

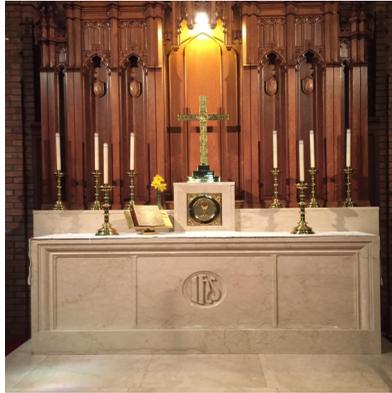
Wednesdays
During the Four Weeks of Advent
December 2, 9, 16 & 23
Midday-Rite I - Spiritual Eucharist

During the lunch hour at **12:10** p.m.
Please join us on our Facebook page



Find us on
Facebook

Join us at <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsmcia/>



St. John's Worship Offerings Live Streamed

on our Facebook page

**Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. and
Compline Monday-Friday evenings at 8:00 p.m.**

You don't have to sign up with Facebook to watch. As long as a person has internet access and a computer, tablet, smartphone or other device, they can watch.

Join in after worship for Sunday coffee hour via Zoom.
Watch for a weekly email with information on how to join in.

Advent Activities As We Count Down to Christmas

Check out the Diocese of Iowa website
www.iowaepiscopal.org where you will find Advent activities for individuals, families and children. The list of resources is wonderful and the activities are easy to do while we stay safe at home.



St. John's Episcopal Church

120 First Street NE, Mason City, Iowa 50401-3302
Phone: 641.424.1300 Fax: 641.422.0208 E-mail: sjecmc@gmail.com
www.stjohnsmasoncity.org

Office Hours: **Monday-Friday 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

Clergy, Staff, and Ministry Volunteers

The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarffe, Bishop of Iowa

The Rev. Barbara M. McCaulley, Priest Associate * The Rev. Stephen Benitz, Rector
The Rev. Kathryn S. Campbell, Priest Associate

The Rev. Canon Elliot Blackburn, Rector Emeritus
Susan Stone, Parish Administrator * Rich Paxson, Treasurer

Angie Grecian-Bransky, Organist & Choir Director
Ann Papouchis, Candidate for the Diaconate * Chris Smythe, Minister of Healing

The mission of St. John's is to welcome and reach out with the love of God to all our neighbors



December 2020

Volume 91 Issue 12

The WORD

St. John's Episcopal Church
120 First Street NE
Mason City, IA 50401-3302

Dear Community of St. John's,

Advent is upon us, and Christmas is peaking around the corner, and a new year has begun. Given the tumult that is 2020, I'm sure many of us are more than ready to chuck this past 12 months out the door and start over. Yet, even as we continue our journey forward, just as the pages of our newspapers and magazines will soon be filled with year-end recaps of the biggest news of the past year, I too find myself glancing over my shoulder. Yes, this past year has brought unexpected disruption to our "normal" lives. Yes, it has completely changed the way we interact with each other and with the world. Yes, it has brought unimaginable stress, sadness, sickness, and even death. All true, and yet none of these statements tell the whole truth.

While it is easy to focus on the very real ways 2020 has been a year to forget, I can't help but also recognize all of the ways it is a year we should remember forever. Because if 2020 has taught us anything, it is that we should never get complacent about the good things in life. It has taught us that faith means something. That hope means something, and that our community is a lot more resilient than we may have thought.

This year, as Easter began, we were not only to celebrate new life in Christ, we were tasked to find it. As things started shutting down, we began opening online churches. Over time, we started finding ways to continue in active ministry to our neighbors and friends with ministries reflective of this time and place. We discovered new ways of coming together physically as conditions allowed. We discovered new ways to remain faithful in our financial support, even when physical presence was impossible. We embraced what I'm calling a "hybrid model of presence" when we gathered in our cars and in-person for confirmation and reception. I'm confident, had I told you a year ago, that we were going to gather across the street in our cars to join worship on our phones and then have outdoor confirmation and reception in forty mile per hour winds on a below freezing day, you would have laughed and said, "no way." Yet, because the pandemic demanded it, we did. We made the effort to show our community support for the newly received and recommitted. Celebrating in the midst the darkness, we spread the light.

More dark days likely lie ahead for our world. Of that, I am certain. This year, Advent reminds us that even in the darkest of days, light can, and will, break forth. It reminds us our messiah has already come into our midst, is present now, and will come again. So, let us rest in that knowledge and continue to move forward in faith, in hope, and in love. As we close one year and begin anew, I find myself recalling the conclusion to evening Compline. "Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace. Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised; For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see. A light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen" (BCP 134-35).

Stephen+

Dates to Remember.

DECEMBER

- 2 - Midday Eucharist Rite I at 12:10 p.m.
- 6 - Sunday Service at 10 a.m. on Facebook The 2nd Sunday of Advent
- 9 - Midday Eucharist Rite I at 12:10 p.m.
Vestry Meeting via Zoom at 5:30 p.m.
- 13 - Sunday service at 10 a.m. on Facebook The 3rd Sunday of Advent-Rose Sunday
- 16 - Midday Eucharist Rite I at 12:10 p.m.
- 17 - Faithful Innovations Noon to 12:45 p.m.
- 20 - Sunday Service at 10 a.m. on Facebook The Fourth Sunday of Advent
- 21 - Sue Stone on vacation through January 3, 2021
- 23 - Midday Eucharist Rite I at 12:10 p.m.
- 24 - "Christmas Eve" Eucharist at 6:00 p.m. on Facebook
- 25 - "Christmas Day" Diocesan Holy Eucharist from St. Paul's Cathedral in Des Moines
Parish Office is Closed
- 27 - Sunday Service at 10 a.m. on Facebook
- January 1-Parish Office is Closed

Join Compline on Facebook weekly Monday-Friday at 8:00 p.m.

