

Lent/Easter 2023

# THE VISITOR

Official Newsletter of St. James United Church

# DEMONSTRATE

your ways,

*O Eternal One.*

Teach me

*to understand*

so I can follow.

*Psalm 25: 4*



This issue:

MINISTRY MESSAGE

PAGE 03

MUSIC NOTES

PAGE 05

TREASURER MESSAGE

PAGE 06

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PAGE 09

FAMILY FUN

PAGE 10

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

PAGE 12



Welcome.

The days are starting to get warmer and longer. Lovely spring flowers will be popping up before you know it.

The season of Lent and Easter is upon us. Lent has traditionally been a time of reflection. Take some time to look at Lent a little differently. Instead of seeing it as a time of sacrifice, see it as an opportunity for growth.

Use simple daily reflections and acts of generosity as a way of putting others first during preparations for Easter.

Make your Lenten journey the path for your own personal resurrection.

Sincerely,  
Glen Warren, Editor

St. James United Church  
330 Elizabeth Avenue  
St. John's, NL A1B 1T9

Phone: 709-722-1881

[www.stjamesuc.org](http://www.stjamesuc.org)

Ministers:

Rev. James Ravenscroft  
Susan Sheppard, DLM



@StJamesUnited



st.JamesUC



StJamesUCNL

Worship with us!  
Saturday, 4:30 PM  
Sunday, 11:00 AM  
EvenTide Service  
Sunday, 7:00 PM



## Ministry Message

JAMES RAVENSCROFT & SUSAN SHEPPARD

Ask people what their favourite church season is and most would say Christmas. Not as many but still a good crowd would say Easter. One of our favourites though is Lent. We both like this season because it invites us into collective reflection, to consider who we are and to whom we belong. In United Churches we often express this through added study sessions, like at St. James for the study of Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul, or special prayer services like our noon communion and prayer. In more liturgical denominations like the Anglican, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches, Lent begins with an Ash Wednesday service during which congregants have a cross of ash traced on their foreheads with the traditional words, “Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return.”

It may sound a bit maudlin but it is really an invitation to not only ponder your mortality but really to recall the creation story in which we are told that the first human was formed from the soil and then God breathed life into them. That then is a question of identity, to remember that we are created by God, animated by God’s breath, and so both part of the earth and part of the stars, the same as every other aspect of creation. For those who wish to receive an ash cross, there will be three opportunities. Both Cowan Heights United and Memorial United in Portugal Cove are hosting evening services for Ash Wednesday (February 22), and we will also have an “imposition of ashes” at the end of the morning service at St. James United for the First Sunday of Lent (February 26). Those receiving ashes at St. James will be told “Remember who you are and to whom you belong.”

-Continued on next page.

Do not withhold good  
from those to whom  
it is due,  
when it is in  
your power to act.

PROVERBS 3:27





# Ministry Message

JAMES RAVENSCROFT & SUSAN SHEPPARD

Throughout Lent we will be exploring who we are as we first ponder who Jesus is. This is our main theme this year in large part because the gospel readings in Year A, the year where we mostly hear Matthew's gospel with large portions of John as well. That is the case throughout Lent, with stories in which we hear Jesus reveal his identity in powerful images like Living Water, Light of the World, the Resurrection and the Life. To underscore this, we are beginning the season not with the customary reading of Jesus in the wilderness but rather with Jesus inviting his first disciples to see where he is staying. That invitation to spend time with him is extended to all of us in this time.

This Lent we are also exploring who we are as a congregation as we begin to review our Mission Articulation Plan (MAP) and discern together not only who we are today but where we see ourselves in the next five to ten years. While we are asked by the Region to review our MAP annually, we are doing so with greater congregational engagement this time, motivated in part by budget shortfalls and so the need to review our staffing needs. Rather than approach this with concern, as a ministry team we invite you to do so with hope and prayerful curiosity as we consider what our needs are, what opportunities there are for us in our neighbourhood and wider community, what new initiatives or approaches the Holy Spirit is calling us to develop in response. Who knows where our conversations may take us?

What is key every Lent is that we take the time to reflect and pray. This is the intent behind the ancient practice of fasting during this time, not denying ourselves for its own sake but when we want to have a bit of chocolate, or play a video game, or enjoy a coffee, or whatever we may be abstaining from, our minds and hearts move towards prayer. As you do so this coming Lent, may it be a time of growth and insight into who Jesus is for you, how you are called to live as his disciple, how we all are together as a congregation.





# Music Notes

Warm greetings – on the coldest day of the year – from the St. James Music Team!

