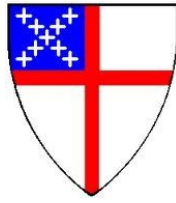




# The Epistle

Winter Issue  
2015



# St. James' Episcopal Church

*knowing and serving God by serving others*

Collegeville, Pennsylvania  
610-489-7564

Dear Friends in Christ,

What a busy time of the year! All of us who are getting settled into our new routines and watching in wonder as the world changes around us. Life seems to speed up in the fall! Not only are the leaves changing and we sense the oncoming of winter, the holiday season is just around the corner which brings the added anxiety of where are we going for Thanksgiving as well as fretting over buying the perfect Christmas gift. This season can exhaust you if you let it. One of the ways you can battle the fatigue of the holidays is to slow down and celebrate with the Church the season of Advent. Take time this coming Advent to slow down and wait for the in-breaking of Christ this Christmas season. Make family time to light the Advent wreath and tell the ancient story of the birth of our Lord. To all, have a wonderful Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas Season. May your spirit and body be renewed this Holiday season and may you encounter our Risen Lord in ways that you could have never imagined!

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Mike* †

Mike Sowards, Rector

## Rector

◆ Mike Sowards 215-251-8856

## Vestry

- ◆ Barbara Bateman, Rector's Warden 610-489-9712
- ◆ Drew Beck, People's Warden 610-287-0642
- ◆ Janet Newman, Vestry Secretary 610-495-5395

## Buildings & Grounds

- ◆ Jean Beers 215-256-6064
- ◆ Rick Toth 610-495-6913
- ◆ Gene Goff 610-489-0765

## Communications

- ◆ Drew Beck 610-287-0642
- ◆ Joanne Tatem 610-631-2488

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- ◆ Barbara Bateman 610-489-9712

## Finance

- ◆ Jon Yenney 610-454-0179
- ◆ Dale Pennacker, Treasurer 610-933-5177

## Outreach & Companion

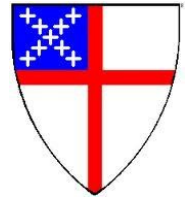
- ◆ Kathy Lochocki 610-585-5586
- ◆ Cheryl Skeates 610-270-8964

## Parish Life & Member Ministries

- ◆ Sarah Reid 610-539-7953
- ◆ Melanie Jackson 610-831-1987



## Crafting a Vision for St. James' A message to the congregation



As you may recall the Vestry announced last spring its intent to undertake an assessment of church properties with an eye toward not only determining present needs; but also to assist in the creation of a long range plan that will ensure that St. James' sustains the ability to fulfill its mission: **"to know and serve God by serving others"**. As we look back at St. James' central role in the Evansburg Village of years gone by we hope to craft a vision that continues and expands the role of St. James' in the ever widening community of the future.

The good news we received from the engineers assisting GKO Architects with the assessment is that our properties, despite their age, are in generally good shape and are for the most part not beyond what might be expected for ongoing general maintenance needs. Encouraged by this assessment coupled with the economic stability provided over the past two years by a growth in parish membership and an increased response to our Stewardship Campaign the Vestry is confident St. James' is well positioned to focus its energy on envisioning a plan for the future.

In recent meetings, the Vestry has asked ourselves what St. James' might look like 20 - 30 - 50 years from today. What should we do *now* that will ensure St. James' historic presence in this spot? How do we plan *now* to foster an environment of consistent growth and prosperity for the future that allows ongoing pursuit of the mission of St. James'?

Over the next several months, we will continue to work with GKO as we actively seek a wide variety of ideas—those that may be considered both 'inside *and* outside of the box.' Ideas to help determine how we can best meet the needs of our present congregation; as well as, provide a stable base for congregations of the future in the areas of worship, education, fellowship, and service to the community.

***However, be assured that the Vestry cannot and does not want to work in isolation.*** As ideas take form the Vestry will need input from each and every one of you. Short meetings are planned with those in leadership positions to assess needs such as space and equipment to foster particular programs. Following the gathering of this information everyone will be invited to a general parish "Visioning Day". The expectation is for this day to fall in late January or early February 2016. Please watch the Epistle, Sunday bulletin and the Happenings email for the announcement confirming the specific date and plan to participate.

