



ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
A joyful, inclusive community

St. James Community Journal May 2013

Dear St. James Members and Friends,

Please enjoy reading our May 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

Saying "Yes" and Saying "No"

By Rev. John Kirkley



One of the most challenging things about congregational life is recruiting people to give their time to volunteer. We all feel stretched among the competing demands in our lives: work, school, family, self-care, friendships, church, and other volunteer commitments. Perhaps we even feel divided against ourselves: saying, "yes," when we really mean, "no," and vice-versa.

The Christian tradition often speaks about the practice of "discernment." "The literal translation of the word has roots in the Greek *diakrisis*, which means 'to separate,' 'to sift through,' 'to sort out,' or 'to distinguish.'" It is about knowing when to say, "yes," and when to say, "no." It is about being in touch with our own desire for God and God's desire for us.

Will my "yes" bring me closer to my deepest desire or will it draw me away? The first step is being aware of my desire for God and those things that bring me closer to God. As Rose Mary Dougherty observes, "The constant in my understanding and living of discernment is its integral relationship to prayer, for it is only through prayer that our lives are brought into focus and we begin to sense who we are and what we need to be about." Awareness is the foundation of discernment.

Awareness is in the service of paying attention to the invitations to love in our lives. Sometimes, my experience activities I previously have seen as a burden or an obligation can shift radically when perceived as an invitation

love. It can become a joy. Prayer can help us clean the lens of perception.

Awareness in the service of love brings freedom. I can say “yes” or “no” with confidence because my life is centered on the one thing necessary: responding to love. I’m no longer divided between this and that competing demand; everything belongs as an expression of the desire for God. One of the great gifts we can give one another in Christian community is support in saying “yes” and “no,” encouraging one another to act from awareness in response to love, rather than obligation, fear, or pride.

It is in this spirit that I invite you to consider your “yes” and “no” to volunteering at St. James. No ministry here meant to feel like a life sentence. Alternatively, there may be something here to which you are truly called, even if it means saying “no” to some other things in your life. The following are some particular areas where we need volunteers.

Stewardship Ministry: the focus here is on securing the resources needed for the church’s mission. This means raising money and recruiting volunteers. It is about cultivating generosity and gratitude – including acknowledging the generous gifts of time and money that people invest in St. James. We need volunteers for the annual pledge campaign, an annual fundraising event, and someone devoted to tracking and acknowledging volunteers. We also need one or two people to coordinate a series of informal dinners so that people here can get to know one another better. (Contact Charlie Gregg)

Welcome Ministry: the focus here is on assisting visitors to becoming contributing members. We need extroverts who are interested in getting to know new people and help connect them to the life of St. James. We need people interested in offering hospitality to newcomers through coffee hour and a quarterly welcome brunch. And we need one or two people who can help with information management to make sure new people don’t fall through the cracks. (Contact Mary Balmana or Noreen Chin Huey)

Christian Education Ministry: the focus here is providing opportunities for people of all ages to grow in Christian faith. This includes Sunday school teachers, youth group mentors, and adult education offerings that appeal to a variety of learners in a variety of settings. If you are interested in teaching, mentoring, curriculum planning, art drama - this is the ministry for you. (Contact [Father John](#))

Parish Life Ministry: the focus here is on coordinating a series of intergenerational events that build community across the parish. This is the special events team: planning camping trips, parish retreat, parish picnic, and other social events. In particular we need a person(s) to (co-)chair this ministry team. Are you called to be St. James’ cruise director? (Contact Barbara Webb)

Worship Ministry: the focus here is on creating sacred time and space in which we can encounter God through worship. Volunteer opportunities abound: choir (if you enjoy singing), flower guild (if you like flower arrangement), and serving as an acolyte. (Contact [Father John](#))

Quotes from Rose Mary Dougherty, *Discernment: A Path to Spiritual Awakening* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009)

Journey to Nicaragua, Part I: Holy Week

by *Petrina Grube*



Dear St. James community,

A sincere thanks to all of you for your support of my first service trip to Nicaragua with a group from St. Vincent de Paul, the school where I teach Spanish. We returned safe and sound Saturday, April 6th, after an incredible 8 day journey beginning with the elaborate Holy Week traditions in León, followed by mornings of cultural excursions and afternoons of community service in a nearby rural community. VivendasLeón, the SF-based educational exchange non-profit that organized our trip, impressed us with their long-term vision, strong community connections, and thoughtful development projects. We thank you for helping us begin this adventure and invite you to join our efforts going forward. We are already working on organizing our next Holy Week delegation next year, and hope to continue supporting projects in the community we worked in throughout the year.

