



Kirchenblatt May 2026

(Parish Newsletter)

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church
1407 Eighth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602



Join us for Worship Sundays at 10:45 am

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**In the event of a Pastoral Emergency, please contact Pastor Eli Hess
Phone: 814-943-3972**

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY-THURSDAY 9 AM-1PM

EMAIL: STJAMESALTOONA@GMAIL.COM

WEBSITE: WWW.STJAMESALTOONA.ORG

PHONE: 814-944-6835

MISSION STATEMENT:

**TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH WORD AND
SACRAMENT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Being Distinctly Lutheran: A Life Worth Living

They do not believe; they do not behave; they do not belong. Amid our widespread cultural collapse, it is not surprising that the growing number of religiously unaffiliated — the Nones — claim no faith (belief), no attendance (behavior) and no church membership (belonging). [Pew Research Center](#) discovered, however, that although they may not behave or belong, two-thirds of Nones indicate they believe in some sort of god.

Their belief stems from the human need for identity, meaning and purpose. As they faced remote work, fragmented families, online church, heightened skepticism and social media bombardment, they discovered their need for a place to belong and an understanding of how to live within that context. Our Lutheran faith and traditions offer depth and distinction to a world desperate for identity, meaning and purpose.

According to the [General Social Survey](#), Nones are four times more likely to change their religious affiliation, and Barna has revealed that [one in five Millennials](#) — who make up the largest percentage of Nones — are moving toward liturgical traditions. These patterns are anecdotally observed in the [small but growing interest](#) in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Yet, as searching souls seek solace in liturgical churches, many are unaware of Lutheranism and our ancient roots.

Historical Lutheran faith

Lutherans need to recognize and appreciate how our historical faith draws “from Scripture and the orthodox Ancient Church” (see Appendix A: Catalog of Testimonies, *Book of Concord* [CPH, 2006], 623–48; or visit bookofconcord.org). The Lutheran church did not “appear” in the 16th century, rather it continued the tradition of proclaiming the apostolic word and creeds. Even today, in our study of the Word, we convey our need for a Savior as well as God’s forgiveness, life and salvation in Christ. Within our liturgical worship, we praise God with dignity and reverence. As God gives Himself to us in His Sacraments, we join with the saints across the ages. In days of constant flux, our ancient Lutheran faith offers a comforting and compelling stability.

Contemporary society vacillates between obsession with the materialistic and utilitarian, which are mired in the here and now, and rejection of the physical and material. On the one hand, it rejects the soul or any sort of spiritual existence; on the other hand, it affirms that you can do whatever you like sexually, regardless of physical reality. You can abort or euthanize without qualm; you can change your “gender identity.” In contrast, the Lutheran faith asserts the importance of the physical as a critical component of God’s creation, one which He declared good and through which He works.

Lutheranism celebrates the physical in relation to the spiritual in several ways. Our worship is incarnate. Our Sacraments contain visible elements. Our Lutheran liturgical and sacramental life elevates the focus from the tangible toward transcendence, shifting the attention from us to God, and synthesizing that focus with physical and material meaning and intention. This focus on Christ and His work grants our souls a depth to life for which we desperately yearn, filling our lives with identity and meaning.

Masks of God

Many people today also seek purpose. They attempt to find it in activities such as service, tolerance and economic justice. However, apart from an active and living faith in Christ, such activities will ultimately ring hollow. Jesus said, “Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Serving others is the heart of the doctrine of vocation. Within our vocations, we both serve and are served. Luther referred to this as our [“masks of God.”](#)

Through our everyday relationships, in most of the hours of our day, we serve others. Human nature looks to what we “do” for significance. Yet the good works we walk in are not ours, but God serving others through us. The doctrine of vocation can help the Nones find purpose in their service to others.

Our faith is about being, not just doing. The world is on a treadmill of doing — there are never enough hours in the day; things are never good enough. Our Lutheran faith is a way of life and a state of existence. God serves us, instead of being about what we have done or how we have lived. And because of His love, our lives spill over in good works for the neighbor.

