

St. James the Greater

Where All Are Welcome

The Epiphany of the Lord ✚ January 3, 2020





Message from Fr. Tom

Before we say good-bye to our Christmas season next week, please, if you have not done so already, check out the “St. James Virtual Choir Christmas Card” on YouTube. It was the labor of many hours and of much love, and features so many of our choir members. **No one in our parish has been unaffected by the changes due to COVID, but I think our choir members have felt a particular pain of loss.** Not only have they been unable to gather as a community of friends for rehearsals and liturgies, they also have not been able to experience the joy of singing FOR YOU as their ministry. That’s why they were willing to put so much energy and love into this recording. What you might have heard as prelude before our Christmas masses, you can see performed by our directors, musicians and singers in their video. Thanks to all those who gave their time, especially our music coordinator **Mary Kolstad**, and our **technical whiz kids Landon Cerny and Don Byrne**. You have to get to YouTube.com and then search for the above title, or search for our YouTube channel, where all our videos are listed. I’m sorry if this is impossible due to lack of access; I am glad that at least you have had the opportunity to hear it all before our masses.

We never had so many people at Midnight Mass before! Well, in church there were about fifty, but that was multiplied many times over after including our online worshipers. The most common comment I heard was “**The opening procession with the baby was so beautiful!**” For that we can thank **Cash Cerny and Sam Ebert**. Cash carried the child high with dignity and grace, and Sam preceded him with the swinging censor of incense. They came up with a lot of the procedures themselves, as for example when Sam said during a brief rehearsal, “Um, I feel kind of underdressed.” So, yep, they put on server albs, and this really did make things more beautiful. We have so many great altar servers here at St. James and it’s another sadness of our times that we haven’t been using them because of COVID precautions. So, it was good to have the opportunity to use two of our crackerjack servers at that midnight hour.

As you know, I had feared that St. James would be in the position of having to turn away people who came to mass on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. We even made 120 cards with attached candy canes to give to people we’d have to turn away. As it turns out, **with one exception that was received gracefully, we did not have to tell anyone that we were full.** In fact, the two masses we thought would be most crowded ended up having extra room because of no-shows. After our Christmas masses, we gave out **Christmas ornaments** tastefully enhanced by **Kelly Beaudrie** with a message from St. James: “*Merry Christmas. Let’s light up the darkness! –St. James the Greater, Where All Are Welcome.*” We probably will have some extras lying around if you’d like to call and see.

The ornament cards were decorated with some red, yellow and blue Christmas lights, which reminds me of the joke that I told at one of the Christmas masses. A one-frame cartoon shows a conventional-looking Light Bulb opening the front door to receive guests, surprised to see so many multi-colored Christmas bulbs lined up on his front yard. “I wasn’t expecting so many of you,” he tells one of the red, yellow and blue bulbs. That one responds, “We’re Christmas lights. When one of us goes out, we all go out.” I liked that. I’m not sure if the people in church thought it was funny. Jokes are harder to sell when there aren’t so many in church.

Fr. **John Schultz** was scheduled to have to have a total knee replacement on December 28, so hopefully that went off as planned. He told me he will be convalescing at Dove West, and so let’s pray for him and everyone in our care centers and hospitals. It will be such a relief when we can get that vaccine distributed and worry less about things.

I can add one more thing to the list of things I miss this year: Our New Year’s Eve Mass and Pot Luck. If you attending any in the past, you know it was a good time. I especially liked the root beer keg, which added a note of celebration to the whole event. Hopefully next year we can pull it off again. In the meantime, thanks to all of you who are keeping the faith alive and the Church healthy through your prayer and other efforts. **May 2021 give us all an easier time of it, but most especially may it witness an increase in faith, hope and love among all of us. Peace.**

Some Words that Fr. Tom Shared at Christmas Masses this Year

Welcome to Christmas in this most unusual year. How is Christmas different for you this year? I bet it is very unusual for most of us, for example, right now how we're sitting with all this space around us! The central truth of Christmas is that God comes to us, to be with us, to help us live this life well and to make it possible to be with him forever one day in heaven. That doesn't change. In any situation imaginable God comes to us.

I especially want to welcome people who are really hurting tonight, especially those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, perhaps for the first Christmas. I'm so glad you are here; I pray that our prayer will be a comfort to you and give you confidence that the God who came to be with us has prepared a place for beyond this world so that he might always be with us.

I mentioned on YouTube this week that one thing that changed for me this year is that I cannot join my brother in going to where our mom lives and enjoy and evening of laying around, exchanging gifts, and broiling up some lobster tails. I was missing the lobster tails thing especially this week. Partly because I like lobster, but partly because of what its history in my family has been.

In April 1973, my family experienced deep sadness when there was a car accident, my sister was killed and my brother was very badly injured. He's in good shape now. When that first Christmas after the accident rolled around, my family wanted to do something special, extravagant, because it was a hard year. So, we had lobster tails for dinner and we've done so every Christmas since.

So, I want to hang onto that in a limited way. But you know it's hard to say how it will go. Mom might decide she doesn't like lobster anymore, and my brother might say he doesn't want to risk food poisoning during his drive back to Madison. And you know what? That would be OK. It's not about the lobster; it's about the love of family and surviving together these many years, and communicated that by our presence and our actions, and sometimes our words.

