

the Joyful Noise

of St. James' Episcopal Church

Guiding Us On Our Sacred Journeys.

by Elsie Miller

It was from Frederick Buechner's spiritual memoirs, *The Sacred Journey*, and *Now and Then*, that I began to view my life as a journey, and that my journey was sacred.

"Listen to your life", advised Buechner. "God speaks to us in a myriad of different ways at every moment of every day."

If it is true that God speaks to us throughout the day in ordinary events, then it is good to take note of this. I like especially to do this at the close of each day before I doze off to sleep.

I swiftly move through my day asking such questions as Where did I meet God today? What were my encounters? What was my prevailing mood? Have I missed anything? Frequently some incident or small detail will surface and be underscored.

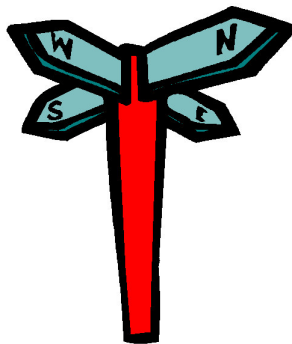
This being the beginning of a new year is a good time, not only to review the daily events, but also to take note for a while of the big picture. Memoirs can help us to do just that as they often focus on the turning points of our lives, the life defining moments, the times when we are born anew, when we emerge from our cocoons - emerge from a time of inner darkness and endless waiting - to a time of bursting with new life - spreading our wings and taking flight: Times when we are ecstatic with a zest for life.

In his memoirs, Buechner writes of the great and crucial moments of his life.

There was that phone call from a stranger who liked Buechner's writing and wondered whether he had

ever considered writing for God - or for the church - or something like that?

Later Buechner found himself attending church and in a sermon by George Buttrick was brought to tears. This he followed with a visit to Buttrick who then gave Buechner a tour of Union Theological Seminary, which paved the way for Buechner's ordination in the Presbyterian Church. All this resulted from a phone call.



It was an encounter with a Sunday School teacher that completely put my life on a different course. I remember the exact spot - on the sidewalks of Berlin in the midst of town.

"Elsie," he said, "Have you considered going to college?" It was the summer after my high school graduation, and "No" I had not considered it at all. He went on to say that while I was a good person - or did he say

"beautiful person" - college would make me a better person - or something like that.

I went home and announced to my parents my intentions - my desires. They consented. It was not only I, but also two of my older brothers who decided on such short notice to spend the next year at Goshen College!

Today, I think of how that brief conversation impacted not only my life, but also the life of my oldest brother, Jack, leading me to live in a much broader world in a wiser way while leading

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Editorial Information

The Joyful Noise is published monthly September through June as a ministry of St. James Episcopal Church. Submissions in accord with the Mission of St. James are encouraged. The address of the Editor is 429 Kinney Circle, Wooster, OH 44691 and you may e-mail: astolat@sssnet.com

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Evelyn Manzella
Sarah Madoff
Elsie Miller
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Folders for the last issue were:

John Hockett
Janet McGinty
Jane Miller
Clara Patton



- New Year's Day, January 1, 2004
- Epiphany Sunday, January 4, 2004
- Epiphany, January 6, 2004
- Baptism of the Lord, January 11, 2004
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-24, 2004
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 19, 2004

Saint James Episcopal Church

Corner of East North and Market Streets, Wooster, OH (330) 262-4476
Parish Hall: (330) 262-4488
Web Address: <http://www.bright.net/~nuzum/StJames/>
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Holy Eucharist Services

8:00 am and 10:00 am Sunday, 7:30 am Wednesday

Staff

Rector - The Reverend Evelyn N. Manzella	(330) 262-1930
Organist - Jason Metheny	(330) 769-2867
Choir Director - Ned Brooks	(330) 264-9495
Parish Secretary - Gladys Hunter	(330) 682-0117
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When there is no priest available, you may call the Senior Warden, Celia Smart, at (330) 262-0299, or the Junior Warden, Gwen Bayless, at (330) 264-1874 in case of emergency. Stuart Ling is available to make pastoral calls.

