

Saint James' Parish

95 ROUTE 2A (POQUETANUCK), PRESTON, CT 06365

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Website: <http://www.stjamespoquetanuck.ctdiocese.org>

The Reverend Canon David L. Cannon, Vicar Emeritus

The Reverend Ronald J. Kolanowski, Vicar

The Reverend Ronald S. Steed, Deacon

Kathy Buck & George Warner, Wardens

283rd Annual Report

of the 283rd Annual Parish Meeting

held on June 4, 2017 at 11:00 am

at St. James Church, 95 Route 2A, Preston, Connecticut



BISHOP SAMUEL SEABURY MEMORIAL WINDOWS

As installed in St. James' Church July 2015

Circa 1870's "Christ the Good Shepherd"

Dedicated to the Memory of Samuel Seabury and in Honor of The Rev. Canon David L. Cannon, Vicar Emeritus of St. James Church for his 50+ years of service to the Southeast Connecticut communities

**MINUTES OF THE
St. James Parish "282nd" Annual Parish Meeting
Punderson Hall**

June 12, 2016

Worship 10:00 AM

Business Meeting: 11:00 AM, Presiding Wardens: George Warner & Kathy Buck
Call to Order the "282nd" Annual Meeting 42 parish members present

1. Voting list reviewed: Asked "Are there any corrections to the voter's list" Mary
Bawza

Motion to approve voter's list second and carried
Parish Clerk

2. Minutes of the 281st Annual Parish meeting (06/12/15) read Mary
Bawza

Motion to accept the minutes of the "281st" Annual Parish Meeting
Parish Clerk
Seconded and carried

2. Wardens Report George
Warner

3. Clerk's Report Mary Bawza

4. Review of reports as printed, questions and answers St. James Parish
All reports were accepted as received by title

5. Report of the Nominating Committee

Departing vestry member John Perkins

Slate for the Vestry was discussed with the name of those who offered to take
the listed open positions

Are there any nominations from the floor? Asked 3 times

No other nominations: Nominations to be closed.

Motion to close nominations second and carried

Following a time of prayer, folks were asked to discern if they also felt a call to serve.

Elected:

Wardens: George Warden and Kathy Buck to continue as wardens

Clerk: Mary Bawza

Treasurer: Julie Perkins

Class of 2017: Peter Liebert, Julie Perkins and David Streeter

Class of 2018: Mary Bawza, Steve Holmberg and Gail Rigney

Class of 2019: Ray Litwin and Ian Sharpe

Diocesan Convention Representatives: Class of 2017: Ian Sharpe and Gail Rigney

Seabury Deanery Representatives class of 2017: Ian Sharpe and Sylvia Correia

6. Election of Parish Officers and Vestry Members, and Representatives to the Diocesan Convention

Moved to install, second and carried

7. Authorization of the newly elected Vestry members and Parish Officers, Delegates and Alternatives to the Diocesan Convention “To act on behalf of St. James until the next Annual Parish Meeting AD 2017

Moved to install, second and carried. Clerk cast 1 vote

Mary

Bawza

9. Other Business

Parishioners

Recognition and appreciation of parish member’s contributions to parish life

Closing Prayer

Adjourned at 12:20 PM

Yours in Christ. Mary Bawza , Parish Clerk

Vicar’s Report and Sermon June 4, 2017

Today we celebrate the feast of Pentecost. It is one of the most important feasts in the church year. It commemorates the event of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples and giving them power and authority to proclaim the gospel. The story of Pentecost comes to us in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles. In it we hear how the Spirit comes into the room like a strong wind and tongues as of fire descend on each person. Jesus’ followers are given the power and the strength to transcend their fears as they step out into the larger world to boldly proclaim the gospel, the good news of life and salvation given by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Up until this time they remained in the upper room locked away, afraid of what might come. Their focus was on security and safety. They did not have the power of the Spirit to open the doors and go out into the larger world with boldness and conviction.

The feast of Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Church. It is the starting point at which the apostles had the courage given by the Spirit to risk...to unlock the doors of the Upper Room and step out into the world. It was time to move forward, to damn the torpedoes, to go full steam ahead to do the work Jesus had given them to do regardless of the consequences. It is fitting we hold our annual meeting this year on the Feast of Pentecost, a time to celebrate the Body of Christ gathered for 283 years as St. James’ Parish North Groton that relocated to Poquetanuck in 1785.

The image of the Upper Room has always been a powerful one for me and it provides an apt metaphor for life. There are times for all of us when we must retreat to an upper room. We must steal away to a place of safety that helps us feel secure. I had that experience recently with my recovery from foot surgery. I had to simply retreat, to stop what I normally do and rest in order to heal. There were nights I actually slept 12 hours and I felt great waking up after that long sleep. Sometimes retreating to a place of security and safety is the most appropriate thing we can do. We need to do it when we have faced a major loss in our life, or a change that rocks our world. And, I have also come to know that

the Upper Room is not the place to live permanently. The Spirit bids us take risks...go places that are not comfortable, times filled with ambiguity and uncertainty.

