

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: September 3, 2017

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Bible Verse

*But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."
- Exodus 3:10*

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

There has been so much going on - Neo-Nazis, statues, protests and counter protests.... All that fades from view when we face disasters like the unprecedented catastrophe of Harvey. We put our differences great and small behind us so we can help each other. (Read below for how you can help)

I would hesitate to think God gives us disasters so we can change our perspective - but I wouldn't be surprised if God *hopes* we take the opportunity afforded us to look at what we have been doing to each other. I'm not very optimistic about it. My guess is, we *will* rescue each other, feed each other, donate to help each other, and then when the crisis is over fall right back into our party lines. But is that God's plan?

Disasters, whether man-made or natural (or a combination), often bring up the question of what God's plan is. Does God even *have* a plan? For that matter, who *is* God anyway?

This is nothing new. People have been asking that question for eons. Even Moses asked this, and he was speaking to God directly! Who are you? What do we call you? Why are you picking on me?

God's answer was simple - and vague. I AM WHO I AM. God simply is. God is the essence of being. Life itself. And Love itself. The great I AM is the essence of relationship (you can't be a Trinity of persons without relating to each other).

So when disasters come that make us forget our petty or big fights, at least for a few days, they bring us just a tiny bit closer to who God is. They help us break free from the hard shells of our self-centeredness and get a little better sense of who God is and what it's like to live in harmony with God.

In disasters, you simply worry about being in the moment, about getting one more person out of the water, finding food for one more group. You simply are. Together.

Whether God plans these or not is open to debate. The idea that we can use these situations to know God and God's reign just a little better is not.

So, let us take these terrifying days and find the moments in them that allow us to break free of ourselves.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Did you know?

...We only used to read two lessons on Sunday? We did. Up through the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, the readings for Sundays were in the prayer book and included only the Epistle and Gospel. There was no Old Testament reading. Period. Why did the church add an Old Testament reading for the 1979 prayer book? Because that, too, is part of our story and has value. Sure, there's bible study, but in reality, many don't read their bibles outside of church, so it's important to hear the story of creation, of Noah, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And more. So when you hear that extra lesson being read on Sunday, you can thank (and I do mean thank) the current Book of Common Prayer.

Announcements

Harvey Aid: An Opportunity to Extend Christ's Love

One sometimes hears the phrase "A picture speaks 1000 words" so I will let the pictures we are seeing about the devastation from Hurricane Harvey speak for themselves. Our neighbors in Texas and beyond need our support and our prayers as they begin the long road to recovery. There are critical immediate needs and there are longer range needs.

Episcopal Relief and Development partners with affected Dioceses and parishes to provide the best support resources for our brothers and sisters in need. Most importantly, Episcopal Relief is there for the long haul. Not only is Episcopal Relief and Development present to meet critical needs during the Rescue Phase of a disaster but they are there through the ensuing phases of Relief and Recovery. As Rob Radtke, President of Episcopal Relief and Development, reminds us, responding to a disaster is a marathon and not a sprint.

Please prayerfully consider making a donation to our special parish collection to support Episcopal Relief and Development's Hurricane Harvey Response Fund over the next two Sundays - September 3rd and September 10th. Checks should be made payable to St. James' Church, memo line: Hurricane Harvey. Thank you.

Peace,

Deacon Gail

Youth Group

St. James' Youth (sometimes called "Episcopal-Pals") are making plans and going places. All middle and high school students are invited to join the group. Our first monthly activity is a challenge course (at Mariapolis Luminosa) on Sunday, September 24 at 3:00. We'll meet at the church and leave at 2:45 pm. Bring your friends!

Men's Breakfast

Men of St. James', breakfast this month is Saturday, September 16 at 8:00 AM. As usual, we're meeting at Cranberry's. These are great times, so join us!

Oil Contract Offer

St. James has just entered into this year's heating oil contract. Rainbow Oil is offering all members of St. James a personal contract to lock in a price of \$2.099 per gallon until March 31, 2018.

If you are interested just call Rainbow Oil and request a contract be mailed to you, sign and return it.

