

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Lector/Intercessor: Gretchen Walker

Communion Assistant: Lori Pittard

Acolyte:

Ushers: Mike Downs, Al Brown Jr., Sid Hughes,
Bill Hardister, Hunter Huss

Videographer:

Greeter: Esther Circle

Building Supervisor: Wendell Overby

PRAYER LIST

Brad Baker; Joyce Beaty (friend of the Marlow's); Angie Buchanan; Mike & Debbie Cagle (friends of Robert & Debbie Davis); Noah Clifton; Bruce Coffey (friend of Mark Murphy); Karey Conrad (friend of Dee Pieschel); Emma DePaulis; Anne Fridlund; Ed Frost (friend of the Marlow's); Tim Gibson (friend of Deb Black); Tom Grady; Linda Jones (family of Barbara & Dale Merrell); Annaleah, Michael, & Preston Morrow (friends of Shannon Nesbit); Tom Ridenhour; Geoff & Pam Seige (friends of Robert & Debbie Davis).

ALTAR FLOWERS

Today's altar flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Norma Mosley during Advent, one of her favorite times of the year, by her family.

REGISTER TO RING!

St. James will once again be ringing the bells for Salvation Army on **Thursday, Dec. 5 & Thursday, Dec. 12**. Sign up at the link: <https://sjnc.net/special-event-sign-ups>

CONGREGATIONAL BREAKFAST

"Y'all Come" early on **Sunday, Dec. 22** for a continental congregational breakfast beginning at **8:45am** and enjoy the company of your fellow saints of St. James. At approximately 9:15am, support and enjoy the Sunday School kids singing the Christmas story.

2025

SUNDAY MINISTRY SIGN-UPS

Sign up to be a Communion Assistant, Lector, Videographer, or Acolyte in 2025! All Sundays in the new year are now posted. Sign up by scanning the code or visiting the website.



**The Second Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 8, 2024**

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 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.

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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.

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BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

Dec. 10 – Jason Urso

Dec. 13 – Debbie Davis

Dec. 11 – CJ Harward III

CHURCH CALENDAR THIS WEEK

Sunday, Dec. 8

9:00 am Adult Sunday School
9:00 am Parish Choir
9:30 am Children's Sunday School
10:00 am Worship
11:00 am Social Ministry Committee (Parlor)
4:00 pm Bethlehem at the Farm

Monday, Dec. 9

10:30 am Quilting
6:30 pm Scouts

Tuesday, Dec. 10

Noon Lively Leisures
6:00 pm Congregation Council

Wednesday, Dec. 11

5:30 pm Handbells
6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, Dec. 12

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Sunday, Dec. 15

9:00 am Adult Sunday School
9:00 am Parish Choir
9:30 am Children's Sunday School
10:00 am Worship

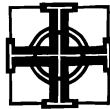
UPCOMING EVENTS

December 24:

Christmas Eve at St. James
Family Service - 5:30pm
Musical Prelude - 10:30pm
A Carol Mass - 11:00pm

MY FATHER'S HOUSE MEAL MINISTRY NEEDS

St. James & St. Johns will host My Father's House Ministry Dec. 16-18. There are 25 people in the Ministry. If you can help provide an item for the dinner meal **Dec. 16 or Dec. 17**, please let co-chairs Sylvia Corl (704-425-8621) or Martha Matthews (704-787-2180) know.



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

THE HOLY COMMUNION



Welcome

Prelude Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme J. S. Bach

Please stand.

THE INVOCATION

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

THE CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
C **Amen**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Please sit or kneel, as able.

P Most merciful God,
C **we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

P We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

C **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

P Our indifference toward your coming,
C **we confess to you, Lord.**

P Our desire to control time and seasons,
C **we confess to you, Lord.**

P Our failure to be alert to signs of your presence in our midst,
C **we confess to you, Lord.**

P Our lack of concern for those who come after us,
C **we confess to you, Lord.**

P Our injustices toward people you came to save,
C **we confess to you, Lord.**

P In the mercy of almighty God, I declare to you the forgiveness of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen**

THE ENTRANCE HYMN

A harmony graphic is not available. Please #29 in the green LBW hymnal.



- 1 "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
- 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain!



Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the king - dom now is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits his ho - ly reign!



