

MAY 2023

ST JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH EPISTLE

A CONGREGATION
OF THE
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF AMERICA

IN THIS ISSUE:

Poem from Pastor

Council Updates

Fellowship: June Picnic

VBS: Operation Restoration

Preschool Retirement

Our Outreach Tree

Outreach Efforts

Stewardship Thoughts

Digital Updates

Time and Talents Survey

Help Wanted!

In Our Prayers

And more...



ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

111 Peter Road, Southbury CT 06488

www.stjamesct.org

[@stjamesctlutheran](https://www.instagram.com/stjamesctlutheran)

203.264.6446

stjamesctlutheran@gmail.com

Rev. Abigail Lilja Johnson, Pastor

(she/her)

pastor@stjamesct.org

203-450-6454 (call or text)

Mission

We affirm and spread the Word of God in all areas of life. We focus on nurturing, serving and uplifting our members and local community by practicing love in action as exemplified by Jesus Christ through our preschool and other outreach services.



Vision

We believe we are saved by God's grace through faith alone, proclaiming our faith in the Holy Trinity. As church, we manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ, by joining in prayer and action. We worship together as a community through reading of the Word, celebration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness and service. We see our shared Christian faith as an integral part of our daily lives and use the gifts of the Spirit for our lives together and for our callings in the world.

CHURCH STAFF

Genie Bisch

*Parish
Administrator*

Abigail Manville

*Media &
Communications*

Leslie Broch


*Director of
St. James Preschool*

*Please contact the office **before** dropping by should you require assistance.
Building is locked at all times for security. Thank you!*

May 2023

Regular calendar updates on our website
<https://stjamesct.org/calendar/>

S M T W T F S

	1 3pm Service @ The Watermark VBS Registration Open to all	2 10am Worship & Music 7pm YAFM	3	4	5	6
7 11:30am MEF 11:30am VBS Teacher Info	8	9 1pm Ladies' Fellowship	10 7:30pm Preschool Board	11 10am Service @ The Lutheran Home	12	13 9:30am Men's Fellowship 11:30am Rice Restock
14 <i>Mother's Day</i>	15 <i>Epistle Contributions</i>	16 1pm <i>Evangelism</i> 4pm <i>Fellowship</i>	17	18 7pm <i>Finance & Property</i>	19	20 Homefront Volunteer Day
21 11:30am Guatemala Trip Meeting <i>Last Day of Sunday School</i>	22 10am Preschool Storytime w/ Pastor	23 10am Preschool Storytime w/ Pastor	24 7pm <i>Council</i>	25 7pm <i>VBS Planning</i>	26	27
 28 <i>Pentecost</i>	 29 <i>Memorial Day</i>	30	31	<div style="background-color: #c88e3c; border-radius: 20px; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <p>Mark your calendar! Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, June 4 after service</p> </div>		

WEEKLY EVENTS

S M T W T F S

9:00am Adult Forum		9am-12pm Parish Admin.	1:30-3:30pm Fika w/ Pastor	9am- 12pm Parish Admin.	2:30- 5pm Parish Admin.	
10:15am Worship w/ Sunday School		11:00am Staff Meeting	7:30pm Bible Study			
	8:00pm AA	12:00pm Meditation Call	8:00pm AA		<i>Pastor Sabbath</i>	<i>Pastor Sabbath</i>



A WORD FROM PASTOR

"Easter Hope with Feathers"

Poem written by Pastor Abby (Inspired by "Hope is a thing with feathers" by Emily Dickinson)

Preached at the 2023 Easter Sunday worship service at St. James

So if hope is a thing with feathers,
That perches in the soul
Then it took flight this morning
in the Marys; according to the scroll.

They who walked the garden early
Morning dew dampened their hems
Their hearts and minds still heavy
Heads bent low, like willow stems

All hope was lost, every feather plucked
Brutal witnesses, their faith had thinned.
Until a voice, "Be not afraid!"
Spoke life where death had been.

"How can this be? Who goes there?
Please, where have you taken my Lord!?"
With angels' smiles, they gently replied,
"This grave you seek - no longer where he's stored."

If hope is a thing with feathers,
It must have hovered high
For one week before this morning
No one anxiously scanned the sky

No one worried where it nested
When the palms and glad praises waved
No one hoarded seeds for Supper,
Though it was the Last one that he gave.

And Thursday was the strangest sea
Which ushered in Good Friday's storm
And Saturday the chilliest land
Of waiting, silence, and mourn.

