

Vol. 71, No 7

July 2026

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

717-334-2012 | StJamesGettysburg.org

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



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR ANDREW

“Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

-Matthew 11:28-30

As we gather for worship on the first weekend of the month – over July 4th – our three-year lectionary draws our attention to Matthew chapter 11. To Jesus speaking to those left exhausted by the pressures of the life of discipleship.

We find John the Baptist imprisoned for publicly condemning Herod Antipas for his unlawful marriage. As John sits behind bars, he begins to doubt if Jesus really is the one to come – the one more powerful... who will baptize with the Holy Spirit... who will cut down every tree that does not bear good fruit...

So, Jesus sends John’s disciples to remind him that the kingdom of heaven has indeed come near; The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed are those who do not fall away... That those who seek to follow him are to repent for their wrongdoings and take up his yoke and learn from him.

It doesn’t take a whole lot of searching to discover the weariness of our world. All around us, the weary and burdened – the imprisoned, the exhausted and overwhelmed, the anxious and fearful. We see it in parents trying to provide for their families, in caregivers tending loved ones through illness, in workers uncertain about the future, in those carrying grief that never seems to leave them, in those who feel isolated and alone, in our heightened political climate, in the worries of the world that seem too big to overcome.

At the same time, we live in a culture that all too often tells us to work more, achieve more, and depend only upon ourselves. Yet the more we strain against the weight, the heavier the burden becomes.

This, as the gospel reminds us, is where Jesus meets us. Not at a distance shouting instructions, but right beside us, placing himself under the yoke with us – sharing the weight, bearing our sins, and even death itself upon the cross. Because of this, because Christ is yoked to us, you and I and all the faithful are freed and commanded to be yoked to one another – to bear one another's burdens, pray for one another, forgive one another, and serve one another... to become signs of God's kingdom, reminding our neighbor in need they don't have to carry their burden alone...

Perhaps the challenge before us – as Independence Day reminds us – is to do exactly this. As we give thanks for freedoms granted here in the U.S., solidified through the sacrifices of those who have gone before us, we should be reminded that freedom in Christ is not the freedom to live for ourselves alone. It is the freedom to love and serve our neighbor. As Luther reminds us; A Christian is an utterly dutiful man, servant of all, subject to all.

So, people who follow Christ; What does this look like for you? How are you living your discipleship out in daily life? How are you walking with Jesus that you might relieve the burdens of others and bring new life to those around you? How are you inviting the weary to find rest in you through the promise of your redeemer?

~Pastor Andrew

ENDOWMENT FUND APPLICATIONS

The St. James Endowment Committee is accepting applications to utilize endowment funds. Applications are due Monday, July 20.

Find & download the application here:
stjamesgettysburg.org/about/committees

ST. JAMES BOOK MARKS

You can find these recent library acquisitions on our book cart this month.

The Water Princess” by Susan Verde

Imagine needing to walk four miles each day (a distance of 70 football fields) just to have clean water to drink, cook, bathe, and wash clothes.

“The Water Princess” by Susan Verde is based on the similar childhood experience of model Georgie Badiel. Born in Burkina Faso, "Gie Gie" and her mother make a long and arduous walk each day to their closest source of fresh water. During this daily journey, Gie Gie dreams that she, a self appointed water princess, will someday create a way to bring clean water to her village. Years later, Georgie, working with the foundation Ryan’s Well, is now helping bring clean water wells to Burkino Faso and beyond. This beautiful book, best suited for children aged 4-8, features simple dialogue and the striking, earth toned illustrations of Peter H. Reynolds.

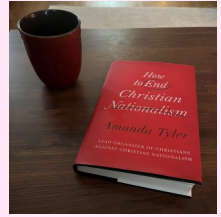
“How to End Christian Nationalism” by Amanda Tylor

Christian nationalism has been a topic lurking on the fringes of our awareness for many years. There’s been no need to pay attention because it has seemed to have so little to do with the concerns of our daily lives, and nothing that would apply to our church life at St. James.

