

Enjoy the St. James June Journal



ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
A joyful, inclusive community

St. James Community Journal June 2013

Dear St. James Members and Friends,

Please enjoy reading our June edition of the St. James Community Journal. 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

Church is Making the Connections

By Rev. John Kirkley



"The breaking of the bread is where I experience my 'deep connection with all of reality.' As I look around at all the faces at the table, I see people from many different experiences, different cultures, those raised in other countries, those raised in a city and those from a rural environment, some with less material goods and some with more. But we are in one place at one time, around one table sharing one meal. And that absolutely amazes me. And I am really, really thankful that I can be part of that." - An anonymous St. James member

This beautiful testimony to the power of Holy Communion reminded me that "church" is not a building. It is not an institution. It is a nexus of relationships through which we touch what is most real.

The most prominent images of the church in the New Testament underscore the primacy of relationships with God and one another. St. Paul describes the church most often as an *oikeioi* – a household or family. The language of family and related endearments: "beloved," "sister," "brother," "children," is so common as to be taken for granted. This is hardly surprising, given that Jesus himself said, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

This familial imagery is reinforced by the centrality of agape – sacrificial love – as the most important fruit of the Spirit manifest in the church. This kind of love, a love that endures risk and loss for the sake of the beloved, is generally restricted to our closest relations. In the early church, it was extended to all our relationships, in imitation of Jesus' agape.

Unlike most families, however, the church is not a homogenous community. It is marked, in fact, by its diversity. This brings us to another prominent image of the church in the New Testament: the Body of Christ. Here, unity is defined not by uniformity, but by the coinherence of distinct parts in one body.

This organic image emphasizes our mutual dependence upon the unique gifts of each and all for our wholeness in Christ. It is in the giving and receiving of gifts from each other that Christ's presence is manifest for the healing of the world. Salvation is a communal experience, necessarily so. It is, in fact, cosmic in scope: nothing less than a new heaven and a new earth.

All this is to say that we touch what is most real in and through relationships. Reality is a matrix of relationships across time and space, across multiple dimensions of time and space. Jesus Christ, "through whom all things were made," is the door through which we pass into the heart of reality, the abyss of divine love. "Church" is making the connections and discovering that all is held in this love.

This discovery changes our perception of reality. It is no longer some-thing "out there," but some-One within which we are. We are no longer strangers, alone, alienated from reality, but rather find ourselves on the inside of God's project of bringing creation to its fulfillment.

In this sense, there is no salvation outside of the church: indeed, there is no "outside." This is the truth that resonates through us each time we gather around the table for Holy Communion. And I, too, am really, really thankful to be a part of that!

Journey to Nicaragua, Part II: Service Project in Goyena

by Petrina Grube



Dear St. James community,

In last month's journal I shared reflections on the first part of my trip this past Easter Break to Nicaragua with a group from St. Vincent De Paul School, where I teach Spanish. We traveled with VivriendasLeón, an educational exchange and development non-profit based in San Francisco and León. After a fascinating three days observing Holy Week and Easter traditions in León, we began the rest of the program. In the mornings we visited local sites to learn about the culture and history of Nicaragua. Our excursions took us to the revolutionary murals telling the story of Nicaragua's tumultuous past, to the Museum of Myths and Legends, to the central market to experience daily life in León, and to the central Cathedral where we walked on the roof to experience a bird's eye view of the city and surrounding volcanoes.

In the afternoons we drove 45 minutes over bumpy dirt roads to Goyena, a rural community where VivriendasLeón helps organize local families to improve life in Goyena through educational, arts, environmental, and small business development projects. Our first day we learned the origin of Goyena, established after Hurricane Mitch in 1998 by families displaced by the flooded river which had wiped out their homes. At our orientation meeting the first day, a mother told us the harrowing story of her experience during Hurricane Mitch, seeking refuge with her father and 1 year old in a tree near her home while the river rose below them. She said she was sure they would die as she saw uprooted trees, houses, and livestock tossed along by the raging waters. Miraculously, they survived, and 14 years later, she and her daughter, now 15, are alive and well, making a new life for themselves in a neighborhood of Goyena literally named "Nueva Vida"- "New Life."

She said when they arrived, there was nothing--no houses, no trees, no buildings. Looking around our first day, it was hard to believe all that had been established in 14 years. With the help of VivriendasLeón and other

organizations, they had built houses, schools, family gardens, and a community and art center. Our job for the week was to help families preparing 5,000 saplings each for a reforestation project of 20,000 trees to be planted this year. Our afternoons found us sitting around a large pile of dirt with moms and kids from the families, carefully filling small bags for planting. As we worked, we got to know each other. The 7th grade student from our school tentatively practiced her Spanish as another 7th grader from the community, Silvia, shyly tried out her beginning English with us, filling in the gaps with laughter and smiles.

