



Open Doors

The Newsletter of St. James Episcopal Church

December 2009

FROM THE



A couple of weeks ago, I was watching daytime TV on my day off, when they began talking about recommendations for Christmas gifts.

There were some great ideas, and, of course, some not so great. But the line that caught my attention was this: “Bring some spiritually back into Christmas with a Buddha.” Now, I don’t have anything against Buddhism, but it seems to me there is a more obvious spiritual figure associated with Christmas – yes, Jesus.

This time of the year, we begin to see signs springing up, “Put the Christ back into Christmas,” or “Jesus is the reason for the season” They express what many of us feel, that sometimes the religious (and original) meaning of Christmas gets overshadowed by shopping, Santa, and decorations. We want to remind people that it’s Christ’s birth that we are celebrating!

But I suspect that the most effective way to encourage people to celebrate Christ’s birth is not with signs and slogans (though you may have seen the great ad for the Episcopal Church in USA Today last week – it’s printed later in *Open Doors*), but an invitation for them to join us. Personally. As in, “We have a great Christmas service at

my church; I was wondering if you’d be interested in coming with me?”

Yes, it’s difficult to invite someone to church. You risk being rejected; you risk offending them. But think how much harder it must be, if you don’t have a church home, or perhaps even any church background, just to walk in by yourself. Recently, on an Episcopalian message board on a knitting website, someone wrote this: “I have a 6 year old daughter and I’d like to take her to church, and I’d like to take myself to church too ... but I’m nervous about the whole thing, how to prepare her, how to go about it in general. Can anybody give me some reassurance and basic instructions for kind of literally how to take my daughter and go to church on a Sunday?” Thankfully, a bunch of people responded to her. But what if she hadn’t had anyone to ask? She probably would still be wondering.

So, consider inviting someone to church with you this Christmas. Our first service Christmas Eve will be the family-oriented service at 5:30 p.m., with impromptu Christmas pageant (any child who shows up is invited to participate as a shepherd or angel – we have some costumes available or they can wear their own). That’s followed at 9:00 p.m. by “Silent Night at St. James,” a traditional candlelit celebration Eucharist with choir, followed by drinks at the Rectory. On Christmas morning, we celebrate with a small, but joyful, Eucharist at 10:00 a.m. Then, on December 27, the

Sunday after Christmas, both our morning services will be Lessons and Carols (with Eucharist). And, finally, we round out the Christmas season on January 3 with a celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany with Baptisms, and followed by our annual Epiphany Brunch.

Looking forward to celebrating Christ's birth with you and your families and friends!

- Raewynne

CHRISTMAS AT ST. JAMES

Christmas Eve - December 24

5:30 p.m. Family service with nativity pageant

9:00 p.m. "Silent Night at St. James"
Traditional candlelit Christmas Eve Eucharist with music for the season, followed by drinks at the Rectory

Christmas Day - December 25

10:00 a.m. Christmas Eucharist

Christmas 1 - December 27

8 & 9:30 a.m. Lessons and Carols service with Eucharist

** Be sure to check the monthly calendar for other seasonal events at St. James.*

A WORD FROM THE WARDENS

Last month we asked parishioners to share with us how they celebrate the season of Advent – how they make it meaningful and spiritual while being surrounded by all the secular commercialism of Christmas. We did not receive one reply. Does that mean that no one participates in any Advent rituals? Does that mean that no one reads what we write????

We had planned to share some of the ideas with you we even had prizes for the best ideaswe'll just have to keep the prizes for ourselves.

As we look at the Advent Wreath, we are reminded that the four candles represent Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. The Advent season is a time of preparation, of anticipation, of longing, of wonder.

In these seasons of Advent and Christmas may ***"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."*** 2 Peter 1:2.

- Pat & Jeff

ADOPT-A-FAMILY

Once again, under the able direction of Donna Guinaw and Claudette Plaschka, we are able to bring some Christmas spirit to a couple of families on Long Island through our annual Adopt-a-Family campaign. If you signed up to participate, please be sure to bring your wrapped and tagged gift to church on December 6 for collection.

