



THE MESSENGER

2021 VOLUME 4

ST. JAMES

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The Rev. Chris Duncan
Rector

The Rev. Dr. Drew Harmon
Senior Associate Rector

The Rev. Don White
Assisting Clergy

The Rev. Pat R. Lyle
Deacon

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Third Year Term

Amy Kurtz
Bahin Leonard
Amy Rabalais
Trey Roberts
John Sykes
Stewart Tharp

Second Year Term

Bob Bowsher
Ashley Frey
Robert Heroman
Bettsie Miller
Chrissie Olsson
Martha Richard

First Year Term

Anita Byrne
Michael Fontenot
Lolly Martin
Alan Miller
Robyn Richards
John Soule

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Facilities Manager

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Director of Communications

Mary Boutwell
Parish Life Coordinator

Monica Dugas
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Shannon Gallier
Director of Music

Bridget Henderson
Head of School

Darell Lee
Custodian

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Sexton

Cheryl Olinde
Director of Finance

Jacques Pourciau
Director of Operations



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A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION - COMING HOME

THE REV. CHRIS DUNCAN
RECTOR

**WHEN THE LORD RESTORED
THE FORTUNES OF ZION, *
THEN WERE WE LIKE THOSE
WHO DREAM.**

**THEN WAS OUR MOUTH
FILLED WITH LAUGHTER, *
AND OUR TONGUE WITH
SHOUTS OF JOY.**

PSALM 126:1-2

There are fifteen psalms (Psalms 120-134) that fall into the category of “psalms of ascent,” including Psalm 126. Many scholars believe that these psalms were used by Jewish worshipers as they ascended from their various homes to travel to Jerusalem and up to the Temple mount during one of three pilgrim festivals as found in Deuteronomy 16:16. Psalm 126, in particular, was most likely written during the 6th century BCE when the Hebrew people were allowed to return to their homes after the Babylonian Exile. Despite leaving captivity with high expectations, the city to which they returned was war torn rubble and had to be rebuilt. Life was not easy. Yet the steadfast commitment of God and the promise of God’s kingdom filled their hearts and a new song echoed from their lips. Therefore, this text is filled with the hope of joy and abundance from God even in the midst of great hardship.



Every generation has times of difficulty and hardship. Psalm 126 reminds us to keep our hope in the God who created us, sustains us, and eternally loves us. This takes work on our part as we seek to be the Church as Christ commands us to love one another as community. The work of the Church is to grow and gather together as the body of Christ in worship, fellowship, and common mission and service to others. When we are engaged in this way, it is easier to stay grounded in the hope we have through Christ.

While the calendar new year is just around the corner, the church’s new year is already upon us with the start of Advent, that season leading up to Christmas. Advent is a time marked by holy expectation for the coming of Christ. With the start of each new calendar year, many people will make new year resolutions that often quickly fade away within days or weeks. However, perhaps it would be more fitting if this practice of resolutions was part of a season with a deeper, holy purpose. What if we were to use this Advent and Christmas seasons to work on ourselves from a spiritual perspective?

These holy resolutions can address any area of one's spiritual life. One big area that comes to mind is that after nearly two years of COVID, many of us are out of the practice and routine of going to church. As life opens back up more and more, it is time to come home. Often people will ask, "Can't I just pray at home through the online service or out in nature?" The answer is yes, certainly. But that is not being the Church as Christ commanded us. We are built for community, for being the body of Christ together. I have often heard people say that going to church or being involved in various ministries is a lot like trying to start a new exercise routine. It is hard at first, but, after a while, it becomes a part of who you are.

Now is the time to exercise our faith here at St. James. Now is the time to come home. Now is the time to resolve to re-engage in the life of St. James. There are a lot of exciting things happening that will only be better with your presence. At the same time the possibilities for our future are even greater if we are willing to step out in faith. Together we make our song in the highs and lows, in the joy and sorrow, in the laughter and the tears:

**WHEN THE LORD RESTORED THE
FORTUNES OF ZION, *
THEN WERE WE LIKE THOSE WHO
DREAM.
THEN WAS OUR MOUTH FILLED
WITH LAUGHTER, *
AND OUR TONGUE WITH SHOUTS
OF JOY.
PSALM 126:1-2**



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

We welcome you to join us at 3pm, 5pm or 8pm on Dec. 24 for our Christmas Eve services. A live stream service will also be offered for those unable to make it in person.

