

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

I would like to have a serious conversation with you about attendance.

I had to report to the Vestry this week that attendance this Spring has been the lowest it has been in my nearly 19 years at St. James'. This drop in attendance was almost entirely at the 10:00 AM service. In fact, the 8:00 AM service has seen some mild growth (though not due to 10:00 AM worshipers moving to 8:00 AM).

Let me throw a couple of numbers at you and then ask for your help in understanding:

Here is average attendance at the 10:00 AM service over the same four-week period (starting on Memorial Day weekend) for the past five years:

2012 - 73; 2013 - 55; 2014 - 44; 2015 - 67; 2016 - 41.

Even the worst year prior to this had an average attendance of 14 higher than this year. In fact, three of the past four Sundays saw 10:00 AM attendance in the 30s.

Why is this important? Does it really matter if we come to church or come regularly?

To answer that, we have to remember that our faith is all about relationship. When young couples come to be married, one of the first things we talk about is maintaining the relationship over the years, when it's hard, when it's boring, when you just get too busy. It takes work and intention. You have to force yourself to have meals together sometimes. You have to work to remember date night (which is crucial!). You have to be together if you are in a relationship.

The same is true for Church. We are not designed to be a club or a sports team that you fit in whenever it's convenient. We are by design a family in the strictest sense of the word. We do not always get along, we get busy, but we hold ourselves together by our common bond of love through our common parent - God.

And like any family, we are stronger and more complete when we do come together. The more often, the better. We come together to be in the presence - to bask in the presence - of our God who dotes on us. We share a family meal together. We tell our family story and ponder it. But without regularity, things fall apart. That's just the way humans are.

Given the importance of togetherness, what do you think is happening? What has led to such a dramatic drop off of our family gathering?

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

I shared this sobering realization with the Vestry, and they suggested a survey to find out what's going on. A more formal survey may be appropriate in time, but for now let me ask you to simply give your opinion. Especially if you have not been here in a while or you find yourself coming less often.

It may be a great time for all of us to pause and reflect: what does the church need to change (music, preaching, coffee)? What is getting between me and time with my family of God?

Whatever the stumbling blocks, it's been my experience that a family that chooses to face them head on often finds they can use those very stumbling blocks as steps to a newer, better, stronger bond. And so I ask to hear from you with hope and faith. Let take that step up together.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

Wanted: Treasurer

Our current Treasurer, Jim Smyth has let the Vestry know he will need to step down from that position in the near future. He is kindly staying on until we can find a replacement, but he has also let us know that it won't last forever.

We need a new treasurer!

Are you the person for the job? Here is a job description taken from our By-laws and informed by the diocesan and national church canons. Take a look. If you might be interested but have questions, please feel free to contact one of our wardens. Just asking will not commit you to anything, but it might help you make an informed decision.

Thanks! We appreciate everyone's help in making St. James' a place of vibrant worship, gracious outreach to those in need, and fiscal responsibility.

Treasurer Duties:

"The treasurer shall:

1. Keep full and accurate accounts of all funds and moneys.
2. Keep records of all disbursements in a computer at the Parish House that shall be the property of the vestry.
3. Collect or receive all moneys payable to the church corporation and receipt in its name for all subscriptions, gifts, legacies and other payments to the corporation.
4. Be adequately bonded, as provided in Title I, Canon 7. All funds and moneys shall be subject to the order and direction of the vestry and shall be kept by the treasurer in a manner to be identified and preserved as the property of St James' Church at Hyde Park, New York.
5. At all times comply with the provisions of Title I, Canon 7 with respect to the care of funds and the keeping of the treasurer and such other person or persons as shall be designated by the vestry.
6. Make written reports for the meetings of the vestry as requested by the vestry.
7. Keep the corporation's buildings and contents insured against fire and other customary hazards and shall take out public liability insurance on the corporation's premises and on its mother vehicles, if any, and shall secure and maintain such other kinds of insurance as from time to time may be reasonably required, all pursuant to the direction of, and in amounts fixed by the vestry.

In case of the absence or disability of the treasurer, the presiding officer may appoint a treasurer pro tem.

The fiscal year shall begin January 1. All accounts of the parish shall be audited annually by an independent certified public accountant.

NOTE: If you would like a copy of Title I, Canon 7 of the Episcopal Church's Constitution and Canons, we have copies on file in the office, and are happy to get you one.

