

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

### Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Back in my high school days, I took four years of German classes. By fourth year, my classmates and I figured we knew pretty much everything there was to know about German. We could hold basic conversations, and since we didn't know any real Germans, we had no idea how bad our vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar were.

Being very clever teenagers, we thought it was especially fun to go into stores and start speaking German to each other. We were going for shock value, of course, because nobody in the world would understand us. People would probably think we were exotic foreigners!

In retrospect, I'm sure I misinterpreted the shaking heads of the adults around us. They probably weren't saying to themselves, "Boy, those are some mighty impressive young people. I wish I could understand what they're saying in that fancy foreign language." It's more likely they were saying, "Kids these days...."

Every Pentecost, I get a little twinge of embarrassment and think of those silly days. Why? Because one of Pentecost's long-standing traditions is to read the Gospel in foreign languages. We have done that before - one lector reads in German, another in Spanish, another in French. I have watched the congregation on these occasions and notice uncomfortable shifting in seats, staring off into space, checking phones - anything to take attention off the fact that nobody knows what's being said.

While we won't have the Gospel read in multiple languages this year, I'm not sure that it's a bad practice. Just like the foot washing on Maundy Thursday (and be honest, how many times have you stepped forward to have your feet washed?), it is awkward but has something to teach us - or perhaps merely remind us.

The purpose of the languages is of course to remind us that on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit, they were suddenly able to speak in the many languages of the visitors to Jerusalem (Pentecost being a holiday that brought pilgrims to the city). It was not just any old miracle. It was a sign of what the church was to be.

The church was to be a place in which no person - regardless of nationality or race or social standing - would be denied the Love of God. Every single person was to be understood as a child of God. Like the wise men on Epiphany, the new languages of Pentecost were meant to show us that our faith is open and inviting to all people. We would do well to remember that.

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

Moreover, while at Epiphany, the outsiders came to Jesus, now with the ability to speak languages, the disciples were given the tools to go out into the world and preach the gospel - using words when necessary - but words people could understand.

In Acts, Luke often shows the church as it can be, perhaps more than as it really was. There's no record of the church keeping their number of apostles to twelve after the early years. There's no record of the disciples continuing to select their apostles by drawing lots. And there is no record of the community remaining together to share all things in common as they did in the earliest of days.

Luke holds up the ideal for us to remember what we are called to be.

Pentecost reminds us that we are called to be the missionaries of Christ. We - you and I - are called to make Christ's compelling grace, mercy, and irresistible love known to a world that needs exactly that. It may require learning new languages - Spanish, French, Arabic, Social Media.... But we have the tools and the ability to learn. All we need is the will.

In Christ,

Chuck+

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

### **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."

- 24 The youth of the diocese and those who work in youth ministries
- 25 The Church of the Good Shepherd, Greenwood Lake
- 26 St. Andrew's Church, New Paltz
- 27 The Bellevue Medical Center Interfaith Chaplaincy, Manhattan
- 28 Christ's Church Nursery School, Rye
- 29 Coler Memorial Hospital Chaplaincy, Roosevelt Island
- 30 The Office of the Anglican Observer to the United Nations, Manhattan

### **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

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.

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

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*

**Rural and Migrant Ministry - Annual Walk-a-thon:** On **Saturday, June 6th** beginning at 10am here at St. James' Church, Rural and Migrant Ministry will host its Annual Walk-a-thon to support its 26th season of Summer Overnight Leadership Camp. Please consider joining us as we walk the Vanderbilt loop followed by a barbecue luncheon served by the Christian Fellowship of the Culinary Institute of America. Or, if you are unable to walk, please consider sponsoring a walker or making a donation to the Rural and Migrant Ministry Overnight Summer Camp.

Rural and Migrant Ministry “works for the creation of a just, rural New York State through: nurturing leadership, standing with the disenfranchised, especially farmworkers and rural workers and changing unjust systems and structures.”

The two program areas that RMM has developed to implement its mission is ACCOMPANIMENT and YOUTH EMPOWERMENT.

The Youth Empowerment Program creates opportunities for rural youth to develop leadership skills. The Summer Overnight Leadership Camp is part of the Youth Empowerment Program.

The Summer Overnight Leadership Camp began in 1989 to provide a camping experience for rural and migrant children. The camp is funded entirely through donations, like donations received from the Walk-a-thon and from foundations. This year the camp is being held from August 23rd through August 29th at the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center in Holmes, NY. Many of the staff are former campers.

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

This Overnight Camp focuses on skill-building and leadership development activities for campers, ages 8-17. The camp welcomes over 100 campers with diverse backgrounds - 40% Latino, 40% African-Americans and 20% European-Americans.

What a difference a camping experience can make in the life of a child!

