



December 24, 2023

**5 P.M. WORSHIP CELEBRATION**

**All Are Welcome**

Welcome to worship on this sacred night! We are delighted that you have chosen to celebrate Christmas Eve with us. What we do tonight is blessed in a very special way. We are here to proclaim again, the birth of Jesus, the Light of the World. The Word has become flesh to dwell among us. Emmanuel - God with us. Merry Christmas!

**STJOHNSBR.ORG | @STJOHNSBR**

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



# 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

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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Bill Putzig  
*Custodian*  
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Brooklyn Hays  
*Nursery Worker*

# WELCOME TO THIS *Christmas Eve Worship Celebration*

December 24, 2023

\*Please stand as you are comfortable.  
**Bold** indicates congregational response.  
Please scan the QR code to register your attendance.



## *Gathering With the Angels*

### Prelude

*Christmas Tidings*

Dr. Penny Kemler, flute;  
Grace Idikwu, flute

### Words of Grace and Greeting

Rev. Lane Cotton Winn

### \*Christmas Proclamation

Arise; shine, for your light has come!

**The Word has become flesh to dwell among us.**

Praise be to God who pours light into our lives.

**We rejoice in this precious gift – the Light of the world!**

Come let us worship the God of hope, love, joy, and peace.

**May God's light shine *on* us,**

***in* us,**

**and *through* us**

**that God's glory may be revealed.**

Merry Christmas!

**Merry Christmas!**

### \*Carol

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*  
The United Methodist Hymnal 234, vs. 1-3

### Lighting the Christ Candle

George and BJ Cobb

The season of watching and waiting is over!

As we light the candles of hope, love, joy, and peace,  
we rejoice in the birth of our Savior.

**Joy to the world! The Lord has come!**

*(The candles of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace are lit.)*

We now complete this circle with our final candle,  
celebrating that Christ *was*, and *is*, and forever *shall be*  
the Light of the World.

*(The Christ Candle is lit.)*

Let us pray...

**God who is with us, the Light of the World,  
shine in our hearts,  
light up our homes,  
illuminate our communities,  
send sparks of love around the world.**

**This we ask in the name One who taught us how to live  
as children of the Light.**

**Amen.**

### Candle Carol

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*  
The United Methodist Hymnal 240, vs. 1

## *Emmanuel - God With Us*

### Children's Moment

Connor Dean

*Grownups may accompany their children to the altar if they so desire.*

### The Word in Scripture

John 3:16

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him should not perish  
but may have eternal life."**

### Anthem

"Prelude"  
from *Suite Antique* by John Rutter

Penny Kemler, flute

### The Word in Scripture

Luke 2:1-7

Madeline Massett

### Carol

*What Child Is This*  
The United Methodist Hymnal 219, vs. 1

### The Word in Scripture

Luke 2:8-20

Madeline Massett

### Carol

*Angels We Have Heard On High*  
The United Methodist Hymnal 238, vs. 1

### \*The Word in Scripture

John 1:1-4, 14, 16

Pastor Lane

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.**

## Witness to the Word

“Punching Holes in the Darkness”

Pastor Lane

## Pastoral Prayer

# Presenting Our Gifts

## Anthem

*Gesu Bambino*  
by Pietro A. Yon  
Rev. Dr. Jack O'Dell, vocalist

## Prayer of Dedication

Pastor Lane

## Offering Our Tithes and Gifts to God

*Christ Was Born on Christmas Day*  
by Patrick Messick  
Anthem: Chancel Choir

*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](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!**

# Celebrating Christ's Presence

## \*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 our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth. You loved the world so much, you gave your only Son, Jesus Christ to be our Savior.

In him, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Through him we witness the height and depth and breadth of your unfailing love for all the world. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

*The congregation is seated and the Lord's Supper is recalled.*

In the same way you moved through that upper room at the last supper, we pray that you will move among us tonight. Bring your story to life in the bread and cup we share.

Come to us again, and say,

“This is my body, given for you.

This is my life, laid down for you.”

In these words, we experience the truth that God *is* with us - Emmanuel. From the cradle to the cross, we experience the matchless wonder of your amazing grace.

*Let us pray.*

With this bread and wine may we open our hearts anew to receive your love and grace in Jesus Christ.

Send your Spirit upon us, let your love be born within us,

so that in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup we may know the living presence of Jesus Christ who *was*, and *is*, and ever *shall be*,

King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Loving Savior,

Light of the World,

Emmanuel - God With Us.

