



Open Doors

The Newsletter of St. James Episcopal Church

March 2009

FROM THE



The days are beginning to lengthen, and it seems like it's slowly getting warmer. Most of us are eagerly looking for

any sign of spring. And yet at the same time at church, we move from Epiphany, with its green color, to the more somber purple of Lent. Often people fast in Lent, and so it feels like a time of deprivation. But the season of Lent is not so much a time of gloom as a time for reflection. It's a time to slow down a little, and take time to pray, think, and share with others in simple ways.

This week I heard the following wise words from an English Bishop:

“Talking about fasting is bad for the soul. Like giving away your money, it should be done quietly behind closed doors, certainly not in front of microphones and cameras. There are no rewards in heaven for turning the virtue of fasting into the vice of broadcasting about it. The point of fasting is to lay your life before God secretly and seriously. Fasting isn't dieting, though both can involve food. Dieting is usually about how you look on the outside. Fasting is

about the shape of your soul. It's a form of praying which, if you were to put it into words, would sound like Psalm 139:

“Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart. Prove me and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me.”

Bishop James Jones on BBC Radio 4's “Sunday” 2/22/09.

Have a holy and blessed Lent.

- Raewynne

CHANGE IN SERVICE TIMES

Beginning Sunday, March 1, we will change the time of our second service back to 9:30.

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist I
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist II
with Sunday School.

The children will attend the 9:30 service with their parents and proceed to classes after they have had Communion. They will be released in Mills Hall at 11:15.

A WORD FROM THE WARDENS

Each year the Wardens, Vestry Members, and Rector make time to attend a retreat. These sessions provide an opportunity for us to explore our roles, duties, and responsibilities. It takes place right after the annual meeting so that the new members and the continuing members can learn how to support each other in their ministry of leadership.

This year the Vestry has decided to attend the Diocesan Workshop "The Spiritual Ministry of the Vestry" which will be held at the Mercer School on Saturday, March 7.

Sometimes it seems that our meetings are just about overseeing finances and maintaining our buildings and this can overwhelm us. By looking at "The Spiritual Ministry" the workshop will explore the difference between the "majority rules" way of thinking which can take over when God is taken out of our decision making process, and a discernment process when we listen for the voice of the Spirit. The purpose of the workshop is to help us discern what Christ would have us do - and teach us to listen to each other.

Please pray for your Vestry as we attend this workshop. Pray that the time we spend on Vestry will challenge us to renew and deepen our relationship with God.

- Pat & Jeff

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

During Lent, the Christian Formation & Education Committee is pleased to offer four avenues of Lenten observance. We encourage you to take part in one or more of these.

1. Daily Lenten devotional booklets adapted from the Diocese of Melbourne's daily study booklet, "Connecting with God through Prayer: daily personal readings," will be available as a journey of prayer, reading, reflection, and action to take simple steps toward connecting with God. Booklets are available in the narthex (one per family).
2. Wednesday evening parish-wide time of prayer (at home or in Mills Hall). Continuing the well-received pattern of families and individuals praying at home at a specific time each week during Advent and Lent, we have set aside the booklet, "Connecting with God through Prayer: daily personal readings" (see #1). Pray from home, or join with other parishioners in Mills Hall on Wednesday evenings, beginning on March 4.
3. Friday lunchtime fasting. All parishioners are invited to fast from lunch on Fridays in Lent and to contribute to Episcopal Relief and Development for world hunger relief (through a parish offering) the money they would have otherwise spent on lunches. Please offer this donation in a specially marked envelope, "Lent/ER&D" in the collection plate or the office.

4. Lenten study. On Wednesday evenings, March 4 through April 1, we will use the Kerygma study, *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*. This study examines Christian spirituality and the Lord's Prayer. The topic and study should prove to be interesting to teenagers and adults alike. As such, we encourage our adults and their teens to participate in any portion of this 5 week study. 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. - Lenten study series in Mills Hall, beginning with the parish-wide time of prayer (see #2). Please sign up in Mills Hall or the narthex and indicate if you would like to purchase a resource book for the study (\$13).

Questions? Please see Chris Mauro, Les Bengtson, Jack Schultheis, or Kathy Sides.

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

I don't know exactly what attracted me to the book "So Much More: An Invitation to Christian Spirituality," but I'm glad it caught my eye at the Emma Clark Library. Written by Debra Rienstra, an English professor at Calvin College, it offers a basic, yet comprehensive look at what it means to be a Christian and how to enrich our lives within a Christian community.

In her introduction, the author says, "This book is a gesture of welcoming friendship for people who are new or newly returned to the Christian faith – those who are searching, lurking, longing or learning." I can't say that I'm new to the faith, but I know I'm still searching, lurking and longing. And I hope I'm still learning.

