



The Window

The Newsletter of St. James' Episcopal Church in Fremont, CA
Called to serve in new and loving ways

May 2014

Celebration of Equality

The history of Christianity in the United States and its treatment of LGBTQ people are not unknown to most of us. Since the inception of our country, religious bodies have condemned same-sex relationships as being unnatural and an abomination in the eyes of God. Scriptural references, taken out of context, have been used to support the argument that homosexuality was a choice, was sinful, and should be considered a sinful act. Even our own larger denomination, The Anglican Church, has made clear statements defining homosexual unions as being outside of acceptable Christian relationships. In 1998, the Lambeth Conference (the decennial gathering of all Anglican bishops) passed a resolution stating that homosexual acts are "incompatible with Scripture." In 2003, after the ordination of the first openly gay bishop in the United States, around 250 bishops boycotted the 2008 Lambeth Conference, and several churches in the Episcopal Church broke away and realigned with more conservative provinces of the Anglican Communion.

The controversy is seen in other mainstream denominations. From the Roman Catholic to the Southern Baptist Church, acceptance of LGBTQ people is limited to those who either proclaim celibacy or who agree to behavior modification in an attempt to become straight. Taking a vow of celibacy solely as an act of repressing one's identity, or attempting to become straight because society is more comfortable with this limited expression of sexuality is damaging and contrary to God's call for each of us to be fully human and alive.

The Episcopal Church has its own cross to bear. As a body, we've struggled along with the rest of the world with reconciling traditional teaching and belief with a social landscape that was quickly changing. For most issues, the Church has lagged behind the changes seen in society. However, with this particular issue – the issue of whether or not LGBTQ

people are created as God's beloved just as they are and therefore should be treated fully and equally in all religious matters and sacraments – the Episcopal Church has been steps ahead of society. As far back as 1976, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church declared "homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church." (1976-A069) Since then, we have taken great strides in seeking equal treatment for all people.

I am a Christian in the Episcopal Church because I believe in the beauty of God's humanity in all of its forms and expressions. When it comes to the rights of our LGBTQ sisters and brothers, there is not a doubt in my mind (or heart) that God intends for their love to be celebrated as much as God intends for my love towards my husband to be celebrated. The willingness of my church to stand on the edge of that arc of justice is one of the primary reasons I have given my life to this institution. As a Roman Catholic, I was drawn to the beauty of liturgy but could not reconcile my conscience with the positions of Rome. As an Episcopalian, I am given both the beauty of liturgy and the example of active courage rooted in the teachings of Jesus. I said to someone recently, "we're on the right side of history." She said to me, "we're on the right side of God." I believe that to be true.

In celebration of the courage of our church, and more importantly, in celebration of equality for all people, including LGBTQ people, we will be setting aside a Sunday geared towards celebrating equality. **At the 10:30 service on June 1**, we will include a prayer in our prayers for LGBTQ youth still being oppressed and bullied. Following the 10:30 service, we will hold a special forum. This forum will include a short presentation of the Episcopal

(Continued on page 3)

Signs of the Risen Lord: Do You See What I See?

In a short email in Easter Week, Elaine Vallecillo-Miller, one of our St. James' players who was hidden away in Noah's ark during the Easter Vigil, wrote, "Did anyone take pictures from that evening? It would be nice to see them."

It was wonderful to hear the glee of the young children from the audience even though we could not see their faces." Elaine's note jibes with the Christmas song I have been humming in my head in these last few days, "Do you see what I see? (Do you see what I see?)....Do you hear what I hear? (Do you hear what I hear?)." I, too, was delighted by the excitement and glee of a child sitting near me as he leaned forward in his seat to see what would happen next amidst the serious silliness of storytelling onstage. It was a delight to "see" together, but what was also so wonderful about the creativity of the skits is that they showed me what the writers and actors themselves saw in the sacred. They were, in their very presentation, a way of saying, "Do you see what I see? Do you hear what I hear?" in the amazing stories of our faith.

Sharing what we see and hear is intrinsic to the Easter story. In Matthew 28:1-10, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are told by the angel who rolls the stone at the tomb, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." It is part of our encounter with the "Good News" to go and tell what we have seen and heard—maybe especially to the "disciples"! For the two Marys, the story does not end there, however: "So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'" It is in going and telling that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary actually meet the risen Christ. And again they go on to tell what they have seen and heard.

