

The CELEBRATION of the GOSPEL

December 23, 2018 at 11 A.M.

Welcome to All

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

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

THE ADVENT OF WORSHIP

GREETING *and* ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT

✠ CALL TO WORSHIP

Andre de la Fuente

Listen—all creation rejoices, can you hear it?

**There is so much noise and chatter,
are you sure there is music?**

Listen—the wilderness and desert are breaking out in song,
can you hear it?

It's been so long since we've heard a melody of praise.

Listen—the crocus blooms with joyful singing, the very mountains
join in the refrain. Can you hear it?

**We join our voices in hope, worshipping our God
who brings forth a new song in the world.**

Let us open our hearts with love as we pray together:

Life-giving God, we are a blessed people.

**In this moment of worship we pray that you might
bless us anew.**

**Give us ears to hear the melodies of praise that fill the
world around us. And as we hear the songs, teach us
to sing your praise, to dance with abandon, to rejoice
in the wonders of your grace.**

**Forgive us when we have passed by signs of your mercy.
We confess that too often we have not been open
to the rhythms of life you offer to us.**

**From this moment forward, open our eyes to the places
where joy is springing up from parched ground.**

**Lead us by your Spirit in the pathways of your
overflowing peace, hope and love. Amen.**

✠ HYMN of PRAISE

Life Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

UMH 213

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

*Andre de la Fuente, Gay Grimes
the Deidre Matthews family*

*Today we light the candle of love and relight the candles of
hope, peace, and joy.*

CANDLE RESPONSE SONG

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

UMH 218

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King.”**

The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

**Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world hath suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not the love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife, And hear the angels sing!**

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Pastor Lane

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.*

ANTHEM

Love Came Down at Christmas

Chancel Choir

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

✠ SCRIPTURE

Andre de la Fuente

Luke 2:8-20

*The Angels' and
Shepherds' Songs*

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping
watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood
before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they
were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for
see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to
you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,
the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped
in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was
with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and
saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the
shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see
this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to
us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the
child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known
what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it
were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured
all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds
returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and
seen, as it had been told them.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Songs of Glory and Peace”

Pastor Lane

WE RESPOND with THANKSGIVING

✠ HYMN of FAITH

Angels We Have Heard on High

UMH 238

A TIME of PRAYER

Pastor Deirdre

The Lord be with you
And also with you!

Let us pray.

Loving God,

**help us as we remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the wise men.**

Close the door of hatred,
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and tender compassion with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil
by the blessing of peace which Christ brings
and teach us to be truly joyous and generous,
with clarity of mind and purity of heart.
May Christmas morning find us
grateful to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
forgiving and forgiven, loving and loved --
for this is the gift of Christ at Christmas.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

OFFERING OUR TITHES & GIFTS to GOD

✠ DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy host. Amen.**

UMH 95

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

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

UMH 224, VS. 2 & 3

✠ BLESSING & SENDING FORTH

✠ POSTLUDE

We invite you to worship with us on Christmas Eve at 4 p.m. or 7 p.m.

*Thank you to all who dedicated a poinsettia in honor or in memory of a loved one.
You may take your poinsettia home after the 7 p.m. service on Christmas Eve.*

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.

Our ushers are happy to assist you in any way. Restrooms are in the Narthex.

Thank you for being here.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Tomorrow is Christmas Eve and St. John's will hold two worship services: at 4 p.m. we will have our family-friendly service and 7 p.m. we will hold our traditional service. We hope you will join us for either of these beautiful candlelight services that will prepare your heart to welcome the Christ child. Holy Communion will be celebrated at both. Childcare will be provided at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Please be considerate in **parking choices** as many visitors join us for worship on Christmas Eve. We encourage those who are able-bodied to park in the large lot behind the Family Life Center so that our guests may park closer to the sanctuary.

The **Christmas Eve offering** will be given to **Families in Transition (FIT)**, a new initiative of Opening Doors. FIT's mission is to provide broad support for a family having challenges while transitioning from a difficult situation until they get to a point where they can support themselves. All cash and undesignated gifts on Christmas Eve will be directed to the needs of the families sponsored by FIT.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULES

The church office will be closed on Monday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 25; we will reopen Wednesday, December 26 at 9 a.m. We will also be closed Monday, December 31 and Tuesday, January 1, 2019, reopening on Wednesday, January 2 at 9 a.m. **NOTE:** beginning in January the church office will be open on Fridays from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

The **Shepherd's Market** is closed for the holidays. It will reopen on Monday, January 7 at 3 p.m.

St. John's Youth will not meet Sunday, December 23 or December 31. Regular Youth fellowship will resume Sunday, January 6 at 4 p.m.

The **Chancel Choir** will not practice on Wednesday, December 26 or Wednesday, January 2. Choir practice will resume Wednesday, January 9 at 6:30 p.m.

All covenant and prayer groups that meet on Mondays and Tuesdays will not meet during the holiday closures and will resume on Monday, January 7 and Tuesday, January 8 at their regular times.

END OF YEAR DONATIONS

Please remember, if you are planning to make a donation to St. Johns' or any of our missions in 2018, in order for it to be claimed on your 2018 tax return, it must be postmarked or brought to the office by December 31.

CENTENARY CHOIR CONCERT - JANUARY 26

Mark your calendar! The Centenary Choir will be performing at St. John's on **Saturday, January 26** at 7 p.m. We will be needing folks to host the students in their home for that Saturday night after the concert. Phone (766-4594) or email (office@stjohnsbr.org) the church office if you are willing to act as a host home.