And, our response is often “no, I don’t want to; I want to stay safe and secure exactly where I am. I don’t want the Holy Spirit to rush upon me like some powerful wind and dislodge me from the place where I am standing. I like things just the way they are, don’t make me change.”

However, my friends, the Holy Spirit doesn’t work that way. The Spirit is constantly moving where she will and she cannot be controlled.

I’m intentionally using the famine to describe the Holy Spirit in the original languages the word for Spirit are feminine not masculine. Our job is to constantly be alert to the movement of the Spirit and ask ourselves...where is the Spirit moving and calling us to join in that movement. This requires of us a posture of discernment.

There was a book written 30 years ago titled “Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community.” The book explores the themes of call, discernment, and community and how they relate one to the other. It is used by many dioceses and church groups to help individuals and communities discern what the Holy Spirit is up to in their individual and collective lives. The book invites us to pay attention to what is happening around and inside of us. The authors invite us to ask deep questions about the gifts we’ve each been given and how we might be called to use those gifts to benefit our various communities and grow spiritually in the process.

In 2008 through early 2010 this parish entered into a process of discernment. You did so at a time when the world around us was collapsing...the housing market crash of 2008 had a devastating effect on organizations throughout the country and indeed the world. St. James’ was no exception. That year your vicar Jackie Sheldon left following the horrific death of her beloved husband...with her departure the financial well-being of parish was dire. During this time a search committee was formed to find a new vicar to come to St. James’. One Sunday in the summer of 2009, I visited the church for services. Coffee hour had not ended by the time Val LaFleur had me signed up as a supply priest in the fall. After my time as supply priest, I was given audio-tape called “God Stories”, in which some of you shared openly the most intimate spiritual experiences and struggles of your lives. There was honesty about the deep faith and trust in God on your part. Because of those stories and particularly the one shared by Ellen Browne, I thought I may be called to come here. As the search committee and vestry did its work, it became abundantly clear that they wanted to call a pastor who would help stabilize the parish. I felt I could offer my gifts in that endeavor. My goal was to help us realize we had enough and *more than enough* to be God’s people in this corner of CT. Working together we’ve learned that God does have a future for us.

The process of discernment is also very much alive among many of you as well. The call of the Holy Spirit to do something new touches us in ways that we cannot anticipate or imagine. For example, during the past 15 years Heidi Magro has faithfully served as a Sunday school teacher and coordinator. Much of her time was spent with our teens, a ministry shared with her dear friend Steve Ducharme. Following Steve’s death in 2011, Heidi discerned that she needed to step back for a while from the parish. She took up

children's ministry again in 2014 and had been a coordinator with Tara Hurt until Tara stepped down last year. This year Heidi discerned that the Spirit is calling her into new ministries and has stepped down as Sunday school coordinator. She has done this work with a great love for all our children and we owe her a huge debt of gratitude. The vestry would like to show its appreciation by presenting her with a gift basket. It is merely a token of our esteem and thanks on behalf of our children, families and the entire St. James' community.

Our new deacon Ron Steed never imagined that he would be joining St. James' as his first assignment following ordination. Yet, the Spirit has brought him to us as we discern new directions for mission and ministry. Others in the parish are discerning a call for healing ministries which is also part of Deacon Ron's calling with us. The Litwins have discerned a call to help build up the community in Hebron and have heeded a call by the Holy Spirit to join the people of St. Peter's in that work.

On this Pentecost Sunday we are reminded of the power of the Spirit...that the breath of God will move where it will, taking us ever deeper into the heart of God. So, the question for all of us on this feast of God's Holy Spirit is "What now? What is God calling us to do? Who is God calling us to be as individuals and as a community to advance God's work of restoration and reconciliation? Is it time to leave some Upper Room where we've been safe and secure and risk opening a door and stepping out into something new, something unplanned and filled with surprise? May each of us have the courage to honestly discern what God's Holy Spirit is up to and the work that lies ahead for each and everyone of us on our journey...a journey that one day will lead all of us directly back to the Heart of God forever.

Saint James' Wardens' Report

Dear Friends,

As I prepared to write this report, I went back in time and read over Warden's Reports for the last 20 years. My God!... What an incredible journey we've shared together! Just the opening paragraphs alone paint a picture of where we were over the years, within the many chapters of our Saint James' Love Story. Here are just a few:

Year 2000

"One year ago we gathered together just as we are now for our Parish's Annual Meeting. And for the first time in thirty-five years we faced the future without a Vicar. Do you remember how you felt? Scared? Uncertain? We weren't even sure who would continue coming to church and who wouldn't. But still, we were confident in one thing: our Love for one another and our trust in the Lord. We were beginning a journey of faith together."

Year 2010

"Last years Warden's Report (6th annual Lu-Philosophy) began with: "In 2009 Saint James' parish entered into a year of doubt, skepticism and fear of what was in God's Plan for Saint James' this year." Do you remember how you felt? Scared? Uncertain? All the doubts we had: Would we survive as a parish? Could we afford a priest?"

“What a difference a year makes! If ever we needed reassurance of God’s unconditional love for us – we have it now in Father Ron. We kept the faith. We pulled together. We managed despite the shrinking attendance, the dwindling pledges and the seemingly impossible task of running a parish without a priest.”

