

# Amens & Alleluias

St. John's Episcopal Church, Congaree

1151 Elm Savannah Road, Hopkins, SC 29061

10:30 am - Celebrating Holy Eucharist Rite 1 on Sundays; celebrating Holy Eucharist Rite II last Sunday of each month

Phone: 803.776.9292 - Website: [www.stjohnscongarree.net](http://www.stjohnscongarree.net) – Office email: stjohnscongarree@gmail.com

## MISSION STATEMENT

We, as members of St. John's Episcopal Church, Congaree, are an open, caring, nurturing community, committed to living the Word of God by witnessing through Christ and growing in grace through prayer, fellowship, education and service.

NEWSLETTER FOR JANUARY 2025

### From the Rector's Desk – January 2025

Dear friends in Christ,

Happy new year! I hope that you have had a joyful and peaceful holiday season and your transition into 2025 has been smooth and hopeful.

2024 was a brilliant year in the life of St. John's! The Advent and Christmas seasons in particular were full of joy. We had a baptism and our first Christmas Extravaganza for children in our community. Thank you to Julie Claytor, the Floyds, and the Perzas for their help putting together such a lovely celebration.

January is one of my favorite months of the year simply for the hope that it offers. The chance to reset and recenter our lives comes with a burst of vigor that hopefully sustains us through the colder months. I have a complicated relationship with the idea of new year's resolutions, for I believe that reorientation and working towards goals is a lifelong endeavor with various starts and stops. Still, there is something refreshing about January.

Epiphany, which the Church observes on January 6, is a season of newness, freshness, hope, and light. We continue with the familiar story of the magi from the East following a celestial path across a long distance to the manger of the Christ child, a King. Then on February 2, we will watch as Jesus is presented in the Temple by his parents. Let us not forget Simeon's response to Jesus's arrival: "these eyes of mine have seen the Savior...a light to enlighten the nations."

The celebrations of the Incarnation have passed, but we mustn't linger in post-holiday blues, for we have so much more to learn from Christ this season before Lent. Join me in pondering the continuation of the Christmas story this month for there is much more to be gleaned and we are now awake and refreshed.

The end of the month will be a busy and exciting time for me, personally. Garrett and I are getting married on Friday the 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:00pm at Trinity Cathedral in Columbia. We sincerely hope that you will be able to join us for the Celebration of Holy Matrimony. You are a large part of our story as a couple, and it would be a comfort and honor to see your faces in the crowd as we make our vows to one another. The dress code is black tie optional, but please don't go out and buy a gown or a tux. Come as you are. We will be receiving guests right after the service so please do come and say hello.

I am so appreciative of your prayers for Garrett and me as we make this next step in our life together. Your support and kindness have meant the world to us.

You remain in my prayers every day. Continue in encouraging one another in faith and love, and I will see you in church.

In Christ, Katie+ (and for the last time, signing off as "Katie Beaver")



### **SUNDAY MORNING FORUM**

The people of St. John's are very appreciative of Rev. Katie and Lisa Clarkson for leading the Forum sessions of Episcopal Church 101! The sessions began in October and ended on Advent 4, December 22. They were well attended, informative, interactive and fun! Stay tuned to what comes next.

### **SENIOR WARDEN'S THOUGHTS**

2024 has gone by very quickly. My thanks to Rita and John as they complete their terms on the vestry and Van as he completes a long term as our Junior Warden. 2024 was also a good year for our Church. Attendance and income are improving, and we enjoyed an excellent homecoming. Formation is going again and was led by Lisa and Rev. Katie. Many activities, such as backpack meals, teacher support, school supplies, and the little library are occurring under our sponsorship at Gadsden Elementary. Our recent extravaganza, held December 22 was quite a success with 40+ in attendance. The activities were well thought out and fun. Children of all ages enjoyed Christmas story time with Rev. Katie. Thanks to Julie for all her work on this project! The Men's Bible Study accepted Bishop Richard's challenge to read the Bible in one year. If you would like to be part of this, meet us at Lizard's Thicket on Tuesdays at 8AM! I firmly believe 2025 will be an even better year for us. Come and see! Onward and upward!

Jim 803.783.4214

### **JUNIOR WARDEN'S NEWS ARTICLE**

December has seen a busy month at St. John's not only for Advent and Christmas but also for work on the buildings and grounds.

In the parish house there are now two new faucets in the little bathrooms' sinks. The old faucets, sixty-two years old, had leaks and were not repairable due to corrosion. The drain pipes for the sinks were replaced too and new fill valves were installed in the water tanks of the commodes. This work was done by Franklin Plumbing and Drain.

