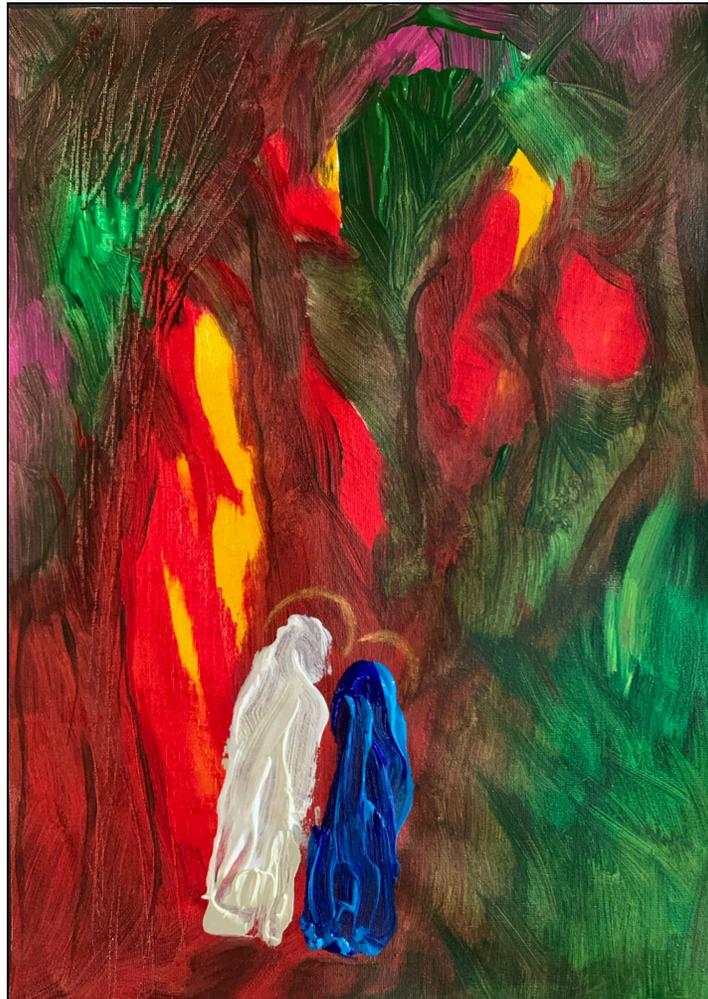


**Second Sunday in Lent**  
Sunday Celebration • March 1, 2026 • 10:00 AM



"Jesus and Nicodemus" by Paulo Medina



SAINT JAMES  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**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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# Second Sunday in Lent

Sunday Celebration • March 1, 2026 • 10:00 AM

Liturgist: Brando Reyes



“Courage is a kind of salvation.”  
Plato (*4th century BCE*)

“Theology is rarely an even, four-sides-to-the-table kind of reality. There always seems to be a third angle to consider, another perspective to ponder.”  
Karoline Lewis (*21st century*)

“Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted.”  
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (*20th century*)

“I shut my eyes in order to see.”  
Paul Gauguin (*19th century*)

“God help us when we have faith only in doctrine.”  
Andrew Prior (*21st century*)

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

## **GATHERING MUSIC**

## **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **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

## **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**

"Sing Praise to God, Who Has Shaped"

NCH 22

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Brando Reyes

One: Come, people of God,  
Many: **Let us journey together!**  
One: Through the uncertainty of the wilderness,  
Many: **Through the uncertainty of our questions,**  
One: God goes with us:  
Many: **Around us, among us, and within us.**  
One: Come, people of God:  
Many: **With our doubts,**  
One: With our questions,  
Many: **With our apprehensions and fears.**  
One: Come, people of God!  
Many: **Let us seek not a destination,**  
One: But a journey of growth.  
Many: **May we hold our answers gently.**  
One: May we be open to learning anew.  
Many: **Let us lift up our hearts to the Living One,**  
One: Open our minds to the Spirit's Wind,  
Many: **And center our lives in the ground of Christ.**

