

St. James' E-pistle

November 25, 2016

Pulpit Notes

"He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Brothers and Sisters:

I hope you had a wonderful and restful Thanksgiving. I hope it was filled with food, friends (and/or family), fun, and a lack of drama! I hope your travel was safe and your traffic jams were few.

And I hope to see you this Sunday, God willing. Actually, this Sunday is the perfect end to the Thanksgiving weekend because it leads right into Advent (and yes, a little into Stewardship).

This secular holiday of Thanksgiving, after all, is designed for us to remember what we're thankful for. Of course, we all think of our families and friends, for the leisure time to spend with them, for fulfilling careers, for the food and shelter we take for granted.

But for Christians, there is one thing above all that we thank God for: the coming of Christ and his selfless sacrifice of himself for us. If that is not the center of our gratitude, then something is off.

That's what we celebrate beginning with this Sunday, the First Sunday of Advent. Christ is coming, and we are preparing.

How do we prepare? Back to Thanksgiving, we can prepare by being thankful. Everything we have is a gift of God, given freely, just as Christ is given freely. Preparation requires understanding that we do not earn these things, nor do we deserve them - they are gifts, and we are called upon to value them as gifts of God, and to be good stewards of them.

We can also prepare for the Birth of Christ by welcoming the new into the Body of Christ. This Sunday, we welcome Troy Verven (grandson of Georgia Verven, son of Amanda and Stephen Verven) through the sacrament of baptism. Next week we welcome Kirstin, Georgia and Irene through Confirmation and Reception.

Welcoming into our midst, into a mature understanding of the faith - that is also part of our preparation for receiving Christ who calls us to be a house of welcome.

And one more way to prepare? Seek peace. There's a reason that famous verse from Isaiah (above) is read on the first Sunday of Advent. If we are to prepare for the Prince of Peace, then we must seek that peace where we are. This has been a particularly contentious election season - and it does not show signs of becoming less so.

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Mind you, seeking peace does not mean standing down when you see injustice. It does, however, always mean seeking and serving Christ is all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself, and it does mean striving for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being. That's what we promise at baptism. So when we face off against others with different political, social, economic views - or when we stand up against those we believe are perpetrating injustice ... we do so seeking the face of Christ in those very people and respecting their dignity.

In seeking Christ in all, in serving Christ in all, in respecting the dignity of all, we do prepare for Christ in our hearts. And we believe the fruits of that preparation will be a better world in this life and peace in the life to come. We believe that it is only so that we can beat our metaphorical (or actual) swords in to ploughshares.

We are entering a season of preparation. It starts with giving thanks, includes welcoming, and continues with seeking peace. I hope to see you Sunday as we begin those joyful preparations!



Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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The News of the Church

Fr. Masud Celebration of New Ministry: Fr. Masud ibn Syedullah, who with his wife Janice has worshiped with us (at 8:00 AM) for the past couple of years, will be installed as the Vicar of St. Paul's, Tivoli this **Sunday, November 27, at 5:30 PM**. You are all invited! In fact, it would be wonderful to see good representation from St. James'. Hope to see you there!

Stewardship Gatherings for All: Just one more Stewardship Gathering remains. **Friday, December 9 at 7:00 PM** at the Chapel. Because life is busy, our plan is to keep these meetings to a one-hour limit.

If you were invited to an earlier meeting and were not able to attend, please feel invited to this one! If you have not yet received your invitation for the December 9 meeting, you should get it next week.

When you get your invitation, please RSVP as soon as possible, and please make every effort to attend. It's that important.

Pageant Sign Up Sheet: Believe it or not, we are already making plans for the 2017 Epiphany Pageant. The Pageant will be held on **Friday, January 6 at 7:00 PM**. But we need actors! So look for a signup sheet in the Narthex starting this Sunday. We have speaking roles, non-speaking roles, and stage crew positions. All ages are welcome and encouraged!

Newcomers Reception: Been at St. James' for a year or less? If so, you're invited to a Newcomers Reception on **Friday, December 2 at 7:00 pm**. This reception gives you a chance to meet more established parishioners, ask questions, and have a chance to learn what opportunities are available to get involved. Ask Fr. Chuck or a Vestry member for more information.

