



Kirchenblatt December 2023

(Parish Newsletter)

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church
1407 Eighth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602



Join us for Worship Sundays at 10:45 am

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**In the event of a Pastoral Emergency, please contact Pastor Drew McCaffery
Phone: 814-944-7560 Cell: 814-538-9036**

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY-THURSDAY 9 AM-1PM

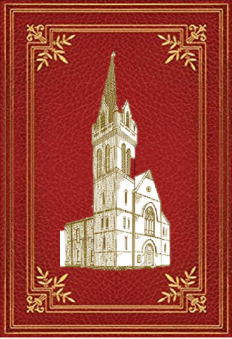
EMAIL: STJAMESALTOONA@GMAIL.COM

WEBSITE: WWW.STJAMESALTOONA.ORG

PHONE: 814-944-6835

MISSION STATEMENT:

**TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH WORD AND
SACRAMENT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**



Vice Pastor's Report December 2023

Pastor's December Musings

A favorite memory of mine during the holiday season was when we held our Christmas get together with family. Long story short, my brother n I are half-brothers, and he would spend Christmas Eve/Day with his dad as I spent it with our mother. So this meant that we would do Christmas on a different day. We would have extended family over for a special meal and then our Papaw would take my brother & I out to see Christmas lights. Unbeknownst to my brother & I this was also when Santa would make a special arrival to our home while we were away. Yet, there was just something special in the midst of that time with my brother & Papaw seeing all the Christmas lights. Occasionally now, I will drag Pr. Amanda to drive around seeing assorted Christmas lights in local neighborhoods and of course a trip to Light on the Lake at Lakemont Park.

In this season of winter, things are going to feel darker. Not only because of the minimal sunlight but also this season of waiting. The days will get darker to Christmas but we also feel this sense of hopelessness in our lives, especially as we sometimes look at the news. Then we arrive to the manger on Christmas Eve where we celebrate the light of the world coming into the darkness. This is significant time for us all which helps not only slow us down but brings together what this holiday season means for us. I think this is one of the many reasons why songs like *Silent Night* is so significant for Christmas Eve worship because it brings its all together.

Friends, I know for many of us as soon as we are done carving the Thanksgiving Turkey, we hit the Christmas Holiday Season in FULL FORCE. It has the opportunity to be a beautiful and meaningful season. Christmas also brings a lot of baggage which can make it feel dark and difficult. My prayer for you this holiday season is that you find the light shining in the midst of those dark heavy moments. May you feel God's presence and peace in the chaos of the holidays. If none of that happens, may Christmas Eve be a time and space where the meaning of this holiday comes together and you feel the light shining on you and all those around us.

Pastor Drew



Contribution & Attendance Summary
September 2022
Contributions \$925 Average Weekly Attendance: 11
September 2023
Contributions \$475 Average Weekly Attendance: 9

December Birthdays

Marian Holsinger	12/29
Nick Holsinger	12/25
Kaylee Manbeck	12/30
Haley Mayo	12/11
Erikka Wilt	12/11

INCOME & EXPENSE SUMMARY	
September 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023	
INCOME	
Bank Interest	\$0.00
Contributions	
General	\$475.00
Designated	\$0.00
Special	\$0.00
Other Income	\$4,000.00
	\$4,475.00
EXPENSES	
Pastoral Administration	\$645.80
Worship & Music	\$587.54
Office	\$2,610.16
Custodial & Property	\$1,80.71
Uncategorized	\$132.73
	\$5,256.94

Remember In Your Prayers

Our Prayer List:

(Names for inclusion on our parish prayer list can be submitted to the church office. The name will remain on the list for one month. At the end of that period please advise the church office, if you would like the name to be continue for another month.)

