

St. James' E-pistle

November 7, 2014

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

I offer for your consideration, a review.

I've never offered a review of a product before, but I have read plenty, so I feel fully qualified to give my opinion. Considering that the product is an app from the Apple App Store, I feel particularly cutting edge.

Okay, so I had to get my kid's help downloading....

Anyway, the app is called, "Living Well Through Advent." I saw it in an advertisement from Church Publishing and thought, "That's something I'd like to help me focus on the season." I figured, it only costs \$1.99, so if it's a stinker, I haven't lost much.

It's actually a very simple little program. When you open it, you see an attractive graphic - a desert path leading toward the Star - and the lessons listed for the first Sunday of Advent. Below, you can click on a link that takes you to the full text of the day's readings.

Flip to the next page (Monday, December 1), and you get a devotional direction. It says, "Notice and share a God moment in your life." Below that is a quote from 1 Corinthians 1:7 : "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

On weekdays, there is no link to the lessons of the day, so the little devotion is all you get. However, on both Sundays and weekdays, there is a link at the bottom called "Thoughts and Reflections." Click on that and you can write down your own thoughts. I like this little feature.

If you see a devotion that you like, there's a button so you can share it with friends & family on Facebook, Twitter, or via e-mail.

It's not a bad program but very basic. I would have loved to see scripture texts for all the days, not just Sundays. Also, I would have liked for all the "thoughts and reflections" to be linked to each other to form on continuous document. As it is, I have to remember where I wrote the reflections if I want to find them again.

So, an inexpensive app which might help your Advent a little. You can also buy a paper version Cokesbury.com. It's a dollar or two more.

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You may ask why I am giving this review. Indeed, why am I talking about Advent. Simple, if Advent is the season to prepare the way of the Lord, November is the season to prepare for Advent!

I don't mean Christmas presents and parties and whatever else we do to ourselves in the annual crush. I mean finding a space where we can get some quiet. Finding some device that allows you to reflect on your faith. Finding some way to step out of the busyness of life and focus on what it means for Christ to come into the world.

If you wait till Advent begins (November 30!), the season will probably slip by unnoticed, lost in the pre-Christmas rush. Now is the time to find your Advent aid!

If you would like to learn more about this app or other resources for a holier Advent, let me know, and we can explore the possibilities together.

In Christ,

Chuck+

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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."

- 9 St. Alban's Church, Staten Island
- 10 Trinity Church, Garnerville
- 11 St. Stephen's Church, Armonk
- 12 St. Barnabas's Church, Irvington-on-Hudson
- 13 Trinity-St. Paul's Church, New Rochelle
- 14 On the anniversary of the Consecration of Samuel Seabury we pray for all bishops in the Church, especially those who are newly consecrated.
- 15 The work of the Diocesan Convention

STILL PRAYING:

Most of the Nigerian girls kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram are still in bondage. Please consider this prayer in your daily devotions.

Prayer for the kidnapped Nigerian girls May 2014

O God, we cry out to you
for the lives and the freedom
of the 276 kidnapped girls in Nigeria.
In their time of danger and fear,
pour out your strong Spirit for them.
Make a way home for them in safety.
Make a way back for them
to the education that will lift them up.
Hold them in the knowledge
that they are not captive slaves,
they are not purchased brides,
but they are your beloved daughters ,
and precious in your sight.
Change the hearts and minds of their kidnappers
and of all who choose violence against women and girls.
Cast down the mighty from their seat,
and lift up the humble and meek,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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ALSO STILL PRAYING FOR ISRAEL AND GAZA:

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

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.

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Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum
English Translation Amichai Lau-Lavie

Donate to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: There is an ongoing appeal for donations to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and its Al Ahib Hospital in Gaza. Even after a month, even after the ceasefires, the situation in Gaza is desperate, and the hospital continues to see more patients than it can handle. The hospital is still very low on supplies and fuel to keep the lights on (and medical devices running).

If you would like to support the good and holy work of the Diocese of Jerusalem and its hospital, please send donations to:

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem
25 Old King's Highway No., Suite 13
Darien, CT 06820

Or online at www.afedj.org

Also, Episcopal Relief and Development is gathering funds for the hospital. Donate online at: www.episcopalrelief.org or mail to Episcopal Relief and Development, PO Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058 (memo line: Middle East Fund)

The News of the Church

Thank You To Those Who Pledged! A warm thank you to all who pledged support for the church and its mission this past week. Your commitment will help us bring God's love to those who need it, share Christ's Good News, and help bring reconciliation around the world just a little closer to reality.

If you forgot or did not get a chance to pledge yet, take heart! You can pledge any time through the year. I promise, we won't turn it away. And as you consider what you gave, consider how it is a reflection of what God has done in your life. As we say each Sunday at the 8:00 a.m. Eucharist, "All things come from thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee."

