The “incomplete” and “unfinished” are part of my daily existence. Some days I am made aware by forgetting something at the grocery store or getting to church with one earring on. Other days it is realized in an endless list of things to do that is never completed. Life is by definition imperfect.

Yet this time a year you can feel our culture striving for perfection, working so hard to make our families happy, driven to feel at peace and fulfilled if but for one day.

The church is preparing to observe a season of Advent. Marked by teachings that awaken us to a holy longing, Advent is about waiting, hoping, yearning for what is unrealized.

In a world where “Joy to the World” is being played in malls and stores beginning the first day of November the church chooses to wait, to fully feel the experience of unfulfillment.

“Church is supposed to make me feel better,” you might say. “Church is supposed to soothe us when things are not perfect”, you might add. “Church is supposed to help us not cause us to deeply feel the imperfection of things”.

The Healing Light of Christ
The church reminds us to hold hope in our hearts. We keep a vigil in our communal life together for God’s presence that has the power to transform us and this world. This is a unique way to enter into the imperfection of life.

Our mission in this world is so vitally important because the church welcomes unhealed, broken people and circumstances and entrusts them to God to forgive, heal and redeem.

It gets very dark this time of year. Before electricity was invented, can you imagine just how dark and long the night would have been? The light of just one candle pierces the darkness. It brings heat and warmth to all who are nearby.

I invite you to make this time before Christmas a spiritually rich time for you and your families. Be creative at bringing the light to your children, friends and neighbors.

Christ is coming. Christ is always coming. Prepare a place for Him.

With you on the Journey,
LISA
Rev. Lisa Senuta, Rector

Our mission in this world is so vitally important because the church welcomes unhealed, broken people and circumstances and entrusts them to God to forgive, heal and redeem.

-----

Saint Nicholas Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 7, 3:30-6:00pm

This wonderful afternoon is for ALL ages.

+ Stuff stockings for residents of The Grove +
+ Make a graham cracker craft +
+ Create advent wreaths +
+ Have your photo taken with St. Nicholas +
+ Leave your shoes at the door for a special treat! +

At 5:00pm we will move to the sanctuary for a beautiful Lessons and Carols service.

Christmas Service Times

December 24, Christmas Eve
+ 4:00pm - A family-oriented liturgy
+ 10:00pm - A candlelit, traditional service

December 25, Christmas Day
+ 10:00am - A traditional service with Christmas Carols

December 28, First Sunday of Christmas
+ 10:00am - Only worship service of the morning

Did you know?
You may now find Lisa’s sermons online at www.stjamestheless.org/sermons and on her blog, http://lisasenuta.wordpress.com
A Note from The Senior Warden

Your Vestry has been actively engaged in bringing life and action to its Mission Statement, which was formed earlier this year. We continue to advance and nurture our spiritual growth as the first priority of our monthly meetings. This activity brings positive energy to our group as we then consider the needs and concerns of the parish.

At each meeting the Vestry reviews and discusses the Christian Education program. As Rev. Lisa continues the search for a Director of Youth Ministry and Christian Education, the Vestry has supported the current Sunday School program and welcomed the involvement of motivated parishioners and parents.

An important element of Vestry work this Fall has been the development and approval of a Parish Vision Statement, which has recently been announced and appears now in many parish publications. The Vestry will further develop this Statement with descriptive subparagraphs and issue a Vision brochure early next year.

The Vestry has approved and overseen a number of important projects. The Nursery Remodeling in memory of Ann Roberts has been completed with the generous financial support of the Roberts family and the design assistance of Hugo and Oksanna Malan. A needlepoint project has been approved for the refurbishing of our kneelers in 2015. Our building and grounds continue to be upgraded as needed. The Lobster Sale fundraiser for Outreach was successfully planned and implemented. Under Deacon Ron’s guidance and Vestry support, the community garden has flourished and provided produce to our Northfield community.

To help us reach forward to our goals of sustainable growth and increased spiritual vitality, the Vestry held a retreat on November 14-15. We learned together that congregations who know who they are and what they do best are most likely to flourish and bring hope and joy to their members. It will continue to be your Vestry’s intent to seek spiritual guidance for our planning and to build a Mission which reflects God’s will for our parish.

In Christ,
John
John Stevens

PARISH VISION STATEMENT

At St. James the Less we experience the presence of God through our compassionate community and vibrant worship.

Compelled by our baptism to follow Jesus, we believe God has formed our church to be a source of hope, love and acceptance.

United in our belief we seek to be a church that is responsive, connected and dedicated to serve our larger communities and neighbors.

