

the Spirit of St. James



St. James Lutheran Church, 1101 High Street, Pottstown, Pennsylvania, 19464 • (610) 326-2810 • DECEMBER 2006

OUR VISION FOR ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH

*"To Be, and to Become, a Worshiping, Caring, Teaching,
and Outreaching Congregation."*

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Sunday Schedule

Worship

December 3 and 10 - 8 and 10:45 a.m.
December 17, 24 and 31 - 10 a.m.

Coffee Fellowship

December 3 and 10 - 9 a.m.
December 17, 24 and 31 - 11 a.m.

Adult Education Classes

December 3 and 10 - 9:30 a.m.

Children's Church

December 3 and 10 - 10:45 a.m.
December 17, 24 and 31 - 10 a.m.

Communion Weekly

1896-2006 St. James Lutheran Church - Celebrating 110 Years of Ministry
Emphasizing Our Vision to Be an Outreaching Congregation



OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Friday 8 a.m. – noon

TELEPHONE
610-326-2810
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STAFF

Ministers

Each and Every Member of St. James

Pastor

The Rev. Peter Hutchinson
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Dr. Stephen & Becky Thorson
Kathmandu, Nepal

Newsletter Editor

Dawn Detweiler
newsletterstj@wi.rr.com

OFFICE NOTES

Master Calendar / Room Scheduling

All room reservations, including committee meetings and private gatherings, should be made with Pam in the office. Please indicate to her any need for room rearrangement, (extra chairs, tables) so proper preparations can be made.

Newsletter Deadline for JANUARY '07 Edition: December 15, 2006

Article submissions can be sent by e-mail to newsletterstj@stjamespottstown.org or placed in the "newsletter" mailbox the Sunday before the deadline. Also please note that articles may be edited for clarity and space conservation.

A Reminder from the Archives Committee

If you have any photos from any church related events that can be shared, please see that the Archive Committee receives them. We are looking for past & future events. Also, if possible, please try to identify the people in the photos. Thanks!

Holiday Office Hours

The office **will be closed** on December 25 and 26, 2006 and on January 1, 2007.



Snow Cancellations

Please watch for an announcement on WFMZ Channel 69 or by checking their website at wfmz.com (look for St. James ELC), listen to WPAZ radio (AM 1370), check St. James's website or call the church for a message regarding cancellations or changes in the Sunday morning schedule due to inclement weather.



As the season of Advent begins, we look once again to hear and see and taste the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. In this season of anticipation and waiting for God to be with us in the person of Christ, we repeat the old chant of the Christian Church that says, “**Come, Lord Jesus!**”

But my message to you this Advent season is “**Come, people of God!**”

Come to our worship services as we begin the season of Advent on Sunday, December 3.

Come to worship the next week and to the Boyertown Choral Christmas performance in the afternoon of December 10.

Come to worship on Sunday morning, December 17, when we will gather together as one community in worship service at 10 a.m. with special music.

Come and attend after that, a coffee hour and our annual congregational meeting. Stay, if you wish, to decorate the church or go Christmas caroling to the homebound.

Come to worship on Sunday morning, December 24 when we again gather as one at 10 a.m. to celebrate the angel’s coming to Mary in the last Sunday of Advent.

Come to our Christmas Eve worship services at either the 3 p.m. family service, or our 11 p.m. traditional candlelight service (with music beginning at 10:30 p.m.)

And **come** again at the 10 a.m. worship service on December 31 when we will continue the Christmas celebration with lessons and carols.

When we say “**Come, Lord Jesus!**” we do so because we all need a Savior, knowing that we all need to have God’s presence and love and forgiveness in our life.

When I say “**Come, people of God!**” it is because I want you to get to know him better and love and trust him more deeply.

When I say “**Come, people of God!**” it is because I want your faith to be strengthened and fed by the exciting fact of God’s coming to be with us through Jesus, his Son.

When I say “**Come, people of God!**” it is because my prayer, my Christmas wish, is that we all grow in faith, hope, and love in the year ahead.

God’s blessings to you in this season of peace, love, joy and hope as we look to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord.

