

ST. JAMES' E-PISTLE

May 3, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last Sunday evening I was listening to my hockey teammates dissect the game we had just played. It occurred to me just how little I understand the game. Although I understood the terms they were using (I know what the slot and pinching are, for example), I just didn't see all the action that they saw.

Why is that, I wondered. The answer, I think is simple. They live, eat and breathe hockey. Many of them play in two or three leagues, which means two or three games a week. Most of them watch hockey games on TV or go to professional games regularly. I don't do any of that. For as much as I love the game, I play once a week, and that is it.

In his book, "Outliers", Malcolm Gladwell suggests that it takes about 10,000 hours of practice in any activity to become a true expert. But when you do become expert, then you see things that others just don't see.

Or hear things.

I bring this up because today is the National Day of Prayer, and there was an interesting article in today's New York Times about people who pray a lot. Regardless of denomination, those who evoke significant time to individual prayer - just sitting in the presence of God - hear the voice of God far more than others.

This is no schizophrenia - these voices aren't malevolent or loud or persistent. They are beyond the ken of psychology, regardless of what one might attribute them to. Also, whereas schizophrenia affects just over one percent of the population, these prayer voices are heard by a significant percentage of people who regularly pray.

I'm happy to admit that I believe God is talking.

Which begs the question: Are you hearing the voice of God? If not God, what are you hearing? It's a fair question since it would seem that we become attuned to what we focus on. We become sharp-eyed and sharp-eared where we spend our time.

I have a suspicion that many of us have become expert worriers or critics or expert hidlers - because we are tuned in to all the stresses and strains of the world around us.

Not that the world ever stops being the stressful place that it is, but on this National Day of Prayer we do well to remind ourselves that we can become experts in prayer. And we can hear the voice of God.

But even if we can't manage all that time for individual prayer - even if there's just too much going on in our lives, and 10,000 hours seems way too impossible - pray anyway.

Even dabbling in individual prayer will get you closer to God. You may not see it. You may not feel it. But you will be closer - and your life will be richer.

You don't have to be an expert at anything to get a lot out of it. If you don't believe me....come watch me play hockey some day.

In Christ,
Fr. Chuck

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The News of the Church

Graveyard Tours Planning NOW.

Leaders Needed! St. James' has now had Lantern light graveyard tours for three years. Last year was our biggest and most exciting venture yet. Now we are planning for another big year - but we need you!

On Sunday, the Graveyard Tour Committee will meet to start the ball rolling. Bev O'Halloran will continue in her role of coordinating and supporting the various tasks, as well as staffing and onsite oversight. This year, we have separated into four tasks the work done by one person last year.

Please take a look and think about whether you fit one of these roles:

1. Business Manager: Responsible for setting up petty cash, income and outflow (payroll)
2. Website Manager: Responsible for maintaining website and making sure that payments made through the website are coordinated with the Business Manager.
3. Artistic Director: Responsible for auditioning and rehearsing actors as well as blocking the flow of the tour.
4. Advertising Manager: Responsible for getting word out about the tours in a variety of media. Also responsible for any public relations programming we may require.

The Graveyard Tours have proven to be a tremendous fundraising vehicle for us, but they also are a wonderful way for us to have fun together and get the word out about how God has worked through this parish for these many years.

St. James' Prayer Group - Ready to Help You Start:

For the past several months, a dedicated and faithful group of eight have been meeting bi-weekly to pray. Led by Pat Keeffe, they have prayed for each other, for the congregation and for larger needs. Prayer is our link with God, and to pray together makes the community stronger. The prayer group wants to let you know that it is a beautiful and life-giving experience. They have found that eight is as large as the group ought to be - any bigger lessens the intimacy - but they are willing to share their encouragement with any who might be interested in starting a new prayer group.

Please contact Pat Keeffe if you would like to learn more about what a prayer group does or how you can start your own.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Andrew Mendelson, Naomi Sleight, Ed Leuken, Rosemary Leuken, Brooke Helton, Ruth Blanding, Debbie Stone, Harold Hall, Michael Day, Clifford Plass, Don Renten, Barbara Knakal, Kurt Burkhardt, Cliff Wells, Janet Arms, Ryan Mackin, James Sheeky, Elmer Van Wagner, Cassidy Way, Rev. Don Hoger, Jolanda Heijenbrok, Joan Oetjen, Ken Briggs, Deborah Porach, Jack Gordy, Gloria Veach, Candace Vincent, Gerald Plass and John Robinson.

