



**Monday, December 25, 2023**

***Christmas Day 10:00am***

**St. James United Church of Christ**

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor

Briana and Jason Riesterer, Advent Candle Reader and Lighter

Cindy Sohn, Choir Director

Randy Sohn, Organist

*St. Augustine, famous 5<sup>th</sup> century bishop, said “He who sings prays twice.” Is it any wonder that Christmas time is rife with carols and hymns? In singing, we give voice to the prayers that embody our faith. O come, let us adore him.*

Meditative Music

Bells Ring

Prelude Gathering for Worship:

*Christmas Hallelujah* by Katie Kleinhans

### **Call to Worship:**

Come, faithful watchers, and behold, your salvation is here!

**We greet the Wondrous Light, our Messiah, Christ the Lord.**

We have waited and watched, longing for God to show up and save us from the suffering and pain in our world.

**We greet the Wondrous Light, the fulfillment of our shocking hope.**

We have waited and watched, longing for peace to reign among us, a peace that removes unjust barriers, frees us from sin, and binds us together as neighbors, family, and friends.

**We greet the Wondrous Light, the bringer of our just peace.**

We have waited and watched, longing for joy that is persistent in the face of the grief, lament, chaos, and oppression that weigh on us day in and day out.

**We greet the Wondrous Light, the source of our fierce joy.**

We have waited and watched, longing to encounter the love that transforms us, the love that is now here among us, first as a babe in a manger, then as a teacher, a friend, and our Savior.

**We greet the Wondrous Light, Love Incarnate who has come to save us and transform us.**

### **Prayer:**

O almighty God, by the birth of your holy child Jesus, you gave us a great light to dawn on our darkness. Grant that in his light we may see light. Bestow upon us that most excellent Christmas gift of love to all people, so that the likeness of your Son may be formed in us, and that we may have the ever-brightening hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

♪ Hark the Herald Angels Sing (#102)

Young at Heart:



### **The Lighting of the Advent Candles Reading:**

God of glory, your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem into the darkness of human night. Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice and defenders of all for whom there is no room.

**Light the first, second, third, and fourth Advent Candles**

### **The Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

Do not be afraid – the light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it. The light is Jesus Christ – the Son of God. Emmanuel – God with us.

### **Apostles Creed**

**I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:**

**Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried:**

**He descended into hell: The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit: The One Holy Universal Christian Church: the communion of saints: The forgiveness of sins: The resurrection of the body:  
And the life everlasting. Amen.**

♪ **The Joy of Christmas**

St. James Choir

**The Christmas Story and Message**

Luke 2:1-20 ESV

*In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

*And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

*"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

*When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.*

♪ **O Thou Joyful (#117)**

**Holy Communion Liturgy:**

Beloved in Christ, during this Advent season we have prepared ourselves to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind go to Bethlehem to see this thing which came to pass, and the Babe lying in the manger. But first we pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all God's people. Let us also remember, in God's name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children. These prayers

and praises we humbly offer to God and in the words which Christ himself hath taught us, saying and praying boldly:

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Holy are you and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected. As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born, so, by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ; one with each other; and one in ministry to our community and beyond. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father now and forever. **Amen.**

*Ours is an open communion to all faiths or those exploring.  
Come and be welcome at the Lord's Supper.*

**St. James Choral Music:**

*Christmas Communion Song*

**Offering:**

The offering will be made as ushers bring the offering plates to you.

St. James is also set up to take on-line offerings through the website (stmstjucc.org).

**Offertory Music:**

*Now is Born the Divine Christ Child, Duet by Cindy and Randy*

*~ The offering is brought to the altar ~*

**Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving:**

**Holy Child of Bethlehem, bless these gifts, that they may be the grace of God for a community in need; that they may be the Spirit of peace for a world at war with itself. Bring your peace into our darkness, and flow through our lands with your glorious love. Amen.**

♪ **Joy to the World (#120)**

**Closing Prayer:**

The people who walked in the darkness have seen a great light.

**Those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.**

We are that people. Christ is that light.

**For a child has been born for us. God's own Son has been given unto us.**

He is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace through his glorious reign.**

Let the trees of the forest shout for joy!

**Let heaven and nature sing!**



***Poinsettias shared in love  
with our church family this Christmas:***

*Heidi & Clarence Belitz, in memory of our parents.*

*Sheila & Brian Hemb, in memory of my parents Lionel & Joan Hellmer.*

*David & Tanya Boman and family, in memory of Dad, Myron Sohn.*

*David & Tanya Boman, for the joy of grandchildren, AJ and Aubrey.*

*Pat Kleinhans, for the joy of Life, Laughter, Love.*

*Charles & Ruth Ann Kolb, for the joy of Christ's birth.*

*Sue, Cindy, Sandy and Families, in memory of Alvin & Loretta Kracht.*

*The Krause Family, in memory of Dolores Krause.*

*Julianne Luebke; Keith, Michelle & Brad Mauk; Katelynn & Rowan Sibley,  
in memory of David Luebke.*

*The Lutzes, for the Joy of Christmas.*

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*Dorothy Mueller, in memory of my siblings Eugene, LaVerne, Henry, Marie  
and twin Donald.*

*Dorothy Mueller, in honor of our forefathers who had the foresight to donate land  
for St. James. Thus, we celebrate 160 years.*

*Jackie & Dave Mueller, Cody, Lexi, Cheyenne & Ben,  
in memory of my parents, Ilene & Leroy Stock.*

