

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

The Monthly Newsletter of St. John UMC

January 2021



Happy New Year!

Choose To Be Hopeful

Wow. What a year 2020 has been for all of us. Some have lost loved ones, some have endured illnesses. Some have lost jobs. But some have had babies, some have had new insights, some have had new starts. Yes, 2020 is behind us and as Christians our hope is that the best is yet to come. The future does have great potential, but how do we grab hold of that potential? How do we lift our eyes above the shadow of death and doubt and commit to making 2021 a great year?

We know that the Covid-19 Pandemic is not over: the vaccine (Praise the Lord!) is getting out, but it will still take months before it makes a real contribution. In light of that, how are we to consider the future for ourselves, for our families and for St. John church? Let's not allow Covid to be what keeps us from considering a better future. Let's not allow Covid to be an excuse against thinking in positive ways. The love of God is bigger than Covid.

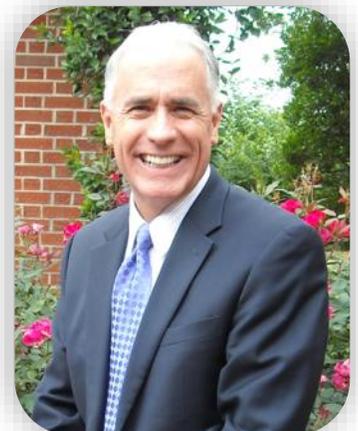
In 2020 significant changes were made to adapt to the pandemic. One of the most significant was in the way we worship. The lake services were a great means of continuing our worship, but it too had its limitations. Livestreaming was something I was familiar with but had no idea it would become a normalcy for St. John. It forced us into modernity. Having to worship sitting on a couch in our pajamas may or may not be what you really want. Some love it; most hate it. We all miss the community. Some have not been able to worship with us at all because of limited computer and internet access. Many of our members in the Towers have not been able to worship with us. We miss each other. However, these days of isolation and separation are numbered. I see us getting back together this year with each other in communal worship, with real live people sitting right next to us. I suspect when the decision to open fully is made it will still take some time to fill up the sanctuary, but it will be wonderful. I look forward to that day coming.

With a New Year here how will we seek to embrace optimistically the future before us?

Some say clean out a closet, declutter your home. Some say start a journal and write thank you notes. All that is great, but let's go deeper: let's practice loving people by listening to them. Let's put kindness in our voices. Let's let go of any anger or resentment that we have in our hearts. Let's look for the small miracles around us every day and give thanks to God: a bird that sings, a child that laughs, a friend that calls. Let's offer up a word of encouragement and hope to others. Let's pray for each other, for our community, for our nation and for the world.

"God is doing a new thing do you not perceive it?" - Isaiah 43:19

Jody Alderman



We are currently in Reopening Phase 1

Full details at StJohnAugusta.org/reopening-updates

PHASE 1 OCCURS:
WHEN RICHMOND COUNTY'S RISK LEVEL IS RED

GREENE ST. CAMPUS IS LIMITED

- Office open by appointment only,
Monday - Thursday, 9am-3pm.
Call 706-724-9641



- Masks required.



Christmas Eve at St. John

Enjoy our virtual Lessons and Carols service anytime on our YouTube channel. Search “St John UMC Augusta” or go directly to this link: <https://youtu.be/aeqNkoZp0fg>

A Christmas Miracle Here at St. John

On Sunday afternoon, December 27, we held “The Journey to Bethlehem” drive-through nativity. This was the brainchild of Rev. Lindsey Solomon. We had originally wanted to hold it on Christmas Eve, but due to weather we had to shift it forward. The weather was beautiful and we had approximately 35 volunteers. It was received well and a lot of goodwill and joy was shared with our community. Some of the cars were people we knew, but some were just families from the community.

My role that day was to offer a welcome and some instructions. I would usually say something like: “You know this story already but you may never have experienced it like this.” The miracle that I am speaking about came when I asked a woman that drove through did she know this story? She was by herself and very matter-of-factly said, “No, I don’t know this story.” I have to admit that it surprised me and it got me excited: here was a woman who didn’t know the story of the birth of Jesus! I realize there are a lot of people who know the story but who choose not to follow Jesus - but to not even know the story! I admit I shared with her a bit more than some of the other folks that drove by. I said, “This is the real meaning of Christmas - the birth of Jesus - and you will hear about it through scripture, music, and drama. It is the story of the Savior that came to love and redeem the world.”

