



St. James' E-pistle: **SPECIAL EDITION**

A Letter from the Rector for July 31, 2020

Dear People of Saint James',

As we are now coming to the close of one month and the start of another, I am becoming cycles of endings and beginnings in our lives. I've recently been hearing stories and seeing far, showing off their first harvest of tomatoes, green beans, and peppers from their gardens and Committees have wrapped up much of their work the spring and summer, and are now on break in August. For myself, I'm now planning to take some time away as well, unplugging from St. James for a time of vacation and rest. In so many ways lately, we have been harvesting the fruits of what we planted over this winter, when you and I came together for a new season in the life of St. James with a new priest.

I hope that the weeks to come in August will be a time of rest and renewal for us all, and a time to reflect on who we want to be and what we will want to accomplish as a community in the fall. Since the past several months (almost half a year!) has been reactive and adaptive. Change has been the norm, whether it or not. Some of that change has been totally out of our control, and some has been long-term. The best we can do is best to sail on through the social and epidemiological storms buffeting the hull of this ship.

We are now going to be entering into a transitional time of calm, I hope. While I am away, our community life will undoubtedly look a bit different. Please offer your gratitude and support to the Finance Committee and its Chair Carolyn Flynn, as they explore options for keeping our corporate structure going in my absence. Our Communications may also change for a while, as I will not be able to continue sending out a regular Letter from the Rector while I'm away.

Such changes as these in August will be temporary, but they will also be important for helping us to continue, what we want to change, and what we want to try out as we enter into the fall. Having endured of late, we will hopefully now be better prepared to take a prayerful, proactive approach to this new season, even if the world continues to deliver us surprises with each passing week. The coming election season is going to continue to stir up tension, division, and rancor in our community, a bit as distracting, worrisome, and harmful to our wellbeing as the pandemic crisis that currently confronts us. Like the regular monsoons that arrive in their due season, the upcoming elections are a potential storm coming from far off, and that we can prepare for now.

How? We can start by holding fast to the light and truth that Jesus brings into our lives as a community centered around our relationship with him and standing firmly on his solid foundation. With his gaze and our focus without ceasing, and keep our hands firmly grasped on the spiritual scales.

generations of reapers who have come before us. The harvest is ripe indeed, and we labor working hard to keep up. I am truly grateful to God to have been sweating it out alongside that a time of rest is now coming when we will have a chance to decide carefully which seeds to plant for the next season of our lives together.

Critically important decisions will be required of us, as we walk forward together through the coming year. But for now, let us pause to enjoy the spiritual and tangible fruits of this bountiful harvest: the sweet, succulent peach, and every crisp leaf of lettuce, and every tart tomato, still warm from the sun, that God's Light *always* continues to give the growth. The question is just what our response will be: will we choose to plant anew for the coming season? Will we choose to leave our field to lie fallow, or will we choose to stay inside in the darkness? I think the text of one of our beloved hymns offers a helpful perspective: "[Come, labor on!](#) Who dares stand idle on the harvest plain, while all around us waves the banner of the cross" (1982 #541)

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Dustin+