



ST. JOHN'S JOURNEY

LIVING IN HOPE † UNITED IN FAITH † LED BY LOVE



July, 2023

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Dear Friends,

A misty rain is falling on my yard at the moment and I am oh, so, grateful for it. I suspect you share that feeling. And, while I watch the rain, the words from the song Rachele Winberg sang last Sunday is running through my head. "What if His blessings come through raindrops?". I know it sure felt like it was an unpleasant rain when Fr. Tom moved to Flint. And, as you will see in the newsletter, Bishop Singh is having some personal troubles that may leave some raindrops on the Diocesan windshield. Yet, somehow, as the rain passes, good things appear. Here at St. John's, we continue to see God's blessings constantly. This congregation is doing very well – and it is a tribute to each of us that God's love continues to show itself every Sunday and during the week too.

Just look at June! We had three Sundays with Holy Eucharist with two lovely guest priests and a bonus visit from Rev. Barb who was just back from her world cruise. Wes & Kathy Wagester's niece, Rachele Winberg, was a guest vocalist on the 25th – it was totally beautiful. We started Uncommon Prayer on the 25th to a large crowd (mostly Kathy & Wes's family and they were charming). The doors between the nar-

thex and the sanctuary have been refurbished and look stunning. We've had some outstanding coffee hours. Jack & Ida Lynn have made sure everything looks tip-top both inside and out. And we'll have a special celebration on July 2nd – Beckett LeClaire's ordination to the Deaconate – to get the new month started out right.



There's not much to share on the clergy transition process. We are blessed to have Rev. Mary Jo Schuetz with us as a guest priest and there's a good chance she will be with us more than once a month if we can work out the schedules. Rev. Susan Voelker, our guest on June 18th, has taken a position as an interim priest and will not be available to us for the foreseeable future. We have sent some background information to the Diocese in case a possible candidate surfaces but we have not heard anything on that topic.



Website: www.stjohnschurchdryden.org
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Find us on Facebook!



Editor: Becky Foster

St. John's Journey is published monthly. We're looking for your photos and articles. Please email them to "stjohnschurchdryden@gmail.com" with the word "Newsletter" in the subject line. Deadline for July is July 28th.



Happy Birthday!

Jim Fry
John Malinich
Kitty Underwood
Wes Wagester
Nikolai Wagner
Jack Dodd

July sends Neil, Ina and me back to school – the College for Congregational Development. We'll be heading to Midland and the campus of Northwood University to spend a week learning a process that helps congregations re-engage with their members and their communities. Say a prayer for us - I'm sure there will be a lot to absorb. And we'll share our experiences with all of you when we return.

And, if you're not busy the evening of Wednesday, July 12th, consider coming to church for an evening prayer gathering. I've been wanting to do something like this for several years and decided now was a good time to give it a try. Similar to a Taize service, it's a mix of music, quiet, scripture and prayer. It won't take long and I'll be sure to avoid introducing anything flammable as part of the process (folks who attended last year's Taize service will understand what I mean). There's an announcement with more info in this newsletter. I hope you can come.

I hope we continue to see God's blessings on our congregation, on our Diocese and our country. Have a blessed Independence Day and a wonderful July.

Becky



Congratulations, Deacon Beckett LeClaire!

Ordained on July 1st at Grace Episcopal Church in Port Huron

Chosen by God
a long time before that

Remember St. John's in your will:

Please consider helping the mission and ministry of St. John's by remembering the church in your will. You can do so by using the following wording:

"I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to St. John's Episcopal Church, a non-profit church, with the current address of 4074 S. Mill St., Dryden, MI 48428, and its successor, the greater of \$_____, or _____percentage of my gross estate, to be used in such manner as determined by its vestry."



Pentecost with a surprise guest!

Look who the Holy Spirit blew in for our Pentecost service! Neil Hargrave was leading the service when Rev. Barb joined in to add Eucharist to our normal Morning Prayer service. Then she came back the following week to celebrate Eucharist with us again! She brought a map tracing her 6 month cruise to coffee hour and we all drooled over it. And I must say everyone looks good in red – even that unusual shade of red that Kathy Wagester is wearing....

