



## THE *Eagle* NEWSLETTER

St. John's Episcopal Church | Lafayette, Indiana | December 2023

### From the Rector

Some of you have likely heard David Sedaris' "Santaland Diaries," a story about his experience working as a Christmas elf at Macy's in New York City back in the 1980s. It is one of my absolute favorite things, and I always listen to it at least once or twice in the lead up to Christmas. If you haven't listened, you can download it on the This American Life website. I highly recommend it. It's hilarious and also incredibly poignant. I wanted to share a little piece of it with you:

Today, I witnessed fist fights, vomiting, and magnificent tantrums. Once a line gets long, we break it into four lines because anyone in their right mind would leave if they knew it would take over two hours to see Santa. Two hours!?! You can see a movie in two hours. Standing in a two-hour line makes people worried that they are no longer living in a democratic nation.

I was sent into the hallway to direct the second phase of the line. The hallway was packed with

people, and all of them seemed to stop me with a question. Which way to the down escalator? Which way to the elevator? The patio restaurant, gift wrap, the women's restroom, Trim-a-Tree.

There was a line for Santa and a line for the women's bathroom. And one woman, after asking me 1,000 questions already, asked, which is the line for the women's bathroom? And I shouted that I thought it was the line with all the women in it. And she said, I'm going to have you fired.

I had two people say that to me today. I'm going to have you fired. Go ahead. Be my guest. I'm wearing a green velvet costume. It doesn't get any worse than this. Who do these people think they are? I'm going to have you fired. And I want to lean over and say, "I'm going to have you killed"....

...This evening I was sent to be a Photo Elf in house number two. The camera is hidden in the fireplace, and I take the picture by pressing a

button on the end of a cord. Most elves will hold up a stuffed animal over the fireplace and say, "Look at my little animal friend and smile." Oftentimes, the parent will settle the child on Santa's lap and then start grooming. I've seen mothers pull cans of hairspray from their pocketbooks and spray the child's hair as if Santa were a false prop made out of cement. Hairspray shoots into Santa's eyes, and he winces in pain.

Once a child starts crying, it's all over. The parents had planned to send these pictures as cards or store them away until the child is grown and can lie, claiming to remember the experience. Tonight I saw a woman slap and shake her crying child. She yelled, "Rachel, get on that man's lap and smile, or I'll give you something to cry about." Then she sat Rachel on Santa's lap, and I took the picture, which supposedly means, on paper, that everything is exactly the way it's supposed to be, that everything is snowy and wonderful. It's not about the child or Santa or Christmas or anything, but the parents' idea of a world they can not make work for them.

This is just a small sample of the story. But every time I listen, I laugh until I'm crying. Then, as we come to the end, I'm jerked back to that realization that this is what Advent and Christmas are all about. It is, as a friend described it recently, a gauntlet of emotions.

I go through this gauntlet of emotion every Advent. I think back to my last Christmas at home before college, I got into a big fight with my mom and ran away from home. It wasn't as dramatic as all that — I lived in a small town and the only real place I knew to go was my grandparents' house. But I stayed in her basement for several weeks. I remember, too, that year my mom and her brother weren't speaking to one another. When I finally went home on Christmas Eve nothing was fixed, nothing was addressed. We just put the presents out and went right on with Christmas as if nothing had ever happened. This world that we couldn't make work,

these relationships we couldn't quite manage, these toxic patterns just kept right on keeping on.

That wasn't my only difficult Advent or Christmas. In thinking about that story now, I realize that Christmas is like an inflection point. We get so wrapped up in trying to put together the perfect Christmas, that we lose the thread. Christmas is just a particularly potent moment for all this, but isn't it like a parable for all of life? We all want things to go a certain way, so we try to shoehorn them into place, hammer them into the vision we have imagined — our children, our relationships, our parents, our careers, whatever. (As a priest, I'm trying to create the perfect religious experience for every person who walks in the door.) But what sense does any of that make? We might want to judge her a bit harshly, but nearly every one of us have been like that woman in Sedaris' story. Even if we can't make the world work, we want everything to be perfect, at least on paper. We want to keep up appearances. Because then we can feel like we've accomplished something, anything. Look, our kids turned out okay, right? Our marriage is solid, right? We've made a difference somewhere, somehow, right? It's all on Facebook and Instagram or the celebrated family Christmas photo, so it has to be true, right?

