



ST. JAMES LIVESTREAMED CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Saturday, December 12 - 6:00 p.m.!

Although it is not possible to have our annual Carols and Dessert program this year, please join us for a smaller live streamed Christmas concert from St. James on Saturday evening, December 12. Several musicians from St. James will share beautiful music selections of the Christmas season - coming to you directly from our sanctuary! No audience is permitted, but please join us from the comfort of your home.

If you are unable to join us at 6:00 pm, a recording of the livestream concert will be available later that evening on YouTube Channel, StJamesVerona and can be linked from our St. James website, www.stjamesverona.org. **Merry Christmas from St. James!**

THANK YOU to our tech team who makes our live streamed and recorded worship services possible! Special thanks to Tracy Borchert, Alex Ford, Danni Londo, Michelle Lichty, and Jay Wendorff. You are doing an awesome job, and we all appreciate it!

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

December 13 - Advent 3 Worship - live streamed at 8:30 a.m.

December 20 - Advent 4 Worship - live streamed at 8:30 a.m.

December 24 - Christmas Eve recorded worship available on our YouTube Channel beginning at Noon.

December 24 - Parking Lot worship at 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm

December 27 - Pre-Recorded service: Christmas Lessons & Carols

January 3 - Pre-Recorded Children's Christmas pageant!

JOIN US CHRISTMAS EVE... IN THE PARKING LOT

3:00 pm & 4:00 pm

We will bring back the Parking Lot Worship Service on Christmas Eve with two services at 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm. Communion will be served, hymns will be sung (in your car.) There will be special music via your radio from the Sanctuary. Watch your Email for further details...



FROM THE PASTOR ...

“THERE IS LIGHT at the end of the tunnel...but we are still in the tunnel.” – Dr. Michael Osterholm

I think Dr. Osterholm, who is an epidemiologist at the University of Minnesota and member of an ELCA congregation in the Twin Cities, describes the situation we find ourselves in very well. News of two vaccinations currently before the FDA for approval, each with an efficacy rate in the mid-90s, is indeed encouraging. There is indeed light at the end of this long tunnel, but first we need to make it through the rest of the tunnel, and that of course, includes winter.

Winter is always a challenge, and this winter may prove to be more challenging than others we have faced in recent memory. As we approach the short days and long nights of the winter's season, let us be mindful of those who struggle with the increased isolation and loneliness that dealing simultaneously with winter and a pandemic brings. If you sense that someone is struggling more than usual this winter, please reach out to that person with a phone call, email or text. In addition, please let Pastor Peter or myself know so that we can assist you in reaching out. Even though we are not physically present with one another, the need for community has never been greater. Guided by God's Spirit, let us find ways to be a community in Christ and stay connected- though at a distance for now- but connected nevertheless.

Though the building is not open for large, in person gatherings, the work of the church goes on. Christ's church

does not stop for a pandemic. You should know that the St. James staff continues to work very hard to find new ways to continue the mission and ministry of St. James. Worship continues on line, devotions are written and sent out, bills are paid, statements are mailed, budgets are discussed and planned, confirmation and Sunday take place (although quite differently) and the St. James Pre-School (the award winning St. James Pre-School) remains open – and the list goes on. The ministry continues thanks to the dedicated and hardworking St. James staff. Please continue to pray for them, and when you can, send them a card or an email to thank them for all their efforts. Together, as a community in Christ, we will make it out of this tunnel.

Right now, like the majority of other churches in the Madison area, we are not open for in person worship. As vaccinations began to take place and the situation on the ground changes, we too will make plans for how and when to reopen. As a result, our Christmas celebrations will be very different this year, both here at St. James and in our homes. But let us find ways to celebrate the light and the love that comes to us at Christmas nonetheless. There is light at the end of the tunnel, so let us not give up hope. And may that light, the light that comes to us again at Christmas and shines so brightly in the darkness, guide us, empower us and give us hope. Together, we will make it out of this tunnel and through the winter

