



Sunday, January 2, 2022

11 A.M. WORSHIP CELEBRATION

All Are Welcome

The story of Epiphany marks an end and the beginning. Leaving their home, the Wise Men embark upon a pilgrimage, seeking the glimpse of the divine in the Christ child. Being warned in a dream, the Magi choose a different direction to journey back home. This leads them away from Herod's deception, manipulation, and harm. The Magi make a subversive choice to disobey Herod. They listen to God speaking to them through their dreams. As our own journeys continue, we remember we must sometimes make bold choices to choose a different way.

Whether you are a guest or member, we invite you to register your attendance (scan the QR code in the pew) so we know you're here and we can get to know you better.

STJOHNSBR.ORG | @STJOHNSBR

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

OUR MISSION

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.

OUR VISION

Our church will be known as a center for feeding people spiritually and physically in our community.

OUR CORE VALUES

We believe the following guiding principles make us a fruitful and spiritually intentional church:

- Fellowship: A sense of family, hospitality, and belonging to an open, accepting, and nurturing community.
- Caring: Loving response to needs of all people through empathy and compassion.
- Mission: giving of ourselves to meet and serve the needs of all others by faithful witness through our actions, servanthood and way of living.
- Spiritual Growth: Studying, understanding and growing in the word of God by Christ-centered prayer, worship and service through discipleship in action.

OUR CONTACT INFO

230 Renee Drive | Baton Rouge, LA 70810

office@stjohnsbr.org | 225-766-4594 | stjohnsbr.org | [@stjohnsbr](https://www.instagram.com/stjohnsbr)

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. - noon

60TH ANNIVERSARY

St. John's was founded in 1961 by 60 charter members. Ground was broken for the present sanctuary in August 1962, and it was dedicated Easter Sunday 1963. We are celebrating our 60th anniversary throughout 2021. Give God the Glory!

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Do No Harm, our first Wesleyan rule continues to be our benchmark for all recommendations. Following the recent guidance from the Louisiana Department of Health regarding the indoor situations, we recommend mask wearing during our worship services.

We look forward to the day when COVID will no longer be a part of our daily lives, until then, let us pray for our world, country, state, parish, and each other.

Grace & Peace
The Covid-19 Task Force

HELPFUL HINTS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

We fully welcome and love engaging children in worship! We include a special Children's Moment each Sunday.

- **The St. John's Prayground** is located in the front of the sanctuary. This is a place for children and their families to worship together, allowing children to more fully participate in the service. As a safety precaution, masks are required in the Prayground for everyone ages 2 and older. If you or your child need a mask, some are available in the Prayground. More details about the Prayground may be found on our website.
- A staffed **nursery** for infants through preschool is open every Sunday morning and is located next door in our Education/Administration building.
- **Changing tables** are located in the restrooms in the back of the sanctuary and our nursery.
- Children are welcome to receive **Holy Communion**, which is served weekly at 8:30 a.m. and on the first Sunday of the month at 11 a.m. Our communion elements are bread and grape juice. Gluten-free elements are also available.
- **Sunday School** is offered for children starting at age 3 through 12th grade from 9:45-10:45 a.m.

Any questions? Ushers are glad to assist you.

COMING HOME TO GOD

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

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Pastor Lane

Introit

*Call to Worship

Steve Rushing

God, we come to worship in this new year hoping it will be better.

Guide our thinking and doing and help us remember:

2022 will be kinder, **if I am kinder.**

2022 will be healthier, **if I practice good health guidelines.**

2022 will be more compassionate, **if I show more kindness.**

2022 will be less anxious, **if I offer more grace.**

2022 will be more just, **if I advocate for more justice.**

2022 will be less contentious, **if I speak more gently.**

2022 will be less violent, **if I more actively work for peace.**

2022 will be more loving, **if I demonstrate love more freely.**

Guide us by your Light, O God,

that we may bring your Light to the world. Amen.

*Hymn of Praise

Christ Is the World's Light

The United Methodist Hymnal 188, vs. 1, 4

GROWING CLOSE TO GOD

Children's Moment

Darlene Dickson

Prayer for Illumination

Steve Rushing

Holy God,

**You speak to us in Scripture and in songs,
in sunrises and sunsets,
in friends and in strangers,
in dreams and in stars.**

**You are speaking all the time,
and how often do we miss it?**

**Still our minds so that we can listen with a depth
that we have not heard before.**

**Still our hearts so that we can receive with open arms
what it is you are offering us today.**

**We know you are speaking,
so we are listening.**

Gratefully we pray. Amen.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

THANKSGIVING TO GOD

Star Words Litany

We are seekers - just like the Magi.

**Light our paths and lead us close to home...
close to you.**

We are looking for hope, peace, joy, love
and so much more that Christ brings.

**Light our paths and lead us close to home...
close to you.**

We long for the abundant life God promises.

**Light our Light our paths and lead us close to home...
close to you.**

May this star word be one of encouragement.

**Light our paths and lead us close to home...
close to you.**

May this word guide our intentions in the days to come.

**Light our paths and lead us close to home...
close to you.**

May we pay attention to where God is present.

**Light our paths and lead us close to home...
close to you.**

May God use these words to show us
how to live and love in the world.

**Light our paths and lead us close to home...
close to you. Amen.**

*Hymn of Faith

I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light
The United Methodist Hymnal 206, vs. 1, 2

Prayer of Confession

**God, we love to worship you when the stars
are bright above us.**

**We love to worship you when the sky is clear,
and the breeze just right.**

**We love to worship you when the journey to Bethlehem
is an easy one.**

**Unfortunately, as you know, this journey of life, love,
and faith is rarely easy.**

Now and again, the stars disappear.

