

St. James' E-pistle

November 20, 2015

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

In the midst of the terrorist attacks in Beirut, Paris, and now Mali, it is easy to forget that this is a wonderful, joyous world. For every the story of hatred, there are a thousand of love.

Syracuse University has some students in Paris, and they reported one such story after the attacks. They were out when having a nice time when everything got crazy around them. Streets were blocked (including the street to their hotel), police appeared everywhere, and all of a sudden, these out-of-place young people had no idea what to do or where to go.

A man, who looked just as terrified as they did, informed them that there was a terrorist attack going on. Then, after doing some translating with the police for the students, they discovered they were not going to get through. They panicked, but the man calmed them and told them to come home with him. Cautious at first, they eventually did, and he introduced them to some of his family. He fed them and, when it became evident that they would not be able to go back all night, gave them a place to stay. They called him an angel.

I mention this because we - Children of God, followers of Christ - are called to be like this man. We do it because God loves us and because Christ is our King, and Christ commands us to reach out in love. This, too, is stewardship - managing, caring for, spreading the love that Christ gives us. It is not easy, but it is good.

The conversation has slipped from the terrorists to refugees, and people of faith disagree vehemently about whether we should welcome them, keep them out, or put them in detention centers. The only consideration for us is, what is Christ's command? Real stewardship is trusting that if we do God's will, God will be with us.

The other day, a younger person admitted to me that they were terrified and had no idea what to do. The best thing I could offer them was the following prayer. I offer it to you now.

A Prayer for the Terrorized

Be not lost in anxiety, for that is the playground of the devil.

Be not overcome by fear, for that is the nursery of hate.

Be not consumed by anger, for that is the wellhead of violence.

And yet...

Be not naive, for that is laziness.

Be not apathetic, for that is selfishness.

Be not too certain, for that is childishness.

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Rather...

Be at peace within and without, for God blesses the peacemakers.

Be kind when it is difficult, for God calls for your light in the darkness.

Be brave in your compassion, for God is with you always, to the end of the age.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Guest Preacher: We received thanks from St. John's Kingston for our hospitality to them and the Rev. Michelle Meech who is a candidate for rector there. She preached at the 10 AM service so that members of their search committee could observe her in a "neutral" space. They have asked us if we would host another candidate on December 13 - and we said yes. It'll be fun!



Youth Group: On Sunday, November 15, Youth of St. James' went to Mariapolis Luminosa for a team-building challenge course. Although it was low to the ground, there were indeed challenges! And fun! Join us next time. Other events we're planning include working at the Lunch Box, snow tubing and ice skating, and a trip to the Cathedral. Stay tuned.



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Operation Christmas Child Thanks: The Sunday School wants to thank you for your kind donations to Operation Christmas Child. With them, we were able to fill eleven boxes! We hope and pray we have been able to make Christmas a little nicer for those who have less.

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. See the flier.

Bible Study Reading 1 Kings: We will read Chapter 12 of 1 Kings at next week's bible study. We want you to enjoy it with us! So join us every Thursday at 11:00 AM in the Wilks Room. If you would like a bible study at a different time of day, let Fr. Chuck know!

Men's Breakfast: The men of the parish will have breakfast this Saturday at 8:00 AM at Cranberry's. From there, we'll move on to other church-related topics.

Come Hear Bishop Dietsche: Bishop Dietsche will be preaching at an Ecumenical Service at St. Martin de Porres Roman Catholic Church, 118 Cedar Valley Road, Poughkeepsie on Monday evening, November 30 at 7:00 pm. Fr. Tom D'Albro has prepared a service incorporating the Pope's declaration of a year of Mercy beginning on Dec. 8th. There will be Tiaze music and lectors from the First Evangelical Lutheran Church and from Christ Church. You are heartily invited to be part of this ecumenical event and especially to support of Bishop Dietsche's efforts in that regard.

Newcomers Reception: We are always delighted to welcome new members to the congregation. Join us on Friday, December 4, at 7:00 PM for our next Newcomers Reception. This is a chance for new and "old" alike to get to know each other a bit and to learn what's out there in ways to grow together as the Body of Christ. If you aren't sure if you are included in this invitation...YOU ARE!

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Please Pray this 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

Visitation/Inquirers' Classes: The 2016 Episcopal Visitation at St. James' has been scheduled for December 4, 2016. Bishop Shin will be our Episcopal visitor for Confirmation, Reception and Renewal of Baptismal Vows. If you are interested in being confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church, please see Fr. Chuck to register for Inquirers' Classes."

