

An asterisk (\*) indicates that you are invited to stand, as you are able.

Welcome & Announcements

Introit

“He Came Down”

arr. Bell

Lighting the Advent Wreath

The Diamond Family

One: In a world full of fear, where do you see the presence of love?

All: We see love when people hold open the door.

We see love in a warm embrace, a homemade casserole, a phone call after a long day.

We see love in random acts of kindness and intentional acts of empathy.

One: Even in a fearful world, love is all around us.

All: Today we light the candle of love as a reminder of this good news.

(Light candles)

One: May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, love is here. Love is world-changing. Love is shining bright.

We just have to look for it.

\*Hymn (Insert)

“The Candle of Hope”

Prayer of Invocation & Confession (ending with the Lord’s Prayer)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Promise of Forgiveness

\*Gloria Patri 198 (Red) vs. 1, 5

My soul gives glory to my God. My heart pours out its praise. God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways. Praise God, whose loving covenant supports those in distress, remembering past promises with present faithfulness.

\*Affirming Our Faith

One: We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.

All: We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow.

We believe that good news is louder than fear.

We believe this good news is for all people.

One: So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.

All: We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst.

One: We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim:

All: Unto us, love is born.

One: We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love.

All: So still, we believe. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:18–25 (pg. 1, N.T.)

Nancy Arico

Children’s Time

As Pre-K–12th graders leave for Sunday School, we send them with this liturgy:

Pastor: Now we go our separate ways to worship and learn about God.

Cong.: May God be with you there!

Children: May God be with you here!

Anthem

“Come, O Come Emmanuel”

arr. Raney

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 41:5–10 (pg. 669, O.T.)

Sermon

LOVE

Rev. Beckett

*After the sermon, a brief musical interlude will offer time for reflection.*

\*Presentation of Offering & Doxology (Hymn 95, Red)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

\*Prayer of Dedication & Prayers of the People

\*Hymn (Insert)

“I Will Come to You”

\*Benediction

\*Postlude

“Soon and Very Soon”

*Please take time after the Postlude to greet one another, especially people you don’t already know!*

#### ENRICHING OUR WORSHIP OF GOD

Music Director

Janet Kaido

Ushers

Jim Little

Greeter

Gail Nelson

Musicians

Chaka Allen (baritone), Jeff Estabrook (tenor),

Dwight Jaggard (piano)

#### WELCOME TO ST. JOHN’S!

No matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, or what you are wearing, you are welcome here! No matter where you are in your faith, you belong here. All we want is to help you experience the presence and love of Jesus Christ! If there is anything we can do to help you feel more at home, please feel free to ask one of the ushers located at the sanctuary doors. We would love for you to join us for refreshments downstairs in the Fellowship Hall following worship. We are glad that you are here and hope you will worship with us again soon!

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL

After the scripture reading, grades K–12th will leave with their teachers. If this is your child’s first time in Sunday School, the ushers have pamphlets that tell you everything you need to know. As always, nursery care is provided for children ages 5 and under.

#### SESSION UPDATE

This past Monday, the Session received Brian Binkley and Mark Ntow into active membership (they will be welcomed in worship on January 18). They also approved the Marketing Task Force’s branding proposal for a new logo and color scheme that will be introduced in January. And they approved a plan to restructure the church’s boards, which will also be introduced in January.

#### IMPLEMENTATION TEAM UPDATE

The Implementation Team meeting with task force chairs was cancelled last Sunday due to the weather. Be on the lookout for an update in January!

#### OFFERING & PRAYER CARDS

If you would like to support the life and ministry of St. John’s, there are offering trays located at each door in the sanctuary. You can also give electronically by scanning this QR code. Prayer request cards can be placed in one of the offering trays.



#### CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

This morning we begin receiving the Christmas Joy Offering. This offering through the PC(USA) supports at-risk youth, provides assistance to current and retired church workers in need, and develops future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges, particularly equipping communities of color. You can give using the envelope in your bulletin and put it in an offering tray. You can also give online by scanning the QR code above and selecting “Christmas Joy Offering” from the dropdown menu.

#### CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Longtime St. John’s member **Henrietta Damiano** passed away on Monday, Dec. 8. A memorial service is being planned for Saturday, March 14.

#### WOMEN’S BOOK STUDY – 2 OPPORTUNITIES!

The Sundy book study meets at 8:15 a.m. in the Carriage House, apart from the first Sunday of every month. They are taking a break from their current book to read *Advent in Plain Sight: A Devotion Through Ten Objects* by Jill Duffield. Contact Nancy Wolfe ([nj.wolfe@verizon.net](mailto:nj.wolfe@verizon.net)) for more information.

The Monday group is taking a short break and will resume January 5 at 10:00 a.m., both in person and on Zoom (use the church Zoom link found on the website under Quick Links). They are discussing *Elusive Grace: Loving Your Enemies While Stiving for God’s Justice* by Scott Black Johnston. Contact Nancy Arico ([nancy.arico@verizon.net](mailto:nancy.arico@verizon.net) or 610-550-9547) for more information.

#### MEN’S GROUP

The Men’s Group will meet Wednesday, January 7 at 7:00 a.m. in the Carriage House to continue their study of Isaiah. Contact Pastor Patrick for more information.

