

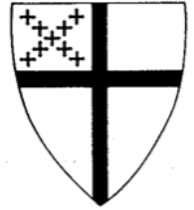


Give me my scallop-shell of quiet
My staff of faith to walk upon,....
and thus I'll take my pilgrimage.
— Sir Walter Raleigh

The Staff

Jesus said, “I say to you who hear: Love your enemies,
do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you,
and pray for those who spitefully use you.”

Luke 6:27-28 (English Standard Version)



March 2021

Anglican worship of Jesus Christ and Biblical preaching of the Good News.

DIOCESE OF THE RIO GRANDE

Jesus Christ, *Head of the Church*

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Michael Hunn, *Bishop*

The Rev. John Tober, *Rector*

The Rev. Dr. Frank Williams, *Assisting Priest*

“ Lent is a time for discipline, for
confession, for honesty, not because
God is mean or fault-finding or finger-
-pointing but because he wants us to
know the joy of being cleaned out,
ready for all the good things he now
has in store. ”

—N. T. Wright

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From the Rector's Desk

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' –Luke 11:1

Dear St. James' Family—

I was asked this week how I pray and what I pray about. I don't know that I can answer that question any better than Jesus did, but I'll give it a shot. There are lots of times that I use ready-composed prayers such as Jesus and our Jewish brethren do. A rabbi friend of mine told me it's pretty unusual for Jewish people to write new prayers or extemporize prayer. That seems unusual to us, and I suspect it seemed unusual to the disciples when Jesus taught them this novel prayer, which we know as The Lord's Prayer.



I pray the daily office at least once a day... sometimes Morning Prayer; sometimes Evening Prayer or Compline. I hold to the opinion that Compline is the most beautiful service in our prayer book and for a bedtime prayer or devotion, I think it's tops. And there's churchy things that I do regularly that are necessarily prayerful: enacting liturgy, writing sermons, and so forth. I especially appreciate contemplative prayer: focusing on something like a candle flame or a flower and meditating on it. I like quiet time such as during solitary walks in nature. Some things I've tried and they just don't work for me, personally; journaling is one example. Also, as the sole priest in a church, I don't often get to participate in religious services anymore, and that's a disappointment.

Every morning, I pray the Jacques Cousteau prayer when I get up: "I'm still alive; a miracle!" and I thank God for that. I pray at meals. Though we've gotten out of the habit, we have a cube with 6 prayers that we used when Leigh Ann was little, to help her learn to pray. You can find different varieties of those on Amazon or at Christian bookstores. I thank God when I go to bed for what I accomplished that day and for help in accomplishing what's needed the next. And finally, much like how Amy and I communicate with Leigh Ann now that she's half a continent and an ocean away, I have kind of a running dialogue with God: "Hey, God; good job on the sunset tonight." "Thanks for the pretty stars." "Thanks for friends and family." "God, I'm worried about so-and-so; they're really struggling." "God, I'm really struggling; how do I get through this?" "God, please let so-and-so know that you love them and help them." I pray the prayer Alan Shepard prayed before he launched into space aboard Gemini 3: "Oh Lord, please don't let me screw this up." I pray that a lot.

Several times a day I remember the people on our prayer list and my prayer list—people who are sick or grieving; those near death and those who have died. I pray for our church: St. James', our diocese, the National Episcopal Church, and devoted people of every faith. I pray for our government officials: the president & his cabinet, Congress, our state and local elected leaders. I pray for the telos of God's Creation, and our part in it; that we can find solutions to global warming, food scarcity, war & strife, bigotry & prejudice. I pray for the victims of tragedy, such as State Trooper Darian Jarrott, and the victims and perpetrators of the Capitol insurrection. I pray for and end to the COVID pandemic, those who care for others, and those who are at greatest risk.

