THE CHI-RHO

NEWS

December 2023

Articles from St. Mark Lutheran & St. James Episcopal included

UPCOMING SERVICES / EVENTS







FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT SERVICE ~ The Sunday morning worship Service on December 24th will be a joint service at St. James Episcopal Church at 9:30 AM. There will be no morning service at St. Mark that day.

<u>CHRISTMAS SERVICES</u> ~ There will be a Christmas Eve service on December 24th at St. James Episcopal Church at 7:00 pm. The joint Christmas Eve service with St. James Episcopal will be held at 9:00 pm at St. Mark. The festivities will include music by the St. Mark and St. James choirs along with a clarinetist.

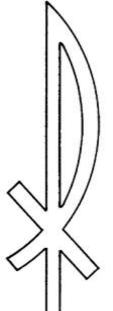
There will be a joint Christmas Day service on Sunday, December 25th at St. Mark Lutheran Church at 9:30 am. There will be **No** Christmas Day service at St. James.

Come to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we hear the good news of what God has done for us, join in traditional carol singing and gather at the table for communion. The churches will be decorated in their finest and lit by candles. Join us for this very special celebration of our Lord, Jesus.

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS ~ There will be a joint service on Sunday, December 31st at St. Mark Lutheran Church at 9:30 AM. There will be **No** service at St. James on that Sunday.

EPIPHANY SERVICE, SATURDAY, JANUARY 6TH

There will be an Epiphany worship service at St. James on Saturday, January. 6^{th,} (time to be determined). This will be a collaborative worship service involving St. James, St. Mark, and the other Episcopal churches served by Archdeacon Grace Swinski: Christ Church, Lincoln and Emmanuel, Cumberland. Come celebrate the threefold revelation of Christ to the peoples represented by visitation of the Wise Men, the announcement of Jesus as the Son of God at his baptism, and his first miracle at Cana of Galilee.





COLLECTIONS



THE COAT NEEDS YOUR COATS

We are entering the most difficult time of year for persons in need of winter warmth. In order to meet the need, the Coat has a critical need <u>for winter coats</u> <u>for all ages and winter boots/shoes.</u> We also need almost all kinds of cold weather clothes, especially for men, and men's work boots.

If you can help, bring donations to the Coat during its open hours – Monday and Wednesday 1-3. Clothing also can be left in the atrium of St. James.

For St. Mark members, the donations can be left in the narthex.

Please consider keeping the feet of a child or adult warm and dry this winter!

The Coat and the community thank you!

ANNUAL "CHRISTMAS" WISH LIST

St. Mark will have their annual "Bring a Gift for the Church" Event. Donating these items helps with the operating budget. Below is the suggested wish list. If everyone could bring in a few of these items it would be greatly appreciated. Please mark them "Gift for St. Mark" and leave them in the office. You can drop off items on Sundays or on Wednesdays or Thursdays after 2:30 pm.

Thank you for your generosity.

Christmas Wish List for St. Mark

8 1/2 x 14 white paper (20lb), 8 1/2 by 11 white paper (20 lb)

Stamps, Gel pens (black & red ink)

#10 Security Envelopes (4 1/8 x 9 1/2 inches

1-Gallon jug water, White grape juice

Solid colored cotton fabric - 1/4 yd. minimum and

Large spools of white or beige thread (Quilters)

Paper towels, Toilet paper

Fabreze Air Freshener

All-purpose antibacterial spray (e.g.Clorox, Lysol)

Mr. Clean or Lysol cleaner, Mr. Clean eraserpads,

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Swiffer dry cloth refill pads (Altar Guild uses also)

Swiffer wet jet cleaner refill solution and refill pads

Swiffer wet mopping cloths

Tall Kitchen (13 Gallon) & Small (4 Gallon) trash bags

30 Gallon Trash Bags

Nitrile disposal gloves (size large)

Light bulbs (60W)

Ice melt

or anything else you think the church needs

Christmas Single List

THANK YOU ~ Thank you to Anna Groemmer for the donations of handmade mittens, hats, and scarfs. They will be distributed from the St. Mark office when needed.