Start of the Program Year

Sunday, September 12, 2021





PLUMBING THE DEPTHS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

THE REV. DR. ANDREW HARMON
SR. ASSOCIATE RECTOR

The beginning of the program year brings with it exciting new opportunities for adult education and formation, and this year has been no different.

Our most recent four-week Adult Forum series delved into the Gospel of John. For many, John presents all kinds of challenges, such as hostile statements about Jewish people and customs, not to mention seemingly esoteric reflection regarding Jesus's relationship to God the Father. The list goes on, but it is safe to say that the Fourth Gospel—as John is often called—has fascinated and frustrated many over the centuries.

Rather than a stumbling block, this fascination and frustration held the promise of a fruitful Adult Forum series. And with that, an invitation was extended the Very Dr. Rev. Cynthia Kittredge (Dean, President, and New Testament Professor at the Seminary of the Southwest).[1] Through the wonders of technology, Dean Kittredge joined us virtually via Zoom to orient the group to John's Gospel. She shared some of the particularities of the gospel and how those served, as she put it, to proclaim and witness to the work of God in Jesus Christ.

In pointing our attention to John 20:30-31,[2] Dean Kittredge drew out the gospel's purpose to nurture faith for the purpose of abundant life. She then led us through a careful reading of the Gospel's poetic prologue (John 1:1-18), focusing on the unique importance of the incarnation while helping orient us to the general contours of the text.

Fr. Chris led our second session, reflecting on what scholars often label “the Book of Signs” (John 2–12)—that portion of John's gospel detailing Jesus's many words and works revealing of his ministry and identity. Jesus's seven miraculous acts point beyond themselves to the theological significance of Jesus. Specifically, Fr. Chris facilitated our second class, reflecting on God's provision through the turning of water into wine (John 2) and the wilderness multitude feeding (John 6).

Casey Duncan gave a dynamic third session, guiding the class through Jesus' Farewell Discourse in John 14–17. These chapters serve as John's distinct retelling of the Last Supper, highlighting the Gospel's discrete approach to leadership and authority. Much of that third session was spent showing how John's recounting of Jesus's words and works connected Hebrew precedent and scripture. Rather than emphasizing the eucharistic components of that final encounter between Jesus and his disciples, we—as readers—are confronted with the jarring, yet beautifully comfortable, truth that we are called friends of God.

