We Are the Church Together

The church is a people—not a building. Wherever you are, there is the church. We can serve the world together; we can pray together—even when we are physically apart. We believe in a spiritual reality that transcends the physical. We are the church spiritually together, even when we are forced to be physically apart. And, we are going to get through this together.

Grace and Giving amidst Covid

Surely the impact of the Covid virus has touched us all. Whether we have suffered it directly or indirectly our lives have been changed by this contagion. “Social distancing” was once possibly a manifestation of an extremely shy person and “masks covering face and nose” possibly a disguise for nefarious purposes. Today these are laudable traits, manifesting consideration for the health of yourself and humankind. What was once a central practice of Episcopalians, congregating on Sundays for communal worship, is now most readily experienced “online.” Even as number-limited live services have reopened, rules intended to prevent viral transmission have robbed us of some of the joy of celebrating and growing our faith in Christ as a community into an isolated, more somber event.

There are, however, gifts from Covid. The preciousness of our health and life has never felt so real. Father Charles wrote recently on Realm of this as a fitting time for prayerful reflection. No doubt we are awakened more than ever to the blessing of our faith, and our love of worshiping Christ together. Something we held so dear was so accessible that we perhaps took it for granted. No
Samaritan Ministry

St. John’s “First Sunday of the Month” food collection for the Samaritan Pantry is Sunday, September 6th.

Requested items are:
Peanut Butter, Jelly and Cereal

The shopping basket will be on the porch (office entrance) from 7:30am until noon that Sunday. Drop off at a time convenient for you.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Last month we delivered over 250 items.....St. John’s has blessed this ministry and all involved are grateful.

If you have any questions please contact Cindy Johnson (314) 616-4622

Parish website is a go to source for parish information

Have a question about what is happening at St. John’s? The website is an excellent source of information. Explore and discover things about St. John’s you might not know.
stjohnsoceansprings.dioms.org

longer. Now we can see what was unseen. We can actually feel the importance of being part of the Christian community that is St John’s. We miss what we had as a community and we pray for its return.

We are not the first Christians to have had their faith tested by a sickening contagion. The ravages of plagues ultimately vanished with improved hygiene; smallpox succumbed to a vaccine; and recurrences of influenza dampened by a combination of the two, with the addition of better medical treatment. Though we cannot know when Covid, too, will ebb and St John’s will “return to normal.” To be ready for that time, stewardship of our beloved community is essential. Frankly, another lesson learned during this time of Covid is the parts of St John’s that have not been extinguished. Worship services have continued in a variety of forms almost from the start of this pandemic. How timely was the deployment of the new online platform, Realm, which has fostered intraparish communication in a way that would not have been possible in years past. The outreach ministry of St John’s to the Samaritan Pantry has never been more needed nor more robust. The parish’s financial health remains acceptable, despite national and local Covid-related economic devastation. Some federal assistance and, most importantly, the fidelity of our parishioners who have been able to maintain their pledge commitments has made that possible. When we consider those among us who have lost employment or had wage decreases this is indeed a blessing and lays the foundation for our resurgence.

In the weeks ahead, we enter the time of year when we must ask of ourselves what we can commit of our time, talent and treasure to the health of our parish in 2021. We know Grace and Giving amidst Covid will be different than any prior canvass. Letters will go out and information made available but gone will be the packed pews together roused by a heartwarming faithful testimonial. No doubt we can find new ways to speak together about Christian giving, and that may be a blessing too.

Challenged we are indeed, yet our faith in Christ abides. Your parish remains your parish. A virus cannot take from us what is essential to our being, and there is still much joy in that.
**Realm Connect**

**A Tool for Communication**

To keep us together (even while we must be apart), we have launched a powerful new tool called “Realm Connect.”

From your computer, tablet, or smartphone, you will be able to maintain your contact information, schedule events, reach out to other members of the church, join special interest groups, and even donate online.

Need help signing on? Send an email to realm.stjohns.osms@gmail.com.

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**You Can Now Donate to St. John’s Online**

One of the advantages of St. John's expanding our use of Realm is the addition of online giving.

Continuing our financial support of church ministries is critical during these difficult times.

Giving online is convenient, safe, and private. You can easily contribute to your pledge account, or send a special donation to one of the four outreach ministries our church supports, all from your computer or smartphone.

Just go to the Giving section of your Realm account, click on +Give or GIVE NOW and complete the online form.

You can select the specific fund to which you want to contribute, the frequency, the method of payment, and whether you wish to donate a little extra to offset the processing costs.

The transaction fees the church must pay for credit card and ACH (bank checking and saving account) transfers are 3% and 1%, respectively.

A direct link to online giving is also available for members and guests on the St. John’s Episcopal Church website.

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**Stay Safe, Go Online**

In an effort to keep everyone safe, St. John’s has been moving every ministry and mission online to the extent that it is possible (and we are learning to stretch what is possible).

Small groups can meet via Zoom, Google Hangouts, Go to Meeting and other video conferencing tools.

The Rector's Class, an online religious education offering, has been launched.

The EYC has been meeting weekly via Zoom.

We can pray together daily. Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline (services from the Book of Common Prayer) are being prayed online.

Worship services from the nave at St. John’s are being lived streamed regularly.

And, we have adopted the expanded use of Realm, a communication tool to help keep us connected during this time.
Church in the time of Coronavirus

While gathering online is the safest option, you do have other opportunities to worship.

Worship

Worship is at the heart of St. John's. The current worship schedule is below:

A limited number of parishioners may register and attend worship on

- Sundays at 7:30 am, Holy Eucharist, Rite I
- Sundays at 9:00 am, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- Sundays at 10:15 am, worship.together

All must wear masks and maintain social distance.

