

St. James' E-pistle

May 20, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

The E-pistle is going to go on a 2-week vacation. Our family is traveling to Illinois to visit my parents, so I appreciate your understanding during the E-pistle's break.

Yes, it is vacation season. I hope and pray that as you approach your own vacation, it is an occasion of rest and relaxation.

But I wouldn't put money on it.

Vacation is one of those things Americans struggle with. We receive less vacation time than any other industrialized country in the world. Then we fear becoming unnecessary, so the vast majority of Americans never use all - or any - of their vacation time. And then, when we do go on vacation, we often bring work with us. Alternatively, we turn the vacation into a job all its own, making it a bundle of stress that you need a vacation from when you're done!

Why do we do this? And does a life following Christ have anything to say about it?

It's pretty simple to understand why we do it. Fear. Good jobs are hard to come by, and they may be harder to hang on to. It's an employer's market, as they say. When the boss realizes he/she can squeeze more out of you than might be strictly allowed, there is a temptation to squeeze, especially if others are doing it.

Heck, a lot of employers are crossing the line, not only subtly doing away with vacation but also whittling away at overtime and weekends. For many, the 40-hour work week is fondly remembered as a relic of the past, and none of those extra hours are compensated appropriately.

And yet.... And yet, sabbath time is not only a commandment, it is essential to the human soul. The reason for weekends is that we learned over long years of abuse, that people need rest. They need time to re-create.

God knows this. That's one reason why the fourth commandment is to "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." Rest is holy.

Ideally, in an industrialized society, we can afford to have a day of complete rest and another day devoted to worshipping God and being the Body of Christ together. This allows us the time to do all those little chores we need at home, and also spend some of that regenerating time with God and God's people.

St. James' E-pistle

May 20, 2016

Some people still enjoy this luxury, but that number is shrinking. Even church becomes one more item on your to-do list that you check off. How many times do people skip church - or pick the "quick" service so they can get around to doing the important things of the day.

I don't mean to lay a guilt trip on anyone - this is just the reality of our contemporary world. You don't get support for resting and doing nothing. Wanting rest is counter cultural.

But then, our faith is countercultural, isn't it? And your God calls you to find that rest in this world rather than wait till you enter the Kingdom of God.

How do you embrace your countercultural faith? Probably by baby steps. Make sure you know how much vacation you're entitled to - then take a little bit more than you did last year. Maybe just a day, at first. Don't endanger your job, of course, but you may find that taking that time won't make you redundant after all.

If you're the boss, of course, then you have an obligation to take care of your employees. Insist that they take the time. Assure them that they are better employees for taking a rest. Honor their sabbath time, as God has intended from the beginning.

Oh, and if you have a great employer who encourages you to take the time you need to regenerate - let them know how much you appreciate it!

Vacation is simply sabbath time. We will miss you if you go away for a couple of weeks - yes, you will be missed! - but I pray for you a peaceful, restoring, re-creative time away, so that when you come back to us, it will be with joy, peace, and energy!

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

May 20, 2016

The News of the Church

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 20, 2016

FARMWORKER MARCH

Please join the marchers as the 200 mile FARMWORKER MARCH comes through Dutchess and Ulster Counties:

Wednesday, May 25th - Zion Church, Wappingers Falls

7pm - Program: *Fighting for Freedom of Movement:*

Driver's License Access for Immigrant Farmworkers

Speaker: Emma Kreyche, Worker Justice Center

Thursday, May 26th

Join us as we march across through the City of Poughkeepsie (approximately 1pm starting at Christ Church, Academy Street and/or the Walkway Over the Hudson (Washington Street entrance) approximately 2pm.

7pm - St. Andrew's Church, New Paltz

Program: *Emerging Models for Farmworker Equity* Speaker: Lorrie Klevenger

Friday, May 27th - New Progressive Baptist Church, 8 Hone Street, Kingston 7pm - Speakers: Retired Farmworkers of the Hudson Valley - their stories

Wednesday, June 1 - FARMWORKER ALBANY DAY

opening presentation, march to the Capital, rally, lunch, legislative visits, closing words and send off

Further information and registration:

rural&migrantministry.org/farmworker-march Questions regarding how to get involved: Deacon Gail

St. James' E-pistle

May 20, 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.diocesen.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

22 Trinity Sunday

Canon Theologian of the Diocese

23 Holy Trinity Church, Inwood, Manhattan

24 Grace Church in New York, Manhattan

25 St. Mark's Church, Nepera Park, Yonkers

26 Treasurer of the Diocese, Parish Treasurers, and Financial Administrators of the Diocese

27 Church of the Holy Trinity, Manhattan

28 St. Paul's and Trinity Parish, Tivoli

29 The Church Pension Group

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 20, 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.

Pray for the Repose of the soul of George Dahlgren.

Pray for Allelu Kurten.

Pray for safe travel for all who are on the road this vacation season.

Pray for our college graduates this week.

