

# the Joyful Noise

of St. James' Episcopal Church

## The Corporeality of Stewardship

by Damon Hickey

I grew up in the “Southern” Presbyterian Church, which prided itself on being more “spiritual” than “northern” Presbyterians. The two denominations, divided over slavery, theology, and the Civil War, have since reunited. But in my youth, they were very different. Some people said Southern Presbyterians were just Southern Baptists with less local autonomy and better-educated clergy. Our hymnal contained many of the gospel tunes and texts found in Southern Baptist hymnals (and in the Episcopal Church’s *Lost in Wonder, Love and Praise* today). We were definitely more evangelical than our northern counterparts. Our so-called “spirituality” expressed itself in many ways. We were less inclined than “northern” Presbyterians to get involved in social and political issues. We believed that winning souls for Christ was a higher priority than working for social justice.

We also thought of stewardship in inward, personal terms. Specifically, we believed that the church’s programs should be supported entirely by the free-will offerings of God’s people, that tithing (giving 10% of your income to the church) was expected of all Christians, that “offerings” beyond the tithe were also expected (every Sunday the minister would say, “Let us worship God with our tithes and offerings”), and that the church was *never* to raise funds through sales, auctions, games, and the like (unlike the “worldly” Episcopalians and Roman Catholics and, it was rumored, even some northern Presbyterians!). I can’t recall ever being asked to give to a church budget, except for a capital campaign. Stewardship—your personal response to your personal relationship with your personal Savior—was only indirectly related to the church’s program and mission.

At St. James, we’ve also tended to talk about stewardship and pledging primarily in terms of the individual’s response to God, and less about the relationship between our giving and the church’s mission. The needs of the church to pay its bills, meet its payroll, carry on its programs, maintain its property, and advance its God-given mission beyond its walls have received less attention during “stewardship season” than the importance of responding individually to God’s generosity. Parishioners have been asked to pledge not only their money, but also their time and talent, by listing on their pledge forms all the ways in which they planned to be individual good stewards. But unlike PBS, NPR, and a host of charitable orga-

(cont. p.3)



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## Editorial Information

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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](mailto:astolat@sssnet.com)

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



**Astolat**  
Publications



Evelyn, Gladys and Ned now have their own e-mail address. Messages and confidential information can now be sent to the appropriate person. You may still use the [saintjameswooster@earthlink.net](mailto:saintjameswooster@earthlink.net).

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Web Address: <http://www.stjameswooster.org/index.html>

E-mail: [saintjameswooster@earthlink.net](mailto:saintjameswooster@earthlink.net)

*Holy Eucharist Services*

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

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Velda Cross (06)	(330) 345-1416
Sue Gorman (07)	(330) 262-0973
Mary Hickey (06)	(330) 262-7059
Peggy Hockett (08)	(330) 345-7825
Roger Kienzle (08)	(330) 262-4262
Jim Richard (06)	(330) 264-2608
Jane Richardson (08)	(330) 264-4342
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Tim Urang (07)	(330) 682-0118

*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 Greet, Grow, and Give in the name of Jesus Christ.

## The Corporeality of Stewardship (from page 1)

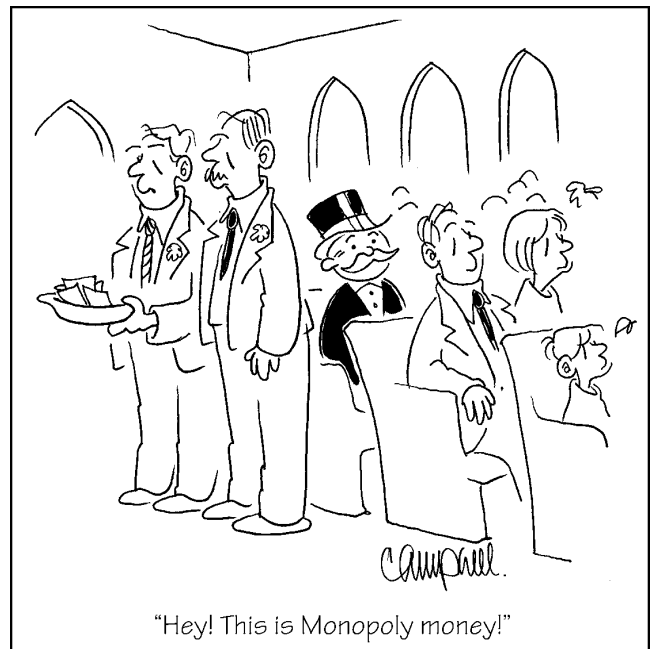
nizations, we've not said, "These are the programs you want, and we need *your* contribution to keep them on the air!"