St. James Choir

Happy New Year! And I do not mean 1/1. With Advent, beginning this year on December 3rd, we begin a new church year so pull out your purple and join us for Advent music, prayers, and readings. Some of the best-known hymns are seasonal so if you miss them, they're gone for another year. We need your presence! Voices in the congregation make every service better and worshipping together improves everything. The choir has been preparing music for St. James Advent and Christmas services on and off since the summer; it made us feel cooler to think Christmas. Now, we also have music for Christmas at St. Mark so our rehearsals will keep us busy. (Rehearsals are usually on Thursdays at 1 P. M. with a few exceptions. Feel free to call if you are interested in joining us. You should see the benefits!!!!)

There are so many questions and concerns about our future. Coming together for worship, coffee hour, and discussion can be a means of gaining insight and strength. I am reminded of a simple teaching from a long-ago Sunday school class. The teacher told us that the cross was also a symbol of how we should pray. The upright piece was our own prayers going to God; the cross piece represented us praying as part of a congregation. I hope and pray that all parishioners who are able will re-commit to more regular church attendance; you are needed, and you are missed.

P.S. You don't really need to wear purple to attend!

Shirley Ayers



Dear friends in Christ,

We have an especially short Advent this year, with just 3 weeks between the first Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve, which coincides with the fourth Sunday of Advent this year—so Christmas will be upon us before we know it! I've enjoyed Advent and its traditions since my early childhood—the lighting of the Advent wreath's candles, the greening of the church, the preparation of the manger for the coming of Jesus—sometimes getting ready for a big event can be almost (or even more!) fun than the event itself. Truth be told, when I was involved in theatrical productions, I enjoyed the weeks of rehearsal more than the weekend of two or three performances. I like being prepared; I like the process of preparation, and I don't enjoy feeling rushed or overwhelmed—so I like that our faith has built in seasons of preparation for the major feasts of Christmas and Easter.

But of course, those seasons were developed after the fact: Mary and Joseph probably didn't feel like they had an adequate preparation for what God brought into their lives when Jesus was conceived, and the shepherds who heard the glad tidings from the angels at Jesus' birth had even less notice.

Pastors' message continued on the next page



All throughout the lead-up to this Advent, we have been hearing the Gospel warnings to be ready, keep awake, be prepared: for you do not know when the Master is coming. God acts whether we feel ready or not—are we able to respond favorably when the Lord calls upon us, even when that call comes as a shocking surprise? I think the spiritual gift of Advent and Lent, the seasons of preparation, is to teach our faith to be ready to answer God's Word to us even when we feel unprepared, and to find the joy in Christ's presence even when it is unexpected. May we rejoice in the remembrance of our Savior's birth this Christmas and be always eager to follow where he leads us.

Grace and peace, Peter

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE ST. MARK CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Advent begins, the preparation for Christmas and the end of our calendar year. On this day after Thanksgiving, I want to thank everyone who has helped St. Mark through the year. Pastor/Father Tierney, all the Council Members, all the Committee members, all the donors and contributors, all the teachers and children in Confirmation and Sunday School, all the helpers, and all those who attended and participated in any of our services or activities. St. Mark cannot work without you.

We are in the season of stewardship. You should have received a mailing or emailing with a Stewardship Committee announcement and a Pledge Form for the upcoming year. Please consider these prayerfully and return the Pledge Form at church, through the mail, or via an email reply. We need everyone's help in putting together the next year's budget. Thank you, in advance, for that important reply.

You will soon see evidence that the parsonage roof is being replaced. With the excellent work of our Facilities gurus, Bob Marcil and Matt Larson, we acquired four good bids on that needed work and the Congregation approved our commitment to the project. Several donors stepped forward and covered most of the cost. So, while we are requesting your help in paying the full cost of the repair, we are seeking less than the approximately, \$5,000 - \$8,000, we expected might be needed. Also, arrangements for installation of a security camera near the church entry will complete our current round of upgrade projects for St. Mark. Those should help with insurance costs next spring.

