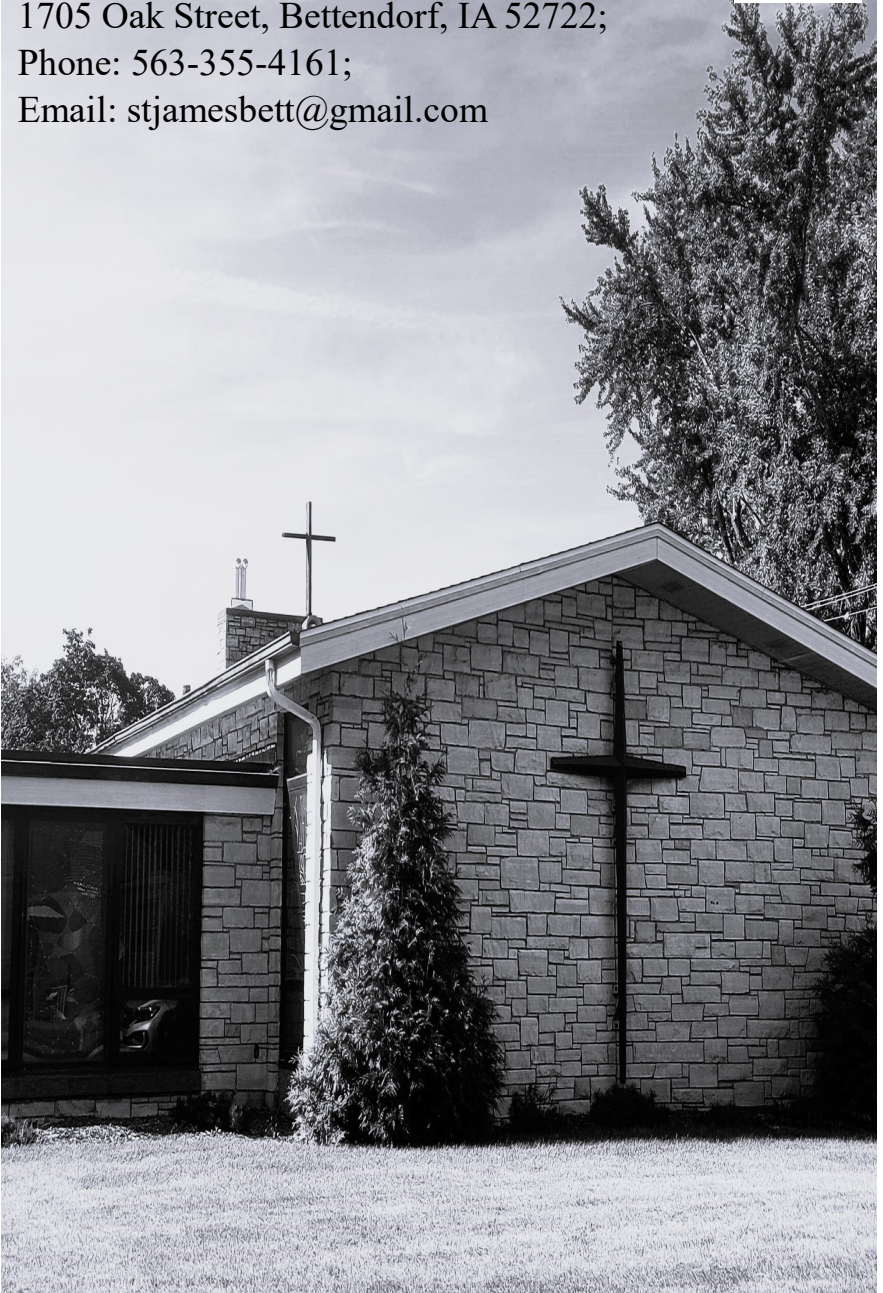


# The December 2024 Epistle

A publication of St. James Lutheran Church,  
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M E S S A G E  
from the  
M I N I S T E R

As we celebrated the Feast of Christ the King, I invited you to imagine a reality in which the perfect, blameless, and altogether-good person of Jesus Christ is truly King. What would it be like?

