



February 11, 2018

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION
For The Year of Our Lord 2017**

**The Church of St. James the Less
Ashland, Virginia**

The Rt. Rev. Shannon S. Johnston – Diocesan Bishop
The Rt. Rev. Susan Goff – Bishop Suffragan
The Rt. Rev. Edwin F. Gulick Jr. – Assisting Bishop
The Rev. Jeffrey D. "Rock" Higgins – Priest-In-Charge
Paul Robb – Interim Organist and Choir Director
Joanne Robb – Interim Director, St. Cecilia Children's Choir
Margaret Rush – Parish Administrator
Cameron Stiles – Treasurer
Yancey Jones & Richard Shirey – Asst. Treasurers
Bobbie Street – Parish Nurse
Loida Matthews – Nursery Attendant

VESTRY MEMBERS 2017

Dawn Davis – 2018
Richard Grosse – 2018
Beth Markwood – 2018
John Hoar – 2019
Yancey Jones – 2019
George Spagna – 2019
Ricki Carson – 2020
Rebecca Cline – 2020
Janet Taylor – 2020

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**St. James the Less
Annual Meeting Agenda
February 11, 2018
9 am**

Opening Prayer:	The Rev. Rock Higgins
Call to Order:	Yancey Jones, Senior Warden
Approval of Minutes, 2017 Annual Meeting	
Vestry Election:	Yancey Jones
Treasurer's Report:	Cami Stiles
Report from Diocesan Convention:	George Spagna
Review of approved budget:	George Spagna
Sr. Warden Vestry Report:	Yancey Jones
Priest's Report:	The Rev. Rock Higgins
New Business	
Old Business	
Closing prayer and adjournment	

PARISH STATISTICS *

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
*Active units	325	357	356	391	423	441	427	430	301**	304
		+								
		+								
Baptisms	11	6	3	4	1	7	3	5	2	2
Confirmations	1	10	1	6	9	4	5	10	0	6
Receptions	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1
Reaffirmations	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Marriages	4	2	3	1	2	0	1	1	0	0
Funerals	3	3	2	11	4	5	6	5	3	0
		+								
		+								
Sunday Holy Eucharist	106	101	101	105	104	104	103	104	101	107
Sunday (MP or EP)	1	2	0	1	5	0	9	12	9	9
Weekday Holy Eucharist	62	52	54	55	58	57	46	57	45	55
Weekday (MP or EP)	34	29	42	37	35	37	28	1	11	7
Eucharist to Sick & Shut-ins	9	5	2	9	2	6	6	42	43	57
Other Offices – Compline, Noonday Prayer, Weddings, Burials.	7	0	0	12	6	10	5	6	5	2

{Note: Sacraments which included Holy Eucharist are counted under that Heading}

*Does not include children under 16 years of age.

** Church database was cleaned up; this number more accurately reflects the parish.

St James the Less
Minutes of Annual Meeting - February 12, 2017

DRAFT Minutes of Annual Meeting of St. James the Less Episcopal Church

Rector, Rev. Anna Brawley, called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m. Rev. Brawley led the congregation in an opening prayer.

- **Vestry Election:** Senior Warden, Steve Pace, read the slate of nominees to fill the six vacancies on the vestry: Ricki Carson, Rebecca Cline, John Hoar, Yancey Jones, George Spagna and Janet Taylor. Steve opened the floor for nominations. Seeing none, Cami Stiles moved that the nominations be closed and the slate elected by acclamation; Bob May seconded. **The motion was approved.** Tanya Reagan then moved that we approve election of 3 vestry members for 3 year terms and three vestry members for 2 year terms. The motion was seconded. **The motion was approved.** We congratulated the new vestry members and thanked the outgoing members for their service.
- **Report from Diocesan Convention:** George Spagna, SJTL voting delegate, reported on the 222nd Annual Diocesan Convention of January 26-28. He asked those who attended the convention to be recognized: SJTL was represented by 8 laypeople in addition to George, a very admirable number. George indicated that the convention was very non-controversial and that there were two major outcomes of note. The first was that Bishop Shannon Johnston announced that beginning in September, parishes would be visited by a bishop once every two years instead of once a year. The purpose of the change is to allow the bishops to spend more quality time with each congregation and to provide for more in-depth exchanges with parishioners, vestries and priests. On alternate years, regional visits will allow for the opportunity for confirmations, baptisms and a more adhesive regional presence in the diocese. The second announcement was that all of our Bishops, Shannon Johnston, Ted Gulick and Susan Goff, have pledged to live out their baptismal covenants to support refugees and the helpless, even if it means going to jail in civil disobedience.
- **Minutes:** Steve Pace made a motion to approve the minutes of the 2016 annual meeting as written; Bob May seconded. **The motion was approved.**
- **Treasurer's Report:** A motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report as written. **The motion was approved.**
- **Budget:** Yancey Jones, Assistant Treasurer, thanked the Finance Committee for their work on budget preparation and briefly outlined the budget. A motion was made and seconded to accept the budget for 2017 as written. **The motion was approved.**
- **Sr. Warden's Vestry Report:** The report was submitted in advance. Steve Pace asked the vestry members to come forward and he led us in singing, with a focus on our roles as servants of the Lord. Afterwards, Junior Warden, Bob May, presented Steve Pace, our senior warden for the last 3 years and acolyte master for 30 years, with an engraved, brass Paschal candle and

stand. Steve received a standing ovation from the congregation in appreciation of his years of outstanding service to St. James the Less.

