

# St. James' E-pistle: **SPECIAL EDITION**

A Letter from the Rector for September 11, 2020

Dear People of St. James',

When I was a (somewhat-anxious) child, I can remember feeling a certain sense of looming global danger. I had heard about this faraway country called "The Soviet Union," which looked like a great sprawling monster on the globe in my bedroom. And if the film "Red Dawn" were to be believed, I was sure we Americans could be attacked any moment if we let our guard down, (children included!). Our way of life as we knew it would be overturned, and we would be joined into that amoeba-like beast as it sought to spread its communist reach around the world. To my mind back then, our fearsome enemy was clear. We knew who it was and where it was located. We knew what it looked like and how its speech sounded. And so, as uneasy as a childhood during the Cold War was, there was perhaps a certain comfort in the apparent clarity of who was on which side.

A couple decades later, I was starting just my second week of graduate school, after having lived two years in the *former* Soviet Union, when the shock of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks struck. Perhaps the most stunning aspect of that morning for me there in Indiana was just how inconceivable the grainy images on my television seemed at the time. The scenes I was watching had simply never crossed my mind as a possibility. And yet, there they were, and I was left scrambling to incorporate this shattering affront to humanity into my realm of the possible. My presumed clarity of who was friend and who was foe, who was weak and who was dangerous, it all went up in smoke.

Nowadays, I've heard mention that the deaths caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States is the equivalent to another September 11<sup>th</sup> attack every few days. As incomparable as the tragedy of that terrible day is to any other experience in our nation's history, I do think the parallels are worth reflecting upon. Like the Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the risks of a global pandemic remained completely off my radar as a threat, until it visited our shores. Like this date in 2001, the year 2020 will again forever change our generation's sense of what is dangerous and what is safe, what is wise and what is foolish, in so many ways.

So, on this day of remembrance for the lives lost and lives forever broken on Sept. 11, 2001, I ask you also to keep in your prayers the leaders of St. James' Church in 2020. Your vestry members and officers are facing great challenges in this season. We are trying to offer the fullest breadth of experiences for members to live out their faith in the midst of an ongoing pandemic that is still a present danger, claiming hundreds of our fellow Americans' lives every day. At the same time, and as if that weren't enough, your leaders also tasked with wisely laying the groundwork now to support our common life and mission throughout 2021, the year when we all dearly hope to return fully together again.

Yes, we all hope and pray that 2021 will be called "the year after Covid-19." But just like 2002 was following the Sept. 11 attacks, the coming year will be one in which our eyes will be open to the realities of our world in a new way. We will never be the St. James' Church that we were before the pandemic struck, and has continued to strike us day after day after day. We will be wounded, and we will struggle for some time to come. But we will also be wiser, going forward. We will be more flexible and resilient. And, I think we will never, *ever* take another passing of The Peace or sharing of Holy Communion for granted again!

As we long for that time to come, I ask your prayers especially for those in our parish who will be working diligently and faithfully all through the coming months to prepare for its arrival.

Let us pray:

*Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, especially for the Members and Officers of our Vestry: Janet Brown, Lyn Meyers, Linda Spaziani, Ryan Beaudry, Susie Sarkisian, Gary Rogers, Jehad Sabbagh, Cathy Blasco, Jeanne Todaro, Deb Kaufmann, Carolyn Flynn, Sandi Nichols, Helena Hawkshawe, and Lew Westfall; that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Dustin+*