St. James has always been blessed with a busy and diversified music program. Of course, I must extend my thanks to the Senior Choir, under the leadership of Bob Rose, for its contribution to our 11 AM services. The choir has made a considerable effort to introduce new hymns to the congregation through introits, anthems and communion music over the past few months. In addition, members are keen to explore some challenging repertoire and are already preparing for the Easter season!

Community and fellowship are two pillars of any church group, and I am pleased to have so many musical groups call St. James “home”. Our Guitar Group has joined us for each church season and, in a few weeks, will be leading our worship for Transfiguration Sunday. A heartfelt thanks to the Newfound Sound Women’s A Cappella Chorus for joining us for our Bethlehem Bazaar as well as a 11 AM worship service. Newfound Sound’s music is energetic, captivating and always enhances our worship. In the coming months, I hope to extend an invitation to other choral and instrumental groups who rehearse at the church to join in our Sunday morning worship.

Several years ago, before the Covid-19 lockdowns, I presented an afternoon pipe organ recital of reflective music for Holy Week. I hope to prepare a similar presentation this year – keep your eyes on the bulletins and congregational emails for more information in the coming weeks.

Many thanks to the congregation for their continuing support of the music program.

Best wishes,

Amy Dalziel




# Treasurer's Message

As we have just finished 2022, and the Finance Committee would like to thank everyone that contributed to the overall cost to run the church and to keep us moving forward. You accepted the 2022 budget of a \$48,500 deficit and we ended the year with around a \$22,000 deficit. We will know once the Auditors have completed their job where we are financially. Please join us on Sunday, March 12th for the Annual Meeting after the service.

The 2023 envelopes are now available at the church. If you have not already picked them up please do so. You can also pay by PAR, pre authorized debit, Paypal through the church website or by Canada Helps. Please contact the church office if you need more information about PAR or an application form.


Jean Thompson  
Treasurer



## BOOK FAIR

**Sunday and Monday**  
**March 19 - 2:00 - 6:00**  
**March 20 - 10:00 - 5:00**

Donations of new or gently used books will be accepted from February 21 - March 14 during office hours.



# EASTER SYMBOLISM

In a few weeks it will be Holy Week, the most significant time of the church year as we mark each day in the last week of Jesus' life. The climax of this week is the Easter Vigil, celebrated as the sun sets on Holy Saturday. As we did last year, St. James will be hosting the Vigil as we welcome the other United Church congregations in Metro St. John's for what is also the first liturgical celebration of the Easter Season.

For those who attended last year, you likely noticed that this worship service is unlike any other in the church year, composed as it is of a variety of elements, each rich with much symbolism. The Easter Vigil often begins with the lighting of the Easter fire, although we opted to make it a transition point between the reading of various passages from the Torah and Prophets and the gospel account of the empty tomb. Traditionally nine readings, they are a retelling of our salvation story from the creation story in Genesis through to the Exodus account and the renewal promised in the Prophetic Books. We made that decision to underscore how lighting the fire is a symbol of Christ's resurrection, the night of sorrow at Jesus' death replaced by the joy of risen life. It also reminds us to the first chapter of the Bible when in Genesis we read how God said "Let there be light" and from that moment the whole creative process began. The resurrection of Christ is like a starting over of that first day, a chance to go back to the beginning as we return to the harmony that we imagine was a constituent element of life in the Garden of Eden. This new life, this dawn of a new age, is something we share. And so we pass that light from one to another, taking the fire of resurrection into the church, and into our own hearts.

Continued on next page.



We further celebrate this sharing in the resurrection through the symbol of water. Just as when we were baptized and so by sharing in Christ's death and resurrection become part of the church, we give thanks for water and pray that the Holy Spirit will renew our hearts. During this portion of the service we often profess our faith as we say again the commitments made at our baptism. Usually associated with being confirmed, we are free to renew our baptismal promises regularly, a recommitment to follow the Risen Christ in our lives, living the harmony that not only we associate with Eden but with God's Reign. And just as we had water poured upon us at baptism as a sign of our rebirth, so we experience the water once more, be it coming to the font or as we did last year, by sprinkling the congregation with water.

The final symbol of this liturgy is the bread and wine of communion. More than just a retelling of Jesus' final meal with his friends, in our remembering, it is as if we were there, and not just at that meal but at every meal he shared, meals of inclusion when so called sinners were welcomed by him, meals of abundance as a few loaves and fish feed more than five thousand people with much left over, meals of renewal when following his death Jesus appeared among them whenever they shared food together. And not even just these meals but the meals of Jesus' Jewish ancestors, the meal he shared with his disciples on that last night being a Passover meal, making it a meal where they remembered how God had rescued them from enslavement in Egypt and as they remembered it was like they were being set free again. Communion is a powerful sacrament where Christ is spiritually present, renewing our relationship with God and each other as we share in bread and wine together, again pointing us toward the harmony of God's Reign, a reign of inclusion, abundance, renewal and liberation.

