

MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. JAMES CHURCH, BRISTOL

St. James' exists to ...

GATHER as God's people

KNOW the love of God in Christ

GROW as disciples of Jesus Christ

GIVE to the world what God has given us.

VISION STATEMENT ~ GOALS : 2008

- Call a priest
- Help others – less fortunate – within and without our church family
- Feed others
- Spread the Gospel through word, action, music
- Offer counsel and comfort to people within and without our church family
- Nurture and educate our children and children in our community
- Ongoing adult programs to share and grow in our faith
- Utilize our buildings for the greater community

ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BRISTOL, PENNSYLVANIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Worship	Page 3
Parish Property	Page 3
Parish Organizations	Page 4
Outreach Programs	Page 4
Church Events	Page 5
Parish Statistics	Page 6
History	Page 7,8
Discernment Committee	Page 9
Vestry of St. James'	Page 9

WORSHIP

St. James' currently has two services of worship on Sunday mornings. At 8:00 am (with piano accompaniment) and 10:00 am (with organ accompaniment) are services of Holy Eucharist from the Book of Common Prayer, rite 2.

The Sunday School meets at 10 am during the first part of the service, with the children joining their families for Communion. On the first Sunday of each month, the children worship with their families for the entire service, taking on various roles such as reading a lesson or ushering.

All services of worship are supported by members who service as acolytes, altar guild, Eucharistic ministers, readers, and ushers.

Anointing for healing is provided at each service on the first Sunday of each month.

During the summer, there is one service at 9:00 am, Holy Eucharist rite 2, with piano and organ accompaniment.

Christmas and Easter

There are currently two services on Christmas Eve, at 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm, and a service on Christmas Day at 10:00 am.

During Holy Week, we have joint services with Zion Lutheran Church on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday evenings, with one service held at each church.

PARISH PROPERTY

CHURCH

The present church was built in 1857 and is nestled within the parish cemetery. The church can seat approximately 250 people. A sound system has been installed. The sanctuary has been refurbished and brought to the modern standards of the Episcopal Church and newly remodeled. Heating and air conditioning system was completed in 2000. Entry to the building and sanctuary and restroom are handicap accessible.

PARISH HALL

The parish hall was built in 1877. The Sunday school is located in the parish hall. The Rector's office, parish office, conference room and full kitchen are adjacent to the social hall. The parish hall and restroom are handicap accessible.

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

Altar Guild –

The women in this group prepare the altar for all services held in the church with a team committed from Saturday to Saturday each week throughout the year.

Bible Class –

Adult Bible Classes are held in the evening in the fall and during Lent

Women of St. James' –

The group meets the first Wednesday evening of each month. Many of the church social functions are sponsored by the women. This group also supports and participates in numerous community and charitable organizations.

Vestry –

The vestry meets the third Wednesday evening of each month. The vestry sponsors the parish picnic and commemorates St. James' Day on July 25th each year.

Other Current Organizations –

Prayer Group, Stewardship Committee and parish newsletter, "REJOICE."

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Food Baskets -

Donations of money and food items are collected and food baskets are prepared and distributed to needy families in our community.

AA Meetings -

Groups meet in parish hall on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays each week

Historic Bristol Day -

Walking tours of the church and cemetery with historical guides are offered in conjunction with the Bristol Historical and Cultural Foundation.

Bristol Ministerium -

Community Thanksgiving Service, Unity week in January, Stations of the Cross walk on Good Friday

Women of St. James' -

Help others in need in the local community and county, state and country. We assist in programs for the Seaman's Institute, Red Cross Homeless Shelter, Bethanna Children's Home, Njavo Indian Mission, Easter Seals.

CHURCH EVENTS

Weekly Thrift Shop

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| January | - | Annual Parish Meeting |
| February | - | Covered dish luncheon before Lent |
| March | - | Ham & Cabbage Dinner (Joint Holy Week services with
(Zion Lutheran Church, |
| April | - | Flea Market (Ministerium Stations of the Cross |
| May | - | Flea Market |
| June | - | Parish Picnic, Flea Market |
| July | - | St. James' Day Celebration, Flea Market |
| August | - | Flea Market |
| September | - | Calendar Luncheon, Flea Market |
| October | - | Historic Bristol Day Celebration, Flea Market |
| November | - | Ministerium Thanksgiving Eve Service, Holiday Bazaar, Flea
Market |
| December | - | Creche Blessing, Children's Christmas Pageant |

PARISH STATISTICS

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Baptised Members	218	207	185	162	
Baptisms	11	16	13	7	
Confirmed	11	7	0	0	
Received	2	4	0	0	
Marriages	7	13	9	4	
Burials	6	13	12	10	
Church School	48	49	17	27	
Ave. Sunday Attendance	95	105	84	60	
First Sunday in Lent	100	137	87	54	34
Easter	206	203	183	107	89
Pentecost Sunday	73	102	119	74	54
First Sunday in Advent	94	134	75	43	

HISTORY

In 1702, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, (SPG) sent ex-Quaker, George Keith to America to survey the work of the Anglican Church in the colonies. When he arrived in Boston on the H.M.S. Centurion, ship's captain, John Talbot, joined him in the expedition. Two of their objectives were the New York – Philadelphia corridor and along the banks of the Delaware River where Keith's former Quaker followers had settled.

