

# St. James United Church of Christ

9008 Meisner Road, Casco, MI 48064 / [www.ourstjameschurch.org/](http://www.ourstjameschurch.org/)

Newsletter  
December 2021  
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## News from Pastor Ken



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Greetings to all! Merry Christmas and a belated New Year!

I realize that it sounds odd hearing these well wishes in this order but that is how it goes in the church world. According to the Liturgical calendar the church New Year officially began the last Sunday in November this year with the first Sunday in Advent. For all of you keeping score this begins Liturgical year C.

This year in so many ways seems like last year just overflowed into this year. So much uncertainty, confusion, and frustration.

Maybe even more so my appreciation of Advent grows. Perhaps even more with every passing year. When I think of what Advent is all about. As you have heard me say so often, Advent is to Christmas what Lent is to Easter. It is a time of spiritual preparation and discernment. It is a time to consider our relationship with God and Jesus Christ and the role they have in our lives. It is to consider this incredible gift that we are about to receive and how we would like to use it. I like to think of the gift of Christmas as an unlimited gift card that we can use anytime and anyplace to shape and guide our lives. But like all gift cards, it only benefits us if we choose to use them.

I think my Christmas' have become richer and more fulfilling as my Advent practices become richer and more intentional. I use Advent as a time of spiritual centering, reflection, and preparation for the year to come so when Christmas gets here, I am really ready. Not necessarily on the outside but on the inside. I think part of what use to (and still can) make me crazy about Christmas is that I thought everything needed to be perfect on the outside in order to be right on the inside, including gifts, decorating the house, the tree, the lights, the dishes, the...the..., the.... You see, I can make myself anxious just thinking about it. And while potentially becoming overwhelmed

## Pastor Ken Newsletter Continued

about the outside, it becomes easier to forget to prepare and make ready the inside. The heart and the spirit of Christmas.

So, for years it has been, first things first. Heart and spirit first and then allow some time to put up a little tree, a few decorations, and a little bit of shopping. Just as a note, I do not buy things people will not use just because I do not know what they need. Ah.... Christmas

So once again I am gathering my meditation materials and have been making my short list of specific things, I am seeking God's direction about in my life. It is important for me to use this as a time and season of reflection and preparation. If you would like to join me in spirit for a day in prayer, meditation, or whatever practice you use to center your spirit, I would enjoy sharing that with you. I continue to be excited about the journey ahead. This year I invite you to join me in re-arranging prioritizes and sharing with me ways to more fully enjoy Advent and therefore Christmas.

First, slow down and take time to remember what this season is truly about. It is time for thinking about our individual relationships with God and listening for what it is God would have us to do and who it is that God would have us to be. It is a time of prayer, contemplation and discerning. It is a time for considering and acting on how it is you want God to impact your life. I want to remind you to expect the unexpected.

Secondly, Advent is the beginning of the new church year. It is a season for appreciating what is, together with the hope of what is to come. I look with anticipation toward this New Year both in my personal life as well as our life together and as a community of faith. This has been an interesting year of growth and transition for me and our church family. As we make our way through this year there is cause for a cautiously exciting sense of energy and anticipation. I invite you to pray and prepare for what God is calling you individually and we as a community, to be and to do in the year ahead.

Third, Advent is the gateway to Christmas and all the joy and anticipation that comes with it. As I stated earlier, I am aware that even in "normal times" during the holidays we are sometimes consumed with trying to do life perfectly. It seems that no matter how much we do or how hard we work there will always be a couple things more we could have done. Is not that the way life is. I think the key to happiness during the holidays as well as throughout life is to slow down, plan for what you can plan, do what you can do, and then relax and take time to enjoy the ride, knowing that things are always going to turn out a little differently than the plan. Make sure to leave room for the Spirit to do its thing.

