



St. James News

CHRIST AT THE CENTER. TRUTH IN ALL THINGS

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From The Desk Of *Pastor Mark Loder*

February Spiritual Discipline: Memorizing Scripture

Moses teaches us: “4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

The Word of God is always to be in our hearts, in our minds, and on our tongues. This Word is our only defense against the evil one, the world, and our own sinful flesh. If we are to think on things that are true, noble, beautiful, right, pure, lovely, and admirable, then the Word must consistently be before us. The conscience must be informed with the truth in order to stand on truth when tempted and troubled. These are reasons for us to memorize Scripture.

Memorization, in many ways, is a lost art. We live in a time of ease. We can type a word into a search bar or thumb through an index to find multiple verses on a topic of choice. On the whole, such modern innovation has not improved our biblical literacy or made us better students of Holy Writ. One only needs to read a Chrysostom, Luther, or Walther sermon to see how

much more biblically astute those men were than us. There is work to be done. This is our great opportunity.

FOR FEBRUARY, WE ARE GOING TO WORK ON THE HABIT OF MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE. If it's not already something you are actively doing, start small. Begin with one verse per week. Write the verse down on a piece of paper, pull it out multiple times a day, and read it aloud; likely you will have it nailed down in no time. If it's already your habit to memorize Scripture, work on a bigger chunk of text.

One of the benefits of forcing ourselves to memorize Scripture is that it keeps the Word of God constantly before us. Scripture is no longer relegated to a morning or evening routine. It becomes something that's thought about in all our comings and goings. It becomes not merely an aspect of our life or a to-do list item to check off. It becomes the very thing we orient our lives around.

Consider the joy you would have in memorizing one verse of Scripture every week of the year. After 365 days, you would have 52 verses to use in conversations, in catechizing, and in fighting the temptations of the devil. Your eyes would be more clearly opened to see Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

We do not live by bread alone. We live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of our God. Let us do so intentionally, binding that Word as frontlets before our eyes.

✠ **Bible Trivia** ✠

See answers below

1. What two kinds of animals did God help David kill which gave him faith to face Goliath?
2. Which king ordered that when his subjects heard music they must fall down and worship him?
3. To which Old Testament prophet did the angel Gabriel appear?
4. What two things did John the Baptist tell the Pharisees and Sadducees Jesus would baptize them with?
5. Who said, "No prophet is accepted in his own country."?

Answers: 1. A lion and a bear (1 Samuel 17:34-36). 2. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:5) 3. Daniel (Daniel 9:21). 4. Holy Ghost (or Spirit) and Fire (Matthew 3:11) 5. Jesus (Luke 4:24)

Our Church Records

Church Attendance

Midweek Advent	34
Sunday, December 7	100 & 118
Midweek Advent	35
Sunday, December 14	234
Midweek Advent	36
Sunday, December 21	93 & 93
Christmas Eve	278 & 67
Christmas Day	90
Sunday, December 28	85 & 53
Sunday, January 4	72 & 177
Sunday, January 11	92 & 124
Sunday, January 18	92 & 108
Sunday, January 25	107 & 127

Communion Attendance

Sunday, December 7	137
Sunday, December 14	128
Sunday, December 21	76
Christmas Eve	138
Christmas Day	45
Sunday, December 28	97
Sunday, January 4	106
Sunday, January 11	124
Sunday, January 18	112
Sunday, January 25	129

New Member

Jordan and Mackenzie Holmquist by Profession of Faith.

Jacob Heutmaker by Profession of Faith.

Transfer Out

Martin and Ruth Latzig to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Annandale, Minnesota.

Paul & Jodi Utne to St. Johns Lutheran Church, Winsted, Minnesota.

Baptism

Kane Holmquist son of Jordan and Mackenzie Holmquist, on January 11, 2026, by Pastor Loder. His sponsor is Jim Ittel.



Hear the Good News of the Gospel on the Lutheran hour each Sunday at 9:00 am on KDUZ 1260 AM Radio.

