

# St. James' E-pistle

## Date of Sunday Service: August 4, 2019

### Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

#### Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This week, the National Cathedral published an open letter calling for a return to decency in society and particularly in the political realm. This unusual letter was precipitated by a flurry of name calling and denigration at the highest levels.

In the letter, the Cathedral leadership mentioned the late senator Joseph McCarthy who spread lies and fear around the country with his claims of rampant communism. They noted how he destroyed many lives in his quest for attention.

Of course, this caused a lot of controversy itself, with many agreeing, some saying it was too little too late, and others arguing that the church should never comment on anything in the political realm.

But as we've said in the past, politics is simply how we treat each other in society — and that is absolutely the church's business. We never choose partisan sides, never endorse candidates, but when it comes to the tone of public discourse, the church properly has a voice.

So, what does their call for decency mean? What IS decency, and is it something we really need in society?

More essentially, is decency something Christians should strive for?

Yes. Absolutely yes. We should set decency as a minimum standard for Christians and we should expect it as a minimum standard for our leaders.

I say minimum because decency is simply the act of confirming to standards of propriety, modesty, honorableness, and morality. Those are the requirements for living peacefully in society. If we can't treat each other with respect, if we can't value even those we disagree with or dislike, we'll have a difficult time making it as a society.

Even more, we'll have a difficult time following Christ. Because everything Jesus did and showed his disciples to do was laced with decency. He listened carefully even to the Pharisees before responding. He asked the sick what they wanted him to do. He stood up repeatedly for the weakest, most marginalized in the community. He welcomed the stranger. And he never belittled his opponent even when he confronted them head on with harsh truth.

The cathedral's letter about decency, in its reference to Joseph McCarthy, quoted the exchange between him and Joseph Welch (chief counsel for the US Army): "Have you no sense of decency,

...sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?” But then it made an interesting point. That Mr. Welch was not so much questioning Senator McCarthy as the whole of society.

Have WE left no sense of decency?

Do WE embrace treating other children of God as if they were vermin? Do we embrace publicly (or privately) belittling others? Do we embrace using others to get what we want? One article from Psychology Today titled, “Whatever Happened to Basic Human Decency” (February 28, 2017) suggested it is indecent to believe in getting away with whatever you can as long as it gets you what you want. Because that attitude rejects the most basic Christian tenet: to love our neighbor as ourselves.

So, as a society and as followers of Jesus Christ, what are we willing to embrace and what to reject? Do we embrace decency, respectfulness, modesty, morality, or do we throw them out in favor of power and all its trappings?

That was the ultimate question addressed in the Cathedral communique. That is the question that faces us as Jesus’ disciples every day.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

### Thought for your week:

**“The child within us stays alive. And that child within us never loses the talent to look with the eyes of the heart, with wonderment, and so to pray without ceasing.”**

— David Steiner-Rast, *Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer*

### 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

*Between Service Class to Resume. Next Series: "Who Needs Creeds?"*

Several folks have asked when the between service classes will resume. Well, here they are! Starting on the 15th, we will have a series called "Who Needs Creeds?" Designed to address if not necessarily answer questions about whether the Creeds are necessary, this series will give some history and theology but leave plenty of room for open and frank discussion. What does it mean to say you believe something? Is it necessary to state it in public? What if you're not sure what you believe? If you have ever asked any of these questions (or are asking them now), this series is for you.

*RURAL AND MIGRANT MINISTRY: Request for School Supply Kits*

This year Rural and Migrant Ministry's Overnight Camp, is being held the week of August 12th - 18th at the Presbyterian Camp in Holmes, New York and is celebrating its 30th year of operation. The camp's theme is **PERSEVERE**.

In addition to the Overnight Camp, Rural and Migrant Ministry offers a variety of summer youth programs. Each of these programs makes a huge difference in the lives of the young people who attend, and often, these experiences are life-changing.

At the end of camp each camper receives a Back to School Supply Kit. Last year our parish family donated forty-two kits.

**Please prayerfully consider making a donation of a school kit.**

The kit should include:

- 4 composition notebooks (NO spiral notebooks)
- 4 sturdy (2) pocket folders
- 1 package of notebook paper
- 1 box of primary colored Crayola washable markers
- 1 24-count box of Crayola crayons
- 1 soft pencil envelope/case that includes 1 package (12) #2 pencils, 1 eraser, 1 pencil sharpener, 1 ruler, 3-6 bill point pens, 2 glue sticks, a pair of school scissors
- small package of construction paper

**OR if you would like us to do the shopping, please prayerfully consider making a cash donation.** Cash/Checks payable to St. James' Church, memo line - RMM school supplies. Special offering envelopes can be found in the pews.

**Deadline for donations: Sunday, August 4, 2019**

On behalf of the campers who will benefit from your donation: **THANK YOU!**

— Deacon Gail on behalf of the Outreach Committee

*Fireside Chat Coordinator Needed: WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR A COORDINATOR!*

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!

*Reading Adventures Gearing Up:*

Believe it or not, it's almost Back To School time. And with that comes Reading Adventures! We will re-start the program in October, but we want to line up our volunteers as soon as possible. If you would like to be a volunteer this year, please contact Fr. Chuck at your earliest convenience. It's one of the most effective and rewarding programs you can be part of , and it only takes an hour a week.

