

# St. James' E-pistle

## Date of Sunday Service: November 25, 2018

### Last Sunday after Pentecost (Christ the King)

#### Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**NOTICE: Worship Continues in the Parish Hall.**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I hope you had a *wonderful* Thanksgiving! It is that time of year when we get to sit down together with family and/or friends and consider what we are thankful for. I know I found many things that deserve my gratitude. I hope you did, too.

One thing I am grateful for is this congregation's ability to roll with the punches of life, then roll up your sleeves and say, "Now, what work of the Lord needs to be done?" So even as we worship in the Parish Hall, Thanksgiving baskets were prepared to go out to neighbors in the same hall. And our Nursery School held its craft fair in that same hall, raising money for scholarships for families in financial distress. And the Christmas stars appeared on the Parish House Walls. And AA met, and the Boy Scouts met, and, and, and.

We are learning that it doesn't take all that much space to do big, wonderful and grace-filled Ministry. All it takes is the people of God motivated to love their neighbor as themselves. I regularly thank God for the blessing of working in such a place with such people.

Your adaptability and sense of service will be useful in the coming weeks. We will decorate for Christmas, rehearse the Epiphany pageant (and prepare for a potluck), distribute Christmas baskets, conduct our Stewardship campaign, and have our annual meeting — all in the same space.

But as we discovered, the space itself is less important than the people who share it. So as a last look at Thanksgiving, let me express my thanks for being with you and the work we do together.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

## Announcements

### *This week's Inquirers Class:*

This week, our class is, "What Is Christianity?" A broad overview of what binds all those together who call themselves "Christians". What are their basic beliefs and practices? Are they all really the same religion?

### *Women's Group TEA:*

The December Christmas party will NOT be on Dec. 3rd at Antonella's. There is NO dinner on Monday, December 3rd.

Instead we are getting together on **Sunday, December 2 at 3:00 PM** at Cranberry's for an **Afternoon Tea**. Cost is \$20 which includes tax and gratuity.

The tea is on the same day as the Hyde Park Tree Lighting Ceremony, so we can go as a group to this community event.

We **DO** need an RSVP this time, as well as if you need the gluten-free option. Please RSVP by Thursday, Nov. 29th.

We will still do the gift exchange! Please bring a Christmas ornament or decoration that you have either made, are re-gifting, or purchased for around \$5.



*It's Pageant Time!*

Look for a sign-up sheet this Sunday to be part of the Epiphany Pageant. The pageant this year will be part of a potluck supper on **January 5**. Think of it as holy dinner theater! All are welcome to sign up, and you get to pick (or create!) your role. It's a good time to have some fun!

*Join the Reformulated Graveyard Committee:*

**The Vestry voted at their October meeting to rejuvenate the Graveyard/Columbarium Committee.** There's an important reason for this: The observation or study of graveyard epitaphs and art have become increasingly popular pastimes, especially in the Hudson Valley. St. James' Graveyard has no shortage of interesting gravestones. The Annual Graveyard Tours share our history with the community but the grounds need some tender care and maintenance and mapping to continue this as a self guided tour throughout the year. **If you would like to learn more or volunteer email Vestry member Dan Raugalis at [raugalis@gmail.com](mailto:raugalis@gmail.com)**

November 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	<b>26</b> Office Closed	<b>27</b> 6:30 Evening Prayer 7:00 Inquirers	<b>28</b> 10 AM Morning Prayer  <b>7 PM Vestry</b>	<b>29</b> 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 - Reading Adventures	<b>30</b> FREE PRAYER FRIDAY	
<p>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.</p>						

