

FROM RED LETTER CHALLENGE

# GIVING

---

## CHALLENGE



**Sunday, February 8, 2026, 10 am**

**FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**



*Changing lives with the love of God  
to the glory of God*

## Welcome Guests!

We're glad you're with us today!

We hope you'll introduce yourself to the Pastor at the Church door after worship today.

### Worship Schedule

Our regular worship times are:

**Saturdays** at 5:30 pm

**Sundays** at 8:30 am & 10:00 am

**Sunday School** at 10:00 am September-June

Serving in the Lord's house today:

5:30: Laretta and Jim Sauer / 8:30: Daisy Karika / 10:00: Owen Schmideler

Altar flowers have been given- to the glory of God

Pastor: Neil Mittelstaedt

Pastor: Conner Forbes

[www.stjlc.com](http://www.stjlc.com)

631- 584-5212

Ministers: All the people of St. James

## **Opening Song: Open the Eyes of My Heart**

[Verse]

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord  
Open the eyes of my heart  
I want to see You, I want to see You  
Open the eyes of my heart, Lord  
Open the eyes of my heart  
I want to see You, I want to see You

[Chorus]

To see You high and lifted up  
Shinin' in the light of Your glory  
Pour out Your power and love  
As we sing holy, holy, holy

[Verse]

[Chorus]

[Bridge - repeat 4x]

Holy, holy, holy  
Holy, holy, holy  
Holy, holy, holy  
I want to see You

## **Welcome and Announcements**

### **Invocation**

*(Children come to the front of the Church)*

### **Children's Message**

### **Lord's Prayer**

*(Children leave for Sunday school during the Song of Praise)*

## **Song: Build My Life**

[Verse 1]

Worthy of ev'ry song we could ever sing  
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring  
Worthy of ev'ry breath we could ever breathe  
We live for You

[Verse 2]

Jesus, the Name above every other name  
Jesus, the only One who could ever save  
You're worthy of ev'ry breath we could ever breathe  
We live for You, oh we live for You

[Chorus]

Holy, there is no one like You  
There is none besides You  
Open up my eyes in wonder  
Show me who You are and fill me with Your heart  
And lead me in Your love  
To those around me

[Bridge]

I will build my life upon Your love  
It is a firm foundation  
I will put my trust in You alone  
And I will not be shaken

## **Old Testament Reading**

*Deuteronomy 14:22–29*

**A** The Old Testament Reading is from Deuteronomy, chapter 14.

<sup>22</sup>You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. <sup>23</sup>And before the LORD your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. <sup>24</sup>And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there, <sup>25</sup>then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the LORD your God chooses <sup>26</sup>and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. <sup>27</sup>And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

<sup>28</sup>At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. <sup>29</sup>And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

### **Holy Gospel Reading**

*Mark 12:41–44*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the twelfth chapter.

**C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>41</sup>And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. <sup>42</sup>And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. <sup>43</sup>And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. <sup>44</sup>For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

**L** Heavenly Father, You have blessed us with many gifts including our money,

**C** **and we are sorry that like spoiled children, we abuse these gifts including our money.**

**L** Teach us Father to follow Your commands and instructions about giving and money, that like the poor widow,

**C** **we may trust You completely, and give what we can.**

**L** In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now

**C** **and forever, amen.**

**Sermon:** Trading Control for Obedience

## Apostles' Creed

**☩ I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life ✝ everlasting. Amen.**

## Prayer of the Church

### Offering

*Some time ago we stopped passing the offering plate. There is now a box in the Narthex in which you may place your offering. Even more helpful, you may give electronically either by using the QR code below or visiting [stjlc.com/give](http://stjlc.com/give). You may also give to God and the work of His Church by mailing your offering in.*



### Offering Prayer

- ℒ** Almighty, Generous, and Eternal God, You are the giver of every good and perfect gift.
- ☩ All that we have comes from Your gracious hand.**
- ℒ** You provide daily bread—homes, work, abilities, and resources.
- ☩ We receive these gifts with thanksgiving and trust.**
- ℒ** You also gave up riches beyond measure,
- ☩ and humbled Yourself for our salvation.**

- L** Move us to give our tithes and offerings not to earn Your favor,
- C** **but in grateful response to Your mercy.**
- L** In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now
- C** **and forever, Amen.**

**Confession and Absolution**

- P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,
- C** **who made heaven and earth.**
  
- P** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
- C** **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**
  
- P** Since we are gathered to hear God’s Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying:
- C** **God, be merciful to me, a sinner.**

-Silence is observed for self-examination-

- C** **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**
- P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

✠ **Holy Communion** ✠

**To Our Guests Regarding Holy Communion:**

Holy Communion is a gift Christ gives to His Church.

In it, He offers His true Body and Blood in and with the bread and wine.

