



Open Doors

The Newsletter of St. James Episcopal Church

February 2010

FROM THE



RECTOR

Sunday dawned bright and sunny - a gorgeous day for our Annual Meeting. Unfortunately - or perhaps fortunately as it turned out - the church heating had failed, so we moved our combined 9.30am service to Mills Hall. It was packed, with parishioners gathered around tables and children on the floor or on laps. Following morning tea hosted by the Vestry, we moved into our Annual Meeting. After the reports (copies available from the office), which included hearing of our improved financial status in 2009 compared with prior years, and reception of a budget with a small deficit, Debbie LaMano, Les Bengston, and Colette Tarantino, were elected to Vestry and Chris Mauro to the office of Warden. Two items of other business were introduced: the plan for a community garden in our grounds, with food grown going to support the food pantry, and a discussion of the use of our flags in the church.

I raised this latter issue in response to concerns expressed to me by three parishioners about the movement of the flags from immediately behind the altar to the balcony. I presented a history of flags in the church, some basic principles, and four options for their placement (copy below). A number of parishioners spoke, of a range of ages and including both veterans and non-

veterans. The consensus was that option 2 should be adopted. A parishioner has offered to donate new flags, and the existing flags will be placed in Mills Hall, where until now we have had no flags. The discussion was thoughtful and respectful - a model of how to deal healthily with difficult issues!

Blessings

Raewynne

FLAGS IN CHURCH

History:

1850s? American flags not used in churches

Mid-late 19th century American flags introduced into Roman Catholic Churches to counter criticism that they owe allegiance to the Pope, a foreign power

1940s American flags introduced into churches during WW2

1950s Flags were suspended from angled brackets overhead the nave. Morning Prayer was the primary form of worship in our church, and the liturgical focus was on the Rector and choir.

1970s? With the introduction of the Eucharist as the principal weekly service, the focus of worship moved to the altar.

1970s/80s The altar was moved forward to the front of the sanctuary, with the choir behind. The focus of worship moved to the altar, which was closer to the people. The priest was joined by the Eucharistic Ministers behind the altar.

Exodus 20: 2-3

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

US Code Title 4, Chapter 1, §7k

"When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag of the United States of America should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speaker's right as he faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the clergyman or speaker or to the right of the audience."

1970s-90s At some point the flags were moved from overhead to the back corners of the sanctuary, where they formed a backdrop.

Late 1990s The altar was returned to the back of the sanctuary. Shelves were installed in the back corners of the sanctuary. The flags were moved inwards to stand behind the altar. The priest stood alone at the altar.

2007 Parishioners requested that the Eucharistic Ministers rejoin the priest behind the altar. The flags were obscured, and drew focus from the symbols of our worship. At the end of that year, the flags were moved to the balcony, where they can be seen leaving the church. This follows the traditions of cathedrals, where they are traditionally suspended horizontally overhead, and many churches, where they are placed by the exit as a visible sign of the world into which we go, "rejoicing in the power of the Spirit."

Late 2008 Two parishioners expressed concern to the Rector about the position of the flags.

2009 The vestry discussed the flags and decided that hanging from the bar with the parish banner might be an appropriate position. Nothing was done. Discussion apparently continued among parishioners, though only one person talked with the Rector. The vestry discussed it again. The Rector decided it would be healthiest to have a public discussion at the Annual Meeting.

Principles:

- The architecture always wins!
- In any Christian church, the cross is in the position of honor, representing God on whom our worship is focused. This means that the US Flag Code is by definition violated any time an American flag is in church, because the cross is always of highest prominence.
- The symbols of the core of our worship, Word and Sacrament, that is, the pulpit, altar and font, should not be obscured or overshadowed.
- The Rector is responsible for worship and for the use and control of the church and its furnishings and appurtenances

The flag is important to many people in this congregation. Therefore we are looking at options that do least injustice to the flag code while still observing the first commandment, and being practical, given our architecture.

