



**St. James Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
December 22, 2024  
4th Sunday of Advent**

**Worship every Sunday  
10:45 AM**

**Welcome**

***We welcome all visitors who come to worship with us today. We are delighted that you have come to share in the prayer and praise of our Lord and invite you to return and add your voice to ours in holy celebration. If you have a special need or prayer write it on the prayer card in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate. Before you leave us today, we ask that you please sign our guest book.***

**Pulpit Supply: Steve Katcher  
Church Organist/Choir Director: Patricia McConnell  
Administrative Assistant: Tim Surkovich**

**ALL LITURGY AND MUSIC RIGHTS RESERVED  
REPRINTED UNDER AUGSBURG FORTRESS LITURGIES LICENSE  
#31114  
REPRINTED UNDER ONELICENSE.NET #A-723225**

**St. James Mission Statement: To make disciples of Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament by the Holy Spirit.**

Announcements: If you cannot read the hymns, you can turn to the hymn in the red ELW hymnal in the pew racks.

Prelude: Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming Hildebrand/Jones  
(We take this time to silently prepare our hearts and minds for worship)

PLEASE STAND

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

In the name of the Father, and of the ✚ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*An extended silence may be kept.*

Merciful God,

**We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, and Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

*We Gather*

\*GATHERING SONG: Hark, the Glad Sound!

ELW 239

NEXT PAGE

# Hark, the Glad Sound!

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior  
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's  
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing  
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come

prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -  
bond - age held. The gates of brass be -  
soul to cure, and with the trea - sures  
shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal

pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song,  
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.  
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.  
arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751  
Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

## \*GREETING:

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

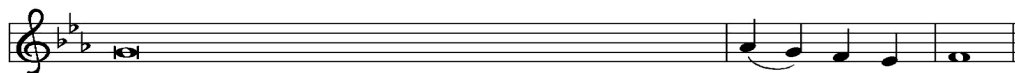
KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



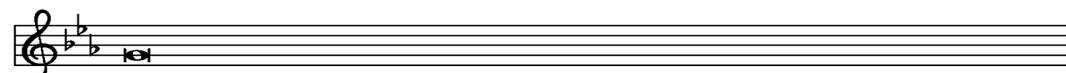
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



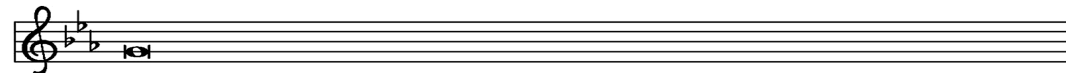
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

# Glory to God

Assisting minister



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY:

P: Let us pray.

**Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## \* LIGHTING OF 4TH ADVENT CANDLE

\*Candle Lighting Hymn to People, Look East

ELW 248

### People, Look East

4 An - gels an - nounce with shōuts of mirth him who brīngs new  
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming  
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The score ends with a double bar line.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965

Music: BESANÇON, French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934

Text © Miss E. Farjeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Associates.

Arr. © 1999 Novello & Company Ltd., London, United Kingdom. All rights reserved. International copyright secured.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## *We Listen to the Word*

**First Reading:**

**Micah 5:2-5a**

A reading from Micah.

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; <sup>5a</sup> and he shall be the one of peace.

The word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

**Luke 1:46b-55**

<sup>46b</sup> My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, <sup>47</sup> my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> **for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed:**

<sup>49</sup> you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.

<sup>50</sup> **You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.**

<sup>51</sup> You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,

<sup>52</sup> **casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.**

<sup>53</sup> You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> **You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise of mercy,**

<sup>55</sup> the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.

## Second Reading:

Hebrews 10:5-10

A reading from Hebrews.

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; <sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. <sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’ (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

<sup>8</sup> When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



## \*GOSPEL:

Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.





<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

[<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

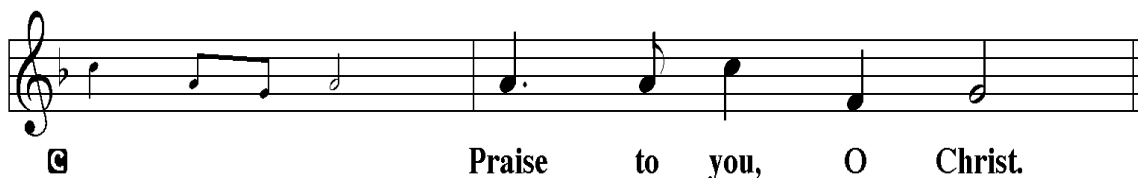
<sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."]

