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“Following through
with the hard
stuff is what
makes the stuff
we love possible.”



The St. James' Epistle

February 2012

Changing the Conversation

The Rev. Brenda G. Husson, Rector

“I don’t want to hear about it anymore!” Unfortunately, I hear this phrase several times a week, declaimed with great passion and often loudly. The speaker is my son and the cause is my temerity in raising the subject of homework. I (or my husband Tom) tend to ask provocative questions: wondering whether he’s gotten it out of his backpack, whether he’s done it, how much of it there is, when it’s due. Or, even worse, reminding him that it needs to be done before a video game is played. He really doesn’t want to hear that.

Unpleasant as these exchanges are two things about them intrigue me. The first is that despite the anger, our son’s response engenders a good deal of sympathy, both from me and from my husband. Our son is dyslexic. He also has dysgraphia. When reading and writing are hard, homework is tough. Fortunately, he is in a school that knows how to teach kids with such disabilities and he’s made great progress with both. Still, reading and writing are inevitably part of his homework, whether it’s science, history, current events, or English. Even math (which he enjoys) can come with word problems. Who among us wants to spend time doing something which reminds us of our struggles? Not me.

Probably not you either. So we’re sympathetic despite our insistence that the homework gets done.

So what else intrigues me? That despite these vehement and regular protests, if you ask him how school is he always says: “It’s great!”, with the exclamation point clearly audible. And he’s talking about Middle School. Middle School. He means it too: he talks at length about what happened in a particular class, tells us that algebra is cool (two words I never linked), that the book he’s reading for English gives him “chills.” And, though the school is in Brooklyn and we are not, he hasn’t been late even once in his nearly four years there. It is great. For him, and so for us.

Although I am always happy to talk about my son, why do I bring this up? Because at least two or three times a week someone at St. James’ says to me, “I don’t want to hear about it anymore!”—passionate words, sometimes spoken loudly. But the topic isn’t homework; it’s money. Here, too, I’m actually sympathetic. Money is an incredibly anxious-making topic because all of us, including your clergy, have serious questions about the role it plays in our lives. Am I frugal or merely cheap? Am I

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February 2012 at St. James'



Organist Christopher Jennings will perform "New York, New York," Friday, Feb. 10

"New York, New York" Organ concert by Christopher Jennings Friday, February 10, 7:00 p.m.

Spend an evening at the symphony—with the St. James' Symphonic Bicentennial Organ. Hear music inspired by a magical mountain, then listen to crashing fanfares and flashy toccatas. There may even be dancing.

All of the music on the program was written by New York Composers, opening with the Storm King Symphony, by Clarence Dickinson, which reflects the varying moods of the stately "Storm King" mountain that stands guard, as it were, over the Highlands of the Hudson. This is followed by a Fanfare composed by Alec Wyton (former organist of St. James') for the large State Trumpet

stop for the organ at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Then Calvin Hampton's *Five Dances*, a set of pieces with rhythmic intensity even in the light and playful movement "At the Ballet" and most certainly in the final section, "Everyone Dance." The concert closes with Gerre Hancock's new Toccata, written in the French style but with American flair as only Dr. Hancock can achieve.

Tickets are available at the door: Adults \$20; Children/Seniors: \$10. Info at www.stjames.org/music or by calling 212-774-4204.

See page 7 for additional music program information.



Did you know? "Shrove" isn't another word for breakfast-at-dinner. To shrive is to obtain absolution by way of confession and penance.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Tuesday, February 21, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Parishioners, newcomers, neighbors, and guests of ALL AGES are invited to St. James' annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper in Coburn Hall.

Enjoy all you can eat of the best pancakes, bacon, sausage, and fruit salad while the children decorate the 2012 St. James' Alleluia banner. The banner will be put away during Lent before making a grand entrance as part of the procession at the 9:10 service on Easter morning! You can see examples of previous years' banners on display outside the Sunday school rooms downstairs in Donegan Hall.