In early 1704, the vestry of St. Mary's, Burlington, New Jersey, established in 1703, petitioned the SPG to appoint John Talbot their rector, and the first resident of SPG missionary in New Jersey. From Burlington, he would cross the Delaware River to Bristol, a small settlement in Pennsylvania established in 1681, to preach to an equally small group of Anglicans on Sunday afternoons. During his absence in England from 1705 to 1707, Thoroughgood Moore, one-time SPG missionary to the Mohawks of New York, served Bristol as well.

Talbot, in his report to the Society in 1714, described his early experiences in Bristol: "It was first begun by the zealous Moore, of pious memory ... I crossed the water at my own cost to serve these poor people who live in darkness and the shadow of death, in the midst of Heathenism, Atheism and Quakerism." He had baptized a few, he said, and told of "two of their chief people, Mr. John Rowland and Mr. Anthony Burton, who were willing to undertake to build a church, which they have done ...". The original building was erected through the generosity of Anthony Burton, John Rowland, the DeNormandie family and others. It was one story high composed of brick and stone. The first pulpit of black walnut was given by The Rev. John Talbot. The first sermon was preached there in 1712 before it was officially opened by The Rev. Francis Phillips. The church was consecrated for worship on the Feast of St. James' the Greater, July 25, 1714.

For a number of years, the ministry was sustained on an irregular basis by English missionaries. As zeal for the American Revolution developed, the Church of England missions in the colonies suffered from neglect, largely because the clergy had taken vows at the time of their ordination to uphold the Crown. Even before the war began, the church building here was abandoned and vandalized. During the Revolution, the vacant church deteriorated and was used as a stable by the American forces. Its windows and doors were ripped away and the interior exposed to the elements. After the peace, the original church was thoroughly renovated and enlarged, and its ministrations were regularly resumed.

Following the war, the few remaining members of the congregation managed to send one of their members, Christopher Merrick, to represent them at the meeting in Philadelphia called by William White in 1784 to form a diocese. The following year, the parish signed the Act of Association and was admitted into convention. Merrick also represented the parish at the 1786 convention that elected White the first bishop of Pennsylvania.

In Philadelphia in 1785, St. James' was one of the churches represented to form the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Thus, all the Church of England missions in the new country were incorporated into one body, a national church with bishops, priests and deacons, self-governing, but still in communion with the Church of England. Since its inception, about 40 clergy have served this parish. In the Diocese of Pennsylvania, St. James', Bristol, is the 10th oldest of the Church of England missions.

At the turn of the 19th century, Bristol had a reputation as a resort, with visitors from many parts of the new nation, yet the parish did not prosper any more than it had in the colonial period. This was true, however, of the infant Episcopal Church as a whole, still recovering from its former connection with the British crown. The situation in Bristol improved in 1832 with the opening of the Delaware Canal between Bristol and Easton, and it became a thriving industrial center.

For more than 100 years, St. James' remained the only Episcopal Church in Bucks County until George W. Ridgley became rector in 1830. He helped establish Grace Church – Hulmeville in 1831, St. Luke's – Newtown in 1832, St. Andrew's – Yardley in 1835, and Trinity Church – Buckingham in 1837.

Although St. James' original church building had been repaired and enlarged before the opening of the canal, the decades following its completion saw sufficient growth in the community for the parish to consider demolishing the church, now beyond repair, to plan for the present structure. The present edifice, mid-Victorian Gothic in architecture, built of Trenton fieldstone with beaded moldings and corbels, was built at a cost of \$10,000. Work began in 1856 and a new church was ready for Easter services in 1858.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the women of the parish formed the Ladies Church Aid Society for "the collection of clothing and delicacies for the soldiers at the front." The organization continued after the war and provided funds for building a parish house in 1877, currently still in use.

The early years of the 20th century saw alterations to the interior of the church. These included making a central aisle, installing an organ at the front of the church, removing the gallery at the rear and moving the choir to the chancel. In 1924, they changed the east wall of the church to allow the installation of the Dorrance Memorial Window. Designed by Nicholas D'Ascenzo, the window received the Gold Medal of the Architectural league of New York in 1925.

The development of Levittown, which was built in 1953, largely for World War II veterans, reshaped Lower Bucks County. The area surrounding Bristol, once agricultural, became a growing suburb of Philadelphia. Presently, our parish responds quickly to requests from community organizations for use of building space and hosts Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. The Bristol Riverside Theater rehearsed in the parish hall in the past and, starting this Fall, will hold productions there. The church and parish hall are open for the annual Historic Bristol Day and strongly supports Bristol ministerium programs.

DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

Chairpersons - Joanne Pizzullo, Betsy Schmidt

Members - Rick Baus, Jr.
Denise Ciambrello
Linda Jones
Horace Schmidt

VESTRY OF ST. JAMES'

Horace Schmidt, Rector's Warden
Linda Jones, Accounting Warden
Betsy Schmidt, Acting Secretary
Susan Marion, Treasurer
Dolores Baus
David Bevan
Denise Ciambrello
Joseph Ciambrello
Donna Dernoski