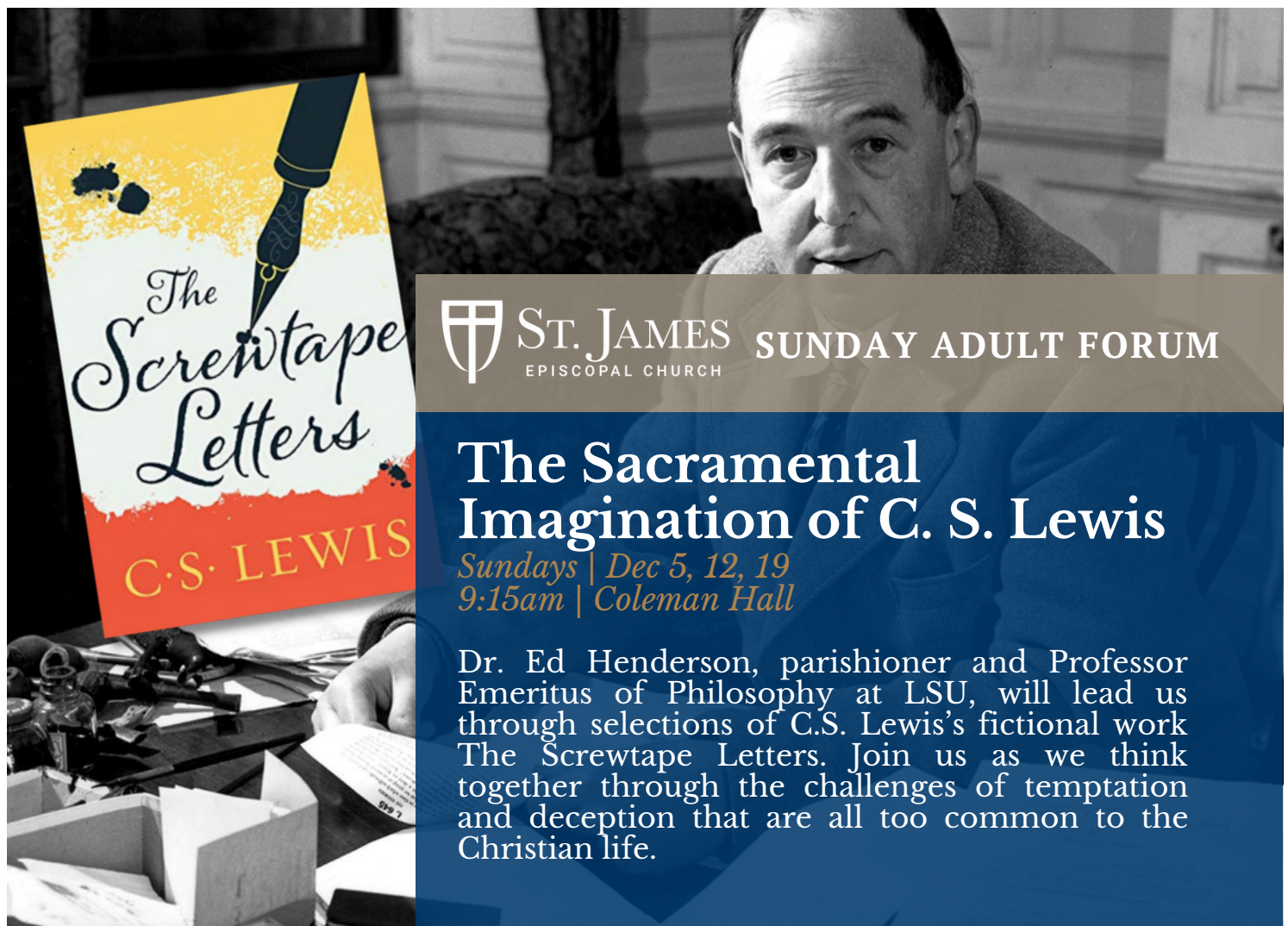



I had the privilege of concluding the four-week series by zeroing in on John's depiction of the resurrection. John 20–21 offer a handful of powerful Easter stories, weaving together the importance of seeking and believing through sight in Jesus's post-resurrection appearances. The subsequent task for those who follow Jesus to live in the Spirit of the Risen Lord who shows signs and teaches and establishes a beloved community.

The four-part series did not pretend to be exhaustive or comprehensive in its treatment of the Fourth Gospel. Nor did the sessions try to iron out the difficulties and challenges that surface in John's twenty-one chapters. Instead, the focus throughout was on the particularities of John's witness to the life and ministry of Jesus. In so doing, we were invited repeatedly to reassess our understandings of belief, spiritual sight, and friendship with God and with those whom God loves.

[1] Dean Kittredge's book *Conversations with Scripture: The Gospel of John* (New York: Morehouse, 2007) proved especially instructive for the series.

[2] "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name."



 **ST. JAMES** SUNDAY ADULT FORUM
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Sacramental Imagination of C. S. Lewis

Sundays | Dec 5, 12, 19
9:15am | Coleman Hall

Dr. Ed Henderson, parishioner and Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at LSU, will lead us through selections of C.S. Lewis's fictional work *The Screwtape Letters*. Join us as we think together through the challenges of temptation and deception that are all too common to the Christian life.

