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

St. John's Episcopal Church
405 N. Saginaw Rd.
Midland, MI 48640
(989) 631-2260
office@sjec-midland.org
www.sjec-midland.org

THE EPISTLE

NOVEMBER 2026



A General Thanksgiving (1979/2007 Version), BCP p. 836

> Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.
>
> We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.
>
> We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.
>
> We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.
>
> Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.
>
> Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. *Amen.*

We don't hear the General Thanksgiving very often at St. John's, and we're even less likely to hear its more contemporary counterpart. The original prayer dates to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the version above, introduced in 1979, follows much the same pattern: giving thanks for the blessings of this life, for the gift of Jesus Christ, and for the grace to live gratefully. But I particularly appreciate the newer prayer's attention to the texture of ordinary life, including the work that challenges and fulfills us, and even the disappointments and failures that remind us of our dependence on God.

November offers us a season to give thanks for the many gifts of our common life. As we reflect on our *Plenty Good Room* stewardship theme, I'm especially grateful for the generosity of those who sustain the ministry of St. John's, sharing their time, talents, and resources in ways both visible and unseen. We also have a particular reason for thanksgiving this year as we look forward to welcoming our first bishop, whose faith, energy, and vision bring exciting possibilities for the Diocese of the Great Lakes. There is much to celebrate in what God has already given us, and much to anticipate in what lies ahead. My hope is that our gratitude will make us attentive to the gifts still emerging among us, and willing to make plenty good room for whatever God calls us to next.

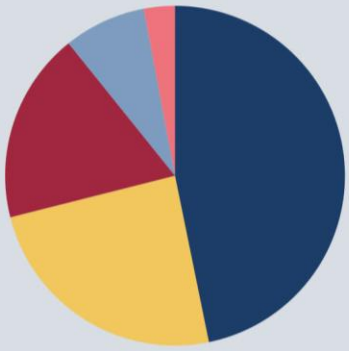
Plenty Good Room

St. John's, Midland Stewardship Overview

Making Room for Ministry

Our life together at St. John's is made possible by generations of generosity. Gifts from those who came before us continue to support our ministry through endowments, while the financial commitments of our current community help sustain our worship, care for our buildings, support our staff and programming, and extend our ministry into the wider community.

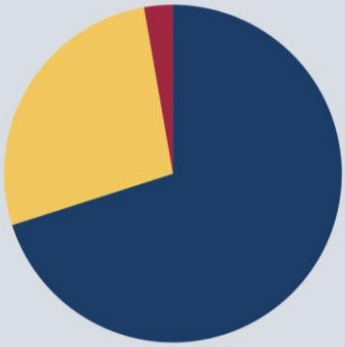
How we use our resources:



2026 Budgeted Expenses

47% – Staff and ministry personnel
24% – Buildings and administration
18% – Outreach and diocesan commitments
8% – Capital and other expenses
3% – Programming

Where our funding comes from:



2026 Budgeted Revenue

70% – Endowment distributions and transfers
27% – Congregational giving
3% – Other income

Ministry Behind the Numbers

Our budget tells only part of the story of ministry at St. John's. Worship, music, formation, pastoral care, and outreach are made possible by the work of staff and volunteers, supported by our buildings and other resources. While programming accounts for just 3% of budgeted expenses, much of the work of planning and carrying out these ministries is reflected in our personnel and operating costs.

Looking Ahead to 2027

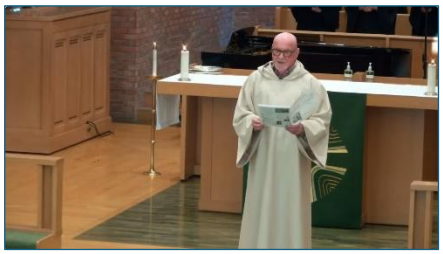
Our endowments are an extraordinary gift, but they also represent a responsibility to care for what we've inherited. The generosity of today's congregation helps us sustain our ministry while stewarding those resources for future generations. As we plan for 2027, we also anticipate significant increases in health insurance costs for our staff, alongside a growing commitment to the Diocese of the Great Lakes. Our diocese is transitioning to a new assessment structure in which congregations with greater financial resources contribute a larger share, helping sustain ministry throughout the diocese. As you consider your pledge for 2027, I invite you to think about what you value in the life of St. John's and what we hope to make room for in the years ahead.

