

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Every time churches start talking about Stewardship, somebody mentions the "tithe." It's one of those words that sounds both impressive and slightly ominous.

"Do you tithe?"

"Don't forget the tithe."

"Why isn't everyone tithing?"

What is this tithe of which so many speak? I hope to shed a little light on the subject, which in turn may help you make your own stewardship decisions.

The word "Tithe" comes from Old English teotha which means "tenth." Teothan means "to pay one tenth." It is the concept that the faithful - you and I - are expected to give one-tenth of our income to the church.

It comes up several times in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, largely in texts describing the establishment of the nation of Israel after the exodus.

In Leviticus 27:30-33 we read that, "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD." In the texts, these tithes are to be given to the Levites. As you remember, of the 12 tribes of Israel, only the Levites did not receive a homeland. They were dispersed among the other tribes to serve as priests. They owned no land but were granted the right of the tithe.

In keeping with that tradition, the Episcopal Church embraces the tithe. In 2009, the 76th General Convention passed a resolution which "reaffirms the tithe as the minimum standard of giving for Episcopalians."

A key word here is "minimum." As far as the church is concerned, everyone should be giving at least ten percent

But should that really apply to us today? Jesus never mentions the tithe except in a negative context. He complained about the scribes and Pharisees who "tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith."

David A. Croteau, in his book, "You Mean I Don't Have to Tithe?" cites several theologians who argue against the tithe precisely because Jesus doesn't ask it of us. Moreover, he says it is too much of a burden on the poor and too low a standard for the rich.

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

So how are we to understand this? More importantly, what are we supposed to do? Is it ten percent of gross or net? Does that ten percent include giving to other charities? What if we have really big expenditures - like college?

Frankly, what the church expects of us is irrelevant. Episcopalians are not known for doing something just because it's expected of them. I can't imagine successfully brow-beating or guilt-tripping any of you into tithing. And really, I wouldn't want to. If you're going to give to the mission of the church, I'd rather have it be with joy. And if it is a smaller amount that allows you to enjoy the giving, so be it.

Besides, do we really want to get into the minutia of whether or not stocks count as income?

In 2 Corinthians 9, St. Paul says "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

For the record, I believe God loves a grumpy giver, too. And a non-giver, for that matter. But the idea of each person giving as he or she determines to be right does make sense.

Nevertheless, if you'd like guidance, here's a thought. Each of us should give. We should give not only to the work of the church but probably to other worthy causes as well. We need to factor all of this in to our financial considerations.

What's more, for some of us, ten percent is the difference between eating and starving or having a place to live. Whether it's net or gross, do not put yourself in undue financial stress. On the other hand, for others of us, ten percent is nothing, a little off the top. We can afford twenty, thirty or even forty percent without feeling the pain.

If that's the case, give more - again, not just to the church but to the work of God throughout the world.

For my money (pun intended), we give to the mission of the church not because we feel guilty but because we believe that the Good News of Jesus Christ is important and worth being spread with joy and love. We give because we understand how our wealth is pure gift - and that our giving will be part of God's blessing on others. We give because to hold tightly to our money (or anything) makes us prisoners of that money.

So I suggest you look at the things, causes, charities that you feel are worthy, and then once you examine your budget, you set aside a set amount (or percentage) of money for them. I'm certainly not going to tell you how much! After that, give it! Saying you'll do something but not following through doesn't really do anyone any good.

So, will you tithe?

I don't want to know. I doubt God cares.

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

What God does care about, however, is that you're engaged in the world, engaged in the people, the issues, the needs, concerns and the ministries that are right in front of us. Whatever the amount, let your giving be with joy for the work God gives us to do.

In Christ,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

The News of the Church

Roast Pork Dinner TONIGHT! 5:00 – 7:30: A delicious Roast Pork Dinner with seasonal vegetables, roasted potatoes, salad, rolls, braised red cabbage. Apple Cobbler with ice cream for dessert. Served Family Style. There will also be an assortment of apple pies baked by the CIA for sale. Tickets are \$15. You can make your reservation at the office (229-2820).