Some options:

1. Move the altar forward to where it was in the 1980s and 1990s. The shelves would be removed, the tabernacle placed on a side table, and the flags replaced in the back corners. The choir would be placed behind the altar.
2. Suspend the flags above the congregation, immediately in front of the balcony, in line

with our St James banner, so that they are highly visible when leaving the church.

3. Place the flags in wall brackets, similar to their placement under Mr Mills.

4. Place the flags on the floor by the font and pulpit, or both by the font; move the font to either the center of the aisle (visually uniting the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist) or in the back of the church, removing one or more pews to make space (the traditional placement of the font, in the entry of the church)

WARDEN'S REPORT

I welcome Chris Mauro to the position of Warden, Colette Tarantino and Les Bengtson to the Vestry, and congratulate Debbie LaMano on her re-election. I look forward to working with them and the rest of the Vestry, and am thankful for their commitment to St. James.

Please plan on joining us in fellowship and in support of our youth as they prepare and serve us at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper.

I am looking forward to reading C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* and participating in the Book Group meeting on Wednesday nights during Lent. I encourage you to join in.

Are you interested in the history of our church? Do you love to search through old documents? Have you ever wanted to be an archivist? A St. James History Committee is being formed to search through boxes of material that have been found in a storage room. This material needs to be organized and stored properly so that it will be available for future generations. We also plan to catalog and photograph church items. We already have one volunteer – Marty

Scott. Please let me know if you are willing to assist. We are not going to be able to do this quickly, but will work on one project at a time. We will probably meet at least once a month – however, you would not have to attend every time.

Looking into the future, we are creating a sub-committee of the Buildings and Grounds Committee to begin making plans to restore Mills Hall. Although this project is over a year away, we need to carefully look at our needs so that correct decisions are made. If you are interested in having your ideas heard contact Kurt Rettig (chairman of Building & Grounds Committee) to volunteer.

- Pat Westlake

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER & MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION

On Tuesday, February 16, parishioners are once again invited to don festive masks or costumes and celebrate Mardi Gras at the annual Pancake Supper. The young people of the parish will be staffing the kitchen, whipping up tasty treats. The celebration begins at 5:30 p.m. in Mills Hall. Come join the fun!

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

Holy Eucharist will be celebrated on Wednesday, February 17, Ash Wednesday, at 12 noon and 7:30 p.m. There will be imposition of ashes at both services.

ALTAR GUILD NEWS

The penitential season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and continues for six Sundays before Easter. Lent spans forty weekdays and is a time of prayer and preparation to celebrate Easter. The Altar Guild will be putting our purple hangings on the altar, the pulpit and the lectern, and Raewynne will be wearing the purple chasuble.

The color purple symbolizes the pain and suffering leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus and also symbolizes royalty and the hope of newness celebrated in the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

The Altar Guild appreciates the continued support for our stewardship and ministry in the preparation of the Lord's table in worship. Have you noticed the names of loved ones in the bulletin under the order of service? Parishioners are asked to donate \$35.00 in memory of, or blessing for, a family member or friend.

This past year parishioners gave donations for worship only 20 Sundays, causing the Guild to operate with a deficit budget. We need parishioners' weekly support of our worship to continue to provide the necessities for our services. There are forms in the back of the church, or you can write a check, made out to the Altar Guild, and send it to the church or put it in the Sunday offering plate.

- Ann Tebbutt

The following is from the Diocesan Altar Guild.

The Altar Guild

What on earth do they do for Heaven's sake?
If they weren't there what difference would it make?

If there should be no altar guild there
Neither clergy nor LEMS would find vestments to wear.

If the weekly team should fail or falter
There'd be no silver or linens on the St. James altar.

The flowers at the altar don't descend from above:

Week after week they're a labor of love.
We change vestments and hangings from season to season

Since these different colors are used for a reason

The lights burn bright in the candlesticks
Because we replenish the oil, we fix the wicks.

We launder the linens, we dust the pews.
We polish the silver, straighten books that you use.

We choreograph weddings, reassuring the nervous,

We're a quiet presence at each memorial service.

To make high holy days a rich celebration,
We give our time and our talents to church decoration.

