

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.

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2022



Meditation: Christmas Eve is a time of celebration of Light and Hope. Isaiah's scripture reminds us that the people who had walked in darkness have now seen a great light, the light of hope in their dark nights. Psalm 96 is a magnificent song of joy and hope. Titus reflects on the salvation of all humankind through the witness and person of Jesus Christ. But most especially beloved is Luke's Gospel passage about the Nativity. There are many ways to think of the Light of God's Incarnate Love. We have chosen some non-traditional objects to portray the Light coming into the world. It first began as a glimmer of hope; moved to a directing beam; continued as a welcoming light, and warmed our spirits as the light in God's Presence.



1741 S. State Street
Greenfield, IN 46140
Phone: 317-462-7340
Email: office@stjamesnalc.org

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.

Diane Witte, interim organist

Special Music: Dan Petry, Christian Gries, Monica Cantrell & Jim Timmerman
Praise Band: Maggie Bode, John Browder, John Turner, Cindy Gregory, Marieta Boone, Gary Davis-french horn, special guest

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.

Order of Service

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Prelude

Special Music by Diane Witte & Kenya Ostermeier

Welcome

Opening Hymn (Please Stand)

Oh little town of Bethlehem LBW #41

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in they dark streets shineth The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king, And peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; But, in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

(Please Be Seated)

***CALL TO WORSHIP AND ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING**

LEADER: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

ALL: O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

L: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

A: Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

L: His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

A: Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth.

L: Say among the nations, "The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity."

A: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all through Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity.

(Light four advent candles and the Christ candle)

L: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!

A: O Come, let us adore him!

Prayer of Confession

P: Let us confess our sins to God.

C: Lord of Light and Hope, our minutes and hours have been swallowed up in preparation for this night and for the coming day. We have been so caught up in the preparations for gatherings and gifting that we have pushed aside the wonder of what you have done for all Creation. Forgive us when we so easily get entangled in our own plans and forget to pay attention to the true event. Help us to relax and listen, instead of rush and shout. May the songs of the angels, the surprise of the shepherds, and the joy of the Holy Family become part of our preparations and our lives. Open our ears, our eyes, our hearts and our spirits to again hear the old, old story, spoken by new voices in new ways. Remind us again of your never-changing love for us. Prepare us to serve you by serving others. This night we offer this prayer of our hearts to you, gracious God. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

P: God of bright and shining stars, we come this evening with the reminiscences of the old, old story in our hearts. For many here, the story has been heard numerous times, flooding their lives with warmth and love; For others the story is new, surprising, causing wonder and surprise. All around us are symbols and reminders of the miraculous Birth. We see the greens which remind us of your eternal presence and love for us. The candles shed their glowing light helping us to remember the many ways in which you have brightened our lives and offered light to our journey. The colors, the music, and aromas, the people, invite us again into your wonderful presence in the world in the birth of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

In this world in which your holy land is in such turmoil, shed your light anew, that your healing Love may bring Peace and Hope to people in conflict. We ask that you protect all those who are in harm's way; all those who live lives of anguish, poverty, oppression. We ask your loving presence to be with those who refuse to believe in you; who see your word through the church as a tradition, but see very little impact in their daily lives. Let the Light of Jesus Christ penetrate that darkness of alienation and bring Hope and Peace to all your people.

May the light of the stars which sparkled in those dark skies, again illuminate our lives, guiding, healing, leading us to you, Blessed God.. As we gather in this time and place, hearing the story of the birth, remind us again that you are born continually in our lives. In gratitude we offer our praise and our love to you.

C: AMEN

Hymn

***Joy to the World* LBW #39**

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
While field and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

(Please Be Seated)

Pastoral Prayer

P: The people who once lived in darkness have been given a great light! Praise be to God who has heard our cries. Our souls sing out God's praise! God has brought us a light of Hope and Peace. Tonight, in this place, the Light of God's Love is given to us! And we shall see that light and let it shine through our lives. AMEN.

