ST JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH EPISTLE

A CONGREGATION
OF THE
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF AMERICA

IN THIS ISSUE:

A Word from Pastor

Faith Formation

Milestone Ministries

VBS Theme Announcement

World Relief Health Kits

Preschool Updates

St James Vision and Mission

Guatemala Team Recap

Outreach Activities

And more...



ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

111 Peter Road, Southbury CT 06488

www.stjamesct.org

@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

Digital Coordinator John Dressel

Music Director Leslie Broch

Director of St. James Preschool

Please contact the office **before** dropping by if you require assistance.

Building is locked at all times for security. Thank you!

A WORD FROM PASTOR



Dear Beloved Community,

Last month, all members and friends were invited to meet after worship for a discussion on the mission and vision of St. James. During part of this conversation, participants lifted up St. James **values**; the principles we hold close to heart that shape our many ministries. Members came up with a long, vibrant list of specific examples; collectively highlighting these five common themes:

- 1. **Sustainability** (closed timelines, shared leadership, life-giving not energy-sucking, maximizing impact)
- 2. **Variety** (diverse in modalities, causes, and outreach recipients, from local to global)
- Creativity (honoring history while embracing newness, fresh, engages member passions)
- 4. Relational (connection-rooted, intergenerational, welcoming, personal,)
- 5. **Embodied** (physical presence, hands-on, addresses active needs, provides care directly)

Friends, what a beautiful list of values that we share - they really feel like St. James! They are justly inclusive of our wide breath yet specific to our unique context. Though we are diverse in our individual sense of call, relationship to God, and even beliefs at times, we are united in a truly special, shared identity in this faith family. What a strength to know who we are and boldly declare it! What a joy to lean into the belovedness with which we were made and where we were planted; affirmed in baptismal waters and sustained in the Word. By articulating our mission, vision and values, we are better equipped to share them and invite people who align, who are looking for an affirming space that feels like their home, who are seeking to belong in the midst of this disconnected world.

God, teach us as we pray:

We/I can't be all things,

but by God,

we/I are beloved as we/you are.

We/I can't do everything,

but by Christ,

we/I can do anything.

And by the Spirit,

whatever we/I go,

we/I go with you in hope, faith and love. Amen.

						明清			
	Apri	l 2024		Regular calendar updates on our website https://stjamesct.org/calendar/					
	S	M	Т	W	T	F	S		
		1	2	3 No Worship & Music Team	4	5	6		
		Pastor av	way for continuir	ng education					
	Outdoor 7 worship 11:45 am Membership Info	8	1pm Women's Group	6pm Youth & Family Team 7pm Preschool Board	11 10:30am Lutheran Home Worship	12	9:30am Men's Group 11:30am Rice Restock		
	Sanctuary 14 Dedications 11:45 am Service Trip Info	3pm Watermark Worship Epistle Submissions	1:00pm Evangelism Team	7pm Finance Team	18	19	20		
	21 11:45am PreK	22	23	24	25	26	27		
	Discussion "Problem- Solving"			7pm Council	6pm 20s/30s Pub Theology				
	Bible 28 Presentations	29	30						
	11:45am PreK Discussion "Agreement"								
	Discussion "Agreement"	IV EVEN	NTS						

WEEKLY EVENTS										
S	М	T	W	T	F	S				
9:00am Confirm. 10:15am Worship, with S. School 11:30am Choir Rehearsal	11am Bible Study 7:30 pm Bible Study, virtual 8:00pm AA	9:00am- 12:00pm Parish Admin. 12:30pm Meditation Call	1:30-3:30pm Community Fika @ Starbucks 8:00pm AA	9:00am- 12:00pm Parish Admin.	Pastor Sabbath 2:30- 5:00pm Parish Admin.	Pastor Sabbath				

2023/2024 Liturgical Year B: The Gospel of Mark



March 23rd - March 30th

Come to the Cross

We journey with Christ through his final days - entering joyful Jerusalem, gathering for the Last Supper, and leading up to the cross.

1 Week

Guest Voices: none

Feast Days:

03/24 Palm Sunday 03/28 Maundy Thursday 03/29 Good Friday 03/30 Holy Saturday



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.

7 Weeks

Guest Voices: none, as of yet

Feast Days:

03/31 Resurrection Sunday 04/12 Good Shepherd

ELCA LEADERSHIP

Pastor will be away
Monday April 1 Friday April 5 for
continuing education

On-call pastor: Rev. Samantha Perret Cross of Christ Lutheran Church (ELCA) Waterbury, CT 860-790-1108



PASTOR ABBY

Whether in celebration, grief, doubt, or curiosity of faith, she is happy to meet with you when and where suits you well.

