St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church
September 6, 2026
15th Sunday after Pentecost

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: Peggy Thatcher
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: God Of Our Fathers arr. Roger Wilson

(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.

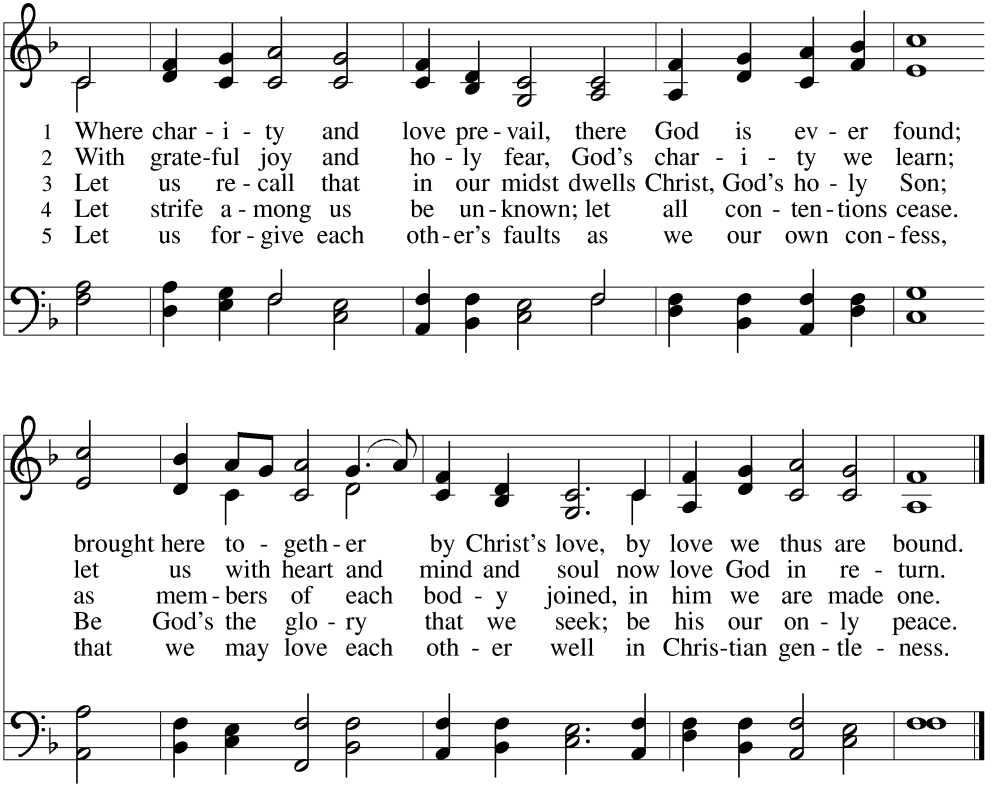
God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, and Christ may live in your hearts through faith.
Amen.