THE WESLEY CHALLENGE - SERIES AND STUDY

Make your New Years Resolution to develop a more authentic faith and join us for The Wesley Challenge built around 21 questions that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, encouraged the first Methodists to ask one another. Through this sermon series and Tuesday night study we will explore how we can develop the spiritual habits, practices and actions that can lead to a thriving Christian life.

See the insert in today's bulletin for additional information, to reserve a book, and to register for the class.

HAPPENING AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday, December 23

8:00 a.m. Praise Team, *Sanctuary*
8:30 a.m. Worship Service, *Sanctuary*
9:30 a.m. Coffee Time, *FLC*
9:45 a.m. Sunday School, *Campus Wide*
11:00 a.m. Worship Service, *Sanctuary*
7:00 p.m. Alleluia Ringers, *Sanctuary*

Monday, December 24

OFFICE CLOSED, THE SHEPHERD'S MARKET CLOSED
4:00 p.m. Family Service w/candlelight, *Sanctuary*
6:30 p.m. AA Meeting, *FLC-E*
7:00 p.m. Traditional Service w/candlelight, *Sanctuary*

Tuesday, December 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
OFFICE CLOSED, THE SHEPHERD'S MARKET CLOSED

Thursday, December 27

OFFICE OPEN
THE SHEPHERD'S MARKET CLOSED
8:30 a.m. Holy Folders, *Library*

Saturday, December 29

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

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS:

Ushers: *Jane Rassi, Deidra Matthews, Carrie de la Fuente, Nico de la Fuente*

CHURCH STAFF

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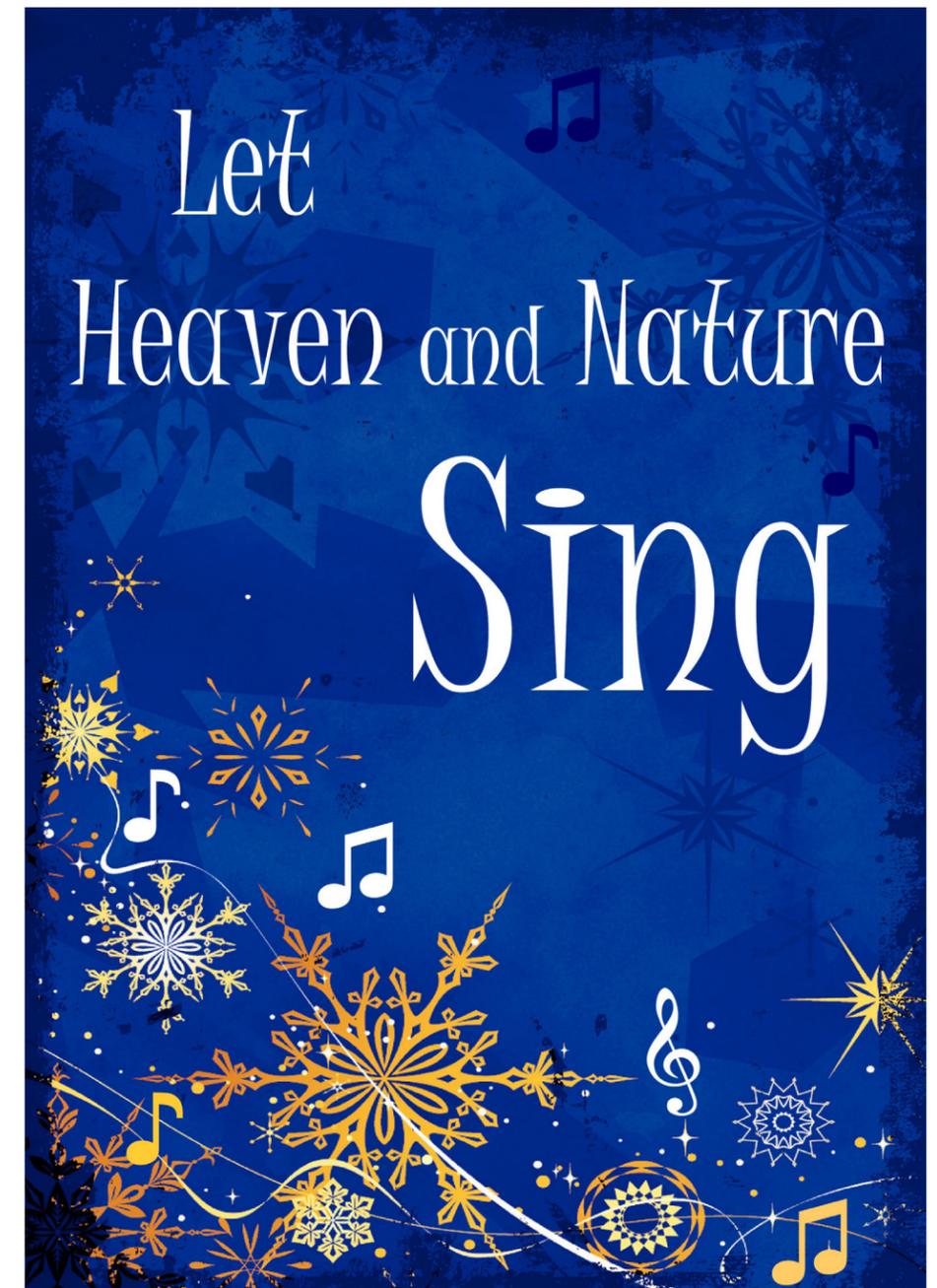
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ST. JOHN'S
United Methodist Church

Glorifying God. Feeding People. Making Disciples.



December 23, 2018
11 a.m. Worship Service

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.