



The Messenger

St. John's Episcopal Church

Springfield, Missouri

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In This Issue

- † Rector's Reflections
- † A New Command
- † From the Senior Warden
- † How Plastic Can Harm Your Health
- † Outreach Ministry Group Report
- † In-Between Times
- † Remembering Special Dates and People

St. John's Episcopal Church

Bishop

The Right Reverend Amy Dafler Meaux

Interim Rector

The Reverend Ronald Keel

Director of Music

Kevin Grice

Senior Warden

Victor Matthews

Junior Warden

Linda Robertson

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Ozarks' Pridefest June 14

St. John's joins with Christ Church, St. James, and the Diocese of West Missouri in co-sponsoring the annual Ozarks Pridefest on June 14th at Park Central Square. The day begins with a Pride Mass: 9:30 a.m. at Christ Church. Then those who wish will go to the parking lot of the Municipal Court at the corner of Benton and Chestnut to gather for the parade to the square. The parade starts at 10:45 a.m. Come by the Episcopal Church's booth between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and say hi! If you'd like to volunteer, contact Melissa Gallian.

Fourth of July Parade

In past years, the parish has participated in the Midtown Neighborhood Association's Fourth of July parade. St. John's will be having a Fourth of July Mass at 9:00 a.m. Please plan to join us in celebrating Independence Day! This year's letter from Midtown is below.

Dear Friend of Midtown,

Springfield's 34th Annual Old-Fashioned 4th of July Parade & Celebration is quickly approaching, and it is with great pride that we send you an entry application for this event. We hope you will consider being part of this year's festivities. The parade will once again begin at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, July 4th in Midtown. This year's theme will be **"Good Neighbors, Strong Communities."**

The check-in and line-up will occur on Drury Lane, same as last year. Well-behaved dogs may ride in floats, but not accompany marching units, as the pavement in July is very hot. Following the parade will be the annual celebration in Washington Park until 1:00 p.m. Festivities will include live entertainment, children's games, and food. Our 4th of July event is a rare opportunity for the public to step back in time for the nation's birthday. The historic Midtown District still retains its architectural integrity of the Victorian era. Join us in enjoying our 19th century porches and stroll along our 100-year-old brick sidewalks. The applications for entry must be returned by June 30th. We hope you will consider being a part of the 33rd Annual Midtown 4th of July Parade & Celebration and we can't wait to see your float this year!

Sincerely, Midtown Neighborhood Association



From the Interim Rector

St. John's ~ The Future is Now

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

— Isaiah 43:19

Since 1886, St. John's Episcopal Church has been a steadfast presence in the spiritual life of Springfield and beyond. For nearly 150 years, this parish has faithfully offered worship, hospitality, outreach, and care—anchored in rich tradition while responsive to the needs of a changing world.

Today, St. John's stands at a holy threshold. With deep gratitude for the nineteen rectors who have led this community thus far, the parish now prayerfully engages in the sacred work of discernment as it searches for its next spiritual leader. Under the devoted guidance of the Search Committee, the Vestry, and with the support of the Diocese of West Missouri and our newly consecrated bishop, the Holy Spirit continues to inspire and shape this journey with hope and purpose.

The new rector who will be called to St. John's will find a community vibrant with ministries—each one a living expression of our baptismal covenant. From Outreach and Pastoral Care to Parish Health and the Green Team, from the Order of Saint Vincent to the Legacy Society, from Stewardship to the ever-vital ministry of Hospitality—St. John's remains active, engaged, and committed. The church's long-standing musical tradition continues to bless our worship life under gifted leadership, inspiring both reverence and renewal.

As I continue to serve as Interim Rector during this transitional time, I want you to know that I hold an abiding confidence in what lies ahead. The future is not only bright—it is unfolding even now. St. John's is poised to grow, to flourish, and to continue its faithful witness as a house of prayer, a beacon of hope, and a community of love.

