



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Herald

Volume LI Issue XII

December 2024

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

“Continuity and Change at Christmas”

After serving as a decorated chaplain in the British Army during World War I, the Rev. Eric Milner-White took a post as chaplain at King's College. Concerned that the Great War had hardened attitudes toward religion in general and Christianity in particular, Milner-White developed a service called Nine Lessons and Carols. The service features readings and music designed to walk participants through the story of God's love for all people, which is made manifest in the Incarnation of our Lord. The service continues to this day and has been broadcast by the BBC since 1928.

As sad as it is, we have witnessed a decline in the church in North America, much like what Milner-White observed in Great Britain a century ago. Inspired by his vision, our Christmas Eve service this year will be based on the King's College liturgy. Though the format will be different from the way St. John's has celebrated in the past, all the elements you have come to love will be present. We will hear

a rich array of readings. Our talented St. John's Chorale, Bell Choir, and Children's Choir will enrich our worship, all supported by a string quartet and harp. We will sing beloved hymns, including “Hymn to the Christ Child,” written by Pastor and Mrs. Gongaware for our congregation. We will celebrate our Lord's ongoing presence among us as we receive Jesus in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. It will be a joyous night!

After much prayer and consideration, we will not be holding a worship service at 7:00 am on Christmas morning. Please know that this decision was not made lightly. I recognize that this is a difficult change for some of you. I hope that you will plan to attend worship on Christmas Eve and celebrate the joy of Christ's birth with your loved ones on Christmas Day.

As we enter Advent and prepare for Christmas, please keep our staff and volunteers in your prayers. It is a joyous time, but also a very busy time. There is a flurry of activity, like the annual congregational meeting, the Christmas pageant, and various holiday gatherings.

Amid this very busy season, I pray you will see glimpses of God's grace at work in your life and in our world.

Peace,
Pastor Robb



A Note from Pastor Robb

Providing a safe place to worship and work is a matter of highest priority at St. John's. Please assist us in this matter by ensuring that all of the doors to the parish hall remain locked during the week, even (especially) when staff are in the building. This means checking behind you to ensure you have locked the door when you leave. Thank you.

Peace,
Pr Robb

St. John's Lutheran Church
5 Clifford Street, Charleston, SC 29401
Church Office: 843-723-2426 info@stjohnscharleston.org

St. John's Lutheran Church

November 22, 2024

To Members of St. John's Lutheran Church

Re: NOTICE OF ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday December 8, 2024

10:00 Single Service and

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Vestry has called the 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on Sunday December 8th. There will be a single combined service that Sunday at 10:00AM. Immediately following the service we will conduct the Annual Congregational Meeting. The purpose of the Annual Congregational Meeting is to present the details about the 2025 Budget, 2025 Vestry candidates and Endowment Committee Trustee. The St. John's congregation will then vote on these previously mentioned agenda items.

Children will be preparing for the Christmas Pageant (that will immediately follow the Annual Congregational Meeting) in the Fellowship Hall during the meeting to allow for parents to more easily attend the meeting.

Please make every effort to adjust your plans to attend this most important meeting and encourage every other voting member of St. John's to likewise attend.

Sincerely,

Steve Trayte
Vestry President

5 Clifford Street, Charleston, SC, 29401 / 843-723-2426
Rev. Dr. Robert L. Harrell, Senior Pastor Allison Williams, Director of Music
www.stjohnscharleston.org

Join Pastor Robb on Facebook Live

each Wednesday at 8:30 AM for a short devotion.

You can access St. John's Facebook page via the app or any web browser at <https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsLutheran>

2025 Discipleship Challenge

Would you like to grow in your faith?

Do you want to immerse yourself in the world of scripture?

Pastor Robb is challenging every member of St. John's to participate in reading the entire New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs in 2025. A daily reading schedule will be available for each month, along with a collection of prayers and other support resources. Be on the lookout for sign-up information!