Rainbow Oil's number is 229-9418.

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).

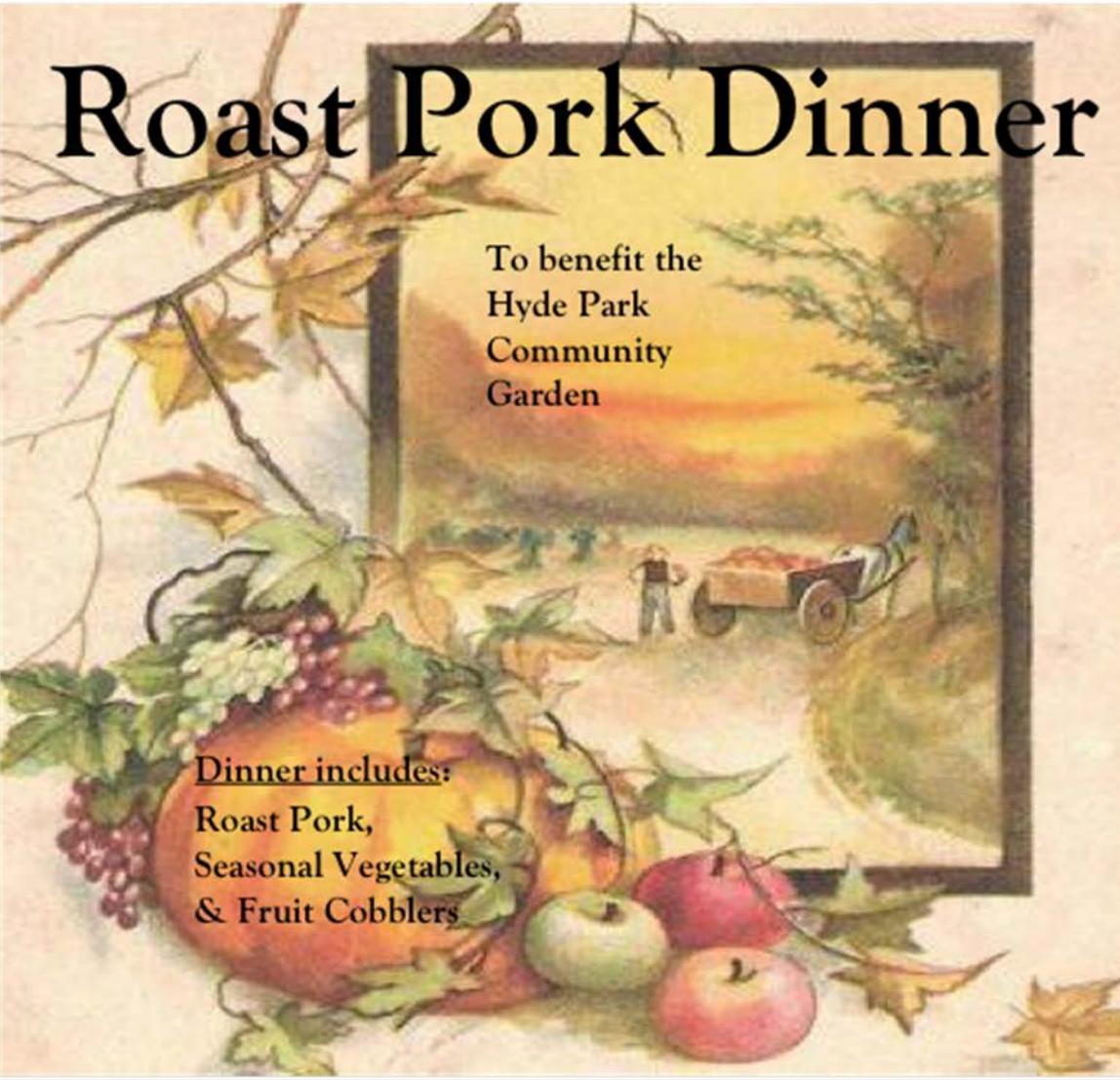
BUT the best part is that you will be helping your church reach and inspire the world with God's love. And that's a pretty good deal. See Fr. Chuck if you want to become a sponsor.

