

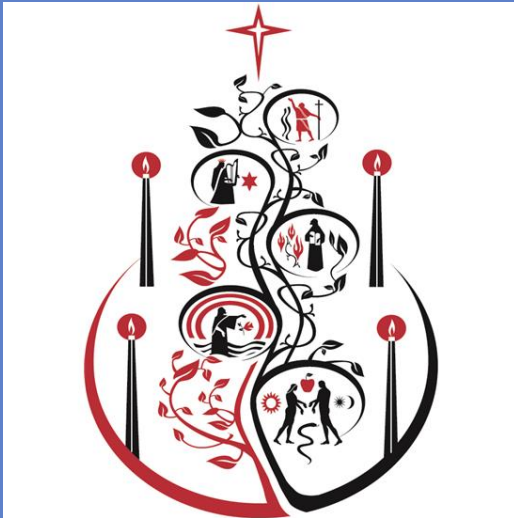
St. James Lutheran Church

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

Ring Out A Weekly Newsletter



WEEK OF DECEMBER 6



Worship Bulletin Dec. 6

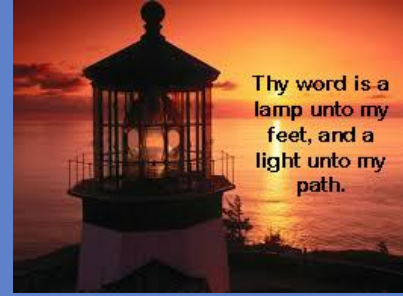
Second Sunday of Advent

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

First Reading Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Second Reading 2 Peter 3:8-15a
Gospel Mark 1:1-8



Readings for December 6



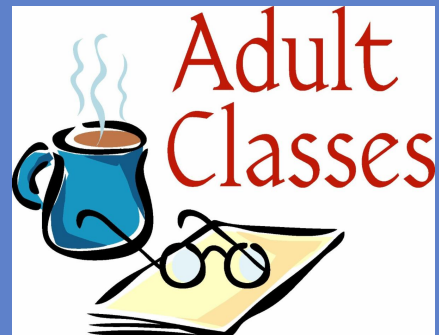
ONLINE WORSHIP

Online Worship for Sunday, December 6 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- Jacob's Dream

[Join Class on Zoom](#)



ON THE CALENDAR THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 6
9:30 am Online Worship Service

Thursday, December 10
6:30 pm Bible Heroes Pre-2nd

10:00 am Zoom Sunday School
5:30 pm Tree Lighting / Caroling

Tuesday, December 8

6:00 pm Congregation Council

Wednesday, December 9

7:00 pm Drive-In Worship/
Communion

7:00 pm Bible Heroes 3rd-5th

Sunday, December 13

9:30 am Online Worship Service

10:00 am Zoom Sunday School

4:00 - 7:00 pm Bethlehem at the
Farm

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

06-Dec. Marshall Cromer

06-Dec. Carole Grady

08-Dec. Lauren Yoos

10-Dec. Jason Urso

11-Dec. C J Harward III



DRIVE-IN WORSHIP/COMMUNION

**Wednesday, December 9
Top Level of Parking Deck**

In order to provide an opportunity to safely worship together in the same place and to commune, there will be a Drive-In Communion service on Wednesday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. **We will be gathering on the top level of the Parking Deck next to St. James.**

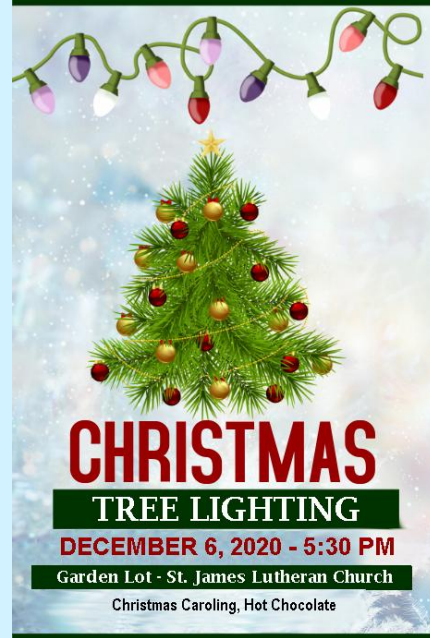
CHURCH NEWS

TREE LIGHTING / CAROLING

**December 6 - 5:30 pm
Garden Lot at St. James**

Since we are not yet able to gather in person inside the sanctuary, we will

gather together for a tree lighting in the Garden Lot this coming Sunday. We invite each family to **Bring an Ornament to Represent Your Family** on the tree. There will be a short devotional; we will be lighting the tree and singing Christmas Carols. Hot Chocolate will be available.



