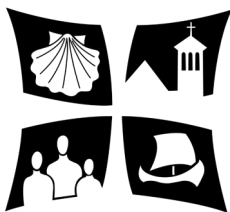


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# The Messenger



“We respond to God’s abundant grace by being hearers, proclaimers, and doers of the Word.”



## *St. James Lutheran Church*

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A congregation of the ELCA,  
and a Reconciling in Christ Congregation.



## A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR ANDREW

*Now when Jesus heard about the beheading of John the Baptist, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.*

- Matthew 14:13

The first weekend in August brings before us Matthew's rendition of the *Feeding of the Five Thousand*. An often-overlooked detail of this story is Jesus' emotional state as he cares for the crowds of people in need of his presence. He is in mourning, grieving the untimely death of his friend and cousin – John the Baptist. And so, we read; he withdrew to a deserted place by himself.

Through this action, St. Matthew gives us a glimpse into the human side of Christ. While we can't say for sure what Jesus must have been feeling or what he was thinking, but we can make some fair assumptions. Pain and sadness. Likely a bit of shock. Possibly, a bit of doubt... His ministry had in some way led to the Baptist's death – was he doing the right thing?

My guess is, we have all had moments in our lives when we have wondered about our decisions – about our lifestyle choices... our actions... We did this or that, which caused a friendship or a relationship to come to an end. We said this or that, hurting someone we care about. We made the choice to walk a certain path in life that resulted in leaving behind what was once important to us.

Throughout our gospels, we see again and again that the life Christ calls us to involves risk. The disciples are expected to leave everything behind for a lifestyle of sacrificial love and service. They are to give away all worldly possessions and separate themselves from their most cherished relationships so that nothing would get in the way of their devotion to Christ and His way – “Take no gold or silver... no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals or staff...” “Whoever loves father or mother, son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”

Christian martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer reflects on such a lifestyle in his writing, *The Cost of Discipleship*.

“Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.” “Costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. It is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him...”

From the calling of his first disciples, following Jesus has required costly grace – to submit to the yoke of Christ above all else. Something Jesus was able to ask of his disciples, because he lived into it himself. Something he can ask of us today, because he died for it.

As we keep on reading our story of the *Feeding of the Five Thousand*, we discover, that even though Jesus wanted some time alone amidst his grief, he had compassion for those who came to him. He set his own desires aside, for the needs of others.

I wonder how it is, people of St. James, that you are living into this walk of sacrificial loving service, costly grace, and lifestyle? How you are placing your wants and desires to the side, for the needs of your neighbor? For Christ and His church?

As we enter into our church growth campaign and spend time discerning how the Spirit is leading us to reach out to those in our local community, questions such as these will be at the heart of our work together. The crowds around us are in need of Christ’s compassion today just as they were some two-thousand years ago on the beach. And we, you and I, have been called and commissioned to do exactly that – to show compassion, to proclaim Christ’s healing Good News, and to feed the hungry.

It will require sacrifice. It will require us to choose Christ above the things of the world. It will require us to give of our time and our talents. To reach out to those we haven’t seen in some time and remind them how important being part of a community of faith is. To step outside of our comfort zone and invite people to come to church – and to do it again and again. To believe – even in times when it appears we have little to offer – that our God is one of abundance... one, who can use us to fill thousands, just as his disciples did with a couple loaves and fish...

Washed in the waters of baptism and fed with the bread of life, we have been invited and sent out into the world to do this work. So, go forth in peace to love and serve the Lord.

With love,  
Pastor Andrew

## A MESSAGE FROM VICAR LIBBY

### *Fair Warning: I Don't Do Roller Coasters*

That line was my response to Adam's ask if I wanted to chaperone a trip to Hershey Park with our Middle and High School Youth. Although I was excited to spend a summer day with our youth, a past memory kept haunting me throughout the planning stages of St. James Youth's day at Hershey Park.

