

# St. James' E-pistle

## Date of Sunday Service: August 11, 2019

### Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

#### Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In last Sunday's sermon, I spoke of death — in relationship to the mass shootings but also touching on some funerals I had officiated the previous week. It led to a discussion not only of life after death but the purpose of life itself.

This week, the great writer Toni Morrison died. Her writing, such as the novel *Beloved*, highlighted the black experience in the US. They are books highlighted injustice that has run through our country not only as a black issue but as a soul issue because injustice harms the soul.

The famous theologian Cornel West agrees when he says, "Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public."

Justice and love, then, are inseparable. Justice is simply one facet of the diamond of love. Love without justice is unthinkable, and justice without love has no meaning. That's why the church has always held up justice as a Christian value. Even when we have failed to live by those values, it was right to hold up justice, because Jesus showed us how to treat others justly and taught us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Our Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Michael Curry, preached not too long ago about how in everything we do as Christians, we are to look to the rock. God is our rock, and Jesus is that rock incarnate. So in everything we do, we look to Jesus who sat with sinners, fed the hungry, healed the sick, embraced foreigners and people of the wrong religions.

So for Christians, our purpose in life is to love God — to do that deep internal work of intentionally carving out time to be with God. Our purpose is also to love our neighbor — that often painful external work that can involve confronting our own biases as well as injustices visited upon the weakest of our brothers and sisters.

St. James' has not been known as an activist church, and you may prefer it that way. God knows that I do not love demonstrations or protests. They are intensely uncomfortable for me, and I attend them only when I believe I have no other choice if I am to remain faithful.

Other congregations, other denominations, other faith communities choose a different path. They see injustice and act. Some stand up for minorities that are abused by our justice system. Some stand up for immigrants seeking help. Some stand up for poor working folks who can't make a living wage. Others still stand up to Congress and demand legislation to reduce or end the rampant gun violence, so unique to us among the wealthy countries.

Justice is part of the Christian's calling. Therefore it is part of your calling. As the prophet Micah wrote (and as you'll find posted next to my office door): "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8a).

With that in mind, you might want to consider joining an interdenominational vigil on the lawn of the Church of the Messiah in Rhinebeck this Sunday at 11:30 AM. It's not a long vigil — maybe only 20-30 minutes long is what they guess — but it is an outward sign that the church stands and has always stood on the rock of justice and against the sins of racism and xenophobia.

Fighting for Justice is not the only thing we do, of course, but without it, we are missing a key element to the Kingdom of God in which love is the natural state, and injustice a disease. Presiding Bishop Curry said, "Look to the rock." Our rock of ages is Jesus Christ, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.

But that same rock lets us know we can't hide forever. In time, we are called to go out into the world to love and serve God and each other.

That's who we are.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

### Thoughts for your week (in memory of Toni Morrison):

**"Love is Divine only and difficult always. If you think it is easy, you are a fool. if you think it is natural, you are blind."**

**"Freeing yourself was one thing. Claiming ownership of that freed self was another."**

**"At some point in life the world's beauty becomes enough. You don't need to photograph, paint, or even remember it. It is enough."**

**"Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all."**

— Toni Morrison

### Worship This Week:

Tuesday	6:30 PM	Evening Prayer (at the Chapel)
Wednesday	10 AM	Morning Prayer (Wilks Room)
Thursday	11 AM	Bible Study
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

### *Welcome Frankie!*

We joyfully welcome Francis William Raugalis, who was born Thursday morning to Alyssa and Daniel Raugalis. Congratulations to Daniel, Alyssa, Altona, and Andrew for the newest member of their family. Mother and child are doing well.

### *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 **September 15 at 9:15 AM in the Wilks Room**, 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.

### *Acolyte Training:*

I'm pleased to announce that several folks have expressed interest in learning more about becoming an acolyte! Because schedules are running things, but also because I would like to get people on the Fall schedule as soon as possible, I will have a couple of different training sessions. First will be **this Sunday after the 10:00 AM service**. The second option is **Sunday, September 1, after the 10:00 AM service**. If you can't make either of these sessions but want to acolyte, let Fr. Chuck know, and we'll set up an alternate training session.

