



CLOSE to HOME

Sunday, November 28, 2021

8:30 A.M. WORSHIP CELEBRATION

All Are Welcome

When something hits close to home, it affects us deeply. During the Advent and Christmas season, which begins today, we journey through scriptures and rituals that are tender, heavy with emotion, and vulnerable. We carry the memories and truths of this season close to our hearts.

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](https://twitter.com/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

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 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 until December 12. After that date, masks will become optional. 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

*Song of Praise

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
The United Methodist Hymnal 196, vs. 1, 2

*Candellighting

Marc Adams, Joyce Robinson

Can you be homesick for something you've never known?

**We are homesick for a world where all are fed, where laughter
is contagious, where the doors are wide open.**

We are homesick for a world with more bridges than walls, where
trees grow tall and rivers run clear.

**We are homesick for a world where all people feel at home—
in their bodies, in their churches, in their homes.**

We long for that world.

We hope for that world.

So today we light the candle of hope, because hope keeps our hearts
alive as we wait.

May this light be a reminder that the wait is always worth it.

God is here. May we carry hope with us.

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

*Candle Response Song

As We Light the Candle

**As we light the candle of hope,
We await the Christ yet to come
Hoping for a world of shalom,
One where we are closely known.
Christ come to us, upon our earth do dwell,
May we carry hope close to home.**

GROWING CLOSE TO GOD

Children's Moment

Natalie Cooper

Prayer for Illumination

Donnie Lambert

**God of the stars and God of our hearts—
our days will pass
but your words will last.
The earth might fade
but your words will last.**

**Our memories might blur
but your words will last.
The grass will wither
but your words will last.
The sky could go dark
and your words would last.
So as we listen today,
help us to hold onto what will last.
Help us hold onto you.
Gratefully we pray,
amen.**

***Scripture**

Luke 21:25-36

Donnie Lambert

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

“Close to Home: Homesick”

Pastor Lane

THANKSGIVING TO GOD

***Hymn of Faith**

*See Fig Tree Leaves Now Sprouting
Sung to the tune of “Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming”
The United Methodist Hymnal 216*

Prayer of Confession

**Gracious God,
we find ourselves with two options every day—
to stay homesick for the world you had in mind,
or to allow cynicism to win.
Do we hope against hope, or do we throw in the towel?
Do we insist on a better world, or do we
assume it’s impossible?
Forgive us for the days when cynicism wins.
Forgive us for numbing our homesick hurt
instead of using it to fuel a better world.
Kindle in us a hope that won’t let go.
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.*

*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.

In your love and by your Spirit, you have invited us in and welcomed us home and so we thank you with the faithful of every time and place, 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. (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

Donnie Lambert

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

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

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

The United Methodist Hymnal 211, vs. 1, 2

*Benediction

*Postlude

WORSHIP NOTES

Flowers on the Altar

The flowers on the altar are given by Richard and Marilyn Damberg in celebration of Grace Idikwu's birthday on November 29. Happy birthday, Grace!

Worship Stewards

Ushers in today's service are Joyce Robinson and Paul Ivey.

Coffee Time

Everyone is invited to the Family Life Center for coffee and refreshments following worship.

Prayers and Liturgy

Most of our prayers and liturgy were written by Sarah Are Speed | A Sanctified Art, LLC | 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. - Mark Your Calendars! Everyone is invited! Our Fest begins in the Sanctuary at 4 p.m. for an intergenerational Christmas-Sing-along. Please let us know your five favorite Christmas hymns or carols. 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. And, don't forget to send in your top five Christmas hymns/carols online at <https://forms.gle/L4RbHZetGsXdvpg28>.

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, as well as the Methodist Children's Home in Robert, LA. More details to come.

Lagniappe Kitchen Renovation Fund

Our fundraising efforts for the kitchen renovation are underway and we have already raised \$96,774! To give online go to 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!

Thank You For Pledging

Thank you for those who have already made a financial pledge to God's work here at St. John's for 2022. Your pledge will enable us to move into the future with hope. Pledges allow us to plan for the year ahead. Pledge cards are available in the Narthex and can be turned in through the Offering or the church office. You can also pledge online: stjohnsbr.org/pledge-2022.

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 <http://bit.ly/stjohnsgive>.

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 <http://bit.ly/stjohnsgive>.

Advent and Christmas at St. John's

November 28 - "Close to Home" worship series begins today. An accompanying daily Devotion Booklet is available in the Narthex.

December 4 - Youth Christmas Party at the Robertsons, 4 - 6 p.m.

December 5 - Grocery Bag Sunday

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

December 12 - "The Song of The Shepherd" Cantata, composed by Terry Byars in 2020, both worship services.

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