Advent Blessings and Christmas Joy be yours,

– Pastor Kurt

Phone: 608.845.6922

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

www.stjamesverona.org

Fax: 608.845.6903

Online Worship—Livestreamed on our YouTube Channel

Sunday - 8:30 am

Office Hours

Monday 9:00 am — Noon

or

By Appointment

Staff

Kurt Billings, Pastor	Cell: 235-8122
Peter Narum, Pastor	Cell: 469-9625
Michelle Lichty	Parish Administrator
Barb Roberts	Office Assistant
Susan Zimmer	Office Assistant
Holly Parker	Director of Parish Education Ministries
Paulette Spoon	Adult Choir & Handbell Choir
Susan Bubolz	Youth Choir Director
Rhonda Chalone,	
Alex Ford & Jim Erickson	Accompanists
Barb Rasmussen, R.N.	Parish Nurse/Visitation Coord.
Heather Pearl	Director, St. James Preschool
Holly Parker, Lori Rudy	St. James Preschool
Kristin Wills & Stacy Zimmerman	

Congregational Council

Elise Taft, President	608-437-7954
Dennis Beres, Vice President	608-845-9305
Mark Krebsbach, Treasurer	608-438-6424
Jim Ruder, Secretary	608-212-6742
Desiree Canto	646-599-7021
Allison Heil	608-845-9094
John Walker	608-845-8732
Susan Martin-Zernicke	608-246-2025



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

TREASURER'S REPORT

	<u>Actual</u>	vs. <u>Budget</u>	<u>(Decrease) from Budget</u>	
Year to Date Receipts				
Through November 30,2020	\$576,402	\$585,303	\$(8,901)	(1.5%)

Happy and blessed Advent to all,

A heart filled thank you to our Members. It is truly inspiring to see your continued support of our Church.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the St. James staff for all their hard work over the past year. The staff in my opinion have seamlessly transitioned into their expanded roles. Thank you so much for the staff's continued flexibility and creativity.

Seeds to Branches - Thank you to our Members for your continued contributions to the Seeds to Branches campaign fund. This ongoing campaign is an integral part of the financial future of our Church. During the year, a portion of the initial campaign funds were used to fund our monthly mortgage payments. In addition to the monthly mortgage obligation, we hope in future years that the Seed to Branches campaign funds will provide future opportunities to prepay portions of the mortgage principal and provide additional staff support and growth opportunities.

Year-end giving opportunities - December of course is an important month spiritually. This month is also very important financially for our Church's general budget as illustrated in the below graph. Included in this edition of the St. James Jottings is an article that discusses tax efficient ways to give to our Church. Please review this article for tips and ideas.

This year has been like no other before it. It has been reassuring that our Church community continues in so many creative ways. God bless and a very safe and Merry Christmas to all.