In fact, we fill the needs of every dimension,
Some are large and important, some too small to mention.

We're seldom noticed, but our rich reward
Is to be Martha and Mary in the house of our Lord.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

The pine needles are finally all picked up, or so I think, and its time to start planning projects for the warm, sunny days ahead. We will be reconvening in March to develop a list of tasks we would like to accomplish this year. There are all types of work to be done, requiring a variety of skills. Anyone who enjoys working with their hands, being outdoors, our just contributing to the care of our beautiful buildings and grounds, is welcome. If you have an interest in contributing in any way, please contact me at kretny@aol.com, or attend any or all of our meetings. Watch the Sunday bulletins for dates and times. Your suggestions for projects or repairs are also welcome.

- Kurt Rettig

LUNCH BUNCH

The Lunch Bunch will gather on Tuesday, February 23, 12 p.m. at Siam Thai Restaurant, 25 Main Street in Kings Park. All parishioners are welcome to attend. Contact Fjeril Deal (724-3720) to sign up.

KNITTING FOR LENT

Once again the Rector is inviting those knitters in the parish to make scarves and hats for seafarers. The Seaman's Church Institute is an Episcopal-affiliated organization that provides chaplaincy to seafarers, and provides them with hand knitted scarves, hats, and other warm clothing. Patterns are available on the web at <http://www.seamanchurch.org/484.asp>. They are easy enough for beginners. They recommend 100% acrylic yarn. Raewynne suggests Caron Simply Soft.

OUTREACH

Helping Haiti - Thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, St. James was able to send a total of \$3,037.06 to our diocese for Episcopal Relief and Development aid to Haiti. (*Note: your donation is tax deductible for 2009*). Your caring, along with that of others in this diocese, will help many people in need. Continue to pray for the people of Haiti.

Smithtown Food Pantry - Thank you to Pat Westlake and Claudette Plaschka for all their efforts on behalf of the Food Pantry. Also, thanks to all our parishioners who staffed the pantry in January and/or donated food (see Claudette's article). Our next month to staff the pantry is August.

Daffodil Days - The Women of St. James are selling bunches of fresh cut daffodils to benefit the American Cancer Society. An order may be placed on February 14 or 21 for a bunch of daffodils for \$10. If you choose the Gift of Hope for a \$25 donation, the ACS will deliver a vase filled with your bunch of daffodils to a hospitalized cancer patient. You may order your daffodils by signing up on the sheets provided at coffee hour or by calling Pat Martinsen (584-6439) or her daughter, Brooke Moos (686-6562). Please pay when you order or by the last order date, which is February 21. Make checks payable to the American Cancer Society. Daffodils will be delivered at coffee hour on March 21.

Lenten Outreach - Watch the upcoming Sunday bulletins for ways you can reach out to others during Lent with your time, talents and treasure.

Outreach Meeting - There will be an outreach meeting sometime this spring to decide how to allocate the \$2,000 in St. James' budget for outreach. Watch the Sunday bulletin for the date.

- Sue Krall

SMITHTOWN EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY

January was a very busy month at the Food Pantry. We served 110 families for a total of 432 people. In addition, 76 people and organizations donated food. A very big thank you to all the volunteers. We could not have done this without your help. St. James will be on again in August – our goal will be to get 3 volunteers each day. We could have certainly used it last month.

- Claudette Plaschka

FESTIVAL OF FILMS & FAITH

The Greater Port Jefferson-Northern Brookhaven Arts Council, in collaboration with many houses of worship in our area, will be sponsoring three films this spring. Tickets are free for church members.

*Monday, March 15 at 7 p.m. at Theatre Three in Port Jefferson - "Mugabe and the White African," the only documentary feature film to have come out of Zimbabwe in recent years. The special guest speaker will be Douglas Rogers, a journalist and author of The Last Resort, about his family's farm in Zimbabwe.

*Thursday, April 8 - film to be announced.

*Thursday, April 29 - film to be announced.

