

St. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

# EPISTLE

Autumn 2023



1410 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta GA 30307 | (404) 378-4243 | stjohsatlanta.org

## BEARING FRUIT IN GOD'S VINEYARD

The theme for this year's stewardship emphasis at St. John's is "Bearing Fruit In God's kingdom". As Christians, we are called and empowered to work with the Holy Spirit and build God's kingdom in the world. Everything we do—the financial gifts we give, the committees we join, the acts of love we share bear fruit for that kingdom. The ministries of St. John's that we all cherish build God's kingdom in the Atlanta area and beyond.

An outline of our "Bearing Fruit In God's Vineyard" is as follows...

**August–September** - Ministry teams create a draft spending plan supporting our current and future ministries for 2024

**September 17–October 8** - a 4 week emphasis in worship using sermons, temple talks, and music to share thoughts about bearing fruit in God's vineyard.

**October 15 - Pledge Sunday** - the time to make a financial commitment in support of the ministries of St. John's

**November** - a time for Council to compare the draft spending plan with the our anticipated financial gifts and develop a proposed spending plan to share with the congregation

**December 3** - The Annual Congregational meeting to adopt an actual 2024 spending plan

God has graced us with an abundance of gifts and it is out of that abundance that we return a portion of those gifts to bear fruit and build God's kingdom in the world. Thank you for your continuing support of St. John's. Together we can and will make a difference in the name of Jesus Christ.

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that invites freely, loves unconditionally, and serves with joy

**The Rev. Dave Helfrich**  
Interim Pastor  
[pastordave@stjohsatlanta.org](mailto:pastordave@stjohsatlanta.org)

**Rolando Salazar**  
Music Director  
[rolazando@gmail.com](mailto:rolazando@gmail.com)

**Julie Strecker**  
Director of Faith Formation  
[julie@stjohsatlanta.org](mailto:julie@stjohsatlanta.org)

**Glen Eckman**  
Church Administrator  
[geckman@stjohsatlanta.org](mailto:geckman@stjohsatlanta.org)

**Clyde Payton**  
Sexton  
[cpayton@stjohsatlanta.org](mailto:cpayton@stjohsatlanta.org)

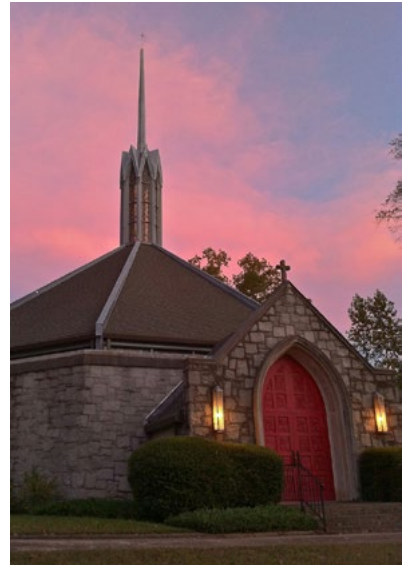
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# FAITH FORMATION CORNER

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## God's Pause

In Sunday school last week we read the parable of the Canaanite woman from Matthew. We puzzled together as we read from various bibles offering differing perspectives on Jesus's reaction to the woman when she asked him to heal her daughter. One version stated that Jesus ignored the woman. Another, that he did not answer her at all. These seemingly insignificant turns of phrase actually raise what I consider to be a paradox. It's fairly human to assume that when someone doesn't answer our call, especially in today's world where we are always connected, they are ignoring us. When I find myself jumping to that conclusion too quickly, especially when it comes to God, I have to stop and ask myself whether or not I'm being honest with myself. It's easy to blame God when the answers I'm looking for aren't there. It's easy to think that God isn't paying attention. But as I've gained more experience in life and spent more time with God, I've come to believe that when God pauses, God is still there, and still listening. Pauses in communication are important signals in interpersonal communication. They can mean many things. In a relationship where someone in a subordinate role, whether it be an employment relationship, a parent – child relationship, or a stranger – stranger encounter, is asking of someone with more power, status, or knowledge, a pause sometimes is the giver giving the asker time to reflect on the question. I believe that's the true meaning of God's pause. When I am feeling down and alone and troubled and I say "God, are you listening to me?" God's pause is God's way of saying, "Julie, are you listening to yourself? I am." And God is.



