

St. James' E-pistle

January 20, 2017

Pulpit Notes

"Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him"

Brothers and Sisters:

Sunday is our Annual Meeting. **Remember: 9:00 AM!** We will do all the things that we do every year at our Annual Meeting: budget, reports, election, St. James' medal - and it is important.

It's important because each one of the functions matters to the life of a church, but it matters more because it is greater than the sum of its parts. The totality of the Annual Meeting is about this community understanding who we are.

When the disciples saw Jesus, when they heard him say, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people," they followed. "Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him."

They followed him so readily because they understood who he was and who they were because of him. Because of Jesus, they got it that they were God's children. And that's who we are.

This Annual Meeting is not just some not-for-profit board or some corporate share-holders meeting. It is our heart and soul - it is our love for each other and for the one who made us.

There is nothing to be gained by begging or brow beating (or bribing) people to attend. If this family means something to you, you'll be there if possible.

But we are always better when we know who we are - a family knitted together through the love of Christ, God's beloved children. I hope to see you there Sunday.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+



Another sign of love in one of our neighborhoods, this one at the Golden home. The message is timeless and as important today as ever.

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The News of the Church

Men's Breakfast: The next monthly men's breakfast will take place on **January 21 8:00 AM at Cranberry's!**

ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT: Notice is hereby given of the Annual Meeting of St. James' Episcopal Church in Hyde Park on Sunday, January 22. The meeting will begin with Holy Eucharist at 9:00 AM and continue with light breakfast and business following the Eucharist. At this meeting, we will not only receive reports from the various committees, but we will elect new Vestry members and honor a parishioner's service with the St. James' Medal. The meeting will be held in the Parish Hall.

Qualified Voters: According to Parish By-laws, eligible voters are "persons of the age of eighteen years or more belonging to the parish, who have been baptized and are regular attendants of its worship and contributors to its support for at least twelve months prior to an annual election or a special meeting of the corporation at which they are in attendance."

If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like to vote, you may request an absentee ballot no later than 10 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

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Retreat: Please see the flier below for the "Agents of Peace In a Time of Fear" retreat led by Fr. Masud ibn Syedullah and Fr. Garrett Metler. It is a three-day retreat at Holy Cross Monastery just across the river. Though the cost may seem high at \$300, it is a remarkable value. Moreover, if you are interested (and I hope you are) but find the cost prohibitive, the church has money available to help you go. Just see Fr. Chuck.



ROOTS & BRANCHES
PROGRAMS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

presents

Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear



Discover Your Inner Peacemaker & Reconciler

on this retreat designed to turn back our present tide of divisiveness, conflict and inflammatory speech.

Participants will reconnect with the peacemaking example of Christ and be empowered with practical methods to become agents of peace and reconciliation in their own communities.

Co-led by the Revs. Masud Ibn Syedullah and Garrett Mettler, this three-day retreat takes place from February 3rd — 5th, 2017 at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, NY.

Accommodations at the monastery and all meals are included in the \$300 registration cost.

To find out more and to register visit

www.holycrossmonastery.com/retreat-programs

or call Lori Callaway at 845-384-6660

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Churchyard Committee: Our churchyard committee wants you. The committee oversees one of the most historic graveyards in the region, and is responsible for making sure it is kept up. It handles the sale and digging of graves as well. If you value our churchyard and want it to continue to be a source of comfort whose loved ones rest here as well as historical interest to those who visit, please join our committee. If you're interested, you can contact Carol Vinall at vinehall3@aol.com.

DONATE YOUR iPad! Please consider donating your old iPad - or any old tablet that can read a PDF file - to St. James'. We would like to have three or four tablets so we can download the digital bulletin onto them and let guests (or parishioners, of course) use them. This is especially helpful to those who are unfamiliar with the liturgy and all the books we use. You should erase everything on it, of course - all we need is a PDF reader and a browser (to download the information). Thanks!