To God's peo - ple now pro - claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way!
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,

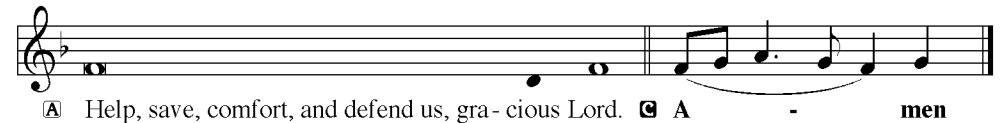
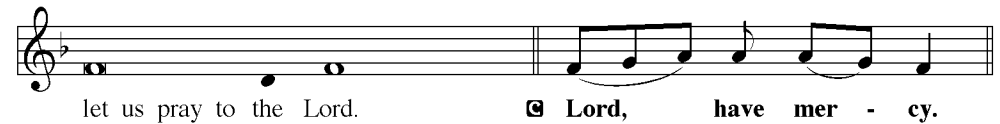
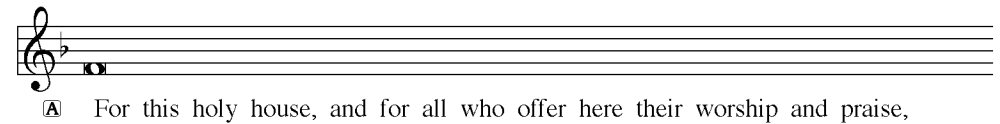
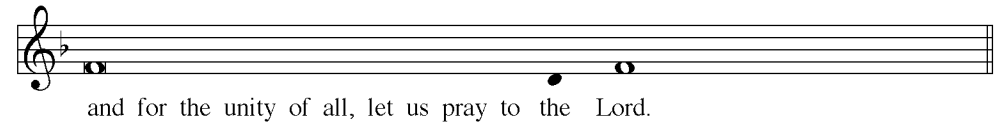
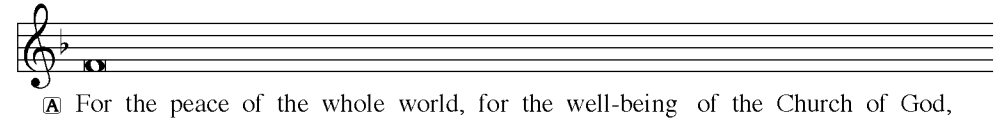
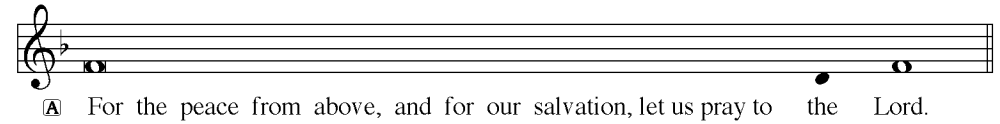
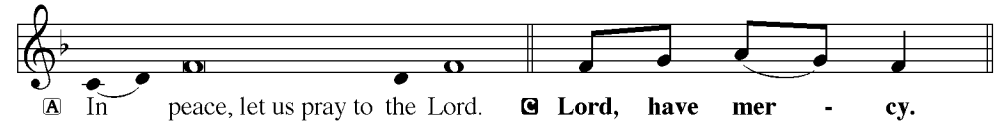


Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.
Let the val - leys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

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 KYRIE



PRAYER AT THE ADVENT WREATH

P Let us pray. We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

C Amen.

*As the Advent Wreath is lit the congregation sings,
verses one and two of "Oh, Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel."*



1 Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on
3 Oh, come, strong Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's
4 Oh, come, blest Day - spring, come and cheer our spir - its by your



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
Si - nai's height in an - cient times once gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save
ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joyce! Re - joyce!
and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you

C **And also with you.**

P Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son. By his coming give us strength in our conflicts and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; through your Son, 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: Malachi 3:1-4

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

THE SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with

knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

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

Please stand.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 3rd chapter.



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,


“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.



Praise to you, O Christ.

Please sit.

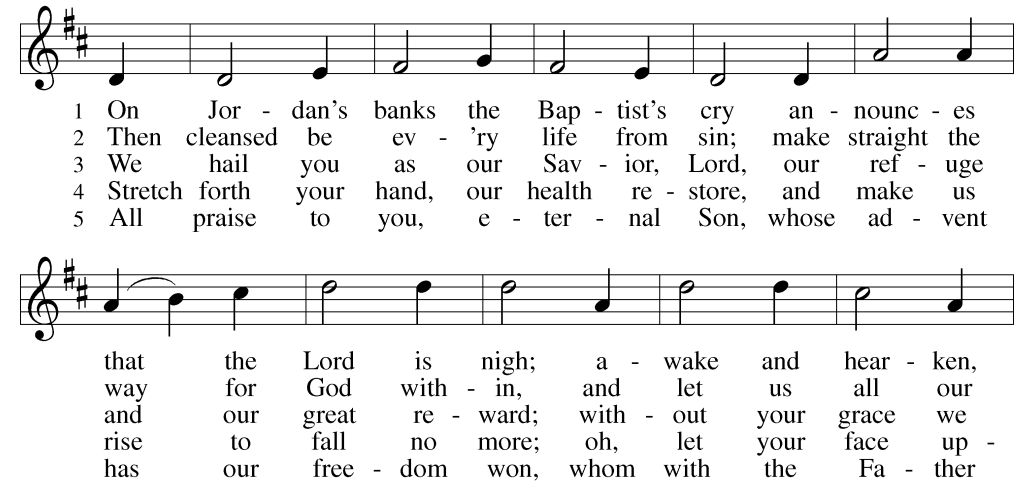
THE SERMON

Pastor Bill Ridenhour

Please stand.