#### END OF YEAR GIVING

Year-end gifts will be credited in the 2025 tax year if they are postmarked by Dec. 31. Some members and friends of St. John’s donate shares of stock or mutual funds at the end of the year. If you are interested in this option, we use Vanguard to process these transactions. Please ask your broker to use DTC number 0062; our account number is 6142 8971. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Bouvier ([brianbouvier57@gmail.com](mailto:brianbouvier57@gmail.com)).

#### 2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES AVAILABLE NOW

Offering envelopes for 2026 are available for pickup in Fellowship Hall. If there is not a box of envelopes with your name on it, but you would like one, please email Brian Bouvier ([brianbouvier57@gmail.com](mailto:brianbouvier57@gmail.com))

## CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

We hope that you will join us for one (or both!) of our Christmas Eve services:

4:00 p.m. Family Service (with kids' Christmas pageant)  
8:00 p.m. Candlelight Service (Prelude starting at 7:45 p.m.)

Feel free to bring family and friends! Children and youth wishing to participate in the nativity story are encouraged to come to the Family Service at 3:50 p.m. to pick out their costumes ahead of time.

## YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY – TODAY! (4:30–6:00 P.M.)

Join Pastor Ridgley and Michael Whalen for our best Christmas party yet! Wear your Christmas PJs and join us for a waffle bar! We will do an ABSURD Santa Gift Exchange, so don't forget to bring the most absurd (wrapped) gift you can find for under \$20 to the party!

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Thank you to everyone who donated a poinsettia to help make our sanctuary so beautiful for Advent and Christmas! Feel free to take your poinsettia home after worship on December 28.

Barbara Beucler  
Peggy Billian  
Ken & Nancy Coradi  
Peter & Nancy Crawford  
Ken & Mary Dilloway  
Kermit & Earline Eck  
Sandy Forbes  
John & Sharon Griffin  
Jim & Ann Hatfield  
Tom & Lynne Hay  
Tom & Nancy Higgins  
Sam & Megan Hillier  
Doris Humphrey  
Kathy and Kate Johnson  
John & Julie Lieberman

Jim & Kate Little  
Dan & Jen Lortz  
Chuck & Jeanne Lynam  
Skip & Marieanne McClenen  
John & Barbara McClintick  
Lee & Barbara McConnell  
Chris & Judy Miletto  
Dick & Chris Oliver  
Bruce & Nancy Phillips  
Ann Roberts & Frank Lewandowski  
Pamela Schafer  
Steve & Lisa Scolari  
Bob & Sue Severi  
John Senior & Nancy Kimmons  
Jim & Sue Tiede

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AT ST. JOHN'S

Happy Birthday to members and friends of our St. John's family who are celebrating birthdays this month! Please consider wishing them a happy birthday in person or sending them birthday wishes by text, email or a card in the mail. Contact Barbara McConnell ([blbmcconnell@aol.com](mailto:blbmcconnell@aol.com)) if you would like to be added!

**December 10** – Melanie Henricks    **December 25** – Jesus Christ, Avery Hillier  
**December 12** – Sue Chudy    **December 26** – Lisa Howell  
**December 13** – Barb Beucler    **December 26** – Nancy Phillips  
**December 16** – Earline Eck    **December 30** – Sarah Crill

**ST. JOHN'S CALENDAR**  
Scan the QR code below or visit our website for the complete calendar:



**Sun, Dec. 21**    **The Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
8:15 am    Trustees Meeting (Kean Room)  
8:15 am    Women's Book Group (Carriage House)  
9:30 am    Worship & Sunday School  
5:00 pm    Officers' Christmas Party (CH)  
4:30 pm    Youth Christmas Party (Youth Room)  
10:00 am    Women's Book Group (CH)  
5:00 pm    Exercise Class (FH)

**Mon, Dec. 22**  
**Tues, Dec. 23**  
**Wed, Dec. 24**    **Christmas Eve (church office closed during the day)**  
4:00 pm    Family Service  
8:00 pm    Candlelight Service

**Thurs, Dec. 25**    **Christmas Day (church office closed)**  
**Fri, Dec. 26**    **Church Office Closed**  
**Sat, Dec. 28**    9:30 am    Worship (Lessons & Carols Service)

### This Week in the Church Office

Please note that the church office will be closed on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of this week. Please send any bulletin announcements to [admin@stjohnsdevon.com](mailto:admin@stjohnsdevon.com) by Noon on Monday.

Friday is Pastor Patrick and Pastor Ridgley's sabbath day, and the church office is closed on Saturday. If you email or call on those days, you will not get a response until they are back in the office.

If you have a pastoral emergency pertaining to a death, hospitalization, or crisis situation when the office is closed, please call 484-604-0499.



[www.stjohnsdevon.com](http://www.stjohnsdevon.com)

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"Tethered"  
by Rev. Sarah A. Speed

When we were children, we fell asleep with walkie talkies tucked under our pillows. All that separated us was a bathroom, a hallway, a few feet of empty space, but as children, even small distances can feel like miles. So after the parents whispered prayers over our skinned knees and spelling tests, after they kissed our sweaty foreheads and tucked us into bed, we'd pull the walkie talkies out from under our pillows. We'd roll the dial on the top of the transceiver. We'd sputter that invisible tether to life. And with a few crackles in the quiet of the night, you'd whisper my name. I'd press down the button. I'd promise I was close. As an adult, I don't know what ever happened to those blue-grey walkie talkies. But I know that even today, if the monsters in the closet feel too real, and you whisper my name, I promise I'll be close.

**Sunday, December 21, 2025**  
**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**