

FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS 2015

St. James Episcopal Church, Amesbury

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Reflections from Fr. John

Dear St. James Family,

In a few weeks we will once again begin to walk with Jesus through the forty days of Lent as we recall His fasting and temptation in the Wilderness by Satan and prepare for the events of Holy Week.

The season of Lent, the forty days that lead us to Easter, did not begin until sometime in the fourth century. During the first three centuries preparation to celebrate the Great Paschal Feast usually covered a period of one or two days, perhaps a week at the most. Many in the Church felt that this was not sufficient time to prepare for the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. Eventually the Church accepted a forty day period, forty because of the prominence of that number in the Bible as well as

because this was the length of time Christ spent in the Wilderness.

This season would be marked by penitence and fasting, self-examination, self-denial and prayer, customs already associated with the days immediately leading up to Easter Day. This forty day period also became a time when converts to the faith were prepared for Baptism and when those separated from the Church because of notorious sin were prepared to once again join the fellowship of the faithful. Today in the Church our Lenten journey begins with Ash Wednesday.

The earliest accounts we have of Ash Wednesday date back to around the 8th century. In his book *Lives of the Saints*, an Abbot named Aelfric (955-1020) writes "now let us do this little at the beginning of our Lent that we strew ashes upon our heads to signify that we ought to repent of our sins during the Lenten fast." While neither Ash Wednesday nor Lent is mentioned in the Bible, there are many accounts of the use of ashes to signify repentance in the Old Testament as well as some in the New, one of these accounts in Matthew 11:21 where ashes are mentioned by Jesus Himself.

In our tradition, we kneel at the communion rail and the priest makes the sign of the cross on our forehead with ashes saying "For thou art dust and to dust thou shalt return." When

the priest makes the sign of the cross on our foreheads with ashes we should be reminded of our Baptisms. One of the gifts of Baptism is the forgiveness of sins. Part of the Baptismal liturgy is the anointing where the priest makes the sign of the cross on our foreheads with Chrism saying "you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own forever." As we make our observance of Ash Wednesday we acknowledge we are sinners, we acknowledge that we are heartily sorry for our misdoings and as those ashes are traced on our forehead we should be reminded that the cross was traced on our forehead at our Baptisms where we were granted forgiveness of our sins, forgiveness because Christ died for us and rose again. While Lent leads us to the cross of Good Friday, death does not have the final word as Christ vanquished death and sin on Easter Day.

My friends, I invite you as we begin the season of Lent to begin your Lenten pilgrimage at St. James with one of our liturgies on Ash Wednesday, where we remember we are sinners but through the love of God our sins have been forgiven. Continue that pilgrimage on the Sundays in Lent, attend some or all of our Collaborative Deanery Lenten programs on the Wednesdays in Lent beginning February 25th hosted by a different Church each week (St. James will host March

4th). Join us on the Second, Third and Fourth Sundays in Lent as St. James will host a Sunday Lenten forum immediately following the 10am service. And finally journey with us through the days and events of Holy Week as we prepare for Christ's Passion remembering that He died, for us, so that we might have life and have it in abundance.

As we prepare to enter into this holy season please know that all of you remain in my daily thoughts and prayers.

Yours in Christ,
Father John

Vestry Meeting



The February Vestry Meeting will be held on Tuesday the 10th at 7pm at the Briggs Mill Apartment complex in the club house located at 20 Cedar Street. Entrance is on Poplar Street. All are invited to attend and observe our vestry meetings.



Shrove Tuesday

Join us on February 17th for our annual Shrove Tuesday Dinner with Mardi Gras theme. This will be held in the Parish Hall from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. We will have eggs, waffles, pancakes, sausages, gluten free options and lots of toppings to choose from. Donations will be gladly accepted to help offset costs.

Ash Wednesday Services



Ash Wednesday is February 18th.

Worship Services with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist, Rite II will be held at 7am and 7pm.

We will also continue the tradition of Ashes-on-the-Steps from 8am to 9am.

Sunday Lenten Forums at St. James

In the Gospel according to Luke, after Jesus had been praying, one of His disciples said to Him "Lord teach us to pray as John taught his disciples." Jesus responded by saying to all the disciples "When you pray, say: . . ." and taught them what has come to be called The Lord's Prayer. This sacred prayer is taught to all of Christ's disciples usually at a very young age. It is prayed at almost every Church service we celebrate, and it is a prayer that has brought to many comfort and peace throughout the centuries and is a wonderful way to enter into conversation with Christ.

I thought since the Lord's Prayer is such an important part of our faith and since we are entering into the

season of Lent where prayer is stressed, why not look together at this Great Prayer during our Sunday Lenten Forums this year. This event will take place on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday's in Lent following the 10am service in the Parish Hall.

Let us look together at the Lord's Prayer as we find it in both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and discover the many reasons why this is such a magnificent prayer and how it can help us make our Lenten pilgrimage this year all the more fruitful.



Merrimack Valley Deanery Collaborative Lenten Supper Series

We will once again participate this year in the Lower Merrimack Valley Deanery Collaborative Lenten Program on Wednesday evenings in Lent beginning February 25th. The evening program will begin at 6:00pm as we gather for fellowship and dinner and end around 8:00pm with Compline.

The theme this year is Tourist, Missioner or Pilgrim. The sessions do not build on each other so if you can only make one or two that is fine. Below are the locations.

We invite all to join us as we make our pilgrimage through these 40 days.

February 25th
St. James, Groveland
Topic TBD

*March 4th
St James, Amesbury
Mission Trips, Fr. John

March 11th
St. Paul's, Newburyport
Peace in the Suburbs

March 18th
Trinity, Haverhill
Family Feast at the HUB

March 25th
All Saints, West Newbury
A Matter of Justice

*Nursery care as well as activities for older children will be provided at St. James on March 4th. Please contact the respective Churches directly to see what child care options are available on their host night.

Youth Event with Father John



All youth are invited to an evening of fun and games with Father John on Friday, February 27th in the Parish Hall.

The evening will include pizza dinner, Wii, Xbox, PlayStation, board games and a chance for our youth to get to know our new Rector.

We will meet in the Parish Hall from 7pm to 9:30pm. If you are in 6th to 12th grade, we hope you will be able to make it and as always you are welcome to bring a friend or two.

Family Services

"The Family That Prays Together Stays Together"



Monthly Morning Service of
Prayer & Worship for
Parents and Children

Hymns, Homily and Holy Eucharist

Sunday, March 1st
and
Sunday, May 3rd
at the 10am Service

Fr. John will invite our children to come up to the altar steps (parents are also invited to accompany our youngest members as well as our children who are a little shy) and ask them questions about the readings we just heard, the Church, our Service or another part of our rich tradition. They will also have an opportunity to ask him questions as well. Our children will be invited to remain in the Church for the whole service on these days.

We are hoping that starting in October these services will also include our children as well as our youth taking on different aspects of the service as well. We hope you can join us on these Sunday's and yes there may even be questions posed to the congregation as a whole as well!

April Baptisms



The next day for Baptism will be on April 4th at The Great Vigil of Easter Service.

This year the Vigil Service will be celebrated at St. Paul's in North Andover. If you or someone you know is interested in participating in this Great Sacrament please speak with Fr. John or call the Church office.



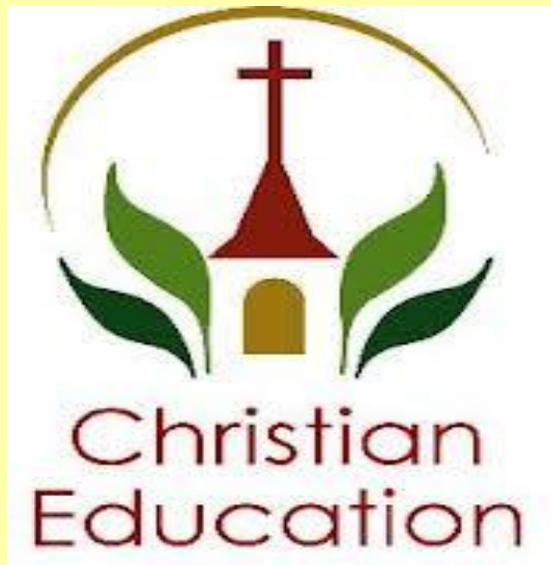
We are beginning a Newcomers Ministry at St. James in an effort to make those who are new to the parish feel welcomed, help them get to know other parishioners and become involved in the ministries at St. James. We will begin by reaching out to those in the parish who have come to St. James in the last year.