PICK-A-STAR

Pick a star off the tree during coffee hour on Sunday, December 6, and provide a gift for one of the residents of the local UCP homes, or one of our parishioners who cannot get out to services. Please bring in your gifts on December 13. The gifts will be distributed to the homes on December 20th. For further information, contact Stephanie Coleman.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS DONATIONS

As we prepare to celebrate the holiday season with our families, let us not forget our neighbors who are in desperate need for food. The Food Pantry shelves are being rapidly depleted of stock. Between January and October we have experienced a 70% increase in clients! *“Let us not become weary in doing good.”*

We need your donations of non-perishable foods on a weekly basis. Whether you can contribute a case or a can, every donation is appreciated. Especially needed are the following items: soup, peanut butter, jelly, tuna, vegetables, fruit, juice, pork & beans, macaroni & cheese, stews, chunky soups and canned meats.

We also need volunteers to check the basket weekly and transport the food to the Pantry. This can be done on your own schedule. Thank you for your help!

- Claudette Plaschka

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN COLLECT FOR UNICEF

I would like to extend my thanks to all families who participated in our “Trick or Treat for UNICEF” this year. The children collected more than double the amount from last year, for a total of \$80.50. That’s pretty good for pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters....and a couple of dollars, too!

My child was a little apprehensive in the beginning, but after the first person gladly donated, and reminisced on their own experiences collecting when they were young, the task was approached with eagerness. Thank you for all your help.

-Karen Noack

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

This year’s Christmas Luncheon is to be held on Tuesday, December 8, 12:00 p.m. at Kitchen a Bistro, 404 Route 25A, St. James. The cost of the luncheon is \$35 per person, plus gratuity. Contact Fjeril Deal at 724-3720 to sign up today. All are invited to join in the fun!

FOR THIS, WE ARE THANKFUL

On Sunday, November 22, we followed a recently established tradition at St. James by spending several minutes reflecting on that for which we are thankful. Each parishioner (adult and child) at both services was asked to fill out a card which was then read at the part of the service which is usually reserved for the Prayers of the People. We have listed below many of the thanksgivings in the two categories considered:

In my life, I give thanks for...

A wonderful family, good health, friends, home, job, my husband, children, lifestyle, my granddaughters, God's indwelling holy spirit, breath, my country, wife, the gifts from God that allow me to serve others, my great life, my daughter's engagement, that my son has a job, the agency that takes care of my son, the freedom we experience, the knowledge of a benign tumor and its removal, all my pets, food, Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa, grandchildren, my spirituality, my community of caring individuals, my school, my puppy, neighbors, my cats, the love of God, the gift of faith, and God's grace, the planet earth, the glory of creation, my garden, the Cursillo community, the prayer shawl ministry, that my cousin, Matt, is safely home from Iraq, Jesus Christ, who loves me.

Here at St. James, I give thanks for ...

The people of this parish who are always here for each other, the honor of serving as a Lay Minister, Bible studies, being with people of faith, good friends, worship, being welcomed as a visitor, my extended family at St. James, God's presence, the Body of Christ, the spirit of the congregation, the encouragement and help in my prayer and spiritual life, the Rector, Wardens, Vestry, and all volunteers who serve so nobly, nice music, toy room, the history and connection with the past, God, Sunday School, Jesus, coffee hour, the choir, forgiveness, opportunities to do "good works" for others, Bishop Larry and his wife, Jeanne, the faithfulness of our people, our children, our participation in the seven church religious family that supports the Emergency Food Pantry, a neighborhood where we can raise our family in safety and grow them to be great people, the opportunity to worship God, through Jesus Christ, with the most wonderful people, in a very special place.

SPREAD SEASONAL JOY! COME CAROLING!

Join a varied group of St. James members as we go caroling to some of our parishioners who are homebound, or in nursing homes. You don't have to have a great voice, just be willing to share in bringing some Christmas cheer to others. Children are welcome, too!