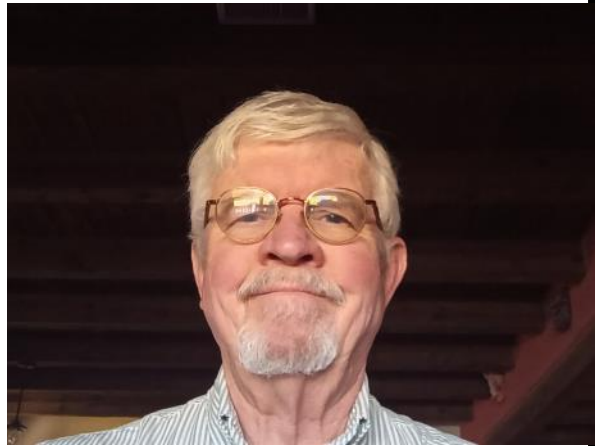
Sometimes—many times—these prayers are articulated, often they are not. Sometimes prayer consists of just sitting still. My thinking is, how we pray (specifically) is not so important.

There are a variety of ways to pray, because there is a variety in people. Not that I know the mind of God, but I suspect God is interested more in creating and maintaining open lines of communication—just like between parents and kids. I think it’s no accident that when Jesus taught His disciples to pray, Jesus’ prayer began, “Father.” Jesus’ contention is God is a loving parent to whom Jesus can go for anything; good or bad, right or wrong, joyful or sad. I think Jesus wants the same type of relationship for all of us.

With many blessings,
john+

Senior Warden’s Report—Sig Johansen

Wow! It’s already March! I’m finally getting ahead of the administrative things involved in being Senior Warden and I’m happy to have a moment to reflect. As you know, we’re slowly and haltingly moving out of the pandemic restrictions that have so affected our worship and fellowship this year. We hope and pray that we can return to in-person worship as well as outreach and evangelism. We expect to live stream the services when we return to in-person worship, so that those who prefer can be part of the experience from their homes. Hopefully, the case load and severity will go down quickly so that we can include music and coffee hours in our time together.



Due to the pandemic, our stewardship campaign was not as successful as we had hoped. This faces us with a significant financial challenge this year, but fortunately we are well provided for due to our giving and prudence in previous years. The staff, Finance Committee, and Vestry are working to identify possible savings opportunities through the year. Also, please remember that you can renew or modify your pledge or plate giving at any time.

I’ve asked Eric to start putting the summary of our monthly financial report in the Staff so we all know our position. In February our cash flow was significantly negative, due to paying three months of Fair Share (November 2020, December 2020, and January 2021) in one month. Otherwise we were in the black for the month.

As we come out of the pandemic restrictions, we hope to find new opportunities to carry out our mission – evangelism, worship, fellowship, learning, and welcoming others. If you know of any opportunities in these areas, please communicate them to me, Fr. John, or the office.

In God’s Peace,
Sig Johansen
Senior Warden

Junior Warden's Report

Greetings from Your Junior Warden

I can't believe it is already March and a year has passed since we embarked on this journey through COVID -19. We have traveled this time together, but in a different way than we were used to. We have had Zoom meetings and phone call and text messages and e-mails, I have talked to people on the phone and gotten to know some better than I knew them when we attended church together. That is a huge blessing!

I have heard; "tough times don't last, but tough people do", "this too shall pass, the best is yet to be", "there is a light at the end of the tunnel and it is not a train". I have heard them all and repeated them to encourage friends and family, but I didn't really take it in myself until I heard Fr. John say it in his sermon last Sunday. This too shall pass. It will pass, it is passing, the vaccinations are happening and I am hearing more and more from people I know that they have received their first or even their second shot. There is a light at the end of the tunnel and I am pleased to report it is not a train.

I am looking forward to getting things done at the church, but more importantly I am looking forward to pot luck dinners, and Bible studies, and worshipping together, and just plain seeing you all. I am looking forward with faith, thankful that we will be able to gather together soon. We are so blessed to be a family. Stay strong, stay safe, see you soon.

