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St. James Episcopal Church
by Autumn Entzminger

I attended St. James's Episcopal Church at 1205 W. Franklin St. Richmond, Virginia 23220. I attended the 11:15am - 12:30pm service on November 15th. Reverend Caroline Smith Parkinson was preaching at this service. I picked this service and this place because it's close to where I live so it's good walking distance and I didn't have much time to find another place so it was convenient for me. I walk past this building a lot so I decided that it would be a good place for my project.

The outside of the church looked well kept and it's in a nice area since it is on campus. The building is really tall and is grey with a blue cross on the very top of it. The church looks new and renovated and is not old and run down so that helped me choose this place to attend. Like I said I walk past this building almost everyday on my way to classes and thought since it's on campus it would be okay to attend. The area around the church is very nice and city like and mostly college students around. The church seemed really similar to a Christian church that I'm more familiar with since it has the cross on top of it. Since I was in walking distance I didn't have to worry about finding parking.

Walking into the church there were ushers or greeters at the door handing out programs for the service. The inside of the church was really nice and classy. It was mostly white inside the church with purple pews and chairs. I liked the design of the building and the colors they had inside. Since I got to the church at a reasonable time there were a lot space left on the pews so I didn't have trouble finding a seat. didn't feel uncomfortable but they could probably tell that it was my first time attending. The church had many religious symbols inside. There were a lot of crosses and then the window in the sanctuary had a painting of Jesus. There were many bibles on the back of the pews so people could read along or sing along.

The people who attended did not look like college students it was mostly middle aged adults. They didn't look like they were of a lower class so I would say middle to upper class people attended the service. Nearly everyone was dressed nice for the service and looked very respectful. No one looked out of place so I would say that the people who attended probably go to the church often or have been before. There were mostly Caucasian people who attended the service, some people were by themselves, and others had families. I would say the people looked like they were in their 30's or 40's in age. The members seemed nice I didn't talk to anyone but if I had they seemed like they would've been friendly. Everyone's mood was calm and quiet and very spiritual.

The service started with a very peaceful singing from the choir. The singing was different from what I experienced when I would go to church when I was younger. The church was
quiet as this was going on and everything seemed like a routine like they do this every week. The singing stopped for a little and then there was a prayer. After the prayer some people had come down the aisle and lit some candles and the singing continued. Some more members were flowing in while the choir was singing hymns. A lady then stood up front of the church and started reading a verse from the bible. After the reading the choir continued to sing a hymn. There was some more reading of scriptures from different people and the choir stopped singing while they were reading. The church routine was similar to a baptist church I have gone to a few times and that surprised me. Even though it’s the same religion I thought they would have like different traditions but for the most part it was the same. There was a lot of readings in the front of the church before the preacher came out. The preacher talked about events going on in the world. She talked about recent terrorist attacks on different countries. She related these events to end of times the bible talks about. She called it the apocalypse and talked about how the bible said certain events would happen in the end of times. I liked the message she talked about because she talked about events happening around the world.

I actually thought the service was nice and I was more in my comfort zone in the church since I grew up in a christian family. I probably would attend this church again and not just for a project. The people who attended seemed friendly and I liked that about this church. Before attending this service I didn’t know what to expect and I didn’t do any research about this kind of church. I enjoyed the preaching from the Reverend Caroline Smith Parkinson. The service was about an hour and 15 minutes long so that wasn’t bad. I liked how organized they were they started on time and we got out at a reasonable time. The service was short and not dragged out so I liked that about it. Overall the service was a nice experience for my project and I enjoyed it. •

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