

February, 2023



ST. JOHN'S JOURNEY

LIVING IN HOPE † UNITED IN FAITH † LED BY LOVE

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A Note from Tom

"For many grow languid in praying; and in the freshness of their conversion they pray fervently, afterwards languidly, afterwards coldly, afterwards negligently; they become, as it were, careless. The enemy is awake; you are sleeping. Our Lord Himself, in the Gospel, gave us the precept, 'that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.'" — St. Augustine

With the month of February comes our service on Ash Wednesday—this year it is on February 22. And with Ash Wednesday comes the liturgical season of Lent. Lent: the 40 days of preparation leading up to our celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Lent: the season of the color purple. Lent: the time when we concentrate our efforts on renewing our right spirit with God.

As St. Augustine says (and I'm paraphrasing here), as practicing Christians, sometimes our prayer life—which **is** our relationship with God—gets stale. Sometimes we take God for granted, or we neglect God altogether. As Lent begins this February, it might be a good idea to take stock of our relationship to God. But how?

A good way to begin is to ponder the blessings in our lives. What do we have to be thankful for? How have we been blessed in our lives, from birth up to today? As we reflect, are there particular parts of our lives that stand out as blessings? Our health, our families, our security, our happiness?

And as we think about our blessings, maybe it's a good time to thank God in prayer for them. Doesn't take long to say, thank you God for this meal I'm about to eat (and have always eaten). Thank you, God, for this reliable car that I drive. Thank you, God, for my pet, my children, or my friends.



And, since it's Lent (almost), why not add a couple of sentences of prayer asking God to be with those who need help? Or asking prayers for situations that need to be resolved? Or offering prayers for your own comfort or your own healing?

And finally, remember to say a sentence or two praising God for all that he has done, and all that he will do for us in the future. Look at the world God has created. It is a beautiful place, and our creator God deserves some compliments about the world in which we live, and the blessings we have received.

Take a few moments to offer such prayers and we can look St. Augustine directly in the eye and say, "Not me, St. Augustine, I am sleeping no more. I am awake and so is my God!"

With every blessing...

Tom+

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St. John's Journey is published monthly. We're looking for your photos and articles. Please email them to "stjohnschurchdryden@gmail.com" with the word "Newsletter" in the subject line. Deadline for March is February 24th.



Happy Birthday!

Al Sievers, Kathy Wagester and Ida Lynn Dodd

Senior Warden

Dear Friends,

This is the Annual Meeting Newsletter. Those who attended the meeting (which had another OUTSTANDING coffee hour spread), will recognize much of what follows. I just want to be sure everyone is informed. We did elect a new Vestry. Connie Ogg has joined our group. Results of officer positions are:

- Sr. Warden** Becky Foster
- Jr. Warden** Jack Dodd
- Clerk** Connie Ogg
- Treasurer** Still Open
- Members at Large
 - Ina Dockham
 - Russ Underwood
 - Wes Wagester
 - Recording Secretary: Neil Hargrave

I've included a pictorial selection of events and people from 2022. Lots of

good memories there. The one thing I wish I had done more of in the Annual Meeting was thanking all of you for everything you do to make St. John's the mix of prayer, fun and getting it done that it is. When I think about some of



our bigger projects this year – like the Music Concerts, the Xmas Bazaar, the Building Bridges meeting – that required all-hands-on-deck, I remember that everyone just pitched in to do what was needed to welcome our visitors, to make it fun for all of us and to lend a hand wherever it was needed, I am just overwhelmed with gratitude. I have tried to thank each of you personally over the year. Consider this an additional word of gratitude. You inspire me and keep me going.

Blessings,
Becky

Taste and See Classes

Dates: Monday, February 27 @5 :30

Monday, March 6 @ 5:30

Monday, March 13 @ 5:30 Time: 5:30

Location: **St. John's Parish Hall**



Remember St. John's in your will:

Please consider helping the mission and ministry of St. John's by remembering the church in your will. You can do so by using the following wording:

"I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to St. John's Episcopal Church, a non-profit church, with the current address of 4074 S. Mill St., Dryden, MI 48428, and its successor, the greater of \$_____, or _____percentage of my gross estate, to be used in such manner as determined by its vestry."

