

# St. James' E-pistle

## Date of Sunday Service: August 6, 2017

### The Transfiguration

#### *Bible Verse*

*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

- 2 Peter 1:16

#### **Pulpit Notes**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

One of the things I like about our faith is that it is experiential. That is, it's not actually all about a lot of theory. Yes, there are many who love theory, and there's nothing wrong with deep thinking over who God is, what God wants, how God does things.

But experience is at the heart of it. Experience and desire. Not exclusively private experience, either. Yes, you'll find plenty of moments in scripture where one person has a profound encounter with God. Abraham and Jacob, for example, each has a life-changing run-in with the divine. But for every private experience, there are those witnessed by many - or at least a few.

Think of Moses coming down the mountain, and all the people seeing him practically glow. Think of the Epiphany, when Jesus is made known to the Magi. Or Christ's baptism when the voice of God declares to all, "This is my son, with whom I am well pleased." Think of the Transfiguration, which we celebrate this Sunday. Then, of course, there is the resurrection, the risen Christ being seen by countless witnesses. Even the apostle Paul has a moment when he is blinded by light and thrown from his horse in plain view of many people not sympathetic to the gospel.

Throughout the history of Christianity, there have been innumerable experiences of the presence of God, some gentle and subtle like summer breeze, others bold and blatant like a hurricane. These encounters happen every day to every type of person. I happen to know folks right here at St. James' who have felt the certain hand of God in a variety of ways.

You will meet many who say that anyone with such experiences must be mentally ill. That's probably more projection than anything. And it's certainly a little arrogant because they figure that if they haven't experienced it, it can't be valid. That's a human weakness we all have to guard against, but it does nothing to invalidate the fact that our God reaches out to us and gives us all sorts of opportunities to reach back.

I guarantee that every Sunday, *somebody* here experiences at least a little of that. I can see it in peoples' eyes. So look around and look within. Embrace the experience.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

### *Did you know?*

...Why the priest holds his/her hands up during communion? You may notice during the Eucharist Prayer that I do a lot of hand gestures. Through most of the prayer, I hold my hand upward - that's called the "orans" position which just means "prayer" position. That's because in more ancient times everyone held their hands up like that to pray. They are a way of reaching up to God - not unlike a small child reaching up to a parent so they will lift them up. Over time, it became associated with just the priest - who was seen as the representative of the people - and only during the Eucharistic prayer. In the 70s, among charismatic groups, the orans position of prayer became popular for all Christians again - and why not? Prayer ideally engages all our senses including the physical. Because the Eucharistic Prayer is so significant to us (and the longest prayer of the liturgy), the orans position is still used there. But you reach up to God at any time.

## **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, August 6 (from 9:15 to 9:45 AM)** in the Wilkes Room, the session will be on Unction.

*Seeking 2 Coordinators for Graveyard Tours:*

We still need a couple of positions filled for our Graveyard Tours. What we need:

1. A Tour Guide Coordinator
2. A Parking Attendant Coordinator

We have had a couple of folks express interest, but until we have them secured, we'll still be posting this notice. These two positions are crucial to making the Tours run. We have found that parking is a serious issue because there's so much coming and going. While we can get high school students to park cars, we need an adult to coordinate and direct them.

And while we are blessed with many wonderful volunteer tour guides, they need someone to coordinate them, too.

Coordination means securing the needed people, scheduling them, and being on site to make sure they have what they need. I can't pretend these are easy jobs. Both of them require time and footwork. But they ARE immensely satisfying because coordinators know just how much they are contributing to the spiritual and educational ministry of this church as well as its financial health.

So please, offer your skill, your time, your commitment. If you're uncertain, the first step is to pray. Pray hard! The second step - if you still aren't convinced - is to talk with me. I am convinced you are the person we need. And while the job is demanding, I'm convinced you can do it.

So step forward and become a part of this amazing thing.

*Become a Graveyard Tour Sponsor:*

Do you own a business or are you in a position to influence decisions at your company? If so, why not become a Graveyard Tour Sponsor? several local businesses have done so already. What does it take to support the Tours, and what's in it for you? Glad you asked.

For as little as \$50, your business will be listed on the Graveyard Tour website all year. This site get a lot of traffic especially during the tour season. You also get your company listed on the tour programs. AND, depending on the amount of your support, your company receives at least one complimentary ticket for opening night (those who donate more than 350 receive three tickets for any night).

