

St. James' E-pistle

March 17, 2017

Pulpit Notes

*In his hand are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands have molded the dry land.*

--Psalm 95:4-5

Brothers and Sisters:

I hope you survived the Great Blizzard of '17! I tried to keep two entrances to the house snow-free (in case of emergencies. Two means of egress are always a good idea!), but beyond that could only do reading, writing and phone work. There was more digging on Thursday, including digging out the church so we could have morning prayer. We didn't.

One thing I did on Wednesday was call on a few of our parishioners with mobility problems to see if they were okay. It's just a good idea to check.

One of the things about weather emergencies (or other kinds), is that you never know when they will hit. It is God's earth, for he made it, and it is not ours to control. It's always best to prepare ahead. After Superstorm Sandy, the Diocese of New York instituted an emergency protocol (including checking in on those who can't get out). Among the suggestions are to prepare the church to be an emergency shelter if needed. In our area, officials have said this is neither necessary nor desirable, but in other areas, such spaces are life savers.

Another practical suggestion is for everyone in each household to have a "Go Bag." A Go Bag is a small backpack with a couple of changes of clothes, travel toiletries, first aid kit, and some cash - pre-packed so all you have to do in case of evacuation is grab it and go. I've read that these are especially popular in earthquake prone areas but are useful everywhere since no home is immune from disasters such as fire.

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I have never been one for exaggerating danger, but reasonable preparation for what can be reasonably anticipated makes sense. After all, we carry insurance of all sorts for the likely event that some day, something will happen. Making a plan is the same, only it is a plan to not only look out for yourself but others around you. Make arrangements with your more vulnerable neighbors to check on them occasionally. Make a Go Bag. Check with your local volunteer agencies to see how you can be a help in times of need.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

A word about our Sexton: As you know, Richard Secor, our sexton for the past 14 years, has announced his retirement effective at the end of this month. While the timing for us is a little awkward, coming just two weeks before Easter, the reality is that there is never a convenient time to go through a staff change. There's always something that demands the work of a sexton, and when we don't have one, we notice.

For the next few weeks, I ask you for your patience as we put out the call for applicants. If you know someone who is a) hard working, b) has a good eye for and knowledge of institutional cleaning, c) is conscientious and dependable, d) can perform some light maintenance tasks, and e) is willing to work part time on our schedule - then please have them contact Fr. Chuck!

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The News of the Church

Lenten Morning Prayer: We had to cancel Tuesday's and Wednesday's Morning Prayer for obvious Wintery reasons, but we are open for business now! Please join us as part of your Lenten discipline. Weekdays at 10:00. Additionally, Monday has two times: 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM.

Attend the Trinity Institute: We are the host site of the Trinity Institute this year, beginning March 22 at 7:00 PM and running through March 24. March 23 and 24 begin at 9:00 AM and go through till after 4:00 PM, but you can come for part of the day if that's what your schedule allows. We really hope that there will be good representation from St. James' at this event.



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.

The Graveyard Tour Committee has openings for positions, and if you want to keep this remarkable ministry going strong, now is your time to step forward. Now is the time to listen to God's call to see if this is where you are meant to be. If you believe in the power of the Graveyard Tours to increase the work of St. James', contact either Fr. Chuck or Bobbie Wells.

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!

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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' 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.

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.
March 18, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM - Eucharistic Minister/Eucharistic Visitor Training (in Cornwall)

Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear: Our dear friend Fr. Masud ibn Seydullah was featured in a Wall Street Journal article this Wednesday for his retreat, "Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear." The article noted that people all around the country have been seeking out retreats that help them deal more positively with (and listen to more effectively to) people they do not agree with, especially in the political realm. You can read the article at this link!
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-new-retreat-for-these-times-1489511342?emailToken=JRryd/14YXSXhNw2aMw1kVslcewSBvOTS1rLaX7NIA3QtHHOrKe9xqA4nJ7u/TP+GB8jvIxe>

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!"

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

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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.

March 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
SPRING FORWARD! 9:00 AM Lenten Breakfasts	8 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Morning Prayer Office Closed 6:00 PM Women's Group	10 AM Morning Prayer	10 AM Morning Prayer 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	10 AM Morning Prayer 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	10 AM Morning Prayer	8:00 AM Men's Breakfast 10:00 AM Clean-up Day

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:00 AM Lenten Breakfasts	8 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Morning Prayer Office Closed	10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Vestry	10 AM Morning Prayer Trinity Institute 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	10 AM Morning Prayer Trinity Institute 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	10 AM Morning Prayer Trinity Institute	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
9:00 AM Lenten Breakfasts	8 AM Morning Prayer 10 AM Morning Prayer Office Closed	10 AM Morning Prayer	10 AM Morning Prayer 6:30 Reparations workshop 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	10 AM Morning Prayer 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures 7:00 Fireside Chat	10 AM Morning Prayer	
<p>Every Sunday, the Holy Eucharist is celebrated at 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM</p> <p>Sunday School is offered at the 10:00 AM service. During Lent, we have breakfast together at 9:00 AM. Remember, there is NO Coffee Hour.</p>						

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."

