

Community Learning Center at St. James
St. James Episcopal Church
St. James Preschool
California Counseling Institute

St. James Community Journal

February 2009

From Our Senior Warden

By Doreen Canton

What a tremulous month January was at St. James! It started with a mirroring of the global economy in our budget, and the devastating news that the Vestry had to eliminate the positions of some productive and caring parish employees. I give my sincere thanks to our staff for creating an effective and safe way for us to share and start talking about our feelings of pain, loss, anger and uncertainty at the Annual Parish meeting on January 11th.

On the 18th Mary Moore preached her last sermon, and we celebrated her long ministry at St. James. This was a bitter sweet day for us all, but Mary Moore told me that she thoroughly enjoyed it. Enfolded into this celebration was Joan Gascoyne's 90th birthday party. The sun shone and the church was full, and we had deviled eggs and potato chips (some of Mary Moore's favorite treats!) at coffee hour.

By the time you read this newsletter, Mary Moore's big retirement Gala and Shari's last sermon, followed by her Hawaiian Luau party, will have come and gone. Judging by the amount of love, time, and commitment that have gone into the planning of these events, they will have each been a huge success.

I have had good discussions with the Reverend Canon Michael Barlowe from the Diocese regarding the future for St. James. The Bishop has determined that we needed a "breathing space" before the Interim Rector comes on board, so we will have supply priests through the month of February. This means we will have a visiting priest on Sunday to conduct the service. A small liturgical planning group consisting of Deacon Merry Chan, Fred Goff, Erazm Pochron, Jane Weston, and Roger Wickstrom will work out the order of service, readings and prayers. Rev. John Gallagher will act as host to the visiting priest and show him/her where everything is kept. We will let you know as the Vestry gets direction from the Diocese on how to handle any pastoral issues that come up over the next month.

Michael Barlowe will be meeting with the Vestry on Tuesday February 3rd, to discuss, among other things, candidates for Interim Rector. The vestry will review the CVs of prospective candidates and then interview those selected for further consideration. The goal is to have the Interim Rector start on March 1st.

I want to thank the many people who have expressed support to me personally and to the Vestry at large as we struggle to lead St. James forward. We are a strong community made up of loving, talented, and dedicated people. Please continue to talk or write to me and the other Vestry members and share your concerns, thoughts and ideas with us. Together, we can make this work.



Thank You from Mary Moore



Dear Friends,

Thank you so very, very much for all the wonderful gifts, letters, and cards with which you have showered me. The bejeweled “star” from Sunday Clubs, and the lovely jeweled cross; the hand-painted plate from the Youth Group with all their names

and message of love; the St. James shell with the beautiful inscription . . . all these gifts are shining forth from my mantelpiece. Then there is my favorite sunflower painting with plenty of money for framing it, and the picture of the Aspire kids with a lovely pink hydrangea plant . . . truly an embarrassment of riches!

The “Texas” theme for the Annual Parish Meeting to celebrate my home state and me, with the delicious Texas main dish—King Ranch chicken—was inspired. On my last Sunday as Rector of St. James, a joyful reception following the service featured my personal favorites – deviled eggs and potato chips!

And now, last but not least, there will be a Gala in my honor on January 24th at the Marine Memorial Club. I’m told that 160 people are attending.

I am blessed indeed with all of the above and so much more. Best of all is your love and all that we have shared.

I am excited about the future of our beloved St. James Community – Church, Preschool and Community Learning Center. Please know that you are in my prayers and that I am with you in spirit.

Love and all blessings,
Mary Moore

Bishop Swing Blesses Mary Moore’s Retirement

[This message from the Right Reverend William Swing, retired Bishop of the Diocese of California, was read at Mary Moore’s retirement gala on January 24th.]

When Mary Moore Gaines, that girl from Fort Worth, Cincinnati, Monaco, and London, walked out of my office for the first time with a stack of theology books,* I thought that she might make a pretty good priest someday. I did not have the inspiration or the imagination to figure out that she would become a great priest. But she did.

