

The Messenger

Saint James
LUTHERAN CHURCH
FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.

JOYFULLY
Connecting
FAITH • LIFE • PEOPLE



March 2026
Volume 42, Issue 3

Worship - Christian Education / Youth - Fellowship -

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While some folks seem to be completely certain about current events, decisions, and actions, I am not one of them. There are times I wish I had made more of effort over the decades to pay closer attention to what was going on in the world. Maybe now I could make some sense of it all. Of course, I also wish I had gleaned more understanding from sermons, Bible studies, theology classes, ethics courses, and other education opportunities offered by the church and my seminary. If I just had a better sense and understanding of the whys, whens, hows, histories, backgrounds, etc., I might feel more competent to have conversations with folks about current events. But, as it is, I feel like I am in a quagmire of uncertainty, fear, and anxiety. Fortunately (or maybe not), I'm pretty sure I am not alone in those feelings. So, if you are looking to me for answers and assurances, I'm afraid we'll have to venture and explore those paths together.

But here's the perplexing thing, though. I have found over the years, that if I begin with the philosophy that "it'll be okay" (a premise we've heard often, no doubt), I am able to sort through the various confusions, anxieties, and uncertainties. I may not find answers, but I am not pulled further into the quagmire.

I spent three years on the campus of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC (now a part of Lenoir Rhyne University, Hickory, NC). The chapel was in the middle of the campus and had a large stained-glass window covering the back wall of the sanctuary. A picture is located below. Notice the dove in the center that is headed downward into the various shapes, sizes, and colors. I spent many hours over the years meditating in front of this window. In it, I am reminded of the assurance we have in the loving Three-in-One God – creator, redeemer, and sustainer.

Continued on next page...

Pastor’s Page continued...

I don’t fully understand all the nuances of God’s unconditional love, how the Spirit makes its way into the water of baptism, how Jesus’ real presence is in the bread and wine, nor exactly what happens to our body and spirit when we die. And yet, I find comfort and solace in hearing forgiveness being pronounced in worship; strength upon the proclamation of law and gospel in a sermon; and, loving inspiration in music. All of those experiences ground me and offer me a spiritual place from which to contemplate and meditate the worries of this world.

Yes, *it’ll be okay*. Regardless of my understanding of this world, my preparation for what may or may not happen, or my action to sway decision-making, everything will be okay. For God’s love will be constant and will triumph for each of us over all conditions.

In your mercy, O God
hear our prayers.

Pastor John

To see a better image of the window,
click [here](#).



Many thanks to all the folks who have worked diligently to replace the privacy fence at the parsonage.

It is greatly appreciated, and will add beauty to the house.

Pr John & Anna Lisa

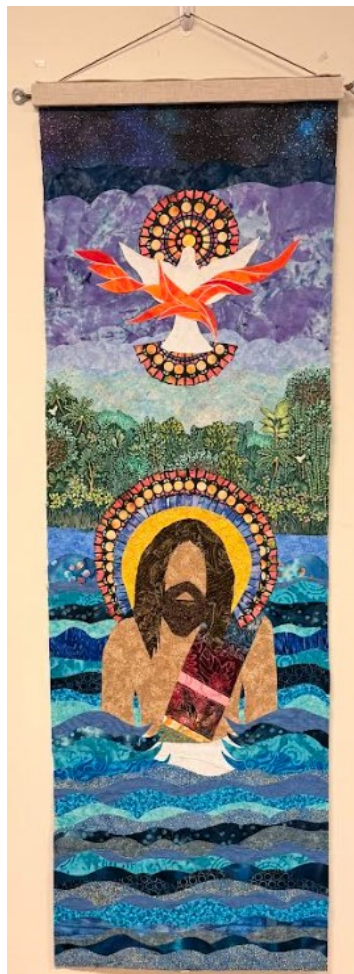


Holy Week Schedule



Maundy Thursday worship	7:00 pm
Good Friday worship ...	7:00 pm
Easter Sunrise	7:00 am
(outdoor, weather permitting)	
Breakfast	8:00 am
Easter Festival Worship ...	10:00 am
(Sanctuary)	

Thanks to Anna Lisa Johannessen for sharing two of her newest liturgical fabric art pieces. They will add great beauty and meaning to our Lenten season.





We will be celebrating 90 years at Saint James on June 28th during Worship!

Anyone have a memory, story, picture or item that reminds us of our 90 year journey that we can share?

