

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Death. That seems to be all I talk about in Lent.

We're all going to die. We're designed to die. Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.

By why?

Why do we die? Why does God allow some to cut short the lives of others. Why are too many deaths painful or violent?

On the other side of the equation, why does death terrify us so much? Why do we run from it and avoid talking about it? Why do we try to "beat" death? And why, oh why, does trust in God so very often fall apart when death touches us?

Without wanting to sound like a commercial, these are some of the questions we will address next Wednesday evening at the first session of our Lenten Program, "Remember That You Are Dust." Look for the flier below and consider joining us for that important forum.

Whether you decide to attend or not, you might want to consider those questions. You might want to ask yourself what power death - even the idea of death - has over you and what your proper relationship to this inevitable part of life.

It is important because the relationship you have to death will affect the relationship you have to life. It's often those who run from death who spend all their time building protective walls or accumulating superabundant wealth ("just in case") yet miss God's love. Even if it looks like they're having a good time, they're constantly looking over their shoulders, unable to see anyone but their closest friends as rivals or threats.

To truly live, as Christ calls us to, means to let go of the fear of death. It is no enemy but a welcome friend. It is sometimes forced upon us unwillingly, but even then, it relieves pain and brings us out of suffering into a land of joy and peace. This is the teaching of our faith. It is not because we are good but because God loves us.

When we embrace the idea of death as a friend, at whatever point it should greet us, we can more readily stick our necks out to love, the experience, to express our creativity. We are able to stand up for others more boldly and yet more peacefully.

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

This is all nothing new for Christians. Except that we forget. We get caught up in "defense" and "security" of all types. It's easy to be swept up in the excitement, even if we know in our hearts that it's just so much noise.

So this Lent, please continue to ponder death. It's not morbid, and it's not weakness. It is acknowledgment that we are merely travelers passing through, and even if we have many miles to go before we rest, we - each of us - will eventually reach home.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

The News of the Church

Youth Group to Special Olympics: Please keep the Youth of St. James' in your prayers as volunteer on **February 20th** at the Special Olympics. Please cheer for them as they cheer on some very special athletes. And please keep the athletes in your prayers, too! They are special indeed.

Lenten Breakfasts: Don't forget to come at 9:00 AM this Sunday for breakfast! Lenten breakfasts run through **March 13th**.

Lenten Meditation Booklets: We have already gone through a second printing of the Meditation booklets! We have a few left, but they are going fast. After they are gone, they will be printed on an as-needed basis.

Parish Planning Meeting: On Saturday, **March 5th**, the Vestry will host a Parish Planning Meeting for the entire Congregation. Anyone interested in how we will organize and execute ministry here is encouraged to come. This is especially important if you head up a committee or ministry! It would be wonderful if we needed to find extra chairs!

Boy Scout Breakfast:

A hearty fresh cooked breakfast!

Your choice of:
Pancakes (Regular, chocolate chip or blueberry)
Scrambled Eggs
Sausage or Bacon
Hash browns
Orange juice Coffee or Tea

Where: St. James' Church 4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park

When: Saturday, February 13, 2016 Time: 8:00 am - 11:00 am

Cost \$8:00 per adult ticket \$6:00 per child ticket

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

Second Community Movie Night:



You are invited to attend our
FREE COMMUNITY MOVIE NIGHT!

When: **Saturday, March 12th**

Time: 6:30 p.m. 9:00 p.m.

Where: St. James' Parish Hall.

4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park NY 12538

We are screening the 1977 classic, **"Star Wars—A New Hope"**, starring Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher.

Join us, as Luke Skywalker takes up the challenge to rescue Princess Leia and help the Rebellion overthrow the Empire.



Please bring your family, friends, grandkids, cousins, etc. Parish membership is not required.

Movie night is sponsored by the St. James' Sunday School. Popcorn and soft drinks are included! Bring blankets for the kids if you wish. Hope to see you there!

Costumes welcome!



