

Worship

Worship is central to the life of our community. It is the reason we exist. For almost 250 years the people of St. John's have maintained a rhythm of worship and praise of God. At our best, we are an oasis of God's love in a confused world, a beacon of Christ's light within our city, a dwelling place for the Kingdom of God. It is our worship life together as the body of Christ that undergirds us, that gives strength and meaning to all of our church activities. If we do nothing else, it is our highest calling to gather together in praise and thanksgiving to the God who gives us life.

Jesus promised that whenever two or three are gathered together in his name that he will be in the midst of them. Everyone is invited and welcome to come and gather at St. John's as we worship in the name of Christ.

Ministry Opportunities in Worship

Music

From the earliest times the people of God have expressed in music those feelings that cannot be fully expressed in words. St. John's music program seeks to provide a place for all to praise God through their gift of music.

Children's choir is composed of children grades K-5 who sing once a month during the 10 a.m. service.

Youth choir is made up of our youth grades 6 – 12 who sing about once a month. Rehearsals are usually after the 10 a.m. service.

Senior choir is a mixture of male and female voices that sings at the 10 a.m. service. They sing a wide range of choral repertoire in the Anglican tradition. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings.

Handbell choir is for adults and teenagers. They play about once a month, and for all major Feast days.

Altar Guild

Members of the Altar Guild are the guardians of a largely invisible ministry. They assist the clergy in preparation for our worship. Their gifts to the congregation include maintaining and caring for altar hangings and linens, maintaining and caring for the liturgical brass and silver, and decorating for the special services. They are charged with the care of the altar and its preparation for worship.

Ushers and Greeters

St. John's ushers and greeters are the "first line of hospitality" on Sunday Mornings. They welcome people to the church, provide directions and assistance when needed, collect the offering, guide people to communion, locate people who wish to receive communion but who cannot come to the altar rail, and in general, prepare for the unknown.

Lectors

Parishioners serve as readers or Lectors during regularly scheduled worship services. They read the lessons from the Old and New Testaments and lead the congregation in the Prayers of the People.

Chalicians – Eucharistic Ministers

Chalicians assist the clergy in the distribution of the Eucharist, administering the cup of wine. They are licensed by the Bishop, and must be a communicant in good standing. They also help by leading the Creed and being prepared to read a lesson if needed.

Eucharistic Visitors

Eucharistic Visitors are trained and licensed by the Bishop to take Communion to those members of our parish who are in the hospital, nursing homes, and home bound. They serve as an important link between the parish and members who are no longer able to physically be present on Sunday. These people are sent out each Sunday, reminding everyone that nothing can ever separate us from our oneness in Christ Jesus.

Acolytes

Children and youth grades 3-12 serve as acolytes during worship. Acolytes serve in ways such as crucifer (carrying the cross), torchbearers, banner bearers, carrying the Gospel book, lighting the candles, assisting with Communion. On a normal Sunday service at 10 a.m. there is a team of ten who serve.

Worship Services at St. John's

7:30 a.m. Service of Holy Eucharist Rite I

St. John's early service is a said service, having music only on Easter Sunday. The Holy Eucharist is always celebrated and always according to Rite I. This dignified and simple celebration has a strong group of regulars for whom this is their primary worship experience. It is a service in the tradition of Anglican worship whose hallmarks are reverential quiet, and personal devotion.

10 a.m. Service of Holy Eucharist Rite II

Our later morning service is a gorgeous blend of music and Prayer Book worship. This service is usually Rite II, except for the season of Lent when we use Rite I. Choirs sing or play every Sunday.

10 a.m. Wednesday morning Service of Holy Eucharist with Unction.

A quiet service of Holy Eucharist with special prayers for healing is held every Wednesday at 10 a.m. in the chapel. We read every name on our prayer list and offer to God our intercessions for ourselves and our world.

Worship at St. John's

The world can be saved – by one thing only and that is worship. For to worship is:

*to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God,
to feed the mind with the truth of God,
to purge the imagination by the beauty of God,
to open the heart to the love of God,
to devote the will to the purpose of God.*

William Temple
98th Archbishop of Canterbury

Nursery care

For all ten o'clock Sunday morning services of Holy Eucharist, there is nursery care available in the Education building, located right next to the Church on the north side. The nursery is open from 8:30 until 11:30 on Sunday's, so that parents and older children may attend Christian formation classes. This is a safe, child friendly environment with several attendants, the primary attendants being themselves grandparents. There are toys and games for children of younger ages, and a separate room for babies equipped with cribs and diaper changing areas.

Christian Formation

At St. John's we have Christian education classes for all ages, which are designed to teach the Scripture, the traditions of the Church, and what it means to be a Christian and member of a Church family. Children can start in classes at age three. The earliest ages primary learn through play, story telling, and singing songs. There are five different classes, by ages and year

in school, for ages three through high school. All Christian formation classes are held in the nine o'clock until about 9:50, so that everyone may attend worship together.

Worship for Children

The most important thing we do here, and that from which all our other work is derived, is our worship of God. All children of all ages are welcome at worship.

