

The CELEBRATION of the GOSPEL

DECEMBER 17, 2017 at 8:30 A.M.

Welcome to All

All are invited to to participate in any of our activities, and to become a part of this community of faith and love.

✠ Please stand as you are able. **Bold** indicates congregational response.

THE ADVENT OF WORSHIP

GREETING *and* ANNOUNCEMENTS

✠ SONGS of PRAISE

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

UMH 229

**Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all.**

**Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.**

**Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you.**

The King of Glory Comes

FWS 2091

**REFRAIN: The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.
Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.**

**Who is the King of glory; how shall we call?
He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages.** *(Refrain)*

**In all of Galilee, in city or village,
he goes among his people curing their illness.** *(Refrain)*

**Sing then of David's son, our Savior and brother;
in all of Galilee was never another.** *(Refrain)*

LIGHTING of the ADVENT CANDLE

Caress and Eric Threadgill

We have witnessed this Advent season three candles being lit:
Hope, Peace, and Joy.

Today, we will include the lighting of the candle of Love.

We celebrate God's ever-present, unconditional love for us.

(lighting of all four Advent Candles)

As we open our hearts to God's love, may our lives be signs
of God's extravagant love for the world.

**May Emmanuel find welcome in our hearts,
take flesh in our lives, and be for all peoples
the welcome advent of redemption and grace.**

RESPONSE to the LIGHT

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

UMH 204

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.**

WELCOME IN THE GOOD NEWS

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Barbara Benton

Parents may accompany their children to the altar if desired.

*Ushers will pass out folders during the Children's Moment.
Please register your attendance. If you have any joys or concerns
please fill out a prayer card found in the left pocket of the folder
and place it in the offering plate.*

✠ SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25

Jim Roberts

This is the Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION

Based on Psalm 19:14

**May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight, thou who are my strength and my
redeemer. Amen.**

SERMON

Welcome Inn Change

Pastor Lane

OUR LOVING RESPONSE

✠ HYMN of FAITH

O Little Town of Bethlehem

UMH 230

✠ PRAYER of CONFESSION

**Merciful God,
always with us...always coming:
We confess that we do not know how to prepare
for your Advent.**

We have forgotten how to hope in miracles.

We have not welcomed in the promise of your kingdom.

We get distracted by all the busyness of this season.

We ignore the needs of our neighbors.

Forgive us, we pray.

**Grant us the patient faith and wisdom of Mary,
the joyful welcome of Elizabeth,
and the courage and resolve of Joseph,
that we may journey with them to Bethlehem,
and find the good news of a child born for us.**

**Now, in the quiet of our hearts, we ask you to make
us ready to welcome your Light into our lives.**

(A time for silent prayers and confession.)

✠ WORDS of ASSURANCE and PARDON

based on Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the
promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those
days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up from
David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety.

And this is the name by which it will be called:

“The Lord Is Our Righteousness.”

**Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose coming we announce
this season, is our righteousness.**

In Christ, we are made right with God.

In Christ, we are forgiven! Glory to God! Amen.

✠ SHARING the LOVE and PEACE of CHRIST

OFFERTORY

Shepherd's Watch

written by Betty Schroeder

✠ DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God,
all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

UMH 94

✠ CALL to the TABLE

**Welcome! This table is for all,
brothers and sisters, neighbors and newcomers,
from near and far, we gather at God's welcome.**

This table is for all, but it is not our table.

It's God's table. So come, and take your place
at the table of grace.

You are welcome. You are invited. You are called.

**Let us share this holy meal together,
where all are welcomed in.**

✠ THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

And so, with your people on earth and
all the company of heaven we praise your name
and join their unending hymn:

Singing together:

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna in the highest. Blest is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

The congregation is seated and the institution of the Lord's Supper is recalled.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we
offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Singing together:

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The pastor invokes the present work of the Holy Spirit and concludes:

All honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and for ever.

Singing together:

**Amen. Amen. Amen. Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

UMH 895

GIVING the BREAD and CUP

- *All are welcome to partake in Holy Communion.*
- *Gluten-free communion is offered to anyone who desires it; when you come up to the altar, let the server know you would like the gluten-free elements.*
- *You are invited to stay at the chancel for prayer as long as you desire.*

PRAYER after RECEIVING

**Thank you, God, for meeting us in this holy mystery, where you
have welcomed us in and filled us with your grace. Send us by
your Spirit to be faithful signs of your steadfast love, filled with
the hope that comes from this blessed season, as we prepare to
“welcome inn,” your Son, the Light of the World. Amen.**

DEPARTING IN SERVICE & LOVE

INVITATION to CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

*We joyfully welcome all those whose wish to become members of St. John's
and invite you to come forward during the singing of the closing hymn.*

✠ HYMN of DISCIPLESHIP

Love Came Down at Christmas

UMH 242

✠ BLESSING and SENDING FORTH

✠ POSTLUDE

All are invited to stay for refreshments in the Family Life Center.

*The flowers in the sanctuary are in celebration of the wedding of
Madeline Blackwood and Alex Beem.*

The poinsettias in the sanctuary are from members and friends of St. John's.

Welcome to St. John's!

Welcome to worship! We are glad you've joined us and hope you feel at home here. Whoever you are, wherever you are on your faith journey, you are welcome.

