



The Messenger

St. John's Episcopal Church

Springfield, Missouri

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Sundae Sunday

August 15 & 16

**Outreach Ministry Group:
Thank you, Parishioners for Generosity!**

Join us on August 15th and 16th for a sweet treat. The Outreach Ministry Group will provide ice cream treats after the Saturday 4:00 service. We're hosting coffee hour on Sundae Sunday and serving ice cream, toppings, cookies and root beer. It's our opportunity to thank you for your generous support of our many outreach projects.

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St. John's Episcopal Church

Bishop

The Right Reverend Amy Dafler Meaux

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The Reverend Benjamin George-Thoms

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Realm and Connect are going live for St. John's Parishioners in September!

Change can be scary, but this time it's especially exciting! St. John's will introduce our new congregational/church management software and communications app.

Realm is a church management software with many excellent integrations for parishioners to use and will streamline many aspects of the parish office's current workload. Invitations to sign in will be sent through email.

Connect is a communication app that is fully integrated with Realm. Instructions for downloading the app will be published with the release of Realm in September. Watch for more details about these exciting changes in the weekly and following publications.

Mundane Musings

Beloved of God,

As the summer comes to a close, we are told life returns to its previous rhythms and paces. As the heat and humidity persist, saying that the summer is closing seems somewhat inaccurate, even if a reprieve is forecasted as I write this. I can't help but feel that the idea that summer brings a slower pace might also be a bit inaccurate. Sure, things change, schedules are reconfigured, and this is the time that many take vacations, but does it really slow us down? Maybe. Maybe not.

The fast-paced way of being in our current point in history seldom lets up. Appointments are still made and kept. Extracurriculars continue. We are still never without ads, promotions, campaigns, or product placements. Cellphones live in our pockets functioning as computers and making us accessible to anyone and everyone 24/7. So-called "grind culture" doesn't end, and neither do prevailing attitudes that glorify busyness and exhaustion as hallmarks of a life well-lived. "I think, therefore I am" seems to have been traded for "I am weary, therefore I am accomplished." The tendency in our society to conflate human productivity with human dignity might also be added to this list, but let's deal with one topic at a time.

Despite all of this, our Lord bids us come to him and rest. Christ, speaking directly to the weary, says, "Take up a lighter burden and live life with me." Perhaps in the year of 2026, we might hear this as, "Live a life with me and the peace that I give instead of life with your calendars, busy schedules, and drives to always do and go."

Societal systems and structures, however, are what they are. Sometimes the choice just isn't given to us to actually turn things off and let responsibilities and expectations go. Sometimes.

Whatever this changing of time brings to you, whatever new challenges and responsibilities may come, don't forget the invitation of Christ to sit and be still. Do not forget the importance of resting in the peace of God which passes all understanding. Like carving out time in our calendars to grab a coffee, lunch, or dinner with friends and family, carve out time to breathe and simply be with the One Who Is and is known as I Am.

O God of peace, who has taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray you, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

— The Book of Common Prayer, "For Quiet Confidence," p. 832

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Ben



The Green Team

My bachelor's degree is in Audio Engineering and Sound Design for theatrical productions, and prior to Ben and I meeting, I was working in that career in Eastern Kentucky. The summers of my time there were spent engineering and sound designing productions like *Tarzan* and *Hairspray* at an amphitheater in the middle of a state park. My interest was piqued during a recent Green Team meeting when a member brought up "Sounds Right," a self-described "music initiative to recognize the value of nature."

Producing shows in the middle of the woods in Eastern Kentucky comes with its draw backs, but I always had plenty of free, natural wildlife sounds to set some ambience. "Sounds Right" is a company that aims to give Mother Nature her credit (and royalties) in order to drive conservation funds up and destruction down. Sounds Right does this by working with other conservation organizations and making nature a legally represented musician named NATURE. Bands that feature NATURE on their songs have to pay 50% royalties towards the conservation funds Sounds Right is tied to. These tend to focus on high-priority ecosystems such as the Amazon, Congo Basin and Tropical Andes.

For the job I used to do, I would have paid to have nature ambience sounds in theaters or locations and 100% of those royalties would have gone to conservation because another artist/musician was not involved. Unfortunately, Sounds Right was not founded until 2024, a few years after I got out of the theatre "scene." Being such a young company, most of the musicians to feature NATURE on their songs are up and coming DJ's and electronic-pop artists. However, there are some Grammy awarded/nominated artists that have featured NATURE like Hozier, Ellie Goulding and Yann Tiersen, the composer associated with the film *Amelie*.

