

The January 2026 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!

RING THE BELLS! JESUS HAS BEEN BORN! THE WORD HAS BEEN MADE FLESH!

Our reading on Christmas Day from the prophet Isaiah began with these words: *“How beautiful...are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation”*

Let the message of salvation be shouted for all who will hear!

As I said in my Christmas Day sermon, it is a glorious feeling to receive good news - to be found when you are lost, to be healed when you are broken, to be freed when you are in chains, to be part of building anew after havoc has destroyed a home, when peace is finally attained where war and hostility previously reigned, to have a melody in our hearts when formerly there was bitterness and pain...and this is the promise of God in the arrival of Jesus Christ.

There are times when we cannot see the good work that is happening below the surface. There are times when the world seems so far gone that peace seems like a dream of a fainter dream. There are times when resources are so slim that rebuilding seems impossible. There are times when the world seems dark and there is nothing we have nothing to cling to except the promise of God. And still...the promise of God remains.

The promise of God is that with the arrival of Christ the scales have irrevocably tipped in favor of light over darkness. As we have been saying throughout Advent and now through the Christmas season: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness *does not* overcome it.

What does that mean for today? In the imagery of C.S. Lewis and the Chronicles of Narnia, it may still be winter but Christmas is coming. The earth may be hard as iron from weeks and months and years of frost, but the Son has set his foot on the earth and the thaw has begun.

The promise of what has already happened in Christ may not be fully realized in our present circumstances, but in our reality, as Children of the Light, we can be the very change in the world today that we want to see tomorrow. Because the promise has been made, because the Savior has been born, the outcome is secure. The Word has been made flesh, the light has dawned in our hearts, and there is no turning it back.

To celebrate that light that has dawned in our hearts, I invite you to join our Epiphany Celebration on January 6th! The celebration starts at 6pm and service is at 7pm. Lots of fun and participation from our kids! Details are on page 5 in this newsletter. See you there!

Grace and peace to you in Epiphany and in the weeks ahead,

Vicar Bryce Hewlett, SAM

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

Happy January and Happy 2026, St. James!

What an eventful year 2025 was, filled with so many memories for a thousand lifetimes!

Last month, we had a wonderful turnout for our Live Nativity (and everyone braved the below-freezing temperatures!)

We had two Christmas Eve services, one at 4 pm and one at 11 pm. Both were well attended. We will continue celebrating the joy of the holiday season on January 6th with our Epiphany service. Crafts and activities will be provided for the children, as well as a “polar plunge” and an “Around the World” potluck celebration, where you can bring a dish to share from your cultural background!

As we prepare to have our Annual Meeting on January 25th, I want to bring up the proposed changes to our Constitution that we will be voting on. We had a discussion back in October with a lot of good dialogue, where people were able to voice their opinions and concerns. Bryce had encouraged everyone at the end of the meeting to keep thinking about the proposed changes and how they can help St. James’ future. We are planning on sending out another email with the drafted constitution updates as we get closer to the Annual Meeting, so you can look over the proposed changes once more. I encourage you all to attend.

Be good. Do good. God bless,

Madeline Schmidt

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

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1/1 PATTY TURNER

1/5 KATHY MANTHE

1/8 STEVE MILLER I

1/10 NICK MALLI

1/11 TERRY MARTENS

1/16 SHARON CORKEN

1/16 WRIGLEY HEWLETT

1/16 SHIRLEY WAIT

1/19 BARBARA JACKSON

1/21 LEO SOUTHWELL

1/26 KELLAN BILEDDO

1/28 BRADLEY MALLI

1/28 KAREN MARTIN

1/31 SUE MILLER

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

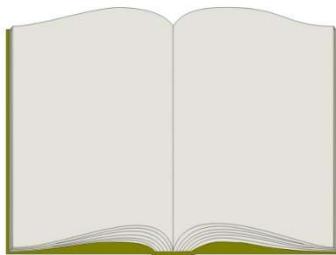
1/19 SHERRY GERMANIO & LYNN
CHAMBERLAIN

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!