The last time I rode a rollercoaster was in 2008. I was 11 years old, and was on a school trip to Knoebels Grove Amusement Park in Elysburg, PA. I was really excited for the trip. My elementary school would close out every school year with a trip to the park, complete with a chicken barbeque, free rides, and lots of fun for all involved. The family fun day was something I looked forward to every year. The 2008 trip was a chance to spend time with friends and their families before my grade separated into different middle schools.

I don't remember much about the last school trip to Knoebels Grove, aside from the delicious chicken and the splash zone at the "Skloosh," the biggest log flume-style ride at the park. I so wanted to be brave enough to make it onto the water ride and descend the 50 foot drop to the ground, but I never made it. While I enjoyed a good trip to the amusement park, I always felt uncomfortable when I spent time among others who seemed to be so much braver than I was. I wanted to be brave, too. And so, when my dad asked if I wanted to go on the wooden roller coaster before we left I said "yes."

We took off in the wooden roller coaster car, and immediately I felt a sense of dread. The only thing I remember years later, is how rickety the ride was, how much I thought I was going to fall off, and how much I felt sick after the drops. I haven't been on a rollercoaster since.

Fifteen years later, and I found myself this summer in the midst of a group of eight young people, anxious to get on the roller coasters at Hershey Park. They, unlike myself, were ready and excited to take on all the coasters, from the classic Fahrenheit to the new Wildcat's Revenge. I had one goal for the day: to just get on one coaster.

The roller coaster I picked was called the "Laff Trakk," described by Hershey as "the first indoor, spinning, glow-coaster in the United States. This family friendly house of laughs spins riders through an exciting adventure of sights and sounds complete with glimpses of colorful characters, a dizzying hall of mirrors, and more!"

The ride started, and all of a sudden I found myself being flung backwards, down spirals, and back up hills. The room was pitch black, and I couldn't tell what was coming up in front of me. I grabbed Adam's hand, closed my eyes, and screamed as we tossed and turned.

When I think about it, faith is similar to that first roller coaster I went on at Hershey Park. Faith is getting in the line, surrounded by friends, knowing that no matter what you experience or how scared you are, there will be someone there to hold your hand and scream alongside you. Faith is knowing that even if you lose sense of direction or cannot see what lies ahead, God will see you through to the other side. Faith is moving from the "comfort zone" that is the Monorail to the least scary rollercoaster at the park and knowing that even that small step of faith is important.

This month, may we have the courage to take the first step towards something that scares us. Pick up the phone to text an estranged loved one. Say hello to the new person at a community meeting. Run that extra half mile. Ride that roller coaster.

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. -Deuteronomy 31:6*

May we rely on our faith in God to grant us courage and give us strength. Amen.

With love and courage,  
Vicar Libby



I spent the first week of July in Philadelphia attending the 18<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM), four days of worship, concerts, reading sessions, workshops, and fellowship.

The theme of the conference and each morning's keynote address, "What Wondrous Love," allowed for reflection on topics of hospitality, joy, wonder, and love in action.

We enjoyed communing together at historic Christ Episcopal Church, the home congregation of several of our nation's founding fathers. The Church of the Holy Trinity, where the beloved carol, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" was composed, hosted morning prayer and an evening hymn festival. The sound of several hundred church musicians singing with organ and brass is quite an experience! Choral Arts Philadelphia performed a program of largely Italian baroque music in the episcopal cathedral. It was here that I snapped the photo of *The Hungry and Thirsty Jesus*, a compelling sculpture portraying Christ as a homeless person along the street, inspired by Matthew 25:35. On the final morning, we traveled to Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansdale, for workshops and closing eucharist led by a choir of children who had been attending a choir camp during the week.

The various workshops I attended gave me insights into improving my work with adult and children's choirs, a deeper way of thinking about how text relates to musical composition, and some useful choir and piano repertoire. I want to thank St James for providing me with the opportunity to attend the conference. I gained valuable ideas and perspectives and have been energized to continue my work among you.