When I ordained her to the priesthood, I figured it would be just a few years till she retired. Fooled again. She outlasted me by three years.

When I was asked my opinion about her being a Co-rector, I said it was a bad idea and wouldn’t work. Wrong, thrice.

Will I ever get anything right about Mary Moore? Let me say that she was much more of a pilgrim priest than a predictable priest. The amazed and impressed members of her flock were treated to a theology, spirituality, and faith journey which were hung out wet on the line for all to see. She evolved publicly and from the heart. Genuine would a good word. I’ll stick by this evaluation and figure that I got one out of four.

So congratulations to George on being a West Virginian with patience and loyalty and congratulations to Mary Moore for a royal priesthood fashioned after the life, the way, and the truth of Jesus Christ.

With love and blessings for your future,

+ Bill

* She actually read the five books and returned them.

Fare Thee Well, St. James!

By the Reverend Shari Young



It has been such a privilege to be part of this open-hearted and generous community. Thank you! I have always felt free to just be myself here. This truly is an inclusive, non-judgmental community of loving, friendly people. Immersing myself in the Sunday morning community here has always been a source of great joy.

Mary Moore invited me to serve here in late 1997, when my son Matty was about one, as a non-stipendiary priest at the 5:00 p.m. Sunday service. Six months later I was a paid Children's Minister working to create a successful Sunday School program. Three years later, we could brag that we had 80 children in the Sunday Clubs program and 35 adults teaching them!

Elia Pochron has been absolutely central to this success. We have been a synergistic team since the very beginning, bouncing ideas for curriculum, crafts, and activities back and forth with great creativity. I have learned a lot from her dedication to excellence, her love of children, her joie-de-vivre, and her continual gifts of service to the St. James community.

Sidrah Gibbs joined us at St. James in the fall of 2000. I knew her giftedness from our work together at Bishop's Ranch Choral Camp, and was very, very happy to have her join me as a colleague. She is always tuned into what kids both want and need, and is absolutely the best program planner and mentor to kids.

Thank you, Elia and Sidrah, for a great program; and thank you, Mary Moore, for inviting me to join and serve our beautiful kids.

Thank you, St. James, for always being generous with time and money and spirit: from Sunday Clubs teaching, to Heifer Project, to Mothers Helping Mothers, to writing letters on behalf of legislation, to Women's Circle, to giving Joan Gascoyne a ride to church, to making great Parish Hall feasts and parties for a variety of reasons. You are always willing, able, and smiling.

I am very grateful to have shared this journey in Christ with you for eleven years: they have paralleled Matty's growth from toddler to pre-teen. He has grown up in a

healthy, loving church, and I am grateful to you for your care and delight in him and for the sure foundation you have provided for a lifetime of church-going. (Matty will continue here until June at least, depending on where I settle.)

Until we meet again on the path, may God richly bless you all!



Sunday Clubs News

By Carla Cooper

With heavy hearts, Sunday Clubs said good-bye to youth minister Shari Young on January 25th. After Shari's departure, we will continue to welcome children to Sunday Clubs, with some modifications (like Eucharist upstairs with the adult service). Shari has developed lesson plans through February that we will use in the near-term, and we continue to be blessed by Elia Pochron's inspired and inspirational crafts projects. Through June we plan to continue drawing from wonderful St. James curricula developed in recent years and relying on our able volunteer teachers. Our Youth Group remains under the watchful eye of Sidrah Gibbs. Tom Matthews (takimat@pacbell.net), parent of two youth group members, is the parent liaison for the Youth Group.

There is a parent meeting Sunday February 8th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., to gather ideas for Sunday Clubs moving forward. There will be child care during this meeting from our young-child caregivers, Steph and Teak, in the preschool classroom. Your participation is important to us as we chart next steps for the curriculum for preschool to 5th grade!

