

St. James Lutheran Church

1741 S State Street
Greenfield Indiana 46140

*The mission statement of our congregation is:
To bring people to Christ,
encouraging relationships with Him and others.*

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Love

December 11, 2022



Meditation:

Advent heralds the inversion of all things. This is wonderful news for the now destitute, hungry, and persecuted. But for those of us who have plenty to eat, a safe place to live, a secure job, and a say in our government, this involves admitting our complicity in the world's injustices. The excellent news doesn't seem so nice now, for some reason. However, the Bible instructs us to join with Jesus in fulfilling God's plan for universal abundance. Only when we accept our role as disciples can we really celebrate Christ's birth.

Today's chancel flowers are given by Alison LaFlower.



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Greenfield, IN 46140
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Welcome to St. James Lutheran Church

The mission statement of our congregation is:

To bring people to Christ, encouraging relationships with Him and others.

Rev. Dr. Richard Blue Jr., Pastor

TO ALL GUESTS...

- **THANKS** for joining us for worship today. We hope your experience will be one of being touched by God and of being enriched through our experience of fellowship. **Please fill out the Connection Card found in your bulletin and place in the offering plate.** And please come again!!
- **PARTICIPATE**
 - The worship service is printed in the bulletin and can also be viewed on the video screen for your convenience. Bulletins are emailed to all members each week.
 - **Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices during the worship service.**
 - The service is streamed live and available online afterward on YouTube. Links can be found on the [St. James website \(www.stjamesnalc.org\)](http://www.stjamesnalc.org) and [Facebook page](#).
- **COMMUNE** — All baptized Christians who believe that Jesus Christ is present with his body and blood in the bread and wine are invited to receive Holy Communion at the Lord's Table. The ushers will direct those receiving the sacrament down the center aisle to the altar rail. **If you require gluten free host, please let the servers know.**
- **NEED ASSISTANCE?**
 - **Hearing devices** are available for those who have trouble hearing through the loudspeaker system.
 - Hand sanitizer is available on the tables in the Narthex and in the pews.

Please feel free to ask an Usher for assistance, they will be happy to help you.

**PRELUDE
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Please Stand

† We Lift Our Hearts in Worship †

INVOCATION AND PRAYER

P: In the name of the Father, the Son (+), and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)

C: Amen.

P: Patient and loving God, we so easily launch ourselves in preparation for the secular festival of giving and parties and the swirl of social events; but we forget that the true preparation is the readiness of our hearts to receive you. Help us look again at our lives and turn them around so that they may be in tune with your will. We ask this in Jesus' Name, AMEN.

Prayer of Confession (Isaiah 35, Luke 1, Matthew 11)

P: God, you announce your coming with exciting news:
the hungry will eat their fill, the oppressed will dance
in newfound freedom;

**C: You proclaim your mission with hard news: the well fed will go hungry,
the powerful will lose their status.**

P: We find ourselves squirming as we acknowledge our participation
in structures that oppress and marginalize.

C: Help us accept and proclaim the coming of your Son as truly good news.

P: Give us the courage to set aside our privilege,

**All: and help bring about this upside-down world, where everyone can sing
together for joy.**

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Words of Assurance

P: The desert shall rejoice and blossom.
Waters shall break forth in the wilderness.
The burning sand shall become a pool.
The God who can transform the dry lands
can also transform the desert of our lives.
Abundant forgiveness is ours

from the God who turns sorrow and sighing
into joy and gladness.

All: Amen.

OPENING HYMN Lo, How a Rose is Growing LBW (Green Hymnal) #58

1. Lo, how a rose is growing, A bloom of finest grace;

**The prophets had foretold it: A branch of Jesse's race
Would bear one perfect flow'r Here in the cold of winter
And darkest midnight hour.**

2. The rose of which I'm singing, Isaiah had foretold.

**He came to us through Mary who Sheltered him from cold.
Through God's eternal will This child to us was given
At midnight calm and still.**

3. The shepherds heard the story, The angels sang that night:

**How Christ was born of Mary; He was the Son of light.
To Bethlehem they ran To find him in the manger
As angel heralds sang.**

4. This flow'r, so small and tender, With fragrance fills the air;

**His brightness ends the darkness That kept the earth in fear.
True God and yet true man, He came to save his people
From earth's dark night of sin.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: In the midst of the barren land,

C: Flowers burst into bloom.

L: In the midst of the dry desert,

C: Streams of water gush forth.

L: In the midst of sorrow and sighing,

C: Joy and gladness dance together.

All: We shall see the glory of God!