**\*PRAYER OF INVOCATION** (inspired by Psalm 121)

Brando

**We lift up our hearts to you, Spirit of the Universe:**

- **Trusting you to hold us securely when we feel caught in the mire of indecision, when we hesitate to step forward, when we fear the future too much to try.**
- **Trusting you to keep watch when our eyelids droop, when our perseverance wanes, when we draw near, and when we wander away.**
- **Trusting you to shelter us from the heat of anger, from the shadows of deceit, from the temptations that cloud our vision.**

**We lift up our hearts to you, our Helper, Watcher, and Shelterer. Amen.**

**\*RESPONSE**

**"Call to Payer" (Verse 1)**

SPP 61

***Floating and flaming and filling new life.  
Hovering and healing and helping with sighs.  
Spirit at work since the dawning of time;  
meet us right here, touch us right now.  
Meet us right here, touch us right now.***

## RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

- **Alyscia Keller**
- **James Keller**
- **Kathleen Rockey**
- **Mary Ventura**



## CHILDREN'S TIME

## SCRIPTURE

**John 3:1-17** (NRSV Updated Edition)

Brando

*John regarded this meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, as one of the most significant events highlighting the theological differences between Christianity and Judaism. Here he states the real purpose of Jesus' life and ministry.*

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the realm of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the realm of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Promised One. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Promised One be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that God gave the Only Begotten Son, so that everyone who believes may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Only Begotten into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him."

## CHORAL ANTHEM

**MESSAGE**

"We Are All Nicodemus"

Rev. Paul

## JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CONGREGATION

### 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

## SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

### INVITATION TO THE TABLE

One: Jesus has gathered us, longing to share with us bread and cup at his table. May these be moments which open our eyes to the mystery of God's presence with us in the days and nights of our living. All are welcome to be nourished and refreshed by these abundant gifts.

Many: **No matter how old you are, no matter your gender, no matter your culture, no matter whom you love, no matter your ability, no matter your race, no matter your faith journey, all are welcome at this table.**

*(continued on the next page)→*

One: No one can “earn” a place at this meal. Come of your own choice.  
Many: **Bring your hopes and your history. Bring your deliberations and your doubts. Bring your cry for liberation. But what is most important is that you come as your whole self.**  
One: We welcome all to this banquet table. This is a table of hospitality, sharing, celebration, and relationship.

## COMMUNION HYMN

“I Come with Joy” (*Verses 1-3*)

NCH 349

## WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

One: In time beyond our dreaming, God hovered over the waters and was revealed in fire and storm and precious law.  
Many: **Likewise, humanity, in this creative likeness, evolved on our planet, along with minerals and waters, flowers and fruits—living creatures of grace and beauty! We offer God our thanks and praise.**  
One: In the forty days of Lent, we also remember the love made manifest in the birth, life, and death of Jesus of Nazareth. In his healing acts and love-filled teachings, we recall the words he spoke to call forth love, care, peace, and respect for one another.  
Many: **We are grateful for this assurance of love where there is human betrayal, love where there is hatred, and love where there is oppression.**  
One: And so, with Elizabeth who prophesied a birth, Martha who longed for the Christ, and James and John who sought to follow in the Way, we continue our praise, saying:  
Many: **Holy, holy, holy, vulnerable God, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

One: We remember that long ago, so our tradition says, Jesus took bread, offered thanks for it, and broke it:  
Many: **“This bread is broken, as my body will be.”**  
One: He handed the bread to his friends, and invited them to eat:  
Many: **“Remember all that I have been to you.”**  
One: We remember that long ago, so our tradition says, Jesus took the cup, offered thanks for it, and gave it to his friends:  
Many: **“This cup is poured out, as my life will be.”**  
One: He handed the cup to his friends, and invited them to drink:  
Many: **“As you drink, give thanks for all I have given.”**  
One: Siblings in Christ, this is the bread of life and the cup of blessing.

## PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

Dear God, you transform. You transform all that is before you so that at the touch of your grace we are never the same. Make these ordinary gifts of bread and cup into the extraordinary presence of Christ with us. In so doing, hold us as your own. Renew us as your people for the sake of the world you love. Amen.

## COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

We receive communion by the ancient rite of intinction:

1. Please come forward by the center aisle.
2. Approach the Pastor and take a piece of communion bread.
3. Go to the Communion Assistant and slightly dip your bread in the chalice, while avoiding touching the contents with your fingers.
4. After dipping your bread in the chalice, receive (consume) the elements. You need not wait to return to your seat to partake in communion.
5. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.

