



Ash Wednesday

February 14



Ash Wednesday services will be held at **Noon and 7:00 pm** on February 14. Both services will include the imposition of ashes.

Verse by Verse

A Poetical Journey Through Lent

2024 Lent Midweek at St. James

Join us this year as we gather for a simple meal and then move to the sanctuary where each Wednesday we will look at a few poems that will serve as guides on our walk with Jesus during the season of Lent.

From Pastor Narum: "There are simply too many wondering poems about Lent, or about the themes of Lent, not to spend some time with. I cherish these poems – will read them not to understand them as much as to let them touch us and move us."

Meals are served from 5:30 - 6:30 (come when you can), and our gathering time is 6:30 - 7:00.

Note: This includes the Community Meal served on March 6.

*Verse by Verse Wednesdays are **February 21, 28, March 6, 13, & 20***

Welcome Pastor

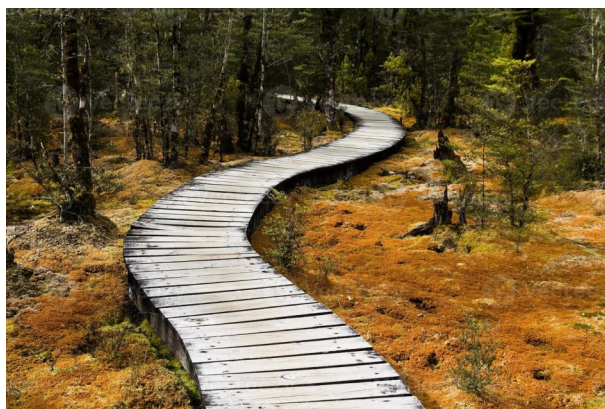
Jerry Buss

Pastor Jerry Buss started as our half-time Interim Pastor on Sunday, February 4th. He will be commissioned at all worship services this coming weekend.



Pastor Jerry served as pastor of three congregations in Oregon and Washington. He was also the mission director for the Northwest Washington Synod for ten years where he worked with many churches in all types of situations. In 2018 Jerry and his wife, Darlene, moved to Monona to be near their only grandchild. Both of their children live in Madison and work at UW-Madison. Jerry was the co-director of a clergy renewal program at Holy Wisdom Monastery until 2022 when he retired.

Pastor Jerry is excited to be at St. James to support us through this time of transition. Please introduce yourself to him when you get a chance.



From the Pastor

There is no sweeter manner of
living in the world than
continuous communion with God.

Brother Lawrence

Don't do something. Sit there.

Lent is a wonderful season, but too easily made into a time where *we* do all the work: giving up, taking up, 40 days of this or that, reading a Lenten devotional. If the New Year's resolutions didn't take, here's another chance.

Yes, Lent is a preparation that brings us to Good Friday and Easter, where in the end, God does it all. That should be a sign to us, because the disciplines and practices of Lent don't bring us through the season, they expose our inability to transform ourselves. Failing in them can be a greater gift. When we fail we give ourselves up to God, we turn back and return to the source of life and love.

So what *should* we do during Lent? As I was reading here and there for some new insight for this *Jottings* article, nothing was flowing in my direction. So I set down my laptop, grabbed my guitar, and started strumming. Oh

my — *way* out of tune. "There's an app for that": on my phone tuning app a bright, green bar lights up when the string finally arrives where it's supposed to be.

This I realize is Sign #1 — maybe Lent is about getting our *souls* in tune (though I doubt there's an app for that).

So I set the guitar down, ready to start writing, and along came Sign #2 — our little dog looked up at me with a look of longing dogs are so good at. She jumped up and just *sat* there — no desire to play, or go for a walk, or get something to eat. She seemed as content as could be. I realize this was not an interruption, but a gift.

I wondered, in these two small, insignificant events, if getting in tune with God has more to do with sitting than with doing, with receiving than with giving.

In the 17th century, a Parisian Carmelite monk, now known as Brother Lawrence (1614-1691), recorded his thoughts and reflections that were later compiled into a short book called *Practicing the Presence of God*, now considered a Christian classic.

Brother Lawrence gave his life to this practice: seeing every moment as a prayer of *living in the presence of God*. For example, he wrote, "It is not necessary to have great things to do. I turn my little omelet in the pan for the love of God."

