



JOURNAL

December 2022

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WWW.DIOET.ORG

A message from the Rector

*Dear God, may your light shine on us, as once it shone upon the shepherds,
as they kept their flocks by night.**

Advent is both dark and light: a season of darkness whose meaning is the anticipation of light. The days in December grow shorter and the nights longer. The dark grows deeper as Christmas approaches and the light of Christ grows nearer and brighter. Some of us prepare for Christmas festivities with great joy and anticipation. Some of us feel loneliness, loss, desolation, and the dark absence of a loved one even more acutely in this season.

Advent is a season of dark and light. But in the dark, whatever form the darkness takes, we await the light.

For darkness is the incubator and protector of new and hidden life.

In the darkness of the soil, the seed waits to germinate and sprout.

In the darkness of the night, we can see the splendor of the universe and the blanket of stars. In the dark, the Magi saw the star that guided them to the place where the Christ child lay.

In the darkness of sleep, we are restored and renewed, soothed and healed. In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up and speak.

And in the darkness of Mary's womb, the Christ child was nourished and protected. The darkness of Mary's womb was incubator for God made flesh and the hope of the world.

So too may the darkness and hush of this season nourish and protect us, and be an incubator for a new and living hope in us. God is with us, in darkness, as we await the light.

We will celebrate Christmas, with wonder and with great joy – but not yet.

Now is Advent, and in the darkness, we are getting ready, for healing and hope, for new birth and life, whatever form that healing and new life takes.

God is with us, in darkness and in light.

And when Christmas comes, the splendor of light will shine on us too, as it shone on the shepherds in the field as they kept their flocks by night.

Rev. Laura

** Prayer excerpted from "A Procession of Prayers: Prayers and Meditations from Around the World"*

500 N. Roan Street ❖ Johnson City, TN 37601 ❖ 423-926-8141
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An Episcopal Church in the Heart of Johnson City

A message from the Senior Warden

During this special time of the year, I hope you will join me in giving thanks for all that we have at St. John's. For Reverend Laura and Deacon Cathy, the vestry, the choir, the altar guild and all who work behind the scenes to make us a true caring and community church.

As we enter this special season of Advent, with all the promise it brings, we can glory in what we do and what we can do in the coming year. Thanks be to God.

Peace.

Tom

Vestry Election Results

We are grateful for the willingness and enthusiasm of all five parishioners who agreed to be nominated for Vestry. Voting concluded on November 30. The three newly-elected members are Kathi Horne, Lee Phillips, and Allen Pickel; their three year terms begin on January 1, 2023.

Outreach

The Outreach Committee meets bimonthly. At their last meeting, the members of the Outreach Committee made disbursements from the remaining balance of the 2022 outreach budget as follows: The River Ministry for Women: \$1,000; Good Samaritan Ministries: \$1,000; and Family Promise: \$1,600.

Caring Cabinet & Streetside Food Pantry (SSFP) by Jennifer Kinser



Thank you to everyone who has contributed items, funds and time to the Caring Cabinet and Streetside Food Pantry ministries! Our neighbors continue to be thankful for all the resources provided.

New sign-up sheets to help with keeping the cabinets stocked on a regular basis are posted in the Narthex. Any help you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Bins are located in the Narthex if you would like to drop off supplies, and you'll also see a list of most-needed items for both the Caring Cabinet and Food Pantry. You can also view those lists on the church website. (Go to <https://stjohnstn.org> then click on "Mission & Outreach" and choose Caring Cabinet or Food Pantry from the drill-down.)



If you prefer to make a monetary donation, we have made an effort to find the most cost-effective places to purchase many key items for stocking, so any funds contributed will help with these purchases. Please write SSFP in the memo of your check. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas for the Caring Cabinet or the Streetside Food Pantry, please contact me at 612-388-0218 or jjkinser@comcast.net.

Holston Habitat for Humanity - Progress on "Keena's Build"

Interior finishing of Habitat's new home up the street from St. John's on E. Myrtle Avenue will be underway through mid-December. If you can paint interior walls or have other handy skills to share, even a few hours of your time will make a difference! To sign up, visit

<https://donate.holstonhabitat.org/campaigns/23255-keena-s-build/join>

Blue Christmas Service

On Sunday Dec 11 at 4 pm, St. John's will offer a Blue Christmas service with Holy Eucharist. The Blue Christmas liturgy provides a meditative and healing space for those for whom the Christmas holidays may be a difficult time because of grief, loneliness, loss, or a difficult life transition. This service is for anyone in the parish or surrounding community. Please invite friends, colleagues, and loved ones to this special service of prayer, music, and worship.