Jonathan Noel



*The Hungry and Thirsty Jesus sculpture outside Philadelphia Cathedral.*

## SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

September is always exciting in the life of the church. It is Rally Day—which launches the Sunday School Year, our 2 & 3 year olds receive picture bibles, and our 4th graders receive text bibles.

It is also important as it is the national day of service within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) - **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday.** Stay tuned for opportunities to volunteer in the community Sunday afternoon on September 10!



**“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday**



September 10, 2023

## RECONCILING IN CHRIST TASK FORCE REPORT

The people of St. James are proud to be a “welcoming” congregation. We make this promise to every visitor: when you choose to share worship with us, we will greet you warmly. We made that promise “official” several years ago by becoming a “Reconciling in Christ” congregation. In his own ministry, Jesus offered God’s love to everyone, and he was especially eager to reach people at the margins of society, people like widows, orphans, and tax collectors. For the baptized, as Paul wrote, *There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*—Galatians 3:28

Our promise to be inclusive led us to participate in the Gettysburg Pride march and to sponsor a St. James table (side-by-side with the Lutheran Seminary) in the square. We encouraged St. James to invite Pastor Carla Christopher to preach an inclusive gospel a few weeks ago. Our next major project will be to develop and offer this Fall a program to the Sunday School classes on being a welcoming congregation. We all need frequent reminders that the good news of Jesus is for everyone.

## WORSHIP PREVIEWS

**AUGUST 5 & 6**

### TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*In today's first reading God invites all who are hungry or thirsty to receive food and drink without cost. Jesus feeds the hungry multitude and reveals the abundance of God. At the eucharistic table we remember all who are hungry or poor in our world today. As we share the bread of life, we are sent forth to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.*

**Preacher:** Pastor Andrew Geib

**Readings:** Isaiah 55:1-5      Romans 9:1-5  
Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21      Matthew 14:13-21

**Fellowship,** hosted by Evangelism & Fellowship Committee.

**AUGUST 12 & 13**

### ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*Elijah finds the presence of God not in earthquake, wind, or fire, but in the sound of sheer silence. When the disciples face a great storm on the sea, they cry out with fear. Jesus says: "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Amid the storms of life, we gather to seek the calm presence of Christ that soothes our fears. In comforting words of scripture and in the refreshing bread and cup of the eucharist, God grants us peace and sends us forth to be a sign of God's presence to others.*

**Preacher:** Vicar Libby Baker-Mikesell

**Readings:** 1 Kings 19:9-18      Romans 10:5-15  
Psalm 85:8-13      Matthew 14:22-33



## AUGUST 19 & 20

### TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.*

**Preacher:** Pastor Andrew Geib

**Readings:** Isaiah 56:1, 6-8  
Psalm 67

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

## AUGUST 26 & 27

### THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*In Isaiah the people are advised to look to their spiritual ancestors as the rock from which they were hewn. Jesus declares that the church will be built on the rock of Peter's bold confession of faith. God's word of reconciliation and God's mercy are keys to the church's mission. Paul urges us to not be conformed to this world but to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, using our individual gifts to build up the body of Christ. From the table we go forth to offer our spiritual worship through word and deed.*