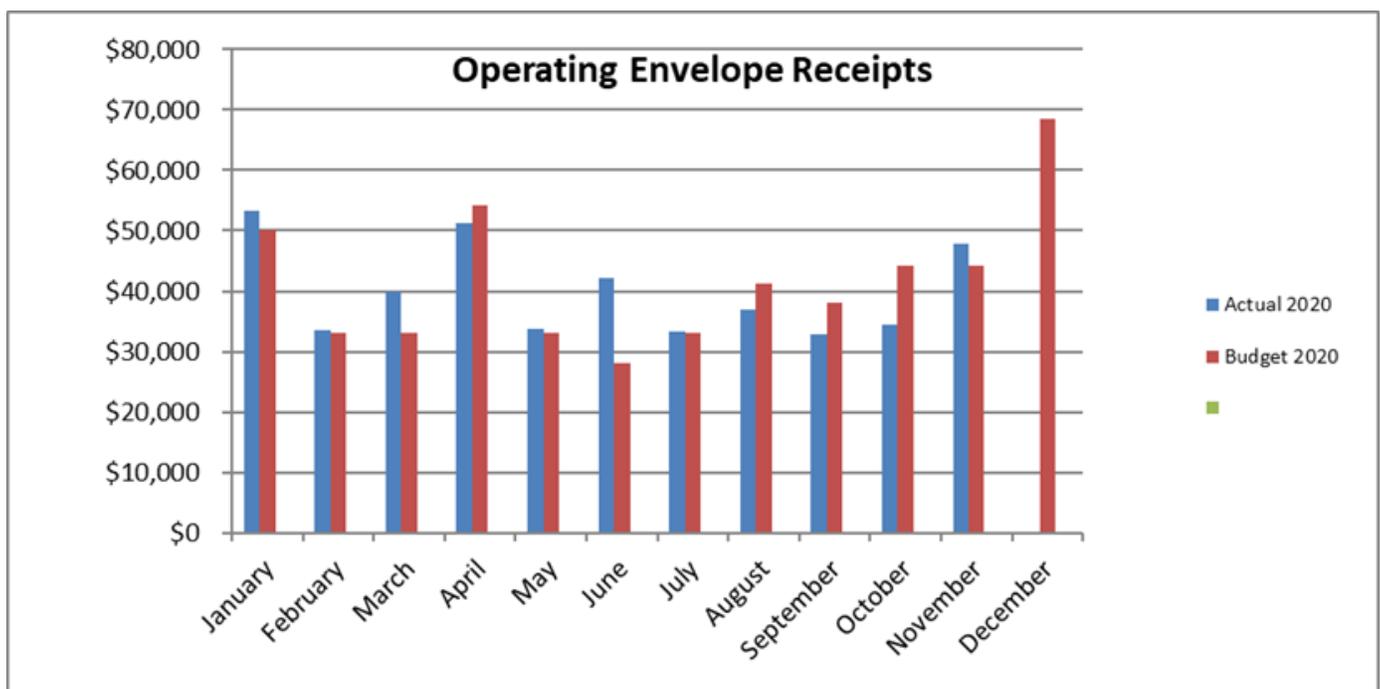
The following graph shows the 2020 Operating Envelope Receipts in comparison to the 2020 Budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

– Mark Krebsbach, Treasurer

*Thank you members for returning your
2021 Pledge Cards.*

*If you haven't already done so, please
send, email or drop-off at church.
Thank you!*



CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY

St. James Virtual Pop-Up Christmas Pageant & Advent Workshops

Hello Members of St. James!

It is hard to believe that the holidays are once again upon us. As we enter this unprecedented holiday season amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it is inevitable that many of our traditions will look different this year. The Pop-Up Christmas Pageant is no exception! Now, more than ever, I believe it is important that this Christmas tradition lives on! Of course, the pageant will have to look different as we follow safety guidelines. So, this year we will be having a VIRTUAL Pop-Up Pageant! **The virtual pageant will be in video form and will serve as the St. James worship service on Sunday, January 3rd.**

Traditionally, members of the congregation hold up one of our pageant props during the singing of songs. This year, we are inviting all to participate in making new props. We will ask families to participate in a “guided drawing” of the props. Guided drawing videos will be posted on the first three Sundays of Advent (11/29, 12/6 & 12/13). Families will draw their own candles, sheep, cows, donkeys, trees, angels, and/or camels. Then, we are asking that you take a picture of yourself with your drawing/s. You can text your picture(s) to me at (608)279-5077. We will have these pictures played during the Christmas songs in the pageant video. We think this will be a fun way to bring the whole congregation together and spread some Christmas joy!



I am also looking for children that would like to be an actor or narrator in the pageant. Actors and narrators will video record themselves acting and reading their parts from home. Once complete, videos can be uploaded to a Google Drive folder. Once I have all of the videos, I will compile them into a full pageant presentation! Please reach out to me if you have a child/children that are interested in participating in the pageant as one of our actors or narrators!

We are looking forward to continuing the Pageant tradition and are excited about the new format! Again, please contact me if you have a child interested in participating in the pageant as an actor. Thank you for your time and consideration in being part of this year's pageant!

Your Pageant Director,

Katy Moldenhauer

Katy Moldenhauer

Email: kathryn.moldenhauer@gmail.com

Phone: (608)279-5077



Sunday School



While we miss our Sunday School students and families greatly, we have been thankful to provide lessons for families to engage in at home. We were thrilled to see families at our Drive-Thru Kickoff & Bible Presentation and our Drive-Thru Trick-or-Treat! At each of these events, families were able to pick up bags containing Sunday School craft materials, activity sheets, family pages and some fun, faith-based trinkets & treats. Each week we post a video that includes a song, Bible story, craft, service challenge and sending prayer. Families are able to print activity sheets that go along with the lesson or request a packet of materials. We have LOVED receiving photos of the kiddos doing Sunday School at home and sharing them as a way to stay connected!

