



Open Doors

The Newsletter of St. James Episcopal Church

December 2013

FROM THE



RECTOR

This Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning of the Church's year. We leave behind the celebration of Christ the King, the warmth of family Thanksgiving celebrations, and here in church,

even the pressures of Christmas shopping. Here we have time to slow down, to think, to pray, to be quiet, and above all to prepare for the coming of our Savior, born as a babe in Bethlehem, and coming again in glory.



As I was reflecting on Advent, I came across this poem by Madeleine L'Engle, the author of the Newbury Medal-winning novel "A Wrinkle in Time" and for many years as librarian and writer in residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. I invite you to take time to meditate on it this Advent.

The Winter Is Cold, Is Cold

by Madeleine L'Engle

The winter is cold, is cold.
All's spent in keeping warm.
Has joy been frozen, too?
I blow upon my hands
Stiff from the biting wind.
My heart beats slow, beats slow.
What has become of joy?

If joy's gone from my heart
Then it is closed to You
Who made it, gave it life.
If I protect myself
I'm hiding, Lord, from you.
How we defend ourselves
In ancient suits of mail!

Protected from the sword,
Shrinking from the wound,
We look for happiness,
Small, safety-seeking, dulled,
Selfish, exclusive, in-turned.
Elusive, evasive, peace comes
Only when it's not sought.

Help me forget the cold
That grips the grasping world.
Let me stretch out my hands
To purifying fire,
Clutching fingers uncurled.
Look! Here is the melting joy.
My heart beats once again.

CHRISTMAS AT ST. JAMES

Christmas Eve - December 24

5:30 p.m. Family service with Nativity Pageant and Eucharist

9:00 p.m. Traditional candlelit Christmas Eve Eucharist with music for the season

Christmas Day - December 25

9:30 a.m. Christmas Eucharist

Christmas 1 - December 29

9:30 a.m. Service of Lessons and Carols

Christmas 2 - January 5

Epiphany Brunch following the 9:30 a.m. service

THE WARDEN'S COLUMN

C.S. Lewis wrote, *“The reason why it can never succeed is this. God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on gasoline, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”*

Several years ago the Vestry while on retreat recognized the importance of a life lived in **relationship** with God. As a result the Vestry defined “Growing in faith through scripture and prayer” as a core principle of

our mission here at St. James. During the past few years the Vestry and the Christian Education and Formation Committee (CFE) has promoted and encouraged Bible study. Unfortunately, it is a minority of our parish that participates in our Bible studies.

I do believe we were made to hear the Word of God. Hearing and reading Scripture makes me happy. For me, it's like eating a proper diet. There are foods I love to eat, like Chinese spare ribs. I love how they taste, but always feel awful after I've eaten them. Similarly, there are foods I've come to appreciate like vanilla yogurt with granola. I didn't like how it tasted at first, but it does make me feel good, and I even look forward to having it. Bible study has been the same experience.

This Advent season the CFE has decided not to offer a special series of workshops. Instead, the focus will remain on Bible study. I really encourage you and your family to participate in the fellowship of a “Tuesday Morning”, “Tuesday Night”, or “Wednesday Evening Family” Bible study. If you can't be present, I still encourage you to make the time in your life to read the scripture designated for those weeks. In the words of C.S. Lewis, it is “the food our spirits were designed to feed on.” It is the food we need to grow in faith; and that in doing so we can fully receive the love of God, and the happiness and peace He wants us to have.

Happy Thanksgiving,
Chris

ADVENT PROGRAM

This Advent season the Christian Education and Formation Committee will be offering a series of Bible studies from “The Thoughtful Christian” on psalms. The studies are being offered Tuesday night, 12/3 and 12/17 at 7:15 p.m., and will focus on the psalm of the week from our lectionary.

The Psalter is a body of liturgical poetry. It is designed for vocal, congregational use, whether by singing or reading. The psalms are full of emotion and often deal with the human condition speaking directly to our souls. The majority of psalms are songs of praise to God, communal or individual laments, or individual thanksgivings. They are poems about our relationship with God.