St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

See Mary Poppins! Want a fun evening that will support several of our youth? Go see Mary Poppins, the FDR High School spring musical. Sure, it's Lent, but penitence and spiritual discipline doesn't have to stop you from supporting our school and having a laugh. The production features these St. James' youth: Amelia McNamara, Colleen Kornish, Dalton Slegel, and Kirstin Horn. If you have questions, you can see Wendy Urban-Mead who heads up the parent boosters for the production.

Franklin D. Roosevelt High School's PRESIDENTS' PLAYERS present: *Mary Poppins*

**Franklin D. Roosevelt High School Auditorium
156 South Cross Road, Hyde Park, NY.**

The musical "Mary Poppins" is based on the famous Disney movie of the same name, and features familiar songs such as "A Spoonful of Sugar", "Let's Go Fly a Kite", "Feed the Birds", and "Supercalifragilistic". A very special feature of this performance will be seeing Mary Poppins FLY! (Flying by Foy)

**Special FREE Senior Citizens Performance:
THURSDAY MARCH 10 at 10:00 a.m.**

An optional LUNCH is available for \$6.00. To reserve a place for lunch, call Linda Senchak at the Hyde Park CSD Department of Performing Arts at 229-4000 x1801.

Other performances are Friday, and Saturday, March 13 and 14 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 13 at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$12.00 for adults and \$6.00 for students and seniors. Tickets can be purchased at the door, or in Hyde Park at Julian's Deli, on Route 9G, just south of the high school, or at The Shipping Place, on Route 9, just north of St. Andrew's Road.

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

Pledge Envelopes: If you pledged but have not yet received your pledge envelopes, you can do so on Sunday. You can also pick up your 2015 statement of giving (helpful for taxes).

PLEASE PLEDGE! If you have pledged for 2016, thank you! If you have not yet pledged, it's not too late. We would like 100% participation this year in pledging, no matter the amount.

"Remember That You Are Dust"

**Preparing for Death
In order to Live more fully...**



Wednesdays at 7:00 PM
St. James' Chapel
10 East Market Street



February 24: The Spirituality of Dying

The Rev. Chuck Kramer, Rector of St. James'

March 2: Wills and Legal Matters of Dying

Mr. Michel Haggerty, Lawyer specializing in wills and elder law

March 9: Working with The Funeral Home

Mr. Rob Sweet, Funeral Directory, Sweet's Funeral Home

March 16: Planning Your Funeral Service

The Rev. Chuck Kramer, Rector of St. James'

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

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

- 21 The Church of Saint Andrew, Staten Island
- 22 St. Mary's Church, Tuxedo Park
- 23 Diocesan Property Support Committee
- 24 St. John's Church, Tuckahoe, Yonkers
- 25 All Saints' Church, Briarcliff Manor
- 26 Rural & Migrant Ministry
- 27 Episcopal Recovery Team of Staten Island

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.

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

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*

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 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.

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

Birthdays (this past week):	Elizabeth Gabel; Meg Connolly-Burkhardt; Tadgh O'Halloran; Stephanie Barkoe; Regina Ardini
Birthdays (next week):	Charlessa Thatcher; David Foote; Gilbert O'Halloran; Karen Pitcher
Acolytes:	February 21: Jasmine, Jaylen and Bill February 28: Nancy, Kirstin and Deirdre Mae
Altar Guild:	February 21: Team Number I February 28: Team Number II
8 a.m. Readers:	February 21: Debbie Belding and Lynne Koch February 28: Angela Henry and Grant Ferris
10 a.m. Readers:	February 21: Patty Caswell and Wendy Urban-Mead February 28: Regina Ardini and Judy Douglass
Ushers:	February 21: Bill and Regina Ardini February 28: Patty Drake and Pat Keefe
Pledge Clerks:	February 21: Paul Littlefield and Janet Bright February 28: Tanya Hall and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	February 21: Walter and Lynne Koch; Ashley Konyn; Allelu Kurten February 28: Paul Littlefield; Joanne Lown
Coffee Hour Hosts:	February 21: Lenten Breakfast February 28: Lenten Breakfast

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 15:1-12,17-18

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 13:31-35

Psalm 27

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

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

Sermon Preached on First Sunday in Lent (February 14, 2016)

"Tempted by Fate"

When I was in my twenties and seriously considering going to seminary, I had to meet with a group in my diocese called "The Commission on Ministry." They are the group responsible not only for screening aspirants to the ministry but also supporting them throughout the long and convoluted process.

