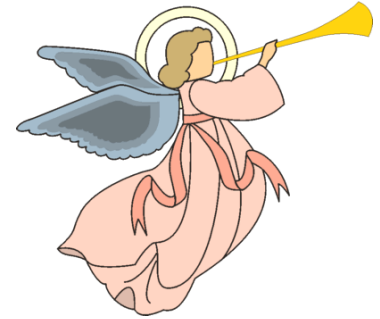


St. John's Good News



From Rev. John...

Dear Friends,

Greetings. Every December presents a struggle as we are bombarded with commercial and societal forces which makes Christmas into a burden. Every year I wonder *'how can I possibly communicate to the many gentle souls who have blessed my life how very grateful I am?'*

A wonderful, international, movement has sprung up in recent years called the Advent Conspiracy (for more information see www.adventconspiracy.org). This movement embraces three principals:

Worship Fully It starts with Jesus. It ends with Jesus. This is the holistic approach God had in mind for Christmas. It's a season where we are called to put down our burdens and lift a song up to our God. It's a season where love wins, peace reigns, and a king is celebrated with each breath. It's the party of the year. Entering the story of advent means entering this season with an overwhelming passion to worship Jesus to the fullest.

Spend less Before you think we're getting all Scrooge on you, let us explain what we mean. We like gifts. Our kids really like gifts. But consider this: America spends an average of \$450 billion a year every Christmas. How often have you spent money on Christmas presents for no other reason than obligation? How many times have you received a gift out of that same obligation? Thanks, but no thanks, right? We're asking people to consider buying ONE LESS GIFT this Christmas. Just one. Sounds insignificant, yet many who have taken this small sacrifice have experienced something nothing less than a miracle: They have been more available to celebrate Christ during the advent season. Find more time to spend time with the significant people in our lives.

Give More God's gift to us was a relationship built on love. So, it's no wonder why we're drawn to the idea that Christmas should be a time to love our friends and family in the most memorable ways possible. Time is the real gift Christmas offers us, and no matter how hard we look, it can't be found at the mall. Time to make a gift that turns into the next family heirloom. Time to write mom a letter. Time to take the kids sledding. Time to bake really good cookies and sing

Contd.

December
2022

Sunday worship remains at 10am, in-person and virtually: All are welcome to participate, and seating capacity is now at 75. The service also continues to broadcast via Zoom, with weekly link options shared by email.

Phone: 781-233-1242

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Saugus

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really bad Christmas carols. Time to make love visible through relational giving. Sounds a lot better than getting a sweater two sizes too big, right? Need a few ideas? See www.adventconspiracy.org/story

Love All When Jesus loved, He loved in ways never imagined. Though rich, he became poor to love the poor, the forgotten, the overlooked and the sick. He played to the margins. By spending less at Christmas, we have the opportunity to join Him in giving resources to those who need help the most. When Advent Conspiracy first began four churches challenged this simple concept to its congregations. The result raised more than a half million dollars to aid those in need. One less gift. One unbelievable present in the name of Christ.

I wish you all a Holy Advent and Joyous Christmas.

Peace,
John +

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

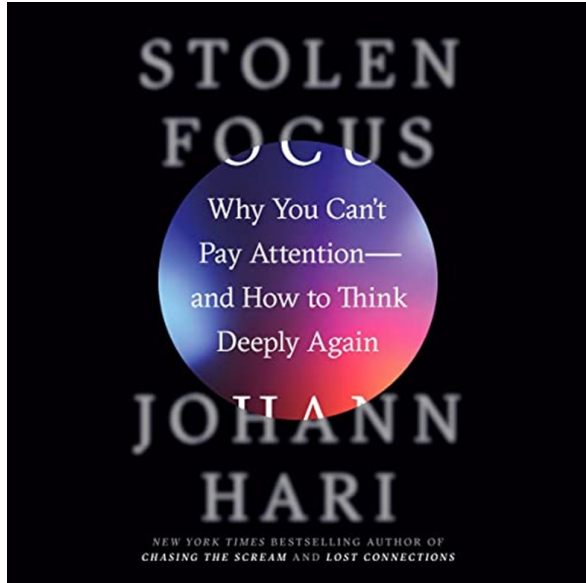
“Comfort ye, my people”: An Advent online retreat



