

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: January 7, 2018

First Sunday after the Epiphany

Bible Verse

"And in the temple of the Lord all are crying, "Glory!" The Lord sits enthroned above the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as King for evermore."

- Psalm 29:9-10

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Happy Epiphany! Today (assuming you're reading this on Saturday), is the Feast of the Epiphany - the day the Magi arrived from the East to bless the newborn Christ and offer him gifts. These wise men from far away, from non-Jewish countries, serve a couple of important functions for us.

First, they remind us that God's grace, peace, mercy, and love are intended for all people everywhere. Though scripture doesn't tell us what countries they're from, tradition has them coming from all corners - because God's love extends to all corners.

Second, they brought gifts that told hinted at the future ministry this infant would have.

Gold as a sign of his divine royalty. He is the Son of God

Frankincense as a sign of the holiness of his mission, of his bond with God the father, and of his call to bring us closer to God, incense symbolizing our prayers ascending to God.

Myrrh, an ointment for anointing the dead, as a sign of what Jesus would sacrifice in order to save us.

Even though it is Epiphany, and the season of Epiphany lasts through mid-February this year, there are a couple of unusual things to pay attention to. For example, traditionally, we have an Epiphany pageant at this time. Not this year. We just weren't able to get the cast together in time.

Also, this Sunday, while we'll acknowledge Epiphany and the coming of the Wise Men, it is primarily the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, so that's where our focus will be. It's a little tricky, observing two important feast days at the same time, but that's the situation.

And here's one more thing - not exactly a difference, just a tradition we rarely observe but one that I hold out to you as an offer.

During the week following January 6, it is common for the priest of the parish to visit homes (where invited) to offer a blessing. There's even a liturgy for it. I might want to fudge on the timing of this a little since I have to be out of town next Friday and Saturday, but the idea is a good one, and

4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park NY 12538 T 845-229-2820 F 845-229-5293

W www.stjameshydepark.org E stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org

f at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/22692330307>

there's no reason we can't extend this out a couple of weeks. So, if you want the house blessing of Epiphany, call me, and we'll find a time that works.

Epiphany is that season when we remind ourselves that Christ is not for us alone - that God is revealed to all the world, and that those who reach out to others - all others - in love are doing the will of God. Let us observe this graceful season by recognizing Christ's love wherever we go, whatever we do, whomever we meet.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

PLEDGE CARDS, YEAR-END GIFTS, AND PLANNED GIVING:

Once again, I am thankful for those of you who have turned in your pledge cards, and I encourage everyone else to do so. If you need a card, you can print this one below or pick one up in the church office.

There are other ways you can contribute to the ministry of the church, and we have not given them the attention they deserve. First, in addition to your annual pledge, you can make a one-time, year-end gift to the church which may help with your taxes. Second, you can put the church in your will as you plan for the future. Talk with your lawyer about how you can do it. Ours is an endless, eternal ministry and requires long-term planning. Thank you again for making this church a part of your ministry. We need each other if we are to be the Beloved Community.

Announcements

Between-Service Class Resumes:

We had a nice break, but now it's time to get back to class. The Between-Service Class starts back up this Sunday, January 7. As always, classes take place in the Wilks Room from 9:15 to 9:45. This week's miracle: The Healing of an Official's Son.

Annual Meeting Announced:

Notice is given of the Annual Meeting of St. James' Parish in Hyde Park. The meeting will take place on Sunday, January 28 immediately following a 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist. The Annual Meeting is a meeting of the entire parish where reports of the year's activities are given and a vision and plan for the future is laid out. Members of the Vestry are also elected at the Annual Meeting. Eligible voters are those members of St. James' who are at least 18 years old and have been faithful in worship and giving over the past twelve months.

Inquirers Class This Week:

We begin an exploration of the scriptures. Next class, Wednesday, January 10, will be a look at the Old Testament. Class begins at 7:00 PM. All are welcome to join us for one session - or for the entire series!

Are You Getting the Episcopal New Yorker?