There is so much more awesome information about Sounds Right that I am not able to fit here, but if you would like to learn more about their efforts and exactly how it works visit www.soundsright.earth

Jacob George-Thoms

Treasurer's Thoughts

As we have now reached the halfway mark of the year, the treasurers thank all of you for keeping your pledges up to date. It helps us to continue paying the bills during the summer months. This is a time of year when people are on vacation, but the bills aren't. It also gives us a chance to remind you of the different ways you can make your contributions. The offering plate comes around each Sunday. We are set up if you prefer PayPal. If you would like to set up a bank authorization to send a check weekly or monthly, let me know and I will provide you with the information you need. For those of you who are retired, if you contribute from your IRA, it is tax free. Speak with your financial advisor for more information.

We here at St. John's are lucky to have several ministries we can give to. In the fall and spring, we have the beautiful sounds of the choral scholars. Each Sunday the altar has flowers on it. The endowment fund is a way to ensure that those who follow us here at St. John's have a way to have the things we have today. The parish discretionary fund helps those who are in need. Speaking of those in need, we have a tremendous outreach ministry that shares the love of St. John's with many who are having a hard time making ends meet. In closing, many thanks for all your contributions made to St. John's.

David Westervelt, Treasurer

Becoming God's Giving Channels

Our heavenly Father, who has created us and redeemed us through Jesus, has chosen to work through us to support and carry out his work here on earth. God blesses us financially not to only provide for our needs but to have resources that God can channel through us for purposes that he directs. God uses us as giving channels to help the poor, support his Church, and extend his kingdom here on earth. God gives through us.

In Martin Luther's Large Catechism, we read the following sentence in his explanation of the First Commandment, "Creatures are only the hands, channels, and means by which God gives all things." As Luther tell us, "God gives all things" through us. Our heavenly Father uses us as His channels to fund His mission and ministry. So how wide is your channel? The size of our channels will vary. As our faith matures and our relationship with Jesus deepens, our channels will become wider. In our Christian journey, our channels may begin as little trickles until they become wider, and, for some, as wide as a roaring river.

While we may be more focused on the amount of money that flows through our channels, God looks at our hearts. He wants us to give from loving and giving hearts. God knows that what we can give is also determined by our income and the savings and investments that we may or may not have. God has given us different amounts of wealth, so our giving capabilities vary. As our faith grows and we begin to understand the importance of giving, our giving channels will widen. Our hearts determine the flow and our wealth or lack of it reflects the size of our offerings. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to give and to keep on giving for the purposes for which God will direct. The openness of our channels is much more important than size of the gifts that goes through them. God provides each of us with resources not just for our personal comfort but in order to enable us to be generous. Through our generosity, the recipients of our gifts will give thanks and praise to God.

May we not only be God's giving channels but be channels for God's love through our hands, feet, and words. By God's grace, may we all become wide-open giving channels God uses to support and fund his work here on earth.

Parish Health Ministry

Gambling Addiction: Why It's So Easy to Miss

Gambling problems have a sneaky way of building up quietly. There's rarely a dramatic "rock bottom" moment right away — instead, the damage piles up behind closed doors for months or years before anyone notices. And here's the thing: gambling addiction messes with your brain in a lot of the same ways drugs and alcohol do. But it's got its own twist — you can't see it happening, the money problems hit hard and fast, and today's apps and websites make it way too easy to gamble alone, anytime, anywhere.

Think about it — there's no slurred speech, no shaky hands, no smell, nothing you can point to and say "something's wrong." Someone can quietly fall apart inside while still showing up to work, making dinner, and acting totally normal on the outside.

A lot of people go out of their way to keep it hidden too — grabbing the mail before anyone else can, deleting bank alerts, gambling privately on their phone. So, the people around their family, doctors, bosses — usually notice only the fallout: someone's more stressed, moodier, or flaking on responsibilities. They don't see the actual gambling.

The damage spreads into pretty much every part of life — money troubles, fights with loved ones, secrets piling up, anxiety, depression, even physical health. But because it all looks so much like “regular stress,” nobody connects the dots back to gambling until things blow up.

Here’s something that might surprise you: you don’t have to be a full-blown “problem gambler” to get seriously hurt by it. Research shows people who gamble at low or moderate levels can experience harm as intensely as living with moderate anxiety disorder. You don’t need a clinical diagnosis for it to wreck your life.

And it’s not just the person gambling who suffers. Partners, kids, and extended families get pulled into it too — missed school pickups, less quality time with children, a household that’s just not functioning the way it should.

Because so much harm happens to people who wouldn’t even meet the official criteria for gambling disorders, experts are pushing for a bigger-picture approach — one that looks at gambling as a public health issue, not just something to treat person-by-person after it’s already a crisis.

