

The Vine and Branches

SAINT JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DILLON, MONTANA

stjamesdillon@live.com

406-683-2735

Sept. October 2021

GREETINGS FROM FATHER DONNEL O'FLYNN:

As we head into fall I have a basic theological reflection and some updates about parish life.

First, theology. It has become ever more clear to me how helpful it is for a person to have a functioning relationship with God. There are *so many* disturbing and painful events in the world today, that unless one is grounded spiritually, it is easy to get demoralized and even unhinged. Recent weeks have given the world: earthquakes, hurricanes, drought, flood, fire, pandemic, starvation and war, not to mention civil discord in our country. Any one of these, or even two or three, might seem “normal” enough. But to have *so many* unsettling things going on at once is a situation that only God can fix.

This is why regular worship is so helpful. For at least an hour each week our minds are taken away from whatever is alarming and obsessing them, and put into a completely different reality. Our beleaguered psyches rest in transcendence, and our unsettled brains have a chance to focus on divine compassion and forgiveness. Just on the level of basic psychological health this is really great; no wonder people who do not have a regular immersion in a larger truth so easily go off the rails.

I'm not making a pitch for people to “go to church”. I'm just stating facts. If your soul is anchored in God, you're going to do better with the day-to-day, whatever those days may bring. Judge for yourselves whether this sounds right or not.

Now on two updates. First and foremost, my recent sermons have been urging the members of St. James to really focus on the upcoming visit of our chief pastor, Bishop Stebbins. She will be in Dillon for her annual visitation on November 7, All Saints Sunday. I believe this is an opportunity for heartfelt spiritual

recommitment, one not to be missed. It could greatly energize the congregation heading into the future. My sermon on August 22 was about this and it is available online on the parish website.

In particular I urge everyone to consider making a personal Reaffirmation of Baptismal vows when Bishop Marty is at St. James. This service can be located in the Prayer Book on pages 415-419. I am offering to lead a discussion about all this at the adult education hour of 4:00 PM on Sunday October 17. I would really like to see a strong turnout so that everyone can fully grasp what it's all about. In addition to the spiritual benefit to us as individuals and as a congregation, a good turnout on November 7 would be a clear demonstration to Bishop Marty that St. James is ready to move ahead. This part really is a pitch to “go to church,” especially on October 17 and November 7.

Last but not least, something very nice is coming soon to St. James: an icon of St. James the Apostle, for whom the parish is named. As it happens, there is an opening for a new work of art in the sacristy. A photograph of a young woman from a century ago graced the sacristy until quite recently, when her family asked to have it back. An anonymous offer to donate the icon of St. James, to fill that empty space, was accepted by the vestry. I don't make magical claims for works of religious art. However, I do think this one will have a helpful subliminal effect. It will remind us visually that we are part of something bigger, that “great cloud of witnesses” of which the scriptures speak. In its own quiet way, an icon of St. James will remind us of the transcendent life to which we are called—helping to ground us in very unsettling times. Many thanks to the anonymous donor, we look forward to seeing it soon.

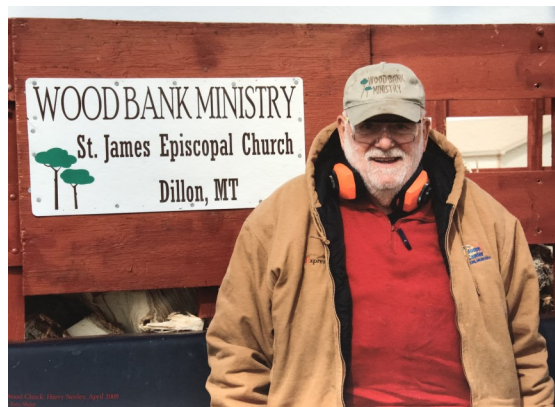
Blessings and peace to all,
Donnel+

Dear People of God,

The Rev. Harry Neeley died in his sleep Sunday, August 22. We will post any public arrangements when we have them.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Harry. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

+Bishop Marty



Calendar of Regular Events

**Worship, Sundays, 10:00 am:
Holy Eucharist, Sept 19 & 26,
October 10 & 17, other Sundays
are Morning Prayer.**

**Adult Education or Theology on Tap
Sundays 4:00 PM:
Adult Ed (Guild Hall) Sept 12 &
19, October 3 & 17, other Sun days
meet at the Brewery.**

**Bible Study (Guild Hall or by
ZOOM), every Wednesday at 9:30
am.**

**Contemplative Prayer (Guild Hall),
2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 5:00 PM.**

EPISCOPAL RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT

Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD) programs alleviate hunger and improve food supply, create economic opportunities, strengthen communities, promote health, fight disease, respond to disasters and rebuild communities. ERD follows an integrated model, implemented through a global network of partnerships.

