

# St. James' E-pistle

## June 12, 2015

### Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

As you know, this Sunday is Recognition Sunday. It's the day when we recognize the Sunday School Students for coming and learning about God's love. It's the day when we recognize the acolytes and their service to the church. And it's the day when we recognize and thank the teachers for their hard work to bring the gospel even when it is hard and sometimes dispiriting.

There are many others we can recognize for their service to the church - our wonderful choir, our ushers, the lectors and lay readers, altar guild.... Any number of people who give of themselves week after week.

But Recognition Sunday is generally about our youth and the adults who work with them. In that context, there is one other group of people which we won't officially recognize on Sunday, BUT who deserve some attention. I am talking, of course, about the parents.

It's hard to be a parent of Sunday School students and acolytes. A recent study came out showing that people who consider themselves faithful church-goers actually attend much less often than their parents and grandparents. Why? Most because they're busy. The claims on our attention from all sorts of activities is strong. Sports, work, weekend trips, organizations...

If you have a kid, multiply the claims on your time by four (per kid). It's amazing how often parents bring their kids to church dressed in their sports or scout uniform, either heading out to a game or coming back from a campout. It's easy to tut tut and complain about how things are different from the days when we were young, and church was a priority.

But I think it's kind of heroic to bring the kids despite all the other demands on their time. I can almost guarantee you that there's lots of griping and complaining from the kids because they don't want to miss a second of the event they're involved in. So the parent who nevertheless says, "Church is important, too," is doing a hard work, even counter cultural. They are impressing upon their children that what happens here does make a difference in their lives - not just now but forever.

Parents who drag their kids to church (or cajole, convince, urge...) are showing their children how vital Jesus is to their lives. It's not the words they use so much as the fact that they still come. Just as parents have to see that their charges do their chores, get exercise, eat with the family, finish their homework and brush their teeth - because they are important for life now and life in the future - so do they need to see to their children's spiritual growth.

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It is not easy, but it's important, and I applaud all the parents who bring their families week after week. Even if you can't manage it every week, however, I applaud you for getting them here as often as possible. Ours is a complicated, exasperating but also exhilarating world, and by giving your young ones a spiritual anchor and foundation, you are opening their minds and souls to a whole new world - one in which God is not just a word but Love itself.

So thank you, parents. I know how hard it is, what you do, and I appreciate it.

In Christ,

Chuck+

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### **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."

- 14 St. Peter's Church, Port Chester
- 15 St. Andrew's Church, Yonkers
- 16 The Church of the Resurrection, Hopewell Junction
- 17 St. Paul's Church, Poughkeepsie
- 18 Christ Church, Warwick
- 19 St. Mark's Church, Fort Montgomery
- 20 The Congregational Support Plan Committee

### **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.

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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*

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## **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.

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**Nursery School News:** Today, **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.

**Nursery School Board Member Sought:** The St. James' Nursery School Board needs a new member from within the parish. Tanya Hall has served faithfully and skillfully in this capacity for the past few years, but has decided it's time to step down. You do not have to have a child in the Nursery School (or even in that age range) to become a member. Just see me. The board's job is to organize fundraisers and work on marketing/publicity for the school. Discussion at the board meetings centers on what helps the school better serve its students.

**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.

**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.

**Men's Breakfast:** **June 20**, 8:00 AM, Cranberry's! If you're 18 or over, be there! If you're a father - especially if you're a NEW father (Justin Bohlmann, Daniel Raugalis, and Brian Zocchi), start your Father's Day weekend off the right way - with a celebratory cup o' joe with the guys.

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**Invitation to a Parish Celebration:** Brian Rance and Melinda Harris cordially invite you to attend a second annual parish celebration of fellowship 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, 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, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

*Also, please offer thanksgiving for the birth of Emerson Rose Bohlmann to Justin and Danielle Bohlmann on June 10, 2015.*

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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 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):	Mary Grosskopf, Samantha O'Mara and Carol Bender
Birthdays (next week):	Anna Marie Pitcher
Acolytes:	June 14: Nancy Montero, Kirstin Horn and Deirdre Mae Micker June 21: Russell Urban-Mead, John Beyer and Anna Clark
Altar Guild:	June 14: Team Number II June 21: Team Number III
8 a.m. Readers:	June 14: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris June 21: Angela Henry and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	June 14: Wilma Tully/Nancy Montero June 21: Patty Caswell/Andy Hall
Ushers:	June 14: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher June 21: Andrew and Tonya Hall
Pledge Clerks:	June 14: Janet Bright and Joanne Lown June 21: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	June 14: Jodi, Taylor and Travyn Triola, Wilma Tully and Russell, Wendy, Katherine and Charlie Urban-Mead June 21: Liz Van Wagner and Art Veach
Coffee Hour Hosts:	June 14: Jodi Triola, Ross & Connie Eames and Pat Rooney June 21: Deirdre Mae Micker and Anna Marie Pitcher

### This Week's Lectionary

1 Samuel 15:34-16:13

Psalm 20

2 Corinthians 5:6-10,11-13,14-17

Mark 4:26-34

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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 Second Sunday after Pentecost (June 7, 2015)

#### "Rejecting Heaven"

Last night we had a youth group cookout which was really fun. We had hamburgers, hot dogs, s'mores made with chili chocolate.... We sat around the fire and saw who could flip over the hammock. The usual. But we also discussed some weighty topics. One thing we discussed was the nature of heaven.