After our joint meeting about discernment at St. James on 24 September, we received messages from the Bishops of the RI Episcopal Diocese and the NE ELCA Synod that they needed to clarify their positions concerning the partnership and co-location of St. Mark and St. James. The Steering Committee heard the outcome of those discussions on 2 November, requested letters stating those positions, and scheduled a joint congregational meeting on 19 November. We thank the Bishops for providing the letters we requested (copies appear after this article), the representatives of the Diocese and Synod for presenting the letters, and, especially, to the members of the congregations for participating in the joint meeting. The messages from the Bishops change some things we thought we knew, and require us to revisit some of our analyses and options.

President's message continued on the next page



More discussions between St. James and the Diocese are needed and were triggered by the November 19 meeting. Clearly, more consideration of what needs to change, and what needs to be moved, if St. Mark co-locates at St. James or St. James co-locates at St. Mark, must occur. Your input on these discussions is vital to both congregations. Let the St. Mark Council and the St. James Vestry hear your ideas, thoughts, and desires. Our timeline of decisions for cooperation and co-location has changed and may not occur until the Annual Meeting in January.

Our Nominating Committee will soon be seeking nominees for the Council (6 needed), Nominating Committee (2 non-Council members needed), for 2024 Synod Assembly Delegates (2 needed), and for Treasurer. In early January the audit will be done and reports for the Annual Meeting will be due.

In the meantime, we will celebrate the coming of our Lord, and be as generous to our friends and neighbors as we can. Please use the Big Brother/Big Sister donation/recycling bin near our front door. They accept new and used clothes, shoes, and clean cloth items (they recycle these). Avoid trash, non-recyclable items and use smaller bags. And do not forget our Kitchen Ministry which can always use: kitchenware, small microwaves, coffee makers, tea pots, or toasters. And/or, donations of supplies for the church; anything donated is something less that needs to be purchased by general funds.

May the Lord be with Us, Kenneth L. (Ken) Campbell, St. Mark Church Council President

ST. MARK FINANCE COMMITTEE

Greetings to St. Mark Members and Friends. This Holiday Season, we give thanks for your many gifts and for the financial generosity of our members during 2023. These are challenging times, especially with inflation, but our church has many gifts and our church leaders have been great stewards in controlling our expenses. **Thank you to all for your generosity during 2023!**

Presently, we are in the midst of budget preparation for 2024. We thank those who have turned in their pledge cards and those who are sending in their cards shortly. Pledge cards are important to the church so we can match pledges to our expenses for the following year's budget. With your pledge gifts, we can modify our other expenses and ministries, so we do NOT overspend and retain a balanced budget (as required by our constitution): Generous Pledges/Gifts + Controlled Expenses = Balanced Budget.

Please help us by submitting your 2024 pledge cards. Thank you very much!

Good News: Due to your generosity and the tight controls, our 9 months financial situation is on track:

QUARTERLY UPDATE ON PLEDGES, INCOME, AND EXPENSES: 3RD QUARTER, 2023

PLEDGES: Budget **75%** Actual **81%**TOTAL INCOME: Budget **75%** Actual **75%**TOTAL EXPENSES: Budget **75%** Actual **74%**

Finance Committee continue on the next page



Some quick year-end notes: Jane Peach has resigned as our Accountant. She continues to be of great assistance as we transition Jim McKamy, our Treasurer, taking over her duties. We thank Jane for her hard work and professional expertise as St. Mark's Accountant.

We want to thank several of our members for making several onetime gifts to support special church expenses. Our members and, we believe, especially God, continue to support St. Mark!

Merry Christmas to each and every one of you. May each of you and St. Mark be blessed with the Christmas Spirit! Our blessings and best wishes for a great New Year.

God's Blessings and Peace.

Members: Arline Gilpin, Jan Peterson, Miriam Campbell, Jim McKamy

SERVICE OF THE LORD COMMITTEE

Highlights from Service of the Lord Committee

Reviewing the fall activities, a dedicated core of St. Mark and St. James members participated in CCA's annual Shelter Walk in September. The drizzle subsided and the walk along Clinton and Social Street was pleasant. We mingled with other groups who all engaged in some way to support the Shelter. We were proud to have many donors as well, and the St. Mark/St. James team was able to exceed our fundraising goal. Once again, thank you! Sept 10 was the final summer joint service at St. Mark, followed by assembling ready-to-go kitchen items in bags, both disposable and washable dishware. The task completed, everyone sat down to enjoy sandwiches, sweets and plain old conversation.