We encourage you to join us and “sing” a psalm on a Tuesday night! This busy Advent season consider the words from Psalm 122 verse 7 designated in our common lectionary for December 1st: “Peace be within your walls and quietness within your towers.”

We hope that you find comfort and strength in this study of the Psalms as we regularly will provide verses for reflection from the lectionary throughout the coming year.

“Peace be within your walls
and quietness within your towers”

- *The C.F.E. Committee*

ANGLICAN MYSTICISM, ONLINE

Advent online shared book reading

The Mercer School is offering an online reading of [Advent with Evelyn Underhill](#), edited by Christopher Webber, which was published by Morehouse in 2006. “For generations, readers have found in the writings of Evelyn Underhill the guidance to help them deepen their own interior lives in the Christian mystical tradition. In this lovely volume, Anglican author and editor Christopher Webber has carefully selected inspirational passages from Underhill’s most significant works, providing readings for every day of Advent and Christmas – and sharing the timeless treasure of Underhill’s spiritual vision.” - *Morehouse Publishing*

The book is available through Amazon and iBooks, as well as at other sites. To participate, simply read the daily selection from Underhill throughout the season and join in the discussion on Mercer School’s Facebook page, *Conversations at Mercer*. No registration or payment is necessary.

FLOURISH IN FAITH

The Stewardship Ministry Team hopes that through our “Flourish in Faith” series in the past few weeks that you have considered how your material blessings can deepen your faith and commitment to the ministries of St. James. In our letter to you, we asked that you prayerfully determine God’s will for the gifts and resources with which you have been blessed.

Stewardship of course involves money but it is not about money. Stewardship is sharing in God’s mission with a glad and cheerful heart. Stewardship transforms lives in our community. Stewardship is responding to God’s call. Stewardship blesses the giver more than the receiver.

As together we celebrate Commitment Sunday on December 1, when our pledges will be offered as an act of worship, we thank you for taking this spiritual journey and taking time to reflect on how the gifts you have received can enable you to “Flourish in Faith.”

With gratitude to each of you for the gifts you share,

- Jennifer Lawrence

PICK-A-STAR

On Sunday, December 1 parishioners are invited to select a star from the tree in Mills Hall during coffee hour and purchase a gift for a shut-in parishioner or resident of a local UCP home. Each star contains a name and a suggested item to purchase. Wrapped gifts are to be returned to the church by Sunday, December 15, and delivery to the UCP homes will be on Sunday, December 22. If you chose the name of a shut-in parishioner, you may make your own arrangements for delivery.

- Stephanie Coleman & Sue Krall

ADOPT-A-FAMILY

Each year we also participate in the diocesan Adopt-a-Family program. This year, we have three families with a total of six kids. If you didn't select a family member this past Sunday, there is still time to do so on December 1. Some special items that are needed are towel sets (a total of 10 are needed), “goodie” baskets, and grocery store

gift cards. Please be sure to have your wrapped gifts back on Sunday, December 8. Thank you to all who take the time to participate in this outreach opportunity.

- Donna Guinaw

BAKE A BATCH FOR THE FOOD PANTRY

This year, we are offering a new outreach opportunity. During the month of December many of us enjoy baking cookies for our families and friends. This month, when you are doing your baking, why not bake a batch for the clients of the Smithtown Emergency Food Pantry, who would really appreciate a special treat during the Christmas season?

Cookies don't need to be fancy – they just have to taste good and travel well. This is a great way to get the kids involved! You can use slice and bake dough, or your own favorite recipes. Cookies may be wrapped by the dozen and labeled as to type and whether or not there are nuts included.

You may bring the cookies to coffee hour on Sunday or the office during the week. They will be transported to the Food Pantry at the beginning of each week. If you can volunteer to transport them, that would be a great help.

- Laurie Mannix

TOILETRY DONATIONS

Students at Protestant Campus Ministry at Stony Brook University gratefully thank you for all your donations of toiletries for women transitioning from domestic violence. Recently, they were able to donate 400 baskets to these women! The students have completed this outreach project (at least for now) and will be undertaking other projects.

So, what to do with all those extra toiletries you have amassed? The clients at the Food Pantry always appreciate these items. Donations can still be left in the brown basket at the back of the church, and will be sent to the Pantry for their use.