### *NO Men's Breakfast:*

There will be no Men's Breakfast this month.

### *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.

# Anti-Racism

## *Inter-Denominational Witness*

***“What does the Lord require of you but to do Justice” Micah 6:8a***

Join your friends and neighbors in solidarity against racist rhetoric and actions.

After some opening prayers, we will commit to examine our own racism and to take action to confront racism when we see it in our daily lives.

***Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup> -- 11:30 am***

***On the Lawn at***

***Church of the Messiah***

***6436 Montgomery Street***

***(corner of Route 9 and Chestnut St.), Rhinebeck***



THE EPISCOPAL

Church<sup>OF</sup> THE Messiah

## August 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<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>
<b>18</b> Guest Celebrant: The Rev. Susan Auchincloss	<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> Guest Celebrant: The Rev. Kevin Bean	<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.diocesenyn.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

- 11 Diocesan Disciplinary Board
- 12 St. James' Church, Callicoon, Delaware Catskill Episcopal Ministry
- 13 All Who Work at The Episcopal Church Center
- 14 Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Manhattan
- 15 Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Chappaqua
- 16 Church of the Intercession, Manhattan
- 17 St. Luke's Church, Eastchester

## Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ashley, Joe Baldwin, John Bohlmann, Justin Bohlmann, Fr. Fred Cartier, Patty Caswell, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Heather Francese, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), John and Gloria Golden, Kathy Graff, Robert Guariglia, Clifford Hallmark (father of Alyssa Raugalis), Dalton K., Edith Kline, Lynne Koch, Walter Koch, Ashley Konyon, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Lorraine, Joanne Lynn, Jim Lynn (Carol Bender's brother - facing surgery), Doris Mack, Margaret, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginero Milano, Lillian Peralta, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), John Ross, Hank Schroeder, James Sheekey, Naomi Sleight, Carl Smith, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Georgia Verven, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

*For the repose of the soul of Trevor John Sonnenberg (great grandson of Joan and Bud Oetjen), for recovery from surgery for Bud Oetjen. For recovery and healing for Walter Koch. For healing for Kasey Gaulin. In thanksgiving for the birth of Francis William Raugalis.*

## 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): Patricia Holland, Jeffrey Thatcher and Mary Gabel

Birthdays  
(this coming week): Gordon Mackenzie, Jim Matranga, Suzann Kinne and G. Angela Henry

Acolytes:  
August 11: Russell Urban-Mead  
August 18: Jaylen Thatcher

Altar Guild:  
August 11: Team II  
August 18: Team II

8 a.m. Readers:	August 11: Deb Belding and Grant Ferris August 18: Shannon Butler and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	August 11: Jim Oppenheimer-Crawford and Lilian Peralta August 18: Patty Caswell and Mike Fenwick
Ushers:	August 11: Lillian Perrotta and Charlotte DeGroff August 18: Dean Caswell and Audrey Horne
Pledge Clerks:	August 11: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass August 18: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	August 11: Georgia Verven, Stephen, Amanda, Trevor, Travis and Troy Verven August 18: Carol Vinall, Dick Wager, Laura Walsh, Dyan Wapnick
Coffee Hour Hosts:	August 11: Summer Break--No Coffee Hour August 18: Summer Break--No Coffee Hour

## This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20  
 Psalm 50:1-8, 23-24  
 Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16  
 Luke 12:32-40

## This Week's Hymns

Processional: LEVAS 137 - Just As I Am  
 Sequence: LEVAS 69 - In The Garden  
 Offertory: LEVAS 181 - Amazing Grace  
 Communion: TAIZÉ 47 - In the Lord, I'll Be Ever Thankful  
 Recessional: LEVAS 60 - How Great Thou Art

## Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

*"Greed, Death, and Mercy"*

In the past week, I buried four people. One was a woman who died a natural death at a ripe old age after a long illness. Two were a married couple who died of accidental carbon monoxide poisoning a week before they were supposed to move to a new home. On Thursday, I buried a 14-year-old

boy who had had a biking accident but seemed fine, and then later in the day just collapsed in front of his parents.