Financial Update for Year-End 2022

Pledge Donations	\$62,887
Total Expenses	\$59,916
"Profit"	\$2,971



Pledge Donations I think several people made a special effort to donate more in these last few months and it did help. At year end we were only **\$353 below** expected amounts. Not bad at all, considering everything else that this congregation has been doing. Thank-you to everyone who donated throughout the year.

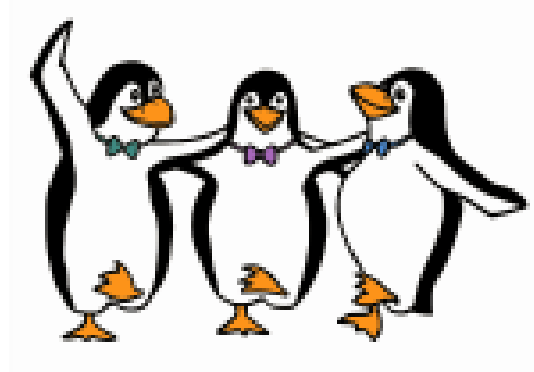
Expenses – The biggest expenses were

- Diocesan Tithe \$6,912
- Utilities \$6,169
- Parish Administrator Wages \$5,895
- Clergy Pension \$3,580
- Building Insurance \$3,530
- Music Director Wages \$2,600
- Telephone & Computer Expense \$2,075



Overview of 2023 Budget

	2023 Estimate	Change from 2022 Actuals	
Pledge Donations	\$59,200	-\$3,687	This is better than it looks. We're a little smaller this year. Many members increased their pledge amounts to make this level possible. Many thanks to all who submitted a pledge card AND to those who are regular donors.
Expenses	\$58,164	-\$1,754	
"Profit"	\$1,036	-\$1,933	If budgeted levels are maintained, we will be in the black at year's end.





Status of Invested Funds

Background:

At our 2022 Annual Meeting, the congregation approved a motion to establish an investment account according to approved Investment Policy.

- **\$65,000 was transferred to Vanguard Accounts** and invested in a highly rated and profitable fund. The chosen fund focused on companies that were environmentally friendly, socially responsible and had structures that allowed for fair and reasonable working conditions. These are called ESG funds.
- During the 2022 downturn, ESG funds did worse than other funds which, due to energy/oil investments, were able to show some recovery at the end of the year.
- Highly rated ESG funds generally lost between 8% to 19%.
- St. John's investment declined early in the year and has not yet returned to original levels of investment.
- **Total on December 31, 2022 was \$54,863 a 12% reduction.**

Going Forward:

- Since the beginning of the new year, the fund has increased to just **over \$58,000**.
- Projections for 2023 are optimistic but still predicting volatility.
- Diversification is probably better than using only one fund.
- We are exploring ways to have a professional Investment Manager to assist us with our choices going forward. This will provide better information for decisions and relieve the Treasurer from trying to learn everything there is to know about investment options.



Which way will it go?

Up and Down?

(note: bell tower expansion photo)



Transitioning from the Curacy Program

The big change in 2023 will be assuming full responsibility for clergy salary payments starting in July. We have been planning for this transition for several years. This past year, we've been creating a "kitty" to that should help us cover gaps between salary levels and annual donations. We plan to invest those funds in an interest bearing CD to increase the totals until needed. Our best guess (about salary increases, returns available for investing the funds, annual donation levels) is that we are good through 2025. At that point, we HOPE our income will cover clergy salary completely. Additional funds may be added to the Salary Allocation account through fund raising activities or donations which may extend the timeline.



If we can't cover salary needs through normal donations, what then? There are a few options:

- We draw from our main investment funds - buys time but not viable long term
- We use Supply Priests for worship needs in when resident clergy is no longer an option and cover Pastoral needs, etc. ourselves. We've done this before and it was a good experience.

For now – we do our best to manage these funds correctly

AND we **PRAY** for God's help in our efforts to continue our ministry with clergy.

