



**December 12, 2021, Third Sunday of Advent**

**Christmas Fund Sunday**

**St. James United Church of Christ**

**St. Mark's United Church of Christ**

*Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor          Organist: Ann Rodewald*

*Reader: Scott Siekman          Choir Director: Kathy Jurk*

Meditative Music

Bells Ring

Prelude Gathering for Worship:

*Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

**Call to Worship: (responsively)**

**L:** A path to our God,

**P:** Winding through the ordinary,

**L:** Weaving through the busyness,

**P:** Overcoming roadblocks and detours.

**L:** A way to go home,

**P:** Leaving the past in the past,

**L:** Moving from darkness and exile,

**P:** Coming into the light.

**L:** Advent is a path to our God,

**P:** A way to come home,

**L:** A discovery of God's voice:

**P:** Rejoice, rejoice. God is with us!

**Opening Prayer: (all together)**

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to our Church, the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow. For he is Lord forever and ever. *Amen.*

**Hymn of Praise: (#95 Hymnal)**

*On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

**Young At Heart:**



**Advent Candle Lighting (The candle of Joy)**

**Statement of Faith:**

*We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:*

*He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death.*

*He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.*

*He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.*

*In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself.*

*He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.*

*He calls us into his church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.*

*He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.*

*Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen*

**St. Mark's Choir:**

*An Advent Alleluia*

**Pastor:** This is the joy Sunday, the celebration of the gift that comes and the gift we are to and with one another. Let there be shouts of praise and hope. Let there be laughter and joy; not simply a pretending all is well when there are many for whom all is not well. But, a deep reservoir from which joy can be drawn and tasted. Speak of the joy that sustains, the presence that abides, even in the difficult moments, even on the cloudy days.

See how our children express their joy in singing or through moving. Let them dance during the hymns. Set them free to let the joy be seen in their little bodies. Let them influence; let them raise up; let them help put smiles on faces not used to smiling anymore. No, it doesn't change difficult circumstances, but it is a promise of something more to come. Let this be a sign of the coming kingdom. Remind us all that there is joy in this home. Promised joy. Felt joy. Real joy. Let's lean into joy today.

**People:** Be still my soul. Your love and joy overwhelms me. While my days and nights come and go, you will be by my side never leaving nor forsaking me. May my faith in you ever increase!

**Hymn of Assurance:** (#87 Hymnal)

*Be Still My Soul*

**Scripture Reading:**

Isaiah 12:2-6

**Message:**

*An Offer of Joy*

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

**Hymn of Faith:** (#33 Binder)

*Trust and Obey Vs 1, 3, 5*

**People's Prayer / the Lord's Prayer:**

*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.*

**Offering**

Offering, tithes and gifts can be made before or after worship in the offering baskets/plates at the welcome area of the church. St. James is also set up to take on-line offerings through the website (stmstjucc.org).

**Offertory Music:**

*Like a child*

*~ The offering is brought to the altar ~*

**Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving: (all together)**

**God who gives all gifts, in this season, we focus so much on giving gifts to one another. Help us, we pray, to remember what John the Baptist tells us is on your wish list: that we might bear fruit worthy of the repentance that is the very heart**

**of this season: fruit of compassion, fruit of sharing, fruit by denying ourselves so that others who have little will have enough. In response to you, we give that our fruit might please you. In the Savior's name, we pray. Amen.**

**Hymn of Sending:** (#158 Pilgrim People)

*The King of Glory*

**Benediction:**

... To love and serve the Lord. *Amen.*

**Postlude**

*For Ages Women Hoped and Prayed*

---

**Isaiah 12:2-6**

*"Behold, God is my salvation;*

*I will trust, and will not be afraid;*

*for the Lord God is my strength and my song,*

*and he has become my salvation."*

*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day:*

*"Give thanks to the Lord,*

*call upon his name,*

*make known his deeds among the peoples,*

*proclaim that his name is exalted.*

*"Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;*

*let this be made know in all the earth.*

*Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,*

*for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."*

---

Website: [www.stmstjucc.org](http://www.stmstjucc.org) email: [stmstjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:stmstjoffice@gmail.com)

phone: 920.693.8361

Send an email to be added to our prayer team.

