

# The MESSENGER

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

stjamesnewcastle.com

DECEMBER 2023



Where strangers become family

## ADVENT BEGINS DEC. 3



ADVENT STUDY AVAILABLE

**LIVING WELL THROUGH ADVENT**

**Practicing Wonder with all your Heart,  
Soul, Strength, and Mind**

By Living Compass

There are booklets available for Daily reading and reflections and we will meet for discussion on Wednesday's at noon, beginning Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>.

CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent and we will not have a service that morning unless there are requests to have Morning Prayer.

### CHRISTMAS DAY

There is not a service Christmas Day.

## Christmas Eve SERVICES

CAROL SING 6:00 PM

EUCCHARIST 6:30 PM

Reception to follow

(please bring something to share)



## DECEMBER SCHEDULE

<b>BAZAAR</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> 9-3</b>
EUCCHARIST-1 <sup>ST</sup> ADVENT	3 <sup>rd</sup> 10:00 am
Green the Church	3 <sup>rd</sup> after lunch
Raintree Square	3 <sup>rd</sup> 2:00 pm
Advent Study starts	6 <sup>th</sup> NOON
Morning Prayer	10 <sup>th</sup> 10:00 am
CANTATA	10 <sup>TH</sup> 6:00 PM
BC Meeting	13 <sup>th</sup> 6:30 pm
Eucharist	17 <sup>th</sup> 10:00 am
Basket donations due	17 <sup>th</sup>
DOK meeting	20 <sup>th</sup> NOON
CHRISTMAS EVE	24 <sup>th</sup> 6:30 pm
(no service the morning of C. Eve)	
Lessons and Carols	31 <sup>st</sup> 10:00 am

## Faith Seeking Understanding - December 2023 from Father Brown Mujete

*"Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants, you have established a stronghold against your enemies to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" (Psalm 8:1-4)*

I have been reading Daniel L Migliore's third edition of Faith Seeking Understanding and discovered some profound lessons that I'd like to share with you all in this December article of St. James. The fundamental point that Migliore notes is that to be Christian is to question and seek to understand. Faith, he says, awakens wonder, inquiry, and exploration. Any faith that does not free one to seek and ask is not faith.

I, for instance, was born and raised in a more conservative community that prohibited any form of spiritual inquiry and wonder. I grew up with the misconception that any form of Christian spiritual seeking or curiosity was synonymous with unbelief. I was taught that everything the priest, pastor, or rabbi said was gospel truth and need not be questioned. It was not until my early formation years at seminary that I read about St. Augustine's writing, "I believe in order that I may understand." According to St. Augustine, Knowledge of God not only presupposes faith, but faith also seeks deeper understanding.

One of the most common convictions among the early church fathers was that the Christian faith encourages inquiry, searches for innate understanding, and dares to ask difficult questions. Like other people, Christians do not live in a vacuum; we face tricky questions, especially in crises such as guilt, suffering, pain, sickness, injustice, poverty, death, etc. As believers, we are not immune to the complexities of the questions that arise during these times. On the contrary, believers are often caught in the troubling absurdity between faith and reality. We believe in a sovereign good God but live in a world where evil always seems to win. We believe in a living and ever-present God but more often experience the absence rather than the presence of God.

Well, friends, we must remember that as believers, our seeking, wonder, or inquiry is elucidated by faith in God and not an attempt to attain certainty apart from God. As long as we are believers, we will continue to ask: who are we? Why is God silent? Is there a God? Why do we have so much evil in the world? What should I do? etc

Migliore summarizes, "When faith no longer frees people to ask hard questions, it becomes inhuman and dangerous. Unquestioning faith soon slips into ideology. superstition, fanaticism, self-indulgence, and idolatry...Human life ceases to be human not when we do not have all the answers, but when we no longer have the courage to ask the important questions."

This advent, let us open our hearts and minds to seek, wonder, and ask the most important questions. Let us confess this faith that, in the words of St Augustine, frees us to believe in order that we may understand.

Blessed Advent,

Fr. Brown Mujete

**IT'S FINALLY HERE!!!!**



**CHRISTMAS BAZAAR-**

**December 2 from 9-3**

**WE HAVE 10 VENDORS- 16 TABLES**

**CHURCH BAKE SALE TABLE**

Let's fill this table with all the holiday favorites. It is our main source of income for the day.

**LUNCH ROOM**

There is a sign up sheet for donations and workers. We will need desserts and drinks besides pot pies and sloppy joes.



**GREENING THE CHURCH**

We will be greening the church on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> after a soup lunch. Please join the fun! It's a busy day with Eucharist, Greening and the Raintree service at 2pm, all following our Bazaar on Saturday.

**.PHONE LIST CORRECTION**

The church email is [stjamesnc2020@gmail.com](mailto:stjamesnc2020@gmail.com)

**EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY**

If ANY of you know of someone with a need, use the pantry to help them with a 2 day supply. It's well stocked currently.



**NEW FOOD BASKET MINISTRY**

Karen Shields and Peggy Jent delivered baskets to 9 senior citizens for Thanksgiving. There is a list of items needed for Christmas coming soon. If you can help deliver, please ask Karen to help you get cleared through the agency.

**PLEDGE CARDS DUE**

Please turn in your 2024 pledge by Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>. There are extra letters available at church.

**ANNUAL MEETING IN JANUARY**

Three new members of the Bishop's Committee will be elected. If you would like to join, please talk with Marilyn Witt, Sonny Carter, or Cindy Bullard about replacing them.



**CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY CHOIR**

There are 5 of us practicing for the Christmas Cantata. (Marilyn, Pat, Peggy, Cindy and Sara) It will be at the First United Methodist Church on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm. Please come and listen. We will also be singing at the New Castle Prison on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL STARTED**

Aimee Chapman started the new "One Room Schoolhouse" Sunday School class in November for our children. Exciting times! If you would like to help, talk to her about it.

## **MORE SAWS BUILDS COMING**

Sonny says there are 2 more ramps scheduled to be built in December, weather permitting. The first is this week on Thursday and Friday, 11/30 and 12/1. The second is 12/14-15. If you can help, talk with Sonny Carter 765-465-7044.

## **TECHNOLOGY UPDATE**

I have moved the microphones and livestream equipment into the sacristy so that it will be locked up. The Ladies Guild purchased a new iphone to use with the Mevo camera to livestream to our Facebook page. The information to unlock it is there also. We hope for more people to learn how to set up the equipment.

Zoom continues to have poor sound quality that is beyond my ability to solve. We will have to pay someone to try to help but the laptop is not working at present. We like Zoom because it is interactive. It's good to be able to talk to those worshipping with us. Pat Carter