Reading Adventures News

Once again, Reading Adventures, our after-school reading program for children at North Park Elementary School, will help kids with improving reading. The reading program meets once a week after school. In it, volunteers read one-on-one with children who have been recommended as likely to benefit from a little extra reading. North Park has a new principal this year, Ms. Lynnette Williams who is enthusiastic and welcoming. She had committed to encouraging as much participation as possible and smoothing our way however she can.

For this first semester, we will meet on Thursdays, starting at the end of the school day and reading for one hour. The program year will begin on Thursday, October 19. If you would like to volunteer as a reader, please contact Fr. Chuck or Anna Marie Pitcher.

Roast Pork Dinner



To benefit the
Hyde Park
Community
Garden

Dinner includes:
Roast Pork,
Seasonal Vegetables,
& Fruit Cobblers

Where: St. James' Episcopal Church, 4526 Albany Post Rd., Hyde Park, NY

When: Friday, September 15, 2017 - One Seating: 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: Adults \$15, Children 10 & over \$10, Children under 10 free.

Call the Parish Office for Reservations: 845-229-2820.

September 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	28 Office Closed	29	30 10 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Nursery School Open House	31 11 AM Bible Study	1	2
3 Unction	4 Office Closed	5	6 10 AM Morning Prayer	7 11 AM Bible Study	8	9
10	11 Office Closed Nursery School 6:30 PM 9/11 service	12	13 10 AM Morning Prayer	14 11 AM Bible Study	15 Harvest Dinner	16 8 AM Men's Breakfast
17	18 Office Closed	19 7:00 PM Vestry	20 10 AM Morning Prayer	21 11 AM Bible Study	22	23
24 3:00 PM Youth Group	25 Office Closed	26	27 10 AM Morning Prayer	28 11 AM Bible Study	29	30 Regional Council Tour Dress Rehearse

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.dioceseny.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

- 3 Christian Formation Commission of the Diocese
- 4 Brotherhood of Saint Gregory
- 5 The Laurel & Rose Butler Nursery School of St. John's Church, Yonkers
- 6 Church of the Holy Communion, Mahopac
- 7 Episcopal Chaplaincy at SUNY New Paltz
- 8 Union Theological Seminary
- 9 Postulants and Candidates for the Priesthood

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, 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), Pat Rooney, 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.

Please pray for the victims of Hurricane Harvey.

Please pray for the Repose of the Soul of Doris Lyons, mother of Georgia Verven.

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):	Liz Van Wagner, Sharan Alessandra, Charles L. Pardee, Jr. and Michael Glancey
Birthdays (this coming week):	Laura Seagren, Annabeth Gausepohl and Patricia Caswell
Acolytes:	September 3: Team 1 September 10: Team 2
Altar Guild:	September 3: Team III September 10: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	September 3: Debbie Belding and Sue DeLorenzo September 10: Lucille Ogden and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	September 3: Russell Urban-Mead and Joann Clark September 10: Wilma Tully and Mike Fenwick
Ushers:	September 3: Bill and Regina Ardini September 10: Patty Drake and Bobbie Wells
Pledge Clerks:	September 3: Joanne Lown and Janet Bright September 10: Joanne Lown and Janet Bright
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	September 3: Pat Weber, Cliff and Bobbie Wells, Corey Whalen September 10: Scott and Diane Wyant and Grace Parent and St. James' Nursery School
Coffee Hour Hosts:	September 3: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil September 10: Jodi Triola, Ross and Connie Eames

This Week's Lectionary

Exodus 3:1-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 513 Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song
Sequence: 136 (LEVAS) I Have Decided to Follow Jesus
Offertory: Choir: Take Up Thy Cross
Communion: 644 How Sweet the Name of Jesus
Recessional: 450 All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (August 27, 2017)

"Secret Identity"

I've decided to change the title from "Secret Identities" to "Suppressed Identities."

Here's why.

Originally, I was thinking about how Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone he was the Messiah. Like Batman or Superman - it's obvious to *us* who he is but for some reason, nobody in the story can figure out that he's the superhero.

