

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: July 15, 2018

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I've tried to share postings with you about the General Convention, but I find that I'm not keeping up very well. A lot is going on.

The biggest issues these days is the prospect for Prayer Book revision. If you've been an Episcopalian for any length of time, you probably remember the soul searching and hand wringing, not to mention the all-out warfare over the last prayer book revision. If you don't remember, it began with a series of trial liturgies in the late 1960s (close to the time frame of Vatican II) and concluded with the adoption of the 1979 version.

The current conversation, I'm sorry to say, is starting to sound like the fights of 40+ years ago. In fact, many of the same arguments are being made. The time isn't right. People don't want change. The language of the current book is just right - why change what's working?

My favorite argument against change is that millennials want "traditional" liturgy and theology, not guitar masses. Someone actually said that. This amuses me because the people saying this are typically the very same people who said that the 1979 BCP would ruin the church. You'd think if that were the case, they would welcome a revision.

But speaking of the millennials (roughly the 21-35-year-old cohort), I am aware that they are not impressed with faddish worship. They want something honest and real and can sense when something is just cynical marketing. Millennials aren't staying away because our prayer book is insufficient. They aren't staying away because we don't have beautiful organ music. They're mostly staying away because they have trouble trusting the institution. Research suggests that they distrust most institutions - which is why the scouts and the Lions and Rotary and Kiwanis all are struggling to retain or recruit members.

So, for my money, the hand-wringing that has already started is of little use. A prayer book revision will not save the church, nor will it ruin us. If the church is to have a future, it will be because we have chosen to follow Christ - to actively serve, to actively witness Christ's action in our lives, to actively share the Good News, to actively learn our stuff so we know what we're talking about when we go out into the world. THAT is what will grow the church - the Body of Christ reaching out to the world.

That does not mean that the the prayer book revision should not be approached with extreme care. We don't discard cherished words lightly. We don't change what's working well and bringing people closer to God. I was reminded by a parishioner last week that there is great power in knowing some of the prayers by heart. This is true - in fact, I require confirmands to memorize the Nicene Creed,

the 23rd Psalm, the summary of the law, and the Lord's Prayer (that's kind of a gimme). Having those resources at the tip of your tongue is vital. Memorizing favorite prayers or bible passages is also a powerful thing.

But going deeper, we come from a tradition of "lex orandi, lex credendi" - roughly, the way we pray informs the way we believe. That speaks not only to the need for moving cautiously but also for the need to change some things. Just look at Morning Prayer and consider how patriarchal the language is. All the language about God is masculine. You may say that's because scripture talks about God in masculine language, and you can't change scripture. But there is language in scripture that refers to God in feminine terms. Why not include that? Moreover, there are places in the BCP where we use masculine terms even when scripture doesn't warrant it. Take the Nicene Creed, for example. In Hebrew, the work for the Spirit is feminine. In Greek, it is grammatically neuter, though it often has feminine connotations. Yet they choose in 1979 to start calling the Holy Spirit "he". It would make sense at the very least to return to the 1928 and Rite I usage of "who," which does not assign gender.

Then there is some very dated, "70s-sounding" language that deserves to be updated. I'm thinking especially of Eucharistic Prayer C which I never did like that much. It has some beautiful elements, but with phrases like "the vast expanse of interstellar space" and "this fragile earth, our island home", which is so "mod" that people even mockingly call it the "Star Wars" prayer. It has beautiful elements, but it needs some cleaning up so it doesn't sound silly.

There is also the inclusion of language for same-sex marriage. It is, after all, approved by the church, so the prayer book should reflect the usage. And that, I must say, IS something millennials definitely want.

There are a lot of other things we can do to the BCP. Or not. The changes won't make the difference between this church growing or folding up. That's up to how we choose to follow and witness to Christ. But it will be a reflection of how we believe. Moreover, when the language is beautiful, it makes it much easier to get lost in the worship - to let our souls soar.

So pray for the people who will be tasked with revising our prayer book over the next dozen years. It's nothing to be afraid of, but it is something to take seriously and to approach carefully. May their deliberations be guided with grace and joy by the Holy Spirit.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

SUMMER PLEDGE APPEAL: We are in full summer mode now, and that means travel. It also means it's easy to forget your pledge. This is your friendly reminder to keep up with your pledge so your St. James' family can keep up with the work God has given us to do together. If you have yet to pledge for this year, it's never too late! God is good, and so is your partnership in the Jesus Movement.

