



THE EVANGEL

The official publication of St. John's Episcopal Church

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Dear People and Friends of St. John's,

We will spend the entire month of March wrapped in the season of Lent, with its hues of purple penitence. But remember that the real meaning of "repent" is "metanoia" – a change in one's perspective or attitude that will make a change in one's life.

What change might we make that will change the way we live, so that we are closer to living in God's kingdom, God's way, here and now? What can I let go of that will free me to live with more integrity? What can I let go of that will free up more resources (time, things, money) to share with those whose needs are greater than my own?

Could praying Morning or Evening Prayer even once a week help me focus more? (<https://dailyoffice.app/> or <https://www.missionstclare.com/english/>) How would my week be changed if I came to Compline on Thursday evenings? What if I tried simply "sitting" with God over my cup of tea or coffee for 10 or 15 minutes in the morning?

Let us fast from that which separates us from others, pray for those we find hard to love, give of our time and our hearts...

Have a blessed Lent!

Sr. Diane+

Lenten Series - 2023

March 1, 8, 15, 22

Soup, bread, and fruit at 6:30PM in the Parish Hall, followed by the videos beginning at 7PM each Wednesday. (Also available on Zoom beginning at 7PM.)

March 29 - Wrap-up discussion of the series **ON ZOOM ONLY!**

The Easter Stories: Celebrating, Questioning, and Explaining the Easter Stories – a series of four videos with John Dominic Crossan – a noted scripture scholar and the co-author (with Marcus Borg) of *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem*.

Each week, we will have a visual lecture from Crossan guiding us through the Easter stories, followed by a chance for discussion.

- 1. Metaphors for Jesus' Exaltation**
- 2. The Western Tradition of Individual Resurrection**
- 3. The Eastern Tradition of Universal Resurrection**
- 4. Reconciliation of Eastern & Western Resurrection Traditions**

Our Worship Space...

As I announced a few weeks ago, beginning on Palm Sunday, we will celebrate the Eucharist at the large altar in the sanctuary behind the altar/communion rail, through the feast of Pentecost. Sometime during the Easter season, we will have a parish “Forum” so that we can talk about our worship space and our prayer.

Part of our conversation certainly will involve our ‘feelings’ about the two different arrangements – the current one and the one beginning Palm Sunday. But our conversation should also include awareness of what these arrangements “say” about our beliefs, and the reasoning behind how things have been or are arranged.

To give us some background, here is a “repeat” of a column we published in the May/June 2022 Evangel.

NOW YOU KNOW...

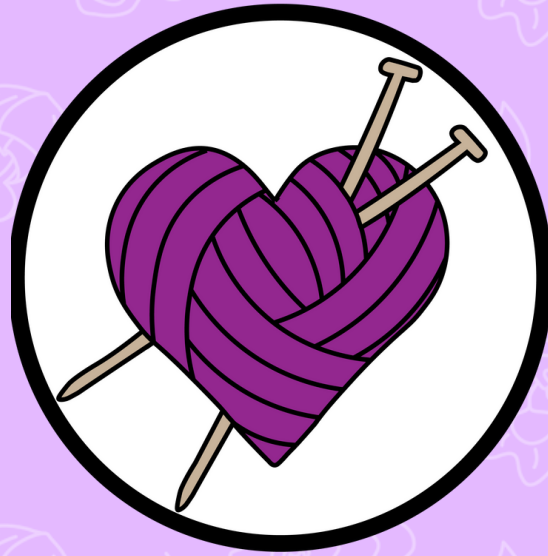
One of the things COVID did was make the use of the altar rails (or communion rails) for receiving communion an unsafe practice. While some folks are longing for a return to using the altar rails, there are as many who prefer coming forward in procession without using the rails.

How did the use of altar rails get started? Why have we used them? Here is what the Episcopal Church website has to tell us about ALTAR RAILS:

