

The **Epistle**



St. James' **Episcopal Church**

knowing and serving God by serving others

Collegeville, Pennsylvania 610-489-7564

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Don't forget to register

your children for class!

Please register by

September 8th.

A Message from Fr. Mike

Dear Friends in Christ.

I hope you have had a relaxing and enjoyable summer! With this special "Education Epistle" we turn our attention to the upcoming program year. It's time to put away our summer toys and trips to the beach - it's time to get back to work! As we begin another Christian Education year, I would like to encourage all of us to return to our commitment to Christ and to each other. Let us recommit to read scripture and fulfill our baptismal promise to "continue in the apostle's teaching." (BCP 304) Once again, I reiterate that Christian Education is not just for kids! I call on all of us at St. James' to participate in Christian Education this year, through teaching or attending classes.

Of course, a new program year brings new opportunities! We here at St. James' are pleased to have our new Christian Education Director, Lauren Exley, on staff with us this year. The work and commitment Lauren brings to this position will be obvious as you read this Epistle. Check out the "What's New" section to see what else is in store for the 2017 - 2018 year!

Remember, now is the time to get back to regular worship! Take the time to come to Church and bring an attitude of gratitude. There is much here at St. James' in which to be thankful. Our plans to repair the church and to build our new Outreach House continue to move forward. We will be starting our Capital Campaign to fund these endeavors in January. God is continuing to bless us with new families here at St. James' and bless our outreach initiatives to our community. May the Holy Spirit of God bless all our efforts in this upcoming program year and may you find the spiritual blessing you need from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

In Love,

Fr. Mike+

About St. James' Education Program

The Education program at St. James' Episcopal Church includes programs for children, youth, and adults. Formal instruction is imperative to the spiritual growth of all! Children participate in a structured curriculum, designed to expose the child to all areas of the Christian faith. Young adults participate in classes to prepare for their future adult Christian life. Adults are encouraged to attend a variety of classes to continue the study of their faith.

Youth through Adults are offered many opportunities to serve before, during, and following worship. Participating in worship from a young age creates an involved Episcopalian in the years to come. Opportunities to serve include Junior Choir, Lectors, Acolytes, Altar Guild, and Adult Choir.

This Epistle will give you information about available classes for youth and adults, as well as service opportunities. Check out "What's New?" to discover more about this exciting program! General information about special events throughout the year is also available.

What's New?

Read all about the exciting 2017-2018 school year!

- ⇒ Classes are now offered for all students in Pre-Kindergarten—12th Grade!
- ⇒ All youth classes (including Middle School and High School classes) meet from 10:00am—10:30am.
- ⇒ Parents, students, and teachers begin together in the 10am Worship service. Teachers and students will be dismissed to class following the opening hymn.
- ⇒ There is a new curriculum for all grades, including Middle School and High School.
- ⇒ There are <u>three</u> adult education programs! Choose between programs offered on Sunday morning, Wednesday evening, or Thursday morning.
- ⇒ Those preparing for Confirmation will attend a dedicated "Confirmation Class." Occurring from 9:15—9:45am, the course will be offered for 6-weeks prior to the Bishop's annual visit. All are welcome, including those already confirmed!
- ⇒ There is a new service opportunity for those in 2nd—5th grade: the Rector's Cross! Youth 6th grade and up are also encouraged to join Altar Guild!
- ⇒ The Pilgrimage is open to all confirmed members, 9th Grade –Adult.

Meet Lauren Exley!

The New Director of Education



Lauren Exley is excited to join the church staff as the Director of Education. In consultation with Father Mike, Lauren will oversee all aspects of St. James' Education Program, including scheduling, curriculum, and administrative tasks. Summer was an incredibly busy time, as she wrote a customized curriculum for our program.

In addition to overseeing Education, Lauren also acts as Assistant Organist and Junior Choir director. During the week, you can find her at The Wyndcroft School, teaching music to all students in Early Childhood—8th Grade. Her background in both education and music brings a unique perspective to the programs at St. James'.