Just Press “Pause” – an Evening Prayer Service

When: Wednesday, July 12th 7PM

Where: St. John’s Church

What to expect: This prayer service is a time to detach from your hectic to-do list and spend some quiet time connecting with yourself and with the Divine. It will be about 30 minutes long. There will be some music, quiet time for reflection, some scripture with time to share questions and insights and time to pray.



Interested? Please let Becky Foster know if you are thinking of coming. It will help her plan the evening.

Financial Updates

May is the most recent month to be reviewed by the Vestry. The basic figures (full numbers only, rounded up) are below:

May 2023	Monthly Budget	Monthly Actual	Better or Worse than Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	Better or Worse than Budget
Income	\$4,933	\$4,776	\$140	\$24,667	\$28,766*	\$4,099
Expenses	\$5,306	\$4,719*	\$585	\$24,696	\$23,359	\$1,337
Net Profit	-\$373	\$57	\$430	-\$30	\$5,406	\$5,436

Pledge donations for May were just slightly (\$140) below budgeted amounts for the month. The transfer of unspent funds for Clergy Housing and Clergy Salary to Restricted Funds that were approved last meeting have exaggerated actual expenses for the month - this is for this month only. The figure in this graph has backed that out in order to more clearly see actual expenses. Adding budget for Supply Priest costs has increased our monthly expenses above our monthly budgeted income – however we have made provision in the YTD funding to cover this. If this is confusing, just know we are in the black this month. The Utilities bill was under budget for the first time in ages.

YTD Income in this chart does NOT include the \$3,750 we added from the Curacy Pgm to cover Supply Costs. This number reflects YTD pledge income to compare with our YTD expenses. As you can see, we are doing well for both income and expenses so far this year.

Vanguard Investment Account – as of May 31, 2023

- ETF Investment transferred to Vanguard Total Stock Market fund as approved in last meeting. \$60,214 transferred. Current value \$60,082.
- CD - \$21,000. This will remain stable until next year when interest is added to the amount.

Ministry Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lector</u>	<u>Eucharistic Minister</u>	<u>Crucifer</u>	<u>Worship Leader</u>	<u>Video</u>	<u>Counting Member 1</u>	<u>Counting Member 2</u>
July 2	Ina	Tammy	John	Rev Schuetz	Ida Lynn	Jack	Neil
July 9				Kitty	Ina	Ina	Wes
July 16	Kay	Mary	Neil		Ida Lynn	Connie	Ina
July 23				Beckett	Sherry	Wes	Russ
July 30				Becky	Wes	Russ	Becky

A Lovely Song and a Lovely Voice

On June 25, Rachelle Winberg was a guest vocalist at our Uncommon Prayer service. Rachelle is Wes & Kathy Wager's niece and an accomplished vocalist who moved us all. The song she chose to sing was "Blessings" by Laura Story. The lyrics said that sometimes blessings come to us by way of difficulties, even when we think He is farthest away and uncaring, He is right there and bringing blessings into our lives. The amazing thing, is this was totally in synch with the themes in our readings for the day. The Holy Spirit at work for sure. Many thanks to Rachelle, Wes and Kathy and all their family who joined us for the day. It was a full house complete with the laughter of little ones. And the coffee hour!!!! It doesn't get much better than this....



Ladies of the Theater

A group of us got together to watch "Singing in the Rain" at the PIX – and we had a bite to eat across the street before the show. What a fun day. Thanks to Sherry Wagner for getting the ball rolling. Even though the movie was made in 1952 (and some of our group and NEVER seen it before!), we still laughed and hummed our way through it. Let's do it again!

Sanctuary Door Fixed and Looking GOOD

Cleaned up, repaired and ready to install. Jack & Craig worked for a couple of hours to ensure the doors would close properly. Thanks to Craig from Caveman & Pip in Oxford. He took such care with these doors – even preserving some of the "scars" from the original builders. Surprise! He found a termite nest in one of them – gone now, but where did they come from?





