

St. James' E-pistle
March 11, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:



And don't forget our Lenten Breakfast this Sunday!

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

March 11, 2016

The News of the Church

Family Movie Night: The Second Family Movie Night will be **Saturday, March 12 at 6:30 PM**. Everyone is invited, and we hope you come for a fun evening! **FREE PIZZA** to those attending (while supplies last).

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!

Lenten Breakfasts: This **Sunday March 13** is our final Lenten Breakfast of the year! Please join us to enjoy each other's company and thank the kitchen crew!

St. James' E-pistle

March 11, 2016

Sunday School News:

Sunday March 13th: Sunday School will be our rendition of "Stations to the Cross" our travels through Holy Week in lieu of our regular class- Meet upstairs in the Parish hall - 10:00am.

Sunday March 20th: No Sunday School- Please participate in the Palm Sunday Service.

Sunday March 27th: No Sunday - Happy Easter

April 3rd: Sunday School resumes for Bright Sunday.

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."

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

St. James' E-pistle

March 11, 2016

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.

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.

St. James' E-pistle
March 11, 2016

"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'

Holy Week And Easter At St. James'

Thursday, March 24 - Maundy Thursday

7:00 PM

Maundy Thursday Liturgy with Stripping of Altar

Friday, March 25 - Good Friday

10:30 AM

Community Walk of the Cross,
beginning at Regina Coeli Church

7:00 PM

Good Friday Liturgy with Veneration of the Cross

Saturday, March 26 - Holy Saturday

8:00 PM

Easter Vigil with New Fire and
First Communion of Easter

EASTER SUNDAY! March 27

8:00 AM

Easter Communion with Music

10:00 AM

Easter Communion with Music
Easter Egg Hunt for kids follows

St. James' Episcopal Church
4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538
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St. James' E-pistle

March 11, 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.diocesenyn.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

- 13 The Episcopal Church's House of Bishops
- 14 The Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk, the 15th Bishop of New York, the Rt. Rev. Richard Grein, the 14th Bishop of New York, and the Rt. Rev. Catherine Roskam, formerly Suffragan Bishop of New York
- 15 The Rt. Rev. Herbert A. Donovan, The Rt. Rev. Stacy Sauls, the Rt. Rev. Andrew St. John, and the Rt. Rev. Geralyn Wolf, Assisting Bishops of New York
- 16 Diocesan Committee to Elect a Bishop
- 17 St. Joseph of Arimathea Church, Elmsford
- 18 The Church of St. Edward the Martyr, Manhattan
- 19 Parish Administrators and Secretaries of the Diocese

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

St. James' E-pistle

March 11, 2016

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, Rob Robinson (brother of Mary Gabel), 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

March 11, 2016

Birthdays (this past week):	William Rance; Richard K. Wager; Richard Kuralt; Susan Dingee
Birthdays (next week):	Aric Tegtmeier; Chuck Kramer; Don Ogden; Braeden Hall
Acolytes:	March 13: Bryanna, Amelia and Braeden March 20: Jasmine, Jaylen and Bill
Altar Guild:	March 13: Team Number III March 20: TBA
8 a.m. Readers:	March 13: Angela Henry and Lynne Koch March 20: Debbie Belding and Lucille Ogden
10 a.m. Readers:	March 13: Russell Urban-Mead and Bobbie Wells March 20: Wilma Tully and Justin Bohlmann
Ushers:	March 13: Andrew and Tanya Hall March 20: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	March 13: Doug Belding and Dean Caswell March 20: Paul Littlefield and Janet Bright
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	March 13: Chris and Sue and Daniel McGlynn; Bruce and Kelly McIlravy; Tom and Maggie and Amelia McNamara March 20: Deirdre Mae Micker; Mike and Annette and Mike and Gage Minter; Nancy Montero
Coffee Hour Hosts:	March 13: Lenten Breakfast March 20: Lenten Breakfast

This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm 126

Philippians 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8

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

St. James' E-pistle

March 11, 2016

Sermon Preached on
Fourth Sunday in Lent
(March 6, 2016)

"THIS!"

