



The Messenger

St. John's Episcopal Church

Springfield, Missouri

March 2026, Issue 142, No. 3



Mark Your Calendars



St. John's beautiful
**Stations of
the Cross**
Fridays at noon
during Lent



**March 20th,
6:00 p.m.**



**Holy Week
Begins**
March 28/29

In This Issue

- † Mundane Musings
- † Outreach Ministry Group
- † Tithing: A Spiritual Decision and More
- † Parish Health: The Joy of Lent
- † Green Team Tip for March
- † Native Plant Sale
- † Green Team: Global Bright Spots
- † Remembering Special Dates and People

St. John's Episcopal Church

Bishop
The Right Reverend Amy Dafler Meaux

Rector
The Reverend Benjamin George-Thoms

Director of Music
Kevin Grice

Senior Warden
Mark O'Dell

Junior Warden
Linda Robertson

Parish Office: (417) 869-6351
website: <https://stjohnspringfield.diowestmo.org>
e-mail: stjohns-spgfld@sbcglobal.net

EASTER FLOWER OFFERING

Easter will be arriving on April 5th this year, when Lent ends with the glorious celebration of our Savior's resurrection. A wonderful symbol on this great occasion is the array of Easter lilies that fills our church. Making a donation to supply these flowers is a particularly good way to remember those dear to us who have departed this life to continue with the living Christ. There will be special Easter Flower Offering envelopes beside the bulletins at each Saturday and Sunday service for the rest of Lent. Please make your check payable to St. John's Episcopal Church and write "Easter flowers" on the memo line. Your envelope may be mailed to the church, turned in to the office, or placed in the offering plate. On the outside of the offering envelope, please print clearly:

Given by: _____

In memory of: _____
(and/or) _____

In thanksgiving for: _____

This information will be used to prepare the Easter Flowers Offering Booklet. Please submit your envelopes no later than **Monday, March 30th.**

Thank you.
Karen Horny, Altar Flower Coordinator

Numerous volunteers have brought dishes to share and teams of cooks have prepared food for meals to celebrate our fellowship.

And that's stewardship!

Mundane Musings

The Book of Psalms is a wonderful gift to us in the Scriptures. In them we see the full breadth of human emotion. They run the whole gamut, and we are not spared even the parts of human nature that we perhaps would rather not acknowledge. We see joy, unconstrained praise for the goodness of God, expressions of hope and longing, and we also see cries for justice. We see lamentation and despair, and we also see anger, bloodlust, and cries for vengeance upon our enemies with a ferociousness that seems impossible to reconcile with the Gospel of Christ. The psalms hold a mirror up for us in which we can see models of how people have voiced everything in their hearts and minds to their Lord, regardless of whether it were the good, the bad, or the ugly. And so should we all.

Wherever and whenever the psalms have been read and prayed, since prayers are what they are, there has been a potential tendency to see in them justification for the bad and the ugly instead of an uncomfortable reflection on the lows of our humanity, however understandable some of these responses may be in their contexts. While this can be said of many passages in the Bible, it might also be said that, with the psalms at least, they are examples of humbling honesty and examples of where we might yet grow more fully into the likeness of Christ. In fact, it is Christ himself who is always our lens for the Scriptures. There is not a thing in the Bible which we do not measure next to Jesus, the true Word of God and the one in whom there is no more a true reflection of the Father. Why? Because the primary purpose of the Scriptures is to point us to Christ, and so it is in the light of Christ that we read them.

In short, even when it comes to the Bible itself, the question we must always ask ourselves is: “Does this look like Christ?” Of course, Christ is himself not a character on the pages of the Bible, but alive, ascended, and seated at the right hand of the Father to reign over all things. We know Christ both from the witness of the Scripture and from the loving relationship with him we are always invited into.

The Psalms are also wonderful examples of where all of our prayers should be headed. After we have poured our hearts out to God, be it in words of hope, praise, fear, confusion, outrage at the unfairness and horrors of the world, or even in words of confession of the baser human tendencies which can fill our hearts, the psalms almost always move towards an acknowledgement of God’s greatness and goodness. We are not left in only our feelings, be they positive or negative, but our subjective feelings are moved to the objective truth of the good God who loved the whole of creation, everything and everyone within it, to the point of death on the cross.