May God always be there to pause with you.  
In Peace,

Julie Strecker  
*Director of Faith Formation*

# HAPPENINGS

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## Announcing St. John's Women's Night Out!!

Come one, come all to our first **WOMEN'S NIGHT OUT** to be held **Sunday, September 17, 5-7:30 p.m.** We will dine and swim at the Durand Mill Clubhouse and Pool.

Activities will include potluck food, pool games and dry land games too. Questions? Contact Ellen [ecyswim1@gmail.com](mailto:ecyswim1@gmail.com)

Mark your calendars and hope to see you soon!

## St. John's Book Club

Welcome back, readers! The St. John's book club will meet on **Monday, August 21, at 7:00 p.m.** This will be a hybrid gathering, so those who are able can meet **in person** at Eagle Eye Books (2076 N Decatur Rd, Decatur, GA 30033); for those who are unable to join in person, the Zoom link is also available (no passcode needed): <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81116824220>. We will be discussing "The Water Dancer," by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

### Schedule for 2023

#### August 21

Book: "The Water Dancer"  
by Ta-Nehisi Coates

#### September 18

Book: "My Sister, the Serial Killer,"  
by Oyinkan Braithwaite

#### October 16

Book: "All You Can Ever Know: A Memoir,"  
by Nicole Chung

#### November 20

Book: "The Last White Man,"  
by Mohsin Hamid



# RECENT NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

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## CALL COMMITTEE

We are currently in Phase 2 of the call process, Congregational Mission Exploration.

The St. John's call committee members are:

- **Martin Jessiman** (Chair)
- **Paul Arne**
- **Marsha Goerss**
- **Gwyn Herbein**
- **Ella Myer**
- **Adam Renner**
- **Diana Robinson**
- **Francoise Wackenhut**

The Call Committee leads the process, but they need all of our input! They will engage the congregation in conversations about St. John's to create the Ministry Site Profile which will act as the foundational document to help match St. John's with its new pastor. You will have multiple opportunities to contribute to these important discussions:

**Aug. 27**, after church (in person)

**Sept. 12, 7:00 p.m.** (virtual,  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4043784243>)

**Sept. 17**, after church (in person)

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Because our current Financial Secretary, Ian McFarland, will be assuming the role of President of the congregation in January, we are in need of someone new to fill this very important role in the life of the congregation. The Financial Secretary is *ex officio* a member of the Finance Committee and Executive Committee, as well as the Church Council. They work with the Church Administrator to keep track of and report to the Church Council on congregational giving. If you would like to learn more about this role (which is not that time-consuming), please contact either Ian ([ian.mcfarland@emory.edu](mailto:ian.mcfarland@emory.edu)) or Pastor Dave.

## PROPERTY REPORT

### Sanctuary Refurbishments

The church council approved initiating refurbishments to the sanctuary. We have previously met with a representative from Waggoneer's Pew Cushion Company ([pewcushions.com](http://pewcushions.com)). They submitted a proposal for installing permanent upholstered pew cushions. We also met with a carpet company and have an estimate from them. For about \$55,000 we can refurbish the pews, woodwork and replace the carpeting.

We also found another company, Sharpe's Church Interiors, which handles pew cushions ([pewupholsteryinc.com](http://pewupholsteryinc.com)). It is very fortunate to find this company as they are located in North Carolina and they can do the complete job—refinish the wood, replace the carpeting and install pew cushions. Their representative will be at SJ around August 18th to gather measurements, etc. and subsequently, to give us a price.

### Master Project List

The Master Project List shows a listing of the many Property Ministry projects, sorted by the area and by priority. Any SJ member who has a google account can have VIEWING access to this Google document. Send your request to Doug Robinson ([doug@eagleeyebooks.com](mailto:doug@eagleeyebooks.com)) and he will share the document with you.