

**Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost**  
**St. Francis and St. Clare**  
**Blessing of the Animals**  
Sunday Celebration • October 18, 2026 • 10:00 AM



**CREATION JUSTICE • JUST PEACE • OPEN AND AFFIRMING**

**Founded in 1853**

Rev. Paul Werner, Pastor  
Ciaran Krueger, Music Director  
Christy Schrecengost, Church Administrator  
Jonathan Rizzo, Accompanist  
Cher Hall, Sunday School Leader  
Karen Reinagel, Director of Religious Education Emerita

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# Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost

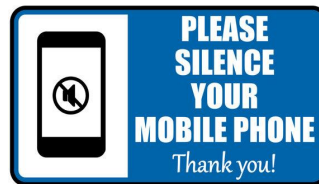
## St. Francis and St. Clare

### Blessing of the Animals

Sunday Celebration • October 18, 2026 • 10:00 AM

*Today's altar flowers are given in gratitude to God for the thirteenth anniversary of my ordination into the Christian ministry on October 20, 2013 ~ by Rev. Paul Werner*

Liturgist: Jan Harris



“Animals don’t lie. Animals don’t criticize. If animals have moody days, they handle them better than humans do.”

*Betty White*

“I *had* to have company — I was made for it, I think — so I made friends with the animals. They are just charming, and they have the kindest disposition and the politest ways; they never look sour, they never let you feel that you are intruding, they smile at you and wag their tail, if they’ve got one, and they are always ready for a romp or an excursion or anything you want to propose.

I think they are perfect gentlemen.”

*Mark Twain*

“Such short little lives our pets have to spend with us, and they spend most of it waiting for us to come home each day. It is amazing how much love and laughter they bring into our lives and even how much closer we become with each other because of them.”

*John Grogan, in “Marley and Me”*

“Never, never be afraid to do what’s right, especially if the well-being of a person or animal is at stake.”

*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

“You cannot share your life in a meaningful way with any animals such as a dog, cat, rabbit, bird, rat, pig, horse and so many more and not know that we are not the only sentient and sapient beings on the planet.”

*Dr. Jane Goodall*

“If we’re going to have animals around, we all have to be concerned about them and take care of them.”

*Bob Ross*

“An animal’s eyes have the power to speak a great language.”

*Martin Buber*

**Congregation: Bold print**  
\*Please rise in body or in spirit.

## **GATHERING MUSIC**

## **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **“ALL ANIMALS ARE OUR RELATIVES” • CANDLE LIGHTING**

We light this candle in honor of the animal realm — furred and hoofed, two-legged, four-legged, many-legged, fanged and clawed, gentle and fierce, wild and tame. May we remember that all animals are our relatives, worthy of our care and respect.

### **STEWARDSHIP STORY**

Ralph Stonier

### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We acknowledge that the land upon which St. James UCC stands was originally the ancestral and unceded territory of the Haudenosaunee and Erie people. We celebrate and honor the contributions that Native Americans have made in the past and continue to make today in the Western New York area and the Americas. We embrace the Haudenosaunee philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. Additionally, we commit to supporting initiatives that empower the local, national, and international Indigenous communities and to listening, learning, and taking actions to address injustices past and present that have impacted these communities and all God’s creation.

### **WORDS OF WELCOME**

**Welcome to St. James, an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, where we strive to be more fully the body of Christ. We are committed to welcoming and celebrating all people and the uniqueness we each bring. As people of faith, we boldly proclaim: No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you’re welcome here.**

### **CONTEMPORARY READING / CONTINUING TESTAMENT**

Rev. Paul Werner

“When Your Best Friend Has Four or So Legs” by Rev. Julián Jamaica Soto

### **INTROIT**

## **\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

*Please rise in body or in spirit to greet your neighbor with Christ's peace.*

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

*Please return to your seat as we begin to sing the opening hymn.*

## **\*OPENING HYMN**      “God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale”

NCH 32

## **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Jan Harris

(adapted from *The Canticle of the Sun* by St. Francis of Assisi)

One: Be praised, O God, through our Brother Sun, who brings the day. May we share your radiance.