Year 2015

“Our Story is a Love Story,” is still the deepest and truest answer to the question: “Who are we at Saint James’ Parish, Poquetanuck?” It permeates and defines not only everything we do here at Saint James’, but more importantly, it defines how we do what we do. We simply and naturally do it with love. And when we put this love into action. Miracles great and small occur.”

The theme running through all of these is our **“Saint James’ Love Story.”** Our love of God, His Son, and all His Children, has carried us always...through the natural cycles of our Parish Life, the constant “refreshing” that is change and growth everywhere within the Wholeness that is God’s Miracle for us, our parish family, and all Creation.

It’s interesting that, though our numbers seem down in both the congregation and church school, our administrative and financial health is better than it has been in many years, thanks to Father Ron, and the Vestry’s faithful ministry of managing our affairs.

Within the newly formed ECCT Regional gatherings, our Saint James’ Parish is held up as a model for other parishes to emulate in our openness, inclusiveness, and willingness to collaborate with other parishes and share our strengths.

Like Kathy and I, and like many of you who have been a part of our Saint James’ Love Story long enough to have lived these cycles, we have known those “difficult and challenging times” as well as those times that seemed “all blessings.” This year, God’s Love has showered us with so many of those blessings, not the least of which is the addition of Deacon Ron to our parish family. God’s Love has also asked us to suffer much this year, as love often does. We do this together with God, as a caring Family. That is His strength within us multiplied by our love and faith in Him, and our love for one another.

Kathy and I, and our entire Vestry, are so very proud of you all, and who we are together, in this Little Wooden Church with its Big Heart, and its Open Front Door. God Bless you all, Kathy and George, Saint James’ Parish Wardens

Finance Report: Living by Faith and Not by Sight

Unlike 2015 when we needed to withdraw \$40,000 extra from the endowment to stabilize our operating finances, in 2016 we cut our draw from the endowment by 50%. In 2016 pledge receipts totaled \$99,785. Overall giving came in at \$113,823. In 2017 pledges came in at \$100,027. We budgeted on faith that pledge giving would increase and budgeted \$106,700. For the first four months of 2017, income exceeded expenses by \$2,785 with expenses for the year \$1,348 under budget.

Apart from actual finances we give special thanks to our bookkeeper Mr. Bill Day, who works diligently planning and guiding us to improve our processes. Funds raised for specific projects like capital improvements or other funded accounts on our balance sheet

outside of operations are now in a savings account and tracked separately to make sure they remain funded and are not confused with operating revenue.

Our auditor completed a 2015 audit letter that indicated one change needed to be made for two signatures of checks in excess of \$500. The vestry voted to make that change and a policy is in place for the two signatures. Lastly, we need to thank our treasurer Julie Perkins who has resigned her position to be with her fiancé at a new parish community. Julie has been a faithful member of our vestry since 2011 and we miss her caring spirit. Respectfully submitted, Fr. Ron Kolanowski

Clerk's Report

Since our last Annual Meeting in June 2016, we've had 3 Baptisms, 6 Funerals (Burials/Memorial Services, and one wedding. We had 85 Sunday services, and 13 home communion visits were delivered. Our average attendance on Sundays was 55, with 99 attending Easter services and 128 attended Christmas services. We sponsored 1 large family through the Christmas giving tree, and 7 Thanksgiving/Christmas baskets were given away. Respectfully in Christ, Mary Bawza

Worship

Following last year's Annual meeting the vestry decided to have one service in the summer at 9:00 a.m. This was well received by the parish and will continue for the summer of 2017. The vestry also contemplated having one service instead of two going forward. However, to do so would have made operating Sunday School difficult for families and teachers, so the plan was not implemented. Since Christmas Day fell on a Sunday this past year we held one service on Christmas morning which was fairly well received. We have truly been blessed with the addition of Deacon Ron Steed to our parish family in the spring of 2017. He brings great energy and enthusiasm to his ministry and this was especially evident during Holy Week and Easter this year. In an effort to continue collaborating with our area churches, we combined our efforts for Holy Week similar to last year. We joined Christ Church, members from Grace Church Yantic and St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Norwich for the Last Supper worship on Maundy Thursday. While attendance was slightly smaller than last year it was a wonderful gathering and reenactment of Jesus' last meal with his followers. Fr. Peter at Grace Church was unable to preside at the Easter Vigil this year due to illness so I offered to preside. The vigil brought together St. James' Poquetanuck and Grace Church for this most ancient of worship services held in Yantic. Deacon Ron sang the exultant and shared duties with Grace's deacon Scott Stephens.

For me the highlight of the week was the Good Friday service we hosted at St. James'. The traditional service which is sparsely attended (usually fewer than 15) was replaced with a youth-oriented and family-centered worship experience that took a walk through Holy Week. Some 50 youth and adults from St. James', St. David's, Covenant Presbyterian Church in Ledyard, DCF foster children, and youth from the ecumenical Emmaus group came together for this special service followed by lunch and the movie "Zootopia". With the help of Cathie and Ray Litwin as well as George and Wendy Warner and Peter Leibert, everyone was treated to a fish and chips luncheon just like the fish and chips dinners.

