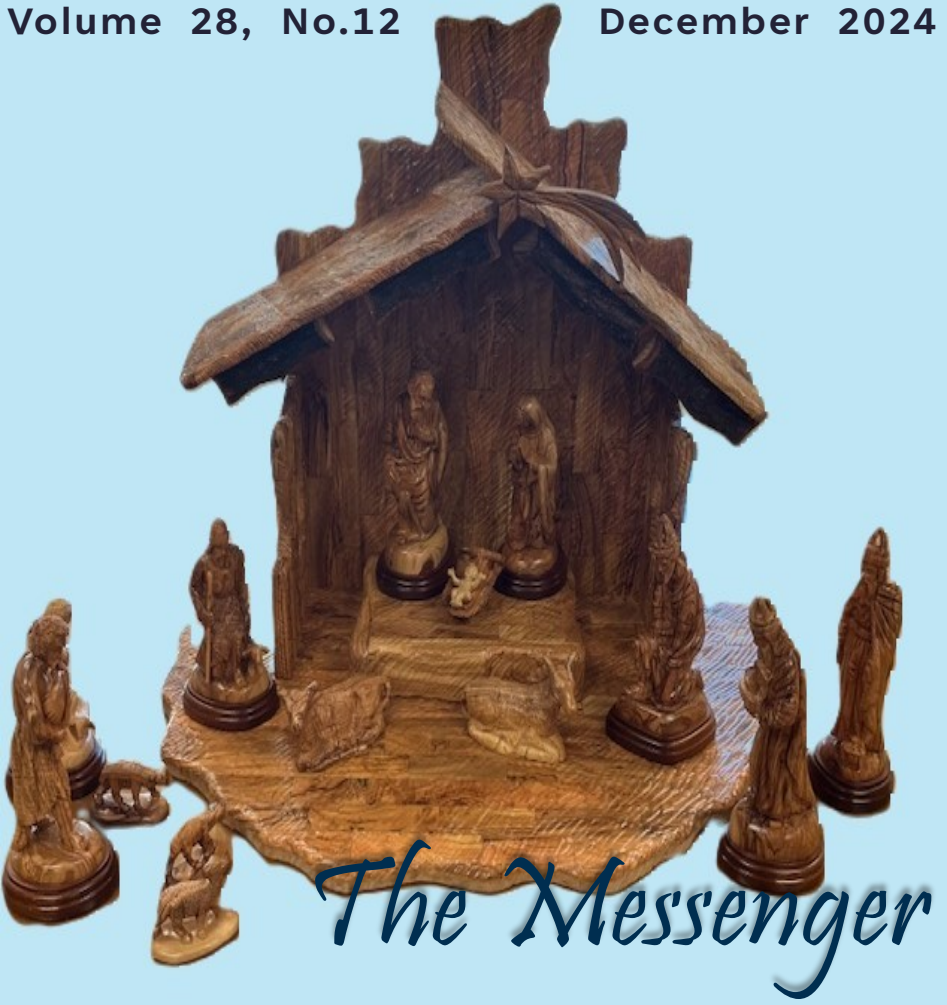


Volume 28, No.12

December 2024



The Messenger

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



St. James Lutheran Church

109 York Street | P.O. Box 4596
Gettysburg, PA 17325-4596



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR ANDREW

“Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” -Luke 21:29-33

It's hard to believe, but December is here. Fall is behind us. Most of the leaves have hit the ground and been bagged or shredded. Halloween decorations have been packed up and stored away. Temperatures continue to drop, and the days are getting shorter. Before we know it, the “s” word will come across the weather apps on our phones and the rakes will be swapped out for shovels. Animals of field and forest are getting ready themselves – some gathering and storing, some preparing to head for warmer climates. All signs of change... of new beginnings...

In Christian circles, this time of year brings about new beginnings through the season of Advent – ushering in a new church year. We know Advent as the season of preparation. And while we spend much of the season preparing for the birth of the babe in the manger, it is also a time to prepare for the return of Christ – for the Second Coming, when the world as we know it will come to an end and all will be judged.