The church building's exterior renovations are all but complete. John Davis and David Brown have replaced the wood that was rotted and in need of replacing. David Brown has painted the building and all that is lacking are a few touchup spots. The church's front doors are just before being repaired by John and David with new heart pine veneer boards to be installed.

Outside on the grounds, some of the high winds we experienced earlier in December blew a white pine tree almost onto our shed. The tree did not fall onto the shed as it was caught and held by some very strong vines. It was determined that this fallen tree and three beside it needed to be removed to prevent a disaster from happening to the shed. The trees were removed by Gardener's Tree Service from Irmo. Gardener's Tree Service also limbed up three trees on the property that had dead limbs in them.

This completes my last report as junior warden. I wish to thank the congregation for allowing me the privilege of serving the church these last few years as your junior warden.

**VESTRY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

December 1, 2024

- The Bishop's visitation will be on March 30, 2025.
- Julie Claytor and the rector are working on a Christmas program for children.
- The rector would like to use Rite II during Epiphany.
- The rector will be out of town on December 29 and February 2.
- Anne Lott was elected treasurer for 2025.
- The next meeting will be January 13, 2025.

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM KATIE RE: SPAM TEXT MESSAGES**

It has come to my attention that there is a person or persons out there who is sending texts to members of the congregation pretending to be me, asking for gift cards and/or monetary donations. These are spam messages! Please delete the messages and report them as Spam to your carrier. Remember, I will never ask for gift cards or money via text or email. Please be cautious when opening any links or attachments from suspicious senders. If you have any doubts about a text you receive, you can always call, text, or call me at (803) 386-7049, my published church phone number. Thank you to everyone who alerted me to this incident on Monday evening.

**HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE****Happy New Year!**

As we step into a brand-new year, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on 2024. This past year marked a significant transition for our committee as we bid farewell to our beloved chairperson, Rita, who "retired" after many years of dedicated service. Rita's remarkable leadership has left an enduring legacy—her meticulous attention to detail, unwavering commitment to excellence, and warm spirit have shaped the Hospitality Committee in countless ways. While we'll miss her leadership, Rita's not entirely off the hook; I'll continue to seek her guidance and assistance in the year ahead.

Although 2024 wasn't the busiest year for the Hospitality Committee, we were honored to serve our church family in meaningful ways. We hosted receptions - both in times of loss and in joyful moments like welcoming a new member to our family – and by providing meals during recovery. Our goal will be to continue to uplift and support our community whenever needed.

Looking forward, I encourage you to reach out if you know of anyone in need of support during times of illness or hardship. The Hospitality Committee is equally eager to assist during moments of joy and celebration.

Together, let's make 2025 a year filled with kindness, connection, and shared blessings. Here's to new beginnings and a wonderful year ahead!

Debbie Davis  
Hospitality Committee Chair

**NEWS FROM YOUR ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN**

The next ECW meeting will be on January 19 at 9:30am. Here are highlights and available opportunities. Your faithful efforts contribute to our success in fulfilling our budget for outreach projects for the year. Our humble thanks!

- The president of ECW beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup> is Julie Claytor. Welcome, Julie, and thank you!
- The ECW will sponsor a "Pounding" shower for Katie and Garrett on Saturday, January 11 at 11am. Please plan to attend this fun event honoring Katie and Garrett.
- The executive committee will meet on January 12 in Zion Hall after worship to formulate the proposed 2025 outreach budget which will be presented at the January 19 meeting.

Peace and Love, Julie Claytor, Rita McCaskill, Fran Burnett and Mary Ann Hiott

**GADSDEN MINISTRY**

*Thank You!*

*(Thank you note from Rory Washington, the school counselor at Gadsden Elementary)*

Dear St. John's Episcopal Church Congaree Family,

The students and Staff of Gadsden Elementary send our gratitude for all that you do for us. You impact the lives of our students, parents, and staff in such a positive way each week and during this special time of year. We appreciate the care, time, and energy you have given.

We are definitely reaping the benefits from your ministering and kindness. God be with each of you. Wishing you a season filled with joy, love, and laughter.

*Happy Holidays!*

Thank you for your support of all of our Gadsden Ministries. Your compassion and generosity have made it possible for us to make a difference in the lives of so many.

**Gadsden Backpack Ministry**

How much did you eat during the holidays? Did you ever feel hungry? It is hard to imagine being hungry and not finding enough to satisfy the feeling. This is why we continue to support the Backpack program at Gadsden Elementary School where we furnish supplemental weekend meals for 20 students each week. We hope to promote healthy eating habits as we pack the bags each week. Items donated should be nonperishable, single servings, and easy to prepare as oftentimes the children do this themselves.

