

Enjoy the St. James May Journal



ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
A joyful, inclusive community

St. James Community Journal May 2014

Dear St. James Members and Friends,

Please enjoy reading our May edition of the St. James Community Journal. For our upcoming events please view the News and Events page or the Calendar on our website at www.stjamesf.org.

If you have comments about this month's Journal, or items 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 at stjames@stjamesf.org or (415) 751-1198 x2.

Thank you!
--Rose and Erazm

Believing is Seeing

by The Rev. John Kirkley, Rector

**BELIEVING
IS SEEING**

John's Gospel, the last of the four Gospels to be written, is concerned to be clear about the resurrection of the body in response to those who said that Jesus wasn't really human and didn't really die. John wishes to counter Gnostic teachers who viewed Jesus as a divine being, who only appeared to die, and for whom salvation is about escaping from the body. John, in keeping with Orthodox Christianity and in spite of his high Christology, affirms the paradox that Jesus is both human and divine. Salvation is not about escaping from life in the body, but rather transforming life in the body.

There is a pastoral concern in John's resurrection accounts as well, particularly in the story that prominently features the apostle Thomas. Written sometime between 90 and 110 CE, some 60 to 80 years after Jesus' ministry, John's Gospel appears at a time when the first generation of disciples is dying, including the apostles who witnessed the resurrection. This raised the question: is the faith of those who did not actually see the risen Christ as valid as those who did? John wishes to assure us that faith based on the testimony of the apostolic witnesses is as valid, perhaps even greater, than the faith of those witnesses themselves: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (John 20:29).

We see a similar concern in I Peter, another late New Testament writing. "Although you have not known him, you love him; and though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." In loving Jesus we become like the object of our love, thus sharing in his life and joy. We are transformed by entrusting ourselves to the mystery that we cannot comprehend. "Believing is seeing," rather than "seeing is believing."

The problem with Thomas is not that he doubts the Resurrection per se. Remember, Thomas was present when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The problem is that he doubts the testimony of the other disciples and so is not open to entrusting himself to Jesus again. Thomas was certain that their final journey to Jerusalem would end with Jesus' death; when Jesus announces that he is going there, Thomas tells the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16).

Thomas was fixed on what was wrong with the situation. He could not see any other possibilities beyond the finality of death and defeat. Perhaps, too, he was fixed on his own guilt at having failed to have the courage to die with Jesus as he had so boldly professed before the crucifixion. When push came to shove, Thomas failed to keep trust with Jesus. In his grief and guilt and utter failure, it may just have been asking too much for Thomas to trust again.

And yet despite his doubt, there was something about the other apostles that kept Thomas connected to them because we find him gathered with them a week later. The other apostles are willing to share the space of shame with Thomas, inviting him to join them as they reconstitute themselves as a community struggling to accept forgiveness and the possibility of new life. It is as he is inducted into this forgiven and forgiving community, that Thomas, too, comes to see Jesus; or, rather, Jesus reveals himself to Thomas. Just this bare willingness to entrust himself to the care of his brothers is enough to bring Thomas into an encounter with the abyss of divine love overflowing in the new life present in the risen Christ.

As Archbishop Rowan Williams has noted "There is no hope of understanding the Resurrection outside the process of renewing humanity in forgiveness. We are all agreed that the empty tomb proves nothing. We need to add that no amount of apparitions, however well authenticated, would mean anything either, apart from the testimony of forgiven lives communicating forgiveness" (Resurrection: Interpreting the Easter Gospel, p. 109).

The Risen Christ is present in the community of those who are renewing humanity – indeed the whole creation – through lives that communicate the healing love of God. We may not know Jesus or see him as the apostles did, but we can be swept up into the vision of God's kingdom that he released into the world. As Peter said, we can love Jesus and so come to trust the power of his vision and share the joy that it inspires. That trust can lead to healing.

Not everyone is a St. Peter or a St. Teresa of Avila. But all of us can attend to the testimony of the apostolic witnesses and test the authenticity of the reconciliation practiced in communities of people who gather in Jesus' name. We can become sharers in that witness and life giving practice, and so make Jesus' vision real in the world. We can become his risen Body together. If we believe, we can see Jesus risen in our collective life of love and forgiveness.