If you're not receiving the *Episcopal New Yorker*, the quarterly magazine of our Diocese, email Andrew Gary at agary@dioceseny.org with your name, mailing address, and the name of the congregation where you are a member. You'll receive the newspaper four times per year. It's that simple to keep up on news of the Diocese and read Engaging yet challenging articles about our faith.

Become An Acolyte:

Whatever your age, if you want to become an acolyte, we will make a place for you. If you attend Sunday School, we will work to make sure you don't miss too much!



A
New York
Lamentation

A Play About Slavery in New York

Presented by

The Episcopal Diocese of New York
As it observes a *Year Of Lamentation* for
the Church's culpibility in the
enslavement of God's children

Performances

January 21, Christ Church, Staten Island

March 4, Christ Church, Poughkeepsie

September 23, St. Philip's, Harlem

October 14, St. Bartholemew's, White Plains

All performances begin at 3:00 PM

The Churches of the Diocese of New York have been asked to be part of this Farmworker Fair Labor Human Rights Hearing on January 17. The hope is that each church will send one clergy person and two parishioners. Please let Fr. Chuck know if you are interested in participating.

Farmworker Fair Labor Human Rights Hearing

SAVE THE DATE!

Join the Justice for Farmworkers Legislative Campaign on January 17, 2018 at 10 AM at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) WELL at the Albany State Capitol for
*A Farmworker Fair Labor Hearing:
An Inquiry into the Ethical Treatment of Farmworkers in the State of New York*

For more information email: JoseChapaFW@gmail.com



Co-Sponsored by Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM)
RMM works for the creation of a just and rural New York State by:
Nurturing leadership, Standing with the disenfranchised and
Changing unjust systems and structures.



January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1 Office Closed	2	3 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Inquirers	4 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	5	6
7 Unction	8 Office Closed 6 PM Women's Group (at Coppola's)	9	10 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Inquirers	11 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures 7:00 PM Fireside Chat	12	13
14	15 Office Closed	16 7 PM Vestry	17 10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM HP Assisted Living Eucharist 7:00 PM Inquirers FARMWORKER HEARING	18 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	19	20 Tentative CPR Course (Time TBD)
21 3 PM "New York Lamentation" 3 pm Youth Group	22 Office Closed	23	24 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Inquirers	25 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	26	27
28 9:00 AM Eucharist/ ANNUAL MEETING	29	30	31 10 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Inquirers			

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/>

- 7 The Episcopal Diocese of New York;
- 8 For a shared understanding of our common life and vocation;
For grace and power to sustain and enliven our ministries; For a spirit of respect and gratitude for one another's gifts and contributions; For deep bonds of affection as we partner in mission;
- 9 St. John's in the Village - Manhattan;
- 10 St. Luke's - Eastchester;
- 11 St. Philip's Church - Garrison;
- 12 Church of the Epiphany - Manhattan;
- 13 Episcopal Church Foundation.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Mariel Carter, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Tedi Kramer, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginerio Milano, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), Pat Rooney, John Ross, 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): None

Birthdays (this coming week): John Golden, Sanjana Shahani, Ryan Seagren and Chris Granados-Kramer

Acolytes:	January 7: Nancy Montero and Jaylen Thatcher January 14: Deirdre Mae Micker and Bill Fenwick
Altar Guild:	January 7: Team III January 14: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	January 7: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch January 14: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris
10 a.m. Readers:	January 7: Wilma Tully and Maggie McNamara January 14: Wendy Urban-Mead and Mike Fenwick
Ushers:	January 7: Bill and Regina Ardini January 14: Patty Drake and Bobbie Wells
Pledge Clerks:	January 7: Joanne Lown and Sue DeLorenzo January 14: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	January 7: Liz Granados, Chuck Kramer, Nick and Chris Granados-Kramer and Tom Greene January 14: Andy, Tanya, Braeden and Riley Hall
Coffee Hour Hosts:	January 7: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil January 14: Jodi Triola and Mike Fenwick