Messages are uploaded to YouTube: St. Mark's & St. James UCC

If you or a family member are in need of pastoral care,  
please contact Pastor Patrick at 920-693-2858

or leave a message on the church's answering machine at: 920-693-8361



## This week's celebrations:

### *Birthdays:*

December: 13<sup>th</sup> - Andrew Roelse

16<sup>th</sup> - Janelle Davis, Keith Mauk

### *No Anniversaries This Week*

#### **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."

## **LOOKING AHEAD... NEXT SUNDAY, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> ...**

***St. Mark's: 9:00am Worship***

***9:00-11:30 Sunday School Program Practice***

***5:00pm Sunday School Children's Program***

***St. James: 10:30am Sunday School Children's Program***

***9:00-10:15 Sunday School Program Practice***

**TODAY:** HS Youth Group Youth Gathering/Christmas party, 5:30-7:00pm at St. James. Bring a friend if you like, your favorite holiday appetizer (enough for at least 10 people), and a "white elephant" gift (something you have at home that you and your family no longer need, or something new \$5.00 or under) and please bring it wrapped :) Food, games, and fun!

**STUDY OF LUKE GROUP** - Mon., Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm, St. Mark's

**ST. JAMES CHOIR PRACTICE** - Tues., Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm

**CONFIRMATION-** Wednesday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-7:30, St. James

**ST. MARK'S CHOIR PRACTICE** - Wednesday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE THURS., DEC. 16<sup>TH</sup>**

**GETTING ACQUAINTED... STUDY GROUP** - Thursday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm

---

## **~IMPORTANT CHRISTMAS DATES~**

Sunday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>:

St. James Sunday School Program, 10:30am

St. Mark's Sunday School Program, 5:00pm

Friday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>: Both Services at St. Mark's, with communion

Family-Oriented Christmas Eve Worship, 4:00pm

Traditional Christmas Eve Worship, 7:00pm

Saturday, Dec., 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Day Worship,

with communion, 10:00am, at St. James

Sunday, Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>: No Worship Services OR Sunday School

today! Wishing you a most blessed Christmas.

## ***NOTES:***

### **GPS**

**Grow** – deeper in our faith and relationship with God.

**Pray** – pray daily for family, neighbors, and others.

**Study** – read the Bible, pray over what we read, ask questions.

#### **Additional Text: Phil. 4:4-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Luke 3:7-18**

Though there is a quietness to Advent, a hushed waiting for something to be revealed, something to be born, it is also a time of deep joy. This is a Sunday to celebrate the joy of the season, the joy of waiting, and the joy of having already received the one for whom we wait. So, set up the dance floor, blow up the balloons, serve refreshments in the narthex. Let's make this day, at least—if not every time we gather for worship—a celebration of joy and hope.

This is not a denial of challenges or hurdles we face. This is not implying that there are no more tears in our waiting time. But it does mean that we can learn to hope, even in difficult moments in our lives. We don't proclaim sunshine and roses for everyone all the time, what some call the "happy-clappy" worship. There is depth here and honesty, even as we celebrate the goodness of God. Let us find our way to that joy, however loud or quiet it might be. But we trust that it is there.

What is your most joy filled Christmas you've ever had? Was it coming home after being gone for a long time? Was it having sons, daughters, grandchildren come to your home, after not seeing them for quite a while? Or a reconciliation time with a broken relationship?

**Prayer:** A singing God! Isn't that what we all hope for? In the midst of troubles, struggles, and a world gone wild, we hope not only that God delights in us individually, but also that God sings over the entire world a melody of renewal. Zephaniah declared God would quiet our hearts with love and rejoice, even as God mightily delivers us. In Advent, we hope in hope *Amen*.

If you or a family member are in need of pastoral care, please contact Pastor Patrick at 920-693-2858 or leave a message on the church's answering machine at:  
920-693-8361