

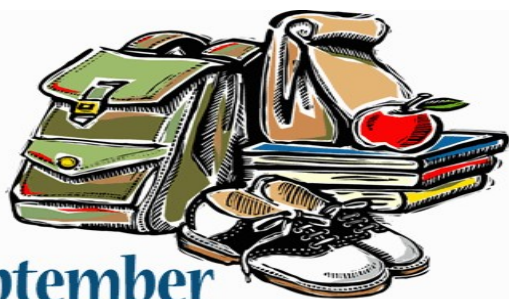


The Messenger

St. John's Episcopal Church

Springfield, Missouri

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September

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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

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Linda Robertson

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Breakfast Club Brunch!

September 6th

Wednesday Night Dinner & Programs

September 16th

Adult Formation Hour

Tools for the Journey



Praying in the Christian Tradition

Sundays at 9:15am in the Parish Hall

September 13th, 20th, 27th,

October 4th, and 11th



Save the Date!

Annual Chili Cook-Off

Our annual Chili Cook-Off is coming up! Join us on October 18 at 5 pm for fun and fellowship. This year we will be raising funds for Ambassadors for Children. Children who must leave their homes often have nothing or maybe a sack full of personal items. The loss of family, belongings, and familiar surroundings impacts their self-esteem and identity.

By partnering with Ambassadors for Children, we can provide children in foster care with much needed new clothes, shoes, school supplies and other essentials. Our funds will help them pursue extra-curricular activities and receive needed therapies. These resources help restore dignity and self-worth to the youth in care!

Mundane Musings

Beloved of God,

On Thursdays at noon, we have a Mass with anointing here at St. John's. This isn't a new thing. It's been a feature of our worship schedule for just about as long as most folks I've talked to can remember. That's exactly the reason I thought it might be as good a time as any to talk about this sacrament.

Anointing of the sick is one of the sacramental rites of the Church that developed from its earliest days. In the letter of James we read, "If any of you are sick, they should call for the elders of the church, and the elders should pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. Prayer that comes from faith will heal the sick, for the Lord will restore them to health. And if they have sinned, they will be forgiven" (James 5:14-15, CEB). The word "elders" is a translation of the Greek word from which we also get the word "priest." As early as this New Testament letter, we hear of the importance of seeking anointing from the priests of the Church.

The Western Church grew to combine the anointing of the sick with rites to mark our transition from this life into the next, but we have worked to move away from this. We don't read in St. James, "If any of you are dying," but rather, "if any of you are sick." This is why the Church developed a way of adding the anointing of the sick into the very structure of the Eucharist. What better place to seek the healing hand of the Lord than when we are gathered together to receive his sacramental presence at the altar?

It might seem somewhat counterintuitive, though. We know, especially on this side of 2020, the importance of maintaining appropriate distance, necessary isolation, and limiting our exposure while contagious. So, why make an occasion for it during the Mass, our corporate and public worship? Well, how do you understand what it means to be sick?

At this time in history, we also understand that being "ill" goes far beyond just a physical ailment. Mental illness is just as real, and it can be just as painful. Anxiety and depression can be just as much an issue of wellness as the flu and pneumonia. We now even understand substance use and behavioral disorders as being neurological diseases. What it means to have an ailment has taken on a whole new definition, and our understanding in the Church of healing has broadened as well.

More so than relief and deliverance from whatever condition might affect us, healing is understood as being restored. Which is to say that the healing most properly sought after in this sacrament is God restoring us to wholeness in the sense of holiness. Our bodies, hearts and minds included, will be raised into glory on the last day. That is our promise through sharing in Christ's own resurrection in baptism. In the sacrament of anointing, we seek first the healing of our souls, trusting that our bodies will follow along in time or eternity.

This doesn't mean that there aren't miraculous examples of the unexplainable happening. Who knows what God desires for us in the fullness of God's plans? We do know, however, that God desires the restoration of our humanity and our growth in faith, hope, and love. Sometimes, the grace we receive in this sacrament is the grace to persevere through the ailment in a way marked by those same virtues. And so we seek what we know is God's will, and pray for whatever else his will might be.

All of this said, know that the Mass on Thursday is for a lot of different people who are going through a lot of different things. Maybe you're one of them. That's okay.

Maybe you can't get to the church on Thursdays. That's okay too. Just reach out to the Church office to call on the "elder" of your parish. Jesus shows up in a lot of places, and I can too.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Ben

In God We Trust

Reading the Bible, you have likely noticed that there are many references to money, wealth, riches, or possessions in God's Word. In fact, they are referenced more than 2300 times. About 15 percent of Jesus' recorded words relate to money and possessions. Our heavenly Father is interested in how we view, manage, and give the money that he entrusts to us. Scripture gives a clear warning about problems that money can cause. Jesus tells us, "You cannot serve God and money" (Matthew 6:24). The United States' official motto "IN GOD WE TRUST" is inscribed on our money. Is your trust in God or in money?

In our daily lives, money plays a huge part. When we consider the time we spend working to earn money, the time planning on how to spend it, the actual time spending it, and then the time we worry about it, money plays a key role in our lives.

In his 1999 book *Neither Poverty nor Riches*, Craig Blomberg finishes with the following five conclusions:

1. Material possessions are a good gift from God meant for his people to enjoy. God's creation of the material world is good, and he desires that all people have some assets so there is fairness.
2. Material possessions are a primary means of turning hearts away from God. Possession of, or desire for, too many material goods can lead to rejection of God.
3. A sign of a redeemed life is the transformation in stewardship. A life following and serving Jesus includes receiving our money from God thankfully, managing it faithfully, and giving it generously.
4. There are certain extremes of wealth and poverty which are in themselves intolerable. Those with a surplus are to help support those in need.
5. The Bible's teaching about material possessions is intertwined with spiritual matters. Financial decisions are spiritual decisions. Our long-term happiness and security can be found only in trusting and following Jesus.