Many are aware of the ministries at St. James; the Food Pantry and the Coat of Many Colors. But did you know there are steady helpers from St. Mark as well? If you go to the Coat on Mondays, you will likely see Jan Peterson there, and if you check out the Food Pantry on Wednesdays, Judy Helm is a regular. At St. Mark, our Kitchen Ministry has been very busy over the past two months. Eric Sjoblom and I have met 16 clients who have benefited from the housewares and small appliances we offer. Thank you all for the donations, the clients are so appreciative. If you find deals on cleaning supplies, think of the Kitchen Ministry. We have very little to offer the clients at this time.

And don't forget, the first arrivals will receive this year's warm and fuzzy scarf!

We invite you to come see and be part of what is going on with the Coat, the Pantry and the Kitchen Ministry. Ask Peggy, Jan, Judy, Shirley or Lee Ann!

Submitted, Peggy Qvicklund



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

This November, our stewardship pledge drive is taking place. Thank you to all who have already sent in their pledge cards. We know that some of our members are prayerfully considering their financial contributions and we look forward to hearing from them. All gifts are welcome. As you know, the finance committee uses the total pledge information to help budget for 2024 and support all we do at St. Mark. Please, after your consideration, let us know your pledge by using one of the following methods:

- Mail to: Attn: Financial Secretary, St. Mark Church, 871 Harris Ave., Woonsocket, RI 02895
- Email our Financial Secretary: <u>janpeterson@cox.net</u>
- Need a pledge card? Pam can email or mail: stmarkwoon@gmail.com copies at church.
- Direct deposit through Vanco* at: https://www.vancopayments.com
 *If you have questions about Vanco, please contact Jan Peterson, our Financial Secretary
- Of course, you can drop your Pledge card in the offering tray on Sunday.

Thank you for all that you give of yourselves and your gifts of every kind that make our community possible. Thank you for being part of this growing, living community rooted in Christ. Praise be to God for you, for your gifts, for all you bring to our community, and to Christ! Thank you for continuing to support St. Mark in 2024!

WORSHIP

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FLOWERS AND NAMES AT ST. JAMES

Please submit any additions to the St. James Christmas Flower Memorial list, along with donations, to Maggie Lange in the St. James office by Wednesday, December 20th.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE ~ DECEMBER 24 (St. Mark)

Volunteers are needed to serve as acolytes and crucifer. If you are interested in helping please sign up on the sheet located on the bulletin board at the back of the church or email the church at stmarkwoon@gmail.com.

2024 SUNDAY HELPERS SCHEDULE (St. Mark)

Many volunteers are needed to serve as communion assistant, reader, stewardship tellers and for coffee setup on Sunday mornings. If you are interested in helping, please send an email to Pam at stmarkwoon@gmail.com.

ST. JAMES WINDOW PROJECT PROGRESS

St. James' sanctuary windows project is about to take off! We just received notification that the Champlin Foundation will fund our grant proposal for \$20,000, which completes the funding needed to fix and reglaze the large windows in the sanctuary. They will soon open in summer and prevent drafts in winter. This work will maintain their beauty for all to enjoy many years into the future. The Vestry has voted to contract with a building restoration specialty company, but work will probably not begin until the weather warms up. Thanks to the many donors who have been waiting to have this project completed! Trivia question: How many panes are in just one of the large sanctuary windows? Would you believe 51 in each?!



ST. JAMES FOOD BANK

Thank you, thank you! Your response to requested food items has provided enough for Thanksgiving baskets as well as a head start on the Christmas baskets. If you are still of a mind, please continue the donations of hearty soups, especially Dinty Moore Beef Stew. Sixteen people gathered to create 28 Thanksgiving baskets using a revised system. This included bringing up the boxes, food, etc. to the atrium, packing the baskets, and cleaning up the area, all of which was completed in record time. Ninety-eight people will be fed with these baskets, not just a holiday meal but also about three additional days. Each basket contained a minimum of 33 items. We now have more revisions to employ as we prepare Christmas baskets on Tuesday, December 19th, at 8:30 A. M. Stay tuned for a progress report. Better yet, come join the fun!