Being VivendasLeón's first delegation from a Catholic school, the first part of our trip was arranged to allow us to participate fully in León's rich Holy Week traditions. After flying into Managua the night of Holy Thursday, the next morning we literally jumped out of the van from our airport hotel just as the statue of Jesus emerged from a historic church in León for the first Good Friday procession, the Via Crucis, Way of the Cross. We joined the throngs of people walking alongside the giant float of Jesus, carried on the shoulders of men from the congregation. In front of him, a statue of St. John, carried by the youth group of the church and Mary, carried by women of the church, led the way to each Station of the Cross. Pausing in front of each station, the procession listened to scripture and prayed for a moment before moving. A band playing somber music set the rhythm for the procession, everyone shuffling slowly together. It felt like the entire city was there, walking Good Friday together. It's a long, slow, hot journey, and it gave me a real sense of observing the day together, the whole body of Christ coming together to stop everything and just walk with Christ for the day.

Yet the day is also filled with beauty. In the afternoon we visited Suritiaba, a neighborhood famous for its colorful elaborate sawdust carpets. For hours we wandered slowly watching the carpets develop as people carefully poured, patted, and sprinkled colored sawdust to form scenes of the life of Jesus' ministry throughout his life, as well as his crucifixion and resurrection. After hours of waiting, another evening procession, the Burial of Jesus, marched over the beautiful carpets carrying the crucified Christ, lighting up the night with a brightly lit wooden float carrying his body.

On Holy Saturday we saw more slow, meditative processions, punctuated with some surprises such as a custom where an effigy of Judas is set on fire and explodes into fireworks, sending the crowd gathered diving for cover behind park benches and trees. I certainly prefer our Easter vigil over that custom, but we were fascinated by the diverse customs that develop around the Holy Week stories.

Finally, up bright and early at 5:30 a.m. Easter morning, we arrived at the main Cathedral for the Easter procession. After 2 days of slow processions and somber music, this day the band played joyfully, a glowing effigy of Jesus being carried down one side of the main plaza with Mary carried down the other side. The figures turned at the end of the plaza and faced each other. A tiny boy dressed as an angel darted down the length of the plaza to Mary then flew back, proclaiming "Jesus, Jesus, your mother is looking for you!" Then, turning to the crowd, he cried "Jesus has risen, alleluia! Alleluia!" The band broke into "The Saints Go Marching In" and everyone follows

Jesus and Mary into the Cathedral together, bells ringing and fireworks exploding. Such a sense of joy and new life after the long journey of the last two days brought tears to my eyes on that Easter morning in Nicaragua.

Monday we began the rest of the program, with morning visits to cultural sites to learn about Nicaragua- the revolutionary murals telling the story of Nicaragua's history, the Museum of Myths and Legends to understand some of the cultural context, the central market to experience daily life in León. In the afternoons we drove 45 minutes to Goyena, a rural community where ViviedasLeón helps organize local families to improve life in Goyena through educational, arts, environmental, and small business development projects.

Next month in the St. James Journal I will share more about our experience in the community of Goyena, and some possible ways that St. James may support the on-going development efforts happening there. Until then, feel free to check out ViviendasLeón at www.viviendasleon.org for more information about their programs.

News from the Vestry

By Barbara Webb, Sr. Warden



Your Vestry held their April meeting on April 21.

The Church has rented the small office in the Office Building effective May 1. Our new tenant is Brian Esty, CMT. Brian is a certified manual therapist. His website is www.brianesty.com. Thank you Doreen Canton and Ryszard Pochron for painting and spiffing up the office.

Assessment Appeal. The Assessment Appeal Application was discussed and approved. Thank you Tom Matthews Finance Chair and Bill Newlin, Treasurer for the hard work in compiling the required documents. Because of your diligent effort, the application will be submitted to the Appeals Committee ahead of the May 15 deadline. After the Assessment Appeals Committee has received our paperwork, a date will be set to meet with our representatives. The Committee will then make a recommendation to the Diocesan Executive Council, which has the authority to make decisions on assessment relief. St James assessment for 2013 is \$50,000; we are appealing for three year relief as follows:

- ** 2013 - \$35,000
- ** 2014 - \$17,500
- ** 2015 - \$8,750

A great deal of discussion was focused on establishing and staffing committees to carry out the Ministry Priorities for 2013 – Worship, New Member Incorporation, and Stewardship.

The Welcome Committee has been revamped to New Member Incorporation. To better accomplish its goal which is to move people from being a visitor to being a contributing member, by cultivating a welcoming congregation and creating a structure and process to follow-up with visitors, it has been broken down to three components:

- ** Hospitality including coffee hour
- ** Logistics
- ** New member follow-up or "shepherding"

We all enjoy visiting with friends during coffee hour but coffee hour is primarily to welcome visitors. Spend at least the first 10 minutes talking to a newcomer. Make them feel welcome.

Parish Life Committee focuses on community building through parish events for both members and newcomers including Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, Maundy Thursday supper, camping trip, parish retreat, parish picnic, etc. If you have project management skills we can use you on this committee. You don't have to reinvent the wheel. All of the requirements, lead times, items to be purchased, etc. for each of the events are in our data base. We need a coordinator.

