

St. James' E-pistle

July 25, 2014

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

I would like to draw your attention to two pleas for donations featured in this week's E-pistle. First there is a plea from Rural and Migrant Ministries for donations of school supplies for children of farm workers. A list is given below - please pray about this and see if God is not calling you to donate so that these children can work toward a better future.

Second, there is a plea from the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem for help in keeping their hospital in Gaza open and supplied with the essentials for treating the wide variety of wounds they are seeing due to the fighting going on in Gaza.

We all know the good work of RMM, and indeed, St. James' has had a long relationship with that ministry, including our hosting of their annual walkathon.

You may know less about the conflict in Gaza and the long-standing Episcopal ministry there. The Diocese operates a hospital in Gaza, the Al Ahli Hospital. It has always operated under conditions American hospitals would consider strained, but they have been a haven of healing. Now, however, it is at more than 100% capacity because of the fighting and is running out of even basics such as suture - let alone fuel to operate their generators. The staff is working round the clock in back-breaking and heart-breaking conditions.

It is easy to take sides in a war-like situation. Don't do it. As Christians, we are on God's side, and God loves and cares for all His children. Human conflicts do not absolve us of our call to love all God's children and to care for them when it is within our capacity to do so. While we grieve for all who are killed or injured, we can freely acknowledge that far fewer people have come to harm in Israel, and that Israel has plentiful and state-of-the-art equipment with which to work. There is no humanitarian crisis there.

Our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Jerusalem are doing God's work on the ground at great personal risk. Perhaps we who sit safely in our beautiful valley can keep them in our prayers and help them in whatever way possible. Information later in the E-pistle will help you help them.

I mentioned prayer. It is crucial in this situation. Reba McIntire recently published a song in response to this crisis. It is titled simply, "Pray for Peace." You might want to give it a listen. Even more poignantly, two middle eastern mothers, one Jewish and one Muslim, have banded together to create a circle of prayer for peace.

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They came to believe that the animosity between Jews and Muslims in Israel and Gaza cannot be overcome with violence nor without prayer. Mutual prayer for and with each other.

Actually, they published two prayers. One of them is more a ritual - a ceremony they ask everyone to perform each Friday (a holy day for both Jews and Muslims). It simply involves lighting a candle. The other prayer is longer, but I include both of them for your reflection and use.

You may say that praying for peace is naive, that it does nothing. But I would argue that not praying sustains conflict. Not lifting up our enemies in loving prayer concedes defeat to "the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God" and "the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God" as the baptismal covenant puts it.

I would argue that without loving prayer, there is no hope of moving forward. And without prayer, there is no witness of God's purpose for the world - especially in this seat of the three major religions born of Abraham. These two mothers, Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum, risk much by standing together and calling the world to pray. We risk very little by praying.

I share it below:

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.

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.

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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

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

July

27 On the feast day for William Reed Huntington, Priest, we pray for an increased ecumenical spirit.

28 Incarnation Center, Ivoryton, Connecticut

29 Metropolitan Japanese Ministry

30 Trinity Conference Center, West Cornwall, Connecticut

31 All couples in the diocese and those who work in ministries for healthy relationships

August

1 The staff of the Episcopal Diocese of New York

2 The Church of the Crucifixion, Manhattan

Still Praying: Though some of the Nigerian girls kidnapped by Boko Haram have escaped, most are still in bondage. Please consider this prayer in your daily devotions.

