

STRANGER THINGS



A SERIES ABOUT
BIZARRE BIBLE STORIES

Sunday, July 28, 2024
8:30 a.m. Worship Celebration

All Are Welcome

God has declared King Saul to be an unfit ruler due to his serial lapses in judgement and an overall lack of righteous decision-making. God has anointed the young David to usurp Saul's throne. The prophet Samuel tells Saul of God's selection of David as the next king of the Israelites. Saul denies this fate initially. After Samuel's death, however, Saul grows more desperate to receive a new fate from God. That is where we pick up in 1 Samuel Chapter 28, as Saul seeks help from the Witch of Endor.

Whether you are a guest or member, we invite you to scan the QR code to register your attendance so we know you're here and we can get to know you better.



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Welcome to St. John's United Methodist Church

GUEST INFORMATION

We are glad you've joined us and hope you feel at home here. Whoever you are, wherever you are on your faith journey, you are welcome. Our ushers are happy to assist you in anyway. Restrooms are in the Narthex, located in the back of the Sanctuary.

Please take home a copy of our Welcome Brochure located in the Narthex or view it online at: stjohnsbr.org/welcome-brochure.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

We fully welcome and love engaging children in worship! We include a special Children's Moment each Sunday.

- **The St. John's Prayground** is located in the front of the sanctuary. This is a place for children and their families to worship together, allowing children to more fully participate in the service. More details about the Prayground may be found on our website.
- A staffed **nursery** for infants through preschool is open every Sunday morning and is located next door in our Education/Administration building.
- **Changing tables** are located in the restrooms in the back of the sanctuary and in our nursery.
- Children are welcome to receive **Holy Communion**, which is served weekly at 8:30 a.m. and on the first Sunday of the month at 11 a.m. Our communion elements are bread and grape juice. Gluten-free elements are also available.
- **Sunday School** is offered for children starting at age 18 months through 12th grade from 9:45-10:45 a.m.

St. John's Clergy and Staff

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The Celebration of the Gospel

**Please stand as you are comfortable.
Bold indicates congregational response.
Please scan the QR Code to register your attendance.*



Prelude

Words of Welcome

Natalie Cooper

*Songs of Praise

Cry of My Heart

The Faith We Sing Songbook 2165, vs. 1

Holy, Holy, Holy!

The United Methodist Hymnal 64, vs. 1 & 4

*Call to Worship

Goldie Files

As we gather this day, each of us brings something to worship –

We bring the burdens of the week.

We bring prayers of hope, and prayers of anguish.

We bring our voices, and our offerings, and our questions.

We bring our faith - tattered or whole as it may be.

We bring the fullness of our lives – even life's contradictions.

We bring all of this to each other and to God,
whom we worship together now.

May the worship we share in bring glory to God.

*Response

As the Deer

The Faith We Sing Songbook 2025

Children's Message

Natalie Cooper

Scripture

Connor Dean

1 Samuel 28:8-20

For the Word of God in scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,

Thanks be to God.

Witness to the Word

Connor Dean

“The Witch of Endor”

***Hymn**

Seek Ye First
The United Methodist Hymnal 405, vs. 1 & 2

***Confessing Our Sin**

Natalie Cooper

Every week, as we worship together, we have the opportunity to admit to ourselves, to each other, and to God that we do not always live as we are called. In this time of confession, this time of opening our hearts, let us remember that God is merciful and just, eager to offer grace and love. Let us pray.

Holy God,

**We are an imperfect people and are in need
of your grace and forgiveness.**

Your way is clear, yet we ignore it willfully.

**We have walked along crooked paths
strewn with our selfishness and greed,
our arrogance and our apathy.**

We live as though the rules do not apply to us.

**We admonish others for not meeting a particular
standard, then make excuses when we don't meet
those same standards.**

Forgive us for not heeding your will.

**Change us by your grace and for your glory,
through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.**

***Receiving Grace**

Hear the good news:

Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
that proves God's love toward us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
Glory to God. Amen.**

***Sharing the Love and Peace of Christ**

Offering Our Tithes and Gifts to God

*We appreciate your generosity.
Each gift enables us to be a blessing in our community.
You may give online by scanning the QR Code
or navigate to stjohnsbr.org/give.*



***Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below:**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***Gathering at the Table**

Rev. John Gilmore

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

(Prayers are lifted and the story of the Last Supper is recalled.)

The Lord's Prayer

***Sharing the Bread and Cup**

Everyone is welcome to share in Holy Communion.

Communion will be served using the ancient means of "intinction" with only the pastor and servers touching the elements, or, if you prefer, you may receive pre-packaged elements. Our communion elements are bread and grape juice.