- **Rector's Report:** Preceding the Rector's report, Courtland Warfield read a passage of scripture from Ephesians 4. Rev. Brawley's report focused on looking to the future. After thanking people for their pledges and thanking our vestry for their service and support, she praised our strengths and also identified some areas where our collaboration is needed to build up "our community of faith in the love of Christ Jesus, our Savior." The two major areas are Christian Formation, especially Children's Christian Formation: to this end, Rev. Brawley indicated that she would like to hire a full-time clergyperson to focus on these needs, as well as those of our youth and young adults. The second area she identified was the need to focus our efforts on growth in the areas of Communication and Communications. The remainder of her report focused on her suggestions for the improvement of both areas. At the conclusion of her formal report, Rev. Brawley announced that she would like to have an open discussion about the recently announced departure of the Rev. Charles Joy, who will leave St. James the Less at the end of May. Emotional and pointed discussion ensued, as Rev. Joy has served us faithfully for the past 9 years.

The annual Meeting closed with prayer at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Bruce Register

TREASURER'S REPORT (FINANCIALS ATTACHED AT THE BACK OF THIS PACKET)

REVIEW OF APPROVED BUDGET (BUDGET ATTACHED AT THE BACK OF THIS PACKET)

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT & REFLECTION

In February 2017, a new vestry was elected, consisting of three parishioners who were continuing their terms and six new members. This vestry met often, as we worked through much official business, while listening and responding to each other and to you. Throughout our journey one thing has been evident; the Holy Spirit has been at work and walking among all of us. I want to thank all our parishioners and especially our vestry members, past and present, for the tremendous devotion exhibited to SJTL.

Our ministers when we began our terms were Rev. Anna Brawley, who came to us in September 2016, and Rev. Charles Joy. In May we celebrated Charles' eight years of ministry to us, as he moved on to other parishes to share his multitude of gifts. We are deeply indebted to him for being our spiritual support through those years.

In June 2017 Anna made the decision after thoughtful prayer to seek another call. Anna's time with us was brief and yet deeply meaningful for many. After working closely with the diocese, the vestry made a call to the Rev. Rock Higgins, who began as our priest-in-charge on September 10. As we welcome Rock, Stephanie, Selah and Sojo, we all feel the joy of Rock's enthusiasm and energy for SJTL, and we feel enormously blessed.

Our worship services continue to be meaningful and varied. They are supported by the music leadership of Paul and Joanne Robb, and each one of you, as you carry out your missions from altar guild to acolytes to ushers and many more.

Our financial position is excellent thanks to your generosity during the stewardship campaign and the Brunswick Stew fundraiser.

Christian Education continues Sunday mornings for adults and children. Celal Kamran has joined us for the next six months to support children's education. Our youth groups continue to thrive.

Thanks to all those involved in the upkeep of the property, especially our lovely memorial garden.

Our outreach in the community continues through many avenues, including the clinic, food ministry, Peter Paul Development Center, community dinners, and Mother's Morning Out, to name a few.

2017 and the previous five years have been years of transition for our church. This constant change has at times been difficult for each of us in different ways, but it is clear we are a vibrant community of faith. As we look to an exciting future lead by Father Rock, the vestry is enthusiastic and energized to support Rock, our parishioners and all our ministries.

PRIEST-IN-CHARGE REPORT

The Rev. Rock Higgins, Priest-in-Charge

As of yesterday, I have been with St. James the Less for 5 months. That is not a long time in the great scheme of things, and yet, I am delighted in how quickly we reached a level of comfort and common mission.

The goal of any ministry endeavor is changed lives. We want things to be different, and hopefully better, than the way they began. That is often ambiguous and amorphous. Because of that, we often rely on more tangible things to which we can apply a metric. In other words, we look to numbers. I try not to focus on numbers, but numbers are people, and people matter. Our numbers are solid and good. We have been able to maintain a weekly average of over 140 since I arrived, with some weeks significantly more than that.

Also, I have been most pleased with the Stewardship Campaign, and the phenomenal leadership that Jennie Bruce and Jim Carson gave. We finished the year in the black, despite some large expenditures that were not anticipated. Also, we have our budget fully covered by pledges for the coming year. These are terrific signs of where St. James the Less is. Also, this will enable us to take some careful first steps into expanding ministries and approaches here in Ashland.

