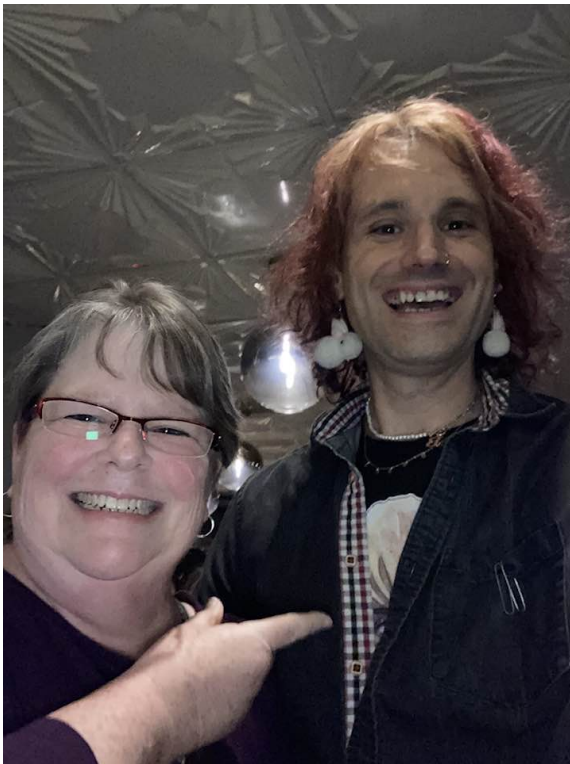


A BEACON OF HOPE

In the heart of the city

"The church that saved my life."



Catching up with Bunny Ryan Oder

I recently spent a week in Nashville, one of my favorite cities. As I was pondering my plans, it occurred to me that Bunny Ryan Oder had moved from Columbus to Nashville several years ago, and that it would be great to connect with them again.

Bunny came to us in 2017. They were homeless and suicidal. I instantly liked them, feeling both their pain and their joy, and sensing authenticity that I rarely find in people. We became fast friends, and I was honored to serve as Bunny's baptism sponsor later that year.

Bunny and their partner, Lincoln, found employment and housing, and stabilized their lives together. As Bunny delved deeper into their faith, I was happy to serve

as support and sounding board. Bunny and Lincoln moved to Nashville soon after, and while we stayed in touch via social media updates, and a few texts, I missed them.

So, the decision was made to conspire with Lincoln and surprise Bunny while I was in Nashville. What a reunion it was! I showed up at their workplace, and after the shock wore off, Bunny did two things: They pointed to their mouth and exclaimed, “Look! I have teeth!” They introduced me to their manager, saying “This is Pastor Mary, my baptism sponsor from the church that saved my life.”

“The church that saved my life.” What a statement.

We talked for a long while, as Bunny recalled their days at St John’s, doing what they needed to do to survive while at the same time contemplating ending their life. It was the community of St John’s that brought Bunny back from the edge, embraced them just as they are, and loved them into a new life. This redemption and resurrection of sorts speaks loudly, especially during the season of Lent, to St. John’s identity as a safe and inclusive space for all of God’s children.

As we move closer to Holy Week, closer to the joy of Palm Sunday, closer to the despair of the cross, and closer to the Resurrection of Jesus, I invite you to ponder the role that St John’s has played in your life, and ways St John’s has served as a place of redemption and resurrection for you.

Lenten Blessings!
Pastor Mary

What's your St. John's story?

[Click here to share.](#)

Sunday, March 26, 2023

Worship at 11:00 a.m.

Fifth Sunday in Lent



The Gospel of Lazarus (887) This is an illuminated manuscript located in Yerevan, Armenia.

[Click here to learn more about this artwork.](#)

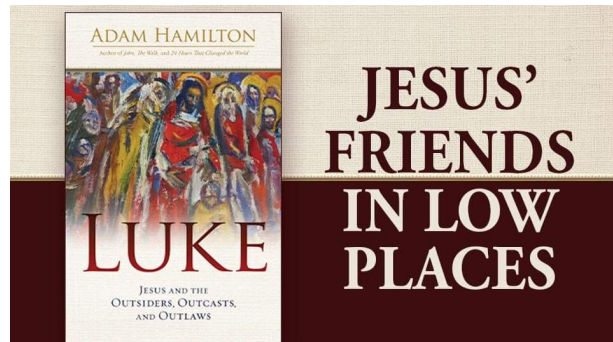
Scripture Readings for
Sunday

Ezekiel 37:1-14
John 11:1-45

Click on the references
above to view the Bible
texts.

