



ST. JOHN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
LAFAYETTE

The Eagle

St. John's Episcopal Church | Lafayette, Ind. | December 2020

Christmas at St. John's

Each year, I receive loads of Christmas cards and letters from friends and family. Sometimes, I know that behind the letters, there's more going on. I know they have difficult lives — a cancer diagnosis, depression, addiction, a divorce on the horizon, or just the same anxiety most of us are feeling. But from those cards and letters, you would think that everything was perfect, everything was copacetic. And sure, we all wish the world worked for us, that the world worked the way it's "supposed to." Sometimes, we'd settle with having the world look perfect, at least, so we can fool our families, friends, coworkers, and even ourselves into believing the world is something other than it is.

It will be interesting to see how things go this year. The pandemic has thrown all our best-laid plans out the window. We are celebrating in ways we would not have chosen, without our wider circle of family and friends. Instead of celebrating in a packed church with candlelight and beautiful hymns, we're going to pray together over Zoom. The holidays will have their own beauty, their own loveliness, to be sure. But it won't be the same. It certainly won't be perfect. It won't make for a good Christmas card, a Norman Rockwell scene or a Bing Crosby song.

But if we're honest about it, the irony should be obvious. We want everything to be especially perfect around the holidays. But the Christmas story offers us something else entirely. As Matthew and Luke tell it, for instance, the story is a complete mess, with characters whose lives are spinning out of control, with terror and threats of violence all around, with bad luck, and a series of unfortunate events centered around the birth of this unexpected child. Norman Rockwell could not have painted the gritty reality of that scene. Bing Crosby could not have captured the terror of that night in a song. This is not the Victorian Christmas that has been marketed to us, the Christmas that we have sold ourselves. Rather, as the classic hymn reminds us "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." The reality of the world with its fear and

Christmas & Epiphany at ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE

Monday, December 21st

7:00 p.m. "Longest Night" Service

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th

4:00 p.m. Lessons & Carols Service *via Zoom*

6:00 p.m. Christmas Concert from St. John's *via Zoom*

9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service *via Zoom*

Christmas Day, Friday, December 25th

10:15 a.m. Christmas Day Service *via Zoom*

2:00 p.m. Christmas Concert *re-broadcast via Zoom*

The First Sunday after the Epiphany, January 10th

10:15 a.m. Virtual Epiphany Pageant with Good Shepherd *via Zoom*



terror threatens to overwhelm all the years' hopes.

And the thing about this story, the raw beauty about this story, is that despite the mess and the shattered lives and the terror and the tears and the fear, the angels come. Despite the mess they shout, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" Despite the mess, the shepherds glorify God. Despite the fact that the world doesn't work for anyone involved, the baby is born anyway, and God takes human form and becomes "the Word made flesh," "Immanuel," "God with us." And despite the fear and terror she had experienced, "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." This is the heart of the Christmas story. Despite everything that goes wrong, God comes. Despite the world's ills, God arrives in the flesh.

I invite you to join with your St. John's family to celebrate Christmas this year despite the fact that we can't quite make the world work the way we want, despite the brokenness in our lives, despite the pandemic and the stress and anxiety we've experienced this year. Let us celebrate the fact that, despite all of this, God comes into the world, that God is with us. Treasure these things and ponder them in your heart.

— Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org

“Longest Night” Service

7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 21

Christmas time is often called “the most wonderful time of the year,” but for many of us it is a time of deep sadness, loneliness and grief. Named for the winter solstice — literally the longest night of the year — this “Longest Night” service offers space to engage those feelings that seem “out of sync” with the world around us. It is an opportunity to acknowledge, own and offer up those feelings to God.

We hope that this service will be a place of comfort, healing and hope for all those who attend. Even if you don’t feel “out of sync” with the feelings swirling around us, this service offers an opportunity for quiet and contemplation in the midst of a hectic world.

We hope to have this service in-person at St. John’s. Look for more information coming soon. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*



The 2021 Annual Report

Contributions to the St. John’s Annual Report are due in mid-January. Like last year, we ask that only reports containing new updates be submitted. Reports for new ministries or ministries that have changed in substantial ways are, of course, welcome. If you have any questions, please contact the church office. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*

Deaths

Kathleen Williams
Sept. 26, 2020

Jane Brand
Oct. 24, 2020

Faith-Filled Generosity: The 2021 Annual Giving Campaign

Each year, as our ministry unfolds, we learn a little more humility about our plans than the previous year. 2020 has certainly been a year for changing plans, for being agile, for experimenting and rolling with the punches. In the past year, we have found ways to continue worshipping together, sharing God's love and our lives and making Jesus Christ known in our community. In a word, we found new ways to continue being the Church — to continue living as faith-filled witnesses to what God is doing in our lives, in our community, and in the world. As we look toward 2021, we know that we will likely encounter new challenges and different disruptions. But we will face those challenges together, with God's help.

