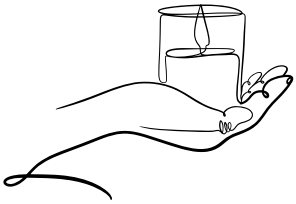
The Window

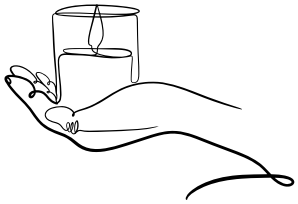
THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH, FREMONT CALIFORNIA

MARCH 2025



You Are the Light of the World

By Charisma Pangilinan



When I was in high school, I asked a poll question to my friends. It was just a simple conversation starter, one that, at the time, I didn't realize would make such a remarkable memory. I asked: If you could choose one of the following things, which would it be?

A million dollars. The cure for cancer. Or being happy for the rest of your life.

Because I assumed the cure for cancer has the highest impact, I naively thought that was the selection most everyone would choose. I thought it was the most selfless choice. So imagine my confusion when one of my friends said she would choose to be happy for the rest of her life. When I asked her why, she said she believed the best thing she could offer the world, was to be happy. If she was happy, then she would treat others with kindness and help them to be happy. Then they can do the same… and so on and so on.

I was dumbfounded and amazed at the simplicity and trueness of her answer. Now some 35 years later, I still think of her statements and how in this day and age, it has never been more necessary.

This memory was one of the first things that came to mind when we selected the Vestry topic, "You are the light of the world".

I believe we are in unsettling times. In my world, there's a lot of anger, frustration, fear, and overall doubt. I know for me personally, I find myself more jaded and unmotivated than ever before. It had been a turbulent last year for me already with the loss of my mother and then the re-election of Trump just deepened my depression. Never before have I needed the light of others to help inspire me daily.

Perhaps the "You" in this statement doesn't apply to anyone specifically but in fact, applies to everyone. In a previous sermon, I spoke about how your energy impacts everyone around you. I still believe that to be true. If we could all try harder to focus on what makes us happy, truly happy, then that can translate into being less selfish, speaking less negatively, smiling more, and loving deeper. God made it possible for each of us to be a light, much like how in vigil services, when we all hold candles. From one flame, we light the candle of our neighbor, who in turn passes the light to the next person. Very quickly, all of our candles are lit and a glow fills the church. Find your happiness and pass it on.

FEBRUARY VESTRY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Submitted by John Amouroux, Jr Warden

The vestry convened on February 20, 2025 at 7pm, in-person in the Education Room. Matt Hurley led in prayer.

Oral Communications

- Bruce noted that the early pancake supper sign-ups at this point are low compared to the expected size so it might be difficult to determine how much food to buy.
- John mentioned about the outside group meeting on Feb 21 at the Cedars church in Newark to discuss the newly-enacted Fremont camping ban.
- Gregg discussed the current state of Abode's Rapid Rehousing program for the delivery of household goods, and how their activities have slowed down, causing us to accumulate excess goods in our storage trailer.
- Lori reminded the vestry about the upcoming Safe Church training being held Sunday. March 16 at 12:00 noon.

Monthly business

- The vestry approved the January 9 Vestry Meeting Minutes.
- The vestry approved the January 19 Annual Meeting Minutes.
- The meeting minutes for the February 7 & 8 Vestry Retreat have been delayed so their approval will happen at the next vestry meeting.
- The vestry reviewed and approved the January Financial Reports given by Bruce.
    - Our operating income is higher than expected, which is good. But this is likely because some people are getting ahead on their pledges.
    - The revenue for our Use of Church funds is down. Bruce and Lori will look into the cause or find the accounting discrepancy.
    - The Outreach fund had high expenditures, and this was mostly due to the gas cards bought for the Safe Parking program, Sunshine Village food purchases, backpacks for Union City Family Center, and other items.
        - It was noted that the gas cars were funded from our parishioner's special donations and not taken from any St. James' funds.
- The vestry approved the January Staff and Ministry Reports.