This Week's Lectionary

Genesis 1:1-5

Acts 19:1-7

Mark 1:4-11

Psalm 29

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 119 - As with Gladness Men of Old
 Sequence: 121 - Christ When for Us You Were Baptized
 Offertory: "Baptized in Water"
 Communion: 143 (LEVAS) - Wade in the Water
 Recessional: 135 - Song of Thankfulness and Praise

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Christmas (December 31, 2017)

"Christmas Wouldn't Be Christmas"

Do you like the lights on my tuba? I know, I know, I put them on last year and just never got around to taking them off. And then when I got the tuba out a couple of weeks ago, someone said, "You're going to keep them on, right? And you're going to play on Christmas Eve, right? You always play on Christmas Eve. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the tuba."

Yeah - I wonder about that.

But the next day, I was on YouTube listening to "Snoopy and the Red Baron" - anybody remember that song? In the comments section below the video, about five people wrote, "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without Snoopy!" I saw almost the exact same comments when I listened to, "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch."

Well, I have my own song that I *have* to listen - repeatedly - in the run up to absolutely every Christmas. (Play theme to *The Cinnamon Bear*).

This is the theme song to an old radio program called *The Cinnamon Bear*. It's a series of 29 10-minute-long episodes about a pair of twins named Judy and Jimmy Barton who have lost the silver star for the top of their Christmas tree. The twins tell everyone they meet, "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the silver star on top of our tree."

In searching the attic for it, they meet a real live 4-inch-tall ornament shaped like a cinnamon bear. This bear helps them through endless adventures until they finally - on Christmas Eve - find their silver star.

So, of course, Christmas is saved.

Or is it?

For Judy and Jimmy, their **tradition** is certainly saved.

Traditions are nice. Most of us have traditions that we just **have** to observe?

But did saving Jimmy and Judy's tradition really save Christmas? It's no more saved than when the Grinch returned presents down in Who-ville or the Red Baron shared a toast with Snoopy. Or when I lugged out this tuba and turned on the lights.

Because none of these traditions has anything to do with Christmas, do they? Even without them. Christmas would still be Christmas.

So, what **do** we need for Christmas to really be Christmas? Right - Baby Jesus.

But here's a secret. Jesus just being born doesn't really make it Christmas either. (I know... the nativity scene, the Advent calendar, the Carols...). And yes, Jesus' birth is important. But you know, babies are born every day.

What makes Christmas **Christmas** is that *this* baby is God's Son. And that God chose to become one of us in every way - even to the point of being a weak little baby who has to be changed and fed. Because that means that God has gone through everything we go through in life and knows what it feels like when things are good and when things are bad.

Christmas is Christmas because God wanted to be with us - to be one of us - in order to show just how much we are loved. It had to start with a birth, but that birth was just the beginning.

And remember, Jesus wasn't born in some rich palace where everyone did everything for him. Was born in a barn and had to run away and live as a refugee for his first years. Even when he was allowed to come home, he had to work hard just to stay alive.

And remember, after he grew up - what Jesus taught was that God loves us so much, like the most loving parent you can imagine - and nothing can ever make God stop loving us. That's why he died and rose again for us - to show us just how much he loves us and to show us that not even death has power over God's love.

Without the birth, how could Christ know what it is to be a refugee or working just to survive?

Without the birth, how could Christ teach us about our relationship to wealth and our obligation to those without?

Without the birth, how could Christ feed us and teach us to do the same?

Without the birth, how could he teach us to heal, or have mercy, or forgive?

How could he die and rise again for us?

Without the birth - which is just the beginning, not an end unto itself - there would be no Jesus and everything he did. And then Christmas truly wouldn't be Christmas.

So, if you have your traditions for today (and tomorrow) ... I hope you enjoy them. They are special. But remember Christmas will always be Christmas as long as we have Jesus. Amen.

NOTE: Audio recordings of some sermons are now available on St. James' website, www.stjameshydepark.org Look under "Worship"