

SEPTEMBER 2023

ST JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH EPISTLE

A CONGREGATION OF
THE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF
AMERICA

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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*

Diane Peterson

Organist

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!*

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL



Meets 4th Wednesday, 7-8:30pm

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.

REPORTS & NEWS

As we get back into the flow of fall schedules, a reminder of our congregation's annual goals, as voted on all together during our June 2023 meeting.

- 1. Develop a debt reduction strategy, addressing mortgage and expenses**
- 2. Conduct a Preschool self-study to mutually assess relationship, mission, and responsibilities with church**
- 3. Bolster meaningful fellowship events with outreach component, to strengthen congregational and ecumenical relationships**

These aims of our church will shape the priorities of our Council and direct the allocation of time and resources this year.

NEW ENGLAND SYNOD & ELCA CHURCHWIDE

"Lift Every Voice: Centering the Voices of Clergy of Color" Sundays through Sept. 24

A worship series inspired and partly funded by the "I Have A Dream Fund," who long to end racism and increase in understanding across cultural barriers.

@Trinity Lutheran Church, Worcester MA 10am

Fall Retreats at Camp Calumet

- Fall Flavors Lutheranhostel, Oct. 2-5
- Autumn Mid-Week Getaway, Oct. 3-6
- Harvest Weekend, Oct. 6-9

Visit calumet.org or see pastor for details

MEMBERS

Officers

- Kathy Haddy, *President*
- Donna Peterson, *Vice President*
- Bill Dreska, *Secretary*
- Neil Johnson, **Treasurer*
- Ellen Hubina, **Assistant Treasurer*
- Curt Haedke, **Financial Secretary*

Liaisons

- Jan Carnaroli, *Worship*
- Lucia Dressel, *Fellowship*
- Barbara Manville, *Preschool*
- Liz Skinski, *Preschool*
- Lynn Morrison, *Evangelism & Outreach*
- Tony Salvatore, *Properties*
- Rev. Abigail Johnson, *Faith Formation*

**non-voting*

September 2023

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

S M T W T F S

					1	2	
3 9:30am Summer Worship	4 3pm Worship @ Watermark <i>Labor Day</i>	5 PreK 1st Days! 10am Worship & Music Team 7pm YAFM		6 6pm Pub Theology	7 9am PreK Parents Tea	8 9am PreK Parents Tea	9 9:30am Men's Group 11:30am Rice Restock
10 9am Member Info 10:15am Worship starts 3-6pm YouthGrp	11 11am & 7pm Bible Study (1/6)	12 1pm Women's Group	13 7pm Preschool Board	14 10:30am Worship @ TLH	15 Epistle Submissions	16	
17 Sunday School begins	18 11am & 7pm Bible Study (2/6)	19 1pm Evangelism 4pm Fellowship	20	21 7pm Finance Team	22 3:30pm YAFM Apple Picking	23 9am-12 Jam Making for Fall Fest	
24 9am Confirm begins	25 11am & 7pm Bible Study (3/6) <i>Yom Kippur (No PreK)</i>	26	27 7pm Council	28	29 	30 10am-3pm Fall Fest	

Season of Creation

WEEKLY EVENTS

S M T W T F S

9:00am Confirm. class	8:00pm AA	9am-12pm Parish Admin.	1:30-3:30pm Fika @ Starbucks	9am-12pm Parish Admin.	<i>Pastor Sabbath</i> 2:30-5pm Parish Admin.	<i>Pastor Sabbath</i>
10:15am Worship with Sunday School		11:00am Staff Meeting 12:30pm Meditation Call	8:00pm AA			



ORDINARY TIME

In Summer

June 18 - Sept. 3

Deepening our Sabbath

*Enriching our spiritual
practices as we embrace
simplicity, restoration and
sunny creation.*

Liturgical Color:
Green

Season's Guest Preachers:

