



St. James Newsletter

February 2026

2025 Pastor's Report

Somewhere I heard the saying, "The only constant in life is change." I suppose some aspects of that cliché are debatable. But change is undoubtedly inevitable.

On a personal level in 2025 I certainly experienced change through the death of my oldest brother, Bill. He was a significant influence in my life. While we were not in regular contact, I miss knowing that he is around. I served as Bill's healthcare power-of-attorney, and in the final month of his life I spent a significant amount of time helping coordinate his care, including several trips to Champaign County where he lived. Now I am navigating the process of closing his estate as his executor, which will include more trips to Champaign for things like selling his house and car. I am deeply grateful for all your notes of support and sympathy during this time and for your patience as I need to be out of town to deal with Bill's estate. I will do my best to make sure this business has minimal impact on my ministry among you.

As a congregation we also have experienced changes in 2025. Most notably is the change that is occurring through our participation in the RIM (Rock Island/Moline) churches and RIM task force. In Rock Island and Moline there are eight ELCA congregations. All eight, to some degree, are experiencing the changes that exist in Christian churches in general: aging membership, declining participation, shrinking financial support, and increasing, often expensive, building maintenance.

In response to those challenges, and after more than a year of conversation among the pastors, we have begun to understand the need for collaboration and cooperation among us. To that end, the eight congregations joined together for worship twice in 2025, a Pentecost celebration in Centennial Hall at Augustana, and joining in the celebration of First, Moline's 175th anniversary in December. Both services were a true expression of worship and joy as the one body of Christ we represent in Rock Island and Moline.

The RIM task force was established as a group of lay leaders from all eight congregations to continue to explore ways that we can best serve God's mission in our communities in the years to come. I can't predict what the pathway to the future will be for our congregations, but I have no doubt that it will involve change.

At the same time, Calvary and St. James continue to explore what our future might look like and how it might need to change. Thanks to the members of the Vision Team (Valorie Daniel, Pam Gross, Jerry Johansen, Greg Johnson, Terrill Johnson, Terry Langston,

Donna Renneke, and Bethany Weipert) the process continues to move forward as we seek to work together and support each other for the sake of the gospel.

Together in 2025 St. James and Calvary worshipped together (once including All Saints Episcopal Church), served in some mission projects together, picnicked together, shared some WELCA activities, and even enjoyed a couple evenings at the theater (Music Guild) together.

I firmly believe that the more we do things together, the stronger our bond and the better prepared we are to embrace whatever change may be headed our way.

These, of course, are just a couple examples of the changes that are headed our way. There will be others. Some we may already be anticipating while others are unknown to us right now.

And while change may be inevitable, there are a couple things that remain constant.

The first constant is the love and presence of God. No matter what changes that will, without doubt, come, God, through the Holy Spirit, will be walking with us to support us, lead us, and, from time to time, push us. And while some of the changes we may experience might not have the results we hope for, we also trust that God's church will continue in some form and God's word will be proclaimed.

The second constant is the work we do for the mission of Christ in the world. I am confident that as we experience the changes that certainly lie ahead, we will continue to serve Christ by serving our neighbors by:

- Serving the hungry through things like providing meals at the Christian Care and Café on Vine, and providing non-perishables to local food pantries.
- Bringing comfort and warmth to those in need with our quilts, Afghans, hats, scarves, mittens, etc.
- Sharing the love of God around the world from financial support to a hospital in Tanzania to water filters for the people of Romania and Guatemala.
- Supporting the work of the church in Illinois, the United States and the around the globe through our mission support to the Northern Illinois Synod.
- Supporting our community by providing space for community organizations to meet.
- Lifting up the members of our congregations through prayer, financial support, hands-on help, funeral meals, smiles and hugs.
- Providing opportunities for people to grow in faith through worship and Bible study.
- And many other ways.

Change is inevitable. The church, including our congregations, will not look the same in five or ten years as it does now. But no matter how it changes, it will still be built on the foundation of God's love, and it will continue.

I am proud of the ways our congregations are preparing for change and thankful for the support of each you as we seek to be the presence of God through whatever change may be coming.

In Christ,

Pastor Knowles

Rescue Mission Meal

St. James will serve the evening meal at the Christian Family Care Center on Wednesday, February 11.



We will buy the ham and needed supplies. If you would like to help, we need volunteers to serve and prepare crockpot beans and cheesy potatoes.

