



Dec 2023



ST. JOHN'S JOURNEY

LIVING IN HOPE † UNITED IN FAITH † LED BY LOVE

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Pastor's Corner

Dear people of St. John's,

Pentecost has evaporated at long last, and our anticipation of Advent has arrived. In the four weeks of Advent, we are attentive to time, since there never appears to be enough of it this time of year. Hours and days appear to run together as we await the birth of our Christ Child, as well as His second coming.

Our Scripture readings focus on the end times, John the Baptist heralding the coming of Jesus' ministry, and the birth our Lord and Savior. Sometimes in the solitude of the season, our fears and concerns, our hopes for the future, and our visions rise to the surface. We face ourselves and the Journey which lies ahead and at the same time realize we can find companionship for the road ahead through Jesus.

Our readings expand and challenge the welcoming of the baby Jesus. We have God coming as a judge and calling us into a life of justice which can invoke both anticipation and fear as we choose the meaning of what is right or wrong.

Often in the Bible, God meets humans on a mountain. In our language a

mountaintop experience is one which is so overwhelming that it can change one's future. All of these experiences can be superimposed in our church. The Christian mountain is wherever we receive the word and sacraments.



In this season of preparation and expectation let us find active ways to express our faith, through areas of personal development, family development, and church community development. These acts of faith will allow us to put on the armor of God.

We are offered a glimpse of God's vision for creation and humanity. We are challenged to set life's goals around this vision. Advent invites the church to dream of what God's will is being done fully, "on earth as in heaven."

Merry Christmas to all!

In God's Love,

Rev. 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 Dec 29.



Happy Birthday!

Kathleen Buszek
Sherry Wagner

Happy Anniversary!

Russ and Kitty
Underwood

Vestry Notes

Friends, I just finished my first walk in the snow with my two dogs. The older dog had a major case of the zoomies while the younger dog kept losing the ball in the snow and leaves. She was so thrilled when she finally found it! Even though some of us dread winter, seeing their enjoyment just made me laugh. I hope that you find some joy in the new season too.

St. John's continues to be so blessed. A small party of hardy Michiganders made sure local youngsters had candy from St. John's on a snowy Halloween. And November just kept getting better. Fr. Harold Schneider joined St. John's as Priest-in-Charge and is fitting right in with the congregation. We thanked Rev. Mary-Jo for her support as a supply-priest this year with some fun mementos on All Saint's Sunday. That same day, Tom & Marie Smith's granddaughter, Natalie, celebrated the anniversary of her baptism with a lovely liturgical dance. Our fall coat drive for elementary school students is doing great – we'll

probably deliver the coats the first week of December.

We've had several visitors to our services. And everyone continues to make our coffee hour extra special.



December is looking very good. We will have two Taste & See classes in early December. Our Xmas Bazaar is on track to be another festive event. Longest Night will be held on December 21st. And Xmas Eve will be held at 7PM on the 24th. A quirk of the calendar means that the fourth Sunday of Advent will be the MORNING of the 24th so we have two opportunities to pray together that day. And we're hosting a Xmas Morning Breakfast Pot-Luck for anyone who can come. I hope that anyone who cannot join family or friends that day will consider joining us. I've heard a rumor that Santa may leave some surprises for attendees. We'll just have to see.

May we all remember to savor the season.

Peace & Blessings,

Becky

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."



Year-End Strategies for Reducing Income Taxes

For those of us who must withdraw a certain amount from our IRA's every year (commonly known as RMD or Required Minimum Withdrawal), there is a way to reduce the taxes due on that withdrawal. If you designate a non-profit organization (like St. John's) as the recipient of the withdrawal AND if the check from the fund is written directly to the organization, it will NOT be taxable. You can use this approach for a year-end

donation OR you can do it to fund your annual pledge for 2024. Either way, your savings helps an organization and you get a tax break! A win/win, right? Talk to your investment firm about their process for making this happen. It won't be difficult.

Can you see yourself here? How about as part of the Vestry?



