

Enjoy the St. James Sept. Journal



St. James Community Journal

September 2013

Dear St. James Members and Friends,

Please enjoy reading our September edition of the St. James Community Journal. For our upcoming events please view the [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

Observing the Sabbath

By Rev. John Kirkley



Sabbath observance is rooted in two fundamental convictions. The first conviction is that everything is a gift. Our day each week is set aside as a reminder that God created all things and affirmed their goodness. God then relaxed into that goodness so to speak, inviting us to lean back into the graciousness of existence. Sabbath observance cultivates the perception of reality as trustworthy. We have been given everything we need.

The Sabbath also teaches us to see ourselves as part of a larger whole. Our lives are sustained by complex natural forces upon which we are entirely dependent. We are the beneficiaries of a creative process that precedes and transcends us. The appropriate response to this state of affairs is awe and gratitude.

The second conviction undergirding Sabbath observance is the affirmation that all creation is sacred. Its value in its entirety and in each of its parts derives not from its utility, but rather from its very being. It is intrinsically valuable and worthy of being treated with respect and dignity. While many things are and must be used to sustain human life, nothing and no one should be exploited.

Sabbath observance is therefore not only an act of worship, but also an act of justice. Worship and justice are at the heart of the Sabbath commandment:

For six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you

shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Sabbath observance derives not only from gratitude for creation, but also from remembering our capacity to exploit each other. Sabbath rest honors the needs and the dignity of all creatures. You can't keep Sabbath and run a brothel, or a sweatshop, or a factory farm.

The Mosaic law extended the weekly Sabbath day to the observance of a Sabbath year once every seven years. The observance of the Sabbath year included four components: allowing the land to lie fallow, the remission of debts, the manumission of Hebrew slaves, and the redistribution of capital such that ancestral lands and homes were returned to their original owners.

Sabbath observance fosters a relatively egalitarian human community living sustainably on the land, in gratitude for creation and honoring the sacredness of all life. The Sabbath is honored when we put the common good before self-interest: feeding the hungry, attending to the needs of the afflicted, restoring the integrity of the community in which we live, and securing the future of generations to come. Keeping the Sabbath means serving the integrity of the whole creation. It requires us to look past the next quarterly statement or annual report to preserve that integrity for the long haul.

Jesus announces the arrival of the Sabbath year, quoting the prophet Isaiah,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

The Sabbath year ideal pervades Jesus' ministry: his parables are full of debtors, laborers, and land owners; he invites us to pray that God would forgive our debts as we forgive those indebted to us; he feeds hungry crowds; his preoccupation with the distribution of wealth is directed toward restoring economic justice in keeping with Sabbath year practice.

If Jesus had a bumper sticker, it probably would have read, "If you want to keep the Sabbath, work for justice." The root of his conflicts about the Sabbath with various authorities was this insistence that holiness and compassion, worship and justice, are inseparable. The vision of God's reign enacted by Jesus is the observance of the Sabbath as an act of worship and a practice of justice.

The Biblical ethic inscribed in Sabbath observance is a guideline for real life. It can't be dismissed as a pious pipedream, or reserved as an option for spiritual elites seeking personal perfection. It is a social ethic that has implications for public policy. If we want to observe the Sabbath, we have to work for justice.

Mothers Helping Mothers

by Barbara Webb



Mothers Helping Mothers, one of the many ministries of St James, funds microloans to help fight global poverty. We got our start in the summer of 2007 and work through [KIVA](#), a non-profit organization, headquartered in San Francisco. KIVA's mission is to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty.

To date Mothers Helping Mothers has loaned a total of \$12,425.00. Of that amount, all has either been repaid or is in the process of being repaid.

On August 4, our members met and loaned \$1,025.00 the individuals listed below. This amount is a combination of donations and repaid loans. We also made a donation to the KIVA operations fund.

Tuombe Group from The Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kasoki is a member of the group. She is a young experienced entrepreneur. Kasoki is 31 years old and a mother of six children who all go to school. Her husband is a Master stonemason. Kasoki sells corn flour. She wishes to increase her business, educate and feed her children, and build a house. Her portion of the group loan will serve to buy four sacks of corn flour. Mothers Helping Mothers was able to complete the funding of the loan by lending \$250.00.

Erlinda from Trinidad, Bohol in the Philippines. She is a married woman and has six children. Erlinda has been engaged in the farming business for more than 20 years now. This is the source of her income. Her husband works as a carpenter. Erlinda will use her loan to buy seeds, fertilizer and pesticides for her farm. With this, she will be able to improve her farm as well as her harvest. In the future, Erlinda hopes of expanding her business and making it a success. Moreover, she wants to save money for the schooling of her children. Mothers Helping Mothers was able to complete funding of her loan by lending \$175.00.

