



**SAINT JAMES'**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# **Annual Report for 2020**

Submitted for the Annual Meeting Held  
January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Via Zoom

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*In March, 2020, the world was hit with the Covid-19 Corona virus, causing a world-wide pandemic. As a result, all in-person worship services and gatherings ceased. Our last Sunday gathering was on March 8. Our last Wednesday gathering was on March 10. This annual report reflects the realities of a church seeking to maintain connection, community, and common worship while not being able to be together in person.*

## **Clergy & Staff Reports**

### **Rector's Report – The Rev. Lori A. Walton**

#### **Worship and Liturgy**

Throughout 2020, our ministry staff remained consistent with the Rev. Bill Hale, Children & Teen Minister Jan Scrutton, and Brian Cochran lending their preaching voices. On at least one Sunday, we fed in a sermon from the Most Reverend Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. Prior to the lockdown, we welcomed Louis Chicoine, CEO of Abode Services, to preach on February 23.

Our worship transformed over time. We began with celebrating Morning Prayer with sermon. We then moved to Ante-Communion, a service of the Liturgy of the Word ending with the Lord's Prayer and a blessing. Realizing the worship services felt incomplete but still not being able to share in Holy Communion, we initiated the Service of Spiritual Communion, a full Eucharistic Service minus the consumption of the consecrated elements. After many months of fasting from Holy Communion, we were authorized by the Diocese to begin the Liturgy of the Presanctified. This is a service in which pre-consecrated hosts are consumed in the home. To coordinate this, we setup an online reservation system where parishioners reserve their communion for the month and either pick it up by driving by or have it delivered to them.

Our early services were recorded and posted online. In early September, we went "live", live-streaming our services from the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings with a recorded version available thereafter. We also initiated "watch parties" followed by coffee hours. Our Music Director, Jennifer Ravera, has been the lead in gathering parishioners on zoom to watch the service together, followed by a time of check-in.

For several services, typically the last service of each month, Children and Teen Minister and I provided a Family Service, combining Sunday School and worship.

Most of the services and events that fall outside of the regular church calendar were either canceled or re-formulated. While we did celebrate Scout Sunday on February 16, we were not able to celebrate St. James' Day or VBS Sunday. For Volunteer Appreciation Sunday, the vestry handed out ice-cream and fruit in a drive-through event. Our St. Francis Animal Blessing took the form of a virtual blessing of pet pictures. The Lessons and Carols service on December 27 was a joint effort of all six deanery churches with each taking one lesson/carol. We also provided virtual blessings for Mother's Day, Father's Day and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

We had 32 children and adults at the Children's Imposition of Ashes on Shrove Tuesday, taking place on February 25. This is compared to 42 the year before. Over three Ash Wednesday services on February 26, we gave out ashes to 75 congregants and visitors (we had 94 the prior year).

For Holy Week, we provided a Holy Week@Home packet for parishioners to be able to create home altars and experience the Triduum at home. We also provided Faith@Home and Advent@Home packages. See our **Worship at Home** section for details.

Our Palm Sunday service included the familiar elements of palm blessing, procession through the garden (using past pictures) and the Passion reading done via zoom and recorded. Our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services included reflections and the invitation to mark each day from home. For Easter, I provided an Easter message and invited the congregation to worship at Grace Cathedral. For the Feast of All Saints', we read a virtual necrology, naming our dead. Our Thanksgiving service was held via zoom with Ante-Communion. For Christmas, our Family Service was pre-recorded and available throughout the day. Our evening service was a traditional Christmas Eve service (using the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified) live-streamed from the sanctuary, as was our Christmas Day service.

We did hold one in-person service in our parking lot with some in their cars and some sitting in distanced chairs in the lot on November 2. This service was a pre-election prayer service.

Our Music Director, Jennifer Ravera has been instrumental in providing quality music during this time. She has recorded solos, blended hymns using her own voice in parts, recorded quartet music, and instrumentals. More detail can be seen in her report.

Because of the dangers of any in-person contact, our Altar Guild duties have been covered by Katie Cunningham and Ruth Poole.

Our Lectors have been scheduled on a by month basis, requiring two people to be at church only once for the whole of the month. Lessons were then recorded for use in subsequent Sundays. No acolytes were used. All of the Prayers of the People were recorded from the home. Further details can be found in George Seigmann's report.

All baptisms and confirmations were delayed. The Bishop's visitation, originally scheduled for November 1, All Saint's Day, was postponed to November 2021. I officiated one private wedding in August.

In January, we celebrated one memorial service and one interment. After that, all in-person memorial and funeral services were delayed. In 2020, we lost seven parishioners: Sally Hartley, Bob Bell, Dorothy Balderston, Pat Vlastelica, Bill Mosier, Penny Trant and Ann Jamison. I held a zoom memorial service for Sally Hartley and her family. I held small interment services for Dorothy Balderston (memorial garden) and Pat Vlastelica (columbarium).

On November 16, we held our sixth annual candlelight vigil for those who died on the street. This service was pre-recorded and aired virtually. The coordination, filming, and end-product was done by Jan and Beth Scrutton. This event could not have taken place without their work. You can read more details in Jan's report.

### **American Sign Language Service**

A couple of years ago a group of deaf people asked to be brought under the umbrella of St. James'. This group averages 10-12 people per Sunday, gathering for a prayer service designed and led by Bev Mosier. Pre-pandemic, they met in the Education Room concurrent with our 10:30 service. Post-pandemic, their service is on zoom and has grown to reach people outside of the Tri-City area.

## **Worship at Home**

In order to bring church to the home, we made Books of Common Prayers available for borrowing. We also developed several offerings for approximately 120 homes. We created household packages for Holy Week, General Faith, and Advent, encouraging parishioners to create home altars or spaces to worship. We also provided a table worship service for Thanksgiving, a small altar cross, and monthly consecrated hosts. The items in each packet are detailed below. For the summer, we encouraged folks to pick up rocks and paint from our campus to paint and scatter through their neighborhoods.

Holy Week@Home: Daily readings and prayers for Holy Week, candle in holder, wooden palm cross, palm cross, stitched cross, dyed wooden egg.

Faith@Home: Daily prayers for 7 days, ideas for home altars, holy cards of Christ and St. James', shell, origami paper, a clay earth bead.

Advent@Home: Prayers for Advent Wreath, Prayers for Las Posadas, candle, Christmas decoration with paper for prayers, wooden nativity creche.

For specifics of the vehicles used to provide virtual worship to the congregation, please see Mike Scrutton's report "**Live Streaming Worship.**"

## ***Staff, Administration and Finance***

Our staff remained the same with the exception of the start of Ron Cook as our parish administrator, a position left vacant in 2019 by the departure of Alice Harrison. Throughout the pandemic, we've continued to employ Jan Scrutton (Children and Teen Minister), Jennifer Ravera (Music Director), Bill Hale (Assisting Priest), and Ron Cook (Parish Administrator). In early 2020, we hired a new Nursery Care Giver, Jesenia Garcia. We went on lockdown only one Sunday of on-site work provided by Jesenia. We continued to pay Jesenia until laying her off in June. It is our hope to re-hire her when we are able to resume in-person gatherings. We paused the cleaning of the church buildings for the first months of the pandemic, and then resumed utilizing Fernando's Cleaning and Landscaping company to clean and sanitize. The maintenance of the grounds did not cease.