To me, this is the secret of Advent and Christmas. The world is running a thousand miles an hour toward this year's Christma-spectacula-ganza. But as Christians, we are called to slow down. To let things play out as they're supposed to. To let Christ come in his own good time. To let God work out God's plan, not ours. And then, when Christmas finally comes, it's a hot mess. Just think about Luke's version of the story. The characters' lives are spinning out of control. Nothing goes according to plan. Mary and Joseph have to travel at the most inopportune time because of an oppressive occupation. Poor Mary, this young, unwed girl, is forced to give birth to Jesus, her firstborn son, the new king of the Jews, the son of God in a barn. She's surrounded by stinking animals and

filthy shepherds. She puts her newborn infant in a feeding trough to sleep.

But Christmas comes all the same. Jesus, the one who will save us, comes all the same. The world is transformed all the same. And we are freed from the need to create a perfect world, to shoehorn those relationships into place, to hammer the world into our vision of the way things should be. We no longer need to be ruled by the fear of a world that we cannot make work. Rather, we are freed to love the world with all its imperfections, to see one another as God sees us, to love one another as God loves us. As that wonderful hymn reminds us, “the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.” At Christmas, those hopes and fears meet — those profound hopes that get right to the heart of who we are and what we need, those dreadful fears of abandonment and loss

that strike at our very core — and hope and peace and joy and love win out.

But first we have to run that gauntlet. We have to slow down. We have to let go and let God. We have to look for God in the most unlikely places, in the messiest of places. And then we have to let God do the work that God is going to do, in our lives, in our homes, in our communities, and in the world.

–Bradley Pace, [bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org)

Glass, Ira. “David Sedaris’ Santaland Diaries.” 20 December 1996, in *This American Life*, produced by Peter Clowney, Ira Glass, et al., podcast, transcript, <<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/47/transcript>>

## Advent & Christmas at ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE

First Sunday in Advent, December 3

8:00, 9:00 *via Zoom*, & 10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship

Guest Preacher: the Rev. Canon Jodi Baron, Christ Church Cathedral  
5:00 p.m. Advent Lessons & Carols

Second Sunday in Advent, December 10

8:00, 9:00 *via Zoom*, & 10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship

Third Sunday in Advent, December 17

8:00, 9:00 *via Zoom*, & 10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship

Guest Preacher: the Rev. Dr. Kirsten Guidero, Marian University  
12:00 noon Greening of the Church

Wednesday, December 20

6:00 p.m. "Longest Night" Service

Fourth Sunday in Advent & Christmas Eve, December 24

9:00 *via Zoom* & 10:15a.m. Morning Prayer

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

4:00 p.m. Lessons & Carols Service *via Zoom, hosted by Good Shepherd*

9:00 p.m. Carol Prelude & 9:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Christmas Day, Monday, December 25

10:15 a.m. Carols & Holy Eucharist

1st Sunday after Christmas, December 31

8:00, 9:00 *via Zoom*, & 10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship

The Feast of the Epiphany (observed), Sunday, January 7

10:15 a.m. Epiphany Pageant & Holy Eucharist *one service only*



## From the Curate

The Ten Commandments, the subject of the previous article in this series, show us how best to be in relationship with God and our fellow created beings. They also highlight our sin and need for redemption as we fail to fully obey them. That brings us to the fifth section of the Catechism — sin and redemption (BCP 848-489). Sin is a touchy subject because it is inherently negative. It is a term that is easily abused when people (lay or ordained) with power in a religious community wield it as a weapon to strike down anything they don't like and anyone they feel doesn't belong.

The definition of sin offered by our Catechism is broad, yet helpful. Sin is anything that results in the distortion of our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation. This is likely maddeningly non-specific for some Christians, but it acknowledges the reality that some actions may be sinful for some people and not so for others. It also leaves lots of room for the realization that something that is inherently neutral can morph into sin if relationships suffer. For example, it's not a sin to really enjoy doughnuts. However, if a person neglects his financial, professional, and familial responsibilities in order to spend more and more time eating doughnuts, his behavior veers into sin.