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."

- 22 St. John's Parish, South Salem
- 23 San Pablo Church, Manhattan
- 24 The Chaplaincy at the United States Military Academy, West Point
- 25 On the feast day for James Otis Sargent Huntington we pray for all who seek to follow a Rule of Life.
- 26 St. Hilda's and St. Hugh's School, Manhattan
- 27 The Diocesan Ecclesiastical Trial Court
- 28 All single persons in the diocese and those who work in singles ministries

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:

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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

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

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Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Sue DeLorenzo, 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):	Katherine Urban-Mead, Richard Ciferri, Ross Eames, Audrey Horne, Dean Caswell, Janet Bright and Kathie Champion
Birthdays (next week):	Bob Seils, Bruce Mackenzie, Evan Weaver, Ingrid Anne Koch Hodgins, Susan Gausepohl, Kurt Burkhardt and Beverly O'Halloran
Acolytes:	November 22: Bryanna Burkhardt, Amelia McNamara and Braeden Hall November 29: Jasmine Thatcher, Jaylen Thatcher, Bill Fenwick and Bryanna Burkhardt
Altar Guild:	November 22: Team Number II November 29: Team Number II
8 a.m. Readers:	November 22: Angela Henry and Grant Ferris November 29: Deb Belding and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	November 22: Wilma Tully and Judy Douglass November 29: Donna Beyer and Paul O'Halloran
Ushers:	November 22: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher

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	November 29: Donna and John Beyer
Pledge Clerks:	November 22: Doug Belding and Dean Caswell
	November 29: Paul Littlefield
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 22: Mike, Lori and Bill Fenwick and Grant and Shirley Ferris
	November 29: Charlotte, Tom and Peter Finnigan and Bonnie and David Foote
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 22: Saira Shahani
	November 29: Barbara Slegel and the Choir

This Week's Lectionary

2 Samuel 23:1-7

Psalm 132:1-19

Revelation 1:4b-8

John 18:33-37

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

Sermon Preached on Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (November 15, 2015)

**We had a guest preacher at the 10:00 AM service, but I still preached at the 8:00 AM. Without access to Mother Meech's sermon, I offer you mine from the 8:00.*

"Signs"

Christmas is coming; the signs have already begun to appear: I mean, of course, the annual news reports of people complaining that stores these days say "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas": this year it started with the Starbucks red cup controversy, but it's the same old thing. But it IS a reliable sign.

More seriously, the attacks in Paris -

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Taken together with so many other acts of violence within our borders and without; perpetuated sometimes by Muslim extremists but just as often - at least inside our borders - by Christian White Supremacists, many see all this violence as a sign of the end times.

People have from the beginning of history wanted to interpret evil in the world as a sign of something divine. Many have looked at their era's evil as a sign that the world - or at least the age - is ending.

The disciples were no different. When Jesus said the temple would one day no longer stand - which was tantamount to the end of the world for them - they wanted a sign.

Jesus said they would get none. Nor did they need one. Horrible things would continue to happen - as we regularly witness - but he said, "This is but the beginning of the birth pangs." Upheaval is simply the background in which you will do my work, it is the canvass on which you will paint my masterpiece.

It is not so difficult to imagine, that he might then have said, "If you are so keen on having signs, how about the signs that matter most, the signs that God is here amongst you? The signs that God has always been acting and is now doing a new and great thing."

He might have said to them - and to us today - if you want THOSE signs, look around you. Not at a temple or a church built with human hands, but at the sky, the river, the land that feeds us. Look at yourselves, here to worship, to pray even for the Romans who oppress you - even for terrorists whether they be Christian or Muslim.

The signs of God in your presence are the kindness and bravery that people of good will always have and always will display to those in need even when they themselves are in danger.

Those are the signs that matter to God - let them matter to you.

Jesus might well have then pointed to himself and said, "Here. I myself am the sign that God is with you. Follow me."

Yes, there are signs of evil and decay in the world. Always have been - always will. But the signs that matter to us are those that point to God. All we have to do is follow them.

Amen.

COMMUNITY

THANKSGIVING SERVICE



The Hyde Park Association of Churches
invites you to

A Community Service of Thanksgiving
Tuesday, November 24 at 7:00 PM

St. James' Chapel
10 East Market Street
Hyde Park, NY 12538

EVERYONE IS INVITED AND WELCOME!