THE HYMN OF THE DAY

A harmony graphic is not available. Please #36 in the green LBW hymnal.



1 On Jor - dan's banks the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent
that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and hear - ken,
way for God with - in, and let us all our
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

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 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.

From all sin, from all error, from all evil;
 from the cunning assaults of the devil;
 from an unprepared and evil death:

Good Lord, deliver us.

From war, bloodshed, and violence;
 from corrupt and unjust government;
 from sedition and treason:

Good Lord, deliver us.

From epidemic, drought, and famine,
 from fire and flood, earthquake, lightning and storm;
 and from everlasting death:

Good Lord, deliver us.

By the mystery of your incarnation; by your holy birth:
Help us, good Lord.

By your baptism, fasting, and temptation;
 by your agony and bloody sweat;
 by your cross and suffering;

by your precious death and burial:
Help us, good Lord.

*Truth imparting gives salvation;
Thine be praise and adoration!*

THE OFFERING

Please stand.

THE DOXOLOGY

For Season in Advent, the Offertory is the Doxology set to the familiar Christmas carol tune, The First Noel. The tune will be played once prior to the congregation singing.



D Bm A A⁷ D/F# G D A⁷ D A⁷
Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow. Praise God, all

7 D G A⁷ D A⁷ D A⁷ Bm A A⁷
crea - tures here be - low. Praise God a - bove, ye

12 D/F# G D A⁷ D A⁷ D G A⁷ D A⁷ D
heaven - ly host. Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

18 A⁷ D Bm F#m D G A⁷ D A
No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el,

22 Bm D/A G D A⁷/E D/F# D/A A⁷ 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, almighty and everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

P You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all holiness; you bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence. We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us. We thank you for the new world to come and for the love that will rule all in all.

We praise you for the grace shown to Israel, your chosen, the people of your promise: the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the memory of the fathers, the homecoming from exile, and the prophets' words that will not be in vain. In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son, who fulfilled and will fulfill all your promises.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the incarnation of your Son: his human birth and the covenant he made with us. We remember the sacrifice of his life: his eating with outcasts and sinners, and his acceptance of death. But chiefly on this day we remember his rising from the tomb, his ascension to the seat of power, and his sending of the holy and life-giving

Spirit. We cry out for the resurrection of our lives, when Christ will come again in beauty and power to share with us the great and promised feast.

C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we and all who share in this bread and cup may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, may enter the fullness of the kingdom of heaven, and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

C **Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

P Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

Through him, with him, in him, in the u - ni - ty of the
Ho - ly Spir - it, all hon - or and glo - ry is yours, al -
might - y Fa - ther, now and for - ev - er. A - men

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

☐ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer- cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way 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. Please come by way of the center aisle and return by the side aisle. If you need help figuring out where to and when to go, an usher or fellow worshiper will help you. At one time we too were confused. For those unable to partake of wine, white grape juice is available. If you are unable to come to the altar, the pastor will bring communion to you at your seat. Please advise an usher.

Communion Anthem: Comfort Ye My People & Ev'ry Valley (from *Messiah*) G. F. Handel
-Wes Watts, tenor

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her Iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. (Isaiah 40 :1- 4)

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

A harmony graphic is not available. Please #26 in the green LBW hymnal.



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Refrain
Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's Word!

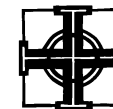
THE DISMISSAL

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

Postlude

Swiss Noël with Variations

Daquin



Worship Live Stream

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced our world to shut down in 2020, St. James began to live stream worship. This was a helpful way to sustain our community in a difficult time. St. James continues to live stream worship to this day. For the sake of our homebound members (and our nurse staff/volunteers) who watch faithfully we will not stop live streaming worship.

It is possible to live stream worship with only a wide angle shot of the sanctuary that does not change. That only requires waking up the laptop, clicking on the live stream button and starting the stream. It is also possible to have a live stream in which the camera moves throughout worship. That makes for a more interesting "broadcast" and requires volunteers willing to be our "director" by changing the "shots" on the tablet.

This month of December has no one scheduled to serve in this role. We need to increase the number of volunteers willing to serve as the "videographer." The small, faithful band of current volunteers will enthusiastically welcome you to the club and teach you everything you need to know. The greater the number of videographers the smaller the number of times each person is needed to serve. Please speak to Pastor Bill.