



Lent/Easter 2025

THE VISITOR

Official 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 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

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Rev. James Ravenscroft



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st.JamesUC



StJamesUCNL

Worship with us!
Sunday, 11:00 AM



Ministry Message

JAMES RAVENSCROFT

Each year as the worst of Winter ends and we start to look forward to some semblance of Spring, we once again mark the Season of Lent. This timing shouldn't surprise us given that the word Lent comes from the root of the old English for lengthen, the designation because this church season coincides with lengthening days and so an increase in the amount of light we experience. I like this connection. Unlike the name for this church season in other languages, such as Carême in French because it is forty (quarante) days long, or Fastenzeit in German because fasting is a significant practice in Lent for many people, the English word ends up capturing, albeit accidentally what we hope to gain spiritually each year.

This makes sense, the roots of Lent being a time when adults prepared themselves for their baptism at the Easter Vigil, the first worship service of the Easter Season. After this they were no longer considered catechumeni (those being instructed) but called photismenoi (those who had received light). Light is associated with Christ's resurrection (especially the dawn when the women discovered the empty tomb), with the grace of the Holy Spirit (which appeared as tongues of fire over Jesus' followers), and with awakening or receiving wisdom. We prepare for all of these during Lent and look toward the Season of Easter.

continued on the 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

Perhaps it is through this association with wisdom that a common practice for Lent in United Church congregations is holding a study group. This is often the case at St. James, last year a group gathering online to study Act/Fast: Spiritual Practices for a Climate in Crisis. This year we will hold a focused Bible Study during Lent, looking at the significance of the cross from a number of different perspectives. We will hold two sessions a week, once on Sunday afternoons following worship and fellowship (you are encouraged to bring a bag lunch) and once on a weekday evening, the day determined by those participating. This study will parallel the main focus of each Sunday, the general theme being “Under the Shadow of the Cross” as we prepare ourselves for Holy Week as Jesus accepts the cross for himself and invites us to carry our own cross as well. It is appropriate then that we have the chance to be marked with the cross both on Ash Wednesday (March 5 at 6:30 pm) and again following the main worship service on Sunday morning (March 9 at 11:00 am).

The cross is not the end of the story, Jesus’ death becoming a moment of transformation for him and each of us through the resurrection. We are joined to him, dying to our old selves in order to rise with him through baptism. Thankfully each Easter (both at the Easter Vigil and on Easter Sunday) we get to renew our baptismal promises, affirming our commitment to him and to the spiritual awakening we experience through his Spirit. May the Season of Lent be a time for each of us to reflect on that gift, a time to grow in wisdom and in grace.



Music Notes

As we enter the season of Lent, our music will guide us through this reflective time under the theme “Beneath the Shadow of the Cross.” This season invites us into moments of contemplation, and our musical offerings will embrace this spirit with beautiful, introspective selections prepared by various musical groups.

Our Lenten worship will include music from the Taizé tradition. Taizé music is simple, repetitive, and meditative, creating space for deep reflection. For those interested in experiencing more of this style, we encourage you to attend St. James’ Taizé service on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM.

The St. James Senior Choir is hard at work preparing a variety of anthems for Lent and Easter, including “Worthy Is The Lamb” from Handel’s Messiah, “And Can It Be?” by Dan Forrest, selections from John Rutter’s Requiem, and more. We are thrilled to welcome a few new members who have recently joined the choir—thank you for sharing your voices with us!

A new and exciting addition to our music community is the St. James Young Adult Ensemble, featuring piano, guitar, and voice. This group enjoys performing contemporary music and reimagining traditional hymns in a fresh, modern style. We certainly enjoyed their leadership at our Sunday, February 9th, 11 AM service.

A sincere thank you to the St. James Guitar Group for lending worship on Sunday, January 26th. Their musical contributions extend beyond our church walls, as they continue to bring the joy of music throughout the St. John’s area. We commend their dedication to sharing St. James’ musical spirit with the wider community.

We are always interested in hearing from members of the congregation who would like to get involved in the music program. Please reach out to Amy or Bob if you have any ideas, feedback or hidden musical talents to share with the congregation!

Best wishes,
Amy Dalziel, Director of Music



Message from the Chair

Spring: Sunshine, warmth, soft breezes, new life, hope, renewal. One word evokes so much.

Our hearts beat a little faster, our steps are a little lighter. We are filled with a sense of anticipation, of what, we are not sure. We just know.

The blanket of long, dark, cold days is about to lift. But we are not patient. We wish it to be plucked away quickly. We are tired. We are dreary. We are in a hurry, always in a hurry.

God's unveiling is slow and deliberate. It is with purpose. We are to be still, to be emersed in the experience of the awakening. We are to close our eyes as we breathe the warm spring air, as we listen to the chirps and croaks of a world coming slowly back to life. We are to let our eyes be saturated with the vibrant colors of the crocus and the daffodil. We are to feel the new, sweet grass underneath our bare feet.