Troop 80 Fundraisers: Join Boy Scout Troop 80, which St. James' sponsors, for a series of fundraisers.

On **December 3**, the Troop will hold Pancake Breakfasts at the St. James' Parish Hall. Times are 8:00 to 11:00 - \$8 at the door.

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The Bishop is Coming! Mark your calendars. On **Sunday, December 4**, Bishop Allen Shin will come to St. James' to confirm, receive, reaffirm faith and preach. Please be on hand to welcome our Suffragan Bishop and show him real St. James' hospitality!

Lessons and Carols: Next **Sunday, December 4, at 4:00 PM** at St. Margaret's, we will have the annual celebration of Lessons and Carols. Members of our choir are singing in the combined choir, so I hope you'll want to join us!

Churchyard Committee: Our churchyard committee wants you. The committee oversees one of the most historic graveyards in the region, and is responsible for making sure it is kept up. It handles the sale and digging of graves as well. If you value our churchyard and want it to continue to be a source of comfort whose loved ones rest here as well as historical interest to those who visit, please join our committee. If you're interested, you can contact Carol Vinall at vinehall3@aol.com.

DONATE YOUR IPAD! Please consider donating your old iPad - or any old tablet that can read a PDF file - to St. James'. We would like to have three or four tablets so we can download the digital bulletin onto them and let guests (or parishioners, of course) use them. This is especially helpful to those who are unfamiliar with the liturgy and all the books we use. You should erase everything on it, of course - all we need is a PDF reader and a browser (to download the

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HELP WANTED

URGENT NEED for BAKERS & CANDY MAKERS

Pull out your best holiday recipes and fire up your oven. We are asking you to contribute 10 dozen (2-3 batches) of your favorite holiday cookies or your tastiest candy treat for the Holiday Cookie and Candy Sale on Dec. 10.

Proceeds will be used to provide a holiday dinner and gifts to 23 less fortunate Hyde Park families.

Please sign the clipboard in the narthex indicating what you are willing to contribute. If you have any questions, please call Sue at 266-3196. Thanking you in advance for your help.



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December 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 11:00 Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures 7:00 Inquirers	2 7:00 Newcomers Reception	3
4 10:00 Episcopal Visit with Confirmation and Reception 4:00 Lessons and Carols	5	6	7	8 11:00 Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures Buildings and Grounds	9 7:00 Stewardship Meeting	10 Holiday Cookie Sale
11	12	13	14	15 11:00 Bible Study 3:30 Reading Adventures	16	17
18 12:00 Christmas basket distribution	19	20 7:00 Vestry	21	22 11:00 Bible Study	23	24 6:00 Family Christmas Service 10:00 Candlelight Service
25 10:00 Christmas Day Service (at Chapel)	26	27	28	29	30	31

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Note: On Christmas Day, there will only be one service at 10:00 AM at the Chapel. The main services for Christmas will be Christmas Eve.

Spiritual / educational websites to deepen your faith:

- Acts 8 Movement
- GrowChristians
- Episcopal Cafe (a favorite)
- The Slate Project (not affiliated with Slate magazine)
- Virtual Abbey
- Second Life Church (gives you a virtual church experience if you're into that sort of thing. Fun to look at maybe).
- Inward/Outward (daily meditations sent to your e-mail)
- "Edge of Enclosure" (weekly lectionary-based blog post)
- The Celtic Christian Tradition (via Facebook)
- Anne Lamott (via Facebook)
- Jan Richardson - <http://paintedprayerbook.com> (Especially good for those grieving or interested in women's spirituality.)

The News of the Diocese

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

27 St. Paul's Church, Bronx (First Sunday of Advent)

28 St. Andrew's Church, New Paltz

29 Trinity Church, Fishkill

30 Brotherhood of St. Andrew

December

1 Diocesan HIV/AIDS Committee; All Affected by HIV/AIDS; Those Who Seek a Cure

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2 Metropolitan Japanese Ministry
3 The Church of the Crucifixion, Manhattan

Praying For Peace Everywhere:

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

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,

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May this be your will
And let us say Amen.

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

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dee, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Angela Henry (recuperating from hip replacement surgery), Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Charles Pardee, Clifford Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), John Ross, Richard Secor, 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 alright.