- 19 St. Mary's Church (Manhattanville), Manhattan
- 20 Holyrood Church, Manhattan
- 21 All Angels' Church, Manhattan
- 22 Trinity Institute
- 23 The Director of Communications and the Episcopal New Yorker Advisory Board

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24 Diocesan Mutual Ministry Review Consultants
25 St. Mary's Church (Castleton), Staten Island

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

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,

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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, 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 Sheekey, 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):	Russell Urban-Mead, Richard Kuralt and Susan Dingee
Birthdays (this coming week):	Aric Tegtmeier, Chuck Kramer, Don Ogden and Braeden Hall
Acolytes:	March 19: Team 1 March 26: Team 2
Altar Guild:	March 19: Team I March 26: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	March 19: Debbie Belding and Thomas Finnigan March 26: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	March 19: Russell Urban-Mead/Judy Douglass

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Ushers:	March 26: Donna Beyer/Deirdre Mae Micker March 19: Judy Douglass, Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	March 26: Donna and John Beyer March 19: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	March 26: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell March 19: Gordon and Virginia MacKenzie, Jim and Beth Matranga
Coffee Hour Hosts:	March 26: Chris, Sue and Daniel McGlynn, Bruce and Kelly Mcllrary March 19: Lenten Breakfast March 26: Lenten Breakfast

This Week's Lectionary

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

This Week's Hymns

Processional: Hymn 152

Sequence: Hymn 692

Offertory: "Sicut Cervus" (Like a Deer)

Communion: Hymn 658

Recessional: Hymn 649

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

Sermon Preached on
Second Sunday in Lent
(March 12, 2017)

"Where Faith Leads"

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Our faith is full of paradoxes, and I suspect they have led us to a lot of confusion, frustration, and - frankly - a lot of giving up.

For example, a week or two ago, someone asked me how I might address the criticism that Christianity is really a polytheistic religion because we have three gods. This isn't a sermon about the Trinity - that's a topic that could take all day. But suffice it to say our faith is in ONE God, who just happens to be a bit more complicated than we usually want to think.

But then, that FAITH is more complicated than we want to think, too, isn't it? Because, despite what Paul leads us to believe in today's epistle, faith is more than simply saying, "I believe!"

Even the example Paul uses for faith is more complicated than that. He tells us that Abram (remember, he's not Abraham yet) believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. The point Paul was trying to make was that you don't earn God's love by just doing lots of good deeds, as some people thought. On the other hand, look at Abram: he trusted God but did not and could not leave it at that.

Trusting, which is as good as saying "believing", which is as good as saying "having faith" is an essential part of the equation, but it's only one part. The other part is equally essential - letting that trust, that belief, that faith lead you somewhere.

Think of when Nicodemus came to Jesus, and Jesus said he had to be born from above. This confuses Nicodemus - but think about it. Without being born of the spirit, we are dead inside, but without the flesh, we can do nothing. Two parts to the same equation. And only together do one and one equal two.

Last week, I mentioned people who, having counted the consequences of their proposed actions, went forward in faith. We've spoken many times about faith never being static - that as St. James' taught, faith and action go hand in hand.

That action might be dramatic. Hiding runaway slaves, hiding fugitive Jews from Nazis (in fact, I just met with someone this Friday whose grandfather was shot by the Nazis for hiding Jews), sponsoring refugees in Poughkeepsie or offering sanctuary to undocumented immigrants.

Or - as in Abram's case - leaving your family and your country and striking out to a new land where YOU are the immigrant who is not particularly welcome. Abram goes because he trusts the one who sent him. Without that trust - that FAITH - he would not have bothered. Wouldn't have DARED. But with faith, he believed he could go anywhere God led.

Sometimes faith leads us to seemingly less dramatic places. Maybe it led you to this very church today for reasons you can't quite explain. Not really dramatic - but it could be life-changing.

That's a little more like Nicodemus in today's gospel. He had heard of Jesus and had probably even heard him speak before. But being a Pharisee - and a member of the Sanhedrin - it would not do to be seen with this radical young preacher. It might even be dangerous. So he sneaks in to see Jesus by night.

Now, just hold that image in your minds for a moment. A big shot political and religious - official sneaking into a disreputable place at night. (Beat) For some reason, I always imagine him

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climbing over a wall, but that's not what the gospel says. Still, coming at night is a clear signal that Nicodemus is taking a risk.

But why do it? Can you call it faith when he doesn't even understand everything Jesus is saying? Of course you can. Who of us understands everything about OUR faith? If you do, then please come up and explain the concept of the Trinity because most of us still struggle with that one! No - faith isn't understanding. It's trusting enough to be led somewhere new. For Abram, it was to a new land, and for Nicodemus it was to a compelling speaker who didn't mind him coming at odd hours and asking a lot of questions.

Where will faith lead you? Such a simple question but one that has to be asked - over and over and over. Nicodemus didn't just go to Jesus that one time and say, "Well, that was inspiring. Time to go home." No, it was just the beginning of his long and fruitful journey - a journey that we can presume had a lot of stops along the way where he said, "Now where to?"

And we KNOW Abram's journey led him all over the Middle East but with LOTS of stops where he looked up and cried, "Now what?" Believing, trusting, having faith in God is only the prelude to the next steps. Where YOUR next steps in faith will take you is anybody's guess.

Well, God probably knows.

Amen.