



September 19, 2023

Dear Hogwarts at St. Thomas' Class of 2023,

Our special course on Harry Potter in Faith began informally last Sunday. We started to personalize our "pouches of hope" and think about house assignments. We will pick up that work this coming Sunday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> in our first official lesson.

In *Deathly Hallows* (the book, not the film), Harry wears a leather pouch around his neck close to his heart in which he keeps important things. Some things are intact. Some are broken. A pouch is like our soul, the part of us that holds our truths, the things that give our life meaning in love and hope. The pouch holds things which remind us of the gifts we have, the challenges we overcome, the scars we have. Harry puts a Snitch in his pouch because it was the last thing Dumbledore gave to him. The pouch holds the parts of our lives that are broken, too, which we would like to repair. You are invited to bring an item or two for your pouch next Sunday with a very short story to share with the class. Only if you want to, though.

At the end of *Deathly Hallows*, the last book, when Harry gets the elder wand (the most powerful wand in the world), he uses it to repair his broken possessions, then he destroys it. Harry learns by experience that the greatest power comes from love and kinship. He never gives up hope that he will see his parents and godfather again. Seeking God is like seeking the elder wand. Once we connect to God's love, we can choose what to do with it. We can use it to repair broken things or will be we tempted to use it to make ourselves more powerful?

The sorting hat helped us pick houses. Some of us got more than one option. Like Harry, we get to tell the sorting hat which house we want or don't want. We get to choose. That's free will. Harry chose Gryffindor (for the brave at heart) over Slytherin (for cunning ones). We have a Slytherin in our group, Hufflepuffs (just and loyal, true, and hard-working), and Ravenclaws (with a ready mind). Which house will you choose?

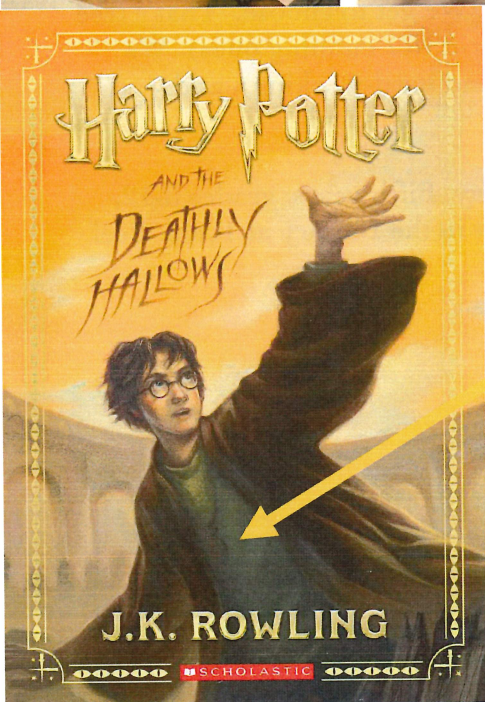
Lindsey and I are looking forward to seeing you on Sunday. Fifth years, grades 6-12, meet at 9am in the Founders' Room. First years, grades 1-5, meet in the Library at 10am. Feel free to wear any Hogwarts gear that inspires you.

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Anne Hartley  
Curate, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church  
Visiting Chaplain, Hogwarts

St.   
Thomas'  
Episcopal Church





The moleskin (leather) pouch was a gift from Hagrid on Harry's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. Only Harry can get things out of the pouch. Most of the things in the pouch remind Harry of people and places he loves — his parents, his godfather, Hogwarts.

What can you find to bring to the next class that will show us something you love or something that's broken that you hope someday to repair, or something that has made you a stronger person?