Faith Formation

Adult Faith Forum Advent Series - Practicing Simplicity, December 4, 11, 18

The Adult Faith Forum meets Sundays at 9:15 am (between services) in the Great Hall. Our Advent program this year is based on a booklet from Living Compass entitled *Practicing Simplicity With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind*. Fred Mackara will be facilitating.

Booklets are available at the church, or you can download a pdf at <https://www.livingcompass.org/advent>. (Scroll down on the same webpage if you'd like to sign up for daily devotionals by email.)

EfM - Education for Ministry - Registration for 2023 is now open!

Contact: Lee Phillips, EfM mentor (lee@wordmatters.com or 423-676-7902)

What EfM is: A four-year program produced by the School of Theology at Sewanee: The University of the South. It is designed to help laypersons grow spiritually through study, theological reflection, and worship.



Why EfM? If you love reading, learning, and thoughtful conversations about faith, you will enjoy being part of this group.

Our EfM group meets on Sundays from 5 - 7:30 pm. The next program year begins January 15 and runs for 36 weeks (January through December with a summer break.) We have been meeting via Zoom, though we may resume meeting in-person or a hybrid arrangement.

As EfM is based on small-group study and practice, enrollment is limited to twelve participants. The deadline for enrollment is December 31, 2022. Tuition/Material Fee is \$325 (+ \$5 online registration fee) plus cost of the books, payable at registration.

If you'd like to learn more about EfM at St. John's, please get in touch with Lee Phillips as soon as possible, as the new program year starts in January. The program website is efm.sewanee.edu.

Centering Prayer continues to meet via Zoom Tuesday evenings at 6:00 pm and in-person on most Sunday mornings. All are welcome to join us! Several retreats are scheduled for the coming year. For more information and/or to receive Zoom link info, contact Frances Jackson. (jxn621@gmail.com or 423-946-3345)

Memories of a "Blue Christmas" service by Shelley Stahlman

I first learned about a Blue Christmas service in December 2016 when I attended one offered by Christ Church Cathedral in Nashville, Tennessee. I've since learned that many faith groups around the country offer such services.

I was invited to join a volunteer from Vanderbilt Children's Hospital where my precious year-old granddaughter Avelyn was a cardiac ICU patient since birth. We were truly heartbroken when "Avie" succumbed to her very critical heart defects six months later, but that December we, her grandparents, along with her parents, were living day-to-day at her side while holding our breaths and willing her to survive.

In an eerie way, life beyond Vanderbilt Children's Hospital ceased to matter, even to exist, as Avie battled her illness as well as the many difficult expected and unexpected consequences of expert, caring attempts to keep her alive and thriving. When I ran family errands that December and encountered commercial holiday trappings and gift selections, I felt numb to the excitement and anticipation many people experience this time of year.

That Blue Christmas service with thoughtful music, readings and candle lighting really was a balm to my senses and spirit. Amid the ambient seasonal cheer, I felt my ongoing grief and sadness acknowledged and supported by others. I know I'm not alone in feeling left out when, for whatever reason, difficult emotions such as hurt, disappointment, sorrow, loneliness and anxiety arise during the winter holidays.

You are cordially invited to the Blue Christmas service at St. John's on December 11 for a gentle space and time to sit with whatever you are thinking and feeling and, perhaps, to gain encouragement in the fellowship of kindred spirits.

Children and Youth Programs

Children's Education by Rae Grosserode, Director of Children's Education (rae.grosserode@gmail.com)

A lot of good things are happening with the children's Sunday School! We've finished our unit on Judges and Kings, and will be studying Advent and Christmas in December. After the Epiphany pageant we will begin a unit on the parables of Jesus.



The children are once again raising money for a charitable donation to Heifer International. Check out our display in the narthex, and contact me if you'd like more information on giving. After the success of last year's project, through which we donated six sheep, the students are very excited to repeat their gift! This year they will be purchasing goats. For more info, visit <https://www.heifer.org/blog/five-ways-animals-help-reduce-global-poverty.html>

Mark your calendars for Sunday Dec 4



St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, will be stopping by the church on the 4th for a visit before his feast day on the 6th.

Join us after the 10:30 am service for a photo opportunity and themed activities.

St. Nick may even have some coins to give away - the chocolate kind!

On the 4th we will also be celebrating our wonderful lead nursery attendant, Hannah Holder. She has faithfully served the youngest members of our church family for ten years, and she is now leaving for more family time and new opportunities. Be sure to stop by and express your appreciation for Hannah on December 4!