During the month of February, you will hear the following topics:

February 1, 2026

"Rotten Tomatoes"

Boasting gone wrong—it's the rotten fruit of rightful praise. It happens when we forget that everything we have is a gift, even the things we think we've earned and deserved.
1 Corinthians 1: 30-31

February 8, 2026

"Type C"

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit meets us, gives us the mind of Christ, and leads us back into the world as children of God.
1 Corinthians 2:12

February 15, 2026

"Up and Down the Mountain"

Many voices compete for our attention, but above all, listen to the voice of Jesus and hear what He's done for you. Matthew 17:1-9

February 22, 2026

"As Through Fire"

To be baptized into Christ, to trust in Him, is to die with Him, to be raised by Him, to pass through the fire under His shelter.
1 Corinthians 3:13



February: Lisa Kotila (1), Autumn Carlson (2), Gary Hagemann (2), Matt Horsch (2), Lorie Gruenhagen (3), Eric Zimmerman (3), Maggie Gueningsman (4), Emily Long (4), Morgan Stueven (4), Holli Kobow (5), Adeline Kilpela (6), Edwin Borg (7), Mason Bobrowske (9), Amelia Kilpela (10), Mya Morrisette (11), Carol Burau (12), Allan Munson (12), Jamie Hofer (13), Brandon Wickesberg (14), Nathaniel Love (15), Mark Birkholz (16), Brian Gruenhagen (16), Bentley Krueger (16), Kelcey Fleck (17), Maggie Burau (18), Marin Luchsinger (18), Joshua Moist (18), Greg Birkholz (19), Harlan Horsch (19), Lila Drusch (20), David Kobow (20), Randy Marschel (20), Viann Montgomery (22), Michael Reich (22), Isabell Scheuch (23), Daniel Oestreich (24), Barry Schmiege (25), Yvonne Currey (26), LaMae Pettit (26), Maxwell Kilpela (27), Jesse Pettit (27), Titus Diers (28), Mara Loder (28), Mathias Loder (28), Charles Kobow (29).



2/2 Brennan & Alysha Monson
 2/9 Kenneth & Gina Koch
 2/15 Rodney & Katherine Miller
 2/16 Bradley & Hope Koosman
 2/17 Brian & Darlene Yager
 2/27 Vernon & Judith Rasmussen



Members gathered for our annual LWML Christmas Potluck party on Monday, December 1st at 5 PM. We enjoyed a delicious array of food and fellowship. Following devotions, we sang the 12 Days of Christmas associating each day with biblical symbols and passages, a skit reminding us of what is important in preparing ourselves for Advent and Christmas, a fun "Smelling" test and an unscramble the Christmas words game. The evening ended with singing a few of our favorite Christmas carols.

No meeting in January.

Monday, February 2nd, 2 PM, will be a Prayer Service. Join us in the church and hear how God answers prayers according to His wisdom, timing and graciousness. Praise, Remember, Ask, Yield, Excitement, Rejoicing.

Our March 2nd, 2 PM will be our annual "Work Afternoon", cleaning the kitchen and making Easter favors for the Care Center, ending with a Sub lunch.

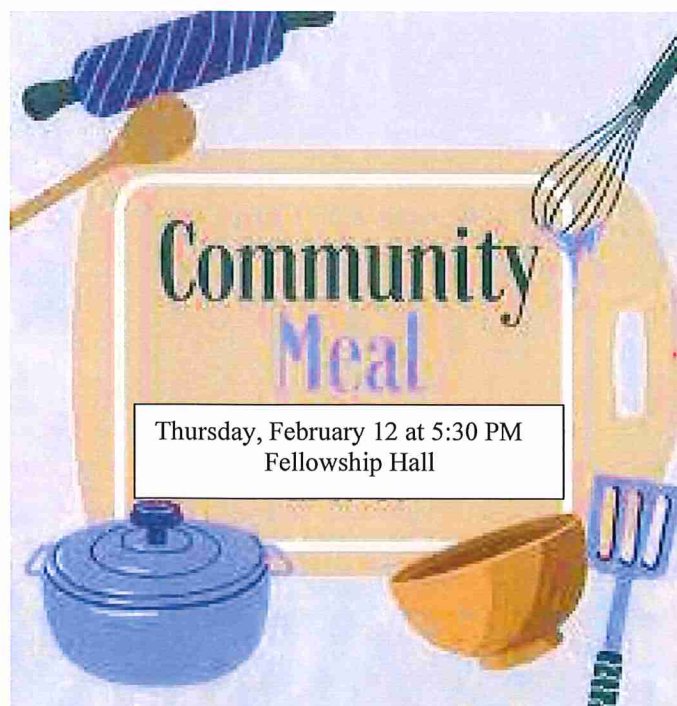
We welcome all ladies of the congregation to join us at any of our meetings!!