In some intangible things, though, is where I see the most health.

- Five months ago I was given a warm welcome, but noticed how quickly people left after services. The mood in the coffee hour was polite, but few stayed for very long. That has changed. Now, there is a "buzz" in the coffee hour after church. People are staying and talking, spending time with one another. And the times are stretching in length and participation. Every week when I walk in I stop and thank God for the changes in spirit in the short time I have been here. Some point to me to take the credit, but it takes all of us doing what we can do be kind and gracious with one another, and it is showing.
- My first Sunday I clapped for the St. Cecilia's Choir, sharing great joy over the great job they had done. I learned that that was not a previous norm, and understand the theological/liturgical reasons why. The spontaneous applause at the end of the Bluegrass Mass morning edition last Sunday came naturally and authentically, and I joined in instead of starting it. It is that type of joyous exuberance which shows the nature and spirit of this place. This is not the church that was here a mere 5 months ago.
- While not a change, I so appreciate the deep commitment I have seen in all those who work with our kids and teens. From our Sunday School that got a reboot with a new curriculum, to our St. Cecelia's Choir and the wonderful music they share, and to our Youth programs making a safe and encouraging space for our teens, over and over, every week, we keep "training up [our children] in the way [they] should go." Being a dad, I am also a recipient of this great gift, and I could not be more thankful.

My focus of the first few months has been to get to know as many of the parish as I can, encouraging people to a Christ-centered focus on health and wholeness, both individually and collectively. We have initiated very little change in my time so far, and a question I have asked often is "What is the tradition here?" I try to be flexible, and attentive to the expectations of people without being hampered by them.

We have made a few changes, and they seem to be going well.

- We moved to a multiple week bulletin, which frees us to focus more on the ministry instead of desktop publishing.
- We added a new service, and the "trial balloon" of the Bluegrass Mass went very well on Feb. 4, and we go to its regular time, 2nd Sundays at 5pm, starting tonight.
- We brought on Celal Kamran as our Christian Formation Intern, looking specifically at what we are doing with our children, youth, and adults. He will be with us through the school year, and will also help us with creation of a job description for a permanent position later.

These are just a few shifts to help us fulfill our mission of being part of the Christian presence in Ashland.

I look forward to the coming year, getting to work with the Vestry to help shape the directions we will go in the coming months. We are an active, vibrant, and healthy parish. We have overcome some big situations, and the resilience and commitment of the parish shows. I love that people are looking forward and dreaming again, asking "What if..." and "How about..." questions. Never do I want to quench that enthusiasm. I will, though, repeatedly bring us back to the questions of "How are you being Fed?" (What are you actively doing to feed your soul?) and "Who are you Feeding?" (What are you doing to help and encourage another Child of God?) For the coming year, that will be my focus, making sure that each person that calls St. James the Less home can answer those two questions, and if they cannot, lovingly encourage them to draw closer to Christ so that they can claim and grow in that relationship and be able to express the ministry they are called to do.

Continued blessings in 2018! And many thanks for a great beginning to my tenure as your priest!

Respectfully submitted, The Rev. Rock Higgins, Priest-in-Charge

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Please refer to the financial reports provided by the treasurer, found at the end of this report.

Memorial Gifts Committee

Along with the Property Committee and a representative from the Altar Guild, the committee considers and makes recommendations to the Vestry for gifts to the parish given as memorials or celebrations of loved ones.

Parish Auditors

A group consists usually of three people, who conduct an annual audit of parish financial records and practices.

Nancy Fines (752.7890)

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

2017 was a year of Blessings for Saint James the Less Property Committee. We enjoy the blessings of time and talent from a dedicated pool of volunteers, namely Dale Hill and Tom Fritter, and Ann and Wilbur Lawrence, and Mary Lou Brown, who tend to our grounds and gardens. We have had volunteers again mow our extensive property allowing Saint James the Less's budget to work harder in other areas. This past October we also hosted our first Fall Work Day and we had numerous parishioners roll up their sleeves and pitch in washing windows, scrubbing walls, digging up bushes, and power washing the playground fence. For all of the willing hands we are truly thankful.

The coming year does see a few large projects in the works. The stairs at the front of the church need attention. We are currently looking at companies for quotes to make those steps safer while keeping the character of the current steps. We also need to look at re-glazing the windows in the church. We are currently looking at quotes for that project as well.

Thank you again for all your hard work this year. Please consider pitching in for our next work day (date TBD) or volunteering to help mow the grounds once the weather gets warmer.

SUNDAY MORNING PARTICIPATION

ACOLYTE GUILD

We offer a special thanks to Claire Reagan, who served for many years and graduated this past spring. Currently 20 young people are serving regularly as acolytes at St. J's and 4 young adult alternates. We recognize and salute them for their service to the church.

