

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

This Sunday, you will notice an insert in your bulletin. Until yesterday, there was no insert, but events unfold quickly in our world. The flooding in the Gulf Coast this week has been nothing short of historic. In just a few days, as much as thirty inches of rain fell in some places. 40,000 + homes have been affected with thousands evacuated.

To put this in perspective, they haven't seen anything on this scale since 2005 when Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. The heavy rains are set to continue through Saturday.

Our first reaction to this should be prayer - for those affected and those responding.

Heavenly Father, you are the giver of all life and the protector of those who put their trust in you. Guard those who are endangered by the flooding in the Gulf Coast. Keep them safe, help them rebuild their lives physically and emotionally, comfort the grief-stricken, and aid the rebuilding process. Guard and guide also those who risk their lives to save others, who give completely of themselves to bring compassion out of chaos grace out of suffering. Keep them all as the apple of your eye, the work of your hands, the children of your love. And grant us strength and courage to give of ourselves so that we can bring healing to those in such desperate need. Through Christ we pray, Amen.

Because prayer is not simply about wishing good thoughts but about emboldening us to holy action, let me give a little background. The biggest damage appears to be in the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana and the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana, both of which are coordinating with Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) to help alleviate the suffering.

The bulletin insert you will see is a request for donations to help ERD help others in crisis. I will simply call it to your attention and invite you to be part of this relief effort, especially as it affects fellow Episcopalians in Louisiana.

Of course, there are so many other crises in this world - many worse than the flooding - but we recognize that nobody can focus on everything. If you are currently giving what you can to help suffering somewhere else, God bless you. If you're looking for a way to help in this situation, however, ERD is a great and effective place to start.

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

If you are traveling this week but would still like to help, the contact information for ERD is as follows:

You can donate online here: <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/us-disaster-fund>

Or you can send a check to: **Episcopal Relief & Development**
 Mail to P.O. Box 7058
 Merrifield VA 22116-7058.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

The News of the Church

Parish Picnic: Sign up now! There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex to be part of our parish picnic. Mark your calendars for **Sunday, August 28**. More details to come, but start practicing your grilling! We provide the burgers and dogs - everyone brings a side dish to share.

Sunday School Registration Starting Soon! Get ready for BACK TO SCHOOL! Sunday School, that is. Registration for Sunday School this year will be on Sunday, September 11. The first day of classes is Sunday, September 18. Remember, we welcome - we encourage - everyone to come. Bring your friends! We want them. Bring your siblings! Bring anyone you know who you think could use a bit of God's love

Harvest Roast Pork Dinner: A Fundraiser for the Community Garden. **September 23rd** from 5-7:30 p.m.. Adults are \$15, Children 10+ are \$10, Under 10 is Free. Call the Parish Office for reservations.

Acolyte Festival: Save the date - **Saturday, October 22** - for the Diocesan Youth Acolyte Festival! It's a full day of mostly meeting other youth, learning a few tricks of the trade, and in general having a great time. We're looking for all youth and a few adults to make the trip

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!

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

August 19, 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)

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

- 21 Episcopal Church Center
- 22 St. Luke's School, Manhattan
- 23 The Laurel & Rose Butler Nursery School of St. John's Church, Yonkers
- 24 St. Bartholomew's Church, Manhattan
- 25 St. Simeon's Church, Bronx

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

26 Scholars of the Diocese
27 St. Augustine's Church, Manhattan

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,

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.

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

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, Kathy Ganim, 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 Ann Smith.

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):	G. Angela Henry, Vince Asher, Amelia McNamara and Shirley Ferris
Birthdays (this coming week):	Liz Van Wagner, Sharan Allessandra, Charles L. Pardee, Jr. and Michael Glancey
Acolytes:	August 21: Deirdre Mae Micker August 28: Bill Fenwick
Altar Guild:	August 21: Team Number II August 28: Team Number II
8 a.m. Readers:	August 21: Debbie Belding and Lynne Koch

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

	August 28: Lucille Ogden and Grant Ferris
10 a.m. Readers:	August 21: Donna Beyer and Maggie McNamara
	August 28: Patty Caswell and Wendy Urban-Mead
Ushers:	August 21: Donna and John Beyer
	August 28: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne
Pledge Clerks:	August 21: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
	August 28: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	August 21: Bill, Regina and Laurel Ardini, Vince Archer
	August 28: Stephanie Porach; Evan, Todd and Stephen Weaver
Coffee Hour Hosts:	August 21: No Coffee Hour
	August 28: No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 58:9b-14

Psalm 103:1-8

Hebrews 12:18-29

Luke 13:10-17

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

Sermon Preached on
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
(August 14, 2016)

"Division, Not Peace"

Yesterday was 55th anniversary of the Berlin Wall's construction. One night people in Berlin went to sleep, jobs on one side, homes on the other. Or brothers or cousins or girlfriends on one side while they were on the other. The next morning they wake up to barbed wire, blockades, and thousands upon thousands of Mason's under guard already deep into construction of a wall that would divide and destroy lives for nearly three decades.