There are several moments that stand out for me in Holy Week that keep me thinking about the Risen Christ, and in the interest of going and telling, I share them with you. Perhaps the first came at the end of relating the stories of the Last Supper (in relation to Passover and the Exodus from Egypt), the

Passion and the Resurrection to the children on Palm Sunday. At the end of this "very big work" (and quite a long time of sitting!), one of the youngest children said, "Tell it again!" Evidently this story is worth repeating. I leave it to you to ponder why!

On Maundy Thursday, while we shared a meal, foot washing, and then Eucharist together to make living memory of the Last Supper, my young son built several tall structures with blocks on a carpet near the altar. He was compelled to finish them after the Stripping of the Altar in the sanctuary. "This is the Temple, this is the tower to God (the tower of Babel featured in the beginning of the Godly Play story of Pentecost), and this is Jerusalem, the city," he said. Many at the Maundy Thursday service saw a boy playing with blocks; upon looking again, I discovered that through "play" he had joined Holy Week with Passover and Pentecost—memory in the making.

In her personal reflection during the Good Friday service, Penny Trant engaged in her own "godly play" by joining together John Wayne's portrayal of the Centurion in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* and the Grinch (who stole Christmas) to give voice, line and flesh to what it is to "see with the heart." Penny stood before us as one who sees with her heart and by that sees God in others, too. (Amen, and again, Amen.) Brian Cochran's Good Friday reflections upon Tai Chi as the "answer" and his sharing about how his life has been transformed through a practice that reconnects body and mind helped me to understand—or see—that Christ's sacrifice, indeed, had to be in the body to "work"—and that our connection to the Eucharist and to the Body of Christ needs to be physical and not intellectual or "spiritual" alone if our faith is to be alive and full. (Since then, in this Easter Week, I have been swimming, walking, and dancing as a way to enliven my spirit, too!)

At the Easter Vigil, Linda Nelsen greeted me gently as I sped on past and made sure to point out who she was: God. (Now there's a metaphor.) When she appeared onstage with Ezekiel, her top hat, rhinestone earrings and gracious smile all came together. Regardless of whether we wish to call God by male or female names, Linda made it clear that our God has style! And how will I ever forget Barbara Lyon as the dancing skeleton enlivened by God's Spirit in the Valley of Dry Bones, showing me as much life, grace, and mirth as anyone should ever hope to have?!

(Continued on page 6)

Eastertide Faith Formation Classes

Water for the Journey: The Baptismal Covenant in the Lives of the Faithful



Come explore the origins, significance and meaning of your baptism in the Christian tradition and the importance of the Baptismal Covenant in keeping you, the faithful Christian, connected, engaged and “hydrated” as you journey through the

sometimes arid and parched experiences of life.

We will delve into the Jewish origins of ritual immersion. The various meanings tied to water among the nomadic peoples of the Holy Land. How God uses water in the Bible. Understand the origin and meaning of the baptismal rite in the church. How the baptismal rite came to be and why the Baptismal Covenant is tied to this rite. Understand how the Baptismal Covenant is a personal pact between you and God. Learn how at your baptism you were “ordained” into the Priesthood and Diaconate of All the Faithful.

Start a process of discernment to determine how God is calling you to use your gifts for the furtherance of God’s Kingdom. Whether you were baptized this past Easter or by John the Baptist himself, you will learn how to keep your “canteen” full for the journey of life.

These presentations continue in May. You are welcome to attend as many of the presentations as your schedule permits. While it will be more meaningful for the individual to attend them all, each session is self-contained. All are welcome to bring their dinner with them to class.

When: Tuesday Evenings, May 6 & 13

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Where: St. James’ Church, Room EB1

Presenter: Deacon Ken

Cost: FREE!

Celebration of Equality

(Continued from page 1)

Church’s position on Gay Rights, including ordination and marriage rites. ***The forum will also be an opportunity for anyone to ask questions they might have about the Church’s history and/or position.***

Why? Because I suspect there are a whole lot of LGBTQ people who assume Christianity believes them to be defective, and I want them to know that the Episcopal Church thinks no such thing. I suspect that there are LGBTQ Youth who have a social circle that accepts them, but a religious circle that tells them God disapproves, and I want them to know that God loves them just as God made them. I suspect that Christianity has been written off by many others who believe it to be a dated and stale religion, and I want them to experience a religion that is contemporary and alive.

So, I thought maybe we should do something to address these wrong assumptions, ***but I need your help.***

On June 1st, invite anyone you think might be interested in this topic or curious about a Christianity that does not fit the cultural stereotype to join us for worship at 10:30 and to stay for the forum following. This is not to recruit new members – this is to simply let people know that we are a church who stands ready to embrace anyone seeking a deeper connection with the Divine, and we are a church who believes that it is our duty to work for equality simply because Christ compels us. So invite them. Invite them by asking if they’d like to learn more about a Christianity that is different from what they hear about in the media, invite them by stating it is important that society know that there is a place for people drawn to beauty, ritual, and a courageous and faithful community, invite them by telling them there really is a church that welcomes all.