We continued our tradition of liturgical arts. Sandie Szocik who was recovering from a fall and broken arm faithfully created and restored the butterflies which are hanging in the mobile in the church. Myra Day created another quilt for Easter that features lilies and other flowers. Jan Harris and the altar guild team decorated the altar, while Gene Baker, Mary Streeter and Mike Moore helped throughout the week on various set-ups needed. Deacon Ron and I participated in the early morning sunrise service at Amos Lake and we had two services on Easter Sunday with our choir singing a lovely anthem at the 10:00 a.m.

Sadly, the prominent place that Holy Week used to hold for previous generations has largely been lost in our contemporary context. It is through collaboration and "trying on" new and creative ways to tell the central story of our faith that holds the potential for growth and passing on our tradition to our young people and another generation.

I give thanks for all those who participate in worship as readers, at the altar, singing, leading prayers, providing flowers or creating artwork. What I am most grateful for is the generosity and trust given by this congregation to allow us to "try things on", while maintaining our traditional forms of worship. Not all parishes are as open as the people of St. James' to trying new ideas or forms of worship.

Respectfully submitted, Ron Kolanowski, Vicar

Altar Guild Report

It is with much regret that I must announce the resignation of Cathie Litwin. She has been a very dedicated member of the altar guild and has taken meticulous care of our altar linens. I wish her well in her new parish; they will be very blessed to have her join them along with her husband Ray.

Thank you to everyone who helped decorate for Christmas and Easter. There were many helpers this year. A special thanks to Ed and Elaine Hess who hung the greenery which is not an easy task. Thanks to Ben Engler for wrapping all the pansies in foil for Easter and to Sandie Szocik for the awesome job of making the butterflies for the mobile. We appreciate Calista Green for the large Paschal candle in memory of her granddaughter, Ivy Green. Thanks go to Sylvia Correia for the beautiful flower arrangements for the altar. I appreciate all the work the altar guild team does to keep things ready for Sunday services. I'm so happy to have Mary Streeter back to polish the brass.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Harris

Organist / Music Report

We are so blessed at St. James' with our small but mighty pipe organ. It graces our ears with beautiful, melodic tones and I am very privileged to play it for you! Both the organ and the piano are well maintained. The piano is tuned as needed by Doghouse Piano Tuning. The organ is tuned twice a year, prior to Easter and Christmas, by Alan McNeely and his company. Alan comes quickly to repair the organ when notified of problems.

Speaking of the organ, it stopped working in the middle of a hymn on a Sunday prior to Easter. Of course, when that happened, everyone stopped singing and looked at me, wondering what happened! I played the piano for the remainder of the service.

Alan responded within a day to look at the problem with the organ. A large valve that goes between the blower and the pipes had broken. It turns out that the part dated back to

1948 or so. Alan replaced the valve and spent at least a day taking out the old one and installing the new one.

Our holiday choir sings gloriously as they perform our anthems for Easter and Christmas each year. We rehearse the anthem for at least four weeks in advance. Mike LaFleur accompanies us with his guitar, and we are most grateful for him and his talent! We really enjoyed singing our Christmas and Easter anthems during the past year. I am so grateful for the members of our choir for sharing their time and talent with us. We welcome anyone who would like to join us for these occasions. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!
Respectfully Submitted, Myra Day

Children and Youth Ministries

Children and Youth Ministries

As many of you know, the St James Church School program is in transition this year. With the retirement of several long-term staff members last year and a decrease in the number of families with young children attending St James, the time has come to reevaluate our traditional program and make plans for the future.

Seeing the need for continuity in the SJCS program, Heidi Magro took on the leadership role for fall 2016. Melissa Loizou continued to assist with programming, music production, classroom management, craft projects and all other aspects of the program. Wendy Warner and Gail Rigney also stepped in to assist as both are Safe Church Certified and have many years of experience working with children.

When Miss Heidi announced her retirement in December, Miss Gail and Miss Wendy took on the task of consistently staffing the weekly gathering. We thank Miss Heidi for her generosity, hard work and dedication to SJCS and are delighted with her occasional visits to the program.

A critical element of the SJCS program, Mike LaFleur provides acoustic music each week with Val LaFleur stepping in to assist with vocals as needed. The excitement always ramps up when Mr. Mike walks in carrying his guitar. Within minutes, children and staff become fully engaged with singing simple verses and employing rhythm instruments.

SJCS Objectives:

- Children are learning the basic precepts of the gospel through fellowship and developing an ability to speak to others about their understanding of God.
- Curriculum is dynamic and tailored to suit the needs and interests of our small group. 2016-2017 sessions focused on Beatitudes and Mission, using the Serendipity Bible as a resource.

SJCS Activities:

- Thank-You Circle followed by Communion with congregation
- Intergenerational Coffee Hour with Christian/Folk Mini-Concert
- Music during Family Worship and at Communion
- Christmas Pageant - based on "Our Father" written by Ellen Browne
- Easter Egg Hunt & Festivities
- Liz Harris Memorial / Cannonball Run Tee Shirt Design – Since 2001

Accomplishments:

- Re-organized storage areas to have better inventory and access to materials.
- Installed two bulletin boards and a white board to share crafts, prayers and lessons.
- Safe Church Certification completed for all SJCS staff and volunteers.
- Improved communication with parish and staff
- Good Friday Children's Service organized by Father Ron was a huge success!

