

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: August 20, 2017

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Bible Verse

Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity!

- Psalm 133:1

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Remember last week's Epistle when I told the parable of the chief and the missionary? In it, the missionary told the chief he would burn in hell if he did not accept Jesus as his Lord - but that he would not have risked hell if he had never heard of Jesus. To which the chief said, "Then I would have been better off if you had never come and said anything."

Well, this week we look at how even good parables can only go so far. We have discussed the events in Charlottesville already, but that is not really sufficient. It's not, I think, because what we are dealing with is more than just a rogue group of white supremacists. What we are dealing with is more than just an isolated, shocking event. The hope that "brethren live together in unity" - which we often give voice to with "Can't we all just get along?" - is alive but distant.

On Tuesday evening, I attended one of the prayer vigils in Poughkeepsie to support those who oppose the Neo-Nazis and white supremacists. It was interesting as a white man to listen to people of various cultural backgrounds. Some expressed shock at what took place in Virginia. One said, "This is not my America."

But then a black speaker said, "Nothing that happened down there shocked or even surprised me. This *is* my America - all my life." Part of that conversation centered around what it was like for white people to become awakened to this harsh reality, the be "woke" as the saying goes. In a sense, unlike the Native American chief who might have been better off not being evangelized, we are not better off in our ignorance. We need to be *woke* so that we understand what our brothers and sisters live with every day. We need to pay attention to how our lives affect others. Only then can we work toward improvement and that blessed day when we live together in unity.

Admittedly, it may seem easier to remain unaware, to not know what others are facing and how we are benefiting from it. Still, knowing is better than the alternative. Think of it like this: Imagine you're driving in your car at breakneck speed, completely unaware that you are headed toward an unmarked cliff. Would you want someone to *wake* you to that reality? Now suppose you were driving that car remotely, but others were in the car. Would you still want to be *woke*? You're safe, after all. Yes you would, because you would feel responsible for those in your care. You would want them to be safe, too. That's what it is like in society. We're responsible for each other, and if others are being harmed, we want - we need - to be aware so that we can change course. Sometimes, being woke is no fun, but it is necessary.

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I invite you, then, to broaden your awareness of the issues that made something like that march in Charlottesville possible, and that will make more such marches (and worse) inevitable. Do some research that's more than just watching your favorite news channel. Do some reading. Look at sources you wouldn't normally read. Ask questions (always respectfully) of people who may hold differing views. Ours is a faith of reaching out, of listening, of learning - of never being satisfied when brothers and sisters are in pain.

Oh how good and pleasant it is when brethren live together in unity. That's our goal. But to get there - and it's an endless journey - will take humility, courage, patience and determination.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Did you know?

...Why we cross ourselves? Nowhere in the Bible will you read of anyone making the sign of the cross. Yet we know this little action represents the cross upon which Christ died and through which he redeemed the world. It's unknown exactly when people began using this sign of Christ, but at least by 200 CE, it was described in writing. At first only the forehead was crossed, but by the 4th century, the gesture we know was in place. It is considered an act of blessing and belief. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus explained in the early years that one should hold three fingers together at the tips to represent the Trinity. The other two fingers represented the dual nature (human and divine) of Christ. In the eastern church, people cross themselves moving from the right shoulder to the left. In the western church, we cross ourselves from left shoulder to right. When do we use the sign of the cross? Priests and bishops often bless the congregation or objects using the sign. Often, when being blessed, congregants will also cross themselves, as if in reply. Individuals can cross themselves at any time, but it is usually a sign of blessing or reverence for Christ, a plea for Christ's presence and blessing. Whether you cross yourself or not is your decision - in the end, it's between you and God.

Announcements

Men's Breakfast:

Men! Breakfast this Saturday, August 19. 8:00 AM at Cranberry's. See you there.

Farewell Sarah:

This Sunday, August 20, is Sarah Rodeo's last Sunday at St. James' before she heads off to graduate school at Yale. Please stop by to wish her well.

Final Summer Adult Forum:

We only have two sessions left in this series! We've looked at Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Reconciliation and Unction. THIS Sunday, August 20 (from 9:15 to 9:45 AM) in the Wilkes Room, the session will be on Ordination.

Become a Graveyard Tour Sponsor:

Do you own a business or are you in a position to influence decisions at your company? If so, why not become a Graveyard Tour Sponsor? Several local businesses have done so already. What does it take to support the Tours, and what's in it for you? Glad you asked.

For as little as \$50, your business will be listed on the Graveyard Tour website all year. This site get a lot of traffic especially during the tour season. You also get your company listed on the tour programs. AND, depending on the amount of your support, your company receives at least one complimentary ticket for opening night (those who donate more than 350 receive three tickets for any night).