I suppose I could spend Lent playing my guitar with a dog on my lap. But that's not the point. Lent is a discipline, a

ST. JAMES STAFF

Peter Narum, Pastor	Cell: 469-9625
Michelle Lichty	Parish Administrator
Barb Roberts	Office Assistant
Susan Zimmer	Office Assistant
Barb Roberts	Card Ministry
Holly Parker	Director of Children & Family Ministries
Laura Smith	Director of Confirmation
Paulette Spoon	Adult Choir & Handbell Choir
Susan Bubolz	Youth Choir Director
Rhonda Chalone, Don DeBruin,	Accompanists
Jim Erickson, Carol Murphy	
Barb Rasmussen, R.N.	Parish Nurse/Visitation Coord.
Heather Pearl	Director, St. James Preschool
Holly Parker, Kari Poppen	St. James Preschool
Nicole Sudhoff, Kristin Wills	
& Stacy Zimmerman	

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Julie Murphy, President	608-345-8533
Dennis Beres, Vice-President	608-845-9305
Karen Bretnauer, Secretary	608-209-3035
Kim Feller, Treasurer	608-206-4562
Rob Frederick	608-280-1470
Christine Kemnitz	608-886-6363
Mark Smith	608-214-2212
Rebecca Woolums	847-894-8344
Susan Martin-Zernicke	608-246-2025



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

fast, but maybe not in the way we usually imagine. To be mindful, or “heartful,” of God’s presence, is to not to bring anything new except our awareness, a presence that is already with us.

What good is awareness? I think of David Foster Wallace’s commencement (“This Is Water”) address at Kenyon College in 2005. He said, *The really important kind of freedom involves attention and awareness and discipline, and being able truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them over and over in myriad petty, unsexy ways every day. That is real freedom. That is being educated, and understanding how to think. The alternative is unconsciousness, the default setting, the rat race, the constant gnawing sense of having had, and lost, some infinite thing.*

Attention and awareness can be for you and me a Lenten discipline. Living in God’s presence, however, comes with a warning: you will find yourself changed, and you may even find yourself in tune.

Lent offers many wonderful disciplines and opportunities. Lent is a fast from whatever draws us away, and a feast on whatever brings us closer. Amidst all the choices, consider doing less and sitting more. Don’t try to be a better person, but bask in the loving presence of God. Let God do the work.

—Pastor Peter

From the Congregational Council



Hallelujah! We have an interim pastor! Pastor Jerry Buss started a 6 month contract February 4 by attending our 8:30 service and Semi annual meeting. He will have a formal commissioning service on February 11 at our 8:30 service so come and meet him.

Pastor Jerry will lead a transition team of 5-8 members and help prepare our congregation for a new pastor. This transition from Pastor Kurt’s retirement and calling a new pastor is really a wonderful opportunity to reflect on where our ministry is and where it’s headed. The team will hold listening sessions and basically survey church members and examine their feedback carefully. They’ll seek input from the community around our church as well. Taking this time for a survey process offers our church an opportunity to examine itself: to learn what it has become, what its gifts are, who its people are and what their gifts are, what the community is like and how it’s changing, and, most importantly, what your church might be doing next in ministry.

After gathering all this congregational and community feedback, the transition team will basically be drafting a job description for the person our church needs as a pastor to move forward. This whole transition process could take a few months or up to a year. Prayers will be made; patience will be necessary and our faith in God will be strong.

The team will give updates throughout this process on our website but if anyone ever has questions, I and all other council members are available to answer them.

We have a lot of work to do in the coming year and I challenge everyone to become more involved. Let’s get to know each other more!

— Julie Murphy, Council President

Annual Reports

The 2023 Annual Report is available at the Welcome Center or you may request one by emailing office@stjamesverona.org.

The 2024 budget was approved at the Semi-Annual meeting on February 4.

Congregational Life

Chloe Circle holds successful Blood Drive

St. James is a popular location for American Red Cross Blood Drives with the Preschool Activities Room as a great space for this community event. The most recent blood drive was held on Saturday, January 20th and 43 units of blood were collected which included 2 first-time donors and 6 donors who contributed Power Red or double units. There is a severe shortage of blood at present so please consider donating at a location near you or at an upcoming blood drive here at St. James on Saturday, April 20th and Saturday, October 5th. Chloe Circle hosts the blood drives with morning appointments and home-baked treats along with other snacks are available. Register at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767 for an appointment. Here are a few photos of St. James donors and volunteers from the January 20th event!



Carla Blaidell and Renata Henry worked the registration table.



Dave Feller and Sue Martin-Zernicke donated blood.



The Prayer Shawl Ministry gathers the first and third Wednesdays of each month at St. James. All are welcome to join!

The Prayer Shawl Ministry workshops are the first & third Wednesday of the month at St. James from 9:30-11:30. Please join us for fellowship, laughter, knitting and crocheting. There is yarn and directions at the Welcome Center and all are welcome to join in.

