

THE EPISTLE

THE MISSION OF ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH, A CENTRAL CITY CHURCH,
IS TO WELCOME ALL PEOPLE INTO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST AND TO SERVE IN HIS NAME

THE RECTOR'S RAMBLINGS

I have taught Jamie and Keltie how to pray. Before they eat, they sit. They wait while I fold my hands and say a prayer before their meal. Often the prayer is something like "Bless this puppy. Help her (him) to be a good dog. Help her (him) to know that she (he) is loved." When I unfold my hands and say, "Amen," they know that they can put their faces in their dog bowls and eat.

Now, for those of you who think that I am crazier than a bed bug, let me hasten to say that I do not think that my dogs know English beyond the sparse language of "come," "sit," "wait," "are you hungry?," and, their favorite word: "treat." I am obviously not praying for their benefit. I am praying for mine.

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<i>The Rector's Ramblings</i>	1	<p>Priests are in the prayer business. I am always on the lookout for times to tap into the stream of prayer that is constantly moving between God and humanity. I say, "thank you, God" when a light turns green and I am in a hurry. I make the sign of the cross and ask for God's mercy and healing when a Flight for Life helicopter flies overhead. I pray before my own meals, either silently, or, if I am with another Christian, out loud. I pray because I can. I pray because I must. I pray because each time I do, I am just a teeny bit more aware of God's presence in my life.</p> <p>I pray with Keltie and Jamie not because I think <i>they</i> understand the concept of prayer, but because <i>I</i> understand the concept of prayer. And they understand love. And between those two concepts we get closer to God.</p> <p>Okay, it's sort of a cute dog trick if you watch me praying with them before their meals. And I had to teach them to do it. But then, all of us have to be taught to pray. Even the disciples knew that when they said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray."</p> <p>My prayer for each of you is that you be on the lookout for times when you, too, can tap into that great stream of prayer flowing continuously between us and God. Pray, however and whenever you can. Pray in unlikely and likely places. Just, pray.</p>
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FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

There are special feelings I have when I come into St. James' on Sunday mornings. I feel welcome, comfortable, accepted, loved. I go to the pew where I always sit and get comfy and cozy. Sunday after Sunday the same routine... Then, one Sunday, Mother Debra, in her sermon, keeps asking "Are you ready to drink from this cup?"

It's easy sitting there and cozy to respond, inside, "Sure." But the question keeps coming and we cannot ignore it. So much for comfy and cozy. Now I am hit right in the heart and mind with the question: are you really ready or have you settled into a complacent Christian life?

Jesus never asked the easy questions. Jesus never offered an easy way and in fact warned of the difficult path we would walk to follow Him.

Nowhere does Jesus say being a "C and E" (Christmas and Easter) follower is enough. Nowhere does Jesus say that anything less than complete commitment is what it means to follow Him. That does not leave room for complacency. Perfection will never be attained by any one of us, but, striving to do the best we can every day can be achieved.

One place we can start to deal with our complacency is to look at what we each are doing to live out our mission at St. James'. Service is at the heart of our statement of open-hearted love for all people which we have contact with. We do this by volunteering at The Gathering to feed our neighbors. Via Red Door Clothes we provide clothing. Sundries at The Gathering provides the necessities for keeping clean, as do the sundries we collect and turn over to the Central City Churches for distribution. We are there to be with the indigent solitaires at the time of their burial. We serve Christ as we welcome every person who comes through our doors and make them feel at home and share our love.

All of these things rightfully make us feel good. All of these things demonstrate our love of Jesus. All of these things are what define St. James'.

But sometimes prosperity (success) creates complacency. It's easy to let others know how good we feel about what is happening here and to fall back on that pride and let others actually carry the load. Complacency creeps in like the fog that rises from the lake. It becomes comfortable to sit back and watch. If we look into our hearts, we know that we are letting down not only our fellow Christians and the programs of service, but we are letting down Jesus. And, quite honestly, we are missing out on the joy that can only come from actually serving.



This same joy can resound in our hearts when we shake off our complacency, surrendering our devotion to living as Jesus would have us live. The joy that can only come when we are willing to say "Yes! I am ready to serve, I am ready to live with Jesus actively alive in my heart, I am ready to drink this cup."

Deacon Ned

VESTRY NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER 2009

The Vestry meeting on September 16th 2009 was called to order with a prayer led by Susan Wilson. Following the prayer we started with a check-in question that was “how has God been working in your life this week?” Vestry members shared their stories.