*All are welcome at God's table. No one is turned away.*

*You do not have to be baptized or be a member of this or any church to partake in this meal. We invite you to receive these gifts of life and blessing given freely by a compassionate God.*

*A gluten-free bread option is available. The chalice contains grape juice rather than wine. (Sealed pre-filled plastic cups are available for those who may prefer them.)*

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

May our sharing of bread and cup be as Jesus lived it, O God, knowing that our lives are forever changed by this and every breaking of bread. May the table-gathering of your people be blessed, and may we be strengthened as we serve as agents of your peace, justice, love, and reconciliation of and among your people as we journey through Lent. Amen.

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

“As Moses Raised the Serpent Up”

NCH 605

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*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.*



## Sing Praise to God, Who Has Shaped

Ps. 68:4, 32; Ps. 105

Joachim Neander, 1680

Transl. Madeleine Forell Marshall, 1993

1 Sing praise to God, who has shaped and sus - tains all cre -  
 2 Praise God, our guard - ian, who lov - ing - ly of - fers cor -  
 3 Sing praise to God, with sin - cere thanks for all your suc -  
 4 Sing praise, my soul, the great name of your high God com -

a - tion! Sing praise, my soul, in pro - found and com -  
 rec - tion, Who, as on ea - gle's wings, saves us from  
 cess - es. Mer - ci - ful God ev - er loves to en -  
 mend - ing. All that have life and breath join you, their

plete ad - o - ra - tion! Glad - some re - joi - ce— or - gan and  
 sin - ful de - jec - tion. Have you ob - served, how we are  
 cour - age and bless us. On - ly con - ceive, what god - ly  
 notes sweet - ly blend - ing. God is your light! Soul, ev - er

trum - pet and voice— join - ing God's great con - gre - ga - tion.  
 al - ways pre - served by God's pa - ren - tal af - fec - tion?  
 strength can a - chieve: strength that would touch and car - ess us.  
 keep this in sight: a - men, a - men nev - er end - ing.

# Call to Prayer

♩=100

D G/D A/D G/D

D D/F# G D

1. Float - ing and flam - ing and fill - ing new life.  
 2. Search - ing and sav - ing and sooth - ing in - deed.  
 3. Call - ing and car - ing and chang - ing each heart.

F#m Bm E A

Hov - 'ring and heal - ing and help - ing with sighs.  
 Teach - ing and turn - ing and tak - ing the lead;  
 Lov - ing and lift - ing us to a new start;

Em A Bm/A A7 D/F# Em

Spir - it at work since the dawn - ing of time;  
 Fa - ther - ing, Moth - er - ing, birth - ing new ways;  
 Je - sus our Sav - ior, our teach - er, our Lord;

A Bm C#dim Bm G Em/G A D

meet us right here, touch us right now.  
 meet us right here, touch us right now.  
 meet us right here, touch us right now.

A Bm C#dim Bm G Em A D

Meet us right here, touch us right now.  
 Meet us right here, touch us right now.  
 Meet us right here, touch us right now.

*Brian Wren, 1968; rev. 1982, 1994**Unison*

1 I come with joy, a child of God, for - giv - en, loved, and  
 2 I come with Chris - tians far and near to find, as all are  
 3 As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share, each proud di - vi - sion  
 4 And thus we meet, and bet - ter know the Pres - ence, ev - er  
 5 To - geth - er met, to - geth - er bound, in friend - ship we will

free, The life of Je - sus to re - call, in  
 fed, The new com - mu - ni - ty of love in  
 ends. The love that made us, makes us one, and  
 near, And join our hearts and sing with joy that  
 stay, And go with joy to love the world and

love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.  
 Christ's com - mu - nion bread, in Christ's com - mu - nion bread.  
 strang - ers now are friends, and strang - ers now are friends.  
 Christ is ris - en here, that Christ is ris - en here.  
 live the way we pray, and live the way we pray.

ONE LICENSE A-723905

joy

# As Moses Raised the Serpent Up

605

Versification The New Century Hymnal, 1993

John 3:14-17

1 As Mo - ses raised the ser - pent up, God's  
2 For God so loved the world that God, all  
3 That Child was sent in - to the world not

Child is lift - ed high; And all who in that  
hu - man life to free, Gave to the world God's  
to con - demn but save; Now through Christ's name all

Child be - lieve shall nev - er, nev - er die.  
Child that all might live e - ter - nal - ly.  
are re - deemed— what won - drous love God gave.