If you have any questions or comments concerning the Education or Music Programs, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren at laurenexley@live.com or 610-306-3953.



Sunday School Classes

Classes meet Sundays from 10:00-10:30am.

Children begin in church with their families and leave with their teachers after the opening hymn. They will return in time for Communion.

Occasionally, to promote understanding of the worship service, Sunday School students attend the 10am Worship Service. Children sit together with their teachers and practice using the tools of worship. These special days will be called "Kids in Church" Sundays!

Nursery Care (Birth - 3 years)

Child-care is provided from 7:45am-11:15am. Parents can drop-off and pick-up throughout the 8am and 10am services. The Nursery is located in Platt's Hall.

NEW for 2017-2018!
All parents, students, and teachers will gather together at the start of the 10:00am service. We will all sing the opening hymn, with a dismissal of the church school at its conclusion.

Primary (Pre-Kindergarten – 1st grade)

Children engage with biblical stories and Episcopal traditions in a welcoming way. Classes follow a predictable pattern (Gathering, Storytelling, Engaging, and Closing) and are designed to be interactive.

Elementary (2nd – 5th grade)

Children engage with biblical stories, Episcopal traditions, and the worship service. Building on the foundation set in their primary years, children continue hearing the great stories of the bible. Children also begin to interact with materials used in worship (Bible, Book of Common Prayer, and Hymnal) to prepare for their eventual understanding of the Episcopal service.

Middle School (6th - 8th grade) *

The Middle School years are about forming the basis for the adult Christian life. Youth begin connecting their faith to the world around them. Students learn Episcopal Church basics alongside their continuing study of Scripture.

A highlight of the course is the annual Lenten Nightwatch. Hosted at an area church, the students participate in an overnight program that includes an interactive Eucharist. (Cost: \$25, Friday night – Saturday morning)

High School (9th - 12th grade) *

High School students participate in a variety of discussions and programs. The class is designed to transition students from a follower of the church to a leader in the church. Students have the opportunity to be confirmed (a separate course) and become more integrated in to the life of the parish. Students are encouraged to join a church ministry (Acolyte, Lector, Altar Guild, Music, etc.) in addition to coming to classes.

A highlight is the annual Province III Youth Event. Youth from all over the Mid-Atlantic region come together for a weekend of learning, worship, games, small group events, and workshops. (Cost: \$150, Friday night – Sunday morning)

*Altar acolytes will continue to serve as scheduled. Crucifers and torch bearers can participate in the processional, attend class, and participate in the recessional after returning to the service.

Everything you wanted to know about Curriculum

What our kids will learn (and how it will help them later in life!)

This year, St. James' will be transitioning to a new curriculum. This curriculum is based on a free resource provided by Virginia Theological Seminary and has been modified for our use! What makes this curriculum special is that it was written by, and for, Episcopalians! The lessons themselves are constructed in a way that will introduce children and youth to the structure of the Episcopal worship service.

The year is divided into four separate units, which rotate on a 3-year cycle. Each year has a different focus, ensuring that students are exposed to a wide array of topics during their time in class. Unit topics for the 2017-2018 school year include:

Pre-Kindergarten—1st Grade

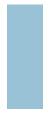
- ⇒ The Creation Story
- ⇒ Jesus, Son of God
- ⇒ Baptism: Belonging
- ⇒ We are the Church!

2nd-5th Grade

- ⇒ The Pentateuch
- ⇒ Jesus: Healer
- ⇒ Baptism: People in Covenant
- ⇒ Church in the New Testament

6th—8th Grade

- ⇒ The Episcopal Church Year
- ⇒ Old Testament: Called by God
- ⇒ Old Testament: Covenant Ancestors
- ⇒ Old Testament: Community Leaders



Keep an eye out for a new weekly bulletin space. Get all your updates about the Education Program! Check-in regularly with up-to-date lesson plan topics, schedules, and announcements.

The High School class uses a variety of resources and lessons are largely impacted by the contributions of the students. As such, their topics are not pre-defined.

More about each class...

