

The Vine and Branches

SAINT JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DILLON, MONTANA

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Nov. Dec. 2020

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I am so excited about this issue of the Vine and Branches! It is full of input from our parishioners. Just goes to show what an interesting group we are. The holidays are in the works, of course our celebrations will be quite different than we are accustomed to. But wonderful all the same. Limited social distancing and Facebook or Zoom get togethers will be the norm. Not to worry. Everyone will make it work. St. James is a very resilient parish, especially in this time of restrictions.

Happy holidays as we share the most wonderful celebration of life, hope and belief.

Carol Meacham

TREASURER'S CORNER

Our net income from January-September 2020 is \$6,109. The budgeted amount for the same time period is \$15,108. The difference is \$8,999.

We are under budget on revenue, mostly because we have not had to draw as much from our investment account as anticipated. We are under budget on pledge income \$1,580, which is offset by an increase in plate receipts of \$1,732. We also took advantage of the PPP loan program, which provided cash for some operating costs and payroll expenses.

Total operating expenses through 9/30/2020 are lower than budget. This, along with the PPP loan, has helped St. James keep disbursements from our investment account below budget. As of Sept. 30th, we were 75% through the year and have expensed 66.54% of total budgeted expenses. If giving continues as it has this year and we can continue to decrease expenses, we should be at or above break even income for the calendar year.

Keeping your pledge current has helped us stay healthy financially in these difficult times. Thank you!

Kay Roach, Treasurer

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

DON'T FORGET—As you do online shopping **REMEMBER Amazon Smile.**

When you order eligible products from Amazon, you can designate St. James Dillon to receive a charitable donation of 0.5% of the purchase price from Amazon. You must sign in at **smile.amazon.com.**

Select your charity: St. James Episcopal Church.

Generate donations for St. James starting with your next Amazon purchase.

Every little bit helps!



Dates to Remember

Morning Prayer every Sunday at 10 am.

Theology on Tap at the Brewery Sundays at 4 PM.

Vestry meeting Sunday Nov. 15 at 11 am.

Vestry meeting Sunday Dec. 20 at 11 am.

Christmas celebration—details to be announced.

RBC WEALTH MANAGEMENT REPORT

October 8th was the date of our semi-annual meeting with Brandon Costly, our RBC Wealth Management Advisor. Brandon reviews our Salsbury Endowment fund with the Vestry and interested parishioners. Our endowment fund recovered from the approximately 40% downturn that affected most investment accounts in March. The fall was due to market uncertainty in the face of Covid 19. Stocks in the technology sector dominated the market recovery. Brandon believes we are still in a bull market, although the market will remain volatile in the short-term. Our account is rebalanced every month to keep a balance of 60% equities and 40% fixed income.

I will let you know in advance of the next meeting so you can put it on your calendar and plan to attend.

Kay

ALTAR GUILD NEWS

As Altar Guild members, we have responsibilities that we do each week. We prepare the altar for Sunday Eucharist and any other services that are scheduled throughout the year. We order altar flowers for each Sunday.

We always welcome new members! If anyone is interested in joining the Altar Guild, please contact Ellen Daugherty -925-2873, or Jane Howard 683-2807.

Jane Howard, Chairman

CHRISTMAS

The Vestry is working hard on the plans for our Christmas Eve celebration. They will be decorating earlier this year so we get the full benefit of our beautiful church ready for the birth of the Christ child.

Once everything is finalized we will let you know the details so you can make plans to celebrate this most blessed of events.



VESTRY

How many of you would like to feel good about yourself? How about feeling you are helping other people? Helping your church? Staying connected with God? Giving of yourself for 36 hours within a 3 year period.

We are trying to compile a list of names of parishioners who would like to add their name to a list of potential Vestry members for next year. I know it is a little early, but a few Vestry members will have served their 3 years and will be going off in 2021 and we are thinking ahead for the annual meeting in January 2021.

St. James is a wonderful church because of all the Vestry members through the years who have made wise decisions for the good of all the congregation. I hope you will consider becoming part of our Vestry. It is only one hour a month for meetings, but a whole lot of “feeling good” in your heart.

