

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: October 7, 2018

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I promise I'm not going to get all political, but I AM going to talk Gospel, and often the two can intertwine.

During the drama of the past weeks surrounding the confirmation process of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, I noticed one very troubling trend. Many people around the country - on line and at rallies - made fun of the woman who came forward with allegations of sexual abuse. One scene I watched was like something out of a dystopian movie.

So let's be clear. The Christian faith, the gospel of Jesus Christ, does not make room for mocking people, least of all victims of crime, poverty, or injustice. One cannot claim to follow Christ and still laugh at the misfortunes of the weak and powerless.

But I want to broaden my conversation beyond only victims of sexual abuse. I want to talk about what the gospel requires of us with regard to how we treat each other. Because this is at the heart of what we stand for as Christians. And this is it:

In our lives together on this earth, we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. For too long, too many Christians have tried to put limits on that love. But to truly follow Christ, love means no limits. It means unconditional love. It means always seeking the highest good for those we are called to love. It means treating every single one of them with respect - the respect due a child of God and heir to the kingdom. And it is ALWAYS predicated on that love being bestowed first upon those who have less of what makes life on earth enjoyable.

Here are some of the people we have treated as inferior, tainted, dirty, expendable:

People of a different race (and by "race" what I really mean is people who have different outward features than us because their ancestors come from a different part of the world). Even today, people throughout the world tend to look down on their brothers and sisters with darker skin. This is wrong. Race is a human-made concept since every human is genetically the same with only superficial differences based on geography. In the US, we used race to justify slavery, imprisonment, and outright extinction, even genocide, of various cultural groups. The lingering effects are alive and well today, as we have seen on TV nearly every day.

Women: For millennia, we have treated women as inferiors, to be used for procreation and taking care of the family. We have long demanded obedience of them rather than partnership. It's been less than a hundred years that women could vote. I am pleased that the Episcopal Church in 1928 became one of the first denominations to remove "and obey" from its marriage rites. Nevertheless,

it took another fifty years before we would consider ordaining a woman, let alone consecrate one as bishop. And even today, women earn less than men for the same work. Even today, women are sexually abused at a much higher rate than men and are still not taken seriously when they suffer abuse (which explains the long periods of silence). The examples are endless.

LGBTQ: I know there are a lot of initials, but for far too long western society, sanctioned by the church, has driven people of varying gender identities underground. We taught that anything other than heterosexual identity was sick or broken or evil. What we failed to appreciate is that God's creation is much more varied than we can imagine. If God consistently makes a certain percentage of the population a certain way, is God wrong? Yet we have persecuted, imprisoned, killed people who have a different sexual identity. We shun them and try not to notice. The truth is, every one of them is a beloved child of God due the respect and dignity of all people. It is the church's understanding that it is irrelevant whom a person loves — what matters is that we treat all people with love.

Immigrants: In scripture, there is no higher obligation (other than honoring God) than offering hospitality to the stranger. Not simply giving it when asked but actively offering it to the visitor, the foreigner, the guest worker. The biblical standard is to be a host to the foreigner. We have gotten away from that to the point where we think of foreigners as either the enemy (especially if they look different from us) or as someone to be exploited. Or kicked out. They are none of these. Immigrants or foreign visitors are always to be welcomed as beloved brothers and sisters in Christ even if they don't observe Christianity. That's because God is love, and God extends God's love to all.

That's just four categories of people we are still struggling to learn how to treat as brothers and sisters. I could talk about the poor, the sick, the intellectually disabled as well. We don't really do much better there, do we? We even mock them. But this is not the will of God. Rather, if we are to actually see ourselves as the Body of Christ, then we have to — *have to* — embrace the idea that we are all one. They are us.

In the end, all I hope to impress today is that we belong to each other and can not condone - ever - mocking those who are weaker than us. Sure, politicians are open to mockery, but they are extremely powerful and extremely public by choice. (Though I would encourage you to treat even your most reviled political figure with the dignity and respect due a brother or sister. You may spend a lot of time trying to either sway them or oppose them, but give respect and dignity even if it is not returned). I assure you, our teaching is that those who belittle the sick, disabled, weak, powerless, homeless, hungry, foreigner... they will answer to God in God's own time. What that will look like, I have no idea. God's mercy is wide and widespread. But they will answer God, I believe, when they stand before the proverbial pearly gates, and God says, "Just how *did* you show your love (or lack thereof) for the least of these?"