How can it be that a person in our time does not know this story? What a great reminder for the church. There are people that still don’t know the story. We are commissioned and compelled to share this great news of Jesus Christ and we share it in words and in our deeds, in the way we live. (And even in our parking lot.) I don’t know the outcome of what happened to this woman, but did it plant a positive seed in her heart about what the Christian faith is all about? We can hope so. Today I pray for her, that God would use what we did on Sunday to grow within her a desire to know Jesus Christ more fully. This is the purpose of the church: to share the love of Jesus Christ with the world, to make disciples that will in turn change the world. What a blessing to be a part of St. John, a church that for 223 years has been doing just that.

Jody Alderman



This Month in Worship

11am Online Worship:

January 3, 2021

Those Who Dream Persevere

Scripture: *Isaiah 60:1-6*

Psalm 72, Matthew 2:1-12

January 10, 2021

A New Year Feels Good

Scripture: *Genesis 1:1-5*

Psalm 29, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11

January 17, 2021

You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet

Scripture: *1 Samuel 3: 1-10(11-20)*

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, John 1:43-51

January 24, 2021

Preaching and Recruiting

Scripture: *Jonah 3:1-5, 10*

Psalm 62:5-12, Mark 1:14-20

January 31, 2021

When Worship Gets Uncomfortable

Scripture: *Deuteronomy 18:15-20*

Psalm 111, Mark 1:21-28



HONORARIUMS AND MEMORIALS

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2020

Benevolence:

In honor of Mr. & Mrs. James Bennett, Jr. by Fay J. Clements

Bless this House

In memory of Elfie Howard by Curt & Patty Strickland

Budget:

In memory of Dottie Allen by Jeanne & Lansing Lee, W.

Wynn Riley, Allen & Becky Smith, Judith & Greg Goodwin

In memory of Charles & Muriel Williamson by Edwin S. Presnell

In memory of Levi Hill, III by Edwin S. Presnell

In memory of Emily Calhoun by Allen & Becky Smith

In memory of Beatrice Dismer by Judith & Greg Goodwin

In memory of Edwin Dickson by Susannah Dobbs, W. Wynn Riley

In memory of Douglas Scott by W. Wynn Riley

In memory of Lawanda Blythe by Rebecca Proveaux

In memory of Harriet Ottinger by Greg & Judith Goodwin,

Kent & Elyse Kronowski, Allen & Becky Smith, St. John UMW, Virginia Allen

In memory of Leonard Brubaker by Greg & Judith Goodwin,

Allen & Becky Smith, Virginia Allen, W. Wynn Riley, Gwen Fulcher Young

Music Memorial:

In honor of Margaret & Leonard Brubaker by Jamie Garvey

In honor of Jamie Garvey by Diddy Thompson, David Allard

In honor of Eve & Jim Richardson by Jamie Garvey

In honor of Patty & Curt Strickland by Jamie Garvey

In memory of Leonard Brubaker by Curt & Patty Strickland, Allen & Becky Smith, DiAnne Johnson, Nesbit & Ann Dasher

In Our Prayers

Georgia & Rich Vesely, Judith Goodwin's mother, Lois, Tison King, Wyck Knox, our military at home and abroad, the global pandemic, and the troubled corners of our world.



Sincere condolences to the family of Harriet Ottinger who passed away November 30, 2020; the family of Leonard Brubaker who passed away December 6, 2020; and the family of Rick Ward who passed away December 8, 2020.

For more information, visit us online at www.StJohnAugusta.org

Join our **Remind text groups!**

For reminders about worship, schedule changes, reopening changes, etc...

Text @stjohn1798 to 81010.

If you are new to Remind, they may ask you to create an account and/or download the app. You do not need to do that to just receive messages from St. John.

We also have a text group for the lake ministry. Text @stjohnlake to 81010 if you want those updates that just pertain to lake.

Remember that Facebook, our website and newsletter provide the most information during this time.

Please check those platforms.

<https://StJohnAugusta.org>

On Facebook search:

“St John UMC Augusta”

“St John UMC at the Lake”

Thank you for your faithfulness and your generosity during what has been the most unprecedented years in our lifetime. Your giving has allowed us to continue the work of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the community and the world.

-Jody Alderman

We appreciate your continued giving by check, cash, credit card, or automatic bank transfer.

Please mail checks to the church at:

St. John UMC

P.O. Box 444

Augusta, Ga 30903

Or drop by during office hours:

Mon– Thurs, 9am –3pm. Call first 706.724.9641

Or go online to stjohnaugusta.org/donate to give your tithe to the general budget or other fund designation.

Point your phone camera at this screen code to go directly to the website.



Please fill out your financial pledge for 2021 at this link if you haven't already.

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**Please remember that in the red phase,
our office is open limited hours.
Please call before you come by.**



St. John United Methodist Church

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