We estimate our cost for the pancake supper to be between \$5 and \$10 per per-

son. Register online at www.stjames.org, and contribute an amount that is comfortable for you. When you choose to pay more than the cost, you are not only supporting our common life and ministry as the Body of Christ at St. James', but also helping to assure that Parish Life events remain accessible to ALL parishioners and newcomers.

If you have questions, are unsure of how to register online, or would like to lend a hand at the pancake supper, please don't hesitate to contact Grace Beacham, Associate for Parish Life, at 212-774-4231 or gbeacham@stjames.org.

Ash Wednesday | February 22

8:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 6:00 p.m.: Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes

4:00 p.m.: Ash Wednesday Service for Children

The beginning of Lent, the season of self-examination and preparation for the joy

of Easter, is marked on Ash Wednesday with a focus on our mortality. The ser-



ices on that day are quite somber, but they are also hopeful; by reminding ourselves of our death, and the ways our limitations draw us from the love of God, we are reminded as well that God's love nevertheless conquers all. Thus while we impose ashes on our

foreheads as a symbol of mortality, we also hear most forcefully the message of forgiveness, salvation, and love. Please join us for one of these services. Note that the children's service also includes the imposition of ashes for those who wish it, but it is not required.

An Evening with Yasinta Mtambo: Women in Malawi Monday, February 27, 6:30 p.m.

Patrick Kidd, PIM-Africa Chair

PIM-Africa is delighted to welcome to St. James' one of our long time partners in mission: Yasinta Mtambo. Yasinta works closely with Bishop James Tengatenga in the Diocese of Southern Malawi as the coordinator of the Mother's Union, a global organization of Anglican women with local chapters dedicated to supporting parents, protecting children, and nurturing the life of faith within families. Yasinta also works closely with Love's Harvest (an organization St. James' has partnered with) to help families and communities grow their own, sustainable food through permaculture gardens, fruit trees and animal husbandry.

Yasinta will be in New York to attend the UN Commission on the Sta-

tus of Women as a guest of Anglican Women's Empowerment, a network of women from around the Anglican Communion dedicated to equipping and empowering women to be agents of social transformation. Her talk at St. James' will touch on the status of women in Malawi, as well as the evolving role of the Mother's Union in creating meaningful change in local communities. Sponsored by Partners in Mission-Africa, the evening is open to all, especially to those who would like to learn more about our ongoing relationship with the Diocese of Southern Malawi. For further information, contact Patrick Kidd at Patrick.kidd@rosewoodhotels.com or by calling 212-439-1562.



Yasinta Mtambo to speak on the status of women in Malawi and change in local communities.

Gordon McMullan Returns

Bishop Gordon McMullan returns to St. James' this month after spending the holidays at home in Northern Ireland, where he is retired Bishop of Down and Dromore. On this visit, Bishop McMul-

lan will lead the Wednesday and Thursday Bible Project groups, preach at services, and assist with pastoral visits. He will be with us for six weeks as a pastor, preacher, teacher, and friend.





A Journey to the Holy Land

Led by the Revs. Brenda Husson and Carol Anderson

January 26 – February 10, 2013

In the Bible Project we've read about Jericho and those tumbling walls; soon enough, Solomon will be building the great temple in Jerusalem. Over Christmas, we heard again about the shepherds tending their flocks by night and then, in early January, about Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan. But do you wonder what it might mean to stand in Jericho and pray at the temple wall or stand in the shepherds' field and a few days later renew your baptismal vows in the Jordan River? Early in 2013, the Rector, who has made two interfaith trips to Israel and the Rev. Carol Anderson, who has led several pilgrimages to the Holy Land, will lead a group of St. James' parishioners in an exploration of the Holy Land that will deepen our faith, enlarge our

understanding of the issues that have roiled this land and its people for millennia, and allow us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus' disciples. The cost of the trip is \$2,700 (double occupancy) plus airfare and includes the cost of lodging, meals, guides, and in-country transportation. A \$400 deposit is required by Friday March, 30, 2012, to reserve a place and the balance will be due by December 1. A monthly payment plan can be arranged.

