

THE EPISTLE

AUGUST 2026

Dear St. John's Community,

This summer, we had the joy of celebrating four baptisms at St. John's in two back-to-back weeks, welcoming four young humans into our church family and the household of God. And week after week, as we do throughout the year, we have gathered around the altar for Holy Eucharist, sharing bread and wine as we remember Christ's presence among us. (With the exception of this coming Sunday, August 16, when Chris Lauckner will officiate services while I get away for the weekend—thanks, Chris!)

And of course we see God's grace in the sacramental rites we celebrate here as well: from marriages to anointing for healing, from ordinations like those we hosted this spring to confirmations like those coming up in the fall (November 22 in Saginaw—reach out to Mo. Alissa if you want to learn more!)

Our catechism defines a sacrament as “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” Sometimes I think of this as the place where the material and immaterial are most united, where our bodies and spirits join and offer a glimpse into the holy. This might be an uncomfortable thought, as for some reason many of us seem to have discomfort with bodies, but Incarnation—embodiment—is a critical part of our faith and spirituality, and God often comes to us in the material, sensuous parts of our lives: water poured over a forehead, bread placed into an outstretched hand, a memorable meal, the wonders of travel and experiencing the world, the touch of a loved one.

Much of what we do in church is about *sacrament*, but much of what we do in life is also *sacramental*. I think of pastor and writer Frederick Buechner who, in his *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*, notes that sacramental moments can happen anywhere and “If we weren't blind as bats, we might see that life itself is sacramental.”

Now, I'm not telling you to skip church! In fact the nearness to God I feel in the sacraments of the church is a big part of why I felt called to be a priest. There is a reason we keep returning to water and oil and bread and wine, to touch and words and gathered bodies. These things, these rituals, train us to recognize grace. They give us tangible signs of something we cannot always see.

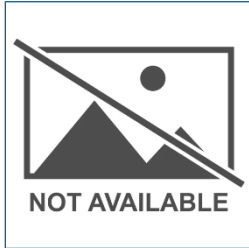
But part of our reason for gathering inside the walls of the church is learning to recognize what is happening beyond them. So I wonder: What has been sacramental in your life this summer? Where have you encountered an outward and visible sign of grace? Maybe it was around a dinner table or beside a lake, in a garden or on a long drive, in the laughter of your children or grandchildren, in someone showing up when you needed them, or simply in a moment when you suddenly realized how precious this ordinary life can be.

Pay attention, and you just might be surprised by the sacraments unfolding all around you.





July Worship Service Links



6th Sunday after Pentecost
July 5, 2026



[7th Sunday after Pentecost](#)
[July 12, 2026](#)



[8th Sunday after Pentecost](#)
[July 19, 2026](#)



[9th Sunday after Pentecost](#)
[July 26, 2026](#)

Older services can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/sjeclivestream>

WE APPRECIATE YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT!

St. John's depends on the generosity of our friends and members. Pledges and gifts to St. John's can either be made by check and sent via US Mail to 405 N. Saginaw Rd., Midland, MI 48640, or by visiting tinyurl.com/Give2SJE. This link will take you to a screen where you will enter the amount of your donation and designate a specific purpose or fund. Enter your email address as well, and you'll receive an electronic receipt.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
linking lives in the love of Christ

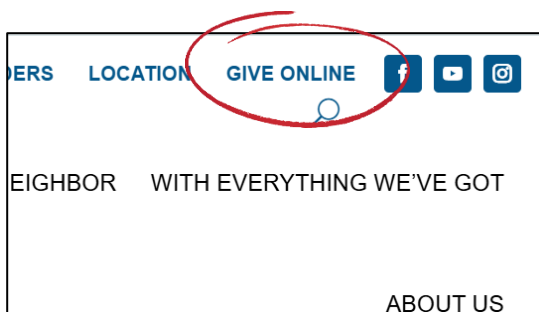
Welcome to St John's Episcopal Church

Giving Details

Give to optional memo + add more

E-mail Address

ACS Technologies [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Use](#)



You can also access electronic giving from the upper right-hand corner of our [webpage](#)... or by pointing your phone's camera at this QR code.



