



THE MESSENGER

2021 VOLUME 3

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Rector

The Rev. Dr. Drew Harmon
Senior Associate Rector

The Rev. Don White
Assisting Clergy

The Rev. Pat R. Lyle
Deacon

VESTRY

Third Year Term

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Bahin Leonard
Amy Rabalais
Trey Roberts
John Sykes
Stewart Tharp

Second Year Term

Bob Bowsher
Ashley Frey
Robert Heroman
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Martha Richard

First Year Term

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Jacques Pourciau
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Ebony Williams
Custodian



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YOU WILL BE THE MIRACLE

THE REV. CHRIS DUNCAN RECTOR

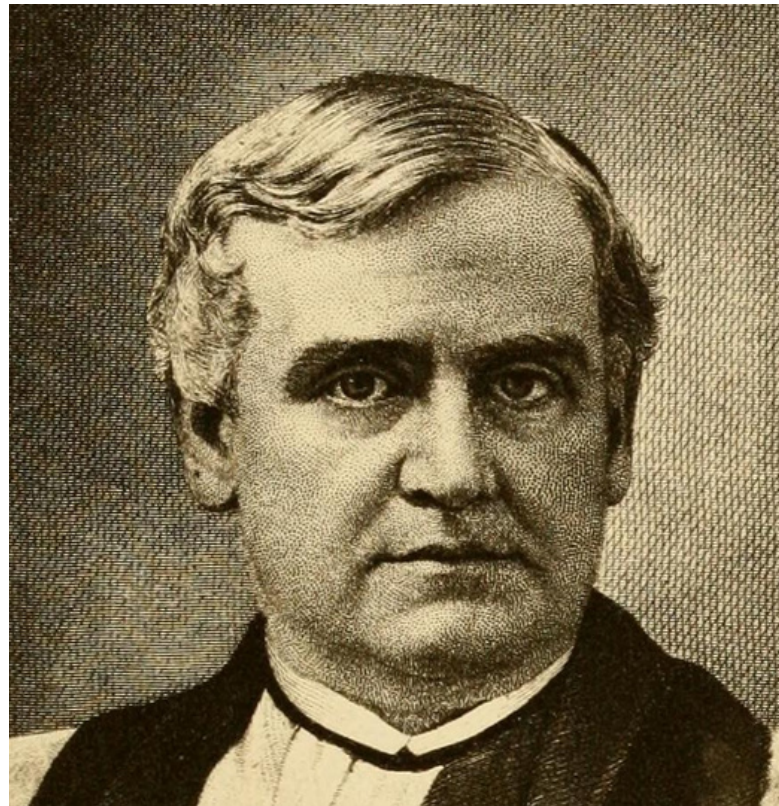
Though the Rt. Rev. Phillips Brooks' name might not ring a bell for most people, his words certainly will, "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie..." The Rt. Rev. Phillips Brooks served as an Episcopalian preacher, rector, and bishop in Boston, MA in the late 1800s. He published sermons and lectures on preaching, but Brooks is most widely known for the beloved Christmas carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

Often, when serving as the celebrant of the Eucharist on a Sunday morning, I share a blessing with the congregation which is adapted from the words of the Rt. Rev. Brooks:

**DO NOT PRAY FOR EASY LIVES
BUT ASK INSTEAD TO BE
STRONGER MEN AND WOMEN
FOR THE LIVING OF LIFE. DO
NOT PRAY FOR TASKS EQUAL
TO YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS,
BUT INSTEAD SEE THE GREAT
WORK OF GOD BEFORE YOU
AND ASK FOR THE GIFTS AND
TALENTS EQUAL TO THE TASK.
FOR WHEN YOU PRAY IN THIS
WAY, YOU WILL BE THE
MIRACLE AND EVERY DAY THE
WORLD WILL WONDER AT THE
RICHNESS OF GOD'S GRACE
THAT HAS COME INTO
CREATION THROUGH YOU.**

The blessing echoes words from Brooks' sermon entitled, "Going up to Jerusalem," a work that has been quoted on many occasions, including by John F. Kennedy at the 11th Annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast. In this sermon, Brooks reflects upon Luke 18:31 which reads:

"Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."

