual inspection and \$57 per month monitoring.

Bob made a motion to purchase the fire detection system proposed. Molly seconded it. Under discussion, Linda suggested that we add a sprinkler system as it is not part of the original quote. The vestry also discussed other future capital projects and grants available from HRF and ECCT. It was suggested that a future agenda item should be the hiring of a consultant for a capital campaign. Bob made a motion to table discussion of the fire detection system. Linda seconded it. The motion passed with one opposition.

Old Business

Mission Statement for Website

Fr. George is looking for volunteers to form a small committee to look at our current mission statement and present a revised statement to the Vestry.

New Business

Women's Ministry

Linda and others are trying to get together in a social setting to discuss woman's fellowship and what a women's ministry would look like.

Newcomers' Dinner

The Vestry will sponsor a newcomers' dinner (hors d'oeuvres and supper) Sunday April 27th at 5 pm. In the parish hall. Invitations will be sent to those who have joined our Parish in the last 3–6 months, possibly the last year.

Good Shepherd Time for Reflection & Feedback We recognize that the members of the former Good Shepherd need time to grieve and we need to support them. We are looking for help from their former Senior Warden David Woodford for suggestions on what we can do.

Chorus Angelicus

This youth choir, actually three (3) different choirs, looking to rent space here (choir room, church, office space, parish hall), present recitals, and be a resident group at St. James. We are negotiating rent (approximately \$600/ month).

Tubular Chimes from St. Mark's "Orchestral Bells" The chimes, a gift from Bishop Laura, will be suspended on a rack by the lectern.

Skip made a motion to adjourn. Doug seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously. Adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted Bonnie Sudell, Clerk

First Sunday Breakfast

Find delicious food and fellowship at the *First Sunday Breakfasts* cooked by a great crew of men of the parish, led



by John McBride: pancakes, sausage, bacon, eggs, juice and coffee as good as Mom made. Gluten-free pancakes or muffins will also be available. Join us on Sunday morning, April 6th, from 9 am–9:45 am for a wonderful time of food and fellowship!

St. James community workday

On Saturday, May 17th, beginning at 8:30 am, all who are able are invited to join us in clearing the east side of the building of growth and vegetation (it has become overgrown) and paving the way for seeding grass and starting, we pray, a prayer garden on that side of the church building. Bring your tools, especially chain saws, if you have them, rakes, shovels, etc. Please wear gloves and long pants and sleeves for your protection.

Easter Flower Delivery

The best Easter surprise of all may be seeing the delight in the eyes of shut—ins to whom you bring a flower from their parish. We also remember our members who have lost a loved



one in the last year. Our chancel will be filled with flowers on Easter. You are encouraged to spread joy by taking these plants to those whose names will be available after the services that

morning or during the week after Easter. Leave the flower basket in the chapel (please!), remove the plant, take a card with the address of a recipient; deliver it and see what God has in store for you.

Men's Breakfast

On Saturday, May 10th, at 8 am, all men of the parish are invited to join us for a time of conversation and good food at the Crazy Pancake, 17 Whiting Street, in Plainville. Come as you are. Everyone is responsible for his own breakfast but let Fr. George know if that is a challenge, as there is assistance available. We



plan on making this a monthly gathering, to be determined by the group, and a time for conversation and growth in the Christian life.

Celebrating April birthdays!

Karen Young Donna Wilkie Kathy Roach Susan Brockman Story Cadigan Katrina Mason Nina Hayes Ruth Torrence Eric Johansen Karis Bittner Filipa Hansen Wyatt Chambers



Save the Date for Sound Healing

Kelvin Young returns on Saturday, June 7th with a Sound Healing program.

Holy Week Schedule

Holy Week, which begins on April 13th with Palm Sunday, is the most important week of our liturgical year. Often called "Passion Week," the week following the Sunday of Palms should bring us to a fuller and deeper understanding and appreciation of how much God loves us and sacrificed for us. As Christians Holy Week accelerates our reflections on the Passion and death of Jesus, even as we prepare for Easter. We encourage you to participate in as many services as is possible for you and your family during the course of the week.



