



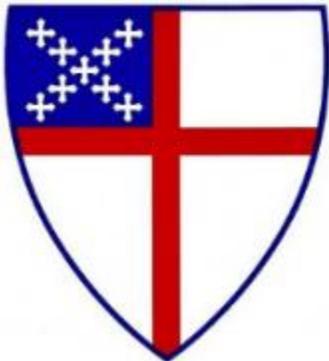
Please enjoy reading the March edition of the St. James Community Journal. [For our upcoming events please visit our website.](#)

If you have questions or comments about the content or formatting, please contact our editor [Natalie Thomas](#). For more information about St. James please contact [Erazm Pochron](#) in the church office.

Thank you!  
-- Natalie and Erazm

## News From the Vestry

by Doreen Canton  
Senior Warden



Your vestry is off and running, with a good first meeting accomplishing a lot of business. We have moved the day and time of our meetings to Monday nights.

The new Congregational Renewal Task Force is up and running ably lead by Carla Borsoi. Their focus is on understanding the needs of our community internally and externally; grant writing to a special Eli Lily fund that provides money for rector sabbaticals; and reaching deeper into our neighborhood. The group is planning a series of monthly Forums titled *Richmond Perspectives*. The first three forums

feature a meeting with the captain of 6th Avenue Police Station, Green Apple Books, and Supervisor Eric Mar. If you have questions or would like to be part of this group, please speak to Carla. She will be presenting information on Pie Sunday.

Following the approved resolution at the annual meeting for the formation of a committee to explore the San Francisco Organizing Project/Peninsula Interfaith Action (SFOP/PIA) with a view to becoming a Member Congregation. Eight members from St. James attended the "All Leader Gathering" at St. Marks on Sunday, February 8. Overall this was a positive experience and individuals will seek to attend further events in the coming weeks before

gathering to discuss their overall impressions of the organization.

Christian Education continues to be busy with preparations for Lent. Mark your calendar to attend one or all of these great sessions: Eleanor Scott will lead four Wednesday night sessions on reflections of the Gospel of John and artistic representations of the text. And the Rev John Kirkley will lead three Sunday Forums covering fasting, blessings, and dying.

Several members of the vestry and from the parish attended workshops on "Volunteer Inspiring & Recruiting for Success," "The New Parish," and "Living in the Intentional Community with focus on Young Adults," "Wise and Faithful Leadership," and "Continuing the Dialogue on Race and our Beloved Community" at the Diocesan event held Saturday, February 7.

Budget report shows us to be essentially on track. However, we remain about \$20,000 short of our stewardship goal for this year. The finance team will be looking at how we can bridge this gap. More information will be available on Pie Sunday.

In other news, we remembered the passing of three longtime St. James members this past month. Memorial Services have been held for S.K. Au and Joan Gascoyne. Joan's service was co-officiated by Rev. Mary Moore Gaines and Rev. Kirkley. A Service for Don Kafarian will be scheduled for an upcoming Wednesday evening at 7 pm.

The youth group is gearing up for their annual chili cook-off fundraiser happening on March 15, so please come hungry and support them. They are also looking for a new lodging to host their annual ski trip happening in March. If you have any suggestions or contacts for a cabin they might rent please contact Sarah Montoya. Godly Plan continues for the younger children on Sunday mornings.

The disaster preparedness committee will present a draft plan for the Parish at Pie Sunday. A Parish work day is also scheduled for Saturday, March 21, so please join us for a fun morning of getting to know each other while we do light maintenance and sprucing up to keep our building healthy and looking beautiful.

We ended the meeting with vestry members identifying their areas of interest and the roles they are planning to serve in over this coming year, they are as follows:

*Doreen Canton - Senior Warden and Stewardship*

*Brad Drda - Junior Warden*

*Kathleen Walker - Liturgical committee and support to Youth Group and Choir*

*Ulrich - Community building, Adult Education*

*Ed Wilcox - Pastoral Care for the elderly.*

*Noreen - "Mothers Helping Mothers" and support to Parish Life and Welcome Committee*

*Petrina - Chair Christian Education*

*Eleanor - Adult Formation/Christian Ed and Youth Group*

*Carla - Congregational Renewal*

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## Learning from Hildegard of Bingen

by Rose Scarff



*Between the words,  
beneath the words,  
beyond the words,  
may God meet you  
in the places  
where words cannot go.*

So writes Jan L. Richardson in her book *In the Company of Women* following a reflection on the illuminations of 12th century mystic

Hildegard of Bingen.