Your faith-filled generosity — generosity that trusts God to use you and your gifts to build God's kingdom — makes St. John's ministry possible. If, like us, you believe in the mission and ministry of St. John's, we invite you to make a financial commitment as part of a faith-filled witness to what God is doing in your life, in our community, and in the world. Making a financial commitment now is crucial to helping the leader-

ship to plan in the face of an uncertain year. But more than that, your faith-filled generosity is a sign of the places God is already at work.

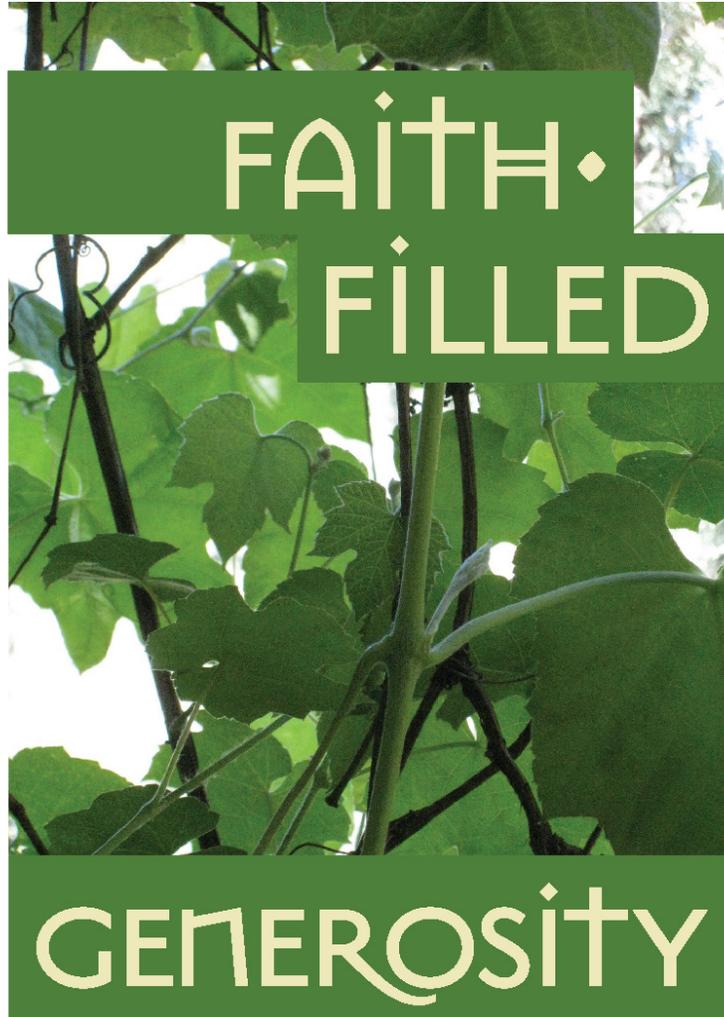
You may have already received information

about the 2021 budget as well as a pledge card. If not, please contact the church office. You can also find information on the St. John's website at <http://www.st-johns-laf.org/giving-to-st-johns>.

If you have already submitted your pledge, thank you so much. If you have not, we ask that you prayerfully consider supporting St. John's ministries by making a pledge. We also ask that you do so as soon as possible in order to give the Finance Committee and Vestry ample time to finalize next year's budget. You can

return your pledge card through the mail or go to www.stjohns-laf.org/pledge to pledge online.

If you have any questions, please contact Bradley Pace at bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org or any member of the Stewardship Committee. — *The St. John's Stewardship Committee*



The Best Epiphany Pageant Ever

10:15 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 10 via Zoom

This year, St. John's & Good Shepherd will have a virtual Epiphany Pageant with lessons and hymns at 10:15 a.m. Sunday, Jan.10, via Zoom. All youth and children are encouraged to take part. We will have a rehearsal at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 9, also via Zoom. More information will follow. Please mark your calendars and contact Katie Elder at katie.elder1@gmail.com with any questions. — *Bradley Pace, bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org*

Choosing a Thankful Heart

Thank goodness! Thank you! Thanks! Thanks be to God! This month, as we are surrounded by the brilliance of changing colors, my heart is filled with thanksgiving, and it seems the trees offer a backdrop in wordless joy. They don't reflect the woundedness of this year, the losses we have faced and the celebrations missed. They just keep showing up brilliantly until their leaves move to their next phase, falling to the ground, and nourishing what is to come. Oh! What a grand finale they give!

Having lived most of my life in southern California, where the hills are "golden" (brown) most of the year, I've been texting pictures of the colors to friends and family. I often take the long way home, winding through woods and farmlands just to get a few more moments of splendor, grateful for the colors of nature and the technology of GPS. I've been putting up food for the winter, inspired by a surprise gift of squash and four seasons to embrace. This is a different year. Its joys are different. And I am choosing to be thankful for what I uncover as I settle in to a new way of life. I am not alone in this. We are journeying this new road together.

