

# St. James' E-pistle

## Date of Sunday Service: January 5, 2020

### The Epiphany

#### Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Happy New Year! Happy 12th Night! Happy Epiphany!

Oh, my goodness, there's so much to be happy for — and that's true. We have a joyous new year before us with no shortage of amazing opportunities and gifts. This very weekend, we are having what promises to be a memorable Epiphany Pageant. The Epiphany itself is a huge occasion of thanks because it is God's announcement that we are all brothers and sisters — and the sooner we start acting like it, the better our world will be.

Considering how people used to think of the “other” as inherently suspect, evil even, this is good news. Of course, people still do these things, but God says “Not in my Name.”

We have the start of the new Fireside Chat series on January 16, an exciting addition to our beloved series because it features our own Shannon Butler. We have a large (for St. James', anyway) confirmation class and baptism group preparing for these remarkable sacraments of inclusion. Inclusion and “launching” into new facets of ministry.

We have our Annual Meeting coming up on January 26 — one of the premiere moments in the life of our parish because we worship together, we celebrate together, and we make decisions together. I remember one year when we had some particularly contentious issues to deal with, and it was of all Sundays *that* day when a visitor — a potential parishioner — came to be with us. Afterwards, I apologized to them for the changed time of the service and for the extended back-and-forth they witnessed that day. To my surprise, they smiled and told me that it was a blessing to see the church at work, honest yet still loving. They thought this told them that they had found their church. So yeah, even the annual meeting is cause for celebration

This doesn't meant we don't have our challenges. We DO! Big ones. The Vestry and I have been writing to you for months now about the budget deficit and our need for Stewardship. That has not changed. Although we blessed the pledges the Sunday before Christmas, we still only have about half of the pledges we need.

If you have not sent in a pledge card, PLEASE DO SO! This is the financial life-blood of the church, without which we can not stay afloat. And what we are doing is far too important to not make it.

Each year, people make New Year's resolutions, so I'm going to ask you to make a couple: First, resolve to pledge. Even if you're uncertain of your income stream, pledge something. It helps us know that you're “all in.” Second, resolve to attend church more regularly. It is amazing but true

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

that attendance alone shapes not only your life but the lives of those around you. If ever you've wondered if your presence mattered, wonder no more. It does. Third, resolve to share your faith in word and action. You don't have to knock on people's doors or stand on a street corner to talk about your faith. Living a life of grace and generosity, of giving of yourself, brings people closer to the presence of God — and in doing so, attracts those who are ready to grow closer. Listen to them to know when to speak. Make yourself available and then share your experience. Fourth, resolved to be more aware of your experience. Our faith, which is based on a relationship with God, grows deepest when we work on it in prayer, study, and reflection.

This church is here to help you become richer in God's Spirit and in realizing the gifts you have been given to share. It's a new year filled with new hopes and possibilities. Make the most of it — and help keep the work going.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

### Thought for your week:

**“For outlandish creatures like us, on our way to a heart, a brain, and courage, Bethlehem is not the end of our journey but only the beginning — not home but the place through which we must pass if ever we are to reach home at last.”**

— Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat*

### Worship This Week:

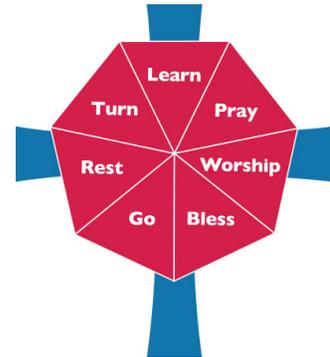
Tuesday	6:30 PM	Evening Prayer (at the Chapel)
Wednesday	10 AM	Morning Prayer (Wilks Room)
Thursday	11 AM	Bible Study on Christmas Break!
Sunday	8 AM	Eucharist Rite I
	10 AM	Eucharist Rite II

**If you have anything to add to the E-pistle, please contact either Fr. Chuck, Dyan in the Parish Office, or Brian Rance. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday evening. Thanks!**

## Announcements

### *Between Service Class - Rule of Life:*

THE WAY OF LOVE classes continue this **Sunday, January 5** with the second half of “**BLESS**”. These classes are open to all, and you don’t have to have been to previous classes. Each session lasts from **9:15 - 9:45 AM** in the Wilks Room.



### *Inquirers Class Resumes This Sunday:*

Busy Sunday Coming Up! Following the 10:00 AM Eucharist, we will have our second Confirmation Class. The theme today: What is Christianity? Please join us if you want to be confirmed, received into the Episcopal Church, or would like to reaffirm your faith. OR if you’d just like to sit in on a class for the fun of it!

### *Bible Study Christmas Break:*

Our Bible Study is taking a short Christmas Break. We will start back up on **January 9, 11:00 AM** in the Wilks Room.

