

St. James Lutheran Church, ELCA

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StJamesGettysburg.org

*"We respond to God's abundant grace by being hearers,
proclaimers and doers of the Word."*

Volume 65, No. 12

THE MESSENGER

December 2020

[Announcement on Postponing In-person Worship \(11/25/20\)](#)

It is with many mixed emotions, but with clear certainty, that we have made the decision to postpone beginning in-person worship services in our church building, scheduled for this Sunday, November 29. We have been planning and in conversation for several months (staff, COVID-19 task force, Worship & Music Committee, Congregation Council) to re-enter the church building on this First Sunday of Advent.

- A number of reasons bring us to this decision:
- We have a different landscape today than when we began planning for this re-opening. The dynamics of the virus have/continue to change.
- Recent letter from our Synod bishop, strongly recommending greater prudence, cutting back to no more than 10% of the worship space capacity.
- Synod office will be closing down for at least two weeks because of similar concerns.
- At least 2 local hospitals are at peak capacity; it seems irresponsible to create a potential situation where we add to this already excessive burden.
- Several surrounding school districts have gone totally virtual
- Other districts have elected to hold post-Thanksgiving pre-empted quarantine protocols.
- Several of our organists (because of at-risk concerns) are not able to be part of the worship leadership; as well as many others who serve in worship leadership.
- Several persons, who had previously signed up for worship, have now pulled out.
- Wednesday, Adams County closed its District Court.
- The total spike in confirmed cases locally continue to rise.

[Our concerns](#)

Protecting volunteers who have agreed to be greeters, organists, singers, pastors

Protecting our staff here in the church office. We absolutely believe our recorded services are vitally important in reaching greater numbers of people at this time; we need our staff to be healthy. We need to preserve our ability to continue recorded services and keeping our staff healthy.

We (Pastor Andrew and I) know that this brings great disappointment to many of you, because to be together in worship is one very important way we are connected as a congregation. We have been warned that this will be a difficult winter season. We recognize this. We do not want to add to this difficulty by creating an opportunity for greater sickness or even dying. We will continue to do all we can to stay connected with you, but we do not wish to add to an already difficult situation. Thank you! Let us worship!

~pastor mike

A message from Pastor Mike

Grieving in this Uncertain Time

"It is my hope that we will see how hurts, pains and losses need not destroy, but rather can lead to a better understanding of life, a greater wisdom and compassion, and a deeper courage to continue our journey. Goodbyes will always be with us. So will hellos. Praying 'goodbyes' can bring us to the doorway of a new beginning." ~Joyce Rupp, Praying Our Goodbyes

I've been thinking about grief a lot lately. I am thinking about it in relation to the pandemic and how this pandemic has interrupted and disrupted our lives in so many different ways. I have especially reflected upon grief in the relationships we have lost, or been unable to visit—spouses, family members, close friends—some who have died without close family contact, in the final weeks, days and hours of their lives here in their earthly home. Our children and youth are experiencing similar losses, but in different ways.

We have several excellent therapists and counselors here at St. James who I know are confronted with issues of grief every day. I admire the work they are doing as part of their daily employment. In my own work as a Spiritual Director for more than 20 years, I have come to realize that all spiritual direction is primarily grief work, but I especially have seen it these past several months. During this time of pandemic my spiritual direction sessions are all done on zoom; many are seminary students, some are pastors, and there are a few other individuals seeking a deeper relationship with God. Spiritual Direction is primarily about awareness, through reflective conversation, of the Spirit of God moving in a person's life.

When I arrived here at St. James 16 years ago I began a call in the midst of a congregation who was grieving two beloved pastors who had recently retired from a long and fruitful ministry. I believe one aspect of my role at that time was to walk with St. James in your grief and to do my best to not allow you to get stuck in the grieving process that comes when loving relationships have changed. I am thinking about this now because more recently we have lost through retirement several other longtime staff members. The COVID pandemic certainly has affected so many things in our church life, but especially because of our social distancing, I have wondered about the grieving process related to Tim and Barbara Braband and its impact.