With these conclusions, we can consider some applications. Because money is good, it is right and proper to work hard and to be compensated with a fair income. Understanding that money is a gift from God and owned by him, we will want to share with those in need. In addition, the giving of our money is a wise and prudent way of preventing money from becoming overly important. Our ultimate gift from God is the gift of salvation through Jesus, and we have the privilege and the joy in using some of our money to help finance churches and ministries that share the Good News of the Gospel. Through our faithful giving, we can help people hear about Jesus.

ALTAR FLOWERS

OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE ADVENT

Now that summer and vacations are ending, your thoughts may turn to giving special thanks for a joy in your life or to particularly remembering an individual who is now among our dear departed. A gift of altar flowers is an especially good way to put those thoughts into action. There are a few Sundays that have not yet been reserved before we enter Advent. Each Sunday, beautiful arrangements of flowers for the two vases cost a total of \$50. It is also possible to arrange with another family to share a particular Sunday by each funding one vase for \$25. There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board in the hall near the glass doors. Please be sure to pay for your altar flowers before the Sunday you have requested. Altar flowers are a wonderful contribution to our worship!



A New Choir Year Begins

On Sunday, September 13, St. John's will begin a new choir year, and with it we will welcome a new group of Choral Scholars to sing alongside the Parish Choir.

The Choral Scholar Program has been an important part of the music ministry at St. John's for many years now. The program brings talented student singers into the choir to strengthen each section, support our volunteer musicians, and help maintain the high standard of sacred music that is so central to our worship.

Choral Scholars serve as regular members of the choir throughout the academic year, rehearsing each week and singing for Sunday Mass, major holy days, and special liturgies. In return for their time, preparation, and musical leadership, each scholar receives a stipend. For many of our scholars, the program offers not only financial support while they are students, but also valuable experience singing a broad range of sacred choral repertoire and participating in the liturgical life of the Church.

The program also gives St. John's an opportunity to form relationships with young musicians from our community and area universities. Over the years, many scholars have become deeply connected to the parish, and their presence has enriched both our music and our common life.

The Choral Scholar Program is made possible in large part through the generosity of parishioners and friends of St. John's. Financial gifts designated for the Choral Scholar Fund go directly toward supporting the stipends for these singers and help ensure that the program can continue from year to year. Gifts of any size are welcome and make a meaningful difference. Those wishing to support the program may make a contribution to St. John's and designate the gift for the Choral Scholar Fund.

As we look ahead to the new choir year, I also want to offer my sincere thanks to the members of the Parish Choir who continued to sing so faithfully throughout the summer months. Summer brings changing schedules, travel, and smaller numbers from week to week, but the choir continued to offer its time and gifts in service to our worship. Their dedication is deeply appreciated.

In the coming editions of The Messenger, we will introduce our new Choral Scholars individually and share a little about their musical backgrounds, studies, and interests. I hope you will take the opportunity to get to know them, welcome them to St. John's, and thank them for the gifts they bring to our worship.

As a new choir year begins, we give thanks for all who offer their voices in the service of the Church and for all whose generosity helps make this ministry possible.

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

September 1	Karen Daniel
September 4	Prae Gamel
	Matthew Gray
	Christopher Roop
September 5	Amelia Schweitzer
September 6	Rhonda Axtell
	Donna Strothkamp
September 7	David Nelson
	Mary Yarber
September 8	Ron Daniel, Jr.
September 10	Larry Goforth
September 12	Jason Becker
	Michelle Sage
September 15	Shanna Robertson
September 16	Martha Cutting
	Larry McMillen
September 17	Julia Merica
September 18	Jonny Carter
	Sherry Iott
September 19	Britaney Johnson
September 21	Terry Greer
	Rachel Taylor
September 22	Nadine Gentry
	Patricia McCall
September 23	Bruce Ratcliff, III
September 26	Jennifer DuVall
	Corey Mays
September 30	McKenzi Payton
	Allison Wall
	Christopher Wilhoit

Anniversaries

September 7	Rob & Bridget Close
September 8	Ben & Pat Schultz
September 12	Eric & Jill Vahldick
September 13	Blake & Cinnamon Smith
September 14	Donald & Stephanie McCoy
September 21	Douglas & Ashley Patton
September 24	Tom & Alnita Mulvihill
September 26	Pat & Donna Strothkamp

Faithful Departed

September 1	Joe Brown
September 8	Vickie Snider
September 9	Bill Gamel
September 10	Arthur W. Beck
	Jim Burroughs
	J. J. Sand
September 11	Charles H. Evans
September 12	William R. Webb, II
September 13	Vincent Bondi
September 14	Elaine Crabtree
	Homer Ingenthron
September 15	Eliza White
September 16	William Decatur
	Phillip Vicory
September 18	Jerrold Bachus
September 19	Leva L. Hiler
September 21	Mary Bondi
	Norbert Bondi
September 22	Eleanor Webb
September 24	Andree Leshner
September 25	Dorothy Mason
	Gladys Moon
September 26	O. Kenneth White
September 27	Charles Alfred
	David Bradley
	Virginia Haszelbart
September 30	John R. Duckworth
	Sarah J. Cogswell



Green Team would like to know if the congregation would be interested in either a seed swap or a native plant sale this fall. If you are interested in a seed swap, would you have seeds to swap? In any amount?

Please indicate on the sign-up sheets in the parish hall denoting interest and participation. One or the other would occur in October. Thank you for your input.

Lindsey Parks