

# St. James' E-pistle

## April 18, 2014

### **Pulpit Notes**

Brothers and Sisters:

By the time you receive this, we will be well into the liturgies of Holy Week. Tonight is Maundy Thursday. Tomorrow the Community Walk of the Cross and the evening liturgy with the veneration of the Cross.

My favorite, but also most troubling, liturgy of this week is the Easter Vigil. I love it because it is shrouded in mystery. We start outside, we light the new fire, we process with the Paschal Candle, we sing or say the Exsultet, we hear the story of salvation - all by candle light.

Here at St. James', the Vigil has always been small. It is unfamiliar to most and at an inconvenient time. For those who want the big glorious service of Easter morning, it just doesn't give that Easter-y feel. And there aren't too many who are willing to go to the Vigil and Easter morning. It's hard sometimes just to get people to attend, let alone get the readers and such.

The Vigil is also one of the most complicated services in the church year. Fire, chanting, candles... It's a lot of work for a handful of people.

Why do I do it?

Because the mystery of the resurrection is found in the dark. Because the beauty of that small light breaking through the darkness reminds us of how Jesus lay in the tomb, covered in a shroud and utterly dead. Yet, in the midst of that darkness, the light returned to his eyes, he awoke and arose. He left the tomb in the middle of the night and brought new light to the world, a light that said, "Not only does God love you, but that love has overcome death now and for ever."

Don't get me wrong. I love Easter morning, too. But the Vigil speaks to my heart. Maybe that's because I am a very early riser. 4:00 AM has always been my normal waking time, so I am used to wandering around the dark house (so as to not wake others). Sitting in the darkness feels natural to me, and in the darkness, I can imagine the work God did in raising Christ. A private, intimate action that would not have been suited to the light.

I love the Vigil because the darkness is also a place of life, of rebirth. The light of Christ came to us in the midst of darkness. And that light holds the promise of life eternal.

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That's why I will continue the Vigil even if it is only a handful of souls who celebrate it with me each year. In that small, intimate service, God's love for us shines through. In it, we know that Christ is risen.

And that, my brothers and sisters, is what Easter is all about.

In Christ,

Chuck+

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**HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

**Maundy Thursday -  
April 17**

7:00 PM. Come for the Last Supper and Stripping of the Altar

**THE WATCH**

Sign up to sit for an hour or more in the church from the end of the Maundy Thursday through Good Friday.

**Good Friday - April 18**

10:30 AM. Community Walk of the Cross starting at Regina Coeli.

7:00 PM. Good Friday Liturgy including Veneration of the Cross.

**Easter Vigil - April 19**

8:00 PM. The most mysterious and beautiful service with New Fire, and first communion of Easter.

**Easter Day - April 20**

8:00 AM. A Joyful celebration of the Resurrection! (Rite I)

10:00 AM. A joyful, family oriented celebration of the Resurrection followed by a good old fashioned Easter Egg Hunt!

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

**Habitat for Humanity/Blessing of the Build:** Please bring in your collection for Habitat for Humanity on Sunday, April 27th. We will total up all of our offerings and deliver them the following week for the Blessing of the Build. Details on that will follow! All are invited to attend!

**Inquirer's Class:** Due to a diocesan function, next week's Inquirer's Class has been cancelled. Our next session will be April 30, starting at 7:30 PM. The topic will be, "What is the Episcopal Church?"

**Tag Sale:** There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for the town-wide tag sale to benefit Habitat for Humanity on Saturday, May 17th. A table will be provided and rents for \$15.

**Empty Egg Cartons:** Please bring in your empty egg cartons (preferably cardboard) for seedlings for the garden. Kindly leave them in the Parish hall.

**Pledge Statements:** There are still pledge statements in the Narthex for you to help you know where you stand. Please pick yours up! Also, please note that the statements are only for pledges. They do not include other donations.

**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 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, Grace 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.