A Prayer for This Season of New Beginnings

Gracious and loving God, you have guided St. John's through generations of faith, and now, with thankful hearts, we look to the future you are unfolding before us. Bless this community in its time of transition. Strengthen the hands and hearts of all who serve. Inspire and guide those discerning new leadership. And may your Holy Spirit continue to move among us, that we may grow in love, deepen in faith, and flourish in mission.

In Christ's holy Name we pray,
Amen.

Faithfully,
Fr. Ron Keel
Interim Rector

A New Command

Jesus, speaking to his disciples, said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

“A new command.” Yet it is an old one. It was Moses, way back in the book of Leviticus, directed by God to speak his commands to his people, who said, “You shall not take vengeance...but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:18).

Jesus amplified his command, however. We are to love, he said, “as I have loved you.” How did Christ love us? At the time, the disciples did not know the depth of Christ’s love. They hadn’t heard the angels announce the birth of their Savior in Bethlehem. They had not yet been to Calvary and couldn’t comprehend Jesus’ references to his impending death. They had no idea that the Resurrection, Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost were ahead.

We do have that knowledge. We understand what Jesus is talking about for we know how he loved us. He has loved us enough to leave the glories of Heaven. He has loved us more than earthly power and status and honor. He has loved us more than he loved his own life.

Jesus further said that love for one another would be the mark of members of the Family of God. Just as he gave sight to the blind, made the lame man walk, healed the sick, and preached the Gospel to eager ears, so did his followers. So should we today. With the love of Christ in us, we visit the lonely, provide food for the hungry, and share our financial resources in order that the Word of God might be preached and bring many to salvation. Loving others as Christ has loved us means that we should be willing to lay down our lives for them.

Sinful beings that we are, we are not prone to love others as Christ has loved us. The apostle John tells us how it is possible: “Beloved,” he wrote, “let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7). We are born of God, and, by his grace, we can carry out his command to love one another through all the opportunities he gives us with all the gifts he gives us.

From the Senior Warden

Victor H. Matthews

Promoting Vitality Within the Parish Community

In its efforts to promote vitality as a feature of our parish community at St. John’s, the Vestry wishes to encourage everyone to find a ministry that fits their talents and interests. The greater number of participants who contribute to our efforts at St. John’s is an expression of our love for this place and the work of the Gospel and is an acknowledgement that this work is not just the responsibility of the Rector or the Vestry.

Among the opportunities available are serving at the altar, singing in the choir, serving as an usher, a lector, or as a volunteer staff member. We also have many committees that carry out a variety of functions for the church family. These include a very active Outreach Committee that each month sponsors an effort to assist the wider community and those in need. The Pastoral Care Committee reaches out to those who are in the hospital or shut in by illness or who simply need someone to express their care for them. The Green Team works to keep our grounds beautiful and periodically has a litter pick up day to keep our neighborhood litter free.

And, at a basic level are those who volunteer to assist with our various functions like the quarterly Sunday brunch, the Chili Cook Off, and every Sunday provide items for fellowship after the service. This last group of volunteers provides us with a type of communion, much like the eucharist in the mass. Eating together and sharing conversation is an important way to demonstrate the vibrancy and welcoming spirit of our church family. We hope you will seek out an opportunity to get involved since Christians are called to believe and also to act out our faith.

How Plastic Can Harm Your Health

An overview of an article by *Consumer Reports*

<https://www.consumerreports.org/toxic-chemicals-substances/how-plastic-can-harm-your-health-a2854312421/>
brought to you by the Green Team.

“Plastic is everywhere,” yet it often contains chemicals linked to reproductive harm, cancer risk, metabolic disease and other health issues. Recently, *Consumer Reports* found two types of chemicals used in plastics, in a wide variety of nearly 100 packaged foods.

“These findings are concerning because there is clear evidence linking exposure to these particular chemicals to several health problems, including disruptions to the hormone system in the body.” This can lead to neurodevelopmental problems, metabolic disorders and reproductive problems, resulting not only in disease and disability to individuals and families but “an estimated \$250 billion in healthcare costs in 2018.”