During this time of Advent, I invite you to follow that simple formula, plan a little, do a little, and enjoy, remembering that the biggest gift that you will receive is not

**Pastor Ken Newsletter Continued**

under the tree. It is the gift of God's unending love for you, the gift of boundless, unconditional, unearned, mercy, grace, and forgiveness. So, sit a moment, wait a while, take a deep breath, expect the unexpected and then prepare to open the Gift that can transform your life forever. Expect a miracle.

Remember that whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are held in God's unconditional love, boundless mercy, and unending grace. And there is a place for you here.

May you know the love and grace of God in your life. May your heart and life be filled with the Spirit. Merry Christmas!!

Take care and be well, Peace  
Ken

## Prayer List ....

Prayers for .... Claudette, Linda, Wayne, Shirley, Deborah, Karen, Keith, Terry, Janette, Barb, David, Nikki, Ralph, Sue, Doris, Frazer, Lee, Arnie, Bev, Jennifer, Carol, Joy, Steve, Marge, Harvey, Lynn, Don, Lois, Jack, Marion, Debbie, Tom, Brenda, Michelene, Bill, Ben, Jim, Mary, Kathy, Michael, Gina, Families of St. John & St. James



## Outreach Ministry

### Blue Water Area Rescue Mission - B-WARM

#### B-WARM NEEDS

##### Both Men and Women houses:

Current needs. No current needs except for continued prayers

They are thankful for the church's support and continued prayers. Continued prayers for Arnie's continued recovery and success on restarting their programs.

#### Helping Hands

**Current Needs:** Canned fruit and veggies, cereals, crackers and boxed mixes.

Not accepting books and furniture currently.

**No expired or opened boxes of food accepted.**

#### Kids in Distress

**Current needs** are as follows:

Hygiene Supplies: shampoo, conditioner, body wash, toothpaste, etc., boys and girls underwear and socks all sizes, new or gently used boots all sizes, boys pants size 5 – 8, snow pants size 5 and up.

## Happy Birthdays in December

1 – Mark Beattie  
3 – Jerry Maedel  
6 - Kim LaDuke  
9 - Rusty Stover  
9 – Sierra Nicole Pauley  
10 – Teri Lynn Ross  
11 - Ashley Beattie  
13 - Frank Tringali  
19 - Shirley Teltow  
25 - Jeff Bandlow  
25 - Ken Gadd  
27 - Jim Robertson  
28 - Jeff Laduke  
28 - Robin Meldrum

## Earthly Gifts

Our financial goal for November was \$5,345.00 and \$5,167.00 was donated. The goal for December will be again \$5,345.00. Please keep in mind our winter expenses for the Church. Envelopes for next year will be available this week and next at the main entry to the church after which the remainder not picked up will be mailed at great expense to St. James. If for some reason you did not find yours or did not receive it in a week or so please contact Roberta or Ralph for assistance. Numbers are listed in the weekly church service bulletin or leave a message on the church phone recorder 586-727-1623. Please have a safe winter season.

## Anniversaries in December

12 - Kelly & Terry Pauley  
16 - Kris and Wally Dombrowski

## The Discretionary Fund December 5th, 2021

Did you know this fund is utilized to aid with rent, utilities, medical supplies, food, and transportation to doctors, etc.?

This is generated from the loose change collected the first Sunday of each month. Please empty your pockets and change purses that day to meet the needs of our church and community.

## Spiritual Ministry

Sunday School is in session. Please feel free to bring your children to church and partake in the weekly Sunday School classes.

Please contact Sue Tews if you are interested in helping with Sunday school.

## *Christmas Poem*



### **The Star In The Sky Is Shining So Bright**

The star in the sky is shining so bright,

It gives the shepherds a sign & the Kings light.

Joseph can't take his eyes off the little baby,

Neither can those who have come to meet this miracle born from  
Virgin Mary.

Mamma Mary smiles down at her sweet little child,

His lips too stretch into a smile on his face so mild.

Merry Christmas to you dear!

