

1st Sunday of Christmas

December 28th, 2025



Divine Service 9am

St. James Lutheran Church

1213 US Hwy 22

Phillipsburg, NJ

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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!

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 the parents of our younger children please:

Sit towards the front so the little ones can see and hear all that is going on and quietly explain parts of the service and what pastor, ushers, etc. are doing. Don't sweat the small stuff-God gave your littles the wiggle, noise and energy they have and we don't want to suppress that in God's house! Children are always welcome here! If you feel as if you need to step out of the service with your child, feel free but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the children come to me."

To the members of our church please:

Welcome children and their parents-their presence is a sign our congregation is growing and a gift to us all.

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 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.

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 us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained servant of the church of Christ, and by Christ's authority alone, I forgive you the entirety of all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the ✠Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***GATHERING HYMN: WOV 643 – Once in Royal David's City**

***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.

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE: GLORY TO GOD**

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



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



we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

II. WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

A reading from Isaiah.

⁷ 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 favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"
and he became their savior

⁹ in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 148

The Psalm is read responsively.

¹ Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!

² **Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!**

³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ **Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the heavens!**

- ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for he commanded and they were created.
- ⁶ **He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**
- ⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
- ⁸ **fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!**
- ⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
- ¹⁰ **Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!**
- ¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
- ¹² **Young men and women alike,
old and young together!**
- ¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
- ¹⁴ **He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.**
Praise the LORD!

SECOND READING: Hebrews 2:10-18

A reading from Hebrews.

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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, ¹² saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

¹³ And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



GOSPEL READING: Matthew 2:13-23

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ 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.” ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, 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 magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “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.”

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ “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.” ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling 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. ²³ 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 Nazarene.”
The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY: LBW 54 – It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

***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, **receive 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: ELW 188 – Create in Me a Clean Heart**

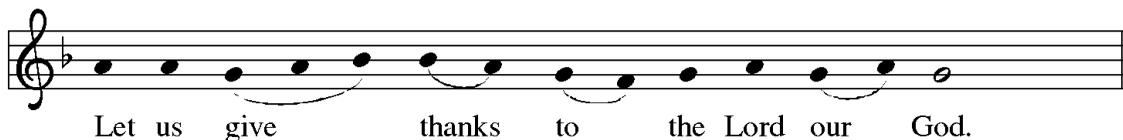
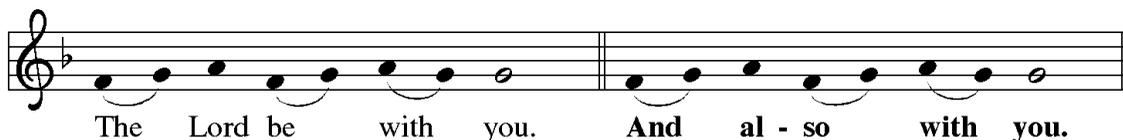
Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -
store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

***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:



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.

***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 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.

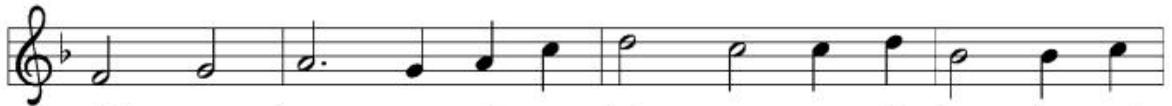
and each person may respond

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.

***POST COMMUNION SONG: ELW 273 – All My Heart Again Rejoices**



1 All my heart a - gain re - joic - es as I hear, far and
 2 Je - sus' voice from low - ly man - ger soft - ly thus calls to
 3 Come, then, let us has - ten yon - der; here let all, great and
 4 You, dear Lord, I'll ev - er cher - ish; though my breath fail in



near, sweet - est an - gel voic - es; "Christ is born," their choirs are
 us: "You are safe from dan - ger; come and see; from all that
 small, kneel in awe and won - der; love him who with love is
 death, I will nev - er per - ish: by your side in light e -



sing - ing, till the air ev - 'ry - where now with joy is ring - ing.
 grieves you you are freed; all you need I will sure - ly give you."
 yearn - ing; hail the star that from far bright with hope is burn - ing.
 ter - nal I shall be end - less - ly filled with joy su - per - nal.

***POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

IV. SENDING

***BLESSING**

Blessing concludes: **Amen.**

***SENDING SONG: LBW 52 – Your Little Ones, Dear Lord**

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is born for you.

Thanks be to God.

Worship Helpers: Joanne Willauer will be coordinating the monthly schedule. Please contact her at 610-393-6317 or jdwillauer@rcn.com with your available dates!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Funeral Service of Helen Steffel to take place at the church on Tuesday, December 30th. Visitation at 10am. Service at 11am.

- **Saturday 1/3:** Church Breakfast 7am-10am
- **Sunday 1/4:** Evangelism Committee meeting after church
- **Thursday 1/1:** **NO** Proverbs Bible Study with Pastor Levi – Resumes 1/8

UPCOMING

- **Tuesday 1/6:** Epiphany service 7pm
- **Sunday 1/18:** Annual Church Congregational meeting, 11am. All are encouraged to attend.
- Evangelism Committee's Event "Line Dancing" to take place January 16th. A great time to welcome new people to St. James. Invite. Invite. Invite!

THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP HELPERS

Usher/Greeter: Harvey Walters

Lector: Joanne Willauer

Altar Guild: Steve Stocker

Tellers: Sandy Wismer/Don Willauer

NEXT SUNDAY'S WORSHIP HELPERS(1/4)

Usher/Greeter: Jon Slaton

Lector: Rick Brunsell

Altar Guild: Steve Stocker

Tellers: Steve Stocker/Jon Slaton

Let us remember in prayer: The Family & Friends of Leo Pursell, The Friends & Family of Larry Vietro, The Family & Friends of Rodger Crowell-Nugent, The Family & Friends of Kevin Detrick, Joy, Gordon, Justin, Ethan, Dawn, Carol, Debbie Esther, Suzanne, Keith, Sara, Bob, Patrick, John, Gary, Sharon and those unable to attend church service; Carol, Janet, Janice, Greg, Helen, Alayne and Elsie.