Children of all ages are welcome in worship. However, if you or your child would prefer, nursery care is available in the Administration Building next door; an usher can escort you. Children's bulletins and sermon sacks are available from an usher.

Restrooms are in the Narthex.

Thank you for being here.

THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

The Christmas season is, in most cases, a time of joy, excitement, and happiness. But it can be a difficult time for some, especially those struggling with sorrow and grief. St. John's is once again holding *The Longest Night Service* **Thursday December 21** at 6 p.m. This service is a time to acknowledge our grief and remind ourselves of the hope we have in Christ. Everyone is invited to this beautiful, intimate, and healing service.

YOUTH ACTIVITY - HOLIDAY LIGHTS

St. John's Youth, if you want to see the Holiday Lights at the Baton Rouge General on Bluebonnet meet at the church at 5:45 p.m. on **Thursday, December 21**; we will be leaving at exactly 6 p.m. There is live music, hot chocolate, dancing trees, and **3 tons of SNOW!!!** This is a family event, so if parents and siblings would like to come, all are welcome. We expect to be back at the church around 8 p.m. If your family is planning to attend the Longest Night Service, feel free to join us after the worship service is over.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

We hope you will worship with us both Sunday morning for our combined worship service, as well as in the evening on Christmas Eve.

10 a.m. A festive worship experience that will feature voices of prophets and Old Testament stories to prepare our hearts for the gift of Christmas. We will not have Sunday School or coffee time. A nursery will only be available at the 10 a.m. service.

4 p.m. A family worship service with traditional Christmas scripture readings by children & youth, carols, Holy Communion, concluding with candlelight.

7 p.m. A traditional worship service including the Chancel Choir, carols, Holy Communion and concludes by candlelight. If you ordered a poinsettia you may take them home after the 7 p.m. candlelight service.

OFFICE AND PANTRY HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Please make note of holiday closures for the church office and The Shepherd's Market. The church office will close Thursday, December 21 at 4 p.m. and will remain closed through Christmas week. We will reopen with regular office hours (9 a.m.-4 p.m.) on Tuesday, January 2. The Shepherd's Market will be closed beginning Friday, December 22 and will reopen on Thursday, January 4 at 8 a.m.

ANGEL TREE THANK YOU

Thank you to all of St. John's "angels" who helped with the Angel Tree this year. You purchased and wrapped gifts for 40+ children. Thanks to those who called the caregivers and organized the gifts for delivery. A special thank you to all who delivered gifts on a cold Saturday morning. Everyone doing their part allowed us to bring Christmas blessings to the children on our tree.

END OF YEAR DONATIONS

This is a reminder, for income tax purposes, that all donations to St. John's for 2017 must be postmarked by December 31. If you have any questions about your giving, please call the office

HAPPENING AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday, December 17

9:45 a.m. Sunday School, *Campus Wide*
10:00 a.m. Puppet Show for Children, *FLC-C*
4:30 p.m. Youth Christmas Caroling

Monday, December 18

9:00 a.m. Ladies Covenant Group, *Parlor*
10:00 a.m. Let's Geaux Play, *Toddler Nursery*
3:00 p.m. The Shepherd's Market, *FLC*
3:00 p.m. Men's Covenant Group, *Library*
3:00 p.m. Lectionary Ladies, *Parlor*
5:00 p.m. Ladies' Covenant Group, *Parlor*
6:30 p.m. AA Meeting, *FLC-E*

Tuesday, December 19

8:00 a.m. The Shepherd's Market, *FLC*
8:15 a.m. Worship in the Market, *FLC*
4:30 p.m. Ladies' Covenant Group, *Parlor*
5:30 p.m. Cancer Survivors, *Choir Room*

Wednesday, December 20

5:00 p.m. Ladies' Covenant Group, *FLC-A*
6:30 p.m. Alpha Bells, *Sanctuary*
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir, *Choir Room*

Thursday, December 21

8:00 a.m. The Shepherd's Market, *FLC*
2:00 p.m. Holy Folders, *Library*
6:00 p.m. The Longest Night Service, *Sanctuary*
6:00 p.m. Youth: Holiday Lights
7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts, *FLC*

Friday, December 22

OFFICE CLOSED
6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer Group, *Parlor*
9:00 a.m. Arts & Crafts, *FLC-A*

Saturday, December 23

12:00 p.m. AA Meeting, *FLC-C*

Sunday, December 24

10:00 a.m. One Worship Service, no Sunday School
4:00 p.m. Family-oriented Candlelight Service
7:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service

ALTAR FLOWERS

In lieu of altar flowers a donation has been made by Troy and Sarah Prevot in honor of their 33rd anniversary.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Ushers: *Jim and Theresa Sandifer, Barbara Benton, Stephen LeBlanc;*
Host: *Sandra Kuykendall*

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Lane Cotton Winn
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Remember to pray for **The Walk**.
"...for we walk by faith, not
by sight." - 2 Corinthians 5:7
(NRSV)



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ST. JOHN'S

United Methodist Church

Glorifying God. Feeding People. Making Disciples.



8:30 a.m. Worship Service

DECEMBER 17, 2017

We are a Christian community called to share our gifts through worship, witness and service so that others will know God and become disciples of Jesus Christ.