



St. James' Episcopal Church
9 Williams Street • Clinton, New York 13323 • 315-853-5359
www.stjamesclinton.org • office@stjamesclinton.org

REGULAR SERVICES:

Saturday, 5:15pm • Sunday, 9:30am, nursery provided, Sunday School 9:30am

Church office hours: Tue. 5-7pm; Wed. 5-9:30pm; Thurs. & Fri: 8:30am -1:30pm

Staff:

Rector: The Rev. Timothy S. Reger
Minister of Music: Mr. Richard Lloyd • Sunday School Director: Jenny Fuller
Sexton: Mr. Christopher Evans • Administrative Assistant: Allison Forbes

Vestry:

Senior Warden: Patricia Jue • Junior Warden: Karen Anderson
Skip Beardsell • Cynthia Crossley • Bruce Evans • Patty Fox
Susan Havlovic • Gordon Jones • John Pick • Wendy Weber • Kathy White
Treasurer: Jan Wilson • Assistant Treasurer: Blair Jones

Webmistress: Patricia Jue
Newsletter: Pat Evans

Leadership Group Chairs:

Parish Life: (Open)
Outreach: John Pick
Worship & Formation: Tim Reger
Property Management: Heidi Philley
Finance Committee: Craig Heuss
Investment Committee: Jim White



St. James' is a community where we come together in Christ to develop spiritually; find opportunities for outreach; receive comfort when in need; and engage in sacred experiences through our liturgy, music, fellowship, and mutual ministry."

From the Rector

For about three weeks, I have been haunted by a single sentence: “When Christ calls, he bids us to come and die.” The line is from Dietrich Bonhoeffer. I came across it, seemingly by accident, and can’t seem to stop thinking about it. It has become my Lenten mantra.

There’s never a good time to die, to be humiliated, or have an accident. There’s never a good time to be diagnosed with cancer, to lose a friend, or be betrayed by one. There is never a good time to have to experience death in any form and face its indescribable loneliness. Our resistance is powerful. Yet, sooner or later in life, a major crisis shakes us at the very roots of our being. We are left feeling naked, helpless, and vulnerable. We are taken, as John’s Gospel puts it, to a place we would rather not go. The Bible has an image for this. It names this experience the desert.

The idea of the desert as a place of purification is profoundly scriptural. The Bible tells us that, before they could enter into the promised land, the Israelites had to first wander in the desert for forty years—letting themselves be led by God, undergoing many trials, and swallowing much impatience. A long period of uprooting and frustration preceded the prosperity of the promised land. This was God’s planning. Thus the desert came to be seen as the place that correctly shapes the heart and the idea developed that one should prepare oneself for major transitions by first spending some time in the desert. Initially this was taken quite literally and religious men and women looking for purification would often go off into some actual physical desert and stay there for a time. Jesus did this. After his baptism, he went off for “forty days” into the Sinai desert. Later, as the scriptures developed, the concept of desert was taken to mean more a place in the heart than a place on a map and was understood to be a mystical thing: Before you are ready to fully and gratefully receive life, you have to first be readied by facing your own demons and this means going “into the desert,” namely, entering that place where you are most frightened, lonely, and threatened. In order to be filled by God one must first be emptied.

Sometimes we have the luxury of choosing our own deserts for Lent. We name some aspect of our lives that needs growth and development, and go to that desert, sometimes with great difficulty, sometimes with ease, or at least motivation. Sometimes deserts just come our way. We don’t choose them.

That’s the position I find myself in this year. I would really prefer a comfortable Lenten desert of my own choosing. Instead, I have noticed how after two years, I am still grieving the significant change in my wife’s health, which happened around this time of year. I have known grief before, but this is a different sort.

Grief comes in waves, painful waves that wash over you.

Sometimes work helps me stay connected with other people and with reality, but then the wave crashes down and surprises me all over again: that the nature of our relationship has forever changed; that wave of feeling utterly responsible for the well being of everyone in my family; that wave of loneliness and missing the way things used to be; the wave of feeling like there’s a place in life where I can’t go home.

I know enough psychology to know that these waves need to come, that I must go to the center of the pain, to enter the pain, to understand that the hurt and the pain is connected with the degree of love that I have for my wife. The degree of hurt or pain that I have is connected also to the loveliness of her person and character. I don’t know what the resolution of this grief will be, only I hope that someday it will hurt less.

