

St. James' E-pistle

May 26, 2017

Pulpit Notes

The Power of Different

One of the coolest things I discovered all week was that the Jim Henson Foundation - yes the Jim Henson of Muppets fame - has just unveiled a new award for excellence and great promise in puppetry: THE ALLELU AWARD.

Yes, our own Allelu Kurten is being honored with an award that will touch lives around the world for many years to come. If you did not have the pleasure of knowing Allelu Kurten, she was a parishioner here for many decades. She travelled the world as a leader in the international puppetry community and put on countless shows, including right here at St. James'. She spoke at Jim Henson's funeral, and Jim Henson's daughter came to Allelu's.

Now, you may think that it's really not all that big a deal to have an award named for you because of puppets. In fact, I've heard people ridicule the idea of puppeteers - that it's all just kid stuff (as if there were anything wrong with that!). But I assure you, those who practice this art have made a tremendous - and positive impact on countless lives.

Not only do puppets make the lives of children better - anyone who was a child in the 70s or later certainly remembers the lessons taught by Kermit the Frog or Cookie Monster - but the enhances adults' lives, too.

In my low-brow tastes, I'm thinking of comedian Jeff Dunham and his irreverent puppets. (Yeah, yeah, I know he's a ventriloquist, those are puppets they're using). However, there are phenomenal other artists doing things that make adults gape in wonder.

One night Allelu invited our family over to meet a friend of hers from Germany. His name was Albrecht Roser, and he was famous in the puppet world. Of course, I had never heard of him. But on a whim, he made a couple of handkerchiefs into puppets that mesmerized us all as they danced and floated.

Anyway, the Allelu Award comes in two parts. Part one is awarded to an American Puppeteer (or company) to travel to International Puppetry festivals. Part two is for non-US companies to travel here to American festivals.

It is this international emphasis that makes me smile. Allelu was, if nothing else, a person who embraced the whole world. While she had strong opinions, there wasn't a place or a person she didn't see as an important child of God who had at least the potential to reflect back the light of Christ. She was always reaching out to others.

One of the things I loved about Allelu was that she let that light shine regardless of the darkness that often tried to extinguish it. She took to heart St. Peter's words:

"If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you."

I'm not suggesting that she was reviled by all that many - but she always saw the call to bring light as a matter of joy, not of duty, as a blessing, not a burden. If others chose not to accept that light, well, too bad for them. They were missing out.

I think this award - which will never make the big newspapers or television, which 99.9% of the world's population will never hear of - will nevertheless be a boon to the world and will make us a better place to live.

And maybe that's the lesson of both Allelu's life and the words of St. Peter. It's not important to make a big splash. It's not important to have everyone love you or your words or actions.

What is important is that you are bringing light, that you are sharing God's love with those who need it most, and that you walk in the presence of God all ways.

Or, in the words of one of the prophets:

What does the Lord require but to love kindness, do justly and walk humbly with our God.

That's always seemed to me the way Allelu lived her life - and a good way for us as well. So, keep your ears and eyes open for more news about the Allelu Award. I am betting that it will be a blessing to many indeed.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

The News of the Church

An Invitation to "Episcopalians In The Park"

The Church of the Resurrection has decided that they would like to get to know their fellow Episcopalians better. To do that, they have come up with "Episcopalians in the Park". Resurrection, along with St. Luke's and St. Andrew's in Beacon, are inviting all the area Episcopal Churches to join them on the huge (1 acre) front lawn at St. Luke's in Beacon on **Saturday, July 29th from 2pm-7pm** as we celebrate being Episcopalian. We will have food (we will ask each church participating to provide a category of food), music (do you have a musician who would like to play / join a band?), and games (do you have favorite outdoors games, icebreakers?). This is really to get to know each other and have a wonderful day being Episcopalians. If we really know each other, maybe we can also join in on some service projects together, or help each other out in other ways. You never know where the Spirit might lead us - together.

So, please, save the date - July 29th - to join us.

