

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Maybe you think all I talk about is Stewardship.

It's not true!

And yet, maybe, it is. That's because for me, everything is stewardship - all the time. By that I mean that every waking moment of our lives is spent with the world around us. The places, the people the things. We don't choose them necessarily, but we do choose how we interact with them.

That's stewardship.

Here are a couple of silly examples from my life. The alb I wear on Sundays - it's not mine. Literally. I went to a diocesan function where we vested. I hung up my alb after the function, went to the luncheon following, and when I came back, my alb was gone, and this one was in its place. That was perhaps fifteen years ago. Believe it or not, a couple of years later, the same thing happened with my surplice (the white part that goes over a black cassock). The surplice I found in place of mine is much older than mine, maybe older than me! And then, a few years ago, my prayer book/hymnal disappeared. It was a little special to me because my parents had given it to me at my ordination and had even embossed my name on it. No idea what happened to it, but less than a week after it disappeared, certain effects from the house of Will Jones - who had recently died - were given to the church. Among them was Will's prayer book/hymnal.

In all three cases, I lost something of sentimental, vocational and/or financial value. At the same time, things appeared to replace them. They were not the same, but they did help me do the jobs that God needed done. My choice was not to lose my items, nor was it my choice which items would replace them - these simply came. My choice was how to interact with them, how to see them and use them.

What I chose to do was to understand my attachment to a couple of vestments and a book really meant very little. It didn't matter what alb, surplice or prayer book I used - what mattered was that I was willing to use the resources at hand to do the work at hand. Every time I put on that alb and open that prayer book, I smile at how God provides (even when we are - well I am - careless). For me, it is stewardship to use those things and to not worry if another should go missing - I trust I'll have what I need for the work. And I am thankful that God allows me to hold them lightly.

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

So yes, everything is Stewardship! And that's why I am excited about how the Stewardship Committee is approaching the upcoming Pledge Campaign. It is all about living in a spirit of gratitude. It is all about looking around and knowing that God has done a great thing, and we get to be part of it! They get it, and for that, I am grateful.

You can be grateful, too. How? ***Come to Breakfast!***

On Sunday, November 8 at 9:00 AM, we will kick off the pledge campaign with a **parish breakfast**. Not a continental breakfast either - we're talking Lenten Breakfast style! Come, eat, talk, laugh, have conversation and deep theological reflection (or talk about the Mets) as we lay out very briefly a way forward. If you're new to St. James', this is the perfect time to get to know the people and the place more intimately. So Join Us!

And while you're at it, starting this Sunday, we will say this collect for Stewardship each Sunday through the pledge campaign. I'm including it here for your use at home.

A Collect for Stewardship

Gracious God, giver of all we have and hold as stewards; grant the people of this church a deep and abiding awareness that all things come from you – our health, our incomes, our jobs, our talents and our generous impulse. Send your Holy Spirit to help us as we swim against the rising tides of materialism, envy, individualism and greed in our culture. When we are tempted to think of money as a private matter, remind us that you have asked for part of what we are given, to be returned to you as a symbol of our awareness that you give all we have. And further, help us to help each other in this grace of giving, for you are the lover of our souls and call us to nothing less than transformation in Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

See you in Church—and especially at breakfast—on November 8th.

In Christ,

Chuck+



THIS SUNDAY:

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

The News of the Church

All Saints Children's Sermon: I already know I'll have leftover Halloween candy, so what better way to get rid of it than to bribe - I mean encourage - kids to be part of a children's sermon this Sunday! All kids who come up for the sermon will get one last chance at the old Trick or Treat action. There may be other, uh, incentives. So kids, come to church this Sunday! Your sweet tooth will be glad you did.

NO Apple Pie Baking: First of all, thank you to all who volunteered to bake apple pies for the Community Thanksgiving Dinner. As it turns out, I have been informed that the health department will not allow pies to be served if they have been baked in private homes. INSTEAD, there will be a Pie Baking Session at the United Methodist Church's kitchen on Friday, November 13 from 10 AM to 12 Noon. If you would like to be part of that, please e-mail Liz Langan at lizzyj0184@gmail.com.

Family Movie Night: You are invited to attend a **FREE FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT** on Saturday, November 14th, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. We are screening the 1985 classic starring Michael J. Fox, "**Back to the Future**". Join us, as Dr. Emmett Brown sends a teenager 30 years back into the past in a time-travelling DeLorean automobile.