Men's Breakfast: The Men's Breakfast is tomorrow, **Saturday, September 19th, at 8:00 a.m.** at Cranberry's. All men 18 and over are invited! Hope to see you there - there's a lot to eat and talk about.

Tour Guide Training Saturday at 5:00: If you have signed up to be a tour guide for the Graveyard Tours, please make every effort to attend the training session tomorrow, **Saturday, September 19th, at 5:00 PM.** We will have a brief orientation in the Church, then walk through the route in the graveyard. Be prepared for inclement weather (just in case).

Acolyte Training This Sunday: If you want to be trained as an Acolyte, this Sunday is your chance. After the 10:00 AM service, Fr. Chuck and Deacon Gail will do a thorough training session. It won't take too long, but by the end, you'll know everything you need to know!

Tables Coming: Help Needed: The new tables you helped buy for the parish hall are coming! They will arrive on Monday afternoon (no specific time has been given yet). We need a half dozen strong backs or so to help move them from the truck to the parish hall. If you can help, please let Fr. Chuck know.

Sunday School Registration OPEN! Sunday School starts this week! Don't worry if you haven't had a chance to register - you can do so at any time. Registration forms for Sunday School will be available at church, so pick on up this week! There's also a registration form attached to this E-pistle - you can print it up and bring it with you.

GRAVEYARD TOUR TICKETS ARE ON SALE: You can now purchase Graveyard Tour tickets by visiting our website: www.stjameshydepark.org Encourage your friends, colleagues

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

and families to get their tickets, too! We hope that sending people directly to the church's website will make the purchasing process easier.

Bible Study Reading-1 Kings: We just began our Thursday weekly daytime bible study for the fall season. The book we're working on is 1 Kings, so if you don't know anything about it, now's your chance! It meets every **Thursday at 11:00 AM**. Open to everyone.

Pledge Clerk Wanted: We are looking for a Pledge Clerk to work with one of our experienced clerks. We'll show you the ropes. You would serve about once a month.

WEEDERS WANTED: Thank you to everyone who volunteered to take a garden or path assignment for weeding in an effort to "put our best foot forward." We still need 3 or 4 more volunteers. You will choose a garden or path to adopt and be responsible for its weeding and upkeep throughout the year. You will be able to work on it on your own schedule (There will be no designated work days, just whenever it fits in with you.) It probably should only need your attention three or four times a year (if that). Bring a friend. If you can help fill that schedule, please call Sue DeLorenzo at 266-3196 or Carol Vinehall at 849-1914. We'd really appreciate your help. Thanks again.

Episcopal Relief and Development Next **Sunday, September 27** is Episcopal Relief and Development Sunday as we celebrate their mission of bringing hope to our neighbors around the world. Please prayerfully consider making a donation in honor of their 75th Anniversary celebration. There will be special offering envelopes in the pews to place your cash or check donations. Checks are to be payable to St. James' Church - memo line: Episcopal Relief. Thank you.

Wellness Fair: Being held on **Saturday, October 4th** from 12-6 p.m. at the Hyde Park Farmers' Market. Please see attached flier.

Get Your Coffee Hour On! Would you like to clear out your cupboard of cookies? Feel like baking a cake or a sheet of brownies? Find a good 'buy one, get one free' deal on baked goods at stop n shop? If you can donate some goodies and place them on the table in the parish hall before church, you too can be a coffee hour volunteer-- that's all it takes! So please, fill up all those empty slots thru December on the clipboard in the narthex & we'll handle the rest. P.S.

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

Of course, if you feel called to get more involved, just ask Saira or any other coffee team member how you can help!

Bless Your Pets - October 4: This year, the Feast of St. Francis - **October 4** - falls on a Sunday. We don't want to interfere with regular worship, but we also don't want to ignore the patron saint of animals and the environment, so at 3:00 PM that day, we will hold a simple service to thank God for our pets and all the animals of the world. Bring your pets, bring your friends, bring yourselves!