Despite moving everything online, our children's program remains strong and our youth group, both led by our Children and Youth Minister, Jan Scrutton, is doing well. Jan has been creative and pro-active in offering online gatherings and events to keep our children and youth engaged. Please see Jan's report for further details.

Our Assisting Priest has assisted with pastoral care and worship virtually. Of note, he has taken leadership with our Home Alone Group (a group of people who live by themselves), offering them a weekly zoom gathering to connect and stave off loneliness. He also led our Wednesday service every other week and has assisted with some of our other one-off offerings. Please see Bill's report for further details.

The vestry continues to be responsible for the stewardship campaign for the parish. This year, the campaign consists of personal sharing and encouragement for all members to pledge through online video statements. The vestry also conducted an every-household reach, delivering a stewardship letter, pledge card, and small potted plant. For our in-gathering, we held a drive-through event where parishioners drove through the parking lot, stopping at four stations: advent@home material pick-up, a non-perishable food drop off for Abode services and a blessing, a donut and fruit stand, and a station to drop-off pledges and notes of gratitude.

As of this writing, we received 7 new pledges and our pledge income increased over last year by over \$12,000. The average increase of returning pledges was just over 10%. Mike Scrutton, serving as the pledge secretary continues to be a great resource in painting a picture of our congregational giving.

The students from the School for the Blind assisted us in setting up our Sunday worship materials until the lockdown in March. It is our hope that we can continue this work-study program when we are back to regular Sunday worship.

To supplement at-home work and gatherings, we activated three zoom accounts and a YouTube channel. Our office hours were modified to once a week for three hours. We also setup a more robust on-line giving platform to accommodate distanced donations.

### ***Welcoming and Integrating New People, Outreach***

Growth at St. James' has been fairly stalled in light of moving to a virtual mode of worship. While there are likely people engaging in our services and other offerings, it is impossible to identify them. We were able to add some members to our parish roles, numbering approximately 6-7. On January 4 we held our fifth annual Epiphany Party for new/er members and potential members of the church. The afternoon was a wonderful experience with lots of laughter and fellowship.

We continue to support schooling for Hope and Miriam, two children in Kenya. This effort is through the organization Maisha Bora. Hope and Miriam's schooling has been interrupted by the pandemic. They hope to resume classes in 2021.

When the lock-down started, a team of volunteers telephoned every member of the parish to check-in with them. Weekly phone calls to our more vulnerable parishioners continued. I initiated a weekly Wednesday Morning Check-In where I email the entire parish with a short reflection and word of hope and comfort.

As part of the effort to keep the congregation connected, our Music Director, Jennifer Ravera, hosts two different zoom gatherings: a Wednesday evening choir gathering and a Thursday evening social hour.

### ***Wider Church Involvement and Personal Formation***

I continue to serve on the Commission on Ministry and completed my second year as President of the Southern Alameda County Deanery. I am also involved in the Tri-City Interfaith Coalition.

### ***Assistant Priest Report – The Rev. Bill Hale***

Worship and Liturgy 2020: At the onset of the year, I was part of the regular rota for preaching and celebrating, functioning under Lori's leadership as an assisting priest would. The coming of the pandemic brought changes to our worship in several ways. No sooner had Lent begun than both diocesan and government directives suspended in-person worship services. From that point on, along with other members of the staff, I have used Zoom to provide pastoral services. These include regular preaching, leading the Home Alone group on Thursdays, sharing with Lori the Wednesday services, attending the watch parties and coffee hours which follow, and attending the weekly social hour gathering. By means of these gatherings, I have come to meet a variety of parishioners, heard their stories, offered support at times, and extended the reach of personal pastoral care on behalf of the staff.

Lori and I divided responsibility for the “Sacred Group” series, where each of us led our respective weekly gathering concerning the timely issues of race, diversity, and Christian responsibility. While Lori officiated at the pre-election prayer vigil here at the church, I led a concurrent identical service on Zoom for those who could not be physically present. During Advent, I led a weekly group as we explored “The Practice of Prayer.” With Lori’s approval, on September 17<sup>th</sup>, we began to offer daily Morning Prayer on Zoom, where we use the Prayer Book liturgy and include all those on the parish prayer list. During 2020, our attendance at these services totaled 208.

### ***Children & Youth Minister’s Report – Jan Scrutton***

Drawing on a thesaurus might give more options than unprecedented, unusual, strange, to describe this year but we lived it together and I am grateful for the St. James’ community who supported and connected to the work we have done and who adapted to the new technology. Our children, young people and teachers have had to move to school online and in church we have had to find ways to use the technology available along with old fashioned letters and calls to keep connected.

My year started with an overnight at Grace Cathedral with 7 young people the day before leaving for Atlanta and the Forma Conference, Rooted in Jesus. I came back after a busy time, including hearing Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preach, to a busy new year filled with potential. Planning Sunday School, preaching, Summer camp plans and the cycle of the church year stretching out ahead of me. We found a new nursery carer to start work on Sunday mornings and support our under 4’s as the number of families in church meant the nursery was often full. A successful Ashes for Kids Service followed the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and I went off on vacation. I returned for what turned out to be our last regular service of the year, and a youth group meeting, on March 8<sup>th</sup>. By the following Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup> we had to meet for our youth confirmation retreat virtually and make plans to deliver Sunday School via video going forward.

During the year I have continued to use Illustrated Ministry as a basis for the curriculum offered in Sunday School – making use of both their lectionary programs and special Beatitudes series. I’ve recorded Sunday School weekly and videos are released on a Sunday morning. Accompanying color-in activities have been distributed via email to families, and anyone else who requests them. Weekly viewing figures are around 8-12 views and I am aware those are people of all ages and that families watch together. In addition to Sunday School we have also released some book readings for kids – thanks to Lori, Monique and Evelyn for recording those for me. Being on film is not a natural thing to do for me and I am grateful for the increasing skills of Beth Scrutton for helping create a coherent program and style for our output. She has taught herself to produce slide shows, edit video and audio tracks well and helped me create lessons each week.

Our acolyte team has been unable to serve during the rest of the year and once we are able to return to worship we will start afresh with training and reminding everyone of what to do! Three Sunday School families have moved away during the year, although one remains connected to our online worship and Sunday School.

All households have received three Faith@Home bags during the year, which I have helped collate, assemble, and distribute. For Sunday School families some additional materials have been provided – the Advent @Home Family Addition included materials for a Zoom Christingle Service and Epiphany home blessing. Sunday School families also received a summer activity box with materials to support Sunday School in the summer. This included playdough, Lego, coloring pencils and other resources and was delivered along with a pizza or cookies (as agreed

with parents). I've written back-to-school notes and Christmas cards to the kids to help them know we are still a community, even if we can't be physically together.

During the year families have sent in photos of their Sunday School sessions, shared models to illustrate stories, recorded dances (Father Abraham) to feature in our family services and voices to be part of our Christmas A-Z. Young people have also recorded Prayers of the People and been involved with Zoom meetings. Christmas was a significant challenge – finding a way to involve as many people as possible to replicate the 'everyone welcome' approach we have to our annual pageant. We recorded a simple Family Service for Christmas Eve which included an A-Z story of Christmas illustrated with pictures from around campus and from previous years and read by 20 young people from our congregation. We released the service video on Christmas Eve and then the A-Z story alone on our Facebook page. Both received good feedback.