Congratulations to our returning acolytes:

Third Year Honor: Corinna Cline

Second Year Honor: Riley Massey, Will Rosser, and Jake Stockbridge

First Year Honor: Virginia Meade, Hardy Meade, Grace May, Henry Shifflett, and Alex Maria

- Second Year Senior:** Flory Brockwell, Danielle Sergi, Landen Helsley, Deklan Cauthorne, and Anabel Shifflett
- First Year Senior:** Kalani Jones, Ian Hughes, and Peyton Chambers
- First Year Junior:** Sophie May and Hayden Massey
- First Year Beginner:** Prudence Reynolds
- College alternates:** Danielle Stockbridge, Claire and Patrick Reagan

It is a pleasure working and serving with these young people. Their dedication and service to St. James the Less are second to none. I encourage you to let them know how important they are to our worship and congratulate them on a job well done.

Steve Pace, Acolyte Master (516.6107)

MUSIC

Choir – Adult

The Adult Choir continues to add to the quality of our worship experience at St. James the Less. While a few singers have had to drop out this past year, several new people have joined the group keeping the chancel area at near full capacity. The choir's ability and level of musicianship also continues to grow. In 2017, the Choir provided musical leadership for most Sunday morning services as well as Ash Wednesday and Holy Week. They are continually learning new and more sophisticated works from the Anglican tradition along with music by contemporary composers. We are always looking for new singers, whether to join us for the entire program year, or to make a short-term commitment to sing for Holy Week and Easter or Advent and Christmas. *There is always a place for new members* and we invite you to join us on Thursday evenings at 7pm.

Paul Robb – paul.robb60@gmail.com

Choir – Hand Bell Choir

This group is comprised of 7 regular ringers with Bob Chamlee and Joanne Robb filling in as a substitute when needed. They meet for rehearsal at 6:00 pm on Thursday evenings and have played during worship 7 times in 2017. They are very dedicated to regularly participating in worship and will continue to enhance both the music program and our liturgical life of our church.

Paul Robb - paul.robb60@gmail.com

Choir – St. Cecilia

The St. Cecilia Choir practices on Thursday afternoons from 4:45-5:30. Several of the parents wait in the library during practice and enjoy that time of fellowship. During the school year the children sing one Sunday each month at the 10 am service, as well as Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday. Currently, there are 12 enthusiastic singers from grades 1-5. The number of participants varies during soccer and baseball seasons. The music we select for the children's choir coincides with the lessons of the liturgical calendar. Each week we review the upcoming Gospel lesson and try to provide a brief video clip depicting that event from the Bible. We also encourage the children to actively participate in worship by practicing the liturgical songs that the congregation sings. With the ceiling mounted computer projector, we are able to display their anthems on the choir room wall. This is tremendously helpful in discussing the meaning of the lyrics so they understand the message they are singing, and it aids in teaching music notation. The children who participate in the St. Cecilia Choir have demonstrated an increased awareness of what happens in worship. Choir participation has also noticeably improved

their self-confidence. This is a fun group and we always welcome new voices. You are encouraged to contact Joanne Robb if you think your child might benefit from joining our choir.

Joanne Robb – joanne.robb4@gmail.com

Counters' Group

Two members count the offering money each Sunday (immediately following the 10 am service), deliver it to the night depository at the bank and record the figures for the Treasurer. This is a very important ministry. Please contact Nancy if you are interested in assisting.

Nancy Fines (752.7890)

Eucharistic Ministers

Assist during the services by leading prayers and assisting with communion. EMs also help by taking communion to the "shut-ins" and sick following Sunday worship when requested. Eucharistic Ministers are appointed by the Rector who requests a license from the Bishop. Please talk to Father Rock if you are interested in participating in this ministry.

Cami Stiles (798.5030)

St. Francis Guild

The Guild serves families and the parish in time of loss of a loved one, primarily during the vigil period and funeral service. Responsibilities typically include participating in the vigil and serving as a pallbearer, usher, and/or lector during the service.

Derrick Rosser (798.3057)

St. Hilda's Altar Guild

Several teams work with the Clergy to ensure that the altar and sanctuary are prepared for all services. Provides elements for Holy Eucharist, maintains vestments for worship services, provides flowers for worship services and decorates the Church for major feast days and other special occasions such as weddings and funerals. New members are encouraged and welcomed to participate; no experience necessary, training provided!

- Karen Fritter (798-2262), Sylvia Spagna (752.6513)

Ushers

Assist at the Sunday 10 am service and at special services by assisting the congregation with seating, answering questions, collecting the offering, bringing the Bread and Wine for Communion to the Altar during the Offertory, etc. Head Ushers, men and women, volunteer, usually for a month at a time, during the school year and/or one week at a time during summer months. Please take a month during 2017 or a week during the summer months. This is an easy and wonderful way to serve the congregation and to meet and greet your fellow parishioners. Thank you for your service in the past.

