

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

Pulpit Notes

I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing....in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed

--Genesis 12:1-2

Brothers and Sisters:

What does it mean to be a blessing? If you've heard me preach long enough, you'll know that blessing doesn't always mean easy and happy times. In fact, I've regularly said blessings are often a prelude to challenging times. Abram was blessed in this quote from Genesis and then immediately sent away from his father's house into an unknown land. Jacob received his blessing only to be chased away from his home for the next twenty years.

Nevertheless, they were blessed because they grew in their relationship with the Living God - and they were richer for it in their souls. Despite the trials and tribulations of the world around them, despite the pain and anguish they often suffered at the hands of others (and sometimes through their own poor choices), they knew the grace and the peace of God's endless love.

More importantly, because they were blessed, they were able to be a blessing to those around them. That is, through them and their examples, others came to know God more closely - more lovingly - and were richer in spirit for it.

In a way, the work of blessing all the families of the earth through Abraham is still going on because we are his spiritual heirs. That is, you and I are also called to be blessed by God and through God to be a blessing.

You and I are called to rest in God's grace, to allow his love to wash over us and enfold us, to lift us up and give us strength, courage and hope. Then we're called to go out and do the same for others who have not yet had the chance to know that grace and that peace.

That's what it means to be blessed and to be a blessing.

Now, it is fair to say that not everyone at St. James' (or in any church) feels blessed. Not everyone feels grace and peace and love despite the turmoil around them. For some of us, that turmoil is so stressful, so upsetting, so heartbreaking, that the idea of blessing anyone is as far from our hearts as the moon is from the earth.

4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park NY 12538 T 845-229-2820 F 845-229-5293

W www.stjameshydepark.org E stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org

f at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/22692330307>

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

It is in those times that we need the blessing of the Body of Christ the most. We need the people who are grounded in God's grace, who are resting in God's peace - they become our anchors to hold onto us when we have lost our moorings. That is, when we can't be a blessing for others, it's time to let others be a blessing for us. It may not make the outside turmoil easier, but it will give us a sense of God's presence - something we'll likely never get on our own.

So pray this Lenten season. Go to Morning Prayer. Read your meditations. Make an effort to look within, not only to find the blessings that are there but to see how you can be the blessing someone near you needs.

And trust - God has not called us to an easy life, but he has called us to be blessed. And we will be. Not only that, but you will be a blessing, and "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

The News of the Church

Lenten Morning Prayer: We've had a full week of Morning Prayer - with great participation! If you haven't had a chance to attend, I encourage you to do so. What has pleased me most is that there have been several who have come back for more after experiencing their first Morning Prayer. Give it a try!

Graveyard Tour Committee Openings: You know how powerful the Graveyard Tours have been for St. James'. They have been fun, educational, and inspirational not only for the congregation but for the whole community. Not only that, but they have been extraordinarily helpful to the parish budget.

Please contact Fr. Chuck if you are interested in joining the Graveyard Tour Committee.

Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast: Troop 80 is having another Pancake Breakfast fundraiser for the scouts who are going to SeaBase High Adventure Camp.

It is **Saturday, March 11** from 8 to 11a.m. in the Parish Hall, \$8.00 for adults and \$6.00 for children.

Women's Group Meeting: The second meeting of the St. James Women's Group is on **Monday, March 13, at 6:00 PM** at Antonella's in Hyde Park Plaza for dinner. If you can, let Patty Glancey or Regina Ardini know in advance so that they can give Antonella's an estimate. But, also feel free to drop in!

Men's Breakfast: Next Men's Breakfast is Saturday, **March 18 at 8:00 AM**. Meet at Cranberry's!

Clean-Up Day: There will be a church/parish hall clean-up session **Saturday, March 18 starting at 10:00 AM**. If you would like to attend please e-mail Mike Glancey at geomike80@yahoo.com thanks!

Reparations Workshop: The good people of St. Margaret's invite everyone at St. James' to be part of a Lenten workshop on Reparations in the country and especially in the Diocese of New York. Although Fr. Chuck is a new member of the committee and might be able to be a resource, he is not one of the presenters. The date of this special workshop is **Wednesday, March 29 at 6:30 PM**.