In the back corner chapel of our church we have provided an area with a rug, soft toys, and rocking chairs. Parents should feel free at any time to take their child there if the child needs some time to play or be rocked. Restlessness often arises from boredom, children will pay more attention if they know what is going on. It often helps if children can see the action.

On the way into the church there are children's packets with coloring books and soft toys, it is perfectly all right for children to play with these during the service, please return the packet at the end of the service.

It is helpful if parents take time during the week to help teach their children to pray and to listen to Scripture. Very young children easily learn the Lord's Prayer, and will feel more a part of the service when they can join in.

We also offer Children's chapel for children up to grade three in the undercroft; this is a time of lessons and songs geared toward our young children. Children's chapel joins the main service at the peace.

In the third grade children may start serving as acolytes at the service.

Children and the Holy Communion.

It is not necessary to be confirmed for children to receive Holy Communion. We want the children in our parish never to be able to remember a time when they could not receive Holy Communion. We think it is that important for them to feel included. All children are welcomed and indeed encouraged to receive Holy Communion, it is not necessary that they somehow “understand” what the Eucharist is all about, or to take a class before receiving. At St. John’s as soon as a child starts to reach for the bread, we recommend that the parents allow the children to receive. If the child does not eat the bread at first, just gently take it and consume the bread. Remember, all are welcome to the Lord’s Table.

Help a child prepare for worship

Allow for bathroom time before worship

Do not rush prior to morning worship, your children will reflect your relaxed mood.

Teach the Lord’s Prayer.

After the service discuss what happened, listen to your child’s comments and questions.

Take an active part as a family in the service, serve as greeters, altar servers, readers etc.

Encourage your children to greet other members, always introduce your children

Do not let worship be a Sunday morning only experience.

Let God’s love for you be evident in daily living and growing as a family.

Make Sunday worship a regular part of the time you spend with your children.

Have a special family activity after the worship service.

Help your child locate hymns, psalms, and responses in the prayer book

Assist your child in singing the hymns

Children

At

St. John’s

St. John’s strives to be an inclusive community. This means that all are welcomed here.

We welcome children of all ages, and have a number of programs which are designed to help make children feel welcome, to educate them in our traditions, and to incorporate them into our worship.

***Christian Education
is central to the life of St. John's.***

The reality is that everything we do -- our worship, study of the Bible, and outreach -- is about our formation as members of the body of Christ. Central to our education efforts is teaching the stories of the Bible, passing on the traditions of the Episcopal Church, and helping Christians negotiate a world that more often than not stands in opposition to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The journey of one who follows Jesus Christ is a life-long pilgrimage of discernment and discovery. Learning about the Christian Faith is also a life-long work in progress. To that end we offer Christian Education for youth and adults in a variety of settings.

***Christian Formation Hour
Sunday School***

All ages gather for Christian education and formation at 9 A.M. on Sunday mornings from September through May.

For children and youth age 4 through Grade 8, we offer a rotation module curriculum entitled *Come Join the Circle*. This curriculum allows our children and youth to experience the same bible story for a number of weeks as well as engage it in a variety of modalities from arts and crafts to music, to brain teasers and puzzles, to cooking and drama, to community life and outreach. Each Sunday our children come together to hear the biblical story told in dramatic fashion and then break into groups based by age to encounter the story through the modalities listed above.

Our youth, 7th to 12th grade, meet monthly on Sunday evenings in the home of one of our teens for food, fellowship, fun, and formation. Outside of Sunday evenings, this group also engages in a number of fellowship and outreach activities as scheduled throughout the year. These activities have included a lock-in, a mission trip to Mississippi, a ghost tour, and a hockey game.

For adults there is the Adult Forum which consists of modules focusing on an assortment of scriptural, ethical, theological, and life issues. We also offer a

Bible study. Recent topics have included the Gospel according to Luke, "Exploring the Creeds," "The Jesus I Never Knew," and "Religion as Entertainment".

The *Wednesday Bible Study* is a group that meets after the 10 o'clock Wednesday service to examine the Bible lessons for next Sunday. The study of Scripture nourishes us and helps to open up the richness of the Bible to us.

Book Group

A book group meets monthly to have in-depth discussions about books that influence our lives as Christians and human beings. In the past years the group read and discussed a variety of fiction and nonfiction books.

Seasonal Study Opportunities

Lenten Study is held jointly with our brothers and sisters from St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. We gather on Wednesdays during Lent for a simple supper followed by a study program. The programs run the spectrum from recent films or books to Scripture or a theological topic. Some recent topics have included "Message in a Bottle" and "human sexuality".

Vacation Bible School

VBS is held during the summer. From Sunday through Thursday evening our church is transformed into an underwater world, or a ranch, or water park, as the children of our parish have a time of fun and games while they learn more about God and their faith.

Advent Meditations

Perhaps more properly considered part of our worship, every Wednesday of Advent we gather for Evening Prayer and meditation. These meditations usually are lessons about various saints, for instance Joseph or Elizabeth, and are always opportunities for more learning.

Christian Formation

at

St. John's

“Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law, I shall keep it will all my heart.”