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VESTRY MEETING RECAP *(continued)*

New and Continuing Business

- The vestry approved a reimbursement for the St. James' ASL Retreat expenses from the Deaf SI Fund.
- The vestry approved the purchase of a new Advent wreath for the big church with funds coming from the Memorial Donations SI Fund.
- The vestry approved to fund a contractor to perform tree removal for dead trees and pruning of other larger trees in the Memorial Garden church courtyard, and park. Funding will come from Operating Maintenance & Repair and the SI Memorial Garden Fund.
- Lori updated the vestry on the status of finding a part-time clergy person. The search is actively ongoing but there are no solid prospects yet.
- The vestry discussed how to mix in-person and Zoom venues for the monthly vestry meetings. It was decided to alternate every month as had been done in 2024.
- Lori updated the vestry about the clergy meeting Bishop Austin held covering the current national climate and legal issues concerning ICE and our church grounds.

Matt proficiently orchestrated the vestry through compline and the meeting was adjourned. The next vestry meeting will be held on March 20th, in-person, in the Education Room.

The vestry meets via Zoom in the odd months (January, March, etc.) and meets in-person in the parish hall during the even months (February, April, etc).

A Joyful Lent?

by Barbara Milligan

I was sitting with my eyes closed, listening to a friend read a familiar passage from the Letter to the Philippians: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." (Phil. 4:4, *New Revised Standard Version*), and so on through several more verses. The Lenten season had begun, and a few friends and I were doing a *lectio divina* ("sacred reading"). The idea is to listen to (or read) a passage of Scripture several times and notice what word or phrase stands out for you, what God might be stirring within you through that word or phrase, and how you might want to respond to God.

Although I love the prayer practice of lectio divina, this time it was hard for me, because the word *rejoice* kept getting in the way. *Nope. Wrong word. Not during Lent.* I was listening for something more somber, in keeping with the season of commemorating Jesus' suffering and death. But no matter how hard I tried to make a different part of the passage stand out for me, I could visualize it only as tiny type, whereas I kept seeing "Rejoice!" in brilliant colors as the focal point of a mural on the side of a building.

Rejoice during Lent? Is that what God is inviting me to do?

Fast-forwarding to the present, I can think of three possible reasons to resist that invitation. First, there is so much cruel upheaval and suffering going on around us and throughout the world. To rejoice right now might seem heartless.

A second possible reason to resist is that during Lent we are invited to become more aware of our own weaknesses, brokenness, and sins and draw closer to Jesus, who loves us deeply, forgives us, heals us, and changes us. Jesus' response to us is a lot to rejoice about, but we tend to save it for Easter as we celebrate the Resurrection. The idea of rejoicing during a season of mourning might not make sense to us.

Third, many of us rarely hear the word *rejoice* except in Sunday-morning sermons and hymns, so we might find it difficult to relate to. In everyday American English we talk about being happy and feeling joyful, but not so much about "rejoicing."

I have learned that when God invites us to rejoice, to not do so, for whatever reason, could mean missing out on some good gifts that God wants to give us. So, ever since that lectio divina from Philippians, part of my annual Lenten practice has been to consider possible reasons to rejoice throughout that season.

Lent is a time in which we're invited to accompany Jesus in the last days of his ministry, including his suffering and death. As we do this, a friend once told me, we start to recognize how Jesus accompanies us in both the ordinary and extraordinary moments of our lives. When we grieve with Jesus, we can begin to see how he grieves with us. When we meet Jesus in his loneliness after he's been deserted by his closest friends, we can begin to see how Jesus is with us when we're lonely.

So, where does the rejoicing part come in?

The rejoicing comes in recognizing that Jesus is present with us and to us—seeing us, hearing us, feeling with us, loving us. We're not alone. Jesus is with us in every anxious thought, every fear, every doubt, every twinge or bottomless pit of hopelessness, shame, grief, or sense of abandonment. Jesus has experienced all these feelings, and he is loving us and healing us as we experience them.

Jesus is also present with us in our joy—what the Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis describes as the feeling of "freedom, of bounce-back, of contentment, of wonder." She explains: "Joy is a reservoir of goodness that makes you rock back and forth and hug yourself. It makes you tilt your head back in a full-throated laugh or just hum. Sometimes it's just peace way deep down in your belly."*

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A Joyful Lent? *(continued)*

Lent is a season of opportunities to draw closer to Jesus by recognizing the gifts of his presence with us. As a new member of St. James', I see all of you as God's gifts to me, and I'm looking forward to spending my first Lent with you as we draw closer to Jesus together.
May you rejoice in being with Jesus during this Lenten season.

*Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, "Got Joy?," *Fierce Love*, Substack, Feb. 6, 2025.