Altar Rails

Chest-high rails around the altar were used as early as the fifth century to prevent the people from interfering with the ministers of the eucharist. The people came to the altar rails to receive the sacrament, which meant that the altar rails served as communion rails. Some places continued the early church practice of administering communion by ministers who moved among the people. Standing was the normal posture for receiving communion until the thirteenth century, when kneeling to receive the sacrament became customary. This practice was related to the elevation of the host by the celebrant. Altar rails were first used in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The Puritans disliked altar rails. They often removed them from churches and moved the altar into the body of the church. William Laud (1573-1645), Archbishop of Canterbury, directed that altars be returned to the east wall of churches and fenced by altar rails for protection against desecration. The altar rails were latticed. Bishop Wren of Norwich noted that they were “so thick with pillars that doggs may not gett in.” The English clergy continued to move among the people to administer the sacraments until the eighteenth century, when the altar rail came to be used as the communion rail. In the nineteenth century, the chancel was seen as the room for the sacrament and the nave was seen as the room for the liturgy of the word. Altar rails in the Episcopal Church are low, reflecting the assumption that the people will kneel to receive communion. Altar rails may be made of metal or wood. Current liturgical usage has emphasized the shared participation of celebrant and people in the eucharist, and tended to remove barriers between the altar and the congregation. Standing to receive the sacrament is practiced with increasing frequency, and altar rails have been removed from some churches. Altar rails may become obsolete as standing to receive communion becomes more widespread in the Episcopal Church. <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/altar-rails>

Thoughtful Threads



**Thoughtful Threads will meet
Monday, March 20 6:00 pm
in the Chapel at St. John's**

Bring your own projects and join us as we continue our contemplative, spiritual journey into the rich history and meaning of fiber arts.

This month we'll explore how handmade gifts connects us one to another, and begin our journey with some special fabric art inspired visio divina.

In-Person Safe Church Training

In-person Safe church trainings will be held in the Parish Hall on:

Tuesday, April 11 at 6:00

Saturday, April 15 at 10:00

Sunday, April 16 after coffee hour

There is also a train-on-your-own web model that can be taken at any time. It can be found on the diocesan website.

If you are a Vestry member, work with a children's or adult ministry, or simply are interested in attending, *please register with Lara Raisanen for one of those sessions by Wednesday, March 15*. Training must be renewed every three years. If you choose to complete the web training module, or are attending one of the upcoming scheduled Zoom trainings, please let Sr Diane know.

What is Safe Church? It is a policy that is "intended to provide you with the tools and insights to take an active role in keeping our communities safe. They will give our communities a vocabulary for discussing the issues of sexual misconduct and harassment and assist in and teach all of us healthy boundaries and loving ways to interact with the children and other adults in our midst. This will further the crucial mission of transforming all of our churches into truly safe spaces for God's beloved children."



**Daylight Saving Time is
March 12th. Don't forget to
set your clocks ahead one
hour.**



It's time to get sign up to host our guests from the ICRH shelter, the week of 03/26-04/01! Please contact Ulana (klymy1au@cmich.edu) if you would like to contribute to a meal. Please contact Laura Cochrane if you would like to spend time in the evening with shelter guests (involves puzzles, playing cards, and sometimes entertaining kids), to spend the night, or to help serve breakfast and clean up in the morning. There is always a shelter staff person there with the volunteers.

Contact Laura Cochrane (cochr1ll@cmich.edu) with questions.



St John's Episcopal Mt Pleasant and The Great Lakes Loons

To once again celebrate St John's, summer and one of America's favorite past times, we are planning an afternoon baseball game at Dow Diamond, Midland, MI where The Great Lakes Loons play. The Great Lakes Loons are a local MiLB LA Dodgers Affiliate team. More info about The Loons and Dow Diamond can be found at www.milb.com/great-lakes.

On **Sunday June 11, 2023**, as part of Dow Diamonds Faith & Family Celebrations, The Loons will be playing the Lake County Captains starting at 1:05pm. Sunday games are special because every Sunday "Kids Eat for Free" and after the game finishes, kids can line up and run the bases.

We will have a luxury suite upstairs and tickets will be ~\$23/each as long as we hit the **minimum number of 30 attendees**. Please plan to attend and you can reserve your spot by either calling/emailing the office or call/email **Jennifer Dingman, (989) 488-7085** or djdingman@charter.net. A minimum number is required by April 15, 2023 so please reserve your spot today!

Volunteer Opportunity

ProMedica Home Health & Hospice of Mt Pleasant is currently seeking hospice volunteers.

The Hospice Volunteer

"We depend on our hospice volunteers to help us provide the love, respect and care our patients and families need. Some volunteers interact directly with patients and families, while other prefer to work behind the scenes in the office setting. As a volunteer, you would help us decide which tasks you are comfortable performing."

