



ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
A joyful, inclusive community

St. James Community Journal April 2013

Dear St. James Members and Friends,

Here is the April edition of the St. James Community Journal. Please enjoy reading our new journal articles and essays. For upcoming events please view our [News and Events](#) page or visit our [calendar](#).

If you have comments about this month's Journal or items (especially pictures!) that you'd like to contribute for the next journal please contact [Rose Scarff](#). For more information about St. James please contact [Erazm Pochron](#) in the church office.

Thank you!
Rose and Erazm

The Tomb is Empty

By Rev. John Kirkley



"There is a kind of truth which, when it is said, becomes untrue."

– Anita Mason, *The Illusionist*

Archbishop Rowan Williams offers this quote from Anita Mason's novel in the conclusion of his meditation on the empty tomb. There is a certain theological humility evident in this conclusion: to try to put the Resurrection of Jesus into words, to provide a definitive description, is to make it untrue. It fosters the illusion that we can grasp what cannot be grasped. It tries to bring closure to what is always an opening into a process of transformation over which we have no control. Not every experience is reducible to language.

Williams helps us to see the importance of the empty tomb as a sign of the God whose presence can not be communicated fully because it is not in any way commensurate with any other "thing" that could convey this presence adequately; not even metaphorically. It is altogether a "Presence" that is an "Absence." Here, Williams suggests, the empty tomb functions symbolically much like the empty space between the cherubim flanking the arc of the covenant, where YHWH is said to dwell.

John's Gospel describes Mary Magdalene's encounter with two angels flanking the empty space where Jesus' body had been laid in the tomb. Williams notes that, "if John does mean us to catch an allusion here, we must suppose

that it is to this non-representable, non-possessible dimension of the paradoxical manifestation of God to God's people." This "Presence" as "Absence" may "explain" why in many of the post-Resurrection appearance narratives Jesus is unrecognizable to his disciples.

The theological point here is that while the Church affirms the manifestation of God in Jesus, and the reconciliation of the world to God through his death and resurrection, "the resurrection narratives themselves insist that the risen Jesus is not grasped, owned or perfectly obeyed by his friends. The Church continues to attend to Jesus to discover what it is to be; and it is this attention that constitutes the heart of the oddity and difficulty of resurrection belief."

In other words, we cannot point to Jesus and say, "there he is," once and for all. This would limit the freedom and agency of the Risen Lord whom we encounter in ways not reducible to the teaching of an historical figure, the veneration of a hero from the past, the example of an innocent, nonviolent victim, or even a glorious vision. The encounter takes the form of the empty tomb.

Thus, we are continually engaged in a process of attending to the Risen Jesus, (informed, but not limited, by the biblical record of his teaching and practice) to discover and accept more fully the abyss of love that flows through this empty tomb, this space between the cherubim. We attend to the Risen Jesus so as to be formed by him into "a people whose corporate calling [is] to show the world at large what [is] the scope and resource of divine love." We simultaneously become transparent to that divine love, and stand under its judgment. The moment we think we have grasped it, we fall headlong into that "empty space" that brings us back to renewed attention.

"The central image of the gospel narratives is not any one apparition but the image of an absence, an image of the failure of images, which is also an absence that confirms the reality of a creative liberty, an agency not sealed and closed, but still obstinately engaged with a material environment and an historical process." In this sense, the empty tomb is an historical fact.

The Risen Christ is not simply an idea, a mental construct of the believer or memory about Jesus preserved by tradition. At the same time, any attempt at a quasi-scientific description of the risen body is a futile and idolatrous attempt to fill in the space left by the empty tomb. We are left with the "uncomfortable task" of finding our way between "conservative fundamentalism and liberal existentialism" by attending, again and again, to the Risen Jesus in the vicissitudes of the world and history.

If you find this explanation of the Resurrection unsatisfying, that is because it is! It is simply a means of pointing you back toward the empty tomb, to the space in between the cherubim: to your own encounter with the "Presence" that transcends our capacity to grasp it, yet holds us in love.

Note: All quotes are from Rowan Williams, "Between the Cherubim: The Empty Tomb and the Empty Throne" in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 183-196.