We Gather

*GATHERING SONG: Where Charity and Love Prevail ELW 359

NEXT PAGE

Where Charity and Love Prevail



Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.
Music: TWENTY–FOURTH, attr. Lucius Chapin, 1760–1842
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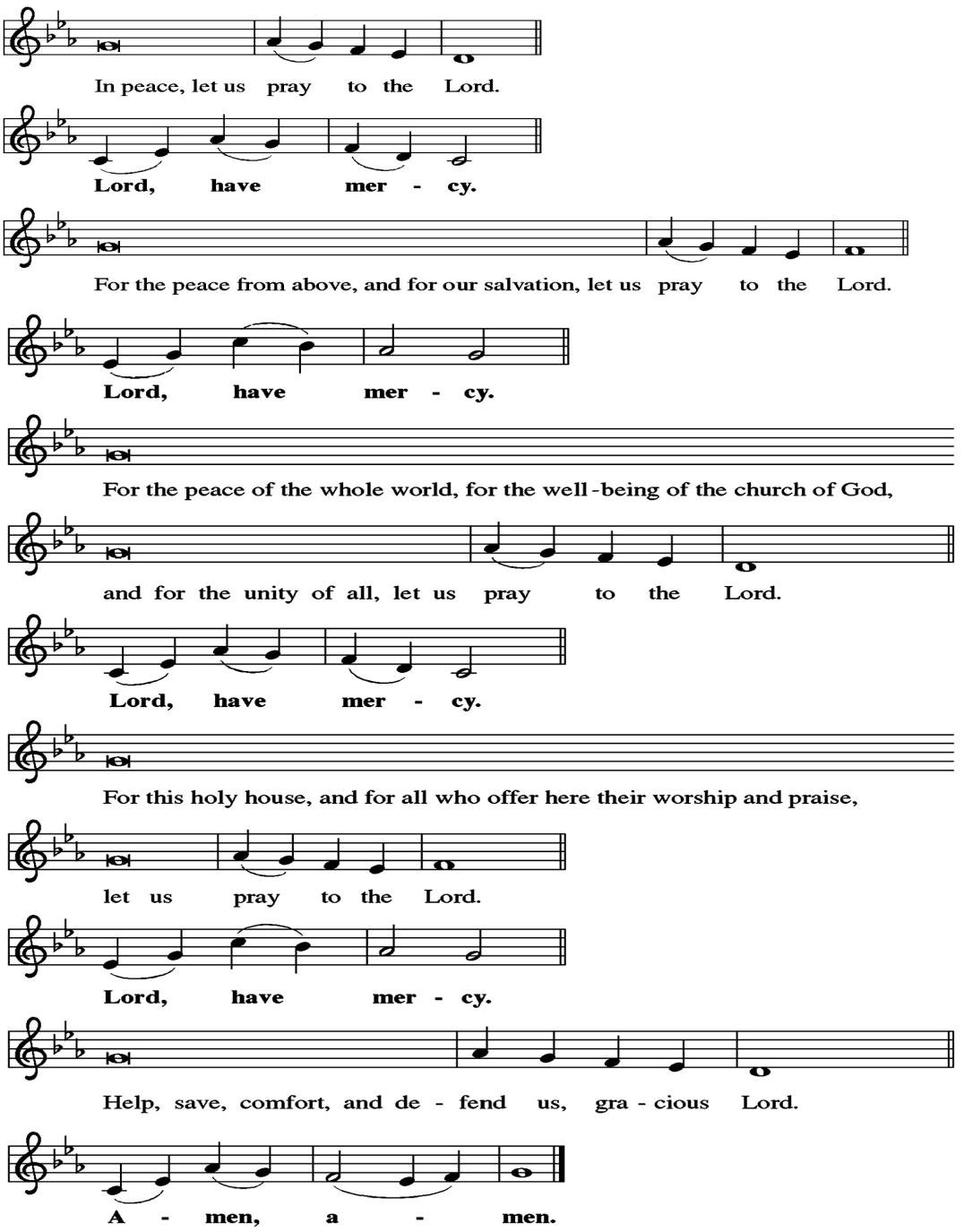
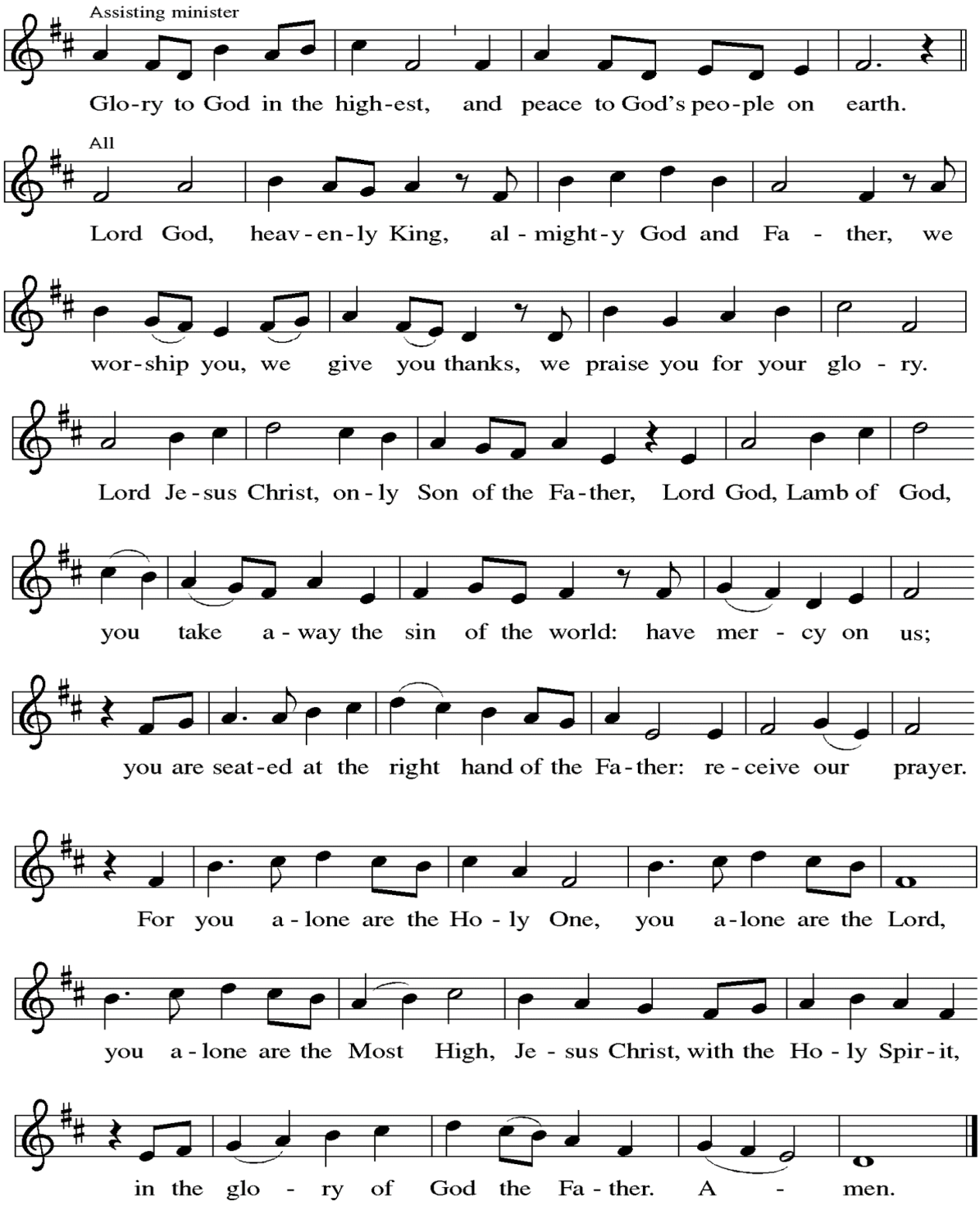
*GREETING:

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 de - fend 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.

O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

We Listen to the Word

First Reading: **Ezekiel 33:7-11**

A reading from Ezekiel.

7 So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you
hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 8 If I say to
the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to
warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity,
but their blood I will require at your hand. 9 But if you warn the wicked to turn
from their ways and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in
their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

10 Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel: Thus you have said: “Our
transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of
them; how then can we live?” 11 Say to them: As I live, says the Lord GOD, I
have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from their
ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die,
O house of Israel?

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: **Psalm 119:33-40**

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end.

34 **Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching; I shall keep it with all my heart.**

35 Lead me in the path of your commandments, for that is my desire.

36 **Incline my heart to your decrees and not to unjust gain.**

37 Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood; give me life in your way.

38 **Fulfill your promise to your servant, which is for those who fear you.**

39 Turn away the reproach that I dread, because your judgments are good.

40 **Behold, I long for your commandments; by your righteousness enliven me.**

Second Reading: **Romans 13:8-14**

A reading from Romans.

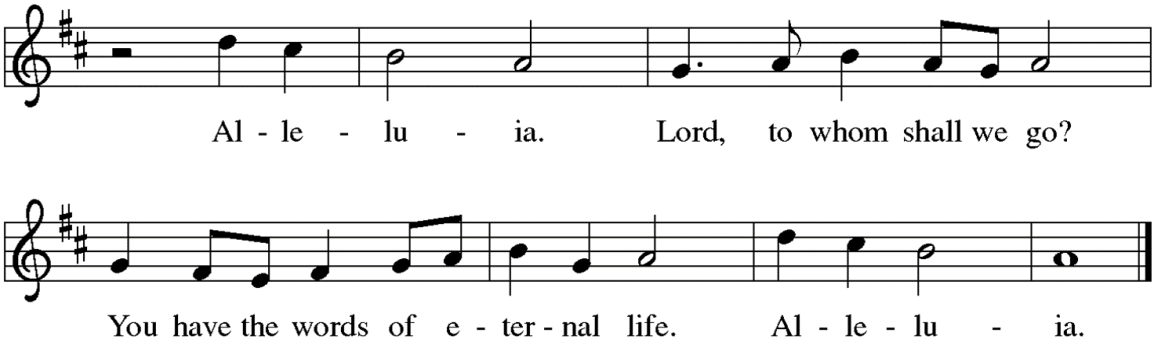
8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 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; 12 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; 13 let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