November 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

28	29	30	31	1	2	3
			<b>All Hallows' Eve</b>  10 AM Morning Prayer	<b>All Saints Day</b>  11 AM Bible Study  3:30 - Reading Adventures	<b>Safe Church Training (Cathedral)</b>	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Unction</b>	<b>Office Closed</b>	6:30 Evening Prayer  7:00 Inquirers	10 AM  Morning Prayer	11 AM Bible Study  3:30 - Reading Adventures  <b>6:30 Newcomers Reception</b>	Diocesan Convention	Diocesan Convention
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	<b>Office Closed</b>	6:30 Evening Prayer  7:00 Inquirers	10 AM  Morning Prayer	11 AM Bible Study	FREE PRAYER FRIDAY	<b>8 AM</b> Men's Breakfast  <b>9:30 AM</b> Altar Guild Meeting

			2 PM Hyde Park Assisted Living	3:30 - Reading Adventures		<b>10:00 AM</b>  Lector Training
18	<b>19</b>  <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>20</b>  6:30 Communit y Thanksgivi ng Service	<b>21</b>  10 AM  Morning Prayer  2:00 PM. Hyde Park Assisted Living Eucharist	<b>22</b>  <b>Thanksgiv ing Day</b>  <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>23</b>  FREE PRAYER FRIDAY	<b>24</b>
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## 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.diocesenyn.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

### November

- 25 St. Mary's Church (Castleton), Staten Island
- 26 All Souls' Church, Manhattan
- 27 St. Andrew's Church, New Paltz
- 28 Christ the King Episcopal Church, Stone Ridge
- 29 St. Andrew's Church, Bronx
- 30 St. Andrew's Church, Walden

### December

- 1 Diocesan Episcopal AIDS/HIV Committee

## Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ashley, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, 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, Joanne Lynn, Jim Lynn (Carol Bender's brother - facing surgery), Doris Mack, Margaret, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginerio 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):	Audrey Horne, Dean Caswell, Janet Bright, Kathie Champion, Bob Seils, Bruce Mackenzie, Evan Weaver, Ingrid Anne Koch Hodgins, Susan Gausepohl and Kurt Burkhardt
Birthdays (this coming week):	Beverly O'Halloran, Melinda B. Harris, Gary Glancey, Hank Schroeder and Lori Rider-Fenwick
Acolytes:	November 25: Bill Fenwick, Jack Canez and Mattie Canez December 2: Russell Urban-Mead and Braeden Hall
Altar Guild:	November 25: Team I December 2: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	November 25: Lucille Ogden and Grant Ferris December 2: Shannon Butler and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	November 25: Eric Zavadil and Deirdre Mae Micker December 2: Russell Urban-Mead and Nancy Montero
Ushers:	November 25: Maggie and Tom McNamara December 2: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher
Pledge Clerks:	November 25: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell December 2: Joanne Lown and Sue DeLorenzo
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 25: Bonnie Foote and David Foote, Jillian Foster, Karen Foy December 2: Mary Gabel and Elizabeth Gabel, Gail Ganter-Toback
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 25: Brian Rance, Saira Shahani December 2: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil

## This Week's Lectionary

2 Samuel 23:1-7  
Psalm 132:1-13 (14-19)  
Revelation 1:4b-8  
John 18:33-37

## This Week's Hymns

Processional: 477 - All praise to thee, for thou, O King divine.

Sequence: 460 - Alleluia, sing to Jesus!

Offertory: King of Glory, King of Peace

Communion: Taizé: Live In Charity

Recessional: LEVAS 76 - Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the morning

## Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

### *"Real Confidence"*

I have to admit something. Lately, every time I get news about how things are going in the church, I cringe a little. That's because it FEELS like the only news I'm going to get is bad news. We're in the parish hall for a third week, and it looks like it could be several more. And this troubles me.

Thankfully, several folks have said to me over the past week that this has actually been a rather nice change, that the parish hall has given them a new way of seeing worship, and that they don't mind. This eases my mind tremendously. Thank you.

And thank you, also, for helping put the lessons in context. Because all of them speak during times where their house of worship are anything but certainties.