GUIDELINES:

- We ask that you park in the Portico Lot, Parking Deck or on the street where allowed.
- Lawn chairs may be set up in the lot, spaced apart.
- Masks must be worn.
- Please observe social distancing of 6 feet unless someone is a part of your social bubble.



Bethlehem at the Farm December 13 - 4:00 - 7:00 pm

Journey back in time to Bethlehem on Sunday evening, **December 13** from 4:00 – 7:00 pm. You and your family will be welcomed to Bethlehem by the Census Taker and introduced to your guide who will lead you through the experience. You will meet a Roman soldier on horseback, visit the market where bread, fruit and other items can be found, meet a group of shepherds warming themselves around a campfire and talking about seeing the angels and their visit to see the baby. Meet the Innkeeper, encounter a person in need, feed the animals, and of course, visit Mary, Joseph and the newborn baby.

All COVID guidelines will be practiced: social distancing, hand sanitizing, and temperature checks as you enter the city. In order to maintain an outside gathering maximum of 50 persons at one time, it is important that you sign up below or if you prefer, you may call the church office 704-786-0166 to schedule your time. Each time slot is 20 minutes long.

A huge THANK YOU to Jeff and Nita Jones for allowing us to use their farm for this special event. The address of the farm is 835 Brafford Drive, Concord, NC 28025. The farm is located 1.7 miles from the church. We hope to see you in Bethlehem.

[Make Your Reservation](#)

ADVENT WREATH KIT

Create your own family Advent wreath to light at home during this Advent season. St. James will be providing the materials for you to make your own wreath. There are still kits available and can be picked up at the church during office hours.



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

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 Troop 221.

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



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.

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 recent months we have averaged serving between 750 and 800 households through our drive-through food pantry at our Crisis Center. With our satellite pantries and other food programs, we are serving about 1,500 households a month! In the first two weeks of November, we had already served 500 households, including 80 in one day on November 2! So almost as fast as the food is donated, we're distributing it.



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:

- Canned Green Beans
- Canned Corn
- Baked Beans (Pork & Beans)
- Other canned beans except for Pinto (black, kidney, chili, etc.)
- Any dried beans
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Pasta Sauce
- Canned pasta w/ meat (spaghetti w/ meatballs, ravioli, etc.)

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

CHURCH-WIDE NEWS



Hope Is Stronger Than Memory

Hope is Stronger Than Memory

This time of year is so very nostalgic, even sentimental for those of us so charmed or privileged. We long for what was,

for our ghosts of happy Christmas Past to visit sooner rather than later with its flood of happy memories. We long for them, cling to them, count on them to affirm and renew what we thought we always knew and even deserved. Good things, like family, relationships, childlike faith, and wonder. For the privileged, there's no feel-good, fail-safe panacea-like Christmas.

The other day while driving, this peppy tune from the Broadway musical "Mame" came on the radio, and I joyfully sang along, even though I can be the most stubborn "no Christmas music until Christmas" grinch!

WE NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS From the show "Mame" (1966, Jerry Herman)

- Haul out the holly. Put up the tree before my spirit falls again
- Fill up the stocking. I may be rushing things, but deck the halls again now.
- For we need a little Christmas. Right this very minute.
- Candles in the window, carols at the spinet

- Yes, we need a little Christmas, right this very minute
- Need a little Christmas NOW!!!

But did you realize this song, in the context of the musical, was sung by Auntie Mame and the cast during a sweltering, thoroughly depressing Georgia July? (I remember at least the sweltering part!) Things aren't going well at all for Auntie Mame. Her plantation-owner husband has died in a freak accident, and her nephew from New York has just come to live with her. The 1929 stock market crash has left her on the verge of bankruptcy. "How," this transplant from the North into Deep South Georgia wonders, "can we make things better?" Desperate times call for desperate measures.

