

St. James Parish Church

Holetown, St. James, Barbados

TO BE A BEACON RADIATING GOD'S LOVE AMONG ALL PEOPLE



CHRISTMAS EVE - YEAR A

CHRISTMAS WITH THE CHILDREN

6:00 P.M. DECEMBER 24, 2025

RECTOR: THE REV. CANON BEVERLEY SEALY-KNIGHT

ASSISTANT PRIEST: REV. GRAVENEY BANNISTER

ASSISTANT CURATE: REV. STEVENSON SOBERS

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

DECEMBER 25, 2025

REV. CANON BEVERLEY SEALY-KNIGHT

THE QUIET RADIANCE:

A REFLECTION ON BEING A BLESSING THIS CHRISTMAS

Greetings my brothers and sisters in Christ,

We thank God that we are together this Christmas as we remember our loved ones whom we love but see no longer. They have been a blessing to us in word and deed and we are encouraged to be the same for others.

Christmas is a time when many are hoping for a miracle - when many are hoping to be blessed and the Christmas story is the greatest incentive for being that vehicle of God's grace.

To be a blessing is not necessarily about performing grand, public gestures, or achieving monumental acts of charity. Instead, we find it is a far quieter, more consistent practice—a daily choice to embody goodness in the small, often unseen, interactions of life. It is the intention to leave every person and every place slightly better than we found them, driven by the understanding that true fulfillment lies not in what one acquires, but in what one contributes.

The essence of being a blessing is a radical shift in perspective: moving from a scarcity mindset focused on personal lack, to an abundance mindset focused on shared resources of time, empathy, and kindness. It means consciously stepping outside the natural human inclination toward self-preoccupation to notice the needs, visible or invisible, of those around us. This awareness turns simple acts—like listening without judgment, offering sincere encouragement, or simply being a stable presence in a moment of chaos—into powerful gifts. These are the moments when we are most truly "blessed" in the transitive sense, acting as conduits of grace rather than merely recipients of it.

What is perhaps most profound about this practice is the creation of a genuine ripple effect. A single act of intentional kindness is rarely a closed loop. The energy of being supported, seen, or relieved of a burden tends to propagate outwards. The person who received a timely compliment might then pay for the coffee of the person behind them. The colleague who felt truly heard during a stressful meeting might approach their next interaction with renewed patience. It is through this chain of quiet generosity that the world's shared burdens become lighter. Our own well-being is intrinsically tied to the well-being of our community, and by nurturing them, we inevitably nurture the environment that sustains us.

Furthermore, being a blessing is a potent antidote to cynicism. In a world that often feels fractured and overwhelming, actively choosing to bring light, even in a small way, grounds us in purpose. It reminds us that we have agency—that our hands are capable of healing, even if only by wiping away a tear or typing a supportive message. The deepest, most enduring joy we have experienced has consistently followed an action that eased another's suffering or amplified their happiness. This paradoxical reality—that we gain by giving—is the quiet truth at the heart of the matter.

Ultimately, being a blessing is not a status to be achieved, but a continuous way of living. It requires humility, consistency, and a persistent willingness to see the good in others and to reflect that goodness back to them. It is the gentle, daily work of making one's life a quiet, radiant source of warmth in the lives of others.

