

St. James' E-pistle

March 13, 2015

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Last Sunday, we had our first Neighborhood Pilgrimage. Wouldn't you know it, the beautiful, warm day shifted in the blink of an eye to snow squall the moment we began walking! Fortunately, our little band of pilgrims forged ahead, and before long, the snow stopped and the sun was out again. From that point on, we had a lovely time.

More importantly, we walked and prayed as part of our Lenten discipline. We prayed for our neighbors, we observed what people were doing, like raking snow off a roof, washing a truck, chatting with neighbors. We listened to the sounds around us like dogs barking in more than a few houses. And we listened to our hearts.

One of our number said it seemed odd that they had not walked in that neighborhood in years even though it's right around the corner from our church. When was the last time you walked around the "block" here?

The Season of Lent is in part a season of awareness, learning - or remembering - how to see what God puts in front of us every day. Taking these little walks is one way to look at the world anew and rediscover the wonder of the ordinary. It's a chance to really notice what ripe field God has planted us in.

We will walk a new neighborhood this Sunday, one with more businesses and possibly more challenges. It'll still be Hyde Park - but even a small town like ours has undiscovered corners, and every town has a need for people of faith who will take the time to get to know their town - and lift it up to God in prayer.

In Christ,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

March 13, 2015

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."

- 15 Christ Church, Poughkeepsie
- 16 Grace Church, Port Jervis
- 17 The Diocesan Council
- 18 St. John's Church, Arden
- 19 On Saint Joseph's Day we pray for the strength and faith of all fathers.
- 20 Sunset Nursery School, Montrose
- 21 The Trustees 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

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

March 13, 2015

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*

The News of the Church

Youth Group Overnight: The third weekend of the month is coming up, and that means Youth Group Overnight. The March Overnight will be Friday, March 20 to Saturday, March 21 AT THE CHAPEL.

Outreach Committee: Outreach Committee is having its monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 18 at 6:30 PM in the Wilks Room. All are welcome.

Men's Breakfast February 21: Our third Men's Breakfast will be March 21 at 8:00 a.m. at Cranberry's. All men 18 and over are invited! We'll eat, chat, and maybe plan a little. Join us.

Lenten Programs: The Lenten Program - God's Gift of our Neighbor - with Fr. Masud ibn Syedullah has been a true gift, and it has seen a great response! There are two more sessions, and you don't have to have attended the first two in order to prosper from the final two. The next session is Wednesday, March 25th. You'll be glad you came! There is a small potluck supper at 6:00 - bring something to share if you can, but even if you can't bring something, join us! There's always far more than enough for everyone. See flier at the end of this E-pistle.

St. James' E-pistle

March 13, 2015

Our next Neighborhood Pilgrimage takes place this Sunday, March 15 at 11:30 a.m. We'll need to drive to Town Hall and park our cars there so we can walk that neighborhood in prayer. So grab your walking shoes and a jacket, and let's be pilgrims together!

Easter Program: Fr. Masud will also lead a one-day event in celebration of Easter on April 18. Tell your friends, invite neighbors! Cost for this day-long event is \$15, but includes lunch. See flier at the end of this E-pistle.

Pilgrimage Planning Now: We are starting plans for our Spring Rail Trail Pilgrimage. After carefully checking the calendar, we've set the dates of May 30-31 - the week after Pentecost. I am looking for a couple of volunteers who will take on organizational responsibilities such as registration. If you would like to be a part of making our third pilgrimage the best yet, please contact me as soon as possible! Thanks, Fr. Chuck

Pledge Envelopes Awaiting You: Pledge envelopes have arrived! Please pick them up if you haven't already done so.

Faith Build: 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, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dottie Drake, Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Jane Gagliardoto, Gloria Golden, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Barbara Knakal, Ashley Konyn, Lucy Lamonica, Rosemary Leuken, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Clifford Plass, Gerald, Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John robinson John Schoreder, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Debbie Stone, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Pray for the Repose of the Soul of Anne Meisner

Pray for the Repose of the Soul of Evelynne Luty McIlravy

St. James' E-pistle

March 13, 2015

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):	Faith Kinne, Charlie Urban-Mead, Carl Needy, Russell Urban-Mead and Richard Kuralt
Birthdays (next week):	Rebekah Rider and Aric Tegtmeier
Acolytes:	March 15: Russell Urban-Mead, John Beyer and Anna Clark March 22: Bryanna Burkhardt, Chris Granados-Kramer and Amelia McNamara
Altar Guild:	March 15: Team Number III March 22: Team Number III
8 a.m. Readers:	March 15: Angela Henry and Jim Smyth March 22: Debbie Belding and Lucille Ogden
10 a.m. Readers:	March 15: Patty Caswell and Deirdre Mae Micker March 22: Russell Urban-Mead and Bobbie Wells
Ushers:	March 15: Andrew and Tonya Hall March 22: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	March 15: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher March 22: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	March 15: Mike, Annette, Mike and Gage Minter, Nancy Montero and Carl and Jean Needy March 22: John North, Andrew Burgreen and Paul, Bev, Skye, Tadgh and Gilbert O'Halloran
Coffee Hour Hosts:	March 15: Lenten Breakfast March 22: Lenten Breakfast