We will meet at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 20 in the Webster Room to set up our car pools, and will enjoy some refreshments on our return. If you need any more information, contact Ron Tebbutt at 751-7408.

HELP THE ALTAR GUILD DECORATE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

Members of the Altar Guild will be preparing vessels, making window arrangements, and hanging wreaths and garlands on Saturday, December 19, beginning at 9 a.m.

On Sunday, December 20, following the 9:30 a.m. service, they invite your help in putting up bows, wrapping garlands outside the church, and putting the final touches on decorations for Christmas. Many hands make light (and quick) work, and our church always looks so beautiful for the Christmas season.

PEOPLE IN THE PEWS

This month's interviewee is Louise Harders.

Tell us about yourself. I was born in Smithtown Landing, my mother was born in New Jersey, and my father in Germany. I have lived on Long Island all my life, and was married at St. James Church in 1953.

First attended St. James. I first attended St. James at the age of 7, and was Baptized and Confirmed here.

Roles played in the parish. Greeter, coffee hour host, and "jammer".

What do you like most about St. James? The church services, and the friends we have made.

Last book read? *A Light in the Window* .

Hymn you'd take to a desert island.
Amazing Grace.

Tell us some of your favorites:

Color Blue
Movie "Gone With the Wind"
Song "Because of You"
Season Spring

The way to spend Saturday morning
With family

Education and interests. High school graduate. Like to flower garden.

If you were to start another career, what would it be? Hairdresser.

A verse from Scripture that is especially meaningful to you? Hebrews 4:12.

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

ADVENT EVENING OF REFLECTION

Sunday, December 13

4:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Mills Hall

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. . ."

"O Come, O Come, thou Wisdom from on high. . ."

So begin the first two verses of the well-known Advent hymn. Each of "*The Great O Antiphons*" shaping each verse is a brief prayer addressing Christ by one of his messianic titles from the Old Testament and ending with a heartfelt plea for his coming. Although the precise origin of these texts is unknown, by the 8th and 9th centuries the church in Rome and monastic communities throughout western Europe were using these words at evening worship services during the season of Advent. Enjoy a reflective respite with the Christian Formation and Education Committee as we look more closely at this popular hymn.

A light soup supper will be served at 5:30 p.m. Please sign up in the church narthex or by calling the church office.

- Kathy Sides

2009 ADVENT BOOKLETS

Booklets for our at-home, parish-wide Advent candle lighting (7:30 p.m. Sundays) are available in the narthex, along with purple Advent candles for those who do not have an Advent wreath. This year's format includes a reading from the Daily Office, followed by reflectively praying one of the Advent hymns sung in the 9:30 service that day. This is an important time to set aside the increasing busyness of the season and to focus instead on preparing our hearts to celebrate Christ's birth as we reflect on the meaning of this event in our lives.

SNOW POLICY

The Vestry has set the following policy in the event of snow:

- * If a snow emergency has been declared, all events, including church services, are to be canceled.
- * If the Smithtown schools are closed, the church office is closed, and all daytime activities are canceled. Evening activities will take place depending on the weather and road conditions.

VESTRY NOMINATIONS

We are pleased to report that both Debbie LaMano and Chris Mauro have agreed to run for a second three-year term as Vestryperson. We still have one position for Vestry that remains to be filled. Jeff Smith has decided to retire after one two-year term as Warden. Therefore, we have that position open, as well.

The requirements for these positions were enumerated in the November issue of *Open Doors*. If you feel called to serve, or would like to nominate someone else, please contact Jack Schultheis, Chair of the Nominating Committee by December 7th. He can be reached at 689-9467.

EPIPHANY BRUNCH

Plan to join us on Sunday, January 3, as we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany with a special brunch following coffee hour. Watch the Sunday bulletin for more information, or contact Stephanie Coleman, who is coordinating this event. Stephanie can be reached at 689-0663.

STEWARDSHIP

I wanted to submit a personal testimony regarding pledging, as I'm so excited (really I am) to be able to submit a pledge card for 2010.

