

**WE'RE
SO GLAD
YOU JOINED
US TODAY!**

Welcome to St. John's!

Welcome to worship at St. John's United Methodist Church.

You are welcome and celebrated in this faith community!
If you are a first time attendee or a long-time member;
If you are black, brown, white or anything in between;
If you are gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian, or transgender;
If you are a Native American or an immigrant friend;
If you are male or female, young or old, abled or differently-abled, rich or poor;
No matter what you believe or doubt;
No matter where you are on life's journey;
You are a gift of the Creator God. Together, we are family of God,
because we are gathered in the name of the One who makes us one.



St. John's has been affiliated with Reconciling Ministries Network since 1998, when we adopted a statement affirming the sacred worth of all God's children, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. We celebrate our diversity and welcome all people to join us in our journey together toward greater understanding and mutual respect.

We welcome children and enjoy their participation in all aspects of congregational life. For caregivers of small children, a changing table is available in the front bathroom and the library is open if you need a quiet place to tend to your little one. A nursery with certified workers is available for infants through age 5 at the southeast corner of the building if you need respite. Ushers will be glad to direct you to any of these resources.

Meet Our Staff.

To contact a member of our staff please call 806-762-0123, visit us online, or send us an email at openminds@stjohnslubbock.org

Rev. Josh Stueve
Senior Pastor
Rev. Ann Akin
Associate Pastor
Clint Barrick
Organist

Tim Algate
Director of Music Ministries
David Cranford
Facilities Manager
John Dotts
Assistant Facilities Manager

Rachel Shipley
Director of Youth Ministries
Kyle Collins
Director of Communications
Trish Hernandez
Director of Childcare Ministries

Mary & Elizabeth Lauren Wright Pittman

"Mary and Elizabeth affirm, comfort, and support one another in the unexpected, strange circumstances of their pregnancies. Elizabeth instantly recognizes that Mary is pregnant and is filled to the brim with the Holy Spirit, so much so that she exclaims that Mary is blessed among women and the mother of the Lord. What an amazingly confident and prophetic statement she makes. It is unclear, exactly, of the reason for Mary's visiting Elizabeth. She may have been seeking comfort or community, or she may have been wanting to offer comfort to Elizabeth. Whatever her intentions, it is clear that Mary is emboldened and empowered by Elizabeth's affirmations as she breaks into the Magnificat. It is as though Elizabeth's words, "Blessed is she who believed," creates space in Mary's heart to proclaim the broad implications of what is taking place within her womb. I wanted to depict the creative energy, communication, and power that was taking place in Mary and Elizabeth's wombs in this moment. Mary's womb swirls with the knitting together of the One through whom all things came into being, while Elizabeth's womb radiates joy with the leaping of the one who will spend his life directing attention, awe and reverence to the One in Mary's womb."



Please Remember in Prayer:

St. John's Homebound
Jane Haynes
Myrna Shuey
Leslie Cox
Dwight Finckbone
Gary Pate
Abby Reimer
Arthur Cook
(The Brother of Randy Cook)
Roy Peterson
(The Brother of Ken Peterson)

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 **ST. JOHN'S**
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 15, 2024

10:30 a.m.

 **ST. JOHN'S**
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Address: 1501 University Ave. Lubbock, TX 79401

Phone: 806-762-0123 **Web:** stjohnslubbock.org

Email: openminds@stjohnslubbock.org

The Worship of God - 10:30 A.M. Service

ENTRANCE

**Gathering Revs. Josh Stueve and Ann Akin

Prelude Clint Barrick
Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

*Call to Worship Coleen Sedberry

God of mercy, your light dawns upon us.

We open our hearts in joy.

Your grace gives light in our darkness.

We rise from the shadow of death.

You lead us into a new day.

Guide us into the way of peace.

