

St. James' E-pistle

January 13, 2017

Pulpit Notes

"I love to do your will, O my God; your law is deep in my heart."

- Psalm 40:9b

Brothers and Sisters:

The Psalms are like the hymnal for our ancient brethren. They do the same thing that our songs do. They praise God. They complain to God. They express our intentions and our hopes to God.

And sometimes they open a window to our souls to show where we really are with God. The Psalms are not always historical or theological but they are always human. That's one of the things I like about them so much.

The Psalm for this Sunday has many of those elements wrapped up into one tidy package. There is complaint but also praise for relief. And then there is that open window that expresses the psalmist's heart: "I love to do your will, O my God; your law is deep in my heart."

In our faith, it is the heart that is most essential because we are a relationship faith. Which brings us each to some uncomfortable questions:

Do I love to do God's will? Is God's law deep in my heart?

We know what God's will is, right? We know what God's law is, right? If not, why not? Is it for lack of information out there? Is it just a matter of not knowing where to find the information?

This isn't meant to sound scold-y. These are just the questions we have to ask ourselves on an ongoing basis. Do I really love God's will? And what is God's will? And how do I do it once I decide that I love it?

Well, as with all things worthwhile, the first step is to be aware. To be aware of God's presence, to spend time getting to know God, to listen and learn with determination.

So, in a nutshell, the will of God is that we love God and God's other children. We do this in two primary ways - through worship and study (both alone and together), and through service, especially to those most in need. And God's law? Simple: Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself.

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You might wonder what this has to do with anything in your life. In a little over a week, we will have our annual meeting. We'll talk about a lot of things but mostly about our collective life and ministry together. We will look at how we can better worship God and better serve God's children.

And we'll once again bring up the eternal issue of money. That's always going to be a part of reaching out beyond ourselves, of keeping a space like ours not only open but hopping with beauty, kindness and inspiration. So as we approach the annual meeting and the presentation of the budget (deficit), we'll also ask you to make sure you've gotten your pledge in. Pledging is a commitment to be the community and to act on behalf of the Gospel.

It is, in a way, an expression of how much we love to do God's will and keep God's law in our hearts. Let us then all pledge ourselves and our resources to this great work.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Men's Breakfast: The next monthly men's breakfast will take place on **January 21 8:00 AM at Cranberry's!**

ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT: Notice is hereby given of the Annual Meeting of St. James' Episcopal Church in Hyde Park on Sunday, January 22. The meeting will begin with Holy Eucharist at 9:00 AM and continue with light breakfast and business following the Eucharist. At this meeting, we will not only receive reports from the various committees, but we will elect new Vestry members and honor a parishioner's service with the St. James' Medal. The meeting will be held in the Parish Hall.

Qualified Voters: According to Parish By-laws, eligible voters are "persons of the age of eighteen years or more belonging to the parish, who have been baptized and are regular attendants of its worship and contributors to its support for at least twelve months prior to an annual election or a special meeting of the corporation at which they are in attendance."

If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like to vote, you may request an absentee ballot no later than 10 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Pledge Envelopes. Pledge envelopes are in, and everyone who pledged can pick in their envelopes on Sunday

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Retreat: Please see the flier below for the "Agents of Peace In a Time of Fear" retreat led by Fr. Masud ibn Syedullah and Fr. Garrett Metler. It is a three-day retreat at Holy Cross Monastery just across the river. Though the cost may seem high at \$300, it is a remarkable value. Moreover, if you are interested (and I hope you are) but find the cost prohibitive, the church has money available to help you go. Just see Fr. Chuck.



ROOTS & BRANCHES
PROGRAMS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

presents

Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear



Discover Your Inner Peacemaker & Reconciler

on this retreat designed to turn back our present tide of divisiveness, conflict and inflammatory speech.

Participants will reconnect with the peacemaking example of Christ and be empowered with practical methods to become agents of peace and reconciliation in their own communities.

Co-led by the Revs. Masud Ibn Syedullah and Garrett Mettler, this three-day retreat takes place from February 3rd — 5th, 2017 at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, NY.

Accommodations at the monastery and all meals are included in the \$300 registration cost.

To find out more and to register visit

www.holycrossmonastery.com/retreat-programs

or call Lori Callaway at 845-384-6660

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Churchyard Committee: Our churchyard committee wants you. The committee oversees one of the most historic graveyards in the region, and is responsible for making sure it is kept up. It handles the sale and digging of graves as well. If you value our churchyard and want it to continue to be a source of comfort whose loved ones rest here as well as historical interest to those who visit, please join our committee. If you're interested, you can contact Carol Vinall at vinehall3@aol.com.

DONATE YOUR iPad! Please consider donating your old iPad - or any old tablet that can read a PDF file - to St. James'. We would like to have three or four tablets so we can download the digital bulletin onto them and let guests (or parishioners, of course) use them. This is especially helpful to those who are unfamiliar with the liturgy and all the books we use. You should erase everything on it, of course - all we need is a PDF reader and a browser (to download the information). Thanks!

