



December 2025



ST. JOHN'S JOURNEY

LIVING IN HOPE † UNITED IN FAITH † LED BY LOVE

PASTOR'S CORNER

Rev. Harold Schneider



Dear people of St. John's,

Well, we finally made it. The season of Pentecost is past and we are able to commence our short journey through Advent, a time of preparation. During this season, let us find active ways to express our faith, through personal development, family development, and church development. These active ways of engaging our faith allows us to cast away the works of darkness and lead us to the light.

This is not just a time to prepare for Christmas, and the baby Jesus. It is a time to prepare for the *return* of Jesus. It is the beginning of a new year in the life of the church, a time to turn over a new leaf, and to live life in a new way. This can happen through joyful expectations or actively preparing through prayer and other spiritual practices. Your plan will likely be different than others.

Our preparations will be crashed by John the Baptist. Beneath his rough exterior lies a man smitten with a passionate love for God and people.

He wants us to repent, to turn around and take an honest look at ourselves and move forward. God calls us to live out the way of love, to turn and learn from our sins. We are loved and redeemed by God, no matter how many times we fall into sin.

Angels always figure in the stories of Jesus' birth and resurrection. Angels are divine messengers, extensions of the power and mercy of God, and in the Bible they are often the way believers encounter the Almighty. Do we listen to the angels in our life? Those angels sometimes speak through human contact and other media. Are we prepared to listen for their message?

My prayer for you includes a Holy Advent and a Merry Christmas. Please include them in your interactions with everyone.

In God's Love,

Fr. Harold

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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 January is December 26.



**December
Birthdays**

**Mary Cameron
Kathleen Buszek
Sherry Wagner**

**December Anni-
versaries
Russ & Kitty
Underwood**



Vestry Notes

BUSINESS NAME

Dear Friends,

I hope your Thanksgiving was all you wished it would be. My sister-in-law asks everyone around the table to describe one thing they are thankful for this year – a little like when Fr. Harold asks about our blessings. It's a good thing she specifies only one item. I have so many things that I am grateful for this year – many of them about you. I am always impressed with how often people pitch in to help with a project. Either with hands-on efforts or with funds to fill in where needed. And always with a gentle smile. As Sr. Warden, I sometimes stress about various church related questions. But the Holy Spirit always brings someone forward to answer the need. Right now, I'm a bit stressed about who will be on Vestry next year and who will be Treasurer. I know the Holy Spirit will pester the right people to take that step. And I'm grateful for their offer even before they make it.

December is a busy month for all of us and for the church too. We begin Advent, of course. I always like the contrast of how peaceful our services are when compared to the persistently cheerful, clock ticking countdown, buy-buy-buy that we experience all around us. We do have a few things on the schedule. Here are the Advent Activities.

**A Taste & See event on Wednesday,
December 10th with Fr. Harold.
Dinner at 6PM, class at 6:30. The
topic will be the video "When Bad**

Things Happen to Good People".

Our **Christmas Bazaar on Saturday,
December 13th**. No stress here - it's a low pressure event that we can all enjoy.

**Christmas Carol Sing-along at the
Bells in Almont on Monday, De-
cember 15th at 11AM.** We have a song book and we sing all the carols folks enjoy with our friends at the Bells. Come if you can – it's a fun time.

We're trying something new with the **Longest Night service**. We're holding it on **the morning of last Sunday before Christmas (December 21st)**. This will replace that day's Morning Prayer. We hope this will be easier for folks to schedule rather than our traditional evening service. Please come, and let us know what you think of this option.

**Christmas Eve service will be on
Wednesday, December 24th at
5:30.** I know we all look forward to it.
**Lessons & Carols on Sunday, Decem-
ber 28th at 10AM.** It's always fun to sing those familiar carols.

I hope you have time to participate in a few of these. Celebrating the season with our church family brings the real spirit of Christmas home to each of us. I wish each of you a meaningful Advent and a joyful Christmas.

Peace,
Becky





Holy God, I am tired!
Tired of the fear-filled news,
Tired of the cruelty toward neighbors,
Tired of the deafening silence from leaders,
Tired of being always on edge,
Tired of screaming into the void,
Tired of holding hope against despair.
Meet me in my tiredness, O God.
Meet me in the ache of these long days
and breathe your strength into my bones.
For the sake of your love.
Amen.

Bishop Deon K. Johnson

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson, 11th Bishop of Missouri, publishes a daily prayer on Facebook. These prayers are practical, and somehow both topical & timeless. You may be familiar with Bishop Deon from his time as rector at St. Paul's - Brighton. If you have the chance to hear him preach, take it!

Here is his prayer from November 17th, which Kitty Underwood and Fr. Harold thought might be a good one to share.

Light in the Darkness
reimagining
the Longest Night

Sunday, December 21st
10 a.m.



