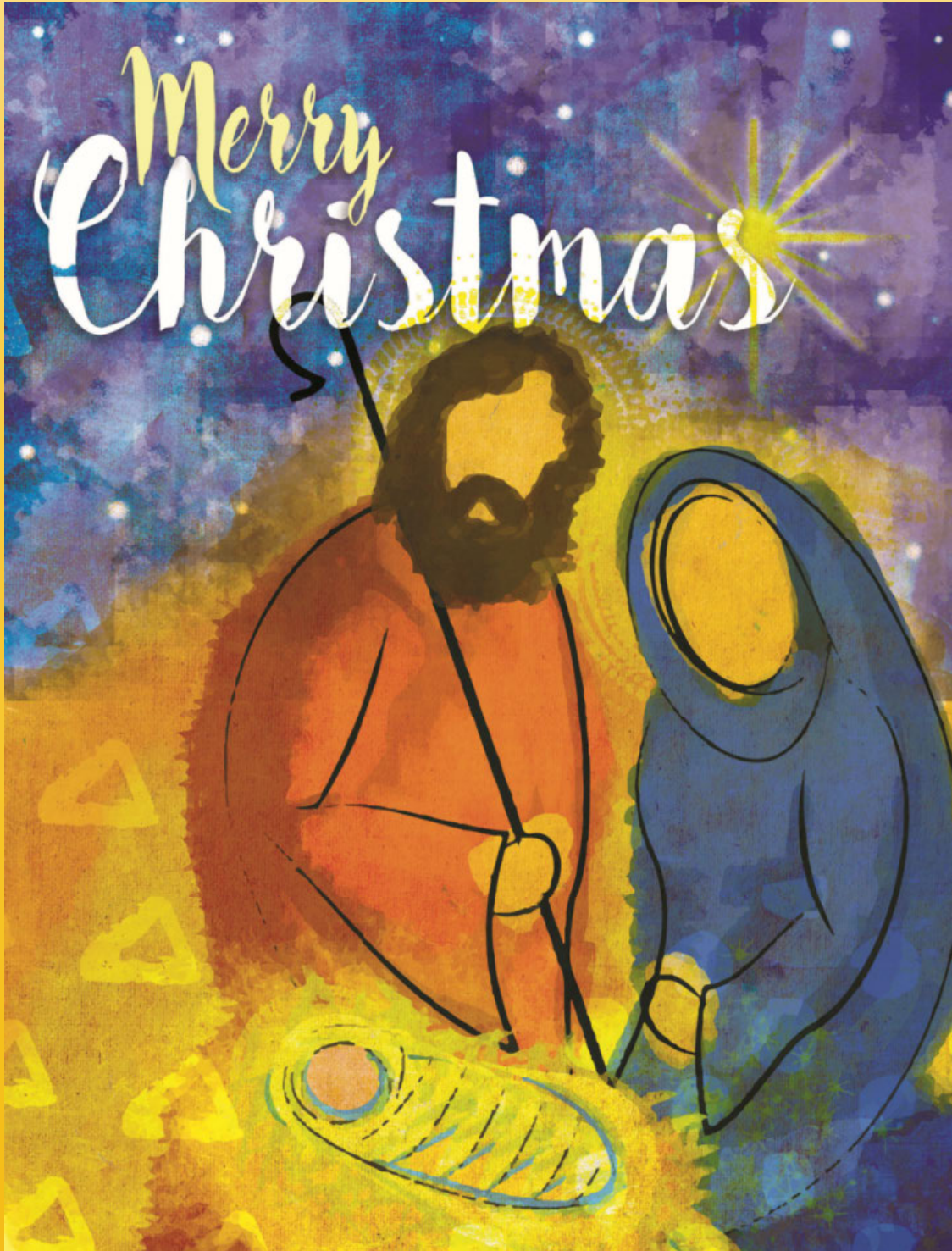


December 26, 2021

St. James the Greater  
*Where All Are Welcome*  
Feast of the Holy Family





## Message from Fr. Tom

Merry Christmas? I add the question mark because our bulletin company's deadlines are such that I'm writing this in the middle of the Third Week of Advent, and not feeling very Christmassy just yet! As always, I'm sure that we "had" a wonderful celebration at St. James. God willing, the Mack clan came with a beautiful tree and set it up gracefully reaching to the ceiling to the right of the altar. God willing, our piano players, other instrumentalists, and many singers found great joy in their ministry to all of us. God willing, Dan Kneer was able to join us on Christmas Eve a year and a couple weeks after a debilitating stroke and bring us all to tears by playing the organ to "O Come All Ye Faithful" and "Joy to the World." God willing, there will be so much love and faith in our house of prayer that no one leaves without feeling the love of God and the warm of those around them.

We hired a new person to remove snow from our sidewalks and entrances. A parishioner had heard that Hope Lutheran was happy with their guy and so we contacted him and, with the help of his son, he was happy to add us to his list of customers. His name is Trevor in case you see him at work and want to say hello. Thanks to Tim Deziel and Jim Forster for helping with the transition and showing him how to use our equipment.

I haven't quite figured out when I will go to see Mom and be with my brother at Christmas. Mom think I shouldn't drive back and forth on Christmas Day because I'll be too tired. So, I'll probably drive back and forth on Christmas day, and then also go and stay Monday through Tuesday noon. She's 91 and a heart valve is working imperfectly, so she often mentions that each Christmas being her last. It certainly could be, for her or anyone. It's important to be good to one another just for the sake of being good, but also because after death there will be fewer regrets and more peace in the midst of the grief.

Speaking of grief, I was so impressed by a couple of our parishioners who sought me out in recent weeks because they noticed a man grieving deeply while praying with us at mass. I asked the man if he would welcome calls from any well-wishers and if he would like to be connected to our Grief Group, and he said "yes." So, hopefully he made some healing connections with us. I know Pat Hanson will give him a call about our grief group.

