

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Let me know what you think of this. The other day, I was in a conversation with other church leaders, and a heated debate broke out about the passing of the Peace. Not all were Episcopalians, but many churches have an equivalent to the Peace, so they were invested in the topic.

The argument was about whether or not the passing of the Peace was a good thing. Or to be more precise, whether or not the longer, protracted Peace was appropriate.

You know what the Peace is like at St. James'. While I go up and down the aisle to make sure I say "Peace be with you" to everybody individually, parishioners get out of their pews and pass the Peace with each other. It can take awhile.

Some participants of our conversation argued that there was no need for anyone to even shake hands with their neighbor - it's assumed through the "And also with you." They feel anything more is a distraction. Still others thought it okay for parishioners to shake the hands of those around them but no more. As one said, "It disrupts the flow that we established with the Liturgy of the Word."

Then there were the defenders of the protracted Peace. It brings a joyful atmosphere, they argue. It allows people to look each other in the eye, to personally give peace, to connect at a deeper level. I admit to being in this camp, and when I have worshiped at church's without it, I've always felt a little loss.

To my great surprise, one of the arguments against the passing of the Peace was that it puts off visitors. That is, visitors hate it because it makes them feel uncomfortable. They don't know anyone, and usually nobody comes to greet them because they're too busy chatting with their friends or trying to talk about church work, like buildings and grounds.

To be sure, the Peace is not coffee hour. It is not a mini-Vestry meeting. It is not, as one person put it, "recess." I would discourage anyone from using this sacred time to check whether a bill was paid or a meeting cancelled. Really and truly, the only thing that time is for is sharing God's Peace with each other.

But is this sharing a turn-off? Should we simply say, "And also with you," and move on? How do you feel during the Peace?

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

If you have strong feelings about this, let me know. I am particularly interested in hearing from those of you who are new to St. James'. Did the Peace make you feel included? Excluded? Joyful? Bored? Did you even notice?

This may not be the most pressing issue in the Church, but the Peace of Christ is important, and how we share it shapes how we live out the Gospel. So let me know what you think.

In Christ,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

The News of the Diocese

Convention Note: The St. James' delegation to Diocesan Convention this weekend includes Fr. Chuck, Deacon Gail, and Andy Hall, our senior warden. Please pray for us as we spend Friday and Saturday deliberating the future year for the diocese.

INDABA Guests Need Beds: Now that we have an Indaba Team, we need hosts for one Sunday. We do not yet know which weekend we will be hosting guests from New York City and Region II, but we know it will either be in January, May or September. You do not have to be on the Indaba team to host someone - in fact, there are more guests than Indaba team members, so it is essential to have parishioners put folks up. Please contact me (Fr. Chuck) if you think you might be able! Thanks!

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 <http://www.diocesen.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

November

- 16 St. Thomas' Church, Armenia Union
- 17 St. Nicholas on the Hudson, New Hamburg
- 18 St. Thomas' Church, New Windsor
- 19 St. John's Memorial Church, Ellenville
- 20 Grace Church, Middleton
- 21 The Church of the Good Shepherd, Manhattan
- 22 St. John's Parish, South Salem

ALSO STILL PRAYING FOR ISRAEL AND GAZA:

Let us continue to light a candle for peace in the Holy Land - and everywhere. Prayer is our most potent antidote to hatred.

1. **Candle for Peace**

Please also light a candle on Fridays - holy to both faiths - for Peace

Let us Light Candles for Peace

Two mothers, one plea:

Now, more than ever, during these days of so much crying,
on the day that is sacred to both our religions, Friday, Sabbath Eve

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

Let us light a candle in every home - for peace:
A candle to illuminate our future, face to face,
A candle across borders, beyond fear.
From our family homes and houses of worship
Let us light each other up,
Let these candles be a lighthouse to our spirit
Until we all arrive at the sanctuary of peace.

2. **The Mothers Prayer:**

God of Life:
You who heals the broken hearted, binding up our wounds.
Please hear this prayer of mothers.
You did not create us to kill each other
Nor to live in fear or rage or hatred in your world. You created us so that we allow each other
to sustain Your Name in this world:
Your name is Life, your name is Peace.
For these I weep, my eye sheds water:
For our children crying in the night,
For parents holding infants, despair and darkness in their hearts.
For a gate that is closing – who will rise to open it before the day is gone?
With my tears and with my constant prayers, With the tears of all women deeply pained at
these harsh times
I raise my hands to you in supplication: Please God have mercy on us.
Hear our voice that we not despair That we will witness life with each other, That we have
mercy one for another, That we share sorrow one with the other, That we hope, together, one
for another.
Inscribe our lives in the book of Life
For Your sake, our God of Life Let us choose Life.
For You are Peace, Your world is Peace and all that is Yours is Peace,
May this be your will
And let us say Amen.

*Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum
English Translation Amichai Lau-Lavie*

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

Donate to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: There is an ongoing appeal for donations to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and its Al Ahib Hospital in Gaza. Even after a month, even after the ceasefires, the situation in Gaza is desperate, and the hospital continues to see more patients than it can handle. The hospital is still very low on supplies and fuel to keep the lights on (and medical devices running).

If you would like to support the good and holy work of the Diocese of Jerusalem and its hospital, please send donations to:

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem
25 Old King's Highway No., Suite 13
Darien, CT 06820

Or online at www.afedj.org

Also, Episcopal Relief and Development is gathering funds for the hospital. Donate online at: www.episcopalrelief.org or mail to Episcopal Relief and Development, PO Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058 (memo line: Middle East Fund)

The News of the Church

THANKSGIVING SERVICE: The annual community Thanksgiving Service, held each Wednesday before Thanksgiving, will not be held this year. Too many churches were unable to participate.

HOWEVER, the United Methodist Church felt they would like to offer their church for a Thanksgiving Service on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. They wanted to make sure everyone in town was invited. The service, as in the past, is at 7:00 pm.

Have You Pledged? If you have not had a chance to pledge yet, take heart! You can pledge any time through the year. I promise, we won't turn it away. And as you consider what you gave, consider how it is a reflection of what God has done in your life. As we say each Sunday at the 8:00 a.m. Eucharist, "All things come from thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee."

Pageant Actors Wanted! Didn't get a chance to scratch your acting itch with the Graveyard Tours? Acted in the tours but can't get enough? Here is your chance!

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

We are just now beginning preparations for the Epiphany Pageant - to be presented the first weekend in January (Date TBD). There are a couple of script choices, so some of it will depend on who signs up to act.

We could also use a couple of stage hands, a props person, a costume person and anything else you might think of.

The pageant is not terribly long, and there are parts with a variety of lines (from very few or none to lots). We want children, teens and adults!

So scratch your theatrical itch and be part of the St. James' Epiphany Pageant!



Adult Acolytes Wanted: Without wanting to sound alarmist, we are in the midst of an acolyte predicament. We don't have many. With graduations, crazy schedules and moves, we are down to six acolytes, one of whom has a broken arm and can't serve at the moment. That does not mean we have to go without acolytes. Adults can step forward, too! We already have one adult acolyte currently serving, and others have served in the past. Perhaps YOU can consider becoming an acolyte! It's fun, gets you close to the action, and allows you to serve

God in a new way. All you need to do is contact Fr. Chuck. Hope to see you robed up and ready to serve soon.

Nursery School Craft Fair/Cookie Sale: On November 22, St. James' Nursery School will host its annual Fall Craft Fair/Cookie Sale. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 3:00 p.m. All proceeds go toward the operation of the nursery school including scholarships for those in financial stress.

St. James' Nursery School is celebrating its 51st year of operation this year and has touched the lives of more than a thousand children. Many of them, now adults, have come back to visit and share fond memories of the school. Many of them have brought their own children and now grandchildren back to the school!

And in the "you ought to know" category, the town has implemented a free universal pre-kindergarten program. We were afraid this would draw students away from St. James' since we charge tuition and are not full day. Indeed, two children did try the free pre-K program, but both of them returned to St. James' because the quality and the care are unrivaled.

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

Annual Christmas Cookie, Candy and Ornament Sale: The annual St. James' Christmas, Cookie, Candy and Ornament Sale will take place on Saturday, December 13th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please see the flier at the end of this E-pistle.

Graveyard Tours Videos: Thanks to the hard work, generosity and artistry of Brian Rance, we now have several videos of the Graveyard Tours. There are 50 DVDs for distribution to each family in the parish. Each DVD contains two nights of performances. The DVDs are great for showing to your friends and family when they visit this Thanksgiving!

If you would like a DVD, please let Fr. Chuck know

OR

You can simply watch on YouTube:

The October 18th Tour can be found by clicking on the following link
(or pasting this address into your web browser):

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgErYajv6z1nZoKsg4djhywh_NnS-Gi7M

The October 25th Tour can be found at this address:

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgErYajv6z1keCPb_hT51U8YcNnzWXxYG

There are some different actors each night, so performances will vary.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Susie Buhalis, Jim and Sharyn Burke, Ashley Coyne, Kathleen Craft, Michael Day, Jane Gagliardoto, Kasey Gaulin, John Golden, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Andy Hall, Harold Hall, Liz Handman, Brooke Helton, Rev. Don Hoger, Dalton K., Barbara Knakal, Rosemary Leuken, Doris Mack, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Pat Rooney, John Schroeder, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Debbie Stone, Gloria Veach, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Bobbie Wells, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

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 alright.

