
The Weekly Parish Light 2023

St. James Episcopal Church · 2 S Augustine St. · Wilmington DE 19804 · 302-994-2029

**From the Rector – The Rev. Sarah Nelson
December 16, 2023**



In olden days, it used to be the practice of the church to send out a Christmas letter to all of the congregation. It was a practice to speak both about the year that was quickly coming to an end and, of course, a solicitation for Christmas donations. I commend both practices, both in the church and in our own lives.

What has this year held, both the highlights and the difficult times? How and where have we felt God's presence in those times? How have these events in our own lives been a living testament of our faith? They say that there are no atheists in fox holes, and who cannot look at celebrations without seeing the miracle of our God? In your own life, where are those moments? How have these times deepened our journey of faith?

A tried-and-true exercise is to draw a straight line on a piece of paper. Mark off the months of 2023. Then, using a different color pen, identify significant moments in the year. Place a mark on your straight line signifying these times. You may choose to put a mark either below the line or above the line identifying these high or low times. Throughout the ups and downs of the graph that you have created, ask yourself about your relationship with God during those times. While a simple activity, sometimes adding a visual to the reflection is helpful. Even more so is to take the time to reflect on those moments in your spiritual life during these past months.

This Sunday is our annual Christmas Pageant. Our children will present a telling of the story of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I would mark this Sunday as one of the highlights way above the line on my graph. Why, you might ask? I would place this Sunday as a highlight because the pageant is our opportunity to observe how we are passing on the story of salvation to the next generation. How? These precious children are hearing and taking in the story in their lives. Jesus tells us that we are to go into the world and preach the Gospel, how we are to make disciples of all. The pageant is just that – our mission and our calling in action.

The Gospel appointed for the third Sunday of Advent is about John the Baptizer. A more apt description would be John the Missionary. John always speaks of himself in terms of his relationship to Jesus. Actually, he spends more time telling us what he is not, but he describes Jesus aptly: the Light of the world, the one for whom he is preparing the way.

I have read that if you are placed in total darkness, no matter how long you are there, your eyes will never adjust. If you are in darkness for 5 minutes or 5 years, in total darkness you will never be able to see even your hands in front of you. Yet with only a glimmer of light, the eyes adjust and you can begin to see.

John the Missionary reminds us that in a world that can seem very dark indeed, we are to define ourselves in relation to the Great Light, Jesus Christ. In all that we say and all that we do, we are to point to that Light in the hope of allowing others to see. We are to be that glimmer for the world. John is the one who calls us from the wilderness to live in relationship with the true Light of the world, the one whose birth we await. *(continued on page 2)*

FROM THE RECTOR *(continued from page 1)*

In these final days before the celebration of the Light coming into the world, let us rejoice in the awareness of our God who loves us so much that God sent the Light to us, to find us, to sustain us, and to be a constant companion throughout the seasons.

Faithfully,

Sarah



MUSIC MINISTRY NOTES
from Dr. Michael Larkin,
Director of Music Ministry

My St. James Friends,

We are already to the third Sunday in Advent and once more the Gospel focuses on the ministry of John the Baptist. Accordingly, the Parish Choir anthem this week will be a hymn setting, “There’s a Voice in the Wilderness Crying,” that we sang at our combined Lessons and Carols service this past Sunday with the “other” St. James. If you were not able to make it, you missed a lovely, meaningful service. Our hymns also continue this theme and the theme of preparation for the birth of Jesus. Sing boldly!

We certainly look forward to our Youth Pageant this Sunday. In addition, a gentle reminder that this Sunday at 7:00 p.m. (6:30 gathering in the Lounge for refreshments), we will hold our Quiet Christmas service. Whether one has a physical or emotional burden, or has great joys this season, or both, or just wish to enjoy a quiet, calm Christmas celebration, this service is a wonderful way to take a breath amid the hustle and bustle of the season and quietly celebrate the birth of our Savior.

I hope to see you at both of our services this coming third Sunday in Advent.

Blessings,

Dr. Michael Larkin

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 17, 2023

SUNDAY'S LITURGIES – *Old Testament: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm: 126;*
New Testament: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28.

LAY MINISTERS –

Director of Music Ministry:	Dr. Michael Larkin	Greeter:	Penny Geist
Worship Leader:	Dawn Martinez	Usher:	Andi Bender
Old Testament Reader:	Denise Jarrell	Altar Guild:	Dawn Martinez
New Testament Reader:	Caroline Luckey	Counters:	Tom Reilly & Dawn Martinez
Acolyte:	Denise Jarrell		



The third Candle on the Advent Wreath (the Candle of Joy) will be lit by the Bender Family.

