

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: March 18, 2018

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

There are some weeks that are so full, you just don't know where to begin. We were dominated, it seemed last week, by the snow storms hitting us with no little ferocity. The first storm was mostly wind and ice, and many lost power. The second storm, of course, was all heavy snow, and you can still see the evidence of that storm through the countless downed branches. The third storm was a bit of a bust here - not that I'm complaining! - but others suffered serious damage in it.

We all live in the northeast and know what to expect from winter. Nevertheless, it is always good for us to check in on each other - to remember that our care for our neighbor never stops. We belong to each other in fair weather and foul.

On the other hand, we know what tremendous beauty these snow events bring. Though it is melting at a prodigious rate, why not take a walk and enjoy the snow which paints the landscape a gorgeous white. It will fade soon enough.

The other big thing is of course guns. On Wednesday, we heeded the bishop's call and said prayers for those who suffer gun violence. We rang the bells. See below for information on how you can be part of the movement to reduce gun violence.

Finally, we are entering the last week of Lent before Holy Week. Of course that means that this Sunday will be our **Final Lenten Breakfast!** But it also means that we are preparing for Holy Week and Easter. Please use Holy Week to its fullest. Each one of the Holy Week events is designed to bring you closer to the God who loves us so much and wants nothing less than communion with us. A flyer with Holy Week service times is below.

So much going on - but each in its way helps us know that we are loved by God and called to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

On February 25, the Rt. Rev. Mary Glasspool visited to confirm and reaffirm. From left to right: Jeffrey Fishwick and Jillian Foster were confirmed. To the right of Bishop Glasspool are Eric and Tammy Zavadi who reaffirmed their faith. Congratulations all!



On Monday, March 12, many of our St. James' brothers and sisters met at Five Guys Burgers for a highly tasty fundraiser.

The Sunday School was raising money for its continuing ministry to the world including purchasing supplies to help out the Dutchess County SPCA.

At one point, 31 different St. James' folks filled the restaurant, making joyful noise (mostly munching) - and money for ministry. Five Guys gave 10% of its proceeds that evening to the Sunday School.

Please fill out the ATTENDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE!

“And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24-25

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Matthew 18:20

You are a member of St. James', and we are blessed to have you. Your presence is crucial to the life of this parish. When parishioners come together, everyone's life is made more joyful, fuller and in general better.

In our ongoing effort to increase attendance by current members, we would like to ask you a few questions. Please take this seriously and answer as honestly as you wish. You may include your name or not - that is up to you. If you do, your answers will be held in strictest confidentiality, though the general information will be collated for parish consideration.

No matter how often you attend, we want to hear what keeps you away or keeps you coming back.

Thank you in advance for your help understanding what is needed to advance the work of the gospel.

- 1 How long have you attended St. James'? _____
- 2 On average, how regularly did you attend over the past 12 months?
 Weekly Biweekly Monthly Bimonthly Less often
- 3 Was this more than, less than, or about the same as the previous year?
 More Less About the same
- 4 If you attended **less** this year, to what do you attribute this? *Check as many as apply and use as much space as you need to elaborate on any point.*
 Work Sports Travel Health Family complexities
 Anger at the rector Anger at other parish leadership Anger at the Episcopal Church
 Music quality Sermon quality Sunday School size Loss of Faith Other

- 5 If you attend **more**, to what do you attribute that? *Check as many as apply and use as much space as you need to elaborate on any point:*
___Health ___Family ___Seeking Closer Relationship with God ___Good Fellowship ___Music quality ___Sermon quality ___Sunday School size ___Other
- 6 Answering as honestly as you can, what would make you attend more? We will leave this open for you to answer as you choose, but it can range from “Nothing” to small changes like “Need a ride,” to significant things like “Change in leadership.”
- 7 If there is anything you feel needs to be said that is not addressed here but needs to be said, please let us know.

Name (optional) _____

Announcements

Youth Sunday Thanks:

Thanks go out to the Sunday School students who took part in our Youth Sunday! Ushers, readers, acolytes... great job everyone! Let's look forward to another one!

Men's Breakfast:

Saturday, March 17, we'll have the next Men's Breakfast - Cranberry's, 8:00 AM. See you then.