- What if there was a King who ruled perfectly, justly, wisely and humbly?
- What if there was a King who cared for the poor?
- What if there was a King who kept corrupting power in check?
- What if there was a King who fulfilled every good and holy desire from his subjects?
- What if there was a King strong enough to defeat the forces that oppose him and gentle enough to welcome the beggar to his banquet?
- What if there was a King whose reign subverted national borders to unite every good intention in every human heart good under a single banner of truth and justice?

The statement “Christ is King” is an overtly political statement. There's no way around it. This statement has been a threat to every political authority in every era and region of the world where it has been uttered by those who declare its truth.

In the United States, we are especially distrustful of kings. It's in our blood. Our country was founded on the rejection of monarchy as an acceptable form of government. “No more King!” we said. “That's just too much power in the

hands of one person.” But perhaps our distrust of political leaders, especially of monarchy, has seeped into a subtle distrust of Jesus as our King. Perhaps our inherited cultural overtones keep the reign of Christ at bay.

Our suspicion and distrust may give us pause, but the goodness of Christ compels us to look again. Jesus is a different kind of King over a different kind of a kingdom.

- This King does not derive his power from the typical power structures of our world.
- This King doesn't need to wage war to exercise his power because it was through him that all things in heaven and earth were made. Everything is his and always has been.
- This King doesn't need to argue with Pilot about theories of truth because in his very being truth has become one perfect and holy person.
- This King extends his reign into the world, not through violent conquest, but through the changed hearts of his subjects. These subjects demonstrate their love of the King by emulating his behavior.

Jesus has nothing to prove. He is confident and secure in an outcome that is already guaranteed. He stands there and by his very presence gives testimony to the reality of a reign that supersedes every other reign the world has ever known. It supersedes Pilot and every ruler to the present day.

This is the King every nation longs for. The prophet Haggai, speaking of the Messiah, says, “What is desired by all nations will come” says the LORD Almighty. (Haggai 2:7)

Do you remember this verse from the advent hymn, *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*?

*O come, desire of nations, bind / In one the hearts of humankind*

*Bid Thou our sad divisions cease / And be Thyself our King of peace*

This is the King every nation longs for. The promised one. As journey through Advent we will meet the baby, meek and lowly, born in the manger who is Christ the King.

The Feast of Christ the King is a relatively recent addition to the liturgical calendar. It was instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI and adopted by Lutherans in the 1970s to reassert the primacy of the reign of Christ in the face of nationalism, secularism, and totalitarian governments in Russia, Italy, Spain, and Germany.

**These destructive currents are thriving in our country and around the world today.**

If you will permit me to say anything during this tumultuous political environment in the days in which we live, permit me to convince you of this:

There is a King who reigns on a throne eternally whose kingdom will never end (I am the alpha and the Omega, The beginning and the end). Whose reign extends into the world through his people.

He is a King of a different kind of a Kingdom. This Kingdom builds from the ground up and includes everyone who will follow the way of Jesus. All are invited. None will be denied. And every one of us can live today as full subjects in the Kingdom of God and whose King is Jesus Christ. This is the true Kingdom. This is the reality we must embrace if the land in which our houses, our homes, our church and our businesses will ever be made whole.

Christ is King and there is no other.

# Prayer and Learning Group

From fall 2024 through Spring 2025, the Christian Education Committee with Bryce Hewlett host monthly prayer and learning groups for adults.

The sign up sheets for these groups are located in the Narthex. Contact the church office with any questions you may have.

We hope to see you there!

December: Light From a Different Corner of the Room

Dates: Wednesday, December 18th, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.  
Thursday, December 19th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

- What is the religion of Jesus like for those who have their back up against the wall?
- What is the response of people who may not frequently consider this experience?

Scripture Study: Matthew 5:1-12 **(on your own)**

Recommended Reading: *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman **(on your own)**

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

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Happy December Everyone! So many wonderful things to look forward to this month at St. James, while we celebrate the birth of Christ!