Your Vestry is committed to investing the time it will take to gather the necessary input so that we may ***together*** create a long range plan and set it on a path to completion. We hope you too will feel their energy and embrace the exciting promise that growth and change will bring.

For St. James' Vestry  
Drew Beck, People's Warden  
Barbara Bateman, Rector's Warden

## **First in a series of submissions on: What it means to be Episcopalian from a historical, canonical and theological perspective.**

- faithfully submitted by *Fr. Mike*

### **Episcopal 101**

We have been blessed here at St. James' with amazing growth. Many of our new members are coming to us from different denominations. I thought it would be appropriate to write a series of columns in the upcoming Epistle talking about what it means to be an Episcopalian and what are our core beliefs.

The word "episcopal" refers to government by bishops. The historic episcopate (bishops) continues the work of the first apostles in the Church: guarding the faith, unity and discipline of the Church, and ordaining men and women to continue Christ's ministry. An Episcopalian is a person who belongs to the Episcopal Church, which includes churches in the United States and 14 other countries. The Episcopal Church is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

#### **What do Episcopalians believe about the Bible?**

The Holy Scriptures are the revealed word of God, which inspired the human authors of the Scripture, and which is interpreted by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge that there are differing accounts of events in scripture (i.e. two creation stories see Genesis chapters 1 and 2) and that sometimes the accounts in the Epistles are not congruent with the Gospel accounts. We try and understand the setting and audience of each and every biblical account and then dialog with the scriptures asking ourselves two theological questions. The first question being; what is God, through the Holy Spirit doing in this passage for those to whom the account was written for? And, the second question is, what is God, through the Holy Spirit saying to God's people today through this scripture? Those who have attended my bible studies have heard me say that I don't take the entire bible literally but, I do take the bible seriously. One of the Anglican Church's greatest theologians, Richard Hooker, gave us the concept of the Three-Legged Stool of Scripture, Reason, and Tradition. Hooker stated that "Anglicans do not ascribe an absolute authority to Scripture. At the same time, Anglicanism rejects the absolute claims of an infallible papacy. Anglicanism is distinct in its reliance on the 'Three-Legged Stool' of Scripture, Reason, and Tradition." This "Three-Legged Stool" has become the essential feature of a distinct "Anglican Ethos." Its popularity appears to lie in the manner in which it functions to exclude any form of religious "absolutism." Neither the Bible, nor the authority or the Church, nor the reasoning intellect can claim the last word, but together they offer a balanced way to discern the will of God.

*Continued next page*

Scripture plays an important part in our liturgies and worship. Every Sunday we gather for Holy Eucharist in which the liturgy is composed of two parts; the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Table. In the first part of our Eucharistic celebration, the liturgy of the Word, selected passages from the Old Testament, a Psalm, the New Testament as well as a Gospel reading is appointed for each Sunday in the Revised Common Lectionary. All scripture is read from the lectern in a very public way. The Gospel is processed among the people and all stand in reverence confirming our devotion to Holy Scriptures. It has been said that there is more scripture reading in an Episcopal church than in most protestant churches. One of the hallmarks of Anglicanism is the motto *Lex Orandi, lex credendi*, which means the “law of praying is the law of believing.” In the Book of Common Prayer we pray what we believe and we believe what we pray. The best indication of how Episcopalians believe in scripture is summed up in the Collect appointed for Proper 28, the Sunday closest to November 16. The collect reads:

*Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 236)*

**We celebrate the lives of the  
departed St. James’ saints since the last All Saints’ Day**



Wally O’Brien, Connie Eckerd, John Longacre, Martha Ness,  
Ruth Raisley, Tom Tegler, Jr. and Charlotte Keenan

*May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.*

Thoughts from a parishioner on loss: There is a lot of love in this parish, but it doesn’t always show. Trust me, it is here. We are not always aware of the tragedies that touch other people’s lives. When we hear about someone’s death or loss, we are compassionate and we feel sorrow for those who are hurting. It is understandable that we do not know everyone in the parish. Please trust that the absence of communication does not mean a lack of compassion or sorrow. On the contrary, let us be inspired to get to know each other better so that we can help others carry their burden.





