

The Messenger

St. John's Episcopal Church, Springfield, Missouri — October 2026, Issue 142, No. 10





St. Francis Pet Blessing

Join us on the parish lawn for the annual pet blessing. Bring your pet family members and maybe a lawn chair. You don't need a pet to attend! Remembering beloved pets is a good way to commemorate the 800th celebration of St. Francis of Assisi. See you Saturday, October 3, at 11:00 a.m.

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St. John's Episcopal Church

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Join us, Saturday, October 31,
in the parish parking lot for Trunk or Treat!
The event is from 4-6:00 p.m.
A Sign-up sheet is posted in the hallway.

Chili Cook-off

Outreach Annual Chili Cook-Off

Our annual Chili Cook-Off is coming up! Crosslines Ambassadors for Children provides **new** clothes from their Clothing Boutique for foster children. They also help cover the cost of sports equipment, music lessons and therapies. We're collecting these items from their wish list: **new** pajamas for girls and boys; **new** boys sneakers sizes 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; strawberry cake mix and frosting. You may also write a check to St. John's with "Ambassadors for Children" on the memo line.

You can start bidding today on the gift baskets and other items for the silent auction. The Outreach Ministry Group is suggesting a donation of $5.00 to benefit Crosslines Ambassadors for Children. You will have the opportunity to hear about the services they provide for foster children in Greene, Christian, and Taney Counties. Sample and vote for your favorite chili with your dollar bills. Hot dogs, dessert and drinks will be provided. Join us for food, fun and fellowship!

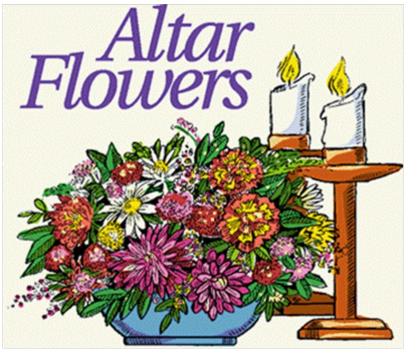
Trunk or Treat

Outreach 1st Annual Event

Our 1st annual Trunk or Treat is coming up! Join us on October 31 for a great time with our Mid-Town neighbors. A sign-up sheet is posted in the hall.

Please sign up if you would like to decorate a car and/or bring candy! We want to have plenty of stops for trunk or treaters to visit. Costumed helpers are welcome too! If you would like to join in the fun, but need help, contact the church office or Fr. Ben. We have great people to help you put a spooky twist to your trunk or to help you with a good costume. Fun times are coming to St. John's!

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!

St. John's Steward

Plenty Go

The Spiritual Plenty Good Room tells
inclusive love. The home is there, th
prepared.

Choose your seat and sit down, the cho
metaphors for the Kingdom of Heaven,
this case, the message is clear: in the e
everybody; and in the heaven we create
strive for the same.

What abundance! Images of narrow pat
aside, Jesus proclaimed such a radical,
in our hearts that we, all of us, each of u
humanity.

We have each been given gifts to share
fullness of God's Kingdom.

The secret about having gifts to share is
generosity. God modeled generosity in
continue to participate in the co-Creatio

Question for Reflection:

How have you used your creativity and experience to overcome scarcity?



J. Davey Gerhard is the Executive

Star Store and Bowerman Elementary

For over twelve years, St. John's has been providing the food portion at the monthly Star Store at Bowerman Elementary. STAR stores are partially funded by the charity Cents of Pride. Cents of Pride is a unique program dedicated to fulfilling student needs through a reward system that reinforces positive choices and empowers students. That reward system is the Star Store at Bowerman. The objectives are to meet essential needs of the students, improve behavior and attendance, and teach fiscal and personal responsibility. Each month the students earn points, and these points allow them to shop at the store for food items (first table), hygiene items (second table), and then fun things (third table). Low points may allow them to shop only at the food table; whereas full points for the month allow shopping at all three of the tables. St. John's is the major contributor of the food items. Other items are purchased by the school with Cents of Pride donations and donations from other sources. St. John's also provides holiday meals for three families every year, two of which have children at Bowerman, and the third family is the family of a disabled veteran.



Quick facts for this school year - enrollment at Bowerman is 275 students (prekindergarten to fifth grade); the academic proficiency is well below the state average; and approximately 80% of the children qualify for the free lunch program.

Just like many of the schools in the Springfield Public School System, Bowerman could benefit from volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering, refer to this link for information: https://www.sps.org/community/volunteer. The current Bowerman Elementary was built in 1930 and, without naming names, we have parishioners that went to school there.



Daughters of the King

The St. Genevieve Chapter of St. John's Daughters of the King has been busy this last year. Almost a year ago, Karen Horny, Sharon Riestis and Jan Rorrer were installed as members of the order, and Renee' Taylor renewed her vows as a Daughter. We also installed Fr. Benjamin as our Chaplain.