It would certainly be a mistake to reduce stewardship to giving to any program, including the church's. As good as it is, the United Way is not the church. The Southern Presbyterians were right that the spiritual dimension of stewardship is about our response to God in Christ, not about reaching a giving target, subscribing a budget, or even "doing good." But stewardship is also a big part of how we express and experience our oneness with the body of Christ, his church, and about our corporate ministry through the church. In the Epistle readings for Epiphany, we've heard again St. Paul's words in I Corinthians about the diversity of gifts and the oneness of the body. Let's extend that metaphor to the church's budget. There are ministries that Evelyn, Ned, Jason, Gladys, and our sexton each perform that others of us cannot. These ministries also enable others to do their own ministries. To take just one example, without Ned and Jason, how would the members of the choir minister through choral music? There are ministries that our church and parish office buildings perform—providing space for twelve-step groups, temporary housing for a low-income family, worship, fellowship, religious education, and committee support—that would not happen if we met in a rented school cafeteria, storefront, or church basement. There are wider ministries in Wooster, our diocese, our national church, and the world that most of us are not called to do individually, but that our church's budget enables us to do through others.

So this year, the Stewardship Committee asked the Vestry to state its goals for the church for the 2007 budget year, and to estimate what increase in giving would be needed to meet those goals. We sent that list to everyone who had given to the church in 2006. We asked those who had pledged before to pledge again and to consider increasing their pledges by at least 6%—the Vestry's estimate of the increase needed to meet its 2007 goals. We also told each person or couple how much more that would cost them. We asked those who had not pledged to consider giving at least 2% of their income in 2007. This year we also decided to focus on financial stewardship, and not to include a pledge of time and talent.

I've been overwhelmed by the response. As the last few pledges come in, it seems likely we will see an increase in financial commitments for 2007 of roughly 12%—*twice* what we asked for!—and an accompanying increase of about 12% in the number of pledging "units." That's cause for celebration and thanks to God, and to you! I hope it will also encourage us to go on seeing and discussing our parish budget as an instrument of our corporate mission. Where might seed money help establish a new ministry or fund a pilot project? Where might our support help leverage a community or diocesan effort that needs just a little more to sustain itself? How might discretionary funds be used to promote programs for our children and youth?

It's been said that the Anglican tradition is centered on the Incarnation. We're not just about the Word, but also about the Word-made-flesh. We're not just about pie in the sky by and by when you die, but also about ministering to very "fleshly" needs here and now. Someone said that Christians believe in "inspired flesh," not "embodied souls." We're not just spiritual; we're corporeal. "By their budgets you shall know them" applies equally to the budget of each individual or family and to the budget of our church. Stewardship is not just about each individual's inner response to Christ. It's also about our corporate "fleshly" response in ministry and mission. This year's pledges tell me that we're "getting the message." Thanks be to God!





## Evelyn's Epistle

My Friends,

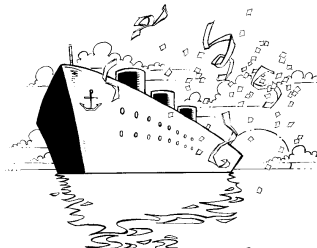
Six months from now I will start my sabbatical. It will begin on July 1st and end with my return to church on September 30th (a fifth Sunday). During those weeks, we plan to have visiting clergy each Sunday to celebrate. If that is not possible, we are blessed with excellent worship leaders/lay preachers who can lead Morning Prayer on the occasional Sunday.