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## THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Sun 3/1	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration Communion Sunday / Reception of New Members
Tue 3/3	12:00 PM	<b>Connector weekly e-news articles are due</b> (every Tuesday)
Tue 3/3	7:00 PM	<b>WISE Book Study</b> (Chapters 2 & 3) (Horton Lounge & Zoom) More info: hamburgucc.org/education
Wed 3/4	6:00 PM	<b>Cub Scouts</b> (Assembly Hall)
Thu 3/5	7:30 PM	<b>Scouts BSA</b> (Assembly Hall & Scout Room)
Thu 3/5	8:00 PM	<b>Alcoholics Anonymous</b> (Horton Lounge)
Sun 3/8	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Wed 3/11	3:00 PM	Worship Team
Sun 3/15	11:30 AM	Church Council
Wed 3/18	1:00 PM	Mission and Social Action Team
Sun 3/29	10:00 AM	Palm Sunday Celebration
Thu 4/2	7:00 PM	<b>Maunder Thursday Service (Hamburg Clergy Alliance)</b> at Hamburg Presbyterian Church
Fri 4/3	7:00 PM	<b>Good Friday Service (Hamburg Clergy Alliance)</b> at St. James United Church of Christ
Sun 4/5	10:00 AM	<b>Easter Sunday Celebration / Communion Sunday</b>

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## REV. PAUL'S TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Mon 3/2	Day off
Tue 3/3	MORNING & AFTERNOON: Office and by appointment EVENING: WISE Book Study
Wed 3/4	Office and by appointment
Thu 3/5	Office and by appointment
Fri 3/6	Study and writing day
Sat 3/7	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/StJamesSS2025">https://tinyurl.com/StJamesSS2025</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?**

## WISE BOOK STUDY

As part of our process of becoming a WISE congregation (**W**elcoming, **I**nclusive, **S**upportive, and **E**ngaged for mental health awareness), we are educating ourselves on issues relating to mental health and neurodiversity, particularly in the church setting.

→ **For more information:** <https://www.hamburgucc.org/education>

**St. James UCC Book Club**  
**WISE Book Study**

**Tuesdays at 7:00 PM**

**IN PERSON & ONLINE • ALL ARE WELCOME!**

***Blessed Minds:***  
***Breaking the Silence About Neurodiversity***  
by Sarah Griffith Lund (Chalice Press, 2025)

Affecting up to 20 percent of Americans, neurodiversity includes autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and several other conditions. Through personal stories, historical context, and theological insights, Sarah Griffith Lund unpacks the concepts of neurodiversity, mental health, and disability. This book challenges the stigma surrounding neurodivergent individuals and offers practical steps for creating inclusive and supportive faith communities. With themes of vulnerability, compassion, and justice, *Blessed Minds* is a call to recognize the divine nature of all minds and to foster a church environment where every individual is valued and celebrated.

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## What is the United Church of Christ?

The United Church of Christ traces its roots to the Protestant Reformation, the Pilgrims of the *Mayflower*, and traditions indigenous to the United States. There are five historic “streams” that formed the UCC: Congregational, Christian, Afro-Christian, Evangelical, and Reformed.

- In 1931, the Christian Church, along with the Afro-Christian Convention, joined with the Congregational Churches to form the Congregational Christian Churches. Then, in 1934, the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America united to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Both of these denominations merged to form the United Church of Christ in 1957. We are a united and uniting church.
- The UCC weaves God’s message of hope and extravagant welcome with social action for justice and peace, and our response to the demands of our faith is woven into the history of our country.
- We were the first historically white denomination to ordain an African American (1785) and the first in the modern era to ordain a woman (1853). We were the first mainline denomination to ordain an openly gay man (1972) and affirm marriage equality (2005). We were in the forefront of the anti-slavery movement, the Social Gospel movement, and the Civil Rights Movement, taking seriously Jesus’ commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself.”
- Learn more about the UCC’s “firsts”: <https://www.hamburgucc.org/about-the-ucc>

# 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>



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



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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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