

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: September 23, 2018

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I would like to talk to you about money.

Ugh.

No, seriously, each of us has to talk about it from time to time. We have to talk about it with our spouses or partners (if any), with our business associates, with our children (if any), with our lawyers and financial planners... just to name a few. We have to talk about it because it's important.

It's just that it's different at church. Whenever we talk about money at church, it's this weird thing where we're not supposed to talk about it because we're supposed to be disconnected from money. We're holier than that, right? At the same time, the cultural impression is that money is ALL churches ever talk about because we're secretly con artists suckering the gullible out of all their savings.

And then there's what I call the "NPR" impression of churches and money. That is, people see the church like any other not-for-profit organization that needs its money to operate and therefore has to go through the annual (or semi-annual) agony of the fund drive.

Well, this is one of those "it's all true/it's none of it true" letters. Every priest I know is incredibly uncomfortable talking about money and would rather talk about root canals. That's largely because people think of us as parasites sucking them dry. Which we aren't! At the same time, we're not like other non-profits even if we DO need money to stay afloat. (Just ask the Vestry what we need to keep our vast physical plant running).

But money and Christianity have a more complicated relationship. We have to have and use it in this world, but we are called to have an understanding of its power for both good and ill. We are called to give it the proper perspective. Money is like power, and neither is necessarily good or bad. They are tools to be used appropriately, depending on your priorities.

For the Christian, our priorities are always to further the Kingdom of God. That means to feed the hungry (including ourselves), clothe the naked, house the homeless, and bring delight to those who need a little joy. Neither is something to be held onto as a good in and of itself, nor is it something to be stockpiled. Stockpiling in general is a real impediment to trusting God.

I say this fully aware of the irony I'm participating in. After all, St. James' has an endowment. However, we use that endowment as the tool it's intended to be. We take an approved amount from it to cover some of the costs of operating our physical plant. It does not come close to

breaching the gap, but it helps. Without it, we would have had to either close the church or sell of most of our property. Believe me, when nearly half your land is a graveyard, it's not that simple.

Further, you may not realize that St. James' is not legally allowed to sell any of its land or property without permission from the Diocese of New York. That's how the laws of the land work. So for the foreseeable future, we depend on the endowment to cover what pledging doesn't.

So, there is the practical side of giving: if we want to have Sunday School and Choir and acolytes and Outreach to the community... money is one of the necessary tools we use.

Then there is the part that makes us different. The Spiritual side. No, claiming a spiritual connection is not simply a way to make our need for money sound "holier." It is real. Because Jesus regularly talked about our relationship to those things that make us think we have earned our position, earned our place in heaven, earned God's love.

Neither money, nor social class, nor good works, nor physical attributes do that. We are called to rest, to trust in none of these things but only in the Love of God which is unconditional and meant for all. Stewardship season - which isn't quite here but is coming - is all about putting these things in their proper perspective. The physical stuff gets you by on earth, but the spirit, the nurture of the soul lifts us up to a higher and simultaneously deeper place. Money gives us means - the spirit gives us meaning.

That's why we hold loosely to our money. That's also why we give to the church. We are stewards - taking care of it for God for as long as it's in our care. The most common way we give back what is God's is by pledging. You'll hear about that before all too long.

But there are other ways to give. Planned giving is a common way. That's when you put the church in your will or make some other provision for the future - well ahead of the time you actually give it. The church should always be a part of your will even if it's just a small amount. There's also designated giving - giving toward a specific goal/project/gift. Normally, that's actually discouraged because it's usually best to let go of control and to trust the parish leaders to use their judgment. Sometimes, however, it can be helpful. But if you ever plan on a designated gift, please check with me, the wardens, and the treasurer before going ahead with it. That'll make it much more effective.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Announcements

Graveyard Tours Around the Corner:

This year is the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I - and we are paying tribute to that commemoration with a focus on characters who served in that war. If you haven't purchased tickets already, you should do so now before the limited supply is exhausted.

We need volunteers to act as tour sweepers (keeping any stragglers from falling behind) on the following nights:

1. October 5: 8 p.m.
2. October 6: 8 p.m.
3. October 19: 7 and 7:30 p.m.

Please let Brian Rance (brian.rance@freshfields.com or 917 650 0233) know if you are able to help out for any of these time slots.

Let's make this the best year ever!

Defibrillator Achieved! Thank You!

With the help of some very generous donations, we have now received enough money to purchase the defibrillator! It will still take some time as we put the funds in the proper accounts and then go through the selection process. Friends in the Hyde Park Fire Department have agreed to help with the purchase, so we should have the proper equipment. Very exciting news! After we install it, we'll offer a class for any who wish to be trained.

Episcopal Relief and Development Sunday - September 23:

Our Outreach Committee has designated Sunday, September 23 as Episcopal Relief and Development Sunday. Recently, Episcopal Relief & Development has released their new logo and tag line "to reflect their connection to the Episcopal Church while conveying the strength of their relationships with church partners and local communities worldwide." Their new tag line is "Working together for Lasting Change." As the mission arm of the Episcopal Church, we, as a parish community, will have the opportunity to prayerfully consider making a donation to support the work of Episcopal Relief and Development on Sunday or on the following Sunday, September 30th. Special Offering envelopes will be provided. Cash or checks payable to St. James' Church/memo line: Episcopal Relief. On behalf of all who will benefit from your donation - THANK YOU!