2003 Vestry

Senior Warden - Celia Smart (03)	(330) 262-0299
Junior Warden - Gwen Bayless (04) Buildings and Grounds	(330) 264-1874
Cathy Cook (04) Finance	(330) 263-0073
Liz Glick (05) Worship	(330) 263-4048
Dan Gorman (02) Finance	(330) 262-0973
Mary Hickey (Clerk) Member Care	(330) 262-7059
John Hockett (05) Adult Education/Outreach	(330) 345-7825
Bob Kendall (04) Finance	(330) 264-0549
Alan Kiefer (03) Worship	(330) 264-0227
Chuck Miller (05) Finance	(330) 262-1166
Margo Miller (04) New Member Ministry	(330) 264-7201
Pat Watson (05) Hospitality/Fellowship	(330) 263-7811
Pat Zoller (05) Outreach	(330) 264-9909

The Collect for St. James': "almighty and everlasting God, who didst move Thy servants in times past to establish and sustain this parish of St. James: Grant us grace so to follow their good example that we in our time may fulfill Thy will for us by knowing, loving, and serving Thee and Thy people; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

The Mission of St. James Episcopal Church is to be an inclusive community of God's people, appreciative and accepting of each other's gifts, who welcome all who desire to be strengthened, and loved by our Lord through offerings of worship, spiritual growth, service, and pastoral care.



Astolat
Publications

Evelyn's Epistle

Dear Friends,

While I was in Vermont, I had the wonderful opportunity to host two foreign exchange students. The first student who lived with me was a lovely young woman from Venezuela, and the second student was a brilliant young woman from the Republic of Georgia, (which I came to know is a country older than Russia in the former Soviet Union.)

I learned so much about their customs and traditions, how they celebrated the holidays and how they expressed their faith as Christians, one being raised in the Latin American Roman Catholic church and the other in the Georgian Orthodox church. For both of them, it took a while for them to realize I was a priest, since women were not clergy in the churches of their traditions.

Like my exchange students, it often takes me living with something for a while to start to truly understand it. Sometimes that while can be quite a stretch of time. It has taken me a long time to come to some deep-down understanding of the church... and I'm sure I'm not quite there all together yet.

I grew up going to a large Roman Catholic Church with at least a thousand other people. My understanding was that being a part of the church meant going to religious instruction, saying what I learned, and going to Mass and giving to the collection.

When I returned as a graduate student, going to church was about my personal spiritual development and how the church supported that growth.

When I joined the Episcopal Church, I understood the church as the place I wanted to serve God as a priest. I have learned about sacraments, about the Bible, about vestries, and building maintenance. I learned so much as a priest. I have understood the role of a priest as someone who supports the spiritual lives of the people they serve through preaching, sacramental ministry and pastoral care.

What I'm coming to understand more clearly, through living with you, is how the people of the parish are the ministers of the church. Baptism is full entrance into living in the body of Christ. The ministry of the church is not dependant on me... it is dependant on all of us seeking where the Holy Spirit is leading us, where we

are given energy and passion and skill. Sometimes it takes a while to figure out where the Spirit is leading, and sometimes something we think we are called to do, doesn't work out and we find that our gifts are not in that area. Sometimes we are led to individual tasks when at other times, we are called to work as a group, but always, we are called to use our gifts for the building up of Christ's body, the church, for our friends, our pew-mates, our neighbors, and the stranger brave enough to come through the door.

I pray that I will continue to learn how to support you in your ministry, to help make sure you have the right tools, the resources, and encouragement to be bold in what and how God calls you to build up this community. I so want you to believe that God has called you to a life in Christ's service as essential members of the church with gifts that we need you to share.

In this new year when you are making your New Year Resolutions, resolve to claim your call as a minister of God and give yourself time to see how that works out in your life and in the life of our faith community.

With all joy and hope for this new year in God's care,

Evelyn

St. James' Bell Ringers



One cold and windy Saturday, St. James members stood in front of J. C. Penney's, so that others may be fed and clothed this winter. We are very grateful to all who participated in The Salvation Army-Share a Day for Others. Thank you: Terry Ling, Jane Richardson, Chuck Miller, Kyle Ofori, Kevin Ofori, Katie Cross, Dick Figge, Alice Bunting, Jane Buxton, Gwen Bayless, Robyn Bell, Hal Hulit, Norm Lathrop, Elizabeth Lutton, Thea Lutton, Cameron Maneese and Evelyn Manzella.