With this, much of our weekend scripture texts throughout Advent depict images of the apocalypse – distress and judgement, nations at war and environmental disasters, the passing away of heaven and earth. Images placed aside the call for repentance of sins. Part of our preparing, creating a new heart within.

In his reflections on Advent, Luther reminds us that the manger and the cross are never far apart. Christ's birth and death (and everything in between), are acts of sacrificial love. From beginning to end, the King of kings emptying himself – sharing in human woe, taking his throne in squalor, under the shadow of terror – that we would experience great joy in him. The faithful, you and me, called to do the same – to give of ourselves for the good of a world in need, that all would experience the Good News of great joy.

So, as we prepare for Christmas during this Advent season and celebrate the birth of our Lord, let us not forget that we have Christ in our neighbor. Treasure his love in your heart and extend it to others. Welcome those the world has cast out and share his peace. Be generous. Be humble. And bring joy. For we have been given the greatest gift of all. A Savior has been born to you, Christ the Lord. The Kingdom of God has come near.

With love,
~Pastor Andrew



Christmas Eve Worship

4:00 PM Daylight Service

6:00 PM Outside Family Service

8:00 PM Evening Candlelight Service; livestreamed

ALL ARE
welcome

St. James is a RIC Community of Faith.



St. James Lutheran Church
109 York Street, Gettysburg
www.StJamesGettysburg.org



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR LIBBY

“For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.”- Psalm 62: 1-2

We all have our talents. For some, it's an amazing artistic ability. For others, it might be writing, public speaking, or critical thinking. If I put together a list of my talents, “patience” would likely be at the bottom of that list. Although I've worked hard to develop patience in different situations, it's not something that comes naturally. With patience often comes waiting, and waiting can stir up anxiety, especially when things don't go according to my plans.

In his Advent devotional submission, Jerry Christianson speaks of the dichotomies in Lutheran belief: “saint/sinner, already/not yet.” It seems like the Advent season is a dichotomy of itself: we are told to wait for the Christ child with patience while surrounded by a world full of holiday travel, Christmas decorations, music, and movies. This contrast can make the quiet of Advent feel both inviting and challenging, a gentle reminder to create space for what matters most.

Psalm 62:1-2 invites us into this space of waiting: “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.” The Psalm reminds us that this kind of waiting isn't just about passing time but about seeking God's presence with expectation and patience. Silence doesn't always come easily, especially when our hearts are filled with worries or lists of things to do to prepare for the holidays. Yet in the stillness, we are encouraged to trust that God is present, even when we can't see what lies ahead. When we pause, we open ourselves to noticing God with us right now—Emmanuel, God with us—in the quiet moments.

This Advent, as we await the Christ child, let's try to embrace the slower, quieter rhythm of this season. Instead of rushing to get to Christmas, let us intentionally pause to notice God's presence in the small, simple moments - cold mornings, birdsong, our children's laughter.

For in our waiting, God is working, drawing near, and preparing our hearts to receive the gift of His Son. May this season of waiting renew our hope and peace, preparing us for the joy of Christ's arrival.

With love and thanksgiving,
Pastor Libby



ADVENT MID WEEK SERIES

This Advent season we are once again returning to our mid-week worship services. We are grateful to be serving dinner every week before worship. Our theme this year is “Finding Joy In The Darkness.”

Join us for delicious food and fellowship, and stay to listen to special messages by members of our congregation. Dinner is served weekly at 5:15 pm and worship will begin at 6:30 pm. Please bring a covered dish to share.



FINDING JOY IN THE DARKNESS

MIDWEEK ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES
DINNER AT 5:15 P.M. & WORSHIP AT 6:30 P.M.

Wed, December 4	Emily Harte
Wed, December 11	Kyle Smith
Wed, December 18	Cara Russo

St. James is an RIC Community of Faith.



“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” Luke 2:1-20



YOUNG AT HEART: KEEPING UP WITH THE KIDS

Adam Michael, Director of Youth & Family Ministry

Santa. Presents. Jack Frost. Elves. Reindeer. Frosty the Snowman. Stockings. Christmas trees. Brightly colored lights.

