




Lent/Easter 2024

The Visitor

Newsletter of St. James United Church



Be joyful in hope,
patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12

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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 is a time to clean out the debris in our lives to make room for new growth. Traditionally, people have done this through fasting, by releasing something in their lives that has a hold on them. Sometimes this is a food, or a possession, or an activity.

Use this season wisely as a time of preparation for growth. Use this season to walk the hills and valleys of your life and identify the obstacles preventing you from growth. Put in place good disciplines that will help you connect with your faith. Make your Lenten journey the path for your own personal resurrection.

Reach out to the church and its members to help you explore your faith.

Sincerely,
Glen Warren, Editor

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

Phone: 709-722-1881

www.stjamesuc.org

Ministers:
Rev. James Ravenscroft



@StJamesUnited



st.JamesUC



StJamesUCNL

Worship with us!
Sunday, 11:00 AM
Sunday, 7:00 PM



Ministry Message

James Ravenscroft

We often don't hear it framed this way, but Lent and Easter are really all about relationships. As you have likely been told at least once or twice, Lent at its beginning in the first centuries of the common era was a time of preparation for people who were preparing to be baptized on Easter Sunday. Having prayed and studied for many months, even years, the last forty days were a time of intense prayer and reflection, so the person could ready themselves for the transformation coming through baptism in a wedding of their lives to Christ, and also to the Christian community. And all through the Easter season, those who had been baptized would take time celebrating and deepening their appreciation of what that meant for them moving forward. Like I said, Lent and Easter are all about relationships.

As we take time this Lent for our own prayer and study, we too reflect on our relationships, not just within the church but in our interactions in the wider community. This is why many people take on a spiritual practice in this time. One such practice is giving something up, the act of denial a tool for reflection, each time you want to have what you have sacrificed being a moment to reflect on who you are and how you want to live in the world. Ideally, we tie the sacrifice to a question of justice. For example, someone gives up chocolate not just as an act of denial but because they want to reflect on how chocolate is made, both in terms of how workers are often exploited and the land deforested.

With this in mind, we are taking an ecological focus this Lent in a couple of ways. First, you are invited to read *Act/Fast: Spiritual Practices for a Climate in Crisis*. This is a United Church resource with reflections and prayer practices for each day of Lent. There will be a Zoom group for those who wish to come together each week to discuss what they have reflected upon. Second, we will include some elements from the book in worship, specifically some of the contributions I made to the book. We will also take some time for environmentally focused quiet reflection during worship. I pray it is a spiritually rich time.

**The kingdom of
God ought to
reshape our vision
of what matters.**

Russell D. Moore





Ministry Message

James Ravenscroft

There will be two other relationship focused activities during Lent. Each Wednesday at 12:30 there will be a communion service followed by a brown bag lunch. No studies. No extra practices. Just a chance to nurture our relationship with Christ and each other. Plus on March 14, our Diversity Committee and the Affirming Ministry Committee at Gower Street United are co-hosting at St. James a panel discussion on gender identity and expression, and how we can best support trans-youth and adults. This will include a light meal to further enhance community building.

It is also a lovely coincidence that the pilot partnership between St. James United and Cochrane Street United starts during Lent. Although we officially begin the relationship on March 1, it was decided to kick-start worshipping together a couple of weeks early with members of Cochrane Street United, including their choir, coming to St. James on February 18, the first Sunday of Lent followed by lunch in the auditorium. In these early weeks of being together, it is good for everyone to take time to get to know one another, as well as to pray for each other. In this season of reflection and prayer, we take time to ponder how we can support one another, including what can we let go of to help nurture a healthy and loving relationship in the months to come. We continue to pray in Easter, highlighting what new life is made possible by the two congregations coming together in mutual support.

There are many ways we can mark Lent and Easter, each a rich opportunity to grow spiritually. Whatever we choose, be it participating in something organized by our congregation or something we do on our own, I pray that it will be a time to grow in relationship with God, with Christ, and with one another.

**Patience is
the companion
of wisdom.**

St. Augustine





Music Notes

Greetings from St. James' Music Team!

It is a messy, overcast day as I write this report. The lyrics, "I the Lord of Snow and Rain" (from the beloved hymn, Here I am, Lord) come to mind. With Christmas well behind us, we prepare for a few more unpredictable months before any signs of spring will arrive.

