

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, 2015-16

The Network



St. James' Episcopal Church

2485 Main Street, P.O. Box 206, Glastonbury, CT

To grow spiritually and spread the love of Christ

Service Schedule

Sundays

8:00 AM Rite I Holy Eucharist

10:15 AM Rite II Holy Eucharist

Wednesdays

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve 5:00 PM *4:45 Musical Prelude*

 10:00 PM *9:45 Musical Prelude*

Christmas Day 9:00 AM

Vision Statements:

All of our ministries are Christ-centered, joyfully sharing Christ's love.

Led by our commissions, we will reach out and encourage participation to nourish spiritual growth.

Using our time, talents, and treasure, we will support the ministries and activities of this faith community.

We will be an open, welcoming, and inclusive faith community with honest and respectful communication.

Our ministries will serve the community of St. James' and those beyond our walls.

RECTOR'S RAMBLINGS

Advent is upon us once again. Advent is a funny thing because in many ways it only exists in the Church, and not only the people who make up church, but literally within the four walls of the building that we call church.

To everyone else, this is the Christmas season, or if we are being politically correct, the holiday season (even though we know it is all about Christmas, no matter your religious affiliation or lack thereof, because it's not about the Christ Christmas but the "buy stuff" Christmas). It started VERY early this year. I think I saw my first signs of Christmas at Walgreens in my hometown when picking up a prescription for my mom at the end of September. Everything around us is screaming CHRISTMAS!!!!!! Stores (except those that sell religious items) are not selling Advent wreaths, candles, or Advent Calendars. There aren't Advent specials on TV or Advent Carols being sung by a choir (you know the rest of that song) or played in every store you step into. No, Advent is hard to find out there which is why it is SO important that we hang onto it here.

Advent is God's time. It is life lived a bit more in the Holy. It is a beautiful, quiet time of joyful preparation for the coming of our Savior. And it is more than just the preparing for the coming of Christmas and the celebration of the birth of Jesus. It is a preparation for the ways we want Jesus to be born in us this year because Christmas is more than a birthday party for Jesus. Christmas is about a birth that not only HAPPENED but continues to HAPPEN in us. Getting the Christmas Spirit is more than a Hallmark slogan for followers of Jesus, is it something born in us each year that we live the entire year.

Preparing our hearts, minds and souls for Jesus to be born in us anew, in a unique and special way, a gift just for us, is a mindful thing. It takes thinking and praying and being open to how we want Jesus to be born in us THIS year. It's asking - what is the new thing we want to make room for in us this year? In what new way do we want Jesus to be born in us?

So if nowhere else, we will hold onto and cherish Advent here in Church. We will wait until December 25th (ok - 24th with Christmas Eve services) to let Christmas come and we will celebrate it for the 12 days of Christmas ending on January 6th. This is why we don't sing Christmas Carols or have the Christmas Pageant in Advent - it's not Christmas here yet. And if we do Advent well, even just in church, we find that Christmas is so worth the wait.

Peace,

Denise+

Celebration

The Reverend Walter McKenney's last Sunday with us will be January 3rd. We will have one service at 10:00 followed by a brunch in his and Ida's honor. Please join us for a celebration of the ministry that Walter has joyfully offered to us here at St. James'.



The Jesse Tree: An Advent Observance

by Matt Cornish

A green Shoot will sprout from Jesse's stump,
from his roots a budding Branch.
The life-giving Spirit of GOD will hover over him,
the Spirit that brings wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit that gives direction and builds strength,
the Spirit that instills knowledge and Fear-of-GOD.
Fear-of-GOD
will be all his joy and delight.
He won't judge by appearances,
won't decide on the basis of hearsay.

He'll judge the needy by what is right,
render decisions on earth's poor with justice.

His words will bring everyone to awed attention.

A mere breath from his lips will topple the wicked.
Each morning he'll pull on sturdy work clothes and boots,
and build righteousness and faithfulness in the land.

Isaiah 11:1-5

Long before Jesus was born, the people of Israel knew that the Messiah would be born of the lineage of the man many considered to be Israel's greatest king: David. As such, many Israelites waited with baited breath for the rise of the man who would be an even greater David than the king who came before. What they got instead was a Baby, born in a cave, who preached love for their enemies, not war against them.

It frequently makes me think of the line in the carol *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*, "To you in David's Town this day is born of David's line..." Jesus...born of the line of David...a line that stretched back to David's father, Jesse.

