

St. James' E-pistle

May 12, 2017

Pulpit Notes

"Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father" -- John 14:13

Brothers and Sisters:

I don't normally write about strictly political things, though the Gospel is inherently political in and of itself because it focuses on how we treat each other. However, a recent executive order directly affects churches and what we can or cannot say, and it has gotten a few folks asking what it means for St. James'.

I am referring, of course, to the executive order called, "Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty." You have probably heard of this and the president's commitment to do away with the Johnson Amendment which, according to an NBC News article, "bans tax-exempt organizations like churches from political speech and activities."

What that means in real life practice is that churches cannot endorse a political party or candidate. There had been talk earlier that the order would also ease restriction on companies that might want to discriminate against LGBTQ employees or clients, but that provision was not included, so for the most part, it's all about political speech.

Now, in reality, all the executive order can do is relax IRS enforcement of the ban. To repeal it would literally take an act of Congress.

What does that mean for St. James'? Not that much, really. To the best of my knowledge, I have never said anything in church that would come close to violating the Johnson Amendment. Nor do I believe that would be appropriate.

Let me be clear about two things: 1) This doesn't mean I can't have and voice my own political preferences as a private citizen. Of I put a campaign bumper sticker on my car or in front of my house, that's perfectly acceptable since it is free speech of an individual.

2) This also doesn't mean that the church does not engage in speech that many think is political. But what we address are issues, issues that stem directly from the Gospel: stewardship of the earth, care for the poor, care for the immigrant, care for the sick, imprisoned, and marginalized.

For the record, any church can campaign for a party or candidate it wants to - but then it loses its tax-exempt status. Nobody would go to jail. And frankly, enforcement of it has been so lax

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over the past few decades that churches have openly campaigned for against candidates with virtually no repercussions.

There were other provisions in this executive order, but this was the one that would affect us the most. Maybe other churches will be bolder in their partisanship, but we will stick with discussing Gospel issues. And of course, it is my hope that these discussions will affect how you and I act politically in the world - because every time we look in the eye of the stranger or enemy and see instead a brother or sister in Christ, that is Gospel politics at its most radical.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

Did You Know?

Every week, we read the **psalm** as part of our worship. Did you know there are different ways to do it? Normally at St. James' we say it *responsively*. That is, the leader says the first half of the verse, then congregation says the second half. We could also say it *antiphonally*, which means one half of the congregation says the first half of the verse while the other half says the second. Or you could go by full verses. Of course, you can also sing the psalm, either as a hymn or led by a *cantor* who sings a portion of the psalm while the congregation sings a refrain every few verses. What way sounds good to you?

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The News of the Church

Men's Breakfast: Men of St. James', our next Men's Breakfast is Saturday, May 20 at 8:00 AM. As usual, we will meet at Cranberry's.

Reformation Invitation: The Christian Church in the Western Hemisphere is observing 500 years since the start of the Reformation. In the spirit of ecumenical fellowship, St. Kateri Tekakwitha Roman Catholic Church is holding an ecumenical worship to observe this dramatic change in the western church.

The service is on Pentecost Sunday, June 4 at 3 PM. The address is 1925 Route 82 in LaGrangeville. Hope you can make it!

Check Out Our Welcome Video: Have you checked out our new Welcome Video? It's important to explore new ways to reach out to people, and video is one of those ways. Go to www.stjameshydepark.org and click on the "Welcome" tab on the left. What other videos would you recommend for St. James' to make a better impact?

Volunteer Drivers Needed! The Hyde Park Association of Churches (HyPAC) needs drivers! The local pastors have been in contact with Vanderbilt Hotel and discovered that a pressing need for residents is transportation, especially to the food pantries and grocery store. Would you consider becoming a volunteer driver to give these rides?

Robin Friesheim of St. Timothy's Lutheran is the coordinator for this ride-giving ministry and is seeking volunteer drivers. For now, this is just rides to the Hyde Park Food Pantry (Fridays 9:30-11:30 AM) and Reach Out Food Pantry (Fridays 2-5 PM) with each trip lasting about 15 minutes. In the future, they may tackle rides to the grocery store.

If you can serve as a volunteer driver or would simply like more information, please contact Robin at rfriesheim@gmail.com. Of course, you can also ask Fr. Chuck if you have questions.

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Episcopal Charities Sunday

Sunday, May 14th

Episcopal Charities Sunday, as well as Mothers' Day, is May 14. Are you aware that 9.7% of our neighbors here in Dutchess County are facing food insecurity and that 16% of Dutchess County children struggle with hunger issues? And the statistics regarding food insecurity are similar for our neighboring counties here in the Mid-Hudson Region - Orange, Sullivan and Ulster. Women, children, seniors, people with disabilities and the working poor are our most affected population in regard to food insecurity.

On Sunday, May 14th (Mothers' Day) we will join with the other parishes in our Diocese to highlight the work of Episcopal Charities and to give thanks for their work and ministry.