Pledging for 2010: My personal situation has brought me to a time of permanent disability. I haven't worked for Child Protective Services since 10/13/06. However, I've been extraordinarily blessed to have a supportive family, who were able to carry my financial needs. I was very disappointed to not be able to make a pledge for 2009, as I had no income of my own. This past summer I received notification that I now qualify for permanent Social Security Disability. Now that I am receiving a small income, I have the opportunity to start at the foundation and make a tithe presented to God through my church. I really am very excited to return to a minimum tithing of 10% back to God. After all, He gives and provides for 100% of our needs.

I have preciously experienced the power and benefits of tithing. While I don't seek the benefit, I know that tithing works. When I first finished my B.A. degree, I earned about \$7,000 that year, and tithed, and I also saved \$2,000 that year for a downpayment on a car. With tithing I experience financial freedom and have experienced this freedom seep into other areas of my life. Although it bewilders my mind as to how financial ends can be met and stretched, it also brings a sense of wonderment and awe at God's magnificence.

- Patricia J. Pawelko

Commitment Sunday was November 29th. There has been a tremendous response, but we still haven't reached our goal. If you are planning to pledge, please return a pledge card to the office A.S.A.P.

ADVENT SUNDAY HIGHLIGHTS

Advent 2 - December 6

The Rev. Claire Nesmith to preach

Advent 3 - December 13

The Chrismon tree is decorated by the children during the 9:30 a.m. service

Advent Eve of Reflection 4:30 p

Advent 4 - A visit from St. Nicholas during the 9:30 a.m. service

Pick-a-Star gift delivery

Christmas caroling 4:30 p.m.

AN INVITATION

We recently received a letter from Ecolin Jewelers, who have taken over the store originally occupied by Vickers' Framing at 464 North Country Road in St. James. They have offered to donate 5% of any sales made to our parishioners between now and Christmas to our church. If you have seen their shop in Port Jefferson, you know they carry many beautiful items. Please stop by to see what they have, and if you make a purchase, let them know you are a parishioner at St. James Church. They will issue a duplicate invoice, which you can turn in to our office. At the end of the month, we will let them know the total of the sales receipts we have received, and they will send us 5% of that amount.

NEWS OF THE PARISH FAMILY

On November 8th, we welcomed into the parish family Tyler Robert Moleti, the son of Joseph and Lisa Moleti, grandson of Lil and Bob Moleti, and baby brother of Alex. It was wonderful to see all of Tyler's family and friends at his Baptism!

At the Diocesan Convention in November, our Rector, Raewynne, was named by Bishop Larry Provenzano as Canon Theologian of the Diocese. This is an honorary position. She will provide theological advice to the Bishop, write a monthly column for *The Dominion*, and keep a blog. Congratulations, Raewynne!

REQUESTS & OFFERS

Recycling of greeting cards: Pat Pawelko would like to recycle any type of greeting card you are ready to toss (birthday, get well, even Christmas cards). She will put a clear plastic shoebox size labeled container for collection of these items in the lobby of the Christian Ed building, with her name on it.

Looking for a Christmas gift? A table runner might be just the ticket. Runners are pieced and quilted, and can be any length. Fabric can be seasonal or everyday to coordinate with your decor. Prices vary according to size. Contact Laurie Mannix at 928-8322 if you are interested.

No time to bake, or hate to do it? Let me do it for you! Quick breads and cookies are my specialties. Many different recipes. Reasonable prices. Contact Laurie Mannix at 928-8322 for information.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

