

# St. James' E-pistle

## Date of Sunday Service: December 17, 2017

### Third Sunday of Advent

#### *Bible Verse*

*"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light."*

*- John 1:6-8*

#### **Pulpit Notes**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I write this today (Friday, December 15) with so many thoughts: The first is, Yikes! I was supposed to have this finished by Thursday morning!

But the second is of gratitude. I celebrate the 27th anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood today. It's no big number anniversary, and to most people it seems like kind of a weird, arcane thing to celebrate, but for most clergy I know, it signifies an important moment on their life. This is a day when our course in life changes forever. Up till that moment, we could always back out, still deacons (I was ordained as a deacon six months earlier), but not likely to make church work our sole occupation. Ordination (to both diaconate and priesthood) changes your life forever. That's why virtually every retired priest I know still serves at the altar and participates in diocesan committees till their dying day.

For me, it has always been appropriate that I was "priested" during Advent. Each anniversary becomes a time of reflection, just as Advent is a time of reflection for all of us. We reflect on how we've been living our lives, how we relate to others, what God is calling us to do, and more. I assure you that today, I am reflecting on what it means to be a priest in general, and to be your priest in particular. As I mentioned before this reflection leads me to gratitude. So thank you for allowing me to be here with you.

Perhaps you can use this Advent for your own reflection. You don't have to be a priest or deacon to know that your life belongs to Christ. You don't have to wear vestments of any sort to find the Holy in the Everyday. All you have to do is hold fast to God's love for you, and know in your heart that you want that love to touch, to infect, everyone else. As the sign in front of the church says, "Love your neighbor (Everyone's Your Neighbor)".

So this week, I'm reflecting. We never know what God will do with our lives or what God will put in front of us at any given time, but we know that God is with us. We know that we, like John the Baptist, are sent "as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe." And that makes our ministries, whether ordained or lay, the best gifts we could hope for this season.

Grace and Peace,  
Chuck +

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

## 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.

### St. James' Episcopal Church, Hyde Park Our Pledge to the Ministry Given Us by Jesus Christ

In support of St. James' and in thanksgiving to God  
I/We commit \_\_\_\_\_ per  week  month  year  
for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in 2018.

I would like to serve the church as a volunteer \_\_\_\_\_  
(please note area of interest)

I would like pledge envelopes

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ingathering Sunday is December 3. Please bring your filled-out card to church that day so we can offer it up to God's service. Or you can mail in your card prior to that at the address below.**

4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538 • 845-229-2820 • [stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org](mailto:stjamesoffice@stjameshydepark.org)

## Announcements

### *Chapel Service:*

This Sunday, the 8:00 AM service will be held at the chapel.

### *Between-Service Class for THIS SUNDAY:*

We are discussing Miracles. This week's miracle will be the **Virgin Birth!** Class is in the Wilks Room and goes from 9:15-9:45 AM.

### *Youth Group Game Day:*

Our Youth Group is meeting this Sunday, December 17 at 3:00 PM in the Parish House. To keep it light for the holidays, we will have a Board Game Day. All Middle and High School Youth are invited!

### *Inquirers Class This Week:*

This week's Inquirers Class will discuss **Church History**. Inquirers Classes meet at 7:00 PM on Wednesday's. Everyone is welcome.

### *Greening of the Church:*

Join us for the Greening of the Church on **Saturday morning, December 16** as we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child. Men from the **Men's Breakfast** (8:00 AM that day at Cranberry's) will stop by to help between 9:30 and 10:00 AM.

### *Christmas Services:*

Join us for any or all of three Christmas services this year! **Christmas Eve**, we have a **6:00 PM Family Service** with blessing of the crèche. At **10:00 PM** we have our **andlelight Christmas Eve service**. Beautiful music will punctuate both. On **Christmas Day at 10:00 AM** at the Chapel, we will have our simple Christmas morning service.