If you have questions, would like to RSVP your church, etc., please give me a shout.

Looking forward to actually getting time to spend with you all!

Pentecost

Sunday, June 4 is the Feast of Pentecost. That's the day when the Holy Spirit, looking like fire, descended upon the apostles. They were empowered to speak in different languages, bringing the Gospel to the whole world. It's a tradition to wear red on Pentecost - so wear red! It's also common for the Gospel to be read in several different languages. What languages would you like to hear that day?

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!

Rides for Refugees Wanted

In addition to the rides that the Hyde Park Association of Churches is looking for (see below), Christ Church is looking for rides for the refugee family it is sponsoring. The family arrived in January 2017 and is settled in Hyde Park. The great news is that the settling in has gone very well -- Masu and Roza are now working, as is their oldest daughter, Nathalie. The two younger children have started school. The adults are also taking classes in English as a second Language and for the GED. Transportation is often needed between home, classes, and work, and we would love to have some more drivers!

Anyone interested can contact Carlie Graves, Rides Coordinator, at cagraves@vassar.edu or 845-380-8526. Thanks very much!

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.

May 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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 Memoria 1 Day Office Closed	30	31 10 AM Morning 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	JUNE 1 11 AM Bible Study	2	3

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."

May

- 21 Grace Church, Manhattan
- 28 Diocesan Congregational Development Commission
- 29 Diocesan Disaster Response Team
- 30 Diocesan and Congregational Mission Partnerships Abroad
- 31 Regeneration Church, Pine Plains

June

- 1 St. John's Church and St. Paul's Chapel, South Salem
- 2 St. John's Church, Pleasantville
- 3 Candidates for Confirmation in the Diocese

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.

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):

Connie Eames and Daniel McGlynn

Birthdays (this coming week):	Alexandra Burkhardt, Barbara Slegel, Thomas Gabel and Christina Wardell
Acolytes:	May 28: Team 2 June 4: Team 3
Altar Guild:	May 28: Team II June 4: Team III
8 a.m. Readers:	May 28: Debbie Belding and Thomas Finnigan June 4: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	May 28: Patty Caswell/Mike Fenwick June 4: Wilma Tully/Nancy Montero
Ushers:	May 28: Dean Caswell, Audrey Horne June 4: Nancy Montero, Anna Marie Pitcher
Pledge Clerks:	May 28: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell June 4: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	May 28: Leslie Quick, Brian Rance, Melinda Harris and William Rance June 4: Daniel, Alyssa, Aldonna and Andrew Raugalis, John Robinson and Patricia Rooney
Coffee Hour Hosts:	May 28: Brian Rance, Saira Shahani June 4: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil

This Week's Lectionary

Acts 1:6-14
 Psalm 68:1-10, 33-36
 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
 John 17:1-11

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 215 "See the Conqueror Mounts in Triumph"
 Sequence: 213 "Come Away to the Skies"
 Offertory: "O Lord Most High"
 Communion: 205 "Good Christians, All Rejoice and Sing"
 Recessional: 214 "Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise"

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Sixth Sunday of Easter (May 21, 2017)

To Be An Orphan

If you've known me for any length of time, you probably know I love to read - and actually, what I love most is children's literature. Always have. When I was a kid, I was even a member of the International Wizard of Oz Club. Not kidding. Did you know there were more than 40 Oz books? Even as an adult, I love kids books - that was one great thing about becoming a parent - I had the perfect excuse to read all these books over and over. I mean, when Harry Potter came out, and I got to read them out loud... how cool was that?

Anyway, if you've read as many of these books as I have, you notice a common theme in a lot of them.

Orphans.

Just look at them:

Cinderella - orphan; Tom Sawyer - orphan; Oliver Twist - orphan; Little Orphan Annie.... Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz - orphan, Superman (well, most superheroes, really - all orphans). One of my favorite childhood stories was The Boxcar Children, where four siblings were all orphans. And the theme lives today. Luke Skywalker (& just about all the main Star Wars heroes - orphans). And of course, Harry Potter... I could go on.

