

AUTUMN 2025  
OCTOBER - DECEMBER

# ST JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH EPISTLE

A STORYTELLING  
MAGAZINE SHARING  
THE FAITH, HEART,  
AND LIFE OF CHURCH

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- Leslie Broch, PreK Dir.
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And more...



Explore Faith - Embrace Community - Engage Justice

# ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

111 Peter Road, Southbury CT 06488

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Rev. Abigail Johnson, Pastor (she/her)

[pastor@stjamesct.org](mailto:pastor@stjamesct.org)

203-450-6454

## 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.

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!

## CHURCH STAFF

**Genie Bisch**

*Parish  
Administrator*

**John Dressel**

*Music  
Director*

**Abigail Manville**

*Digital Coordinator,  
volunteer*

**Katherine Belonis**

*Legal Consultation,  
pro-bono*

## PRESCHOOL STAFF

**Danielle Christina**

*Teacher*

**Leslie Broch**

*Director & Head Teacher*

**Debbie Flick**

*Teacher*

# A WORD FROM PASTOR



Dear Beloved Community,

Recently, a native Southerner who had relocated to New England spoke with me about the unexpected cultural shock.

"It took me time to realize that New Englanders aren't very nice but they are kind," she commented. "They are the type of people who will cut you off in traffic, but pull over to help you change a flat tire." This made me chuckle, as it seems to ring true. Of all the American subcultures, our region isn't known for its warm first impressions. But it is full of good people, like you.

Being nice is about manners, politeness, palatability and optics. Its about creating comfort and being agreeable. Holding the door for someone is a nice thing to do, but it is not sinful to let it close. Jesus' first miracle at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11) was a nice act; by turning the water into wine, he saved the couple from deep cultural embarrassment. It was a gracious, polite thing to do - but the party would not have gone hungry.

However, far more of Jesus' ministry was about kindness. Kindness is doing what is right and just, even if it creates discomfort. Jesus flipped tables to clear the temple of moneychangers in reverent respect of God's house (John 2:13-17). When a group of men wanted to execute a woman caught in adultery, Jesus challenged their hypocrisy to protect her (John 8:1-11). He did not give an easy, comfortable answer when a rich young ruler inquired about abundant life but rather, the inconvenient truth of humility and generosity (Mark 10:17-22). Importantly, the religious were not exempt from Jesus' harsh kindness; as he frequently called out the Pharisees' preoccupation with houses of worship remaining "nice." Jesus wanted the misled congregation members to understand the fullness of true faith, felt and acted on in the world. He wanted that for its leaders as well.

Being nice is sweet, but if it delays or opposes creating true kindness, then we have to follow Jesus' method of priority. For those comfortable in their privilege, this change will feel bad - maybe even wrong. Do not waiver; this is holy restructuring. A system of "nice" for some at the expense of wholeness for all is not the kingdom of God. Loving, as Jesus teaches it, begins with seeing people fully. Seeing what brings them wholeness, then celebrating it and protecting it with them. Seeing what causes them pain, not turning away, but working together to eliminate it. So be courageous amidst discomfort, followers of Jesus. Be kind and love - God is holding the door open for you.

Peace, Pastor Abby

*Whether in celebration, grief, doubt, or curiosity of faith, Pastor Abby is happy to arrange a meeting with you for care, counsel, and prayer. Home or hospital visits by your invitation and consent. Call cell directly with care emergencies. Observes Sabbath on Fri & Sat.*



## SUMMER MINISTRY

Summer was packed full of special ministry invitations to serve many of our wider ELCA communities: resident chaplain at Camp Calumet, NH; faculty of eco-theology at Pinecrest Lutheran Leadership Ministries, NJ (pictured with fellow faculty); Global Christianity course at United Lutheran Seminary.



# CHURCH COUNCIL

The elected lay-leaders of governance and administration

## REPORTS & NEWS

### State of CT Security Grant

All projects associated with this grant are completed here at St. James. All required documentation has been submitted to the State and St. James even came in under budget by ~\$108.00! We are grateful for this award and are awaiting the final reimbursement of funds to cover work expenses.

### Shared Space Agreement:

A subcommittee made up of members of the council, preschool board, and properties team are creating a Shared Space Agreement. This covenant is meant to clarify roles and responsibilities regarding the physical space usage as well as the cleaning, maintenance, administration, and insurance liability associated with operating preschool as an outreach of the St. James Congregation. For more information, please speak with Lauren Lyons, Barb Manville, Steve Ulc, or Ellen Hubina.

### Model Constitution for Congregations:

The Churchwide Assembly updated the Model Constitution for Congregations at its meeting this past August. The New England Synod is encouraging all congregations to bring their constitutions in line with these revisions as soon as possible. Once the revisions are made, our congregation will vote to adopt them at our February 2026 congregational meeting. Additionally, we decided to take this opportunity to further review and modify our St. James Constitution to best align with our current membership community and the ways in which we feel we can best organize and function structurally, administratively, and financially. Updating the constitution beyond the revisions made by the General Assembly will be an ongoing project; the congregation will ultimately vote to adopt any additional changes at a future congregational meeting, sometime after our Budget Meeting in February. If you are interested in learning more, or would like to offer suggestions and input, please speak with Liz Skinski or another member of Council.

