



# The Epistle



# St. James' Episcopal Church

*knowing and serving God by serving others*

December / January  
Issue 2016

Collegeville, Pennsylvania  
610-489-7564

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you receive this Epistle, many of us are still burdened by a contentious and polarizing political campaign. What is for certain is that we in this country are extremely divided. What makes matters worse is that we are going into our holiday season with all the pressures and busyness that the season brings. I know every year I have cautioned us not to be sucked into the prevalent culture that our secular society deems necessary for the Christmas season. Remember we are celebrating the Incarnation of God in Christ! Jesus was born into a world torn by occupation and political turmoil. Israel at the time of Christ was a riotous place full of uncertainty and violence. Jesus broke into that world preaching a message of peace and reconciliation. The celebration of his birth should remind us of that message and challenge us to be “peace-makers” and people who strive for unity and love within the midst of chaos. As we begin to observe the season of Advent, a time of Holy Waiting, of anticipating what God has in store for our lives, let us be more committed than ever to slow down, to take time to be with family and loved ones and to be models to this frantic and rushing world. Make family time to light the Advent wreath and tell the ancient story of the Incarnation of God in the form of the Christ child. To all, have a wonderful Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas Season. May your spirit and soul be transformed this Holiday season and may you encounter the Risen Christ, God incarnate this holiday season!

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Mike* ☩

Mike Sowards, Rector

## Rector

◆ Mike Sowards 215-251-8856

## Vestry

◆ Barbara Bateman, Rector's Warden  
610-489-9712

◆ Jon Yenney, Vestry Secretary  
610-454-0179

## Buildings & Grounds

◆ Jean Beers 215-256-6064

◆ Rick Toth 610-495-6913

◆ Gene Goff 610-489-0765

## Communications

◆ Barbara Bateman 610-489-9712

## Education

◆ Mike Sowards 215-251-8856

## Finance

◆ Chris Kristofco 215-272-1910

◆ Dale Pennapacker, Treasurer  
610-933-5177

## Outreach & Companion

◆ Kathy Lochocki 610-585-5586

◆ Jackie Dahlen 610-792-0935

## Parish Life & Member Ministries

◆ Sarah Reid 610-539-7953

◆ Melanie Jackson 610-831-1987

◆ Joanne Tatem 610-631-2488



## Vestry Highlights



At the August Vestry Retreat St. James' Vestry discussed the need to keep the members of our congregation apprised of issues affecting the parish. The decision was made to run an article under the title "Vestry Highlights" in each St. James' Epistle. This will not be a detailed report but will, as the title indicates, highlight actions taken or projects underway. Note that final approved Vestry meeting minutes are available on the St. James' website. We hope that you, our parish members, will find this information of use in understanding the day to day work that is involved with keeping the parish functioning efficiently; and, armed with this knowledge, that you will find ways to fulfill your commitment to the ministry of St. James'. If at any time you wish more detail regarding specific information provided, please do not hesitate to contact a member of your Vestry.