Volunteers help enrich the lives of patients by:

- Running errands for patients and families
- Staying with patients so family members can get a much-needed rest
- Reading or providing a comforting touch
- Playing or singing soothing music to patients
- Helping with office support tasks at the agency
- Providing a friendly visit to lift a patient's spirits

Volunteer Services

- Caregiver relief/support
- Bedside vigils for patients in their final hours
- Veteran volunteer support to patients who are veterans
- Art at the bedside
- Pet visits
- Friendly visits
- Reading loud
- Bereavement support
- Music at the bedside
- Legacy – life stories
- Group activity support
- Special events

If this is something you may be interested in, or would like more information, please contact ProMedica Home Health and Hospice at (989) 772-2541 or visit their website at www.promedica hospice.org/mountpleasant.



The communities of Eastern and Western Michigan are invited to join our local chapter of Holy Hikes Great Lakes (a bi-diocesan ministry!) for worship, fellowship, and fun in 2023.

In 2023, we'll take on five hikes throughout the lower peninsula, from April through October 2023. Our Holy Hikes are like liturgy on the move -- we will be hiking and praying along the way, hearing scripture and learning about God's creation.

All hiking sites have been carefully selected to be rated "easy" treks to ensure access for all generations and most mobilities. We expect to spend about 90 minutes on the trail, including time both hiking and stopping for prayer and reflection. We end each hike with trailside fellowship! In the case of heavy rain, the date will be rescheduled.

We ask that all participants RSVP so we know how many to expect and so that we can be in touch with more specific directions to the trailhead and in case of inclement weather.

2023 Schedule & Locations

APRIL 22nd at 1PM
Earth Day & Valuing Water
Stepping Stone Falls
5161 Branch Road
Flint, MI 48506

JUNE 17th at 1PM
Stewardship of Creation
Lake Huron Trail from
Camp Chickagami
6952 Kauffman Road
Presque Isle, MI 49777

AUGUST 26th at 1PM
The Kinship & Unity
of All Creation
Newaygo Welcome
Center Loop
4684 Evergreen Dr.
Newaygo, MI 48337

OCTOBER 14th at 1PM
Pollution & Recycling
Woodland Park & Nature Preserve
2518 Gethings Rd.
Battle Creek, MI 49015

SEPTEMBER 23rd at 1PM
Celebrating Creation
Mill Pond Park
607 S. Adams St.
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

For more information and to RSVP, please visit the [Holy Hikes website](#)

Minutes for Vestry Meeting for February 2023

Present: Pat Thurston, Diane Stier, Olivia Ohler, Jerry May, Clancy Delong, DJ Proctor, Nancy Herman-Kinney, Mary Kiesgen, Kevin Davidson, Lara Raisanen, Dan Eichinger, Kendall Klumpp, Jen Dingman (clerk)

Meeting called to order at 11:38 am.

Nancy commented on how nice it is to be meeting in person again and welcomed everyone to the table.

Pat led the group in an opening prayer.

Meeting minutes from Dec 11, 2022 and Jan 15, 2023 were reviewed, no changes suggested. Dan moved to accept the minutes as written, Mary seconded. All approved.

Ken Klumpp attended the meeting to address the Vestry with a concern about the altar placement and why he would like to see it returned to its original configuration. Choir in front of the organ pipes and the altar behind the altar rail allowing for a free flow of people to the alter for communion. He shared his experiences in St Johns and the beauty that the configuration offers parishioners and asked Diane and the Vestry to prayerfully consider his plea. The Vestry thanked him for his thoughts and agreed to discuss this matter during new business.

Property Committee

- Security – Jerry noted that he and other members of St Johns have come to the church after hours and found one or more doors unlocked or locked but not latched. The door off the parking lot going into the Lantern being the most common. Clancy shared that this door was retrofitted with a panic bar after installation due to fire code and it has not worked properly ever since. Several options including fixing doors, installing cameras and other security measures were discussed and Kevin made a motion to create a committee to investigate and bring recommendations back to the Vestry for consideration. Lara seconded the motion and all approved. Jerry, Kevin and Lara will be the initial members of this committee.

Minutes for Vestry Meeting for February 2023

- Authorization to Spend – Jerry noted that he would like to have authorization to spend some level of funds without approval from Vestry. He used a recent Clean & Bright example where the Gift in Kind of \$500 fell short of the purchase price for a new washing machine. A motion was made to give Junior Warden authorization to spend up to \$500 w/o Vestry approval and up to \$1000 with Senior Warden approval. This motion was tabled in favor of reviewing church Bylaws before the next Vestry meeting to determine if such a motion can be made. Dan offered to help.
- Storm window – Nancy noted that there was a storm window on the Rectory that needed attention and Jerry had already taken care of it.

