



# **St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church**

## **November 30, 2025**

### **1st 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: Jay Buchanan  
Church Organist/Choir Director: Patricia McConnell  
Administrative Assistant: Tim Surkovich**

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**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: Comfort, Comfort Ye My People arr. Paul Manz  
(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:

Fling Wide the Door

ELW 259

NEXT PAGE

# 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 Oh, bless - ed be the 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 cre -  
 Son of bliss who fills our lives 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.  
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**\*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.



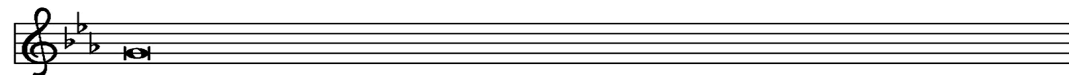
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



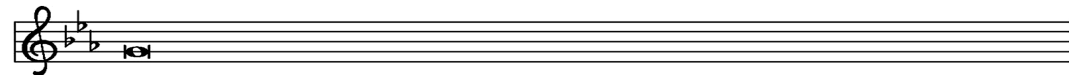
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## \* LIGHTING OF 1ST ADVENT CANDLE

**\*Candle Lighting Hymn Light One Candle to Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers  
ELW 224**

### Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;

the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.

The bride-groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.

Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with the lyrics written below the vocal staves. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes in the left hand.

## ***We Listen to the Word***

### **First Reading:**

**Isaiah 2:1-5**

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>1</sup> The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it.

<sup>3</sup> Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.

<sup>5</sup> O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM**

**Psalms 122**

<sup>1</sup> I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

<sup>2</sup> **Now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.**

<sup>3</sup> Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity with itself;

<sup>4</sup> **to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, the assembly of Israel, to praise the name of the LORD.**

<sup>5</sup> For there are the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

<sup>6</sup> **Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you.**

<sup>7</sup> Peace be within your walls and quietness within your towers.

<sup>8</sup> **For the sake of my kindred and companions, I pray for your prosperity.**

<sup>9</sup> Because of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek to do you good.”

## **Second Reading:**

**Romans 13:11-14**

A reading from Romans:

<sup>11</sup> Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup> the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup> let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

\* Please rise as you are able

## **\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.



**\*GOSPEL:**

**Matthew 24:36-44**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

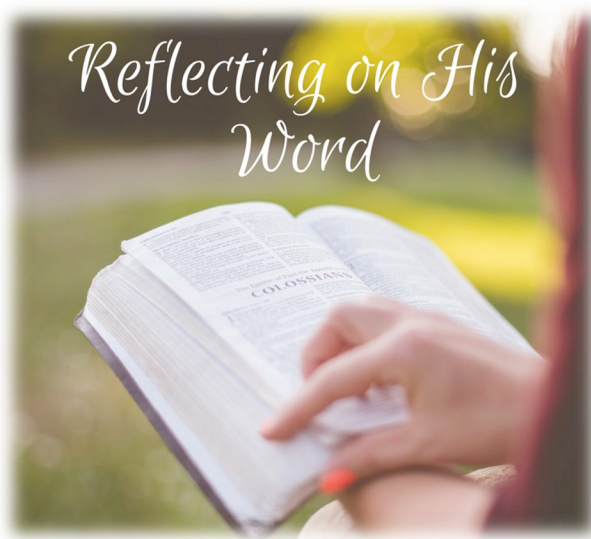


[Jesus said to the disciples,] <sup>36</sup> “About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. <sup>42</sup> Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**



Sermon



## *We Respond to the Word*

\*Hymn of the Day:

ELW 250

### Blessed Be the God of Israel

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody is primarily in the Soprano and Alto parts, with the piano providing harmonic support in the right hand and bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are arranged in three systems, each corresponding to a system of music. The first system contains three lines of lyrics, the second system contains two lines, and the third system contains two lines. The music concludes with a final double bar line.

1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free  
2 With prom - ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,  
3 My child, as proph - et of the Lord you will pre - pare the way,

and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da - vid's tree.  
the oath once sworn to A - bra - ham, from foes to save us all;  
to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.

