



St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church October 25, 2026 Reformation Sunday

**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:

(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:

Thy Strong Word

ELW 511

NEXT PAGE

Thy Strong Word



1 Thy strong word did cleave the dark - ness; at thy
 2 Lo, on those who dwelt in dark - ness, dark as
 3 Thy strong Word be - speaks us righ - teous; bright with
 4 From the cross thy wis - dom shin - ing break - eth



speak - ing it was done. For cre - at - ed light we
 night and deep as death, broke the light of thy sal -
 thine own ho - li - ness, glo - rious now, we press toward
 forth in con - qu'ring might; from the cross for - ev - er



thank thee, while thine or - dered sea - sons run.
 va - tion, breathed thine own life - breath - ing breath.
 glo - ry, and our lives our hopes con - fess.
 beam - eth all thy bright re - deem - ing light.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise to thee who light dost send!



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia with - out end!

Text: Martin H. Franzmann, 1907–1976

Music: EBENEZER, Thomas J. Williams, 1869–1944

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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.

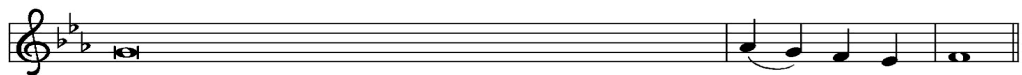
KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



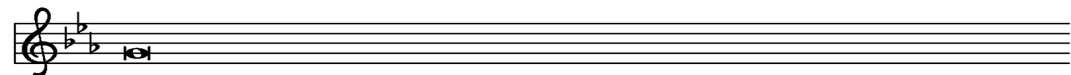
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



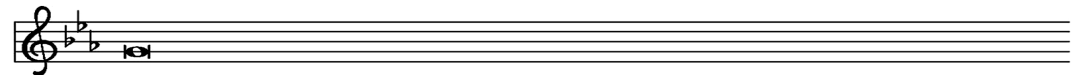
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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.

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.

Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, 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 31:31-34

A reading from Jeremiah.

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

² **Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**

³ though its waters rage and foam, and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

⁴ **There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.**

⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken; God shall help it at the break of day.

⁶ **The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake; God speaks, and the earth melts away.**

⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

⁸ **Come now, regard the works of the LORD, what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**

⁹ behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world; who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ **“Be still, then, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”**

¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Second Reading:

Romans 3:19-28

A reading from Romans.

¹⁹ Now we know that, whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For no human will be justified before him by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets, ²² the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ it was to demonstrate at the present time his own righteousness, so that he is righteous and he justifies the one who has the faith of Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of law? That of works? No, rather through the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

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:**

John 8:31-36

The Holy Gospel according to John.

³¹ Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free’?”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

The Gospel of the Lord.



Sermon

We Respond to the Word

*Hymn of the Day:

ELW 405

O Spirit of Life

1 O Spir - it of life, O Spir - it of God,
 2 O Spir - it of life, O Spir - it of God,
 3 O Spir - it of life, O Spir - it of God,
 4 O Spir - it of life, O Spir - it of God,

in ev - 'ry need you bring us aid,
 in - crease our faith in our dear Lord;
 make us to love your sa - cred word;
 en - light - en us by that cred same word;

pro - ceed - ing forth from heav - en's throne,
 un - less - your grace the of pow'r should give,
 teach us ly to flame know God's love im - part,
 the ho - ly to know God's love ra - dian - love,

from God, the Fa - ther and the Son;
 none can be - lieve in Christ warm each live;
 that lead us to Christ may who reigns each heart;
 lead us to Christ who reigns a - bove;

O Spir - it of life, O Spir - it of God.
 O Spir - it of life, O Spir - it of God.
 O Spir - it of life, O Spir - it of God.
 O Spir - it of life, O Spir - it of God.

***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

Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.

A brief silence.