You are encouraged to bring family and friends, whether or not members of the Parish. Movie night is sponsored by the Sunday School. Popcorn and soft drinks are included! Bring blankets for the kids if you wish. Look for more details to come!

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

Youth Group: On Sunday afternoon, November 15th, youth members of St. James's will go to nearby Mariapolis Luminosa for a ropes/team-building course. The exact time will be announced later, but it will be early afternoon. Invite your friends - the more the merrier! We are planning other events, too, including working at the Lunch Box and a trip to the Cathedral. Stay tuned.

Election Day: Don't forget to vote this Tuesday, November 3rd!

Reading Program Has Started: Reading Adventures has now had its first two sessions at North Park Elementary School. It's going very well with 13 children and just enough volunteers. Thanks to all who are making it work!

Thanksgiving Service: Notice is also given that on Tuesday, November 24, the community churches will hold their annual Community Thanksgiving Service at 7:00 PM. This year, it will be at St. James' Chapel, which hosts three other churches along with our own occasional services. If you would like to participate in the service, please let Fr. Chuck know.

Bible Study Reading 1 Kings: We're glad to have some new members of our Thursday Bible Study - Welcome! And we want more. So join us every Thursday at 11:00 AM in the Wilks Room. We are reading I Kings.

Never Too Late For Sunday School: Didn't get a chance to register for Sunday School earlier? Know a friend who might be interested? New to the parish? You can register at any time! Just ask Valerie Gaulin for a registration form. We'll be delighted to see you!

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

- 1 We give thanks for All the Saints.
- 2 On the feast day for the Commemoration of All Faithful Departed we pray for all who mourn, and pray that their grief may be turned to joy.
- 3 All deacons of this diocese who have died, may they rest in peace.

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

- 4 All priests of this diocese who have died, may they rest in peace.
- 5 All bishops of this diocese who have died, may they rest in peace.
- 6 St. Luke's Chapel (St. Martin's Parish), Manhattan
- 7 The Church of the Good Shepherd, The Bronx

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:

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

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

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, Susie Buhalis, Sharyn Burke, Mariel Carter, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Barbara Knakal, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Charles Pardee (husband of Sally), Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, 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):	Rebecca Foote, Andrew Hall, Michael Fenwick, Sue Fenwick and Sophie Ciferri
Birthdays (next week):	Anna Mae Swenson, Sue DeLorenzo, Bud Oetjen and Riley Hall
Acolytes:	November 1: Jasmine Thatcher, Jaylen Thatcher and Bill Fenwick November 8: Nancy Montero, Kirstin Horn and Deirdre Mae Micker
Altar Guild:	November 1: Team Number III November 8: Team Number I
8 a.m. Readers:	November 1: Deb Belding and Lynne Koch

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

10 a.m. Readers:	November 8: Angela Henry and Lucille Ogden November 1: Donna Beyer and Sophie Ciferri November 8: Patty Caswell and Nancy Montero
Ushers:	November 1: Saira Shahani and Pat Keefe November 8: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher
Pledge Clerks:	November 1: Janet Bright and Joanne Lown November 8: Paul Littlefield
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 1: Judy Douglass and Dottie Drake November 8: Patty Drake and Ross and Connie Eames
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 1: Audrey Horne November 8: Jodi Triola, Ross & Connie Eames and Pat Rooney

This Week's Lectionary

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9

Psalm 24

Revelation 21:1-6a

John 11:32-44

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

Sermon Preached on
Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost
(October 25, 2015)

"What is Restoration"

I just read an article the other day about one of the Syrian refugees who got lucky. Three years ago, after his brother was killed in a mortar attack, this man grabbed up his young wife and children and fled Syria. They spent the next years in refugee camps in Jordan - but with no way to earn a living there and dwindling resources from the international community, they were starving.

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

Eventually, they got help to come to the US, and they jumped at it. They now have a modest house, the children are starting school for the first time in three years, he's getting tutoring in English, AND he has found work, albeit not in his old career - yet.

Finally - a good refugee story. All's well that ends well. At least their long ordeal is over, Or is it?

There's certainly no denying that this young family's story ends much - much - better than that of countless Syrians, of countless others from around the world whose lives are destroyed by war, famine, and natural disaster, among other things.