Suggestions can be found on our website at <https://www.stjohnscongarree.net/volunteer-opportunities>. Your support is important and greatly appreciated.

**Gadsden Elementary Little Free Library**

**ST. JOHN'S RECEIVED A MATTHEW 25 GRANT FROM EDUSC**

St. John's has received a \$1,500 grant from the Diocese called a "Matthew 25 Grant." This is a program designed to fund and support ministries of mercy and caring. We applied for this grant in order to help fund and sustain the Little Library ministry at Gadsden Elementary, and will be able to do so with the amount provided. Huge thanks to Julie Claytor for writing a successful grant application and all her work with this wonderful ministry!

On our website ([www.stjohnscongarree.net](http://www.stjohnscongarree.net)) go to the Ministries page for more information.

**ALTAR GUILD**

Director – Lisa Clarkson

Thank you to the Altar Guild members who served in December and helped prepare the church for Advent and Christmas Eve. As we move into the new year, you may sign up to give flowers for the altar from January 12 (flowers are being donated on January 26) to March 2. Ash Wednesday is March 5 and no flowers will be on the altar until Easter.

**MEMORIAL GIFT OF ADVENT CANDLES**

The Blue Advent Candles are being given to the greater Glory of God and in loving memory of John Gorman Clarkson III and Thomas Nicklos Carros by Lisa Clarkson.

January Schedule: January 5<sup>th</sup>- Louise/Corrie; January 12<sup>th</sup>- Julie/Frank; January 19<sup>th</sup>- Sara & Lloyd; January 26<sup>th</sup>- Fran/Al.

Please consider joining this important ministry and call Lisa at 803.237.2892.

**THE GOOD NEWS GRAPEVINE**

A big thank-you (from Danielle Floyd) to everyone who helped with Senior Resources' Shoebox for Seniors campaign! Because of your generosity, we were able to deliver over 1,000 gifts to seniors in Richland County who are part of our programs. If you'd like to keep helping throughout the year, we're always in need of shelf-stable pantry items and pet food for our seniors. Feel free to reach out to Danielle at [dfloyd@seniorresourcesinc.org](mailto:dfloyd@seniorresourcesinc.org) if you have any questions or want to get involved.

Our own Carol Fowles has traveled to Iceland to visit with her granddaughter, Sarah and her family, and to meet her new great-grand baby. Congratulations to you all!

Your devoted staff wishes to thank the congregation for their kindnesses in giving them a Christmas bonus. They feel grateful and blessed to be serving God and His people in this church and are looking forward to the new year and all the blessings and opportunities it will afford!

If you have news about yourself or your family you wish to share for the February newsletter, please send it to the church office no later than January 22<sup>nd</sup> at: [stjohnscongraree@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnscongraree@gmail.com).

**JANUARY CELEBRATIONS**

**BIRTHDAYS IN JANUARY**

3	Holly Brazitis	11	Garrett Davis
4	Jo Ann Curtis	13	Treye Byars
4	Sheryl Moureaux	21	Jennifer Tafel
6	Ashlee Thompson	27	John McCaskill
7	Bob Harding	31	Annie Antley
7	Bud McCaskill		

**ANNIVERSARIES IN JANUARY**

1	Alicia & Jenks Mikell
18	Carolyn & John Grimbball

**SERVANTS IN JANUARY**

	<u>WORSHIP LEADER</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>VIDEOGRAPHER</u>	<u>GREETER</u>
January 5	Bud McCaskill	Rita McCaskill	Van Lott	The Claytors
January 12	Fran Burnett	Julie Claytor	Jose Peraza	Debbie Davis
January 19	Van Lott	Anne Lott	John Davis	Mary Ann Hiott
January 26	Jim Hiott	John Lott	Selman Watson	Louise Barker