OPENING PRAYER (Isaiah 35)

P: God of Glory, we rejoice in the good news
of your promises. Come into our parched world

and shower us with your gushing, abundant water of life.
Enter into our brokenness, and renew us with the strength of your love.
Be born anew in our hearts and in our world.
Come, Jesus; come. We are ready! Amen.

Please be seated

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

THE LORD'S HIGHWAY: Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalms 146:5-10

Reader One: “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing . . . A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray . . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah 35:1-2, 8, 10 NRSV).

Reader Two: The prophet Isaiah tells us about the joy of ascending to God's house. The prophet tells us to imagine being set free, being unburdened, being released to live, to fully live in the grace and wonder of life itself, surrounded by those who love us like no one else. And then he tells us that the journey to get there is just as much a joy.

Reader One: The Psalmist says “Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord . . . who made heaven and earth . . . who keeps faith . . . who executes justice . . . gives food . . . sets prisoners free . . . opens eyes . . . lifts up . . . watches over . . . upholds . . . The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!” (Psalm 146 NRSV)

Reader Two: We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, and of deep and everlasting joy, as a sign that we are those who walk with a skip in our step because we can see the destination, and it is pure joy. We are ascending to God's promise.

Light three candles on the Advent wreath. This week we light the pink-colored candle in the wreath.

† We Hear God's Word †

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35: 1-10 (page 615 in pew bible)

Joy of the Redeemed

35 The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.

³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;

⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
"Be strong, do not fear;

your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;

with divine retribution
he will come to save you."

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.

Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.

In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸ And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.

The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.

⁹ No lion will be there,

nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰ and those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

P: The Word of God for the people of God.

C: Thanks be to God.

Please Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Alleluia”

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2-11 (page 839 in pew bible)

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

²When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

⁴Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy^[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

⁷As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. ⁹Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.”^[b]

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

P: The Gospel of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE FOR OUR YOUNGER DISCIPLES

Alison LaFlower

Please stand

THE MESSAGE HYMN Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful LBW (green hymnal) #45

1. Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
Oh, come ye, oh come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him Born the king of angels:
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2. The highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

3. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God...In...the..highest:
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus , to thee..be..glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing:
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Please be seated

MESSAGE FOR OUR OLDER DISCIPLES

Rev. Amanda Marie Blue

Please Stand

† We Respond to God's Word †

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Apostles' Creed

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Please be seated

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

THE OFFERING

Now we join with Christians all over the world in worshipping God through our giving of our financial resources. If you are a guest, please do not feel obligated to participate in the offering. Instead, we hope that we are able to give something to you. We welcome you to give only as your heart desires. For members and friends, the vision and ministry of St. James depends on your giving. We thank you in advance for your generosity. This time of offering is a significant act of worship, and we now offer our offerings and tithes.

Please Stand

THE OFFERING RESPONSE

Let the Vineyards be Fruitful

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord and fill to the brim our cup of blessing,
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,**

That we may be fed with the bread of life.

Gather the hopes and dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer.

Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

Offering Prayer (Isaiah 11)

We thank you, Holy One,
for all your good gifts,
especially the gifts of prophecy, promise,
and calls for preparation.

As a thankful response to these gifts,
we offer our belief, our commitments, and our money,
that we may hasten the time
when no one will hurt or destroy
on all God's holy mountain.

All: Amen.

† We Celebrate the Lord's Supper †

Here our Lord gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins
Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: God of our salvation,
we do not deserve your love and yet you lavish it upon us.
Not being content to be apart from us,
you came to us in human form,
becoming flesh and becoming one of us.
You are not a God that is removed from our reality
but is intimately present in our lives and our struggles.
We lift up to you our thanks for your presence among us.
We give thanks for your son, Jesus Christ,
the very incarnation of your being on this earth.

With all of creation, with all peoples in every time and place

we join the everlasting chorus:

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

P: We remember how you called your servant Mary to bear your son,
how you called your servant Joseph to accompany her,
how you called the wise men to search and the shepherds to ponder,
how you called John to proclaim and Jesus to be baptized,
how you called Peter and the disciples to follow and serve.

THE WORDS OF JESUS

With them, we gather on the night on which Jesus was betrayed,
when, after having dinner with his friends, he took the bread,
blessed it and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying,
take, eat, do this in remembrance of me.

Likewise, he took the cup and, pouring it, said,
this is cup of the salvation, shed in my blood, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.

For as long as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the resurrection of our living savior until he comes again.