Between Service Classes:

The Between-Service Classes are back! The new series is on CHURCH MUSIC! What is it, how do we do it, what do we love?

September 23 - "Navigating The Hymnal 1982."

September 30 - "Other Hymnals: LEVAS and more."

October 7 - "Greatest Hits of the Hymnal."

October 14 - "Rock Stars of Church Music."

SAFE CHURCH Training:

The Diocese of New York requires SAFE CHURCH training for all clergy and employees of any congregation. It is also **required** for all Lay Eucharistic Visitors. Bishop Dietsche *expects* it of ALL Vestry members, Sunday School teachers, or any volunteers who work with children in any capacity. Bishop Dietsche **encourages** it for all parish volunteers and any parishioner who wants to be further educated. There are two ways to take this training. One is in person: There is a SAFE CHURCH training session on Friday, November 2 at the Cathedral from 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM - I (Fr. Chuck), am attending this to keep my certification up to date. If you want to join me, please let me know as soon as possible. There is a \$30 fee, but I will cover the cost if you choose to go there.

The second way to take the training is online. See me to register, as I am the administrator for it. There are several 15-20 minute classes that you must take and pass a test for it to register. After you have completed all the courses, you will receive a printout certificate.

Women's Tea:

The Women of St. James' are having a Tea on Sunday, September 30 at 3:00 PM. They will be taking over Cranberry's for the event. If you are interested, please contact Patty Glancey or Liz Granados as soon as possible.

Free To A Good Home:

Clarence and Joann Clark have two beautiful handmade Amish rocking horses that once belonged to their grown daughters. The young women have flown the nest, and it's time to let these functional art pieces delight new children.



So if you have kids in the toddler range who would enjoy the simple pleasures, let them (or the church) know! They can bring them to church this Sunday.

LECTOR Training November 17:

If you are a current Lector or would like to become one - and we would love for EVERYONE to join this ministry - the rescheduled Lector Training Session is set for Saturday, November 17 at 10:00 AM. Please see me (Fr. Chuck) if you would like to attend the training. All current lectors are encouraged to attend since “tune ups” are always helpful.

A Plea Regarding Material Gifts To The Church:

Recently, we have received a series of gifts from well-meaning folks. Some are simply dropped off with a note that the church can use them as we see fit.

The reality for us, however, is that it is not possible for us to use most of these gifts. Since we are largely a volunteer organization, very few of us have the time to sort through and seek homes for the gifts. Some of them, intended for Sunday School or the Nursery School can't be used because they aren't appropriate to the needs of the school. We have to trust the teachers to know what they need.

Currently, the garage is stuffed to overflowing with ... well, who knows what? Come Spring, we will have to clean it out and probably throw much of the contents away. Our stage has played host to such gifts as well, which makes it difficult to use for other purposes.

So here is the plea: If you have something you think you would like to donate, please check with Fr. Chuck first. Or directly with a Sunday School teacher or other ministry leader. Please don't be offended if we say we can't use it - sometimes that's just the way things are. Always feel free to ask, but don't be surprised if it's not needed.

Also always feel free to put a "Free To A Good Home" notice in the Epistle - we are happy to do that at any time.

One last word: Sometimes, various parish ministries will put out a request for specific items. If you see such a request, rest assured that your material gift will be most appreciated.

Generous hearts are one of the joys we experience in the church. Let's all work together so that your generous instincts will lead to a positive placement of your material gifts.

Church Climate System Update:

At its last meeting, the Vestry authorized the installation of a heat pump system which should provide cost efficient and ecologically sound heat and air conditioning for many years to come. The contractor is set to begin work at the end of September and has said it should take no more than two weeks, though there is a window of one month. That means at the latest, our new system will be in place by the end of October.

At the same time, the Vestry approved finding a mold abatement firm to review the needs of the church and come up with a recommendation. We are all committed to making St. James' a comfortable and healthy place to worship. Thanks so much for your patience - and thank you for continuing to be patient a little longer!

September 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 NY Lamentation Play	24 Office Closed	35	26 10 AM Morning Prayer	27 11 AM Bible Study	28	29 Regional Council Graveyard Tours Dress Rehearsal

30	1 Office Closed	2	3 10 AM Morning Prayer	4	5 GRAVEYARD TOURS!	6 GRAVEYARD TOURS!
<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. Between Service Classes on Sundays are from 9:15 to 9:45 in the Wilks Room.</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.diocesen.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

- 23 Trinity Church, Garnerville
- 24 Christ Church, Sparkill
- 25 St. John's Church (Getty Square), Yonkers
- 26 Episcopal Chaplaincy at Vassar College
- 27 Trinity St. Paul's Church, New Rochelle
- 28 Diocesan Young Adult Missioner and the Young Adult Network
- 29 St. Michael's Church, Manhattan