Birthdays (this past week):	Katherine Urban-Mead
Birthdays (next week):	Janet Bright, Dean Caswell, Audrey Horne and Kathie Champion
Acolytes:	November 16: Chris Granados-Kramer and Bryanna Burkhardt November 23: Jasmine Thatcher, Charlie Urban-Mead and Jaylen Thatcher
Altar Guild:	November 16: Team I November 23: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	November 16: Angela Henry and Lynne Koch November 23: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth
10 a.m. Readers:	November 16: Wilma Tully/Nancy Montero November 23: Russell Urban-Mead/Judy Douglass
Ushers:	November 16: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher November 23: Saira Shahani and Pat Keefe
Pledge Clerks:	November 16: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher November 23: Paul Littlefield and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 16: Mike, Lori and Billy Fenwick, Grant and Shirley Ferris and Tom, Charlotte and Peter Finnigen November 23: Cathy, Kerry and Brian Flynn and Bonnie and David Foote
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 16: Deirdre Mae Micker, Leslie Quick and Susan Gausepohl November 23: Outreach

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

This Week's Lectionary

Judges 4:1-7

Psalm 123

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

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

Sermon Preached on
Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost
(November 9, 2014)

"Intentionality"

Did you know that if you go to YouTube and type in "proposals," you'll get lists like, "proposals that will make you cry" or "proposal flash mob" or "best proposal ever," or even "proposals gone wrong"? There was the flash mob in the Home Depot, the proposal on the Ellen Degeneres Show, the song and dance by the hopeful groom at Disney World, assisted by Minnie Mouse... And so on. Now WHY people are filming their proposals is a question I don't want to try to answer, but they sure do put a lot of thought and effort into them. And why? Because the proposal is important.

The proposal is important not because it's magic but because it shows intentionality. That's why the ceremony is important, too. It shows that everyone is going into it with eyes open, intending to do this thing called marriage together. Taking it a step further, we have the engagement period not just so we can create some fantasy wedding that can never live up to the hype but because it gives you time to really think about what you're getting yourselves into. To be intentional.

The same is true with confirmation. We just had our last class on Wednesday - confirmation is in a month. When I was confirmed, it was with all the other fifth graders. Confirmation classes were something our parents dragged us to and which meant nothing. Well, for most of them, it meant that once this boring thing was over, they wouldn't have to go to church anymore. That was, of course, wrong.

The whole point of confirmation isn't graduation from church but intentionality. I intend to be a full member, an active member, a minister of the gospel in fact. I'm not just here because my parents drag me. Do the candidates really intend it? Only time will tell. But one of the reasons we have all these classes - aside from learning the things we need in order to be more mature members of the church - is to give time to really consider if that's what we intend.

St. James' E-pistle

November 14, 2014

Being intentional about who we are and how we live is one of the most important things we can do. That's the best advice I think I could give anyone starting out on a new chapter of life. **Mean** to be the person you are, don't just be it by default.

This is exactly what Joshua was saying at the Jordan River when the Israelites were about to enter the promised land. Joshua says, choose now. Make a conscious decision. Either be of the kingdom of God or don't. But for crying out loud, don't just go along. Now, I can't promise that there wasn't severe pressure on everyone to conform, maybe even the threat of death or at least being ostracized by family if one chose differently, but let's assume all things were equal, that choosing one god over another had no negative ramifications. That's the way to go. To choose with eyes open, clear headed. Taking time to consider it all.

Otherwise we DO just go along.

And eventually, it'll catch up with you. Think of the bridesmaids in today's gospel. For some unknown reason, half of them only bring the oil in their lamps, no extra. They haven't given this gig much thought. They're just going through the motions and are pretty sloppy in their preparations. They don't plan ahead and they don't consider contingencies - like, what if the wedding party is late.