PASTOR



WORSHIP NOTES



We will be celebrating the birth of our Savior at the next Rejoicing Spirits worship on Wednesday, December 13 at 7 p.m. We will begin with a Christmas hymn sing and some special music, followed by worship celebrating the nativity of our Lord, and ending with a festive fellowship time. This should be a special night for all. If you have not yet had the chance to worship with us, come and join us as we celebrate God's gift of Jesus coming to us. All are invited. All are welcomed.

Beginning Together with Bishop Burkat highlights from October 26, 2006

- 70 people attended "Beginning Together with Bishop Burkat" as she presented the new Synod Design.
- There was an opportunity *for* discussion and reflection.
- After the bishop's presentation, the Upper Montgomery Conference met in assembly to elect the new dean *for* 2006-2009. By a *one* vote margin, The Rev. Paul Neff, Grace Lutheran Church, Royersford was elected.
- For more information on the evening, please contact any of the following individuals: David Garner, John Ungerman, David Hartzman, Tracie Rheel, Ron Schafer, Suzanne Rigg or Pastor Hutchinson.



Sundays of Advent and Christmas Eve Worship

The four Sundays this year in the season of Advent are **December 3, 10, 17 and 24**. On December 24 there will be one Advent worship (not Christmas) worship service at 10 a.m. The **Christmas Eve** worship services will be later that day with a family service at 3 p.m. and a candlelight service at 11 p.m. with special music beginning at 10:30 p.m. Also there will only be **one worship service on Sunday, December 31** at 10 a.m.

Advent Devotional Booklets

Advent devotional booklets are now available in Horn Hall. These devotions were written by the member and friends of St. James and sponsored by the Christian Education Committee. Please don't forget to pick one up to use for your daily devotions during the season of Advent. A special thanks goes to Melinda Mace for coordinating the writing and compiling of these booklets.

Offerings for 2006

All offerings and contributions to be accounted for in 2006 will need to be in the office by Sunday, December 31, 2006. Anything received after that will be accounted for in 2007.

Third Sunday Offering December Recipient ELCA World Hunger

ELCA World Hunger makes a life-saving difference around the world and close to home through an integrated and comprehensive program of relief, development, education, and advocacy.

Relief efforts provide food, medicine, and shelter to those in desperate need.

Development projects break the cycle of chronic hunger with sustainable and community-based strategies that offer access to education and training, clean water, affordable housing, micro-credit loans, and agricultural improvements.

Educational resources and events inform and inspire ELCA members of all ages to learn, care, give, and act to end world hunger. Learn more about ELCA World Hunger resources at www.elca.org/hunger and www.augsburgfortress.org/eicahunger.

Advocacy works at local, state, national, and international levels calling for justice in government policies, programs, and legislation. Get up-to-date information and take action at www.elca.org/advocacy.

ELCA World Hunger works with a host of trusted partners, notably Lutheran World Relief and the Lutheran World Federation, and builds on long-term relationships to do this work efficiently and effectively. Funded entirely by gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, ELCA World Hunger operates with lean administration costs under ten percent.

All money raised by the World Hunger Appeal comes through specially designated offerings and donations from ELCA members, congregations, and friends. ELCA World Hunger receives no benevolence (general budget money from general ELCA member offerings).

(continued next column)

Fundraising efforts are directed by the World Hunger Appeal, but the ELCA's daily world hunger ministry is based in congregations where most of the fund raising takes place. Please prayerfully consider giving this month to support this very important ministry of our denomination.

Commitment Sunday Final Totals

A total of 106 responses, including 17 new commitments, were received! Total pledge amount for Current Expenses is \$153,843; Synod Benevolence is \$14,046; Building Maintenance is \$8,864. The total amount pledged is \$176,753.

Thank you to everyone for prayerfully considering this response. Our pledge is a formalization of our commitment to supporting ministry here at St. James, in our neighborhood, and in the world. Any questions or changes to your individual pledge should be directed to Pam in the Church Office.



Annual Meeting December 17 at 11:15 a.m. Horn Hall

Please plan to attend part one of the annual meeting after service on December 17 at 11:15 a.m.

The agenda for the meeting includes the election of Council members, review and adoption of the 2007 budget and approval of the revisions to the constitution required by the ELCA. The proposed Budget will be provided for the congregation by December 10. Please contact any council member with questions or items to add to the agenda.

