

**ASSISTING IN WORSHIP**

**Lector/Intercessor:** Amy Griffith

**Communion Assistant:** Margaret Garrison

**Acolytes:** Ben & Ryan Kuly

**Ushers:** Chip Popovici, Jimmy Harris,  
Jeff Jones, Jeff Gilbert, Phil Tesh

**Videographer:** Ann Blackwelder

**Building Supervisor:** Jeff Gilbert & Kenny Propst

**PRAYER LIST**

Cecil Berry (friend of Gretchen Walker); Family of Michael Black (nephew of Patsy Black); Patsy Black; Caroline Bost; Betsy Boynton (friend of Tommy Propst); Patrick Bryn (son of Kirby & Sondra Bryn); Angie Buchanan; Mike & Debbie Cagle (friends of Robert & Debbie Davis); Noah Clifton; Bruce Coffey (friend of Mark Murphy); Karey Conrad (friend of Dee Pieschel); Jennifer Cook (friend of Fonda Shumate); Catherine Durst (daughter of Anne & Dee Hodges); Nadine Filipak (friend of Al & Dee Pieschel); Ed Frost (friend of the Marlow's); Tom Grady; Harriett Huss Hodge; Maureen Hollmeyer; Mary Frances Johnson (cousin of Francie Davis); Karen Johnston (friend of Judy Benz); Ruth Lawler (friend of Dee & Al Pieschel); John Ledford (brother of Deb Black); Barbara Merrell; Deb & Roger Myers (friends of Deb Black); Stan Parnell (friend of Rob & Debbie Davis); Becky Phillips; Al Pieschel; Lori Pittard; Tom Ridenhour.

*To assist in your offering*

Secure Online Giving



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*Thank you for supporting St. James!*

**The First Sunday after Christmas**  
**Sunday, December 28, 2025**

**The Holy Communion**  
**10:00am**



**St. James Lutheran Church**  
**104 Union Street South**  
**PO Box 684**  
**Concord, North Carolina 28026**  
**704-786-0166**  
**www.sjnc.net**  
**Rev. William C. Ridenhour, Pastor**

### Welcome to St. James Lutheran Church

Maybe you need forgiveness, or maybe you need to forgive ... Maybe you're tired and you need a little space to breathe ... Maybe you're trying church for the first time, or maybe you're trying church for the last time... Maybe you've spent your whole life wondering if God really loves you... Maybe you're lonely... Maybe you're sick... Maybe you came here looking for a miracle... Maybe you came here looking for another church but got disoriented and came here instead, and now it's too late to get up and walk out... Maybe, with God, there are no accidents... Maybe, with God, there is hope and healing and miraculous companionship... Maybe, with God, there is space to breathe and forgiveness on top of forgiveness... Maybe, with God, there is love... Maybe, with God here in our midst, we will hear those words that still split open the heavens, "You are my son! You are my daughter! You are my beloved. You. In you I am well pleased!" Maybe this is why we gather together, week after week after week, here at St. James.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome in this place - not just by the Saints at St. James, but by the God who revealed himself in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our brother, and our friend.

Welcome to St. James.

If you are comfortable doing so, please introduce yourself to Pastor Bill. If you have visited with us a number of times and think you might want to "make it official," please speak to Pastor Bill. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak to the person next to you or to an usher.

**Restrooms** are located on the first and second floor of the Education Building. A **nursery** is available for children up to and including five years of age on the first floor of the education building. An usher will be happy to help you find them.

If you're visiting or if you have been here for 99 years (and are willing to do so), please sign a pew pad.