*Tom & Nancy Nye, in loving memory of Melvin & Violet Seifert.*

*Tom & Nancy Nye, in loving memory of Addison Emilie Nye.*

*Tammy Serketich, for the joy of Ella, Ezra & Cole.*

*Carlene Sohn in memory of Myron Sohn.*

*Carlene Sohn & Family, in memory of Elmer & Leona Sohn and  
Carl & Elmyra Ohlrogge.*

*Randy & Cindy Sohn, Katie & Daniel, Dan & Rachel, in memory of Myron Sohn.*

*Randy & Cindy Sohn, Katie & Daniel, Dan & Rachel,  
in memory of Kenneth & Virginia Kuether.*

*Dale & Doris Sprenger, in honor of Children, Grandchildren  
and Great Granddaughter.*

*Dale & Doris Sprenger, in memory of  
brother & sister-in-law, Allen & Katherine Gabsch,  
brothers-in-law, Edward Kretsch and David Luebke,  
nephew, Larry Kretsch.*

*Allen & Eunice Stolzmann, for the joy of our Family.*

*Ellen Mae Surfus, in memory of Bill Surfus and Arthur & Hertha Lorfeld.*

*Tom Urness & family, in memory of Jill Urness.*

*Mary Ann Vogel, in memory of Wayne Vogel and Walter & Orvilla Stoeckigt.*



# Staying Close, Staying Connected

## Our Church Celebrations!

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK TO:

December 24<sup>th</sup> – Jenny Riesterer, Lee Sixel

25<sup>th</sup> – Raymond Henschel, Noel Wippermann

27<sup>th</sup> – Ethen Lutzke

28<sup>th</sup> – Tim Russart

### ANNIVERSARY:

December 28<sup>th</sup> – Mike & Amy Summers



**December 27th is the deadline for making a contribution to St. James/St. Mark's UCC to have it recorded for 2023.**

INFORMATION FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT is due to Karen:

St. Mark's-Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>

St. James-Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>.

Email to [stmstjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:stmstjoffice@gmail.com) or drop off a copy at St. Mark's

**WE NEED SAFE SANCTUARY HELPERS**—an extra adult--to attend the high school youth group meetings. Please consider volunteering, it's a great way to get to know our wonderful HS youth!



### TAKE THE POLAR PLUNGE WITH PASTOR PATRICK ~ CARE KITS FOR THE HOMELESS



Pastor Patrick is taking pledges for the *Polar Bear Plunge* in Sheboygan on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 at 1:00pm. The pledges will be used to reach his goal of making 100 Care Kits for the Homeless. You can pledge big for small as the Spirit leads you, either a flat donation or an incremental donation (ex., *I'll pledge \$2 for every 10 seconds you stay in; \$5 for 30 seconds; \$10 if you stay in the water for 1 min..*)

Sign up sheets are in the back of each church.

For more information contact Pastor Schultz at [schultzpw@gmail.com](mailto:schultzpw@gmail.com), 920-693-8361, or Facebook messenger

**COME & JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS!**

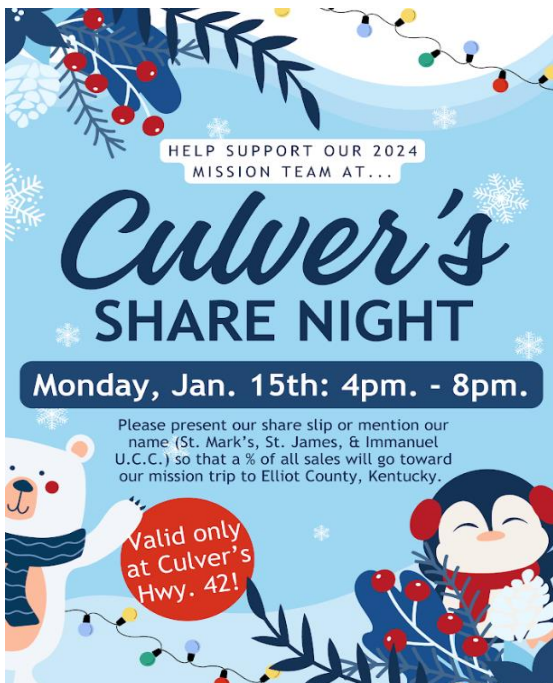
**St. James UCC**

**1st & 3rd Sundays..... 10:30 a.m.**  
**2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays..... 9:00 a.m.**

**~Sunday School meets 9-10am at both churches~**

**St. Mark's UCC**

**1st & 3rd Sundays..... 9:00 a.m.**  
**2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays..... 10:30 a.m.**



Culver's 'Share Slips' are available in the back of church. One has to accompany each order on Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> in order for our Mission Trip Group to get the donation.

Services are recorded and available on our church YouTube channel:

St. Mark's & St. James UCC

Like us on Facebook

Check out our Website:

[www.stmstjucc.org](http://www.stmstjucc.org)

Join our prayer team; contact Karen in our Church office: [stmstjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:stmstjoffice@gmail.com)

**WELCOME!**

**To the parents of young children:**

**Relax!** *God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress those wiggles in God's house.*

- ❖ *Consider sitting toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to engage.*
- ❖ *Quietly explain the parts of the service and the actions of the pastors, musicians and leaders.*
- ❖ *Sing the songs, pray and voice the responses. Children learn behaviors by mimicking you.*
- ❖ *If you have to leave the Worship Center with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me."*