

I'd like to take you on a tour of the sanctuary this morning. All things being equal, I'd ask you to leave your pews and walk around with me. I'll let you stay seated, but travel around the room with your eyes as I point out two dozen names that you can find in various parts of this sanctuary.

[At the 8a service, we did leave the choir loft and walked around the sanctuary together.]

Let's start over there in the northwest corner. The window that depicts Faith, Hope, and Charity has the following inscription: "in loving memory of Samuel Anthony Goldschmidt and of Ellen Caroline Chesebrough." Goldschmidt is a German and Ashkenazic Jewish name that goes back to 15c Frankfurt am Main. Based on the biography on Samuel that I found, he seems to have been a Christian believer and not a practitioner of Judaism. He was a founding member of the American Chemical Society and a towering figure in science. The dates for Ellen (and note the window uses her maiden name) is the date of her marriage to Samuel and the date of her death. Samuel is buried in Woodland Cemetery in the Bronx. His brother, George, died on the *Titanic*.

Next is the Abraham Stearns window. Stearns served as senior warden on three separate occasions: for a year in 1835; for another year in 1841; and then for the term you see listed there. One source says he ceased serving as senior warden in 1886, but I imagine the parishioners who commissioned this window in his honor extended the term to 1887, the year of his death at age 98.

I'll come back to the northwest window later. Likewise, I'll come back to the plaque on the candle stand, which was given "in memory of Ralph & Mabel Hill."

The four windows in the narthex celebrate more recent members of the Woodstock community. The one with the cows was given "in memory of Alan N. Mann." Mann was an award-winning dairy farmer. The one with horses was given "in memory of Hon Hugh S Coyle." Coyle was a New York Supreme Court justice. I'm guessing he owned horses and a farm up here. The one with

the stag and doe was given “in memory of C. Wardell St. John.” He was Yale Class of 1911 and dean of admissions at Choate in the 1940s. Perhaps he was a hunter? I don’t know. The one with the skier was given “in memory of Charles H. Kendall.” Kendall helped revive the Woodstock Golf Club after WWII and update, with Laurance Rockefeller, the ski facilities on Mt. Tom and Suicide Six in the 1960s.

Let me continue with the windows, and then I’ll point out some other names. The window at the altar from the Tiffany atelier is “in Memory of The Founder and First Rector of this Church and in Memory of His Wife.” Isabelle Bradley and I mused about why the parishioners chose to spell the Rev. Joel Clap’s last name with two Ps, given that the histories and his gravestone have one P. You’ll hear more about Joel Clap when we celebrate our 200th anniversary in a few years.

Let’s go to the southeast window “In memory of Julia Ann Stevens.” Stevens was Joel Clap’s youngest daughter. The middle window is “In loving memory of Cornelia Bailey Williams.” She was the daughter of John A. Pratt—I’ll come back to him in a bit—and the wife of Edmund Higginson Williams, the second son of Norman Williams. And this window honors George Palmer Williams. Along with Pratt, Stearns, and others, Williams helped to charter St. James in 1825. He was a Sunday School teacher and was ordained to the diaconate. He went on to teach physics at the University of Michigan and is buried in Ann Arbor. Lastly, the two clerestory windows are “in loving memory of Marie Louise Peckham Seagle.” She lived with Goldschmidt and Chesebrough in New York City after her parents died.

If time permitted, I would tell you more stories about these people along with John A. Pratt, who’s commemorated on the rood screen; the Rev. Francis W. Smith, our tenth rector, who’s commemorated on the altar rail; Mary Lavinia Owen, whose children gave this pulpit and that