Unfortunately, this comfortable status quo seems to no longer to be the case, and it may be actively threatening the very Christian reality in which we have grounded our lives for decades. If you are feeling confused, threatened, and out of control by what appears daily on our news and social media, you are not alone. The subject of Christian nationalism has taken on a life of it's own.

In “How to End Christian Nationalism,” Tylor explores this topic in depth from her Baptist upbringing, and attempts to answer many questions about this new reality and how to apply it to our Christian/Lutheran lives.

Through this exploration, Tylor provides us with a frightening yet illuminating foundation for better understanding this 21st century crisis of interaction between national identity and religion. This selection may make a good follow-up to our recent Bible Study book "Separation of Church and Hate."



COME!



SUMMER
MOVIE
SERIES

THURSDAYS @ 10AM
with Pastor Andrew

July 2
A Dog's Purpose

up next:
Won't You Be My Neighbor
Soul
A Man Called Otto

VBS 2026
Volunteers



THANK YOU





YOUNG AT HEART: KEEPING UP WITH THE KIDS

Adam Michael, Director of Youth & Family Ministry

I can do all things, through God who strengthens me! Especially if I've got a friendly seal on my side and a snowball in my pocket.

Our Phillippians 4:13 verse carried the day during this summer's Snowball Mountain Challenge-themed Vacation Bible School, co-led by Christ Lutheran Church in June. Through it all, kids learned how they can share their gifts, be brave, give their all, spend meaningful time in prayer and spread hope all around!

Roughly 130 kids attended at least one of our daily rotations, which focused on stories about Joseph interpreting dreams, Esther showing courage, the widow's offering, Jesus praying in the garden, and Peter and John healing a man at the temple. They danced, sang, prayed, played games, created art, performed science experiments, ate story-themed snacks and listened attentively to understand how God's word still impacts us today.

Bringing it all together, we challenged our kids to step up and make monetary donation for CARES (Combined Area Resources for Emergency Shelter). Collectively, the group gathered more than \$450 for our winter weather shelter program! The congregations, with a strong push from Christ Lutheran, also collected dozens of hats, gloves, scarves and other winter-weather attire for Holiday Family Outreach to distribute this Christmas season.

I want to thank all of our many volunteers who showed up with a positive attitude and a love for teaching and learning. This event energizes youth ministry in a way that is only possible with all of your incredible support. It's an annual reminder that the church is not a building or a staff, the church is the people!

In Christ's love,

Adam Michael
Youth and Family Director
St. James Lutheran Church



Some action shots from our activity filled week of VBS:



MUSIC NOTES

Jonathan Noel, Minister of Music



As a musician pondering the 250th anniversary of the United States, I naturally think about the musical tapestry of our national celebrations. I think of the familiar strains of John Philip Sousa's great marches such as "The Stars and Stripes Forever" or "The Washington Post." I think about songs in our collective memory such as Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land," Samuel Francis Smith's "My Country 'Tis of Thee," or Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic." And of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention "The Star-Spangled Banner." This song began life as a poem written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key as he witnessed the British ships in the Baltimore Harbor fail in their attempt to destroy Fort McHenry. The words were soon set to a popular drinking song of that time. However, it wasn't until more than a century later (1931), that the song became our official National Anthem.

The first stanza is a question. Watching from a ship in the harbor, the answer still unclear in the dimness of dawn and smoke of the battle, Key asks: O say does that star-spangled banner still wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave? The second stanza answers the question. Yes, the flag is still there. The question mark becomes an exclamation point: 'Tis the star-spangled banner - O long may it wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave! The controversial third stanza taunts enslaved men who went to fight for the British in exchange for freedom while the fourth speaks of the future, acknowledging that there will be more battles to fight: And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

But the question posed in the first stanza, standing on its own as it does at every sporting event, remains a question unanswered. The song is about much more than a flag over a fort in 1814. It is about asking tougher questions. Can freedom endure for everyone? Can democratic institutions survive challenges? Can a diverse population remain united? Can the country better realize its own ideals? This anthem asks us to hold up a mirror to ourselves and to address our shortcomings, to desire the common good,

and to persevere in our work for liberty and justice for all. It is a call for us both today and in the future to make sure that the ideals represented by that star-spangled banner are still there every time the smoke clears.