(203) 450-6454 pastor@stjamesct.org

While observing Sabbath on Fridays & Saturdays, Pastor does not receive texts or emails. Please call directly with pastoral emergencies and she will aid as soon as possible.

St. James is part of the

NAUGATUCK VALLEY CONFERENCE

NEW ENGLAND SYNOD

For more info, visit nelutherans.org

Synod Elections

There are a number of elections upcoming in our synod beyond a new Bishop. Some are open to laypersons, including Synod Council and Judicial Committee. See Pastor Abby if you have an interest in serving.

Hearts, Hands, Voices: Workshop for Church musicians April 13, 9:30 AM - 3:00PM at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Westborough MA.

For a complete list, subscribe to the Monday Medley email newsletter

ELCA CHURCHWIDE

For more info, visit elca.org

Help shape a new social statement The ELCA is developing a social statement on civic life and faith, the relationship of church and state, and related matters, as called for by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Social statements are the ELCA's primary documents to address significant social issues. They are intended to aid reflection, shape conscience and set forth the ELCA's teaching and policy on the major social issues and questions of contemporary life. Social statements are developed by task forces, using an established process of study and widespread participation across the church to guide theological and moral deliberation.

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL



Meets 4th Wednesday 7:00 pm

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

We had a truly wonderful and eventful Lenten and Easter season at St. James this year! We enjoyed hosting one of the very popular "Lent on the Road" dinners and services with many guests of other local congregations participating and a blessed time was had by all. Also, notably we had some beautiful and warmer weather during Lent and welcome the daffodils blooming near our front door! We heard from Missionary Ben and continue to support the mission work of the Tino Family in Guatemala. Plus, there were many, many more fantastic moments with our St. James family.

As we continue to meet and work together towards our vision for the St. James Preschool ministry, we want to invite everyone to attend the April meetings. Those sessions really will be successful with as much participation as we can muster. The first April meeting is going to be "Problem Solving" on April 21st and the second meeting of the month will be "Agreement" on April 28th. Deacon Natalie Bloomquist will once again be leading us through the sessions.



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, ex-officio

*non-voting

Worship & Music

Join our planning meeting at church 1st Wednesdays @ 7PM



Look Ahead

Sunday April 7

Outdoor worship, in the chapel by the Outreach Tree

Sunday, April 14

Dedications of Sanctuary Gifts, including stained glass, altar and tables made by members

Sunday, April 21Good Shepherd Sunday

Sunday, April 28Presentation of First Bibles to Kindergartners

Sunday, May 5 Outdoor worship On Palm Sunday, the Guatemala Away Team shared tradition of Antigua's beautiful alfombras.



Celebration & Storytelling

On March 3, the Away Team shared with the Home Team about the trip to Guatemala.



On March 17, friend of St. James and music missionary Ben Tlno, with wife Scarlet and son Jaakkob visited.





Holy Week Bulletins Grateful to our 3rd Grade artists for designing the bulletin

covers this season.

SERVING IN WORSHIP

LITURGY MEANS "THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE" IN GREEK

April 7 - Easter 2 April 14 - Easter 3

Preach: Rev. Abigail Johnson Preach: Rev. Abigail Johnson Preside: Rev. Abigail Johnson Preside: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Altar Guild: Jan Salvatore **Altar Guild:** Judy Katzmark

Ushers: Jeff Nadasen, Tony **Ushers:** Jacque Matthew, Gary Kline Salvatore Counters: Steven Ulc, Catherine Ulc

Counters: Gary Kline, Bob Morrison Lector: Jennifer Beuadean White

Lector: Diane Mladien Cantor: TBD

Cantor: Marion Allen Asst. Minister: Jennifer Beuadean

Asst. Minister: Mary Ewert White

Sunday School: Ellen Hubina, Sunday School: Mary Ewert, Jan

Linda Bedard Salvatore

April 21 - Easter 4 April 28 - Easter 5

Preach: Rev. Abigail Johnson Preach: Rev. Abigail Johnson Preside: Rev. Abigail Johnson Preside: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Altar Guild: Lynn Morrison Altar Guild: Judy Lee

Ushers: TBD Ushers: Donna Peterson. Rich

Larson

Counters: Kathy Haddy, Jan Carnaroli

Counters: Gary Kline, Bob Morrison **Lector**: Curt Haedke Lector: Donna Peterson Cantor: TBD

