



## From Our Rector

### *Stewardship Challenge for St. James*

By the Reverend John Kirkley

Our Senior Warden Jan Vennari and I wrote to you in early December regarding St. James' budget for 2013. The Vestry has decided to eliminate approximately \$20,000 in expenses to help close a significant budget deficit. These cuts include eliminating the organist position as of January 20<sup>th</sup>.

In response to this news, an anonymous donor has stepped forward with a gift challenge. If we meet our 2013 pledge goal of \$210,000, ensuring a balanced budget, this donor will underwrite the cost to retain the organist position through the end of the calendar year (approximately \$10,000).

We immediately received a \$1,000 pledge increase from one household to help meet this very generous challenge.

Come to the  
**Annual Parish Meeting**  
Sunday January 13, after 10 a.m. service



*Your voice, your vote ...  
your community needs you there!*

## EPIPHANY PAGEANT

Sunday January 6  
during the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist



- \* Epiphany pageant and child-friendly worship
- \* Coffee hour with Three Kings cake and crafts

Other increases and new pledges have followed, and as of December 27<sup>th</sup> we had received pledges totaling \$177,000, more than 80% of our goal. *But we still need more than \$20,000 in additional pledges to ensure a balanced budget, and receive the challenge gift.*

If you have not yet completed a pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. If you already have pledged – thank you so much! And, if you're able to do so, please consider increasing your commitment for 2013. We'd like to be able to announce that we have met our goal by the Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday January 13.

The Vestry is committed to a balanced budget next year, but it would be even better if we could have a balanced budget *and* continue to enjoy the musical talent of Aki Amai. Please help us to meet our pledge goal and maintain a vital component of our music program.



## Pipe Works, and a Work Day

*A Word From  
Our Junior Warden*  
By Grant Paul

Following a plumbing emergency over the Thanksgiving weekend, the line from the parish office building to the street has been replaced. This required breaking up and replacing some concrete in the courtyard and on the sidewalk in front of the lych gate. The total bill was \$9,500, of which insurance is paying \$2,400. The rest of the funds will come from St. James' Building Fund.

The plumbing company also said that the sewer line from the parish hall to the street is in very bad shape and needs to be replaced. This repair will cost even more, since that sewer line is much deeper underground. We are still soliciting bids for this work, but we agree that it needs to be done soon.

At the parish Work Day on December 8<sup>th</sup> we set up the Christmas tree in the narthex, cleaned the sanctuary, and cleaned and sorted the kitchen area. Thanks to the volunteers who helped out!



## Monthly Men's Breakfast

Saturday January 12<sup>th</sup>

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Come share ...

Good coffee

Tasty food

Digestible theology and reflection

Questions? Contact John Kirkley

at [john@stjamesf.org](mailto:john@stjamesf.org).



## Prayer and Meditation at St. James

Sunday January 6<sup>th</sup>

Mindfulness Practice and Discussion Group  
after the 10:00 a.m. service

Thursdays January 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>

Lectio Divina Scripture Meditation  
6:30 p.m. (Supper follows)

Weekly Weekday Services

Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer  
and Meditation

Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. - Evening Prayer  
and Meditation

## Parish Transitions and the St. James Journal

*Reflections From a Senior Warden Emeritus*

By Doreen Canton

In January 2009 St. James was going through major changes. The economy was crashing around the world at various rates, and people were uncertain what was going to happen both individually and collectively. At the same time our parish faced the retirement of a beloved long-time rector, a capital campaign that had been in the making for ten years, and a shrinking congregation and pledge base.

In the fall of 2008 the Vestry had to make some extremely hard decisions regarding our finances and how we were going to keep the parish in sound financial shape. These decisions included laying off a number of part-time staff and finding both an interim priest and permanent rector. As you know, the parish elects the Vestry, or lay leadership, who assist the rector in running the business of the parish. Without a priest in charge this responsibility fell to the Vestry, especially the Wardens and Treasurer.

As we struggled to grapple with our new responsibilities and hire an interim priest, we realized how important



communication was going to be over the next months. The Vestry needed to keep everyone informed about what was going on, particularly our progress in hiring an interim priest and explaining the process for the rector search. This all got even more complicated when the Vestry voted to terminate the capital campaign, another tough decision that produced strongly-held opinions.

One of the part-time paid staff who had recently been laid off was the editor of the St. James Journal. The Journal had been providing the St. James community with parish news, entertainment, hope, and encouragement for many years under the capable hands of a number of our talented parishioners. And now, just when parish communications were most important, the Journal was without an editor.