- Rich Holt (368.0609)

EDUCATION & FORMATION

Children & Youth

For the children of SJTL, the 2017 calendar year began with the epiphany play, offered during 10 am worship. Thanks to Gay Gibson who helped organize and support participation, as well as to Joanne Robb for her musical instruction. The last Sunday of the year we counted pop tops and donated them to the Ronald McDonald House in memory of Charlotte Reynolds.

In August we offered our fourth annual SJTL Vacation Bible School for four evenings in August. Twenty-five children gathered each night for a light dinner, followed by a lesson, activities and music. On the final night the parents joined us for dinner and a musical offering. Thank you to the many helpers, especially Ragan Dyer, Steve Pace, Allison Pace, Bret Bajcsi, Melissa Hill and Jessica Hill. The last special event of the year was the intergenerational Advent Fair. Parishioners were invited to make advent wreaths while the children made advent calendars and ornaments and selected Christmas gifts for their parents.

We are pleased that the children are involved in many other church activities such as acolyte service, as readers, singing in St. Cecelia's choir, and participating in youth groups.

We continue to be blessed with our nursery staff. Loida Matthews and a paid assistant care for our little ones weekly. We are excited to have many young families worshiping with us. We recently had 14 children in nursery for the 10 am service!

As we begin 2018, we are excited that Father Rock has brought us Celal Karman, who will work with the children's education program for the next six months. We are blessed with terrific Sunday school teachers, who are using an exciting new curriculum; however attendance is sporadic. We look forward to ministering to the needs of the many new families we see each week who are coming to worship with us. Thank you for your support of this most important ministry of our faith community.

Jane Jones (798.6919)

Youth Group – Middle School

Youth Groups at SJTL are a ministry of outreach to our community. We respect and welcome youth of all faith traditions into the Middle School Youth Group, and honor each person's right to seek and worship the Great Mystery however they are led. Kids are barraged with messages promoting consumerism, body image, intoxicants, being part of the cool group, Christians being boring, etc. Youth group is proof it is possible to have a REALLY GOOD TIME while staying within Christian behavior norms. We also provide opportunities to serve the community, including hosting a "Youth Worship Service," cooking / serving pancakes at the annual church "Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper," and the diocesan "Youth Day of Service." We include activities that teach skills around resolving conflict and building healthy relationships, and we do not shy away from hard topics when they arise. Youth Group provides an environment of safe honest seeking, where the goal is curiosity, dialog, and kids finding and owning their own answers to life's hard questions. We stress respect, safety, participation, prayer, forgiveness, and fun, and it is our prayer that Youth Group can serve as another layer of emotional and spiritual protection as your child navigates the minefield of adolescence.

Alex Meade ammeade@comcast.net or 550.7686

Beth Markwood emarkwood@comcast.net or 691.1260

PK Kinser pk287@yahoo.com or 703.399.5217

Youth Group – High School

The senior high youth group consists of high school students and 4 adult volunteer leaders from SJTL. The group meets Sunday evenings during the school year, from September to June. This group is inclusive and is not limited solely to SJTL high school students. Our goals are fellowship, hospitality, outreach, and spiritual development. We take a developmental, gradual approach to outreach, whereby we build in many small-scale tasks throughout the year, with week-long summer experiences that involve a more intensive involvement and commitment. We expect that each youth group member will

participate in one of our more intensive experiences of outreach by the end of their time in youth group. Our hope is for our graduates to leave youth group prepared for a life-time of outreach and service that is grounded in a strong personal faith and to the community of the Episcopal Church.

Approximately one third of our activities involve fellowship and hospitality (e.g., a shared meal most Sunday meetings that is donated by a youth group family; get-to-know-you, non-competitive and silly games; participation in the Parish Shrine Mont Retreat; hosting a 'Gratitude Event' to show appreciation and love for parents, grandparents, and church staff). Another third of the group's activities focus on spiritual development (e.g., group study and reflection of the day's lectionary, a short video, or other relevant materials; learning skills for forgiveness; group prayer; learning about non-violent communication, meditation or other mindfulness oriented practices; preparation for and leading the High School Sunday Service). The remaining approximately one third of the group's efforts consist of outreach activities which include:

1. Gathering supplies for the Ashland Christian Emergency Society (ACES) through an annual scavenger hunt in the fall;
2. Hosting the Community Dinner for STJL in October and April;
3. Leading the congregation-wide Christmas gift program for ARC of Hanover to provide gifts for needy children in Hanover County.
4. Tri-Cities work camp in Petersburg to renovate homes in July.
5. Mission trips to assist to with disaster relief (e.g., flooding in White Sulphur Springs, WV; hurricane relief from Hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, Joaquin, and Matthew) and to provide service to others (e.g., assist with trail maintenance at National Parks).