HOPE, LOVE, JOY, PEACE



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT – The children will have their Annual Christmas Pageant – “A Super Christmas” – during the 10:00 am worship service **this Sunday, Dec. 17th**. A Lunch Reception will follow the service in the Parish Hall. You won't want to miss this!!



PARISH PRAYER LIST – Please see the last page of this newsletter and pray for those in need of our prayers for strength, guidance, or healing, especially Patti, Penny, & David Edwards, Carmen Scott, Penny Wilhelme, Diane Geist, Lindsey, Kira, Preston, Cindy, Dave, Jim, Terri. Pray for those who have died. Pray also for Presiding Bishop Michael Curry who is recovering at home after surgery from a fall earlier this month.

Anyone wishing to have someone **placed on or taken off the prayer list** may email Marti LaRue (martilarue828@gmail.com) or call the church office at 302-994-2029.

THOSE CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK –

FAMILY – We will be praying this week for the Biscoe family. Please remember to pray for Jeff and Terri during the service on Sunday and keep them in your thoughts during the week.

A Prayer for Families: Heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, we humbly pray to you to guide and govern us by the Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our daily life, we may never forget you, but remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER – Pray for The Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea.

DIOCESE OF DELAWARE – Pray for Delaware Prison Ministries.



Thirteen adults and six children shared delicious meals, fun & laughs, opening gifts, and fellowship this past Thursday at Tony’s Bistro in Newark! Thanks to all who participated in the fun-filled evening!

ANNOUNCEMENTS



“NORM” THE TURKEY

Anyone who plucked Norm’s feathers and have **NOT** brought in your supplies for the kitchen yet, would you **please bring them in this Sunday, December 17th!** We need the supplies for Sunday’s Coffee Hour & Reception after the Christmas Pageant and also for the get-together before the Quiet Christmas service.




Have you started collecting small glass jars yet? We need them to use for votives for the Epiphany Three Kings Sunday Celebration in January. There is a box in which you can put the jars from **now through Sunday, December 24th.** Thank you.

FUNDRAISER EVENT



WILLIAMS SYNDROME ASSOCIATION: Check out the ***Bender Twins’ Team fundraising page!*** Click on the link below for more information and to donate to this wonderful Association on behalf of Samantha and Autumn! (If you are unable to open the link below, copy and paste into your URL.)
<https://events.williams-syndrome.org/team/500609>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS</u></p> 	3	– Samantha Holmberg
	8	– Christian Padovani
	9	– Chase Carew
	12	– Jason Grahe
	13	– Dottie Huber
	24	– Sandy Grim
	24	– Mark Hutchinson
	27	– Eliza Nelson
	29	– Nicholas Harvey
	31	– Constance Ruggieri

CALENDAR – DECEMBER 17 - 31

Sunday, December 17 (Advent 3)

Choir Rehearsal – 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service – 10:00 a.m.

Children’s Christmas Pageant during service, followed by Coffee Hour/Lunch Reception

Quiet Christmas Service – 7:00 p.m. - Refreshments in Lounge at 6:30 before service

Sunday, December 24 (Advent 4)

Choir Rehearsal – 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service – 10:00 a.m.

Monday, December 25 – *Merry Christmas!*

No Worship Service

Sunday, December 31 (First Sunday after Christmas Day)

NO Choir Rehearsal

Worship Service – 10:00 a.m.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK :

Happiness never decreases by being shared.

-Buddha

ST. JAMES VESTRY

Sr. Warden: George McDowell

Jr. Warden: Tina Geist

Christian Education Chair: Tina Geist

Finance: George McDowell/Tina Geist

Outreach Chairs: Dawn Martinez and Janice Fischbach

Pastoral Care Chairs: Dawn Martinez and Marti LaRue

Property Chairs: Tom Reilly and Andi Bender

Hospitality/Fellowship Chairs: Marti LaRue and Carol Hall

Worship Chairs: John Grim and Dawn Martinez

Recording Secretary: Marti LaRue

Clerk of the Vestry: Janice Fischbach



A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen.

*Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby
Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell*

Prayer in the Midst of Violence

Lord, in our shock and confusion, we come before you
in our grief and despair in the midst of hate,
in our sense of helplessness in the face of violence,
We lean on you.

For the families of those who have been killed, we pray.
For the shooters – *help* us to pray, Lord.
For the communities that have lost members, their anger, grief, fear,
We pray.

For the churches striving to be your light in darkness
beyond comprehension,
We pray.

Lord of all, gather us up – your creatures, your world –
and bring an end to the violence.
Come, Lord Jesus.
Amen.