Rev. Linda Kraft
Rev. Dewey Strohmeyer
Tammy Faulkner
Jenifer Beaudean-White

Summer Worship:
9:30 AM outside weekly,
weather permitting



SEASON OF CREATION

Sept. 10 - Oct. 1

A Mighty River: Let Justice & Peace Flow

*Prophet Amos cries out: "But
let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-
failing stream!" (Amos 5: 24)
and so we are called to join the
river, to take up climate and
ecological justice, and to speak
out with and for communities
most impacted by climate
injustice and the loss of
biodiversity. As the people of
God, we must celebrate
Creation and work together on
behalf of all Creation, as part
of that mighty river of peace
and justice.*

**10:15 am Worship
Resumes**

Special Observances:
Feast of St. Francis,
Oct. 1 (outside)



A WORD FROM PASTOR

Dear beloved community,
Greetings from Istanbul! The call to prayer
echos around these ancient streets;
Arabic voices sounding from speakers high
on the minarets of mosques, as those of the
Muslim faith take a moment to worship.

"... GOD SAID, "TAKE OFF YOUR
SANDALS, FOR THE PLACE
WHERE YOU ARE STANDING
IS HOLY GROUND."
- EXODUS 3:5 NV



This happens 5 times a day, across the city and across the world. The beauty of the
earth in prayer together, of the discipline of faith woven into everyday life, warms
my soul. I have lost count of the houses of worship I've visited on this 2-week trip;
from cliff-side monasteries, ancient cave seminary, and hundreds of tiny blue-
domed churches sprinkled across the Greek landscape. But as I lifted my headscarf
and slipped off my shoes to entered the Hagia Sophia - a 537AD Byzantine
cathedral, turned museum, turned mosque - I was struck by the truth that the Spirit
really is everywhere. Whatever name it is given, whatever traditions wraps around
it or religion welcomes it, the Spirit is alive and present in our multi-cultural world.
And wherever it travels, wherever it calls us to walk, we walk on holy ground.

Peace, *Pastor Abby*



(left-right) Greek Orthodox, Santorini; Hagia Sophia, Istanbul; Keslik Monastery, Turkey;
P. Abby & friend Cambrey; Blue Mosque, Istanbul; Chozoviotissa Monastery, Amorgos;

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.

BUNK NOTES FROM CAMP

In August, Pastor Abby became *Chaplain Abby* at the New England Synod's camp, Calumet. She preaches morning worship and evening vespers daily, provides pastoral care to staff and campers aged 8-15, joins in camp games and activities all day long. What a joy! Unsurprisingly, Thule was also a big hit and made many friends. Camp Calumet also offers a summer family camp and year-round retreat programming.

Welcome

INVITING
NEW
MEMBERS!

**Membership Info
Breakfast
Sun. Sept. 10, 9am**

Those who wish to join will confirm with Pastor, be affirmed in a Council vote and welcomed with a blessing during worship on Sun. Oct. 29 Reformation Sunday. Offered again in the spring



WORSHIP & MUSIC

Join our planning meeting 1st Tuesdays @ 10-11 AM



Season of Creation

Adopted in the 1990s, this new inclusion in the liturgical calendar was developed by an ecumenical network of churches worldwide, including the Lutheran denomination.

The optional season is an invitation to celebrate the communion of all Creation, learn about our natural world, and respond together in our call to ministry to the cry of ecological crises.

**Year A 2022/23:
(Year of Matthew)
"The Spirit Series"
Sept. 10 - Oct. 1**



NOTE: Worship at 10:15am resumes Sept. 10



**Let Justice
and Peace Flow**
Season of Creation 2023

A Mighty River
Amos 5: 24

Global Ecumenical Prayer Service

Kicking off the "Season of Creation," tune into this virtual worship service on Fri. Sept. 1, 9am on Youtube (Scan QR code)



Blessing of the Animals

On Sunday, Oct. 1, your pets are invited to church to attend outside worship at our regular time, for a Blessing of the Animals as we observe The Feast of St. Francis.