Plenty Good Room

October Worship Service Links



19th Sunday after Pentecost
October 4, 2026



20th Sunday after Pentecost
October 11, 2026



21st Sunday after Pentecost
October 18, 2026



22nd Sunday after Pentecost
October 25, 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/Give2SJEC**. 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.





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 | OCTOBER 28, 2026

the rev. zachary nyein elected to be our first bishop diocesan!



On Saturday, October 24, at our third diocesan convention in Muskegon, we elected the Rev. Zachary (Zack) Nyein to be the first bishop diocesan of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes.

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless our bishop-elect Zack, and other clergy, and all our people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
(BCP, p. 817)

Fr. Zack will begin his work with us in January. Pending completion of the consent process, he will be ordained and consecrated as Bishop I on the Feast of Julian of Norwich, May 8, 2027. Read more about Fr. Zack at **greatlakesepiscopal.org/who-we-are/bishop**.

evensong celebrating bishop anne

In celebration of Bp. Anne's faithful ministry with us as assisting bishop, and in gratitude for her pastoral care during this time of transition, the diocese will host a special Evensong service and reception at **St. Mark's, Grand Rapids, on November 8 at 5:00 p.m.**

Bishop Anne's ministry with us will conclude on November 30.

nov. 9 registration deadline for final 2026 confirmation

Please register candidates for confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation by November 9. The service will be held at St. John's, Saginaw on November 22. Please note: registration must be completed by the parish priest, senior warden, or parish administrator. Find the form at **forms.greatlakesepiscopal.org/confirmations2026**

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.

NOVEMBER

Plenty Good Room: 2027 Stewardship

This year's stewardship theme, *What We've Received*, invites us to remember what we've inherited and consider how we might care for it and share it with others. Throughout November, we'll continue reflecting on the ministry we share and the generosity that makes it possible.

Stewardship packets are available in the Narthex for pickup through Sunday, November 18. If you are unable to pick up your packet in person, we'll mail it to you after that. If there isn't an envelope with your name on it, the office doesn't know about you! Take an unlabeled packet, complete the Parishioner Information Sheet included, and submit with your pledge.

SHARING TREE

Help fill holiday wishes in Midland County

We are coordinating a sharing tree for those less fortunate this holiday season. The tree has been set up in the Sanctuary for you to pick a tag(s) to fulfill. **Please return the items purchased, with the tag affixed to them, by Monday, November 30.** Please see Jan Marcou or Linda Germain with any questions.

Midland Santa Parade

The Midland Santa Parade is **Saturday, November 21** at 10 am. St. John's Welcoming Committee provides hot chocolate to parade goers at **SAMS Pantry** that morning starting at **9 am**. If you'd like to watch the parade, you're welcome to park at SAMS at 503 N. Saginaw. Just remember that the entry to the parking lot is on Cambridge St.



Community Game Night

November **Game Nights** are Friday, November 13 and 27, in Williams Hall. Play our games or bring your favorites! Bring your friends or join in with us! All ages welcome!!



The Boy Scout Food Drive is coming up on Saturday, **November 14**. The food is not being sorted at St. John's this year, but we still **need volunteers** to help us check dates of the donated items, sort and put the food away at SAMS Pantry. We will be there from **10 am** until it's all done, but if you are able to volunteer even just an hour or two of your time it would help us so much! This is a wonderful yearly donation for our pantry, but it's a lot of food. Please contact Denée Koonce at deknee@me.com or 281-770-6608 with any questions.



October
Children & Youth



Sunday School and Nursery was a fun month to adventure through in October. Ms. Linda continued the four-part lesson called *Be an Influencer*. The first two lessons were about being Intentional and Selfless. The idea to be an "influencer" to most kids is a Social Media persona that gets a lot of "likes" or "views." Explaining to them this isn't always a great way to be an influencer if it is done in the wrong way. We are asking them to be intentional with their actions and how they affect others. To be a selfless influencer you need to have followers, but to lead you need to be willing to listen and speak with others thoughtfully. Lets see what lessons three and four bring us next month. Ms. Alicia taught a few *Godly Play* lessons throughout October. Ms. Alicia also had a good conversation with one of our upper elementary students about the liturgical calendar and how it is forever re-adjusting to fit the current year.



If any children or youth that are 2nd grade or older would like to learn about serving during services, please reach out to Linda Germain for information.

We are looking forward to *Being Influencers* and *Godly Play* lessons leading up to the start of Advent at the end of November. We hope to see new and old faces throughout our adventures in November.