Many: **Be praised, O God.**

One: Through Sister Moon and the stars, in the heavens you have made them.

Many: **Be praised, O God.**

One: Through Brothers Wind and Air — and all the weather by which you give your creatures nourishment — may we comfort those whom the wind and the rain have distressed.

Many: **Be praised, O God.**

One: Through Sister Water — useful, humble, precious, and pure — may we all be refreshed, our hearts filled with every need.

Many: **Be praised, O God.**

One: Through Brother Fire — through whom you brighten the night — set us aflame with your love for the whole world.

Many: **Be praised, O God.**

One: Through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us, rules us, and produces fruits, flowers, and herbs.

Many: **Be praised, O God.**

One: Praise and bless our God, and give thanks, and serve God with great humility.

Many: **Amen.**

## **\*OPENING PRAYER** (attributed to St. Francis of Assisi)

Jan

**Gracious God, make us instruments of your peace.**

**Where there is hatred, let us sow love;**

**where there is injury, pardon;**

**where there is discord, union;**

**where there is doubt, faith;**

*(continued on the next page) →*

where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy;  
Grant that we may not so much  
seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

**\*RESPONSE**

“All Things Bright and Beautiful” (*Verse 1*)

NCH 31

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful, our dear God made them all.  
Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,  
God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings.  
All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful, our dear God made them all.*

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

**SCRIPTURE**

Jan

**Genesis 1:20-2:3** (The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation)

*This text is the ending of the first of two sacred creation myth stories found at the very beginning of the Hebrew Bible. It features the creation of various living creatures, including humans.*

God then said, “Waters: swarm with an abundance of living beings! Birds: fly above the earth in the open expanse of the sky!” And so it was: God created great sea monsters and all sorts of swimming creatures with which the waters are filled, and all kinds of birds. God saw that this was good and blessed them, saying, “Bear fruit, increase your numbers, and fill the waters of the seas! Birds, abound on the earth!” Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

Then God said, “Earth: bring forth all kinds of living souls — cattle, things that crawl, and wild animals of all kinds.” So it was: God made all kinds of wild animals, and cattle, and everything that crawls on the ground, and God saw that this was good.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be stewards of the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, the wild animals, and everything that crawls on the ground.”

*(continued on the next page) →*

Humankind was created as God's reflection:  
in the divine image God created them;  
female and male, God made them.

God blessed them and said, "Bear fruit, increase your numbers, and fill the earth—and be responsible for it! Watch over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things on the earth!" God then told them, "Look! I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth, and every tree whose fruit carries its seed inside itself: they will be your food; and to all the animals of the earth and the birds of the air and things that crawl on the ground — everything that has a living soul in it — I give all the green plants for food." So it was. God looked at all of this creation, and proclaimed that this was good — very good. Evening came, and morning followed — the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. On the seventh day God had finished all the work of creation, and so, on that seventh day, God rested. God blessed the seventh day and called it sacred, because on it God rested from all the work of creation.

## **CHORAL ANTHEM**

### **A PRAYER FOR OUR ANIMAL COMPANIONS WHO HAVE DIED**

*An invitation will be made for those present to name those beloved animals who have died, either silently or aloud.*

### **"BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS — ST. FRANCIS DAY"** (by Thomas Rhodes)

### **BLESSING OF OUR ANIMAL COMPANIONS**

*In the scriptures, the act of blessing means "the imparting of power or life." The person performing the blessing is mediating that power from God to the person or animal involved. To bless is more than an expression of goodwill or caring. To bless is to impart God's power in person! The blessing of each animal, by name, means that health, healing, and life are being mediated from God for the benefit of the animal in its relationship with its human partners.*

## **A TIME OF PRAYER FOR AND WITH OUR ANIMAL COMPANIONS**

### **PASTORAL PRAYER**

### **LORD'S PRAYER / PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR**

**Our \_\_\_\_\*, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom\*\* come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom\*\*, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

*\*Use whatever language is closest to your own heart (Our Father, Our Creator, Our Father and Mother, etc.)*

*\*\*Or "kin-dom."*

## RESPONDING WITH OUR GENEROSITY

### INVITATION

### OFFERTORY / GIVING OF OUR GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

- *Please place your gift in the offering plate. Many of our members and friends give online. To do so, you are invited to use the information located on the back cover of this bulletin.*
- *Our gifts help sustain this community of faith by maintaining our facilities, supporting our staff, and providing the materials that make our ministry available to all.*

### \*DOXOLOGY

NCH 780

(Sing the version of the Doxology that is closest to your own heart.)