What have we accomplished in these 90 years? What was a great outreach?

“What are some of the ways we followed the Lord’s command to serve those in need?”

Have we worked toward our mission?

Have we built a community?

Let us hear from you. Ideas welcomed! Contact Tonie Neal, Diana Vittoe or Rick Boelke with your treasures that will help us remember our 90th anniversary video on June 28th.

UPDATE ON INTENT CARDS FOR 2026 Ministry Spending Plan

To date we received March 11, 2026 we received 34 intent cards, totaling \$151,170.

Our hope is for 40 Intent Cards, at \$ 150,000.

Thanks to all those who have made extra efforts for boosting cash flow challenges due to the two snow-out Sundays in February.

Congregation Constitution

The congregation ratified the updated constitution at the congregational meeting on March 8th. If you want (or need) a copy, please call the office.

2025 Annual Report

The Congregation Council presented a 2025 Annual Report at the meeting on March 8th.

A copy was emailed or sent by text to all members who are on the Mailchimp or Remind text list. Due to the inactivity of many ministry teams (a condition we are working to rectify), much of the annual report summary is the best memory of events and activities. If you remember something that should be included, please contact the church office. The congregation council will review to include it as an addendum for archival purposes.

Some info on Church Security

CHURCH should be a safe place ... not only spiritually, but physically as well. And to that end, we have security measures in place at St. James.

Inside alarm system – both church buildings are equipped with multiple sensors for motion detection, door lock, glass-break sensors, and heat/fire/smoke detection. In the event of any of those conditions, the system will automatically contact 911.

Rover attendant on Sunday morning – several years ago, with the help of Cumberland County Sherriff Department, we developed safety protection protocols in the event of an Active Shooter scenario within the buildings. Two parts of that plan are obvious each Sunday. First, the only access to the building from outside on Sunday morning is through the Gathering Space main entrance doors. The Gathering Space is monitored by the ushers. Second, a volunteer serves as outside Rover. You might have seen them wearing a safety vest and patrolling the parking lot. The training indicates that the large majority of incidents are deterred simply by someone noticing what happens in the parking areas.

The plan calls for our buildings to be locked following worship, and the alarm system armed. We do not have a set assigned person(s) to lock the building each week. So, it is very important for all ministry teams, or other groups who meet following worship to have someone assigned to lock the doors prior to their meeting beginning, and to properly secure the building after they have concluded their meeting.

Additionally, if you happen to be part of a group meeting at the church, make sure someone is designated to check all doors and set the alarm system.

Members of the property committee are available to help train each third Saturday during property work day.

Thanks for being aware of this need!



MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS NEEDED

The focus on ministry teams during Lent continues – here’s a word about a few of them.

The Evangelism Ministry Team is responsible for educating, inspiring, informing, and encouraging the congregation to share the story of God, and God’s mercy, love, and grace. Using the church newsletter, Facebook and other social media, church web site, and other forms of infographics and publicity, this team shares the unique ways that Jesus’ story intertwines with St. James’ story, and how that impacts our families, the neighborhoods, and the world.

The Stewardship Team is involved in teaching, inspiring, asking, thanking, and updating the congregation about how monies, time, energy, talents and passions, etc. are gathered and invested in ministry – and how that makes a difference in the world. The team will work throughout the year to inspire folks of the possibilities of ministry as we offer ourselves and our resources. What are the ways and places and faces God calling us to? And what might those stories be as we offer our whole selves in mission in the story?

There are also ways to offer your time and talents without being on specific teams.

The Property Team leads a property work day on the third Saturday of each month. Do you work with tools, help clean or organize, etc.

Are you a good communicator? Perhaps you would consider being a *lector*.

Do you have a desire to lead during worship? Consider volunteering as a *communion assistant, choir member, usher, handbell choir member, liturgical arts, share in children’s time leadership*, etc.

Maybe you have the gift of welcoming or home decorating? *The fellowship planning team* always has need for folks who can help with meals, receptions, after worship coffee time, etc.

Questions? Contact Pastor John or a council member, and we’ll point you in the right direction.

