

April 3, 2008

SJWT



Dear Friends,
Eat, Pray and Love with us at St. John's this Sunday!

Worship with us this Sunday, April 6: 3rd Sunday of Easter:

8:30 Early Eucharist; 10:30 Eucharist; Sermon: Gary van der Meer; Celebrant: Gary van der Meer; **New Musicians: Freedomize!** Refreshments following.

Announcements & Events

Great Upcoming Music!

April 6: From the downtown twenty-something church **Freedomize: Leah, Andrew, Mike and Laura**; April 13: Barry Short, organ and piano; April 20: Jaroslav Czerwinec, accordion; April 27: Anne Lederman, fiddle; and Tom Leighton, piano.

Movie Day Proceeds

Last Saturday was the Movie Day in the High Park Village private theatre. It was a great day, with great movies like Casablanca, Ratatouille, The Bourne Ultimatum and Monty Python. Thanks to everyone who helped out organizing! We sold just over 51 tickets and **the total proceeds are \$500!**

Leadership Team Meeting

The next Leadership Team meeting will be **Monday, April 14, 7:15 p.m.** These meetings are where the St. John's community coordinates our Events Calendar and provides support to the people organizing and leading Events. It is also a great place to bring new ideas for our community.

Worship with us during the week

Tuesday, April 8, 7:00 a.m. Morning Prayer, with Anglican Rosary and silent meditation; **Thursday April 10, 10:30 a.m.** Morning Prayer, with scripture discussion followed by home baked refreshments.

Writing Cheques to St. John's

Our bank has tightened its rules about cashing cheques written to St. John's. Our official name for banking purposes: **"St. John's Church, West Toronto"**.

St. John's Spiritual Retreat at St. John's Convent

The theme for our spiritual retreat is "Sacred Spaces" - Sacred Spaces within ourselves, in our homes, in our church, and around the world."

Our retreat leader will be Sister Louise, SSJD.

Friday, June 13 to Saturday, June 14. \$110, includes your own room and all meals.

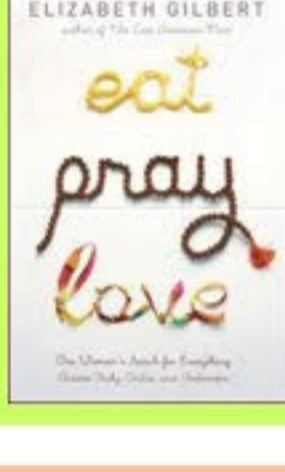
Questions and sign up: Lynelle Gehrels, 416-656-9111 and Joan Devitt, 416-766-3062



Eat Pray Love

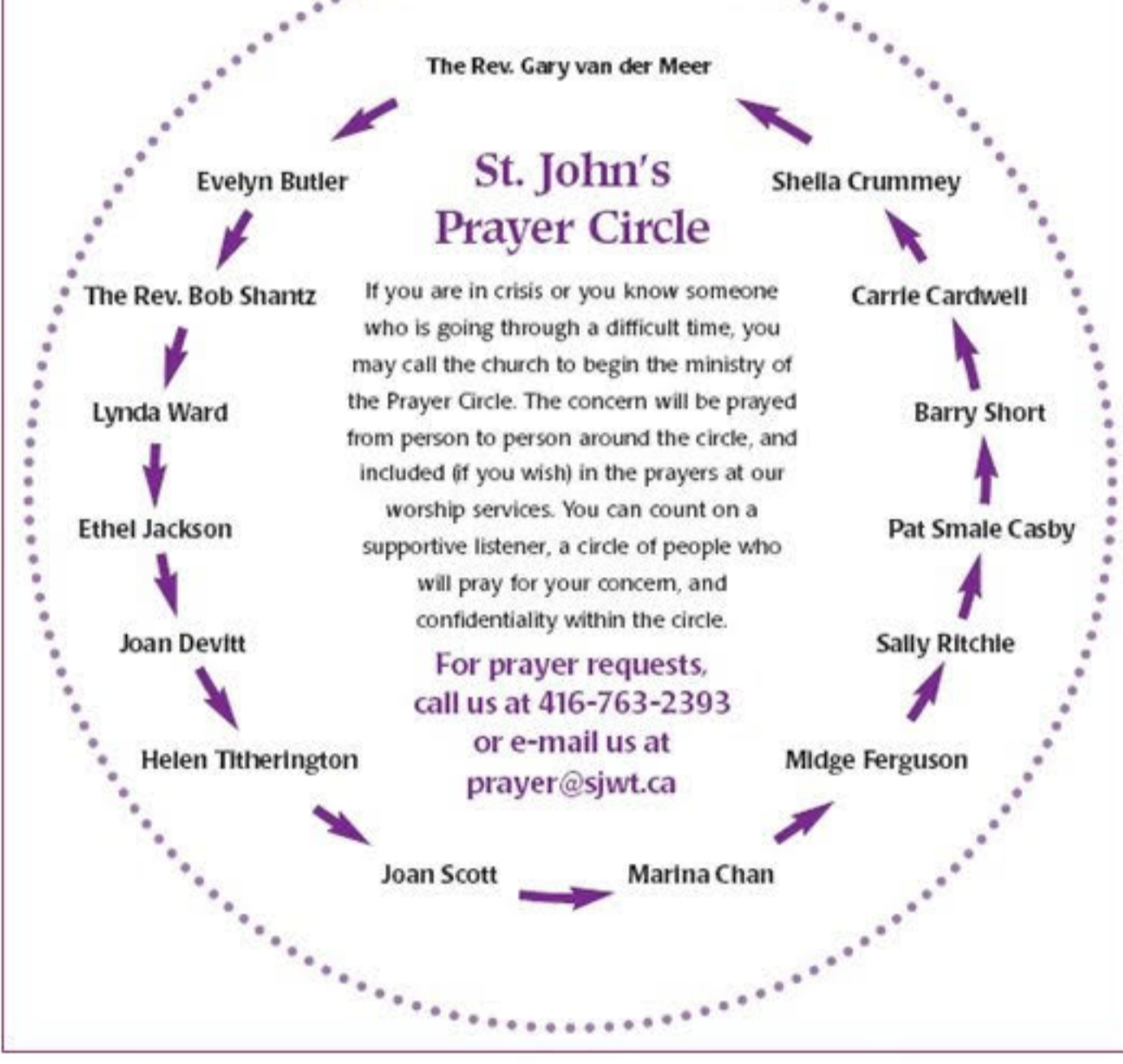
The Thursday Morning Worship participants invite you to accompany them in reading the book, Eat, Pray, Love by Elizabeth Gilbert. Get it from your local bookstore or call the church office as we have a few extra copies.

Read the book this month and come and talk about it at the Potluck Supper and Discussion, **Tuesday, April 29, 6:00 p.m.**



Prayer Circle

For any emergency concern, you may activate the Prayer Circle by calling the church office, or by calling an individual named in the diagram. Your concern will travel from person to person until the circle is completed, and members of the Prayer Circle will continue to remember your concern in their personal prayer time. We appreciate having updates on your concerns in time for Prayer Circle check in meetings.



Joan & Marina



Dancing with the Invisible Man

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

A few months ago on the subway I overheard a young man talking to his female friend sarcastically about someone's religion. "He believes in a magic, invisible man. That's what Jesus is - you know - the magic invisible man!"

I was indignant. I moved away because I didn't want to hear any more of his snideness. But it occurred to me a moment later that the phrase he used captures exactly the difficulty I often have with conventional "belief in the risen Lord". The "magic invisible man" must have arranged for me to overhear this young man, just so I could think it through!

Part of the difficulty I have with believing in an actual resurrected Christ is just embarrassment. Isn't this believing without good evidence? And doesn't that consign me to the ranks of the silly, gullible people who believe in UFOs, healing crystals, and the many past lives of Shirley Maclaine? Or the people who have seen Jesus in a taco shell, in the woodgrain of a hospital door, in the pattern of sunlight on a kitchen wall refracted through a glass teapot? If it was just embarrassment, I think I could handle it. There is a Peanuts cartoon where Lucy is angry with her brother Linus for dancing with Snoopy. Does he want to make a laughing-stock of the family? He replies, with a smirk, "Nine hundred years from now, who will know the difference?" And goes on dancing.

But how is it possible to believe in a Person whom I've never actually met, who is utterly intangible, without indulging in a kind of "imaginary friend" fantasy?

Maybe I could try to be a thoroughly modern Christian and dismiss any literal understanding of the resurrection. The resurrection is myth. Jesus lived on in the memories of his disciples and the church; Jesus was "raised" in the kerygma (preaching) of the church. Thank you, Rudolf Bultmann and company. But this doesn't seem to account for the kind of joy that was expressed by the early Christians, which we intend to emulate. "Rejoice! Jesus died a horrible, despairing death on the cross, and as an actual person no longer exists in any way, shape or form; but his teachings are still valid! Hallelujah!" Uh, no.

My problem may be that I tend to think of belief in terms of verifiable facts, rather than in terms of commitment to Meaning. John's Gospel, after all, presents Jesus as the embodiment of the eternal Word of God - that is, God's generous, compassionate, forgiving, self-giving love and wisdom made flesh. I believe that should be my focus. If I believe in this love as the ultimate value, if I am willing to believe that it is not only the ultimate value, but ultimate reality itself - then it becomes easier for me to believe that this love has the power to transcend and conquer death in a very real way. And on one particular historical occasion, has reunited friend with friends during their darkest hour. Such a belief makes me want to carry on love's redeeming work.

That's what Easter is all about, Charlie Brown.

I believe - help thou unbelief. Amen.

Brian MacIntyre

For meditation and reflection in Holy Week, the scriptures are truly rich: You might consider one for each day: Sunday: April 6, 2008: Acts 2:14, 36-41, Psalm 116:10-17, 1 Peter 1:17-23, Luke 24:13-35.

P.S. I hope you find it helpful to get an update like this from St. John's Church, West Toronto. If you would like something listed in the announcements, or if you know someone who would appreciate receiving this, please contact me. If you would prefer not to receive news from St. John's in this way, please also let me know.

Best wishes, Gary+

Check our website. www.sjwt.ca

And remember this!

We are not a Building!

We are an accessible, accepting, diverse community. We are young and old, able-bodied, and disabled, employed and unemployed. We are married, single, divorced, straight and gay. We are from all over the world, yet we could live next door. You will find open minds and open hearts at St. John's.

The mission of St. John's Church is to build a community of caring believers committed to Christ, to work for justice and service to all in need. We gather to praise God, and to give and receive support to meet the challenge of our daily ministries. We call on all who will to come and join us.