BUT the best part is that you will be helping your church reach and inspire the world with God's love. And that's a pretty good deal. See Fr. Chuck if you want to become a sponsor.

*Deadline for School Supply Kits: THIS SUNDAY, AUGUST 6:*

Rural and Migrant Ministry will again be offering a variety of summer youth programs. These programs include day camps, a leadership academy, residential programs, an overnight leadership camp and high school and college internships. These programs make a huge difference in the lives of our young people. These programs can also be life-changing. This year's theme is Challenges.

Please prayerfully consider making a donation of a school kit: The kit should include 4 composition notebooks (NO spiral notebooks), 4 sturdy (2) pocket folders, 1 package of notebook paper, 1 box of primary colored Crayola washable markers, 1 24-count box of Crayola crayons, 1 soft pencil envelope/case that includes 1 package (12) #2 pencils, 1 eraser, 1 pencil sharpener, 1 ruler, 3-6 ball point pens, 2 glue sticks, a pair of school scissors and a small package of construction paper.

Or if you would like us to do the shopping, please prayerfully consider making a cash donation. Cash/Checks payable to St. James' Church, memo line - RMM school supplies. Special Offering envelopes can be found in the narthex of the church.

**Again, the Deadline for Donations: this Sunday, August 6, 2017.**

On behalf of the campers who will benefit from your donation: THANK YOU!

*SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR*

As you may know, our Music Director Sarah Rodeo has been accepted into Graduate School at Yale University.

Although she had hoped to delay her entrance into the program for a year, the university informed her that such a delay was not possible. Consequently, Sarah will leave us for New Haven, Connecticut following the 10:00 AM service on August 20.

Her tenure with us was brief, but it has been a delight, and we wish her only the best. Sarah, you go with our prayers and best wishes.

We will soon be able to announce her replacement and look forward to a new chapter in our musical ministry.



# Hyde Park Kids Garden Club

PICNIC



Special Guest  
"Scruffy"!!!



Saturday August 12, 2017

from 12 - 2 pm

at the Hyde Park Community Garden  
(old baseball field at St. James' Episcopal Church)

Please call 229-2820 for more info

# August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31 <b>Office Closed</b>	1	2 10 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Nursery School Open House	3 11 AM Bible Study	4	5
6 Unction	7 <b>Office Closed</b>	8	9 10 AM Morning Prayer	10 11 AM Bible Study	11	12
13	10 <b>Office Closed</b>	15	16 10 AM Morning Prayer	17 11 AM Bible Study	18	15 8 AM Men's Breakfast
20 Sarah Rodeo's last day at St. James'	21 <b>Office Closed</b>	22	23 10 AM Morning Prayer	24 11 AM Bible Study	25	26
27 Glen May's 1st Day at St. James'	28 <b>Office Closed</b>	29	30 10 AM Morning Prayer	31 11 AM Bible Study		

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/>

- 6 (The Transfiguration). Church of the Transfiguration, Manhattan
- 7 Diocesan Disciplinary Board
- 8 Church of the Epiphany Day School, Manhattan
- 9 Grace Church, La Gracia, White Plains
- 10 Trinity Church, Garnerville
- 11 The Canon for Congregational Vitality
- 12 St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Amenia Union

## 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 Konyn, 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), Karen Shan, 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):	Christian Schroder
Birthdays (this coming week):	Patricia Holland, Jeffrey Thatcher, Mary Gabel, Gordon Mackenzie, Jim Matranga and Suzann Kinne
Acolytes:	August 6: Team 3 August 13: Team 1
Altar Guild:	August 6: Team I August 13: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	August 6: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth August 13: Lucille Ogden and Thomas Finnigan
10 a.m. Readers:	August 6: Russell Urban-Mead and Andy Hall August 13: Wilma Tully and Judy Douglass
Ushers:	August 6: Andrew and Tonya Hall August 13: Judy Douglass, Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	August 6: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass August 13: Joanne Lown and Janet Bright
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	August 6: Russell, Wendy, Kassie and Charlie Urban-Mead, Liz Van Wagner August 13: Janet Veith, Georgia Verven and Stephen, Amanda, Trevor, Travis and Troy Verven
Coffee Hour Hosts:	August 6: Summer Schedule--No Coffee Hour August 13: Summer Schedule--No Coffee Hour

## This Week's Lectionary

Exodus 34:29-35  
Psalm 99  
2 Peter 1:13-21  
Luke 9:28-36

## This Week's Hymns

Processional: 423 - Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise  
Sequence: 129 - Christ Upon the Mountain Peak  
Offertory: 137 - O Wondrous Type, O Vision Fair  
Communion: 5 - O Splendor of God's Glory Bright  
Recessional: 135 - Songs of Thankfulness of Praise

## Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (July 30, 2017)

### *Hidden Treasure*

Today, we have a baptism. Avery Joshua Bohlmann. I love a good baptism because we welcome a new member of the Body of Christ.

