

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: November 5, 2017

All Saints Sunday

Bible Verse

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

- Revelation 10:11

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I'm just going to say it. Twenty years is a long time.

When I came here in 1997, I would not have predicted being here twenty years later. The average rectorship at the time was eight years. But then, as I've said before, I wouldn't have predicted coming here at all. That was purely the work of the Holy Spirit, and I believe my time here has also been guided by that same Spirit.

Who knows what the future will bring? If experience has taught me anything, it's that we really can't worry about that too much. We address the world and its needs as we meet them. Of course, we plan for the future, but we hold onto our expectations lightly because God just might have another thought for us.

Anyway, I do hope to see a lot of you at the Saturday celebration of our time together. AND at church on Sunday as we celebrate the Feast of All Saints. We will have a wonderful "witness" that day, too, speaking about her experience of God at St. James'. This Stewardship season is all about understanding who we are in God's eyes and embracing our role in the Kingdom of God.

Our role, I'm convinced, is to embody God's love as Christ did. That's not easy in a hard world. And speaking of the hard world, the world as we meet it, I would be remiss to not mention the recent terrorist attack in New York. Yet another attack on innocent people, an attack that gains nothing for the perpetrators and does much to harm the fabric of society.

As followers of Christ, we understand that such attacks have no power over us. We understand that death is not our enemy and therefore cannot be used as a threat over us. We understand that the answer to hate is to love. That is not the same thing as acquiescing to those who would harm others. Rather, it is putting our energies all the more toward caring for those in need, whether it be physical, spiritual or mental need. Reaching out in God's love is still the best response to fear, anger, and hatred.

Over the past twenty years, I have tried to articulate over and over the purpose of the church, to be a place of exploration, contemplation, and challenge, but also a place of safety, rest, and peace. A place where we learn - and then we act. Where we come for rest and, once refreshed, go out into the world ready to see Christ in the face of our neighbor.

Nobody knows how many years we have left together - I would be foolish for even pretending I had an idea. Again, that is entirely up to the Holy Spirit. But then, that's true for all of us. Over the years, many have left who thought they would stay - sudden moves, sudden changes in personal situations, or gradual falling away. And of course, those who have left this world for God's greater glory.

None of us really controls where the Holy Spirit will lead us. All we can do is embrace the life set before us. And that is what I am all about. Celebrating where we've been and looking forward to - well, who knows? We have laughed together and cried together, we have held hands with the grieving and danced with the joyous. Let's continue to do so for the next ... who knows how long? And really, who cares, because we are doing God's work right now. And that's what counts.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

EPISCOPAL VISITATION NOTICE

Every two years, one of our bishops visits St. James'. Typically, at that time, we confirm those who seek confirmation and receive those who wish to enter the Episcopal Church from another denomination.

We just got notice this week that the visitation is nearly a year earlier than expected. Usually, the bishop comes in December. In 2018, Bishop Mary Glasspool is coming in February. **February 25** to be precise.

What that means is that we do not have a lot of time for Inquirers' Classes! SO, if you would like to be Confirmed, Received, or would like to re-affirm your faith on February 25, please contact Fr. Chuck AS SOON AS POSSIBLE so we can set up classes.

Announcements

Men's and Women's Groups:

The Women's Group meeting this month is on Monday, **November 13 at 6:00 PM** at Coppola's. The Men's Breakfast is Saturday, **November 18 at 8:00 AM**. Hope you can make whichever one is right for you!

Run For Vestry:

The Nominating Committee of St. James' Vestry would like to invite you to run for election. From now until the beginning of January, the Nominating Committee will receive names of those interested in serving the church through this important group.

Among the Vestry's functions is to work toward the financial health of the parish, to help guide the leadership spiritually, to consider practical goals, and to make decisions about who uses our space. By becoming a member of St. James' Vestry, you join the ranks of such luminaries as Samuel Bard, Morgan Lewis, Franklin Roosevelt, and Helen Fink. More importantly, you join the ranks of brothers and sisters today who want to help this parish love God and serve God.

