

# WELCOME to St. James Lutheran Church

We ask you to, if you wish, .....

**PRINT THE ATTACHED BULLETIN...to follow along with Sunday's Service.**  
As you are worshipping from home, you are invited to set aside a sacred space for worship.  
*Light a candle and set out your bread and wine.*

**Worship Service - Streaming live @ 9:30am or watch later!**



Click on image OR

FB Search: Saint James Lutheran Church of Columbus, Montana



Click on image or the link below to be directed to our website:  
[www.lutheranchurchcolumbusmt.org](http://www.lutheranchurchcolumbusmt.org)

\*\*On the website, scroll down to "Click here for the St. James FB link"

To our faithful followers at home or wherever you are, PLEASE let us know you are watching by writing a post or give your name. We'd love to hear from you!

## TODAY:

- Council meeting immediately after worship
- PH's Annual Kids' Christmas Shopping Day 1:00 – 3:00pm

ALSO,

**\*\*2<sup>nd</sup> PERFORMANCE of the  
STILLWATER COMMUNITY CHORUS:**

**Sunday December 17<sup>th</sup> 1:30pm**

**@ the Cobblestone Center in Absarokee**

**\*\* Doors open 1/2 hr before event Everyone Welcome.**

## St. James Lutheran Church

205 E 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. Columbus, MT 59019

Leader: Pastor Tonia Fisher (406) 656-9557

Email: [toniafisherclarkmt@gmail.com](mailto:toniafisherclarkmt@gmail.com)

Our Mission: "We worship together, grow in faith,  
share our faith and serve with the love of God"



**Sunday December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent  
"Unto Us a Child is Born"**

## Welcome, Announcements & Opportunities for Serving

“Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, LORD...You are their glorious strength. It pleases you to make us strong.” (Ps 89:15,17)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all .....and also be with you.

Let us stand, as you are able, and prepare our hearts for worship

### Call to Worship for JOY: ELW #242 “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn” Vs 1 & 4 only



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for  
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -  
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when  
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for  
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is  
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so  
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.  
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;  
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -  
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -  
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in  
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and  
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to  
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and  
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.  
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.  
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

**Lighting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Candle of Advent: Pastor Tonia & Brian Luepke**

**WE SING:** *\*\*to the tune of "O worship the King, All Glorious Above!"*

The candle of joy reminds us to sing, for God is at work to do a new thing. The proud will be humbled; the lowly will rise. God's kingdom is one of delight and surprise.

## GATHERING

### Confession & Forgiveness

Everlasting God, You love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness which make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

### Assurance of God's Love

#### Gathering Hymn: ELW #267 "Joy to the World"



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing  
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

## **Prayer of the Day**

*Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

## **WORD**

### **Hear the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup>to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. <sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. <sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. <sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Word of Wisdom, Word of God. **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

### **Read Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55 responsively by whole verse**

<sup>46b</sup>*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,* <sup>47</sup>*my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,* <sup>48</sup>**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed:** <sup>49</sup>*you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.* <sup>50</sup>**You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.** <sup>51</sup>*You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,* <sup>52</sup>**casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.** <sup>53</sup>*You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.* <sup>54</sup>**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise of mercy,** <sup>55</sup>*the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.*

### **Hear the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil. <sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Word of Wisdom, Word of God. **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

Please stand, as you are able, to welcome the Gospel

### **The Gospel Acclamation: ELW #151**

*We sing: Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.*

### **The Gospel according to John:**

We sing the response after the announcement: **“Glory to you, O Lord”**

### **John 1:6-8, 19-28**

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, “What

then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said <sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

**The Gospel of the Lord:**

We sing the response after the conclusion: **"Praise to you, O Christ"**

**Sermon: "Joy Abounds"**

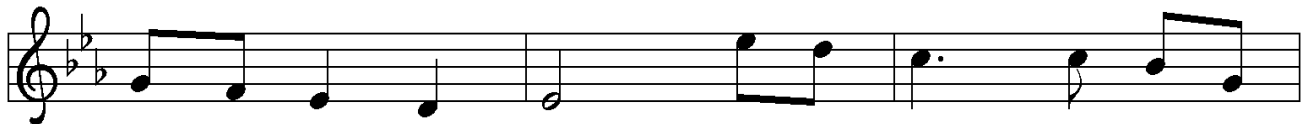
**Reflection Hymn: ELW #561 "Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory"**



1 Joy - ous light of heav'n-ly glo - ry, lov-ing glow of God's own  
 2 In the stars that grace the dark - ness, in the blaz - ing sun of  
 3 You who made the heav-en's splen - dor, ev - 'ry danc - ing star of



face, you who sing cre - a - tion's sto - ry, shine on  
 dawn, in the light of peace and wis - dom, we can  
 night, make us shine with gen - tle jus - tice, let us



ev - 'ry land and race. Now as eve - ning falls a -  
 hear your qui - et song. Love that fills the night with  
 each re - flect your light. Might - y God of all cre -



round us, we shall raise our songs to you. God of day - break,  
 won - der, love that warms the wea - ry soul, love that bursts all  
 a - tion, gen - tle Christ who lights our way, lov - ing Spir - it



God of shad - ows, come and light our hearts a - new.  
 chains a - sun - der, set us free and make us whole.  
 of sal - va - tion, lead us on to end - less day.

