

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: June 25, 2017

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Bible Verse

*For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, and great is your love toward all who call upon you.
Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications.*

- Psalm 86:5-6

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Last weekend I returned from a week-long residency at a preaching course. The residency was at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria (the second oldest Episcopal Seminary). I wondered if I should go to a course on preaching given that I have been at this for a while, but it seemed to me that old dogs can learn new tricks, and you should never be so proud as to think you can't learn.

Besides, I wanted to be surrounded by younger priests who were newer in ministry, who were closer to seminary and carried that excitement. It's infectious. In the end, I did get that. Of all the priests there, I was the longest ordained. Still, the camaraderie and energy were secondary to the learning. There was so much to take in (and believe me, I was taking notes!) that it would be impossible to implement every clever idea all at once.

We had lectures on preaching in series, on what it means to preach politically without being partisan, on gearing preaching toward the mission of the church (rather than sermons being disconnected from each other), and on using media and images in preaching. We also had workshops on how to be fully present when preaching. This involved a lot of breathing and movement exercises not all that different from the sort that actors do.

But perhaps the most important part of it at all was the deep consideration of why we preach in the first place. Because without purpose, preaching is stale, uninterested, and counterproductive. So, why preach? Because there is much we need to know as Christians. Because the Gospel of Jesus needs to be proclaimed. Because the ministers of the church - that's you - need to be encouraged, supported, and admonished in your ministries.

One immediate result of the course is that I will be doing a preaching series. Actually, I'm in the middle of it. Last Sunday, my sermon (see below) was called, *Discipleship Among the Wolves*. It is the first of a five-part series on Discipleship. Next week's sermon is *Discipleship of Confrontation*. These will be followed by *Discipleship of Sacrifice*, *Discipleship of Presence*, and *Discipleship And Power*. While I am not deviating from the lectionary this time around, I may at some point have a series that doesn't use the lectionary at all.

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What I would like you to take from this is that I am taking the task of preaching very seriously, as I take my faith seriously and my calling here as priest. I hope you, too, take *you* call seriously because it is serious business.

Not that we don't have fun together - as we should! But if what we're doing here weren't worth taking seriously, would it even be worth doing?

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Did you know?

...what services are in the BCP? Sure, you know Rite I and Rite II Holy Communion, but what else is in that red book? Well, of course there are weddings and funerals. What else? Baptism and Confirmation, naturally. But now it becomes a bit more difficult for some of us to name the types of worship you'll find. Here are a few things: Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer (or Evensong if it's set to music), Compline, Noonday Prayer are all parts of the Daily Office which you can be part of. We have Morning Prayer every Wednesday at 10:00 in the church. Then there are less common forms of worship. There's Confession (or Reconciliation) - not as part of the Sunday Eucharist but as its own service. Same with Unction. There's Unction which comes with a service of Ministration to the Sick. There's Ministration at the Time of Death. There are private daily devotions (for those times when two or three can't be gathered together). And then, there are the seasonal liturgies (Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil....).

There are some things you won't find in the Prayer Book. For example, you won't find The Stations of the Cross. That's in *The Book of Occasional Services*. But there is a lot in the Prayer Book - a lot of ways to be with God. And that's all to the good.

Announcements

Wellness Fair

Come to the Wellness Fair - sponsored by the St. James' Community Garden - **this Saturday** at the Hyde Park Farmers Market. It starts at 9:00 AM.

Recognition Sunday

On **Sunday, June 25**, we recognize our Sunday School students and teachers as well as our Acolytes. Please be sure to be in church that day as we celebrate their achievements and their service to God.

Summer Adult Forum

The Summer Adult Forum will begin on **Sunday, July 9 - 9:15 AM** in the Wilkes Room. They will run every Sunday through August 20. This series of quickie classes will focus on the Sacraments. What are they? Why do we have them? What does each one mean? Who can take part in them? There will be seven sessions since there are seven sacraments. You can attend one, two or all of these sessions - each session works independently of the others. The first class is: **Baptism.**

Episcopalians In The Park

Come to an Episcopalian Celebration! The Church of the Resurrection in Hopewell Junction is teaming up with St. Luke's and St. Andrew's in Beacon on **Saturday, July 29** for "Episcopalians In The Park." It is a way for Episcopalians all over the area to get to know each other better, and to have some fun and (of course) food! This day where we celebrate being Episcopalians takes place on the large grounds of St. Luke's in Beacon from **2:00 PM to 7:00 PM**. If you are a musician, they're looking for folks from all over to get together and make beautiful music.

