

the st. james



February 2008

Volume 8 Number 2

Sunday Schedule

8:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I
9:00 am Adult Education
10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II
11:00 am Sunday School
11:15 am Coffee & Fellowship
11:45 am Children's Choir

Sunday, Feb. 3rd
Bishop Powell visits
Baptism and Confirmations

Wednesday, Feb. 6
Ash Wednesday
12:15 p.m. - Holy Eucharist
7:30 p.m. - Holy Eucharist

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Rector's Message

Dear Saints of James,

As I was glancing through the Roanoke Times several weeks ago, an article caught my eye and my imagination. The woman writer shared her experience of being caught up in the commercialism and over consumption of Christmas and she had vowed to return to a former discipline of not bringing anything into her house that was not absolutely necessary, for a whole year. No impulse buying for her, no justification of buying something because she wanted it, deserved it, could afford it, might not find it again, or had a new credit card in her purse. She challenged herself and she challenged us to not buy and bring home anything that was not absolutely essential, for a whole year. Can you accept that challenge? I am thinking that I may take up this charge, beginning as a Lenten discipline, and I may even join the virtual community of the Church of Stop Shopping.

Are you familiar with the Church of Stop Shopping? Founded by the Reverend Billy, he and the Stop Shopping Gospel Choir with the Not Buying It Band, are on the road, traveling with a message about the take over of commercialism. The Church's statement of belief is this: "Reverend Billy and the Stop Shopping Gospel Choir believe that Consumerism is overwhelming our lives. The corporations want us to have experiences only through their products. Our neighborhoods, "commons" places like stoops and parks and streets and libraries, are disappearing into the corporatized world of big boxes and chain stores. But if we "back away from the product" - even a little bit, well then we Put The Odd Back In God! The supermodels fly away and we're left with our original sensuality. So we are singing and preaching for local economies and real - not mediated through products -- experience. We like independent shops where you know the person behind the counter or at least - you like them enough to share a story. We ask that local activists who are defending themselves against super malls, nuke plants, gentrification -- call us and we'll come and put on our "Fabulous Worship!" Remember children... Love is a Gift Economy"

Bill Talen, better known as Reverend Billy, has a message with a mission and he travels the nation to save us from our spendthrift selves. Reverend Billy unabashedly embraces the theatricality that has long been a tradition in certain religious circles. He's got the pompadour, the ringing locution and the scarlet-faced intensity to match any televangelist, but his sermon is delivered not in the church but in Wal-Marts and mega-malls, where nonplused shoppers are harangued about the upcoming "Shopocalypse" being brought on by our endless purchasing and credit card habits. Not everyone is amused, of course,

St. James Episcopal Church

Clergy:

The Rev. Susan E. Bentley, Rector
seb@rev.net

Staff:

Mrs. Connie Bierly, Secretary
Mr. William Capps, Choir Director
Mrs. Sharon Capps, Organist
Mrs. Donna Park & Ms. Sandi Hudson,
Sextons

The Connection:

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The St. James Vestry:

Senior Warden, Doris Mattox, 992-3088,
Junior Warden, Maile Armstrong, 947-5016
† Clerk, Lynn Wright, 992-5615
† Treasurer, Matt Cordani, 362-3016,
† Ass't. Treasurer, Avis Aheron, 774-0010
† Rec. Treasurer, Bob Bird, 366-0996
Helen Campbell, 489-4536, Jed Doak, 354-4164,
Butch Eanes, 992-5195, Chuck Cohen, 366-3178,
Michael Kennedy, 389-1003
Bob Ostrom, 265-3771., Peter Hannon, 986-0778
(† - Not Vestry members)

Standing Committees

Christian Education:

Liturgy: Helen Campbell, 489-4536
Membership: Pat Ball, 725-8730
Outreach: Ray Kasey, 562-1956
Parish Life: Tricia Champion, 563-9554
Property: Maile Armstrong, 947-5016
Stewardship: Avis Aheron, 774-0010
Finance: Glen Lake, 345-7550 &
Gail Fields, 265-0786

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#### Episcopal Church Women:

Sharon Capps, 362-8016

#### Daughters of the King:

Esther Williamson, 366-3177

Talen has been banned from Starbucks and Disney properties everywhere, and frankly, you wouldn't want to run into him if you were trying to shop — but the three dozen members of the Church of Stop Shopping Gospel Choir do make it go down a bit easier.

I am hoping that his movie, "What Would Jesus Buy?" will come to the Grandin Theatre and we can have another parish Faith and Film outing to view the film. Reverend Billy is quite outrageous, but he has a very important message and he, with the choir and band, are spreading the Gospel. We may be inspired as we see more of his work. As Rev Billy says, "We like action. We'll lead a parade, energize a picket line in a Wal-Mart parking lot, sing at a fundraiser to save a town from a super mall". For more information on the church of Stop Shopping; see [www.revilly.com/invite/](http://www.revilly.com/invite/)

As you are thinking about your Lenten discipline and what you might give up or take on for Lent this year, remember the Reverend Billy, and see if you might commit to not buying anything that is not essential.