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

You are invited!

To a
Newcomers Reception

On Thursday
November 8, 2018

6:30 PM

At
St. James'

(The Wilks Room, first door on the left in the Parish House)

This is a time for newer parishioners who have been here for not a year or less to meet "more seasoned" parishioners, to learn what's available to do, to discover ways to be involved or find resources you need. There's even a facility tour if you want.

Please RSVP at 845-229-2820
or to stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org.

Got questions? Just ask!

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THIS YEAR'S GRAVEYARD TOURS

GRAVEYARD TOURS FOCUS ON FIRST WORLD WAR

This year, the St. James Historic Graveyard Tours will be focused on the First World War. I am serving as the "director," which means I've been recruiting and working with the actors to get them ready to perform. I am also a historian who teaches about WWI. In case you are fuzzy on the larger context, forgot stuff that you learned in school, and would like some handy links for getting yourself ready for your graveyard tour, here are two sources that I like a lot, and that maybe you will find interesting. - Wendy Urban-Mead

On the US involvement in the war:

https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/united_states_of_america

An easy-to-follow 12 minute video provides a refresher on the causes of the war:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbwH1ZBnYds>

Between Service Classes Continue:

Our series on CHURCH MUSIC continues with a look at some of the Hymnal's "greatest hits." Some you may know by heart, others may be new to you, but they have greatly influenced church music, so you ought to know them.

~~**September 16** - "Why Do We Have Music?"~~

~~**September 23** - "Navigating The Hymnal 1982."~~

~~**September 30** - "Other Hymnals: LEVAS and more."~~

October 7 - "Greatest Hits of the Hymnal."

October 14 - "Rock Stars of Church Music."

FINAL "A New York Lamentation" Performance:

The fourth and final performance of "A New York Lamentation" is next Sunday, October 14 at 3:00 PM in St. Bartholomew's Church in White Plains. As with the recent performance in New York City, Fr. Chuck will leave after church to get to the church in time. He has room for three in his car. If you would like to attend this performance of the play about slavery in New York - and have a private discussion about it with the playwright afterwards - just let him know this Sunday. If we have more than that number of people who want to go down, we'll pull in another driver. There is no admission fee for the play, but a free-will offering will be taken at the end.

SAFE CHURCH Training:

The Diocese of New York requires SAFE CHURCH training for all clergy and employees of any congregation. It is also **required** for all Lay Eucharistic Visitors. Bishop Dietsche *expects* it of ALL Vestry members, Sunday School teachers, or any volunteers who work with children in any capacity. Bishop Dietsche **encourages** it for all parish volunteers and any parishioner who wants to be further educated. There are two ways to take this training. One is in person: There is a SAFE CHURCH training session on Friday, November 2 at the Cathedral from 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM - I (Fr. Chuck), am attending this to keep my certification up to date. If you want to join me, please let me know as soon as possible. There is a \$30 fee, but I will cover the cost if you choose to go there.

The second way to take the training is online. See me to register, as I am the administrator for it. There are several 15-20 minute classes that you must take and pass a test for it to register. After you have completed all the courses, you will receive a printout certificate.

Free To A Good Home:

Clarence and Joann Clark have two beautiful handmade Amish rocking horses that once belonged to their grown daughters. The young women have flown the nest, and it's time to let these functional art pieces delight new children.



So if you have kids in the toddler range who would enjoy the simple pleasures, let them (or the church) know! They can bring them to church this Sunday.

LECTOR Training November 17:

If you are a current Lector or would like to become one - and we would love for EVERYONE to join this ministry - the rescheduled Lector Training Session is set for Saturday, November 17 at 10:00 AM. Please see me (Fr. Chuck) if you would like to attend the training. All current lectors are encouraged to attend since “tune ups” are always helpful.

