



THE EVANGEL

The official publication of St. John's Episcopal Church

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Dear People and Friends of St. John's,

Last year in this space, I talked of my practice of asking myself a question, at the beginning of the new year: What do I want to nurture this year? What do I want to grow – in my own life, in our community, in our world? – Once I have named what I want to nurture – I can figure out how I might go about that. What things will help it grow? What things will stifle the growth of whatever it is I want to nurture?

The “nurturing” questions help me focus on the heart of the matter, perhaps, and allow me to see that how I do the nurturing might change from day to day, and that is okay.

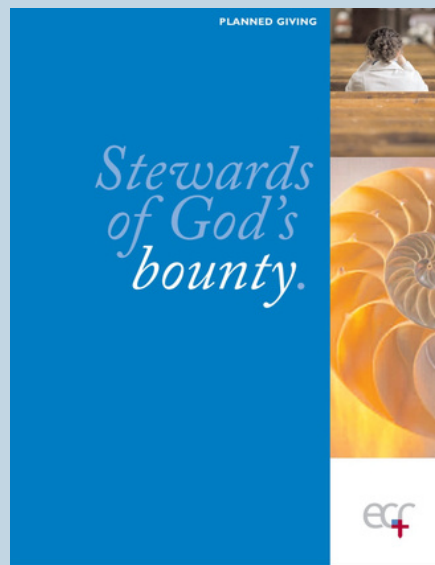
We will have our parish Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 21. [MARK YOUR CALENDAR. We will make the meeting available by Zoom for those who need it.] Some things are always on the agenda – hearing reports about what has happened in the previous year, passing the budget for the year to come. More importantly, though, this gathering provides us with the opportunity to be with and to talk with one another. The question I ask you to think about as preparation for our meeting is this: What do we want to nurture at St. John's in the coming year? What do you want to nurture at St. John's in 2024? – Then we will be able to do the work of figuring out how we do that nurturing – together.

What do you want to see more of in your own life – and how can you nurture that?

Mostly, may we all find a way to nurture the Divine Spark that dwells within each of us.

A blessed new year to us all.

Sr. Diane+



[Planned Giving Booklet](#) - Gift Planning

Gift planning is sometimes called the “How” of giving. It naturally follows the “Why”—the motivation or reason you want to give in the first place. As Episcopalians we all have our own personal reasons for wanting to make a planned gift to support the organizations and ministries that are meaningful to us. The diocese has created information on gift planning that is described in this [brochure](#). It describes the different ways you can accomplish this through immediate, deferred or life income gifts. It is provided to give you a basic understanding of planned giving options, but it is not a complete reference for all the options available.

Two options that are not detailed in the brochure but might be of interest to you are listed below. If you have any questions about these, please reach out to the Treasurer, Clancy Delong, and he would be glad to answer any questions.

Charitable Donations from your IRA

If you are over 70.5 years of age and have a Traditional IRA (or inactive SEP, inactive SIMPLE, or inherited) you can make a Qualified Charitable Donation directly from your IRA to St. John's. Benefits include:

- + No taxation on the amount you donate as you are not withdrawing it, so it will not increase your income.
- + You may deduct the amount you donate, up to \$100,000.
- + The amount you donate will count as your RMD.

To accomplish this, contact the company that holds your IRA as they will have their own process. Generally, you will direct them to send a check from your IRA directly to St. John's.

You cannot donate directly from a 401K, but you can roll over funds from a 401K to an IRA and then donate from there.

Donor Advised Funds

If you are not yet 70.5 yrs old but would like a tax-advantaged way to donate, consider using a Donor Advised Fund (DAF). Work with your brokerage firm (Vanguard, Schwab, Fidelity, other) to set up the fund. Benefits include:

- + Avoiding capital gains tax on appreciated securities; you can transfer these into the DAF to donate and you will not have to pay the capital gains tax normally incurred when you sell them.
- + As soon as you transfer securities into the DAF, you can take a tax deduction for charitable giving. Your tax deduction is the full amount of the appreciated security.
- + You can donate the money whenever you want, even several years from now. Since the standard deduction has been raised, sometimes it is beneficial to consolidate all your itemized tax deductions into one year. You can move 2- or 3-years' worth of charitable donations into a DAF in one year, and then distribute them slowly over the next 2-3 years.