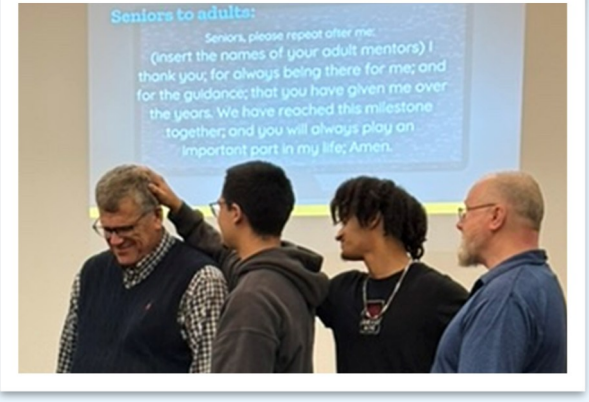


Thank you to all who contributed to Ian Gibson’s Eagle Project!

We collected \$700.

Youth Attend 2026 LYO

Seven youth and three adults attended LYO (NC Synod Gathering) at Greensboro February 27 – March 1. They spent time in worship, fellowship, study, music, and a lot of fun. Thanks to the congregation for making a faith-forming weekend possible!



Youth Attend 2026 LYO



The GOOD SHEPHERD-40 days of comfort

Fleece comes from sheep. Shepherds tend to sheep.

During Lent we will use fleece to honor our SHEPHERD.



In March of 2019 Marcia Katt was informed the Child Advocacy Center needed "comfort blankets". Comfort blankets are given to children at the end of a forensic interview. Our first donation was made during the April 2019 Prime Time meeting. Since our first donation several "work days" to make "comfort blankets" have been held. Numerous church members, family members and friends have helped.

We try to be good stewards of our fleece fabric. Squares of fleece are removed before the blankets are tied. Those squares are donated to schools to be used either as erasers for white boards or put on the legs of chairs to prevent scraping of the floors. If we receive pieces of fleece that aren't big enough for "comfort blankets" we make either scarves or shawls. These are donated to nursing homes or areas where they will help people stay warm.

If you have any size pieces of fleece you would like to donate, we will put it to good use.

During the 40 days of Lent we will donate 40 "comfort blankets". That means 40 children will know the SHEPHERD knows them and knows how special they are.

As of February 18, 2026 1,840 "comfort blankets" have been donated to the Child Advocacy Center that were made by church members, family members and friends.

Questions?

Marcia Katt 910-322-8037



Join our Nursery Volunteers!



We need a few adults who can volunteer in our nursery on Sundays. “Church policy for youth protection requires all who participate regularly with children to go through Safe Gathering training, which includes a background check (church paid.) This training takes about 1.5-2 hours and is video based.)

Contact Michelle at the office: 910-484-8052 / saintjameslutheran@gmail.com

103rd Annual Gathering of the Lutheran Men in Mission

Date: Saturday, March 14, 2026
Location: St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
531 Hardin Rd., Dallas, NC 28034

Format: In-person and virtual (via Zoom)

Schedule:
9:00 am – 9:50 am: Registration and Continental Breakfast
10:00 am – 3:30 pm: Annual Gathering

Theme: "Be the Body of Christ"
⇒ Romans 10:15: "And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

Registration:
You may register online at the following link or in person on the day of the event:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nclmm-103rd-annual-gathering-tickets-1980409209256?aff=oddtcreator>





This year's recipient of a \$500 Aderholdt Scholarship is Nathan Stockham. Congratulations!



BREAD 'N BOWLS

MARCH 12, 2026
11 AM - 2 PM

Proceeds benefit the ministry of Fayetteville Area Operation Inasmuch

Bread Bowl + Salad Bar: \$25

Pottery Bowl + Everything: \$30

Group Rate + Free Delivery on 10 or More: \$12

SNYDER MEMORIAL
Baptist Church
701 Westmont Dr.



Scan to Purchase Tickets:



WIN
BIG!



GIFT BASKET RAFFLES

BUY NOW & SAVE!



Fellowship Opportunities



Fellowship opportunity for women!

Our monthly breakfast group (**Salty Women**) meets on second Thursdays, **March 12 at 9am** at Biscuitville (3110 Raeford Rd - Tallywood Shopping Center)

If you are interested, please let Ruth Ann know: 910-309-1007



Men's Fellowship - April 1

Come join us every first Wednesday 5:30 pm - 8 pm on the back lawn of St. James for brats, beans, and beverages.

If you are coming, let Dave Runkle or Todd Burns know in advance.

Weather plan is in the Annex/Entrance across the parking



Join us every first Tuesday, at Noon!