Monthly Financial Report

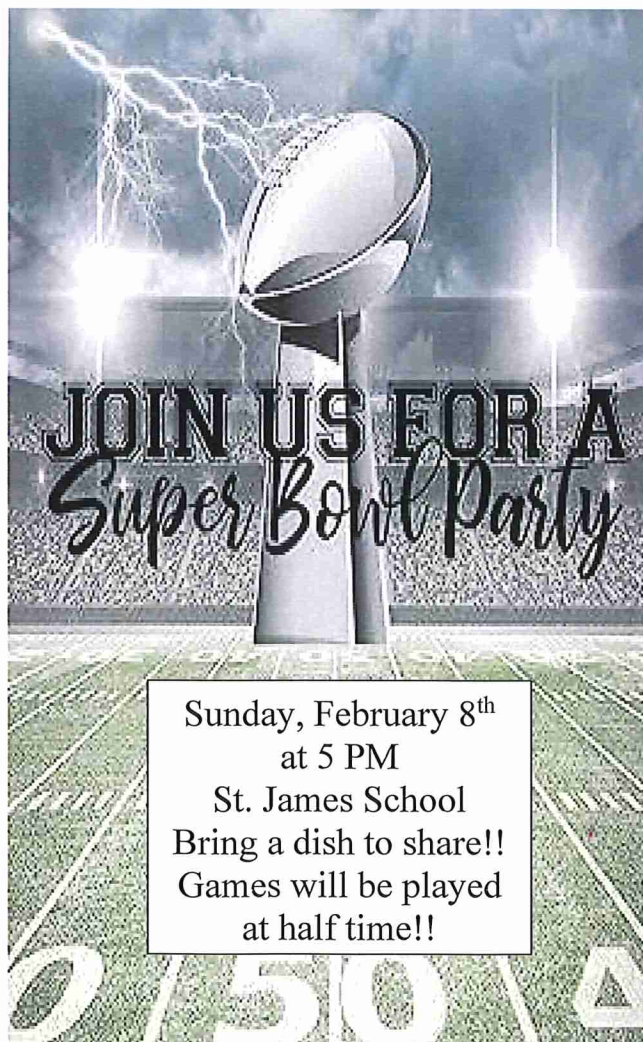
St. James Lutheran Church
Monthly Financial Summary
December 2025

	Year to Date	
	Actual	Budget
Receipts		
Offerings & Donations	357,499	255,917
Tuition & Other Receipts	156,381	140,165
Mission Receipts	5,333	6,042
Total Receipts	519,214	402,123
Expenses		
Salaries-Church & School	250,866	254,861
Benefits/Payroll/Taxes/Mileage	64,377	69,429
Administration & Program Expenses	38,693	31,411
Utilities/Maintenance & Repair	89,301	87,150
Mission Disbursements	2,000	729
Total Expenses	445,238	443,580
Net Receipts/Expenses	73,976	(41,457)



Ash Wednesday Worship + February 18
7:00 PM Divine Service

Midweek LENTEN Worship Services
Wednesdays + February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25
7:00 PM Worship Service