Brenda and Carol will host an information session about this journey following the 11:15 a.m. service on Sunday, February 19. Please join us and, if you have questions or want to secure your place now, please contact Brenda at 212-774-4250 or at bhusson@stjames.org.

The Bible Project in February

The Revs. Will Peyton and Ryan Fleenor

Back in September, we set out to read the entire Bible together as a parish, an undertaking we're calling The Bible Project. If you'd like to get in on it, don't worry about "catching up," just jump in where we are and whenever you can. Weekly 10:30 forums (in between Sunday-morning services) explore the week's reading and are supplemented by discussion meetings throughout the week. These "reading groups" are made up of whoever shows

up—no "joining" and no commitment is expected. Visit TheBibleProject.net for more information, including a reading schedule and the days and times of the reading group meetings. There you'll also find a weekly blog by the Rev. Craig Townsend as well as a link to an eclectic series of musical selections related to the week's reading chosen by parishioner Arminda Thomas. Contact any of the clergy for more information.

Do you wonder what it might mean to stand in Jericho and pray at the temple wall or stand in the shepherds' field and a few days later renew your baptismal vows in the Jordan River?

Don't miss this month's Sunday morning forums (10:30 a.m.) in Coburn Hall:

- Feb. 5** Dr. Martien Halvorson-Taylor, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible at the University of Virginia, will return to St. James' to explore the story of Queen Esther, Mordecai, and wicked Haman.
- Feb. 12** We hear about the patience of Job, but just how much patience did he really have? The Rev. Brenda Husson, Rector, will offer a fresh perspective on a story we may think we already know.
- Feb. 19** Dr. Alan Cooper, Professor of Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary, will offer an introduction to the Psalms as Hebrew poetry.
- Feb. 26** Dr. Davis Wortman, Music Director and Organist, will explore the incredible musical legacy of the Psalms, from their role as ancient Israel's hymnal to our own day.



Changing the Conversation, continued from p. 1

teaching my children to manage money well or spoiling them? Are other households struggling the way we are? Do I spend too much, or live with someone who does? Can I say no to my friend's "ask" for their worthy cause or will that cost me their friendship? How come I have so much, yet feel so broke? That's a small sample. And when our parish church asks us for money we are being asked to think directly about our priorities in light of God's—and maybe to rearrange ours accordingly. Who among us wants to focus on a subject that reminds us of our struggles? Not you. Not me either.

So the good news? Well, as with my son, there is more going on than frustration and anxiety. For I also hear, every day, that you love St. James', words you speak with the exclamation point clearly audible. And you tell stories... about your amazing experience in a mission program, the time your children actually complained when you couldn't come to church, a worship service or a sermon that blew you away, the care that was given when someone you loved or you yourself needed it. These stories we tell

(I tell them too) are, in fact, love stories. A love you make tangible as you fill forums and services, volunteer to serve the hungry and sleep in the shelter, sing with joy and work tirelessly on committees and guilds that touch every part of our life. In those times, St. James' is great. For all of us.

None of us automatically see the correlation between doing the hard work and feeling great about our lives. But I know school has become great because my son slogs through the homework. And I know that when I love St. James' and my own part in its life, it's because I have pushed myself to line my priorities up with the Gospel. My hope at home and my hope here are pretty much the same: That as we wrestle with the difficult subjects (whether homework or money), we will come to realize that following through with the hard stuff is what makes the stuff we love possible. When we do that, two wonderful things will happen: I won't need to talk about raising money anymore. And we will all see just how amazing this parish can be. I can't wait.



February Food Donations for Yorkville Common Pantry

Beginning the first Sunday of every month, St. James' collects food for donation to Yorkville Common Pantry. On the first Sunday, children and adults alike are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items to the altar when receiving communion. At other times, donations may be left in the baskets near the Parish House reception desk or in the Narthex.