New Between-Service Class:

Starting **November 12**, we will have a new Between-Service Class. Called "Miracles", it will focus on one miracle each week - usually one performed by Christ. In these classes, we'll explore what a miracle is, what their purpose is, and how they affected people of the Bible and us. These classes start at **9:15** Sunday morning and end by 9:45. We invite everyone to join!

Newcomers Reception:

Mark your calendars for **December 8!** If you have been at St. James' for a year or less, get ready to receive an invitation to our Fall Newcomer's Reception. This is a time to meet new people, learn a little more about what's going on here, and in general have a good time. If you are an "old-comer," join us to help welcome new members. Festivities start at **7:00 PM.**

Safe Church Training:

Have you had *Safe Church* training? It is a program offered by the Diocese to keep all people safe from abuse of all sorts while involved in our ministries. It deals with sexual and other abuse and helps us avoid questionable situations. The training is mandated for all clergy. It is also required for all lay employees. The bishop expects all Sunday School teachers and youth workers to take the training as well as Vestry and wardens. It is open to all parishioners.

The training is available in three forms: 1) you can go to New York at announced sessions (or an annual one in our region). 2) we could hire a trainer to come to our parish and all do it together. 3) you can take the course online - you have to create an account, which you would do through me since I am the parish administrator for *Safe Church*. If you're interested, and I hope you are, please see me (Fr. Chuck).

November 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Office Closed		1 ALL SAINTS 10 AM Morning Prayer	2 ALL SOULS 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures	3	4 5:30 PM 20th Anniversary POTLUCK
5 CHANGE CLOCKS! Unction 12 Noon Garden Blessing	6 Office Closed	7	8 10 AM Morning Prayer	9 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures 7 PM Vestry	10	11 Diocesan Convention
12 9:15 BETWEEN SERVICE CLASSES START	13 Office Closed 6 PM Women's Group (at Coppola's)	14	15 10 AM Morning Prayer	16 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures	17	18 8 AM Men's Breakfast 10 AM Altar Guild Meeting
19 12 Noon T-Day Baskets/Youth Group	20 Office Closed	21	22 10 AM Morning Prayer	23 Thanks-giving	24	25
26 IN-GATHERING SUNDAY	27 Office Closed	28	29 ALL SAINTS DAY 10 AM Morning Prayer	30 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures	1	2

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. Gregory's Church, Woodstock
- 6 All Saints' Church, Briarcliff Manor
- 7 Church of the Divine Love, Montrose
- 8 Credentials Committee and The Inspector of Elections, Diocesan Convention
- 9 Secretary and Assistant Secretary, Diocesan Convention
- 10 St. Martin's & St. Luke's Church, Manhattan
- 11 Diocesan Convention Planning Committee

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Mariel Carter, Dee, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Cath Holywell (priest in the Church of England and Indaba partner who worshiped with St. James' - undergoing heart surgery), Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Barbara Kubiak (Mother of Donna Tracy-Coffman), Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), Pat Rooney, John Ross, Richard Secor, Sharon Secor (recovering from heart surgery), Karen Shan, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Patricia (sister of Barbara Slegel), Carl Smith, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Healing for Alyssa Raugalis

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):	Michael Fenwick, Sue Fenwick, Sophie Ciferri and Sue DeLorenzo
Birthdays (this coming week):	August ("Bud") Oetjen, Riley Hall and Gwendolyn Cookingham
Acolytes:	November 5: Team 1 November 12: Team 2
Altar Guild:	November 5: Team II November 12: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	November 5: Julett Butler and Grant Ferris November 12: Lucille Ogden and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	November 5: Wilma Tully and Nancy Montero November 12: Patty Caswell and Andy Hall
Ushers:	November 5: Nancy Montero, Anna Marie Pitcher November 12: Andrew and Tonya Hall
Pledge Clerks:	November 5: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass November 12: Joanne Lown and Janet Bright
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 5: Donna Coffman-Tracy, Gwen Cookingham, Kathleen Craft November 12: Charlotte DeGroff, Sue and Don DeLorenzo, Stephanie Dieckler
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 5: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil November 12: Jodi Triola, Michael Fenwick

This Week's Lectionary

Revelation 7:9-17
Psalm 34:1-10,22
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 287 - For All the Saints

Sequence: 658 - Blest Are the Pure in Heart

Offertory: "Blest Are They"

Communion: 189 - [LEVAS] Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Recessional: 293 - I Sing A Song of the Saints of God

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost (October 29, 2017)

"What It Means To Love"

There is perhaps no more frustrating rule in the church than to love the Lord your God and to love your neighbor as yourself. There is, perhaps, also no more abused rule in the church.