BUT the best part is that you will be helping your church reach and inspire the world with God's love. And that's a pretty good deal. See Fr. Chuck if you want to become a sponsor.

Choir Season Starts Soon:

We are beginning a new season with a new minister of music. Why not make this your chance for trying a new thing. Join the choir! Rehearsals are once a week. Our new minister of music, Glenn May, would like to invite you to the first rehearsal of the season on Thursday, August 31 at 7:30 PM. See if you like it. Learn what you can do. Get in gear for wonderful, soulful, prayerful music. The first Sunday with choir anthem will be September 7. Come make beautiful music.

A HUGE THANK YOU

goes out to each of you who made a donation (cash and/or kit supplies) towards the Rural and Migrant Ministry Campers' School Supply Kit Project. We raised \$790 in cash. This summer, through your generosity, we were able to deliver 38 school supply kits to the RMM office on Tuesday, August 15th. Your donation will make a difference in a young person's life; on behalf of the campers who will benefit from these kits - THANK YOU!!!!

Deacon Gail on behalf of the Outreach Committee

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS: Environmental Programs

The 21st of the month is bearing down upon us once again. This Monday, August 21st, it is not only the day for the Solar Eclipse, it is the day that our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, calls on us to PRAY, FAST and ACT. This month's action calls on each of us to advocate for the protection of funding for environmental programs both domestically and internationally.

“The Episcopal Church's General Convention policy supports clean air and water and climate change mitigation. Our policy urges Episcopalians to support environmental stewardship, and equipped with this mandate you can advocate for critical environmental programs funded through the appropriations process. We believe that cuts to these programs will have serious negative impacts on at-risk and low-income communities, while appropriate funding levels will allow these programs to effectively steward our environment while safeguarding neighbors most in need.” - Episcopal Church's one-pager on Appropriations for the Stewardship of God's Creation.

Available in the narthex will be the One-Pager in addition to For Such a Time as This: Environmental Programs sheet.

Please prayerfully consider learning more about these programs and contacting your representatives in Congress.

“Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer

from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

- For the Conservation of Natural Resources - BCP

Peace, Deacon Gail

August 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13	14 Office Closed	15	16 10 AM Morning Prayer	17 11 AM Bible Study	18	19 8 AM Men's Breakfast
20 Sarah Rodeo's last day at St. James'	21 Office Closed	22	23 10 AM Morning Prayer	24 11 AM Bible Study	25	26
27 Glen May's 1st Day at St. James'	28 Office Closed	29	30 10 AM Morning Prayer	31 11 AM Bible Study		
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/>

- 20 Diocesan Global Missions Commission
- 21 Canons Committee and Resolutions Committee, Diocesan Convention
- 22 Jack & Jill School at St. George's Church, Manhattan
- 23 St. John's Church, Staten Island
- 24 St. Bartholomew's Church, White Plains
- 25 Trinity School, Manhattan
- 26 Zion Church, Dobbs Ferry

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, Barbara Kubiak (Mother of Donna Tracy-Coffman), Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), John Ross, Richard Secor, Sharon Secor (recovering from heart surgery), Karen Shan, 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 all right.

Birthdays
(this past week): G. Angela Henry, Vince Asher, Amelia McNamara and Shirley Ferris

Birthdays
(this coming week): Liz Granados, Scott Pitcher, Jeffrey E. Pardee and Christopher Santos

Acolytes:
August 20: Team 2
August 27: Team 3

Altar Guild: August 20: Team II
August 27: Team III

8 a.m. Readers: August 20: Debbie Belding and Lynne Koch
August 27: Lucille Ogden and Grant Ferris

10 a.m. Readers: August 20: Patty Caswell and Barbara Slegel
August 27: Wendy Urban-Mead and Charlotte DeGross

Ushers: August 20: Maggie and Tom McNamara
August 27: Dean Caswell, Audrey Horne

Pledge Clerks: August 20: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
August 27: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell

Parish Cycle of Prayer: August 20: Carol Vinall, Dick Wager, Laura Walsh
August 27: Dyan Wapnick, Dave and Chris Wardell, Linda Way

Coffee Hour Hosts: August 20: Summer Schedule--No Coffee Hour
August 27: Summer Schedule--No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 45:1-15
Psalm 133
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15: 10-28

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 596 - Judge Eternal, Throned in Splendor
Sequence: 533 - How Wondrous and Great Thy Works
Offertory: 691 - My Faith Looks Up to Thee
Communion: 470 - There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
Recessional: 209 - We Walk By Faith and Not By Sight

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (August 13, 2017)

"Fear"

When I began this sermon several days ago, I had a sermon about the fear Joseph must have felt when his brothers grabbed him with the intention of murder. I had a sermon about the fear of the disciples when they saw the impossibility of Jesus walking on water.