| October 2018 | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 10 AM Morning Prayer | 4 11 AM Bible Study | 5 FREE PRAYER FRIDAY GRAVEYARD TOURS! | 6 GRAVEYARD TOURS! |
| 7 Unction | 8 Office Closed | 9 | 10 10 AM Morning Prayer | 11 11 AM Bible Study 3 PM Eleanor Roosevelt Birthday Ceremony | 12 GRAVEYARD TOURS! | 13 GRAVEYARD TOURS! |
| 14 3:00 PM “New York Lamentation” (White Plains) | 15 Office Closed | 16 7 PM Vestry | 17 10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM Hyde Park Assisted Living | 18 11 AM Bible Study | 19 GRAVEYARD TOURS! | 20 8 AM Men's Breakfast GRAVEYARD TOURS! |
| 21 12 noon Community Garden Blessing | 22 Office Closed | 23 | 24 10 AM Morning Prayer | 25 11 AM Bible Study | 26 | 27 |

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| 28 | 29 Office Closed | 30 | 31 10 AM Morning Prayer All Hallows' Eve | 1 All Saints Day 11 AM Bible Study | 2 Safe Church Training (Cathedral) | 3 |
| <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/>

- 7 Society of St. Francis
- 8 Third Order of the Society of St. Francis
- 9 Lay Readers of the Diocese
- 10 St. Paul's Church, Yonkers
- 11 St. James' Church, North Salem
- 12 Diocesan Deacons Committee
- 13 Diocesan Domestic Violence Task Force

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ashley, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Darlene Calgagni, Mariel Carter, Joanne Clark, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Brian Ganter (deployed to Afghanistan), Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), Gloria Golden, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Tedi Kramer, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Carl Levine, Joanne Lynn, Jim Lynn (Carol Bender's brother - facing surgery), Doris Mack, Margaret, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginero Milano, Lillian Peralta, Mary Bowers Peters (stroke), Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), 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): Austin Horne, Bryanna Burkhardt, Daniel Ogden, Aaron Burkhardt,
Justin Bohlmann, Ann Dingee and Robin L. Bohlmann

Birthdays
(this coming week): Peter Matranga, Dot Craft and Sharon O'Brien

Acolytes:
October 7: Russell Urban-Mead and Braeden Hall
October 14: Nancy Montero and Jaylen Thatcher

Altar Guild:
October 7: Team I
October 14: Team I

8 a.m. Readers:
October 7: Deb Belding and Lucille Ogden
October 14: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch

10 a.m. Readers:
October 7: Wendy Urban-Mead and Joann Clark
October 14: Eric Zavadil and Bobbie Wells

Ushers:
October 7: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher
October 14: Patty Drake and Bobbie Wells

Pledge Clerks:
October 7: Joanne Lown and Sue DeLorenzo
October 14: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass

Parish Cycle of Prayer:
October 7: Kim. Jack and Matthew Canez, Dean and Patty Caswell,
Carolyn Canon
October 14: Clarence, Joann, Anna and Catherine Clark, Donna
Coffman-Tracy

Coffee Hour Hosts:
October 7: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil
October 14: Jodi Triola and Mike Fenwick

This Week's Lectionary

Job 1:1; 2:1-10
Psalm 26

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12
Mark 10:2-16

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 685 - Rock of Ages
Sequence: LEVAS 214 - God Is So Good
Offertory: We are Children Of The Lord
Communion: Taizé: "Live In Charity"
Recessional: LEVAS 213 - Children of the Heavenly Father

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

"What is Hell?"

#Jesus says whoever causes another to stumble is condemned, condemned he suggests, to the fires of hell.

So... this is going to be a two-part sermon (sorry, tried to figure out how to simplify it & couldn't). First, let's look at what it means to cause others to stumble. And we'll get particular here. Second, let's look at what this hell is of which Jesus speaks.

Stumbling is a broad topic. A couple of weeks ago in James' Epistle, he was talking about how the tongue was lit with the fires of hell, and how a small thing like that can lead others away from God's Love. That's a stumbling block. (Or in the gospel, the guy who healed in Jesus' name but wasn't a disciple...those who believe/preach/serve/prophesy.. not exactly the official way)

But the stumbling block in the news these days - and one we have to talk about - is sexual abuse. Catholic priests, Bill Cosby, and ...

Obviously, the country was glued to their TVs with the testimonies of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Judge Brett Kavanaugh.

But My point in looking at this one is not whether or not he did it. Rather, what's important is that what SHE did and said was entirely consistent with other abuse survivors. Not coming forward - often for decades - is the norm. Nobody will believe them, and that's what their abusers are counting on. It's almost always he said/she said, and who ya gonna believe?