Spiritual / educational websites to deepen your faith:

- Acts 8 Movement
- GrowChristians
- Episcopal Cafe (a favorite)
- The Slate Project (not affiliated with Slate magazine)
- Virtual Abbey
- Second Life Church (gives you a virtual church experience if you're into that sort of thing. Fun to look at maybe).
- Inward/Outward (daily meditations sent to your e-mail)
- "Edge of Enclosure" (weekly lectionary-based blog post)
- The Celtic Christian Tradition (via Facebook)
- Anne Lamott (via Facebook)

Jan Richardson - <http://paintedprayerbook.com> (Especially good for those grieving or interested in women's spirituality.)

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January 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15 11:30 Epiphany Pageant (rescheduled)	16 <u>ML King Day</u>	17 7:00 Vestry	18	19	20	21 8 AM Men's Breakfast
22 9AM Joint Eucharist/Annual Meeting	23	24	25 12:00 Nursery School Board	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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."

- 22 St. Paul's on-the-Hill Church, Ossining
- 23 L'Église Français du Saint Esprit, Manhattan
- 24 Trinity St. Paul's Church, New Rochelle
- 25 Christ Church, Poughkeepsie
- 26 St. Paul's Church, Yonkers
- 27 Treasurer of the Diocese, Congregational Treasurers, Financial Administrators
- 28 Episcopal Asian Ministry and the Episcopal Asian Supper Table

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.

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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,

May this be your will

And let us say Amen.

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

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Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Dee, Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Charles Pardee, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), John Ross, Richard Secor, James Sheekey, Naomi Sleight, 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 alright.

Birthdays (this past week):	Isabela Handman Quines, Alix Ciferri, Diane Plass, Beth Matranga and Thomas McNamara
Birthdays (this coming week):	Daniel Matranga, Deirdre Mae Micker, Tanya S. Hall, Dalton M. Slegel, Suzanne Glancey and John Seagren, Jr.
Acolytes:	January 22: Team 2 January 29: Team 3
Altar Guild:	January 22: Team III January 29: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	January 22: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris January 29: Lucille Ogden and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	January 22: Wilma Tully/Andy Hall January 29: Russell Urban-Mead/Judy Douglass
Ushers:	January 22: Andrew and Tonya Hall January 29: Judy Douglass, Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	January 22: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell January 29: Doug Belding and Charlessa Thatcher

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Parish Cycle of Prayer: January 22: Susan Heupler, Pat and Bill Holland
January 29: Kirstin Horn, Austin and Audrey Home

Coffee Hour Hosts: January 22: Annual Meeting Breakfast
January 29: Barbara Slegel and the Choir

This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 9:1-4

Psalm 27:1, 5-13

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 4:12-23

This Week's Hymns

Processional: Hymn 539 (O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling)

Sequence: Hymn 126 (The People Who In Darkness Walked)

Offertory: "Where True Charity and Love Dwell"

Communion: Hymn 661 (They Cast their Nets in Galilee)

Recessional: Hymn 550 (Jesus Calls Us)

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

Sermon Preached on
Second Sunday after the Epiphany
(January 15, 2017)

"A Light To The Nations"

We are in the Season of Epiphany - (and we are celebrating the pageant today despite delays). The magi helped us know that God's Word is for all people everywhere. Epiphany is all about the light of Christ being made known to the nations.

Problem is, God's light is often uncomfortable. Isaiah, who in today's Old Testament reading was told to be a light to the nations, understood this. People didn't want to see God's light, and tradition holds that he was killed for it.

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Jesus, who was hailed by magi from around the known world as the true light, was killed for being light. He pointed to the corruption of politicians and business people. He pointed to the way people blamed the poor for their poverty. He pointed to how often people put their personal interests ahead of their relationship with God - and called them to repent.

Civic officials didn't like it and told him to not get involved. Keep to religion, they said, and don't mess around in our business.

Sort of like these days when people say to the church, "don't be political." Keep quiet - keep locked up in the church building.