And yet, even for this family, things are not so simple.

There are people in our country who don't want them here because they're Muslim.

He and his family still only speak a few words of English.

He feels incredible guilt about family members who are left behind in Syria.

And there are the nightmares - the memories of horrors witnessed.

All looks normal - as if their fortunes have been restored - and yet there are scars that will haunt them for the rest of their lives.

This is one of the mistakes we human beings make a lot about life. We see someone back on their feet after a hard time, things looking better than ever, and we assume everything's all better.

Here's another quick example. A couple of years ago, a guy who had spent 30 years on death row in Louisiana - much of it in solitary confinement - was released because DNA testing proved that he was innocent of the murder they'd accused him of. The state gave him a \$20 gift card and a bus ticket and wished him well. He was officially restored to society. Justice, in their eyes, had been restored.

Except, of course, nothing was restored. He could not live, could not get work and had nowhere to turn. He died penniless.

Sometimes scripture helps us think hard things are easily restored.

Look at Job.

In today's reading, we see the happy ending. After losing his health, his wealth, his children and his home, it is all restored. More children, more money, a better home, better health. He's a lucky guy!

Remembering that this story was written to address the question of whether people always deserved the suffering in their lives, and remembering that the conclusion was that NO, They don't - we still have the problem of its ending. Because all the author can do is restore what was taken from Job.

But if you were to ask Job - I bet he would have preferred none of it ever happened. Giving him more children does not take away the loss of his first children. Having his reputation restored doesn't take away the constant verbal abuse he received at the hands of his supposed friends. Having his health restored doesn't take away the memory of the pain.

St. James' E-pistle

October 30, 2015

The same is true in our gospel story. Certainly, Jesus asks Bartimaeus what he would like him to do for him, and certainly, Bartimaeus wants to have his sight back. What Jesus does for him is not merely a sign of Jesus' power but an act of mercy and hope. And yet... he's been a beggar for a long time. He has to learn a trade. People expect him to be a beggar. How's he going to explain the sudden ability to see again? And even when he gets a job, and people accept that he wasn't lying all these years, he has years of not seeing that will stay with him - something he can never explain, something that nobody else will ever understand.

What am I getting at here? That restoring people to health or safety or position isn't good? Far from it. Bartimaeus rejoiced at being able to see again, and Job much preferred his ultimate ending to the one that had been predicted by his wife and friends. And indeed, the refugees who make it to the US or Canada or Germany or Sweden know how lucky they are.

What I'm suggesting is that restoration is only part of the story. And it can be deceptive. What we see in these stories is physical restoration. They get back the home, health, wealth etcetera. But things can never be the way they were before whatever loss took place. Those scars are always with us. You can't go back in time and make it as if things never happened.

This is important for us when we encounter people who have suffered great loss of any sort but who look fine now. Chances are, there are layers of pain and conflict underneath a seemingly calm surface.

Because of this, I would suggest that restoration is never finished. Healing is not a one-and-done prospect. It is ongoing - often life-long. And it always requires help. Sometimes, it's physical help, sometimes, it's emotional or spiritual. Regardless, as children of God, we are called to be here to offer that help. Every person here has the skill to listen, to be patient, to ask, as Jesus did, what do you need?

I would also suggest - and you may have guessed by now - that all of us, to some degree or other, have had need for restoration of some sort. You simply cannot get through life without loss. You can't get through life without scars. And while some are much more horrible than others, it seems that God had made sure none of us is exempt.

Why?

Well, you might as well ask why God gave us life in the first place. To learn how to love. We're in a hard world. What better training ground for learning patience, empathy, concern, mercy and hope? Throughout history, we have learned that when we withhold those things, life gets worse for everyone and suffering is compounded. But when we give patience, empathy, concern, mercy and hope - and when we allow ourselves to receive them - pain and suffering fall into context. They are always a presence, but they do not govern us anymore.

So, what is restoration? REAL restoration. It is not simply having things put back in order as if nothing happened. It is reordering them so that through it all, the grace, peace and love of God shine through. Amen.

Thanksgiving Pies



Order Your Thanksgiving Pies

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Choose from Apple, Apple Crumb,
Pumpkin, and Mincemeat.

\$12

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All proceeds benefit the Hyde Park Community Garden