

St. James' E-pistle

January 6, 2017

Pulpit Notes

"He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead." -Acts 10:42

Brothers and Sisters:

This Sunday, we observe the Feast of the Baptism of Christ. It's easy to forget that Jesus, like us, was baptized. It's easy to forget that he submitted to the act of having someone else immerse him in water (or pour water upon him - it's not certain how it was done). And it's easy to forget that the essence of what happened at Jesus' baptism is the same as what happens at our own.

And what is it that happens?

We are called God's own, we receive the Holy Spirit, and we are given work to do.

In Acts, speaking about the baptism, Luke tells us that Jesus "commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead." Reading the full context of Acts, it's clear that to Luke, testifying means much more than simply telling people something. It means an entire way of life.

That way of life includes constant prayer, seeing God in everyone and everything, caring for both world and all living creatures within it, and treating others as we hope our ultimate judge will treat us.

Granted, when we talk about Jesus, we often don't like to use the word, "Judge." But nowhere in scripture or our tradition has it ever been suggested that we are not judged in the end. Everything in our faith tells us that in the final accounting, we will each be answerable to Christ for how we live our lives.

Do we, like Christ, make God our focus? Do we, like Christ, care for the poor, the hungry, the despised, the immigrant? Do we, like Christ, heal, help, and forgive even those who seem unhelpable or unforgiveable? Do we, like Christ, proclaim with our words and actions God's love?

Of course, we know that we can't ever do all this very well. That's why we are always thankful that it is Christ who judges rather than one of us. That's why we're glad that Christ looks beyond our actions to our hearts. Nevertheless, Christ does judge, and as far as we can tell, it is not a perfunctory judging - there will be consequences. There will be some who are

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condemned - more because they reject the love that God commands than for any individual infractions.

So, as we observe the baptism of Christ, let's remember that baptism isn't a ticket to the promised land. It's commissioning. And when we remember Christ's baptism, we remember our own. We are God's commissioned representatives here.

This is a new year! A new beginning! As we begin it, let's remember who we are and what we are called to do and be.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Welcome Sarah Rodeo! As you know, we welcome this Sunday our new Music Director, Sarah Rodeo (pronounced Ro-Day-Oh)! Sarah is a senior at Vassar studying music. She has a special love for liturgical music and plays guitar as well as piano and organ. Please join us this Sunday to welcome Sarah!

Fireside Chats Begin: The first Fireside Chat of the 2017 season will take place **Thursday, January 12 at 7:00 PM** at St. James' Chapel. The lecture is titled, "The History of the FDR Presidential Library."

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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Love Your Neighbor: Here's another "Love Your Neighbor" sign traveling through the area in a parishioner's car - spreading the word beyond the yard! Send in pictures of your sign!



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)

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- 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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Epiphany...
and the Band



An Epiphany Pageant

Friday, January 6, at 6:30 pm
All Welcome! - Free Admission

St. James' Episcopal Church
4525 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, NY

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January 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8	9	10	11	12 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures 7 PM Fireside Chat	13	14
15 11:30 Epiphany Pageant (re- scheduled)	16 M L King Day	17 7:00 Vestry	18	19	20	21 8 AM Men's Breakfast
22 9AM Joint Eucharist/ Annual Meeting	23	24	25	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."

- 8 The Baptism of Our Lord
St. Andrew's Church, Manhattan
- 9 St. Simon the Cyrenian Church, New Rochelle
- 10 St. Peter's Church, Peekskill
- 11 Diocesan Efforts to Raise Awareness about Human Trafficking
- 12 Congrégation Haïtienne du Bon Samaritain, Bronx

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- 13 Vassar Haiti Project
14 Union of Black Episcopalians

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.

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

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):	Betsy Eames, John Golden, Sanjana Shahani, Ryan Seagren and Chris Granados-Kramer
Birthdays (this coming week):	Jodi Triola, Brian O'Leary, Craig M. Slegel and Joan Oetjen
Acolytes:	January 8: Team 3 January 15: Team 1
Altar Guild:	January 8: Team II January 15: Team III
8 a.m. Readers:	January 8: Debbie Belding and Thomas Finnigan January 15: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	January 8: Donna Beyer/Bobbie Wells

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Ushers:	January 15: Patty Caswell/Nancy Montero January 8: Patty Drake, Bobbie Wells
Pledge Clerks:	January 15: Nancy Montero, Anna Marie Pitcher January 8: Joanne Lown and Janet Bright
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	January 15: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher January 8: Andy, Tanya, Braeden and Riley Hall
Coffee Hour Hosts:	January 15: Liz Handman, Franklin Santos, Bela Quines, Chris Santos and Angela Henry January 8: Jodi Triola, Ross and Connie Eames January 15: Deirdre Mae Micker, the Urban - Meads