St. John's will have two open Vestry positions to fill in January. Ina Dockham and Wes Wagester are rotating off of Vestry and we will miss them. However, it gives you a chance to offer your time, initiative and imagination to help St. John's grow and thrive. We have a formal meeting once a month on Zoom so you can attend in your jammies if desired. And there are different projects throughout the year that may take some additional time. But we have a pleasant and flexible team that you would certainly enjoy. It's one way to get to know each other better. And your input might be just what we need to see new possibilities. Please pray about it and listen to hear His answer. Any Vestry member would be happy to answer any questions. Or just contact Becky if you are interested.

Saying Farewell to Al Sievers

Our friend and brother, Al Sievers, passed away on November 6th after a long slow decline. His partner, Linda, and his family were with him during the last days. And he specifically wanted to have his funeral surrounded by his St. John's family. An excerpt from the obituary said,

"Al was a longtime member of St. John Episcopal Church in Dryden, Michigan, and had strong faith in our Savior Jesus Christ. Al was a good man, with a huge heart, and he gave his attention to anyone who needed it. Al was very proud of his children and grandchildren, giving them encouragement and accolades when needed."

Although arrangements had been made to have the service at White Chapel, Al's son, Jason, wanted Fr. Harold to officiate. Harold and Jason spoke extensively about Al's life, his family and the fond memories that they would cherish. Harold had just begun to serve at St. John's but that didn't matter – he connected with the family and crafted a service that would inspire and comfort friends and family. And Michelle and Jason bravely fought off tears as they offered touching tributes to their father.



One of his caregivers from American House drove from the west side of the state for the viewing and service. She told me that Al shared his infectious humor with everyone right to the end. He ran a good race and crossed the finish line in style.

We keep Michelle, Scott, Jason and Linda in our prayers. It's always hard to lose someone you love but especially during this time of year. May the Holy Spirit bring them comfort and peace.

An All Saint's Celebration to Remember



St. John's had a very special All Saint's celebration this year. Natalie Smith, Tom & Marie Smith's granddaughter, was baptized at St. John's 10 years ago and has grown into a lovely and very talented young woman. She wanted to celebrate the anniversary of her baptism at St. John's by performing a liturgical dance during the Offertory. There were twirls and leaps and these pictures do not do it justice. We are so grateful that Natalie and her grandparents gave us this gift.

December Dates to Remember:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Advent 1	4 Taste & See	5	6	7	8 Xmas Bazaar Prep	9 Xmas Bazaar
10 Advent 2	11 Taste & See	12	13	14	15	16
17 Advent 3 Vestry	18	19	20	21 Longest Night	22	23
24 Advent 4 AM Xmas Eve Service PM	25 Xmas B'fast Pot-Luck	26	27	28	29	30
31 Lessons & Carols						

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Halloween –with a little Snow on the Side

It was a blustery Halloween night but that did not stop folks from having a good time distributing candy. As Deacon Beckett says, “There’s not bad weather, just bad gear”. Folks bundled up and used some hand warmers to keep the candy flowing to the ingenious trick-or-treaters who came by. Here are a few exam-



First Sunday with Fr. Harold

Fr. Harold celebrating his first Eucharist as Priest-in-Charge at St. John’s. We look forward to many more.

Outreach Teen Relief Coat Drive

Great response to coat drive for elementary school students. The girl’s coats are so cute – and the boys coats are very cool!



Time to bake, make or take items for our annual Xmas Bazaar.

Ina Dockham is encouraging us to bake something since that seems to sell better than the other items. But we certainly want to showcase any craft items or gently used Xmas décor for our shoppers. Please consider donating AND helping with prep, day-of support and clean-up. Sign-up sheets are in the Parish Hall. If you’re like me, you’ll find something that you just HAVE to bring home!

Drop off/prep day – Friday, December 8th 10AM to 4PM

Bazaar – Saturday, December 9th

9:30AM – 4PM





Longest Night Service

Please join us for a special service of com-

fort and peace during the darkest night of the year. For all of us who feel the absence of family members and friends during the holidays. And for those who struggle with loss of health, jobs or other trials. In the midst of the last minute bustle, it's good to take some time to acknowledge our heartaches and pray for healing.