*Taken from “**Prayer for mass violence**” by Grace Claus
written for faithward*

Prayer for Refugees

O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness
and brought them to the promised land.
Guide us now so that, following your Son, we may
walk alongside vulnerable refugee families as
they build a new life in the county of your love and mercy. Amen.

ST. JAMES PRAYER LIST – Please use this Prayer List and include the following people in your daily prayers. Names will remain on the prayer list for one month. If you want to keep someone on the list, add, or remove anyone, please email (stjamesnew@verizon.net) or call the church office (302-994-2029).

Abigail	Cullen Kate Deal	Joshua John	The Pat Purdy Family
Alan	Frank Dean	Sister Julian	Reese
Alethia	Diana and Pevan	Carolyn Karney & Family	Neil Reilly
Alex	Rose DelliGatti	Juanita Kavanaugh	The Rev. Reuben Rodriguez
Allysa	Henry Diaz	Kathy	Aaron Richers
Amy	John DiOrio	Melvin Kessler	The Roche Family
Andrienne	Ross Donovan	Kiara	The Family of Fr. Ruben Rodriguez
Anna	Deborah Earley	Ritchie Kinlaw	Roy
Anne	Vern Earley	Kira	Emily Ruggieri
Christina Azwol	Patti Edwards & Family	Sara Kirk	Henry Saffer
Tony Andres	Penny Edwards	Susan Kriznuski	Sally
Sage Andrews	Carol Edwards & Family	Marti & Ron LaRue	Daniel Sanchez
Barbara	Ellie Rose	Laura	Gabriela Santiago
Scott Battaglia	Eli	John Lewis	Mike Scarpetti
Seth Bayless	Eric	Liam	Scott
Jim Bender	Janice Fischbach	Lilly	Carmen Scott
Trish Bender Bayless	George Fischbach	Lois	Richard Scott
Jeff Biscoe	Mary Ellen	Allen Luckey	The Francis Scott Family
Bobbie Blevins	Kira Fix	Cindy & Dave Mahoney	Maria Perdikis
Eileen Borders	John & Harriet Flynn	Mallory	Mike PierceSeth
Barry Boulden	John	Marie Marcinkowski	Linda Sheesley
Paula Boulden	Joan Frati	The Martinez Family	The Slocomb Family
Myrle Bowe	Ginny	Mary Helen	Earlene Smith
Ronald Boyce	Diane Geist	Jude Matejkovic	Dan Sommers
Doris Brown	Fred Geist	Melvin	Kenny Stafford
Charles Brown	Gerike Family: Adam, Lindsey, & Oliver	Missy	Dorothy Stephens
Eleanor Buchanan	Glenn	Carmen Moore	Steve
Crystal Bush	The Gracie Family	Shirley Moore	Gavin Stiteler
Douglas Bush	Brittney Griffin	Ann Moses	Paula Szczuka
David Butters	Scott Gunn	Jay Muckle	The Sztokiewicz Family: Joanna, Michael, Hannah, Charles
Fran Pearlman-Butters	Carolyn Halfen	Randy Murray	Thomas
Cameryn	Ike Hammond	Sara Musselman	Lorayne Titter
Caroleen	Lindsey Hammond	Natalie	Jack Tucker
Carolyn	Amy & Rick Harra	Maren Nelson	Shon Tucker
KayMaire Castro	Major Scott M. Harra	The Rev. Sarah Nelson	Tyler
Cathy	Nancy Hoffman	Sue Nelson	Jack
Wayne Chapman, Jr.	Travis Hoffman	Nicholas	Betty Ann VanHekle
Chris	Holly	Noah	Preston VanHekle III
Cindy	Eileen Hughes	Cassandra Norsworthy	Mary Wade
The Clapp Family	Peter Huiner and Family	Paula Orty	Nancy Walls
Linda Clark	Kaylee Jackson	Mark Parton	Valerie Warrington
Clint	Jennifer	Terri Parton	Missy Wieland
Bill Cole	Jenna & John	Debbie Papa	Penny Wilhelme
Brittany Collins	Jeremy	Madeline Pepe & Children	Andy & Linda Wolf
Christina Conaway	Jim	Pat	
Presiding Bishop Michael Curry	Joan	The Pease Family	
Daisy	Joe	Maria Perdikis	
Dave		Mike Pierce	
		John Pumphrey & Family	

For those serving our country: National Guard: Terron Barnes, Brad Pastore, Christina Pastore;
U.S. Army: Maj. Scott M. Harra. *Give grace, O Lord, to our brothers and sisters in Christ who suffer physically and emotionally, that they may be healed. Grant them trust and love that their prayers may be answered and that they may be relieved from their suffering. Amen.*

Rev. 12/16/23