Outreach Meeting:

St. James Outreach committee will be meeting on **March 21st at 6:30 PM** in the Wilks Room. All are welcomed!

March Against Gun Violence:

On **Saturday, March 24**, Episcopalians from all over the state will join thousands of others in the "March For Our Lives." Several parishioners from St. James' have decided to attend the march in New York City. If you would like to attend with fellow parishioners, please talk to Fr. Chuck about coordinating. There is also a march in Poughkeepsie (see below). Christ Church, Poughkeepsie has rented a bus to go to the march in Washington, DC. If you're interested in that march, please call Christ Church's parish office.

Prayer Vigil - Walkway Over the Hudson: March for Our Lives:

There will be a Prayer Vigil on **Friday, March 23 from 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM** at the chapel at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park. The Prayer Vigil will be replacing the normal final service of the day which is Compline.

On Saturday, March 24th, there will be a local **March For Our Lives** gathering on the Walkway Over the Hudson. The march begins at 11:00 a.m. on the Poughkeepsie side of the Walkway and proceeds across to the Highland side of the river. The organizers will be asking each person to make a \$1.00 offering to offset planning costs. It is my understanding that no backpacks, etc. will be allowed on the Walkway during the march. Signs are encouraged; however, signs are not to be attached to sticks or poles.

Book Recommendation: The Second Amendment: A Biography by Michael Waldman

There is so much discussion going on about the 2nd amendment that I decided to go to my copy of the Constitution and reread the second amendment. It reads “*A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.*”

The amendment along with the other nine amendments was added to the constitution in 1792 and reflected a specific time and place in our history.

Shortly after re-reading the amendment, Mr Waldman was interviewed on NPR about his book: “The Second Amendment: A Biography”. In recent years, I have been struggling to understand how we got from the 1792 understanding of the 2nd amendment to how the 2nd amendment was being interpreted in 2018. I have been struggling to understand how we got from owning muskets and rifles to owning assault rifles and the need of individuals to own an assault rifle. Because of these struggles in trying to understand different people’s perspectives on these issues, I brought the book and have begun to read it. Thus far, I have found the information presented in Waldman’s book insightful.

If you have been struggling like I have with the gun debate, please consider reading this history of the 2nd amendment. — Deacon Gail

A PLEDGE PLEA:

If you have not pledged yet, please do so. Letters will go out next week from the Vestry to remind you about your pledge. Please help!

Are You Getting the Episcopal New Yorker?

If you're not receiving the *Episcopal New Yorker*, the quarterly magazine of our Diocese, email Andrew Gary at agary@diocesenyc.org with your name, mailing address, and the name of the congregation where you are a member. You'll receive the newspaper four times per year. It's that simple to keep up on news of the Diocese and read Engaging yet challenging articles about our faith.

~ Save the date and register now! ~

**I Want My Church to Grow:
What is Congregational Development?**

Saturday, April 28, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

(Check-in opens at 8:30 a.m.)

Trinity St. Paul's Church

311 Huguenot Street, New Rochelle

This special workshop is for:

- ✓ Laypeople and clergy who want to grow a vital church
- ✓ Those who want to join God in doing a new thing
- ✓ Leadership teams working on evangelism, church growth, spiritual development

Workshop Topics

- ❖ Episcopalians Evangelize? Using Community Organizing Tools for Church Growth
- ❖ You Start with what You Have: Asset Based Congregational Development
- ❖ We Need More Money: Best Practices for Your Stewardship Campaign
- ❖ Everything Keeps Changing! Vestry 101 for the 21st Century

Cost: 1–2 people: \$10 each; 3–4 people: \$8 each; 5 or more people: \$7 each

- **We encourage congregations to bring teams of 3 or more people!**

To register online, visit www.diocesenyny.org/ednyevent/cd18-april/

Questions?

The Rev. Canon Altagracia Pérez–Bullard, PhD

Canon for Congregational Vitality

212–316–7433 or aperez-bullard@diocesenyny.org

What is Congregational Vitality in the Diocese of New York?