## The Gospel of the Lord



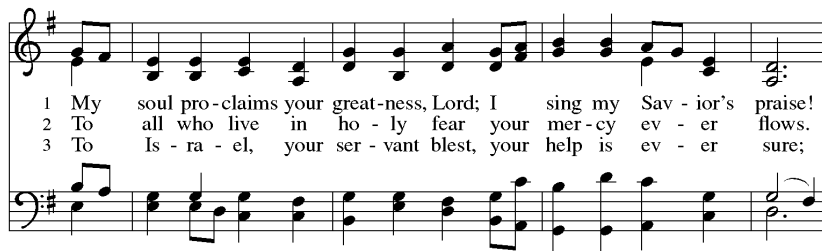
Sermon

# *We Respond to the Word*

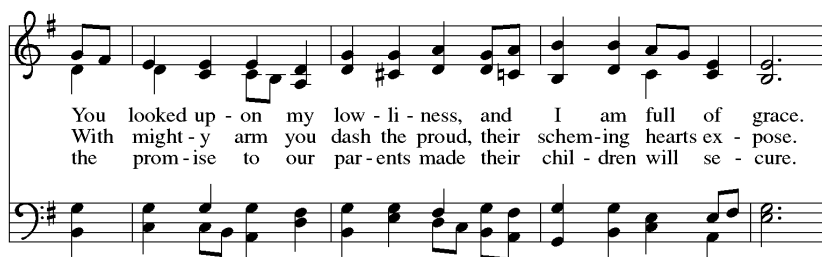
\*Hymn of the Day:

ELW 251

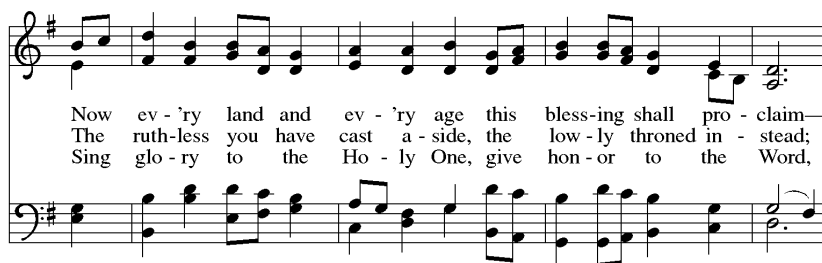
## My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness



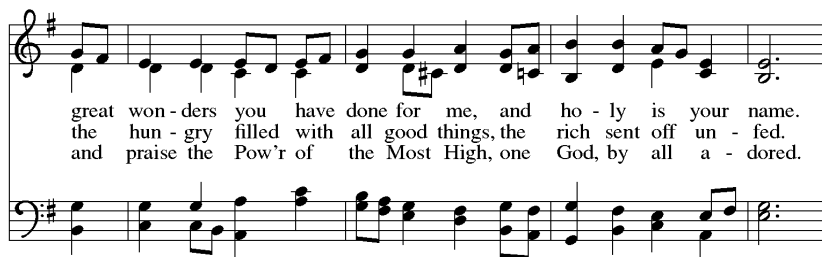
1 My soul pro-claims your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav - ior's praise!  
2 To all who live in ho - ly fear your mer - cy ev - er flows.  
3 To Is - ra - el, your ser - vant blest, your help is ev - er sure;



You looked up - on my low - li - ness, and I am full of grace.  
With might - y arm you dash the proud, their schem - ing hearts ex - pose.  
the prom - ise to our par - ents made their chil - dren will se - cure.



Now ev - 'ry land and ev - 'ry age this bless - ing shall pro - claim—  
The ruth - less you have cast a - side, the low - ly throned in - stead;  
Sing glo - ry to the Ho - ly One, give hon - or to the Word,



great won - ders you have done for me, and ho - ly is your name.  
the hun - gry filled with all good things, the rich sent off un - fed.  
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all a - dored.