Mothers Helping Mothers and St. James

Making a Difference for Women of the World by Noreen Huey



Thanks to the continued generosity and support of the St. James community, we were able to designate five new loans ranging from \$175-\$300 to women in five different countries. We also made a donation of \$200 to Petrina Grube's student program/trip to Nicaragua - Viviendas León (The St. Vincent de Paul school) and a \$75 donation to the Kiva operating fund to support their good work. Last month, combining repaid micro loans in our Kiva portfolio and new contributions from St. James parishioners, a total of \$1150 in micro loans were granted to:

- Monica of Kitale, Kenya. A 34 year old mother of four who is a dressmaker and has been in business for eight years.
- Robina of Kamoki, Pakistan. A 37 year old mother of four who has a hand embroidery business.
- Luljeta of Albania. A 44 year-old villager with three children and who has been in the agriculture business, selling produce to wholesale buyers for 20 years. She wants to purchase more potato and onion seeds for planting.
- Mrs. Tsevelmaa of Bayanhongor, Mongolia. A 47 year old widow who lives with her 5 children ranging from age 25 to age 2. She has been running a butcher shop since 2006 which will soon be run by her older daughter. She is starting a welding service at home by order to supplement their income.
- Maria Martha of Cuenca, Ecuador. A 49 year old mother of with four children, three of whom are married themselves and live independently. She works rearing animals and in agriculture. She also makes and sells ice cream.

Watch for more news coming soon about our next MHM/Mary Sunday on Mother's Day, May 12th.

News from the Vestry

By Barbara Webb, Sr. Warden



Pie Sunday was held on March 17, with an abundance of pie, both savory and sweet.

Outgoing treasurer, Hap Rhodehamel, with the help of pie charts, explained St James' current financial situation. The most exciting news is that we are within 1% of our 2013 pledge goal of \$210K. That means that our anonymous benefactor will fund the organist position through the end of the year. Aki will be back.

Sr. Warden, Barbara Webb, gave a brief overview of the 2013 ministry priorities – worship, new member incorporation, stewardship.

The table conversation topic was the worship at St James with special emphasis on the music program. The conversations were spirited with lots of good suggestions. A summary of those suggestions follows:

1. What do you notice about worship at St. James? What stands out for you in terms of points of connection and disconnection during worship?

Likes

- Reading psalms in different ways (men/women, left/right, singing, etc.)—change is nice, adds to service
- Announcements at end of service
- Offering "Episcopal Church 101"
- Children as acolytes; is inspirational for young children
- Community Eucharist, especially Ron sitting down with kids
- Communion around the table, more like family
- The congregation has a role (speaking) in the Eucharistic prayer
- "Kid" acolytes
- Friendliness of the Church
- 1st Sunday is packed because it is the Family (children's) service
- Welcoming newcomers but don't want to "overwhelm" them

- Music that is easy to sing
- Inclusivity of SJ
- 1st Sunday family service

Dislikes

- Meditation period after sermon is too short, and there's confusion about what bell means. Would prefer a bell to signal both beginning and end of period
- Want more detail about what the healing group does in chapel: what is it, what do you do when in there
- Long sermons. Aim for 7-10 minutes. Prefer without notes.
- Unclear how to get a nametag
- Wednesday night as only night for programs, need more variety
- Not enough women with speaking roles in the liturgy
- Dislike the wording of the Nicene Creed. Suggest using alternative creeds. Also suggest singing or chanting the creed
- Soft voiced speakers need the mike
- A lot of the hymns are not in the Large Print Hymnal
- Don't say "long time, no see"
- Kneelers broken. Need new pads
- Non-inclusive language i.e. God the Father (would prefer God the Parent)

2. In the past few months, some changes have been made in worship: a new format for the service bulletin, moving the announcements to the end of the liturgy, and a renewed focus on children at the Community Eucharist on the first Sunday of each month. How have you experienced these changes?

Mixed response to new service bulletin (like and dislike). It's confusing for new people. Like seeing text for whole service (reinforces/adds depth to what's being said). Suggest having a long and short form for those who prefer all text.

Need to have some large print bulletins. Also don't use dark purple, or any dark color, for the announcement page as it makes it too hard to read.

