

RAQUETTE LAKE CHAPEL



4Q 2022 PASTORAL LETTER

RAQUETTE LAKE, NEW YORK

WWW.RAQUETTELAKECHAPEL.ORG

Bits & Pieces

In October and into November “Sunday Blasts” will look at the Book of Job, a fitting end to our Wisdom study.

In November we begin the Christian New Year season, Advent, the weeks before the birth of Christ. We plan to have a Christmas Eve Service this year at the Chapel!

We had an amazing summer church season this year!

Many people returned to the Chapel after being away for years and renewed old acquaintances. Our mailing list has grown.

All of this could not be possible without the Chapel members, Trustees, and officers. Thank you all!

MAKING PLANS AND BUILDING ON SAND

Friends of Raquette Lake Chapel,

Only a few weeks ago we read and heard the Bible quotations you see here (James and Luke) and preached in a summer sermon. Little did I know then that Maggie’s and I would experience these firsthand!

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. (James 4:13-14, NIV)

Making Plans: Do you ever make plans? Of course, you do! We all do. What kind of plans do we make? Daily, weekly, monthly, yearly? The Book of Proverbs has a lot to say about the wisdom of planning. For instance, “We should make plans – counting on God to direct us” (16:9).

During the summer Maggie and I planned our fall vacation to the Atlantic coast of Florida. A week or so driving south in our travel trailer and visiting sites along the way, three weeks in a Florida timeshare, and finally the trek back home before the end of October to beat the first snowfall in the Adirondacks.

Good planning, checking road routes, weather reports... Before leaving for Florida, we saw there was a weather feature called “depression #9” forming in the Caribbean south of the Gulf of Mexico. We knew some rain was forecast for the first few days of our stay in Florida, but it was just “normal rain.” As days went by, the “depression” became the hurricane named Ian, predicated to be a major hurricane heading for the west coast of Florida. (What did James warn us about making plans?





Category 4 Hurricane Ian: I couldn't help recalling...

...the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed, and its destruction was complete.” (Luke 6:49, NIV)

Hurricane Ian has hit landfall three times as of October 1: Cuba, the west coast of Florida and across Florida, South Carolina. Lives are lost and property severely damaged.

We can't fault people who build on sand in Florida – it's all sand. Those who build structures anywhere on the Atlantic Coast know what may lie ahead for them: storms, floods, wind, severe weather in general. People in Florida know the risks and adopt building architectures which provide as much protection as possible. But, of course, the forces of nature seem to overcome all. (By the way Maggie and I did have to evacuate for three days, but we suffered no injury or property damage.)

Already people are arguing. In the New York Times articles about help needed in Florida and soon needed in South Carolina have strings of comments like “You didn't help us with Hurricane Sandy, so we aren't going to help you with Ian!” And on and on ... Seriously? I've never met anyone who built a house to live in that didn't do the best job possible for themselves and their families. If it was built on Florida sand, it was the best house that could be built in those circumstances. With the hurricanes that plague the oceans, even a house built on rock won't survive. Jesus taught us that when someone needs help, we help them. Period. End of story.

Through all this architecture is not the point, is it? How we live in community with each other on a rock, guided by God, is what the Gospel urges us to do.

The Wisdom in All of This? Our lives are short, and our time is a blessing. As we “live and move and have our being” on this earth, circumstances may derail our plans and lives with God. Yet, no matter what happens, we should look to God for what we ought to do. James 4:17 is unambiguous about this: “If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.” And our rock? The life and teaching of Jesus, and our redemption by His death.

We can't let the shortness of our lives – and derailed plans and houses that get destroyed – stop us from being a blessing to others. If our lives are not where or what we think they should be, don't let that stop us from caring and loving and forgiving and motivating others, being guided by God.

At this point, the question I want you to think about is, “What or who drives your plans?” Are you the driving force behind your plans, and if so, how does God's wisdom and direction affect and guide the plans you make and communities you build? How does God's wisdom and guidance influence our reactions to those in need? And if we sometimes feel dissatisfaction, maybe it is because our plans aren't what God wants us to do. (Hey – we've been there!)

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. (James 2:8, NIV)

Please keep your prayers Dawn, Bill, Margo, and those suffering from hurricane Ian; special prayers in memory of long-ago friends who have died. Blessings to all!

Have a blessed fall and winter! - Vance