God wishes to fill us with renewed wonderment, to return us to a child like state of innocence and openness. It is in this state of perfect communion that we can allow ourselves to be fully open to the love that Jesus has for us; a warm, soft, vibrant love that is ultimately expressed in the Easter story.

Spring is the renewal of God's commitment to us. "I love you" whispers all around us. We have only to be still and listen.

Michelle Skinner
Chair St. James Council

I Dream of Spring

by Joseph J. Mazzella

In the midst of Winter I often dream of Spring.
In my mind's eye I see the days lengthening with the sun
rising earlier each day in the pink morning sky,
bathing the world in it's golden light.
I see the snow rapidly melting under its wonderful warmth.
I see the grass turning green again
as killing frost turns into gentle rain.
I see the first dandelions and buttercups peeking their
heads through the rich soil and stretching towards the sun.
I see the buds and blossoms on the trees
filling the air with their sweet smells.
I hear the birds singing songs of love again
and watching them soar through the sky.
I see the hibernating animals awakening from their winter
sleep and rejoining the world of the living again.
I hear the sweet music of children's laughter
as they run and play outside.
I see neighbors sitting on their porches and sharing friendly
waves and kind words with each other.
I feel the whole entire world around me coming back to life
again and knowing that God's Loving care is behind it all.
In the midst of Winter I often dream of Spring
and that gives me hope and warmth and love and joy.

I know too that in this world it often feels like Winter inside
of us, no matter what the season outside is.
I know that we sometimes feel cold, lonely, hurt, and sad.
I know that sometimes it feels like Spring will never come.
But deep inside each of us there is an eternal Spring.
It is a gift of God given in His Wisdom and Love.
It is up to us, though, to bring it forth
and face the winter of this world.
It is up to us to share our warmth, our love,
and our Spring even on the coldest days.

Dream of Spring then. Share your Spring.
Bring your warmth to everyone you meet
and help God to bath this world in Love.
And know too that when your life in this world is over God
awaits you in a place where it is always warm, it is always
Loving, and it is always Spring.



Spring: A Season of Hope

Are you getting anxious for the coming of spring? Do you find that winter is dragging on? Winter is a very important season. It prepares us for spring. It is a time to take a break and a time for rest, reflection and restoration. When winter's work is done, spring arrives. It is a season of hope, a time of rebirth, reawakening and renewal. Solomon 2: 11-12 says, "for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land."

Although, we have to be patient for the weather to catch up, nature's signs of spring are all around us. The snow is melting, seeds are sprouting, early flowers are even blossoming, birds are returning, animals are coming out of hibernation, animals are giving birth to their babies, days are getting longer and it is getting a little warmer.

There are other visible signs of spring around us. Stores and storefronts are displaying brightly coloured clothing and lawn mowers instead of snow blowers. Easter and Spring celebrations are occurring around the world and churches are having their Spring Sales, something familiar to St. James.

Our UCW has an afternoon Tea and Sale every Spring and one will be held again this year, on Saturday, April 12 from 2-4 pm. Mark it on your calendar. Most of the women in our group are getting older and the number of women who can actively participate is quite small. UCW needs your help in contributing items for our Sale and in purchasing goods at the Sale. New members are very welcome. Our meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at 12:30 pm. in the Fellowship Room at St. James.

Barbara Adams

HAPPY
Easter!



Financial Snapshot

January

Revenue

Collections	12,229
Rentals	5,519
Other	1,579

Expenses

Repairs	1,865
Heat/Lights	7,158
Cleaning	2,669
Salaries	13,421
Other	1,062

Total Revenue 19,327

Total Expenses 26,175

As the first month of 2025 is past us, here is our financial picture. Our repairs are a bit high but that is due to the dishwasher and the elevator pump.

Holy Week

Services

Once again, the United Church congregations of the Northeast Avalon are joining together to lead services for the three main services of Holy Week with Cowan Heights United Church, Gower Street United Church and St. James United Church hosting.

Note that we are trying something different for Good Friday. The service will be an outdoor walk akin to the Stations of the Cross. As participants walk together they will stop at a number of outdoor locations where they will reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross as well as on social and other issues facing us in our world. Facilitated by Gower Street United, the walk will be downtown. Stay tuned for more details.

April 17, 7:00 PM: Maundy Thursday Service at Cowan Heights United Church

April 18, 2:00 PM: Good Friday Way of the Cross, starting location TBA

April 19, 8:00 PM: Easter Vigil Service at St. James United Church (note later time)



Did you know that St. James United has its very own Recycling Account? If you'd like to donate your empty bottles, bring them to the Recycling Depot on O'Leary Avenue. Tell them it's for us and we get the refund.



