

Advent

An invitation to *begin again*



Sunday, December 8, 2024
8:30 a.m. Worship Celebration

All Are Welcome

One of life's most essential lessons is that we are created for connection and community. Today's scripture reading reminds us that what matters most are the relationships in our lives - our community - our family - our friendships - and our connection and relationship to God - because we are not meant to do life alone. In order for the Christmas story to happen, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus needed one another, for, as we will read in scripture, not only are two better than one, but a cord of three strands is not easily broken.

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.



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Welcome to St. John's United Methodist Church

GUEST INFORMATION

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. Restrooms are in the Narthex, located in the back of the Sanctuary.

Please take home a copy of our Welcome Brochure located in the Narthex or view it online at: stjohnsbr.org/welcome-brochure.

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.

St. John's Clergy and Staff

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Cheryl Roubique
Nursery Coordinator

The Celebration of the Gospel

**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

Advent Affirmation

In a world that is lonely,
a seat has been saved for you.
In a world that is anxious,
we light candles against the gloom.
In a world that is weary,
we sing songs of joy and peace.
We are not alone.
For here in this place, God is weaving us together.
Light the candles! Sing with joy!
We are a three-cord strand, not easily broken.

*Song of Praise

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

The United Methodist Hymnal 211, vs. 1 & 2

Lighting the Candle of Peace

Karen Fritz and Kathy Vandiver

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again?
Where do we start?

Let us begin together.

Let us begin arm in arm.
Let us begin by holding each other up,
instead of tearing each other down.
Let us begin with words of peace.

Yes, let us begin with peace.

(The candles of hope and peace are lit.)

Today we light the candles of hope and peace.

May these lights remind us of what could be.

May these lights mark a new beginning.
May peace flow like a river, and may it start with us.
Arm in arm, hand in hand, side by side.

May we begin again. Amen.

Advent Wreath Song

Sung to the tune of *Breathe on Me, Breath of God*

**Kindle this flame of peace.
May it burn bright and true.
Lighting the way that is of God,
the journey we pursue.**

Children's Moment

Sarah Prevot

Prayer for Illumination

Donnie Lambert

The words of this world whip around us like a mighty wind.
We are caught up in news reports,
in text messages,
in emails and notifications.
We are drowning in updates from the media, caught off guard
by the constant hum of it all.
But here on this bright morning we remember
that God is speaking, too.
Together, let us pray to our loving Lord:

O God,

Still the voices around us.

**Calm our minds and center our hearts
so that we can hear your words above the wind.**

We are leaning closer.

We are at the edge of our chairs.

We are beginning again.

Speak to us, as only you can. Amen.

Words of Wisdom

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

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

“Created for Community”

Pastor Lane

*Hymn

Blest Be the Tie That Binds
The United Methodist Hymnal 557, vs. 1 - 3

*Sharing the Love and Peace of Christ

Mission Moment

Staff Appreciation Love Offering

Gray Sexton

Offering Our Tithes and Gifts to God

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus &
Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella*
Betty Schroeder, dulcimer; John Toney, guitar

*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

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow
The United Methodist Hymnal 94

*The Great Thanksgiving For Advent

Come to this Table. All are welcome here.

We gather to catch a glimpse of God's presence among us.

Draw near, for love is hovering close.

God is all around us.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The blessings of God, our Creator, are shared.

And so, with Mary and Joseph, with angels and shepherds,
and with all who have walked the long journey of faith, we join their unending
hymn of praise:

**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 as we recall the life and ministry of Jesus Christ,
concluding with these words:*

As we share this bread and cup, we remember the love that binds us together –
your love, which never lets us go.

**Let this day be a new beginning, O God.
Draw near to those who feel isolated
and remind us all that with you, we are never truly alone.
With you, we are seen.
With you, we are loved.
With you, we are known.
With you, we are celebrated.
What greater love is there than that?**

A prayer of consecration is shared, concluding with the following:

Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church,
all honor and glory are yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing the Bread of Life & the Cup of Blessing

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

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Donnie Lambert

**Nourishing God,
Sometimes we tell ourselves that too much
has taken place to begin again,
that too many mistakes have been made,
and that the world is too far gone.
We tell ourselves that we couldn't possibly begin again.
But then we come to your table
where all are welcomed, all are seen, all are fed.
And just like that, we have hope.
Just like that, we begin again.
Thank you for the gift of this fresh start.
Thank you for meeting us in ordinary bread and juice
to remind us that it's never too late to begin again.
In gratitude, we pray.
Amen.**

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**

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

***Benediction**

***Postlude**

Worship Notes

The flowers on the altar are in celebration of the 40th anniversary of Troy and Sarah Prevot. Congratulations, Troy and Sarah!