Through the year we have met monthly to hold in prayer those who have requested prayers, to pray for and support our clergy and lay ministers. Part of our meeting is spent studying. We are currently studying the book, *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*, by Joanna Weaver. It is amazing how much we all can relate to Mary and Martha, especially Martha..

In October, before our installation, several of us attended the annual Fall Assembly which was hosted by the Daughters of the King at Christ Church in Springfield. In April, we attended the Spring Assembly held at Church of the Resurrection in Blue Springs. This month, the Fall Assembly is at St. James church here in Springfield.

On August 2nd, after completing her twelve week discernment study, Kim Westervelt was installed as our newest daughter. She has been such a blessing to the Order. Also on that day we offered prayers for our dearly departed sister, Karen Horny. We all miss her so much. We presented Fr. Benjamin with his Chaplain's Cross: we really appreciate his guidance.

On November 22nd, we will be renewing our vows at the 10:30 service. This is something we do annually to remind us of our commitment to our Rule of Life. Our Rule of Life is our Rule of Prayer and Rule of Service, and it guides in our journey toward a closer relationship with our King and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Please remember that the Daughters of the King are here to support the clergy and the parish in prayer and service. Feel free to contact any of us to request prayers. You can also request prayers to be forwarded to the Daughters by contacting the church office. All prayers are held in strict confidence.

We would love for more women at St. John's to join us. Please contact Renee' Taylor or any Daughter for more information.

The Order of the Daughters of the King

MAGNANIMITER CRUCEM SUSTINE F H S

The Motto of the Order

For His Sake…I am but one, but I am one.
I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
What I can do, I ought to do.
What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do.
Lord, what will you have me do?



DATA CENTERS

Coming To A Neighborhood Near You
by Lindsey Parks, Green Team

Data Centers have been around a while now. But lately, they are getting a lot of bad press. According to *The Harvard Gazette*, April 9, 2026 "Why Are Communities Pushing Back Against Data Centers?", the reason for current pushback against data centers is the currently massive scale required of land, energy and water to house and keep servers cool while training AI. Recently, Springfield City Council and City Utilities have had two question and answer meetings to determine our community's concerns.

And concerned we are. A friend of mine attended the first meeting. She shared that many people who showed up weren't able to get inside, as the numbers exceeded fire regulation limits. She also stated that most questions were unable to be answered, such as how much water would be diverted to data center use, how much energy will it require, will it have a good return on investment? Information online estimates that 40% of energy use is solely for cooling the banks of servers. Many places have already found their energy grid is stressed and bills have gone up due to increased costs to improve outdated infrastructure. Data centers do not take breaks. For the centers, energy consumption is 24/7, 365 days a year. Who will have priority? Data centers or residents?

I looked on our City's website and found that they are interested in transparency, regulating data centers to the extent necessary, and expect them to bear their own energy costs, rather than passing these on to residential customers. But neither the website nor the hearing moderators said how that would be negotiated. I'm sure it's on a case-by-case basis. City Utilities also will assess whether current infrastructure can handle data center needs. Applications were put on hold for 120 days, while the public was solicited for input.

Local leadership has updated its land use and development frameworks to handle data centers differently than traditional industrial employers. What is most concerning to residents appears to be the potential lack of control, regulation or accountability. A number of places elsewhere have revealed that contracts are obscure, lack public scrutiny, are frequently redacted, and often require NDA's (non-disclosure agreements) to be signed.

Keeping up with China, not to mention the rest of the world, is a predominant reason for attracting data centers to an area, as well as the promise from Big Tech that AI is the future. Yet, even China is hesitant to move forward without regulations. Job creation is another reason to entice data centers to an area, but the reality is that the number of professional positions is small in the long term and solely construction-related in the short term. Job creation may also end up being irrelevant due to job loss caused by AI. Another reason given on the pro-centers side of the debate is the income they would provide. However, in 2015, to make it attractive for investors, Missouri legislated a 100% sales tax break (Data Center Sales Tax Exemption Program), on computer equipment purchases, etc. That also includes materials for construction as long as the project exceeds $25,000,000, lasts 15 years, employs at least ten people and the average of the salaries of the number of people employed exceeds 150% of the average base salary of workers in the community where the center is located. The higher paid software managers compensate for the lower paid data techs and electricians, therefore, not every salary has to meet the 150% requirement. The question arises—would we retroactively collect sales taxes if the centers fail to fulfill the requirements of the legislation? The incentives don't stop there. Greene County offers Chapter 100 Bonds to facilitate real and personal property tax abatements, meaning that, until paid in the traditional ten to twenty years, the county owns the assets of the data center and leases them back until the Bond is paid off. This is a PILOT Agreement (Payments In Lieu Of Taxes Agreement). Where is that income allotted?