Worship Committee

- Several members of this committee will not be serving in 2023 due to the limited focus on the Family Services. What classifies as a Family Service was discussed for new members and the next committee meeting is being planned.
 - Targeting 5 Family services total in 2023.
 - A Family Service will be an activity plus Potluck with a short Compline or similar worship service at the end. Advertisement to the community will be done.
- Lent
 - Two Ash Wednesday services, 12pm and 6pm EST
 - Lenten Series will return – Soup & a Movie format. 6:30pm EST in Parish Hall and films by John Dominic Crossan will be shown
 - In person + Zoom, 3/29 will be Zoom only due to Restoration House

Outreach Committee

- Gearing up to reach out for Easter families, Nancy to help
- Restoration House
 - DJ noted that the shelter needs help, DJ to meet with Executive Director on Sun Feb 19
 - Discussion about privacy concerns and the reduced numbers served during host week #1 in 2022 because of no curtains on Parish Hall windows and restrictions on having anyone sleep in that space.

Education Committee

- Safe Church training is required by any parishioner who will be serving in the name of St. Johns.
 - Includes Vestry, Eucharistic Visitors, Restoration House and Clean & Bright Volunteers
 - Lara will maintain the list of individuals who have completed it
- Sunday School Series – Diocesan provided curriculum is available. Diocese covers ½ the cost. Lenten Series purchased (\$150) to trial before deciding on future purchases or commitments. It follows the Episcopal Lectionary year and is written by a group of diverse young individuals.
- Vacation Bible School? – should we give this a try the summer of 2023 to draw in new members? Weeklong event could be kicked off with a picnic on Sunday, children attend part days Mon – Fri concluding with a Family Service and an opportunity for attendees to “showcase” what they did during the week.

Parish Life/Social Committee

- 2023 Loons Game – Sunday June 11, 2023, 1:05pm EST, Dow Diamond, Faith & Family Day
 - Announcement to go in the bulletin, on the website, etc. to start generating interest
 - We will have a Luxury Suite to address feedback from last year regarding ability to mingle and visit easily with all attendees. Indoor/outdoor option will also help to draw in any individuals who would not otherwise attend due to potential for heat/humidity and exposure to the elements.

Administrative Committee

- Q1 Income/Expenses down but that is normal in a new year. Clancy noted nothing alarming.
- Isabella Bank & Trust Endowment Fund is being moved to the new Diocese investment fund. Collective fund will generate larger buying power and investment portfolio opportunities. Name is “St John’s Mt Pleasant Endowment Fund” and paperwork was signed. Investment policy is available in the office with the Vestry notes.
- Church Audit – Eastern and Western Diocese will be doing the audit together. Eastern is light years ahead in terms of its documentation practices and Clancy noted that the Western Diocese cannot be relaxed about this any longer.

Minutes for Vestry Meeting for February 2023

- New audit procedure/policy needs to be put together (after April 15 tax day)
- Option to outsource or appoint parish members to be part of this audit
- Diane noted that there is a group of Diocesan individuals who will help with our reviews. It was suggested that we try this option before spending the ~\$1,500 to outsource.

Senior Warden Report

- Nothing to report

Rector's Report/New Business

- Altar placement – in response to Ken's presentation, Diane handed out a copy of The Church for Common Prayer, which describes how "our space" should be built. There have been many changes to the beliefs on this topic over the years, but Diane feels strongly about the current set up but wants the Vestry and Parish to prayerfully consider all options. A future "Chat & Chew" forum will be set up during coffee hour to allow the Parish to weigh in. Dan agreed to facilitate this discussion.
- Succession Planning – Alice noted the importance of having summary documents for each operational role to allow a new person to transition into each role more effectively. Electronic copies will be kept in the office and can be updated as needed. Plans will be made to contact those currently in these roles in 2023.
- Drop-off/Loading/Un-loading Sign – it was asked if such a sign makes sense for the front of the church to keep a space clear to allow for drop-offs. After discussion, it was suggested that this makes more sense in the back of the church by the Parish Hall/Lantern entrance.
- Vestry Retreat – Vestry will gather sometime in March/April in the Parish Hall instead of going away somewhere. Several individuals thought that it would be important to stay "home" to ensure that all considerations on things like altar placement can take place. Chat & Chew forum to be scheduled before the Retreat so all comments/feedback can be considered.