Workday April 12, 2014

by Doreen Canton, Junior Warden



A great big thank you to Roger, Dave, Ted, John, JJ, Scott, Oliver, Alex, Dan, Barbara, Elizabeth, Janna, Noreen, Fe, Ryszard, Elia, and Rev. John! They came out and worked hard on April 12th to help clean, tidy and prepare the church for Easter. We had a very productive day and accomplished our chief objective of cleaning out the storage room behind the Parish Hall in addition to many smaller projects.

The multiple smaller projects included replacing and tightening screws, adjusting the hinges on several doors,

replacing blown light bulbs and checking the roof above the porch leading into the Parish Hall. On the roof it was noted that several feet of gutter and a couple of spouts to direct the water flow into the gutter were missing. The paint storage area was tidied and paint cans labeled where possible to identify content and/or what walls they had been used on.

Cleaning projects included dusting and replacing pencils and welcome cards in the pews; washing of walls, skirting boards and window ledges in the Parish Hall and the stairs leading down to the parish hall; sweeping the courtyard, weeding flower beds and hanging the palms over the Lychgate.

The kitchen and pantry area were tidied, cleaned and rearranged to make better use of the space. The back storage area was totally emptied, washed, vacuumed and dusted. The small window in the far corner was repaired to prevent the rain from entering the space.

The amazing amount of items from this storage area were carefully sorted and organized. Broken items and garbage were disposed of accordingly to garbage and recycle bins. Treasures that were no longer needed by the church were offered to the congregation on Sunday morning and then the remainder of these items were given to Goodwill.

The arts and craft projects were sorted, stored labeled and returned to storage space, costumes tidied and stored and space was created to store clean table cloths, extra kitchen supplies and special items that only get used a couple times a year.

Overall, it was a very successful day with individuals working very hard for the time they could dedicate to St. James in the midst of their own busy personal schedules. We will plan our next work day for August/September and I hope many of you will be able to join us at that time. Thank you all for your support and assistance in maintaining our beautiful church and grounds.

News from the Vestry

by Barbara Webb, Senior Warden



The San Francisco Organizing Project is sponsoring a series of free seminars titled Planning Care for Aging Loved Ones. The seminars will be held at the various congregations that have joined together as advocates for issues facing older San Franciscans.

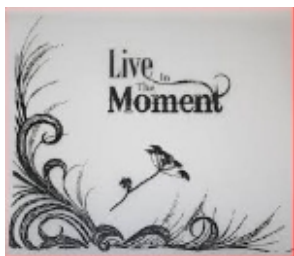
- Thursday May 15th, 12:30-1:45 pm at Star of the Sea, 4429 Geary Blvd - Home Safety and Independence
- Thursday, June 19th, 6:30-8 pm at Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores St. - Taking Care of the Caregiver
- Thursday, July 17th, 6:30-8 pm at St John the Evangelist, 110 Julian Ave - Memory Care
- Thursday, September 18th, 6:30-8 pm at Sherith Israel, 2266 California St. - Protecting Yourself and Your Property

Flyers are located on the table in the church entryway and downstairs in the Parish Hall.

Jr. Warden, Doreen Canton reported that an awesome workday was held on April 12. Lots of cleaning out of storage rooms. Thank you everyone who participated. The next workday will be sometime in August.

Being in the Moment...and Connecting

by Julie Terracino, MFT
California Counseling Institute



An on-going complaint I hear in everyday conversation, and with clients in my work as a therapist, is that we don't have time to do everything. At the same time, it seems many feel the need for time to breathe, reflect and refuel. In an earlier article, I explored our desire for this time out of time.

It seems essential to ask questions about what we are doing and seeking when we are taking time to meditate and renew ourselves, whatever form that might take. We might be finding those restorative moments through a spiritual practice that involves prayer, meditation, yoga, exercise or art.

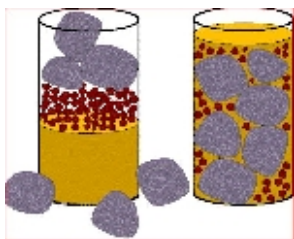
Where are we trying to "go" during those moments? What are we seeking in ourselves and, possibly, in others when we are taking a break from the mundane and the joyous times of our lives? What do our practices lead us to realize and accept?

There is the possibility that by being quiet, taking time to breathe and reflect upon what our connection to ourselves and to others is and could be is fulfilling in itself. When clients come for therapy they are, in fact, taking time to slow down, to stop and see where they are in their lives. The initial connection with the therapist is one that gives them a model for others in their own world.