Are you a wine aficionado?

Social Ministry collects wine corks to donate to Keep Charleston Beautiful, who repurposes them to make flooring tiles, soles of shoes, building insulation, and more! Only natural corks are accepted for repurposing, not synthetic ones. Read more here:

<https://www.charleston-sc.gov/2774/Uncorking-The-Details-About-Wine-Cork-Re>

We collect them in the entry of the Parish Hall and they are periodically poured into a large bag. Volunteers are needed to deliver the bag quarterly to the City of Charleston office at:

823 Meeting Street, Charleston.

Help Decorate the Chrismon Tree

On Sunday, December 1st after the late service, families will again gather in the church to decorate our Chrismon tree with the St. John's Chrismons. After the late service, we'll enjoy a light lunch in the fellowship hall followed by decorating the Chrismon Tree!!! Elves of all ages, both children and adults, are needed. Even if you haven't helped before, please come and enjoy fun and fellowship! We will have a job for you!

POC: Chris Tant 843-345-0748



Christmas Poinsettias and Wreaths

Once again, you have the opportunity to contribute to the poinsettias and wreaths that will enhance our sanctuary during the Advent and Christmas season. Poinsettias are \$20 and wreaths are \$25. Oversized door wreaths are \$50. Place your order form with your check into the offering plate or mail it to the church office. All orders must be received by Wednesday, December 11th. Please make your check payable to St. John's Lutheran Church and indicate "Altar Fund" on the "memo" line.

Poinsettia Quantity _____ x \$20.00 = \$ _____

Wreath Quantity _____ x \$25.00 = \$ _____

Door Wreath Quantity _____ x \$50.00 = \$ _____

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY AND INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.

Continue on reverse, if needed.

Indicate: In honor of = H; in memory of = M; in celebration of = C

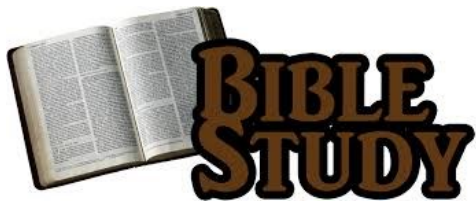
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Given by: _____

E-mail address: _____



Winter Bible Study

Beginning January 14, join us for a light supper and Bible study on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 - 8:00.

We will meet for a light meal at 6:00 pm. After we eat, the women will gather together for a class on "Discerning the Voice of God." The men will gather for a book study on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*, led by Pastor Robb. Cost and registration information will be coming soon.



"How can I serve my church?"

We are in need of additional people to assist with worship. You will be guaranteed a seat near the altar and you gain the joy of serving in a very specific way in communion with others. Never served before? No worries! We will train you. Helpers are needed for Communion set-up before the 8:30 AM service, Communion clean-up after 11:00 AM service, filling candles, acolyte, crucifer, worship assistants, and lectors. Contact someone you see serving, or contact the church office: info@stjohnscharleston.org

News From the Special Projects Committee

Save the Date: March 1st, 2025 5-7 PM
Lowcountry Mardi Gras in Parish Hall

Our next Front Porch Day will be held on Sunday, January 12th from 1-2:30 PM. We will keep our doors open to guests to tour St. John's.

Please reach out to Elizabeth Marchant if you would like to help with this event.
843-693-1885 ecmarchant@gmail.com

Next Special Projects Meeting will be Monday, January 6th, 2025 at 11 AM (one week early to meet prior to Front Porch Day)

Many, many thanks to my office volunteers!

I'm so grateful for the help, particularly during extra busy holiday times (with additional bulletins and inserts), and when there are stewardship letters, congregational letters, and newsletters.

I couldn't do this without you.

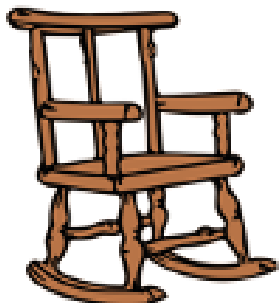
THANK YOU!