These upcoming months, despite the weather, will be an exciting and busy time for St. James' music program. Bob and I recently met with Cochrane Street's Music Director, Tristan Cleveland-Thompson, and a member of their choir to discuss the exciting opportunities that arise when two strong musical programs have the chance to collaborate. We are already planning joint Sunday services which will showcase the talents of each choir (St. James and Cochrane) as well as incorporate a combined choir anthem.

Beginning this month, Cochrane's musicians will lead the music worship in our sanctuary the third Sunday of each month. This is an exciting opportunity to "make a joyful noise" with a group of musicians who share in our enthusiasm for worship through song. Rest assured, we will continue to see a lot of St. James' Senior Choir - you will notice in the attached calendar that they are scheduled to lead music on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. I am forever grateful for the effort, commitment and enthusiasm shown by the Senior Choir. Their anthems send us on a journey of emotions - uplifted, hopeful, reflective, thoughtful - but always spiritually nourished. I see, in our Wednesday rehearsals, the effort and energy required to present this music - and it is not lost on the congregation.

On a sadder note, over the last few months we lost two members of the congregation who were near and dear to our music program: Roly Hillyard and Harvey Weir. I had the pleasure of working with both Roly and Harvey - two musicians who brought a wit and sense of humour that made rehearsals joyful and lighthearted. Their memory is often shared in rehearsals, and we will feel their loss for years to come.

I encourage members of the congregation to attend a Sunday 7PM Vespers Service. We hold a Taize service and Celtic Vespers service each month. The latter service features lively, Celtic songs on piano and guitar, and is an enjoyable service for anyone who appreciates Newfoundland folk music.

Looking forward to the many musical memories that 2024 will bring.
With best wishes,

Amy Dalziel



Cochrane Street Pilot Project

After many months of discussion and planning, we are pleased to announce that the start date of our pilot partnership with Cochrane Street United Church is officially March 1st. In addition, the first worship service hosted by them at St. James will be a couple of weeks early on the First Sunday of Lent (February 18th), making it possible for both congregations to share common elements for this important church season. Further to this, the Regional Council has given their blessing to this partnership and its leadership is excited to see how things unfold.

So how did we get here? As you will recall, in January 2023 Cochrane Street United approached the various United Church congregations in St. John's with the concept of congregations forming partnerships, an innovative solution as congregations face declining membership. Several meetings were held, and much brainstorming was done around how such a thing could be possible and the impact of it not being possible. If it were possible, what would it look like? Everyone involved agreed that the concept was a way for us to move forward and carried great responsibility to ensure its fruition. Interested churches were invited to submit proposals of how they could support and be a part of that vision. We were pleased to learn that the leadership at Cochrane Street decided that the congregation and ministerial leadership of St. James was the best choice for moving forward with this idea.

From there, many moving pieces have been coming together to make this dream a reality. We are in the process of searching for a part-time minister. If the successful candidate is not available until later in March or April, we will still begin to live into the partnership on March 1. Our various committees and groups plan to begin communicating, exchanging ideas and getting together to foster positive relations between the two congregations. A liaison committee has been established to navigate the next eighteen months. A full review with congregational input is planned at the six-month mark.

For St. James, the partnership is cost neutral. On the first Sunday of the month, Rev. James will lead worship at Cochrane Street. St. James will be led by lay leadership with the possibility of the part-time minister leading some of those services. On the third Sunday of the month, Cochrane Street will host the St. James service. They will usher, read, and we will enjoy their choir, hopefully in conjunction with our own choir! Rev. James will provide leadership and preach.

We are very excited about the potential this partnership presents and to take all of you with us into the next chapter of our United Church history!

Michelle Skinner
Chair, St. James Council

Treasurer's Message

Revenue:

Collections & Special Envelopes	\$198,004.73
Rentals	\$29,924.65
10 Paton	\$18,000.00
Fundraising	\$6,705.11
AOTS	\$4,610.00
UCW	\$7,000.00
Other	\$986.80

Total Revenue \$265,231.29

Expenses:

Repairs and Maintenance	\$18,972.92
Heat	\$31,563.42
Church Operations	\$72,572.47
Assessment/Donations	\$16,141.00
Committees	\$1,761.36
Salaries	\$183,107.70

Total Expenses \$324,118.86

Total Loss: 58,887.57



We have come to another financial year-end at St. James. 2023 has been a very trying year financially, but in other ways we are moving forward and doing some great things. Here is a brief look at where we are at December 31st.