**Preacher:** Vicar Libby Baker-Mikesell

**Readings:** Isaiah 51:1-6  
Psalm 138

Romans 12:1-8

Matthew 16:13-20

# AUGUST 2023 CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
30	31	<p><b>1</b>  <b>1-4PM</b> Office closed for staff meeting  <b>5:30PM</b> ELC Staff meeting, via zoom  <b>6:30PM</b> Evangelism &amp; Fellowship, Library  <b>6:30PM</b> Worship &amp; Music, via zoom</p>	<p><b>2</b>  <b>9AM—5PM</b> Cunningham</p>
<p><b>6</b>  <b>10TH AFTER PENTECOST</b>  <b>8:15AM</b> Worship  <b>9:30AM</b> Fellowship  <b>10:25AM</b> Summer Choir, Music Room  <b>10:45AM</b> Worship</p>	<p><b>7</b>  <b>9:30AM—Noon</b> Quilters   <b>5:30PM</b> Endowment, via zoom  <b>6:30PM</b> Property, Library</p>	<p><b>8</b>  <b>1-4PM</b> Office closed for staff meeting  <b>5:30PM</b> ELC Gov, via Zoom [closed meeting]</p>	<p><b>9</b></p>
<p><b>13</b>  <b>11TH AFTER PENTECOST</b>  <b>8:15AM</b> Worship  <b>10:25AM</b> Summer Choir, Music Room  <b>10:45AM</b> Worship  <b>Noon</b> Miracle Workers Lunch at McDonald's, Steinwehr Ave.</p>	<p><b>14</b>  <b>6:30PM</b> Executive, Library [closed meeting]  <b>7PM</b> Personnel Committee, Library [closed meeting]</p>	<p><b>15</b>  <b>1-4PM</b> Office closed for staff meeting  <b>7PM</b> Creation Care Taskforce, via zoom  <b>7:15PM</b> Social Ministry, Library</p>	<p><b>16</b>  <b>6:30PM</b> C   <b>Sight &amp;</b></p>
<p><b>20</b>  <b>12TH AFTER PENTECOST</b>  <b>8:15AM</b> Worship  <b>10:25AM</b> Summer Choir, Music Room  <b>10:45AM</b> Worship</p>	<p><b>21</b>  <b>6PM</b> Youth Ministry, Youth House</p>	<p><b>22</b>  <b>First Day of School (GASD)</b>  <b>10AM</b> Stephen Ministry Group, Room 300  <b>1-4PM</b> Office closed for staff meeting  <b>4:30PM</b> Gburg CARES, Library  <b>7PM</b> World Outreach</p>	<p><b>23</b>  <b>6:45AM</b> M  <b>Breakfast</b>  <b>9:30AM</b> C  <b>3:30-5PM</b> Group</p>
<b>K-5 Youth Workcamp</b>			
<p><b>27</b>  <b>13TH AFTER PENTECOST</b>  <b>8:15AM</b> Worship  <b>10:25AM</b> Summer Choir, Music Room  <b>10:45AM</b> Worship  <b>5-6:30PM</b> MS Youth Group  <b>6:30-8:30PM</b> HS Youth Group</p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b>  <b>1-4PM</b> Office closed for staff meeting</p>	<p><b>30</b>  <b>6:45AM</b> M  <b>Breakfast</b>  <b>9:30AM</b> C  <b>3:30-5PM</b> Group</p>

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>6PM MS &amp; HS Youth Caledonia Falls</p>	<p>3 10AM Bible Study, Gathering Area Noon-2PM Library Committee</p>	<p>4 1:30PM Prison Society, Music Room</p>	<p>5 11AM-5PM Caledonia Family Picnic 5:30PM Worship  7PM Miracle Workers, Board Game Night, gathering area</p>
<p>Council, Library Sound-Moses</p>	<p>10 10AM Bible Study, Gathering Area  17 10AM Bible Study, Gathering Area Noon-2PM Library Committee</p>	<p>11  18</p>	<p>12 5:30PM Worship  5PM-10PM Miracle Workers, Relay for Life (Oakside Community Park, Biglerville)  19 K-5 Youth Workcamp 5:30PM Worship  7PM Miracle Workers Movie Night, gathering area</p>
<p>MS &amp; HS Gathering Area Child Care Chapel K-5 Youth</p>	<p>24 10AM Bible Study, Gathering Area 1-4 PM History &amp; Archives, Gathering Area</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 5:30PM Worship</p>
<p>MS &amp; HS Gathering Area Child Care Chapel K-5 Youth</p>	<p>31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA: Mon-Sat at Noon // Wed at 7:30AM &amp; Fri at 7PM, Music Room</li> <li>• AlAnon: Mon at 7PM, Music Room</li> <li>• Family Support: <i>Autism &amp; Intellectual Challenges</i>: 1st Wed, at 6PM, Room 303</li> <li>• Lust Recovery: Wed at 6:30PM, Room 204</li> <li>• Scouts: On break for the summer</li> </ul>	



