

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: January 21, 2018

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Bible Verse

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

- Mark 1:14

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I confess to being a little excited and possibly distracted this week as we prepare for the premier of "A New York Lamentation" on Sunday. I wish the premier was in our part of the diocese, but such is the work of committees.

Still, the work of the play, and the work of the committee - and through them, the work of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York will be done! And that work is to help us look at ourselves clearly, without trying to cover up the sins. It is, in a sense, a Lenten play - hard but necessary for our spiritual health. We are called by God to look at our sins, to lament them, to repent, and to change our ways. That's what the "Year of Lamentation" is all about, and I'm blessed to be a part of it.

We all have plenty in our lives to review, of course. Not just our personal lives but in our society as well. Again, that's what the Year of Lamentation is all about - recognizing that a problem far bigger than any individual (in this instance, slavery) required a response from the people of God (and did not get it).

Many issues require societal attention; review, repentance and repair. One such issue being wrestled with these days is immigration. It fills our airwaves, and as people of faith, we wonder what our stance should be, and what we should do. More than one person has asked me what the Episcopal Church's stance is on a difficult, complicated and fraught problem.

The Church has statements on many immigration issues which you can read at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/article/summary-episcopal-church-policy-immigration-and-refugee-issues>. In general, however, the Church's stance is that we treat all people humanely, that families are allowed to remain together, that people who were brought to this country illegally and raised here - who know no other country - should be allowed to remain and have a path toward citizenship.

For those who seek a scriptural basis for thinking about immigration, you may find that it is surprisingly clear. Even the Old Testament with its frequent invasions and even slaughters has a kind attitude toward immigrants - "strangers" in biblical terms.

4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park NY 12538 T 845-229-2820 F 845-229-5293

W www.stjameshydepark.org E stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org

f at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/22692330307>

Leviticus summarizes it rather succinctly: “When the alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 19:33-34 and 24:22).

Of course, it’s important to remember that Jesus himself was also an alien - a refugee in Egypt, just as Jacob had been. That does NOT mean the Church’s stance is that people ought to simply wander around unchecked. Even in Jesus’ time, borders existed, and travel between countries could be restricted. More so today. The chaos would be catastrophic. Nevertheless, as Christians, we are called upon to always monitor our treatment of refugees, of guests, of those who are fleeing violence or crippling poverty. The self-centered and self-serving attitude of “this is ours, not for you,” is not compatible with Christianity. Our faith always requires an open heart and open doors. Our faith requires acknowledging that nothing belongs to us - it is all God’s, and whatever we are blessed with is for the good of all God’s children, not merely our loved ones.

How do we examine our individual and corporate response to the refugee crisis and immigration issues? First we ask if we are helping in some way as individuals. Donating to Episcopal Relief and Development is one way. Second, we look at our representatives’ votes on refugee and immigration policy and decide whether it comports with our faith. Are we really helping those places in need as much as we can? (The answer is No. We are not even helping - financially or in terms of accepting refugees - as much as smaller countries). Third, we take remedial action, whether that is finding a place to donate or contacting our representatives - or looking for new ways to help. As long as we consider each person in need our brother or sister, as Christ commanded, we will always desire and seek to do more.

I have no intention of telling you what to do - only encouraging you to review where you stand and whether it fits with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This one example of taking a hard look at your life demonstrates why they call it a “hard look.” It is not easy.

But then, if you wanted easy, you would never have chosen to follow Jesus, would you?

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

A PLEDGE PLEA

If you have not pledged yet, please do so. Our budget is highly dependent on your pledges, and without them, we can’t do the work we believe we are called by Christ to do together. There are several people who have not yet pledged, and our budget is beginning to look dire.

Also, if you have pledged, would you consider increasing it? Thanks.

Announcements

Between-Service Class Resumes:

As always, classes take place in the Wilks Room from 9:15 to 9:45. This week's miracle: *The Miraculous Catch of Fish*.

Men's Breakfast:

Saturday, January 20, 8:00 AM at Cranberry's. We'll discuss the CPR course which is tentatively scheduled for February. Be aware that due to class size limitation, this session will be limited to members of the Men's Group. We will explore further CPR courses in the future.

Christian Unity Service:

On **Saturday, January 20 at 3:00 PM**, the Churches of our area will celebrate Christian Unity with a special service. It will take place at Hyde Park United Methodist Church. Please attend this service if at all possible.