- Sue Krall

GIVING THANKS

In this season of Thanksgiving, I wanted to thank the many parishioners who so willingly helped to make the reception for the Noacks so lovely. The generosity and abundant love from each of you was overwhelming. Within moments of sending out a request for help, I had received numerous emails offering food and service. The offers continued to come for the next several days. Many of you volunteered to cook, some to set up Mills Hall, others to be responsible for decorating and floral arranging, two wonderful individuals offered to heat all of the food, altar guild prepared the church for a beautiful service, dishwashers were in abundance and cleanup was a breeze with so many hands willing to help. A delicious lunch buffet was provided. As I was watching the numbers of people being fed and the foods disappear as quickly

as we were putting them out, my first thought was that we would run out of food before everyone was fed. Then, as I reflected, I knew that we would not run out of food. As I shared my thought, several of us spoke of the "Feeding of the 5,000".

I consider myself very blessed to be part of the St. James family, a family that is full of compassion, love, thoughtfulness, caring and generosity; generosity of talents and time. Whatever role you played, I want to thank you on behalf of myself and the Noacks. This outpouring of love will never be forgotten.

Happy Thanksgiving and blessings to you all.

- Colette Tarantino

COFFEE HOUR

Do you enjoy coffee hour? Would you like to share that joy with other parishioners? Many of our regular coffee hour hosts go south for the winter, so there are opportunities for you to help out! If you can assist any Sunday from January 26 through the end of March it would be greatly appreciated. Please contact me by email: patkreg@verizon.net or phone 863-1113.

- Pat Kregler

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

St. James' annual Christmas luncheon will be held on Tuesday, December 10, 12:30 p.m. at Villa Sorrento, 823 Middle Country Road in St. James. The cost is \$28.00 per person. Make your reservations with during coffee hour on Sundays, or call Fjeril Deal at 724-3720.

CEMETERY NEWS

The Cemetery Committee has been busy these last two months with several projects. First, after much discussion in previous meetings, we decided to replace twenty-six of the dead and/or missing cedar trees along the allée through the center of the original cemetery. The beautiful archway dates back to the 1800s and has often been used by funeral processions and is an important part of our historic cemetery.

The second project has been a continuation of the beautification of the new cemetery area with the planting of additional trees and shrubs. This project was spearheaded by Robin Dahlgard and Tony DeVito with the approval of the Cemetery Committee. One aspect of these plantings includes eight yew shrubs to line a pathway leading east from the roadway to the front of the large Kousa dogwood tree donated a few years ago by Linda and Ken Misa. This is similar in design to the allée described above. Heartfelt thanks to Robin and Tony who did all the designing, landscaping, and planting in both projects. We invite you to look at this ongoing work in maintaining and improving our cemetery. Consider also the many possibilities of donations to the cemetery to help in this work and as remembrances for loved one.

The Cemetery Committee invites all members and other interested parishioners to a grave blanket decorating party on Wednesday, December 4 beginning at 4:30 p.m. We have over 100 blankets to decorate this year, so many hands make light work. Pizza will be served once the decorating is done.

- Ken LeCluse

OUTREACH

The Smithtown Emergency Food Pantry especially needs donations of juice, fruit, tuna fish and peanut butter and jelly at this time. Donations can be left in the cart in the hallway of the Christian Education building. If you see that the cart is getting full, please take a turn and deliver the food to the Pantry, which is located at St. Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church in Smithtown. The Pantry is open Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to Noon. When you are baking for Christmas this month, why not bake a batch of cookies for the clients of the Pantry? Cookies may be wrapped by the dozen and brought to coffee hour on Sunday, where they will be collected for transportation to the Pantry each week. Share the joy of the season!

St. James will participate in a Habitat for Humanity work day on Friday, December 13. Experience or special skills are not needed. You will be shown what to do on the site. Plan to bring your lunch. Contact Ken LeCluse at 588-1176 if you can join the group, or for more information. Helping another family in this way is always a very gratifying day!