I have benefitted this year not just from the support of Rev. Lori and the St. James' staff but also from colleagues located further afield but made closer by technology. We have all had to learn new skills and pivot to slightly different roles when needed. I've met via Zoom with diocesan youth leaders to share ideas and support each other. I have also taken part in webinars which have provided inspiration and support in equal measure. I hope some of these methods of working together continue post pandemic. In December I was one of three leaders who launched pause, a monthly online meditative service for youth from the youth leaders of the diocese of California. While such collaborations were previously possible, we have taken advantage of our new situation to explore new ideas and try new things.

We were not able to gather for our 10<sup>th</sup> summer camp this year but look forward to being able to gather again in the future. Sunday School videos continued over the summer for families who wanted to connect. The summer activity boxes linked to these lessons.

I am grateful for the support of the St. James' community and vestry, for a staff team who work together and for the support of my family who have stepped into this new territory with me. While I look forward to us being able to gather together again, I believe there are lessons to be learned from this time that will echo in our ministries going forward.

### ***Music Ministry – Jennifer Carini, Music Director***

I celebrated my ninth year of working at St. James' at the beginning of September! I am very happy working with the wonderful people of St. James'. Thank you for being so welcoming to me and my family!

Pre-COVID, Music has been provided at the 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services.

At the 8:00 a.m. service, the congregation sings two hymns, a sequence, and the doxology each week. There is instrumental music provided during the offertory and Taize music at communion.

The 10:30 a.m. service has many hymns and songs for the congregation and choir. The Adult Choir meets to rehearse on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. We sing at the 10:30 Eucharist on Sunday mornings, rehearsing prior to the service at 10:00am. The choir is open to all parishioners. Adult Choir: There are 9 current choir members. They are: Josephine Amadi, Janet Fischer, Tim Fortescue, Angela James, Melissa Mallory, Greg Miller, Bud Pearson, Bruce Roberts, and Elaine Vallecillo Miller. We lost two choir members this year: Lyn Puliam moved to Idaho, and Pat Vlastelica passed away in the fall. We miss Lyn's voice and bubbly personality. Pat was an endeared member of our choir for many years, as well as part of many other ministries at St. James', and we greatly miss her.

During COVID, in which in-person worship was cancelled beginning on Lent 2, the music program has changed in how it has delivered music to St. James'.

I have spent many hours planning and researching how to record and distribute hymns and anthems for our church services. With the help of Lori, Mike Scrutton, and the Vestry, I was able to hire a professional quartet to record hymns and anthems for the months of July 2020 - December 2020. Kristine Berg, Joey Carini, Adam Ferrer-Miller, and Bill O'Neill did a fabulous job singing and recording for us. They recorded both in person at church and remotely from their homes. I was able to take their home recordings and put them together with the GarageBand app and email them to Mike Scrutton, who then put the hymns and anthems together with slideshows, and then Marcus Pun was able to put subtitles with the hymns. It is a well-coordinated effort, but it has been well worth it!

In addition, the St. James' Adult Choir has also made two recordings, "We Shall Overcome" and "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace." Choir members sang their parts to the piano accompaniment that I sent to them through email, and then emailed me their recordings. I put their recordings together with GarageBand and made slideshows for the songs, and they were both a success! "We Shall Overcome" was even featured at Convention in October, which was a great honor.

The St. James' music program is an integral part of worship on Sundays and other services. Even though we aren't meeting in person, we are still looking for new choir members all the time! We currently meet on Zoom every Wednesday at 7pm for conversation and laughs. All are welcome to be a part of it! Please email me at [music@saintj.com](mailto:music@saintj.com) and we can figure out the best way for you to be involved!

## **Wardens' Reports**

### ***Senior Warden's Report – Sylvia Ma***

I am very thankful and blessed to have the opportunity to serve as your senior warden in 2020. When I accepted our rector Lori's call, I was looking forward to an uneventful year, and thought that the toughest decision I had to make was whether to purchase a vanilla or chocolate cake for Volunteer Appreciation Day. Little did I know...

The pandemic happened. We have been in shut-down mode: no in person worship or get-togethers or meetings. We are extremely fortunate to have a very capable team of staff and volunteers, with Lori's excellent leadership, to keep our worships going online and to tend to our spiritual and pastoral needs.

The Vestry switched to monthly meeting via online platform Zoom. I must say I had never heard of Zoom before last March, but now Zoom is an integral part of my life. Since March, besides Vestry meetings, I have been attending watch parties on Sundays for worship on Zoom; weekday Morning Prayers on Zoom; and Ante Communion service on Wednesday mornings on Zoom. I am incredibly grateful to be able to participate in Sacred Ground study on Racism and Advent study on Prayers, both on Zoom. During these months, even with the Regional Stay Home order, I am blessed to be able to connect with you through this Zoom technology.

The Vestry had not been idle in this pandemic. Realizing that we are missing incomes from plate offerings and facilities rentals, we worked on adding an online giving platform. With the help of our treasurer Lynn Locher, very capable volunteers Jan Brandt and Mike Scrutton, the Vanco online giving platform was installed. With the help and persistency of Lynn Locher, we

also secured a Payroll Protection Plan forgivable loan to help with our financial situation. The money was used for salaries and utility bills.

With the help of the Disaster Preparedness Team, we set up an Emergency phone tree with 79 households participating.

I think I could speak for all the Vestry members that we also had great fun helping with drive through Volunteer Appreciation Day distribution of yummy ice cream and juice bars; with Advent bag deliveries; with Stewardship deliveries, with drive through pledge and gratitude ingathering and with 2021 Vestry recruitments.

In 2020, each Vestry members wrote an article in Window on their thoughts on Being Bold. We all spent a year adjusting to the pandemic's new normal. I give thanks to God for leading us to be bold.

### ***Junior Warden's Report – Monique Manjarrez***

As your Junior Warden this year, my responsibilities were varied and fluctuated as needs presented themselves. This past year could have certainly stopped us in our tracks, but I was very proud to be part of a Lead Team that persisted to keep the St. James' community moving forward. I felt that our monthly conversations were thoughtful and responsible. The Lead Team meetings also helped to organize our Vestry meetings and ensure that we were attending to all important parish matters. Every month, I would write the Vestry highlights from our meetings for the Window Newsletter, informing parishioners of the important work and decisions being conducted for the well-being of our church.

On a personal level, having formerly served as Senior Warden and now this year as Junior Warden, I have strengthened my leadership skills and have deepened my understanding of how a church operates behind the scenes. I have a newfound appreciation for all the working pieces that make a strong church. I have also been blessed with so many new friendships and getting to know others within our community.

Being a part of the Lead Team comes with a lot of gratitude: I would like to thank our Senior Warden, Sylvia Ma, for her leadership this year; our treasurer, Lynn Locher, for her expertise and for carefully attending to the financial matters of the church; and to Rev. Lori Walton for guiding us all spiritually and in faith. As I reach the end of my three-year term, I am grateful for having been part of this team, for being part of the Vestry and for belonging to a beautiful church that is St. James'.

## **Committee Reports**

**The following Committees, Ministries, and Events did not take place in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions (or were not able to submit a report):**

- Available For Lunch
- Cub Scout Pack
- Healing Ministry
- Hillside Senior Care Center
- St. James' Cares
- Library & Archives
- Little Church Renovation Committee
- Men's Group and Men's Retreat

### ***Abode Dinners – Lynn Locher***

Our group fixed dinner for Sunrise Village in February led by Ralph and Lynn Locher. We were scheduled to return in April but the Village was in lockdown so the staff were doing the cooking. Raeleen and Marco Ramsamy donated the food. By May the residents had been moved to hotels and their meals were provided for them. At this time we wait for information on the resumption of meals at Sunrise Village.