A sign-up sheet is on the info table in the narthex. Meet in the church kitchen on February 11 at 5:30 pm or bring prepared items before that time.

Thank you to everyone who has donated a cake, brownies, or cookies for dessert.

Living Water Via de Cristo Weekend #68

When: March 19-22
Where: Camp Minohaven
1517 East St
Tiskilawa, IL

More specific information will be sent to you, after submitting an application. Please contact Rhea Frank-Cottingham 309-781-8546 for more information.



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Luanne Beinke's sister, Lynette Unger, on Sunday, January 18, in Worthington, Ohio.

Lynette was in the St. James confirmation class of 1966. An open-house luncheon at St. James is being planned for April or May.

- ◆ Jane Massey
- ◆ Terri Warren
- ◆ Brad Hubbard



Meetings

- Property Team
February 2 at 7:00 pm
- Welcoming Team
February 4 at 6:00 pm
- Stewardship/Finance Team
February 16 at 4:00 pm via Zoom
- Council
Tuesday, February 17 at 7:00 pm in person and via Zoom.



Women's Circle

The St. James Women's Circle will meet on February 17 at 2:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Hostess: Donna Renneke
Bible Study: Luanne Beinke

"Praying with the body of the Earth"
by Liv Larson Andrews.

Bible Study - Matthew



Bible study led by Pastor Knowles will be on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm. We are in person at the church, or you can participate via Zoom. **No Bible study on February 17.**

If you would prefer a daytime group, the Bible study is on Monday mornings at 10:00 am in the Upper Room at Calvary.

The Zoom links are on our website.

Café Women's Bible Study

This group meets on the third Saturday of the month, so the next time is on February 21 at 10:30 am. Anyone interested, should RSVP to Rhea Frank-Cottingham, 309-781-8546.

Quilters



St. James Quilters will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, February 21 at 1:00 pm. All are welcome, even beginners. Please join us as we quilt.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper - hosted by All Saints

Be sure to mark **February 17** (Shrove Tuesday) on your calendar for gourmet pancakes, sausages and a Christ Cake. **Time: 5:00-6:30 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. Someone will have a baby Christ figurine under their piece of cake, and Fr. Dusty will present them with a gift. Free will offering will be accepted.



Midweek Lenten Services

The 2026 Midweek Lenten Services will be joint services with the Rock Island/Moline (RIM) congregations. The theme of the services will be *Going Deeper: Conversations with Jesus*.

We will be invited to explore the why behind what we do in response to God's call in an ever-changing world. We will join the conversation between Jesus and his partners from Sunday's gospel readings as we think about naming, claiming, and proclaiming our why.

Each week the RIM congregations will gather together for worship at 7:00 pm. A soup supper will precede worship at 6:00 pm. The schedule is as follows:



February 25 @ San Jose Obrero (located at Trinity, Moline)
March 4 @ First, Moline
March 11 @ Salem, Moline
March 18 @ St. James, Rock Island (co-hosted with Calvary)
March 25 @ First, Rock Island

Assisting on Sunday – February 2026

Sunday	Lector	Counters	Sound Booth
Feb. 1	Donna Renneke	Stacy Miles Tina Wieland	Mike Olinski
Feb. 8	Judy Johansen	Todd Gann Linda Ryden	Bob Ryden
Feb. 15	Bob Ryden	Dave Renneke Rhea Frank-Cottingham	Dave Renneke
Feb. 22	Jerry Johansen	Ruth Anne Hartman Gary Wolber	Jerry Johansen

Birthdays

Susan Johnson	2/ 8	Hunter Merrill	2/15
Elizabeth Johnson	2/ 9	Kristina Cox	2/17
Abbigale Rasmussen	2/10	Daisy Bower	2/18
Michael Ryden	2/10	Mauwa Lebon	2/18
DJ Anderson	2/11	Donna Renneke	2/22
Christian Cottingham	2/12	Mike Olinski	2/26
Bill Kempf	2/12		
Rickie George	2/15		
Roberta Hodge	2/15		
Bowlin Marshall	2/15		

Anniversary

William & Pamela Trotter 2/14

Annual Meeting – Election Results

Council (3-year term)

Terrill Johnson, Mike Olinski, Luanne Beinke

Nominating Committee (1-year term)

Gary Wolber, Cam Palicki, Judy Johansen

Endowment Committee (3-year term)

Tom Fox, Daryl Empen

Audit Committee (3-year term)