A gluten-free option is also available.

You are invited to stay at the chancel for prayer as long as you desire.

If you are a person with limited mobility, please let the usher know and someone will bring communion to you.

Prayer After Communion

Goldie Files

Gracious God,

The mysteries of this life pale in comparison to the mystery of faith experienced at this, your table of grace.

Send us out into your world to be the presence of love and hope to all who despair and fear, that all may have life, and life abundant.

Amen.

Call to Action

Connor Dean

We joyfully welcome all those who wish to become members of St. John's and invite you to come forward during the singing of the closing hymn.

***Hymn**

Christ Beside Me

The Faith We Sing Songbook 2166, vs. 1 & 2

***Blessing and Sending Forth**

***Postlude**

Worship Notes

The flowers on the altar are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of David John Henson by his family.

Ushers for the 8:30 service are Phil and Jill Slicker

After the 8:30 service, everyone is invited to the Family Life Center for coffee and refreshments.

Connect with Us

You are invited to participate in any of our activities, and to become a part of this community of faith and love. Sign up for text/email notifications by texting the word "Connect" to 225-230-1017.

PRAYER REQUESTS

We believe that prayer is a powerful way to connect us to one another and to God. If you have a prayer or joy you want lifted up, please email prayers@stjohnsbr.org. Pastor Lane and Lynn Cooper, our Administrative Assistant, will receive your request and pass it along to the Prayer Team, unless you request it only be shared with Pastor Lane. A group of dedicated volunteers receive prayer requests weekly and then focus on praying for these requests immediately and throughout the week. All of the Prayer Team Members are deeply committed to keeping prayer requests confidential as requested. Prayer Requests are also included in the *Inside St. John's* newsletter, sent on Tuesdays.

Announcements

ADULT SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL - TED TALK THEOLOGY

Our adult summer study series is called TED Talk Theology and runs through July 28 (9:55-10:45 am) in the sanctuary. Each Sunday we're watching a TED Talk, reading scripture, and talking about what they say to us about our faith and life. We have a new facilitator each Sunday. Come weekly or come when you can! .

TODAY SUNDAY JULY 28 will be our last session and will be lead by Steve Rushing with a talk by Robert Waldinger, "What makes a good life? Lessons from the Longest Study on Happiness." Our scripture focuses will be Romans 12:1-21; Acts 2:43-47; Matthew 18:20.

PICKLEBALL, ANYONE?

Join us for pickleball for adults on **Tuesdays at 7 p.m.** in the Family Life Center. No sign up is required, just show up! Beginners are welcome. For more information contact Donnie Lambert at 225-921-0446.

TODDLER SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS NEEDS LEADERS

We are looking for two or three leaders for our toddler Sunday School class starting August 4. Curriculum and activities are planned and provided in advance. If you are willing to help out, even if it is just for one or two Sundays each month, please contact Connor (225-766-4594 or connordean@stjohnsbr.org).

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERIES - OLYMPIC FAITH

As the Olympic games take center stage this summer, we will discover how the values of the games teach us biblical values for our lives. Join us for this brand new worship series, "Olympic Faith," starting August 4, 2024.

FALL BIBLE STUDY ON PSALMS

There will be two sessions of the Immersion Bible Study on the Book of Psalms beginning **Tuesday, September 10 at 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.** in the library. (The study will end October 15.) Registration information will be forthcoming. The study books will cost \$15 and can be picked up in the church office **after Monday, July 29**; participants should read Lesson 1 prior to the first class. You may pay for the book by check (made out to St. John's UMC with Bible Study in the memo line) or online at stjohnsbr.org/give/SS Classes and Small Groups/Bible Study. If you have any questions, please contact Rhonda Tucker (by phone or text: 225-270-2193 or parkerrhondatucker@gmail.com).

JOIN OUR CHANCEL CHOIR

Our Chancel Choir will resume rehearsals on **Wednesday, August 7**. We meet in the choir room at 6:30 p.m. This is an opportunity for anyone to share the gift of their heart, soul, and voice--when one sings, they pray twice. Grace upon grace is bestowed upon those who share their gifts to the glory of God.

ANNUAL SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Opening Doors is once again sponsoring their annual school supply drive. **The drive will end Sunday, August 4.** The school supplies will go to students at Wildwood Elementary School, Charlie Thomas Memorial Head Start Center, and Gardere Community Christian School.

Suggested supplies are: pencils, pens (black or blue), Elmer's glue, glue sticks, 24-pack of crayons, colored pencils, spiral notebooks (3 subject or more), standard rulers, folders with clasps and pockets, scissors, boxes of Kleenex, rolls of paper towels, Clorox wipes, hand wipes, dry erase markers, kid scissors, construction paper, copy/computer paper, and kindergarten paper with wide lines.