Only, that's not where Jesus stayed, is it? Jesus confounded people - even John the Baptist, who understood that Jesus would take away the sin of the world, wasn't quite sure what Jesus was doing.

And so Jesus says, "Come and see." Come and see what I'm doing. Come and follow right out these doors and into the world. So as Christians, as followers of Christ, we are called to get mixed up in the world. In all of its aspects.

I was thinking of this when I got a call on Friday from the National Park Service, as I do about three times a year. As rector of St. James' I'm asked to give invocations and benedictions at various Roosevelt events. In fact, I do a lot of public prayers, and the one they called me about on Friday was for FDR's birthday on January 30th. Ironically, the new superintendent doesn't want to call what I'll be doing "prayers" because it sounds too religious. So they will be called "traditional beginning" and "traditional ending." But I can assure you, I'll be praying! Might be the last time I'm asked there, but I will be praying.

But in general, these public prayers can be a problem for clergy. Not because we're afraid to mix religion and politics - Jesus did it, so it's impossible for us to avoid. We're more concerned with being used as mere religious window dressing. Are we just there to make it look to the world that whatever the government does has God's blessing? Is it really being a light to the nations to give a (Christian) prayer at a state function?

I don't know. All I know is, whenever I give such a prayer, I pray that whatever comes out of my mouth will be from God and will bring light beyond the walls of this church.

In fact, I'm sure that such prayers - if we really lift our hearts to God - can have a positive impact on people's lives. Take the upcoming inauguration this Friday. In what we all probably recognize as one of the most contentious and bitter elections, the very question of prayer has become a hot potato. Our National Cathedral's choir will sing at the inauguration, and the cathedral itself will hold a special prayer service after the inauguration, traditionally attended by the new president.

This year, a lot of people objected to the choir singing or the cathedral holding the service because they felt it would act as a stamp of approval for President-elect Trump. But the cathedral and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said that if such a service was appropriate before, then it is appropriate now. Such a prayer service is not an endorsement of any particular person or platform. It is bringing light to the world by asking God to touch the heart of the new

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president so that they act wisely and justly. That's why we at St. James' will continue to pray for President-elect Trump throughout his tenure as President.

Prayer is not the only way we bring light to the nations. Like Jesus, we reach out to those in many kinds of need. Like Jesus, we go to the sick, the poor, the outcast, the homeless, the refugee. Like Jesus, we stand up for those facing discrimination and injustice.

Just be warned that speaking up is often condemned, even though those issues are directly related to the gospel.

Remember last week when we talked about baptism? About worship and service being two sides of the same coin? To those who suggest that the church stick to worship, we must say that this would be an incomplete and immature faith. To those who say we should limit our outreach to feeding the hungry, we must say that this is not the example of our Lord Jesus Christ - or of the prophets before him.

Yet, we are hardly radicals. We're Episcopalians after all. Rather, we will continue to use the gospel as our guide when it comes to speaking. For example, we oppose torture. We oppose actions (whether private, corporate or government) that harm the environment. We oppose laws and social conventions that pit ethnic, cultural groups against each other or that favor one above others. We address issues of this nature because they are gospel issues. Because that is what being a light means.

Of course, being a light to the nations means bringing the internal light as well. It means bringing our own personal relationship with God to a place where others can see and hear. It means worshiping faithfully and - yes - beautifully. It means sharing personal faith stories. Ours is both an internal and external faith, and our sharing both aspects is the light Isaiah anticipated.

So come Inauguration Day, our National Cathedral's choir will sing God's praises. Our national cathedral will have its prayer service. Come January 30th, I will pray at the Rose Garden.

And we, the Church will work for the most vulnerable in our society, just as we will work, pray, and worship so that individuals around the world will be filled with Christ's love. Because both sides of that coin are essential, and making them known to the world is our call.

It is the season of Epiphany, after all, when we are asked to not merely bring Gold, frankincense and myrrh - we are asked to bring light. Amen.