

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
October 4, 2026



Divine Service 9am

St. James Lutheran Church
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Phillipsburg, NJ

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Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Welcome to St. James!

Founded in 1750, the year 2025 celebrated our 275th anniversary of being God's church. We're so glad you're here! We pray you feel warmly welcomed as we gather to celebrate God's unconditional love in Jesus Christ. He who is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!

If you are visiting today: Thank you for joining us today! If you have any questions, please ask! Pastor Levi and the members of our church-community would be glad to help you out. Please sign the guest book or complete a hospitality card located in the pew racks.

To those with young children: We are very happy you are here today. Relax and enjoy your time here. Jesus knows that children tend to wiggle and squawk a bit, so please don't be embarrassed by it! Encourage your kids to sing and pray with us, and be sure to sing and pray your parts as an example to them.

Following along in the bulletin: *indicates the congregation stands. In our liturgical worship, **bold words** are spoken by the congregation. LBW refers to content found in the green hymnbook *Lutheran Book of Worship*. WOV refers to content found in the blue hymnbook *With One Voice*.

Presiding Minister
Assisting Minister
Musician

The Rev. Levi Q. Powers
Dan Gulick
Dave Miller

I. GATHERING

*CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father,
and of the ✙ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Most merciful God,

We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all our sins. As a called and ordained servant of the church of Christ, and by Christ's authority alone, I forgive you, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN: LBW 482 - When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**

***GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE: Glory to God



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

II. WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 5:1-7

A reading from Isaiah.

¹ I will sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.

² He dug it and cleared it of stones
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded rotten grapes.

³ And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.

⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield rotten grapes?

⁵ And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.

⁶ I will make it a wasteland;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts
 is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
 are his cherished garden;
he expected justice
 but saw bloodshed;
righteousness
 but heard a cry!
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 80:7-15

- ⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts;
 let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
- ⁸ **You have brought a vine out of Egypt;
 you cast out the nations and planted it.**
- ⁹ You cleared the ground for it;
 it took root and filled the land.
- ¹⁰ **The mountains were covered by its shadow
 and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.**
- ¹¹ You stretched out its tendrils to the sea
 and its branches to the river.
- ¹² **Why have you broken down its wall,
 so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?**
- ¹³ The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it,
 and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.
- ¹⁴ **Turn now, O God of hosts,
 look down from heaven;**
- ¹⁵ behold and tend this vine;
 preserve what your right hand has planted.

SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14

A reading from Philippians.

[Paul writes:] ^{4b} If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

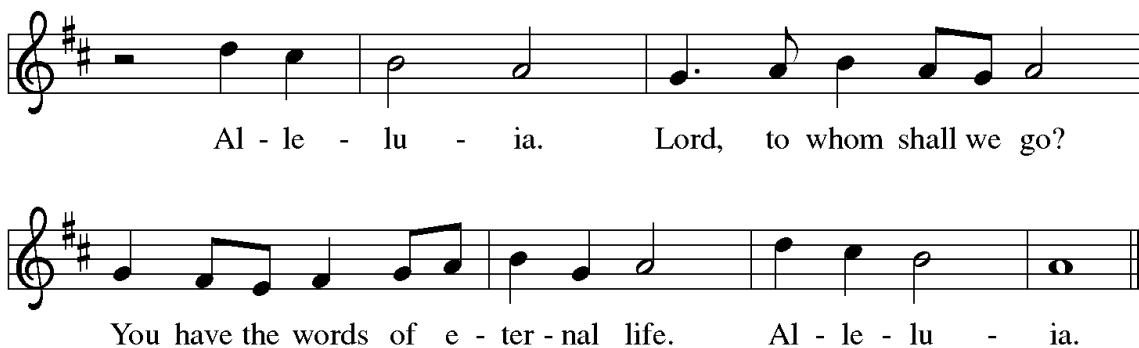
⁷ Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*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.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 21:33-46

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ³³ “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went away. ³⁴ When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵ But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷ Then he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes’?

⁴³ “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruits. ⁴⁴ The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY: LBW 94 - My Song Is Love Unknown**

APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Each petition ends: "...Hear us O God, **your mercy is great.**"

Prayers conclude: **Amen.**

***Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say,
"Peace be with you," or similar words.*

The assembly is seated.