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### **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:	Virginia Mackenzie, Wendy Urban-Mead, Todd Weaver and Steven Gausepohl
Acolytes:	April 20: Bryanna Burkhardt, Chris Granados-Kramer and Monica Rizzo, Gage Minter, Jasmine Thatcher and Charlie Urban-Mead April 27: Mike Minter, Nancy Montero and Skye O'Halloran
Altar Guild:	April 20: TBA April 27: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	April 20: Debbie Belding and Lynne Koch April 27: Angela Henry and Paul Littlefield
10 a.m. Readers:	April 20: Russell Urban-Mead/Bobbie Wells April 27: Patty Caswell/Sophie Ciferri
Ushers:	April 20: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher April 27: Donna and John Beyer
Pledge Clerks:	April 20: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher April 27: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell
Coffee Hour Hosts:	April 20: The Congregation April 27: St. James' Sunday School

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

Jeremiah 31:1-6

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 28:1-10

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Sermon Preached on  
Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday)  
(April 13, 2014)

### "Whosanna?"

Okay, I know "Whosanna" is kind of a corny title for the sermon, and Palm Sunday is a serious day which deserves a serious sermon. But the "who" in "Whosanna" would not get out of my mind, like an ear worm from God. So, here it is, "Whosanna."

And I think I know why.

On that day when Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, the jubilant crowd laid down palms and cloaks along the path for Jesus to walk upon and cried "Hosanna!" But you have to wonder if they really knew what they were shouting.

"Hosanna" - or Hoshianna in the Hebrew - is roughly translated as "Save us!" In the Old Testament, it is often used as a cry for help. However, it's used today differently. When the crowd calls out Hosanna, it's a cry of praise, even adulation. They aren't begging for someone to save them, they're cheering, so that it now means something like, "Our Savior!"

It's used as a song of praise mixed with hope and expectation.

"Whosanna" is my one-word way of asking, who do they think is walking by? What is it they think he's going to save them from?

To answer that, we need to think back to the beginning of Lent. Remember how Jesus was sent into the wilderness and tempted? Remember how his temptations - to turn rocks into bread, to defy death by throwing himself from a building, and to rule the world - helped him clarify what his mission would be? Well, those people shouting Hosanna have seen him feed the 5,000. They've seen or heard how he raised the dead and healed the sick. They heard how he calmed the storms with a word.

When they shout "Our Savior!" they may be thinking about the much hoped-for Messiah who will save Israel from the Roman occupiers. But they may just as well be expecting him to alleviate their poverty and hunger, or cure their sick child.

Is that who they think he is? Is that the salvation they expect from him?

Let's turn that around. Who do YOU think Jesus is? What is he going to save you from? From hard times? From illness or death? From oppression of all sorts?

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Are your expectations of Christ the same as those people shouting Hosanna? Because their expectations were crushed.

Jesus did not feed everybody endlessly. He did not heal everyone who was sick or dying. He did not overthrow the Romans. He taught - and he confronted respectable people and their reluctance to embrace God with all their being. He said to them, "The salvation I offer does not make the external discomforts and problems go away. The salvation I offer gives your life meaning - it gives you back your relationship with God whom you now fear."

This was not enough, and the people who had welcomed Jesus so enthusiastically, who had called him savior, now turned on him and clamored for his death. They shouted, "Crucify him!" They may have even been satisfied that he was a dud because he never so much as tried to escape - he meekly went to the cross like a lamb to the slaughter.

So, how about you? Will your expectations of Christ be crushed as well? Do you find yourself wondering how a loving God could possibly allow life to be so hard, so unfair? Will you turn away when Jesus doesn't deliver the return to health, or the job, or the loved one, or justice for the oppressed? Will you reject Jesus when he doesn't deliver the salvation you're looking for?

As we begin this Holy Week, then, I invite you to ask yourself: Who is this Jesus entering Jerusalem? Who is Christ? What is the salvation I seek from him?

Jesus offers us all real salvation. the question is, will you embrace the salvation he offers even if it's not what you expected? Amen.