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VBS Time: It's time to start thinking about Vacation Bible School. We have a program picked out already, and it looks exciting with a totally new format. If interested, please contact Valerie Gaulin, or Bev O'Halloran.

Monday Night Bible Study: This has been cancelled (permanently).

Assistance with Hillcrest House Meal Preparation: Leslie Quick and Kathy Graff have asked for help from at least one other person to help them make the Hillcrest House meal on Saturday, May 11th. Please contact either one of them directly to learn what meal item(s) they need.

Want to Sing with Spirit of Unity? Some parishioners have asked if they might occasionally practice with our artists in residence. Ray Watkins has asked any who want to rehearse with them to contact him: raywatkins@mindspring.com.

Episcopal Charities

Did you know that 14.5% of American households struggle to put food on the table and that one in four American children are at risk of hunger?

Do you hear their voices? "It wasn't my turn" was the response of a young student who had fallen asleep at school when asked if he had eaten breakfast that morning. "Lack of work worries me. My children were hungry and I told them the rice is cooking until they fell asleep from hunger," was the response from a mother.

Isaiah reminds us: "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry? . . ." or in Matthew's Gospel: "For I was hungry and you gave me food."

Episcopal Charities, the outreach arm of our Diocese, has been providing funds and support to parish-based programs since being incorporated in December, 1996.

Currently there are forty-one feeding programs supported by Episcopal Charities throughout our Diocese. Here in the Mid-Hudson Region (Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster Counties) we have eleven programs supporting neighbors who face food insecurity each day.

From data received from Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, it shows that 10.7% of Dutchess residents must deal with hunger issues. Our neighboring counties, the statistics are: 11.7% - Orange; 13.8% - Sullivan and 11.9% - Ulster. However, behind these statistics are real lives reflected in the faces of our neighbors - children of God.

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As we move around the region, we discover that Christ's love is shining through the Food for Life/Comida de Vida Food Pantry sponsored by St. Thomas Church - Amenia Union or St. Andrew's/St. Luke's Food Pantry in Beacon. That love shines in "Fed by Grace" Food Pantry sponsored by Grace Church - Port Jervis or at St. John's Church - Monticello's Caring Hands Food Pantry along with the daily meals provided by Angel Food East (St. John's - Kingston) to residents of Ulster County living with HIV/AIDS.

Along with food, many of our parish-based programs provide additional information, education and support related to nutrition, housing, employment and immigration issues. For instance, Caring Hands Food Pantry in Monticello partners with Cornell Cooperative Extension on nutrition education.

Episcopal Charities enables our Diocesan grass-roots, parish-based programs to extend Christ's love to neighbors that reflect the needs of the local area through their grant program. In addition, Episcopal Charities offers workshops to all program leaders throughout the year.

In the coming week, please prayerfully consider a donation to Episcopal Charities. There will be envelopes available for you to make your donation or you may drop a check, payable to Episcopal Charities, in the offering plate on Sunday, May 12th.

If you have any questions about the work of Episcopal Charities, please ask me. On behalf of all our neighbors in our Diocese who will benefit from your donation - THANK YOU!

Deacon Gail

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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. 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's okay.

Birthdays:	None
Acolytes:	May 5: Eden Ciferri, Bryanna Burkhardt and Travyn Triola May 12: Nick Granados-Kramer, Skye O'Halloran and Mike Minter
Altar Guild:	May 5: Team Number III May 12: Team Number III
8 a.m. Readers:	May 5: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris May 12: Angela Henry and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	May 5: Donna Beyer and Justin Bohlmann May 12: Patty Caswell and Sophie Ciferri
Ushers:	May 5: Donna and John Beyer May 12: Dean Caswell and Austin Horn
Pledge Clerks:	May 5: Janet Bright and Joanne Lown May 12: Deb and Doug Belding
Coffee Hour Hosts:	May 5: Saira Shahani and Pat Keefe May 12: Jodi Triola, The Eames and Annette Minter

BIRTHDAY LIST UPDATE: Our birthday list is out of date. To ensure that you are accurately included in the list, please send an e-mail to stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org with your name (and the names of family members), together with birth dates. Please include "Birthday Update" in the subject line of the e-mail.

Please see Pat Keefe if you would like to host a coffee hour!

This Week's Lectionary

Acts 16:9-15
Psalm 67
Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5
John 5:1-9