If you have any questions about your continued financial support of St John's, please call the church office and your call will be directed to the appropriate staff person. Thank you for your generosity!



the feast bite-sized

ORDINARY TIME | AUGUST 5, 2026

meet the bishop candidates on the initial slate



The Rev. Cn.
TERRI LYNNE BAYS



The Rev.
ZACHARY NYEIN



The Rev.
HOLLY RANKIN ZAHER

*Meet the
Candidates*



With gratitude and hope, the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes announced on July 22 the nomination of three candidates to stand for election as the first bishop diocesan of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. We are all now invited into this next season of discernment. On the Meet the Candidates page of our website (greatlakesepiscopal.org/bishop-search/candidates), you'll find a photo, bio, résumé or CV, and short video introducing each candidate. We encourage you to read, watch, and, above all, pray. Our final slate will be announced once the petition process closes. Meet and Greet with all candidates on the bishop slate will take place the third week of September.

august opportunities

As we wrap up the 2025-2026 program year, there are a number of important opportunities for learning, support, and involvement in our diocese. From parish budget prep resources to scholarships for licensed lay ministry training programs, from diocesan budget input townhalls to the opening of Holy Ground for Whole Communities to applications for cohort two, and from dismantling racism training to an online book club, we've got a lot going on for you in your individual and congregational contexts. The best way to stay up to date with these and other offerings is through our online newsletter, *The Feast*. Catch up on previous issues and subscribe at greatlakesepiscopal.org/feast.



a foundation of steadfast love: diocesan convention

Our third annual convention is quickly approaching! We'll gather on site at the Van Dyk Mortgage Convention Center in Muskegon on Friday and Saturday, October 23 and 24. During our gathering, we'll conduct regular convention business including passing the budget, considering resolutions, and electing diocesan leaders. We'll also be electing our first bishop diocesan. Keep up to date with all things convention at greatlakesepiscopal.org/convention-iii.



Scan to keep up to date on events and announcements at our online home for people, parishes, and ministries, greatlakesepiscopal.circle.so

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF THE *GREAT LAKES*

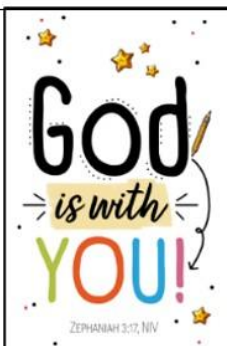
[CLICK HERE to read the most recent full version of THE FEAST ONLINE.](#)

AUGUST

Blessing of the Backpacks August 23, 10 AM Service

It's back to school time! We would like to send you off with lots of prayers and many blessings! Invite your friends and all the teachers you know to church on **Sunday, August 23**, for a backpack, laptop bag, purse, cell phone, briefcase or bag you carry blessing during the 10 AM service.

Bring your backpack and get a tag. The tag will remind you that God is with you throughout the day and school year. **St. John's wishes ALL of the students, teachers, and support staff a wonderful school year!**



Youth Group needs a leader starting in September.

YOUTH LEADER

We are shifting our youth group to Sunday mornings. Details to be worked out. Please reach out to Linda Germain (linda@sjec-midland.org or stop in the office) to discuss if you are interested.

Diocesan Summer Book Study: Join the Revs. Alissa Anderson & Erin Jean Warde for a diocese-wide discussion of Debbie Blue's *Consider the Birds: A Provocative Guide to Birds of the Bible*. No background in theology or birdwatching is needed – just curiosity and a willingness to read, think, and wonder



together. We gather on [Circle Live](#) (the Diocese of the Great Lakes' online gathering space) on Mondays at noon through **August 31**. Please reach out to Mo. Alissa with any questions!

Community

G₂ A₁ M₃ E₁
N₁ I₁ G₂ H₄ T₁

August **Game Nights** are Friday, August 14 and 28, in Williams Hall. Play our games or bring your favorites! Bring your friends or join in with us! All ages welcome!

Choir Kickoff | Sunday, August 30



The choir is back, and we'd love for you to be part of it!

Join us on **Sunday, August 30**, immediately following the 10 AM service for our **Choir Kickoff**. We'll gather at 11:15 AM for a shared meal in the McNab Room,

followed by our first rehearsal of the season in the Sanctuary from 12-1 PM.

Whether you've sung in the choir for years or have been thinking about joining for the first time, this is a great opportunity to meet the fellow musicians and make music together. Bring a favorite dish to share if you're able, we'd love to have you with us!

Questions? Contact Travis at travis@sjec-midland.org.

Coming this Fall:

Blessing of the Animals
Trunk or Treat



SIGN UP NOW!

MINISTRY FAIR 2026 will take place on **Sunday, Sept. 20**, during the Fellowship Hours following both services. If you would like your St. John's ministry to be represented, contact

Ann Wright to reserve table space.