Goals:

- Evaluate feasibility of continuing with traditional SJCS program
- Investigate alternatives (ex: monthly Messy Church program)
- Increase Regional Collaboration (ex: Good Friday Children's Service)
- Provide timely and meaningful programs for children, youth and families

In love and light, Gail Rigney, Interim Church School Coordinator

2016-2017 Church School Staff:

Heidi Magro (Leadership thru Dec 2016)

Gail Rigney (Interim Leadership)

Wendy Warner (Children's Ministry)

Mike LaFleur (Music/Choral Ministry)

Melissa Loizou (Children's Ministry)

Member Care & Parish Life

BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY REPORT

June 2016 to May 2017

The bereavement ministry reaches out with love and comfort to those who have lost someone, especially in the first two years following the death. Most folks flock to and support someone who is grieving a loss, at the time of the loss. There is a great deal of activity and responsibilities that keep the grieving person "occupied and distracted." It seems to be around 3 months later when the flurry of activity has slowed in pace, and life must resume, that others often return to their own lives and problems and the mourner feels more alone as they continue to adjust to their loss and accept the changes it has caused in their life. The first year of loss is most difficult as the traditions and milestones are approached for the first time without that deceased person.

Initially, Fr. Ron is spending time and talking with the bereaved. When he feels it is the appropriate time, he will present them with the book *Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss*, as a gift from the St. James Parish family. It is a beautifully illustrated book by Pat Schwiebert, Chuck DeKlyen and Taylor Bills that affirms people who are bereaved, educates the un-bereaved and is a building block for children dealing with loss. Accompanying the book is a deeply-felt pastoral letter I developed that affirms the individual experience of the grieving process. Fr. Ron personalizes each letter before presenting the gift. Both he and I have received heartfelt notes of thanks expressing how the book helped them to feel less alone in their darkness and to know there is a "normalcy" to their overwhelming sadness. This past year he has gifted several books, often at the

funeral or memorial service, or shortly after the loss. We have received heartfelt notes of gratitude from folks expressing how helpful and supportive the book is for them.

At three months past the death, a personal hand written note is sent to the contact person: a spouse, child, relative, etc. This note expresses that the friends and/or fellow parishioners of St. James want them to know we are thinking of them and continue to hold them in our hearts and in our prayers as they continue their grief journey. It will specifically mention the name of the deceased. This note is signed by me on behalf of “pastoral care of St. James.” This note is sent in a small padded envelope along with a beautifully boxed sterling silver butterfly or angel bookmark, a list of on-line grief resources (developed by Brigham and Women’s Hospital Grief Study), and two tea bags marked for “quiet times.” We also include the flyer/information about the garden at Hospice in Norwich.

On the first birthday of the deceased following the death, the contact person(s) will receive a letter recognizing the birthday is approaching and that it may be a difficult time. This letter is also personalized and invites them to reach out to Fr. Ron or any of us in the SJC family and if not already doing so, to join us for services and fellowship where they would surely find comfort and understanding. Each letter will also include a list of suggestions of ways to recognize and celebrate the birthday. (developed by Hospice).

At the one year anniversary of the death, a printed note card is sent, again recognizing that the date is approaching and may be difficult. It is a lovely note card with a stamped collection of sea shells, with a pronounced scallop shell, that have washed onto the shore. (The scallop shell happens to be the symbol of St. James Church.) It encourages the bereaved to reflect and remember the love and light that the person brought to their lives and has left behind for them to cherish always. This is signed by pastoral care ministry of SJC. When appropriate, we also send a remembrance for the first wedding anniversary following the passing.

At two year anniversary, they receive an 8 x 11 meaningful poem, personalized with the name of deceased and dates of birth and death. At the end of the poem there is meaningful scripture. For the first two years following the death, we also send personalized letters of invitation to our annual Blue Christmas service.

This 12 month period we have sent out a total of 53 items of correspondence: 17 one-year anniversary of death, 7 first birthday following death, 21 two-year anniversary of death, 7 at 3 months past death, 1 wedding anniversary and 34 personalized invitations to our Blue Christmas service. This year we also sent out letters following the passing of Conor Irwin to parishioners who have also lost a child, to extend our compassion, prayers and understanding of how much more difficult this event was for them.

I feel privileged and honored to be entrusted with this ministry.
Respectfully and humbly submitted, Cathie Litwin

PARISH LIFE

We want to be present and available for one another in our parish community so let us know if you or anyone is going through a difficult patch, is in hospital, or could use a pastoral visit. Health care privacy laws prevent disclosure once someone is discharged from the hospital so it is important to be made aware of members in rehab or nursing

home. Please call Fr. Ron directly at 860-280-8526, or at church 806-889-0150. To email Fr. Ron directly on issues, please send your email to ronkol@sbcglobal.net.