In great hope of the Resurrection and New Life for every person,

Lori+

EASTER EVENT AT HILLSIDE SENIOR CARE

It is customary for St. James' folks to wear "bunny ears" as we take the Easter gifts to the residents' rooms, but this year the EASTER BUNNY made a personal appearance! It was a warm afternoon for Lauren Doherty to be in that costume, Yeah Lauren! Mary Morkved's 9 year old daughter, Stacia, did a tap dancing routine. She's a student at the Mission Dance & Performing Arts School. The Easter Bunny and Stacia also did a little dance together. Byron Bader, with his keyboard,

accompanied the St. James' group as we sung our way through a few Easter and Springtime melodies. Byron also did a solo, singing and playing *Embraceable You*. Encore! Encore!

There were some extra "wiggle bunnies" and they were donated to the children's Easter Egg Hunt. Thank you, Rev. Lori, the St. James' bunnies, and all the families for your support and contributions.

Sandra Motley



Pictures by Bruce Roberts



Vacation Bible School 2014

VBS returns this summer with an 'in-tents' week of day camp at

Camp St. James' from **July 28th - August 1st**. We'll start with the stories of people in the Bible who lived in tents, like Abraham and Sarah, and move towards Paul the tentmaker and his travels. Registration forms will be available soon. Please pass the information on to friends, family and neighbors who may be interested.

As always we will be looking to the congregation to help out with resources. Our first needs are for yarn (any color or size for using in weaving) and old flat sheets or lengths of cotton fabric that can be dyed/cut up etc. We will also be looking for the loan of a couple of tents, a couple of canopies and an outdoor fire pit.

Contact Jan Scrutton: jan@scrutton.org.uk if you are able to supply anything. Keep an eye on the weekly email for a list of our needs.

Dates will be set soon for leaders' meetings. If you are available to help out for one day, to set up or for the whole week, please contact me.

Jan Scrutton

Contemplative Practices

Contemplative Practices continues throughout May with wonderful classes designed to enhance your spiritual practices. On May 4 we wrap up our exploration of Lovingkindness Meditation.

On May 11 and 18, Sylvia Ma will introduce us to I Chuan Meditation. I Chuan is a practice of meditation using eight simple hand postures which can be done standing up or sitting down. Practicing I Chuan will build up our internal energy through relaxing the body and sharpening the mind. We will do some warm-up exercises before and after meditation with four postures each session. On May 25 and June 1, Barbara Dabney will guide us in the use of our labyrinth.

Janet Fischer

Vestry Minutes Available In The Office

For several years, it has been common practice to post Vestry Meeting Minutes publicly on our website saintj.com for the whole world to see. This has been in addition to their being available in the office, in accordance with our bylaws which say "The Clerk shall act as secretary of the Vestry and of Parish meetings, and shall keep a fair record of the proceedings of such meetings. Such records shall be the property of the Parish and shall be open for reference to the Rector and other officers of the Parish, to all members of the Parish, and to representatives of the Diocese of California."

In making the minutes available on the website, we have been serving three audiences:

- The Lead team and Vestry members who need access to past minutes in order to check past decisions and discussion and provide context for revising them or performing the work of the Vestry;
- The Saint James' community who is interested in the work of the Vestry;
- The wider internet-sphere.

On several occasions in the past year, the lead team and Vestry have had to discuss removing sections from our minutes that would be inappropriate to share outside our community, for example financial information in general and personnel related financial information in particular, clergy and other reports which might be of a pastoral nature and discussion about our relationship with other organisations.

While we want the work of the Vestry to be as transparent as possible, we're aware that a third of those viewing our minutes on the website have been from outside the Tri-City area. The Vestry feels that we have a duty of care not to share what might be sensitive information more widely than appropriate. While we've solved the problem on a number of occasions by omitting sections from the minutes, this reduces their value as a record of the meetings. We're also very grateful to our Clerk, Elizabeth, and are concerned about the additional work required to publish edited versions.

After much careful consideration, the Vestry has decided to end the practice of posting Vestry Minutes publicly on the website. We continue to have minutes available in the office for church members, and we'll continue our practice of publishing summaries in *The Window*. The full Annual Report will also continue to be posted online.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to speak with me.

