

From the Rector

THE REV. JOSH HOOVER

josh@stjamesbirmingham.org

Last month clergy and lay leaders met with Bishop Perry to receive together the results of a mutual ministry review run by an outside consultant. We were presented the data that came from interviews with diocesan staff, members of diocesan committees, and several other leaders. There was a lot of information, some of it predictable and some of it very interesting. The one thing from that conversation that continues to resonate with me was that over and over, those who have been around our diocese for a while talked about a change in the culture. People may differ about whether the changes they see are good or bad, but in the five years that Bishop Perry has served the Diocese of Michigan, we see very real difference in the culture.

As we approach the first year anniversary of the significant changes we needed to make in our staffing to make us sustainable, I am aware that St. James, also, is in the midst of a cultural change. Working together, we are moving from a staff-centric vision of our church to one in which it is the members who run the church. Some of these changes we have made with purpose, others have happened naturally out of need. These changes have often been difficult since we tend to connect the way we have done things in the past with the identity of the church itself. But that simply isn't true. We, the faithful people who worship and minister out of this place are St. James, not our building or bylaws our programs or even our worship.

That doesn't change the fact that it is hard to change old habits, and so I want to express my deep gratitude to all of you who have stepped up in this time to perform new ministries, to fill the gap when needed, and to love one another in ways that demonstrate fulfillment of the mission of the church. Thanks to those who have led formation programs for children and teens, who have washed dishes, set-up or taken down tables and chairs, who have shown up at church to do one thing only to find themselves joining in other things that need to get done, who have cared for our building, or have visited, called, or written to a parishioner who is unable to be with us.

Having our members stepping up to run our church, to provide leadership and to own the many ways that we feed and are fed at St. James has been adding to our vitality. And it is palpable. People want to be here, to see each other, and to make a difference together. I am thrilled that our Vestry has set goals for this year to do two things – one is to help us create systems to support the church we want to be, by rethinking our policies and procedures and working to strengthen the Parish Fund. The second is to communicate with the world our priorities as the church of God and to find new ways to feed and be fed.

We are all learning together what it might mean to more fully become St. James. To faithfully take our sense of who we are and whose we are into the world. God is calling you, is calling all of us to be God's church. I look forward to all the ways St. James will respond in the year to come.

Thank you.

Faithfully, Fr. Josh

The Reverend Joshua A. Hoover, Rector
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Angie Righter—Jr. Warden
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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays 8:00 a.m. in-person and 10:00 a.m. in-person and streamed on Facebook and our Website

Weeknights Compline 7:50 p.m. on Zoom

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday from 10 a.m.—3 p.m.

PASTORAL CARE

For pastoral emergencies, please contact Fr. Josh Hoover at 810-620-5402

The Spirit is a monthly newsletter published for members and friends of St. James. **We are always looking for photographs of church events!** The deadline for submission is the 15th of each month for the following month's issue. Please email articles and/or photos to:

parishadmin@stjamesbirmingham.org

Adult Forum

9:05 a.m. Sundays in the Lounge

THE REV. JOSH HOOVER

In Easter season, after discussing together the Vestry priorities for the year, we will return to our beginnings and take a deep dive into some of the troubling stories in the Hebrew Scriptures. Using the book, *Getting Involved with God: Rediscovering the Old Testament* we will join Professor Ellen Davis from Duke Divinity School as she teaches and invites us into a spiritually engaged reading of scriptures. Fleming Rutledge writes, "Combining ease with skill and nerve with artistry, (Ellen Davis) tackles the most difficult portions of the Old Testament."

Books will be available from Fr. Josh for \$10 beginning Easter Sunday. But join us whether you have read or not, there will be plenty to discuss.