SEB+

### Bishop Powell's Visitation

Bishop Powell will be at St. James on **Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>** for his regular parish visitation. It will be a day of celebration at St. James, as we gather as a community of faith with our Bishop. Mark your calendars and plan to be a part; the schedule for the day is as follows:

|          |                                                                                                    |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00 am  | Confirmation service with one adult<br>Confirmand: Susan Tolliver                                  |
| 9:00 am  | Parish Forum with Bishop Powell, in the nave                                                       |
| 10:00 am | Baptism of Mariah Cordani &<br>Confirmations for Denise Smerecki,<br>Rachel Ostrom, and Ryan Kovac |
| 11:30 am | Pot Luck luncheon honoring our<br>Bishop & Dorothy Powell                                          |

**Each family should plan to bring food for our luncheon.**

### The Stewardship Corner

All things come from you, O Lord, and of your own have we given you.

+  
+ +  
Time + + Talent  
+ +  
+ + + + +  
Treasure

**Pledged and Unpledged Support:** In December 2007, we closed out the year in good fashion, providing \$14,332 in pledged and unpledged support, contrasted to the budgeted amount of \$10,007 for the month, or a variance of plus \$4,325. Moreover, we ended the financial year having given \$126,523 in pledged and unpledged support, contrasted to the \$121,198 we said we would give. In other words, in 2007 we gave \$5,325 more than we said we would. For 2008, our pledges have now come to over \$132,000, or approximately \$10,500 more than we pledged in 2007.

**St. James Cycle of Prayer:** In February we pray for the Membership Committee and all newcomers. We give special thanks for the work of the committee members to enhance the experience of visitors and newcomers and to incorporate them into our church family.

#### Other Ways to Support St. James Parish:

Remember that we can support our parish by purchasing from Kroger and using **Kroger cards** that we can purchase for \$5.00 from Dorothy Herndon. Then "load 'em up" and 5% of our purchase amounts will be returned to St. James. Also remember our **Adopt-a-Day** program, in which we can honor any day of the year with a gift of \$33.00 (down from 2007 because our pledges are greater). We can also be contributing to **St. James's Endowment Fund** and include St. James in our **wills**.

**A Talk with God:** I really don't do this often enough, but a few days ago I had a real heart-to-heart talk with God. (You don't have to be a televangelist to talk with God, or to reveal the conversation.) It went this way:

*Me:* Father, I have heard for a long time that we should "...take no thought for the morrow, what we shall eat, or what we shall wear, but consider the lilies of the field. They neither toil nor sweat, but even angels in all their glory are not arrayed as one of them." I take that to mean that you'll be taking care of everyone, and they don't need to worry so much about material things.

*God:* That's right.

*Me:* But Father, I work for a non-profit agency that sees many people who obviously don't have what they need simply to exist in this world, and yet you say that they will be OK. How can you say that? How are they to be cared for?

*God:* Remember the awful story of the man who was trying to prove that I don't exist, and he said that if there is a God, why doesn't he strike me right here, right now? Just then, a man walked up and clipped him a good one on the chin and said, "God was busy doing more important things, so He sent me."

*Me:* You mean, rather than providing miracles of food falling from the sky and clothes materializing out of the blue, you're expecting US to care for them?

*God:* Exactly. You are responsible, and you will be held accountable.

*Me:* Me??

*God:* Yes, you...and all the others who have means to help. Don't you remember what Jesus told you? "I was naked, and you clothed me. I was hungry and you fed me. I was in prison and you visited me. Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me." He also said, "Inasmuch as you have **not** done it for the least of these, you have **not** done it for me. When you come to me and say, "Lord, Lord," God will say, "depart from me, I never knew you."

*Me:* But...

*God:* You are responsible, and you will be held accountable.

*Me:* But...

*God:* You are responsible, and you will be held accountable. End of conversation.

### Shrove Tuesday

Our annual pre-Lent Pancake Supper on Shrove Tuesday, will be held February 5th from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. Historically Shrove Tuesday was a time to party and get one's fill of all the things that would be given up during the season of Lent. A supper of pancakes became a tradition in some places as that was a way to use up all the fat that would not be

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used during Lent. Our pancake supper at St. James is a time to gather as a faith community to share in the communion of eating together, a time that former members often join us, and a time for visitors to come and be among us. Typically, the proceeds from the supper are given for outreach needs in the community and usually the Vestry designates the Pancake Supper funds for the Williamson Road Clergy Association Emergency Relief Fund.