I believe in the message of Scripture that somehow by going into this desert, however reluctantly I go, God is going to speak to me anew and I will come to know God in a new, more intimate way. Jesus teaches us in the Beatitudes, “Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they who mourn.” He reminds me, he reminds us, that in experiences of brokenness like the one I’m in, we learn a greater dependency on God and on others, and grow to understand better and more what he meant by life in the Reign of God. By entrance into the desert with the Lord, we are promised a new relationship of love between God and ourselves; one that can fortify us, give us strength, give us grace.

In the desert of grief, I know that God is powerfully at work in me. It is not a contrived Lenten penance, but rather embracing and carrying the mystery of the Cross, which I believe will always lead to new life. Let us pray for each other this Lent, that our desert experiences, whatever shape they come in, will, indeed, lead us to greater intimacy with God, greater love of one another, and a greater sense of service and justice to our brothers and sisters.

What desert do you find yourself in this Lent: one of your own choosing or one that has happened to you? Whichever it is, use the opportunity well.

May the remainder of your Lenten experience be holy and blessed!

Tim+

p.s. If you are looking for some good Lenten reading, it is difficult to do much better than Belden Lane’s, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring the Spirituality of Desert and Mountain*.

Announcement postings for the Weekend Worship Bulletin must be emailed to office@stjamesclinton.org before 9:30am the Thursday prior to the weekend. Space for announcements is limited, so please be concise and send your announcements at your earliest convenience. Parish sponsored events will be given first consideration.

Children's Ministry

For the past few weeks, the Sunday School children have been getting to know Jesus, learning about his life, his miracles and teachings. They've heard stories, sung songs about how Jesus is their friend, participated in Children's Chapel services, got "caught" by fishers of men (see photo), and have eaten many loaves (corn muffins) and many, many, many fishes (goldfish crackers). This unit about Jesus' life will continue until Easter, and will include a variety of fun activities that bring the stories to life.



Outreach

Outreach thanks everyone for the support received for our Outreach Focus Groups. There was a wonderful response and level of participation. Outreach will be sitting down and analyzing all of your input and will report back to the congregation soon on the direction we will all be taking.

One of the themes that emerged from the focus groups seemed to be the desire for immediacy in our responses to emergencies; whether local or international. I must say, our immediate response to the tragedy in Japan has met that standard! Outreach has sent \$1,000 to help in the response, and there are a number of other efforts taking place.

Cranes of Hope Outreach Project for Japan

We invite you to show your support for the people of Japan who are recovering from the earthquake and tsunami, and face the uncertainty of radiation. Ways to help include: donating time to fold paper cranes, see www.stjamesclinton.org/tsumani-march-2011; praying, there are prayer cranes at the back of the church to take home; giving money. Donations will be acknowledged by hanging a crane in the Parish Hall. Why cranes? Cranes are important in Japanese culture. It is a Japanese tradition to fold cranes when praying for others to recover. Monetary donations can be left in the collection box at the back of the church. Make checks out to St. James; with MercyCorp-Japan on the memo line.

Worship & Formation

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday and ends with the Easter Vigil. We mourn for Christ's death, marvel at his obedience, and celebrate the victory over death. It is easy, after the solemnity of Lent to quickly fast-forward to Easter Sunday. However, consider taking part in some, or all, of the Holy Week services.

On Palm Sunday, the service begins in the Parish Hall with the blessing of the palms. We then go into the Church for the rest of the service. At the end of the service, we hear a retelling of the crucifixion and exit in silence. There will be no Sunday School or coffee hour on Palm Sunday.

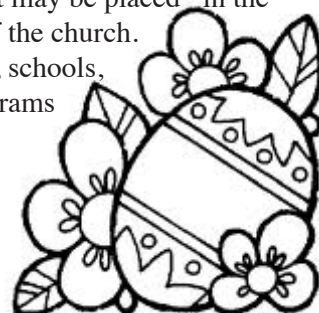
Maundy Thursday we remember when Jesus broke bread and drank wine with his disciples before taking up the cross on his journey to death. We gather in the Parish Hall to enjoy a simple dinner; sign up sheets are on the parish hall corkboard. Afterwards, we go into the church for the stripping of the altar and hear a reading from the Gospel of John.