Chip Johnson

Personnel Committee (2-year term)

Judy Fox

February 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:30a Worship (SJ) 9:30a Fellowship (SJ) 10:00a SS (SJ) 10:30a Worship (AS)	2 10:00a Bible Study at Calvary or via Zoom 7:00p Property Team	3 6:30p Boy Scouts 6:30p Bible Study at church or via Zoom	4 9:30a Worship Service (AS) 6:00p Welcoming Team	5 8:30p Cub Scouts	6 Office Closed	7
8 8:30a Worship (SJ) 9:30a Fellowship (SJ) 10:00a SS (SJ) 10:30a Worship (AS)	9 10:00a Bible Study at Calvary or via Zoom 10:30a Retired Pastor's 6:00p Junior League	10 6:30p Boy Scouts 6:30p Bible Study at church or via Zoom	11 9:30a Worship Service (AS) 5:30p Rescue Mission Meal	12 6:30p Cub Scouts	13 Office Closed	14
15 8:30a Worship (SJ) 9:30a Fellowship (SJ) 10:00a SS (SJ) 10:30a Worship (AS)	16 10:00a Bible Study at Calvary or via Zoom 4:00p Stewardship/ Finance in person or via Zoom	17 2:00p Women's Circle 5:00p Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 6:30p Boy Scouts 7:00p Council at church or via Zoom	18 Ash Wednesday 12:00p Lenten Service (AS) 12:00p Lenten Service (C) 7:00p Lenten Service (SJ)	19 6:30p Cub Scouts	20 Office Closed	21 10:30a Café Women's Bible Study 1:00p Quilters
22 8:30a Worship (SJ) 9:30a Fellowship (SJ) 10:00a SS (SJ) 10:30a Worship (AS)	23 10:00a Bible Study at Calvary or via Zoom	24 6:30p Boy Scouts 6:30p Bible Study at church or via Zoom	25 12:00p Lenten Service (C) 5:00p Stations of the Cross (AS) 6:00p Soup Supper @ San Jose Obrero (located at Trinity Moline)	26 6:30p Cub Scouts	27 Office Closed	28

Companion Parishes in Tanzania

Rev. Enock Loriki is the pastor of our companion Mdori Parish in the North Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Pastor Loriki sent a letter expressing **"courage through your strong prayers and gift funds. In the year 2025 with great joy, we received \$1600 from you for the Studies of Evangelist and others. We really thank you."**

One female student who completed her studies at Mwika Bible and Theological College was ordained on February 2, 2025. Rev. Ruth Teveli is the pastor in charge of Loorkisale Parish, while the first male is in Simanjiro Parish as leading pastor.

Two Evangelists and six students of Christian Education graduated on December 6, 2025. Four students of Christian Education and others will graduate next year after meeting the College Qualification.

On November 20, 2025 Mdori Parish divided into two parishes, Mdori Parish which remains with 10 congregations and the new Parish of Tarangire remain with 3 congregations. Pastor Loriki says "For now I am still the minister of both parishes while I am in my studies. Please continue to pray for me."

On the same day their first Evangelist Solomon Leyan retired at the age of 65 at Kakoy Congregation after serving God in Mdori Parish for 27 years. The Parish rewarded him a house of 3 rooms which is now at finishing level.

Donations

We are accepting donations for **Mdori education** gifts during February to be forwarded to the parish. We have received a \$250 gift to date and \$1500 from St. James Endowment for this year.



Two students graduated as Evangelists after three years of study at Oldoinyo Sambu Theological College. Dec. 6, 2025



On the same day, 6 out of 10 students graduated from their program of Christian Education.



Inauguration of Tarangire Lutheran Parish. Nov. 20, 2025.
It consists of 3 congregations:
Tarangire Center, Kakoy, and Osiligi.



Evangelist Solomon Leyan retired.

St. James on the Web

stjamesri.org



309-786-0503

saintjamesri@gmail.com

At our website you will find
single-click links to

[Facebook](#)

and St. James photos

[Flickr photos](#)

St. James is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation

In our awareness that we are all broken people, we rejoice in God's abundant grace. Therefore, we welcome all who are seeking God's love and forgiveness regardless of national origin or ancestry, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, abilities, beliefs, political views, financial resources, or family status.

There will always be a place for you at St. James.

For more information check out [Reconciling Works](#).



St. James Lutheran Church
3145 31st Ave
Rock Island, IL 61201

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE