

St. James' E-pistle

September 26, 2014

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

With so much going on in our church, you may wonder why I have a lot of “continuing” notices in the E-pistle. You might (gently) suggest to me that nobody will look at them again since they’ve been running for several weeks in a row.

And you might have a point.

I think specifically of the prayers for peace in the Holy Land and the prayers for the Nigerian girls abducted by Boko Haram, not to mention a call for donations for the Diocese of Jerusalem’s hospital in Gaza, a call for new acolytes, a call for Habitat for Humanity workers, and a reminder of the Home Matters service available to seniors.

So why have these things repeat week after week? Because many situations in our lives are not one-time deals. Many of our concerns are ongoing, but the temptation is to think, “We already prayed for them. Let’s move on to the next item.”

That’s not how life works.

While it’s true that every day brings new opportunities, new challenges, new crises, it’s equally true that old situations do not magically go away. The girls in Nigeria are still captive. The hospital in Gaza is still treating above its capacity with barely recognizable supplies.

For us, the challenge is to balance out the ever-flowing stream of new causes with the ongoing, old news. It is for us to learn when we simply need to stick with an issue long after it has ceased to be fashionable.

The same is true within the church. From little things like our unending need for new acolytes to stream of folks who come looking for spiritual, emotional or sometimes financial help.

So, I keep some of these messages and prayers in the E-pistle week after week after week. Even if you don’t read it every time, even if your eyes skip right over it, it’s important that it’s there. We do not forget those in need and danger simply because they are no longer in the news cycle.

This doesn’t mean that news doesn’t happen here at St. James’! You’ll find some really important things in this week’s E-pistle: Indaba, Reading Adventures, and Stewardship, for starters. I hope you will give them your prayerful and serious consideration. They matter.

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Balance the new with the old, the acute with the chronic. Both are part of God's world and God's call to you for action.

STEWARDSHIP: We are approaching that time of the year when we talk about Stewardship, that is, your pledge to the work of Christ in the Church.

It is always good and right to pledge (and yes, we always have). But Stewardship is much more than money, and it is more than merely a Fall activity. Stewardship is how we use what God gives us all year long.

Stewardship is the way in which we view our possessions, our time, our skills. If we see them as "mine" then we miss the point of the Gospel. If we see them as something we earned, or something we deserve, then we miss what Jesus taught us about God through the resurrection.

If we take Christ seriously, then we understand that everything comes from God and is given to us so that we may share God's love.

In coming weeks, you'll hear about the many ministries we take part in at St. James', and how they all need money to continue. All true! But let the Stewardship season also be for you a chance to look at what you have and remind yourself that it is, ultimately, God's. We are simply the stewards of those things.

In Christ,

Chuck+

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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."

September

- 28 Church musicians
- 29 On the feast day for Saint Michael and All Angels we pray for protection from temptation and evil.
- 30 St. David's Church, Highland Mills

October

- 1 The Bishop of New York
- 2 French Church of Saint Esprit, Manhattan
- 3 The Church of the Resurrection, Manhattan
- 4 On the feast day for Francis of Assisi we pray for all who work on behalf of the poor.

STILL PRAYING:

Most of the Nigerian girls kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram are still in bondage. Please consider this prayer in your daily devotions.

Prayer for the kidnapped Nigerian girls May 2014

O God, we cry out to you
for the lives and the freedom
of the 276 kidnapped girls in Nigeria.
In their time of danger and fear,
pour out your strong Spirit for them.
Make a way home for them in safety.
Make a way back for them
to the education that will lift them up.
Hold them in the knowledge
that they are not captive slaves,
they are not purchased brides,
but they are your beloved daughters ,
and precious in your sight.
Change the hearts and minds of their kidnappers
and of all who choose violence against women and girls.
Cast down the mighty from their seat,
and lift up the humble and meek,

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through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ALSO STILL PRAYING FOR ISRAEL AND GAZA:

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.

For You are Peace, Your world is Peace and all that is Yours is Peace,

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May this be your will
And let us say Amen.

Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum
English Translation Amichai Lau-Lavie

Donate to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: There is an ongoing appeal for donations to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and its Al Ahib Hospital in Gaza. Even after a month, even after the ceasefires, the situation in Gaza is desperate, and the hospital continues to see more patients than it can handle. The hospital is still very low on supplies and fuel to keep the lights on (and medical devices running).