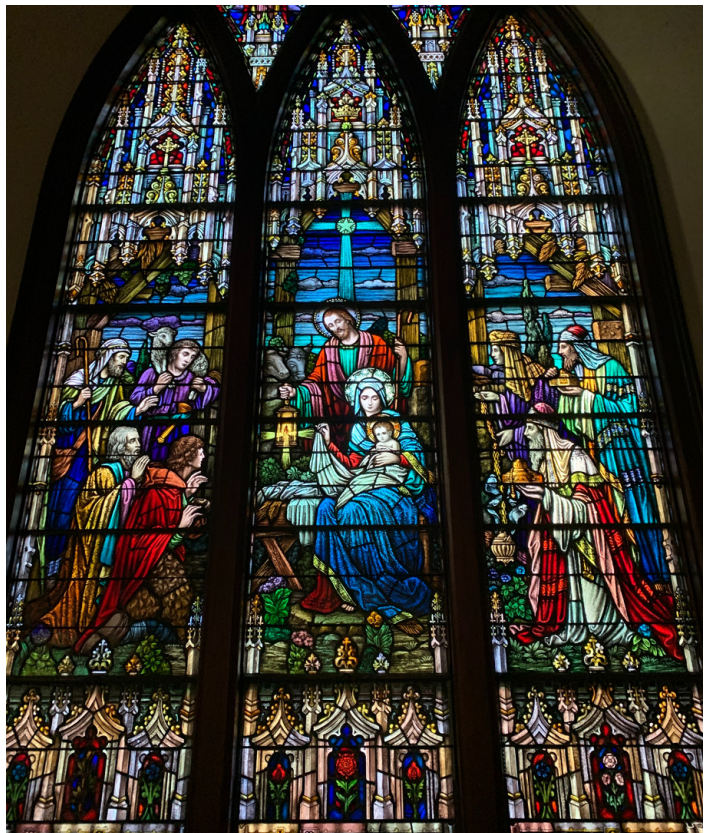
LESSONS & CAROLS

SHANNON GALLIER DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

One of the most beloved traditions in many Episcopal churches is the service of Lessons & Carols. These can be offered in any of the church seasons, but they are most often offered in Advent and Christmas.

Lessons & Carols has its origins in early 20th century England. The Rev. Eric Milner White, who first devised the service, originally intended it to be offered on Christmas Eve while serving at Truro Cathedral in Southwest England. Over the 20th century, the service was popularized by the annual BBC Radio broadcasts from King's College, Cambridge. The service has become a beloved holiday tradition throughout the world.

Lessons & Carols uses alternating readings from scripture and seasonal music to tell the story of “the loving purposes of God” seen “through the windows and the words of the Bible,” as Milner White put it. Hymns and carols are used to comment upon the readings in order to enhance our understanding of them and to add a sense of balance and symmetry to the liturgy.



On **Sunday, December 19th at 5 p.m.**, the combined choirs of St. James will offer a Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols for the first time since December of 2019. Before the service, I will offer a half-hour organ recital featuring music for the season beginning at 4:30 p.m. as a prelude to the service. The recital will feature works by J.S. Bach, Dello Joio, Brahms, and Dupré. Music for the service itself will feature wonderful hymn arrangements by Sir David Willcocks, and anthems by Goldschmidt, Poston, Robinson, and Edwards.

Wherever it is sung, Lessons & Carols is adapted to local interests, traditions, and customs, as it is in the bidding prayers of our service, but its beauty, poetry, and music brings the world together year after year.

We invite you to listen, sing, and surround yourself with the beauty of holiness.



NOONTIME ADVENT RECITALS

Join us at noon each Wednesday throughout the Advent season for half-hour organ recitals featuring seasonal music on St. James's beautiful new Goulding & Wood pipe organ:

- Dec. 1 *David Summers, Director of Music at St. Joseph Cathedral, Baton Rouge*
- Dec. 8 *Jarrett Follette, Canon Precentor, Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans*
- Dec. 15 *Dan Talbot, Organist at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge*
- Dec. 22 *Dr. Richard Webb, Organist and Music Associate at First United Methodist Church, Baton Rouge*

THE RETURN OF TWO FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

MARY BOUTWELL

PARISH LIFE COORDINATOR

THE JAMES GANG

After an 18 month hiatus due to COVID restrictions, two fellowship groups determined that they were ready to begin gathering again.

