

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday Celebration • November 30, 2025 • 10:00 AM



SAINT JAMES
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CREATION JUSTICE • JUST PEACE • OPEN AND AFFIRMING

Founded in 1853

Rev. Paul Werner, Pastor
Ciaran Krueger, Music Director
Christy Schrecengost, Church Administrator
Jonathan Rizzo, Accompanist
Cher Hall, Sunday School Leader
Karen Reinagel, Director of Religious Education Emerita

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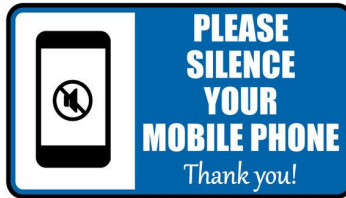


hamburgucc.org

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Liturgist: Maryangela Gadikian



“There’s a world of hurt out there that needs the word of hope in here.”
Rev. Jo Hudson (*21st century*)

“It is not enough to win a war; it is more important to organize the peace.”
Aristotle (*4th century BCE*)

“There is no ‘way to peace’; there is only ‘peace.’”
Mahatma Gandhi (*20th century*)

“In this life we are to become heaven so that God might find a home here.”
Meister Eckhart (*14th century*)

“When I die, God isn’t going to ask me ‘Did I create the Earth in six days or five days?’ but ‘What did you do with what I gave you?’”
Richard Cizik (*21st century*)

“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be a better light, and safer than a known way.”
St. John of the Cross (*16th century*)

Congregation: Bold print
*Please rise in body or in spirit.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land upon which St. James UCC stands was originally the ancestral and unceded territory of the Haudenosaunee and Erie people. We celebrate and honor the contributions that Native Americans have made in the past and continue to make today in the Western New York area and the Americas. We embrace the Haudenosaunee philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. Additionally, we commit to supporting initiatives that empower the local, national, and international Indigenous communities and to listening, learning, and taking actions to address injustices past and present that have impacted these communities and all God's creation.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Welcome to St. James, an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, where we strive to be more fully the body of Christ. We are committed to welcoming and celebrating all people and the uniqueness we each bring. As people of faith, we boldly proclaim: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE (Week One: Hope)

Ralph Stonier

One: When I look around, I see shadows of hunger. So many neighbors, nearby and around the world, will go to bed hungry tonight.

Many: **When I look around, I see shadows of injustice—the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. And someone somewhere will fall asleep under a bridge tonight.**

One: In the face of hunger, we light a candle of hope.

Many: **In the face of injustice, in the face of despair, we light a candle of hope.**

(The first Advent candle is lit.)

One: May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

Many: **May the light from this candle say to all that God's hope is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.**

One: Friends, be not afraid. God's hope is at hand!

*Light the Advent candle, one:
Now the waiting has begun;
We have started on our way,
Time to think of Christmas day.*

*Candle, candle burning bright,
Shining in the cold winter night;
Candle, candle burning bright,
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.*

INTROIT

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Please rise in body or in spirit to greet your neighbor with Christ's peace.

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Please return to your seat as we begin to sing the opening hymn.

***OPENING HYMN**

"Now Is the Time Approaching"

NCH 609

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Maryangela Gadikian

One: As the sun rises on this new season, we turn within and ask God to renew hope in each of us.

Many: **Let us go to the house of our God and find hope within!**

One: Though the days are hard, and the news is grim, we turn to our siblings here, asking them to trust God, as we have so many times in the past.

Many: **Peace be within the walls of this house, that our hope might spread beyond!**

One: In our fears and our desperation, in our exhaustion and our pain, God wraps us in bands of hope, holding us together so we may continue the struggle for justice and peace.

Many: **I will seek all that is good within the house of God, and I will carry it with me wherever I go!**

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Maryangela

Emmanuel, we come here today to renew ourselves in the generosity of God's hope. We will climb the mountain hand in hand so that we may learn again of God's promise to be with us, both in the valley and on the peaks. Let us set down our despair and rest in the light of God until we are renewed! Amen.

*RESPONSE

“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn” (**Verse 1**)

W&R 160

***Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born, behold! the child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all the hearts together,
he opens wide the heavenly door and lives now inside us forever.***

CHILDREN’S TIME

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 2:1-5 (The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation)

Maryangela

The ideal of a world at peace based on a common faith is one of the most important gifts of Israel’s prophets. Here Isaiah expressed that vision in one of its two very similar versions in the Hebrew Bible. It also appears in Micah 4:1-5. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah in the late 7th century BCE. Which prophet first conceived it remains unknown.