We have advent readings, candle lightings and two Christmas Eve services; one at 4pm, and one at 11pm.

We also have the Live Nativity on December 14th from 5PM to 7pm. Soup will be served at this time as well as crafts for the kids. There will also be animals to see. The Live Nativity is always a night of fun for everyone! I hope you all will be able to share in the joy of the season at St. James.

Make sure to check out all the updates that have been done in the Narthex! New paint, lots of organizing and updating, and a new area to display the Lutheran World Relief quilts.

It looks wonderful, fresh, new and alive.

The work that was done perfectly mirrors the new life and growth that we are seeing at St James. Thank you so much to all who were involved with this project!

I wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas Season!  
Take care of yourself and each other!

*Angie*



As you are all aware, we are having issues with drainage/water infiltration into the foundation and into the fellowship hall. To correct the problem we must remove the entire sidewalk on the east side of the building (just outside the Sacristy door to the stoop cap outside the narthex door). We will need to add compacted fill and drain tile and area drains to collect runoff from the building and surrounding grounds. We plan to replace the gutter and downspouts because they are leaking onto the sidewalk and direct those into the drain tile. Also, a portion of the sidewalk will be replaced, going out from the narthex. In addition, a portion of the east entrance stoop cap is badly cracked and contributes to water leaking into the storage closet below (where the tables and chairs are kept).

Our cost breakdown below includes replacement of the flooring to include the kitchen areas so that all tile will match, using a glue down waterproof plank.



also included is the cost to replace the carpet in the office and repairs to the freezer ( compressor replacement). Our plan would be to borrow the money and repay the loan with income raised from fundraisers and donations. We do not want to use cash reserves. As we all know with ourselves, there is maintenance with age!

Work has begun on the LED lighting, thanks to a generous contribution to cover the costs.

As you may remember, we have had huge expenses( electrical service, HVAC system) due to the maintenance and upkeep of our 70-year-old building.

Council met Sunday, November 23rd and approved the following work to be done:

Remove and replace exterior concrete	\$10,800.00
Remove and replace flooring	\$8,950.00
Repair freezer compressor	\$2,500
Remove and replace gutter and downspouts	\$2,000
Bell and tower tuckpointing	TBD
<b>Total estimated costs</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>



Sarah Circle will meet **not** meet in  
December.



The December meeting of the St James GANG will be an outing. Meet at Devils' Glen HyVee for lunch.

*Everyone buys their own lunch.*

We will also have a gift exchange. If you want to participate in that, bring a gift not to exceed \$5. We will also have an afternoon of some games and socializing.

A collection will be taken for the Food Pantry, as well.

See you there on Dec. 19th at 11:30AM!

Pat Larson  
(563)343-2142



## From the Quilt Block

Here is your opportunity to be part of the Quilt Ministry. St. James annual quilt raffle will open on December 1st . The funds received from the raffle are used primarily to purchase quilt batting (filler) and supplies for the quilt ministry. Our quilts go to Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI). Items that go to LWR must be requested. Items that go to LSI stay in Muscatine, Scott, Cedar, and Clinton Counties.

Tickets are \$1.00 for one or 6 tickets for \$5.00 and will be available before and after services. Each quilt has a name and a corresponding box to receive the tickets. Write your name on the back of the ticket(s) and insert (them) into the box(es) of your choice. The drawing for the quilts will be December 22nd before the closing of the service.

This raffle is open to members of the church (not the general public) and remember it is a donation to buy batting and support your St. James quilters.

This year we have 5 twin size quilts and 1 full size quilt. The twin size quilts are not only good blankets on twin beds but also great for that afternoon nap on the couch or in the recliner. They may also be a nice gift.

Pieces be with you,

*Shirley Richlen*

**Maggie and Kenny Bayliss' new address:**

274 Cragmor Drive.

Clinton, IA. 52732

**REMINDER!**

**Deadline for January Epistle Articles  
is Monday, December 23rd.**

Please return  
gifts by 12/8

Contact Judy Larson with  
any questions at  
(563)340-7902



## **GIVING TREE**

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Please take an ornament from  
our Giving Tree in the Narthex to  
buy gifts for children and  
families in need.

