

## A St James Pilgrimage History

In April of 2003, Rev Wendy Murray spearheaded a fundraising initiative for a St James youth pilgrimage and cross-cultural experience. She, along with Archdeacon Ken Anderson and the wardens recognized that as a Christian community we must commit to uphold and celebrate the youth of this parish and recognize the commitment of each Christian to foster and nourish the spiritual life of each child. They also understood the advisability and joy of supporting a pilgrimage for youth as they make their way in the world.

And so, after much work and support by this parish, the first St James pilgrimage took place in 2004 to Canterbury, England where our youth participated in a week-long "Soul in the City" event filled with worship and service. Rev Wendy Murray, Greg Murray, Mary Ann McDowell and David Booth accompanied the 10 kids, or 'Seekers'. The second group of 12 pilgrims from the 'Rite 13' youth group went to Taize, France in 2005. Karine Farmer, Bert Chesworth and Hilary and Mark Dencev ably led them. Our most recent pilgrimage group, the 10 Junior Disciples, travelled to Taize in July of 2007 with their leaders Matt Schieven, Ingrid Galsworthy and Tony and Nicole Hewitt-Lawrence. Each of these groups has expressed the great joy they experienced and the deepening of their faith as a result of being with so many youth from around the globe in worship, service and fellowship.

We held a "Taste of Taize" Silent and Live Auction fundraising evening on November 15, at which we raised over \$22,000 in support of two more pilgrimages in 2009 and 2010. . Thank you to all our parishioners who donated items for this event and to those who bid at our auction, we deeply appreciate your incredible support. It takes a considerable amount of work by the youth and their parents to host such an event, but more importantly, our youth and their leaders are committed to a 4-5 year journey of faith and service together to prepare for pilgrimage.

In addition to meeting regularly to discuss issues of faith, spirituality and the place of Christianity in their daily lives, our youth participate at St James as sidespeople, Eucharistic ministrants, intercessors, readers, VBS leaders, servers, community breakfast and Sunday School volunteers, Parish Council members, a Trafalgar Terrace worship team and in many other capacities. The fact that we have so many young people who are committed to their faith and this community is testament to this path to pilgrimage. Thanks to all who have shown support in many ways and continue to do so. God Bless!