When you or a member of your family is in the hospital, please let the office know. Due to new privacy regulations, the hospital is no longer allowed to give us that information.

Sacred Journeys

(from p.1)

my brother into honing his leadership skills. I cannot imagine either of our lives without college. That brief conversation on the sidewalks of Berlin was a life defining moment.

For Buechner, possibly the most defining moment for him took place when he was ten years old. His father took his own life by suicide. Buechner described this in stark minute details decades later in his memoirs. How the remaining family was quickly moved to Bermuda to “get away from it all” and never talk about it.

Later, of course, he knew he had to come to terms with this and he even chose to write openly about it. When his mother discovered the writing, she was livid - enraged - with anger to the point that she never again, to his knowledge, read any more of his numerous publications.

In this brief account, I’ve just given of Buechner’s life the big picture emerges - the death of his father - and who of us has not been deeply moved by the death of a beloved key person? Then there is the matter of keeping secrets and never talking about it to anyone while it festers and erodes within us. It does not go away.

I like so much the words we pray weekly in our worship - Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid... May it be so. And may I not keep any secrets.

I salute Buechner for dealing with and sharing his secrets, for being candid and open - a trait appreciated by his many readers and pastors.

He differed in this regard from his mother. He paved another path. And that points to another issue of how is it that we deal with the painful and complex parent child relationship? Many memoirs wrestle with this issue.

My relationship with my mother was a life-long struggle. It was when she was in her 90’s that she shared with me her life-long secret and that was a powerful life changing healing moment. The last remaining wall between us fell in bits and tiny pieces like dust - and blew away. I loved her deeply, completely far more than I ever dreamed possible. This was transformation with a capital T.

Yes, do take time to note the big picture and do a life review. What are the themes woven through the

tapestry of your life?

And, oh yes, pick up a good memoir and have yourself a good read.

Baptism: What It Means To Me

from Kelly Aughenbaugh



What it means to me to be baptized is I will be part of the Church, a member, it is my choice to be baptized this time, and I will participate in activities for and with the Church. I accept what I am being baptized

for/in and I will follow through with my commitment of vows/promises to my family and God.

When I first found out I was not baptized, the way St. James recognized it, I felt nervous and as though people would wonder why I had been receiving communion if I was not baptized with water. I later felt happy and excited. I was also thankful that I could get the chance to be baptized and I knew my parents did that right thing for me when I was younger. Sometimes I felt strange being around friends at Church because they were all baptized and I was not. I also felt lost, but I knew God was watching over me and my family because something would happen or Reverend Evelyn’s sermon would relate to something in my life of thoughts concerning baptism.

Now I’m glad to be a part of the Church and begin my journey as a baptized Christian with Jesus and God. I feel more confident and am proud. What it means to me to be a part of St. James is I have a family, both Church and Home. I am accepted as a member and I can take part in activities with the Church. I’m glad to be part of the Church and can make the decision to commit myself and live like God wants me to. I choose to open my heart to Jesus and God. I’m thankful my family and friends are here to support me and that they have always done what’s best.

I’m thankful the Church family has always considered me part of the Church and they did not mind if I was not baptized the way the Church recognizes it. My family, home and church, have always shown compassion and love. This shows they love even if you’re not baptized like me, but look past differences and can love. Thank you

Vestry Candidates

Jean Barnes



Jean has been an active member of St. James for eight years. She was a vestry member and a senior warden during the time of the removal of the old green house and the purchasing of the new office. Jean says she is extremely grateful for the lessons she has learned and friendships made during that time.

She is looking forward to an exciting and interesting four years on the board.

Velda Cross

Velda was born and raised in the small village of Padiham in England and was always an active member of the Church of England. For many years she worked as a registered pediatric nurse until moving to Wooster as a result of her husband's opportunity to advance his career.



Since joining St. James some eight years ago, Velda has taken every opportunity of contributing to the church community. A member of the Altar Guild and former Altar Guild Directress, Velda is excited by the prospect of serving on vestry, which she sees as a natural next step in her spiritual evolution.