April 7 – No Adult Forum

April 14 – Vestry Priorities for 2024

April 21 – Chapter 1 – Praying the Psalms

April 28 – Chapter 2 – The Psalms of Lament

May 5 – Chapter 3 – The Cursing Psalms

Bible Study

Wednesdays at 12:00 p.m. on Zoom

THE REV. JOSH HOOVER

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84940791816>

If you have ever been tempted to join Bible Study in the past, this Easter is a great time. We will be reading and discussing some of the highlights of the book of Acts, and that is new territory for us. Come and join us if you have something to share or are as confused as we are... either way you are welcome to join us as we talk together, support one another, and learn a thing or two about God and the Christian life in the process. Feel free to eat your lunch while we meet or just to listen, all people and experiences are welcome.



Palm Sunday Procession

St. James/Versiti Blood Drive

Sunday, April 7 from 11:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m. in Centennial Hall

SARAH MAY

Did you know that Michigan needs 620 units of blood every day to keep our hospitals fully supplied? And Versiti supplies blood to over 85 of these hospitals, including all of the Corewell (Beaumont) and Henry Ford hospitals. Local blood drives such as ours play a major role in the collection of this blood. Please consider signing up to donate and encourage your family and friends to sign up with you too. Our drive goal is 20 donations. You can help us reach our goal by scheduling your appointment online by going to <https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules>.

If you have trouble signing up, go to [Versiti.org](https://www.versiti.org) or just call me at 248-225-3296 and I can do it for you. With your help, I know we can reach our goal for Versiti on the 7th!

Vestry Meet & Greet

Saturday, April 13 from 2:00—4:00 p.m.

SHAR WICKENS

Jon, Jane Barnes, Pam Grier and I welcome you to a Vestry Meet and Greet in my home at 167 Hillboro Dr. between Cranbrook and Lahser in Westchester Village. Drop by anytime between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. on Saturday April 13th for conversation about what is happening at St. James. Casual light refreshments will be served.

Night Watch 2024

Saturday, April 20 to Sunday, April 21

At the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Detroit, MI

Night Watch is a lock-in for young people in our diocese to fellowship and worship together. It's open to Middle & High School students. Drop-off is at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday with a 1:30 p.m. pick-up on Sunday. The cost is \$25 per participant. Sign up at <https://edomiforms.formstack.com/forms/nightwatch2024>

Indie Book Fair

April 25 from 6:30—8:00 p.m.

THE REV. JOSH HOOVER

St. James Church and Preschool are excited to host, A Pop of Indie. Everyone with a child in their life is invited to this very special book fair that features independently published Michigan authors. There will be storytelling and crafts for children run by the authors, and the opportunity to see a variety of books. There will be some great options to purchase something for any of the children in your life, and possibly to get it signed by the author.

St. James would like to provide refreshments for this gathering. Kid friendly snacks will be the order of the day. If you are interested in helping, please contact Fr. Josh.

Baptismal Blankets

Coffee Hour April 28 and May 5

THE REV. JOSH HOOVER

Every child who is Baptized at St. James receives a blanket in memory of the occasion. You can join Shar Wickens during coffee hour on Sunday, April 28th or May 5th to help make the blankets that will be given out in the future. These blankets that are made by our community will be a strong symbol of the way that the newly Baptized are connected to us as siblings in Christ.

April 2024

Vestry Update

Minutes from Vestry meetings are posted in Centennial Hall after they are approved each month. For a more recent update, we include highlights here in the Spirit. At their March meeting the Vestry of St. James:

- Created goals for the year (see below)
- Discussed progress of new Communications Committee
- Approved change to one service for summer beginning in June
- Went over needed changes to the Preschool
- Discussed continued work on the property
- Approved a fundraiser to buy new furniture and table pads for Centennial Hall

Vestry Goals for 2024

After a session brainstorming and voting together, the goals below emerged as the Vestry's priorities for 2024. These are a draft, but will give you an idea of what they are working on this year.

1. Organize a new Communications Committee charged to publicize church events and programs across platforms, update the church website, and increase visibility with Preschool families.
2. Discuss and plan for a possible third service with a different worship style and focus between now and end of summer. If feasible, launch third service in fall.
3. Work with the Parish Fund Committee to develop and implement a planned giving campaign. And Connect Parish Fund with Stewardship to enable year round Stewardship efforts.
4. Choose multiple community events, particularly those happening in Shain Park, to participate in throughout the year.
5. Rewrite our Policies and Procedures Manual to make it better describe how we are actually working as a congregation and make it a support to those serving in leadership of committees.

Pastoral Care Updates

SHAR WICKENS

I am now the new Vestry liaison to Pastoral Care. I hope to identify, assist and stay in touch with congregation members who are unable to attend services, receive the sacrament, or participate in church activities in person for any reason. I am asking you to help me identify this ever-changing group of members, so we can better address their spiritual, emotional and physical needs.

I am sure you're aware that we all have available to us Rev. Josh for any pastoral emergencies! This is an important job and time consuming, so he has help with Michelle taking phone messages, along with Deacon Patti and Eucharistic Ministers making visits.

I am asking you to help me with being a resource in keeping any needs updated. If you have a concern about the welfare of a member or yourself, I encourage you to let us know. Sharjean@aol.com or 248-763-5929

You are in my thoughts and prayers.

Senior Warden's Report

PAM GRIER, SENIOR WARDEN

Gratitude, Part II

Last month I mentioned many groups and individuals that shine within St. James. This month, it is time to thank those that, week in and week out, make our Sunday mornings so special.

The first folks you tend to see are the **Ushers**. They welcome you with a smile while assisting you in any way necessary. They do a very important job to both make visitors and members feel welcome. We appreciate their commitment to being there once or twice a month for us.

Next, we have our **Musicians**, whether it is Richard on the organ (or piano), the **Handbell Choir** or the **Choir** itself. They all practice at least weekly to provide enrichment to our services.

Our newest/returning group is the **Acolytes**. It is so wonderful to have them back, and you may have noticed that this is now an intergenerational group. All are welcome!

You have probably noticed that there are some new faces reading the lessons, known as **Lectors**. We have some new recruits that are learning from our seasoned veterans. This, too, is an intergenerational group. We could always use a few more voices up front.

Like the Lectors, we have a couple new **Eucharistic Ministers**. Also like the Lectors, they are paired with and learning from the long-time EMs. I feel it is safe to say that they have found it is not as scary as they thought it would be. ☺

Sitting in the back on the computers we find our **Tech Team**. They make everyone look and sound good for the folks watching at home.

Speaking of making things look good, that is what the **Altar Guild** does. They usually come in on a Saturday to set everything up. They would love to have some new members – male OR female. They would be happy even if you only wanted to help out occasionally.

Two people you don't see (unless you stop in on a weekday) are Michelle Metry, our **Parish Administrator**, and Juana Roque, our **Sexton**. They both work very hard all week long to make St. James the wonderful place it is.

Last, but certainly not least, are **Father Josh** and **Deacon Patti**. They put in a great deal of time to make our Sunday services meaningful.

Thank you to everyone listed above – you are part of what makes St. James the place we love.

If you are interested in checking out any of these groups, I am sure they would be happy to let you join on a trial basis and you can determine if it is for you. Give me a call (248-219-7464) or drop me a line (grierp@comcast.net) and I will connect you with the group.

Also, if I didn't mention your group, please let me know. I am happy to feature any and all of our groups and committees. You are what make St. James, St. James!



Maudy Thursday service and meal in Centennial Hall



Music Notes

RICHARD NEWMAN

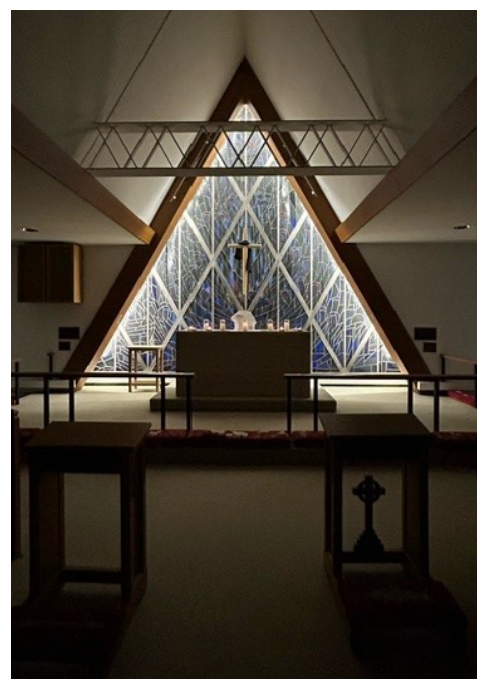
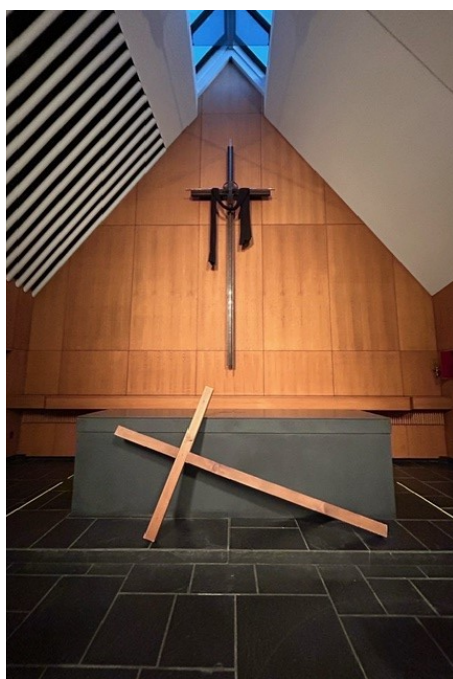
music@stjamesbirmingham.org

Although Holy Week and Easter has passed, the choirs at St. James will still be hard at work for the remaining two months of the program year. The St. James Ringers will play the prelude on April 21 and May 12. Please come five minutes early to hear the bells on those Sundays. In the coming months, both choirs will host coffee hour. The Choir will host on April 21 and the Handbell Choir on May 12. This is a good opportunity to talk with these choir members should you be interested in joining either of our choirs. Our numbers are dwindling and we would welcome you to be a part of the music ministry—to carry on St. James’ long lasting tradition of giving glory to God through music!

Hymn Histories for April

Hymn 209, “We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight” – This hymn by Henry Walford was first published in his *Psalms and Hymns* (London, 1867). It appeared in the Episcopal hymnal in 1892 and 1916, but was not continued in *The Hymnal 1940*, possibly since it alludes to several incidents in the Resurrection narrative without focusing sharply on any of them. Gordon Slater’s attractive tune *St. Botolph* first appeared in *Songs of Praise for Boys and Girls* (London, 1929). It entered our hymnal in *The Hymnal 1982*. The tune name honors the parish church of St. Botolph in Boston, Lincolnshire, where the composer served as organist. St. Botolph was born in England around 610. He became a Monk and is remembered for his sanctity and miracles and for having led many in the way of salvation. Soon after 654, he founded a monastery in “Boltoph’s Town” which was later contracted into “Boston.” He is the patron saint of both the original Boston in Lincolnshire and its namesake in the new world, Boston, Massachusetts.

Hymn 204, “Now the Green Blade Riseth,” – This French Noël, matched with a text rich in biblical imagery, is very much in the style of a traditional carol and as such is a great enrichment to our singing tradition. The text by the British author The Rev. J. M. C. Crum (1872-1958) uses imagery from John 12:24 and I Corinthians 15:37. The tune *Noël Nouvelet* is based on a medieval French carol. This tune conveys a mysterious character to the hymn and thus is a wonderful invitation to meditate on the Resurrection of Our Lord.



Acolytes and Altar Guild members strip the altar after news of Jesus’ arrest on Maundy Thursday. The congregation left in silence after the cross was placed, and some offered prayers at the altar of repose in the chapel.

Preschool Notes from Miss Melissa

MELISSA WOJCIECHOWSKI

preschool@stjamesbirmingham.org

<https://stjames-preschool.org/>

We are looking forward to spring and the warmer weather it brings! We have been lucky to have a warm winter, but our friends and teachers alike are looking forward to spending even more time outdoors. Our children strengthen growing muscles when they are climbing, running, and jumping. And we could all use a breath of fresh air!

This month, our classrooms will be focusing on April showers and all the new life that brings. They will talk about weather, plants and the life cycle of the trees as their leaves begin to return. It's a month of new beginnings!

On Thursday, April 25, the church and preschool will be hosting A Pop of Indie, a book fair full of children's books written by independently published Michigan authors. There will be crafts and story times, all run by different Indie authors. There will also be refreshments provided by the St. James Vestry, and the book fair will be full of books to purchase for the little ones in your life. Additionally, there will be a wish list of books that the St. James teachers would love to have for their classrooms if anyone is interested in donating a book to the preschool.

Spring has sprung! Wishing you good health and continued blessings to you and yours.



*The Preschool had a
St. Patrick's Day Dance
on Friday, March 15th
in Centennial Hall.*

Outreach Opportunities

PEANUT BUTTER FOR PONTIAC

THE REV. JOSH HOOVER

Every Thursday one of our great volunteers or a family comes into church to make peanut butter sandwiches. We donate these sandwiches to the Community Breakfast at All Saint's in Pontiac. You can help by taking the time to make sandwiches (it takes an individual about 45 minutes). To sign up, go to this link: <https://stjames.rocks/pbj>

You can also help by donating peanut butter or jelly. Simply drop off any donations in Centennial Hall on Sunday.

BOUND TOGETHER

MICHELE WOGAMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Vacation Bible School is coming in July!

Summer is coming! Bound Together is excited to be working with St. James, St. Davids, possibly St. Philips and, of course, All Saints - Pontiac to bring a collaborative Vacation Bible School to children across northern Oakland County. This will be the fourth year for this program, and we're currently hoping that the Diocese will be funding our adventures by way of a Tretheway grant application to be reviewed in late March.

The program will once again take place in the early evening at All Saints, with a kid-friendly dinner for participants ages 4-11 at 5:00 p.m. and program from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. We'll be having a planning meeting mid-April, so if you would like to be involved, please let Fr. Josh or me know, and come join the fun! We'll be focusing on stories, art, games, and hopefully some science, as the latter was a real hit last year with our young friends.

Look for updates in this space as we share ideas, make plans and create some fun and friendship for kids and adults alike - so just let us know if you're in!

Sign Up to Host Coffee Hour!

Coffee Hour after both of our services is that chance to connect with our fellow parishioners and guests. We are in need of volunteers to sign up to host coffee hour in April and May.

A few notes: Coffee and tea are provided by the church; you will only need to provide the treats, you should plan for 20 following the service after the 8:00 a.m. service, and approximately 45-50 at the 10:00 a.m. service.

Please sign up on the sheet in Centennial Hall at <https://stjames.rocks/coffee23>

Intercessions

IMMEDIATE PRAYER LIST

Penny; Anne; Calvin; Tom; Michael; Quenten; Bev; Jane Barnes; Margaret; Michael Curry; Anita; Mary; Rich; Daniel; Cynthia; Sue M.; Linda Baldwin; Patti Fraley; Julian.

SUSTAINING PRAYER LIST

Michelle; Richard; Noah; Maryanna; Natalie; Chuck & Mickie; Claire; Corinne; Evi; Pete; Mary; Marty; Sally; Don; Bill; Rachel; Dave; Sue; Mary Jo; Jean; Dave; Rob; Jacob; Bob.

IN MEMORIAM

Ronald Gable, Bruce Macdonald

St. James Vestry

2022-2025

Michelle Boice
Pam Grier, *Senior Warden*
Nancy Schutte
Michele Wogaman

2023-2026

Fred Austin
Jane Barnes
Andrea Everett
Amanda Reister

2024-2027

Sophie Gable
Angie Righter, *Junior Warden*
Kathy Stange
Shar Wickens

Our Mission

INVITE you to the table
ILLUMINATE our spiritual journey
SHARE Christ's love with the world