



# TOGETHER FOR JOY STEWARDSHIP 2021

*Let the floods clap their hands;  
let the hills sing together for joy.*

+ Psalm 98

We are a Christian community called to share our gifts through worship, witness, and service so others will know God and become disciples of Jesus Christ. At St. John's United Methodist Church we come *together for joy* through worship, witness and service, and through pledging.

Commitment Sunday, when we are invited to make a pledge to God's work at St. John's for 2021, is October 25, 2020. Our pledge goal for next year is 100% participation by church members. Remember, it is not how much you pledge but that you show your commitment to St. John's by pledging. No pledge is too small to be thankfully received. Inspired by Psalm 98, let us join in singing a new song, as we invest in our future *together for joy*.

## Did you know?

- 126 households pledged a total of \$460,200 for 2020
- Pledges = 73% of our 2020 budget
- Every pledge is important
- Pledged revenue is needed more than ever in 2021

*Our shared commitment to offering a pledge each year provides a firm foundation for St. John's as we seek to live out our vision to feed people spiritually and physically.*

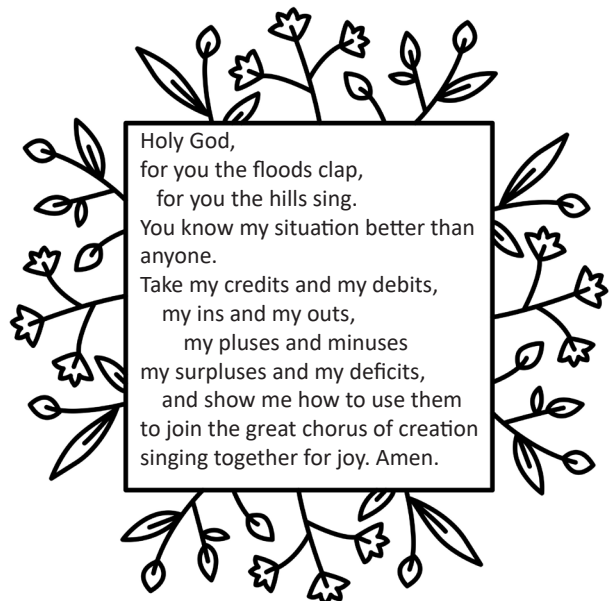
## Ways to Pledge

1. **WORSHIP:** Complete your 2021 pledge card and bring it with you to worship on Commitment Sunday, October 25, 2020, at 10 a.m.
2. **DRIVE-THRU:** Drop off your completed 2021 pledge card during the Drive-Thru Offering on October 25, 2020, between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. or at the "Together for Joy" Tailgate fellowship happening after worship that day.
3. **MAIL:** Return your completed pledge card by mail to: St. John's United Methodist Church, 230 Renee Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70810.
4. **ONLINE:** Submit your pledge online anytime at [stjohnsbr.org/pledge-2021](http://stjohnsbr.org/pledge-2021).



TOGETHER FOR JOY  
STEWARDSHIP 2021  
**WORSHIP & TAILGATE**  
COMMITMENT SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 25  
worship @ 10 am  
with tailgate to follow

On Sunday, October 25, we will celebrate with joy the commitment and love of our St. John's family. Join us, following the service, for a tailgate fellowship outside on our beautiful campus. The Boy Scouts will be offering individually packaged BBQ chicken meals for \$12 or you can pack your own picnic lunch. Bring a chair or blanket. While masks are not required outside, we will practice social distancing. *What a joy it will be to gather and be fed physically and spiritually!*



# *Together in Spirit*

## CONGREGATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING COVID

- There have been 12,210 total views of all online services and videos.
- When we began sheltering at home, Pastor Lane and Pastor Deirdré offered live Prayer and Meditation time on Facebook three times a week for 15 weeks.
- A Phone Tree reached almost all of our congregational households, thanks to 12 faithful volunteers.
- We hosted several Home Hymn Sings featuring the Praise Team on Facebook Live.
- 14 Sunday School classes and small groups continue to meet for study and fellowship on Zoom.
- New discipleship and spiritual formation opportunities have been offered on Zoom, including a 12-week study of the Enneagram and The Cure for Sorrow online retreat.
- More than 40 people engaged in the 21-day Racial Justice Challenge in July.
- Pastor Deirdré shared an original story on Facebook Live each Saturday for eight weeks, to the young and young at heart.
- 53 people attended worship on October 4, our first in-person worship service since March 8, 2020.



# *Mission and Outreach*

## CONGREGATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING COVID

- The Shepherd's Market transformed into a drive-thru food pantry at the end of March, serving 700 households in April. The drive-thru pantry continues to serve more than 455 people on average each month.



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**More than 2,000 crosses were placed on our front lawn in remembrance of those from Louisiana who died from COVID-19 between Holy Week and Pentecost.**

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- Our congregation has donated 13,849 pounds of food and household items to The Shepherd's Market, as well as \$29,607 in monetary donations this year, which translates into 22,205 pounds of purchased food. The Shepherd's Market gives away 22,000 pounds on average each month, so our monetary donations have covered one month of food!
- We raised and distributed funds for families and individuals within St. John's who were experiencing financial challenges during COVID-19.
- In July we ministered to 21 families with A Summer Dive into Parables. It was an interactive look at a different parable each week that encouraged reading stories, crafts, snacks and writing to a pen pal.
- Outreach to our neighborhood schools, Wildwood Elementary and Charlie Thomas Headstart, through Opening Doors and the Gardere Initiative continues.

