

St. James' E-pistle

May 13, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

I was gratified to hear that so many members of St. James' attended the lay listening session for the bishop's strategic plan. Apparently, the only church that had more people attend was the host congregation, St. Paul's in Poughkeepsie.

Based on comments I've received from some who attended, I have to conclude that the clergy version of this was more fulfilling since we had more time to learn about the issues and much more time for input. There were a couple of other glitches as well. However - - - overall, the meeting was good for folks, and I was able to follow up on some of the questions and comments raised last Tuesday at the Deans Conference.

If this whole Strategic Plan thing is a mystery to you, I'll try to give a brief summary. Bishop Dietsche rightly has seen that our society is undergoing a cultural shift in which mobility is higher, trust in institutions (any institutions) is at an all-time low, and the churches are struggling.

To paraphrase our late fellow parishioner Eleanor Roosevelt, we have the choice of either cursing the darkness or lighting a candle. Bishop Dietsche has determined that this diocese should bear the Light.

But how?

He set up three task forces to explore A) Restructuring our Governance and Diocesan Structures, B) Congregational Vitality and Visibility, and C) Financial Matters. I should note that our own Deacon Gail Ganter-Toback is on the task force for Restructuring.

In essence, each task force was to describe and analyze the current situation, the make suggestions for more practical, healthy, and sustainable changes.

Though Deacon Gail can give you a clearer understanding of the Restructuring task force's recommendations, I will take note of a couple of points. One thing that surprised task force leaders was how few parishioners in the diocese have any idea what the structures are and what their purposes are.

In the diocese there are three main governing groups: The Trustees, the Standing Committee, and the Diocesan Council. The Trustees are a group of experts both appointed and elected who primarily create the budget and advise the Standing Committee on property decisions. The Standing Committee is a little bit like the Vestry - there for diocesan governance and as a

St. James' E-pistle

May 13, 2016

Council of Advice. The Diocesan Council is centered on the mission of the diocese and tasked with implementing decisions of Diocesan Convention.

Changes recommended in governance included some rearranging and clarifying of roles of each group as well as a renaming of the Diocesan Council, which they suggest now calling the Council for Mission.

One other change they are exploring is a change in the structure of Deaneries. Currently, St. James' is part of the Dutchess North Deanery including St. James', St. Margaret's, Church of the Messiah in Rhinebeck, Christ Church in Red Hook, St. Paul's in Tivoli, and St. John's in Annandale. It has been suggested that a larger deanery consisting of all the churches in Dutchess County would make a better division, and I agree.

However, there is also a strong desire on the bishop's part for Inter Parish Councils to redevelop. An Inter Parish Council (IPC) is like a brainstorming group made up of two members from each congregation. In other words, it's time to get parishioners from the various church back together!

The second task force - Congregational Vitality and Visibility - focused on best practices for churches to revive the Spirit within and Evangelism without. The report included a strong push for parishes to become involved in Renewal Works, a year-long program requiring a team of nine parishioners and the rector to attend several training sessions. A member of the task force has asked if she can come to St. James' to beat the drum.

A question came up about Indaba in this section. Some folks felt that the Indaba's, while very positive experiences, were not followed up. At the Deans meeting, the message I got was that this concern has been heard, and the diocesan leadership will implement more follow-up. I wish I could be more specific, but I don't know more.

The third task force was primarily focused on finances both at the diocesan and congregational level. As you know from our experience, we are generally on the cusp of insolvency. We are barely able (some would say unable) to pay our diocesan assessment even though it has been reduced significantly. The diocesan leadership clarified the formula used to calculate assessments and is considering a new formula.

Two other areas of concern were transparency - that is, the task force felt there are ways which the diocesan leadership can make the budgeting process more available to the general populace. This will probably involve reports being viewable online, but likely more.

The other concern is the real crisis in imperiled congregations. Three have closed already this year, and the task force will need to look at what constitutes a congregation that is no longer sustainable. The likelihood is that several other small parishes will close in the coming years.

But, as Archdeacon Parnell mentioned in his sermon at the priests conference, the period between 1900 and 1970 was the church's "golden age" with the highest numbers of attendance

St. James' E-pistle

May 13, 2016

ever seen. And yet during that period, the diocese closed nearly one third of its congregations (going from almost 300 to just about 200). Apparently, the fear of closing churches is a larger impediment to growth than actually closing them.