At this month’s meeting we talked about our building and finishing up the repair work that needed to be done. (If you have not had the chance to see the remodeled chapel I suggest you do. It is lovely.) The vestry then set some dates for the parish to go bowling and for Game Night 2. We talked about the upcoming visit from the Bishop and received updates about two of our outreach ministries: sundries and Red Door Clothes. We discussed chapter 3 in the book, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* that we are reading together and ended the night around 9:30 with a closing prayer and a blessing by Mother Debra.

Teresa Jackson

MAKING “JOYFUL NOISE”

You may be curious about the assemblage of Jame-sians now going by the collective “Joyful Noise.” Essentially we are members who like to share our gifts with the community in worshipping and praising God. So... how did this all come about?

After Mother Debra instituted “Mass in the Grass,” I suggested that we had some gifted musicians who might be willing to bring their guitars and voices to enhance worship at the next “Mass in the Grass.” She agreed, so in 2005 Lucy Cooper and I worked up some selections and toted our guitars to Mt. Mary for our outdoor Eucharist. It worked well, and we looked to do it again. After the Eucharist, Sue Gillman came over and asked if she could play one of our guitars. Wow! That girl can rock! So Sue joined up.

The following year Beth Taylor brought her guitar. Mother Debra asked if we would be willing to sing and play at a regular worship service, which we did. Dawn Doerr and Susan and Robert Wilson helped lead with their vocal gifts. We continued to provide the musical foundation for subsequent outdoor Eucharists, along with occasionally filling in at St. James’. Then we recruited Cristal Weeks, a flutist, and were overjoyed by her contribution.

To this point, we were a group of talented and willing musicians whose gifts allowed St. James’ to experience new and familiar music with a different sound. We had music from our hymnals as well as contempo-

rary praise music and “camp” style music. Since we were just doing this as an occasional opportunity, we rehearsed only when we knew we would be playing. What if we gathered on a routine basis? What if we had somebody with professional experience come in and lead and work with us?

Earlier this year Mother Debra invited Anne Meyer to help us build a foundation, and to lead the music at a few services. Kristin Chula (violin, recorder, penny whistle and mezzo), Vanda Healy (soprano), Gust Olson (cello, tenor) and Paul Cooke (tenor) all volunteered their talents, and we became “Joyful Noise.” We are building our own community as we rehearse every two weeks after Fellowship, and are looking at other activities together as well as adding more musicians. (If you are interested, please talk with me or Mother Debra. We could use a percussionist!)

Our goal is simple: we want to complement the worship experience at St. James’ with high quality music in diverse styles and sounds. We have been at worship about every six weeks, and we appreciate your participation as you sing loudly and lovely during worship, even though we may be doing something you have never heard before.

It is all of us – St. James’ together at worship – that truly makes the Joyful Noise!

Deacon Terry Garner

THE MEMORIAL CHAPEL

As the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining. For St. James', the silver lining to our flood damage may be the Memorial Chapel. For as long as she has been with us, Mother Debra has been dreaming of a chapel space that was less a small version of our regular worship space and more a space for contemplation, for reflection and a different prayer experience. The recent flood allowed us the opportunity to completely reexamine the space, seize the moment (and the opportunity to time the renovation to Mother Debra's tenth anniversary with the parish), and to try and implement her vision.

I have been told we met with a great deal of success in our endeavor. We have created a space for personal prayer and reflection in the raised area, with space provided by removing and storing the large wood panels. The altar has been brought down to the floor for more intimacy, like in the main church. Flexible seating, a donation from the diocese from the former St. Andrew's parish, replaced our fixed pews. A more subdued color scheme has increased the contemplative feeling of the room. New carpet, chosen to unify the color of the new furniture, the installed woodwork, and the focus wall color now covers the entire chapel, not just the sanctuary.

If you have not yet stopped for moment of personal prayer, or come to celebrate evening Eucharist at 5:30 on Wednesday evening, please consider it. The space calls. And please be sure to thank the many people who helped to transform it: Loraine Garner, Terry Garner, Vanda Healy, Teresa Jackson and Sullivan, Mark Shaw, Beth Taylor, Mary Washbush and Ellie, and John Washbush.