Sunday, April 13th, Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday – We are so very excited and blessed to be able to engage Palm Sunday in a

more traditional way this year. At 8 am we will gather on the steps, weather permitting, for the Liturgy of the Palms. Our traditional Palm Sunday procession, weather permitting, will begin at 9:45 am at the corner of Mountain Rd and High St., in concert with our neighbors from First Church, Congregational. All are encouraged to participate but, if you have mobility issues, please feel free to wait for us in the church; we will arrive at the doors around 10 am.



Wednesday, April 16th at 7 p.m. Tenebrae – Tenebrae literally means 'darkness' or 'shadows' in Latin. We present a series of wonderful

readings as 7 candles are extinguished one at a time, until even the "Christ" candle is hidden, as if in the tomb. Tenebrae prepares us for the coming three days of Holy Week.





Thursday, April 17th at 7 p.m., Maundy Thursday – Maundy is from the Latin *maunde*, *mande*,

and mandatum, meaning "an order." On the night before Jesus died He said to His disciples, "a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another" (John 13:34). Anyone who wishes has the opportunity to keep vigil with Jesus for an hour overnight in the sanctuary where an Altar of Repose is set for the Blessed Sacrament.



Friday, April 18th at 11:30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Good Friday – our mid–day service will be an intimate, contemplative service with short

readings, Taizé music, and much time for reflection. At the 7 p.m. service we will observe the Veneration of the Cross, and taking of Holy Eucharist from the Reserved Sacrament, honoring Jesus as He lays dark in the tomb. For a fleeting moment, we feel outside the reach of Jesus, who is taken from us and placed into the ground, away from us. The low point of Holy Week, as Jesus dies on the Cross.



Saturday, April 19th at 7:45 p.m., The Great Easter Vigil – we celebrate Jesus' passing over from death to life, from darkness to light in a wonderful

service called The Great Vigil of Easter, beginning at twilight.

Easter Sunday, April 20th at our usual times (8 and 10:15 a.m.) – Jesus is risen indeed! Joy abounds as we celebrate with uplifting music.

Newcomers welcome!

On Sunday, April 27th, from 5–7 pm in the parish hall, we are hosting a Newcomer's Gathering to celebrate the folks who have become part of our community of St. James in the last couple of years. This will be a fun evening with dinner provided by members of St. James who are not newcomers (a sign-up sheet is on the parish hall ramp bulletin board for this purpose). Members – who are not newcomers – are asked to bring an entrée, dessert, side, or salad to share with everyone. We want members who have been here for a long time or a short time to join us in welcoming our "newcomers."

Your photo in print or on our website?

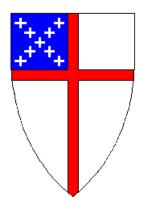
St. James Parish uses candid photos of various church activities on our website and in publications (like this *Epistle*). If you prefer that your photo NOT be displayed, please contact the parish office; we maintain a list of members whose likeness is not to be shared.

St. James Parish

3 Mountain Road Farmington, Connecticut 06032

> Phone: 860-677-1564 Fax: 860-677-8219

Email: st.james.church@sbcglobal.net Website: www.stjamesfarmington.org



MISSION STATEMENT:

We welcome all to worship and nurture spiritual growth through faith, grace and reason.

We reach out to those in need as a caring community

and live Christ's teaching to love one another.

STAFF		OFFICERS	
The Rev. George C. Roberts Rector	Kathy Bullard & Stephen Hard, Wardens		
Blake Hansen Director of Music	EJ Ososki, Treasurer		
Brigitte Cadigan	Jerry Hess, Asst. Treasurer		
Children & Family Ministries	Bonnie Sudell, <i>Parish Clerk</i>		
Susan Deming Parish Administrator		VESTRY	
Cheryl Rusczyk	2026	2027	2028
Admin., St. Mark's Ministries	Stephen Hard	Kathy Bullard	Linda Mason
Ray Smith Sexton	Skip Mason	Doug McDowell	Ed Preneta
Kim McLaurin Nursery Supervisor	Robert Sudell	Molly Sherman	David Tompkins

St. James Parish

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