

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 – 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 DECEMBER 2024

From the Rector's Desk – December 2024

Dear friends,

I can never say it too much or too often: I am so thankful for you!

As our year ends, I am reminded more than ever how important church communities are. It has been a tough year and a joyful year. We have, as a community, suffered loss, endured medical crises, navigated a tricky public landscape, and dealt with the various daily heartbreaks that come with life. We have also had much to celebrate! I was installed as your rector last January, we had a joyful Easter, lots of good work done in our community, a fabulous Pentecost picnic and softball game, and a full Homecoming turnout.

Advent is a season of creativity, waiting, and anticipation. If you're like me, patience is not easy. It is hard to wait around for the next thing, especially when that next thing is the birth of our Savior. It seems that every year he arrives just in time. He arrives just as the nights get longer and darker, just in time for deep sadness which can surface during the holidays. He brings with him Good News. He brings peace, joy, hope, and comfort for the entire world. Rejoice, rejoice.

This holiday season, your church is here for you! If you are grieving, if you are merry, if you are struggling, if you are lost you are welcome at St. John's. Please reach out to me should you need any pastoral advice or company. Churches are places carved out, places that make room for encounters with Christ. Of course, Christ is everywhere. But there is something special about worshipping in Advent and being in a place that makes room in our hearts and lives for the arrival of something precious.

Christ is coming, how can you make room for him?

I look forward to celebrating the holiday season with you for a second time! Please invite your friends and family to church this season, let them experience the embrace of Christian community.

In Christ,

Katie+



SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

Rev. Katie and Lisa Clarkson are leading sessions of Episcopal Church 101! Three sessions remain. The sessions are being held from 9-10:15 each Sunday. Topics include: Introduction, Book of Common Prayer, Church History, Church Year with sacraments, colors and liturgy, Global Anglican Community, Social Issues and Spirituality. These classes will be helpful to anyone who wishes to be confirmed or would like a refresher course on the church. The remaining opportunities to attend are Sundays, December 8, 15 & 22. Coffee and light refreshments will be served. If you have been unable to attend thus far, please join us when you can.

JUNIOR WARDEN'S NEWS ARTICLE

This month we have seen a tremendous amount of repair work done on the exterior of the church. John Davis and his helper David are in the final stages of completing the work on the church's exterior and Patrick Sullivan is in the process of painting the building. John now has the wood for the repairs to the front doors. The wood selected is reclaimed heart pine and the work shall begin soon. The well pump failed at the rectory and Phillip Paul of Paul's Well Service came and replaced it.

VESTRY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

November 11, 2024

- The budget presented by the Finance Committee was passed.
- The Junior Warden reported that the church building is being painted and the panels on the front door will be replaced.
- The Senior Warden commented that Homecoming this year was great. He reported that procedures to put on this great day are being written down and standardized.
- The Senior Warden made positive comments about the Diocesan Convention and how Bishop Richards runs an efficient meeting.
- The nominating committee presented the following slate to be presented to the congregation on December 1:
 1. Junior Warden: Rusty Davis
 2. Vestry members: Betsy Cate, Treye Byars
 3. Convention delegates: Jim Hiott, Fran Burnett, Lisa Clarkson, Van Lott, Mary Ann Hiott, Louise Barker
- Julie Claytor will work with the rector to develop some sort of Christmas program for children.
- Barratt Murphy, great grandson of Jed and Mary Sturtevant, will be baptized at St. John's on December 15.
- The meeting concluded with Compline.
- The next meeting will be December 1 after the Annual Meeting.

THANK YOU FROM YOUR STEWARDSHIP CHAIR

We have had a wonderful response during our Stewardship Season; with total pledges surpassing those of 2024. Your faithful support of St. John's puts us in a position to grow, thrive, and continue God's work in our community. Thank you, not only for your support during Stewardship Season, but for always stepping up when there is a need. What a great team we have at St. John's!