Thanks be to God. Both within our vocations and within our worship, God serves us, which is in stark contrast to the worldly “earn and deserve” method for acquiring something. He does not need our worship. He does not need our attendance. Instead, He serves us. We simply give thanks. Helping others understand the passive reception of God’s good gifts through the Divine Service comforts us in a world that obsessively focuses on accomplishment to provide identity.

The Lutheran faith offers identity, meaning and purpose by pointing us to Christ. It offers an ancient, timeless perspective; value through vocation; and the blessing of being served. Abiding in God’s blessings and grace is compelling and offers the Nones — and all of us — a framework for a life worth living.

Reprinted from “*The Lutheran Witness*” March 15 2023, Leah Broman

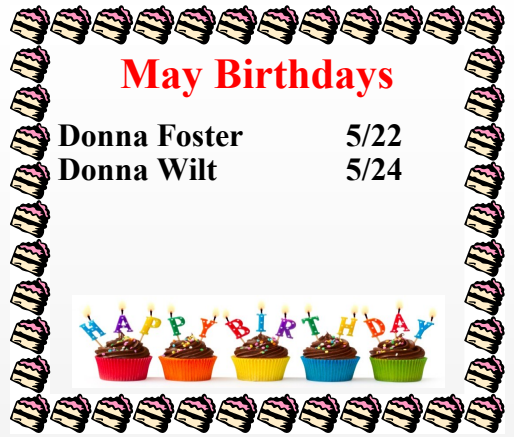
Contribution & Attendance Summary

February 2025

Contributions \$494
Average Weekly Attendance: 9

February 2026

Contributions \$734
Average Weekly Attendance:7



INCOME & EXPENSE SUMMARY

February 1 2026 February 28, 2026

INCOME

Bank Interest	\$0.00
Contributions	
General	\$734.00
Designated	\$0.00
Special	\$0.00
Other Income	\$14,000.00
	\$14,734.00

EXPENSES

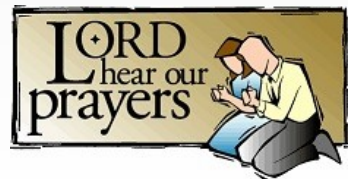
Pastoral Administration	\$490.88
Worship & Music	\$907.38
Office	\$1,17.18
Custodial & Property	\$14,541.72
Uncategorized	\$0.00
	\$17,657.16

Remember In Your Prayers

Our Prayer List:

(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.)

- Tim Surkovich Jeff Bickel Bill Wilt
- Bob Holsinger Sr Staff Sgt John Hiles
- Donna Foster Donna Wilt Bill Dambeck
- Carolyn Feather Judy Dambeck
- The soul and family of Debbie Thomas
- The soul and family of Debra Morgan
- The soul Marian Holsinger
- The soul of Deborah Manbeck
- The soul of Sylvia Malsatzki
- The soul of Carol Weaver



May 1—Luke 24:44-47, Psalm 1

O Holy Spirit, we thank You for the wondrous predictions of Christ's saving life, death, and resurrection. Sustain us in these ultimate realities by keeping us in the Word, uniquely blessing us in this month's study of various psalms. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 2—Acts 4:23-28, Psalm 2:1-6

Bless us, dear Father, in the forgiveness and the new life flowing from the Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 3—Acts 13:26-33, Psalm 2:7-12

Lord Jesus Christ, eternally God's Son, we praise You that You became flesh for our salvation. Amen.

May 4—Hebrews 2:5-9, Psalm 8

Praise to You, O Son of God, for by absorbing our sin and death on the cross, You created the way to the eternal creation. Amen.

May 5—Matthew 27:45-50, Psalm 13

Faithful Father, we believe that in Christ You have not forgotten us, for in Him You will never leave us nor forsake us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 6—Romans 3:9-24, Psalm 14

Lord Jesus, we praise You that in Your cross and empty tomb, You declare us righteous. Amen.

May 7—Acts 2:22-26, Psalm 16

O eternal Son of God, we praise You that You have become our path to resurrection life. Amen.