Looking Ahead to Thanksgiving Dinner: Even though we still have much to do in October, plans are being made for Thanksgiving. The Community of Hyde Park - including churches, chamber of commerce, schools and other organizations are teaming up to host a community-wide Thanksgiving Dinner at the New York State Park Headquarters in Staatsburg. The dinner will be on Sunday, **November 22 at 5:30 PM**. There will be a ticket price, though there will also be many tickets available for those who cannot afford it.

St. James' has been asked to bake between 20 and 30 apple pies for the dinner. I'm still waiting to hear how the supplies will be provided, but our main concern right now is getting a few bakers who are willing to bake - we can do it either at homes or all together at the church. Let Fr. Chuck know!

Thanksgiving Service: Notice is also given that on **Tuesday, November 24**, the community churches will hold their annual Community Thanksgiving Service. This year, it will be at St. James' Chapel, which hosts three other churches along with our own occasional services. If you would like to participate in the service, please let Fr. Chuck know.

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.

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."

20 Holy Innocents' Church, Highland Falls

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

- 21 On the feast day for Saint Matthew we pray for increased courage in sharing our faith with others.
- 22 Sacristans and altar servers in the diocese
- 23 The Social Concerns Commission
- 24 Merricat's Castle School, Manhattan
- 25 St. Andrew's Church, Hartsdale
- 26 The Chaplaincy at New York University

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.

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

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, Sharyn Burke, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, 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.

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): Kathy Graff, Stephen Gaulin, Marcia Valdatta, Laurel Ardini, Bill Holland, Stephen Burkhardt and Franklin Santos

Birthdays
(next week): Joe Cotton, John Beyer, Austin Horne, Bryanna Burkhardt, Daniel Ogden, Aaron Burkhardt, Justin Bohlmann and Ann Dingee

Acolytes:
September 20: TBA
September 27: TBA

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

Altar Guild:	September 20: Team Number III September 27: Team Number I
8 a.m. Readers:	September 20: Deb Belding and Jim Smyth September 27: Angela Henry and Lucille Ogden
10 a.m. Readers:	September 20: Wilma Tully and Nancy Montero September 27: Patty Caswell and Andy Hall
Ushers:	September 20: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher September 27: Andrew and Tonya Hall
Pledge Clerks:	September 20: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher September 27: Doug Belding and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	September 20: Dean and Patty Caswell and Kathy and Fred Champion September 27: Judy and Chandler Burke, Clarence, Joann, Anna and Christine Clark and Rich, Leighann, Alix, Sophie and Eden Ciferri
Coffee Hour Hosts:	September 20: Deirdre Mae Micker September 27: Saira Shahani

This Week's Lectionary

Proverbs 31:10-31

Psalm 1

James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

Mark 9:30-37

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

Sermon Preached on
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
(September 13, 2015)

"Gaining the Whole World"

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

Ever have one of those nights where you're lying in bed, and your thoughts bounce from one thing to another in a stream of consciousness? Well that was me last night.

Yesterday evening, we had rehearsal for the Graveyard Tours. I was talking with the cast about John McVickar, our first rector, who opened a school for black residents because he believed education was the only way forward.

That got me thinking: Education is the only way forward. That is why we have our boys in college.

However, college is very expensive.

It's so expensive, we wonder how we'll pay for it.

We Need money.

We Better play the lottery. Hey, you never know. We might win.

What if we do win? What if we win A LOT? Then Money won't be a problem.

We Can afford an education. We Can afford anything we want. New car. A nice vacation. Our own house. Our own business. Our own politician. Heck, with that kind of money, I could become a politician! I could become president! I could rule the world!

Well, Until someone stages a coup, that is, or I get sick of it all, or - as is inevitable for us all - I die. And then all that money, all that property, all that power, would be utterly useless. And the lives that I would have almost assuredly stepped on in my way to the top would cry out for justice.

Okay, so this line of thinking may stray from what our scriptures were getting at...but not by much.

Because one of the tenets of our faith is that we do not cling to this world. Not to money, not power, not people, not life itself.

