

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: February 2, 2020

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

The Presentation

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I was so pleased with the Annual Meeting last Sunday. Not only was attendance one of the highest it's been in years, but so many other things made it a time of grace. Valerie Gaulin gave a memorable and inspiring acceptance when she received the St. James' Medal (you can read it at the end of this Epistle), we elected wonderful new Vestry members, and even the often awkward task of finding members for the new Nominating Committee went startlingly quickly!

The part of the Annual Meeting that typically fills me with the most anxiety is near the end when we ask if there is any other business anyone would like to bring up. At this point people often just want to go home, but it's necessary. Sometimes difficult and painful topics are raised which take a lot of unpacking. Other times, nobody has anything to bring up, and we close with a sigh of relief.

And then there was this year where a topic was raised, but one that was well worthy of discussion — not just for a few minutes at the end of a meeting but as an ongoing part of our life together. The question was (and I paraphrase), how can we speak more openly and frankly about the important issues — often called political — which demand our attention? How can we as a parish, address more honestly and act upon those issues that we see in the news each day (without dancing around them)?

While we did not get into specifics, I can list any number of issues that face us as Christians which demand our attention. After all, our faith says that if we are aware of any ill, any injustice, any hurt, especially of the weakest and most vulnerable of God's children, it is a call from Christ to action. So, the immigration issue is not just political but a question for our faith. The water crisis in Flint is not just a Michigan issue but one for all people of faith. The Standing Rock pipeline issue does not affect just the reservation but the entire church. And so on. We can not hide from abortion, LGBTQ rights, sexism, xenophobia, nationalism, racism, the school-to-prison pipeline, gun violence and so on.

Having said that, I also know from speaking with other parishioners, that they view church as a place of refuge, a place where for an hour or two a week they can find rest and refreshment from the slings and arrows of a hard life. Sometimes you just need to step away from the world's chaos in order to re-group and reconnect with that peace which is so often stolen by the world.

Here is the irony of the church. It is a hospital for the soul while at the same time being a training ground and encourager for action (often direct action). The church must be both. And that means we as a congregation have to find a way to give rest to the weary and tools for action for those ready to march.

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We have a history of trying to avoid conversations and actions about “political” issues in our church. Back in slavery days, while many churches opposed the institution, the Episcopal Church chose not to address it because it was “political”. It didn’t help that many powerful Episcopalians profited mightily from slavery. And yet, with hindsight, we recognize how important it would have been for the church to speak.

I’m not sure if I know exactly how to find the perfect balance, but I promise you this: I’ll try, and I encourage each of you to try as well. That means not judging those who aren’t where you are in your journey. If you need rest, rest without guilt but let those who need to act do so. If you need to act, then pick up the mantle and cross — and go into the world in any number of ways, to advance the cause of justice and peace.

I do have a couple of thoughts on how we might approach these two seemingly different but complimentary ways of being.

First, ways in which we might pay closer attention to and act on significant issues in our society: At the meeting, we discussed forming a group that can tackle significant issues either by studying them or using them as a springboard for action. Russell Urban-Mead agreed to be part of that group.

Moreover, we can use the Between-Services Class as a forum for discussing specific issues and the church’s stance on them. The Episcopal Church has something called the Episcopal Public Policy Network which is tasked with addressing these manifold issues and representing the church’s official positions. You can visit their website at <https://episcopalchurch.org/OGR/eppn-sign-up>.

Finally, Fr. Masud ibn Syedullah created the “Agents of Peace” retreat as a tool to empower people to have just such conversations. To address serious, divisive issues head on but in respectful conversation with the other. He is willing and able to lead this retreat in a congregational setting if that’s what we would like.

As for making this a place of refuge, I offer what might seem like trite and tired suggestions, but they are real and effective. First come to church. But more than that, come early and sit — quietly. If you sit or kneel and close your eyes, nobody will bother you or try to chat. This quiet is life-giving. You can come to the church during the day, too — any day — and sit in quiet.

Attend Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer — they refresh and allow one to be fed. Meditation is a good, holy, and thoroughly Christian option as well, and if anyone wants to create a meditation group, let me know, and we can look at options for timing and publicizing.