Youth Report by Ryan Clinton, Interyear Intern (ryanclinton4747@gmail.com)

The youth had a blast visiting Perplexodus Escape Adventures on November 19. Though we didn't succeed in solving the puzzles in Dr. Jekyll's Laboratory, it was an exciting adventure nonetheless, and the proprietors (thankfully) let us exit the escape room anyway.



Afterwards we enjoyed milkshakes at "The Scoop" Ice Cream parlor. All in all, the event was a success, and our crew can't wait to try again soon.

A reminder that Youth Sunday School is every Sunday at 9:15 am. For the first few weeks of December, we will be talking about Saints, both big 'S' and small 's', historical and every day, while developing plans for future service projects.

St. John's to host the 2023 Diocesan Convention

St. John's is honored to host the Diocese of East Tennessee's annual convention February 3-4, 2023. We will welcome our bishop, diocesan staff, and more than 200 delegates from around the diocese for worship, workshops, and the annual business meeting. While the business meeting is for delegates only, we are *all* invited to attend the workshops, ministry fair, and worship services.

Tom McGinnis, Suzanne Donaldson, and McKenna Cox will be representing St. John's as delegates.

We will definitely need lots of folks to help with hospitality, and since February is right around the corner, please stay tuned for more info about our role as host.

Fellowship

**(21
to
40)**

This fairly new fellowship group for **parishioners age 21 to 40ish** is planning a “December De-Stress” Dinner on Saturday, Dec 3, 6:30 pm at the Interyear House, 223 E Unaka Ave in Johnson City. Come on over, bring a friend, enjoy a beverage, and take a breather from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Please contact Ryan Clinton for more information and/or to let him know you’re coming. (ryanclinton4747@gmail.com or 704-689-9541)

Men’s Group

The men’s fellowship group will meet for dinner on Monday Dec 12 at Sahib, and Tuesday Jan 10 at Café One Eleven. For more information, contact David Kalwinsky at 423-202-8102.

Finance

YTD Financial Report - Operating Budget

	Oct 2021 YTD Actual	Oct 2022 YTD Actual	Variance YTD Actual 2022 vs 2021	Oct 2022 YTD Budget	Variance YTD Actual vs YTD Budget
Plate Offerings	\$ 2,044	\$ 6,567	\$ 4,523	\$ 5,100	\$ 1,467
Pledge Payments	224,438	211,916	(12,522)	231,000	(19,084)
Prior Pledges	1,885	720	(1,165)	600	120
Contributions	52,890	34,956	(17,934)	32,400	2,556
Misc. Income	326	1,137	811	600	537
Prepaid Pledges	41,070	32,500	(8,570)	18,600	13,900
Total Income	322,653	287,796	(34,857)	288,300	(504)
Total Expense	273,837	275,076	1,239	298,928	(23,852)
Net Income	\$ 48,816	\$ 12,720	\$ (36,096)	\$ (10,628)	\$ 23,348

Net income is positive through October despite a lag in current year pledge payments, primarily due to spending under budget and income from advance payments of 2023 pledges. Please call the church office if you would like an updated statement of your contributions year-to-date.

Heading into 2023, so far we have received pledge cards from 85 households. Please know that every pledge of any amount makes a difference, as stewardship is the key to creating and managing a realistic operating budget.

We are grateful for the generous support that sustains this parish and is vital to our many ministries of love and service.

St. John’s Endowment Fund (Presented by Suzanne Donaldson at the Annual Parish Meeting Nov 13)

What is an Endowment? An endowment is a donation of money or property to a nonprofit organization, which uses the resulting investment income for a specific purpose. Most endowments are designed to keep the principal amount intact while using the investment income for charitable efforts. Each year, only a portion of the income earned is spent while the remainder is added to the principal for growth. In this respect, an endowment is a perpetual gift.

History: Our Endowment fund was created in 1947, when five members of St. John’s – Dr. G. Edward Campbell, Robert F. Harkins, W. W. Miller, Jr., Dr. Charles P. Wofford, and Ferdinand Powell – created it to receive property that was devised or bequeathed or otherwise gifted to the Fund, to be held in “trust” for the declared charitable and religious use for the advancement of religion in Johnson City. The initial contribution in the amount of \$1,900 was made January 17, 1948.

For many years, small amounts were contributed, until 1974 when a \$50,000 bequest was received from the Elise Metzger Estate. Since that time additional gifts have been received, such that the current permanent balance (corpus) is \$62,750. Additional funds from recent bequests totalling \$36,185 have been allocated by the vestry as Quasi-Endowment contributions for a current total principal of \$98,936.