At a recent meeting of the Christian Formation & Education Committee I read the following quote from the book. We decided to share it with you. It's from a section called "Staying Home" that asks why so many people with a hunger for spirituality are not seeking it in churches.

"Probably the most common reason people give for staying away is that they don't think they need church. 'I believe in God and everything,' a resister might explain, 'but I'm not going to do the whole church thing. I don't care for institutional religion.' . . . But saying that one appreciates Christian ideas while avoiding actual Christians is like saying that one enjoys baseball statistics but does not care for the actual game. One can indeed pray and study and read the Bible and be of service to the world without being part of a congregation. But there is a tinge of arrogance about this. A person who believes she can homeschool her own soul has a rather high opinion of her own ability. . . We need the example of others who are farther along than we are.

"Christianity is definitely a team sport . . . Extraordinary people – the great souls of the world – can inspire us to live lives of commitment and faith. But ordinary people can, too, if you let them. It's worth finding some good ones and placing yourself among them."

I've found quite a few "good ones" at St. James. And whenever I place myself among them, I get real help for my searching, lurking, longing and learning. Do you ever feel the need for "so much more" in your spiritual life? Then why not take a chance and join us on Wednesday evenings during Lent as we study the Lord's Prayer.

- Jack Schultheis
Christian Formation & Education Comm.

HOW TO HELP WHEN YOU'RE HURTING

The March newsletter of the Long Island Council of Churches includes a column from Tom Goodhue, Executive Director, which gives advice on how to be generous, confident, and faithful in fearful times. Some of the topics addressed are: Giving what you can, Give your time and talents, Give stuff away, and Show up.

"Your presence, whether or not you can put much in the offering plate, reassures all the rest of us that we are going to get through this together."

Copies of the entire article will be available in the back of the church.

CALENDAR FOR MARCH

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Holy Eucharist I 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m. 3 Yoga 5 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m. 4 Lenten study 7 p.m. 5 Bible study 10 a.m.
Yoga 3:30 p.m.
N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal 8 p.m. 7 Vestry retreat @ Mercer School 8 Holy Eucharist I 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m.
Commissioning of Vestry 9 Finance Committee 7:30 p.m. 10 Yoga 5 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m. 11 Lenten study 7 p.m. 12 Bible study 10 a.m.
Yoga 3:30 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal 8 p.m. 14 Parish ski trip 15 Holy Eucharist I 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m.
Parish Life meeting 11:15 a.m. 16 Vestry meeting 7:30 p.m. 17 Yoga 5 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m. 18 Lenten study 7 p.m. 19 Bible study 10 a.m.
Yoga 3:30 p.m.
N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal 8 p.m. 22 Holy Eucharist I 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m.
Scout Sunday
Smithtown Food Pantry
Anniversary Celebration 24 Yoga 5 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m. 25 Lenten study 7 p.m. 26 Bible study 10 a.m.
Yoga 3:30 p.m.
N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsal 8 p.m. 29 Holy Eucharist I 8 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m. 30 C.F. & E. meeting 7:15 p.m. 31 Yoga 5 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m. |
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MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Marge Kreussling
Ann Tebbutt
Tony DeVito
Ernie Harders
Ken Wille
Hailey Cinquemani
Harry Toop
Carol Maybee
Justine Guinaw
Ruth Rutigliano
Patricia Brack
Emily Rose Miller
Derek Lally
Dolores Marge
Michael LaMano
Nancy Rasmussen
Ryan White

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

Jeff & Karen Smith
Ralph & Patricia Martinsen
Jim & Nancy Petschauer

EASTER FLOWERS

As is customary, we are asking for your donations for flowers to decorate the church for the Easter services. Flowers can be given as memorials or thanksgivings, or in honor of a special event. Please fill out the form below and send to the office with your donation by **Monday, April 6**, so that it may be included in the bulletin. Flower envelopes will be available in the church narthex if you prefer to use them.

Name: _____

In memory of/thanksgiving for:

Amount enclosed: _____

POSITION AVAILABLE:

Temporary part-time jobs with the U.S. Census. Must take short test and be over 18. U.S. citizens preferred. \$14 to \$21 per hour. Call 1-866-861-2010.

**LET US NOT BECOME WEARY IN
DOING GOOD...**

Galatians 6:9

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
CELEBRATE WITH US**

**THE
25TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
SMITHTOWN TOWNSHIP
EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY**

Please join us as we celebrate this milestone.
This ministry has been made possible by
your dedicated and committed support.

Sunday, March 22, 2009

2 p.m.

Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving
Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal
Church

Brooksite Drive, Smithtown, New York

3pm - 5pm
Reception
Church Hall

and

Open House
Food Pantry
Church Parish House

**ASH WEDNESDAY
SERVICES**

12 Noon Holy Eucharist and
Imposition of Ashes

8 p.m. Holy Eucharist and
Imposition of Ashes

