

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

### Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

Back in the 1960s at the height of the Cold War and the nuclear arms race, there was an MIT math professor named Tom Lehrer, who had a side job singing humorous, topical songs. They were often political and biting. One of those songs was called, "Who's Next" and dealt with news that China had just confirmed that they had nuclear capabilities.



In "Who's Next," Tom Lehrer asked which countries would be the next to go nuclear. He predicted Egypt would get one to aim at Israel. Israel's response?

The Lord's our shepherd says the psalm  
but just in case... we better get a bomb!

That song speaks to something basic to human nature. We are natural skeptics. True, we can also easily be conned - a psychologist recently noted in an interview on the radio that anyone who knows what they're doing can get large groups of people to believe, say, or do almost anything. That's the bread and butter of con artists and advertisers.

Nevertheless, we have a natural skeptical side, too, and eventually we tend to start asking questions even if we've been duped before.

It seems that John the Baptist's skeptical side was showing in the above passage from Matthew's gospel. He'd been preaching about Jesus, proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, but now he sat in jail, and Jesus wasn't starting the revolution John had expected. So he sent word asking, "Are thee the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"

Most of us don't get to ask Jesus directly - at least not in the flesh and blood sense. We pray, we listen, sure, but that's not the same. Even when we are answered, it's usually nonverbal. This makes it harder to believe, to trust.

And yet we do. We trust.

We don't trust that nothing bad will ever happen to us - we know they will. That's the nature of the world. What we do trust is that through everything, God will be with us, that God will

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

give us what we need to do the work placed before us. That God loves us so much that he would become one of us and sacrifice himself for us so that we could have eternal life.

When Jesus answered John's question, he said, "Look what I'm doing - that's answer enough." What he was doing was healing, feeding, forgiving, welcoming - in other words, the work of the Gospel - the work of God. That's our sign of God's presence - when acts of love and caring are performed, Christ is there.

One of my projects in these days of simultaneous expectation and doubt is to print up yard signs that read: "Love Your Neighbor (Everyone's Your Neighbor)." I have just about secured enough funding to place the order. The idea is that we give them away until there are no more - and our community spreads the message that we intend to Love Our Neighbor, no matter who they are.

That really is the message we are waiting for in this season of anticipation. Isn't it? That God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son in order that we may live. And that we, God's children, may love.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

St. James' E-pistle  
December 9, 2016

**The News of the Church**

# Christmas at St. James'



## Celebrate the Birth of Christ!

### **Christmas Eve**

**6:00 PM**  
Family Service

**10:00 PM**  
Candlelight Service

### **Christmas Day**

**10:00 AM**  
Quiet Communion

(at St. James' Chapel,  
10 E. Market St.)

**St. James' Episcopal Church**  
4526 Albany Post Road  
Hyde Park, NY 12538  
[www.stjameshydepark.org](http://www.stjameshydepark.org)  
845-229-2820

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

**A Note About Music:** For the past five months, Denise Bassen has been graciously serving as our interim organist. She began rehearsing the choir as well last month so they would not be without leadership. However, a long-term injury has caught up with her, and although she toughed it out in order to be here for the bishop, she can no longer put off treatment and has decided she must step away as our interim organist. At some point in the future, it would be nice to formally thank her for her service here but that may have to wait. Certainly, we wish her speedy recovery.

In the meantime, Vera Ewing has agreed to play for us for the next two Sundays as well as at the 10:00 pm service on Christmas Eve. We think we have the 6:00 pm service covered as well but don't want to promise just yet.

At the same time, we are in the midst of interviewing candidates for the permanent organist/choir director position. As part of that process, candidates rehearse the choir so that the choir members can get a feel for them and give their input. We are fortunate that for at least the next two weeks, candidates for the position will be able to work with the choir - so we won't lose much!

We have had a little scrambling, but I want to assure you that the music in our worship is not only being covered but joyfully and beautifully. In the end, it is Christ we praise with our voices and instruments, and that praise will be evident each Sunday and Christmas!

**Come for the Cookies!** And Candy and Centerpieces! Our annual Cookie Candy sale is **this Saturday** and benefits our Outreach ministries. Please join us starting at **10:00 AM** to not only support Outreach but get the holiday cookies you need for your celebrations.

**Pageant Rehearsals Begin!** We are still looking for 1 or 2 more actors for our Epiphany Pageant, Epiphany and the Band. The Pageant will be held on **Friday, January 6 at 7:00 PM**. We have speaking roles, non-speaking roles, and stage crew positions. All ages are welcome and encouraged! So look for the sign-up sheet!

**LOOKING FOR VESTRY CANDIDATES:** The Nominating Committee of the St. James' Vestry is soliciting candidates for three Vestry positions and one warden position. If you are interested in being placed on the ballot at the Annual Meeting in January, please contact one of the following members of the Nominating Committee: Keith Burkhardt, Mike Fenwick, Vince Asher, Andy Hall, Joanne Lown, or Valerie Gaulin.

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

**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](mailto: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 information). Thanks!

### **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.)

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

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

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

Every Sunday, our Eucharists are at 8:00 and 10:00 AM.