## YOUNG AT HEART: KEEPING UP WITH THE KIDS

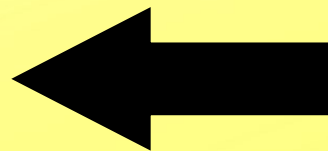
Adam Michael, Director of Youth & Family Ministry

Repetition is helpful for educating children and even adults!

In the church, we triple down on some of the more important stories of our faith, but in most cases our liturgy follows a three-year cycle before coming back around. For kids, three years is an eternity. After a year and a half of basing our elementary youth group activities on the liturgical calendar, I want to try something different. Each month of this year, we'll reinforce key developmental traits through a Christian lens.

Traits such as persistence, self-control, curiosity, grit, conscientiousness and self-confidence can be found in several Christian narratives, and are also considered to be key elements of character by educators, psychologists and neuroscientists. Of course, nothing is more important than love; this will remain a central focus of our curriculum.

Thus far, middle and high school youth group has served as a place for kids to play, unwind and discuss the joys and stressors in their lives. This will continue but with a more thematic focus. Each week we will reflect, at least briefly on important themes that exist across nearly every belief system – truth, goodness, beauty, love, compassion, joy, and equanimity/ harmony – once again through a Christian lens. Being mindful of these elements can help us to live richer, more fulfilling lives. This is a new approach for me, so suggestions for fun exercises or experiments regarding these topics are welcome!





## UPCOMING YOUTH SCHEDULE

### **Board Game Nights—Monday, August 7 & 14 at 6PM**

Play games, eat pizza, laugh and have fun in the Gathering Area at church. Play our games or bring your own. All family members are welcome! Our last game night is August 14

**Middle School Cunningham Falls Hike—Wednesday, August 2** – kids entering sixth through ninth grade are invited to spend a morning hiking up the waterfall, located in northern Maryland. We'll stop at picnic tables for lunch, then spend the afternoon playing by the lake! Friends are welcome for this event, but let Adam know in advance.

**St. James Caledonia Picnic—Saturday, August 5** – Those who are young or young-at-heart are invited to join us at Caledonia for a picnic from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The youth minister will bring wiffleball, spikeball, frisbees and more. Bring your creek shoes, a swimsuit and a meal and enjoy the company of our congregation!

**Mini Workcamp Weekend—August 19-20** – All kids entering kindergarten through sixth grade are invited to spend a day answering God's call to service by working on church and community projects. Kids and parents are invited to spend the night at the church for a night full of worship, games, movies and more! Wake up at the crack of dawn and enjoy a big breakfast before getting back to work!

Email Adam at [youth@stjamesgettysburg.org](mailto:youth@stjamesgettysburg.org) for more information on any of these activities.

**Last but not least, please be on the lookout for an email regarding youth group registration for the 2023-24 year. Invite your friends to be part of our community!**

# COUNCIL CORNER, JULY 19 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## En Bloc Agenda

- Approval of Minutes from June 21, 2023
- Acceptance of Treasurer's Report: Church Financials & ELC Financials
- Acceptance of New Members: none for affirmation of faith nor baptism
- Appoint Judy Seilhamer as Chair of Worship & Music Committee

**All items in the en bloc were approved.**

**Council Orientation:** explanation of the SJLC Endowment by Tom Uhlig; explanation of church financial reports and budget by Karen Lentz; explanation of Sharepoint & emails by Katy Clowney

## Old Business

- Review SMART Goals & Progress: Youth goal previously met; attendance is traditionally low during summer months; regular giving offering has met the budgetary goal.

