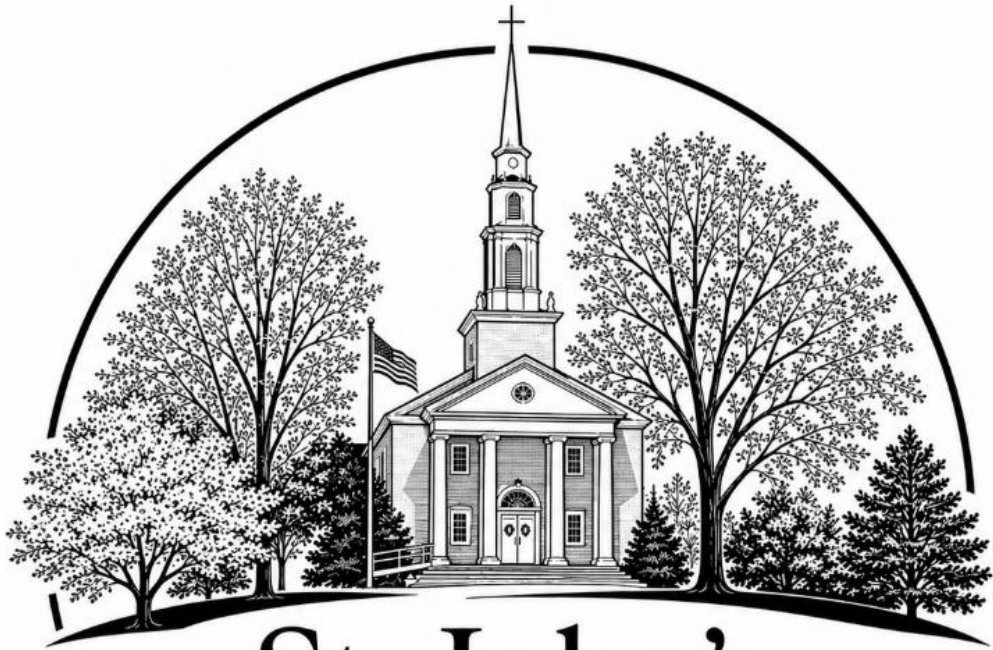




St. John's Lutheran Church

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STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 27, 2026 | 10:30am

Welcome to St. John's. We invite you to join us as an active participant in the worship of God.

PRELUDE

Catilena and Reflection

Matthew H. Corl

We stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

We kneel or stand. Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

HYMN AT THE PROCESSION

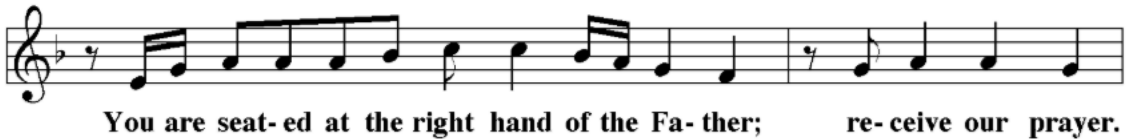
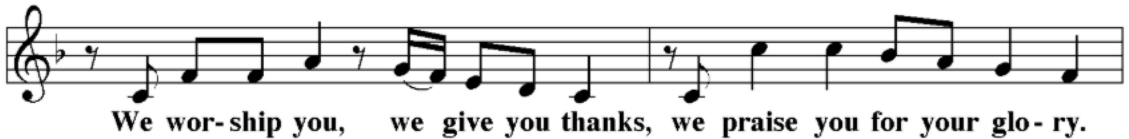
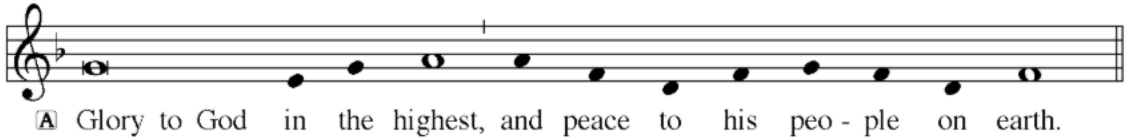
God Is Here

HYMN 526

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

GLORIA





PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

We sit.

