

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: September 30, 2018

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

#MeToo.

You all know what it means, and sadly, many of you have experience with the sexual abuse with which it is associated. This has been in the public view long before the allegations of sexual assault were brought against Judge Brett Kavanaugh. Women have been coming forward in record numbers well before Bill Cosby was sentenced to prison for sexual predation.

But it is a topic that we ought to address as a congregation. The reasons for this - aside from the obvious, that issues of abuse of power and abuse of our sisters and brothers in Christ are always issues to tackle head on - is because the Diocese of New York is itself dealing with its own #MeToo moment.

At the Priests Conference last spring, which I missed due to my mother's funeral, a series of priests came forward to describe how they were sexually harassed and abused by a bishop who has been dead for fifteen years now, the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore. While I was not there, I have since listened to many of their stories. These were both women and men, and most of them confided that they had never spoken of this abuse before. At first, they said nothing because they were young - often seminarians at the time - and afraid they would lose their chance at ordination or (for those who were newly ordained) lose their positions.

Bishop Dietsche, who by all accounts was stunned by the revelations, immediately called together a Task Force which included many survivors, and asked them to help create a safer, more effective way for people to report clergy abuse. They also created an anonymous mechanism for people to tell their stories (both victims and abusers) - not a legal device but simply a way to tell their story. The Diocesan Convention this November will address sexual abuse, particularly in its liturgy.

Bishop Dietsche is calling this a "season of listening," and while listening is not sufficient, it is necessary. Too often, as we see over and over in the news, when victims of abuse do step forward, they are met with skepticism or outright hostility. "Why did you wait so many years?" comes the cry. Yet history shows that survivors of sexual assault, harassment, or abuse are very reluctant to do so precisely because they know they will not be believed and will be ridiculed by those who would protect the abusers. They are also embarrassed and ashamed because society has given the message that sexual abuse victims are somehow tainted. They may even face danger for saying something, as some receive death threats. There's simply nothing to be gained by stepping forward, so unless there is a compelling reason larger than themselves, many choose to remain silent.

That silence, however, does not make the suffering any less real, nor does it absolve the sin. It eats away at people and robs them of faith, trust, joy, hope. The number of people who declared they were done with “organized religion” in the wake of the Roman Catholic sexual abuse scandals is heartbreaking. Heartbreaking because they were abused and because their relationship with God has been so brutally damaged through the actions of people they trusted (both the abusers and those who covered it up in order to protect the institution).

With Bishop Dietsche’s announcement of the “Season of Listening,” I pray that this institution is in the process of NOT putting its protection ahead of the spiritual and physical welfare of the people who have entrusted us with their care. I pray we will collectively put the spiritual health of all our members ahead of our own institution.

As an individual, as a pastor, as a friend of some who have been abused, I feel the pain and anger they have shared with me. And just to be clear, when someone tells me they have been abused - even if it happened 35 years ago - my default is to believe them. Research has shown that while there have been extremely rare cases of fake accusations, the vast majority are real, and they are just the tip of the unreported iceberg.

Below is a link to the Diocesan working group’s page report where you can also, anonymously, tell your story if you choose. There is a link as well for if you want to report abuse in a more official, legal capacity.

<https://www.diocesenyn.org/ednyfiles/edny-metoo-sept-2018-letter-english/?wpdmdl=43917>

I wish such letters were never necessary, but in all of humanity, sexual predation has been a part of us. That doesn’t make it acceptable, nor should we turn a blind eye to it. All it means is that we may, finally, have found the maturity as a species to address it the way it should be.

I pray it is so.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

Friendly Reminder About Balloons:

This week we had the minor irritant of a helium (Mylar) balloon that had been let loose in the Parish Hall. Small beans, I know, but it kept getting caught in the ceiling fan blades, and every time it did, it made a loud banging noise. It also knocked loads of dust off of the fan blades — not an altogether bad thing but it sure made for repeated clean-ups on the Parish Hall floor. We were also concerned that the string could get wrapped around the fan axle and burn out the motor. It took two days and a lot of work to get it down.

Please remember that helium balloons are not allowed in the Parish Hall. Thanks!

Announcements

Graveyard Tours Coming:

NEXT WEEK! Get your friends to attend! Send out reminders on FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram — even old time email. Tell them word of mouth or with your telephone. Just get out the word because our first night (especially the 7:30 and 8:00 PM tours) could use some more registrations. Help us make this a powerful and wondrous Graveyard Tours.