The food bank continues to be busy with a record of 307 people being fed in October. There is always a need for wrapped bar soap as we do not buy that with food bank funds. On November 15th we actually ran out of bread! This is a first for me. Luckily, we had muffins and some pastries from Panera but nothing takes the place of bread or bagels. Our thrice-monthly Panera runs for 'doughnations' have brought in less than in the past so with our higher numbers that unwanted milestone was reached. Does anyone reading this know of other businesses that might donate their bread products? (Oh, how I miss Park'n'Shop!!!)

A heartfelt thank you to all the contributors and volunteers who help maintain this ministry. It is much needed, and you are much appreciated.

The food bank will be closed on 12/25, 12/27, and 1/1, reopening on Wednesday, January 3rd.

Shirley Ayers



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

November 19, 2023

Dear People of St. Mark's and St. James's in Woonsocket,

I am writing in the hope of clearing up a misunderstanding that has arisen as your two parishes have faithfully and diligently considered the possibility of working more closely together to ensure the future of both congregations.

First, however, I want to affirm both the ministry your two congregations carried out individually for so many years in Woonsocket and the joint ministry in which you have collaborated more recently. I have spoken with the Rev. Peter Tierney and Bishop James Hazelwood on several occasions about how important I believe it is we maintain a vibrant expression of mainline denominational ministry in the City of Woonsocket. Many other traditions have had to cease their work in the city as the economic climate has worsened over the past decades. I am clear that we will not. For that reason I am particularly grateful to you all as you work together to discern what



might be possible as part of a merger, federation or co-location between your congregations so that, strengthening each other, you can continue this valuable witness.

And I am grateful for the extraordinary working relationship that the Diocese of Rhode Island has with the New England Synod. Bishop Hazelwood and I have prayed together, taken counsel with each other about concerns in Rhode Island and shared mission strategies together. Our staffs are in regular contact. I believe such relationships are one of the most important fruits of decades of ecumenical work.

Now to the nature of this misunderstanding for which I apologize and take responsibility. In presenting various possibilities that might shape your conversations on co-location, the Steering Committee, through no fault of its own, conveyed the mistaken impression that St. James Church could be sold to help finance your two congregations' lives together. That is not the case, and as soon as my staff and I recognized the problem, we spoke with the Lutheran Synod and asked to speak directly to the Steering Committee.

A little background on difference in Episcopal and Lutheran polity might be helpful here. In the Episcopal Church, unlike in the Lutheran Church1 congregations hold property in trust for the diocese in which they are located. Decisions about selling, renting or mortgaging property are made with the consent of the bishop and the Standing Committee of the diocese. In the Lutheran Church such decisions are made in consultation with the Synod, but in the end the final decision is made by the congregation's leadership. That is different in the Episcopal Church, and that difference is what has created the need for this special meeting.

I have been clear, since I became the Bishop of Rhode Island, that I am willing to approve the sale of a church building or complex only as a last resort; when the building is simply not useable for purpose, or when every other avenue has been exhausted. The few buildings that have been sold over the last decade were the result of decisions made prior to my time in office and from which there was no path to return the building to sacred ministry. Given the good condition of the St. James' plant and property, and the vital outreach ministry that is happening in the building today, I am not in favor of selling this property.

That does not mean that I would be opposed to an option where the congregations decide to worship in St. Mark's and rent or lease St. James property for mission or outreach or some other purpose determined by the congregations.

Again, I apologize and accept responsibility that this information was not clearly and consistently communicated to you at each step of the process. I know from earlier conversation with the Steering Committee that this error has rightly been a source of anger and frustration. I committed to them that my staff and I will do everything we can do to make sure that this process going forward is transparent and that there is full information presented regarding each option. I ask your forgiveness for the trouble this has caused and pray that the Steering Committee and the congregations will be able to move forward in their mutual discernment process.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely Bishop of Rhode Island



NEW ENGLAND SYNOD EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.