### ***Abode Services Rapid Re-Housing Program – Gregg Feeney***

St. James', along with 18 other faith-based churches and organizations, meet throughout the year to pool resources and ideas on getting families and veterans re-housed. The member churches partner up and pool our monies and donations of gently used household items or new items to help a family get settled into their new home. We have our own storage unit which is used to store items donated by our church members or other folks within the faith-based community. St James' has fundraisers and part of the proceeds go to Abode Services.

In the year 2020, our program was minimized due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the stay at home orders. The residents at Abode's Sunrise Village were moved to hotels through 01/31/2021. The need for our program did not go away. Our meetings were cancelled and the requests to re-house families converted to email and text messages. We still met our commitment of helping a minimum of 2 families per year and provided additional support to other churches needing items we have stored in our storage unit on campus.

Abode Services started a program to help college students find housing and it was just getting off the ground when the pandemic hit. We expect to re-start that program once the pandemic is under control and schools reopen.

The members of St. James' and their network of friends continually provide us with a lot of useful items. A close friend of Rev. Bill Hale and his wife Arlene was so moved by what St. James' does to support Abode's Rapid Re-Housing program that she donated 4 sets of dishes, pots and pans, towels, and glassware to help get families started on their new home.

Our program will continue on throughout the pandemic. As the stay at home orders are lifted, and we are allowed to meet in person, then we'll continue our quest to rehouse families.

Abode Services recognizes the need for affordable housing is purchasing real estate and developing it. The goal is focusing on families and our veterans. City Center Apartments and Laguna Commons are the latest example of Abode's commitment to affordable housing. City Center Apartments, a 60-unit veteran-focused development in Fremont, will start construction in 2020 and open in 2021. Laguna Commons, a Fremont supportive housing community that rehuses veterans and others who have experienced homelessness, was co-developed by Abode and opened in 2016. Thank you, St. James', for your continued support year after year.

### ***Altar Guild – Katie Cunningham***

In a normal year the Altar Guild is comprised of 21 individuals who work in teams of four. Once a month, each team prepares the altars of the two churches for Sunday services. Each team is responsible for picking up the fresh flowers for the church. After each service is over the team cleans and puts everything away. The Wednesday service held in the little church was prepared by Rose Hoffman.

This past year the COVID requirements altered the altar guild duties. As services moved to on-line, Mary Casas filled the altar candles once a week during the first few months of the shutdown. After she returned to work, Ruth Poole and Katie Cunningham continued preparing

the altar and placing fresh flowers inside the church each week with minimum contact and following all safety precautions.

Beloved altar guild members Dorothy Balderston and Pat Vlastelica passed away in 2020. Dorothy passed away in May 2020. Dorothy was captain of team #4 for many years. Pat passed away in October 2020. Pat had been captain of team #3. Pat retired from altar guild duties in 2019. They both will be greatly missed by all St. James' parishioners.

We look forward to the time when all altar guild members can share in these practices again. Until such time as it is safe, we will continue with the minimum amount of altar guild members involved each week in preparing our St. James' altars.

### ***Bible Studies, Monday Morning & Wednesday Afternoon – Rev. Lori Walton***

Two bible studies meet on a weekly basis. On Mondays, eight committed parishioners meet for an hour to check-in, read scripture, and discuss. For 2020, we've been working our way through the Gospel of Luke using the book "A Journey through Luke". On Wednesdays, another nine parishioners meet to check-in, view a video, read scripture, and discuss. We use material from The Bible Project. Both gatherings have been prayerful and life-giving during this time of uncertainty.

### ***Blessing Bags – Janet Fischer***

Even during COVID our Blessing Bags continue to be handed out by our parishioners. They are available for "no-contact" pickup during our office hours on Wednesdays, 10am – 1pm. In 2020, we moved from plastic bags to cloth bags that double as a back pack. Meg Amouroux created a logo for these bags that include the words, "May you find blessings wherever you go." We fill the bags with bottled water, toiletries, canned food, a wash cloth, socks, and a new face mask (provided by the crafters at Acacia Creek, led by our own Nadine Yother). We are not taking physical donations for the bags; if you would like to contribute to the bags and their contents, please make a donation to the Rector's Discretionary Fund. Thank you!

### ***Coffee Hour Hosts – Elaine Vallecillo-Miller & Dave Nelsen***

Prior to the Pandemic and shelter in place mandate by Governor Newsome, our loyal team of Coffee Hour Hosts were doing their regular Sunday duties, setting up and hosting our 8:30am and 10:30am Sunday Service Coffee Hour at the Church Hall. However, this activity stopped from March 2020 to the present. Normally, Dave Nelson and Elaine Vallecillo-Miller, co-leaders of this important ministry, would have held an annual gathering with the team.

We will plan a Zoom gathering and meeting so we can discuss any changes we need to make to our roster of volunteers. Once we can resume our Sunday Coffee Hour activity, after everyone has received their vaccinations, we will be ready to serve our congregation and guests.

### ***Counters Report – Jan Brandt***

The counters assist the Parish and Treasurer by counting and documenting pledge, non-pledged offerings, and funds from users of the parish. Four of the eight counters have served since the inception of the group in 2002; the other four have all counted at least five years. The members are committed to accurately recording and keeping the confidentiality of your donations.

Due to Covid the counting teams were not able to continue past mid-March. Gail Blalock & Jan Brandt have been counting since that time. Counting includes documenting donations in Church Windows Software, preparation and distribution of quarterly and annual giving statements. Statements this year were primarily distributed via email, again due to Covid. Counters also frequently volunteer as cashiers and counters for special events such as the Pancake Supper.

Please be kind to your Counters by including your pledge number on your check or bank Bill Pay (if not in pledge envelopes). The counters are conscientious and faithful behind-the-scene workers, many of whom serve on several parish committees.

### ***Deanery Report – Rev. Lori Walton***

The Southern Alameda County Deanery met four times over the course of the year, with the Rev. Lori Walton serving as President and parishioner Jim McConnell serving as Vice-President. Of note, the deanery submitted a letter to the diocese asking for a revision of the assessment formula in light of the pandemic and expected drops in income. This letter did not result in any change. However, the assessment relief program offered by the diocese was strengthened. The deanery was also instrumental in prompting a new resolution for financial transparency, asking the Diocese to make their financials available in detail in advance of the Annual Convention. Our Deanery Reps/Convention delegates for 2020 were Scott Whitaker, Jim McConnell, Ken Trant, Meg Amouroux, and John Amouroux. Penny Trant and Elaine Miller served as alternates.

### ***Disaster Preparedness Team – Elaine Vallecillo-Miller***

Presently, DPT has six members: Bud Pearson, Jill Buono, Bob Bynum, Josephine Amandi, Gregory Miller, and Elaine Vallecillo-Miller (Congregational Disaster Coordinator). We have met about four times. Initially, we had one in-person meeting prior to the “Shelter-in-Place” mandate on February 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss our 2020 goals which consisted of hosting disaster-readiness practices – fire, earthquake, and violent intruder- with the congregation. We had discussed these ideas with Rev. Lori regarding a timetable. Also, we felt that by submitting bimonthly articles on various emergency scenarios of church campus locations, we would demonstrate the evacuation routes from a particular location. Bud’s article was published in the newsletter. The other articles were tabled for the remainder of the year.