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THIS YEAR'S GRAVEYARD TOURS

GRAVEYARD TOURS FOCUS ON FIRST WORLD WAR

This year, the St. James Historic Graveyard Tours will be focused on the First World War. I am serving as the "director," which means I've been recruiting and working with the actors to get them ready to perform. I am also a historian who teaches about WWI. In case you are fuzzy on the larger context, forgot stuff that you learned in school, and would like some handy links for getting yourself ready for your graveyard tour, here are two sources that I like a lot, and that maybe you will find interesting. - Wendy Urban-Mead

On the US involvement in the war:

https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/united_states_of_america

An easy-to-follow 12 minute video provides a refresher on the causes of the war:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbwH1ZBnYds>

Defibrillator Achieved! Thank You!

We are now doing the shopping for the defibrillator — we've contacted the Fire Department for help in selecting the right unit. Soon!

Between Service Classes Continue:

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? Our next session looks at some of the other hymnals that the Episcopal Church uses. We'll see what's out there, if anything's familiar, and why we don't use some of them.

September 16 - "Why Do We Have Music?"

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.

September 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1 Office Closed	2	3 10 AM Morning Prayer	4	5 GRAVEYARD TOURS!	6 GRAVEYARD TOURS!

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.

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/>

September

30 Church of the Messiah, Rhinebeck

October

- 1 Episcopal Asian Ministry
- 2 St. Luke's Church, Somers
- 3 Episcopal Chaplaincy at Bard College
- 4 St. Francis of Assisi Church, Montgomery
- 5 St. Francis & St. Martha's Church, White Plains
- 6 Diocesan Liturgical Commission

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 Konyon, 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):	William Holland, Stephen Burkhardt, Franklin Santos and Antoinette Horne
Birthdays (this coming week):	Austin Horne, Bryanna Burkhardt, Daniel Ogden, Aaron Burkhardt, Justin Bohlmann, Ann Dingee and Robin L. Bohlmann
Acolytes:	September 30: Bill Fenwick, Jack Canez and Mattie Canez October 7: Russell Urban-Mead and Braeden Hall
Altar Guild:	September 30: Team III October 7: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	September 30: Shannon Butler and Jim Smyth October 7: Deb Belding and Lucille Ogden
10 a.m. Readers:	September 30: Patty Caswell and Andy Hall October 7: Wendy Urban-Mead and Joann Clark
Ushers:	September 30: Andrew and Tanya Hall October 7: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	September 30: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell October 7: Joanne Lown and Sue DeLorenzo
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	September 30: Janet Bright, Julett Butler, Kurt, Meg, Alexandra, Aaron and Bryanna Burkhardt October 7: Kim, Jack and Matthew Canez, Dean and Patty Caswell, Carolyn Canon
Coffee Hour Hosts:	September 30: The Choir October 7: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil

This Week's Lectionary

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22
Psalm 124
James 5:13-20
Mark 9:38-50

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 654 - Day By Day
Sequence: 404 - We Will Extol You Ever blessed Lord
Offertory: Healing River of the Spirit
Communion: Taizé: "Live In Charity"
Recessional: 707 - Take my life

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Deacon Gail Ganter-Toback

What thoughts come to your mind when you hear the word PRIVILEGE? Do you see privilege through the lens of power or do you see privilege through the lens of opportunity?

Curiosity took me to Webster's Dictionary where PRIVILEGE is defined in these ways: "special advantage, permission . . . the right held because of one's status or rank and exercised to the exclusion or detriment of another. Privilege is also the right or benefit granted to or enjoyed by an individual, class or caste."

During last week's sermon, Father Chuck took us through an exercise of taking a crumbled up paper ball and challenging us to get it into a barrel located in the middle of the church without moving from our location. He reminded us that each of us was born into a specific position, a position we had no control over at the time of our birth.

For this exercise, some of us had the privilege - a special advantage of being close to the barrel. An easy shot into the barrel. Some of us were further away. In order to get our ball into the barrel, we needed support from others. Remember, we could not move. And some of you showed insight in how to get your ball into the barrel by passing your ball to a neighbor who passed it to another neighbor which enabled your ball to finally make it into the barrel.

I spent the week reflecting on this exercise and I've been thinking to myself, if we, as a group, could see this exercise as an exercise on inclusion and exclusion. Were we so focused on getting our ball into the barrel that we did not notice that we who sat in the sanctuary were excluded from the exercise because of our position. A position that meant we were too far away to participate. We had no one to pass our ball to; no real connection to the rest of the group. In some ways, we were invisible.

And I think of how many of God's beloved children who because of distance and their position in society are invisible to us.

In our Gospel this morning, Jesus and his disciples have arrived in Capernaum. During their journey, the disciples had been arguing with one another on who was the greatest amongst the group.

When they reached the house, Jesus sat them down and asked them, “What were you talking about?” Suddenly, a very uncomfortable silence came over them. The disciples were well aware of what they were talking about, a conversation on power - who among us is the greatest. His disciples weren’t seeing the bigger picture of what Jesus had been saying to them on their travels; their only focus was on power and status.