## The Lord's Prayer

## \*Sharing the Bread and Cup

Carol Medley

*O Little Town of Bethlehem* 230, all verses

*The First Noel* 245, vs. 1 & 2

*Emmanuel, Emmanuel* 204 (2x)

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

## Communion Response

*Mary, Did You Know?*  
Bryan Adams, soloist

## Sharing the Light

### \*Carol by Candlelight

*Silent Night*

The United Methodist Hymnal 239, vs. 1, 3, & 4

*During the candlelighting, the pastor will light a candle  
from the Christ candle and pass the light on.*

*Watch the light grow as we share it with one another.*

*Let us remember this is the light of Christ that shines brighter  
and brighter as we share God's love with one another.*

### \*Christmas Blessing

Pastor Lane

### \*Carol of Celebration

*Joy to the World*

The United Methodist Hymnal 246, vs. 1 & 4

### \*Postlude

Dr. Terry Byars

*Extinguished candles can be placed in baskets in the Narthex as you depart.  
Merry Christmas!*

## Worship Notes

Thank you to everyone who served and shared their gifts in our worship service.

If you made a donation for a poinsettia dedication, you may take your plant home following the service.

Ushers for tonight's service are Richard and Marilyn Damberg, Paul Ivey, and Susan Johnston.

## Upcoming Worship

### ONE SERVICE ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

We will celebrate the coming of the new year on New Year's Eve morning at 10 a.m. We will have a combined Service of Light and Reflection on Sunday, December 31, as we consider this past year and prepare our hearts and lives for 2024.

### STAR WORD AND EPIPHANY SUNDAY

On Epiphany Sunday, January 7 at 8:30 and 11 a.m., we will receive a Star Word during worship as a gift and guide for the new year. Inspired by the Magi following the star to Jesus, selecting a star word to meditate on throughout the year can deepen your self-reflection and prayer practices. Join us in this spiritual discipline and for our first worship service of the new year.

## Announcements

### CHURCH & SHEPHERD'S MARKET HOLIDAY CLOSURES

The church office will be closed on Tuesday, December 26, reopening on December 27 and Friday, December 29 thru Tuesday, January 2, reopening on January 3, 2024.

The Shepherd's Market is closed for the holidays following the Great Turkey Giveaway and will reopen for regular pantry hours on Thursday, January 4 at 8 a.m.

**ABOUT THE SHEPHERD'S MARKET:** New volunteers are always welcome! In addition to being a client-choice food pantry, we also serve a meal every time the pantry is open.

A snack supper is offered on Mondays and a hot breakfast is served on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Clients can shop twice a month, and you can eat as many times as you would like. Find out more about The Shepherd's Market at [shepherdsmarket.org](http://shepherdsmarket.org). Whether you are in need of food or fellowship, there is a place for you at The Shepherd's Market!

### END OF YEAR GIVING

We would like to close the year with the joyful feeling of having met all our financial obligations, and to begin next year with renewed hope and confidence. We can do that with your help. As a church, we rely on strong December offerings, and this year is no different. **In this season of gift giving, we invite you to make a special year-end gift to the church.** Through your gifts, vital ministries of St. John's can continue.

Contributions can be made online ([stjohnsbr.org/give](http://stjohnsbr.org/give)), by mail, or during worship. We also accept stocks, bonds, securities, IRA charitable rollovers, and RMDs. Mailed contributions must be postmarked by December 31 to receive contribution credit for 2023. Online gifts can be made until midnight on December 31. If you have any questions, please contact LeAnn Davis in the office at 225-766-4594 or via email at [leanndavis@stjohnsbr.org](mailto:leanndavis@stjohnsbr.org).

### 2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN "CALLED TO COMMUNITY"

Thank you to those who have made a pledge for 2024. We celebrate the following:

- 105 individuals & families have pledged a total of **\$515,688**, so far.
- 57 households have increased their pledge for next year.
- 15 are first time pledged givers.

If you have not yet pledged, please consider joining your fellow St. John's family members who have increased their pledge from this year to next. Our 2024 budget includes a Spirit-led 13-14% increase, and your increased pledge will get us closer to our goal. You can complete a pledge card and turn it in during the offering or to the church office, or you can pledge online at: [stjohnsbr.org/pledge-2024](http://stjohnsbr.org/pledge-2024).

# Youth & Children's Ministries

## SUNDAY MORNING CAFE TIME AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:30-9:50 Cafe time for youth & children (K-12th) in Room 202

9:50-10:50 Children's & Youth Sunday School time

**NOTE: There will be no Sunday School on December 24 or December 31.  
Our regular Sunday morning schedule resumes January 7.**

## NEW YEAR'S EVE LOCK IN

The St. John's youth group is hosting a lock-in for United Methodist Youth in and around Baton Rouge. One youth group all the way from Amite will be joining us as well! Students should plan to be dropped off at St. John's UMC at 6:00 p.m. with overnight bags, sleeping bags/blankets, pillows, and air mattresses/cots. Dinner and snacks will be provided.

