



DECEMBER 2023 | STJOHNSLYNCHBURG.ORG

REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

SUNDAYS

- 8:00a Holy Eucharist, Church
- 9:00a Breakfast
- 9:20a Nursery Available
- 9:30a Adult Forum, Middle School and High School Formation, Chapel Chat, and Sunday School PreK-5th Grade
- 10:30a Holy Eucharist, Church & Livestream

TUESDAYS

- 8:00a George Bean Men's Group, Magill

WEDNESDAYS

- 11:00a Bible Study, Magill
- 12:10p Holy Eucharist, Chapel

THURSDAYS

- 4:00p Evening Prayer, Westminster Canterbury Chapel
- 7:00p Parish Choir Rehearsal

LOOKING AHEAD DECEMBER

- 17 4:00p Lessons and Carols, Church
- 24 9:45a Combined Holy Eucharist Service, Church
- 4:00p Christmas Pageant with Eucharist, Church
- 10:00p Festival Holy Eucharist, Church
- 25 10:30a Christmas Day Service, Church
- 31 9:45a 5th Sunday Combined Service, Church

JANUARY

- 4 11:45a Westminster Canterbury Luncheon, WC
- 8 6:00p Kids Haven, Magill
- 9 5:15p COA Meeting, Chapter Room
- 15 Office Closed in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 16 5:30p Outreach Meeting, Chapter Room

MESSAGE FROM THE REV. CHRIS ROUSSELL, RECTOR

Dear Saints of St. John's,

This year marks my fifth Christmas with you as your Rector. During this past year, I've had a personal goal that I've kept to myself. I have been intentionally focused on being joyful and spreading joy. And what is "joy"?

Joy is different than happiness. Happiness is fleeting and temporary. Joy is longer lasting and more deeply embedded in our souls. Happiness comes from external experiences. Joy is an internal disposition. Happiness is a personal experience. Joy is a shared and communal experience. Happiness makes us feel good. Joy makes us choose and be good.



I remember as a child trying to go to sleep on Christmas Eve, so excited about the coming of Santa Clause that I tossed and turned like a guilty old man. That sense of anticipation was as much fun as Christmas morning itself. During this Advent Season, we should still be tossing and turning with excitement - not for Santa, but for the coming of Jesus Christ when He returns to fulfill his promise of purifying the world and recreating a new heaven and new earth. (The new heaven here being the cosmos, not the eternal realm where God dwells).

It is my prayer that you will experience great joy this season and in the coming year. For anyone who suffers with grief or depression and feel far removed from joy this season, please reach out to me so that we can visit and pray together. I don't want anyone to suffer alone.

Let's spread the joy of Christ at St. John's and invite someone to church in the coming year. Our parish is growing because of personal invitations. If everyone committed to bringing at least three different guests to a service, program, or class in the coming year, I'm confident that our joy will be contagious and they will want to continue to experience the love of Christ in us, through us, and with us far into the future.

With Joyful Blessings for You and Yours,

Chris

A Festival of Lessons and Carols



Sunday, December 17, at 4:00p

St. John's Parish Choir Cantate Children's and Youth Choir
Peggy Haas Howell and Randall Speer, Conductors

*Carols by David Willcocks, Jim Leininger, Regina Pearsall,
Michael-John Trotta, Matthew Owens, Franz Biebl, John Rutter,
Bob Chilcott, and Morten Lauridsen*

St. John's Episcopal Church, 205 Elmwood Avenue, Lynchburg, VA 24503



St. John's
Episcopal Church
LYNCHBURG

Christmas Services

December 24

9:45a *Combined Holy Eucharist*

4th *Sunday of Advent*

4:00p *Children's Pageant*

10:00p *Festival Holy Eucharist (incense)*

**Christmas Day
December 25**

10:30a *Holy Eucharist Rite II*



ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S MESSAGE

Christmastide

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN COWGILL, ASSOCIATE RECTOR FOR FORMATION



Siblings in Christ,

I want to write about the season of Christmastide. The song “the twelve days of Christmas” has it right—there are twelve days of the Christmas season every single year—December 25- January 5. Included in

these days are several feasts: St. Stephen (December 26), St. John the Evangelist (December 26), Holy Innocents (December 28), The Feast of the Holy Name (January 1) and one or two Sundays (every Sunday is a feast of our Lord) after Christmas, depending on what day of the week Christmas falls.

St. Stephen’s is the first Martyr; or the first person to die for the faith. Stephen’s full story is told in Acts 6-7; he was one of the first deacons, gave a speech before the high council of Jerusalem, and was killed for his faith and his testimony. As he died, he prayed for the forgiveness of his executors, just as Jesus does from the cross (Luke 23:34).

