



Celebrating Community, Faith, and Fellowship

GOOD NEWS

Identity. Belonging. Purpose. **A NEW SEASON AT HOLY INNOCENTS**

As we turn toward a new program year at Holy Innocents', I keep coming back to a phrase from Luke's Gospel: "Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem." It's a turning point in the story—Jesus chooses love, even when it's hard. Even when it means sacrifice.

This fall, we're being invited to do the same: to set our face forward as a church, as individuals, as a community committed to raising up the next generation, welcoming the stranger, and serving with courage.

Dr. Kara Powell, a leading voice in youth and young adult ministry, says every young person is asking three big questions:

**Who am I? Where do I belong?
What is my purpose?**

But these aren't just questions for young people. They're the same questions Jesus answered with his life. And they're the questions we're answering together this fall through vibrant ministries, renewed relationships, and bold love.

Who are we? We are beloved children of God. That's what we proclaim at every baptism. It's what we teach our children and youth—not just through Sunday school or music, but through meaningful relationships and courageous conversations. This fall, children's formation, youth group, choir, and small groups return in full swing—and we need your voice and your presence to help shape these young lives.

Where do we belong? Right here. At Holy Innocents. In a community that loves deeply and shows up for one another. You've done that so powerfully this summer—surrounding Ruth with your prayers, meals, cards, and encouragement

during her surgery and recovery. You've surrounded me with grace and strength. You've shown what it means to be the Body of Christ in real, tangible ways. And soon, we'll welcome the Rev. Dr. Bill Murray and Sean back from their sabbaticals on Sunday, August 17—a homecoming filled with joy and anticipation.

What is our purpose? To tell the story of what God has done—and is doing—in our lives. Like the man freed from the tombs in Luke 8, we are sent back into our neighborhoods and schools and workplaces not just to live quietly, but to live boldly with love, purpose, and truth. This fall, we'll continue that mission through outreach, formation, music, worship, and shared leadership with our Spanish-speaking congregation.

Friends, we don't have to have it all figured out. But we are being called to take the next faithful step. To move forward—not backward. To live the way we already know how to live: with love that acts, hope that builds, and faith that follows.

So let's set our face toward this new season together—with eyes wide open, hearts stirred with purpose, and hands ready to serve.

See you at the **Back to School Bash on August 10**. Don't miss the **Low Country Boil on August 16**, and **Sunday School resumes on August 17** on Bill and Sean's first Sunday back.

Grace and peace,
Stewart+

P.S. We have been having terrific conversations at our Adult Forum each Sunday at 9:00 AM throughout the summer. On July 31, Maggie Menkus will lead us in a conversation around our spiritual gifts: Identity, Belonging, and Purpose! On August 3 we'll give you a tutorial of our database, REALM, and the many ways it can help us stay connected.

Let's Play!

RENEE STEPHENS

Summertime is full of all the fun things that we play with. Long days and late nights, campfires and glow sticks, movies with popcorn, pizza and treats, and days by the pool, the beach or the lake. We take road trips, family vacations, and/or go to summer camp.

In Children's Chapel, we go around the circle and share something from our week, and I get to hear about all the adventures from ziplining to kayaking to all kinds of sports and camps and vacations. The joy of it is tangible in the air around us. Each child is so full of excitement to share what they experienced. ***There's something about play and fun that soothes our soul and gives rest to our spirit*** even when that play involves a lot of physical exertion.

This is actually the very thing that God reaches out to us with: an invitation to play. ***God invites us to experience life with joy, creativity and a sense of wonder.*** Sometimes it's easy to accept the invitation. All the circumstances are just right: the house is clean, the laundry is done, there are no social obligations on the calendar, there is no underlying stress from work or life. It feels like it's only when all these things are in order that we can let go and lean into some kind of playtime.

But what if our soul needs to play first? It's such an easy formula when we're working with children. Start out with a game to introduce the learning material. We laugh and have fun and after some time, we settle into a story and a reflection. But somewhere along the way, we get older, and a shift happens. We start believing that we need to work first and the reward is play. As we journey into our back-to-school routines, I invite us all to carry the spirit of play with us. Carve out the time and enjoy the wonder of God's creation, the world around us and the world inside of us. The experiences we carry, the love that we have for the people in our lives, the wounds that might still be healing. All of it is an opportunity to meet God anew, to rest in God's presence, to play.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



SUMMER PROGRESS & PARISH GENEROSITY



CAROLINE FLEMING

Summer is in full swing and school is right around the corner. We have been busy at Holy Innocents with cleaning and organization projects in addition to unplanned challenges with AV equipment, kitchen equipment, electrical and HVAC issues. All works are in progress and being addressed! We remain in a good financial position through the summer due to several parishioners paying their pledges in full earlier than usual. We are so blessed to have such generous people with their talents and treasures. ***We are only \$1,350 short of our YTD budget for pledges of \$800,939 and over budget in loose plate and unpledged gifts.*** In addition, we have collected more money for facilities use than planned at this point in the year. Aside from salaries and pension, the largest spending categories are Utilities, Insurance, Facility Expenses, Custodial Fees, and Telecommunications. We are keeping close to budget so far this year. In addition, we budget \$60,000 annually for the Property Reserve fund for large unplanned building expenses.