When not enjoying time with all her church activities, Velda juggles her time working at Buehlers, raising two girls, and keeping her somewhat manic husband on track!

Jim Richard



Jim is married to Marcy, who is a teacher, and has three children; Michael, Bradley, and Anne. He received a B.A. degree from Bluffton College and his JD from Ohio Northern. He served in the army for two years and is an attorney at Reynolds and Richard.

He enjoys all sporting events, golf, and traveling. He served as president of the Wayne County Bar Association in 2002.

Jim has served on the vestry, the Building and Grounds Committee, was chairman of the Personnel Committee, Junior Warden and is a member of the choir.

Mary Hickey

I grew up a Presbyterian, graduated from Hollins College in Virginia, and attended Princeton Theological Seminary for a year before Damon and I were married there in 1967.



Damon became a Presbyterian minister and served churches in Texas and Oklahoma for 3 years. Our daughter, Doralyn, was born in 1970; she and her husband Brian now live in Bozeman, Montana.

When Damon left the ministry to become a librarian, we moved to North Carolina, where we lived for 20 years. There we joined the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and were active in it for 25 years. We moved to Wooster in 1991 and were part of the Friends Meeting here; then several years ago we started attending St. James, and were confirmed as Episcopalians in 2001.

After working in the College of Wooster admissions office and then at Wooster Interfaith Housing, I'm now retired and am very grateful to be able to become more involved in the community, including volunteering at People to People and being an active member of St. James. I've served as clerk of Vestry for two years, am on the Outreach Committee, lead Evening Prayer, am a lector, coordinate the Prayer Chain, have served on Altar Guild, and participate in WWW.Come.



Don't forget!! If you are the chairperson/leader of a committee or group, please submit your report to the office by Jan. 4th. If you e-mail it or submit it on disk, it's very easy to insert into the report.

January Birthdays



1	Jason Runnion	22	Jarra Slaydon Henderson
3	Kelsey Griffio	24	Ian Sharp
4	Ferne Haghiri	26	Troy Schmidt Emily Schmidt
5	James Grifo	27	Chuck Miller Brian Anderson Stephanie Perrone
7	Martha Dutton	28	Ed Koller
8	Russell Cross	29	Robin Sharp Cheryl Cross
9	John Lawrence	30	Hannah Burns Juanita Baserman Pat Irvin
11	Carver Maneese	31	Jill Hockenberry Brian Kurzenberger
15	Joyce Roe		
19	Archer Purvis Melissa Glick		
21	Terry Ling Shirley Ryan		

January Anniversaries



1/17/69	John and Pat Zoller
1/25/69	Roger and Carol Kienzle
1/29/94	Jim and Shannon Harvey

Altar Flowers



The cost for flowers is \$40 plus tax for two arrangements. You are welcome to share dates with another family. If you wish to donate, please sign the calendar in the North Street Entrance. Flowers are ordered by Karin Harriman, altar guild directress, from Com-Patt-ibles, who sends a bill to the parishioner. If you have special instructions, please indicate it on the calendar or give Karin a call at 262-5980.

Jan 4	Open
Jan 11	Cameron Maneese, in thanksgiving for Carver..
Jan 18	Alison and Troy Schmidt, in celebration of the 22nd birthday of Emily and Troy..
Jan 25	Stuart and Terry Ling, in celebration of Terry's birthday..

If you would like to provide flowers for the Sunday services, the calendar for 2004 is posted in the North St. entrance.

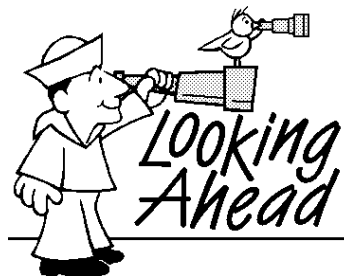
Join Art Classes! *from Sarah Madoff*



Release your creative self and join in with oil painting classes. These will take place monthly from January through to June 2004.

Find your style of painting! Still life, figures and outdoor landscapes. Call 330-201-

3132 or e-mail faerief1r@hotmail.com or talk to Sarah Madoff at church for more information.



