

THE SEASHELL

A Newsletter of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

25 N Adams Street, West York, PA. 17404

717-854-7198

www.stjamesyork.org



OCTOBER, 2022
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 10

BEWARE!

In August/September, Pastor Liz's identity was compromised, and someone posing as her had reached-out, one by email and one by phone text, to two members of the congregation. The scammers requested those members purchase gift cards for which she would reimburse them. This is a lie. Pastor Liz would not solicit you in this manner. If you receive any such communication in which Pastor Liz is asking you to make a purchase on her behalf, please call her immediately, 717-654-2334.

WORSHIP

Worship services are at 9:00 am and offered in-house and livestreaming via Facebook and YouTube.

Ingathering Sunday October 9th in Worship. We will display quilts and ask for God's blessings upon those who receive them. The Nave is always so colorful, and we are thankful for the quilters who make this ministry possible.

Wear RED! On October 30th when we celebrate the German Reformation and our young women who will Affirm their faith through the Confirmation Rite.

Wear WHITE! On November 6th when we celebrate All Saints Day and remember the saints who have died.

All Saints Remembered Submit the names of the baptized who have died that you would like to remember in the Intercessory Prayers by October 30th. Write down their names, or email them and give them to Pastor Liz DIRECTLY. lpolanzke@yahoo.com OR drop them in her mailbox in the office.

Pastor Tom Caruso will be leading worship on November 20, Christ the King Sunday, while Pastor Liz is away. Welcome Pastor Tom!

A Summer of Favorite Hymns

Thank you to everyone who submitted hymn suggestions for the months of June – September. There were some surprises, but overall, a reminder that classic hymns are classic for a reason. We love them. If the hymn request cards were a survey, *The Old Rugged Cross* would have been voted the congregation's favorite hymn.

Altar Flowers

Sponsors for 2022 -\$38 per week

THE 2023 FLOWER CHART WILL BE POSTED ON THE ADAMS STREET BULLETIN BOARD



Council Meeting Schedule for 2022

Every Fourth Sunday after Sunday School. October 23, November 27, December 18 (Third Sunday)

PRAY



IN PRAYER: for the following: Judy Cooper, Bonnie Loucks, Gaye Lauer, Ron Crone, Betty Burkhart, Jennifer Roosa, Joanne Nolt, Molly Slyder, and Ralph Ashton. Prayers also for those in the military, Benjamin (Ben) Reeder, Brodey Decker, Adam Reed, Lakyn Wedlock, and Jacob Drawbaugh. To add a name to the prayer chain please contact Pastor Liz 717-654-2334 or one of the

Prayer chain chairpersons, Shirley Trout, 717-846-4784, Janice Sewell, 717-767-4122, or Deb Meckley 717-764-0372.

Emergent Prayer requests may be phoned-in or emailed. By phone, please call Deb Meckley, (717-764-0372), Shirley Trout (717-846-4784) or Janice Sewell (717-767-4122). By email, please email Pastor Liz, lpolanzke@yahoo.com

Please add Kelly to your prayers. Kelly and Joe are Breakfast Blessings regulars. Kelly underwent an extensive back surgery at the end of September, and they have requested prayers for her successful recovery.

We also pray for The Zemaitis family as they mourn the death of their beloved Ruth Zemaitis. May she rejoice as she joins the saints in light and reunited with those who have gone before her.

LEARN

Adult Sunday School has resumed. Every Sunday at 10:15 AM after post-worship fellowship.

The Schedule is as follows:

September 25 – October 30

November 6 & 13

November 20

November 27

December 4

December 11

Christian Discipleship with Mike Cooper and Mark Snyder

The Book of Esther with Pastor Liz Polanzke

The Christmas Story with Mark Snyder

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Weekend)

TBA

The Christmas Story continues with Mark Snyder

Youth Sunday School

The Gospel of Matthew for Ages 5 – 7th Grade

The Wired Word (Contemporary issues) – Senior High and Confirmands

GIVE

A Short Guide to Understand First Fruit Offering from Tithe.ly

There are plenty of terms and phrases in the Bible you frequently hear in church but may not understand. One such term is the first fruits in the Bible.