Even more concerning is that these two chemicals are “only the poster children for the chemicals present in our foods and environment.” There are many others that are being widely used that have not yet been adequately studied or tested for safety. “Complicating this is that “tiny bits of plastic, known as microplastics, break off from plastic all the time and are currently found in food, water and air... National monitoring surveys by the CDC suggest that some plastic chemicals, including BPA and phthalates, can be found in pretty much everybody in the United States.”

“Chemicals found in plastic include carcinogens, neurotoxic chemicals and endocrine disrupting chemicals,” and can “directly damage organs, leading to disease over time. Others interrupt important biological processes, especially those involving hormones.” This can have serious repercussions even at trace levels, especially during pregnancy and in young children, resulting in reduced I.Q. and shortened attention span. Other chemicals found in plastics can increase the risk of certain cancers.

Plastics are a byproduct of the production of fossil fuels, including coal, oil and gas. The risk begins as these materials are extracted from the ground, so people living near coal, gas, and oil fields are exposed to these chemicals upon their extraction. “But all of us are exposed to plastics while they are used.”

This year the Green Team at St. John’s has decided to focus on what we can do to eliminate or significantly reduce our use of plastics in our homes as yet another way that we can become better stewards of our own health and of the health of our planet. Stay tuned for future articles about how to reduce your use of plastics, and work on increasing your awareness of all the plastics that you are using in your home and yard. You can begin by clicking on the link at the head of this article.

Outreach Ministry Group Report

In May, the Outreach Group worked with the Crosslines Community to provide gifts and supplies for birthday parties for eligible families. For “Wish I May,” we collected NEW items they requested for children ages 1-15, especially birthday plates & napkins, board books and other children’s books and birthday banners and decorations.

Women’s Medical Respite was very pleased to receive a nice array of leftovers from our new bishop’s meeting with the diocesan clergy at St. John’s on Tuesday, May 6.

During the summer, Outreach will be collecting easy-to-eat meals for food insecure kids who are home from school. The group also discussed the best location for our on-going collection basket for Crosslines donations.

Outreach will meet on June 8 but skip a July meeting. Sundae Sunday will again take place in August. Outreach welcomes suggestions for providing needed assistance for others!

In-Between Times

brought to you by the Parish Health Ministry.

Life is filled with clear beginnings and endings. As wonderful and/or sad as these times may be, the majority of life is filled with in-between times. These are the spaces where we are neither where we were, nor where we are going—just like spring here in Wisconsin, still cold and windy, yet sunny and the snow is gone, so it's neither fully winter nor spring. It's more of an in-between time. These in-between times can be uncertain, challenging, and even unsettling. Yet, they also hold immense potential for growth, reflection, and renewal.

In-between times take many forms. They may be the weeks between leaving one job and starting another, moving from one home to another, or the years between childhood and adulthood. These liminal spaces—where we exist between what was and what will be—are often overlooked and even undervalued because they can be difficult. However, they can be some of the most formative moments in our lives.

The world encourages us to hurry through these periods, to rush to the next milestone. But what if we embraced them instead? What if we saw these in-between moments not as obstacles or times we have to trudge through, but as essential parts of our journey?

It's natural to feel uncomfortable in these times. Most of us crave certainty, a clear direction, and tangible results. However, some of life's most profound lessons come not in the moments of achievement, but in the waiting.

Psychologist and author William Bridges describes transitions as three-stage processes: endings, neutral zones, and new beginnings. The neutral zone—the in-between time—can be where we grieve what we've left behind, wonder about what's next, and ultimately become the person ready to step into a new phase of life.