This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-17

This Week's Hymns

Processional: #76 - On Jordan's bank, the Baptist's cry

Sequence: #139 - When Jesus went to Jordan's stream

Offertory Anthem

Communion: #131 - When Christ's appearing was made known

Recessional: #121 - Christ, for when you were baptized

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

Sermon Preached on
The Holy Name
(January 1, 2017)

"The Power of Names"

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I know 2016 has been a rough year for a lot of people, including a flood of celebrity deaths in the final couple of weeks of the year.

But I would like to pay quick homage to another death just two days ago. The death of a cat. It might seem trivial to you, but this cat won the hearts of not a few people. His name? Uncle Annabelle.

You might ask how he got such an unusual - even inappropriate name. Simple, really. Uncle Annabelle was already an older cat - stray - when he moved in on some friends. Pretty much just strolled in and declared himself home. They fell in love with him. However, it's not always easy to know a cat's gender, so for the family, it was Annabelle. Until they finally were able to take him to the Vet. But by that time, Annabelle had stuck, so he became Uncle Annabelle.

I always found the name rather endearing.

But it did remind me of a song from my youth - Johnny Cash, I think. It was called, "The Boy Named Sue," and it was all about this boy whose father had left them when he was just a baby. The only thing the boy got from the dad was a terrible name - Sue. People made fun of his name all through childhood, and he ended up getting in quite a few fights. Finally, after Sue grew up and had become a tough man, he ran into his aging father. While he didn't exactly have the heart to exact the revenge on the man that he had dreamed of, he did ask him why the father had given him such a terrible name.

The dad's reasoning? Because the world is tough, and since he couldn't be there to teach the boy how to be tough, he gave him a name that would force him to become tough.

I'm not sure if those are parenting skills I'd like to recommend, but both Sue and Uncle Annabelle tell us about the importance of names. Names have power. They can endear or harm. All you have to do is look at this recent political season. Just a couple of the names I've heard adults call each other are "libtard" "republithug" "moonbat" and "wingnut." These are not names designed to further civil discourse. They are epithets designed to harm, to demoralize, to dismiss and verbally destroy the other.

Just like when we were kids. Remember how your parents taught you, "Sticks and Stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me." Well, that was one of the fallacies of childhood. Of course names hurt. That's why people call each other names - because they hurt. Names have power.

On the positive side, names have power to heal and build up as well. In some cultures, when a person is found guilty of some minor offense, rather than being punished, they are stood in the middle of a group, and those people surrounding the guilty person bombard them with the kinds of names we need to hear: Valuable, Helpful, Brave, Smart, Kind, Giving, Forgiving, Hard working... and so on. These names remind the person of who they really are and how their society sees beyond the offense.

Names have power.

That's why in many cultures - like in Jesus's - when a child is named, it's not a trivial event. The name means something. Do you know what your name means? Mine - Charles - means "Man."

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If it were in Hebrew, it would be Adam. My middle name - Edward - was my great-grandfather's middle name and was given to me to strengthen the family connection. That's power.

Jesus's name meant something, too. Something big. So big that we have a feast day just to commemorate his name. You see, in Jesus's day the name was a sign of who that person would become. Eight days after birth, a baby boy was to be circumcised and given his name - and it was a big deal.

Now, you may remember last week, all the prophecies spoke of the child to come who would be Immanuel - God with us. But today, the name Jesus is given, and it is to tell us what God is going to do now that God is with us.

But first you need to know that they didn't really name him Jesus - that's the English version of the Greek version of the Hebrew. The name Jesus received was Yeshuah - which itself is a popular shortened version of Yehoshuah which, in Hebrew (which is Joshua in English), means roughly, "God redeems" or "God is salvation" or "God is a saving cry."

His name - salvation - tells us that God is with us to help us, to save us from our own reckless and wanton disregard for creation and the people in it, and especially from our separation from God himself.

His name helps us know that the Son of God is all about salvation - seeing beyond our human weakness an into our hearts where the Kingdom of Heaven most truly resides.

Names have power, and the name of Jesus has the most important power of all. But we can use other names, names he has given us in order to make the world a better place.

Because yes, there are horrible names we call each other, and they do a great deal of harm. But we have access to better names. Like "Friend," or "Brother" or "Sister" - or best of all, "Child of God." Amen.