- Latinx Ministry
- Consulting with Congregations
- Renewal Works (2018)
- Congregational Development Commission
 - Developing/Identifying/Providing Resources (Resourcing)
 - Diocesan Training Events (Equipping Leaders)
 - Planting and (re)Development
 - Grant Programs



The
Episcopal Diocese
of New York

March 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 11 SPRING FORWARD! 10 AM SPECIAL YOUTH SERVICE | 12 Office Closed 7:30 PM Choir Practice | 13 | 14 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Inquirers | 15 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures | 16 11 AM Free Prayer Friday @ Cranberry's | 17 8 AM Men's Breakfast |
| 18 3 pm Youth Group | 19 Office Closed 6 PM Women's Group @ Coppola's | 20 7 PM Vestry | 21 10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM Eucharist at HP Assisted Living | 22 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures | 23 11 AM Free Prayer Friday @ Cranberry's | 24 March Against Gun Violence |
| 25 Palm Sunday | 26 7:30 PM Choir Practice | 27 | 28 10 AM Morning Prayer | 29 7 PM Maundy Thursday THE WATCH | 30 10:30 AM Community Walk of Cross 7 PM Good Friday | 31 8 PM EASTER VIGIL |
| 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. | | | | | | |

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/>

- 18 St. Bartholomew's Church, White Plains
- 19 St. Andrew's Church, Beacon
- 20 Christ Church, Poughkeepsie
- 21 Episcopal Church Women, Diocese of New York Chapter
- 22 Diocesan Environment Committee
- 23 Calvary-St. George's, Manhattan
- 24 Spouses of Diocesan Clergy

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Mariel Carter, Joann Clark (recovery from surgery), 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, Joanne Lynn, Jim Lynn (Carol Bender's brother - facing surgery), Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginerio Milano, Lillian Peralta, Mary Bowers Peters (stroke), Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), Pat Rooney, John Ross, 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): Carl Needy, Russell Urban-Mead, Richard Kuralt and Susan Dingee

Birthdays
(this coming week): Aric Tegmeier, Chuck Kramer and Don Ogden and Braeden Hall

Acolytes:
March 18: Kirstin Horn and Amelia McNamara
March 25: Russell Urban-Mead and Braeden Hall

Altar Guild:
March 18: Team II
March 25: TBD

8 a.m. Readers:
March 18: Debbie Belding and Lynne Koch
March 25: Julett Butler and Grant Ferris

10 a.m. Readers:
March 18: Patty Caswell and Joann Clark

March 25: Wendy Urban-Mead and Maggie McNamara

Ushers: March 18: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher
March 25: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher

Pledge Clerks: March 18: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
March 25: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell

Parish Cycle of Prayer: March 18: Tom, Maggie and Amelia McNamara
March 25: Gabby Mercado, Isabelle Mercado and Deirdre Mae Micker

Coffee Hour Hosts: March 18: Lenten Breakfast
March 25: Lenten Breakfast

This Week's Lectionary

Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3:14-21

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 148 - "Creator of The Earth"
Sequence: 498 - "Beneath the Cross"
Offertory: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"
Communion: 341 - "For the bread which You Have Broken"
Recessional: 152 - "Kind Maker of the World"

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Second Sunday in Lent (March 11, 2018)

"Loving the Light"

Here's a riddle. Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Let's make it interesting - which came first, the darkness or the light? OR Which came first, good deeds or belief?

Now when it comes to the first riddle, I would say, eggs - because I had eggs at our church breakfast this morning, and I'm going to have chicken for dinner this evening. Or you could say, "Who cares? As long as I get to eat them both."

With the darkness and light, you could say, as long as I have light to work in and can sleep when it's dark, I don't care which comes first.

But if you're a Christian, you might just care about good deeds come before belief. Just like chickens and eggs, or darkness and light, *both* good works and belief are important, but it *does* make a difference which comes first. Certainly which comes first in our hearts.

Here's an example of what I mean.

In just under two weeks, a whole lot of people are going to be traveling to Washington, DC and New York City - and Albany and Poughkeepsie and to over 400 cities around the country to protest gun violence. Many parishioners of St. James' will be among those marchers - as will I.

No matter what your position is on the Second Amendment or guns in general, every Christian can agree that violence against other people is never the will of God, and that we all are called to bring it to a minimum. So even if you don't agree with the marchers, you can appreciate protesting such violence.

