

FOURTH SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT

“BLESSED ARE YOU WHO BELIEVED  
THAT WHAT WAS SPOKEN TO YOU BY THE LORD  
WOULD BE FULFILLED.”

—LUKE 1:45

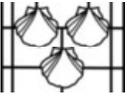
Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

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Keep your lamps burning

Relationship—Love and God  
in people together, sometimes  
in unexpected ways



## Message from Fr. Tom

Wow, the weekend of December 19, the last weekend before Christmas, is here. As always, I have reveled in these days of Holy Darkness with all of you. I am **grateful to all the piano accompanists** who made possible the musical setting of our Eucharistic Prayer. I am **grateful to all the altar servers**, youth and adult, who made our lantern processions so moving. The only downside was that probably most of you in church couldn't see it very well. The idea of "Keeping watch" and bringing the light both in with us and to lead us out into the world spoke volumes to me about connecting what happens inside our walls with what we do outside our walls.

**Christa Barrett and Makenzie Johnson** are our two RCIA participants this year as they prepare to be Confirmed in the Catholic Church. **Jacky Miller** is really excited about the enthusiasm they both have. Christa's two children were baptized at a Religious Education night mass recently, and **Makenzie** is our first grader here at St. James! Keep them both in your prayers, please.

I was surprised by the number of people who came out on a cold and snowy night last Tuesday, December 7, for our communal Celebration of Mercy prayer. I expected about 20 and there were more than 2x that. I never know if people appreciate the Covid precautions or think they're excessive (I assume some do and some don't), but especially since Fr. Schultz, who works in two hospitals, was the other confessor, both of us went outside the front doors of church for that duty. I don't know how it was for the people who confessed their sins, but Fr. **John and I both had the same reaction: "Wasn't that great to announce God's forgiveness with all snow falling? It was like grace from heaven fluttering down on the people. Mercy in snow."** It really was special for both of us.

This week's special communal prayer will be on Tuesday, December 21, with our "Word and Music for Days of Holy Darkness." This is without a doubt my favorite non-Eucharistic prayer service that we do at St. James. A reading--from Scripture or other various sources, some ancient, some new--is proclaimed, then there is a period of silence, and then a congregational song from our books. It is a lovely opportunity for peace and quiet and meditation on Advent themes during this season's final days. It is lovely in-person, but will also be streamed and available on our YouTube channel.

Did you notice that the area around the **carport entrance to church is much better lit** as of a couple weeks ago? Well, that's because **Ed Gonstead** came over and replaced several burned out bulbs. I wouldn't have known it was a problem but for some parishioner feedback and the eagle eyes of our neighborhood watchman, **Steve Steinmetz**. So, in one sense it only takes one person (Ed) to change a lightbulb, but in other sense it takes a village.

**Financially speaking, the one thing that isn't going very well is our Diocesan Annual Appeal.** It got a later start this year due to diocesan delays, but it is still one of our weakest efforts that I can remember. From the posted chart outside church, it appears we have contributed 54% of our goal, leaving us still **\$44,000 shy of our target**. Despite its name, this drive is not a true Appeal, but is in fact an assessment, and so has to be paid with parish funds if we fall short. Our local diocese is the glue that keeps us attached to the universal church, and its needs are many just as our parish needs are many. If you haven't contributed to this year's Appeal, or if you have and still have some end-of-year charity dollars you could offer, please consider contributing to this year's Appeal. If you no longer have an envelope, or if none was ever sent to you, you can always slip a check in an envelope labeled "Annual Appeal" and drop it in the collection box in church or at the office, it will go the right place. It is only because you are so good supporting St. James financially that our target is as high as it is, so this is **both a "thank you" and a "please?"**

Last, **many thanks to Paula Winter** for her presentations on our **strategic planning** after all the masses last weekend. I know for Paula it was a **Labor of Love, capital "L's" for both**. She had a beautiful way of surveying our many parish groups and then presenting to all who came to listen. All the work of recording and organizing the information was also with her mind and fingers. I'm sure her work will serve us well going forward. The only negative thing I heard was that lots of parishioners, those who don't have email or who aren't on our email list, did not receive the initial survey that was sent out last March. That is unfortunate, and we will learn from this oversight.

Peace.

## GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

December 19, 2021

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

St. Augustine tells us that a “Christian is a mind through which Christ thinks, a heart through which Christ loves, a voice through which Christ speaks and a hand through which Christ helps.” As we look around and out at the world, we do not have to search too far before we come face to face with inequity and injustice. There is so much unfairness, prejudice, anger, hatred, violence, and want. The stories of human heartache, people being hurt, deprived of life’s necessities, loneliness, and sickness are far too commonplace. For many of the world’s ills, the vices of greed, lust, pride, gluttony, and jealousy are clearly among the more significant root causes.