“Your contribution impacts generations ahead of and behind you...”
- Rev. Lisa Senuta

Remember to turn in your pledge by Ingathering Sunday, December 7.
A Passion for Prayer

What is the Prayer Network?

The Prayer Network includes the clergy and nearly 40 parishioners of St. James the Less.

When Sue Babbs receives a request it is emailed as promptly as possible to this team—often within a few minutes. The members of the Network will each pray, wherever they are, as they feel led—maybe once only, maybe hourly, daily or weekly. Some situations are so hard to get out of our heads that we pray constantly.

Any information you give us helps us to pray in a more informed way, but will pray just for a person by first name only if that is what you wish. We also really appreciate updates.

Most of the time the prayer request is sent immediately to the network, so we are able to pray quickly when there is an urgent situation.

This network also helps parishioners to be more concerned for each other and share other signs of caring as well as praying.

Please let Sue Babbs (suebabbs385@gmail.com) know if you would like to join the network.

Loving God, as we enter this Advent season, we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ.

Show us the creative power of hope.

Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ.

- From the liturgy of Advent I
**Kids and Families at SJTL**

**November**

**Pinstripes Bowling**
Earlier in November a small group of families headed over to Pinstripes for bowling. A fun time was had by all!

**Mother Daughter Tea**
Sunday, November 30, 3:00 - 5:00pm
in the Parish Hall

This special afternoon will offer an opportunity for mothers and daughters (grades 3 to high school) to gather in a beautiful setting to share tea, treats, and reflect on what makes them strong, healthy women in the world.

RSVP to the parish office or in the parish hall. Guests are welcome.

**December**

Check page 3 for information about the St. Nicholas Lessons and Carols Event on Sunday, December 7th at 3:30pm!

**Confirmation in 2015**

Confirmation is starting in January with 6 youth!

They will follow *My Faith, My Life,* a mentor-based curriculum as they prepare for Confirmation.

Please keep these youth in your prayers. Maureen Burke is the contact person should you have questions.

**Devotional Reading in Advent**

**The Vigil** by Wendy M. Wright

"From one of the most original voices in contemporary spiritual literature comes this new book that weaves together the liturgical calendar, traditions from Christmas masses in medieval times, traditional themes of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, and stories from scripture and her own life. A delightful gift for those with whom you share the waiting and watching of the season of hope.”

- Review on Amazon.com

+++ St. James the Less has ordered 25 copies and they will be available in the parish hall for $14 each.

+++ Wendy Wright holds a PhD. from the University of California at Santa Barbara and is currently Professor of Theology at Creighton University and holds the John C. Kenefick Faculty Chair in the Humanities.

**Living Well by Scott Stoner**

Living Compass and its founder Scott Stoner offer an opportunity for Living Well through Advent.

This group of resources include a booklet of daily encouragement for the Advent journey incorporating “heart, soul, mind, and strength.”

**Pick one up today in the Parish Hall.**

**Kids and families may pick up Advent Calendars in the Parish Hall**
A Note from the Director of Music

“O come, thou Dayspring, from on high. Free us from Satan’s tyranny. To us the path of knowledge show, and help us in her way to go.”

Throughout this season of Advent, we will use music to illuminate the text and theme of the season this year, which is the “Light” of Christ. The music I have selected will name various types of light.

Here are some lyrics I hope you might connect with along our Advent journey together.

+ 

“Rejoice, rejoice believers, and let your light arise”

“Sometimes, the light surprises the Christian while she sings”

“I want to walk as a child of the light”

“Will there really be a morning? Is there such a thing as day?”

“Longing for light, we wait in darkness”

The language of Advent hymns and music is one of hope, waiting, patience, stillness, and even agitation…it captures all the emotion we aspire to feel during this period of anticipation.

While it can feel like a static time period, it doesn’t have to be. We can strive to be enlightened along the way.

There are so many ways we can encounter Christ as we wait for the celebration of his arrival at Christmas.

I pray that one of those ways will be through the music we sing on Sundays, at our St. Nicholas Lessons & Carols, Celtic Service, Christmas Caroling, and perhaps you may even find yourself singing in your home.

Blessings this Advent,

Anastasia Cameron Balmer, Director of Music

Did You Know?

“During World War I, on and around Christmas Day 1914, the sounds of rifles firing and shells exploding faded in a number of places along the Western Front in favor of holiday celebrations in the trenches and gestures of goodwill between enemies.”

“On Christmas Eve, many German and British troops sang Christmas carols to each other across the lines, and at certain points the Allied soldiers even heard brass bands joining the Germans in their joyous singing.”

