

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.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Joy

December 18, 2022



Meditation: Cultivating Joy. Joy is most available to you when you are available to be nowhere other than right here, right now. Rest your body in this state of joy and be present, right here, right now.

Today's chancel flowers are given in celebration of June Gries' birthday.



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Greenfield, IN 46140
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Welcome to St. James Lutheran Church

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*Rev. Dr. Richard Blue Jr., Pastor
Diane Witte- Interim Organist*

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)

L: We are always looking for evidence that God is with us.

P: That sign is in the One to come--the One that God is sending.

L: We want to know for sure that everything is in God's care.

P: And so we cry to the heavens in our distress. Our cries are heard! God is responding in love and hope.

L: Let us come before God with expectant hearts and spirits!

P: Let us be ready to receive the blessed gift of the Savior. AMEN.

Prayer of Confession

All: Lord, we confess that we are rushing headlong into Christmas. It's only seven days away and we still have so much to do. Our preparations are far from complete, and we are exhausted. We wish this whole thing were over so that we could rest. Forgive our shortcomings and our short-sightedness. You have poured upon us blessing after blessing, daily reminding us of Your love and presence; yet we have chosen to jump onto this "greased slide" into Christmas. Give us patience. Slow us down. Remind us of the ways in which You are present with us--not in the wrapped packages, the abundance of food, but in the love and compassion that is brought to all. Forgive us, we pray. Make us truly ready to receive Your love and the gift of the Christ Child. AMEN.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Words of Assurance

P: The light of God's love shines upon each of us in the gift of God's love, Jesus Christ. This is given for you. Rejoice! You are loved by God, now and forever. AMEN.

All: Amen.

OPENING HYMN

LBW #56 The First Noel

1. The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was ...so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.
2. They looked up and saw ... a star
Shining in... the east...beyond...them far;
And to the...earth it gave...great light,
And... so it continued both day...and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the king of Israel.
3. And by the light of that...same star
Three wisemen came...from country afar;
To seek for a king was their...intent,
And to follow the star...wherever it went.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the king of Israel.
4. This star drew near to the the...north-west,
O'er...Bethlehem...it took...its rest;
And there it...did both stop...and stay
Right...over the place where Jesus lay.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the king of Israel.

CALL TO WORSHIP

LEADER: The voice of the prophets cry out: Look, the young woman shall bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel which means, "God is with us."

ALL: Restore us, O God; let Your face shine, that we may be saved.

OPENING PRAYER

P: Lord of all life and all seasons, help us open our hearts to hear the words of promise and love that you send to us. Like Joseph, may we trust in your abiding love and power. Prepare us to receive your gift of grace and peace. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

Please be seated

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

Reader One: His name is Jesus and He will save us from our sins.

Reader Two: Stir up Your might, and come to save us!

Reader One: He is descended from David according to the flesh.

Reader Two: You who reign on high with the angels, shine forth Your light!

Reader One: He was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead.

Reader Two: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Reader One: We belong to Him, obedient in faith for the sake of His name.

Reader Two: Then we will never turn back from You; give us life, and we will call on Your name.

Reader One: Jesus is coming, prepare the way of the Lord!

Reader Two: Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

(Light four advent candles on the Advent Wreath)

Reader One: Jesus is coming and He will save us from our sins.

Reader Two: Shine Your light, O Lord, and we shall be saved!

FIRST READING

Isaiah 7:10-16 (Pages 591-592 in pew bible)

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ “Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”

¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.”

¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you^[a] a sign: The virgin^[b] will conceive and give birth to a son, and^[c] will call him Immanuel.^[d] ¹⁵ He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, ¹⁶ for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.

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

Mathew 1:18-25 (page 827 in pew bible)

Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[c] because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”^[d] (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

P: The Gospel of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE FOR OUR YOUNGER DISCIPLES

Amanda Blue

Please stand

THE MESSAGE HYMN

LBW #394 Lost in the Night

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?

