

St. James' E-pistle

November 18, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Many of you have seen the sign I sometimes take to the coffee shop and set up on my table. It reads, "Free Prayer." In small words below, it quotes Martin Luther: "Pray, and let God worry..."

Last Thursday, I sat with my sign and had just begun to work on the sermon when two men came up wanting to talk about the election. Without ever discovering which way they voted, we prayed for our nation, aware that tense times were ahead.

Not five minutes later, a man quietly slipped into the seat next to me. He asked if I really would pray for him, and if maybe I had a few minutes to talk. His story was very simple. Two days earlier, there had been a one-car accident on Route 9 just north of the church. It closed the street for more than four hours. Somehow, the car had become engulfed in flames, and the driver was killed.

The man told me that he was the first person the scene - before the first responders had arrived - and had tried to get the victim out of the car before the flames overwhelmed them. He said he tried everything he could to get the man out, but to no avail. As he spoke, he began to shake, and it was no surprise when he explained the two reasons he had approached me.

First was to let go of the guilt that had overtaken him because he had not gotten the victim out. He needed to hear someone else say that he had done all he could. Second was to share the horrible experience because it haunted his waking and sleeping hours.

I encouraged him to seek professional help for PTSD but also invited him to come talk any time he felt the need.

That day, I felt that my little sign had done its work, that I had been sent there for that man especially. I am thankful I was there. Perhaps this is the inheritance of the saints in the light that St. Paul talks about. To bring light in the dark, whether it is on a grand national (or world-wide) scale, or on the individual level. To bring light is what we are here for, and in bringing it, we are made strong with the strength that comes from his glorious power.

This Sunday is the Feast of Christ the King. It is a day when we proclaim that we have no King but Christ, that our lead first comes from him, and we follow others only to the degree that they follow Christ. But even more, we proclaim that Jesus Christ is the bringer of the light that we embrace, and that we commit to be bearers of that light to the world.

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But how? I was talking with Fr. Richard Witt (of Rural and Migrant Ministries) the other day, and he told me of a project they're undertaking. They are buying a bunch of yard signs that read, "Love Your Neighbor" and giving them away. I asked if I could steal the idea, and he said he'd love everyone to steal it. I might, though I would add at the bottom: (Everyone's Your Neighbor).

Will this change the world or make the tensions go away? Probably not. But it is a witness that people of good faith - regardless of their political or religious leanings - can share in that one common bond. And who knows, maybe just having a sign in the lawn might change one person. My little sign did.

Of course, to produce a hundred such signs is several hundred dollars, so doing this would be contingent on finding the funds, but in tense times like these, maybe this is the flicker of light we are called bring. The only way we'll know is by listening to Christ our King.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Stewardship Gatherings for All: We had our first Stewardship meeting last week, and it was a truly positive experience for everyone! We look forward to the next two. The remaining evenings for these gatherings are this **Saturday, November 19, and Friday, December 9.**

Because life is busy, our plan is to keep these meetings to a one-hour limit. Each meeting will start at 7:00 PM at the Chapel.

The Vestry is holding these meetings because it feels it's important for us all to work together as we move forward in our collective ministry.

After these meetings, the Vestry will gather the information and make a presentation (with recommendations) at the Annual Meeting in January.

When you get your invitation, please RSVP as soon as possible, and please make every effort to attend. It's that important.

Pageant Sign Up Sheet: Believe it or not, we are already making plans for the 2017 Epiphany Pageant. The Pageant will be held on **Friday, January 6 at 7:00 PM.** But we need actors! So look for a signup sheet in the Narthex starting this Sunday. We have speaking roles, non-speaking roles, and stage crew positions. All ages are welcome and encouraged!

Men's Breakfast: St. James' Men! Join us at Cranberry's at 8:00 AM this Saturday for breakfast. We will likely talk about Christmas plans (maybe picking up the Christmas trees). Mostly, though, we will just get together and solve the problems of the world.

Altar Guild Meeting: St. James' Altar Guild will meet at 10:00 AM this Saturday in the church to plan for Christmas. Everyone is welcome to join!

Nursery School Holiday Craft Fair: Come support our Nursery School and do your Christmas Shopping on **November 19.** You can find all sorts of gifts and goodies from vendors of our region.

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Hyde Park Thanksgiving Dinner: The second annual "Hyde Park Thanksgiving Dinner - A Community Shares Appreciation" is **November 20**.