(aewright0702@gmail.com / 989-859-4118)

**SAVE THE
DATE!**



Children & Youth

Summer Fun and School Year Announcements



During the month of June we enjoyed our relaxed summer atmosphere and flexibility in **Childcare**. Some much needed time off and rest for our staff as well as more low-key days during the 10am service. We enjoyed having our young friends hanging out with us.

The beginning of June, **Girl Scout Troop 50593** finished their year with a Bridging Ceremony in the courtyard and refreshments in Williams Hall. The Troop wants to give a huge shoutout to St John's for hosting them all year for their meetings and events. It helped them have a homebase to go to for our adventures and planning.



Sunday School and Nursery will begin their normal weekly schedule on September 13th. We will continue with our split classroom approach of having the lower elementary (K-2nd grade) children enjoying Godly Play stories with Ms. Alicia and the upper elementary (3rd-5th grade) children enjoying lessons with Ms. Linda. Our nursery care team of Ms. Jenni and Ms. Leah will continue to engage our youngest friends with their morning fun and help in the other rooms as needed. The staff and volunteers are looking forward to a year of new adventures. Please join us starting at 9:45am until the end of church service on Sunday mornings.



July brought a fun adventure for Linda, Alissa, and their children. Alissa and Linda were part of the Leadership and Worship teams at **Camp Chickagami** the week of July 12th. It was an adventure to say the least since it was the first time at Camp Chick for both of us. Nathan, Abby, and August were overnight campers and had fun with their first experiences too. Avonlea enjoyed most of her experiences at Camp Chick... she is ready to be a big kid camper! Nathan discovered... there is more to church camp than praying!! Our adventure led us to a small community church in Presque Isle for two nights due to wildfire smoke from Canada. Imagine 70 children and adults in a fellowship hall and sanctuary about the size of ours at St John's experiencing life for two days.

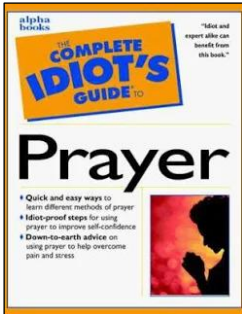
Everyone did amazing and went with the flow of the different camp experience. I haven't heard Alissa's response to how she feels about going back, but I said I want a do over (ha ha). I hope to get another opportunity to try a full week at Camp Chick.



Library News

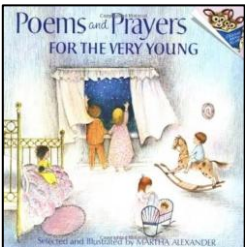
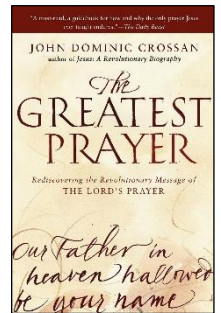
by Marnie Bash

Prayer is important to our life as members of St John's and as Christ's followers, and I have brought out several books on prayer and books of prayers for display on the feature shelves this month. There are books about prayer and ways of praying, books on contemplative prayer, books on The Lord's Prayer, and there are books of prayers themselves. I have also pulled a few books of prayers for children; these are delightful books to look through as well as to read the prayers there. Ideal for moms and dads to read with their children.



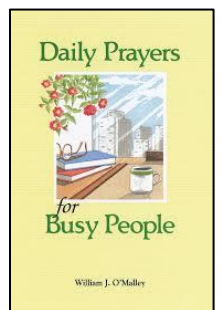
So...what do we have? Among the books about prayer generally is the *Complete Idiot's Guide to Prayer* – simple, easy to read, but pretty thorough. *Beyond Words, 15 Ways of Doing Prayer* by Kristen Ingram takes us beyond just getting on our knees by offering different places to pray and by calling out attention to ideas often missed; a lovely little book that helps break us out of everyday habits. I very much enjoy *Naked Spirituality* by Brian McLaren; using his own life and experiences he gently moves us from simple, repeated prayers to deeper and wider praying and various types of prayer to try.

There are two books about contemplative prayer on display, although there are several more in the library itself if you wish to pursue this topic. Out on the feature shelves are Basil Pennington's *Centering Prayer*, and *Contemplative Prayer* by Thomas Merton. Books about the Lord's Prayer include John Dominic Crossan's *The Greatest Prayer* and Don Underwood's, *the Lord's Prayer*. One book we thoroughly enjoyed studying in Women Journeying Together was Adam Hamilton's *The Lord's Prayer*; on display is a large print edition of the book, but a regular print book plus DVD can be found in the Waring Room among the DVD's studies.