**Save the Date:** Congregational Budget Meeting – Feb. 1, 2026



## RENT OUR SPACE

1. Call the Main Office to request date
2. Fill out a rental form
3. Return form for review 10 days out from event
4. Pay fee, deposit, and acquire insurance

## MEMBERS

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- Kathy Haddy,  
President
- Frank Varanko,  
Vice President
- Liz Skinski,  
Secretary
- Rev. Abby Johnson,  
Pastor

### LIAISONS

- Jan Carnaroli,  
Worship
- Meghan Buchanan,  
Faith-Formation
- Steven Ulc,  
Properties
- Barbara Manville,  
Preschool
- Bill Dreska,  
Community Within
- Kevin Peterson,  
Community Beyond

### FINANCIAL OFFICERS

- **Treasurer, vacant**
- Ellen Hubina,  
Assist. Treasurer
- Curt Haedke,  
Financial Secretary

# STEWARDSHIP

*noun*

*the careful and responsible management of all things entrusted into our care by God*

## MORTGAGE UPDATES

On behalf of the Mortgage Campaign Subcommittee, I want to thank you for your faithful support of our campaign to lower the church mortgage. We are encouraged to share some important updates:

- We have received \$14,000 of the outstanding pledged amount, bringing our campaign
- account balance to over \$31,000, with about \$4,000 still outstanding.
- Our matching gift commitment has been revised. While the original match was set at
- \$75,000, part of the commitment was withdrawn. The good news is that we still have a very generous \$50,000 matching gift in place. Every dollar given to the campaign will continue to be matched, up to this amount.

Though the matching total is lower than first anticipated, we are deeply grateful for this remarkable \$50,000 opportunity to double the impact of your gifts. Together, we are making meaningful progress towards lowering our mortgage balance and strengthening our financial future.

To reach our revised goal by year's end, we ask for your continued support through pledges or gifts. Simply note "Mortgage Campaign" on your check or envelope or use the special Mortgage Campaign envelopes - available on the Narthex table. Your contribution will go directly toward this effort. Thank you for your prayers, generosity, and commitment to St. James. "God loves a cheerful giver." -2 Corinth.9:7

In Christ,  
Curt Haedke, with Mortgage Campaign Subcommittee

## SEASONAL SPOTLIGHT FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Mission Endowment  
Fund giving

Financial Stewardship  
Campaign

Mortgage Campaign

Drafting 2026 budget

## FINANCIAL

Care of money to achieve goals and maintain long-term financial health

## RELATIONAL

Care and cultivation relationships with one another and community

## MISSION

Care and attention to our unique call & vision

## GENERATIONAL

Care of knowledge and resources for the benefit of future generations

## INCLUSIVITY

Care of an environment that is welcoming, affirming, and supportive of diversity

## SPIRITUAL

Care of faithful exploration, connection to God, and each other

## TIME & TALENTS

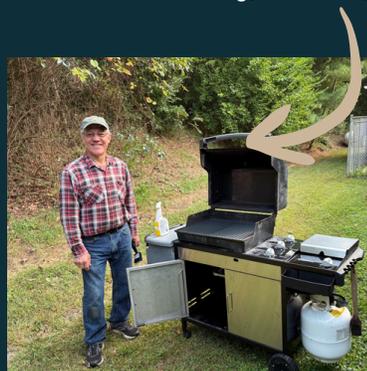
Care of schedules, energy, and volunteer needs

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Care and celebration of the earth

