



ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH  
LAKE FOREST, ILLINOIS

***"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."***

*Colossians 2:6-7*

Dear St. James Church Community,

It is such an exciting time being together, witnessing the growth of this church and its flourishing. I am filled with gratitude to God, and it is a joy to be part of this incredible congregation. This verse spoke to me because it traces the life of our faith in Christ.

### **Exciting things are happening at St. James**

We have so graciously "received Christ Jesus our Lord" in our baptism. Last Sunday, we were a part of the journey of five confirmands as they pledged to 'continue their walk with Christ,' having been 'rooted and built up' as full persons in him. Their parents, grandparents, sponsors, and this church have supported them in their faith journey, and for their lives in Christ, we give thanks!

This year, we have seen life springing from every crevice of this community!

- We have baptized five children so far this year (with three more coming soon). We promised to support them as they grow with Christ.
- We have prayed for and lifted up seven new families who've answered the call to be disciples of Christ in this congregation and will be receiving more new members in October.
- We have welcomed two new staff members, building greater capacity for connection and tending the ground for new growth.

### **An update on our strategic plan**

In the midst of all this wonderful ministry, the leadership gathered, prayed, discussed, and made decisions regarding our strategic plan. The plan has been divided into two parts:

- The first part, our strategic values and vision, was crafted from scripture and placed into a beautiful new brochure that you can use to invite others to church.
- The second part, the objectives, was distributed on Sunday, September 28th, in preparation for our all-congregation **Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, October 5th.**

At this gathering, the leadership will share an overview of the process of building this strategic plan and the objectives that have been discerned since the LEAD team shared them with the council. Through all the listening and learning from one another, it became clear that our congregation needed avenues to support greater involvement. We opened ourselves to thinking strategically about the structure of our ministries.

In order to grow deeper in our relationships, there is a plan to have three branches of overarching ministry into which ministries fall:

- Jesus
- Congregation
- Neighborhood

To provide oversight, communication pathways, and connection, each of these branches will be co-led and work together to discern starter ideas and how we can all get involved to realize our vision for St. James. That's where you come in!

### **What I am asking you to do in response**

St. James needs everyone to be engaged in this exciting new ministry endeavor. How can we do that?

- **Pray** about where God is leading you to get involved or deepen your engagement in the ministries of St. James.
- **Attend** the Town Hall Forum (and lunch!) after worship on Sunday, October 5th, to learn more about serving Christ in new ways.
- **Commit** your "first fruits" to God by investing in your home church through pledging your time, talent, and treasure to this exciting new vision.

Enclosed, you will find a Pledge card. There are 3 options for completing the card:

1. **Fill out the enclosed Pledge Card and bring it to worship** on Celebration Sunday, November 9th, 2025, in our 10:00 am Worship service. Envelopes will be provided.
2. **Complete and submit the Pledge Card online.** Visit the Stewardship tab on our website, [stjameslutheran.com/stewardship](http://stjameslutheran.com/stewardship), for the link to the form.
3. If you are unable to attend the worship service, just complete and return the Pledge Card by **mail or drop by the office** to submit it.

We are beyond blessed in this congregation. So many people remark on the friendliness and generosity of St. James. As stewards, those entrusted with all the gifts God has first given us, we are invited and encouraged to use them to:

- Continue walking with Jesus, rooted in the faith and with a strong foundation for our lives.
- Share the message of love and belonging in Christ.
- Give thanks to God every day.

I invite you to pay attention to what the Holy Spirit stirs in you in this season of growth and cultivate that good seed in Jesus' name. I hope to see you at the **Town Hall Forum on October 5th, after worship.**

God's blessings and hope,



Pastor Amy Gillespie