This is my third plan for sabbatical... the first I postponed because the increase of four-legged friends in my home after my father's death. The second plan was nixed because the Doctor of Ministry program I was going to attend was not offered here in town as it had been. So... this is finally it. I have some solid plans and some in the works. I am going to England and Scotland. That will happen in July. I am staying with the Reynolds family for a bit in England, then spending a week on retreat at the Abbey in Iona, Scotland. When I return, I plan to work on developing my skill in stained glass, getting my house organized, and visiting other churches. At some point, there will be a trip to Georgia to meet the new grand-niece or nephew due in early July. I hope to spend a week or more on retreat at the monastery in Boston. In September, I am registered to attend an Alban Institute conference called *Discerning a New Vision for the Long Pastorate*.

The Sabbatical committee and I are beginning work to make sure everything goes smoothly during this time. We will offer more information about commonly asked questions as we look forward to what the needs and concerns are for this period. If you have specific questions or concerns, please let me know so we make sure they are addressed. The number one question I've received so far is, "What about Brooker and the other dogs and the cats?" This is the hardest part of going away! I have lined up a very dependable live-in caregiver for the crew... Kelly Aughenbaugh. So all will be well. Hurray!

This summer, I will celebrate 15 years in ordained ministry, and we will begin our 10th year together. I am so grateful for the support, encouragement, and generosity of this congregation in planning this sabbatical. My hope is that I come back from those three months with increased energy, focus, and passion for our ministry together.

More to come....  
Evelyn



Peggy Hockett

## Cruise Ship St James

Well, it seems to me that we have just dropped out of the Christmas Season right into Lent and Easter. Ash Wednesday is February 21<sup>st</sup> and Easter is April 8<sup>th</sup>. As you know there are many church activities during that time, so the Cruise Ship will be anchored.

However, we do have an event scheduled for April 22, 2007. Dick Figge and Company will do the first public reading of a new play titled "The Visitor" in our sanctuary at 7:00p.m. Donations to Habitat for Humanity will be accepted. This is a public event so friends and family are very welcome, as well as the general public.

The primary character in this four person play is Sigmund Freud. It is set in Germany at the beginning of World War II. It is to be remembered that Freud was of Jewish background, but an atheist. A dialog between Freud and 'the visitor' explores some interesting philosophical questions but with humor. But, who is the visitor?

That is all the background I am going to give at this time, more in March. Put it on your calendar for a great evening of theater. Just think, you will be the first to hear it in this country. WOW! Dick hopes to get audience feed-back regarding the play.

## February Birthdays

- 2 Josh Wilburn
- 3 LeRoy Curtis
- 4 Maxine Hayes
- 5 Linda Peterson
- 7 Travis Kraker  
Mary Lou Nuzum
- 9 Katie Cross
- 10 Denny Brayer
- 11 Bruce Clayton
- 12 Alice Bunting
- 14 Mary Eberhart  
Joan Skelly
- 15 Mary Burns  
Jackie Kiefer
- 18 Delainey Johnson  
Audrey Thomas
- 19 Marilyn Blanchard  
Paul Bonvallet
- 23 John Strong
- 25 Susan Anderson
- 27 Kim Watkins
- 28 Mark Kraker



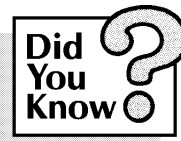
## February Anniversaries

- 1/53 Faz and Ferne Haghiri
- 4/89 Bob and Lori Varga
- 9/64 Hal and Roberta Looney

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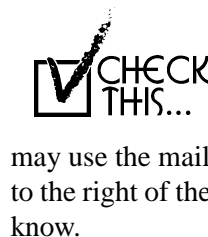
## Adult Forums

Speakers and topics for the Adult Forum are currently being scheduled. This month, the speakers are Bill Blanchard on **Feb. 4** and Stan Hales on **Feb.18**. The Adult Forum meets at 9:30 a.m.




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For those people who don't have a computer and would like to be added to the telephone tree, please call Cynthia Slater at 330/601-0576 or Jill Hockenberry at 330/264-2489.



The black mailbox in front of the office is being used by the apartment upstairs for mail. Please **do not put items in there for the office**. You may use the mail slot or leave items between the doors to the right of the mailbox, but please let the office know.



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.



Communion can be brought to you at home or in the hospital whether you find you cannot make it to church for two weeks or two months. Please call the office if you would like to arrange for communion.