### *Too Young to Acolyte?*

I was at a meeting of other clergy the other day, and they began talking about acolytes. We have had a policy at St. James' of requiring acolytes to be at least 9 years old. Apparently, we are the exceptions. Several churches start them at 4! In consideration of this, I am pondering lowering the age of our acolytes - at least as "apprentices." Let me know if you're interested. We'll work to make sure you don't miss much Sunday School!

### *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).



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 culpability 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](mailto: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.



# December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10 <b>2 Advent</b> 4 PM Lessons & Carols @ St. Margarets	<b>11</b> Office Closed 6 PM Women's Group (at Coppola's)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 10 AM Morning Prayer  7:00 PM Inquirers	<b>14</b> 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures	<b>15</b>	16 8 AM Men's Breakfast 10 AM Greening Of Church
17 <b>3 Advent</b> 8 am @ Chapel 3 pm Youth Group	<b>18</b> Office Closed	<b>19</b>  <b>7 PM Vestry</b>	<b>20</b> 10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM 7:00 PM Inquirers	<b>21</b> 11 AM Bible Study 3:30 PM Reading Adventures	<b>22</b>	23
24 <b>4 Advent</b>  <b>6 &amp; 10 PM Christmas Eve</b>	<b>25</b> Office Closed  <b>10 AM Christmas @ Chapel</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 10 AM Morning Prayer	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	30
31						

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.diocesen.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

- 17 Church of the Good Shepherd, Bronx
- 18 Zion Church, Wappingers Falls
- 19 Church of the Good Shepherd, Roosevelt Island
- 20 Children and Youth Ministers of the Diocese
- 21 St. Thomas' Church, New Windsor
- 22 Church Musicians and Choirs of the Diocese
- 23 Church of the Messiah, Rhinebeck

## 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, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginero 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, 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<br>(this past week):   | Elizabeth Hilton, Skye O'Halloran and Sylvia Erlandson  |
| Birthdays<br>(this coming week): | Aldona Raugalis, Christopher McGlynn, Joanne Lown, Randy Soden,<br>Stephen Foote and Madeline Glancey |
| Acolytes:                        | December 17: Team 1<br>December 24: Team 2  |
| Altar Guild:                     | December 17: Team II<br>December 24: TBA  |

8 a.m. Readers: December 17: Jim Smyth and Sue DeLorenzo  
December 24: Lucille Ogden and Julett Butler

10 a.m. Readers: December 17: Wendy Urban-Mead and Nancy Montero  
December 24: Patty Caswell and Andy Hall

Ushers: December 17: Nancy Montero, Anna Marie Pitcher  
December 24: Bill and Regina Ardini

Pledge Clerks: December 17: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher  
December 24: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell

Parish Cycle of Prayer: December 17: Karen Foy, Jillian Foster, Mary Gabel and Elizabeth Gabel, Gail Ganter-Toback  
December 24: Mary Jo Garlo and Peter Francese, Valerie, Steve and Kasey Gaulin and Steve, Susan, Rebecca, Annabeth and Andrew Gausepohl

Coffee Hour Hosts: December 17: Deirdre Mae Micker, Wendy and Russell Urban-Mead  
December 24: Brian Rance, Saira Shahani

## **This Week's Lectionary**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
Canticle 15  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
John 1:6-8,19-28

## **This Week's Hymns**

Processional: 59 - Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding  
Sequence: 70 - Herald, Send the Note of Judgment  
Offertory: "Mary's Song"  
Communion: 58 - Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending  
Recessional: 65 - Prepare the Way,

## **Last Week's Sermon**

Sermon Preached on Second Sunday of Advent (December 10, 2017)

(NOTE: On Sunday, December 3, I engaged in a pulpit exchange with Mother Megan Sanders from St. Paul's, Pleasant Valley. This is the sermon I preached there. If I can obtain a copy of Mother Sanders' sermon, I'll print it here as well).

*"Repent! (You'll like it)"*

I am delighted to be here today. I realize for you, seeing me here is probably just like any other day when your priest is away and you get a substitute - but for Mother Megan and me, it's like a field trip. We don't get to celebrate the Eucharist and preach in a new place very often - and I've been at St. James' for 20 years, so this is a real treat.