Prayer for the kidnapped Nigerian girls May 2014

O God, we cry out to you
for the lives and the freedom
of the 276 kidnapped girls in Nigeria.
In their time of danger and fear,
pour out your strong Spirit for them.
Make a way home for them in safety.
Make a way back for them
to the education that will lift them up.
Hold them in the knowledge
that they are not captive slaves,
they are not purchased brides,
but they are your beloved daughters,
and precious in your sight.
Change the hearts and minds of their kidnapers

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and of all who choose violence against women and girls.
Cast down the mighty from their seat,
and lift up the humble and meek,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The News of the Church

DEADLINE for Fall Rail Trail Pilgrimage Registration: The **deadline of August 10** is approaching to register for the Rail Trail Pilgrimage (September 13-14). We start in Hopewell Junction and end at in the Town of Lloyd, spending the night at St. Andrew's Church in Poughkeepsie. Last Spring it was a spiritual powerhouse. There is a non-refundable \$15 deposit required to hold your spot (refundable only if we have to cancel). Because of the difficulty in finding supply clergy, this deadline cannot be changed.

You're invited to a
"Rail Trail Pilgrimage."

Ever Want to go on a
Pilgrimage and
think.....

It's too expensive...
It's too much time...
It's too far away...
I can't
I can't
I can't.....



Yes you can!

On **September 13-14**, we take to the Dutchess and Hudson Valley Rail Trails, across the Walkway Over the Hudson in a spiritual walking pilgrimage.

Registration Deadline: August 10

For more information/brochure, call 229-2820 or go to www.stjameshydepark.org

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Rural and Migrant Ministries Plea: School Kits Needed: Each year when children leave our summer programs, we provide them (and often siblings) with basic school supply kits. This outreach effort is appreciated by the children and youth and even more by their parents as they prepare for a new school year.

School supply sales will soon begin...since these are not needed until mid-August, we urge you to watch for the sales. Kits should include:

SCHOOL KITS for ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

- * 4 composition notebooks (NO spiral notebooks)
- * 4 sturdy 2 pocket folders
- * A package of notebook paper
- * A box of primary colored Crayola washable markers
- * A 24-count box of Crayola crayons
- * A soft pencil envelope/case that includes:
 - 1 package (12) #2 pencils (preferably Ticonderoga brand)
 - An eraser and pencil sharpener
 - A non-flexible plain ruler
 - 3-6 good quality ball point pens
 - 2 glue sticks
 - 1 pair of school scissors (reversible for lefties, if possible)

In addition, a small package of construction paper would be welcome.

ALTERNATIVE KITS FOR 7TH - 12TH GRADERS

- * 6 composition notebooks (NO spiral notebooks)
- * 6-8 sturdy 2 pocket folders
- * 2 packages of notebook paper
- * A soft pencil envelope/case
- * A large package (12/24) of #2 pencils (preferably Ticonderoga brand)
- * A pencil sharpener and eraser
- * A package (12) good quality ball point pens
- * 2 yellow highlighters
- * A non-flexible plain ruler
- * 2 glue sticks

Also needed: large bath/beach towels, single fitted bed sheets - these need not be new, but please be sure they have been laundered; fleece throws for cool nights.

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SCHOOL KITS and needed extras should be delivered to the RMM Office by Tuesday, August 12th. Questions??? Call us at the office 845-485-862 845-485-8627 or 845-297-586 Jane 297-5864845-297-845

Appeal for Donations to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem has for years operated several hospitals including the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza. From their appeal letter:

"In the last two [weeks], the impact of airstrikes [by the Israel Defense Force] has caused structural damages to the hospital, including its ventilation system in the operating theatre and the emergency room. In addition, windows have been broken in many buildings, as well as in the new diagnostic center.

Currently, and since the beginning of the crisis, Al-Ahli staff have maintained around-the-clock presence at the hospital, receiving wounded people and providing them with the critical medical care that they need.

Like the other hospitals in Gaza, Al-Ahli hospital is experiencing shortages in medicine, fuel for electrical generators, food for patients, and food parcels for many in the community seeking this help."

They seek a half-million dollars to simply make the hospital functional for the overwhelming number of wounded. Here is the contact information if you would like to help:

Evangelical Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & the Middle East
NABLUS ROAD 20 P.O. Box 19122 Jerusalem Contact Person: Ramzi Hallac
Address: P.O. Box 19122 Jerusalem Tel: 972 505 213 630

Outreach Meeting: We are having our next Outreach meeting this **Wednesday, July 30th at 7:00** in the Parish hall. Please let me know if you are able to attend! Thanks!