Starting in Pre-Kindergarten, children will begin learning responses common to the worship service (Thanks be to God!) and become familiar with hearing Scripture in an age

appropriate way. Games, crafts, and songs will help young students engage with the material.

Elementary students will build on the concepts learned in their Primary years and will quickly become accustomed to locating and reading Scripture for themselves. Classes begin by reciting an opening statement or prayer, followed by an opportunity for student lectors to read Scripture aloud. A time of discussion and brief activity is always concluded with prayer.

Middle School classes place emphasis on students forming a solid foundation for their future adult Christian life. Each class follows the structure of the Episcopal service, beginning with the daily Collect, followed by Scripture reading, a time of engaging, and a concluding prayer found and read from the Book of Common Prayer.

High School classes provide a time for our older youth to discover and debate their faith in a supportive environment. Students will have the opportunity to discuss a variety of topics, from Scripture to the "real-world". The class structure is designed to transition students into their life as an Episcopal adult.

Adult Education Programs

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Mike Sowards

As we all know, the learning doesn't stop just because you are an adult! Join us for our Adult Education Programs. There are three programs, so you are sure to find one to fit your schedule. We look forward to seeing you!

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday Nights from 7:00-8:00pm

Bible Study is a more formal time of biblical study. The class follows a chosen book of the bible from beginning to end, studying the historical implications as well as the application to our modern day faith. Though passages are studied consecutively, you are welcome to come and go as your schedule allows. Beginners through biblical scholars are welcome.

Christ and Coffee

Thursday Mornings from 11:00am -12:00pm

During this time of fellowship, the upcoming Old Testament, Psalm, and New Testament lessons are studied. As each study is self-contained, you are welcome to come and go as your schedule allows. The morning ends with a brief Noon-day Prayer service. All are welcome!



Adult Forum

Sunday Mornings from 9:15 - 9:45am

This is an open time for biblical exploration and discussion. The topics will vary week to week. All are welcome to attend following the 8am service or before the 10am service. For 6 weeks prior to the Bishop's annual visit, this class will be replaced by a Confirmation Class. All are welcome!

Confirmation Class

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Mike Sowards

A 6-Week course that meets on select Sundays from 9:15-9:45am in Platt's Hall

Confirmation is an important time in a young person's life. In the Episcopal tradition, parents and grandparents make promises for the young child that are affirmed by the young adult at Confirmation. Classes are formed prior to the Bishop's yearly visit.

A young adult participates in Confirmation in their High School years. Individuals (9th Grade - Adult) can choose when it is most appropriate for them to receive Confirmation. Please note - Confirmation Class is not a substitute for the regularly scheduled High School class from 10:00-10:30. Students will attend both classes.

This year, the Bishop will visit St. James' on Sunday, March 4th, 2018. If you are interested in being confirmed or received on this date, please contact Fr. Mike.

Note: Adults who have been confirmed in another denomination can elect to be "received" rather than "confirmed" by the Bishop and are strongly encouraged, but not obligated, to take this course.

Opportunities to Serve

Available for all Kindergarten-Adult

Our community is strongest when everyone, including our youth, participate in worship with a servant's heart. The lessons learned early in life carry-on into the adult years. This is why we encourage our youth to be active participants in the worship service. Our hope is that each child and young adult finds an opportunity to serve.

Below, you will find several ways that youth and adults can become involved in the worship service. Youth will register on the Education Program Registration form. Interested adults can contact the coordinator directly.



Junior Choir (Kindergarten—8th Grade)

Junior Choir is for all kids who are interested in singing! The choir meets after the 10am service on select Sundays. The choir performs on Christmas Eve (5:00pm service) and Easter Sunday.

Contact: Lauren Exley (610-306-3953 or laurenexley@live.com)

Rector's Cross (2nd—5th Grade)

The child assigned to be the Rector's Cross has responsibilities during the Processional (opening hymn) and Recessional (closing hymn). At the appointed time, the child collects the smaller cross and carries it just ahead of Father Mike. This service can be completed before and after Sunday School.