- Susan



Altar Flowers/Greens

Please contact Susan at the church office to sponsor flowers or greens in 2025!
843-723-2426 or email: info@stjohnscharleston.org
The cost is \$50 per vase.





The Great Litany

This year, we will begin our Advent season by singing The Great Litany on the First Sunday of Advent. There was a time when processional litanies were quite common and indeed have a long history in the church, with litanies found in the liturgy as early as the fourth century. We see a remnant of the practice when we pray the Kyrie on Sundays at Holy Communion. The Litany as found in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* is an adaptation of the first English translation written by Thomas Cranmer in 1544. When describing his work to King Henry VIII, Cranmer said that the Litany, "will much excite and stir the hearts of all men unto devotion and godliness." As we enter into a season of reflection and anticipation, we pray that our hearts will also be moved to devotion and godliness."



Why is Pastor Wearing Pink (Rose) Vestments?

During the Advent season, there is often a different thematic focus for each Sunday. While these have by time and place, the one Sunday that has kept a consistent focus is the Third Sunday of Advent. It is called *Gaudete Sunday*, or Sunday of Joy, and is derived from the ancient entrance verse sung on that day, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice." (Philippians 4:4) It is the Sunday we shift our focus from "The Lord is coming" to "The Lord is at hand!" We will light a pink candle on the Advent and Pastor Robb will don a pink stole and chasuble to highlight the joy of the day.

FROM THE SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

We would like to thank everyone for all their work in getting the Christmas boxes ready to be filled for the Charleston Area Senior Center.

Please help us by filling the boxes with the following items: chapstick, comb, lotion, shampoo, soap, socks, stocking cap, toothbrush, toothpaste, vaseline. Please wrap the boxes in Christmas wrapping paper (there is free gift wrap on the table in the hallway!) and designate if for a male or female on outside of the box.

**Boxes need to be returned no later than
December 8th**

so they can be distributed to the Charleston Area Senior Center.
Thank you for all you do to make this ministry a success!



Tovey Circle

The Tovey Circle Christmas Party is December 5th at 6:30 PM at the home of Joye Shuler. Please remember to bring your canned goods for the Charleston Area Senior Center.

Lee-Freyschmidt Circle

The Lee-Freyschmidt Circle will hold their Christmas luncheon on Thursday, December 12 beginning at 11:30. Please contact Barbara Lawton at 843-875-9222 for details and to RSVP. We look forward to a time of fellowship and food as we celebrate the "reason for the season."



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN
CHURCH ANNUAL

Christmas PAGEANT.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING &
POTLUCK CELEBRATION

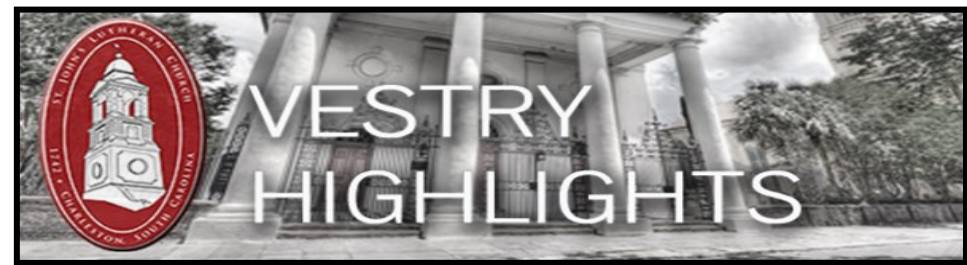
DECEMBER 8TH @ 10:00

CHURCH WILL PROVIDE CHICKEN AND DRINKS.
PLEASE SIGN UP FOR AN APPETIZER, SIDE OR
DESSERT.

DON'T FORGET A SERVING UTENSIL.

Be sure to sign up for the potluck!