St James' 2025 Vestry

Vestry Retreat

The hardworking team of vestry members, staff, treasurer and clerk met for a full day of conversation and business on February 8. Together, we prayed, played, ate, and discussed the difficult issues of the day. We examined the role of the church in today's world and spent time team building and getting to know each other. It was a full and fruitful day. Please thank the vestry when you see them around campus, and don't forget to say "Congratulations" to John Amouroux, our Jr. Warden.

Vestry Members

back row (l-r)
Matt Hurley
Gregg Feeney
John Amouroux (Jr. Warden)
Paula McKinney
Kaethe Lang
Burtin Hart
front row
Charisma Pangilinan (Sr. Warden)
Emily Dunn
Bev Mosier
Rev Lori
Barbara Vacchieri
Katie Porter
Marcus Pun *(not pictured)*

Maisha Bora Update

Provided by Bev Mosier

Attached are new photos and letters from Hope Nanyole and Miriam Nangila, the two young ladies we are supporting through Maisha Bora in universities in Kenya. Political unrest and current government policies and practices have created disruption and chaos in the lives of Kenya's students. Both reports make reference to this reality. Nonetheless, both are progressing. They are still on track to graduate in the spring of 2026.

HOPE

The last semester of 2024 had so many challenges mainly because of the lecturer's strike. After resuming school in September our learning program was very much affected, and the school was closed abruptly since the staff were not working and instead were in the streets demonstrating against the government for delaying their salaries.

We had to organize ourselves as students and were doing group studies online. It was a difficult way of learning because of the lack of a good network and guidance from the teachers. However, it's all we had and so we made the best out of it. We were called back to school on 7th November only for a strike to resume in a week and we went back home again.

The students also became violent because the government raised the school fees unrealistically and removed the historical subsidy the government offers the public universities. The situation was chaotic and resulted in the destruction of school properties and injuries.I was able to get back home unhurt and my stuff locked in safely. This situation affected the academic year and thus I will experience a delay in graduating.

We resumed on 6th January 2025 marking the beginning of a new academic year. I have now officially started my third year even after the delay. Although the staff still tend to keep off work, which they call "go slow" we are hopeful that the government will comply with the signed Return to Work Formula as this is affecting the students.

There is so much political influence in our university because it's in the President's home and thus so much ethnic control being the main public university in this region. This has never happened before anywhere in the country since National universities serve the entire country.

In January 2025 I participated in a charity walk on International Children's cancer that was also for commemoration. I walked under the Lions club which as students we have joined.

I'm always very grateful for the generosity of and love you have continued to give me. This is a golden opportunity for me, and I can't thank you enough for your role in my life. May God reward you for your kindness.

Hope Nanyole

Hope (left) and peers

Maisha Bora Update *(continued)*

MIRIAM

My school run smoothly throughout the year 2024. I had a chance to be placed in various departments for my practical experiences. I worked at the children's, women and men wards in different times. My greatest experience was working in the Theater where I worked for two months but not consecutively. The tasks I was involved in included handling instruments for surgery and assistance to surgeons.

I was also involved in ensuring cleanliness before surgery was conducted and that all required items are in place and in time. I was required to understand the kind of surgery to be performed, how long it will take and the staff they will be working with. I worked with neurosurgeons and orthopedics most of the time.

The other interesting experience was working at the emergency wards where patients were brought in critical conditions. It required my flexibility, swift actions and cooperation with other staff. This also applied while working at the maternity ward that was always very busy. My new academic year commenced in January 2025 and currently in school very busy with the syllabus. I was required to apply for a place where I will be working for attachment later in the year and I was approved to work at Cure Hospital, a sister neighboring hospital.

II am highly grateful for the unwavering support and generosity you have shown me throughout my education journey. Your kindness has been a beacon of hope and has made it possible for me to pursue my dreams. Your support has been transformative, and I cannot overstate the profound difference it has made in my life. It is because of your generosity that I have come this far. You have invested in my life, and I promise to work diligently focusing on my dreams. Thank you so much.

Miriam Nangila

WAYS WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER

LITURGY & WORSHIP

WORSHIP AT CHURCH

We offer two services on Sunday morning at 8:00am and 10:30am. Coffee and light snacks following each service. Join us for worship and fellowship!