Stewardship Committee identifies, cultivates, and nurtures the resources needed for the church's mission by improving our recruitment, training and acknowledgement of volunteers as well as increasing our pledge base and revenue.

If you have an interest in any of these ministries, please volunteer. If you are asked to be on a committee, please accept. If we get enough volunteers, it won't become a life-time commitment. Contact the [Church Office](#) or a member of the Vestry. Your Senior Warden will be in your debt.

In the Moment

**by Julie Terraciano MFT
California Counseling Institute**



Haste makes waste
Or does it?

A stitch in time saves nine
Really?

A penny saved is a penny earned
Perhaps not...

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush...
Then why do we reach for the bush?

Breathing in I calm my body,
True...

Breathing out I smile,
True encore...

Breathing saves me
Sustains me
Brings me back to me
To my life and to all life.

I've been teaching my grandson proverbs recently. These are the four that he repeated, perhaps without taking

the meaning, at his ripe age of four. At the same time, I did explain them in a, hopefully, more accessible version. Like most four year olds, he's quite adept at mimicking, so we were entertained when he gave them back to us somewhat effortlessly.

We were even more impressed when he put them to music, matching each of the words with a note on the piano. As you can imagine, he liked the rhythm of the words and how he could match those sounds with the notes he was able to elicit from the keys.

Thinking of these proverbs which I learned at my mother's knee, so to speak, let me reflect upon thoughts which we utter to ourselves, mindlessly throughout the day. Thus my rejoinder questions here in my meditation.

Often haste does make waste, but our highly technologically connected culture doesn't really accept that. A stillness in time might save us a few, but we also might try to let someone else do it for us. A penny doesn't get us far these days and, sometimes, a lot more disappears despite our thoughtful planning. Being humans, we will often reach for two in the bush.

Being human, we do sometimes get lost in our hurry, our projects, our work, our pleasure. What seems to remain truly healing for us is our return to spirit, to breath, to the moment. We seek our sanctuaries because we are fatigued with a world that sometimes exhausts us. So breath, quiet, and reflection are vital resources...life-giving and life-sustaining.

At the California Counseling Institute, we help clients sort through the often-demanding haste, busyness, and acquisitive parts of their lives. We explore what gets in the way of the meaningful pursuits they long for and the joy that may be eluding them.

Loved and Chosen

Anne Lamott at St. James
by Rose Scarff



Even before she gave her reading at St. James, I knew Anne Lamott was a gifted writer and an intelligent, witty and extremely funny speaker. After all, I had read most of her books and had heard her speak before. What I didn't anticipate was the kind of hard questions she would have to field and her patience and grace in answering them.

The book she read from was "Some Assembly Required", written with her son Sam about the first year of his son Jax, Anne's first grandson. She read parts written by Sam and parts written by herself and explained the bits in between, but not spoiling the story for those of us who haven't read it yet. Then she opened the floor to questions.

The first one was, "Do you think evil exists?" You could have heard a pin drop for several long seconds. Then she repeated the question to the audience and gave her own version of how evil exists in the world which I won't begin to try to recreate. She took question after question about her books, her life, writing and death, and declined to answer questions she deemed inappropriate. I marveled at her ability to stay so cool and calm through it all.

But what stuck with me long after the evening was over was her story about teaching Sunday School at her church, St. Andrews in Marin City. No matter what the Bible story of the day might be, she makes a point to let the children know that they are "loved and chosen by God." We are all loved and chosen by God and we all need to be reminded of it often, not only these kids who haven't heard this before, but also we grownups who are so busy with our grownup cares and concerns that we forget it . . . if we ever realized it to begin with.

So read Anne Lamott's books and laugh and cry with her, and remember what she shared with us: "You are love and chosen by God. Loved and chosen. That's all you need to know."

St. James Camping Trip

June 14th- 16th



Mark your calendars for the St. James Gourmet Camping Trip on Father's Day weekend, June 14-16, at Samuel Taylor State Park in Marin County. Join us for the weekend, a night, or just for the day for some great food and fun activities for all ages. Our theme this year is "A Taste of the Mediterranean". The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. For more information please contact Doreen Canton or Ryszard Pochron.

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MAY CALENDAR

May 1, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
May 2, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
May 5, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice Mindfulness Meditation after 10:00 a.m. service
May 7, Tuesday	7 p.m. <i>Exploring Christianity Series</i>
May 8, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
May 11, Saturday	7:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast
May 12, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice St. James serves at Martin de Porres House of Hospitality
May 14, Tuesday	7 p.m. <i>Exploring Christianity Series</i>
May 15, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
May 16, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
May 19, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice
May 22, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
May 26, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice
May 29, Wednesday	7:30 a.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room

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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