Next meeting March 12, 2023

Pat led the closing prayer.

DJ moved to adjourn, Olivia seconded, all approved. Meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm

Below is a summary of operating fund activity through the end of January (8.33%).

Unrestricted operating fund receipts.....	\$ 13,035.94 (6.6% of budget)
Unrestricted operating fund expenditures.....	17,041.35 (7.8% of budget)
Operating fund receipts over (under) expenditures.....	\$ (4,005.41)

Estimated giving amounts are down this month. This is usual for the month of January. Please verify that your current year estimated giving amount is up to date.

If you have not already done so, it is not too late to turn in your estimated giving amounts for 2023. Contact Pamela Dingman, our giving secretary, for forms or additional information.

Special projects:

External Sign Upgrade: Whittemore Foundation grant request has been approved. The sign committee is currently collecting quotes from several vendors. Grants and funds collected account for \$ 13,917.17 being raised to date.

Columbarium Expansion: We are waiting for spring for the installation of our columbarium expansion. If you are interested in a niche, please contact Pamela Dingman for more information.

Cash Balances

Cash in Checking Account	53,077.90
Savings	26,784.53
Certificates of Deposit	16,097.58
Endowment Fund	90,341.80

Total	<u>186,301.81</u>
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Cash Sources This Month

Traditional Giving	9,105.00	66.07%
Online Giving	<u>4,674.92</u>	33.93%
Total	<u>13,779.92</u>	100.00%



Remember Our
Homebound Members
Drop a card to our parish
members who are homebound.

Alma Dickerson
461 E. Wing Rd.,
Mt. Pleasant MI 48858
989-772-2516.

Sandy Wood
Prestige Centre
5785 E. Broadway Rd.,
Mt. Pleasant MI 48858

Fran Weaver
Comfort Care
1945 Churchill Blvd.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Joan Kadler
Crestwood
2378 S. Lincoln
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
989-772-2803

Elliott Parker
Crestwood
2378 S. Lincoln
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858



March Birthdays

Jeanne Maxon	03/06
David Kinney	03/09
Nancy Herman Kinney	03/20
Diana Clapp	03/29

St. John's Prayer Group

If you wish to add or remove names from the Prayer List, please call Sr. Diane Stier, 989- 807-0215, the church office, or email Pamela Dingman: padingman@hotmail.com. Thank you.



Pastoral Care

Just a reminder: you should let the parish office know if you are ill and wish to receive a call from the Rector.



Weekly Schedule:

Sunday 10AM: Holy Communion: In Person or [Facebook](#)
or [YouTube](#)

Wednesday 10AM: [Church School by Zoom](#)

Wednesday 7PM: [Connections Conversations by Zoom](#)

Thursday 8PM: [Compline \(Night Prayer\) by Zoom](#)

Coffee Hour Schedule:

March 5	The Davidson Family
March 12	The Eichinger Family
March 19	Lynne L'Hommedieu & Liz Brockman
March 26	Ford & Pamela Dingman

Lay Ministers:

	Lectors	Prayers
March 5	Derek Rivard	Carol Lauffer
March 12	Mary Kiesgan	Jennifer Dingman
March 19	Dan Eichinger	Mary Kiesgen
March 26	Nancy Hartshorne	Jim Thurston

Greeters Schedule:

March 5	DJ Proctor & Christi Brookes
March 12	David & Jennifer Dingman
March 19	The Eichinger Family
March 26	Jim & Patricia Thurston

March Calendar

**Sundays: 03/05, 03/12, 03/19,
03/26**

10am Holy Communion
(In person, Facebook, &
YouTube)

**Mondays: 03/06, 03/13, 03/20,
03/27**

6:30 pm G.A.