I've actually gone to a lot of such protests in my life -because there is plenty out there for a Christian to oppose: Gun violence, *any* violence, the racism that is alive and well here, the sexism which still plagues us, the growing gap between rich and everybody else, the mistreatment of immigrant workers, the mistreatment of Native Americans, the ravaging of our environment. That's just a few I could think of off the top of my head - I'm sure you can come up with a few more

When I was young, I thought protest marches were very exciting - all those people, the chanting, the music. But I have to tell you, I don't love them. Sure, I participate when I feel it's necessary, but I don't love them. After I'd been to a few - and I have - I find that they can kind of wear a person down.

I mean, all these things are worthy of the attention of a Christian - but being **against** things all the time is like sinking into the darkness. All life seems negative. You can do it for awhile, but eventually you need the light. For us Christians, we have to know more than what we're against - we have to know what we're FOR.

Let me tell you another story. Back when Moses was leading the people of God away from Egypt, they had a hard time keeping positive. All they ever did was complain, complain, complain. "We hate this place! There isn't any food - oh yeah, and the food is terrible! It's too hot! I'm thirsty! I'm tired of walking!"

At one point, so the story goes, God just got so tired of it that God sent a bunch of snakes to bite people. And if they wanted to live, they had to look at a bronze snake Moses had put on a pole. Now, I don't know if that *really* happened like that, but the point of the story was that the people were focusing only on what was *wrong*. They were not focusing on where they were going. They weren't focusing on following God - or on simply being with God.

Sure, they had challenges to deal with out there in the wilderness, but they let those challenges make them forget why they were there in the first place - which was to be free and to be with God. And if you forget why you're there, then nothing seems good.

So let's bring it back to that anti-gun march. Why are we marching? Because killing people is bad. Absolutely. It is good to be against violence.

But why are we against violence? Or, why are we against treating immigrants like they are aren't really human? Or, why are we against treating women like they aren't as good as men? Or, why are we against treating the earth like our personal garbage can?

Or if you want to look at it another way - Why do we collect food for the food pantry? Why do we run our after-school reading program? Why do we collect money for the school in Martel, Haiti? Why do we work on the Buildings and Grounds Committee or the Vestry, or the altar guild or anything that seems so necessary?

Is it just because we have to? Because it's our duty? Because nobody else will do it?

If the reason we do things is out of fear, or anger, or guilt - you can only do that so long before it starts to eat you up inside. Even if they are good things.

That's what John was saying in his gospel today when he said that those who believe in Jesus are not condemned but those who do not believe are condemned already. He wasn't saying something silly like, "All you have to do is believe in Jesus - whatever that means - and then you can do whatever you want to anybody you want and it doesn't matter - and you don't every have to lift a finger for someone else - because you said you believe." People have used that as an excuse to hurt other people - but that's not what John was saying.

What he was saying was that belief comes first. Belief - really knowing how much God loves you - gives you all the reason you need to want the best for everyone else in the world. You help others not because you have to, not because you're afraid God will get you if you don't - but because you know God's love so deeply that you *want* to love others - to do what's best for God's other children. You love Jesus so much that you *want* to follow. You.

And sometimes Jesus leads us to places we would never have suspected - maybe to an animal shelter to help abandoned pets, maybe to a protest march where you're marching not so much against guns but for the other people God also created. Maybe to another country. Maybe to the cross.

John isn't saying that being a Christian doesn't require hard work - what he's saying is that belief comes first. Loving the light comes before tackling the darkness. Because without the light inside us, the darkness will wear you out - it will kill the soul.

Now, if you're worried that you have been focusing on darkness too much - that life is a series of complaints and problems, duties and burdens - then let me offer you this little assignment (or suggestion).

In your prayer time this week, ask yourself, what attracts you to God? What makes you love the light of Christ? What makes you look into the eyes of your brothers and sisters in Christ and say, "I want that!"

And if you're not sure, then use your prayer time to simply rest in the arms of God. Ask God to just hold you for awhile so that you can feel embraced by that love.

Because it is this light, this love, that makes everything else make sense. Which means the answer to the riddle of which came first is always belief - because God loved us first. Amen.

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