In December, Sunday School families, along with the entire congregation, are encouraged to participate in the Virtual Advent Workshops & Christmas Pageant! Let's join together to create a special Christmas memory and spread some joy!

Are you receiving the Sunday School Scoop? If not, please email Holly at hparker@stjamesverona.org so you can stay informed of faith formation opportunities in 2021!

Confirmation

We kicked off the year by welcoming students and families to a Family Time Matters class in the St. James parking lot. To start the year, students could attend in-person class on Wednesdays or Zoom class on Sundays. We were able to sneak in a few outdoor classes and one indoor class before making the decision to transition to all virtual for the remainder of 2020. Students have been busy learning about Lutheran history and catechism and finding ways to serve others through drive-through events, leaf raking, and participating in worship. We hope to return to in-person class eventually...but in the meantime, we are grateful for the opportunity to connect in other ways. We are also grateful for the flexibility, creativity and grace of our committed teachers, students and families!



St. James Parent Support Group

Members with children of all ages were invited to meet via Zoom once a month this fall. Parents shared highs and lows and connected over conversations about busy schedules, parenting during the pandemic and more. This virtual "coffee hour" was a great way to connect with old friends and meet some new friends too! Thank you to member Kristin Scheeler for leading the way. Stay tuned for 2021 Parent Support Group dates and announcements!

Are there any topics you'd like to discuss? Email Kristin Scheeler at viktorcello@gmail.com or Holly Parker at hparker@stjamesverona.org with any questions or suggestions!

Children, Youth & Family Ministry

These are strange and challenging times, and we want to do our best to support you and your family! Please reach out and let us know what needs or suggestions you have!

GIFT PLANNING IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Gift planning includes a range of possibilities from making a gift in the near future by dropping off, mailing, or donating online on our website, to sharing a gift intention for the coming year by returning your 2021 pledge card, to creatively planning how you will use your assets now or sometime in the future, or by putting plans in place for a legacy gift extending beyond your lifetime. We hope the following information will be helpful for you. These descriptions are not intended to provide financial or tax advice so please consult with your investment and tax professional for financial advice and further information. Remember . . . you don't have to wait until the end of the year. Consider whether this is a good time to make a gift and contact the church office for more information on how to do so.

In 2020 there are some new opportunities for gifts, and subsequent tax implications through the CARES act and related legislation:

If you use the standard deduction, you can claim up to \$300 in charitable giving (and \$600 for a couple) as a tax deduction

If you itemize your taxes, you can continue to claim charitable giving. Limits on charitable giving have changed and even eliminated for 2020. Consider whether "paying it forward" by making intended 2021 financial support may make sense for you this year.

Please remember that you can make charitable gifts anytime between now and the end of the year . . . you don't have to wait until December 31!

Donor Advised Funds

If you have established a Donor Advised Fund, please consider a grant to support the ministry of Saint James.

Who Says It Has to be Cash?

Did you know that only about 5% of our wealth is in the form of cash? The remaining 95%, not found in our bank accounts or in our pockets, includes stocks, mutual funds, homes, and retirement accounts.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)

Those already 70-1/2 or older by 2019, may be familiar with **Required Minimum Distributions (RMD)**, if they have traditional retirement accounts. In 2020, there will be no required minimum distributions. In 2021, according to current tax law, required minimum distribution will resume, and begin for those who are at least 72.

Making a qualified charitable distribution can provide tax advantages. And while there is no RMD in 2020, you may still find it advantageous to make a gift directly from a retirement account, and/or to plan for how you will make a gift through RMDs in 2021.

Gifting Appreciated Stock to Saint James

When you are considering your gift to Saint James, one of the most effective means of tax savings available is gifting appreciated stock or mutual funds. When you donate qualified appreciated stock (generally stock held for at least one year), you may be able to deduct as a charitable deduction the fair market value (FMV) of the stock (even though you may have paid substantially less when purchased) and not be subject to the capital gains tax for stock gift.