Potluck Lunch in our Fellowship Hall

April 7 at Noon

The Prime Timer group is designed as a fellowship opportunity for all members over 55.



Dedicated to Helping Older Adults Maintain Independence with Dignity

To our friends at St James Evangelical Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, seniors and caregivers we support, I offer my sincere gratitude for your generous gift to the Cumberland County Council on Older Adults through Cumberland Community Foundation's 2025 Giving Tuesday campaign.

For more than 57 years, the Council on Older Adults has proudly stood beside the seniors of our community, offering services that nurture independence, health, safety, and social well-being, as well as supporting the caregivers of our older adults. Our ability to provide these essential services at no cost is possible because of the compassion and generosity of our community, through both the gift of time and financial support. We are proud to stand beside you in supporting those most in need.

We thank you for your thoughtfulness and belief in our mission to ensure seniors can maintain independence and dignity within our community. With your continued support, we are excited to build on this work and expand our impact in the year ahead.

*Thank you so
much for your
support of our
seniors!*



♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ *Thank You* ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

With deep appreciation,

Lisa Hughes
Executive Director





Thank you for your gift!

Saint James Evangelical Lutheran Church
PO Box 53276
Fayetteville, NC 28305-3276

Dear Saint James Evangelical Lutheran Church,

On behalf of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, thank you for your recent gift.

We are able to continue to enhance our facilities, expand access to scholarships, recruit and retain talented faculty and cultivate a rich campus life for our seminarians because of committed partners like you.

Thank you for helping to prepare this next generation to become spiritual leaders and servants to their communities worldwide.

Warmly,

Catherine Serrin Niekro
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

This is your tax receipt. Please retain it for your records

Date Processed:	12/31/2025	Gift ID: 25-400-1000011050
Amount:	\$2,500.00	
Benefitting Fund:	Theda Suggs Memorial Scholarship for LTSS	

Social Ministry Outreach for March



Change for Change for Crop Walk.

All donations will go to Church World Services and Fayetteville Urban Ministry. These organizations feed, cloth, mentor children, teach adults and children to read, build dams, dig wells, ramps, repair local houses in need and help with rent and electric bills when needed. Come walk with us.

CROP Hunger Walks

CROP Hunger Walks are community-based walk fundraising events held in cities and towns across the United States, created to support the global mission of **Church World Service**, a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. After a CROP Hunger Walk ends, 25% of the funds raised is returned to the host community to support local hunger fighting efforts.



Background

The Crop Project began in 1947 when farmers were asked to donate food and seed crops to our hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia. The first CROP Hunger Walks took place in Bismarck, North Dakota (1969), and York, Pennsylvania (1970). Since then, CROP Hunger Walk events have been held in hundreds of communities, large and small, raising millions of dollars to eradicate hunger and poverty.

Get Involved

Hunger is one of the greatest injustices facing our world, but it doesn't have to be this way. Ending hunger is possible in our lifetime. You can help make it happen. Register for your local CROP Hunger Walk, raise funds, and take us one step closer to ending hunger once and for all. Join the movement!



Thank you to all who donated diapers last month.
The Department of Social Services was most appreciative!

Left:
Tonie Neal dropping off our donatoin



Our 10:00 Sunday worship service is being streamed live,
and is also available for later viewing.
Click [here](#) to watch

Receive Text Updates

If you are not currently on our email news list, sign up on our website: <https://saintjamesfay.org/>

To receive text messages as well, or instead of email, here is how to sign up

To receive messages via text,

Text @8bhg3
to 81010



You can opt-out of messages at anytime by replying, 'unsubscribe @8bhg3'.
Trouble using 81010? Try texting @8bhg3 to (910) 401-3357 instead.

Upcoming Zoom Meetings

Click on the times to connect

Property Team - (April 8)
- 2nd Tuesdays

(Meeting ID: 829 6466 1925 / Password: 977528)

[6:00 pm](#)

Men's Bible Study - Sundays

(Meeting ID 821 3488 9583 / Password: 257977)

[9:00 am](#)

Fellowship & Conversation - Tuesdays

(Meeting ID: 837 4730 9659 / Password: 588450)

[7:00 pm](#)

THANKS FOR SHARING RESOURCES



We appreciate every gift that is received, and we attempt to make wise decisions in how we use and invest these funds.

Thanks for on-going financial giving.