June Giving	3 & 4	10 & 11	17 & 18	24 & 25	AVG
Worship Attendance	212	194	224	226	<b>214</b>
Actual Giving Offering	\$10,509	\$26,372	\$10,739	\$16,528	<b>\$16,037</b>

Weekly need per budget \$14,589.47 (with 53 Sundays in 2023)

Worship Attendance Goal of 250 attendees: not met

Budget Goal: met!

- *Church Vitality Taskforce Update:* After a successful Vitality Taskforce Retreat on July 15 at ULS, Pastor Andrew will continue to meet with Pastor Nathan Swenson-Reinhold monthly, and the results of the recent Congregational Vitality Survey could be presented to the Task Force in August.
- *Gettysburg CARES update:* Revisions to a grant allowing CARES to operate a cold-weather shelter within the St. James building for six months needs to be re-approved by county commissioners by July 30. After that, a special congregational meeting would be called on September 17 after the 10:45 a.m. service for discussion and motion of the plan.

- *Building safety:* Pastor Andrew outlined the proposed bid to install seven exterior door cameras, and two interior cameras.

### **New Business**

- *Committee assignments:* Council members will review church committee assignments and choose possible committees to join.
- *Motion from Mission Support and Finance (suggested by Katy):* to decrease and re-organize special giving envelopes into one offering envelope; encouraging giving each month for special funds, and not just a few times a year. Motion passed.
- *Motion from Finance:* Take \$500,000 from church checking account:
  - Open a PNC Money Market account with \$300,000 (6 months, 6 withdraws per month, 4.05% APY, no minimum investment)
  - Open a PNC Investment Partner Account with \$200,000 (14 months at 5.60%)Motion passed.
- *Motion from Early Learning Center:* Take \$250,000 from ELC checking account and open a PNC Money Market Account (6 months, 6 withdraws per month, 4.05% APY, no minimum investment). Motion passed.
- Signers on the 3 new accounts mentioned above will be the existing signers on bank accounts: Carol Widerman, council president; Alan Haynes, council vice president; Debra Baker, council secretary, and Karen Lentz, treasurer. Motion passed.

### **Good for Council – Good for Church – Good for God**

- Upcoming Ordination at St. James: July 29 – Katharine Beckman – diaconal minister. Dinner follows.
- ELC – accepted to participate in the 2023 Adams County Community Foundation Giving Spree

Pastor Andrew closed the meeting with prayer.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., Library**

## CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

When we began our work as the Call Committee in May 2022, one of the very first things we did was look to the Word of God for guidance. Together we made a list of bible references which spoke to us regarding this state of having a “pastoral vacancy.” We continue to carry them in our thoughts and prayers regarding this work, and hope you are too. Here are some we’ve asked you to use in your prayers:

*Make me to know your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths.*

*Seek the Lord.*

*Ask in faith, never doubting.*

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God.*

*For I know the plans I have for you.*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding... and He will make your paths straight.*

There are also texts that say do not grow weary. It’s easy for us to be a bit discouraged; we finished our Mission Site Profile (MSP) last October and it was disseminated by the ELCA. So why haven’t we heard about our new pastor?

There are reasons why: the biggest is that there is a significant shortage of pastors in our whole church. I recently spoke with Bishop Dunlop, who assured me he has not forgotten St. James and further spoke of his desire to find the right pastor to lead us in the mission and goals reflected in our MSP. He commented that the assignment process has changed in the ELCA, and there are very few candidates for ordination graduating from seminary who are not already pointed in a particular direction, and that was the case this May following graduation at the United Lutheran Seminary.

Further, we know that the work we all did last summer and fall to determine directions and goals can help and guide our congregation in our current vitality efforts. So please keep praying for our call process. Keep praying for the pastor who will be called to serve in this place. Keep praying for Pr. Andrew as he serves in his call as our lead pastor. Keep praying for patience, faith, and trust.