## MUSIC MAKERS

Music Makers will resume their time with Mr. Steve on **Sunday, January 7 at 4:30 p.m.** in the Choir Room. All children in kindergarten through 5th grades are invited to join in.

## C.H.A.O.S. - CHRIST HERE AND OTHER SPACES

Save these dates for our upcoming events for children and their families!

**January 28, 4:00 p.m.** Join us for a family movie night in the Family Life Center. We will enjoy a hot cocoa bar as well! Families can vote for the movie using the link included in the Faith Friends Newsletter.

**February 25, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.** Bring your leftover Mardi Gras beads and join us for a craft night using upcycled beads! Dinner will be included.

**March 23, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.** St. John's UMC is hosting our annual Bunny Breakfast celebration - complete with pancakes, crafts, games, and an egg hunt. You won't want to miss out on this!

**April 28, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.** Save the date for this event... More info coming soon!

## YOUTH PROGRAMMING FOR SPRING SEMESTER

The St. John's youth group will start gathering on the first Sundays of each month from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m., beginning January 7th, 2024. Throughout the spring semester, we will meet at the homes of different church members for intimate small group Bible Study, games, crafts, or other activities.

St. John's youth will also meet on the 3rd Wednesdays of each month throughout the spring semester. These Wednesday gatherings will be called "Wednesday Night Live" (or WNL for short).

Households with youth students will receive monthly calendars by mail to stay connected on upcoming events.



## In memory of...

**Jake & Mary Marino, Willis & Alline Webb** by Frank and Bobbi Marino  
**Jim Schaffhauser** by Joyce and Bill Perry  
**Keith Hartman, Dan Winn** by The HartWinns-Ben, Lane, and Julian  
**Kaitlin & Riley Hunt** by Kathy Vandiver  
**Christopher Schroeder** by Betty Schroeder  
**George & Frances Lindsley** by Jim and Norma Thomason  
**Jim & Hilda Thomason** by Jim and Norma Thomason  
**Valentine & Jessie Sexton** by Gray and Suzanne Sexton  
**Pearl & Walter Fournet** by Gray and Suzanne Sexton  
**David's mom Sandra Ferguson** by David, Konnie, and Emilie Ferguson  
**Konnie's father Charles Kelly** by David, Konnie, and Emilie Ferguson  
**Danny Fontenot** by Bobby Johnson and Hal Holloway  
**Ron Johnson** by Bobby Johnson and Hal Holloway  
**Danny Jones** by Bobby Johnson and Hal Holloway  
**J.A. & Heartsease Higgins, Frank & Genevieve Cooper** by Lynn Cooper

## In honor of...

**My parents** by Amy Richardson  
**Our family** by the Gordon family  
**Our daughters Jane & Livia Walker** by Mari and Shawn Walker  
**Dale Biggs on his 95th birthday** by Bill Elrod and Fran Bussie  
**Barbara & Dale Biggs on their 50th wedding anniversary**  
by Bill Elrod and Fran Bussie  
**Stevie Irene, my granddaughter** by Betty Schroeder  
**Jim & Claudia Fowler** by Ruth, Fran, Charles, and Colleen  
**Our four great grandchildren: Weston, Hensley, Emmylou, and Wrenley**  
by Phil and Jill Slicker  
**Our St. John's UMC family** by Pastor Lane, Ben and Julian Hartman  
**The Connections Sunday School Class** by Bernie Johnson  
**To the Glory of God and to the retired clergy who call St. John's home**  
by Bernie Johnson  
**Our daughter Emilie** by David and Konnie Ferguson  
**The unfailing, joyful love of my honorary aunts, uncles, and church family**  
by Wally Isenhower

Thank you for adorning our worship space with beautiful poinsettias!

WAYS TO  
*Connect*  
WITH US AT



**ST. JOHN'S**  
United Methodist Church

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**CHECK OUT OUR WELCOME BROCHURE**

[stjohnsbr.org/welcome-brochure](http://stjohnsbr.org/welcome-brochure)

*Or grab a printed brochure on your way out!*

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**SIGN UP FOR TEXT/EMAIL  
NOTIFICATIONS**

Text the word "Connect"  
to 225-230-1017

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**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

[stjohnsbr.org](http://stjohnsbr.org)