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host: Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

### \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

### \*CLOSING HYMN

“Touch the Earth Lightly”

NCH 569

### \*BENEDICTION: BLESSING OF ST. CLARE

Go forth in peace,  
for you have followed the good road.  
Go forth without fear,  
for God who created you has sanctified you,  
has always protected you,  
and loves you as a mother.  
And may God’s blessing be upon you:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.



## **\*SINGING FOR A JUST PEACE**

*Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on earth, with justice and dignity.*

*With God as Creator, family all are we.  
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.*

*Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take, let this be my joyous vow:*

*To love with kindness and work for justice, that all may be set free.  
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me!*

## **\*POSTLUDE**

*You may make your way to the Horton Lounge (Hospitality Room) for refreshments and fellowship, or you may remain in the sanctuary for contemplation and reflection.*

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# All Saints Sunday

## November 1

You are invited to bring photos of your deceased loved ones (human and/or pet) to be blessed on the altar during service.

## God of the Sparrow God of the Whale

1 Thess. 5: 18; Ps. 136

Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1983

(Introduction) G G7 C Unison Em Am Dm

1 God of the spar - row God of the whale  
 2 God of the earth-quake God of the storm  
 3 God of the rain - bow God of the cross  
 4 God of the hun - gry God of the sick  
 5 God of the neigh - bor God of the foe  
 6 God of the a - ges God near at hand

G7 C FM7 E7 Am Em

God of the swirl - ing stars How does the crea-ture say  
 God of the trum - pet blast How does the crea-ture cry  
 God of the emp - ty grave How does the crea-ture say  
 God of the prod - i - gal How does the crea-ture say  
 God of the prun - ing hook How does the crea-ture say  
 God of the lov - ing heart How do your chil-dren say

FM7 Em7 Am Dm 1-5 Gsus4 G C

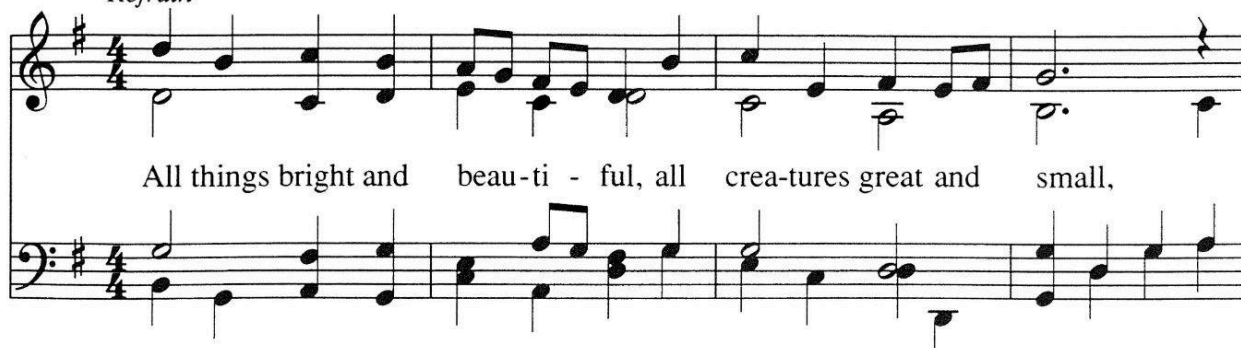
Awe How does the crea-ture say Praise  
 Woe How does the crea-ture cry Save  
 Grace How does the crea-ture say Thanks  
 Care How does the crea-ture say Life  
 Love How does the crea-ture say Peace  
 Joy How do your chil-dren say Home.

