

The MESSENGER

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
stjamesnewcastle.com
JANUARY 2024



Where strangers become family

JANUARY SCHEDULE

EUCCHARIST/EPIPHANY	7 th	10:00 am
Raintree Square	7 th	2:00 pm
BC Meeting	10 th	6:30 pm
Morning Prayer	14 th	10:00 am
DOK	17 th	noon
Eucharist	21 st	10:00 am
ANNUAL MEETING	21 st	lunch
Morning Prayer	28 th	10:00am

EPIPHANY BONFIRE

The community is invited to the annual bonfire on January 6th at 6 PM next door at First Christian Church. If you have a real tree, take it to the flagpole at FCC anytime before then so they can use it for the traditional festival of light in the darkness, celebrating the arrival of the Magi to the Christ Child. It's a splendid sight!

ANNUAL MEETING WITH LUNCH

The annual meeting will be held after church on January 21st. There will be a pitch-in lunch following the meeting. We need 3 new members of the Bishop's Committee. HAVE YOUR REPORTS TO THE OFFICE BY JANUARY 15TH.

CHRISTMAS THANK YOU

Thanks to Rosie Hua Holloway for singing during our Christmas Eve service. Beautiful as usual!

ZOOM SERVICE CHANGE

We have tried to provide alternatives to being in church in person since COVID times. The Zoom sound quality has never been great but has gotten worse. I talked with a professional about improving the quality and he told me we would need a much more expensive laptop with soundboard programs to get quality sound. Because that is not feasible for us, we won't be using Zoom for live services any longer. We will continue to livestream to our Facebook page. You can watch it at your convenience or join us at 10 AM. You do not need a facebook account. Just search for St. James Episcopal Church Facebook page (make sure it says New Castle, IN) and start watching. If you are joining us, please comment so you can be counted.

NO MORE ZOOM CHURCH.

SAWS UPDATE

Our crew of Sonny Carter, Dan Bullard, John Thompson, and Tim Cherry finished 12 ramps this year for a total of 24 in the 2 years we have been involved. If you are interested in joining the SAWS team in 2024, let Sonny know. They will start again in the Spring.

HABITAT WOMEN'S BUILD

If you are a woman interested in helping build a house (on the job training), let Pat Carter know. We will break ground this spring.

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. This is the work of the church.

CHRISTMAS BASKETS

Besides the 9 senior citizens helped with food and gifts this Christmas, we also supplied a basket and Christmas gifts for a 13 yo boy to a local family. Thank you all for your generosity.

PLEDGE CARDS OVERDUE

Please turn in your 2024 pledge ASAP. Even if you can't pledge this year, please let Cindy Bullard know so we can finalize the budget.

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.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Peggy Jent just finished leading an Advent Study on Practicing Wonder. There is an interest in holding other classes. Discussed was a study on comparative religions using The Great Courses and a study from A Living Compass about balance and wholeness, based on the results of your own assessment tool. If you have other ideas, let her know. What also needs to be decided is the day and time. While 9 AM Sundays would be a logical time, it is nice to schedule during the week as an afternoon or evening class. Please let Peggy know your preferences.



FATHER BROWN'S MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR

Embracing the Promise of New Beginnings!

"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43: 18 – 19

Friends, over the last couple of weeks I have been reading the prophet Isaiah and these two verses in chapter 43 stood out for me especially as we end 2023 and begin 2024. Verses 18-19 are situated in the section where Isaiah is encouraging Israelites to look forward to a future redemption and restoration.

The preceding verses talk about God's ability to forgive sins and the call for the people to return to Him. The prophet emphasizes the importance of letting go of the past and anticipating the new things that God is going to do. The imagery of making a "new way in the wilderness" and creating "rivers in the desert" symbolizes the divine ability to bring about transformation and renewal in seemingly impossible situations.

This passage offers inspiration and hope, reminding the people that God's plans for them surpass their current circumstances, offering a vision of a future filled with promise and divine intervention. These verses remind us to let go of the burdens of yesterday, for today brings a fresh start. The God, who spoke galaxies into existence, invites us to witness the unveiling of His new masterpiece in our lives. He assures us that His plans for us are filled with hope, purpose, and abundance.

As we bid farewell to the challenges and triumphs of this past year, let us embrace the promise of a new beginning. Like a brand-new book, 365 blank pages lie before of us ready to be filled with adventures and stories of our journeys in the new year.

In the face of uncertainty, we are called to remember and trust that God is orchestrating a symphony of blessings, opportunities, and growth. Even in the wilderness of challenges, God paves a way, and in the dry deserts of life, He creates rivers of refreshment.

May this new year be a season of renewal, a time to embrace change with courage and to walk confidently into the unknown. Let us open our hearts to the infinite possibilities that lie ahead, guided by faith, fueled by hope, and anchored in love.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all; now and forever, Amen!

Happy New Year!

With love and blessings,

Fr. Brown Mujete.