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Make sure the family number  
and name are on each gift!

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Extra gift donations for each  
parent can be included as well ♡

# November & December

## SPECIAL SERVICE TIMES

**TUESDAY 11/26**

*Thanksgiving  
Service*

6:00PM PIE FEST

7:00PM SERVICE

**SATURDAY 12/14**

*Live Nativity*

*\*No Saturday Service*

*Performance Times*

5:00PM / 5:30PM

6:00PM / 6:30PM

**TUESDAY 12/24**

*Christmas Eve  
Services*

4:00PM

TRADITIONAL  
FAMILY SERVICE

11:00PM

TRADITIONAL  
SERVICE

**MONDAY 1/6/2025**

*Epiphany*

6:00PM DESSERT

7:00PM SERVICE



# **BLUE** *Christmas*

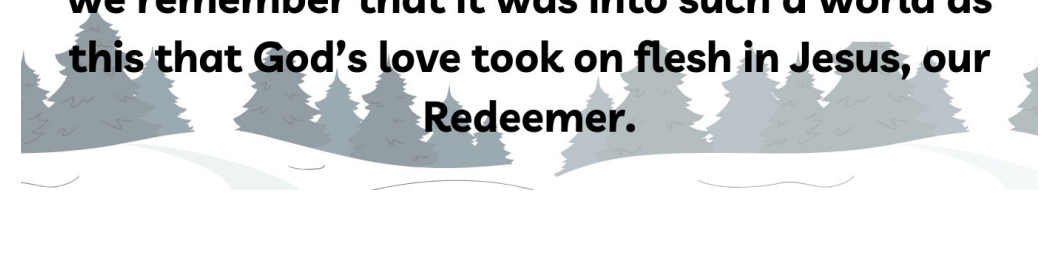
**December 18th, 2024 at 5:30PM**

**GRACE LUTHERAN**

**1140 E HIGH ST.**

**DAVENPORT, IA 52803**

**You are invited to join St. James, Redeemer, and Grace for a worship service that acknowledges that for many, Christmas is anything but merry. The holiday season can be difficult for those of us who are grieving the loss of loved ones, who have difficult family relationships, who struggle with addictions, physical and mental illness, depression or stress, and who feel deeply the pain of those in our world who suffer the effects of war, poverty and disease. So, we gather as a community to express and acknowledge these conflicting emotions, as we remember that it was into such a world as this that God's love took on flesh in Jesus, our Redeemer.**





## **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

12/4 HARLEN BRIGGS

12/4 SARAH OSWALD

12/9 SELENA GARCIA-HOGBIN

12/10 JASON FORARI

12/12 JACKSON PUETZ

12/14 MELISSA FORARI

12/14 JACKIE SCHNECKLOTH

12/14 RENEE WHITE

12/20 MANDY PETERS-SPEIDEL

12/23 ELLEN HOGBIN

12/23 CAROL LEACOX

12/24 CARA CHAMBERLAIN

12/26 CHRISTIAN MALLI

12/30 JUDITH RYAN

## **DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

12/27 EDWIN & SANDRA ARP

# CHRISTIAN E D U C A T I O N

## *Words with Women*

Open to all women looking to share stories, life, and laughter!

This is intentional time to build friendships and mutually support each other through life's ups and down with kindness, prayer, and listening ears.

*Words with Women* will take place on **December 3rd at 6pm** and will meet **monthly on the first Tuesday evening each month thereafter.**

Together we are stronger! Join us in building sisters in faith! No sign up necessary—just show up! Contact Mandy Peters-Speidel with questions at (563)370-8262.

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*Social Ministry News*

We have our Giving Tree up this year again, so if you are able to help a family in need, please take an ornament from the Giving Tree in the Narthex to purchase gifts for a family.