OWL REPORT

OWL (Older and Wiser League, self-designated) has met now for three years running. The gathering has evolved into an even bigger and better group over the past year! Generally a group of 30-40 people are present on the second Thursday of each month. More and more of the attendees come from outside the parish which highlights the value and need for such a gathering. We enjoy a fun, relaxing time to share conversation, laughs, and build relationships. We invite “younger” folks (or those who *feel* younger), or those who are not able to participate in other avenues at the church, to contribute towards the carefree meal for the OWLS, who have served the church in various committees for a time, and for elders in the surrounding community. No one is expected to prepare the entire meal. A volunteer can offer any part of the meal: the entrée, bread, salad, or dessert, for one month. Also consider sharing the entrée or desert with a buddy. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the sunroom or speak with Sylvia 860-464-9995. If you like to cook but don't feel you are able to purchase the food, let us know. These can be very simple meals of soup and bread, casseroles, quiche, etc. You can drop off the food the day before and leave us instructions as to the preparation.

The December/ Christmas luncheon brings in 50+ diners for the gala holiday event. The meal this year were individually cooked Filet Mignon by acclaimed Chef Fr. Ron with side dishes by many generous participants and lots of help from Gene Baker. There were decorations, favors and door prizes and lots of fellowship and fun!

The tradition of putting out a basket to help cover the expenses of the main course has continued to grow and expand. On average each gathering brings in around \$100, most of which is used to purchase diapers for the diaper ministry, see below.

Respectfully submitted, Cathie Litwin and Sylvia Correia

Buildings and Grounds/Sexton Report

This has been a productive year for our physical plant at St. James, with several highlights.

Since last year's Annual Meeting we've continued to make improvements to our physical space. Most notably, the first floor office now occupied by Fr. Ron went through a complete renovation including a new roof when the former roof sprung leaks. We also replaced the treads to the stairs leading up to the parish hall.

We also did some investigative work on the west wall as part of the Rose Window project. To our delight we discovered that the sills did not need replacement like the ones on the east wall when we installed the Seabury window.

Importantly, the buildings and grounds committee has come together for regular meetings and identified priorities and a checklist of items for completion. A new vent-less AC unit will be installed in the parish hall to make it user-friendly year round. Also, options to improve lighting in the space will also be addressed, hopefully, this summer.

Tom Evans and Mary Streeter continue to keep the inside of our buildings clean and welcoming. For a time Mary had to take a leave of absence to care for her mother. Mark

Perrin stepped in and helped us enormously during Mary's absence for which we are grateful. We also have the assistance of Dave Contino for a few weeks who will help Gene with a number of maintenance jobs that need attention, including power washing our buildings. Lastly, we must show our gratitude to Gene Baker who in spite of various health challenges this past year has continued to step up and care for our facilities and manage inspectors, vendors and the needs of our buildings.

Respectfully submitted, Fr. Ron Kolanowski

Fish & Chips 2016

For the 52nd consecutive year the people of St. James' and members across the community came together to host the Annual Lenten Fish and Chips Dinners. As our parish continues to age it is always a question if we will have the capacity to pull off this huge endeavor year after year. As always, God provided us with all that we needed and more than enough: more than enough spirit, hands to get the job done with new volunteers to help, and of course lots of love. This truly was the highlight of the story of this year's fish and chips dinners. We succeeded in large part because of folks beyond our parish family who committed week after week to come and pull this all together. There are a few worth noting. We had tremendous help from some of our friends at St. Catherine's Catholic Church who came to cut bread, make the coleslaw, set the tables and contribute desserts to our dessert table. Former scout leader and teacher at St. Bernard's Holly Cyr helped coordinate wait staff among kids from St. Bernard's. Last year all our girl scouts graduated high school leaving a big hole. But thanks to the teens from St. Bernard's as well as a few from St. Patrick's Cathedral we had enough wait staff to pull it off this year. The boy scouts were highly organized this year and did a great job at the carry-out table and running orders to and from carry-out. Under the direction of Bob Peck the scouts did an excellent job. Several new scouts joined the effort which was a boon to our event. Mark Perrin, again, reached out to neighboring fire stations to make sure that there was adequate coverage to help with parking outside and our friends at Hart's Nursery helped with parking space. So, this year's headline clearly showed the value of this event to the larger community well beyond the parish.

This year the weather was not with us every week and we saw a slight dip in attendance from last year. In addition, the planners chose to move away from Styrofoam products and to use biodegradable items which had added cost. Last year our net profit was \$13,500. This year net profit was just under \$10,000. This is still a huge improvement from previous years, when the average profit from the meals was between \$5,000-\$6,000. While profit is important, the most important part of these dinners continues to be the fellowship. There are people who attend these dinners who come to see folks they only see this time of year at these dinners. There are some who come to each of the six weeks to share in the food and fellowship. Our bishop Ian Douglas and his wife attended this year and they both agreed that this would now be an annual pilgrimage for them. They were moved by the energy in the room, the fun, the fellowship and conversation. So, barring some catastrophe fish and chips will continue into the future.