The James Gang, composed of mostly retired individuals in our community, gather for day trips, luncheons and other outings a few times each year. This fall, The James Gang has gone on two outings.

In September, the group visited the LSU Water Campus followed by lunch at Pastime Pizza. They explored one the world's largest movable river bed physical models – the Lower Mississippi River Physical Model while learning about erosion of our coastline and the many projects underway to help prevent further erosion.



The James Gang visited Congregation B’Nai Israel in October. Rabbi Batsheva Appel shared information about Reform Judaism, the synagogue, The Torah, and Jewish High Holy Days. The James Gang was especially honored that Rabbi Appel showed the group their Torah Scroll. A Torah Scroll is a long scroll containing the entire text of the Five Books of Moses, hand-written by a scribe in the original Hebrew. Each Torah Scroll is an exact replica of the original scroll written a millennium ago and takes at least a year to create. Torah Scrolls are rolled up around two ornate wooden shafts, attached to either end of the scroll.

For information regarding future James Gang outings, contact John Cadwallader, jgcad@i-notification.net or 225-938-4441.

ST. JOAN OF ARC

The Saint Joan of Arc Group, a women's group that gathers for study and fellowship, met in October in Coleman Hall for the first time since February 2020. The group enjoyed a catered luncheon while Denise Allen, chairperson, outlined the course of study for this program year. November's lesson was led by Father Don White and hosted by Helen Campbell. The topic for the year is *Women's Voices in the Church*. Joan of Arc meets at noon the first Monday of the month from October through May. Contact Denise Allen, dmlallen@bellsouth.net for information about future meetings.



JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT

Parish Work Day
SATURDAY, DEC. 18 | 9 AM

FROM *WHAT IF* TO *WORTH EVERY MINUTE OF IT*

LIZ CANFIELD

INTERIM FAMILY MINISTRIES
COORDINATOR

When I was first approached about stepping into the Family Ministry Coordinator position, I admit I had my reservations. I had spent the last 11 years working for the world's largest chemical company where I spearheaded communication strategies to 1,200 employees and contractors, managed crisis command centers, and supported multimillion-dollar projects. My job felt important, and it made me feel important. Singing "Jesus Loves Me" and crafting popsicle crosses, not so much.

Part of me knew I needed to take time to reset to think about my family and what I really wanted in my career, but part of me wanted to jump back into the communications arena where I was doing things that were significant and feeling like I was making a difference. Do I really want to drag myself out of bed at 8 a.m. every Sunday morning? Can my family afford for me to go in a new direction? I love working with kids, but do I love working with them that much?

Essentially, what we teach our children now influences their entire lives. So, when I chuck an axe with young adults, make a creation globe with a 2nd grader or serve Goldfish crackers in the nursery, it is an opportunity for me to influence entire lives for the sake of the Gospel. If that's not important, I don't know what is.

If I go back to those "what if" questions I asked myself in August and think about the answers in today's context, it's pretty impactful. Do I really want to drag myself out of bed at 8 a.m. every Sunday morning? Yes, because it gives me the opportunity to have quiet time with God. Can my family afford for me to go in a new direction? Yes, because I am more present, happier, and less stressed. I love working with kids, but do I love working with them that much? Yes, because when a child comes running into Sunday School with a smile on their face excited to be there it's worth so much more than multi-millions.



Sunday School Scoop

We started Sunday School at the beginning with the story of creation. As we read how God created our world little by little each day, the kids created their own Creation Globes complete with light, stars, fish of the sea and more. One awesome creator chose a kangaroo and kola for her “beasts of the fields” and behold, Australia was made! Games, crafts and even STEM activities continue to help children connect the dots between the stories of the Bible, teachings of Jesus and living with a servant’s heart.

Children’s Church Check-in

Children’s Church continues to have great participation. Yes, I may be bribing them with a small piece of candy for their loyalty, but I also see how the lessons of love and God’s awesomeness are having an impact. You may have noticed that each time the children depart and return to church, one child is leading the procession carrying a small cross. This has become quite the hit with the kids, and many are on their best behavior so they can be chosen to carry it.