This semi-ridiculous example can show us how sin gains power over us and steals our liberty. If our fictional sinful doughnut eater spends his mortgage money on doughnuts and repeatedly ignores his family to gorge himself, there is clearly a problem. He has lost his freedom to relate properly with his spouse and children. Important aspects of his life have become enslaved to his lust for doughnuts (probably the raspberry jelly-filled kind). He now works only for doughnut money. He spends all his free time, and much of his family time, buying and eating them. His relationship with doughnuts is seriously distorted, and it's affecting his personal and spiritual relationships.

## From “An Outline of the Faith” also known as the Catechism

**Q.** What is sin?

**A.** Sin is the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation.

**Q.** How does sin have power over us?

**A.** Sin has power over us because we lose our liberty when our relationship with God is distorted.

**Q.** What is redemption?

**A.** Redemption is the act of God which sets us free from the power of evil, sin, and death.

**Q.** How did God prepare us for redemption?

**A.** God sent the prophets to call us back to himself, to show us our need for redemption, and to announce the coming of the Messiah.

**Q.** What is meant by the Messiah?

**A.** The Messiah is one sent by God to free us from the power of sin, so that with the help of God we may live in harmony with God, within ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.

**Q.** Who do we believe is the Messiah?

**A.** The Messiah, or Christ, is Jesus of Nazareth, the only son of God.

Luckily for him, and for us, God is in the business of redemption. God sent Jesus, God's son, to earth to set us free from the power of evil, sin, and the death that results from sin. From scripture we learn that God sent the prophets to call us away



from sin that distorts and back into right relationship with God. Once that return to God happens, our relationships with ourselves, each other, and the rest of creation begin to heal. The Catechism goes even deeper. It tells us that the call back to right relationship (literally to “righteousness”) includes showing us our need for redemption (by the Ten Commandments, for example) and announcing the coming of the Messiah.

Christians believe that the Messiah, the anointed one of God, is the one sent by God to free us from the power of sin so that we can live in harmony (undistorted relationship) with God, each other, and all of creation. We believe that Jesus of

Nazareth is the Messiah, the only son of God. He is the one who does the work of redemption, and we benefit from that miraculous work. Through his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus broke into the cycle of distorted, sinful relationships of humanity and opened to us the way of freedom and harmony. We believe, not that we are no longer ever susceptible to sin, but that Jesus has broken its ultimate power over us. It is with grateful hearts that we say, “We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world” (from the liturgy for Good Friday, BCP 281). – *Jason Fortner, jason@stjohns-laf.org*



## **Advent Lessons & Carols Service**

**Sunday, Dec. 3, at 5 p.m.**

While you might be familiar with the Christmas service of Nine Lessons & Carols as sung by St. John's Choir, Lafayette Master Chorale, or on WBAA from King's College, Cambridge, there is a similar service of Seven Lessons & Carols for Advent, which is less familiar (we have previously held this service once in the last 20 years). This service will be held at 5 p.m., Dec. 3, at St. John's.

The dean of King's College, Eric Milner-White, who began the Christmas service in 1918, created a Procession with Carols for Advent in 1934 based on the a framework of the Christmas service. In the words of Dean Milner-White, the main theme of the service is “the development of the loving purposes of God ...” seen “through the windows and words of the Bible. The purpose of the service is not to celebrate Christmas, but to expect it.”

The liturgy involves seven readings from scripture which form the heart of the service, and each is further illuminated by a hymn or anthem. Advent prayers and responses further reflect the anticipation of Christ's incarnation. St. John's choir invites you to this unique service — all are welcome. –

*Michael Bennett, michael@stjohns-laf.org*

## Hangings of the Greens & Lunch

### Sunday, Dec. 17, after 10:15 Service

Please stick around after the 10:15 service on Sunday, Dec. 17, to help get the church ready for Christmas. If you have a favorite chili recipe, bring along a pot to share. For more information, contact the church office by email at [teresa@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:teresa@stjohns-laf.org) or by phone at 765.742.4079. —Bradley Pace, [bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org)

## ‘Longest Night’ Service

### Wednesday, Dec. 20, at 6 p.m.

The Christmas season can be a painful time. While the joyful sounds of the season are all around us — on the radio and television, in shopping malls, and in our churches — many of us are reminded of what we have lost or never had. Broken relationships, unemployment, ill health, the pain of isolation — all these can make us feel alone amid celebration. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern; we need to know that we are not alone.

