The Window

The Newsletter of St. James' Episcopal Church in Fremont, CA

Called to serve in new and loving ways

February 2016

LENT: A SEASON OF COMPASSION

"To understand a person, you must first walk a mile in their moccasin." – Native American Proverb

This year the Season of Lent comes "early" on the secular calendar. It seems as if there is little time between the joyous coming of the Messiah at Christmas, his revelation to the world in Epiphany and his passion, suffering and death recalled in Lent through Holy Week.

While we know the outcome of the "story" is ultimately a happy one, there is still a great deal of sorrow and pain yet to be experienced. Each year the church relives the life and ministry of Jesus through the liturgical year. We revisit the highs and the lows of Christ's earthly ministry, endeavoring to re-experience what it must have been like to have Emmanuel, the very presence of God, walk among humankind. Why does the church spend so much time, effort and energy each year remembering the events of over two thousand years ago? How do those distant events affect us today? What is the purpose in remembering stories of strange happenings and miraculous occurrences?

There an old Native American proverb, "To understand a person, you must first walk a mile in their moccasin." This old wisdom acknowledges that while we may see the trials and tribulations of another human being we cannot truly know and understand until we experience them for ourselves.

When I was in a pastoral care class at the School for Deacons decades ago I remember a discussion we had with the professor. While practicing some reflective counseling, where the counselor repeats back to the counselee what he or she said, the student counselor said to the professor acting as the counselee, "I know how you feel." The professor, as counselee, began crying and shaking his head said, "Do you? Do you really KNOW how I feel? Can you feel my pain? Do you really know the depth of my sorrow and despair? Have you ever been in my shoes?" The class was speechless. It was obvious the student counselor, by making what seemed to be a benign sympathetic comment, had struck a raw nerve in the psyche of the professor acting as the counselee. Coming out of character, the professor pointed out how dangerous it was to presume to know something as personal and private as someone's feelings, reminding us of the wisdom of the Native American proverb quoted above.What does this example have to do with us in the 21st Century as we approach yet another season of Lent? To some extent, I believe God sent his Son to be Emmanuel, "God with us", so that God might be able to understand better how his children "feel." To have compassion for creation, God first had to know and feel the experiences of the created. In other words, God needed to walk the Way of the Cross…also known as the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrows…a mile in humankind's moccasin.

Compassion can be defined as "sympathetic concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others." God had compassion for humankind and in doing so sent His only begotten Son to both experience and relieve our sufferings. Lent is a time when we reflect upon God's compassion for us.

Last year, the vestry signed the Charter for Compassion, a declaration and call to action for all people of faith to express compassion for our sisters and brother throughout the world. While we in the United States are often oblivious to the sufferings and misfortunes of others in remote parts of the world, it is our duty as Christians to be compassionate to those less fortunate that we. I am proud of the parish's leadership in recognizing the need for compassion and understanding not only within the Tri-cities area but also in our own parish. I encourage you to learn more about the Charter for Compassion by either visiting the Charter's website, www.charterforcompassion.org, or reading Karen Armstrong's book, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*. Faith Formation is planning a book study group for this book in the Spring of this year. I invite you to participate and help you and your community to grow in compassion and understanding for all God's children.

Deacon Ken

Stewardship Corner

"…for God loves a cheerful giver." ***2 Corinthians 9:7***

Verse 8 continues *"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."* What a remarkable passage on giving! It has become my favorite over the years.

As I write my last Stewardship Corner article, I can't help but reflect on my 10-plus years on the Stewardship Committee, the last 6 years serving as Chair. It's been a wonderful experience. I'm sure some of you are shaking your heads and thinking to yourself "Religion and money? Throw in politics, and you have everything your parents told you not to talk about!" But, asking for money isn't difficult when you believe that everything we have has been given to us by God. We are only giving back from that which God has given us.

As with any organization, change can bring about new ideas and different ways of doing things. This is good. After more than 10 years, I feel it is the right time for change and for me to step down and someone else take the helm. I have enjoyed my experience, and the time has passed by quickly. When I reflect on some of the annual stewardship events (the fall roundup, the small dinners and large dinners, Stewardship the Musical, the First Thanksgiving at St. James', the first and second parking lot tailgate get-togethers, and many others), I can't help but smile, laugh, and feel good about the community at St. James'. And thank you to those who have commented to me about my articles in the Stewardship Corner. Your thoughts were much appreciated.