*Let us know you visited!*



*Scan to connect!*

### BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

Dec. 28 – Beth Downs  
Dec. 29 – Bobby Clary, Barbara Merrell, Joshua Monk  
Dec. 30 – Nell Hoekstra  
Dec. 31 – Catherine Nivens  
Jan. 2 – Eric Olsen  
Jan. 4 – Susie Kartheiser

### CHURCH CALENDAR THIS WEEK

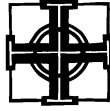
<b>Sunday, Dec. 28</b>	<i>Sonshine Backpack Items Due</i> 9:00am      Choir 10:00am      Worship
<b>Monday, Dec. 29</b>	10:30am      Quilting
<b>Thursday, Jan. 1</b>	<i>New Years Day – Office Closed</i>
<b>Sunday, Jan. 4</b>	9:00am      Choir 9:30am      Children's Sunday School 10:00am      Worship

### VOLUNTEER IN 2026!

Our 2026 Sunday Worship Volunteer Opportunities are now open! We're looking for Communion Assistants, Lectors, Acolytes, and Videographers to help on Sundays.

Altar Flower dates are also available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Not sure where to start? Email us at [info@sjnc.net](mailto:info@sjnc.net) for more information, training, or to connect with a volunteer team leader.



***St James Lutheran Church:***  
***Growing in Christ through Worship, Learning, Fellowship and Service.***

## THE HOLY COMMUNION



Welcome

Prelude

*Please stand.*

### THE INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

THE ENTRANCE HYMN: #55 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice (Please see next page.)

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to-day;  
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.  
He has o - pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

**THE APOSTOLIC GREETING**

P     The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
C     **And also with you.**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P     The Lord be with you  
C     **And also with you.**  
P     Almighty God, you have made yourself known in your Son, Jesus, redeemer of the world. We pray that his birth as a human child will set us free from the old slavery of our sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
C     **Amen.**



*Please sit.*

**THE FIRST READING:** Isaiah 63:7-9

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,  
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,  
because of all that the Lord has done for us,  
and the great favour to the house of Israel  
that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.  
<sup>8</sup> For he said, ‘Surely they are my people,  
children who will not deal falsely’;  
and he became their saviour  
<sup>9</sup> in all their distress.  
It was no messenger or angel  
but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

A     The Word of the Lord.  
C     **Thanks be to God.**

**THE SECOND READING:** Hebrews 2:10-18

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup> saying,  
‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.’  
<sup>13</sup> And again,  
‘I will put my trust in him.’  
And again,  
‘Here am I and the children whom God has given me.’

<sup>14</sup> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

A     The Word of the Lord.  
C     **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand.*

**THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

C     **Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**  
          **You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

**THE HOLY GOSPEL**

P     The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.  
C     **Glory to you, O Lord**

<sup>13</sup> Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and

remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I have called my son.’

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup> ‘A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.’

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.’ <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, ‘He will be called a Nazorean.’

P The Gospel of the Lord.  
C Praise to you, O Christ

*Please sit.*  
THE SERMON

Pastor Bill Ridenhour

*Please stand.*  
THE HYMN OF THE DAY: #40 What Child Is This (Please see next page.)



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.

Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead-ing.  
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.

This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

## THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen

*Please kneel or sit as able.*

## THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

A With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

For all people in their daily life and work, for families, friends and neighbors and for those who are alone, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

For this community, the nation and the world. For all who work for freedom, justice, and peace, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

For the just and proper use of God's creation, for the victims of poverty, fear, injustice and oppression, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace and unity of the Church of God, for all who proclaim the gospel, and all who seek the truth, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

For all people who are in danger, sorrow or any kind of trouble, for those who minister to the sick, the friendless and the needy, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation and the prayers of our hearts for all in need, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

For the faithful who have gone before us and are at rest, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

P Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen

## THE PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

*Please sit.*

## THE OFFERING

*Please stand.*

## THE DOXOLOGY

*The Offertory is the Doxology set to the familiar Christmas carol tune, The First Noel.*

D Bm A A<sup>7</sup> D/F<sup>♯</sup> G D A<sup>7</sup> D A<sup>7</sup>

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow. Praise God, all

7 D G A<sup>7</sup> D A<sup>7</sup> D A<sup>7</sup> Bm A A<sup>7</sup>

crea - tures here be - low. Praise God a - bove, ye

12 D/F<sup>♯</sup> G D A<sup>7</sup> D A<sup>7</sup> D G A<sup>7</sup> D A<sup>7</sup> D

heaven - ly host. Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

18 A<sup>7</sup> D Bm F<sup>♯</sup>m D G A<sup>7</sup> D A

No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el,

22 Bm D/A G D A<sup>7</sup>/E D/F<sup>♯</sup> D/A A<sup>7</sup> D

born is the King of Is - ra - el.

## THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Let us pray.

A Merciful Father,

C we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## THE COMMUNION RITE

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

C Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

P We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son,  
whom you sent in this end of the ages  
to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word,  
inseparable from you.

Through him you created all things,  
and in him you take delight.

He is your Word,  
sent from heaven to a virgin's womb.

He there took on our nature and our lot  
and was shown forth as your Son,  
born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary.

It is he, our Lord Jesus, who fulfilled all your will  
and won for you a holy people;  
he stretched out his hands in suffering  
in order to free from suffering those who trust you.

It is he who, handed over to a death he freely accepted,  
in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one,  
to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous,  
to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection,  
taking bread and giving thanks to you, said:  
Take and eat; this is my body, broken for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This is my blood poured out for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection,  
we lift this bread and cup before you,  
giving you thanks that you have made us worthy  
to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people.

And we ask you:

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church;  
gather into one all who share this bread and wine;  
fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth,  
that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him all glory and honor are yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church both now and forever.

**C Amen**

P Lord, remember us in your Kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**C Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.**

*Please sit.*

## **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Q: What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

A: Instituted by Christ himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink.

Q: What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?



A: We are told in the words “for you” and “for the forgiveness of sins.” By these words the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation.

*-Luther’s Small Catechism Part V*

*Jesus bids all the baptized to feast at his table. For those unable to partake of wine, white grape juice is available. If you wish for the pastor to bring communion to you. Please advise an usher.*

*Please stand.*

### THE POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C **Amen**

### THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A Let us pray,

A O God, in this meal we have been given a foretaste of the feast that is to come. Help us always to be alert to your gifts in our midst; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen**

