

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: July 16, 2017

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Bible Verse

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."

- Matthew 11:25

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I spent a couple of days this week on retreat with the Reparations Committee of the Diocese of New York. We traveled to Auburn, New York, where we visited and held our meetings at the Harriet Tubman Home. I recommend making a pilgrimage there. For those who don't know, Harriet Tubman was born to parents who were enslaved in Maryland. Despite receiving severe abuse at the hands of her enslavers and watching half her siblings sold off while still young, she retained her spirit.

When she freed herself, she was in the clear, having made it all the way to Canada. But she did not like the idea of leaving her family behind. So she came back down south and, over many dangerous trips, brought all of her family to freedom. Though New York was not the safest of places for a runaway, she befriended many white allies including William Seward (future Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln, responsible for the purchase of Alaska from Russia). He offered to give her seven acres of land for a small farm, but in a move not unlike Abraham, she insisted on paying for it.

Then she began a series of daring and dangerous trips to the south to free more than 70 other enslaved people, using the Underground Railroad as her vehicle. In all the trips, not one of her "passengers" was captured or killed. When the Civil War began, she offered her services as a spy, not only gathering information but freeing more enslaved people who joined the Union. She even led several military raids and was accorded military honors at her death.

After the war, Harriet Tubman fought for women's suffrage, for more civil rights for people of color, and for the aged. She ran a small home for the aged, initially for black people who were not accepted in white-run homes for the aged, but she welcomed people of any ethnic background.

The reason we met at Harriet Tubman's home was because the Reparations Committee is tasked with studying the era of slavery in New York and our role in it. Out of this comes the need to see places of history so that we can understand better its effects on us today. There is no understanding the present tapestry without understanding the past threads that went into the weaving. And when the picture seem awry today, you have to trace back through all those threads to find out where things started going wrong.

4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park NY 12538 T 845-229-2820 F 845-229-5293

W www.stjameshydepark.org E stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org

f at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/22692330307>

The good news is, that in doing this, we learn a lot, not only about people of the past but about ourselves. As I've said before, we are not responsible for the actions of people in the past, but we are responsible for understanding how we got to where we are today, and where there is something awry, doing what we can to set it right.

Next year, the Reparations Committee will introduce to the Diocese a Year of Lamentation in which throughout the diocese we seriously look at our past and acknowledge the sins of our forebears, grieving them collectively. That is the first step in a three-year program moving from lamentation through repentance and on toward repair and reconciliation.

I find that this work is more than just work toward racial justice. It is work toward our common goal of being the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth - or as the Church also calls it - becoming the Beloved Community.

As the Diocese approaches this year of Lamentation, I hope you will embrace the opportunity to unravel those threads and see what we, as the Beloved Community, can weave anew.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Did you know?

...what the *Proper Preface* is? The Proper Preface is a prayer said by the celebrant during the Eucharistic Prayer. Its function is to set the tone for the Eucharistic Prayer, to highlight the season or the occasion. It's called "proper" because it varies from season to season or occasion to occasion - rather than being the same all the time. You have to dig around for it in your prayer book. If you look at Eucharistic Prayer A (for example), on page 361, it says, "*Here a Proper Preface is sung or said on all Sundays, and on other occasions as appointed.*"

But where do you find the prayer? And how is it decided which prayer to use? For the first answer, go to page 377. There you'll see *lots* of Proper Prefaces. The first three are "Preface of the Lord's Day." These three are what we use most of the time - during the long season of Pentecost. Turn the page, however, and you'll see prefaces for a wide variety of church seasons or occasions.

Announcements

This Week's Summer Adult Forum:

We got off to a great start for the Summer Adult Forum with an introduction to the Sacraments, starting with Baptism. THIS Sunday, July 16 (from 9:15 to 9:45 AM) in the Wilkes Room, the session will be on Holy Communion.

Men's Breakfast/NO Women's Dinner

CORRECTION: There will not be a Women's meeting this month. The next meeting will be in September. Sorry for the mix up. The parish men will still have their monthly breakfast on Saturday, July 15 at Cranberry's at 8:00 AM. Hope to see you there!

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!

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS: PRAY, FAST and ACT

On May 21st of this year, we participated, through our Prayers of the People, in the Global Day of Prayer to End Famine. More than twenty million of our neighbors are at risk of starvation and many more millions suffer from drought and food shortages around the world. Are you aware that famine is more than lack of food? Famines result from multiple reasons: conflict, drought, poverty and global inaction.

Our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, along with leaders of other faith communities, has expanded this initial call to a monthly call on the 21st day of each month through December, 2018 - the end of the 115th Congress. It is a day for all of us to address hungry and poverty and to encourage Congress not to cut public programs that support our brothers and sisters living in poverty here in our country and around the world.