Nursery News

Working in the church nursery is more than changing diapers, rocking babies and helping the toddlers play nicely together. St. James is blessed to have a wonderful nursery staff that work hard to create a place of love and warmth. Slowly but steadily, the nursery is also undergoing a design update with framed pictures, fun rugs and new toys.

EYC Extra

There’s power (and more fun) in numbers. This year youths from across the Episcopal Diocese are coming together for scheduled fun and faith-filled activities. In September, the Baton Rouge EYC gathered for a literal throwdown at Civil Axe Throwing where everyone worked up an appetite for dinner afterwards at Curbside Burgers. In October, 30 kids from 3rd grade through high school teamed up boys against girls for some colorful Capture the Flag, and while some kids literally left blue, there were smiles all around. And, who knew picking up trash could be so much fun or competitive, when youths came together for a trash scavenger hunt as part of Serve Sunday.



FALL FEST WAS FANTASTIC

MARY BOUTWELL
PARISH LIFE COORDINATOR

On Saturday, October 24th, St. James families and friends gathered on the playground to celebrate Fall with St. James' first ever Fall Fest event. There was a pumpkin patch, face painting, games, and activities for the children. The smiles on the faces of the kids let us know that the day was a success! A special thank you to the Associate Vestry and everyone who came out to make it a Fall Fest to remember.





FROM THE VESTRY

TREY ROBERTS SR. WARDEN



This Fall has been a busy one for St. James and our Vestry!

Our new tenant, the Nature Conservancy, has moved into the third floor of the Ministries building. We were excited to put that space to use for a good cause. The rent we receive will help us further the mission of our church. The Vestry recently voted to establish a “rainy day fund” whereby a portion of the rent we receive each month will be set aside for use when rent is not collected in the event of a vacancy. Doing this will help offer some further stability for our long-term budget. We are also marketing parts of the 1st Floor of the building for lease.

We have had some recent interest in the two large empty rooms that front Florida Street. Hopefully we will get that space leased soon as well. If you know of anyone who may be interested in the space, please let me know.

As I reported in my last update, many church renovations were completed over the summer. We have already started planning for major Capital Campaign projects next summer. The Vestry approved moving forward with the Campus Planning Committee’s recommendation to finish a majority of the landscaping projects slated for the campus, install a new roof on Killgore Hall, replace the failing windows on Werlein Hall, and unite our four parking lots into one with a new layout. All of these projects should start in earnest in May 2022. Many more details on these projects will be communicated as the year moves on. I can’t thank the Campus Planning Committee, and specifically, Chair Alyce Dietz enough for their tireless work and dedication to St. James. These projects would not move forward so smoothly without their guidance and expertise.

We have some great things happening in our various ministries. I am personally very excited about the EYC. We have combined efforts with other churches in the Baton Rouge area and so far all of our events have been successful. The last event, hosted at St. Luke’s, had over 30 kids attend! Hopefully, popular events like this will continue to build momentum for our program.

I would like to thank Lee Griffin, John Sykes, Ben Dampf, Anita Byrne, and Claudia Black for recently giving up some of their Saturday to attend the virtual Diocesan Convention. St. James was well represented! It is always interesting to see the business side of the Diocese.

By now, hopefully, you have cast your ballot in the Vestry election. This was our third year to have a “mail in” election. Once again it was a success with most of you taking the time to vote. Thanks to the candidates for being willing to serve. Each candidate that agreed to run would be an asset to our church leadership.

Our next Vestry update will be in 2022. Until then, I hope each of you and your families has a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Preserving Our Past SECURING OUR FUTURE

2021-2025

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BY THE NUMBERS

NUMBER OF PLEDGES 263

TOTAL PLEDGED AMOUNT \$4,095,504.91

TOTAL GIVEN TO DATE (11/9/21) \$1,773,156.36

Volunteer with Us!

Drive-In Food Bank Distribution
third Saturday of each month

Hearty Breakfasts
every fifth Sunday

St. James Christmas Feast
Sunday, Dec. 12



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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

WEDNESDAYS IN-PERSON

Noon Holy Eucharist with healing
prayer

SUNDAYS ONLINE

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

CHRISTMAS EVE

3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.