- Sue Krall

CHRISTIAN FORMATION & EDUCATION NEWS

Looking ahead to Lent: As we prepare to enter the reflective and self-examining season of Lent, the Christian Formation & Education Committee encourages you to take part in one or more of the following corporate and individual activities.

Book Group on Wednesday Evenings in the Webster Room. All adults and senior high youth are invited to a book-group discussion series focused on C.S. Lewis' Mere Christianity. We will meet in the Webster Room, 7:15 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesdays, February 24 through March 24.

Of this classic book, parishioner Jack Schultheis says, "I picked it up at a time when I was just getting back to church after falling away for a while. I've read it several times since. Lewis lays out the essential tenets of faith with clear language and one insightful analogy or metaphor after another. It amazes me how he opens up such an infinite, life-changing faith with such effortless prose."

Books are available in the narthex for \$10 each. Reading schedules are also available. Use the sign-up sheet to let us know if you've taken a book, paid (check or cash in the box in the narthex), and/or will be joining us.

Weekday Devotional Booklet. Copies of "Walking with the Prophets through Lent," a series of readings and reflections following the weekday lectionary, will be available for at-home use by individuals and/or families.

Friday Fasting. Instead of having lunch on Fridays (or on another day of the week), consider donating the money you would have spent on food to a special offering to

Episcopal Relief and Development,
designated for Haiti.

The CF&E Committee exists to encourage faithful discipleship by offering substantive opportunities for adults to grow in their knowledge of scripture, to reflect theologically, and to share with each other in the transforming journey toward and in faith.

- Kathy Sides

NEWS OF THE PARISH FAMILY

We seem to have sad news to report this month.

James Quinn passed away on January 20 after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease. A Christian Burial service was held at St. James on January 23, with burial in the cemetery following. Our sympathy and prayers go out to Joan and family.

Nancy Rasmussen's sister, Susan Zubiller, passed away suddenly at the end of January. Please keep Nancy in your prayers, as she deals with both this and her husband's illness.

Richard McKinley, brother-in-law of former parishioner, Lillian McKinley, passed away last week, and was buried in our cemetery on Saturday, February 6.

Please keep all of these people and their families in your prayers.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- 1 Food Addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 2 Bible study 10 a.m.
Bible study 7:15 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
- 3 Knitters group 10:30 a.m.
Bible study 7:15 p.m.
- 4 Yoga class 4:30 p.m.
N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal 8 p.m.
- 5 Food addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 7 Holy Eucharist Rite II 9:30 a.m.
Annual Parish meeting 11:15 a.m.
- 8 Finance Committee 7:30 p.m.
- 9 Bible study 10 a.m.
Bible study 7:15 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
- 10 Knitting group 10:30 a.m.
Bible study 7:15 p.m.
- 11 Yoga class 4:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal 8 p.m.
- 12 Food addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 14 Holy Eucharist I 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m. with
Baptism & Sunday school
- 15 **Presidents' Day** - office closed
Food addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 16 Bible study 10 a.m.
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
& Mardi Gras celebration 5:30 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
- 17 **Ash Wednesday**
Knitting group 10:30 a.m.
Holy Eucharist 12 p.m.
Holy Eucharist 7:30 p.m.
- 18 Yoga class 4:30 p.m.
N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 19 Food addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 21 Holy Eucharist I 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II with Sunday school
9:30 a.m.
- 22 Vestry meeting 7:30 p.m.
Food addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 23 Bible study 10 a.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m.

- 24 Knitting group 10:30 a.m.
Lenten study 7:15 p.m.
- 25 Yoga class 4:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal 8 p.m.
- 26 Food addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 28 Holy Eucharist I 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II with Sunday school
9:30 a.m.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Kerrick Wille
Peter Cahill
Sandy Grigoletto
Joan Quinn
Annabelle Wille
Colette Tarantino
George Krall
Joan Mercep
Kelly Lally
Lorelei Glogg
Jeff Smith
Maggie Lawrence
James Schultheis
George Donohue
Kevin White
Eric Rettig
Sarah Schubel
Leah Tarantino
Dan Maybee
Becky Linthwaite

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Tom & Theresa Donohue