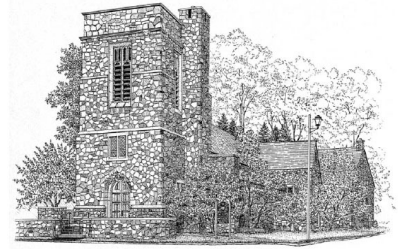


# St. James Newsletter

November 2010



## Update from the MDC

Thank you all again for your willingness to tell the members of the Ministry Discernment Committee your thoughts, hopes, and prayers for the parish by filling out the questionnaire we made available. The response has been overwhelming: over 60 of you submitted a questionnaire. That's more people than attended either of our forums in August and September. We are grateful and humbled.

We are also eager to share with you what you all had to say. So on Sunday morning, November 14, we invite you to join MDC and the Outreach Committee for breakfast between the services and a short presentation on the results from the survey. We think you'll be both comforted and surprised by who we are and where we, individually and collectively, want to head. There

will be time to ask us all questions about the process, and we'll have more to share at that time about our projected timeline in completing our work.

As I said in my last report, our principal work at this time is the writing of our parish profile. It would be easy to fill in blanks and dash off a description of who we are and what we do. By no means do I feel we are dragging our feet. But at the same time, understanding who we are at St. James at this particular passage of our life together is far from easy, so we are working deliberately to make certain we listen to you and to God about our future.

I hope to tell you, in my December report, that our profile is complete and on its way out to the wider world. Until then, I invite you to join us on the 14<sup>th</sup> to hear what you all think of our parish. It promises to be an exciting breakfast!

And, of course: continue to pray. We sense your support on our behalf. And we delight in the realization that God is in our midst, and not just in the midst of the MDC. "Where two or three are gathered ..."

Yours in His service and for the MDC.—*Steve Swayne, Chair*

## New Senior Warden Elected

At their October meeting, the Vestry elected Isabelle Bradley as Senior Warden. Isabelle will replace Bob O'Donnell who served the church as Senior Warden in 2009 and 2010.

## Adult Education Fall Lecture Series Continues

"The Rectors of St. James" will be the topic of the November Adult Education History Lecture Series. The discussion will be held on Sunday, November 21 at 11:30 a.m. and will be led by the Rev. Jane Barr.

## Family Service November 21

On Sunday, November 21, we will have a Family Service at 10:00 a.m. Our children and youth will read the lessons, usher and acolyte. There will be a children's homily. All families are encouraged to attend.

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**St. James Episcopal Church**  
**On the Green**  
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## From the Interim Priest

In November, we celebrate my favorite holiday, Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving Holiday is an American moment – an odd juxtaposition of religion and nationalism when the sacred and secular come together. The act of giving thanks is inherently holy. It changes us, softens us, warms us; it gives us perspective because it assumes something about the giftedness of life itself. It is a day when gratitude takes the place of everything else.

The fact that God has always been about seeking to be in deeper and deeper relationship with us is an occasion of unending thanksgiving. One of the names attributed to Jesus, about which we shall read and sing in the season of Advent, is Emmanuel — “God with us.” God’s being in relationship with us startles me into thanksgiving. By loving us, God opens us up to love others and to be loved by them. I am thankful that all tables that share goodness and hope and renewal flow from a central table in our lives, the one around which we worship again and again. We call this liturgical celebration the GREAT THANKSGIVING; and, it is not just for one morning a year but for every day and every moment. We gather in worship first and forever to give thanks; the word “Eucharist” means thanksgiving. Every time we gather for worship at St. James we are nourished at a table that is bounteous. There is always enough and more that can be added, at a table that is holy – ordinary elements made by our

prayers to be vehicles of particular grace.

The month of November leads us into a change of seasons in our liturgical calendar. The long liturgical season of Pentecost concludes and we prepare to begin the Christian year with Advent on November 28. While Thanksgiving is a day when we remember and give thanks for all that God has given us, Advent is meant to remind us that we look ahead. Advent means coming, and we look ahead to the future and God’s continuing presence in our lives.

During the month ahead, may we all reflect on God’s many blessings so richly bestowed upon us. Thank you for supporting St. James with your financial pledges, with your presence at worship and celebrations, and with your talents and time.—*Jane Barr*

## Stewardship Committee Update

Thank you to all who have pledged to St. James for 2011! Last Sunday was our In-gathering Day, the official deadline to turn in pledges for next year. But not to worry if you missed it—we will still happily accept new pledges! I will let you know next month the number of pledges we received, and the total amount pledged.

I also want to thank all of you for supporting St. James in all the many ways you contribute to our church community. Welcoming visitors is important—one of our ribbon comments was: “St. James

is a welcoming place for those visiting from out of town.” Another comment from the ribbons read: “I feel I have come home when I walk inside the Church. Liturgical Passion.” This is a gracious thank you to those who present our services each week, as well as to those who spend their time and expertise in maintaining our lovely sanctuary.