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, Carl Levine, 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), 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):	Fred Champion, Edith Kline, Thomas I. Finnigan, Kathy Graff, Stephen Gaulin and Laurel Ardini
Birthdays (this coming week):	William Holland, Stephen Burkhardt, Franklin Santos and Antoinette Horne
Acolytes:	September 23: Riley Hall and Amelia McNamara September 30: Bill Fenwick, Jack Canez and Mattie Canez
Altar Guild:	September 23: Team III September 30: Team III
8 a.m. Readers:	September 23: Lucille Ogden and Sue DeLorenzo September 30: Shannon Butler and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	September 23: Wilma Tully and Barbara Slegel September 30: Patty Caswell and Andy Hall
Ushers:	September 23: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher September 30: Andrew and Tanya Hall
Pledge Clerks:	September 23: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell September 30: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	September 23: Robin Bohlmann, Justin, Danielle, Emerson and Avery Bohlmann; St. James' Church School September 30: Janet Bright, Julett Butler, Kurt, Meg, Alexandra, Aaron and Bryanna Burkhardt
Coffee Hour Hosts:	September 23: Brian Rance, Saira Shahani September 30: The Choir

This Week's Lectionary

Proverbs 31:10-31
Psalm 1
James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a
Mark 9:30-37

This Week's Hymns

Processional: LEVAS 215 - God Our Father, We Adore You

Sequence: LEVAS 189 - Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Offertory: Servant Song

Communion: Taizé: "Live In Charity"

Recessional: LEVAS 158 - Make Me A Blessing

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

"Little Human Things"

Yesterday I was at the diocesan Anti-Racism training required for all clergy and other leadership in the diocese.

One of the exercises designed to show what privilege - or if you will, disadvantage - asked each of us to remain in our pew, take a piece of paper, and get it into the garbage can sitting up front.

Let's try it now. *[all take paper previously distributed and try to get it in basket]*

Yesterday, we all threw our paper, and of course, those of front had a much easier time making the basket than those in the back - even if those in the back were better shots. The first point was simple - if you're born in the majority class of society, you will have an easier time.

It's nobody's fault you were born with that position in society - it just is. It simply shows that where you start out can make it easier, harder or even impossible.

Yet that wasn't the main point. Because the facilitator then asked us to think of how we might have done it differently given that the only rule was to stay in your pew and get your paper into the basket. It took awhile for us to realize that those of us up front had the option of turning around and saying to those in back, "Do you all in back want to pass up your papers and let us in front toss them in?"

Why didn't we do that the first time? Simple: we were all of us worried about getting our own papers in the basket, so it never dawned on us to look around.

This wasn't just an exercise about racism. It was about the sin of focusing on ourselves. On those things **we** want - without even considering those around us.

This is the sin that Jesus dealt with in today's gospel.

Think about what's going on in Mark: Jesus and the disciples have been ministering all over the region of Caesarea Philippi (which is northeast of the Sea of Galilee), when Jesus asks them who people say he is. Then he asks them who they think he is, and Peter - of course it's Peter - says straight out, "You're the messiah."

But RIGHT AFTER THAT, when Jesus starts telling them that he's going to have to die as part of his messianic role, Peter rebukes him.

You can imagine Peter taking him aside and saying, "Jesus! Don't mess around. You're scaring everyone. I mean - I just told you you're the messiah, and now you want to throw it all away!"

Jesus lets Peter have it. "Get behind me Satan," is not something you say casually. Back then, that was serious business. And why is Jesus upset? Because Peter has his eyes focused on little human things, not the amazing, world-changing divine things that Jesus is initiating.

Now, Peter might argue that staying alive is not a little thing, but Jesus is clear that there are bigger, more important things than merely staying alive. Following Jesus and changing the world's relationship with God is one of them because it means putting your life out there not merely for yourself but for those in the world who aren't able.

In other words, your job in following Jesus is to turn around and ask, "Would you like me to throw your paper for you?"

But we are stuck in our little human things. Not only our fear of death of course. Let's face it - if we were Peter, we probably would've done the same thing because we somehow think of death as the ultimate.

So let's think smaller. What are those little things in your life that make you focus on yourself (and here, include your immediate family with yourself) and forget your neighborhood, community, state, country or world?

I think you know the usual suspects: Your comfort, your wealth, your health, your power, your position, your freedom to do whatever you want, the status quo, your safety... Those are the things that we cling to and can't imagine easing our grip on.

James took one tiny little human example in his epistle - the tongue. He said even a little thing like that - when unbridled - can cause incalculable harm. All it takes is one person to say, "I'll say whatever I want, and I don't care what anyone thinks..." to start a fire.

James wasn't a person to bridle his own tongue when he felt it necessary to speak. His point is - look around and see whom you're helping and whom you're harming. It's not all about you.

When Jesus said, "Pick up your cross and follow" - the first step to following was always changing your focus. Because to follow Jesus, you have to focus not on yourself but on him and where he's going. And Jesus is going to the people behind you.

So imagine yourselves with a piece of paper. No matter where you are sitting, imagine that basket up front. Jesus says, without moving, get your paper into the basket. And now ask yourself, What are you going to do? 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?