Green Team believes environmental concerns top the list. Farmers are complaining of livestock loss, due to cows not calving, among other concerns when data centers are in close proximity to farms. Residents are complaining of constant noise and vibrations in their homes from nearby data centers. We haven't yet properly considered effects to wildlife. If bird populations reduce, insect populations will increase exponentially. If groundwater is depleted for open cooling systems and/or water is diverted from streams, this will have a detrimental effect on habitats in entire watersheds and possibly change forever what we love about living here.

The Goldberg Institute, in an obvious effort to make data centers seem palatable and necessary, published an article April 26, 2026 "The Data Center Debate-Fact v. Fiction", which outright ignores that current data centers need large amounts of energy and water use,. Instead, it alludes to information from much smaller data centers that we have had for decades for such things as medical information storage that use closed loop water

cooling systems. What the article doesn't mention is that, using closed loop systems for the newly proposed AI data centers would be vastly more expensive to both install and operate on the large scale required for AI. Mark Zuckerberg's META Corporation, for one, has refused to pay to install this system, preferring to divert water from nearby streams and creeks directly, thus avoiding the cost of purchasing it from the local water agency, although wouldn't downstream users of said water consider this theft?

The article cited the need for new centers to be close to high speed fiber optics, as being even milliseconds behind in financial transactions loses banks untold amounts of money, implying what's bad for banks is bad for us. It also mentioned that putting centers in undeveloped spaces would be at taxpayer's expense to provide the infrastructure, which seemed mildly threatening, though, at the same time, new infrastructure is described as a perk for the community. The article then argued that changing zoning to prevent data centers in certain areas infringes on the free market and private property rights of landowners who might see data centers as a bonanza.

The first and most compelling reason the Goldberg article offered for supporting data centers is that we all access information incessantly using our phones and computers, thus the information needs to be stored somewhere that meets the centers' needs. I am convinced it is the mountain of surveillance information across the nation that needs to be stored and accessed in real time that is the driver of AI technology data centers, not you or me looking up articles or using social media. Flock camera surveillance has already been misused by law enforcement for personal reasons. Who is to say it won't be for political reasons? Then there are concerns with AI, itself. As a result, I just can't help feeling like the protective robot from the ancient TV series, *Lost In Space*, bellowing and waving its arms— "Danger, Will Robinson! Danger!"

Faithful Departed

To be remembered at the Altar on All Souls' Day.

Please print the full names and your full name as submitter. Place the list in the alms basin or submit it to the church office no later than Sunday, October 25th. The names will be read during the All Saints/All Souls' Day Mass.

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Requested by: _____

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

Oct. 2	Trinity Roop
Oct. 5	Amanda Junod
Oct. 6	Michael Becker
Oct. 9	Elizabeth Walstrand
	Jennifer Wilkinson
Oct. 11	Keith Chaffin
	Alex Newman
	Thomas P. Richardson
Oct. 12	James Hancock
Oct. 13	Dennis Blevins
Oct. 14	Loeta Bradley
Oct. 15	James Mauk II
	Sherri Olson
	Michael Richerson
Oct. 17	Mary Marshall
Oct. 21	Ashley Patton
Oct. 23	Tanya Roop
Oct. 24	Thomas Arnall
	Robert Ratcliff
Oct. 27	Samantha Tellatin
Oct. 29	Buena Esther

Anniversaries

Oct. 8	Bruce & Vicki Ratcliff
Oct. 19	David & Janice Jones
Oct. 22	Steve & Sherri Olson
	Todd & Jennifer Wilkinson

Faithful Departed

Oct. 1	William Price
Oct. 2	Claude M. Bradley, Sr.
	Paul Davolt
Oct. 3	Patricia Baker
Oct. 5	Roy Earl Newton
Oct. 6	Ruby V. Aldridge
Oct. 7	Lena Burns
	Belinda Twitty
	Rachael White
Oct. 9	Allie B. Nickelson
Oct. 10	Ilah Dixon
	Frances Wilke
Oct. 11	Henry Guthrie
Oct. 12	Mary B. Robertson
	Jack Vanderhoof
Oct. 14	Thomas Doran
	Felix Grant Kinnaird
	Kermit Clark Kynion
Oct. 15	Catherine L. Birkenbaugh
Oct. 17	Jerry Lee Birkenbaugh
	Herman Busse
Oct. 18	George F. James
	Honey Vanderhoof
Oct. 23	Albert B. Cutting
Oct. 24	Ella C. Morris
Oct. 25	Marjorie Leonard
Oct. 28	John David Achord
Oct. 29	John L. Braig
Oct. 30	Oney Armstrong
Oct. 31	Marie Ruth Price
	Charles Saltsgaver