

# St. James' E-pistle

## February 26, 2016

### **Pulpit Notes**

Brothers and Sisters:

I was pleasantly surprised Wednesday evening at the first session of our "Remember That You Are Dust" series. The rain was so hard at times that the walkway to the chapel was flooded, and the parking lot had become a mud field.

And yet, a dozen of you showed up!

Given that several folks have said they are interested in the series but were unable to attend the first session for scheduling reasons, I am really looking forward to a great crowd at next week's session on Wills, Estates, Health Care proxies and all those other legal issues surrounding the end of earthly life. The flier below gives the pertinent information.

Lent is a season of self-examination and reflection, so I don't feel it appropriate to overdo it with activities right now - your meditations have done such a good job of feeding the soul, and the focus on our mortality in the series directs our meditations.

So we don't need to fill up the calendar with a lot of other things right now.

However, do please make your plans now for Holy Week and Easter. I would very much love to have a full house at each service - not because I need big numbers but because we all need these liturgies. Each one tells part of our story. Each one, like a good movie, brings us to a new place emotionally and intellectually. Each one is a piece of the puzzle that makes up our faith and our lives.

Even if you are traveling during Holy Week and Easter, make time for these liturgies. They make Easter make sense.

You can read below about any other activities coming up.

But, and I hesitate to even ask, if anyone is interested in doing one more thing - something special for Bright Sunday this year - please contact me as soon as possible. If enough people want to do something, we'll need a couple of weeks to prepare it. Otherwise, I feel the tradition can safely take a sabbatical.

So, while there are lots of things going on, let's make the time this Lent to reflect on what's important. We are dust, to dust we shall return, and in our mortality we embrace the promise and hope of Jesus Christ who broke down the walls dividing us from God. We are beloved children of God - and nothing will ever change that.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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### **The News of the Church**

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

**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.

**Next Fireside Chat:** Thursday, **March 3<sup>rd</sup>** at 7:00 PM. Tony Musso discusses our heritage in historic architecture. As always, it takes place at our chapel, and admission is free.

**Parish Planning Meeting:** On Saturday, **March 5<sup>th</sup>** from 10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon, 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!

**Help Liberty Station:** Following a period of exploration and discussion with Jocelyn, a staff member at Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), the Outreach Committee made the commitment to support Liberty Station and the work of SSVF.

Some background: SSVF is under the umbrella of Hudson River Housing. Their goal is “to promote housing stability among very low-income Veteran families who reside in or are transitioning to permanent housing.”

We have too many homeless and/or at-risk Veterans in Dutchess County. SSVF is there to provide needed services to these Veterans. For Veterans who find themselves homeless, Liberty Station, provides housing, various services and hope.

Thomas Moody, a US Army Veteran, says it best - “When I got back to Poughkeepsie, I probably spend a couple of weeks living out of my truck and it was just one of those things. I didn't want to be a burden . . . I have a lot of family here but I'm also a very prideful person so I thought it was important to me to try and work this out myself. And with the help of SSVF I was able to do that. It was very quick. I believe I was in Liberty Station the following day. I've been serving as the superintendent for the past seven months.”

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If you haven't picked up your Lenten calendar, please do so. This year's calendar is a prayer calendar reflecting the challenges our Veterans and active service personnel encounter.

Check out our Liberty Station table as you enter the Parish Hall for breakfast. There will be copies listing the needs for Liberty Station and SSVF. There will be a basket to receive your donations. In addition, we will have a video showing Tussing Elementary School of Virginia singing - THANK YOU - Soldiers.

Our support of Liberty Station and SSVF is ongoing with support continuing throughout the year. Please prayerful consider supporting our Veterans.

Thank you - St. James' Outreach Committee

**Join the 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](mailto:vinehall3@aol.com).

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### 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!**



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**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 the talents of our own 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.

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**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'

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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."