*The Epiphany Pageant is Coming!*

Get ready to enjoy high theater and great music as we celebrate the world premier of this year's Epiphany Pageant, "The Voice." There's Tension! Humor! Drama! Compassion! You will have a heavenly experience! And you'll find it all in the Parish Hall, **Sunday, January 5 at 4:00 PM.**

## St. James' Episcopal Church Presents:



**Sunday,  
January 5**

**4:00 PM**

St. James' Parish Hall  
4526 Albany Post Road,  
Hyde Park, NY

[stjameshydepark.org](http://stjameshydepark.org)  
845-229-2820



**You Are Invited!**  
**Free Admission**

*Fireside Chats Gearing Up:*

Our first Fireside Chat of the Season is **Thursday, January 16 at 7:00 PM**. It features our own Shannon Butler as she addresses the Delanos and the Opium Trade. Mark your calendars now!

*NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING:*

The Annual Meeting of St James' Episcopal Church, Hyde Park will take place on **Sunday, January 26, 2020**. The day will start with a **9:00 AM** Eucharist, then continue with the business portion of the meeting. At the meeting, we will approve the 2020 budget and will elect a new vestry. **QUALIFIED VOTERS:** According to our by-laws, "Persons of the ages of eighteen years or more belonging to the parish, who have been baptized and are regular attendants of its worship and contributors to its support for at least twelve months prior to an annual election or a special meeting of the corporation at which they are in attendance, shall be qualified voters thereat." Polls must be open for at least one hour and will be open before each service. Also, according to our by-laws, "If for good cause, a voter is unable to attend the Annual Meeting, he/she may, within ten days of the election, secure an absentee ballot from the rector. To be counted, the ballot must be returned to the rector prior to the closing of the polls."

January 2020						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>29</b> <b>9:15 AM</b> Between Service Class	<b>30</b> Office Closed	<b>31</b> <b>6:30 PM</b> Evening Prayer	<b>1</b> <b>10 AM</b> Morning Prayer  <b>New Years Day</b>	<b>2</b> <b>11 AM</b> BIBLE STUDY	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> <b>9:15 AM</b> Between Service Class <b>12 Noon</b> Inquirers <b>4:00 PM</b> Epiphany Pageant	<b>6</b> Office Closed  <b>7:00 PM</b> Choir Rehearsal	<b>7</b> <b>6:30 PM</b> Evening Prayer	<b>8</b> <b>10 AM</b> Morning Prayer	<b>9</b> <b>11 AM</b> BIBLE STUDY  <b>3:30 PM</b> READING ADVENTURES	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>

<b>12</b> 9:15 AM Between Service Class 12 Inquirers	<b>13</b> Office Closed  7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>14</b> 6:30 PM Evening Prayer	<b>15</b>  10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM. Hyde Park Assisted Living Eucharist	<b>16</b> 11 AM  BIBLE STUDY  3:30 PM READING ADVENTURES 7 PM Fireside Chat	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 8 AM Men's Breakfast
<b>19</b> 9:15 AM Between Service Class 12 Inquirers	<b>20</b> Office Closed  7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>21</b>  7 PM Vestry Meeting	<b>22</b>  10 AM Morning Prayer	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>  9 AM Joint Service & Annual Meeting	<b>27</b>  7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>28</b>  6:30 PM Evening Prayer	<b>29</b>  10 AM Morning Prayer	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	
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.						

**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/>

- 5 St. Ann's Church for the Deaf, Manhattan
- 6 Church of the Resurrection, Hopewell Junction
- 7 St. Ann's Church, Bronx
- 8 All Who Are Writing the General Ordination Examinations and the Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains

- 9 Episcopal Church Women, Diocese of New York Chapter
- 10 Safe Church Trainers of the Diocese
- 11 Diocesan Task Force Against Human Trafficking

**Please keep the following people in your prayers:**

Vince Asher, Ashley, Joe Baldwin, John Bohlmann, Justin Bohlmann, Fr. Fred Cartier, Patty Caswell, Sue Dingee, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Heather Francese, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), John and Gloria Golden, Kathy Graff, Robert Guariglia, Clifford Hallmark (father of Alyssa Raugalis), Dalton K., Edith Kline, Ashley Konyn, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Lorraine, Joanne Lynn, Jim Lynn (Carol Bender's brother - facing surgery), Doris Mack, Margaret, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginero Milano, Lillian Peralta, 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): None
- Birthdays (this coming week): John Golden, Sanjana Shahani and Ryan Seagren
- Acolytes:
  - January 5: Riley Hall and Jaylen Thatcher
  - January 12: Nancy Montero and Maddie Glancey
- Altar Guild:
  - January 5: Team III
  - January 12: Team I
- 8 a.m. Readers:
  - January 5: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch
  - January 12: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris
- 10 a.m. Readers:
  - January 5: Patty Caswell/Deirdre Mae Micker
  - January 12: Wendy Urban-Mead/Nancy Montero
- Ushers:
  - January 5: Dean Caswell and Audrey Horne
  - January 12: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher
- Pledge Clerks:
  - January 5: Joanne Lown and Sue DeLorenzo