St. James' E-pistle

May 20, 2016

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):	Walter Edgar Koch, M.D.; Brian Kinne; Morgan Kinne
Birthdays (this coming week):	Connie Eames; Daniel McGlynn
Acolytes:	May 22: Nancy, Kirstin and Deirdre Mae May 29: Russell, John Beyer and Anna
Altar Guild:	May 22: Team Number I May 29: Team Number II
8 a.m. Readers:	May 22: Angela Henry and Jim Smyth May 29: Debbie Belding and Lucille Ogden
10 a.m. Readers:	May 22: Patty Caswell and Maggie McNamara May 29: Russell Urban-Mead and Bobbie Wells
Ushers:	May 22: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne May 29: Patty Drake and Pat Keeffe
Pledge Clerks:	May 22: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell May 29: Joanne Lown and Andy Hall
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	May 22: Barbara, Tim, Craig and Dalton Slegel; Jim and Jan Smyth May 29: Randy and Barbara Soden; Marguerite Spratt
Coffee Hour Hosts:	May 22: Saira Shahani; Brian Rance May 29: Barbara Slegel; The Choir

This Week's Lectionary

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

Canticle 13

St. James' E-pistle

May 20, 2016

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

Sermon Preached on Day of Pentecost (Whitsunday) (May 15, 2016)

"Soft Spirit"

I have a confession to make. When I gave our secretary Dyan this sermon title, I had no idea what it meant. Actually, I hadn't even given the title a thought: you see, I was out of town Tuesday and Wednesday. Thursday was just a very busy day, and by the end of it, I wasn't feeling well. By Friday morning, I was so sick I had to stay home in bed. So when Dyan called looking for a sermon title, I really could not have cared less about it and said the first thing that popped into my head. Soft Spirit. Where it came from, I couldn't say.

And then, lying in bed with a fever, I had this nightmare. Okay, not a real nightmare, just the realization that now I had to make a sermon fit this title that had no meaning.

I mean, the Holy Spirit isn't soft. It's scary. Here's how scary it is. Thursday morning, I read the story of Pentecost to the Nursery School kids. When I showed them a picture of the tongues of fire resting on the disciples, one of the kids yells, "Stop, Drop, and Roll!"

The reading in Acts says the Holy Spirit came in with the rush of a violent wind, the kind a Midwesterner like me associates with tornados. There's nothing soft about that.

And we all know that when the disciples began preaching about Jesus and his amazing love for all of us, preaching it to all people in all languages - they got arrested, beaten and all too often murdered.

The Holy Spirit is wild, untamable, powerful, and very dangerous.

But it's funny how these things work out. A little bit after hanging up, opened my e-mail. I have a subscription to a daily meditation, and that day's meditation was a poem by the 19th century poet, Christina Rossetti:

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing thro'.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads
The wind is passing by.

Christina Rossetti
Source: 365 Poems for Every Occasion

The Spirit can be a rushing wind or a gentle breeze. We see neither, and the breeze is barely felt except for its impact on us. But it's there.

St. James' E-pistle

May 20, 2016

We forget - well I forget - that the work of the Holy Spirit is not always flashy. That the Spirit whispers more often than shouts. We forget the prophet Elijah who could not hear the voice of God in earthquakes or storms or raging fire but in the still soft voice of the Spirit.

We forget - or maybe never knew - that the Spirit is the one person of the Trinity so unknowable we don't know if it's wind, bird, or flame. We can't even fix a gender to it. In fact, while the Rite II version of the Nicene Creed calls the Spirit "he", all previous English versions said "who." And in the Hebrew they say "she". I'd guess what scares us most about the Spirit is that we can't pin her down.

Think about it, aside from that big dramatic event on Pentecost, the event that gave birth to the church, the Spirit has done most of her work quietly, maybe even unnoticeably.

As a modest example, Cliff Wells and I were reminiscing the other day about when I was interviewing for the position of rector here. You see, I did not want to come here. I lived in a cute little town in North Carolina with nice people at a church that was really turning itself around. In fact, when I received St. James's parish profile, I threw it in the garbage. I won't go into how I ended up at the interview, but suffice to say, I came only to be polite before wishing St. James' well and moving on. The funny thing is, the search committee came prepared to do the same thing. All the other candidates had withdrawn, and they were not going to be stuck with the last guy left.

So when we got together, we were all polite and a little tense. But somewhere in there, things started to change - I couldn't begin to guess where - and by the end of the evening we were no longer talking about "if" we came to St. James' but "when". At the end, I remember turning to Liz and saying, almost in shock, "We're coming here." And she - all calm - said, "I know."

I've always believed - and I think the same is true for Cliff - that this gentle, almost imperceptible nudge toward each other was the work of the Holy Spirit, that soft spirit we celebrate today.

Mind you, there've been plenty of times when I suspected the Spirit was guiding me, and I chose not to listen. The Spirit will not take us where we refuse to go.

Still - and here's my other point - Soft does not mean powerless. The power of the Spirit has never been one of physical force, of dominance over others. That's the world, not God. The apostles never harmed - they, like Jesus, fed the hungry, healed the sick, opened their arms to the despised, preached good news to the despairing. They broke down walls that divide and went about the work of knitting us together into the family of God.

So, when we find ourselves inclined toward what is loving and good - even if it's not what we imagined or wanted - perhaps we can stop and listen for that still, soft voice. Because the Spirit may speak with a soft voice, but when we listen, powerful things can happen.

Today is Pentecost in all its red, fiery, gusty, bird-like glory, the birthday of the church. The funny thing is, the best way to celebrate is to quiet down and listen. And let that soft spirit speak. Amen.