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

The News of the Church

Field Trip Rhinebeck Jewish Center: St. James' Bible Study group invites you to join them on a "Field Trip" to the Rhinebeck Jewish Center which was recently featured in the Northern Dutchess News. We will visit with Rabbi Hecht, view their new windows, and in general enjoy the company of fellow children of God from a different tradition. The date for this trip is Thursday, July 21, leaving St. James' parking lot at 10:30 AM. Please let Fr. Chuck know if you would like to join us!

St. James' VBS needs you!

If you are interested in helping out with a weekend VBS program this summer, please contact Valerie Gaulin at vgaulin51@gmail.com.

Depending on how many volunteers we get, we'll plan a Friday night, Saturday and Sunday morning VBS program sometime over the summer, where the kids can come and learn about God and Jesus in a fun interactive way!

If you are interested in helping, please send me an email letting me know what weeks you can or cannot do and how you might be able to help

Remember Your Pledge this Summer: Each summer we send out a reminder to keep the church in your sights during those long hot days. This is true not only for attendance and prayers but for pledging. Thanks!

Parish Picnic: It's been a long time since we've had a good old fashioned Parish Picnic, but one is in the works now! Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 28. More details to come, but start practicing your grilling!

Join the Churchyard Committee! Our churchyard committee wants you. The committee oversees one of the most historic graveyards in the region, and is responsible for making sure it is kept up. It handles the sale and digging of graves as well. If you value our churchyard and want it to continue to be a source of comfort whose loved ones rest here as well as historical interest to those who visit, please join our committee. If you're interested, you can contact Carol Vinall at vinehall3@aol.com.

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

Notes from the Garden

May 2015

This month in the garden we had some very wonderful experiences and also a very sad event.

First the wonderful. We finally had the installation of our permanent deer fencing put up on the 16th and 17th. This fence is 9' high which hopefully will deter our deer friends' access in to the garden. In addition, we had Oakwood Fencing sink in the posts 3' and the gardeners and Scouts pushed down the wiring along with the repurposed old deer fencing stopping those pesky and destructive woodchucks once and for all!

Three new raised beds were built in our "Young at Heart" section of the garden.

They measure 4' wide X 20' long and now have assorted vegetables seedlings planted in them. When they are grown, all will be donated to the Hyde Park Food Pantry and Hyde Park Meals on Wheels. Thanks go to Dr. Joe Calabro and Doug Belding for the building of these beds. With help from Troop 80 and parents, many yards of topsoil was transported, and we thank them for that as well.

Our Young Peoples Garden now has 7 straw bales that will now serve as the planting material for assorted vegetables that will be grown in them for donations as well. In addition, three galvanized tubs are there and now have radishes, beets and mesclun growing. The St. James Nursery School generously donated 13 colorful tomato cages to support the plants that the 3 and 4 year old classes started about 2 months ago!

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

May also brought the garden a new bee hive! It is located towards the back of the garden and by all appearances, they seem to be adjusting to their new home just fine.

On the sad note, Allelu Kurten, the woman whom we dedicated this garden to passed away after a short illness on May 21. Allelu always wanted to make this community garden a reality while she was living here in Hyde Park and a faithful parishioner of St. James for almost 50 years.

Her last visit to the garden was two summers ago, where she looked over the assorted plots not only of "her" section "Allelu's Garden", but the surrounding community gardeners who now have a place to go and grow for their own personal consumption. She was always kept up on the happenings of the garden, and I know that she was so pleased in the way it has evolved over the last five seasons. She will always be our inspiration to continue to provide an assortment of organic vegetables and beautiful flowers to our local residents who need a helping hand.

Until next month.... enjoy June.

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

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.diocesenyo.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

June

- 26 St. Ann's Church, Bronx
- Also:
Muslim Holy Day: Laylat al-Qadr (Also, July 2)
- 27 Trinity Church, Garnerville
- 28 Church of St. Martin's and St. Luke's, Manhattan
- 29 St. Paul's Church, Poughkeepsie
- 30 Blanton-Peale Institute and Counseling Center

July

- 1 Diocesan Reparations Committee
- 2 All Companion Parish Relationships Worldwide

Join The Worship Walks: A Holy Hike, a 2-Hour Pilgrimage Whatever you want to call it, On Saturday, July 2, Fr. Chuck will lead the Worship Walk. This week's walk will take place at the Vanderbilt Loop. If you have any questions about this short and simple Trek with the Trinity, please see Fr. Chuck.