As we wait, during this blessed rest known as the season of Advent,
we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**C: Christ has died; Christ is risen;
Christ will come again.**

We give thanks for your gifts of grace,
and ask that your Holy Spirit would come to bless us through this sacrament,
that we might preside with you and you in us.
Hear us as we pray the prayer you taught us to pray, saying:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

C: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ extends his table before you.

Gather here with all the saints.

All: Amen.

P: All who would come to Christ are invited to come to His table.

Please be seated

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;

Have mercy on us. Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;

Have mercy on us. Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;

Grant us peace.

THE DISTRIBUTION

Please Stand

COMMUNION HYMN

Special Music

THE BLESSING AFTER THE MEAL

P: (Isaiah 35, Luke 1)

Generous God, you have given us all that we have

and all that we are. We thank you for the opportunity

to respond to your love and generosity by sharing our gifts with others.

Our hearts sing with joy as we work with you

to bring true peace and justice to our world.

As we prepare for the coming of your Son,

may our lives proclaim your good news for all

throughout the earth. Amen.

All: Amen.

THE BENEDICTION (Matthew 11)

P: May the love of God fill you
until you overflow with joy.
May the coming of the Christ Child free you
to live in an upside-down world.
May the Holy Spirit empower you
to work for the reign of God on earth.
At Christmas and throughout the year,
may you be inspired to share the good news
of God's vision of peace and love. Amen.

All: Amen.

† We Depart in Peace †

THE CLOSING HYMN

Lost in the Night LBW (Green Hymnal) #394

1. Lost in the night do the people yet languish
Longing for morning the darkness to vanquish,
Plaintively heaving a sigh full of anguish.
Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?
2. Must we be vainly awaiting the morrow?
Shall those who have light no light let us borrow,
Giving no heed to our burden of sorrow?
Will you help us soon? Will you help us soon?
3. Sorrowing wand'ers in darkness yet dwelling,
Dawned has the day of a radiance excelling,
Death's dreaded darkness forever dispelling
Christ is coming soon! Christ is coming soon!
4. Light o'er the land of the needy is beaming;
Rivers of life through its deserts are streaming,
Bringing all peoples a Savior redeeming,

Come and save us soon! Come and save us soon!

Remain Standing

THE DISMISSAL

P: Go in Peace and Share The Good News!

A: Thanks be to God.

WORSHIP VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE This Week, Sunday Dec 11	9:30 am Pastor Richard Blue	Next Week, Dec 11 Next Week Sunday Dec 18	9:30 a.m. Pastor Richard Blue
Assisting Minister	Joan Shaw	Assisting Minister	Christian Gries
Lector	John Shaw	Lector	Christian Gries
Ushers	Sheila Bryan John Browder	Ushers	Tracy Guffey Neal Guffey
Greeters	June Gries Ron Westerfeld	Greeters	John Shaw Joan Shaw
Altar Guild	Diana Clements-Scott	Altar Guild	Diana Clements-Scott
Communion Assistant	June Gries	Communion Assistant	Karen Bell
Acolyte	Luke Stearns	Acolyte	Eli Stearns
Sound Technician	Dan Ivers	Sound Technician	Dan Ivers
Video Technician	Geoff LaFlower	Video Technician	Neal Guffey
Bread Baker	June Gries	Bread Baker	Karen Bell
Women's Bible Study Snacks	Sherry Coomes	Women's Bible Study Snacks	Diana Clements- Scott
Slide Creators	Bill & Sherry Coomes	Slide Creators	Terry Clark
Children's Sermon	Allison LaFlower	Children's Sermon	Amanda Blue
Counters (Monday)	Maggie Bode Cindy Gregory	Counters (Monday)	Phil Miller Ron Westerfeld
This Week, Wednesday December 14 Midweek Advent Service	7pm- Wednesday Advent Service	Next Week Wednesday December 21 Midweek Advent Service	7pm- Wednesday Advent Service
Assistant Minister	Joan Shaw	Assistant Minister	Christian Gries
Lector	June Gries	Lector	Dawn Hahm
Ushers	Diana Clements-Scott	Ushers	Diana Clements-Scott
Greeters	Tom and Nancy Fisher	Greeters	Alan and Jeanette Berkshire
Altar Guild	Diana Clements-Scott	Altar Guild	Diana Clements-Scott
Communion Assistant	June Gries	Communion Assistant	Karen Bell
Acolyte		Acolyte	
Sound Technician		Sound Technician	
Bread Baker	Jane Hale	Bread Baker	Jane Hale
6 pm Pre Service Meal Provider	Men's Bible Study	6pm Pre Service Meal Provider	MBO

