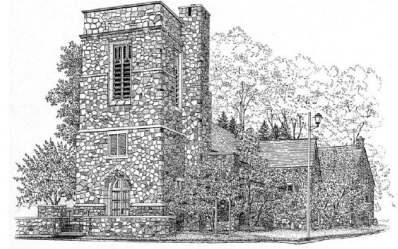


St. James Newsletter

January | February 2011



Annual Parish Meeting, Sunday January 30

Sunday, January 30, following the 10:00 a.m. worship service, St. James will hold its Annual Parish Meeting. All members of the parish are invited to attend. Reports will be given describing the ministry of the parish over the last year and three new vestry members will be elected.

“Seekers” Group to be Formed

In response to several comments at recent parish meetings, a new group will be forming, called “Seekers”. We will meet once a month in each others’ homes for a pot luck meal, similar to foyer groups, but there will also be a conversation revolving around a particular topic related to who we are as children of God. The meetings will last two hours, and

whether we meet Sunday afternoons, Saturdays for breakfast or brunch, or weekday evenings will be decided by the group, as will the topics of conversation. The group will be led by Betty Berlenbach. An organizational meeting will be held on Sunday morning, January 16, after the 10:00 a.m. service to choose a meeting time and to suggest topics. (When a group like this met in previous parishes, topics ranged from the latest book Betty was reading to Talking to children about God, death, and other difficult topics; to Spirituality and Sexuality; to biblical topics. The basic guiding principle was that the topic was something suggested by the group.) If there are more than twelve people, a second group will be formed, so that the groups stay small. If you have any questions, please talk to Betty. At 263-9345 or by email at lambfarm@tds.net — *Betty Berlenbach*

Foyer Groups

The Parish Life Committee will complete the formation of Foyer Groups in the next few weeks. There is still time to sign up if you would like to join a group. Each group will be headed by a member of the Parish Life Committee who will contact the members of their group for the first gathering in late January. Each group will decide when and

how often they would like to meet. Since we are a congregation located in many different areas, we have tried to put together proximate members to facilitate these get-togethers.

Our hope is for us all to have relaxed, fun gatherings that will provide an opportunity to get to know each other better away from our church setting. All ages are welcome, and we do hope you will consider participating if you have not signed up as yet.

Our Coffee Hours on Sunday also need host/hostesses. Please do sign up to be one.—*Kathy Rolph, Chair, Parish Life Committee*

An Introduction to Praying with Icons

On Saturday, February 26, Brother James Koester – Society of Saint John the Evangelist – will present a short history on icons, discuss their prayer-filled implications and potential, conduct a discussion and answer questions, and describe/show “icon writing,” which he practices with mastery.

The program will begin at 2:00 p.m. with coffee and cookies and will end no later than 4:30 pm. Brother James will preach on Sunday, February 27 at the 10:00 a.m. service.—*Wyman Rolph, Adult Education Committee*

**St. James Episcopal Church
On the Green
Woodstock, VT 05091
(802) 457-1727
www.stjameswoodstock.org**

**The Rev. Jane Barr, Interim Priest
janebarr@stjameswoodstock.org
802-457-1727, ext. 2 or 802-457-3124**

St. James Epiphanies

For we have observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage. (Matthew 2:2)

The sign for the wise men was the star that they observed in the heavens, the bright light of a star that they were willing to follow to the place where the baby lay. During this season of Epiphany, we like the wise men are to be observers, as we approach our life with God. As observers, we look for God's works of wondrous love all around us. The word "epiphany" means a revelation from God. Quite literally it means God showing up. As Christians we worship a God who shows up. If we are but able to watch and wait, God indeed shows up in the flesh even on our grayest of days.

I have been at St. James almost a year now and I have witnessed many epiphanies. Each Sunday, the children gather in the room behind the Great Hall or in my office and hear the stories of our faith from a loving teacher. The children's Christmas Pageant brings laughter and joy as the story of Jesus' birth is told once again. People dash in from the outside as cold hands are warmed and smiles connect with familiar faces. The singing of a hymn touches the hearts of all who are gathered. This is Epiphany.

Communion is taken to people who are unable to attend worship on Sunday morning, reminding them that they are connected to St. James even though they are unable to attend church. Transportation is given to those who cannot drive themselves to church. This is Epiphany.