P.S. I am planning to have a Parish clean up day prior to Easter, even if we aren't allowed to worship together we can still gather and spiff up the place, social distancing is not difficult when are working outside.



St. James' Weekly Bible Studies:

Fr. Frank continues to hold bible study by phone. His class is working through the prophets in the bible. There are two sessions, one on Sundays at 9am and at noon on Wednesdays. To find out how to join, please contact the church office

St. James' Vestry Minutes

February 15, 2021

Call to Order – Fr. John opened the meeting with a prayer for guidance at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Agenda -- Fr. John (action item) - Fr. John asked if anyone had changes to the Agenda and there were none. Agenda approved.

Approval of Minutes - Fr. John (action item) - Fr. John moved for approval of both sets of minutes from the meetings held January 19 and January 31. Glenn motioned, Susan second; motion passed.

Philosophy of Interaction with Vestry – Fr. John St. James belongs to you, the people of this church. The Parish needs be able to run this church and make decisions as a body of people for St. James. Your role is to lead St. James to where you want it to be. I am not here to tell you how to vote or tell you what the decision is so that you can ratify it. I am here to craft and lead liturgy and to help the vestry make decisions that reflect God's love to our community and shepherd our resources responsibly. This is your church, you lead it!

Installation of new Members & book hand out – Fr. John Installation of new vestry members will be during coffee hour on Zoom, Sunday, February 21, 2021, from noon to 1:00.

Consent Agenda explanation discussion – Sig We get all committee reports a week before vestry meeting that includes: Finance, Treasurer, Building and Grounds, Evangelism Outreach and Mission. Reports are sent out to all members before meeting and asked for consent before meeting. If there is a question, we ask for them to be removed from consent agenda before approval. Finance Report goes out under separate cover. Vestry Agenda goes out Thursday before Monday's meeting.

Rector Report -- Fr. John

COVID numbers are fluid. Dona Ana is in the yellow.

The positivity rate is below 5%. The Diocese has limited potential to worship with no more than 25% in building with 6 ft distancing per family unit. The limit is 6 family units in church to open limited service.

Discussion about what constitutes a family unit for seating purposes in the church. These are members of a family that live under the same roof. Further discussion if two services (8:00 and 10:30) with limited seating would be possible. Rick, Sig, and I have been discussing how to live stream one of the services instead of pre-recording it. There was one concern raised re: cleaning the church between services. Fr. John will check on this.

It was asked when we could begin limited worship service. Fr. John felt that the soonest could be the 28th because we needed to get volunteers lined up for services. Phil motioned that we open for limited worship, Nyeta seconded, and motioned passed to open for limited worship.

This Sunday will still have Eucharist To-Go at 11:00.

Outdoor Sign - vestry will receive choices from Pat Lamb who is working on it.

Sr. Warden – Sig

Thank you, Dottie, Phil, and Mary for serving.

Check out Vestry Retreat Agenda. We will go over our mission and vision along with how coming out of COVID has changed our parish, etc.

The Annual Corporation Meeting following immediately after this meeting.

Jr. Warden - Lynn

- Sunday School maintenance ongoing.
- Tom Grimes to clean parish hall before 17th February.
- Lynn will be selecting her Assistant Jr. Warden.

Treasurers Report- Mary

- Reviewed 2021 Financial Summary

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Sig

- Building and Grounds
- Evangelism Outreach and Missions
- Finance – Cheryl, Phil, Sig, Pat L., and Mary members
- Stewardship – Jenn and Susan

Ad Hoc Committees

- Audit – this committee to be filled soon
- Nominating and Elections
- Personnel Committee – Dottie
- Pastoral Care
- Policy
- Safety Committee
- Hospitality Committee

Evangelism needs a committee member to chair. Think about it for March 6. Jenn concern is that it should be someone who knows how it run not just manage meetings. There was talk about bringing Terry back.