Announcements

Music Reminder:

This summer - starting last Sunday - we re-introduced a little Taizé music to St. James'. We began with the Communion Hymn, which is the Taizé song, "Nothing Can Trouble." Taizé is known for its brevity - just one or two lines - but also for being repeated over and over. So, the song will be sung throughout communion; don't worry, you'll know when it ends. We will sing this song for communion every Sunday in July. That way you won't even need to think about it by the second week, and you'll be able to come up to communion still singing.

Acolyte Training:

An acolyte training session will take place on **Sunday, July 22 at 11:30 AM**. This is not a long training session, especially in this heat, but it is important for new acolytes. It is also good for "old" acolytes to get a refresher course, so please come if you are at all available! If that date doesn't work, please let Fr. Chuck know. If *you* would like to become an acolyte, please let him know.

LAY READER Training:

As promised, there will be a training session for all Lay Readers, currently licensed and those who would like to be, for **Saturday, July 28 at 9:00 AM**. It will last no more than three hours and explore all the areas that are important to fulfilling this ministry. If you can't make this date but still want to get licensed (or renew your license) Fr. Chuck will set an alternate date for September. Please note: according to diocesan rules, all lay readers who bear the chalice must be licensed. This class should fulfill requirements for licensing.

Between Service Classes:

On the **Sundays of July** we have a series on the 7 Deadly Sins. Last Sunday we began with an overview of the sins and looked at Pride. This Sunday, we will explore **Greed** and **Lust**.

Youth Group:

Sunday, July 22 at 3:00 PM! Hope you can come. We are putting up a banner in the front yard.



2018
EpiscopPalians
in the **PARK**

SATURDAY • JULY 14th • 1-4PM

St. Andrew & St. Luke Episcopal Church
850 Wolcott Avenue • Beacon, NY

Episcopalians in the Park is back!

Join us for another fun-filled day of food, games,
and music as we get to know our fellow Episcopalians.

Please bring a side dish to share and something to drink.

RSVP:

email nylesurrection@gmail.com
or call Rev. Jan at 435-764-7643

Save the Date!

***Mid-Hudson Regional Council Meeting
Saturday, Sept. 29, 2018
9:30am-3pm at St. James Hyde Park***



After our business meeting, we will engage with the topic of **CLIMATE CHANGE** and our role in caring for God's creation.

*Featuring keynote speaker, **the Rev. Jeff Golliver** and **Hudson River Playback Theatre**, a group that fosters change through storytelling, music and interactive performance.*

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Dietsche will preach and preside at Holy Eucharist. More information and registration materials will follow soon.

July 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8 VBS! Between Service Class	9 Office Closed	10	11 10 AM Morning Prayer	12	13	14 Episcopalians in the Park
15 Between Service Class	16 Office Closed	17 7 PM Vestry	18 10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM Hyde Park Assisted Living	19	20	21 8 AM Men's Breakfast
22 Between Service Class Acolyte Class Youth Group	23 Office Closed	24	25 10 AM Morning Prayer	26	27	28 Lay Reader Class
29 Between Service Class	30 Office Closed	31	10 AM Morning Prayer			

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

- 15 Episcopal Relief & Development
- 16 St. Stephen's Church, Armonk
- 17 St. Simon's Church, Staten Island
- 18 Sunset Nursery School, Montrose
- 19 Ascension & Holy Trinity Church, West Park
- 20 The Diocesan Director of Strategic Programs
- 21 Companions of Mary the Apostle

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ashley, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Darlene Calgagni, Mariel Carter, Joanne Clark, 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, Margaret, 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, Hank Schroeder, 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): Brooke Schroder, Liz Handman, Paul Littlefield, Judith H. Douglass, Edén Ciferri and Nancy Montero

Birthdays
(this coming week): Taylor Triola, Rick Schroeder, David R. Bender and William Ardini

Acolytes: July 15: Bill

July 22: Deirdre Mae

Altar Guild:	July 15: Team I July 22: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	July 15: Lucille Ogden and Sue DeLorenzo July 22: Deb Belding and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	July 15: Russell Urban-Mead and Mike Fenwick July 22: Wendy Urban-Mead and Deirdre Mae Micker
Ushers:	July 15: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher July 22: Andrew and Tanya Hall
Pledge Clerks:	July 15: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher July 22: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	July 15: Audrey Stenger, Bev Tas July 22: Cathy, Aric and Andrea Tegtmeier; Geoff, Charlessa, Jasmine and Jaylen Thatcher
Coffee Hour Hosts:	July 15: No Coffee Hour July 22: No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19
Psalm 24
Ephesians 1:3-14
Mark 6:14-29

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 554 - 'Tis the Gift to Be Simple
Sequence: 432 - O Praise Ye The Lord
Offertory: LEVAS145 - Have Thine Own Way, Lord
Communion: Taizé (insert) - "Nothing Can Trouble"
Recessional: 690 - Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

“What Is Honor?”