As the organizers say, "This is really to get to know each other and have a wonderful day being Episcopalians. If we really know each other, maybe we can also join in on some service projects together, or help each other out in other ways. You never know where the Spirit might lead us - together."

Please let Fr. Chuck know if you are interested - we'll have a sign up sheet going around over the next several Sundays so we can RSVP.

So save the date! July 29. And join us!

Call to Fight Human Trafficking

The Episcopal Public Policy Network is asking all Episcopalians to join the fight against modern-day slavery today by asking your state representatives in the Senate and Assembly to support groundbreaking and crucial legislation on human trafficking. The New York Senate and Assembly have introduced legislation (S.5955/A.06834) to lessen the prevalence of human trafficking in hotels and put systems in place to identify and protect victims. This legislation would require hotels to train their employees to identify potential trafficking situations and report suspected cases. It would also bring awareness to the public and possible victims by requiring hotels to post a notice in the lobby about what human trafficking is and how to obtain help by calling the National Human Trafficking Hotline (888-373-7888). Tell your state representatives to vote YES on S 5955/A 06834!

June 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
18 Fathers Day	19 Office Closed	20 7 PM Vestry	21 10 AM Morning	22 11 AM Bible Study	23	24 Wellness Fair
25 Recognition Sunday	26 Office Closed	27	28 10 AM Morning	29 11 AM Bible Study	30	
Sundays: Holy Eucharist Rite I is at 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II (with music) is at 10:00 AM. Sunday School and nursery are available at 10:00 AM.						

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

<https://www.diocesen.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

June

- 25 Church of St. Luke in the Fields, Manhattan
- 26 St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, Stony Point
- 27 St. Luke's Church, Beacon
- 28 St. Philip's Nursery School, Garrison
- 29 St. Peter's Church, Port Chester
- 30 The Canon to the Ordinary

July

- 1 Diocesan Reparations Committee

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Dee, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Cath Holywell (priest in the Church of England and Indaba partner who worshiped with St. James' - undergoing heart surgery), Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), John Ross, Richard Secor, Sharon Secor (recovering from heart surgery), James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Patricia (sister of Barbara Slegel), Carl Smith, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, 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 all right.

Birthdays
(this past week): Chris Mackenzie, David Triola and Suzanne Schroeder

Birthdays
(this coming week): Lucille Ogden

Acolytes:
June 25: Team 3
July 2: Team 1

Altar Guild:
June 25: Team I
July 2: Team II

8 a.m. Readers:
June 25: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth
July 2: Lucille Ogden and Jim Smyth

10 a.m. Readers:
June 25: Patty Caswell/Maggie McNamara
July 2: Wendy Urban-Mead and Deirdre Mae Micker

Ushers:
June 25: Donna and John Beyer
July 2: Dean Caswell, Audrey Horne

Pledge Clerks:
June 25: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
July 2: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass

Parish Cycle of Prayer: June 25: Rohit, Saira, Sanjana and Jeet Shahani, Carl Smith
July 2: Barbara, Tim, Craig and Dalton Slegel, Jim and Jan Smyth
Coffee Hour Hosts: June 25: Brian Rance, Saira Shahani
July 2: No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 21:8-21
Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17
Romans 6:1b-11
Matthew 10:24-39

This Week's Hymns

Processional: Hymn 675 - Take Up Thy Cross, the Savior Said
Sequence: Hymn 660 - O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee
Offertory: Hymn 707 - Take My Life and Let It Be
Communion: "O For a Closer Walk With God"
Recessional: Hymn 161 (LEVAS) - "Go Preach My Gospel, Saith the Lord"

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Second Sunday after Pentecost (June 18, 2017)

Discipleship Among the Wolves

I am so glad to be back home after two long weeks away. It's no exaggeration to say I missed you and, while I was away, really began to appreciate all over again how amazing you are.