The creator of the universe
Life breath in every lung
The perfect love they showed us
And belonging for everyone.

It was all too much for this place
So broken, greedy, and scared
But when Christ stretched out his wingspan
It was for you that he magnificently cared

So if hope is a thing with feathers,
Wrap a boa around my soul!
A monstrosity of plumes and colors
For the tombstone it did roll!

And My God comes bursting from it
No more death or sacrifice to make
No more waiting for a kingdom come
It is now, right now; our fast does break.

So - my sweet friend in the garden...
If hope is a thing with feathers,
It migrates north in the spring.
Comes to YOUR bird feeder at the window
And invites you out to sing.

No work of faith or penance,
Not a whole loaf or even a crumb,
Could earn you the love that loves you
To the moon and back, and then some.

So the birds do sing, and the women weep
But now in joy, and not fear
May the Word alive and singing,
Reach you this Easter and throughout the year. Amen.



OFFICE OF THE PASTOR

FIKA
with PASTOR

**Wednesdays
1:30 - 3:30 PM
at Starbucks
in Southbury**

All are welcome to this daily Swedish tradition of a coffee break with friends



MEET PASTOR ABBY

Whether in celebration, grief, doubt, or curiosity of faith, she is happy to meet with you at a time and place that suits you well. Reach out to connect.

Observes Sabbath Fridays & Saturdays. Please call for pastoral emergencies.

REPORTS & NEWS

WORD & SACRAMENTS

From April

No baptisms, funerals or weddings; Monthly services local retirement/care homes

This May

Baptism of Milo Roller

PASTORAL CARE & COUNSEL

2nd Quarter Focus:

Milestone Ministries curriculum for YAFM (to begin in autumn 2023)

Ongoing spiritual guidance & support for individuals, families, ministry teams, & community

WIDER CHURCH & PUBLIC THEOLOGY

Camp Calumet chaplain July 30 - August 5

Artist for Mustard Seed Ministries, faith ed. materials for kids

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Festival of Homiletics, online, May 15-18



NEW ST. JAMES MEMBERS!

On Good Shepherd Sunday, we celebrated new members of our flock! They were blessed during worship and honored with reception following.

Next installment of new members will be this fall. See Pastor if interested.

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL



The role of Council includes leading in mission, goals and priority; overseeing administration; involving members in all areas of church; responsible for financial and property matters of the church, including staffing, and general oversight of governance.

St. James' members are voted to Council at the June congregational meeting, and positions are decided by Council members annually. Members may serve up to 2 consecutive 3-year terms.

REPORTS & NEWS

- Expense oversight and management is working! YTD expenses through the first two months are slightly favorable to budget by \$1399. The mild winter helped reduce snow removal which is the primary reason. Thank you to all members for helping to keep our expenses to a minimum!
- Abigail Manville has creatively worked with her employer to receive a grant to pay for her work at St James. Thank you Abigail, for your outstanding work at St. James and your commitment to expense management.
- Thank you to Katie Dressel for her legal expertise and willingness to review all contracts pro bono on behalf of St. James.
- A new building use agreement has been completed along with policies and procedures for the community to utilize St. James Fellowship Hall. These documents are being reviewed by Council.
- The Job Description Subcommittee is finished with developing staff job descriptions and performance reviews. Council will be reviewing the documents in April & May.
- Time flies and our new Council starts in July! Donna Peterson and the New Council Member Subcommittee will be reviewing terms and reaching out to members for vacancies. If interested in joining our team, please speak to Donna, Kathy, or Linda.
- Lynn Morrison and Donna Peterson will represent St. James at the New England Synod Assembly June 9 & 10, 2023. Thank you, Lynn and Donna, for volunteering.
- Planning is underway for our Church Picnic on June 11 at Ballantine Park. The planning team includes Chair Diane Mladjen and Judy Katzmark.

MEMBERS

Officers

1. Kathy Haddy, President
2. Linda Bedard, VP
3. Donna Peterson, Secretary
4. Neil Johnson, Treasurer
5. Ellen Hubina, Assistant Treasurer
6. Curt Haedke, Financial Secretary

Liaisons

1. Jan Carnaroli, Worship
 2. Lucia Dressel, Fellowship
 3. Diane Mladjen, Preschool
 4. Lynn Morrison, Evangelism & Outreach
 5. Tony Salvatore, Properties
 6. Liz Skinski, Faith Formation
- Emilie Ulc, Youth Rep.
Rev. Abigail Johnson

Time and Talents

Help St James grow! This year's time and talents cards are available for everyone to fill out. Let us know how you feel called to help!

