

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: March 11, 2018

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I had hoped to spend some self-indulgent time here talking about the play last Sunday. But time does not wait around for that sort of thing, and before I was able to write even five words, the weather changed the focus of nearly everybody in our area.

As you know, we got clobbered. Not only did we have a fierce storm just a week ago, but yesterday we got slammed with another, yet very different storm. Thought the falling snow was pretty, and the winds were gentle, this week's storm has done more damage - at least from my standpoint.

For the record, at the time of this writing, the church and the parish house are without power. I hope this will be remedied by the time you read this. Keep watching your email for updates.

Damage done may not be apparent right away, but a quick survey of the grounds shows that several large branches have come down. Our old screen house (which we were intending to replace anyway) finally succumbed to the weight of the snow and collapsed. And during the height of the storm, a car veered off the road onto the front lawn of the rectory. The driver's efforts to extract themselves only made things worse. Fortunately, a Good Samaritan happened by, and we were able to get them off the yard and back onto the road.

This all goes to remind us that we are not in control. Certainly not as much as we think we are or want to be. The world with all its complications rolls on whether we like where it's rolling or not. Our job is to find our own center of gravity, keep our balance, and help others stay upright along the way. Which is another way of saying we are to ground ourselves in God's love and love our neighbors as ourselves.

But on the way to check out the chapel to see what condition it was in, I also noticed a snowman. Another sign. Another reminder. In the midst of worries and concerns or just the day to day work of life, there is room for playfulness, for creativity, for joy. Let us. Remember - Love God and live in joy. Come snow or sun.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Don't forget
Spring Forward
This Sunday!

**Set your clocks ahead
one hour.**



**ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL, HYDE PARK**

Needs your support!

Join us on March 12, 2018

from 4pm to 10pm at Poughkeepsie Five Guys

Address: 2507 South Road - Oakwood Commons

Five Guys will donate 10% of your purchase
on March 12, 2018
from 4pm to 10pm
to St. James Episcopal Church
Sunday School, Hyde Park



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:

Next Sunday, March 11, at the 10 AM service, members of the parish youth will help lead worship for Youth Sunday. They will take various parts in the service including reading. **Please** encourage them so that they may be the leaders of tomorrow!

Free Prayer Friday Continues:

Join me each **Friday in Lent** from approximately 11:00 AM to 12:00 (or later) at Cranberry's for FREE PRAYER FRIDAY. It is an outreach in which I, and anyone who chooses to join me) sit with a sign that says, "Free Prayer." It is an invitation for those who need prayer to come up and talk. I have done this a few times and found it very effective in attracting conversation and, yes, prayer.

Men's Breakfast:

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

No Women's Dinner:

The March Women's Dinner has been cancelled. Look for notice of the April dinner!

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. 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.

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.

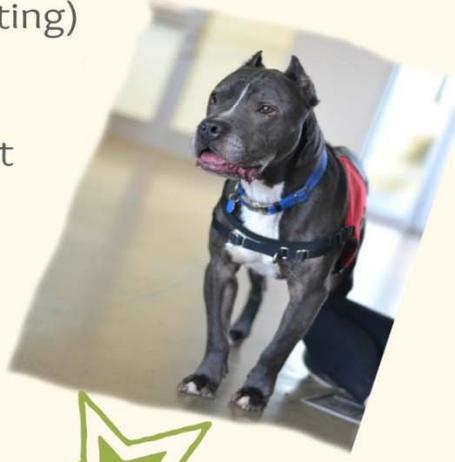
Become an Acolyte:

Whatever your age, if you want to become an acolyte, we will make a place for you. If you attend Sunday School, we will work to make sure you don't miss too much.



We are collecting the following items for the Dutchess County SPCA:

- Purina Dog Chow *Natural*
- Purina Cat Chow
- Dog Treats (any kind, just super yummy)
- Cat Treats (any kind of yummy treats)
- Canned Cat and Dog Food (any kind)
- Dog Toys
- Cat Toys
- Dog Collars with Metal Buckles (all sizes)
- Bleach (basic disinfecting)
- Paper Towels
- Dawn Dish Soap
- Laundry Detergent



636 Violet Avenue
Hyde Park, NY 12538
845-452-7722
www.dcsPCA.org



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

- 11 Christ Church of Ramapo, Suffern
- 12 Regeneration Church, Pine Plains
- 13 All Saints' Church, Harrison
- 14 Brotherhood of Saint Gregory
- 15 Clergy Serving as Deans in the Diocese
- 16 Church of the Crucifixion, Manhattan
- 17 Church of St. Edward the Martyr, Manhattan