### Actions taken: **October & November**

- ◆ Buildings and Grounds received approval to contract for the following work: repair and improvement of the concrete walkway at the back office entrance to the building, exterior painting and repair of Platts Hall and parish hall windows, and installation of aluminum snow guards to metal roof over the choir room and nursery. Work will begin in the near future to replace doors between the parish hall and the Evansburg Road entrance to the building. This is to be done to increase building security.
- ◆ A standard operating procedure was established for receiving and approving Eagle Scout projects.
- ◆ A new approach to this year's Stewardship campaign was developed with a focus on giving with an "attitude of gratitude". The 2017 campaign kick off was a Ministry Fair on October 22/23, included a 5-week sermon series on thankfulness and giving from Fr. Mike and culminated with the ingathering of pledges on November 19/20. As of the ingathering 73 pledges have been received.
- ◆ Treasurer noted that the mandatory diocesan assessment for 2017 is \$15,321.00. Approval was given to pledge \$3500.00 to the 2017 diocesan program budget. A new formula for giving has been developed by the diocese that combines parish mandatory and program giving. This will allow parishes to better assess their gifts on a percentage basis. St. James' intends to develop a plan that will allow giving to a 10% tithe to the diocese over the next five years.
- ◆ The initial payment from the Marsteller estate should be received by the end of the year. A future celebration of Deb Marsteller's gift to the parish will be held at an appropriate time.
- ◆ Funds from the D'Lauro account will be used to satisfy the 2016 pilgrimage account. Moving forward it is intended that each pilgrimage be self supporting with cost divided equally between individual contribution, fundraising, and Vestry contribution.
- ◆ Due to serious conversion issues with the buyout of First Niagara Bank by Key Bank the decision has been made to transfer all parish accounts to Phoenixville Federal Bank.
- ◆ A revised and streamlined Communications Request Form is available on the parish website for immediate use when requesting building use and/or internal advertising of parish events.
- ◆ A proposal from Impact Stewardship Resources was accepted to conduct a feasibility study to determine parish readiness to move forward with Phase I of the St. James' Master Plan.
- ◆ The Master Plan was presented to the Lower Providence Township Planning Commission on October 26 with a follow up to township representatives on November 10. These were the first of numerous meetings that will take place with township officials before approval is granted for the Outreach House project.
- ◆ Commendation given to Carole Exley for her work at the Outreach House. Under Carole's direction the Outreach House has been awarded a \$7000.00 grant from Healthspark Foundation for the use of technology to enhance efficiency and service to clients.

# The Season of Giving

## Earn Pennies for St. James' and Others

Did you know there is a simple and easy way to add small amounts of money to the parish general fund at no cost to you?

- † If you shop Redner's Markets – collected receipt tapes are accepted in Redner's tape rebate program that supports local charities. A percentage is given directly to St. James'.
- † The Main Street Café in Royersford will donate 10% of your total bill to St. James'. Simply tell them you are a parish member at check out. A rebate periodically arrives at the parish office.
- † Betty Crocker box tops and metal tabs from soda cans are being collected for use by a local school and Ronald McDonald House to redeem for merchandise.



Simple – easy – no cost!

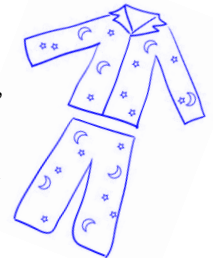
*Hardest part is remembering!*

We hope this gentle reminder helps



## December 1st — Annual Pajama Drive

For the past three years we have collected NEW pajamas for children, teens and adults, both male and female in all sizes! Please help us to reach a goal of 125 pairs this year. We need to have these pajamas by **December 1st**. Please put them in the box provided by the coat rack.



## Faberware Stamps at Acme



Right now through January Acme stores are giving stamps toward free/ or partial payment for Faberware cookware. When you shop at Acme they will give you a stamp for every \$10 purchase. (If you tell them you are purchasing food for the food pantry, some clerks give us extra ones). Please put any collected stamps in an envelope in Jackie Dahlen's, Carole Exley's or Kathy Lochocki's mailbox. We will use them to get free cookware for our clients at the Outreach House. Cookware is always in high demand.

**Thank you!**

## Blue Jean Sunday

December 4



Consider coming to service in your casual “cleaning” clothes. Together we will work to prepare the inside and outside of the church for the holidays. Any help and time you can offer is appreciated. Work starts after coffee hour and ends with a light lunch.

Feel free to contact Rick Toth 610-495-6913, Jean Beers 215-256-6064 or Gene Goff 610-489-0765 with any questions.

## ECW Holiday Gathering

### Ornament Exchange

Tuesday, December 6

Platts’ Hall at 7 PM

All women of the church are welcome and encouraged to join us for fun and fellowship in Platts’ Hall on Tuesday December 6th at 7 PM.

Please bring a wrapped ornament to exchange. The evening will be a festive kick off to the holidays.

**Hope to see you there!**



## The Good Book Club

Wednesday, December 7

Platts’ Hall at 6 PM

*The Chaperone*, by *Laura Moriarty*

Bring along your dinner and beverage beginning at 6 PM, then at 6:30 PM we will decide on the future book titles for February, April and June.