*Hymn No. 202 *The United Methodist Hymnal*
People, Look East BESANCON

Advent Candle Lighting - Peace Lola Smith-Gentry
and Carmen Gentry

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Act of Praise St. John's Children's Choir, Larry Howard, guitar
Night of Silence Daniel Kantor

A Time for Young Disciples Pam Edwards
Hymn No. 217 *The United Methodist Hymnal*
Away in a Manger AWAY IN A MANGER

As the children come forward:

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his
sweet head.*

*The stars in the sky looked down
where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus,
asleep on the hay.*

As the children depart:

*Be near me, Lord Jesus,
I ask thee to stay
close by me forever,
and love me, I pray;
bless all the dear children
in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven
to live with thee there.*

Prayers of the People | The Lord's Prayer Rev. Ann Akin
God in your graciousness/mercy
Hear our prayers.

**Our Father who art in Heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass
against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Act of Praise St. John's Liturgical Dance Troup
While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

*Gospel Reading - Luke 1: 68-79, p. 58, N.T. Coleen Sedberry
The word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon Rev. Josh Stueve

**You're invited to stand at moments in this service marked with an asterisk.*

***Please silence all cell phones and electronic devices.*

Prayer of Response Rev. Ann Akin
A Blessing for Open Arms Kate Bowler

Blessed are you with open arms to welcome God this Advent,
willing to invite its promises into the center of your longing.
Blessed are you, even now in the waiting.
Open to receiving what is beautiful though clothed in such precarity.
Blessed are you, agreeing to stand still long enough
to let your eyes adjust to the darkness until the starlight begins to appear,
the dawning of God's promises.

In that gentle light, find a corner of your heart
where hope can stay protected.
A place from which we can nurture a little gratitude,
a little compassion, enough to go around.
Some for God and some for yourself.
And some for the next unsuspecting soul that wanders into your light.

THANKSGIVING

Invitation to an Offering Rev. Josh Stueve

Hymn No. 211, v. 1, 2, 5, 6 *The United Methodist Hymnal*
O Come, O Come Emmanuel VENI EMMANUEL

Anthem St. John's Chancel Choir
How Great Our Joy Craig Courtney

*Doxology No. 94 and Presentation of Gifts
**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise, God the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

SENDING FORTH

Reception of New Members Rev. Ann Akin

**We rejoice to welcome you as members of
Christ's Holy Church, and we bid you welcome
to St. John's United Methodist Church.
With you we renew our vows to uphold it by our prayers,
our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.**

Hymn of Faith, No. 209 *The United Methodist Hymnal*
Blessed Be The God Of Israel MERLE'S TUNE

Benediction Rev. Josh Stueve
[Luke 1.78-79]

By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
**to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Please be seated for the Postlude.

Postlude Clint Barrick
Noel in D major Louis Claude Daquin (1694-1772)



*Altar flowers this morning are given by Sarah Nuckolls in honor of
MacKenzie Nuckolls Phillips 30th birthday and the birth of our grandson,
Grady Anthony Phillips born on December 8, 2024.*



Blue Christmas Worship Service

As we anticipate the coming of Christ during the season of Advent,
we are mindful that for many the holidays are not always merry and
bright. Whether dealing with recent tragedy or hardship or scars
from previous years, the holidays can bring the blues.

Join us in this reflective service as we remember Jesus' promise
"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Wednesday, December 18 at 6:00 p.m.

Workday at the South Plains Food Bank

United Women in Faith is sponsoring another workday at the South
Plains Food Bank(5605 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.) on Saturday,
December 21 from 10:00 a.m. - Noon. Please contact VelvetLee Elder
to register.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services

Step into the warmth of the season and immerse yourself in the
joyous atmosphere of St. John's on Christmas Eve!

Join us in person as we celebrate with two candlelight worship
services featuring famous scripture passages and joyful hymns.

Service times are 5:30 & 10:45 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24.

End of Year Giving

For end-of-year giving, you have several options.

1. You can donate on the church website (stjohnslubbock.org) or on
Realm at www.onrealm.org/stjohnslubbock.

2. You may also mail in your donations.

As long as the donation is postmarked by December 31, it will count
toward your 2024 contributions, even if the church doesn't receive it
until January. (Contribution statements for 2024 will be in the mail in
mid-late January.)