Seriously. You may not notice it sitting in the pews week after week, but one of the things I love about this place is that - like St. Paul says - God's love has been poured into your hearts. And it shows in so many ways.

Think of all the ways you share God's love. The Garden, Reading Adventures, the Altar Guild, you're Lectors & Lay Readers, you're in the Choir, you're Sunday School Teachers, you're Sunday School students, you work the Food Pantry, you visit the sick and lonely, you make fellowship possible here, you build things for others, you Advocate for Justice... all these things are expressions of your love and they show me how amazing you are.

It's your amazingness that gives me hope and joy and energy...

And ... it gives me courage to give you an assignment.

Seriously. I have an assignment for you, so take out a pen or pencil and some paper (your bulletin's fine) - or your phone - and write down the following assignment. I'll wait.

Ready? Here goes.

"Go to the lost sheep. As you go, proclaim the good news that 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons."

Now, I realize you might have issues with the whole raising the dead and casting out demons thing, but nobody said you had to do *everything*. Only what God's calling you to as one of the disciples.

Before you tell me that you're not a disciple, that it wasn't *you* that Jesus sent out 2 by 2, let me ask you to reconsider. Because you ARE one of Christ's disciples. Each one of you. Each one of *us*. You may not be sent to do *everything* the apostles did, but you and I *are* sent by him.

By the way, did you finish writing down those instructions? Just in case you didn't get it, I'll repeat them. "Go to the lost sheep. As you go, proclaim the good news that 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out the demons."

Or maybe for you it's: Proclaim the good news: feed the hungry, teach kids to read, sing God's praises, visit the sick and lonely, read scripture to the congregation, bring justice and mercy everywhere you go.

Which is to say that, whatever you're doing, make sure it is a proclamation of the good news of Christ. That's discipleship.

And yes, it's *terrifying*. Heck, I get scared just standing up here talking to you every week, always worried I'm not making any sense.

But it's worse for you.... You're going out into a world that increasingly doesn't trust the church - doesn't trust religion in general - or *any* institution for that matter. You're going out into a world increasingly hostile to what you proclaim. Like Jesus said, you're being sent out like sheep among wolves.

But here's the thing. Those wolves - **THEY NEED YOU**. They're HUNGRY for exactly the words of love and grace and mercy that you have. They're worried, and frightened, and frustrated. They're tired of being angry and divided all the time. They're tired of not being accepted. They're tired of being abused - or of abusing. They want life and want it more abundantly. They need what you offer. The harvest is plentiful.

So yes, being a disciple is scary ...and you might be thinking, "I can't do that! I don't know *how* to proclaim. I don't have the tools. Those wolves'll eat me alive. Let Chuck do it - he's the professional."

But HERES THE OTHER THING. If you're being called to discipleship, then it's YOU Jesus is calling. I can't answer for you. If you're being sent, it's YOU Jesus is sending. I can't go for

you. And I don't have to. You're already amazing. You have the tools you need. And if you don't, I'm here to help you gain them.

I'm here for you because Jesus didn't send the disciples out by themselves. He sent them out together - to support each other, to teach each other, to remind each other why they were doing this. We are never alone - and I am always there for you.

You want training? Come to bible study. Or come to the between-service forums. There's a brand new series starting on what it means to be a sacramental people. First class is baptism - you know, where we're given authority to go out into the world and proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ.

When Jesus sent his disciples out like sheep among wolves, he *also* said to be wise as serpents. Get the training. Be prepared so you don't get eaten. Maybe dress up like a wolf so you fit in. If that helps you proclaim Christ to wolves, so be it. Remember, they long for his love, mercy, forgiveness, and grace. The harvest is plentiful.

And yes, the laborers are few. They've always been few because discipleship is hard and frightening. Fortunately, I know some amazing people who have what it takes to be those laborers, who are smart and gracious and giving and who have the love of God poured into their hearts. The laborers are few, but fortunately for us, the few includes you.

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