Now I have a sermon that makes me afraid.

It makes me afraid because speaking about social issues always irritates people - because whenever I speak about uncomfortable things, somebody gets angry at me. At least I can comfort myself that it's just a sermon among people I know who are not likely to threaten me. The most you're likely to do is fume a little.

And that also makes me afraid - afraid that the Gospel today will have no impact on anyone - change no hearts, move no minds closer to the will of God. Or that I'm just preaching to the choir.

What makes me afraid, of course, is speaking about the events in Charlottesville, Virginia at the University of Virginia and surrounding area. And yet, I would be more afraid not to speak about it because I would have to answer to God for my silence. And I guarantee you, nearly every pulpit throughout this country - and many around the world - will be filled with the same message.

And that message is that the group marching down there with torches and weapons shouting Nazi slogans like "Blood and Soil" - that group that surrounded a church filled with peaceful, worshiping counter-protestors - have nothing to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Their method was to instill fear, and their message was one of fear. This group - which is alternately called the Alt-Right, White Nationalists, or White Supremacists but who embrace the spirit and message of Nazis - want you to be afraid. They are not coy about it, either.

One of these Neo-Nazis tweeted a message that has been re-tweeted by the leaders of several white nationalist groups. It said, "The fear we instill in them today only fuels our victory tomorrow."

These groups want people of color to be afraid, to know their place. When they shouted, "We will not be replaced," what they meant was that they do not want to lose their place as the most privileged group in the country. They do not want to become a minority because they know how minorities are treated here. They know people of color don't get the same bank loans, don't get the same jobs, don't get the same educational opportunities or the same safety afforded them by the government.

And they want you to be afraid, whoever you are, even if you are a white male like the overwhelming majority of them. They want you to be cowed so you don't speak up, so you don't say anything when they insult and abuse others.

Fear is their weapon and their message.

But it is not the message of God.

When Joseph was grabbed by his brothers (who were angry that they were losing their position of privilege) - he had to feel terrified. How close did they get to beating him to death? When they threw him in a pit, he had to be afraid. What were his chances of dying from exposure or thirst? When they sold him into slavery to the Ishmaelite traders - what could he have felt other than fear?

And yet, he knew God was with him. He trusted the dreams God gave him, and he trusted that God would not abandon him.

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on water, they were terrified. Ghosts held a much more vivid and frightening place in people's imaginations back then than today when we have seen every conceivable evil on video and when we have our nights lit up by electric lights so that we are never truly in darkness.

Yet Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid," and "You of little faith, why do you doubt?" It's not unlike the time when he was asleep on the boat when a fierce storm erupted that threatened to sink the boat. The once again terrified disciples woke him with cries of "Don't you care that we're about to drown?" And again he said, "Why are you afraid? I'm with you."

And that is our question today.

A friend and colleague of mine - one who was on the Indaba team with me that traveled to England and India - was in that church that was surrounded by those torch-bearing Neo-Nazis. She said they were simply praying when it became clear that they were not going to be allowed to leave the building. All exits were blocked.

While some feared the crowd outside - who knew what they might try to do? - she said the prevailing mood was of God's presence. There was a calm about them because God was - and is - with them.

Fear can not - and will not - win.

Now, as we all know, the abuse and intimidation of people of color in this country did not start in the past year. It has not been limited to this large crowd of angry white supremacists.

This abuse has been going on a very long time, and since it usually doesn't affect most of us, we usually say nothing. We usually don't even notice.

When we do say something, people get tired of it. They say, "Can't you think of something new to complain about? Didn't we deal with that long ago? Won't you people ever be satisfied?" So we clam up.

It is so easy, so tempting to let things go along as they've been going for so long. But if the Gospel teaches us anything - and I'm talking about the entirety of the Gospel, not just today's reading - it is that we are all God's children, wonderfully made and responsible to and for each other. Or as St.

Paul said, “there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him.”

How is it that we can be too afraid - or disinterested - to notice when our own family is being harmed?

Unless, that is, we doubt God is with us. Unless we doubt Christ has called us to love each other. Unless you doubt every single person is worthy of respect. “You of little faith,” Jesus says, “Why do you doubt?”

I know people hate it whenever I speak about “political” topics. But politics is simply the manner in which we care for each other - and that is the core of Gospel as well.

The events in Virginia teach us that we do not have the luxury of silence. Thankfully, neither do we need to fear when we are called upon to speak. Because God is with us. Today and always. Amen.

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