By the request of Rev. Lori and the Lead Team, the DPT members assisted with calling the parishioners about participating with a Phone Tree in April. We collected the data and submitted to Rev. Lori whereby the Lead Team would make appropriate changes of telephone numbers, email addresses, and parishioner’s status. Once the compilation was completed, DPT members tested the Phone Tree at the end of July and reported our results to Rev. Lori. Overall, this activity was a success. More importantly, many parishioners who have not participated with any Zoom meetings, Coffee Hour, Watch parties, Bible Study, and Morning Prayer, enjoyed our personal contact and related any concerns to us which were passed on to Rev. Lori.

Elaine Vallecillo-Miller, the South Alameda Deanery Representative for the Diocesan Disaster Preparedness Committee, continued with attending via Zoom the bimonthly or quarterly meetings. The topics have been on creating virtual training for the entire diocese. Some members of this Committee have participated with the CoVid19-related planning and discussions.

In December, DPT recommended the purchase of two infrared no-touch thermometers, suggested by Josephine Amandi, a nurse, to check our parishioners and guests when we can worship and meet in the future.

We also proposed five wireless intercom stations at various church campus locations (Big/Little Church, Church Hall, Education Room, Sunday School, and other designated place) in case there is a medical or emergency. We would have the ability to communicate the incident and make appropriate calls and actions. Both Rev. Lori and Sylvia Ma, Senior Warden, approved these two recommendations. These were bought and are stored in the EV closet and office. We will continue to meet, discuss and plan our congregational needs to be ready.

### ***Endowment Fund Report – Mary Casas***

The St. James' Endowment Fund was established in 2004 when parishioners indicated they had included St. James' in their estate planning. In 2006, the Memorial Garden Endowment was established, followed by the Little Church Endowment in 2007. In addition to estate planning, gifts are given to the funds as celebrations, memorials, or to honor friends and those who serve at St. James'.

The funds are presently invested with the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) and are overseen by the Endowment Board. Endowment Board currently includes Mary Casas, Jino Joseph, John Butterfield, Ralph Locher, Craig Gentner and St. James' Treasurer, Lynn Locher, who is an ex officio member of the Board.

While protecting the principle, distributions are made annually and reflect the growth of the fund. The Principal Value is \$189,499 and the Market Value is \$246,549. Due to the recent pandemic the Endowment Board were only able to meet 3 times in 2020. The last meeting was in August. The Board has decided to not make distributions to the three funds (Vestry, LC, MG) at this time.

### ***Episcopal Youth Fremont – Jan & Mike Scrutton***

2020 began with 7 young people and two leaders (Jan Scrutton and Lauren Zarovy) going to Grace Cathedral for the MLK overnight and march. This annual event has become a regular feature in our schedule and allows us to connect with young people from other churches in the diocese and beyond.

EYF serves young people from both St. James' and St. Anne's and we anticipated a group of young people making their own decisions about confirmation in 2020. Our full day retreat was scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> March and was the first event moved to Zoom. Mike, Jan and Lauren met with the group online and got their first hint of what the rest of the year would look like. Confirmations in the diocese were postponed for the rest of 2020. We have 5 young people from St. James' and 3 from St. Anne's who will be waiting to see when an opportunity for confirmation comes up.

We started meeting monthly on Zoom to chat, play games and share a compline service. Lauren has relocated out of state and we are grateful to Jill Buono and to parents who have 'hung out' with us online during our meetings (child protection guidelines still need addressing when meeting online). We have played games like Code Words and Among Us together.

A box of goodies was distributed in June to mark the end of the school year, and individual cards were sent for back to school in August. Some of the youth have joined in recording prayers for church, and readings for our Christmas A-Z. In December we had chance to be part of the first youth online mediative service, called pause, from the youth leaders of the Diocese. We hope to continue being involved in **pause** in 2021

## ***Facilities – Dave Nelsen***

Our old buildings and large outdoor area demand a lot of attention, care and maintenance. These are some of this year's significant activities:

We have continued to contract out our janitorial and some landscaping work to Fernando Janitorial and Landscape Service. Fernando cleans and vacuums our buildings and keeps up the grounds adjacent to the buildings.

A new storage container was added in back of the dumpster area. This was purchased by Scout Pack 163. They made all arrangements and graded the area prior to its placement. Its primary use is for storage of Pack 163 equipment, but St. James' is welcome to use excess space for storage as well.

New roof coverings were installed over the education building and the flat portion of the Big Church. The prior tar and gravel coverings were removed, dry-rot areas replaced with new wood, sealed and a foam covering was applied. A final top coat of paint provides a water tight seal and protection from ultraviolet light. This foam roofing material has a longer life than some alternatives and provides some insulation value as well. Thanks to John Kimber, Bruce Roberts, Jim Cunningham and Dave Nelsen for their work on this important project.

The roofing company offered, and we said yes, to adding 12 holes and 3" diameter "drops" around the edge of the big church roof. This will ensure water drains through these rather than over the edge of the roof. We installed downspouts from these drops to the ground, mounted to the wall. Thanks to Bruce and Laura for helping me with this project.

The freezer quit working in August. A service company was called and replaced a failed component. While there we had them evaluate the refrigerator. At about 20 years old it was decided we should replace it. Janet Fischer did the research for a new one and coordinated its installation. Thanks to Janet, as well as Bruce and Dave, for being available to take delivery.

A new door was installed at the rear of the big church. The old door was damaged by sun and water exposure as there is almost no eave over this door. The new door is covered with fiberglass and will stand up to the sun and water much better. Jim Cunningham did the research, purchase, delivery and installation of door, frame and lockset. Thanks to Jim and Dave for assisting.

Six old light fixtures were replaced under the eaves of the education building. Some re-wiring was also done to incorporate a new photocell to control when the lights turn on and off. New under-eave lights were also installed over the door to the little church sacristy, the big church entry and side door to the parking lot. These were also wired to a photocell to ensure they burn only at night. These nine new fixtures are LED lamps using far less energy while emitting more light. Thanks to Ron Larson for his product knowledge and wiring skills. Ron and Dave worked together on this project.

A new toilet was installed at the end of the janitor's closet, adjacent to the choir room. We have had issues with the old unit for years and many people have tried to fix it. This will save water due to leaks as well as during general use. Thanks to Mary Frances Leopold for donating this important upgrade.

A new redwood fence was installed at the back of our property near the education building. The cost was shared with our neighbor, who obtained three bids he shared with us. Prior to the installation we worked many days removing ivy which had overtaken one end of the fence. We were also there the day of the install to remove large roots under the fence-line once it had been removed. Thanks to Bruce Roberts, John Amouroux, Scott Whitaker, Jim McConnell, Laura Winter and Dave Nelsen for their hard work.

With funds made available through a PPP loan due to the covid19 pandemic, St. James' was able to employ a sexton to focus on tasks around the church which we otherwise may not have been able to do. I was pleased to accept the position when it was offered to me. Tasks

performed during this time include cleaning and painting the entry of the office area, hallway and doors, installing a new mailbox and mounting a flagpole to the banner structure to display flags including an Episcopal, American and a Rainbow flag. Protective sheeting was placed over areas prior to re-roofing work and extensive cleanup and vacuuming was done following that work. The big church and nursery, Sunday school and education room carpets were vacuumed and shampooed as well.