## **Apostle's Creed ELW #105**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the

Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven.

He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **Prayers of the People**

After each petition: *P: Lord, in Your mercy,* **C: hear our prayer**

After last petition: **All: AMEN.**

**Passing of the Peace** .....and we say: **and also with you.**

## **MEAL**

....we thank you for your faithfulness to St. James in sharing your tithes and offerings and allowing us to do God's work with our hands.

**Bread & Wine and Our Gifts are brought forward.....** while we sing

**The Offering Hymn: ELW #487 "What Feast of Love"** \*\*to the tune "What Child is This"

What feast of love is offered here? What banquet come from heaven?

What food of everlasting life, what gracious gift is given?

This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heaven.

Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the manna given!

## **Offering Prayer**

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth.

**Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.**

**Amen.**

**Table Setting Hymn: ELW #466 "In the Singing"** \*\*1<sup>st</sup> vs only- no refrain



1 In the sing - ing, in the si - lence, in the hands ex - pect - ant, o - pen,



in the bless - ing, in the break - ing, in your pres - ence at this ta - ble,

## **Great Thanksgiving ELW #153**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise**

....we join their unending hymn:

**(C) sings: Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might; Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

## Words of Institution

### The Lord's Prayer ELW #154

Mystery of our Faith. **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

### Invitation to Communion

*In this meal of bread and wine, we believe Christ is truly present forgiving sin, reconciling us to God and one another, and giving new life. Christ is host. Christ is the one who invites us to the table even while it is properly understood as the meal of the baptized. All are welcome at the Lord's Table.*

As communion is distributed, you are invited to sing the following hymns:

#### "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"

- 1 God rest ye merry, gentlemen let nothing you dismay  
Remember, Christ, our Savior was born on Christmas day  
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray

#### Refrain:

*O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy! O tidings of comfort and joy!*

- 2 The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced with much in mind  
And left their flocks a-feeding in tempest, storm and wind  
And went to Beth'hem straight away the Son of God to find **Refrain:**
- 3 And when they came to Bethlehem where our dear Savior lay  
They found Him in a manger where oxen feed on hay  
His Mother Mary kneeling down unto the Lord did pray **Refrain:**
- 4 Now to the Lord sing praises all you within this place  
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace  
This holy tide of Christmas all other doth deface **Refrain:**

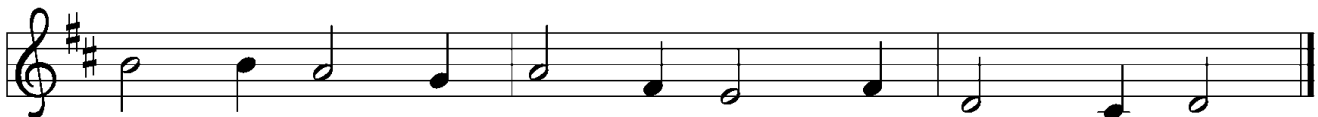
### ELW #249 "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"



- 1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
- 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
- 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
- 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
- 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



- that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,  
way for God with - in, and let us all our  
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we  
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -  
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



- for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.  
waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.  
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.  
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

**Prayer after Communion..... and we say: Amen.**

## SENDING

**Benediction..... and we say: Amen.**

**Sending Hymn: ELW #543 "Go My Children, with My Blessing"**



- 1 "Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, nev - er a - lone.
- 2 "Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.
- 3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, clos - er to me.



Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.  
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.  
Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.



In my love's bap - tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for - ev - er.  
Here you heard my dear Son's sto - ry, here you touched him, saw his glo - ry.  
Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here my ten - der com - fort stilled you.



Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, you are my own."  
Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure."  
Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, joy - ful and free."

**Dismissal: Go in peace. Keep awake. Thanks be to God.**

*Music Published by Permission, CCLI #11445215 Worship Service recorded by Permission, CSPL #168651*

## **December Mission offerings.....**

**~ Your continued support benefits**

**ELCA Charities**

***i.e. World Hunger & Relief; Freedom in Christ; Good Gifts***





## Happy December Birthday

Pete Hegg 12/4; Sydne Wanner 12/6; Maureen Hemphill 12/7;  
Nancy Stennerson 12/7; Rusty Stennerson 12/8; Larry Goehner 12/14; Carrie Williams 12/14; Sarah  
Norslien 12/14; Peggy Herzog 12/23;  
KayDel Shelton 12/26; Lisa Kem 12/29



## Happy December Anniversary

Cindy & Steve Smith 12/7; Danny & Betty Ames 12/26;  
Don & Peggy Herzog 12/26; Steve & Denise Cowan 12/26.

