

SEPTEMBER
2023

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SAINT JAMES

LUTHERAN CHURCH



Fall 2023 & Spring 2024

All of these words and ideas point to the stories of 1st and 2nd Samuel: King, Kingdom, Temple, House, Son of David, Anointed, Christ, Messiah, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives...

Join us in worship and education this Fall for an exciting journey through 1st and 2nd Samuel. You might come to agree with Vicar that the story is "A Royal Mess!"

In 2024 we'll turn our undivided attention to The Gospel according to Mark..."The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

- * Join us for Worship, Saturdays at 5pm and Sundays at 9:30am.
- * Join us for Christian Education (6pm) and Confirmation (7pm) on Wednesdays.
- * Join us for Bible Study: Sundays at 10:45am, Mondays 9am, and/or Tuesdays on Zoom at 9am.

REMINDER...

**Starting September 3, 2023...
Sunday Worship is moving to 9:30am!**

Saturday Worship remains at 5:00pm.

Christian Education

**Fall Education Begins on
September 6!**



Preschool-5th Grade Schedule (6-7 p.m.)

- 6:00-Meal (freewill donations accepted)
- 6:20-Whole group story and music
- 6:35-Grade-level classroom fun
- Please confirm/update your family's contact info. here: <https://forms.gle/JUSmmdsXd3428tiq7>

Want to join the fun?

Sign up here to help serve the meals: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904044aa4af22a7f58-wednesday#/>

We need two adults to help during classroom time:

- 1st-3rd graders and 4th-5th graders
- High school helpers are always welcome! This is a very fun way to earn Silver Cord hours.

Contact Rebecca (education@stjamesjohnston.org) if you want to be a part of this lively and engaging ministry.

Confirmation information:

6th-8th Grade (7-8 p.m.)

- Pizza served at 6:45 (freewill donations accepted)
- Parent/student meeting on September 6

9th Grade (7-8 p.m., Sept. 6-Oct. 25)

- Confirmation is Sunday, October 29, during worship.
- Parent/student meeting with Vicar Tori on September 6 at 7:00

Youth

National Youth Gathering

In July 2024, we plan to take a group of students to New Orleans for the National Youth Gathering. This is a life-changing faith formation event! Students going into 8th grade through 12th grade during the 2023-24 school year are eligible to attend. Registration will be active this September 1-30th. Please reach out to Vicar if you would like to register or have any questions!



A Summer of Youth!

Every Wednesday this summer we've had youth in the building doing all sorts of things! From casserole building to ice cream socials, they have had fun getting to know each other through food, service, team building, and conversation. It has been one of the best summers for youth engagement!

Connected by Faith

Connected by Faith Women's Bible Study will be meeting for our Fall session starting Monday September 11, 2023 at 6:30pm for 7 sessions.

We will meet weekly at Saint James Lutheran Church for one hour. This fall we will be simultaneously working through the books of Obadiah and "Women of the Word" by Jen Wilkin. You do not need to attend all 7 sessions in order to join us. We would love it if you would consider joining even if you can only make it a couple of times!

"We all know its important to study God's word. But sometimes it's hard to know where to start. What's more, a lack of time, emotionally driven approaches, and past frustrations can erode our resolve to keep growing in our knowledge of Scripture. How can we, as Christian women, keep our focus and sustain our passion when reading the Bible?" ~ Jen Wilkin

New this FALL is onsite FREE childcare for children over 1 year of age. The children and babysitter will be close by for any related needs while you join us in deepening your understanding of how to study the Bible. Pre-Registration is REQUIRED for babysitting services.

For more information or to register please contact Kristin Rodenberg at kristin.hacker@gmail.com or 515-975-7831.

Jen Wilkin's book, "Women of the Word" can be purchased online from Amazon (\$9.39), Lifeway (\$9.74), or Christianbooks.com (\$7.99 Plus S & H)

Worship & Music

What Do You Really Know about David?

In the Gospels Jesus is often called “Son of David,” and it seems that being of the “house and lineage of David” is important to Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah. But what do most of us know about King David? Well, he lived about 1000 years before Jesus, he was another youngest brother, a shepherd who played the harp and wrote some psalms, he killed a giant named Goliath...Oh, and there was that thing with Bathsheba. Hmmm.

The Bible Study groups have been reading the accounts in *1st* and *2nd Samuel*, and it is safe to say it has been eye opening! The discussions have been intense: was David a hero or a scoundrel? Should he be admired or despised? Or was he simply human – like us – who did good things in some situations and fell very short in others? And what was David’s relationship with God? Then, what do we teach our children and young people about this larger-than-life character whose shadow still falls over Christians and Jews three thousand years later?

Taking on David, his back story and predecessors, his family, and the fallout from his life and reign will be a challenge because we are used to reading and hearing the Bible in “snippets” ... short readings of a few verses. *1st and 2nd Samuel* (and *1st and 2nd Kings*) reads like an action-packed historical novel with political intrigue, tribal disputes, family jealousy, violence, war, executions, murders, and X-rated sex. If you are looking for something for your fall reading, why not take on the “David cycle.” The bits you hear on Sunday morning will make more sense in the larger context – ask a member of our Bible Studies!

Bell Choir or Vocal Choir: A Family Affair?

With the new time for Bell Choir rehearsals on Wednesdays at 7 pm beginning September 6th, it might be worth considering whether parents picking up their upper elementary grade children might join their child in a musical/service experience. Of course, this time also works for parents who have transported confirmation students to class.

