

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

A Letter from the Rector for May 8, 2020

Dear People of St. James',

As our days of coronavirus isolation are now drawing on to weeks and months, I find myself noticing more and more extraordinary news lately. We are expected to get snowfall here in Danbury tonight, a meteorological anomaly I understand happens here only once every 25 to 50 years. On the west coast, wicked-looking insects called "[murder hornets](#)" are now raising alarms for bee-keepers and outdoors enthusiasts. And in my home state of West Virginia, 2020 is the year for a massive brood of locusts to crawl out of the ground after 17 years of patient preparations. Every day seems to bring reports of something new and something rare and something not-terribly-pleasant for us to contend with. It's enough to make us want to withdraw in dread and fear and hopelessness, preferring to avoid what may lurk just beyond the horizon for us next.

Through all these unusual circumstances, St. James' Church has not thrown up our hands and given up to the challenges that are confronting us, however. For example, last Sunday, we experienced our first real technical difficulties with our 9am Morning Prayer broadcast on Facebook. For some reason, when the time came for the scheduled video to "go live," only the Administrators of our church's Facebook page were able to see it. The situation seemed to resolve itself in time, but not without a flurry of confused and alarmed messages flying about in the "comments" section. Fortunately, we had a backup plan for just such an untoward and unexpected complication. You see, our Morning Prayer broadcast simultaneously "goes live" at 9am on our church's Youtube page, found [here](#). (You may wish to "subscribe" to our Youtube channel for easier *(and quick!)* access in the future). So, rather than count the Sunday a loss, we were able to simply move on to the Plan B that was already in place. Knowing that online streaming doesn't always go quite as planned, we had an alternate route already mapped out, so that we could change course with minimal interruption. And God was praised!

This practical and adaptive approach has shaped the recent work of our parish leadership as well. Lately, your Vestry and Committee leaders have been investing hours and hours of work and conversation into understanding our present realities as a church, anticipating future complications, and then charting new course options for our church's

way forward. Your Finance Committee and Vestry held special meetings this week, and will be opening up new opportunities for parishioners to get involved in making the most of our energies and skills to raise funds for our operations. We'll also be organizing efforts to use the church's properties and spaces to generate income. So, even during these days of isolation, we are finding that there is much that we can do to lay the groundwork for future opportunities. Stay tuned over the weeks and months to come to hear about ways you can participate and contribute to these efforts!

In the meantime, our new activities are ongoing. I am now working with our families to gather our young ones together for a bit of children's Christian Formation via Zoom. We'll be hearing the story of Noah's Ark, getting creative with God's rainbow promise, and maybe even finding a little comfort in the faithful patience of Noah and his family to get through long days and nights, all cooped up together in that crowded boat! I'm also working with our Growing in Faith Committee to schedule a workshop on The Daily Office. There, we'll explore the origin and purposes of our Anglican cycle of daily prayer, discuss how we might take advantage of it in our physically-distance circumstances, and learn how the nuts and bolts of the Offices come together. If you are wondering about where our current Sunday morning worship offering comes from and what it's all about, this one-time session will be your chance to get your questions answered!

Yes, the news these days does seem filled with extraordinary events and dire revelations around every turn. But our leaders have their hands gripped firmly on the ship's wheel, and the course is being set and re-set, day by day. All that remains is for all of us at St. James to take up the oar waiting right before us, and add **our** energy to the forward movement of this vessel!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Dustin+