An additional outreach activity related to disaster relief began in January 2016, through engagement with young adults who were active at St. James the Less when they were in high school through youth group and/or as an acolyte. This 'reunion' service trip is outreach both to those young adults and to those for whom we volunteer. This event occurs during winter break and involves a four-day trip and 2 & ½ days of service. Participation in this service trip has been about 12-14 young adults (including 2-3 sponsors (e.g., youth group leaders).

In 2017, our high school youth group participation ranged from 8-20 youth for most activities, with four adult volunteer leaders (Rebecca Cline, Derrick Rosser, Bryan Cline, and Aleta Meyer). We are grateful for the dedication of our adult volunteers, as well as for the support of the congregation (e.g., generosity with the Christmas Gift Program for ARC of Hanover; our Annual Car Wash Fundraiser, contributions from Chenery to support our two summer mission trips, and the availability and reliability of two vans that can transport 8 people and luggage at a time). This is a transition year for us, with the Clines 'retiring' as high school youth group leaders, thus we will have two 'new' youth group leaders next year. If you are interested in getting involved as a youth group leader, please reach out to Father Rock to discuss and learn about expectations.

*Aleta Meyer (752-6620), Bryan & Rebecca Cline (798.0915)
Derrick Rosser (798.3057)*

PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

The Parish Life Committee works together to support important events occurring during the year. This year we hosted two picnics at the beginning and end of the Christian education school year. As a congregation, we celebrated the ministry we shared with the Rev. Anna Brawley; two baptisms; the arrival of the Rev. Rock Higgins; and six confirmations with the Rt. Rev. Ted Gulick, as his final official act. Thanks to everyone who has helped tirelessly throughout this year. Without the helping hands of all parishioners these celebrations would not be possible.

The **Supper Club** is a part of Parish Life, and provides a means for holding monthly dinners, in a home setting, for parishioners and newcomers. Its purpose is to provide a relaxed and enjoyable fellowship gathering. Members participate by bringing a dish and agreeing to host two to three dinners each year. Individuals are rotated each month so that the members have opportunities to meet and get to know other members.

Dawn Davis, Vestry Liaison (513.4169)

WELCOME/NEWCOMERS COMMITTEE

The committee continues to focus on improving our strategies for inviting, welcoming and connecting newcomers to our church. Updates include:

Inviting/Welcoming Strategies:

- The SJTL website continues to undergo a major revamping; we now have a new web address: stjamestheless.church.
- Signage was changed outside to correspond to the new web address and to include Father Rock's name as our Priest-in-Charge;
- We are much more active on Facebook with daily postings; we are using Facebook to advertise and place targeted ads.
- Rock posts pictures on Instagram on average of 3 times per week.
- We reinserted a weekly ad in the church section of the *Herald-Progress* and are placing free advertisements of upcoming events in the Community Calendar section.
- New visitor pew cards that include Rock's message were placed in the pews. Rock personally contacts each person who returns a card or who signs the guest book.
- Greeters continue to welcome and direct visitors at both entrances on Sunday mornings.
- SJTL coffee mugs have been ordered; they will be filled with information and welcoming gifts and presented to first time visitors.

Connecting Newcomers Who are Attending:

- Three newcomer luncheon dates are on the calendar for 2018.
- Newcomers as well as those who are not attending regularly have been called by members of the vestry and invited to special events and services.
- Members of various committees are encouraged to include new people when considering adding new members or seeking volunteers.

We are delighted to report that our attendance numbers are up since Rock's arrival, and that we are seeing many new faces in the pews! Thanks to all of you who join us in making St. James the Less a welcoming and exciting place to worship!

Committee Members: Joanne Flanagan, Dick Shirey, Karen Davies, Dawn Stockbridge, Ann Lawrence, Ragan Dyer, Jenny Bruce (chair) and Richard Grosse (vestry liaison).

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Mission: *We are a committee that connects to outreach initiatives in our church and in our community. Our hope is to provide oversight, vision, and support to our St. James the Less outreach efforts through awareness, education, connection, and communication.*

Dani Stockwell (798.6548)

Each sub-committee listed below has its own primary contacts. If you would like more information or have an interest in being a part of the Outreach Committee, please contact Dani, or the office, for further guidance.

Highlights of the Year:

Annual Outreach Meeting: An annual meeting of all of the leaders of outreach initiatives at SJTL was held in September so the leaders could share their progress and goals, reinforcing communication, coordination, and support among the groups.

ACES: Since 1950's "To serve and address the unmet needs of the less fortunate in the Ashland community." ACES is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization supported by community groups, scouts, churches, schools and individuals in the Ashland, Doswell, Glen Allen, and Hanover areas of Hanover County.