None of these were present at the time of Jesus' birth. Nor were the big, ceremonious church celebrations in honor of the little guy, for obvious reasons.

All year long, we've worked on renovating our souls and concepts that we consider to be inherently good. But this year during the Christmas season, we'll be taking a little detour into restoration – the act of returning something to its former place or condition.

As we head into the Yuletide season, we will look at Christmas and try to peel away the secular layers and focus on what Jesus' birth means for us. We'll spend some time thinking about angels, King Herod's reign, the birth of Christ, the three wise men, and more. We'll also look for ways to spread Christmas cheer around the community.

We'll still take some time to celebrate some of the more modern traditions as well, mostly through games and crafts. We may even spend some time learning about Old St. Nick and Luther's love of Christmas trees.

All of that will culminate at our WaterLife service on Dec. 15 when we put on a presentation of *Santa's Not So Silent Night*. Have a wonderful Advent season!

In Christ's love,
Adam Michael
Youth and Family Ministry Director





Check out some of these photos from our recent youth events:

Preparing for the Youth Group Bake Sale

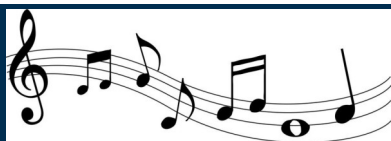


St. James Family Halloween Party



MUSIC NOTES

Jonathan Noel, Minister of Music



*Oh, come, little children, oh, come, one and all.
Oh, come to the cradle in Bethlehem's stall.
Come look in the manger this glorious night,
And see the Lord Jesus in heavenly light.*

– An Old German Carol

Those who come to the December 15th WaterLife Service will hear a new Christmas song written by our fourth and fifth graders. During Wednesday after-school youth group, the children are divided into three rotations according to grade level. Not only are there too many children to teach all at once, but the division also allows us to consider developmental differences among the grade levels as we teach. Fourth and fifth grade students enjoy extra challenges and opportunities for leadership. And so, I am currently coaching them through the process of writing a new Christmas song.

We are starting with a familiar tune - Jingle Bells. We are learning about chorus and verse. We are learning about phrases, poetic meter, and counting syllables. These things form the framework. Now we start the task of replacing each syllable of Jingle Bells with a syllable of new text so that it fits the overall rhyme scheme and makes sense. To begin this task, each student writes down keywords as the Christmas Story is read from the gospel of Luke. Next, we form small groups to brainstorm ideas for new lyrics from those keywords. Finally, we share our ideas and decide collectively on final lyrics. I will typeset the final project using music notation software so that each student can take home a professional-looking copy of the music with their names on it. Then we will share the song with the other grade levels so that everyone can also learn it before it is introduced to the congregation during the next WaterLife Service.



I am looking forward to hearing the finished song and eager for the moment when the children get to sing it for the congregation in worship. I hope this will be a positive and memorable experience for the students.

Christmas Blessings,
Jonathan Noel

St. James Welcomes A New Nativity

This Advent season we will be introducing a new decoration to the worship space. A portion of the Mission Fund was used to purchase a large olive wood nativity for the worship space. It was supported by the Mission Fund because it is supporting artisans in the Holy Land who congregation members met while on their trip to Israel in 2023.

Last year, in my Advent message, I shared with the St. James congregation traditions that I experienced as a child in my home congregation, Bethel Lutheran in Frederick, MD. One of them was the nativity. Each week we would introduce new characters to the nativity as we prepared for the birth of Christ. The cow and sheep would be there first, along with the empty manger – their feeding trough. The shepherd would be out in the fields with their flock, further away from the nativity. Eventually, Joseph and Mary would enter the scene, and then finally baby Jesus would be part of the candlelit processional on Christmas Eve. The wisemen would make their way on Epiphany. The story would develop, just as the excitement would develop for the children in our congregation. I am thrilled that we will be adding this excitement and means of story telling to the worship space of St. James.

Many thanks to Carole Smith for her diligence on all of the olive wood purchases and sales. She made the process of selecting and purchasing beautiful artwork for the church easy and fun. And many thanks to the members of the Mission Fund for supporting this endeavor that will be part of our Christmas traditions at St. James!

