

MAY 2024

ST JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH EPISTLE

A CONGREGATION
OF THE
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF AMERICA

IN THIS ISSUE:

A Word from Pastor
Robertson Spirituality Series
55th Anniversary
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And more...



*Please join us for Worship on Sunday mornings at 10:15 am for worship at
111 Peter Road, Southbury, CT.*

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

*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,

There are so many facets to each of our lives; the physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual, etc. Spirituality involves the recognition of a feeling or sense or belief that there is something greater than oneself alone, something more to being human than sensory experience, and that the greater whole of which we are part is cosmic or divine in nature. Religion is just one expression spirituality; in which folks feel called to take that feeling or sense, and planting it in a particular tradition to engage with it and nourish it - just as we have done as Lutheran Christians! Still, a growing population of our neighbors are explore their spirituality and relationship to God outside the traditional structures, especially here in our New England home. Last month, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace invited me to join a new committee conscientiously working to support this growing population. As God calls me to the spiritual care of my community, I am excited to accept the opportunity to lean more fully into providing validation, accompaniment, and support to all people - equally created, redeemed and loved by our God. See below to learn!

Peace, Pastor Abby

About Robertson Spirituality Series “Spirituality for the Nones”



Hartford International
UNIVERSITY FOR RELIGION & PEACE

The number of religiously unaffiliated Americans – often called “the nones” – make up a significant portion of the U.S. population, between 20-30%, and that percentage is growing at an ever-increasing rate. These are not people who are necessarily atheists, or simply morally indifferent, or unconcerned with spirituality. In fact, a recent study showed that as many as 72% of the nones believe in God, or a higher power, or a spiritual force. They often yearn and search for the transcendent and seek matters of ultimate concern, just like those in organized religion. At times they describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious.” Unfortunately, there seems to be very little spiritual nourishment offered specifically to feed them, nourishment that is thoughtful, credible, meaningful, and tailored to include them as well as spiritual seekers comfortable within an organized religion. It is the goal of the Robertson Spirituality Series to provide provocative and nourishing presentations to seekers from all backgrounds. We hope to provide speakers who come from all faiths and no faith, who will address spirituality’s intersection with:

- environmental justice, eco-spirituality, and racial concerns
- the rich tradition of mystical and contemplative devotion throughout world history
- “thin places”
- concerns of health, beauty, harmony, and mortality.

The series will enrich spirituality in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, lectures, seminars, retreats, book groups, discussions, and trips to sacred places. See hartfordinternational.edu for more information

May 2024

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

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1 7pm Worship and Music	4	5	6 8am Homefront
5 11:45am MEF Fund	6	7	8 7pm Preschool Board	9 10:30am Lutheran Home Worship	10	11 9:30am Men's Group 11:30am Rice Restock
12	13 3pm Watermark Worship	14 10am Ladies outing	15 <i>Epistle Submissions</i>	16	17	18 9am WELC Gathering
19	20 7pm Preschool board	21	22 7pm Council	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 6pm 20s/30s Pub Theology	31	

WEEKLY EVENTS

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
9:00am Confirm.	11am Bible Study	9:00am- 12:00pm Parish Admin.	2:00-4:00pm Community Fika @ Starbucks	9:00am- 12:00pm Parish Admin.	<i>Pastor Sabbath</i> 2:30- 5:00pm Parish Admin.	<i>Pastor Sabbath</i>
10:15am Worship, with S. School	7:30 pm Bible Study, virtual 8:00pm AA	12:30pm Meditation Call	8:00pm AA			



EASTER

March 31st - May 18th

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

Temple Talks

04/14 Sanctuary Gifts
Dedication

Special Observances

03/31 Resurrection Sunday
04/12 Good Shepherd



CHURCH IN THE WORLD

May 19th - June 23rd

Called & Equipped

Beginning at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit entered the world through powerful expressions of newness, diversity, hospitality, and acceptance. God gives us great courage to go into the world as Christ's body to love and serve one another as the Church in the world.

6 Weeks

Special Observances

04/19 Pentecost
04/26 Holy Trinity
06/02 Congregational Meeting
06/06-08 Synod Assembly
06/16 Youth Sunday
06/23 Worship in the park

ELCA LEADERSHIP



Pastor will be attending the Festival of Homiletics "Sustaining and Nurturing the Preaching Life" virtually, May 13-16. This annual conference celebrates the craft of preaching and educates clergy to further develop their craft for the good of the church.

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

The next phase of the bishop election process is the availability of biographical information on those whose names were submitted, and who agreed to allow their names to go forward. You may find those biographies linked [here](#) as well as other pertinent information relating to the election.

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 have some great news to report! The Connecticut Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection has tentatively awarded St. James, under the 2024 Connecticut Nonprofit Security Grant Program. There will be an official Notice of Grant Award package to be sent in the coming weeks.

Our submission for the Security Grant was directed at four significant security improvements:

- Replace current parking lot light poles and lamps with taller poles, LED lights and angled heads. Designed to provide improved lighting and coverage of the entire parking lot.
- Install security cameras around the exterior of the church.
- Install an alarm system.
- Install keypad access entry system with automatic locking doors.