Why doesn't God just step in and fix this mess? After all, God created this world, and one would hope that he would step up and take some measure of responsibility for it! Once we sit with this thinking for a while, we can begin to realize just how flawed it really is. God did take responsibility and God did fix the problem! God sent us Jesus Christ as the divine solution to the world's ills. It is not God who has shirked responsibility, we have. We are the ones who continually fail to set our own personal needs, wants, and securities aside so that One more powerful than us can use us.

Mary had to set her needs aside in order for the Son of God to come into the world. Put simply, Mary listened and believed. Having opened herself to being an instrument of the Divine, God could use her as his mind, heart, voice, and hand. She became God's vessel so that God's greatness could reach the ends of the earth and peace could come upon the world. God's fix for the world's difficulties is you and me. We are the ones who confess that Jesus Christ came into the world as the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, and herald of justice. All we have to do is believe, as did Mary, that what has been spoken to us by the Lord will be fulfilled. Then, we can step aside and be the Christians we claim to be. What a difference it would make if every person who professed to be Christian truly understood that their one and only vocation is to be God's instrument. What a beautiful, equitable, and just world it would be.

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Fully Loving, Faithfully Teaching  
Compassionately Serving  
Truly Living, Joyfully Catholic

The Son of God  
became man to  
enable men to become  
sons of God.

C.S. LEWIS

**Growing Through Grief**

*God doesn't give us what we can handle, God helps us handle what we are given. "*

All Are Welcome" as we create an environment of hope, support, respect, coping skills, care plans and mutual trust for anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one. This is a place to share positive discussions on a topic that is emotional, physical, sensitive and private. What is said in this group, stays in the group.

We realize that there is a tremendous need.

**Our next group will be held on the following dates:**

12/17/2021, 12/31/2021, 1/7/2022, 1/14/2022, 1/21/2022  
and 1/28/2022 all at 1:15 PM in the Gathering Space at St. James.

For more information or to join the group please contact Pat Hanson at 715-835-9811, or the St. James Parish office at 715-835-5887.

**Religious give thanks.** "Thank you" hardly seems adequate to convey what it means to us," says a Catholic sister regarding the financial assistance her community received from the Retirement Fund for Religious. Prayer-filled thanks for your donation to last week's collection!

### Technology Committee

Are you tech savvy? We need you! We are looking to form a technology committee help assess and diagnose technology issues at the parish. For example, the Wi-Fi is bad during Religious Education nights—why? Who do we ask about it? We need someone to advise us. Can you help? Talk to Christine or Jacky.

### Sojourner House

Did you know that St. James has three teams going to Sojourner house regularly? It's not too late to help if you are feeling called to do a little extra service this season. The fourth Friday will go on 12/24, and fifth Friday will go on 12/31. If you are interested in helping out, let Christine know: christine@stjameseauclaire.org or 715-835-5887.

**DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING INSTANCES OF CHILD ABUSE** The Diocese of La Crosse, through its policies and procedures, seeks to provide a prompt, appropriate and compassionate response to reporters of sexual abuse of a child by any diocesan agent (bishop, priest, deacon, employee, religious, vendor or volunteer). Anyone wishing to make a report of an allegation of sexual abuse should send that report to Mrs. Teresa Brown, Complaint Intake Agent, at the Diocese of La Crosse, P.O. Box 4004, La Crosse, WI 54602-4004. Alternatively, you can contact Mrs. Brown at 608.791.0179 or intakeagent@diolc.org. The reporting form is available through the Diocese of La Crosse Office of Safe Environment or on the diocesan website at: diolc.org/safeenvironment/reporting. Individuals are also encouraged to take their reports directly to civil authorities. Copies of the diocesan policy are available through your local Parish and on the diocesan website. If you have any questions about the Diocese of La Crosse and the implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, please contact Teresa Brown, Diocese of La Crosse, at 608.791.2679 or tbrown@diolc.org.

### Parish Staff

Phone: 715-835-5887

Fr. Tom Krieg	Pastor	tom4664@aol.com
Christine Warloski	Pastoral Associate	christine@stjameseauclaire.org
Jacky Miller	Pastoral Minister	jacchuck@yahoo.com
Anne Henriksen	Office Manager	stjameseac@aol.com
Mary Kolstad	Crd. of Liturgical Music	kolstadmary@gmail.com
Kelly Beaudrie	Dir. of Religious Ed.	beaudrie.kelly@gmail.com
Beth Cerny	Crd. of Religious Ed	elizabethcerny@hotmail.com

### Mass Intentions & Schedule

Weekday masses are at 9 :00 AM Tuesday-Friday.