## PROPERTY

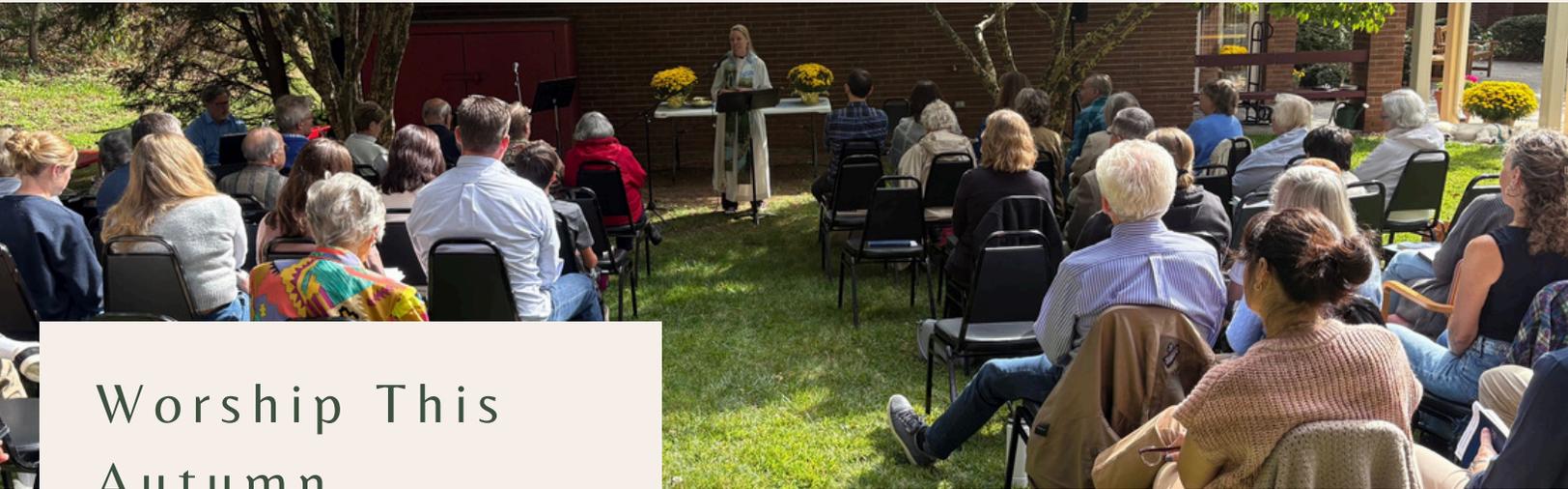
Care of our building, facilities, and belongings



*Thank you to property stewards like landscaper and handyman Kevin B for all your time and energy!*

*"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..."*  
- Mark 10:45

# WORSHIP & MUSIC



## Worship This Autumn

- **Oct. 5 - Blessing of the Animals**  
Bring your pet to be blessed outdoors
- **Oct. 12 - UNICEF Temple Talk**  
Invitation to give towards children's aid
- **Oct. 19 - Financial Stewardship Talk**  
Kicking off the annual budget appeal
- **Oct. 26 - Reformation Sunday**  
Celebrating Lutheran history & identity
- **Nov. 2 - All-Saints Sunday**  
Bring photos for Remembrance Table
- **Nov. 9 - Dorothy Day House Sunday**  
Learning about our CT mission partner
- **Nov. 16 - Welcome Rev. Mark Lingle**  
Our CT Rep. for New England Synod
- **Nov. 23 - Blessing of New Members**  
Welcoming new additions to our family
- **Nov. 25 - Interfaith Thanksgiving**  
@ North Congregational, Woodbury
- **Nov. 30 - Advent 1: Hope**
- **Dec. 7 - Advent 2: Joy**
- **Dec. 14 - Advent 3: Peace**
- **Dec. 21 - Advent 4: Love**  
**The All-In Nativity Pageant**  
Skit style worship, costumes for all!
- **Wed. Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve 4:00**  
Choir, candlelight, special guest for kids
- **Dec. 28 - Christmas 1**

*Season of Creation outdoor services; Summer baptisms of George Franco and Frances Belonis; Blessing of the Backpacks; Camp Calumet Sunday music by Carnarolis and preaching by Sara J.*



## STEWARDS of PRAISE

Join the Worship & Music team to plan services: 1<sup>st</sup> Wed. odd months 7pm



Worship @ East Hill, 4<sup>th</sup> Monday 2pm

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;  
break forth into joyous song and praises!" - Psalm 98:4

## Sacred Art in the Sanctuary

BY RICH LARSON, ST JAMES MEMBER

### The Beautiful Wooden Cross

Our beautiful wooden cross was designed and made by a founding member of our church, Frank K. Bachele (father-in-law of Gisela Bachele). He used wood dating back past the 1900s which were from supporting structural members of an old pavilion where the Lutheran Home now stands. He produced a beautiful representation of our most cherished Lutheran symbol: the empty cross of our risen Lord. His skills in woodworking (a practiced hobby) and his sense of design enable him to create a beautiful cross having long slender tapering lines with simple angular contours. The cross was the center piece of our former worship space as it stood suspended on the west wall of our fellowship hall for over fifty years. The timeless design creation now continues to serve as our centerpiece in our new sanctuary. It is positioned directly above our altar and invites contemplation of God's love for us. It also provides our congregation with a sense of continuity as well as a connection with our St. James church history. The wooden cross is suspended five inches directly in front of the stained glass window enabling us to continue the practice of draping the wooden cross with shawls of the Christian seasons. The beautiful wooden cross at St. James - to the glory of God!



### The Lamb of God

The Lamb of God as depicted in stained glass is a very important symbol for Christians spanning back to the time when Jesus walked the shores of the Sea of Galilee. As Jesus approached John the Baptist, John proclaimed, "Behold The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). The people of Israel have long associated lambs with religious offerings to God. The spiritual slaughter of lambs has been an important part of their annual Passover observances since Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. The prophet, Isaiah, foretold of the sacrifice of Christ as a lamb being led to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7). We, as modern day Lutherans, set our minds on God's sacrifice of His only son as we celebrate Communion with the singing. As the daylight brightens and enhances the beauty of the stained glass, may your thoughts turn to what Christ has done for us as the lamb of God.



