



Building upon the Legacy: The Messenger

The Rev. Chris Duncan, Rector



In February 1899, the very first edition of The St. James Messenger hit the presses and was delivered to each family in the parish “free of charge.” Families who were able to afford it were asked to contribute twenty-five cents per six issues. Articles

within the first newsletter included announcements about “The Woman’s Pastoral Aid,” “The Willing Workers’ Guild,” and “St. Andrew’s Brotherhood.” This edition was more of a ministries list, but did include an article on the Altar Guild, with a description of Christmas morning at the church. According to Miss M. Clayton, “Through the efforts of the Guild, the Church was most beautifully dressed in the bright berried holly, bamboos, and palmettos on Christmas day.”

Miss Clayton’s words, paired with the article, vividly illustrates a historical Christmas experience and the hard work performed by the Altar Guild.

One of the things I love about St. James is the link we have to the saints that have gone before us. I feel the generations of prayers that have filled our church

throughout time. Their presence is almost tangible when we gather for communion, “joining our voice with Angel and Archangels and with all the company of heaven...” At the same time, St. James has always sought to serve Christ by meeting people where they are today. And so the story continues ... we continue building upon the St. James legacy.

Our newsletter has evolved and changed with each new season of the church’s life. Similarly, the stories of St. James and the transformation of lives through the mission and ministry of our parish by the Holy Spirit continues. The Messenger will share our stories while also providing a place to further teach about the “why” of what we do as St. James or even as Episcopalians and Anglicans.

Ultimately, St. James has grown in ministries and numbers since that first edition in February 1899, but the legacy of ministry continues - as does the need to share our stories with one another. Now it is our turn to write the next chapter in the story of faith that is St. James.

I hope you enjoy the newest edition of The Messenger. Happy reading!

St. James' 175th Anniversary

Mary Boutwell,
Parish Life Coordinator

On Friday, October 4, the walls of Bishops Hall rang with the sounds of laughter and Motown music. Over 250 St. James Episcopal Church parishioners gathered to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the church. The event featured live music by the BRW New Orleans Band, catering by Chef Don Bergeron, flower arrangements by Billy Herroman's, and a dance floor. We are grateful to the Associate

Vestry for their planning and execution of such a fabulous night.

Were you or your friends spotted at the event? Take a look at the pictures below!

The 175th celebration continued on Sunday, October 6. Over 400 individuals attended the three offered services that day. The 10:30 a.m. service was followed by a parish picnic, which featured hot dogs and hamburgers by The Holy Grillers and playground inflatables provided by The Children's Council.



St. James Advent Wreath Making

Sunday, December 1 in Bishops Hall
After 8:30/10:30 a.m. services - 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

All ages welcome. Forms, candles, and greenery supplied! Contact Parish Life Coordinator Mary Boutwell at mboutwell@stjamesbr.org.

Two lit candles are shown in the bottom right corner of the block. The candles are white and have a warm, glowing light. The background is dark, making the candles stand out.



Christmas Angel Tree

Sunday, November 10 - Monday, December 2
Parish Hall Parlor

Gift giving benefiting Salvation Army families, St. James kitchen staff, and residents of Oak Park Plaza.

Instructions/gift lists coming soon!
Gifts due by Monday, December 2.

Contact Betsy Harper at
bharper@stjameseds.org, or via
phone at (225) 937-8362.



Evensong at St. James and Across the World

Shannon Gallier, Director of Music

As Episcopalians, much of our history is inextricably tied to that of England. Before the Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century, England was covered in Catholic monasteries and abbeys. Many of the traditions of monastic life were therefore natural sources of continuity after the Reformation. It was in this spirit that Thomas Cranmer devised Evensong as a compromise between two of the Daily Office services offered throughout the day in monasteries: Vespers, a service for the end of the day, and Compline, a service said before going to bed.

Evensong is a service to give thanks for the day that has past, pray for safety through the night, and to look forward to the coming of Christ, to a better day. Indeed, the word, "Evensong," is a poetic conjunction of "Evening" and "Song." The service is primarily Choral, with the Choir singing most of the service on behalf of the congregation, and has been offered daily in cathedrals and churches throughout the world for almost 500 years.

The spiritual high point of Evensong are two canticles, songs

taken directly from the Bible. Evensong traditionally uses the Magnificat ("My soul doth magnify the Lord...") and the Nunc Dimittis ("Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace...") The Magnificat, sung by Mary when she was told she would bear the Messiah, is used to respond to the longing for that very Messiah found throughout the Old Testament. The Nunc Dimittis, which Simeon sang after a long, hard life of waiting for that Messiah, is used to respond to the New Testament, the fulfillment of those Old Testament prophecies. For nearly half a millennium, composers have devised brilliant settings of these two texts specifically for Evensong, sometimes with introspective solemnity, and others - as we sung at our November 3 Evensong - with great pomp and grandeur.

