



seeking:
*How do we
begin again?*

Sunday, March 5, 2023

11 A.M. WORSHIP CELEBRATION

All Are Welcome

Nicodemus comes to Jesus under the veil of night to ask him some big faith questions. Jesus invites him to begin again - to learn a new way of knowing and living out his faith. Like Nicodemus, what are the questions you ask in the dark? How is God inviting you today and throughout the season of Lent to take one small step after another of letting go, opening up, and allowing God to do a new thing in you? Where in your life might you be invited to begin again?

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

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



ST. JOHN'S
United Methodist Church

Glorifying God. Feeding People. Making Disciples.

GUEST INFORMATION

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. Our ushers are happy to assist you in anyway. If you are feeling cold, shawls are available in a basket in front of the media desk in the back of the sanctuary. Restrooms are in the Narthex.

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

Thank you for being here.

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. 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 in 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 18 months through 12th grade from 9:45-10:45 a.m.

Any questions? Ushers are glad to assist you.

ST JOHN'S CLERGY AND STAFF

Rev. Lane Cotton Winn
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seeking community

**Please stand as you are comfortable.*

Bold indicates congregational response.

Please scan the QR Code to register your attendance.



Prelude

Words of Welcome

Rev. Lane Cotton Winn

Introit

*Call to Worship

Pat Cobb

What is it like to begin again?

It is like flowers in the spring that push through frozen ground.

It is like babies learning to walk, one clumsy step at a time.

It is like Nicodemus in the night, asking Jesus for guidance.

It is like a Sunday morning, starting our week anew.

May we find God in our seeking.

May we learn as we go.

May we be brave enough to begin again.

Let us worship the God of new beginnings.

*Song of Praise

The Summons

The Faith We Sing Songbook 2130, vs. 1, 4, & 5

seeking insight

Children's Message

Connor Dean

Prayer for Illumination

Pat Cobb

Holy God,

We come to you today with big questions.

As we read your Word today, we ask that you would weave answers into the text.

Speak to us through this ancient story that we might find what we are seeking in you.

With gratitude and open hearts we pray, amen.

*Scripture

John 3:1-17

Pat Cobb

*Response to the Word

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.

“How Do We Begin Again?”

seeking wholeness

*Hymn of Faith

This Is a Day of New Beginnings
The United Methodist Hymnbook 383, vs. 1, 3, & 4

*Call to Confession

Pat Cobb

The prayer of confession offers us a new beginning. In this prayer, we lay our cards on the table. We speak honestly with God about who we are and who we long to be. And in response, God wraps us in grace and lets us begin again.

So together, with God's grace, let us wipe the slate clean.
Together, with God's grace, let us pray the prayer of confession.

*Prayer of Confession

God of new life, you call us into unknown places,
and we bury our heads in the sand.

You promise all the stars in the sky,
and we doubt it can be true.

You speak of new life in the Spirit,
and we tell ourselves we've missed our chance.

Over and over and over again, you invite us closer to you.

Show us the way.

Forgive our mistakes.

Give us the courage to begin again with you.

Amen.

*Words of Forgiveness and Grace

Family of faith, hear and believe this good news:

There is a grace to God's love that is bigger than we can imagine.

No matter what we did or didn't do yesterday, we have been forgiven.

Today, the slate is wiped clean. Today, we are made new.

Join me in saying:

We belong to God.

We are held in God's love.

We are made new. Amen.

*Sharing the Love and Peace of Christ

Ministry Moment: Taking Steps in Loss and Life

Dee Muenzler

seeking gratitude

Offering Our Tithes and Gifts to God

Here I Am, Lord
Arranged by Mary McDonald
Choir anthem

*We appreciate your generosity.
Each gift enables us to be a blessing in our community.
You may give online by scanning the QR Code
or navigate to stjohnsbr.org/give.*



*Doxology

Holy Ground
The Faith We Sing Songbook 2272

**We are standing on holy ground,
and I know that there are angels all around;
let us praise Jesus now;
we are standing in his presence on holy ground.**

seeking grace

*Invitation to the Feast

Friends, if your seeking has led you here,
if your weary heart followed breadcrumbs all the way to this sanctuary,
then I have good news:

you do not have to seek anymore.

The One you seek welcomes you.

The grace you seek will be given.

This is Christ's table.

We are the guests.

He is the host.

There is a seat here with your name on it.

So kick off your walking shoes.

Let your weary heart rest.

We are standing on holy ground.

All are invited. All are loved.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

*The Great Thanksgiving

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 God thanks and praise.

God of the lost and the found,
surely it is right for us to give our thanks and praise;
for day after day we look for you,
and day after day we find you:
 in the laughter of children,
 in the sun rising over the horizon,
 in the flowers of spring.

Our seeking does not go unanswered,
and for that we are grateful.
And so together, we proclaim our praise:

**Holy, Holy, Holy One
God of justice and love
Heaven and earth are full of your wonder.
Hosanna, among us!**

The congregation is seated.

Like those who gathered with Jesus on the night of his arrest, we come
in need of grace.