To honor and name the difficulty of this season, St. John’s will host a “Longest Night” Service at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 20. Let us come together, sharing and hearing prayers, Scripture, and music that acknowledge God’s presence for those who struggle and for those who mourn. Hear the good news that God’s Word comes to shine light into our darkness. This service is a joint ministry between the Chapel of the Good Shepherd and St. John’s. — Bradley Pace, [bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org)

## Epiphany Pageant

### Sunday, Jan. 7, at St. John’s

St. John’s will host an Epiphany Pageant of lessons and hymns on Sunday, Jan. 7. There will be only one service that Sunday at 10:15 a.m. All children are invited to participate.

Look for more information during Godly Play, Children’s Chapel, and via email. There will be a rehearsal at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 6, at St. John’s. Please contact Amanda Yauney at [amanda@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:amanda@stjohns-laf.org) with any questions. — Bradley Pace, [bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org](mailto:bradleypace@stjohns-laf.org)



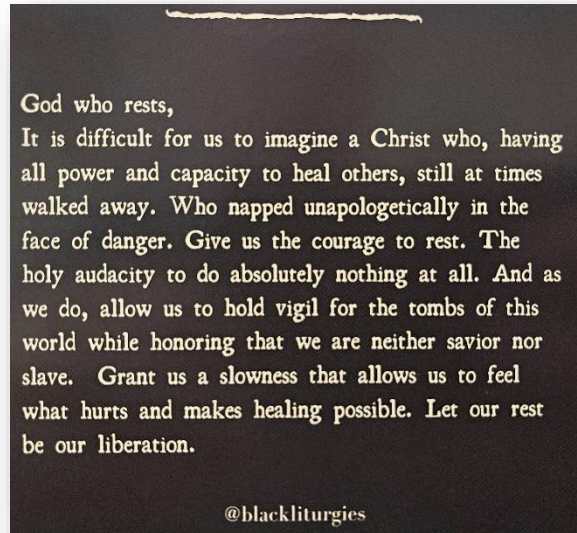
## “Rest and Liberation”

### A Report from Diocesan Convention

The 186th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis was held November 10-11 in Indianapolis. This year’s theme was “Rest and Liberation.” The theme was introduced by keynote speaker Cole Arthur Riley. Riley is a writer and poet and the creator of Black Liturgies, a space that integrates spiritual practice with Black emotion, Black literature, and the Black body. Black Liturgies is a project of the Center for Dignity and Contemplation, where she serves as the Center’s Curator.

Along with the normal business resolutions, elections and breakout workshops, delegates heard about some of the ministries going on around the diocese:

- The new diocesan youth minister reported on the mission and five-year goals for the revitalized diocesan youth ministry, all based on the ministry’s values of Christ-centered love, radical inclusivity, fun, lifelong faith, and outward focus.
- The transitions occurring at Waycross recognize the important role that the camp and conference center can play in the mission of the diocese. To better define that role, several key points are being considered, including why does Waycross exist, what is it for, how does its work align with our mission statement, what can it offer to parishes, and what can it offer to the diocese. All aspects of managing the property are being examined, to create a space that enhances the spiritual lives of all.
- The diocese’s commitment to racial justice begins with engaging our own history. The report from the Racial Justice Task Force included an update of how the parishes throughout the diocese have been working with the Covenant to Root Out Racism.



- The Table Indianapolis was welcomed into the diocese as a mission congregation, through a unanimous vote followed by a thundering standing ovation. A talented group from The Table provided beautiful music for the noonday service on Saturday.



- The ongoing discernment between the Dioceses of Indianapolis and Northern Indiana continues as a possible reunification is considered. The study committee reported on their process and progress and presented a video in which Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows and Bishop Douglas E. Sparks talked about their thoughts. There will be listening sessions scheduled



during Epiphany to gain the thoughts of clergy and laypeople from across the diocese. Dates and registration for the sessions will be announced later.