Please email Kathy Henry (khenry@techinsights.com) or Carla Cooper (carlaNcooper@gmail.com) if you have questions about Sunday Clubs. As Vestry members and as Sunday Clubs parents and teachers, we look to shepherd an inviting and inspiring Clubs program in 2009. We will need your help! Please look at the bulletin board near the Caldwell Room, as well as emails and the newsletter, for updates and volunteer opportunities.

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

UPCOMING CLASSES AND EVENTS

For Children and Youth

Saturday Learning Time

A weekly morning program for children 2.5 to 5 years old not enrolled in preschool. Free, with a parent service requirement. Call 415-751-1199 for more information.

Kindermusik

For children under 4, with a parent. Rhythm, singing, dancing, playing simple instruments, taking turns, group performance! A fun way to develop a foundation in music. For price and time information contact Dee Dee Lawton at 415-561-9754.

Advanced Kindermusik

A drop-off class for children 4 to 5.5 years old. Music basics, including beginning piano. Contact Dee Dee (above) for more information.

ASPIRE After School Care

Quality care from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. every school day, for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Homework help, crafts, music, dancing and activities. Cost is \$200 per month. For information about enrollment or volunteering as a tutor, call Merry Chan at 415-823-2622.

Suzuki Music Lessons

Lessons in violin, cello, and piano from teachers of the San Francisco Suzuki Talent Education Program, at St. James and off-site. Weekly 30-minute lessons for beginners, \$135 a month; 60-minute lessons for advanced students, \$200 a month. Call 415-412-6723 for information.

Homework Help Center

High school students interested in tutoring middle-school students at Roosevelt Junior High should contact Nayad Abrahamian at 751-1198. A great way to earn your service credits!

For Adults

Buddhist Meditation

Wednesdays 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall, led by Shinko Rick Slone. All are welcome who seek to begin or continue a meditation practice.

Overeaters Anonymous

Sundays 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. and Tuesdays 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. A 12-Step program that addresses eating and body-image issues.

Debtors Anonymous

Tuesdays at 6:00 – 7:00 in the Caldwell Room. A 12-Step program that addresses spending habits.

Annual Giving Campaign Report

By Judy Spain and Roger Wickstrom, Co-Chairs

For an update on our Annual Giving Campaign, we decided to reprint most of our report submitted for the January 11th Parish Annual Meeting – with some updated numbers! There is good stuff to chew on and to be thankful for!

The Annual Giving Campaign kicked off in mid-September, with the theme “When All Are Generous, There is Abundance.” We have indeed received a generous number of pledges committed to St. James. This is a heartening sign to us all of the dedication to St. James, the church's vision, and the community we share.

As a reflection of the unsettled economic times, we have unfortunately also seen many struggle to commit to the same levels of pledging that were possible in previous years. As of January 23, 2009 we have received pledges totaling \$263,008 from a total of 104 pledging households – 95 returning pledges and 7 new pledges. In response to these times and to the trends that we have seen develop, we have decided to lower our initial 2009 campaign goal to \$325,000 with 130 pledging households. This, however, is not a concession to lessened vision and hopes! This is a challenge to all of us at St. James as we move into the coming year.

And – the Annual Giving Campaign is not over! This is a progress report. We know we each are doing, and will continue to do, all that we possibly can to help St. James Church fund its programs and ministries and meet its financial obligations. Please give St. James highest priority in 2009. It is never too late to pledge. We can meet this challenge with our prayers for God's wisdom and love.

May we all daily commit ourselves to that spirit of hope and vision and generosity we choose in Christ and here at St. James. Blessings.



Capital Campaign Summary for the Community Learning Center at St. James December 2008 and Year to Date

By George Gaines
Capital Campaign Treasurer

This is the fifth monthly summary report on the Capital Campaign. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact me.