Wednesdays are school masses.

Rosary and Adoration are available after the Tuesday Mass until 10:30 AM.

Sat.	Dec. 18	4:30 PM Tom BaDour
Sun.	Dec. 19	8:00 AM Elliot Campbell 10:00 AM People of St. James
Tue.	Dec. 21	Enid Cota
Wed.	Dec. 22	Erwin Zurbuchen
Thu.	Dec. 23	Sandy Leonard
Fri.	Dec. 24	no 9 AM mass 2:30 PM Christmas Eve 4:30 PM Christmas Eve 6:30 PM Christmas Eve 9:00 PM Christmas Eve
Sat.	Dec. 25	9:00 AM Christmas Day no 4:30 PM mass
Sun.	Dec. 26	8:00 AM People of St. James 10:00 AM Eddie Barnett

### Baptism Classes

Classes are starting up again at regular times.

Classes are currently scheduled for:

Jan. 9, Jan. 30, Feb. 13.

Please let Ruth, the instructor, know if you plan to attend, at ruthebert78@gmail.com or 715-225-4959.

### Recycle old Christmas lights

Have a string of lights that don't work anymore? You can recycle them at the Courthouse!

A parishioner is willing to collect them at church and bring them to the courthouse. There is a bin for collection in the Gathering Space.

### Sermon on the Amount

November 7, 2021

Sunday Adult Envelopes (169)	\$14,656.50
2020 same week (101)	\$10,740.00
Students	\$2.00
Plate	\$227.00
Total	\$14,885.50

Year to date Adult Env./CPL Income through Oct. 31, 2021:

Actual (July 1-Oct. 31) \$229,022.33

Budgeted (July 1-Oct. 31) \$226,983.29

Long term maintenance & facilities improvement fund and Past\*Present\*Future Campaign income for Nov. 7 was \$325.00 for a total since July 1, 2021 of \$10,620.00.

### St. James School Phone: 715-830-2277

Jackie Lutz Principal,  
jlutz@regiscatholicschools.com  
Shanna Donkers, Administrative Assistant,  
sdonkers@regiscatholicschools.com  
Linda Schultz, Commission Rep.-RCS,  
linda1735@gmail.com

**Bulletin deadlines:** end of day Mondays.

**Christmas Mass Times:**

Christmas Eve: 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 9 PM

Christmas Day: 9 AM

Feast of the Holy Family: 8 and 10 AM  
(no 4:30 Mass)

The 9 PM mass will be live-streamed.

To accommodate different preferences regarding social distancing, as well as larger attendance:

The 2:30 and 4:30 Masses will have all pews available.

The 6:30 mass will have all pews socially distanced.

The 9 PM and 9 AM will have our normal half and half.



**Eau Claire Homeless Vigil**

Each year, scores of unhoused people die in our state; some with no obituary, funeral, or burial.

On the eve of the longest night, our community will hold space for those who have died this year. We will gather to pray, light candles, and remember. We hope this will be a transformative moment when we all decide to work together to end the injustice of homelessness in Eau Claire. Please join your neighbors at the Phoenix Park labyrinth from 5:00 to 5:30 PM on Monday,

December 20. Organized by the JONAH Religious Leaders Coalition, please call Lynn at 715-497-8732 for more information.

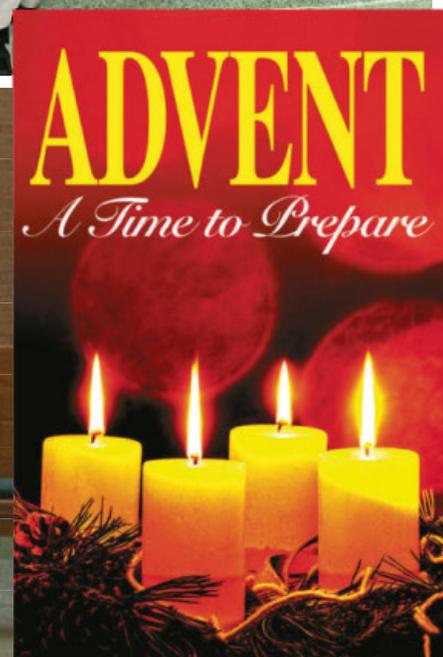


**Word and Music for Days of Holy Darkness**

Our annual Advent service with readings, songs, and periods of silence to relax into the days of holy darkness. Dec. 21 at 7 PM.



Welcome to the Catholic faith Abram Walker, Sophie Gregg, and Cheryllyn Powell.



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