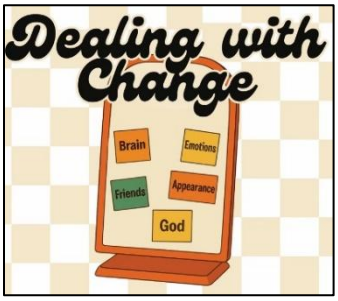


In October Children & Youth sponsored a trunk at the Welcome Committee's annual **Trunk or Treat** event. Some children and youth helped decorate our trunk in a Stitch theme. They also handed out candy and interacted with our visitors to the event.

The Annual **Blessing of the Trick or Treaters** event was a huge success! Our Youth Group started off the morning with a little ping pong and then moved up to Williams Hall for crafts before the Sunday School children arrived. We had crafts downstairs during our 10am service. During the service the children paraded in costume up the church aisle for a blessing over their upcoming trick or treating adventures. After the service we had coffee-hour snacks provided by the Children and Youth Programming as well as Apple Cider and Candy provided by the Welcoming Committee. Thank you, Welcome Committee, for the delicious cider and candy, children of all ages appreciated it. After our Blessing during service the children and youth group helpers returned to Williams Hall for pumpkin carving, pumpkin painting, coloring, and other crafts. Two of our young children decided to make "pumpkin soup" with the seeds and innards, these two keep us on our toes!







EYE Youth group had a busy month. We continued our Bible study on *Dealing with Change*. This is a fitting series as the youth are starting brand new schools, entering a final year at a school and/or just adjusting to a new school year. We continued our discussions about how our bodies are changing. While we don't always understand our bodies 'God reminds us that he made our bodies and it is good even when it is changing.' We had an interesting twist in our discussion because we asked youth to pick one thing about themselves that recently has made them insecure or unsure. They didn't have to share, but as we were discussing the question it was very clear the females of the group could pick at least one thing such as hair, acne, or clothes as an example. The males of the group couldn't pick one thing. The adults even gave examples from their own teens, and this still didn't prompt an answer. Adults asked why everyone thought this was the case and it was clear the thought process of the differing males/females collectively was males don't seem to stress the little stuff or worry as much as the females appeared to. One of the main joys of Youth Group is watching how a simple question can evolve into deeper and meaningful conversations that were never the intention of the lesson.







As highlighted above, our youth also participated in Blessing of the Trick or Treaters event and helped the children's group during the event.

Our next youth group meeting will be on November 22nd.
We will finish up our *Dealing with Change* curriculum.

St. Martha's Guild Silent Auction



Be on the lookout for the St. Martha's Guild Annual Basket Auction! This is our major fundraiser for the year. We use these funds to bless a number of charitable endeavors around Midland. Baskets will be on display beginning Sunday, November 15. **Bid early and bid often and as always, thank you ALL for your generous support!**

St. John's Family Potluck
Sunday, December 6
after the 10AM worship service in Williams Hall



Main dish and drinks will be provided; you will provide vegetables, salads and desserts. There will be a signup sheet in Williams Hall beginning Sunday, November 15. For added fun, we will enjoy making a Christmas Tree Chrismon.

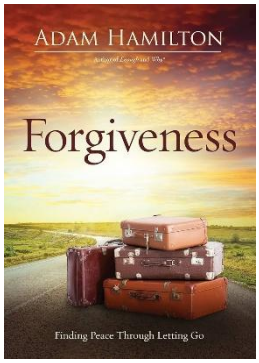
Women Journeying Together

by Marnie Bash

We are still busy doing a close reading of the stories of Genesis. We've dug into the stories about Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, and about Isaac. We also enjoyed lunch together, out at the Midland Mall while the carpeting was being replaced! Now we're tackling the stories about Jacob and Joseph to finish out our study and the year of 2026.

Our schedule:

Nov 5 – *Jacob and Esau*
Nov 12 – *Jacob's Family*, and also *the Story of Tamar*
Nov 19 – *Joseph in Egypt*
Dec 3 – *Joseph and his Family Reunite*



In the new year, we will spend January looking at a brief study by Adam Hamilton on *Forgiveness*.

Women Journeying Together is a group of women who gather Thursday afternoons, 1:00 to about 2:30. Our discussions each week are mostly independent of one other, so you can come or miss as your schedule permits. 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 invited. Come and join us for a particular study or "forever". Questions? Contact Marnie Bash, mpbash@ameritech.net or 989-839-9364.

