



# CLOSE to HOME

Sunday December 5, 2021

**11 A.M. WORSHIP CELEBRATION**

All Are Welcome

In John the Baptist, we see the foundation of what is to come. We see how interwoven his story is with Jesus'. In this second week of Advent, we focus on making space—in our lives and our imaginations—for God's blessings to break through. We will also light the candle of Peace and share in Holy Communion.

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 | stjohsbr.org | @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. In light of the Governor's recent COVID update, St. John's has returned to not requiring masks while in worship and in small group gatherings. If you feel better wearing a mask, by all means do what you are most comfortable with.

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 Playground** 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 Playground for everyone ages 2 and older until December 12. After that date, masks will become optional. If you or your child need a mask, some are available in the Playground. More details about the Playground 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

## \*Song of Praise

*Hymn of Promise*  
The United Methodist Hymnal 707

## \*Advent Candellighting

Fred and Becky Shearer

The home we long for is built on a foundation of love,  
with Jesus as our cornerstone.

**The home we hope for is a home that knows peace:**

A peace at the core of our being . . .

**A peace that calms our anxiety . . .**

A peace amidst our relationships . . .

**A peace experienced down the street  
and around the world.**

The home we long for is a home that knows peace.

So today we light the candle of peace—  
as a reminder and as a prayer.

**Let us give thanks for a foundation of love,  
as together we build a home of peace.**

**We are close to home. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*Lighting of the Candles of Hope and Peace.*

## \*Candle Response Song

*As We Light the Candle*  
Sung to the tune of "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent"

**As we light the candle of peace,  
we await the Christ yet to come,  
seeking peace within and around us,  
to a world with fear overgrown.**

**Christ, come to us, upon our earth do dwell.  
May we carry peace close to home.**

# GROWING CLOSE TO GOD

Children's Moment

Molly Means

Prayer for Illumination

Steve Rushing

God, who speaks a good news language—  
we admit, listening has never been our greatest gift.  
We are easily distracted,  
our minds run a million miles a minute.  
We doubt your faith in us,  
and take the easy way out when it comes to hope.

**So today we bow our heads and ask for help.  
Settle our hearts.  
Quiet our minds.  
Steady our breathing.  
Help us to rest in you.  
Help us to listen for your good news.  
Gratefully we pray,  
amen.**

**\*Scripture**

Luke 3:1-6

Steve Rushing

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

“Close to Home: Laying the Foundation”

Pastor Lane

## **THANKSGIVING TO GOD**

**\*Hymn of Faith**

*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*  
The United Methodist Hymnal 206, vs. 1, 3

**Prayer of Confession**

Pat Cobb

**Holy God,  
When John was Born, Zechariah leaned down  
and whispered words of love into his ear.  
We know that you do the same for us, day in and day out,  
yet we fail to hear it.  
When John the Baptist came proclaiming the coming  
of the Messiah, he promised of One who would baptize us  
with the Holy Spirit.  
We doubt that we are worthy of this promised coming.  
We doubt that we could possibly be enough.  
We hustle for our self-worth and wear ourselves out  
aiming for perfection.  
We deflect words of praise.  
We hide behind shiny first impressions.  
Forgive us. Trusting our worth is the hardest job.  
Open our ears as you open our hearts, so that we might rest  
on the foundation of goodness you have laid for us.  
Gratefully we pray, amen.**

**Words of Assurance and Pardon**

Family of faith, even when we throw in the towel, even when we give up on hope, God does not give up on us. We are loved. We are claimed. We are invited closer to God's home.

So hear and trust this good news:

**There is room for us in God's house, and nothing can separate us from that love. We are claimed. We are forgiven. We are welcomed home. 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](http://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

*Our sung communion responses are from The Faith We Sing Songbook 2257*

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.**

*The pastor gives thanks, remembering God's acts of salvation.*

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

**Hosanna in the highest. (3x)**

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

**Hosanna in the highest. (3x)**

*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:

**Christ has died; Christ is risen;**

**Christ will come again.**

**Hosanna in the highest. (3x)**

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

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, the Hope of the world, now and for ever.