*Silence for reflection.*

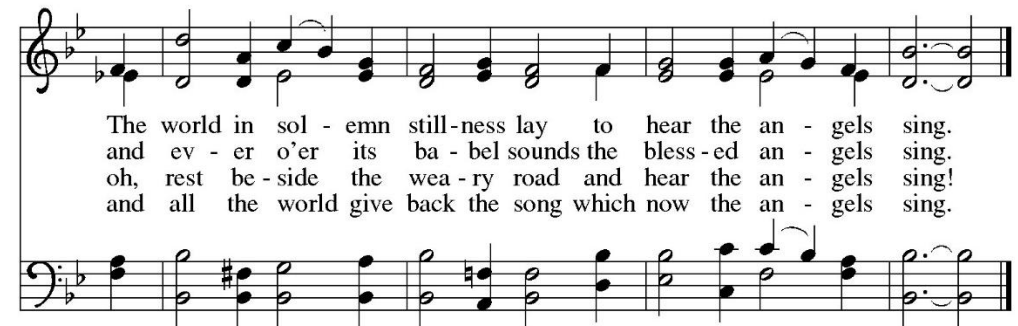
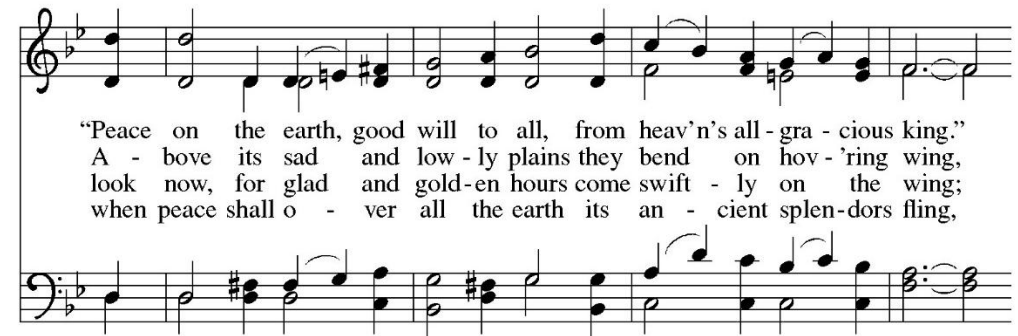
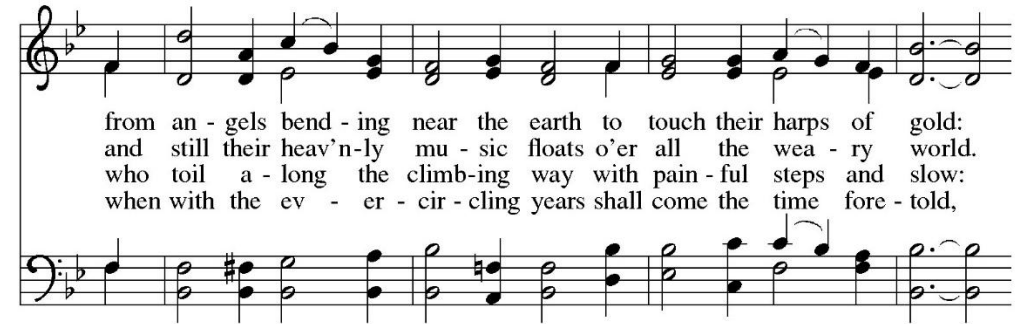
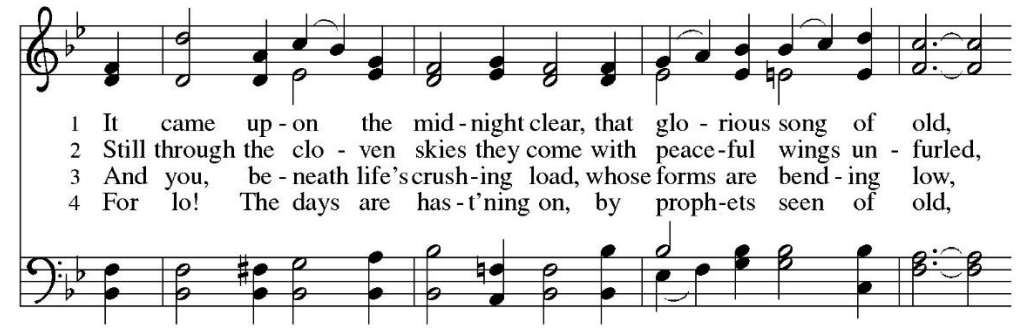


### THE BENEDICTION

P Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C **Amen**

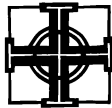
### THE SENDING HYMN: #54 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear



THE DISMISSAL

P        Go in peace. Serve the Lord.  
C        Thanks be to God.

Postlude



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**Doxology:** Text and music adapted by Dean McIntyre, The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, PO Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-  
0003. Telephone 615-340-7073. Website umcworship.org. Email: music@gbod.org. Text and tune are public domain.

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES AVAILABLE

Offering envelopes for 2026 are ready for pick-up on the table behind the sacristy (office hallway). If you did not receive a box and would like one, contact Jill Irvin.

PARTNER INITIATIVES: AMAZING GRACE

**1. Blessing Box in Rotary Square**

Amazing Grace's Life Skills Lab program will be helping to keep the Blessing Box stocked every Tuesday and Thursday in partnership with the 1CAN Organization. You can join in this ongoing effort by donating non-perishable food or hygiene items. The red Blessing Box collection bin will remain on the Portico Counter and serve as a year-round ministry opportunity.

**2. Children’s Coat Drive**

In partnership with the Cabarrus Partnership for Children, Amazing Grace will be collecting new or gently used winter coats for children in need. Coats can be placed on the couch in the Amazing Grace room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor through January.

STAY CONNECTED!

Sign up to receive our weekly *Ring Out* e-newsletter for news, events, and ministry updates.



**Follow us on social media:**

Facebook & Instagram: @stjamesnc  
YouTube: @stjameslutheranconcord