Jesus' Friends in Low Places Lenten Season Study

Join in this study
throughout Lent at 10 a.m.
in the new History Room.



A Lenten Reminder
Pray *The Lord's Prayer* daily.
Invite 3 people you know to visit St. John's with you!

GREEN WIG SUNDAY











Holy Week Worship

April 2 | 11 a.m.

Palm Protest Sunday

April 6 | 6:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday

April 7 | 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday @ Trinity Episcopal

April 9 | 11 a.m.

Easter Sunday

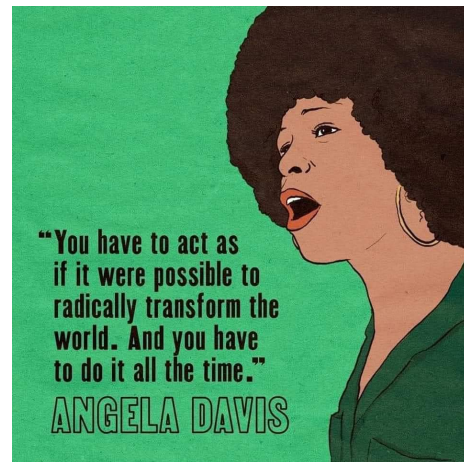


ST. JOHN'S
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

www.stjohnschurchcolumbus.org

PALM PROTEST SUNDAY

Palm Sunday marks the memory of the raucous welcome Jesus received in Jerusalem, just a few days before he was executed. So why do we call it Protest Sunday? Well, because the ministry of Jesus was all about a protest against the powers of Empire and Religious traditions that sought to oppress and marginalize people. **You are invited to wear your favorite "Protest" attire on Sunday, April 2 as we remember that Jesus was always on the side of the marginalized and that we should be, too.**



Also next Sunday is St. John's Church Cinema Connection. We will be viewing and discussing the groovy musical, ***Godspell***.

Prepare Ye the Way to come to the sanctuary at 5 p.m. on Sunday, April 2.



Making Music a Ministry

You likely already know that St. John's is blessed with a phenomenal team of professional musicians who assist us in worship every week and on special occasions. (If, by some rare occurrence, you haven't heard our band, take a look at our [YouTube](#) channel). Our **Music Director, Amber**, and our **Band Leader, Matt**, work closely with Pastor Gini to ensure that songs used in worship serve to enhance and

deepen our experience together and connection with the Divine. Amber's debut event as Music Director was the [Free Holiday Concert](#) in December that featured our **Community Choir** and local drag queen, Anisa Love. Pastor Gini and Amber met this week to talk about Amber's plans for the music ministry at St. John's. You can be assured there will be more opportunities to listen - and to participate - in the future. Amber is not just a gifted performer and artist, but she also has a heart for meaning-making through music. If you have been a part of any

Community Choir rehearsal, you have seen that firsthand. The Spirit of the Living God is moving in our midst and we are brought closer to God through Amber's gift of ministry to our community!

Happening During the Week



MONDAYS

Storytime with Pastor Mary at 7:00 p.m. Eastern. You can watch live on Facebook each week! Be sure to Like and Share.

[Here's a link to this week's story on Facebook.](#)

This week's story is *Good Night, God Bless* by Susan Heyboer O'Keefe.

St. John's Men's Group on 1st & 3rd Mondays

Join Pastor Hank for our **St. John's Men's Group** which is open to all who identify as male. We meet via Zoom on the 1st and 3rd Monday at 7:30 p.m. For more information and the Zoom link, reach out to [Pastor Hank](#). Our next gathering will be on April 3.

Coming on Mondays in June: Kickball on the Commons



TUESDAYS

The **St. John's Community Choir** rehearsals are every Tuesday evening from 7:00 to 8:30pm at *Trinity Episcopal Church*, on the corner of Third and

Broad. We will practice each Tuesday evening in preparation for singing in **Easter Sunday worship on April 9.**

The St. John's Community Choir is open to *anyone* interested, whether or not a member or attendee of St. John's. No music or vocal experience is required. We just make a lot of joyful noise!

If you have questions or need more information, get in touch with [Pastor Hank](#).

Parking for Trinity is available at the Columbus Commons garage (a short walk from the church) or metered parking along the street. The City of Columbus has removed all parking meters and now has kiosks on each block that take payment. [A more convenient and easier solution is the Park Columbus app, which you can read about and download to your phone here.](#)



WEDNESDAYS

St. John's The Largest Table hosted by Trinity happens at noon every Wednesday.

The team this week was Pastor Mary, Steve, Pat, Robyn, Mary, and Beth. Skip and Jim cleaned it all up.