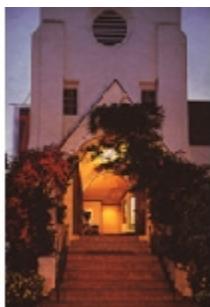
Amal from Gaza, Palestine. Amal is 42 years old, married and has two children. She has owned a poultry farm since 2009. She has requested a loan in order to develop the poultry farm and buy drinking pots, more food, green houses and poultry. With this loan, Amal will be able to increase poultry sales and improve her income. Mothers Helping Mothers made a loan of \$300.00 toward the total amount requested.

Las Xoyitas Group from Guatemala. The members of the group raise domestic animals and grow corn and beans. One of the members is Dolores, 59. Even though, she didn't have the opportunity to attend school, three of her five children are in school. She makes a living raising domestic animals, especially pigs. She started her business 35 years ago. Her portion of the group loan will be used to buy four piglets and feed for them. She hopes to have more capital in the future and to have a farm. Mothers Helping Mothers made a loan of \$300.00 toward the total amount requested.

On August 17, Mothers Helping Mothers solicited donations and received a total of \$276.00. To put this in perspective, the average annual income in the Congo, see above, is \$119.00. Dear people, you are so generous and wonderful. Mothers Helping Mothers thanks you.

News from the Vestry

By Barbara Webb, Senior Warden



Ladies!! I hope everyone had a good summer. Your Vestry took a vacation in July but now we're back. Lots of good things have happened since my last article.

We have a new Vestry member! Doreen Canton will complete the unexpired term of Rosalie Neal who had to resign due to school obligations. Doreen is a past Jr. and Sr. Warden. Her expertise will be an asset. Welcome Doreen!

The sidewalk repair has been completed. St James was required to replace approx. 130 sq. ft. of cracked and broken sidewalk; the city replaced the other areas around the trees for free. The Vestry voted to have the City Contractor do the work – cheaper both in price and time. And they did it fast! The work was completed in 2-3 days. They removed the stump and even replanted the volunteer sunflower.

Fred Goff joined the Vestry at our August meeting to discuss the music program. This summer continued the tradition of parishioners requesting their favorite hymns. Dates when hymns were to be sung were listed in the Weekly News so everyone knew when their favorite was coming up. Fred is considering keeping the suggestion box through-out the year. Other things to look forward to in the music program – Elizabeth Nelson will be writing new words to hymns, musicians such as Peter Krag will be playing every other month, an Oompah Band for the first Sunday of October for October Fest (to coincide with the Blessing of the Animals).

During the summer, St James tried out a different space arrangement in the sanctuary - "meeting room" style. I you like it? Or not? Sunday, August 25th, during coffee hour, parishioners had a chance to give their yes or no. Opinions were mixed. Yes – easy for those in wheelchair to move around, more friendly, cozier, really got to see the stained glass windows. No – had to turn sideways to see the altar making it painful for the neck and back, couldn't hear as good, difficult for latecomers, awkward to take up the collection and to direct parishioners to communion. Suggestions – arrange the pews in a chevron arrangement keep the side aisle for safety, keep the swags.

REMINDER!! – No storage of anything is permitted in the furnace room per the San Francisco Fire Dept.

Have you noticed that the Dove Family is back above the front door?

Don't forget the Parish Workday on Sept 14 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Come for however long you can. A sign-up sheet will be in the Parish Hall. Willing hands are all that is required; let's make the Church spiffy for fall.

It is time to start thinking about nominations for both 2014 vestry and deanery members. If you are approached by one of the nominating committee, please give it serious consideration. I have been a member of both and have found it to be a rewarding experience.

See you at the Parish picnic in Golden Gate Park on September 8!

Rituals

*by Carolyn Swearingen, Ph.D.
California Counseling Institute*



At the California Counseling Institute, our mission is to help integrate spirituality with psychotherapy for the development of the whole person. We not only practice this in our work with clients where appropriate, but we also integrate a sense of spirituality in our work with each other as part of developing our community. Part of how we do this is by having rituals to mark important transitions in our community...whether it be to mark the arrival or departure of one of our staff members, or to share a meditation before our weekly staff meetings. Being a part of CCI and its many rituals of connection and transition has made me realize the positive role that ritual can have in our lives.

Social rituals are the everyday activities and behaviors that function to confirm or renegotiate our status and relationships with others in our community. These are common to all communities throughout history. These

actions typically involve symbolic communication, convey a sense of group identity, and provide continuity in meaning across generations.

