

2nd Sunday of Advent
December 7th, 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!

Introduction to the Season of Advent: The color of Advent is blue, which symbolizes hope in our coming King. Lutherans emphasize three advents of Christ-- 1) in the past, the baby born of the virgin Mary, who was crucified, died and buried, and on the third day risen from the dead; 2) in the future, Christ will come in glory and unite earth and heaven; 3) in the present, through the word preached and the sacraments administered. Advent is not our own preparation but what God does for us. The Advent wreath signifies Christ's arrival among us.

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

The Rev. Levi Q. Powers

Assisting Minister
Musician

Polly Newbold
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 entirely forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the †Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Blessed are you, God of Jacob, for you promise to transform weapons of war into implements of planting and harvest and to teach us your way of peace; you promise that our night of sin is far gone and that your day of salvation is dawning.

As we light the candles on this wreath, wake us from our sleep, wrap us in your light, empower us to live honorably, and guide us along your path of peace.

O house of Jacob, come,

let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN: LBW 34 – Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel**

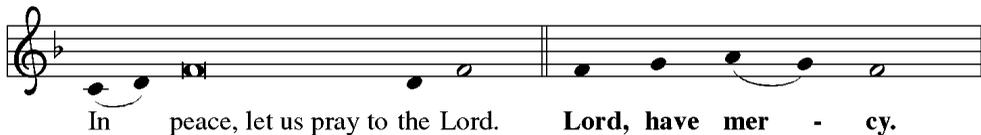
Verses 1-3

***GREETING**

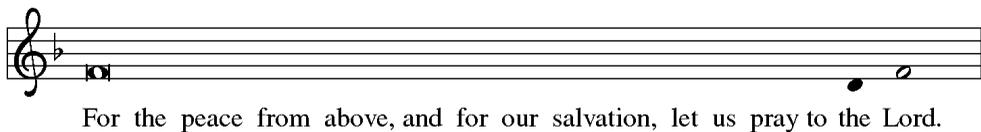
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

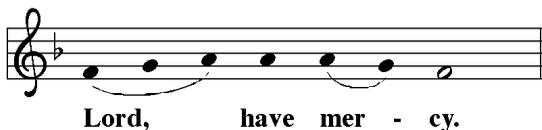
KYRIE



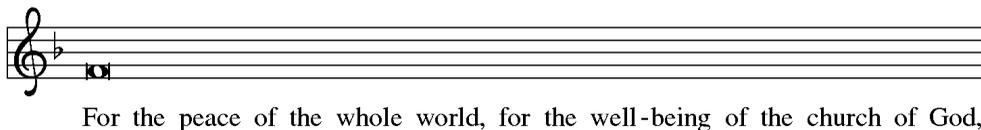
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



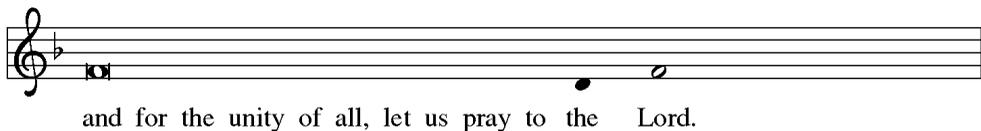
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



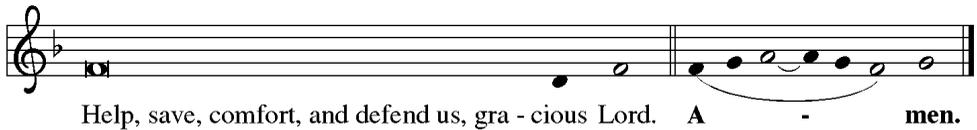
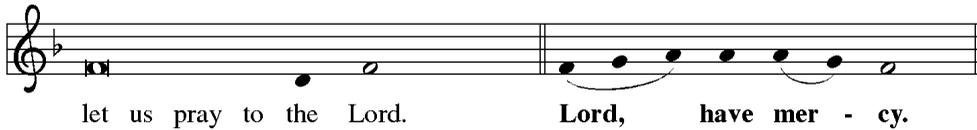
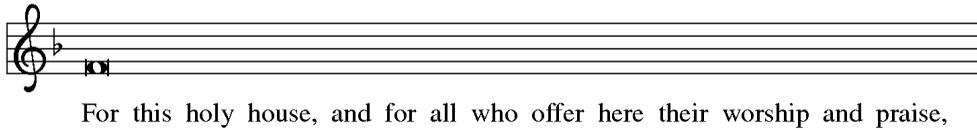
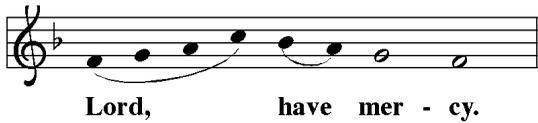
Lord, have mer - cy.