May 8—Revelation 11:15-18, Psalm 21:1-6

Jesus, we thank You for the astounding gift of life forever and ever. Amen.

May 9—Matthew 27:32-50, Psalm 22:1-21

We thank You, Jesus, that You suffered crucifixion for us. Help us in the times of our struggles. Amen.

May 10—Matthew 26:26-29, Psalm 22:22-31

Lord Jesus, thank You for blessing us in Your gift of Holy Communion, for there we eat, worship, and remember. Amen.

May 11—John 10:14-30, Psalm 23:1-3

Good Shepherd, we praise You that by Your death and resurrection You eternally save us helpless sheep. In Your name, Jesus. Amen.

May 12—1 Thessalonians 4:13-16, Psalm 23:4

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes; Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies. (LSB 878:6) Amen.

May 13—John 14:1-6, Psalm 23:5-6

Thank You, Jesus, for preparing our eternal dwelling place by Your death and resurrection. Amen.

May 14—Luke 24:50-53, Psalm 47:5-9

Lord Jesus, like the disciples, we worship You, for upon Your ascension, You give unique blessings. Amen.

May 15—1 John 1:5-2:2, Psalm 32

Jesus, we praise You for creating and distributing forgiveness so we now can walk in light. Amen.

May 16—Hebrews 10:5-10, Psalm 40:6-10

We praise You, Lord Jesus, that by Your one sacrifice we have the complete payment for our sins. Amen.

May 17—Hebrews 1:5-9, Psalm 45:3-7

We thank You, Jesus, that You are both God and man, enthroned to care for us forgiven sinners. Amen.

May 18—Luke 12:16-21, Psalm 49:16-20

Lord Jesus, even as You gave all for us, give us generosity to share “our” earthly wealth. Amen.

May 19—1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Psalm 51:1-9

Lord Jesus, enable us daily to return to our Baptism in repentance, realizing that there we have been washed from sin. Amen.

May 20—Romans 8:32-39, Psalm 44:20-26

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You that You were led as a lamb to be slaughtered for our salvation. So when we seem to be lambs led to the slaughter, help us to believe we are more than conquerors, because nothing can separate us from Your self-sacrificing love. Amen.

May 21—Romans 15:1-7, Psalm 69:7-13

Lord Jesus, we thank You that You carried the reproach—the accusations—we deserve. Amen.

May 22—Matthew 2:1-16, Psalm 72

Heavenly Father, send us Your Spirit that we may continually bow before Christ as our Savior. In His name. Amen.

May 23—John 5:19-29, Psalm 80:14-18

We praise You, dear Father, for You made the Son of Man strong for Yourself and for us. In His name. Amen.

May 24—Acts 2:32-41, Psalm 104:10-30

O Holy Spirit, continue to create and renew our faith in Jesus, for in Him You create life. In His name. Amen.

May 25—Luke 18:35-43, Psalm 89:1-4, 19-37

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 26—Hebrews 1:8-12, Psalm 102:25-28

We thank You, Lord Jesus, that in You we will endure and praise You eternally. Amen.

May 27—Mark 4:35-41, Psalm 107:23-30

Lord Jesus, enable us to believe the wind and waves are under Your control and will ultimately be stilled forever. In Your name. Amen.

May 28—Mark 12:1-11, Psalm 118:19-24

Lord Jesus, our cornerstone, we trust that in You we are now unrejected, now forgiven, now possessing resurrection. In Your name. Amen.

May 29—Matthew 21:1-11, Psalm 118:25-27

Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 30—Titus 2:11-14, Psalm 130

Dear Redeemer, we trust that through You we can come to our Father in every need. Amen.

May 31—John 16:12-15, 20-24, Psalm 51:10-12

O triune God, we praise You for creating our salvation and for restoring our joy in it. Amen.



Announcements and Upcoming Events

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

The church office email is stjamesaltoona@gmail.com The church's website is www.stjamesaltoona.org
Find us on Facebook to get up-to-date information.

