



**St. James Evangelical
Lutheran Church
January 4, 2026
2nd Sunday of
Christmas
Communion**

**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: Rev. Scott Custead
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: Medley of the Kings Arr. Isele/Hopkins/Landon/Lasky
(*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.

Most 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.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

We Gather

*GATHERING SONG: As with Gladness Men of Old

ELW 302

NEXT PAGE

As with Gladness Men of Old

1 As with glad - ness men of old did the guid - ing star be - hold;
2 As with joy - ful steps they sped, Sav - ior, to thy low - ly bed,
3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at thy cra - dle, rude and bare,
4 Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - 'ry day keep us in the nar - row way;
5 In the heav'n - ly coun - try bright need they no cre - a - ted light;

as with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright;
there to bend the knee be - fore thee, whom heav'n and earth a - dore;
so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,
and when earth - ly things are past, bring our ran - somed souls at last
thou its light, its joy, its crown, thou its sun which goes not down;

so, most gra - cious Lord, may we ev - er - more be led by thee.
so may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek thy mer - cy seat.
all our cost - liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'n - ly king.
where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glo - ry hide.
there for - ev - er may we sing al - le - lu - ias to our king.

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898, alt.
Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872

*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.



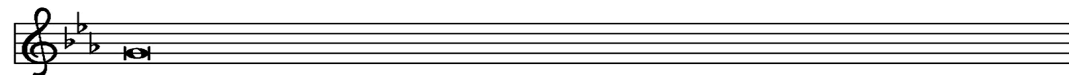
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



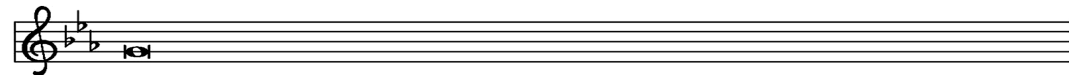
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb

who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and

strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of



God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,



glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

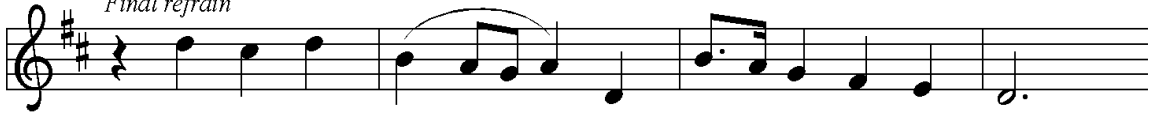


al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was



slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.



Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, 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:

Jeremiah 31:7-14

A reading from Jeremiah.

⁷ Thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel." ⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. ¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." ¹¹ For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. ¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. ¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice and dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. ¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 147:12-20

¹² Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion.

¹³ **who has strengthened the bars of your gates and has blessed your children within you.**

¹⁴ God has established peace on your borders and satisfies you with the finest Wheat.

- ¹⁵ **God sends out a command to the earth, a word that runs very swiftly**
- ¹⁶ God gives snow like wool, scattering frost like ashes.
- ¹⁷ **God scatters hail like breadcrumbs. Who can stand against God's cold?**
- ¹⁸ The Lord send forth the word and melts them; the wind blows, and the waters flow.
- ¹⁹ **God declares the word to Jacob, statutes and judgements to Israel.**
- ²⁰ The Lord has not done so to any other nation; they do not know God's judgements, Hallelujah!

Second Reading:

Ephesians 1:3-14

A reading from Ephesians.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***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:**

John 1:10-18

The Holy Gospel according to John.



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

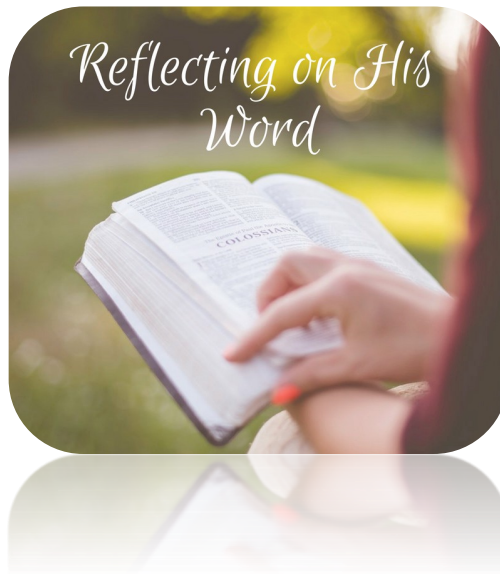
¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord.



Sermon



We Respond to the Word

*Hymn of the Day:

ELW 640

Our Father, by Whose Name

The musical score is written for a three-part setting (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass) in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a treble staff for the Soprano part and a bass staff for the Alto and Tenor/Bass parts. The lyrics are written below the staves, with each line of music corresponding to a line of text. The first system contains three lines of text, the second and third systems contain two lines each, and the fourth system contains one line. The music is a simple, hymn-like melody with a steady bass line.