# All Things Bright and Beautiful

31

Cecil F. Alexander, 1848; alt.

*Unison  
Refrain*

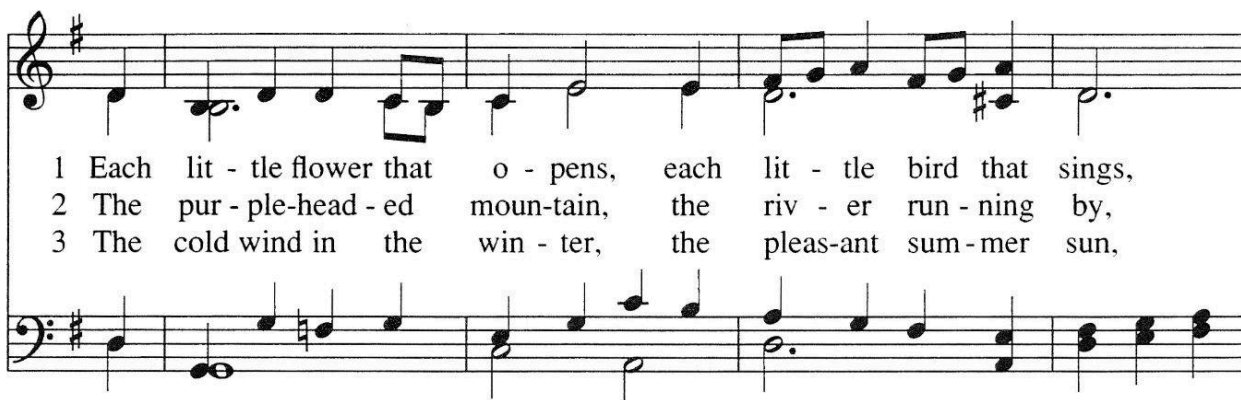


All things bright and beau-ti - ful, all crea-tures great and small,

*Last time, end*

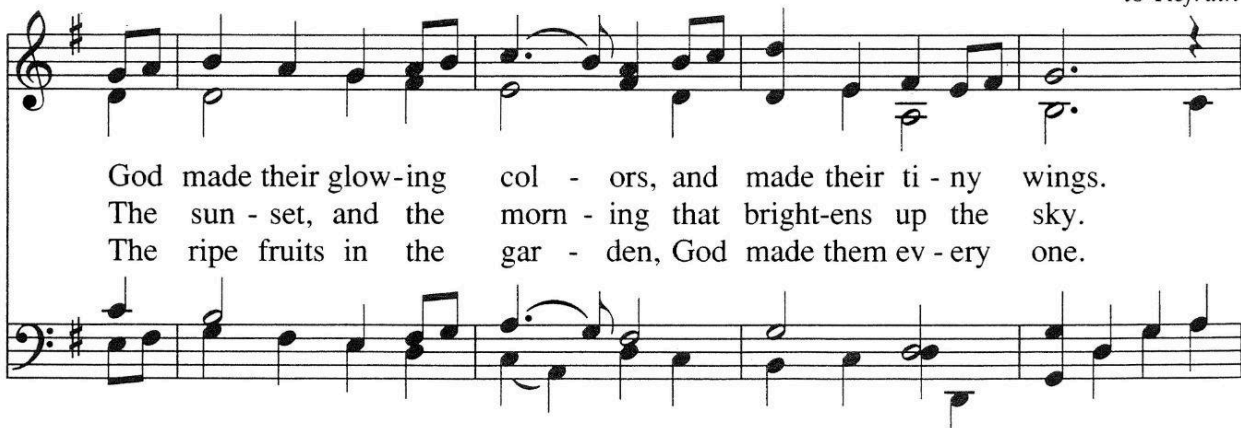


All things wise and won - der - ful, our dear God made them all.



1 Each lit - tle flower that o - pens, each lit - tle bird that sings,  
2 The pur - ple-head - ed moun-tain, the riv - er run - ning by,  
3 The cold wind in the win - ter, the pleas-ant sum-mer sun,

*to Refrain*



God made their glow-ing col - ors, and made their ti - ny wings.  
The sun - set, and the morn - ing that bright-ens up the sky.  
The ripe fruits in the gar - den, God made them ev - ery one.