Sig said that a vestry member does not have to chair this committee. Discussion tabled to retreat meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Cemetery plots – Fr. John
- St James was bequeathed four 4 cemetery plots several years ago and they are still available for purchase. There are two together in the Good Shepard Section C Lot 71, spaces 1 and 2, as well as two more in spaces 5 and 6. They are valued at over \$4000.00 each, however, we are willing to sell these for \$1800.00 each. If interested, please contact Sig Johansen at 979 595-8209 or Nyeta Haines at 575 642-9640. We do have pictures and encourage any interested person to contact us. It is also possible to see them in person, if so desired. We have someone interested in buying two of the plots and have asked for a further discount on the second plot because they would be used for a veteran and disabled people. The prospective buyer is a highly active parishioner. Vestry decided that the interested party be asked to make a proposal on the second plot for consideration and vote. Nyeta will follow-up.
- Cleaning and purchase items for office – Fr. John
- Tentative plan for some time after Easter to clean the office and purchase items needed.
- Dedication of Parish Hall stained-glass window and library – Fr. John
- We would like to have a dedication in the Parish Hall for our new beautiful stained- glass window. If you have not been by to see it, contact Fr. John to come by and see it. Also, we planning to dedicate the library to Fr. Frank.
- The portrait of Fr. Frank has gone missing. If you have any information about this, please let Fr. John know.

NEW BUSINESS

Safeguarding Training – Luci

All vestry members must get their safeguard training 8 modules done as soon as possible.

Follow the 6 steps to begin the process. It takes 2-3 days. Send me your certificate as soon as you have completed all 8 modules. If you have questions, let me know.

Book study-Fr. John

Book study will begin at March 6 Vestry Retreat. Read: Conversations with Scripture: The Gospel of Mark by Marcus J. Borg, Chapter 1, Mark 1-3.

New members issued Vestry Resource Guide.

Sunday School Online - Luci

- The Sunday School program is 45 minutes long. Mary and I run it every Sunday. We get anywhere from 3 to 5 kids. We will be getting zoom details to Eric so he can post the Zoom information for anyone who wants or know of kids that want to join St. James Sunday School online.
- We use “Superbook” by the Christian Broadcasting Network which is available through YouTube Kids. The videos teach life lessons to the kids through bible-based stories. The stories are about 2 kids and their robot that are transported through time and experience bible adventures (old and new testament). The kids interact with the people of the era and witness God’s influence in man. Each journey is exciting and filled with a lot to discover. Most importantly, they find solutions that have positive outcomes.

Parochial Report – Nyeta

Nyeta and Fr. John went over the Parochial Report. Glenn motioned to approve the Parochial Report, Susan Seconded, and motion approved.

Approval of Signatories – Mary

Sr. Warden – Sig Johansen

Jr. Warden – Lynn Marshall

Vestry Member – Phil Benson

Vestry Member – Susan Smith

Nyeta moved to approve signatories, Glenn seconded, the motion passed for signatories listed above to serve as check signers for this year

Employee evaluations and covenants for 2021 – to be done when personnel committee meets.

ADJOURNMENT

Jenn moved to adjourn; Dottie seconded. The Vestry voted to adjourn the meeting and ending with recitation of The Lord’s Prayer at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Luci Kirkland, Vestry Clerk



March 2021 Birthdays

2	Mary Ancker	24	Rick Marshall
3	Mary Lou Arend	26	Ron Lerdal
4	Jody Wellborn	27	Louise Van Doran
9	Larry Pickett	29	Johanna Binneweg
18	Lucy Gray		
	Jeanne Lutz		

If your name is not listed and should be, please call the office (526-2389) and let us know.
We’d love to wish you a Happy Birthday!