What does all this have to do with a "tree" in our sanctuary during Advent. Well, the Jesse Tree is the physical embodiment of the connection between God's covenant with humanity that began with Creation and was fulfilled by the birth of Jesus. The Christ Child came into the world to grant freedom to God's people. Not freedom from some oppressive regime, but freedom from themselves, the ultimate realization of the ultimate promise.

The Jesse Tree reminds us of the many ways in which God made his covenant with his people: Creation, the Exodus, Joseph and his dreams, Jacob and his ladder, Noah's rescue from the flood waters. Throughout the books of the Old Testament, God reaffirms his covenant with humanity in anticipation of what will come. Through the Jesse Tree, we are given a physical reminder of all that came before Jesus' birth, a reminder that the Old and New Testaments are intricately interwoven. That Jesus' birth, death, and most importantly his resurrection fulfill God's promise to us: God's people.

So, each Sunday in Advent, our Church School students will be hearing the stories of God's Covenant, and making ornaments to hang on our Jesse Tree. Through doing so, they will be introduced and reminded of that covenant as they await the birth of Christ. Every week as we bedeck the branches of our Jesse tree, we will be one step closer to the celebration of Christmas.

And hopefully, our Children will walk away amazed by old stories, anticipating the coming celebration, but most importantly, firm in the knowledge that the Jesse Tree is the physical embodiment of Jesus: the branch upon whom all God's Promises are, and will continue to be hung.



Visual Arts and Advent

3 "Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

4 Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

5 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Isaiah 40:3-5

This past fall, a **Visual Arts Committee** was formed to consider ways to incorporate the visual arts into our worship. Visual art can change the experience of being at worship, making "seeing" part of the worship experience.

The theme for Advent 2015, based on the scripture above, will focus on journey and preparation as we move through this beautiful liturgical season to the celebration of Christmas. First, a beautiful wall hanging, created by Diane Obernesser, will be placed in the foyer. One of the elements in the hanging will be a pathway, signifying the journey along the path to the star over the manger.

Tying in to the theme of journey and preparation, a second visual consisting of beautiful shades of blue and pink fabric will be draped in the nave. Please watch for a star, which will transform and change each week as our journey to the Light draws ever nearer.

The third visual for Advent will be a Jesse Tree, which represents Jesus' **family** tree. The Jesse Tree is named from Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot shall come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." The church school children will decorate the Jesse tree with ornaments representing the path of the salvation story across four thousand years of history and includes the people, prophesies, and events leading up to the birth of Jesus.

A sincere word of thanks is given to all who have helped with this project. We welcome others to join us in further exciting and creative endeavors throughout the liturgical seasons of the church year.

Becky Lee, Sandy Ouellette, Barbara Edwards, Diane Obernesser

"We long to bring the warmth and disclosure of art to worship; to bring a joy beyond words to the celebration of the sacraments; to incarnate, to give form from the commonness of matter, the pain and sorrow of the reality of crucifixion, to proclaim a promise of resurrection that evokes hope from the whole being, not merely from the intellect." Nancy Chinn, Liturgical Artist, *Spaces for the Spirit*, p. 8.



Please join us for
**ADVENT
LESSONS
CAROLS**

St. James' continues its annual tradition of Advent Lessons & Carols. This year it will be sung during the 10:15 AM service on Sunday, December 6.

The Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols is a service celebration of the birth of Jesus that is traditionally followed at Christmas. The story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus is told in nine short Bible readings from Genesis, the prophetic books and the Gospels, interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns and choir music. The format was based on an Order drawn up by Edward Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury but at that time Bishop of Truro, in Cornwall, for use on Christmas Eve, 1880. Tradition says that he organized a 10:00 p.m. service on Christmas Eve in a temporary structure serving as his cathedral and that the purpose of the service was to keep men out of the pubs.¹

Since that time the original service has been adapted and used throughout the world. The most famous Lessons and Carols is that broadcast annually from King's College, Cambridge (UK), on Christmas Eve. The first service at King's was held in 1919, an adaptation of Benson's service of 38 years before. Except for 1930, the service has been broadcast on BBC since 1928, and is heard in American through American Public Media. Locally you can hear the broadcast on WNPR, typically "live" at 10:00 a.m. on Christmas Eve day (see <http://wnpr.org/> for the Christmas Eve and Christmas day times).