SUNDAY WORSHIP LIVESTREAM

If you cannot attend church in person, you can join our 10:30am service live-streamed on Sundays at **saintj.com**. The service can be joined at any time on Sunday from 10:30am or watched during the week on our **YouTube channel**.

WEDNESDAY 10:00AM SERVICE

Celebrate the Liturgy of the Word with prayers and sermon discussion in real time on Zoom. Join us! The link can be found under "Upcoming Events" on the right side of our **website**.

Online Worship Resources | Link

Follow us on Social Media!

FACEBOOK INSTAGRAM

Find Links to service & sermon audio/video here:

YOUTUBE APPLE SPOTIFY TUNEIN

LEARNING

SCRIPTURE/BIBLE STUDIES

Monday | 11:00am on Zoom

Join with others to catch up and wrestle with some of the sacred texts of the Bible. We meet every Monday on Zoom. Everyone is welcome. Email lori@saintj.com for the Zoom link or find it alongside more information on our parish **website**.

Wednesday | 11:00am on Zoom

Join us for Bible Study at 11:00am held on Zoom and facilitated by Rev. Lori, who will send out a link to a short video and discussion questions. Email Rev. Lori at lori@saintj.com to be added to the list.

FELLOWSHIP

SUNDAY COFFEE HOUR

Coffee Hour is held after each service on Sunday mornings. Come over to the Parish Hall after worship and join us for a cup of coffee, light refreshments, and good conversation. Everyone is welcome!

*Zoom links for all of our offerings can be found on our parish website, **saintj.com**. Look for the calendar of events on the right side of our home page. If something is not listed, email the leader and they will make sure you have what you need.*

Sunday's service and sermons are also online on iTunes, Spotify, TuneIn, and Youtube. Go to our website for online worship resources. Like us on Facebook and Instagram! We also have a YouTube page & Twitter feed.

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

Sunday School | Current Events

Sunday School, for children aged 4 to 6th grade meets weekly during the 10:30am service and all are welcome to join. We gather for a story and talk about the lesson of the week, usually lectionary-based so the whole family will hear the same Bible passages. Children then return to church in time to join their families for the Eucharist/Holy Communion.

Episcopal Youth Fremont

Episcopal Youth Fremont (EYF) is a youth group for 6th – 12th graders based at St. James' which meets during the school year. Contact Jan for info about summer plans and to express interest in our 2024-5 youth confirmation program.

Any questions about our programs for children or youth? Email our Children & Youth Minister Jan Scrutton at jan@saintj.com.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY | January 2025

Fund Balances	01/31/2024	01/31/2025
Operating Fund	87,440.24	82,413.57
Building Fund	95,653.60	108,238.77
Special Interest funds	676,189.81	720,496.52
Pledges Budgeted	33,144.25	31,246.83
Pledges Paid	36,006.00	39,556.03
Unpledged Contributions	230.00	935.00
Other Operating Income	1,274.24	1,243.67
Total Operating Income	37,510.24	41,734.70
Total Operating Expenses	34,937.04	36,567.75
Income Less Expenses	2,573.20	5,166.95

ALWAYS AT SAINT JAMES'

PARISH CALENDAR

Access the online parish calendar **here.**

DIOCESAN NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Diocese of California, or DioCal, publishes a weekly newsletter every Thursday via email which you can receive by signing up on their website **HERE**.

For more information on diocesan events, staff, offerings, and resources, visit **www.diocal.org**.

BLESSING BAGS FOR DISTRUBITION

Let us remember those who have no shelter. Our Blessing Bags are available for you to give away. Each bag contains toiletries, water, food, socks, and a mask. We're using reusable cloth bags that can also serve as a backpack. **Please note we are not taking donations other than monetary donations.** This allows us to purchase what we need and to be consistent with what we are offering.

Blessing Bags are available to pick up during office hours, Wednesdays & Thursdays between 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM, in the parish office hallway.

Occasionally we have people visit church to ask for assistance. It is helpful to have gift cards we can give out with blessing bags when appropriate. If you'd like to donate a card, we ask for $25 cards for gas, Safeway, Target, Walmart, or Lucky. They can be given to the wardens, clergy, or put in the office.

MORNING CHAIR EXERCISE CLASS | ZOOM

Tuesdays | 10:00AM – 11:00 AM

Join Sylvia Ma for a weekly Zoom class on chair exercises on Breathing/Qi Gong and Tai Chi/ Hsing I movements. No experience is necessary. If you are interested, email Sylvia at **hsiehtinghsueh@yahoo.com**. The link will also be found on the parish website's calendar.