My own favorite of the psalms is Psalm 42. The 6th and 7th verses have become something of a centering point for me.

6 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul?
and why are you so disquieted within me?

7 Put your trust in God; for I will yet give thanks to him,
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.”

Whenever the world is beset with distractions of any and all kinds, I return to these verses as a reminder of the above truth when my soul is troubled, wearied, or confused at how a world that God called good can still be filled with such troubles. I rest in the one thing that anyone can ever truly know, and that is that God is good and true.

Sometimes it’s the only comfort to be had, but it is still at all times sufficient whether we are in a place to feel that it is or not. Like with the psalmists, this is where we should orient ourselves to eventually reach. It is the balm that can ease all hurts and wounds, even if our journey to this conclusion, like with many of the psalmists, is less than direct and first requires expressions of confusion, anger, loss, and even uncomfortable confessions of the contents of our hearts.

Outreach Continues Important Projects

St. John's Outreach Ministry Group has continued to pursue an excellent variety of projects. As December came to an end, we proceeded with our regular "12 Days of Christmas" collection to provide wine for four rural parishes in Kenya served by Fr. Jesse Mutugi, who attended St. John's while studying in Springfield some years ago. We raised \$1,720 through the generosity of our parish.

With the arrival of Lent, we have again identified an important project of Episcopal Relief & Development's international efforts. A "Complete Care Package" includes aspects from five of their programs to empower a community. Our goal of \$1,170 provides the following: three goats, one flock of chickens, three savings & loan group memberships, one family garden, clean water for a family, care for four moms & their newborns. You may write a check to St. John's with "ERD" on the memo line. All donations are appreciated.

Another important Easter project is supplying food and household supplies for our three families we continue to support three times a year. See the sign-up sheet on the outreach bulletin board to see what's still needed. Please bring your items by March 29, so they can be delivered before Easter. You can also help cover the cost of perishables by writing a check to St. John's with "Easter Baskets" on the memo line.

Tithing: A Spiritual Decision and More

Giving is our response of faith to God's countless gifts, especially the gift of Himself in Jesus Christ. As God so freely gives to us grace upon grace, so we should be inspired to give of our own selves as God gives to us and the world. By the power of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament, we are molded and transformed into stewards who become more Christ-like in our giving as we engage in the spiritual discipline of offering our time, talents, and treasures.

God exhorts us to give, and it is by God's grace that we are enabled to give. As Christians, the model of tithing found in the Old Testament, the giving back to God of 10% of agricultural produce, is a model as much as the actions of the first Christian community in Acts. These first believers held everything in common for the common good. Tithing then is more of a spiritual decision than a financial one. It has little to do with money, but it has to do with our devotion to Christ. When we tithe, it could be said that the heart takes precedence. Those who make a commitment of giving are often ones who deeply understand who they are and Whose they are. Tithing is a reminder that God is the creator and source of all that we are and have, and so we are willing to forgo some of the pleasures and comforts of the world to further God's redemptive work through the Church itself.

The Scriptures share giving many guides to inspire and encourage the practice of giving. We are encouraged to give to God first (Proverbs 3:9), regularly (1 Corinthians 16:2), proportionately (2 Corinthians 8:12), intentionally (2 Corinthians 9:7), and generously (Luke 6:38). However, for financial reasons it may be difficult for some to become tithers immediately, whereas others will be in position to give much more than a tenth. The tithe is a guide or goal to strive for and then attempt to surpass, though we, like the widow and her mite in Mark and Luke, give what we are able when we are able.

This spiritual discipline is an opportunity for us to stay connected to Jesus and our faith community, and it helps align our hearts with the Lord. As we are told, "Where your treasure is there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Through the joy of giving, we align ourselves to gospel principles and the very likeness of our God.

May the Lord bless and keep us by grace and in joy as we give where we are able!