Peace, Deacon Gail

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

**Take Some Business Cards:** We have created some Business Cards for St. James' Church, and we want you to take them. These cards have our service times and contact information for the church office, but no personal names. Carry them around with you because you never know when you might have a conversation that leads you to talk about Christ and your church. If you have a card with you, you can simply give it to them and let them know it has all the information they might want to get started exploring St. James'. When we run out, we can always get more, so please take a handful this Sunday!

**Important Note For Committee Chairs:** Effective July 1, all Committee and Organization leaders will need to formally seek permission from the Vestry before scheduling any fundraiser or public event. This can be done by filling out a simple form available at the parish office. The Vestry will go over each request at its monthly meeting (third Tuesday of every month. But note, there is NO meeting in August, so you would need to make sure you have your September event request in for the July meeting). Events that are already on the calendar as of May 21 will be "grandfathered" in. This permission methods was seen as necessary to make sure Vestry members know what is going on at the church and to help avoid scheduling confusion.

**Pray for the Baptized:** This **Sunday, May 24**, we will welcome three new members of the Body of Christ. Madeline Aletta Glancey, Emily Marion Glancey, and Aldona Cathereine Raugalis will be baptized at the 10:00 AM Eucharist. Please pray for them in their new life in Christ. Please pray for their families as well - and pray that we may support them all in the days, months, and years to come.

**Nursery School News:** Three things you should know about St. James' Nursery School:  
One: A recent article appeared in Psychology Today reported on several long-term studies on

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

the effect of academically-focused preschools vs socialization-focused preschools. The result? Preschools emphasizing academics do harm to children. They show immediate but short-term advances in academic output, but by the middle of elementary school, all those gains are lost or even reversed. Kids who focus on socialization skills prosper long-term. I mention this because socialization has been the focus of St. James' Nursery School for 50 years. Ask the kindergarten teachers who get our kids, and they'll tell you that kids from St. James' are the kind they love to have.

Two: On **Wednesday, May 27**, the Nursery School will have an open house (12:30 - 2:00 pm). Tell your young parent friends about the Psychology Today article and about St. James'!

Three: On **Friday, June 12**, the Nursery School will end its school year with a moving up ceremony for the departing children. Keep them in your prayers.

**Youth Group Cook Out: Friday, May 29**, the Youth Group will gather in the backyard of the rectory for a cookout. This will replace the month's overnight. Youth Group families are invited, too. The youth will have some time apart for some discussion - but we're pretty sure the adults can entertain themselves!

**A Prayer for Our Pilgrims:** Please keep the Pilgrims in your prayers as they prepare for next week's pilgrimage. Here is a prayer to offer:

All-powerful God, you always show mercy toward those who you love and you are never far away for those who seek you. Remain with your servants on this holy pilgrimage and guide their way in accord with your will. Shelter them with your protection by day, give them the light of your grace by night, and, as their companion on their journey, bring them to their destination in safety.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Oh, and if you've thought about walking but haven't turned in a registration form, call or e-mail Fr. Chuck.

**Wellness Fair:** A Wellness Fair fundraiser for the Hyde Park Community Garden will be held on **Saturday, June 13** from 10-4 on the grounds of St. James Church

Please come out and support the vendors that will be there that day to offer various services and products promoting healthy living!

Food will be offered for sale from students at the Culinary Institute of America.

Music provided by the Plan Bee's and other guests!

Free admission.

For further information about vendor space, call Deb Belding at (845)240-3194.

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

**Recognition Sunday:** Please be sure to come to church on **Sunday, June 14** for RECOGNITION SUNDAY and Ice Cream Social. Not only do we recognize our students and acolytes, but we say thank you to our hardworking and dedicated Sunday School teachers. And we give our graduating seniors a blessing and a joyful send-off into the world!

If you have a graduating High School or College student (Associates, Bachelors, Masters or Doctoral), please let me (Fr. Chuck) know so we can properly acknowledge them.

**Invitation to a Parish Celebration:** Brian Rance and Melinda Harris cordially invite you to attend a second annual parish celebration of faith and friendship at their home at 9 Marshall Road (corner of Netherwood) from 5:00 to 10:00 p.m. on **Saturday, June 20th**. Dinner and refreshments will be served. Parents should feel free to bring children. If you plan on attending, please RSVP to [brian.rance@freshfields.com](mailto:brian.rance@freshfields.com) or by phone to 212-360-1854. Please indicate the number attending. Please don't feel obliged to bring any food or gifts. There should be plenty for everyone.

**Summer Youth Conference:** I strongly encourage any young people (rising 6th graders to rising college Freshmen) to attend the Summer Youth Conference at Incarnation Camp Center this summer. The dates are **August 16-22**. More information is on a flier below. I have financial aid for anyone interested. Again, I strongly urge this!