Library News

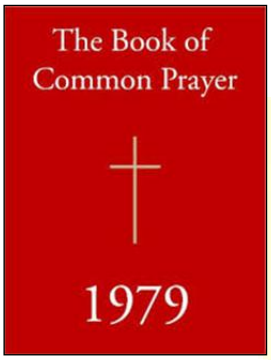
by Marnie Bash

Books by our favorite male authors will remain on the Feature Shelves for a short while longer, until the middle of the month. Then, the week before Thanksgiving, I will be putting out our books for Advent and Christmas. We have many devotionals to help you find a few quiet minutes during the very busy days leading up to Christmas; there are some books that talk about how and why various traditions developed around Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany; and there is poetry. Beginning the week before Thanksgiving, these books will be on the shelves in Williams Hall. Also that week, I'll be putting out some devotional and informational pamphlets over near the windows. Look them over and choose one for yourself or for your family. Look for both the books and pamphlets to be out the weekend of November 21-22 and have a blessed Advent/December!



BCP Spotlight

by Ellen Mc Vey



The Lord be with you. R: *And also with you.*
Lift up your hearts. R: *We lift them to the Lord*
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. R: *It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

The Eucharistic Prayers begin with these words which flow from the Jewish liturgical tradition. While our nation celebrates Thanksgiving Day once a year, as Episcopalians, we celebrate The Great Thanksgiving (p. 361) whenever we gather for Eucharist. The word "eucharist" means "thanksgiving". We are a thanksgiving people!

Throughout the BCP there are many different prayers of thanksgiving including a section dedicated to various prayers of thanksgiving (pgs. 836-841). During this month I especially commend the following prayers to you -- A General Thanksgiving (p.836), A Litany of Thanksgiving (p. 837), and The General Thanksgiving (Rite I, p. 58; Rite II p. 101). The following is the Collect specifically for Thanksgiving Day…

Prayer for Thanksgiving Day – p. 194 (Rite I), 246 (Rite II)

> Almighty and gracious Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

And, during these times of change and uncertainty may we continue to be reminded that "It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." Amen.

Church History in Three Minutes (or Less)

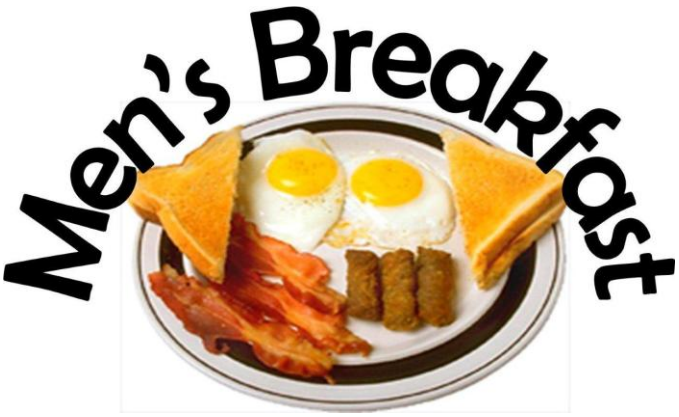
by Eric Carlson



At Diocesan Convention, we elected the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes's first Bishop Diocesan. As a delegate preparing to vote, I thought a lot about what the bishop's place is in the Anglican/Episcopal tradition. Having bishops (from Greek for 'overseers') maintains continuity with church government dating back to the first century. But in the decades following the English Reformation, there was heated debate about whether the church should continue to have bishops, which many saw as unjustifiable remnants of the Roman church from which England had broken away. This was part of a larger debate about the English church's identity and place in the Reformation.

The nastiest battle in the new English church took place in 1551, when John Hooper, chosen to be Bishop of Exeter, refused to wear traditional vestments because they were not required in Scripture and felt like an incomplete break with Roman practice. Such "popish rags" had to go if England's church was to be fully reformed! Archbishop Cranmer argued that vestments were not forbidden in Scripture and could be used for "decency" and good order. Cranmer won, and we continue to use vestments in our worship that are virtually undistinguishable from those of Catholic priests and bishops. This caused confusion and ambiguity, because there are many things about the Anglican and Episcopal tradition that appear Catholic. Some even use the phrase "via media" to describe Anglicanism: a "middle way" between Catholic and Protestant.