1 Our Fa - ther, by whose name all par - ent - hood is known,
2 O Christ, your - self a child with - in an earth - ly home,
3 O Ho - ly Spir - it, bind our hearts in u - ni - ty

in love di - vine you claim each fam - 'ly as your own.
with heart still un - de - filed to full a - dult - hood come:
and teach us how to find the love from self set free;

Bless moth - ers, fa - thers, guard - ing well, with con - stant love as
our chil - dren bless in ev - 'ry place that they may all be -
in all our hearts such love in - crease that ev - 'ry home, by

sen - ti - nel, the homes in which your peo - ple dwell.
hold your face and, know - ing you, may grow place in grace.
this re - lease, may be the dwell - ing place of peace.

Text: F. Bland Tucker, 1895–1984, alt.
Music: RHOSYMEDRE, John D. Edwards, 1806–1885
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***Creed**

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. 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.

O God, you reveal yourself wherever two or three are gathered in your name. Be with us now, not only in the infant Jesus and resurrected Christ, but in the beloved people of this assembly. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You reveal yourself in the waters of the womb; in brooks, ponds, and oceans; and in the waters of baptism. Grant us wisdom to tenderly care for the earth as a garden watered by your grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You reveal yourself in blessed diversity. Help us to look for you in people near and far, in bodies of all kinds, and in kindred young and old. Let us seek you in many places, praising you in many tongues. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You reveal yourself in new life. Support those beginning a new job, a new relationship, or a new living situation, especially those displaced because of tragedy or loss. Be with all others who need your life-giving touch this day (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You reveal yourself in holy communion. Sustain all who provide food and fellowship in this congregation and in the wider community. Make our tables signs of your welcoming presence among us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You promise to turn mourning into joy and to comfort those who weep. We remember those who have died and look to being united with them in your glory. 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.

***Sharing of the Peace**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

We Offer Our Gifts

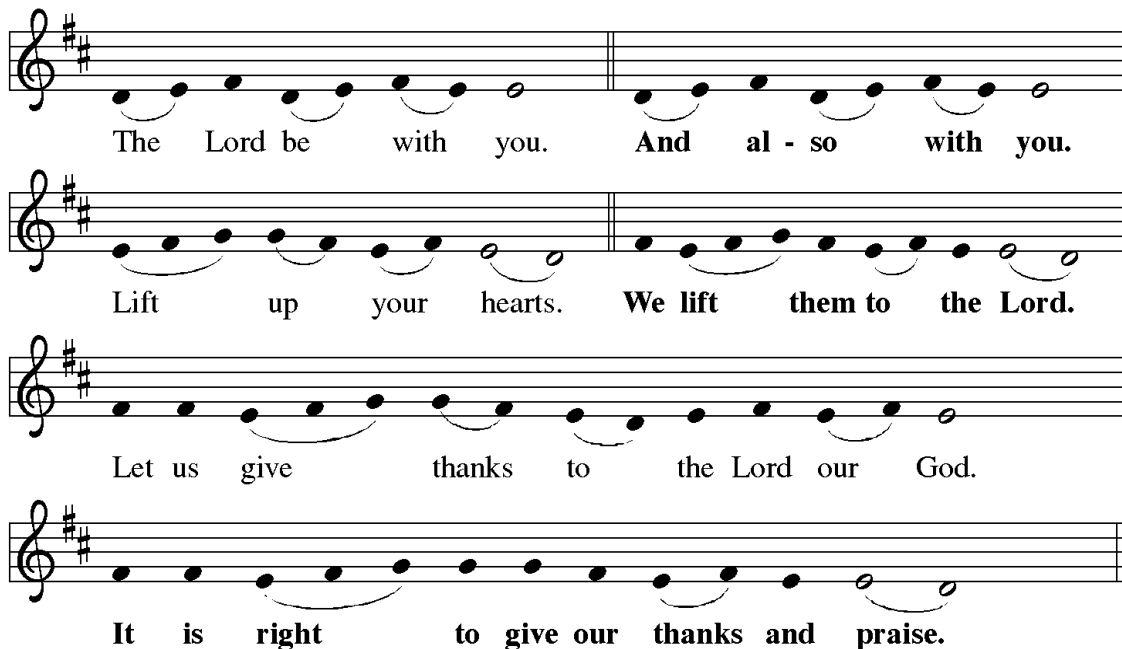
***Offering Prayer:**

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.

We Share the Feast

***Holy Communion**



The musical notation consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
- Staff 2: Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
- Staff 3: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- Staff 4: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*Thanksgiving at the Table

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we might receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Again, after the supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

For as often as we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

*The Lord's Prayer

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

**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.**

*Invitation to Communion

P: Reveal yourself to us, O Lord, in the breaking of the bread, as you once revealed yourself to your disciples.

