

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

It was a beautiful and joyful Easter! Christ is risen indeed! And although we've always known this, it is good to remind ourselves and celebrate.

Easter is not just a day. It is a season. The great fifty days. And in those days, we are able to focus on what Christ is doing with and in and through us today. Make no mistake, Christ is acting in us. That's why we don't simply come to church to be entertained but to be transformed.

That's why we try to bring transformative worship - even in our simplest liturgies. That's why we try to bring good preaching from all who step into our pulpits.

That's why we value education, not just for children but - perhaps especially - for adults.

The lack of consistent adult education has been a concern of mine for a while, which is why the suggestion (at the recent at Parish Planning Meeting) to introduce an adult forum in between Sunday services excited me. The idea may need some more planning before it becomes reality, but it would give us a time for substantive discussion of important issues.

One such issue that has been in the news is racial disparity. As we know, the diocesan convention asked parishes to look deeply into their past and their roles in slavery. We did this with our Graveyard Tours and a successful lecture in the Fireside Chats. In fact, I've been asked to repeat the lecture at the Wallace Center next Sunday (April 10).

This year, we've been asked to look more deeply at race in America. Bishop Dietsche has recommended three books for our consideration:

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration In The Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander, *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation* by Jennifer Harvey, and *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* by Jim Wallis.

The diocese (the bishop and the convention) has asked us to study the issue not only because our diocese is tremendously diverse but because, we are all intimately connected, and when there is disparity in one quarter, it affects all others. Or in St. Paul's language, if one part of the body suffers, the entire body suffers. And when there's healing in one part of the body, the whole body is healthier.

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

Again, we don't currently have a plan in place for a between-the-services adult program, but the idea excites me, and we seem to have a focus ready-made for us.

As we plan more, I will keep you posted, but this is definitely something I would love to see take off at St. James'.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

The News of the Church

Sunday School News:

April 3rd: Sunday School resumes for Bright Sunday.

Final Fireside Chat: The final Fireside Chat of the season is this Thursday, April 7, at 7:00 PM. Local historians Al Venk and Linda Bouche explore the life and influence of Louis Howe, political advisor to FDR.

Special Collection for Liberty Station: Our 2016 Lenten calendar focused our attention on the challenges our Veterans and active service personnel encounter. Some of the prayers on the calendar focused our attention on our homeless and at-risk veterans and their families.

Here in Dutchess County, we are grateful for the presence of Liberty Station and the great support they give to our homeless veterans by providing housing, a variety of services and hope. Liberty Station is overseen by the Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

A reminder: There is a basket and copies listing the needs of Liberty Station and SSVF in the hallway of the Parish House for your donations.

In addition to donations from the List of Needs, Liberty Station has stated a need for a variety of different types of gift cards. In order to ensure that we meet their specific needs, we are having a Special Collection this Sunday, April 3rd. This collection will provide Liberty Station the needed flexibility in distributing gift cards to their clients.

You will find Special Collection envelopes in the pews for donations - cash or checks payable to St. James' Church/memo line: Liberty Station.

Our support of Liberty Station and SSVF is ongoing with support continuing throughout the year. Please prayerfully consider a donation to Liberty Station.

Thank you - St. James' Outreach Committee

A Men's Retreat: Although we do not normally advertise events for other organizations, this retreat may be of interest to some. The minister running it, the Rev. Randy Prentiss, is pastor at Arlington Reformed and retreat director at the Taconic Retreat Center (where our youth have gone to the Bridge Builders Camp). Here is what he says:

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

MID-HUDSON MEN'S RETREAT

April 8-9.

26 hours of RENEWAL

Get closer to God; get closer to each other.

What is this? An opportunity to get away with other guys for rest, renewal and retreat. We will do this through worshipping, laughing, playing, learning, talking, being away and being together.

Guys need a break. Guys need to get away. Guys need God. Guys need each other. Its' a good thing.

When? Friday April 8, 6pm, thru Saturday April 9, 8 pm.

Where? Taconic Retreat Center at intersection of Taconic Parkway and Rte 199, Red Hook. 30 minutes from Poughkeepsie. 45 minutes from Hopewell Junction. www.taconicrcc.net for info and directions.

Who? A group of guys from a variety of local churches are putting this together, for All men 19 and older...

We hope that a group of guys from a variety of local churches will come and have a great time.

COST: \$115 includes 4 meals and 26 hours at camp. Climbing Tower and zip line additional cost (optional).

For the first time in a long time, many men from around the Hudson Valley will get together at the TACONIC RETREAT CENTER. We will be away for 26 hours to think about the things that are really important in our lives – our families, jobs, relationships, and God. Join us to reflect upon what's really important in our lives, and to have some fun.

Give yourself time for an Easter retreat co-led by Fr. Masud Ibn Syedullah: God's resurrection has broken through to our world and into our lives once again. Do you feel renewed, inspired? If you want to gain a new and more personal experience of the resurrection this Easter season consider treating yourself to a retreat at the end the month at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park. "Gold from the Silver Screen: Resurrection, the Core of Our Faith" will use three films - Awakenings, Peaceful Warrior, and Woman in Gold to draw you into deeper reflection about how God renews our lives. Co-led by Fr. Masud and the Rev. Garrett Mettler, this four-day retreat will take place from April 26th through April 29th. Accommodations at the monastery and all meals are included with the retreat program for the

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

registration cost of \$335. To find out more and to register visit
www.holycrossmonastery.com/retreat-programs.