January 12: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass

Parish Cycle of Prayer: January 5: Liz Granados, Chuck Kramer, Nick and Chris Granados-Kramer Tom Greene

January 12: Andy, Tanya, Braeden and Riley Hall, Susan Helper, Pat Holland

Coffee Hour Hosts: January 5: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil

January 12: Jodi Triola and Mike Fenwick

## This Week's Lectionary

Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 84  
Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a  
Matthew 2:1-12

## This Week's Hymns

Processional: 114 - 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime  
Sequence: 93 - Angels From the Realms of Glory  
Offertory: "How Brightly Shines The Morning Star"  
Communion: 92 - On This Day Earth Shall Ring  
Recessional: 99 - Go Tell It On the Mountain

## Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on First Sunday after Christmas

*"The Beginning of Freedom"*

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He came to his own and they did not accept him. But to all who accept him, he gives power to become children of God.

In the beginning... We might as well say that Jesus IS the beginning. Because the word became flesh — and it was only then, when the word became flesh — that the work of that word could begin. Jesus was the beginning of a long work that lay ahead.

Now that we've had Christmas Day and the birth of Christ, we tend to think the holidays are over. We can put Jesus away for another year. Our work is done. But, our faith has always been that Jesus did not end anything. He didn't instantly bring salvation, however you define that. He didn't instantly make life easier for anyone.

Instead, Jesus was the beginning. He was the beginning of our journey, our new life, our work. The problems of the world didn't end with Jesus. But Jesus entered into the problems of the world to plant a seed — like a wheat grain planted among thistles. Jesus entered into a divided, violent world in which few people trusted each other — and instead of fixing everything, he started teaching us how to be mature agents of God's love.

The apostle Paul describes it in his letter to the Galatians sort of like adolescence, the beginning of adulthood — or in those times, the Beginning of Freedom. In those days in wealthier families, children were considered on par with slaves until the age of emancipation, which was just about adolescence.

In the same way, up till the time of Jesus, Paul says we were immature and needed the strong hand guidance of the law. But with Jesus, the core of the law — love God, love neighbor — is implanted in our hearts. Paul implies we don't need more than that to carry on as God's maturing adults.

But like I say, Jesus is and was only the beginning. Jesus didn't stop hatred or crime or abuse or poverty or disease — Jesus initiated us into a new phase of faith. And in the history of the world, 2,000 years is less than the blink of an eye, so we are still in this phase Jesus has begun — this adolescence in which we are learning how to see the world and each other more clearly and act more lovingly.

Jesus entered into a violent world. Whether or not Herod really came and killed all the kids is almost irrelevant because we live in a world — and Jesus entered into a world — where that was hardly unlikely. Yesterday we observed the harsh fast day of Holy Innocents — when the murder of children for political gain was supposed to have happened.

After all that, he had to grow up, take on the authorities and their corruption, suffer, die and rise again. His birth was truly just the beginning of his work.

The world is no less unjust and violent today. Where children are separated from their parents, often never to be seen again. Where children die in custody. Where families fleeing violence are met with more violence. Where homelessness is on the rise and so is ethnic-based violence. We live in a world where violence and imprisonment are a way of life as much today as then. Where a life is still cheap.

And yet, this is the world which God's word chose to enter. And the world did not know him. He came to his own people, and his own people did not accept him. **YET HE CAME.** Not to magically make everything all better but to plant a seed and nurture it. To say to us, You are no longer children — you have been given the only tools you need to seek the life God wants. A life of justice and peace not only for yourself but for the world.

When we talk about freedom in the US, we think about being able to do whatever we want. That wasn't the freedom Paul considered. Or the freedom of the Word becoming flesh. That freedom is having the word so deeply within us that we know God's will without having to be told. We know how to love inherently — because it is part of us.

So really, what John's gospel is saying, what Paul is saying is simple: Jesus came to tell us it's time to grow up.

We live in a world that needs us to grow up. We live in a world that needs God's love implanted in every heart. We don't need more power or money or control over others. We don't need more purity or security. We don't need more laws designed to preserve privilege for some and keep others in their place. That's not the love Jesus planted.

With the birth of Christ freedom was begun, not completed. When the Word became flesh — the freedom to walk as a child of God began. But the walking is up to us.

Nothing ends with Jesus — but everything worth doing begins the moment we let that Word into our hearts. 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](http://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?*