Men's Group

The Men's group will meet on Monday, March 4 at 6:00 pm (typically the first Monday of the month) at Paddy Mac's located at 608 W Verona Avenue. All are welcome.

Quilting Group

The Quilters meet the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 9:00 am. Interested members are invited to attend.

The St James Women's Retreat will be held March 9-10, 2024

Our annual retreat will be held at Holy Wisdom Monastery in Middleton. The theme of this year's retreat is "Blessings for the Lives we Actually Have." Brochures and registration forms are now available at the Welcome Center with registrations due February 18. There will be options for participating just for the day on Saturday or the full retreat experience with an overnight stay. Please join us. Bring a friend! Questions? Contact Bobbie Wang: 608-215-5604 or bwang799@gmail.com.

10 Powerful Reasons to Attend a Retreat

*"How many times have you noticed that it's the little quiet moments
in the midst of life that seem to give the rest extra-special meaning?"*

—Fred Rogers

♦ *Get away from it all.*

To retreat means to take a step back, to withdraw, to find a haven or sanctuary. Every now and then we need to clear our heads and forego the distractions around us.

♦ *Take care of ourselves.*

Taking care of ourselves in order to claim our own God-given goodness is a worthy goal. Taking time for a retreat is a way to honor ourselves in a healthy way.

♦ *Put first things first.*

When we take time for a retreat, we orient ourselves to the belief that God is most important in our lives.

♦ *Slow down and pay attention.*

If we build retreat time into our lives, we afford ourselves the opportunity to slow down and pay attention. We become more intentional about how we want to live and mindful of God who is always present.

♦ *Bask in the glow of affirmation.*

Retreat centers create an environment of hospitality where participants are welcomed as God would welcome us. Spending time with good friends and loved ones and making new connections enriches our lives and affirms the love God has for all of us.

Looking Ahead

Holy Week Services

Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday), March 24,
Choir cantata, Worthy is the Lamb, 8:30 & 10:45 am

Maundy Thursday, March 28, 7:00 pm

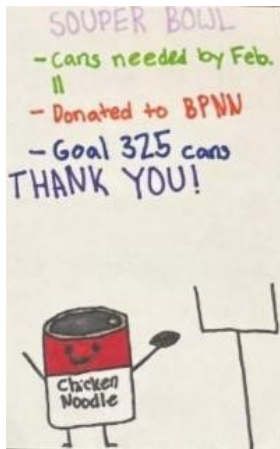
Good Friday, March 29, 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday, March 31, 7:00 am 8:30 am & 10:45 am

Attention, Singers!

The St. James Choir will be singing a cantata with the story of Jesus' road to the cross for Palm Sunday, March 24. We would welcome additional voices! Rehearsals will be a combination of times on Wednesday evenings and/or Sunday mornings between services. Please contact Paulette Spoon at church or by email (spoonp@charter.net) if you are interested or would like further information.

Children, Youth & Families



The Souper Bowl of Caring

Now-February 11th

The St. James Club Connect Kids (5th & 6th graders) are doing a service project for the "Souper Bowl" and would like to invite you to participate! Our goal is to collect 325 cans of soup to donate to the Badger Prairie Needs Network. Please help us tackle hunger in our community by donating between now and **February 11**. You can place your cans in the boxes in the Narthex or Youth Lounge. Preschool families can simply send their donations to school with their children. We're also accepting cash or checks made out to BPNN which can be placed in the soup pots. Thank you!

Love & Friendship Party

Sunday, February 11th at 9:30 am
St. James Dining Room

Join us during coffee hour for a multigenerational celebration of God's love!
Featuring refreshments, fellowship & fun! Hosted by Sunday School & Club Connect.

Let us love
one another,
for love comes
from God



1 JOHN 4:7

First Communion



We invite those who wish to participate in First Communion to save the following dates:

Sundays, March 3 & 10 from 9:30-10:30 am - Instruction

Saturday, March 9 at 10:00 am - Bread Baking & Banner Making

Sunday, March 17th at 10:45 am - First Communion Service

A letter with more details will be mailed to 3rd grade families. If your child is not in 3rd grade, but you would like them to participate in First Communion, please contact Holly at hparker@stjamesverona.org.

Palm Sunday Palooza

Sunday, March 24

8:30 am Procession of Palms - Children are invited to meet in the Narthex and join in a procession of palms at the beginning of the service. **9:30 am Brunch in the Dining Room + multi-generational fun in the Narthex!**



Sunday School Highlights

Here's a glance at some of the ways Sunday School students have been exploring Jesus' Baptism, God Calls Samuel, Jonah & the Big Fish, and Teaching & Healing!