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.



*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

II. WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

- ¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- ² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,
- ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.
¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations
shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19

The Psalm is read responsively.

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
² **May he judge your people with righteousness
and your poor with justice.**
³ May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
⁴ **May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.**
⁵ May he live while the sun endures
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
⁶ **May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.**
⁷ In his days may righteousness flourish

and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

**¹⁸ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.**

¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may his glory fill the whole earth.
Amen and Amen.

SECOND READING: Romans 15:4-13

A reading from Romans.

⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles
and sing praises to your name”;

¹⁰ and again he says,

“Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”;

¹¹ and again,

“Praise the Lord, all you gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him”;

¹² and again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the gentiles;
in him the gentiles shall hope.”

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



GOSPEL READING: Matthew 3:1-12

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’ ”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY: LBW 36 – On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry**

***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.

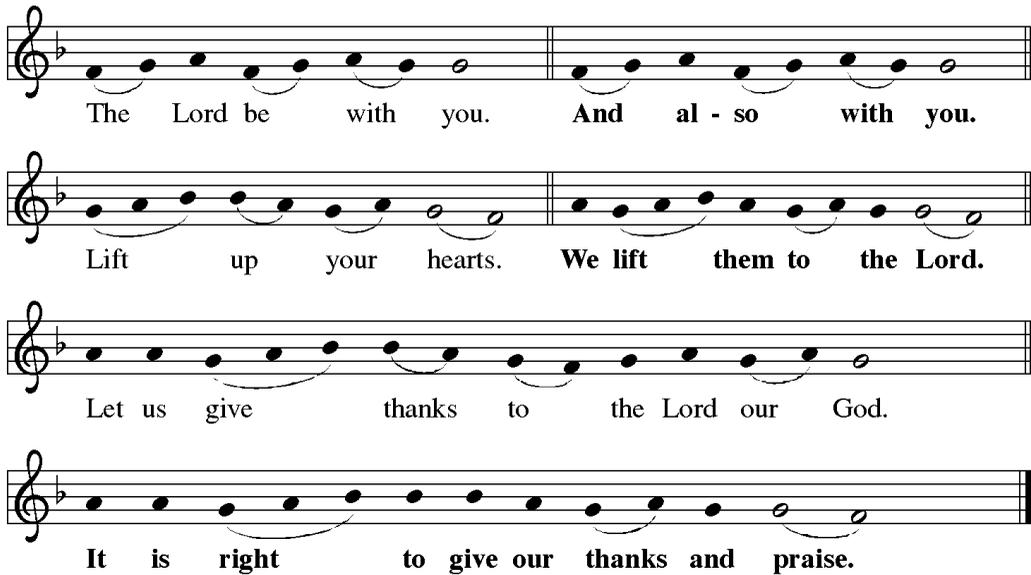
The image shows a musical score for the offering verse. It consists of five staves of music in a single system, all written in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The music is a simple, melodic line with a steady rhythm.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

