

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 8, 2015

### **Pulpit Notes**

Brothers and Sisters:

The diocese has been making some changes in training requirements that you should be aware of. All clergy have been required for many years to take training courses in sexual abuse awareness (currently called Safe Church and Safeguarding God's Children). In addition, employees are also required to take some training, and volunteers who work with children have been expected to (as opposed to required).

There have also been racism awareness workshops required of clergy and available to others who perform ministries. Given the surprising large racial divide exposed in the past many months, such training is particularly valuable.

As I said, recently, the diocese has upgraded the requirements for this training. Lay eucharistic visitors are now also required to receive the Safe Church training.

Furthermore, we are now required to renew this training every five years. For several of us, this will mean finding out when and where courses are, and getting ourselves to them.

Fortunately, the Safe Church program will soon be offered in an online format. Each congregation is required to have an administrator for this, and as clergy are recommended to be that administrator, I have registered on behalf of St. James'. The online version of this program will be available sometime this summer.

I mention this to you because it's important for you to know that the Church is constantly monitoring itself, constantly trying to see where it falls short - especially in such important areas as child safety and care of parishioners. I know that Bishop Dietsche has been very aware of the places where the Church in general fails the community it seeks to serve. He's also aware that such mundane things as training workshops are what we need to begin to address our shortcomings.

They don't fix everything. They won't stop every incident of abuse. But they already have made a difference, stopping clergy or other leaders from putting themselves (often innocently enough) in situations that cannot end well. With the renewal process, our awareness will remain fresh - and the church will be a safer, more welcoming place for it.

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 8, 2015

As we approach Mothers' Day (and Fathers' Day next month), it seems that this kind of looking out for our collective family is exactly what is called for.

I think Mom would approve.

In Christ,

Chuck+

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 8, 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."

- 10 St. Paul's Church, Spring Valley
- 11 Zion Church, Dobbs Ferry
- 12 St. Mark's Church, Mount Kisco
- 13 St. John's Church, Pleasantville
- 14 Holy Cross Church, Yonkers
- 15 Trinity Church, Fishkill
- 16 St. Andrew's Church, Poughkeepsie

### **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 8, 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*

### **Episcopal Charities Sunday - Sunday, May 10th**

Were you aware that 10.2% of your neighbors in Dutchess County are facing food insecurity and that 16.6% of Dutchess County children struggle with hunger issues?

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 are hungry and I told them the rice was 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.”

Incorporated in December, 1996, Episcopal Charities, the mission arm of our Diocese, currently partners with fifty parish-based, non-sectarian feeding programs in our Diocese. In addition to the actual grant, Episcopal Charities provides strategic training, operational support and four required sustainability workshops to the program leaders.

As we move around the Mid-Hudson Region, we discover that Christ’s love is shining here in Dutchess County through the mission of Rhinebeck Food Pantry, sponsored by Church of the Messiah - Rhinebeck; Food Pantries located and sponsored by St. Paul’s Church - Poughkeepsie, Zion Church - Wappingers Falls and St. Andrew’s Church and St. Luke’s Church - Beacon; in addition to the Food for Life/Comida de Vida Pantry sponsored by St. Thomas Church - Amenia Union.

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 8, 2015

Other Mid-Hudson programs that are shining Christ's love are located in Orange, Sullivan and Ulster Counties: Saturday Morning Breakfast program sponsored by Christ Church - Warwick; Shepherd's Kitchen sponsored by Church of the Good Shepherd - Newburgh; Guild of St. Margaret's Soup Kitchen sponsored by Grace Church - Middletown; Fed by Grace Food Pantry sponsored by Grace Church - Port Jervis; Food Pantry sponsored by St. George's Church - Newburgh, Angel Food East sponsored by St. John's Church - Kingston and Caring Hands Food Pantry sponsored by St. John's Church - Monticello.

Episcopal Charities' grant program enables us, through our donations, to extend Christ's love to grass-roots, parish-based programs that reflect the needs of that parish-based program's local area. Please note that because the Diocese provides for the overhead expenses, 100% of your donation is designated specifically for programming.

As faithful followers of Christ, please prayerfully consider making a donation to Episcopal Charities. There will be envelopes available in the pews for you to make your donation. If you are writing a check, please make it payable to Episcopal Charities.