Every parent knows this experience. You ask your kid to do something, and they don't want to. Some other adult asks them, and they are more than happy to do it. Or you give them some pearl of wisdom, and to them, it's the dumbest thing they ever heard. Some other adult says the exact same thing, and it's the most brilliant thing they've ever heard.

This same principle works with adults, by the way. I remember when I was ordained, I was talking with my dad about what it meant to be a priest, and at some point I said, “Maybe I could be rector of St. John's (our home parish).” He looked at me and said, “Then I would leave. I am not calling my kid ‘Father.’”

Jesus knew this exact feeling, didn't he? In today's gospel, he's back home, and even though the words he's speaking are pure light and life, all anybody can see is that this is little Jesus - Joseph and Mary's boy - getting too big for his britches. Had it been any other prophet, everyone would have reacted differently. But they knew him since he was a snotty little boy. They knew him when his voice cracked and he got acne. How could they take him seriously?

That's what we do, isn't it? We lock people in these little boxes and can only see them that one way. We make them their roles and never see the light that's in them. Jesus doesn't seem to get mad at his home crowd. Just shakes his head and says a prophet is not without honor except at his home.

And here we have to understand “honor” to mean hearing/seeing/perceiving God at work. Honor is letting God shine through us, letting God speak through us. Instead, they put Jesus in a box - well, we tend to lock people up in these little boxes - or roles - don't we? We do that rather than see the light of God or hear the words of God flowing through us.

Here's the weird thing. We put God in those boxes, too. We have an example of that going on right now at General Convention. There is a debate going on about revising the Book of Common Prayer. Part of that revision centers around how we see God in terms of male or female. We have locked God in the box labeled “Old White Man with a white beard sitting in the clouds.” We have failed to appreciate the fullness of God that even scripture shows us. Remember that Genesis says God created us in God's image, male and female God created us? God is so much bigger than the ways we choose to see God and, frankly to control God.

Know who else we lock in little boxes? Ourselves. Right here in church, we are often not able to see ourselves as anything more than audience. We lock ourselves in the audience box when in fact, we are disciples. But if honor is letting Christ shine through, we dishonor God when we see ourselves as mere audience.

If it's any comfort, we are not alone in this. When Jesus sent out his disciples, they were unsure about it. There's a big reason he sent them out two by two. In part, of course, it's because we can't do ministry all by ourselves. We need each other.

But another reason he sent them out two by two is because they didn't see each other as disciples yet. They were young and inexperienced and probably goofing around all the time. Jesus needed them to go out two by two so they could see each other for the disciples they were - to see Christ's light shine through them and hear the words of life coming from their mouths. He needed them to free each other from the little boxes they had put each other in.

That's us. We are asked to see each other as *partners*, as fellow disciples with whom we work - not merely fellow parishioners with whom we sit on a Sunday (or every other Sunday...). We support, uphold, strengthen, encourage, teach each other - because we are not mere consumers, we are not passive - We. Are. Disciples.

But don't get caught up in titles. We don't want people to focus on who we are. We want people to hear God's Word that flows through us. We want people to see God's light that shines through us.

And what is God's Word? It is that OUR HOPE IS NOT UNFOUNDED. That God's love is real and alive and present in us. All we have to do is look inside and look at each other.

If we are open to sharing it - and hearing it - with and from all, then we are doing what we're called to do. Then we are honoring God.

Yes, that does require work and training. The disciples went out - and then came back for a debriefing. We have education every week - today even. We had VBS this week. We have Sunday School. We have Bible Study (and we can have MORE!). I'm having Lay Reader training at the end of the month - and Acolyte training. If you think you're not fit to be a disciple - then know that you ARE fit to begin training. Now.

Our hope in God is not unfounded. And neither is God's hope in us!

I leave you with these questions to ponder this week: Am I looking for Christ in the other people around me or am I limiting them to a role? Am I letting Christ shine through me or am I limiting myself to a role? Am I being the disciple I'm called to be.

I pray you let Christ shine through you because that is all the honor any of us needs. Amen.

A WORD ABOUT RECORDED SERMONS:

Most weeks, I upload a recorded copy of the sermon onto my Facebook page as well as St. James' YouTube channel. I have not yet figured out how to upload them to the St. James' Facebook page but am working on it.

You can also listen to sermons by going to YouTube (www.youtube.com) and searching for "St. James Episcopal Church, Hyde Park, NY". There, you will not only find sermons, but also videos of the Fireside Chats and other videos of interest. You can subscribe to that page, and then when new content is uploaded, you will receive a notification.