LGBTQ+ Inclusion Training for Congregations

February 11, 2023 from Noon-4pm in Lansing

The Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan have legacies of inclusion, though not always perfect, aspiring to tell and exemplify God's love for every human being.



In our church, all people have access to every level of belonging and leadership, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. **There are LGBTQ+ identifying people in every community** -- this training is applicable to your congregation regardless of your size, age demographics, location,



or local politics.

Location:

St. David's Episcopal Church
1519 Elmwood Road
Lansing, MI 48917

See Rev. Tom if interested.



Many know Matt Watroba as the voice of folk music in Michigan for his work with WDET–Detroit Public Radio. As producer and host of the Folks Like Us program, and the nationally syndicated, Sing Out Radio Magazine and Folk Alley, Watroba has come in contact

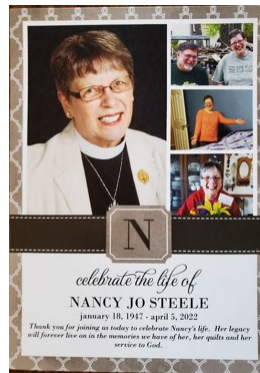


with many aspects of folk music and culture. Matt brings a unique set of talents to the stage as an educator, performer and master of ceremonies. His passion for bringing community together through music and education is infectious. Add to that Matt's own special brand of humor and you are in for a most entertaining and enlightening experience.

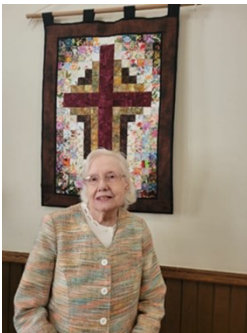
St. John's Memories of 2022



Our first Seder in 2 years!



Some of our friends have gone before us. They were blessings that are truly missed. We look forward to seeing them again.



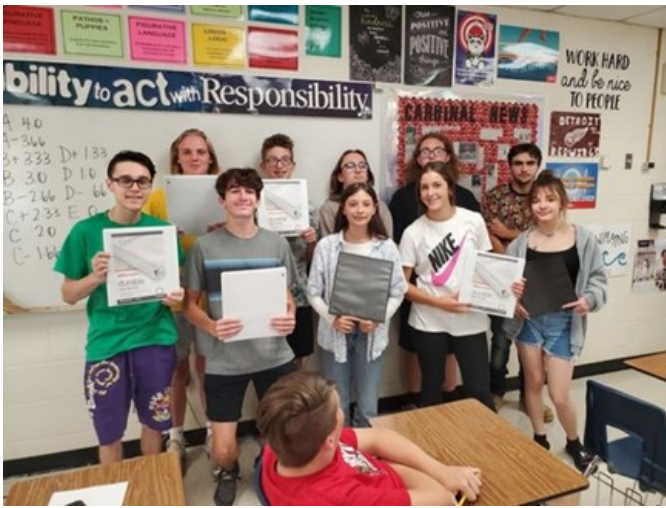
Evelyn Sunich at Easter!



St. John's version of 2 Men and a truck. They did a great job of clearing out the old shed area.



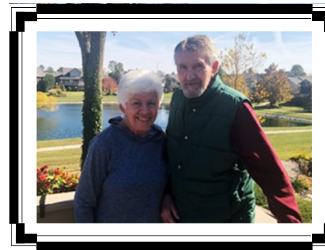
The blessing of the new shed on Pentecost Sunday. We sure look good in red. New shed looks pretty good too.



School supplies were gathered for Susan McNary's first grade class and for Dryden High School Students – who are seen here with some of the notebooks.



Outreach Teen Relief gets some attention from the County Press. We collected 26 coats this fall for Dryden High. That's over \$1,000 of coats!



And some of our friends have moved from the area. We hope they enjoy their new surroundings

St. John's Episcopal Church
 Concert Series Presents:
The Classic Choral
 Women's Ensemble presenting
 A Variety of Choral Music
 Saturday, June 11th at 7pm
 St. John's Episcopal Church
 4074 Mill St.
 Dryden, MI 48428
 For more information visit: www.stdrydenschurch.org

We had two concerts this year and there are more to come in 2023!