I remember early on in the process, one of the members of the commission asked me, "If you go to seminary, you have to be prepared to risk losing your faith?"

To which I thought (but was too afraid to say), "Are you crazy?" Without my faith, why would I ever go to seminary?

Over time, however, I came to understand what they meant. They didn't mean Faith in Christ, belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

What they meant was that many enter seminary with dearly held but false or at least naïve notions of what our faith is. Many enter seminary not wanting to be challenged or stretched in their life with Christ but to have their preconceived notions confirmed (and maybe congratulated).

What they meant was that some entering seminary believed, for example, that God can only love Christians, that baptism guarantees heaven, that receiving communion is getting your spiritual clock punched, that God can only speak through the bible (and the King James translation at that).

What they meant was that some think being a minister of the Gospel is all about incense, chanting, organs and preaching.

What they meant was, if you want to serve God, you have to let go of your cherished notions and trust that God is more. Because you can be tempted by your faith to walk away from the path of Christ.

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

We see a similar temptation in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul is a smart, faithful man, but he is often misunderstood, no more so when he writes: "if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Tempting to think that's it, right? Just believe it and say it. Well, technically, you may not even need to do that to be saved, if saved means to live eternally in God's love. Jesus says we simply are loved.

But when we read these words, we are tempted to think that we don't have to do anything else to be a follower of Christ. Just believe and say the words. Let's just remember that in the gospels, at least one demon publicly professed Jesus to be the Son of God - and it's clear that he believed it.

Let's also remember that this belief in just confessing the faith led many missionaries to force others to get baptized and say the words. Belief is important, speaking is important, but it's only a small piece of the puzzle of Christ.

Then there's Jesus himself. When he is baptized, he's led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan.

What are those temptations?

To turn stones to bread. To rule the world. To become invincible.

In other words, Jesus is tempted with different ways to fulfill his God-given mission. Is he here to feed the hungry? Is he here to be a strong leader (maybe to conquer the occupying Roman army?). Is he here to make the world safe?

Just as confessing Christ as Lord and savior is by itself a good thing, so can be feeding the hungry, providing strong leadership and making the world a safer place.

And certainly, over the course of his ministry, Jesus DID feed, lead and bring people to physical safety.

But that's NOT what he was here for - nor is it what we are here for.

The temptation of all these good things that SEEM to be acts of faith is that we may grab onto them and forget what we are truly called to do.

We can easily fall into the trap of thinking that doing outreach is enough (whether it be food pantry, garden, reading...).

We can easily fall into the trap of thinking that going to church and singing God's praises (or making your pledge!) is enough.

St. James' E-pistle

February 19, 2016

We can easily fall into the trap of thinking that making the church a safe haven, or protesting injustice is all there is to being a Christian.

They are all good, but what Jesus came here for is much more. What Jesus calls us to is much more.

He came to change our relationship with God - which necessarily means changing our entire orientation from this world to God. He came to change what we are looking at. Because you can't truly follow where you're not looking, and following is what we are called to do.

When I say we are tempted by faith, then, what I mean is that there are many good things out there that fall under the category of faith. They are good in and of themselves - just like chanting and organ music are good - but if they become our purpose, our sole focus, then they lead us from our true purpose of following Christ. Wherever he leads.

So this Lent, set your gaze upon Christ. Follow wherever he leads. You might find yourself serving in a pantry or choir - but don't be tempted to stop there. Where Christ leads is a much bigger world. Amen.