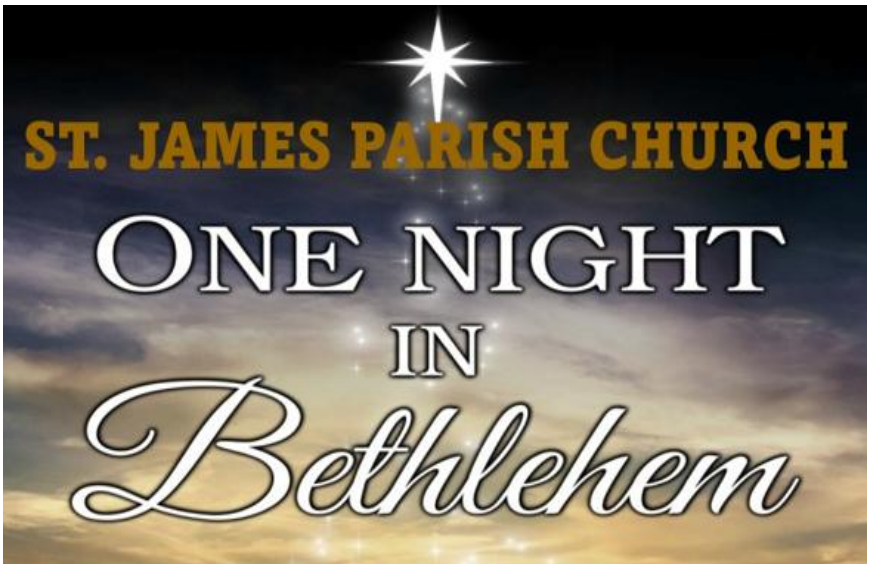
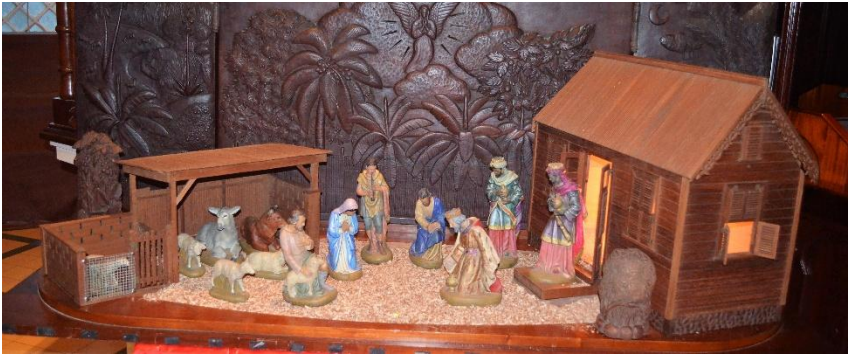
Let us be the blessing that our world needs this Christmas.

A joyous Christmas to you and a year filled with countless blessings.

Your friend and pastor

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Call to Worship ~ Welcome ~ Lighting the Advent Wreath ~ Candles ~ Opening Prayer ~ Bethlehem in Scriptures ~ Hymn: O Little Town of ~ Bethlehem ~ Mary's Story: The Gospel of St. Luke, Chapter 1 26 -38 ~ Prayer & Response ~ Solo ~ Joseph's Story: Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 1:18 to 25 ~ Prayer & Response ~ Solo ~ Prayer & Response ~ Hymn: Once in Royal David City ~ Jesus's Birth: Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2 Verse 1 to 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Jesus's Birth: Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2 Verse 1 to 7 ~ Prayer & Response ~ Hymn: Away in a Manger ~ The Shepherds' Story ~ Prayer & Response ~ Dance ~ St. Matthew Tells the Story ~ Prayer & Response ~ Offertory ~ Presentation of gifts ~ Hymn Go Tell it on The Mountain ~ Hymn: Virgin Mary had a baby boy ~ Intercession ~ Collect ~ Hymn: What Child is this ~ Hymn: Silent Night ~ Benediction ~ Hymn: Joy to the World
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Jesus was born in Bethlehem to fulfill an ancient prophecy. And to establish His connection to King David, showing that He was the promised Messiah

Bethlehem's significance lies in its prophetic role, its ties to David's royal lineage and its significance as a humble place chosen by God for the Saviour's birth.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The impossible was about to happen in a stable in Bethlehem. This is the night when creation stood still for God was doing the most unbelievable thing. His precious Son, Jesus Christ was to be born of a Virgin. The Word was made flesh. Welcome Jesus Humble Saviour. Come you faithful people come!

R: We celebrate the Christ child who has come to save
C: Glory to God in the highest

R: God's child is the Wise counselor filled with mighty power

C: Glory to God in the highest

R: This is the night of the Holy Birth

C: Glory to God in the highest

R: Rejoice good friends the Good News is here

C: Christ our Saviour is Born! Hallelujah

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

Now is the time to light the Advent Wreath Candles.