A popular variant of the Christmas Lessons & Carols is a similar service for Advent, one that we use at St. James'. Lessons & Carols becomes the service of the Word followed by the Eucharist. The readings and music are Advent-based, from the fall of humanity to the Annunciation. During my time at St. James' we have included the traditional Bidding Prayer, *Adam lay ybounden* (a traditional carol about Adam and Eve; versions by various composers), and several new carols sung by the choir. The Adult Choir begins learning the music in October and looks forward to this musical celebration of the coming of Christ.

Please join us on December 6 for our annual Advent Lessons & Carols service.

For those interested in attending Christmas Lessons & Carols services in the community, here are some of the most popular:

Trinity College Chapel, Trinity College, Hartford (12/6: 4 & 7 PM [identical services])
<http://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/SpiritualReligiousLife/Music/Pages/Lessons.aspx>

Saint Patrick-Saint Anthony Church, Hartford (12/13: 7 PM). Jim Barry will be the organist for this service.
<http://www.spsact.org/>

South Church, New Britain (12/21: 4 PM). Former St. James' organist, David Westphall, will be the organist for this service.

<http://musicseries.org/wordpress/page2-2/>

Advent Music

During the four Sundays of Advent, we will include several seasonal musical selections. We continue use of the Earey refrains during the Advent Wreath candle lighting, as well as the Taize piece, *In the Lord I'll be ever thankful*. Both of these we have done in previous years. New this year is a setting of the Sanctus (Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts) and the Fraction Anthem by American composer, Richard Proulx. This setting is an arrangement of the familiar Advent hymn, *O Come, O come, Emmanuel* (Hymn #56). You'll quickly learn this music as we repeat it each Sunday in Advent.

Christmas Eve

Music preparations are underway for Christmas Eve at St. James'. At the 5 PM service, music will be provided by the St. James' Choristers, Adult Choir, and Susan Knapp Thomas, harp. At the 10 PM service some members of the Adult Choir will sing, along with the O'Donnell team of violin and viola.

Carol Sing on December 27th

Our tradition of singing Christmas Carols on the Sunday following Christmas Day continues this year. In place of the sermon on December 27 at the 10:15 AM service, you will have the opportunity to sing several carols. If you have a particular request, contact Jim Barry at dirmusic@sbcglobal.net by December 13th.

Christmas Pageant

This year we are joining with St. Luke's for a Christmas Pageant with Living Nativity on **Sunday, December 20 at 3:00 p.m.** at Beacon Woods Stables, 99 Beacon Woods Lane in South Glastonbury. Anyone interested in participating should let Matt know.

Rehearsal will be here at St. James on December 13th at 1:00 and there will be a dress rehearsal on the 19th with costumes at St. Luke's on Main Street, South Glastonbury. The pageant is going to be amazing and lots of fun so please join us. There will be hot cider and refreshments following the pageant. Bring some carrots to feed the horses.





Carol's Closet serves and advances God's mission of restoration and reconciliation in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit in these ways:

Carol's Closet is a ministry of the entire parish of St. James'. It does not belong to a single committee—God has entrusted *all of us* with its purpose of providing every day paper and personal hygiene products, which are not covered by SNAP, to Glastonbury residents in need. *We all* participate in God's mission of restoration and reconciliation by spreading the love of Christ as we respond to human need through this loving service.

Thank you for your prayers and generous donations of items and funds, which are making a real difference in many lives. As of this issue we will have held three monthly distributions and we are pleased to be serving over 50 persons. Among those we have served are a veteran and his family. They have been very active throughout their lives to support others in need. And they now find themselves in need of assistance. The expressions of thanks received from *all* of our guests are deeply moving, and we are very grateful to serve them.

This ministry is supported solely through your donations of product and monetary contributions. We are happy to report to you that 100% of donations received are used to purchase product for distribution. In addition, collaborative partnerships with other faith communities in Glastonbury continue to grow as they donate. We welcome your suggestions to find sources of revenue and donations of the needed items.

Please consider donating the following items. These items can be placed in the marked cart in the church foyer.

Toilet tissue	Facial tissues	Toothbrushes	Toothpaste Paper
Towels	Bar Soap	Shampoo	Deodorant

Monetary donations are welcomed and should be placed in a separate envelope clearly marked "Carol's Closet". (Please do not include it in your pledge envelope.) If giving by check, please note "Carol's Closet" on the memo line. These steps will assure that the monies are placed into the appropriate account. You may place your donation in the offering plate on Sunday or send it to St. James'. If you have made a donation by check, please check your quarterly statements to assure that it went to Carol's Closet. If it did not, please contact Jeanne Kowalsky at church so that it can be put into the correct account. Thank you!!