# Caring for our facilities and finances

## CONGREGATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS YEAR

- We formed a Tech Team of incredible volunteers and upgraded our technology and livestreaming capabilities, which enables us to remain together in spirit by providing high-quality livestream worship on multiple online platforms.\*
- In June we welcomed Haleigh Schwartz as our new Youth Director. She has been assigned to serve with us for three years by the Center for Youth Ministry Training while she pursues her Master's in Youth Ministry.\*
- Several HVAC systems at the church have been repaired or replaced this year.
- Toxic mold remediation, a significant leak in the guest bathroom, and HVAC issues were taken care of at the parsonage.
- We have a new standing seam roof over the classroom side of the Family Life Center, along with two new downspouts.\*\*
- In May we received \$60,000 from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) through the Federal CARES Act, which we anticipate will be forgiven.
- The Staff Parish Relations Committee is in the process of hiring a part-time AV Media Tech Coordinator, who will oversee our online worship presence, maintain our audiovisual technology, and coordinate volunteers.
- As of October 1, 2020, our debt to the United Methodist Foundation is \$133,256.

\* We received two grants from the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana for these ministries.

\*\*We borrowed \$35,000 from our line of credit with the United Methodist Foundation for the replacement. We are still in litigation with our insurance company about the roof damage claim.

## Celebrating before...

### CONGREGATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS BEFORE COVID



- In 2019, 24 people joined the church.
- During the Advent and Christmas seasons we participated in the Angel Tree mission, Almost Christmas study, Advent Fest, as well as our inspiring worship services and musical cantata.
- 525 turkey dinners were given away during the Great Turkey Giveaway last December. *Save the date for this year's giveaway: December 19, 2020.*
- At the start of 2020, we shared in a Wesleyan Covenant Renewal Service.
- An Al-Anon small group was launched to help families share experiences, strength and hope in dealing with loved ones struggling with addiction.
- Faith Friends, a spiritual growth and fellowship program for families launched in February and has continued to offer online engagement for families who are raising children at home.
- The United Methodist Women completed 100 Days for Girls kits in February. In the five years St. John's UMW has been sponsoring Days for Girls workdays, 700 kits have been made and sent to girls in underdeveloped countries.
- In February, Unity in the Community brought together the families of Charlie Thomas Head Start, Opening Doors, the Gardere Initiative, and our congregation for worship, celebration and fellowship.
- Our pastors went out into the community on Ash Wednesday offering ashes and prayer to our neighbors.
- In early March, 54 people participated in the Rediscovering the Art of Conversation retreat workshop.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## How has the pandemic affected St. John's financially?

Since suspending in-person worship and activities in March 2020, pledged giving has remained strong, whereas we have experienced a steady decline in non-pledged gifts. At a time when we are no longer benefiting from passing the offering plates on Sunday mornings, pledged giving is our primary source of revenue. We anticipate that we will need to create a budget for 2021 based almost entirely on the pledges we receive during this stewardship campaign. In these uncertain times, your pledged support is essential to our church family's operations and ministry.

## Who should make a financial pledge?

Everyone. If you are participating in St. John's online or in-person worship services, small groups, Bible studies, or fellowship opportunities you should make an annual financial gift. Pledging is an important spiritual exercise which allows you to reflect on the blessings God has bestowed upon you and to express your gratitude for those gifts by giving back to the Church.

## I already give, why should I pledge?

Pledges allow us to plan for the year ahead. Think of it this way: to make a family budget, you need to know what your income will be. The church is no different. To plan effectively, our leaders need to know what our income will be. Your pledge is a vital tool to develop the operating budget, plan for outreach, education, and other important spiritual and formation programs.

## How much should I pledge?

Your pledge should be an amount that is meaningful to you and an amount you can give with gratitude and joy. If you currently do not pledge but contribute regularly, consider pledging that amount or consider challenging yourself to give more. If you pledged last year, prayerfully consider increasing your pledge for 2021.

## I made a pledge last year, should I pledge again?

Yes! Your pledge from last year will not automatically renew. Please take time to consider what you would like to commit to St. John's in the upcoming year.

## Can I set up an automatic payment by credit card?

Yes, you can set up a recurring gift online at [www.stjohnsbr.org/give](http://www.stjohnsbr.org/give).

## Can I pay by check?

Checks are welcome and may be offered during worship or mailed to 230 Renee Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70810.

## Is my pledge tax deductible?

Yes. Donations to St. John's are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. You will receive a statement detailing your donations each year.

## Does St. John's allow for planned gifts?

Yes. There are a number of ways you can make a significant impact and gift to further the mission and vision of St. John's. LeAnn Davis, our Manager of Finance and Facilities, can get you in touch with our friends at the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana, who will walk you through how to make a bequest. Planned giving is a meaningful way to extend our support of St. John's to those who follow us.

## What if I become unable to complete the amount I pledge?

We understand that circumstances change. Please let the church office know if you need to make changes to your pledge during the calendar year.

## Have additional questions?

If you are discerning a pledge and would like to speak with a pastor, please contact: Rev. Lane Cotton Winn, Lead Pastor, [pastorlane@stjohnsbr.org](mailto:pastorlane@stjohnsbr.org).

If you have questions about the church's budget or finances, please contact: Gray Sexton, Finance Committee Chair, [graysexton@sextonlaw.net](mailto:graysexton@sextonlaw.net)

If you have administrative questions about pledging or about your current or future giving, please contact: LeAnn Davis, Manager of Finance and Facilities, [leanndavis@stjohnsbr.org](mailto:leanndavis@stjohnsbr.org).

230 Renee Drive  
Baton Rouge, LA 70810  
225-766-4594



**ST. JOHN'S**  
United Methodist Church

[office@stjohnsbr.org](mailto:office@stjohnsbr.org)  
[www.stjohnsbr.org](http://www.stjohnsbr.org)  
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