

St. James' E-pistle

February 10, 2017

Pulpit Notes

*Happy are they whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the Lord!
- Psalm 119:1*

Brothers and Sisters:

Wouldn't you be happy if you were blameless? Who wouldn't be?

And wouldn't you just love to walk in the law of the Lord - I mean consistently, all the time. Again, who wouldn't?

But that's not the way things are. Most of the time, we're a mess (though sometimes we're more a mess in our minds than in reality).

The truth is, nobody is or ever will be blameless. Nobody will walk in the law of the Lord with unerring footsteps. And to the degree that we try to be perfect, we will paralyze ourselves and fail to do anything. Which is, when you think about it, blameworthy.

So, there's the catch. To do nothing in a world that demands action is not being blameless. But to act is to risk making sometimes horrible mistakes and, once again, be open to blame.

That has been the conundrum for Christians from the very start: How do I lead a blameless life that is still true to Christ's command to go out and act.

You know the answer: You don't.

What we do is go out there and act in the name of Christ and hope that Christ makes it all right. What we do is pray for guidance, study the scriptures and other Christian thinkers, talk to each other and set a course of action. We do this with the full awareness that we will be wrong more often than we would like. But we also trust that when we act in Christ, the love for God and our neighbors will show through and have a positive impact despite our inability to be perfect.

So it is for us. Whatever we do, no matter if it is going to the store or feeding the hungry, working a new job or writing letters to Congress - if we have done the spiritual work (see above) then we can proceed without fear or trembling. Not that we don't acknowledge mistakes or our own prejudices, and not that we don't work to correct them once we become aware of them, but we are not paralyzed into inaction.

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That's the theory anyway. For most of us, there is still a strong inclination to avoid being open to blame - so our action may be halting or tentative. That's okay. Maybe you can't go out and build a Habit for Humanity home. But you might be able to participate in a community cleanup day or Reading Adventures or just write letters to parishioners who have been sick for a while.

Nobody will ever be blameless. Let that thought free you so that you can act - in Christ's name - with joy.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Feast of Absalom Jones: St. Paul's, Poughkeepsie (161 Mansion Street) will celebrate an Evening Prayer Service in remembrance of Absalom Jones on Sunday afternoon, **February 12, 2017 at 4:00 pm.** The Rev. Dr. C. Allan Ford (Vicar of St. Margaret's, Staatsburg) will be the homilist. All are welcome. Light refreshments will be served after the service. There is ample parking in the church lot.

If you would like further information, please call St. Paul's Office - [845-452-8440](tel:845-452-8440)

Women's Group: The St. James Women's Group will meet for the first time for coffee/tea and/or dessert on **Monday, February 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Eveready Diner** in Hyde Park. Please join us for conversation and cheer! Let us know if you plan to attend so that we can advise the diner--but you are certainly welcome if you decide at the last minute! --Patty Glancey and Regina Ardini

Outreach Meeting: **Wednesday, February 15,** the Outreach Committee is having a meeting at 6:30 in the Wilkes room. All are welcome.

Next Fireside Chat: Our next Fireside Chat lecture will be: "The River at Risk." It deals with the many pressures put on our Hudson River and how we can act to. This new lecture will be **Thursday, February 16 at 7:00 pm** - at the Chapel, of course!

Quarterly Chapel Service: Our next Quarterly Chapel Service is **Sunday, February 26.**

Lenten Morning Prayer: This year, we are excited to offer daily Morning Prayer for your Lenten discipline. While the timing won't work for everyone, we hope that you will be able to attend at least one - but whether it's just one, one a week, or every day, we'll be here for your spiritual benefit.

It is especially gratifying that we have six volunteers who are offering their time to lead Morning Prayer. Vince Asher, Wilma Tully, Janice Syedullah, Tom Finnigan, and Patty Caswell will each officiate one day a week at 10:00 AM. For those who need a little earlier, Wendy Urban-Mead will lead Morning Prayer on three Mondays at 8:00 AM.

If anyone wants officiate at 6:00 AM (or Saturdays), let me know - the more we offer, the more opportunities there are for your fellow parishioners - and our neighbors - to attend.

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So come to the church on Lenten mornings - it will make your Lenten discipline that much more meaningful.

Let' Grow Together!