So what is first fruit in the Bible? First fruits may be mentioned when pastors talk about giving or generosity. But what exactly does it mean? And why is it good to know for the average church-goer?

What is first fruits in the Bible?

“When you come into the land which I give you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.”

Leviticus 23:10

The concept of first fruits is rooted in biblical times when people lived in an agrarian society. Harvest time was significant because that was when the hard work the farmers had poured into their crops all year began to pay off. They were literally reaping what they sowed.

God called his people to bring the first yield—the first fruits—from their harvest to him as an offering. This was to demonstrate the Israelites’ obedience and reverence for God. It also showed that they trusted God to provide enough crops to feed their family.

Back then, there were plenty of rules associated with making first fruit sacrifices. They had to be brought to the temple priests. No other crops could be harvested until after the first fruits were presented. It was a complex process.

The Hebrew word for first fruit is *bikkurim*—literally translated to “promise to come.” The Israelites saw these first fruits as an investment into their future. God told them that if they brought their first fruits to him, he would bless all that came afterward.

We no longer live in an agrarian-based society. Most people reading this are probably not farmers. You likely don’t worry about harvest time or giving away the first yield of your crops. But the idea of first fruits is still relevant—it just takes on a new meaning for us.

First fruits in the Bible

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops.” Proverbs 3:9

We see the term first fruits initially mentioned in the book of Exodus when Moses is leading God’s people out of captivity in Egypt. God instructed the Israelites to give up the first of their crops so that they could understand the value of God’s blessings.

Through the first five books of the Bible, Moses brings up the idea of a total of thirteen times. That’s because it was an essential concept for his people to understand. First fruits is mentioned throughout the Old Testament, and it’s even referenced in the New Testament books.

In the New Testament, the term first fruits takes on a symbolic meaning. In 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul mentions Christ as the “first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.” Jesus was God’s first fruits—his one and only son, and the best that humanity had to offer. God gave Jesus, who was raised from the dead, up for us, in the same way that we sacrifice the best we have for him.

What started as a specific instruction for bringing crops to the temple priest was expanded on later in Scripture. It no longer refers to literal fruit—first fruits means any income, wealth, or blessings that a Christian has received over the course of the year.

Difference between first fruits and tithing

“The first of all first fruits of every kind and every contribution of every kind, from all your contributions, shall be for the priests: you shall also give to the priest the first of your dough to cause a blessing to rest on your house.” Ezekiel 44:30

To give a tithe means that you give a tenth of your income to your church. Tithes are generally given throughout the entire year. Tithes are meant to be given in an automatic sense of obedience after you receive your income--e.g., paycheck, commission, bonus. A First fruits offering is something different.

First fruit offerings are typically an annual gift to the church done at “harvest time.” Because we’re not actually harvesting crops, the harvest can mean different things to different people. Perhaps you just got a bonus at work. Maybe you just received a huge tax refund check. Maybe you saved 15% or more on car insurance.

These are all harvest time moments when your hard work paid off. These are also great opportunities to turn back to God in gratitude for the blessings.

Whenever you decide to make a first fruit offering, the important thing is that you do it freely, with no guilt or obligation. This is supposed to be a celebration of all that God has done for you. It’s a kind of worship that you can use to support the work of others. A first fruit offering is our opportunity to give above and beyond just a regular tithe.

Why giving first fruits is important

“In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.” Genesis 4:3-5

The famous Bible story of Cain and Abel begins when the two brothers make an offering to God. Cain brings some of his crops before the Lord, and Abel brings an offering of slaughtered animals. But there is a distinct difference between these two gifts.

Cain brings some fruit and vegetables—probably something he had left over after he had fed himself and his family. But Abel brought the best of what he had to God—the firstborn of the flock, the healthiest of his animals. God noticed this difference in these sacrifices, and he had a clear preference between the two.