Now 450 years later, St. James provides two Evensongs in our 2019 - 2020 program year: an All Saints' Day observance on Sunday, November 3, and one for Eastertide on Sunday, May 3. We hope you will join us as we lean more deeply into our Anglican heritage.



We Care Bag Organizing Event

Sunday, December 15 at 11:30 a.m.
(After the 10:30 a.m. service)
Bishops Hall

Help us organize and stuff meal bags for the homeless!

Contact Phillip Wright at
carfilwrt@cox.net.

Christmas Schedule

Christmas Eve

Tuesday, December 24
St. James Episcopal Church

Service Times:
2:30 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Day

Wednesday, December 25
St. James Episcopal Church

Service: 10:00 a.m.

Seasonal Music Schedule

Downtown Pilgrimage

St. James Choir
Sunday, December 8
St. James Episcopal Church

Join us for this brief selection of classical Christmas music!

Christmas Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 22
St. James Episcopal Church

A full classical, musical celebration of the season.

Breaking Bread, Healing Hearts

*Lluvia Peveto,
Director of Communications*



The sky was still muted when the first of the volunteers trickled into St. James' Bishops Hall at 7 a.m. on Sunday, September 29, 2019. Tables were set, a breakfast feast was prepared, and all that was missing were the guests of honor: Baton Rouge's homeless and impoverished population.

For 11 years, our church has organized the 5th Sunday Hearty Breakfast ministry, dedicated to providing those less fortunate with a chance to rest and replenish through a seated, hot meal. The program usually serves 250-350 per event, four times a year. Originally spearheaded by Rev. John Hugh Moloney, Prior of the former Center for Spiritual Formation at St. James, the program is now managed by Nancy Jo Poirrier.

Every year, Poirrier said, she can depend on seeing a few familiar faces in a sea of volunteers: the

Clark family. George and Melanie Clark have been involved with the program for over 9 years.

"As long as I can remember, this is something we did with the church," Melanie noted, "My children have grown up serving alongside us as a family."

*This is a way we can give
back to people who need
the help.*

Both of Clark's children, Taylor, 17, and Colin, 15, have been trained to know their way around buffet and table areas, waiting on guests to make sure their needs are met before any hands are raised for assistance.

Melanie attributed the family's long-standing participation to the St. James' legacy as an

effective church of service, and her own passion for the issue of the city's homeless.

"This is a way we can give back to people who need the help. It is important for me to get the kids involved, and teach them about the importance to be understanding of people in different circumstances - facing challenges we're unfamiliar with," Melanie said.

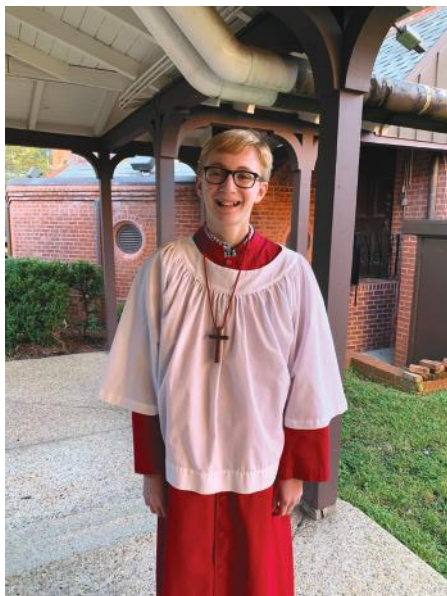
This year, the City of Baton Rouge reported a 40 percent increase in Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless service requests, and has expanded community partnerships with nonprofits like St. Vincent de Paul to address the issue.

To learn more or to become involved with the 5th Sunday Hearty Breakfast ministry, please contact Nancy Jo Poirrier at npstudio@bellsouth.net.



5 Years & Counting: Acolyte Honors

Lluvia Peveto, Director of Communications



Risley Elliott, 13, St. James Episcopal Church acolyte

There are stories of service in all corners of the church. And sometimes, when we least expect it, we find volunteer veterans in the youngest among us.

Thirteen-year-old Risley Elliott, and Bryan Olsson, 14, were recently awarded with “5 years of service” acolyte pendants. Silver cross pendants were given to the two young men by the rector in August of this year for their consistent volunteerism.

Risley, an 8th grader at Episcopal High School, said his experience as an acolyte shaped his view of faith and volunteer work.

“I’ve gotten really close to the priest and all the people who work at the church. It’s a fun thing to do, and it feels good to feel like you’re doing something good and making a difference.”

Olsson agreed.

“My experience as an acolyte ... is important because it allows me to learn more about my faith and help others out at the same time,” Olsson said.

During the early stages of its inception, the worship practice - derived from the Greek word *akolouthos*, which means “follower” or “attendant” - was known as a minor order in services. The earliest reference to their work as an established part of services was in 252 - when they were mentioned in passing in a letter from Pope Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch.

Today, the role has evolved into a major part of contemporary Anglican services. As high-visibility servants, acolytes assist in preparing for the Eucharist, leading the procession into the church, and are individually tasked as torchbearers, candle lighters, crucifers, thurifers, and bear banners.

“This ministry is important because acolytes lead the way and it is demonstrative of what youth can achieve in the church,” Caroline Ross, Acolyte Ministry Coordinator, said.

The next round of new acolyte training is scheduled to start August 2020. If you or anyone you know would like to learn more about this ministry at St. James, please contact Caroline Ross at carolineross@cox.net.



Love of Christ, Always

John Soule, St. James Campus Planning Committee Chair

The Campus Planning Committee has been working closely with Tipton Associates on proposed renovation plans for the St. James Sanctuary. Since the spring, Tipton Associates and their consultants have performed multiple site visits to the Sanctuary to review existing conditions.

In September, the committee received Design Development drawings which portrayed many of the proposed repairs, updates, and modifications. Changes include significant upgrades to the dated HVAC system, electrical equipment, repairs to damaged plaster, organ console relocation within the choir area, lighting upgrades, a fire suppression system, replacement of sanctuary flooring and other minor updates. The next step in this process will be to contact general contractors experienced in historical restorations.

Prior to selection, general contractor candidates will undergo an interview process to gauge experience, quality of work, and potential project performance. Once one is selected, they will be expected to provide guidance from a contractor's viewpoint, as well as assist in developing a detailed project budget. This process will likely occur in November, so that early involvement from the contractor can assist in progressing the project.

In addition to the architectural design, Goulding & Wood has coordinated the design of St. James' new organ. Organ chamber layout and the organ chest design was started in October. Goulding & Wood has also reviewed current Design Development drawings and provided valuable feedback for coordination purposes between the organ designer and the architect. An acoustical engineer performed a visit in September to analyze the current acoustics of the sanctuary, to ensure the new organ meets the congregation's expectations. His report was provided to both design teams (the architect and organ designer) for consideration.

Over the next few months, the design team and contractor will begin detailed planning of the project with an anticipated start date of just after Easter 2020. Following four to five months of construction, the sanctuary will be reopened for services with the new organ shortly before Christmas 2020.



Why Fifth Grade?

*Fr. Michael Kuhn, Interim Head of School,
St. James Episcopal Day School*

Schools are often questioned about the reasoning behind their grade level scopes. Parents and educators alike talk about PreK-8 or K-12 schools; sometimes they wish that we spanned more grade levels. Yet St. James Episcopal Day School is clearly an elementary school that ends programming at 5th grade.

This scope is not simply one that involves figuring out classroom availability; determining grade levels in a particular school can affect the way we teach and learn, shaping the tone of the school community, resource use, and parent involvement.

I have spent most of my 32 years as an education

leader in PreK-8 schools. One observation holds true for each of these sites: each school typically derives its identity through focusing on its highest grade level - the graduating class. In other words, the exit point in a school helps to shape each prior grade level in that school.

The tone of St. James Episcopal Day School is young, but not

immature - students' minds are being challenged at levels appropriate for their development. But playfulness, joy, curiosity, and academic confidence are borne out of the youthful quality here. When our kindergarteners look up, they are seeing fifth graders who still wave to them and play with them.

Sometimes, there is a tug on families to jump into a bigger school, to get their fourth grade child into a middle school before the "rush" of sixth grade, or to



move their second grader when an older sibling moves to a middle school from St. James. But families who take a moment to

reflect are often able to recall the power of this school that culminates in fifth grade.

St. James offers a program tailored to developing young minds, young bodies, and young souls. We may not be a child's final educational experience, but we are committed to being a child's finest educational, social, and spiritual foundation.

Finding Balance: Family Ministries

Haley Schroeck,
Family Ministry Coordinator



Shortly after starting at St. James in July, I was struck by a single statement during conversations with parishioners and staff about the Sunday School program: “Let’s be the church where children want to bring their parents.”

Sunday School curriculum development was among the most critical projects that I was tasked with as the Family Ministry Coordinator. The materials had to be entertaining and engaging enough to prevent absences, generate conversation, and inspire sharing among our young attendees.

Ultimately, the SparkHouse Rotation model was chosen. Students spend either one or two weeks on a story, but interact with the story in two separate ways or

“rotations” weekly. Sunday mornings at St. James are now loud, messy, energetic - and most importantly - joyful. Whether it’s creating trail mix to take on Noah’s ark, or going on a scavenger hunt to look for signs of God’s great creation, activities abound.

Are we the church that sparks invitations from children to their parents? With only six Sundays under our belt, it’s a little too soon to say. Sunday School averages 10 students a week, with a peak of 15 students. I feel confident saying we are successfully establishing an engaging learning environment, and a place where children and their families can engage in fellowship. I encourage you to review the photographic evidence. After all, they say a picture is worth 1,000 words.



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