After feasting with his companions, Jesus took the bread, blessed it,
broke it, gave it to all of them, saying, "This is my body which is given
for you. Take, eat, and remember me."

After the supper, he did the same with the cup, saying, "This is a sign
of the new covenant. Drink in remembrance of me."

As a way to remember Christ's perfect love and life we joyfully and
thankfully give you back our lives as holy, living sacrifices. Receive this
gift of our lives, together with Christ's gifts for us, as we speak the Truth
about our faith:

**Christ died.
Christ rose!
Christ is alive, and is coming again.**

Consecration and Blessing

Let us pray.

Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary bread and cup.

May this meal be the nourishment we need to continue seeking you
in the world.

Use your Holy Spirit to make us one with Christ and one with each
other, so we can care for the world until Christ comes again and we
all join around his table as family in perfect love.

We also pray for conviction.

Do not let us get comfortable with half-hearted seeking.

Do not let us grow numb to the suffering of this world.

Make us persistent in our pursuit of justice,
 in our consoling of the grieving,
 in our welcoming of the stranger,
 and in the feeding of the hungry.

Until your promised day, we will seek.

The Lord's Prayer

Until your promised day, we will pray, saying:

Our Father...

Breaking the Bread

This broken bread is *whole* in our taking.
This full cup *overflows* in our sharing.

No matter what it is your soul is seeking,
there is good news to be found here.

Come with your questions.

Come with your hunger.

Come, because this feast is a reminder that God's Table is big enough
for all of us.

So come. All are welcome.

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. The bread will be dipped in the grape juice and handed to you. Or, if you prefer, you may receive pre-packaged elements.

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 a person with limited mobility, please let an usher know and someone will gladly bring communion to you.

Gratitude Prayer

Pat Cobb

**God of manna and mustard seeds,
we came to this table hungry and we leave feeling full -
full of hope,
full of promise,
full of what could be.**

**Thank you for nourishing our curiosity
alongside our spirit and our conviction.**

May we always seek you the way you seek after us.

With grateful hearts we pray, amen.

may God bless you
in your seeking

Call to Action

Pastor Lane

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**

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
The United Methodist Hymnal 127, vs. 1 & 2

During the singing of the hymn, we invite you to bring forward The Shepherd's Market grocery bags.

***Blessing and Sending Forth**

Pastor Lane

As you leave this place,
may God bless you with seeking.

Seek out the hungry.
Seek the weary.
Seek the good in every person you pass.
Seek out the hopeful.
Seek the faithful.
Seek God in each of us.
As you seek and as you wonder,
may you find what you are looking for.
In the name of our loving God,
who is always seeking us, go now in peace.
Amen.

***Postlude**

worship notes

USHERS

Ushers for the 8:30 service are Fred and Becky Shearer

LITURGY AND PRAYERS

Most of our liturgy and prayers were written by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

announcements

TODAY - GROCERY BAG SUNDAY

The Shepherd's Market client-choice food pantry continues to serve 135+ families each week. All donations are greatly appreciated. It is the donations we receive from St. John's that let's us serve anyone who comes to the pantry. February's Grocery Bag Sunday yielded a donation of 921 pounds of food and household items from the St. John's church family.

TODAY - COMMUNION COMPANIONS ORIENTATION

One of the many ministries impacted by the pandemic has been our Visitation ministry to our home-centered and facility-bound church members. We are eager to re-launch this ministry and rebuild those connections! To do so, we need volunteers to serve as Communion Companions.

Communion Companions will make a monthly visit to a church member to which they are paired, extending Christian love and fellowship, serving Communion, which was consecrated in worship, and maintaining the connection to our church family. These visits are set up by you, the Communion Companion, so it fits into your personal and/or work schedule.

These visits are so rewarding for everyone! If you are interested in visiting one of our cherished church members as a representative of St. John's, please come to the **Communion Companions Orientation on Sunday, March 5 at 3 p.m.** in the Library led by Pastor Lane. She will go over helpful tips for having a brief yet meaningful visit as well as instructions for sharing Communion together. If you are unable to attend the orientation but are willing to serve as a Communion Companion, please let Pastor Lane (pastorlane@stjohnsbr.org) know.

TODAY - CONFIRMATION CLASS

The Confirmation class meets today in the Parlor, 3 - 4:30 p.m. The confirmands will discuss ways to connect to the Christian Heritage, our faith history. Please continue to hold our 7 confirmation students in your prayers.

TODAY - FOOD, FUN, FELLOWSHIP TEAM

The Food, Fun, Fellowship Team will meet today in the Library at 4:30 p.m. to plan the upcoming Manna Mission Meal and the "Bunny Breakfast."

UWF RUTH CIRCLE MEETS TUESDAY

The Ruth Circle will meet **Tuesday, March 7 at 9:30 a.m.** in the Parlor. Claudia Fowler will present the program "Growing Spiritual Seeds." All women are invited to attend.

MANNA MISSION MEAL

Join us for a food, fun, and fellowship event on **Sunday, March 19 at 5 p.m.!** The youth will lead us in packing manna bags assembly-line style. We will meet in the FLC at 5 p.m. for a potluck dinner so bring a dish to share.