The Hyde Park Community Garden

Kick-Off Meeting

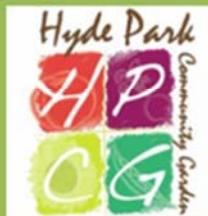
7:00 PM Feb. 23, 2017

St. James' Chapel

10 East Market Street, Hyde Park

For Info Call 229-0153

Join us for our 6th Season!



Internment Camp Exhibit: Though not a church function, this exhibit is worthy of your attention. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum will open a new phot

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exhibit on February 19: "Images of Internment: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II." With over 200 photographs including the work of Dorothea Lange and Ansel Adams.



St. James' Hosting Trinity Institute Simulcast: St. James' is excited to be one of two Midhudson Valley sites hosting a simulcast of this year's Trinity Institute Conference which takes place March 22-24. The Trinity Institute is a three-day conference attracting participants from around the world. Each year it focuses on one topic of importance to people of faith. This year's conference is titled: "Water Justice" and centers on the sacredness of water and the necessity of protecting it so we can all live. From the Trinity Institute website: "Water is a gift. Water is life. As water crises increase, access to safe and clean drinking water decreases.

From Flint to Standing Rock, many of today's most pressing social issues revolve around water. Faith communities worldwide can help."

The simulcast will take place in the parish hall. We encourage everyone to be part of this - for all three days if possible, but for one day if that's all you can do.

Some Diocesan Dates of Interest: It is important to be in communion with other Episcopalians in our diocese. While many events are held in New York City, some are more regionally available. Here are a few events that you may be interested in.

- February 11, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM - Safe Church Training (in Tarrytown)*
- February 11, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM - Blessed Absalom Jones Celebration (Cathedral)
- March 18, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM - Eucharistic Minister/Eucharistic Visitor Training (in Cornwall)

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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 Online Resources 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)
 - Fr. Richard Rohr's blog <https://cac.org/richard-rohr/richard-rohr-ofm/>
 - Jan Richardson - <http://paintedprayerbook.com>
- Especially good for those grieving or interested in women's spirituality.

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February 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5	6 Office Closed	7	8 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	9 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	10	11 5:00 Buildings & Grounds
12 4:00 PM Absalom Jones Ceremony	13 Office Closed 7:00 PM Women's Group	14 <u>Valentine's Day</u>	15 6:30 Outreach Meeting 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	16 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures 7:00 PM Fireside Chat	17	18 8 AM Men's Breakfast
19	20 Office Closed	21 7:00 PM Vestry	22 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	23 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures 7:00 PM Comm. Garden kick-off	24	25
26 8:00 Quarterly Chapel Service	27 Office Closed	28 6:30 PM Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper				

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."

- 12 Church of the Atonement, Bronx
- 13 Wardens and Vestries of the Diocese
- 14 Diocesan Young Adult Missioner and the Young Adult Network

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- 15 Theological Scholars and Professors of the Diocese
- 16 Trinity Preschool, Manhattan
- 17 Episcopal Cursillo
- 18 Diocesan Socially and Environmentally Responsible Investment Task Force

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

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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

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Dee, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), 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 Sheeky, 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):	Andrew Gausepohl, Cathi Tegtmeier, Doris Mack, Paul O'Halloran and William Fenwick
Birthdays (this coming week):	Deborah Belding, Elizabeth Gabel, Meg Connolly-Burkhardt, Tadgh O'Halloran and Stephanie Barkoe
Acolytes:	February 12: Team 2 February 19: Team 3
Altar Guild:	February 12: Team II February 19: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	February 12: Lucille Ogden and Thomas Finnigan February 19: Debbie Belding and Lynne Koch

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10 a.m. Readers:	February 12: Patty Caswell/Justin Bohlmann February 19: Regina Ardini/Andy Hall
Ushers:	February 12: Dean Caswell, Audrey Horne February 19: Bill and Regina Ardini
Pledge Clerks:	February 12: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass February 19: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	February 12: Pat Keeffe, Peter Khan February 19: Jack, Suzann, Brian and Faith Kinne, Morgan Kinne, Milena Jewel and Abby Jewel
Coffee Hour Hosts:	February 12: Jodi Triola, Ross and Connie Eames February 19: Deirdre Mae Micker, the Urban- Meads