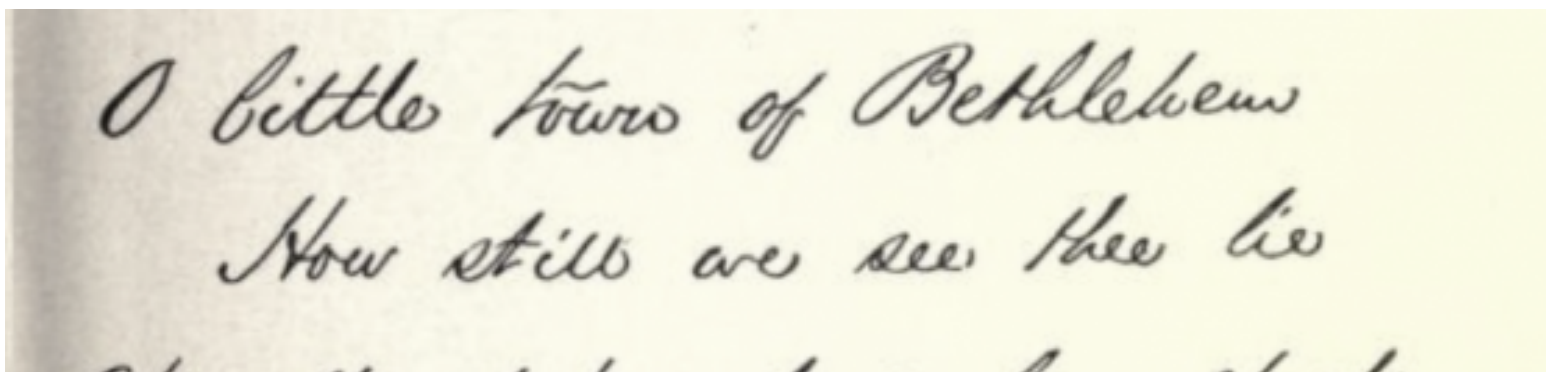


Nine chapters earlier in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus set his eyes toward Jerusalem and began to travel with his disciples to what will be his suffering unto death upon the cross. Jesus spends the majority of the Gospel of Luke literally walking to Jerusalem in order to fulfill God's plan of grace. All that Jesus says and does is in the greater context of God's will, mercy, grace, and self-sacrificing love. Brooks posits, "every true life has its Jerusalem to which it is always going up." He argues that all humans are working toward something and challenges the listener to consider the Jerusalem that God has appointed for each and to which they are heading. The journey to Jerusalem is not easy. Jesus showed us that it is a journey of giving up of self in favor of giving mercy to others. Yet, as Brooks posits, we are each called to our own Jerusalem for which we were perfectly made for our time and place.

As I write this article in the waning days of July, I do not know what the coming days, weeks, and months have in store. With the Delta variant of COVID-19 on the rise, there is renewed fear and anxiety for many. Some are tired from the past 18 months and ready to simply move forward. However, people are also fiercely divided on how to move forward, and this has led to feelings of disdain for "the other" and a breakdown in conversation, the very foundation of our living in community with one another. Yet, we are called to community by the Triune God who exists as perfect community. Yes, life is hard, but hope endures for "Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again."

In Brooks' words that inspired the blessing, we find a calling to not be drawn deeper into the world's broken nature. Rather, we worship the God of perfect love and perfect grace who calls us to Jerusalem as we are called to deny ourselves and see how God is moving among us. We look for miracles. We pray for miracles. And may we be the miracle through self-denial, grace, mercy, and love for one another as exemplified for us by the Living God. Therefore...

**MAY WE PRAY NOT FOR EASY LIVES
BUT ASK INSTEAD TO BE STRONGER
MEN AND WOMEN FOR THE LIVING
OF LIFE. MAY WE NOT PRAY FOR
TASKS EQUAL TO OUR GIFTS AND
TALENTS, BUT INSTEAD SEE THE
GREAT WORK OF GOD BEFORE US
AND ASK FOR THE GIFTS AND
TALENTS EQUAL TO THE TASK. FOR
WHEN WE PRAY IN THIS WAY, WE
WILL BE THE MIRACLE AND EVERY
DAY THE WORLD WILL WONDER AT
THE RICHNESS OF GOD'S GRACE
THAT HAS COME INTO CREATION
THROUGH US.**



St. James Sunday

celebrating **SYVIA RABALAIS**
for 25 years of service with St. James



...the Feast of St. James

featuring a fish fry and splash day for the kids



& the official grand premiere of the new organ in all its glory!