This is what Isaiah ben-Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

In the last days, the mountain of God’s Temple
will be established as the most important mountain
and raised above all other hills—
all nations will stream toward it.
Many people will come and say:
“Come, let us climb God’s mountain
to the Temple of the God of Jacob,
that we may be instructed in God’s ways
and walk in God’s paths.”
Instruction will be given from Zion
and the word of God from Jerusalem.
God will judge between the nations
and render decisions for many countries.
They will beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
one nation will not raise the sword against another,
and never again will they train for war.

O house of Leah and Rachel and Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of God!

Matthew 24:36-44 (The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation)

Rev. Paul Werner

This passage is part of Matthew’s rendition of the “Little Apocalypse” first presented in Mark 13. This vision follows closely the style of earlier Jewish apocalyptic writings. It depicts the time when Christ will come to establish God’s reign. Note also that the emphasis is placed on the total unexpectedness of the moment when this will happen.

Jesus speaking: “No one knows that day and that hour—not the angels of heaven, nor even the Only Begotten—only God.

(continued on the next page)→

“The coming of the Promised One will be just like Noah’s time. In the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, having relationships and getting married, right up to the day Noah entered the ark. They were totally unconcerned until the flood came and destroyed them. So it will be at the coming of the Promised One. Two people will be out in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two people will be grinding meal; one will be taken and one will be left. Therefore, be vigilant! For you don’t know the day your Savior is coming.

“Be sure of this: if the owner of the house had known when the thief was coming, the owner would have kept a watchful eye and not allowed the house to be broken into. You must be prepared in the same way. The Promised One is coming at the time you least expect.”

CHORAL ANTHEM

“Vine and Fig Tree”

James DesJardins

MESSAGE

“Get Real!”

Rev. Paul

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CONGREGATION

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD’S PRAYER / PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Our ____*, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom**, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Use whatever language is closest to your own heart (Our Father, Our Creator, Our Father and Mother, etc.)*

***Or “kin-dom.”*

RESPONDING WITH OUR GENEROSITY

INVITATION

OFFERTORY / GIVING OF OUR GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

- *Please place your gift in the offering plate. Many of our members and friends give online. To do so, you are invited to use the information located on the back cover of this bulletin.*
- *Our gifts help sustain this community of faith by maintaining our facilities, supporting our staff, and providing the materials that make our ministry available to all.*

***DOXOLOGY**

NCH 780

(Sing the version of the Doxology that is closest to your own heart.)

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host: Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

***CLOSING HYMN**

“Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”

NCH 122

***BENEDICTION**

***SINGING FOR A JUST PEACE**

***Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, with justice and dignity.***

***With God as Creator, family all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.***

***Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my joyous vow:***

***To love with kindness and work for justice, that all may be set free.
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me!***

***POSTLUDE**

You may make your way to the Horton Lounge (Hospitality Room) for refreshments and fellowship, or you may remain in the sanctuary for contemplation and reflection.