Contact: Gayle Eselby (484-614-5312 or werd13193@yahoo.com)

Lector (6th—12th Grade)

A lector is responsible for reading the appointed scripture lesson aloud during the worship service. Lectors are responsible for practicing the reading and being prepared to read clearly in front of the congregation. Lectors will be utilized on "Kids in Church" Sundays.

Contact: Lauren Exley (610-306-3953 or laurenexley@live.com)

Acolyte Program (6th Grade—Adult)

The Book of Common Prayer says, "At all celebrations of the Liturgy, it is fitting that the principal celebrant, whether Bishop or Priest, be assisted by other priests, and by deacons and lay persons. Being an acolyte is doing just that—actively assisting the Priest in the worship of God. The ministry of the acolyte is to be a servant to God and God's church—the word "acolyte" does mean "one who serves." Acolyte is a general term that refers to servants of the liturgy, including crucifers, torchbearers and thurifers.

At St. James', we use 3 acolytes each at both the 8am and 10am services on Sunday. The Crucifer carries the cross and leads the procession. They also assist at the altar in preparing the table for Eucharist. Following the Crucifer are two torch bearers, who carry the candles.

We welcome anyone, 6th grade through Adult, to join this important ministry. A training will be held in the Fall for all acolytes, including current members.

Contact: Gayle Eselby (484-614-5312 or werd13193@yahoo.com)

Altar Guild (6th Grade—Adult)

This dedicated group of individuals is responsible for the setting of the altar for worship. You will have a great opportunity to learn about the intricacies of the altar vestments and play an integral role in preparing for worship. This position requires attendance before and/or after worship on scheduled weekends.

Contact: Sally Templeton (610-489-2486)

Adult Choir (9th Grade—Adult)

The Adult Choir is a great place to serve your church...and have some fun! <u>Anyone</u> can sing and add their joyful sound to the choir. Rehearsals take place Thursday nights from 7:30-8:45pm and occasional Sunday mornings from 9:15—9:45am. If you would like to join choir, but can only commit to Sunday morning rehearsals, please let us know!

Join the choir for FUN, FELLOWSHIP, and a FREE SEAT on Christmas Eve!

Contact: Ron Davis (610-489-3318)



Pilgrimage

Open to all confirmed members, 9th Grade—Adult

A pilgrimage is not a vacation, sight-seeing trip, or service project. A pilgrimage is a time set aside for your spiritual growth. One of the key components of a pilgrimage is "taking you out of your comfort zone". As such, our church hosts pilgrimages to locations around the world.

Pilgrimage is open to any confirmed church member, 9th Grade – Adult. Pilgrimages are scheduled, on average, every 4 years. Hosted by Fr. Mike, you are sure to return refreshed and ready to life out your Christian faith in the world.

The current trip is scheduled for July 2018 to London, England. If you are interested in attending, please contact Fr. Mike as soon as possible to reserve your space.

For the current trip, all monies currently set aside for the Pilgrimage will continue to offset the cost for <u>youth</u> attendance. Any adult wishing to attend the Pilgrimage for 2018 is responsible for covering 100% of their own cost. In future years, church wide Pilgrimage fundraising will benefit all attendees.

2018 Pilgrimage anticipated cost (including airfare): \$1500

"Kids in Church" Sundays

Four times a year, all Sunday School attendees (Pre-Kindergarten—12th Grade) will attend and participate in the 10am worship service. Teachers will sit in designated places with the younger students and guide them through the service. Students will be encouraged to follow along with the service, using prayer books and hymnals.

These special Sundays will be very exciting! Student lectors will read lessons and prayers, youth will participate in the Processional and Recessional, and Father Mike will give a special sermon for the youth.

It is important to note that these Sundays are NOT days off. As a church community, it is important that we encourage youth to participate in the worship service, and not simply observe it. These Sundays will be an excellent opportunity for youth to practice their skills!

