

St. James' E-pistle

November 27, 2015

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Ours was spent largely in a hotel room, but we were together with our sons, and we had wonderful food together, so it was a blessed day. There are so many things to be thankful for.

One of the things I appreciate which may not have jumped first to your mind is the church calendar. I love the church seasons. They give a sense of rhythm to life and fill our time with a rich texture that at the same time rehearses for us our faith.

This Sunday begins the four-week-long season of Advent. It is the beginning of the church's year because it is the period of waiting and watching for the coming Christ. In our church, we don't count shopping days; we light Advent candles. In our church, we don't sing Christmas carols before their time; we sing hymns of preparation. In our church, we give green and red a rest in favor of blue or purple because those are the colors of introspection, reflection, forgiveness and expectation.

I invite you to the observation of a holy Advent - to a time of quieting down in the midst of everyone else's manic search for the "perfect" gift, to a time of expectation not of parties but of incarnation - of Jesus with us.

Of course, we are in Stewardship season as well (it's just as cyclical as the rest of the church year!). And anticipation is a big part of this season, too. Our anticipation looks forward to Sunday, December 6. That is our ingathering Sunday when we take up all the pledge cards and bless them on the altar. On that day, we also collect cans of food to bless on the altar as a physical sign of our offering ourselves to God. All of the cans of food will be donated to the Hyde Park Food Pantry.

So come to church this week! Wear blue or purple! Enter into the season with joyful expectation, because Christ is coming into our hearts.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Youth Group: A new youth group for Dutchess County Episcopalians is forming. It is called CONNECT designed to be for ALL youth of our county and will meet once a month at a different church. The next (second) meeting of this group meets this **Sunday, November 29** from 2:00 to 4:30 at St. Paul's, Pleasant Valley. Short notice, true, but if you're interested, let me know! I'll know about future meetings more quickly from now on. Please let me know if you're interested in the idea!

Sunday School News: On **Sunday, December 13th**, the Sunday School will be holding a "Donation" Sale during coffee hour. The proceeds from this sale will go towards the purchase of a grave marker for our beloved Sunday School Teacher- Jackie Jennings. Jackie was a "Lifetime" Sunday School teacher. We miss her and hope we can raise enough money to provide this for her and her family. So please plan on visiting our little donation table in the parish hall after church on the 13th.

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 30th** 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 4th**, 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!

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

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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

Advent Program: On **Sunday, December 13th** at 3:00 pm, Fr. Chuck, with Mother Megan Sanders of St. Paul's, Pleasant Valley, is giving a presentation titled, "Colors, Candles, and Carols: What Advent Means to Episcopalians." It will take place at the Taconic Retreat and Conference Center and is open to the public. Following the lecture, there will be a rather dramatic lantern launch in which several large paper lanterns will be launched into the late afternoon/evening sky.



Congratulations to Dalton: Congratulations to Dalton Slegel for completing his requirements for Eagle Scout. The project he completed to earn the Eagle rank was a kiosk at the Hyde Park Rail Depot. Check it out!

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."

November

- 29 The Mid-Hudson Executive Committee
- 30 On the feast day of Saint Andrew the Apostle we pray for creativity in introducing others to Christ.

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December

- 1 On World AIDS Day, we pray for the work of the HIV/AIDS Committee of the Social Concerns Commission and for those around the world affected by HIV/AIDS.
- 2 Good Shepherd, Roosevelt Island
- 3 St. Ambrose's Church, Manhattan
- 4 Grace Church, City Island, The Bronx
- 5 St. Luke's Church, 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.