On behalf of all our neighbors throughout our Diocese who struggle with food insecurity and who will benefit from your donation - **THANK YOU!!**

Peace, Deacon Gail

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

**Rural and Migrant Ministry:** Please consider joining our farmworkers on Tuesday, May 19th in Albany for the annual Farmworker Albany Day Rally. There will be a bus leaving Kingston on that day. For reservations, please call RMM at 845-485-8627. Then on Saturday, June 6, RMM will hold their annual Walk-a-thon here at St. James' Church.

**Sunday, May 10th is Episcopal Charities Sunday:** Please prayerfully consider making a donation to Episcopal Charities, the mission arm of the Diocese. Envelopes can be found in the pews. If you are writing a check please make it payable to Episcopal Charities. On behalf of all our neighbors who will benefit from your donation - THANK YOU! In addition, please see the longer article about this subject under "The News of Diocese" above.

**Treble Choir Concert:** The Cappella Festiva Treble Choir concert this coming Saturday at 4pm is free and open to the public. Taking place at Christ Episcopal on Carroll Street in Poughkeepsie, it is the Treble Choir's last performance for the year and is being presented in honor of Mother's Day. See the flier at the end of this E-pistle.

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 8, 2015

**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, Debbie Stone, 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.*

Birthdays (this past week):	Diane Webb
Birthdays (next week):	Erika Seagren, Rebecca Gausepohl, Isabelle Vogeler and Walter Koch
Acolytes:	May 10: Nancy Montero, Kirstin Horn and Deirdre Mae Micker May 17: Russell Urban-Mead and John Beyer
Altar Guild:	May 10: Team Number III May 17: Team Number III
8 a.m. Readers:	May 10: Angela Henry and Grant Ferris May 17: Debbie Belding and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	May 10: Wilma Tully/Judy Douglass May 17: Donna Beyer/Deirdre Mae Micker
Ushers:	May 10: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher May 17: Donna and John Beyer
Pledge Clerks:	May 10: Deb and Doug Belding

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 8, 2015

Parish Cycle of Prayer: May 17: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher  
May 10: Bob, Ann, Drew and Michael Seils, Saira, Rohit, Sanjana and Jeet Shahani and Barbara, Craig and Dalton Slegel  
May 17: Jim and Jan Smyth and Randy and Barbara Soden

Coffee Hour Hosts: May 10: Jodi Triola, Ross & Connie Eames and Pat Rooney  
May 17: Deirdre Mae Micker and Patty Drake

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

Acts 10:44-48

Psalm 98

1 John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17

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  
Fifth Sunday of Easter  
(May 3, 2015)

"Open Baptism"

Today, I'm going to talk about something called "open baptism." It is a practice in which some churches have advertised particular days in which the congregation will baptize all takers. All you have to do is show up to church on that particular Sunday, and you will be baptized. No questions asked.

There has been some controversy over this, of course. We wouldn't be Episcopalians if there weren't. Some believe this practice cheapens baptism or trivializes it. They say that to simply toss it out there to the general public like an advertising campaign makes this sacred sacrament into a gimmick. They say that there needs to be some understanding and intention of truly fulfilling the vows (and some accountability) before we should baptize.

Tradition is that parents, sponsors and candidates for baptism received some education - typically three or four sessions from the priest. In ancient times, it was more like three years of intense training. And there's nothing wrong with requiring some good teaching.

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 8, 2015

On the other hand, if open baptism is a mistake, it's not the worst teaching about baptism that the church has provided. We once taught that children who die unbaptized go to hell. Or at best, Limbo. We once taught that if you sin after baptism, you go to hell.

Anyway, why am I talking about this rather arcane church controversy?

Because our reading from the Acts of the Apostles gives us an example of what you might call Open Baptism. And, because in three weeks, we will have three baptisms (which is pretty exciting).

Let's look at what happened between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, then let's look at baptism itself.

In our reading, Philip is transported by the Spirit to a road where he sees a man - an Ethiopian who is a high court official - reading out loud to himself in his chariot. People read out loud more often than not in those days, so this isn't unusual. Anyway, he's reading Isaiah, so Philip can assume the eunuch is at least a friend of Jewish religion, perhaps a faithful follower.

Therefore, Philip approaches the eunuch and asks if he understands what he's reading. The Ethiopian says, "no," so Philip explains it all - not just the Isaiah part, however, but what it means in the context of Jesus Christ.

As they ride along, the eunuch says, "Look, there's water. What's to prevent me from being baptized right now?"

What indeed?