In a normal year campus cleanup days are organized periodically to maintain our buildings and grounds. Trees and shrubs are trimmed, areas are painted, windows washed, rooftops and gutters cleared, weeds are pulled, mowed and blown around. It is often hot and dirty work, but there is a sense of accomplishment when complete. We usually socialize and share pizza together following these events. This year was different, of course, and only a few times did a small group gather. I look forward to being able to work together soon to maintain our wonderful buildings and grounds.

### ***Faith Formation – Janet Fischer***

We began the year with our traditional Lenten Soup Supper and class in March, planning on the program: *Signs of Life: Why Church Matters – Light, Water, Food, Shelter, Community*. However, with the stay-at-home order that went into effect mid-March, this event was cancelled.

We facilitated an 11-week discussion on Zoom using the Episcopal Church's materials, *Sacred Ground, A Film-Based Dialogue Series on Race and Faith*. The discussions were thoughtful and sometimes intense. Over 30 people participated in either the daytime or evening sessions. This course was facilitated by The Rev. Lori Walton, The Rev. Bill Hale, Tessa Richardson, and Janet Fischer

During Advent, The Rev. Bill Hale facilitated a four-week zoom discussion on prayer.

The Women's Day of Renewal, planned for May, was cancelled. Our Wednesday evening meditation group stopped meeting in March.

### ***Flatlanders – Women's Retreat – Laura Winter***

Our annual Ladies' Flatlanders weekend trip to the beach was sadly called off this year due to the Covid-19 restrictions. We missed spending time with everyone. We hope to be able to gather again in 2021 and have reserved the townhouse at Pajaro Dunes for September 16-19. Mark your calendars (in pencil) and look for more information as the year unfolds.

### ***Greeters – Dave Nelsen***

It is the task of the greeters ministry team to help visitors to St. James' feel welcome. This may involve directing them to the nursery or Sunday school rooms and introducing them to people currently staffing these areas. It may involve finding someone to sit near a visitor to offer aid with the worship service, bulletins or hymnals if needed. The greeter, standing with the rector, is often one of the first faces of St. James' a visitor encounters. They represent St. James' and serve the rector by being a host at a time the rector is far too busy to give a visitor the time they deserve and the attention they may need. The greeter is positioned next to the rector following the service to invite visitors to sign our guest book and join us in the Parish Hall for coffee. Thank you to Jan Pearson, Gregg Feeney, Craig Genter, and Dave Nelsen for your welcoming presence.

## ***Hunger and Homelessness Vigil with Abode Services – Jan Scrutton***

With no option to gather and remember those who died while homeless this year we had to rethink the vigil. We talked to Abode Services and agreed it was important to continue this tradition, especially in a time when remembering those who died is made harder by our inability to gather. Rev. Lori invited faith leaders to submit video prayers while Beth, Jan & Mike Scrutton filmed at Abode and St. James' to gather the material for the vigil. Mission Peak Chamber Singers offered their recording of 'Home' to be used in the presentation.

A video was edited together by Beth Scrutton and launched on November 16<sup>th</sup>. It was promoted by St. James', Abode Services and Tri City Interfaith Council. Jennifer hosted a watch party for St. James' and the views on the night totaled 120 with press attention in the following week meaning numbers went higher (currently at 178 views on YouTube). While it was sad not to be able to meet as usual the presentation was well received and enabled us to name and remember those who had died.

## ***IT Report – Mike Scrutton***

During 2020, we purchased and deployed a new PC for the work of the treasurers. Our servers have successfully enabled staff to access (non-financial) data remotely, enabling work-at-home. We upgraded our external internet connection to provide for faster upload speeds enabling us to live-stream worship.

## ***Lay Eucharistic Visitors – The Rev. Lori Walton***

Our Lay Eucharistic Visitor program was paused in light of Covid-19.

## ***Lectors and Lay Eucharistic Ministers – George Siegmann***

Lectors and Lay Eucharistic Ministers are dedicated parishioners who read the scripture lessons and assist in the liturgy and at the altar. They work hard to make each church service a worshipful experience for everyone, and have been very flexible as schedules change. The following members of the 2020 teams served at the in-church services until March 8, 2020.

- Lectors: John Amouroux, Tom Blalock, Bob Doherty, Chris Nance, Sunita Joseph, Joan Kimber, Patty Lacy, Mary Frances Leopold, Jim McConnell, Linda Nelsen, Raelene Ramsamy, Mike Scrutton, Pat Spalding, Peter Maina, Getzi Wesley and Ken Trant. On the first Sunday of the month at the 10:30 service, mature members of our Sunday school have been reading the lessons, assisted by our regular readers.
- Eucharistic Ministers: Laura Winter, Meg Amouroux, Janet Fischer, Lynn Locher, Ralph Locher, Greg Miller, Mary Morkved, Vivienne Paratore, Marilyn Rose, Bekka Murray, George Siegmann, and Brian Cochran. Tom Scrutton serves when he is home from college.

After March 8, we could no longer congregate in the church for services. Services were live streamed or recorded. Lectors were selected from throughout the St. James' parish. They were generally scheduled to read a month's worth of lessons at a time. They came to the church for one session and recorded for the remaining Sundays.

- Lectors after March 8, 2020: Bekka Murray, Chris Nance, Raelene Ramsamy, Victor Bontempo, Monique Manjarrez, Tim Fortescue, Mary Frances Leopold, Mike Scrutton, Jeff Bert, Vivienne Paratore, Peter Maina, Tessa Fortescue, Mary Morkved, Bruce Roberts, Patty Lacy, John Amouroux, Meg Amouroux, and Ken Trant.

Those who read the Prayers of the People read and recorded themselves from home.

- Readers for the Prayers of the People: Greg Miller, Vivienne Paratore, Mary Morkved, Kimberly & Callie Patton, Jim McConnell, Laura Winter, Charlie and Diane Jackman, Jan Brandt, Scott Whitaker, Sylvia Ma, Tom Scrutton, Jay & John Butterfield, Ken Trant, Letty Rodarte, George Siegmann, Burtin & Elizabeth Hart, Lauren & Bob Doherty, Lilia Gomez & Gianna Verdin, Marlene Benedict, Bruce Roberts, EJ Hilliard, Gregg Feeney, Patty Lacy, Lynn & Ralph Locher, Don and Marilyn Rose, Meg Amouroux, Janet Fischer, and Ron Larson.

As they always do, the members of St. James' really stepped up to provide fulfilling services for us each Sunday especially during the challenges provided by the COVID19 pandemic.

### ***Liturgical Design – The Rev. Lori Walton***

The sanctuary was modified to accommodate video-taping of our services by closing the curtains (hiding the big screen), reducing our flowers to one arrangement instead of two, and shifting our pews to accommodate social distancing. A new altar frontal for Christmas and Easter was designed and created by Jan Scrutton.

### ***Live Streaming Worship – Mike Scrutton***

When the pandemic forced us to close the church for worship in March, we pivoted to provide worship and Sunday School online. Our [first online service](#) was shared on Sunday March 15<sup>th</sup> 2020, and had been recorded the day before on a domestic camcorder, edited at home and posted on YouTube with a link from our website saintj.com. It was a service of Morning Prayer, attended in person by members of the vestry and with the regular format of lectors, sung prayers and hymns –around 20 people were present.