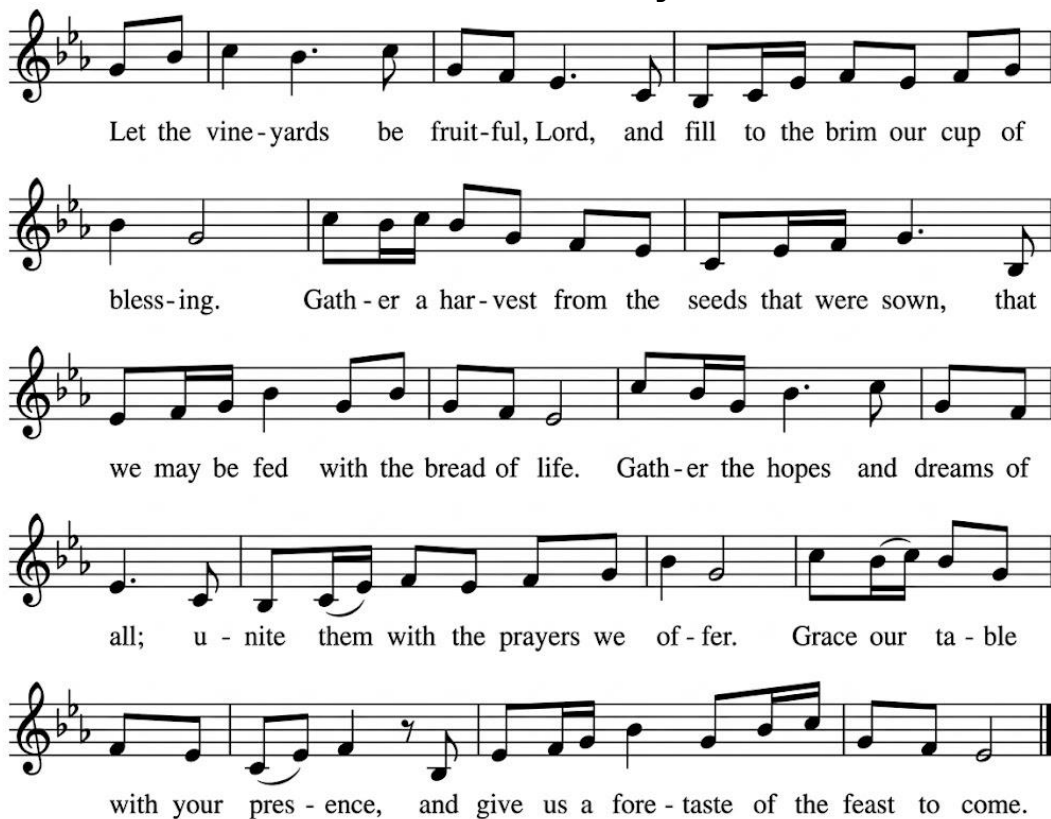
III. THE LORD'S SUPPER

OFFERTORY



Scan the QR Code to give electronically.
An offering plate is in the back of the sanctuary if you wish to give check or cash. You are welcome to give to the ministry of St. James Lutheran Church freely and spontaneously. There is no guilt or shame. If you do give, give with a cheerful heart.

