

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: July 7, 2019

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Episcopal Church is not unique in having a General Confession, but it is a minority voice. Some people claim that a General Confession is “wimping out” in that it does not demand of us individual accountability.

That could be correct. Except, we also have the private confession, which we urge for those who have sins weighing on their souls (and everybody now and then). That’s also why I would advocate — in the next prayer book revision — for a statement that asks worshipers to kneel in silence and contemplate those sins which separate them from God and their neighbor. To be sure, the current prayer book indicates a period of silence, but there’s not direction about what to use that silence for.

I bring up the Confession because as I mentioned on Sunday, this is the **Year of Apology**. I said on Sunday that we as a diocese haven’t done much with it yet, especially when compared to the **Year of Lamentation**. In part, this is because the Reparations Committee was exhausted, and in part because understanding what Apology is and how to do it collectively is hard.

But just as surely as the General Confession is an important part of our life together as followers of Jesus Christ, so is the apology we owe for the sin of slavery and its ongoing effects.

I also bring up the Confession because it is a good model for the stages of what psychologists say make a good Apology. In case you have forgotten, they are: 1) Name the sin (the thing for which you’re apologizing). 2) Own it. Take responsibility for doing the wrong rather than passing the blame onto someone else. 3) Express remorse for having done it. 4) Make amends/repair the damage to the extent possible, and 5) Commit to making sure it doesn’t happen again.

This is not far from our General Confession.

There’s naming the sin (aside from the silence intended for naming personal sins): “We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not love our neighbors as ourselves”.

There’s taking responsibility: “...we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed.”

There’s expressing remorse: “We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.”

And there’s commitment to change: “...that we may walk delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name.”

The only thing missing is repairing the harm, which would not be amiss in the next revision of the confession. But, if you got to private confession, you will often receive an admonition to do just that.

The General Confession also teaches us about *corporate accountability*. We confess together because we are all in this together. We are responsible together for the sins of humanity and the church. It's not the easy way out of avoiding your personal accountability; it's the hard way of accepting responsibility together for things that are larger than any individual.

In the case of slavery — which, after all, is what the **Year of Apology** is all about — we collectively acknowledge the church's responsibility for its sin (approving of and offering support to slavery in this country). We also individually acknowledge that we have ignored the ongoing effects, in part because we simply didn't know, and in part because we don't want to know. The fact that slavery itself officially ended in 1865 does not mean that its subsequent forms ever ended.

How we express remorse for this is what we're struggling with this year. How does the church apologize? And how will it work to repair some of the ongoing harm? That's why the **Year of Apology** has been such a difficult task.

But that's also where the General Confession helps us because it already gives us a platform with which to understand collective responsibility.

As the **Year of Apology** continues — and likely extends into 2020 so we can get things right — we CAN understand how the entire church is responsible for its role in slavery and how the entire church CAN repent and take actions toward repairing the harm.

And finally, we can, as the church, commit to making sure chattel slavery never darkens our land again. This is no small task because as history shows us time and time again, freedom is never won permanently, abuse of the weak is never stopped permanently — forces of darkness will never be entirely stamped out. They merely bide their time until no one is paying attention.

That's why this **Year of Apology** — and the practice of apology in general — is so important. That's why we've always had the General Confession and, I hope, always will.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Thought for your week:

“Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.”

— George Orwell, 1984

Worship This Week:

Tuesday	6:30 PM	Evening Prayer (at the Chapel)
Wednesday	10 AM	Morning Prayer (Wilks Room)
Thursday	11 AM	No Bible Study This Week
Sunday	8 AM	Eucharist Rite I
	10 AM	Eucharist Rite II

If you have anything to add to the E-pistle, please contact either Fr. Chuck, Dyan in the Parish Office, or Brian Rance. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday evening. Thanks!

Announcements

Fr. Chuck Away:

As with last year, Fr. Chuck will be away this month for 10 days working with young people in South Africa. He departs July 10 and returns July 20. Fr. Kevin Bean will be our supply priest that Sunday. Fr. Chuck will accompany Fr. Masud ibn Syedullah to help lead the “Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear” workshop at the Volmoed Center and its Youth Leadership Training Program. Volmoed is a conference/training center which also serves as an intentional faith community for several residents. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has a home there.

Fireside Chat Coordinator Needed:

After nine years of phenomenal work coordinating our famous Fireside Chats, Sue DeLorenzo is stepping down to a well-deserved rest. The Chats, however, go on! In fact, speakers are already approaching us about ideas for talks! What we need now is a new coordinator. It would be a lie to say this doesn't require some serious work, but the foundation Sue has laid makes it a *much* more manageable — and enjoyable — job. So contact Fr. Chuck to claim your spot!