SERVING IN WORSHIP

LITURGY MEANS "THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE" IN GREEK

September 3 - 9:30am, outside

with Blessing of the Bell Tower

Preach/Preside: Rev. Abby Johnson

Altar Guild: Judy Katzmark

Ushers: John Dressel, Judy Katzmark

Lector: Judy Katzmark

Asst. Minister: Lynn Morrison

Counters:

September 17 - 10:15am

with Blessing of the Teachers

Preach/Preside: Rev. Abby Johnson

Altar Guild: Paulette Calderone

Ushers: Bob Morrison

Lector: Curt Haedke

Asst. Minister: Karen Lampiasi

Counters:

September 10 - 10:15am

Preach/Preside: Rev. Abby Johnson

Altar Guild: Lynn Morrison

Ushers: Jacque Matthew, Tony Salvatore

Lector: Abby Lyons

Asst. Minister: Jim Morrison

Counters:

September 24 - 10:15am

Preach/Preside: Rev. Abby Johnson

Altar Guild: Judy Lee

Ushers: Jeff Nadasen, Judy Lee

Lector: Diana Larson

Asst. Minister: Mary Ewert

Counters:

Share your gifts - the church is the people!

CONTACT

Special Music: 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

MEDITATION CALL

TUESDAYS 12:30PM

Original, quick guided meditations recorded by Pastor Abby; subscribe on our website homepage to receive recorded call or listen on the podcast.



PUB THEOLOGY



1st WEDNESDAY 6-7PM
@ BLACK HOG BREWERY CO.
Especially for Young Adults (20/30s), a casual meet up to explore ideas and questions on religion and faith, in the world today and this season of life.

BIBLE STUDY

6-WEEK FALL SERIES

Songs of the Faithful: Studies in Psalms

The book of Psalms contains one hundred-fifty prayers, songs, liturgies, and poems that express the full range of human emotion, displaying the highs and lows of the life of faith. This season's study explores 6 big questions based in the Psalms.

WHEN: Mondays, September 11 - October 16

- 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM, at church
- 7:00 - 8:00 PM, online

(Same session at either time of day)



Podcast: A Steadfast Branch

A weekly podcast for all ages, listen for free on our website or on Spotify. Faith-formation offerings such as sermons, devotionals, blessings, meditations, and interviews with the wider church community. Tune in!





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

YAFM Planning
Team meets 1st
Tuesday, 7-
8:30pm

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Resumes Sept. 17

**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 Sept. 24

**Sundays 9:00am
Grades 6+**

A deeper study in Lutheran tradition and Christian faith in affirmation of baptism. Taught by Lynn Morrison and Neil Johnson, with Pastor Abby

YOUTH GROUP

**Monthly meet-ups
with fellow
Lutheran churches
Grades 6-12**



Pool Party

Sept. 10, 3-6pm @
Wilton, CT. RSVP to
Pastor by Sept. 1

VBS UPDATE

This past July, 53 children spent their week with us to learn about God's love. Our theme was "Operation Restoration" - empowering children to be agents of change for love and creation care in the world. Many, many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped to make the week possible - it takes a village and we are so grateful for the community that supports our young people.

This year's mission focus for VBS was "Kids Helping Kids" supporting children locally through PB&J donations for the Southbury Food Bank and globally through donations of school supplies, non-gummy vitamins and money for school uniforms to support Tree for Hope School in Guatemala. 25 jars of jelly and 37 containers of peanut butter were collected. A dozen bottles of vitamins, a large bin of school supplies and roughly \$300 toward school uniforms were also gathered. Many, many thanks for your generosity!



NEW



MILESTONE MINISTRIES IN FAITH FORMATION YOUTH & FAMILIES



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Faith is a lifelong hike and life is full of milestones along the trail. As your home church, we want to celebrate those with you and your children throughout their life. Every year, each grade will explore one new milestone of faith. At the end of the school year, kids will receive a token to remember this stage of their journey, given by different ministry teams of St. James. Over the years, the collection will grow along with their education and enrichment. With every milestone, kids will explore more about God, the Christian religion, and their personal faith!