## Foyer Gatherings

Saturday, December 10 at 7:30 PM

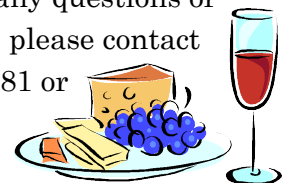
**Hosts: the Branco family**

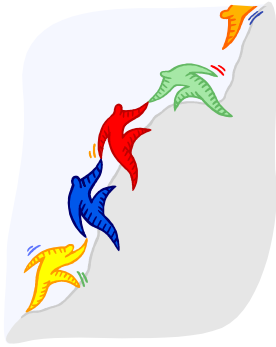
*Please bring an appetizer and a beverage of choice to share & an item for the Outreach House.*

Saturday, January 14 at 7:30 PM

**Hosts: Deb DiSanto & Ned Travis**

Foyer Gatherings are informal get togethers at the host’s home for fellowship. They are on the 2nd Saturday of the month and begin at 7:30 PM. The sign up sheet for hosting is on the bulletin board in the back hallway. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Melanie Jackson at 610-952-8681 or [mljackson821@gmail.com](mailto:mljackson821@gmail.com).





## Outreach House Awarded Technology

The fourth quarter is a busy time at the Outreach House as we prepare to serve our clients during the holiday season. Everything we do is with our clients' best interests in mind. How can we serve them better? What will be the most efficient way to do things? These thoughts led me to see the need for technology.

I discovered a company that provides software to be used by food pantries. It will allow us to "check-in" clients efficiently and securely. *Our current system involves a box with large index cards.* Computers with the proper software will be a HUGE step forward for our mission. So that we could obtain this needed technology I approached The Healthspark Foundation in Colmar, Pa. This foundation identifies, selects and invests in programs and agencies that improve the health, welfare and quality of life of the community. In October, I applied for a grant and called it Technology is our friend. After some waiting, word was received that we were awarded the grant!

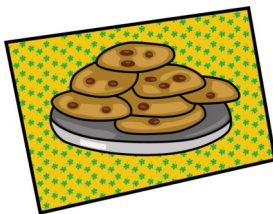
The Healthspark Foundation is gifting the Outreach House \$7,000 to help us achieve our technology goals. We will be purchasing Surface Notebooks, a 2 year subscription to *pantryworx* software, 2 years of internet access, "swipe card system", a copier/printer, ink, paper and a shredder to keep confidential information secure. This is such exciting news for the Outreach House and we look forward to using this new technology to best serve our clients.

**Come and see what God has led us to do as we serve others in our community!**

- Carole Exley, Director Outreach House

## December & January Soup Kitchen at St. Mary's

Cookie donations are welcome and appreciated! Simply place the cookies in the church kitchen the night before Saturday delivery and mark them "For St. Mary's".



December cookie: **Your Choice/Assorted**

January cookie: **Chocolate Chip**

Please contact Altheda Anduze 610-342-2010 with any questions

## Another Successful Ham & Oyster Dinner

We are **THANKFUL** and **GRATEFUL** for all the volunteers who helped make the 2016 Ham & Oyster Dinner such a HUGE SUCCESS — **284 meals served! \$2,100 dollars raised!**

Whether you worked during the two days needed to prepare food, saw that food was plated in the kitchen, served in the dining room, came out to clean up the aftermath or purchased tickets and enjoyed the meal your support is appreciated. This event has been sponsored by the ECW for more than 100 years Ham & Oyster is truly an all parish event.



## 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 Sarah Reid, [reidsrock@comcast.net](mailto:reidsrock@comcast.net)



## *Advent Wreaths and Advent Meditation Booklets*

**Available on Sunday November 27**

If you don't have your advent wreath from last year, you are invited to pick-up an Advent Wreath on Sunday, November 27 after the 10 AM service in Platts' Hall. 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 26/27