Food Pantry Donations:

The Hyde Park Food Pantry at Regina Coeli is located at [28 Harvey Street, Hyde Park, NY](#). Food donations are welcome and may be dropped off at the Pantry on Friday mornings [9:30 AM - 11:30 AM](#), or in the basket at church on Sunday mornings. Correspondence and donations (checks payable to the Hyde Park Food Pantry), may be mailed to Hyde Park Food Pantry, [PO Box 171, Hyde Park, NY 12538](#). Any questions, contact Patty Moore at [845-233-4057](#) or Sue Eagan at [845-889-4416](#). Any form of support is greatly appreciated.

July 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1 Office Closed Memorial Day	2 6:30 Evening Prayer	3 10 AM Morning Prayer	4 NO BIBLE STUDY INDEPENDENCE DAY	5 FREE PRAYER FRIDAY	6
7 Unction	8 Office Closed	9 6:30 Evening Prayer	10 NO MORNING PRAYER	11 NO BIBLE STUDY	12	13
14	15 Office Closed	16 6:30 Evening Prayer 7:00 Vestry Meeting	17 NO MORNING PRAYER	18 NO BIBLE STUDY	19	20
21	22 Office Closed	23 6:30 Evening Prayer	24 10 AM Morning Prayer 2:00 PM. Hyde Park Assisted Living Eucharist	25 11 AM Bible Study	26 FREE PRAYER FRIDAY	27 8 AM Men's Breakfast

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.

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/>

- 7 The Episcopal Church's House of Deputies
- 8 All Serving on Interim Bodies of General Convention
- 9 Safe Church Trainers of the Diocese
- 10 Diocesan Mutual Ministry Review Consultants
- 11 Summer Camp Programs of the Diocese
- 12 Christ Church, Red Hook
- 13 The Diocesan Director of Human Resources

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ashley, Joe Baldwin, John Bohlmann, Justin Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Fr. Fred Cartier, Patty Caswell, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), John and Gloria Golden, Kathy Graff, Nick Granados-Kramer, Robert Guariglia, Clifford Hallmark (father of Alyssa Raugalis), Dalton K., Edith Kline, Lynne Koch, Ashley Konyn, Tedi Kramer, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Lorraine, Joanne Lynn, Jim Lynn (Carol Bender's brother - facing surgery), Doris Mack, Margaret, Bruce McIlravy, 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), 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): Lucille Ogden

Birthdays
(this coming week): Brooke Schroder, Liz Handman, Paul Littlefield, Judith H. Douglass, Eden Ciferri and Nancy Montero

Acolytes:	July 7: Braeden Hall July 14: Jaylen Thatcher
Altar Guild:	July 7: Team II July 14: Team III
8 a.m. Readers:	July 7: TBA July 14: TBA
10 a.m. Readers:	July 7: Jim Oppenheimer-Crawford and Andy Hall July 14: Wilma Tully and Mike Fenwick
Ushers:	July 7: Andy Hall and Tonya Hall July 14: Patty Drake and Bobbie Wells
Pledge Clerks:	July 7: Joanne Lown and Sue DeLorenzo July 14: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	July 7: Cathy, Aric and Andrea Tegtmeier July 14: Geoff, Charlessa, Jasmine and Jaylen Thatcher, Heather Toth
Coffee Hour Hosts:	July 7: Summer Break--No Coffee Hour July 14: Summer Break--No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

2 Kings 5:1-14
 Psalm 30
 Galatians 6:(1-6)7-16
 Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 693 - Just As I Am
 Sequence: 539 - O Zion Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling
 Offertory: 685 - Rock of Ages
 Communion: Taize 47 -In the Lord, Ill Be Ever Thankful
 Recessional: 525 - The Church's One Foundation

Sermons from the Last Two Weeks

Sermon Preached on Third Sunday after Pentecost

“Claiming the Mantle”

I would bet that nearly everyone has heard the term, Chariot of Fire. I would also bet that most think it’s “Chariots of Fire” because of that old movie. **And** I would bet that most don’t *really* know the story it comes from or what makes it significant.

I am here to help.

But even more, I want to show how this story connects with the gospel and with all of us.

So, let’s get to Elijah and Elisha. Now, you know that Elijah was a prophet of God, and you probably also remember that he had been chased around by the king and queen of the day who wanted him dead because he kept telling them they were in trouble with God for the way they treated people.

Elijah complained to God — a lot. So finally God told Elijah to appoint Elisha as his successor. Now, after a period of training, it’s time for Elijah to ascend to heaven. That’s where we pick up the story. Elijah and Elisha make their way past several other prophets, all of whom tell Elisha that his master is going away.

Despite Elijah’s commands, Elisha will not leave him. So, when it’s time to depart, Elijah asks Elisha what parting gift he wants, and Elisha says, “a double portion of your spirit,” whatever that means.