Mission and Ministry Conference

February 6-7, 2004

Keynote speaker: The Ven. Mark Holligsworth, Jr., Bishop elect.

\$30 person/\$100 family (max) registration.

See the bulletin board for more information



from Ruth Brown

Healing Tip

Fred P. shares: I wish you a day of ordinary miracles

- A fresh pot of coffee you didn't make yourself
- An unexpected phone call from an old friend
- Green stoplights on your way to work or to shop
- I wish you a day of little things to rejoice in
- The fastest line at the grocery store
- A good sing along song on the radio
- Your keys right where you look
- I wish you a day of happiness and perfection
- I wish you little bite-size pieces of perfection that give you the funny feeling that God is smiling on you, holding you so gently because you are someone special and rare
- I wish you a day of Peace, Happiness, and Joy

Blood Pressure Screening Contest

Sponsored by the Wooster Community Hospital, Parish Nurse Partnership Program

Guidelines:

1. Have your BP taken by your Parish Nurse, at your church, at least once a month, 6 out of 8 months.
2. Have your card marked each month for 6 of 8 months
3. Enter your completed card for the drawing of 3 great prizes:
 - Pedometer
 - Healthy cookbook
 - Free Massage

All participants will receive a certification upon completion of screening contest.

This will start in February. February blood pressures will be taken February 15th instead of the 1st.



Congratulations to Kelly Aughenbaugh on her baptism.

St Nicholas Cookie Update

I would like to thank all of you who helped with the baking, dough making, icing, bagging. I hope all of you enjoyed the fellowship as much as I did. Thanks and hope to see you next year. Ruth Brown

The Editor's Bit



Under the heading of "disturbing philosophical arguments," file the recent discussions found at Vermillion's "Open Carry Shipping Day," where for a two-hour period, the good citizens of the Harbor Town area of Vermillion, Ohio, were treated to the site of gun-toting patriots walking in and out of local stores and restaurants. In an attempt to promote the legalization of concealed weapons

in Ohio, around 70 folks strapped on their firearms and wandered around the streets looking for bad guys. Well, maybe just looking for a Christmas present for the kids.

Chuck Holliday, who sounds like he has a relative called "Doc," wasn't taking any chances and decided to wear both a .40 Beretta and a .357 Magnum – you can't be too careful when living in Vermillion. Chuck's words of wisdom include the phrase "We are common-sense people." I always worry when anyone appeals to "common-sense" because the definition appears to be "whatever I think is a good idea."

One of the common-sense notions that Chuck advances is that "When criminals think somebody may be carrying a weapon, they won't mess with them." Now this begs so many questions that it hardly qualifies as an answer in the first place. If I'm a rootin', tootin', pistol-packin' hombre who thinks some dude's packin' heat, it's in my best interest to plug him first. Hey, the concept of the Pre-emptive Strike is pretty popular these days, especially amongst our leaders.

Of course, if concealed weapons are OK for Joe Average (and it seems a testosterone-fueled thing because one rarely hears from Josephine Average that she wants to pack heat) then it's OK for Al Capone, Don Corleone, and Tony Soprano to do the same.

(cont. p.11)

Both the Church of England and the Episcopal Church USA have been torn recently over the appointment or election of openly gay priests as bishops. In England, an appointment was withdrawn in the face of controversy; in the US, one was confirmed. A thoughtful article in the English church press pointed out that Christians hold different views about homosexuality primarily because they hold different views about the authority and interpretation of the Bible. When the biblical writers condemned homosexuality, were they writing about committed same-sex unions? And even if they did condemn all forms of homosexuality, is their condemnation still authoritative for us today? If not, why not? How do we decide what in the Bible we will or won't accept as "gospel"? What the church needs, the author argued, is a careful discussion of what theologians call "biblical hermeneutics": the principles we follow in interpreting Scripture and applying it to our lives. Sue Perkinson, who spoke at St. James about our own church's General Convention, urged us to engage in just such a discussion.