Lamb of God



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Communion Distribution — please come to the step before altar as led by the Spirit to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Post-Communion Blessing

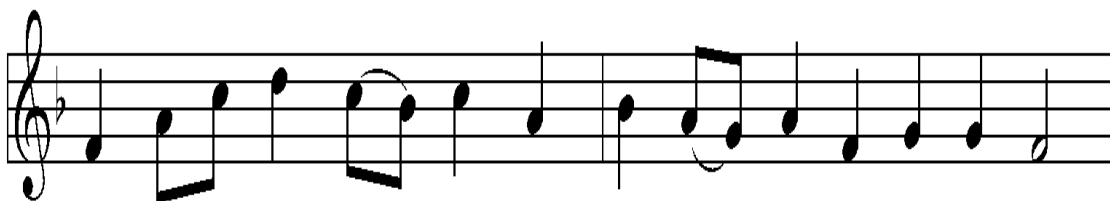
P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

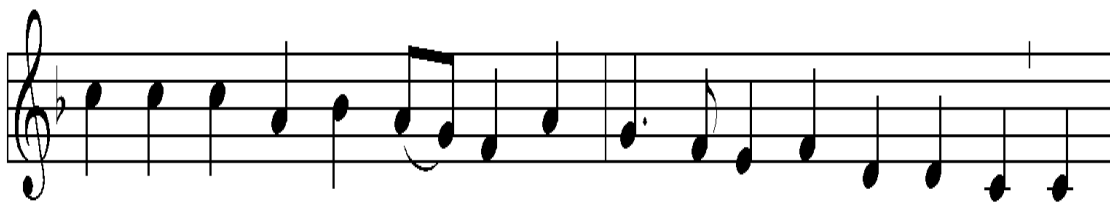
*Song after Communion:



☐ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re - calls his prom - is - es and leads his peo - ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***Prayer after Communion**

P: Let us pray.

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

.

C: 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:**
NEXT PAGE

The First Noel

ELW 300

***Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

Recessional:

Unto Us A Child Is Born

Arr. Gertrude Richolson


The First Noel



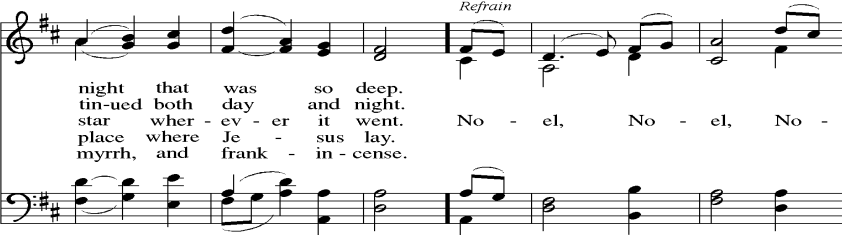
1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . a star shin - ing
 3 And by the light of that . . same star three . .
 4 This star drew near to the . . north - west, o'er . .
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
 in . . the east . . be - yond . . them far; and to the
 wise . . men came . . from coun - try far; to seek for a
 Beth - le - hem . . it took . . its rest; and there it
 rev - 'rent - ly . . up - on . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
 earth it gave . . great light, and . . so it con -
 king was their . . in - tent, and to fol - low the
 did both stop . . and stay right . . o - ver the
 there in his . . pres - ence their . . gold, . . . and



Refrain
 night that was so deep.
 tin-ued both day and night. No - el, No - el, No -
 star wher - ev - er it went.
 place where Je - sus lay.
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.

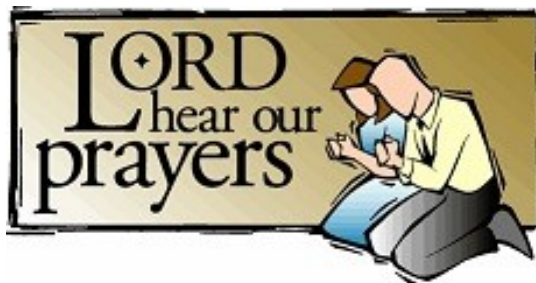


el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

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 The church's
website is 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 TODAY

Jan 4 10 AM

Un-decorate Church

Jan 10 10 AM

*** *Pizza served afterwards***

St Luke's Community Lunch

Jan 14 PM

Pot Luck Dinner

Jan 18 12 PM

Council Meeting

Mar 9 4 PM

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



POTLUCK DINNER

The next Potluck Dinner is

January 18, 2026

12PM



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!

*Please consider volunteering and signing up to
sponsor Sweets and Treats.*



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



NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL
MEETING
March 9, 2026

4 PM

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Altoona, PA 16602**

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www.stjamesaltoona.org



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.