I would like to say thank you to our Rector, Lori Walton, for her support and never once telling me that my ideas were, let me say sometimes a little "unconventional" when it came to stewardship. Lori has always been there to listen, help, and encourage me, which meant a lot. I have been fortunate to have served with a dedicated and enthusiastic group of St. James' parishioners. I can't express enough my thanks and gratitude to the current committee (Sandra Motley, Ruth Poole, George Vlastelica, Adrienne Farrell, and Lauren Doherty) for their help, support, and friendship. I wouldn't have lasted this long without their encouragement and guidance. Thank you, also, to Lynn Locher, who proceeded me as Chair and continued to provide assistance over the years. St. James' has many able and talented members who give of their time, talent, and treasure. Thank you.

In closing, I'd like to say a few more words about giving. The more we give, the more we delight in our giving – and the more God delights in us. Our giving pleases us. But, more importantly, it pleases God. This doesn't mean we should give only when we're feeling cheerful. So, please don't wait until you feel like giving – it could be a long wait! Just give and watch the joy follow. And, if you haven't turned in a pledge for 2016 yet, please do so soon.

Thank you for your words of encouragement, your kindness, and your support. And, remember "God loves a cheerful giver!"

Gail Blalock
Stewardship Chair

Sitting Mediation in the Zen Tradition

Every Wednesday evening, 5:45-6:15 pm in the Little Church. Bell for silence sounds at 5:50. Everyone is welcome to join us for this time of silent meditation. Contact Janet Fischer with any questions.

January Vestry Minutes

The vestry met on January 14, 2016. We started our evening with a shared meal at 6:30, with the meeting starting at 7pm. We welcomed as guests our deacon the Rev. Ken Parris, and the Rev. Karen Swanson, who is our supply clergy for the month of January while Rev. Lori is away on sabbatical for the month.

While it was the first meeting of 2016, it was the last monthly meeting of the 2015-2016 Vestry Year.

Much of the meeting was spent around issues of finance. We reviewed the year-end financial statements for 2015, as well as the budget for 2016. The result of this discussion was the passing of the 2016 budget. This budget reflects much work by the Vestry as a whole, in addition to thoughtful input from various ministries and groups. Special thanks to:

- Our Treasurer, Lynn Locher, for her endless data collection, numerous spreadsheets, and clear presentation, full of the information we need to prepare a sound budget for the coming year.
- The Stewardship Committee led by Gail Blalock, who worked steadily throughout the year, culminating in the fall pledge drive.
- To all who pledge their financial commitment to St. James'. These commitments allow the Vestry to consciously and prudently prepare the new year's budget, which allows St. James' to be God's hands in our communities.

The meeting continued with reminders about upcoming events, including the budget presentation to the parish on Jan. 24 (9:15am), the Annual Meeting on Jan. 31 (following a single 10am service), the Vestry Retreat on Feb. 5/6, and Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Feb. 9. We also gave the go-ahead to the McCutcheon Team to proceed with scheduling and planning of the next concert on Jan. 16, 2017.

Recent email votes were recorded: approval for the purchase of a new furnace for office area (held on Dec. 27), and approval of the transferring of funds from Operating to Special Interest accounts (held on Dec. 31). An ex post facto vote to repair a leak in the water main (occurring on Jan. 2) was also held, and passed.

- This was the last meeting for four of our vestry members, whose terms are ending this month. We are very grateful for the service of outgoing Vestry members Al Casas, Sr. Warden Dave Nelsen, Alison Saichek, and Ralph Locher. On behalf of the Vestry and all of St. James', we thank them for their time and efforts over their past three years on vestry.

We ended our meeting with Compline in the Little Church.

