

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Two weeks ago, I wrote to you that the stewardship season - or to be more precise, the pledging season - is nearly upon us.

Last Sunday, I was proud to see your Stewardship in action. When we put out the call to raise donations for hurricane relief in Haiti (through Episcopal Relief and Development), you came through with more than \$1,300 raised in one day! And who knows how many of you later went home to donate online!

You might wonder why I'm calling this stewardship. It wasn't pledging to help the church, after all - it was a one-time appeal to help people in need.

Which fits the definition of Stewardship.

You see, Stewardship is using the gifts that God gives you to fulfill the work of God, usually through your parish church. The work of the church is to Love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. That means to care for the suffering (our neighbors) in the name of Christ.

So yes, this was tremendous Stewardship, and I am tremendously proud of you for it.

There are, of course, many other types of Stewardship. We know the old slogan, "Time, Talent, and Treasure," but that isn't really adequate, because when we say "Treasure" we typically think only of our pledge.

Mind you, pledging IS vitally important. Without your pledge, we cannot serve, we cannot provide a place of worship, inquiry, and wonder. Without your pledge, Fireside chats and Graveyard Tours and the Blessing of the Animals, and VBS and Sunday School and Bible Study and Coffee Hour... all go away.

It's just that financial stewardship includes so many other aspects. The Episcopal Church, for example, encourages Planned Giving. This is a catch-all phrase for giving to the church even after we have left this earth. Wills are a big part of Planned Giving (have you remembered the church in your will)? But so are other types of gifts that continue long after we're gone. Things like endowments and property are not uncommon.

Of course, it's not necessary to wait until death to share some of these gifts. In fact, you can make a special gift to the church any time you want, and they are gratefully accepted as ways to boost the Gospel in our local setting.

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

A special gift can be almost anything. If you run into money and want to share it by simply writing a check over and above your pledge - that's stewardship. If you see a need (say a vestment that's worn out) and want to replace it - that's stewardship. If you see some maintenance that you would like to fund - that's stewardship.

In general, gifts are easiest for the Vestry to manage if there are no conditions placed on them (they are all volunteers, offering their time as part of their stewardship). However, sometimes there is a project that is close to your heart and you really want to contribute toward it. Such gifts can help us take care of things we simply can't do any other way. We normally ask parishioners who want to give such gifts to contact the wardens first to discuss the proposed gift. They and the rector will help make sure that we can actually make the idea a reality before you commit money to it.

These are all forms of Stewardship - and there are many more. They are all ways in which we use the gifts God has given us in a manner that is meant to please God and bring peace, hope, and comfort to our neighbors.

You all did such a marvelous job of it last Sunday. I pray that we can all continue to see our whole lives as living stewardship.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

The News of the Church

Thanks for a Great St. Francis Many Thanks to all who joined us Sunday at 10:00 AM in the Parish Hall to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis and the Blessing of the Animals. Here are some photos!



St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016



Graveyard Tours - So Far So Good: We began our 7th season of the Graveyard Tours last weekend. The first night had perfect weather and was nearly sold out. The second night had slightly smaller numbers and overcast skies, but the weather held, and the performances were superb! One audience member wrote an e-mail to the church a few days later: "I would just like to tell you that my son and I had an awesome time at the Graveyard Tour on Friday night. Everyone was so nice and the residents of the graveyard made everything so interesting. I'm trying to talk my son into going back this year, but we will definitely be there next year. The only thing I regret is that we didn't go the past years."



Great Job, Everyone! If you haven't gone yet, buy your tickets now! And invite all your friends. You can get tickets at www.stjameshydepark.org.

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

Men's Breakfast: This Saturday, October 15 at 8:00 AM, the Men's Breakfast will take place at Cranberry's. We encourage all men of the parish to join us!

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer: Deacon David and Carol Bender are participating in the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk on Sunday, October 16, 2016. They would appreciate your financial support. You can donate by going to the link below. Just copy and paste it into your browser.

http://main.acevents.org/site/TR?px=26375449&pg=personal&fr_id=77386&s_locale=en_US&et=fmPFj65jVXw6fWk46dBSVQ

Troop 80 BBQ Chicken Dinner: Boy Scout Troop 80, which St. James' sponsors, is holding a BBQ Chicken Dinner on Saturday, October 15. It is take-out only. Because its timing conflicts with the Graveyard Tours, customers will pick up their chicken at the United Methodist Church between 4:00 and 6:00 PM. All tickets must be purchased in advance. If you'd like a ticket, please see Bill Fenwick (or any other scout from Troop 80).

Committees That Can Use Your Help

Stewardship: The Stewardship Committee is a group that helps coordinate our fall pledge drive as well as keep the concept of Christian Stewardship in our consciousness throughout the year. Never a large committee, the group of typically three members has been quite helpful. However, this year two of the three members have had to leave the group; one to become a Sunday School teacher, and the other because she has to leave the parish for the next few years.

So listen to your heart. Is God calling you to this ministry? Though it is not a heavy burden, the impact of the committee is huge on the ministry of St. James'.

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.