Prayers for children include *Prayers for All Seasons* by Sophie Piper and Elena Temporin, *Prayers to Read and Know* by Sophie Piper, and *Poems and Prayers for the Very Young* by Martha Alexander. As mentioned, these are all beautifully illustrated and lovely to look through as well as read. Other books of prayers and illustrated books of hymns can be found in the Children's Books in Williams Hall under the topic of worship.

Finally, we have books of prayers: *150 Opening and Closing Prayers* by Carl Koch, *Short Prayers for Busy Women* by Harriet Crosby, and *Daily Prayers for Busy People* by William O'Malley. As always, there are several more books of prayers in the Waring Room, including several of table graces.



I hope you'll enjoy one or more of these books this month and feel free to wander back to the Waring Room for more or different information on prayer and praying. Happy reading!

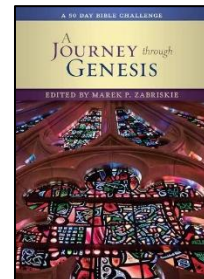


Women Journeying Together

by Marnie Bash

Women Journeying Together will begin this fall on Thursday, September 10th, at 1:00; we will meet as usual in the Activity Room on the lower level. Our first study this year will be the book of Genesis. We will be focusing on several particular stories, but we hope to read all of Genesis around this study. We will begin by looking at the primeval myths of origin and then spend time with the patriarchs Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. We'll also look at the story of Tamar, a fairly unknown woman who shows up in the middle of the Joseph saga. Our reading and study will be accompanied by videos from Dr Amy Jill Levine and Dr Stephen Miller and their lectures on the Old Testament. Join us, Thursday, September 10, 1:00, in the Activity Room!

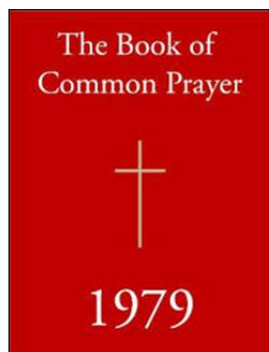
NOTE: Our book, *A Journey through Genesis*, has been ordered; I will let you know when they are available for pick-up either at the church office or at our first class in September. They are \$12 each.



Women Journeying Together is a group of women who gather Thursday afternoons, 1:00 to about 2:30. We meet in the Activity Room on the lower level, just below the church office. We study, read, share, laugh a lot, and pray with and for one another. Occasionally we go out to lunch together. Women of all ages are welcome.

BCP Spotlight

by Ellen Mc Vey



25. For Labor Day

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen. (BCP p. 261)*

With Labor Day fast approaching (YIKES!) I thought this prayer would be timely. This is the Collect for Labor Day. In the Episcopal tradition, a collect (col'-lekt) is a prayer that "collects" the silent prayers of the people, uniting them into a single voice offered to God during worship. It serves to focus the congregation's intentions, concerns, and petitions, and often reflects the theme of the day, season, or feast. Collects also connect worshippers with generations of Christians who have prayed the same words, providing continuity and a sense of communal unity

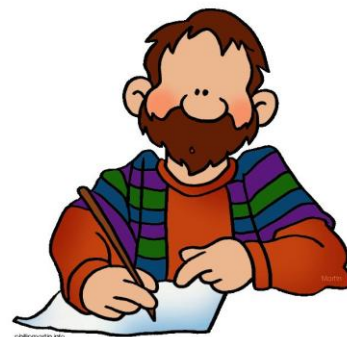
This Collect was new to the 1979 BCP. It recognizes the right of the laborer to a proper return, but also sets our work within the context of the common good and the "rightful aspirations of other workers." In it we pray that God might also "arouse our concern for those who are out of work."¹

¹Marion J Hatchett, *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 216.

Church History in Three Minutes (or Less)