#### February

- 28 All Saints' Church, Staten Island
- 29 The Church of the Epiphany, Manhattan

#### March

- 1 Episcopal Church Women
- 2 St. George's Church, Newburgh
- 3 St. James' Church, North Salem
- 4 Episcopal Cursillo
- 5 Postulants and Candidates for the Priesthood

#### **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.

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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*

### **Please keep the following people in your prayers:**

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, 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*

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*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):	Charlessa Thatcher; David Foote; Gilbert O'Halloran; Karen Pitcher
Birthdays (next week):	William Rance; Richard K. Wager; Faith Kinne; Carl Needy; Russell Urban-Mead
Acolytes:	February 28: Nancy, Kirstin and Deirdre Mae March 6: Russell, John Beyer and Anna
Altar Guild:	February 28: Team Number II March 6: Team Number II
8 a.m. Readers:	February 28: Angela Henry and Grant Ferris March 6: Debbie Belding and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	February 28: Regina Ardini and Judy Douglass March 6: Donna Beyer and Nancy Montero
Ushers:	February 28: Patty Drake and Pat Keefe March 6: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher
Pledge Clerks:	February 28: Tanya Hall and Dean Caswell March 6: Joanne Lown and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	February 28: Paul Littlefield; Joanne Lown March 6: Doris Mack; Gordon and Virginia Mackenzie; Jim and Beth Matranga
Coffee Hour Hosts:	February 28: Lenten Breakfast March 6: Lenten Breakfast

### **This Week's Lectionary**

Exodus 3:1-15

Psalm 63:1-8

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9

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

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Sermon Preached on  
Second Sunday in Lent  
(February 21, 2016)

### "The god of the Belly"

Okay, time for a little honesty. What did you give up for Lent? As you know, Lent is a time when we traditionally give up something - or at least think about it. Generally, that means we give up something that we know we can live without anyway - although one year I did give up coffee, so that was brutal...

But this year, I confess Lent slipped up on me so quickly that it was here before I even thought about it, and I still haven't come up with something that feels right. I haven't given up on it though - still thinking what to give up.

Now, I know, it's just a tradition. God's not going to love me any less if I don't give something up for Lent. But I do value it.

And before anyone says, "Why don't you take on something, take on a discipline, rather than give up something meaningless?" I'll tell you why.

Because there is power in stripping things away.

As a friend of mine shared in one of his Lenten meditations, "We don't need to increase our goods nearly as much as we need to scale down our wants. Not wanting something is as good as possessing it." Lent helps us think about scaling down our wants.

For me, it's important to remind myself that essentially everything I take for granted is unnecessary and frankly can get in my way.

That's why, we start the season with words of death; to remember that someday everything we hold dear will be stripped away. It's helpful to get used to the idea. Maybe one year, I'll give up speaking for Lent because that's something I'm not sure I could live without. Sorry, that'll likely have to wait till I retire.

Seriously, we strip away the inessential because it leaves us with the absolute essential - God alone.

And this terrifies us. Not God, but the idea of nothing but God.

Paul, in his own inimitable way tells the Philippians much the same. He tells them to imitate him (of course) in his example of essentially owning nothing more than is necessary to do the work God has given him. His ministry is everything, and all the possessions in the world are nothing. Worse, those possessions kill. "Their end is destruction, their God is the belly...their minds are set on earthly things."

It's very simple. When our focus is on stuff - and let us remember that every thing, every skill, every person in this world that's not God is stuff - then we lose our way.

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Stuff is important inasmuch as we need it to do the work of knowing God and spreading God's love. When people told Jesus to run for his life because Herod wanted to kill him, he said, "I've still got work to do for now. When I've finished, then I can let go of this life." He kept ahold of life here until his work was done.

So stuff. Can we look at the god of the belly and renounce it - not just with words but with a change in how we live? After 2,000 years, you'd think we would have perfected it.

Of course, if we had, especially with the worldwide influence Christianity enjoyed over the past thousand years, then there would be no poverty because there would never have been hoarding of resources or exploitation of the poor. There'd be little pollution because we'd be living so simply. There'd be little crime because we'd have little desire for stuff. At least among Christians, right?

But that's not how it is or likely ever will be.

There's a lot of pressure in the world to focus on acquiring more, regardless of the cost to others - a lot of pressure to making your god the belly.

So, we use these forty days as a reminder. And a hope. Perhaps if I can live without one thing, then maybe I can live without another. Each thing I strip away brings me a little closer to the kingdom. It's worth a try.

Amen.