We have been brainstorming ways of welcoming new members and families and one idea we have come up with is having Mentor Parishioners. We will pair up new members with current parishioners who can answer questions about St. James and Amesbury, invite to the Parish Hall for coffee hour and make sure they are meeting other parishioners and finding ministries that excite them.

We will also welcome new members with an hors d'oeuvres evening with the other newcomers, mentors,

vestry members and Fr. John and an official welcome to the parish the following Sunday at the worship service they regularly attend.

If you would be interested in being a Mentor Parishioner please contact the Church Office or speak with Fr. John or Dawn Schmidt for more information. An informational meeting will be held in March.



Godly Play Classes

Godly play will be cancelled on February 15th due to the holiday weekend.

Youth Group Event - Building the Dream

Nearly 100 young people and adults from a dozen parishes across the diocese including Saint James gathered at St. Luke's in Chelsea on January 17th for *Building the Dream*. Participants were appreciative of the programming, overwhelmed by the hospitality and moved by everyone's willingness to share and listen.

High School Retreat: THE TREE OF LIFE

Barbara C. Harris Camp & Conference Center (BCHC)
Greenfield, New Hampshire

Friday, February 6 to Sunday, February 8, 2015
It's not too late to sign-up!

Led by members of the Diocesan Youth Council (DYC)

For more information visit diomassyouth.org.

Scholarships are available upon request. Send your request to Jennifer Collins at stjames.christianed@verizon.net

WINTER CAMP AT BCHC

Experience the adventurous spirit of the Barbara C. Harris Camp & Conference Center in Greenfield, NH in all its winter glory. Two programs are offered:

Winter Camp for 7th - 9th graders
Winter EDGE for 9th - 11th graders

Contact [BCHC](#) for more information or to register. Scholarships are available upon request. Send your request for a scholarship to Jennifer Collins at stjames.christianed@verizon.net

BCH SUMMER CAMP SEEKS JUNIOR COUNSELORS

Application deadline is March 1, 2015

For more information and application, contact the [BCHC](#) Camp Director: Alessia Doss directly.

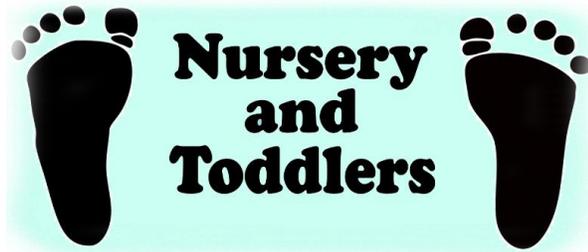
"I WILL, WITH GOD'S HELP."

Confirmation Service and Pre-confirmation Retreat

Confirmation Service will be on May 9th starting at 10:30am location TBD. Pre-confirmation retreat planned by the Diocesan Youth Council will be March 20-21st at BCHC. Father John and Kim Potts will be the attending chaperones.

Visit diomassyouth.org for details.

Scholarships are available upon request, by contacting Jennifer Collins at stjames.christianed@verizon.net



NURSERY CARE AT ST. JAMES

Nursery Care is available every Sunday starting at 9:45am until the end of the 10am service. Nursery Room is located in the Parish Hall.



Men's Group at St. James

The Men's Group at St. James meets Saturday mornings to read aloud and discuss appointed selections in the Holy Bible and related resources. They learn about the circumstances of biblical events, their significance and the people involved. We encourage men of St. James and their friends to join the group.

Meetings are held either in the Parish Hall or hosted at a member's home. Call Arthur Yarranton at 978-364-4749 or Mort Gilbert at 978-388-3831 to confirm meeting location, time and if you need a ride. Regardless of location, morning beverages and baked treats are provided.



KNITTING AND CROCHET For Men, Women and Youth!

Beginning on Sunday, February 8th from 2pm to 4pm, the Knitting and Crochet Group will meet in the Parish Hall.

Knitting together is a great opportunity for fellowship and forming bonds. It also provides an excellent opportunity for outreach ministries in many ways, such as fundraising (church fair items), charity (premie hats, chemo caps, helmet lines for military) and prayers/reflection (prayer shawls).

