

The November 2025 Epistle



A publication of St. James Lutheran Church,
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Dear St. James Family,

MESSAGE from the MINISTER

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ!

On October 12, 2025 a group of about 40 congregants gathered after the Sunday morning service to prayerfully discuss and imagine what our church might become over the next 5 years. The intent was to celebrate the growth and development we experienced over the last two years and form a vision for what God might call us to do in the future. This was a conversation open to all in the congregation. Feedback was gathered from attendees on a series of guiding questions. I ask you to read over the summery I offer below. It's quite inspiring! God bless you as we celebrate the final month of fall and look forward to Advent!

Guiding Questions

Questions to consider the present conditions of our congregation were as follows.

- What do you love about St. James?
- What makes us distinct from other churches in our area?
- What are we doing today that we should keep doing in the future?
- What are we doing today that should be left behind so we can move into our future?

Questions to consider what our church might become in the future were as follows.

- What might we look like in 2030 and how does that differ from what we are now?
- How might God be calling us to love our neighbors in the next 3-5 years?
- What do we need to start doing now to prepare for that future?

Congregational Responses

Many themes emerged as part of this conversation. Concerning the current status of our congregational life, the following elements were highlighted.

- We love St. James because it is a friendly congregation where one can be known and remembered. Many of us feel loved and cared for through relationships in the church, prayer for each other, and many other ways our congregation helps us to know that we are not alone such as the Friendly Visitor Committee and pastoral care. Additionally, streaming our services on YouTube helps us stay connected with those who cannot make it to a weekend service for various reasons.
- We have ways of participating in the congregation that we enjoy such as singing in the choir, modern and classic worship options, reliable pastoral leadership, and an increase in attendance at worship.
- We have ways of serving those in need in our communities through hunger ministries such as serving meals at Zion Lutheran (ELCA) in Davenport and St. James Food Pantry which is housed in the Lower Level of our church building.
- Many of us found St. James and stayed here because it is close to where we live (or lived when we started attending) which made getting to church easier than traveling out of the neighborhood.
- Many of us have deep roots at St. James because our families grew up here. Some multigenerational families are still active participants in our congregational life.
- We love St. James because what we talk about at church on the weekend applies to the whole of our lives. It is practical and not at all separate from what we face at home and in the world. This is especially true in the content of our liturgical prayers, sermons, “talk back” at the Saturday service, and monthly *Coffee and Conversation* meetups after the Sunday morning service.

The following qualities and ministries are seen as distinctives of our congregation and present opportunities for development in the future.

- We are Lutherans. In particular, we are ELCA Lutherans. This comes with a unique contribution to the world and is a needed witness in our region. As ELCA Lutherans we are quick to include people on the margins of society. We give anyone the opportunity to be welcomed into God's family. This distinct identity is reflected in our worship services on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings. These two services are stylistically distinct but are both faithfully Lutheran. Because these services are on different days, at different times of the day, and stylistically distinct, we feel this opens the doors wide to people who are looking to worship and enrich their faith in non-coercive yet substantially formative environments.
- The presence of the St. James Food Pantry in our Lower Level makes us unique compared to other churches in our area. We are proud of being able to host this ministry and pray the ministry will continue. Our people faithfully support the Pantry in various ways - mostly through financial contributions and food drives. The leadership of the pantry has faithfully served in their roles for 14 years. In our present economy, the need in our community has increased and the supply, especially from River Bend Food Bank has decreased. Keeping the shelves stocked has become increasingly difficult. Over the next 3-5 years our congregation will need to find ways to support the leadership of the pantry if it is going to stay open. Resources of time and money are perpetually needed.
- Because of our size, we know each other and can keep tabs on each other in loving and supportive ways. This is especially true of our young people who move away for college and those who are connected to us who serve in the military.
- We have a great many children at most of our services. This is not typical of larger trends in mainline Protestantism and ELCA congregations of our size across the country. Having a "critical

mass” of young people provides an environment where other families with young people can more easily connect to us.

Concerning the future vitality of our congregational life, the following elements were highlighted.

- *Youth Outreach:* Many people voiced curiosity about a mission to include people in the 16-26 age range in our church. The shape of an outreach/ministry to this demographic is entirely unknown. We acknowledge this demographic is experiencing a resurgence in engagement with Christian faith. Our approach to Christian faith should be among those options being considered. Is this a place where the church wants to put its energy in the future? Perhaps an open meeting on this topic would be useful at a future date.
- *Serving in Church Ministries:* Some of our committees and other generalized responsibilities around the church are maintained by faithful people who have been in those roles for many years. In some cases, those faithful people would like to transition into other ways of serving or would like help in their current work. We all would benefit from additional attention on how to make those needs known and how to welcome people into new ways to serve the church.
- *Communication:* General communication about the happenings around the church, how things work in our decision-making, and schedules for various roles should continue to improve. Perhaps posting information about our committees including what they do and who to contact if one wants to join a committee would help the congregation understand the work that continually happens but is less visible to the public eye. Information could be posted in various places including the Narthex, monthly newsletter (*The Epistle*), email announcements, and our weekly service bulletin.
- *Open, Public Dialogue:* We want to keep talking as a congregation in open ways (such as a Stakeholders Meeting) throughout the year.

These and other means are helpful to stay connected, get involved, and speak about the state of our church. More opportunities like this should be a part of our future.

- *Telling Our Story*: Further develop the good work of the Communications Guild. We would benefit from more outreach at public events such as the Farmer's Market in Davenport, events being held in our building, and social media presence. Additional ideas include: sending hard copies of our newsletter to visitors, targeting schools for communication (colleges, trade schools, high schools, etc.), and campus groups such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FAC).
- We may want to consider updating our sound system and fixing the live audio feed to other parts of the building. This used to be a feature for worship, but it has not worked for some time. Additionally, the audio pickups in our sound system are blended together which makes it hard to adjust volumes for mics and other amplification devices for worship.
- We see a great deal of underutilized potential in the Saturday night service. Regular attenders on Sunday might consider coming to the Saturday service occasionally to be a body in the room. This helps when new people come so that it feels warmer and livelier.

Conclusion

This summary intends to provide an overview of the main themes of the meeting. It does not intend to include every comment from each individual contributor. Additional ideas may be submitted to Council or the Presiding Minister by phone, in person, or through email. All contributions will be duly considered for the health and vitality of our church.

Respectfully submitted,
Bryce Hewlett, SAM

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Happy November, St. James!

I can't believe 2025 is almost over! This year has been jam-packed with so many memorable moments, including learning that I am becoming an aunt for the first time, starting graduate school, fulfilling my first year on council, and beginning Confirmation classes, to name a few.

October was also filled with many memorable moments as we had our Stewardship Season. Finance put together a wonderful narrative budget, and Christian Education held Rally Day, which was full of food, friends, and fun! We then had our stakeholders meeting and open council meeting, where we discussed how we would like to see St. James in the future, and how our wording in our constitution should be for our ever-changing future.

I encourage you all to continue to reflect on those same topics and questions we discussed during October. We are always trying to improve and better ourselves, and we should think of St. James as an extension of ourselves.

Be good. Do good. God Bless,

Madeline Schmidt

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11/7 EMILY HICKS

11/7 LAVONNE MIENKE

11/15 GLENN BOYLES

11/16 EVERETT MANTHE

11/18 SHIRLEY RICHLIN

11/19 JAY BROOKS

11/23 YVONNE NICHOLS

11/27 HEATHER MALLI

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

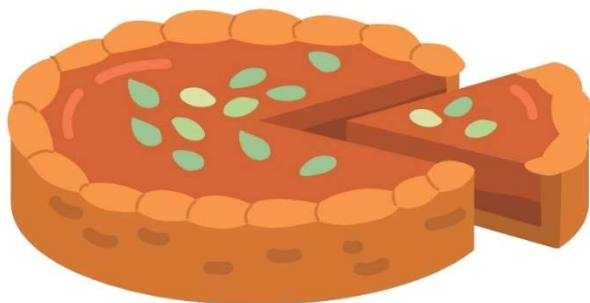
11/14 TERRY & JIM MARTENS

11/20 JERRY & YVONNE NICHOLS

11/22 KATHY & ZACH MELBY

JOIN US FOR

Pie Fest & Our Thanksgiving Service



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH

.....
PIE AT 6:00PM

.....
THANKSGIVING SERVICE AT 7PM

.....
SIGN UP SHEET IN THE NARTHEX!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PIE FEST CONTACT SHIRLEY

RICHLIN AT (563) 949-6545

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST



Saturday, November
8th @ 8:00 a.m.

St. James Lutheran Church
1705 Oak Street
Bettendorf, IA. 52722

For more info contact Justina Pessein at 563-940-3782.
Sign up sheet located in the Connections Corner in the
Narthex!

November 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
11/2	11/3	11/4	11/5	11/6	11/7	11/8
9AM Worship <i>All Saints</i> <i>Daylight Savings Ends</i>	4PM Social Ministry 6PM Communica- tions Guild		6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC		8AM Men's Prayer Breakfast 5PM Saturday Service
11/9	11/10	11/11	11/12	11/13	11/14	11/15
9AM Worship 10AM Coffee & Convo	8AM Worship & Music Mtg.	4PM Property Mtg. 6PM Christian Ed. Meeting	1:30PM Finance Mtg. 6PM Confirmation Class 6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry		5PM Saturday Service
11/16	11/17	11/18	11/19	11/20	11/21	11/22
9AM Worship 10AM Council Mtg.		1PM Sarah Circle	6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11:30AM GANG 11AM Service at BHCC		5PM Saturday Service
11/23	11/24	11/25	11/26	11/27	11/28	11/29
9AM Worship		6PM Pie Fest 7PM Thanksgiving Service	6-8PM Food Pantry	No Food Pantry <i>Thanksgiving</i>		5PM Saturday Service
11/30	12/1	12/2	12/3	12/4	12/5	12/6
9AM Worship <i>Advent</i>	4PM Social Ministry		6PM Confirmation Class 6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC		5PM Saturday Service



Sarah Circle will meet on November 18 with Shirley Richlen as the hostess. The lesson leader is yet to be determined. The lesson is the third in a series from the Gather magazine titled "Money, stewardship and generosity" with the focus verse: "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)



The St. James GANG will be meeting on November 20th in Fellowship Hall at 11:30 a.m. We bring our own lunch and the dessert and beverages will be provided. Come and share your thoughts of reasons to be thankful!

There won't be a speaker, just a time for memories and counting our blessings. Please remember to sign up on the sheet in the narthex on the November 16th!

Pat Larson



Sunday October 12, we blessed the 54 Personal Care Kits and the 32 quilts that have been made in the past year. Those efforts have been sent on their way to bring comfort around the world.

This weekend the Lutheran ELCA Church will be represented at the Farmers Market Fall Harvest Festival especially the churches of Zion, Grace Trinity and St. James. We will be highlighting our quilting mission and how we impact our community and the world.

As occurred last year our quilt day falls on our Thanksgiving service and Pie Potluck so there will be no quilting until January 27th.

But wait, The quilt raffle will start November 29th and run to December 21st when we have the drawing. Remember your contributions will be spent to purchase more batting. At this time, we do not need more fabric. Thank you for your generosity and resourcefulness in providing fabric. Now what we really need is more bodies to make the quilts!!! The quilters meet on the 4th Tuesday every month from noon to 4:00pm.

Thank you to all who; tie the quilts, sew the strips together, and assemble the strips and support the quilt mission with your donations.

Peace be with you,

Shirley Richlen

St. James Lutheran Church
1705 Oak Street. Bettendorf

4:00PM | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | 5:30PM





CHURCH COUNCIL

OLD BUSINESS

Motion for council to make conversation with the congregation at an open council meeting on removal of the C9.03.A10 provision in the church constitution by Ellen, seconded by Steve. Motion passed.

Jay Brooks presented a proposal for him to give presentations at the church on his travels to locations around the world with his professional quality photos taken at each and recounting of his experiences and the biblical implications. The title is *Photographing God's Creations*.

His presentations will be open to church members, others churches, and others by invitation with free will donations made to St James. Each show will last 45-60 minutes.

Motion to approve Jay's photographic church program by Tom, seconded by Erik. Motion passed.

Vote for William and Julie Martin, who are charter members and homebound, becoming member of St James.

Motion to accept as members of St James by Ellen, seconded by Tom. Motion passed.

Highlight from Our Confirmation Class

Our Confirmands wrote prayers inspired by Psalm 8 at our most recent meeting.

Here's a sample of some of those prayers:

Lord, you have allowed us to live and live well. You have loved us and given us people to love, and people to love us.

When I consider your work of symphonies, the work of strings and echoes, or sunsets and sunrises.

I thank you.

You have given us opportunities and lessons, the knowledge to apply them, and the power to appeal to you for comfort in our failures.

You have put floors beneath our feet and roofs over our heads, food on the table and gas in our tanks.

You keep the world beautiful and protect us when it is terrible.