Thoughts from a Fellow Pilgrim – Quaker Thomas Kelly

Thomas Kelly was a Quaker mystic who lived from 1893 to 1941. He published two books on faith and the life of faith that have been translated by Kathleen Wilson into a type of free verse that is easier for the modern reader to understand. She found Kelly's writings so inspiring that she has created a pamphlet of her verses that is free to all. I think this is a gift to all of us. As we read these words, I think we can say we have heard from a brother and fellow pilgrim on our faith journey.

*I am persuaded
that God is greater than logic,
although not contrary to logic,
and our mere inability to catch Him
in the little net of our human reason
is no proof of His non-existence,
but only of our need
that our little reason shall be supplemented
by His tender visitations,
and that He may lead and guide us to the end of the
road
in ways superior to any that our intellects can plan.
This is the blindness of trust,
which walks with Him, unafraid, into the dark.
. . . humbly walking in the presence and guidance
and will of God.
Life is meant to be lived from a Center,
a divine Center. . . .
There is a divine Abyss within us all,
a holy Infinite Center, a Heart,
a Life who speaks
in us and through us to the world.
We have all heard this holy Whisper at times.
At times we have followed the Whisper, and
amazing equilibrium of life,*

amazing effectiveness of living set in.

*Now out from such a holy Center
come the commissions of life.
Our fellowship with God issues in world-concern.
We cannot keep the love of God to ourselves.
It spills over.
It quickens us.
It makes us see the world's needs anew.
We love people and
we grieve to see them blind
when they might be seeing,
asleep with all the world's comforts
when they ought to be awake
and living sacrificially,
accepting the world's goods as their right
when they really hold them
only in temporary trust.
It is
because from this holy Center
we relove people,
relove our neighbors as ourselves,
that we are bestirred
to be means of their awakening*

*Life from the Center
is a life of unhurried peace and power.
It is simple. It is serene.
It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant.
It takes no time,
but it occupies all our time.
And it makes our life programs new and overcom-
ing.
We need not get frantic.
[God] is at the helm.
And when our little day is done
we lie down quietly in peace,
for all is well*

From "Quaker Thomas Kelly: Life from the Center"
by Kathleen Wilson. Her pamphlet is available at no
cost on the website: www.quakerthomaskelly.org

Four Letters from the Diocese

We are sharing these letters with you to honor Bishop Singh's and the Standing Committee's effort to keep all of us informed about some personal news from Bishop Singh. We will pray for Bishop Singh and his family in hopes that emotional wounds may be healed. And we pray for both dioceses as we work through our worries and our hopes.

June 16, 2023

Dear Friends,

While we celebrate Pride Month and all the joys of loving relationships, I share a bit of news about my own journey and ask for your prayers.

It brings me great joy to share with you that, in the last year, I have reconnected with an old friend from seminary. With the support of our Presiding Bishop and the Standing Committees of our dioceses, Ato and I became engaged last year over the Christmas holidays, and will be wed later this August when I am in India!

I must also address a painful part of this journey with you. This step forward in my life has created some conflict within my family, especially with my two sons, who are expressing anger on social media and by email. The divorce from two and a half years ago has been a painful transition and this pain has developed further as I moved into a new relationship. As a father, I love them and have worked with them, and will continue to invite them to address this pain and disappointment with me in a safe, therapeutic setting when they are ready. I want you to know that the Presiding Bishop's office has been attending to this matter with the boys and my ex-spouse and has been in contact with them and with me over the last year. I am attentive to communicating with and responding to the PB's office in every way as they monitor this tender family situation.

I ask your prayers for my former spouse and our children, especially during this painful time. I also ask for your prayers for Ato and me as we marry this summer and work through a long visa process.

I invite you to get in touch with Canon Katie Forsyth if you have any questions. She can be reached at kforsyth@eastmich.org and kforsyth@edwm.org.

Blessings to you and gratitude for the love modeled to us by Jesus Christ!

Prayerfully,

The Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and
Western Michigan



June 20, 2023

Dear Friends,

[As I wrote on Friday](#), after two and half years post-divorce, I have moved into a new relationship. Unfortunately, this has created a hurt-filled and harmful reaction within my family, now in a public way. Over last week and weekend, my sons have published letters with some serious allegations against me, posting that letter to social media and sending it directly by email to several of our congregations.