Katy Clowney
Church Administrator

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
1 1ST OF ADVENT 8:15AM Worship 9:30AM Sunday School & Fellowship Battery & Cork Collection 10:45AM Worship 5-6:30PM MS Youth Group 6:30-8:30PM HS Youth Grp	2 Office Closed 6:30PM Property, Library	3 1-4PM Office closed for staff meeting 5:30PM ELC Staff Meeting, via Zoom 6:30PM Evangelism & Fellowship, Library 6:30PM Worship & Music, via Zoom	4 6:45AM M 9:30AM C 3:30-5PM 5:15 PM 6:30PM —
8 2ND OF ADVENT 8:15AM Worship, Martin Luther Choir Sings 9:30AM Sunday School 10:45AM Worship 5-6:30PM MS Youth Group 6:30-8:30PM HS Youth Grp	9 Office Closed 6:30PM Executive Committee, Library 7PM Personnel, Library	10 1-4PM Office closed for staff meeting 5:30PM ELC Governance, Library	11 6:45AM M 9:30AM C 3:30-5PM 5:15 PM 6:30PM —
15 3RD OF ADVENT 8:15AM Worship 9:30AM Sunday School, Youth Ministry, Rm 301 10:45AM Waterlife Worship & Christmas Pageant 12PM Miracle Workers, Lunch at McDonalds 5-6:30PM MS Youth Group 6:30-8:30PM HS Youth Grp	16 Office Closed	17 1-4PM Office closed for staff meeting 4:30PM Gettysburg CARES, Library 7PM Creation Care Taskforce, via Zoom	18 6:45AM M 9:30AM C 3:30-5PM 5:15 PM 6:30PM — After the Council, L
22 4TH OF ADVENT 8:15AM Worship, Martin Luther Choir Sings 9:30AM Sunday School, 10:45AM Worship 5-6:30PM MS Youth Group 6:30-8:30PM HS Youth Grp	23 Office Closed	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 4PM Worship 6PM Worship – Outdoor Family Service 8PM Worship	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS 9:30AM F 10AM Wa
29 1ST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS 9:30AM Fellowship 10:00AM Worship—Lessons & Carols	30 Office Closed	31 1-4PM Office closed for staff meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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MS & HS Breakfast Child Care Chapel 1 K-5 Youth Grp - Fellowship -Advent Mid Week	5 12-2PM Library Committee, Library 7PM St. James Choir, Music Room	6 1:30PM Prison Society, Music Room	7 8AM Breakfast with Santa 5:30PM Worship 6:30PM Miracle Workers, Board Game Night, Gathering Area
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MS & HS Breakfast Child Care Chapel 1 K-5 Youth Grp - Fellowship -Advent Mid Week	12 10AM Bible Study, Gathering Area 1-4PM History & Archives, Gathering Area 7PM St. James Choir, Music Room	13	14 9AM Holiday Family Outreach 5:30PM Worship
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DECEMBER 2024

MS & HS Breakfast Child Care Chapel 1 K-5 Youth Grp - Fellowship -Advent Mid Week Advent Service, Library	19 10AM Bible Study, Gathering Area 12-2PM Library Committee, Library 7PM St. James Choir, Music Room	20	21 5:30PM Worship 6:30PM Miracle Workers, Movie Night, Gathering Area
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Y CHRISTMAS !! Office Closed Fellowship orship	26 Office Closed	27	28 5:30PM Worship
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Between Christmas and New Years, church staff will be taking some time off to enjoy with their families, and they will only be in the office to complete essential tasks. If you need to stop in to the office, please make an appointment.

AA: Mon-Sat at Noon // Wed at 7:30AM & Fri at 7PM, Music Room

AIAnon: Mon at 7PM, Rm 204

Lust Recovery: Wed at 6:30PM, Rm 204

Troop 79: Tues, 6:30PM, upstairs level // Cub Scout Pack: Thurs, 7PM dining room

WORSHIP PREVIEWS

NOVEMBER 30 & DECEMBER 1: 1ST OF ADVENT

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Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.