During the week, committees and people gather to discuss parish business: worship, vestry, outreach, finance, education, stewardship, parish life. Members of the Altar Guild and Flower Guild prepare the sanctuary for worship. More than just another meeting or gathering to discuss the logistics of running the church, meetings are ministry. How do we celebrate our common life? How do we take care of one another? How do we care for and make use of God's house? How do we welcome the stranger? How do we serve our neighbors? Our ministry together is an outward and visible sign of Christ among us. This is Epiphany.

And in our workplace and at home, epiphanies abound, though we fail to notice them. Sometimes we take for granted those we love the most. This season, I invite you to pay attention to those most ordinary of places and those most ordinary people who show us the grace of God each and everyday: a spouse, a coworker, a child, a friend. Let us pray that we may in every encounter greet our God with both joy and gratitude.

Thank you all for your generosity in giving of your time this past year. It has been my great joy to share ministry with all of you.

Blessings in the New Year.—
Jane

Outreach Corner

Happy New Year from the Outreach Committee. The next Outreach Breakfast will be held on Sunday, February 13 at 9:00 a.m. Blueberry pancakes will be

the order of the day and Louise Fowler will work her magic to decorate the Parish Hall in a Valentine theme. There is no scheduled speaker, however Liz Hall will lead a knitting workshop.

Ongoing Outreach projects include the collection of toiletry items for the Haven. A collection basket is located in the church. Also we ask everyone to continue to remember the Woodstock Food Shelf. If everyone brought one can or non-perishable item to church each Sunday, we would have a full basket to deliver to the Food Shelf every week.

The next few outreach meeting we will have more discussions on what projects we will be doing in the next couple of years. Our hope is to focus on the bigger picture and looking forward as a parish. We also hope to discuss more "in reach" to work with those in need in our own Church family.

Please know that Outreach meetings are open to all. We invite you to attend our next meeting on Tuesday, February 1 at 4:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. If you are unable to attend in February, mark your calendar to attend another meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. Or feel free to contact any of the committee members: Bev and Scott Kinne, Louise Fowler, Dave Clark, Liz Hal, Karen Vitols, Katherine Webster or Betsey Caldwell to discuss new ideas for Outreach projects.—*Bev Kinne, Chair*

New Meeting Room Completed

The former Food Shelf Room has been given a complete overhaul and is ready to be used as a meeting room. In the fall George Calver enclosed the pipes on the ceiling and more recently a crew has been busy painting the walls and the floor. Thanks to the following painters: Betsey Caldwell, Candace Vandouris, Steve Hiller, George Calver, Tyler Harwell and Isabelle Bradley.



Candace Vandouris and Isabelle Bradley painting the floor of the new meeting room (formerly the Food Shelf Room).

A Message from the MDC

*God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.*

Your MDC has been at the task of discerning God's call for this parish for nearly half a year now. All of us would have liked the process to go more speedily than it has gone. But as I look at this month ahead, I sense that God has caused us to arrive at our current juncture precisely at this time.

*Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.*

By the end of this month, you will have the opportunity to read the profile of the parish that we have written. It's not the profile we would have written in August, prior to our parish-wide meetings.

It's not the profile we would have written in October, prior to looking at the results of the survey. Nor is it the profile we would have written in early December, prior to some of the tremendous discussions the Vestry has been having.

*His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.*

Our January 30 Annual Meeting will be one of the most exciting meetings in the history of St. James Church. Much has happened in the last two months, creating a vision and momentum for our future together that was hardly imaginable when we all began this journey together. We on your MDC are thrilled to be a part of this historic meeting, and I encourage you all to be in attendance.

*Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.*

Lead us, Lord. Lead us in Your righteousness. Make Your way plain before our face. Amen.

—Steve Swayne for the Ministry Discernment Committee

Outreach for Kids

Thanks for all who participated in the Holiday Crafts for Kids and Teens before Christmas. Much fun and crafting was had by all! Look in the weekly emails for a Midwinter and Valentine Crafts for Kids...coming soon!—Betsey Caldwell

Happy New Year

The turn of the New Year is a time for looking both forward to the future and back to the passing year. Looking forward, we now have 56 pledges for 2011, for a total of \$156,228! Your support and confidence in the work of St. James is greatly appreciated, thank you.