<u>GOAL</u>	<u>RAISED</u>	<u>NEEDED TO GOAL</u>
\$4,330,000	\$2,283,107	\$2,046,893

Campaign Income/Expenses

<u>INCOME – DECEMBER 2008</u>	<u>YTD 2008</u>
\$70,326	\$282,738

<u>EXPENSES – DECEMBER 2008</u>	<u>YTD 2008</u>
\$5,774	\$157,919

CAPITAL FUNDS ON HAND: \$639,221

Official Launch Party! San Francisco Village – Northside

Starting as a Steering Committee of the Community Learning Center at St. James, San Francisco Village – Northside (SFV-N) began to serve our members in early January after 2 ½ years of study, spreading the word, recruiting Charter Members, fundraising, hiring an Executive Director, finding donated office space, and much, much more.

The official SFV-N Launch Party will be on Saturday, February 7, at the Jewish Community Center at Presidio and California, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. All are invited to come and bring a friend. There is reduced fee parking at the Center. To receive an “e-vite” or just to learn more, please visit our website at sfvillage.org or call SFV-N at 415-387-1375. Remember, you are invited! Please come and see.

Transitions

By Elaine Chan-Scherer, LCSW
Executive Director and Psychotherapist
California Counseling Institute

Our lives are filled with transitions – some happy and some sad. As a nation, we have just had a huge transition with the inauguration of our new President. You at St. James have just said goodbye to your long-term beloved priest, Mary Moore Gaines. Last year two of my dear friends moved out of the Bay Area. Some of you have experienced huge losses in retirement funds. And many of us have had experience with the ultimate loss – the death of a loved one.

Think of some recent transitions in your life. How did you feel?

Transitions can be unsettling. We are rocked to our foundations. We are unsure of our footing. We need time to learn how to take steps on uncharted ground.

After a transition, it is important to metaphorically “sit down.” Stop for a moment to breathe. Allow your feelings to emerge.

If you must get busy right away, be sure that you allow yourself moments to pause—even a minute a day—to take in how you are feeling at the moment. If we do not allow our feelings to emerge, they may squirt out somewhere else as displaced irritation, impatience, anger or frustration.

Undesired transitions can bring up anxiety, grief, and loss. We may feel numb and in shock. We may experience the stages of grief—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance—over and over for each new situation we encounter. The process of accepting the new reality often feels gut-wrenchingly slow, but if we do not allow ourselves to experience the difficult feelings, our grief can get stuck. When you are stuck in grief, your life may feel joyless, numb, confusing, and purposeless.

Even with happy transitions – a job promotion, a new love interest, your baby taking her first steps – there is loss and grief involved. Your previous sense of stability, even if it was a stressful stability, has changed. You may not know where you stand. A transition can bring joy *and* shakiness. Even if we intellectually understand the transition and prepare ourselves, it takes time and space to fully embrace the new reality. Often our internal selves (our feelings, psyche and soul) need patience in integrating the external reality.

When my oldest daughter went away to college, I thought it was a happy time. But a month later I found myself

crying more easily, snapping at my colleague, and feeling generally stressed out. An insightful friend pointed out that I had not given myself time to acknowledge my grief and loss over this transition.

So this is a case in which you should do as I say and not as I do. When you have experienced a big transition in your life, please pause. Allow yourself to feel your breath for a minute. Or take five minutes to stare at a tree. Let your feelings emerge, even if they are painful. Give your body a chance to process the changes you have experienced.

And by all means, if you need extra support, ask for it!

Life is easier when our feelings are able to flow through us naturally and with ease.



Conflict!

Sex, Religion and Feminism

By James A. Turner

“The world is the devil’s hunting ground and children are his choicest game.”

-- Anthony Comstock

“When motherhood becomes the fruit of a deep yearning, not the result of ignorance or accident, its children will become the foundation of a new race.”

-- Margaret Sanger

In my last essay in this series I introduced the topic of birth control, its importance to the human race, and how attitudes toward it either changed and grew - or did not -

as human culture changed and grew: from a culture of hunters and gatherers to an agricultural and rural culture, then to the culture of the industrial revolution, and now the information/technology culture of the present. I continue with the issue of birth control in today's essay.