Pageant Actors Wanted! Didn't get a chance to scratch your acting itch with the Graveyard Tours? Acted in the tours but can't get enough? Here is your chance!

We are just now beginning preparations for the Epiphany Pageant - to be presented the first weekend in January (Date TBD). There are a couple of script choices, so some of it will depend on who signs up to act.

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We could also use a couple of stage hands, a props person, a costume person and anything else you might think of.

The pageant is not terribly long, and there are parts with a variety of lines (from very few or none to lots). We want children, teens and adults!

So scratch your theatrical itch and be part of the St. James' Epiphany Pageant!

Graveyard Tours Videos: Thanks to the hard work, generosity and artistry of Brian Rance, we now have several videos of the Graveyard Tours. There are 50 DVDs for distribution to each family in the parish. Each DVD contains two nights of performances. The DVDs are great for showing to your friends and family when they visit this Thanksgiving!

If you would like a DVD, please let Fr. Chuck know

OR

You can simply watch on YouTube:

The October 18th Tour can be found by clicking on the following link (or pasting this address into your web browser):

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgErYajv6z1nZOKsg4djhywh_NnS-Gi7M

The October 25th Tour can be found at this address:

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgErYajv6z1keCPb_hT51U8YcNnzWXxYG

There are some different actors each night, so performances will vary.

Nursery School Craft Fair/Cookie Sale: On November 22, St. James' Nursery School will host its annual Fall Craft Fair/Cookie Sale. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 3:00 p.m. All proceeds go toward the operation of the nursery school including scholarships for those in financial stress.

St. James' Nursery School is celebrating its 51st year of operation this year and has touched the lives of more than a thousand children. Many of them, now adults, have come back to visit and share fond memories of the school. Many of them have brought their own children and now grandchildren back to the school!

And in the "you ought to know" category, the town has implemented a free universal pre-kindergarten program. We were afraid this would draw students away from St. James' since we charge tuition and are not full day. Indeed, two children did try the free pre-K program, but both of them returned to St. James' because the quality and the care are unrivaled

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Adult Acolytes Wanted: Without wanting to sound alarmist, we are in the midst of an acolyte predicament. We don't have many. With graduations, crazy schedules and moves, we are down to six acolytes, one of whom has a broken arm and can't serve at the moment. That does not mean we have to go without acolytes. Adults can step forward, too! We already have *one* adult acolyte currently serving, and others have served in the past. Perhaps YOU can consider becoming an acolyte! It's fun, gets you close to the action, and allows you to serve God in a new way. All you need to do is contact Fr. Chuck. Hope to see you robed up

and ready to serve soon.

Outreach—Notes from the Garden: Please see the flier at the end of this E-pistle.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Susie Buhalis, Jim and Sharyn Burke, Ashley Coyne, Kathleen Craft, Michael Day, Jane Gagliardoto, Kasey Gaulin, John Golden, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Andy Hall, Harold Hall, Liz Handman, Brooke Helton, Rev. Don Hoger, Dalton K., Barbara Knakal, Rosemary Leuken, Doris Mack, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Pat Rooney, John Schroeder, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Debbie Stone, Gloria Veach, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Bobbie Wells, 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):

Anna Mae Swenson, Sue DeLorenzo, Michael Mungo, August (Bud) Oetjen, Florence Fried, Riley Hall and Gwen Cookingham

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Birthdays (next week):	Katherine Urban-Mead
Acolytes:	November 9: Nancy Montero and Chris Santos November 16: Chris Granados-Kramer and Bryanna Burkhardt
Altar Guild:	November 9: Team I November 16: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	November 9: Debbie Belding and Sue DeLorenzo November 16: Angela Henry and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	November 9: Regina Ardini/Sophie Ciferri November 16: Wilma Tully/Nancy Montero
Ushers:	November 9: Bill and Regina Ardini November 16: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher
Pledge Clerks:	November 9: Deb and Doug Belding November 16: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 9: Connie and Ross Eames, Sylvia Erlandson and Ann and Ray Farrell November 16: Mike, Lori and Billy Fenwick, Grant and Shirley Ferris and Tom, Charlotte and Peter Finnigen
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 9: Jodi Triola, The Eames and Pat Rooney November 16: Deirdre Mae Micker, Leslie Quick and Susan Gausepohl

This Week's Lectionary

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Psalm 78:1-7

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

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

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Sermon Preached on
Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost (All Saints Sunday)
(November 2, 2014)

"What We Will Be"

You getting a lot of junk mail these days? Political ads? Us too. But that's hardly the worst of it in our house.

I don't want to embarrass Chris right now, but we are at that time in our lives when nine tenths of the mail we receive is made up of college brochures for him. There is a flood from all over the country.

It's impossible to even read them all, let alone know which one will really be the best place for him, really give him the best education and the best shot at a great future.

The pressure is great. What if he picks the wrong school? What if he doesn't get into his first choice school? What if we can't afford it? What if, what if, what if....