Annual Meeting Announced:

This is third notice of the Annual Meeting of St. James' Parish in Hyde Park. The meeting will take place on **Sunday, January 28** immediately following a **9:00 AM** Holy Eucharist. The Annual Meeting is a meeting of the entire parish where reports of the year's activities are given and a vision and plan for the future is laid out. Members of the Vestry are also elected at the Annual Meeting. Eligible voters are those members of St. James' who are at least 18 years old and have been faithful in worship and giving over the past twelve months.

Inquirers Class This Week:

We begin an exploration of the scriptures. Next class, **Wednesday, January 17**, will be a look at the New Testament. Class begins at 7:00 PM. All are welcome to join us for one session - or for the entire series!

Write a Lenten Meditation:

Lent is fast approaching, and with it, our Lenten Meditation booklet. For every day of Lent, there is a brief meditation written by a parishioner (or sometimes friend of St. James'). It is a true spiritual gift to the congregation and to others outside our parish who regularly request copies. A sign-up sheet will be available starting this Sunday. Please sign up!

Are You Getting the Episcopal New Yorker?

If you're not receiving the *Episcopal New Yorker*, the quarterly magazine of our Diocese, email Andrew Gary at agary@diocesenyc.org with your name, mailing address, and the name of the congregation where you are a member. You'll receive the newspaper four times per year. It's that simple to keep up on news of the Diocese and read Engaging yet challenging articles about our faith.

Become An Acolyte:

Whatever your age, if you want to become an acolyte, we will make a place for you. If you attend Sunday School, we will work to make sure you don't miss too much!



A
New York
Lamentation

A Play About Slavery in New York

Presented by

The Episcopal Diocese of New York
As it observes a *Year Of Lamentation* for
the Church's culpability in the
enslavement of God's children

Performances

January 21, Christ Church, Staten Island

March 4, Christ Church, Poughkeepsie

September 23, St. Philip's, Harlem

October 14, St. Bartholemew's, White Plains

All performances begin at 3:00 PM

January 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
14	15 Office Closed	16 7 PM Vestry	17 10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM HP Assisted Living Eucharist 7:00 PM Inquirers FARMWORKER HEARING	18 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	19	20 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast 3:00 PM Christian Unity Service
21 3 PM "New York Lamen- tation" 3 pm Youth Group	22 Office Closed	23	24 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Inquirers	25 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	26	27
28 9:00 AM Eucharist/ ANNUAL MEETING	29	30	31 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Inquirers			
<p>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. Between Service Classes on Sundays are from 9:15 to 9:45 in the Wilks Room.</p>						

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

- (and also the Reparations Committee and the Year of Lamentation)
- 22 St. Margaret's Church (Longwood), Bronx
 - 23 Treasurer of the Diocese, Congregational Treasurers, Financial Administrators
 - 24 St. Paul's Church, Pleasant Valley
 - 25 St. Paul's Church, Poughkeepsie
 - 26 St. Paul's Church, Staten Island
 - 27 Youth Choristers of the Diocese

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Mariel Carter, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Tedi Kramer, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginerio Milano, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), Pat Rooney, John Ross, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Carl Smith, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Georgia Verven, 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): | Jodi Triola, Brian O'Leary, Craig M. Slegel and Joan Oetjen |
| Birthdays
(this coming week): | Isabela Handman Quines, Alix Ciferri, Diane Plass, Beth Matranga and Thomas McNamara |
| Acolytes: | January 21: Kirstin Horn and Amelia McNamara
January 28: Russell Urban-Mead and Braeden Hall |
| Altar Guild: | January 21: Team I
January 28: Team II |
| 8 a.m. Readers: | January 21: Julett Butler and Sue DeLorenzo
January 28: Lucille Ogden and Jim Smyth |
| 10 a.m. Readers: | January 21: Russell Urban-Mead and Nancy Montero
January 28: Patty Caswell and Andy Hall |
| Ushers: | January 21: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher |

January 28: Andrew and Tonya Hall
Pledge Clerks: January 21: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
January 28: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer: January 21: Liz Handman, Franklin Santos, Bela Quines and Chris Santos and Angela Henry
January 28: Kirstin Horn, Austin and Audrey Horne
Coffee Hour Hosts: January 21: Deirdre Mae Micker, Wendy and Russell Urban-Mead
January 28: Brian Rance, Saira Shahani

This Week's Lectionary

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:6-14
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 530 - Spread, O Spread the Mighty Word
Sequence: 660 - O Master Let Me Walk With Thee
Offertory: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"
Communion: 321 - My God, Thy Holy Table is Spread
Recessional: 490 - I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Second Sunday after the Epiphany (January 14, 2018)

"On Being Known"

"On Being Known On Friday, social media erupted with a phrase that was repeated around the country - on Facebook, Twitter, even email. Well, at least among the clergy.