Haul out the holly! Fill the stocking! Candles in the window! Carols at the spinet! Nothing chases the blues away like Christmas! And we need it, NOW. Right this very minute. The tune is so upbeat that it's easy to miss the deep angst in the lyrics. "Because I've grown a little leaner, grown a little colder, grown a little sadder, grown a little older and I need a little angel, sitting on my shoulder, need a little Christmas NOW!"

Ah, that word that makes Advent so frustratingly counter-cultural even without a pandemic and the prospect of a vaccine that can restore a little normality. [Vocabulary alert as pandemic invokes this word so regularly: "normalcy" is technically not a word. It's "normality." No such thing as its opposite, "abnormalcy." Nope. Abnormality. Rant over.] We are—with or without a pandemic, without glorifying the past or minimizing the struggle of the present—by definition, the people whose faith acknowledges that as strong as memory is, hope is stronger still. Life isn't fundamentally about either the destination or the journey. It's about who accompanies us. Relationships are, finally, only as strong as the future they promise. That's why we put all of our eggs in one basket, the basket of Jesus, stronger even than our sinning, stronger even than our dying. The one whose future has death not ahead, but in the past, and therefore not just the one who came, but will come again in power.

...which brings us back to Advent that announces, awaits, prepares for, aches for that one's coming.

"Keeping Advent" means not letting anything, not our proud past, not even Christmas, obscure our hope, watching, waiting, repentance. Yes, I've all but sold my soul to the Amazon Prime culture of instant gratification. I prefer it all right now. But oh, how we all NEED to learn and to recover and to practice hopeful WAITING! All will be well in the

end, and to the extent that all is NOT well, this is NOT the end!

How much more poignant this year, as in-person gathering hopes for families, much less congregations, are still very much up in the air, as the snowball rolls down the hill toward 300,000 virus deaths, as racial and political and economic ideologies and realities split family and nation. So yes, “We want a little Christmas. Right this very minute. Vaccine distribution. Fulfillment to win it.” But Advent invites us into the counter-intuitive, spiritually and emotionally necessary posture of active waiting. Faith. I’m with you, Mame. Got my tree up. Blared Christmas carols last week. Earliest ever. But need a little Advent NOW!

Walking with you,
Bishop Tim Smith



CHRISTMAS BENEFIT CONCERT

December 9 - 8:00 pm

In the first-ever event of its kind, ELCA World Hunger presents an online Christmas benefit concert featuring Peter Mayer, a longtime Lutheran and the lead guitarist for Jimmy Buffett. Although we are in the midst of a difficult winter due to COVID-19, we know that, through God’s abundance, you have shown incredible generosity by supporting the necessary work

of the church. This concert is a gift to you this Advent season. It is a way for us to say thank you and provide a place for you to gather online with the church community as we prepare for the birth of our Savior.

The concert is free and will premiere on the [ELCA Facebook page](#), with a live chat so you can engage with the audience, ELCA staff and Peter Mayer himself. Donations to ELCA World Hunger are encouraged and will support our church’s work to respond to hunger and poverty in more than 60 countries around the world.

Register now to receive a free, exclusive Peter Mayer Christmas album download, created just for this event!

[Click here to get my free album](#)

Get the latest information through the [Facebook event](#) and share with your friends! Join the fun on Twitter and Instagram with the hashtags #ELCAChurchTogether and #StarsAndPromises, and we'll be resharing your posts. We hope to see you there!

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL VIRTUAL PROGRAM

December 11 - 8:00 pm

The National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival comes to audiences FREE in a virtual, multi-media format on **December 11**. *The Incarnation: For the Healing of the World* brings music from around the globe announcing the birth of Christ with messages of peace and joy that nothing—not even a pandemic—can take away.



[Details Here](#)

ELCA GOOD GIFTS

Wondering how to make a positive impact in the world right now? With ELCA Good Gifts, you can choose from 50 charitable gifts to give in honor of friends and loved ones. Each one of these gifts makes a real impact in the world, sharing the love of Christ — one goat, water well or school uniform at a time. Start your holiday shopping now and order free, customized cards for each gift you give. Please give by Dec. 10, 2020, to ensure that your cards arrive in time for Christmas.



[Shop Now](#)

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 6** Youth In-Person
- **December 13** Bethlehem on the Farm
- **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](#)

Website: www.sjnc.net
Church Email info@sjnc.net