DISCIPLESHIP and FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Holiday Concert

December 10 at 3 p.m.

The Boyertown Area Choral Association, under the direction of Peg Lamb, will perform a Holiday Concert at St. James Lutheran Church on **Sunday, December 10 at 3 p.m.** Refreshments and fellowship will follow the concert. All are invited to come and bring family and friends!



Christmas Angel Program

St. James is once again helping the Pottstown Salvation Army in their annual CHRISTMAS ANGEL PROGRAM. We have accepted 50 gift tags. Each tag designates a local child, age 14 or younger, for which Christmas will be more special by someone taking the initiative to purchase him or her a suggested gift. Each tag lists a specific child's first name, whether boy or girl, age, clothing size if applicable, and a suggested gift choice.

The tags are available in Horn Hall and can be found hanging on the tree. Please take one, or as many tags as you think you are able to provide gifts. When you have finished purchasing your gift please place it under the tree. All gifts should be returned UNWRAPPED with the tag securely fastened and **need to be at the church no later than December 10.**

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

A St. James tradition continues as we once again will be helping The Salvation Army with their bell ringing and kettle collection. St. James will be ringing the bell at the kettle collection located at the Boscov's entrance (closest to Sears) of the Coventry Mall on **Saturday, December 16 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.** Please **sign up in Horn Hall** to volunteer a half hour to an hour of your time to help provide for the needs of others.

Christmas Caroling December 17th

Help spread some holiday cheer by Christmas caroling to the shut-in members. We'll begin with **lunch and fellowship following the congregational meeting on December 17,** and then will proceed to spend quality time with our members during the daylight hours! **Please sign up in Horn Hall by December 10.**



Decorating the Church for Christmas December 17th

We will be decorating the church for Christmas on the Third Sunday of Advent, **after the congregational meeting. Please sign up in Horn Hall** if you would like to help. You are also invited for lunch afterwards so please indicate when you sign up if you will share in the meal.



WELCA News

A big THANK YOU to all those who gave small personal care items over the past several weeks to help us with our tradition of helping the YWCA holiday celebration. Thanks to your efforts, 60 smiling women and men will receive gift bags for the Parent's Network supporting this specialty group-teaching solid parenting skills so families may remain intact.

Next Meeting: December 11th - Meet at St. James by 6:55 p.m. We will then carpool to deliver our gift bags, and attend the YWCA's honoring of the Parent's Network Group. A new experience for us!!

Looking ahead: January 15th – Join us at 7 p.m. again in Horn Hall for a special presentation by Barry and Kass Moyer.

Women of the ELCA Upper Montgomery Conference Bible Study

The next WELCA Upper Montgomery Conference Bible Study will be at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Stowe, on Tuesday, **December 5, at 10 a.m.** with coffee at 9:30 a.m. Barbara Lutz will be the leader.

The January Bible Study will be at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Pottstown led by Ethel DeWitt on Tuesday, **January 2, 2007.** All women are invited to participate in these Bible Studies found in the Lutheran Woman Today Magazine. If you would like to attend, please contact Grace Schafer or Mary Arnt for carpooling arrangements.

Salvation Army Community Lunch Second Wednesday of Month

Volunteers are needed! Volunteers are needed at different times between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to help with cooking, serving and cleanup. Please consider helping those in need. For additional information please contact Jean Drauschak at 610-323-1792.



SCRIP and Holiday Plans

It's time to plan now and avoid the last minute shopping "crunch" in the retail world. Purchase scrip and help provide others who are less fortunate the opportunity to eat well.

Grocers, retailers, even some web certificates are available. Remember Christmas falls on a Monday this year, so PLAN AHEAD!

We will NOT be selling Scrip Christmas Eve or December 31. **Also, note** the revised times for these three weeks only:

On Sunday, December 17th and 24th Scrip sales held from 9 to 9:45 a.m. in Horn Hall and from the end of the service until 11:30 a.m.

After December 11th we won't be able to promise to secure any new certificates so PLEASE plan ahead. When our stock is depleted, it may be too late to re-order the gifts. Use the form we created and pre-order your gifts. We'll have them ready for you the next Sunday. Thank you for your support during the past year!