Now, the book of DANIEL is a strange one. Not only is it written in two different languages (Hebrew and Aramaic), but it has two distinct sections: One is historical in which it tells the tale of being shipped off to Babylonian Exile. The other is prophetic where he predicts events of the temple in Jerusalem in the future. In exile, he is removed from the temple. In the prophecy section which is today's reading, he prophesies that the temple will suffer the "abomination of desolation." Which was later to be interpreted as a Greek altar being set up in the temple on the Greek emperor Antiochus IV.

[This is the conflict leading to the Maccabean revolt, and many say this section was written much later by someone else, but for our purposes, what's important is that the Temple fails the people, or proves itself to only be a building. And that is the point Jesus wants to make. It's only a building.]

In MARK's Gospel, Jerusalem is under Roman occupation, and here we find Jesus predicting fall of the temple (again). Remember that the first temple had already been destroyed in Jeremiah's and Daniel's day, and that in Daniel's prophecy (which came true) it would be desecrated.

So Jesus is kind of telling the disciples that they should know better than to get too enthusiastic about a building. Even holy buildings will fail them. Then he warns them that people will fail them as well. Remember, this is just a couple of days before the Passover in which he will be betrayed by Judas, and abandoned by the disciples themselves. He knows what he's talking about.

But it's not out of bitterness that he says it. Rather, the point for both Daniel and Jesus is that these failures don't change a thing about God. And it is in God's eternal love that **they** have confidence. Even when things seem futile on a worldly level, God is still the same yesterday, today, and forever. And God's love for us is eternal.

Their confidence is that God will be with us in our difficulties in this life, not protecting us from the slings and arrows, but walking with us. Always. Now that's *real* confidence.

As the author of Hebrews says, "we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus." And let's not forget that when Hebrews was written, early Christians were facing scrutiny and rejection by many in Judaism. Moreover, the letter was probably written just a few years before the temple was utterly destroyed by the Romans.

Yet the author expresses that confidence — that we enter the sanctuary ultimately by the blood of Jesus, not a sanctuary of human design but of God's love. Not by anyone's merit, least of all ours, but by the blood of Jesus — the sign of God's eternal and unconditional love for us.

So the simple point is this:

If our faith in God is based on a beautiful building — it will fail us. Because every building is just a building.

If our faith in God is based on the people around us being good and honest — it will fail us. Because every human, even the best, is still imperfect, still incapable of seeing beyond their own limited views.

Our faith is based on God's being WITH us through everything, And THAT faith strengthens and upholds us here on earth, just as it promises us a life in eternity where — I gotta believe — neither cold nor mold will ever drive us from the presence of God.

## BONUS SERMON

*(On Tuesday, November 21, I preached the sermon at the Community Thanksgiving Service. Here is that sermon on Coming Together).*

### **Thanksgiving, 2018**

#### **"Coming Together"**

First off, I would like to say how glad I am to be here with you. It is good for us to be together to offer thanks to God. The last time I was at large interfaith gathering was at the vigil at Temple Beth El for the victims of the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting. It really struck me when someone there said, "Communities of faith need to be getting together for more than just vigils." I agree. We need to be together more often, And what better time than a time of thanksgiving. *[In fact, you just might want to set another place at your tables Thursday — I might want to come by and be together with you — depending on what kind of pie you got]*

So... Happy Thanksgiving! But I need to be clear about something. This isn't about the Pilgrims. I mean, yes, there **is** something compelling about a group of refugees being welcomed and cared for through hard times by the local inhabitants. There's something in our faith that honors such hospitality to those in need.

But Thanksgiving is actually older than that. Different cultures — certainly throughout Europe where the pilgrims were from — had a long history of festivals thanking God for a good harvest. Usually, it was a church service of some sort.

Of course, that raises the question: **Why do we give thanks?** Is it part of a bargain? We give thanks, and God keeps the food coming? No, that's not how we see God, is it?

Rather, we give thanks because it's good for us. Giving thanks reminds us that we didn't provide all that food ourselves. We **can't** provide that food for ourselves — it comes from God — and that's okay because God provides what we need to do what's necessary because God loves us.