John Washbush

THE BISHOP'S VISIT

On October 11 at our 10:30AM worship service, Bishop Steven Miller will be coming to St. James'. The Bishop comes every two years for a "visitation." He will meet before October 11 with the Wardens, John Washbush and Beth Taylor, and Mother Debra to get a sense of the state of the parish. When he comes on October 11 he will preach and preside at the worship service and also confirm and receive people into the Episcopal Church. This is not, of course, the only time that we have contact with our Bishop. But it is the time when he comes to focus his time and attention solely on St. James'.

Please make every effort to be in church on October 11 to greet the Bishop and help him to come to know the richness that is the community of St. James'.

Mother Debra+

DID YOU KNOW?

** This month we distributed clothes to 169 adults and 45 children (Sept. 5th) and 164 adults and 56 children (Sept. 19) at Red Door Clothes. On the 5th we also gave out more than 40 backpacks with school supplies to children there;

** This month we prayed at the burials of Benjamin Grummons, Allen Lang, and Robert Sparrow, when they had no one else to pray for them;

** This month we distributed sundries to 194 persons at The Gathering (Sept. 26);

** So far this year we have collected 2714 items of sundries for distribution by the Central City Churches at Our Savior's Lutheran.

OUR KIDS

Sunday School
At St. James'

Children are the hands by
which we take hold of heaven.

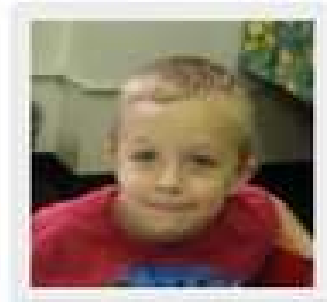
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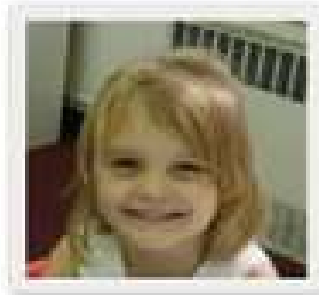
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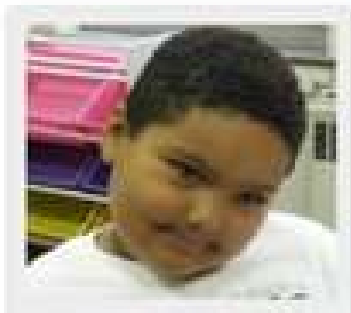
Amelia



Amanda



Antonia



Sullivan



Ellie



Nicholas

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL?

We're having more children (Thank you, God!) so we now have 3 groups—Nursery, Lower Primary and Primary.

New Volunteer teachers are Liz Kohler, Leanne Mittelstadt, Michael Brunelle, Susan Nusser and Liz Roepke. Returning teachers are Dawn Doerr, Jane Rider, Sue Gillman, Jackie Laska and of course, Kris Ochocki, who's in charge. Robert Wilson will be adding music once a month.

The oldest student, Ellie Washbush, will read the Gospel to the Lower Primary and give her version of the reading.

Jocelyn Fait continues to help Donna Mc Master, our paid Nursery Director.

Jill Littlefield

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME

It's wonderful that we at St. James' worship as a community, pray as a community, and serve as a community. It's also wonderful that we *play* as a community – which we will have several opportunities to do this fall!

The first is a Bowling Night, generously sponsored by Vanda Healy, on Friday, October 9 at 6:30 p.m. We will meet at AMF West Allis Bowl for pizza, bowling, and fun. No bowling skills necessary J

The second opportunity is St. James' Game Night II on Saturday, November 21. The first game night was so fun that it's back by popular demand! We will play a variety of family-friendly games and share a meal.

Mark your calendars, and please consider laughing and playing with your fellow Jamesians.

Dorota Pruski

BUY A SHIRT. MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Common Ground Core Team members from Hansen Dodge Creative developed a pilot program to introduce minority students to the creative industry. The program, OnRamp, brings creative organizations and high schools together in order to expose minority students to the breadth of jobs in the creative industry and inspire them to pursue a potential career.

Students from Milwaukee's Community High School designed some wonderful t-shirts as a result of their participation in the program.

Learn more about OnRamp: <http://www.onrampmke.org/>

By buying a shirt, you are helping fund future OnRamp programs.
Tell your friends, neighbors, countrymen and social networking buddies!