Spiritual / educational websites to deepen your faith:

- Acts 8 Movement
- GrowChristians
- Episcopal Cafe (a favorite)
- The Slate Project (not affiliated with Slate magazine)
- Virtual Abbey
- Second Life Church (gives you a virtual church experience if you're into that sort of thing. Fun to look at maybe).
- Inward/Outward (daily meditations sent to your e-mail)
- "Edge of Enclosure" (weekly lectionary-based blog post)
- The Celtic Christian Tradition (via Facebook)
- Anne Lamott (via Facebook)

Jan Richardson - <http://paintedprayerbook.com> (Especially good for those grieving or interested in women's spirituality.)

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Epiphany...
and the Band



THIS SUNDAY!
JANUARY 15
at 11:30 AM

An Epiphany Pageant

Friday, January 6, at 6:30 pm
All Welcome! - Free Admission

St. James' Episcopal Church
4525 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, NY

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January 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8	9	10	11	12 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures 7 PM Fireside Chat	13	14 3:00 Pageant Rehearsal
15 11:30 Epiphany Pageant (rescheduled)	16 M L King Day	17 7:00 Vestry	18	19	20	21 8 AM Men's Breakfast
22 9AM Joint Eucharist/Annual Meeting	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

The News of the Diocese

Some Diocesan Dates of Interest: It is important to be in communion with other Episcopalians in our diocese. While many events are held in New York City, some are more regionally available. Here are a few events that you may be interested in.

February 11, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM - Safe Church Training (in Tarrytown)*

February 11, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM - Blessed Absalom Jones Celebration (Cathedral)

March 18, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM - Eucharistic Minister/Eucharistic Visitor Training (in Cornwall)

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** Safe Church training is mandatory for all employees as well as youth workers. It is strongly encouraged for all Sunday School teachers and is available for all parishioners. It can also be taken in an online course. See Fr. Kramer for more information.*

Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: Please pray for these diocesan ministries this week. If you want to check out the entire year's calendar for intercession, it's simple to find - go to <http://www.diocesen.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

- 15 St. Ambrose Church, Manhattan
- 16 Christ Church Riverdale, Bronx
- 17 St. James' Church (Fordham), Bronx
- 18 St. Peter's Church (Chelsea), Manhattan
- 19 Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission
- 20 The Diocesan Social Concerns Commission
- 21 Episcopal Church Women, Diocese of New York Chapter

Praying For Peace Everywhere:

Let us continue to light a candle for peace in the Holy Land - and everywhere. Prayer is our most potent antidote to hatred.

1. **Candle for Peace**

Please also light a candle on Fridays - holy to both faiths - for Peace

Let us Light Candles for Peace

Two mothers, one plea:

Now, more than ever, during these days of so much crying,
on the day that is sacred to both our religions, Friday, Sabbath Eve

Let us light a candle in every home - for peace:

A candle to illuminate our future, face to face,

A candle across borders, beyond fear.

From our family homes and houses of worship

Let us light each other up,

Let these candles be a lighthouse to our spirit

Until we all arrive at the sanctuary of peace.

2. **The Mothers Prayer:**

God of Life:

You who heals the broken hearted, binding up our wounds.

Please hear this prayer of mothers.

You did not create us to kill each other

Nor to live in fear or rage or hatred in your world. You created us so that we allow each other to sustain Your Name in this world:

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Your name is Life, your name is Peace.

For these I weep, my eye sheds water:

For our children crying in the night,

For parents holding infants, despair and darkness in their hearts.

For a gate that is closing – who will rise to open it before the day is gone?

With my tears and with my constant prayers, With the tears of all women deeply pained at these harsh times

I raise my hands to you in supplication: Please God have mercy on us.

Hear our voice that we not despair That we will witness life with each other, That we have mercy one for another, That we share sorrow one with the other, That we hope, together, one for another.

Inscribe our lives in the book of Life

For Your sake, our God of Life Let us choose Life.

For You are Peace, Your world is Peace and all that is Yours is Peace,

May this be your will

And let us say Amen.

Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum

English Translation Amichai Lau-Lavie

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Dee, Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Charles Pardee, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), John Ross, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Carl Smith, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Schedules

A Note about Schedules: The names you see below are those listed on their respective schedules. There are often times when, due to sickness or travel, substitutes are asked to fill in or trade positions. This will probably NOT be reflected in the lists below—so, if there is an inconsistency between what you see here and what you see on Sunday, that is alright.