Protestant Campus Ministry at Stony Brook University has received a 2013 grant of \$1,500.00 from Episcopal Charities of Long Island. The grant

application was jointly sponsored by St. James and Caroline Episcopal Churches. The money will be used for a new printer and for student peer ministers for the ministry. PCM students will be participating in an **Interfaith Festival of Lights**, celebrating the diversity of religions and their winter holidays. **It will be held on Wednesday, December 4 at 6 p.m. in the Student Activities Ballroom A on the campus.** You are invited to enjoy the foods, songs, dances, and displays of the various religious groups. Students at PCM gratefully thank you for all your donations of toiletries for women transitioning from domestic violence. Recently, there were able to donate 400 baskets to these women! The students have completed this outreach project, at least for now. (However, the clients using the Food Pantry can always use toiletries as well, so donations can still be placed in the basket in the back of the church, and will be taken to the Food Pantry with the food donations).

Wrapped gifts for the families we are sponsoring through the Episcopal Diocese are due back at church on Sunday, December 8. Be sure to securely attach the name tag. For more information contact Donna Guinaw at 269-4276.

Wrapped Pick-a-Star gifts for residents of UPC group homes are due back at church on Sunday, December 15. Be sure to securely attach the star with the person's name. The gifts will be delivered by Santa and our youth,(and you, if you would like to join them) on Sunday afternoon , December 22. This is a favorite day of the season for many of us. Don't miss out! If you choose a star on December 1 for a home-bound parishioner, you may deliver your gift at your convenience any time before Christmas. For more information, contact Stephanie Coleman at 751-4151.

The Seamen's Church Institute Christmas at Sea Program will be giving hand-made scarves and caps to seamen from around the world. If you knit or crochet, or would like to learn on a simple project, speak to Raewynne for patterns available for this project.

Veterans supported by the United Veterans Beacon House in Farmingdale thank you for the clothing and household items you donated during November.

Donations to Episcopal Relief and Development have twice the impact if you give by December 6, thanks to a matching gift challenge from a group of generous donors. Your gift will be doubled in size! If you wish to donate to the relief effort in the Philippines, this would be a reliable way to do so. Just note your wishes on your check. You may send a check payable to "Episcopal Relief and Development" to P.O. Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058 or go to info@episcopalrelief.org to give online.

For the most meaningful Christmas gifts, try the following web sites:
www.episcopalrelief.org/gifts for life (1-855-312-4325).
www.heifer.org/faith (1-888-548-6437)
www.worldvisiongifts.org (1-888-511-6511)

Register as a bone marrow donor at www.bethematch.org .

Thank you for all the ways you reach out to others during the Advent and Christmas seasons!

- Sue Krall

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORK DAY

St. James will participate in a work day for Habitat for Humanity on Friday, December 13. You don't need special building talent, just a willingness to work. Contact me at 588-1176 if you can volunteer, or if you want more information.

- *Ken LeCluse*

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING & VESTRY NOMINATIONS

The Annual Parish Meeting of St. James Church is scheduled for Sunday, February 3, 2014. At that meeting, we will be electing members of the Vestry as follows:

Warden - one (1) two-year term

Warden - one (1) one-year term (to fill vacancy)

Vestry persons - three (3) three-year terms

Nominations are being accepted for all the above positions. Please speak to Chris Mauro or the Rector if you are interested.

PARISH THANKSGIVINGS

During the services on Sunday, November 24, the congregation reflected on those things for which they are thankful. Here are some of the responses:

In my life, I give thanks for....