August 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29 Office Closed	30 6:30 Evening Prayer	31 10 AM Morning Prayer	1 NO BIBLE STUDY	2 FREE PRAYER FRIDAY	3

<b>4</b> Unction	<b>5</b> Office Closed	<b>6</b> 2:00 PM. Hyde Park Assisted Living Eucharist  6:30 Evening Prayer	<b>7</b> 10 AM Morning Prayer	<b>8</b>  NO BIBLE STUDY	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Office Closed	<b>13</b> 6:30 Evening Prayer	<b>14</b> 10 AM Morning Prayer	<b>15</b>  NO BIBLE STUDY	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 8 AM Men's Breakfast
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Office Closed	<b>20</b> 6:30 Evening Prayer	<b>21</b> NO Morning Prayer	<b>22</b>  NO BIBLE STUDY	<b>23</b> FREE PRAYER FRIDAY	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 6:30 Evening Prayer	<b>28</b> NO Morning Prayer	<b>29</b>  NO BIBLE STUDY	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
<p>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.</p>						

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

- 4 Diocesan Finance Committee
- 5 St. John's Church, Arden
- 6 Church of the Transfiguration, Manhattan
- 7 The Episcopal Church Foundation
- 8 St. John's Church (Wilmot), New Rochelle
- 9 The Diocesan Chief of Finance and Operations
- 10 Diocesan India Network

## 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): Clifford Wells, David Wardell, Patricia Drake and Christian Schroder

Birthdays  
(this coming week): Patricia Holland, Jeffrey Thatcher and Mary Gabel

Acolytes:  
August 4: TBA  
August 11: TBA

Altar Guild:	August 4: Team I August 11: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	August 4: TBA August 11: TBA
10 a.m. Readers:	August 4: Wilma Tully and Justin Bohlmann August 11: Jim Oppenheimer-Crawford and Lilian Peralta
Ushers:	August 4: Jodi Triola and Susan Simpson August 11: Lillian Perrotta and Charlotte DeGross
Pledge Clerks:	August 4: Joanne Lown and Sue DeLorenzo August 11: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	August 4: Liz Van Wagner, Janet Veith August 11: Georgia Verven, Stephen, Amanda, Trevor, Travis and Troy Verven
Coffee Hour Hosts:	August 4: Summer Break--No Coffee Hour August 11: Summer Break--No Coffee Hour

## **This Week's Lectionary**

Hosea 11:1-11  
Psalm 107:1-9, 43  
Colossians 3:1-11  
Luke 12:13-21

## **This Week's Hymns**

Processional: 379 - God is Love, let Heaven adore him  
Sequence: 674 - Forgive our sins as we forgive  
Offertory: 594 - God of Grace and God of Glory  
Communion: TAIZÉ 47 - In the Lord, I'll Be Ever Thankful  
Recessional: 488 - Be Thou My Vision

## **Last Week's Sermon**

Sermon Preached on Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

*“What To Pray For”*

***[Light a candle and put it in the middle of the church. Focus on it in SILENCE.]***

Repeat after me: “Be Still And Know That I Am God.”

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.

***[SILENCE]***

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, they weren’t just asking for a technique. What they were really asking was what we pray for. What is our goal? *Why* do we pray? What *is* prayer?

In response Jesus gives the familiar words of the Lord’s Prayer. But that’s not the end of it. He continues to teach about what we are to *really* pray for — and what we are assured to receive. “...how much more will the heavenly Father give the **Holy Spirit** to those who ask!”

The Holy Spirit is what we get in prayer.

Sure, we can pray for other things, for specific outcomes like a disease cured or a new job — and some of these things may actually happen in response to prayer — IF that’s what is needed for God’s Kingdom. But that’s not our primary purpose in prayer. Our purpose is the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the beginning and end of our prayer. The Spirit fills us — and in filling us turns us back toward God in a world that constantly seeks to turn us away. But turning away from God is death to our souls. And God wants us to have life.

We pray, and the Spirit turns us toward God.

We pray, and the Spirit turns us toward our true identity as God’s children.

We pray, and the Spirit turns us toward our hope and our strength and our purpose.

But what does receiving the Spirit mean in our lives?

It means we are more able to follow where Jesus leads.

It means we are more able to see Christ even in the eyes of those we despise or who hold what we consider to be vile ideas.

It means we gain strength and courage to do what Christ has put before us even if it is terrifying or unpleasant or outright dangerous.

It means we gain the inner peace to be the light in the darkness, to be the island in the sea, to be the staff to the weak in a world filled with noise and chaos.

It means we are able to see the hungry and choose to feed them rather than blame them for being hungry. We are able to see the girl caught in sex trafficking and choose to find safety for her rather than blame her for bad choices. We are able to see farm workers seeking humane working conditions and choose to help rather than simply say, “They’re better off here than in their old homes.”

Prayer allows us to see more clearly — because it is the Spirit who focuses our sight.

Of course, prayer is not a vending machine. It’s not this one-time thing where you put in words and receive an outcome. Prayer is a practice. A way of life. Jesus gives the disciples words because prayer — focusing on God — requires action on our part.

Lighting a candle perhaps. Saying words. Walking a labyrinth. Using a rosary. Praying icons.

The incidentals don’t matter. The focus, the intention do.

You pray for the turning, and at least your attention will be turned. Toward God.

But that turning is a lot like being in a boat caught in a river’s current — we cannot turn that boat around by ourselves. Prayer reminds us we need God, and that God’s Spirit leads us to know our need for each other. Prayer can be collective or solitary, but it always turns us to each other.

We pray — together and alone — because we need God’s Spirit in this world which so desperately tries to turn us away from God and from loving each other. Last week, Deacon Gail highlighted the hate-filled language flowing so freely in our country.

Well, the more hate-filled the world is, the more vile language we hear about our brothers and sisters, the more we disagree with others (and perhaps for good reason), the more we need to focus on God. The more we need to ask for God’s Spirit to fill us.

The more we need to be still and know God.

Be still and know that I am God.

Those could just as easily have been the words that Jesus gave the disciples. But regardless of the words, none of it will have meaning, and the Spirit will not necessarily be given, and we will not be turned — if we do not ask.

***[SILENCE.]***

May we all ask, today and always. 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](http://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?*