There are several reasons for the net loss. With an aging congregation, our revenue is down due to members passing away and the high cost of living. Our expenses are up due to age of the building it is now needing repairs, cost of oil is rising and the increase in our insurance. A big thank you to the UCW and the AOTS for their general donations, and also a thank you to all members of St James for helping to keep our church going.

2024 Budget has been approved by council and will be presented to the Congregation on March 17th, 2024 at our Annual Congregational Meeting. Please mark your calendar to join us for this important meeting.



Lent is here. Instead of giving something up, why not think about what you would like to learn from your journey this year?

Grief, anxiety, hope, love, pain, despair, awe—many emotions are used to describe our relationship with all of Creation. What is your personal, physical, and spiritual relationship with God's Creation?

How does this relationship affect how you follow Christ? This Lenten devotional invites us to deepen our love for Creation and take action or fast for a climate in crisis. We will come together once a week via Zoom on the Wednesdays of Lent to discuss what we learned and experienced. If you plan to take part in the study or just read the book on your own, please order through the United Church Bookstore (link below). Look at Lent from a different perspective by deepening your love for the environment along with your commitment to climate action.

Act Fast is available at the United Church Bookstore:
<https://ucrdstore.ca/collections/books>

There are many other great books available.



UCW MESSAGE

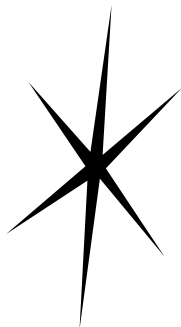
Well, we can't say it really feels like spring - 6°. We have snow and more forecast for on the way.

But it's good to be alive, to walk in the snow. It's difficult for older members to get around, and some of us who are not so old don't like snowy days either. But we must take the bad with the good and vice versa. Our UCW members are dwindling away. The church and our UCW have changed in the past few years. However, we are planning an afternoon tea and bake sale on Saturday, April 20th between 2:00 and 4:00 PM . Hopefully we'll have better weather, and everyone will get out to enjoy our afternoon tea and meet old friends and possibly new ones. We extend a warm welcome to all women who would like to become a member to our UCW.

As we enter into the holy season of Easter, it is time to explore the reality and deep meaning of Christ. It is a time to remember and reflect upon what was done for you and for me. It is a time to ask ourselves "What meaning do we find in the death and resurrection of Jesus for ourselves and for the world."

Happy Easter to all,

Betty Pilgrim
UCW President



United Church Women

COFFEE & BAKE SALE



**\$8 AT
THE DOOR**

**ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH
330 ELIZABETH AVENUE**

CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR INFO.



Being Nice

Recently, I came across the video [“Stop Being Nice So You Can Be Kind.”](#) As I watched, behaviours that I practice regularly in efforts to be “nice” surfaced in my mind. Often, I feel the need to solve other people’s problems, even when they don’t ask for my help. For many of us, the social conditioning to be “nice” — e.g., abandoning our needs to accommodate others, assuming responsibility for “keeping the peace,” being silent about our thoughts and feelings — starts at an early age. This is particularly true for individuals who identify as female and other historically and systemically marginalized people.

Being nice is centered on what we believe we can glean from obtaining someone else’s favour. Because niceness does not require authenticity, practicing niceness regularly can lead to feelings of resentment and being overextended and underappreciated. Niceness is quite different from the kindness described in the scripture below.

Kindness is a type of love that makes room for others to live their purpose without our attempting to influence them. Kindness is a love action that eliminates selfish ambition and ego. When we are motivated by kindness, we use our positions to build people instead of using people to build our positions. Kindness is a love that lives in truth. Kindness speaks truth in our relationships with the creator, ourselves, our colleagues, our schedules, our finances and with the people we serve through our work in the church and community. Kindness leads to everyone being honoured and valued equitably.

During this time of Lent, let us choose kindness over niceness as we reflect on the love that led Jesus to the cross.

Glen Warren

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs.

1 Corinthians 13



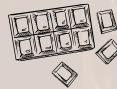
St. James invites you to celebrate easter with delicious Purdy's Chocolates! At the same time you'll be helping our congregation achieve its financial goals.

Order deadline: Wednesday, March 6, 2024

**Pick up your order at the church
on Saturday, March 30, 2024.**

Thank You!

FOR YOUR PURCHASE



Click [HERE](#) to start your order!