And let’s rest in this text:

Ephesians 3:17a-21 (emphasis added) *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the*



*Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love surpasses knowledge- that you may be filled to the measure of the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*



Lucinda Bringman, chair, St. James Call Committee

## CHURCH VITALITY RETREAT WRAP-UP

On July 15 the St. James Vitality Task Force and Congregational Council hosted a Vitality Retreat at the Seminary in Gettysburg, led by Pastor Nathan Swenson-Reinhold.

The day was filled with spiritual readings, prayer, discussion of not just our church, but churches in general and our place in God's World. There was a clarity of mission, as well in that growth of the church is not just to add members so that we can become a "Mega-Church." *The mission of the church is not to count the sheep...but to feed the sheep.*

As we were discussing the reasons people come to church or don't come to church, one of the members said that *it seems people, generally speaking, have one reason to go to church and several reasons not to.* If that is accurate what are reasons to want to go to church? What could make people want to go to SJLC? Wouldn't it be nice if the number was reversed and there were several reasons to want to go to church and zero reasons not to? What are people needing in order to "Want to go to church?" Below are some needs that we discussed.

- An all-inclusive God.
- An authentic church community.
- The need to serve not only our church, but our community.
- Clear sense of purpose.
- Openness to innovation / Openness to change.
- A church that focuses on relationships.
- Fulfill the need to be seen and not stalked.

A couple of questions were posed to us that I would like to share:

*Why would God want to plant someone here at SJLC?* Some of the bible verses we read talked about planting seeds in fertile soil verses toxic soil. *Do we have fertile soil or toxic soil at SJLC?* Based on our survey it seems we have more fertile soil than toxic soil, but we must continue taking care of the soil...*How do we do that?*

*Are we a Museum of Saints/Hospital for Sinners?* Do we as members know the difference between being welcome at church and belonging to church? *How can we make Christ clearer at SJLC?* What barriers are there between people and Jesus at SJLC? In other words, how do we get out of Jesus' way? *What attitudes and practices need pruning at SJLC?* How can we help our Pastor delegate duties at SJLC? *How do we inspire new names and faces to join us for more than just Saturday evening or Sunday morning worship? Encouraging them to volunteer in the life of the church? How quickly can we move from inspiration to implementation?*

In closing, while there were many takeaways from this retreat, one of the biggest for me was the saying below that I hope best describes St. James Lutheran Church. This is for new members, old members, visitors, non-members and anyone who walks through our open doors. **No one sits alone.**

*God's Peace, Alan Haynes*



## AUGUST OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD ITEMS

We are collecting small items for Operation Christmas Child. Children from across the globe will receive a shoebox sized box filled with small items to bring them Christmas joy. When you are out running errands, consider picking up a few items to be included in the Christmas shoe boxes!

- Individually wrapped bars of Dove soap
- Pencil cases
- Small manual pencil sharpeners
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Pens & Pencils
- Rolls of tape
- Blank index cards
- Erasers
- Picture books
- Watercolor sets
- PlayDoh & plastic cookie cutters
- Small chalkboard with chalk
- Stickers
- Small boxes of crayons
- Jump ropes
- Decks of playing cards

## PARISH RECORDS

### 50+ WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

July 2	Tim & Barbara Braband	50 years
August 15	Bill & Judy Leslie	53 years
August 21	Terry & Jane Fox	58 years
August 24	Charles & Debbie Raffensperger	54 years
August 25	Ken & Gloria Unger	60 years
August 26	Martin & Catherine Crabill	72 years

### DEATHS

June 18 Evelyn Fair

## VISITING ST. JAMES

### Office Hours:

Monday—Friday, 9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Wednesdays until 5:30 p.m.

The rear door at the parking lot is open. Come on in!!

## CALLING ST. JAMES AT 717-334-2012

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- 203 Adam Michael**  
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*St. James*

Lutheran Church, ELCA

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