You may use the link to the Google Form in the digital edition of the newsletter, email the church office: info@stjohnscharleston.org or call Susan at the office: 843-723-2426.



The Vestry meeting was called to order on Thursday, November 21st, by Vestry President Steve Trayte. The following represents the highlights of our Vestry meeting:

1. Noted in attendance were all members, except previously excused Chris Tant and Barbara Harpe. Attending as an invited guest was Dan Prickett, Chair of the Finance Committee.
2. Pastor Harrell began the meeting with a prayer.
3. The October, 2024, Treasurer's Report was reviewed by Martha Harken. Dan Prickett reviewed the Finance Committee's proposed 2025 Budget. Dan discussed the financial stress that faces the Congregation considering decreasing contributions and increasing expense, especially in the insurance premiums. The proposed 2025 budget totals to an annual deficit exceeding \$100,000. Steve noted that this is the fruition of the necessity of "Investing in St. John's" as we move forward from the pandemic setbacks and the pastoral transitioning. The Vestry deliberated and approved the Budget with recommendation that the Congregation approve the budget at the December Annual Meeting. Dan was thanked for his and the Finance Committee's efforts and was excused from the meeting.
4. The October, 2024, Vestry Minutes were approved.
5. Pastor Harrell reviewed his previously distributed report. Pastor Harrell noted that the 2025 Vestry will hold its annual retreat on a TBD Saturday in January and the Installation of Vestry will take place during both services on January 5th.
6. The Vestry considered and approved the following actions:

- Called the Annual Congregational Meeting to take place on Sunday, December 8, 2024, following one service at 10:00 AM.
- Approved St. John's Pastor Emeritus Policy.
- Approved increasing the fee for renting a parking space to \$140 per month.
- Rescheduled the December Vestry Meeting to be held on Tuesday, December 17th, following the annual Staff and Vestry Christmas Social.
- 7. Pastor Harrell and Vice President William Dowd put forth the following slate of Vestry Officer Candidates: William Dowd – President; Genevieve

Lagonera – Vice President; Martha Harken – Treasurer; Barbara Allen – Secretary. The Vestry deliberated and approved the proposed slate with recommendation that the Congregation elect these candidates at the December Annual Meeting.

Pastor Harrell and Vice President William Dowd then put forth the following slate of Vestry Member Candidates: Chris McDonough, Lewis Moore, Melissa Spaulding and Marshall Wilson. The Vestry deliberated and approved the proposed slate with recommendation that the Congregation elect these candidates at the December Annual Meeting.

Noted was the election by the Endowment Committee of Marc Marchant to serve as Trustee. The Vestry acknowledged such election with recommendation that the Congregation ratify this Trustee election at the December Annual Meeting.

8. The various Committee Chairpersons provided an update on the activities and action occurring within their areas, mostly via written reports that were distributed to the Vestry in advance of the meeting. Of note were the following actions:

- Elizabeth Marchant received approval to hold a “Low Country Mardi Gras” congregational social event on Saturday, March 1, 2025 to be hosted by Pastor Harrell – preparing and serving his favorite dishes.
9. There being no further business, President Trayte adjourned the meeting. The next regularly scheduled Vestry meeting will be Tuesday, December 17th, at 6:30PM – Christmas Social at 5:30PM.

Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9:30-2:30
843-723-2426 info@stjohnscharleston.org
The office will be closed December 25 and 26.

Please scan the QR code
for easy online giving
to St. John's!



Please mark your calendars!

Weekly

Sundays

Children's Choir coincides with Sunday School at 9:30 AM,
for children in grades 1 through 8!