*Since the Late 19th Century St. James' Hosts*

## Annual Ham & Oyster Dinner

**Please Join Us!**

**Saturday, November 7 from 4-7 PM**



Come enjoy this classic church supper. Dine in family style on the *locally* famous homemade potato salad, green beans, applesauce, and pie for dessert. Adults pay just \$15; children 11 and under just \$7. Take-out available.



To help make this 125+ years event another success volunteers can offer their time on Friday, Nov. 6, or Saturday, Nov. 7. Sign-up sheets are in Platts' Hall. One can also contact Val Allen, Jeans Beers, Tricia Goonan or Marilyn Hastings with questions.

Pie donations needed.

### Hosts Are Needed

#### Important Fellowship Time



Coffee Hour starts right after the Sunday 10 AM service in Platts' Hall. It is a great time to meet and greet your fellow parishioners and guests are always welcome.

Please consider volunteering to host an upcoming Coffee

Hour. Sign up sheets are posted near the coffee maker.

If you have any questions please contact Mark Ellison, 724-992-0811 or [ellison@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:ellison@stanfordalumni.org)

### Altar Flower Schedule

#### November

- 8th Dolly Faber
- 15th Alatha Sherrod  
Connie O'Brien
- 22nd Deborah Marsteller  
Bill Parshall
- 29th Douglas Francisco & Family

#### December

- 6th Cathy & Howard Maris  
Bob Lang
- 13th Dorothy Salter  
Doreen & Tom Mayconich
- 20th Val & Curt Allen
- 24-31 Christmas Memorials

#### January

- 3rd Sue & Vic Uebele
- 10th Barbara & Bill Kott
- 17th Tina & Jim Shields
- 24th Patricia Goonan
- 31st Marilyn Hastings





## Junior Choir

### Will Continue to Delight

The Junior Choir will continue for those who would like to learn and perform more advanced music. The Junior Choir is for anyone who is in 2nd grade or higher.

The Junior Choir is directed by Lauren Exley and will perform on Christmas Eve and on Easter Day. One may choose to be in one or both performances. Rehearsals will only be on the Sundays leading up to Christmas Eve and Easter Day. These rehearsals will be immediately following the 10 AM Sunday service.

Christmas Eve rehearsal dates:

**November 11, 22 & 29**

**December 6 & 13**

Easter Day rehearsal dates:

**February 14, 21 & 28**

**March 6, 13 & 20**

## Singing Sundays

The 2nd Sunday of each month will be Singing Sunday. On this day during class time the Church School children will learn a simple song with Miss Lauren Exley. After class, the children will present their song to the congregation. We look forward to hearing the beautiful music!

Singing Sundays are:

**November 8**

**December 13**



## Advent Caroling

**Sunday, December 6th at 10 AM**

Congregation will sing the first and last selections of a carol, while the choir sings the middle.

## Christmas Carol Sing

**Sunday, January 3rd at 10 AM**

All congregational singing. The last chance to sing out loud and clear for all to hear those carols you have been listening to regularly.

## St. James' Youth Group

All students grades 6 thru 12 are invited to participate in Youth Group. Our next meeting is **November 15th at 6:30 PM** in Platts' Hall. Come out and meet some new friends. We will be planning for the upcoming December 20th White Elephant Youth Group Christmas Party, always a lot of fun!



## St. James' Outreach House

### How to Have a Joyful and Delightful Holiday Season

At St. James' Church, we're committed to "serving God by serving others" all year long. During the next few weeks, as the holiday season approaches, we'll all have opportunities to serve families that need our help. The idea this holiday season, and every holiday season, is to give and receive gifts, be they physical and tangible or spiritual and intangible. Gifts represent the great love that God showed for us when He gave us His Son, Jesus Christ.

Let us keep love in our hearts and minds even on the days when the perfect "Merry Christmas" we're planning seems more like an imperfect "Messy Christmas." God is with us and in the midst of everything that we do at every moment of our lives.

