

# St. James' Journal

*The Rev. Dr. Cathy L. Deats, Rector*

*April 2007*

This past Sunday I was the guest of the Panther Valley Ecumenical Church, a congregation whose members are from four denominations: Presbyterian, Methodist, United Church of Christ, and Episcopalian. Begun in 1969 as a bold experiment, their pastoral leadership also rotates through the denominations. The present pastor, The Rev. Dr. Mary Lou Howson, will be leaving on Easter Day and the next denominational leader, according to current by-laws, will be an Episcopal priest. The congregation wanted to learn more about Episcopal worship, and so I was invited to celebrate an Instructed Eucharist.

An Instructed Eucharist is something like a drama with stage directions. During the service of Eucharist, we pause at various points to explain what is happening or why we do certain thing. We stopped to explain the receiving of the gifts of bread, wine and plate offering, and again to talk about the setting of the table as the Deacon did so. We answered questions such as why there is a gospel procession; why people cross themselves or bow; what all the movement, color and singing are about. This service was very well received by the congregation and it surprised me how helpful the preparation was to me personally. It is good to step back and look at our liturgy from the 'outside.' It gives perspective and real appreciation for how liturgy truly is "the work of the people."

The whole experience brought to mind something that happened to me in seminary. I was the minority as an Episcopalian in a Methodist seminary (about 80 Protestants of various denominations, mostly Methodist, to about 12 Episcopalians). When it came time in Liturgy class to practice the Eucharist, I was suddenly in the role of expert after being at the bottom of the class in Church History, where the Reformation in England was touched upon briefly and the giants of Protestant Theology ruled. I knew the names of all the vessels and "altar stuff." The cup is a chalice, the plate a paten set on a corporal (linen cloth) and covered with a pall (stiff square of linen covered plastic). I was in my glory. Always a person who likes to learn by making connections, I asked what was the name of the little tiny cups most Protestant churches use for communion.

They looked at each other, puzzled, and answered, "little tiny cups"!

The questions people ask Episcopalians are: why do we read our prayers? why do we get up and down so much? why do the ministers move around so much? why do we call things by special names when it would be easier to just call a thing what it is?

The Holy Eucharist is, at least in part, a drama. Some have said worship is a drama - we are the audience and God is the actor - but I think that God is the audience and we are the actors. We are doing our work, the work of the people, as we gather around the table. The symbolism of the act of giving and receiving, the colors and sounds which touch our senses, the use of our bodies in worship to stand in prayer or kneel in repentance, all these things which are part of our heritage draw us relentlessly toward God and each other.

Holy Week is also a drama. It is a drama, which draws us relentlessly toward the cross and the tomb. Along the way, we enter the darkness of Tenebrae, the poignancy of the Last Supper, the lonely vigil in the garden and the excruciating passion of Jesus. Then, from the darkness of death and hell, comes a spark of light – the new fire of life which explodes into blazing brilliance at the Great Vigil of Easter. Our songs of joy on Easter Day ring out with unrestrained *alleluias*.

So come on in, take your place; the overture has begun. Soon comes the drama. We can see it, hear it, taste and feel it. It is a story of betrayal, sadness and torture. But fear not...we know the ending.

*Alleluia; Christ is risen!*

*The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

Yours in the joy of the risen Christ,

## Warden Words – The Road to Demolition

I tend to approach any discussion of the upcoming Parish Hall Building project with some trepidation. After all, I publicly announced that demolition would begin on or about February 15 and here April is on the horizon. WELL ...

Yesterday, an intrepid group from Saint James' attended the Parish Hall Pre-Construction Meeting at the Hackettstown Municipal Building. We were there with Rochelle Contracting and various town and county agencies to go over the technical and legal aspects of the project going forward. All of our plans are in place and approved with some minor footnotes being addressed over the next few days. The only significant issue is the management of traffic on Moore Street – with all the construction activity that will be going on, we all agreed that closing Moore Street (to through traffic) was the way to go. So St. James' is on board, the Town agencies are on board, and our contractor is on board. Not bad for a one hour meeting.

We have one more gate to pass through. To proceed, we need the approval of the Hackettstown Town Council. We are on the agenda for their scheduled April 9 meeting and anticipate their concurrence with our project as presented. It won't be long after that before the machines roll in.

I am really looking forward to this transformation. Our doors will truly welcome everyone. And we will do it this year. Thank you all for bringing us to this point.

David Olesen

## The Deacon's Homily – from March 25

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in your sight, oh Lord my strength and redeemer.

Good morning. The church teaches us that Lent is the time for repentance and redemption. There is no "alleluia" after the dismissal. On Good Friday we are reminded that we are created out of the dust of the earth and we pray that the ashes maybe a sign to us of our mortality and penitence. Today is the fifth Sunday in Lent and we are headed towards the joys of Easter.