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 Velda Cross, 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 Velda a call on (330) 345-1416. The flowers are yours to take after the 10:00 service

- Feb 4 Jane Richardson in memory of her husband, Bill
- Feb11 Stuart and Terry Ling in meomory of Otto Wagner and in thanksgiving for the three K's
- Feb 18 Shirley Buytendyk in celebration of her grand-daughter Krysten's birthday

The 2007 flower calendar is posted in the North Street entrance, if you would like to provide flowers for the Sunday services.

# St. James' Peace and Justice Committee

Susan Figge

The Peace and Justice Committee has resolved to work this year within the framework of the **Millenium Development Goals**, as formulated by leaders from 191 nations. *Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation* has prepared suggested strategies for individuals, congregations and dioceses to help meet each goal, and as a committee we have added some thoughts of our own. Last month we focused on MDG # 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger. This month we focus on

## MDG #2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

**“A sustainable end to world poverty as we know it, as well as the path to peace and security, require that citizens in every country are empowered to make positive choices and provide for themselves and their families. This can only be achieved if all the children of the world are given the chance to learn in a high-quality schooling environment at least through primary school.”**

from [www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org)

### Did You Know?

- More than 115 million children are out of school worldwide.
- 1 in 4 adults in the developing world is illiterate.
- 46 percent of girls in the world's poorest countries have no access to primary education.
- Universal primary education would cost \$10 billion a year—that's half of what Americans spend on ice cream.
- Young people who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those missing an education.

### What We Can Do as Individuals

Remind our elected leaders that education is a basic human right (as found in the 1948 Declaration of Universal Human Rights) and governments have a responsibility to provide free, compulsory education for all.

The Global Campaign for Education is planning an Action Week, April 23-29, 2007. Learn more about this and other activities and resources by going to their website ([www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)).

Go to the Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation website ([www.e4gr.org](http://www.e4gr.org)) for more information such as that found in the *Did You Know?* paragraph above.

### What We as a Congregation Can Do

Give an amount equal to our church school curriculum budget toward education in a developing country, and continue to provide support such as the funds given through the Outreach Committee to the orphanage Jeff Baker visited in Africa.

### What Our Diocese Can Do

Work through our companion diocese relationship to provide resources for teacher training in the developing world and make the MDGoals a major theme at Convention.

Please add your thoughts to ours on the Peace and Justice bulletin board at the south entrance.

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## Holy Humor

A group of kids were playing church and decided to have a baptism. The problem was that the only candidate for baptism they could find was a cat.

Needless to say, the cat didn't take kindly to being dunked under the water. Finally, after wrestling with the cat for over an hour, one of the kids took a handful of water, poured it on the cat's head, and said "OK, be a Methodist then."

How Many Unitarians does it take to change a light bulb?

We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that light bulbs work for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb, and present it next month at our annual Light Bulb Sunday Service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence.

How many Amish does it take to change a light bulb?

What's a light bulb??

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## Perfume: The Story of a Murderer

German author Patrick Süskind's novel *Perfume* created a sensation in Europe when it was first published in 1985. It was soon widely translated and became an international bestseller. It was a thriller unlike any other, centering as it did on the sense of smell and the evanescent world of fragrances. Its central figure is Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, a figure completely devoid of any moral sense, stunted in all capacities except one: he is an olfactory genius; his discernment of smells is beyond the imagination of other mortals. Having apprenticed with a leading perfumer, Grenouille sets out to create the ultimate perfume, a quest that involves him in a series of murders of young women and gains for him irresistible, irrational power over other human beings.

The novel engaged audiences on a number of levels. First of all, it was a thriller in every sense, a satisfying page-turner that transported readers to a different world and described it in fascinating detail.

For readers familiar with the German and European literary canon, it was an immensely playful postmodern novel, rich with skillful reworkings of motifs of literary masters from Goethe and Kleist to Hoffmann and Baudelaire.

At a more serious level, the novel could be read as a thoughtful critique of 18<sup>th</sup> century rationalism, its attempts to control and exploit nature (and other human beings) and the awful human costs of that endeavor. Since we and our institutions are the children of that age, there were important implications for our own treatment of the world and each other.

Still others chose to read the novel as a political parable, the story of a monster from obscure origins who becomes a thoroughly evil, yet magnetic and charismatic dictator.