I've wanted to do something like this for a long time, but it was only when I met your Rector that I felt it was possible. She is so open and willing to try something new - and a little frightening - that I knew it would be great. She'd have to be for me to entrust my congregation to her, which is no small thing. And I take her trust in me to be here with you very seriously. So...thank you for allowing me this joy.

But I gotta tell you, Mother Megan and I have spoken about doing this since June and could never find a date that worked. Then when we got a date in November - I had to cancel. I was beginning to wonder if we were ever going to pull this thing off. So when it began snowing... well, I wasn't going to let a little snow stop me after preparing for so long!

Which makes this pulpit exchange a lot like today's gospel. No seriously. In the gospel you've got some weird guy showing up out of nowhere dressed in strange clothes talking about preparing for this person nobody knows when or even if will ever come.

Actually, I have more in common with John than that. He ate locusts and honey, and if ask my sons, they'll tell you that's what my cooking tastes like. Also John was purportedly a member of the Nazarite sect - a religious sect that never cut their hair. And see? I never have to cut mine, either.

Seriously, what John came for is crucial to our faith. But you might be thinking to yourself: "What's he doing in Advent? Advent's all about getting ready for Christmas, the birth of Jesus, and the Baptist doesn't even show up until after Jesus is an adult.

But, of course, Advent is about preparing us for Christ not Christmas - and Christ in every way, not just as a child. Actually, the birth of Jesus wasn't all that important to the gospel writers. Mark and John don't even mention it. They start with John the Baptist. All four gospels have John, so you know you better sit up and take notice.

Which brings us to what John actually did. He was preparing the people for Christ. And the way we prepare is by repenting. Because if we don't repent - and that means to change our ways, not just say we're sorry - how will we greet Jesus when he comes in glory?

Only you know what things you personally need to repent of. But we all have some things separating us from the love God, and Advent is a good season for each of us to take stock of our lives - to see if we are the kind, welcoming, forgiving person Christ expects.

If you're in doubt, you can go through Jesus' checklist to see where you need repentance. Do you love your neighbor? Are you helpful to the poor? Are you welcoming to the alien? Do you stand up for the powerless? Do you visit the imprisoned? Do you care for the sick?

If you're having issues with any of these, John says, "Repent!"

We have private confession in this church, and it is a gift which allows us not only to examine our sins and confess them but to make a plan to do better. I hope you avail yourselves of it because that private confession is grace-filled. Besides, you have a great confessor whom you can trust. I know, because I tried to get her to dish up all the dirt about you all, and she wouldn't do it!

So private confession is good. But every week, we also have general confession. John would approve because he understood that sin is not JUST a private thing. It's corporate, too. A couple of days ago, we observed Pearl Harbor's Anniversary. Today, we observe the world's response to that corporate sin called World War II, and I'm happy to say that Dutchess County figures prominently in that response. You see, today is the 69th Anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The UN Committee that drafted it was chaired by none other than our fellow Episcopalian - and member of St. James', I might add - Eleanor Roosevelt. While we don't live up to its ideals, it is the first document to state that all people on earth deserve to be treated with dignity and grace regardless of their wealth, power, nationality, religion, gender... anything.

Well, maybe not the first such document. There was the gospel. Of course, we haven't lived up to that very well, either, have we?

But don't worry. Not even John did. I mean he totally misunderstood what Jesus was going to do - thought he was going to come in with guns a-blazing and overthrow the Romans. John did not understand Jesus.

But he knew he was sent to prepare us for Jesus. Which teaches us two things. We don't have to understand everything Christ does in order to love and follow him. And... we need to prepare.

So, when Mother Megan returns, call her up and make an appointment for a private confession. I promise I won't ask what you said. And even today, when we confess together, let it be that time of preparation.

This isn't a gloomy thing! John may have been weird, but the preparation he preached was for joy! So let us, joyfully prepare for Christ together. Amen.

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