The DAF can distribute the funds to any valid charitable institution. Each brokerage firm has their own process, so you'll work with them to set up the fund, transfer securities into it, and distribute them when and where you want.

January 14 at Coffee Hour - All-Parish Info Session on Juncture

The Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan have been in a Season of Practice, working together and even sharing staff, for several years. This was done to discern what a juncture (merging) of the two dioceses would look like. In early 2020, right before Covid changed everything, our two dioceses formed a [Building Bridges Steering Committee](#).

In March, our parish will send two delegates and Sr Diane to a special called convention to vote on this juncture. If you would like to weigh in on this momentous, historic decision, there are several opportunities to learn more about juncture - what it means, what might be good or bad about the decision, and how being a part of a new diocese will affect St. John's.

Here is the [2023 report](#) from the Building Bridges Steering Committee. I encourage you to click through, to read what the members of the steering committee presented at Convention in October. Additionally, under "[Previous Communications](#)" from the link above you can find every report Building Bridges has issued. Building Bridges has published a [FAQ](#) with information and answers to commonly asked questions.



Blessing of the home



In Deuteronomy 6:9, God tells the people of Israel: “These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house... You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

So at the start of this new year, chalking the doorway is a tangible way to honor God in our lives. This celebration is a way of marking our homes, usually at the front or main entrance, with sacred signs and symbols as we ask God’s blessing upon those who live, work, or visit throughout the coming year.

Church tradition names three of the Magi, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar and on Epiphany we celebrate these three saints and their gift-bringing. The numbers of the year are the bookends of the inscription.

C M B above the door, also stands for *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, Latin for “Christ, this house Bless.” The inscription this year is: 20+C+M+B+24. God of heaven and earth, you revealed your Son to the world by the guidance of a star. Bless this house of prayer and all who pass through its doors. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

Calendar Blessing

Eternal God, to you belong all times and seasons.

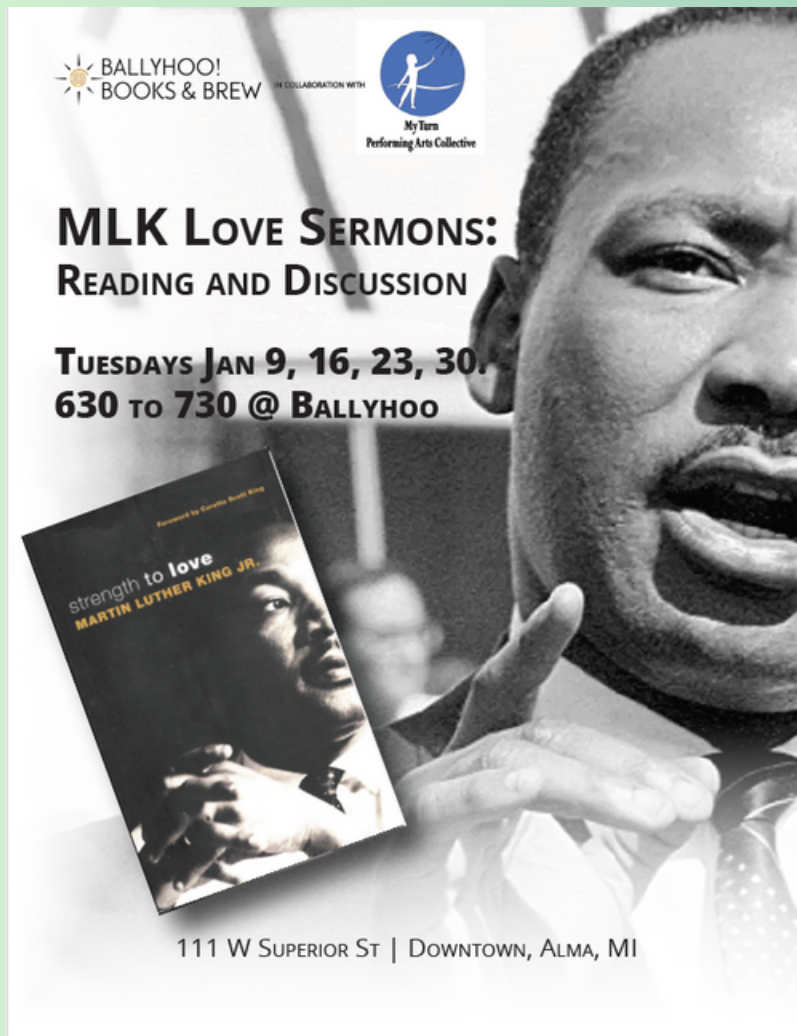
In the circle of the year,
the unending wreath of days and months,
through midwinter emptiness and summertime fullness,
through autumnal death and vernal rebirth,
through ferial*, fast, and feast days,
we journey in the mystery of your saving grace;
rejoicing in Christ's coming among us
in the past, the present, and the future,
we watch, and serve, while yearning for that day
when time will be no more
and all will be seated at the great feast of your love.