Christmas certainly is a time full of memories. So many families that I meet with to prepare a funeral for their mother or father say something like, "She/He always made Christmas so special for us." My mom was no slouch, but in our house Dad was the big Christmas guy, delighting in making us wait to open gifts, and amusing himself by not knowing which gift he wrapped was for who. His guesses were always right, now that I think of it, so he was just playing the delays for all they were worth, I think. Then he would play the games he bought us with as much joy as we ourselves. Not being a father, I can only imagine the joy it would bring a man to see his family so happy at Christmas. I know every Christmas isn't all fun and rainbows for everyone; I guess I was lucky that way.

January 1<sup>st</sup> is not a holy day of obligation this year, it being one of those holy days that loses its force of obligation if it falls on a Saturday or Monday. We will nonetheless pray the mass together on the vigil, the evening before, at 5:30. We were hoping to have a big pot luck as we had done until the pandemic came upon us, but that was if the infection/death rate was decreasing, which sadly it is not. So, I'm guessing it'll just be mass. That doesn't sound right—"just mass"—does it? You know what I mean, though.

So, I do wish you the joy of knowing God-with-you and God's tender care for you. I wish you growth in faith and the strength to cope with the challenges that will come. Between friends and family you may have, God, and your parish community, you truly are not alone.

Peace.

GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

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**December 25, 2021****The Nativity of the Lord**

“He so loved us that for our sake He was made man in time, through Whom all times were made; was in the world less in years than His servants, though older than the world itself in His eternity; was made man, Who made man; was created of a mother, whom He created; was carried by hands which He formed; nursed at the breasts which He had filled; cried in the manger in wordless infancy, He the Word without Whom all human eloquence is mute (St. Augustine, Sermon 188).” The miracle of what happens at Christmas is truly an awesome mystery. Revealed in the silent ordinariness of life is God’s intimate love for humanity and all that he made. The Word, existing for all time, comes and dwells among us.

God kisses us. We can seek and soar with playful delight as a joy never known before fills our heart.