The Hyde Park Thanksgiving Dinner is a community event made possible by joint efforts of local volunteers and donors (local church leaders and parishioners, residents, organizations and businesses) contributing their time, resources and money.

Tickets are already sold out! But the Dinner is still looking for more volunteers. You can learn more, and you can sign up to volunteer at www.comservhp.com.

Community Thanksgiving Service: The Annual Community Thanksgiving Service will take place this year on **Tuesday, November 22 at 7:00 PM**. The location is Regina Coeli, and the preacher is Rev. Jay Cookingham of the Bridge Builders Community Church. We hope to have a large representation from St. James'!

Newcomers Reception: Been at St. James' for a year or less? If so, you're invited to a Newcomers Reception on **Friday, December 2 at 7:00 pm**. This reception gives you a chance to meet more established parishioners, ask questions, and have a chance to learn what opportunities are available to get involved. Ask Fr. Chuck or a Vestry member for more information.

Troop 80 Fundraisers: Join Boy Scout Troop 80, which St. James' sponsors, for a series of fundraisers.

On **December 3**, the Troop will hold Pancake Breakfasts at the St. James' Parish Hall. Times are 8:00 to 11:00 - \$8 at the door.

The Bishop is Coming! Mark your calendars. On **Sunday, December 4**, Bishop Allen Shin will come to St. James' to confirm, receive, reaffirm faith and preach. Please be on hand to welcome our Suffragan Bishop and show him real St. James' hospitality!

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Jesus' family values are about becoming the human family of God,
reconciled with God and each other.
And in that way is hope and salvation for us all.



PRESIDING BISHOP MICHAEL B. CURRY



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November 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13	14	15 7PM Vestry	16	17 11:00 Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	18 6:45 PM Graveyard Tour Wrap-up Meeting	19 8AM Men's Breakfast Nursery School Craft Fair 10 AM Altar Guild 7PM Stewardship Gathering
20 Thanksgiving Basket distribution Community Thanksgiving Dinner	21	22 7 PM Community Thanksgiving Service (@ Regina Coeli)	23	24 Thanksgiving Day	25	26
27	28	29	30			
Every Sunday, our Eucharists are at 8:00 and 10:00 AM.						

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December 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 11:00 Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures 7:00 Inquirers	2 7:00 Newcomers Reception	3
4 10:00 Episcopal Visit with Confirmation and Reception 4:00 Lessons and Carols	5	6	7	8 11:00 Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures Buildings and Grounds	9 7:00 Stewardship Meeting	10 Holiday Cookie Sale
11	12	13	14	15 11:00 Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	16	17
18 12:00 Christmas basket distribution	19	20 7:00 Vestry	21	22 11:00 Bible Study	23	24 6:00 Family Christmas Service 10:00 Candlelight Service
25 10:00 Christmas Day Service (at Chapel)	26	27	28	29	30	31
Note: On Christmas Day, there will only be one service at 10:00 AM at the Chapel. The main services for Christmas will be Christmas Eve.						

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HELP WANTED

URGENT NEED for BAKERS & CANDY MAKERS

Pull out your best holiday recipes and fire up your oven. We are asking you to contribute 10 dozen (2-3 batches) of your favorite holiday cookies or your tastiest candy treat for the Holiday Cookie and Candy Sale on Dec. 10.

Proceeds will be used to provide a holiday dinner and gifts to 23 less fortunate Hyde Park families.

Please sign the clipboard in the narthex indicating what you are willing to contribute. If you have any questions, please call Sue at 266-3196. Thanking you in advance for your help.



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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.

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.)

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

- 20 Christ Church, Red Hook
- 21 The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Chappaqua
- 22 St. Andrew's Church, Beacon

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- 23 Christ the King Episcopal Church, Stone Ridge
- 24 Food Pantries, Soup Kitchens and Feeding Programs of the Diocese
- 25 St. Stephen's Church, Woodlawn, Bronx
- 26 Dicoesan RenewalWorks Program for Congregational Vitality

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.

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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, Clifford Plass, Grace Plass, Linda 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.