INTRODUCING MOTHER LYNN HOOKS

THE REV. DR. ANDREW HARMON SR. ASSOCIATE RECTOR

A couple weeks back, I had the privilege of sharing a cup of coffee with Mother Lynn Hooks, incoming Christian Education teacher at St. James Day School. Over our 90 minutes, I heard of Mother Lynn's family, her discerning a call to ordained life, and her incredibly gracious disposition as a teacher. Shot through it all was an effusive sense of gratitude to God and to the communities that have nourished and encouraged her.

Lynn comes to St. James after almost 25 years of teaching Christian Education at St. Luke's Episcopal Day School in Baton Rouge. Her first years at St. Luke's were spent roaming from class-to-class, pulling a red wagon behind her, stacked high with bibles and books and supplies. In addition to her classroom duties, Lynn eventually came to serve as Lay Chaplain, crafting the school lectionary and training and herding acolytes. I asked if these experiences were the propelling forces in her pursuit of ordination. They were "critical," Hooks said, but her informal discernment began years earlier.

Lynn was born into a Southern Baptist family in Baton Rouge, but grew up surrounded by cousins who were Roman Catholic. And there was something about the sacramentality, the concrete manual acts, of Catholicism that drew her in—"I loved going up to get communion, even though I wasn't supposed to," she recounted with a smile. When Lynn went off to LSU, she found herself enveloped in a group of Roman Catholic friends, regularly attending retreats and Mass.

When she married Michael, a lifelong, childhood friend (and cradle Episcopalian), they began looking for a spiritual home. Wandering into the doors at St. Luke's felt like coming home for Hooks; it was, she said, "a perfect blend of the sacraments and the liturgy and the draw of the Holy Spirit." Soon after Lynn and Michael joined St. Luke's, an opening came up for a religion teacher at the church's Day School. With some teaching experience—albeit in her self-admitted youthful brazenness—Lynn applied and was offered the job. "They took a chance on me," she reflected, and the rest was history.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Lynn met and worked alongside an ordained deacon, Debbie Scalia, who had relocated from River Ridge. Though the Episcopal Church has had female clergy since the late 1960s, Deacon Debbie's presence was new to Lynn. "I never saw a woman priest, except in the circles of NAES [National Association of Episcopal Schools]," she recalled. Though Lynn had worked alongside "20 or 30 priests" over her two-plus decades at St. Luke's, seeing a woman in a collar allowed her to imagine herself as a clergyperson, "to let myself go there". At that time, as well, several other clergy urged Lynn to entertain formal discernment for ordained ministry, which further opened her up to the possibility of a call to the priesthood.



MOTHER LYNN WITH FAMILY

The discernment process was far from a formality for Lynn; through it all she “wanted to hear God’s truth about what I needed to do.” In the end, all signs (and committees) pointed toward seminary, but a series of personal and familial challenges forced Lynn to reconsider the traditional, residential model of seminary. After a number of months, she was encouraged to look into The Iona Collaborative, a project through the Seminary of the Southwest, which provides digitized and hybrid formational training for priests, deacons, and lay leaders. Lynn found that The Iona Collaborative’s approach worked well for her life season, allowing her and Michael to stay in Baton Rouge while completing her seminary education.

Lynn was ordained a priest July 1, and since that time, she has put Iona’s unique approach to formation to the test. In addition to her responsibilities at St. James Day School, Lynn will serve as Priest-in-Charge at two parishes in the Diocese: St. Paul’s-Holy Trinity in New Roads and St. Mary’s in Morganza. Her hope, of course, is that each of these opportunities complements and feeds the others.