Philip can't think of a good reason not to do it, so they go down to the water and baptize the man.

You can say that the man already knew a thing or two about God, and that's probably true. You can also say that Philip gave him some education about Christ, so in a sense, there was some training. But what can you really teach in the course of a wagon ride? And was it enough?

And that's the question: what is enough to know in order to be baptized? Is knowledge the most important thing?

To explore that, let's remind ourselves what baptism is. It's a sacrament, and as we all know, a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. So, it's a sign of grace. And what is grace? There is a definition in your catechism, but I'm going to give you a stripped down, simplified definition that you can take with you. Grace is God acting in your life, and you being aware of it. Awareness, then, is crucial.

You are aware of God acting in your life - in the case of Baptism, you are aware of God calling you closer, calling you to be part of the Kingdom of God. And the sign of that is the baptism itself - the water, the oil, the words.

When I teach baptism classes or Inquirers classes, I ask people to think of a sacrament as a kiss. I ask couples if they remember their first kiss - and of course, there is only one right answer. Now think about it: a kiss is just two pairs of lips touching each other. Nothing magic in it really. But that first kiss changes everything. Up to the point that a couple kisses, they are just two people, aware of feelings stirring somewhere down there, but still just two people. As the

# St. James' E-pistle

## May 8, 2015

feelings grow, they're drawn closer - but until that kiss, they are only a potential couple. AFTER it, they are a couple - and they will forever be either a couple or an ex-couple.

The kiss does not make the relationship, but it is a sign of what has been going on, and a start of a new thing. It is a doorway that the couple walk through together.

That's baptism - a doorway. Wanting to go through that doorway is the most important part of the whole process. Not understanding. Being drawn toward it - and responding - that's what counts.

Now, people always ask why we baptize infants, if it's all about desire. Think back to the kiss. There's another type of first kiss that is just as powerful. If you ever had a child, remember what it was like to hold that baby for the first time. What did you do right away? Kiss that baby. Why? I don't know, we just do. And it forever binds us. There is a desire to know and love that child forever. The child has no idea what that kiss means - but they know it is important to their very being.

If you had to really understand marriage or parenthood before you started, would you ever do it? More likely, you'd give up. Most of us even after years don't really understand what we're doing. We just know that we love it and that it's important.

One of my favorite movies, "A Knight's Tale" has a scene in which a peasant who has been impersonating a knight, and has fallen in love with a noble woman, is eventually busted. He says to her, "Now that you know who I am, what will you do?" She says, "Ah, to know you will take a lifetime, a lifetime that I am willing to give."

So understanding baptism, knowing all about it, is not nearly as important as desiring it. Getting baptized isn't nearly as important as living it - using it as a starting point to go deeper in our relationship with God.

Notice that Philip never mentioned baptism to the Ethiopian eunuch - he was too busy talking about Jesus. But the eunuch recognized the water as a starting point, the doorway to enter into a longer, lifelong journey. And he wanted it.

So, if open baptism is simply walking to the doorway of the journey of faith with anyone who wants to go through - I'll walk with them. I'll baptize anyone who really wants it. Because in the end, that door, like baptism itself, is always open. Amen.

# THE WORLD IS FULL OF POETRY

*Mozart*

*Donaudy*

*Brunner*

*Chilcott*

*Papoulis*

*Dilworth*

## Cappella Festiva Treble Choir

*Christine Howlett, artistic director*

*Saturday May 9, 2015, 4:00pm*

*Christ Episcopal Church*

*20 Carroll Street, Poughkeepsie, NY*

Free & open to the public

[cappellafestiva.org](http://cappellafestiva.org) ~ 845-853-7765

Join the

# Rail Trail Pilgrimage

**May 30-31**

This is St. James' Church's  
THIRD Pilgrimage!

**Everyone Welcome!**

**Registration Deadline is May 15**

NOTE: There is a \$50 registration fee  
with a \$15 nonrefundable deposit



The **Rail Trail Pilgrimage** is a two-day spiritual walk from the Hopewell Junction Trailhead of the Dutchess Rail Trail to Tony Williams Park in the Town of Lloyd. We spend the night at a local church. The pilgrimage follows nearly 20 miles of rail trail including the Walkway Over the Hudson. We make periodic stops for scripture and prayer.



For more information/brochure, call  
**St. James' Episcopal Church, Hyde Park**  
229-2820 or go to [www.stjameshydepark.org](http://www.stjameshydepark.org)