Confirmation

Coming Up in Sunday School & Confirmation

Date	Spark (3's-4th grade)	Club Connect (5th-6th grade)	Confirmation (7th-8th grade)
Feb 18	Special Lesson with Pastor John Mix		Cocoa & Catch Up
Feb 25	Abraham & Sarah's Visitors	Judges	John
Mar 3	Ten Commandments (3rd grade 1st Communion Class)	David	Family Time Matters
Mar 10	Light of the World (3rd grade 1st Communion Class)	Solomon's Temple	Acts
Mar 17	Serve & Follow (3rd grade 1st Communion)	Kingdoms	Paul
Mar 24	Palm Sunday Celebration		
Mar 31	Easter Sunday (No Classes)		

2023-24 Confirmation Team

Laura Smith, Confirmation Director, Pastor Peter Narum, Mark Smith, Karen Breitnauer, Joleen Rau, and Holly Parker

Join Us!

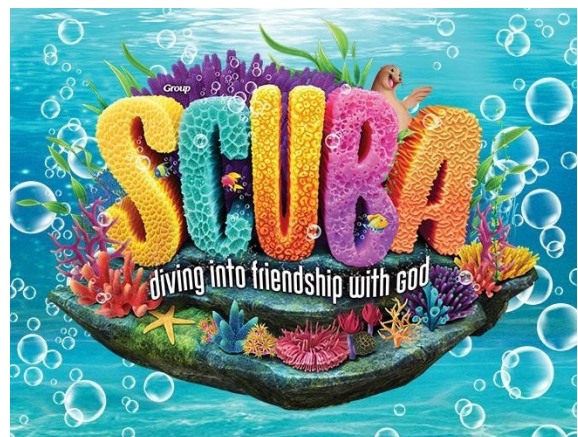
We are always looking for more volunteers to lend a hand! Sharing even just an hour or two a month will greatly benefit the students and other teachers...and will be rewarding for you as well! You don't need to be an expert - we are a supportive group who learns and grows together and along with the students. Contact Laura at confirmation@stjamesverona.org with questions.

Vacation Bible School

Save the Date!

August 5-8, 9:00 am - 12 noon

Registration opens March 1st



Youth Group

Third Wednesday of Each Month

6:00 — 7:30 pm

The St. James High School Mentorship Team will be hosting Youth Group again this year! All 4th through 12th graders are welcome to attend. Join in fun activities on the third Wednesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 pm. The next Youth Group meeting is on February 21 where we will be helping with the evening Lenten meal.

Announcement from the St. James High School Mentorship Team: 2024 High School Mission Trip Planning is underway!

The St. James High School Mentorship Team is thrilled to bring a High School Mission Trip opportunity back to St. James. Although the details have not been finalized yet, the ball is rolling. The team has decided to partner with Group Mission Trips again. This was the organization utilized in the 2019 trip to Grand Rapids, MI. This year we are planning to serve the Kenosha, WI area sometime in July (exact dates TBD).

High School Mission Trips are a perfect opportunity to receive, grow, and give. They provide a foundation for deeper connections with God and each other. These memorable experiences both challenge and inspire students.

If you have a 9th through 12th grader, please watch your email for more information as it becomes available. If you would like to support the 2024 St. James High School Mission Trip, please watch for opportunities. Students will be planning fundraisers including Stock the Pot, Family Fun Night, and the annual Drive-in Dinner. You can support the high school students by contributing to fundraisers and spreading the word about these fun events. Please continue to watch your email, announcements, and look for signs up at church.



Save the date for the following events hosted by the High School Mentorship Team:

Wednesday, February 21st	Youth Group Serving Soup (before Lenten Service) & Stock the Pot Fundraiser Kickoff
Wednesday, March 20th	Youth Group Serving Soup (before Lenten Service)
Wednesday, April 17th	Family Fun Night with Music Video Bingo from 6:00-7:30 pm (all are welcome!)
Wednesday, May 15th	Annual Drive-in Dinner

From the Parish Nurse...

February, 2024 is declared as “**Heart Health**” month in the National Health Calendars. That is appropriate as February 14 is Valentine’s Day.

Nutrition is a major part of Good Heart Health. It’s important to stay away from processed foods and make most of your diet, “plant based.” This includes all the plants, like fruits and vegetables, lentils, and beans. Then include fatty fish, such as salmon and sardines. Milk, eggs, and cottage cheese are good sources of calcium. There may be some restrictions on certain things if you have medical conditions or on particular medications.