NEWS FOR MARCH

PARISH PRAYER LIST

For Those in the Military
Jarrod, Megan, Theresa, Mark, Tim, Caitlin, Emily, Robin, Dave Shawn, Ethan, Paul, Matthew, Johnny, Jonathan, Darren, Robert

For Healthcare Workers and Chaplains
Evelyn, Jeff, Brian, Josephine, Mary, Polly, Alice, Bozena, Angela, Darcia, Mary, Tammy, Mana, Natalie, Dr Jonathan, Megan, Gerald, Amber

For Teachers, Principals, School Staff
Jennifer, Monique, Toni, Jill, Sherea, Esther, Peter, Vivienne, Margaret, Stephen, Tim, Jason, Jeannie, Lucia, Travis, Jasmine, Emma and those in our families and communities

For Those Expecting Children
Sevan & Amber

For Those Who Need Solace, Strength & Guidance
David, Derek, Katie, Terri, Rose Marie, Lynn, the Tomkinson family, Maria, Rob, Raj, Holly, John, Alex, Karen

For Those Who Need Healing & Comfort
Ron, Julie, Gail, Linda, Barry, David, Elaine, Kit, Margaret, Karla, Mandy, John, Gary, Sandi, Ralph, Krisi, Kathy, Paul, José, Barbara, Albert, Marlene, Jane, David , Harriet

For Those Who Have Passed Away
Melvin, Glenn, Buck, Roberta, Ernie, Bobbi, Adam

BIRTHDAYS
MARCH

1	Kimberly Patton
6	Anna Davis
7	Paul Davis
8	Robert Lacy
	Jan Scrutton
9	Bethany Vacchieri
11	Barbara Vacchieri
13	Karen Ekren
	Barry Hedgpeth
14	Jennifer Ravera
20	Laura Castenada
24	Alice Johnson
27	Henry Dunn

To add someone to the "Special Prayers" list, please call or email the Church Office. After six weeks, names are removed. Please renew request(s) as needed.

The next issue of The Window is in April. *We welcome your comments, essays, poems, photos, book reviews, newsworthy items, and any group activity information.*

Email your submissions to newsletter@saintj.com by March 20, 2025

ANNIVERSARIES
MARCH

25	Paul & Nancy Svenson

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MAILING *PO Box 457 Fremont, CA 94537-0457*

WEBSITE *www.saintj.com* **TELEPHONE** *(510) 797-1492*

OFFICE HOURS *Wednesdays & Thursdays* | *10:00am – 1:00pm*

Called to serve, in new and loving ways.

PARISH STAFF

The Rev. Lori Walton | *Rector*.....**lori@saintj.com**
Karla Koon | *Seminarian*.....**karla@saintj.com**
Jan Scrutton | *Children and Youth Minister*.....**jan@saintj.com**
Jennifer Ravera | *Music Director*.....**music@saintj.com**
Ron Cook | *Office Administrator*.....**admin@saintj.com**
Bruce Roberts | *Treasurer*.....**treasurer@saintj.com**

VESTRY MEMBERS

Senior Warden
Charisma Pangilinan | srwarden@saintj.com

Junior Warden
John Amouroux | jrwarden@saintj.com

Emily Dunn
Gregg Feeney
Burtin Hart
Matt Hurley
Kaethe Lang
Paula McKinney
Bev Mosier
Katie Porter
Marcus Pun
Barbara Vacchieri

Vestry Clerk **Elizabeth Hart**

CONVENTION DELEGATES

Bev Mosier
Mike Scrutton
Ken Trant
John Wagas

Alternate to Convention **Jim McConnell**

Contact Us: **stjdeanery@saintj.com**

WORSHIP TIMES

Sunday Services:
In-Person | 8:00am and 10:30am

Live-streamed | 10:30am with recording

Wednesday Service:
Online/Zoom | 10:00am

IMPORTANT COORDINATORS

Eucharistic Ministers & Lectors
George Siegmann

Eucharistic Visitors
The Rev. Lori Walton

Ushers
Burtin Hart

Facilities ***facilities@saintj.com***

The Window Newsletter Staff
Laura Winter
John Wagas **Gregg Feeney**
Brian Cochran