And of course, once the chariot of fire comes, Elijah drops his mantle, which Elisha claims as his own, using it to part the water, thus showing that he now has the prophetic power that had once been Elijah’s.

So far, so good.

Here, it helps to know that in that culture, the mantle was a symbol of the prophet. Perhaps it was a special cut or color — I just don’t know — but passing the mantle was a visual sign of passing the prophetic authority on to a successor. That’s what we are seeing in today’s story.

To claim that mantle did not guarantee the prophet would necessarily be *good* at his job. Elisha, for all his power, never quite managed the impact that Elijah had. And he did petulant things like sending a bear to maul some kids who made fun of his bald head. That’s not a righteous use of prophetic power.

And claiming that mantle did not mean that life would be good. Most prophets knew that their existence was always tenuous because to be a real prophet often meant to confront the rulers of the day and tell them truths they did not want to hear. Many a prophet was executed.

So, while claiming the mantle of prophet sounded good, it was nothing to take lightly.

Fast forward to Jesus.

He has his disciples, and they’re feeling pretty good about themselves. They see Jesus as at least the heir of Elijah. He’s got power, he has the authority, he reveals godly wisdom. And **THEY** are his heirs. They, like Elisha, are looking forward to the day when they can claim the mantle.

Which may explain why they were so ready to rain down fire upon the town that did not receive them. Let's show them some of that divine wrath, just like the old prophets.

Only Jesus rebukes them. That's not how he does the business of God.

The story moves on to other would-be disciples. Others who might want to claim the mantle. One says, "I'll follow you anywhere," and Jesus throws a little cold water on him. He says this is not a job for the faint-hearted. There's no place to call home, no rest, no glamor. We don't know if that person still chose to follow.

Others are even invited, but they hesitate. Let me just go bury my dad. Let me just go say goodbye to my parents. Seems reasonable, but the way it's written, these are not so much actual familial obligations as they are excuses. I have to do this first. I have to do that first. I'll get back to you.

And Jesus says, to do this work requires commitment. The commitment means putting his work ahead of family, friends, business — everything. To do the work of Jesus means to put loving God and neighbor ahead of your own frustrations or indignation. Maybe the disciples were right to be angry at the people who would not receive them, but Jesus showed that loving them was more important than punishing them.

The most important thing about Jesus, however, is that his passing of the mantle was not limited to just the disciples. Through his death and resurrection, he passes the mantle to each of us as well.

And that's a problem. Because although he passes it to each of us, it's up to us to claim it.

And to claim the mantle of Jesus is a serious thing.

It means you will never feel quite at home in the world.

It means you will never be able to rest easy when someone else is abused, homeless, treated unjustly, frightened, alone or abandoned, sick or depressed.

It means you will have to make following Jesus a priority over everything else — over business, over friends, over family, over whatever things you thought were of highest importance.

To claim the mantle of Jesus means that you see the rest of the world through the lens of Jesus — and live accordingly.

So, Jesus is passing the mantle. He's been passing it for 2000 years. The question for us is: will we claim it? Amen.

Sermon Preached on Second Sunday after Pentecost

"Believing vs Healing"

In a way, this is one of my favorite gospel passages. In part, I suppose, it's because it's so graphic. You can see the possessed man screaming and breaking the chains that bind him out in the wilderness. You can hear the demons shouting, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the

Most High God?” You can see the herd of pigs suddenly go crazy and rush off the cliff to their deaths. And you can imagine all those townsfolk gathering around Jesus, looking at the healed man and the dead pigs and saying, “Please ... just go.”

But there’s another reason I love this passage. It is our story in a nutshell. It’s the story of how we mess up our relationship with God — individually and as the institution of the Church — over and over again.

Let’s look at the story to see what I mean.

You may have heard that all you need to do is believe in Jesus, and you’ll be saved. But guess what? In this story, the demons believed. THEY called him Son of the Most High God.

But they also wanted nothing to do with Jesus and what he offered. That’s why I don’t trust people who tell you to just believe in Jesus — without ever suggesting that you be healed, or that your life be transformed.

The man who was possessed, on the other hand — he was healed. Now, this story is different from most of the gospel healing stories because usually someone asks for healing or Jesus says, “What do you want me to do for you?” This time, he just does it. But afterward, the man fully embraces that healing, so we can safely assume Jesus saw past the man’s demons to what he truly needed and desired, and provided it. All we know for sure is that having to believe in Jesus was not a prerequisite — but accepting the healing *was* important. So we have this tension between **believing vs healing**.

But at this point we add a third element.

The townspeople come up and see what has happened. They see the man who’s healthy now. They see the dead herd of pigs. And they tell Jesus to leave because they’re afraid.