Tim Surkovich , Debbie Thomas,
 Jeff Bickel, Bill Wilt, Staff Sgt John Hiles
 Donna Foster, Jean Bickel, Donna Wilt,
 Carolyn Feather, Bill Dambeck,
 Judy Dambeck
 Those serving in our military

Allegheny Lutheran Home:
 Janet Kauffman

Homewood
 Sylvia Malsatzki

In their own homes:
 Deborah Manbeck

Dec 1—Matthew 16:13-20, Psalm 18:1-2

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled, A quiet chamber set apart For You to dwell within my heart (*LSB* 358:13). Amen.

Dec 2—Exodus 3:1-15, Psalm 126

Heavenly Father, we are not worthy to come before You. But You are worthy. Thank You for sending Jesus to make us fit for Your holiness. In His name we pray. Amen.

Dec 3—Jeremiah 33:14-16, Psalm 25:1-10

Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus; Turn not from me aside, And help me to receive You This blessed Adventide (*LSB* 354:4). Amen.

Dec 4—John 4:5-30, Psalm 95:1-9

Dear Jesus, forgive our prejudices. Help us see and share, by faith through the Holy Spirit's power, our Savior, who has come to set us free. Amen.

Dec 5—Jeremiah 1:4-10, Psalm 71:1-6, 17-18

Dear Jesus, thank You for every human life. In childlike faith, help us to answer Your call and share Your love with others. Amen.

Dec 6—John 13:12-20, Psalm 116:16-19

Dear Jesus, help us to follow Your example and serve others. Amen.

Dec 7—2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Psalm 73:23-28

Lord, bless our country and our world. Free us to share Your all-sufficient grace with others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dec 8—Genesis 22:1-2, 11-14, Psalm 111

Heavenly Father, by faith may we respond to Your Word. May Your will be done in and through us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dec 9—Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 139:13-18

Dear God, give us ways to care for all life. Help us to speak up so that all might know Him whom You have sent, Jesus, our Lord, our Savior, and Servant of all. In His name. Amen.

Dec 10—Romans 3:19-28, Psalm 46:8-11

Lord God, calm our fears and help us to trust in You always. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dec 11—1 Peter 2:4-10, Psalm 118:19-24

Lord Jesus, keep us firm in Your Word and Sacraments and help us to be Your living stones to others. Amen.

Dec 12—John 6:22-35, Psalm 145:15-16

Lord, grant me then, thus strengthened With heav'nly food, while here My course on earth is lengthened, To serve with holy fear. And when You call my spirit To leave this world below, I enter, through Your merit, Where joys unmingled flow (*LSB* 642:4). Amen.

Dec 13—Matthew 18:15-20, Psalm 32:1-7

Lord, may Your Spirit work mightily to draw us all closer to Jesus and the Father's abiding love and forgiveness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Dec 14—Revelation 22:6-13, Psalm 27:7-14

Dear Jesus, touch us with Your love and keep us steadfast in our faith until You return. Amen.

Dec 15—Matthew 20:1-16, Psalm 145:8-9

Gracious Father, thank You for Your generous love, revealed ultimately through Your Son, our Savior. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dec 16—Romans 1:16-17, Psalm 46:1-3,7

I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour; . . . O Thou who changes not, abide with me (*LSB* 878:2, 4). Amen.

Dec 17—John 10:7-11, Psalm 84

Redeemer, come and open wide My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide (*LSB* 341:5)! Amen.

Dec 18—John 14:1-3, Psalm 23:5-6

Lord Jesus, thank You for being with us. Strengthen us in times of loss and uphold us by Your grace, that we may rest each day in Your saving arms. Amen.

Dec 19—John 15:1-8, Psalm 80:14-19

Lord Jesus, You came to die and rise for us all. Help us to remain connected to You through Your Word and Sacraments. Amen.

Dec 20—Matthew 11:25-30, Psalm 18:31-35

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit Into ev'ry troubled breast. . . . Let us find Thy promised rest (*LSB* 700:2). Amen.

Dec 21—Isaiah 6:1-8, Psalm 138

Heavenly Father, use us, our gifts, talents, treasures, words, and our very lives for the building up of Your kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dec 22—Revelation 22:12-14, Psalm 93

Eternal Lord Jesus, lift our vision and help us to tell Your redemptive story to others. Amen.