For more information contact Paul Walsh



Noon - 3pm
17 MARCH

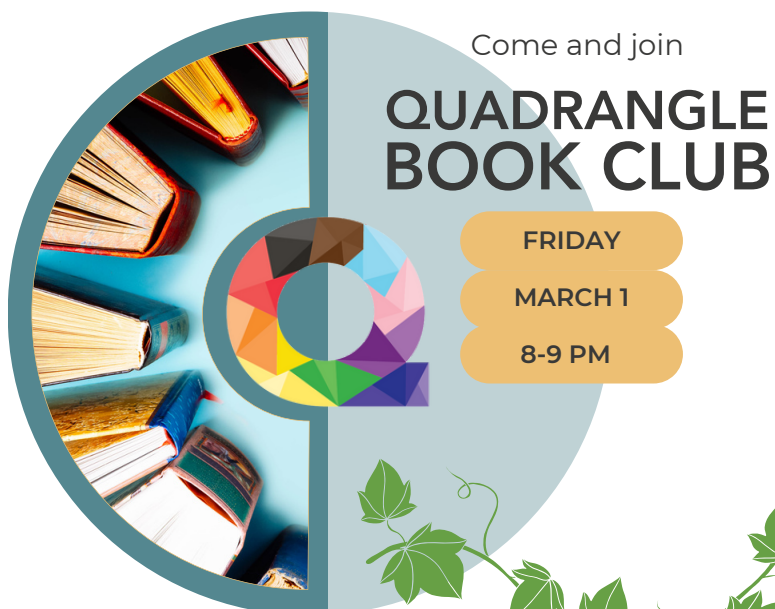
ANNUAL CHURCH *Meeting*

Stay after the service for the annual
general meeting for St. James.
Refreshments will be provided.



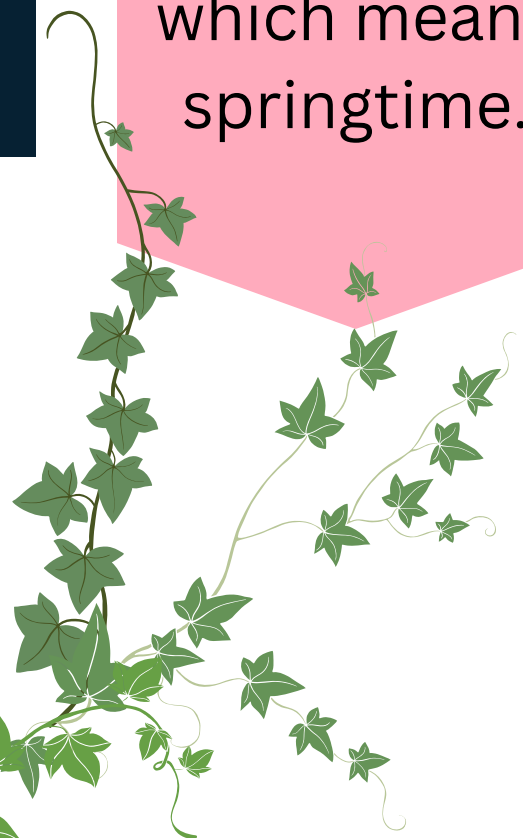
LENT

comes from
the Middle
English word
“lente,”
which means
springtime.



Come and join
**QUADRANGLE
BOOK CLUB**

FRIDAY
MARCH 1
8-9 PM





GROW SPIRITUALLY THIS LENTEN SEASON

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.



Maundy Thursday, March 28

- Gower United Church

Good Friday, March 29

- Wesley United Church

Holy Saturday, March 30

- St. James United Church

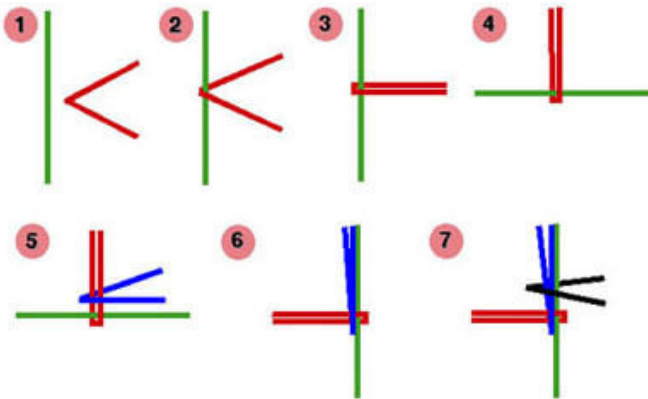
**Join us for communion
Easter Sunday
March 31 at 11:00 am**

craft with kids



Ingredients

- 16 Pipe cleaners or straws
- 4 small rubber bands
- Scissors



Ireland's patron saint, Brigid was known for "helping" miracles like feeding the poor, or rescuing the weak from violence. How can you be like Saint Brigid and help out in your community?

