

The CELEBRATION of the GOSPEL

DECEMBER 23, 2018 at 8:30 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 & ANNOUNCEMENTS

† SONG of PRAISE

Love Came Down at Christmas UMH 242, vs. 1 & 2
**Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.
Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;
worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?**

† CALL to WORSHIP *Natalie Cooper*

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.**

† SONG of PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High UMH 238, vs. 1 & 2
**Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

*Daphne Grady, John Toney,
John & Karen Buckley*

*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, vs. 1
**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.**

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.*

WE HEAR GOD’S WORD

† SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:8-20

Natalie Cooper

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Songs of Glory and Peace”

Pastor Lane

WE RESPOND with THANKSGIVING

† HYMN of FAITH

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

UMH 213

OFFERING OUR TITHES & GIFTS to GOD

Shepherd’s Watch

by Betty Schroeder

† DOXOLOGY

UMH 94

**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!**

† THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

God is with us. **We are not alone.**
Christ is present here. **The Spirit moves within us.**
Let us give thanks to God. **In memory and in hope.**

Blessings be to you, Creator God,
who in the beginning brought light and life to the world
and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.

**Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages,
your ancient promise still brings us hope.**

Over the ages you have called people to embrace your hope
and share your love. But even when they have closed their ears to the
song, you did not stop singing. You sent prophets and messengers
to your people, reminding them of the promised time of peace and
justice that would surround the world.

**They came in the midst of our despair
and filled us with hope.**

And then you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the
promise in a new way.

**Promising her a son, who would be called Jesus.
Promising her that in her son the world would be changed.**

And now as we prepare for that child to be born,
we echo the ancient song:

**O come, O come Emmanuel. Blessed is the One who comes
in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

THE STORY REMEMBERED

Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the
life that this baby will live.

**We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition
to show all what the Banquet of Hope could be, as he ate
openly with the despised and the outcast of his world.**

And we remember one special meal, a foretaste of the banquet that
is to come, that he ate with his closest friends.

**Gathering them together in an upper room to share the
story of liberation, he prepared them for liberation.**

And at the end of the meal he took bread, blessed and broke it,
then passed it to them saying:

**Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the
world. Eat it in remembrance and in hope.**

After that he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying:

**This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you
drink it remember me, for I shall not eat or drink again
until the time of the heavenly banquet.**

Remembering the birth of the child in the stable, we remember also
his life, his death and his resurrection.

**We remember how he poured his love out to all he met.
We look forward to his return and the coming reign of
peace, love, and justice.**

THE SPIRIT TRANSFORMS

The pastor invokes the present work of the Holy Spirit.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

THE POURING & BREAKING & SERVING

The Bread we break is the Bread of Life. The Cup we share is the
Cup of Promise. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

- ♦ *All are welcome to partake in Holy Communion.*
- ♦ *Gluten-free communion is offered to anyone who desires it at the station on the right.*

PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION

**God our Savior,
you fill the hungry with good things and send the
self-satisfied away empty.
In this eucharist you have filled us with the word
and the bread of life of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Make us hunger now for his coming in the hearts
and the homes of all.
Fill us with his spirit of service and heart of peace,
that through us, he may become near to people.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. 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

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

UMH 224, vs. 2 & 3

† BLESSING & SENDING FORTH

† POSTLUDE

After the service, all are invited to the Family Life Center for refreshments.

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. John's 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: *Phil & Jill Slicker, Paul Ivey, Sandra Kuykendall*

CHURCH STAFF

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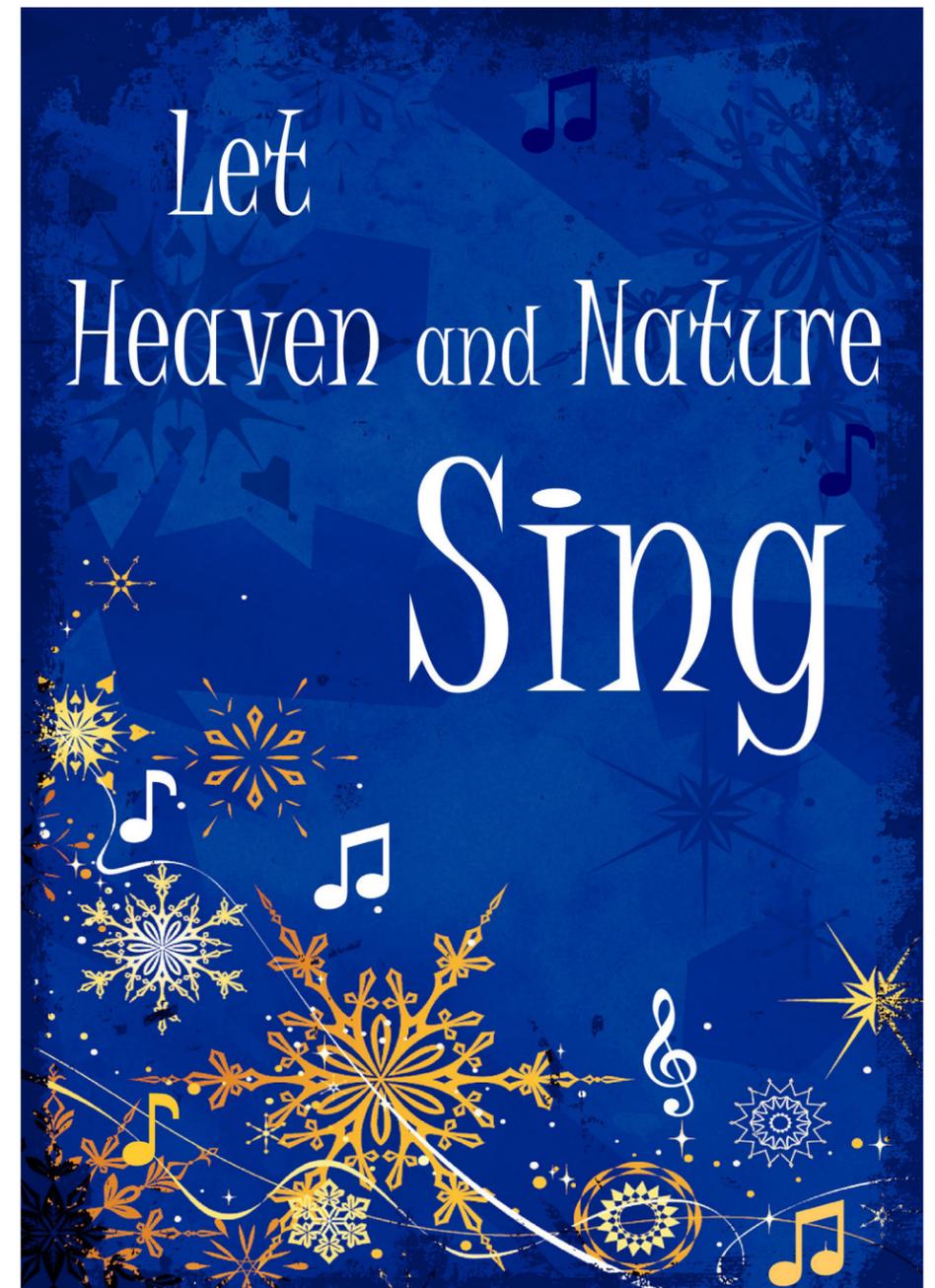
Give online: <http://bit.ly/sjumcgive>



ST. JOHN'S

United Methodist Church

Glorifying God. Feeding People. Making Disciples.



December 23, 2018

8:30 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.