

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

In the wee hours of this morning, Liz and I crept outside, set up our lawn chairs in the yard, turned off all the outside lights, and watched the sky.

We were "Perseid peeping." Not that we're big astronomers or anything, but the Perseid meteor shower only comes around once a year, and the sky was clear. Besides, I just happened to wake up at 3:30, so why not?

To say the show was overwhelming would be to overstate it. We saw maybe nine or ten meteors before declaring ourselves too cold and too tired to stay out any longer. But the sky was beautiful. With most lights off and no clouds, it was stars like we rarely see around here.

It reminded me of back home in Illinois where you can drive out to the corn or soybean fields in the middle of the night and still see a sky untainted by lights or tall buildings (not counting the occasional silo). It is the beginning of "big sky" country.

Sitting in those lawn chairs, our necks craned to see as many stars as possible, I felt a certain peacefulness that is difficult to find at any other time of day. I love the sound of the very few animals that venture to make noise at that hour. I love the feel of the dew forming under and over me. I love the quiet - though a train across the river did interrupt for a while.

These are the times when I feel God's presence in predictable yet new and surprising ways. When I just sit there and listen to the world, there is the voice of God and the Peace of God.

I sometimes wonder if that's what Jesus was doing when he went off by himself - lying back on the ground, looking up at the stars and sensing God's eternal presence. He carved out that time to be alone even when so many people were pressing in on him from all sides. It must have been important for him. And if for him, then in all likelihood for us, too.

What are your peaceful places and times? How do you hear that still small voice? What can you do in your life to prepare the way for the Lord of Love to enter in?

You might ponder that even as you prepare to go out into the world to do the good work God has given you. We are clearly meant to be out and about with people, but we're also meant to look up at the stars from time to time.

You don't even have to have the Perseid Shower - the night sky holds its own beauty. Of course, you don't have to stargaze in order to find your place of peace. God is everywhere. But

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

in case you were wondering, the Alpha Aurigid meteor showers will be here at the end of the month.

In Christ,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

The News of the Church

Men's Breakfast: This Saturday, August 15, at 8:00 AM, the men of the parish will gather for breakfast at Cranberry's. This has become a great gathering for us - it's for fellowship, fun and even a little work. This month, there are several neat projects to look into, see what sounds interesting and worth picking up. If you're 18 or older, join us.

Buildings and Grounds Meeting SATURDAY: Join us! Buildings and Grounds is going to have a meeting on Saturday, August 15, at 6:00 PM. We start in the Parish Hall! If you want to be involved in our church in a hands-on way, if you want to make our property a more attractive, more inviting space, and if you want to spend time with some really good folks, join the Buildings and Grounds Committee!

Table Fundraiser Starting: St. James' is beginning a campaign to replace our old, battered parish hall tables with new, lightweight and durable tables that actually look good. The campaign, headed up by Joanne Lown, seeks to raise enough money for fifteen new tables (at a cost of approximately \$150 each).

You can "Adopt A Seat" at the table for only \$15, or you can "Adopt A Table" for \$150. We can only order the tables once we reach the full amount needed.

This campaign ends on September 15, so there isn't much time.

Please make your checks payable to "St. James' Episcopal Church"

Nursery School Open House: On Wednesday, August 19, at 5:00 PM, St. James' Nursery School will have an open house for potential new students. If you have or anyone you know has a child between the ages of 3 and 5, why not come and check the school? It offers socialization that is not available elsewhere. Encourage your friends to visit.

Tour Guides and Crew Needed! We are almost there with our actors (see below) for the Graveyard Tours, but now we need tour guides and ground crews! In the past, we have had a small but dedicated crew doing this (especially crew). This year, we're looking for many more to be part of it. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex this Sunday - let us know you're

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

interested! In the early part of September, we will have a training session or two for all tour guides.

Tour Guide Actors Needed: Most roles have at least one actor now! But only one is completely filled (a second should be soon). We need the following:

1 John Germond - a 40-50ish man. Ideally can play organ. Organist/choir director for 35 years. We have one actor for this role and need another!

2 Rev. John McVickar - a younger man (mid-20s, early 30s would be ideal but can go older). First rector of St. James'. We have one actor for this role and need another!

3 Ellen Roosevelt - athletic woman early 20s. Winner of 3rd US Open. We have one actor for this role and need another!

4 Catherine Carl - almost any age can work (20s - 90s. She lived a long time). Richard's daughter.

5 Emma Victoria Pitkin Marshal - 50-70ish woman. Poetess of Hyde Park. We have one actor for this role and need another!

Rebuild the Churches Fund: Bishop Dietsche has asked each parish of our Diocese to join him in contributing to the rebuilding of the seven African-American churches that burned recently. We will hold this special collection on Sunday, August 30th.