Julie Claytor

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

2024 Comes to a Close: Gratitude and Upcoming Events

It's hard to believe that there is only one month left in 2024! This year has flown by, and as we approach the final weeks, we want to take a moment to express sincere thanks to everyone who has supported the Hospitality Committee throughout the year. Your generosity, time, and efforts have made all the difference, and I am grateful for each of you.

Looking ahead, we have two special events to look forward too. In December we will be celebrating the baptism of Barratt William Murphy - a joyous occasion for our community. In January we have a "pounding" for Katie, a tradition that brings us together in love and support. These are happy times to celebrate with one another!

As always, the Hospitality Committee is here to help. If you or someone you know is in need of assistance or if you have any special requests, please do not hesitate to reach out. Our mission is to serve and support our community, and we are here to lend a hand. You can contact the church office at 803-776-9292 or Debbie Davis 803-622-2929,

Additionally, if you feel called to serve in this special ministry, we would love to have you join us, whether it's helping with events, providing hospitality, or offering a kind word to someone in need.

Thank you again for your continued support, and may the final month of 2024 be filled with peace, joy, and gratitude for all the blessings we share.

Debbie Davis

Hospitality Committee Chair

NEWS FROM YOUR ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

The ECW meeting was November 24 following covered dish luncheon in Zion Hall. Here are highlights and available opportunities. Your faithful efforts contribute to our success in fulfilling our budget for the year. Our humble thanks!

- As a church-wide project, two families have been adopted to receive gifts for Christmas. A sign-up poster is available and gifts should be wrapped and tagged by December 8th.
- The ECW will purchase gifts for the women at Women's Shelter to give to their children.
- 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.

Peace and Love, Louise Barker, Rita McCaskill, Fran Burnett and Mary Ann Hiott

ECW CHRISTMAS ADOPT-A-FAMILY

This Christmas the ECW will be adopting 2 families from Gadsden Elementary School. There is a sign-up sheet in the church narthex and a big poster in the parish hall that lists the children, their gift needs, and sizes. Please sign up for the gift(s) you would like to purchase, wrap your gift, and place it under the church Christmas tree by SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8. Be sure to label each wrapped gift with the number assigned to the child you are buying for. Once you have placed your gift under the tree, please check off your name on the sign-up sheet. Any questions? Check with Julie Claytor.

Thank you for making this a very, merry Christmas for some children and for generously supporting our outreach projects.

GADSDEN MINISTRY

Gadsden Backpack Project

St. John's continues to support the Backpack program at Gadsden Elementary School where we furnish supplemental weekend meals for 20 students each week. Items donated should be nonperishable, single servings and things children can prepare on their own. We hope to promote healthy eating habits as well.

Do you shop at Food Lion or Walmart? Our pantry consistently needs Van Camp's Beanee Weenees with the yellow top. Each can is considered a meal and when we order from Walmart, we can only order 12 cans. We need 20 each week. Please consider picking up a few cans for our program whenever you can.

Other suggestions can be found on our website at <https://www.stjohnscongaree.net/volunteer-opportunities>. Your donations are important and appreciated. Remember to check to see if assistance is needed to pack the bags on Sunday. The pantry is set up to make this process easy and quick. Thank you all.

Gadsden Elementary Little Free Library

A big thank you goes to everyone who contributed to our October book drive. We now have a good supply of children's books that we will use to stock the Gadsden Elementary Little Free Library. We will also be able to buy some new books for the library with the monetary donations. Our goal with this ministry is to encourage the love of reading in the Gadsden students by putting books into their hands. We hope to have the library installed and ready for use by the end of November.

St. John's will make sure that the Little Free Library always has books for the students to choose from. That being said, donations of money or books appropriate for children between the ages of 3 and 12 will be accepted at any time. Thank you for your part in the success of the students at Gadsden Elementary.

On our website (www.stjohnscongaree.net) go to the Ministries page for more information.

ALTAR GUILD

Director – Lisa Clarkson

Thank you to the Altar Guild members who served in November and helped prepare the church for Homecoming. As we move into Advent and Christmas, please remember to place your order for poinsettias by December 15th. Order forms will be in the bulletin.