Into the breach stepped our gracious, unassuming Elizabeth Nelson. I can only imagine how much tougher this transition time would have been without our Journal and Elizabeth's patience and skill as editor. She was understanding when we repeatedly asked for deadline extensions, presented articles at the last minute, or sent in changes to articles already submitted. And she helped to

maintain the Journal as a means for us to maintain a dialogue with the congregation, bringing openness and transparency to the difficult decisions being made by the Vestry.

Elizabeth's original commitment as editor was to give it a try for three months. That's now four years ago! I have greatly appreciated the marvelous job she has done in bringing to light the stories and adventures of our talented congregation. I look forward to reading my copy of the Journal every month, and I am grateful to Rose Scarff for volunteering to move the Journal forward.

The Journal and all who contribute to it add so much to the life of the parish. It is read by regular church goers and those who attend only occasionally. In addition, there are many of our former parishioners and some guests who keep in touch by reading the Journal. Over the years various editors and contributors have lent their own creative stamp to this special newsletter. You can, too! No previous experience necessary. Talk to Rose if you have writing or artwork that you'd like to offer. Or talk with any Journal contributor whose work you enjoy, and let them know!

Thank you to Elizabeth and all the St. James Journal "faithful" for your support and help when I needed it desperately during our time of transition, and for the years of news and entertainment you have provided since then.



## *“You Say Goodbye, and I Say Hello”*

### Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

By Elizabeth Nelson  
Outgoing Editor, St. James Journal

Thank you to all the writers and artists who've worked with me over the last four years to provide news, education, inspiration, and entertainment to our St. James community. Time and again they have surprised us, delighted us, challenged us, and made us better ... all while making their editor look really good. They're amazing, each and all.

Thank you to Rose for stepping up as the Journal's next editor. Long-time active parishioner, Journal contributor and former editor, experienced writer, committed to keeping the Journal accessible both on-line and on paper – we couldn't ask for better. Please support her in every way you can.

Last and most, thank you to every Journal reader who ever took the time to approach me (or any other contributor) and say something like, “When I read your article in this month's newsletter, it made me think about...” Conversations like that are why we do this, and what the Journal is for. Thank you for paying attention, and keeping the conversation lively.



### A New Editor and New Look for the Journal

By Rose Scarff  
Incoming Editor, St. James Journal

Beginning with the February 2013 edition of the St. James Journal, I will be taking over as editor as Elizabeth Nelson retires after four years of dedicated work. I am hoping it will not be the last time we hear from Elizabeth, and that she will continue as a contributor to the newsletter from time to time.

Also beginning with the February issue, the newsletter will have a new format. Instead of being sent to you as a .pdf document which you must open to read, you will receive the emailed version of the newsletter in a format similar to the new Weekly News email. We will still print some copies for those who would rather receive their newsletter on paper, but that too will look different.

Although I was once the editor of the Journal many years ago, at that time I had Noreen Huey's help with graphics and layout. With the new format that is supposed to be less of an issue, but I ask your patience as I learn this new format and get up to speed on this new way to distribute the news of St. James.



## Gifts I Treasure at St. James

By Petrina Grube

Recently at my Education for Ministry class at Grace Cathedral, a classmate asked us what we look forward to about the stewardship season. I first thought, well, I don't necessarily look forward to it – it's just a necessity to keep the church running. But as I considered it further, I realized there is a part of the stewardship season that I do enjoy: hearing fellow parishioners' statements about what St. James means to them and why they give to support the community. I feel we get to know each other better through these stories. As we continue to discuss how each of us can pitch in to keep St. James a healthy and vibrant parish, I offer my reflections on four of the gifts I treasure most about St. James.

### 1. The gift of an inclusive environment that invites open exploration of faith

Before coming to St. James I visited various churches, but never quite felt at ease. I felt I was being asked to accept concrete answers that excluded others who were not on board. Then in 2004 I happened across the book *The Heart of Christianity* by Marcus Borg. His vision of Christianity, focused on its inclusive heart of love, truly spoke to me. I thought to myself, "I would love to find a church that is discussing this kind of Christianity." On a whim I Googled "Marcus Borg, church, San Francisco."