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

Sun, 10 AM – Advent Wreath Pick-up after Service

### ◆ Advent 2 – Dec 3/4

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

### ◆ Advent 3 – Dec 10/11

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

### ◆ Advent 4 – Dec 17/18

Sat, 1:30-3:30 - Pageant practice

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

Sun, 10 AM – Nativity Pageant & Eucharist

Sun, 11:00 AM – All Parish Potluck

### ◆ 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 – Dec 31 & Jan 1

Sat, 5PM; Sun 8 AM - Evening and Morning Prayer Rev. Deacon Dennis Coleman

### ◆ Epiphany 1 — Jan 6

Friday, 7:30 PM— Epiphany Service for the Valley Forge Deanery at Epiphany Royersford

### ◆ Epiphany 1 – Jan 8

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

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



## The Nativity Pageant

**December 18 at 10:00 AM**

In place of the regular sermon, the children of St. James' will perform the Nativity Pageant. Afterward all are invited to the Platts' Hall for an ALL PARISH POTLUCK. A variety of food items as well as help with set-up and clean-up will be needed. Please look for the sign-up sheets in Platts' Hall.

**We hope you join us for this festive event!**

**Please note: practice for the Nativity Pageant is Saturday, December 17 from 1:30-3:30 PM**



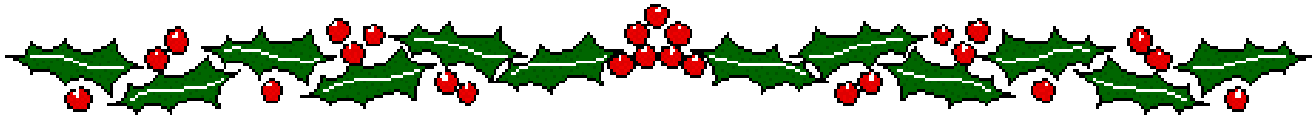
## Christmas Memorials

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 until **Sunday, December 18**.

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



# Christmas Eve Dinner

**Saturday, 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 Pennapacker, 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:** Contact Fr. Mike, 215-251-8856 [fr.mike6554@gmail.com](mailto:fr.mike6554@gmail.com).

**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. Sarah Reid, [reidsrock@comcast.net](mailto:reidsrock@comcast.net).

**Communications:** Contact Barbara Bateman, 610-489-9712 [bebateman@verizon.net](mailto:bebateman@verizon.net)

**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:** Contact Barbara Bateman, 610-489-9712 or [bebateman@verizon.net](mailto:bebateman@verizon.net).

**Memorial Flowers:** Contact Marilyn Hastings, 610-489-9728 or [marilyn.hastings@verizon.net](mailto:marilyn.hastings@verizon.net).

**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).

# Calendar Highlights

## December

- **Services Nov 26/27** - Sat, 5 PM ; Sun, 8 & 10 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II  
Sun, 10 AM – Advent Wreath Pick-up after Service
- **Services Dec 3/4** - Sat, 5 PM ; Sun, 8 & 10 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- Dec 4 - Sun, 11 AM Blue Jean Sunday
- Dec 6 - Tues, 7 PM ECW Ornament Exchange Fellowship Party
- Dec 7 - Wed, 7 PM The Good Book Club
- **Services Dec 10/11** - Sat, 5 pm ; Sun, 8 & 10 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- Dec 10 - Sat, 7:30 PM Foyer Gathering at the Brancos
- **Services Dec 17/18** - Sat, 5 PM ; Sun, 8 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II ; Sun, 10 AM – Nativity Pageant & Eucharist
- Dec 17 - Sat, 1:30-3:30 - Nativity Pageant practice
- Dec 18 - Sun, 11 AM – All Parish Potluck
- **Services Dec 24** - 5 PM – Family Crèche Service & Eucharist; 10:30 PM – Carols & Festal Eucharist
- Dec 24 - 6 PM – Parish Christmas Eve Dinner
- **Services Dec 31** - 5PM — Evening prayer with Rev. Dennis Coleman

## January

- **Services Jan 1** - Sun, 8 AM – Morning prayer with Rev. Dennis Coleman
- **Services Jan 8** - Sat, 5 PM; Sun, 8 & 10AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- Jan 6 Epiphany, Friday, 7:30 PM Epiphany Service for the Valley Forge Deanery at Epiphany Royersford
- Jan 14 - Sat, 7:30 PM Foyer Gathering at DiSanto / Travis home