Now why, you may ask yourself, are orphans so common? There are a couple of reasons. For one, in literature, the protagonist has to have it hard - there have to be obstacles to overcome. For a child, one of the biggest hardships or obstacles is the lack of a parent.

Without a parent, they lack a sense of self, of safety, of power. Often, they lack a sense of that parental love. This is true even if the author gives them some sort of a caretaker, because the caretaker is always deficient in some way. They are either cruel, distracted, inept, overwhelmed, or hiding something. Think of Cinderella's wicked step-mother, or Tom Sawyer's overwhelmed Aunt Polly. Or Dorothy's poor and depressed Uncle Henry and Aunt Em. Or Luke Skywalker's Uncle Owen who wouldn't let him know anything about his father. And of course, Harry Potter's spiteful Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia who made him sleep in a cupboard under the stairs. Even if the caretakers tried hard, they could never be what the children needed.

Another thing these orphan stories have in common is some sort of guide who comes along. Think of the fairy godmother for Cinderella. Or the scarecrow, tin woodman, and cowardly lion (not to mention Glenda the good witch) for Dorothy. Or Obi-Wan Kenobi for Luke Skywalker. And of course, Dumbledore for Harry Potter.

This guide offers wisdom, counsel, comfort, a sense of purpose and courage to do what needs to be done.

So, why do we like these orphan stories so much? The consensus seems to be that we like them because we often feel like orphans even when we're not. We often feel alone, misunderstood, weak, and like we don't quite belong. And we're always looking for that home where we belong.

That's the final commonality in orphan stories. They're looking for home, for where they belong. Cinderella finds her prince, Dorothy finds there's no place like home, Luke Skywalker finds the Jedi, and Harry Potter - eventually - finds Ginny Weasley and a relatively normal life among his fellow wizards.

This is universal - it goes beyond time and space - so that people 2000 years ago halfway across the world experience the same orphan-sense that we may feel today. This is something the apostle Paul understood when he was speaking at the Aropegus. He said to them, "I get your religious needs - how you take it seriously, even to the point of having an unknown god. But you're looking in the wrong place for an answer to that sense of belonging. It doesn't exist in objects made of wood or stone or metal."

The evangelist John also understands this sense of being an orphan.

John is writing his gospel at a different time from the other evangelists. He's writing as they are in the middle of a break-up with the Jewish community in the synagogue. The temple was already destroyed - years if not decades before. Now, even the synagogue is being taken away from them - they're losing the family they grew up with & feel lost, center-less, unrooted.

Which is just how the disciples feel in today's reading. Remember, this passage takes place at the last supper when Jesus is letting the disciples know he won't be with them much longer. Remember last week when he told them he had to leave so he could prepare a place for them in his Father's kingdom? This week's reading takes place at the same time.

In last week's passage Jesus explains why he has to leave. But now, in this passage, he comforts them. He does this with two promises. One, he promises to provide a helper, and advocate. An Obi Wan Kenobe or Albus Dumbledore, if you will.

Only in this case, it is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit who empowers them - and us. Who gives us strength and courage but also a sense of purpose and an ever-present awareness of God's love. But Jesus doesn't stop there. The Holy Spirit in this world is a guide, a mentor along the way - but NOT the end of the story. For that, Jesus makes a second promise: To return and bring them home to be family.

Like all those good stories, John understands that we're on a journey, and he points to the goal of that journey - the Kingdom of Heaven, our true home.

It's because heaven is our home that we often feel like orphans. We just don't quite fit into this world, don't quite belong. It often feels like we're alone. We need guidance but even more, we need a sense of purpose, belonging, and love.

Those are Jesus' promise to us, just as they were to the disciples.

We will have our Obi Wan - the Holy Spirit

We will have our final home in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus knows us and our needs. In the end, like all good stories, the need is the same. To be loved in our own family. Fortunately, that's exactly what God gives. A happy end. Amen.

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