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

Worship Walks:

Celebrating God in Creation

Schedule

All walks start at 10:00 am and will take place in either Ulster or northern Dutchess county

Sat, Jun 4 on the Rail Trail
(Michelle Meech)

Thu, Jun 9 (Matthew Wright)

Sat, Jun 18 (Susan Auchincloss)

Thu, Jun 23 TBA

Sat, Jul 2 TBA

Thu, Jul 7 on the Rail Train in Stone Ridge (Alison Quin)

Sat, Jul 16 (Susan Auchincloss)

Thu, Jul 21 on the Rail Trail in Stone Ridge (Alison Quin)

Sat Jul 30 (Matthew Wright)

Thu, Aug 4 at Mohonk Preserve (Jeanne Person)

Sat, Aug 13 (Br Peter Rostron)

Thu, Aug 18 (Susan Auchincloss)

Sat, Aug 27 (Matthew Wright)

Thu, Sep 1 on the Poet's Walk (Michelle Meech)

*Leadership schedule
subject to change*

FOR UP TO DATE
SCHEDULE INFORMATION
INCLUDING LOCATIONS
AND DETAILS OF HIKES
VISIT:

www.stjohnskingston.org

CHOOSE Worship Walks FROM
THE MENU ON THE LEFT



All of creation is evidence of God's unbounded love and is glorious in its very being. By **Celebrating God in Creation**, Worship Walks reminds us that God is the Source of all life and reconnects us to the splendor of all that is holy.

Each Worship Walk is a short 1-2 mile hike lasting approximately 2 hours and is a worship service throughout led by an Episcopal priest. Alternating between *Thursday and Saturday mornings*, **Worship Walks** is an opportunity to reconnect with nature and to connect more deeply with one another, including those from area parishes.

Join us as we celebrate God in creation.

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



welcomes you

Worship Leadership: The Rev. Susan Auchincloss from Trinity, Saugerties; The Rev. Chuck Kramer from St James, Hyde Park; The Rev. Alison Quin from Christ the King, Stone Ridge; The Rev. Jeanne Person from the Episcopal Diocese of New York; Br. Peter Rostron from Holy Cross Monastery, West Park; The Rev. Matthew Wright from St Gregory's, Woodstock. Organizer: The Rev. Michelle Meech, St John's, Kingston

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

Episcopal Election Toolkit Available: It is the official position of the Episcopal Church to encourage all eligible members to vote in every election. We see it not only as part of our civic duty but as part of our collective life of faith. If we are not engaged in the community, then we are withdrawn - which is not the example our Lord showed. To encourage enthusiastic and informed participation in the election process, the Episcopal Church has published an Election "Toolkit" with information such as what representatives are up for election, who your officials are, and what the issues of the day are. It includes the Episcopal Church's official position on several issues, which may be helpful in your deliberations.

The most important thing in the church's eyes, however, is that we all go out and vote! Here's a link to the "Toolkit":

<http://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org/episcopal/EpiscopaliansVote>

Spiritual / educational websites to deepen your faith:

- Acts 8 Movement
- GrowChristians
- Episcopal Cafe (a favorite)
- The Slate Project (not affiliated with Slate magazine)
- Virtual Abbey
- Second Life Church (gives you a virtual church experience if you're into that sort of thing. Fun to look at maybe).
- Inward/Outward (daily meditations sent to your e-mail)

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.

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

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.

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*

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dee, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Charles Pardee (husband of Sally), Clifford Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson (brother of Mary Gabel), John Ross, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Pray for the repose of the soul of Alan Mueser.

*Pray for our high school graduates: Bryana Burkhardt
and Dalton Slegel*

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

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):	Charles L. Pardee IV, Chris Mackenzie, David Triola and Suzanne Schroeder
Birthdays (this coming week):	Lucille Ogden
Acolytes:	June 26: Russell and John Beyer July 3: Bryanna Burkhardt
Altar Guild:	June 26: Team Number I July 3: Team Number I
8 a.m. Readers:	June 26: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth July 3: Lucille Ogden and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	June 26: Donna Beyer and Justin Bohlmann July 3: Patty Caswell and Wendy Urban-Mead
Ushers:	June 26: Donna and John Beyer July 3: Dean Caswell and Austin Horn
Pledge Clerks:	June 26: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell July 3: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	June 26: Georgia Verven; Laura Walsh July 3: Brian, Joanna, Julianna and Matthew Zocchi; Eric and Tammy Zavadil
Coffee Hour Hosts:	June 26: Saira Shahani; Brian Rance July 3: No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

1 Kings 19:15-16,19-21

Psalm 16

Galatians 5:1,13-25

Luke 9:51-62

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

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

Sermon Preached on Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (June 19, 2016)

"Father of All"

If I am a little bleary-eyed, forgive me. Our son went out with friends and did not return until 1:00 AM. Now, he's a college student, so you have to expect these things. And when he's away at college, I have no idea how late he gets home or what he's doing. But when he's here, well, we worry. That's what being a parent is about.