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), Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Tedi Kramer, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginero 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): Gilbert O'Halloran, Karen Pitcher, William Rance, Richard K. Wager and Faith Kinne
- Birthdays (this coming week): Carl Needy, Russell Urban-Mead, Richard Kuralt and Susan Dingee
- Acolytes:
 - March 11: Deirdre Mae Micker and Bill Fenwick
 - March 18: Kirstin Horn and Amelia McNamara
- Altar Guild:
 - March 11: Team II
 - March 18: Team II
- 8 a.m. Readers:
 - March 11: Lucille Ogden and Thomas Finnigan
 - March 18: Debbie Belding and Lynne Koch
- 10 a.m. Readers:
 - March 11: Russell Urban-Mead and Charlotte DeGross
 - March 18: Patty Caswell and Joann Clark

Ushers: March 11: Andrew and Tonya Hall
 March 18: Andrew and Tonya Hall

Pledge Clerks: March 11: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass
 March 18: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher

Parish Cycle of Prayer: March 11: Chris, Sue and Daniel McGlynn, Bruce and Kelly McIlravy
 March 18: Tom, Maggie and Amelia McNamara

Coffee Hour Hosts: March 11: Lenten Breakfast
 March 18: 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 Third Sunday in Lent (March 4, 2018)

"God of Destruction"

There is an anime (Japanese cartoon) show called "Dragon Ball Z." I know about it because my kids used to watch it when they were younger. There is a character in it named Beerus, "The god of destruction." His occupation is to maintain balance by destroying planets.

This is not about that.

There is, among the most important Indian gods, one named Shiva, sometimes known as the god of destruction. "His powers of destruction are used to destroy the illusions and imperfections of this world, paving the way for beneficial change."

This is not about that.

There is, in popular imagination, an angry, white-haired man in the clouds who thunders “Thou shalt not!” And tosses lightning at those who disobey one of his commandments.

This is not about that god, either.

It’s not about any of these because they are not Jesus the Christ.

And yet, Jesus can also be the God of destruction. Because destruction has always been an essential and positive part of God’s interaction with us. We see this on at least two levels in today’s gospel.

One: The cleansing of the temple. You probably know that the money changers were at the temple in the first place because Jews were commanded to make sacrifice of various sorts, but that sometimes they did not have the appropriate animals and had to buy them. However, the coin of the realm was Roman, which included the face of Caesar and therefore were not allowed in the temple. Money changers purchased Roman coins and replaced them with temple coins that could be used to purchase temple animals.

It was a corrupt system because it took advantage primarily of the poor who could not afford animals of their own. It was corrupt because these money changers were charging exorbitant rates. It was corrupt because it made worship into a business.

In true prophetic fashion, Jesus came in and began to dismantle this corrupt system. In doing so, he showed us how we are also to destroy the systems that corrupt and destroy the children of God.

Two: After this, Jesus claims that if they destroy the temple, within three days he will re-build it. As John points out, this is not literal tearing down of the temple (which was accomplished a generation later by the Romans) but of his own earthly body.

He is pointing, of course, to the crucifixion and resurrection. He is pointing to the necessity of Christ’s death, because it is only through that death that our relationship with God can be changed, and through that relationship, our lives can be transformed. It is only through that incomprehensible act of destruction that the resurrection can assure us that not only is God’s love for us unbounded, but God’s power of life over death is limitless.

So, whether it’s the corrupt systems or Jesus’ own body, destruction is sometimes what Jesus must bring.

Yet there is more - because you know that this divine destruction touches our own lives, too.

I’m not talking about the downed power lines and trees of this weekend’s storm. I’m not even talking about the death of a loved one - as painful as those are.

The destruction I’m talking about - which Jesus leads us toward - is the destruction of our own self perception, maybe even our self-certainty - our image of ourselves that we hold so dear. Are we really as good a person as we think we are? Are we really as giving or humble or forgiving or kind? This might be an image of yourself about which Jesus says, “Destroy it, because it is leading you away from me.”

Conversely, we might be led to ask if we are really as *bad* as we think. Are we really that weak or worthless or broken, or irredeemable or unlovable? This also might be an image about which Jesus says, "Destroy it!"

Such destruction is the work of Lent. It is there to strip away our self-importance as well as our self-loathing. And when all is stripped away, when what needs to be destroyed is gone, then rebuilding can start.

If you want an image for this, look no further than the baptismal font. Imagine it big enough to hold your entire body. Imagine yourself stepping into it, stripped of all clothing as was done in ancient days. Imagine going down into the water, once, twice, three times - barely able to breathe, beginning to wonder if you might drown. And then coming up for precious air and life. Baptism is a sign of our destruction - of our old life being stripped away so that a life as a beloved child of God can be built.

That's what we're doing here - destroying what leads us away from God and each other, what kills our souls. In return, we build something new, something loving, something life-giving.

We can be thankful that our God is not that angry old man destroying people who disobey his commandments. Neither is our God a cartoon character like Beerus in Dragon Ball Z. And even though Shiva's purpose of destruction is to make room for beneficial change, our God is not Shiva either.

Nevertheless, destruction **is** of God - as we see in Jesus - so that life and love can grow more abundantly. Amen.

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