Would these conversations be so lively if it weren't for a narrative that is in itself so richly fascinating? It is not surprising to learn that a number of important film directors have been intrigued by the story and the

possibility of adapting it to the screen. Martin Scorsese, Ridley Scott, Tim Burton, and Milos Forman have all seriously considered it. Stanley Kubrick, I am told, pondered the idea for a long time but finally abandoned it as impossible.

Enter Tom Tykwer, Süskind's countryman and the director of such boldly imaginative films as *Run, Lola, Run* and *The Princess and the Warrior*. With Andrew Birkin and Bernd Eichinger he fashioned a screenplay, brought Dustin Hoffman on board to play the master perfumer Baldini, and secured the budget for a mammoth period production. (No doubt with an eye to the international market, the film is in English.)

Aside from Hoffman and Alan Rickman, however, the film does not feature established star performers, which is all to Tykwer's credit. Grenouille is played by the young English actor Ben Whishaw. In a first, memorable close-up shot at the beginning of the film, Grenouille's nose slowly emerges, an emblem of the man, from dark shadow into light in a prison cell. Given that the novel describes Grenouille as a grotesque, hunched figure, it is striking that the film presents him as a slender young man, as a kind of innocent. It is an interesting choice, and it says something about his relationship to the world around him, for that world is seen as entirely self-seeking and exploitative. To present Grenouille as a monster from birth would be to absolve this world and its inhumanity.

This is not to say that we sympathize with Grenouille or even get to know him beyond his obsession. We are appalled, but we are also fascinated in following the obsession to its terrible ends. Beside him, Baldini is almost a comical figure—an artisan and small businessman beyond his better days, pretending to be more than he is and encountering in Grenouille a genius he himself never dreamed of.

If you don't know the story, I'll leave off here and let you follow it in the film to its outsized, fantastic conclusion.

(cont. p.8)



## Speaking of Movies (from page 7)

The novel was extraordinary in its ability to describe scents and their effects. Tykwer's film seeks to do it visually, giving us close-ups of the stinking details of 18<sup>th</sup> century Paris, its fish markets, tanneries, and their denizens as well as the arcane processes of perfume production. Tykwer's cinematographer Frank Griebel skillfully evokes this whole world, and it is never less than fascinating.

My reservation about the film is that it is primarily a faithful translation rather than a compelling work in its own right. Until I read the novel, I confess, my impressions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (aside from its music) were largely visual: paintings and engravings, the pleasing proportions of its architecture and furniture design. From the first page, the novel brilliantly thrusts us into a compelling world of smells, and it is that, even more than the storyline itself, that lingers in memory. "Odors" Patrick Süskind wrote, "have a power of persuasion stronger than that of words, appearances, emotions, or will. The persuasive power of an odor cannot be fended off, it enters us like breath into our lungs, it fills us up, imbues us totally. There is no remedy for it."

Kubrick's skepticism is easy to understand. I found the film admirable in many ways, but it can't exercise the same hold as Süskind's evocative novel.

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## Mini Lenten Retreat

Renew your inner spirit at the next *South Central Deanery Meeting and Mini-Lenten Retreat*. The Retreat will be hosted by Grace Church, Mansfield, on March 31, 2007.

In addition to the Eucharist, we will have a mini Lenten Prayer Retreat. Please mark your calendars. This prayer retreat will be facilitated by Jo Richards, member of Grace Church, Mansfield. Please let me know as soon as you know if you will attend (Susan Lau - johnlau@ecr.net). There will be a service music CD available to be sent to attendees before the date.



*Susan Gorman*

This year the Outreach Committee will again be very busy! As always, we will sponsor the monthly food drives for *People to People Ministries*. In addition, the Committee will help facilitate the *Episcopal Community Service Foundation* and *Episcopal Relief and Development Drives*. In January, some of the Committee members will attend a

seminar put on by *Bridges Out of Poverty*. We hope that this will assist the Committee in determining future Outreach projects and in helping determine allocations.