Many of us have been taught to "give up" something for Lent as part of our repentance. In recent years it has been suggested that instead of or in addition to giving up something, we add something positive, such as a good work. Perhaps you have added outreach in the community or Bible study or helping your neighbor shovel snow!

Today's First Lesson from Isaiah and Psalm 126 tell us of another important way we can participate in Lent. "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? ....I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise." Declare my praise sounds like a pretty precise instruction.

The psalm says, "... then our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among nations, The Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us and we are glad indeed." Doesn't that sound like God wants our happiness?

My spiritual advisor is Sister Pamela at the Convent of St. John Baptist. Sometimes she asks me "Why are you so happy?" And I reply that I can't help myself. I recently had a birthday and I am so glad to still be on Earth. I wake up most days happy to be alive and able to get up and participate in God's world. OK. There are a few grumpy days too." Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy".

Think about your life and offer up to God your joy! Perhaps being alive or your family or your dog or pleasure in a good book gives you happiness. Share the joy with God. Certainly the family of St. James' has much to praise and give thanks for in the new building project of a Parish Hall accessible to everyone and for our rector and vestry who are helping us to accomplish this. We can look around in church and see a dog being carefully trained to provide a better life for a blind person. We can look around and see the new beautiful babies who have been baptized and joined us in God's family. We can look around and see dear familiar faces and some new ones we hope will become familiar. We can look and see a skilled professional interpreter providing inclusion for a deaf deacon.

The collect for today says "Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what your promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where the true joys are to be found."

I ask you to consider your God-given happiness during this Lenten season and "let your mouth be filled with laughter and your tongue with shouts of joy". Join with me and praise the Lord!

Amen

The Rev. Sheila Shuford, Deacon

## HOLY WEEK AT ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**Saturday, March 31, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm**

*We prepare for the dramatic story of Holy Week, the last week of life on earth for Jesus the Christ.*

**Quiet Morning –, in the church, followed by light lunch**

In our Lenten offering by The Rev. James Warnke, "Holy Week for Ordinary People," we will prepare for Easter by praying the journey of those seven days. Curate at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Englewood, Fr. Jim is a priest, psychotherapist and author of the book, Becoming an Everyday Mystic.

**Palm Sunday - April 1, 8:00 and 10:00 am.**

- The Passion of Christ dramatically brought to life in outdoor procession (at the 10 am service, weather permitting) with singing and incense, the blessing of the palms and the reading of the passion story
- Continental breakfast at 9:00 am

**Wednesday - April 4 at 7:30 pm**

- **Tenebrae:** A service of shadows in which we follow the story of God throughout the history of God's people using the symbolism of darkness and light.

**Maundy Thursday - April 5 at 7:30 pm**

- **The Holy Eucharist with foot washing** will be celebrated in remembrance of the Last Supper. Following the service, the altar is stripped and we keep a watch in the Lady Chapel throughout the night until noon Friday.

**Good Friday - April 6**

- **The solemn Good Friday Liturgy** of prayer, song and reading of the Passion of Christ. This **Ecumenical Community Service** is led by clergy from Christian churches in Hackettstown and surrounding areas, **12:00 noon**.
- **Stations of the Cross**, a journey of Christ's last day, **7:30 pm**.

**Holy Saturday - April 7**

- **Noonday prayers, 12:00 noon** in the chapel.

**EASTER**

- **Easter Eve (Saturday, April 7, 7:30 pm)**

The Great Vigil of Easter, the lighting of the new fire, bringing the church from darkness to light; please bring any type of bell to ring to signal the resurrection of Christ

- **Easter Day**

Festival celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. Holy Eucharist at 8:00 am and 10:00 am, with music and St. James' Multi-Generational Bell Choir

*St. James' is an open, inclusive, and caring faith community that embraces diversity and celebrates the joy of Christ. All are welcome!*

## April dates to remember

Monday – Friday, April 9–13 - Church Office Closed/Administrator out of office  
Thursday, April 19 - Fundraising Committee Meeting/Mitcham House, 7:30 pm  
Saturday, April 21 - Town-wide Rummage Sale  
Sunday, April 22 - What in the World Fundraiser, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm  
Thursday, April 26 - Vestry Meeting, Mitcham House, 7:30 pm

### From the Sunday School

Godly Play Lessons have focused on Lent and the Mystery Of Easter for the past month. The students have learned about Jesus' experience during the Lenten season and the significance of Palm Sunday. The month of April will only have three weeks of Sunday School out of the five, as follows:

- April 1<sup>st</sup> Palm Sunday - also Family Sunday
- April 8<sup>th</sup> Easter - no Sunday School
- April 15<sup>th</sup> - Godly Play: The Holy Family
- April 22<sup>nd</sup> - Godly Play: Holy Baptism
- April 29<sup>th</sup> - Mother's Day project

Thanks for your continued support.

Kathy Lacouture

### From the Sacristy

Holy Week will soon be upon us. Included in the Church Bulletin this past week was a handout detailing the services for Holy Week. Every time I consider all the preparations that are necessary, it's a bit overwhelming - palms, candles, incense, towels, water, more candles, plants, flowers, more candles... But this physical preparation of the Church has always helped me to prepare my heart for the Resurrection. Members of the Congregation attending any of the Holy Week services are welcome to stop in the Sacristy before and/or after these services. There will be someone from the Altar Guild working. We welcome your assistance.

Altar Guild will meet Saturday, April 7th at 10:00 am to make the Church ready for our Easter celebration. Please join us...no experience required...and no permanent commitment to Altar Guild is implied! Our work is generally completed in time for the Noonday Prayer Service in the Lady Chapel.

Meg Critchley

### Youth Group

Our teens participating in the 30 Hour Famine: Tina, Sylvia and Rick Okoye, Lindsay and Amy Modugno, Sawyer and Charlie Thieringer, Joey Ayers and Tanya Volkert, raised \$1,655!! We are so proud of them. They invited friends, worked hard and had fun. Special thanks to Lori Pursel who chaperoned overnight.

Last month Ed Modugno Jr. talked to the group about Buddhism and we discussed items in the news. This month on April 22nd, Tina, Sylvia and Rick Okoye will talk about their year in Africa. We are excited to hear about their experiences.

Questions or suggestions: Dawn Modugno or Lori Pursel

### 30-Hour Famine

The results are in! Youth Group members from St. James' raised a total of **\$1,655** in their recent fast for hunger! Youth group members Joey Ayres, Amy and Lindsay Modugno, Ricky, Tina and Sylvia Okoye, Sawyer and Charlie Thieringer and Tanya Volkert surpassed their goal of raising \$120 each. All brought friends to the 30-hour overnight experience during which they prepared and served a meal at the soup kitchen at Church of the Good Shepherd, Wantage.

Funds are used by World Vision to relieve hunger all around the world. This year, the focus of relief is on Darfur and Kenya, areas of tremendous hunger due to war and drought. World Vision estimates that \$360 feeds one child for a year, and that 29,000 children die each day of hunger and hunger-related disease.

Added to the young people's awesome accomplishment is the fact that in 2007, the monies they raised are matched by a government grant which *quadruples* the \$1,655 that they raised and will feed 18 children for one year!

St. James' applauds our youth as they live out their baptismal promises in the world!

## Fundraising News –

Dates for your calendar - The FRC (fundraising committee) has a few dates for you to put on your calendar. Special Coffee Hour, the Rummage Sale and a Fish Fry can all be added.

We are having a “RUMMAGE SALE”. We have decided to hold our rummage sale on Saturday, April 21st from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. This is the same weekend that Hackettstown hosts the town-wide yard sale. It is a one-day event; setting up on the front lawn of the Mitcham House. We ask that if you have items to donate, please hold them as long as you can and deliver them only the week before. Our storage will be the front room of the Mitcham House. Please refrain from donating books, electronics and clothes, as we simply do not have the room.

The very next day, April 22nd, the FRC will host a “Special Coffee Hour”. “*What in the World*” has generously given us permission to use their store for coffee hour. In addition, they will donate a percentage of everything that is purchased between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm to St. James’. What in the World is not normally open on Sunday, so it will be our space for a few hours. Please invite your friends and neighbors to come and shop with us, maybe even bring them to church with you. For the location and additional information, pick up a flyer, talk to Barbara Olesen or Barbara White or check it out on the FRC web page.

Finally, a DATE TO EAT! A ways off but still...! On Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, we will host an Argyle Fish or Chicken and Chips dinner at Christ Church in Budd Lake. We hope to bring at least 200 people to this event. Tickets will be sold in advance and at the door. Take-out will also be available. For more information, check out the web page.

Our next meeting will be April 19th, Thursday night after Chapel at 7:45 pm. We will begin planning our Tricky Tray for October. If you are interested in helping out this year, please join us.

Thank you for all your support. We would love to hear from you. Your ideas, comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please visit our web page [saint.james.church.home.comcast.net](http://saint.james.church.home.comcast.net). All our events are posted and you can email us through that site.