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

SPECIAL NOTICE: Our Sexton, Richard Secor, has announced that he will be retiring at the end of the month. We naturally wish Richard a happy retirement. Please note that we will begin a search for a new sexton as soon as practicable and hope to have uninterrupted service. Thanks for your patience and cooperation in this time of transition.

Explore the Choir! "If you have any interest at all in singing and/or playing an instrument - no matter how much experience you have - do consider participating in the St. James music ministry! You can contact St. James' Music Director Sarah Rodeo (sarodeo@vassar.edu) at any time!"



St. James' Hosting Trinity Institute Simulcast: St. James' is the only Midhudson Valley site 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.

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12 SPRING FORWARD! 9:00 AM Lenten Breakfasts	13 8 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Morning Prayer Office Closed 6:00 PM Women's Group	14 10 AM Morning Prayer	15 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	16 10 AM Morning Prayer 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	17 10 AM Morning Prayer	18 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast 10:00 AM Clean-up Day
19 9:00 AM Lenten Breakfasts	20 8 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Morning Prayer Office Closed	21 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Vestry	22 10 AM Morning Prayer Trinity Institute 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	23 10 AM Morning Prayer Trinity Institute 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	24 10 AM Morning Prayer Trinity Institute	25
26 9:00 AM Lenten Breakfasts	27 8 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Morning Prayer Office Closed	28 10 AM Morning Prayer	29 10 AM Morning Prayer 6:30 Reparations workshop 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	30 10 AM Morning Prayer 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	31 10 AM Morning Prayer	

Every Sunday, the Holy Eucharist is celebrated at 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM
 Sunday School is offered at the 10:00 AM service. Coffee Hour follows.

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

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.

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.

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.diocesenyn.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

- 12 The Most Rev. Michael Curry and The Episcopal Church's House of Bishops
- 13 Episcopal Delegates to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
- 14 The Rt. Rev. Mark Sisk, 15th Bishop of New York
- 15 The Rt. Rev. Richard Grein, 14th Bishop of New York
- 16 The Rt. Rev. Catherine Roskam, Retired Bishop Suffragan of New York
- 17 The Assisting Bishops of New York
- 18 St. Joseph's Episcopal Church, Bronx

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.

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

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,

May this be your will

And let us say Amen.

*Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum
English Translation Amichai Lau-Lavie*

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

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, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), 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):	Faith Kinne and Carl Needy
Birthdays (this coming week):	Russell Urban-Mead, Richard Kuralt and Susan Dingee
Acolytes:	March 12: Team 3 March 19: Team 1
Altar Guild:	March 12: Team I March 19: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	March 12: Lucille Ogden and Jim Smyth March 19: Debbie Belding and Thomas Finnigan
10 a.m. Readers:	March 12: Regina Ardini/Andy Hall March 19: Russell Urban-Mead/Judy Douglass
Ushers:	March 12: Andrew and Tonya Hall March 19: Judy Douglass, Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	March 12: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass March 19: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

Parish Cycle of Prayer: March 12: Joanne Lown, Doris Mack
March 19: Gordon and Virginia MacKenzie, Jim and Beth Matranga
Coffee Hour Hosts: March 12: Lenten Breakfast
March 19: Lenten Breakfast

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17

This Week's Hymns

Processional: Hymn 575 (Before Thy Throne, O God)

Sequence: Hymn 142 (Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days)

Offertory: "God So Loved The World"

Communion: Hymn 146 (Now Let Us All With One Accord)

Recessional: Hymn 668 (I To The Hills Will Lift Mine Eyes)

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

Sermon Preached on
First Sunday in Lent
(March 5, 2017)

"Considering the Consequences"

Welcome to Lent, the great forty days. We begin the season with Jesus going into the wilderness for forty days to fast and pray.

Why 40 days? Because it took time to consider what his mission should be - more to the point, how he should fulfill it. He knew the mission was reconciliation, helping us know and share God's love. But how? Would he feed the world, defeat all enemies, heal all the world's sick? Or something more?