Parish Health Ministry

The Joy of Lent

From Sr. Hannah Aloysius, CSM
Prioress of the Community of St. Mary Southern Province

It might surprise you that the only time the Rule of St. Benedict mentions joy is on the section about Lenten observance. Benedict instructed his monks to use this season as a time to offer something up to God “with the joy of the Holy Spirit.” As Sister Rosy Kandathil, OSB, from Holy Wisdom Monastery wrote “It isn’t often that I am urged to celebrate Lent with the same joy and enthusiasm that I might greet the coming of spring – but Benedict reminds me that the two are not so far apart. Both are meant to point us to new life, growth, renewal, and, ultimately, joy. This season is about turning around, right where I am, and receiving the grace of God for me.”

Lent is not a weight loss plan and it can be a very triggering time for those struggling with eating disorders and body image issues. People who carry these burdens often start from a place of “There’s something wrong with me” but the beauty of Lent, as the collect for Ash Wednesday states, is that we are reminded that God hates nothing God has made. Lent is not the time to moralize food (PS – it’s never a good time to moralize food). I think the biggest temptation we all face is to forget our belovedness. After all, as soon as Jesus was baptized and was told he was ‘the beloved’ he was tempted into 40 days of tests and trials that questioned that core identity. What if we could reframe Lenten practices as a time for a deeper self-compassion and awareness and examination of what thoughts and actions draw us nearer, or father away, from this universal belovedness we all possess?

It's not easy being green...



Up to 15 percent of your heating/cooling bill may be from cracks and openings in the thermal envelope of your home.

On a windy day, turn on all your exhaust fans (bathroom, kitchen, dryer) then use a 12-inch strip of toilet paper to check around your windows and doors to find leaks that waste energy. Then, use a stack of Post-it notes to help you remember where the leaks are when you start caulking.



The Spring Native Plant Sale ends the last day of March. All orders are 10% off from Missouri Wildflowers.

Should you not have a garden, please consider making a donation of some plants to the Green Team for us to continue beautifying the church grounds. Or make a donation of the 10% savings from your own order for our future fund.

The Green Team

GLOBAL BRIGHT SPOTS TO MAKE YOUR DAY

In late 2025, early 2026, **stingless bees** in the Peruvian Amazon were given LEGAL STATUS!!! What this means is that they deserve the rights to exist, thrive and have a healthy, pollution-free habitat. They are the first insects ever to be granted such rights, which is a testament to acknowledging that they are **responsible for pollinating roughly 80% of the Amazonian flora**. This law allows them to be represented in cases of pollution and habitat destruction, a huge step forward in environmental justice. **All God's creatures** deserve sustainable environments. Protecting the entire web of life ultimately benefits us humans, as well. This is a huge win for indigenous leaders, scientists like Dr. Rosa Vasquez Espinoza and environmental advocates, who all collaborated together.

New York City inaugurated **congestion fees** for driving in the city core in January 2025 and **they are WORKING!!!** It costs \$9.00 per day and \$2.25 at night to drive in the area in lower Manhattan. The fees reduced daily vehicle entries by **70,000 per day** in the Central Business District, help fund public transit, decreased particulate air pollution by 22% and **increased foot traffic** to local businesses. Sometimes it takes just a few old tricks to teach new dogs.

Mexican **fishery businesses changed course from collapse to comeback**—Overfishing for shrimp, rising fuel costs, farmed shrimp and warming waters decimated the thriving port industries in the Gulf of California by the 2010s. Switching to fishing for hake, a fish living in colder, deeper waters, required revamping fishing gear and methods, with a concern not to repeat mistakes. Partnering with scientists, policy makers and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to build sustainable fisheries necessitated making boats hygienic and gentler in handling hake catches so that more of the catch was preserved in its delicate condition. This made the fish sellable at higher prices, meaning less fishing reaped higher profits, a win-win-win for humans, fish populations and consumers.

Here is a beautiful perspective on **a maligned flower**—The dandelion is persistent. It is underestimated. It grows where it's told it shouldn't and then it spreads. It changes the landscape and soil, not through force, but presence.

Now make that **a strategy**—To create change, advocates are accelerators (like dandelions) breaking through hardened ground, carrying solutions on the wind, rooting transformation in places that have been ignored for too long. This is how real change happens, you might say, by being careful stewards of God's creation. Amen.