Committee Night Wednesday, December 6th

Dinner at 6 p.m.
Devotions at 6:45 p.m.
Meetings at 7 p.m.

All committees will reconvene at 8 p.m. to share any necessary communications. Committees meeting this month include:

Evangelism, Fellowship, and Stewardship

If you are not currently serving on a committee but are interested in learning more about what each committee does, please join us. Anyone willing to serve on a committee should talk to Suzanne Rigg or Pastor Hutchinson.



Fairly Traded Coffee is Back!!

Starting in December fairly traded coffee and other items from Equal Exchange will once again be available to purchase in Horn Hall. The coffee and other products are sold at cost with the primary goal being to help bring about awareness of fair trade and advocate for it. Fair trade provides the means for small farmers to make enough money to support themselves while using the premiums to improve their standard of living. Fair Trade is not a charity or handout; it is simply a process of giving a fair exchange.

The easiest way to support Fair Trade is to purchase fairly traded products. Your actions as a consumer support or discourage actions by businesses. By making the choice to buy fairly traded products you help provide health care, education and a better lifestyle for farmers, workers, and artisans around the world.

Relay For Life



The Pottstown Relay for Life officially had a kick-off for the 2007 Relay. If you have seen our table or read the Mercury, a little boy named Carlos from Barth Elementary School is responsible for a feature called "Dimes Make a Difference". He was touched by his teacher's experience with breast cancer and in turn, has touched the hearts of all who heard him tell the story on November 8th at the kick-off meeting. Please stop at the Relay table in Horn Hall and pick up a copy of Carlos's story. And if someone asks you for a dime, you will understand.

This year we will be selling books for all ages on your Christmas list. Also, we will be selling candles, home-baked cookies, and other gift items to kick off our St. James team fund raising.

A Blessed Advent to everyone.



BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS

Blood pressure checks will be given on **January 7, 2007** following the 8 a.m. worship service and again at 10:15 a.m. prior to the 10:45 a.m. service. See you then.

BLOOD DRIVE

January 8, 2007 is a time when you can unselfishly give to your neighbor when they are in dire need. You can donate part of yourself by giving blood between **2 p.m. and 7p.m.** when Miller Keystone will be here at St. James. If you are unable to give, please send a friend or neighbor.

Handling Grief during the Holidays

Despite the joys of celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus, some of us find the Christmas season to be a time when the pains of losing a loved one also arises in our hearts. The following are some tips to help you through the season;

1. Don't think that you have to do what might be expected of you (i.e. make a dinner, come to a party, etc.) Tell family and friends if you are not up to those things.
2. Make some changes in your practices if that feels more comfortable. When you open presents, decorating, baking, cards sent and other traditions can be changed.
3. Consider doing something for someone else that you don't know. Give the gift of your time or make a special donation in memory of your loved one.
4. Recognize your lost loved one as if they were still with you. Listen to their favorite music, serve their favorite foods, look at old photos, light a candle for them.
5. Don't be afraid to express your feelings and, if need be, to cry over your feelings. You won't spoil everyone's fun. You will be given the gift of compassion
6. At the same time, don't be afraid to have fun. You will not defile the memory of your loved one by enjoying the season. That is what they would want for you.
7. Get enough rest and don't push yourself with all the demands at Christmas time.
8. Remember that you are not alone. There are lots of others who will be feeling like you do.
9. Remember that Christ himself, shares in your sadness but promises you the greatest gift at the end of all seasons.
10. Ponder and pray on God's love whenever you need to.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

Refugee Resettlement Ministry

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me"
~Matthew 25:35

December has arrived and we are still waiting for news as to when our refugee family is arriving. As we wait, we are still doing what we can to get ready for that day when they do arrive.

Thank you to all who purchased Chicken BBQ dinners. Through donations and sales we made close to \$1000. We also will be receiving matching funds from Thrivent so that event will bring in over \$1000 once all the monies are in.

Thank you to all who have brought in any non-furniture donations. If you have not yet had the chance to bring in your donated non-furniture items, please do so at your earliest convenience and place them in Suzanne's office. There is a new donation list available in Horn Hall for a few remaining items. Please check the list to see if there is anything you can donate remembering that items need to be new or almost new.