WORD

FIRST READING

EZEKIEL 18:1-4, 25-32

A reading from Ezekiel

The word of the Lord came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die. ²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my

way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

PSALM 25:1-9



¹To [|] you, O Lord,
 I lift [|] up my soul.

²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be [|] put to shame,**
nor let my enemies triumph [|] over me.

³Let none who look to you be [|] put to shame;
 rather let those be put to shame [|] who are treacherous.

⁴**Show me your [|] ways, O Lord,**
and teach [|] me your paths.

⁵Lead me in your [|] truth and teach me,
 for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all [|] the day long.

⁶**Remember, O Lord, your compas- [|] sion and love,**
for they are from [|] everlasting.

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and ¹ my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your good- ¹ ness,
O Lord.

⁸ **You are gracious and up- ¹ right, O Lord;
therefore you teach sinners ¹ in your way.**

⁹ You lead the low- ¹ ly in justice
and teach the low- ¹ ly your way.

SECOND READING

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-13

A reading from Philippians

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,

⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,

¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

We stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL

MATTHEW 21:23-32

The holy gospel according to St Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

We sit.

**CHILDREN’S SERMON
SERMON**

REV. MARTHA MCCREIGHT

We stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lord Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word

HYMN 517

APOSTLES’ CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.*
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,**

the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

**Or, He descended to the dead.*

We kneel or sit for the prayers.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each intercession ends with these words:

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We stand.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

We sit.

GREETINGS

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us,
an offering and sacrifice to God.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Change my Heart, O God*

Eddie Esinosa/Raney

To support the mission and ministry of St. John's, you can give online at
www.stjohnelca.org *or scan the QR code above.*