Wednesdays

8:30 AM Facebook Live with Pastor Robb

Rehearsals continue each Wednesday
for Handbell Choir (5:30 PM) and St. John's Chorale (6:30 PM)

December

Sunday, December 1

Family-oriented light lunch and decorate Chrismon Tree after 11:00
service

Tuesday, December 3

9:30 AM Worship & Music Committee

Thursday, December 5

6:30 PM Tovey Circle Christmas Party

Sunday, December 8

One 10:00 service

followed by Annual Congregational Meeting,
Christmas pageant, and potluck

Thursday, December 12

11:30 AM Lee-Freyschmidt Circle Christmas Luncheon

Tuesday, December 17

5:30 PM Vestry/Staff Christmas Social

6:30 PM Vestry meeting

Wednesday, December 18

10:00 AM Coffee with Pastor Robb

Tuesday, December 24

8:00 PM Christmas Eve service

Wednesday, December 25 – Christmas Day

Church Office closed Wednesday 12/25 and Thursday 12/26



DECEMBER

Birthdays

12/1 Jennifer Dennis
 12/1 Gracie Lesemann
 12/3 Sallie Springer
 12/3 Melody Lowe
 12/4 Carole Jordan
 12/4 Debbie Stelling
 12/5 Sally Fulmer
 12/6 Peyton McDowell
 12/6 Allen McDaniel
 12/8 Wilson Antley
 12/9 Patti McCormack
 12/10 Irene Palasek
 12/12 Mary Motley
 12/13 Thad Shuler
 12/13 Jason Vaughan
 12/14 Thomas Williams
 12/16 Chad Dennis
 12/17 Jamey Lawton
 12/17 Andy Pelland
 12/19 David Allen
 12/20 Jan Jones
 12/20 Anne Thomas
 12/21 Judy Butler
 12/24 Audrey Lesemann
 12/26 Thomas Fletcher
 12/27 Tommy Harken
 12/27 Olivia Tuggle
 12/28 Martha Clark
 12/29 Hubert Shuler
 12/29 Bob Pickard
 12/30 Annie Littlejohn
 12/31 Kim Andersen
 12/31 Hugo Kilgour

Congregational Concerns & Prayers

We remember in our prayers:

Deborah Bussey
 Terry Butler
 Ted DeHart
 Jerry Duck
 Chere Edwards and Leslie Weikle
 Peggy Flood
 John Foltz
 Christian Groff
 Jason Hilton
 Denny McKeever
 Michele Meisten
 Linda & Larry Mohr
 Paul Morris
 Michael Rossetter
 Barbara Siegling
 Barbara Tamsberg
 Betty Wieters
 Allison Williams
 and our members who have
 experienced the loss of
 loved ones.

Our Loved Ones Away From Home

We remember members and
 friends who are serving
 in our military:
 Charles T. Clark
 Grant Hoel
 Thomas McCarthy

St. John's Lutheran Church

2024 Staff, Officers, Vestry & Committee Chairs

Staff at the Office: 843-723-2426

Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Robb Harrell pastor@stjohnscharleston.org
Office Manager/ Church Administrator	Susan Messersmith info@stjohnscharleston.org
Director of Music	Allison Williams music@stjohnscharleston.org
Financial Administrator	Carole Jordan financialadmin@stjohnscharleston.org
Director of St. John's Chorale and Director of Digital Ministries	Brink Norton media@stjohnscharleston.org

Vestry Officers

President	Steve Trayte	Secretary	Barbara Allen
V- President	William Dowd	Treasurer	Martha Harken

Vestry Members

Brenda Carr, Barbara Harpe, Michael Lagonera, Elizabeth Marchant,
Lewis Moore, Tom Springer, Sheila Sines Thomasson, Chris Tant

Committee Appointments

Christian Education	Barbara Harpe
Communication	Sheila Sines Thomasson
Endowment	Frickie Martschink
Evangelism	Michael Lagonera
Finance	Dan Prickett
Archivist and History	Sallie Springer
Lutheran Men	open
Nursery	Christian Education Committee
Property	Lewis Moore
Social Ministry	Brenda Carr
Special Projects	Elizabeth Marchant
Stewardship	Tom Springer
Women of the ELCA	Anita Mitchum
Worship & Music	Chris Tant