On Good Friday, we join with local churches for a noon service. This year, the community service is at St. James. A collection will be taken for the Country Pantry. A soup and bread lunch follow. If you are able to make a pot of soup or donate bread, please sign up on the parish corkboard. If you are unable to make the mid-day service, come to the Tenebrae service at 7pm.

The Easter Vigil begins in darkness. The darkness represents all darkness – evil thoughts, motivations, deeds; all that is hidden and secret, deceitful and dishonest, divisive and abusive, immoral and sinful. It's the darkness of our world. Then the Easter Vigil fire is lit, from which the Paschal candle is lit. We follow this Light of Christ into church and experience the power of that light as we light our hand-held candles. We listen to the many readings of God's saving grace. Then, in joy, the entire church is lit. We ring bells and hear the good news that Christ has risen! We renew our Baptism vows. We give thanks for God coming down to us, living with us, and give thanks for his saving grace. The tomb is empty. There is Light in the midst of our darkness. We celebrate Eucharist and wish all a good Easter...and we celebrate the Risen Christ at the Easter Sunday service. (There is no Sunday School on Easter Sunday.)

Special Offering During Holy Week

During Holy Week, offerings for the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East may be placed in the basket on the table in the back of the church. The funds help operate hospitals, schools, orphanages and many other programs that benefit all people in the province, Christian, Jewish and Muslim alike.



Rite 13

Rite 13 Provides Sumptuous Pancake Supper

The group raised \$329, of which \$200 will be distributed among Heifer International, the Steven Swan Humane Society *and* something very, very special (to be announced). Also, 63 non-perishable goods were received from the guests and the R13 members delivered them to the Country Pantry on March 20th.



**Healing a Hurting World:
A Mission Project for the Diocese of Central New York
to Benefit Episcopal Relief & Development**

The Diocese invites parishes to participate in a fundraiser for Episcopal Relief & Development for the Japan Earthquake Response Fund: ER-D –Japan; Haiti: Recovery & sustainable development following the Jan. 2010 earthquake: ER-D –Haiti; NetsforLife® Inspiration Fund: \$12 provides a family with a net, a demonstration on how to use it, and information on recognizing the symptoms of malaria before it's too late; ER-D NetsforLife; Disaster Relief Fund: Used around the world to respond to natural disasters; ER-D DRF. To participate, send donations to St. James indicating either ER-D –Haiti; ER-D NetsforLife or ER-D DRF. For checks, indicate this on the memo line. Offerings will be dedicated Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday during Holy Week which marks the end of the Lenten season.

Let us not forget!

The Diocese of Central New York, of which St. James is a part, donated tens of thousands of dollars to Haitian relief after the earthquake in 2010. Many have asked “what else can we do?” The Diocese hopes to have a work team going to Haiti in the fall, possibly in November. If you are interested in participating in such a trip please email Barbara Groves at: smhec47@aol.com.



From the Church Mouse

Hope springs eternal. For those of us in CNY it means we have hope that the snow will eventually melt, flowers will show their faces before Easter, and dead brown grass will sprout green once again.

This year, the first full month of spring is April, and for most Christians it's all about the conclusion of the forty days of Lent and looking forwards Easter Sunday. Your resident church mouse's family observes, as many of you do, Holy Week by attending Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday services.

I have a house full of young children (surprise!), therefore the Easter Bunny pays us a visit while we are attending church. Our rule is: First we worship and then we party and play. Somehow while we are gone Peter Cottontail finds his way down the bunny trail to fill our house with enough Easter baskets of various trinkets and tons of candy that should last until next Easter. Now here's the question: How long does it take my family to eat up all those treats?

From my family to yours,
Easter blessings filled with peace,
love, and joy,

Cedric

♪ ♪ **Music** ♪ ♪

Of course we all know the Doxology. This is probably the one piece of music that we've sung more than any other in church. And I'm a strong believer in not messing around with those particular words, when sung to that most traditional tune. “Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below” No. Now, I know you can't put a gender on God, but it simply has to be: “Praise Him all creatures here below.” This I found out the hard way: I was once music director at a church where the minister insisted on changing the words to make them gender neutral. What ended up happening is that there was a huge shouting match (“GOD!! HIM!!”) amongst the congregation at every singing of the Doxology. Now, I have a feeling we're not the type of congregation that would resort to that sort of behavior, but I would definitely be counted amongst the many who would not agree with the change—the Old 100th is just too traditional.