Preacher: Pastor Andrew R. Geib

Readings: Jeremiah 33:14-16 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Psalm 25:1-10 Luke 21:25-36

Fellowship, hosted by History & Archives and Christian Ed.

DECEMBER 7 & 8: 2ND OF ADVENT

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer’s voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi’s prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the “salvation of God.”

Preacher: Pastor Libby Baker-Mikesell

Readings: Malachi 3:1-4 Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 1:68-79 Luke 3:1-6

DECEMBER 14 & 15: 3RD OF ADVENT


Christ’s presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one “more powerful” than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

Preacher: Pastor Andrew R. Geib

Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-20 Philippians 4:4-7
Isaiah 12:2-6 Luke 3:7-18

COUNCIL CORNER, NOV. 20 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Approval of Minutes from 10/16/24 meeting: Approved
- Treasurer's Report, Church Financials/ELC Financials: The \$40,000 donation for the van is in the budget under the "Liability" line item...It is now called the Van Fund.
- Acceptance of Treasurer's Report
- Presentation by Ashley Drechsler, Director - St. James Early Learning Center: Ashley updated the council regarding new curriculum, the possibility of a new room for more students, how special-needs students are serviced, and how the ELC was named Best Early Learning Center in Adams County for the second year in a row.
- Acceptance of New Members via affirmation of faith – none until a class can be scheduled after the holidays, via Baptism – Emma Sachse to be baptized 12/22/24
- Regarding new members- it was recommended that the Evangelism Committee arrange a small "welcome package" for new members. Possible items to include: SJLC Coffee Cup, SJLC Tee Shirt, Small prayer book, information about SJLC
- Hurricane Relief Update: To date, St. James has collected \$21,458 (contributions from the congregation with matching funds from St. James). The funds will be disbursed as such: Lutheran Disaster Response to receive \$10,000, Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Asheville, NC) to receive @ \$5,734, Church on the Circle, St. Armands Key Lutheran Church (Sarasota, FL) to receive @ \$5,734. The church collected 38 Lowe's buckets, which will be distributed in 2025 by Christian World Services (CWS). Scott Zimmerer organized project & delivered buckets to New Windsor, MD.
- Church Van Follow-Up from Congregation Meeting, Nov. 17, 2024: A motion passed to form a Church Van Committee to research & purchase a 12 -15 person vehicle. The committee also will speak with the Personnel Committee regarding the language of its committee policy.
- Youth Representative on Council: Discussion about the possibility of a youth member with full voting power, aged 16-18 and who is confirmed. Two incentives to attract potential representatives: a possible recurring college / training scholarship and/or a cash



payment for a Youth Group project headed by the youth representative. Glenn Munsee to draft a proposal to be presented at the Dec. council meeting. Council also discussed adding a Young Adult (aged 18-30) voting member.

- Establish a group of Council members to study and potentially rewrite Chapter 12 (Council Duties) of the St. James Constitution and Bylaws: A committee headed by M. Withrow & including S. Sanders and W. Lane will discuss possible language regarding Council Duties in Chapter 12. Current language is dated and difficult to understand. Any potential changes to the Constitution and Bylaws to be approved by the Congregation at a Congregation Meeting.
- Wrap Up of Congregation Meeting, 11/17/24: A. Haynes thanked council members for a successful meeting and for continued Council engagement with the congregation. He also recognized the Youth Group for feeding meters, thus avoiding parking tickets. Moving forward, the council discussed: changing start time to 12:15 (to allow for setup and after service time), better ways to count attendees/voting members during the meeting, moving the Secretary/Recorder closer to the front for more visibility and engagement during the meeting, & better management of the microphones so that everyone can hear. The next meeting will not be covered by Zoom; congregants who cannot attend the meeting can watch the livestream but they will not be able to vote.
- Council Mission – Any Results/Stories? - No new stories regarding the Council Mission of inviting people to church. Upcoming events at SJLC present an opportunity to fulfill our Council Mission. Pastor Andrew encouraged Council to share our events several ways including using social media. Upcoming events discussed: Thanksgiving Eve dinner & bluegrass festival/service, Christmas Breakfast with Santa (12/7/24), Advent midweek services, Christmas Eve services.