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Birthdays (this past week):	Jodi Triola, Brian O'Leary, Craig M. Slegel and Joan Oetjen
Birthdays (this coming week):	Isabela Handman Quines, Alix Ciferri, Diane Plass, Beth Matranga and Thomas McNamara
Acolytes:	January 15: Team 1 January 22: Team 2
Altar Guild:	January 15: Team III January 22: Team III
8 a.m. Readers:	January 15: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch January 22: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris
10 a.m. Readers:	January 15: Patty Caswell/Nancy Montero January 22: Wilma Tully/Andy Hall
Ushers:	January 15: Nancy Montero, Anna Marie Pitcher January 22: Andrew and Tonya Hall
Pledge Clerks:	January 15: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher January 22: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	January 15: Liz Handman, Franklin Santos, Bela Quines, Chris Santos and Angela Henry January 22: TBA
Coffee Hour Hosts:	January 15: Deirdre Mae Micker, the Urban - Meads January 22: Annual Meeting Breakfast

This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 49:1-7

Psalm 40:1-12

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42

This Week's Hymns

Processional: Hymn 497 (How bright appears the morning star)

Sequence: Hymn 132 (When Christ's appearing was known)

Offertory "All glory be to God on high"

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Communion: Hymn 121 (Christ, when for us you were baptized)

Recessional: Hymn 7 (Christ, whose glory fills the skies)

NOTE: Audio recordings of some sermons are now available on St. James' website, www.stjameshydepark.org Look under "Worship"

Sermon Preached on
First Sunday after the Epiphany
(January 8, 2017)

"Two Sides, Same Coin"

Today we celebrate the Baptism of Christ. Ordinarily, this is a day set aside for baptisms, and we would have the renewal of baptismal vows.

But we're going to have both of those in just a few weeks, so we will be forgiven for letting it slide this week.

Nevertheless, this gives us a great opportunity to discuss what is so important about baptism to us as Christians.

Usually, when we think of baptism, we think of little babies. And that would be in keeping with the newborn babe theme of Jesus, right? Only, when Jesus stood there in the Jordan with John the Baptist - he was already an adult. So this seems a little off.

Not only that, but the Baptism Jesus submitted to was different from what we practice. Different, you say? How? Well, I'll tell you. For one thing, it was a repeatable act. It was for washing away your sins whenever you needed. For another thing, it wasn't in the name of the Trinity.

Which is to say, it was not Christian baptism. And yet, what Jesus forged that day would become the form - and the purpose of baptism for us to this day.

We don't have to go any further than today's collect to understand the purpose of baptism: it says on that occasion, God "proclaimed him [God's] beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit."

And that is exactly what happens to us in Baptism. God calls us his beloved children and anoints us with the Holy Spirit.

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This is why Jesus' baptism is important to observe even to this day: it shapes you and me. You and I are proclaimed - acknowledged by God as God's children, just as he acknowledged Jesus. You and I are given the Holy Spirit just as Jesus was given the Holy Spirit.

Two major aspects of baptism: being a child of God and having power.

You might think they are very different aspects of Christian life, but as Jesus showed us repeatedly with his life, they are two sides of the same coin, and like a coin, you can't have one without the other.

We forget that too often. Too often, we want to embrace one side of baptism and ignore the other. For example, too often, we want to hide inside the church, get lost in worship and music and praying quietly - all of which are essential. But what we don't want to do is embrace the power of the Spirit which pushes and prods us to go out into the world to preach, to witness, to feed the hungry and seek justice for the oppressed.

But just as often, we fall into the trap of wanting to be a social service agency. We're all about outreach and justice - all of which is essential - forgetting why it is important.

The Feast of the Baptism of Christ reminds us that worship, being in the presence of God - who is our Father! - is our identity. Without resting in that, without daily seeking out God's presence, without making the time to be with the family of God - there's no point in anything else.

Spiritual practices over the centuries have developed to help us nurture that relationship. We have a labyrinth not fifty feet away built to encourage one-one-one time with God our Father. We have bible study weekly to dig deeper into the relationship. We have worship every Sunday - and are looking at more - to nurture our collective relationship.

In those Stewardship meetings we had this fall, one thing came clear. We want more education and more worship. In two weeks, at the Annual Meeting, we'll look at how we can feed this need.

But the other side of that coin is that without action - driven by the Holy Spirit who will guide us if only we listen - but without action, then we are shallow and empty. We're nothing more than naval gazers or a social club.

Outreach is crucial precisely because in our relationship with God our Father, we understand that we are all children of the same father and as such responsible for each other. The Christian cannot wash his or her hands of their neighbor and say, "You made your bed, now sleep in it."

The other day, Liz and I saw a movie called "Hidden Figures" about three brilliant women working for NASA in its earliest days. Because they were African American, they were not taken seriously. But the beauty of this story - aside from it being true - is that you got to watch people

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change, to see them recognize that, yes, we are fellow children of the same father - and now it is time to treat each other as such.

Two sides, same coin.

So, no, we will not have the renewal of baptismal vows today. But you can go home and read it. You can come back and support the newly baptized in just a few weeks. You can come to the Annual Meeting in two weeks and claim your part in this Family of God. You can commit to worship, and study and prayer just as much as you can commit to feeding the hungry and standing up to injustice.

Being a child of God and being anointed with the Holy Spirit are not separated from each other. They cannot be separated from each other. Because when we are baptized, we are both adopted and anointed. Which is to say, we are made whole. Amen.