- From www.veteransforpeace.org/our-work/remembering-christmas-truce/

This Christmas Eve service at St. James the Less will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Christmas Truce during World War I by singing Silent Night at the start of the service. To learn more about this amazing story, visit veteransforpeace.org.

St. John’s Illuminated Bible
Epiphany Lessons and Songs
Sunday, February 15th, 10:00am

On this morning, worship will be illuminated by artwork from the Saint John’s Bible. There will be only ONE service at 10:00am.

This is the world’s only handwritten, illuminated bible commissioned by a Benedictine monastery in the modern era. Be sure to ask one of our many parishioners who attended the retreat last year to tell you more about this special bible. Learn more at www.saintjohnsbible.org.

Thank you to John Wesche

John Wesche, 8:00am organist resigned from his position this November. He has expressed his appreciation for and care for the St. James the Less community. If you would like to send him an email thanking him for his service and wishing him well, his email is jwesche@starbucks.com.

Join the Choir for Christmas Caroling
Sunday, December 14th after the 10:00am Service

Everyone is welcome to join the choir as they sing carols to homebound members and friends of the parish. Stay at church after the service for a pizza lunch and then caravan to houses.

If you enjoy baking cookies, consider bringing treats and the group will package them together on the 14th.

After caroling, all are welcome back at the church for cookies and hot cocoa.

Please RSVP to Sarah Generes (sgeneres@gmail.com) by December 11 if you are able to come!

Suggested donation: $4 per person/$10 per family.

Children are especially welcome and encouraged to attend!

This is one of the choir’s favorite activities every year because it’s so much fun, and it’s a chance to really spread the joy and love of our parish and God with those who need it most.
Levi’s Table: Opportunities to Serve

Our Levi’s Table ministry started in the spring of 2000. The Vestry wanted to establish a new ministry that truly reached out and helped people in real need. We provide a whole range of activities and services, including a monthly birthday party, worship services, taking them on trips such as to The Botanic Gardens as well as individual involvement, sharing their joys while providing moral support on their sad days.

The Grove of Northbrook is located at 263 Skokie Blvd. (just north of Garden Fresh Market). Any interested volunteers should contact Sue Babbs, Bill Fox, or Ron Valentine.

Christmas Cards
Please join us during Thirty Worthy Minutes on Sunday, December 14th as we sign Christmas cards for the residents of The Grove. These are greatly appreciated as the residents receive so little personal mail that a card makes a huge difference to them. Say a prayer for them as you or your children write the cards.

Christmas Stockings – the Simple Way!
This year we will again be giving each resident a small stocking, containing Christmas candy and a little gift. For the past 7 years, we have raised $10 per person this year, and would love to do the same this year. Most of the 125 residents do not receive visitors at Christmas and this is one of the ways that we can help them feel loved. They do not have much cash to spend, and really enjoy the opportunity to spend money of their own.

So please make a donation and make a resident or residents feel special and remembered. Donations can be put in the large stocking (which will appear on the outreach bulletin board in early December) or given directly to Sue Babbs. Checks should be made out to “St. James the Less” and marked “Levi’s Table Stockings”.

Christmas Stockings Delivery and Carol Singing
December 24, Christmas Eve morning at 9:45am
We will be delivering Christmas stockings to all the residents and singing Christmas carols. Join us in the lobby at 9:45a.m. – Children welcome too.

December 25, Christmas Morning Service at 10:00am
We will be bringing the Good News of Christmas to the residents. Come and swell the numbers, help with the singing, play the piano, ensure the residents are reading from the right page, and generally ensure that the Light of Christ shines into the lives of the residents on that day.

Parish Evenings and Wood Carvings
Since the Babbs family returned from Madagascar, around 60 parishioners came to presentations. Donations from those 2 evenings totaled $390, which will be sent to the McGregors to help buy wood carvings for the Cathedral. These will be bought from Malagasy artisans, Jean et Frère, at Ambositra.
http://www.i-madagascar.com/jean-et-freres.html

SJTL Community Garden Southeast
The Madagascar Edition
In January, Glen Tracy is going to Toliara to do some landscaping work around The Gathering Place (Bishop Todd and Rev. Patsy’s home; the Bishop’s and Diocesan offices). He plans to go for about 2 weeks, and is still looking for a traveling companion.

This landscaping will bring some of the beauty of God’s creation to the currently rather barren landscape. At present, apart from a few plants close to their home, there are some scrubby, slightly prickly grasses, cacti and a few baby baobab trees (which will take many years to grow to a good size, but are the native trees of the region). Some orange, grapefruit and lemon trees will be planted, as well as a prayer garden for meditation and quiet. The garden will also provide over-flow space for any receptions held by the Bishop.

