

St. James' E-pistle

October 18, 2013

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

I know that most of us have our thoughts and prayers with the Bohlmann family as they grieve the death of their son and brother, Josh. My heart aches for them as well.

While we will continue to hold them up in prayer. I encourage you to check in on the Bohlmann family in the coming weeks. Often, a grieving person needs their friends even more after all the initial activity is over.

Of course, there are other things on our minds as well. Next week, we will celebrate the Feast Day of our Patron saint, Saint James, the Brother of our Lord. Though we do not have a specific liturgy that we plan on using to celebrate, I encourage you to think about this saint - the one who at first did not buy into his brother's message or identity, but who then learned just who Christ is, and embraced it.

This James is the one who tells us that faith without action is empty. It is a hard and challenging statement but one we have also embraced. We try to put our faith into our actions, into the way we live. That is the identity of this congregation - at least as I've experienced it.

The action we take will be different for each of us. It may be getting involved in Outreach or some other non-parish-based service to those in need. It may be offering up your talents in art or music to the parish. It may be as simple as sending a card to or making a meal for a grieving family. All of that is faith in action.

We had a Vestry meeting this week, and one of the current members said something profound. He said we sometimes joke about "doing our time" on the Vestry, but that sounds as if it were something negative. In contrast, he said (and I paraphrase), he found service on the Vestry to be enlightening, interesting and enjoyable. He said he got to know other parishioners better and felt that he was truly part of the parish.

Which is a way of saying that faith in action is not all grim business. It is joyful, it builds relationship, it makes room for laughter and a sense of being truly part of this wonderful family.

So, as we celebrate St. James, let's celebrate that part of him that makes us the wonderful place that we are - faith in action, whatever that action may be.

In Christ,

Chuck+

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The News of the Diocese

The Election of a Bishop Suffragan: On Saturday, December 7th, our Diocese will elect its next Bishop Suffragan.

Please keep all who are involved in the process in your prayers:

“Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of all who shall choose a Bishop Suffragan for our Diocese, and all who offer themselves as candidates, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Coming October 26th - Volunteer Opportunities to Make a Difference: Do you like to paint or work in the garden or cook?

On Saturday, October 26th Habitat for Humanity of Dutchess County is coordinating a local “Make a Difference Day” in the City of Poughkeepsie. There are many homes in the city that are in need of some TLC.

Volunteers are needed to:

- * Perform minor exterior repairs
- * Paint the exterior of houses
- * Clean up and replant gardens
- * Cook and serve lunch for volunteers

In addition, volunteers with construction, painting and landscaping experience are needed to lead teams of unskilled volunteers.

Young people ages 16, 17 and 18 who are interested in becoming a volunteer are most welcome; however, they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Is this something that interests you? For further information or to say “Yes, I’ll be a “Make a Difference Volunteer”, please contact our local Habitat for Humanity office by calling 845-475-9336 or by visiting the volunteer section of their website: www.habitatofdutchess.org

Deacon Gail

Mid-Hudson Regional Council: “A Place at the Table, Celebrating Our Diversity!” is the theme for this year’s Mid-Hudson Regional Council, planned for Saturday, October 26 at St.

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Luke's, Beacon. Each parish will bring a dessert and a talent that displays their diversity. [Fr. Chuck's Note: I am looking for folks to help with dessert for the Regional Council. There needs to be enough for 50 small servings - not sure what that means, but my impression is pretty small. Please help! Contact me if you can.]

ALSO: Val Stelcen, Executive Assistant to the Bishop for the Mid-Hudson Region, sent the following announcement:

As we are approaching the Mid-Hudson Regional Council on Saturday, October 26th, one of the things that need immediate attention is finding people who would be willing to stand for election as representatives on the Mid-Hudson Executive Committee. We have a number of people who are rotating off or who are opting not to stand for another term. We have openings for both lay and clergy representatives. Terms are for one year and are renewable for up to four terms and then mandatory rotation off. It is not an onerous task – we meet about 5 times per year. Meetings are in the evening beginning over dinner at 6:00 pm and usually ending no later than 8:30 pm. The committee deals with the program life of the Region and administers the Board of Managers Funds that are specifically designated for work in the Mid-Hudson Region. If you have questions about the work of the committee, please don't hesitate to contact me.

The News of the Church

Stewardship Date Set: At its meeting this week, the Vestry set November 10th as "Ingathering Sunday." That's the date we will all come together to bring in our pledges for the next year.