Christmas Families

Once again the Outreach Committee will be helping the town of Glastonbury with gifts for children. Wish lists for 5-7 children will be provided with each gift to cost no more than \$15.00. All gifts must be returned to the church by December 6th. Stay tuned for specific details. Questions? Please contact Judy Knowlton at judyknowlton@comcast.net or 860-295-0489.

Outreach

Christmas Cheer

Outreach will be coordinating with the Town of Glastonbury Social Services to assist with their collection of Christmas gifts and gift cards. Please give as generously as you can to those who are in need. Please watch for details at St. James', or give directly to the Glastonbury Social Services.

Alternative Giving Opportunities for Christmas

Has Christmas turned into an annual "sweater (or tie or shirt) exchange?" Do you and your relatives have all the "stuff" that you need? How about using this opportunity to try some alternative giving. Choose for others (or suggest that you might like to receive) meaningful gifts that will benefit people in real need. Here are a couple of possibilities:

Gifts for Life (Episcopal Relief and Development)

Catalogs are available at the church, or you can shop on line at <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/>.

The Heiffer Project

Go to www.heiffer.org and click on "browse the catalog" at the bottom of the screen.

The Outreach Committee has set aside \$500 for the church school children and youth to use to select gifts through the Gifts for Life catalog. Please help them to think about the real meaning of Christmas and the importance of giving to those who have much greater needs.

Outreach, *continued*

HAITI COLLEGE TUITION FUND

In response to a request for consideration from Denise, the Outreach Committee has committed resources this fall to support a young woman in Haiti who is in need of assistance to complete her college education. At its November meeting, the committee made decisions to contribute \$200 of its available funds and also to dedicate the proceeds of the November 15 Soup Sunday to this tuition assistance. In Denise's words:

Milaine is a young woman in Haiti who is the fiancé of Guimond Louis, one of the seminarians I had the privilege of teaching when on my sabbatical in 2012. Milaine is studying computer programming in Port-Au-Prince and needs \$1,300 for a year of college tuition. Education is the only way out of poverty in Haiti and the only way that country has a future. Let's help make a difference in Haiti by investing in the future of these young people.

Thanks to all of you who supported the recent Soup Sunday, and to those who have made direct contributions to this fund. Additional donations are most welcome. Checks should be made out to St. James' Church, with "Haiti tuition fund" in the memo field.

Hold the dates!

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| Sunday, February 7 | Souper Bowl |
| Tuesday, February 9 | Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (REAL maple syrup – bring your friends) |

Warm Clothing

Your response to requests for gently used coats, sweaters, sweat shirts, sweat pants and new underwear and socks for men and women has been outstanding! Thank you! Your donations will help to keep the homeless warm. Please continue to bring in items and place them in the gray container in the foyer.

The coat drive will continue until January 31st. If you have questions, please contact Judy Knowlton at judyknowlton@comcast.net at 860-295-0489.

Adult Formation Offerings

THEOLOGY ON TAP

WATCH FOR WEEKLY EMAIL BLASTS FOR UPCOMING PROGRAMS

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Join Denise on Thursday mornings when Coffee and Conversation will begin after the New Year with J. Philip Newell's book **LISTENING FOR THE HEARTBEAT OF GOD**. This book is available on Amazon used for as little as \$.01! We will meet at 10:00 in the Loft *beginning on January 14th*.

JANUARY 14 & 28

FEBRUARY 11 & 25

MARCH 10 & 17

Please join us!

Retreat

For the past several years, folks from St. James' Church have joined others from the Episcopal Church in CT at an annual retreat at Holy Cross Monastery in NY on the Hudson River. This is a beautiful and holy place and a wonderful opportunity for spiritual renewal. The dates this year are February 5-7, 2016 and the cost is \$190.00.

Please let Denise know by December 13th

if you are interested in attending this year.



HEADS UP HARTFORD! YOUTH

Wilderness Church at J.B. Williams Park in January

Pastor Lydia from St. Mark's Lutheran Church has invited us to join her in the **Wilderness Church** experience **the first Sunday of each month from 2:00-4:00**. The Wilderness Church is an opportunity to intentionally seek to experience God in creation. It will be a one hour walk with prayer, a story and quiet time all woven in together - a two hour time frame is given to allow time for gathering and getting to the trail but the hike will be an hour. The walks will take place locally and on as flat a trail that we can find. We will begin on **January 3rd at J.B. Williams Park**. We can gather at St. James and head over together or meet up at the trail.