The St. James Women's Group has begun to read and reflect on several of Richardson's reflections on the life and work of Hildegard during their monthly meetings at Creative Canopy.

What does a 12th century mystic have to say to us in the 21st century?

Quite a lot, as we are finding, although Richardson is just as apt to quote Annie Dillard as Hildegard in trying to clear up a point or two for herself and for us. She shows us that we can't put our 21st century judgments on a 12th century mystic if we are to understand all she accomplished in her long life. Hildegard's belief in the tenants of the church, the place of women in the church and in society and her prejudices against those of other faiths were all of her time.

Yet she also challenged the powers of her day by her writings about her visions and her botanical and medical knowledge, her letters to popes and bishops and kings, her preaching and her travels, her building of monasteries, her music and illuminations. Her accomplishments in any one of these pursuits would have made her exceptional in any era, but that she did all this and more, often with the threat of ex-communication or worse held over her head, is truly remarkable.

Hildegard's visions were initially what set her apart. She had been experiencing them since a small child, but did not speak of them until she was in her early 40s when she was told by God to write about them. The visions were eventually illuminated by unknown artists at her monastery. Richardson writes, "...Hildegard knew that their significance lay in discerning their meaning. Hildegard devotes far more time on explaining the visions than to describing them...its import came in the message it conveyed."

Nevertheless, seeing some of these illuminations, even poorly reproduced, is helpful in attempting to understand Hildegard's theology. And hearing the chants she wrote for her nuns can bring us to a place of contemplation even though we may not understand the Latin or be familiar with the music.

On Saturday, March 21st, the St. James Women's Group will be going on a field trip to hear the Hildegard Singers at an outdoor event in the Marin Headlands beginning at 11 am with a picnic to follow. If you would like to attend and need directions or want to carpool, please contact Barbara Webb at 415-751-9860 or [obipone@aol.com](mailto:obipone@aol.com).

*Blessing  
In the light and complexity  
of Hildegard's life,  
may you see your own life  
more clearly.*

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## Friendship and the "Sound Marital House"

by Tim Lewis, Psy.D.  
Clinical Psychologist, California Counseling Institute



In my first session with a couple, without fail, one or both partners will ask some version of: "Just how bad off are we, doc?" It seems to be an all too human trait to not only compare ourselves with other individuals – but other couples, as well!

Though there are pitfalls to making comparisons (another couple is always going to appear happier, more down to earth, more in love, etc.) in reality our natural curiosity about how others live and experience life is a highly adaptive trait. When channeled effectively these comparisons allow us to experience not just superficial feelings of envy or disdain for others, but also provide an opportunity for us to envision and implement new, richer directions in our marriages and partnerships.

Though some marriages and relationships may appear more harmonious than our own, we all marry other, all too human individuals who have a varied set of experiences, challenges, preferences and family backgrounds. Meshing together any two such "cultures" is by its very nature an imperfect business. Long the domain of "Dear Abby," self-help books and advice from friends and family, the ingredients for a successful, supportive marriage have been the focus of intensive research for over a generation. A leading relationship researcher, Dr. John Gottman, of the University of Washington, has been particularly adept at separating fact from fiction when it comes to what works in marriages.

One important aspect of marriage that often goes unrecognized is the dimension of friendship. Dr. Gottman's research has found that friendship lies at the foundation of what he calls the "sound marital house." A sound marital house, in his estimation, has several "floors" built upon a base of friendship. A base of friendship in turn supports and facilitates the next level, the expression of positive feeling. These expressions of positive feelings highly influence the next level which is comprised of effective problem solving and a dialogue with perpetual problems. With these building blocks in place, the couple is more effective in creating a sense of shared meaning and more adept at pursuing dreams and aspirations.