MINISTRY GOALS



- 1** FOR KIDS to explore their relationship with God, and learn faith tenets at a steady pace.
- 2** FOR FAMILIES to support spiritual discovery and incorporate faith exploration into home life.
- 3** FOR CHURCH to engage with kids, integrate them into all areas of ministry, and celebrate their journey and contributions.



WELCOME

Box, from family



BAPTISM

Candle, from Pastor



HOW TO PRAY

Acorn, from YAFM



THE BIBLE

Bookmark, from Evangel.



10 COMMANDMENTS

Stone, from Council



HOLY COMMUNION

Napkin, from Altar Guild



CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Bird, from Worship



FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Fruit, from Parish Support



LORD'S PRAYER

Heart, from Ladies Group



CONFIRMATION

Cross, from Mens Group



THE GREATEST COMMANDS

Fish, from Outreach



EXPLORATION

Compass, given by the congregation



An Apple A Day

Updated Covid 19 Vaccinations



New Covid-19 vaccines are available soon by end of September once Food and Drug Administration and Center for Disease Control and Prevention sign off. The XBB variants, descended from the original Omicron variant are the most prevalent in circulation. These new vaccines target these variants. Moderna, Pfizer and Novavax will offer these specific vaccines for all children and adults. For teens and adults, they can choose any of the updated versions. For children 2 years and up a single new shot from Pfizer or Moderna. Children 2 years to 6 months still may receive divided 2-3 doses.

There is a change in approach to vaccine development which in past which targeted two strains now is just aimed at one strain, XBB.1.5. The newest XBB descendant is EG.5, one closely related sometimes called "Eris". The new vaccine will offer protection and cross protection to XBB lineage. As with all Covid vaccinations in the past this is the best protection so far to prevent serious illness and hospitalization. Please check with your PCP for questions related to your health and vaccinations.

St James Preschool

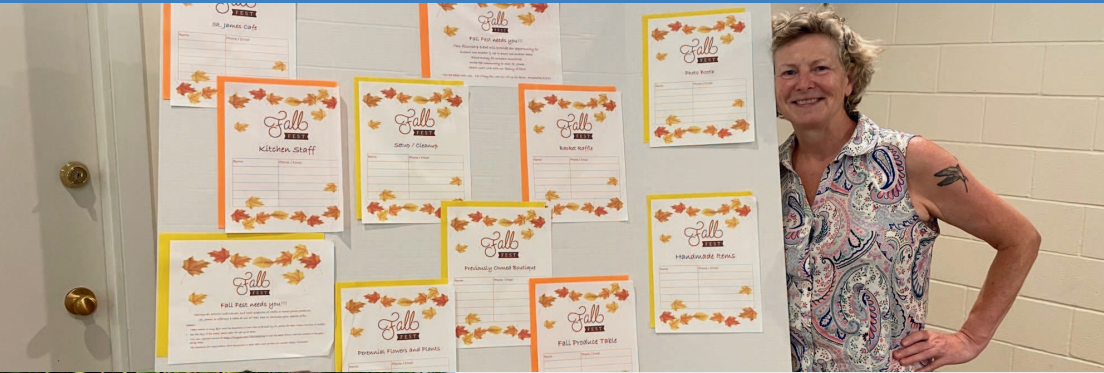
We welcome new and returning families to the preschool. We are excited for a year full of exploration! creativity! fun! learning! friendship! This month we will explore Getting to Know You/All About Me, Feelings, and practice lots of scientific and math skills as we study Apples.

We have a few spots available in our 3's class if you know of anyone who may be looking.



Fall Fest

All proceeds from this event will go towards the 2024 Guatemala Mission Trip. please help to make this event a big success!