Bless our calendars we pray
and our lives in each of their days,
that we may ever give voice to your praise
and enact your love and grace;
through Jesus Christ our Savior,
who, with you and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting.

Amen.

* ferial are ordinary days, as opposed to fast days and feast days.

— adapted from “A Blessing of Calendars for the New Year,” by The Rev. Andrew G. Varga, ©2012, at <http://teamrcia.com/.../a-blessing-of-calendars-for-the.../>



The My Turn Performing Arts Collective will be holding a reading and discussion of Martin Luther King Jr's sermons on love, as found in the book "Strength to Love". This is a four part series of readings followed by discussion of it's content as part of the foundational faith of MLK's actions, and how they apply to us today.

January 9, 16, 23, 30
6:30PM - 7:30PM
Ballyhoo Books & Brew
111 W Superior Street
Alma, MI



One Sunday a month, St. John's will offer a second service.

This is a way to offer additional worship opportunities, provide flexibility for those who may not be able to attend the usual service time, and offers a stronger sense of inclusivity.

The second service in January will be held on **January 28th at 4PM** in the chapel – downstairs at the north end of the undercroft.

**Watch for the date for Valentine
making day in future announcements**





The 2024 Altar Flower Calendar is posted in the Lantern across from the elevator. Please consider a Sunday that is a good date for you to honor or remember a loved one and sign up to provide altar flowers. Flowers are a wonderful addition to worship! You may use flowers from your garden or a store and arrange them yourself, or arrange with Elliot's or Norm's Florist to do arrangements and they will deliver to the church.

Thank you!

Present: Diane Stier, Olivia Ohler, Pat Thurston, Mary Kiesgen, Kevin Davidson, Dan Eichinger, Clancy Delong, Alice Ciccu, Lara Raisanen, Jen Dingman (clerk) (Zoom)

Absent: Nancy Herman-Kinney, Jerry May, DJ Proctor

Meeting called to order at 11:53am. Pat led the group in an opening prayer.

Minutes from Oct 15, 2023, monthly Vestry meeting were reviewed. Dan moved to approve the minutes; Mary seconded. All approved.

Worship Committee

- Art Show reception – 6pm Fri Dec 1st
 - All are invited to attend
 - Final preparations for the event are being made
- United Thank Offering
 - Today Nov 19th so it is complete for 2023

Rector's Report

- Thanksgiving Day service – 9am
- Advent booklets at the church for anyone that wants them
- No Advent Lessons & Carols – doesn't make sense w/o an organist
 - Will attempt something with only hymns, etc.
- 5pm Christmas Eve Service
- 10am Christmas Day Service

Property Committee

- External structure/brick work needs to be completed
 - Grant money to cover 50% of the cost might be available from the National Fund for Sacred Places.
 - Deadline for LOI submission is 2/22/24.
 - Jerry, Lara and Alice will make up a committee to pursue this, 1 additional member would be nice to have.
 - Architect in Saginaw who specializes in churches will be contacted
 - Additional fundraising will be necessary before July, 2024
 - Clancy noted that this would be an appropriate use of endowment funds
 - Lara noted that matching funds might also be available from the National Church

- External painting completed
- Sign update – Mason is injured and work has been put on a temporary hold