The Vestry decided it is not necessary to do a big campaign this year because this parish gets it. You understand that not only does your pledge make the work of St. James' possible, but that it is your investment in that ministry. It says you are part of this great work, and that it is part of you.

So look for a letter from the Vestry in the coming weeks to help you decide how much to pledge.

Graveyard Tours. Thank you to everyone who signed up to be a tour guide. We now have plenty!

What we want now is YOU. We are looking for guests to come enjoy these tremendous performances. Encourage your family and friends to be part of it!

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Tickets sales are ongoing, so order yours today. Tickets are available on the website at <http://stjameshistoricgraveyardtours.com>.

Tea Room: Be certain to attend the annual TEA ROOM on October 19th.

If you have any questions, please contact Deirdre Mae Micker (883-0943) or Christina Wardell.

Please help make this event another smashing success!

Harvest Dinner: Please see the flyer attached at the end of this E-pistle.

St. James' Concert Series: The Cupcakes. Sunday, October 20, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. at the Chapel. Recipe for cupcakes: Start with 3 uber-talented women; add 5-6 instruments (3 at a time); then cream together with a bouquet of awards for songwriting and independent music. Stir in 6 CDs, sprinkle with jingles, tours with famous people, production credits, and videos. Ice the whole thing with humor and harmony. No need to bake - The Cupcakes definitely do the cooking! Lyn Hardy has performed folk, rock, old time, contra, blues, and country music in the USA, Canada and Europe since 1965. Elly Wininger got her start in the NYC Folk Revival scene playing blues and ragtime guitar in the basket houses of Greenwich Village. Janice Hardgrove is a former jingle singer for national corporations such as McDonalds and Pepsi.

Tickets sold at the door. \$12 ADULTS; \$10 SENIORS; FREE children 12 & under.

Complimentary refreshments (featuring cupcakes, of course). Call the office at 845-229-2820 for info.

Secretary Vacation: Our secretary, Dyan, will be taking Fridays off through November, using up unused vacation time. It would be great if someone could sit in the office on those days to answer phones and receive mail. She's normally in the office till 2:30 or 3:00. If you can help, just give Dyan or Fr. Chuck a call at 229-2820. Thanks!

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Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Janet Arms, Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Kurt Burkhardt, George Buso, Michael Day, Jane Gagliardoto, Jack Gordy, Harold Hall, Jolanda Heijenbrok, Brooke Helton, Rev. Don Hoger, Barbara Knakal, Rosemary Leuken, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Nancy Nucci, Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Deborah Porach, Don Renten, John Robinson, Marty Schroeder, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Debbie Stone, Gloria Veach, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way and Cliff Wells.

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:	Jasmine Thatcher
Acolytes:	October 20: Team IV October 27: Team I
Altar Guild:	October 20: Team Number III October 27: Team Number III
8 a.m. Readers:	October 20: Angela Henry and Lucille Ogden October 27: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris
10 a.m. Readers:	October 20: Russell Urban-Mead/Deirdre Mae Micker October 27: Wilma Tully/Bobbie Wells
Ushers:	October 20: Andrew and Tanya Hall October 27: Bobbie and Cliff Wells
Pledge Clerks:	October 20: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher October 27: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell
Coffee Hour Hosts:	October 20: Deidre Micker and the Gausepohls October 27: Audrey Horne

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 32:22-31

Psalm 121

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Luke 18:1-8

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Sermon Preached on
Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost
(October 13)

"Always Time for Thanks"

Given the tragic death of one of our young members, Josh Bohlmann last night, what I'm about to say may seem ill-timed. But upon reflection, I don't think so, so hear me out.

Remember having to sit down and write those thank you notes after Christmas? I was thinking about it because I saw my first Christmas ad this week. Anyway, I hated writing those notes and squirmed out of it whenever I could. Maybe it was just the 60s and 70s where we questioned everything our parents did or appreciated, but it seems my generation in particular rejected this exercise as old-fashioned, pointless and meaningless. Perhaps our parents didn't do the best job of explaining the value of these little notes. Just saying, "Grandma will get upset and never give you anything again" doesn't quite get the spirit. Neither does, "It's the polite thing to do." But after a few decades of reflection on the matter, let me see if I can come a little closer.