There is an overriding sense of joy and delight at the Outreach House at this time of year--among those who serve and among those who are being served--among those who give and among those who receive. *I invite you to be a part of a joyful and delightful Outreach House holiday season by participating in the programs that we're offering this year.*

Here are a few ways that you can get involved:

- † Volunteer for 1.5 hours or more during the holiday season, during the months of November and December. Look for sign-up sheets outside the church office with information on dates and volunteer jobs.
- † Help with sorting and marking food from the Boy Scout Food Drive on Saturday, November 21. Watch for more information in the church bulletin and in weekly emails.
- † Donate food each Sunday.
- † Participate in the Christmas Mitten Tree Gift Program. We'll be providing our families with gift cards, toys, or clothing with a retail value of \$50.
- † Be a Santa's Helper by assisting with sorting and distributing gifts to families in December. For more information contact Patty Earhart, [pearhart1@verizon.net](mailto:pearhart1@verizon.net)
- † Donate gift cards in \$25 or \$50 amounts to help us meet the needs of families that have unexpected emergencies during the holiday season.
- † Be prepared to "adopt" an Outreach House family that may need extra help during the holiday season.

I thank you all in advance for your participation and look forward to "serving God by serving others" with you and our friends in the community this holiday season!

Peace and blessings,

*Marialice*



## *Advent Wreaths and Advent Meditation Booklets*

**Available on Sunday November 29**

You are invited to pick-up an Advent Wreath on Sunday, November 29 from the St. James' choir after the 10 AM service in Platts' Hall.

A metal ring, faux greens, and a set of four candles will be provided for each family.

If you have your wreath from last year and just need candles they will be provided.

In addition please take An Advent Meditation Booklet for Families. We suggest that you and your family gather on a designated evening every week, Sunday evening would be ideal. This booklet presents a participatory liturgy for families. One can decide ahead of time who will do what so that responsibilities are given to everyone in the family who is able. Make advent special in the way that best suits your family.

Each week of Advent your family service begins with the lighting of the Advent wreath in your home, followed by scripture reading and reflection, continuing with a song or two and closing with a collect (prayer). Your time together can continue more informally with one of the suggested activities from the booklet or create one of your own.

Booklets also be available in Platts' Hall.

## *Celebrating Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany*



Christmas is not the time period surrounding December 25th, but rather one of three distinct events that celebrate God becoming one of us in Jesus, the Incarnation. During Advent, we focus on the excitement, wonder, and expectation of what is to come. During the Christmas season, we celebrate the Incarnation and try to live fully as God wills by pouring out our lives for others. Christmas is NOT over on December 26th; instead, it is a season of 12 days culminating at the Epiphany and the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, where Christ becomes manifest (present) to all peoples. On Epiphany, we focus on the three Wise Men, symbolizing the many races for whom Christ was born. The baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of his public ministry. In order to truly celebrate God's "Christmas gift" to us (the Incarnation), the entire season from Advent through Epiphany should be upheld in our actions and in our hearts.

**Merry Christmas to All!**

## *Schedule of Worship & Events*

### ◆ Advent 1 – Nov 28/29

Sat, 5 PM ; Sun, 8 & 10 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II  
Sun, 10 AM – Advent Wreath Pick-up after Service

### ◆ Advent 2 – Dec 5/6

Sat, 5 PM ; Sun, 8 & 10 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II

### ◆ Advent 3 – Dec 12/13– In-gathering

Sat, 5 pm ; Sun, 8 & 10 AM– Holy Eucharist, Rite II

### ◆ Advent 4 – Dec 19/20

Sat, 5 PM ; Sun, 8 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Sun, 10 AM – Nativity Pageant & Eucharist

Sun, 11:00 AM – Parish Advent Party hosted by ECW  
(with a special visitor dressed in red!)

### ◆ Christmas Eve – Dec 24

5 PM– Family Crèche Service & Eucharist

The Christmas Story is read, and families put the crèche in place between readings. After blessing the crèche, we proceed with Communion. This service (with no sermon) is particularly good for children.

6 PM– Parish Christmas Eve Dinner

10:30 PM – Carols & Festal Eucharist

Traditional Christmas “midnight” service, with carols, special music by the choir, sermon, and Communion.