## Touch the Earth Lightly

Unison  
Brightly

Shirley Erena Murray, 1992

1 Touch the earth light - ly, use the earth gent - ly,  
 2 We who en - dan - ger, who cre - ate hun - ger,  
 3 Let there be green - ing, birth from the burn - ing,  
 4 God of all liv - ing, God of all lov - ing,

nour-ish the life of the world in our care:  
 a - gents of death for all crea - tures that live,  
 wa - ter that bless - es, and air that is sweet,  
 God of the seed - ling, the snow, and the sun,

Gift of great won - der, ours to sur - ren - der,  
 We who would fos - ter clouds of dis - as - ter—  
 Health in God's gar - den, hope in God's chil - dren,  
 Teach us, de - flect us, Christ re - con - nect us,

trust for the chil - dren to - mor - row will bear.  
 God of our plan - et, fore - stall and for - give!  
 re - gen - er - a - tion that peace will com - plete.  
 us - ing us gent - ly, and mak - ing us one.

## THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

|     |       |          |                                                                 |
|-----|-------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun | 10/18 | 10:00 AM | Sunday Celebration - Blessing of the Animals                    |
| Sun | 10/18 | 11:30 AM | Church Council (Room 210)                                       |
| Tue | 10/20 | 12:00 PM | <i>Connector</i> weekly e-news articles are due (every Tuesday) |
| Tue | 10/20 | 6:30 PM  | Small Group Study of "The Chosen" (Horton Lounge)               |
| Wed | 10/21 | 3:00 PM  | Worship Team (Horton Lounge)                                    |
| Thu | 10/22 | 6:00 PM  | Cub Scouts (Assembly Hall & Scout Room)                         |
| Thu | 10/22 | 7:00 PM  | Scouts BSA (Assembly Hall & Scout Room)                         |
| Thu | 10/22 | 8:00 PM  | Alcoholics Anonymous (Horton Lounge)                            |
| Sun | 10/25 | 10:00 AM | Sunday Celebration                                              |

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

|     |       |          |                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|-------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun | 10/25 | 11:30 AM | St. James 101 (New Members' Group)                                                                                                              |
| Sun | 11/1  | 10:00 AM | Sunday Celebration - Communion / All Saints Day                                                                                                 |
| Mon | 11/2  | 6:30 PM  | Compassion Not Cruelty Prayer Vigil (Sanctuary)                                                                                                 |
| Sun | 11/8  | 11:30 AM | Autumn Potluck Luncheon (Assembly Hall)<br>→ Sign up: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/AutumnPotluck2026">https://tinyurl.com/AutumnPotluck2026</a> |
| Wed | 11/11 | 3:00 PM  | Worship Team (Horton Lounge)                                                                                                                    |
| Sat | 11/14 | 1:00 PM  | Singing Resistance (Sanctuary)                                                                                                                  |
| Wed | 11/18 | 1:00 PM  | Mission and Social Action Team (Horton Lounge)                                                                                                  |
| Fri | 11/20 | 6:00 PM  | St. James UCC Meat Raffle (Oakwood Manor, Hamburg)                                                                                              |
| Sun | 11/22 | 10:00 AM | Sunday Celebration - Harvest Home Sunday                                                                                                        |

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## REV. PAUL'S TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

|     |       |                           |
|-----|-------|---------------------------|
| Mon | 10/19 | Day off                   |
| Tue | 10/20 | Office and by appointment |
| Wed | 10/21 | Office and by appointment |
| Thu | 10/22 | Office and by appointment |
| Fri | 10/23 | Study and writing day     |
| Sat | 10/24 | Day off                   |

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## BE A SUNDAY VOLUNTEER!