Dec 23—Luke 1:26-38, Psalm 89:1-5

Dear Jesus, prepare our hearts for Your coming and remind us that nothing is impossible for You. In Your name. Amen.

Dec 24—Luke 2:1-20, Psalm 23:1-4

Heavenly Father, You sent Your Son, Jesus, to lay down His life and rise for us. On this holy night, may we behold the victorious Lamb of God, who takes away our sins and reigns for all eternity. In His name. Amen.

Dec 25—2 Peter 1:16-21, Psalm 96

Dear Jesus, thank You for coming into this world to save us. Illumine us with Your grace and help us to shine like stars for You in a world that needs Your love. Amen.

Dec 26—John 14:1-14, Psalm 146

You are the way, the truth, the life; Grant us that way to know, That truth to keep, that life to win Whose joys eternal flow (LSB 526:4). Amen.

Dec 27—John 18:36-37, Psalm 47

Dear Jesus, help us to be Your faithful witnesses, proclaiming Your Good News wherever You lead. Amen.

Dec 28—John 11:11-27, Psalm 121

Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place May glorify Thy lavish grace. . . . [In death] keep My body safe in peaceful sleep Until Thy reappearing. And then from death awaken me (LSB 708:2, 3). Amen.

Dec 29—Matthew 28:16-20, Psalm 51:10-12

Lord Jesus, by the Holy Spirit's power, may our lives reflect Your presence. By faith, may we believe You are with us always. Amen.

Dec 30—John 8:12, Psalm 27:1-6

Dear Jesus, shine in our hearts and help us to be Your Gospel light to all the world. Amen.

Dec 31—Revelation 21:5, Psalm 100

Dear Jesus, help us to trust in You. Lead us to walk by faith in the newness of life in this coming year and forevermore. Amen.

Your Daily Prayer



pray
EVERY DAY



Announcements and Upcoming Events

IN THE CASE OF A PASTORAL EMERGENCY,

In the event of a Pastoral Emergency, please contact Pastor Drew McCaffery

Phone: 814-944-7560 Cell: 814-538-9036

Email: pastordrew0604@gmail.com

The church office email is stjamesaltoona@gmail.com The church's website is www.stjamesaltoona.org

Find us on Facebook to get up-to-date information.

REMINDER AND IMPORTANT

BULLETIN ADDITIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN TUESDAY AT 10:30 AM.

For corrections, please contact the church office secretary Tim Surkovich, I'm in the office Monday-Thursday 9-1.

******IF AN ARTICLE FOR THE KIRCHENBLATT CANNOT BE SUBMITTED BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH, PLEASE CALL AND RESERVE A SPACE FOR YOUR ARTICLE SO THAT THE KIRCHENBLATT CAN BE FORMATTED AHEAD OF TIME TO PROVIDE SPACE FOR ALL THE CONGREGATIONAL NEWS.******

DEADLINE FOR THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF THE KIRCHENBLATT IS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15.



UPCOMING MEETINGS, EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES:

DECORATE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS	DEC 2 10 AM
SWEETS AND TREATS/ADVENT WEEK 2	DEC 3 10 AM
FAITH ON TAP @ MARZONIS GREENWOOD	DEC 5 6 PM
ALLEGHENY CHORALE CONCERT	DEC 3 3 PM
ADVENT MID-WEEK SERVICE @ BETHANY	DEC 6 630PM
COUNCIL MEETING/ADVENT WEEK 3	DEC 10 12 PM
ADVENT MID-WEEK SERVICE @ BETHANY	DEC 13 630PM
ADVENT WEEK 4	DEC 17
FAITH ON TAP @ MARZONIS GREENWOOD	DEC 19 6 PM
ADVENT MID-WEEK SERVICE @ BETHANY	DEC 20 630PM
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE @ BETHANY	DEC 24 1 PM
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE @ BETHANY	DEC 24 6 PM
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE @ ST JAMES	DEC 24 8 PM
UN-DECORATE CHURCH AFTER CHRISTMAS	JAN 6 10 AM
WELCA BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN ENDS	JAN 7, 2024

**Note: No morning services at Bethany or St James December 24th or 25th*



WHAT'S HAPPENING!!



NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

DECEMBER 10, 2023

SWEETS

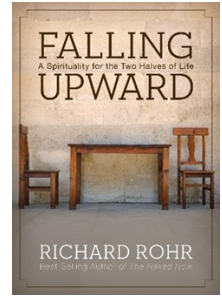


TREATS

SWEETS AND TREATS THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH.

OUR NEXT SWEETS AND TREATS
WILL BE
DECEMBER 3, 2023
Provided By: Jean Bickel

* We are always looking for volunteers to sponsor Sweets and Treats. If you're interested there is a sign up sheet in the Sunday School Room. Your support is appreciated!



Bible Study Update

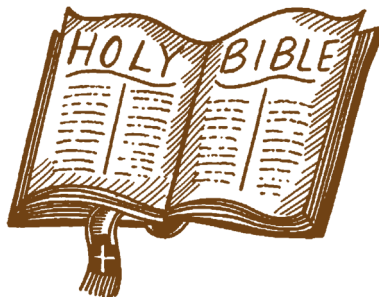
Faith on Tap- 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the Month at Marzoni's in Greenwood

Since September, we have been doing a series on Richard Rohr's book *Falling Upward*. These have been great conversations as we have spoken about our spiritual upbringing but how that influences our 2nd half of life. This book study will take us to the remainder of the year as we are doing 2 chapters per session. We hope you join us as we fall upward for a time of fellowship and faithful discussions.

Faith on Tap Dates:

Dec 5th: *The Shadowlands & New Problems and New Directions*

Dec 19th: *Falling Upward & Wrap up*





Free to the public



***Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 3pm
St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, Altoona***

***Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7pm
First Presbyterian Church, Tyrone***

Deborah Estright, Director

We ask the congregation to please contribute cookies for the social after the concert. There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex.



WELCA's Christmas Luncheon

All are invited! Mark your calendar Now!



DATE DECEMBER 9, 2023

TIME: 12:30PM



WHERE: Altoona Jethro's (Party Room)

*Must register no later Dec 4th by calling the St James church office at 944-6835, or Margaret Thatcher at 814-943-4749

Sing and Praise God with accordion player Rose Ann Fregone.

** We will briefly hear from Daniellie Haluska Assistant Director of Precious Life, on how your pennies, dimes, and quarters can provide hope and help in our area for all young women dealing with pregnancy.*



This opportunity provided by a
THRIVENT grant.

thrivent[®]





WELCA NEWS

Precious Life Baby Bottle Campaign



Change for Life
Baby Bottle
Campaign



Be a "STAR" this Christmas!

*Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord"
Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future*

Pick up an empty bottle from our Christmas Tree in the foyer. Campaign starts November 19. Take your bottle home and fill it with spare change. Bring your bottle back by January 7, 2024

*Take one for friend or relative. Remember:
"Every Life Matters!" "Every Coin Counts!"

Fill a Bottle! Save a Life!

*Precious Life provides resources to a young girl who needs to choose life for her young child.

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE 2023

**Decorate Church for
Christmas
Saturday December 2,
2023 10 AM**



Advent
A Season of Hope
& Expectation

**November 26, 2023 to
December 17, 2023**

**Bethany 1 PM
Bethany 6 PM
St. James 8 PM**



*NOTE: Neither church will hold
services morning services December
24th or 25th*



**Un-Decorate Church
after Christmas
January 6, 2024 10 AM**



Advent Mid-Week Services at Bethany

(Nov 29th, Dec 6th, Dec 13th, Dec 20th)