Instead of resisting these moments, we can choose to find meaning in them. Here are a few ideas of what helps:

1. **Embrace Reflection** The in-between provides space to slow down and reflect. What lessons have you learned? What do you truly want to be moving toward? Journaling, meditation, or quiet walks can help bring clarity.
2. **Practice Patience** It's tempting to want to rush toward the next chapter, but growth takes time. Trust that the waiting has a purpose. The caterpillar does not become a butterfly overnight—transformation happens in the cocoon.
3. **Stay Open to Possibilities** Sometimes, the best opportunities arise in the spaces where we least expect them. An in-between time might seem like a pause, but it can also be a doorway to something better than you imagined.
4. **Take Care of Yourself** Transitions can be draining, both emotionally and physically. Prioritize self-care, whether that means nourishing your body, leaning on a support system, or allowing yourself to rest.

If and when you find yourself in an in-between time, remember that it is not wasted time. It is a time of becoming, of preparing, of evolving. Though it may feel uncertain, remember that this time is also full of potential. The next step will reveal itself when you are ready—but for the moment, honor the space you are in.

Holly Hughes Stoner, LMFT and Scott Stoner, LMFT

St. John's Episcopal Church
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Return Service Requested

The Messenger

**a Newsletter of
St. John's Church**

Remembering Special Dates & People

Birthdays

June 3 Colbie Stiles
Dax Stiles
June 4 Nikki Chaffin
Eden Olson
June 6 Bettie McAndrews
Lindsey Parks
June 7 Leslie Ballew
Nicholas Wilkinson
June 9 Nadda Gamel
Fay Ollis
June 11 Lenora Samaniego
June 12 Anita Harper
June 13 William Webb III
Alisa Gamel
June 15 Paige Iott
Lindsey Nelson
June 16 Conner Hank
Ruby Hilton
June 19 Mary Branscom
Hannah Redden
June 20 Krista Harris
June 24 Anabelle Lee Chaffin
Todd Wilkinson
June 26 Sonja Chaffin
Vicki Ratcliff
June 28 Russell Axtell
July 1 Robert Hollis Wilhoit
July 2 Joseph Bendon
July 5 Elaine Simpson
July 7 Nathan Branscom
July 10 David Westervelt
July 11 Patricia Blair
James McMillen
July 14 Meghan Arnall
July 16 Melissa Gallian
John Paul Jones
July 17 John Walstrand

July 18 Fr. James Moon
Mark O'Dell
July 20 Adele O' Dell
July 21 Tyler Branscom
July 24 Mary Neal
July 29 Jennifer Stammers
July 30 Elizabeth M. Lohman
Norma Tokarczyk

Anniversaries

June 2 Larry & Jacque Gray
June 3 Mark & Tiffany Bowers
June 26 James & Nikki Chaffin
June 27 James & Janice Hancock
June 30 Michael & Roberta Richerson
July 5 Lawrence & Fay Ollis
July 23 Thomas & Mary Ann Arnall

Faithful Departed

June 1 Robert S. Cravens
Margaret Fendlason
Thomas H. Hill
June 3 Arabella Braig
Bertha Edwards
Robert Jones
June 4 Ann Merica
June 5 James McCoy
June 6 Zenor Byrum
Arch Price
Ray Woolridge
June 7 Helen Cunningham
June 9 Margaret Bailey Horny
June 11 George Edwards
Louis Nelson
June 15 Julia Dorothy Coover
June 16 John Braig
June 21 Mary Virginia Johnson
June 24 Henry Ledgerwood

June 25 Etta Crews
June 26 Susan Alive Cutting
June 28 John Patton
June 29 Einar Jacobson
July 3 George D. Burns
July 5 Alberta Comstock
July 6 Florence Silsby Brown
July 7 Rolland Comstock
July 9 Helen Marie Crooks
Peggy White
July 10 Edward Millikin
Ralph Rimbey
July 11 Julia Guthrie
July 12 Frances Lee Wingo
July 14 Wilfred G. Barker
July 15 Ralph E. Bostwick
Bob Bradley
July 16 Dorothy Ann Deck
July 21 Dixie Anderson
Edward E. Wadley
July 24 Julia Holiday
July 25 Annie Coover
Col. Harry Kirkpatrick
July 27 M.J. (May) Barker
July 29 Jack Armour
July 31 Mildred McCarthy
Karen Ollis