When: **Thursday, December 21st**

Time: **7PM**




 and
 suddenly
 there was with
 the **angel**
 a multitude of
 the heavenly host
 praising God
 and saying
Glory to God
 in the highest, and on earth
 peace, goodwill towards
 men
 Luke 2
 13-14

*Please join us as we celebrate
 the birth of Christ on
 Sunday, December 24th
 At 7:00 PM*

Advent Taste & See Classes Scheduled

We haven't had a Taste & See class in quite a while. With the start Advent and having Fr. Harold more than willing to lead the discussions, it seemed a perfect time to get this back on the schedule. The general format is a combination of a **LIGHT** (appetizers and finger food) pot-luck for the first 30 minutes or so followed by a discussion on a selected topic. This year, the topic is the Journey to Bethlehem. Fr. Harold will provide any materials needed. We just supply the food and our thoughtful attention. Dates & Times are:



of

Monday	December 4 th	5:30 – 6:30 Munching & Mingling	6:30 start of class
Monday	December 11 th	5:30 – 6:30 Munching & Mingling	6:30 start of class



A New Assisting Bishop for Eastern & Western Michigan Dioceses Announced

The Diocese of Eastern Michigan shared some exciting and hope-filled news: the Rt. Rev. Skip Gladstone Adams will formally return to our body as Assisting Bishop, expected to serve from now until the calling of a new bishop provisional or bishop diocesan. Many will remember Bishop Skip's compassionate, playful, and prayerful ministry amongst us as Assisting Bishop in 2021.

“Assisting Bishops” are already-consecrated bishops (meaning, they've served in another **diocese** before) and are called to serve in a specific role as determined by the ecclesiastical authority. The areas that our Joint Standing Committees have specifically asked Bishop Skip to attend to include:

Pastoral care and support to clergy, leadership, and laity of the **dioceses**, specifically attentive to our reality of having two recent situations of bishop discipline

Support, wisdom, and advice to **diocesan** leadership

Represent the **dioceses** in the House of Bishops and in councils of the wider Episcopal Church

Preside over **diocesan** liturgies: confirmations, ordinations, celebrations of new ministry

Consultation and support for **diocesan** staff

Assistance with elements of clergy transitions and discernment processes: bishop-to-bishop calls, consent to Letters of Agreement, letters dimissory, selection of postulants and candidates for ordination, supervision of deacons (in consultation with archdeacons and staffs), clergy licensing, disciplinary matters

His service with us is part-time, about 12-15 hours per week. He will be primarily remote, serving with us from his home in New York state while traveling in occasionally for some in-person gatherings. The costs related to this position are shared equally between the **dioceses**.

Several of us from St. John's attended a seminar where Bishop Skip was one of the speakers. He was humble, insightful and fun. If he leads another seminar in his time with us, we should ALL make an effort to attend. It was THAT good.



Geodes by Carrie Newcomer



Carrie Newcomer is a singer/songwriter that I have recently "discovered". This is a part of a song that she wrote that I think is especially intriguing for Advent. The song is lovely and you can find it on You-Tube.

No you can't always tell
one from another
And it's best not to judge a

book
by it's tattered cover
I have found when I tried
or looked deeper inside
What appears unadorned
might be wondrously formed
You can't always tell
but sometimes you just know

'Round here we grow geodes
in our gardens
They're as common as the rain
or corn silk in July
Unpretentious browns and grays
the stain of Indiana clay
They're what's left of shallow seas
glacial rock and mystery

And inside there shines
a secret bright as promise

All these things that
we call familiar
Are just miracles clothed
in the commonplace
And you'll see it if you try
in the next stranger's eyes
God walks 'round in muddy boots
sometimes rags
and that's the truth
You can't always tell,
but sometimes you just know

No you can't always tell
one from another
And it's best not to judge a book
by it's tattered cover
I don't open them to see
folks 'round here just like me
We have come to believe
there's hidden good in common things
You can't always tell
but sometimes you just know
You can't always tell
but sometimes you just know

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>
Dec 3	Jack			Kitty	Ida Lynn	Russ	Becky
Dec 10	Mary	Neil	John	Fr Schneider	Sherry	Neil	Jack
Dec 17	Tammy			Neil	Wes	Jack	Connie
Dec 21	Rev Le-Clair			Becky	Ina	Ina	Wes
Dec 24	Ina			Kitty	Becky	Connie	Ina
Christmas Eve	Wes	Rev Le-Claire	Neil	Fr. Schneider	Ida Lynn	Wes	Russ
Dec 31	Tammy			Neil	Sherry	Russ	Becky

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