Up popped St. James, where Borg had been a guest speaker earlier, just two blocks from my house! When I walked through the doors, I found what I'd been looking for – a community of people who didn't claim to have all the answers, but were passionate about journeying together as we explored the mysteries of this faith and what it means for how we live our lives; a church that is welcoming to all travelers, wherever they are on their faith journey. Eight years later, St. James is my spiritual home and a regular part of my life. I love the conversations I have with fellow St James members and visitors at classes, at coffee hour, on retreat, during volunteer projects. I am grateful for a place where we can be honest and open as we share our faith walk together.

### 2. The gift of on-going adult faith formation

I also am grateful for the opportunities St. James provides for on-going adult faith formation through preaching, classes, and the monthly Journal. Since I arrived at St. James, we have had fantastic preachers, both clergy and lay: Mary Moore, Shari, Won-Jae, John, Ron, Elizabeth, Mary, Leslie, and others. They have opened my eyes and heart and mind over and over, bringing new meaning to familiar verses, nudging me to look at life in fresh ways, revealing Gods' message of love again and again and inspiring me to live it out in daily life. The classes and series at St. James over the years have also deepened my understanding of our faith and what it means to walk in the way of Christ. I also treasure the contribution of the Journal to our faith formation, with its thought-provoking articles from the pastor, CCI staff, and members of the congregation.



3. *The gift of spiritual practices to stay grounded and centered*

With a hectic teacher's schedule, plus a tendency to jump into a multitude of activities, classes, and volunteer efforts, I am extremely grateful for St. James' grounding and centering presence in my life. Weekly worship on Sunday morning, as well as *lectio divina* prayer evenings and monthly mindfulness sessions, help me to stop, breathe, rest in prayer, and re-root myself in God's loving presence, the source of our being.

4. *The gift of community*

Rarely in our big, busy cities are we able to come together with the same people, to share a meaningful ways, on an ongoing basis. As I talk with friends about their longing for a sense of community in San Francisco, I realize what a special space St. James provides. In this transient city, St. James feels like a little haven of small-town community, where people care for and support each other over time. It is also a place where we have conversations about, and try to make sense of, the deeper issues going on in our lives and world. I find myself wondering how we can share this gift with others in our city who long for connection, for the sacred, for a place where they can explore the deeper questions of life. A great way to start is to support St. James financially so it can continue to thrive, providing gifts of spiritual nourishment, growth, and community to its members and beyond.



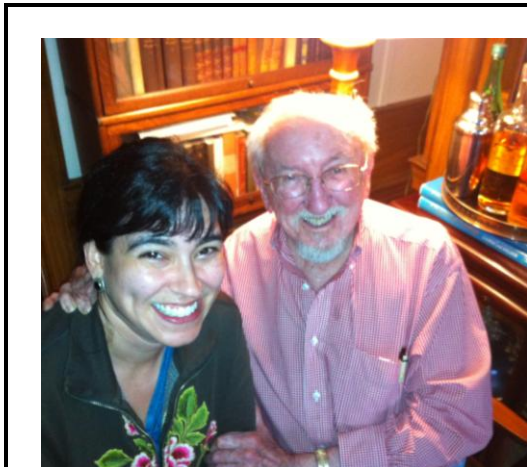
ElderWISE  
*Volunteer Visitors  
Working in Service  
to Elders*

By Amy Brokering  
Director,  
Senior Resources



In previous columns I've shared information about Episcopal Senior Communities' "Senior Center Without Walls," our Senior Produce Markets, and our information/referral service for elders through the Senior Resources program. This month I'd like to highlight our opportunities for adult volunteers via the "ElderWISE – Working in Service to Elders" friendly visitor program.

What makes this friendly visitor program unique and effective? One significant factor is the emphasis on training each adult volunteer in interpersonal and listening skills that help to develop the volunteer's confidence in becoming a compassionate companion to a lonely, at-risk elder. A recently trained volunteer visitor had this to say about ElderWISE: "The friendly visitor volunteer training was so worthwhile – the staff provided practical, solid information that included listening skills and small-group activities. You can take the skills that you learn to all of your relationships – and I enjoyed the day so much!" Another volunteer commented about how glad she felt about being matched with a homebound senior in her neighborhood, saying, "I feel like I'm contributing to the universe when I see my senior friend each week!"



*Episcopal Senior Communities'*  
Senior Resources

Programs and referrals for seniors  
and those who love them

San Francisco office located on-site at St. James!