So... Is It Really an Addiction?

Short answer: yes. Gambling disorder is now defined as a pattern of gambling that’s persistent and out of control enough to seriously mess with someone’s personal life, relationships, or job — basically, compulsive behavior that keeps happening even when it’s clearly causing damage.

Just like with drugs or alcohol, it becomes an entire cycle: chasing the next bet, obsessing over it, getting a temporary high or relief, and then really struggling to cut back or stop once it’s taken hold.

And brain scans back this up — gambling lights up the same reward-and-control circuits in the brain (the ventral striatum, amygdala, prefrontal cortex, if you want the technical names) that drugs and alcohol do. That’s a big reason experts now group it in the same category as substance addictions.

Gambling and substance addictions share a lot of the same DNA. Both involve impulsive behavior, a brain reward system that’s been hijacked, and dopamine circuits that keep pulling someone back for more.

They also tend to run in the same crowd, risk-wise — genetics, co-occurring anxiety or mood disorders, past trauma, and starting young all raise the odds for both.

And if you talk to people dealing with either one, the experience sounds eerily similar: intense cravings, constantly thinking about it, needing more and more to get the same rush (bigger bets, more time), struggling to quit, and feeling awful — almost like withdrawal — when they try to stop.

The biggest difference? Gambling doesn’t leave a trail on your body. No slurred words, no track marks, no smell of alcohol — nothing physical to tip anyone off. So catching it early basically comes down to noticing behavior and financial red flags, which are a lot easier to keep under wraps.

With drugs or alcohol, financial ruin is usually a side effect of the addiction. With gambling, the money problems ARE the addiction — the debt, the drained savings, the legal trouble aren’t just fallout, they’re basically baked into what makes it a disorder in the first place.

And then there’s the modern twist: online casinos, sports betting apps, machines built for nonstop play — all of it lets someone gamble alone, all day and night, without ever making a scene in public. That means the warning signs family and friends used to rely on just... aren’t there anymore.

St. John's Episcopal Church
515 E. Division St.
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Return Service Requested

The Messenger
a Newsletter of
St. John's Church

Remembering Special Dates & People

Birthdays

August 2 Douglas Patton
August 3 Shirley Rogers
 Sherrie Rumstein
August 4 Mary Jane Robertson
August 6 Candace Iott
August 7 Charles Bowers
August 10 Jordan Cooper
 Kathy Devore
 Patricia Schultz
August 11 Clara Bradley
 Maxandra Samaneigo
August 12 Jakob Osborn
August 13 Thomas Heydt
August 14 Jasmine Gamel
 Marybeth Lyon
 Frank Merica
 Lexie Roop
August 16 Patricia Lathrom
August 17 Richard Ollis
August 18 Tracy Fay
 Gordon Patterson
August 20 Shirey Van Hook
August 22 Allison Olson
August 24 Samuel Chaffin
August 24 Jessica Ratcliff
August 25 Steve Bendon
 Courtney Hill
August 26 Angela Bendon
 Joseph D. Ollis
 Blake Roop
August 27 Patricia Schreiner
August 30 Liesl Aldridge

Anniversaries

August 6 Russell & Rhonda Axtell
August 8 Cindy Cooper & Ian Lindevald
August 28 Jon & Jennifer Stammers
August 30 David & Mary Jane Robertson

Faithful Departed

August 1 Charles S. Christianson
 John Sellers
August 2 Ralph Compton
 George B. Morris
 Fannie Price
 S. I. Smith
August 4 Arlene F. Schmidt
August 5 Lafayette Herd
August 6 Edna Coley
August 7 Donna Gamel
 Terri Price
August 8 Myrna Berry
 Frank Leathers
 Julius Seifert
August 9 Wilbur Wickizer
 Charles Winn
August 10 George Huntsman
 Maude Osenbaugh
August 11 Lester R. Langsford
August 12 Nora M. Hoffman
August 13 Gordon Webb
August 15 Gil Morgan
 Nancy Richardson
August 18 Earle Rice
August 19 Norman Jones
August 21 Lewis David Caudle
 Nancy James
August 22 Jerry Dean Hancock
 Clyde W. (Bill) Young
August 24 O. E. Golden
 Robert Barr Smith
 Cecil T. Stiles
 Gladys Westervelt
August 25 Wayne Schweitzer
 Charles D. Toombs
August 27 Marion L. Stephens
August 28 Mary Brown
 Mary Elin Veigh
 Lena Wilhoit
August 30 Irma Edwards
August 31 John L. Butler
 Clarence Iott