

The December 2025 Epistle



A publication of St. James Lutheran Church,
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Dear St. James Family,

MESSAGE from the VICAR

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Advent is upon us and our themes are turning toward the arrival of Jesus. As always, when we remember the coming of Jesus in his birth in Bethlehem, we also look forward to his coming in glory at the end of this age. In that way, the themes of Advent are twofold.

On the one hand, we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus in the world when he was born as a baby. We rejoice in all that means for us - in our time and in our place - as well as for the whole world. His coming was certainly a gift to the world - unlike any other gift. It brings us hope. It brings us peace. It brings us courage to do good in the world.

On the other hand, the full extent of the blessings of that gift have not permeated our world completely. When we look around at the state of the world, we might wonder if the blessing of Christ extends *far as the curse is found* as the old Christmas carol states so beautifully.

The Scriptures call this time we live in the “last days.” We live between the first advent of Christ in Bethlehem and the second Advent of Christ at some point in the future. Our readings during the Advent season will reflect these themes. We will be comforted by God’s gift to us in the baby Jesus and we will be called to consider how we live today in light of the future coming of Jesus. These are simultaneously comforting and challenging messages. I pray God gives us ears to hear and hearts to receive these promises of God as we look forward to the celebration that waits for us on Christmas.

Before we get to Christmas there are many, many opportunities to engage with celebrations during the Advent season! Announcements for all of the celebrations will come to you in various ways. Keep your eyes peeled! Here are a few major dates you won't want to miss.

- **December 13th** - Live Nativity! Sign up to be a character and tell all your friends!
- **December 20th** - Joint “Blue Christmas” service at Redeemer Lutheran in Bettendorf.
- **December 24th** - Christmas Eve services at 4pm and 11pm
- **December 25th** - Christmas Day service - PRE-RECORDED ONLINE ONLY
- **January 6th** - Epiphany Service - lots of family fun w/worship!

The details of these festivities are located elsewhere in this newsletter, in our regular worship service bulletins, and hanging in the Narthex. I look forward to celebrating with you all!

Grace and peace to you in this Advent season,
Vicar Bryce Hewlett, SAM

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Happy December, St. James!

It is astonishing how fast this year has gone by, and all the amazing things that have transpired over this year! Advent is one of my favorite times of the year, as we get to celebrate the birth of Christ and reflect on what He has done for us.

We have so many exciting things happening during Advent that anyone can participate in!

We have Advent readings, candle lightings, and two Christmas Eve services; one at 4 pm, and one at 11 pm. Both were well attended last year, and I hope both will be well attended again this year.

Our Live Nativity will be held Saturday, December 13th, from 4-6 pm. Soup will be served at this time, as well as crafts for the kids. Donations to the Food Pantry and the Clothes Closet are welcome! I hope you all can come and enjoy the greatest story ever told.

Finally, the Confirmation students are seeking donations to make Compassion Bags to give out to some of our local homeless shelters.

An insert was in the bulletins in November stating what the students need for donations. They are hoping to get enough donations to make 30 bags to give out the week before Christmas. I hope you all can lend a helping hand to those in need.

I wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas Season!

Be good. Do good. God Bless,

Madeline Schmidt

A background of colorful, irregular confetti pieces in shades of pink, orange, yellow, green, and blue.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/4 HARLEN BRIGGS

12/9 SELENA GARCIA-HOGBIN

12/10 JASON FORARI

12/12 JACKSON PUETZ

12/14 MELISSA FORARI

12/14 RENEE WHITE

12/15 SAMUEL PESSEIN

12/23 ELLEN HOGBIN

12/23 CAROL LEACOX

12/24 CARA CHAMBERLAIN

12/26 CHRISTIAN MALLI

12/30 JUDITH RYAN

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/27 ED & SANDY ARP



ANGEL TREE



PLEASE
RETURN GIFTS
BY DECEMBER
14th



PLEASE BE SURE TO SIGN FOR EACH GIFT
(**ANGEL OR BELL**) THAT YOU TAKE!

Each gift should include child's name
AND family number (located on Angel)

If you have multiple gifts for your child,
please label **EACH** one!

Family gifts are appreciated!