To paraphrase St. Paul, if there's no love, it's not Christmas. You can have the lobster, the presents, the tree...you can have all the trappings of Christmas without making Christmas happen in your life. Care for one another. Thank God for each other. And in this especially let's soak in the love of God that strengthens us so we can be strong for one another.

My friend Tim was talking to his granddaughter before Christmas. He asked her, "Katie, what do you want for Christmas?" She went on excitedly for about a whole minute, then paused as said, "Papa, what do YOU want for Christmas?" He said, "Katie, you know, I really don't want anything for Christmas." She replied in disbelief, "WHAT? You don't want anything for Christmas?" She continued to beg her Pap to tell her what he wanted for Christmas.

"Well, Katie," he finally said, "What I want for Christmas is for you to get everything you want for Christmas." Then she said after a few seconds, "Hmm...I'll have to think about that."

She was trying to discern the heart of her Papa. It didn't make sense to her that he wouldn't want anything other than see her happy. It makes sense to parents, though, as they learn the meaning of love.

As Katie starts to seek what is behind the love in her Papa Tim's heart, Christmas invites us to seek what is behind the heart of God. Like Tim, God wants only abundant life for his children. I'm pretty sure God isn't rooting for us to have all the THINGS that we covet, but I do God wants us to live full, joyful and generous lives. He says as much in the Gospel of John 10:10, if you want a Bible verse to back up that claim.

And so these days of Christmas we ponder again the goodness of God who comes to our darkness with a desire that we might have abundant life.

Mass Intentions & Schedule

Weekday masses are at 9:00 AM Tuesday-Friday.
 Wednesday and Friday are School Only while school is in session.
 Saturday 4:30 PM, Sunday 8:00 and 10:00 AM.

Masks & social distancing are required.

Sat.	Jan. 2	4:30	Steven R. Tomashek
Sun.	Jan. 3	8:00	People of St. James
		10:00	Devin Bien
Tue.	Jan. 5		William Hollern
Wed.	Jan. 6		Lyle and Arlee Berg
Thu.	Jan. 7		Edward and Ruth Hollern
Fri.	Jan. 8		Charlie Martenson
Sat.	Jan. 9	4:30	Bob Krumenauer
Sun	Jan. 10	8:00	People of St. James
		10:00	Eddie Barnett

Sermon on the Amount

December 20, 2020

Sunday Adult Envelopes (169)	\$16,523.50
2019 same week (176)	\$9,367.00
Students	\$0.00
Plate	<u>\$98.00</u>
Total	\$16,621.50

Year to date Adult Env./CPL Income through Nov. 30, 2020:

Actual (July 1-Nov. 30)	\$257,364.00
Budgeted (July 1-Nov. 30)	\$263,515.00

Long term maintenance & facilities improvement fund
 and *Past*Present*Future Campaign* income for Dec. 20 was
 \$235.00 for a total since July 1, 2020 of \$39,737.60.



The Macks setting up the tree for Christmas, making sure our Christmas is still bright and beautiful. Thanks Macks for your time and dedication. We are all grateful.

Mass Sign Up

For help signing up for week-end masses, or if you have questions on the system, please contact Kelly Beaudrie at beaudrie.kelly@gmail.com, or 715-828-8313.

Religious Education will resume in person elementary classes on January 6 with Group B from 6:15-7:30. Middle School will continue to be virtual.



OCTAVE OF
Christmas

Parish Staff

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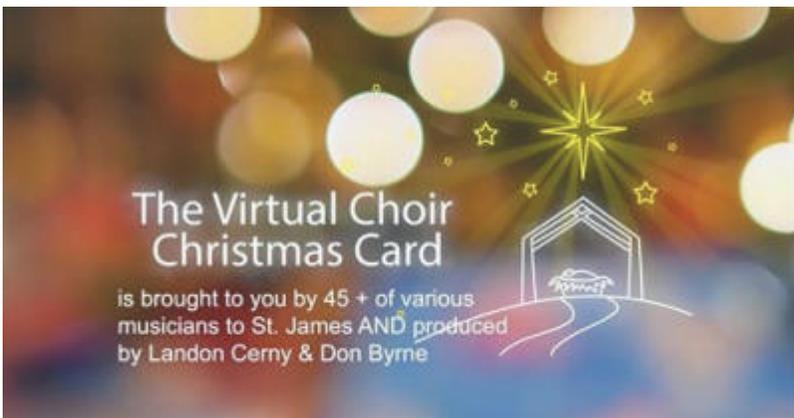
Bulletin deadlines: end of day Mondays.



More St. James family's Nativity sets



St. James school kids caroling in the neighborhood.



The Virtual Choir Christmas Card

was a collaboration of Love of Music, of our Faith and of the need to BRING A BIT of JOY to St. James through our choirs. I want to THANK ALL of those musicians involved who were able to give freely of their time and energy.

THANK YOU Landon Cerny and Don Byrne for your continued dedication to help the musicians SING and PLAY together again, even if it was "VIRTUAL".



Hearing the recording swells my heart. THANK YOU everyone for your part in this ADVENTURE. To ALL of the Parishioners and To ALL of the musicians, THANK YOU for your commitment to St. James and bringing your beautiful spirit to the music.—Mary Kolstad (bulletin editor note: thanks to Mary as well for your hard work on this!)

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