If you would like to support the good and holy work of the Diocese of Jerusalem and its hospital, please send donations to:

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem
25 Old King's Highway No., Suite 13, Darien, CT 06820

Or online at www.afedj.org

Also, Episcopal Relief and Development is gathering funds for the hospital. Donate online at: www.episcopalrelief.org or mail to Episcopal Relief and Development, PO Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058 (memo line: Middle East Fund)

The News of the Church



Wanted: New Acolytes: We want you! We are always looking for new acolytes, and Fall is the perfect time to join! You'll have fun and serve God and your church at the same time. Acolytes need to be at least nine years old and willing to be trained. It's not hard, but you do need to see Fr. Chuck first. So join now!

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Habitat for Humanity Update: Our Church is committed to the Habitat for Humanity Faith Build at 125 Garden Street. Construction has started and needs volunteers. Construction occurs on Fridays and Saturdays 8:30 – 3:30. Please visit the website <http://www.habitatdutchess.com/> to sign up and volunteer. Select the Volunteer Opportunities box and follow the prompts. Also, follow Habitat for Humanity of Dutchess County on Facebook for pictures and schedules. In addition, churches are needed to sign up to provide lunches for the construction teams of 10 to 15 people. Lunch can be sandwiches, pizza or casseroles, fruit and or salads, dessert and some drinks. Please contact Judy Walters (845-297-1530) if you can get a group together to provide lunch on either a Friday or a Saturday.

The Build Captain, Alberto Sanchez, has stated that work on the site will take place each Friday and Saturday. The foundation is in and is now waiting for helping hands to continue building this house. Won't you please consider offering your hands?

Any questions, please contact Deb Belding or Deacon Gail.

READING ADVENTURES RETURNS: A couple of years ago, Reading Adventures folded because Hyde Park Elementary School where it took place closed. There is no interest at Staatsburg Library to recreate the program. Whether it will arise with the same name or something new is unknown, but the librarian there has been working with St. James' to create a similar program. Now, we are looking for volunteers to read with kids!

As yet, it is uncertain what days or times the program will take place - these are being worked out with the schools and library. But if you are at least interested in being a volunteer reader, please let me know. If you need more information about what the program does, please let me know. Thanks!

Youth Group Overnight: On Saturday, September 27, the St. James' Youth Group will gather in the Parish Hall for the first of what we hope will be monthly overnights. The idea is to have enough time together to goof around but also do some worship and more serious conversation as well as plan some trips and service projects together. We get together at 5:00 and will eat dinner together. For this first meeting, pizza's on me. Bring your friends! The more the merrier (though I would like to get a rough count so I know how much pizza to get).

Tea Room Coming: The world famous St. James' Tea Room is coming in just a few weeks! The Tea Room is on Saturday, October 18 and will draw hungry folks from all over the area. As we do every year, we are looking for help with baking and serving. There is a set menu of

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proven goodies, so you don't have to wonder what to bake - just contact Deirdre Mae Micker or look for the Tea Room clip board and sign up. Servers are of all ages, so go ahead, sign up!

If you can't bake or serve, you can always come and eat! Whichever way you choose, we look forward to seeing you there.

Hudson Valley Home Matters: Hudson Valley Home Matters is seeking both volunteers and members. It is an organization devoted to providing simple services to adults over 50 through volunteers. There is an annual fee for membership. If you are interested in volunteering or seeking the services of Hudson Valley Home Matters, you can get more information from their website at <http://www.hvhomematters.org> or by calling at 845-452-4846. If you know Herb and Barbara Sweet, they are volunteers. You can contact them as well.

Indaba Team Forming: We have been offered the opportunity to form an Indaba Team for 2015. You may remember that last year, parishes throughout the diocese participated in the Indaba program. In it, groups made up of three parishes got together over three weekends to visit each church, learn about their circumstances and the ministry they had within their circumstances. In each group, there was one church from each of the three Regions of the diocese (New York City, Region II which is mostly Westchester, Putnam, and Orange Counties), and the Mid-Hudson Region where we are located). Each church was asked to form a team of four people (including the rector).

Last year, we were unable to form a team - just barely. But every participant I spoke with reported that the Indaba process was tremendously helpful, even life changing. They highly recommended it.