However, we can have gender specific words if we use a new tune, and I've got just the one, courtesy of Jennifer DeWeerth. We will be singing it for the duration of the Easter season, and it is indeed very appropriate, packed with Alleluias as it is. At this point, if you're a dyed-in-the-wool Episcopalian, you should already be on the mark. So sing along:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

If you're still in the dark, this will be sung to the same tune to which we sing “Ye watchers and ye holy ones,” hymn 618 (*Lasst uns erfreuen*). The Easter season should be chock full of “Alleluias,” so let's have some more!

Parish Life

Easter Sunday we celebrate the Risen Christ - “Hail Thee Festival Day!” and after the service, enjoy fellowship with a special coffee hour. Please bring sweets or baked goodies to share and help make this a truly festive day. Other

fellowship events include on Maundy Thursday a simple supper of wines, cheeses, breads, etc. followed by the service, and the noonday Good Friday community soup and bread lunch. See the sign up sheets in the Parish Hall.

All are invited!

Bishop Gene Robinson will speak at Cornell University on Wednesday, April 6th: Lecture at 4:30 p.m. in Sage Chapel followed by Eucharist in Anabel Taylor Chapel at 6:30. Tickets are not needed for either event. For further details, contact Clark West, Episcopal chaplain at Cornell University crw86@cornell.edu or go to the Lecture Website: <http://www.curw.cornell.edu/Wood11Bishop.html>.

Vestry News

The vestry received financial updates from Craig Heuss. We thank Gordon Hayes, Jr. for chairing the investments committee since its inception 2 years ago; Jim White now serves in this ministry capacity.

We voted to approve the first stage of work to address drainage and foundation issues. These include installing a French drain between the church and rectory, remediation of the (wet) rectory basement, removal of a defunct oil tank and boiler and masonry repair of the church foundation and steps. We await updates from the Property Management leadership group before approving the second stage of work.

We heard a report from the Outreach leadership group. The vestry joins the group in thanking all of you who took part in one of the focus groups. Around 50 people provided feedback, which, considering the size of our parish, is a great testament that St. James values outreach efforts.

The vestry authorized the formation of a Communications Leadership group to help facilitate information flow within the parish and the greater community. Anyone interested in being a part of this group should contact the Rector, one of the Wardens or Skip Beardsell.

May 2012 is the 150th anniversary of the incorporation

of the parish. Yes, it is a year away, but it's not too early to start preparing for this event. Libby Beardsell and MaryLou Iles have graciously agreed to organize the celebrations. They already have many ideas. Please talk to them if you have some ideas of your own or if you would like to help in some way. We expect several projects will evolve. Keep your ears and hearts open!

The vestry retreat is April 2. At this annual event, the vestry gathers to share our hopes and visions for St. James, learn how to work more fully with each other, search for ways to be more effective servant leaders, and discuss ways to use our individual and collective gifts to further St. James' mission of honoring God.

Patricia Kay Jue, Sr. Warden

Diocesan Ministry Fair Saturday, May 14th

The 2011 Ministry Fair will be held at the Holiday Inn, Liverpool. There are many workshops designed to inspire, teach, and re-new the spirit; see www.stjamesclinton.org/ministry-fair-2011. This year there is a "Youth Track," designed specifically for youth. Details will be published in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, mark your calendars for the Ministry Fair on May 14th.

Memorial Flowers for Easter

Those wishing to provide an Easter plant for the altar may do so by using the special envelopes in the pews, calling the church office at 853-5359 or completing the following form. If you would like to take your plant after the Sunday service, please note this on your envelope or check. A minimum donation of \$20 is requested. Checks should be made payable to St. James' Church Altar Guild with the notation "Easter plant."

Parishioner's Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

Will take plant after Sunday's service?: Yes: _____ No: _____

Please complete this form and return it to the parish office with your minimum donation of \$20.00 before April 18, 2011. Thank you.

Easter plants will also be delivered to shut-in members of the parish so they may know that we think of them and include them in our celebrations. If you would like to receive a plant or know of someone who would like one, please call the church office. Please also tell us if you would like the plant delivered before Easter or would prefer an altar plant delivered after Easter Sunday. And if you could volunteer some time to deliver a plant to a shut-in member of the parish, we would greatly appreciate it. Simply select a name from the sign-up sheets in the back of the church and make arrangements to visit. Thank you.

> > > DEADLINE FOR MAY NEWSLETTER: APRIL 25 < < <