Mike Scrutton, Sr. Warden

In the Way of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Four hundred and fifty years ago, in a remote Basque village in northern Spain, lived a man named Iñigo Lopez who drew a connection between the inner daydreams of humanity and the movement of God in the individual life. Through a process of discernment and development, this man – known to us now as Saint Ignatius — created a method of reflection and prayer known as the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises.

These exercises are made up of meditations, prayers and contemplative practices meant to deepen a person’s relationship with God. While the original exercises were done in complete solitude, they have been recast today as a 30-day retreat of daily prayer, silence, and spiritual direction.

During the retreat, a person engages the core practices of Ignatian Spirituality: an examination of where one finds both consolation and desolation (called the “examen”), and a method of engaging scripture that is imaginative and intimate.

For many years, I have aspired to embark on the 30-Day Ignatian Retreat. This year, through a series of circumstance and grace, I have the opportunity to take the time for the Exercises. With the full support of our Wardens and Vestry, I will be spending part of June and part of July at El Retiro Retreat Center in Los Altos.

The specific dates of the retreat are **June 18 – July 22**. Per our bylaws, the Senior Warden is in charge of the interests of the Church in the absence of the Rector. To that end, Mike Scrutton will be the person in charge and will be the main point of contact for pastoral and administrative emergencies. The Reverends Stephanie Green and Ken Parris will cover all liturgical responsibilities, and will be available for pastoral care. David Goldstein, the Parish Administrator, and the rest of the Lead Team, Mike Scrutton, Dave Nelsen and Lynn Locher, stand ready to handle any administrative issues. This situation is not only a wonderful opportunity for my own spiritual path, but is also a testament to the many gifts and resources of St. James’. I really can leave for a month and the church will keep running!

I look forward to not only my brief absence, but also the chance to share with you what I’ve learned and experienced. I am confident that this retreat will greatly benefit both my spirituality and my ministry to St. James’, and I expect to return to you well-rested, energized, and with a deeper sense of God in my life and in the life of this community.

I know your prayers go with me.

Lori+

(Continued from page 2)

Do You See What I See?

Finally, Easter Sunday arrived—and with it, the Egg Hunt—which incidentally, I never really saw in full swing. I was too taken with the generous outpouring of the community in preparing the eggs and the care and creativity with which the Youth hid all 400 of them! Hints of Resurrection?

Easter was already greeting me on Good Friday when I walked from the Little Church into the Main Sanctuary and saw the fabric streamers arcing the space thanks to Elaine and Greg Miller’s daring creativity. Easter filled me in quiet when I walked through the sanctuary before the Vigil and inhaled the fragrance of the lilies. St. James’ is a generous, alive community, and truly, the Risen Lord has walked here. (Dave Nelsen has even walked on the rooftops sweeping away dead leaves.) “Greetings,” said the risen Christ to the two Marys. At St. James’, the Lord’s welcome is all around.

Let us go and tell!

