



Dear Friends:

As I write, we are preparing for the light, the Christ who is the savior of the world to be born. Like so many people, I feel as though I cannot wait any longer. Yet, I know that I should not try to get ahead of God's unveiling of the mystery of what the new light might bring this year. It is safe to say that we all want an end to the loss of life and economic hardships that this pandemic has caused friends, family, and strangers all over the globe.

I find myself wanting all of that, and so much more. I want to see an end to fear of being afraid to love the stranger as ourselves, an end to thinking that anyone can say what they want even though it may hurt another, I want us to learn to live with others who think differently than we do, I want justice for all people, I want healthy, affordable food for people to eat, I want us to move toward healthy living that leads to wellness, I want clean air to breathe and water to drink everywhere, and I want love, abundance and creativity to start to dominate our lives.

These things are possible with God's help, and with the coming of the Christ child we are reminded that this is why we gather in community, we partake of Holy Communion, and we stay together even though we may have differences. The thing I want the most this Christmas is for you to be the first in line to say: "How can we get there; how can we help make all of this happen?" Let us believe that the light of Christ is truly coming into the world and with God's help we can continue to grow as a community of faith that changes the world. When Mary said yes to the Angel Gabriel, she was saying yes to peace, joy, hope and love. So, let us too say yes, with every fiber of our being.

May God bless and keep you and your family this Christmas,

Kim+

## Wardens' Christmas Message

We have had an Advent season like no other we have ever known. As we prepare to celebrate the 12 days of Christmas, our world, our communities, and our lives are significantly reshaped and re-imagined in the midst of the challenges of the pandemic. There is much from our traditional Christmas observances that we will miss. But, with God's help, we can look to new possibilities and new traditions.

Advent is the Beginning, the season of anticipation, of waiting and hoping and preparing. We wait for God to send divine love and light into our dark world. As we prayed, lighting the candle that first week of Advent: *Every week in the season of Advent, we will light another candle. Each candle that we light will remind us that Christ, the Light of the World, will soon come to us.* We have seen this light in the everydayness of our lives together—and in the responses we make when our parish community and the communities we live in are experiencing the darkness of isolation and upheaval. We, the St. James congregation, are the light; and it is being seen by the people in the region as we collaborate with area churches to feed the homeless, generously insure that families in our community have gifts to open at Christmas, and when we deliver pumpkin bread to our Owl Lunch patrons. We come together against this darkness; we make every effort to be the example that lets the light of Christ shine through.

In this season of hope and expectation, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who participate in the St. James community for a world of good. Wishing you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year!

Mary and Kathy, Co-Wardens

**Merry Christmas!**

## Finances

The vestry and finance committee have been very busy planning for the 2021 budget year and reviewing the 2020 budget. Despite all of the changes that have occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our “little church with the red doors” has remained “open” to serve our church family and the surrounding community. Online services have become the new normal for now. While many of us long for our in-person worship, St. James has been able to continue to provide a weekly church service to our parish membership. We are in fact ahead of other parishes in the diocese in this regard. We remain connected. We have developed a closer relationship with Grace Episcopal Church through our Holy Friendship. We have also been involved in collaborative efforts with Christ Church in Norwich and St. David's in Gales Ferry.

Financially, we continue to show our perseverance, despite many obstacles. We have been good stewards with our money. We are current in our bills. We were able to meet our financial obligations without having to take funds from our endowment, which has allowed those investments to continue to grow and at the end of November, the endowment had fully recovered its original value at the end of 2019. Our proactive practices have kept our finances on stable ground. Due to the generosity of a few folks who have given more than they pledged, we met the pledge amount for 2020. If everyone is able to pay their 2020 pledge in full, we will be able to end the year without using the loan and will have enough funds to begin 2021 with adequate cash on hand. Our goal has been to be as fiscally responsible as possible while staying consistent with our worship and outreach, and we are meeting that goal due to your faithfulness.