A recent ad in *Episcopal Life*, the monthly newspaper of the national church, led me to an online "course" that deals with these issues. I decided to enroll and to review some of the readings here. The Web site is <http://www.searchforjesus.com>. Although the subject matter is "The Search for Jesus," the subtext is how we interpret what we read in Scripture and how we apply it to our lives. Each week I get online 2 articles from religious thinkers whose views range across the theological spectrum. I also have access to an online "Discussion Board."

As of mid-December 4 articles (3–4 pages each) had appeared. All of them deal with the authority and interpretation of Scripture:

- "Is the Bible the Word of God?" by Marcus Borg
- "The Accuracy of the New Testament: A Matter

of Faith?," by Richard Land

- "The Search for the Real Jesus," by Ira Rifkin
- "A Religious Santa Claus Story," by John Shelby Spong
- "Misconceptions about the Virginal Conception, by Ben Worthington III

Borg, an Episcopalian who is a member of the "Jesus Seminar," writes that there are "two [only two?] ways of seeing the Bible's origin. The first sees it as a divine product; the second sees it as a human product.... The first is affirmed by fundamentalist and most conservative Christians." Not surprisingly, Borg sides with the second view, but still wants to say that the Bible is the Word of God, "in its function, not in its origin." Scripture, he says, is a sacrament, "a mediator of the sacred, a means whereby the Spirit of God continues to speak to us even today." This "sacramental function of Scripture occurs especially in its use in Christian devotion and worship."



Land asks whether the accuracy of the New Testament is a matter of faith. A "Christian believer of Baptist and evangelical conviction," he argues that there is ample evidence that all or most of the New Testament books were written during the lifetimes of those who had known Jesus, and that the original writings were copied and transmitted carefully and accurately. Still, he says, "The New Testament is not a secular document making secular claims, but a religious document making transcendent, supernatural claims, and that makes the question of its reliability and authenticity ultimately a matter of faith—faith with a lot of compelling and corroborating evidence, but still faith."

Rifkin, an author and journalist, recounts "The debate over who Jesus was," saying that it "is almost as old as the movement founded in his name." His article places our contemporary discussion, including the Jesus Seminar and its critics, in its historical context. "Under
(cont. page 11)

Something's Gotta Give

I well recall Jack Nicholson's early performances in *Five Easy Pieces* and *Carnal Knowledge*. So convincing was he as troubled, alienated characters incapable of genuine and loving involvement that I figured that was who he must be and that was all he could play. Seeing him then as the feisty, extroverted sailor in *The Final Detail*, I decided I had better pay attention to whatever he did. Some 30 years later he is still full of surprises.

In *Something's Gotta Give*, written and directed by Nancy Meyers, he is up to his old tricks, but of course with a twist. He plays Harry Sanborn, a wealthy music producer and perpetual bachelor who has been chasing 20-year-olds for the past 40 years. So notorious has he become for romancing nubile beauties and yet evading the marriage altar that *New York* magazine has placed him on its cover and conferred on him the title of "The Escape Artist."

The film opens with his arrival at the oceanside family cottage of Marin Barry (Amanda Peet), ready for a weekend adventure. Unexpectedly her mother Erica (Diane Keaton) and aunt Zoe (Frances McDormand) show up, initially taking him for a burglar. Marin's mother is divorced and is a successful playwright. This being a sophisticated crowd, they decide that all four should spend the weekend in the house. Mother and aunt are at once put off and fascinated by Sanborn. As the previews have already telegraphed, Harry slowly develops an interest in his girl friend's middle-aged mother, something he never could have imagined. Even more surprising is the fact that he may be falling in love for the first time in his life. Now this is the stuff of situation comedy, but the dialogue is sharp and witty, and even when the script is thin and contrived, the acting is uniformly a joy to watch. As the sardonic bon vivant, Nicholson has been accused of doing an imitation of Jack Nicholson. This may be true in part, but he has such expansive fun in doing it, and we are included in the fun; more importantly, however, many layers get peeled off to reveal a man overwhelmed and amazed to discover his vulnerability and susceptibility to genuine love.