Disregarding what famously happens in the rest of the story, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel teaches us a valuable lesson. Giving our firstfruits means giving our best to God. It means sacrificing something that costs us a little. It means putting God first, even before ourselves, or our family.

Making a first fruit offering opens us up to allow God to work in our life. When we approach God with open hands—rather than clenched fists—it makes it easier for him to give us more to work with.

Giving of our first fruits reminds us that God is our ultimate priority. It shows God that we are obedient to him and we can be trusted with more. Perhaps most importantly, being generous in this way shows that we are grateful for all God has given to us.

How to give a first fruits offering

“If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.” Romans 11:16

What does this practically look like? How do you determine how, when, and how much you should give as a first fruit offering? This is going to look different for every person and each season. But here are a few steps you can take to help you get started in the right direction:

- **Pray:** If your goal is obedience to God, it only makes sense that you would first go to him in prayer. Ask him what you should do with your money and resources. Listen to what he says.
- **Prepare:** God calls us to be good stewards of the blessings he gives us. That means knowing what we’re able to give and when. Have a plan in place for your offering. Approach each harvest time with an open mind and a generous heart.
- **Prioritize:** The whole idea behind a first fruit gift is to put God first. That may be donating your first paycheck of the year to the church. It may mean that you put this donation first in your budget. Just make sure that you’re prioritizing God in your finances.
- **Give:** Know where you are going to give the money to. Is there a specific fund at the church you want to contribute to? Is there another nonprofit you want to support? It also helps to know the amount you’ll give.
- **Repeat:** How often do you want to give a first fruit offering? This was traditionally an annual practice, but you can give as often as you’d like. Making it a part of your routine will help keep it a priority, not something you do spontaneously or sporadically.

However you give, the key thing is that you’re giving with an open heart and mind. The process of giving above your normal tithe can help prepare you for God to make a difference in your life. Making a first fruit offering demonstrates obedience to God, rather than your money.

SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE will begin collecting items for the West York Bulldog Pantry.



Shopping/donation list includes the following items: Taco kits, hamburger meal kits, peanut butter, jelly, pasta, pasta sauce, canned soups, vegetables, and fruit, applesauce, cereal, cereal bars, mac & cheese, paper towels, toilet paper, tissues, cleaning supplies, toothbrushes, toothpaste, bar soap, body wash, etc. Thank you to everyone for your donations.

SERVE

Halloween Volunteers are needed to staff the St. James tent and pass out reflectors to youth for the West York Borough Halloween walk on October 22, 5-10 PM. If you are able to help, sign-up on the bulletin board outside the nave or call Ruth Hoover, 717-515-4019.

Holiday Care Packages If you would like a care package sent to a military member or college student, submit their name, USPS mailing address, and \$10 by November 6th. The youth of St. James will be assembling the packages.

Donate Shoe Boxes to the Youth of St. James by November 6th. Our young people will be creating and mailing Holiday Care Packages. (see announcement above) Shoe boxes may be placed on the back pew of the Nave on the pulpit side.

Breakfast Blessings

The breakfast is growing as the word gets out that we are back indoors.

We are averaging around 55-60 a month. We are looking for donations of toilet paper, paper towels, laundry soap, dish soap and body wash. Everyone appreciates the hot meal they receive and the household items and hygiene items we hand out. We would like to thank Weis Market, Sunshine Workers and the Congregation for their continued support to our community outreach program.

Ham & Cheese Pretzel Sandwich Sale

Ham and Cheese Pretzel Sandwich Pick up will be November 9th 11am-12pm. The deadline for ordering will be October 30th. Order forms will be available on the entrance table.



INVITE

St. James Seniors

The St. James Seniors will be meeting Oct. 6, 2022, at 11:30. Our meeting will be an Indoor Tail Gate. Hot dogs and BBQ will be provided. Drinks will also be available. Please bring a side dish to share with everyone. Our entertainment that day will be Keil Holland. He is a guitarist and singer.