And Moses? He even has this cool origin story where, as a baby, he's set adrift in a basket only to be rescued from a terrible fate by a princess - and while she raises him as her own, everyone knows he's *different*.

I kind of liked the whole "superhero" secret identity thing - hidden in plain sight, they're mild mannered carpenters or - well, Moses might have been more of a Bruce Wayne since he was raised as a prince. But anyway, when the cry for help came, they would spring into action, raising the dead or bringing people out of slavery.

I really wanted to go there, but I think maybe it was wishful thinking. Because - to me at least - it feels like we need a superhero. I have spent the last few days - or weeks - depressed about the state of our country. And every article I read or listen to or watch, whether it be about what's going on right now or about our history - just makes me more depressed.

Which is kind of the point of the superhero, by the way. Superman was first published deep into the depression with war looming (also the period when Green Hornet, Batman, Flash, Captain Marvel among others appeared). People were depressed and scared - they needed more than regular heroes. They needed superheroes. And it didn't matter that they hid their identities with a pair of glasses or a flimsy mask.

There are a few problems with this secret identity theory. First, Moses' identity might actually have been known to everyone, though the text makes it difficult to know for sure. The Princess surely knew he was a Hebrew, and I suspect Pharaoh knew she had to come up with the baby from *somewhere*.

Nevertheless, he was raised as a prince. I should note that our translation says his mother gave him over to the princess when he had grown *up*, but others say when he had grown *older*, which is a better interpretation.

Anyway, despite being raised as a prince, people *knew* he was a Hebrew - they just didn't talk about it.

Second, Jesus did not hide the fact that he had awesome power. He turned water into wine, he calmed storms, he walked on water, he healed the sick and raised the dead. So to say, "Don't tell anyone I'm the Messiah" probably doesn't change people's impression that he's someone special.

So.... If everybody knew who they were, why not talk about it? Why suppress it?

With Moses, it's complicated. He was from an oppressed people. Pharaoh officially wanted him dead. It was only by the princess's word that he was spared and raised among royalty. But how would that look to the Hebrews? Could Pharaoh really have this Hebrew baby in the family? How could he justify continuing to oppress the Hebrews if he had one as a son?

So, even if people knew, Moses officially became Egyptian. He became one of the oppressors of his own people. He was raised to think Hebrews were inferior, born to serve Egyptians.

Who he was Wasn't secret, just suppressed. This may have kept him alive, but it wasn't the real Moses.

Jesus kept his Messiahship quiet only because the time wasn't right yet. For his mission, he needed the stage to be set properly. He needed to have time to *show* people first who he was before telling them. Even better if they could figure it out for themselves - knowing they could trust him by his actions before he ever said a word about his identity. Today, he checks their progress by asking who people think he is - and who *they* think he is. Still, you'll notice that in three of the four gospels, Jesus never once calls himself the Son of God - and barely refers to his identity at all.

Rather, Jesus talks about and shows the power of God's love. Once the foundation was laid through his teaching and miracles, *then* he could identify himself after the resurrection.

Had he said, "Look at me, I'm the Messiah!" before giving people a reason to believe, the truth of Jesus' saving message would have been brushed aside.

There's another reason, I suspect, that the identities of both Moses and Jesus were suppressed rather than secret.

People needed to know their saviors. The Hebrews needed to recognize Moses when he returned to bring them out of slavery - and to recognize him as one of their own, even if he was identified with the oppressors. I mean, would they really have followed an Egyptian out of Egypt?

With Jesus, people had to know he was a Jew. Otherwise, his death and resurrection would have meant nothing. And the only way they could know he was a Jew was by knowing where he came from, knowing his family.

Superheroes are unknown, secret, other. God's heroes - even the Son of God - are one of us. We know where they come from. There may be reasons for their identities to be suppressed, but it's always temporary. Waiting to come out.

So, as much as I'd like one, I have no expectation of a superhero popping up in our time of need. But heroes of the biblical sort - people we *know*, people who can see suffering and pain and injustice in the world and spring into action to correct it? Well, you've been here all along. Amen.

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