Yorkville Common Pantry is New York City's largest privately run food pantry. Donate in February:

- whole grain foods
- dry rice and packaged beans
- oatmeal
- cereal bars



We have a problem. A solution. And a choice.

Bill Hoar, Junior Warden

St. James' runs an annual deficit. Despite cutting programs and personnel over the last eight plus years, last year the Vestry approved a budget with an eight per cent draw on the portfolio (which we know is way too high). This year we made a commitment to reduce that draw to seven and a half per cent (still too high, but an improvement as we move towards 5% on our way to 4%). But to do that we will need to find \$150,000 in expenses to cut. That is after no increases in program expenses and only cost of living increases for the staff.

Here's the real problem: We have developed a mind-set that expense cutting is the only way to eliminate deficit spending. The real solution: we need to increase income.

Each one of us needs to reexamine our annual commitment to St. James'. If every household that could made an annual commitment of at least \$5,000.00, we would not be dealing with a deficit at all. But year after year, parishioners who say they love St. James' give exactly the

same amount to the church as they have the year before. Some will be quite generous with their schools, universities, arts organizations, and hospitals, and treat their spiritual home as a secondary non-profit. Perhaps re-prioritizing is in order.

If you are reading this, chances are you care about St. James'. Perhaps Sunday is your only day at St. James', a day in which you have your spirits lifted or hear great music or see that your children participate in one of the best Sunday School programs in the city. Perhaps you are also here during the week: serving on one or more committees, participating in bible studies, working in the meal programs or preparing for a mission trip. One day or seven, it all requires money to run and staff time to execute.

We need to effect a change. The good news is that we can—and then stop cutting away at good programs and squeezing good people. We can pay our own way, with each of us thoughtfully making a meaningful increase to our annual commitments to the church we love.

Daring to Ask

The Rev. Will Peyton, Associate Rector

I once heard a bishop say that if you want to make Episcopalians look at their shoes, all you have to do is mention Jesus or money. Because a big part of my job at St. James' has to do with welcoming newcomers to our community, I've had a lot of opportunities in my time here so

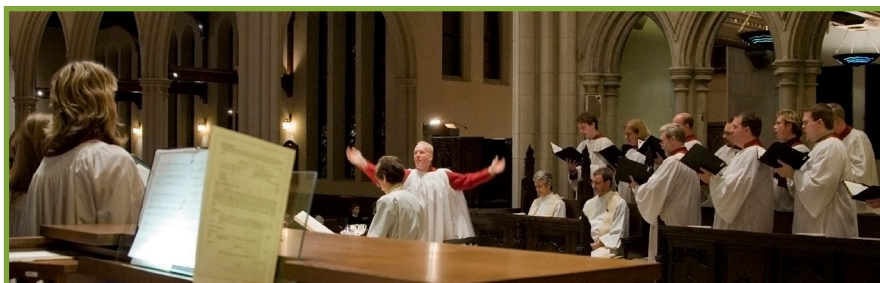
far to talk about both Jesus and money with people who are just beginning to discern where St. James'—or the Episcopal Church, or just Christian faith—might fit into their lives. Newcomers feel a certain freedom to ask questions that those of us who have been around for

Daring to Ask, continued on p. 8



Gracious and loving God, thank you for all your blessings. Teach us to be generous with our treasures. Support us as we build for future generations. Fill us with joy as our hearts grow in faith. Encourage us to use our talents to the fullest. Grant us wisdom as we seek to know your will. Help us actively share the love of Jesus Christ with each other, our city, and the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Music at St. James'



Mendelssohn's *Elijah*: Choir Concert

Sunday, March 4, at 3:00 p.m.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's oratorio *Elijah* stands next to Bach's great vocal works and Handel's *Messiah* as among the most passionate, dramatic, and beloved interpretations of scripture in music. The combined adult choirs of St. James' will perform this mighty work in a condensed concert performance, to complement the ongoing weekly reading of the entire Bible at St. James' through The Bible Project (thebibleproject.net).