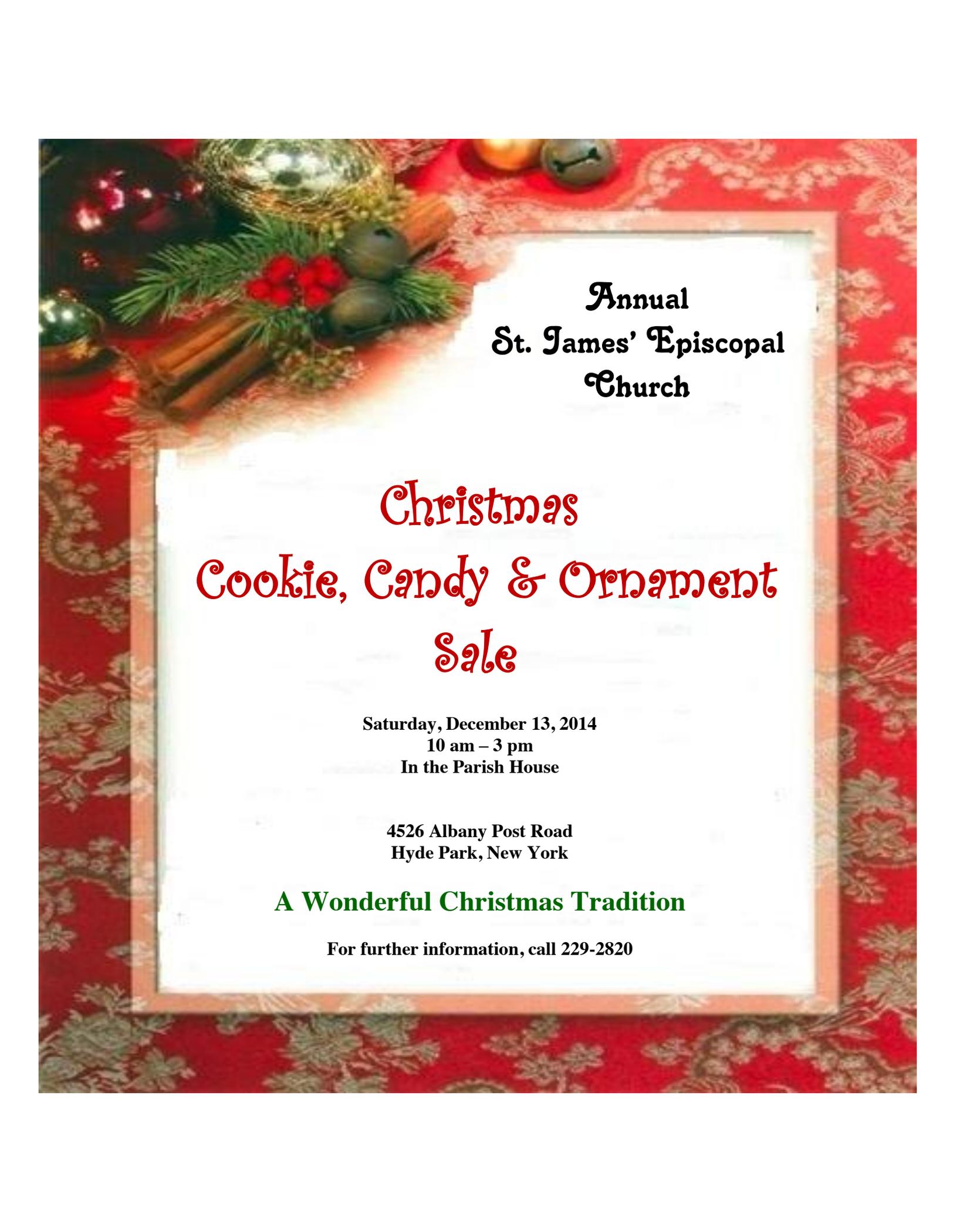
I know we don't do weddings that way anymore, but think of going out to the movies with friends. You get up to the cashier and then reach into your pocket for your money only to realize your wallet's empty. Or that you forgot it. Now, you either have to either borrow from your friends or miss the movie. At the very least, you're embarrassed. It's not a perfect analogy, but Jesus is saying, "This is important stuff. Treat it that way."

As individuals and as a church, we are called to be intentional every day in everything we do. We can't just put up a sign, for example, that says, "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You" and say our work is done. We must invite. We must build trust with the people we want to share our faith with. We must mean it every day and not just throw it out there because it sounds good. That applies to how we invite people whom we invite - do we really invite all? Gay, straight, black, white, Latino? Let us decide intentionally.

Which brings us back to those proposals. You CAN just slip into a marriage without thinking about it. Las Vegas thrives on the 5-minute, not-so-sober engagement where people say, "Hey, wanna get married? Sure, sounds fun." Of course, the track record for long, fulfilling marriages out of that kind of proposal isn't great.

Not that you have to have a dance troop or do it in front of thousands at a ball park. You don't even have to get down on one knee. But to look each other in the eye and say, "Do you want to spend the rest of our lives together?" And to answer "Yes," - that has real power.

And if it has power for two people who just want to get married, think how much more power there is when we ask ourselves, "Is this the God I choose to follow?" And we answer, "Yes." Amen.



**Annual
St. James' Episcopal
Church**

**Christmas
Cookie, Candy & Ornament
Sale**

**Saturday, December 13, 2014
10 am – 3 pm
In the Parish House**

**4526 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, New York**

A Wonderful Christmas Tradition

For further information, call 229-2820