No matter what happens in this particular case, it has brought to our nation's consciousness the wide-spread nature of such abuse, and people I know and love have now come forward to say they too experience harassment and assault. Note that it shouldn't matter if we know them or not, however, since every victim is our brother and sister, a fellow child of God.

Such abuse DOES act as a stumbling block for the abused. It can destroy one's faith in humanity, and in God. How much worse when it comes from a person of faith - or a person in authority in the faith community? You know all about the Catholic priests who abused children over decades and how the church covered it up. But this isn't limited to them. It's everywhere including our own church.

In this week's Epistle, I wrote about Bp. Paul Moore who has been dead for fifteen years now. Several priests have now come forward to say they were sexually abused by him, usually when they were young seminarians. Like Dr. Ford and most abuse survivors, they said nothing for years.

What amazes me was that these priests were able to still retain a sense of calling. And it makes me wonder how many others were abused and simply quit seminary, quit priesthood, quit church, quit on God....

Jesus says it's better to cut your arm off than go the fires of hell, but most abusers don't. They play innocent, upstanding, holy. That's why for many, their only reckoning will be after death.

So what awaits them? This is the second part, and it's a murky and uncertain thing. In Mark's gospel, Jesus suggests it's an endless fire in which people are consumed, though whether they languish forever or just cease to exist is unclear. Matthew, in his story of the rich man who would not care for poor Lazarus (another stumbling block), the rich man seems to languish eternally.

CS Lewis, on the other hand wrote of hell as a boring, mundane place where people - including bishops - paced around angrily and claiming it was someone else's fault. But he saw it as a place they could get out of whenever they wanted - if only they could take an honest look at themselves.

In truth, none of us can know for sure what hell is. It might be different for every single person who has separated themselves from God's Love - other than it is the place where God isn't.

Driving people away from a trust that God loves them - whether through hateful words or abusive actions or just not caring - seems the most heinous crime in Heaven. It's certainly the most harmful.

But how God will deal with us in the next life is anybody's guess. Especially since we proclaim God's mercy. Still, I think it best to heed Jesus' advice. He talked about cutting off body parts, but what I think he was getting at was this: when we have harmed someone, we need to own it. We need to admit our wrong and take our lumps, whether it is someone's private anger, public ridicule or loss of a job, or even prison time.

This may be one of the hardest things Jesus asks us to do in this life. But forgiveness can't come without honest self-examination. Besides, it is better than causing someone to walk away from God's Love.

So - when you leave today ask yourself this: are you a stumbling block? If so, what can you do to correct it? I don't think there's anymore to add to that today - that's a hard enough assignment for a lifetime. Amen.

A WORD ABOUT RECORDED SERMONS:

Most weeks, I upload a recorded copy of the sermon onto my Facebook page as well as St. James' YouTube channel. I have not yet figured out how to upload them to the St. James' Facebook page but am working on it.

You can also listen to sermons by going to YouTube (www.youtube.com) and searching for "St. James Episcopal Church, Hyde Park, NY". There, you will not only find sermons, but also videos of the Fireside Chats and other videos of interest. You can subscribe to that page, and then when new content is uploaded, you will receive a notification.

SERMON VALUATION FORM

It is not necessary to take notes during the sermon. Rather, you can take some time afterwards to recollect the sermon and its effect on you. Give yourself a few minutes for each of the questions. If you choose to share this with the preacher, it can be a powerful aid to better preaching - but this is not a form to be handed to the preacher and forgotten. It is an aid for you, so you can speak directly with the preacher and answer follow-up questions.

1. WHAT ARE YOU STILL HEARING?

That is, without evaluating it, what are the words or phrases from the sermon that are still echoing in your ears? Are there any "ear worms"?

2. WHERE MIGHT THIS BE LEADING?

As a listener, where does this sermon lead you? What does it invite you to? What are the next steps in your faith that might arise from this sermon?

3. HOW DOES THIS SERMON "PLAY"?

That is, how is it organized or ordered? What steps has the preacher taken you through? What structure did you notice in this sermon? What has it asked you to do?

4. HOW MIGHT THIS SERMON "GROW"?

That is, what suggestions would you have to hone the message of this sermon, to make it more engaging, inspiring, logical, fleshed out... No sermon is ever entirely done; its themes will be revisited over time. What would help the next time be more compelling?