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The St. James' Epistle

January 2012

Kings, Candles, and Cake

The Rev. Brenda G. Husson, Rector

In the world beyond the church doors, Christmas is over. Yet as a church, we celebrate the twelve days of Christmas, continuing our celebrations through the Feast of the Epiphany, on January 6. We mark that night with a service of Lessons and Carols, at which the three wise men make an appearance. At the end of the service, the congregation heads out onto Madison Avenue for the burning of the greens (actually a small sample of the greens that adorned the church during Christmastide) and parishioners' candles are lit from that fire. Our lit candles point to the truth that we who have celebrated Christ's birth and the coming of the light of Christ into the world are now meant to take that light into the world. Christmas is known in the Church as the Feast of the Incarnation. We celebrate God coming to us in the person of Jesus: enfleshed. With the arrival of Epiphany, we are now to bear the message of God's love for the world in *our* flesh, by how we live and bear witness to Christ.

I have always liked this ending to the Christmas season. The Epiphany service tends to be more intimate and contemplative than the earlier celebrations of the season. So too, the reminder that the light of Christ is meant

to shine through us is especially apt after weeks of letting brightly colored ornaments and shimmering holiday lights carry the glow of the season for us.

This year, because January 6 falls on a Friday, we'll enact what we believe even more clearly. If you've been around St. James' for any length of time, you will have heard of our Friday night dinner program. Those dinners—prepared by volunteers who create a meal of fresh salad and a main course with at least two side dishes, set the tables, butter the bread, serve our guests, provide dessert, greet everyone as they come in, clear the tables, and wash the dishes—take place year in and year out. Dinner is served to our guests at tables for ten, adorned with tablecloths and flowers. Our guests include some who are homeless, some who are underemployed, and others who are elderly and live on very limited incomes.

Whenever I work at the dinner program (or help with the Tuesday lunch program, which provides another splendid meal similarly prepared and served), I welcome guests and remind them that just as they are welcome in Coburn Hall, they are equally welcome in the church for our services. A few do

continued on p. 8

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A Season of Revelation

Continuing in the spirit of the Christmas season, this January we enter into the season of Epiphany. While the joy of celebrating Christ's birth is fresh in our minds, we strive to recognize and remember God's presence and power in our own lives. We hope you will join us for fellowship and festivities that keep you close to God in heart. Here is a look at some of this month's highlights. See the calendar at www.stjames.org to register online.



Epiphany celebrations at St. James'

January 1

First Sunday After Christmas Day

Services at 8:00, 10:30 a.m., and 6:00 p.m.

As many people begin to pack ornaments away until next year, the Church continues its celebration of the twelve days of Christmas, a season that comes to a close on the Feast of the Epiphany. Join us for services at 8:00, 10:30 a.m., and 6:00 p.m. on January 1.

The Feast of the Epiphany: Epiphany Lessons & Carols

Fri. Jan. 6

6:00 p.m.

Join us to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany—the arrival of the magi at the manger—with Lessons & Carols. Music of Felix Mendelssohn, Franz Biebl, and others, sung by the St. James' Canterbury and Compostela Choirs, will be followed by the burning of the Christmas greens and a festive reception with our Friday night dinner guests. All are welcome.

Winter Parish Celebration

Wed. Jan. 25

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Save the date and watch the mail for your invitation to St. James' annual Winter Parish Celebration!

On any given evening at St. James', you're likely to find dozens of parishioners in different parts of the building engaged in different aspects of the ministry we all share—committee meetings, choir practice, Bible study, the dinner program, and more. If you've given the St. James' calendar even a casual glance, you know that it's crammed full of opportunities to meet, to learn, to pray, and to do the work of the Church. Once in a while, we need to put all those pieces together. We need to bring together parishioners with different interests, different gifts, and different experiences of life at St. James', to celebrate the ways in which the whole is

greater than the sum of the parts, and to marvel at the way we have been called, in all our diversity, to be the Church together in this place. Thus, the Winter Parish Celebration, a party for the whole parish, jointly sponsored by the Parish Life Committee and the Stewardship Committee, to celebrate our community.

It is the fond hope of the Vestry and the clergy that everyone will plan to come. All are welcome, regardless of ability to pay, but a suggested donation of \$20 per person will help defray the cost of the event. Please join your fellow parishioners, those you know and those you don't, in expressing our hope in the future God intends for us, and in supporting the community, the programs, and the ministries that proclaim that hope.

2012 Vestry Elections

Nominating Committee begins meeting this month

In the December issue, we announced the beginning of the 2012 Vestry Elections process. Beginning this month, the Nominating Committee will meet weekly to consider those whose names have been put forth for consideration. If you are interested in serving on the Vestry, or if you know someone who you think would make a great addition, the Nominating Committee members welcome you to discuss your ideas with them. To facilitate communication, posters with members' photos will be hung throughout the Parish House beginning this month.