Outreach Committee

- Thanksgiving baskets – stuff due today, Nov 19th, Alice will help put them together after Vestry and Adam will help Olivia deliver them
- Finals baskets for our St Johns College Students
 - Matthew Alton, Emma, Matthew Kinney, Zach, Choral Scholars – send it to the Department office – Jen to place the order, others to donate funds for it
- People Helping People – offering to deliver Christmas Trees to homes who need them
 - Individuals can sponsor a tree to help with the cost
- Christmas Baskets will be done, more details to come

Human Resources

- Organist position has been posted in multiple locations, no good candidates yet
- Organ/Music Program contacts at MSU, CMU, SVSU have been contacted
- Johnathon Korpi may be back in Mt Pleasant, might be a temporary option?
- Alice will look at ZipRecruiter

Administrative Committee

- Separate budget meeting to be scheduled on Dec 12th @ 6pm in the Parish office

Education Committee

- Christian Formation
 - Diocesan sponsored curriculum – for up to 25 kids, can partner with other churches to make it more affordable
 - Story Makers - \$1000 annual license fee, 42-week curriculum
 - Lara shared the box that she and Sam bought for Toddler age and it's been donated to St John's
 - Committee formed to look at options for Episcopal Formation; Nancy Herman-Kinney, Tom and Mary Ellen Cochran

News from The Diocese

- Lara is now the head of the Diocesan Committee in the absence of our Bishop as of Nov 18, 2023

- Building Bridges – Combined Eastern and Western Diocese
- Lara will send Juncture info and a Vestry discussion and parish wide meeting will be scheduled to ensure that all have an option to understand the upcoming vote and express concerns/opinions
- Kevin asked if the Vestry can also get pros and cons of each, historical significance, etc.
- There are a lot of mixed feelings about the merging of the Dioceses with respect to how to name, where to put the new office, etc.
- Decision will happen in March no matter what because it needs to be taken to the General Convention and if the decision isn't made now, the next General Convention will be in 3 years
- Lara will put together an announcement for the December Evangel
- Diane will determine dates for both the Parish wide meeting and Vestry discussion, needs to happen before the Annual Meeting scheduled for Sun Jan 14, 2024 (Sun Jan 21 make-up date)
- Convention Delegates will be selected in January as usual at the Annual Meeting and Juncture will take place in March

Parish Life/Social Committee

- 2024 Loons game info to be sent before the Dec 17th meeting so a date can be selected and a decision on what format (suite, reg seats, Northern Lights Pavilion (2023 seating))

Senior Warden Report

- No Report

New Business

- Clancy noted that according to IRS rules, the Rector's housing allowance needs to be approved on Sun Dec 17th

Next meeting Sunday December 17, 2023 at 11:30 after coffee hour

Juncture meeting Thurs Dec 7th 7pm by Zoom

Diane led the closing prayer. Mary made a motion to adjourn, Kevin seconded. All approved.

Meeting adjourned at 1:04pm

November 2023 Financial Report

Below is a summary of operating fund activity through the end of November (91.67%).

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Unrestricted operating fund receipts..... | \$ 187,664.36 (95.05% of budget) |
| Unrestricted operating fund expenditures..... | 198,093.81 (90.68% of budget) |
| Operating fund receipts over (under) expenditures..... | \$ (10,429.45) |

This year we are fortunate to have carryover Covid relief funds to cover this year's deficit. We will not have these carryover funds in 2024. If you have not already turned in your estimated giving amounts for 2024 to Pamela Dingman, please do so.

Please confirm that your estimated giving amounts for 2023 are up to date.

Cash Balances

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cash in Checking Account | 38,003.13 |
| Certificate of Deposit #1 | 44,161.65 |
| Certificate of Deposit #2 | 20,266.02 |
| Endowment Fund | 91,385.57 |
| Total | <u>193,816.37</u> |

I wish everyone a joyous holiday season and prosperous new year.

Clancy



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

Sandy Wood
2812 Weatherwood St.
Mt. Pleasant MI 48858

Nancy Fulton
1945 Churchill Blvd.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

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

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

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:
pamela.dingman@gmail.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.