Barbara White

## Read It and Rent It: The Pursuit of Happyness Book by Chris Gardner with Quincy Troupe Movie starring Will and Jaden Smith

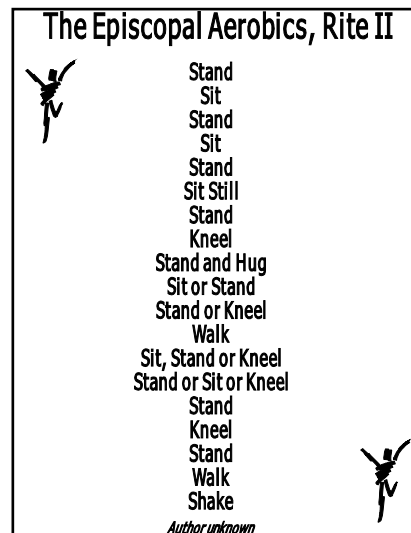
Enthusiastic readers can often be heard recommending a book over watching the movie-version of a story. This time, you'll hear me suggest you do both - I'm just not sure which order to recommend them and that's because they're quite different from each other.

I had the pleasure of watching the movie first. It is a movie I encourage you to see, especially with the youngsters aged 10 and over in your life. The motion picture is a well-written and even better acted film showing an episode of Chris Gardner's (played by an excellent casting choice in Will Smith) life as he worked from a dead-end job to a life in the solvent lane as a stockbroker. Gardner never loses sight of his top priority, son Chris, Jr. played by Will Smith's very own son, Jaden. There is only one swear word to be heard in the entire film and it's in total context, so no worries for family viewing. The question that then needs to be asked: if the movie is so good, why recommend the book?

Because the movie is just a slice of Gardner's life. By reading the book, which is entertaining enough, you'll get a deeper picture of the truth behind Gardner's life, just without the swelling music or tender looks exchanged between father and son. The book is much more graphic and I recommend it for adults 21 and over. Don't miss either one.

Julia Quelly

Friendly Exercise Guide provided by Cathy for her letter



## Bell Choir “Notes”

The Bell Choir has been busy preparing music for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. We hope that you will enjoy both pieces. The Palm Sunday piece is joyful and triumphant and includes the hymns - *All Glory, Laud and Honor; Hosanna, Loud Hosanna* and *Ride On, Ride On in Majesty*. The Easter piece is based on the hymn *Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain*. Both composers, Sharon Elery Rogers and Barbara Baltzer Kinyon, are well known for their music for bells.

The choir will not rehearse on April 8, having earned a well-deserved Sunday off from practice.

The members of the Bell Choir may travel to Westminster Choir College to hear a concert by the Westminster Concert Bell Choir before they depart on tour. The performance is April 29 at 4:00 pm. If you are interested in attending the concert, please call me at 973-584-2061 so I can order tickets.

Louise Olshan

## Surprises for the Organist

After spending a wonderful week in Orlando with Sam and two of our sons, our trip home was delayed by about 8 hours. I kept Cathy informed as to where we were and called at 7:25 am [that Sunday] to say that we were at the baggage carousel in Newark and would be at St. James' ASAP. Well, I arrived at St. James' at about 9:10 a.m. with very little sleep from the night spent in the Orlando Airport.

What a joy to open the front door and hear the bells practicing! The bells were busy warming up under Pam's direction. Thank you, Pam, for stepping in and helping.

After we finished with the warm-up for the bells, I moved to the organ and had another huge surprise. All the settings on the organ had been lost! Seems like the organ had a power surge while I was away. So now at about 9:25 am, I had to frantically reset things for the upcoming service. If things sounded a little strange, it is because I did not have sufficient time to carefully reset everything. Thanks for being understanding. In fact, I had no negative comments on the sound, although I knew things were not as they should be. The following week things returned more to normal, although there are still a few settings that need adjustment.

Louise Olshan

[Editor – Way to go, Louise! All thanks for hanging in there!]

## Senior Choir Notes:

The Senior Choir will be singing at our Maundy Thursday, Good Friday Stations of the Cross and Easter Vigil services and at both the 8:00 am and 10:00 am services on Easter Sunday! They're a busy group! As always, we would love to have some more folks from the congregation join us! Rehearsals are Thursday nights from 7:30om – 9:00 pm in the church.

## Children's Choir Notes:

The Children's Choir will be singing at the 10:00 am Easter Sunday service. Due to several families going for the Easter vacation, the choir will be a small group but dedicated and working hard. They will be singing, and signing - "That Easter Day With Joy Was Bright".

Once we get past Easter, we will begin working on our song for the last Sunday of Sunday School which will be sometime in May. The date is not available just yet. If you have a child who is interested in singing for that day, please let me know or call the church office and let Linda know. She'll get in touch with me. The children rehearse on Thursday evenings from 6:15 – 6:45, usually in the Mitcham House. You can call me at 908-850-8086 for more information.

Pam Laura

