

St. James Lutheran Church

*"Growing in Christ Through Worship, Learning,
Fellowship, and Service."*

Ring Out A Weekly Newsletter



WEEK OF DECEMBER 20



Worship Bulletin Dec. 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

First Reading 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Psalm Luke 1:46b-55

Second Reading Romans 16:25-27



Readings for December 20

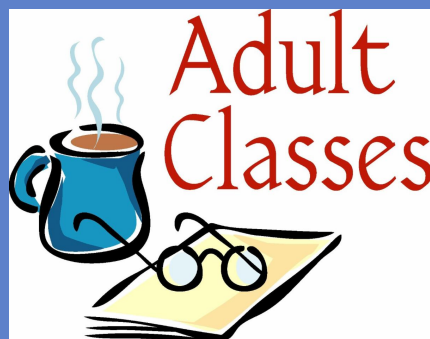


ONLINE WORSHIP

Online Worship for Sunday, December 20 will be available on Facebook and YouTube at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday morning. An email with links will be sent when the online worship service is posted. You can open or print the bulletin and follow along with the service.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS ZOOM

Frank Irvin will be offering a Zoom Sunday School class on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Everyone is invited. Please have a Bible or Bible App ready because we're going to look outside the texts listed in the lesson. Click on the link below to join in the discussion.



[Study Guide- Esau Forgives Jacob's Family](#)

[Join Class on Zoom](#)



ON THE CALENDAR THIS WEEK

[Sunday, December 20](#)

[Friday, December 25](#)

9:30 am Online Worship Service
10:00 am Zoom Sunday School
5:00 pm Youth In-Person
Christmas Gathering

Thursday, December 24

5:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship
7:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship

Christmas Day
Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 27

9:30 am Online Worship
Service- Lessons and Carols

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

- 20-Dec.** Rory Kartheiser
- 23-Dec.** Lauren Irvin
- 25-Dec.** Bub Craver
- 25-Dec.** Ryan Hardister
- 26-Dec.** Todd Walker



CHURCH NEWS



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Our Christmas Eve Worship this year will be held outdoors in the Garden Lot at St. James. Social distancing will be followed and masks must be worn. You may bring a yard chair if desired. There will be two services offered at 5:30 and 7:30 pm. The services will also be broadcast over FM radio 93.9 to those who prefer to stay in their cars, parking in the back Portico Lot. An Online service will also be

available on Facebook and YouTube. A link will be emailed for the online services.

WAYS TO WORSHIP ON CHRISTMAS EVE

- In-Person Worship in Garden Lot at 5:30
- In-Person Worship in Garden Lot at 7:30
- Drive-In Worship in Portico Lot at 5:30 or 7:30
- Online on YouTube or Facebook



“Virtual” Poinsettias for Christmas 2020

Order Deadline Monday, December 21

This Christmas we can honor our loved ones while also helping our local ministries like Opportunity House, CCM and Salvation Army Shelter of Hope! The church will still list tributes to those we cherish, but instead of buying poinsettias to brighten our sanctuary, we will be sending contributions to our local social ministries that are experiencing increased needs during the pandemic. What a wonderful way to help others during the Christmas season.

To honor a loved one with a virtual poinsettia, complete the form. Payment can be mailed to the church or paid online.

We will list the donations in a special Ring Out during Christmas Week and also will be included with the Christmas Eve bulletins.

[Order Virtual Poinsettias](#)

ST. JAMES PRESCHOOL



In search of sanity these days? St. James' preschool has some gifts for you: laughter, crying, singing, one-on-one talks about sharing and caring. Stop in and listen to a child's brilliantly constructed story, real or pretend, you'll never know! It's no wonder Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." Many thanks to the St. James Preschool, Health and Safety, and Mission Committee's work.