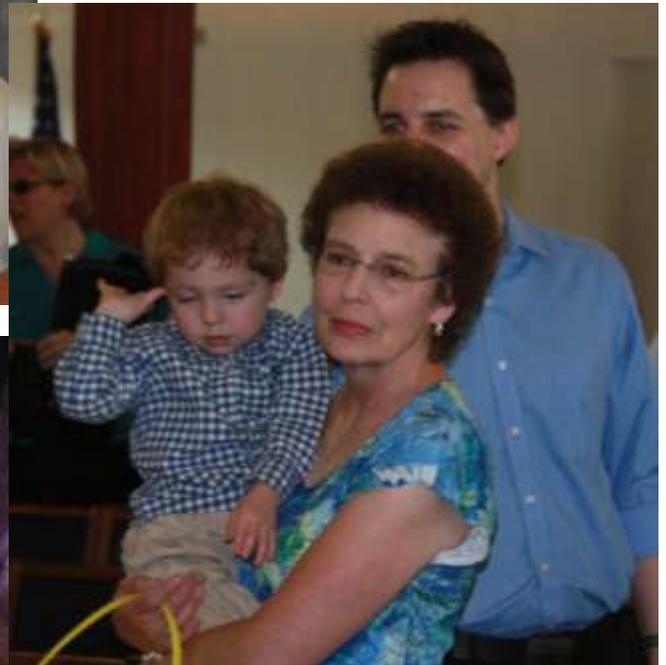
The Rev. Stephanie Green

Easter Vigil



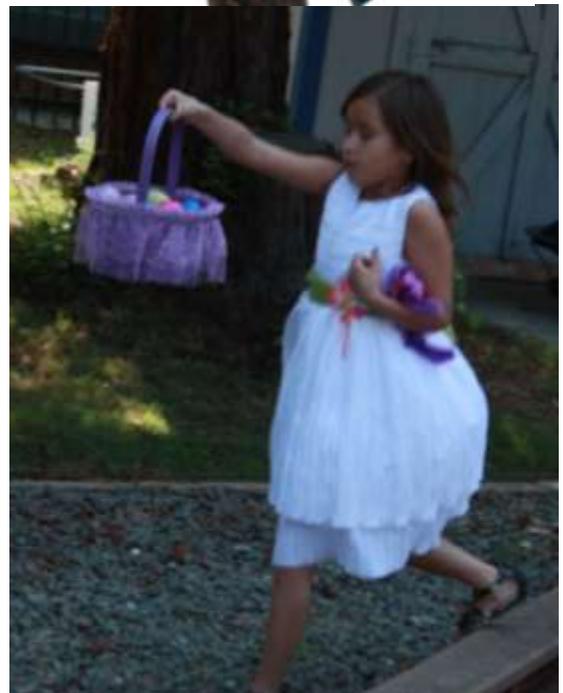
Pictures by Bob Bynum and Jan Scrutton

Easter Festivities



Pictures on pages 8 and 9 by Jan Scrutton and Ralph Locher

Easter Festivities



The Symbolism of the Blue Passion Flower



According to Wikipedia, the 15th and 16th-century Spanish Missionaries used the flower to teach the Passion of Jesus Christ:

- * The 10 white petals represent the 10 faithful apostles, excluding Peter who denied Christ and Judas who betrayed him.
- * The purple and blue radial filaments represent the crown of thorns.
- * The three stigmas at the top of the flower represent the three nails and the five anthers below them represent the five wounds of Christ—one on each hand and foot from the nails and one from the lance in his side.

We might ask, “Do you see what I see?”

Stephanie+

Judge Not!

I was shocked, confused, bewildered, as I entered Heaven's door,
 Not by the beauty of it all, nor the lights or its decor.
 But it was the folks in Heaven who made me sputter and gasp—
 the thieves, the liars, the sinners, the alcoholics and the trash.
 There stood the kid from seventh grade who swiped my lunch money twice.
 Next to him was my old neighbor who never said anything nice.
 Herb, who I always thought was rotting away in hell, was sitting pretty on cloud nine, looking incredibly well.
 I nudged Jesus, “What's the deal? I would love to hear Your take.
 “How'd all these sinners get up here? God must've made a mistake. And why's everyone so quiet, So somber - give me a clue.”
 “Hush, child,” He said, “they're all in shock.
 “No one thought they'd be seeing you.”

What the Vestry is Up To

As you know, the structure of the Vestry has been reconfigured to put aside “clusters” (other than the facilities cluster) and to spend this year developing and launching specific projects and ministries. As part of our process, we spent the bulk of the Vestry Retreat in January mapping out existing and well-run ministries, ministries that could use some support, and new ministries that would benefit both the congregation and the neighborhood.

Through our work, it became clear that a formal **Congregational Care Team** needed to be developed. This would be a Team that would support parishioners in need of transportation, meals, companionship, etcetera. The Vestry has gotten an excellent start on planning this new ministry, and a subgroup of the Vestry is continuing the work. As we move forward, look for more information about this much-needed ministry, as well as other new ministries being planned and launched by the 2014 Vestry.

Lori+

Financial Summary March 2014		
Fund Balances	<u>3/31/2013</u>	<u>3/31/2014</u>
Operating Fund	\$ 57,059	\$ 41,649
Building Fund	\$ 35,371	\$ 41,736
Year To Date Summary Operating		
Pledges Budgeted	\$ 60,906	\$ 61,062
Pledges Paid	\$ 55,329	\$ 55,947
Unpledged Contributions	\$ 1,825	\$ 2,105
Other Op Income*	<u>\$ 6,370</u>	<u>\$ 5,724</u>
Total Operating Income	\$ 65,010	\$ 63,776
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 58,667</u>	<u>\$ 72,923</u>
Income less Expenses	\$ 6,343	\$ (9,147)
*Includes Fundraising		



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WORSHIP TIMES

SUNDAY SERVICES: 8:00AM & 10:30AM
CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES: SUNDAY 9:15-10:15AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15AM
YOUTH GROUP SECOND SUNDAY 6:30PM
WEDNESDAY EUCHARIST 10:00AM

OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY: 9:00AM-1:00PM

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Alison Saichek

Bud Spalding

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Altar Guild: Ruth Poole
Ushers: Burtin Hart

Facilities: facilities@saintj.com

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Bud Spalding

The Window Staff

Ralph Locher

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