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9AM Worship	6-7:30PM Bible Study	6PM Epiphany Potluck 7PM Service	6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC 1PM Finance Mtg.		5PM Saturday Service
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9AM Worship	8AM Worship & Music Mtg. 6-7:30PM Bible Study	4PM Property Mtg. 6PM Christian Ed. Mtg.	6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry		5PM Saturday Service
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9AM Worship 10AM Council Mtg.	6-7:30PM Bible Study	1PM Sarah Circle	6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry		5PM Saturday Service
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9AM Worship 10AM Annual Mtg.	6-7:30PM Bible Study	12-4PM Quilting	6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry		5PM Saturday Service



Sarah Circle will meet on Tuesday January 20th at 1:00pm in the Social Hall. We are studying Prayer.



If you haven't heard yet, the winners of the quilt drawing were:

- #1 "Sweet Disappearing 9 Patch" (twin) Madlyn Wulgaert
- #2 "Chevron" (Twin) Bob Jacobs,
- #3 "Double Frame 16 patch " (twin) Joleen Bakken
- #4 "Hawkeye Square Dance" (lap robe) Carrie Reese
- #5 "Star Burst" (lap robe), Anna Forari
- #6 "Hedge Hog Wild " (baby quilt) Pat Hill

Thanks to all who participated so we can purchase batting. \$141.00 was collected which is enough to purchase 1 roll of batting (not including shipping). Each roll will make 27 quilts. Thank you again.

The quilters also participated in the Farmers Market Fall Festival to inform the public of some of the mission work done by the ELCA Lutheran churches in the area. St. James sold some quilts and other items for a total of \$155.00 at the Festival. We were joined by Trinity in Pleasant Valley, Grace, Zion, and St. Mark in Davenport.

The quilt group meets on Tuesday, the 27th of January at church from noon to 4:00 p.m. weather permitting. Bring a smile and join the fun. NO SEWING skills are required. We can teach you all you need to know, and you will enjoy the fellowship of the group, snacks, and coffee. Come and see what we are all about.

*Keep on stitching.
Shirley Richlen*



This has been a very busy time for us! In November, we served a meal for Churches United at Zion Lutheran Church in Davenport. Around 70 people were fed!

Our Giving Tree was once again a great success! We provided gifts to 41 children from 17 families, and 10 adult residents of the Bettendorf Healthcare Center. Thank you to all who made this possible.

We also called Bingo at the Health Care Center on the 18th. They are always so appreciative and it's a joy to be there. They win small stuffed animals and quarters. They also enjoy small figurines.

If you'd like to be involved in Social Ministry, please contact Judy Larson at 563-340-7902.

January Worship Assistants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Usher
1/4/26	Tom Sladky	Diana Worley	Needed	Fritz Voss	Judy Larson
Epiphany 1/6/26	Needed	Needed	Needed	Needed	Needed
1/11/26	Diana Worley	Judy Larson	Needed	Kelly Crooks	Ron Mekalson
1/18/26	Shirley Richlen	Angie Schmidt	Needed	Ellen Hogbin	Ryan Martin
1/25/26	Pat Larson	Jason Forari	Needed	Caroline Hicks	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

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 25th
10:00AM

This is a meeting where we recall everything that has been done in the church over the past year.

- New Council members will be voted in.
- Each committee will share their report from 2025.

**Members:
please plan to
attend this
meeting!**

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Ed Arp, Lynn Chamberlain, Bev Chappen, Sandy Henry, Frieda Houldsworth, Jeryl Krumbholz, Jim Krumbholz,

Doug Larson, Bert Leder, LaVonne Mienke, Mark Peters, Jean Rowe, Dave Schmidt

Family and Friends

Amanda (friend of Melissa), **Becky** (sister 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),

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)

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

Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 23:6