Two other ribbon writers mentioned our beautiful music, a gift from Robert Lee and all our singers, and our sense of community, a gift from everyone with a smile and a helping hand. I’ll quote one last ribbon, one that sums up the writer’s appreciation of “The sermons, the music, the value compass and the community of living saints.” Along with this writer, I feel very fortunate to be here at St. James now, a part of this warm and inspiring congregation.—*Candace Vandouris, Stewardship Chair*

## Daylight Savings Ends November 7

Set your clocks back one hour. You get an extra hour of sleep on Sunday, November 7.

## Outreach Corner

Our November Outreach Breakfast will be on Sunday, the 14<sup>th</sup> and we invite all to attend. Our guest speaker will be members of the MDC who will discuss the recent parish survey. We are planning the 2011 breakfast dates, which will be the second Sunday of each month.

The Dove Program will be back on November 7. We work with the HIV/HCV Resource Center (formerly known as ACoRN) to build a bridge between the HIV/Hepatitis C clients in the Upper Valley and the people of St James. The clients of the Resource Center provide us with “wish lists” of non-perishable food offerings and household items and St. James members purchase the items for them. Please pick up a “Dove”, sign it out, and do a little shopping for our friends in need.

The Outreach Committee is offering a wonderful free craft class. Please plan to join us on November 13 and November 20

from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Bring a sandwich and join the fun. All supplies provided.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 2 at 4:00 p.m. in the parish hall. We will look at various organizations and projects to use the year's remaining budgeted funds.— *Bev Kinne, Chair*

## Foyer Meals

Shortly after moving to Woodstock in 2002, the Foyer Dinners at St. James were organized and I was fortunate to be included in a marvelous group. Though I had friends in Woodstock, it was the Foyer Dinners that I shared with Laura and Sherman Kent, Isabelle and Bill Bradley, June Wilson and her boyfriend, that really brought me into the St. James “fold”. A bonding in my mind that took place among us and that I still feel is there today.

In January we will again form Foyer Meals; offering them at breakfast, lunch or dinner. The meals are to be simple and there is no agenda; just good fellowship among church members. A blending of the “eight o'clockers” and the “ten o'clockers” is planned, with groups ranging from six to eight people. Sustenance and companionship are our only requirements!

Please plan on becoming to be part of one of these groups and enjoy the fellowship that I remember with such fondness. A sign-up sheet will be located in the hallway or you may call the church office to sign up, 457-1727.—*Beverly F. Ritchie*

## Bog Chapel on Thanksgiving Day

Come to Bog Chapel on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 25 at noon, for a half hour of thankfulness. We will pray in the rain, snow or sunshine about gladness and about the healing to our planet that our thanksgivings initiate and support.

The Bog Chapel is located at 4169 Cloudland Rd. in Woodstock/Pomfret. It is the third house on the right coming from River Rd. Look for a metal house with a Coke sign.

Children, pets, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. are welcome. The service is one half hour only. Plan your cooking accordingly!—*Jane Wolfe*

## Member Spotlight

Joan and David Blackwell have been members of St. James for nearly 20 years and their years of service and dedication to this church are significant.

Jo and David were both raised as Presbyterians, Jo in Ohio and Dave in Maryland. When a company transfer took their family to Minnesota in 1954, they were moving into Lutheran country. Many of their friends and neighbors were Lutherans, and eventually they joined the local Lutheran congregation. In subsequent moves they transferred to Lutheran congregations in Summit, NJ, Pennington, NJ, Longmeadow, MA, and Hanover, NH. They also were active in the United Church of Christ in Longmeadow, MA, during the time when their older son was active in the UCC Pilgrim Fellowship.

After they retired in 1987, they joined the Lutheran Church in Hanover, but they were anxious to have their church home in the community where they lived, so they started attending St. James. They were attracted by Donald and Marcia Boyer as priests, and by the Episcopal religion. The liturgy and theology were very similar to the Lutheran liturgy and theology and St. James became the natural place for their church home.

In 1998 Dave became a member of the Vestry. His background working with financial institutions made it natural for him to be active in the financial activities of the Vestry. He worked with others on the Vestry in the preparation of budgets and he served on the stewardship,

budget and finance committees. He was on the Vestry during the last Discernment period. Dave is often a lector and an usher at the 8:00 a.m. service.

Both Jo and Dave worked for many years on the St. James Fair. Jo is a regular Coffee Hour host, has also been active in King's Daughters, with its unofficial connection to St. James, and is a long-time volunteer and supporter of the Woodstock Food Shelf.

The Blackwells now spend the winter months in Florida where they are seasonal members of St. Lukes in Port Salerno. Both of their sons live in the Hartford, CT area. Their plan for the future is

to sell their house in Woodstock and move into a retirement facility closer to their sons and families.