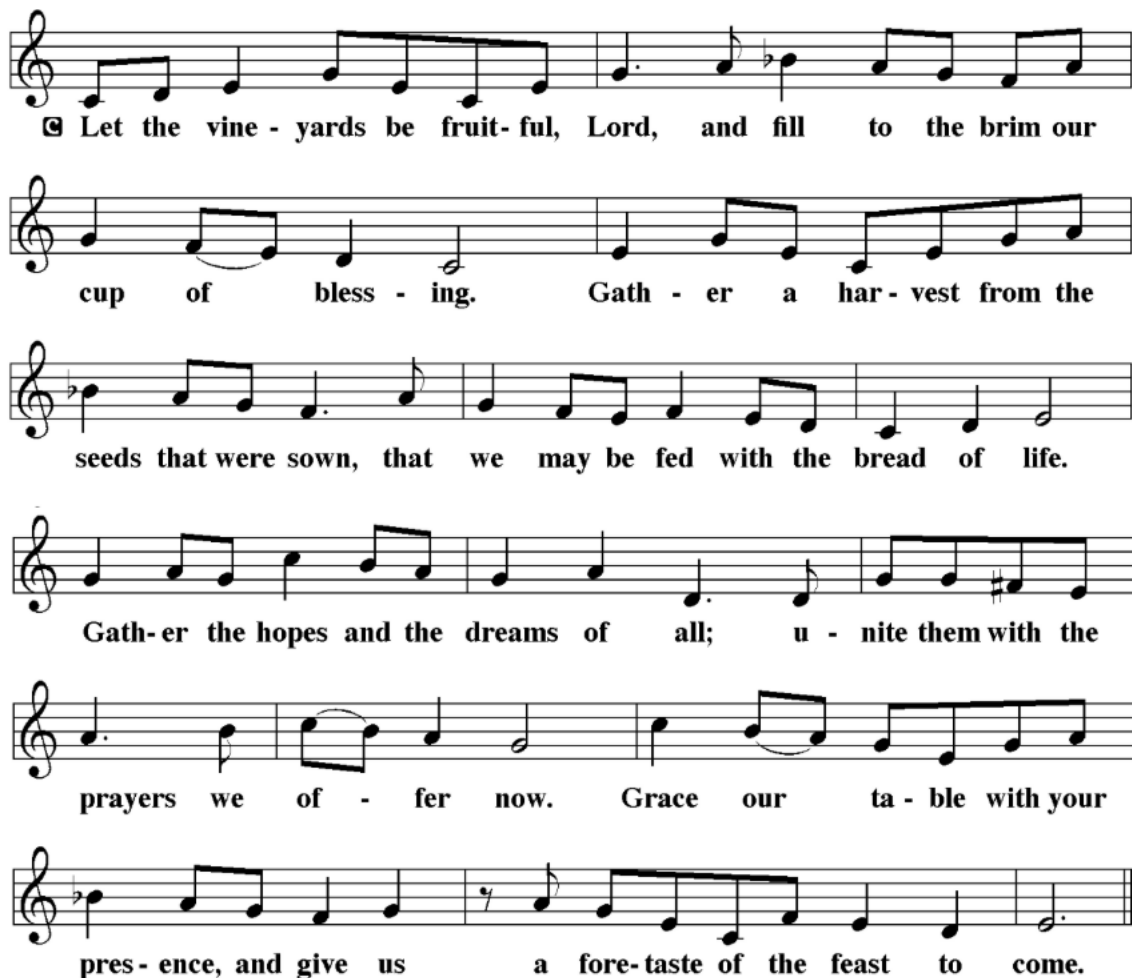


We stand.

MEAL

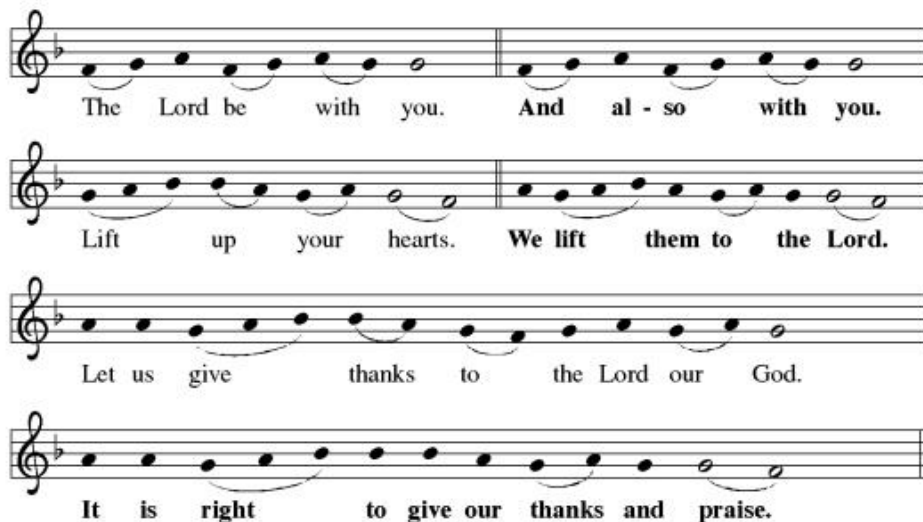
HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION

HYMN 182



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the
seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the
prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