After consultation with the lead team, and following advice / requirements from the State, County, City and Diocese we concluded that we needed to scale back our 'on-campus' activities further. To ensure everyone's safety, attendance has been reduced to the absolute minimum – Lori as Presider, with the Scrutton family bubble (Mike, Jan, Beth) as camera operators and editors, as well as handling the setup and tear-down. In the fall, John and Meg Amouroux joined the team, to share the work and provide a second 'bubble' to ensure continued cover should one bubble be COVID-compromised.

Part of the rules from the Diocese include the provision that the on-site team should be the same people consistently to minimize the risk of virus spread. Lectors join on campus approximately once a month and record additional weeks' lessons after the service. These are then inserted in subsequent services, along with pre-recorded prayers of the people (recorded by parishioners themselves at home) and music recorded by Jennifer with assistance for part of the year from her team of choristers. The music is set to video of the campus, created by Beth Scrutton, and captioned by Marcus Pun. Rev Bill Hale has continued to preach, and we have developed the capability to bring him into the service from home.

Each week the bulletin, lessons and hymns are posted on our website alongside a link to the service video so that folks can join in from home. Our Music Director, Jennifer, has hosted 'watch-parties' twice every Sunday at 8:30am and 11am to enable those who wish to worship together to share in watching the service over Zoom, and enjoy fellowship at 'Coffee Hour'. Our weekly worship services have been joined on saintj.com and YouTube by weekly online Sunday School videos, featuring our Children and Youth Minister Jan Scrutton, and edited by Beth Scrutton. During the year, we have also created special online videos for Holy Week and Christmas, as well as a [video for visitors and newcomers](#).

Thanks to a budget granted by the Vestry from existing Special Interest funds, and a donation from a parishioner, we have invested in video and streaming equipment which has enabled us

to live-stream worship from the Big Church sanctuary at St. James' directly to YouTube and onwards to saintj.com on a Sunday morning. This enabled us to shift from pre-recorded worship to live-streaming since Sunday September 20<sup>th</sup> 2020. Our expectation is that live streaming will continue even when we are able to gather as a community in order to serve the needs of those unable to attend in person.

Our [YouTube channel](#) has 106 subscribers at December 29<sup>th</sup> 2020. Most Sunday services are streamed 45-55 times. Our Christmas Eve Family service was streamed 67 times, and our traditional Christmas Eve Holy Communion was streamed 90 times. It is difficult to estimate an accurate number of viewers – one stream can be watched by an individual, a family worshipping together, or by a watch party (typically 12-30 people).

### ***McCutcheon Concert Fundraiser – Sylvia Ma***

Our annual John McCutcheon Concert on Monday Jan 20, 2020 was another great success. We had a large crowd of over 240, with around 70% non-parishioners. John McCutcheon and Red Tail Ring gave us a very entertaining evening. Ticket sales totaled over \$7300. The prize drawing, with 18 prizes donated by 12 generous parishioners, generated a record \$1040. The cookies from the snack bar were delicious and brought in an additional \$204. The expenses were under \$5200. The Vestry approved to donate \$1500 from the proceeds to support ABODE services to fight homelessness; \$750 to the Centerville Free Dining, \$500 to SAVE to provide alternatives to domestic violence; and \$676.20 to Maisha Bora to support two high school girls in Kenya.

This fundraising and community outreach event could not have happened without all of your help. There were more than 60 people who contributed time, talent and treasure not only on the night of the concert but in the months preceding the event. They wrote, sent out and uploaded publicity notices/articles/blog; bought advertisements; designed, printed and posted flyers and signs; updated, hung and took down banners; set up email address and the phone message; printed tickets; took messages; donated all those fabulous prizes for the drawings; took out and put away all the prizes on Sunday mornings; sold concert and drawing tickets; bought concert and drawing tickets; invited their family, friends and neighbors to the concert; cleared the facility calendar for the event; got contracts signed; signed contracts; booked hotel rooms for John McCutcheon and his road manager and for the Red Wing Tail; borrowed and returned the stage from Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park and the extra chairs from Harbor Light; wrote and made verbal announcements on Sundays; wrote announcements and articles for the weekly newsletter, Sunday bulletins and for the Window; cleaned up the campus; put up lights; directed traffic; set-up before the event and cleaned-up afterwards; bought stuff for the snack bar; baked dozens of delicious cookies; made coffee; helped with the snack bar; decorated and set up the Vestry Room for the Artist and Crew Dinner; cooked and served wonderful soups, salads, breads and desserts for the crew; donated wine, water and sodas; washed all the dishes; cleaned up the kitchen; set up and took down the dressing room; ushered; sold CDs and books for John McCutcheon and the Red Tail Wing; created and printed the programs; inserted the drawing prize list into the programs; showed great hospitality; did a wonderful job as MC/announcers; took photos; waited for the sound crew, Tesser, to set up the sound systems and the lights before the events and to pack everything up afterwards; volunteered to be the docent of our Little Church; did all the accounting and analysis ...and countless people who offered prayers and encouragements along the way. Thank you, we appreciate all your support and ministering.

Due to the pandemic, instead of his Left Coast Tour in 2021, John McCutcheon will be doing a live-stream concert on January 16. St. James' will be again sponsoring the concert and proceeds will go to support ABODE Services to fight homelessness.

## ***Memorial Garden/Columbarium – Ruth Poole***

Saint James' Memorial Garden is managed by a garden committee comprised of St. James' parishioners. In 2020 we lost one member, Dorothy Balderston, who had been a member of the committee board since 1999. She will be missed.

Due to the Pandemic in 2020 -

- The Memorial Garden was maintained on an “as-needed” basis.
- The MG Committee prepared interment for three people into the garden (Dorothy Balderston, Genore Schaaf, and Sylvia Wessel).
- The MG Committee interred one person into the Columbarium in the Little Church (Pat Vlastelica).
- Four MG plots were sold (Trant and Ekren).
- No in-memory stones were sold.
- The Saint Fiacre statue (to replace the garden birdbath which was removed in 2019) still has not been installed into the garden. Concrete/rebar work pending.
- The Memorial Garden's annual “Coffee Hour” Memorial event which provides garden and columbarium history and current material to parishioners and guests was not held in 2020. (Flags were displayed on Memorial Day at all garden sites, but unfortunately all removed and taken by some unknown person.)

We are always in need of new members. Please contact Ruth Poole if you are interested at [ruth.poole@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ruth.poole@sbcglobal.net)

## ***Newsletter – The Window – Janet Fischer***

The Window continued to publish monthly during 2020. The online newsletter page was visited an average of 60 times a month. Ron Cook, our office administrator, continues to print and mail hard copies to those who have requested them, and puts a small print supply outside the office for others to pick up.

## ***Outreach – Jan Scrutton***

During 2020 St. James' has kept up its support of local groups serving the underserved and in need in our community. We started the year delivering 38 gift cards to help with shoes to Abode Services and Union City Family Center (UCFC). In the summer we then collected school supplies for Abode Services. There was a lower need for backpacks but school supplies were still important to help families set up for remote schooling. Union City Family Center were also grateful for school supplies and a donation of hygiene supplies to help with the needs they identified.

Fremont Education Foundation has been supporting Fremont Schools with providing computers, hotspots and technology to support teachers and students with remote learning. The Vestry made a donation to this appeal on our behalf.