- Bishop Jennifer led the delegates in bidding farewell to the Rev. Canon Kristin White, as she concludes her ministry with us to become the bishop of Southern Ohio.

Bishop Jennifer closed the convention by reminding us of the risen Jesus’ “Great Commission” at the end of Matthew’s Gospel: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” In today’s vernacular, she said that this commission calls us to go out and create communities of true, deep belonging, and communities of all sorts of people. This is what Jesus calls us to do today, she said, and what Jesus calls the Episcopal Church in Indiana to be about. She said that we’ve done a lot, but we have a lot still to do.

St. John’s lay delegates Vicki Bower, Becky Dick, Kristine Holtvedt, and Jennie Stein joined clergy Bradley Pace and Jason Fortner. Good Shepherd’s delegates were Lara and Daniel Chase. Ezra Buzzard-Cooke was the youth delegate from the Wabash Neighborhood.

Detailed materials from the Convention can be found on the Diocesan website at [indydio.org/2023-diocesan-convention/](http://indydio.org/2023-diocesan-convention/). — Jennifer Stein, [jenjen47906@yahoo.com](mailto:jenjen47906@yahoo.com)



**THESE DAYS, IT SEEMS AS IF THE ENTIRE WORLD IS TALKING ABOUT BELONGING. BUT THE CHURCH IS REALLY SUPPOSED TO MEAN IT.**

**BISHOP JENNIFER BASKERVILLE- BURROWS**  
2023 Diocesan Convention Address



## Discerning God’s Call

*December 2, 2023*  
*10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. EDT*  
*Waycross Camp and Conference Center*

**This event is designed for ALL believers – those seeking to deepen their lay call as well as those contemplating becoming deacons and priests.**

**Morning workshops will introduce discernment practices for hearing God’s call. Formation opportunities to respond to God’s call (lay or ordained) will be shared in the afternoon.**

**Registration is required. The cost is \$15.**







Jubilee Christmas Shoppers 2023



Jubilee Christmas Sign Up 2023

## Jubilee Christmas 2023

Jubilee Christmas will be held from 9 a.m. until noon on Saturday, Dec. 9. You still have time to volunteer on the day of Jubilee as a host, or you can sign up to bake cookies or sweet breads (like banana bread, no nuts), using the links in the weekly email or the QR codes above. Cash donations may be made through the OnRealm app or on Sundays using the Jubilee Christmas envelopes. If you have any questions, please contact Jubilee Christmas Coordinator Mary Kay McCauley. –*Mary Kay McCauley, mccauley.mk3@gmail.com*



## The St. John's Stewardship Campaign:

### Service, Sharing, Community

Thank you for the many ways you support the ministries of St. John's Church. Your many gifts of time, talent, and treasure — gifts of service and sharing — help build the community that is St. John's. This is true whether you serve in worship, read at a Zoom service, share groceries at Fowler Apartments on Fridays, contribute financially, or give in any number of different ways. As the Stewardship Committee wrote earlier this year, we know that the people of St. John's will step up to give generously to make our service, sharing, and community flourish. Thank you in advance and thank God for all the ways you make St. John's a wonderful church.



Many thanks to all of those who have pledged as of Nov. 20, 2023:

Sam & Jenni Augsburger  
John & Elizabeth Barrett  
Jac & Kathie Basden  
Jim & Sandy Bodenmiller  
Sally Boniece  
Vicki Bower  
Rick & Carla Bowerman  
Sue Bracey  
Karl & Nancy Brandt  
Randy & Georgia Brist  
Greg Buzzard & Hilary Cooke  
Steve & Sally Byrn  
Mary Campbell  
Nancy Dandrow  
Jamie & Kirsten Davis  
Dennis & Kristin Dell  
Brien & Becky Dick  
Alyce Dressler & Mara Fox  
Marilyn Sue Eichhorn  
Gayle Ennis  
Sharon Evander  
Jason & Shelbi Fortner  
Rosemary Frederickson & Chuck  
Pavlue  
Miki Garrison  
Wayne Gehleach & Barbara  
Mathew  
Cindy Gerlach & Gary Mueller  
Ed & Carol Helgerman