Who's going to sing in the **Summer Choir?**

SUNDAYS
Rehearse
@10:25 am,
Sing during the
10:45 am
service

ALL VOICES WELCOME!

**MARTIN LUTHER
CHOIR**

SING IN WORSHIP 2nd Sunday
4th Sunday
at 8:15AM Worship

**REHEARSE
MORNING OF
AT 7:55 A.M.**

ALL VOICES WELCOME!

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

1
9am Youth Activ
Tree Trekkers

AA: Mon-Sat at Noon, Wed at 7:30AM, Fri. at 7:30AM, & Fri at 7PM, Music P
AIAnon: Mon at 7PM, Rm 204 Lust Recovery: Wed 6:30PM, Rm 204

**5 6TH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST**
8:15am Worship
9:30am Fellowship,
Creation Care
Recycling Collection
10:45am Worship

6
**Church Office Closed
(in recognition of
July 4th)**
6:30pm Property
Committee, Library
6:39pm Common
Ground, Music Room

7
1-4pm Church
Office Closed
5:30pm ELC Staff
Meeting, Zoom
7pm Evangelism &
Fellowship, Library

8
9am Youth Activ
Tree Trekkers

ELC

**12 7TH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST**
8:15am Worship,
Martin Luther Choir
Sings
10:45am Worship

13
Church Office Closed
1pm Executive,
Library
2pm Personnel,
Library

14
1-4 pm Church
Office Closed
5:30pm ELC
Governance,
Library

15
11am Sustaina
Small Group, LI
6:30pm Council
Library

MS & HS WORK CAMP—JULY

**19 8TH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST**
8:15am Worship
10:45am Worship

20
Church Office Closed
**Endowment
Applications Due**

21
1-4pm Church
Office Closed
7pm Creation Care
Taskforce, Zoom

22
9am Youth Activ
Tree Trekkers

**26 9TH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST**
8:15am Worship,
Martin Luther Choir
Sings
10:45am Worship

27
Church Office Closed
5:30pm Finance
Committee, Zoom
7pm World Out-
reach, Zoom

28
1-4pm Church
Office Closed
4:30pm Gettysburg
CARES, Library
7pm Rayna's
Readers, Music
Room

29
9am MS & HS Yo
Cunningham Fal

Rainbow Rose Silver Triangle Group—2nd and 4th Tues. @ 1 pm, Rm. 303
Rainbow Rose All Identities Group—3rd Tuesday @ 5 pm, Rm. 303
Rainbow Rose Teen Group - 2nd & 4th Sunday at 1pm, Rm. 303

ay

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

ity—

2
10am Bible Study,
Gathering Area
12pm Library
Committee, Library
6pm Family, Faith &
Fun Night

3
ELC Closed

4 **INDEPENDENCE DAY**
5:30pm Worship
**Creation Care Recycling
Collection**



Room

9
10am Bible Study,
Gathering Area
1pm History &
Archives, Gathering
Area
6pm Family, Faith &
Fun Night

10
1:30pm Prison
Society, Music Room

11
5:30pm Worship

BAKE SALE, JULY 8-10, 9AM—11 AM

bility
brary
,

16
10am Bible Study,
Gathering Area
12pm Library
Committee, Library

17

18
5:30pm Worship

JULY 2026

12-17

23
10am Bible Study,
Gathering Area
6pm Family, Faith &
Fun Night

24

25
5:30pm Worship

outh
ls Trip

30
10am Bible Study,
Gathering Area
6pm Family, Faith &
Fun Night

31

- Gettysburg Choral Society: Mon @ 6:30 pm, Music Rm (Worship Space -1st Mon. of the month)
- Troop 79: Tues, 6:30PM, upstairs level
Cub Scout Pack: Thurs, 7PM dining room