Mixed response to the announcements at the end. Pro – makes the service flow better. Con – disruptive to the healing team. Prefer congregation/ministry represent their own announcements to show vitality of community

Mixed response to one person reading the Prayers of the People. Some said yes. Some prefer several voices. Keep the names of the soldiers in. Like the bidder(s) standing in the center aisle.

Reinstate having the children verbally say what they are thankful for during the Eucharist Prayer

3. Music is an essential aspect of worship. What do you like best about the music at St. James? What is most important to you? Are there particular hymns you would like to see in a "St. James Hymnal"?

Likes

- Love that it frequently changes
- Love hearing postlude at end – a real treat
- Like a variety of music types (world, African, spiritual). Variety is nice, is appealing to visitors, is lively, more contemporary
- Love having other instruments
- Like call and response singing
- Like rounds, especially of co-leader
- Suggest having the choir sing twice a month and other music types the remaining Sundays.
- Suggest a Hymn board
- Include an article about the new season, music in the newsletter and weekly bulletin. Explain the season

Dislikes/Would like

- Harmonic song without musical accompaniment (e.g. , a cappella chant)
- Sing more old Episcopal hymns. Some of the new hymns are hard to sing

- Keep singing the favorite hymns from August throughout the year
- Suggest practicing hymns before the service starts. Also suggest a "singing" Postlude to rehearse a new hymn for next Sunday

Mixed response to a St James Hymnal. Some yes, some no because it would limit choices

4. Do you have specific suggestions about how we can develop and support the adult and youth choirs?

- Make a limited ask for choir participation – for a single Sunday or short term (e.g., have Lenten choir)
- Create a seasonal choir
- Include rhythm instruments by kids and adults
- Like idea of supplemental (not replacement) hymnal
- Have a combination children/youth/adult choir
- Make music a major part of the Parish Retreat

Recommend the youth be queried for their thoughts on these same questions.

Parish Work Day Accomplishments

by Tom Matthews



We had a very productive parish work day -- a big thank you to everyone who helped before to organize, during, and after to clean up and do miscellaneous finish up items. This was definitely the case of many hands make light work! We had about 20 folks who participated -- and all enjoyed a fine breakfast and lunch! And the age range of those who participated was impressive -- just about a century with the youngest being 3 and the senior one being almost 91!

Items completed:

- Replaced sconce in church
- Cleaned out furnace room
- Organized pews and chairs in nave -- and marked placement on floor
- Repaired damaged kneelers
- Fixed woman's room toilet seat
- All buildings now have up-to-date smoke and CO detectors
- Back alley behind church is cleaned and navigable
- Fixed paint shed in back alley and organized them
- Old paint removed and taken to dump
- Fixed holes in closet in rectory where water entered
- Cleaned out flat garage
- Cleaned up side alleys between parish house and flats, and west of church
- Cleaned-up/preped for painting small rental office
- Washed walls/baseboards/ledges in sacristy/altar area.
- Repaired kneelers
- Washed all tables in undercroft
- Repaired holes in Caldwell room
- Replaced motion detector in parish hall men's room

- Cleaned up choir room
- Begun to take inventory of all contents of building for insurance purposes

FYI, it is very important to keep the furnace room clear of all items.

Items not accomplished:

- Paint the small rental office
- Repair bathroom wall in CCI
- Clean parish hall baseboards

If anyone is interested in doing any of these items, please let Erazm or me know.

Thanks again, everyone! Great job! Our next parish workday is in September -- and there will be plenty to do!

Cheers! Tom

Secure Connections

by Terry Potente, LCSW
California Counseling Institute



Recently my husband and I took our grandkids aged 9 and 4 to the Academy of Sciences for a lovely day in the rainforest. As we were about to leave, grandfather and granddaughter left to get the car and the 4 year old took off to see the penguins. He is in a wonderful stage of adventure, going off and coming back to check in to his secure base. He is always in sight after hiding a second or two. But this time, the check in was interrupted. I had no idea where the penguins resided, having never been to that part of the museum. And by the time I found the penguins, the 4 year old had slipped away to some other exhibit. For the first time, we had lost each other! Round and round I searched. No 4 year old in an orange shirt. I was hoping he was just around the corner, but not this time.

