

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: February 16, 2020

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I've mentioned in the past couple of sermons how the season of Epiphany was a continuing unveiling of who Jesus was and what his purpose was for being among us. But over that same time, there is a subtle shift from Jesus' purpose to ours.

Now as we approach Lent — Ash Wednesday is just a week and a half away! — we are going to enter into a totally new period, one of self reflection and, to a degree, self questioning. Who are we in relationship to Christ? What do our actions mean? How are we to be the people God intends?

It is fascinating to me how the church year takes us on a series of journeys, each one like a level in a video game, (or like those “escape rooms” where you have to solve a little mystery in one room before advancing to the next) each with its own focus. And each one revealing something new to us about God, ourselves, or both. I mention this because as we prepare the Lenten Meditation booklets and get ready to receive ashes, as we make the long slog through Lent toward Easter, it is helpful to understand the goal of each — not the outward signs of the season but what we're doing it for.

As we finish up Epiphany and get ready for Lent, let us take seriously what the seasons have to teach us — and embrace those lessons.

Oh, and join us for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper! That is a great and fun part of the journey that eases the transition between seasons.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Thought for your week:

“Following call is going to look different for each of us. But for every one of us, it will be an act of faith and require a step into the unknown. We will experience joy as well as know pain. We will be humbled in realizing our limits and stretched beyond them. But we will know, though not fully comprehend, that we are doing what we were born to do—and be.”

— Trish Stefanik, Overlook Retreat House at Dayspring

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

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Join Us!

All are Welcome

February 25, 2020

6:00 PM



St. James' Parish Hall

**All Youth Are Invited to take part in
Fr. Chuck's Pancake Decorating Fun!**

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 Between Service Class is on Hiatus until after Easter because we have the Lenten Breakfasts during the Lenten Season. But please be reminded, that on March 15, Bishop Dietsche will be here to confirm and baptize, so there will be no Lenten Breakfast that day. Instead, there will be a reception following the 10:00 AM service.

Inquirers Class This Sunday:

The theme of this week's Inquirers Class is: **Baptism**. 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!

Remember Your Lenten Meditations:

Thank you to everyone who signed up to write a Lenten Meditation! Some have already come in, and they are very moving. Please remember that the deadline to get all meditations in — and I hope you'll beat the deadline! — is February 23. Please if at all possible **email** your meditation rather than giving me a paper copy. That makes it much easier for me. Thanks!

Lecture on Slavery:

On Saturday, February 29 at 2:30 PM, Fr. Chuck will give a lecture on slavery and those who benefited from it at the Adriance Memorial Library. There is no fee.

Comedy Night Fundraiser:

If you are a supporter of the Hyde Park Public Schools, please consider coming to the “Leap Into Comedy” Fundraiser on Saturday, February 29 (see flyer below). You’ll get to see Fr. Chuck try his hand at standup comedy — *nothing* like a sermon!

**Leap into
COMEDY**



**February 29th
COPPOLA'S RESTURANT**

**DOORS OPEN AT
6:15PM**

**Sponsored by the
HYDE PARK EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

Tickets \$50
Dinner, Salad, & Dessert Included!
Cash Bar - 50/50 Raffle - Gift Baskets

Tickets available at www.hydeparkeeducationfoundation.org
on our Facebook Event Page.
OR by sending a check to
HPEF, P.O. Box 320, Hyde Park, NY, 12538
Include phone number for reservation confirmation

**Hosted by
Duane Joseph Olson**



Elon Falance



Nick Vlagas



Tim Redmond



Rhiannon Guilfoyle



**Father
Chuck Kramer**

The Hyde Park Education Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, whose mission is to support programs and resources for the students of the HPCSD

Next Fireside Chat: Stone Walls of Hyde Park:

Mark your calendars for the next Chat: **March 5:** *The Stone Walls of Hyde Park.* The speaker is Patricia Weber, who was instrumental in the committee to preserve the historic stone walls that are found throughout the town and county. She will discuss their historical importance and the efforts to preserve them. As always, the Chat starts at 7:00 PM. Please share this with your friends!

February 2020						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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 Lenten Meditation Deadline 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 2:30 Lecture on Slavery 6:30 Leap Into Comedy

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.diocesenyny.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

- 16 St. Mark's Church, Mount Kisco
- 17 Church of the Intercession, Manhattan
- 18 St. Andrew's Church, Hartsdale
- 19 Diocesan Congregational Development Commission
- 20 The Canon for Congregational Vitality
- 21 La Academia Ecu mica de Liderazgo
- 22 Church of the Mediator, Bronx

