



St. James United Church
330 Elizabeth Avenue,
St. John's, NL, A1B 1T9



Celebration of Worship for December 22, 2024



The people of St. James United Church are eternal seekers who value diversity within our congregation, city and all of society. We affirm each person's uniqueness and believe that all persons deserve to be valued, treated with equity, and respected. We are all children of God, walking many paths of spirituality.

Further, we proudly and publicly declare our commitment to practice radical hospitality and strive in every way to provide a safe and supportive place for all persons to participate in the worship and work of our church.

Guided by the teachings of Jesus, we embrace all persons, regardless of creed, race, age, ability, economic status, cultural and ethnic background, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or any other difference that has led to marginalization or oppression.

December 22, 2024 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Leading Worship: Rev. James Ravenscroft,
Amy Dalziel, Bob Rose and the Senior Choir
Ushering: Sharon Seaward, Kennedy Collins,
Marilyn Adams, Susan Pike and Jean Thompson

*Please rise as you are able where there is an * in the service. Print in **bold** indicates that the portion is read or sung by everyone.*

We Come to Worship

PRELUDE

WELCOME; LAND AND KINSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We share greetings in Inuktitut, French and Twi, and give thanks for the land upon which we gather as we commit to be inclusive of everyone.

SHARING OF PEACE

INTROIT

OPENING POEM: “Dawn Chorus” by Tony Lucas

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

1. Each day as the earth turns, the sky turns as well, shifting from black to inky blue to pink and red, announcing the coming dawn.
2. The birds are the first to notice the change, raising an angelic chorus to the sun as it crests the horizon. A new day comes.

REFRAIN: “We Wait for God” (Words: William S. Kervin, 2023; Music: Deborah Park and Tom Reynolds, 2023)

We wait for God, creation longs to see a new day dawn. And though the night is dark and deep we dare to sing our song. We wait for God, creation longs, we dare to sing our song.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy One, as we come together this day, we rejoice that the time of celebration is near. Like birds greeting the dawn, we lift our voices to praise you, to rejoice that our waiting is nearly over and soon we will gather again to celebrate Christ’s birth so many centuries ago, and each day in our hearts. We pray in the name of the one who comes, your promised Emmanuel, Amen.

* **HYMN:** “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” (VU 44)

We Share in Love

OUR LIFE AND WORK

OFFERTORY: *There are many ways to give to St. James. You can place an offering in the plate, scan the QR code on the left, contribute via PAR, website (www.stjamesuc.org), e-transfer (email treasurer@stjamesuc.org), mail to the church office or drop in our secure mailbox. In whatever way you choose to give, the community is grateful.*



* **HYMN:** “In the Bleak Midwinter” (Voices United 55 v 4)

**What can I give him, poor as I am. If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise man I would do my part; yet what I can I
give him, give my heart.**

PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

ANTHEM

We Listen and Respond

LEARNING TOGETHER

We explore themes of the day in a manner that is accessible to all ages.

* **HYMN:** “Deck the Halls” (v1, Traditional; v2 & 3: Rod Reinhart)

1. Deck the halls with boughs of holly,

Fa la la la la la la la la.

'Tis the season to be jolly,

Fa la la la la la la la.

Don we now our gay apparel,

Fa la la la la la la la.

While we sing a yuletide carol,

Fa la la la la la la la.

2. Forward now to peace and freedom,

Fa la la la la la la la la.

There, a little child shall lead them,

Fa la la la la la la la la.

Break the chains of war and slavery,

Fa la la la la la la la la.

Pray with courage. Work with bravery,
Fa la la la la la la la la.

3. Dance away your victim's silence*,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Bring an end to fear and violence,
Fa la la la la la la la la.
War and hatred? No and never!
Fa la la la la la la la la.
Peace on Earth, we sing forever,
Fa la la la la la la la la.

READINGS: *At the end of each reading please say,
"Thanks be to God."*

Micah 5:2-5a; and Luke 1:39-45

HYMN: "My Soul Cries Out" (*More Voices* 120)

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

ANTHEM

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE PRAYER OF JESUS (*based on the original Aramaic*):

Radiant One: your Name shines within us, outside us - even darkness shines in you. Create your reign now, that your one desire acts with ours. Grant what we need each day in bread and insight. Forgive our hidden past, our secret shames, as we forgive what others hide. Keep us from forgetfulness, the temptation of false appearances and free us to walk your path with light and joy. For from you arises every vision; to you returns the birthing glory of the cosmos. Amen.

We Leave to Serve

* **HYMN:** "Angels from the Realms of Glory" (*Voices United* 36)
Change "Come and Worship" to "Go and worship" in each refrain.

BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

One: Go forth in love, waiting for the One we call Emmanuel!
All: We go, blessed in the assurance that God is with us!

POSTLUDE

St. James United Church

Chair of Council:	Michelle Skinner
Minister:	Rev. James Ravenscroft
Minister Emeritus:	Rev. Dr. Donovan Brown
Music Director:	Amy Dalziel
Associate Music Director	Bob Rose
Office Administrator	Stephanie Harnum
Technology Support:	Jake Thompson
Church Custodian:	Bruce Winsor

Life and Work - December 22, 2024

We accept the following donations to the General Fund:

- * In memory of Jean and Gilbert Inkpen from Gillian Brown
- * In Honor of Claire Higdon's birthday on December 26th from Stephen O'Dea

We accept the following donation to the Bethany Danielle Pike Memorial Camp Fund:

- * In Memory of Bethany Danielle Pike from Susan L. Pike and Michael Kavanagh

Christmas Office Closure: The church office will be closed starting on December 21 until the morning of January 2nd.

BIG THANK YOU: The Baking Spirits Bright Elves would like to say a big thank you to everyone who helped out in any way possible to make last Sunday a big success. From bringing stew/soup/chili/beans, to rolls and sweets, items for the bake sale and for all the people who help set up and clean up, servers and who looked after the bake sale. We served over 80 people for lunch and raised over \$1400. Once again thank you, we could not have done it without you.

Preparing for December 29: Do you have a nativity set at home that is unique or holds special memories for you? Bring to the church on December 29 and if you are comfortable, set it up in the sanctuary. As part of worship that day, there will be time in the service for people to look at different nativities and share about them.

St. James Calendar: 2025 Calendars are available to purchase. If you wish to buy one, please contact the office during regular business hours. The cost is \$20.

Bridges to Hope: Bridges To Hope are asking their partner churches to contribute a specific item each month. Of course, this item, and other non-perishable food items, can be given any other Sunday as well. These items are staples in the food hampers distributed and will go a long way to ensuring that hampers can be filled.

The suggested item(s) for December 2024, especially useful for Bridges to Hope - Canned Meat. Other non-perishable food items are always welcome and appreciated! Thank you for your support!

St. James Christmas Worship Services:

Christmas Eve Family Service - December 24 at 4:30PM
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - December 24 at 7:00PM
1st Sunday of Christmas Service - December 29 @ 11AM