Contact Amy Brokering at 415-752-0139 or visit [www.jtm-esc.org](http://www.jtm-esc.org)

ElderWISE, founded in 2009 in San Francisco, focuses on pairing isolated and often homebound seniors with volunteers for regular social visits in the elders' homes. A key goal in the ElderWISE program is to end the social isolation that can often occur when seniors are homebound or living alone with reduced mobility. Volunteers' visits, usually at least twice per month for one or two hours, can help alleviate seniors' loneliness and often lead to a greater sense of connection to the outside world and community activities. For the volunteer visitor, this regular connection with an elder builds a relationship of companionship and caring, which can enrich the volunteer's own life in unexpected and beautiful ways.

When evaluating the impact of friendly visits to the senior participants, it is important to note that studies have shown that the potential benefit from increased social connections is quite remarkable. Researchers from Western Oregon University (2007) found that helping seniors increase or maintain their social networks can lead to enhanced cognitive functioning, improved quality of life, and decreased depression. We believe that our ElderWISE volunteers often play an important role in supporting our senior clients' potential to continue living well and independently in their own homes.

Our next all-day training for new volunteers is scheduled for Saturday, February 23. If you would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer visitor with ElderWISE, or if you know an elder who might benefit from participation in this program, please contact Vanessa Sacks, Program Manager, at 415-668-1823 or [vsacks@jtm-esc.org](mailto:vsacks@jtm-esc.org). Vanessa would be glad to share information about ElderWISE and the way this program can enrich both volunteers' and seniors' lives.



## Relief in Release

By Carolyn Swearingen, Ph.D.  
California Counseling Institute

Happy 2013! The new year can be a valuable time to reflect on the past, assess the present, and look towards the future with a sense of curiosity and anticipation for the year ahead. Often, in so doing, we create goals and resolutions regarding how we might try to improve



different aspects of our lives (get healthier, improve work/life balance, etc.). Change often means letting go of thoughts, wishes, beliefs, feelings, and/or behaviors. Letting go is an important step in the change process, but can also be anxiety-provoking and uncomfortable. Even the thought of letting go may be causing you discomfort as you read this. This is natural and to be expected. Letting go is scary because we fear losing a sense of control and becoming overwhelmed.

However, what I have noticed for my therapy clients is that the opposite is true. Letting go allows people to feel more in control of themselves and their lives, and less anxious. This is so important, because our fear of letting go tells us the opposite: "If I really accept that I can't control my wife's behavior [or that my friend is dying, or that I am deeply sad about the childhood I never got], I would be overwhelmed and feel helpless." With a trained professional as a companion and guide through this journey, the act of letting go itself can actually feel liberating rather than overwhelming. Time and again I have supported clients in letting go of whatever they felt was holding them back from fulfilling their potential, and it is typically accompanied by a sense of relief, with renewed self-efficacy and self-confidence.

An image may make this clear: imagine that you are holding on to a rock. In many ways the rock may be comforting; it may help you feel protected, comfortable, and safe. After a long time of holding on to it, however, your hand starts to cramp and the rock begins to feel heavy – as if it may be a hindrance rather than a help. "But I can't let go of the rock," you may think to yourself. "Otherwise I'll lose that familiar sense of comfort and control it brings me." Eventually, though, you do let go – and although you may initially feel uncomfortable and scared because you no longer have what you used to have, you may soon notice that you have something different: a feeling of empowerment because you did something you thought you couldn't do. And now that you've done it, you also feel the relief of setting something aside that may have been holding you back.

I believe this is one of the greatest sources of self-esteem, self-confidence, and transformation that we have available to us. The therapists at CCI are dedicated to helping people transform their lives and spirits in these ways. We wish you growth and healing in the new year.



## Epiphany

By Elizabeth Nelson

[*This column appeared first in this space in January 2007, and has returned several times since. A favorite of mine, and a perfect last/first word from me on this back page.*]



Say you're someone who likes to look at the night sky. You live in a place and time where the horizon is low and artificial light is rare, so there's a lot of night sky to look at: millions of tiny lights up there, spinning slowly in a gigantic dance. You watch. Maybe you're studying the lights, maybe you're praying to them, maybe you're just letting your mind go dark while they shine on you. Whatever it is that you're doing, you keep on doing it. Night after night, you and the darkness and millions of tiny lights ... and you watch.