1	Bible study 10:30 a.m. Bible study 7:15 p.m. Recovery group 7:30 p.m.		Church" 9 a.m. Toastmaster's Group 9:30 a.m. - Mills Hall
2	Knitting group 10:30 a.m. Grave blanket decorating 4:30 p.m. - Mills Hall Bible study 7:15 p.m.	20	Advent 4 Holy Eucharist I 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II with Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Church decorating Pick-a-Star gift delivery Christmas caroling 4:30 p.m.
3	N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	21	GreSheeters Anon. 7:30 p.m.
6	Advent 2 Holy Eucharist I 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m. with Sunday School Adopt-a-Family gifts due Pick-a-Star gift sign up	22	Bible study 7:15 p.m. Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
7	Finance Committee 7:30 p.m. GreSheeters Anon. 7:30 p.m.	23	Knitting group 10:30 a.m.
8	Christmas Luncheon 12 p.m. at Kitchen a Bistro Bible study 7:15 p.m. Recovery group 7:30 p.m.	24	Christmas Eve Family service & Nativity pageant 5:30 p.m. "Silent Night at St. James" Holy Eucharist 9:00 p.m. Drinks at the Rectory
9	Knitting group 10:30 a.m. Bible study 7:15 p.m.	25	Christmas Day Holy Eucharist 10:00 a.m.
10	Yoga class 4:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	27	Christmas 1 Holy Eucharist I with Lessons & Carols 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II with Lessons & Carols 9:30 a.m.
12	Connor funeral 11 a.m.	28	GreSheeters Anon. 7:30 p.m.
13	Advent 3 Holy Eucharist I 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m. with Sunday School Parish Life Committee 11:15 Advent Evening of Reflection 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	29	Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
14	Vestry meeting 7:30 p.m. GreSheeters Anon. 7:30 p.m.	31	New Year's Eve
15	Bible study 7:15 p.m. Recovery group 7:30 p.m.		
16	Knitting group 10:30 a.m. Bible study 7:15 p.m.		
17	Yoga class 4:30 p.m. N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal 8:00 p.m.		
18	Mills Hall rental - "Challenger" party 6 p.m.		
19	Altar Guild "Greening of the		

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Florence Clark
Betty Toop
Marty Scott
Julia White
Robert Bennett
Kathy Mauro
Kathy Sides
Pat Pawelko
Jade Plaschka
Bob Scott
Pat Martinsen
Les Bengtson
Laurie Mannix
Ron Davies
Alex Pfitzer
Donna Wachter

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Willy & Nancy Rasmussen
Peter & Claudette Plaschka

*A Blessed Advent & Christmas
to All!*

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS

Each year, members of the Altar Guild, along with other parishioners, do a beautiful job decorating our church for the Christmas season. To assist in funding the purchase of those decorations, memorial gifts may be given. If you are interested, you may either use an envelope (included in mailed copies of *Open Doors*, and available in the back of the church) or fill in the form below, enclose it along with a check, payable to St. James Church, and mail it to the office. Please return your request by Sunday, December 20, so your memorial may be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

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**Offering for Christmas Memorial
Flowers and Greens**

Given by: _____

In memory of _____

In thanksgiving for _____

Amount _____

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This is the advertisement from USA Today referred to in the Rector's column.

The Episcopal Church

welcomes you

-  *As Episcopalians, we are followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and believe in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
-  *The Episcopal Church has members in the United States, as well as in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Haiti, Honduras, Micronesia, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, Venezuela, and the Virgin Islands.*
-  *We strive to love our neighbors as ourselves and respect the dignity of every person.*
-  *The Episcopal Church is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, and traces its heritage to the beginnings of Christianity.*
-  *Our liturgy retains ancient structure and traditions, and is celebrated in many languages.*
-  *We welcome men and women, married or celibate, to be ordained as bishops, priests, and deacons.*
-  *We believe in amendment of life, the forgiveness of sin, and life everlasting.*
-  *Lay people exercise a vital role in the governance and ministry of our Church.*
-  *Holy Communion may be received by all baptized Christians, not only members of the Episcopal Church.*
-  *We uphold the Bible and worship with the Book of Common Prayer.*
-  *We affirm that committed relationships are lifelong and monogamous.*
-  *Episcopalians also recognize that there is grace after divorce and do not deny the sacraments to those who have been divorced.*
-  *We affirm that issues such as birth control are matters of personal informed conscience.*
-  *We celebrate our unity in Christ while honoring our differences, always putting the work of love before uniformity of opinion.*
-  *All are welcome to find a spiritual home in the Episcopal Church.*

www.episcopalchurch.org