We are still collecting supplies for this mission. If you would like a printed list of items needed, there are postcards in the Narthex. The list can also be found in the newsletter. You may also make a monetary donation online at www.stjohnsbr.org/give. Fund: Mission, Sub Fund: Manna Bags

COFFEE TIME REVISITED

Tired of boxed raisins and packaged muffins? It's time to Bring Back the Food! The Food, Fun, and Fellowship team is looking for volunteers to provide snacks for Coffee Time on Sundays. Sign up for several Sundays as a group – Sunday School class, church committee, or just a bunch of friends! Sign up to celebrate a birthday or an anniversary! See more details and get on the schedule by going to <https://tinyurl.com/CoffeeTimeSignup>.

SANCTUARY OPEN ON WEDNESDAYS

Each Wednesday during Lent, our Sanctuary will be open for people to come for prayer, quiet time, and reflection. As you enter the narthex, a church member will greet you and offer you a devotional guide, which you can read as you sit in the sanctuary. Your prayer time can be quietly on your own while sitting in the pew or kneeling at the communion railing. The sanctuary will be open from Noon to 1p.m. and again from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. each Wednesday during Lent. You may come and go as your schedule allows.

LENT DEVOTIONAL CARDS

We have a limited number of **Daily Devotional Cards**, which you can take home today or pick up from the church during office hours. Each card has a reflection question and prayer, and continues through the week of Easter. You can also follow St. John's on Facebook and Instagram (@stjohnsbr) for daily reflections during Lent.

MEET WITH OUR NEW BISHOP

Bishop Delores Williamston has begun a Boots on the Ground Tour, meeting with clergy, laity, and members of local congregations all across Louisiana. All Laity of the Baton Rouge District are invited to meet with her on **Saturday, March 11 from 10:00am-11:30am at Wesley UMC** (544 Government St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802). This gathering gives Bishop Williamston the opportunity to listen to United Methodists' hopes and dreams in Louisiana, hear their concerns, and learn of their interests. She also hopes to offer guidance and support for the coming year.

NEW PROGRAM ABOUT GRIEF

Taking Steps in Loss and Life is an 8-week grief support program that will begin **Tuesday, March 21, 2 - 3:30 p.m.** in the Parlor. Dee Muenzler, who recently received her certification as a Grief Educator, will facilitate the SESSIONS. All who are experiencing grief are invited to meet with others to share their experience. To register text Dee at 225-933-1668 or send an email to deemuenzler@gmail.com. Cost of the program is \$20 (scholarships are available). You may pay online at stjohnsbr.org/GiveNow. Use the *Fund* drop down menu and choose *SS Classes and Small Groups*, under *Sub Fund* choose *Grief Program*. Checks written to St. John's UMC should have Grief Group in the memo line or on the cash envelope. Deadline to register is Thursday, March 16.

HELP WITH YOUTH MINISTRY

If you have a passion to work with young people or are just looking for more ways to get involved at St. John's, consider signing up as an adult volunteer with our youth group. To ensure the safety of our young people, St. John's requires at least two adults be present to oversee all events involving youth and/or children. Volunteers essentially serve as a secondary adult to help supervise these activities. Remember - you don't have to have a child in youth group to volunteer. Email Connor Dean to sign up or if you have any questions. You may also sign up online at tinyurl.com/sjumcyouthsignup.

this week at a glance

Sunday, March 5

- 8:00 a.m. Praise Team Warm Up, 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
- 3:00 p.m. Confirmation Class, Parlor
- 3:00 p.m. Communion Companions, Library
- 4:30 p.m. Food, Fun, Fellowship, Library
- 4:30 p.m. Music Makers (1st-12th grades),
Choir Room
- 6:00 p.m. Bells Practice, Bells' Room

Monday, March 6

- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 9:00 a.m. Ladies Covenant Group, Parlor
- 1:30 p.m. UWF Executive Committee, Parlor
- 3:00 p.m. Men's Covenant Group, Library
- 3:30 p.m. The Shepherd's Market, FLC
- 4:30 p.m. Ladies Covenant Group, Parlor
- 6:00 p.m. Disciple Bible Study, Library
- 6:30 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-E

Tuesday, March 7

- 8:00 a.m. The Shepherd's Market, FLC
- 9:30 a.m. UWF Ruth Circle, Parlor
- 6:30 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-E

Wednesday, March 8

- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 12:00 p.m. Sanctuary Open for Prayer
- 5:00 p.m. Sanctuary Open for Prayer
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir, Choir Room

Thursday, March 9

- 8:00 a.m. The Shepherd's Market, FLC
- 6:00 p.m. Opening Doors, Library

Friday, March 10

- 6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer Group, Parlor
- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 8:00 a.m. Food Bank Delivery, FLC

Saturday, March 11

- 8:30 a.m. Prime Timers Breakfast
- 12:00 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-C
- 8:00 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC

*Family Life Center



seeking sanctuary?

Our sanctuary is open for reflection and prayer
every Wednesday in Lent.

NOON - 1PM | 5PM - 6PM