Incorporated in December, 1996, Episcopal Charities, the mission arm of our Diocese, currently partners with forty-nine feeding programs located throughout the Diocese. In addition to the actual grant, Episcopal Charities provides strategic training, operational support, networking opportunities to parish programs through workshops and one-on-one consultations.

Episcopal Charities' grant program enables us, through our donations, to extend Christ's love to grass-roots, parish-based programs that reflect the needs of that parish-based program's local area. Please note that because the Diocese provides for the overhead expenses, 100% of your donation is designated specifically for programming.

As faithful followers of Christ, please prayerfully consider making a donation to Episcopal Charities. There will be envelopes available in the pews for you to make your donation. If you are writing a check, please make it payable to St. James' Church, memo line: Episcopal Charities.

On behalf of all our neighbors throughout our Diocese who struggle with food insecurity and who will benefit from your donation - THANK YOU!!

Peace, Deacon Gail

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St. James' Episcopal Church

presents

*A Mother's Day
Tea Party*

4-course Luncheon

&

Light Entertainment

with "suffragette Margaret Lewis Norrie" at 2:15



May 13, 2017

Two Seatings

12:00 pm and 3:00 pm

\$25 per person

Reservations Required, Limited Seating

Gift items available for purchase

*celebrate with your mother, sister, daughter, or best friend
in a special way at a special place*

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ROOTS & BRANCHES
PROGRAMS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

presents

Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear

A Retreat
June 9th and 10th, 2017



Discover Your Inner Peacemaker & Reconciler

on this retreat designed to turn back our present tide of divisiveness, conflict and inflammatory speech. Participants will reconnect with the peacemaking example of Christ and be empowered with practical methods to become agents of peace and reconciliation in their own communities.

Co-led by the Revs. Masud Ibn Syedullah and Garrett Mettler at Taconic Retreat Center in Milan, NY.

Accommodations at the retreat center and all meals are included in the \$300 registration cost. To find out more and to register call 845-758-8764.

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May 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7 9:15 Easter Forum Unction following each service	8 Office Closed	9	10 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	11 11 AM Bible Study	12	13 Mothers' Day Tea
14 Mothers' Day	15 Office Closed	16 7 PM Vestry	17 10 AM Morning 5:30 Nursery School Open House 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	18 Prayer 11 AM Bible Study	19	20 8 AM Men's Breakfast
21 9:15 Easter Forum	22 Office Closed	23	24 10 AM Morning 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	25 11 AM Bible Study	26	27 4:00 PM Baroque Adirondack Consort Concert
28 9:15 Easter Forum	29 Memorial Day Office Closed	30	31 10 AM Morning 7:30 Choir Rehearsal			

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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.

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 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.

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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."

- 14 Church of the Heavenly Rest, Manhattan
- 15 With gratitude for the ministry of the Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool on the anniversary of her consecration as Bishop.
- 16 St. John's Memorial Church, Ellenville
- 17 With gratitude for the ministry of the Rt. Rev. Allen K. Shin on the anniversary of his consecration as Bishop.
- 18 Church of the Good Shepherd, Granite Springs
- 19 La Iglesia del Buen Pastor, Newburgh
- 20 Christ Church, Red Hook

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.

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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*

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, Cath Holywell (priest in the Church of England and Indaba partner who worshiped with St. James' - undergoing heart surgery), 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, Sharon Secor (recovering from heart surgery), James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Patricia, (sister of Barbara Slegel), Carl Smith, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Please pray for the Rev. Mitties DeChamplaign, who is gravely ill.

Pray for the repose of the soul of Irene Rokitowski.

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.

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Birthdays (this past week):	Erika Seagren and Rebecca Gausepohl
Birthdays (this coming week):	Walter Koch, Brian Kinne and Morgan Kinne
Acolytes:	May 14: Team 3 May 21: Team 1
Altar Guild:	May 14: Team I May 21: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	May 14: Debbie Belding and Sue DeLorenzo May 21: Lucille Ogden and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	May 14: Wilma Tully/Deirdre Mae Micker May 21: Regina Ardini/Judy Douglass
Ushers:	May 14: Judy Douglass, Vince Asher May 21: Donna and John Beyer
Pledge Clerks:	May 14: Joanne Lown and Janet Bright May 21: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	May 14: Anna Marie Pitcher, Clifford Plass and Christy Plass, Linda Plass May 21: Stephanie Porach and Evan, Todd and Stephen Weaver
Coffee Hour Hosts:	May 14: Jodi Triola, Ross and Connie Eames May 21: Deirdre Mae Micker, the Urban- Meads

This Week's Lectionary

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 200 "Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain"

Sequence: 457 "Thou Art the Way"

Offertory: "A New Commandment"

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Communion: 487 "Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life"
Recessional: 685 "Rock of Ages"

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

Sermon Preached on
Fourth Sunday of Easter
(May 7, 2017)

"Identity Crisis"

Several years ago - back on Nick's 10th birthday in fact - we had a birthday party for him with several kids from his various activities. We went to a Renegades baseball game on the one rainy night of the summer, I think, so we were not only corralling all these kids, but we were trying trying to make sure they didn't get too wet.