### Martin Luther's Seal, Letter from Martin Luther to Lazarus Spengler, July 8, 1530

*First, there is a black cross in a heart that remains its natural color. This is to remind me that it is faith in the Crucified One that saves us. Anyone who believes from the heart will be justified (Romans 10:10). It is a black cross, which mortifies and causes pain, but it leaves the heart its natural color. It doesn't destroy nature, that is to say, it does not kill us but keeps us alive, for the just shall live by faith in the Crucified One (Romans 1:17). The heart should stand in the middle of a white rose. This is to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace—it puts the believer into a white, joyous rose. Faith does not give peace and joy like the world gives (John 14:27). This is why the rose must be white, not red. White is the color of the spirits and angels (cf. Matthew 28:3; John 20:12). This rose should stand in a sky-blue field, symbolizing that a joyful spirit and faith is a beginning of heavenly, future joy, which begins now, but is grasped in hope, not yet fully revealed. Around the field of blue is a golden ring to symbolize that blessedness in heaven lasts forever and has no end. Heavenly blessedness is exquisite, beyond all joy and better than any possessions, just as gold is the most valuable and precious metal.*



# FAITH-FORMATION

## For Adults

### BIBLE STUDY

**Mondays**

**11:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Explore The Word, theological themes

**Autumn Study:**

**“What is the Bible?”**

**by Rob Bell**

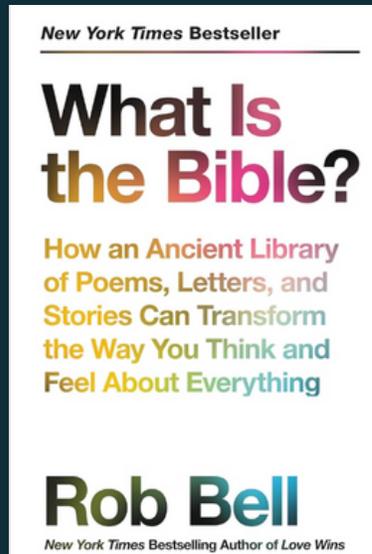
10 weeks, beginning Sept. 22 till Dec. 15  
Why should we bother with such an ancient book? Isn't it all myths and fairytales? What about all that violence, and the contradictions?

If you're asking yourself these questions, join us!

### SEMINARS

**Seasonal Offerings**

Learning and reflection in workshops led by guest speakers on various topics



### SERMONS

**Sunday 10:45 am**

Scripture, faith & life meet, as we proclaim & wonder together

## INTERFAITH FIELD TRIPS

**Seasonal Offerings**

All-ages welcome in visiting our neighbors' houses of worship for education and prayer; a partnership outing with UCC Southbury

**Vespers at Christ Our Savior Church**

Eastern Orthodox Christian

Roxbury Rd, Southbury

Sat. Oct. 11, 4:30 PM

RSVP Theo Camara



### MEDITATION

**Tues. 12:00 pm**

Mindfulness & breathing practices sent via phone

### DEVOTIONALS

Free resources on the Narthex table (Word in Season, Milestones Ministry, seasonal booklets, etc.)

## For Kids

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Sunday 10:30 - 11:00 am**

Lectionary-based class for PreK to Grade 5 to explore the Word in enriching activities.

### CONFIRMATION

**Sunday 9:00 - 9:45 am**

A 4-unit course for Grade 6+ into Lutheran history, teachings, biblical study, faith in the world.

### VACTION BIBLE SCHOOL

**Week in July/August**

A half day camp of faithful fun; a partnership program with UCC Southbury



"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." - Matthew 7:7-8

## Reflections from a Sunday School Teacher

BY MEGHAN COLASANTO, SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR, ST. JAMES MEMBER

When I think back to my own days in Sunday School, I'm filled with warm memories. My mom was one of the teachers, and I'll never forget how she used to bring in munchkins for all of us—such a treat! I remember the Bible stories, my friends, and most of all, the feeling of safety, love, and the deep truth that no matter what, God loves me. That message stuck with me through the years. And now, all these years later, I find myself on the other side—teaching Sunday School to the amazing kids in our congregation. One of the things I love most is seeing the relationships that form across generations with this powerful message continuing to be shared today.

Thanks to our wonderful team of dedicated (and fun!) teachers, for developing a wonderful bond with the children of St James. You're teaching and love is impactful! **God loves us. We are His children.** It really is that simple—and that powerful.