Another part of good heart health is **Exercise**. It doesn’t have to be training for the “Iron Man”, but it is important to move and not sit all day. If you work from home or sit at a desk during your work day, it’s important to do some stretching and/or walk around every hour. It is good for your eyes to get away from that screen too. If you’re not able to do exercising out and about, there are several excellent stretching exercises on line that you can do while in bed.


Sleep is another avenue to good heart health. It’s important to keep a regular routine. Relax, cool bedroom, off the electronics for at least an hour, and only decaffeinated beverages, at least an hour before bedtime.

Praying, and keeping the **Lord** in our hearts, as well as doing the things mentioned here will help decrease your stress and all together assist in **Good Heart Health**.

“Then I lay down and slept in peace and woke up safely, for the Lord was watching over me.” Psalm 3:5

God’s Blessings,

Barbara Rasmussen, RN. CPN.



Blood Pressure Checks

We will hold the next blood pressure check will be held on February 11 after the 8:30 am service. All are welcome!

Thank you!

I have said it many times, but will repeat it now to my St. James family: Thanks to each of you for your prayers, calls, cards, flowers, thoughtful gifts, visits and generously offering to help Mom with rides, etc. during my 5 month health crisis. All is so appreciated and I know it helped with my healing. I am blessed and grateful.

— Diane Maurer



St. James
Community
Meal

Community Meal

Wednesday, March 6 at 5:30 pm

****Note time change for Lent**

Stay tuned for the menu. *There is no need to register in advance.*
Skip the cooking and join us for dinner!

Preschool News

2024-2025 Preschool Registration:

Registration is open for next school year for ALL families. We offer classes for kids ages 2 years 1 month (2s Class) and 3 years old (3s Class). We are also a Verona Area School District Pre-K site for kids 4 years old by September 1, 2024. Current families, returning families and church members get registration priority before new families. Open registration closes on March 29th, at which time all spots left available will be filled on a first come first serve basis. For more information and to register you can go to our website. Our spots are filling up quickly so make sure to spread the word and/or register. Reach out to Heather at sjp@stjamesverona.org or 845-6922 with any questions.

Preschool Happenings:

In December, we had a winter zoom bingo party with preschool families. January has been about staying warm, snow, and lots of energy. When it is warm enough to go outside the kids enjoy playing in the snow, otherwise they do love the activity center as well. In February, we look forward to celebrating friendship, pajama week, donut day, and our everyday playing/learning.



PARISH NOTES

If you have someone that you would like to add to this prayer list please email (office@stjamesverona.org) or call the church office (845-6922) or fill out a form which can be found at the Welcome Center at St. James.



We remember our members in our prayers, especially Norma Bader, Loretta Docken, orena Gerbitz, Ed, Anna, Lizzie, Monica Pechan, John Scharer, Wanda, & Larry Yeske.

We also remember Karen Bittrich (mother of Elise Taft), Bruce & Pearlene (sister and brother-in-law of Karen Wolf) Kimberly Choi (daughter of Norma Bader), Dorothy (mother of Sue Zernicke), Dustin Olmschenk (nephew of Nancy Steinemann), Marty Pulver (brother of Renata Henry), Everette Reynolds (granddaughter of Dave & Sandy Saether), Sharon Schwinn (sister of Mary Moldenhauer) Charlene Tolmie (mother of Chery Vroman), Mary Volker, (sister of John Volker), Dave Wolf (nephew of Doug Wolf), Archer Yob (great-nephew of Renata Henry), Marsha Zahasky (sister of Mary Walker), and friends, Camille, Cindi, Dawn, Dennis, Erin & family, Jeff & Finn, Lynn, Sandra, Sarah, Susan Kennedy, Leo, and Debbie Loughrin.

Christian Sympathy is extended to the family of Esther Wing as they mourn her death; to the family of Jon Baldock as they mourn his death and to the family of Zelma Danna as they mourn her death.

In Residence: **Four Winds** — Candy Nerge. **Noel Manor**—Dick & Helen Dignan, Lorena Gerbitz, Dale & Audrey Hagen, James Hatch, Lloyd Hornbacher, Marilyn Le Moine, Jim Nerge, Carol & Jim Path, Peggy Papenfus, Chuck & Marilyn Roun, John Scharer, Jim Schumann and Charles & Gloria Widish. **Crossroads Care Center of Sun Prairie** - Kay Hankins.

Serving in the Military: Gavin Bazala, Wyatt Breitnauer, Bryan & Hannah Tordoff, Judy Watters, and Evan Spoon.

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