St. John the Evangelist is the namesake of our parish. It celebrates the beloved disciple, the author of the fourth gospel, and the only one of the apostles whose church history holds not to have been a martyr. His prologue to the Gospel is read every third year in Christmastime and reminds us of the “Word made Flesh” (John 1:1-15). John’s witness connects us theologically from the Bible to the development of the early church.

The Feast of the Holy Innocents remembers those children slaughtered by King Herod (Matthew 2:16-18). When King Herod realizes the wise men will not bring him Jesus, he reacts with rage and ordered all children who could be Jesus to be put to death to protect his own throne from this King. This feast is especially heavy when we consider modern children who are slaughtered by rulers in both wars and exploited in peacetime as well.

The funny thing about these three feasts is that they are moveable—they move around if the first Sunday after Christmas falls in the middle. This is not true of the Feast of the Holy Name. What this reflects is that these feasts were designated before Christmas was placed on December 25th; more importance is given to the season of Christmas than the Sanctoral (saints) calendar that is overlaid on top of it. These three feast days connect us to different aspects of the Christmas story yet stand distinct from it. They temper our joy in a Savior with the true cost of discipleship, responsibility of evangelism, and the reality that sin still affects the world at the expense of the most vulnerable.

I encourage you, as you rest and recover from Christmastide, to read the three collects for the feasts on their feast day (Book of Common Prayer, p. 237-238), and to remember especially those most in need of God’s mercy.

In Christ,

Ben

Fr. Ben

ben@stjohnslynchburg.org



Christmas is in Full Swing!

BY AMY PANZER



Do you believe in Santa? We have spotted him, and a couple of his elves a few times down here in the Day School! Christmas excitement is in the air as we have lots of activities leading up to our winter break.

We welcomed LCS strings from Paul Monroe Elementary for a special holiday performance, and it is always fun to see (and hear) some of our SJDS alumni play. We also had a visit from one of our favorite graduating families, the Rumores, for our annual Children's chapel on Hannukah. We held a fun Christmas spirit week, including Polar Express Day, Ugly Christmas Sweater Day and dressed in our Christmas best for our annual Christmas Concert.

The Day School will be on break Dec. 18-Jan. 2. Priority enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year will begin in January!

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

BY LALLA SYDNOR JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Greetings Children, Tweens, Teens, Parents and Grandparents!

What a wonderful and busy season! Our smallest children are learning about Advent and preparing for the birth of the Christ Child. They lit candles on the Advent wreath, added large and small animals to St. John's beautiful Fontanini nativity scene and made Christmas ornaments. Club 54 created special Christmas cards and Chrismon ornaments to decorate a new tree for the well-attended St. Nicholas Day party. Our Youth Group gathered and wrapped presents for three St. John's angel tree children. As you prepare for Christmas day, take the time to relax and think about the amazing blessings God has put in your life, past and present.

Recently, a parishioner asked about a youth group emblem seen in the weekly updates and church program. "Have Fun, Help Out, Happy Hearts" is our St. John's Youth Group moto that we use to open and close each activity. Our two goals are to enjoy our time together and to serve others. In doing so, we hope to create happiness in the hearts of all. If you see these kids signing a heart to one another, you know what it means!

I am happy to announce Sunday School attendance has picked up in the last two weeks. This January, please make church, Sunday School, and the youth activities we provide a priority. You will thank yourself as you watch your children form positive relationships and build a strong Christian foundation. Text, call or email any time!

Lalla

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**HAVE FUN!
HELP OUT!
HAPPY HEARTS!**



OUTREACH REPORT

BY CATHY DALTON

The Christmas season is traditionally a season of giving at St. John's. Our Christmas plate offering will be shared with Daily Bread, Meals on Wheels, and Rivermont Area Emergency Food Pantry.

2024 will be a busy year! Plan ahead to join us at our future meetings: January 16, March 5, June 4, September 3, November 5, at 5:30p in the Chapter Room. If you cannot join us for the meetings, please join us in our activities. We are planning to work with Bear Mountain Backpacks in July, and we will serve needs in our community by the Stuff the Miller Home Freezer in February, Day of Sharing in the fall, at Lynchburg Daily Bread, the Thanksgiving with the Yoder Center of the Tinbridge Hill neighborhood, the Yoder Center Angel Tree, and with contributions of time, talent and funds for many other organizations in our community.



ONE COMMUNITY ONE VOICE SHARE THE WARMTH COAT DRIVE was established to collect new and gently used coats to meet the need of many people in our community who lack enough warm clothing to stay protected throughout winter, and lack the money to buy that clothing. Thank you for filling the box again this year!