Birthdays
(this past week): Margaret McNamara, Katherine Urban-Mead, Richard Ciferri and Ross Eames

Birthdays
(this coming week): Audrey Horne, Dean Caswell, Janet Bright, Kathie Champion, Bob Seils, Bruce Mackenzie, Evan Weaver, Ingrid Anne Koch Hodgins, Susan Gausepohl, Kurt Burkhardt and Beverly O'Halloran

Acolytes:
November 20: Team 2 (John)
November 27: Team 3

Altar Guild:
November 20: Team II
November 27: Team III

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8 a.m. Readers:	November 20: Lucille Ogden and Jim Smyth November 27: Debbie Belding and Thomas Finnigan
10 a.m. Readers:	November 20: Donna Beyer and Judy Douglass November 27: Patty Caswell and Wendy Urban-Mead
Ushers:	November 20: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher November 27: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne
Pledge Clerks:	November 20: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher November 27: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 20: Sylvia Erlandson November 27: Mike, Lori and Bill Fenwick, Grant and Shirley Ferris
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 20: Deirdre Mae Micker, The Urban-Meads November 27: Brian Rance, Bobbie Wells

This Week's Lectionary

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalm 46

Colossians 1:11-20

Luke 23:33-43

This Week's Hymns

Processional 494 Crown him with many crowns

Sequence 397 Now Thank We All Our God

Offertory Anthem "Come Ye Disconsolate"

Communion 325 Let us break bread together

Recessional 718 God of Our Fathers

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

Sermon Preached on
Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
(November 13, 2016)

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"Dark Days"

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

The other day we were coming home from - I don't remember, but it was maybe 6:00 in the evening. It was pitch black out. The stars were shining and the moon was already high. Actually, I think it was dark by 5:00. And I thought to myself, man I really hate the time change. It just makes everything feel so dark.

Amazingly, even though I have complained about it many times, nobody has seen fit to fix this. At least for the foreseeable future, I have to live and work in the dark afternoons. Fortunately, we have these things called electric lights that we can turn on at will. Which is to say, we have ways to work in the dark.

Working in the dark is kind of what our gospel reading today is about, too. What I mean is, Jesus saw dark days coming for his disciples. Not so much physically dark, but dangerous times, times of little hope, times of despair and persecution, when the strong and powerful would do their best to harm the weak and vulnerable.

Jesus was right, of course. Dark days did come. Not only in the form of his arrest and crucifixion, not only in the days of his disciples, but time and time again in the lives of people around the world throughout the generations. And he told his disciples what we have had to learn ever since: As people of faith, we cannot allow ourselves to be led into hopelessness by those who bring fear, destruction, and oppression. It is times like these, he says, that we are called to testify to God's truth. Jesus even says this is an opportunity to testify to the truth.

But he is careful about that testimony. He tells them, don't be led astray by those who say, "My way is the only way!" Or "The world is ending!" We know the arc of God's love is much longer than any of our lives, and as someone wrote on Wednesday morning after their candidate lost the election: "Despite it all, the sun did rise today, and now I know I have work to do."

I did not really want to talk about the election because, frankly, some of you are grieving and some of you are celebrating. But everyone can agree that these are tense times, that relations within the country and abroad are frayed. Based on news reports and personal conversations, neighbors now walk around in fear of their neighbors. (For some of us, this may be our first experience of what one of my friends who is a person of color says they live with every day.)

Actually, nobody knows what the next U.S. administration will really bring. What we do know is that in the past and around the world, there have been good governments, there have been murderous tyrants, and there has been everything in between. In each of those settings, followers of Christ were called to speak the gospel truth. In light or dark, we are called to bring something brighter.

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The great World War II era German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book *Life Together*, wrote: "Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the Cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work."

Whatever this new administration brings, we know the words of Christ, we know the mission of the gospel, and what Jesus calls us to will not change. It has always been and will always be to love all God's children and bring about that love in the world. It is to repent of our sin, our complicity in evil, and to seek God's forgiveness. It is to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick - regardless of ability to pay. It is to welcome the stranger and the alien as brothers and sisters, especially those fleeing persecution. It is to stand between those who are persecuted and those who would persecute them. Yes, this means physically, and that terrifies me because in these last few days, the reports on the news of people being physically attacked for the color of their skin, or their religion, or their sexuality or their political views have been overwhelming. Jesus told the disciples who were enjoying the splendor of the temple that it would be destroyed - as are all things of which we are so proud. And in its place would be a dark time in which they and all who raised the ire of the rulers - would be imprisoned, tortured and even killed. But to run and hide was not the answer. Rather, as a follower of Christ, the answer is to speak up more boldly with the Gospel. He said, don't worry about the words you'll use, God will give the right words. But speak! Because regardless of what's going on around you, now is your time to bring God's love, reconciliation, justice, mercy and yes, peace.

I wish I knew what was going to happen in our country and in our world in the coming years. I don't. I'm as much in the dark as anyone. But I know that in the darkness, we - you and I - can bring light. Amen.