There is a time for everything, and now is the time to remember and choose to be thankful for the moments of love, joy, and surprise this year has afforded us. As I write, I am surprised by the gaggle of geese that offer their song, unwilling to be left out. What will surprise you today? What friendships have you made, renewed or strengthened? Where have you offered love or help? What conversations have inspired you? What has made you laugh? Where has Scripture brought in light? What has healed? These are moments that make us smile, thankful for memories we can recall and adventures we have survived. These stories sparkle with grace, beautifying the world and making it easier to choose to have a thankful heart. I would love to hear your stories. Drop me a line or text, and I'll pour a cup of tea and listen to the people I am thankful for. — *Andrea Arsene, andrea@stjohns-laf.org, 510-684-0178*

Family Faith Formation

If you are a family with children fifth grade or younger, you most likely have been getting emails from me with Family Faith Formation Lessons. Please let me know if you are not receiving them.

Since COVID-19 keeps us from meeting in-person for Godly Play/Sunday School, I have been working on a family friendly formation about worship and liturgy. The goal of this is to encourage Bible study through the lens of worship. These lessons will continue to be sent out weekly with a break for Christmas and the Epiphany program on Jan. 10, Easter and concluding in May.

As we worship on Zoom or in-person when possible, these lessons are meant to be interactive, as together we grow in our understanding of God's love for us and our response in worship. Please be on the lookout for an Advent/Christmas packet/box to be delivered before the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 29.
— *Gretchen Freese, gretchen@stjohns-laf.org*

A Note from Associate Rector Gretchen Freese

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at St. John's,

I would like to take a moment to thank you for the gift of working in ministry with you since January and into pandemic times. It has been such a gift, joy and blessing.

As many of you know, my family is preparing to leave in late December or early January for Berlin, Germany, where my husband will be doing research for the spring semester. Thus, Nov. 30 is my last day with you for 2020.

I am looking forward to working in ministry with you again after Jeff's sabbatical and our return in July/August 2021. Blessings to you all as we journey to Advent, Christmas and into 2021. — *Gretchen Freese, gretchen@stjohns-laf.org*

Seasonal Alert: Email scams

Email scams are nothing new, and as the holidays approach, the scammers are looking for victims. If your gut says something is off, pay attention. This week an email came from "Bishop Jennifer." But the tone was wrong. Further investigation revealed that it wasn't from our Bishop Jennifer at all. It was a scammer who had crafted a very similar email address and eventually asked for gift cards. The diocese has been notified. But the scammers are out there. Be aware. Stay safe.



St. John's Episcopal Church
 600 Ferry Street
 Lafayette IN 47901-1142
 (765) 742-4079
 www.stjohns-laf.org

St. John's Episcopal Church
 600 Ferry St.
 Lafayette, IN 47901-1142

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 104
 Lafayette, Indiana

Bishop of Indianapolis

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer
 Baskerville-Burrows

Rector

The Rev. Dr. Bradley Pace

Associate Rector

The Rev. Dr. Gretchen Freese

Curate

The Rev. Andrea Arsene

Sunday Associate

The Very Rev. Robert L'Homme

Parish Administrator

Teresa Lohrman

Director of Music

Michael Bennett

Building Use Coordinator

Bill McInerney

Treasurer

Bill McInerney

Assistant Treasurer

Jim Hess

Vestry

Greg McClure, *Senior Warden*
 Charlie Shook, *Junior Warden*
 Kathryn Nielsen, *Finance Chair*
 Annie Schreiber, *Clerk*

Ashley Bigelow, Anna Burman,
 Gayle Ennis, Elaine Johnson,
 Mary Kay McCauley, Angela Mosier,
 Aaron Sims, Rebekah Sims

Eagle Editor

Cindy Gerlach

Deadline for the January Eagle is
Monday, Dec. 14. Submit items to
 eagle@stjohns-laf.org.

Follow us:

Facebook.com/stjohnslaf
 Twitter @stjohnslaf
 Instagram @stjohnslaf

www.stjohns-laf.org
 Worshiping • Sharing • Making Christ Known

St. John's Financial Summary October 2020

INCOME

	Oct-20	Total 2020	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Pledge Income	\$27,295	\$263,142	\$376,080	70.0%
Operating Income	\$4,192	\$21,282	\$95,207	22.4%
Non-Operating Income	\$3,451	\$65,328	\$17,200	379.8%
Transfer Income	\$0	\$30,276	\$47,360	63.9%
TOTAL INCOME	\$34,938	\$380,028	\$535,847	70.9%

EXPENSES

	Oct-20	Total 2020	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Outreach	\$5,907	\$66,050	\$94,374	70.0%
Program	\$151	\$5,617	\$27,250	20.6%
Administration	\$238	\$888	\$4,400	20.2%
Personnel	\$26,044	\$216,618	\$267,017	81.1%
Office	\$1,578	\$14,010	\$25,800	54.3%
Property	\$3,651	\$93,464	\$117,006	79.9%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$37,569	\$396,647	\$535,847	74.0%

Net Income (Loss) -\$2,631 -\$16,619 \$0