### ◆ Christmas II – Jan 3

Sun, 10 AM – Christmas Lessons & Carols

### ◆ Epiphany 1 – Jan 6

Wed, 6:30 - 7:30 PM – Pot Luck Parish Dinner

7:30 - 8:30 PM Epiphany Pageant with candlelight recessional of the Magi

*Please check the website too, dates & times are subject to change at this busy time of year.*

## **The Nativity Pageant Sunday, December 20 at 10 AM**



In place of the regular sermon, the children of St. James' will perform the Nativity Pageant. Afterward all are invited to the Christmas Luncheon hosted by ECW. Children will be treated to a special visit from a guy in *Red!*

## *J2A, Rite 13 and Confirmed Young Adults Present*

**Pot Luck Dinner 6:30-7:30 PM**

**followed by**

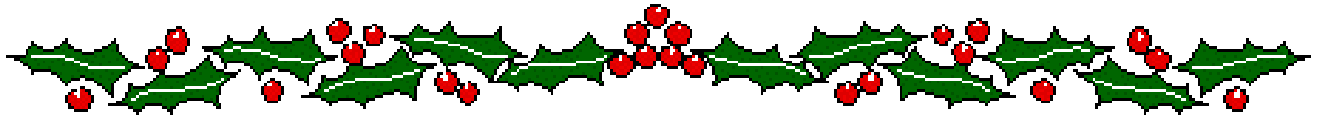
**The Epiphany Pageant**

**Wednesday, January 6**



A Pot Luck parish dinner will be served in Platts' Hall, then the youth carry the service by participating in the readings, the prayers of the people and telling the story of the three wise men. The service concludes with a candlelight recessional that includes the congregation's participation.

All students grades 6 thru 12 are invited to participate in the Epiphany Pageant. Join us for just one rehearsal on January 3rd at 6:30 PM.



# Christmas Eve Dinner

**Wednesday, December 24 at 6PM,**

*Avoid the extra stress of cooking on Christmas Eve and bring your family and guests to join your parish family for this meal right after the 5 PM service.*

Turkey, bread, and beverages provided. You bring a dish to pass OR a monetary donation toward the cost of the rest of the meal.

So we have enough turkey and a good balance of dishes, please clip off the coupon below, sign up for the meal, and leave it in the marked box in the church foyer.

Please contact Bob Gannon: 610-331-5400 or [rgannon@pathcominc.com](mailto:rgannon@pathcominc.com) with any questions.



**Christmas Eve Dinner**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

I will bring (check one; please bring enough for 6–8):

Appetizer \_\_\_\_\_ Salad \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetable \_\_\_\_\_ Dessert \_\_\_\_\_

OR \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (suggested donation \$3–5 per person, \$15 maximum per family)

Check here if you can help: Set up \_\_\_\_\_ Clean up \_\_\_\_\_

## Christmas Memorials

For anyone wishing to remember loved ones at Christmas and, at the same time, contribute to the “greening of the Church”, Altar Guild is accepting donations for

**Christmas Memorial Flowers & Greens through Sunday, December 13.**

Please mail names of those to be remembered, along with donations to:

(make checks payable to “St. James’ Altar Guild”)

Marilyn Hastings  
790 Clahor Ave.  
Collegeville, PA 19426





## All Are Welcome to Attend the Good Book Club



**December 2, at 6 PM,** Girl on the Train, by Paula Hawkins

**February 3, at 6 PM,** Cold Mountain, by Charles Frazier

**April 6, at 6 PM,** The Sins of Scripture, by John Shelby Sprong

**June 1, at 6 PM,** The Secret Chord, by Geraldine Brooks

The St. James' Good Book Club meets in the Parish Hall. Attendees discuss the latest book and are invited to bring along their dinner.



On Saturday, October 3 members of the St. James' Good Book Club attended ***Lisa's Annual Big Book Club Party*** hosted by author, Lisa Scottoline. The party is an annual event held at the authors sprawling Chester County Farm. Despite the weather (*nasty day*) St. James' book club members along with 500 other invited guests were welcomed individually by Ms. Scottoline and her daughter, Francesca Serritella, for an afternoon of food and discussion.

**A great time was had by all!**

# St. James' Community Fun Day



# All Hallows Eve & All Saints Party

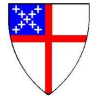


# St. James' Animal Blessing



## Would You Like to Get Involved?

Here is a list of opportunities to be involved in parish life at St. James. You are welcome to contact anyone listed to discuss getting involved, ask questions, or provide feedback.