With all that in mind, I will be happy to send you copies of the task force reports (in PDF format) if you choose. Just let me know. And please, keep the work of the diocese in your prayers. Especially during this Pentecost weekend, we would do well to remind ourselves that it is through the Diocese of New York that the work of the Holy Spirit is being done, and done joyfully.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

May 13, 2016

The News of the Church

NOTE: Each month, the Stewardship Committee will publish a meditation well worth your consideration. This was supposed to appear last week, but it did not make it in. Here it is now. Enjoy!

ST. JAMES' STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER A Monthly Meditation



This month's meditation is from the Diocese of Saskatchewan, the Anglican church in the North. Each month a new meditation about stewardship will be featured. We welcome all parishioners to submit meditations for this publication.

Stewards of the Invitation by Deacon Chris Dow

Jesus is having a nice dinner with religious people. He tells them that when they host such events, they ought to invite outcasts, rather than respectable people like themselves. This radical command makes them uncomfortable. Someone at the table tries to change the subject by saying, 'Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!' They assume that they will be among this chosen company. Jesus is not so sure. Just because you initially accept the invitation does not mean you will bother to show up. Everyday life so easily gets in the way. But God insists that His house be filled for the feast - those we're uncomfortable inviting into our homes will take the place of those who squander the invitation.

Lord, we thank you that you have not only invited us to your heavenly feast, but have already served us the appetizer of Holy Communion. Help us to be good stewards of your gracious invitation by being frequent guests at your table. Nourish and strengthen us to go

St. James' E-pistle

May 13, 2016

out into the world and extend your invitation to others - especially outcasts and outsiders - so that all may taste and see that you are good. Amen

Outreach Committee: is having a meeting Wednesday May 18 at 6:30 in the Parish House. Please join in!

Tag Sale/Wellness Fair: Saturday, May 21 will be not only the town-wide tag sale but also the church's Tag Sale for Outreach. Along with the sale will be the annual Wellness Fair sponsored by the Hyde Park Community Garden at St. James'. Be sure to come!

Men's Breakfast: The monthly Men's Breakfast will be Saturday, May 21 at 8:00 AM. We take over a couple of tables at Cranberry's and are always looking for more men to join us. Usually we eat and share in fellowship but we also share the news of the church and sometimes plan a work project here and there.

Parish Picnic: It's been a long time since we've had a good old fashioned Parish Picnic, but one is in the works now! Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 28. More details to come, but start practicing your grilling!

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 haven't yet pledged for 2016, it's not too late. We would like 100% participation this year in pledging, no matter the amount.

St. James' E-pistle

May 13, 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."

15 Day of Pentecost

Trinity Wall Street, Manhattan

Also: In thanksgiving for the ministry of the Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool on the anniversary of her consecration as bishop.

16 Community of the Holy Spirit

17 St. James' Church, Manhattan

Also: In thanksgiving for the ministry of the Rt. Rev. Allen K. Shin on the anniversary of his consecration as bishop.

18 St. John's Church, Wilmot, New Rochelle

19 Episcopal Relief and Development

20 Ascension & Holy Trinity Church, West Park 21 College Chaplains 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

May 13, 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, George Dahlgren, Michael Day, Dee, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Allelu Kurten, 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

May 13, 2016

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Birthdays (this past week): | Erika Seagren; Rebecca Gausepohl |
| Birthdays (this coming week): | Walter Edgar Koch, M.D.; Brian Kinne; Morgan Kinne |
| Acolytes: | May 15: Jasmine, Jaylen and Bill May 22: Nancy, Kirstin and Deirdre Mae |
| Altar Guild: | May 15: Team Number I May 22: Team Number I |
| 8 a.m. Readers: | May 15: Debbie Belding and Sue DeLorenzo May 22: Angela Henry and Jim Smyth |
| 10 a.m. Readers: | May 15: Donna Beyer and Wendy Urban-Mead May 22: Patty Caswell and Maggie McNamara |
| Ushers: | May 15: Donna and John Beyer May 22: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne |
| Pledge Clerks: | May 15: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher May 22: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell |
| Parish Cycle of Prayer: | May 15: Suzanne Schryver; Saira, Rohit, Sanjana and Rohit Shahani May 22: Barbara, Tim, Craig and Dalton Slegel; Jim and Jan Smyth |
| Coffee Hour Hosts: | May 15: Deirdre Mae Micker; The Urban-Meads May 22: Saira Shahani; Brian Rance |

This Week's Lectionary

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:25-35, 37

Romans 8:14-17

John 14:8-17, 25-27

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

Sermon Preached on
Seventh Sunday of Easter

St. James' E-pistle

May 13, 2016

(May 8, 2016)

"A Tale of Two Mothers"

Happy Mother's Day! I hope you're having a great day. Got flowers? Cards? Did you think of your mother? Give thanks to God for her? Good. In honor of the occasion, I would like to tell you a tale of two mothers who were major influences in the creation of Mother's Day.