Cantor: TBD Asst. Minister: Liz Skinski

Sunday School: Mike Lyons, Jan **Asst. Minister:** Karen Lampiasi

Carnaroli Sunday School: Megan Buchanan,

Kathy Haddy

CONTACT:

Ushers: Jacque Matthew Cantors: John Dressel Altar Guild: Paulette Calderone

Assistant Ministers: Liz Skinski Lectors: Judy Katzmark Sunday School: Lauren Lyons Counters: Curt Haedke



MEDITATION CALL

TUESDAYS
12:30PM
Original, brief
guided meditations
recorded by Pastor Abby;
subscribe on our website
homepage to receive recorded
call or listen on the podcast.

PUB THEOLOGY

3rd THURSDAY



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. Non-alcoholic options available. Pub hosted trivia follows.

BIBLE STUDY

MONDAYS
11AM, in church
7:30 PM, virtual
8 sessions, starting APRIL 8
Lead by Pastor Abby

Book of Acts

The Holy Spirit is clearly at work in Acts, pouring out on people from many nations on the day of Pentecost, giving Jesus' disciples the power to speak boldly, gathering early believers together for worship, and sending out Peter and Paul as missionaries. In this course, participants will examine the beginnings of the church and will find meaningful connections between the early church and the church today.

- 1. The Spirit Creates Community
- 2. The Empowering Spirit
- 3. The Spirit on the Margins
- 4. The Conversion of Peter
- 5. World Upside Down
- 6.A Riot in Ephesus
- 7.On Trial for the Resurrection
- 8. And So We Came to Rome



Podcast: A Steadfast Branch

A podcast for all ages with faith-formation offerings such as sermons, devotionals, blessings, meditations, and interviews with the wider community. New episodes weekly! Listen for free on stjamesct.org or on Spotify.



Youth Group

Hosted by our friends at UCC Southbury; Sundays

4:30-6:30pm

1st Sunday: Jr. High 2nd Sunday: Music 3rd Sunday: Sr. High

Sunday School

SUNDAYS 10:30-11:00 am Grades PreK-5

Dismissed midworship for a brief lesson and activity in art, music, games, storytelling, etc. Taught by rotating teachers.

Confirmation

SUNDAYS 9:00-9:45 am Grades 6+

A 2-year, 4-unit course, taught by Pastor, Lynn Morrison, and Neil Johnson.

Unit 2, Spring 2024: Lutheran History & Catechism

Milestone Ministries

YEAR-LONG INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING

Each year, kids explore a new faith tenant; in their church life supported by the congregation and in their home life with their families. See Pastor.

Thank you, Confirmation students!

Sarah, Anna, Abby, Maddie, Jose and Alejandro for serving as acolytes during Lent and Holy week! Thanks to Lynn Morrison for coordinating.

Vacation Bible School - July 22-26, 2024

Join St James and UCC as we team up together to organize this year's VBS! Our theme this year? Camp Firelight!

Join us for a week long, half-day camp where kids and adults will make new friends and explore their relationship with Christ. Keep an eye out for registration emails this month- spots fill up fast!

Interested in volunteering? Contact yafm@stjamesct.org

CELEBRATING MILESTONES



Kindergarten – Bible

Kindergartens receive their first Bible during worship on Sunday, April 28. See Pastor to learn more.



Fellowship



Hosted by Men's & Women's Fellowship Teams - all are welcome!



Sat. April 27 @ 10am

Local Hike for Families

All are welcome to join this YAFM event! To help with YAFM activities, contact yafm@stjamesct.org

Community "Fika" for All

Wednesdays 1:30 - 3:30pm @ Starbucks Join Pastor for this daily Swedish tradition of a coffee break and chat with friends

Young Adults Group (20s-30s)

3rd Thursday 7pm social team trivia @ Black Hog Brewery; see Pastor

Women's Fellowship Group

2nd Tuesday 1pm; tea and conversation; see Judy Katzmark

Join us on April 9th as we assemble Health Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. And put on your calendar May 14th, the date we will be traveling to Litchfield to visit the Historical Society's display of samplers and enjoy a meal together.

Men's Fellowship Group

2nd Saturday 9:30 AM morning coffee and conversation; see Jacque Mathews

Outreach







Tues. April 9 LWR Health Care Kits Packing, by Women's Fellowship Group Sun. April 14
Tree 4 Hope 2025
Service Trip
Info Session
11:45 am

Sat. April 27 Dorothy Day House Sandwich Making



AMERICARES HOMEFRONT DAY 2024

Spring is right around the corner and so is another year of Homefront Day planned for May 4th. Stay tuned for more details. If interested contact Lauren Lyons, 203-982-8415 or email homefrontsofia@gmail.com.