**Altar Guild:** Members work in teams to prepare the worship area before and after services, care for altar linens and fixtures. Women *AND* men are welcome to do this! Contact Marilyn Pennacker, 610-933-5177, [marilypenna@verizon.net](mailto:marilypenna@verizon.net).

**Acolytes:** Assist during worship service at the altar, lead the worship procession with cross and torches; anyone from grade 6 through adult is eligible. Contact the Gayle Eselby, 484-614-5312 [werd13193@yahoo.com](mailto:werd13193@yahoo.com).

**Choir:** St. James' choir provides music for the 10 a.m. service and special services throughout the year. Contact organist Mr. Ronald Davis, 610-489-3318, or the church office.

### **Christian Education:**

- ◆ **Ages 3 to 5th grade**, contact Laurie Shawaluk, 610-287-0147 [lshawaluk@comcast.net](mailto:lshawaluk@comcast.net) or Amanda Kristofco, [akristofco@gmail.com](mailto:akristofco@gmail.com), 215-421-6328.
- ◆ **Rite 13**, contact Susan Maris, 610-489-3342 [susanmaris@verizon.net](mailto:susanmaris@verizon.net) ; James Thompson, 610-342-2010 [jamesthompson5241@verizon.net](mailto:jamesthompson5241@verizon.net)
- ◆ **J2A** contact Phil Tatem, 610-631-2488 [ptatem77@verizon.net](mailto:ptatem77@verizon.net) or Annmarie Thacker, 610-409-1930 [rrad725@verizon.net](mailto:rrad725@verizon.net)
- ◆ **Adults**, contact Fr. Mike, 215-251-8856 [fr.mike6554@gmail.com](mailto:fr.mike6554@gmail.com), or Chris Exley, 610-948-2260 [cexley@comcast.net](mailto:cexley@comcast.net).

**Coffee Hour:** Make coffee and provide light refreshments after the 10 a.m. service. Sign up on the bulletin board by the coffee pot for this important ministry of hospitality. Mark Ellison, 724-992-0611 [mellison@ursinus.edu](mailto:mellison@ursinus.edu).

**Communications:** Contact Drew Beck, 610-287-0642.

**ECW:** All women of the church are automatically members of Episcopal Church Women. We have two meetings per year and are involved in all sorts of things around the church. Contact Tricia Goonan, 610-831-1422 [waving2@aol.com](mailto:waving2@aol.com)

**Foyer Gatherings:** Parishioners meet at host homes for food and fellowship. Sign-up sheets and details are available on the bulletin board outside the church office. Contact Melanie Jackson, 610-831-1987 or Sarah Reid, 610-539-7953 [reidsrock@comcast.net](mailto:reidsrock@comcast.net).

**History Center:** Volunteers meet to sort archives on the second Wednesday of the month and other times as needed or requested. Contact Barbara Bateman, 610-489-9712 or [bebateman@verizon.net](mailto:bebateman@verizon.net).

**Memorial Flowers:** Contact Marilyn Hastings, 610-489-9728 or [mhastings@ikon.com](mailto:mhastings@ikon.com).

**Ushers:** Assist with seating, welcoming visitors, and collecting offerings during the 10 AM service. Contact Ginny Tinner, 215-256-4170 [vtinner@comcast.net](mailto:vtinner@comcast.net).

**Vestry:** The leadership of St. James' includes 12 parishioners elected to terms that rotate every January. Meetings, open to all St. James' parishioners, are usually the 3rd Monday of each month. Commissions meet regularly to coordinate programs and address specific concerns of the church. A list of members and contacts is on the front page of *The Epistle*.

**Worship Leaders:** Read scripture and prayers and/or administer the Chalice during worship. Contact Basil Varian, 610-584-9008 [jbvarian@verizon.net](mailto:jbvarian@verizon.net).

**Youth Group:** Service-oriented social group for youth grades 6-12. Contact Lisa Reinhardt, 610-213-1425 [reinhardt73@yahoo.com](mailto:reinhardt73@yahoo.com) or Reed McCann, 610-635-2422 [reedmccann@verizon.net](mailto:reedmccann@verizon.net).