In June, the Committee will again cook and serve at *Meals Together*. Also starting in June, the Committee will once again collect toiletries and cell phones for *Every Woman's House*. The Committee will also do the *Blessing of the Animals* in October. During the latter part of the year, the Committee will sponsor its annual *Ton of Love* event and Salvation Army bell ringing. Please check the Outreach Bulletin Board for upcoming events! If anyone is interested in joining the Committee please call me at (330)262-0973



## New from Iraq

Justin VanHouten is currently with the US forces in Ar-Ramadi. He has sent us some photos of life in the desert. Justin's tour of duty has been extended by an extra 90 days and so he will not be home in April as he was hoping.

According to Jay VanHouten, "Other than that, he's doing fine." However, to keep his spirits up, Justin appreciates getting mail. So, here is his address:



LCPL VANHOUTEN, JUSTIN  
1ST BN 6TH MAR WPNS CO  
UNIT 73145 FPO AE  
09509-3145

Feel free to send as many letters as you want!

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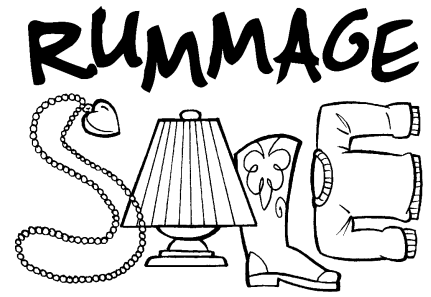
## King and Queen of the Epiphany

This year's King and Queen of the Epiphany are Ray and Lois McCall. Congratulations!



Mark your calendars and start spring house cleaning.

Friday, March 9,  
2007 9:00 a.m. to  
7:00 p.m. Saturday,  
March 10, 2007  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



Start now (if you haven't already!) Donations may be brought to the church any time it is open or you are there for a service or meeting. Place them under the tables in the parish hall. The church will also be open:

Monday, March 5 to Thursday, March 8 between the hours of 9:00a.m. and 9:00p.m. HELP! We need people to take in and sort the contributions during those same hours. If you haven't signed up, that's OK. Come anyhow!

Come when you can and leave when you must. All time is appreciated (even one hour) because that is how the job will get done.

While it is a fund raiser for the church, it is also a very important outreach to those in need. We all have items in our attics, basements and garages that we keep saying we really should get to Goodwill or People to People. This is your chance to help that community and help reduce our deficit as well.

Put the week of March 5th on your calendar and come along to join others for some social time working with friends for a worthwhile cause. There will be an organizational meeting announced soon.



"What part of Guardian Angel don't you understand?"

# February 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 7:00 pm Outreach	2 Mission and Ministry Conference	3 Mission and Ministry Conference
4 8:00 am H.E. 9:00 Choir 9:30 Adult forum 10:00 Sunday School 10:30 H.E. 11:30 Coffee	5	6	7 7:30 am H.E. 9:30 Bible Study 7:00 pm NO Choir	8  Evelyn Off	9  Evelyn Off	10 Evelyn in Elyria
11 8:00 am H.E. 9:00 Choir 9:30 Adult forum 10:00 Sunday School 10:30 H.E. 11:30 Coffee	12 ECSF Meeting at Trinity Commons	13	14 7:30 am H.E. 9:30 Bible Study 11:00 Book Group 3:00 pm Clericus 7:00 Choir	15 7:00 pm Peace and Justice Committee meeting	16	17 Bishop's College for Leadership
18 People to People Sunday 8:00 am H.E. 9:00 Choir 9:30 Adult forum 10:00 Sunday School 10:30 H.E. 11:30 Coffee	19 7:00 pm Vestry meeting	20 6:00 pm Pancake Supper	21 ASH WEDNESDAY  7:00 am H.E. 12:00 H.E. 7:00 pm H.E. Choir	22	23	24
25 8:00 am H.E. 9:00 Choir 9:30 Adult forum 10:00 Sunday School 10:30 H.E. 11:30 Coffee	26	27	28 7:30 am H.E. 9:30 Bible Study 11:00 Book Group 7:00 pm Choir	1	2	3

*Remember, you can check the St. James' website for calendar information and updates. Just go to <http://www.stjameswooster.org>.*



## The Editor's Bit

This month is something of a bumper *Editor's Bit*, which may be welcomed by those many thousands who missed their regular fix last month. I say thousands based on my guess that the St. James' website has such a massive Internet presence that folks across the globe are reading the *Joyful Noise*. I could be wrong.