College Support Boxes

We want to commend and thank everyone who participated in sending out the College Care Boxes for 10 students attending University. Particularly, thank you to Lauren Lyons for organizing the gathering, packing and shipping. Our college students have been so appreciative of this outreach to them! - Church Council

Don't forget the rice shelf!

Thank you for your donations of (BOXED ONLY) rice! We are looking for helpers to get the rice to the food bank in the coming months.

Many thanks 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)

April – Alvarado May – Lyons June – Colasanto

July – Salvatore

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. hat is the mission of Saint James? What is the vision of Saint James outreach?

These are questions Pastor Abby laid out to the congregation in her Mission & Vision Report during the annual congregational meeting in January. It's time to check in with ourselves, as a community, and identify our mission ("what we do to reflect God's love and presence,") and our shared vision of how we live into that mission. What are the "specific ministries we organize and invest in to live out our unique calling today?"

As Pastor Abby explains, "this process of exploring is a congregation-wide commitment." Council is committed to this process and we ask you to join us as we "pray, share, discern, and define our current mission and vision." This process of reflection and discernment will benefit all areas of church,

including worship, fellowship, faithformation, and outreach. to incorporate in planning throughout the year. Deacon Natalie Éloomquist will be facilitating these conversations with us. Please set aside a couple of hours on Sunday, March 3, 2024, following Worship to gather as a community to brainstorm and celebrate the outreach missions of St. James.

The Saint James Preschool belongs to the church and has been one of our ministries and responsibilities since 1977! The next step in the self-study of our program, which we committed to doing at the June 2023 congregation meeting, is to identify how this ministry fits into our overall mission, clarify the relationship between the congregation and preschool, and determine how we as a church community might re-engage with this ministry in the ways it needs. Therefore, additional sessions with Deacon Natalie will focus more directly on St. James Preschool. We will share stories about why it exists and what we see as the relationship between the preschool and congregation. Council and the St. James Preschool Board invite all members who are interested in the preschool ministry to join us in these further conversations during March and April. We ask you to commit to being present for all 3 sessions, willing to listen, pray, contemplate, and share your ideas with us and one another. We anticipate these sessions will take place in person after church on Sundays, March 24, April 21, and April 28, 2024.

For more information, please talk with preschool council liaisons, Liz Skinski and Barbara Manville, and/or Pastor Abby.
We look forward to spending time together as a community to celebrate where we are and where we are growing, with the Spirit guiding us into the future.



What is the mission of Saint James? What is the vision of Saint James Outreach?

ST JAMES PRESCHOOL

March has been a month of transitions. We have all enjoyed the warm, sunny days and early signs of spring! The first crocus, the first time eating snack outside, the first jacket-free day. We also culminate the month with parent-teacher check-ins to reflect on the tremendous growth the children have made. Some of the favorite materials and activities were working together to create real rainbows with spray bottles and sun, experimenting with ramps, a table full of various textures and shaving cream ("This is the best day ever!"), as well as some creative designs for leprechaun traps. In April we look forward to our pond field trip to Flander's as well as many spring activities.





Preschool Registration is now open!

Please share the news! We have spots available for the 3-year old class and just a few left for the 4-year old program.

Email: stjameslutheranpreschool@gmail.com or call 203.264.6448 to learn more.





Guatemala 2024 Mission Trip

Post Trip Report



Many, many thanks to all of those who prayed and donated items for the February Guatemala service Trip. We hope you enjoyed our Guatemala celebration during worship on March 6. Please enjoy a little trip summary for those who missed the service!

Our team flew in and out of Guatemala City and stayed in Antigua, a beautiful city with many modern amenities. We were able to worship at Saint Alban's Church in Antigua and then spent a day and half visiting Hope Academy, a school built by Tree 4 Hope, specifically for girls in preschool through grade 6. Public schools in Guatemala are free, but most families cannot afford the supplies and uniforms required to send their children. It is common for education to be prioritized to the boys and girls often don't receive the opportunity for education to help them break out of the cycle of poverty.

At the school, we were able to see small presentations the girls had prepared for us and provide the students with school supply kits – they especially loved the prayer pockets! We cataloged and added 66 books to their school library!!! We helped with building additions to the play area on the playground and painted a mural to provide uplifting messages through images of female STEAM superheroes! Kevin and Kristen provided support to girls in the older classes through a lesson on sound and light waves.