You can support our ministries by scanning the code or online

Click [here](#)



Assisting Ministers

3/01 Ruth Ann Crecelius
3/08 Lindsey Smith
3/15 Jane Boelke
3/22 Jacky Hummel
3/29 Nate Stockham

Lectors

3/01 Diana Vittoe
3/08 Jim Wright
3/15 Beverly Beale
3/22 Rick Black
3/29 Erin Smith

Communion Assistant

3/01 Tonie Neal
3/08 Dave Runkle
3/15 Jacky Hummel
3/22 Jaye-Lynn Orellano
3/29 Delores Schiebe

Ushers

3/01 John & Gayle Frinak
3/08 Tonie Neal and James Peterson
3/15 John & Gayle Frinak
3/22 Sharon VanPelt, Ed Samuelian
3/29 Gary & Ruth Ann Crecelius

Acolytes

3/01 Willow Linkous
3/08 Henry Orellano
3/15 Ian Gibson
3/22 Aaron Thomas
3/29 Holden Linkous

Greeters

3/01 Sharon VanPelt
3/08 Nancy Oliver
3/15 Fran DeSilva
3/22 Gayle & John Frinak
3/29 Teri Bumphrey

Rover

3/01 Tom Liedig
3/08 Todd Burns
3/15 Dave Runkle
3/22 Verena & Christopher Min
3/29 Ed Samuelian

Nursery

3/01 Sue Rink, Patsy Linkous
3/08 Erika Stockwell, Jennifer Linkous
3/15 Verena Min, Kathy Brown
3/22 Amber Habermehl,
3/29 Tonie Neal, Patsy Linkous

Around the Parish

PRAYER REQUEST

WE ARE HERE TO PRAY FOR YOU



One of the gifts that the Christian community shares with others is praying for those with special needs or concerns. Call the Church Office or fill out the green form in the pew racks to let us know of prayer needs.

The list in the weekly bulletin is intended to be for persons in immediate crisis. Generally those names will be changed after 3 weeks.

The newsletter has our long term prayer list which is updated as you tell us.

Please keep us informed so that we can share accurate information with the Saint James community.

Remember These

People at Home or in Care facilities (restricted mobility)

- Charlotte Davis
- Claudia Doyle
- Brenda Killett
- Carolyn Uchtorff

Prayer Concerns:

- ◇ Angel Davis
- ◇ John Tucker
- ◇ Beth Sessoms
- ◇ Thomas Oliver
- ◇ Mark & Ann Mabe
- ◇ Brenda Tinney
- ◇ Ashley Littman
- ◇ Joseph San Miguel
- ◇ David Herring
- ◇ James Peterson, Jr.
- ◇ Claudia Joyner

Military Members

(* Deployed)

- Earl Stockham
- Joshua Trogdon *
- Darian Dix
- Bella Fish
- Dan Gibson
- Hochang Min
- Alex Habermehl
- Robert James
- Matthew Porter *



- 3/04 Joan Eissinger
- 3/04 Frank Mathias
- 3/05 Lore Gibson
- 3/07 Charles Lee
- 3/07 Brandon Gregory
- 3/15 Gayle Frinak
- 3/15 Johannes Min
- 3/18 Victoria Orellano
- 3/20 Todd Burns
- 3/20 Bernard Mott
- 3/20 Samantha Hoffmann
- 3/22 Richard VanPelt
- 3/23 Amy Burks
- 3/28 Barb Gearing
- 3/29 Jim Schlenker
- 3/29 Karen Martin

Anniversaries



- 3/03 Sharon & Eddie Mathis
- 3/04 Carl & Deb Rosenberg
- 3/19 Rick & Jennifer Black

**The Messenger is a monthly newsletter of
Saint James Lutheran Church,
P.O. Box 53276; Fayetteville, NC 28305.**

All are welcome to worship each Sunday at 10 a.m.
Holy Communion is celebrated every week.

**Should you have an emergency or need Pastoral Care, contact
Pastor John Locke: Cell (704) 530-9969 or jpl406@gmail.com .**

**Church Staff Office hours are 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Mo-Th.
Phone: (910) 484-8052 | 24 hour answering machine.
www.saintjamesfay.org E-mail: saintjameslutheran@gmail.com**

Saint James Lutheran Church

Located in the Haymount Area

1424 Morganton Road
P.O. Box 53276
Fayetteville, NC 28305



www.saintjamesfay.org

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