Beginning at 11:15 am, parishioners are invited to register to come to the sanctuary to receive Holy Communion from the Reserve Sacrament. You may watch one of the earlier Sunday services online and then come to the parish receive communion. You enter through the front doors and make your way to the altar. The aisle is marked at six foot intervals for easy social distancing (should a line form). At the altar you will receive communion in one kind (bread). You exit by door at the organ. You are inside only briefly. If you want to receive communion at St. John's, this is the safest option we can devise.

In addition to Sunday services, we gather daily on Zoom for prayer:

- Morning Prayer at 8:00 am,
- Noonday Prayer at 12:00 pm,
- Evening Prayer at 4:00 pm, and
- Compline at 8:00 pm.

The Daily Office from the Book of Common Prayer is followed.
If you have ever wanted to experience the daily office, this is an excellent opportunity to do so. Join with others as we hold each other and the world in prayer.

Further details are available on the church website

Parish Survey

St. John's Vestry wants to offer innovative ways for parishioners to connect to the church, to each other, and to the wider community during this time of COVID-19 safety precautions. Please complete a parish survey and let us know which activities are of interest to you and your family. We will offer new programs and activities as time and resources allow. The survey should only take 3-5 minutes to complete.

The survey can be accessed on Realm.

Individual responses will remain confidential. Your assistance with this survey is appreciated. For questions please contact Julia Weaver at julia.weaver@att.net

Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan

We are currently updating our St John’s Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan. The mission is to have current plan designed to help the church prepare the physical facility, before a disaster strikes, and then respond to the needs of our local church, community and area following a disaster.

To accomplish this update, we will need to determine available response skills, certifications, and resources of our members. A personal questionnaire will be available for parishioners to complete that will identify their disaster response skills they would volunteer if needed. It is our hope that current St John’s organizations will help to gather these personal questionnaires as well as identify the resources/skills the organization be willing to provide as a group. Rick Fortenberry will be reaching out to the organizations.

Subscribe to the Parish YouTube Channel.

Did you know St. John’s now has a channel on YouTube? Become a subscriber! You can receive notifications when worship services are being live-streamed on YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyFGp30sBXZZRCMhWTn54rg?

Requests for Prayer

There are two prayer lists kept at St. John’s.

(1) the prayer list that is regularly published for the entire congregation kept by the parish office.

(2) the confidential prayer list kept by the Daughters of the King.

For a month’s time your requested prayer will be published by the parish for the prayer of the entire congregation.

Join the Prayer Wall on Realm to view the requests. And, include the requests in your daily prayers.
Thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. Having a current plan will save valuable time and reduce frustration post disaster.

If you have any questions, please contact Rick 601-818-7394 or the Sr. Warden, Leah Snyder at 228-806-9481.

New Time for the Rector’s Class.

Beginning Tuesday, September 1 the Rector's class will meet at 11:00 a.m. and end with An Order of Service for Noonday.

The Rector's Class is open to everyone.

We will meet on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. online via Zoom.

You can "drop in" and "drop out" as the demands of your life dictate.

There are no exams, papers, or tests.

Classes are topical. So, you can pick and choose the topics that interest you. If next week's class does not interest you, you can take that week off.

The class has many purposes and fills many varied needs with regard to religious education and spiritual formation.

Some classmates will just be curious about this week's topic. Or, curious about Christianity in general or the Episcopal Church more specifically.

Some classmates are participating as part of their own lifelong learning regimen; study being an element in their "rule of life."

Some classmates will be in formal "catechesis" (that is preparing for the rite of baptism). Others may be preparing to renew their baptismal vows, or be confirmed, or be received into the Episcopal Church.

Grapevine

The Grapevine is the monthly newsletter of the parish of St. John’s. The due date for items is the 15th of the month.

Virtual Offering

Some of you have asked about the possibility of making an offering during the livestream of a service of worship. At the time of the offering you may make a donation by texting “STJOHNSOS” to 73256.
The rector chooses topics based on the needs of those who are attending. So, the topics are varied: biblical studies, church history, theology, and ethics all will be covered in various ways.

Financial Update

Year-to-Date Report: June 30, 2020

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<th></th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>vs.</th>
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<td>Tithes, Offerings, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
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The budget number above is the “Pre-Covid Budget.” In August, the Finance Committee met to review the 2020 budget and made new estimates based on our experience over the last five months. The vestry reviewed the new estimates at their August meeting and adopted a new budget for the remainder of the year.

To interpret the above numbers, think of the “budget” number as what we thought would happen in 2020 back in January. And think of the “actuals” number as what really happened. 2020 has been a surprise.

Grapevine via email

You can receive the Grapevine via email—delivered to your inbox!

Click the link on the parish website and follow the step by step instructions to sign up.

Facebook & Twitter

Want to “connect” with St. John’s on social media? You can “follow” St. John’s on Twitter and “friend” St. John’s on Facebook.
Grapevine St. John’s
St. John’s Episcopal Church
705 Rayburn Avenue
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

Electronic Service Requested

Realm Keeps Us Connected.

Share Life Together
Direct messaging makes it easy for you to start conversations one on one or communicate with all the members in a group at one time.

Fellowship at Events
Open up the mobile app to get details about upcoming events, see RSVPs, and note any number of guests or items people signed up to bring.

Reach Out Whenever Necessary
Tap on someone’s profile to initiate contact immediately. It’s super convenient, and you don’t have to memorize anyone’s contact information.

Know What’s Happening
People can read church-wide posts, check out upcoming events, double-check group meetings, and RSVP to any church event.

Modernize Your Directory
The photo directory was church social networking 1.0, but today you can let people maintain their own info and photos and their communication preferences any time.

Review Personal Giving
Give people the tools they need to keep their giving more consistent. Anyone can review their total giving or check if a recent gift has been processed.