Then one night you notice that the pattern of the dance has changed. There's a new dancer up there in the darkness, a light that wasn't there before. It's not so hugely bright that everyone stares and points, but you, because you spend so much time looking at the night sky, you notice. There's a new light up there, and it's different from the millions of others because it's ... well, *calling* to you somehow. The other lights are too caught up in their dance to care whether you watch or what you do, but this one, for no reason you can explain, seems to be shining with a message. *Come*, it shines to you. *This way. There's something you need to see.*

Night after night, a message glowing from the midst of the dance in the night sky ... until finally, for no reason you can explain, you put on your traveling shoes, take your bearings on that new light, and set off on a journey, headed *that way*. Maybe you have some idea of what the light is leading you to, maybe not; but every night you look up at it to get your bearings, and every morning you give yourself to the journey again.

The journey takes as long as it takes. Along the way you meet other people who, for no reason they can explain, are traveling in the same direction. You go on together, following that one particular light. Sometimes you ask

advice from powerful individuals in the places you travel through. The results aren't always what you expect. You keep traveling. Every night, millions of lights dance in the darkness; every night, one light shines out its message to you. *There's something you need to see. This way. Come.*

You travel and you travel, taking your bearings on that one particular light, finding new companions along the way ... and then, at last, you come to the place where the light was leading you. You see what you need to see. You know the reason for your journey.

But the journey isn't over. You needed to come to this place, but it's not a place where you can stay. You've seen what you've seen, and now it's time to move on again – back home, maybe, or somewhere else. There's no longer any message shining in the night sky; where you go is up to you. But you've seen what you needed to see, and somehow, for no reason you can explain, you *know* which direction you need to move in next.

So once again you put on your traveling shoes, take your bearings on this *knowing* that shines inside you, and set off – maybe with some of your new companions. You travel and you travel, and every night before you sleep you look up at the gigantic dance spinning across the sky and wonder: when exactly did this *knowing* come to you? Did it come at the moment when you finally stood in the place where the light had led you, seeing what you needed to see? Did it slip into your mind at some point during the journey that brought you to that place? Was it born the night you looked up and saw that one particular new light among the millions of others? Or did it slowly catch fire inside you during all those thousands of nights you spent alone in the darkness, watching?

Close your eyes, and you can hear millions of dancers in the night sky laughing at your questions. Wake up in the morning and take your bearings. Know what you know. Give yourself to the journey again.



Emanu-El



## CALENDAR

- Jan. 3, Thursday 6:30 p.m. *Lectio Divina* group
- Jan. 6, Sunday 10:00 a.m. Children's Epiphany Pageant during Community Eucharist,  
Three Kings Party during Coffee Hour (see p. 1)  
Mindfulness Meditation after 10:00 a.m. service
- Jan. 12, Saturday 7:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast (see p. 3)
- Jan. 13, Sunday St. James serves at Martin de Porres House of Hospitality  
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING after 10:00 a.m. service!
- Jan. 17, Thursday 6:30 p.m. *Lectio Divina* group
- Jan. 25-27 Vestry Planning Retreat – pray for them!
- 

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

**St. James Episcopal Church**

The Reverend John Kirkley, Rector  
4620 California Street  
San Francisco, CA 94118  
415.751.1198  
fax 415.751.1545  
[stjames@stjamesf.org](mailto:stjames@stjamesf.org)  
[www.stjamesf.org](http://www.stjamesf.org)

**Community Learning Center  
at St. James**

4620 California Street  
San Francisco, CA 94118  
415.751.1199  
[info@clcstjames.org](mailto:info@clcstjames.org)  
[www.clcstjames.org](http://www.clcstjames.org)

We welcome your articles  
on or before the 15<sup>th</sup>  
of the month.

Contact Rose Scarff  
with future submissions.

**St. James Preschool**

Roger Setterfield, Head of School  
4620 California Street  
San Francisco, CA 94118  
415.752.8258  
[rsetterfield@stjamesf.org](mailto:rsetterfield@stjamesf.org)  
[www.stjamespreschoolsf.org](http://www.stjamespreschoolsf.org)

**The California Counseling Institute**

Elaine Chan-Scherer, Executive Dir.  
Meg Bloomfield, Managing Dir.  
4614 California Street  
San Francisco, CA 94118  
415.752.1702  
[ccpsyche@earthlink.net](mailto:ccpsyche@earthlink.net)  
<http://californiacounseling.org>

**Editor and Producer:**

Elizabeth Nelson

**Distribution:**

Elizabeth Nelson  
and Erazm Pochron,  
Andrew Hom *in spiritu*