TINBRIDGE HILL/YODER CENTER: Thanksgiving on November 16 was a success! Many thanks to Kensie Johnson for organizing so many of you that provided the food and served.

Angel Tree gifts were collected December 12. Thank you to those of you who picked up angels and shopped for our neighbors.

THE SALVATION ARMY NEEDS BELL RINGERS. This year the sign up will be different. Please find a partner from St. John's and sign up together. It is a wonderful way to get to know a fellow parishioner, even someone who attends a different service than you do! **Sign Up Dates, December 16-24.** For more information, visit: [Sign Up Results \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)



LYNCHBURG DAILY BREAD: will be staffed by 5 of our parishioners December 19. Please contact Molly Jenkins (845-1321) or euniceroper@comcast.net) to ask questions or to sign up to experience this rewarding opportunity.

2023 has been a busy year! The following ministries were supported financially and/or through a time and talent donation during 2023. Those we helped in 2023:

- Boys Home
- Camp Kum-ba-yah
- Episcopal Relief and Development
- Interfaith Outreach
- Light House
- Lynchburg City Schools
- Lynchburg Daily Bread
- Lynchburg Grows
- Meals on Wheels
- Miller Home
- Miriam's House
- No Walls
- One Community One Voice
- Parkview Mission
- Rivermont Area Emergency Food Pantry
- Saint John's Day School
- Salvation Army
- Society of St. Andrews
- Tinbridge Hill/Yoder Center
- Young Women's Empowerment Academy

Please join us in giving time and funds to our community!



Financial Update

BY GENE KIDD, TREASURER

November pledge and non-pledge receipts fell below the levels of the last few months, but year-to-date total revenue remained above budget.

Total YTD expenses were \$33,997 above budget. Increased staff, property, and utility expenses were the main causes of the budget overrun.

YTD receipts more than offset the expense overruns resulting in a positive YTD Net of \$12,715 which was \$30,111 above budget.

St. John's Episcopal Church Statement of Activities November 30, 2023

Description	YTD Result	YTD SOM	Variance
Pledge Income	\$ 737,384	\$ 685,888	\$ 51,496
Other Contributions	53,204	19,327	33,877
Other Revenue	109,430	130,695	(21,265)
Total Revenue	\$ 900,018	\$ 835,910	\$ 64,108
Administration	\$ 610,768	\$ 591,118	\$ (19,650)
Property	\$ 140,868	\$ 130,414	\$ (10,454)
Christian Formation	\$ 4,469	\$ 6,988	\$ 2,519
Worship/Music	\$ 16,849	\$ 16,775	\$ (74)
Parish Life and Care	\$ 7,710	\$ 9,434	\$ 1,724
Greater Church - Diocesan Pledge	\$ 88,075	\$ 88,077	\$ 2
Outreach/Missions	\$ 18,564	\$ 10,500	\$ (8,064)
Total Expenses	\$ 887,303	\$ 853,306	\$ (33,997)
Net	\$ 12,715	\$ (17,396)	\$ 30,111

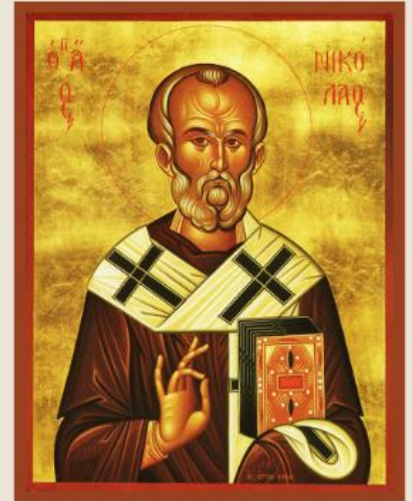


A new documentary featuring Presiding Bishop Curry and other Episcopalians explores "A Case for Love." It will premiere for 1 day only across thousands of theaters in the US, including here in Lynchburg. With a good turnout at theaters, it should be picked up by one of the streaming services for longer-term viewing. The Lynchburg viewing will be at 4:00p and 7:00p at Regal River Ridge.

St. Nicholas Day Appeal 2023

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SOUTHWESTERN VA

As we enter into Advent, one of the holiest seasons of the Christian year, our diocese's annual St. Nicholas Day Appeal is one significant way that we can focus on the mission of love that the Son of God ushers into our world.