**Amen. Amen. Amen.**

**Hosanna in the highest. (3x)**

### 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

Pat Cobb

**O God, thank you for making a home among us through the gift of your son, Jesus Christ. Your Spirit has renewed, refreshed, and sustained us in this meal by the presence of your love, revealed to us in Jesus. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to be daily revelations of that love. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

# SHARING GOD IN THE WORLD

## Call to Action

### \*Hymn of Discipleship

*Hail to the Lord's Anointed*

The United Methodist Hymnal 203, vs. 1, 3

### \*Benediction

### \*Postlude

# WORSHIP NOTES

### Flowers on the Altar

The flowers on the altar are given by Susan Dunbar in memory of her husband, Rev. Tommy Dunbar, for their anniversary December 6.

### Worship Stewards

Ushers in today's service are Richard and Marilyn Damberg.

### Prayers and Liturgy

Most of our liturgy and prayers were written by Sarah Are Speed | A Sanctified Art, LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

### Livestream of Worship

To join a livestream of worship, share today's service or watch previous worship services, visit <http://facebook.com/stjohnsbr/live>.

### Music Livestream

Permission to stream music covered by OneLicense A-732159 and CCLI 20233858.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Advent Fest, Sunday, December 5**, 4 - 5:30 p.m. - Our Fest begins in the Sanctuary at 4 p.m. for an intergenerational Christmas-Sing-along. A special visitor will be here to lead us to the FLC for fellowship, crafts, and story time. If weather permits, we will have a bonfire to roast marshmallows. Bring a snack to share, if you wish.

## Christmas Angels

Instead of an Angel Tree, there will be "Christmas Angels" this year. We will be purchasing gifts for some of the children at Wildwood Elementary and the Gardere Christian Academy. There will be gift information in the Narthex today if you would like to select a Christmas Angel.

## Christmas Poinsettias

Poinsettias will once again add to our already beautiful Narthex and Sanctuary during the Advent and Christmas Season. You can order online at [stjohnsbr.org/poinsettias-2021](http://stjohnsbr.org/poinsettias-2021) or use an order form found in the Narthex. The Poinsettias will be \$12. Deadline to order is Mon., December 13.

## Lagniappe Kitchen Renovation Fund

Our fundraising efforts for the kitchen renovation are underway and we have already raised \$106,624! To give online go to [www.stjohnsbr.org/give](http://www.stjohnsbr.org/give) (under Fund, select Kitchen Renovation); to give by check write kitchen renovation in the memo line. Thanks for helping fill the pot!

## Chancel Choir Resumes

The Chancel Choir will meet **Wednesday, December 8** at 7 p.m. in the choir room. All are welcome to come even if you don't have musical knowledge. Contact Steve Rushing ([stevenerushing@stjohnsbr.org](mailto:stevenerushing@stjohnsbr.org)) if you have any questions or want more information.

## Great Turkey Giveaway

The 11th Great Turkey Giveaway will be **Saturday December 18** in the FLC parking lot. Volunteers of all ages and abilities are welcome - please arrive by 7 a.m. While much of the food for the giveaway is donated, The Shepherd's Market purchases the turkeys and produce for over 500 meals. A donation of \$20 to the Shepherd's Market will buy a turkey and produce for one family. Gifts can be made to St John's with Shepherd's Market in the memo line, in an offering envelope, or online at [www.stjohnsbr.org/give](http://www.stjohnsbr.org/give).

## Staff Love Offering

An annual Christmas tradition at St. John's has always been saying thank you to our staff for all the work they do to make events and programs at St. John's possible. If you would like to participate in thanking them, please put "Staff Appreciation" in the memo line of your check or on the offering envelope, if cash. Donations may be placed in the offering plate, mailed to the church office, or dropped in the black box outside the Admin Building. You may also make your gift online at [www.stjohnsbr.org/give](http://www.stjohnsbr.org/give).

## Advent and Christmas at St. John's

**December 5** - Advent Fest, Sanctuary and FLC, 4 - 5:30 p.m.

**December 12** - "The Song of The Shepherd" Cantata, both worship services.

**December 12** - UMW Bake & Craft Sale, FLC, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**December 14** - UMW Christmas Party, Sherri Artecona's, 6:30 p.m.

**December 18** - The Great Turkey Giveaway, volunteers needed at 7 a.m.

**December 19** - The Longest Night Worship Service, 5 p.m.

**December 24** - Christmas Eve Worship Service, 5 p.m.

**December 26** - One worship service, 10 a.m.



**ST. JOHN'S**

United Methodist Church

*Glorifying God. Feeding People. Making Disciples.*