

# St. James' E-pistle

## March 28, 2014

### **Pulpit Notes**

Brothers and Sisters:

I am filled with excitement and anxiety as we make final preparations for the Rail Trail Pilgrimage. While I realize this is a small group making the trek, I'm also aware that many people are watching with great interest.

Not sure if that makes me more excited or more anxious, but it's clear that lots of people find something compelling in the prayer walk. Please pray for us this weekend. Pray for good weather (we will need it!) and for a good, prayerful, spiritually powerful time together.

There are other things to pray for this week. I pray that we will have several young people register to be part of the Bridge Builders camp this summer. Registration is due on March 31! You can look them up online at [www.hvbridgebuilders.org](http://www.hvbridgebuilders.org). You can also download a registration form there.

Finally, adding to the mix of excitement and anxiety (quite apart from the inherent tension of Lent, Holy Week, and the approach of Easter), is a project I recently started with the Hudson Valley News. As you know, I've written a weekly religion column for the past several years. This Spring we're putting a selection of the columns into a book. It should be ready for sale by late April or early May.

So excitement and anxiety are the words for the week. They seem appropriate for Lent, don't they? Excitement as we look forward to the rebirth of Easter, but anxiety as we look within and understand how small and imperfect we are, realizing that it is only because of God's love for us that we have a hope of Easter, and trusting despite ourselves that God's love is unequivocally for us.

In Christ,

Chuck+

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### The News of the Church

**Bridge Builders:** I would like to have a group of young people participate this Summer in the Bridge Builders camp, which is sort of like Towel Camp (which we last participated in in 2011), only this is local. It is a camp for youth grades 6-12. Campers stay at the Taconic Retreat and Conference Center. Dates are August 3-8, and the cost is a reasonable \$250. For more information, you can check out their website: [www.hvbridgebuilders.org](http://www.hvbridgebuilders.org) The registration deadline is March 31, so please consider registering soon!

**Pledge Statement Sign-Up:** In past years, we sent out quarterly statements to help pledgers keep track of their pledges. A few years ago, we stopped this practice and sent only an end-of-year statement. However, some parishioners have asked if they could once again receive quarterly statements, and the Vestry has agreed. Beginning this Sunday, we will have a sign-up sheet for those who would like to receive quarterly statements. Only those who sign up will receive statements, which will be placed in the Narthex on Sundays.

**Rebuilding Together:** Rebuilding Together Dutchess County (formerly known and Christmas in April) is looking for people who could use their services. They repair/make safe homes of the elderly, disabled and financially distressed. If you need that kind of help or know someone who does, please contact them at [www.rebuildingtogetherdutchess.org](http://www.rebuildingtogetherdutchess.org).

**Editor Wanted:** We are looking for an editor for the monthly printed version of the parish news. This is a compilation of the pertinent news from the weekly E-pistle that is then mailed to parishioners who do not have access to e-mail. Diane Webb had done the job until she moved to Syracuse. Dyan Wapnick, our secretary, has been filling in since then, but that's not part of her job. She will, however, show you what the job entails and help you get started. Please call the parish office to volunteer.

**Inquirers Classes:** Our next Inquirers Class is Wednesday, April 2 - 7:30 PM in the Wilks Room. The session's topic: "What is Christianity?" As always, feel free to sit in on a session that interests you even if you did not register for the series.

**Bible Study Now at 11:00 AM:** The Thursday Bible Study has made a move to 11:00 AM! If you would like to join us, please do! We'll be in the Wilks Room. If Thursdays at 11 don't work for you, please see Fr. Chuck, and we'll organize something that does work.

**Children's Community Chorus:** St. Margaret's Church in Staatsburg is inviting all children between the ages of 8 and 13 to join their free, non-denominational Children's Community Chorus. St. Margaret's received a grant to form this group which is not only a singing group but a class intent on teaching all children how to read music. The idea is for the

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chorus to sing at various community concerts as well as once a month during St. Margaret's worship. If you would like more information, please call Fr. Allan Ford at 914-299-3148 or leave a message at 845-889-4181.

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

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Kathleen Craft, Michael Day, Jane Gagliardoto, Kasey Gaulin, John Golden, Jack Gordy, Andy Hall, Harold Hall, Brooke Helton, Rev. Don Hoger, Dalton K., Barbara Knakal, Rosemary Leuken, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, John Schroeder, Marty Schroeder, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Debbie Stone, The Right Reverend E. Don Taylor, Gloria Veach, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way and Cliff Wells.