Episcopal Relief and Development will be highlighted in September with a special collection honoring their 75th Anniversary celebration being held on Sunday, September 27th.

If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Lown or Deacon Gail. Thank you!

Got Oil? St. James' is a partner with the Dutchess County Interfaith Counsel which has an agreement with Love Efron Oil to reduce oil costs. Because of the collective size of the organization, we get a reduced rate for oil. We recently received word from Love Efron that they would now like to extend these discounts to all members, volunteers, and employees of the member churches. While this is undoubtedly an effort to attract new customers, discounts also apply to current customers.

We don't act as promoters of any business, but if this is something that can save you a little money because of your association with St. James', we are happy to be of use. I believe you

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

need to contact Love Effron directly and mention your relationship with St. James'. If you do so, please contact Fr. Chuck to let him know how it works out.

Take Some Business Cards: Share your church with your friends and neighbors with a St. James' Business Card. You never know when you have the opportunity to help someone find their way to God.

Notes from the Garden- July 2015

We had a very productive month in the garden this month.

An abundance of assorted beans, squashes and zucchinis were delivered to the Hyde Park Food Pantry and Meals on Wheels for several of the Fridays. They were a bit hit! In addition to those, we grew and donated bok choy, kale, collards, onions, cucumbers, mixed greens, swiss chard and beets as well.

A new addition this season for the Food Pantry is to donate a vase of assorted flowers to each client. One of our community gardeners, Lisa Jacoby, is growing and donating a beautiful array of cosmos and zinnias. They have been so warmly received by our local residents. Young and old are so grateful to have these flowers in their homes.

A big thank you to Angela Henry, Joanne Lown, Barbara Hobens, Shirley Ferris and Carol Pickering for helping us distribute these vegetables at the Food Pantry.

We could use the following items, so please keep this in mind:

1. Any type of flower vase to donate for our Food Pantry patrons. Please put them in the narthex.
2. Plastic bags! We have a bin for that also located in the Narthex.

Also, if you could donate 3 hours of your time to help us at our Food Pantry table, that would be great! We can use some help for August 21 and 28. Meet Deb at the Parish House at 8:30 AM to load up. Set up tables at Food Pantry by 9:00 and stay until 11:30 when the pantry closes.

If you need any further information, or if you have any questions, email Deb at deborah.belding@yahoo.com.

Happy August!

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

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

- 16 The Church of the Messiah, Rhinebeck
- 17 St. James' Church, Callicoon
- 18 St. Thomas' Church, Mamaroneck
- 19 The Congregational Life and Mission Commission
- 20 The Archbishop of Canterbury
- 21 The Melrose School, Brewster
- 22 The Liturgical Commission of the Diocese

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.

For these I weep, my eye sheds water:

For our children crying in the night,

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

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, 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, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Bill Millard.

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): Angela Henry, Vince Asher, Tom O'Mara, Shirley Ferris and Liz Granados

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

Birthdays (next week):	Samantha Heller, Christopher Santos and Timothy Slegel
Acolytes:	August 16: John Beyer August 23: Anna Clark
Altar Guild:	August 16: Team Number I August 23: Team Number I
8 a.m. Readers:	August 16: Angela Henry and Lucille Ogden August 23: Deb Belding and Paul Littlefield
10 a.m. Readers:	August 16: Russell Urban-Mead and Judy Douglass August 23: Donna Beyer and Maggie McNamara
Ushers:	August 16: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher August 23: Donna and John Beyer
Pledge Clerks:	August 16: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher August 23: Doug Belding and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	August 16: Bill, Regina and Laurel Ardini and Vince Asher August 23: Stephanie Porach, Evan, Todd and Stephen Weaver and Rebekah & Kwalik Ancrum
Coffee Hour Hosts:	August 16: No Coffee Hour August 23: No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14

Psalm 111

Ephesians 5:15-20

John 6:51-58

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

Sermon Preached on
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
(August 9, 2015)

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

"Put Away Malice? How?"

Paul was walking a fine line. This epistle he wrote which we call the Ephesians probably was not written to them in particular but to the church more broadly (the oldest versions don't mention the Ephesians at all). He wasn't writing to a group of friends but to a diverse group, many of whom he likely did not know. This wasn't uncommon in those days - it was a letter meant to be circulated around.

So, what might he be saying and to whom? Well, in general, the theme of Ephesians is unity. You are the body of Christ. Behave like it.

And why would he write this letter? While there is no certain answer, many biblical scholars believe that he's talking about the tensions and outright hostility between Gentile and Jewish Christians. Believe it or not, there was once a time when some Christians used to think that other Christians were doing their faith wrong.