WORSHIP PREVIEWS

JULY 4TH & 5TH: SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. Jesus associates with those often excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with our own selfish desires and seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather to be refreshed by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Gathered around word, water, and meal, we find rest for our souls.

Preacher: Pastor Andrew Geib

Readings: Zechariah 9:9-12

Romans 7:15-25a

Psalm 145:8-14

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Fellowship, hosted by the Property and Library Committees

JULY 11TH & 12TH: SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.

Preacher: Pastor Libby Baker-Mikesell

Readings: Isaiah 55:10-13

Romans 8:1-11

Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

JULY 18TH & 19TH: EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

Preacher: Pastor Andrew Geib

Readings: Isaiah 44:6-8 Romans 8:12-25
Psalm 86:11-17 Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

JULY 25TH & 26TH: NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

Preacher: Pastor Libby Baker-Mikesell

Readings: 1 Kings 3:5-12 Romans 8:26-39
Psalm 119:129-136 Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

COUNCIL CORNER, JUNE 17 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

En Bloc Agenda: Approved

- Approval of Minutes from May 20, 2026
- Acceptance of Treasurer's Report, Church Financials & ELC Financials

Committee Reports:

Personnel Committee – The committee forwarded 2 motions which were approved by council. The motions were as follows:

- Recommend to Council that the former office of the Music Minister be designated as the Building Superintendent's office, with the move completed by 8/1/26, including the purchase of necessary equipment and furnishings; the Property Committee will ensure the space is ready by that date.
- Recommend to Council that Pastor Geib investigate and take a three-month sabbatical in the summer of 2027, with budgetary details to be developed with the Personnel Committee.

Unfinished Business:

Youth and Community Visioning Update: The next step in the proposed expansion project is to hire an architect to give St. James the building parameters and possible pricing. Architect Heather Ross has been asked for her input, and a meeting has been scheduled for the first week in July. The Endowment Committee has suggested a Minute for Mission be scheduled in the near future to inform the congregation regarding the progress of this project.

CARES Update: Pr. Andrew noted he's been impressed with the work being done so far by the CARES board regarding the 2026-27 season.

New Business:

Election of Council Officers – Mark Withrow was elected president for a second term, Jim Flanagan was elected vice president, and Debra Baker was elected secretary for a second term. These officers, along with the new council members, will be installed at the 10:45 am service on July 12 (tentative).

Wedding approval—Council approved the wedding of Laura Hess and Dalton Redding (non-members) at St. James on 10/10/26.



Pastor Libby will officiate.

Youth Volunteer Background Checks - St. James currently requires youth volunteers to obtain 3 PA issued clearances. Our insurance is recommending to add FBI fingerprinting and a national sex offender registry check, as additional clearances. (The ELC already implements these additional clearances for all adults in the ELC.) As of August 1, 2026, these additional background checks will be required for anyone currently working with St. James youth, and /or children in the ELC. They will also be required for anyone who wants to volunteer in the future to work with our youth in any capacity, and there will be no exceptions. There is a \$25 fee for the FBI fingerprinting, which may be reimbursable.

Committee meetings during worship services -The council adopted the following resolution – *“Because worship is central to congregational life, the Council strongly recommends that no committee meetings be scheduled during any regularly scheduled worship services taking place on St. James property.”* This resolution will be circulated to all committee chairs.