Romantic situation comedy almost requires a love triangle, and so it is here, but it turns out not to involve the daughter, who soon and gracefully bows out. Enter Keanu Reeves as a handsome young doctor who is introduced when Harry suffers a heart attack. The doctor finds himself attracted to the playwright, 20 years his senior, whose plays he knows well. Mother and aunt are both charmed by the doctor, but the script never makes him particularly interesting, and given the barbed exchanges, the engaging conflicts and attractions

between Keaton and Nicholson, we can't imagine a relationship with the doctor ever going anywhere worth following. But the script is clever enough to keep us guessing and interested, especially when the relationship of these two middle-aged lovers becomes the stuff of a Broadway comedy in which the Nicholson character gets killed off at the end of the second act. We begin to consider

the real possibility that the real-life man with the bum ticker could go the way of the stage character. Enough of that: The preview doesn't give it away and neither shall I.

Many will find in this film a bold celebration of the sexuality of older women and men in an age when the box office plays to the ages of 15 to 24. I don't think so. I saw this film in a nearly packed theater of people mostly in their forties and older. They delighted in the characters, and many of the lines called forth roars of laughter. The baby boomers have always loved movies, and in their mature years they constitute a ready audience for films that celebrate the lives of characters who have been around the block a number of times and are still ready for more.



Please add your name to the sign up sheets on the bulletin board for greeters and Coffee Hour hosts/hostesses.

January 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 10:00am H.E. followed by breakfast at <i>Bob Evans</i>	2	3
4 8:00 am H.E. 9:00 Sunday School / Choir 10:00 H.E. 11:00 Coffee	5 5:30 pm Evening Prayer	6 Epiphany 6:00 pm Candleight Service and Epiphany Party	7 7:30 am H.E. 5:30 pm Evening Prayer 7:00 Choir	8 5:30 pm Evening Prayer 7:00 Outreach Meeting EVELYN AT FRESH START	9	10 10:30-2:30 pm Epiphany Faire at Trinity Cathedral
11 8:00 am H.E. 9:00 Sunday School / Choir 10:00 H.E. 11:00 Coffee	12 5:30 pm Evening Prayer 7:00 Vestry Meeting	13 5:30 pm Evening Prayer	14 7:30 am H.E. 11:00 WWW.Come 5:30 pm Evening Prayer 7:00 Choir	15 5:30 pm Evening Prayer <i>JN Deadline</i> EVELYN AT BISHOP'S GATHERING	16 EVELYN AT BISHOP'S GATHERING	17 EVELYN AT BISHOP'S GATHERING
18 People to People Sunday 8:00 am H.E. 9:00 Sunday School / Choir 10:00 H.E. 11:00 Coffee	19 5:30 pm Evening Prayer	20 5:30 pm Evening Prayer	21 7:30 am H.E. 5:30 pm Evening Prayer 7:00 Choir	22 10:00 am H.E. 5:30 pm Evening Prayer	23	24
25 9:00 am H.E. 10:00 Brunch 11:00 Annual Meeting	26 5:30 pm Evening Prayer	27 5:30 pm Evening Prayer	28 7:30 am H.E. 11:00 WWW.Come 5:30 pm Evening Prayer 7:00 Choir	29 5:30 pm Evening Prayer	30	31

Scriptorium

(from p.8)

the best of circumstances,” he writes, “historical biography is an imperfect art, subject to sources that are difficult to separate from human biases because of the passage of time. To engage in historical biography when the subject lived 2,000 years ago in a pre-modern culture is far more difficult. Even Jesus Seminar representatives will admit that the group is more about raising questions than providing definitive answers.”

Spong, a controversial Episcopal bishop, argues, “The birth narrative of Jesus shouldn’t be taken literally.” Much of what we think we know about his birth (camels, stable, animals, etc.) isn’t even in the Bible. Only two of the books of the New Testament mention Jesus’ birth at all. Matthew’s account seems to be concerned about “fulfilling” an Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah, which, according to Spong, Matthew misunderstood because he was reading a Greek translation of Isaiah rather than the Hebrew “original.” Spong promises in future articles to address the question of what these stories were really trying to convey “about God, about Jesus, about human life itself.”