lectern; Charles Clement, whose name is on the baptismal font; the aumbry, where the reserve sacrament is stored, in honor of suffragist Ann Batchelder; the lights in honor of Ellen Warren Kidder; the spotlights in honor of John Kenneth Mickle; the stone given by Orley A. Whitcomb, the same man whose name is on the Whitcomb Block on the corner of Central and Elm Streets; the organ in honor of Ivan Albright; the altar cross, probably from the original church, in honor of Ludomir Hayden; and paneling from St. Mary Madgalen in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England. There's a plaque commemorating Trinity Episcopal Church in South Norwalk, Connecticut, which was destroyed in a fire in 1976; and a portion of the railing was installed in "memory of Wilfred Rhodes ... given by Margaret and John Rhodes." Then there are several things in the room that don't yet have plaques, but I was here when some of them entered the sanctuary. The presence lamp was given in memory of Tom Hazard. Underneath the altar cloth is an table handmade from cherry wood harvested by Dick Umland. His wife, Bonnie, commissioned the making of the table after Dick's death. She, like I, served as senior warden of this parish, though neither one of us as long as Stearns. Then there's the carillon given by Bruce Dudley in memory of his wife, Fay; the piano from the home of Charlie and Kathy English; and the new Advent wreath stand made by Jim and Sebastian Lorenz. That's over two dozen names!

Our reading from Proverbs says that "a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold." Let's be honest: the windows and furnishings in this room are not inexpensive. We can assess how much they are worth and debate whether it's appropriate for us to be surrounded by so much wealth. But the people I named are honored because, in someone's eyes, they were good people. And we honor their memory by remembering them and choosing to be good people ourselves. For as we heard: Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

James tells us that we ought not favor the wealthy to do God's work in the world. Most of us don't have the means to have our names or the names of those we love to appear anywhere on this campus anytime soon. I hope that's OK with you. It's certainly OK with me.

And here's the reason why I'm your homilist this morning. I asked Amy if I could talk today, because twenty-five years ago to the month, I first stepped foot into this sanctuary. Twenty-five years ago, I found the reception to be on the chilly side, truth be told. Some of this, no doubt, was the culture clash between this guy from Southern California and the norms of northern New England. But some of it, frankly, was because some folks were so enraptured with this parish's history that they wanted us to be the Vermont version of a posh New York parish. And while there's nothing wrong with New York parishes in the main, this parish has to reflect the folks who sit in these pews, most of whom weren't here when Joel Clap was rector or Abraham Stearns was senior warden or Laurence Rockefeller and his retinue were parishioners. Most of these people remain unknown to us.

Some of you, though, may have known Ralph & Mabel Hill. I remember Pat Osborne. It was she who dedicated the candle stand in memory of her parents, Ralph & Mabel, and their granddaughter Tina Miller worships with us now. Our storied history connects us to the present day.

That present and future doesn't rest on the past, though; the present and future depend on our living our lives daily in service to Christ and to one another. And in trying to live authentically Christian lives, I can tell you from twenty-five years of trying to do that here: this parish will change and can change. Some of you may have heard me talk about the center aisle being akin to the demilitarized zone back in the early aughts: one ventured across the aisle to share the peace at the risk of life and limb. The thought of having young children moving around the room? Unthinkable. But the history of this parish has changed because I have stepped through that door, because Jeremy and

Marin have stepped through that door, because Tina and Pat stepped through that door, because you stepped through that door. [At the 8a service, I named each of the eight persons in attendance; at the 10a service, I named persons living and dead, present and not present.]

And if our names happen to make it on windows and altar rails? For better or for worse, we will be like many of the names I've recited today: mostly forgotten when it comes to what their roles were in service to St. James. We are all Ozymandias in that regard. We're that nameless northwest window. And that's OK.

Let me end by taking you back to the homily I last shared with you. It was after Ascension Day and before Pentecost. We looked at the thirteenth disciple, Matthias, and I asked us to consider the hallmarks of his life and ministry. Luke chose not to tell us what work Matthias did or how the early church changed because of his ministry. But I took Matthias's example to state that God does not call us to be famous. Instead, God calls us to be faithful. And Matthias unquestionably left his mark on the early church as he served Jesus Christ and the church of God.

So, with this in mind ... if you've been here at St. James for less than twenty-five years, please stand. I beg of you: Make your mark on St. James. And those of you who have been here for more than twenty-five years, please stand. I beg of you: Make your mark on St. James. If people remember our names twenty-five years from now, fine.

But let's not strive to be famous. I call on us all: Let's be faithful. Amen.