S e p t e m b e r 3 0 t h

Fall Fest will be here before we know it!

Please consider donating some nice used items for the White Elephant sale - beginning on September 1st you can bring items in and leave them in the sunday school classroom (by the fellowship hall)

If you have houseplants or you're thinning out perennials, we'd love to add them to the plant sale part of the festival.

We are still accepting table reservations from craft or cottage industry vendors. If you or someone you know would like to sponsor a table you can register on the website or use the paper forms in the gathering area. We could use a few more vendors so please register for a table.

With 4 weeks to go there is much to do. We'll be asking for volunteers each week so please prayerfully consider how you can help!

Outreach

HELP WANTED



Fall is not too far away! For the last 15 years, St. James has held a UNICEF drive to raise funds for the great work by UNICEF -- supporting the needs of children around the world. However, since the pandemic, the traditional kids "Trick or Treat for UNICEF" has ended, but the needs remain!

Marylee is looking for help this year with continuing to support the UNICEF organization and all its good works. It will be short and simple. We would love to have one or two folks to help with an October campaign. Please get back to Marylee. (sieglesnest@comcast.net or 203-264-5999) if you'd like to be involved with this meaningful outreach project this year.

In the Community

Southbury Farmer's Market

A reminder that locally grown produce will continue to be available through October at the Southbury Farmer's Market, held each Thursday from 3-6pm at the Southbury Town Hall. Stop by for great fresh, local produce and help support local farmers.



Hablar un poco de español

Our team heading to Guatemala in February is starting to learn some Spanish and you can join them! Look for a new word or phrase each week in the bulletin to learn a little bit of Spanish!

Don't forget the rice shelf!

Saint James is doing a great job keeping up support of the rice shelf at the Southbury Food Bank – keep up the great work!!!! The food bank serves about 100 families in the community – each family is allowed to visit twice monthly and can take a rice item at each visit.... That's a LOT of rice. There are still some months available for food bank stocking:

September –
October – YAFM
November –
December – Morrison

Food Bank Stocking Hours:
2nd Saturday of @ month from 11:15-12:30 pm and 4th Sunday of the month from 9-10am
Call (203)721-0377 to make other arrangements.

Finance Team

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

We are through 7 months of our financial year. Recall we approved a ~\$23,000 deficit budget at our annual meeting in January. But at this point a little past midyear, our finances look encouraging! Income is running somewhat ahead of budget, thanks to onetime pledged payments in May. And even better is the fact that expenses are running below budget, thanks to tight expenses control by Council.

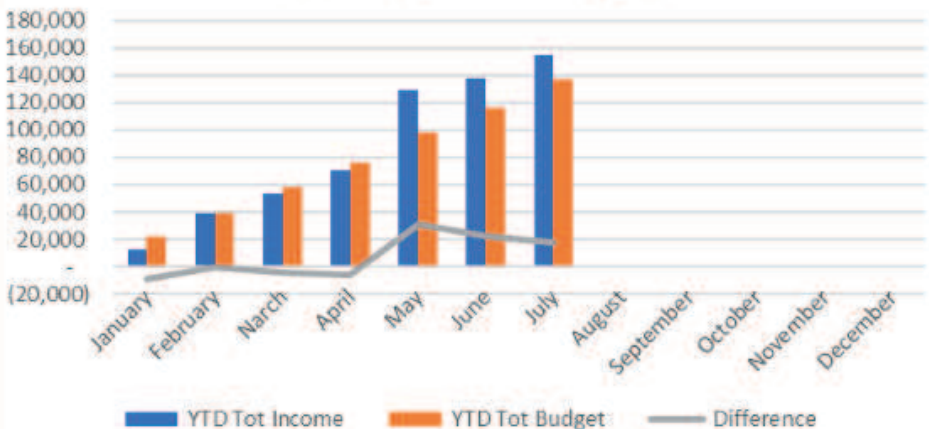
We need continued giving, diligence, and commitment through the rest of the year. With your continued giving strength and our expense management, we hope to cover a significant portion of the deficit anticipated in the annual budget approved in January.