So have the proph - ets long de - clared that with a might - y arm  
that we might wor - ship with - out fear and of - fer lives of praise,  
Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease

God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.  
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous - ness to serve God all our days.  
to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: FOREST GREEN, English folk tune; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

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## **\*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

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*A brief silence.*

God of the people, we come seeking wisdom and instruction. Uphold and strengthen lay leaders, teachers, deacons, pastors, and bishops. Teach us your ways and lead us in your paths. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God of the earth, we seek your goodness in the grandeur of creation. Empower us to care for forests and oceans, as we see you in the world around us. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God of the nations, grant wisdom to leaders, judges, and mediators. Cast out words of hate and transform them into words for building up community. Remake implements of war to sow peace. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God of healing, bring comfort and strength. We pray for our kindred and companions who are ill or despairing (*especially . . . and those affected by HIV and AIDS as we remember World AIDS Day*). Surround all with care and consolation. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God of new possibilities, when addiction wounds, jealousy tears down, and relationships fray, show us how to journey with one another.

Nurture therapists, counselors, and sponsors in their care for others.

God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of all time, build up our lives that we would reflect your grace. At the last, bring us with all the saints (especially) to your holy city where peace and goodness make a home. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

**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:        On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand        ELW 437  
**NEXT PAGE**

\*Dismissal

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

**C: Thanks be to God!**

Recessional        O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee        arr. Paul Manz

# On Jordan's Stormy Bank I Stand

1 On Jor-dan's storm-y bank I stand, and cast a wish-ful eye  
2 All o'er those wide ex-tend-ed plains shines one e-ter-nal day;  
3 No chill-ing winds or poi-s'nous breath can reach that health-ful shore;  
4 When shall I reach that hap-py place and be for-ev-er blest?

to Ca-naan's fair and hap-py land, where my pos-ses-sions lie.  
there God the Son for-ev-er reigns and scat-ters night a-way.  
sick-ness and sor-row, pain and death, are felt and feared no more.  
When shall I see my Sav-ior's face and in God's bos-om rest?

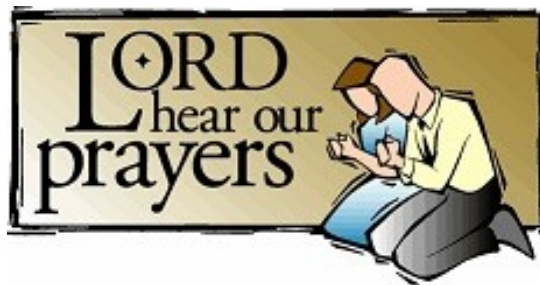
*Refrain*  
I am bound for the prom-ised land, I am bound for the prom-ised land;

oh, who will come and go with me? I am bound for the prom-ised land.

# 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	Bob Holsinger Sr
Staff Sgt John Hiles	Donna Foster	Donna Wilt	Bob Holsinger
Carolyn Feather	Bill Dambeck	Judy Dambeck	Evelyn Holsinger
The soul and family of Debbie Thomas		The soul and family of Debra Morgan	
The soul of Marian "Toots" Holsinger		The soul of Deborah Manbeck	
The soul of Sylvia Malsatzki			

(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.





## **UPCOMING MEETINGS, EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES:**

<b>Decorating Church for Christmas</b>	<b>Dec 6 10 AM</b>
<b><i>*Pizza afterwards</i></b>	
<b>Allegheny Chorale Concert</b>	<b>Dec 7 3 PM</b>
<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Dec 9 4 PM</b>
<b>St Luke's Community Lunch</b>	<b>Dec 10 12 PM</b>
<b>Food Drive for St Lukes Last Day</b>	<b>Dec 14</b>
<b>Sweets and Treats</b>	<b>Jan 4 10 AM</b>

- **NOTE: Worship Services will be held in the Sunday School Room until Palm Sunday!**
- **NOTE: The Allegheny Chorale Concert and Christmas Eve Service will still be held in the Sanctuary!**



Saint James is collecting donations of food for the Saint Luke Food Pantry until December 14th.

Please place your donations in the box by the front entry of the church by the stairs.

*Sharing*  
*Christmas*  
**JOY**



***Sunday, December 7, 2025 at 3pm***  
***St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, Altoona***

***Tuesday, December 9, 2025 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.**

**SWEETS**



**TREATS**

## **SWEETS AND TREATS**

**THE FIRST SUNDAY OF  
EACH MONTH.**

**OUR NEXT SWEETS AND TREATS WILL  
BE: January 4, 2026  
Provided By: Mark Hoover**

\* 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!

**NOTE: No Sweets and Treats in December!**

**COMMUNITY  
LUNCH**



### **ST LUKES COMMUNITY LUNCH**

**Dec 10th 12 PM**

- Hosted by St James Lutheran Held 2nd Wednesday of each month in the St James Social Hall



### **NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

**December 9, 2025**

**4 PM**

# *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.