Ushers for the 8:30 service are Paul Ivey and Joyce Robinson.

Today's liturgy was adapted using words and phrases from Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed's *Liturgy for Words for the Beginning* | Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

After the 8:30 service, everyone is invited to the Family Life Center for coffee and refreshments.

Announcements

COFFEE TIME SNACKS

If your last name begins with **O - R**, **next Sunday, December 15** is "your" day to bring a snack for Coffee Time. Remember, this is just a much appreciated suggestion not an obligation. ***Please bring your items in a disposable container or single-use dish, and take them to the FLC by 9:30 a.m.***

STAFF APPRECIATION GIFTS

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 worship, ministries, programs, and events 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. You may also make your gift online at www.stjohnsbr.org/give (Select the "Staff Appreciation" Fund).

Deadline for staff appreciation gifts is Tuesday, December 17.

NEIGHBORHOOD FRIENDS (ST. JOHN'S ANGEL TREE)

Thanks, St. John's - all of our angels were selected from our Christmas Tree! Wrap each gift separately following the directions on the instruction sheet you received. ***Please bring the gifts back to the office on or before Monday, December 9 at noon.***

GREAT TURKEY GIVEAWAY

The 14th Great Turkey Giveaway will be **Saturday, December 14** and takes place in the church parking lot. Volunteers of all ages and abilities are welcome - you are asked to arrive by 7 a.m.

Volunteers are also needed **Friday, December 13** in the FLC for setup and staging as everything, including turkeys, will be delivered on Friday sometime between 1 and 2 p.m. We will be staging the various areas and bagging items that go along with the turkeys so there will be plenty of work.

SEEKING CRAFT & BAKE SALE DONATIONS

If you have craft & baked items that you might want to donate to the United Women in Faith's Craft & Bake Sale on **Sunday, December 15**, please contact Deborah Cross-Young at 225-281-9470. This very worthy cause raises funds for local missions supported by UWF Circle of the Heart.

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH A GIFT OF LOVE AND DEDICATION

This Christmas season, St. John's is offering two special ways to celebrate and honor your loved ones:

Poinsettia Dedications. Dedicate a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one for \$35. These beautiful plants will adorn our worship space on Christmas Eve and may be taken home after our 6 p.m. Christmas Eve worship service.

Mission & Vision Dedications. For those looking to give a meaningful and lasting gift, consider making a \$35 donation to the Mission & Vision of St. John's United Methodist Church in honor of someone special. With this gift, you will receive a keepsake card to present to your loved one, letting them know a donation has been made in their name.

Both Poinsettia Dedications and Mission & Vision Dedications will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletins. Your gifts help support the work of St. John's, spreading Christ's love in our congregation and community.

To participate, you may complete the online form: stjohnsbr.org/christmasdedications or, if you prefer, printed forms are available in the narthex and office. Deadline to order is **December 18**. You may pay with a check/cash to St. John's UMC with "Christmas Dedication" in the memo line or you may pay online at stjohnsbr.org/give (Choose the "Other" Fund and then choose "Flower Fund" for Poinsettia Dedications or "Christmas Dedication" for Mission & Vision Dedications.)

Thank you for helping make this season one of generosity and love.

ADVENT PHOTO-A-DAY INVITATION

During Advent, we invite you to a spiritual practice of noticing images of hope, peace, joy, and love in the world. Our Photo-A-Day practice invites you to notice God within the world through a guiding word. You can download the daily word prompts at stjohnsbr.org/advent-2024 or get a printed copy at church. As you notice that word coming to mind during your day, take a picture and post it on social media, using #stjohnsbr in your post. Or you can use the daily word as a journaling process of noticing God! As a community practice, it's powerful to observe the various ways we uniquely encounter each word and God around us. Where will you see these words and reflections this Advent season as we begin again in our preparations for Christmas?