Wanted! Two Volunteer Paparazzi

If you can take pictures with your phone, you can do this. There are so many wonderful moments at St. John's but we can't share the images unless someone takes a picture. Last month's Annual Meeting? No pictures. Remember that lovely Jane Harlow Sunday? No pictures. If we have two people looking for photo-ops, we'll have way more than we have now. It won't be hard and it may just be FUN! Please talk to Becky if you can help.



Nikolai got married. Lelia had a baby and some new grandparents are enjoying it all.



St. John's knows how to have some fun too – basket raffle winners, Canadian Thanksgiving.



Halloween candy givers, Holy Hikes in Port Huron and then there's always...

...the Xmas Bazaar! This year's star was a hand-made, fully furnished doll house. Here we see Ina, the creator, and the new owner, Cecilia. What a cutie. So many folks made this a wonderful day and we raised \$1,500 – a record for our Xmas fund raiser.



Rev. Barb's retirement present. She's currently making a world cruise – we hope she thoroughly enjoys her new freedom.

Bishop Singh participated in the Building Bridges session we held at St. John's in December. BTW – the pot-luck was outstanding!



We are blessed with a great team who lead us in worship.

Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors.... Choir and Crucifers



St. John's a wonderful community of faith. Thanks to everyone for making 2022 a memorable year. Wonder what 2023 will bring?



Raspberry White Chocolate Bars

Another yummy recipe from Connie!

TOTAL TIME: Prep: 20 min. Bake: 45 min.

YIELD: 2 dozen.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- 1 package (10 to 12 ounces) white baking chips, divided
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup seedless raspberry jam
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds

Directions

1. In a small saucepan, melt butter. Remove from the heat; add 1 cup chips (do not stir). In a small bowl,

beat eggs until foamy; gradually add sugar. Stir in chip mixture and almond extract. Combine flour and salt; gradually add to egg mixture just until combined.

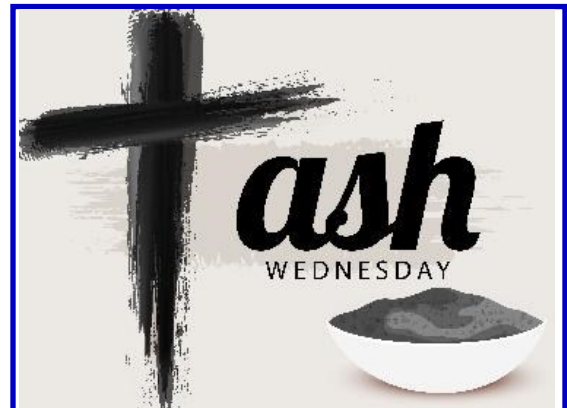
2. Spread half of the batter into a greased 9-in. square baking pan. Bake at 325° for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.
3. In a small saucepan, melt jam over low heat; spread over warm crust. Stir remaining chips into the remaining batter; drop by spoonfuls over the jam layer. Sprinkle with almonds.
4. Bake 30-35 minutes longer or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Cut into bars.



Taizé Service at St. John's

Thursday, February 2 @ 6:00

A Contemplative and Meditative Form of Worship



February 22nd

The beginning of Lent

Ministry Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lector</u>	<u>Eucharistic Minister</u>	<u>Cruiter</u>	<u>Worship Leader</u>	<u>Video</u>	<u>Counting Member 1</u>	<u>Counting Member 2</u>
Feb 5	Mary	Neil	Neil	Rev Manney	Ina	Ina	Wes
Feb 12	Jack			Kitty	Ida	Ina	Ina
Feb 19	Neil	Tammy	Jack	Rev Manney	Sherry	Wes	Russ
Feb 26	Margaret			Becky	Wes	Russ	
Mar 5	Kathy	Jack	Neil	Rev Manney	Becky	Becky	Jack
Mar 12	Tammy			Neil	Ina	Jack	Connie
Mar 19	Jack	Mary	Jack	Rev Manney	Ida	Ina	Wes
Mar 26	Mary			Kitty	Wes	Connie	Ina

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