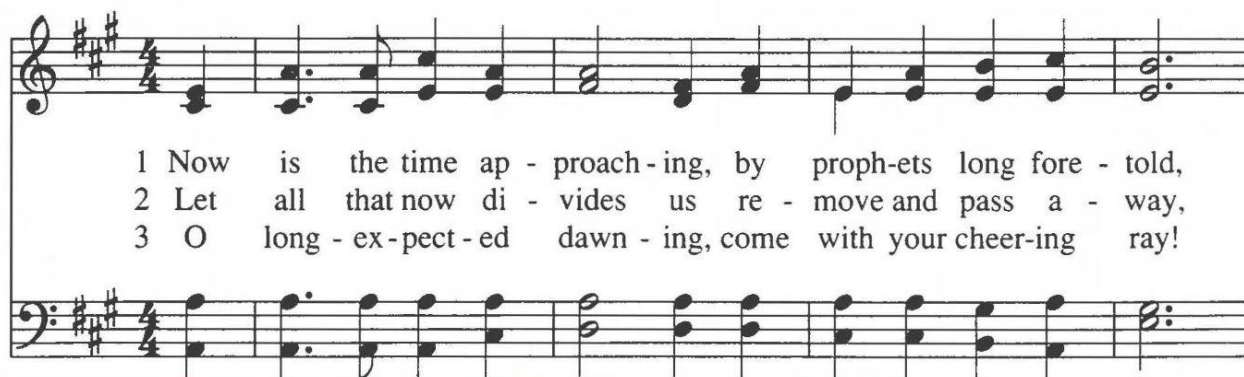


Now Is the Time Approaching

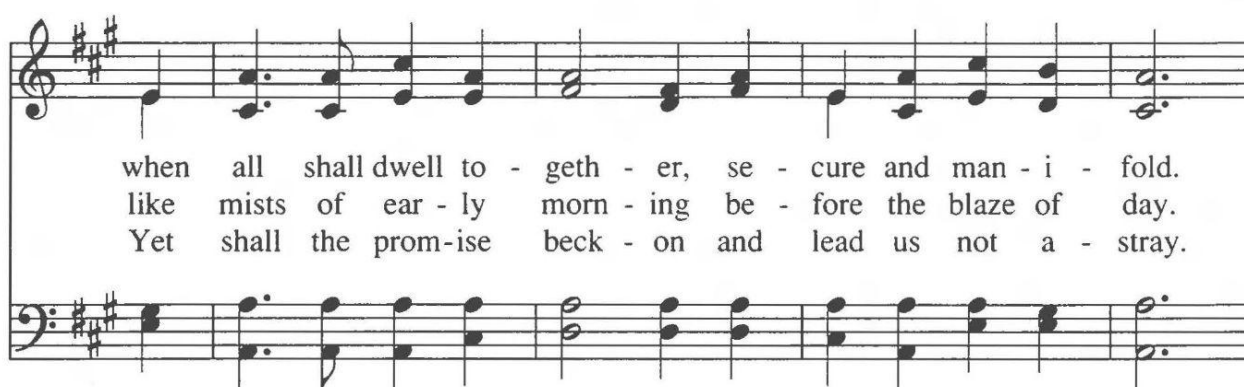
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Jane Laurie Borthwick, 1859; alt.

Jer. 33:14-16; Isa. 11:6-9; 61:11



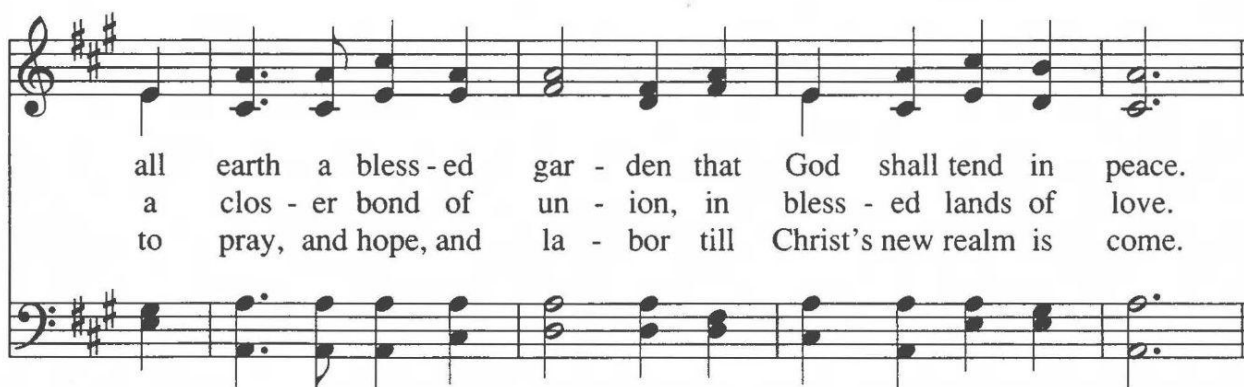
1 Now is the time ap - proach - ing, by proph-ets long fore - told,
2 Let all that now di - vides us re - move and pass a - way,
3 O long - ex - pect - ed dawn - ing, come with your cheer-ing ray!



when all shall dwell to - geth - er, se - cure and man - i - fold.
like mists of ear - ly morn - ing be - fore the blaze of day.
Yet shall the prom-ise beck - on and lead us not a - stray.



Let war be learned no long - er, let strife and tu - mult cease,
Let all that now u - nites us more sweet and last - ing prove,
O sweet an - tic - i - pa - tion! It cheers the watch-ers on



all earth a bless - ed gar - den that God shall tend in peace.
a clos - er bond of un - ion, in bless - ed lands of love.
to pray, and hope, and la - bor till Christ's new realm is come.

160 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

G Am7 G $\frac{C}{E}$ D $\frac{D}{C}$

1 A - wake! a - wake, and greet the new morn, for
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though

$\frac{G}{B}$ C Am7 D7 G Am7

an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall

G $\frac{C}{E}$ D $\frac{G}{B}$ Am7 D C G

soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.