When you say thank you, it does two things. It helps you feel and appreciate the love that went into a gift. That is, if you just take the gift, use it up and forget who it's from, it's just a thing. But if you take the time to acknowledge and appreciate the love that went into it, it's much more. A hand-knitted sweater becomes grandma's calling card. The white stole I wear at weddings (as I did yesterday for former youth group member Laura Kinne - now Murphy) was hand-made by my mother for my ordination. More than once, people have said, "I know needlepoint - THIS was a labor of love." That makes me happy. And every time I tell Mom how much people admire it, that makes her happy. This never gets old.

That brings me to the second reason for saying thank you. It deepens relationships. I used to think that people who expected thank you notes were just in it for themselves - for the pat on the back. And maybe some are. But in general, when you say thank you, you are saying, "I see what you did - I know that you did it for me. I know that I mean a lot to you - and that means a lot to me. And so do you."

It's not magic, but "thank you" may be one of the best relational tools we have.

And that may have been what Jesus was getting at in today's Gospel. There he was on the road when 10 lepers saw him and started calling out to him for help. He says, "God show yourselves to the priest." In those days, if you had leprosy, you had to be certified "clean" by the priest

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before you could reenter society. Just by saying this, Jesus was assuring them that they would be healed.

Then, of course, along the way, they ARE healed. Nine follow directions and go the the priest while one, the foreigner, a Samaritan no less, comes back to praise God. When I was a kid, I thought Jesus was being hard on the other nine because they were doing what he told them to do. But Jesus is encouraging his followers to see the love behind the healing, not just the fact of it. He's encouraging them, and us, to see, to appreciate, to glory in the real meaning of the gift of that healing. It's God saying, "I love you." Just like the shooting stars and leaves and kids and wedding.

Jesus is pointing out what we so often forget, and yet what is evident everywhere we look. Even in a harsh world, even on days when all we can do is cry because tragedies hit us close to home. May especially on days like today because we are reminded that life is unpredictable and short - and that the time to look around us, to see what there is to be thankful for, is now.

I'm still learning this, by the way. Sometimes I get caught up in the busy-ness and the hardness of life and forget how many wonderful things surround me. How many things there are for which I am truly thankful.

Let's just look at this last week. On Monday night, the draconids meteor shower was visible. I forgot about it, but Tuesday morning at 5:00 when I was walking the dog, I happened to look up at the stars, and there were two shooting stars one after the other. Tuesday & Wednesday were beautiful autumn days with the leaves turning and the sun shining. I was walking back to the house one of those days in the afternoon and looked at the lawn thinking, "this is beautiful." Wednesday night there was even an aurora borealis visible from the Hudson River. I missed it, but the picture the next day was stunning - and it was enough for me right now.

It's not just nature, either. Want to know one of my favorite parts of the week? Sitting on the floor of the nursery school and reading bible stories to the kids. Because they're fun. Also, I know those tiny kids are building memories, and I'm happy to be part of making them joyful memories.

Then Friday night - like every Friday night - I sat down with my family to have pizza. Because Friday night Pizza night in our family. Think about it - dinner surrounded by the people I love - AND pizza! How good is that?

Then, just yesterday, I got to officiate at Laura and John's wedding. It made me happy to see two young people so much in love and ready to do what it takes to make a marriage.

The little signs. The gifts, are all around us every day, all the time even when the rest of the world seems hostile and unhinged. That's when it does our souls good to stop like that leper - who suffered for years, mind you - and say, "Wow! Thank you. I see what you did. And it means the

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world to me." Or, as the 13th century theologian Meister Eckhard said, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is Thank You, it will be enough."

So thank you. Thank you for being the Body of Christ for me. And thank you Liz and Chris for being the loving family I need - you inspire me in more ways than you can imagine.

I have a friend who gets this. Recently, he started writing haiku and putting it on Facebook. On Friday, he wrote this:

I'm grateful for love

Given to us by God

Passed on to others

I know that in our culture, we tend to save our celebration of thankfulness for next month with Thanksgiving. But the joys, the gifts, the life that God grants us doesn't have a special season - It's Always Time For Thanks.

Amen.



Harvest Dinner

To benefit the
Hyde Park
Community
Garden

Dinner includes:
Roast Pork,
Seasonal Vegetables,
& Fruit Cobblers

Where: St. James' Episcopal Church, 4526 Albany Post Rd., Hyde Park, NY

When: Friday, November 1, 2013 - Two Seatings: 5:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Tickets: Adults \$15, Children 10 & over \$10, Children under 10 free.

Call the Parish Office for Reservations: 845-229-2820.