Looking back to a lovely autumn morning last September, you will recall that congregations at both services wrote personal messages on ribbons as a visual expression of the things we love about St. James. We answered the questions, "Why are you here at St. James?" and "What are you thankful for?" To help guide us in our plans for the future of St. James, all the ribbon messages are listed here.—*Candace Vandouris, Stewardship Chair*

- To pray.
- Joining together in Song.
- I am thankful for how welcome this parish makes me feel when I visit.
- The opportunity to thank God for this wonderful community.
- My wedding 70 years ago.
- The spiritual center for my family while we lived overseas – for baptism of our Brazilian born son and Puerto Rican born twins.
- As visitors, we are so thankful for seeing you all leading a great Godly example.
- To be part of a multi-generational community.
- I am thankful for singing, choir and lovely people ☺.
- Peace—Sanctuary—blessing of the Eucharist weekly.
- The stain glass windows.
- The choir and the Sunday School.
- The Outreach activities/efforts.
- The beauty –how this church was site of family weddings & baptisms.
- To worship, confirm my faith, partake in Eucharist.
- Fellowship. Music.
- Liturgy, Community & Music & this wonderful building.
- The beauty of this church and the service...peace...comfort.
- That all are welcome.
- Fellowship – the opportunity to serve God with others.
- Liturgy & Music.
- A good sense of community.
- The tradition is comforting & inspiring.
- I love the music – how peaceful it makes me feel!
- The participation and commitment of the congregation.
- Austerity and peacefulness of the sanctuary.
- The beautiful music.
- The loving accepting change now present since 2002 onward! For more welcoming to people.
- Coffee hour.
- My church is my everything and my support & love.
- I feel I have come home when I walk inside the Church. Liturgical Passion.
- St. James works hard for the community.
- St. James is a welcoming place for those visiting from out of town.
- The Fellowship of Diverse Spirits
- The choir coming back.
- Outreach Ministry Evangelism Support Music Love Family Friends Faith Serving Spirituality.
- Our Parish Family, Jane, Robert Lee, our choir & our services.
- The Peace I felt when I walked through the doors.
- The Liturgy Service Each Sunday
- Friendship and Music.
- The Service here on Sunday, helps me get through the week and serve the Lord. Very Inspiring.
- The beauty of the church, the choir and the presence of the Lord Jesus.
- To pray.
- I am thankful & grateful for the Music
- I thank God for our children & grandchildren everyday & for all the Love he has given to me in my Life!
- The place my life gets centered.
- Singing praises to our Lord.
- The chance to serve the needy & sick.
- I love the quiet moments.
- Singing in the choir!
- To meet a review with God, my blessings and responsibilities from and to Him.
- Liturgy Festival – great music!
- I feel so comfortable here!
- Experiencing and Feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Sense of community.
- Inspiration – comfort – friendship
- The flinty perseverance of the people.
- Friendship.
- I like the camaraderie and sharing the Spirit!
- The Sermons, the Music, the Value Compass & the Community of Living Saints.
- Being able to actively participate in ministry.
- Thanksgiving for a constant church home where my faith is helped to grow. Thanks for a loving church family.
- Convenient – don't have to drive far.
- Lasting friendship.
- The History & Tradition.
- I am thankful for Jane Barr, our choir, beauty everywhere, opportunity to belong, opportunity to serve.
- I love choir. I love Spirit. I love architecture.
- My family. God's grace blessed me, always. God bless St. James.

Feast of the Presentation

The Feast of the Presentation Holy Eucharist service will be held on Wednesday, February 2 at 6:00 p.m. An historical overview of the Feast is detailed below.

The Feast of the Presentation, often called Candlemas, commemorates the purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the presentation of Christ in the temple, which took place 40 days after his birth as Jewish law required. According to Mosaic law, a mother who had given birth to a boy was considered unclean for seven days. Also, she was to remain 33 days "in the blood of her purification." Luke tells us, quoting Exodus 13:2,12, that Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem because every firstborn child was to be dedicated to the Lord. They also went to sacrifice a pair of doves or two young pigeons, showing that Mary and Joseph were poor.



Once in the temple, Jesus was purified by the prayer of Simeon, in the presence of Anna the prophetess. Simeon, upon seeing the Messiah, gave thanks to the Lord, singing a hymn now called the *Nunc Dimittis*:

Lord, now you let your servant go in peace, your word has been fulfilled:

My own eyes have seen the salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of every people:

a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

Simeon told Mary, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against, (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." Simeon thus foreshadowed the crucifixion and the sorrows of Mary at seeing the death of her Son.