- Together we are profoundly letting the children come safely during unthinkable times.
- Together we expanded to serve remote learners for siblings of preschoolers!
- Your teams deployed quickly to clean out the second room for virtual Orff music/remote learners AND move mulch for the children.
- The Cannon Ballers Trees of Hope directly impacts St. James children! Thank you Knipp Law Office, PLLC for choosing our nonprofit to support. St. James folks decorated and encouraged participation with this beautiful Chicka Chicka Boom Boom tree.
- Families First was awarded a significant United Way Impact Grant this year aimed at improving school readiness, family engagement, and economic mobility for low income families. Our goal is creating community for families furthest from opportunities, so they prosper for generations.

God has great affection for His children and His grown-up children, like you and me – Thank you!

Ways you can help – a drop-box in the main entrance:

- Snacks for remote learners (small packs of pretzels, crackers, etc.)
- Preschool size socks, shoes, (2 boys and 2 girls, both size 12) and underwear for boys and girls
- Clorox wipes and Lysol
- Little paper bath cups (we provide water on the playground with these)

- Call Aurora Swain at 864-378-9603!

THANK YOU

Thank you to all our Salvation Army Bell Ringers. You brought Christmas cheer to hundreds of shoppers and helped raise over \$2,000 for Salvation Army.



OFFERING ENVELOPES

St. James' Offering Envelopes for 2021 are now available for pickup at the church. You can drive under the portico and either ring the bell or call the church office 704-786-0166 and we will bring your envelopes to you. If you would prefer to have your envelopes mailed to you, contact Jill Irvin. jill@sjnc.net

SOCIAL MINISTRY



MY FATHER'S HOUSE

St. James / St. Johns Lutheran will be hosting My Father's House Ministry December 21, 22 and 23. St. James will provide the dinner meals on Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 21 and

22. There are presently 18 people in the Ministry, 10 adults including staff and 8 children.

If you can provide an item for the meal, please let Sylvia Corl (704-786-0296 H or 704-425-8621 C) know and she can pick items up from your home and take it to MFH on the proper night. Thanks so much for your help with this needed Ministry.

BLESSING BOX

What is the Blessing Box? It's a box that is located in Rotary Square that is stocked with food and other necessary items (List Below) available to those in the community. This was an Eagle Scout project for Gabriel Perry of

St James has agreed to stock the Blessing Box during the months of January and September. You can place items in the box yourself or you can drop them off at the church. Mark Murphy will be the contact person for any questions.



- Canned goods / Crackers / Cereal
- Bags of rice / Ramen / Pasta
- Peanut butter / Jelly
- Granola bars / Raisins
- Fruit snacks / Pudding cups / Fruit cups
- Baby food / Bottled water
- Other non-perishables
- Shampoo / Soap / Deodorant
- Toothbrush and toothpaste

CUDDLE UP COAT DRIVE

The Cabarrus Partnership for Children kicked off its 14th annual Cuddle Up Coat Drive on October 1st. This winter, more than ever, we need your help to ensure all of our community's children are warm.



In an effort to keep our families, children, and staff safe, we will not be accepting coats, socks, underwear, mittens or hats this year. Instead we are asking for checks (written to St. James Lutheran Church, note Coat Drive in the memo line), so that the Partnership staff can purchase the coats and winter items that local children need.



CCM FOOD PANTRY

We are sending out a LOT of food! In November at the Crisis Center drive-through Food Pantry, we served a record 919 households, representing about 3,422 individuals, in 19 days we were open! That is an average of 48 households a day, and one of those days we had a tropical storm and

Country Club Drive was closed below us. The need definitely is increasing in our community, so we sure appreciate all of our supporting partners.

Donations can be dropped by the church during office hours. Pull up

under the Portico and call the office. 704-786-0166

Our current big needs are:

- Cereal
- Canned Carrots, Peas, Potatoes and Mixed Vegetables
- Soup
- Canned Fruit
- Baked Beans (Pork & Beans)
- Other canned beans except for pinto, black, kidney, chili
- Any dried beans
- Pasta Sauce
- Peanut Butter

As always, we especially seek low sodium items, no-added-sugar items, and whole grain items.