Governance: The St. John’s Episcopal Church Endowment Fund is governed by The Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA), which gives clear direction on the investment and spending policies of the fund. It is also included in the annual audit of all of St. John’s finances. For 2022, the amount allocated for spending was \$5,082. A large portion of that was donated to Holston Habitat for Humanity for a build of affordable housing in Johnson City. The 2022 Endowment Committee is comprised of Suzanne Donaldson, Pat Potter, and Bill Fryar as well as ex-officio members Dr. Tom McGinnis (current Sr. Warden) and Rev. Laura Bryant.

Want to learn more? If you have questions or would like to discuss making a gift or a future gift to the Endowment, please contact Suzanne Donaldson, sdlynx68@gmail.com or 423-292-6413.

Advent - Themes and Traditions

Advent is the first season of our church year. There are four Sundays in Advent, beginning with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and ending the day before Christmas.

Advent means “coming” in Latin. It is a season of preparation and expectation for the coming bration of our Lord’s nativity, and for the final coming of Christ “in power and glory.”

Symbols and Traditions of Advent

- ❖ Color: dark “royal” purple or Sarum blue symbolizes preparation, penitence, and royalty.
- ❖ Advent wreath: a green wreath with candles, once for each of the four Sundays.
- ❖ Empty creche: awaiting the Christ child (the baby Jesus is to be placed in the creche on Christmas Day)
- ❖ Advent calendar: to count the days to Christmas
- ❖ Light contrasted with darkness: Jesus is the Light of the world; at the time of christmas, the days begin to get longer
- ❖ The Gloria and other “glorious hymns” are omitted from our worship services as we solemnly prepare for Christ’s coming
- ❖ Festival of Lessons and Carols

Advent Through the Eyes of Daily Life

Advent is a time of preparation, of patience, of remembering what grounds and sustains us. The function of Advent is to remind us who God is and who we are meant to be, as well. Advent is about the riches of emptiness. ... The cry of Advent, “Wake up! Be alert! Watch for his coming” is difficult amidst the busyness of the season. We can practice some simple, but not easy disciplines ... to become more alert to the still small voice of God. We can focus on the giving of ourselves to God. Plan to spend time apart from the busyness of the season each day so you can be alert to God in the silent, the small, and the simple.

(excerpted from The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education)

Why does the Advent wreath have four candles, and why is one different?

There’s one candle for each week of Advent. Often the candle in the Advent wreath for the third Sunday will be a rose or pink color, since this particular Sunday has a joyful emphasis. Some Advent wreaths also have a fifth candle which is called “Christ’s candle” representing Christ coming into the world.

Why do we call church decorating “Hanging of the Greens?”

Perhaps the most striking and the most universal feature of Christmas is the use of evergreens in churches and homes. Among ancient Romans evergreens were an emblem of peace, joy, and victory. Early Christians placed them in their windows to indicate that Christ had entered the home. ... And so it is that once our attention focuses on the celebration of the Incarnation at Christmas (liturgically marked on December 17 ... we “green” our worship spaces, anticipating and “making room” for the coming of Christ on Christmas.

Source: <http://stlukeslebanon.org/>

Why do we wait so long to decorate the church?

Popular culture tells us the “holiday season” is upon us, so get busy! Yet the season of Advent is quite the opposite - a time for contemplation, preparation, and patiently waiting for the birth of the Christ child Jesus. So we live fully in that season, waiting until the last Sunday before Christmas to break out the decorations.

What are the Twelve Days of Christmas?

The Christmas season lasts twelve days, from Christmas Day until Jan. 5, the day before the Epiphany. Just as Christmas Day is a fixed date (December 25), the date of the Epiphany is also a fixed date (January 6.) So the Christmas season is always a fixed number of days: twelve. It is the shortest “season” of our liturgical year. The number of Sundays in the Christmas season varies depending on what day of the week December 25 lands on.