Many people grew and adapted to our changing human culture, but some did not and remain to this day stuck and imprisoned in the mind set of an ancient age, a mind set often based on a literal interpretation of the Bible or the Koran in consort with a continuing regard of woman as subservient to, and the property of, man. Thus conflict between sex, religion, and feminism continues to this day and began when these ancient attitudes ran headlong into our changing culture and mores. Just this October, Pope Benedict XV reaffirmed the Church's opposition to birth control measures. This reaffirmation went back to the encyclical of 1968 titled "On the Regulation of Birth." Benedict's reaffirmation was in response to an appeal to him two months earlier for a retraction of the Church's stance on birth control. This was an appeal made by some 60 Catholic groups, from a multitude of countries, who claimed that the Church's stance had been "catastrophic" for those in the world most in need of contraceptive techniques, both for birth control and for the prevention of AIDS. The Vatican has claimed that the idea that the Church's position on contraception contributed to the spread of AIDS was "obviously unfounded." In addition to its opposition to artificial birth control, the Vatican also opposes the techniques used by fertility clinics, including the freezing of embryos.

While the Catholic Church may stand out as the bastion of opposition to artificial birth control and all its many ramifications, it is not alone and has been joined on this and many related issues by the religious fundamentalists of this country. This issue has spilled over into the controversy over abortion. Witness the gyrations of the Bush administration, in its final months, to cater to the religious right by changing the Health and Human Services Department rules so as to make it legal for any health care worker or provider to refuse to participate in abortion or in the dispensing or prescribing of birth control pills, even in the case of rape, if this was against that provider's religious beliefs.

Now on to a little history. The 19th century gave rise to two historically important participants in the controversy over birth control and a woman's right to it: *Anthony Comstock* and *Margaret Sanger*. The first of these, Anthony Comstock, was a devout evangelistic Christian, who adamantly and actively opposed not only birth control itself but essentially any mention or discussion of it in public. He rose from the dust of the Civil War, where he had served in the infantry, to move to New York where he was appalled by the sexual lasciviousness that he



witnessed everywhere he looked. He became convinced that the availability of contraceptives alone promoted lust and lewdness. He went on a crusade against all this and in 1872 succeeded in getting Congress to pass an anti-obscenity bill which included a ban on contraceptives and made it a federal

offense to disseminate birth control through the mail or across state lines. This became known as the Comstock Law. Shortly after its passage, twenty four states passed their own state laws restricting any trade in contraceptives on a state level.

These were horrible and punitive laws. Probably the worst state law was that of Connecticut where even the use of contraceptives was prohibited and where married couples could be arrested for using birth control in the privacy of their own bedrooms and sentenced to one year in prison for doing so. The dissemination of any information on birth control virtually stopped. Mailing birth control information through the postal service could and did result in jail sentences. Comstock himself was jubilant!

These laws on birth control remained in effect until Margaret Sanger, a courageous woman's advocate and activist, decided to challenge them. In 1916, she was arrested for opening the first birth control clinic in America. This eventually led to a change in the law so that women could at least use birth control for "therapeutic purposes." But her courageous story doesn't end there and is worthy of an entire essay in itself. I will present that in the next issue of the Journal.



Hope and Virtue

By Elizabeth Nelson

When news came out about the staff cuts at St. James that would follow so immediately on Mary Moore's retirement, I felt all the shock, grief, and anxiety that all of us were feeling. And threaded through the emotional mix was an extra question, personal and plaintive and insistent: "My columns! Who's going to publish my columns?"

It was a selfish, egotistical thought, but it also wasn't. For several years now, a column from me has been a regular feature in the St. James Journal, and many people have been kind enough to tell me that they value those columns. For more years than that, the Journal has been a publication surely unique among parish newsletters for the range, variety, and thoughtfulness of its writings. And for years we've been grateful to a series of editors—most recently, to the redoubtable Tim Himes—for faithfully nurturing the Journal and its contributors, and for making sure we all had this familiar, reliable forum in which to exchange information and opinions. Now, I learned, Tim wouldn't be our editor any longer. Now the future of the Journal was in doubt.