CHURCH-WIDE NEWS

We are never alone

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



The room was spare and dimly lit. We sat on folding chairs in a circle—young Honduran women and some of us from the ELCA. We had come to Honduras to observe the work of AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities). This is the ELCA's strategy to help youth who have been forced to flee their home countries because of violence, abuse, extortion by gangs and extreme poverty. Amparo is the Spanish word for shelter or refuge.

In this case, AMMPARO partnered with the Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonites to resettle returned migrants—those who had tried to seek asylum in the United States but had failed or had been denied and deported back to Honduras.

One by one they told us their stories of fear and desperation. Not a one undertook the long and dangerous trek north on a whim. They told us about the abuse they had suffered, about family members who had been killed by gangs, about the inability to make a living because of the extortion by organized crime. They talked about the bitter sadness of leaving home and family, and the uncertainty of the future.

I remember one young woman in particular. She was pregnant when she tried to migrate to the United States. She had the baby

somewhere along the way. She was far from home, mostly alone and desperately wanted her mother to be with her. None of this is what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new and strange existence. She and her baby were now back in Honduras—but not at home. Home was too dangerous.

Remember last Christmas? Remember all of the preparations, the travel to be with family? Remember the holy beauty of the Christmas Eve liturgy and receiving Christ's grace and forgiveness at his table? The shopping and Christmas caroling? The in-person gatherings? All that has changed. The pandemic hasn't forced us from our homes but into our homes, sheltering in place, isolated. Not together, but physically distanced. Not gathered with family and friends, but forced apart because of the threat of infection. Forced by circumstances beyond our control into this strange existence. Oh, there will be Christmas carols piped into grocery stores and other essential services, but they will be painful reminders of how life used to be.

We are reminded of the experience of the exiles in Babylon: "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captives asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land" (Psalm 137)?

I told the young Honduran woman about another young woman who was forced to leave home because of a government decree. She, too, was pregnant and made a long and difficult journey. She, too, was far from home and without her mother when the baby came. She had to find shelter wherever she could. This wasn't what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new existence. That young woman was Mary and the child was Jesus. Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up. Emmanuel—God with us—makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating. The young Honduran woman, and all of us, can find hope because of the birth of Mary's child. There is no God-forsaken place and we are never alone—not in hospital rooms, or sheltering in place, or Zoom calls or on dangerous roads. Many of us will not be physically home for Christmas, but we are truly home in Christ.



A virtual Blue Christmas Service
December 21 at 7pm CST

A VIRTUAL BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Christmas should be a happy season. But it's hard to sing "Joy to the World" when sadness engulfs your heart. The reality of life—memories of the past and the pain of the present—can leave many people feeling less than

merry in December. Register now to participate in the Women of the ELCA's virtual Blue Christmas Service at 8 p.m. on **Monday, December 21**, via Zoom. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with info to join the webinar.

[Register Today](#)

YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS

YOUTH REGATHERING

We were able to gather in person in March and that was the last time we were able to meet in person, up until NOW! The Synod Guidelines have change and now Youth and Children may gather together within these guidelines:

- · Outside only
 - · Wear masks
 - · Practice social distancing
 - · Have no more than 25 people total
-
- **December 20** Youth Christmas Gathering In-Person
 - **December 27** No Youth



CHURCH RESOURCES



You can manage your giving online! Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions or make a one time contribution and view your complete online giving history

from anywhere you have access to the Internet. In a few short minutes, you can make a one-time gift or set up a donation that will process automatically on a recurring basis. Recurring donations are convenient and provide our church with much needed consistent support throughout the year.

The need for your giving and support continues, even though we have had to cancel gathering and corporate worship services.

Give Now

ST. JAMES STAFF

- **Rev. Tony Bradshaw**, *Senior Pastor* [Email](#)
- **Jill Irvin**, *Financial Administrator* [Email](#)
- **Keith Sutton**, *Parish Administrator* [Email](#)
- **Mike Holt**, *Youth and Family* [Email](#)
- **Cindy Cruse**, *Hospitality Coordinator* [Email](#)
- **Kathryn Radcliffe**, *Nursery Coordinator* [Email](#)
- **Kenny Propst**, *Congregation President* [Email](#)

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