(continued on the next page)→

D D G D Em Em Am D D7
 F# F# F# D D C

Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less

Em D D7 G G C B7 Em Bm
 F# B D

geth - er, he o - pens wide the heaven - ly door and
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - ery day we share and

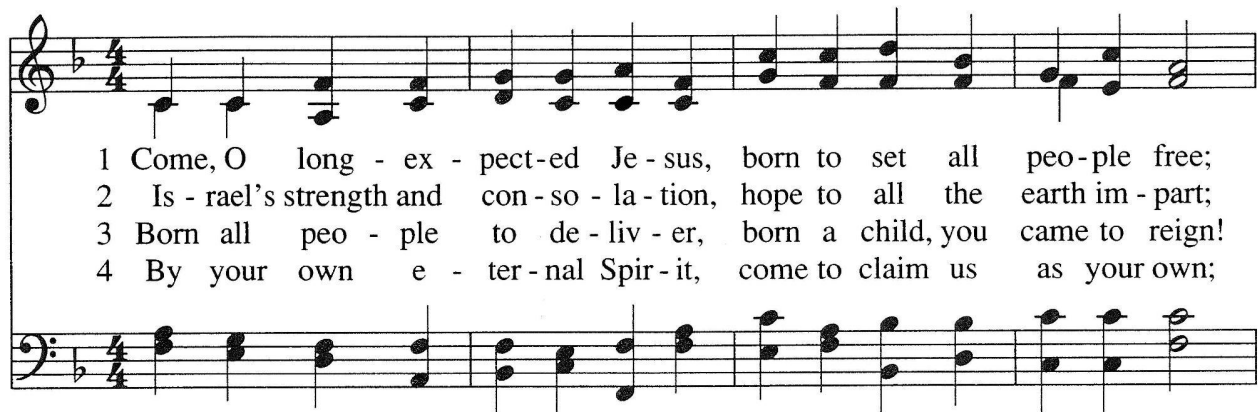
Am7 D7 G Am7 G

lives now in - side us for ev - er.
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

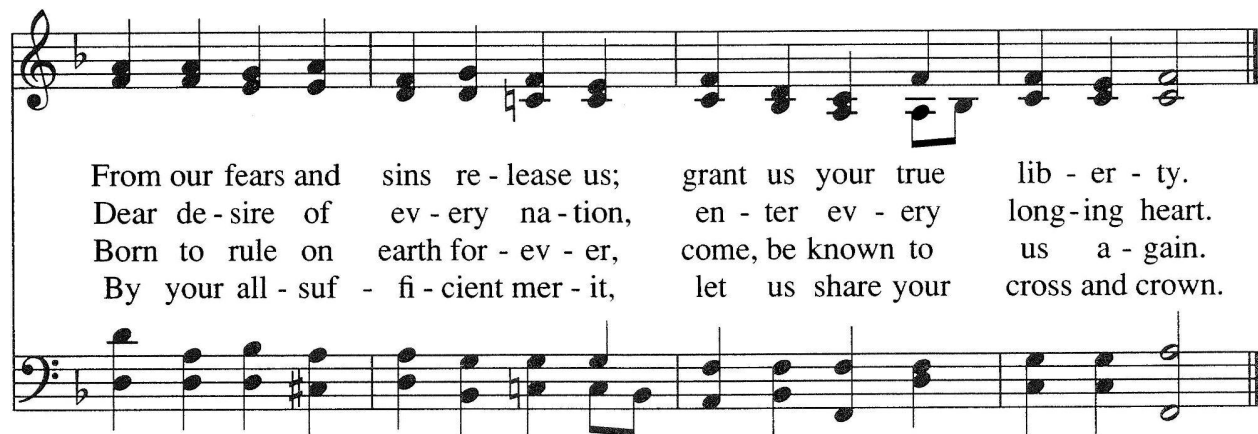
Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

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Charles Wesley, 1744; alt.