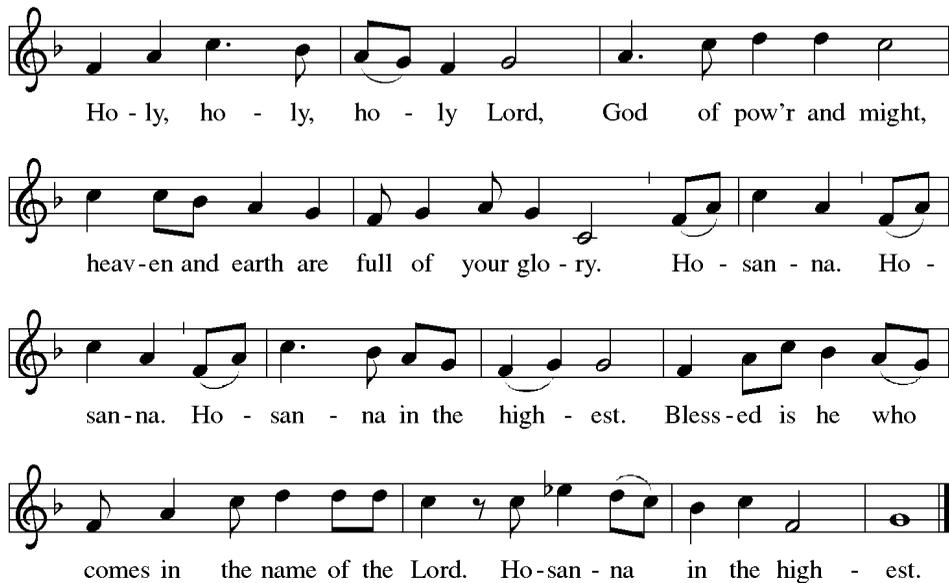
***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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.



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, 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 313 – O Lord, Now Let Your Servant**



1 O Lord, now let your ser - vant de - part in heav'n-ly peace,
2 Then grant that I may fol - low your gleam, O glo - rious Light,



for I have seen the glo - ry of your re - deem - ing grace:
till earth-ly shad - ows scat - ter, and faith is changed to sight;



a light to lead the na - tions un - to your ho - ly hill,
till rap-tured saints shall gath - er up - on that shin-ing shore,



the glo - ry of your peo - ple, your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
where Christ, the bless-ed day - star, shall light them ev - er - more.

***POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

Prayer concludes: **Amen.**

IV. SENDING

***BLESSING**

Blessing concludes: **Amen.**

***SENDING SONG: ELW 246 – Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding**



1 Hark! a thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! "Christ is near," we
2 Wak - ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond - age
3 See the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, come with par - don
4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther



hear it say. "Cast a - way the works of dark - ness,
let us rise; Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling,
down from heav'n. Let us haste, with tears of sor - row,
wrapped in fear, he will shield us with his mer - cy
and the Son with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it



all you chil - dren of the day!"
shines up - on the morn - ing skies.
one and all, to be for - giv'n;
and with words of love draw near.
while un - end - ing a - ges run!

*DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

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

Social Ministry Donation Collections:

- Food Drive collection: Social Ministry supports 175 Families thru River of Life & St. Luke's Church in Phillipsburg.

Let us remember in prayer: The Family & Friends of Brett Palmer, Keith, Sara, Bob, Patrick, John, Gary, Sharon and those unable to attend church service; Janet, Janice, Greg, Helen, Alayne and Elsie.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anyone interested in receiving text messages regarding interruption of services for inclement weather, please add your cell phone number and email to the list on the bulletin board by Frey Hall.

Church Council is looking for new members, if interested please see Jon Slaton or Pastor Levi.

- **Tuesday 12/9:** Property Committee meeting 10am at church
- **Tuesday 12/9:** Social Ministry meeting 10am at church. Christmas lunch to follow at the Brass Rail in Phillipsburg.
- **Wednesday 12/10:** Lutheran Vespers: Loving God, Loving Neighbor. Prayer at 7pm. Soup Supper at 6:15pm. Sign up in the hallway to provide food and drinks.
- **Thursday 12/11:** Proverbs Bible Study with Pastor Levi – 10am at church
- **Sunday, 12/14:** Live Nativity 12pm-2pm, Craft Fair 12pm-3pm

UPCOMING

- **Wednesday 12/10 & 12/17:** Lutheran Vespers: Loving God, Loving Neighbor. Prayer at 7pm. Soup Supper at 6:15pm. Sign up in the hallway to provide food and drinks.
- **Wednesday 12/24:** Christmas Eve service 8pm
- **Thursday 12/25:** Christmas Day service 10am

THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP HELPERS

Usher/Greeter: Doris Lauer

Lector: Rick Brunsell

Altar Guild: Steve Stocker

Tellers: Steve Stocker

NEXT SUNDAY'S WORSHIP

HELPERS(12/14)

Usher/Greeter: Jon Slaton

Lector: Sue Hazelton

Altar Guild: Steve Stocker

Tellers: Sandy Wismer/Dave

Willauer