

# St. James United Church

United in Faith  
Strengthened by Friendship  
Building a Community  
of Love and Justice



**DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH!**



From a center point,  
tulip like flowers  
stretch and bloom,  
referencing the Ralph  
Waldo Emerson  
quote, "The earth  
laughs in flowers."

December 29, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

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Welcome & Introductions

Theme Conversation

Acknowledging the Territory

Lighting the Candles

Call to Worship

**We have named our joy out loud,  
and it is clear—  
God is in our joy.  
God is in this room.  
We have reason to celebrate.  
We have a reason to sing.  
Thanks be to God for the bright hope of this day.  
Come, let's worship!**

Opening Hymn – Joy to the World # 59

Prayer of Confession

**Joyful God,  
You told us that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven,  
we must be like children.**

**Did you mean that like children,  
we must practice unhindered joy?**

**Did you mean that like children,  
we should lean into laughter,  
release our cynicism, and  
open ourselves to delight?**

**In a world as broken and battered as ours,  
we admit, this often seems easier said than done.**

**Forgive us, patient God, for the moments  
when we are so focused on the bad  
that we miss the good.**

**Forgive us for hearing the nativity story  
and staying in our seats  
instead of jumping for joy.**

**We know that even now  
you are sowing delight in our lives.  
Open our hearts up to it.  
With gratitude we pray, amen.**

**Sing With Joy – O Come, All Ye Faithful # 60**

**Prayer For Illumination**

**God of angel choruses and contagious laughter,  
we know that you speak to us in the quiet.**

**We know that when we bow our heads  
and fall to our knees,  
you are there, hovering close, calling our names.**

**However, we also trust  
that when we throw our heads back in laughter,  
when we dance and clap with joy,  
when we skip and sing with gratitude,  
that even there, you are speaking.**

**So on this Sunday morning we pray:  
open our ears and hearts  
to hear what it is that you are saying.**

**Meet us in this joy.  
Meet us in this delight.**

**Meet us in the hope of this Christmas season  
and reveal the wisdom we need to hear today.**

**With hearts full of gratitude we pray.  
We laugh. We listen. We pray.  
Amen.**

Listen for Joy – The Cat in the Manger

Sing With Joy – Good Christian Friends, Rejoice # 35

Practice Joy

Listen for Joy – The Mixed-up Christmas Story

Sing With Joy - Go Tell It on the Mountain # 43

Practice Joy

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

**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 them who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil:  
for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen**

Life and Ministry of the Faith Community

Sing With Joy – Joy Is Now in Every Place # 45

Commendation and Blessing

Sing With Joy – You Shall Go Out With Joy! # 884

**You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace  
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you.  
There'll be shouts of joy and all the trees of the field  
Will clap, will clap their hands.  
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands  
The trees of the field will clap their hands  
The trees of the field will clap their hands.  
While you go out with joy.**