Psalm 119: 33-34



St. John's is engaged in a variety of ministries to the local community and the world. We consider both York and the world-at-large to be our mission field.

Among the many ways we serve the world outside our doors are the following:

Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen: Casseroles for the Soup Kitchen on South George Street are prepared and delivered by members from the parish on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Members help serve the meals to those who come to Our Daily Bread for lunch.

Meals on Wheels: Members of the parish deliver meals to homebound persons on Monday mornings.

Rummage/Opportunity Sale: Twice a year, families in the local community are able to purchase needed items at reasonable prices. Proceeds from this sale support area ministries.

Eyeglass Collection: Eyeglasses collected at St. John's are donated to New Eyes for the Needy in New Jersey.

Sisters in Caring: This group of women in the parish provides care and service in a number of ways. They send greeting cards to the ill, the homebound; on birthdays, and when there is a death in the parish. They send Christmas cards to members of the American armed forces stationed overseas, visit people in hospitals, and prepare health kits for Church World Services.

Low Income Housing is a critical need in the York area. In the past several years the parish purchased three townhouses in the 100 block of North Beaver Street. Work completed by volunteers on Saturday mornings remodeled and repaired the houses. All of the houses have been renovated and are currently rented.

Habitat for Humanity: As a parish, we provide opportunities to share in York Habitat for Humanity projects. In 2005 we partnered with Habitat for Humanity providing funding and volunteers to renovate a house on Thomas Street near our church buildings.

Food for the Hungry Parish Food Pantry, in cooperation with other churches through the Food Pantry Clearinghouse, provides groceries to referred families and to homeless people. Parishioner donations assist to keep the pantry shelves full of canned and dry goods. Volunteers from the parish fill food orders on Thursday afternoons.

CROP Walk: Members of the parish walk on the second Sunday of October to publicize this important ministry of Church World Services to alleviate world hunger. Walkers from St. John's have raised thousands of dollars for Church World Services in past CROP Walks.

Grocery and Gift Cards are offered to parishioners. By purchasing grocery and gift cards, a portion of your purchase is returned to the parish by the vendor. The money raised by this program helps to keep our pantry shelves full.

Easter Lunch is provided by the parish to emergency service personnel working on Easter, to the homeless, those in shelters or those with no place to enjoy an Easter lunch. Volunteers prepare and serve a home cooked meal to all who come to our doors.

Time, Talent, and Treasure is given by members of the parish to organizations in need such as:

Helping Hands
Access-York
York Rescue Mission
New Life for Girls
Staying Connected

Our financial resources also support:

Episcopal Relief and Development
United Thank Offering
All Saints Relief Fund
Operation Understanding

Mission trips

Members of the parish have participated on work mission trips sponsored by Episcopal Relief and Development to Honduras and to El Salvador. Our youth recently traveled to Mississippi to help in the recovery and rebuilding efforts in that region after Hurricane Katrina. Typically between 10 and 20 members go on these trips. The parish tries to send a mission group every other year.

Companion parish relationships

St. John's is a companion parish to St. John's Episcopal Church in Carlisle, PA and Paróquia de Santo Estevao is our companion diocese of São Paulo.

Outreach Ministry

at

St. John's

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

Matthew 25:35-36.



Sunday Fellowship

Breakfast served in the Parish Hall each Sunday after the early service. Everyone is invited to come join us for breakfast.

Coffee, lemonade, juice, cookies, baked treats and conversation are offered in the Parish Hall or on the lawn in seasonable weather following the 10:00 A.M. service.

Foyer Groups

The word “foyer” means “hearthside.” Foyer groups of eight people meet monthly in one another’s homes fall to summer. Participants generally share a meal and conversation. Many groups engage in spiritual practices as we seek to strengthen relationships.

Connections

Anyone and everyone is invited to participate in Connections. Connections will meet quarterly to share a meal, conversation and family friendly activities. Come join us on a Friday evening as we develop deeper parish family connections.

Solitaires

Relationships are particularly important to those of us who live alone. Solitaires meets for a pot luck lunch on the second Monday of each month. We share concerns, invite guest speakers, enjoy stimulating conversation and laugh a lot. We encourage those who live alone to join us.

Parish Retreat

Spiritual growth and personal relationships are fostered one weekend a year during the Parish Retreat at the Bishop Claggett Center in Maryland. This family retreat is noted for an exciting program for children and a stimulating offering for adults.

Patronal Feast

The Feast of St. John the Baptist is celebrated in June with a picnic on the church lawn following the 10:00 A.M. service.

St. Francis Day

St. Francis is known for his concern for the environment and his love of animals. We celebrate the Feast of St. Francis in early

October with the blessing of pets on the church lawn. Games and activities for children make this a fun festival celebration.

Freezer Sale

Parishioners gather throughout the year to share their favorite recipes and prepare frozen food for a yearly freezer sale. The Freezer Sale offers a variety of home cooked items to the community. The Freezer Sale is scheduled the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Proceeds from the Freezer Sale support the many outreach ministries provided by the parish.

**Building Community
Deepening Spiritual
Connections**

at

St. John's

*For where two or three are gathered together
in my name, I am there among them.*

Matthew 18:20

