

The MESSENGER

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

stjamesnewcastle.com

FEBRUARY 2022



RAINTREE SQUARE SERVICE

Our next Sunday afternoon service is February 6th at 2:00pm. You are encouraged to attend and help with readings and singing.

BISHOP'S COMMITTEE MEETING

The next meeting of the **BC** is on Wednesday, February 9th at 6:30 PM. The newly elected members from the annual meeting will begin their 3 year terms. We thank Pat Carter and John Thompson for their service to the church. Zoom is an option if you can't attend in person.

DOK MEETING

The next meeting will be on **WEDNESDAY, February 16th** at noon for lunch, 12:30 for our meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 6TH

Our annual meeting has been changed to Sunday, February 6th, after church. Due to Covid, we will not have lunch so that we may stay masked.

PLEASE HAVE ALL REPORTS TURNED IN BY FEBRUARY 3.



COVID GUIDELINES

Remember that these rules can change from week to week according to what is happening in our community. Until further notice we will all be wearing masks.

THANK YOU

Thank you to Dan Bullard and Cory Fincher for taking down the Christmas decorations during the week of Epiphany.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

If you are an employee of the church or in any supervisory volunteer position, ie Bishop's Committee or teacher. you will be required to apply for a background check through the Diocese of Indianapolis. This is something that has been required for some time but we have been noncompliant. We are in the process of updating everyone's completion of Safeguarding God's Children also. The background check is \$24. If you can't cover the cost, please talk to Marilyn Witt, senior warden.

BROWN'S OFFICE HOURS

Remember that Brown is in New Castle one day each week from 11-3. That day may be different depending on need. If you would like to make an appointment, you may email him at mujetebg@gmail.com or call him at 765- 967-1174.

FUTURE FOCUS FOR ST. JAMES

Last year we did a lot of work with New Beginnings to discern the future of our church. We came up with 3 things we wanted to focus on. They are feeding people, better utilization of our space to raise more funds, and selling property. We also sent a team to the College of Congregational Development. We are now starting work with a program through the Diocese called Church Buildings for Collaborative Partnerships. Because we are feeling pulled in many directions, the Bishop's Committee decided to focus on one thing. We will be looking at ways to utilize our property through connections and partnerships with our community. If you know of organizations that need meeting space or have any ideas for community use of our building, please let anyone on the BC know, ie scout troops need a place to meet, community garden space, parking lot to hold a farmers market, recitals, etc. We will be learning more about this in the next weeks and the leaders of the program will come to St. James to scope out the community and our space.

If you are interested in working on this project planning committee, talk to Marilyn Witt.



BEGINS MARCH 2

SHROVE TUESDAY, MARCH 1st

Hopefully Covid will be back under control locally so that we can return to this annual tradition of our men's pancake supper.

FORM AN EASTER CHOIR???

Is there any interest in singing special music on Easter? Talk to Cindy Bullard.

NEW RECIPE BOOK

For 2022, St James cookbook for our baskets will have an international flair. Petra was so kind to share some Kenyan recipes in December.-- so let's all dig into our recipe file for our favorite international recipes. Using leftovers are great but I am willing to take any of our favorite international recipes. Please email to Karen at kshiields@eiwifi.com

SOCIAL JUSTICE BIBLE CHALLENGE

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

I will, with God's help.

This is one of our baptismal covenants and we promise this every time we renew our vows. The Diocese resolved that every parish would do work around this and racism is a big part of it. St. James as a whole has not done any book studies as suggested. I completed the 11 week series, Sacred Ground in the fall. They are offering another one that started Wednesday the 26th that you might still be able to join. What we are to realize is that if you are not a part of the solution, then you are part of the problem of racism. We are not to be color blind but to appreciate everyone's differences as children of God. We need to stand up for justice and peace for all people. February is Black History Month but black history is OUR history. The Episcopal Church was complicit in slavery and they are trying to make amends. This month, watch movies such as Harriet, The Underground Railroad, Mississippi Burning, 12 Years a slave, Selma, etc to be reminded of what blacks in America have suffered. I am doing this Bible Challenge the 40 days of Lent. If anyone would like to do it with me, we can meet weekly to discuss the reading for that week. Pat Carter

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT From Father Brown Mujete

Look To The Cross

Over the last few days, I have been pondering over the story of Easter, the death, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The last couple of days have been difficult for many people, especially at St. James. Many of us have been unwell, suffering from covid-19, and some are still recovering from the same. I thought it wise to remind us of these words in Exodus.



Exodus 15: 23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore, the name of it was called Marah. 24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, what shall we drink? 25 And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet:

I love how it starts. And when they came to Marah...

See, it wasn't a matter of if they would come to Marah or not; it was a matter of **when** they will come to Marah. I have said this repeatedly in my sermons. Trouble in this life is inevitable, and even the Bible acknowledges that fact. We live in a beautiful yet wicked world. Life has no guarantees that it won't throw trouble our way. We often have no say over what life throws at us as we journey through it. And so, in this walk of life, brothers, and sisters, we all get to a point in life where we get to **Marah**.

The place of bitter waters. The place where finances become a problem, getting a job is a prayer item day in day out, and marriage isn't working, the relationship has gone sour, finishing that college degree is a nightmare, chronic diseases lingering like they're a part of you. We all experience bitter episodes in life. Marah distinguishes not the rich from the poor, the homeless from the homeowners, the learned ones from the illiterate. Everybody gets to Marah in one way or another. The place where our faith is tested, a place where we feel like we want to throw in the towel and walk away.

What do you do when you get to the Marah stage of your life? Well, just as Moses threw the tree in the bitter waters and they became sweet, in the same manner, our Father in heaven has taken up the old wooden rugged cross and placed it on His only begotten son. Jesus died a painful and shameless death on the cross to make our lives sweeter.

Here's the thing, child of God, there's hope for us at Marah. The solution is not in grumbling and murmuring. The answer is looking up to the cross of Jesus on Mount Calvary, the cross that brings us redemption and gives us another shot at life.

Child of God, Look to the cross!