Would you like to get involved with **The Largest Table?** Contact [Pastor Mary!](#)

In the Weeks and Months Ahead

Lenten Study with Pastor Mary

- *Jesus' Friends in Low Places* - Sundays at 10 a.m. in the new History Room

Holy Week

- April 2 - Protest (Palm) Sunday, 11:00 a.m.
- April 2 - Church Cinema Connection presents *Godspell*, 5:00 p.m.
- April 6 - Maundy Thursday, 6:30 p.m. in St. John's sanctuary
- April 7 - Good Friday
 - Noon: Good Trouble Friday on Capitol Square hosted by Trinity Episcopal and St. John's UCC, featuring social justice activists and faith

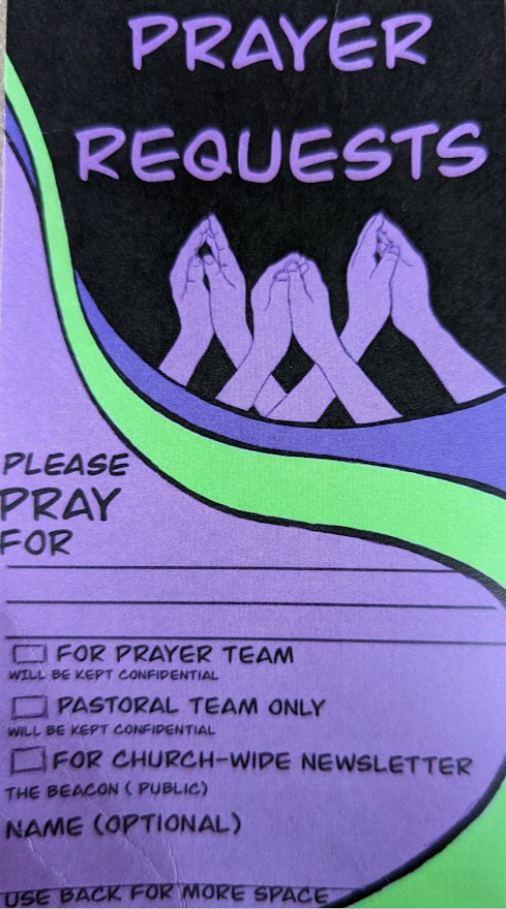
- leaders
 - 6:30 p.m.: at Trinity Episcopal with St. John's pastors and members leading
- April 9 - Easter Sunday worship, 11:00 a.m., featuring The St. John's Community Choir

Coming in June

- June 11 - Pride Sunday
- June 12 - Kickball Season Begins (Monday evenings)
- June 17 - Columbus Pride Parade

More Opportunities to Connect & Share (Details Soon)

- Small Groups
- Training & Spiritual Growth Opportunities
- Pints with Pastor Hank



Prayer Request Cards

Cards are available from greeters or anyone wearing an "Ask Me" button.

You may indicate whether your request should be routed to our Prayer Team, shared confidentially with the Pastoral Team, or shared publicly in this weekly newsletter.

If you don't have any requests to share, just leave the card in the pew pocket to make it available for future use.

Our St. John's Prayer Team:
Cindy K., Pam S., Ashley D.,
John M., Rosie M.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers...

(Requests will remain here so that we remember to pray)

- *Continue to pray for God's healing and comfort for members and friends in our community.*
- *Jake, 31-year-old nephew of Lori Jones, who has stage 3 colon cancer.*
- *Our son is 22 and having a difficult time finding his way. He continues to make poor and impulsive decisions, and needs a stable place to help get*

and keep a job, and find the Lord. (Kyle & Lori Z.)

- For my mental health. (Anonymous)

Trans People are Worthy & Holy



In the wake of continued marginalization of LGBTQIA+ Americans and particularly focused attacks on trans people, the leaders of St. John's echo the words of our denomination in our commitment to the lives of all LGBTQIA+ people. Here in Ohio, gender-affirming health care for minors is under attack once again. We have to continue to lift our voices as people of faith and let everyone know that they are loved by God.

[You can see the full statement from the UCC here.](#)

**Wow, that's a nice camera phone.
You really should use it more often.**

Get out your cameras! We would love to share photos of our St. John's family, wherever you may be, including Sunday worship. If you are wearing your St. John's t-shirt while just living your life, send in a selfie! You can email or text the photos to [Pastor Hank](#).



"Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my close-up."

Rev. Virginia Lohmann Bauman (she/her),
Senior Pastor & Teacher
Mary Torok (she/her),
Director of Faith Formation & Congregational Mobilization
Hank Osmundson (he/him),
Pastor of Community Engagement

Contact Us



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