The same might be said for the Sunday morning Vocal Choir practicing prior to worship from 8:15 to 9:15 am beginning September 10th. If your work or school activities have made Wednesday practices impractical, one trip to St. James on Sunday morning gets the job done. Nor does it need to be an every-week commitment. Come and sing when you can! You are welcome, and your voice and presence will be a service to your congregation, a sweet offering and sacrifice of praise to our Lord.

Social Impact

Holly Beck, an ELCA Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) that we supported over the last year, will join us for worship on September 9 & 10. She will also share a short presentation during our fellowship time on Sunday after worship about her year of service and ministry in the Middle East's West Bank. Additional times to visit with Holly following worship on Saturday and her presentation on Sunday are also possibilities for those interested.

Coming on Sunday, October 8, is "God's work. Our hands." This annual ELCA church-wide day of service will offer a number of opportunities for intergenerational service activities following worship. Watch for more information as this date draws closer.

Property Fall Clean Up Day

Just like the rest of us, our church property needs some TLC!

The Property Team invites (encourages and begs) you to join us on Saturday, September 16, from 8:30—11:30 for a Fall Work Day!

Questions? Contact Chris Burgess at cburgess@revtechlc.com or Linda Queck at steward@stjamesjohnston.org



Habitat for Humanity

St. James Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Day - Friday October 27th

Are you interested in participating in a Habitat for Humanity volunteer workday on Friday October 27th? No construction experience is necessary; there are jobs for all skill levels. Lunch will be provided for all volunteers.

Please register at the link below, contact Erik Allison (erik.allison@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

[Habitat Registration Link](#)

Finance & Stewardship Update

The **Operating Fund** is the beneficiary of our annual stewardship campaign and used to cover day-to-day expenses associated with operating our Congregation’s ministry, including funding for community and churchwide benevolence, church staff, church office, utilities, general building and property maintenance and taxes, and support for activities and programming. **Financial Update as of 7/31/23.**

Category	Actual YTD	Budget YTD
Income	\$230,720	\$225,400
Expenses	\$225,110	\$236,103



In addition to your financial support, there are many ways in which you can offer your God-given time and abilities to serve in Christ’s name!

The Stewardship Team encourages you to remember the covenant into which Christ has called you through Holy Baptism to serve joyfully and faithfully in the life and mission of our congregation! Current opportunities:

- **Help with GROW (God Rocks on Wednesdays)** as a teacher, helping serve a meal, or share a talent. Contact Rebecca, education@stjamesjohnston.org
- **Choir/Bell Choir:** Help us make a joyful noise September—May for Worship Services. See Page 4 for full details.
Contact Larry at: larry.christensen@hotmail.com
- **Fall Clean-Up Day.** See Page 5.
- **Habitat for Humanity Community Build.** See Page 5.
- **God’s Work, Our Hands intergenerational service activities following worship.** See Page 5.

Vicar Tori

The gift of a Story Bible

I started leading a Bible study for our friends at Bishop Drumm, which is an elder care center just down the street from the church. I was very skeptical when Pastor came to me with the idea. I was trying to figure out how I would lead a group who might struggle to stay awake during a time that I normally like to take a nap. But I said we could give it a try.

Week after week, I was continually surprised that people showed up! Some weeks it was five and others it was 15! I was SHOCKED. Why would these people want to come spend time with a 20-something, young seminarian? But the group began to form a rhythm together. I shared the good news and they shared their stories. It is an ebbing and flowing of love and listening.

One resident in particular stands out. She is in her mid-90's and never shied away from telling me what she really thought about the church. Her struggle, pain, and hate, mixed with her honesty, really confused me some days. But she kept showing up. About three weeks into the study, she told me she became a Christian. Wow! I asked her what changed her heart and as always, she told me her truth.

Toward the end of my visit she asked, "Vicar, I need a book about the Bible that a kid could understand. I only went to elementary school so I don't read very good." I promised her that at my next visit I would bring her a book.

I thought and thought about what book I should bring her. I will be honest, I am not really familiar with children's books about the Bible. I knew of many retellings of Bible stories but not many about the Bible. Then I thought about the Bible she held during our study. It was a standard pew Bible and something she likely couldn't read and understand. Which settled my search, I would bring her a story Bible.

Our Spark Story Bibles are beautiful. When I presented it to her I saw her face light up with joy. By the next week she was even more excited, and wanted to share every bit of what she was reading with us.

I never imagined how a story Bible could change a person's life in the way it did but thanks be to God for this gift!



A Fellowship Experiment For the Fall of 2023



As Saint James has recovered from the pandemic, our old fellowship sign-up system isn't working very well. So let's try something new for the fall of 2023!

If this experiment works, we'll keep it going for 2024. If not we'll try something different. Thanks!

1st Sunday of the Month: Potluck Treats

- Bring a smaller portion of cookies, donuts, fruit, meat and cheese, little sausages, hard boiled eggs, etc.

2nd Sunday of the Month:

- Sign-Up to bring 3 dozen treats (3 Slots Available)
[Saint James Lutheran Church: Fellowship Hosts \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)

3rd Sunday of the Month: Food Pantry Fast

- Instead of having treats; bring a food pantry item.
- Coffee will be served.

4th Sunday of the Month: Church provides treats!

5th Sunday of the Month:

- Sign-Up to bring 3 dozen treats (3 Slots Available)
- [Saint James Lutheran Church: Fellowship Hosts \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)

*None of us can do all things,
but each of us can do some things.*