So Jesus being Jesus - a known disrupter of the power structure, picks up a child who was nearby and places the child in the midst of his disciples. We can only imagine what the disciples were thinking, “What in the world is Jesus doing - placing this child in front of us?”

We need to remember that in Roman society, children were viewed as socially inferior - they were the least valued in their communities. Children were vulnerable to the powers to be, often treated as slaves or outcasts. In other words they were basically invisible - their position in society placed them on the edge of that society.

As Jesus holds the child in his arms, he says to his disciples and to us, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

Suddenly one of the most vulnerable people in Roman society was made visible through the single act of raising up this child.

By welcoming this child of God, one of his most vulnerable, Jesus was sending a clear and powerful message not only to his disciples, but to us. He was reaffirming that every person no matter what his/her status is in society, that person is a beloved child of God.

Jesus is challenging us to bear witness to the gospel, to bear witness to justice and peace and to seek out and to serve our neighbors.

Jesus reminds us that discipleship is more than just providing for physical needs. Discipleship involves building relationships and partnerships in finding solutions to problems. It is standing up against human rights violations. It is educating ourselves on the issues that affect us locally, as a nation and as a world community. It is using our voice against the power structures that allow human rights violations and the lack of respect for human dignity to occur. Violations that force our vulnerable neighbors, God’s children, to live under conditions that deny freedom and justice all in the name of power and privilege. Jesus expects us to use our privilege of opportunity to share our gifts that bring love and hope to our vulnerable neighbors near and far.

And we did just that with our support of the New York Haiti Project. We committed ourselves in partnership with other parishes to support the people of Matel, Haiti. One of the goals was to build a school which initially will be used for both the church and the school.

The Good News: The St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and School was officially opened on September 10th. The school has enrolled 75 children in grades K-5. Father Sam Owen, who has been here at St. James’ and is Coordinator of the New York Haiti Project said in a recent letter: “Nearly every child in Haiti realizes that education is the best path out of poverty and they take their studies very seriously.” THANK YOU for your investment in this Haitian community.

Another way in which we can share our gifts of love and hope is through Episcopal Relief and Development. Our Outreach Committee has designated today as Episcopal Relief and Development Sunday and we ask you to prayerfully consider supporting their work and ministry.

Episcopal Relief and Development is the mission arm of the Episcopal Church. They recently brought a fresh new look to their logo accompanied with their new tag line: “Working Together for Lasting Change.”

Episcopal Relief and Development works in partnership with churches and Dioceses. Their approach is Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) That means that Episcopal Relief and Development does not impose a “one-size-fits-all” approach. The focus is on a community’s strengths - its gifts and resources instead of focusing only on needs.

The three areas that Episcopal Relief and Development is currently focused on are issues related to women, climate and children.

Through their US Disaster Program, Episcopal Relief is working with the Dioceses of East Carolina and North Carolina along with the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry to provide emergency assistance to migrant and seasonal farmworkers in rural areas of the states affected by Hurricane Florence. These workers, mostly invisible to the average person, are particularly vulnerable because they depend upon their employers for housing and transportation.

I recently became aware of Episcopal Relief and Development’s work with Syrian refugees. Working alongside Islamic Relief and the Anglican/Episcopal churches in Europe, Episcopal Relief is supporting the work of The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf (and deaf-blind children) which is located in the Zaatari Refugee camp in Jordan. This group works with children with disabilities. Were you aware that under normal conditions children with disabilities are excluded from society? Because of the Syrian War, children with disabilities, along with family members have been forced to move to refugee camps. This forced move of children with disabilities only compounds the challenges these children were already experiencing back home in Syria.

Episcopal Relief and Development helps us to extend our reach of God’s love and hope into the mission fields of our wider world community.

As baptized Christians we are called “to seek and to serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves; to strive for justice and peace among all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being.”

Witnessing to the Gospel is challenging. Witnessing to the Gospel often takes us out of our comfort zone especially when we go up against power and privilege that has been cemented together to create unjust living environments. Willingness to speak out on issues of injustice takes courage.

As a member of the Jesus Movement of the Episcopal Church, let us use our real privilege, the privilege of opportunity to share our gifts each day as we spread God’s love and hope to the most vulnerable of God’s beloved community.

Let us pray:

“Holy Creator, we gather in your presence seeking your wisdom and grace. Open our eyes to all that surrounds us; open our ears to your whispers; and open our hearts to your hurting world.

Inspire us to walk in solidarity with all who are discouraged, lonely, hungry or afraid. Grant us understanding as we strive to live your love in all places of our lives. Empower us we pray, with non-violent hearts, hopeful and compassionate spirits that we may express a holy anger for the injustices in our world as we work for peace.” 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?