



St. James Newsletter

February 2015

From the Rector

With the substantial completion of our *Building on Faith* projects, we can now take a moment, at least a Sunday morning, to celebrate. Bishop Ely will be with us on February 15. With no 8 a.m. service that day, we have the opportunity to gather as one community to give thanks for all that has been done and receive God's blessing through our Bishop for our future ministries.

Our buildings, as beautiful as they are, are not ends in themselves. They were built, and now renewed, to nurture our capacity to serve God and neighbor. This past week, AA meetings were held for the first time since July at St. James, signaling our re-opening to community groups. I recently met with non-profit leaders in Woodstock to invite them to use our accessible facilities.

The third week of January saw members of the wider community attending the *Creating Common Good* Trinity Institute webcast at St. James. In the last century an Archbishop of Canterbury proclaimed, "The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members." While putting the case strongly, he is essentially right. We are called to serve. Over the next months and years, our renewed buildings will give us new tools in reaching out to the needy around us. Our task will be to discern how we will do that.

In the meantime, I will mark my twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood by renewing my priestly vows before the congregation, inviting all present to re-affirm your own Baptismal Covenant. I am very grateful to the Rt. Rev. R. Stewart Wood, Jr., known by all as Stew, for his presence that day to assist in the renewing of all our commitments to God and neighbor, in whatever form of work or service they may be practiced.

On Sunday, January 25, we will gather for our Annual Meeting. This is another opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year and rededicate ourselves to praying, praising, singing, learning and serving together in the name of Christ in our corner of the world and beyond.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Norman MacLeod to Mark 25th Anniversary of Ordination - Bishop Stewart Wood to Preach

On Sunday, February 1, the Rt. Rev. R. Stewart Wood, Jr., will preach at both 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services and lead the Rev. Norman MacLeod in a reaffirmation of his ordination vows. This will be an opportunity for all present to renew their commitment to their own faith and service through the Baptismal Covenant.

The Rt. Rev. George N. Hunt ordained him to the priesthood on February 4, 1990 at the Cathedral of St. John, Providence, Rhode Island. Norman received a Master of Divinity Degree from Yale Divinity School in 1989. He first served as an associate at Grace Church, Providence, before taking on the roles of Vicar at St. Augustine's, Kingston, R.I. and Episcopal Chaplain at the University of Rhode Island. In September, 1997, he was called to Christ Church, Guilford, Connecticut, where he served for eleven years. After serving as an interim priest at St. James, Keene, New Hampshire, and St. John's, Waterbury, Connecticut, he was called to Woodstock in September, 2011.

Stewart Wood served as Bishop of Michigan before his retirement. He is active at St. Paul's, White River Junction, and currently serves as president of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Dartmouth, formerly known as ILEAD.

Native Alaskan Episcopalian to Speak February 22

David Solomon, a leader of the Gwich'in people, will speak after the 10 a.m. service on the need to preserve his peoples' homeland.

The Gwich'in are the northernmost Indian Nation, living in fifteen small villages scattered across a vast area extending from northeast Alaska to the northern Yukon and Northwest Territories in Canada. The word "Gwich'in" means "people of the land." Oral tradition indicates the Gwich'in have occupied this

area since time immemorial, or, according to conventional belief, as long as 20,000 years.

The Episcopal Church has a deep and special relationship with the Gwich'in Nation. More than 150 years ago Anglican and then Episcopal missionaries traveled to Fort Yukon, Alaska to establish a mission there. Today more than 90 percent of the Gwich'in are Episcopalian. They represent one of the few Native Anglican Nations in the world.

David Solomon is head of the Gwich'in Steering Committee and has been involved since 1975 in efforts to protect the vast area so long inhabited by his ancestors. The Alaska Wilderness League brings David Solomon to the region as part of Arctic Alaska Wilderness Week in the Upper Valley. He will begin his week at St. Thomas, Hanover, and spend time at Dartmouth College, the Montshire Museum, the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) and Kendal at Hanover. For more information on the work of the Gwich'in Steering Committee, go to <http://ourarcticrefuge.org/>.

Bishop Ely Visits Parish to Celebrate and Bless Renovated Buildings

On Sunday, February 15, the Rt. Reverend Thomas C. Ely, Bishop of Vermont, will bless the renewed buildings of St. James Church. There will be only one service that day, at 10 a.m. This will be followed by a festive coffee hour.

Bishop Ely's visit marks a culmination in the parish's *Building on Faith* project, begun through intense planning leading to a capital fund drive in the fall of 2013 and a period of intense demolition and building activity through much of 2014. While some projects are not entirely complete, this Sunday will be a great opportunity to celebrate with our Bishop the work and generosity of so many.