Muse 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?

Sorrowing wand'ers, in the 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!

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!

Please be seated

MESSAGE FOR OUR OLDER DISCIPLES

Rev. Dr. Richard Blue, Jr.

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

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

Please be seated

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

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Offering Prayer

P: Holy God of hope and promise: when the children were in deep despair, you promised them a sign, the indication of a Savior coming into their midst. As we bring you our tithes and offerings this day, so many of us are discouraged, trying to find our way. We need your sign, we need your Son, not as simply a reminder of history but as a new direction, a revolution of love that starts in our hearts, a resurrection of compassion that looks beyond self and the accumulation of more and more things that don't satisfy. We need what only a Savior can give us. Guide us by your signs on this day and as we begin the journey to Bethlehem once again. In the Savior's name, we pray. Amen.

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: It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,

Father Almighty (*almighty God*), creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,

and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day

when justice shall roll down like waters

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,

when nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war anymore.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**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: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,

whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations.

You scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts

and have mercy on those who fear you from generation to generation.

You put down the mighty from their thrones and exalt those of low degree.

You fill the hungry with good things, and the rich you send empty away.

Your own Son came among us as a servant
to be Emmanuel, your presence with us.

He humbled himself in obedience to your will
and freely accepted death on a cross.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

THE WORDS OF JESUS

P: On the night in which he gave himself up for us, He took bread,
gave thanks to You, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of Me."

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,

we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving

as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,

as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

P: Pour out Your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,

and on these gifts of bread and wine.

We confess that Your word tells us that this is Your body and this is Your blood

May be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by His blood.

By Your Spirit make us one with Christ,

one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,

until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at His heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in Your holy Church,

all honor and glory is Yours, almighty Father (God), now and forever.

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: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. Amen

All: Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

God still sends signs. Open your eyes to the possibility of grace.
God still sends signs. Embrace the child of hope.
God still sends signs. Let the song of joy send you forth in peace.
Go with the God who still sends signs.

All: Amen.

☐ **We Depart in Peace** ☐

THE CLOSING HYMN

LBW #315 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation, Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit Into ev'ry troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit; Let us find they promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver; Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, Nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing, Glory in they perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation, Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see they great salvation Perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory into glory, Till in heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

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 18 9:30am	Christmas Eve Service 12/24 7pm	Next Week Sunday 12/25 9:30am
Assisting Minister	Christian Gries		Christian Gries
Lector	Christian Gries	Dawn Hahm	Christian Gries
Ushers	Tracy Guffey Neal Guffey		Tracy and Neal Guffey
Greeters	John Shaw Joan Shaw	Alan & Jeanette Berkshire	Alan & Jeanette Berkshire
Altar Guild	Diana Clements-Scott	Diana Clements-Scott	Diana Clements-Scott
Communion Assistant	Karen Bell	Karen Bell	June Gries
Acolyte	Eli Stearns		
Sound Technician	Dan Ivers	Ronald Kissell	Ronald Kissell
Video Technician	Neal Guffey		Neal Guffey
Bread Baker	Karen Bell	Karen Bell	Karen Bell
Women's Bible Study Snacks	Diana Clements-Scott	_____	No Women's Bible Study 12/26
Slide Creators	Terry Clark	Richard Bell	Richard Bell
Children's Sermon	Amanda Blue		June Gries
Counters (Monday)	Phil Miller Ron Westerfeld		Christian Gries Ron Westerfeld
Next Week Wednesday December 21 Midweek Advent Service	7pm- Wednesday Advent Service		
Assistant Minister	Christian Gries		
Lector	Dawn Hahm		
Ushers	Diana Clements-Scott		
Greeters	Alan & Jeanette Berkshire		
Altar Guild	Diana Clements-Scott		
Communion Assistant	Karen Bell		
Acolyte			
Sound Technician			
6pm Pre Service Meal Provider	MBO		