We all want to personally thank Genie, Jacque, and Meghan and Chris Colasanto for their generous contributions towards submitting this grant. It was a heroic effort and fabulous teamwork by all. We will keep you posted when we hear more!

God Bless Our
St. James Family!
Church Council

**Curious about
membership at St.
James?**

See Pastor Abby by
May 5 to be included
in the spring
onboarding.

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*

Dear St. James Members,

We are excited to explore the possibility of celebrating a momentous milestone in the history of our church!

Next year, 2025, will mark the 55th anniversary of St. James Lutheran Church officially becoming a congregation! In 1970, St. James took a significant step by applying to be a chartered congregation. Back then, our church community thrived across the street at the former high school, now Rochambeau Middle School. To commemorate this special occasion, we are gauging interest in hosting and attending a celebratory dinner for all our cherished members, past and present.

Before we finalize any plans, we need to hear from you! We'd like to know if there's enough interest from our members to organize this anniversary event. Please take a moment to consider if you would attend this catered dinner held in the charming courtyard of the Heritage Hotel in Southbury.

Here are some initial details for your feedback:

- Target Date: April or May of 2025 (Sunday afternoon)
- Location: Heritage Hotel, Southbury, CT
- Estimated Cost: About \$50 per person

Help us make this a reality by replying!

Judy Katzmark has generously offered to be the point person for this event. If this sounds like something you'd be interested in attending, please let us know by replying to this email or contacting her directly at pckatzmark@msn.com or 203-264-4980. This feedback will give us an idea if we can go forward.

Judy will also be sharing more information about this budding event at our Congregational Meeting on June 2, 2024.

We look forward to hearing from you and celebrating 55 years of faith, fellowship, and service together!

Peace,
The St. James Church Council

Pictures from the 25th anniversary



Worship & Music

Help us plan worship! 1st Wednesday 7pm

Looking Ahead

Sunday, May 5
Easter 6

Outdoor worship, in the chapel by Outreach Tree

Sunday, May 12
Easter 7

Expanding on Mother's Day to include and honor all those who parent

Sunday, May 19
Feast of Pentecost

Praying for all nations, in many languages

Sunday, May 26
Holy Trinity Sunday

As God is inherently relational, we pray for each other.

Sunday, June 2

Outdoor worship, in the chapel by Outreach Tree



Join us for Sunday worship at 10:15 am;
1st Sunday of spring months is held outside



Easter Children's Message

Thank you Jan Carnaroli for artistically creating a tomb for kids to explore on Easter!

Sanctuary Gifts Dedication

On April 14, we honored all craftsmen and gifts to the beautification of our sanctuary, especially the stained glass cross..



Worship in the Community

Pastor leads monthly Lutheran worship at The Watermark and The Lutheran Home. All welcome to join!

SERVING IN WORSHIP

LITURGY MEANS "THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE" IN GREEK

May 5 - Easter 6

Preach: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Preside: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Organist: John Dressel

Altar Guild:

Ushers (2):

Sunday School (2):

Lector: Jan Salvatore

Cantor:

Asst. Minister:

Counters (2):

May 12 - Easter 7

Preach: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Preside: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Organist: John Dressel

Altar Guild:

Ushers (2):

Sunday School (2):

Lector: Lynn Morrison

Cantor:

Asst. Minister:

Counter (2):

May 19 - Pentecost

Preach: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Preside: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Organist: John Dressel

Altar Guild:

Ushers (2):

Sunday School (2):

Lector: Gary Klein

Cantor:

Asst. Minister:

Counters (2):

May 26 - Holy Trinity

Preach: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Preside: Rev. Abigail Johnson

Organist: John Dressel

Altar Guild:

Ushers (2):

Sunday School (2):

Lector: Judy Katzmark

Cantor:

Asst. Minister:

Counters (2):

CONTACT:

Cantors: John Dressel

Assistant Ministers: Liz Skinski

Sunday School: Lauren Lyons

Ushers: Jacque Matthew

Altar Guild: Paulette Calderone

Lectors: Judy Katzmark

Counters: Curt Haedke



Faith Formation

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

THUR. MAY 30
6PM
@ 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.*

*... did you know that Martin
Luther's wife, Katharina von
Bora Luther was a master
brewer!?*

BIBLE STUDY

MONDAYS
11AM, in church
7:30 PM, virtual
8 sessions
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.





FAITH FORMATION FOR KIDS!

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 mid-worship 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 Easter season! Thanks to Lynn Morrison for coordinating.

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 19th and Youth look forward to participating in the worship service during a youth participation Sunday on June 16th.

ALL are welcome to join!!!! If you have interest in helping with any of the YAFM programming please contact yafm@stjamesct.org.

Next meeting June 4th 7pm.

CELEBRATING MILESTONES

Grade 4 - Fruits of the Spirit

Exemplifying joy, love, kindness and gentleness,
Grade 4 will help honor parents on May 12



Announcing this year's VBS theme: Camp Firefly

It's time for a summer camp adventure with God! Explore timeless Bible stories that demonstrate how people trusted God in the face of their own fears and went on to do great things in God's name.