### **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:

Acolytes:                    March 30: Eden Ciferri, Rebecca Gausepohl and Chris Santos  
                                      April 6: Bryanna Burkhardt, Chris Granados-Kramer and Monica Rizzo

Altar Guild:                March 30: Team I  
                                      April 6: Team II

8 a.m. Readers:            March 30: Angela Henry and Sue DeLorenzo  
                                      April 6: Debbie Belding and Lynne Koch

10 a.m. Readers:         March 30: Donna Beyer/Judy Douglass  
                                      April 6:

Ushers:                     March 30: Kathie Champion and Mary Gabel  
                                      April 6: Andrew and Tonya Hall

Pledge Clerks:            March 30: Paul Littlefield  
                                      April 6: Deb and Doug Belding

Coffee Hour Hosts:      March 30: Lenten Breakfast  
                                      April 6: Lenten Breakfast

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### This Week's Lectionary

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

Sermon Preached on  
Third Sunday in Lent  
(March 23, 2014)

"Water. Water. Everywhere."

This winter I've spent more time inside than usual because it just wasn't nice out. One of the things I did with myself was look back at all my old poetry I attempted in high school and college. Man, was it horrible! But then I found some real poets in the midst of the junk. One old epic poem I stumbled onto just the other day was by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was his, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

You know:

Water, water, every where,  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, every where,  
Nor any drop to drink.

Anyway, it got me thinking about this winter, and as I heard reports about more snow this Wednesday I decided to make my own version of that verse.

Snow, snow, everywhere  
And all the wind did sing  
Snow snow everywhere  
Nor any sight of Spring

That's not really fair, of course. These past couple of days with their warm(ish) temperatures and sunshine have been a tonic for me. On the other hand, they raise the fears of flooding - so we're back to Water, water, everywhere!

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But water, water, everywhere is appropriate in another way, too. Our lessons have water, but like the ancient mariner, it doesn't do much good.

Let's look at them for a moment.

You know the story from Exodus. Moses leads the people into the wilderness where they immediately begin to complain and continue to do so for the next forty years. Today, they're complaining about having no water.

You might think that's a legitimate complaint - we need water to survive after all - but the people have continuously complained about everything even when Moses gives them what they want.

No wonder he's fit to be tied when he goes to God. "What am I going to do with these people?" he cries. In response, God gives them water from a rock. It's another miracle, and at the moment they get water, they are happy.

But you know it won't last. They will begin complaining very shortly. Nothing really satisfies them. Nothing is enough for them. They regularly get all their bodily needs met by God's miracles, but nothing will make them truly at peace.

This is one of the lessons behind this story. It shows how meeting bodily needs is necessary but not sufficient. You can have all the food, shelter, clothing you need and still be miserable. You can have all the water in the world and still thirst for more.

We see the same in the Gospel. Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well outside town, and they talk. He asks her for water from the well. At first she's confused because Jews don't share things with Samaritans, and certainly not water from her bucket. But he says that he can give her better water, living water. "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again," he says, "but those who drink from the water that I give will never thirst again - it is the water of eternal life."

To grasp the impact of this, you need to understand something about this woman. First, notice that it is noon, and she is coming to the well alone. Women did not go to the well at the hottest point in the day - and they never went alone. Unless they were outcasts, that is. As we find out later, she's got a bit of a shady past in their community, so she is alone. She is allowed to survive - but she has no life.

There's plenty of water, but this woman is dying of thirst. Thirst for community, thirst for meaning, thirst for a sense that she still has a place at God's table. Jesus lets her know that he knows exactly who she is - the whole five husbands thing - but he also lets her know that the water he offers is still there for her.

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I suspect we all know what the people wandering in the wilderness or that woman at the well feel like. We have the necessities of life - or at least of survival - and yet we are empty, unsatisfied, thirsting for something more, something real.

Lent is a perfect season for recognizing that the material, while important, is not sufficient. It puts you in survival mode - not life. In order to truly live, we need that living water that Jesus offered.

Jesus offers a simple thing - a connection to God. He says to the woman, place your focus on God, nurture than connection, and all else will eventually fall into place. He says that physical water can disappear - just look out west where they've been suffering drought during our snowy winter. But spiritual water, the water of eternal life, never runs dry.

Lent is also a great season for strengthening that connection with God. It is a time when we voluntarily let go of some of the physical things that distract us - all the physical water, as it were - and dip into the living water. We do this by reading more scripture, by setting time aside for prayer and meditation. That's why we are doing the Lenten pilgrimage next week. To drink from the living water that is always there.

The physical is important - that's why this church rightly spends so much energy on outreach to those in need - but without God's spirit running through everything we do, running through our very lives, it's "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink."

There is living water. Let us drink that instead.