Fill out the survey in your email or fill it out here at bit.ly/TimeAndTalents2023

Digital Accounts

In the past several months, there have been significant changes to our online efforts. Some changes include:

- A free nonprofit google drive workspace, allowing us to have more secure and centralized files, and easier transfer between volunteers
- A free non profit design account on Canva
- A discounted non profit email platform account
- The beginning of free google meets online meetings
- Transfer of the church website to a free website hosting account

All of these changes allow us to centralize our digital presence and cut our costs. If any team members would like more info on how to get access to any of these tools, please contact Abigail Manville to discuss

abigailmanville@stjamesct.org

Media and Communications



Help Wanted!

Did you catch the Stewardship epistle article a few months back?

We are hoping to include more articles, blog posts, and social media posts about our community's experience with Faith, the church, etc. If you are interested in helping and are willing to share your experiences, please contact Abigail Manville to discuss!

Potential topics include your favorite outreach project, a moment where your faith influenced you, a moment of community within St James, your favorite place to pray, why you volunteer your time with St James, etc.



EASTER

April 9 - May 27

Restored & Fulfilled

Christ is risen - let's celebrate! Easter is the joyful spring season of rebirth and restoration. As Jesus is raised from the dead into new life, so are we - praising such great love that creates a fresh start. Christ's salvation is for all creation and God's desires for us all to live together in joyful harmony and wholeness with all the earth.

Liturgical Color:

Gold/White

Season's Guest:

TBD

Special Observances:

Resurrection of Our Lord
April 9



"LIVING FAITH"

May 28 - June 11

Church in the World

In **Pentecost**, the Holy Spirit joins believers in their walk of faith, equipping them with gifts and firing them up for a life lived as church in the world. The **Holy Trinity** demonstrates God as inherently dynamic, relational, and beyond our full understanding or imagination.

Pentecost - May 28

Color: Red

Guest Performance by
Dance Group

Holy Trinity - June 4

Color: White

Church Picnic - June 11

at Ballantine Park,
Southbury

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Join our planning meeting 1st Tuesdays @ 2:30PM



HAPPY

EASTER



Easter Gratitude

Thank you to all who made our Holy Week and Easter Sunday worship services so special! To lay-leaders and staff, Altar Guild and Property teams, the Sunday School students and teachers for the "Alleluia" banner, assistant ministers, readers, and all musicians, especially Diane Peterson, the Easter Choir and director, John Dressel.



SERVING IN WORSHIP

LITURGY MEANS "THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE" IN GREEK

May 7 - Easter 5

*Worship in Outdoor Chapel
with Baptism of Milo Roller*

Altar Guild: Paulette Calderone

Ushers: Jacque Matthew & Jeff Nadasen

Lector: Lauren Lyons

Asst. Minister: Mary Ewert

Cantor: Karen Lampiasi

Organist: Diane Peterson

Counters: Barbara Manville & Bill Siegle

Sunday School: Janice Mons & Ellen Hubina

Coffee Hour Hosts:

May 14 - Easter 6

Altar Guild: Lynn Morrison

Ushers: Gary Kline, Tony Salvatore

Lector: Barbara Manville

Asst. Minister: Jan Salvatore

Cantor: Neil Johnson

Organist: Diane Peterson

Counters: Donna Peterson & Rich Larson

Sunday School: Lynn Morrison & Mary Ewert

Coffee Hour Hosts:



May 21 - Easter 7

Altar Guild: Judy Lee

Ushers: Jacque Matthew & John Dressel

Lector: Lynn Morrison

Asst. Minister: Lynn Morrison

Cantor: Kevin Peterson

Organist: Diane Peterson

Counters: Bob Morrison &

Sunday School: Kat Hubina & Donna Peterson

Coffee Hour Hosts:

May 28 - Pentecost

*with liturgical performance by guest
dance group*

Altar Guild: Judy Katzmark

Ushers: Judy Katzmark & Judy Lee

Lector: Bill Siegle

Asst. Minister: Karen Lampiasi

Cantor: Lynn Morrison

Organist: Diane Peterson

Counters: Gale & Jim Mix

Coffee Hour Hosts:

CONTACT

Cantors: Diane Peterson

Assistant Ministers: Liz Skinski

Sunday School: Lauren Lyons

Ushers: Jacque Matthew

Altar Guild: Paulette Calderone

Lectors: Judy Katzmark

Counters: Curt Haedke

Coffee Hour: Lynn Morrison



Faith Formation

Adult Forum

Sundays @ 9:00 - 9:50 AM, in person

Studies of books, scripture, or social issues where faith and the world meet.

