



## September 4, 2022

# Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

### **James' Last Words of Wisdom**

*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." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil (James 4:13-16, NIV, Sunday's Scripture Reading)*

*Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well... (James 5:13-15, NIV)*

### **Harvesting the Wisdom in James 4:11 Through 5:15**

The two passages above are just a few of the "wisdom texts" in the last chapters of James. These last chapters can be difficult to navigate due to the chapter breaks and the inclusion of different – and unrelated – themes. Yet, we can break it into pieces this way:

- slander and judging (4:11-12);
- failure to acknowledge God at work (4:13-17);
- using wealth to oppress others (5:1-6);
- patience in suffering (5:7-11);
- no swearing allowed (5:12); and
- a call to prayer on all occasions (5:13-15).



*When all is said and done, James' message is a broad warning against human arrogance!*

### **Human Arrogance Exposed**

We have read throughout James how the wisdom and works of the world and those of heavenly origin are at odds with each other. It is up to us to be mindful of this. If we catch ourselves judging others, we are reminded who the ultimate judge is...and it's not us! When we pray, we need to pray in thanksgiving as well as in petition to God. Prayer is a gift to us to help us draw nearer to God.

We can harvest similar heavenly wisdom from each of these themes, being cautious that we are not over-simplistic. A good example is making plans. We can't sit back and say, "God will make this happen, and we don't need to lift a finger." That's called "magic," not faith...and the exercise of this attitude does not build a healthy relationship with God or each other. The members of our community and we ourselves have been gifted with talents by the grace of God, and we are expected to use those talents wisely AND in cooperation with others so that we build up and not tear down.

**Let us keep in our prayers:** the soul of Donna (formerly of Saranac Lake); Fay's recovery from surgery; Bill facing upcoming surgery; Dawn's upcoming surgery and recovery; all the students going back to school and their teachers; continued prayers for those suffering from extreme weather (Pakistan, Mississippi, California); those suffering from violence; all who are suffering from disease and hunger; pray for ourselves as we continue to seek and live by Wisdom. Lord, hear our prayer!