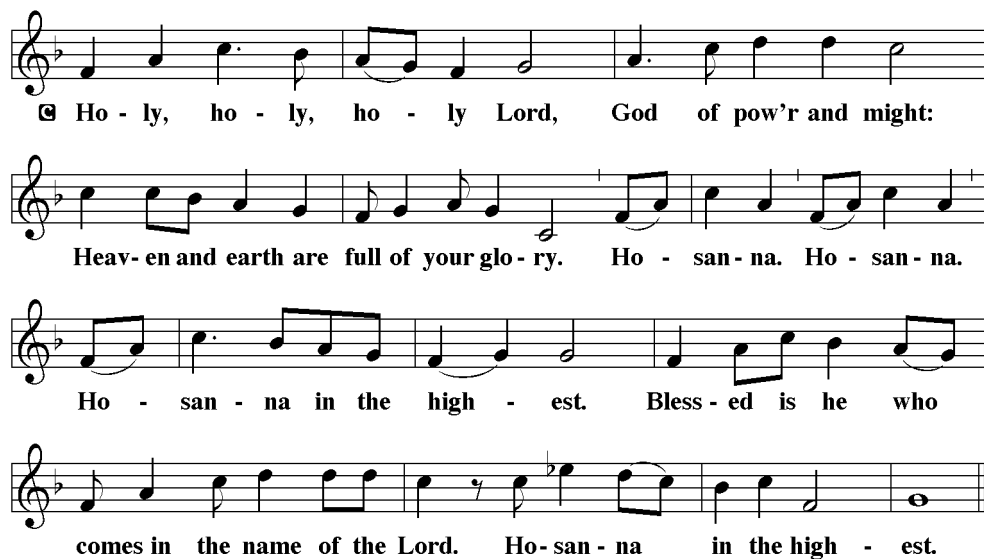
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Here the minister continues with preface for the day, concluding: we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:

Heav- en and earth are full of your glo- ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who

comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God;
you are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.
You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.
Having come into the world, he fulfilled for us your holy will
and accomplished our salvation.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving Passion and death,
his glorious resurrection and ascension, and his promise to come again,
we give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
not as we ought, but as we are able;
and we implore you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving,
and, with your Word and Holy Spirit, to bless us, your servants,
and these your own gifts of bread and wine;
that we and all who share in the body and blood of your Son
may be filled with heavenly peace and joy,
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be sanctified in soul and body,
and have our portion with all your saints.

All honor and glory are yours, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church, now and forever.

Amen

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

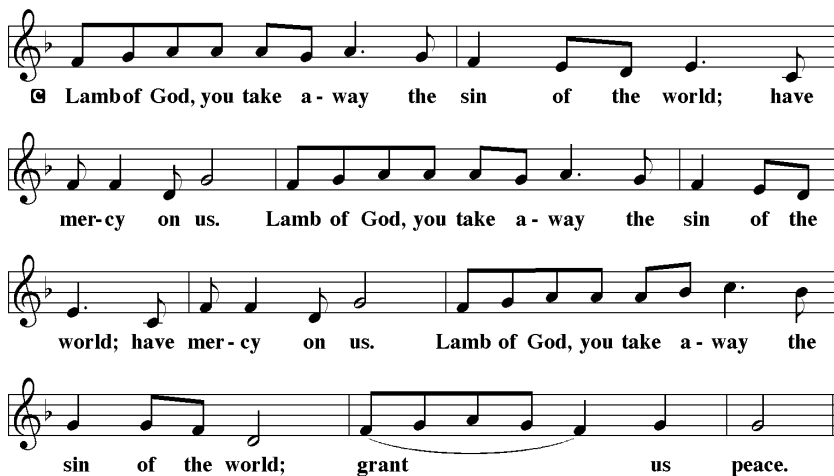
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

All who believe that Jesus is present in the bread and wine, forgiving sins, and promising eternal life, are welcome at the Table of the Lord. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.

We sit.

LAMB OF GOD



☩ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

We stand.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING**BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

HYMN AT THE PROCESSION*Rise, Shine, You People*

HYMN 665

DISMISSAL

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God

POSTLUDE*Intrada*

Matthew H. Corl

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Worship Leaders Today

Celebrant & Preacher	The Rev. Martha McCreight
Organist	Jan Lucie
Worship Assistant	
Reader	Eric Lane
Communion Assistant	
Acolyte	
Usher	Eric Lane
Altar Committee	Eva Jakubek, Cheryl Milukas
Counters	Lois Coffin, Gary Esposito, Barbara Gleckler
Little Free Pantry	Eric Lane
Coffee Hour	

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 30

12:00 noon Weekly Eucharist - Chapel

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, October 4

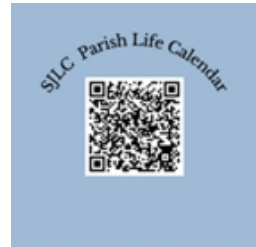
8:30 am & 10:30 am Worship

9:30 am Sunday School

Wednesday, October 7

12:00 noon Weekly Eucharist – Chapel

4:30 pm Confirmation Class



WE NEED YOU!

