

# BECOMING Sanctuary

The story of Mary and Elizabeth, as they both face celebrations and challenges, shows us the importance of having relationships that can serve as sanctuaries for us – ones where we can bring our joys, fears, and full selves, no matter what we may be facing.

## Make A Difference

**As the year comes to a close, we are deeply grateful for your generosity. Gifts received by December 31 help us meet our commitments, sustain our ministries, and serve our neighbors with care and compassion. Thank you for making a difference.**

## Prayer Requests

Share prayer requests by scanning the QR code above, emailing [prayers@stjohnsbr.org](mailto:prayers@stjohnsbr.org) or visiting [stjohnsbr.org/here](http://stjohnsbr.org/here).

## All Are Welcome & Affirmed Here

Whoever you are, wherever your faith journey, you are welcome and affirmed. We are so glad you joined us and hope you feel at home here.

## For Newcomers

**Restrooms** & **Welcome Brochures** are located in the narthex (lobby). Our **ushers** can help you in any way you may need. Text 'CONNECT' to 225-230-1017 join our updates.

## For Families with Children

- The **St. John's Playground** is in the front of the sanctuary during services. Children are welcome to spend **the entire service** here.
- The **Nursery** serves infants – preschool in the Education & Administration building next door.
- **Changing tables** are located in the restrooms and nursery.
- **Holy Communion** elements of bread and grape juice are available to all including children weekly at the 8:30 a.m. service and on the first Sunday of the month at the 11:00 a.m. service. **Gluten free** elements are also available.
- We offer **Sunday School** for 18 months – 12<sup>th</sup> grade from 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., along with a variety of adult classes as well.

The flowers are given by **Rev. Barb Duke** in celebration of Christmas memories, old and new. Thank you to those who made Poinsettia dedications. The list will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin, and poinsettias may be taken after the 6:00 p.m. service.

Todays ushers are **Susanna Seals & Eve Jones**.

CHECK-IN &  
PRAYER REQUESTS  
VIA QR CODE →



## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Shepherd's Market Holiday Closure

The Shepherd's Market will pause for the holidays. Shopping will resume on January 5 as we begin the new year together in care and community.

### The Longest Night Service – December 21

You are invited to a quiet, reflective service tonight at 5:00 p.m. This service is especially for anyone carrying heaviness during the holidays—grief, illness, anxiety, stress, or weariness of any kind. Come as you are for a gentle time of worship, prayer, and hope, held within the peace of the Christmas story. You are not alone.

### Christmas Eve Worship – December 24

**4:00 p.m.** Family-Friendly Service with a Children's nativity & Communion

**6:00 p.m.** Traditional Candlelight & Communion Service

### St. John's Office Holiday Closures

The church office will be closed December 24–26 and December 31, 2025–January 2, 2026, in observance of the Christmas and New Year holidays. We look forward to resuming regular office hours when we reopen on January 3.

### One Service & Extended Coffee Time, December 28

On Sunday, December 28, we will gather for one combined worship service at **10:00 a.m.** Natalie Cooper will preach, and we'll enjoy caroling and a hymn sing-a-long. Following worship, linger a little longer and enjoy extended coffee time and fellowship as we continue celebrating the season together. *All last name letters are invited to bring a treat to share!*

### Epiphany Sunday & Star Words, January 4

Begin 2026 with encouragement and joy as Rev. Rosmery LaFontaine brings the message and receive a guiding "Star Word" for the year ahead. Worshipers will be invited to receive a simple, prayerful word offered as a spiritual companion for the year ahead. Many find their Star Word becomes a gentle guide through both ordinary days and sacred moments in the months to come.

### EVERY WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

 FLC = Family Life Center

**Holiday Schedule Update:** As we observe the Christmas season, weekly activities from December 24–26 are on hold this week. Music Ministries rehearsals will resume January 4.