And what a perfect day for it because of course, it's Father's Day. So, did you think about your dad today? If he's alive, did you get him a card or a call? Are you cooking out?

Just like we did last month with Mother's Day, it's good to remember your parents who help you become the smart, charming person you are today. Right?

But you know, the day is also great for Fathers (as it was last month for Mothers) to think about what they're doing as parents. To think about what it means to be a parent. Because to become a parent -- whew -- that's no light thing.

You give up the right to sleep. My mother says she still worries. You have to move slower so your kids can keep up - and then all the sudden you can't keep up. You have to guide them and hope you're not messing it up. You have to let them make mistakes and, yes, put themselves in danger.

I don't know how often I watched my son climb a tree, getting a hundred feet up till the tree just starts to bend - always with my heart in my throat. I don't know how many times we've taken one or the other to doctor for a broken bone, a sprain, a torn this or that...

But you know, then you look at that baby, or that precocious child, or that brilliant and kind young man or woman, and you have this incredible love that makes everything right with the world.

And it was when I became a father that I finally understood why we call God "Father." Mother works, too, because God has no limits, but it's Father's Day, so....

It was the first time I looked at my infant son and understood - wow - if God loves us half as much as I love this kid - this is a God I want to be with.

And I do believe the term "Father" for God - Parent if you will - is well chosen. That's why Jesus refers to God as Father so often - that's the kind of love God has for us. And what kind of father is God?

St. James' E-pistle

June 24, 2016

Well, our lessons speak to fatherhood and God pretty well. Sure, you may not think of Elijah as Father's Day material, but think of this. Elijah is on the run from King Ahab who wants to kill him. Elijah climbs up to the mountain and screams at God: "I do what you want, and this is what I get? Answer me!" Then, there is a horrible wind storm, strong enough to split mountains. But the voice of God is not there. Following that is a raging fire. But the voice of God isn't there. There's an earthquake, but no voice of God. Finally, there is silence - and a still small voice speaks.

As a parent, one of the things I've learned is that yelling and screaming never works. It'll terrify your kids, but it won't get the results you want (unless you like terrified kids). I also learned that being the biggest and best at everything doesn't really mean all that much. Rather, often what a kid needs is a quiet, calm presence. It's in the calm, "Let's consider what just happened here," that lessons are learned and love is grown.

Same is true for God. Sometimes, like any parent, the best lessons are learned in silence or in quiet. All we have to do is listen.

Or how about our Gospel. I know, pigs and demons aren't really what the dads had in mind today. BUT, think of what is going on. Jesus encounters a sick man - whatever the demon was, it's bad. The demons say, "Send us into those pigs over there and not into the abyss." Jesus does so, and the pigs immediately drown themselves.

Now, the swineherds run away when they see this, and they're afraid. But afraid of what? In all the healings that Jesus performs in the gospels, where else are people afraid of him? Annoyed sometimes, sure, but afraid? So, what are they afraid of?

Well, these pigs are their business. They've just lost 5,000 pigs, which is a lot of money. Does it matter to them that they have regained the health of one man when they've lost money?

But to God, the one man is more important than the money. To a parent, you know that if your child is sick, you will give what it takes to heal that child. The love you share is greater than all the money in the world.

And here's where Paul's letter to the Galatians comes in. Now, this letter is not his most cheerful. Frankly, he's angry at the Galatians. But then he says, "You are all children of God...There is no longer Jew or Greek." We are all children of God. We are all loved insanely by God. Conversely, God is father to us all. And if you ever had brothers or sisters - or if you're a parent with more than one child, you know this question will inevitably come up: "Who do you love more?"

Parents, you know the answer: I love you all equally because you're all different but wonderful. Hard enough to imagine with a few kids - God's got 7 billion. But that's just more family to love. Love doesn't diminish when it's given - it grows.

So Happy Father's Day. If you're a dad, remember what it's like to love someone so much. And then remember that that's God, who is the Father of us all. Amen.