Good for Church/Good for God/Good for Council

- VBS was a great success, and thanks to all who volunteered.
- Thanks to Pastor Libby, the staff and the congregation for all their prayers for the travelers on the recent Egypt trip. Thanks again to Pastor Libby for “holding down the fort” and to Pastor Andrew for sharing photos and commentary about the trip on Facebook.
- The Pride Parade and the Pride booth at the Rec Park were great, and the RIC Committee has been commended. Having the celebration at the Rec Park for the first time, with its wonderful turnout, gave Pride Week even more significance.
- Bishop Herr will be preaching at all three services June 20-21.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 15 at 6:30 pm

RELAY FOR LIFE

Relay For Life (RFL) of Adams County will be held on Saturday, August 8th from 5:00 PM-10:00 PM at Oakside Park in Biglerville. RFL was started over 40 years ago and is a main fundraiser of the American Cancer Society. This year's theme is "Red, White, Relay: Lighting the Way to a Cure." There will be a ceremony to celebrate survivors. If you are a survivor or know of survivors, we would love to have them register, attend, and be honored.

This year, there are 2 teams participating that include members of St. James: *The Miracle Workers* and the *Hope-Full Heels*. Kevin Varish will have his food truck there and also Hunterstown Ruritan's ice cream truck will be present. Pastor Libby and many members of the congregation will be volunteering at the event. A local singer, Amy Rose will perform at 7:00 PM and our own Ernie Kranias will perform at 8:00 PM.

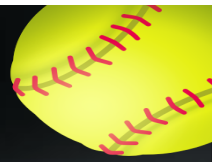
The Luminaria Ceremony takes place at 9:00 PM. Pastor Andrew will open the ceremony, Shirley Sanders is MC and Holly Musselman will share her cancer journey. The ceremony remembers those whose cancer battle has ended, supports patients on their journey, and celebrates survivors.

We invite congregation members and the community to bring their chairs, and come out to support this cause. Please check out our website at: www.relayforlife.org/paadamscounty. Thank you to all for your ongoing support throughout the year.



ST. JAMES SOFTBALL

ALL GAMES
START AT 6:30



THURSDAY
07/02/26

VS FIRST
BAPTIST

@ FIRST
BAPTIST

MONDAY
07/06/26

VS EVANGELICAL
HOLINESS

@ FIRST
BAPTIST

TUESDAY
07/14/26

VS KEYMAR

@ FIRST
BAPTIST

MONDAY
07/20/26

VS BARLOW

@ FIRST
BAPTIST

WEDNESDAY
07/29/26

VS FELLOWSHIP
BAPTIST

@ FIRST
BAPTIST



PARISH RECORDS

50+ Wedding Anniversaries

July 14	Tim & Barbara Braband	53 years
July 20	Alan & Cindy Zepp	51 years
July 24	Walter & Janice Krug	55 years
July 26	Gary & Alan Ratay	57 years

WORLD OUTREACH BULLETIN BOARD

World Outreach recently created a new bulletin board. If you are entering the church from the rear parking lot, the board is located in the hallway on the right, just past the doors to the church office. We invite you to write your global prayer concerns on a post-it note and post them on the board. You can post a country name, a more specific area, or a project you know of, with its location, that needs our prayers.



Post-it notes and pens are provided, in cups to the right of the map. World Outreach will add threads to connect our prayers.

For Whom Shall We Pray?

See the World Map
Spread with threads
St. James to places
Across the seas
Encourage additions
HIS LOVE connections.*

* Poem by Mary Folkemer, member of World Outreach



St. James Early Learning Center

Bake Sale

July 8, 9, 10 – 9am-11am
on the Lincoln Square

VISITING ST. JAMES OR CALLING (717-334-2012)

Office Hours:

Monday—office closed

Tuesday—Friday, 9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Wednesdays until 5:30 pm

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 Todd Izydorski, off on Fridays

Building Superintendent

tizydorski@stjamesgettysburg.org





St. James

Lutheran Church, ELCA

P.O. Box 4596

Gettysburg, PA 17325-4596

PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

LABEL