Visit the site and buy your favorites: http://www.onrampmke.org/buy_a_shirt/

Linda Steiger

LIVING OUR THANKSGIVING

As summer fades and the color of the leaves show that we are inexorably moving into fall, we look ahead to the arrival of Thanksgiving. The original settlers who first celebrated this holiday were people who left one home and came to a new one, one where they were welcomed and assisted by people who were already there. They worked hard together to build a new life.

As they used the personal gifts and skills that they had been given by their Creator, they were rewarded with a harvest. Their lives were not easy and their harvest was never as abundant as they may have wished, but nonetheless, they took time to recognize that without what God had given them, they would never have what they did, nor the opportunity to share their gifts with one another. Without the gifts God had given them, they would not have had the life they enjoyed.

Perhaps by living in a nation with a reputation for abundance, if not excess, we can lose sight of the simple basic premise of Thanksgiving. We are grateful. We are grateful for the gifts we have been given. We are grateful for the opportunity to recognize that what we have comes from God. We are grateful to be able to share of what we have, each according to his or her means.

We are grateful to combine our gifts with those of others to magnify the opportunity to benefit others. We are grateful to have the opportunity to glorify God with a just and proper use of the gifts He has so freely given.

As we move into the fall and prepare for our individual celebrations of Thanksgiving, we will also celebrate a St. James' communal recognition of the great gifts God gives each of us. The time, the talent, and the treasure we enjoy come from God and He asks us to determine what share of those gifts we will offer to our community in his name, so that the community may employ and magnify our gifts in His name.

As we move into the fall, we recognize our role as stewards of God's abundance. We recognize our commitment to our parish, its mission and its people. We give Thanks, and...

John Washbush

LISTENING SESSIONS

During November St. James' is going to have three listening sessions at the homes of three of our vestry members: Gust Olson, Leanne Mittelstadt and Susan (and Robert, our vestry clerk) Wilson.

These meetings are:

November 5, 7PM at Susan and Robert Wilson's home.

November 7, 2PM at Gust and Hope Olson's home.

November 10, 7PM at Leanne Mittelstadt's home.

Each session will be exactly an hour and a half long (at the most). We will start on time and end on time. Promptness is important to respect everyone's time. While the sessions are hosted by the people whose homes we will be in, Mother Debra will be attending each of the sessions.

A listening session is just what it sounds like. It is an opportunity for parish leadership to listen to the parish. And it is an opportunity for members of the parish to listen to one another. This is an important time in the life of St. James'. The vestry and Mother Debra hopes that you will sign up early for one of the three sessions that are scheduled. If we need to schedule more, we will.

STUMP THE PRIEST

Since the Bishop is coming soon, could you tell me something about that odd hat he wears?

Signed, Hatless

Dear Hatless,

The hat that the Bishop wears is called a "mitre." (Pronounced "migh'-ter"). A Bishop wears a mitre during worship as a symbol of their office as Bishop. In ancient Israel, the High Priest wore a headress called the Mitznefet (often translated into English as "mitre.") This was wound around the head to form a broad, flat-topped turban. Attached to it was the Tzitz, a plate of solid gold bearing the inscription, "Holiness to YHWH" (Hebrew for God.) [Exodus 39:14 and 39: 30]. You will only see the Bishop wearing his mitre during worship services.

Signed, the priest

Note: The priest was helped out in this article by Wikipedia where there is much more information about mitres if you are interested.

MUSIC UPDATE

For the next few months, except for the Bishop's visit on October 11, we are experimenting with "piano only" for our worship music. There have been no decisions made about what our music program will look like at St. James'. The Music Committee has been meeting and working hard. At the time of this writing they will have met six times with more to come. We are exploring all options: Piano, organ, with or without a Director, other instruments, the proper place of Joyful Noise (the new contemporary music group), etc.

We will continue to try different musical options over the months to get a sense of how they work with our worship here at St. James'. In the meantime, Karen Beaumont, continues to offer us her gifts as a musician. We have offered her and she has accepted a monthly retainer. We also have a grant which allows us some of the experimentation we have been doing.

Thank you for your patience as we carefully and thoughtfully work out what the music program at St. James' is going to look like.

Mother Debra+

Save these Dates!

October 4: Feast of St. Francis and Blessing of the Animals

October 9: Friday, 6:30 PM Bowling Night: AMF Bowling West Allis (10901 W. Lapham @ Hwy 100)

October 11: Bishop's Visitation with Confirmations and Receptions, Fellowship follows

November 21: Saturday, Game Night II at St. James'

November 22: Stewardship In-gathering, Potluck and All Parish Meeting