Joy is best expressed through dance. There is just something truly wonderful about the self-abandon a beautiful melodic dance reveals. If we are able to let go and really be free, it celebrates life in a way few other experiences really can. With the birth of Jesus Christ, God takes the Divine Dance to a deeper and more tangible level. We can now not only see what we believe but believe what we see! This most perfect dance is a call to beauty, innocence, truth, purpose, hope, faith, and love. Today we know, beyond doubt, that we are a necessary part of God’s beautifully choreographed masterpiece of life and not just a random happening without real intent or purpose. We are loved, treasured, and blessed.

Accepting the truth of God’s birth in time we also accept an invitation to dance with God. We can let go of what tethers us to anxious concerns and superficial securities. Throw caution to the wind and go with God. We have been blessed with talents, gifts, and life eternal. Follow the rhythm of the dance with joy and listen to what the Word who became flesh tells us about what the next steps can be. Today, heaven remains the same, but earth has been profoundly changed.

GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

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**December 26, 2021****The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

Families can be very difficult things to negotiate. This is true not only of our families of origin, the current family of which we are a part, the family of our Church, our society, and our global family as well. Everything human can be found in family stories. Those stories speak of wonderful life-giving successes as well as painful spirit-robbing abuses. Our greatest joys and our greatest wounds are usually connected with the experience of family. Our needs, experiences, and unresolved baggage often color what we bring to our familiar relationships. They contribute to our level of defensiveness, how guarded and protected we become, and what prejudices we believe.



In order to break the cycle of dysfunction we have to remember that it is not only by human effort that we negotiate the difficult and challenging events of our lives. There is a Divine Effort at work as well. For sure, the human effort can create quite a mess and easily destroy lives. This is true of any family with which we are associated. Today’s Feast of the Holy Family serves to help us understand that there is a Divine Story being told as well. It is a story of perseverance in the face of hardship, determination in the face of despair, healing when we see nothing but wounds, and light where there is darkness.

Do we believe that God is always working, guiding, restoring, and leading? Unless we do, we will never be free from the imperfections and wounds that bind us and never be able to understand what it really means to forgive. Pope Francis tells us that the “light which comes from the Holy Family encourages us to offer human warmth to other families.” While this is most certainly true, we can only really begin to do this when we realize that we are still works in progress, not anchored to the wounds and sins of our past, and still a leading star in God’s continually unfolding story of love. The Holy Family persevered and radiated warmth because they knew they were not alone. We can too.

**Mission Statement:**

We, the people of St. James the Greater Parish in Eau Claire, are a community of Catholic believers. We nurture our relationship with God and others through prayer, worship, Scripture, evangelization and education. We are committed to spiritual growth, service and stewardship. We embrace the diversity of gifts and needs of all people.

**New Parishioners/Pastoral Visitations/Prayer Tree:**

Please contact Christine if you would like to join the parish, be visited at home or at the hospital, or have a prayer request.

**Elizabeth Ministry:**

If you or someone you know is expecting, contact Christine to be connected with supportive volunteers.

**Sacrament of Baptism:**

A required Pre-Baptism class is offered frequently in the small room off the Gathering Space. Next class: *January 9, January 30, February 13*. Please let Ruth Ebert, the instructor, know if you plan to attend: [ruthebert78@ymail.com](mailto:ruthebert78@ymail.com) or 715-225-4959

**Sacrament of Marriage:**

By Diocesan regulation, all couples are required to begin the preparation and instruction at least six months in advance of a desired date. Please contact Fr. Tom before setting a date.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:**

Saturdays 3:30-4:00 PM or by appointment.