School NEWS

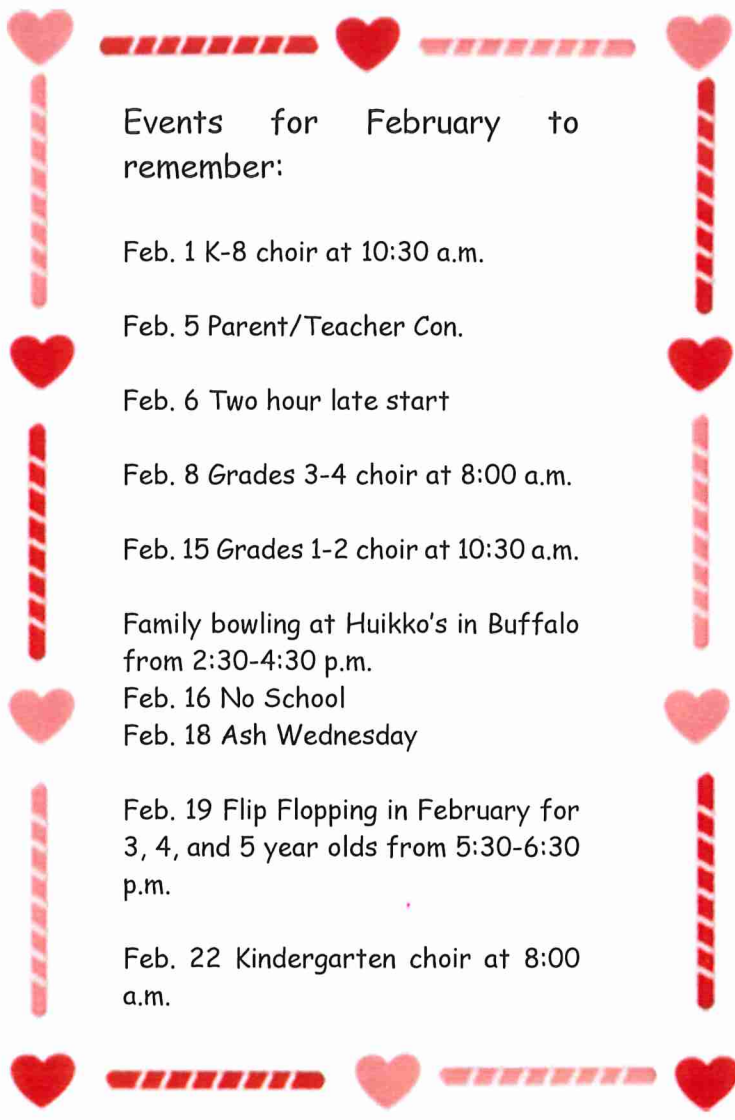
Students and staff at the school have made it past the halfway mark of the school year already! Honor Roll recipients for second quarter are: B Honor Roll - Lucian Koch, Bentley Krueger, Codee Laage, Lilian Olson, Bryce Koosman, Max Kilpela, Nora Morrisette and Odin Johnson. A Honor Roll - Bradley Dickens, Mikaela Johnson, Kaitlyn King, Camden Meehan, Averil Nowak, Noah Reich, Owen Davis, Fischer Eckhoff, Rowan Johnson, Tanner Koch, Eden Koosman, Nayvie Laage, Audrey Ogle, Josh Teske-Holmgard, Allison Estrem, Lila Hennen, Micah Reich, Emma Cardinal, Lillian Doten, Logan Frich, Olivia Koosman, and Oliver Nikko. Congratulations to these diligent students!

National Lutheran Schools Week is always the last week in January. This year's theme is from Psalm 98 :4, "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!" We started the week with chapel on Monday, the 26th. Our service project for the week is collecting items for the local food shelf. If 200 items are brought in, the kids get an ice cream treat. At 500 items they earn pizza for lunch. If 750 items are donated there will be a movie day and if we reach 1000 items teachers who volunteer for it will get a pie in the face.

Each day students test their guessing/estimation skills by studying the number of items in a jar prepared by the PTL and writing down their answer. Winners are announced the next morning and prizes are handed out.

Because of the cold temps our trip to Powder Ridge on Wednesday, the 28th was postponed. The annual mini golf course created by the seventh and eighth graders made Friday an extra special day.

We wrapped up the week by the students in grades K-8 "Making a Joyful Noise to the Lord" sharing special music on Sunday, February 1.



Events for February to remember:

Feb. 1 K-8 choir at 10:30 a.m.

Feb. 5 Parent/Teacher Con.

Feb. 6 Two hour late start

Feb. 8 Grades 3-4 choir at 8:00 a.m.

Feb. 15 Grades 1-2 choir at 10:30 a.m.

Family bowling at Huikko's in Buffalo from 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Feb. 16 No School

Feb. 18 Ash Wednesday

Feb. 19 Flip Flopping in February for 3, 4, and 5 year olds from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Feb. 22 Kindergarten choir at 8:00 a.m.

A Message from Vicar Hallock

“Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.” In our Small Catechism, these are the words we confess when we recite the second article of the Apostles’ Creed. We believe that Christ gave his life to redeem us from our sin and guilt. All that we have been discussing in the last few newsletters has led to this article. When we examine our state and the state of our world, we find wickedness all around us. But this article confesses that Christ has redeemed us from guilt. But with such great news that we hear time and time again, it begs the question, how is this obtained? How do we receive this wonderful redemption? How does it become ours? In our modern Christian world, you will hear no shortage of answers ranging from a personal decision to follow Jesus to gaining it by meritorious acts of love. But is that what Scripture reveals? What does Scripture reveal about how we receive the redemption of Christ for us?

Scripture establishes first and foremost that our salvation is not based on any achievement on our part, but is based purely on the love and mercy of God. Saint Paul writes, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28). By works of the Law, Paul means following the commandments of God. No matter how hard we try to follow the commandments or do good works toward our neighbor, no work will be good enough to save us from our condition. By faith alone we are justified, that is, declared righteous by God, not by any observance of God’s commandments.