CARITAS: SJTL is one congregation involved with CARITAS of Richmond, dedicated to opening our doors to our doors to our neighbors one week a year. Their goal is to "Assure Shelter." It is a community-based organization enabling member congregations to provide shelter and hospitality to homeless people in the Richmond metropolitan area. It was organized in the 1980s to respond to the unmet need for emergency shelter for homeless adults in the cold winter months. The organization's congregation-based model mobilizes the participation of more than 20,000 volunteers every year. Its year-round single adult program provides more than 20,000 nights of shelter to over 1,000 different men and women. The congregations involved in CARITAS represents the city of Richmond, Henrico County, Chesterfield County, Goochland County and Hanover County in Virginia.

Chenery Fund: The Christopher T. Chenery Fund was established in 1973 to honor Mr. Chenery, a former parishioner, and owner of horse racing's triple crown winner, Secretariat. The committee, currently led by Naomi Pace, administers requests for funding and consists of parishioners appointed by the Vestry and Rector, each serving a three-year term. The interest income generated from the fund is available for funding charities, outreach programs and parishioners' participation in retreats, conferences, camps and classes designed to promote Christian spiritual growth. The Fund also tithes to the Building Fund, the church budget and the principle reinvestment.

Peter Paul Development Center: Betty Moore organizes donations and volunteer activities for PPDC. The Mission of Peter Paul Development Center is: Educate the Child. Engage the Family. Empower the Community. Hanover Food Ministry donated back packs, donations were made toward the food pantry and school snacks, Thanksgiving "food baskets" were donated, Christmas-stocking stuffers were collected for seniors, Easter baskets for children put together by SJTL Mother's Day Out, and SJTL volunteers monthly trips to work with the 3rd grade class.

SJTL Free Clinic: "To offer a faith-based healing ministry to our qualified Hanover neighbors by providing free medical and dental health care with compassion, dignity and respect." We continue to serve the medical, dental, podiatry, and eye care needs of Hanover County residents who are uninsured and verified as low income, based on the US poverty guidelines. Located In Ashland-St. James the Less Free Clinic, Ashland Christian Free Podiatry Clinic, Shiloh Baptist Free Eye Care Clinic; Located in Mechanicsville-Cheryl H. Watson Memorial Free Clinic, Mechanicsville Christian Free Dental Clinic.

SJTL Food Ministry: Our mission is "To be a faith-based ministry collaborating with our community to provide nutritious food, education, and creative solutions to food insecurity in Hanover County."

- YOUTH: "Backpack Program" weekend feeding program for local elementary schools (2017-6 meals in 1560 backpacks)
- COMMUNITY: Supplemental Food Program provides families with boxes of nutritious food acquired from "FeedMore" (2016-19 families, 82 folks)

Youth Outreach:

The Senior High Youth Group at St. James the Less builds relationships, motivation and skills for 'walking the talk' as a Christian in fellowship with the Ashland community and the larger world. As part of our yearly activities, we engage in a number of the church outreach activities such as hosting community dinners, helping with CARITAS, and leading the STJL Hanover ARC Christmas Gift program. We also seek to assist in restoring and building communities through Tri-Cities Work Camp and a service trip each summer.

Beth Markwood reported that, in regards to outreach, the *Middle School Youth Group* carried out a pancake supper with proceeds going to CJs Thumbs Up Foundation this past year.

A group of eleven *STJL Young Adults* (high school graduates), organized by Aleta Meyer and PK Kinser, went to Columbia, South Carolina, from January 3-7, 2016, to work with St. Bernard Project to help rebuild homes for families whose houses were severely damaged by Hurricane Joaquin in 2016.

Given there are still homes awaiting rebuild after Hurricane Joaquin in Columbia, South Carolina, another group of eleven *STJL Young Adults* went back from December 27-30, 2016, to work with SBPUSA (formerly St. Bernard Project) to help. The group agreed that next winter, we would do our mission trip from January 2-5, 2018, but we are not sure what community we will assist.

SJTLSunday School Pop-Tops: To provide the children in Sunday School an appropriate, manageable, and meaningful outreach project.

SJTL Mothers Day Out: Our group formed in November of 2016 as a way for moms and children to: Support each other as we raise our children, give to the community, explore interests (yoga, essential oils, organization practices). Allow our children to learn and play with one another in a safe and fun environment

Community Suppers: To provide a prepared meal and fellowship for the needy residents of Hanover County. Dinner served by invitation only, to people from Ashland and the surrounding areas of Hanover County. The churches started these dinners specifically to those on fixed incomes (Social Security or Welfare) or low income all struggling to make it to the end of the month. In addition, they have been open to those semi- homebound and/or those who needing a social outing.

Ashland Open Doors: "Hope through housing." Connecting in faith, Ashland Open Door (AOD) links vulnerable families in Greater Ashland to relationships, stable housing and community based services, and inspires community change. Since forming more than a year ago, the group has taken care of over 30 families (120 persons) placing them in suitable housing.