We are still searching for a two bedroom apartment with rent being between \$600-\$700. If you know of any apartments in the Pottstown area please let Suzanne know at 610-970-4865.

Finally, continue to pray for those individuals working on the Refugee Resettlement Support Team and for the family unknown to us but soon to be in our care.

If you are questions about this ministry please contact Pastor Hutchinson or Suzanne Rigg at 610-326-2810.

MEMBER NEWS

Change of Address

Ernest Schultz
2917 E. High Street
Lot 46
Pottstown, PA 19464

December Birthdays

1 – Alyssa Stein, Justin Stine; 2 – Ken Garner, Nicolas Gulotta, Betsy Jerdon; 3 – Derek Olock; 4 – Ronald Reynier; 5 – Garnet Nye Jr; 8 – Jeff Leiby; 9 – Annmarie Binsfeld; 10 – Kaitlyn Eisenhard; 11 – Joyce Bilger, Pam Irwin; 12 – Greg Hutchinson, Bill Jackson; 13 – David Hartzman; 15 – Amy Lapreziosa, Lois Welsh; 16 – Ronald Reynier, Jr.; 18 – Linda Neiman; 22 – Ashley Rose; 24 – John Richard, Robert Richard; 25 – Joe Ann Hillegass; 26 – Dottie Smith; 27 – Diane Mitchell, Gavin Wert; 28 – Sherry Clancy, Jessica Mitchell; 29 – Janis Lunn; 31 – Pat Baer



Thank You Notes

Thank you to the Fellowship Committee for bringing us together for a night of fun and fellowship in playing EZ Cards.

Thank you for the beautiful flowers and the company that you gave to me. In my mind St. James is everything. Again thank you.

Jay Neiffer

I want to say thank you to everyone at the church for praying for Anthony while he was overseas in Iraq, and hoping that his return would be good. It is everything that I had expected it to be. It will take some time to get use to everything but I am glad that he is home. Thank you for your support and help through his deployment. Thank you very much. We both appreciate it very much.

Anthony & Jennifer Morales

Thank you to all who contributed to the Advent Devotional Booklets by writing a devotion for it.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Highlights from meeting held November 15, 2006

- Reviewed the year end personnel reports.
- Established fees for church use by members and outside groups.
- Approved a budget to be presented to the congregation for 2007.
- Reviewed a proposal for fiscal control establishing practices and guidelines.
- Discussed the agenda for the December and January Congregational Meetings.
- Approved a letter to neighbors regarding parking.
- Approved that no separate bank accounts can be established prior to council approval.
- Approved taking \$7000 from the endowment funds for energy cost.
- Approved giving \$1000 from the Florence Decker Fund to Jessica Mitchell to participate in the Lead America leadership program.

TREASURER'S REPORT

	<u>Oct 2006</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Income	\$26,936.42	\$231,537.70
Expenses	<u>24,516.65</u>	<u>261,540.85</u>
Net Income	\$ 2,419.77	(\$30,003.15)

REGULAR ENVELOPES

Received	\$21,674.00	\$177,920.34
Needed*	<u>20,034.76</u>	<u>200,347.57</u>
Over (Under)	\$ 1,639.24	(\$22,427.23)

THIRD SUNDAY OFFERING

Collected \$ 409.00

Beneficiary: *Pottstown Cluster*

*Figures for each month includes \$14,653 actual pledged and \$5,382 needed growth to balance the budget.

Council Member Contact

If at anytime you have a question, concern, or suggestion that might help the church, you may contact one of the following elected Council members.

Dave Garner 610-970-7560
Email: dggarner@comcast.net
Represents the Stewardship Committee

Jeff Leiby 610-327-9454
Email: jefnrobn@yahoo.com
Represents the Fellowship Committee

Sherry Clancy 610-323-5977
Email: srclancy@alumni.moravian.edu
Represents the Finance and Endowment Committee

John Ungerman 610-718-9368
Email: john.ungerman@thrivent.com
Represents the Property Committee

Alison O'Donnell 610-779-1119
Email: Alison.C.O'Donnell@GSK.com
papodonnell@comcast.net

Dottie Smith 610-323-8226
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Pat Weber 610-326-5421

Mary Arnt 610-323-6176

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