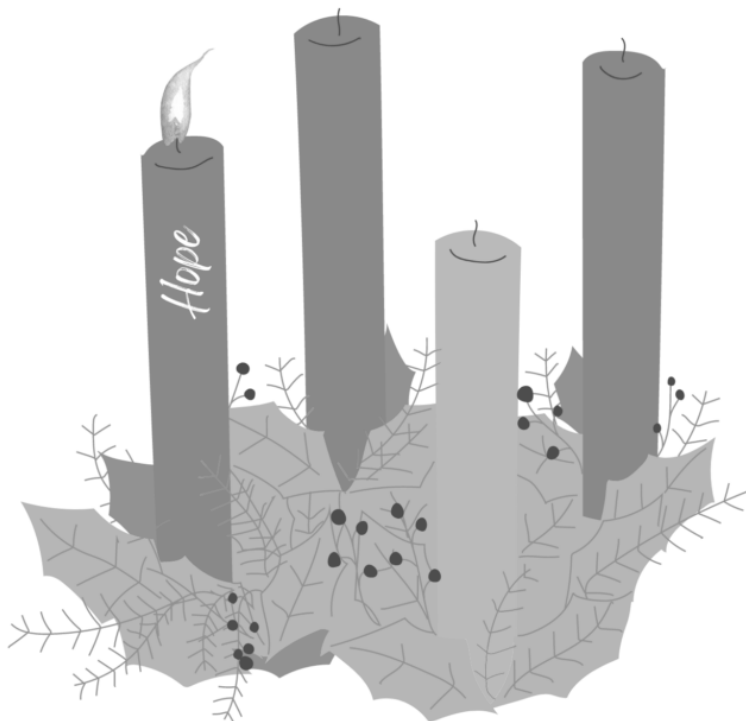


1 Come, O long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set all peo-ple free;
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope to all the earth im - part;
3 Born all peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, you came to reign!
4 By your own e - ter - nal Spir - it, come to claim us as your own;



From our fears and sins re - lease us; grant us your true lib - er - ty.
Dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, en - ter ev - ery long-ing heart.
Born to rule on earth for - ev - er, come, be known to us a - gain.
By your all - suf - fi - cient mer - it, let us share your cross and crown.

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THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Sun 11/30	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration
Tue 12/2	12:00 PM	<i>Connector</i> weekly e-news articles are due (every Tuesday)
Wed 12/3	6:00 PM	Cub Scouts (Assembly Hall)
Thu 12/4	7:30 PM	Scouts BSA (Assembly Hall & Scout Room)
Thu 12/4	8:00 PM	Alcoholics Anonymous (Horton Lounge)
Sun 12/7	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration - Communion Sunday

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Sun 12/7		Last Day to Receive Angel Gift Donations
Wed 12/10	3:00 PM	Worship Team
Wed 12/10	6:00 PM	Viewing and Discussion of "The Shepherd"
Sun 12/14	11:30 AM	Church Council
Sun 12/21	7:00 PM	Blue Christmas Service (Hamburg Clergy Alliance of WNY) (at Hamburg United Methodist Church, 116 Union St.)
Wed 12/24	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Thu 12/25		Church Office is closed (Christmas Day)
Sun 12/28	10:00 AM	Christmas Singspiration Sunday
Thu 1/1		Church Office is closed (New Year's Day)
Sun 1/4	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration - Epiphany Sunday / Communion

REV. PAUL'S SCHEDULE

Mon 12/1	Day off
Tue 12/2	Office and by appointment
Wed 12/3	Office and by appointment
Thu 12/4	Office and by appointment
Fri 12/5	Morning & afternoon: Study and writing day Evening: Wedding Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
Sat 12/6	Morning & evening: Day off Afternoon: Wedding (Sanctuary)

BE A SUNDAY VOLUNTEER!

Please use the links below to sign up for Sunday volunteer opportunities. Thank you!

Liturgists:	https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccliturgists
Greeters:	https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccgreeters
Sunday School Assistants:	https://tinyurl.com/StJamesSS2025
Altar flowers:	https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccflowers
After-church coffee and fellowship:	https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccfellowship

FOOD AND TOILETRY DONATIONS

We continue to collect toiletries and food gifts (as well as pet food and treats) for the Saints Peter and Paul food pantry and outreach center.

There has been a dramatic increase in people needing food and services in the Village of Hamburg, so the people of SSPP are grateful for the gifts that the members and friends of St. James UCC continuously provide.