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THOSE SERVING

December 2023 Altar Guild: Sheri Luepke

December 2023 Cleaner(s): Leanne Sekora & Pat Lofing

December 2023 Reader(s): Maureen Hemphill

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Communion Helper(s): Will someone sign up to help this Sunday?

*Thank you, Brian & Sheri Luepke for helping with communion last Sunday*

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Usher(s): Will someone sign up to help this Sunday?

*Thank you, Leslie Mullin for ushering last Sunday.*

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Gate Keepers: Rae Ellen Strickland & Carrie Williams

2023 Musician(s): Marge Sunvold & Betty Ames

*Thank you for your prayers and generosity. May the Lord bless you and give you peace.*

**“Your faith in God’s mission for St. James is unshakeable.”**

### FOR YOUR REVIEW AND PRAYER.....

December 3<sup>rd</sup> Offering gratefully received \$1,995.00

December 10<sup>th</sup> Offering gratefully received \$1,335.00

**Total received so far this month \$3,330.00**

### Continued reminder of how to give your monthly tithe or offering to your church.....

Mail your offering to the church; Take your offering to the parsonage; Auto pay thru your bank and **Tithe.ly**.

**[Tithe.ly](#)** (click on this “Tithe.ly” link – takes you directly to St. James’ account to sign-up)

**Remember that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8)**

*For new prayer requests, please contact **Pastor Tonia**. Text or call her at (406) 656-9557 or  
email her at [toniafisherclarkmt@gmail.com](mailto:toniafisherclarkmt@gmail.com)*

## PLEASE KEEP IN PRAYER...

For those hospitalized, in nursing homes and homebound, and those battling cancer or other illnesses.

Your healing and wisdom Lord for Bob Hemphill; Bill Strickland; Pastor Tonia; Joy & Larry Goehner;

Jim Dickey; Merridy Gauthier; LaNita Maurer; Steve Cowan; Ken & Pete Hegg; Gary Lofing;

Joan Elser Bonny Rouse;

Those living with cancer: Father Fenton; Kaci Thomason; Brian Wanner; Bob Rouane; Aracelii Enano;

Ashley Foster; Jenny Hansen Cheff; Shane Fouhy; Jim Wilson & Sandy Yoder’s daughter in law, Lola.

Those with COVID and those dealing with its lasting effects.

The children of the world, this is a big request, but God is big. Children who are food & home insecure.

Victims of violence and of natural disasters.

***Please pray for all of those who serve in our military domestically & overseas,  
As well as their spouses and children.***

We certainly hope you are

**Having Fun with Faith...**

We hope you are enjoying the series of "Children's Worship Bulletins", which are *found on our website.*

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

These games are geared toward all age levels, so, everyone can join in the fun!

PLEASE FORWARD & SHARE these bulletins with your kids, grandkids, friends & friend's friends!!!



**Every Tuesday,**

Bible Study is held at St. James 2:00pm.

We study the upcoming Sunday lessons.

**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE**

**Every Wednesday,** continue to watch for the Word(s) on Wednesday email with a copy of Pastor Tonia's weekly message or watch recorded on our FB page. Print the Bible WORDsearch Puzzles. Enjoy!

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES TO REFLECT GOD'S LOVE TO EACH OTHER AND TO OUR NEIGHBORS

### **MORE Community Events for St. James:**

- Every Monday we are invited to join:
  - ~The Stillwater Youth Center for coffee and visiting from 8-10am.
- Every Tuesday we are invited to attend:
  - ~ The Women's Adult Group at the Stillwater Youth Center at 9:30am and/or 7:00pm for an inductive study on Revelation
  - ~ Absarokee Quilting Group – 10am in the basement of the Cobblestone building. Knitters, crocheters and embroiderettes are welcome.
- Every Wednesday we are invited to join:
  - ~ Social Hour at the Columbus Senior Center at 9:30am
  - ~ The Stillwater Youth Center for coffee and visiting from 8-10am



For more information,  
see the "Table Posters"  
at St. James.

**Join the fun this week.....**

**BINGO is EVERY WEDNESDAY!**



## **FUTURE DATES:**



**Share your poinsettia's to adorn our altar  
on Christmas Eve.**

**Come celebrate with us....**



***The 4<sup>th</sup> Day of Advent and  
The Birth of our Lord  
Christmas Eve Service***

**One service on:**

**Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30pm**

**Sunday December 31<sup>st</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas**

**So long...**

**December**

*Welcome January*

January is a time of quiet and new beginnings - is the perfect time to reflect on how you want to live your life.

January is the perfect time to refocus on your priorities and set goals.