Seriously, at that time, the tensions were bad enough that Paul felt the need to intercede. In essence, he said that their fighting had to stop if they were to be representatives of Christ. They had to be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving. He called them to build up those they were in conflict with - not tear down.

So naive.

Or was he? I suspect Paul had been around enough to know that putting away malice, as he put it, was no easy task. Human nature prompts us to fight with those we find to be threatening or even just annoying. We have "stand your ground" laws in some states, which indicates that backing down is a bad thing. We look down on those who "make peace, not war" -whether it's real war or simply two hotheads going at each other. So, Paul knows this about human nature. But he insists that believers still forge ahead, at least seeking reconciliation with each other. Because, from his standpoint, the alternative is the total collapse of the Christian experiment. Already, people in those days looked askance at Christians. They were a new religion with strange beliefs and rituals. The in-fighting did not help. The out-fighting, that is, the run-ins with non-Christians, did not help either.

For Paul, Christians had to not only be seen as peaceful, but they had to be peaceful if they were truly to be the Body of Christ. Christ, after all, gave himself without enmity, without malice. It was a sacrifice that was complete, and Paul really and truly called fellow believers to this sort of self-giving.

BUT, and this is a big but, Paul did not expect anyone to be silent when injustice or other wrongs were going on. Speak the truth, be angry but do not sin. He expected Christians to walk that fine line between justice and malice. He expected believers to allow themselves to be beaten and abused but not to be silent. He expected them to speak but never in abusive terms.

Again, this seems naive to expect from anyone. It seems impossible.

If you don't believe me look around. Yes, I know, I should avoid social media like online news or Facebook. That's where it is easiest to be belligerent without facing any consequences, to

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

yell, scream, insult and otherwise abuse others anonymously. It's not, mind you, only the internet where this behavior that would drive Paul crazy takes place, but it is the easiest place to see it.

Let's look at one example of festering enmity and malice that blew up online. The Confederate battle flag. Think about it for just a moment. As you may recall, the most recent fight over it erupted in the aftermath of the Charleston church shootings. The shooter had displayed the battle flag as a sign of his white supremacy. This led to the call for the removal of the confederate battle flag from state buildings because it was seen as a sign of racism not to mention lingering enmity between northern and southern Americans.

Since most people on both sides of that argument claim Christianity as their faith, it's fair to ask, how could they have approached this conflict in a way that Paul might have approved? The first step for a Christian is to remember that our ultimate goal is always reconciliation. NOT covering over injustices hoping it will blow over, Paul wants real reconciliation where all involved are respected and treated with justice. This does not come easily and requires ongoing, endless discussion. Still, that's our first step: knowing that we do NOT want to beat the other; we want to reconcile.

Second, we speak the truth. Granted, as Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Regarding the Confederate battle flag, the amount of misinformation, of "Myths Uncovered" is disheartening. The articles about the "truth" of that particular flag, its use during the Civil War, the very causes of the Civil War, and of course its use after the war - these articles throw around their so-called facts with abandon. So, when we talk about speaking the truth, it nearly always has to be with an open mind, realizing that we may not have all the story. Truth is always a journey of discovery, and if we ever want to let go of malice, it will have to be with humility. Still, it IS true that a lot of people see that particular as a symbol of oppression. And perhaps more significantly, it symbolizes the open wound that never healed following the Civil War.

Third, bury the hatchet. This is a practice in Native American diplomacy going back at least to the early 17th century. Although done differently at different times, the gist of it is that two disputing sides ceremonially - but literally - buried one or two tomahawks as a sign that they were putting away their fighting and seeking a union that was not there before. They did this so they could move forward with a more important agenda. This is exactly what Paul was getting at. The more important agenda was to show Christ's self-giving love - and to exemplify it to a skeptical world.

How do you do that with the Confederate battle flag issue? Not sure. If I were to suggest actually burying it, that would probably not go over well. But if the idea is reconciliation, perhaps a ceremony in which it and the Union battle flag of the day were buried together might not be a bad sign that, despite differences, we are one people.

Will that make racism go away? Of course not. Will it heal the north-south divide? Hardly. Steps like this are small, but they are in the direction of reconciliation rather than domination. My main point here is NOT what we should do with one flag. That's merely an example of how

St. James' E-pistle

August 14, 2015

we often let our anger, enmity and malice get hold of us and not let go. My point is that we - God's children - DO allow our enmities to fester, we don't let go of malice, at least not easily. But when we make that our goal, we will advance the cause of Christ, the Kingdom of God just a little further. And that may be just enough. Amen.