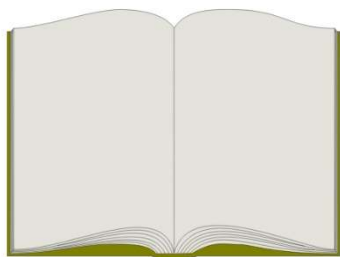
For questions or more information, contact
Judy Larson at 563-340-7902

Join us for A BACK PORCH Theology
BIBLE STUDY

A Jesus Shaped Life

by Lisa Harper

How Biblically Sound Theology Deepens Our
Relationship with God and Each Other



Mondays 6-7:30pm starting
December 29th at St. James

This is a 7 week study where we will gather together to watch videos and have discussion with deeper solo learning points in the week following. The study guide can be found on Amazon.

Please contact Justina at 563-940-3782 if you are interested in joining or if you have any questions!

Live Nativity & Blue Christmas

SPECIAL SERVICES



SATURDAY

12/14/2025

*Live
Nativity*



PERFORMANCE
TIMES

4:00PM

4:30PM

5:00PM

5:30PM

SATURDAY

12/20/2025

*Blue
Christmas*

SERVICE TIME

7:00PM

**REDEEMER
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

1107 TANGLEFOOT LN,
BETTENDORF, IA



Christmas & Epiphany

SPECIAL SERVICE TIMES

WEDNESDAY

12/24/2025

*Christmas
Eve*

4:00PM

TRADITIONAL
FAMILY SERVICE

11:00PM

CLASSIC SERVICE

THURSDAY

12/25/2025

*Christmas
Day*

PRE-RECORDED
SERVICE

- ONLINE ONLY -

FIND IT ON OUR YOUTUBE
CHANNEL!

TUESDAY

1/6/2026

Epiphany

6:00PM

"AROUND THE
WORLD" POTLUCK
AND CELEBRATION

7:00PM

SERVICE FOR THE
FEAST OF EPIPHANY

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
8:30AM Choir Warm-up 9AM Worship	4PM Social Ministry		6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC		5PM Saturday Service & Potluck
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9AM Worship 10AM Friendly Visitor bags	8AM Worship & Music Mtg. 6PM Christian Ed. Mtg.	4PM Property Mtg.	6-8PM Food Pantry 6PM Confirmation Class	9-11AM Food Pantry 1PM Finance Mtg.		4PM Live Nativity (in Place of Saturday Service)
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
9AM Worship 10AM Coffee & Convo 10AM Council Mtg.		1PM Sarah Circle	6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC 11:30AM GANG		5PM Saturday Service 7PM Blue Christmas at Redeemer Lutheran
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
9AM Worship			4PM Christmas Eve Service 11PM Christmas Eve Service	Christmas		NO Saturday Service



St James GANG

St. James GANG will be going on a road trip for our Christmas Party Dec. 18th. Meet us at the Duck Creek Pancake House on Hwy 67 - just East of Devil's Glen Road at 11:30am. We will order our own lunch off the menu.

If you want to take part in a gift exchange, bring a gift which would be OK for either a guy or gal. Gifts should be under \$5. **There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex on Sunday, Dec. 14th. SIGN UP THAT DAY** so you will be included when we phone in reservations on **MONDAY!** See you there!

Pat Larson



From the Quilt Block

The quilt raffle started on November 29th and will run until December 21st when we have the drawing. Remember, your contributions will be spent to purchase more batting.

Peace be with you,

Shirley Richlen

Live Nativity

Saturday, December 13th 4-6PM

St. James Lutheran Church
1705 Oak Street, Bettendorf

4 Performances:

4:00PM | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | 5:30PM

Join us for soup and more between performances in our Fellowship Hall

Experience the excitement
of the very first Christmas



Come see and pet our LIVE animals!

Donations to the Food Pantry & Clothes Closet are welcome!

Find us on Facebook





Epiphany Service

Tuesday, January 6th ✦

Epiphany is one of the largest Christian celebrations around the world! It commemorates the manifestation of Jesus to all the nations through the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus and marks the end of the twelve days of Christmas.

6:00 p.m.

✦ **“Around the World”**

Potluck and Celebration ✦

Bring a dish from your cultural background to share!

✦ **Polar Plunge** ✦

Dip into the new year with the polar plunge, which represents new beginnings for the new year!