One of my cousin's shares a lot of articles and photographs on Facebook, and when she gets excited about something or really agrees with it, she often writes a one-word comment. She writes: "THIS!" In all capital letters.

The moment I began reading today's gospel, a little sign popped in my mind that read: "THIS!" (All capital letters).

The reason is that this is my favorite parable of all time.

A parable, as you may know, is a comparison. It's putting into story form what God is like or what the kingdom of heaven is like. Sometimes they are a little tough to figure out like last week's - you remember, with the tree that the farmer wanted to chop down because it didn't produce fruit?

But I get this one. What it tells me about God is that, well, God doesn't make any sense and maybe isn't fair.

Let's review.

Here's a dad with two sons. The older is hardworking and obedient. The younger is a spoiled brat. He's rude to his father, lazy, and irresponsible. As youngest son, he has no right to an inheritance, but he knows Dad's going to give him a share anyway. Only, he decides he doesn't want to wait for Dad to die, so he says, "Give it to me now!"

Then he goes and blows it on pretty much everything a parent would NOT want their child to spend money on. He does this with abandon, and before long, predictably, he's in the gutter, and left to find whatever job he can - in this case caring for pigs' which is as low as it gets if you're Jewish.

When he come to his senses - because he's hungry, not because he misses his family - he heads home with a memorized speech. But before he gets a single word out, the dad sees him, and rushes down to hug and kiss him as if he had just done the family some great honor. It's like the dad has no pride, no self-respect, no sense of justice.

To make things worse, the older son who does everything right is still out in the fields working when the party starts - and he is furious because he feels like the spoiled kid has been rewarded for bad behavior while he never gets anything.

Before we go any further with this story, let me ask, can you think of any modern equivalents? You could probably think of small examples in your own life, but I'll just pull a couple from the news. In several prisons, there are university programs. If an inmate works at it, they can get a college degree.

St. James' E-pistle

March 11, 2016

These programs come under a lot of fire - not because they don't work. They do! Inmates who earn degrees in prison generally stay out of prison when they are released. They become contributing members of society rather than threats. These programs save countless dollars and lives.

They come under fire by people who feel the inmates don't deserve an education, let alone a "free" education. I actually heard someone say, "Must be nice to be in prison. You get free room and board and college."

As the parent of two college students, I get whole free college tuition frustration. But most who complain aren't mad because college is too expensive. They're mad because they say it isn't fair. We play by the rules but have to pay and go into debt. And they...well, they should be eternally punished. In other words, we often feel like the older brother: we play by the rules, and someone who doesn't gets the goodies.

For the record, I do not recommend prison as a path to an education. It is a lot worse than sitting among the pigs.

But you get the point. Or look at our immigration policy. How often have we heard - or said ourselves - "These illegals come to our country and take our jobs and send their kids to our schools... they don't deserve it, and we're just rewarding their illegal behavior."

Or just the other day, the city of Ithaca was in the news because the mayor is trying to open a safe injection center for heroin addicts where they can have clean needles and a place to stay safe while they are high, and trained medical staff to care for them in case of overdose.

There are examples where these programs work, reducing not only accidental heroin deaths but also the crime rate. And over time, the addiction rate has been shown to fall because more addicts get into treatment. But ere is resistance because some consider it to be rewarding bad behavior.

That brings us back to the older son who was so mad that the younger son was getting a party. THIS is what I love about this parable. The dad says, "You've always been with me! You and I have always shared our love. But THIS brother of yours - he didn't know it till now. FINALLY he is alive, and it's time to celebrate his rebirth.

You see, it never was about deserving.

This parable isn't about THEM. It's about God.

It's all about God's unreasonable love for us.

BUT, when Jesus tells this parable, he IS suggesting that we adopt that same unreasonable love especially for those who are on the edges of society. Those who don't deserve yet another chance. Those haven't even said "I'm sorry."

This is my favorite parable because it tells me who God is, and it tells me who I am. Whether I'm the responsible older son or the irresponsible brat, it tells me that I am still and always will be a beloved child of God. Amen.