St. James' E-pistle

March 13, 2015

This Week's Lectionary

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

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

Sermon Preached on
Third Sunday in Lent
(March 8, 2015)

"The Real Zeal"

You ever wonder what the deal was with Jesus throwing out the money changers? Why did he do it? I mean, why so violent? What got him so upset?

Well, it wasn't because they were providing a valuable service to worshippers. And it wasn't to protest against the Roman oppressors whose coins they were changing (because Roman coins bore the Emperor's image, and coins with human likenesses were forbidden in the temple).

Rather, what upset Jesus was that the money changers were abusing their position. They had turned the temple into a business, a way to make money, probably to gouge their customers, in the name of God. The disciples understood this later when they remembered the words from scripture: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

It terrifies me (and most priests I know) to think I/we may be doing the same - and we probably are to a degree - making our churches too much about making money.

But Jesus' anguish went beyond the money changers turning the temple into a business. Worship at the temple had ceased to become true worship for many. It was merely a rule to fulfill for worshippers. Do things just the right way, sacrifice just the right number of lambs or doves, and you'll keep God happy. Worship had become an obligation, a burden, a barrier between God and God's people. And the temple itself - seen by many as the only place you could validly worship God, had become a stumbling block to relationship with God.

No wonder he says, "tear this place down, and I will rebuild in in 3 days" - not a place of obligation and sacrifices but a place of self-giving, of adoration, of deep and abiding relationship. The real zeal of worship is found in an act of love.

Some people think of religious zeal as following the rules. I'm sympathetic to that. After all, I make the confirmation class memorize the Ten Commandments. But when the rules become

St. James' E-pistle

March 13, 2015

either the goal or a stumbling block, they have to be rethought. Jesus took the 10 commandments and pared them down to two. He distilled them down to their essence, to the point of all God's rules - to love.

Zeal, then, is to love. In our hearts, in our minds and in our actions. In our very beings and in a way which according to Paul, the rest of the world thinks is crazy, foolish, unreasonable. If our zeal doesn't have this unreasonable love at its core, why bother?

So, what does zeal look like? Here are a couple thoughts.

I've been attending Fr. Masud's Lenten program the past couple of Wednesdays, and one thing we've been doing is singing. Gentle singing, repetitive and simple. Fr. Masud said something that I remember my mom telling us kids: singing is praying twice. Which is to say, it's praying from the heart. That's the place of love. It's not punching the spiritual clock, nor is it slavish adherence to rules - it's just loving being in the presence of God.

Another thing that happened this week was a funeral I went to of a colleague, Fr. Bob Dresser. Two things happened at that funeral. One was that the hearse caught on fire - it was quite a scene with the funeral directors hustling to remove the coffin while someone shoveled snow onto the hood in an attempt to put the fire out.

Bob would have loved the humor in that scenario, and I bet every priest there was thinking, "There's a sermon illustration somewhere in this!"

But the second thing that happened was that some of the clergy present decided to form a choir and sing a beautiful traditional piece called the Kontakion, which is part of the Commendation. We drove the organist crazy because we weren't doing things the way he liked, but we made beautiful music in all four parts.

I had forgotten how wonderful it is to sing in a choir - to blend your voice with others - and my heart was uplifted.

Later on, we sang a part of the service called the Sursum Corda - the part where the celebrant says, "Lift up your hearts," and everyone says, "We lift them up to the Lord." That's what sursum corda means: Lift up your hearts. And that did indeed lift up my heart. We sang that all the time when I was a kid, and I forgot how much it moved me closer to God.

So singing might just be real zeal.

It's not the only form of zeal, of course, but it is real. Surprisingly, it's also frightening for many people. Maybe they've been told they shouldn't sing, or they're out of practice, but for many, to sing feels like a form of sacrifice. And yet, singing is one of the most accessible vehicles through which the heart is lifted up to God. And isn't lifting up your heart to God what real zeal is!

So, what I want to do is encourage a little zeal in you today. Even if it's a little uncomfortable, what I'm about to propose is simple and short, so it won't hurt for long. Just think of it as your Lenten discipline for today.