### STEWARDS of LEARNING

Join the Faith-Formation team to plan educational programs for all ages: 1<sup>st</sup> Wed. even months 7pm



*Thank you to our bell ringers... of all ages! Bells are rung as we say the Lord's Prayer during Communion to alert and invite anyone within earshot to join us in the prayer that Jesus taught us.*

## Our Approach to Sunday School

We believe that children and youth are essential members of the Body of Christ. They are vital teachers of joy, curiosity, authenticity and faith. By their presence and participation, we all experience a fuller expression of church in the world. Therefore, children begin in worship with their caregivers; receiving the same statement of welcome, affirmation and inclusion offered during "The Gathering." As we begin "The Word" portion of worship, children come forward for a special message with Pastor Abby, who introduces the themes of their Sunday School lesson for the day. PreK - 5<sup>th</sup> grade is dismissed to class, for a lectionary-based curriculum. This means the whole family - kids and adults alike - all receive teaching on the same scripture, in respective age-matched style and space. We seek to create safe, fun programming that explores faith and builds intergenerational relationships. A variety of members of the congregation rotate as teachers in the classroom, always with 2 volunteers per class ratio. When "The Meal" begins, kids come back to worship, so that we might partake of Christ's Holy Communion as a full community and together, receive the blessing of "The Sending" as we go back into the world, equipped at any age. As Jesus said, "let the little children come to me!" (Matthew 19:14)

# VBS 2025

## Epic Australian Adventure

BY THEO CAMARA, YOUTH DIRECTOR AT UCC SOUTHURY

### STEWARDS of PLAY

VBS is a joint program of St. James and UCC Southbury, with the hosting church trading off each year. In 2026, St. James will be the hosting church. See Lauren Lyons, St.J VBS Director to help plan.



Thank you for helping us along on our Epic Australian Adventure! We saw over 85 students over the course of the week, with about 65 campers and 20 teen CITs helping with the program. We also had 25 adults helping throughout the week, and many more behind the scenes both before and after. Truly, thank you to everyone who gave their time, talent, and efforts to make this week magical for all of our campers!

Each day of VBS started with a G'day mate! Kids started with an opening time of songs, dancing, and lots of fun. Then they would play games, make crafts, sing songs, do a science experiment, and witness a dramatic portrayal of the Bible story. Finally, we would close together with more singing, going over the Bible story one more time, and with our infamous CIT challenges! (Ask someone who was there—I'm sure they'll tell you of these adventures!)

VBS gives us an opportunity to see kids that we might not encounter on a regular basis. It is a privilege to get this time with them, and I am beyond thankful for this opportunity for us to speak into their lives—even if it's just for one week a year. Our partnership between UCC Southbury and St. James is a beautiful example of the "Church" acting as one body, and I am so grateful to be a part of such a partnership. Paul writes in Philippians, "I thank my God every time I remember you... I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." I am excited to announce that next year VBS will be August 3-7, 2026 - mark your calendars! We can't wait to continue this adventure with you.

Peace,  
Pastor Theo Camara  
Director of Youth and Family Ministry at UCC Southbury





**SAVE THE DATE!**  
August 3-7, 2026



# FELLOWSHIP

## Fika: It's the Little Things in Life

BY PASTOR ABBY JOHNSON



*St. Lucia Day 1998 with my godmother and 2025 with Bengt Granskog; Fika at AM Coffee in Southbury*

There are a lot of ways to say “I love you.” Beyond the obvious, there is also “Text me when you get home” or, my personal favorite, “Can I get you a cup of coffee?” This small gesture - especially when that cup is shared together - expresses nurture, presence, a desire to warm and comfort, and an awareness of another’s needs. And, what else is love then to be attentive, affirming, and serving of one another’s basic needs... like that of a good cup of coffee?

The Swedes know the loving power of a shared cup of coffee; so well in fact that it is built into their celebrations and everyday life. On December 13, children all over the country wake early, turn on the coffee pot, and deliver breakfast in bed to their family in celebration of St. Lucia Day. As a child of Swedish heritage, I would dawn the traditional garb and follow suit; delivering care, caffeine, and my mom’s fresh cardamom bread to loved ones, teachers, and elderly church members, house by house. If you ever visit Sweden, you’ll quickly notice that each day, folks pause from work or activity in the afternoon for *fika*, meaning “a coffee break with treats and company.” Even more than a refuel, it is about reconnecting with people, savoring small moments, and expressing gratitude. While in university, my housemates and I hosted *fika* each Friday after class; welcoming any female students into our tiny apartment for cheap coffee and boxed Oreos. Even as poor college kids, *fika* was a simple way of loving our campus community.

Several years out from university, and several more miles away from Sweden, these are still traditions that resonate with me. By hosting *fika* weekly, my hope is to extend a space for anyone to feel less alone, more taken care of, and encouraged to catch that breath we so desperately need. It is truly an open invitation to all people - folks from St. James, other churches, no church, and passersby have all taken a seat. It is not a “religious” event; it doesn’t need to be in order to model Jesus’ way of open tables, gentle company, and loving kindness. *Fika* is a practice largely shaped by the Swedish concept of *lagom*, a philosophy of “just the right amount;” emphasizing balance, moderation, and sustainability in all aspects of life. It is mindset I am continually trying, failing, and trying again to practice. It is one we can all support in each other, through even the smallest pause, simplest gesture, or quick cup of coffee.