This Season of Easter...

The Reluctant Witness by Don Everts

April 16 - May 21 (6 sessions)



Midweek Meditation

Tuesdays @ 12:00 PM, via phone call

Original 2-minute guided meditations recorded by Pastor Abby; subscribe on our website homepage or listen on the podcast

Bible Study

Wednesdays @ 7:30 - 8:30 PM, on Zoom

A casual conversation on Sunday's assigned readings and time for prayer. Come as you are, no preparation needed.

Podcast: A Steadfast Branch

A weekly podcast for all ages, listen for free online or on Spotify. Faith-formation offerings such as sermons, devotionals, kids chats, blessings, meditations, and interviews with the wider church community





FAITH FORMATION... **FOR KIDS!**

SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Sundays 10:30am
Grades PreK-5**

Dismissed mid-worship for a brief lesson and activity in art, music, storytelling, games, and more. Lead by rotating teachers.

CONFIRMATION

Resumes this fall!
Grades 6+

A deeper study in Lutheran tradition and Christian faith in affirmation of baptism. See teacher Lynn Morrison to enroll for the fall.

A small but mighty group is working hard to continue youth and family programming this year. Thanks to all who are helping with teaching Sunday school during services. Our last SCS is planned for May 21st and Youth look forward to participating in the worship service for our annual picnic on June 11th

ALL are welcome to join!!!! If you have interest in helping with any of the YAFM programming please contact Lauren Lyons lyonsden1133@yahoo.com or Liz Skinski liz.skinski@earthlink.net.

Meetings are held every other month (Next May 2nd at 7pm)

VBS PLANNING

A planning group has met a few times to brainstorm and begin planning for vacation bible school 2023! VBS is currently being planned for July 17th-21st - if you couldn't make the meeting, but would like to be involved please let us know! It takes a village and we will need teachers, behind the scenes help, music, crafts, science, games, etc. Please tell us where you would best like your gifts to be used! You do not have to commit for all of VBS if part works better - just let us know. Contact Lauren Lyons 203-982-8415 lyonsden1133@yahoo.com or yafm@stjamesct.org. VBS planning meetings will be held at church the 4th Thursday of each month at 7pm - all are welcome!

Volunteer registration is open now!



Fellowship

Meets 3rd Tuesday @
4PM via Zoom,
See Barbara Manville



Save the Date! Annual Church Picnic! Sunday, June 11, 2023 at Ballantine Park Pavilion, 611 Old Field Rd., Southbury, after service.



Coffee Hour

Interested in helping with coffee hour? Sign up in the gathering area to bring in treats after church Sunday. Setup and coffee provided!

See Lynn Morrison for more details

Men's Fellowship
Meets 2nd Saturday @ 9:30am in the small chapel

Ladies Fellowship
Meets 2nd Tuesday @ 1pm in the small chapel

EVANGELISM

We are ALWAYS looking for folks who would like to join our Evangelism Team - this is a beautiful and wonderful opportunity to engage with others focused on spreading the Good News of Christ, and our only and true Salvation. Contact Lynn Morrison (203-426-7749, edgelake@aol.com) for an update of planned activities/events!

Meets 3rd Tuesday
@ 1PM
in the Prayer Chapel
See Lynn Morrison

James Ministries - Meals Ministry

If you have ever faced a difficult time, you know how comforting it is to receive a casserole, or a fruit bread, etc., from a friend. We have organized, and been in "operation" now for over a year, with 12 team members on our Meals Ministry, and have delivered to 40+ folks at St. James. A time to reach out when there is a need - such as a new baby, a death in the family, serious illness, recuperation from surgery, shut-in, etc. If you would like to be part of this "caring ministry" email or call Lynn Morrison (edgelake@aol.com or 203-426-7749).

Rides Ministry

Are you able to give someone a ride to church? Help us by joining our rides ministry!



ST JAMES PRESCHOOL

203-264-6448

stjameslutheranpreschool@gmail.com

Leslie Broch, Director

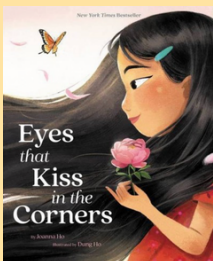


Why do we love spring at the preschool? Field trips to Flanders, Family Days and Flowers just to name a few! We are thankful to everyone who helped with the playground and tent. We are excited to bring more learning and fun outside.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in the 3's program for next year, please help us connect for a visit!