As we move forward into the New Year, there remain many unknowns. What we do know is that St. James Episcopal Church in Preston is a resilient church. We will require the time, talents, and treasure of each of us in order to continue to do the work that God has given us to do for the benefit of all.

I wish you and your loved ones all the blessings of this holy season!

Faithfully yours,  
Lisa, Treasurer

## Stewardship

Stewardship is one of the many traditions at St. James that is in transition. We still give back to the church those gifts with which we have been blessed, but it now takes a more discerning eye to see the work our gifts will lift into the light. We once took for granted the investment in a coat of fresh paint or the placing of a new sign. These things still happen, thanks to you; but they're harder to see. What's even harder to see is the work your gifts do out in the world where God is calling us. The time you volunteer and the financial gifts you pledge not only support the operation of our church, but lift up community programs. Together, with Preston Boy Scouts and their annual food drive, we stock the shelves of our local food pantry and feed our neighbors. Your dedicated giving supports ongoing programs to support the food insecure in the greater Norwich Area as well. St. James, in partnership with Grace Church and Christ Church, is now regularly engaged in feeding those who would go without a Sunday meal were it not for your generosity.

When we look closely at the work God has given us to do out in the world, we see the goodness of our gifts. In these times, we recognize the needs we work to fulfill sometimes outweigh our resources. The vestry and clergy of St. James ask all parishioners to reflect on the importance of our work and prayerfully consider pledging an amount you feel is right.

As 2020 draws to a close, we hope every effort has been made to complete outstanding pledges for this year. If you have already sent in your 2021 pledge card, thank you. If you are still considering your pledge, please do so before the end of the year so we can begin to imagine what we as a congregation can do to care for others and be a beacon of light for the world around us.

Bob  
Stewardship Chair

### **Episcopalians Provide Norwich Community Luncheon**

On Christ the King Sunday, the Holy Friendship parishes of Grace Church, Yantic and St. James Church, Preston along with Scout Troop 75 and Christ Church, Norwich provided 120 meals for the Norwich Community Luncheon. This is a Sunday meal provided weekly in rotation by churches and charitable organizations for the homeless and working poor of the Greater Norwich Region at St. Vincent de Paul Place, the Norwich area's largest soup kitchen, food pantry, and center for advocacy. With the region's COVID-19 cases spiking, participants divided up the effort, each providing a piece that could be assembled safely by a few people who could socially distance during the process. Gluten-free meals were assembled by Troop 75 (outdoors!), water and fruit were provided by Christ Church, and all of it was delivered to Grace where a small team from the Holy Friendship and Christ Church Norwich assembled the main meals and delivered them to Community Luncheon distributors at St. Vincent de Paul Place.

Reducing the impact of food insecurity is a major ministry for the Holy Friendship, and both parishes have forged a solid relationship with St. Vincent De Paul Place. People suffering from poverty, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, come from every corner of the Greater Norwich region, including Preston and Yantic, for meals and to get food for their households from the pantry. Before the pandemic, the Norwich Community Luncheon served about 70 meals on a Sunday; now the need has almost doubled. In the gospel reading for the Sunday this lunch took place, both parishes heard Jesus' invitation to serve those suffering from hunger and thirst: "...just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."



Scoutmaster/Vestry member Bob & Grace Yantic Senior Warden Judie bring all the parts together.

### **Nomination for Vestry Members**

Every year at our Annual Meeting we elect new members to the vestry. In 2021, our Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 31, immediately following the 9:00 AM service. At our 2020 meeting we voted to move the Annual Meeting to January. If you would like to serve on the vestry or would like to nominate a member of the parish, please contact Rev. Kim at the church office. Jan and Wendy are co-chairs of the nominating committee and will be meeting again with Kim+ in early January.

### **New London Homeless Hospitality Center**

Thanks to everyone who added some cleaning equipment to the considerable heap we put together for the New London Homeless Hospitality Center. We house dozens and dozens of people experiencing homelessness all over Southeast CT, and the majority of them go into their new houses with nothing. Your generosity will go a long way toward making their new house a home!