"Do I have Class?" (and other Special Events)

	September 2017						
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	October 2017						
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	November 2017						
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	December 2017						
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	February 2018							
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	March 2018						
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	April 2018						
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29	30						

	May 2018						
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27	28	29	30	31			

October 8 – Blessing of the Animals (HS Class "Pet-sits" during class)

February 4 – "Super Bowl Hoagie Sale" (MS/HS) 8:30 – 10:30am March 4 – Bishop's Visit and Confirmation: No class for MS/HS Class

October 29 – All Hallows Eve Service and Church Costume Party – 7:00pm February 13 – Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (HS) Time: TBD

March 29 – Maundy Thursday Vigil for 2nd Grade – Adult



No Class

Special Event

Calendar of Events: Youth Education All dates are Sundays, unless otherwise noted

	September 10	First Day of Classes!
Dates to be Determined	October 8	Blessing of the Animals High School Class "Pet-Sits" during the 10am service
	October 29	Junior Choir Begins, following the 10am service All Hallows Eve Service and Church Costume Party—7:00pm
Middle School Class Lenten Nightwatch	November 5	All Saints Sunday "Kids in Church" Sunday— All students will sit with their teachers during the service!
Hosted at an area church, the students	November 26	No Class, No Junior Choir Thanksgiving Weekend
participate in an overnight program that includes an interactive	Saturday, December 16	Nativity Pageant Rehearsal Time: TBD
Eucharist.	December 17	No Class, No Junior Choir Nativity Pageant—10:00am, Children arrive by 9:30am
(Cost: \$25, Friday night – Saturday morning)	December 24	No Class—Christmas Eve Junior Choir rehearsal—4:20pm, Family Christmas Eve Service –5:00pm
	December 31	No Class—New Year's Eve
<u> High School Class</u>	January 21	"Kids in Church" Sunday— All students will sit with their teachers during the service!
Province III Youth Event		Confirmation Class begins, 9:15—9:45am in Platt's Hall
Youth from all over the Mid-Atlantic region come	February 4	MS/HS Classes "Super Bowl Hoagie Sale", 8:30—10:30am Fundraiser benefits MS/HS Class events
together for a weekend	February 11	Junior Choir begins, following the 10am service
of learning, worship, games, small group	Tuesday, February 13	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, worked by the High School Class Fundraiser benefits Pilgrimage 2018
events, and workshops. (Cost: \$150, Friday night – Sunday morning)	March 4	Bishop's Visit/Confirmation No Class for Middle School/High School Classes Pre-K—5th Grade will combine for a group project and return in time for the Confirmation Liturgy
	March 18	"Kids in Church" Sunday— All students will sit with their teachers during the service!
The "Superbowl Hoagie	Thursday,	Maundy Thursday Vigil—Service at 7:00pm
Sale" will benefit the cost of these events.	March 29	All youth 2nd Grade—up are invited to sleepover at the church and keep watch. More information to come!
	April 1	No Class—Easter Sunday
	May 20	"Kids in Church" Sunday— All students sit with their teachers.
		Education Program recognition at the 10am service. Last Day of Sunday School classes!

Calendar of Events: Adult Education

Sunday, September 10	Adult Forum begins	
	9:15–9:45am in Platt's Hall	Weekly
Wednesday, September 13	Wednesday Night Bible Study begins	L Schedule J
	7:00-8:00pm in the Sanctuary	
Thursday, September 14	Christ and Coffee continues	NA/ a malatin
	11:00-12:00pm in Platt's Hall	<u>Worship</u>
Sunday, October 29	All Hallows Eve Service and Church Costume Party—7:00pm	Saturday—5pm Sunday—8am, 10am
Wednesday, November 22—Sunday, November 26	No Class—Thanksgiving	
Wednesday, November 29	Adult Classes Resume	
Sunday, December 24—Thursday, January 4	No Class - Christmas/New Years	Sunday Morning
Sunday, January 7	Adult Classes Resume	Adult Forum
Sunday, January 21	Confirmation Class Begins 9:15–9:45am in Platt's Hall	9:15—9:45am Platt's Hall
	Open to all!	
Wednesday, February 14	No Wednesday Bible Study	
	Ash Wednesday Services: 7:00am, 12:00pm, 7:30pm	Wednesday Evening
Wednesday, February 21—Wednesday, March 28	No Wednesday Bible Study	Bible Study
	Lenten Series 7:30pm, see bulletin for more info	7:00—8:00pm Sanctuary
Sunday, March 4	No Adult Forum—Bishop's Visit	
	Confirmation Class participants meet with the Bishop from 9:15–9:45am	Thursday Morning
Sunday, March 25 (Palm Sunday)— Sunday, April 1 (Easter Day)	No Adult Classes—Holy Week	Christ and Coffee
Thursday, March 29	Maundy Thursday Vigil Service at 7:00pm Sign-up to keep watch in the church	11:00am—12:00pm Platt's Hall
May 20	Last day of Class! See you in September!	