Meg Amouroux,
Jr. Warden

Financial Summary December 2015

Fund Balances	12/31/2014	12/31/2015
Operating Fund	$ 47,584.38	$ 48,562.74
Building Fund	$ 33,643.84	$ 30,775.62
Pledges Budgeted	$ 244,246.01	$ 260,825.00
Pledges Paid	$ 248,703.61	$ 258,320.37
Unpledged Contributions	$ 9,804.00	$ 9,085.00
Other Op Income*	$ 21,313.18	$ 22,253.72
Total Operating Income	$ 279,820.84	$ 289,659.09
Total Operating Expenses	$ 283,041.72	$ 287,811.65
Income less Expenses	**$ (3,220.88)**	**$ 1,847.44**

December 2015 the Vestry voted to move $10,000 to the Building Fund and $6,000 to Sabbatical Reserve. Unused Outreach Funds were moved to the Special Interest Fund.

Come Celebrate "Scout Sunday" at Saint James'!

On Sunday, February 7th, at the 10:30 am service, Saint James' will celebrate "Scout Sunday" with Cub Scout Pack 163 for whom we are their charter organization. All current and former cub scouts, boy scouts, girl scouts, explorer scouts, venture scouts, scout leaders, friends of scouting and family members are invited to join in the celebration. If you are a current scout or scout leader…regardless of the pack, troop, etc. to which you belong…please consider wearing your scout uniform to the service. Former scouts and scout leaders are encouraged to wear or bring something from your time as a scout to share with others at coffee hour. St. James' will also present a new pack flag to Cub Scout Pack 163, which has the name of the pack's charter organization, Saint James' Episcopal Church, proudly emblazoned upon it! Come and share the fun! For further information, please speak with Pack 163's charter organization representative, Bob Doherty or Deacon Ken.

Submitted by: Deacon Ken

Available for Lunch

Are you Available for Lunch on Sunday, Feb. 21 at noon?

Come and celebrate the Lunar New Year (Year of the Monkey) with us with some delicious Chinese food at Newark Buffet on Sunday Feb 21 at noon. You pay for your own lunch and we have some great fellowship together. There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall. If you have any questions or need a ride, please call Sylvia 510-552-6549.

Available for Lunch Ministry,
Sylvia Ma and Meg Amouroux

Thank you from the McCutcheon Team

The McCutcheon Team would like to thank all of you for your prayers and support of our 2016 fund-raiser.

With John McCutcheon cancelling his California tour due to illness, the McCutcheon Team decided to offer those who already purchased concert tickets full refund or donation of the ticket amount to St. James'. Your response exceeded the expectations of the McCutcheon Team and the Vestry.

The McCutcheon Team also decided to continue with the prize drawing and hold the drawings after the Annual Meeting on Jan 31. Parishioners donated 25 fabulous prize donations and bought over $700 of drawing tickets.
Your donation of time, talent and treasure made this fundraiser a great success. We raised over $2600 for St. James'. Thank you.

Another piece of good news: John McCutcheon wrote in his newsletter that he is home from the hospital, and is receiving treatment for his infection. Full recovery is expected. You can read John's newsletter at: https://t.e2ma.net/message/ya81k/yaoic. We have rescheduled John's concert to Jan 16, 2017.

Submitted by: Sylvia Ma

THE BOOKWORM WIGGLES

By John Maloney, Librarian

LENTEN DISCIPLINE: ENRICH YOUR SPIRIT – READ A BOOK FROM THE ST. JAMES LIBRARY

The two contemporary free verse Lenten poems below are from the St. James Library book How the Light Gets In by Brian Doyle. The book is library catalog number POET-1.1. Be the first to check it out.

Ash Wednesday

Here's your Ash Wednesday story.
A mother carries her tiny daughter
With her as she gets ashed and the
Girl, curious and wriggly, squirms
Into the path of the priest's thumb
Just as the finger is about to arrive
On the mothers forehead, and the
Ashes go right in the kid's left eye.
She starts to cry, and there's a split
Second as the priest and the mother
Gawk, and then they both burst out
Laughing. The kid is too little to be
Offended, and the line moves along,
But this stays with me; not the ashy
Eye as much as the instant when all
Could have been pain and awkward
But instead it led to mutual giggling.
We are born of star-dirt and dreams,
And unto this we shall return, that is
The Law, but meantime, by God, we
Can laugh our asses off. What a gift,
You know? Let us snicker while we
Can, brothers and sisters. Let us use
That which makes dark things quail.