Special Music: *Do you Hear what I hear*

Christian Gries

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2-7 (pew bible page 593)

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

³You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

⁵Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,

establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Pastor: The Word of God for the People of God

All: Thanks be to God!

Gospel Response by Special Music: “Mary did you know?”

Monica Cantrell & Jim Timmerman

THE HOLY GOSPEL

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. **8** He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **11** He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— **13** children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise and Glory to You, Oh Lord!

MESSAGE FOR OUR YOUNGER DISCIPLES

Rev. Amanda Blue

Please stand

Special Music: Carol of the Bells (Glockenspiel)

Dan Petry

Message

Rev. Dr. Richard Blue Jr.

Offering:

O Holy Night

Diane Witte and Kenya Ostermeier

Offering Prayer

P: There are so many things
to be thankful for tonight, God.
Receive these tokens of our gratitude
for your love incarnate
in the babe of Bethlehem.
May they become God-with-us for all the world.
May they breathe magic back into a world
that needs a sense of wonder and joy.

Prayers Of God's People

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For true faith in Christ and His promise that by His conception, virgin birth, holy life, sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, our sins are forgiven and we are His, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the love of God, that abiding in us and we in Him, we would grow in love toward one another and His love would be perfected in us, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For joy and delight in proclaiming the glad tidings of Christ to all people, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the families of our church and our country, that seeing how Christ took His place in the family of Mary and Joseph, we also would live faithfully as husbands and wives, loving and caring for our children and nurturing them in God's Word, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For good government, that God would move all those in authority to govern in service to the will of David's Son and Lord, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For generosity, that the Father who loves us and sent His Son as the propitiation for our sins would perfect His love in us to show kindness to those in need, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the lonely, sick, recovering or those near death, [especially _____,] that they would be comforted and persevere in hope until He visits them with healing, relief, deliverance and peace, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For all who will receive Christ's body and blood this night, that they would have true faith in His Word and promises, be fed in body and soul, and be sustained in humble repentance and godly living, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

We thank You, dear Lord, for the saints who received Your blessing of righteousness in Christ and now stand in the most holy place before Your throne. Preserve us by Your grace in the holiness of Christ, that we, too, may dwell in Your light and life for eternity; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Holy Communion:

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Lord's Prayer

P: Let us pray the prayer he taught his disciples

All: 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.

Benediction(Please Stand)

P: Let the love of God flow into your hearts. Believe in the power of God to change your life. Behold the goodness of God in creation and in others. Be at peace and celebrate God's good news. AMEN.

Closing Hymn

Silent Night

LBW #65

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories steam from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior is born! Christ, the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from your holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord at your birth.

Dismissal:

Pastor: Go in Peace and Share the Good News!

All: Thanks be to God!

Worship Volunteer Schedule		Christmas Day	New Year's Day Sunday 1/1/2023 9:30am
	Christmas Eve Service 12/24 7pm	Sunday 12/25 9:30am	
Assisting Minister		Christian Gries	Tracey Guffey
Lector	Dawn Hahm	Christian Gries	Maggie Bode
Ushers	Diana Clements-Scott	Diana Clements-Scott	Jim Jackson Deb Jackson
Greeters	Alan & Jeanette Berkshire	John & Joan Shaw	Alan & Jeanette Berkshire
Altar Guild	Diana Clements-Scott	Diana Clements-Scott	Diana Clements-Scott
Communion Assistant	Karen Bell	June Gries	Karen Bell
Acolyte			Luke Stearns
Sound Technician	Ronald Kissell	Ronald Kissell	Ronald Kissell
Video Technician	Dan Ivers	Dan Ivers	Neal Guffey
Bread Baker	Karen Bell	Karen Bell	Jane Hale
Women's Bible Study Snacks	_____	No Women's Bible Study 12/26	No Women's Bible Study 1/2/23
Slide Creators	Terry and Phil	Richard Bell	Sophia Stearns
Children's Sermon		June Gries	Tracey Guffey
Counters (Monday)		Christian Gries Ron Westerfeld	Maggie Bode Cindy Gregory