**Our feet get blisters, and the journey
is far too long and lonely.**

On these days, forgive us for giving up quickly.

**Forgive us for allowing the dream to die
and for taking the shortcut home.**

**We want to be as brave as the Magi.
We want to persevere.
Guide our feet.
Show us the stars. Amen.**

Words of Assurance and Pardon

As far as the east is from the west –
this is how far God will reach to bring us back
to our divine nature and God-focus.

Be assured: Emmanuel.

God is with us. Always.

We are forgiven.

Always. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Offering Our Tithes and Gifts to God

*We appreciate your generosity.
Each gift enables us to be a blessing in our community.
You may give online at stjohnsbr.org/give.*

***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!**

The Great Thanksgiving

*Sung responses are to the hymn "This Is a Day of
New Beginnings"*

**This is a day of new beginnings,
time to remember, and move on,
time to believe what love is bringing,
laying to rest the pain that's gone.**

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
claim your gift of a new possibility for living, as together we sing:

**For by the life and death of Jesus,
love's mighty Spirit, now as then,
can make for us a world of difference
as faith and hope are born again.**

In your signs and witnesses, in every age and through all the world, you
have led your people from far places to into your light, for you are the
light of the world - shining still. And so together, we sing:

**Then let us, with the Spirit's daring,
step from the past, and leave behind
our disappointment, guilt and grieving,
seeking new paths, and sure to find.**

The congregation is seated as the Last Supper is recalled.

Recalling his death and resurrection, and longing for his coming in glory we offer these gifts of bread and wine and our lives in thanks and praise, as together we respond in song:

**Christ is alive, and goes before us
to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings;
our God is making all things new.**

The pastor invokes the presence of the Holy Spirit.

We pray and sing together now in the name of the triune God.

**In faith we'll gather round the table
to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings;
our God is making all things new.**

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing in Holy Communion

Everyone is welcome to share in Holy Communion.

Communion will be served using the ancient means of "intinction" with only the pastor and servers touching the elements, or, if you prefer, you may receive pre-packaged elements. Our communion elements are bread and grape juice.

A gluten-free option is also available.

You are invited to stay at the chancel for prayer as long as you desire.

If you are mobility challenged, please let the usher know and someone will bring communion elements to you.

Prayer After Receiving

God of Light, like the Magi so many years ago, we are here, seeking you. Step by step, we have wandered into this space with the hope of feeling you in our midst. And step by step, you have claimed us, loved us, and fed us. As a new year dawns, we pray that you would be in our dreams and in our waking. Allow us to use our star words as a tool to see you in our everyday life. May they guide us, as the star guided the Magi. May they illuminate our path, as light always does. And in a year, may we find ourselves here, together again, with a mouth full of praise for the ways in which you have been present to us. With hearts full to the brim, together we pray, Amen.

SHARING GOD IN THE WORLD

Call to Action

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

***Hymn of Discipleship**

There's a Song in the Air

The United Methodist Hymnal 249, vs. 1, 4

***Benediction**

***Postlude**

WORSHIP NOTES

Worship Stewards

Ushers in today's service are Susanna Seals and Renee Rodi.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holiday Closures

The church office will be closed Monday, January 3. Regular office hours will resume Tuesday, January 4 at 9 a.m.

The Shepherd's Market will be closed Monday, January 3. Regular drive-through pantry hours will resume Tuesday, January 4 at 8 a.m.

Music Rehearsals

The Alleluia Ringers will resume rehearsals on **Sunday, January 2 at 6 p.m.** Anyone who is interested in joining the bell choir, come to rehearsals in the Admin Building, last door on the left. We would love to have you join us.

The Chancel Choir will resume rehearsals on **Wednesday January 12 at 7 p.m.** Whether a former member of the Chancel Choir or a new person wanting to join, all are invited. We are a volunteer group and no audition is required. Knowing that some may be hesitant to participate, the church has ordered several "singer's masks" that are washable and reusable

Kitchen Renovation

The first stage of the kitchen renovation starts **Monday January 3** and the facilities will be unavailable until construction is complete. We will still have coffee time and encourage you to bring your own coffee mug to limit the use of disposable cups. Thank you for your support and patience as we start this major milestone in our Lagniappe Kitchen Renovation.

New Adult Sunday School

A new adult Sunday School class is forming in January! This new class will begin on **Sunday January 16 at 9:45 a.m.** in the Parlor (first floor of Admin/Education building) and is open to adults of all ages. The class will use scripture and thought-provoking questions to guide conversations around important matters of faith raised by the news of the week. In this discussion-oriented class, The Wired Word curriculum will be used to connect current events with your faith life. You are invited to come try it out for a week or two! Make your personal and spiritual growth a priority in the New Year. This new class will be coordinated by Bobbi Marino and Jami Prince. Everyone is invited to join in the conversation of bringing Christ into the 21st century. If you want to know more about this exciting new opportunity or want to get on the email list for the class, please contact Bobbi Marino (bobbimarino@hotmail.com) or Jami Prince (thecastle2018@gmail.com).

Pictorial Directory Update

If you chose to receive only the free 8x10 pose for the Pictorial Directory, you may pick it up on Sunday, January 2 or Sunday January 9. There will be a table in the Narthex set up for you to get your pictures. NOTE: If you ordered more poses in addition to the free 8x10, those photographs are being mailed to your home.

The UMW Ruth Circle

The UMW Ruth Circle will meet **Tuesday, January 4 at 9:30 a.m.** in the Parlor. A program about the earth's sustainability and all the earth's creatures will be presented. All women are invited to attend.