But afraid of what?

Many years ago, I heard a friend preach about this passage, and he said, they were afraid that their money was gone. Their community made money from those pigs, and Jesus had just taken a chunk out of the economy. So, he argued, they were choosing money over healing.

He’s not wrong, but I think we can look at something bigger.

I would argue the townsfolk were afraid of losing the **status quo**.

And sure, part of that status quo may have been economic. But maybe it was that they didn’t want to lose their scapegoat — the demon-possessed man may well have been the guy they blamed for all their woes. Or he might have been the one they pointed at in order to feel superior — “You think we’re bad? What about *him*?” Or maybe they didn’t want to accept the idea that a Jewish guy (remember, these are NOT Jews he’s with right now) could ever do anything good.

So we have this tension between **believing** and **healing** — and **status quo**.

If you are in any uncertainty about what to choose between these three, let me assure you that **I'm** choosing healing.

In fact, **healing is what we come to church for**. It's not to prove that we believe. And it's not to keep things the way they've always been.

No. We come because we recognize our need for healing. We **WANT** the healing that we know we can't get anywhere else. In our souls, in our minds, in our relationships, in our bodies.

Let me throw out just a few things people have come to talk about with me **THIS WEEK**. Be warned, some of them are "political" — but these are the areas of healing that matter to people in this parish, in this town, right now: And if we can't address them, are we any different than those townsfolk who drove Jesus away?

Pride month — how do we support those of our community who are gay, lesbian, transgender or something else we don't understand? Because they need the healing of a loving community.

Racism — the other day was Juneteenth, and many of us have no idea what that is, but if you're African American, you probably do, and you probably know the healing needed in this country to cure the deadly disease of racism.

Abuse of family (one who can't use family terms) — I had a friend tell me she couldn't call God Father because she was abused by her father. This week someone else said they won't even call fellow parishioners brothers and sisters — because there's so much abuse in families. I still hold on to the familial image of God and the Church despite the absolute validity of their positions. I hold onto the healthy, loving family that God envisions for us rather than the often all too abusive ones we experience. May our understanding of family be healed.

Children in cages — We have all seen in the news the horrific image of children not only being separated from their parents at the border but then kept in dangerous and inhuman conditions. Based on numerous conversations this week, this affects not only those children who are here through no fault of their own — but the lives of all who are aware of them. The palpable pain seeing these children causes many people right here is real. If ever there were need for spiritual healing, this would be it.

Health care — This week I've been to the hospital, to a nursing home, and to people's homes. Some people have illnesses they can't figure out. Others have health problems they can't pay for. Still others have sick loved ones they can't do anything for. Physical healing is God's concern, too.

Then someone wanted to talk about why **People stop coming to church** — You may and say, "That's not a healing issue." But it is. People stop coming to church for several reasons, but they're almost always related to healing. As with the demons, they may *believe* in Jesus but not want what Jesus offers. They're not healthy but afraid to get well. Or they may believe but figure belief is all they need - without changing anything. You know, "I'm a good person, I practice kindness. That's enough."

Or maybe they came for healing and didn't find it here. That one haunts me — I hope and pray that everyone who walks through these doors will find the healing they need rather than more cause for pain or despair. But I also know that we are all of us only human and *will* mess up, *will* cause pain

unintentionally. And it is then that I remember, the healing comes from God: all we can do here is point to God and support each other.

All these — and many more I can't think of — need to be looked at from one of these lenses — Belief, Healing, or Status Quo. The question for each of us individually AND as an institution is: WILL WE CHOOSE HEALING? 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.

SERMON VALUATION FORM

It is not necessary to take notes during the sermon. Rather, you can take some time afterwards to recollect the sermon and its effect on you. Give yourself a few minutes for each of the questions. If you choose to share this with the preacher, it can be a powerful aid to better preaching - but this is not a form to be handed to the preacher and forgotten. It is an aid for you, so you can speak directly with the preacher and answer follow-up questions.

1. WHAT ARE YOU STILL HEARING?

That is, without evaluating it, what are the words or phrases from the sermon that are still echoing in your ears? Are there any "ear worms"?

2. WHERE MIGHT THIS BE LEADING?

As a listener, where does this sermon lead you? What does it invite you to? What are the next steps in your faith that might arise from this sermon?

3. HOW DOES THIS SERMON "PLAY"?

That is, how is it organized or ordered? What steps has the preacher taken you through? What structure did you notice in this sermon? What has it asked you to do?

4. HOW MIGHT THIS SERMON "GROW"?

That is, what suggestions would you have to hone the message of this sermon, to make it more engaging, inspiring, logical, fleshed out... No sermon is ever entirely done; its themes will be revisited over time. What would help the next time be more compelling?