I know, I know, that sounds crazy. We are the church. We're all about love or nothing!

I will argue that both of these things are true.

You probably know that when the Pharisees came to Jesus, their request to know the greatest commandment is tinged with a bit of a hope that he'll mess up but also genuine interest. The Pharisees were not universally against Jesus, but they were suspicious, and how he addressed the law was important to them.

So...he answered from the law, and at the very least, it impressed them.

What Jesus did in his answer: you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself - is to summarize all of the law and the prophets, to give the purpose and power of all the commandments, all the laws, all the prophecies that were ever spoken.

If it is not loving, it is not of God. Period.

We all know this.

So, what is frustrating? Where is the abuse?

It is in the way we have either removed the power from it or flipped the meaning of love to harm others.

Let us be clear that the sort of Love Jesus is referring to is not found in a Hallmark card or on a Facebook meme. There is nothing sentimental about it. It is a way of approaching both God and neighbor that is clear-eyed and practical.

In Leviticus, the hallmarks of love are laid out: love is tied to holiness. It means you judge fairly, not siding with anyone because of their social standing. It means you don't slander others, you don't smear their names, you don't publicly humiliate. It means you don't abuse others for your own benefit, treating them as objects without value other than how they serve you. It means you go to someone who is doing wrong or harming others and you work to bring them back - like an intervention.

And it means you let go of your hatred, your grudge, your desire to get even.

This should all sound like Jesus because over the course of the gospels, he says all of this. Which is to say that love is ethics, and what Jesus said was already well-known to the Jews. It is all about how you treat each other. JESUS JUST EXPANDS WHO NEIGHBOR IS.

And why.

We love each other because God loves us. We love God because God loves us. Yes, there is real affection in love. There is real emotion tied to this, but the first part is the decision to love, the practical choice to treat others justly.

What is frustrating is that we as a society have tried to make Love all about romance or make it seem like some squishy, touchy feely thing that has no meaning in the "real world."

Alternatively, we abuse others and call it love. Ever hear that phrase, "Hate the sin but love the sinner"? It is still popular, and when taken at face value, it makes sense. You want to love the person who does wrong, who abuses others for a profit or treats one class of people as inferior to another. But you also want to stop the abuse.

Yet that phrase has just as often been used to abuse others. It was a very popular phrase, for example, in connection with arguments against same-sex marriage.

Going further back, back to the 19th and early 20th centuries, many said they were being loving when they took native children from their families in order to "civilize" them. In fact, we said it was the .christian thing to do when we drove them off their land so we could have it for ourselves.

Which is just to say that we are governed by the rule of Love, but we often choose not to follow it, to bend it to our less loving desires. Calling it love does not make it love. If it leaves others worse off than before, it was not love. If it leaves others diminished, then it was not love. If it is self-serving - other than in the sense that we are all better off in an ethical, just society - then it is not love.

St. Paul in a different epistle than we read today said, Love is long suffering and kind. It is not proud. It's not self-serving, and it is not rude.

I read once that love is seeking the highest good for all involved. That seems to sum up what both Paul and Jesus - and Leviticus - are saying. That is our measuring stick.

Yes, it is frustratingly hard to actually measure love. That's one reason we still struggle with it. And yet you know when someone is being rude or unkind. You know when you are letting resentment

build up and it turns into a grudge. You know when you're seeking the highest good for someone else rather than just what you want.

Besides, though love is difficult to live and easy to confuse or abuse, there is guidance. The church, this flawed institution made up of people who also struggle with love is nevertheless here to help. Because the church's function is to be a place where we work out how to live in God's love. Not just with easy words but in every aspect of our lives. This is where you can go when you find it difficult to love or don't know what the most Loving course of action is.

We may not have all the answers. But we might have an answer you need. At the least, we'll ponder together. So your homework is to ponder love - practical love - in your life. And yes, come see me.

Amen.

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