One surprising finding Gottman identified is that many couples who do not often argue or disagree may appear from the outside contented, but may in reality be suffering from "marital drift." This drift typically occurs after several years together, when many of us lull

ourselves into the belief that we have learned everything there is to know about our partners. In reality, many spouses have “given up” on asserting their needs and have relegated themselves to living their lives in parallel, emotionally disengaged lives. Given this disengagement, respectful disagreement can actually be viewed as an antidote for marital drift and an impetus for learning more about your partner’s beliefs and desires.

Gottman’s research also found that couples with a strong friendship component in their relationships take an active role in interpersonally “turning toward” their partner’s “bids” (open-ended comments) for connection. This means, more often than not, we simply respond to everyday comments in the here and now. For example, if your partner comments on the weather, a new make of car or your daughter’s ongoing job stress, do you respond with interest or brush off the comment?

Be aware, this is not simply a strategy to “improve communication” through “active listening.” Active listening is a tactic familiar to many (and often parodied) in which you listen and repeat back what your partner has just told you, by saying, “I heard you say...” In contrast, couples who have been shown to effectively respond to their partner’s conversational bids make an attempt to show they are actively responding and tracking comments. This is done not only with verbal responses, but also nonverbally via facial expression, nodding and making eye contact. Sometimes a bigger conversation develops, sometimes it doesn’t. We can’t all be 100% attentive to our partners at all times. I believe the key is that more often than not, you are outwardly demonstrating your active interest and underlying emotional regard for your partner.

When responses to conversational bids are effectively managed, Gottman found that couples can develop what he calls an “emotional bank account” to draw on when the going gets tough. These small and sometimes seemingly unimportant exchanges build up reserves of goodwill in your shared account over time. Building capital or reserves of goodwill helps to facilitate flexibility and decreases the overall level of defensiveness when serious differences do arise. You may never reach agreement on some issues, but high reserves of goodwill place couples in a position to better manage high stress conflicts or serious setbacks. Repeatedly turning away from conversational bids over time can have a corrosive affect that has been found to lead to a sense of loneliness and general resentment of your partner.

Opportunities for conversational bids can be found anywhere. Think about such routine events as how you handle your reunion at the end of the day. Do you process the events of the day? What about riding in the car or watching television together? Is all of your time spent in silence or do you sometimes process thoughts or responses? When engaged in conversations are there attempts to use humor, support and validation? Each of these times spent together can be seen as an opportunity to grow your emotional bank account.

No matter how long we’ve been together, our marriages need to remain an open path to bringing into reality our deepest held hopes and dreams. Out of this union springs the potential for the most meaningful and transformative relationships and experiences in life such as children, personal discovery, accomplishment and romance.

**California Counseling Institute** has served the Episcopal Diocese for over 20 years, as well as San Francisco Presbyterian and Methodist churches by acting as a resource for psychotherapy to Bay Area Ministers and their parishioners. Our experienced therapists believe that the healing process is best achieved through the integration of psychotherapy

and spirituality. CCI is a non-profit Institute, dedicated to providing therapy to people of all income levels, and can provide therapy to low-income clients by supplementing their cost through the Client Assistance Fund.

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## The Selma Alabama March

by Rev. Robert Cromeey

Retired priest and former rector of Trinity Church, San Francisco



Hundreds of clergy and lay people went to Selma, Alabama, after seeing a peaceful march beaten back with horrific cruelty by white police officers. On March 7, 1965, the nation and world saw it happen on TV. Martin Luther King, Jr. sent a message to the clergy of the U.S. to come and support him and the drive for Negro voting rights.

A number of San Francisco clergy met and decided to heed the call. I bought tickets for three of us on credit from a travel agent friend of mine. Don Ganoung, Kit Carson, Lane Barton and I, along with Cecil Williams and Lewis Durham flew to Atlanta, Georgia, changed planes for Montgomery, Alabama. We all had wives and children. It was scary but we knew we just had to go. From Montgomery we took a bus down the red dirt road to the small town of Selma. We rode in the same van with James Reeb, who was to lose his life that night, beaten to death by white ruffians in downtown Selma after eating dinner in a restaurant.

It was like alumni day. I met dozens of Episcopal clergy from The General Theological Seminary where I had gone to school. Hundreds of clergy in our dark suits and clerical collars came. We went the Brown Chapel to hear King speak. He was fiery and passionate. An assistant interrupted him. He left in mid sermon saying someone had been injured. It was James Reeb, the Unitarian minister from Boston.