--Deb Belding

Habitat For Humanity Faith Build Starting! The Habitat for Humanity Faith Build which St. James' is participating in is finally underway. We have a Build Captain and a technical team; they are currently preparing the site for the build. So mark your calendars for the blessing of the build and plan on joining us at 125 Garden Street, City of Poughkeepsie on **Friday, August 8th at 4pm.**

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Hudson Valley Home Matters: Hudson Valley Home Matters is seeking both volunteers and members. It is an organization devoted to providing simple services to adults over 50 through volunteers. There is an annual fee for membership. If you are interested in volunteering or seeking the services of Hudson Valley Home Matters, you can get more information from their website at <http://www.hvhomematters.org> or by calling at 845-452-4846. If you know Herb and Barbara Sweet, they are volunteers. You can contact them as well.

Christmas Tree Stand For Free: Need a Christmas Tree stand for a large tree? Deirdre Mae Micker is moving and needs to reduce, so she has just such a stand for the first taker. Just give her a yell!

Book Now On Sale: Fr. Chuck's book, "God, Life, and Everything" is now available for purchase! It will be in the parish hall after church at a cost of \$12.95. (plus \$1.05 tax). Checks should be made out to "The Hudson Valley News." Come on over to coffee hour and meet the author! He will be happy to autograph it if you wish.

Wanted: New Acolytes: As the school year draws to an end, we will say goodbye to our graduating acolytes (and wish them luck in college!). This opens up a couple of spots on the acolyte list, and we want you! New acolytes need to be at least 9 years old and willing to be trained. Please see me (Fr. Chuck).

Gluten Free Communion: Remember, if you have gluten allergies/intolerance, we have gluten free communion hosts. Please let Fr. Chuck know if you would like that option.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Jim and Sharyn Burke, Ashley Coyne, Kathleen Craft, Michael Day, Jane Gagliardoto, Kasey Gaulin, John Golden, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Andy Hall, Harold Hall, Liz Handman, Brooke Helton, Rev. Don Hoger, Dalton K., Barbara Knakal, Rosemary Leuken, Doris Mack, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Pat Rooney, John Schroeder, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Debbie Stone, Gloria Veach, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Bobbie Wells, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

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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 (week ending July 27):	Bill Ardini, Sally Pardee, Barbara Soden and Nick Granados-Kramer
Birthdays (next week):	Cliff Wells, David Wardell, Patty Drake and Christian Schroeder
Acolytes:	July 27: Nancy Montero August 3: Chris Granados-Kramer
Altar Guild:	July 27: Team II August 3: Team III
8 a.m. Readers:	July 27: Angela Henry and Lucille Ogden August 3: Debbie Belding and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	July 27: Patty Caswell/Nancy Montero August 3: Donna Beyer/ Deirdre Mae Micker
Ushers:	July 27: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher August 3: Kathie Champion and Mary Gabel
Pledge Clerks:	July 27: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell August 3: Deb and Doug Belding
Coffee Hour Hosts:	July 27: Summer Schedule August 3: Summer Schedule

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 29:15-28

Psalm 128

Romans 8:26-39

Matthew 13:31-33,44-52

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

Sermon Preached on Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (July 20, 2014)

"Dream Trip"

As you know, we were away last week, gone to Ocean City for vacation. It was our third year there, so you know we like it and were really looking forward to going again. The beach, the ocean, the boardwalk... Good times.

But then, Nick had to work, so he couldn't go, which left Chris stuck with just his parents. Mind you, he didn't complain, but would you want to be 17 and stuck with just you parents for company?

Anyway, when we drove down, the weather was fine, but our first full day...rain. Second day, rain. Still, there was a break in the weather, so we were going to the beach, by golly. We only had so much time, after all. The wind was blowing, but we put on the sun screen, loaded up the beach chairs and umbrellas and went. After awhile, I decided to just jump into the waves - there were a few people in the water - so I walked up to the water's edge right up to the point where my feet got wet.

