



**St. James Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
March 15, 2026  
Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**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: Nearer, Still Nearer arr. Lani Smith  
(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: I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

ELW 815

NEXT PAGE

## I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to  
 2 I want to see . . . the bright-ness of God. I want to  
 3 I'm look - ing for . . . the com - ing of Christ. I want to

fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give  
 at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ - teous-ness,  
 be with Je - sus. When we have run . . . with

light to the world. The star of my life is Je - sus.  
 shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.  
 pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

*Refrain*

In him there is no dark-ness at all. The night and the

day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the

cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934  
 Music: HOUSTON, Kathleen Thomerson  
 Text and music © 1970, 1975 Celebration.

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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.

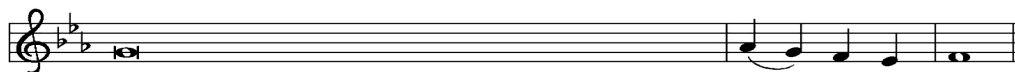
KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



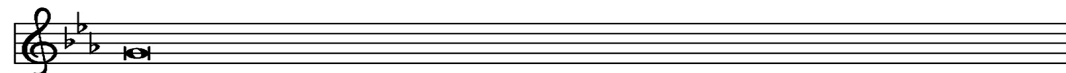
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



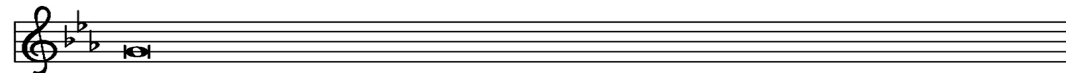
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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.

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P: Let us pray.

**Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*We Listen to the Word*

**First Reading:**

**1 Samuel 16:1-13**

A reading from 1 Samuel.

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” <sup>2</sup> Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.”

<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?”

<sup>5</sup> He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the LORD.” <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” <sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.” <sup>11</sup> Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.” <sup>12</sup> He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.”

<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM**

## **Psalm 23**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

<sup>2</sup> **The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.**

<sup>3</sup> You restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

<sup>6</sup> **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

## **Second Reading:**

## **Ephesians 5:8-14**

A reading from Ephesians.

<sup>8</sup> Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, <sup>9</sup> for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup> Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, <sup>13</sup> but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

**Thanks be to God.**

\* Please stand if you are able

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**\*GOSPEL:**

**John 9:1-41**

The Holy Gospel according to John.



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup> As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup> We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup> When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, <sup>7</sup> saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. <sup>8</sup> The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup> Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." <sup>10</sup> But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup> He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight."

<sup>12</sup> They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

<sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. <sup>17</sup> So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

<sup>18</sup> The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup> and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" <sup>20</sup> His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, <sup>21</sup> but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.

<sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

<sup>24</sup> So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."  
<sup>25</sup> He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."  
<sup>26</sup> They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"  
<sup>27</sup> He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"  
<sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses."  
<sup>29</sup> We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."  
<sup>30</sup> The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes."  
<sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.  
<sup>32</sup> Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.  
<sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."  
<sup>34</sup> They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.  
<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"  
<sup>36</sup> He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him."  
<sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he."  
<sup>38</sup> He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.  
<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind."  
<sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?"  
<sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

## The Gospel of the Lord.



# We Respond to the Word

\*Hymn of the Day:

ELW 779

## Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that  
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
4 The Lord has prom - ised, good to me; his  
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and  
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5

Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1851–1921, alt.

## **\*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**

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*A brief silence.*

God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in our community (*here local congregations may be named*) and across the globe (*here international companion churches and synods may be named*) in right paths for your name's sake. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant, and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live until we too dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**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: What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine ELW 774  
*NEXT PAGE*

\*Dismissal

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

**C: Thanks be to God!**

Recessional

Largo

Arcangelo Corelli

# What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine

## *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*



1 What a fel - low-ship, what a joy di - vine, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms;  
2 Oh, how sweet to walk in this pil-grim way, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms;  
3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms?



what a bless-ed-ness, what a peace is mine, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.  
oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.  
I have bless-ed peace with my Lord so near, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.



### *Refrain*



Lean - ing, lean - ing, safe and se - cure from all a - larms;



Lean - ing on Je - sus, lean - ing on Je - sus,



lean - ing, lean - ing, lean-ing on the ev - er - last-ing arms.

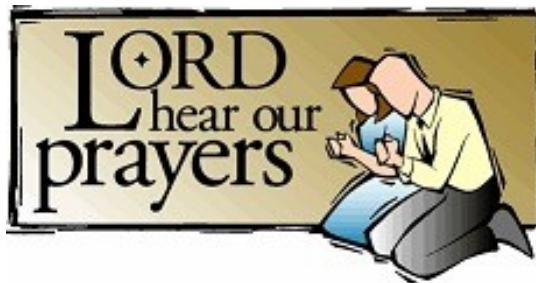


lean - ing on Je - sus, lean - ing on Je - sus,

# 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

Carolyn Feather

Bill Dambeck

Judy Dambeck

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

The soul of Carol Weaver

(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>Potluck Dinner</b>	<b>Mar 22 12 PM</b>
<b>St Luke's Community Lunch</b>	<b>Apr 8 12 PM</b>
<b>Allegheny Chorale Concert</b>	<b>Apr 26 3 PM</b>
<b>Sweets and Treats</b>	<b>May 3 10 AM</b>
<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Jun 8 4 PM</b>
<b>Church Picnic</b>	<b>Jun 28 11 AM</b>

***\*Highland Park Pavillion #2***

- NOTE: Sweets and Treats is canceled for April due to it falling on Easter Sunday!**
- NOTE: Worship Services will be held in the Sunday School Room until Palm Sunday!**



## SWEETS AND TREATS

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF  
EACH MONTH.



OUR NEXT SWEETS AND TREATS WILL  
BE: May 3, 2026  
Provided By: Alda Hetrick  
(Memorial to Carol Weaver)

\* 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 for the  
2026 Calendar Year..*



## NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

June 8, 2026

4 PM

## COMMUNITY LUNCH



## ST LUKES COMMUNITY LUNCH

Apr 8 12 PM

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



**The next Potluck Dinner is**  
**March 22, 2026**  
**12 PM**



**Allegheny Chorale**  
**Spring Concert**

**April 26, 2026**

**3 PM**



*Fourth*  
SUNDAY  
IN  
LENT



*St. James Evangelical  
Lutheran Church*

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Altoona, PA 16602**

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**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.