



Common Thread

December 17, 2023 9:15AM

The spirit of the Lord is upon us to bring good news to all the world. May we be strengthened for this work through our time of worship.



Song – Hymn of Joy

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day!
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel, Your Love has come here to dwell.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and Heav'n reflect Thy rays.
Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
singing bird and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in Thee!
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel, Your Love has come here to dwell.

Henry Van Dyke, Ludwig Van Beethoven, Chris Tomplin and Ed Cash.

©2015 Worship Together Music (BMI) sixsteps Songs (BMI) S.D.G. Publishing (BMI) / Alletrop Music (BMI). CCLI# 1374588

Welcome & Announcements

Advent Reading

Tim, Heather, Evan & Carter Johnson

Leader: The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn. (Isaiah 61: 1-2)

Leader: We light three candles this morning: the candles of Hope, Peace and Love. May the promise of your love, O God, make us rejoice in our hope of salvation.

ALL: O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Children's Message

Prayer Time & Lord's Prayer

(Prayer cards are available to share your joys and concerns and may be placed in the prayer box by the door, or you may email them to prayerrequests@stjamesraleigh.org, where they will then be shared with our Prayer Chain.)

Our Father, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Song – What Child Is This?

What Child is this, who, laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies He in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh, come peasant, king to own Him;
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone Him.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

William Dix, arr. Don Chapman © 2008 Hearts to God Music CCLI# 1374588

Scripture Reading – Luke 1: 26-55

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Message

Pastor Dan Baer

Song – *Hope Was Born This Night*

Tonight I can see a star shine, and its splendor fills up the sky.
It's the same that appeared and the wise men revered, when Hope was born this night.

Out upon the snowy fields there's a silent peace that heals,
and it echoes the grace of our Savior's embrace because Hope was born this night.
Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

Let all of the world sing a chorus of joy, because Hope was born this night.

I can hear the Christmas bells ring, as softly a church choir sings.

It's the song used to praise the Ancient of Days when Hope was born this night.

There are angels in this place, and my heart resounds with the praise.

Like a shepherd so scared, I'll rejoice and declare that Hope was born this night!

Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

Let all of the world sing a chorus of joy, Because Hope was born this night.

Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!

Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! Gloria!

Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

Let all of the world sing a chorus of joy, because Hope was born this night.

Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

Let all of the world sing a chorus of joy, because Hope was born this night.

I know Hope was born this night, because Christ was born this night!

Ben McDonald & Dave Frey. ©2011 Dayspring Music, LLC, LLC CCLI# 1374588

Benediction

Sharing Offerings

Out to Discipleship, and Into the World to Serve

Today's Greeters: Chris, Lori, Holli & Lilli Bradley
Today's Sound/PowerPoint Operator: Paulo DeOliveira

Next Week's Greeters: Ed & Kay Smallwood
Next Week's Sound/PowerPoint Operator: Mike Lamar

We have a nursery available for infants through age 4. An usher will be glad to direct you. We always welcome children of all ages to join us in worship, and Worship Activity Bags are available at the entrance if your child would like one.

*If you are visiting us today, welcome! Please take a moment to fill out a visitor card,
(found on the worship table), and return it to the offering basket or one of the greeters.
Thank you for worshipping with us at St. James today!*

Rev. Dan Baer, Lead Pastor.....	dan@stjamesraleigh.org
Martha Brown, Office Manager.....	office@stjamesraleigh.org
LaTonia Tyner & Brenda Smith, Finance Office — Onsite Tuesdays only.....	finance@stjamesraleigh.org
Wanda Ramm, Music Director.....	music@stjamesraleigh.org
Jeff Bottoms, Organist/Accompanist.....	music@stjamesraleigh.org
Sue King, Assistant Organist.....	sue@stjamesraleigh.org
Bailey Martin, Youth Director.....	youth@stjamesraleigh.org

Church Office & Food Pantry Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Church Office: 919-876-5796

Pastor's Cell: 919-801-1647

Church Website:.....	www.stjamesraleigh.org
Church Office Administration email.....	office@stjamesraleigh.org
Children's Ministries email.....	kidsmin@stjamesraleigh.org
Prayer Requests email.....	prayerrequests@stjamesraleigh.org

What to know this week...

Calendar this week:

TODAY, 12/17 Common Thread contemporary worship, 9:15AM in Carson Hall
Discipleship Hour, 10AM throughout church campus
Kids/Youth Christmas skit practice during Discipleship Hour
Sanctuary traditional worship, 11AM in the Sanctuary
St. James Youth Christmas Party, 3PM in Montague Hall
Administrative Council, 4PM in Carson Hall
NA, 7PM in Saints Hall

Mon, 12/18 Acts Bible Study, 10:30AM in Room 12
GS Troop 4331, 6:30PM in Montague Hall

Tues, 12/19 Library Committee, 9AM in the Library
Staff Meeting, 10:30AM in the Office
GS Troop 4491, 6:30PM in Montague Hall

Wed, 12/20 **Kids/Youth skit practice, 6PM in Carson Hall**
Choir Rehearsal, 6:30PM in the Sanctuary

Thurs, 12/21 New Hope Strummers, 6:15PM in the Music Room
CT Band, 7PM in Carson Hall

Sat, 12/23 Liturgical Dance Practice, 10AM in Saints Hall
Rhodes Family Christmas, 12PM in Carson Hall (private)
GS Troop 1929, 1:30PM in Montague Hall

Sun, 12/24 Combined Christmas Eve Morning worship with Kids/Youth Christmas skit, 10AM in Carson Hall
Common Thread Candlelight & Communion Christmas Eve Service, 5PM in Carson Hall
Sanctuary Worship Candlelight & Communion Christmas Eve Service, 7pm in Sanctuary
NA, 7PM in Saints Hall



Scan this code to give your offering online!

All Angel Tree gifts are due back to the church wrapped with the angel or angel number

attached TODAY. Thank you to all the St. James Santa's helpers who will brighten Christmas for a few children!

Are you looking for a relaxing way to focus on the meaning of Christmas? Don't forget that there are many Advent and Christmas books for all ages available in the Ann Bridgers Library. Stop by and check out some for your holiday reading!

Don't forget to check the **Christmas Post Office** to see if you have holiday mail for your church family! Remember that we're accepting donations for cards not picked up by Christmas Eve that will need to be mailed: just place donations in the cardinal box. Thanks!

Next week's Christmas Eve morning service will be a combined service at 10AM in Carson Hall, featuring a nativity skit by our children & youth and a liturgical dance presentation. Evening candlelight services with communion are at 5PM in Carson Hall (Common Thread) and 7PM in the sanctuary (Sanctuary Worship).

Our annual Christmas Eve special offering will benefit St. James Missions. Please note "Missions" on your Christmas Eve offering.

The church office will be closed for Christmas on Monday & Tuesday, December 25-26, and on Monday, January 1, for New Year's Day.

Our final 5th Sunday Combined Service will be on December 31. We'll meet at 10AM in the Sanctuary for a service of Lessons and Carols led by Sandra Horton and our lay readers.