This Week's Lectionary

Sirach 15:15-20

Psalm 119:1-8

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Matthew 5:21-37

This Week's Hymns

Processional: Hymn 635 (If thou but trust in God to guide thee)

Sequence: Hymn 592 (Teach me, my God and King)

Offertory: "Cantate Domino" ("Sing to the Lord"), and "Benedictus es"
("Blessed art thou")

Communion: Hymn 341 (For the bread which you have broken)

Recessional: Hymn 628 (Help us, O Lord, to Learn)

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

Sermon Preached on
Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
(February 5, 2017)

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"What They Said"

Here is a universal truth: In the course of our lives, we make a lot of mistakes. One of the mistakes we make repeatedly in the church is to keep saying that Jesus fundamentally did a new thing.

I believe Jesus would disagree.

Everything he did from his teaching to his healing to the feeding and the raising of the dead to his self-sacrifice - all of that is completely consistent with the law and the prophets of old.

Rather than being a progressive, then, you might say Jesus was the ultimate conservative. By that, I mean that what he taught and how he lived was and is in perfect harmony with God's desires for us from the very first day. And he was calling the people back to that original purpose.

Jesus says as much in today's gospel, doesn't he? "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill."

He urges us to live as the prophets cried to their people, as the law directed in its earliest form. Not all the fasting and prostrations, but the heart of the law which was the core of the prophets' message.

Jesus makes it clear he is in sync with this law: to love, to feed, to welcome, comfort, free, to house... Remember last week, Micah's condemnation of the Judeans for their mean-spiritedness against the refugees entering their land.

And notice what Isaiah says in today's reading:

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the thongs of the yoke,

to let the oppressed, go free,

and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,

and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them,

and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

This is nothing different from what Jesus says over and over in the gospels. The message, the command never did change.

What Isaiah says about bringing the homeless into our house? Jesus says it's still true because - as much as this rubs against us, it is what God expects of us. And to the degree we do not live like this - and God help me, I surely don't - then we have cause for repentance.

So feel free to join with me in repentance. Only know that repentance implies willingness to change and to take seriously the flaw of our previous approach.

Now, I would rather stand here and say, just come and rest, enjoy each other's company, don't worry about what's going on outside these doors. And to a degree, we can do that. We are here

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as the Body of Christ to feed each other and support each other. God calls us together to be re-created.

But then God sends us right back out into the world - you know, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

Which is to say, we don't get to withdraw from the world for long. As Isaiah said, our job is "not to hide yourself from your own kin."

So, yes, how we treat each other outside of these walls - and by "each other", I mean our 7 billion brothers and sisters, especially those in the greatest need - it is a matter of our most ancient faith.

But Jesus doesn't let it rest there. Not only are we to treat others as the prophets proclaim - but we're to do so loudly. "Let your light shine before others," Jesus says, "so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." Don't hide your light under a bushel. Don't let your spice go bland.

This is ancient, too. As God says to Isaiah, "Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!"

Which is to say, when you are feeding the hungry, don't be shy about saying you are doing so because Christ fed the hungry. When you offer welcome to the homeless, say it's because Isaiah called us to do so. If you're out at one of the rallies urging this country to welcome refugees, then say it loud that you're doing so because it is the command of God from ancient days.

When we not only serve, but do so in God's name, this does two big things. First, it gives us clarity about why we act. It's not because we're so good or brave or upstanding or even radical. We're not. We do these things because they are what our faith teaches. And that is the second reason for acting in the name of Christ: It gives God glory. Because every act of kindness, or love toward our neighbor glorifies God. And God's glory is when we all turn heavenward to see our universal bonds; that God is father of one and all.

So, Jesus upholds what the prophets said. He upholds the law of God's love. It may seem new in that he opens God's to all people rather than only Israel. But that's only because Israel had forgotten its earliest calling - a calling Jesus reminded them of more than once. Even before the Ten Commandments, there was the more ancient law. When God called Abram, he said that he would bless Abram so that he could be a blessing to all nations.

That's what Jesus tells his disciples - go out and be a blessing to all.

So, let us be conservative in the sense of harkening back to the original and most consistent message of the bible: love the Lord your God, and love your neighbor as yourself. And do it loud. Amen.