St James Episcopal Church Financial Summary

FEBRUARY 2021

Citizens Bank Account Balances at the end of the month from Balance Sheet:

ACCOUNTS	FEB 2021	JAN 2021	DEC 2020
Operating Account	\$ 54,917.53	\$ 65,842.96	\$ 66,789.64
Restricted Account	\$ 54,388.90	\$ 52,888.90	\$ 52,319.54
Rector's Discretionary Fund	\$ 3,328.55	\$ 3,403.55	\$ 3,478.55

Operating Income and Expense Summary for the month:

	Current Month	Current Mo. Budget	Year to Date	Year to Date Budget	Annual Budget
Pledge/Plate Income	11,606.06	10,950.00	23,638.10	26,535.00	148,333.00
Other Income	42.26	0.00	42.26	0.00	20,163.00
Expense	- 22,573.75	-16,170.38	-36,552.47	-32,840.76	-202,689.42
Variance	-10,925.43	- 5,220.38	-12,872.11	-6,305.76	-34,193.42

Restricted Account with Entries

ACCOUNT	Beginning Balance	Transfer of Funds	Income	Expense	Ending Balance
Mission and Outreach	5,811.34				5,811.34
Memorial Fund	16,572.76		1,000.00		17,572.76
Organ-Piano Fund	1,331.16				1,331.16
Organ Fund	4,126.65				4,126.65
Building Fund	6,908.07		500.00		7,408.07
BLDG – PH Windows	1,871.89				1,871.89
BLDG – PH Interior Refurb	8,803.76				8,803.76
BLDG – Sunday School Room	4,491.45				4,491.45
Flowers for Altar	1,960.23				1,960.23
Rector Discretionary Fund	3,408.18		125.00	-200.00	3,333.18
Vestry Designated Fund	29,999.28				29,999.28

Fair Share Information

FAIR SHARE	Current Month
Total Income (Operational + Restricted)	\$ 13,273.32
Total Exclusions	\$ 1,625.00
Net Disposal Income	\$ 11,648.32
Fair Share Paid for Reported Month	\$ 1,834.61

Sunday Evening Walking Club

Several parishioners have mentioned loss of facilities or opportunities for exercise. Several people have suggested a walking club. The general suggestion is to start 2 hours before sunset. As the days are getting longer & Daylight Savings starts Sunday, 14 March, we'll begin with a start time of 5:15pm. Through the end of April, we can meet at Fr. John's house, 2006 Breeze Ln, and walk in twos or threes (due to social distancing requirements) on routes ranging from 1 mile to 6.3 miles. Breadcrumb maps and bottled water will be provided, if needed. We'll plan to move to another location beginning on 2 May to explore another part of town.

Holy Week Services

We're planning to hold outdoor services to celebrate Holy Week; hopefully the virus cooperates. The plan right now is to hold a 10:30 service on the west lawn of the church for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, and evening services for the Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil, at 6pm. If all goes according to plan, palms will be distributed, the Passion read, and Eucharist celebrated on Palm Sunday. Maundy Thursday will feature a Eucharist and stripping of the altar. Good Friday will be a service of solemn collects (e.g., no Eucharist). The Easter Vigil will be an abbreviated service of lessons and collects, renewal of baptismal vows, and Eucharist. Finally, our Easter Sunday service will be held at 10:30, as well Services will also be pre-recorded and posted to Facebook, YouTube, and our website for people with concerns about congregating, and "Eucharist to Go" will be offered on Sundays 9-10am, as well.

Hillcrest Memorial Gardens Cemetery Plots

St James was bequeathed four 4 cemetery plots several years ago and they are still available for purchase. There are two together in the Good Shepard Section C Lot 71, spaces 1 and 2, as well as two more in spaces 5 and 6. They are valued at over \$4000.00 each, however, we are willing to sell these for \$1800.00 each. If interested, please contact Sig Johansen at 1 979 595-8209 or Nyeta Haines at 575 642-9640. We do have pictures and encourage any interested person to contact us. It is also possible to see them in person, if so desired.