## Christmas Tote Bags for Local Community Charities

The items accepted anytime: hygiene items such as: school supplies (colored pencils, colored markers, erasers, pencil sharpeners, crayons, scissors, rulers) toothpaste, washcloths, headbands, barrettes and bows, and socks (small sizes – boys & girls), washcloths, floss, and toothpaste and toys. We collect the below items for boys and girls from the age of 2 to 14 years old. We filled 116 tote bags this year for the below organizations. Thank you all for the giving of items, your time, material and for delivering the bags.

### Ministry Needing Helpers!!!!

Members are needed to take the items received for donation to B-Warm, Kids-In-Distress and Helping Hands in Marine City, MI. As you see the boxes/tubs getting full please feel free to help in this ministry by taking the items to the designated places. **Call first**, to make sure they are open for deliveries.

#### B-Warm

1920 24th St  
Port Huron, MI 48060  
(810) 956-0768

#### Kids-In-Distress

Bev & Gordie Kulman  
1114 S 7th St  
St. Clair, MI 48079  
(810) 326-4505

#### Helping Hands

310 s. Parker St.  
Marine City, MI 48039  
(810) 765-3848

### Bottle / Can Collection

Due to the circumstances right now, we will no longer be taking in actual bottle and cans. We are collecting cash donations from empty and clean bottles and cans you return to the store yourself that have a deposit on them to support our Christian Education Program.

Please bring the cash or a check to church. You may give Roberta Fisher or Ralph Ski the funds to give Betty Robertson. If you are unable to take them back, we will still take them at church for donation. Place them downstairs in the storeroom.



### Military Prayer List

I will be including a list in the newsletter of our men and women in the military, to acknowledge those who serve and to pray for their safety. Please submit your love one's, family member or friend's name, rank and branch of service to Roberta Fisher to be placed on the list.

# Kid's Page





### **December Activities**

Sunday, December 5 – Sunday Service with Holy Communion – 9am.

Tuesday, December 13 – Council Meeting – 7pm.

Saturday, December 18 – **NO** euchre

Sunday, December 19, Sunday Service with Holy Communion – 9am.

Tuesday, December 21 – Blue Christmas Service – 7pm. at St. James

Friday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion– 4pm at St. Johns

Friday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion – St. James at 7pm.

### **January Activities**

Sunday, January 2 – Sunday Service with Holy Communion – 9am.

Tuesday, January 11 – Council Meeting – 7pm.

Saturday, January 15 – Euchre – 6:30pm.

Sunday, January 16 – Sunday Service with Holy Communion – 9am.

Sunday, January 30 – Sunday Service with Healing – 9am

## Scripture Readings for December

**Sunday, December 5**  
**Second Sunday of Advent**  
Bar 5:1-9. Or Mal 3:1-4  
Luke 1: 68-79  
Phil 1:3-11  
Luke 3:1-6  
**Make Ready**

**Sunday, December 19**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
Mic5:2-5a  
Luke 1:46b-55 or Ps 80:1-7  
Heb 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)  
**Moving with Mary's Song**

**Sunday, December 12**  
**Third Sunday of Advent**  
Zeph 3:14-20  
Isa 12:2-6  
Phil 4:4-7  
Luke 3:7-18  
**Look Forward**

**Sunday, December 26**  
**First Sunday After Christmas**  
1 Sam2:18-20, 26  
Ps 148  
Col 3:12-17  
Luke 2: 41-52  
**Who is This Child?**

**\*\*Live streaming of Sunday Services will continue at 9:00am on the St. James Facebook page and at 11:00am on St. Johns Facebook page. Both will be available by video once live streaming is completed.\*\***

### Facebook

Please follow St. James on Facebook. New postings, events and Sunday Services are posted on a daily or weekly basis.

### Weekly Emails of Encouragement and Enlightenment

Please sign-up for our weekly emails provided by Pastor Ken. Provide your email address to Pastor Ken at [kgadd@oursstjameschurch.org](mailto:kgadd@oursstjameschurch.org)



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## DECEMBER NEWSLETTER