Susan Hockings & Joe Kappock  
Shawn & Tom Hoffer  
Kristine Holtvedt  
Joseph Jakubowski & Lis Metzger  
Linda Jeffries  
Bruce & Kathy Johnson  
Michael & Lane Johnson  
Bill & Kristine Kealey  
John & Dorinda Kueberth  
Robert Kurtz  
Arlene Kusek  
Brent & Elizabeth Ladd  
Keith & Samantha LeGrand  
Marilyn & Randy Leigh  
Carol L'Homme  
Karen Lohmeyer  
Jim & Shirley Marciniak  
Neil & Kate Mascarenhas  
Caryl Matthews & Don Nead  
Ray & Mary Kay McCauley  
Greg & Maggie McClure  
Bill & Olynn McInerney  
Julia Mills  
George Moore  
Nate & Angela Mosier  
Courtenay & Dave Murakowski  
Dawn & Sean Niccum  
Heather Johnston Nicholson  
Merrill & Katie Nielsen

Bradley Pace & Katie Elder  
Amy Paget  
Barbara Penney  
Julie Peretin  
Don Pilcher  
Raymond Polstra  
Caleb & Danae Redick  
David Riesbeck  
Paul & Jo Roberts  
Stuart & Bonnie Robertson  
Marylin Howland Ross & Jim  
Ross  
Ken & Catherine Sandhage  
Lise Schools  
Charlie Shook  
Bob & Helen Slagel  
Tom & Sharon Smith  
Dennis & Adelia Sorge  
Cynthia Stauffacher  
Jennifer Stein  
Jack Sullivan  
Frank & Kirsten Szendrey  
Dave Topp  
Kyle & Stephanie Tribbett  
Joe Vanable  
Mary Weeks & Pete Palfrey  
Elizabeth White  
Amanda Yauney & John Gregory

## St. John's Financial Summary, October 2023

| INCOME                   | Jan-Oct.            | Operating Budget    | % of Budget  |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Operating Income         | \$383,161.73        | \$495,730.62        | 77.3%        |
| Non-Operation<br>Income  | \$33,798.50         | \$58,557.40         | 57.7%        |
| Transfer Income          | \$19,938.39         | \$42,100.00         | 47.4%        |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>      | <b>\$436,898.62</b> | <b>\$596,388.02</b> | <b>73.3%</b> |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>          |                     |                     |              |
| Outreach                 | \$55,116.09         | \$86,001.00         | 64.1%        |
| Program                  | \$20,967.31         | \$28,620.00         | 52.1%        |
| Administration           | \$3,869.15          | \$4,450.00          | 86.9%        |
| Personnel                | \$275,670.43        | \$342,185.51        | 80.6%        |
| Office                   | \$22,812.28         | \$28,912.00         | 78.9%        |
| Property                 | \$96,529.46         | \$106,219.51        | 90.9%        |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>    | <b>\$474,964.72</b> | <b>\$596,388.02</b> | <b>79.6%</b> |
| <b>Net Income (loss)</b> | <b>\$-38,066.10</b> |                     |              |

### ST. JOHN'S LAFAYETTE

600 Ferry Street · Lafayette, IN 47901-  
1142 765.742.4079 · www.stjohns-laf.org  
stjohns@stjohns-laf.org · @stjohnslaf

#### Parish Staff & Leadership

**Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows**, Bishop

**Bradley Pace**, Rector

**Jason Fortner**, Curate

**Teresa Lohrman**, Associate for  
Administration & Finance

**Michael Bennett**, Director of Music

**Amanda Yauney**, Director of Christian  
Education

**Becky Dick**, Senior Warden

**Bruce Johnson**, Junior Warden

St. John's is a parish of the Episcopal  
Church in the Diocese of Indianapolis.



#### Save-the-Date

- Sunday, Dec. 3, 5:00 p.m. - Advent Lessons & Carols
- Saturday, Dec. 9, 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon - Jubilee Christmas
- Sunday Dec. 17, 12:00 noon - Greening of the Church
- Wednesday, Dec. 20, 6:00 p.m. – “Longest Night” Service