Why the 21st of the month? Are you aware that on the 21st of the month, ninety percent of our neighbors who receive SNAP (formerly food stamps) have used up their benefits. Saying it another way - the last week of each month finds the most people here in America suffering from hunger.

Last month (June 21st), the emphasis was on Domestic Human Needs with the focus on “advocating for vital nutritional assistance, housing and community-strengthening federal programs funded through the appropriations process.”

On Friday, July 21st, FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS, will focus on programs “that work around the world that aim to alleviate hunger, create economic opportunities, promote health and respond to disasters.”

A copy of this month’s Episcopal Public Policy Network Policy Alert: FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS: July 2017 - Foreign Assistance and Humanitarian Aid can be picked up in the narthex of the church.

Please prayerful consider participating in this day of action. Peace, Deacon Gail

Dear God. You understand the needs of our broken world. Please guide us to share our time, talent and wealth to help end extreme poverty, that we may deeply engage in our church’s mission of global reconciliation. Amen.

(from *Lifting Women’s Voices: Prayers to Change the World*)

The New York Haiti Project

Through the efforts of our Outreach Committee, our parish has entered into a three year partnership with the New York Haiti Project. Key components of this partnership is to build relationships, to support our Haitian neighbors in Matel become self-sustaining by building a grain mill for income and to support the building of a church and school.

The New York Haiti Project is working with the people of Matel, Haiti, a small village on the northern coast of the southern peninsula. The village is about three hours from Port au Prince. And yes, the area was affected by Hurricane Matthew when it blew over the island last October.

Ten acres of land on which the mill, church and school are to be built was donated by a Haitian family. The donation was the beginning of this long-term partnership and the beginning of changing the lives of the people in Matel by supporting them in their efforts to build a school and church.

So much has happened

- * The New York Haiti Project continues to seek partnerships with churches.
- * The New York Haiti Project received a grant from the UTO (United Thank Offering) to support the building of the school/church. They are about to break ground for the school which will consist of a 3-room classroom, housing grades K-2. Hopefully, by the end of the year, St. Luke's Episcopal Church and School will be functioning as a worship and educational center.
- * The grain mill has been completed!!!! The equipment has been delivered! The purchase of the equipment was made possible through a grant from our Diocesan Sustainable Development Goals Fund.

The grain mill enables the community to earn income which will provide revenue to pay teacher salaries and other school expenses. It also means that the local farmers won't have to travel a distance to have their corn and millet ground and that the money spent for the milling services will stay in the community.

Currently ten people representing six parishes in our Diocese are in Haiti to eat, pray and worship with the people of Matel and to bless the grain mill.

Please keep the New York Haiti Project in your prayers; check out the current poster in the narthex of the church.

Peace,
Deacon Gail

July 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9	10 Office Closed	11	12 10 AM Morning Prayer	13 11 AM Bible Study	14	15 8 AM Men's Breakfast
16	17 Office Closed	18 7 PM Vestry	19 10 AM Morning Prayer	20 11 AM Bible Study	21	22
23	24 Office Closed	25	26 10 AM Morning Prayer	27 11 AM Bible Study	28	29 Episcopal Celebration
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.diocesenyn.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

- 16 The Trustees of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine
- 17 The Laymen's Club of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine
- 18 Sunset Nursery School, Montrose
- 19 Trinity Church, Fishkill
- 20 St. Andrew's Church, Brewster, Harlem Valley Ministry
- 21 The Canon for Ministry

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 Konym, Barbara Kubiak (Mother of Donna Tracy-Coffman), 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): Judith H. Douglass, Eden Ciferri, Nancy Montero and Taylor Triola

Birthdays
(this coming week): Rick Schroeder, David R. Bender and William Ardini

Acolytes:
July 16: Team 3
July 23: 0

Altar Guild:
July 16: Team III
July 23: Team III

8 a.m. Readers:
July 16: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch
July 23: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris

10 a.m. Readers:
July 16: Wilma Tully and Bobbie Wells
July 23: Patty Caswell and Maggie McNamara

Ushers:
July 16: Patty Drake, Bobbie Wells
July 23: Donna and John Beyer

Pledge Clerks:
July 16: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
July 23: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell

Parish Cycle of Prayer: July 16: Audrey Stenger, Anna Mae Swenson, Bev Tas
July 23: Cathy, Aric and Andrea Tegtmeier and Geoff, Charlessa,
Jasmine and Jaylen Thatcher

Coffee Hour Hosts: July 16: Summer Schedule--No Coffee Hour
July 23: Summer Schedule--No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 25:19-34
Psalm 119:105-112
Romans 8:1-11
Matthew 13:1-9,18-23

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 577 - God Is Love, and Where True Love Is (#)
Sequence: 291 - We Plow the Fields, and Scatter (#)
Offertory: 589 - Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast (#)
Communion: 505 - O Spirit of Life, O Spirit of God (#)
Recessional: 521 - Put Forth O God Thy Spirit's Might (#)

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (July 9, 2017)

Discipleship of Presence

I wish I could spend about four hours on today's readings because each is so rich. But that doesn't look too promising. So, just take a moment to consider what's happening in those scripture readings today.