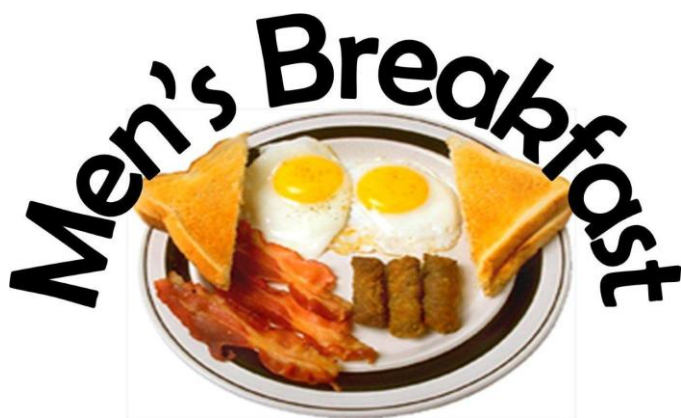
by Eric Carlson

In October, lay delegates and clergy will elect the first bishop diocesan of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. Election of bishops is an ancient Christian practice. *Episkopoi* (overseers) are mentioned in the New Testament. Not all Christian communities had them, and their duties were not consistent from place to place. Since these communities were small, they usually didn't have multiple clergy. The bishop was the church's worship and prayer leader, and the terms *episkopoi* and *presbyteroi* (elders) were effectively synonymous. (The Greek word *hiereis* [priests] wasn't used in the New Testament for Christian ministers; only non-Christians had *hiereis*.) *Episkopoi* were elected by the laity (men and women). After election, neighboring churches would then have to recognize the elected person, and bishops from those other churches would come together to consecrate him.



As Christianity became the dominant religion in Western Europe, acquiring great wealth and influence, popular election was no longer feasible. Kings had a vested interest in who served as bishops in their territories, because bishops were critical agents of royal power locally. By around 1000, the ideal was that when a bishop died, the cathedral clergy asked the king for permission to elect a new bishop. The king also had to consent to their choice for it to be valid. In practice, kings often granted the election right but also named who the clergy were to elect.

After the English Reformation made the monarch the church's head, English bishops were Crown appointments. Currently, the Crown Nominations Commission assesses candidates and sends its choice to Prime Minister Burnham (a Roman Catholic!), who passes the nomination to King Charles. He sends his nominee's name to the cathedral clergy to ratify: an election with only one candidate. In the Roman Catholic Church, regional bishops suggest people to the papal ambassador (Apostolic Nuncio), who vets nominees and sends names of three finalists to the Dicastery for Bishops. It debates and sends a choice to the Pope, who may follow their recommendation or appoint someone else entirely. The process used by the Episcopal Church could not be more different. Following election at diocesan convention, our bishop-elect can be ordained and consecrated only after a majority of diocesan standing committees and of bishops exercising jurisdiction in the Episcopal Church consent. Three bishops must participate in the ordination and consecration. In other words, we follow the example of the earliest Christian communities.



Monday, September 7, 8:00 AM

Join us at the Big Boy Restaurant, 1513 S. Saginaw Rd., for our monthly **Men's Breakfast**. Once in the restaurant, walk through the big room to the smaller room located at the southeast end of the restaurant to find our table.

JOIN US for food and fellowship!!



Each month the *Prayer Corner* includes the church's prayer list as well as the anniversaries and birthdays for the month. The prayer list is updated weekly and included in the Sunday morning worship service bulletins, along with the *Daily Prayers for the Wider Church*. The most recent version can be found at any time by clicking the "[Announcements](#)" link on the SJEC web page:

<https://www.sjec-midland.org/>

Please keep the following people in your prayers...



Cathy Chang & Juan Lopez, Char Bakeman, Henry Youngquist, Chris, Yvonne (Denée Koonce's mom), Charlene Adams, Julie, Vicki Leigeb, Shelby, Bob Estabrook, Betty & Bud & the Schartow family, Ed & the Patterson family, Mandy, and Randy Woodard.

Give thanks with those celebrating August Birthdays...

1 – William Kirksey	19 – Glen Chateaufneuf
4 – Louise White	24 – Janna Luebker
5 – Patty Zettle	Judy Youngquist
6 – Travis Fader	27 – Bob Trautman
8 – Bob Estabrook	Patrick Ward
14 – Greg Zettle	29 – Stacy Daniels
15 – Kathy McCreedy	Tony Germain
17 – Jason Spindler, Jr.	Linda Germain
18 – Ron Lacher	30 – Taryn Vielma
19 – Charles Bash	

Contact the church office

989-631-2260 / office@sjec-midland.org

- To add someone to the prayer list
- Request receipt of the weekly Worship++ email
- Request receipt of the monthly Epistle
- To update your membership directory info

Give thanks with those celebrating August Anniversaries...

1 – Will & Denée Koonce
 4 – Andy & Wendy Thompson
 7 – Bob & Jenny Estabrook
 9 – Robbyn Prange & Carol Sullivan
 12 – Jim & Melanie Massey
 14 – Dick & Louise White
 17 – Josh & Alissa Anderson
 19 – Sam & Jackie Leigh
 27 – William & Rebecca Wieland
 18 – Roger & Anne Moll
 31 – Jim & Brenna Jackson

Members of the congregation who have received Pastoral Care training are available all year for friendly visits. Members who are in the hospital, nursing homes, or homebound may request a visit from our team to receive communion, a comforting prayer shawl or a pocket cross.