YELLOW GROCERY BAGS

Don't forget to pick up a yellow grocery bag for grocery and household items to help stock the shelves of The Shepherd's Market. **Sunday, August 4 is Grocery Bag Sunday.**

Upcoming Children's & Youth Events

YOUTH SUMMER TOUR

The next stop on our Summer Tour will be hosted by Zachary UMC (4205 Church St., Zachary) on **Wednesday, July 31.** Youth should be at St. John's by 5 p.m. in order to carpool to Zachary. We will arrive back at St. John's at 8:30 p.m. for pickup.

YOUTH SERVICE WEEK BEGINS MONDAY

St. John's is hosting Youth Service Week again this summer! It will take place during the **week of July 29 - August 2.** Each day, Youth will participate in volunteer activities and will also have a fun fellowship activity. Potential volunteer activities include The Shepherd's Market, Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, and Friends of the Animals (animal shelter), and Life Source Hospice. Potential fun activities include Celebration Station, Surge Entertainment, Uptown Climbing (rock walls), and Defy Trampoline Park.

EVENTS FOR 6TH - 12TH GRADERS

Youth Mystery Night - The St. John's youth group is hosting a Mystery Party for students entering 6th-12th grades in the 2024-25 school year. Students should have replied with an RSVP by July 21 to ensure they receive a formal invitation with further instructions for the event. The Mystery Party will take place in the Family Life Center on **Friday, August 2 from 6-9 p.m.**

Grub Sunday - Join us for messy games at St. John's UMC on **Sunday, August 4 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.** Let's celebrate the start of the new school year by making new connections with other youth! Students going into 6th grade as well as those in 7th - 12th grades should meet at the St. John's Family Life Center (the building located furthest from Highland Road) at 4:00 p.m. We will then move to the yard to play MEGA Kickball and other messy games. Students should bring towels and an extra change of clothes. We will finish around 6:00 p.m.

This Week at St. John's

Sunday, July 28

- 8:00 a.m. Praise Team Warm Up, Sanctuary
- 8:30 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 9:30 a.m. Coffee Time, FLC*
- 9:45 a.m. Youth/Children's Sunday School, FLC
- 9:50 a.m. Adult Summer Study, Sanctuary
- 11:00 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 6:00 p.m. Summer Bells, Bells' Practice Room

Monday, July 29

- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 9:00 a.m. Ladies' Covenant Group, Founders' Parlor
- 3:00 p.m. Men's Covenant Group, Library
- 3:30 p.m. The Shepherd's Market Client Choice Food Pantry, FLC
- 6:30 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-E

Tuesday, July 30

- 8:00 a.m. The Shepherd's Market Client Choice Food Pantry, FLC
- 7:00 p.m. Pickleball, FLC
- 7:30 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-E

Wednesday, July 31

- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Summer Tour, Zachary UMC
- 6:30 p.m. Ladies' AA Meeting, FLC-C

Thursday, August 1

- 8:00 a.m. The Shepherd's Market Client Choice Food Pantry, FLC
- 5:00 p.m. River City Quilt Guild, FLC
- 5:30 p.m. Church Council Meeting, Library

Friday, August 2

- 6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer Group, Founders' Parlor
- 7:00 a.m. Early Risers Exercisers, FLC
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Mystery Night, FLC

Saturday, August 3

- 12:00 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC-C
- 7:00 p.m. AA Meeting, FLC

*Family Life Center

BACK TO SCHOOL SPIRIT SUNDAY
★ AUGUST 4TH ★
Blessing of the Bags
Prayers for Students, Faculty, & Staff
Presentation of Bibles
(for K, 3rd, 6th & 9th graders)
Everyone wear your favorite school colors!

All students will be "promoted" to the next grade level on **Sunday, August 4**. All children and youth will gather in the Sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. for a brief assembly before breaking into our Sunday School groups for the year. The age groups are divided thusly: Pre-K & younger, Kindergarten - 2nd grade, 3rd - 5th grade, and 6th-12th grade. Students entering Kindergarten, 3rd grade, 6th grade, and 9th grade will be given Bibles on Promotion Sunday as well. **If Connor has not already contacted you about receiving a Bible, please email her at connordean@stjohnsbr.org.**

The whole congregation is invited to celebrate the new school year on Sunday, August 4 by wearing the colors of their favorite school! During children's moment on Promotion Sunday, we will bless the bags of students and education professionals. Be sure to show your school spirit and bring a bag for the blessing!