Silvia showed up every day after school to work with us. With her gentle presence and determined, hard working spirit, she captured my heart. At the end of our work session the second day, she left just ahead of our van, negotiating the rocky road on her bike more quickly than we could in our van. As she rode off, dignified and confident, I thought, "What will become of her life out here in this little rural community?" The last day, we worked at Silvia's house and met her family. As Silvia's mom and I chatted, unloading sapling bags in the hot sun, both of us dripping from the heat, I learned that Silvia's mom had only studied through the 3rd grade. She was determined that her girls get a good education. She told me Silvia wants to be a doctor, but she wasn't sure how they would pay for that. Immediately I thought, we all need to work together to make this happen- imagine Silvia growing up to follow her dream and help people in that way, using her gentle manner and hard-working spirit to heal others. Through future trips, I hope our connection with Silvia's family continues so that we can support Silvia and students like her in fully developing their gifts and talents to continue strengthening their communities.

At our final lunch at the end of the week, saying goodbye to the families we worked with, I met a group of five women beginning a bee-keeping business together. The women, all in their early 50's, had spent their lives raising families and growing food to survive. They were so excited to be starting a business, learning skills they'd never learned before. A micro-loan from ViviendasLeón and business development training had gotten them on their feet and they were now selling honey and preparing to expand their business with future microloans. I hope this is an opportunity that St. James Mothers helping Mothers can look into.

We left León full of new knowledge and experiences, excited to continue and deepen our connections and solidarity through prayers, on-going support, and future delegations. At my school, St. Vincent de Paul, we are already planning for next year's Family Service Learning trip to León Holy Week and Easter Break, April 17-25, 2014. If you or families you know might be interested in joining us, please feel free to email me at petrinag@msn.com.

News from the Vestry

By Tom Matthews, Junior Warden



As your Junior Warden, I just wanted to give you an update of recent facility activities -- and those that are upcoming.

The following are underway:

- Replacing concrete as tagged by The City for the sidewalk in front of our property. This will be undertaken in June/July -- with 130 square feet at a cost of \$1,300 needing repair. The City will also repair an equal amount or more and pay for the concrete needing replacing due to tree damage -- and will also remove the tree stump that is there for no charge. We are hoping they will also provide us a new tree!
- Repairing the pipes in the Woman's Restroom in The Undercroft -- we will put an end to those noisy pipes! Apparently, the brackets holding the water pipes that bring water into the bathroom have come loose. So a hole

will need to be put into the wall to do the repair, and then we will re-sheetrock the area. We are looking for volunteers to prime/paint the repair area. Anyone interested? The estimated cost for this is \$1,200.

- New copier for the office -- bringing cost savings and efficiency.
- New phone/internet provider -- Comcast, bringing a little savings and much faster speed and capacity.
- Janitor contract - we reviewed performance and did due diligence to ensure cost was appropriate. No changes here.
- Garbage containers in kitchen -- signage will be improved to clearly indicate green, blue, and black garbage.

Our next parish workday is September 14th. We will be reviewing the ongoing list we have for items to accomplish, but let us know if there is something you see that needs doing! And, of course, please reserve the date on your calendar from 9 am to Noon -- with snacks available and a light lunch at the end.

Cheers! Tom

Painting Thangkas

by Jana Silverman MFT
California Counseling Institute



Since early childhood I have been fascinated with painting and other visual art forms. My mother was an art teacher and she always found ways to publicly make an impression through painting. In our school we painted doors, windows and murals on classroom walls. In our neighborhood, we painted on walls and created exhibits for certain events and topics. The most impressive project for me as a child was to paint animals from the local Academy of Science on to a big wall.

In my early teens I was a member of an art club where I learned different techniques like oil painting, etchings, printing and multi-media. I created images of many challenging topics of everyday life. After I graduated from high school, I was discouraged from studying art and becoming an artist. As a result, I chose to study psychology. After I graduated from the program I searched for a way to integrate the science of the human mind with my passion – painting. I found art therapy and studied to become a Marriage and Family Therapist with a Masters in Art Therapy. Artistic expression now intrigued the inner life of my mind and body. I became a student of Michele Cassou who teaches the painting process and I attended many 5-day painting retreats. Expressing spontaneously and letting images arise that often seem dangerous or not allowed opened up my mind. I started to feel the freedom that arises when I questioned my beliefs through painting. When I found Byron Katie, who taught a very simple but powerful way to do that questioning, my life changed.