Tickets for the Pancake Supper are \$5.00 for adults, \$4.00 for children, or family discount of \$7.00 for two children, and \$9.00 for 2 adults. Tickets will be available for sale on Sunday, February 3rd and at the door.

Tim Buchholtz will be coordinating this event and needs help with set up, cooking, serving, and clean up. If you can help, please contact Tim at 366-5779 or at [Johntbuc@aol.com](mailto:Johntbuc@aol.com).

### Thank You

Dear Saints of James,

I want to thank all of you who signed up to pray for me for my second amputation revision on December 10 of last year. The surgery was a success in solving some "mechanical" and functional problems as well as smoothing out the humerus bone and burying it under muscle. Prayers really do affect the outcome and give me peace of mind, so I do appreciate them, your thoughtfulness, and your continued support.

Thanks again,  
Donna Frost

### DOK

The Shepherdesses of St. James will hold a 'make-up' meeting after church on February 10<sup>th</sup>. This should be a short meeting so please plan to attend. We need to schedule our meetings for the rest of the year.

The Province III Annual Assembly and Retreat will be held on Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup> in Valley Forge, PA. The Retreat Theme is The Holy Spirit and You. More information will be available soon.

Don't forget that donations to the Self Denial Fund are due now. Our treasurer, Gail Fields, will e-mail the check to the National Office in February.

### Lenten Book Study

The Lenten Book study will be Christianity for the Rest of Us, How the Neighborhood Church Is Transforming the Faith, by Diana Butler Bass. For decades the accepted wisdom has been that America's mainline Protestant churches are in decline, eclipsed by evangelical mega-churches. Church and religion expert Diana Butler Bass wondered if this was true, and this book is the result of her extensive, three-year study of centrist and progressive churches across the country. Her surprising findings reveal just the opposite—that many of the churches are flourishing, and they are doing so without resorting to mimicking the mega-church, evangelical style. Christianity for the Rest of Us describes this phenomenon and offers a how-to approach for Protestants eager to remain faithful to their tradition while becoming a vital spiritual community. As Butler Bass delved into the rich spiritual life of various Episcopal, United Methodist, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and Lutheran churches, certain consistent practices—such as hospitality, contemplation, diversity, justice, discernment, and worship—emerged as core expressions of congregations seeking to rediscover authentic Christian faith and witness today.

The books are for sale in the Parish Hall for \$12.00/each; checks can be made out to "St. James Discretionary Account". The study group will meet on Wednesday afternoons from 3:45 pm until 5:00 pm during Lent, beginning February 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Weather Alert Reminder

Now that we are in the midst of winter, there may be times when it is not advisable to hold services or parish programs for safety reasons. The Rector and the Wardens will make a decision about whether or not to have services, and the decision will be announced on channel 10, and channels 7 and 13 if possible. If you have a leadership role in the Sunday service and are unable to come due to weather conditions, and the service is not cancelled, just call the church and leave a message on the answering machine. The weather can vary greatly throughout the Roanoke Valley, so check Channel 10 for cancellation information and use your best judgment about attending. . Our Good Shepherd Atrium follows the school closings for Roanoke City and County.

## Reaching Out...Outreach

It's the end of the year, actually well past it, and the Outreach Committee thought that you would like to know where your benevolence offerings went, along with where the committee sent the money that the vestry entrusted us with this past year.

We were given a budget of \$700.00, and a job to assign worthy recipients to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday offerings of each month. When the loose plate offering was accepted on those Sundays, the money went to that recipient, but if the plate offering did not total \$70.00, then Outreach added enough money from our budget to make it \$70.00. We also gave gifts based on appeals made to the committee throughout the year. .

In 2007, along with your generous donations to our loose plate offerings, the Outreach Committee dispersed \$3,426.24. The breakdown is as follows:

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Rescue Mission              | \$ 70.00   |
| TAP                         | \$ 70.00   |
| Bradley Free Clinic         | \$ 70.00   |
| Phoebe Needles              | \$ 70.00   |
| St James Youth Scholarships | \$1,051.03 |
| Helping Hands               | \$ 70.00   |
| UTO (Both campaigns)        | \$ 876.29  |
| West End Center             | \$ 70.00   |
| Roanoke Jain Ministry       | \$ 70.00   |
| Transitional Living Center  | \$ 107.10  |
| RAM House (2 gifts)         | \$ 170.00  |
| St Paul College             | \$ 147.00  |
| Second Harvest Food Bank    | \$ 70.00   |
| Pastoral Counseling         | \$ 70.00   |
| Episcopal Relief Fund       | \$ 100.00  |
| Stop Hunger Now             | \$ 100.00  |
| Williamson Rd. Relief       | \$ 244.82  |

Keep in mind these numbers do not include anything that ECW, Daughters of the King, or any other organization within the St James family undertakes, so consider how broad our true outreach is. Thank you so much for your incredible support of our total outreach at St James