This is not because these things are necessarily bad, nor is it simply because they don't last - no matter how hard we try to make them last. No, we do not cling to these things because they are not where our true value, our true treasure, lies. And the more we cling to them, they more they hold us back from real life.

Jesus has to deal with this issue with his disciples when he tells them that his ministry will lead to his death. Peter, who kind of represents all the disciples, rebukes Jesus. He essentially says, "Don't talk like that! We don't want to hear about death."

Jesus reminds Peter in no uncertain terms that we DO talk about death. Because we believe that this life on earth is merely a pathway to the doorway of death, and that real life lies beyond the door.

But if we cling to the things of this world, we will find the passage much more traumatic, and maybe fatal.

Unfortunately, there are too many who preach the value of the things of this world. You've heard of the "gospel of prosperity," the teaching that God wants you to be rich, that if you are not rich, it's because you're not trying hard enough - you don't have enough faith, and you're not making God happy enough.

St. James' E-pistle

September 18, 2015

The gospel of prosperity is just the most recent incarnation of a belief that prosperity in this life is what really matters. It's been going on since the Book of Job.

But what those who teach this deadly doctrine are really doing is teaching that life does not matter, that eternal life is not real and that love itself is a delusion. In their book, if you're not looking out for number one, then there's something wrong with you. In other words, those who teach this philosophy are saying, "Only winners can gain the whole world, and God wants you to be a winner like me."

Perhaps this is why James warned people about the dangers of being a teacher. It is a high responsibility, and you can mess people up in a big way with something as small as your tongue. Teaching self-centeredness leads to fear, and fear leads to mistrust which leads to contempt and hate which makes a living hell on earth.

And that's probably why Jesus says, "What will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?"

Next week we start Sunday school. We will lift up our teachers who will not teach greed, and self-centeredness, and fear, and contempt, and superiority, and hate. They will teach love and reconciliation and humility, and self-giving - they will teach the art of letting go of the things of this world in order to embrace the things of God.

The church has often been guilty of teaching the exact opposite of what Christ taught us. But God keeps calling us back. To re-learn our lessons, seek reconciliation ourselves, and proclaim the gospel. A gospel, by the way, that is open to all people regardless of economic class, race, age, gender, nationality - a gospel that proclaims God's love for all of us.

None of this doesn't mean that I won't still fantasize about winning Power Ball and feel the sweet relief from financial strain. But it does mean I will realize every day that it's just a fantasy. God's love for us, on the other hand, is real.

Amen.

St. James' Episcopal Church
4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, N.Y. 12538

Phone: 845-229-2820 Fax: 845-229-5293

Web Site: www.stjameshydepark.org Email: stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org

2015 - 2016 SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM

Child's Full Name _____

Name Child Prefers to be called _____

Date of Birth _____ Grade Entering _____

Mother's Name _____

Father's Name _____

Full Address _____

(If parents live apart, please give address at which the child lives most of the time and indicate which parent is at that address.)

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail address: _____ May we send e-mail notices to you? Yes / No

Has your child attended St. James Sunday School before? Yes / No

Are you members of the church? Yes / No Has your child been baptized? Yes / No

Will you be attending church while your child is in Sunday School? Yes / No

If not, emergency contact info:

At what phone can we reach you in case of emergency? _____

Additional emergency contact name _____

phone number _____

relationship to child _____

Are there any restrictions/conditions your child has, or is there any information the teacher should know in order to make Sunday School a more positive experience for your child? Yes / No

If yes, please explain.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, problems, suggestions you or your child might have regarding Sunday School.

Date _____ Parent's Signature _____

Hyde Park Wellness Fair



To benefit the Hyde Park Community Garden

**Sunday, October 4 from 12-6 pm
Rain or Shine**

At the Hyde Park Food Festival

**(on Rte. 9 in Hyde Park where the Farmer's Market is -
the parking lot where Hyde Park Motors used to be)**

Free Admission!

Vendors! Food! Music!

~ Vendor space \$20/table ~

**For further information
call 229-2820 or 229-0153**