The committee will accept suggestions until January 31, 2012, and will present a slate of nominees to the Ves-

try at its February meeting. The Nominating Committee, chaired by Anne Anthony, includes Jonathan Bays, Susanne Blackstock, Jack Geary, Nancy Peters, Holly Heston Rochell, Kathie Sincerbeaux, Baker Smith, and Brad Whitehurst. Please contact any one of the committee members to share your suggestions—or leave written thoughts in an envelope marked “Nominating Committee” and placed in the Rector’s mailbox at the reception desk.

For more information on the process of selecting Vestry members, see the December 2011 issue of *The Epistle* at www.stjames.org/news/epistle/December2011.pdf.



January Food Donations

for Yorkville Common Pantry

Beginning the first Sunday of every month, St. James' collects foods 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 January:

- canned soups and stews (low-sodium)
- whole wheat pasta

Expectations and Responsibilities of a Vestry Member

Congregational Participant

- Regular Sunday Worship
- Attendance at forums, special events and programs of the church
- Active involvement in committees and programs of the church
- Demonstrated leadership in stewardship
- Pledge to St. James' with tithing as a goal

Parish Leader and Representative

- Support and encourage the ministry of the Rector
- Support and encourage the staff in carrying out the mission of the church
- Communicate responsibly with the congregation, the Vestry, the Rector, the staff and the community

Responsible & Active Vestry Member

- Attend all Vestry Meetings (10/yr.)

- Reach out to parishioners through stewardship calling
- Participate in Vestry subgroups as required
- Take part in budget development and review
- Attend the annual Diocesan Convention at least once every three years
- Participate in biannual mutual ministry review with the Rector and the rest of the Vestry
- Attend annual Vestry retreat
- Attend scheduled Leadership Retreats
- Serve as a Vestry Liaison to one or two standing committees or guilds
- Act as Vestry Greeter before Sunday services at least once each month
- Count the Sunday collection regularly



Top 10 Reasons to Join the Pilgrimage to Canterbury

- 10 To stretch yourself and your muscles in new and rewarding ways.
- 9 To prove to yourself the shocking news that the English have learned how to cook.
- 8 To find that “kissing gates” are the countryside’s equivalent of Spin the Bottle.
- 7 To see whether Craig has learned any new songs on his orange ukulele.
- 6 To walk in a country where, if you get lost, the people you ask for directions speak your language.
- 5 Sheep! Shaggy cows! And other exotic creatures!
- 4 A little rain never hurt anyone.
- 3 To see the Archbishop of Canterbury’s eyebrows from behind.
- 2 To have a motivation to read some Chaucer for the first time since high school or college.
- 1 To find out that a spiritual journey and a rollicking good time can be one and the same.

Join the Revs. Craig Townsend and Will Peyton on a journey to Canterbury, June 13-22. Walk ten miles each day through quaint towns and beautiful Kent countryside, or sightsee each morning and walk a few miles with the rest of the group each afternoon—the choice is yours.

Full information about the trip is available in the December *Epistle* or at www.stjames.org/education/canterbury2012.html, or by contacting Craig. There are still spaces available. A deposit of \$500 is due by January 15 to reserve your spot on the pilgrimage. Payment can be made through the website listed above, and a monthly payment schedule can be arranged with Craig.



The Bible Project in January

The Rev. Craig Townsend, Vicar

This month we saunter through the books that cover the history of the ancient Kingdom of Israel, from the First Book of Samuel and the anointing of Saul and David as the first kings, to the book of Ezra (and in early February, its companion, Nehemiah), which covers the rebuilding of the Temple and the revival of the kingdom after the return from the Babylo-

nian exile—some five centuries of history. Some famous stories and some wonderful narratives await us: the stories of David’s family’s tragic twists appear to have been written by a court insider, and have all the Machiavellian maneuvers of *I, Claudius* or *The Tudors*. And if you didn’t really read the Book of Ruth over the Christmas break, take a few moments to go back to

it—it's one of my favorites, and has been described by some as the first short story. It undergirds the David stories very nicely, providing a parallel background in his family tree.

I remind everyone of three things:

1. **It's not too late to join the Project.** Just jump in where we are and don't worry about what you've missed—you can get to the key parts of that by looking at the Schedule tab on the website (thebibleproject.net).
2. **It's much easier to tackle these larger stretches of reading a bit at a time.** Try reading a few pages a day, rather than taking on the whole section at once—it's less daunting that way (hmm,

that approach works for stewardship as well...).

3. **All the information you need to keep up is on the website, thebibleproject.net.** I hope that you are finding the weekly blog introductions to the reading helpful. Though I will be on sabbatical for the next three months, I will keep writing those to encourage everyone in the Project and to keep my own discipline of staying on top of the reading. It has been a joy to come this far in the Bible with everyone, so I want to keep that sense of going forward with the community even as I work on another project at home.