What I especially like is that we all take on the responsibility to help teach the newly baptized about life. Watch him grow from tiny mustard seed to full stature. We get to have Avery come here each week, and we get to share our wisdom, make a fuss over him, spoil him ... and send him home to his parents. We're like the other grandparents.

Seriously, though, we DO have important things to teach. (*So pay attention Avery, while I lay down some truth*) Here's truth number one.

God has made you worthy.

Worthy of God's love. Worthy of everyone's respect. And because God has made you worthy, nobody can ever take that away. And because you are worthy, anything is possible.

Earlier this week, our Bible Study went on a field trip to the home of Norman Vincent Peale. (If you're too young to know who he was, he was famous preacher with literally millions of followers & presidents & business leaders & royalty seeking his prayerful guidance.). His most famous book, "The Power of Positive Thinking" essentially teaches that you can have a better life by keeping a positive attitude.

There is some merit to this because visualizing a better life can lead to real improvements. It can help you believe that you can do anything. Not a bad message for a small one.

Anything's possible. The sky's the limit. You are worthy.

BUT, as with all things you have to be careful. Yes, it is important to believe in yourself and a better life. But it goes wrong when you start to think that bad things only happen because you aren't believing hard enough or don't have enough faith.

That's wrong and can lead to the heresy of believing that when bad things happen to people, they deserve it. That poor people deserve it. That those who are weak are somehow less worthy, less deserving, less loved by God.

This thinking misses entirely the point of the gospel and the point of life.

We are not put on this earth to "succeed." We are not put on this earth to "Win."

Heck, everyone loses from time to time. And everyone who ever "won" - that is, had good things happen to them in life - did so at least to some degree because they got lucky.

Maybe - like Avery - you got lucky to be born in a loving family, or in a family of sufficient means that you don't suffer want. That has nothing to do with your positive thinking. You didn't earn it anymore than you earned God's love - and that's okay.

On the flip side, everyone goes through difficult times. Sometimes difficult lives. Sometimes we get on these losing streaks where nothing goes right and everything is wrong. Remember poor Jacob in today's reading from Genesis? Not only was he a refugee, leaving his homeland to save his life, but in today's installment, he gets tricked into marrying the wrong woman! After working seven years to earn the right to marry her. And what does the father-in-law say! "That's not how we do things here. But I tell you what, work another seven years for me, and I'll let you have what you worked for in the first place."

Spoiler alert, it didn't actually get any easier for Jacob after he finally married Rachel. Jacob's life is in fact, filled with disappointment and loss for, like, ever.

So, if there's good luck and bad luck, if everyone loses some time, if succeeding doesn't make you a better person or put you closer to God, what **is** the point?

The **point** is to **see** God. In everyone. In everything. In every situation. At every time. (May repeat this)

Because God is there. Even when everything seems to go wrong, and you can't believe God even exists, God is there. Even when you're flush with victory, and you delude yourself into thinking you did it all by yourself, God is there.

But the presence of God - that pearl of great price - is often hidden so that others just can't see it. Doesn't matter. God is still there.

God's presence is the prize, the goal. The honor and the joy. And becoming aware of God - as we remind ourselves at every baptism - is grace.

God is there - sometimes to comfort, sometimes to chide, sometimes to strengthen and encourage and sometimes to celebrate and just...enjoy.

Our job is to see God in everyone and everything, in every situation and at every time.

We - each of us - **can do that** because God has made us worthy.

*So (Avery) you're a lucky boy. You're born into a loving family. You're in a loving church. You are surrounded by God's love. Part of how your life goes will depend on your - hard work and attitude. And part of it is just luck.*

But what you focus on **is** up to you - and if you choose to seek the pearl of great price - so hidden from so many in the world - you'll find that it's everywhere. And it's there for you. Amen.

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