Saint of the Month

The Morning Star of the Reformation John Wycliffe

That's what he's called; also the "evening star of the middle ages" because he taught philosophy, and some of his ideas are still taken seriously. He was a professor at Merton College in Oxford in 1340. Later he was given a parish near Oxford, so that he could get into town easily. They say he had rooms at Queens College, but though I studied there I never heard about it.

Wycliffe lived through some pretty rough times. The pandemic of the bubonic plague hit England in 1348, and they didn't have vaccines; it's estimated that it killed a third of the population. Many felt that it was a punishment for the sins of the people; no, said Wycliffe, the reason for this plague is the wealth and arrogance of the clergy. That was the fundamental with which his criticism of the church started; he saw clergy as money-grubbers, Popes as claiming an authority God had never given them, and monks—especially the Franciscans, who preached—as simply phony.

In fact Wycliffe didn't believe the church had any right to property at all. He felt it should give all its possessions up and that priests should live as poor men—and later, when he sent "clergy" out to spread his views, he sent them out poor. (In fairness, we have to say he didn't practice this himself, though I'm sure he didn't live luxuriously.)

He encountered all sorts of opposition of course. He was brought to trial, papal condemnations were issued and so forth. But he had a lot of wealthy laymen on his side, especially one John of Gaunt, the king's brother who, essentially, ran the kingdom. Besides, his idea of the governance of the church helped; he believed it should be kept in order by the king. This strikes us as odd, but in that day most people felt kings ruled by divine right, and some extended it to ruling the church. Anyway, English royalty would tend to back Wycliffe;

But if Pope and clergy weren't to be listened to, where did doctrine come from? Why, from scripture of course! Scripture was the source of all truth. Therefore it was important that scripture be placed in the hands of the laity, and Wycliffe initiated the project of translating the Bible. There's some uncertainty over how much of this work he actually did; tradition said that he translated the Gospels. In any case it was due to him that it got done, and this was the first time in a good many years.

Not that we could understand it. The translation was into the "Middle English" of the fourteenth century. But in its time it caught on like wildfire. It was updated from time to time, and Wycliffe sent men out to preach from it. They were mostly laymen but Wycliffe called them "poor priests"; given his beliefs about clerical authority, consecration naturally wouldn't mean anything to him.



The Pope, in his bulls condemning Wycliffe, gave these people the name, “Lollards.” I don’t know what means, but it’s not a compliment. (Does it mean people who hang around without getting any decent work done?) Anyway they proudly adopted the name and it was passed on. Two hundred years later, when Henry VIII had his famous fight with the Pope, there were still Lollards around, and I’m sure they approved.

But which doctrines was Wycliffe against? A lot that many people today would question. He said there was no Purgatory—well, maybe there is and maybe there isn’t, but belief in it was a swell fund-raise. And you mustn’t pray to saints—so there wasn’t any reason for going on expensive pilgrimages. And clerical celibacy wasn’t a good idea—and considering the hash that some priests made—and some still make—of it, perhaps he had a point. And the real church is invisible; it consists of the people who are predestined to salvation, and of no one else. That one horrifies me, but one can see why he felt that way.

And now for the real sticker; Wycliffe didn’t believe that Christ is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Well OK, the clergy were certainly using the doctrine of the Eucharistic Presence as a way of gaining power, but I don’t care; the Presence is extremely important to me, and I feel that scripture teaches it. And the public opinion of the fourteenth century agreed.. Wycliffe lost the support of John of Gaunt, and of most of his backers, when he came out with that.

But by that time he was a bit too prominent to harm. In his lifetime he was not declared a heretic. He had a stroke while saying Mass on Holy Innocents Day 1402, and died two days later. After his death a synod did declare him heretical and they dug up his body, burned it and threw the ashes in the river. I doubt that bothered him.

–Fr. Frank



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to show us how to be
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human race. He came
to show us how to
realize God’s dream,
God’s purpose, God’s
plan for us and for all
creation. ”

—Bishop Michael
Curry



St. James' Holy Eucharist
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