∞

Sources - vitalsigns.edf.org changing the story on climate
projectdandelion.com a woman-led global campaign for climate justice

Slam the Scam

Celebrate National “Slam the Scam” Day during National Consumer Protection Week!

On **March 5, 2026**, as part of National Consumer Protection Week, the Social Security Administration (SSA) and its Office of the Inspector General (OIG) led National Slam the Scam Day. Take part using tools from SSA and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to recognize imposters – including Social Security-related scams – and stop scammers from stealing your money and personal information.

[Help Us Slam the Scam!](#)

! Note—Scammers are using Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an additional tactic to trick people. You may find more information regarding AI Scams from the Senate Special Committee on Aging's brochure, “[Emerging Threat: Artificial Intelligence](#)”.

SCAM ALERT

Watch out! Scammers target everyone.



Recognize scammers. They may:

- **PRETEND** to be from an agency or organization you know.
- Say there’s a **PROBLEM** or promise a prize.
- **PRESSURE** you to act immediately.
- Tell you to **PAY** in a specific way.



Do not give scammers money or personal information – Ignore them!

How to avoid a scam:

- **Remain calm.** Talk to someone you trust.
- **Hang up or ignore** the message. **DO NOT** click on links or attachments.
- **Protect your money.** Criminals will insist that you pay in a hard-to-trace manner, such as with a gift card, prepaid debit card, cryptocurrency, wire transfer, money transfer, or by mailing cash.
- **Protect your personal information.** Be skeptical of a contact you didn’t initiate.
- **Spread the word.** Share your knowledge of Social Security-related scams. Post on social media using the hashtag #SlamtheScam to share your experience and warn others. Visit ssa.gov/scam for more information. Please also share with your friends and family.

If you receive a call, text, or email from an outside source requesting information or posing as church personnel, please follow the tips in this article.

Also, when in doubt, call the church office or Fr. Ben for verification.

St. John's Episcopal Church
515 E. Division St.
Springfield, MO 65803

Return Service Requested

The Messenger
a Newsletter of
St. John's Church

Remembering Special Dates & People

Birthdays

Mar. 5 Shannon Wilkinson
Mar. 6 Kim Westervelt
Mar. 7 Nikki Jones
Mar. 8 Jacque Gray
Mar. 9 Jillian Merrill
Mar. 10 Amy Smith
Mar. 12 Logan Miller
Philip Mothersead
Mar. 14 Mason & Rush Matthews
Mar. 15 Kathryn Follis
Cade Moberg
Mar. 17 Patti Goforth
Mar. 18 Jean Baker
Mar. 19 Sharon Riestis
Mar. 20 Shawn Askinosie
Riley Brown
Jim Price
Mar. 21 Kristopher Chaffin
Debby Williams
Mar. 22 Jay Hancock
Mar. 23 Kevin Grice
Marshall Price
Mar. 25 Rob Temple
Mar. 26 Tara Ramsey
Mar. 31 Angela Schmidt

Anniversaries

Mar. 28 Rex & Linda Porterfield

Faithful Departed

Mar. 1 John Ellsworth Lines
Ruth Parham
Margaret Pelcher
Noi Mae Pierce
Betty White
Mar. 3 Joseph E. Cox, Sr.
Robert Cunningham
Maud R. James
Paul Simpson
Mar. 4 John S. Bostwick, Deacon
David D. James
Guy Richardson
Mar. 5 Minnie McCoy
Mar. 6 Dorothy Bostwick
Bob Richards
Mar. 8 John Hurt
Mar. 9 U.S. Tegarden
Demaris Wright
Mar. 10 Lawrence E. Braig
Mar. 11 Patrick Eugene Brown
Virginia Weigel
Mar. 12 Donald Jacobson
Sabine Williams
Mar. 16 Evelyn Crankshaw
Ethel E. Jacobson

Mar. 17 Joseph M. Patterson
Caroline Tirgrath
Mar. 18 Harriet Mears
Raymond E. Patterson
Mar. 20 Joan Harvates
Mar. 24 Sally Mae Achord
Helen Braig
Juanita Drussa Harmon
Mar. 26 Jesse Thompson
Mar. 27 Rosa Benskin
Mar. 31 Joan Iott