Text: *With One Voice*, 1995, based on the Magnificat  
Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958  
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.  
Outside USA: Arr. from *The English Hymnal*, © Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## **\*Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **\*Sharing of the Peace**

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** **And also with you.**

## ***We Offer Our Gifts***

### **\*Offering Prayer:**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts; ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Use us and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the One who gave Himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## Prayers of Intercession

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

*A brief silence.*

God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation, and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for the wildlife in our communities (*local preserves, parks, or sanctuaries may be named*). Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God our life, you remember the promises you have made to your people. In gratitude for those who have died (*especially*), we praise you for your faithfulness throughout history. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

Lord remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

\*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 those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

### *We Are Sent*

\*Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

\*Sending Song:

Fling Wide the Door

ELW 259

*NEXT PAGE*

\*Dismissal

**P:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God!**

Recessional

O Little Town Of Bethlehem

Richard Hudson

## Fling Wide the Door

1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry  
 2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's  
 3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true  
 4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen

comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the  
 gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his  
 king's com - mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the  
 wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -

Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion  
 scep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows  
 hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful  
 on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly

to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and  
 to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and  
 Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -  
 Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We

praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.  
 wor - ship him with song, for sav - ing us from wrong.  
 a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.  
 praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

Text: Georg Weissel, 1590–1635; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943  
 Music: MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR, J. A. Freylinghausen, *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*, 1704; arr. hymnal version  
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.  
 Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

# CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

**IN THE CASE OF A PASTORAL EMERGENCY,**  
In the event of a Pastoral Emergency, please contact Pastor Eli Hess  
Work: 814-943-3972

The church office email is [stjamesaltoona@gmail.com](mailto:stjamesaltoona@gmail.com) The church's  
website is [www.stjamesaltoona.org](http://www.stjamesaltoona.org)  
On Facebook—St. James Lutheran Church—Altoona, PA



## **Our Prayer List:**

Tim Surkovich	Jeff Bickel	Bill Wilt
Staff Sgt John Hiles	Donna Foster	Donna Wilt
Carolyn Feather	Bill Dambeck	Judy Dambeck

The Family and soul of Debbie Thomas    The soul and family of Debra Morgan

(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.)

Those serving in our military.

## **Homewood:**

Sylvia Malsatzki

## **In their own homes:**

Deborah Manbeck



## UPCOMING MEETINGS, EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES:

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** **DEC 24 7:30PM**  
**UN-DECORATE CHURCH AFTER CHRISTMAS** **JAN 4 10 AM**  
*\*Pizza served afterwards*  
**SWEETS AND TREATS** **JAN 5 10 AM**  
**ST JAMES WELCA SERVICE PROJECT ENDS** **JAN 14**





ST JAMES  
WELCA

 We  
CARE

"LOVE IS A  
FOUR LEGGED WORD"



ST JAMES WELCA INVITES YOU TO PARTICIPATE!

**WHEN:** December 7, 2024 – January 14, 2025

**WHAT:** Dog and cat food, treats, pet toys and small blankets.

**WHO:** Our congregation!

**WHERE:** Please bring your donations to the church and place them under the ST JAMES WELCA Tree

*Did you know our Humane Society is a "NO KILL NETWORK!"*



Please Help Us

# SWEETS AND TREATS

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF  
EACH MONTH.

SWEETS



TREATS

**OUR NEXT SWEETS AND TREATS WILL  
BE: January, 2025  
Provided By:**

\* 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!

*Advent*

=

*Hope*

*Peace*

*Joy*

*Love*

## A Christmas Message



*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. Luke 2:1-7*

Years ago, at Christmas time, our family would travel back to where my parents grew up to visit with family that still lived there. It was a tradition. We would share the day together with gift giving, meals, and storytelling. Adults would chat and cousins would play. It would be a long day spent till we returned home, but it was always a wonderful time. I miss those days, that tradition, especially being back in this area – where memories come alive again for me.

What are your traditions at this time of year? Do you travel to see loved ones? Or do they travel to see you? Do you gather with friends? This is a time to remember how important our memories are and to realize that there are those who aren't able to travel, or don't have anyone traveling to see them. Who might you visit this year to share the joy of Christ's birth? Whose tradition, memories, might you help come alive again?

Merry Christmas from the Office of the Bishop  
+Bp Collins, Pastor Shock, Sue Ellen, Pastor Kratz & Michelle

# *St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church*

**1407 Eighth Avenue  
Altoona, PA 16602**

**814-944-6835**

**[stjamesaltoona@gmail.com](mailto:stjamesaltoona@gmail.com)**

**[www.stjamesaltoona.org](http://www.stjamesaltoona.org)**



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.