



# **St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church December 28, 2025 1st Sunday of Christmas**

**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: Carol Of The Bells arr. Mark Hayes

*(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.**

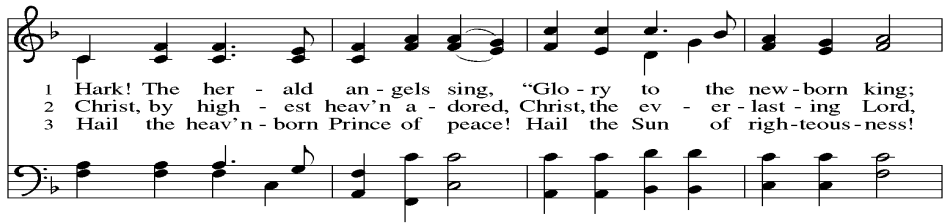
***We Gather***

\*GATHERING SONG: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

ELW 270

NEXT PAGE

# Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;  
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



*Refrain*  
 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.  
 Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915

**\*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.

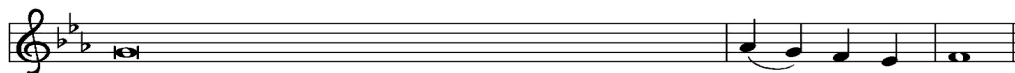
# KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



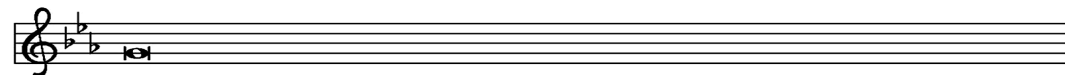
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



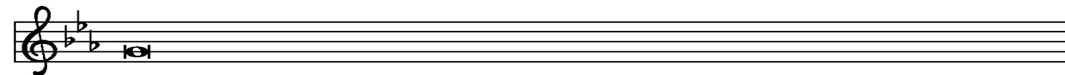
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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.



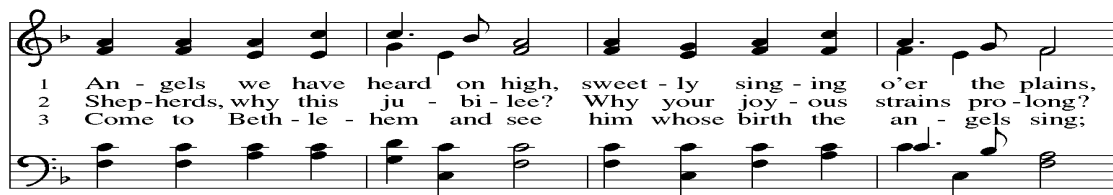
Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

# \*CANTICLE OF PRAISE

## Angels We Have Heard on High



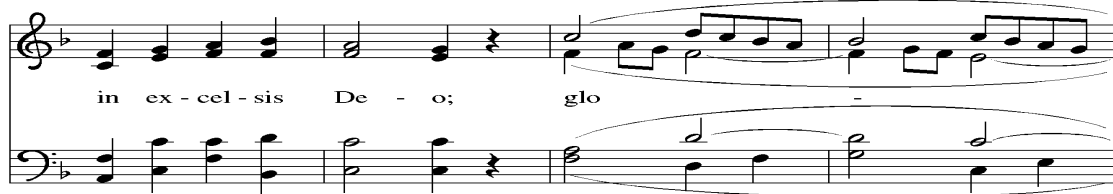
1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
 What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



*Refrain*  
 Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P: Let us pray.

**O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

***We Listen to the Word***

**First Reading:**

**Isaiah 63:7-9**

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>7</sup> I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,  
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,  
because of all that the LORD has done for us  
and the great favor to the house of Israel  
that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

<sup>8</sup> For he said, "Surely they are my people,  
children who will not act deceitfully,"  
and he became their savior

<sup>9</sup> in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel  
but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

**Psalm 148**

<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

<sup>2</sup> **Praise the LORD, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

<sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.

<sup>4</sup> **Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were created,

<sup>6</sup> **who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

<sup>8</sup> **fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

<sup>9</sup> mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

<sup>10</sup> **wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;**

<sup>11</sup> sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;

<sup>12</sup> **young men and maidens, old and young together.**

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

## **Second Reading:**

**Hebrews 2:10-18**

A reading from Hebrews.

<sup>10</sup> It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup> saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

<sup>13</sup> And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

<sup>14</sup> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

\* Please stand if 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 2:13-23**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.



<sup>13</sup> Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> “A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

## The Gospel of the Lord.



## *We Respond to the Word*

\*Hymn of the Day:

ELW 269

### Once in Royal David's City

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system contains the first four lines of the hymn. The second system contains the next four lines. The third system contains the final four lines, ending with a double bar line. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,  
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,  
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;  
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,

where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:  
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;  
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;  
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;

Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.  
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.  
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

## **\*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

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. (*We pray especially for . . .*) Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones (*especially*). Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**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:           Angels, from the Realms of Glory                           ELW 275  
*NEXT PAGE*

\*Dismissal

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

**C: Thanks be to God!**

Recessional:           Fantasy On "Adeste Fideles"                           Charles Sirgisson

## Angels, from the Realms of Glory

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;  
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,

once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.  
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.  
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

*Refrain*

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

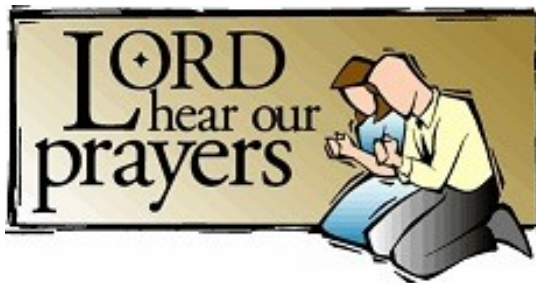
The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The score is divided into four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines. The first system contains the first four lines of the hymn. The second system contains the next four lines. The third system is labeled 'Refrain' and contains the final line of the refrain. The fourth system contains the final line of the hymn.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4  
Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

# 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:**

**Sweets and Treats**  
**St Luke's Community Lunch**

**Jan 4 10 AM**  
**Jan 14 PM**

- **NOTE: Worship Services will be held in the Sunday School Room until Palm Sunday!**





**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!

# **COMMUNITY LUNCH**



## **ST LUKES COMMUNITY LUNCH**

**Jan 14th 12 PM**

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



A SAVIOR HAS BEEN  
BORN TO YOU. HE IS

CHRIST

*The Lord*

LUKE 2:11

Wishing  
★ YOU A  
Blessed  
★ NEW YEAR ★

# *St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church*

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**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.