Thank you,

Lee Graves 660-01919

Alyce Wassall 925-0121

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR DEACON...Deacon Steve

Greetings my Sisters and Brothers in Christ. The heart of my message is short. I miss you. I miss every one of you, and I miss St. James, my church. It has been many weeks since I greeted you last. Many months since I have seen your faces, talked with you and been in your midst. It has been a long time since I walked through our church doors and readied the sanctuary for a Sunday morning service. It has seemed forever since I walked downstairs to the quiet of my office. I hope it is still there. Things are different. Things are changing in our church and our world in ways we never could have guessed or imagined. But God is good, God is faithful, and God remains with us, never abandoning us, even in times of trouble, discord, uncertainty and fear, like now. And even through all of that, God still reminds me daily of you and our church. I miss you all. You are the church that raised me up when I heard God's call to the diaconate. You supported me, encouraged me and financed my journey. I will never forget you. I deeply regret that I never had the opportunity to offer so much as a goodbye when I so abruptly left, until now.

In the intervening weeks since we last met together, an opportunity came my way that I could not refuse. Our Bishop Marty Stebbins offered me leave from my regular diaconal duties here at St. James to do a research project on behalf of our Diocese lasting several months. This study was triggered by my 18-month long tenure on the Bishop Search Committee in 2017-2018. I have always had a passion for the continued life and work of our many small, rural Episcopal churches spread across our Diocese. Churches like St. James here in Dillon. My project involves evaluating the future presence, ministry and impact rural churches have on their members, clergy and the communities they serve. The result will be a documented paper of the project's findings, perhaps suitable for publication. But through all of this I have not forgotten you. I am grateful to our Bishop for allowing me to tell you in my own words why I am not there with you and what I am doing. I have no doubts you folks there "at home" are in good hands. I wish you all continued blessings at St. James in the months ahead and ask your prayers for my work while I am away. I continue to pray for you to be safe and well.

Peace and light,
Your Deacon Steve.



FELTING

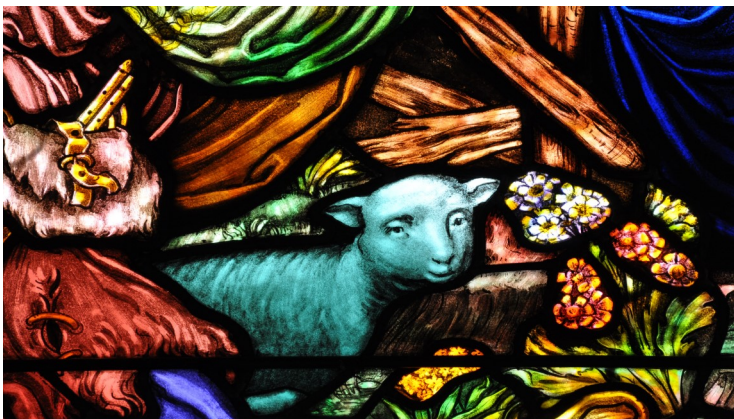
Some of you may know that I have always been a “crafty” person, enjoying sewing, needlepoint and knitting—not necessarily in that order. Recently I have been making felted tote bags. It is an interesting and fun project. First you knit a huge bag and wash it in very hot water with a couple of pairs of jeans, which provide the friction needed. It will felt down to a much smaller size and density. It is a pretty rough process, and usually takes more than one cycle to achieve the result you desire.

Yesterday, as I was finishing a bag, it came to me how the felting process is a lot like what has been going on at St. James lately. Think about it. We were all going along, enjoying our Sunday services and activities when 2 major things happened: First, the COVID 19 pandemic and then our priest’s retirement. Suddenly, our loose, casual congregation was plunged into “hot water”. Wonderfully, everyone has joined together and we are all working to keep our parish active and safe.

The result is a very strongly knit community of loyal parishioners. I think you can look at us as being “felted”, a difficult and often painful process—but worthwhile as is evident in the end result. St. James is open, welcoming and resilient.

Don’t you agree?

Carol



CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS!!!!

As we continue to plan our services, it has become apparent that we need more help in the form of worship leaders, lectors, acolytes, greeters and members of the altar guild. If you would like to explore these rewarding opportunities, please contact our Senior Warden, *Lee Graves*:

bannack2@yahoo.com

406-660-1919

*No matter what you face in
life.....*

Don't let go of God's hand.