Urgent needs:

- individual fruit cups
- pasta sauce

Pet food and treats for:

- cats
- dogs

Food:

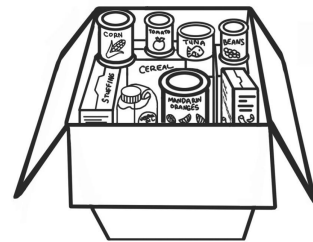
- cereal
- cereal bars
- crackers
- Easy Mac macaroni and cheese
- fresh apples and oranges
- macaroni and cheese (box)
- pasta
- peanut butter
- rice
- shelf-stable milk
- soup (can)
- tuna (can or pouch)
- vegetables (can)

Additional needs:

- baby formula
- baby wipes
- children's supplies
- clothing
- diapers
- dish soap
- facial tissues
- laundry detergent
- paper towels
- plates, bowls, cups, mugs
- pull-ups
- silverware
- toilet paper
- towels
- washcloths

Toiletries:

- deodorant (all genders)
- feminine hygiene products
- shampoo
- toothbrushes
- toothpaste
- other toiletry items



Collection bins for donations are located by the elevator and outside the Horton Lounge.

Thank you to everyone who blesses our community with their donations.

You can also support the pantry by making donations from their Amazon Wish List:

<https://tinyurl.com/SSPPwishlist>

SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSISTANTS ARE NEEDED

We continue to be in urgent need of regularly scheduled Sunday School Assistants to help our Sunday School Leader with our Religious Education program on the first and third Sunday of every month. **We would love to be able to continue offering a Religious Education program for our youth, so the congregation's participation is essential.** Please prayerfully consider volunteering for this important and rewarding ministry.



→ **Please volunteer:** <https://tinyurl.com/StJamesSS2025>

(All Sunday School Assistants must undergo a background check, and this will be done at no cost to you.)

Please reach out to Rev. Paul if you have any questions. Thank you!

AN ADVENT INVITATION

Join us in imagining what it might have been like at the first Christmas. All are invited for an evening with friends, pizza, and **“The Shepherd,”** written by Tyler Thompson and Dallas Jenkins. We will gather in the Horton Lounge on **Wednesday, December 10, at 6:00 PM.**



This short film highlights the humility and wonder of Christ's birth seen through the eyes of the poor, the marginalized, and those who had been waiting for the promised Messiah.



Have you remembered St. James UCC in your will?

Poinsettia Orders Due TODAY

Forms available in sanctuary & outside church office
or visit tinyurl.com/ChristmasFlowers2025

Angel Gifts

We are partnering with Hamburg Central Schools again this year to provide Christmas gifts for families in need in our community. This is a wonderful way to love others with generosity as we prepare to celebrate Christmas.

We will be collecting \$25 gift cards to area stores (recommendations include Target, Walmart, Aldi, Tops, Wegmans, and inexpensive restaurants around the Village of Hamburg), which the school will distribute accordingly. Please include receipts/activation codes. Also collecting new winter hats, scarves, mittens, etc.

Last day for collection will be Sunday, December 7.

Please contact Marie Nolan at 631-553-9912 or marienolan3@gmail.com with any questions.

Envelopes for gift cards available on the table at the front left of the sanctuary.



Welcome to St. James United Church of Christ

- We believe that faith is a matter of heart and mind.
- We believe that taking the Bible seriously does not mean taking it literally.
- We believe that God embraces all people equally.
- We believe that we are called to be nothing less than global citizens.
- We believe that the social expression of love is justice.
- We believe that every generation is called to discover new faith traditions.
- We believe that God continues to speak through the actions and words of people today, just as in times of old.



We are a **Creation Justice** church. In the United Church of Christ, Creation Justice churches are “green” churches committed to caring for creation and recognizing how past and current abuse of this gift has caused suffering and inequity. We commit ourselves to confront current and future detriment to our climate and creation in all dimensions of our congregation’s life and beyond the walls of the church.

We are a **Just Peace** church. In the United Church of Christ, Just Peace churches promote peace with justice (a just peace) as an expression of God’s love. We support peaceful opposition to intolerance, injustice, discrimination, and war, and we seek the ways of justice and peace in order to make a difference in our lives and the lives of all who experience injustice and violence.

We are an **Open and Affirming** church. In the United Church of Christ, Open and Affirming churches covenant to welcome and celebrate people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Likewise, we welcome and celebrate people of every faith experience, race, ethnicity, culture, ability, age, background, viewpoint, and life experience. If you struggle with addiction, are recovering from trauma, or have ever felt the pain of exclusion, you are embraced here.

To receive our **weekly e-news**, *The St. James Connector*, scan the QR code or go to:
<https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccnews>



SCAN ME

For **online giving**, scan the QR code or go to:
<https://www.hamburgucc.org/giving>



SCAN ME

St. James United Church of Christ

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