I started to engage in activities that I had previously not allowed myself to explore. Not only did I become more assertive and confident, but I also picked up Tae Kwon Do and started to practice Tibetan Buddhism. Whole worlds opened up for me. I kept painting in my own art therapy sessions and started to yearn for a way to integrate my spiritual practice with painting. In 2009 I was introduced to Thangka painting, a prescribed way of painting Buddhist deities, scenes and mandalas on canvas or silkscreen. I became a student of Andy Weber, a Thangka painter with 40 years of experience. In the last 4 years I have learned about fascinating ways in which spiritual paintings are used as a map to enlightenment. Every symbol, color and shape represents an important key on the way to liberation from suffering. The style of Thangka painting is very different from any other painting I had done in the past. It is very detailed, based on a grid and specific measurements. The colors are limited and prescribed.

I start a painting by carefully measuring the canvas, finding the middle line and starting to draw a grid from prescribed measurements. Then I draw the outline of a Buddhist deity based on prescribed patterns. When the drawing is completed on the canvas, I outline it with black ink and then start to apply paint, either Gouache or Acrylics. Every surface gets covered very smoothly and carefully. Then I begin a very slow process of shading. I don't blend the paints but instead, I apply tiny lines of the darker color to the lighter color. After the shading, every shape gets outlined with prescribed colors. My smallest brush is 00000, only a few hairs. I often sit for hours, working on little details, wondering how I can get the painting completed. My first painting took three years to complete. It taught me endless patience and let me see and feel the many different layers of meaning, understanding and meditation that can be practiced with Thangka paintings. I learned to appreciate the process of transformation that my painting and I went through over that time. Even though I often felt overwhelmed, I just kept focusing on one detail at a time and kept working until the image was completed. Even when my hand was not steady, my eyes tired or my back hurt, I used those sensations and thoughts that would arise to keep me focused on the painting. Thangka painting has given me much joy and meaning in life. I look forward to spending more time with my passion - painting.

I encourage everyone to keep working on details so that, eventually, your image or dream will be created and come true. It is really the process that is most important for our transformation and not the finished product. In that process we grow in many different ways, open our minds, loosen our attachment to our ego and become more compassionate and kind to others, our environment and ourselves.

If you need help in questioning beliefs that keep you from following your passion, don't hesitate to call one of the therapists at the [California Counseling Institute](http://www.californiacounseling.com) (415) 752-1702. We will be happy to guide you in your journey.

Episcopal Asiamerica Ministries National Consultation To Meet in Bay Area in June

by Carole Jan Lee



Focusing on the theme "EAM@40: Remember, Celebrate and Re-Envision Our Ministry," delegates from Asian congregations from across the United States and Hawaii will meet at the Hyatt Hotel in Burlingame from June 20 to 24.

Delegates from St. James will include Warren Wong and Carole Jan Lee. The first consultation was held in San Francisco and included priests and lay delegates from all the Asian congregations.

A fund-raising golf tournament will be held on June 20th before the meetings begin. A parallel youth program will include a visit to Angel Island and workshops on interculturalism, diversity, leadership, stewardship and worship. The various ethnic convocations will meet separately to discuss concerns of their respective congregations.

The Bishops of the Dioceses of California, Northern California, and El Camino Real are co-sponsors of the consultation. The highlight of the convocation will be the closing Eucharist to be held Sunday, June 23rd at 3 pm, at Grace Cathedral with Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori as the preacher and the Rev. Dr. Fran Toy as co-celebrant. The service will be followed by a Chinese banquet in Chinatown at 6 pm; both events are open to the public. It would be nice to have a table of folks from St. James, so please contact Carole Jan Lee at (510) 419-0560 if you are interested in attending. Tickets for the banquet are \$30.

JUNE CALENDAR

June 2, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. – Journey Sunday for all graduates 9 a.m. Choir Practice Mindfulness Meditation after 10:00 a.m. service Christie Higgins' photographs for sale to benefit St. James
June 5, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
June 6, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
June 8, Saturday	7:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast BYOB (Bring your own Bible)
June 9, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice St. James serves at Martin de Porres House of Hospitality
June 12, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
June 14-16, Thursday-Sunday	St. James Gourmet Camping Trip
June 16, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice
June 19, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
June 20, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
June 23, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice
June 26, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
June 30, 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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