Kids Crafts & Games

Search for Baby Jesus and more!

7:00 p.m.

Service for the Feast of the Epiphany





CHURCH COUNCIL

OLD BUSINESS

Motion for council to make conversation with the congregation at an open council meeting on removal of the C9.03.A10 provision in the church constitution by Ellen, seconded by Steve. Motion passed.

To the Congregation:

Thank you to everyone that helped me celebrate my 100th birthday – sent a card, flowers, a gift card, made a phone call, or visited. Thanks to the church friends that helped with decorations and food and all that helped me celebrate. I will cherish it the rest of my days.

Frieda Houldsworth



Meeting of the Property Committee was held on November 18th.

- Live Nativity – Tent set-up scheduled for Sat., Dec. 13, 9:00 AM.
- Elevator repairs pending after inspection.
- Bell tower cap complete – NEW CROSS, with solar light. Cross meticulously crafted by Fritz and Co. THANK YOU!! And the cost covered by a donation from another St. James member. Thank you!
 - When you drive by after dark, be sure to notice the light on the flag and the new cross - Beautiful!
- January/February – tree trimming

Capital Improvement list completed!

Worship Assistants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Usher	Altar Guild	Altar Guild
12/7/25	Caroline Hicks	Judie Brooks	Jude Hewlett	Melissa Forari	Ana Forari	Audrey Lovell	Diana Worley
12/14/25	Pat Larson	Angie Schmidt	Edi Southwell	Fritz Voss	Judy Larson	Marilyn Pieart	Diana Worley
12/21/25	Shirley Richlen	Diana Worley	Dex Hewlett	Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols	Marilyn Pieart	Diana Worley
Christmas Eve 4pm 12/24/25	Needed	Needed	Needed	Needed	Needed	Needed	Shirley Richlen
Christmas Eve 11pm 12/24/25	Needed	Needed	Eden & Kellan Bileddo	Needed	Needed	Needed	Shirley Richlen
12/28/25	Ellen Hogbin	Pat Larson	Velvet Collison	Ron Mekalson	Kelly Crooks		Shirley Richlen

*Please Note: If you find you cannot serve on the date/time scheduled, please arrange for your replacement, then **call or email your scheduler** to advise the name of your replacement. Your gracious cooperation is very much appreciated! Thanks!*

Schedulers

Altar Guild: Mary Meumann (563)355-7138; marybusdvr@gmail.com

Ushers & Assisting Ministers:

Madlyn Wulgaert; stjamesbett@gmail.com

Children's Team: Kim Hewlett (856)296-1023;
kimhewlett18@gmail.com

Counters: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354;
madelineschmidt2016@gmail.com

Acolytes: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354; madelineschmidt2016@gmail.com

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Ed Arp, **Lynn** Chamberlain, **Bev** Chappen, **Sandy** Henry, **Frieda** Houldsworth, **Jeryl** Krumbholz, **Jim** Krumbholz, **Bert** Leder, **LaVonne** Mienke, **Mark** Peters

Family and Friends

Amanda (friend of Melissa), **Barry** (cousin of Ellen Hogbin), **Carol** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Carol** (friend of Steve & Sue Miller) **Crew** (Susie and Jeff Seitz' new grandson), **Donna** (Ed Arp's sister), **Drew** (Pat Larson's friend), **Emmett** (friend of Diana Worley), **Hattie** (Frieda's sister), **Jenn** (family of Bryce/Kim & Gary/Eunice), **Joe** (Janene's son-in-law), **John** (Susie & Jeff Seitz' friend), **Joseph** (friend of Bryce & Kim), **Karen and Ed** (Shirley's Aunt and Uncle), **Konnor** (Bert Leder's grandson), **Mark** (friend of Jason Forari), **Michelle** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Phil** (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's brother), **Stan** (relative of Fritz Voss), **Steve** (friend of Pat Larson) **Tami** (family of Maggie Bayliss), **Ted** (Ellen Hogbin's father-in-law), **Wally** (Frieda's nephew)

Those Whose Duty it is to Protect Others

Anthony Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)
CPT **Eli** Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)
Nathan Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)
Tyler McLaughlin, First Responder (Family of Pat Larson)

In Memoriam

Don Evans

*If you have anyone who needs to be taken off or added,
please notify the church office.*