Birthdays (this past week):	Audrey Horne, Dean Caswell, Janet Bright, Kathie Champion, Bob Seils, Bruce Mackenzie, Evan Weaver, Ingrid Anne Koch Hodgins, Susan Gausepohl, Kurt Burkhardt and Beverly O'Halloran
Birthdays (this coming week):	Melinda Harris, Gary Glancey, Hank Schroeder, Lori Rider-Fenwick and Bonnie Foote
Acolytes:	November 27: Team 3 December 4: Team 1
Altar Guild:	November 27: Team III December 4: Team III
8 a.m. Readers:	November 27: Debbie Belding and Thomas Finnigan

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	December 4: Lucille Ogden and Lynne Koch
10 a.m. Readers:	November 27: Patty Caswell and Wendy Urban-Mead
	December 4: Regina Ardini and Justin Bohlmann
Ushers:	November 27: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne
	December 4: Bill and Regina Ardini
Pledge Clerks:	November 27: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell
	December 4: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	November 27: Mike, Lori and Bill Fenwick, Grant and Shirley Ferris
	December 4: Charlotte, Tom and Peter Finnigan, Bonnie and David Foote
Coffee Hour Hosts:	November 27: Brian Rance, Bobbie Wells
	December 4: Audrey Horne, Eric Zavadil

This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm 122

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:36-44

This Week's Hymns

Processional 66 Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Sequence 620 Jerusalem My Happy Home

Offertory Anthem "Soon and Very Soon"

Communion 74 (LEVAS) Jesu, Jesu

Recessional 436 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

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

Sermon Preached on
Last Sunday after Pentecost (Christ the King)
(November 20, 2016)

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"Shepherd's Justice"

Our family has been watching a Netflix series called *The Crown*. It's all about the first years of Queen Elizabeth II's reign. I'm not exactly a royal watcher, but the series is surprisingly good. It really brings out the human drama of being stuck in a role you did not want, a role which controls every aspect of your life and which makes a lot of people hate you by your very existence - because they are subject to you through no choice of their own. In England, at least, that is what it means to be King or Queen.

Today is the Feast of Christ the King. What does it mean for Christ to be King? For Christ to be our King?

Something very different than in England, that's for sure. In the Middle East in Jesus' day, kings had a lot more power. Not absolute power maybe, but they weren't figureheads. They had power to control the lives of those around them, and especially to execute justice. Remember the story of Solomon who was faced with two women who claimed the same baby as their own? How he took a sword and said since they couldn't decide who the real mother was, he'd just cut it in two and give each a half? Of course, one woman cried that she would give up her rights to save the baby's life - and so Solomon knew she was the real mom. That's the kind of justice a king could mete out.

A king could pardon you, send you to prison, enslave you or enrich you. When Christians began to call Christ their King, that's the sort of justice they had in mind.

Funny thing about our king is, he describes himself as a shepherd. A good shepherd. One who gathers his flock together and cares for them, and when even one goes astray, he goes in search of that lost one. That is shepherd's justice.

His justice is mercy, forgiveness, self-sacrifice for those who are lost, who are sinners....

Our king - who is our shepherd - is one who offers himself on the cross in order to save us from our self-imposed exiles away from God. The Good Shepherd who lays down his life that we might live.

Yet, he is our King, and we vow - as we will next week when we welcome a new member through baptism - to follow, to serve, and obey. True, disobedience will be met with shepherd's justice, but we choose to bind ourselves to him. Unlike Queen Elizabeth's subjects, we choose to follow this king who forgives, who heals, who feeds the hungry and clothes the naked, who welcomes the alien and who gives up his own life for his subjects. We choose to follow Christ as our King.

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If not to grow closer to our shepherd, to be more like him, to be one with him, then what for? Why would we not obey? Not follow? That's what we have to ask ourselves.

Because following and obeying will mean taking us out of our comfort zone. Will we still obey? Because it will mean bringing us into conflict with the powerful. Will we still obey? Because it will mean going to the cross. Will we still follow? That's the funny thing about our king who uses shepherd's justice - we get to choose him, or not. While we are all here today, this might be a good time to ask: what do I choose?