The name Candlemas comes from the activities associated with the feast. It came to be known as the *Candle Mass*. In the Western Church, a procession with lighted candles is the distinctive rite. According to post Vatican-II discipline, (if possible) the beeswax candles are to be blessed somewhere other than where the Mass is held. Often your local parish will hand out candles, or you may bring your own, to be blessed before the procession. These may be saved for later use in your home. After an antiphon, during which the candles held by the people are lighted, there is a procession into the church. During the procession to the church, the *Nunc Dimittis* is sung, with the

antiphon "Lumen ad revelationem" (Luke 2:32). This procession into the church for Mass commemorates Christ's entrance into the temple.

Franciscan Blessing

The Rt. Rev. Stewart Wood preached at St. James on December 15. Many have expressed interest in the blessing he gave, which is printed below.

A Four Fold Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart. Amen.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace. Amen.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy. Amen.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world so that you can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen.

+And the Blessings of God, who creates, redeems and makes holy be upon you and all you love and pray for this day and forever. Amen.

Thoughts from the Senior Warden

In the center of the small Cheshire village of Sandbach, where my mother lives in England, there is a picturesque cobbled square, and in the center of this square stand two ancient Saxon crosses. Intricately carved by the same hand from the soft sandstone of the nearby Derbyshire Hills, they have lost their cross members and the rich colors and jewels with which they were once adorned and now look more like obelisks. They date from a period that has left little architectural or written record, making the exact date of the crosses uncertain. The larger cross is carved with scenes from the life of Christ and the Gospels, and the smaller one commemorates the conversion to Christianity, in 634AD, of Peada, son of Penda the great pagan King of Mercia.

At this time in history, England was a heptarchy, divided into seven warring kingdoms. From time to time one king would rise to the position of a "bretwalda" or "wide ruler" who could exert dominance over other kings, but there was no concept of a single nation. Despite this fragmentation, Christianity was rapidly gaining dominance with the establishment of the great monastic communities of Jarrow and Lindisfarne in the north and the work of St. Augustine at Canterbury. Penda, described by the historian Bede as "a most warlike man," traced his lineage back to the Norse god, Woden (who gave his name to our Wednesday), and ruled the large kingdom of Mercia that stretched

across much of what would now be called the Midlands of England. He was victorious in battle, killing Oswald, the Christian king of Northumbria, and the most powerful king at that time. Oswald was considered a Christian martyr. The conversion of Mercia to Christianity was not the result of military conquest, however, but of political maneuvering. When Peada, one of Penda's sons wished to marry Aethelfred, the daughter of King Oswiu of Northumbria, the marriage was made contingent on his baptism and conversion to Christianity. Although Penda himself never converted, the majority of his kingdom did. Two of his daughters became abbesses and five became saints.

After the Norman Conquest of England, when William the Conqueror made his survey of his new kingdom in the Domesday Book of 1086, he found not only the crosses at this site but also a church and a priest. In 1585 William Smith, the Rouge Dragon Pursuivant of Arms of Elizabeth I describes two "anciente crosses...of stone...with certain images and writings on them graven [standing] hard together "Elizabeth I granted a license for a weekly market and an annual fair on the cobbles, both of which are held to this day. It is interesting to imagine these crosses at the very center of Elizabethan village life. The crosses did not fare so well in the 17th century. Puritan iconoclasts chopped up the stones and scattered them over a wide area. However, when the Puritan frenzy had run its course, the good citizens of Sandbach re-assembled the pieces of the

crosses, reclaiming one from the wall of a well and another from the front step of a cottage and the crosses were re-erected in their original positions. A more insidious threat came in the late 20th century as part of a movement that sought to preserve ancient monuments by moving them in to museums and replacing them with replicas. It was, however, decided that the crosses had always stood in the square, as a testimony to the faith of our ancestors, and that there they should remain. The replicas were relegated to a rather ignominious spot by the recycling bins.