Rituals that engage the emotions benefit human beings in many ways. They help us cope with anxiety, fear, frustration, uncertainty, trauma, alienation, and feelings of insignificance. Ritual can inspire and transform us through emotional and spiritual health-enhancing catharsis. The performance of ritual within an accepted social framework can foster positive emotion, while also uniting groups around useful shared beliefs.

Comforting us during times of stress or grief and connecting us during times of celebration, rituals can serve many purposes. Graduation ceremonies, marriages, funerals, and other rituals provide an opportunity for emotional expression and even contemplation. They remind us of the major events in life and encourage us to stop for a moment, get outside ourselves, and share in the intersection between our own personal self-realization and our communal social existence. They can also help us become more aware and engaged in the everyday moments of life, provide a sense of meaning, and help deepen our understanding of ourselves.

Though churches are known for their centuries-old rituals, families often have rituals in their own household, like sitting down together to dinner every night, or performing a set bedtime routine, or a particular way of celebrating birthdays and other occasions. In fact, mental health researchers have found that family rituals (such as birthdays, Christmas celebrations, and family reunions) are associated with marital satisfaction, adolescents' sense of personal identity, academic achievement, children's health, and stronger family relationships.

Rituals, even in the middle of our days, can help us shift our awareness and energy. Here are a few ways ritual may help you and add meaning:

In the transitions of the day. If you want to set a mood, ignite energy, or move powerfully into the next activity ritual can be a way to signal to your brain and body that you are ready to make the shift. Consider a morning ritual to set the tone for your day. A bedtime ritual that includes meditation, gratitude or contemplation can help you relax and disengage from the day.

To let go. Rituals can be a powerful way to acknowledge and release the negative feelings around a personal setback, failure or disappointment and it can also help to cope with the grief of a death or the loss of a relationship. If you feel like there are losses that you are hanging on to or not able to properly mourn, create a ritual. If you are having difficulty letting go of a worry, writing it down and then crumpling it up and throwing it away might feel helpful in letting it go.

To create meaning around what matters. Often, rituals around the things we care most about ramp up our appreciation and add deeper meaning. This type of meaning can help us put things into a larger life perspective and feel calmer and clearer as a result.

Seasons

by Rose Scarff, Editor



I am fortunate that where I work I look out my windows into the neighbors' garden which is full of trees, vines, shrubs and flowers. The tree that I watch most closely however, is a large apricot tree right next to my window. I love to follow its parade through the seasons. Today the fruit, which were tiny pale green orbs when I returned from vacation just two weeks ago, are now golden yellow and falling ripe from the tree when the wind blows. So

the leaves will be turning brown and falling and bare branches will scratch my window during the winter. Then o day next spring the tiny buds will burst into pale pink flowers which will eventually become ripe fruit like the apricots I am watching today. The cycle of the seasons, even here in California, where some folks say we don't have any, is something I find very comforting.

Two people close to me are in the process of dying, and although they each may have many more months or ev a year or two of life, there is no hope for them that spring will come again and they will be healthy and whole once more. They are learning to live with a kind of eternal winter where they are confined to quarters by the blizzard of the century. When I visit with them, I am too, but I often forget it. My suggestion that we go outside enjoy the beautiful day does not take into consideration the huge expenditure of energy it would take for a pers hooked up to an oxygen machine to do this—even if I pushed the wheel chair!

So this is a different kind of season, not one measurable by the length of daylight as our world tilts its way arou the sun. This is a season of essences, of what really matters. To them. Now. In the unknown time remaining.

Obviously, we are all in that place, but are distracted from it by daily life or just plain healthy denial. But as we move into the harvest season, as the apricots fall and are stored up for winter, I am already thinking about spir It's what gets a sun loving person like me through the short dark days of winter. As I write that sentence I know that this year it will be different. I won't stop thinking about spring, but I know I will sit with winter with more patience than usual. So, reminder to self—it is still summer—hold the essence of the present. Watch the apricot fall in the wind.

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

September 1, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. – Journey Sunday for all graduates Mindfulness Meditation after 10:00 a.m. service
September 4, Wednesday	7:30 p.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
September 5, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
September 8, Sunday	Service at 8 a.m. 10 a.m. Service & St. James Parish Picnic in GG Park St. James serves at Martin de Porres House of Hospitality 7 – 9 p.m. The Way of Christ Study Group
September 11, Wednesday	7:30 p.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
September 14, Saturday	7:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast-Keeping Faith in a Competitive World 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Parish Work Day
September 15, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice
September 18, Wednesday	7:30 p.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
September 19, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
September 22, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice
September 25, Wednesday	7:30 p.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room
September 29, 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:

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