We will be hosting a midweek worship service held at church at 6:30pm. We will also be joined by our friends from St Luke's in Roaring Spring, so you will get to enjoy the experience of two Pr. McCaffery's! Our theme for this Advent will be *My Soul Magnifies the Lord*. Traditionally on the 4th Sunday of Advent, we hear the Angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary as she is carrying child. Not just any child but Jesus, the Son of God. Mary while amid her own faithful processing of this news, she responds with what we know as *The Magnificat* ("Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." ~Luke 1:38). It is during this 4-week series, we will faithfully experience and process what Mary's words mean, for us and the world during this Advent Season. See you Wednesday, Nov 30th at 6:30pm for our first service where you can join us in person or watch via FB Live. As always, our series will conclude with our traditional Blue Christmas service, for those who this time of the year is especially difficult, on December 20th.



Sequanota

Lutheran Conference Center & Camp

PO Box 245, Jennerstown, PA 15547

(814) 629-6627

www.sequanota.com

SUSTAIN - AN ADULT RETREAT

DATE: FEBRUARY 9-11, 2024

BOWERSOX CENTER

COST: \$170 (DOUBLE OCCUPANCY)/ \$210
(SINGLE OCCUPANCY): INCLUDES 2 NIGHTS
LODGING & 4 MEALS

This weekend retreat has been created to provide adults a weekend to engage their faith for the journey of life. The church we grew up in is shrinking. This raises our anxiety and causes us to question *"what is happening and where is God?"* We all need to be sustained in our love and trust in God. This weekend is for all adults. Please consider joining us for the weekend of study, rest and friendship. The book study will include ["When the Church Stops Working"](#) by Andrew Root and Blair Bertrand.

This weekend is for all adults. Free childcare can be provided on site during sessions to make it easier to engage in the weekend's sessions. (Advance notice is required)

All are welcome! Register online or call the office.



Merry
Christmas!
*and a
Blessed New Year*



St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

1407 Eighth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602

814-944-6835

stjamesaltoona@gmail.com

www.stjamesaltoona.org



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Church Council Members

Mark Hoover—President
Donna Wilt—Vice President
Evelyn Holsinger—Secretary
Ralph Grove—Treasurer
Betty Boslet
Robin Kessler
Sharon Lighner
Shirley Manbeck
Mike Savino
Diane Schultz
Bill Wilt

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church Staff

*Vice Pastor— Pastor Drew McCaffery
Church Administrative Assistant - Tim Surkovich
Organist & Choir Director - Pat McConnell
Financial Secretary/Bookkeeper - Ralph Grove
Custodian—Tori Gragar*

Chairpersons are listed in bold at the top of each committee.

BELOW YOU WILL FIND THE COMMITTEES AS OF THIS DATE. PLEASE NOTIFY EITHER THE CHAIRMAN OR CHURCH OFFICE IF YOUR NAME DOES NOT APPEAR WHERE IT SHOULD OR APPEARS WHERE IT SHOULDN'T. ALSO, PLEASE NOTIFY US IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SERVE ON ANY OF THESE COMMITTEES.

Mutual Ministry

- *Evelyn Holsinger
- *Sharon Lightner
- *Donna Wilt
- *Mike Savino

Christian Education/
Social Ministry

- *Evelyn Holsinger**
- *Sharon Lightner
- *Shirley Manbeck
- *Donna Wilt

Worship & Music

- *Mark Hoover**
- *Sharon Lightner
- Pat McConnell

Finance

- *Mark Hoover**
- *Betty Boslet
- Ralph Grove
- *Bill Wilt
- *Donna Wilt

Stewardship/Evangelism

- *Donna Wilt**
- *Sharon Lightner

By-Laws

- *Mark Hoover**
- *Betty Boslet
- *Mike Savino

Property

- *Bill Wilt**
- Bill Dambeck
- Bob Holsinger
- *Evelyn Holsinger
- *Shirley Manbeck
- *Mike Savino

* Denotes Council Member
Thrivent Rep.—
Robin Kessler