Digging into my Moleskine (see the November 2006 *Editor's Bit* for a quick refresher) for inspiration, I came across the phrase "Happy as a clam."

Strangely, the very same phrase had come up in conversation only last week while I was expressing a coffee at work with my "Mr. Coffee" cappuccino maker. Clearly I was fated to do some digging – for clams, no doubt.

Now I don't know about you, but the notion of clams being happy is a bit of a stretch for my imagination. The idea of a happy bivalve is one step down from worrying about whether it IS true that goldfish have a memory span of 5 seconds. In the depths of my brain, I seem to recall that shellfish have a rudimentary nervous system at best, and no brain to speak of. Of course, the absence of a brain hasn't stopped Bill O'Reilly from having a massively popular talk show on the Fox network... but I digress.

Getting a handle on a clam's happiness probably depends on finding out what it is in the average life of a clam that could be deemed pleasurable. This would include not being eaten, not being poisoned by toxic waste being pumped into the sea, not being dashed against rocks during a big storm, and not having to watch *The O'Reilly Factor* for more than 5 minutes.

Of course, these are "pleasurable" only in so far as they are pain avoiding. I really had no clue whatsoever about what clams might seek out as being fun. After all, I can't say I've seen many clams drinking to excess on a "clams night out" with the boys, nor have I come across any at rock concerts, museums, operas, movie theaters, or sporting events. I have seen a few sunbathing on beaches, but I'm not sure that counts; not unless they also have a cooler of iced drinks, a bottle of tanning oil, and a large towel.

So my researches into the clam lifestyle had to look at those things we typically see as being pleasurable; food and relationships.

Alas, clams appear to have been short changed in the variety department in that eating and dating turn out to be stunningly monotonous. As far as gastronomy is concerned, clams dine on plankton, plankton, and plankton. Unless there's a clammy

equivalent of Emeril Lagasse "kicking it up a notch," plankton is pretty much... well... plankton. You can't boil, fry, grill, marinade, mash, slice, dice, or otherwise make plankton exciting. If you're a clam, it's unlikely that dining out is going to be the thing that makes you happy.

Relationships are similarly tragic, simply because clams are hermaphroditic spawners. Surprisingly, they start off their lives as males and, with age, become females. And it's during the female stage of their lives that they spawn eggs while the younger males release sperm. Somewhere in the ocean, these two mix together to create tiny little larvae clams, which starts the cycle all over again.

You may want to take issue with me on this, but I'm pretty convinced that the spawning lifestyle doesn't fill a clam with the joys of spring. It sounds about as exciting as taking your shoes off. And for the clams that don't get eaten by crabs or humans, the humdrum and tedium can go on for up to 50 years, just in time to receive that first letter from the AARC – America Association for Retired Clams.

Unable to identify any specific, logical, rational reason for a clam to be happy, I decided that the phrase had to be metaphorical in nature and therefore the work of some deranged lunatic with an over-fertile imagination. The story, as it turns out, is a strange as the clam's lifestyle itself.

In 1813, Ann Sophia Winterbottom was born in the bustling town of Derby in Connecticut. Educated in the gentle arts, she married newspaper owner Edward Stephens of Plymouth, Mass. and they moved to Portland, Maine. There, Edward founded the *Portland Magazine* and Ann became its editor. A prolific writer, she also wrote some books using pseudonyms. In 1854, she published a novel entitled *High Life in New York*, by Jonathan Slick, of Weathersfield, Connecticut, a tale of the experiences of a down-east Yankee in New York city.

It was in this book that she penned the phrase, "They seemed as happy as clams in high water." The inference here is that clams are only harvested at low tide, so if the tide is high, then the clams are safe. Then, as happens all too often in language, the phrase became truncated to "happy as a clam" and that's how it's used today.

Hmm. Maybe the bumper edition wasn't such a good idea after all.



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## What's Happening at St. James

- 2nd/3rd Feb**                    **Ministry and Mission Conference, Cleveland Airport Marriott**
- 20th Feb**                      **Pancake Supper 6:00 pm**
- 21st Feb**                      **Ash Wednesday Services, 7:00 am, noon, and 7:00 pm**

### February, 2007

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### March, 2007

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