The New Cathedral
In October, foundations were laid for the new Cathedral, St Patrick’s, which is expected to be completed in good time for St Patrick’s Day 2016.

Other SJTL involvement
One SJTL family plans to send support for women who are struggling to support their families and not return to prostitution. Sue Babbs, Roberta Nichols & Jeannie Scully are working on designing a needlepoint kneeler for the Bishop for the new cathedral.

Patsy’s Health
Recovery from adrenal fatigue will be a long process, but Patsy is currently feeling very well, and is very grateful for our parish’s prayers, which she says greatly contribute to her good health.
Christmas Offerings and Flower Donations

Please use the envelope inserted into this newsletter to make a special Christmas Offering or Flower donation. To be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin, all donations must be received by December 18th. Please mail your donation in, drop it in the offering plate, or leave it in the church office.

ReVive Christmas Basket Program A Success!

Because of your generous support, ReVive Center for Housing and Healing (formerly Cathedral Shelter) is able to ensure 39 families and 9 seniors will have presents to open and food to celebrate Christ's birth this Christmas. If you haven't already turned in the gifts you purchased, please do so by December 6th at 9:00am. Please see Jane Deubel or Susie White with questions.

Bishop Jeffrey Lee is Coming to Men’s Group

Saturday, January 24 at 9:30am

The Men's Discussion Group at St. James the Less, which meets monthly, has invited Bishop Lee to speak and lead discussion at one of our meetings. Men from all over the Evanston Deanery have been invited and we ask the men of St. James the Less to help "spread the word" about this event.

The time with the bishop will include refreshments, conversation, and engaging discussion on relevant topics. Please connect with Phil Montross if you have questions or want to be a part of hosting this event.

"Take time, in the busyness of this season, for quiet reflection - for the light of God’s love is discernible everywhere.”
- A liturgy for Advent I

Calendar Highlights

December

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prepare and Serve Dinner at A Just Harvest Community Kitchen</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9:00am ReVive Christmas Basket Pick up</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ingathering Sunday, Pledges Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3:30pm - 6:00pm St. Nicholas Lessons and Carols</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11:15am Caroling with the Choir</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>7:00pm Celtic Advent Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>4:00pm and 10:00pm Christmas Eve Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>10:00am Christmas Day Service with Christmas Carols</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>10:00am Only One Sunday Worship Service this day</td>
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January

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Prepare and Serve Dinner at A Just Harvest Community Kitchen</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11:30am Evanston Deanery Meeting at SJTL</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>9:30am Men’s Discussion Group - Bishop Visiting</td>
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February

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10:00am One worship service only at 10:00am, Annual Meeting following</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4:00pm Prepare and Serve dinner at A Just Harvest Community Kitchen</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10:00am One Worship service only at 10:00am, St. John's Illuminated Bible Lessons and Songs</td>
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Ongoing events:
First and Third Mondays, 1:00pm Creative Prayer and Meditation
Tues., 9:30am | Knitters Group
Tues., 10:00am | Staff Meeting
Thurs., 7:30pm | Adult Choir Rehearsal
Fri., 9:30am | Prayer Group
Levi's Table Events (see page 12)
Thank You For Your Donations!

Thanks to your generous donations, the coat drive and women’s accessory drive for Deborah’s place were a huge success.

St. James the Less Staff Contacts and Address
550 Sunset Ridge Rd., Northfield, IL60093 | (847) 446-8430 | www.stjamestheless.org

Rev. Lisa Senuta, Rector | lsenuta@stjamestheless.org | (847) 446-8430 x 201
Rev. Ron Valentine, Deacon | chaplain@stjamestheless.org | x 208
Virginia Hunt, Administrative Assistant | virginia@stjamestheless.org | x 200
Kate Rickard, Communications Coordinator | kate@stjamestheless.org | x 202
Anastasia C. Balmer, Director of Music | music@stjamestheless.org | x 204
Brian Locke, Organist | lockepiano@gmail.com
Joanne Straughn, Bookkeeper | bookkeeper@stjamestheless.org | x 202
John Stevens, Senior Warden | vestry@stjamestheless.org

Regular Sunday Schedule
8:00 am - Holy Eucharist - Rite I
10:00 am - Holy Eucharist - Rite II with Music*

9:15 am - 9:50 am
Thirty Worthy Minutes for Adults* | An engaging time of learning and discussion

10:00 am - Godly Play*
An interactive and creative lesson for Preschool through 2nd Grade
*Nursery for Children ages 0-3 Provided

Christ is coming. Christ is always coming, always entering a troubled world, a wounded heart.