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

Jan. 8 A special treat: "The Stories of David," a dramatic reading by parishioner Stephen de Francesco

Jan. 15 The Rev. William Peyton, Associate Rector, will offer an overview of David and Solomon, Israel's greatest kings

Jan. 22 Davis Wortman, Music Director and Organist, will look at the career of the prophet Elijah

and preview Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's oratorio, *Elijah*, which will be performed by our own Compostela Choir in March.

Jan. 29 The Rev. Ryan Fleenor, Lilly Fellow, will explore the later history of Israel as the kingdom divides, is conquered and exiled, and returns to rebuild.

Bishop-Elect Elected!

The Rev. Canon Andrew M.L. Dietsche is New York's Bishop-Elect

The Rev. Canon Andrew M. L. Dietsche was elected Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of N.Y. on November 19 (after the December *Epistle* went to print), when lay and clergy delegates from St. James' and all the congregations of the Diocese met in special convention. As coadjutor, Canon Dietsche will serve alongside our current Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Mark Sisk, until Bishop Sisk's retirement, where-

upon he will become the 16th Bishop of New York. Canon Dietsche is to be ordained a bishop at the cathedral on March 10, 2012. Parishioners are invited to attend, and are encouraged to pray for the Bishop Coadjutor-elect and his ministry.

Parish Register November 2011

Baptisms

Powell FitzRandolph Bos, son of Caitlin and Pier Bos

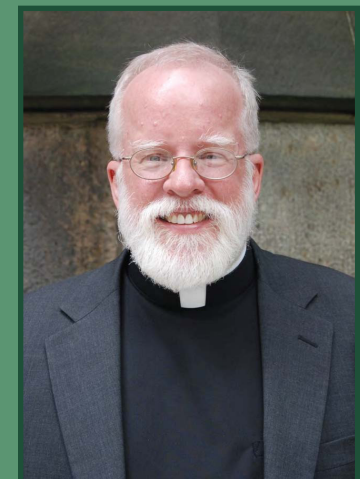
Charles Lucas Brueggen, son of Lauren and Mark Brueggen

Hilary Smith Geary, daughter of Medora and John Geary

William Bennett Howard, son of Lillie and Charles Howard

Alexandra Evangeline Mollett, daughter of Samantha and Ryan Mollett

Beckett Bishopp Mollett, son of Samantha and Ryan Mollett



*Canon Dietsche elected Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of N.Y.
(photo courtesy of the Diocese of N.Y.)*



A Note on the New Year

Holcombe Green, Stewardship Committee Chair

Welcome to 2012 at St. James! Thank you to all who contributed financially to our church in 2011. In my first year as Stewardship Chair, I learned a great many things about this job and about our parish. Everything I have learned has renewed my enthusiasm for the many wonderful things that happen at St. James' and has reaffirmed the importance of St. James' in the life of my family.

In 2012, we will continue to move forward together toward the lofty goals and ideals of our parish. The Stewardship Committee will strive to grow our base of contributors and, yes, we will ask all of you who already contribute to increase your giving. We will also be available to any and all who have questions about why it is important, indeed vital, to contribute financially to St. James' and about how your dollars are put to work by our church.

As I am writing in early December, I

am looking forward still to the Christmas pageant—a highlight of the church year in our family. I hope that you all attended and that you looked kindly upon the shepherds tending to the sheep, ponies and other animals, amongst which I will have been numbered. As I write this, those of us participating in the Bible Project have just finished a rather long week of reading in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The juxtaposition of the somewhat long slog through that reading (was that just hazing by the clergy?) with the anticipation that is felt by our girls around the wonderful annual event of the Christmas pageant was palpable for me this week. I love that St. James' provides that kind of environment, where I am challenged and fulfilled in multiple ways. I thank all of you for your efforts on behalf of our parish and look forward to a successful 2012 stewardship year.

Feed My Sheep

Joe and Mikel Witte, Parishioners

The Witte family is thankful for the “For All the Saints” capital campaign. It provides the parish and us with a joyful opportunity to fulfill our call to “feed my sheep,” as Jesus commanded. In remembering the generosity of the past generations of St. James' parishioners, we are more aware of our call as stewards to insure that future generations will continue to be fed through St. James' ministries and programs here at 71st and Madison, in our city, and our world.

The Gospel is clear about what we are called to do. “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Matthew 25:35-36). Day in and day out St. James' continues to fulfill that charge through our countless ministries and programs: feeding, welcoming, clothing, sheltering, and visiting. God's love is made visible in our parish and beyond.