The conflict in Israel is on all of our hearts and minds as many innocent people on both sides are being injured and killed everyday. The some 7,000 Anglican Christians who make up The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem are praying, and working for peace while assisting those in need of healing and hope. Archbishop Hosam has asked that we, Anglicans, support the various medical ministries of the diocese during this very difficult time. Therefore, your Executive Board and I have designated our St Nicholas Appeal to aid The Princess Basma Centre located on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Through its Child Rehabilitation Centre, this mission of the Diocese of Jerusalem is able to provide treatment and rehabilitation for children with disabilities from Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, for the age group 0-15. You can learn more about the Center here www.basma-centre.org.

You may support this effort by donating online at www.dioswva.org or by mailing a check payable to the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia with "St. Nicholas Day Appeal" marked in the memo to PO Box 2279, Roanoke, VA 24009.



ST. JOHN'S EMERGENCY GUIDE

Early in December, copies St. John's Emergency Guide for St. John's were installed throughout the church. The guide follows FEMA's "Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship". To compile the guide, every employee and many group leaders were interviewed about their safety concerns. Input from both the Lynchburg Police and Fire Departments was collected and research of other law enforcement agencies and safety organizations was included.

Take time to familiarize yourself with the Guide. Every emergency tab is important, but the first one, "IN ALL CASES", applies broadly to everyone.

- Do as much as you safely can to resolve an emergency.
- **Call 911 as soon as you feel you need help.**
- Take care of each other. Move everyone out of harm's way.
- Notify others in the church of the emergency.

The guide provides instructions and suggestions for managing an array of events:

- Medical Emergencies
- Fire
- Natural Disasters (including tornado)
- Hostile Intruders
- Water Leaks
- Other Emergencies
- Emergency Contact Numbers

The guide is not an answer book for every possible situation. Common sense plays a huge role in handling emergencies and safety. Be familiar with the guide's contents and be assured that whatever help you can provide will be beneficial.



HAPPY Anniversary

DECEMBER

December 10

Mary Kathryn & Bill McIntosh (57 yrs)

December 11

Holly & Mosby Perrow (58 yrs)

December 12

Christie & Kevin Hooper (25 yrs)

Anne & Alex Winstead (14 yrs)

December 18

Marge & Joe Freeman (57 yrs)

December 20

Sallie & Brett Carson (20 yrs)

December 28

Laura & John Casler (32 yrs)

Lisa & Sky Pacot (21 yrs)

Dana & Jim Redmond (63 yrs)

December 29

Julie & Allen Chipley (50 yrs)

Sally & Trey James (5 yrs)

Betty & Dick Leary (69 yrs)

December 30

Lynnett & Charlie Schindler (28 yrs)

Betsy & Dennis Howard (6 yrs)

December 31

Emily & Scott Smith (19 yrs)

JANUARY

January 2

Kristin & Lewis Dabney (31 yrs)

January 5

Meghan & Gene Moss (14 yrs)

January 7

Susan & Hank Creasy (29 yrs)

January 9

Margaret & Bob Ladd (42 yrs)

January 11

A.C. & Boopie Whitehead (32 yrs)

January 16

Robin & Frank Levandoski (22 yrs)

January 22

Clarkie & Tom Eppes (13 yrs)

January 23

Gigi & Ted Batt (25 yrs)

January 24

Diane & Billy Walker (43 yrs)

January 26

Joan & Bob Foster (55 yrs)



St. John's
Episcopal Church
LYNCHBURG

IN SERVICE

CLERGY

The Rt. Rev. Mark A. Bourlakas,
Bishop of Southwestern Virginia
The Rev. Christopher Roussell, Rector
The Rev. Benjamin Cowgill, Associate
Rector for Formation

LAY STAFF

Peggy Haas Howell, Organist and
Choirmaster
Nicole Cook, Executive Assistant to the
Rector
Pam Reynolds, Parish Administrator
Amy Panzer, Director of St. John's Day
School
Lalla Sydnor Johnson, Director of
Children, Youth and Family Ministries
Gracie Johnson, Sexton
River Segel, Sexton

VESTRY 2023

Commission on Administration
Betsy Worthington (Sr. Warden) (2024)
Neal Davidson (Jr. Warden) (2024)
John Casler (Sr. Warden Elect) (2025)
John B. Morgan III (Jr. Warden Elect)
(2025)
Scott Kowalski (2023)
Charlie Pryor (2023)

Commission on Christian Formation

Christie Hooper (2023)
Julie Andrews (2025)

Commission on Outreach

Heather Zippel (2023)
Tom Eppes (2025)

Commission on Liturgy & Music

Eleanor Dovel (2024)
Anna McWane (2024)

Commission on Parish Life and Care

Judy Arthur (2023)
Walker Sigler (2024)
Brenda Kincaid (2025)

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TIDINGS

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