Team members include:

The Very Rev. Alissa Anderson and parishioners
Chris Esquivel Chris Schuster
Jan Marcou Fred Schuster
Pat Roush Michelle Spencer
Dave Schafer



Call the parish office (989-631-2260) with a pastoral care request. In the case of a pastoral emergency outside office hours, please contact **The Very Rev. Alissa Anderson** at 616-540-9102 (cell).

Meet with Travis

I'd love the opportunity to connect with you. Whether you have a question, an idea, would like to discuss a ministry or parish project, or simply want to get to know one another, you're invited to schedule a time to meet.



Appointments can be scheduled at your convenience by scanning the QR code, at left, or by visiting:

<https://calendly.com/travis-sjec-midland>.

I look forward to spending time with you.


**How to Connect
with Mother Alissa**
Schedule a time via Calendly

[CLICK HERE](#)


**Drop in Coffee Shop Office Hours
Thurs., 9-11 AM.**

During the month of August, you'll find her at Live Oak Eastside (2405 Abbott Rd.)



HEAD OF THE CHURCH – JESUS CHRIST
MINISTERS – ALL OUR MEMBERS

**To get in touch with any Clergy, Staff
Member or Member of the Vestry, call or
email the parish office:**

(989) 631-2260

office@sjec-midland.org

OUR VESTRY – OUR ELECTED LEADERS
Clergy

The Very Rev. Alissa G. Anderson*Rector*

Staff

Travis Fader *Director of Operations &
Organist/Pianist*

Linda Germain.....*Children & Youth Director*

Colleen O'Dell*Bookkeeper*

Ellen Woodard..... *Administrative Assistant*

Nick Lowthian.....*Sexton*

Vickie Densmore*Janitor*

Class of 2027

Eric Heglin, *Clerk*

Fred Schuster, *Co-Warden*

Class of 2029

Nykkooa Lurie

Mike Spencer

Class of 2028

John Adams

Doug Germain

Ann Wright, *Co-Warden*

WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday

8:00am Holy EucharistSanctuary
 9:00am Fellowship Hour Williams Hall
 10:00am Holy Eucharist Sanctuary & YouTube
 11:00am Fellowship Hour Williams Hall
 11:30am Handbell Choir Rehearsal..... Bell Zone
 5:00pm NA.....McNab Room

Monday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

12:00pm AA.....McNab Room
 6:00pm Popup Bible StudyLibrary

Tuesday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

10:00am Samaritan Fund ClientsLibrary
 1:00pm Knitpickers Williams Hall



Wednesday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

10:30am Women's Bible Study.....Library
 12:00pm Holy Eucharist.. Chapel (use office entrance)
 1:00pm AA.....McNab Room
 5:30pm Tai Chi in the GardenCourtyard

Thursday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

9:00am Alissa's Drop-in Coffee Office Hrs. Live Oak
 10:00am Love Knots (2nd/4th)Williams Hall

Friday (Parish Office open 9am-noon)

12:00pm AA.....McNab Room
 6:00pm Community Game Night (2nd & 4th) ..Wms Hall

Saturday

12:00pm AA.....McNab Room
 7:00pm NA.....McNab Room

The 10:00 am worship service is livestreamed on YouTube. At the time of the service, go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/@st.johnsepiscopalchurchmid8944/streams>. A live service will have a prominent "LIVE" badge on the video thumbnail or title indicating the video is currently being streamed live. Previous services can also be viewed here at any time.



*We joyfully gather to pray, worship, learn and serve as we seek to follow Jesus,
 and invite all to join us on a sacred journey of hope and transformation.*

The next edition of **The Epistle** will be published in early September. The final deadline for submissions is Monday, August 7. Please consider submitting stories of your group's activities, or news of coming events and activities.

If you are not currently receiving an email notice to tell you that **The Epistle** has been published on our website, and you would like to receive one, please email office@sjec-midland.org.

If you prefer a printed copy of The Epistle, they are available in the church office, the narthex and each entrance into the church building.



ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
linking lives in the love of Christ

St. John's Episcopal Church

405 N. Saginaw Road Midland, MI 48640

(989) 631-2260 office@sjec-midland.org

www.sjec-midland.org

Rector – The Very Rev. Alissa G. Anderson



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