The soloists and choirs of St. James' will sing the story of how Elijah, a Hebrew prophet several centuries before Christ, destroyed the pagan cults of Baal introduced into Israel by Jezebel, the wife of the errant Israelite king Ahab. Please bring the entire family and friends to hear this exciting biblical tale brought to life through music.

Tickets are available at the door on the day of the performance, Sunday, March 4, at 3:00 p.m. All tickets are open seating, no reservations required. Ticket prices: \$20 for Adults, \$10 for Senior Citizens and Students. For more information visit www.stjames.org/music or call 212-288-4100.

Parish Register December 2011

Weddings

John Matthew Gellert and Samantha Stark Topping

Baptisms

Alexandra Silliman Brodie, daughter of Honor and John Brodie
Alexandra Hayes Fahrman, daughter of Marilyn and Kenneth Fahrman
Eugenia Lunden McCrary, daughter of Kathryn and Campbell McCrary
Tristan Wolfgang Thym, son of Juliet Arrieta and Oliver Thym

Funerals

Mary Jane Smith

Children's & Families Ministry



Valentine-Making for all ages

Saturday, Feb. 11 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

We deal with the glue and glitter you don't want at home. Come and bring your creativity! Bring your friends and make new ones. For more information, contact Vicki Hall at 212-774-4232 or vhall@stjames.org.

Family Friday

Friday, Feb. 10 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

This month's Movie Night features *Monsters, Inc.* Join us and bring your friends for a great movie, pizza and popcorn. The cost is \$5/person with a maximum of \$15/family. Register online at www.stjames.org/families or pay at the door.



THE EPISTLE

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February at St. James'

Sunday Worship Schedule

8:00, 9:10, 11:15 a.m., 6:00 p.m.

Weekday Worship Schedule

Wednesdays, 8:00 a.m.

Ash Wednesday Worship Schedule

8:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 6:00 p.m.:

Holy Eucharist and Imposition
of Ashes

4:00 p.m.: Ash Wednesday Service
for Children

10 Fri. 5:45 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Youth Host Dinner Program

Fri. 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Family Friday Movie Night

Fri. 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

New York, New York, organ recital

11 Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Valentine-making Party

Sat. 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

PIM-Children Ice Skating

19 Sun. 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

20s & 30s Monthly Brunch

21 Tue. 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

22 Ash Wednesday (see above)

27 Mon. 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

"Women in Malawi"

And save these dates:

4 March, 3:00 p.m.

Elijah, choir performance

Visit the "Calendar" link at
www.stjames.org for a complete and
up-to-date listing of events and activities.

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St. James' Church is a community that actively shares the love of Jesus Christ with each other, our city and the world.

Daring to Ask, continued from p. 6

a while don't; not necessarily because we know the answers, but because we think we've been here long enough that we're supposed to know the answers. These questions from newcomers have occasionally startled me into recognizing that I myself have often been more ready to talk about programs, classes, and worship schedules than about Jesus or, especially, money.

Since I've been here, new members have fairly often asked me about the financial piece of their commitment to the Church, which has led to some wonderful conversations about the theology and practice of Christian stewardship. These have been conversations that I probably would not have initiated, but which have turned out to be helpful to new parishioners who had questions about how to think about their giving to the Church. After a number of these conversations, I start-

ed to be aware of times when my own inclination to talk about something other than money had threatened to get in the way of discussing the questions that a newcomer or a parishioner wanted or needed to discuss.

I don't know how much anyone gives to St. James'. As a pledger, I appreciate the seriousness with which St. James' treats the confidentiality of financial information, and as associate rector, I appreciate the benefits of being ignorant of the numbers. But as priest and pastor, I don't want to miss the opportunity to help parishioners experience the growth in faith that can come from exploring the space between charitable giving and a practice of Christian stewardship. If you're interested in a conversation about your own experience and practice of stewardship, and how it fits into your life in Christ, I would be happy to hear from you.