ANNUAL

CONGREGATIONAL

Meeting

MARCH 23

NOON

MARCH 5

ASH WEDNESDAY

TAIZE PRAYER SERVICE

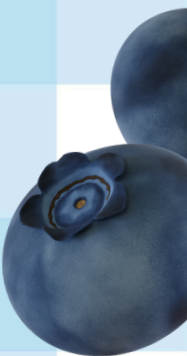
6:30 PM



\$10 PER PERSON

UNDER 12 YEARS OLD - \$5

**TICKETS MUST BE
PURCHASED IN ADVANCE
CONTACT CHURCH OFFICE**



craft with kids

COTTON SWAB PUSSY WILLOWS

Supplies

Cotton swabs (about 30)
Two brown chenille stems
Wallpaper or scrapbook paper
A sheet of blue paper
Yarn
Grey acrylic paint
plastic tray for drying



Step 1

Dip both ends of cotton swabs in grey paint.
Let dry on plastic tray.

Step 2

Draw a vase on the back of the wallpaper.
Make it about half as tall as the blue construction paper. Cut out.

Step 3

Cut chenille stem in two, making one piece slightly longer than the other.

Step 4

Glue vase to lower half of blue paper and put the four chenille pieces in to look like stems.

Step 5

Cut ends off each cotton swab. Glue to each side of stem.

Step 6

Cut a 24 inch piece of yarn. Fold about one inch of the blue paper to the back. Place the middle part of the yarn under. Staple the fold to hold it in place. Tie the ends of the yarn together.

Pussy willows are one of the first signs of spring. Christians use Palms as a church symbol of greeting Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem. But in the Polish tradition, you will also see pussy willow branches on Palm Sunday.

Mark your calendars!

DATE	TIME	SUNDAY/STYLE	LEADERS	MUSIC	SPECIAL INFO	FELLOWSHIP
Mar 8	5:30 pm	Tapestry Potluck/Worship	Young Adults			
Mar 9	11:00 am	1 st Sunday of Lent	James	TBD	Distribution of Ashes	Coffee/tea
Mar 12	5:30 pm	Silent Vigil for Peace				
Mar 16	11:00 am	2 nd Sunday of Lent	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
Mar 16	7:30 pm	InsideOUT LGBTQ Prayer				
Mar 22	3:00 pm	Wild Light Spiritual Oasis			Marking Spring Equinox	
Mar 23	11:00 am	3 rd Sunday of Lent	James	Guitar Group		Soup Lunch
Mar 30	11:00 am	4 th Sunday of Lent	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/Tea
Apr 2	6:30 pm	Taizé Prayer				
Apr 6	11:00 am	5 th Sunday of Lent	James	TBA		Coffee/Tea
Apr 6	7:30 pm	InsideOUT LGBTQ Prayer				
Apr 9	5:30 pm	Silent Vigil for Peace				
Apr 12	5:30 pm	Tapestry Potluck/Worship	Young Adults			
Apr 13	11:00 am	Palm Sunday	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/Tea
Apr 17	7:00 pm	All UCC Maundy Thursday	TBA		Location TBA	
Apr 18	2:00 pm	All UCC Good Friday	TBA		Location TBA	
Apr 18	7:00 pm	Good Friday	James			
Apr 19	8:00 pm	All UCC Easter Vigil	James et al		Communion	
Apr 20	11:00 am	Easter Sunday	James	Senior Choir	Communion	Breakfast
Apr 27	11:00 am	2 nd Sunday of Easter	James			Coffee/Tea
Apr 27	3:00 pm	Wild Light Spiritual Oasis			Location TBA	
May 4	11:00 am	3 rd Sunday of Easter	James	Senior Choir	Communion	Coffee/Tea
May 4	7:30 pm	InsideOUT LGBTQ Prayer				
May 7	6:30 pm	Taizé Prayer				
May 10	5:30 pm	Tapestry Potluck/Worship	Young Adults			
May 11	11:00 am	4 th Sunday of Easter	James	TBA	Mother's Day	Coffee/tea
May 14	5:30 pm	Silent Vigil for Peace	James			
May 18	11:00 am	5 th Sunday of Easter		Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
May 18	7:30 pm	InsideOUT LGBTQ Prayer				
May 25	11:00 am	6 th Sun. of Easter	James	TBA		Luncheon
May 25	3:00 pm	Wild Light Spiritual Oasis			Location TBA	
June 1	11:00 am	7 th Sun of Easter/Ascension	James	Senior Choir		Coffee/tea
June 1	7:30 pm	Inside OUT LGBTQ Prayer				
June 4	6:30 pm	Taizé Prayer				
June 7	All day	UCC Centennial Events			Gower Street United	
Jun 8	11:00 am	Pentecost Sunday			Communion	
June 8	7:00 pm	UCC Centennial Service			Gower Street United	Coffee/tea
June 8	7:30 pm	InsideOUT LGBTQ Prayer?				