First, I want you to know that I am deeply embarrassed and this has been extremely painful. Divorce is messy and mine was no exception. While we separated amicably at that time, it was not without years of spousal conflict and not without some time spent in family therapy. It has not been a simple process since. I have spent quite a bit of time attempting to rebuild the bonds of trust between sons and father since splitting from my former spouse.

Recognizing that one of the areas they feel harmed is the lack of privacy afforded to a family when one parent is a bishop, I am conscious of striking a balance between protecting what privacy can yet be afforded to them and to us, and with responding to these allegations transparently and fully for the dioceses I have been called to serve; dioceses that have a recent experience of trauma related to bishop misconduct. I recognize this dynamic is at play here, and I am deeply, deeply sorry for it.

With the Standing Committee Presidents and Chancellor Fleener, I have been in conversation with the Presiding Bishop's Office over the last week related to this particular effort and for several months previous, when this was first understood to be a family conflict. With some new clarity and for appropriate and necessary transparency, I want to address a few points in the letter and update you on what's next for me and for us.

- Over the past few months, I have invited my sons to dive into these sensitive family matters in a therapeutic setting. My older son was willing to do one session before requesting to discontinue due to his tinnitus. My younger son said he was not ready to do this work. I have been in solo therapy on and off since 2003 and continue to meet regularly with my therapist as well as with two spiritual directors – this is advice I give to all clergy.

- In response to these allegations, I have encouraged the Presiding Bishop's Office to officially open a Title IV investigation, a process to determine the veracity of the points and to determine appropriate actions. There should be no sense that these concerns are casually dismissed. The Presiding Bishop will appoint a separate intake officer to facilitate this process. From my vantage point, an official

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- Title IV process is the appropriate way to clear these painful allegations. As part of this, I have offered to submit myself for comprehensive psychological and alcohol evaluation by a clinical professional. By taking my sons' concerns seriously, I hope that this will keep open the possibility of reconciliation.
- The Presiding Bishop's Office has not called for a suspension or restriction on ministry. I will, however, take a week's break to do the clinical evaluation, and will go on a reflective retreat during the week of July 4th. I will miss attending the Episcopal Youth Event with our remarkable young leaders and am grateful for our youth director's blessing to take this time.
- I will continue to be in conversation with the Presiding Bishop and our diocesan leaders to keep them apprised of this process and to check in along the way. It is my firm belief and hope that the investigation will determine that I have not broken my vows to the church and my adherence to the canons.

Again, Eastern and Western Michigan, I am sorry. I am sorry for the impact this has on our dioceses. I am here to serve Christ in this church, not to distract. I am so encouraged and hope-filled for our dioceses and for our ministry together. Amazing things are happening. Our formation – spiritually, vocationally, developmentally – amongst all orders is in focus. Our collaborations are growing and deepening in mission-oriented, relational ways. Our leaders are growing in their confidence and expertise, strengthening our church to welcome, invite, and lead in all corners.

I am grateful for you. Know that you are in my prayers every day. I ask that you keep me in yours.

Please contact info@eastmich.org or info@edwm.org with any questions or concerns. Your questions will either be addressed directly or pointed toward the appropriate party.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.



The Rt. Rev. Prince G. Singh

Bishop Provisional
The Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western

Michigan

June 20, 2023

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As your Standing Committee Presidents, we write to share information about a sensitive situation taking place in our dioceses, with our bishop provisional.

Several months ago, the bishop shared with the Standing Committees that, after learning about his new relationship, his sons had reached out to the Presiding Bishop expressing hurt around the dissolution of the previous marriage and some internal family dynamics. We were aware that the Presiding Bishop's Office was going to be in touch with the boys and

his ex-wife to respond pastorally. In the last week, this situation has escalated as his sons have shared their concerns more broadly.