Lent

One time I was trying to explain the concept of Lent
To my young twin sons. They were four years old &
Perfect and hilarious and headlong and extraordinary
In their genuineness, you know what I mean? Utterly
Unadorned, no agenda, didn't know how to lie, eager
For the next minute, but thoughtful, and already both
Reflective, as four-year-olds go; I heard them talking
One evening, in their beds, about their first memories.
But this time we were sprawled in the grass and I said
Well, Lent is a time of stripping away the usual things
And getting back to bones. Some people give up wine,
Or chocolate, or dessert, or television, to try to remind
Themselves that underneath fun is love and work, sort
Of. You know what I mean? No, they did not, and they
Happily spent a while thinking of the stuff they would
Give up, like beets, and brushing their teeth. Then one
Boy stood up and said if he was going to go to Lent he
Would give up clothes, which he then proceeded to do,
Followed by his brother, and they ran around laughing
So hard they no kidding fell down. Something snapped
Awake in me, something broke open. Sometimes there
Is a moment in life when something cuts through murk
And muddle and advice and bombast and opinionating,
Something just slices through all the burble and mutter,
Through the received and ostensible wisdom, the natter
And chatter, and reminds us why we are here. We name
This satori, epiphany, revelation - even this we have to
Find a label for, a handle to begin to understand it - but
It's not something a word can explain or define, or even
Really hint at, as far as provenance or effect. It happens,
And you see and hear and apprehend it, and we're agape
And rattled and thrilled and awed. It comes when it does.
You are lucky if it happens once, and blessed if there are
More than one in life. I got one that day on the lawn, yes
I did, and every year when Lent rolls around I remember
That naked lesson, so to speak, about what really matters
In this life - and now, I observe with a smile, so will you.

THE BOOKWORM WIGGLES

By John Maloney, Librarian

THE NONES – "SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS" – AGNOSTICS – ATHEISTS

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

("Christians Decline Sharply as Share of Population: Unaffiliated and Other Faiths Continue to Grow," title of May 12, 2015 PEW Research Center report.)

THE "KNOW-IT-ALL" ST. JAMES' LIBRARY HAS THE ANSWER

(The number in parentheses is the book's catalog number on the shelves.)

The Nones are Alright: A New Generation of Believers, Seekers, and Those in Between, by Kaya Oakes, 2015 (SPIR-37.1): Investigates how and why the exodus from organized religion is occurring.

Belief Without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious, by Linda A. Mercadante, 2014 (SPIR-28.1): Analyzes their spiritual journeys and explains why they reject the claims of organized religion.

Grounded: Finding God in the World: A Spiritual Revolution, by Diana Butler Bass, 2015 (SPIR-5.3): "… God-in-heaven is giving way to Spirit-with-us."

Learning to Walk in the Dark, by Barbara Brown Taylor, 2014 (SPIR-4): Episcopal priest reflects on walking in the realm of spiritual darkness.

Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality, by Donald Miller, 2003 (SPIR-30).

My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer, by Christian Wiman, 2014, (BIOG-24): A man with a cancer diagnosis tries to remain fully present in his life with doubt and faith.

Sinners Welcome, by Mary Karr, 2009 (POET-4): This self-defined "black-belt sinner" includes in one of her poems: "Christ always stood to one side with a glass of water/I swatted the sap away."

"In the days ahead, you will be either a mystic (one who has experience of God for real) or nothing at all." – Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith (1982)

(continued on next page)

SOME CONSOLATION FOR THE DOUBTERS

"In this quest to seek and find God in all things there is still an area of uncertainty. There must be. If a person says that he met God with total certainty and is not touched by a margin of uncertainty, then this is not good. For me, this is an important key. If one has the answers to all the questions – that is the proof that God is not with him. It means that he is a false prophet using religion for himself. The great leaders of the people of God, like Moses, have always left room for doubt." – Pope Francis, in a 2013 interview

"…if he wishes to be sure of the road he treads on, he must close his eyes and walk in the obscurity." – John of the Cross

"…as for me, the silence and emptiness is so great that I look and do not see, listen and do not hear." – Mother Teresa in a letter

Men's Group Saturday Work Day

Saturday, January 23, The Men's Group met to accomplish a few projects. In spite of dodging rain showers that morning they managed to clean the gutters on the Parish Hall and Admin portions of the Big Church. See the photos accompanying these words. In addition Barry Hedgpeth cleaned the wall under the sinks in the kitchen, and it was no small job since it hadn't been cleaned in a long, long time. Then he painted the area, finishing the efforts that had stretched from late last spring. Note that the work was followed by lunch at the local Round Table Pizza. Today's other workers included Dave Nelsen, Ken Trant, Gregg Feeney, Bob Bynum, Greg Miller, Mario Galvez, Bruce Roberts, Scott Whitaker.