That phrase? "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Now, the fact that it is a key line from today's gospel might explain why it spread across the ether. But if that were the case, this would happen every week. It doesn't. Nor do clergy around the country, across denominations, regularly say, "This just changed my sermon this week."

Why has Nathanael's line, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" taken on such importance?

It was in reaction to the president's reported statement about Haiti and the countries of Africa. To paraphrase him, they are no good countries from which we do not want immigrants. The parallels are a little striking, and the timing is almost like God intended it.

Not that it's a perfect parallel, mind you. There are differences. For one, people from around the world and across political parties immediately began to protest the president's characterization of Haiti and the countries of Africa. In contrast, Jesus seemed almost amused by Nathanael's prejudice. Why?

Remember, the disciples were young men, teenagers, maybe one or two in his early 20s. They were raw, naive, and filled with the prejudices of their families (like Nazareth being a godless backwater filled with illiterate hicks).

Jesus knew he would have to form these students like a potter forms clay.

He began work on Nathanael that very moment when he said, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." This instant identification struck Nathanael, which led to the most amusing exchange in the passage:

"How'd you know me?"

"I saw you under the tree."

"Oh wow! You ARE the son of God?"

"You believe because I said I saw you under the tree?"

Nathanael really is a kid, and Jesus promises to teach him how to see the world in a whole new way. The first lesson: Good things do come out of Nazareth.

Throughout the gospels, we see this lesson repeated: every town, every state, every country is Nazareth. Every place is God's, and every person is God's beloved child. It is a lesson Nathanael would learn, and it is one the Spirit calls us to learn again today.

We actually have personal experience with this. A few months ago, Fr. Sam Owen spoke to us about the Haiti Project. He is the rector of a predominantly Haitian congregation, and through his efforts, the Diocese of New York (with St. James' contributing) helped build a new school in the town of Martel. You may have noticed, we have been praying for them each week. For what it's worth, several of my clergy colleagues in this diocese come from Haiti.

There are also many clergy here from the continent of Africa. In fact, my first boss as a priest - the man who is largely responsible for me being ordained at all - is from Africa. And lest we forget, there are a lot more Anglicans in Africa than in the US or Europe.

Which is to say that we know the good that comes from Haiti and Africa, just as we know the good that can come from any place in the world touched by the hand of God.

Nevertheless, our prejudices haunt us and affect how we treat each other. Long before Friday, I had witnessed them and even felt them myself. Small example: when I was in seminary, the Methodists

moved their headquarters to the Midwest. I suggested we do that in the Episcopal church to broaden our efforts there. New Yorker classmates - calling my home “flyover country” - said we couldn’t do that because this is an international church (showing their lack of knowledge about Methodists), and we need to fly internationally - because there are no international airports in the Midwest.

I’m serious.

Or when I lived in the south, and the disparaging language was all about Yankees. More than once, I expected to hear, “Can anything good come out of New York?”

So, we know the answer. God so loved the world, not just America or New York or the South.

Now, what do we do about it?

First, understand that you come out of Nazareth. No Christian can ever think they are holier, smarter, better, worthier. We’re all pretty much in the same boat.

Second, it wouldn’t be a bad idea to get to know people from places you fear or distrust or simply look down on. There is a richness we can’t imagine in almost every corner of the world, and it is only closed-off to those who refuse to see it.

Finally, demand respect. Not only for yourself but for every person on the face of the earth. Stand up for those who are shamed, exploited, or abused - and make sure that you yourself are giving the same respect. It is not easy.

But then, when Jesus called Nathanael, he probably knew that kid wasn’t going to be easy. But Jesus saw the good that could come out of him. May the same good come out of us. Amen.”

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