Episcopal bishops seek to visit parishes in their dioceses about once a year. Bishop Ely's annual time at St. James comes at perfect time to receive his blessing on the massive efforts we have undertaken.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas Clark Ely became the Tenth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont in 2001. With a diocesan Ministry Support Team who live and work in a variety of locations, he oversees a diocese of 45 congregations and approximately 7,000 members.

As part of his call as Bishop of Vermont, Bishop Ely serves on the Board of the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society and is involved with Vermont Interfaith Action, a congregation-based community-organizing network. He is also active in

Kids4Peace, an interfaith initiative of Saint George's College in Jerusalem that brings together Jewish, Muslim and Christian children from Vermont and Israel/Palestine. He is a member of Bishops Working for a Just World, Bishops United Against Gun Violence, the Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music and The Episcopal Church Task Force on the Study of Marriage.

Larry Roberts and Dwight Camp to Receive Award for Spiritual Leadership with Boy Scouts

At the time of Bishop Ely's visit on Sunday, February 15, he will present the Episcopal Church St. George Award to Larry Roberts and Dwight Camp. This award is a national recognition acknowledging distinguished service by adults in the spiritual, physical, mental and moral development of youth through service to the Church and through youth programs. Dwight and Larry have worked in leadership and advisory roles with the Boy Scouts in Vermont for most of their adult lives, having both achieved Eagle Scout as young men.



2014 Final Annual Budget Report

	Budget	Actual
Pledge Income	\$220,300	\$203,860
Total Income	\$294,314	\$273,219
Total Expenses	\$317,719	\$297,390
Deficit	\$ 23,405	\$ 24,171

Benediction

Mercy

Mercy is pretty much a church-only word these days. This means it is rarely understood. The general “sense” of the word today, in church and outside, is “give me/us a break.”

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Sounds like a plea for a blanket leniency in dealing with all our short-comings when it comes to living up to God’s standards for human behavior. Right?

When we use the word Mercy with this understanding, we are doing two things wrong.

First off, it’s a way of feeling sorry for ourselves: Yes, sure, we’re no good compared to you and your A+ walking the walk. We know that, thanks. Second, we’re pretty sure it’s all sort of board-game meaningless: God is known to hand out “Get out of Jail Free” cards fairly liberally, so as long as we’re playing Heaven and Earth in church, we’d like you to give us one of those cards. Thanks.

At no point is God truly present in our understanding and use of the word Mercy. Here are a couple of ways to get things right. First, understand that Mercy is about God, not you: We celebrate our daily experience of God’s powerful mercy and we are overwhelmed with joy, not self pity. Thank you so much for our intimate, present relationship with you! Second, God’s Mercy speaks to our heart, not our actions: Mercy heals the heart, and out of the healing heart come holy actions. Mercy enables your heart to gush with the same living water that flows from God. You are joined in the powerful current of life.

Mercy is the powerful, infinite and intimate kindness of God. We respond to it more readily than we do to any other aspect of the Godhead –

justice, humility, peace, joy and love. Our hearts know when we experience kindness. We are tremendously grateful, every time, and changed for the better every time by that experience, just a little maybe, but changed.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, change us with your kindness. Christ change us with your kindness. Lord, change us with your kindness so that we become you.

It is a powerful prayer for holiness, creation and overwhelming life in this world. Mercy: the kindness of God spreading through the world, through us.

~ Jane Wolfe, Bog Chapel
www.bogchapel.org

Don’t have the 2014 Annual Report?

**Copies will be available for
pick up at
St. James**

**Contact Sari White at
802-457-1727 or
swhite@stjameswoodstock.org
if you wish to have a copy
emailed, or sent out.**

Sundays and Holy Days @ St. James

January 25 – Third Sunday after Epiphany

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist. Rite I
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II and Sunday School
11:30 a.m. Light Lunch and Annual Meeting, Childcare provided

February 1 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist. Rite I
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Reaffirmation of Ordination Vows
by the Rev. Norman MacLeod. Guest Preacher: the Rt. Rev. R. Stewart Wood, Jr.,
retired Bishop of Michigan
11:15 Coffee Hour

February 8 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist. Rite I
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
11:15 Coffee Hour

February 15 – Last Sunday after Epiphany Blessing of Renewed St. James Buildings

No 8 a.m. Service
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Preacher and Celebrant:
the Rt. Reverend Thomas C. Ely, Bishop of Vermont
11:15 a.m. Festive Coffee Hour

Ash Wednesday, February 18

Noon Holy Eucharist, Rite II and Imposition of Ashes
7 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II and Imposition of Ashes

February 22 – First Sunday of Lent

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
11:15 Coffee Hour and Presentation by guest speaker David Solomon,
a leader of the Gwich'in people of northeastern Alaska and a lifelong Episcopalian

St. James Episcopal Church

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St. James Episcopal Church

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Woodstock, VT 05091

**St. James Episcopal Church
Annual Meeting**

**January 25, 2015
11:00 a.m.**

**Light lunch to be served
Childcare will be provided**