



Rev. Peter Smith (Clergy), Carolyn Curry (Organist)  
May MacKenzie (CE Dir), Chad Brazier (Custodian)  
Barb Shea (Secretary) [office@stjamesuc.com](mailto:office@stjamesuc.com)  
197 Main St, P.O. Box 1178, Antigonish, NS B2G 2L6  
(902) 863-2001 [www.stjamesuc.com](http://www.stjamesuc.com)

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**Our Mission as a congregation:** *Love the Lord Your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy and love your neighbour as yourself. (Mark 12:19-21 MSG)*

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December 31, 2023- First Sunday of Christmas

## GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Introit: (33 MV Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope)

*Jesus came bringing us God, Jesus came bringing us God  
Jesus came bringing us God, Hallelujah, forevermore*

Call to Worship (responsive- from Psalm 16:11)

God shows us the path of life

**in God's presence there is fullness of joy;**

in God's right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Prayer of Approach (together)

**God of new beginnings,  
at the brink of a New Year we come into your house  
with confidence that your blessing will bring new vigor to our work,  
will bring new love to our homes,  
will bring new satisfaction to our pleasures,  
and will bring new concern for the welfare of your world,  
as we live and serve in Jesus' name, Amen.**

Hymn: 38 VU *Angels, We Have Heard on High*

Children's Story and Lord's Prayer

Carol Sing

## GOD SPEAKS THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Responsive Reading: Psalm 148 (p. 871 VU)

First Reading: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Marlene Groenenberg

Second Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Anthem

Sermon: "Growing into the New Year"

Gerrit Groenenberg

## GOD CALLS US TO RESPOND

Hymn: 57 VU *O How Joyfully*

Minute for Mission

Shaun Scott

Offertory Sentence and Prayer

Offertory Response ( In the Bleak Midwinter 55 VU verse 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.*

Prayers of the People

Hymn: 68 VU *All Poor Ones and Humble*

Commissioning and Benediction

Choral Benediction (Glory to God in 124 MV)

*Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth.  
Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth.*

Postlude

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**A warm welcome** to everyone who is joining us for worship. May this time help you draw to closer to God and your neighbour. We recognize that we gather in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People, and we seek to be good neighbours to the First Nations.

**Coffee Hosts this morning** are Barb Gardiner and Claire MacDonnell

**The prayers and Christian sympathy** of the congregation are extended to the family and friends of *Brian MacLeod* whose funeral was yesterday at St. James. Please keep William, Brian Douglas (Catherine), Sheumais (Taylor), Jermal (Myrie) and his brothers Bill (Joyce) and Sandy (Marilyn) and all of the family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

## Scriptures for Next Sunday

Genesis 1:1-5 • Acts 19:1-7 • Mark 1:4-11

**Advent Food Drive** – Huge thanks to everyone who participated in this year's Advent Food Drive! Lots of good food was collected and distributed to folks who, more than ever in this season, need it.

**Thanks to everyone who helped make the Community Christmas dinner** possible this year. Thanks to those who donated food and money, those who offered their time to set up, serve, and clean up, and special thanks to Brenda and her team for their work organizing everything.

**The Community Hot Meals** are on pause until Thursday, January 4<sup>th</sup>. When they resume the meals will be served on both Tuesday and Thursday. If you would like to help out please be in touch with Pamela Cunningham or the church office.

**The end of the year is fast** approaching. The last day that donations of cheques and cash to St. James will be credited to your 2023 tax receipt is December 31, 2022 at noon following morning worship. Donations via eft ([eft@stjamesuc.com](mailto:eft@stjamesuc.com)) or online ([www.stjamesuc.com](http://www.stjamesuc.com)) can be made at anytime day or night.

**Come try Meditation.** It's every Tuesday at 3 pm in the Meeting Room. Maybe it's your New Year's resolution to find some stillness in your days, resuming on Tuesday January 9th. All are welcome! Call Fran if you want more background or have questions. 902 863 3546

**Your Social Justice Committee** wishes you all a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy 2024! Acts 20:35: "In every way I've shown you that by labouring like this, it is necessary to help the weak and to keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, for He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

**"The Years Go By", "It's Later than you Think":** Many do not know or remember our son Gordon. Some may remember Festivals of Faith in Halifax. Gordon and children will be at the Cape in January. We invite you to an Open House on Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 1pm. We look forward to seeing you. For more information call Betty Webber 902 863-1301.