December

- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 7 Bill Fryar | 17 Brian Dunkelberger | 22 Sherri Harrington | 28 Allison Benson |
| 11 Jeff Lucas | 17 Tom McGinnis | 22 Margaret Howington | 30 Nancy Nichols |
| 13 Emily Baker | 17 Phyllis Ray | 24 Bert Bach | 31 Crawford Lilavivat |
| 14 Bill Archer | 21 Rhett Byrne | 25 Van Huyck | 31 Madaline Morrissey |
| 15 Charles Byrne | 22 Elizabeth Cloyd | 26 Beth Talley | 31 Peter Pawlowicz |

January

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Holly Hayden | 8 Cathy Osborne | 15 Ken Johnson | 22 Holden Byrne |
| 1 Charles Honeycutt | 8 Sandy Radford | 16 Emily Nagy | 22 Joe Wallen |
| 1 Robbyn Maylott | 9 John Edwards | 18 Tamar McCollum | 23 Rae Hunter |
| 1 Bonnie Pedersen | 11 Wesley Buerkle | 18 Lydia Sweatt | 26 Mark Merriman |
| 2 Angie Green | 11 Finn Lilavivat | 18 Joel Tramel | 27 David Booher |
| 3 Joy McGinnis | 11 Ed Lilly | 19 Linda Lucas | 27 Catherine Phillips |
| 3 Ann VanDreumel | 11 Eddie Miller | 19 Calvert Williams | 28 Nancy Jane Earnest |
| 4 Pat Potter | 12 Katherine Cleveland | 20 Gary Daught | 28 Warren Plowden |
| 6 Owen Grosserode | 12 Terry Walker | 20 Laura Duncan | 31 Nita Summers |
| | 13 Ray Morgan | 21 Andrea Eads | |

Highlights from the Annual Parish Meeting - November 13, 2022

- ❖ Sr. Warden Tom McGinnis named several benchmark achievements over the past year, and read a report from Jr. Warden Bill Archer.
- ❖ Finance Committee Chair Bob Cooper provided a summary of both successes and challenges related to church finances. Treasurer Reneau Dubberly also spoke, and Suzanne Donaldson reported on the history and current status of the St. John's Endowment Fund.
- ❖ Rae Grosserode and Rucht Lilavivat shared news about our children's and youth programs.
- ❖ Committee reports were provided by Sam Pettyjohn (Outreach), Rita Plemmons (Pastoral Care), Gary Mabrey (Organ), Jon Lau (Stewardship).
- ❖ Deacon Cathy Johnston reported on the impact of the Rector's Discretionary Fund, with gratitude for support by this parish.
- ❖ Rev. Laura thanked staff, recognized outgoing Vestry members Lee Bidgood, Ed Jordan, Brandon McGuffey, and awarded special recognition for exceptional contributions of time and talent "behind the scenes" by the Kinser family - William, Jennifer Kinser. Courtney, and Charles.

A recording of the meeting is available to watch at <https://fb.watch/h7QcmhbrJ/>.





Christmas Worship & Special Events

Sunday Dec 11	4:00 pm	Blue Christmas Service with Holy Eucharist (<i>Chapel</i>)
Sunday Dec 18	5:00 pm	Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (<i>Nave</i>)
Saturday Dec 24	Christmas Eve	
	Feast of the Nativity – Candlelight Services	
	4:00 pm	Holy Eucharist Rite II <i>Nave and Facebook Live</i> <i>Nursery available</i>
	10:30 pm	Christmas music
	11:00 pm	Holy Eucharist Rite II <i>Nave and Facebook Live</i>
Sunday, Dec 25	Christmas Day	
	10:00 am	Holy Eucharist Rite II <i>(One service, Chapel)</i>
Sunday, Jan 1	Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus	
	10:00 am	Holy Eucharist Rite II <i>(One service, Chapel)</i>
Sunday, Jan 8	Resume regular worship schedule	

Meetings & Special Events

- Saturday Dec 3 ‘21 to 40’ Fellowship Group Dinner, 6 pm
- Sunday Dec 4 St. Nick is visiting after the 10:30 service!
- Monday Dec 12 Men’s Group dinner, Sahib, 6 pm
- Sunday Dec 18 Church decorating, 11:30 am
- Tuesday Dec 21 Vestry meeting, 7 pm

Programs Recurring Weekly

- Tuesdays Centering Prayer, 6 pm, via Zoom
- Wednesdays Choir Rehearsal, 7 pm
- Sundays Centering Prayer, 9:55 am, in-person
..... EfM, 5 pm, *via Zoom*
..... Handbell Choir Rehearsal, 11:45 am

Regular Worship Schedule

- Tuesdays 5:30 pm, Evening Prayer/Healing Service
- Thursday 10 am, Morning Prayer
- Sundays 8 am, Holy Eucharist Rite I (*Chapel*)
..... 10:30 am, Holy Eucharist Rite II
..... *Nave & Facebook Live*
..... 9:15 am | Adult Faith Formation
..... Children’s Sunday School
..... Youth Sunday School

❖ *Nursery is available on Sundays, 8-11:30 am*

Return Service Requested

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Episcopal Church

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