There is nothing normal about today's Old Testament reading - well, about the whole Isaac cycle in Genesis. Nowhere else in scripture does the dad send a servant far far away to find a wife for a son who doesn't even know a wife is being sought. This is not normal! But, for now, let's focus on the fact that Rebekah comforts Isaac about the death of his mother simply by being there...

Moving on to the Song of Solomon - you have to admit that this is one of the most romantic passages ever in the Bible. We actually had this read at our wedding. Interestingly, you won't find God mentioned in the entire book. Instead, these lovers just want to be together. They want to be in each other's presence - and that is enough.

Then we move to Romans, Paul - understands that he messes up regularly - but he also understands that you don't always have to get it right, as long as you are nevertheless there for the people who need you.

Now, the gospel is a little different. In it, Jesus does a little complaining - to those who would always find something to complain about. "We played the flute for you and you did not dance. We wailed & you would not mourn." Jesus is talking about never being satisfied (about those who complain about everything he does, no matter what), but what he's really talking about - what all the scriptures today are about - is about presence.

To be precise, the presence of a disciple - and the discipleship of presence. Notice the line: you have hidden these things from the wise and have revealed them to infants. What is more important to a small child than their parents' presence?

When someone wants to celebrate, they don't care if you have a present; they care if you're there. When someone is grieving, they don't care about flowers or the right words - they care about you being there. When someone is lonely, they don't worry that it's been a long time - they care that you're here now. Angry (don't cut & run or listen just to retaliate)

The deal is that one of the greatest gifts we can give, especially to those on need - is our presence. Being there.

But, there is a DISCIPLESHIP of presence. And that includes the word DISCIPLINE. Which is to say, the disciple understands their purpose in being there, in being present.

It is not to be the center of attention. It is not to win. It is not to point out what is wrong here. It is not to network or be witty and charming. Those things might happen, but they aren't the purpose.

The disciple's purpose is to embody the love of Christ.

This is harder than it sounds. In fact, it's likely impossible. Like Paul, we will often do what we don't want or not do or say what we want. But it is our job, so we do it anyway. And if we are going to do even an impossible job, we need the tools.

Tool number 1: Show up. Do not underestimate the difficulty in this! Many find it hard to be there where they are needed. They think someone better should be there. They are too busy. Too scared. Too disinterested. But being there is our calling as disciples - so show up.

Tool number 2: The chief tool in the discipleship of presence is not the mouth. It is the ears. Whether you are listening to someone complain (justified or not), or tell the same story for the 1,000th time, or share grief, or even brag... listening is the disciple's tool. Without it, it's likely any other tools will be pointless. Listen to hear, not retort. Listen because what the other has to say is important to them even if it's meaningless to you.

That doesn't mean you'll convince anyone to follow Christ or see the error of their ways (whatever that might be), or make them suddenly be happy. But without listening, it's a sure bet it won't happen.

Tool number 3: Judicious touch. Touch is tricky but also important. Human beings need touch - but here is where discipline is important because touch without thought can do harm. Holding the hand of a sick person may be exactly what they need. Hugging someone in grief might just be the right medicine. But unwanted touch does nothing to further the gospel. The best you can do is ask - or read the situation and be prepared to back off if you were wrong. Again, it's not for your gratification but to embody the love of Christ.

Tool number 4: Judicious speech. The Discipleship of Presence CAN involve words. Remember a couple of weeks ago we talked about the discipleship of confrontation? That requires words - but Judicious words. That means understanding your purpose and thinking before you speak. Pithy comebacks, witticisms, zingers - they aren't really the tools of being present. Your words are first loving, second understanding, and third honest.

Making it known that you love even those who hate you or whom you don't understand is good. Making known that you seek justice and mercy for all is a central Christian tenet and appropriate to speak.

But, if you find yourself in a heated argument, you might, for example, want to revert to tool number 2 and start listening. If you worry you never get a word in edgewise, that's okay. There are some folks you'll never convince of anything - but the effort is not lost if you remain there as a positive listening presence.

It helps to study to be an effective presence. To know some things that you may never use but that you might. That's why we always encourage bible study - not so you can throw quotes at people. Please don't. But so you can know the depths of your own story. That's why we have classes like today's on the sacraments. Or on death or on slavery or Haiti or so on. The more prepared you are, the less you'll fear being a simple presence. And maybe out of that fount of knowledge, you might find words that need to be said.

But even if you have nothing to say - be there as Christ was there, as the disciples were, as we are here today for each other.

I would rate the discipleship of Presence as one of the simplest yet most difficult things. And yet, if we are to be the Body of Christ in the world, it is probably the single most important thing we can do.

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