Thanks to everyone who made these dinners such a great success. Whether you cut fish, bake desserts, wash dishes, wait tables, reset tables, work dessert table or carry-out, each one of you is why people come from far and wide each year to share in this extraordinary event. Thank you all and God bless you.

9th Annual Holiday Craft Fair, Silent Auction, Bake Sale & Luncheon

The craft fair was started and made a reality for years thanks to the hard work and vision of Jewelly Szocik. At the 2016 annual meeting Jewelly announced she would be unable to take the lead on the fair this year. A week later Mary Streeter and Sylvia Correia met with Fr. Ron to say they would take on the event as co-chairs and they did a spectacular job.

From the people who created and donated baskets to our St. James Bakers, to all of you that came and donated your time and talents and to those that came and supported our event, "Thank you." Our two-day event was once again a great success and made a net profit of \$3,585. We had fun, laughter, and amazing food choices! Although the rain on Sunday cancelled the second day for the outdoor crafters, it provided an opportunity to rethink the two-day format for next year.

SILENT AUCTION:

We had 53 specialty items for bid this year that raised \$2,505. Kathy Buck took the lead on managing the auction and with volunteers made it another success.

BAKE SALE:

The bake sale, led by Elaine Hess, literally sold out of everything for the very first time. Bakers took the advice and made more pies and breads and less brownies. The sale hit a record \$688 in baked goods sold.

OUTSIDE VENDORS AND CRAFTERS:

This year we had 19 vendors with a good mix of artisans and services. Gene Baker took the lead in organizing and helping them set up, while Mary Streeter provided hospitality for the workers in the vendor booths.

THE KITCHEN

The kitchen was led by John and Julie Perkins. Working in concert with Mary and Sylvia, they revamped the menu offerings adding burgers as well as baked potatoes with a host of toppings that were well received. The heart of the kitchen is the chili made by Charlie Maine. At 1:00 p.m. on Sunday the kitchen sold out of its last serving of the nearly 10 gallons of chili made. Thanks to all who staffed the kitchen and worked with John on the delicious food enjoyed by all.

"Thank You" to Mark Perrin for directing traffic to keep us all safe.

We are looking forward to next year's event slated for October 7-8, 2017.

Outreach Report

African Ministries: During three weeks in Lent Jewelly Szocik organized the annual African

Mission Organization jewelry and crafts sale during fish & chips. This year, it netted \$1,025 for

Ministries in West Africa. This year, some folks made direct donations for clean water systems for African homes instead of purchasing items. Some 10 additional donations of \$15 (per water system kit) were made to this effort.

**25th Anniversary of the Liz Harris Memorial Cannonball Run Road Race
2016 Financial and Highlight Report:**

2015 Balance from LHCB Account:	\$ 5,016.61
2016 Income: 32 sponsors/ donations:	\$ 4,310.00
2016 Income: Race registrations:	<u>\$ 4,179.00</u>
2016 Total income after race:	\$13,505.61
2016 Total expenses for race.	\$2,336.00
2016 Expenses for 46 Camperships:	<u>\$6,155.00</u>
2016 Total Expenses	\$8,491.00
Balance brought forward Post race 2016:	\$5,014.61

Special Highlights:

- 1.) Jeff Wodecki of Preston won the race in 4:55.
- 2.) Jaclyn Sullivan of Jewett City won Women Div. in 5:18.
- 3.) St. James Church youths, Conor Irwin and Digby Ludlow finished 12th and 13th respectively with a time of 5:45 Tie.
- 4.) SJC LHCB “Kid’s to Camp” program sent a RECORD
Forty-Six (46) children to camp. (5 full & 41 partial scholarships)
- 5.) LHCB Fifth year to sponsor two High School Runner scholarships to the Green Mountain Running Camp (Vt.) in honor of Tim and Kris-Anne Kane. (\$1,500) First HS boy finisher was Cody Kersteter from Ledyard in 5:15 and first girl finisher was Liz Gray in a time of 6:15.
- 6.) Added funding for (\$250) St. Catherine’s Church Running Scholarships. 1 boy scholarship from their Annual 5K road race.
- 7.) Added two new sponsors Flemings Feed & Hardware
and Jewett City Savings Bank.
- 8.) LHCB Fifth year to sponsor the David L. Cannon Award given to the first St. James Church child runner 10 years old or under. For the second year in a row, winner was Owen Muench (age 8) in the time of 7:54.
- 9.) Phil Ludlow Pro-Am Golf Classic Shared ALL Proceeds
To LHCB SJC “Kids to Camp” program. Donation= \$1,535.
- 10.) Oldest runner to finish: age 82, youngest runner to finish: age 4
Pre-registered: 248 (RECORD), total to cross finish line: 210
- 12.) St. James’ students who entered the race: Conor Irwin, Digby Ludlow, Willow Ludlow, Quinn Ludlow, Gretchen Irwin, Dereck Tavares, Daniela Roy, Seth Hurt, Clare Connal-Nicolaou, Owen Muench and Fynn Moran.
- 13.) First St. James adult finisher: Mike LaFleur in 58th. (time 7:10)