Kids will learn ways they can put their trust in God when they are afraid, challenged, or called to do God's work and share the Good News of God's love through Jesus Christ. We are excited to partner with the United Church of Christ in Southbury for a collaborative VBS!!!

Who: Kids aged PreK4 through entering 6 grade in Fall 2024, Jr *volunteer opportunities for students who have completed grades 6th-12th*

When: July 22-26, 2024, 9am-12pm

Cost: FREE!!

REGISTRATION OPENING SOON!

Church Families Registration: May 6th

Returning Camper Registration: May 20th

Open Registration: May 27th

Registration Close: July 1st

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 yafm@stjamesct.org.

Lead contacts for VBS include:

Teachers – Lynn Morrison and Meghan Colasanto

Policy and Procedures – Ellen Hubina and Jan Carnaroli

Program – Lauren Lyons

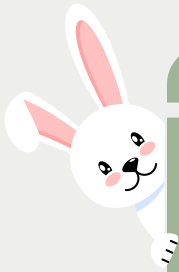
Registration – Abigail Manville

Property – Jacques Matthews

Finances – Ellen Hubina



Fellowship



Sunday March 31
@ 8:30-10am
–
Bunny Brunch in
Fellowship Hall

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

Community "Fika" for All

TIME CHANGE Wednesdays 2:00 - 4:00pm @ 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

May 14th @ 10am; see Judy Katzmark

On May 14th, we will be traveling to Litchfield's Historical Society to view the WITH THEIR BUSY NEEDLES exhibit and share lunch afterwards.

Arrangements have been made for a docent to help us fully appreciate the samplers and the lives of the girls who created them. Please join us at the church at 10 AM to carpool as the time of the visit is scheduled for 11 AM. We will be sharing a meal afterwards across the street at The Corner restaurant.

**CLEAR YOUR CALENDAR, MEET US, AND BE A PART OF THIS
REMARKABLE DAY IN THE LIFE OF ST. JAMES!**

Men's Fellowship Group

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

Seeking friends for an outing? Event you'd like to host? Yay! See Pastor

ST JAMES PRESCHOOL

It's hard to believe we are in the home stretch of the school year. These last several weeks go by in a flash! Recently, the MWF class enjoyed their pond field trip to Flanders's Nature Center and the TTh Class is looking forward to their upcoming farm animal field trip. We are also finding so much joy in the change of the season. Over the next few weeks we will continue to explore weather, insects and plants and have fun during our extended outdoor learning time under the tent. We also have our Family Days coming up in mid-May, which is a joyful and meaningful celebration of our preschool families.



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.





Outreach

This is an incredibly generous congregation with a lot of heart for outreach locally and globally! All are welcome to join for a short meeting on future outreach focus projects on May 5th after worship. If you help with an outreach project or have ideas but aren't able to attend, please reach out to Lauren Lyons. 203-982-8415 lyonsden1133@yahoo.com.

We plan to meet again this fall.

To the Members of St. James:

Scarlett and I would like to give thanks for the opportunity we had to worship and visit with you all on Sunday, March 17th. We appreciated the invitation by Pastor Abby to share our work as missionaries during the service. Scarlett and I enjoyed seeing many familiar and new faces, had great conversations, and loved sharing with the congregation on how God is using us as missionaries in Guatemala. Thank you for your generous monetary gifts of support - greatly appreciated.

Thank you for the continued prayers as we finish up our time in the States, and we look forward to future visits as we know we have a family in Christ in Southbury, CT.

God's blessings,
Ben, Scarlett and Jaakko Tino

Don't forget the rice shelf!

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 drop the food off outside or go inside to stock the shelf!

May – Lyons
June – Colasanto
July – Salvatore
August –
September –
October –

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

Meets 3rd Thursday
@ 7PM

Wow! The world was shaking April 5th in the morning!! Scary stuff!! When the world is shaking we need something that is rock solid! My thoughts are drawn to Jesus' parable of the two builders: one built on rock, the other sand. You know which survived the test of challenge and time! Psalm 18 tells us of our Rock: "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock in whom I take refuge." So - build upon the Rock!

Lynn Morrison- *Stewardship Team*

St James Lutheran
Gods Work, Our Hands

About Us - Embrace Community - Explore Faith - Engage Justice - Give

Welcome Home to St James Lutheran, CT

No matter what life puts on your path, come home to a place where folks know your face, greet you warmly, and support you at each step of the journey, as we love and serve God together.

Visit Us

How will you grow your life in faith at St James?

Root Your Faith | Cultivate Relationships | Branch Out Justice

Visit Us

Wherever you are on your walk with or towards God, you are welcome, affirmed, beloved and belong at St. James. Let us worship God together.

Sunday Worship: 10:15 AM in sanctuary (9:30 AM in summer, outside)

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.

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

Ana Chicaiza

Brendan Adams

Sonja White

Cathie Olinger

Angela McCluskey

Stephen Dreska

Shannon

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, Susan Seel, Anna Milewska, Martin Ford, Evelyn Gorham, and Bob Gilchrist

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.