The Holy Innocents community has once again generously given to those in need! ***Parishioners donated \$34,000 for Holy Innocents of South Dakota that completely burned.*** The Outreach Committee donated \$5,000. Thank you for so much generosity.

If you have any questions or concerns about our budget, income or expenses, please don't hesitate to contact Caroline Fleming at 404-751-2906 or cfleming@holyinnocents.org.



O God of all, we pray today for the people and the Churches of the Holy Innocents in Parmelee (South Dakota), Lahaina (Hawaii), and Sandy Springs (Georgia). We mourn for spaces burned and lost. We long for places of connection and love. We yearn for a bright future of healing and hope. Send your Spirit to guide us into a vibrant relationship between our communities and the world. Open our hearts, our minds, our souls to your work among us. May we seek to abide with Christ and one another as He surely abides with us. In your Holy Name, Amen.
The Rev. Dr. Bill Murray

YOUTH MINISTRY



What if Jesus Were Serious?

MEGAN ATKINSON

We're excited to welcome our 6th to 12th grade students back to youth group this August as we kick off another meaningful year of faith, friendship, and fun. This year's theme invites students to wrestle with a powerful and personal question: "What if Jesus were serious?"

Each week, we'll explore relevant and sometimes challenging topics such as loving our enemies, body image, popularity, and fear. ***With Scripture as our guide, we'll take a deep dive into what Jesus had to say and what it means to follow Him if He truly meant every word.*** These conversations are designed to help students build a faith that's honest, thoughtful, and rooted in God's love.

Of course, youth group wouldn't be complete without a good dose of fun. From off-campus outings to creative games and service opportunities, we're planning a full year of activities that help students bond, laugh, and grow together in a safe and supportive community.

We'll kick things off on Sunday, August 17 with wet sponge dodgeball and a giant slip and slide. It's the perfect way to beat the heat and start the year with a splash. Whether your student is returning or brand new, this is the perfect time to jump in.

We hope you'll encourage the teens in your life to join us this year as we grow in faith and discover what it looks like to take Jesus seriously, together.

YOUTH GROUP

GAMEDAY

WET SPONGE DODGEBALL

AUGUST 17, 4:00-6:00 PM



HOLYINNOCENTS.ORG/EVENTS

READ & FEED

We've launched a **Summer Book Exchange** in Inglett Hall, bring a book, take a book! At summer's end, extras will be donated to a good cause. We're also **collecting non-perishables** for Community Assistance Center & Solidarity Sandy Springs. **Cheerios, granola, peanut butter, pasta, rice, canned beans, and canned meats (tuna, chicken, or Spam)** are especially needed.

YOUNG ADULTS BRUNCH | AUGUST 3, 11:30 AM

Join us for brunch, community, and a take-home self-care kit. We'll also plan upcoming events! All are welcome.

Contact Megan Atkinson (matkinson@holynnocents.org)

BUCKET LIST BOOK CLUB | AUGUST 5, 1:00 PM

Men and women are invited to discuss *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston.

Contact Audrey Sumner (audreysum4833@gmail.com)

BAKE SALE FOR FLOOD RELIEF | AUGUST 10

Support Texas flood victims by donating baked goods to our August 10 sale. All proceeds will go to Episcopal Relief & Development. Drop off your treats, and help make a difference.

Contact Jenny Cantrell (jpcantrell@pittman-construction.com)

READING CONNECTIONS | AUGUST 11, 6:00 PM

The women's book club will be reading *Becoming Madame Secretary* by Stephanie Dray.

Contact Michelle Driscoll (dris1296@yahoo.com)

THIRD FRIDAY: MEN OF HI | AUGUST 15, 7:30 AM

Biscuits, sausage, and good conversation.

Contact Charles Crosby (charles@corepm.net)

MEN'S DINNER & A BOOK | SEPT. 9, 6:30 PM

This month's read: *Endurance* by Alfred Lansing. Hosted by Kevin Nuffer. **RSVP** to Jeremy Webber (jhwwebber@gmail.com)

PILGRIMAGE TO GERMANY | APRIL 8-16, 2026

Walk in the footsteps of Luther, Bach, and Bonhoeffer with fellow pilgrims from Holy Innocents and Holy Trinity (NC). A powerful journey through Mainz, Leipzig, and Berlin—faith, music, justice, and community. Optional Prague extension: April 16-19.