If you would like to donate to ERD, please check out the website at:
<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/> You can designate an offering through St. James by noting "ERD" in the memo line of your check.

Kathryn Hatch

WELCOME ONE AND ALL!!!!!!

Topic du Jour is being held on Sunday afternoons at 4 PM in the Guild Hall.

9/12/2021: Being alone and being lonely—is there really a difference? Session led by Carol Meacham

9/19/2021: Why Don't They Get it? Overcoming Bias, based on the book by Brian McLaren. Session led by Kay Roach.

10/3/2021: Death in Literature Session led by Lee Graves

10/17/2021: Reaffirmation Session led by Fr. O'Flynn

Thanks to Lee Graves and Fr. Donnel O'Flynn for helping in planning this discussion series. It should be very interesting!!!

THROUGH THE DIOCESE

Way of Love Contemplative Retreat @ Camp Marshall and ZOOM. September 21-23, 2021. Rev's Janis Hansen & Valerie Webster are the leaders. Learn to reflect and abide together in Jesus' love through presentations, conversation, chant, Lectio Divina and Centering Prayer.

\$90 for beds and campers, \$50 just meals, stay locally. \$25 via ZOOM. Questions contact Valerie Webster vwebster587@gmail.com or <https://diomontana.com>.

From our Senior Warden, Lee Graves

St. James is entering into a new era of keeping in touch with our members so we have reactivated and upgraded our Facebook page. I know everyone is not on Facebook. But even if you are not on it you could join and only add St. James Episcopal Church. You would only get our information rather than all the other garbage that is on.

Bishop Marty has been encouraging us for years to get it going. We look forward to having you join us.

Lee

If you have anything to contribute, or run across that you would like to share with others, please feel free to send it either to Debbie Huber, Ellen or me. Or if you are a member of Facebook you can post it yourself. I am excited about this new tool. We owe Debbie Huber a special thanks for getting this page going and becoming a useful and interesting tool on behalf of St. James.

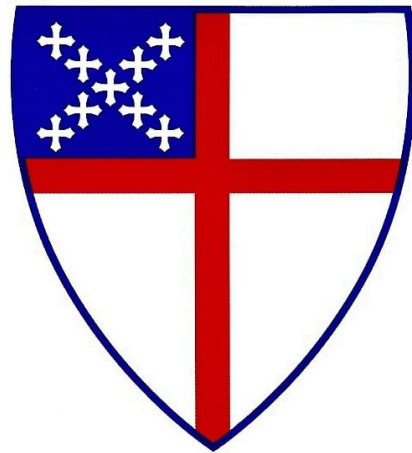


THE EPISCOPAL SHIELD

The colors red, white and blue symbolize the sacrifice of Christ and Christian martyrs, the purity of the Christian faith, and the humanity of Christ received from the Blessed Virgin Mary. In duplicating the colors of the American flag, they also represent the Episcopal Church's standing as the United States branch of the Anglican Communion.

The red cross on a white field is the St. George Cross, an indicator of our link to and heritage with the Church of England, the origin of the Anglican Communion.

The miniature crosses in the blue quadrant symbolize the nine original American dioceses that met in Philadelphia in 1789 to adopt the constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.



The outline of the miniature crosses is in the form of the St. Andrew's Cross in tribute to the Scottish Church's role in ordaining the first American bishop, the Right Reverent Samuel Seabury in 1784.

Submitted by Lee Graves.

ANGELS

Father O'Flynn told our bible study group that September 29th celebrates St. Michael and all angels, which talks about how humans and angels interact.

The following is the collect assigned for that date. It can also be found on page 193 as a Traditional Collect or on page 244 as a Contemporary Collect in The Book of Common Prayer:

“Everlasting God, you have ordained and constituted in a wonderful order the ministries of angels and mortals: Mercifully grant that, as your holy angels always serve and worship you in heaven, so by your appointment they may help and defend us here on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.” *Amen.*

It has caused me to wonder why the theme of angels is meaningful in my life, mainly because there were angels that got me through my ordeal in Vienna when I broke my leg and was hospitalized for 2 weeks. At the request of Mother Jane Shipp, the Anglican priest from the Diocese of Vienna and several of his parishioners visited me. One was a young man who was waiting for ordination. He brought the Holy Eucharist to share. All of these angels got me through an extremely difficult time.

I always think of Clarence in “It’s a Wonderful Life”, the angel who saved Jimmy Stewart from jumping off a bridge. What an eye-opener! It is thought provoking, to say the least, to consider what your life would be with or without angels in a time of trouble.

So, what angels are or have been in your life? Did you realize they were with you at the time or later on?

The St. James congregation includes many angels who are always there to help, no matter what. That is my connection with the collect: the interactions of angels and mortals. Aren’t we all a little bit of both?

Carol Meacham, Editor