***It is the gift of Himself!***

When received in faith, Holy Communion gives forgiveness, new life & salvation.

Those who receive the Lord’s Supper at St. James Lutheran Church are baptized Christians, committed in their faith in Christ, who have been instructed in and believe these truths.

*(We run classes both for young people and adults – everyone welcome.)*

God bless you!

## Preface

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** **We lift them to the Lord.**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

## Sanctus



**C** Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho - san - na to the Lord;



Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

## The Words of Our Lord

## Agnus Dei



1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,



You take the sin of the world a - way;  
You take the sin of the world a - way;



O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,



Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.  
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

## Distribution

### Distribution Song: Great is Thy Faithfulness



1 Great is Thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther;  
2 Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest,  
3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,



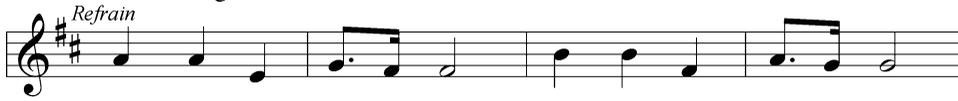
There is no shad - ow of turn - ing with Thee.  
Sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove  
Thine own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide;



Thou chang - est not: Thy com - pas - sions, they fail not;  
Join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness  
Strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor - row,



As Thou hast been, Thou for - ev - er wilt be.  
 To Thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.  
 Bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!



Great is Thy faith - ful - ness! Great is Thy faith - ful - ness!



Morn - ing by morn - ing new mer - cies I see;



All I have need - ed Thy hand hath pro - vid - ed;



Great is Thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me!

## Benediction

### Closing Song: Forever

Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King  
 His love endures forever  
 For He is good, He is above all things  
 His love endures forever  
 Sing praise, sing praise

With a mighty hand and outstretched arm  
 His love endures forever  
 For the life that's been reborn  
 His love endures forever  
 Sing praise, sing praise  
 Sing praise, sing praise

### [Chorus]

Forever God is faithful  
 Forever God is strong  
 Forever God is with us  
 Forever forever

From the rising to the setting sun  
His love endures forever  
By the grace of God we will carry on  
His love endures forever  
Sing praise, sing praise

*[Chorus]*

Forever You are faithful  
Forever You are strong  
Forever You are with us  
Forever forever forever



Please join us downstairs after the 10 a.m. Service in the Parish Hall for the SJ Cafe.

## **NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS**

You are Invited to  
**ALPHA!**

There are 2 different Alpha courses coming up!

**Wednesday February 25th, 7pm - 9pm**

Mike Wheelers Home

40 Marwood Place, Stonybrook, NY 11790

*or*

**Wednesday March 4th, 12:30 - 2:30 pm**

Parish Hall

RSVP [office@stjlc.com](mailto:office@stjlc.com) or 631-584-5212

**COUNCIL MEETING:** Will be held on Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the Library.

**DEAR CONGREGATION:** Our Church and Preschool are hosting two wonderful events on the SAME day - we hope you **choose one!** The first event will be to fill yourself up with the Holy Spirit (Festival of Workshops) and the second event will be to fill yourself up on pancakes (Preschool Applebee's Pancake Fundraiser). Whichever one you choose, let it be merry and spirit-filled!

**Festival of Workshops at SUNY Maritime College - Saturday, March 7th from 8:30am - 3 pm.** Over 30 interesting workshops will be offered - some being led by our own STJLC Pastors and Staff. Continental Breakfast and Lunch will be served. Registration is required at [ad-lcms.org](http://ad-lcms.org). See flyer and/or Carol Mittelstaedt for more information and/or to register. Cost is \$35 for the day and we will carpool from the church.

**Preschool Applebee's Pancake Fundraiser - Saturday, March 7th from 8 am - 10 am!** Pre-Sale Breakfast Tickets only. Please see flyer in your bulletin or pick one up in the Narthex. Come out for a full Pancake, Egg and Sausage breakfast and enjoy the fellowship of

church and preschool families all under one fun roof! This fundraiser provides support for our students to visit Benner's Farm and Sweetbriar Nature Center for amazing Five Senses experiences!

**MUSIC MINISTRY:** We are looking to resume rehearsals for the Festival Choir to prepare special music for Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday and Easter. If you are interested in being part of this mixed-voice, inter-generational choir (middle school age and older), please speak with Christine Kenny after worship or email her at [music@stjlc.com](mailto:music@stjlc.com).

**TECH TEAM:** Are you looking for ways to volunteer and have a particular set of skills in technology? Then we need you! We are looking for volunteers to help run slides and run livestream. If you are interested, please sign up on the sign up sheet in the back in the narthex. We are also looking for people who work in IT. Got questions? Ask Pastor Conner.

**PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2026-2027 IS UNDERWAY:** If you would like to schedule a personal tour, please call the Preschool Office at 631-862-8934 or email [meredithpreschool@stjlc.com](mailto:meredithpreschool@stjlc.com). Registration is ongoing until all spots are filled. Preschool Registration Forms may be found in the Narthex in the Preschool basket.

**PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR NEEDED:** Our beloved Pre-School Director, Meredith Johansson, will be retiring at the end of this school year. We are now seeking her replacement to join our Church staff. Position description provided upon request. Contact Pr. Neil Mittelstaedt by emailing [pastorneil@stjlc.com](mailto:pastorneil@stjlc.com) or by calling 631-584-5212.

**MITE BOXES – SMALL GIFTS BIG IMPACT:** The Lutheran Women's Mission League, LWML, provides these small boxes, that are in the Narthex of our Church. These MITE boxes are available for parishioners who wish to support Mission Grants in our Country and around the world, through small voluntary offerings. Even spare change adds up and helps fund Mission work locally and globally. The January Mission Grant has allowed showers to be made available to LERT locations that help in disaster areas. If you haven't used a MITE box before, we invite you to pick one up and be part of this meaningful ministry. If you have any questions, contact Durinda Dalton 631-897-0307

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:** will be held on Sunday, February 8th after the 10:00 service in the Parish Hall.

**TAX STATEMENTS:** are available to be picked up in the Narthex from 2025.

## **REMINDERS**

**FOOD PANTRY NEWS:** The pantry has been increasingly busy servicing 210 families in the month of December during our Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 10-1200 hours. We thank everyone who has donated food, funds and willing hands to help hand out food and essential products. We currently are in need of cereal, baked beans, chunky soups, and jelly that can be left in the church Narthex red box. Monetary donations can be sent directly to the Smithtown Emergency Food Pantry, PO BOX 1663, Smithtown, NY 11787. Funds are used to purchase items such as milk, eggs, chicken or chopped meat. Volunteers are needed to hand out food and stock items on pantry days from 930-1200. Congregational youth ages 16-18 are welcome on Saturdays and can earn community hours. Questions, call Jeanne Harmer 631-484-5203. ACTS 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

**GIVING WITH SUBSPLASH:** In order to ensure the most secure and seamless experience, we will be transitioning to a new giving platform. **We will be moving from Vanco to Subsplash.** This change will help us manage resources more effectively, at less cost, and make it even easier for you to support the mission of our church. Visit [stjlc.com](http://stjlc.com) and click on the tab that says "Give" for full directions on how to make the switch! If you need assistance, please email Sandra at [sandramcilveen@hotmail.com](mailto:sandramcilveen@hotmail.com)

**CHURCH OFFERINGS:** If you do not use our electronic offering service, you may mail your church offering to the Church Office, 230 Second Ave, St. James, NY, 11780. Thank you for your continued support of our church!

**TO ORDER ALTAR FLOWERS:** Call Connie Marohn at 862-7123 after you have signed up for your requested date in the Altar Flower Book in the Narthex. Please use an Altar Guild envelope located in the Narthex to place your check for \$25.00 for *each* Bouquet payable to St. James Lutheran Church Flowers and the wording you wish printed in the bulletin. Place the envelope into the offering plate or mail to 230 Second Ave., NY 11780. Envelopes must be received by Monday for the subsequent weekend.

## **Peek at the Week**

### **SUNDAY February 8**

8:30am Worship (Sanctuary)  
10am Family Worship with Sunday School (Sanctuary)  
11:30am Congregational Meeting  
11:30-1 Worship Leader Meeting (Library)  
11:30am – 1:30pm Getting Clear Class (Youth Room)  
11:30am – 12:15pm King's Kids Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)

### **MONDAY February 9**

1pm Piecemakers (Youth Room)  
7pm – 9pm MAD Ministry Meeting (Parish Hall)

### **TUESDAY February 10**

7:30pm Moms Giving Group Group (Forbes Home)  
7:30pm Giving Group for All (Parish Hall)

### **WEDNESDAY February 11**

10am – 12pm Griefshare (Youth Room)  
6:30pm – 7:30pm Chancel Chimes Rehearsal (Sanctuary)  
6:30pm – 7:30pm Confirmation (Parish Hall)  
7:45pm – 9pm Worship Band Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

### **THURSDAY February 12**

10am Thursday Giving Group for All (Youth Room)  
7pm Council Meeting (Library)

### **FRIDAY February 13**

8am Morning Prayer (Sanctuary)

### **SATURDAY February 14**

8am Men's Giving Group (Norway Hall)  
5:30pm Worship (Sanctuary)

### **SUNDAY February 15**

8:30am Worship (Sanctuary)  
10am Family Worship with Sunday School (Sanctuary)  
11:30am – 12:15pm King's Kids Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)