**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.

**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.

**Parish Staff**

Phone: 715-835-5887

Fr. Tom Krieg	Pastor	<a href="mailto:tom4664@aol.com">tom4664@aol.com</a>
Christine Warloski	Pastoral Associate	<a href="mailto:christine@stjameseauclaire.org">christine@stjameseauclaire.org</a>
Jacky Miller	Pastoral Minister	<a href="mailto:jacchuck@yahoo.com">jacchuck@yahoo.com</a>
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Beth Cerny	Crd. of Religious Ed	<a href="mailto:elizabethcerny@hotmail.com">elizabethcerny@hotmail.com</a>

**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. 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
Tue.	Dec. 28	Liturgy of the Word w/ Communion
Wed.	Dec. 29	Jerry Fisher
Thu.	Dec. 30	Linus Miller
Fri.	Dec. 31	5:30 PM Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (not a holy day of obligation)
Sat.	Jan. 01	4:30 PM Devin Bien
Sun.	Jan. 02	8:00 AM Bob Krumenauer 10:00 AM People of St. James

**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:** 12/31/2021, 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.

**Sermon on the Amount**

December 12, 2021

Sunday Adult Envelopes (131)	\$13,827.33
2020 same week (128)	\$20,611.00
Students	\$0.00
Plate	<u>\$181.01</u>
Total	\$14,008.34

Year to date Adult Env./CPL Income through Nov. 30, 2021:

Actual (July 1-Nov. 30)	\$284,950.57
Budgeted (July 1-Nov. 30)	\$281,983.29

Long term maintenance & facilities improvement fund and *Past\*Present\*Future Campaign* income for Dec. 12 was \$1,055,421.00 for a total since July 1, 2021 of \$1,405,000.

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

Jackie Lutz Principal, [jlutz@regiscatholicschools.com](mailto:jlutz@regiscatholicschools.com)  
Shanna Donkers, Administrative Assistant, [sdonkers@regiscatholicschools.com](mailto:sdonkers@regiscatholicschools.com)  
Linda Schultz, Commission Rep.-RCS, [linda1735@gmail.com](mailto:linda1735@gmail.com)

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



St. James  
Elementary School  
kids enjoying the  
snow!



### Ruby's Pantry

Volunteers are welcome and needed at Ruby's Pantry the first Thursday of each month between 2-6 PM. Volunteers are outside until we cannot be, so dress warm, have closed toe shoes, and join us for whatever time you can.

### Women's Spirituality Group

The women's spirituality group is studying Matthew Kelly's Life is Messy. They began in November but it isn't too late to join them. They meet on the first Sunday of each month during the school year at 6:30 PM in the gathering space. All women who might be interested in joining us, especially the women who can not attend the Thursday morning group, are invited. Contact Cindy Sarazen with any questions: [cindysarazen1@gmail.com](mailto:cindysarazen1@gmail.com), or 715-288-6160.

### Volunteers Will Be Needed!

Currently the homeless have nowhere downtown to go during the day: the library has moved, Sojourner closes its doors, even the gas station where they could get something to drink and go to the bathroom has closed.

A group of community members and local officials has partnered to create a Warming Center to give the homeless a place to stay. Details are still being worked out, but it looks like the Warming Center will start with Sundays and Christmas before opening its doors for every day shelter.

While there will be staff and security, the need for volunteers will be great! Please consider serving the community in this important way. It is unsustainable and unacceptable that as a community we leave people with no choice but to be on the street during winter. Let's work together as a community to make daytime shelter a reality. Any questions, contact Christine. Watch this space for more details as they are made available.

### St. James Social Concerns Committee

#### January Drive: Sleep in Heavenly Peace, [shpbeds.org](http://shpbeds.org).

Sleep in Heavenly Peace is a national organization that builds beds for children who do not have a bed. We would be supporting the local Eau Claire Chapter. They are in need of sheets, blankets, comforters and pillows for twin beds. They need to be new. People could also make financial donations: the cost for a complete bed including the mattress is \$250.00. They also need volunteers to help build and deliver beds. There will be a meeting on Dec. 27 at 6:30 PM at Hope Lutheran Church for anyone who is interested in learning more about the organization, or you can go to their website at: [shpbeds.org](http://shpbeds.org). The next local build will be Jan. 22.

### St. James Core Values:

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



*Witness the Difference!*

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Academic Excellence.**

Mark your calendars! Enrollment for  
the 2022-23 school year opens  
on **January 24!**

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