Anyway, Nick comes up and says, "Dad, it's going to rain." I said.... "I know."

A second later, another boy says, "Mr. Granados-Kramer, I don't have a rain jacket." I said..."I know."

A second later, another says, "Fr. Chuck, I can't get my rain poncho on." I said..."I know," and helped him get it on.

And a second or two after that, one boy still hasn't put his on, so I say, "Why don't you have your jacket on?" He says, "I don't know." So I say, "Well put it on!" And he answers, "Yes, coach."

In the space of about 2 minutes, I was Dad, Mr. Granados-Kramer, Fr. Chuck, and Coach. All I needed was for someone to come up and say, "Hey buddy...these your kids?" And I would've had a real identity crisis.

Seriously, how could I possibly be all those things all at the same time? Well, kids are busy. They have active lives which generally means their parents do, too. So, to Nick, I was Dad. But since he played soccer, somehow I got roped into coaching the team (for oh so many years) - so I was coach. And Liz and I both volunteered in the classroom one day a week, which made me Mr. Granados-Kramer. And of course, one or two of the kids came from the church, so I was Fr. Chuck.

We all occupy several roles at once, and we make a mistake if we believe that people consist only of the role WE see them in.

We make this mistake with Jesus too. Often, we only see him as the Great Shepherd. It says so right there in Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd." Boom. The canticle says so, too: "O God,

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whose son Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd." Boom. And the Epistle: he's the "shepherd and guardian of your souls." Case closed.

Or is it?

Well, of course, we also call Jesus the Lamb of God. Just a couple of weeks ago, we had the passage from Acts when the Ethiopian eunuch was reading the passage from Isaiah: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth." Phillip says, "That's Jesus."

We certainly see echoes of this in Peter's epistle today, where he talks about how Jesus suffered for us: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed." Peter doesn't specifically call him the lamb, but he uses familiar language that indicates the sacrificial lamb.

So, Jesus is the shepherd and the sheep. Seems contradictory, but we can all probably embrace that contradiction, right? He cares for us like a shepherd but also offers himself up as the sacrificial lamb for our sakes. That's not so complicated.

Or is it?

Just look at today's Gospel.

Sure, it starts out like this is a clear case of Jesus as shepherd. "The one who enters the sheepfold by the gate is the shepherd, and the gatekeeper lets him in and the sheep listen to his voice" and so on. But notice that he does not identify the shepherd.

And then, when the disciples give him those all too familiar blank stares, he says, "Don't you see? I am the gate." Did you see that coming? I'm pretty sure the disciples did not. The gate? But he repeats, "I am the gate. It's through me that both the shepherd and the sheep come - and if they don't come through me, then they're up to no good."

So ... how is Jesus a gate?

This isn't as crazy as it sounds. Remember, Jesus himself says at other times, "I am the way." He says that we go through him to the Father.

Could it be that Jesus is more complicated than we would like him to be? Could it be that Jesus took on not only the role of divine leader and human sacrifice for us but also the role of gate through which we can pass on our path toward the Kingdom of Heaven - a gate leading to the only path there (which is also Jesus, who is the way), which is the path of God's love.

We do not have the luxury of putting just one identity on Jesus, though we often try. "He's my savior. He died for me, and now I'm saved from my sin. The end."

No.

Jesus was the sacrifice, Jesus is the shepherd, and Jesus is the Gate through which we pass and the Way which we follow. We are responsible for recognizing him in all these aspects. And, I dare say, we will discover an even more complicated Jesus along the way.

Now, here's the uncomfortable part. These scriptures point to even more complicated identities. Ours. Sure, we're the sheep. We're the comfortable followers. But then, who is it who's going

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in and out through that sheep gate which is Jesus? It's us. We are both sheep and shepherds, and we can never forget that.

When you stumble into these church doors because you're lost and don't know where to turn, you may feel like a sheep and simply be glad that someone says, "come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When you come here depressed and confused, you may feel like a sheep who is given life when you hear those words, "I came that you might have life and have it more abundantly."

But then, you hear today's reading from Acts: "Those who had been baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ...All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."

Yes, they may have been hippies. But more importantly, they came in sheep and quickly learned to be shepherds, caring for each other and discovering that their lives were never really full until they could not only be part of Christ's flock but also be one of the shepherds, seeking the lost, feeding the hungry, leading others through the sheep gate on the path to the Kingdom of God. We all have multiple roles in life - and in the Body of Christ. Sheep, shepherd, friend, teacher, confidante... No one role is more important than the other except that we are all, together, beloved children of God. Amen.