Is like "Make Your Own Heaven" - one of the kids said that had been taught that it's a place where you can do and have whatever you want. Or is heaven clouds & harps? Or nothingness? Or someplace where you can work your way to perfection? Hard to know. St. Paul in today's epistle just says that heaven is a house compared to our earthly tents, and that we will be brought into God's presence.

It's all pretty vague.

Despite vagueness, who would ever reject heaven? Would you? The famous writer CS Lewis thought quite a few people might. In his book *The Great Divorce* he wrote that people in hell could choose heaven any time they wanted, but it wasn't what they wanted. In *The Last Battle* he wrote about people who, even when given the best of everything, rejected it because it was given to them, they did not trust the gift.

But even in regular life, we hear people say things like, "If heaven is like XX, then I don't want to go there..."

Honestly, I don't know about heaven, but I do know that human nature has shown repeatedly that we choose the bad over the good with great regularity. (& not like that old Billy Joel song "Only the Good Die Young" with the line, "I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints - the sinners are much more fun.") I mean, we regularly choose that which will make us unhappy even as that which will give us satisfaction, joy, and peace are right in front of us.

Or maybe we just don't recognize the better when we see it. Certainly, that's the case in two of our scripture readings.

In the Old Testament reading from 1 Samuel, we have a transition from a tribal "judge" system that had loosely held Israel together for centuries to a monarchy. The reason the author gives for the people wanting a king is pretty weak - everybody else had one. Now, in order to understand what the Israelites wanted, it's important to understand the judge system.

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Israel was made up of 12 tribes based on the 12 sons of Jacob. After their return for Egypt into the promised land, each tribe found its own region within the land and settled there. Each had its own chieftain or leader, and they acted fairly independently for the most part. But whenever there was a time of oppression brought on by some invading and occupying force - such as the Edomites, the Midianites, Ammonites or Philistines - some ad hoc leader emerged from the tribes to rally the entire nation to war. Once they overthrew the oppressors, the judge was theoretically supposed to set aside his or her (there were female judges) military role and return to their previous occupation. They did, however, sometimes act as judges, too, but mostly it was a temporary military role.

So, why did Israel want to get rid of this system? It may be because they noticed that all the oppressors had kings. And with kings, they had a strong, powerful presence. Maybe with kings, they could quit being defensive and do a little oppressing themselves. You know, a good defense is a strong offense...

The choice to give up the judge system for a monarchy did not please God. God told Samuel that the people weren't just rejecting the system, they were rejecting God, they were rejecting the way of life God had chosen - to live peacefully and non-aggressively, generally speaking. Samuel warned them that under monarchy, they would not have the freedom God wanted for them, but nevertheless, they wanted to be powerful. Historically speaking, it didn't work out too well for them.

Or look at the gospel today for another example of rejecting the good right in front of them. Jesus had been preaching for a while, and despite the fact that he was healing the sick and raising the dead, some folks thought he was crazy. Why? I don't know - maybe because he didn't charge a fee, and they couldn't wrap their heads around it... It's likely, however, that what Jesus preached sounded crazy. God just loving us for no good reason sounded crazy. Where was the pride? Where was the honor? Where was the distinction between the deserving and the unworthy!

The interesting thing about today's gospel is that even Jesus' own family didn't recognize him for what he was. They could not see God speaking through him. They could not see God in him, so they came to gather him up and take him home where he couldn't cause any more trouble. This included Mary his mother, and James his brother, after whom this church is named. Jesus recognized their intentions and rejected them. He said, "who are my mother and brothers and sisters? Those who do the will of God." The good news is that this leaves room for everyone in the Kingdom of God.

The bad news, the part of this that made people think Jesus was crazy, the part they rejected - was that it left room for everyone in the Kingdom of God.

Our conversation last night with the youth group wandered into the topic of Prophets as well. They were sort of like the spiritual successors of the judges. They popped up when the nation needed to be warned that the path it was taking would lead to disaster. Few people paid

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attention to them, and quite often, the prophets were arrested or murdered to shut them up. As you can guess, things did not work out too well when the nation ignored the prophets.

This leads us back to our original question. WHY do we reject that which leads us away from joy and peace and satisfaction and go for that which generally leads to grief? It may be the same reason so many reject heaven. In the end, heaven may simply be to be in the presence of God - and if that means I don't get to have it the way I envisioned it, or there are people I don't like there, then no thanks. I'll just make my own heaven. I don't hold high hopes for that method.

Rather, embracing what is truly good means keeping our focus on God. We may not be strong or powerful or "number one" in a worldly sense, but who really wants that anyway?

What we want is heaven. Amen.

# Hyde Park Wellness Fair

to support

## The Hyde Park Community Garden

St. James' Episcopal Church

Saturday, June 13, 2015

10 am - 4 pm

Outdoor Event

Rain or Shine

6'x6' vendor space \$20

(vendor brings own tent, table, and chairs)

To register call 229-2820

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# SUMMER YOUTH CONFERENCE



Open to youth entering grades six through first year of college. For more information, email us at: [NYYouthConference@yahoo.com](mailto:NYYouthConference@yahoo.com)

Summer Youth Conference is a spiritual retreat for teens in a summer camp setting. We come together for a week to worship, play, and sing. Our days consist of a theme-related morning program with discussion groups, daily services, swimming, boating, and sports.

Our evenings are full of activities like a dance, talent show, and campfire. At the end, we return home a little different than when we arrived; stronger for the love and friendship we've added to our lives. Please join us for the week, and make friendships that can last a lifetime!



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