I am anxious to form a team and get involved! To do that, I need three parishioners to step forward. Ideally, Bishop Dietsche would like at least one young adult on the team. Maybe this is your call by God to do something new and exciting in the church. It requires a certain commitment, but it is worth it. Here is some information about the weekends set aside for Indaba. The 2015 weekend dates will be January 24-25, May 2-3, and September 26-27. The website with more information is <http://indaba.episcopalny.org>. If you want to communicate directly with someone from the diocese about it, please contact Archdeacon William Parnell at wparnell@diocesenyny.org.

If you are interested in being part of the team, please contact me, too!

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Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Susie Buhalis, Jim and Sharyn Burke, Ashley Coyne, Kathleen Craft, Michael Day, Jane Gagliardoto, Kasey Gaulin, John Golden, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Andy Hall, Harold Hall, Liz Handman, Brooke Helton, Rev. Don Hoger, Dalton K., Barbara Knakal, Rosemary Leuken, Doris Mack, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Pat Rooney, John Schroeder, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Debbie Stone, Gloria Veach, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Bobbie Wells, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Pray for recovery from surgery for Mike Fenwick. Pray for Cliff P.

Pray in thanksgiving for the marriage of Joe and Lee Cotton.

Pray in thanksgiving for the baptism of Milena Lanette Jewel.

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 (week ending September 28):	Joe Cotton, John Beyer, Austin Horne, Bryanna Burkhardt, Daniel Ogden, Aaron Burkhardt, Justin Bohlmann, Ann Dingee and Jada Jennings
Birthdays (next week):	John Bohlmann and Betsy Wardell
Acolytes:	September 28: Eden Ciferri, Chris Santos and Nancy Montero October 5: Bryanna Burkhardt, Chris Granados-Kramer and Monica Rizzo
Altar Guild:	September 28: Team I October 5: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	September 28: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth October 5: Angela Henry and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	September 28: Regina Ardini/Sophie Ciferri

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Ushers: October 5: Russell Urban Mead/Sophie Ciferri
September 28: Kathie Champion and Mary Gabel
October 5: Andrew and Tonya Hall

Pledge Clerks: September 28: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell
October 5: TBA

Coffee Hour Hosts: September 28: The Halls and the Gaulins
October 5: Audrey Horne and Saira Shahani

This Week's Lectionary

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32

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

Sermon Preached on
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
(September 21, 2014)

"Facing Forward"

It has been a busy weekend. Yesterday we started out with a funeral and ended with a wedding. Today we finish it up with a baptism and the start of Sunday School. We get to touch on some of the major life events all at once!

Each one of these life events offers opportunities to reflect on who we are in Christ and what life in Christ, a life FOLLOWING Christ is all about. (Granted, often at a wedding, following Christ isn't necessarily the first thing on people's minds, but that's what I'm there for.)

And in none of these life events - these sacramental moments - is it more important to reflect on what it means to follow Christ than in baptism.

Our scriptures today offer a particularly important piece of advice to those starting out on their journey of life. Face Forward. That's the advice, Face Forward.

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When you are baptized, you begin a lifelong journey of figuring out what God wants you to do and then trying to do it. But you don't do this in vacuum. You do it in a noisy, pushy, angry world. It is easy to be distracted, even derailed.

Just look at the Hebrews in today's reading from Exodus. They had been released from slavery by God. They had been rescued by God from the avenging Egyptian army. They had walked through the Red Sea for Pete's sake!

Yet, instead of looking around the wilderness in which they found themselves and seeing freedom or opportunity, they looked back at what they had left behind and longed for it. True, they were hungry, but their response was to look back and remember with fondness the good times they had as slaves - a natural human response, by the way. When things get tough, we tend to look back and remember, incorrectly, how great things USED to be. When instead, we would do better to look to God right now and ask for guidance, peace, strength and courage to face to trials before us.

Because life ALWAYS brings challenges and difficulty, but looking back at the "good old days" is not only a delusion, it more importantly keeps us from living right now and seeing the miracle of manna, of quails, of water from the rock - all things God provides if only we face forward to see Him at work

Another temptation we face in life - and this is especially true when you're young and impatient - is to look THROUGH your present life to some hoped-for future. Just look at Paul in his letter to the Philippians today. Now, Paul's had a rough life following Christ. He's travelled as much as anyone, but he's been screamed at repeatedly, beat up, arrested, threatened, chased out of town... He's tired, and as he writes, he admits that he would rather be dead now so he can be home with Christ in heaven.