Over our twenty-five years of attend-



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.

ing St. James' we have been especially thankful for the blessings of the exceptional adult and children's education program—weekly Sunday forums, Wednesday bible study, and prayer groups. We are grateful to our clergy for their leadership in challenging and renewing us, especially through the numerous small group studies of the Bible Project.

Josie, our daughter, was given opportunities to participate in many of the children's education programs as a reader, acolyte, youth usher, and confirmation class member. We want to insure that new families to St. James' have the same opportunities. Living now in Washington, D.C., the last four years, our schedule does not permit us to attend St. James' on a regular basis, but when in New York City, Mikel has experienced the gift of welcome and renewal through the Bible Project and Wednesday morning prayer group, and the opportunity to share in St. James' children's education with Vicki Hall, with whom she was blessed to work for

ten years as a Sunday School teacher.

Perhaps above all gifts we have received from St. James', Joe is most thankful for the extraordinary music at St. James' and the blessing of being fed through the majesty of sacred music.

We are also grateful that today St. James' is able to offer new opportunities for growth and witness. Bishop Gordon McMullan's confirmation and baptismal reaffirmation service this past December and the Rector and the Rev. Carol Anderson's pilgrimage to the Holy Land (in 2013) have and will provide, yet again, occasions to be fed.

With the parish commitment to the "For All the Saints" campaign, St. James' will continue to move forward keeping our vital programs and services going strong now and into the future. In gratitude we join our fellow parishioners in answering the call to "Feed My Sheep."

Youth at St. James'

Youth Host Friday Dinner Program

Friday, January 13, 5:30 – 9:00 p.m.

7th-12th graders are in charge of St. James' Friday Dinner Program on the second Friday of every month during the school year. Volunteers cook dinner, serve guests, and wash dishes at this seated, three-course meal for 90 homeless or

low-income guests. Friends are welcome. RSVP to the Rev. Ryan Fleenor, and meet in the Parish House kitchen. If you have never served before, we'll teach you everything you need to know!

Children's & Families Ministry



Epiphany Party

Thursday, Jan. 5

4:45 - 6:00 p.m.

You're invited! Through stories, crafts, and a very special visit from the Magi, we will celebrate this season of the Church year. Join us as we "spread the light of Christ."

Family Friday Wii Night

Friday, Jan. 20

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Bring your Mii to our Wii and let's have fun with Wii Master, Baker Smith. Pizza, drinks, and fun with other St. James' families. \$5 per person, \$15 per family max.



THE EPISTLE

St. James' Church

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January at St. James'

Sunday Worship Schedule

JAN 1 8:00, 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m.

JAN 8-29 8:00, 9:10, 11:15 a.m.,
6:00 p.m.

Weekday Worship Schedule

Wednesdays, 8:00 a.m.

5 THU 4:45 - 6:00 p.m.

Epiphany Party

6 FRI 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Epiphany Lessons & Carols

13 - 17 Annual Youth Mission Trip

13 FRI 5:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Youth Host Dinner Program

20 FRI 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Family Friday Wii Night

21 SAT 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

PIM-Children Ice Skating

25 WED 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Winter Parish Celebration

And save these dates:

12 February, 3:00 p.m.

"New York, New York," concert

21 February, 5:00 p.m.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

4 March, 3:00 p.m.

Elijah, choir performance

9 May, 6:30 p.m.

"Wild, Wild West"

Community Festival Benefit

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.

Kings, Candles, and Cake continued from p. 1

come from time to time and I know that others, lay and ordained, issue that same invitation. So, we're having our usual service of Epiphany Lessons and Carols and we're having our usual Friday night dinner program. Given the themes of the Epiphany service, it seemed clear that these two events ought to go together.

So they shall. Our Epiphany service begins at 6:00 p.m., and we've invited our dinner guests to join us for church on a cold January night, before being welcomed into dinner around 7:00 p.m. Being inside the warm church, rather than waiting on a cold sidewalk for dinner, is likely to hold some appeal. Even better (and not only for some of our dinner program guests), a service of Lessons and Carols requires no experience of Episcopal worship. You simply listen. To powerful readings and wonderful music. And you sing. Mostly carols you have known since childhood,

wherever you spent your childhood.

But there's another feature of this night that seemed just right. Each year, after we've burned the greens and lit our candles, we come inside for a brief reception including that fine Louisiana tradition of Kings' cakes. (Kings' cakes always hide a small plastic baby Jesus; whoever finds the baby gets to wear a crown—as appealing to adults, it seems, as it is to children.) This year, everyone at the service will be invited to the reception. For some, before heading to Coburn Hall for dinner, for others, before heading home or out with friends to eat. But all of us together. In that hour we will embody what we believe and what the Christmas story portrays when we find kings kneeling in the stable that shelters the baby Jesus: that Christ came to us all and lived and died for us all. If we're going to tell the story it seems only right that everyone whom Jesus loves should be there to hear it.