Those are just a few ideas — maybe most of which will be jettisoned. What’s important is that we try to balance the church’s mission to bring justice, peace, and righteousness to the world but also to find rest and refreshment from to world.

There is nothing easy about any of this, but life is complex and always will be. The church is not here to make the world go away but to give us the resources to live here more closely aligned with

the Kingdom of God. Sometimes that requires action, sometimes rest. May we be a place that embraces both.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Thought for your week:

“Pilgrim, when you ship, long moored in harbor, gives you the illusion of being a house.... Put out to sea! Save your boat’s journeying soul, and your own pilgrim soul, cost what it may.”

— Archbishop Helder Camara

Worship This Week:

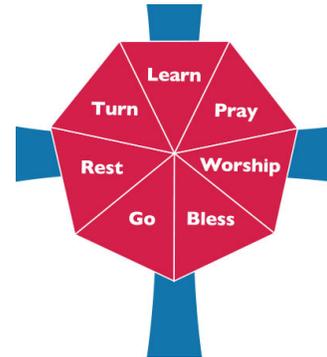
Tuesday	6:30 PM	Evening Prayer (at the Chapel)
Wednesday	10 AM	Morning Prayer (Wilks Room)
Thursday	11 AM	Bible Study
Sunday	8 AM	Eucharist Rite I
	10 AM	Eucharist Rite II

If you have anything to add to the E-pistle, please contact either Fr. Chuck, Dyan in the Parish Office, or Brian Rance. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday evening. Thanks!

Announcements

Between-Service Class:

THE WAY OF LOVE classes continue **Sunday, February 2** with the first half of “**BLESS**”. This is the final step of the 7-step Way of Love. Each session lasts from **9:15 - 9:45 AM** in the Wilks Room.



Inquirers Class This Sunday:

The theme of this week’s Inquirers Class is: **New Testament**. Please join us if you would like to reaffirm your faith or would simply like to sit in on a class for the fun of it!

Next Fireside Chat: Music and Abolitionist History:

Mark your calendars for the next Chat: **February 6: Ob Freedom, Sweet Freedom: Music and Abolitionist History**. The speaker is Peter Bunten, Chair of the Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project.

February 2020						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 9 AM Joint Service & Annual Meeting	27 Office Closed 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	28 6:30 PM Evening Prayer	29 10 AM Morning Prayer	30 11 AM BIBLE STUDY 3 PM FDR Birthday Ceremony 3:30 PM READING ADVENTURES	31	1

2 9:15 AM Between Service Class 12 Noon Inquirers	3 Office Closed 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	4 6:30 PM Evening Prayer	5 10 AM Morning Prayer	6 11 AM BIBLE STUDY 3:30 PM READING ADVENTURES 7 PM Fireside Chat	7	8
9 9:15 AM Between Service Class 12 Inquirers	10 Office Closed 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	11 6:30 PM Evening Prayer	12 10 AM Morning Prayer	13 11 AM BIBLE STUDY 3:30 PM READING ADVENTURES	14	15
16 9:15 AM Between Service Class 12 Inquirers	17 Office Closed 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	18 7 PM Vestry Meeting	19 10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM Hyde Park Assisted Living Eucharist	20 11 AM BIBLE STUDY 3:30 PM READING ADVENTURES	21	22
23 No Between Service Class Today 12 Inquirers	24 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	25 6:00 PM SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER!	26 ASH WEDNESDAY 6:30 AM, 10 AM, & 7 PM Ash Wednesday Liturgy & Eucharist	27 11 AM BIBLE STUDY 3:30 PM READING ADVENTURES	28	29
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.diocesen.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

- 2 Regeneration Church, Pine Plains
- 3 Church of the Good Shepherd, Granite Springs
- 4 Congrégation Haïtienne du Bon Samaritain, Bronx
- 5 The Cathedral School, Manhattan
- 6 Canterbury Uptown Chaplaincy, Manhattan
- 7 Church of Our Savior, Manhattan
- 8 Diocesan Anti-Racism Committee

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Vince Asher, Ashley, Joe Baldwin, John Bohlmann, Justin Bohlmann, Fr. Fred Cartier, Patty Caswell, Sue Dingee, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Heather Francese, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), John and Gloria Golden, Kathy Graff, Robert Guariglia, Clifford Hallmark (father of Alyssa Raugalis), Dalton K., Edith Kline, Ashley Konyn, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Lorraine, Joanne Lynn, Jim Lynn (Carol Bender's brother - facing surgery), Doris Mack, Margaret, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginero Milano, Lillian Peralta, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (deployed to the Middle East), John Ross, Hank Schroeder, 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): Diane Plass, Beth Matranga, Thomas McNamara, Daniel Matranga and Deirdre Mae Micker

Birthdays
(this coming week): Tanya S. Hall, Dalton M. Slegel, Suzanne Glancey, John Seagren, Jr., Kasey Gaulin and David Wardell, Jr.