The work of spiritual companionship is not a matter of magic words or one-size-fits-all solutions; but with grief, it becomes so very important to name it for what it is. Too often an individual's grief is silenced, which is precisely where the work of a spiritual director can be an invitation to greater awareness. Opportunities to name the losses associated with losing Tim and Barbara may be difficult at this time. Might this to be the beginning of a longer conversation that may bring us closer to what Joyce Rupp is inviting us to in times of grieving! I truly want us as a congregation to recognize within ourselves and in each other the various losses we all continue to experience during this time. Let's keep talking with each other as to how we bring each other to the doorway of a healthy exchange at this uncertain time! God bless!



~pastor mike

A message from Pastor Andrew

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

~Matthew 1:18

It's been said that 2020 has been a year of disappointments... a year that hasn't gone as expected... Each of you have no doubt experienced this for yourselves in your own unique way.

In being December, with Advent and Christmas on our minds and in our hearts, it would be easy for us to chalk this holiday season up as yet one more thing that hasn't gone according to plan. The most glaring reason for which, COVID. The little virus that just doesn't seem to want to go away, keeping us from those things we cherish the most – holiday gatherings with family and friends, photos of our children and grandchildren sitting on Santa's lap, the Gettysburg Christmas festival and parade, our midweek potluck dinners and Advent services of *Unfailing Light*, and of course, our Christmas Eve worship services side by side our family of faith singing carols in a candle lit worship space.



In the Geib household, Christmas always comes early and always stays late. Images of Santa, Rudolf, and Frosty, side by side the baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and the Wisemen go up before Thanksgiving and stay up through the season of Epiphany. Apologies to our liturgical purists out there!

Oddly enough, the older I get the more important the season becomes. You would think it would be the other way around, but the more aware I become of the world's darkness, the more significant the light of the Christ child becomes in my life. Maybe you can relate.

As we reflect deeper on the Christmas story, it becomes ever so clear, that like our lives of 2020, it is a one that doesn't go in the way we would have planned if we were the ones writing the story. From the moment of his conception, Jesus enters our world in unexpected ways and in unexpected places. Born to a virgin mother, laid in a manger surrounded by animals, and welcomed by shepherds of the field. Unexpected places and unexpected ways.

While far from how we might expect the Son of God to be born, the same could be said for how Jesus enters our lives today. And isn't this the Good News? Good news, that for me, brings hope. Hope, that even amidst this year... the year that will go down in the record books as one of disappointments... that Christ will not disappoint. That no matter how bad things get, Christ – *Emmanuel* – *God with us* – will be born. Regardless of how different this holiday season may be for you and yours, regardless of the disappointments that come – the unexpected things you face, may you hold onto to this promise. The promise, St. Paul proclaims so clearly in his letter to the Romans; *That nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Born into a broken world, the promise of Christmas is that Christ continues to be born into our brokenness today – our disappointments included. Just as his birth brought light and life to the world on that holy night in Bethlehem, so too may he be born into your lives today bringing light and life.

With love,

~Pastor Andrew

Worship Previews

December 6 – Second Sunday of Advent

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 13 – Third Sunday of Advent

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

December 27 – First Sunday of Christmas

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Readings: Isaiah 61:10--62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Connect



Pastor Mike and Pastor Andrew continue setting aside time on Monday mornings in the Music Room from 10:00 – 11:00 for small group conversation. The meetings begin with a short devotion, followed by general check-ins and discussion among the group, and end in prayer. We look forward to this time together!

~ **Pastor Mike and Pastor Andrew**

Seats for each of the sessions through 2020 are limited, so sign up now online at StJamesGettysburg.org/MondayConnect, or call the office (717-334-2012) for help with a reservation.

Mission Fund in Action

This month we recognize REACH Mission Trips, a program that received \$2,500 from the 2020 Mission Fund, made possible by the generosity of the members and families of St. James.



REACH Mission Trips has organized domestic and international Jesus-centered mission trips since 1990. REACH brings young people into a community with people having a hard time taking care of their homes. For a week the volunteer workcampers and leaders bring their labor and materials to do paint-up, fix-up, build decks, porches, wheelchair ramps and other projects.

Working together to assist homeowners has been a transforming experience for workcampers and homeowners to share Christian love and fellowship. REACH says, "One week of serving others will transform the way your youth group engages their world."