The Candles Lighting focus on four things God gives us through His Son, Jesus Christ's birth, namely Hope, Peace. Joy and love.

CANDLES ARE LIT

Later tonight, we will light the White Candle, The Christ Candle. This Candle reminds us that Jesus is the center of Christmas. For on this night, we meet Emmanuel, God with us. The Light of the World

OPENING PRAYERS

LET US PRAY

O Sweet Child of Bethlehem, on this holy night we gather to celebrate your birth. Heavenly Father, we thank you for keeping your promise. You did not forget humanity but sent your Precious son to Redeem it. As we come together with family and friends, may our hearts be filled with joy and gratitude. Thank you for the gift of salvation and the love that you have shown us through Jesus. Bless this time of fellowship and worship *Amen*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

ALL:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name;
your kingdom come;

your will be done
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. ***Amen.***

BETHLEHEM IN SCRIPTURE

The prophet Micha foretold Jesus' birth place centuries earlier:

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are
small among the clans of Judah, out of you will
come for me one who will be ruler over Israel"
(Micha 5 :2)

Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was a direct fulfilment of this prophecy, confirming his identity as the Messiah. Bethlehem was known as the City of David, where King David was born and anointed. By being born there, Jesus was tied to David's royal line, fulfilling God's promise that the Messiah would come from David's descendants.

Bethlehem means "House of Bread". Christians see symbolism here. Jesus, later called the "Bread of Life," was born in the "House of Bread" "signifying spiritual nourishment for the world.

Bethlehem was a small, humble town, not a grand capital or wealthy city. Jesus' birth there emphasizes that God's kingdom is not about worldly power or

prestige but about humility and service and accessibility to all people.

His choice of Bethlehem also highlights God's pattern of working through the unexpected and the lowly. The shepherds of Bethlehem, who first received the angelic announcement symbolize the ordinary and marginalized being invited into God's plan .

This small town became the stage for the most significant birth in Christian belief, showing that God worked through humble beginnings to bring salvation.

HYMN O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by:
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;
And, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!

So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in:
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

MARY'S STORY

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.

R: The Lord himself will give you a sign

C: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son

R: And they shall call his name Emmanuel

C: Which means ,God is with us

R. Let us pray

Almighty God in choosing the Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son, you made known your gracious regard for the poor and lowly. Grant us grace to receive your Word in humility, and so to be made one with your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy spirit, one God , now and forever
Amen

SOLO

JOSEPH’S STORY

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found

to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

R: A shoot shall come from the stump of Jesse.

C: And a branch shall grow out of its roots.

R: The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him.

C: The spirit of wisdom and understanding.

R: The spirit of counsel and might.

C: The spirit of Knowledge and the fear of the Lord

R. Let us pray

God who from the family of your servant David raised up Joseph to be the earthly father of your incarnate Son and the spouse of his Virgin Mother. Give us grace to imitate his uprightness of life and his obedience to your command, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who

lives and reigns with You and the Holy spirit, one God,
now and forever Amen

HYMN ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID CITY

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that Mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor, and mean, and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood,
he would honour and obey,
love, and watch the lowly Maiden,
in whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
mild, obedient, good as he.

For he is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us he grew,
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love,
for that Child so dear and gentle

is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
where like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

THE NATIVITY STORY JESUS' BIRTH

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

R: Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, taking the form of a slave.

C: but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

R: And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death.

C: **even death on a cross.**

Let us pray

Almighty God, you have made yourself known in your Son, Jesus, redeemer of the world. Through His birth as a human, we have been set free from the slavery of sin. Who lives with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. **Amen**

Hymn: Away in a Manger

Away in a manger,
no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus
laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky
looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus,
asleep in the hay.

The cattle are lowing,
the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus,
no crying he makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus!
Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle
till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus,
I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever
and love me, I pray;

Bless all the dear children
in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven
to live with thee there.