Continued on p. 18

December 5th Sunday Servant Event

St. James will be collecting items for Tender Care Pregnancy Consultation Services in Gettysburg for our 5th Sunday Servant Event in December. The branch will be up the weekend of December 21 & 22. Items should be returned by the weekend of December 28 & 29.

Tender Care provides a safe and non-judgmental place where individuals can discuss their pregnancy related concerns. They provide services including pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, pregnancy education, and baby supplies to those in need, for no cost. Currently, the Gettysburg location is in need of the following items:

Receiving blankets

Swaddles

health kits

Phillip Avent bottles 0 months

Clothing outfits - Girl: NB, 0-3, 9month

Clothing outfits - Boy: NB, 9 month, 12month

Fleece sleepers (boy & girl) sizes NB -12 month

Baby caps & mitts

Diaper bags

Diapers sizes 4, 5, 6 & 7

Tender Care

Pregnancy Consultation Services

Celebrate the Birth of Christ!

Christmas Morning

Wednesday December 25

10:00 AM

ALL ARE
welcome
www.StJamesGettysburg.org



Olive Wood and Chica Bean Sale

Over the coming month, St. James members will have the opportunity to see and purchase olive wood items, jewelry, and Chica Bean coffee products before many of our weekly services. A table displaying the items will be set up in the hall outside of the worship space.

These items make great holiday gifts and they support great causes ! The jewelry and the olive wood products are handmade and support artisans in the Holy Land. In addition, Chica Bean uses a sales model that ensures that the coffee producers in Guatemala (many of whom are female) are paid just prices for their products.

Look for the sales table on the following dates:

Sundays 12/1, 12/8, 12/15 and 12/22 - in the morning, up until the beginning of the second service

Wednesdays 12/4, 12/11 and 12/18—beginning at 5:00 pm

Tuesday 12/24—beginning at 5:00 pm

You may be able to catch the products displayed on some Saturday evenings as well !

Chica
Bean 
G U A T E M A L A



PARISH RECORDS

50+ Wedding Anniversaries

December 12	Jerry & Linda Neth	60 years
December 27	Pete & Martha Riley	55 years

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

Continued from p. 15

Good for Church/Good for God/Good for Council

- Will Lane noted a successful Pathways to Racial Judgment dinner and lecture recently held at ULS.
- A St. James dinner group centered conversation on the Creation Care Team's recent film on sustainable agriculture at ULS.
- Thanks to Pastor Andrew for a great sermon Nov. 17.
- Thanks to Pastor Libby and Pastor Andrew for their email regarding election day.
- New member, Paige Betch, to share her welcome at St. James. Paige is a former CARES guest.

Next meeting: Dec. 18, 2024, following the mid-week Advent service

LOOKING FOR 4-6 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ST. JAMES IS FORMING A COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE OUR NEW CHURCH VAN. INTERESTED IN SERVING? HAVE QUESTIONS?

CONTACT ALAN HAYNES AT
CARDREAMER88@COMCAST.NET OR
717-778-8102 FOR MORE DETAILS



VISITING ST. JAMES

Office Hours:

Monday—office closed

Tuesday—Friday, 9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.



CALLING ST. JAMES AT 717-334-2012

- 201 Katy Clowney**
Church Administrator
kclowney@StJamesGettysburg.org
- 202 Julie Albert**
Administrative Coordinator
jalbert@StJamesGettysburg.org
- 203 Adam Michael**, off on Fridays
Director of Youth & Family Ministry
youth@StJamesGettysburg.org
- 205 Pr. Libby Baker-Mikesell**, off on Fridays
Associate Pastor
lbakermikesell@StJamesGettysburg.org
- 206 Pr. Andrew R. Geib**, off on Fridays
Lead Pastor
ageib@StJamesGettysburg.org
- 207 Jonathan Noel**, off on Fridays
Minister of Music
jnoel@StJamesGettysburg.org
- 215 Tom Bender**, off on Fridays
Building Superintendent
sexton@StJamesGettysburg.org





St. James

Lutheran Church, ELCA

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PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

LABEL