Good health

Loving husband

Beautiful grandchildren

Adequate financial means

Family

Friends

My home

Food

Pets: cats, dogs

Healing

Acceptance

All creatures great and small

My children

Wonderful doctors and medical

people who help us

My wife

Wonderful community

Chance to affect great positive

change

Parents

Siblings

America

Work that I love

Being loved

My life - to wake up each day to

enjoy

Enough money to live and give

Love of music, art, and beauty

My best friend

Hugs

All who support and serve the

Food Pantry

Education

My life in recovery

Living in safety and stability

The ability to accept life on life's

terms though it is not always

pleasant or good

My school

Good wine

A world so beautiful it can still take

my breath away

My son Michael's life, so enriched

by UCP

My mother

The ability to be independent

Support system

The love of my life

My business

Grandma

My boss and job

My friends who have become my

family

My parent's guidance
Those who serve our nation in the
military
My nephew
My students and their intellect
God, for looking over me
Living in a free democratic country
with a right to vote
Teddy bears
Horses
My Fender Stratocaster
Heavy metal
Thanksgiving dinner
Hugs and kisses
My toys
Blankets
Christmas
Books, movies
People who survived cancer
My job, which is focused on serving
God's kingdom
The wisdom of my brother
The joy, gentleness and courage of
Lockie
The mischievousness of Gus
My godchildren
A fireplace for cold winter evenings
My ability to cope with whatever
befalls me
Godiva Chocolate
The Constitution
Hello Kitty and all animals
God's peace, comfort, promises
Sunshine
My God-given abilities that I share
while receiving blessings
All my blessings on a daily basis –
too many to count

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

A place to worship God
Listening to stories
Sunday school and Miss Carol
Coffee hour and the hosts
A sense of love, community, and a
rector whose homilies challenge
me to live a Christ-centered life

A beautiful church
Warm and friendly parishioners
Our children
The faithfulness of our long time
members
The new life of newer members
The church family that seeks to love
each other as Christ loved us
Consolation, sincere concern of
friends for my well-being
Inspiration
The 8:00 service
Spiritual enrichment
Prayers and Bible study
Faithful preaching
A place to be with God in peace
God's word
The visual reminders
A warm, comforting place that
welcomes us and our children
Our priest, Raewynne
The love we share as a community
in Christ
Opportunity to serve
A welcoming home in which to
worship
Spiritual guidance
Community and commitment
Communion, education and
fellowship
The choir and Dara
The Food Pantry
The people that have so warmly
welcomed us as new parishioners
Helping each other when needed
God's guidance
Wonderful parish of people who care
Gospels, sermons, prayers
Godly Play
Watching the younger ones grow up
Our many ministries
The indwelling Holy Spirit
My Christian friends
The Vestry
Laurie
Kindness and acceptance
The overwhelming love and support

that is continually extended to my
family
Cookies!
J2A (Journey to Adulthood)
The Sunday school teachers
The people who make a difference
My faith, hope, love
My priest, the great people here, the
great kids, a beautiful church
which has a place for me
Claudette P. and Nancy P.
All who give of their time for our
parish
My sense of belonging
The freedom to go to the church of
my choice
Having found a place that feels like a
true spiritual home, a place where
I can see myself growing in faith
for the rest of my life

CAMP DE WOLFE 2014 WINTER CAMP

Camp DeWolfe will be holding its Winter Camp for all 4th to 8th graders who can't wait until summer camp! The camp is scheduled for the weekend of Friday, January 24th at 6 p.m. through Sunday, January 26th at 1 p.m. at a cost of \$125 per camper. Activities will include worship, games, arts, fun, and maybe even snow. This weekend will be a great retreat for returning campers, interested first time campers, and anyone who loves camp! Register at the camp site www.campdewolfe.org by December 15, or call 929-4325.

LOST

Our long, dressy table runner (silky, sage green) cannot be found. Perhaps someone took it home for laundering or dry cleaning after an occasion. If so, please return it to the pantry closet in Mills Hall so we can use it for our next "gala" get-together. Thank you!

- *Lil Moleti*

GOOD NEWS

Our parking lot has been routinely full on Sunday. For safety reasons we ask that you do not park on the Mills Hall side of the driveway, or on either side of that driveway along Rte. 25A. The Vestry also asks that the able-bodied make use of the additional parking on the other side of the Sunday school wing (access from Northern Blvd.), or on the grass beyond the playground. We thank you for this assistance in hopes of making our grounds safer, better accessible, and welcoming to visitors.

- *Chris Mauro*

NEWS OF THE PARISH FAMILY

On November 3, we were happy to welcome Jeremy Siedlak as a "child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven" as he was baptized at St. James. When Jeremy, age 7, was asked if he desired to be baptized he responded with a resounding YES! Congratulations to Jeremy and his family, Gabriele and Bill Reisenauer.

A service of Christian Burial was held on November 2 for Jean Henderson, a former member of St. James, who had moved away. Our prayers go out to her family in Virginia.