Thank you to Meghan and Amanda, owners of AM Coffee, for graciously and warmly welcoming me each week. And a special thank you to Bob Morrison, who finds me every Sunday before the church is wonderfully noisy, busy, and overflowing with praise and people, and asks me that loving question: “Pastor... can I get you a cup of coffee?”

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when siblings dwell in unity!” - Psalm 133:1



**Summer Together:** Summer campfires discussing the all-in summer read, “The House in the Cerulean Sea.” September welcomes back Men’s and Women’s monthly fellowship groups, and indoor/outdoor church picnic.

## Autumn Events

1

### Apple Picking & Potluck

**Sunday, October 5** - See *Meghan Colasanto*  
Meet at Gem Orchards in Southbury to gather the season’s harvest before a dinner together.

2

### Pumpkin Carving & Potluck

**Sunday, October 19** - See *Sam Haddy*  
Show off your creative carving ideas with this fun seasonal gathering at the Haddy home.

3

### Harvest Potluck

**Sunday, November 2** - See *Linda Bedard*  
Celebrate the close of our generous financial stewardship campaign with a dish to share!

4

### Advent Wreath Making

**Sunday, November 23** - See *Jan Salvatore*  
Ready your home for the Advent wreath by bringing home a hand made wreath.

5

### Christmas Caroling

**December 14** - See *Meghan Colasanto*  
Spread Christmas cheer loudly for all to hear at our mission partner, The Lutheran Home.

## STEWARDS of FELLOWSHIP

All events are organized by willing volunteers who feel so led to jump in and coordinate one.

# CARE & HOSPITALITY

## The James Ministry

The *James Ministry* team came about from the premise of the national group, *Stephen Ministries*. Stephen Ministers are laypeople that have undergone specialized training to provide one-to-one Christian care and support to people experiencing life challenges such as grief, illness, or divorce. At our church, James Ministry attends to care and hospitality needs. At particularly sensitive moments of life - such as new baby, health concerns, or loss of loved one - they are the ones providing meals, gathering for prayer, and crafting comfort items, like blankets and prayer pockets to be given at pastoral care visits. They also deliver communion to homebound members/friends and host receptions following funerals. We give thanks to the James Ministry Team, for their ongoing stewardship of relationships through compassion and kindness.

### How Can I Help?

1. Deliver **communion** to members
2. **Cook** for meal trains. See *Lynn Morrison*
3. Donate your **crafts** as comfort items
4. Make **care visits** to members and friends.
5. **Join** the team. See *Karen Lampiasi*



“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

- Matthew 25:40

## Remembering Our Saints



Sandra  
“Sandi”  
Pascoe

Sandra Marie Pascoe, lovingly known as Sandi, Gramma, and Meema, passed away peacefully on July 26, 2025 at the age of 82 in Temple, Texas. Born on March 16, 1943, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Sandi lived a life full of love, service, resilience, and joy. Throughout her life, she was a passionate community volunteer and leader.

Sandi was a beloved member of St. James Lutheran Church for many years. Sandi taught Sunday School for over 15 years, planing a seed of faith and love in many of our youngest baptized members. She also founded the James Ministry team several decades ago.

In her later years, she and husband Ron moved to Texas, where Sandi quickly became an integral part of First Lutheran Church. Sandi was a light to everyone who knew her. Her boundless kindness, infectious smile, and nurturing presence created a “safe space” wherever she went. She leaves behind a legacy of love, faith, strength, and service that will continue to inspire all who had the honor to know her.

A memorial service was held at 11:00am Saturday, September 20 in St. James Lutheran Church. Thank you to James Ministry for hosting the reception (pictured left) and carrying on her legacy of service and love.

# ST. JAMES PRESCHOOL

“Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” - Mark 10:14



## A New Year Begins!

BY LESLIE BROCH

See [stjamesct.org/preschool/](http://stjamesct.org/preschool/) for details

What a beautiful start to the preschool year! We have such kind, capable and curious children. It is encouraging to see what these 3 and 4 year old children are able to do, whether it is saving a toad, focused determination when cutting or working on a challenging puzzle or overhearing a child say, “Of course you can play! Everyone can play!”

The fall has provided many opportunities for learning about ourselves and our feelings, navigating new social situations and learning how to advocate for one’s own needs and wants while developing an understanding of how to be a cooperative member of the class.

Integrated into all of the social/emotional learning that takes place daily, concepts are practiced in fun, hands-on activities! We feel fortunate to be able to provide so many opportunities for family participation as well, such as our apple-picking field trip and Thanksgiving Celebration.

We are grateful for the type of program we can offer the children in the area! St. James is a place where all children are supported and valued for being their unique selves!



# OUTREACH



## Time for UNICEF

BY MARYLEES SIEGLE

My love for children goes back to my early days, but was formalized as a new teacher out of college in 1960. Working with youngsters, starting them on their path to education, helping them build character, has always fascinated me. I particularly recall, in my first classroom, a severely handicapped youngster who was confined to a cart to move around from one place to another. It was amazing to see him, cheered by his classmates, in his struggle, become a little hero in their early development.