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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, Susie Buhalis, 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 Sheekey, Naomi Sleight, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

*Pray for the repose of the soul of Elizabeth Stuebing,
mother of Jan Smyth*

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):

Bob Seils, Bruce Mackenzie, Evan Weaver, Ingrid Anne Koch
Hodgins, Susan Gausepohl, Kurt Burkhardt and Beverly O'Halloran

Birthdays
(next week):

Melinda Harris, Gary Glancey, Hank Schroeder, Lori Rider-Fenwick
and Bonnie Foote

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Acolytes:	November 29: Jasmine Thatcher, Jaylen Thatcher, Bill Fenwick and Bryanna Burkhardt December 6: TBA
Altar Guild:	November 29: Team Number II December 6: Team Number III
8 a.m. Readers:	November 29: Deb Belding and Sue DeLorenzo December 6: Angela Henry and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	November 29: Donna Beyer and Paul O'Halloran December 6: Patty Caswell and Maggie McNamara
Ushers:	November 29: Donna and John Beyer December 6: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne
Pledge Clerks:	November 29: Paul Littlefield December 6: Paul Littlefield
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 29: Charlotte, Tom and Peter Finnigan and Bonnie and David Foote December 6: Mary and Elizabeth Gabel, Deacon Gail Ganter-Toback, Mary Garlo and Peter Frances
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 29: Barbara Slegel and the Choir December 6: Audrey Horne and Brian Rance

This Week's Lectionary

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalm 25:1-9

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Luke 21:25-36

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

Sermon Preached on
Last Sunday after Pentecost (Christ the King)
(November 22, 2015)

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"Eyes Forward"

I'm not really happy with the title I came up with today. I mean, "Eyes Forward"? What's that supposed to mean?

I mean, it almost sounds like you should put on blinders and never notice anything going on around you - just look straight ahead. But it's nothing like that at all.

What "Eyes Forward" is, is a kind of shorthand for the title I really wanted to write which runs more like this: "Keep your eyes focused on the one who will lead you safely to the Kingdom and will not steer you wrong because he is the king of the world."

But that didn't fit.

You see, today is the feast of Christ the King. But saying "Keep your eyes on the king" sounds weird to us. I mean, we're Americans; we don't do kings. The title "King" for Christ is a sort of shorthand itself. It's the best title they could come up with that people would understand - and most of the world had monarchs back then.

But Jesus himself tried to make clear that he wasn't THAT kind of King when he said, "My kingdom is not from this world." And as I say, for people like us, it's just not that helpful.

So, "Eyes Forward" is shorthand for the one you want to keep your eyes on in all things - the one you look to when you are lost. The one you watch when you are angry and might regret what you're thinking of doing. The one you look to when you're frightened. Or determined. Or happy.

The kind we will follow anywhere because we trust their wisdom, their skill, their knowledge, and their goodness. With authority.

But where do they take you? To a higher place - to the Kingdom of God who eschews the title of King and chooses the title of Father.

So kingship - foreign for us, but we can use it as shorthand - not for absolute despot but for one we absolutely trust and love.

Now, today, we have a baptism - Emerson Rose. And it's tradition to give some advice to our newest sister in Christ. Well, Emerson, I've known your dad since he was nine years old, so I can give you lots of advice about what not to do... Like when you're a teenager and he says, "Come on, we're going to church," don't argue with him.

Actually, the truth is that for the first decade of your life, you will keep your eyes on your parents. You'll watch them like a hawk. When they behave wisely, and generously, and kindly, you'll notice. And you'll make a mental note of it. And when they are angry or petty or selfish - you'll

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notice that, too. Whatever they do, you'll be watching them for clues about how to live in this world.

They will be your world for awhile - or if you prefer, your king and queen. But if they do their jobs well - and I believe they will - they will lead you to a point where not only will you think they're old and out of touch (that's called being a teenager) - but they will have guided you to a place where you are able to change your focus from them to Christ.

And then, they will not be your king and queen but your fellow travelers, following our king who calls himself our brother - who will lead us true. Until that point, however, pay attention to your parents.

But the best advice, that which will see you through times when you doubt, times when you fear, times when you are arrogant and think you know everything - is to keep your eyes forward - on Christ who will lead you true to his home - or kingdom if you will - that is not of this world. Amen.