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ashley, Joe Baldwin, John Bohlmann, Justin Bohlmann, Fr. Fred Cartier, Patty Caswell, Sue Dingee, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Charles Faverio, 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 Konym, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Lorraine, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Margaret, Bruce McIlravy, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginerio Milano, Christine Oppenheimer, 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):	Andrew Gausepohl, Cathi Tegtmeier, Doris Mack and Paul O'Halloran
Birthdays (this coming week):	William Fenwick, Deborah Belding, Elizabeth Gabel and Meg Connolly-Burkhardt
Acolytes:	February 16: Bill Fenwick and Jack Canez February 23: Emily Glancey and Braeden Hall
Altar Guild:	February 16: Team III February 23: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	February 16: Lucille Ogden and Grant Ferris February 23: Debbie Belding and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	February 16: Wendy Urban-Mead/Deirdre Mae Micker February 23: Patty Caswell/Mike Fenwick
Ushers:	February 16: Jodi Triola and Georgia Verven February 23: Dean Caswell and Audrey Horne
Pledge Clerks:	February 16: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher February 23: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	February 16: Ashley Konyn, Joanne Lown, Doris Mack February 23: Jim and Beth Matranga, Glenn May and Charles Faverio
Coffee Hour Hosts:	February 16: Deirdre Mae Micker, Wendy and Russell Urban-Mead February 23: Brian Rance, Saira Shahani

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: 657 — Love Divine
Sequence: 674 - forgive Our Sins As We
Offertory: Loving and Forgiving
Communion: 707 — Take My Life And Let It Be
Recessional: 525 — The Church's One Foundation

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

"Fulfilling Righteousness"

Last week in our Inquirers class we introduced the Gospels. We talked about how each gospel writer had a different audience:

All 4 wrote for Christians but with different backgrounds:

Mark, Luke, and John all wrote for Christians of gentile backgrounds with varying familiarity with Judaism — some very familiar, others hardly knowing anything about it.

But Matthew was writing to a predominantly Jewish background audience. And this shaped everything he did in the Gospel because, not only was Jesus Jewish, but so were the readers. They knew the teachings, traditions, sacrifices, holy days — on the one hand, that meant Matthew didn't have explain all these things like you see in Luke and John. On the other hand, it means that Matthew had to take into account the prejudices and expectations of his audience. He downplays, for example, God's love and grace for ALL people of all countries (he certainly did NOT have the Magi). He plays up Jesus 'connection with not only King David but Abraham.

And, as in today's gospel, he plays up Jesus 'fulfillment of the law, the prophets, and all righteousness.

Which is to say, JESUS IS NOT SOME NEW FAD BUT A FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD.

That's where we are today. This is part of the SERMON ON THE MOUNT (which was not ONE sermon but a compilation of the teachings of Jesus over time). We're *past* the "Blessed are" section, but remember that one of those Blesseds is "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." We'll come back to that in a minute.

In this teaching — the part we read today — we have a couple of different directions for the disciples (and again, remember, this is teaching for the disciples AWAY from the crowds). It's a training session.

First, He teaches them that they are salt and light. I don't want to focus on this part too much, but you should know that salt was hugely valuable in those days because it was the best food preservative, it was medicine, and it gave flavor to the bland. That was their role as future leaders of the faith. To give life, to heal, to make it clear that life with God was better, not bland and tasteless.

In the same way, in a world with no electricity (and light pollution), light was often a life saver where even a small lamp would show the way home, where it made possible getting essential things done. They were to be light.

But it's what Jesus says *next* that is so important to Matthew: I didn't come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you have no part in the Kingdom of Heaven. That's serious stuff — but what Matthew is saying here is that Jesus FULFILLS the law, FULFILLS the prophets, and FULFILLS righteousness in a way that even the professional religious people can't.

Matthew's audience is not looking for some new invention — they want to know that Jesus is connected to God's original covenant — that what they believed all along about God loving them is true. Matthew's gospel assures them that they haven't been wasting their time all these centuries. Rather, Jesus has come to help them see more clearly and live more nearly what God has been saying all along.

And that is: I love you.

Which is why he concludes this section with that part about righteousness. Righteousness isn't just saying the right things. It isn't just being a good person by not doing bad things. And it isn't just helping other people. Righteousness is ALL of those things. It is the Law AND the Prophets. It is connection with God AND with People.

A Jewish audience would totally get this, and they would say, **“Someone who fulfills righteousness is someone I can follow.”**

Now, you might wonder if the gospel has meaning if each one was written for a different audience and says a different thing. But no. Each has a different audience and says the *same thing differently* so that they can hear it and embrace it.

Matthew spoke to a group of people for whom it was important to hear the words of **fulfillment of the old**. But the heart of it was still: **God loves you**.

On the other end of the spectrum, John spoke to a group who knew virtually nothing about Jews, but the heart of it was still: **God loves you**.

Today, **we** are the followers of Christ, **we are the disciples being trained to go out and speak**.

We need to understand, the world we face is a world filled with intentional division and spreading of fear. Racial tensions haven't been this high since the Civil Rights era. Sexual assaults are on the rise. The gap between rich and poor is widening. The air we breathe and the water we drink is getting worse for the first time in half a century. And these tensions are spreading around the world.

This is the context WE are given to speak in — we will use different words — **MUST** use different words so that the message can be understood.

But the message is the same: **God still loves you**. And so do I. 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?