In the past week, there have also been three mass shootings. Three people plus the shooter were killed last week at a garlic festival in Gilroy, California. One of the victims was a six year old boy.

Yesterday, there was another mass shooting in El Paso, Texas in which at least 20 people died. According to a social media post from the shooter, this was an act of hate toward what he called “the Hispanic invasion of Texas.”

And then, in the early hours of this morning, yet another mass shooting took place in Dayton, Ohio where at least nine people were killed.

I don’t need to talk with you right now about mass shootings. You have all the information you need. We know they are acts of hatred or anger or irrational fear (always facilitated, of course, by easy access to powerful weapons).

There are so many lessons to take from these incidents, but I don’t want the hatred of the perpetrators to take focus away from the people who died. Not only those who died at the hands of this evil, but those who died earlier in the week either naturally or by accident.

Because all these people had lives they were leading, and almost none of them expected to die when they did. They were living, laughing, doing what they loved — or maybe just doing chores. And then they were gone. Their time on this earth over whether they or their loved ones wanted it to be or not.

Even before these mass shootings, I had intended to talk about how unpredictable death is. We never know when we will die, only that we will. At the funerals I conducted this week, I knew there were people who don’t believe in God, but the one point of connection we had was that we all die, and we know it. We all know that we only have so much control over how long we live on this earth — to a degree, much of our time here is out of our hands.

Which brings up the age old question of what life means and what we’re supposed to do with whatever time we have.

I give the same answer at every funeral: we are here to learn how to love in a place where loving is hard. I can’t think of any other purpose that has value. Loving means interacting with others, learning who they are and what their dreams are — and sharing who you are as well. Loving is caring about the other just as you care about yourself. Loving is always seeking the highest good for the other, just as you hope it for yourself.

If you can think of anything of more value in this life, please tell me what it is. Experiences? They’re great but ultimately meaningless. Attention from crowds? Sure, nice, but what does that mean in the end? Money? Yes, money is our big seller, isn’t it? With money we can buy anything we want.

But Jesus had a word about that. In today’s gospel, he’s met by someone in the crowd who wants Jesus to settle a fight over an inheritance. Jesus said, “What? Do I look like a lawyer?” Actually, he said something close: “Who made me your arbitrator?”



More importantly, he said that this greed going on in the family was killing them. It was killing their relationship, and it was killing their souls. That's why he tells the story of the rich man who had phenomenal amounts of money — so much that he had to open an account in the Cayman Islands — I mean build more warehouses for his crops. Only that night, he died. And all that wealth meant nothing.

Now, in this life, we know that money can buy things. You can live in a nicer home and have more fun experiences and wear nicer clothes, and eat out at fine restaurants.

But the point Jesus is trying to dig down into is this: Your stuff is just stuff. It is not life. It will not bring you closer to God, and it will not increase your ability to love — which is our very purpose for living in the first place.

If your focus is on learning how to love God with all your heart, mind, and soul AND on actively loving your neighbor, your stuff becomes a tool in service of that love. You might use it to lobby congress to increase health care for the population. You might use it to feed the hungry or even buy school supplies for kids who have less.

The question is your focus. If you want to protect what's yours from all those people who want what you have — your soul is in danger (and as we have seen, so are other people's lives). Jesus warns you're building barns for stuff that is not serving the Kingdom of God. Because it was never yours in the first place. Everything on this earth is God's, and God has asked us use it to care for each other. Hoarding and guarding against others defeats the love that we are here to learn.

You can have money and fun and status — and die a poor, pathetic person who causes a lot of harm. That is not the will of God for any of us.

Our bodies will die. Greed will kill our souls. Thank God that mercy is also stronger than greed just as life is stronger than death.

Jesus invites us to return our focus to God and promises that this will heal our souls. Jesus urges us to return our focus to loving our neighbors and promises that this will restore our souls. Even if you are the greediest, most self-absorbed person building walls against your neighbors, returning to love is possible. Jesus holds out his hand and says come. The Spirit blows through the wind and whispers come, Being welcomed back by God is called mercy. And this mercy is worth more than all the money in the world.

We are here to love God and each other. Not just in theory but in fact.

This is our lesson, and this is our life.

And this is true no matter how long we live. 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?*