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

A great city was split down the middle as a sign of a horrendous division called the Cold War. Good thing THAT ended in the 90s, and everything got better, and conflict ended and we are all unified!

Well, there does still seem to be a little division amongst us in the world, doesn't there?

But then, it's always been that way. Certainly, our religion is one long history of division and lack of peace. The great prophet Jeremiah in today's passage complains about the other prophets who lie, saying there is no problem - mostly so they don't upset the king and thereby endanger their comfortable positions. But the problem was coming - complete overthrow of the country - they simply refused to talk about it because it would upset some people.

In the letter to the Hebrews, which isn't so much a letter as a theological paper, the author argues against Christians who insist on maintaining Jewish sacrificial practices in the temple, as if Jesus' sacrifice were not enough. This letter is just one of many fights in our church's history over the very nature of what it means to be a Christian.

And then we get to Jesus, who says "Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!"

That is so unlike the Jesus of, "Blessed are the peacemakers", and "he who lives by the sword dies by the sword." Why is he embracing all this division and upset?

Well, we can't say that Jesus loved fighting. But he did recognize reality. And certainly, everywhere Jesus went, no matter what he said or did, it divided people. People who chose to follow him faced fierce opposition often from within their own family. Families and friends literally split up over Jesus, so he acknowledges this reality. It is a sober warning to would-be followers: you will sacrifice.

And he's also suggesting it will always be this way. Judging from history, I'd have to say he was right.

People still walk out of church when they hear things they don't like. They still condemn their own churches - let alone others - if they hear preaching and teaching or see actions they don't like: whether it's talking about caring for the alien in our midst, race, violence, how we treat people of a different gender - whether we repair the homes of the poor or feed the hungry or house the homeless or do nothing at all ... It will divide many in our churches. It always has.

Jesus reminds us that that's okay. It's going to happen. In fact, when we try to avoid conflict brought in by the gospel and paper things over, we cause more harm.

John Jay, 1860 convention.

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

Does that mean we just give up on church? Oh come on! Like there isn't division in every other aspect of your life? Politics? Economics & business? Personal relationships? Sports? (Have you looked at the insides of the Olympics?).

Division, not Peace, is our default.

So, what do we do? Is there any hope? Well, if your life is all about avoiding conflict, then no - no hope at all. That's not what the church is about. The church - at least when we're at our best - is about following Christ (as opposed to upholding our status quo like those false prophets in Jeremiah). We do not avoid conflict, but we DO bring something to it that the secular world cannot.

We bring Jesus, his gift of life to us all, and his example. In short, we bring love. And as our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has said, "If it's not about Love, then It's not about God."

What I mean is, we are not a social service agency - there are others who do that better. We are not a political party - or a business. We are agents of God's love. We seek to infuse every aspect of life with that love. The church's goal is that when you go out into the world, you see the guy sleeping on the street with love rather than disgust. And then let that love for him or her guide your actions.

Our goal is that when you work and have people under you who are struggling, you see them with love rather than as mere tools to use and discard. Our goal is that when you are online and get into an argument with some anonymous person about race, guns, politics, sexual identity, the Olympics - whatever - that you address that person with love. Seeking the best for all people involved. Throughout the world.

Division is brought about by asking who is right. The Kingdom of God is brought about by asking, "Is it loving?"

In the Inquirers Classes, we have an ethics component. Though we try to make it as complicated as possible, it boils down to this: **Christian ethics doesn't ask who is right.** It asks if our actions are loving. Whatever your action, whatever your words, whether it is toward another individual or a whole class of people or a whole nation - or future generations - ask yourself first: is it loving?

Jesus did not revel in chaos or disunity. **That was not his goal. It was, and is, however, reality.** If you step in any direction you will be an agent of division. Former parishioner Eleanor Roosevelt once said: "Do what you feel in your heart to be right - for you'll be criticized anyway."

St. James' E-pistle

August 19, 2016

It is our simple goal as a church, when people build walls to reach across it in love. Our goal is to assure that when we step - whether it cause dismay or not - it is always a step toward God's love. Amen.