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

Episcopal Election Toolkit Available: It is the official position of the Episcopal Church to encourage all eligible members to vote in every election. We see it not only as part of our civic duty but as part of our collective life of faith. If we are not engaged in the community, then we are withdrawn - which is not the example our Lord showed.

To encourage enthusiastic and informed participation in the election process, the Episcopal Church has published an Election "Toolkit" with information such as what representatives are up for election, who your officials are, and what the issues of the day are. It includes the Episcopal Church's official position on several issues, which may be helpful in your deliberations.

The most important thing in the church's eyes, however, is that we all go out and vote! Here's a link to the "Toolkit":

<http://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org/episcopal/EpiscopaliansVote>

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.)

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

The News of the Diocese

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.diocesenyc.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

October

- 16 St. Luke's Church, Bronx
- 17 Hospital Chaplains of the Diocese
- 18 Holy Cross Church, Yonkers
- 19 St. Thomas Choir School, Manhattan
- 20 St. Paul's Church, Pleasant Valley
- 21 Acolytes of the Diocese
- 22 St. John's Church, New City

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:

Your name is Life, your name is Peace.

For these I weep, my eye sheds water:

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

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, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dee, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Charles Pardee (husband of Sally), Clifford Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson (brother of Mary Gabel), John Ross, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, 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.

Birthdays
(this past week):

Peter Matranga, Dot Craft and Sharon O'Brien

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

Birthdays (this coming week):	Jasmine Thatcher and Beverly L. Tas
Acolytes:	October 16: Team 3 October 23: Team 1
Altar Guild:	October 16: Team III October 23: Team III
8 a.m. Readers:	October 16: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth October 23: Lucille Ogden and Thomas Finnigan
10 a.m. Readers:	October 16: Patty Caswell and Maggie McNamara October 23: Regina Ardini and Justin Bohlmann
Ushers:	October 16: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne October 23: Bill and Regina Ardini
Pledge Clerks:	October 16: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher October 23: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	October 16: Donna Coffman-Tracy, Gwen Cookingham October 23: Kathleen Craft, Charlotte DeGroff, Sue DeLorenzo
Coffee Hour Hosts:	October 16: Deirdre Mae Micker, The Urban-Meads October 23: Brian Rance, Saira Shahani

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 32:22-31

Psalm 121

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Luke 18:1-8

This Week's Hymns

Entrance: 388 O Worship the King

Sequence: 637 How Firm A Foundation

Offertory: 657 Love Divine All Loves Excelling

Communion: LEVAS Just As I Am

Dismissal: 562 Onward Christian Soldiers

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

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

Sermon Preached on Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost (October 9, 2016)

"Perfectness of Joy"

Today we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis. As you may know, Francis was a man of joy. Maybe even perfectness of joy. Perfectness of joy? What the heck is that?

Perfectness - already perfect, so not perfection, which is being made perfect.

Joy - happiness deep within, not just for the moment but in life itself.

Jesus talks about seeing the world - and seeing God - like a child, an infant even, because there's this perfectness of joy in a child's eyes. The world is a big, wondrous place, and if they've enjoyed loving parents/family, then the joy is pretty perfect.

We mess it up as adults, of course. We see how people treat each other (especially depressing around election time). We see crime and war. Then we see natural disasters like Haiti - compounded by human-made disasters... And you think, joy?

Well, in Francis' day, life was no bowl of cherries, either. If anything, worse. Plague, famine, war, wild animals - didn't even have Snapchat.

But Francis had this perfectness of joy - it was in him every moment in every situation. And this is a guy who had so little, that he had to beg in the streets just to feed himself. And yet, most of what he received, he spent giving to the poor and sick and outcast or repairing the church. For him, his joy didn't have anything to do with what he owned - it was the love of God in his heart. Now, people thought he was naive because, you know, the world's a dangerous place. He knew this. He'd even been in a war and taken prisoner. It's just that his joy was so complete, and his ability to see God in everything so total, that he had a godly compassion for all of God's creation. Especially the poor, the sick, and the needy. And, of course, the animals. Not only did he give everything away to those who suffered, but he went out and talked to the animals. Once, the story goes, he preached a sermon to a flock of birds. Another time, he went out to talk to a wolf that had been terrorizing the town - and brought into town with him, a changed wolf, a wolf that became the town's collective pet.

Are those just stories? Hard to say. But all the evidence says that Francis approached the world as Jesus would have us - with that childlike wonder, joy, and compassion. He really did believe Jesus when he said, "Come to me all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest...Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

St. James' E-pistle

October 14, 2016

So, how do we celebrate a man who the world thought was a little crazy because he saw joy in everything? Because he saw God in everything?

Why we bless animals, of course! And we care for the suffering.

That's why, today, we will bless whatever animals are here - pets and wild together. And we will reach out in love for those who are suffering - which is why we'll have a special offering for Episcopal Relief and Development to help our brothers and sister in Haiti after yet one more devastating disaster.

We can do both of these things - as different as they seem - with perfectness of joy because, as Francis knew so well, God is in them both. God, he knew, is in everything, everywhere, al, the time. Amen.