

Announcements

NEW Empty the Bucket We've launched our special Advent gift appeal, and have already received over \$100 in gifts. As our gifts are received, watch the level of the dirty water go down in the "bucket" on the table display in the narthex. Let's see how fast we can "empty the bucket"! We hope to share a short You Tube video clip next weekend that highlights the positive impact a spring well can have on an African community. Thank you for your generous support of this life-changing gift of water we are boldly pursuing.

NEW The Heaven and Hell book club will discuss our third book, "Sum: Forty Tales from the Afterlives" by David Eagleman after worship on Saturday 12/6 (pizza provided) and Sunday 12/7 (treats provided). There are still a few copies available at church.

Come! Join us for Holden Evening Prayer Worship Services on Wednesdays, December 3, 10, and the Children's Christmas Program on December 17 at 6:30pm. Soup supper prior to the services at 5:45pm. **Please sign up to help with the meal at:**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904044AA4AF22A7F58-59789361-advent#/>

Poinsettia Orders: If you would like to order a poinsettia(s) in honor or memory of a loved one for Christmas Eve services, fill out the information below, and make checks payable

to Saint James with "poinsettia" on memo line. Orders must be received by December 5.

- ☐ 1 plant branch 4.5" pot with 3-5 blooms **\$5.50** \$ _____
- ☐ 1 plant branch 6.5" pot with 5-9 blooms **\$11.00** \$ _____
- ☐ 3 plant branch 8.0" pot with 12-15 blooms **\$21** \$ _____

_____ Preferred color (white, red, pink or other)

Poinsettia is given to the Glory of God in memory/honor (**please circle one**) of:

_____ by: (Your Name)

Our Giving Tree is up through December 7. Stop by and pick up ornaments with items to purchase that will be donated to: **ChildServe, Johnston Partnership, and Trinity Center at Luther Park.** Thank you for your generosity in making Christmas joyful for others! Contact Lynette Allison @ lejallison@gmail.com or Rebecca Allison @ education@stjamesjohnston.org if you have questions about these projects.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

- ¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- ² The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
- ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear,
- ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
- ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.
- ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading: Romans 15:4-13

- ⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,
- “Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles
and sing praises to your name”; ¹⁰ and again he says,
“Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”; ¹¹ and again,
“Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him”; ² and again Isaiah says,
“The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles;
in him the gentiles shall hope.”
- ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Prayers of Intercession

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. With wisdom and understanding, inspire the faithful around the world. Unite hearts and minds in work to address poverty, access to housing, and equity among peoples. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With counsel and might, move us to care for creation. As we dream of the day when all creatures will flourish alongside one another, guide us in ways humanity and all creation will mutually thrive. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With righteousness and faithfulness, encourage nations to live in harmony with one another. We pray for international student and teacher exchanges, for our partner churches including the Ivuga Parish, and for the shared mission of Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With steadfastness and encouragement, strengthen those who have lost hope in the face of grief, depression, or disease. Renew the spirits of those recovering from surgery and medical procedures. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With welcome and hospitality, embolden us in our shared ministry to overcome all that divides. In acts of repentance, reconciliation, and reparation, may we serve in the way of Christ. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With joy and peace, we remember our ancestors in the faith. Fill us with the hope of the Holy Spirit now and into the ages of ages. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

What's Happening

December 3-5

- Wednesday 10:30 am Chair Yoga
- Wednesday Night Programs
 - 5:45pm Soup Supper for All
 - 6:20pm GROW (preschool-5th grade)
 - 6:30pm Holden Evening Prayer
 - 7:00pm Confirmation (6th-8th grade)
 - 7:00pm ABIDE (9th-12th grade)
- Thursday 9:00am Women's Coffee Group

December 6-12

- Saturday 5:00pm Worship In-Person & Facebook Live
- Saturday 6:00pm Heaven & Hell Book Club
- Sunday 9:30am Worship In-Person & Facebook Live
- Sunday 10:30am Fellowship and Heaven & Hell Book Club
- Monday 9:00am In-Person Bible Study
- Monday 10:30am Chair Yoga
- Tuesday 7:00am Men's Breakfast Group at HyVee
- Tuesday 9:00am Online Bible Study ([Connect Here](#))
- Wednesday 10:30am Chair Yoga
- Wednesday Night Programs
 - 5:45pm Soup Supper for All
 - 6:20pm GROW (preschool-5th grade)
 - 6:30pm Holden Evening Prayer
 - 7:00pm Confirmation (6th-8th grade)
 - 7:00pm ABIDE (9th-12th grade)
- Thursday 9:00am Women's Coffee Group

Celebrations December 6-12:

Birthdays: Kristin Rodenberg, Matthew Christen, Joe Harken, Stuart Ruddy, Kevin Hushagen

Anniversaries: None

Connect with Us!

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(515) 276-0134 – Steward@StJamesJohnston.org

www.StJamesJohnston.org Here you can connect to:

- Our online service and our online giving portal
- Our calendar
- Our Online Bible Study
- Our staff and much more!

Text Pastor Bill at 515.669.7631 or Email Pastor Bill at Pastor@StJamesJohnston.org

First time visitor? Email Pastor for a Welcome gift.