The diocese had a supply of N-95 masks for churches to distribute to local groups in need. Forty of these were gratefully received by Abode Services and by UCFC.

Alongside the Vigil in November we collected food for Abode which was delivered to them in December. We also responded to the appeal from Tri City Volunteers for grocery bags to help them distribute food – we have delivered around 2,000 bags to them in Nov/Dec.

## ***Road Crew – Bruce Roberts***

At first thought the “Road Crew” did nothing this year except provide a radio transmitter for the prayer service held in the parking lot. The second thought is much more complicated when one considers the uses of sight and sound in 2020.

Without Mike, Jan, Beth and Tom Scrutton, St. James' would not have had church services in 2020. The Scrutton family photographed, recorded, and assembled the parts of St. James' Sunday Services for nearly all of 2020. They continue for 2021. Since I was not directly involved, I can only wonder at the knowledge and computer acumen needed to pull off assembling choir performances, prayers of the people, main service, sermons and more. Doing all that week after week deserves accolades of the highest order, Oscar, Emmy, and Grammy would be appropriate. This effort required learning the use of newly acquired equipment.

Jennifer Ravera, Choir Director, pitched in with the recording of soloists who formed a virtual choir, as well as recording herself singing and playing the organ. She also pulled together St. James' choir member recordings for anthems. Not exactly a "Road Crew" job, but akin to it, she hosted Zoom watch parties and Zoom coffee hours and happy hours all through the year.

The Rev. Bill Hale hosted Zoom Home Alone sessions and classes as well as recording his own sermons.

The Rev. Lori Walton recorded her own sermons and rode herd on all the rest of the recorded services for St. James'. She hosted Bible Studies and classes on Zoom as well.

So, all in all, the 2020 "Road Crew" had an expanded membership and pulled off an amazing feat, producing varied church services, choir singing, classes, and Bible studies. And Zoom provided a platform for much of it.

Quite a year in the Age of Covid-19. Some of the above accomplishments may not be thought of as Road Crew duties, but the new age requires new efforts and expanded membership.

### ***Senior Lunch – Jan Scrutton***

The second midweek gathering for lunch was enjoyed by 21 guests in January when a meal of soup and bread along with a selection of desserts was served. Plans to meet again in March had to be put off and we look forward to being able to gather again in the future.

### ***Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Supper) – Dave Nelsen***

Shrove Tuesday fell on February 25th this year and following a long tradition, the men of the parish prepared a meal of pancakes, sausage and scrambled eggs. Many people work together to make this a fun and successful event. The men's group coordinates the operation, setting up, cooking, making plates, serving drinks and ice cream and cleaning up afterward. People of the youth group and scouts helped with serving and bussing tables. For the second year Boy Scouts cooked all the cakes and again we had a second griddle thanks to Kimo Awana. That second griddle makes all the difference in being able to serve meals with very little delay. Dealing with all the tickets, finances, and guest coordinating were several women lead by Gail Blalock. Their help each year is greatly appreciated. This is a wonderful occasion to serve, to be served and to reflect on the upcoming season of Lent. Approximately 110 people attended. Thanks to everyone who helped and participated in this event.

### ***Stewardship – Sylvia Ma***

Stewardship ministry is a year-round effort. I would like to thank Jan Brandt for keeping track of all the pledges and giving us quarterly summaries. I would like to thank Mike Scrutton for being our Stewardship Secretary, for sending out pledge reminders, for analyzing our pledge tendencies and explaining to the Vestry so we could make informed decisions on our budget. The Vestry wrote thank you notes to all pledging units in the beginning of 2020. Thank you.

During the Fall Stewardship period, members of the Vestry shared with the parish what pledging at St. James' means to them. Due to the pandemic, the testimonies were recorded and were incorporated into the Sunday services. Great job, Vestry members!

Pledge cards and a letter from The Rev. Lori as well as a succulent plant were delivered to all households of the Parish by the Vestry. Thank you, Lori and her daughter Megan, and Jan Scrutton for preparing the packets, Laura Winter for organizing the deliveries and Vestry members for driving around town to deliver them.

In the November drive through Ingathering, members of the Vestry helped with snack distribution and with collecting pledge cards and notes of gratitude. As of January 12, 2021, we have received 87 pledges for \$355,290. In 2020, we received 96 pledges for \$343,064. Due to the pandemic, we are not able to worship in person probably in the first part of 2021. We will again be missing plate offerings and rental income for our facilities. We are striving for a balanced budget for 2021 and we are not there yet. If you have sent in your pledge, thank you. If you are still thinking about it, please do send in your pledge card (if you need a pledge card, please email [admin@saintj.com](mailto:admin@saintj.com)) or pledge online at <https://saintj.com/giving>. We really appreciated your support of St. James'.

### ***Tai Chi Class – Sylvia Ma***

We met Tuesdays from 10:00-11:30am and Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30pm. We had an average of eight students in the Tuesday morning class and five students in the Wednesday night class. Due to the pandemic, classes were stopped in mid-March.

### ***Website – Mike Scrutton & Janet Fischer***

During the year, we changed the hosting provider for our website, having been let-down by our long-term host. We took recommendations and selected a solution that specializes in our preferred platform (Wordpress). We were able to resolve the problem within about a week and were only offline for one Sunday. The change meant that we were without analytics data for about 10 weeks from the end of September. Website traffic in 2020 is up by an average of 25%, with approximately 8700 visits this year. Our website promotes our online services with direct links to videos and Sunday programs.

### ***Zoom Fellowship – Jennifer Ravera***

As St. James' in-person church services were suspended starting on Lent 2 of 2020, it became evident that online technology was going to be needed in order to connect with parishioners during COVID.

Once COVID started, I was unable to hold regular choir rehearsals on Wednesday evenings. Instead, I started Wednesday Zoom Choir "Happy Hours" (BYOB) at 7pm, and they have been going strong! It is great to see each other each week to talk about what is going on with music at St. James', and just to keep in touch!

In March I had observed through some Facebook postings from other churches that other parishes were doing Zoom "Coffee Hours." I asked Lori about it, and she suggested surveying parishioners to see if they would be interested in participating. Interest was high, so I gave it a shot. Our first Zoom Coffee Hour was on Palm Sunday, 4/5/2020, and it was a hit! I have been hosting two Coffee Hours each Sunday on Zoom ever since. Parishioners have said it is great to be able to see each other each week and catch up on how everyone is doing.

Soon after, I began a Thursday night Social Hour at 7pm. A group of people get together and share stories, talk about current events, and enjoy being together each Thursday!

Starting when St. James' Sunday service went LIVE, I began Zoom "Watch Parties" to go hand in hand with our Coffee Hours! Now, people can join in community to watch our church service LIVE at 8:30am, or recorded at 11:00am, and then have coffee hour afterwards!

I have really enjoyed being a Zoom host for these get-togethers! I have gotten to know a lot of parishioners so much better than I ever did, and it has given me a feeling of oneness with the St. James' congregation that I truly appreciate. I know many people who participate in our Zoom fellowship offerings really enjoy them as well!

If you would like to join in any of our Zoom meetings, please email me at [music@saintj.com](mailto:music@saintj.com) and I'll get you set up! It's a wonderful way to keep involved in the St. James' Community!  
I'll get you set up! It's a wonderful way to keep involved in the St. James' Community!