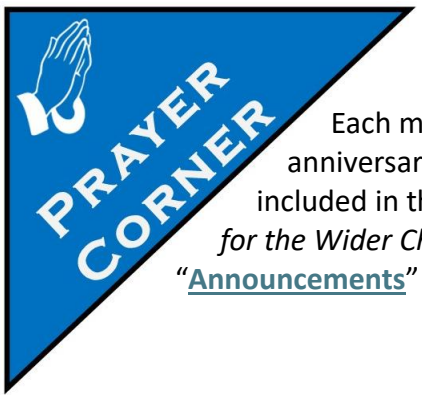
Diarmaid MacCulloch, one of the most distinguished Reformation historians today, argues that Anglicanism should not be viewed that way. Similarities to the Roman church are actually few and insignificant. Following the break with Rome, English church spaces were transformed. Images were removed. The screens that had separated the area around the altar from the congregation, making the Mass the priest's private activity, were gone. Wooden tables replaced stone altars, signaling a new understanding of the Eucharist not as a sacrifice offered by priests but a common meal. New importance was placed on pulpits for preaching. Cranmer rewrote the service for ordaining priests and bishops, removing references to offering sacrifice and replacing it with emphasis on preaching and pastoral work. The church's theology was closely aligned with European Protestant churches in every aspect. Although any trace of continuity with the past was too much for some, such as the Puritans who left and settled New England, this shouldn't obscure the reality that Anglicanism is, historically, Protestant—not a compromise between Protestant and Roman Catholic.



Monday, December 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, Julie, Vicki Leigeb, Bob Estabrook, Chris Lauckner, Bob & Jan Stoney, Paula Mae Merrill, Arie Goudswaard, and Mitzi.

Give thanks with those celebrating Nov. Birthdays…

3 – Mallory Garlinghouse
Carol Sullivan
6 – Greg Gwaltney
7 – Bonnie Hayward
12 – Karen Newhouse
Margo Nielsen
Bob Stoney
13 – Sam Leigh
13 – Ali Thompson
14 – Aiden Carter
15 – Melissa Maxwell
17 – Chris Esquivel
18 – Marianne Girardin
19 – Dana Pressnall
24 – Mike Spencer
28 – Ernest Carter

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 Nov. Anniversaries…

9 – Gordon Thompson & Liz Davis
11 – Adam & Aimee Dupuis
18 – Greg Gwaltney & Chris Lauckner
19 – Bud & Betty Schartow





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
Jan Marcou
Pat Roush
Dave Schafer
Chris Schuster
Fred Schuster
Michelle Spencer

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)**.



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 November, you'll find her at Live Oak Eastside (2405 Abbott Rd.)

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

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

Clergy
The Very Rev. Alissa G. Anderson ..... *Rector*
Kathy Hawkins ..... *Seminary Intern*

Staff
Travis Fader .... *Organist & Interim Director of Music*
Linda Germain ..... *Children & Youth Director*
Colleen O'Dell ..... *Bookkeeper*
Ellen Woodard ..... *Administrative Assistant*
Nick Lowthian ..... *Sexton*
Vickie Densmore ..... *Janitor*

OUR VESTRY – OUR ELECTED LEADERS

Class of 2027
Eric Heglin, *Clerk*
Fred Schuster, *Co-Warden*

Class of 2028
John Adams
Doug Germain
Ann Wright, *Co-Warden*

Class of 2029
Nykkoa Lurie
Mike Spencer

Weekly Opportunities at St. John's

Sunday

8:00am Holy Eucharist .....Sanctuary
8:30am Chancel Choir Rehearsal .....Choir Room
9:00am Fellowship Hour .....Williams Hall
9:00am Youth Group (EOW)..... Activity Room
10:00am Holy Eucharist ..... Sanctuary & YouTube
11:00am Fellowship Hour .....Williams Hall
11:30am Handbell Choir Rehearsal.....Bell Zone
5:00pm NA.....McNab Room
6:30pm Bible in the Basement (1st/3rd).Activity Rm

Monday *(Parish Office open 9am-3pm)*

8:00am St. John's Men's Breakfast (1st) .....Big Boy
12:00pm AA.....McNab Room
6:00pm Popup Bible Study.....Library

Tuesday *(Parish Office open 9am-3pm)*

10:00am St. Martha's Guild (2nd) ..... Activity Room
10:00am Samaritan Fund Clients .....Library
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, The 24 Forms .....Williams Hall

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
1:00pm Women Journeying Together . Activity Rm.

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 December. The final deadline for submissions is Friday, December 4. 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

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Rector – The Very Rev. Alissa G. Anderson

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