#### WORSHIP SERVICES

##### Sundays

8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary

#### COFFEE TIME

##### Sundays

9:30 a.m. FLC

*All Last Names may bring snacks on Dec 28*

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL

##### Sundays

9:45 a.m. Campus Wide

#### MUSIC MINISTRIES

##### Sundays

6:00 p.m. The Alleluia Ringers, Bells Room

##### Wednesdays

6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Practice, Choir Room

#### CHILDREN & YOUTH

##### Sundays

9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Campus Wide

*No Upstairs Cafe on Dec 28*

4:30 p.m. Music Makers (K-8<sup>th</sup> grades)

#### SERVE

##### Fridays

10:30 a.m. Holy Helpers, Church Office

#### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Monday – Friday

#### CONTACT

[stjohnsbr.org/contact-us](http://stjohnsbr.org/contact-us)



# Welcome

## 11:00 AM Worship Celebration

Please stand as you are comfortable where marked by an asterisk (\*) & join in speaking where text is in **bold**.



CHECK IN  
& PRAYER  
REQUESTS

### Gathering Music

Dr. Terry Byars

### Words of Welcome

Rev. Lane Cotton Winn

### Musical Reflection

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

### Invitation to Worship\*

Clara Maynard

Come with your hope and your doubt,  
your wonder and your weariness.

**We come seeking God's presence and each other's blessing.**

When God draws near, hidden promises begin to stir.

**We come, ready for hearts to leap and for faith to awaken.**

Where encouragement is spoken, courage grows.

**We come to rejoice together in the God who fulfills  
what God has promised.**

This is a place for expectant spirits and mouths that bless.

**Come, Emmanuel and fill us with your love.**

### We Sing Together\*

People Look East

U.M. Hymnal #202 vs 1, 3 & 4

### We Greet One Another with Joy and Peace\*

### We Light the Advent Candle

Pat & Matt Veatch

Today, we light the candle of Love. God makes room in impossible places, filling the world with new possibilities.

**In Christ, love takes flesh and dwells among us.**

(We light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.)

As we light this candle, we celebrate the love that knows no bounds.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, Love Incarnate, into our hearts.**

### We Sing Together

Sanctuary

Our Faith We Sing # 2164

### We Encourage Our Children

Sarah Prevot

### We Pray Together

Pastor Lane

**May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, thou who art our strength and our redeemer. Amen.**

### We Read the Word\*

Pastor Lane

**Luke 1:24-45**

For the Word of God in scripture,  
for the Word of God among us,  
for the Word of God within us,

**Thanks be to God.**

### We Reflect On The Word

Pastor Lane

*Becoming Sanctuary*

### We Sing Together\*

Our Faith We Sing #2223 v 1, 2 & 4

*They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love*

### We Speak Ancient Words\*

Clara Maynard

*Canticle of Mary, U.M. Hymnal 199*

SUNG RESPONSE:

**The glory of the Lord shall be revealed;  
all flesh shall see it together.**

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
**my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
who has looked with favor on me, a lowly servant.**

From this day all generations shall call me blessed:

**The Almighty has done great things for me**

**and holy is the name of the Lord,**

**whose mercy is on those who fear God**

**from generation to generation.**

The arm of the Lord is strong,

and has scattered the proud in their conceit.

**God has cast down the mighty from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly.**

God has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich empty away.

**God has come to the aid of Israel, the chosen servant,  
remembering the promise of mercy,  
the promise made to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.**

SUNG RESPONSE:

**The glory of the Lord shall be revealed;  
all flesh shall see it together.**

### Prayers for Us and for the World

As prayers are shared, our response will be:  
God of love,  
**be our sanctuary.**

Pastor Lane

### We Pray the Lord's Prayer

U.M. Hymnal #895

### We Offer God's Tithes and Our Gifts

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*  
Arranged by Stan Pethel

The Chancel Choir



GIVING

Thank you for your generosity. Your gift helps us be a blessing in our community. Scan the QR code or visit [stjohnsbr.org/give](http://stjohnsbr.org/give) to give online.

### We Sing Together\*

*Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow  
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!*

### We Receive This Week's Call To Action

Pastor Lane

### We Sing Together\*

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

U.M. Hymnal #240 v 1 & 3

### We Share in a Blessing\*

### We Go Out into the World\*

Terry Byars  
Music sends us out, but our worship continues as we go forth to love and serve the Lord.