We feel that Bishop Prince has been transparent with us in raising this awareness and in seeking appropriate next steps with our churchwide processes. We invite you to read the message below from Bishop Singh. We welcome the next steps that are to be taken and look forward to a resolution.

Our dioceses are resilient partners; focused on mission!
We are grateful to serve.

Yours in Christ,

Barbara Ilkka

President of the Standing Committee
The Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern Michigan

The Rev. Randall Warren, D.Min.

President of the Standing Committee
The Episcopal Dioceses of Western Michigan

June 30, 2023

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Thank you for the support and care you have shown us and one another over the last several days, as our dioceses have stepped into a sensitive situation along with our bishop. We write today with an update on the progress of the Title IV process and to underscore some important understandings about this unique status.

First, an update. The comprehensive psychological and alcohol evaluation that the Presiding Bishop has requested and that has been readily accepted by Bishop Singh has been scheduled and will take place the week of July 17th with a multi-disciplinary team of clinicians. This is an important step in further information gathering and will give us an accurate portrayal of the bishop's current mental health, any concern for addictive behaviors, and more. The bishop's schedule will be cleared and rearranged in order to give time and space for this intense examination. Additionally, the Presiding Bishop has assigned an intake officer for this matter. She will facilitate the intake process and manage this case. We are pleased with the swiftness at which these steps are taking place.

We also want to articulate some of the ways in which this unfolding situation is unique, especially the ways in which it is different from our previous experience of bishop discipline.

Bishop Singh is voluntarily participating in a Title IV process in light of the accusations made against him by his sons through social media and email. Typically, a Title IV process would be imposed on a bishop by the Presiding Bishop's Office of Pastoral Development in response to an official complaint filed with an intake officer.

At this point in the process, the intake officer is gathering information and assessing the allegations to determine if the situation rises to the level of a Title IV offense. Typically, a Title IV process at this intake stage would not be announced publicly until and unless offenses were officially identified by the Intake Officer and forwarded to the Reference Panel. Because of the public and targeted nature of the accusations, it was important to Bishop Singh and your Standing Committee Presidents that we talk openly and transparently about how the dioceses and church respond to such a serious matter, keeping you updated as we move along and respond to the process.

Asian Chicken Salad

Submitted by Connie Ogg

This is a wonderful summer luncheon salad.

1 Large can of chinese vegetables very well drained. You could sub in some of the nice frozen bags of mixed veggies of your choice. Just don't

leave out the next item!

1 can chopped or sliced water chestnuts drained

1/4 cup sliced onion - white, red or green your choice

1/2 cup chopped green pepper

1/2 cup sliced celery

1 & 1/2 cups diced rotisseri chicken

1/2 cup (or more-your choice) sliced green or black olives

Dressing: 3/4 cup mayo + 2T soy sauce mixed

Mix all ingredients and chill. Nice served with your favorite cracker or a sweet tea bread like blueberry lemon.



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Bishop Singh has not been suspended or restricted from ministry and continues with his normal schedule and activities, including visitations. Typically,

restrictions would be instituted if the bishop under Title IV had acknowledged guilt (our previous experience) or if individuals or the church were in immediate harm.

After the intake process is complete, the intake officer will submit her report to the Reference Panel, articulating whether she recommends proceedings based on the information gathered. If it is determined that the alleged offenses would constitute a Title IV matter, we will move forward accordingly, aligned with our Episcopal Church canons, our careful stewardship of our faith communities, and with priority for the continuing vital and transformational mission and ministry of our partnering dioceses.

Please continue to hold our dioceses in prayer: Bishop Singh and his family, the Joint Standing Committees, our joint staff, and one another. We have traveled far together over the last three years of partnership, through moments of deep challenge and moments of vibrant, Christ-centered ministry. Through all we've experienced together, we have grown in beloved com-

munity, in the healthy and balanced leadership of all orders, and in our trust and reliance on one another. This movement continues. This season is another challenge; one we will meet with compassion, sensitivity, and an ear toward the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Please direct any questions about this process to info@eastmich.org or info@edwm.org. They will be answered or directed to the appropriate place.

Yours in Christ,

Barbara Ilkka
President of the Standing Committee
The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan

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