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

And what would it cost? Because Jesus was clear that the wise person does not rush into a situation without considering the consequences, and whether they could actually see it through. Jesus doesn't go into his work blindly, and neither should we.

But he DOES go forward with his difficult, painful mission - because it is right.

Throughout history, the church has sought to follow his example, counting the cost of their loving actions but going through with them anyway. Back in slavery days, for example, thousands of Christians hid escaped slaves and helped them move on the Underground Railroad toward freedom, even here in Hyde Park.

Certainly, the law considered the runaway slaves to be criminals, essentially stealing the property (themselves) of another person. Those helping them escape were also criminals, and the penalties if they got caught were severe, sometimes even including death. Only a few Episcopalians - like John Jay - got involved in the Underground Railroad. Most Episcopalians thought the church shouldn't get involved in worldly matters.

The same is true of the countless Christians in Europe who risked their lives to hide Jews from the Nazis during World War II. There is no way to convey the courage it took to break the law to save Jewish lives. The horrors that awaited those who got caught were enough to make anyone say, "I'd really love to help, but I have a family to take care of...."

These days, we see religious communities of every faith across the country considering the consequences of their choices. For example: Several are sponsoring refugee families coming from war torn or famine riddled countries. This is no small thing. It involves dozens of parishioner volunteers taking on the task of shepherding a family through the legal and practical matters becoming part of a foreign culture. It also involves helping protect that family from neighbors who don't want them. It has become even harder for them in the past few months since refugees face much tougher scrutiny and hostility. Christ Church Poughkeepsie became a sponsoring parish for a family just before the immigration ban took effect.

It cost the parishioners a great deal of money, time, and hard work. Worse yet, the hostility they have faced includes threats against the family and those helping them. The church knew this was a possibility before they began - and they chose to move forward.

Another contemporary example can be found all over the country. Churches - Episcopal and otherwise - are identifying themselves as sanctuary churches. This is the ancient Christian tradition of offering safety to all who enter the church and claim Sanctuary. In bygone days, as long as the person stayed in the church, the law would not pursue them. In our current context, churches are opening their doors to shelter people who are in danger of being deported. Let's be clear that they do not shelter just any immigrants in danger of deportation but most especially those who have lived here for many years, often since childhood, working and contributing to their communities.

While it is true that their presence in this country is technically a crime, we might consider that the law might be unjust - at least in God's eyes. The implementation of the law might also be unjust, singling out some ethnic groups for deportation over others, and ignoring our own

St. James' E-pistle

March 10, 2017

actions which helped create the conditions that force people to seek relief here in the first place. Regardless, the church's ancient practice has been to give sanctuary to all who seek it.

The consequences of offering sanctuary are many. Holy Cross Church in Kingston is preparing to declare itself a sanctuary church. In preparation, they are installing showers in the church and other facilities to make it possible for them to host immigrants hiding from the authorities. They are accepting the idea of people living in their church for the long term.

Other consequences are more serious. While sanctuary is an ancient tradition, and violating it would look bad for the government, the church members have accepted the possibility of being arrested for their actions. And of course the possibility of violence aimed at the entire congregation is very real.

Lent is the season to look honestly at our lives, repent our failures, and reflect on what God is calling us to be. Although our mission of reconciliation never changes, how we approach it does and must from time to time. Lent is the perfect time to reconsider our call - and the consequences.

So... What is God calling St. James' to? What will it cost us, and are we willing pay it?

Are we called to sponsor a refugee family (if that ever becomes an option again)? Are we called to give sanctuary to immigrants trying to avoid deportation? It's not in my nature to tell the congregation that we should commit to a specific action. But it is my job to admonish everyone here to think deeply, seriously, and honestly about God's mission for us - and to consider what consequences we're willing to accept.

We don't have to find all the answers right away. Lent is 40 days because that's how long Jesus took to consider his mission and its consequences. All I ask is that we as a church use those 40 days as Jesus did. Amen.