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.**

### **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.diocesenyn.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

- 4 The Church of the Resurrection, Hopewell Junction
- 11 St. Luke's Church, Katonah
- 12 Grace Church, Middletown
- 13 Christ Church, Marlboro
- 14 Mission Graphics, Chinatown, Manhattan
- 15 Trinity Church, Saugerties
- 16 Church of the Mediator, Bronx
- 17 Ecumenical Leadership Academy/Academia Ecuménica de Liderazgo

### **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:**

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

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*

**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, 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.

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

### 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):	Ross Eames, Jr., Saira Shahani, Patricia Weber and Elizabeth Hilton
Birthdays (this coming week):	Skye O'Halloran and Sylvia Erlandson
Acolytes:	December 11: Team 2 (Russell) December 18: Team 3
Altar Guild:	December 11: Team I December 18: Team I
8 a.m. Readers:	December 11: Debbie Belding and Grant Ferris December 18: Lucille Ogden and Sue DeLorenzo
10 a.m. Readers:	December 11: Wilma Tully and Maggie McNamara December 18: Russell Urban-Mead and Nancy Montero
Ushers:	December 11: Patty Drake and Pat Keeffe December 18: Nancy Montero and Anna Marie Pitcher
Pledge Clerks:	December 11: Joanne Lown and Janet Bright December 18: Tanya Hall and Anna Marie Pitcher
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	December 11: Mary and Elizabeth Gabel, Mary Jo Garlo and Peter Francese December 18: Valerie and Casey Gaulin, Steve, Susan, Rebecca, Annabeth and Andrew Gausepohl, Gary and Suzanne Glancey
Coffee Hour Hosts:	December 11: Jodi Triola, The Glanceys December 18: Deirdre Mae Micker, The Urban-Meads

### This Week's Lectionary

Isaiah 35:1-10  
Psalm 146:4-9  
James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

### **This Week's Hymns**

Processional: 56 (O come, O come, Emmanuel)

Sequence: 73 (The King shall come)

Offertory: TBD

Communion: 304 (I come with joy)

Recessional: 68 (Rejoice! rejoice, believers)

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

Sermon Preached on  
Second Sunday of Advent  
(December 4, 2016)

"Standing As A Signal"

The Season of Advent is one of those seasons that's packed with symbolism. The advent wreaths, the purple (or blue) vestments, the crèches and all that.....

All powerful.

But I'd like to take just a minute to look at a different symbol. A sign. At the end of the Old Testament lesson, we read about the root of Jesse which stands as a signal.

You see, the root of Jesse is an important sign for Jews of Isaiah's time - and of Jesus' time, too. It is the sign of King David, who is Jesse's son. It is the sign from God that Israel - the people of God - will endure when it seems that nothing is left of the promise of God.

What's more, the root of Jesse is a sign that the will of God will not be extinguished even if it is forgotten at times.

And the root of Jesse is a call from Isaiah for all of God's people to stand as a signal to the world that God's will continues and will continue to be worked out in the world despite all the forces that work against God's will.

If we look a little closer at Isaiah, we'll see what that will of God is that the root of Jesse is standing to signify: peace and justice. The poor will be cared for, war will cease, justice will reign.

But here's the thing about Isaiah. He was writing in a time when there was no peace, when doom was at hand. There were both external and domestic threats. Plus the wild animals, of course.

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

He is speaking words of hope for a time people just aren't seeing yet. He is standing as a signal for what can and ought to be even though it is not yet. The lamb and the wolf will lie down together.

Sort of like John the Baptist, crying out in the wilderness, make straight the paths of the Lord. He warns the people to live lives worthy of repentance, to not just repent with their words but with their actions - to literally change the way they live to conform with God's will. To care for the poor, to seek justice for the disenfranchised, to live in peace with their neighbors.

He stands there in the Jordan River as a sign of God's will, and he does so even in a land where they are occupied by a brutal imperial army, surrounded by collaborators who care more about their own wealth than the health or safety of the nation. He seems so insignificant, yet he stands there all the same.

And he - like Isaiah - calls to us to also stand as a sign. Not a sign that everything's okay - because we know that things are never all okay. There always has been and always will be poverty, war, and injustice in our world. And yet, we are called to continuously stand as a sign that God's will WILL be fulfilled.

We stand as a sign that the coming Christ is the first step toward that fulfillment, but that in the meantime we have much work to do. So we continue to stand.

Sometimes, this means literally standing with others. That's why so many from our church, including the Presiding Bishop, have gone out to the Standing Rock reservation to protest the destruction of sacred burial grounds and the construction of a gas pipeline on treaty lands that could destroy their only source of water.

For a lot of folks, standing like that may seem too radical - too much like Civil Rights sit-ins - where ironically, standing as a sign of God's will meant sitting. For a lot of folks, that's just too dangerous or complicated (since the issues are complex).

But there are other ways for us to stand as signs of the will of God to address the brokenness of the times and yet are within our reach. A couple of weeks ago, I started talking with some of our local clergy about a project I have in mind. It is literally to make signs - a hundred yard signs that read: "Love Your Neighbor: (Everyone's Your Neighbor)". It's not exactly an original idea. Rural and Migrant Ministries have already printed similar signs, but they said they'd be pleased if others took it further.

These signs speak to the unrealized hope and will of God - that we love one another. And in these last few months, it seems that hope is farther away than ever. There have been more than a thousand recorded incidents of racially, religiously or politically motivated acts of violence in the past month.

We as Christians stand against the abuse of others. We stand against the hatred we have seen. We stand against the utter contempt on display. More importantly, we stand FOR God's love, shared with every human being. That's what these yard signs are meant to convey. Imagine a hundred of these scattered through the town - "Love Your Neighbor - Everyone's Your Neighbor." Imagine the positive message we can send to a world so filled with the negative.

# St. James' E-pistle

## December 9, 2016

I am in the process of securing funding for this project right now - so if you want to contribute toward it, let me know after the service!

But even if you think a yard sign is not for you, take seriously the call of Advent, the call of Isaiah, the call of John the Baptist to stand as a sign of the coming will of God. It is not yet realized, but it will be. And if enough of us stand, the world will see it. Amen