For example, if you gifted \$10,000 FMV qualified stock to Saint James assuming a 35% tax rate, you may be able to realize up to \$3500 of tax savings and not pay capital gains tax on the stock gift. If instead, you sold the stock and donated the proceeds, you would likely be assessed a capital gains tax on the FMV less your cost basis.

To be included in the 2020 tax year, the gift needs to be transferred or stock certificate(s) postmarked by December 31, 2020.



Congratulations to our 2020 Confirmands who were celebrated in a special service on November 15, 2020: Elizabeth Sorbet, Casper Cahalan, and Hannah Storch.

Gift planning continued...

Consider the possibilities!

There are creative plans and instruments available to make a charitable gift now . . . or plan for one in the future.

Possibilities might include provisions for:

A gift of property, such as a home or other property, with options for:

Giftting it now, or in the future

Continuing to live in your home or moving out

Receiving annual income for life, or a set period of time

Providing favorable tax advantages for you or your heirs

Retirement Accounts and Life Insurance Policies

This normally can be easily accomplished by designating Saint James as a beneficiary for an account or policy, or a percentage of the eventual value.

Make a Gift to Saint James through your Will

Make an impact and leave a legacy. You can indicate an amount or, provide a percentage of your estate value.

*As always, thank you all for your continued support of St. James Lutheran Church.
We appreciate each and every one of you and look forward to the day when we can be together again.*

WOMEN OF ST. JAMES HOLD SUCCESSFUL BAKE SALE & LUNCHEON



When the Women of St. James Board met in mid-June to start planning for the 2020 Bake Sale & Luncheon Event, we knew we had a big decision to make - do we hold, change, or cancel the event? When it was necessary to make the decision in September, we prayerfully took on the challenge of significantly modifying this annual fundraiser to provide safety and some variety and tradition to the longstanding event. Making the decision to hold the luncheon as a drive-thru event AND only to offer a few bake sale items with all orders to be placed in advance of the event was certainly a big change. We took on the risk/challenge to offer "something" for our patrons to enjoy and because this would be the group's only fundraiser this year.

Well, with the commitment and action by way too many volunteers to name here, we are thankful and thrilled to report that this year's event was even more successful than our full-scale event from last year. The funds raised are to support the Women of St. James mission of providing funding to church and community programs that benefit women, children, and families. The event raised over \$3,500 this year and with the additional Thrivent donation that comes from members who invest in Thrivent of \$1,000, a total of \$4,500 is available for many worthy causes. Examples include supporting the Badger Prairie Needs Network,

sponsoring several families at Christmas as selected by the VASD social workers, purchasing Bibles for the St. James Youth - 3-year olds, 3rd graders, and Confirmation student Bibles, contributing to the annual Women's Retreat, and providing High School scholarships to two graduating seniors.



Members Elise Vroman, and her mother Cheryl, and Karen Breitnauer and her daughter Emilie, help prepare lefse.

In addition to over 110 lunches of the baked pineapple ham with beans, applesauce, and a choice of homemade apple or pumpkin pie or cherry topped cheesecake for dessert, the bake sale items were a huge hit as we basically sold out of krunkake, lefse, pfefferneusse, and whole pies. We also received monetary donations in support of the annual fundraiser and donations of homemade pies for the lunch and the bake sale. THANK YOU for supporting the Women of St. James mission of providing funding to church and community programs that benefit women, children, and families.



Saint JAMES PRESCHOOL



Preschool Update:

This school year sure has been interesting! We are open and have been able to serve our families. We are more limited on our numbers due to COVID restrictions however, we are able to serve all of our legacy families and the ones that had already signed up for this school year. The kids have done an amazing job at being back at school and wearing their masks. At St. James Preschool we have worked hard at being creative in including parents and doing some of our favorite events. For our annual Trick-or-Treat event we did a drive thru version. School bought the “treats” and individually wrapped everything. Then the staff each had a station at their car and handed out bags to the kids as their families drove thru. We had a total of about 80 kids attend (students and their siblings). In December, we are going to do a Zoom Pajama Bingo Party. We are excited to see how this turns out.