It is also possible that when we allow ourselves to reach for a connection between our inner and outer lives, we experience something that can, indeed, feel awesome. When we learn to trust ourselves and others in connections that honor that which we might choose to call our spirit, we may be extending our reach within our grasp.

Big Rocks First

by Rose Scarff



At the April St. James Women's Group Ellen Lentz got the group thinking and reminiscing by first having us read Psalm 49 together. It is about not putting our trust in goods and great riches, because we can't take them with us. Ellen also shared the story about trying to fill a container with an assortment rocks. If you put the small rocks in first by the time you get to the big ones there will be no room for them. But if you put the big rocks in first then the small ones will slip in between the big ones when they go in and you will be able to get them all in the container.

The discussion that followed was about making room in our lives for what was really important, the big rocks, and leaving the little ones until the big ones were taken care of. This all really resonated to me because I have been thinking along similar lines a lot this past year. Maybe because I have been watching and walking with two people close me as they approached death and noticing what was most important to them before they died. Maybe

because I am coming up on my 65th birthday this year. Whatever the reason, trying to get the big rocks in first is becoming more and more important to me.

But I'm still so cluttered with little rocks I haven't gotten to the big ones yet, so no answers as to how to accomplish this. However, signs like our sharing on Saturday keep popping up to guide me along. So I'd like to end by sharing a poem I was meditating on over Easter:

Camas Lilies by Louise Ungar.

*Consider the lilies of the field,
the blue banks of camas opening
into acres of sky along the road.
Would the longing to lie down
and be washed by that beauty
abate if you knew their usefulness,
how the natives ground their bulbs
for flour, how the settlers' hogs
uprooted them, grunting in gleeful
oblivion as the flowers fell?
And you—what of your rushed
and useful life? Imagine setting it all down—
papers, plans, appointments, everything—
leaving only a note: "Gone
to the fields to be lovely. Be back
when I'm through with blooming."
Even now, unneeded and uneaten,
the camas lilies gaze out above the grass
from their tender blue eyes.
Even in sleep your life will shine.
Make no mistake. Of course
your work will always matter.
Yet Solomon in all his glory
was not arrayed like one of these.*

St. James Gourmet Camping Trip

June 6-8th at Samuel P. Taylor State Park (Marin)



It's that time of year again. The sun is shining the woods are calling and once again it's time for the annual St. James gourmet camping trip. This year our theme is Fiesta Mexicana, featuring tacos and barbecue. Save the date: June 6 to 8 at Samuel P. Taylor Memorial Park. A sign-up sheet is available in the Parish Hall. Please talk to Elia, Ryszard or Doreen with your questions.

MAY CALENDAR

May 1, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group 6 p.m. Green Apple Books presents Natalie Baszile “Queen Sugar”
May 4, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. Mindfulness Meditation after 10:00 a.m. service
May 10, Saturday	7:30 a.m. Men’s Breakfast
May 11, Sunday	Service at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. Service 9 a.m. Choir Practice St. James serves at Martin de Porres House of Hospitality 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. The Way of Christ Study Group
May 15, Thursday	6:30 p.m. <i>Lectio Divina</i> group
May 18, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. Noon – Vestry Meeting – Caldwell Room
May 25, Sunday	Services at 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. 9 a.m. Choir Practice
May 30, Friday	7:30 p.m. St. James Supper Club
May 31, Saturday	11 a.m. Women’s Group meeting at Creative Canopy
Every Tuesday	7:30 a.m. Morning Prayer & Meditation
Every Wednesday	6:30 p.m. Evening Prayer & Meditation 7:30 p.m. Buddhist Meditation in Caldwell Room

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
stjames@stjamesf.org
www.stjamesf.org

St. James Preschool

Roger Setterfield, Head of School
4620 California Street
San Francisco, CA 94118
415.752.8258
rsetterfield@stjamesf.org
www.stjamespreschoolsf.org

The California Counseling Institute

Elaine Chan-Scherer, Clinical Dir.
Meg Bloomfield, Executive Dir.
4614 California Street
San Francisco, CA 94118
415.752.1702
ccpsyche@earthlink.net
www.californiacounseling.org

We welcome your articles
on or before the 15th
of the month.

Please send submissions
to Rose Scarff at
Rose.Scarff@gmail.com

Editor:

Rose Scarff

Production:

Rose Scarff
and Erazm Pochron,
Andrew Hom *in spiritu*