St. James youth groups and adult volunteers have been regular participants at REACH work camps in many locations in the United States. Committee member Shirley Sanders this year celebrates 22 years of REACH work camp participation. Shirley says that spreading the gospel and teachings of Jesus and doing what we are called to do --- helping, reaching out to others in need --- are great ways to be doing "God's work, our hands."

Adams County Prison Ministries: Socks for Inmates

Adams Christian Prison Ministries is collecting donations for Operation: Socks for Inmates. The inmates at Adams County Adult Correctional Complex need to know that during the Christmas season they are not forgotten. Join us in bringing a little joy in a practical way. ACPM is asking for donations of a pair of solid white men's crew socks and a Hershey Milk Chocolate (1.55 oz.) candy bar (no nuts, please).



Donations can be dropped off at Saint James Lutheran church at 109 York St, Gettysburg, PA 17325 (use the back entrance on E. Zerfing Alley). A donation box will be available on Monday and Tuesday, December 21 and 22, 2020 between the hours of 9 am and 3 pm. Thank you so much for your donations and support.

BATTERY RECYCLING EVENT

BRING YOUR BATTERIES

Alkaline

- AA
- AAA
- C
- D
- 9V

Lithium Ion

- Nickel Cadmium
- Nickel-Metal Hydride

Coordinated by Creation Care Task Force

Battery Recycling

WE CAN CONTINUE OUR USED BATTERY COLLECTION!

Thanks to a generous couple, we have received another BIG GREEN BOX to fill with used batteries that will then be properly recycled and / or disposed of. Drop off at the church 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday – Friday.

Backpacks for Students in Need

The World Outreach Committee wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the Lutheran World Relief School Kit campaign.

We collected 82 School Kits in three weeks!



Congregation Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Summary

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM. Quorum present.

Devotions led by Carol Cook.

Minutes from September 16, 2020, approved.

Treasurer's Report:

- \$48,750 actual giving. Quarterly benevolence was paid.
- ELC Financials: ELC is back to even for year.
- Capital Campaign: Cash received to date is \$662,149.63 and \$366,456.91 has been spent so far.
- **Motion: That the church approve and submit the PPP Loan forgiveness documents. Motion carried unanimously.**

Report on COVID-19 impact and plans

- Current status is no hospital visits, no home visits, worship at Camp Nawakwa is going well.
- "Return to Worship" plan that the staff and COVID-19 task force developed. May be subject to change.
- St. James will attempt to return to in-person, inside worship on first weekend in Advent on November 29. List of procedures has been developed.
 - For Christmas Eve: Noon, 5:00 pm, 9:00 pm, and an outdoor worship service at 7:00pm on Stratton between York and the alley.
 - In-person, in building funerals not likely until 2021.
 - **Motion: To affirm the "Return to Worship" Plan. Motion passed by unanimous consent.**

Committee and Task Force Reports

- Property Committee & ARD update – Update on the enclosure at the bottom of the main stairwell at the basement level for ELC security purposes. Elevator will be reprogrammed and updated as well. HARB will not require any special items on the east side windows.
 - Motion from Property Committee: **Increase the capital campaign allocation for the stairwell architecture redesign by \$1,300. Motion passed by unanimous consent.**
 - **Motion from Property Committee: Increase capital campaign allocation by \$8,000 for elevator repairs. Motion passed by unanimous consent.**

Finance

- Motion from Finance Committee: **Council recommend the proposed 2021 budget of \$820,840.33, representing a 1.59% increase over fiscal year 2020, to be presented at the annual congregational meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**
- Sharing Ministry Motion: **That council recommend the proposed 2021 budget of \$22,000, to the congregation at the annual congregational meeting with the specific allocations to be determined by the social ministry committee at its October committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**
- Motion from the ELC Committee: **That the council recommend the proposed 2021 budget of \$756,450 be presented to the congregation at the annual congregational meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**
 - **Motion from the floor: That we ask for the ELC Committee to revisit methodology for calculating the amount for the building usage. Motion carried unanimously.**
 - **Motion from the ELC Committee: That the ELC committee recommends Council transfer \$127,800 of the PPP loan to the ELC account. Motion to table recommendation. The intent is to consider this once the SBA forgiveness is finalized. Motion to table carried unanimously.**

Personnel

- **Motion from Personnel Committee: Recommends to Council that pandemic compensation be paid to full time church employees for a total expenditure of \$8,400. Motion carried.**