As we celebrate Reformation Sunday, we remember the witness of Martin Luther and the reformers of the church in every generation. Empower us to continue the work of reform and renewal in our own day. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the healing of natural places despoiled by pollution and human greed (*local places may be named*). Give all living creatures access to safe land, water, and air. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for our criminal justice systems and all those whose lives are affected by them. Give wisdom and discernment to police, probation officers, judges, and attorneys; give courage and peace to prisoners and the formerly incarcerated. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We ask your blessing upon all people who have been harmed by the church and its leaders, that the truth may make them free. We pray for the relief of all those who are sick or suffering (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for those exploring or returning to a life of faith. Encourage and guide them, that they may find their hope in you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

With gratitude, we remember those disciples who paved the way for us and all of our beloved dead. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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: O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate ELW 722
NEXT PAGE

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

Recessional

O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The first system includes four numbered verses. The second system continues the lyrics. The third system continues the lyrics. The fourth system continues the lyrics. The fifth system continues the lyrics and ends with a double bar line.

1 O Christ, your heart, com - pas - sion - ate, bore ev - 'ry hu - man pain.
2 As once you wel - comed those cast down and healed the sick, the blind,
3 O Christ, cre - ate new hearts in us that beat in time with yours,
4 O Love that made the dis - tant stars, yet marks the spar-row's fall,

Its beat - ing was the pulse of God; its breadth, God's vast do - main.
so may all bruised and bro - ken lives through us your help still find.
that, joined by faith with your great heart, be - come love's o - pen doors.
whose arms stretched wide up - on a cross em - brace and bear us all:

The heart of God, the heart of Christ com - bined in per - fect rhyme
Lord, join our hearts with those who weep that none may weep a - lone,
We are your bod - y, ris - en Christ; our hearts, our hands we yield
come, make your church a ser - vant church that walks your ser - vant ways,

to write God's love in hu - man deeds, e - ter - ni - ty in time.
and help us bear an - oth - er's pain as though it were our own.
that through our life and min - is - try your love may be re - vealed.
whose deeds of love rise up to you, a sac - ri - fice of praise!

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923

Music: ELLACOMBE, German melody, 18th cent.; adapt. X. L. Hartig, *Melodien zum Mainzer Gesangbuche*, 1833

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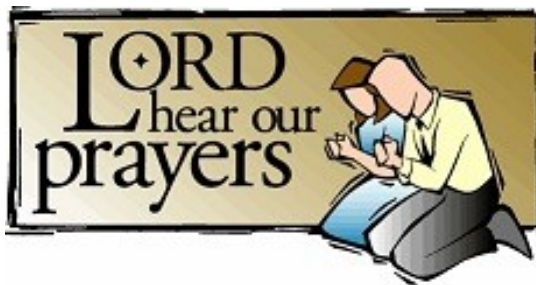
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CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 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:

<i>Sweets and Treats</i>	<i>Nov 1 10 AM</i>
<i>Poinsettia Order Deadline</i>	<i>Nov 1 12 PM</i>
<i>Annual Congregational Meeting</i>	<i>Nov 8 12 PM</i>
<i>Pot Luck Dinner</i>	<i>Nov 15 12 PM</i>
<i>Decorate Church for Christmas</i>	<i>Dec 5 10 AM</i>
<i>* Pizza will be provided afterwards</i>	
<i>Allegheny Chorale Concert</i>	<i>Dec 6 3 PM</i>
<i>* Refreshments following the performance</i>	
<i>Church Council Meeting</i>	<i>Dec 15 4 PM</i>



SWEETS AND TREATS

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH.

OUR NEXT SWEETS AND TREATS WILL BE: Nov 1, 2026
Provided By: Evelyn Holsinger

* 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**
December 15, 2026
12 PM

IMPORTANT NOTE:

- Sunday Worship Service will remain in the Sanctuary until the end of October.
- During November in the Sunday School Room.
- During December through Christmas Eve in the Sanctuary.
- Starting December 27th we will move back to the Sunday School Room until Palm Sunday.