Sunshine Workers

Sunshine Workers will meet on October 10th at 12pm.

West York Borough Halloween Jack-A-Lantern Walk and Festival , Saturday October 22, 2022

King St from Highland Ave to Dewey St in West York

King St will be lined with light pumpkins that have been created by our community, school students, girl scout troop, etc. People attending the event will be able to vote on their favorite

pumpkin. The winning pumpkin carver will receive a prize. There will also be a selection of food trucks, a candy drop from West York Borough Fire Truck, vendors, games for the kids and much more. **Ruth Hoover will be handing out Reflective Stars to the kids who attend this event.**

Why Reflective Stars? Ruth Hoover recently had an interaction with a West York Borough Police Officer and during the conversation about the safety of children walking home after school after activities like sport or band practice. When it is dark, she mentioned wishing somehow the children would be seen by something reflective, so Ruth ran with the idea, did a little researching, and came across these Super Bright Star Reflector Keychains. They can be clipped to items such as back packs. They Measure 5.5CM / 2.16 In. We are asking for the congregation to make a donation to purchase the Stars. Donations can be mailed to the church or placed in a sealed envelope and dropped off in the church office.

Congregational Photo

On November 6th, **All Saints Sunday** we will be taking a Congregational photo. We will be taking a group selfie on November 6, immediately following worship. The picture will be developed and sent with care packages to college students and military personnel. The photo will be taken immediately following worship service on November the 6th, so please plan on coming and bring your best smile!

The Future of St. James

We will be having a conversation with the congregation about the future of St. James. The purpose of this conversation is to have open, honest, loving, and productive dialogue about St. James. Church council will be leading this discussion. Please plan to attend and participate in this critical conversation.

Christmas Pageant

Save the date!!!! St. James youth will be putting on a Christmas pageant during the 9am worship service on December the 18th.

ENCOURAGE

Fellowship Time immediately following worship and before Sunday School has resumed. If you would like to host, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board near the church Adams Street entrance.

The Council will be meeting with Pastor Richard Jorgensen, acting Bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, on September 26, as they weigh their concerns about the future of the congregation.

October 2022 at St. James Ev. Lutheran Church- West York, Pa

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1  Ralph Ashton Jr Birthday
2 17th Sunday Pentecost Worship/Comm 9am Sunday School 10:15am	3  Anna G Lauer, Birthday	4  Dustin Besore, Dennis Wagner Birthday	5  Rickey Ashton Birthday	6 St. James Seniors 11:30am  Thomas Henry Birthday Choir Rehearsal 7pm	7  Gary Brenneman Birthday	8  Phyllis Stevens- Ehrhart Birthday
9 18th Sunday Pentecost  Charles Markle, Birthday Worship/Comm 9am Sunday School 10:15am	10 Sunshine Workers 12pm	11	12  Olivia Drawbaugh Birthday	13 Choir Rehearsal 7pm	14	15  Joanne Boyer, Linda Gilkey Birthday
16 19th Sunday Pentecost Worship/Comm 9am Sunday School 10:15am	17  Susan Ann Orris Birthday	18	19  Carolyn Klinedinst Birthday	20 Choir Rehearsal 7pm	21	22 West York Borough Halloween Jack-A- Lantern Walk and Festival  Thomas Meckley Birthday
23 20th Sunday Pentecost Worship/Comm 9am Sunday School 10:15am Council Meeting	24	25	26	27  Kenneth Hoke Birthday Choir Rehearsal 7pm	28	29
30 Reformation Sunday Worship/Comm 9am Sunday School 10:15am Deadline for Ham and Cheese Sale	31  Aurela Wilhelm Birthday					

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



2022

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Sonja Hoke, Custodian

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.STJAMESYORK.ORG

10 *The Seashell: Newsletter of St. James Lutheran Church, West York, PA*