There is little doubt in my mind that the St. James community will benefit from Lynn’s faithful presence. When asked what Day School students could hope to take away from her classes, Lynn leaned in, and with unrivaled warmth and graciousness, answered:

“It’s really two things. First. Nothing you will ever do will separate you from God’s love. There is not a choice. There is not an action. There is not a feeling that you will ever have that will separate you from God’s love. Period. And second. It doesn’t matter if you have the right answer in the classroom. It’s always “God” and “Jesus.” It doesn’t matter what you learned or didn’t hear. It matters more what happens after you leave the room. That’s where it matters.”

As a parent, I am thrilled that my young daughters will be nurtured by such an approach to Christian Education. Beyond that, it is safe to say that Lynn will add much to the broader St. James community, reminding all of the unwavering love of God and encouraging us to witness to that love.



MOTHER LYNN IS VESTED AS PRIEST FOR THE FIRST TIME BY HER FAMILY

FELLOWSHIP – A COMPANY OF FRIENDS

MARY BOUTWELL

PARISH LIFE COORDINATOR

During the last 18 months, our ministries that promote fellowship and hospitality worked to keep our church family connected by providing fellowship opportunities that were “COVID safe.” This was done by keeping groups small and having them meet either outdoors or virtually. Well, let’s be totally honest. While this formula has certainly been wonderful, and while there has been a richness and grace in these groups, they’re not the same as a big throw down! So, we were thrilled to bring back some of our signature fellowship opportunities this summer.

SUMMER SOUNDS 2021 WAS A HIT!

The St. James Associate Vestry, Holy Grillers, Artists Guild, and Family Ministries teamed up to host Summer Sounds 2021. To jog your memory, Summer Sounds has been a summertime offering at St. James for about 15 years. Each year, we host a concert and invite the St. James community to attend. Due to social distancing restrictions, Summer Sounds 2020 was cancelled.



When COVID restrictions were lifted in late May and we learned we could host Summer Sounds, the Associate Vestry decided to make it bigger and better than ever! They asked the Holy Grillers to grill hamburgers and hotdogs, and they coordinated with our Family Ministries Coordinator to provide activities for the children. The nursery was also open for families with tiny ones.

Close to 200 church and day school members showed up to enjoy the festivities. From the music, to the food, to the children's activities, Summer Sounds 2021 was a hit!



ST. JAMES DAY

The people of St. James gathered together on Sunday, July 25 to celebrate our patron saint, St. James the Apostle, also known as St. James the Greater.

Following the service, we gathered together to celebrate the Feast of St. James with fried fish lunches and a splash day for the kids! We also gave thanks for Sylvia Rabalais' 25 years of service at St. James. For over 25 years, Sylvia Rabalais has been a steady and loyal presence in the church office, giving assistance to hundreds of parishioners and individuals. Having served with five rectors, including two interims, Sylvia knows the ins and outs of St. James probably better than anyone else. Her deep knowledge and love of St. James will be missed daily.



AND THE SEARCH IS ON FOR THE NEXT DIOCESAN BISHOP

THE REV. CHRIS DUNCAN RECTOR

Earlier this year Bishop Morris Thompson, Diocesan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, announced that he would be resigning his diocesan jurisdiction in November 2022 in order to retire. Shortly after the announcement, I began to receive questions from members of the church about what the future holds for St. James, the Diocese of Louisiana. Hopefully this article will help everyone to understand the role of the Diocesan Bishop and the process for finding a new bishop.



CONSECRATION OF BISHOP THOMPSON
PHOTO BY JACOB CROFT BOTTER

What is the role of the Diocesan Bishop?

The first thing to remember is that the name of our denomination, “Episcopal,” comes from the Greek word meaning “bishop.” In other words, we are the Protestant church of bishops. When the Church of England and the Episcopal Church in America first formed, we chose to maintain the tradition of apostolic succession. This is the belief that bishops are the successors to the apostles and episcopal authority is derived from the apostles by a succession in ministry that goes back to the original twelve, as we learn about in the four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. It is often said that the apostolic succession is to be a “sign, though not a guarantee,” of continuity with our history and past. Although there are different types of bishops, such as presiding, suffragan, assisting, and coadjutor, the role of the Diocesan Bishop is defined by the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church to be the chief pastor and leader of a diocese. In general, bishops preside at services of Confirmation/Reception/Reaffirmation and ordinations. Also, all other sacraments in the church are performed under the authority and direction of the Diocesan Bishop. Therefore, the Diocesan Bishop serves as a sort of CEO of the entire diocese, overseeing all churches within its bounds, managing the diocesan staff, and ensuring the continuous works of Christ’s mission to the world through the ministry of the Church[1].

[1] An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church (Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, editors and published by Church Publishing, Incorporated, New York, NY) was consulted in the writing of this article.

How is a new bishop found and selected?

Every diocese handles their search of a new bishop a little differently, but, ultimately, the Canons of the Episcopal Church guide the general process. When the bishop announced his departure, a common question was why announce so far out in advance? The reason is that this time gives the diocese time to fully discern how to step into this new chapter of our ministry. Once announced that Bishop Thompson would be stepping down, the diocese put together two committees: Search and Transition. The Search Committee is tasked with consulting with churches throughout the diocese to create a profile for potential candidates to understand our history, our hopes, our opportunities, and our challenges. After which, the Search Committee will open nominations to the entire Episcopal Church, similar to a rector search. Finally, after much prayer and conversation with prospective candidates, the Search Committee will present a slate of candidates for election, at which point other names can be nominated “from the floor,” so to speak.

After this slate of candidates is announced, the Search Committee’s work is complete, and the work of the Transitions Committee begins. The Transition Committee has a broad set of tasks that include, inviting the diocese to meet the candidates, coordinating the actual election, and facilitating the consecration of the new bishop. St. James has two members on each committee. Helen Campbell and Fr. Drew were invited to serve on the Search Committee. Trey Roberts and Fr. Chris were invited to serve on the Transitions Committee. Meetings to begin this extensive search and transition process began over the past several months.

What role will the people of the diocese have in the actual selection of the next bishop? Diocesan bishops are always elected by the people of the diocese as directed by the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. The delegates selected to represent their parish at the preceding Diocesan Convention also serve as the electors for any bishop election that occurs during their term. In order to be elected, a bishop candidate must win a majority of the votes from both the clergy and the lay delegations. It is the norm in bishop election for multiple rounds of voting to achieve a majority of votes from both the clergy and lay. The election is currently scheduled for May 14, 2022 at Christ Church Cathedral in New Orleans.

When will the new bishop be consecrated and seated? Mark your calendars now, as the consecration of the 12th Diocesan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana is scheduled for November 19, 2022. Stay tuned for more information as the big day approaches. Typically, the Sunday after the consecration, the bishop is formally seated at the cathedral as the Diocesan Bishop.



KNOCKING CEREMONY
PHOTO BY JACOB CROFT BOTTER

WHEREFORE WITH MY UTMOST ART, I WILL SING THEE

SHANNON GALLIER DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

**“SEVEN WHOLE DAYS, NOT ONE
IN SEVEN, I WILL PRAISE THEE;
IN MY HEART, THOUGH NOT IN
HEAVEN, I CAN RAISE THEE.
SMALL IT IS IN THIS POOR
SORT TO ENROLL THEE; E’EN
ETERNITY’S TOO SHORT TO
EXTOL THEE.”**

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633),
HYMN 382, VERSE 3

George Herbert’s words have been heavy on my mind lately; the idea that everything we do and say and think should, in some small way, extol our Maker. That’s easily said when our mantra over the past 15 months may well have been the Psalmist’s, somewhat less cheerful, “How shall I sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”

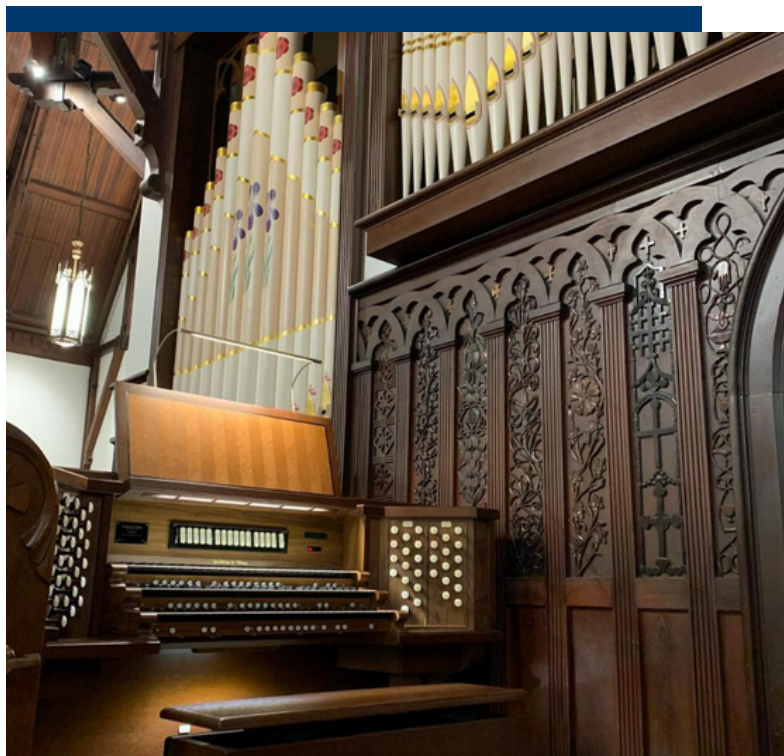
After spending some time in that strange land, however, I, for one, am looking forward to setting my eyes on the horizon and dreaming of new possibilities and innovative ways for us to bring our music program to new heights.

There is a deep humming energy around St. James’ music program right now. An awareness of the potential St. James has to be a center for beautiful liturgy and music has started to sink in. The choirs feel a bit like a bow string, pulled taut and ready to release.

So how do we ensure that all we do in our music and worship, in some “poor sort,” extols God? How do we create deep, meaningful, transcendent worship that brings us out of our everyday lives and gives us a glimpse of divine beauty?

George Herbert’s second verse may give us a clue:

**“WHEREFORE WITH MY UTMOST ART, I
WILL SING THEE; AND THE CREAM OF
ALL MY HEART, I WILL BRING THEE.”**



- By making a sacrifice of our time, our talent and our energy in all that we do around St. James. And by reveling in the beautiful music on Sunday mornings.
- By using the opening voluntary from the new organ to center yourself for worship. Stick around for three or four minutes after the service and be energized by the closing voluntary to go out into the world proclaiming Christ's love.
- By singing the hymns (even those you don't "know"! You can learn new songs!) with courage.
- By supporting the choirs in their ministry of art and music. Attend concerts and special services like Evensong and Lessons and Carols and soak in the beauty of holiness.

In doing these things, even if you're not directly associated with the music program at St. James, you help extol God; to bring the best parts, the "cream," of our hearts to our worship, art, and music. It takes every one of us to create beauty that honors God—not just me, not just the choirs. I look forward to many years of that life-giving work with each of you.



UPCOMING MUSIC MINISTRY EVENTS
 Choir Sunday *September 12* | 10:30am
 Dedicatory Organ Recital *October 24* | 5pm

FAMILY FUN IN THE SUN

CHELSEA BORRUANO
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Friday Fundays were a huge success this past June. Kicking things off, the kids (and the guardians) had a blast for Yoga Yummy. A special thank you Katie with Yoglates South and Sarah Joy with Counterspace for a wonderful morning filled with activities that the whole family could enjoy.

We wrapped up the series by getting the creative juices flowing with an awesome trip to Pinspiration, where the kids got to experience all different types of art mediums, like water marbling, ink tiles, and everyone's favorite, the SPLATTER ROOM. We can't thank everyone enough for coming out. Ms. Haley even said it was the perfect way to spend her last couple weeks here in Baton Rouge!



But, the summer fun didn't end there. This year's **Summer Sounds** event was created for the whole family to enjoy, complete with a GymFit Ninja Warrior Course and nursery for the little ones.

And to wrap things up, or cool them down, our families enjoyed **St. James Sunday** together with fried fish dinners and a splash day for the kids.



Drive-In Food Bank Distribution
third Saturday of each month

Hearty Breakfasts
every fifth Sunday beginning Oct. 31

FROM THE VESTRY

TREY ROBERTS SR. WARDEN

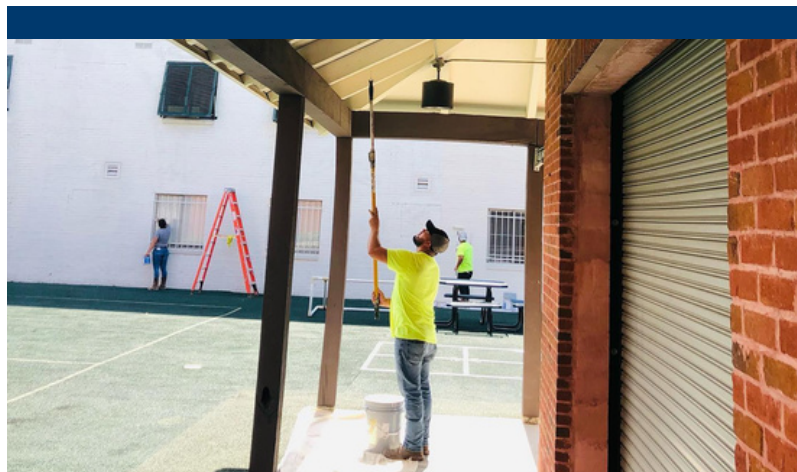


I hope since my last Vestry update, many of you have been able to attend Church in person to see the beautiful renovations. It has been an exciting summer with much work being completed all around the campus.

As has been shared on social media and on the website, the biggest Summer project has been the installation of our new Goulding & Wood Opus 53 Organ. After over a year of building and weeks of installation and tuning, the newest organ in Baton Rouge made its grand debut appropriately on the Feast of St. James. Our many thanks goes to Shannon Gallier for his dedication in seeing this project through. Many of you may not know that the organ process, from planning to installation, has been ongoing for over three years. The commissioning of this beautiful instrument would not be possible without the generosity of our parishioners. It is a gift that will be enjoyed for years to come.

In other exciting news, thanks to the hard work and dedication of Andy McCall, who donated his time and expertise as a commercial real estate agent, we have secured a tenant to lease the majority of the third floor of the Ministries Building. This space was not being used by the church and will become an additional source of revenue for St. James. The Vestry is also making plans for a “rainy day” fund to cover any additional costs of maintenance for the space. The tenant is a non-profit organization whose mission appears to be in line with ours at St. James. Per the lease, which has a seven-year term, we have upgraded the space with new paint and carpet, both long overdue. We will welcome our new tenant to St. James on September 1st.

As you walk around campus, you will find other upgrades to the facilities: Newly sanded and painted wrought iron fencing; freshly painted canopies connecting the church and school buildings; a new brick wall constructed on Florida Blvd to provide additional security to our students and property; a freshly painted interior of Bishops Hall; a waterproofed and repainted exterior of the Ministries Building; and the freshly painted exterior of Killgore Hall. All of these improvement projects have come in on time and on- or under-budget thanks to the hard work of Charles Carter Construction.



As you may know, our dedicated staff members, Nutritionist Mary Palms and Office Manager Sylvia Rabalais, have retired, and our Family Ministries Coordinator, Haley Schroeck, has moved out of state. On behalf of the Vestry, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to each of them for their service to St. James over the years. Mrs. Palms joined the Day School over a decade ago and has been a wonderful fixture at the church as well, especially at Gumbo and other church events. Mrs. Sylvia has worked at the Church for 25 years and has been a wealth of knowledge for five rectors and countless parishioners. Their presence will no doubt be missed at St. James.

As the Summer comes to a close and our Church's Fall programming gears up, the St. James Vestry is poised to welcome back our parishioners and Day School families to an improved Church and school campus, and is excited for new opportunities to serve our Church community.

2021-2025

Preserving Our Past **SECURING OUR FUTURE**

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BY THE NUMBERS

NUMBER OF PLEDGES **263**

TOTAL PLEDGED AMOUNT **\$4,095,504.91**

TOTAL GIVEN TO DATE (7/31/21) **\$1,490,218.15**

SUMMER PROJECT COSTS **\$332,784.62**



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WORSHIP WITH US

SUNDAYS IN-PERSON

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

SUNDAYS ONLINE

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
Facebook/YouTube