Ben Worthington III disagrees with Spong. The fact that the earliest books of the New Testament do not mention the “virgin birth” (which, Worthington rightly points out, is really a “virginal conception”) does not mean that the story is just a later legend adapted from Greek and Roman mythology or a lame attempt to link Jesus’ birth to Isaiah’s prophecies. Rather, Worthington argues, there are passages in other New Testament books that refer to Jesus as Mary’s son, with no mention of a male parent. Worthington believes that “Mary told someone about what had happened [that is, that Jesus had been conceived by the Holy Spirit], clearing up questions about Joseph’s lack of paternity,” and that her account found its way into Matthew’s and Luke’s gospels.

Some observations of my own:

- No one, least of all a biblical literalist, really believes that every word of the Bible is literally true. Because the Bible, taken literally, contradicts itself, every biblical literalist has his or her own hermeneutic for deciding what must be accepted and for explaining away the contradictions and inconsistencies.
- Bias can be more powerful than evidence. The Jesus Seminar and Bishop Spong say that traditional believers accept miraculous biblical stories about Jesus as factual just because they

want to believe them. Yet they themselves label almost any miraculous story, regardless of the evidence for it, as myth or metaphor—especially if believers want to accept it as factual.

- The debate over the origin and nature of Scripture—human, divine, or both?—is part of the ancient debate over the origin and nature of Jesus Christ—human, divine, or both? It’s no accident that both Jesus and the Bible have been called the Word of God. How can I even talk about the truth of Scripture without talking about the Truth (as in, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”) of Scripture? And how can I talk about the Truth of Scripture apart from my relationship with him?

To be continued...

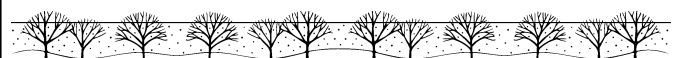
Editor’s Bit

(from p.7)

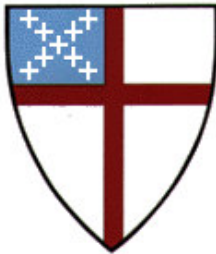
A worried shopkeeper calls the police at 1:30 am because three suspicious guys with bulges in their pockets are positioning themselves at the gas station: one by the pumps, one at the door, and the third inside the store heading toward the counter. The cavalry arrives and finds – surprise surprise – that all the guys are carrying guns. But what’s the charge? Well, nothing! They are carrying the pistols for “personal protection” and were just looking for a late-night coffee. And then they sue the police for harassment.

Ron Wise, another “guns for peace” promoter, feels that carrying arms is “a great idea.” However, his wife, Betty, thinks “this is the most stupid thing I’ve heard of in my whole life.” Josephine Average? According to Betty, “We’re not living in the Old West. Everybody doesn’t need to carry a gun. We’re supposed to be civilized.” Ron, on the other hand, says, “If everyone carried a gun, everybody would be civilized.”

Which reminds me of an old joke. A man walks onto a plane and the security folks find a grenade, a gun, and a knife in his hand luggage. When asked why he is carrying all this stuff, he replied “Well, I heard that one in a million people will have a grenade on a plane; one in another million will have a gun; and one in another million will carry a knife. I reckon that if I’m the one carrying all three, I’m going to feel much safer!”



The Episcopal Church

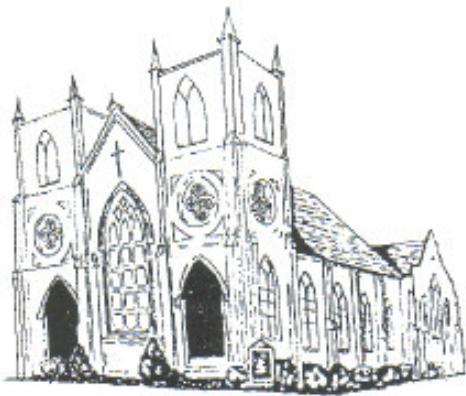


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What's Happening at St. James

- 1st Jan** **Holy Eucharist followed by breakfast at Bob Evans 10:00 am**
- 6th Jan** **Candlelight Service and Epiphany Party 6:00 pm**
- 10th Jan** **Epiphany Faire at Trinity Cathedral 10:30 - 2:30 pm**
- 25th Jan** **Holy Eucharist followed by Brunch and *Annual Meeting***

January 2004						
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February 2004						
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