Special thanks go to: the 32 individual and business sponsors, Carol Steward, Cliff Marks, the Connal-Nicolaou Family, the Litwin Family, the Roy Family, the Irwin Family, Gail Rigney, Fred Graf (the “Cannon Man”), Gene Baker, the Hurt-Houman Family, the Harris Family (all of them), Mike and Val LaFleur, the Good Family, Father David and Andrew Cannon, Tim and Kris-Anne Kane, the SNERRO volunteers, Bob Peck, Gil LaPoint, Ray and Cathie Litwin, Ken Houman, St. James Bakers, St James Fruit Cutters, Father Ron, Town of Preston, Preston Fire Police (Peter Leibert), Preston Fire Company (ambulance crew), the Tyrone Family, the Zachem Family, Boy Scout Troop 75 (tents) and the Ludlow Family, (can’t forget the residents of Schoolhouse Road) and Preston Parks and Recreation Director Amy Brosnan.

Big thanks to Tim and Kris-Anne Kane for their deep concern and excellent service to make this Liz Harris Memorial Cannonball Run road race a wonderful success.

LHCB Race Committee 2016:

Tim and Kris-Anne Kane, Gail Rigney,
Phil Ludlow and Father Ron Kolanowski

DIAPER MINISTRY

The diaper ministry was launched in December of 2015 because there was an unfilled need for families needing diapers for their children. Sources of support for diapers are scarce. When Elsie Yakimchuk celebrated her 90th birthday in October 2015, guests were invited to bring a package of diapers, in lieu of gifts. Just under 1,000 diapers were collected to set the foundation for our diaper closet!

In December 2015, Sylvia Correia established a relationship with Madonna Place to distribute diapers to this facility which helps mothers and children in the Norwich area.. The “OWL’S” happily and generously stepped up. In its first six months of 2015, over 1,500 diapers were delivered to Madonna Place! Since our last annual meeting in June 2016 to May 2017 about 2,100 more diapers have been delivered. Fr. Ron also listed the service on the state-run 211 phone service. Social workers in the area have tapped into this service when their clients are in need of assistance. We keep a supply at all times at church so we can answer a call for help, if need be. Respectfully submitted, Sylvia Correia

SAINT JAMES’ PARISH ECUADOR MINISTRY REPORT

Last summer we returned for the third year, as promised, to the people of *La Mision San Pedro, el Paraiso de Pupusa, Ecuador*. Our mission was formed by, and took on greater significance due to the devastating earthquakes the region suffered in the spring. Below is a damage report we received from Rev. Washington, our host there.

"Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Seabury Deanery,

Thank you for your prayers. Earth movements continue until today (Saturday 23). We thank God for His infinite goodness for the community of San Pedro. We're all fine, no deaths or injuries. Our church is damaged, and the homes of families were damaged badly by the earth shaking. We had a big scare because at that time was a meeting of the Missionary Board in one of the homes. We are very saddened. Mrs. Yolanda’s house and others are damaged. We estimate about 8 or 10 houses. The structure of the houses are

damage: roof, walls, floors, foundations of houses. Some beds, mattresses and damaged furniture. I'm getting reports of damage in Paradise, we are evaluating costs to help repair and rebuild... soon have reports.

We remember fondly. A big hug from the community of San Pedro.

Pray to God to stop the earth tremble.

Blessings, Rev. Washington Villa Marin

To read these words, to see the photos they sent, and to follow the media coverage of the destruction, was deeply personal to us that have worked and played and prayed with these people for two summers. We shared meals together and prayed in these homes. We dreamed with them about improvements they would make, and played games with their children. These are dear friends that were suffering.

The immediate work of our mission became one of raising "Relief Funds," and on the ground "Damage Survey and Spiritual Support." We raised over \$20,000 in aid, purchasing building supplies for reconstruction, food and clothing, school supplies, and another \$25,000 in Earthquake Relief funds,... but most important of all, was our Presence, and the Hope, and the Spiritual Support from parishes far away that cared. This by far was the greatest gift we brought them....our Presence and all Your Love.

Wendy and I would like to join our Ecuador Mission Team in thanking you, our Saint James' Parish, for your prayers, your financial and spiritual support, and for the two suitcases of clothing, toys and school supplies, you gathered for the children. And a special "Thank You," to the LHCBR Grant that secured a year's food and shelter for three orphan children in the village. The joy you bring to all we serve there is a gift beyond measure. Respectfully submitted, George Warner, Saint James' Ecuador Mission Coordinator

Prison Ministry Begun: New Life Ministry of Southeastern Connecticut

This new ministry finally was launched thanks in large part to Deacon Ellen Adams who has given most of her time in ministry to get this ministry off the ground. We hired an executive director, The Rev. Ann Perrott with grant assistance from the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. The original ministry merged into the existing New Life Ministry program that has been doing re-entry ministry for many years in Southeast Connecticut. This merger brings together efforts of Roman Catholics, Episcopal Churches and other partners to rent space in New London to house and support women from York Prison who are seeking to successfully re-enter society. St. James' Poquetanuck has budgeted \$2,000 in 2017 toward the overall pledge of \$5,000. Three women have been housed to date and integrated into the community. The apartments can house a total of four women at a time.