REMINDER AND IMPORTANT

***BULLETIN ADDITIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO
LATER THAN TUESDAY AT 10:30 AM.***

***For corrections, please contact the church
office secretary Tim Surkovich, I'm in the office
Monday-Thursday 9-1.***

******IF AN ARTICLE FOR THE KIRCHENBLATT CANNOT
BE SUBMITTED BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH,
PLEASE CALL AND RESERVE A SPACE FOR YOUR
ARTICLE SO THAT THE KIRCHENBLATT CAN BE
FORMATTED AHEAD OF TIME TO PROVIDE SPACE
FOR ALL THE CONGREGATIONAL NEWS. ******

***DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE ISSUE OF THE KIRCHENBLATT IS,
THURSDAY MAY, 15.***



UPCOMING MEETINGS, EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES:

**Sweets and Treats
Potluck Dinner
Sweets and Treats
Council Meeting
Church Picnic**

**May 3 10 AM
May 17 PM
Jun 7 10 AM
Jun 8 4 PM
Jun 28 11 AM**

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

Worship in the Park with Bethany

July 26 11 AM

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

Worship in the Park with Bethany

Aug 23 11 AM

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



SWEETS AND TREATS

**THE FIRST SUNDAY OF
EACH MONTH.**

OUR NEXT SWEETS AND TREATS WILL BE: June 7, 2026
Provided By: Bill and Judy Dambeck

* 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!



The next Potluck Dinner is
May 17, 2026
12 PM



**NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL
MEETING**
June 8, 2026
4 PM



Church Picnic

Planning for the Church Picnic has begun. You can use the sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

Church Picnic will be held June 28, 2026 at Highland Park, Pavillion #2.

Mass 11 AM Lunch 12 PM

Congratulations and Thank You

To the Allegheny Chorale,

Thank you for the beautiful and incredibly successful performance here at St. James Church. The event was standing room only, and everyone who attended left with a genuine sense of warmth and joy.

We are also deeply grateful for your generous donation to our church. Your music and your kindness have truly blessed our community.





Worship in the Park

Church Picnic

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

Jun 28 11 AM

Worship in the Park with Bethany

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

July 26 11 AM

Worship in the Park with Bethany

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

Aug 23 11 AM

Worship in the Park!





St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church



is a

*Blessed
Community*



PEACE
BE WITH
YOU



Church Council Members

Mark Hoover—President
Robin Kessler—Vice President
Evelyn Holsinger—Secretary
Ralph Grove—Treasurer
Betty Boslet
Sharon Lightner
Shirley Manbeck
Diane Schultz

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church Staff

*Church Administrative Assistant - Tim Surkovich
Organist & Choir Director - Pat McConnell
Financial Secretary/Bookkeeper - Ralph Grove
Custodian—Victor Gragar*

Chairpersons are listed in bold at the top of each committee.

BELOW YOU WILL FIND THE COMMITTEES AS OF THIS DATE. PLEASE NOTIFY EITHER THE CHAIRMAN OR CHURCH OFFICE IF YOUR NAME DOES NOT APPEAR WHERE IT SHOULD OR APPEARS WHERE IT SHOULDN'T. ALSO, PLEASE NOTIFY US IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SERVE ON ANY OF THESE COMMITTEES.

Mutual Ministry

*Evelyn Holsinger
*Sharon Lightner
Mike Savino

Christian Education/
Social Ministry

***Evelyn Holsinger**
*Robin Kessler
*Sharon Lightner
*Shirley Manbeck
*Diane Schultz

Worship & Music

***Mark Hoover**
*Sharon Lightner
*Shirley Manbeck
Pat McConnell
*Diane Shultz

Finance

***Mark Hoover**
*Betty Boslet
Ralph Grove
*Robin Kessler

Stewardship/Evangelism

*Betty Boslet
*Sharon Lightner

By-Laws

***Mark Hoover**
*Betty Boslet
Mike Savino

Property

***Robin Kessler**
Bill Dambeck
Bob Holsinger
*Evelyn Holsinger
*Shirley Manbeck
Mike Savino

* Denotes Council Member
Thrivent Rep.—
Betty Boslet