

St. James United Church

A Community of Friends in Faith

330 Elizabeth Ave, St. John's, NL, A1B 1T9

Celebration of Worship for December 31, 2023



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 31, 2023 – First Sunday of Christmas

Leading Worship: Rev. James Ravenscroft
Leading Music: Amy Dalziel and Becca-ann Bartlett
Ushers: Marilyn Adams, Jean Thompson and Susan Pike

*Please rise in body or in spirit where there is an *.*

We Come to Worship

PRELUDE

WELCOME: *We share greetings in Mi'kmawi'simk, French and Igbo.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LAND AND KINSHIP

We give thanks for the land and commit to be a fully inclusive community.

INSTRUMENTAL INTROIT

A POETIC WORD: "To the New Year" by W.S. Merwin

LIGHTING OF CHRISTMAS CANDLE AND OPENING PRAYER

Reader 1: As we look to a new year, we pause with thanks for the gift of Jesus the Christ, born in time and reborn in our hearts.

Reader 2: Through him and in him, God draws near to us, renewing our world through the transforming gift of God's grace.

Reader 1: Today we light our candle in his name, the flame flickering in the centre of our wreath to remind us how the warmth of God's love centres us in our lives.

**All: Holy One, we thank you for this day,
and for the year that beckons to us.**

**We pray for your blessing upon us now and in coming days,
that as we experience your loving presence with us in Christ,
we may in turn, bear your love to others.**

**We pray in the name of your Emmanuel.
Amen.**

* **HYMN:** "See Amid the Winter's Snow" (*Voices United 77*)

We Share

OUR LIFE AND WORK

We acknowledge the connection between our work and worship as we announce what is going on in our congregation and community.

OFFERTORY: *There are many ways to share your financial gifts with St. James United Church. There are plates as you enter the church in which to place your offering, you may contribute by pre-authorized remittance (PAR), via e-transfer (email treasurer@stjamesuc.org), sent through the website (www.stjamesuc.org), mailed to the church office or dropped into our secure mailbox. In whatever way you give, the community is grateful.*

* **PRESENTATION HYMN:** *We dedicate our offerings to the word of God's love as we sing "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.**

We Listen

PRAYER OF AWAKENING

LEARNING TOGETHER

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

* **HYMN:** "Away in a Manger" (*Voices United 69*)

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

Galatians 4:4-7; Psalm 148 (*Voices United p. 871*); Luke 2:22-40

SOLO

REFLECTION FOLLOWING THE READINGS

We Respond

* **HYMN:** "What Child Is This" (*Voices United 74*)

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

We give thanks for the year that was as we look to the one that is to come.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS (*Voices United, p.121*)

SHARING OF PEACE

We wish one another blessings for a new year with a sign of peace.

We Leave to Serve

* **HYMN:** "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" (*Voices United 48*)

BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

One: Go forth with joy and hope, go forth in love and peace:
for the One we call Emmanuel, God-with-us, has been born.

All: We go forth blessed to share God's blessing to the world!

POSTLUDE

St. James United Church

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

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@StJamesUCNL



@StJamesUnited



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All worship services at St. James are Live Streamed via video for our online congregation. By participating in this service, you acknowledge that you may be visible on live broadcast or archived video.

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