Every donation is a testament of faith; that God is alive, at work and doing something new and good in this place - for you, your family, and your neighbor. Your support ensures that our many ministries of worship, learning, serving and community building can continue and grow in meaningful ways in Christ's world.

Thank you all for your faithful generosity and continued financial support,

The St James Financial Team

Year-to-Date Actual Income vs Budget (Operting plus Mortgage)



Stewardship



Try this exercise to explore purpose & how you can be of service!

PURPOSE: Ourselves Among Others

Feeling fulfilled in our purpose is never doing or acquiring just one thing; it's an ongoing balance of our passion, mission, profession, and vocation. God speaks to us throughout our lives in all areas, encouraging our inward reflection and outward attention. Taking time to explore our joys, our strengths, and the needs of both ourselves and the world invites us to observe where things overlap and investigate or create opportunities to engage in meaningful ways of self-interest.

SELFISHNESS = NONE OF YOU, ALL FOR ME

SELFLESSNESS = NONE OF ME, ALL FOR YOU

SELF-INTEREST = "OURSELVES AMONG OTHERS," WHERE YOU AND ME MEET

As you craft routines and commitments this autumn, take a moment to consider... Of the many things that call on your time, money and attention in life, where does your church fit? How could St. James be a place to live into your unique passions and missions, even professions and vocations? As a community which engages, strengthens and shares in these important parts of your life, where do our purpose as people of faith meet together? Church is a space unlike any other in our lives. How do we tend to it faithfully as we tend to our many gifts from God?



PROPERTIES

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



Bell Tower Completed!

At long last the Bell Tower painting is underway with a new pulleys system for ease of ringing. Let the church bell ring aloud once again!!!

NEW PRESCHOOL FENCE

Thanks to the efforts and coordination of Ellen Hubina and in cooperation with our church council and the preschool board, we have a beautiful new maintenance free picket and chain link fence for our preschoolers.






The Apostle Paul talks about the attitude we should have “as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved.” He counsels us to be compassionate and humble, to be kind and patient, and to forgive others as we have been forgiven. He tells us to let Christ’s peace reign in our hearts “and be thankful” (Colossians 3:12-15).

Too often, when we pray, we put an agenda before God. We tell Him what we want Him to take care of: find that person a job, heal that other person, solve our money problems, and keep our kids safe. We add our thanks as an afterthought. Try spending your whole prayer time offering thanks. In fact, the Bible tells us, “Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

~Lynn Morrison

In Our Prayers



Rich Neeb,	Margaret Greenman,	Pat,
Brian Mons,	Karl Faulkner,	Cathy Weissmann,
Janet Benzell,	Fran Vezina,	Sue Cheatham,
Caroline Kaiger,	Dorian Malloy,	Anthony Salvatore,
Tim Peterson,	Guenter Schuetz,	Joan Waldorf,
Paul Hubina,	Sheryl,	Karen Prodo,
Paul Meberg,	Vivian DeVito,	Fae Guerin,
Ed Mueller,	Jay,	Dominic Prisco
John Raslear,	Randy Calderone,	Chris Prisco
		Heidi Varanko

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, Becky Cavanagh, Al Pacheco, Peter Adler, Annamarie McCabe, George Senerchia, and Krzysztof Gutowski

Prayer List Updates:

The prayer list is edited by request. The full list resets after first Sunday of May and November (All Saints Sunday). To add, remove or request a name remain on the list when reset, please see Pastor Abby or Liz Skinski.

Prayer concern alerts are sent with consent of the family via email; subscribe on our website. If you wish to receive alerts by phone call or text, please see Pastor Abby.

Join us for worship service of Word & Holy Communion on Sunday mornings at 10:15 am at 111 Peter Road, Southbury, CT 06488.