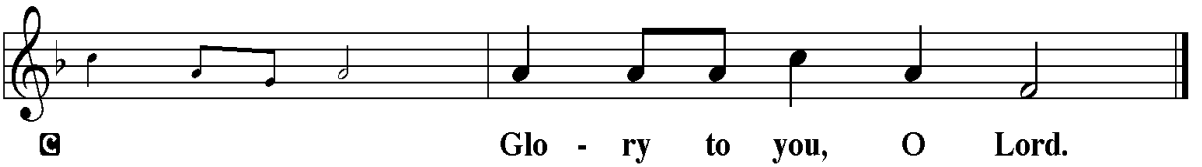
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

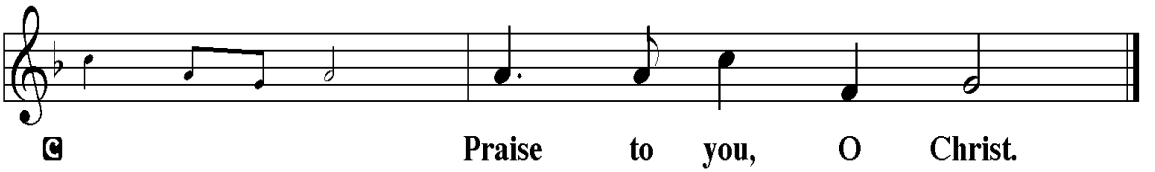
* Please stand if you are able

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



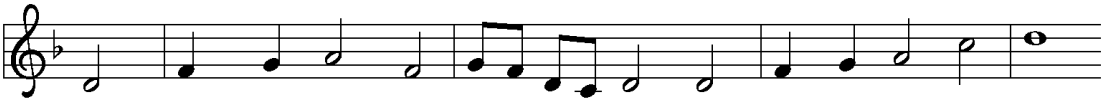
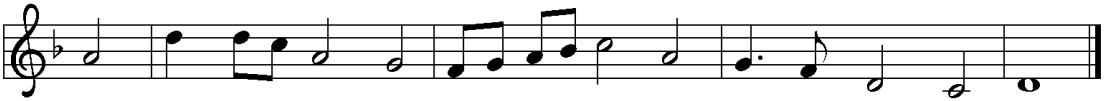
***GOSPEL:** **Matthew 18:15-20**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] [15] “If your brother or sister sins against you,
go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are
listened to, you have regained that one. [16] But if you are not listened to,
take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be
confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. [17] If that person
refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to
listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax
collector. [18] Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in
heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
[19] Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you
ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. [20] For where two or
three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Sermon

We Respond to the Word

*Hymn of the Day: ELW 605

Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive

1 "For - give our sins as we for - give," you taught us, Lord, to pray;
2 How can your par - don reach and bless the un - for - giv - ing heart
3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the truth we dim - ly knew:
4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls and bid re - sent - ment cease;

but you a - lone can grant us grace to live the words we say.
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?
how tri - fling oth - ers' debts to us; how great our debt to you!
then, by your mer - cy rec - on - ciled, our lives will spread your peace.

Text: Rosamond E. Herklots, 1905–1987, alt.
Music: DETROIT, *The Sacred Harp*, Philadelphia, 1844
Text © Oxford University Press 1969.

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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

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Proclaiming God, empower your church throughout the world to announce the words you give us. Open us to receive your word in unexpected ways. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.
Forming God, renew the cycles of your creation that provide for the needs of all. Protect grasslands, marshes, swamps, and all places of transition. Heal communities crying out after disaster (*especially*). Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.
Governing God, turn all who create, enforce, or interpret legislation away from selfish gain and toward your promise of good for all, especially the good of all who labor. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.
Attending God, wake us up to any around us who are in need. Restore broken relationships, failing health, frayed emotions, and the hurts we carry with us. (*We pray especially for . . .*) Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.
Gathering God, resolve conflicts in this community through your righteousness and grace. Reconcile us to each other, making your good news known even through our imperfections. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.
Here other intercessions may be offered.