## Adult Education Evolution Sunday

Next year on February 12, 2009 it will be the bicentennial of the birth of Charles Darwin. "Evolution Weekend," February 8-10 this year, provides an opportunity for discussion and reflection on the relationship between religion and science. One important goal is to elevate the quality of the discussion on this topic - to move beyond soundbytes. A second goal is to demonstrate that religious people from many faiths and locations understand that evolution is solidly scientific and presents no danger to their faith. Finally, as with The Clergy Letter, which has now been signed by more than 11,000 members of the Christian clergy in the United States, Evolution Weekend makes it clear that those claiming that people must choose between religion and science are creating a false dichotomy and that religion and science are not adversaries (see [http://www.butler.edu/clergyproject/rel\\_evolution\\_sun.htm](http://www.butler.edu/clergyproject/rel_evolution_sun.htm))

In this series on "Evolution and the Continuation of Life," for Adult Education at St. James, Dr. Michael Bentley will follow up on the ECUSA *Catechism of Creation* series he presented last year and delve more deeply into the (apparent) conflict between science and religion over evolution and creationism, including "intelligent design."

- Feb 10 – Science & Religion – What is the fuss all about?
- Feb 17 – Evidence for and mechanisms of evolution
- Feb 24 – Evolution, ecology, and the future

## Vestry Corner

What is a Vestry? Most Episcopalians would say that the Vestry is the governing body of the local congregation of the Episcopal church. This is so, and it has specific responsibilities that are set out by the National and Diocesan Constitution & Canons. Though the Vestry has some similarities to a board of directors, it is different in that a parish is a covenant community and Vestry members practice a servant leadership. The success of a congregation is not measured in terms of numbers of members or size of the endowment, but rather in the degree to

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which it is working toward the fulfillment of the mission of the Church. Specific responsibilities of the Vestry include:

- help to define and articulate the mission of the congregation;
- support the mission by word and deed;
- select and support the rector
- ensure effective organization and planning;
- ensure adequate resources in leadership and in financial stewardship
- manage resources effectively
- determine that appropriate programs, policies, and procedures have been developed and are followed;
- assess its own performance; and

provide spiritual leadership to lead the congregation in the mission of the Church “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ (BCP p.855)

Congregations today often participate in a “shared ministry” where the clergy and laity function as part of an interdependent team and seek to engage a large number of people in a variety of leadership roles. Leading a congregation in an increasingly secular world is difficult and requires the support and efforts of many. Its foundation is a faithful dependence on God’s guidance and power. Your Vestry is an important part of the ministry team and looks forward to hearing your thoughts and idea. As Saints of James we are all responsible for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and participating in the mission and ministry of St. James, with God’s help.

### **“Sudan and the MDGs” Council Workshop**

This workshop’s presenters were the Rev. Kim Webster and Mr. Richard Jones, the President of American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. We were given some background information of what has happened in the past, and where things stand today.

The country has been torn by civil and tribal warfare for about 20 years killing and displacing many thousands of people. The warfare continues in the northwest area of Darfur. However, in 2005 the Sudan government and the South Sudan provincial

government signed a “Comprehensive Peace Agreement” which brought a truce to the fighting in the southern area, provides for a period of discussion and, in 2011 provides for a referendum vote that could include the separation from Sudan to establish the new country of South Sudan. If this process does not become stalled or sidetracked it will result in political separation of the north which is predominately Muslim and the south which is predominately Christian. The capital city of the southern region is Juba near the southern border.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia’s first involvement with Sudan came after a visit there by Bishop Light in the late 70’s and was ongoing through the work of our missionary the late Rev. Marc Nikkel. The Marc Nikkel school has steadily grown until the student population is now about 250 with 60% boys and 40% girls.

After years of warfare there is almost total devastation and virtually no infrastructure as we know it. Communications is a constant struggle, roads are almost nonexistent, and schools are few and far between. The MDG’s are at work in the area. Schools are being built and through the efforts of several dioceses a wind and solar power plant was designed, built and has been installed at the Marc Nikkel school. The diocese of Juba has placed a high priority on building a guest house in Juba that will provide a place to house visitors and will provide a source of income for the diocese. At our final council dinner Bishop Powell announced that \$38,000 dollars had been raised and would be sent to Juba to aid in this project.

And finally, the final statement of the workshop was a surprise and had a telling impact on me. It was: “The people of Juba pray for us more than we pray for them”.

Bill Williamson

### **Lenten Confessions**

Lent is an appropriate time to consider using The Reconciliation of a Penitent service (Confession) found on page 447 in the Book of Common Prayer. It is available for all who desire to unburden their conscience; if you would like to make a Confession using the Reconciliation of a Penitent, contact the Rector to set up an appointment.