**Christmas Eve
Service**

5:30 p.m.





Christmas Carol Sing-Along

December 13th, 11 a.m.

Join us at The Bells for a morning of singing everyone's favorite carols.

It's a fun time, and as we all know, the best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!

Taste & See



*A Discussion of the video
When Bad Things Happen
to Good People*

Wednesday, December 10th

Dinner at 6
Class at 6:30



TransAdvent 2025

Our friend Deacon Beckett (Beck) Leclaire is among the contributors to this new Advent resource from Justice Unbound, a part of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Editor Rev. Lee Catoe remarks, "these [are] amazing and powerful pieces of witness, art, and story. I am truly blessed to have been able to read these, truly."

From Beck's contribution...

"at my grandma's house there was a giant willow tree

It stood at the edge of a small hill in a meadow, its grand curtain of leaves and branches draping round about it luxuriantly. It was easily ten feet across at its base and seemed to be the closest thing to an immortal being I would ever encounter."

You can find the full resource, including a printable version, on the Diocesan website: <https://greatlakesepiscopal.org/2025-trans-advent/>



Congratulations to the winner of our November Gift Basket raffle, Dianne Bishop! The beautifully wrapped basket contained fall themed candles, a cutting board, a hand painted hot pad with a drawing of a fox, towels and hand soap.

ADVENTWORD 2025

AdventWord

DECEMBER 3-25 **2023**

3	WIND	15	HASTEN
4	HIDDEN	16	BEGIN
5	PRESENCE	17	SPIRIT
6	PEACE	18	REPAIR
7	GRACE	19	GIVE
8	WATCH	20	DREAM
9	AWAKE	21	LAUGHTER
10	GLORY	22	QUENCH
11	HERALD	23	PONDER
12	VALLEY	24	COVENANT
13	TRUTH	25	LIGHT
14	PATIENCE		

adventword.org

 Forward Movement

AdventWord is an inspirational online Advent calendar featuring a daily prompt word selected from the Sunday Lectionary readings. Followers receive a daily meditation and image inspired by the day's word, and are invited to share their own personal reflections, art, poetry, or other creative expression.

As we await the birth of our Lord and Savior

Jesus Christ, we are invited to find quiet moments of reflection to help you stay connected to your faith, to others, and to God.

There are many ways to participate in Advent-Word! And all of them are correct! Here are a few ideas:

Read and pray over the daily emailed meditation during Advent

Encourage your church to include our downloadable bulletin inserts on the first Sunday of Advent

Connect and discuss the day's word with other disciples on our social media pages

Share your own personal meditation to inspire others—whether visual or written. Haikus and poems, paintings, photographs, personal reflections, and more are all encouraged.

AdventWord is an offering of Forward Movement, a ministry of the Episcopal Church. Learn more about our ministry at forwardmovement.org.



OCTOBER 2025

FINANCIAL REPORT

This is the most recent month for review

Overview: Donations were lower than expected this month. There was a hiccup in recording the collection plate at the end of the month and mid-week checks tucked in the Counting folder – those donations will show up in the November report. Of note, the CD interest is offsetting the shortage in donations.

Expenses were higher than expected for the month but our YTD totals provide a buffer and we’re still looking good.

Vanguard Funds:

Vanguard Money Market: \$66,938 – this reflects moving our original investment to an interest generating account

Total Stock Fund Balance as of October 31, 2025 is \$34,759

One CD of \$22,000 at 3.9% will mature in **April of 2026.**

Total value of the account is \$123,713. This is very close to a 100% increase of our original investment of \$65,000.

Memorial Donations Received!

In the last two months, we have received several memorial donations. Very unexpected and much appreciated.

Richard Buszek Trust - \$50,000 restricted to Landscaping and Gardens

Al Seivers Trust - \$5,000 without restriction. Vestry voted to set this aside for the Paint & Repair of the Sanctuary project next year.

Harvey Taylor’s Family - \$1,000 without restriction

We have sent notes of gratitude to each family. And we hope our friends in Heaven know that we remember them with love.

October 2025	This Month	The Year So Far
Income from Pledges	\$5,007	\$57,272
Income from CD		\$1,040
Total	\$5,007	\$58,312
Expenses	\$6,896	\$55,858
Cash Flow Balance	\$1,890	\$2,454

			<u>Ministry Schedule</u>				
<u>Date</u>	<u>Reader</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>
Dec 7				Becky	Ina	Becky	Connie
Dec 14	Kathy	Jack	Jason	Fr. Harold	Ida Lynn	Russ	Becky
Dec 21				Neil	Sherry	Neil	Connie
Dec 24	Wes	Jason	John	Fr. Harold	Wes	Connie	Russ
Dec 28				Lessons & Carols	Becky	Russ	Mary



Colorist Name:

Art by: bluecatgallery.com

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