Thank you! Deacon Ron



### **Preston Parks & Recreation Youth Services Advisory Board**

The Youth Services Advisory Board has invited Rev. Kim to be a member of the board serving as the private youth servicing agency representative. Kim is looking forward to serving the community of Preston and perhaps learning more about how the community of St. James might support the efforts to meet the needs of youth in Preston.



Thank you Sylvia, Sue and Jan for making delicious pumpkin bread for our OWL friends.



**Adopt-a-Family Giving Tree**

We did it again, and on short notice! One family with four children and other teens will have a wonderful Christmas because of your generosity. Thank you. We give special thanks to Cindy for coordinating the effort and for Phil (Santa) for delivering the gifts. It is a wonderful time of the year and it is especially important this year for these families to know that people care about them. The St. James community does mighty things!



**Ready for Christmas**

Members of the congregation gathered early in December to adorn the outside of St. James for Christmas. We wanted everyone who drives past the church to be reminded that the coming of the Christ would happen even though we need to gather in a different way this year. Thanks go to Jan, Ed and Elaine, Tara, Ken and Seth, Phil, Michael and Bob, and Kurt for decorating the church and enhancing the lighting. A special thanks to Flemings Feed and Hardware for donating the two Christmas trees that are placed on either side of the red doors. Elaine reported that people were honking their horns as they passed by. I think we all need a whole lot of Christmas this year!



### Andrew Robert Cannon

July 22, 1965 - December 13, 2020

Andy, as we know him so fondly, left this earthly life unexpectedly on Sunday evening, December 13, after having visited his father, The Rev. David L. Cannon earlier in the day. A service for his immediate family was held at St. James on December 19. Somehow it was befitting that our sacred space, a space that his father, David, had celebrated and preached in for so many years and a space that has been held in God's hand for so many months during the pandemic was blessed for a few hours for this solemn occasion. In the spring, the family will have a celebration of his life. Friends throughout the area will gather and we will be able to share stories and our love of him. As I prepared for the service, I heard about Andy's humbleness and his ability to inspire children at St. James when he was a young man, adults in his work life, and people in organizations where he volunteered his time. As I listened, I began to understand that Andy was his father's son. Andy was as we are called to be, a part of the royal priesthood who exercised his faith everywhere he went. Please pray especially for his wife, daughters, and sister, niece and great niece and other family members and friends. I give God thanks that I had the privilege to have met him. May Andy rest in peace eternal.

Kim+

### St. James Staff

The Rev. Kim J. Litsey, Priest in Charge

Deacon Ron Steed

Bill Day, Bookkeeper | Office Hours: Tuesday 9a to 2p

Dawn Perras, Office Coordinator

Office Hours: M-T-W 9a to 2p

Office: 860.889.0150

Myra Day, Organist

If you would like to be taken off our directory, contact the church office. Thank you.

Follow us on Facebook at: @St.JamesEpiscopalPreston  
Sunday Worship Service - 9:00 am on Facebook Live  
or on Zoom

ECCT link for regional information:

<https://www.episcopalct.org/>

With current COVID-19 updates:

<https://www.episcopalct.org/covid-19-coronavirus-updates/>



We are still accepting donations of non-perishable food, hygiene & cleaning products. Please leave contributions in the foyer of Punderson Hall. Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

Donations support: St. Vincent de Paul Place, the New London Homeless Hospitality Center, & the Preston Food Pantry.

### Yarn Ministry

We are looking for more scarves, soap sacks, hats, and 7" by 9" sections that will be made into blankets. All donations will go to St. Vincent de Paul Place and the New London Homeless Hospitality Center. For more information, please email Marie Perrin at:

**st.james.parish.yarn.ministry@gmail.com**

If you do not knit or crochet but want to help by donating yarn, we're looking for acrylic 4-ply yarn in any color.