**Memorial gifts received from November 17 through December 22, 2024**

***In memory of Thomas Nicklos Carros***

Given by Tweetie Clarkson White

***In memory of William Hines Linder***

Given by Anne and Van Lott

**FINANCIAL REPORT through November 30, 2024**

**Operating Fund Checking Account:**

November income: \$8,126.30

November disbursements: \$10,648.18

Difference: **-\$2,521.88**

1/1/2024 through 11/30/2024

Income: \$88,648.01

Disbursements: \$137,312.27

Difference: **-\$48,664.26**

**Cemetery and Grounds Checking Account:**

November income: \$500.08

November disbursements: \$670.00

Difference: **-\$169.92**

1/1/2024 through 11/30/2024

Income: \$8014.21

Disbursements: \$15,520.00

Difference: **-\$7,005.71**

**Building Fund Checking Account:**

November income: \$100.22

November disbursements: \$6243.00

Difference: **-\$6142.78**

1/1/2024 through 11/30/2024

Income: \$11,001.43

Disbursements: \$7940.50

Difference: **-\$3,060.93**

**ST. JOHN'S PRAYER LIST**

<b><u>Please Pray For:</u></b>	<b><u>Requested by:</u></b>
Kimberly Brown	Bev Watkins
Miriam Claytor	Parish
Sandy Yuille	Parish
Shay Burnett	Mary Ann Hiott
Brenda Manning	Ed Manning
Chris McVey	Debbie Morris
Jo Curtis	Parish
Mary Clarkson	Parish
Debby Watson	Parish
Judy Addison	Parish
Stan Ingram	Debbie Morris
Michelle	Jane Rye
Holly Davis	Louise Barker
Chris	Lloyd & Sara Ash
James Donahue	John Lott
Maria Brady	Debbie Davis
John Train	Selman Watson
Jack Carmichael	Bev Watkins
Sylvan Plaia aka Lucky	Butch & Judy Addison
Don Burton	Selman Watson
Susan Azukas	Corrie Blasi
Tom Moore	Carol Fowles
Austin Mintz	John & Lynn Davis
Lesley Antley Marshall	Annie Antley
Libby Byars	Parish
Barbara Thames	Holly Davis
Penny Sparrow	Holly Davis
Roy Brazzell	Tammy Brazzell
Heather	Corrie Blasi
John Davis	Parish
Danny Cox	Van Lott
Dave McCoy	Van Lott
Mike Chastain	Van Lott
Warren Powell	Van Lott
Ed Derst	Van Lott
Nancy Stands	Van Lott
Sue Martin	John & Lynn Davis
Joseph Brazzitis	Holly Brazzitis
Jane Rye	Parish
Bill Spoonhoward	Lisa Clarkson
Suzanne Hotinger Galloway	Fran Burnett

Please let us know if you have someone to add to the Prayer List, and if there are folks who have recovered, please let us know that as well.

**POINSETTIAS IN HONOR OF:**



Given for:

The Rev's. Katie Beaver & Garrett Ayers  
 M.R., Leslie, Brett & Caroline Addison  
 Matthew, Amanda, Levi & Audra Nichols  
 John & Lynn Davis & family  
 Rusty & Debbie Davis & family  
 Children & Grandchildren  
 Grandchildren  
 Great Grandchildren  
 Libby Byars

Given by:

Judy & Butch Addison  
 Judy & Butch Addison  
 Judy & Butch Addison  
 Louise Barker  
 Louise Barker  
 Lisa Clarkson  
 Ann & Bob Harding  
 Ann & Bob Harding  
 Bev Watkins

**POINSETTIAS IN MEMORY OF:**

Given for:

M.R. & Annie Addison  
 William & Julia Raines  
 Harold Chadwick Agan  
 Isaac Hayne  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles J. Cate, Jr.  
 Mr. & Mrs. John W. Walker  
 Thomas & Ann Carros  
 John G. Clarkson III  
 Mr. & Mrs. W. R. Claytor  
 Mr. & Mrs. Fred O'Connell  
 Mr. & Mrs. Glass  
 Mr. & Mrs. Goolsby  
 Ed & Avis Hiott  
 G. Joe & Elizabeth Topshe  
 John Gorman Clarkson  
 Sarah Fellers Clarkson  
 Charles Frederick Cooper  
 Amelia Pringle Hopkins  
 Sally Hopkins Livingston  
 Nancy Baggott Lott  
 Van Dorn Lott, Jr.  
 Sarah Clarkson Moore  
 Thomas Thompson Moore  
 Vaughn Moureaux  
 Laurie S. McKee  
 Margaret Foster Curtis  
 William & Elizabeth Blake

Given by:

Judy & Butch Addison  
 Judy & Butch Addison  
 Louise Barker  
 Louise Barker  
 Betsy & Billy Cate  
 Betsy & Billy Cate  
 Lisa Clarkson  
 Lisa Clarkson  
 Julie & Frank Claytor  
 Julie & Frank Claytor  
 Ann & Bob Harding  
 Ann & Bob Harding  
 Mary Ann & Jim Hiott  
 Mary Ann & Jim Hiott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Anne & Van Lott  
 Sheryl Moureaux  
 Sheryl Moureaux  
 Drew Robb  
 Bev Watkins