Weekly Community Group Meetings at St. Johns are not meeting at this time due to the pandemic

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|-----------|--|
| Tuesday | 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month Inspirational Writing hosted by Tina Manyette at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor |
| Wednesday | 8:00 p.m. NA "Stop the Insanity" in the Parish Hall (weekly) |
| Thursday | NOON AA Meeting in the Parlor (weekly)
5:00 p.m. TOPS Meeting & weigh in, in the Parlor (weekly) |
| Friday | 8:00 p.m. AA "Pioneer Club" Meeting in the Parish Hall (weekly) |
| Saturday | 9:00 a.m. Alanon Meeting in the Kuhn Room (weekly) |
| Sunday | 3:00 p.m. Ballroom Dancing in the Parish Hall (weekly) |

St. John's Church Building Remains Closed to the Public

The safety of our parish members and staff are our priority.

If you need to drop off or pick up something from the church building, please make arrangements by calling the church office at 641-424-1300, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. As our community ministries continue to be contactless, drop off and pick up of items, can be done contactless also.

When you have made arrangements, please know that you will be required to wear a face mask and do social distancing.

Thank you! We are all in this together. Please, stay safe!

In Loving Memory of:

Gladys M. de Buhr February 11, 1927 - November 9, 2020 Mother of Gregory & Pamela

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to thy never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that thou art doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

BCP p. 831



St. John's Vestry Meets

the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., online.
The next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2020.



FAITHFUL INNOVATIONS CONVERSATION

Join in the discussion on Thursday, December 17 at noon to 12:45 p.m. via Zoom. RSVP to Traci Ruhland Petty by emailing her at tpetty@iowaepiscopal.org. Rev. Stephen is one of the leaders in this discussion. If you have questions please contact Rev. Stephen.

**A Prayer
For Discernment - Bishop Search**

Holy and gracious God; you love your Church and work for its perfecting. We thank you for the abundance of gifts you have given to the Diocese of Iowa. As we have come to this time of transition, open our minds and hearts to see your hand at work all around us, and to discern your purposes for this diocese in this time.

Bless those who have accepted the call to serve on the Search and Nominating Committee. Strengthen them for the task of faithful listening, to each other, to your people around the diocese, and most of all to the leading of your Spirit. Give wisdom to the Standing Committee, the Board of Directors and to the eventual work of the Transition Committee. Guide and strengthen the diocesan staff in their ministry during this time. And give wisdom to those who will ultimately bear the task of electing our next bishop.

Strengthen the faithful of this diocese as they continue to work and pray for our ongoing life and witness. As we look for what is over the horizon, may we continue to be faithful to the day to day work of God's people in Iowa. Bless Alan our Bishop and his ongoing vision and commitment to our work together. Keep Bishop Alan and Donna in your care during this season of change and discernment for their lives.

We praise your name our loving God, and we continue to trust that "all things are being brought to their perfection by Him through whom all things were made, your son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit." **Amen.**



Confirmation & Reception in St. John's Episcopal Church Courtyard
with Bishop Alan Scarfe, Bishop of Iowa
And Reverend Stephen Benitz, Rector at St. John's Episcopal Church



**Sunday
November 15, 2020**

Congratulations to

Confirmands:
Brayden Miller
Dylan Miller
Emily Benitz
Jess Cornick

Received:
Laura Bernemann





Poinsettias for Sanctuary Christmas Decoration

As in previous years, to purchase Christmas floral decorations, we are asking for a monetary donation given by you in celebration, thanksgiving or memory of your loved ones. Please be sure to include your name and the information of your loved ones with your donation. St. John's will purchase what is needed to decorate the sanctuary. Please have your donations in **no later than Monday, December 14**

Your loved ones will be listed in the Christmas prayers.



St. John's Episcopal Church
Christmas Eve - December 24, 2020
Holy Eucharist at 6:00 p.m. Broadcast on Facebook

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

Luke 2:8-14

WANTED!

Clean, gently used winter coats, hats, gloves and scarves. During the cold weather season we have a rack of items FREE to those in need. The rack is located in the church courtyard. You can hang items directly on the rack or contact the church office (641)4241300 and make arrangements to drop off your items. Men, women and children's items are needed. Boots are accepted if they are in good condition. On behalf of the community.....Thank You!



SPONSORING A SANCTUARY CANDLE 2021 A Long Time Tradition at St. John's

You can sponsor a sanctuary candle for \$10 per Sunday. Every Sunday a candle is lit in the sanctuary for the Sunday church service.

There are many Sunday dates open to be sponsored. You can have the candle in memory, thanksgiving or celebration of a loved one. Their name will be added to the prayer list for the week that you have sponsored. Contact the church office at 641-424-1300 to make arrangements for your sponsorship.

If you already have dates reserved, you will be receiving a post card listing the dates. If you would like to make any changes please contact the church office.



St. John's Facemask & Hygiene Ministry Update!

During the month of October, **21** days: **274** face masks and **30** bags of hygiene items were given out.

During the month of November, **18** days: **244** face masks and **28** bags of hygiene items were given out.

Thank you to our faithful mask sewers!



Please continue to send your gifts regularly, even though we are not meeting in person. Thank you for your support!