There's so much noise in our heads, just in this one area of our lives. How will it all end up? We don't know! Where will he go? We have an idea, but until he signs on the dotted line, we don't know! And even then, will he like it when he gets there? We don't know! We don't even know if he or Nick for that matter will get jobs after graduation. We don't know anything.

Except that no matter what happens, no matter who they become, they will always be our children, and we will always love them.

This is kind of a microcosm of life. There is this flood of voices in every aspect of our lives, all vying for attention, all raising doubts and fears within us, so that our own internal voices start to sound pretty shrill, too. "What am I going to do?!" Jobs, the news, Ebola, elections...

I got this at a meeting of church leaders recently. There was fear and panic over the future of the church. What will happen if a seminary closes? What will happen if some of the smaller parishes close? How are we going to reach young people? How can we compete with social media?

What will become of us?

We don't know. We don't know what we will become. We don't know anything.

Except that we are God's children.

In a way, that's what John was getting in his letter. The Christian community he wrote to were being battered by competing religious doctrines: Jesus was just a spirit, not a real person. He didn't really die. He wasn't the eternal son of God.... They didn't even know if the young community could hold together.

But John wrote, "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is."

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So, this is where we start. We are God's children. What will become of us, what we will be ... that has not yet been revealed. But it is enough to know who we are now.

Jesus expanded on this a little in the beatitudes. In an odd turn of phrase, he lists some things we don't normally think of as blessings and declares them to be so. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the pure in heart, the merciful, the peacemakers and the persecuted.

None of these is easy - just try being merciful on a regular basis or a peacemaker. Many of us might not even think of these as blessings at all because they're so hard. Maybe that's because we think of being blessed as being happy rather than being what it is - made holy, consecrated to God.

More importantly, Jesus says that the hungering, the poverty, the persecution and so on are not the end. They are paths to whom we will become. Satisfied, comforted, at home in the kingdom of God and, yes, God's children.

In the midst of the struggles of life, when we keep our focus on God, on the one we follow, we don't have to worry what we will become, for we are already children of God.

Today is Ingathering Sunday. In a few minutes, we will gather pledge cards - your commitment to following Christ wherever he leads. This is sometimes a time of stress for folks. They think things like, I don't have much to give... Or, I have so many other bills... Or, is it a percentage of gross or net income?... Or, I don't even know what my money going for. Or even, What's the point? We're just a tiny little church.

All those voices can drown out a central truth.

It is a central truth that we remember in our annual celebration of All Saints. It is this: We are God's children. What St. James' will be in the future has not been revealed, and it's not our concern. What is our concern is - just as it was for those who went before us - is to follow Christ now.

And if we are small and weak, just one of many, so what! So is a poem, or a song, or a painting. Heck, so is a sunset with its orange and purple hews resting on the hills. To be poor in spirit, to be meek and pure in heart.., is to know who we are unblinkingly and unashamed, to know we are little and weak and here for just a blink of an eye - but to know that when our eyes are on God, we can make beauty, we can make joy, we can make God's presence known if only to a few people, if only today.

And that is enough.

So, as we prepare to receive and bless pledge cards, let us do so not worrying about what we will be but remembering who we are. We are God's children, and that is more than enough. Amen.

The Hyde Park Community Garden



at St. James' Episcopal Church

Notes from the Garden

Fall 2014

We have just completed our third season at the Hyde Park Community Garden. Here are our highlights for the year:

1. Provided fresh vegetables to an average of 80 Hyde Park families through the Hyde Park Community Garden monthly. We supplied vegetables to them from May through October, so that equals 480 servings!
2. Provided fresh vegetables for Hyde Park Meals on Wheels from June through August.
3. Installed a beautiful and functional storage shed built by students and faculty at FDR High School.
4. Installed a new walkway from the shed to the garden entrance through our Community Garden volunteers.
5. A cleared pathway from the parking lot through the woods to the garden was done in August by members of Bridge Builders Ecumenical Youth Group.
6. A new Dept. of Transportation approved paved apron from Route 9 to the parking lot entrance was done in May through a grant provided by the Episcopal Diocese of New York- Mid Hudson.

Our "Wish List" for 2015

1. A permanent fence at the front of the garden that will hopefully deter our deer and woodchuck friends from entering and enjoying countless meals in the garden!
2. Our "Young Peoples Garden" truly up and running with local organizations being active participants in this front area. We are asking the Boy Scout Troops, Girl Scout Troops, Leo Club, Church youth groups, and the FDR Interact Club to help us grow and donate even more vegetables for our neighbors in need!
3. A new compost area for our Community Gardeners and Volunteers to use to help us continue nourish the soil!
4. Any donations are appreciated and welcomed! Kindly make a check payable to St. James Church with "Community Garden" in the memo section.
5. If you have any questions, or suggestions, please call Deborah Belding at 229-0153.