**Tuesdays: 03/07, 03/14,
03/21, 03/28**

11am Tai Chi with Judy

**Wednesdays: 03/8, 03/15, 03/22,
03/29**

10am Church School
via Zoom

6pm Yoga with Judy

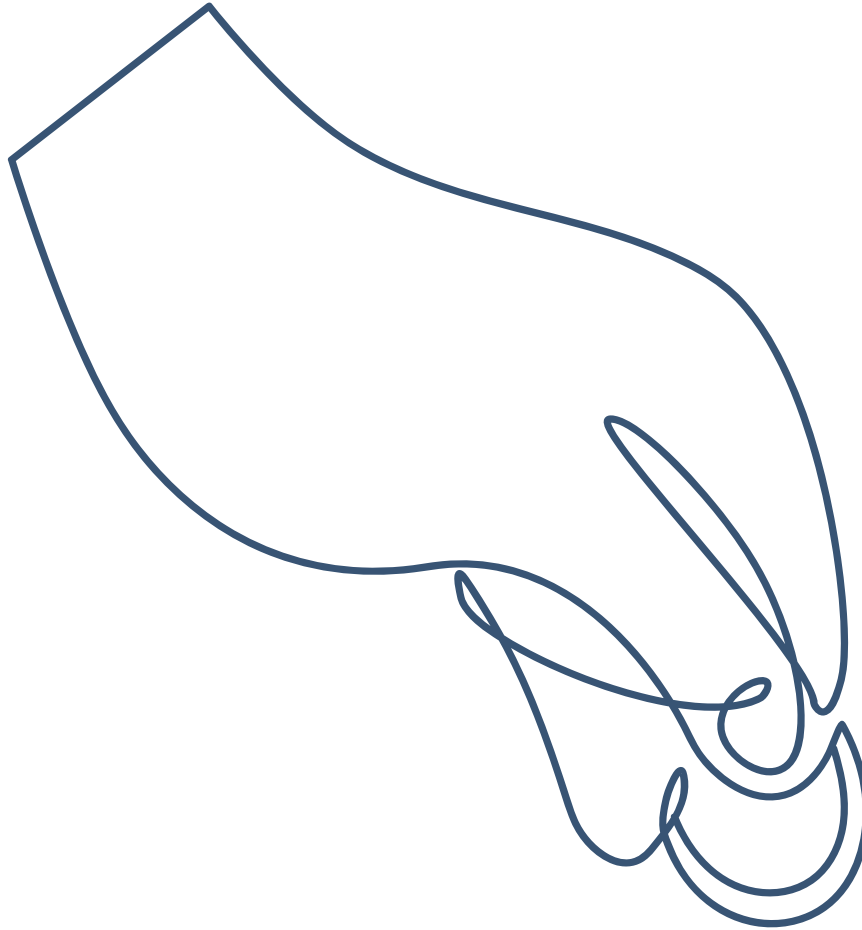
7pm Weekly Connection via Zoom

**Thursdays: 03/09, 03/16, 03/23,
03/30**

11am Tai Chi with Judy
8pm Compline via Zoom

**Fridays: 03/10, 03/17,
03/24, 03/31**

Nothing on these days
Office Closed



Different ways to give...

We now have four different ways to give back to the church. You can now drop off at the church, mail your offer to the church, give through “Giving Tools”, and shop on Amazon. Here are the details on how to give:

1. You can come to the Church office and drop it through the mail slot.
2. You can mail your offering to the Church, 206 W Maple, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
3. You can go to Giving tools and give one time or set up recurring donations from a credit card or bank account.
4. You can sign up through Amazon Smile to make a donation when you spend money on Amazon, no extra spending involved!

Saint John's Episcopal Church
206 West Maple Street Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Phone: 989-773-7448

Fax: 989-772-3480

E-mail: saintjohnsmp@gmail.com

Website: www.stjohnsmtpleasantmi.com

Facebook: [St. John's Mount Pleasant](#)

St. John's Mission:

St. John's Episcopal Church, with God's help and in the Episcopal Church tradition, lives to proclaim the Gospel of Christ by ministering through worship, outreach, fellowship and education. We welcome all who enter our doors, and we support the diverse callings of each member as we seek to serve Christ in every person.

Rector:

The Rev. Sr. Diane Stier, 989-807-0215

Deacon Emeritus:

The Rev. Nancy Casey Fulton

Organist:

Dennis Flynn

Choirmaster pro tempore:

Eric Vinciguerra

2023 Vestry Officers

Sr. Warden: Dr. Nancy Herman-Kinney

Jr. Warden: Jerry May

Treasurer: Clancy DeLong

Co-Treasurer: Lynne L'Hommedieu,

Vestry Clerk: Jennifer Dingman

2023 Vestry Members

David Proctor

Mary Kiesgen

Olivia Ohler

Pat Thurston

Kevin Davidson

Lara Raisanen

Dan Eichinger