Contact Stewart Lucas (slucas@holynnocents.org)

AUGUST 3

Young Adults: Brunch

AUGUST 5

Bucket List Book Club

AUGUST 10

Back to School Bash & Picnic
Bake Sale

AUGUST 11

Reading Connections

AUGUST 15

Men of HI: Third Friday

AUGUST 16

Welcome Back
Low Country Boil

AUGUST 17

Sunday School Starts
Youth Group

AUGUST 24

Youth Group

AUGUST 28

Gallery Opening

SEPTEMBER 7

Episcopal School Sunday
Youth Group

SEPTEMBER 8

Reading Connections

SEPTEMBER 9

Men's Dinner and a Book

SEPTEMBER 10

GLOW

SEPTEMBER 14

CCG Sandwich Build
Youth Group

SEPTEMBER 19

Men of HI: Third Friday

SEPTEMBER 21

Young Adults
Youth Group

SEPTEMBER 25

Newcomer's Dinner

G R O U P S

Join Community of Hope

The Community of Hope will be offering a regional zoom training beginning Sunday, August 3rd. Community of Hope is an international organization, based on Benedictine spirituality, which equips people to participate in pastoral care.

Through ongoing, spiritual formation and practical lessons on care giving, members learn to align theological insights and spiritual practices with their experiences of ministering to others and giving spiritual care.

Pastoral care is when a person is being “present” in a listening, compassionate, non-controlling manner for the purpose of responding to their spiritual needs.

Training sessions will take place weekly on Sunday afternoons for 12 weeks, with an additional Saturday session.

For those who have completed training and decide to move forward in the parish with pastoral care ministry, we gather monthly as the Circle of Care on Monday nights for worship, continuing education, and spiritual support.

Contact Karen Calhoun (knccalhoun@yahoo.com) or Craig Wilson (crwilson01@gmail.com)

Join Education for Ministry

EfM has a new course of study and new materials, but the same vibrant community and spirit of inquiry! Through it you can:

- Deepen your Christian faith.
- Learn how to articulate that faith.
- Let that faith inspire you into action!

More than Bible study – through exploration, prayer, and reflection, trained mentors facilitate stimulating discussions and guide participants to examine life through an increasingly informed and inspired theological lens.

New this year is ***EfM: Wide-Angle, a one-year overview of the spiritual journey that explores the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Christian history, spirituality, and ethics.*** It can be a great introduction to EfM or a refresher for those who have already participated in EfM.

Of course, the acclaimed four-year course of study (EfM Classic) continues and has been enhanced with new books and study materials for the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Christian history, ethics, and spirituality.

The EfM group at Holy Innocents is a caring community that meets every Tuesday evening at HI from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM, September through May, and meetings may also be joined via Zoom. Lin Stradley and Nicole Yarsawich are the seminar leaders. There is a tuition; scholarships are available. ***Registration ends July 31.***

Contact Lin Stradley (lstradley@gmail.com) or Nicole Yarsawich (cole.yarsawich@gmail.com)

NEWS

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH & BACKPACK BLESSING | AUGUST 10

Holy Innocents' is excited to kick off the new school year with our Annual Back to School Bash and backpack blessing! Join us on Sunday, August 10th, for a fun-filled morning as we come together to support children and families heading into a new school year. The day will include a special blessing of the backpacks, a hamburger and hotdog cookout, Foam Palooza party, and more fun for all ages!

- 10:15 AM: Worship with Backpack Blessing: bring your backpack for this special service to celebrate the start of a new year!
- 11:15 AM: Family Picnic: hamburgers, hot dogs, and lots of treats!
- 11:30-12:30 PM: Foam Palooza Party: wear quick-dry clothing or a swimsuit and bring a towel.

WELCOME BACK LOW COUNTRY BOIL | AUGUST 16, 6:00 PM

Let's give Bill a warm welcome home from his sabbatical with a festive Low Country Boil on Saturday, August 16 at 6:00 PM in the Parish Hall, adults only this time! The kids will have their turn with the Backpack Blessing and Foam Party the week before, so this evening is just for the grown-ups to relax, reconnect, and celebrate.

Contact Jenny Cantrell (jpcantrell@pittman-construction.com)

"I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD" 1700 YEARS OF THE NICENE CREED

In 2025, the global church marks 1700 years since the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), where the foundational words of the Nicene Creed began to take shape. To honor this milestone, the Rev. Dr. Gabrielle Thomas will help us explore the theological controversies that led to the Council, what was at stake for early Christian leaders, and why the Creed still matters today.

Dr. Thomas is Assistant Professor of Early Christianity and Anglican Studies at Emory's Candler School of Theology. An ordained priest in the Church of England and accomplished ecumenist, she brings deep insight and clarity to ancient theology and its relevance for today's church.

Join us for this Sunday morning Adult Forum series in September to deepen your understanding of our shared faith and the enduring power of the Creed.

Memorial Gifts

RECEIVED MAY 14 – JULY 9

IN MEMORY OF STEVE LARKIN

DEBBIE AND PETE VAKY

IN MEMORY OF NETTIE SILVA

DEBBIE AND PETE VAKY

IN MEMORY OF NANCY WARNER

LINDA AND JOHN FOSTER



**HOLY INNOCENTS'
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

805 Mt. Vernon Hwy NW
Atlanta, GA 30327

Backpack Blessing | August 10
Parish Picnic and Foam Party for the Children

Celebrating Community, Faith, and Fellowship

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