As a mother to my own children, this connection became even more personal. It was only natural that I was attracted to the efforts of UNICEF reaching out to needy children in the whole world. The early fundraising we did through those orange boxes of "trick-or-treat for UNICEF" was a visible way we could draw upon the community in Southbury to help raise funds for UNICEF's worldwide work. Here are some of the highlights:

- UNICEF collection began in 2008 at St James Church, \$286.84 was raised
- A 2-3 week plan was "Trick or Treat for UNICEF" each October for church, community, friends and local businesses
- An introduction to families/children helping children in need Covid in 2021 stopped use of the little orange boxes.
- Last year's 2024 St. James collection: \$10,070

UNICEF continues to touch hearts and will bring hope in 2025 and the need is still great: famine, violence and hunger in many countries. As a mom, parent, teacher, principal and educator, this is one of the most important mission outreaches that keeps me thanking the generosity of all who share so much for those who have so little! This outreach to children has been a vital part of my life for over 60 years! *"Jesus said, Let the little children come unto me, Forbid them not, For such is the kingdom of heaven."* - Matthew 19:14

United  
Nations  
International  
Child  
Emergency  
Fund



... In Pakistan, Ukraine, Haiti, Gaza, Sudan, Afghanistan, Appalachia... and on and on...  
Through war, famine, floods, refugees, earthquakes - help kids and families with UNICEF!

**Cash and checks to:**  
St. James Lutheran Church (memo "UNICEF")  
Collecting donations October 12 - 19  
See Marylee Siegle

*You always stand taller,  
when you kneel to help a child.*



“Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are doing ” - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

## Summer Review



**Dorothy Day House** received hot meals in July, August and September, prepared by our Men's Fellowship Group at St. James.

**Camp Calumet** set a goal of \$50,000 by logging 150,000 miles together. Team St. James proudly contributed 4,554 miles toward this effort!

**Southbury Food Pantry** received over 90 boxes of cereal, collected during Vacation Bible School.

A note of thanks for our **Medical Shed:**  
*08/17/25 Dear St. James Lutheran Church, I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to extend my heartfelt gratitude for the generous support and assistance provided by your church in lending my wife various mobility equipment from your equipment shed. The walkers, cane, and comode have made a significant difference in the caring of my wife after she fractured both ankles. Your commitment to serving our community is truly inspiring and reflects the core values of compassion and kindness that your church embodies. With the massive bills coming in, we would have been hard pressed to afford purchasing or renting this equipment. When she is better and no longer in need of the few assistive devices we couldn't find in the shed, we will be donating those items to your church. Thank you once again for your generosity and support. It is comforting to know that we have such a caring community around us.*



- David & April Richards, Woodbury CT

## Fall Service

### SOCKtober

1

**October** - See *Leslie Boch*

Donate socks to warm guests at local homeless shelters this autumn into winter.

### UNICEF Fundraiser

2

**October** - See *Marylee Siegle*

Support this UN agency protecting the rights of children and providing aid.

### Winter Wear Drive

3

**November** - See *Lauren Lyons*

Donate winter coats, hats, gloves, and mittens to Dorothy Day House.

### Operation Christmas Child

4

**November** - See *Judy Katzmark*

Fill a shoebox with goodies for Samaritan's Purse international giveaway.

### The Giving Tree

5

**December** - See *Lauren Lyons*

A Southbury Social Services program; donate a gift as requested on the tree and provide unwrapped, for local family in need

## STEWARDS of OUTREACH

Projects serving our 4 mission partners are coordinated by each of the **St. James MP ambassadors**.

All other projects are organized by **willing volunteers**, who feel so led to jump in and coordinate one.



**GIVE TO ONGOING DRIVES!**

Rice - Medical Equipment - Clothing

# BODY OF CHRIST



## Mission Partners

*Congregation-elected organizations whose ministries align with St. James' mission & vision, we commit to being in ongoing supportive relationship with through engagement, education, and financial aid*

## Dorothy Day Hospitality House

BY BILL SIEGLE, ST. JAMES AMBASSADOR



**What is Dorothy Day Hospitality House?** This organization (founded in 1982) is one of St James newest mission partners. It is a private, non-profit community-run kitchen and hospitality center that operates without government funding. Instead, it depends on the generosity of individuals, churches, and community groups. **All work is done by volunteers.** There is no paid staff. It serves the homeless and underprivileged in the Danbury area. It offers meals...

- A **breakfast program** (Morning Glory), run in collaboration with Catholic Charities, operates Monday through Friday from 7 am to 9 am
- A **late afternoon meal**, served every day (363 days a year) from approximately 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm, includes a hot meal and "to-go" sandwich bags. Annually, the kitchen prepares some **52,000 meals**, averaging over 140 meals per day. *St James prepares a hot meal once a month, made by Mens Fellowship group, and cold sandwiches, prepared by Youth and Scouts, in supporting this mission.*

**Community outreach activities** include festive events like "Santa's Workshop," where toys, books, and winter coats are given to local children during the holiday season. St James winter coat drive and holiday gifts are part of this. About half of the food and supplies are donated, with the remainder— along with other operational costs like rent and utilities—covered through **cash contributions** from community supporters. *St James provides an annual cash gift from its operating budget, plus donations from members.*

**Origin of the Name:** The name "Dorothy Day Hospitality House" pays tribute to **Dorothy Day**, a 20th-century social activist and journalist. The first "houses of hospitality" were established during the Great Depression—places offering food, shelter, volunteer assistance, and community for those in need, regardless of religious affiliation. Dorothy Day Hospitality House in Danbury continues that legacy, modeling itself on those principles of radical hospitality and compassionate outreach—embodying a spirit of love, food, and rest for all who require it.

“You are the body of Christ.

Each one of you is a part of it.” - 1 Cor. 12:27

## ELCA Churchwide

*Our national denominational body; oversees churchwide ministries, global missions, theological education, and ecumenical partnerships  
Learn more at [elca.org](http://elca.org)*



### Churchwide Elections

The Rev. Yehiel Curry (upper left) was elected July 30 to serve a six-year term as new presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The Rev. Lucille “CeCee” Mills (lower left) was elected Aug. 1 to serve a six-year term as secretary of the ELCA. The elections took place during the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly being held July 28–Aug. 2 at the Phoenix Convention Center.



### Bishop Eaton Letter to President Trump on Gaza

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton issued a letter on August 14 to President Donald Trump and members of Congress expressing support of “our Jewish-American and Israeli siblings who have suffered because of the Oct. 7 attacks,” yet voicing “profound horror regarding the catastrophe in Gaza and the wider crisis in the Holy Land.”

“The lives of 2.1 million Palestinians in Gaza depend in part on the decisions you will make in the coming weeks and months,” Eaton wrote. “For the love of God, the sake of our shared humanity and the future of our Palestinian siblings of all faiths, your swift action may be the best and perhaps only way to stop the Israeli government from continuing its war and genocide in Gaza, and to plant seeds of peace and well-being for all in the Holy Land.” *Read the full letter on [elca.org](http://elca.org)*

## New England Synod

*Our regional governing and support body that connects the local congregations with the churchwide organization  
Learn more at [nelutherans.org](http://nelutherans.org)*



### From the September “Bishop’s Bulletin” Newsletter

As much as we would like to think of ourselves as independent beings, we live in an interdependent community in which we depend on the labors of others for all the earthly blessings we enjoy. Vocations are all the ways we use our God-given gifts, talents, passion, experiences and wisdom for the sake of community. All work that benefits the neighbor is pleasing to God. This truth leads Christians more deeply into the freedom of the gospel.

Vocational discernment is not about choosing the one holy path God has ordained as part of some divine plan. Rather, vocational discernment, whether it’s a college student wondering what to do after graduation, or a mid-career employee considering a career change, or a retiree pondering what’s next in retirement, is about working in community for the well-being of community. In the freedom of the Gospel any hierarchy we assign to work is washed away. All work that benefits community is pleasing to God.” - Bishop Nathan Piphon. *Subscribe to Bishop’s Bulletin online.*

# CHURCH LIFE AT A GLANCE

## WEEKLY

SUN - FRI	9AM-12PM	BUILDING STAFFED
SUNDAY	09:00 AM	CONFIRMATION
*SUNDAY	*09:30 AM	*SUMMER WORSHIP
SUNDAY	10:15 AM	REGULAR WORSHIP
SUNDAY	10:30 AM	SUNDAY SCHOOL
MONDAY	11:00 AM	BIBLE STUDY
TUESDAY	12:00 PM	MEDITATION CALL
WEDNESDAY	12:30-2:30PM	FIKA @ AM COFFEE

## MONTHLY

1ST WED.	07:00 PM	WORSHIP TEAM OR FAITH-FORMATION TEAM
2ND TUES.	01:00 PM	WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP
2ND SAT.	09:30 AM	MEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP
3RD TUES.	01:00 PM	EVANGELISM TEAM
3RD WED.	07:00 PM	FINANCE TEAM
3RD THURS.	07:00 PM	PRESCHOOL BOARD
4TH TUES.	11:00 AM	DDH HOT MEAL PREP
4TH WED.	06:30 PM	COUNCIL
VARIES	...	FELLOWSHIP EVENT
VARIES	...	OUTREACH PASSION PROJECT

## QUARTERLY

MISSION PARTNER SPOTLIGHT	EPISTLE ISSUE
STEWARDSHIP SPOTLIGHT	DDH SANDWICH MAKING

## ANNUALLY

JANUARY	CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: BUDGET
MARCH	GUSTAFSON SCHOLARSHIP
MAY & NOV.	MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND GIVING
JUNE	N.E. SYNOD ASSEMBLY
JUNE	CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: MINISTRIES
JULY/AUGUST	VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, WITH UCC

*See church calendar on our website for updates and specifics*