It may seem to the casual observer that I pay scant attention to these monuments as I rush by, but they actually mean a great deal to me. They remind me that our Episcopal church has endured. It has born witness to

(continued on next page)



*Sandbach crosses in Sandbach, England.
Photo copyright Bob Harvey.*

Senior Warden *(continued)*

the acquisition and dismantling of a great empire and the rise of other empires. It has weathered the storms of Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the turmoil of the break with Rome. It has adapted and been flexible, holding firm to what is essential to our faith and traditions, while being open to change when it was needed. It is popular to talk of our culture as “post-Christian,” but I’m not so sure that we would have felt confident of the future of the church when the pagan Vikings were sacking the newly-founded monastery at Lindisfarne or when Mary I was burning Archbishop Cranmer on the Broad in Oxford. We have always had to fight for our faith and will always have to do so. The crosses also remind me of the importance of our Christian monuments, our churches and cathedrals, lovingly cherished through the ages as tangible witnesses to our faith and as places of sanctuary and transformation.

Two crosses, two stories: one temporal and one eternal. Today the runic inscriptions are indecipherable, except to scholars, and even the name of the feared King Penda has faded into obscurity. However, the image of the baby in a manger, wedged tightly between two oxen, speaks across the millenniums with the timeless message of hope and salvation that we have just celebrated in our own small village so many miles away.—*Isabelle Bradley*

Treasurer’s Message

Thanks to everyone who already completed their 2010 pledge. Also thank you to all who have made pledges for 2011. For those who requested envelopes, they are on the table to the right as you enter the church. If I missed your request, please let me know so that I can get envelopes to you. If you asked for envelopes but now don’t need them, please let me know that, too.

Although December figures are not complete at this time, they will be in the annual report along

with the 2011 budget that the Vestry approved. That report will be available prior to the Annual Meeting on January 30. I encourage you to let me know what questions you have about any of the financial reports and also to attend the annual meeting.

The Operating Account Profit and Loss figures below are for November 2010. The profit shown for November will decrease for December due mainly to fuel oil costs and the need to restrict the bequest income. The bequests have been designated to pay for work on the stained glass windows, which will be billed in 2011.—*Karen Vitols, Treasurer*

	Jan - Nov 2010	2010 Budget
Operating Income		
Plate	17,164.62	20,500.00
Pledges	129,526.89	130,000.00
Endowment Funds For Operations	35,000.00	35,000.00
Interest On Operational Account	6.16	10.00
Undesignated Income (rent, weddings, etc.)	2,550.91	8,400.00
Undesignated Legacies & Bequests	1,750.00	
Donor Designated-Operations (flowers)	3,495.00	3,000.00
Total Operating Income	189,493.58	196,910.00
Operating Expense		
Music, Flowers & Altar Supplies	3,831.15	6,200.00
Education Programs	195.68	400.00
Advertising & Hospitality	755.43	400.00
Discernment & Clergy Search	1,526.35	2,000.00
Cost of Clergy	50,718.45	57,500.00
Rector's Business Expense	637.59	600.00
Supply Clergy	0.00	1,400.00
Lay Employees	46,795.97	50,100.00
Contract Services	13,186.81	12,750.00
Office Expenses	2,804.19	2,850.00
Computer & Copier	1,104.41	1,000.00
Telephone	2,030.74	1,700.00
Utilities (fuel oil, electric, etc.)	19,105.87	19,150.00
Repair & Maintenance Supplies	731.66	813.00
Insurance (Bldg & WC)	4,955.00	4,850.00
Convention	266.00	250.00
Vestry Expenses	300.00	300.00
Miscellaneous Expense	409.99	100.00
Diocesan Assessment	31,668.12	34,547.00
Total Operating Expense	181,318.01	196,910.00
Net Profit or Loss	8,175.57	0.00

St James Newsletter

January/February 2011

St. James Episcopal Church
On the Green
Woodstock, VT 05091

(802) 457-1727

email:

office@stjameswoodstock.org

www.stjameswoodstock.org

January and February Calendar

Tues. January 11	Parish Life Committee Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
Wed. January 12	Annual reports due
Tues. January 18	Vestry meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Thurs. January 20	Worship Committee meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Sun. January 30	Annual Meeting, 11:00 a.m.
Tues. February 1	Outreach meeting 4:00 p.m.
Wed. February 2	Holy Eucharist, 6:00 p.m.
Sun. February 6	Family Sunday
Thurs. February 10	Children's Education Committee meeting 2:00 p.m.
Sun. February 13	Outreach Breakfast, 9:00 a.m.
Tues. February 15	Vestry meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Sat. February 16	Praying with Icons, Brother James Koester, 2:00 p.m.