Please use the links below to sign up for Sunday volunteer opportunities. Thank you!

|                                            |                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Liturgists:</b>                         | <a href="https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccliturgists">https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccliturgists</a>             |
| <b>Greeters:</b>                           | <a href="https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccgreeters">https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccgreeters</a>                 |
| <b>Sunday School Assistants:</b>           | <a href="https://tinyurl.com/sundayschoolassistant26-27">https://tinyurl.com/sundayschoolassistant26-27</a> |
| <b>Altar flowers:</b>                      | <a href="https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccflowers">https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccflowers</a>                   |
| <b>After-church coffee and fellowship:</b> | <a href="https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccfellowship">https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccfellowship</a>             |

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**Have you remembered St. James UCC in your will?**

**SMALL GROUP SERIES OF SEASON 4 OF “THE CHOSEN”  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20 • 6:30 PM • HORTON LOUNGE OF ST. JAMES UCC**

# The CHOSEN



## **Episode 5: “Sitting, Serving, Scheming”**

Jesus and his disciples gather for an important occasion, but not everyone is there with the same intentions. While some are focused on serving, others are making plans behind the scenes. This episode gives us a wonderful opportunity to consider what it really means to serve Jesus with the right heart.

Come watch with us and stay for our discussion! All are welcome.

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## Annual Autumn Potluck

**November 8**

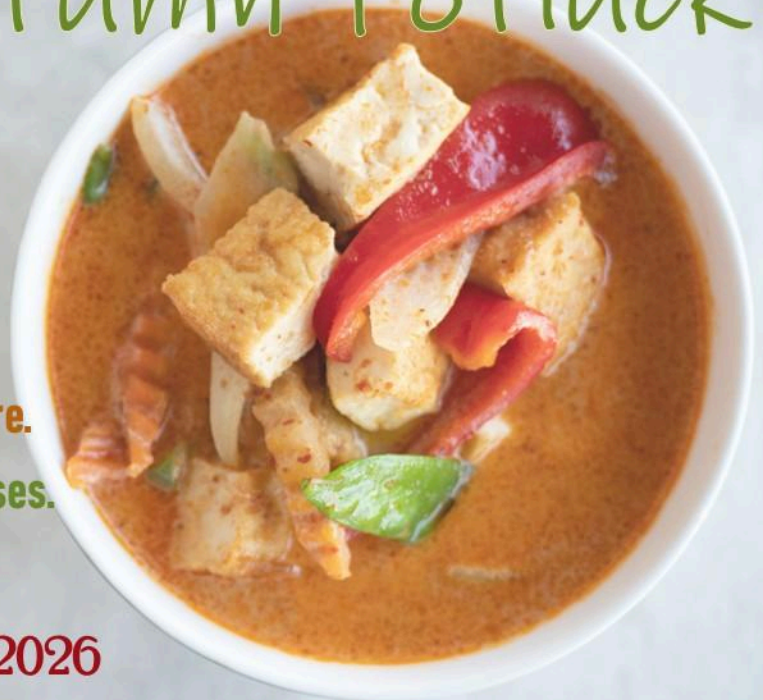
**11:30 am**

**Please plan to bring a dish to share.**

**RSVP requested for planning purposes.**

**All are welcome!**

**[tinyurl.com/AutumnPotluck2026](https://tinyurl.com/AutumnPotluck2026)**



## FOOD AND TOILETRY DONATIONS

We continue to collect toiletries and food gifts (as well as pet food and treats) for the Saints Peter and Paul food pantry and outreach center. Your generous contributions from the shopping list below are most welcome and appreciated.

Collection bins for donations are located by the elevator and outside the Horton Lounge. Thank you to everyone who blesses our community with their donations.

→ **Critical need:** crackers, soup

|                                                            |                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| FOOD PANTRY                                                |                          |
| <b>SHOPPING LIST</b>                                       |                          |
| September/October 2026                                     |                          |
| <b>PANTRY STAPLES</b>                                      |                          |
| Spaghetti Sauce                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Soup                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canned pasta                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canned Vegetables (all - green beans, corn, carrots, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pasta & Rice Sides                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tomato Products - stewed, crushed, diced, paste, etc.      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canned Fruit (inc. applesauce)                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Juice - bottles or juice boxes                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cereal bars/protein bars                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>HOUSEHOLD / TOILETRIES</b>                              |                          |
| Dish Liquid                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Toothpaste & Toothbrushes                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hand Soap                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Paper Towels & Toilet Paper                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Deodorant                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cat and Dog Food                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |

You can also support the pantry by making donations from their Amazon Wish List:  
<https://tinyurl.com/SSPPwishlist>



SAINT JAMES  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## NEW MEMBERS' GROUP: St. James 101

**Sunday, October 25 • 11:30 AM**

**Are you interested in joining St. James UCC?  
Even if you're just thinking about it, this is a great  
opportunity to ask questions, meet others, and  
learn more about us!**

**Please RSVP:**

**[revpaul@hamburgucc.org](mailto:revpaul@hamburgucc.org)  
716-649-6171**



## PRAYER FOR THE POLLS

A MULTI-SITE PRAYER VIGIL ON THE EVE OF AN ELECTION

JOIN US FOR PRAYER AT A HOST CHURCH NEAR YOU!

**ST. JOSEPH UNIVERSITY CHURCH**  
3269 MAIN ST. BUFFALO

**STELLA NIAGARA FRANCISCANS**  
4421 LOWER RIVER RD. STELLA NIAGARA

**AMHERST COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
77 WASHINGTON HWY. BUFFALO

**PILGRIM ST. LUKE'S UCC**  
335 RICHMOND AVE. BUFFALO

**CLEVELAND HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
4774 UNION RD, BUFFALO

**FAMILY OF PARISHES HEART OF BUFFALO**  
ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
SS COLUMBA BRIGID  
75 HICKORY ST. BUFFALO

**ST. JAMES UCC**  
76 MAIN ST. HAMBURG

**NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
300 N. FOREST RD. WILLIAMSVILLE

**CLINTON STREET UMC**  
50 N. ADAM ST. LOCKPORT

**1<sup>ST</sup> CONGREGATIONAL UCC**  
132 N. MAIN STREET. ANGOLA



COMPASSION  
NOT CRUELTY

**NOVEMBER 2, 2026 6:30PM**

## Welcome to St. James United Church of Christ

- We believe that faith is a matter of heart and mind.
- We believe that taking the Bible seriously does not mean taking it literally.
- We believe that God embraces all people equally.
- We believe that we are called to be nothing less than global citizens.
- We believe that the social expression of love is justice.
- We believe that every generation is called to discover new faith traditions.
- We believe that God continues to speak through the actions and words of people today, just as in times of old.



We are a **Creation Justice** church. In the United Church of Christ, Creation Justice churches are “green” churches committed to caring for creation and recognizing how past and current abuse of this gift has caused suffering and inequity. We commit ourselves to confront current and future detriment to our climate and creation in all dimensions of our congregation’s life and beyond the walls of the church.

We are a **Just Peace** church. In the United Church of Christ, Just Peace churches promote peace with justice (a just peace) as an expression of God’s love. We support peaceful opposition to intolerance, injustice, discrimination, and war, and we seek the ways of justice and peace in order to make a difference in our lives and the lives of all who experience injustice and violence.

We are an **Open and Affirming** church. In the United Church of Christ, Open and Affirming churches covenant to welcome and celebrate people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Likewise, we welcome and celebrate people of every faith experience, race, ethnicity, culture, ability, age, background, viewpoint, and life experience. If you struggle with addiction, are recovering from trauma, or have ever felt the pain of exclusion, you are embraced here.

To receive our **weekly e-news**, *The St. James Connector*, scan the QR code or go to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccnews>



SCAN ME

For **online giving**, scan the QR code or go to:  
<https://www.hamburgucc.org/giving>



SCAN ME

**St. James United Church of Christ**

**76 Main Street • Hamburg, NY 14075 • 716-649-6171**

**Church Office: [churchoffice@hamburgucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@hamburgucc.org) • Pastor: [revpaul@hamburgucc.org](mailto:revpaul@hamburgucc.org)**



**We recycle church bulletins! After you are finished using your bulletin, please share it with a friend or neighbor or place it in the recycling bins in the narthex area or in front of the church.**

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