***OFFERING VERSE: ELW 184 – Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful**



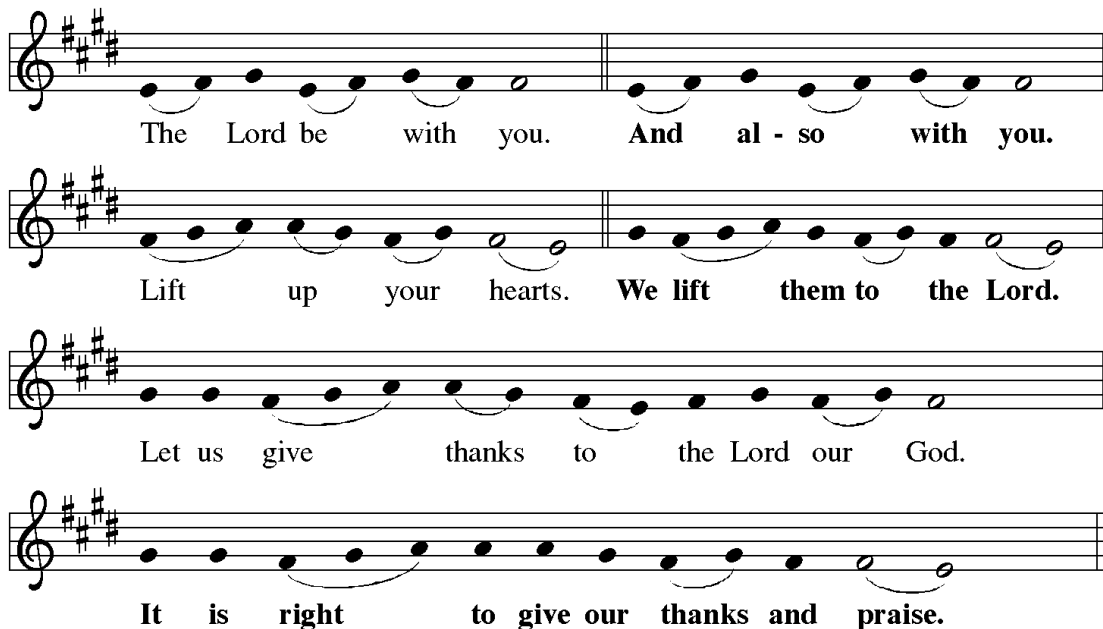
Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Together with the bread and the cup we receive the true body and the true blood of Christ. All who are baptized into Christ and believe that he is really present in, with, and under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of their sins are welcome to join us at the altar. Pastor will distribute the wafer for you to eat. An assistant will hand you a cup to drink from. The first chalice has grape juice. The second chalice has wine. If you need communion brought to you, please let an usher know. Adults and children not yet communing are welcome to come forward with their arms crossed for a blessing.



The image displays four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are simple, using quarter and eighth notes with stems, and are connected by horizontal lines. The lyrics are written below each staff, aligned with the notes. The first staff has a double bar line after the first measure. The second staff also has a double bar line after the first measure. The third and fourth staves end with double bar lines.

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...**Here the minister continues with the preface for the day, concluding:** ...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 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.

***THE WORDS OF GIFT**

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 testament in my blood,
 shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

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.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and each person may respond

Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

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, grant us peace.

***POST COMMUNION SONG: ELW 205 – Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise**



Thank-ful hearts and voice-es raise; tell ev-'ry-one what God has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re-joyce and bear Christ's ho - ly name.



Send us with your prom-is - es, O God, and lead us forth in



joy with shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

***POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

IV. SENDING

***BLESSING**

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN: LBW 453 - If You But Trust in God to Guide You

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Tuesday, October 6:** "Faith, Family, & Food," 5:30-7pm. A time for families of elementary and preschool children to grow in faith together. Eat 5:30-6. Read a book together, sing together, learn and play together at 6-7pm. Invite anyone with kiddos.
- **Wednesday, October 7:** Fellowship at Sharky's 4pm-6pm

UPCOMING

- **Sunday, October 18:** Sunday Forum after church: Crossroads4Hope will give their workshop "Health Champion" which will help people build key skills in supporting those facing a cancer crisis. Crossroads4Hope, based out of Bedminster. They are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing free supportive cancer care services to individuals and families impacted by cancer. They believe we believe "that no one should face cancer alone, and we are on a mission to educate multicultural communities about cancer. We offer free professionally led support groups, individual support, educational workshops, nutrition programs, mind & body classes, financial assistance resources, and opportunities for social connection.
- Social Ministry Donation Collections for October: Comfort Food October. Ideas include: Instant mashed potatoes, stuffing, canned ravioli, etc.
 - Also collecting sweatpants for the Phillipsburg High School and Middle school students until October 11th.
- **Friday, October 23:** Line Dancing returns! Join us from 7pm-9pm for another fun night-open to the public, all are welcome!

THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP HELPERS(10/4)

Usher/Greeter: Don Willauer

Lector: Joanne Willauer

Altar Guild: Steve Stocker

Tellers: Steve Stocker

NEXT SUNDAY'S WORSHIP HELPERS(10/11)

Usher/Greeter: Jon Slaton

Lector: Rick Brunsell

Altar Guild: Steve Stocker

Tellers: Steve Stocker

Let us remember in prayer: Sue, Jackson, Harvey, Maureen, Jake, Nikki, Bruce, Keith, Patrick, John, Sara, Gary and those unable to attend church service; Mae, Janet, Janice, Alayne, Esther and Elsie.