That ocean is cold! But I persisted and went a little deeper - then ran back. This went on for a long time, venturing a little deeper, running back because it was crazy to stand in freezing water on purpose, then forcing myself back in because this was vacation, darn it, and I was going to enjoy the stupid ocean. In the end, I got as deep as my thigh when a wave hit me chest level, and I said, "There's always tomorrow."

Only the next day was the same. And the next. Wednesday, was supposed to be nice - but it was cold and rainy, too. By the time nice weather did hit, we were kind of not in the mood anymore. Our vacation was not quite a nightmare - we found fun things to do - but it wasn't the trip we'd dreamed of. On the other hand, it could have been a lot worse.

Imagine you had been dreaming your whole life of something far better than the beach - say heaven - and it didn't turn out the way you dreamed it would. When I read today's gospel, for example, I was put in mind of those Left Behind books. Remember them? They were a series of books and movies about how all the "saved" were swept up in the rapture while all the unsaved were left behind on earth.

But according to today's gospel, it says the weeds - that is, all causes of sin and all evildoers - are gathered first and then thrown into the fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of

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teeth. Sort of makes you want to be left behind, doesn't it? At the very least, it makes me think that those who got swept up first did not get the trip they had dreamed of!

Not that I necessarily believe that's how things are going to play out. Frankly, it is not very fruitful to try to figure out how God is going to deal with the world in the end. It is a full-time job just figuring out our own relationship with God every day, not to mention the implications of that relationship in the rest of our dealings with the world.

But it is fruitful to remember that things do not always go the way we planned. Look at poor Jacob in today's Old Testament reading. You may remember that he and his mother Rebecca had planned to make Jacob the heir to his father's holdings even though he was the younger son. Jacob and Rebecca conspired to essentially steal the birthright and blessing from Jacob's brother Esau. And it worked. Only, they didn't account for Esau's hot temper, and when Esau discovered he had been cheated, he decided to kill Jacob in revenge.

Jacob had to run for his life, and the future he had dreamed of turned into a nightmare. It's while he's on the run that Jacob stops for the night and in despair, uses a rock for a pillow. You know things have gotten bad when you use a rock for a pillow. But then he has a dream, the famous stairway to heaven.

In this dream, God says to Jacob the words that God says to each of us when we are caught in our own nightmares. "I am with you and will keep you ... I will not leave you."

You and I know what it is like to have those nightmares, and yet it's sobering to think that the worst most of us have faced is mild compared to what the vast majority of the world goes through every day. We live in a beautiful place in relative safety. We get to have vacations now and then - or even know what vacations are! You and I are living the dream.

For others, it is hard. Whether its unaccompanied South American children illegally crossing our borders to flee violence, or Palestinians and Israeli's wondering what will fall from the skies today, or millions of Indians with little more than a rock to lay their head or South African miners living in squalor and working in such dangerous conditions that they are never sure if they see the surface again - there are a lot of people for whom it is not just a trip that is a nightmare but their entire life.

The point of our lessons is that in the midst of the nightmare - whether it is a relatively short period or an entire life - God remains at our side through it all. Always. There is no time when God is not by our side, though we may not be able to notice at the time.

When you're in the midst of pain and suffering, it is hard to notice God's presence - let alone to think like Paul that the pain and suffering in this life are meaningless compared to the glory of heaven.

So now is the time to fortify yourself with that knowledge! Now is the time - when you can dream - to remember that God walks with you, just as you are called to walk with your brothers and sisters far and near. Now is the time to remember that God blesses you and, like Jacob, calls you to be a blessing.

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So that when your dream turns into a nightmare, you will be able to take that pillow of rock as Jacob did, build a memorial, and say, the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it. And when you do, you will be able - as Jacob did - to carry on with the rest of your trip, which is called life, knowing that you are never alone. Amen.