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

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Susie Buhalis, Jim And Sharyn Burke, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Jane Gagliardoto, Gloria Golden, 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, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Barbara Slegel (healing from surgery), Debbie Stone, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Diane Webb, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

*For the repose of the soul of Diane Webb*

## **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*

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

*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):	David Webb, Robin Bohlmann, Brian Kinne and Morgan Kinne
Birthdays (next week):	Alan Mueser, Daniel McGlynn, Marge Gibson-O'Mara, Alexandra Burkhardt, Barabara Slegel and Thomas Gabel
Acolytes:	May 24: Bryanna Burkhardt, Chris Granados-Kramer and Amelia McNamara May 31: Jasmine Thatcher, Jaylen Thatcher and Charlie Urban-Mead
Altar Guild:	May 24: Team Number I May 31: Team Number I
8 a.m. Readers:	May 24: Angela Henry and Jim Smyth May 31: Debbie Belding and Lucille Ogden
10 a.m. Readers:	May 24: Patty Caswell/Sophie Ciferri May 31: Regina Ardini/Maggie McNamara
Ushers:	May 24: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne May 31: Bill and Regina Ardini
Pledge Clerks:	May 24: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell May 31: Paul Littlefield
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	May 24: "Sprit of Unity" and Marguerite Spratt May 31: Anna Mae Swenson, Masud and Janice Syedullah and Bev Tas
Coffee Hour Hosts:	May 24: Saira Shahani May 31: Barbara Slegal and the Choir

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

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:25-35,37

Romans 8:22-27

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

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

### Sermon Preached on Seventh Sunday of Easter (May 17, 2015)

#### "Grace of the Draw"

I remember watching a TV show about old time religion, and one of the things they used to do whenever they had a problem they could not solve was to take a bible, let it fall open to a random page, close their eyes and point to a passage. Whatever passage it was, that would be the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Now that I think of it, I remember seeing that on The Waltons (if you remember that show).

I tried it a couple of times in High School. You know, "Should I ask Susie Anderson out to the prom?" That sort of thing. And then I'd open up to Habbakuk:

"How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?

Let's just say it did not help much.

And after a while, I began to wonder if there was anything to asking God for guidance at all. Wasn't that just a way of avoiding responsibility for making a decision? Shouldn't I use my brain and think things through?

So seeing a passage like today's reading from Acts brings back all those old thoughts. Is it just laziness on their part? Superstition? What does it even mean to ask God's guidance?

Well, let's review the passage from Acts. Our intrepid apostles have seen Jesus ascend into the heavens, and now they are waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit - whatever that means. While they're waiting, they feel that they need a full complement of apostles - 12 like when Jesus was with them. So they pick two men who have been with them from the beginning, pray, and draw lots.

Drawing lots is just what it sounds like. It's like drawing straws or flipping a coin. It was an arbitrary way of making a decision. They asked for God's guidance and assume that God will choose between Justus Barsabbas and Matthias.

Is that taking the easy way out?

Maybe not. For one thing, drawing or casting lots was - or using some other arbitrary selection system was an ancient practice in scripture. Proverbs praised it as a way to avoid dissension. You don't have to worry about bias - it's God's choice.

For another thing, the apostles did not just say, "God, point to someone to replace Judas." They first chose two equally good candidates from among those who had been following Jesus all

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 22, 2015

along. Both of them were people they felt could do the work of an apostle. Either would be a responsible choice.

Then they prayed. They prayed a specific prayer - for God to show them God's choice. To pray this honestly, they had to be ready to accept either outcome. They were not interested in their own desires, but God's. To seek God's will means to leave your own preferences at the door.

Only after all this did they draw lots. Barsabbas was not put down as a loser for not having the lots fall to him. Rather, they were able to say to him simply that God had other work for him.

This selection system may seem a little arbitrary, but it has great value, not the least of which is trusting God. Yes, we do due diligence. We do the homework. But then, listen for the voice of God.

What they did was create a partnership with God. They did their work and then allowed the Holy Spirit to do its work. That is key to our relationship with God - we are partners.

And let's face it, a lot of the time when we insist on our own way, we just make a mess of things. Our nominating committee will soon get to the work of inviting parishioners to consider serving God and the church as members of the Vestry. I've often wondered what it would be like if we went through the parish directory, selected all those who are eligible and faithful in participating in the life of the church, and then drew names. The committee would first pray for the Spirit's guidance, but then trust God to show whom to ask.

Of course, we work within the laws of the State of New York, so we would have to elect Vestry members at our annual meeting, but I think there's something to being able to say, "We prayed earnestly, and God led us to you. Will you run?"

I admit, it's also scary. What if the lot falls to someone we don't like? Trust. Let the Holy Spirit have some input. Trust that God can work with anyone to accomplish God's will. Of course, we need to make sure that what we seek is, in fact, God's will and not our own.

Mind you, this is not just about elections or leadership selection. (Although, this system might be a lot better in state and national politics than the system we currently suffer under). No, doing your homework first and then trusting God's input can be a regular part of our lives. No - not for things like, "What should I have for breakfast." But in matters where we are truly seeking God's will, there may be a place for casting lots. I wouldn't call it luck. I'd call it grace. Amen.