Loving God, all who die in faith have life with you. We give you thanks for the nearness of your salvation for (*name/s, and*) all who have gone before us. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.
Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.
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.**

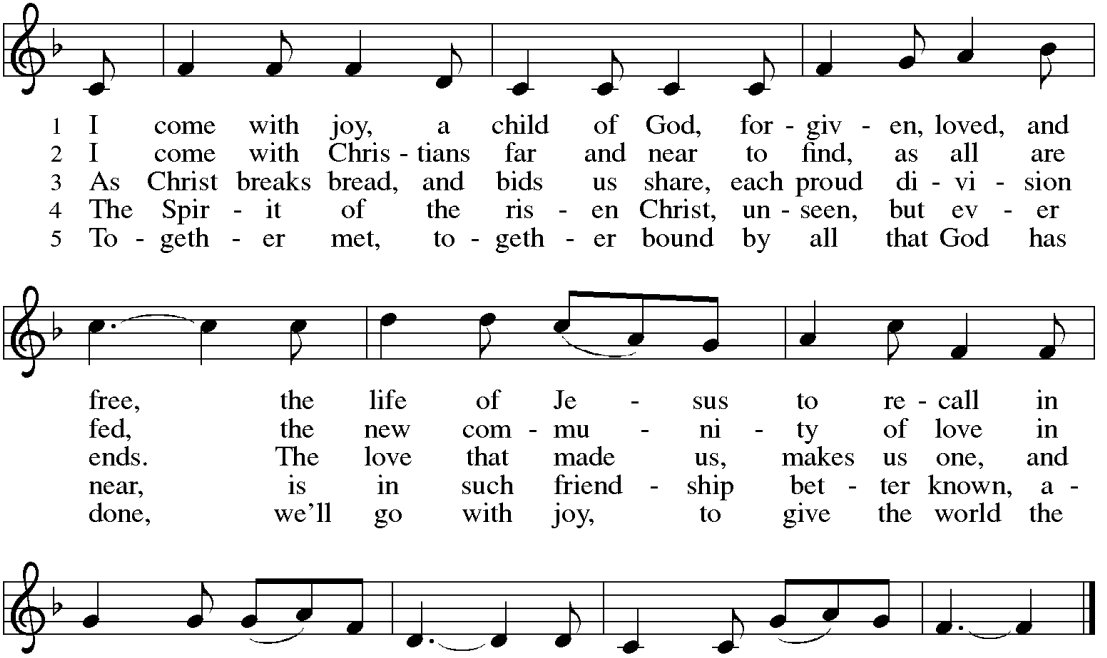
*Sending Song: I Come with Joy ELW 482
NEXT PAGE

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God
Recessional I Know Whom I Have Believed Lani Smith

I Come with Joy



Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936
Music: DOVE OF PEACE, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835
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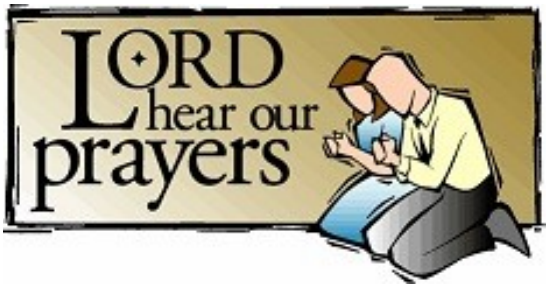
CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

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	Carolyn Feather
Bill Dambeck	Judy Dambeck		

The soul and family of Debbie Thomas
The soul of Marian "Toots" Holsinger
The soul of Sylvia Malsatzki
The soul and family of Debra Morgan
The soul of Deborah Manbeck
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:

Sweets and Treats	***Sep 6 10 AM***
Council Meeting	***Sep 8 4 PM***
Potluck Dinner	***Sep 13 12 PM***
Sweets and Treats	***Oct 4 10 AM***
Octoberfest	***Oct 18 12 PM***

SWEETS AND TREATS

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH.

OUR NEXT SWEETS AND TREATS WILL BE: Sep 6, 2026
Provided By: Mike and Lori Savino

* 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!

NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2026
4 PM

Our Next Pot Luck Dinner will be

September 13, 2026

October 18, 2026

Dinner will be served following the Worship Service.
Dinner to include Sauerkraut, Pork, Mashed Potatoes, Kneadles (German Bread Dumplings) with Gravy, Hot German Potato Salad, Hot Dogs & Rolls, applesauce and drinks.

We are asking members to bring a side dish, vegetable or dessert.

Hosted By: Robin and John Kessler

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

is a

Blessed Community

May God's love
and blessings
be with you
and remain
with you always.

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.