The staff has been working around the clock to make sure we stay up to date on all procedures and protocols. There is a lot of extra work this year between cleaning, teaching in person and virtually at the same time, being down one staff member, worries of COVID, new protocols, etc. Before the school year started, as we were planning, I told the staff that this year’s themes would be open minds, flexibility, creative ideas, and team. It never ceases to amaze me how hard they work each and every day and take whatever challenges are given to them. I am thankful for Holly Parker, Lori Rudy, Kristin Wills, and Stacy Zimmerman and the even tighter team we have formed this year.

This year we are continuing our partnership with The Nora Project. We started working with them last school year. The Nora Project creates curriculum for teachers so they can teach children about kindness, empathy, disabilities, and inclusion. When we did this last year we realized the curriculum wasn’t “just right” for preschoolers so they asked us to help them create and modify the curriculum so they can put out the best possible curriculum for our youngest learners. It has been an honor to work with them. The Nora Project offers training that at least one person has to attend but is open to all our staff. We all attended training sessions (online) this summer. This year their training camp included a point system with points being earned for attending, commitment, and leadership. Holly and I were named “Changemakers”. This is the highest honor for training camp only for those who completed over 17 hours of training in curriculum, social justice, and inclusion. There were also points awarded for whole schools and the top 3 were recognized and received an award. **We are excited to report that St. James Preschool tied for first place and our entire school is considered to be a “Changemaker”.** There are 50 school and more than 225 educators participating in The Nora Project. To be named one of the top schools is such an honor that we are all very proud of. You can visit The Nora Project’s website at www.thenoraproject.ngo to learn more about them.

We all enjoy being back with the kids and are thankful that we can do our jobs in person. We are prepared and ready to tackle whatever gets thrown our way. Our best to each of you today and always.

Heather Pearl
Director of St. James Preschool





Parish Notes



We remember our members in our prayers, especially Jack Bisek, Judy Borgwardt, Ellen Hornbacher, Cheryl Holley, Harriet Instefjord, Lorine Kahl, Ed Kindschi, Sharon Marquardt, Monica Pechan, Lorlene Pulver, Jim & Candy Nerge, Charles Reuter, and Ernie Stuber, We pray also for the families and friends of our members, near and far.

Sacrament of Christian Baptism: Henry Alton Harrison, son of Kevin & Kim (Sherman) Harrison on July 3; Brooks Joseph Schambow, son of Benjamin & Julie (Burns) Schambow on August 9; Callen James Piche, son of Michael & Jenna (Lawfer) Piche on September 19; Lilah Jane Chizeck, daughter of Matthew & Elizabeth (Brueggen) on September 20; and Annaliese Emma Grace Woolums, daughter of Jonathan & Rebecca (Morris) Woolums on October 17, 2020.

Christian Sympathy is extended to the families of Delores “Cookie” Thompson, Doug Wahl, Duane “Dewey” Wagner, and Ruby Reuter as they mourn their passings. We pray also for the family of Chuck Abplanalp as they mourn the death of his mother, Helen.

In Residence: **Four Winds** - Zelma Danna; **Noel Manor**—Dutch & Dee Becker, Ellen & Lloyd Hornbacher, Lorena Gerbitz, Dale & Audrey Hagen, James Hatch, Audrey Kunstmann, Marilyn Le Moine, Maureen Rand, Chuck & Marilyn Roum, Jim Schumann, Ernest Stuber, & Bob

Syvrud. **Oakwood West** – Lorine Kahl. **Willow Pointe** - Betty Burgenske, Kay & Gerald Hankins, and Charles Reuter.

Serving in the Military: Craig Montry, Harry Zimmer, Donovan Mabe, Judy Watters, TJ Becker, Wyatt Breitnauer, Nicole, Andrew Zenz, Evan Spoon, Hannah Tordoff, Bryan Tordoff, Casey Biggins, Casey Pulver, David Pulver, and Shandra Pulver.

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON WI
Permit # 4013

427 South Main Street
Verona, WI 53593-1492