As you can see, the Easter Vigil service is a richly symbolic celebration of resurrection and recommitment. So if you didn't attend last year, why not join in this time around. It is a beautiful service and one that you will appreciate more and more as the years go by.

James Ravenscroft







# GROW SPIRITUALLY THIS LENTEN SEASON

Stop by St. James United Church for communion and conversation about the upcoming Sunday readings on Wednesdays at noon during Lent.

Join the churches of the United Communities of Faith for our Annual Joint Holy Week Services. Each year, we gather together to journey to the cross. We hope you will join us for these special services as we join together with the wider church community to mark this holy season.

**Monday, April 3, 7:30 pm - George Street United Church**

**Tuesday, April 4, 7:30 pm - Gower Street United Church**

**Wednesday, April 5, 7:30 pm - Wesley United Church**

**Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7:30 pm - Cowan Heights United Church**

**Good Friday, April 7, Noon - Cochrane Street United Church**

**Holy Saturday, April 8, 7:30 pm - St. James United Church**

**JOIN US FOR COMMUNION  
EASTER SUNDAY  
APRIL 9 AT 11:00 AM**

# cook with kids

## CROWN OF THORNS

### Ingredients

pretzel sticks or twists

creamy peanut butter\*

round crackers (like Ritz or Breton crackers)

small Ziploc bag



### Step 1

Place 10-12 pretzels in Ziploc bag. Press out the air and seal. Use a bottom of a jar or mallet to break pretzels into smaller pieces.

### Step 2

Spread peanut butter on cracker going all the way to the edge.

### Step 3

Take individual pieces of broken pretzel and place around the edge of the cracker making a ring.

### Step 4

Repeat and serve.

\*You may substitute a nut butter spread for allergy reasons.

# Colouring Page



# Mark your calendars!

DATE	TIME	LITURGICAL DAY	WORSHIP LEADERSHIP	MUSIC LEADERSHIP/ STYLE OF SERVICE	SPECIAL INFO	FELLOWSHIP
Feb. 26	11:00 am	Lent 1	James	Senior Choir	Communion	Coffee/tea
	7:00 pm	As above	Young Adults	Tapestry	EventTide	
Mar. 5	11:00 am	Lent 2	James	Soloist	EventTide	Coffee/tea
	7:00 pm	As above	Susan	Story and Song		
Mar. 12	11:00 am	Lent 3	James	Senior Choir	ACM after worship	Lunch with pie
	7:00 pm	As above	James	The Sunday Table	EventTide	
Mar. 19	11:00 am	Lent 4	James	Soloist		Coffee/tea
	7:00 pm	As above	Susan	Story and Song	EventTide	
Mar. 26	11:00 am	Lent 5	James	Senior Choir		
	7:00 pm	As above	Young Adults	Tapestry	EventTide	
Apr. 2	11:00 am	Palm Sunday	James	Soloist	Palm Parade	Coffee/tea
	7:00 pm	As above	Susan	Story and Song	EventTide	
April 3-7	Holy Week - See special calendar for where each joint service is being hosted.					
April 8	7:30 pm	Easter Vigil	Jointly led			
April 9	11:00 am	Easter Sun.	James	Senior Choir	Communion	Coffee/tea
Easter Sunday evening. No EventTide service.						
April 16	11:00 am	Easter 2	James	To be determined		Coffee/tea
	7:00 pm	As above	Susan	Story and Song	EventTide	
April 23	11:00 am	Easter 3	James	Senior Choir	Earth Day	Mini-lunch
	7:00 pm	As above	Young Adults	Tapestry	EventTide	
April 30	11:00 am	Easter 4	James	Soloist		
	7:00 pm	As above	Susan	Spirit Dance	EventTide	
May 7	11:00 am	Easter 5	James	Senior Choir	Communion	Coffee/tea
	7:00 pm	As above	Susan	Story and Song	EventTide	
May 14	11:00 am	Easter 6	James	Senior Choir (TBD)		Coffee/tea
	7:00 pm	As above	James	The Sunday Table	EventTide	
May 21	11:00 am	Easter 7	James	Soloist		Coffee/tea
	7:00 pm	As above	Susan	Story and Song	EventTide	
May 28	11:00 am	Pentecost	James	Senior Choir	Communion	Mini lunch
	7:00 pm	As above	Young adults	Tapestry	EventTide	

\*A contemporary online service is weekly at 4:30 pm on Saturdays. Check online for more information.