And how none of this is what they had in mind.

You see, back in the mid-19th century, there were these two mothers, Julia Ward Howe from Boston (thou originally from New York) and a mother of six. And Ann Maria Reeves Jarvis from Virginia, a mother of twelve.

Two very different women from crucially different parts of the world but who were each in their own way kind of radical.

The first mother I want to tell you about is Julia Ward Howe. Her husband was a physician and reformer, founder of Perkins School for the blind. Both were abolitionists, but Julia was also a secret author, having published two books of poetry without her husband's knowledge, and written multiple articles for literary magazines. He wasn't too happy when he found out, but she kept writing and publishing, and he finally gave up trying to stop her.

She's best known for writing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" in 1861 after a meeting with Abraham Lincoln. But it was after the Civil War that her role as a mother kicked in. She counted herself lucky that only one of her children died during the war, and that of illness, but she watched as countless other mothers sent their children and husbands into battle. She saw how many did not return, and that those who did return were changed.

Then, the Franco Prussian War hit in Europe, and she decided she'd seen enough. In 1870, she published an "Appeal to Womanhood Throughout the World," which has since become known as the "Mother's Day Proclamation." In it, she wrote, "In this day of progress, in this century of light, the ambition of rulers has been allowed to barter the dear interests of domestic life for the bloody exchanges of the battle field. Thus men have done. Thus men will do. But women need no longer be made a party to proceedings which fill the globe with grief and horror. ... Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country, to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

She followed this up by petitioning the government to declare June 2 "Mother's Day for Peace." Although there were several years of local observance, in the end, the government wasn't interested.

This brings us to our second mother, Ann Maria Reeves Jarvis. She was the wife of a Methodist minister in what is now West Virginia. In the 1850s, she organized Mothers' Day Work Clubs

St. James' E-pistle

May 13, 2016

in several towns "to improve health and sanitary conditions." They also raised money to hire help for families beset by tuberculosis, and inspected bottled milk and food for contamination. When the Civil War broke out, her part of the country was right on the border of north and south, so some fought for the Union, some for the Confederacy. Jarvis called on all of the Mothers' Day Work Clubs to declare themselves neutral, "and provide relief to both Union and Confederate soldiers." Throughout the war, the clubs treated the wounded and regularly fed and clothed soldiers of both sides who were stationed in the area.

Four of her children to disease during the war - again, all of disease - yet she kept working. Following the war, with soldiers returning from both sides, the tension palpable. So she organized a Mothers' Friendship Day to inspire reconciliation. To pretty much everyone's surprise, riots did not break out - Mother's Friendship Day worked and became a regular feature in western Virginia for years.

When Ann died in 1905, her daughter Anna began lobbying for a national mother's day celebration. In 1913, Woodrow Wilson official signed the day into law. Of course, the men in congress wanted to celebrate women having children.

But to both Ann Reeves Jarvis and Julia Ward Howe, ALL women were mother's, ALL people were their children. Each in her own way understood that women could bring about peace and reconciliation in a way that men in their time were incapable of doing. That's what they had wanted to celebrate - the oneness of us all, the responsibility that we all share for each other.

In fact, when florist began making Mother's Day into a business, Ann Jarvis' daughter started protests - sit ins and the like - until she got arrested.

Which brings us to the scriptures. When Paul and his friends got arrested and thrown into prison, they, too, understood the interconnectedness of all people. When the earthquake sprang them from jail, they told the jailer not to harm himself (you see, back then jailers who lost prisoners got killed in unpleasant ways). Rather, they shared the gospel with him, they prayed for him, and in the end, they baptized him as a brother in Christ.

This is in keeping with the gospel. Jesus declares his intention that we all be one, that as he is in the Father, so are we in him, and each of us is one with the other. Is that any different from what Julia Ward Howe and Ann Maria Reeves Jarvis were saying?

Now don't get me wrong, flowers are on order today! But what these mothers wanted was bigger. They wanted nothing less than the love of Christ lived out on earth.

So, when you go out for Mother's Day brunch, think of the examples of these moms who understood we are all one in Christ, brothers and sisters - mothers to us all. Amen.