December Schedule:

December 1st- Louise/Corrie; December 8th- Julie/Frank; December 15th- Rita/Betsy; December 22nd- Fran/Al; December 24th- Lisa and the Altar Guild; December 29th- Rita/Betsy

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

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.

THE GOOD NEWS GRAPEVINE

- The 2024 Homecoming/All Saints' Day BBQ was a resounding success on November 2-3. Over 80 people worshipped with us that day, many coming back to St. John's for the first time in a long while. It is always a privilege to welcome them home. Thank you to everyone who helped cook, grill, smoke, set up, clean up, etc.! We could not have done this without you.
- Rev. Katie will baptize Barratt William Murphy on Sunday, December 15, at the 10:30 service. Barratt's great-grandfather was former St. John's rector, The Rev. Jed Sturtevant, and we are delighted to host their family for this most special occasion.
- Rejoice! Taylor Williams and her husband Garrett welcomed a son, Hagan Arthur Williams, on November 24 at 7lb.1oz., 19.5 inches. Everyone is happy and healthy! Congratulations to the whole family, especially grandparents Treye and Gina Byars!

If you have news about yourself or your family you wish to share for the January newsletter, please send it to the church office no later than December 20th at: stjohnscongarree@gmail.com.

DECEMBER CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

2	Lisa Clarkson	16	Tammy Brazzell
8	Buddy McCaskill	17	Nikki Thilges Philipp
11	Fran Burnett	19	Elise Wilson
12	Dinks Schaeffer	20	John Crane
13	John Davis	21	Ed Kendall
14	Julia Robb	23	Asher Tatum

ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER

31	Stephanie & Michael Thompson
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SERVANTS IN DECEMBER

	<u>WORSHIP LEADER</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>VIDEOGRAPHER</u>	<u>GREETER</u>
December 1	Bud McCaskill	Rita McCaskill	Jose Peraza	The Claytors
December 8	Lloyd Ash	Bev Watkins	John Davis	Debbie Davis
December 15	Fran Burnett	Louise Barker	Van Lott	Mary Ann Hiott
December 22	Van Lott	Anne Lott	Selman Watson	Louise Barker
December 24	Jim Hiott	John Lott	Lloyd Ash	Louise Barker
December 29	Lloyd Ash	Julie Claytor	Frank Claytor	John Davis

Memorial gifts received from October 22 through November 15, 2024

In memory of Thomas Nicklos Carros

Given by Lisa Carros Clarkson

In memory of Laura Jervey Hopkins and the Hopkins Family

Given by Calvert Hopkins Helms

In memory of Mr. G. T. Powers

Given by Elizabeth Powers

In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Smith, III

Given by Mackie and Patrick O'Keefe

In memory of Mr. Mr. Keating Lewis Smith

Given by Mackie and Patrick O'Keefe

In memory of Mr. Mr. Keating Lewis Smith, II

Given by Mackie and Patrick O'Keefe

In memory of Mr. William Duffie Verner, Jr.

Given by Ms. M. Dallas McGuire

FINANCIAL REPORT through October 31, 2024

Operating Fund Checking Account:

October income: \$7226.31

October disbursements: \$13,201.96

Difference: **-\$5975.65**

1/1/2024 through 10/30/2024

Income: \$80,521.71

Disbursements: \$126,715.92

Difference: **-\$46,194.21**

Cemetery and Grounds Checking Account:

October income: \$539.96

October disbursements: \$0.00

Difference: \$539.96

1/1/2024 through 10/30/2024

Income: \$8014.21

Disbursements: \$14,180.00

Difference: **-\$6165.79**

Building Fund Checking Account:

October income: \$10,000.14

October disbursements: \$6228.40

Difference: \$3771.74

1/1/2024 through 10/30/2024

Income: \$10,901.21

Disbursements: \$21,872.50

Difference: **-\$10,971.29**

ST. JOHN'S PRAYER LIST

<u>Please Pray For:</u>	<u>Requested by:</u>
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
Lee Sheorn	Drew Robb
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 Brazitis	Holly Brazitis
Jane Rye	Parish

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.