After more than 20 years teaching in the preschool, Diane Tomas is retiring in June. We are so very grateful for her dedication and service to the program and wish her much joy in her retirement.



STORYTIME WITH PASTOR ABBY

In honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Month...

"Eyes that Kiss in the Corners"

By Joanna Ho

Illustrated by Dung Ho

July 17-21

Operation Restoration

Our kids can be menders of the Earth

VBS
2023

Kids and adults are all part of Operation Restoration as they explore many ways to be menders in God's world. Through music, art, science and movement, we will make connections between Bible stories and mending actions to discover how we can live out our faith in daily life. We will explore how to feed, heal, forgive, pray and rest with practical ideas for how to care for God's earth with our everyday actions.

Who: Kids aged PreK4 through entering 6 grade in Fall 2023

When: July 17 – 21, 2023 9:15am – 12:15pm

Where: St James Lutheran Church; 111 Peter Rd, Southbury, CT 06488

Cost: FREE!!

Register at: stjamesct.org/youth-and-families/vacation-bible-school/.

Church Families Registration: April 17th

Returning Camper Registration: April 24th

Open Registration: May 1st

Registration Close: July 1st

April 1st - Open Registration for Volunteers

April 17 - Open registration to church families

April 24 - Open registration to past VBS attendees

May 1 - Open registration to preschool and general registration

July 1- Registration Closes

VBS is an entirely volunteer run program. There are jobs both little and small that we need help with! Please sign up to volunteer by visiting <https://stjamesct.org/youth-and-families/vacation-bible-school/>. Volunteer orientation day will be May 7th after service.

It takes a village and we will need teachers, behind the scenes help, music, crafts, science, games, etc. Please tell us where you would best like your gifts to be used! You do not have to commit for all of VBS if part works better - just let us know. Contact Lauren Lyons 203-982-8415 or yafm@stjamesct.org. VBS planning meetings will be held at church the 4th Thursday of each month at 7pm – all are welcome!



Outreach



This is an incredibly generous congregation with a lot of heart for outreach locally and globally. A small group met in May and started putting some details into the outreach tree in our gathering area so all can be aware of upcoming outreach projects and who to contact. If you help with an outreach project but weren't able to attend, please get an update to Lauren Lyons so it can be included. 203-982-8415 lyonsden1133@yahoo.com. We plan to meet again this fall.

Coming Soon! **Americares Homefront Day**

Though it may not feel like it quite yet, spring is right around the corner and so is another year of Homefront Day. Stay tuned for more details. If interested contact Lauren Lyons, 203-982-8415 with questions.

Don't forget the rice shelf!

The food bank often struggles during the cold winter months, please be sure to continue to provide donations of boxed rice so we can keep the shelf well stocked. Many thanks to the following families for signing up to help with getting our rice donations to the Southbury Food Bank (88 Main Street South, in the same complex as the Rathskeller Restaurant). There are a few open months – contact Lauren Lyons if you are able to help. You can opt to stock the shelf or they will stock it for you!

Food Bank Stocking Hours:
2nd Saturday of month
from 11:15-12:30 pm. Call
(203)721-0377 to make
other arrangements.

April – Lyons Family
May – Men's Group
June – Colasanto family
July –
August –

Parish Support

Financial Team & Property Team meets together 3rd Thursday @ 7PM

Financial Report as of April 20, 2023

Stewardship

With the wisdom that comes from God, we will be able to see with discernment. With wisdom we are able to see below the surface of things. Wisdom includes the ability to look at ourselves, others, and even obstacles we encounter from a Godly perspective. We will be able to demonstrate better judgment in our relationships, finances, business transactions, and in all areas of our lives. God's wisdom will give us purpose. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will use our time, talents, and money wisely to accomplish God's purposes in our lives.