I'm going to propose that we sing. Remember I was talking about the Sursum Corda? TODAY, we're going to sing it. Right now and then later at the Eucharist. You may even remember it from your childhood. I do. Here goes: (sing it).

St. James' E-pistle

March 13, 2015

That wasn't so bad, was it? Now, remember not to be startled when I sing that little bit at communion. And remember to sing back. Whether or not someone said you can't sing - God doesn't care. Sing. Whether or not you think you've lost your voice, sing. Those few words lifted up to God in love will sound to him like real zeal.

We don't have to wait for Jesus to tear through our church to re-orient ourselves toward God. We understand that zeal for The Lord is possible, and that we can express it in many ways. Self-sacrifice, living the spirit of the law, sharing Christ's story, worshiping with regularity. But singing - that may be zeal for The Lord at its most basic. And that sounds like a good place to start. Amen.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY FAITH BUILD UPDATE

Our parish family through our Outreach Committee made a commitment to support the building of a new Habitat for Humanity house at 125 Garden Street in Poughkeepsie. We joined other churches in Dutchess County by each making a pledge of \$1,000. Together with the \$30,000 Habitat grant, our pledges would provide affordable housing for a family.

Last year many of us participated in the 2014 Habitat for Humanity's Lenten calendar raising slightly more than \$500 to help us towards fulfilling our pledge. This year we have created our own St. James' Church - 2015 Lenten calendar. The Outreach Committee is hoping to raise the remainder owed on our pledge through this Lenten calendar. The calendars are waiting for you to pick up; they can be found in the narthex of the church.

HELP is desperately needed in order for the house to be completed by Sunday, March 15th. Can you help? or do you know someone that can help? The following is a list of needs:

- *taping
- *installation of kitchen cabinets
- *installation of flooring
- *installation of front and back decks
- *painting

This house, the future home of Stephanie and her three children, was blessed on Friday, August 8th. Since then many, many hours of labor have been put into making this Faith Build a reality including the equity hours put in by Stephanie herself.

However, the final push to complete this house needs some knowledgeable leader workers and helpers! Please contact Maureen Lashlee at the Habitat for Humanity office, 5 Catharine Street in Poughkeepsie. The telephone number is 845-475-9336.

Habitat builds homes for families who are currently living in substandard housing conditions. Families must meet certain criteria in order to be eligible to become part of Habitat for Humanity's housing program.

Please keep this Faith Build Project in your prayers that it will be completed by March 15th; thus providing Stephanie and her young family a new home.

If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Lown or Deacon Gail.

Deacon Gail
on behalf of St. James' Outreach Committee



Roots & Branches: Programs for Spiritual Growth

THE REV. MASUD IBN SYEDULLAH TSSF, DIRECTOR
35 CIRCLE DRIVE HYDE PARK, NEW YORK 12538
PHONE: (646) 401-2790
EMAIL: INFO@ROOTSANDBRANCHESPROGRAMS.ORG

Parish Faith Formation Program Proposal for St. James' Church, Hyde Park

Lift Up Your Hearts: A Liturgy and Music Workshop in Celebration of the Easter Season

This workshop, for ALL who love music (*not only those who sing in choirs*), is very practical and inspiring as it demonstrates how liturgy can be more than just well-orchestrated services, but authentic experiences of worship through the creative and prayerful use of music, scripture, space, and silence. Come lift up your hearts in joyful praise!

Saturday, April 18, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. (Including lunch)
St. James' Chapel
Donation: \$15

My Neighbor – A Gift of God: Relating to Those Who are Different from Us

Increasingly in today's world, we are challenged to think about and to interact with people who are different from us. Often we look upon anyone from another culture, race, or religion as "the other," "those people."

Come join us for an evening of fellowship, food, study, and discussion as we consider these and other questions: What does Christian spirituality offer us to be both faithful to God and appreciative of our neighbors? How might God want to use us to communicate the love of God to those of other cultures, and invite them into our midst?

This four-part Lenten program will meet Wednesdays:
February 25 – The World: Created by God, and is a Gift from God
March 4 – All People: Created by God, and are a Gift to the Planet and to Each Other
March 11 – God Loves: All People Equally, and Wants to be in Relationship with All
March 25 – We are Challenged: to be Secure in our Faith, Yet Hospitable to Others

6:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.
St. James Parish House
Bring your favorite dish to share!

This package is being offered to St. James' Church at the reduced cost of \$1000.00.

Like the trees, we are created to be firmly rooted in the ground of our being, the source of all, God.
And like their branches, we extend towards all the gift of life.

Website: rootsandbranchesprograms.org