January Birthdays

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Nancy Hartshorne | 01/01 |
| Christi Brookes | 01/04 |
| Harry Kuhn | 01/09 |
| Barbara Sheperdigian | 01/10 |
| Martha Rarick | 01/15 |
| Kip Cosan | 01/21 |
| Matthew Kinney | 01/22 |



January Anniversaries

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Ford & Pamela Dingman | 01/23 |
|-----------------------|-------|

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:

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| January 7 | Dan & Jasmine Eichinger |
| January 14 | Kevin & Jillian Davidson |
| January 21 | DJ Proctor & Christi Brookes |
| January 28 | Sharon Bolton & Lynne L'Hommedieu |

Lay Ministers:

| | Lectors | Prayers |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| January 7 | Tom Cochrane | Carol Lauffer |
| January 14 | Ulana Klymyshyn | Kevin Davidson |
| January 21 | Dan Eichinger | Dan Eichinger |
| January 28 | Barbara Sheperdigian | Barbara Sheperdigian |

Greeters Schedule:

| | |
|------------|------------------------------|
| January 7 | DJ Proctor & Christi Brookes |
| January 14 | David & Nancy Kinney |
| January 21 | Clancy & Patricia DeLong |
| January 28 | Tom & Mary Ellen Cochrane |

January Calendar

**Sundays: 01/07, 01/14, 01/21,
01/28**

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

**Mondays: 01/08, 01/15, 01/22,
01/29**

6:30PM GA

**Tuesdays: 01/09, 01/16,
01/23, 01/30**

11am Tai Chi with Judy

**Wednesdays: 01/10, 01/17, 01/24,
01/31**

10am Church School
via Zoom

6pm Choir Practice

7pm Weekly Connection via Zoom

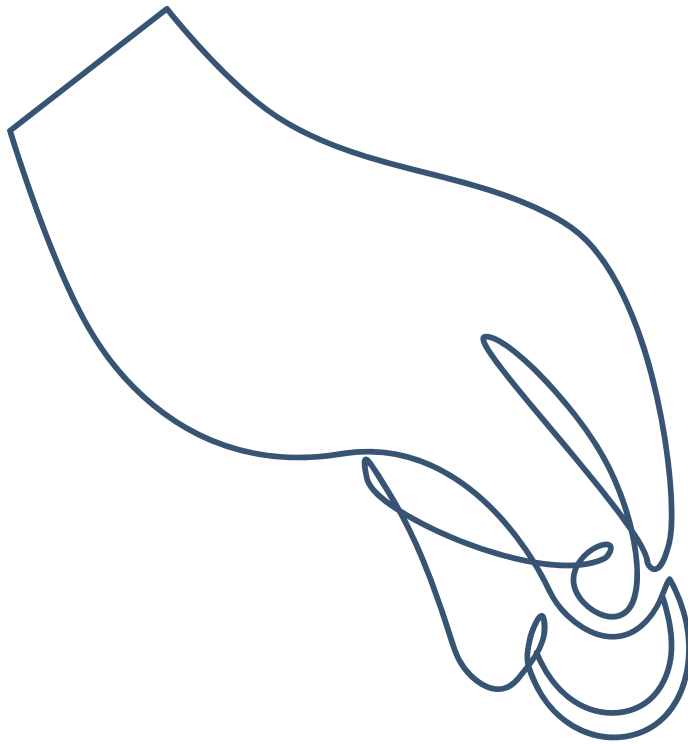
**Thursdays: 01/11, 01/18,
01/25**

11am Tai Chi with Judy
8pm Compline via Zoom

Fridays: 01/12, 01/19, 01/26

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, or give through “Giving Tools.” 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 give online by visiting the Giving Tools link on our website, or by scanning the QR code below.



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:

Choirmaster:

Eric Vinciguerra

2024 Vestry Officers

Sr. Warden: Dr. Nancy Herman-Kinney

Jr. Warden: Jerry May

Treasurer: Clancy DeLong

Co-Treasurer: Lynne L'Hommedieu,

Vestry Clerk: Jennifer Dingman

2024 Vestry Members

David Proctor

Mary Kiesgen

Olivia Ohler

Pat Thurston

Kevin Davidson

Lara Raisanen

Dan Eichinger