That was unacceptable to me. I wanted a newsletter coming out each month, with a column from me in each one. I wanted *someone* to continue nurturing and organizing this community forum.

Eventually, as I looked around at all the busy people who had abruptly become so much busier as a result of the changes at St. James, I began to realize that the *someone* I was waiting for might be myself. And so, eventually (and, I'm afraid, a tad reluctantly), I offered to take on the editorship of the Journal for—to start with—three months: February through April. By then, I figured, I'd know whether I was capable of doing it for longer.

Why am I telling you this? Partly so you'll know why the February Journal may look a little different, and be reaching you a little later, than usual. But mostly because of something our new President said in his Inaugural Address, something I've been thinking about ever since I heard him say it. "Hope" is a word we heard over and over during his candidacy, but on Inauguration Day he called for something more. Quoting words written by George Washington during the tumult and suffering of the American Revolution, President Obama called us to "*hope and virtue*:" to dreams and diligence, to aspiration and dedication, to high poetry and hard work.

What that means for our country, I'll leave for another discussion. (And that's a discussion I'd love to have, by the way; call me.) What I want to talk about here is the

resonance those words take on when I think about the St. James community.

I think that all of us—in the midst of our shock, grief, and anxiety—have great hopes for St. James. We hope that our innovative liturgy and lively Sunday Clubs continue and thrive; we hope that our search for a new Rector is grace-filled and leads us to the right person; we hope that our budget can grow again, and our programs too; we hope our community continues to care for its members when they need care, and continues to reach out to our neighbors to expand our caring and our community.

And because we're schooled in virtue as well as hope, we know that the things we hope for won't "just happen." Hoping for *someone* to come along and teach in Sunday Clubs, or clean up the Parish Hall, or serve on the Vestry

or the Pastoral Care Committee, is not what makes it happen ... and we know that. We are the *someones* we've been waiting for ... and we know that too. So more and more of us are stepping up, doing the work that will transform our hopes into reality. Some are carrying on with service that they've blessed the parish with for years; some are jumping into roles brand-new to them. Some (like your new editor, here) are exercising virtue in a time-limited and tentative way; others are immersing themselves wholeheartedly. And you know what? It's all virtue. It all works. And we need some from everybody.

If you've been wondering what you can do to help realize our collective hopes for St. James, I have a modest suggestion. For oh, say, the next three months—February through April—make it a priority to *come to church every Sunday*. Even if it's raining, even if you have out-of-town guests (bring 'em), even if someone wants to have brunch with you (make a date for 12:15), even if you don't know

"With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift ... and delivered it safely to future generations."

*--President Barack Obama
January 20, 2009*

the priest or the tunes of all the hymns—be there. Show up. Pray the best you can, sing the best you can, shake someone's hand at the Sign of Peace, put something in the collection plate if you've got it, drink a cup of coffee downstairs if you have time—but show up. Every Sunday, now through April, illness or family emergencies excepted. "Decisions are made by those who show up," says a

twentieth-century proverb ... and so is community. We need you, now more than ever. So come.

Is it a deal? I'll do this for three months; you do that. At the end of April, who knows? Maybe we'll sign up for another month or two. Maybe we'll be stronger in virtue, and brighter in hope. I'd like to hope so, anyway.

CALENDAR

- Jan. 30 – Feb. 1 Vestry Retreat**
- Feb. 7 Launch Party for San Francisco Village-Northside (see p. 5)**
- Feb. 8 St. James serves at Martin de Porres Hospitality House**
- Sunday Clubs Parents Meeting (see p. 3)**
- Feb. 15 "Music of the Heart" Concert at St. James, 5:00 p.m.**
- Feb. 25 Women's Circle of Hope and Healing, 7:00-8:00 p.m.**
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The St. James Community Journal is a monthly publication of the Community Center at St. James, whose partners include:

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