- Christmas Breakfast Outreach for families living in motels in Ashland, VA. In June 2016,
- AOD hired a Family Services Coordinator to work with identified families. The Family Services Coordinator connects families with community resources such as: mental health services, The Department of Social Services, food pantries, after school care, utility assistance, housing, and more.
- AOD now has an operational website! Check it out at www.ashlandopendoor.com!
- SJTL is connected to the developing page on the website that lists the churches who are "partnering" with AOD, and provides a link to the page on each church's website that addresses "outreach and service." The objective is to help more hurting people by doing a better job of communicating the services provided by the area churches, and to share the Gospel in the process.

Co-chairs: Ginny Meyer (261.2080) and Julie Ericksen (873.3786)

FREE CLINIC (ST. JAMES THE LESS)

The mission of St. James the Less Free Clinic "to offer a faith based healing ministry to our qualified Hanover neighbors by providing free medical and dental health care with compassion, dignity and respect," provides a unique outreach to contribute toward the well-being of those in our community who are uninsured and whose income falls below the poverty guidelines.

We thank our St. James the Less family for the opportunity to welcome patients to our "sacred center" each Wednesday evening, from 6 - 9 pm when we convert our church basement into a healthcare facility where physicians, nurses, dentists, hygienists, and counselors provide diagnostic, preventative and therapeutic care. Administrative volunteers follow-up throughout the week to assure continuity of care for each patient. Students from Randolph-Macon College, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Bon Secours College of Nursing provide an additional asset to the gifts we offer.

We are financially supported by the generosity of others and spiritually supported by the love, grace and enthusiasm of volunteers. We are blessed by the many St. James the Less parishioners who donate their time, talent, experience, empathy and good cheer with dedication and commitment.

Susan Hubbard, Executive Director (798.7927)

PASTORAL CARE AT ST. JAMES THE LESS

Pastoral Care

The Meal Train is the most visible offering of pastoral caregivers at St. James the Less. Under the coordination of Ricki Carson, volunteers who have notified her of their willingness to participate sign up to take meals to folks who have requested the support. We also continue to have parishioners make friendly visits to church-family members who have become less mobile. And we are very grateful for the contributions of Lula Hopkins, our chief note-writer. Bobbie Street consults on pastoral-care situations with a medical component.

Stephanie Werner (798.3915)

Parish Nurse Program

The Parish Nurse is a special practice and professional model of health ministry handled by a parishioner who is a professional Nurse. It is a part of the Pastoral Care Program. She helps in the health needs of our parish by offering advice, counseling, referrals and education.

Bobbie Street (798.7030)

CHENERY COMMITTEE

The Chenery committee was established to fund charities, outreach programs and parishioners' participation in retreats, conferences, camps and classes designed to promote Christian spiritual growth. The Chenery fund's income derives from annual interest earned from the Christopher T. Chenery Fund, established in 1973

Nine committee members serve a three-year term and are selected by the vestry and Rector. Each year, three members rotate off and three new members are appointed.

Approved Chenery committee applications are presented to the vestry for their vote on final funding.

There are two forms used to apply for Chenery funds. The Chenery Fund Scholarship application is used for camps, retreats, and mission trip requests. All these requests must be church related. The Chenery Fund Grant application is used for organizations and community funding requests. The forms are available in the "Chenery slot" in the hallway close to the parish office.

Jenn Rose (822.0445)

SHRINE MONT RETREAT COMMITTEE

This group plans the annual parish intergenerational fall weekend retreat at Shrine Mont in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Planning living quarters, programming, and spiritual opportunities done from late spring through September.

George Field (752.6384)

SOCIAL GROUPS OF SJTL
"ROMEOS OF SJTL"

The group of "Retired Old Men Eating Out" (or, as has also been suggested, "Retired Outstanding Men Eating Optimally") This social group is open to anyone who wishes to join in. Lunches are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month at 11:30. The first is normally held at Randolph-Macon Cafeteria, but can vary with advance notice. The second gathering is held at Trakside Restaurant. Emails are sent out in advance. To get on the list, email mpfield@comcast.net.

George Field (752.6384)

Red Hats

Based on the national group of the same name, the SJTL Red Hats gather once or twice a month for lunch at a variety of nearby locations. All women of a certain age are welcome, and invited to participate. If you are interested, please contact the church office.

Adventurers

"The Adventurers" is compiled primarily of members of the parish who are over 55 years of age, but younger people and people outside the parish have come and are also very welcome. We meet the fourth Friday of most months at 4PM at the homes of the people who take part in the group. It is primarily a group for socializing with all of us bringing a dish and what we want to drink...not unlike an afternoon Supper Club. The attendance ranges in number from 18 to 24 people.

Katherine Tinker (798.5978) or katht1@verizon.net (lower case, one word)