20 UPLAND STREET, WORCESTER, MA 01607-1624 PHONE (508) 791-1530 I FAX (508) 797-9295 OFFICE@NESYNOD.ORG

November 19, 2023

To: The Congregations of St. Mark Lutheran Church and St. James Episcopal Church

Dear members of St. Mark and St. James,

I thank my God for every remembrance of you...for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:3, 5-6 (NRSV)

I have been keeping all of you in prayer throughout your discernment process, especially today, as you receive new information about your options. Recently, I met with your Partnership Steering Committee, Bishop Knisley, Rev. Tierney, and synod and diocesan staff to discuss this matter. I know that the news about the change in co-location options may be difficult to receive at this stage and I understand if you need to take some time to pause and reflect.

My hope is that after prayerful reflection, you will feel able to proceed with mutual care and discernment. I am committed to working together with Bishop Knisely and all of you to chart a faithful path forward. May the Spirit guide us to build bridges of shared understanding and purpose for the sake of God's mission in the city of Woonsocket.

I want you to know I support you and will walk with you, in whatever direction you choose for your future. Whatever lies ahead, God's work continues through all ofus.

Grace and peace,

Bishop James Hazelwood



INFORMATIONAL NEWS

Newsletter Editor ~ Pam Marcil

ST. JAMES VESTRY AND STAFF

Vicar Church Secretary Music Director

Rev. Peter Tierney Maggie Lange Shirley Ayers

Senior Warden Junior Warden Treasurer

Nancy Paradee Jane Peach Kathryn Atkins

Vestry: Tom Dubois, Sue Markham, Sandy Slack, and John Kaveny

ST. MARK COUNCIL, OFFICE STAFF, AND FINANCE

Pastor In-Charge Church Secretary Music Director

Rev. Peter Tierney Pam Marcil Bill Spont Financial Secretary Janice Peterson

Council President Council Vice-President Matt Larson Council Secretary Council Treasurer

Ken Campbell Kelly Mottram Jim McKamy

PASTOR

Rev. Peter Tierney III Rev. Tierney is in the office at St. James on Tuesday from 9 am to noon and at St. Mark on Wednesdays from 2-5 pm. or by appointment. cell phone # - (401) 556-0697

ST. JAMES'S E-MAIL ADDRESS stjameswoon@outlook.com

Maggie is in the office on Mondays from Noon - 4pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9am – 1 pm. She can be reach at the church at: (401) 762-2222.

COMMUNICATIONS REMINDER FOR ST. JAMES PARISHIONERS

Do you have an email address? If you received this newsletter by mail but have an email address, let us know! Those who receive communications by email receive them more quickly - plus we don't have to pay postage! If you would like to receive your St. James news by email, contact Maggie at the church office - stjameswoon@outlook.com Or you can leave a message stating your email address at 401-762-2222.

ST. MARK'S E-MAIL ADDRESS stmarkwoon@gmail.com

Pam is in the office on Wednesdays and Thursdays after 2:30 pm. E-mail will be checked then.

In case of an emergency, you may call Pam Marcil at (401) 744-0240 or leave a message on the church phone (401)769-8320.

NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY

To save postage and paper, please consider receiving the newsletter electronically (via e-mail). If anyone would like to do this, please let Pam know by leaving a note along with your e-mail address on her desk or e-mail her at stmarkwoon@gmail.com.



Decorate the St. Mark Church for Christmas – After services during Advent
Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ Sunday, December 24th at St. James at 9:30 a.m.
Christmas Eve Services – Sunday, December 24th
7:00 p.m. at St. James and 9:00 p.m. at St. Mark
Christmas Day Service – Sunday, December 25th at 9:30 a.m. at St. Mark
NO Service at St. James on December 25th
Second Sunday of Christmas – Sunday, December 31st at 9:30 a.m. at St. Mark
NO Service at St. James on December 31st
Epiphany Service – Saturday January 6th at St. James (time to be determined)

"Share God's Word" VISION STATEMENT

To love and serve God and each other in our church and community!

MISSION STATEMENT

That every member would know Christ and Make Christ Known!

St. James Episcopal Church 24 Hamlet Avenue Woonsocket, RI 02895 (401) 762-2222

E-mail: <u>stjameswoon@outlook.com</u>
Website: <u>www.stjameswoonsocket.org</u>