The Men's group meets every month on the fourth Saturday, odd months at 9 AM to perform work around the Church and even months at 8 AM for breakfast. Our next breakfast will take place on February 27th, the restaurant to be determined. All men of the Parish are welcome to be included in either or both activities.

Bruce Roberts

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY DAY

WHEN Saturday Feb 6, 2016
WHERE Fremont Veterans' Memorial Building - Niles
37154 2nd St, Fremont, CA 94536
TIME 1:00 - 4:00 pm

In 2010 the United Nations established "World Interfaith Harmony Week as a way to promote harmony between all peoples regardless of their faith". In that spirit we have organized a meetup where we can all talk about and share our faith traditions in the spirit of openness.

Co-sponsored by Alameda County Human Relations Commission, Tri City Interfaith Council and Interfaith Women of Peace

Participants From Over 10 Faith Groups

Booths With Information on Each Faith

Muslim Speaker

Appetizers, Refreshments and Stimulating Conversation

Tri-Cities Interfaith Council
TCICOUNCIL.ORG
For more information contact Moina Shaiq at 510-938-0536 or moinashaiq@gmail.com

St. James' Prayer List

Most Holy God we pray for:

For Those In The Military: Scott, Jarrod, Megan, Erica, Theresa, Mark, Tim, Louis, Military Children of ACBSM, the families and Marines of Dark Horse Battalion, Caitlin, Emily, Robin, Adam, Dave, Shawn, Ethan, Paul, Darren, Matthew

For Those Who Need Guidance and Direction: Gloria, Bruce

For Those Who Need Comfort and Healing: Man Yee, Nonie, Ellison, Peter, Judith, Bobbi, Avis, George, Connie and Dave, Jeanne, Joseph, Patricia, Donna, Jack, Sheila

For Families Expecting Children: Jennifer and Kris

For Those Who Have Passed Away: Kim, Melinda, Kathy, Marion, Terry, Jean, Darin

To add someone to the "Special Prayers" list, please complete a pew card and place it in the offering plate OR call / email the Church Office. After six weeks, names are removed from the list. Please renew your request as needed.
Thank you

Please note: If your birth month or anniversary is in this month and your name(s) is not listed or the information is incorrect, please email the appropriate information to admin@saintj.com

February Birthdays

3 Mike Scrutton
Claudia Noddin
4 Bruce Roberts
5 David Kem
7 Linda Zetterholm-Nelsen
11 Darcia Feeney
12 David Colby
18 Margaret Broun
25 Charles Peeler
25 Maresa Darcena
Charles Peeler
Lauren Doherty
Scott Whitaker III
Francis Singh
27 Chris Ma
28 Luke Scheuffele
29 Adrienne Farrell

February Anniversaries

15 Bob and Lauren Doherty
16 Chris and Pegeen Perry
24 Charles and Vivienne Paratore
Bobbie and Claudette Naidoo

The next issue of ***The Window*** is in March.

We welcome your **comments, essays, poems, photos,cartoons, newsworthy items of interest, artwork, any group activity information and reviews**.

Email your submission to newsletter@saintj.com

March Issue Deadline: February 15th

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WORSHIP TIMES
SUNDAY SERVICES: 8:00AM & 10:30AM
CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES: SUNDAY 9:30-10:00AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15AM
WEDNESDAY EUCHARIST 10:00AM

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

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Ralph Locher
Elaine Vallecillo-Miller
Vivienne Paratore
Alison Saichek

Other Important Coordinators

Eucharistic Ministers & Lectors:
The Rev. John Trubina

Eucharistic Visitors:
The Rev. Ken Parris

Altar Guild: Katie Cunningham

Ushers: Burtin Hart

St. J Youth Leaders: Mike & Jan Scrutton

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