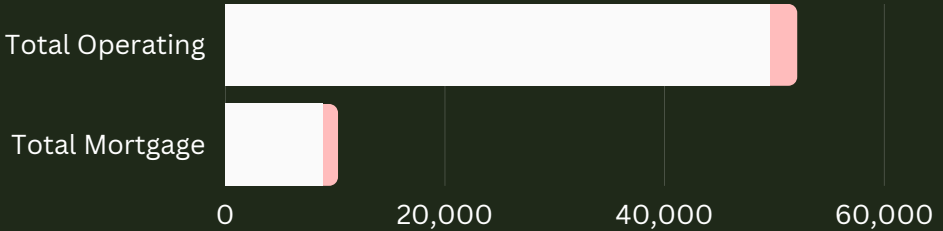
- Lynn Morrison




Thank you to all who came out to help complete our infamous list at the spring cleanup. Despite it being rescheduled to Easter Saturday, people came out to lend their time and hands.

Month	Operating Income			Mortgage Income	
	Budget	Actual	Diff	Budget	Actual
January	16,500	10,427	(6,073)	2,266.25	1,825.00
February	16,500	24,804	8,304	2,266.25	1,708.75
March	16,500	11,727	(4,773)	2266.25	2480.00

■ Budget ■ Shortfall




Current Fund Amounts



\$21,138.03
Bell Tower



\$1,897.00
Organ

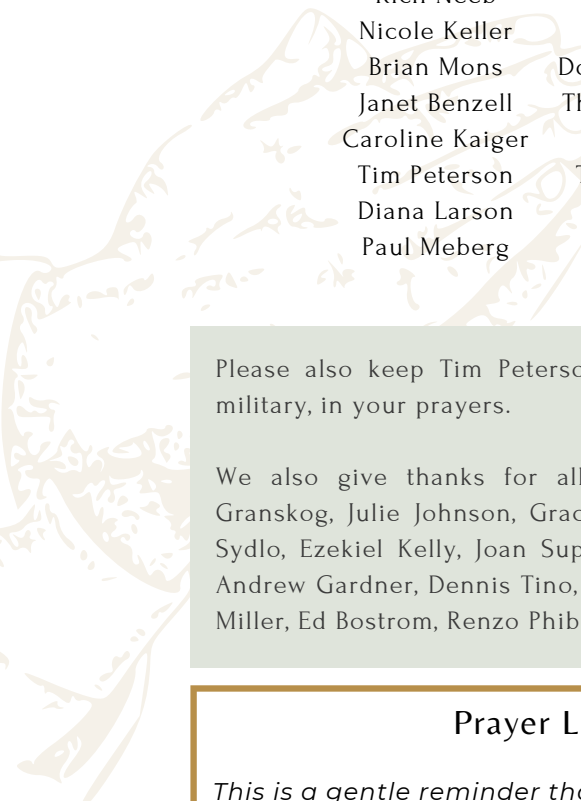


\$805.00
Organ & Music



\$0
Landscaping

In Our Prayers



Jordyn Neeb	Ed Mueller	Clare Vanderwerdt
Rich Neeb	John Raslear	Emma Cavanagh
Nicole Keller	Chris	Olivia Cavanagh
Brian Mons	Douglas Calderone	Gary Cavanagh
Janet Benzell	Thomas Senerchia	Leslie Gott
Caroline Kaiger	Sonja White	Paul Hubina
Tim Peterson	Taylor Morrison	Al Pacheco
Diana Larson	Peter Adler	Richard Shumilla
Paul Meberg	Kaitlyn Franco	Avery Lee
	Yvonne Bogue	

Please also keep Tim Peterson and all those who serve in the military, in your prayers.

We also give thanks for all the saints, especially Christine Granskog, Julie Johnson, Grace Warren, LaRayne Rogers, Eleanor Sydlo, Ezekiel Kelly, Joan Supp, Judy Staskiewicz, Steve Mattson, Andrew Gardner, Dennis Tino, Norma Jean Tino, Lucille Chayt, Lou Miller, Ed Bostrom, Renzo Phibbs and Becky Cavanagh

Prayer List Updates:

This is a gentle reminder that our prayer lists will be reset at the beginning of May. Recognizing that our loved ones are not suddenly "all better" in May or November, and certainly they are not forgotten, we ask that you let us know if you would like a name to remain or be added to the list. This includes our "saints." If it provides you with comfort and you would like your loved one to remain on the saint list for a while longer, please don't hesitate to share that with us as well. Please see Pastor Abby or Liz Skinski with any requests or questions. And please know, all of our loved ones are lifted up in prayer within this community, whether verbalized aloud or held close in our hearts. Thank you.

Please join us for Worship on Sunday mornings at 10:15 am for worship at 111 Peter Road, Southbury, CT. Masks are optional; we ask all to review CDC and CT guidelines to make appropriate choices for your household.