This is a wonderful, fun fellowship and ministry opportunity for men, women and youth.

First-timers and knitters/crocheters of all levels are encouraged to join us in this fellowship and ministry. We have the supplies necessary to get you started!

If you have any questions please contact Beth Mauch at 978-388-1942 or 617-645-2181 or e-mail at beth@themauchs.com.

visual arts
GALLERY

The St. James Visual Arts Gallery

Those who are enthusiastically involved in various forms of visual art are encouraged to submit their work for display in the St. James visual Arts Gallery.

The Gallery's predominant theme is "Gratitude for God's Blessings." What, then, are you artists, great and small, thankful for? Clergy? Friends and family? Events? Purple mountain majesty above the fruited plain? Learning to whistle? What will you bring to St. James church's art ministry?

Your choices should also reflect the gallery's two rotating secondary themes, i.e., subjects and events associated with the months of November through April and those associated with the months of May through October. Both periods, one colder, one warmer, open all kinds of possibilities by which to express artistically, gratitude for God's blessings. If you are interested in displaying your art work, please talk with Mort Gilbert for further details.



The Ministry of Hospitality

Gathering for Coffee Hour after the 10am service is an important part of our life together here at St. James.

Hosting a Coffee Hour is an important ministry. It is more than just feeding people, it also helps people feel welcome in our church. Coffee hour gives us an opportunity to introduce ourselves to visitors and newcomers.

It gives us the chance to catch up with other members of our parish family. Breaking bread together--even in this very ordinary way--helps strengthen us as a parish and renew us as individuals.

Could you help host a Coffee Hour? Just one Sunday every so often and share in the hosting with another parish member! Please talk with Kelly Bennett, our Hospitality Chair, about how and when you can help.



Church Fair Committee Update

Yes, it's time to start planning for the 2015 Church Fair! Mark your calendars now: the next Amesbury Village of Church Fairs will be held on Saturday, November 7, 2015.

The Church Fair Committee will regroup during Coffee Hour on Sunday, January 18th to discuss what went well, what we want to change, and how often we are going to get together for "crafting" in upcoming months.

If you wish to be involved in the fair, please contact Committee co-chairs Dawn Schmidt

(dlschmidt2003@yahoo.com) or Liz Iacobucci
(liz@iacobucci.net).



Host Families for International High School Students

Sparhawk School in Amesbury has partnered with gphomestay's residential program! Together, they are offering an incredible opportunity to families in Amesbury and the surrounding areas. If you are interested in making a positive impact on the life of an international student and live within 30 minutes of Amesbury, you may want to consider becoming a host family. You may learn more at our website:
www.gphomestay.com

Host families will receive a monthly stipend of \$1200 and have access to ongoing support from local Residential Coordinators who can help with coordinating meeting your student upon arrival, keeping you connected with the school community, and mediating issues if they arise.

Students come with their own insurance and spending money and stay for the academic year. There are also short-term hosting opportunities available.

For more information, contact David Brown at 781-996-0429. If you are ready to take the next step and fill out an application please visit:

<http://www.gphomestay.com/Application4.html>

David Brown, Outreach Specialist

The Cambridge Institute of International Education
gphomestay

1025 Main St, Floor 3

Waltham, MA 02451

Direct Line: 781-996-0793. Fax: 909-614-8888.

Website: www.thecambridgeinstitute.org
or
www.gphomestay.com

THE 4th ANNUAL
PETTENGILL HOUSE, INC.
FUNDRAISER

At the Blue Ocean Music Hall, Salisbury, MA.
Friday, March 13, 2015 from 7pm to 11pm

For more information, for sponsorship information or to donate a silent auction item, please contact the Pettengill House directly at 978-463-8801; visit their website at www.pettengillhouse.org or send an e-mail to pettengillinfo@gmail.com.



February Food Donations

During the next few months of colder weather, ONT is in need of instant oatmeal, hearty soups, pasta sauce, pasta and peanut butter.

Also, personal items such as deodorant, mouthwash, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc., are always in need.

Click [here](#) to view ONT's website.

Let us give thanks for God's many blessings to us.

QUICK LINKS

[St. James Website!](#)

[Episcopal Diocese of
Massachusetts](#)

[Send us an E-mail](#)

Blessings and Peace to All!

The Rev. John Satula