COMMUNION EDUCATION CLASS

We will be holding a class for anyone who would like to learn more about The Eucharist. This class will be geared toward our younger children but is open to all ages whether or not you or your children are already receiving Communion. The class will be held on January 23rd from 10:00 -11:00 and January 31st from 1:00 -2:00, in the Church.



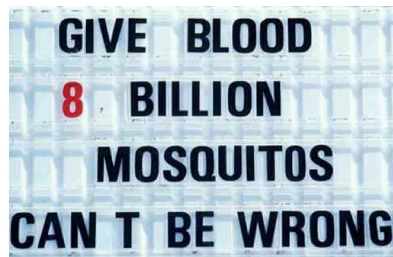
Bloodmobile Volunteers are Superheroes

Thank you very much for making the Fall Blood Drive at St. James' so successful. Sixty-three people signed up to donate blood here on October 30th. Some folks were no-shows or deferred, but because we attracted almost a dozen walk-ins we were able to collect 42 useable pints – three more than the target goal amount! There was a steady stream of donors all day. The Red Cross staff was pleased with the turn-out, and the hospitality of our parishioners who set-up, greeted, fed, encouraged and thanked all the donors and staff.

You did a splendid job! The staff remarked a number of times that the volunteers provided such delightful and abundant food, that they felt pampered. A number of donors commented that other sites don't provide the sumptuous homemade feast that we do. Other drives offer only the pre-packaged food that the Red Cross brings – adequate but not as satisfying. The delicious snacks and nibbles that St. James' parishioners carefully prepare draws in donors.

This time, six St. James' parishioners volunteered to give blood. Yay! We continue to try to increase the number of folks who recognize this critical ministry and participate by sharing some of what they have in abundance with others who are in need. Remember, even with all of our advances in medical technology, blood cannot be manufactured. It can only come from generous donors like you! That's why your donations are so important.

I was particularly grateful to one parishioner who came to volunteer her time – filling in for a relative who had a last minute conflict. She related how a few years earlier she'd had a difficult donation experience (because she was rushing, stressed and had skipped a meal she fainted after giving blood). Since then, she had been too nervous to donate again. But after spending time at the registration desk, greeting some donors and speaking with other volunteers, she found the courage to donate once again. This superhero had a much more pleasant outcome this time. Perhaps you've heard of or even had a similar experience; if so, don't give up! Remember: if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again.



We will hold another blood drive in the spring; if your schedule permits, please consider becoming a blood donor. Healthy bone marrow produces a constant supply of red cells, plasma and platelets. A body easily replenishes the elements given during a donation – some in a matter of hours others within a few weeks. Blood is indispensable for those in need and the donor really doesn't miss this gift of life; For the recipient – it can make all the difference.

Supporting the Red Cross Bloodmobile is great stewardship of our personal resources and great outreach to those in need! Thanks again to all of you who donated your time and talent so that others could donate their blood. That is a gift in itself!

What's Next?

Mark your calendar for these exciting events!



There's lots happening at Camp Washington. Join us—the only thing missing is YOU!

WWW.CAMPWASHINGTON.ORG



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT
PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION



Family Advent Program:

December 6th:

2pm—6pm

Teen Retreat:

January 15-17, 2016

For Youth,

Grades 9-12

Winter Wonderland Weekend:

February 12-14, 2016

For Kids, ages 7-12

Middle School Retreat:

April 22-24, 2016

For Youth,

Grades 6-8

Teen Retreat:

October 7-9, 2016

For Youth,

Grades 9-12



Contact Information

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Facebook ♦ www.facebook.com/StJamesGlastonbury

The Episcopal Church in Connecticut

www.ctdiocese.org

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian T. Douglas, Diocesan Bishop
The Rt. Rev. Dr. J. Laura Ahrens, Bishop Suffragan

St. James' Clergy

The Rev. Denise Cabana, Rector
The Rev. Walter McKenney, Deacon

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Vestry

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Don Gardner, Junior Warden
Steve Ciccalone, Treasurer
Sandy Marshall, Clerk

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Office Hours: 9:00 am - 1:30 pm, Mondays through Thursdays

Pastoral Emergency: Call the church office (860-633-8333) and dial 9 any time during the message. Your call will be routed to the clergyperson on call.