-Noa Hewlett

1 Lord my Lord, thank you for the gift of music;
it fills me up and cheers my soul.

2 O God, you gave me the blessing of fuzzy blankets
that comfort me like a father comforts his child

3 You have given me wondrous friends
who are with me through trial and headache

4 Heavenly Father, thank you for my gift of baking
that helps provide a way for me to go

5 Lord, You made nature for us to enjoy
that brings me peace and closer to you

6 Thank you for my family
a place to belong

7 Father, thank you for food

that nourishes my body and soul
8 You gave us the ability to write
to make books for our enjoyment
9 Thank you, Lord, for always being present
hearing my inmost thoughts and needs
-Kaylee Pessein

1Thank you, God, for beds because it's nice to have a comfy bed to
sleep in. 2Thank you for food because even if I don't like it, it's good to
be full. 3Thanks for medicine for when I am sick and don't we all like
medicine when we're sick? 4Thanks for a roof above my head because
it's wonderful to have a house to live in. 5Thank you for my pet dog
Ghost because it's nice to have a snuggle buddy. 6Thanks for video
games that are awesome to sit down and play. It's my favorite thing to
do with my free time. 7Thanks for rain, it helps the flowers grow. And I
love to stand in the rain, it just feels nice. 8Thank you for this day and
every day and for my life. 9And thanks for You, my God, the Almighty
God, You are mine and everyone's and that is awesome!
-Elijah Pessein

Lord, I thank you for my health.
You have given me a beautiful body to carry me through life.
My eyes; let me see your gorgeous creations.
My ears, let me hear your gifts to the earth.
My arms, help me do the things that I love and help those I love.
My legs, guide me through your world.
My heart, that beats with love and life.
Thank you, Lord, for my health.
-Anna Forari

	Assistin g Minister	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Usher	Altar Guild	Altar Guild
Date							
All Saints 11/2/25	Judie Brooks	Diana Worley	Edi Southwel I	Fritz Voss	Judy Larson	Pat Larson	Mary Meuman n
11/9/25	Ellen Hogbin	Linda Gross	Dex Hewlett	Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols	Pat Larson	Mary Meuman n
11/16/25	Tom Sladky	Mary Meuman n	Velvet Collison	Pat Larson	Carolin e Hicks	Shirley Richle n	Mary Meuman n
Christ the King 11/23/25	Judie Brooks	Pat Larson	Dex Hewlett	Ron Mekalso n	Kelly Crooks	Shirley Richle n	Mary Meuman n
Thanksgiving Service 11/25/25	Maddie Schmidt	Shirley Richlen		Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols		
11/30/25	Justina Pessein	Kaylee Pessein	Sam and Eli Pessein	Ryan Martin	Ellen Hogbin	Audrey Lovell	Mary Meuman n

*Please Note: If you find you cannot serve on the date/time scheduled, please arrange for your replacement, then **call or email your scheduler** to advise the name of your replacement. Your gracious cooperation is very much appreciated! Thanks!*

Schedulers

Altar Guild: Mary Meumann (563)355-7138; marybusdrvr@gmail.com

Ushers & Assisting Ministers:

Madlyn Wulgaert; stjamesbett@gmail.com

Children's Team: Kim Hewlett (856)296-1023;

kimhewlett18@gmail.com

Counters: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354;

madelineschmidt2016@gmail.com

Acolytes: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354; madelineschmidt2016@gmail.com

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Ed Arp, **Lynn** Chamberlain, **Bev** Chappen, **Sherry** Germanio,
Sandy Henry, **Frieda** Houldsworth, **Jeryl & Jim** Krumbholz,
Bert Leder, **LaVonne** Mienke, **Mark** Peters

Family and Friends

Amanda (friend of Melissa), **Barry** (cousin of Ellen Hogbin),
Carol (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Donna** (Ed Arp's sister),
Drew (Pat Larson's friend), **Emmett** (friend of Diana Worley),
Hattie (Frieda's sister), **Jason** (Lynn Chamberlain & Sherry Germanio's son),
Jenn (family of Bryce/Kim & Gary/Eunice), **Joe** (Janene's son-in-law),
Joseph (friend of Bryce & Kim), **Karen and Ed** (Shirley's Aunt and Uncle),
Konnor (Bert Leder's grandson), **Mark** (friend of Jason Forari), **Michelle**
(friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Phil** (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's brother),
Stan (relative of Fritz Voss), **Tami** (family of Maggie Bayliss),
Ted (Ellen Hogbin's father-in-law), **Wally** (Frieda's nephew)

Those Whose Duty it is to Protect Others

Anthony Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)
CPT **Eli** Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)
Nathan Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)
Tyler McLaughlin, First Responder (Family of Pat Larson)

If you have anyone who needs to be taken off or added, please notify the church office.