ADVENT FAITH STORIES

Be checking your Inbox on Wednesdays during Advent. An **Advent Faith Story** written by one of our very own St. John's family members will be emailed to you on Wednesdays. (If you do not get our newsletters, email or call the office and Lynn will add you to the distribution list.)

MUSIC MAKERS & ALLELUIA RINGERS TIME CHANGE

NOTE TIME CHANGES - **TODAY** the Alleluia Ringers (bells) will practice from 2 - 3 p.m. Music Makers will rehearse from 4:30 - 5 p.m.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS HOSTED BY JEFFERSON UMC

Jefferson United Methodist Church (10328 Jefferson Hwy) will be hosting, "THE FIRST CHRISTMAS" a beautiful play that tells the story of the birth of Christ. Performances are **Sunday, December 15, at 2 pm and 6 pm** (show's duration is 75 minutes, with no intermission). Tickets, which are \$12 for Adults and \$5 for Children under 12, can be purchased online at jumcbr.org. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to The Shepherd's Market food pantry. Thank you to Jefferson UMC for this generous partnership! We encourage you to support them with their Christmas production.

This Week at St. John's

Sunday, December 8

- 8:00 a.m. Praise Team Warm Up, Sanctuary
- 8:30 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 9:30 a.m. Coffee Time, FLC*
- 9:30 a.m. Upstairs Cafe, 202 Admin Bldg.
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Campus wide
- 11:00 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 2:00 p.m. Alleluia Ringers, Bells Room
- 3:00 p.m. JOY FEST, FLC**
- 4:30 p.m. Music Makers, Choir Room

Monday, December 9

- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 9:00 a.m. Ladies' Covenant Group, la Madeleine
- 3:30 p.m. The Shepherd's Market Client Choice Food Pantry, FLC
- 4:30 p.m. Ladies' Covenant Group, The Founders' Parlor
- 6:30 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-E

*Family Life Center

Tuesday, December 10

- 8:00 a.m. The Shepherd's Market Client Choice Food Pantry, FLC
- 7:00 p.m. Pickleball, FLC
- 7:30 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-E

Wednesday, December 11

- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 11 a.m. UWF Circle of the Heart Christmas Luncheon, FLC
- 6:30 p.m. Ladies' AA Meeting, FLC-C
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir, Choir Room

Thursday, December 12

- 8:00 a.m. The Shepherd's Market Client Choice Food Pantry, FLC

Friday, December 13

- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 1:00 p.m. Great Turkey Giveaway Set Up, FLC

Saturday, December 14

- 8:00 a.m. GREAT TURKEY GIVEAWAY, FLC**
- 8:30 a.m. Prime Timers Breakfast, Drury Inn
- 12:00 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-C
- 7:00 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC

Advent & Christmas at a Glance

- 12/8 Joy Fest, 3-4:30pm
- 12/11 UWF Ladies Christmas Luncheon, 11 a.m.
- 12/13 Staging/Set up for Giveaway - Turkeys arrive between 1-2 p.m.
- 12/14 Great Turkey Giveaway - Volunteers arrive at 7am
- 12/15 UWF Craft & Bake Sale for Missions, all morning in FLC
Youth Christmas Party, Broadmoor UMC, 5-7 p.m.
- 12/17 Last Day the Shepherd's Market Food Pantry is open in 2024
Last day to make a gift to the Staff Appreciation Love Offering
- 12/18 Last day to make a Christmas Dedication (of Poinsettias or a gift to the Mission & Vision)
- 12/22 The Music Ministries of St. John's Presents "The Message of Christmas", 8:30 & 11 a.m.
The Longest Night Service, 5 p.m.
- 12/24 Family-friendly Service with Live Nativity by children and youth, 4 p.m.
Service of Candlelight & Communion, 6 p.m.
- 12/29 Only one worship service, 10 a.m. (No coffee time, no Sunday School)
- 2025**
- 1/5 Epiphany Lessons & Laughter Service (Star Words), 8:30 & 11 a.m.
(We resume regular Sunday morning schedule.)
- 1/6 Shepherd's Market reopens

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT ST. JOHN'S FLYER

Flyers are available in the narthex and office with information inviting you to join us for special programs, mission opportunities, and worship services during the Advent and Christmas season. We encourage you to take the flyer home with you today so that you can mark your calendar. We look forward to journeying through these sacred seasons with you. Additional flyers are available if you would like to pass one along to someone else.