St. Brigid's Cross

1. Hold one of the reeds vertically. Fold a second reed in half as in the diagram.
2. Place the first vertical reed in the centre of the folded second reed.
3. Hold the centre overlap tightly between thumb and forefinger.
4. Turn the two rushes held together 90 degrees anti-clockwise so that the open ends of the second reed are pointing vertically upwards.
5. Fold a third reed in half and over both parts of the second reed to lie horizontally from left to right against the first straw. Hold tight.
6. Holding the centre tightly, turn the three reeds 90 degrees anti-clockwise so that the open ends of the third reed are pointing upwards.
7. Fold a new reed in half over and across all the rushes pointing upwards.
8. Repeat the process of rotating all the rushes 90 degrees anti-clockwise, adding a new folded reed each time until all rushes have been used up to make the cross.
9. Secure the arms of the cross with elastic bands. Trim the ends to make them all the same length. The St Brigid's Cross is now ready to hang.

Colouring Page



Mark your calendars!

DATE	TIME	LITURGICAL DAY	LEADERSHIP	MUSIC	SPECIAL INFO	FELLOWSHIP
February 14	7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday	James		Imposition of Ashes	
February 18	11:00 am	First Sunday in Lent	James	CSUC Choir		Luncheon
February 18	7:00 pm	First Sunday in Lent	James		EventTide - Celtic Vespers	
February 25	11:00 am	Second Sunday in Lent	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
February 25	3:00 pm	To be announced	James		Wild Light Spiritual Oasis	
March 3	11:00 am	Third Sunday in Lent	TBA	Guitar Group	James at CSUC	Coffee/tea
March 3	7:00 pm	Third Sunday in Lent	James		EventTide - Taizé	
March 10	11:00 am	Fourth Sunday in Lent	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
March 10	7:00 pm	Fourth Sunday in Lent	Young Adults		EventTide - Tapestry	
March 17	11:00 am	Fifth Sunday in Lent	James	TBA	Annual Congregational Mtg	Luncheon
March 17	7:00 pm	Fifth Sunday in Lent	James		EventTide - Celtic Vespers	
March 20	7:00 pm	Spring Equinox	James		Wild Light Spiritual Oasis	
March 24	11:00 am	Palm Sunday	James	CSUC Choir		Coffee/tea
March 30	7:00 pm	Easter Vigil	James and Company	TBA	City-wide service	
March 31	11:00 am	Easter Sunday	James	Senior Choir	Baptism and Communion	
No	Evening	Service	This Week.			
April 7	11:00 am	Second Sunday in Easter	TBA	TBA	James at CSUC	Coffee/tea
April 7	7:00 pm	Second Sunday in Easter	James		EventTide - Taizé	
April 14	11:00 am	Third Sunday in Easter	James	Senior Choir	Communion	Coffee/tea
April 14	7:00 pm	To be announced	Young Adults		EventTide - Tapestry	
April 21	11:00 AM	Fourth Sunday in Easter	James	CSUC Choir		Luncheon
April 21	7:00 pm	Fourth Sunday in Easter	James		EventTide – Celtic Vespers	
April 28	11:00 am	Fifth Sunday in Easter	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
April 28	3:00 pm	Celebrating Spring	James		Wild Light Spiritual Oasis	
May 5	11:00 am	Sixth Sunday in Easter	TBA	Guitar Group	Hymn Sing, James at CSUC	Coffee/tea
May 5	7:00 pm	Sixth Sunday in Easter	James		EventTide - Taizé	
May 12	11:00 am	Ascension Sunday	TBA	Senior Choir	James away in Toronto	Coffee/tea
May 12	7:00 pm	To be announced	Young Adults		EventTide - Tapestry	
May 19	11:00 am	Pentecost Sunday	James	CSUC Choir	Communion?	Luncheon
No	Evening	Service	This Week.			