## Budget vs. Actual

The figures shown below are the 2010 Actual Operating Income and Expenses through September 30 compared with the 2010 Annual Operating Budget. It should be noted that this year's budgeted expenses are at least \$40,000 lower than the past few years and most of the categories are staying within their limits.—

*Karen Vitols, Treasurer*

	<u>Jan - Sep 2010</u>	<u>2010 Budget</u>
Operating Income		
Plate	14,360.32	20,500.00
Pledges	112,664.89	130,000.00
Endowment Funds For Operations	27,000.00	35,000.00
Interest On Operational Account	4.51	10.00
Undesignated Income (rent, weddings, etc.)	2,419.91	8,400.00
Undesignated Legacies & Bequests	1,750.00	
Donor Designated-Operations (flowers)	3,070.00	3,000.00
Total Operating Income	<u>161,269.63</u>	<u>196,910.00</u>
Operating Expense		
Music, Flowers & Altar Supplies	3,203.58	6,200.00
Education Programs	195.68	400.00
Advertising & Hospitality	723.08	400.00
Discernment & Clergy Search	1,526.35	2,000.00
Cost of Clergy	39,623.22	58,100.00
Supply Clergy	0.00	1,400.00
Lay Employees	38,961.49	50,100.00
Contract Services	10,912.89	12,750.00
Office Expenses	2,136.26	2,850.00
Computer & Copier	740.62	1,000.00
Telephone	1,687.93	1,700.00
Utilities (fuel oil, electric, etc.)	14,996.94	19,150.00
Repair & Maintenance Supplies	719.67	813.00
Insurance (Bldg & WC)	4,955.00	4,850.00
Convention	216.00	250.00
Vestry Expenses	300.00	300.00
Miscellaneous Expense	409.99	100.00
Diocesan Assessment	25,910.28	34,547.00
Total Operating Expense	<u>147,218.98</u>	<u>196,910.00</u>
	<u>14,050.65</u>	<u>0.00</u>

## Mercy

Here's a word we don't use too much. Chances are we don't even really know what it means. A religious word, it doesn't figure in our everyday secular vocabulary. Lord, have mercy. What does that mean? We hardly know.

It's ok that we don't really know what it means, but in contemporary usage, it means kindness - with understanding, compassion and commitment thrown in. HOWEVER, why don't we just use "kindness" to get a better sense of the meaning: Lord, have mercy: Lord, be kind. We have a sense of what that means, and we are grateful. Kind is good. Kind is something we can be.

This is much easier than "mercy." Mercy sounds kind of stuck up: I was merciful to the person in the park. I was kind to the person in the park sounds better. Of course we would never say either of these things out loud, because we've been brought up to never say Yes! to any of the good stuff, only to say My bad! to the bad stuff, followed by Lord, have mercy; Lord, be kind. In our culture, it is perfectly ok to say I was unkind, and but totally No! to say, "I was kind/I was merciful."

So, here's the deal for the year coming up: How about contributing to a massive culture change and a massive contribution to the kindness of this world? How about learning to identify your ability to drink in joy and reach out in kindness. How about saying occasionally, first to yourself and then to

others, I was kind today. I did a kind thing.

Heretical? Culturally, yes, spiritually, no. To admit to positive acts of kindness is not to be arrogant. Quite the opposite, it is absolutely humble. How so? True kindness to another is a response to the joy within you. It is not the exercise of an obligation or a duty; it is not manipulative, calculating or "righteous." It is your holy heart reaching out to another. It is a heart smile, a heart touch, a heart embrace, a heart whisper that says "I know you, my sister, my brother, and I am glad we are together if only for an instant."

This will take courage and practice. We are well trained to be pitiful, poorly trained to be brothers and sisters who serve each other with gladness, confidence and joy. What a new year's resolution: to be kind and to admit to it. We'll never have a kind world without your help; we'll never have a kind world without your coming out of the closet and saying, Yes, Lord, today I was kind. Try it. You won't drop dead, and God has

seen everything so if you bungle it, so what? Get up and try again.

Let's take a go at a kind world. Let's take a go at saying, "Thank you, Lord, for letting me be kind." Let's take a go at standing up for the great and holy people God has created us to be. Don't worry, you'll have plenty of opportunity to be pitiful; but don't let the pity-you rain on your kind self. Thank you, Lord, as I live kindly in this world!—*Jane Wolfe*



*St. James Episcopal Church*

**\*\*NEW\*\* CRAFT CLASSES**

**FREE Cloth Painting  
and Design Class**

November 13 and 20, 2010 • 10 am - 2 pm, Bring A Sandwich!  
St. James Church, Woodstock, VT

*Come and explore how to make your very own Floor Cloth. All supplies provided.*

**For more information call Liz at 457-4854 or Bev at 457-1078**

# *St James Newsletter*

*November 2010*

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## **November Calendar**

Tuesday, Nov. 2	Outreach Committee Meeting, 4:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 3	Ministry Discernment Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 4	Budget Committee Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
Sunday, Nov. 7	Ministry Discernment Committee Meeting 12:00 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 13	Outreach Committee Craft Class, 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Nov. 14	Outreach Breakfast, 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 16	Vestry Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 13	Outreach Committee Craft Class, 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Nov. 21	Family Sunday, 10:00 a.m. Adult Ed Forum, 11:30
Thursday, Nov. 25	Thanksgiving Service at Bog Chapel, 12:00 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 28	First Sunday in Advent