Register for Classes

Register for Youth Classes...no need to register for Adult Classes

Three ways to register!

⇒ Register instantly using our ONLINE registration form. Choose your classes and service opportunities for each child.

CLICK HERE: CLASS REGISTRATION FORM

URL: https://form.jotform.us/Lauren_Exley/Class

- ⇒ Print your own registration form on the following pages. Submit your form to Lauren Exley's mailbox.
- ⇒ Pick-up a form from the Education Bulletin Board (located in the hallway leading from Platt's Hall into the Sanctuary.) Submit your form to Lauren Exley's mailbox.

Change lives...volunteer to be a teacher!

Please sign-up by August 15th

- ⇒ Only a 1-year commitment
- ⇒ Choose your grade level Primary, Elementary, Middle School, or High School
- ⇒ All classes take place from 10:00 10:30am
- ⇒ No teaching experience necessary...all you need is a willingness to serve and guide our youngest members!

Sign-up online or complete the form found on the Education bulletin board. Please submit the form to Lauren Exley's mailbox.

CLICK HERE: TEACHER REGISTRATION FORM

URL: https://form.jotform.us/Lauren_Exley/st-james-teacher-registration

St. James' Church – Education Program Registration Form Please complete one form per family.

Please use the grade level for the upcoming 2017 – 2018 school year. Registration is not required for Adult Education programs.

If you have any questions, please contact Lauren Exley at laurenexley@live.com

Contact Information — Who do we contact with information about scheduling?

Adult Contact #1				
Name	Email			
Cell Phone			Yes	No
Home Address				
I can volunteer to help with the:	Nativity Pageant			
	Hoagie Sale (MS/HS)			
	Shrove Tuesday Panca	ake Supper (HS)		
	Regrettably, I am una	ble to volunteer		
Adult Contact #2				
Name	Email			
Cell Phone		Text Reminders?	Yes	No
Home Address				
I can volunteer to help with the:	Nativity Pageant			
	Hoagie Sale (MS/HS)			
	Shrove Tuesday Panca	ake Supper (HS)		
	Regrettably, I am una	ble to volunteer		

Individual Registration – Who will be participating?

Print enough pages to complete one section per child. Staple all pages together to submit.

Name Grade
<u>Instruction</u>
Nursery (Birth -3 years) Primary (Pre-K -1 st) Elementary (2 nd -5 th)
Middle School $(6^{th} - 8^{th})$ High School $(9^{th} - 12^{th})$
Opportunities to Serve
Though optional, service opportunities are a great way for youth to become involved in worship. Select all opportunities that your child is interested in. The individual coordinators for each group will contact you with further details.
Junior Choir $(K - 8^{th})$ Rector's Cross $(2^{nd} - 5^{th})$ Lector $(6^{th} - 12^{th})$
Altar Guild $(6^{th} - 12^{th})$ Acolyte Program $(6^{th} - 12^{th})$
Additional Info (food allergies, etc.):
Name Grade
<u>Instruction</u>
Nursery (Birth – 3 years) Primary (Pre-K – 1st) Elementary (2nd – 5th)
$_$ Middle School (6 th $-$ 8 th) $_$ High School (9 th $-$ 12 th)
Opportunities to Serve
Though optional, service opportunities are a great way for youth to become involved in worship. Select all opportunities that your child is interested in. The individual coordinators for each group will contact you with further details.
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Additional Info (food allergies, etc.):