Now, I am not prone to drama and wild thoughts about abduction. He would make too much noise for sure if anyone tried to hijack him in the crowd. However it was a challenge to not panic and to stay focused. Finally I decided it was time to enlist aid and headed toward the security guard that magically appeared, in an orange vest. Just as I headed toward her, there was a flash of an orange shirt. There he was coming toward me. We saw each other at the same moment. What a deep breath of relief! We hugged and his words tumbled out: "I'm so glad I found you, I was just about ready to cry." Many hugs and soothing followed, really for each of us. It was a moment of very secure connection. And of course we talked about it and what to do to be safe.

This was a little trauma, the kind of upset that happens to everyone. Responses to little traumas vary with age and culture. As a child I may have heard much criticism and blame for getting lost, inconveniencing the grownups, being thoughtless or selfish. Or maybe even a: "don't be such a big baby." It took a long time to find the caring in that approach. Often the adults felt shame and self blame when things went wrong and projected it outward on kids. This is a microcosm of what can happen in big Trauma too. Shock, panic, insecure connection, shame and blame.

Rebuilding Together on April 27

by Roger Wickstrom



And we are put on earth for a little space
That we may learn to bear the beams of love
- William Blake

We often speak of and explore together the concepts and meaning of living in community here at St. James. From sermon topics and discussions over a cup of coffee or tea, to sharing the peace and moments of quiet prayer; from gathering around the table for Holy Eucharist to serving the folks in need at St. Martin de Porres; from tending the courtyard garden to sitting quietly in silence with a hurting friend; all and more are ways of exploring our community in Christ together.

These daily and weekly moments of connection also find outlet in a once-a-year opportunity to stretch our community into the wider community of San Francisco by taking part in a spring time Rebuilding Together San Francisco (RTSF) service project. A tradition now of some 10 or more years, we will join with our friends from St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church for a work day sponsored through RTSF, an organization that "mobilizes teams of volunteers to revitalize neighborhoods by repairing homes and renovating non-profit facilities and schools."

This year's event will take place on Saturday, April 27th, fog or shine, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Working in the home of an elderly gentleman, Mr. Skovron, we will tackle some painting, cleaning and organizing, gardening and other relatively simple home improvement projects in order to make his home safer and more comfortable. Mr. Skovron, along with his two trusty Chihuahua mix rescue companions, is looking forward to the workday ahead.

As many of us can attest, volunteers do not need to be skilled in repair or construction – even that handy with a paintbrush! This is a great day of good physical work and community service, yes, but a day too to make new friends across communities, bearing out Christ's love in new and varied ways.

Look for a sign up sheet in the Parish Hall for more information but do feel free to contact Grant Paul (gpchem67@sbcglobal.net) or Roger Wickstrom (rogewick@hotmail.com) with any questions. More information about RTSF and their opportunities and services offered throughout the year can be found at www.rebuildingtogethersf.org. Join us!

Women's Group Begins In April



Women of all ages are welcome to join the new rendition of the St. James Women's Group. The first meeting will be on Saturday, April 20th, at 10 am in the parish hall.

The plan for this first meeting to have morning prayer followed by breakfast, sharing and discussion. To begin with we will be looking at the stories of different women in the Bible.

How the group will continue is up to the members, so please come and offer your ideas. Jane Clelland, our seminarian, is graciously offering her knowledge and leadership to get us started.

APRIL CALENDAR

April 3, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
April 4, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
April 7, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice Mindfulness Meditation after 10:00 a.m. service
April 10, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
April 13, Saturday	7:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast
April 14, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice St. James serves at Martin de Porres House of Hospitality
April 17, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
April 18, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
April 20, Saturday	10 a.m. – Women's Group Breakfast meeting 5 p.m. – Anne Lamott Book Event
April 21, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice
April 24, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
April 27, Saturday	8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Rebuilding Together Project
April 28, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice

The St. James Community Journal is a monthly publication on behalf of:

St. James Episcopal Church

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on or before the 15th
of the month.

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