We often do that, don't we? "I can't wait till I'm out of high school, and then life will REALLY begin. I can't wait till I have a career, and then I'll have the money to do what I want. I can't wait till the kids are out of the house so I'll have peace! I can't wait till I retire because then I'll have time to do what I want..."

But if we are living in the future, we miss out on the present. Not only that, but we miss out on the ministry that God is putting right in front of us. That's what Paul recognizes in his letter: his desire to be with Christ is tempered by his awareness that he still has work to do in the here and now. He knows the best thing he can do to follow Christ is to face forward and SEE the life in front of him, not look through it.

But there's a third temptation that can derail a life following Christ. Jesus addresses it in today's Gospel. That temptation is to look SIDEWAYS instead of facing forward. In the parable, he shows day laborers who have been hired by a farmer. The first group who's hired agree to the usual wage and are happy that they got picked over those other guys. They know that at least today, they will be able to feed their families. But a few hours later the farmer hires more laborers. They feel lucky too. At least they'll be able to eat today. Then the farmer hires more,

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and even more just before the end of the day. They probably won't be able to do much with the little bit they'll earn, but something is better than nothing, right?

So when those who are hired last receive a full day's wage, not only are they delighted, but the folks who were hired first sit up and take notice too, because they figure, "If THAT guy got a day's wage for just an hour's work, I ought to get a lot more. It's only fair."

And that's their problem. They are busy looking at what the others are getting and comparing themselves with them. They got everything they were promised, but they can't appreciate it because someone else got it, too, and with less effort.

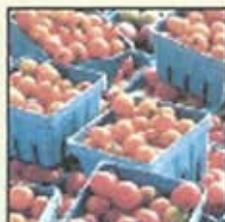
Comparing ourselves to others is never helpful when it comes to following Christ. Because sometimes we say to ourselves, "At least I'm a better person than them." And sometimes we say to ourselves, "I can't possibly be as good as them; it's hopeless." Sometimes we say, "I worked so hard, but THEY got the recognition" and so on.

Jesus knows, however, that in order to follow him, we are called to keep our eyes on him alone. We all have different journeys, but our job is to focus on how WE follow, not others. Comparing won't help, especially when it's to say, "They don't deserve it," which is what those day laborers were saying about the workers who did not put in a full day and still got paid equally. Jesus' message is, "I promise to take care of you forever, and I will. And I'll take care of them, too. But if you are too busy looking at them, you will miss the joy and wonder that I am putting in your path right now,"

This isn't to say that you shouldn't look around you. Following Christ means being aware of what's going on and acting on it. Today, for example, people around the world are marching for action on climate change. Today, Sunday School is starting - an important ministry of the teachers AND the students because we are called to both learn and teach. Locally, we're being asked to help with the Habitat Build. That could be the very ministry God is putting in your lap. But we won't know if we're looking back at the past or through to some unknown future or sideways at what others are doing.

God's message today, whether you're just starting the journey or nearing its end is the same. Face forward. That's where you will find your God and Father. Amen.

FINDING COURAGE. FINDING HOPE.



Exploring the meaning of environmental stewardship in your church & community

Saturday, October 11, 2014 • 9am - 3:30pm

Trinity Church • 7 South Highland Avenue • Ossining, NY 10562

Parking at church • Short distance from train



Keynote speaker: Paul Gallay, President, Riverkeeper

Riverkeeper is the premier environmental watchdog organization that patrols the Hudson River to protect it from polluters and is based in Ossining, NY.

Panel Discussion on Food, Water & Energy : Taking action on your beliefs

Moderated by Rev. Jeff Gollhofer with Sr. Catherine Grace, George Potanovic, Jr. and Steve Knight.

Advance registration: \$10 by October 6th • \$15 on day of event

All Episcopalians from the Diocese of New York are welcome!

Lunch is included with vegetarian options available.



Register online at: <http://episcopaldioceseny.org/events/430>

or contact Rev. Jeff Gollhofer, Committee Chair for more information

phone: 845-532-4904 • e-mail: jmgollhofer1@earthlink.net

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