

Holy Cross Day
September 14th, 2025



Divine Service 9am

St. James Lutheran Church
1213 US Hwy 22
Phillipsburg, NJ

908.454.2864

www.strawchurch.org

strawchurch@gmail.com



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Welcome to St. James!

Founded in 1750, the year 2025 marks 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!

Holy Cross Day: Introduction to the Day

This festival, which originated in the fourth century, celebrates the triumph of the cross. Paul reminds us that Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God. As Moses put a serpent on a pole to be a source of healing for the Israelites, we lift high the cross as the sign of our health and salvation. Each time we make the sign of the cross we remember our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ.

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.

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
Polly Newbold
Dave Miller

I. GATHERING

*CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Th sign of the cross ✝ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

In the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires are 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.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Almighty and most Holy God,

we confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, through our own fault, our own most grievous fault. We acknowledge our lack of faithfulness in holy service, our lack of discipline and obedience, and our lack of love. And so, we pray to you, O God, have mercy upon us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, your dear Son, our Lord. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN: LBW 109 – Go to Dark Gethsemane**

***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: This is the Feast**

Refrain
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose

blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and strength, and

hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his. *Refrain*

2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and

join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:

Bless - ing, hon - or, glo - ry, and might be to

Refrain

God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -

gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

II. WORD

FIRST READING: Numbers 21:4b-9

A reading from Numbers.

^{4b}But the people became discouraged on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 78:1-2, 34-38

The Psalm is read responsively.

¹ Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

**² I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings from of old,**

³⁴ When he killed them, they searched for him;
they repented and sought God earnestly.

**³⁵ They remembered that God was their rock,
the Most High God their redeemer.**

³⁶ But they flattered him with their mouths;
they lied to him with their tongues.

**³⁷ Their heart was not steadfast toward him;
they were not true to his covenant.**

³⁸ Yet he, being compassionate,
forgave their iniquity
and did not destroy them;
often he restrained his anger
and did not stir up all his wrath.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ELW 172 – Halle, Halle, Hallelujah**

[sung before and after the Gospel reading]

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal -
- le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le -
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

GOSPEL READING: John 3:13-17

The holy gospel according to St. John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY: LBW 123 – Ah, Holy Jesus**

***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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Each petition ends: "...God of grace. **Hear our prayer.**"

Prayers conclude: "Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior." **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: TFF 216 – Give Me a Clean Heart**

Give me a clean heart so I may serve thee. Lord, fix my

heart so that I may be used by thee. For I'm not wor -

thy of all these bless - ings. Give me a clean heart and I'll fol-low thee.

1 I'm not ask - ing for the rich - es of the land.
2 Some-times I am up and some - times I am down.

Please give me, Lord, a clean heart, that I may fol - low thee.
Please give me, Lord, a clean heart, that I may fol - low thee.

Give me a clean heart, a clean heart and I will fol - low thee.
Give me a clean heart, a clean heart and I will fol - low thee.

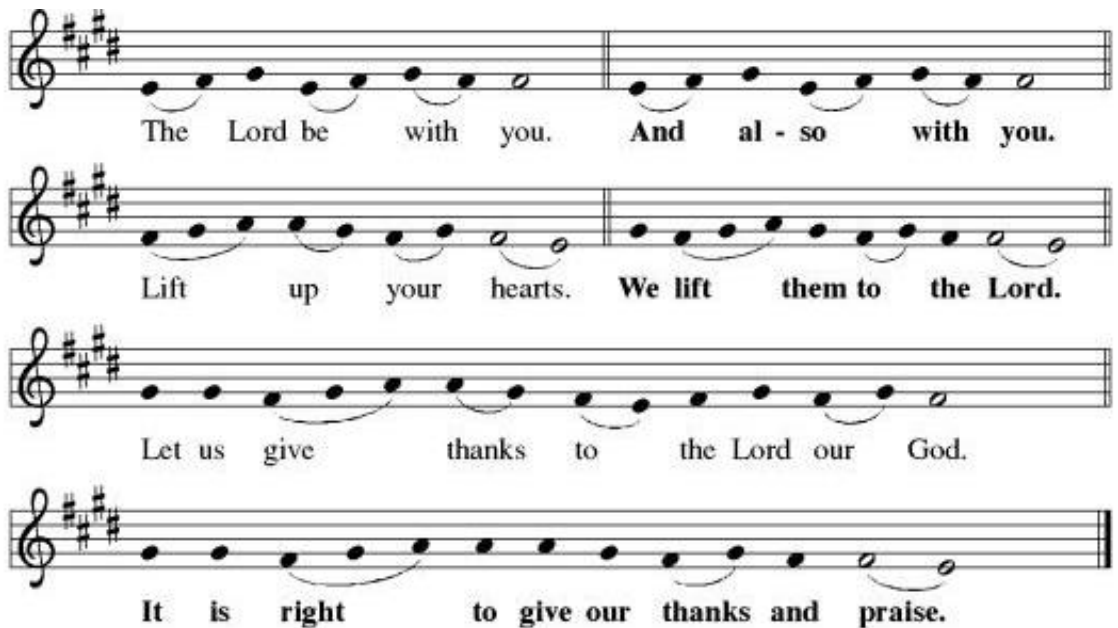
***OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Together with the bread and the cup we receive the body and the blood of Christ. We invite all baptized Christians to this sacrament. Children and adults who do not yet receive Holy Communion are invited to come forward with arms folded for a blessing. If you need communion brought to you, please let an usher know. We commune in tables of 10-15 people. The pastor will give you the bread, an assistant will give you a cup.

Then two will come to pour into your cup-the first with grape juice, the second with wine. Whoever partakes receives orally the body and blood of Jesus Christ.



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:



***THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

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.

***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 206 – Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise**



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



done. Let all who seek the Lord re - joice 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**

Blessing concludes: **Amen.**

***SENDING SONG: LBW 377 – Lift High the Cross**

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Social Ministry: Pullover Hoodie collection will begin September 14 thru October 12 for Phillipsburg School District middle and HS students. Adult sizes S-XXL.

- **Tuesday 9/16:** Church Council 7pm at the church
- **Wednesday 9/17:** Fellowship at Sharky's 4pm-6pm
- **Thursday 9/18:** Reading the Bible with Pastor Levi – 10am at the church

UPCOMING

September 14th after church, Worship Helpers' Training: Please attend if you are interested in any of these volunteer positions: greeter/usher, assisting minister, lector (reader), communion assistant, altar guild, technology assistant, and teller.

- **Sunday, 9/21 after church:** Coffee Fellowship begins. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside Frey Hall for coffee and refreshments.
- **Monday, 9/22:** Christian Ed meeting 10am at the church
- **Tuesday, 10/9:** Social Ministry Meeting at Panera 9:30am. All are welcome!
- **Sunday, 10/12:** Rally Day!

Let us remember in prayer: The Family & Friends of Judy Imhof, The Family & Friends of Pam Sheehan, The Family & Friends of Lou Cicale, The Family & Friends of Audra, Randy, Ryan, Kevin, Beth, Stephanie, Max, Keith, Sara, Bob, Patrick, John, Gary, Sharon and those unable to attend church service; Janet, Janice, Greg, Helen, Alayne and Elsie