*Please return the gifts by 12/8 to the church.*

On **January 25th** we will prepare and serve a meal at Zion Lutheran Church in Davenport.

If you'd like to be involved or have questions, please contact **Judy Larson at (563)340-7902.**

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**Supper at St. James—NEW!!!**

On **December 11th at 6PM**, St. James will open the doors to *anyone* in our community wanting to enjoy a hot meal and fellowship. Spread the word—***All are welcome and encouraged to attend!***

Supper will be served by members of our church family at 6:00pm. Join us for food and fellowship!

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**Luther Properties**

Did you know Luther Properties provides affordable, independent housing for seniors?

This ELCA organization consists of 5 complexes, 2 in Davenport and 3 in Bettendorf. These apartments provide safe homes for those seniors who struggle financially. Rent is based on income, with electricity and water costs included.

If you know of someone who could benefit from such assistance, please contact **Joyce Marinaccio (563-343-3404)** for information.

# Prayers for Healing and Support

## Congregational Members

**Lynn** Chamberlain, **Bev** Chappen, **Sherry** Germanio,  
**Sandy** Henry, **Jeff** Hicks, **Frieda** Houldsworth, **John** Leder,  
**LaVonne** Mienke, **Jeanne** Peters, **Minhon** Ridenour,

## Family and Friends

**Addie** (Diana Worley's co-worker's daughter), **Amy** (friend of Jenny Martin), **Barry** (cousin of Ellen Hogbin), **Carol** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Connie** (friend of Maggie Bayliss), **Danica** (Friend of Deb Crooks), **Dotty** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Donna** (Ed Arp's sister), **Drew** (Pat Larson's friend), **Grant** (grandson of Carol Leacox), **Janet** (Maggie Bayliss' sister), **Jason** (Lynn Chamberlain & Sherry Germanio's son), **Jerry** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken) **Jon** (Joleen Bakken's nephew), **Julia** (Keegan's girlfriend), **Konnor** (Bert Leder's grandson), **Michelle** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Michelle** (friend of Jason & Melissa Forari), **Phil** (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's brother), **Russ** (friend of Steve & Sue Miller, husband to Chris), **Ruthann** (Justina Pessein's mom), **Theo** (Lora Gwin's Godson)

## Military Personnel

**Anthony** Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)  
Lt. Col. **Brandon** Sandoval USAF (Pat Larson's grandson)  
CPT **Eli** Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)  
**Nathan** Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)  
**Samantha** Richard (friend of Larson family)

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

## December 2024 Worship Assistants

Date	Assisting Minister	Acolyte	Usher	Usher	Altar Guild	Altar Guild
12/1/24	Jason Forari	Dex Hewlett	Kelly Crooks	Ron Mekalson	Mary Meumann	Terry Martens
12/8/24	Ann Larson	Jude Hewlett	Fritz Voss	Judy Larson	Marilyn Pieart	Diana Worley
12/15/24	Pat Larson	Edi Southwell	Kelly Crooks	Caroline Hicks	Marilyn Pieart	Diana Worley
12/22/24	Judie Brooks	Lillian Speidel	Pat Larson	Ron Mekalson	Shirley Richlen	Ellen Hogbin
12/24/24 Christmas Eve 4PM	Shirley Richlen		Melissa Forari	Anna Forari		
12/24/24 Christmas Eve 11PM	Janet Brakel	Dex & Eden	Diana Worley	Caroline Hicks		
12/29/24	Marilyn Pieart	Dex Hewlett	Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols	Shirley Richlen	Ellen Hogbin

### December Counters:

12/1 Angie Schmidt

12/8 Ellen Hogbin

12/15 *Needed*

12/22 *Needed*

12/29 Ellen Hogbin

*Please Note: If you find you cannot serve on the date/time scheduled, please arrange for your replacement, then **call or email;**  
**Janet Brakel at 708-207-5515 or jbrakel@ameritech.net**  
to advise the name of your replacement.  
We appreciate your gracious cooperation.  
Thanks!*