THE SHEPHERDS' STORY

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

R: Get you up to the mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings.

C: Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings.

R: Lift it up, do not fear.

C: Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

Let us Pray

Gracious Father, your angels sent the shepherds to Bethlehem. There they found the angels' words were true. With awe and joy they praised You carrying the good news in their hearts. May we like the shepherds glorify You and cry out the good news of Jesus' birth.
Amen

DANCE

ST. MATTHEW TELLS THE STORY

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people

Israel.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

R: In the stillness of this night

C A gift is given

R: Wrapped in swaddling cloth, coming to us as a little baby.

C: God’s greatest Gift is given

R: In the miracle and mystery of God’s Son born in human flesh

C: God has given us His salvation

R: Let us Pray

Heavenly, Father, Thank You for the gift Of Emmanuel- God with us. May his presence fill our homes and lives reminding us of Your infinite love and mercy. Amen

OFFERTORY AND PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

HYMN GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN,

Refrain:

*Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born!*

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.

Refrain:

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! Above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Saviour's birth.

Refrain:

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And Godsent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain:

HYMN THE VIRGIN MARY HAD A BABY BOY

The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
And they said that his name was Jesus.

Refrain:

*He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh yes, believer, oh yes, believer.
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.*

The angels sang when the babe was born,
The angels sang when the babe was born,
The angels sang when the babe was born,
And proclaimed him the Saviour Jesus.

Refrain:

The wisemen saw where the babe was born,
The wisemen saw where the babe was born,
The wisemen saw where the babe was born,
And they saw that his name was Jesus.

Refrain:

THE INTERCESSION

LEADER: In peace let us pray to the Lord.
Father, in this holy night, your Son our Savior was born
in human flesh. Renew your Church as the Body of
Christ.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

LEADER: In this holy night, there was no room for
your Son in the inn. Protect with your love those who
have no home and all who live in poverty.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

LEADER: In this holy night, Mary, in the pain of labour, brought your Son to birth. Hold in your hand those are ailing tonight all who are in pain or distress.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

LEADER: In this holy night, your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness. Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

LEADER: In this holy night, **THE** angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.' Strengthen those who work for peace and justice especially in all the world but especially in Haiti and Venezuela.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

LEADER: In this holy **NIGHT**, shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy. Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

LEADER: In this holy night, strangers found the Holy Family and saw the baby lying in the manger. Bless our homes and all whom we love.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

LEADER: In this holy night, heaven is come down to earth, and earth is raised to heaven. Hold in your hand all those who have passed through death in the hope of your coming kingdom.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

LEADER: In this holy night, Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth. Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

ALL: Holy God, hear our prayer.

THE COLLECT

R: Father, on this holy night, angels and shepherds worshipped at the manger throne. Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary, Joseph and the saints through him who is your Word made flesh, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

HYMN 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 Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
The Cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word Made Flesh, 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!
Raise, raise the song on high!
The virgin sings her lullaby.

Joy! joy! for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!

HYMN: SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
'Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing, "Alleluia"
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth

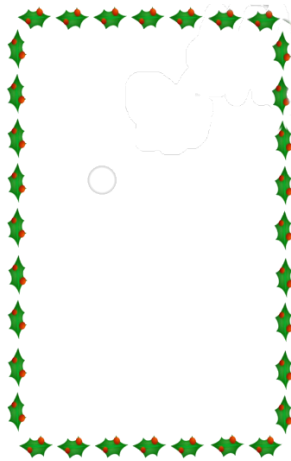
HYMN JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world! The Lord has come;
Let earth receive her King:
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns:
Let us our songs employ:
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.


No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground:
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,






St. James Parish Church



MAY THE
CHRIST OF
CHRISTMAS BE
WITH YOU
TODAY AND
ALWAYS.



*MERRY
CHRISTMAS !!!!*

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PRODUCED BY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

ST. JAMES PARISH CHURCH