We also give thanks to remind ourselves that we need each other. When we give thanks to God for the harvest, we remember that in order to feed ourselves, it requires countless other people to grow those crops, harvest them, preserve them, package and transport them, and sell them to us — and sometimes prepare the meal for us. Giving thanks reminds us that we are INTERDEPENDENT — that we are not meant to be on our own.

So giving thanks is a communal act. It tells us that God loves us and that we love each other. It tells us that we need God and we need each other. We are meant to be together.

Let that sink in. We are meant to be together.

That's just as true when life is easy as when we have to come together in vigil because there's been yet another violent expression of hatred. Or when we come together to pray for brothers and sisters in California suffering from out of control wild fires.

This is especially true when we live in fear of each other. When we wonder who's going to be the crazy one — even at Thanksgiving, we wonder who's going to bring up politics, and we cringe a little. But that's when we need to give thanks the most — when we don't think we can even stand each other. Because giving thanks is a practical, concrete thing each of us can do. When we say thank you, it's a good first step to overcoming distrust. Jesus says, love your neighbor as yourself — he even says love your enemy — and that seems too hard. But saying thank you — that's something we can do, even in the midst of a fearful society.

**Do not fear, O soil;** says the prophet Joel.

**be glad and rejoice,**

**for the Lord has done great things!**

God's not done doing great things, and for that, we all can be thankful.

And while we're giving thanks, we can remember, like Matthew says, that God has promised to provide what we need for the tasks we've been given. Not necessarily what we *think* we need but what we *do* need in order to do what we're called to do.

Why worry? Says Jesus. Aren't you of much more value than the birds of the air? You are! We all are!

Yet one of the unfortunate truths of humanity is that while God provides enough for everyone, not everyone gets what they need. That's not because of God but because humans tend to take from each other, and the stronger and more powerful we are, the more tempting it is to take from the weak and powerless until wealth is concentrated in the hands of a very few.

And when that happens, we go back to looking at each other with contempt, distrust, fear, and hate.

That's why we need to come together to give thanks. Coming together reminds us that this inequity, this fear, this contempt isn't God's will. God's will is for us to be together, to care for each other, to love each other; to praise God for the abundance and then to share that abundance. And after we help each other, to offer thanks to each other. Because that sort of coming together **is** worth celebrating. It's practical. And it's something we can all do.

I saw a small example of that in the news. There was a girl's volleyball team from the town of Paradise, California that was so devastated by fire this week. The girl's volleyball team was supposed to play in an important game, but their gear had been destroyed in the fire. Still, they wanted to try to play using makeshift gear. But when they got to the opposing high school, they found brand new uniforms waiting for them, gifts from the opposing team. In addition, the town had collected \$16,000 to help out each of the Paradise teams' families. Giving thanks — and receiving it — was good for everyone.

This is how it's meant to be. Giving thanks, allowing others to thank you.

And you know, thankfulness isn't all about stuff. We're in a kind of interesting spot at St. James' right now. We had to vacate the church to put in a new heating system, but in the course of installation, it was discovered we have mold everywhere in the church. So, for the past several weeks, while we get THAT taken care of, we've been worshiping in the parish hall.

Let me tell you, that has caused me some sleepless nights. But then someone said, "Aren't we just so blessed to have this warm parish hall to worship in?" And someone else said, "You know, it's kind of a nice change being in the parish hall — it's so intimate here." And someone else said, "This just goes to remind us that church isn't about a building."

So we gave thanks that we could come together as the community that God intended. And let me tell you, giving thanks for *that* never felt so good.

Because of all this... one of the things I am most thankful for right now ... is you. I'm thankful that you and I are community, that we are dependent upon each other not only to live but to have lives worth living. So thank you for being exactly what God intended.

And thank God for letting us work through this life — the difficult and the joyful, the painful and the sublime, the ugly and the beautiful — thank God that we get to do it all together. 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?*