The **Annual Congregational** meeting
will be held:

NOVEMBER 8, 2026

after the service. There will be nominations for council members and then the election for council. The budget will be discussed and then anything else that the congregation may bring to our attention.



The Allegheny Chorale presents their 42nd Season Christmas Concert



St. James Lutheran Church

December 6, 2026

3PM



Refreshments provided by funds from
St James WELCA.



WOMEN
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



POTLUCK DINNER

November 15, 2026

12 PM

**COMMUNITY
LUNCH**



ST LUKES COMMUNITY LUNCH

November 11th 12 PM

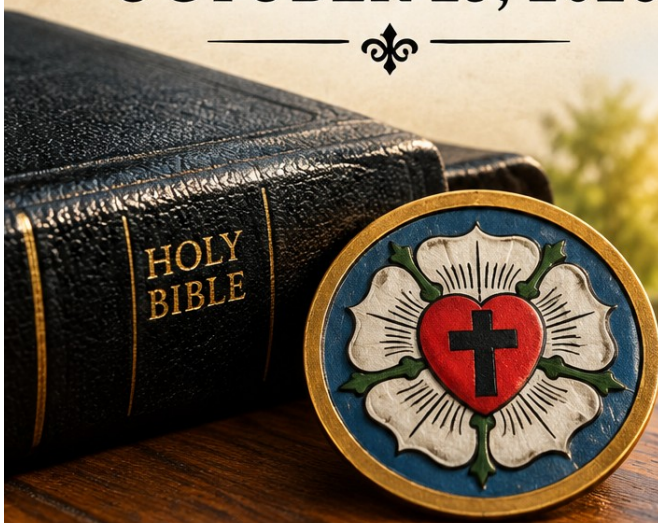
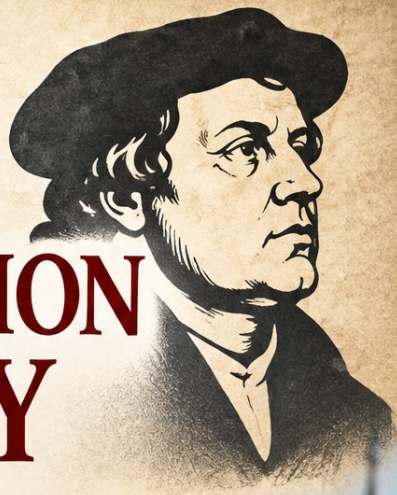
- Hosted by St James Lutheran Held 2nd Wednesday of each month in the St James Social Hall

BY GRACE ALONE
THROUGH FAITH ALONE
IN CHRIST ALONE



REFORMATION SUNDAY

OCTOBER 25, 2026



ST JAMES
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALTOONA, PA



St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

— · — — · — —
+
is a
*Blessed
Community*
— · — — · — —



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



Christmas Poinsettias

Bless our Sanctuary and your home this Christmas with a beautiful red poinsettia! For each \$11 you contribute to the St. James Flower Fund, a flower will be placed in the Sanctuary on Christmas Eve and will be available for you to take with you following our Christmas Eve Service. If you would rather donate the flower for a shut-in or friend of St. James, you may indicate that choice on this order form.

Please complete the form and return it to the church. **The deadline for poinsettia orders and payments is Sunday, November 1, 2026.** Thank you for your generosity in this endeavor!

Your Name _____
(as you wish it to appear in the bulletin)

This donation is made:

In Honor of: _____

Or

In Memory of: _____

Amount of Contribution: _____

Number of Christmas Poinsettias: _____

Envelope Number: _____

Please check one:

_____ Yes, I do want to take the poinsettia (s) home with me.

_____ No. I don't want to take the poinsettia (s). I would like them to be given to a shut in or friend of St. James

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

**1407 Eighth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602**

814-944-6835

stjamesaltoona@gmail.com
www.stjamesaltoona.org



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.