ACOLYTE SIGN-UP



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS, COMMUNION ASSISTANTS, READERS, USHERS, COFFEE HOUR, AND LFP SIGN-UP



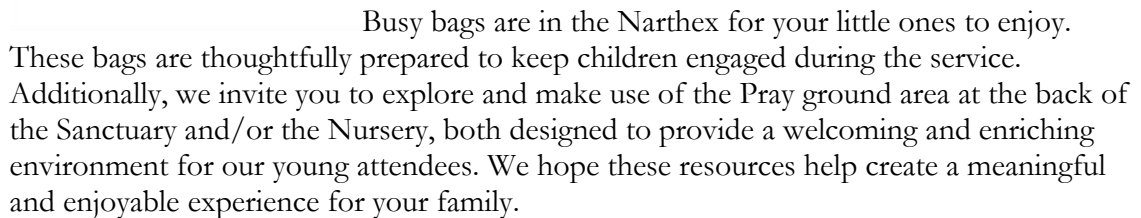
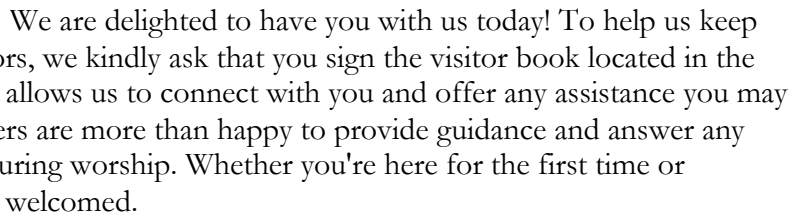
This week we pray for . . . Andrew, Beryl, Cat, Cody, Gary, Gerald, James, Julie, Marie, Sandra, Shirley, Toby, and Valerie. If you have someone to add to the prayer list, please email the parish office.

Contact Pr Martha for pastoral needs at 406-565-3592.

Parish Office: parishoffice@sjlcstamford.com

Pastor Martha: MMcCreight@sjlcstamford.com

Finance: finance@sjlcstamford.com



All are welcome! We share Christ's love, grow in faith, and serve others.



Everyone's Help Is Needed At the Patch

On Saturday, September 26, we unloaded the semi-truck of pumpkins for the Pumpkin Patch. Thank you to everyone who joined.

Please don't forget to sign up to work at the Patch throughout October...all help is needed.

This project is an all congregation effort. All of the funds raised are given away to Building One Community, Kids In Crisis, and Future Five. As such, it is the biggest mission project of the year for St. John's.

Don't delay signing up – do it now. Thank you!



GIVING WITH LOVE

Our 2026 Giving Intention Campaign

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” • Mark 12:31

This fall, St. John’s begins a six-week journey of faith, gratitude, generosity, and love.

How do we love our neighbors through St. John’s?

Our gifts help make possible the worship, care, fellowship, outreach, and ministry we share together.

- ♥ **Why St. John’s matters**
- ♥ **Why Giving Intentions matter**
- ♥ **Giving with ease and consistency**
- ♥ **Making faithful commitments**

Giving with Intention. Giving with Gratitude. Giving with Love.

MAKE YOUR GIVING INTENTION ONLINE

Scan the QR code to complete your Giving Intention through our secure Google Form.



🕯️ **SAVE THE DATE!** 🕯️

CONSECRATION SUNDAY • NOVEMBER 8, 2026



Bring your Giving Intention to worship, then stay for our Ice Cream Social!

Sundae Fun for Everyone!

The St. John’s Stewardship / Giving Intention Committee