St. James' Episcopal Church

presents

A Mother's Day Tea Party

4-course Luncheon

&

Light Entertainment

provided by Local Actress Angela Henry



May 7, 2016

Two Seatings

12:00 pm and 3:00 pm

\$25 per person

Reservations Required, Limited Seating

Gift items available for purchase

*celebrate with your mother, sister, daughter, or best friend
in a special way at a special place*

4526 Albany Post Rd., Hyde Park, NY 12538 Phone: 845-229-2820

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 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.

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."

- 3 St. John's Episcopal Church, Kingston
- 4 Grace Church, Hastings-on-Hudson
- 5 Diocesan Socially and Environmentally Responsible Investment Task Force
- 6 Grace Church, City Island, Bronx
- 7 Church of the Divine Love, Montrose
- 8 Christ Church of Ramapo, Suffern
- 9 Education for Ministry

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

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

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.

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

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

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 Sheekey, Naomi Sleight, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Pray for the repose of the soul of Rachel Davis Robinson, mother of Charlessa Thatcher.

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.

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Birthdays (this past week): | Kathleen Craft; Susan McGlynn; Susan Heupler; Carol Vinall |
| Birthdays (next week): | Dorothy Drake; Brian Rance; Virginia Mackenzie |
| Acolytes: | April 3: Russell, John Beyer and Anna April 10: Bryanna, Amelia and Braeden |
| Altar Guild: | April 3: Team Number I April 10: Team Number I |
| 8 a.m. Readers: | April 3: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris April 10: Angela Henry and Sue DeLorenzo |
| 10 a.m. Readers: | April 3: Patty Caswell and Justin Bohlmann April 10: Regina Ardini and Deirdre Mae Micker |
| Ushers: | April 3: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne |

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

April 10: Bill and Regina Ardini

Pledge Clerks: April 3: Joanne Lown and Janet Bright
April 10: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass

Parish Cycle of Prayer: April 3: Don, Lucille, Rachel and Daniel Ogden; Paul, Bev, Skye, Tadgh and Gilbert O'Halloran
April 10: Jim Oppenheimer; Brian and Scarlett O'Leary; Brian O'Leary, Jr. and Tara O'Leary

Coffee Hour Hosts: April 3: See sign-up sheet
April 10: See sign-up sheet

This Week's Lectionary

Acts 5:27-32

Psalm 150

Revelation 1:4-8

John 20:19-31

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

Sermon Preached on
Easter Day
(March 27, 2016)

"It Matters"

I'm glad to see so many of you brought Easter eggs to hide for the Easter Egg hunt! All kids are reminded that if they find any plastic eggs fill with chocolate, they should bring them straight to me! Thank you.

Seriously, even though we just have the hunt because it's fun, Easter eggs have been part of Resurrection story since earliest Christian days, starting in Mesopotamia, where colored eggs were already a symbol of death and rebirth. Early Christians saw the connection immediately and started using the hard shell as a symbols of the tomb - something that looks completely sealed - but that on Easter Day was broken open. Because just as Christ broke open not only the tomb but broke death itself. Oh, and earliest traditions had the Easter eggs dyed red because Christ shed his blood for us.

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

See, it matters that we understand where these eggs come from. We're not just goofing around. Actually, so much of what we do today matters because this is the single most important Christian feast there is. Everything about this day matters. If you're a little vague on what's so important about today - or what your parents dragged you here a let's do a quick review.

On Friday, we remembered how Jesus was arrested and killed by being crucified.

It actually started long before that when Jesus began preaching a different kind of power than military or monetary. There were terrorists in those days, like Barabbas, who tried to drive the Romans out, though they had little effect other than terrorizing average people. But it was Jesus' radical selflessness, his preaching of the power of love that frightened the rich and the mighty, the Romans, the priests, the Pharisees. So they decided to kill him. They killed him because what he taught mattered - that love is more powerful than might.

Now, when they killed Jesus, it was a horrible death but it mattered that Jesus, the Son of God, died. Not because he was paying some debt that we had run up with our sins and weren't able to pay. But because God is our loving parent, and as any parent knows, you would sacrifice your life to save your children. What we needed saving from wasn't that we do bad things but that we had a bad relationship with God. One where we were afraid of God and thought that we only had value if we were successful and never made mistakes. If we earned God's love. One where, if we thought of God as a father at all, it was as an abusive one.

Jesus said, "No. I just love you. Just like a good mother or father. To the death." So, it matters that Jesus died to show us the extent of God's love for you and me.

But then Jesus rose from the dead! And that really matters. Because that tells us that it is God doing this, not just some interesting man. It's God making the promise to love us always. God making the promise that death no longer has power over us. Jesus rising tells us that it is true. Life is stronger than death.

So you see, just like getting the story of the eggs right matters, so it also matters that we understand who Jesus is and what he did on Easter morning.

And you know what else matters? You being here. It matters that we come together to celebrate Jesus' resurrection because it is our single biggest act of hope. Because you and I are the Body of Christ. Because God loves us. Period.

You may not really want to be here today because you have Easter baskets and Easter dinner at home - but it matters that you're re here. Even if you don't know if you believe in God - it matters that you are here because there is something in your presence that will touch someone else. There may even be words you hear today that spark something in your heart. You never know. And it matters that you're here even if you are the most faithful worshipper in the world because not only do we celebrate, but today we re-dedicate ourselves to God in Christ when we renew our baptismal vows. It is like looking your loved one in the eye and saying "I love you." You've done it a million times - but every single time is important. Love never gets old. It never dies. It is stronger than death. So, it matters that we celebrate.

Speaking of which, remember that egg? Well, there's a word written on it.

St. James' E-pistle

April 1, 2016

That's right : Alleluia! It means "Praised be God!" We haven't been able to say that in a while, but today is Easter, and it doesn't matter how many times we say it - it's never too many. So Alleluia! Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!