- Pastors' housing allowance: **That council approve 2021 housing allowances for both pastors. Motion carried unanimously.**
- **Endowment Committee Motion: The committee recommends Lucinda Bringman as new member of the Endowment Committee for congregation to consider at their congregational meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**
- Youth Ministry Motion: That the council approve to conduct an amended cookie walk fundraiser

Old Business

- Committee charters (tabled until November meeting by Executive Committee)

New Business

- Synod Assembly lay voting members from St. James: Executive committee nominates Sharon Kaya, Shirley Sanders and Emili Scavitto. **Nomination approved unanimously.**

Strategic Planning conversation around building usage will be continued in November.

Good for Council – Good for Church – Good for God

- Update on Gettysburg CARES. A new director has been hired. Her name is Rosemary Laureano. She seems to be a very good fit. A local motel will house the shelter in December, January, and February. The CARES board reserved 15 rooms for those three months and is applying for a disaster grant from the county to help fund it this year.
- The congregational meeting is November 15 both via Zoom and in person. A quorum of 50 people is needed.
- Council members encouraged to participate in the Music Ministry Task Force survey.
- It was suggested that additional signage be utilized discouraging the use of the parking lot by non-church users: it seems to be an escalating problem. This matter was referred to Property Committee.

Meeting concluded with prayer.

Next council meeting will be November 18.

Capital Campaign Report thru October 31, 2020

The Capital Campaign report on pages 35 & 36 in the 2020 Annual report show through September 2020, \$662,149 was received in contributions and \$366,493 was spent. October had another \$15,330 of contributions and when combined with the Gift-in-Kind of \$45,000 totaled \$722,477. After subtracting expenditures the unspent funds through October are \$310,987. Some projects have been delayed somewhat by limitations on construction during COVID-19. The campaign is very blessed to have received these funds and are thankful to members and others of their generous offerings. This enables the church to continue to plan and implement many projects which will support and enhance our ministry. Thank you.

Parish Records

BAPTISMS

November 1, 2020 Ronan Michelangelo Hawk

DEATHS

November 4, 2020 Lorene B. "Renie" Hubbard

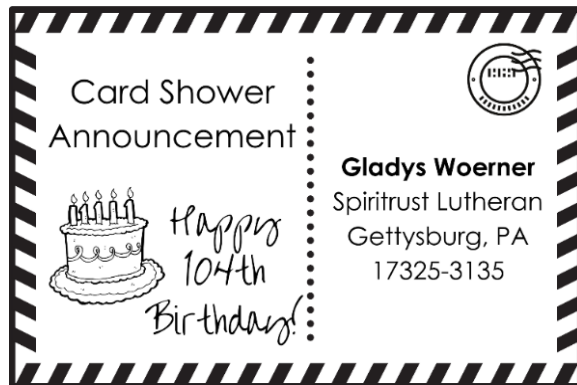
November 8, 2020 Doris M. Spangler

50+ WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

December 12, 1964 Jerry R. & Linda B. Neth 56 years

December 16, 1962 Cecil D. & Patricia A. Sandoe 58 years

December 27, 1969 Peter H. & Martha B. Riley 51 years



*Gladys Woerner will be
104 years young on December 6!*

YOUTH NEWS

| Questions? Email Kristin at youth@stjamesgettysburg.org |

Halloween Fun on October 30th!

Not even a Hurricane could keep the festivities away! Thanks to everyone who supported this event and to everyone who was able to participate!



The Youth House has a new addition...

Thanks to Malina Reber, we have a BEAUTIFUL painting hanging in the Youth House!



High School Axe Throwing November 13th!



Sign up for the Christmas Pageant!

Parts are still available!
Go to www.bit.ly/stjpageant20 to sign up.

Contacts: Pete Riley (prfrog@embarqmail.com)
Julie Keyser (julie@k-c-g.net)

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St. James

Lutheran Church, ELCA

PO Box 4596

Gettysburg, PA 17325-4596

PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

LABEL

Visiting St. James

Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Ring the doorbell at the Zerfing Alley entrance.

Calling St. James at [717-334-2012](tel:717-334-2012)

When calling our church office, you will reach the automated phone system.

You can either listen to the options before selecting, or you can immediately dial an extension below to reach an individual staff member or their voicemail.

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