But you may be asking why not, why can’t our good works save us? Let’s assume, for the sake of argument, that we could render good works to atone for our sins. We know that we sin and we know that we make mistakes. In order to amend our mistakes, you would have to go above and beyond. But no work that we do is going above and beyond because they are merely our duty to do, as Scripture testifies, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Therefore, only someone who can render works greater can atone for our sin. And this comes through Christ, God, who was the only one who could pay it, though only man owed a debt

to God, and he took on human flesh to pay that debt. Only faith can save us and not works of the Law, as Scripture clearly teaches. This faith is not merely a historical knowledge of Christ nor a mere intellectual assent. This kind of faith, even the demons have, they too acknowledge Jesus was real. Faith is more than historical knowledge, it is trust. But trust in what? Trust in the promises of God, that for the sake of Christ, you have been redeemed, forgiven, and rescued. Christ, who took on your very human flesh and blood, was crucified and raised that you may be reconciled and reunited with the Father “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Faith saves because it clings to the promise of the Gospel. The object of faith is the Gospel itself. Faith is the instrument of the Holy Spirit that brings the good gift of the Gospel to us: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). This faith comes to us through the Word, the testimony of the inspired witnesses “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). This Word that is preached, convicts our hearts of our sins and offers the remedy in the Gospel: “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (1 John 5:11). Saving faith embraces that the promises of God are true and certain. Saving faith has confidence in this promise of the forgiveness of sins.

God has given us this great assurance by faith that he has redeemed and forgiven us all our sins. But sometimes we struggle to believe this truth. Our guilt often weighs down our hearts and we struggle to imagine that God could love poor sinners like ourselves. We struggle even when the Word plainly tells us that God gave his life for us and came “not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). As signs and tokens of salvation, he gives us the Holy Sacraments; namely Baptism and the Eucharist. In Baptism, he washes away our sins and gives us the Holy Spirit “There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21). Additionally, he gives us his very own body and blood to eat and drink under bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins. In the Eucharist, we truly commune and fellowship with our savior. In that bread and wine, we receive life and salvation, for where there is the forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. God seals his promises with these sacraments, which truly bring us his gift of the Gospel. And especially, these gifts confirm and strengthen our faith, which has received the promises of God, that for the sake of Christ’s merits we are accounted righteous.

Service Planner

SEASON	DATE	LITURGY	PREACHER	ORGANIST	HYMNS	COMMUNION
	Feb. 1	Septuagesima	Ex. 17:1-7	Psalm 95:1-9	1 Cor. 9:24-10:5	Matt. 20:1-16
		DS I	Vicar	Molly	827, 853, 924	566, 680, 643
	Feb. 4	Chapel	Matt. 20:1-16			
		Prayer and Preaching	Vicar	Molly	605, 827, 740	
	Feb. 8	Sexagesima	Is. 55:10-13	Psalm 84	2 Cor. 11:19-12:9 or Heb. 4:9-13	Luke 8:4-15
		DS I	Pastor	Nancy	577, 586, 655	623, 756, 636
	Feb. 11	Chapel	Luke 8:4-15			
		Prayer and Preaching	Pastor	Molly	577, 586, 655	
	Feb. 15	Quinquagesima	1 Sam. 16:1-13 or Is. 35:3-7	Psalm 89:18-29 or Psalm 146	1 Cor. 13:1-13	Luke 18:31-43
		DS I	Vicar	Molly	545, 841, 849	744, 685, 861
ASH WEDNESDAY	Feb. 18	Chapel	Matt. 6:(1-6) 16-21			
		Prayer and Preaching	Vicar	Molly	392, 418, 433	
ASH WEDNESDAY	Feb. 18	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12-19 or Jonah 3:1-10	Psalm 51:1-13 (14-19)	2 Peter 1:2-11	Matt. 6:(1-6) 16-21
		DS I (spoken)	Pastor	Molly	423, 419, 418	424, 435, 433
LENT	Feb. 22	First S. in Lent (Invocabit)	Gen 3:1-21 or 1 Sam. 17:40-51	Psalm 32 or Psalm 118:1-13	2 Cor. 6:1-10 or Heb. 4:14-16	Matt. 4:1-11
		DS I	Pastor	Nancy	544, 424, 569	600, 561, 562
	Feb. 25	Chapel	Matt. 4:1-11			
		Prayer and Preaching	Pastor	Molly	542, 421, 423	
MID-WEEK 2	Feb. 25		Ex 24:12-18 / 1 Ki 19:3-8 / Matt 12:38-50			
		Vespers	Vicar	Nancy	542, 421, 878	