Acolytes:
February 2: Riley Hall and Jaylen Thatcher
February 9: Nancy Montero and Maddie Glancey

Altar Guild:
February 2: Team II
February 9: Team III

8 a.m. Readers:	February 2: Debbie Belding and Irene Kipp February 9: Shannon Butler and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	February 2: Jim Oppenheimer-Crawford/Bobbie Wells February 9: Eric Zavadil/Maggie McNamara
Ushers:	February 2: Patty Drake and Lillian Peralta February 9: Maggie and Tom McNamara
Pledge Clerks:	February 2: Joanne Lown and Sue DeLorenzo February 9: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	February 2: Jack, Suzann, Brian and Faith Kinne, Morgan Kinne, Milena Jewel and Abby Jewel February 9: Irene Kipp, Edith Kline, Rudy Knakal, Walter and Lynn Koch, Boy Scout Troop 80
Coffee Hour Hosts:	February 2: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil February 9: Jodi Triola and Mike Fenwick

This Week's Lectionary

Malachi 3:1-4
Psalm 24:7-10
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 435 — At the Name of Jesus
Sequence: 66 — Come, thou long expected Jesus
Offertory: "You Are Mine"
Communion: 277 — Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly
Recessional: 495 — Hail, thou once despised Jesus

Last Week's Sermon

NOTE: There was no sermon last week due to the Annual Meeting. The Rector's Annual Report was printed in the packets everyone received, so it's not necessary to re-print it here. However, there were requests to print Valerie Gaulin's moving words as she accepted the St. James' Medal. She has graciously agreed to all them to be printed here.

January 26, 2020

Annual Meeting

St. James' Medal Acceptance

I am not a great Christian. I am not a biblical scholar. I struggle every day to do the right things, do the just things and even do kind things sometimes. BUT, I trust that God will continue to provide me strength and empower me to serve. I aspire to follow in my parents' footsteps, and I choose to surround myself with people - like all of you - who are examples of God's goodwill as my inspiration.

"We can do no great things, only small things with great love". It's a phrase on a necklace my Mother gave to me, and it reminds me that no matter how small the gesture is, it can still have a profound effect on an individual. I have learned that through the years, especially by being a member of this church and hope that you all realize that you each in your own way through your God-given talents, whether you realize it or not, have an effect on others.

This is a great church and an even better family. When someone here hurts, we all hurt; when someone here rejoices, we all rejoice. Just as an immediate family does, we help each other while we journey through our lives and having such a large family allows us the ability to do many small things with great love as a church community. I see it all the time, and our faith is contagious enough to keep us going.

I have been blessed to have so many people share their love & support with me since I've been here. I've developed long friendships and cherished this journey we are on together. I've loved working with my sister Jodi, the Sunday School Parents, co-teachers, the teens, the clergy, the entire congregation and especially the children.....Their way of viewing the world, their eagerness to help others in deed and action overwhelms me – I have learned far more from them than I ever taught them.

Jesus taught his disciples that hospitality, especially how we welcome the stranger as a sacred act, is at the heart of how we practice our faith, so thank-you all for your hospitality- for welcoming me and my family into your family.

As Fr. Chuck mentioned this morning, our work is never done but with your continued love and support and God's trust in me, I'll continue to grow in faith in whatever ways he guides me to walk in.

So, Thank-you to the Vestry for bestowing me with this honor, and I say to you all, I want to share this medal with you- **my church family**. I'll frame it and hang it on the walls here in the parish hall as a reminder that we are all, every one of us capable of doing small things with great love every day to spread joy and encouragement to all people as God would want us to do. – God's Peace to you all! - Thank-you and AMEN!