Kit Carson and I were assigned to sleep at a Black family's poor but tidy home. We slept in a double bed. When we awakened the family had gone. We noted there was no food in the house. We walked back downtown for breakfast. When we told people that we had walked back and forth on that lonely dirt road, we found out we were lucky not to have been ambushed, beaten, or shot.

All day we stood around and chatted with friends old and new. We awaited King's order to march a thousand clergy and lay people to Montgomery as planned. I sat on a bench on the side of Brown Chapel. King and Ralph Abernathy and two other men walked by on the way to church. I stood and we had a brief conversation and a shake of the hands and they hurried into the church.

Bishop Pike came to Selma for a few hours and spoke to the assembled crowd. He had given a lecture at a nearby university. He had to leave that afternoon.

I was also a stringer for the San Francisco Examiner. I called Lisa Hobbs, a reporter at the time, a couple of times and told her about what was going on in the town. She took down

the chronology and then said, "Tell me some of the colors you see." I saw green grass, brown faces smiling and afraid, some red rooftops and a black telephone in my hand. She wanted some color and pictures for her story.

That evening when it was dark, the line of march was formed. Kit and I stood next to each other while the TV cameras lighted us. The click and flash of 35 mm's seemed to go on and on. The police chief came on the bullhorn and told us to disperse. No one moved. After fifteen minutes he came on the horn again and told us to disperse or we would be arrested. A third time he came on and told the TV cameras to turn off their lights. And they did. Now a thousand people stood in the dark, facing policemen with clubs. We knew what had happened a few days before. I was never so frightened in my life as I was then. Kit and I clung to each other. We waited another twenty minutes.

Dr. King came on the speaker system and told us that the march would take place later in the week. He had reached an agreement with the authorities and another march would take place in a few days with police protection. This we had come for was cancelled. I felt great relief and some disappointment.

We retraced our steps and the next day flew back to San Francisco safe and sound and excited beyond measure by the events of the last three days.

A week later another huge number of people went to Selma and did the march the entire way to Montgomery, Alabama. After that March President Lyndon Johnson launched comprehensive civil rights legislation that assured African Americans the right to vote and invalidated all laws that discriminated against people of color.

When I returned to San Francisco, I appeared on a number of radio and TV talk shows. I was invited to a number of churches to tell of our experience. It was amazing to me how little we knew of the suffering Black Americans in the South. Many did not know that black people could not vote, were prevented from working in many companies, and had to live in the poorest parts of town. They did not know that most African-Americans lived in fear of white people all the time.

Why did I go and risk my neck? I was married to Lillian and we had three young daughters. If I had been hurt or killed I would have jeopardized their future, but I was aware of the pain and sorrow white America caused African Americans. The sharpest learning came from reading Gunnar Myrdal's book *The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* examining the terrible facts of racial discrimination. I had read it in college. When Lillian and I took a bus trip to Hampton, Virginia in the mid-fifties, we saw drinking fountains and toilets marked for colored. Our friend Vernon Bodien was the white chaplain to the all-Black Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. In his home we met professors and lawyers who could not teach in white universities, had to ride in the back of the bus and were in constant fear of their lives and those of their children.

I read James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*, and Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. I was tremendously moved and outraged that fellow Americans were treated so miserably by the white majority. Newspapers and magazines in the 50's began to cover the blatant discrimination in the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

My upbringing in the church had made its mark. I knew a few black clergy whom I adored. The late Fr. Fergus Fulford, an African-American, was humorous, thoughtful and

passionate about the need for black rights. In the summers of '51 and '52 I worked at Camp DeWolfe in Wading River on Long Island. There were black youngsters whom I got to know and like. I taught some of them to overcome their fear of the water and learn to swim.

Going to Selma just seemed like the right thing to do. I felt it important to bear physical witness that we white liberals could act as well as talk about freedom for all people. My wife was very liberal and supported my going, though it must have been hard for her, as we had three young daughters. There was a certain amount of danger for me. But her support was important.

P.S. In the wonderful 2014 movie *Selma* the writers moved scenes around and episodes heightened dramatically. The movie did real justice to the events in Selma in 1965.