The other 3 days of the trip were spent visiting Miguel Magone orphanage, home to up to 90 children removed from their home due to safety concerns. Days at the orphanage were spent helping to dig the foundation for a planned technical school as well as playing with and supporting the children and staff residing there. The final afternoon, we were treated to a music performance put on by the children of the orphanage on the piano, guitar, ukelele and marimba. The music program for children residing at Miguel Magone is funded by Tree 4 Hope.

One afternoon, we had the opportunity to tour and learn about the company Chica Bean, a specialty coffee company, where the coffee is entirely produced by women and roasted at origin. The company is dedicated to ensuring adequate wages for coffee producers by consolidating the production process all under one roof. The art of roasting was explained and we got to meet the only female coffee roastmaster in the country (and of course drink delicious coffee!)







During free time, we were able to explore local art, culture, and native cuisine in Antigua. We also had the opportunity to hike one of the local volcanoes, Picaya during our free day. We got to visit a local weaver in her home to see her beautiful work and enjoy delicious native Guatemalan cooking (and try our hand at making tortillas!) We all worked hard, laughed a lot and really enjoyed learning about the Guatemalan culture, as well as learning more about how to support one of our mission partners, Tree for Hope. To find out about sponsoring education for one of the girls at Hope Academy visit www.tree4hope.org You can purchase chica bean coffee at www.chicabean.com and find out more about the orphanage at www.tree4hope.org





Earth Day 2024

A few simple ways we can reduce our impact on the environment this Earth Day

Turn off electronic devices when not using them.

Move your thermostat up 2 degrees in the summer and down 2 degrees in the winter can save 2000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

Recycle – you can save 2400 pounds of carbon dioxide by recycling half of your household waste

Purchase Chica Bean or Equal Exchange Fair Trade Coffee. www.chicabean.com or www.equalexchange.coop

Change your bulbs Replacing one regular
light bulb with a
compact florescent
light bulb will save 150
pounds of carbon
dioxide per year.

Clean up some trash when you are out on your walk! Be sure to wear gloves and wash your hands immediately after coming home.

Try your hand at compost. Nonmeat and dairy food scraps decompose into wonderful soil when given time and a protected place. Coffee grounds are a wonderful addition.

Plant a tree – each tree can absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its



Finance Team

Meets 3rd Thursday @ 7PM Notice: Our St James gathering area and chapel will undergo repairs and painting in mid April

PARTNERING WITH GOD IN HIS KINGDOM! Scripture is full of instances where God has used ordinary people like us to accomplish extraordinary things. He chose a stammering Moses to lead His people out of bondage, self-serving fishermen James and John to lead His Church and spread the Gospel, impulsive Peter's confession upon which to build His Church, and an unhealthy Paul to be the first great missionary to the Gentiles. God uses imperfect people, those whom the world considers weak and flawed, to extend His kingdom. We are far from perfect, but we, like Moses, James, John, Peter, and Paul, are privileged by God's grace to participate in the work of His kingdom.

Lynn Morrison- Stewardship Team



New! St James Website Refresh

Get ready to click the refresh button for a new St James website geared towards welcoming visitors, connecting members, and growing our life in faith.

Keep an eye on stjamesct.org this month for the reveal!

In Our Prayers

Janet Benzell
Tim Peterson
Paul Hubina
Dorian Malloy
Chris
Heidi Varanko
Diana Larson
Cassie
Dick Dunseith

Mary McDonald
Paul Meberg
Tiffany Randall
Pat
Richard Manville
Frank Jander
Marion Allen
Marilyn Johnson
Ron Johnson

Bob Gilchrist
Ana Chicaiza
Brendan Adams
Sonja White
Jack Lampiasi
Cathie Olinger
Nancy Best
Angela McCluskey
Stephen Dreska

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

We also give thanks for all the saints, especially Brian Mons, Nathan Giacomini, Vivian DeVito, Christine Pascoe, Nina Persing, Nicole Keller, Fae Guerin, Dominic Prisco, Jueng Lee, Caroline Keiger, Sonny Crotti, and Susan Seel

Prayer List Updates:

The prayer list is edited by request and the full list is reset twice a year in May and November. To add to the prayer list or request a name remain on the list, please see Pastor.

Prayer alerts are sent via email;
subscribe on our website.
If you wish to receive alerts by phone
call or text, please see Karen Lampiasi
of the James Ministry Group to be
added to the list.