Saturday, December 3 | 9:30 a.m. - 12 Noon | Online (free)

Advent Online Retreat, Saturday, Dec. 3, 9:30 a.m.-noon: We live in a time of radical challenge and change. Advent offers rich material for prayer, conveying images of disruption, struggle and endings, and images of reconciliation, birth and beginnings. This morning retreat, led by The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, will seek to create a space of prayer big enough to encompass both what disturbs and shakes us, and what brings comfort and hope. How do the images of Advent enlarge our capacity to midwife Christ’s birth within us and among us? The retreat will include presentations, silence, singing, solitude and small group conversation. If possible, participants are asked to have a candle and Bible at hand, and wear something comfortable for an optional walk outdoors.

This free retreat is open to all and is sponsored by both Episcopal dioceses in Massachusetts and the Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ. Please contact the parish office or Rev. John for the link.



Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention—and How to Think Deeply Again

By Johann Hari

Book Discussion Group - Wednesday evenings
at 7:30 beginning January 11th, 2023

Kindly email the office if you are interested in participating.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

From the Senior Warden...

Hello everyone,

It's been several months since we began talking about discernment. So here is an update as to where we are. The committee has been formed and will consist of Julia Aston, Rev. John Beach, Dan Casey, Donna Manoogian, T.J. Martin, and me.

We will have our first meeting on Dec. 11 and welcome any questions you may have. Please take advantage of coffee hour. We may not have the answers but we will work on getting them.

To review -

What is Discernment?

In the discernment process, we will review our vision for the congregation. We then assess whether our priest-in-charge shares that vision and is a good fit to continue on as our rector at the end of year three. As of October, Rev. John began his third year as Priest-in-Charge.

What does this mean to you?

As a parish member we need to hear from you. This is your church.

One of the tasks of the Discernment Committee is to interview parish members to gather their thoughts/dreams/changes for St. John's future. We value everyone's time and will continue to work with our consultant for meeting content and direction.

Grace and blessings,
Brenda Caggiano, Senior Warden

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Every Child Deserves to Smile



In this season of giving thanks, I want to express my gratitude to all who support this much-needed ministry. The motel is full and, at this writing, serves as home to about 40 children. Your gifts mean the world to these children and their families. During the month of November we delivered \$50 in gift certificates for distribution to the families. We will continue to collect \$10 gift cards to Stop & Shop and Market Basket as well as monetary donations toward the gift cards through December 31st. Non-perishable food items, bottled water, paper goods, plastic storage containers, can openers and microwaveable containers are always welcomed donations.

Donations may be left in the donation baskets in the vestibule. Please contact Jeanne Seaboyer if you have questions or would like to make a gift card donation.

Community Outreach

SFD Annual Toy & Gift Cards—Collection remains open until December 4th

Thank you for the donations that have been coming in! Your generosity toward ensuring teens and tweens are also remembered this holiday through the Saugus



Fire Department’s annual appeal will help make Christmas more enjoyable for families in need. Donations of gift cards (pizza, X-box, Visa, Amazon, movie theater tickets, etc.) are gratefully accepted. For those wishing to make a gift card or monetary contribution toward the purchase of gift cards, please contact Jeanne Seaboyer.



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2023 Stewardship Ministry Update

As of 11/21/22, St. John's has received 33 pledges (we sent out 66 letters). Total amount pledged so far is \$53,128.00 (finance has budgeted \$84,000). We have received 2 new pledges, one pledge has signed up for auto withdrawal, and 11 pledges were able to increase from 2022. If you have not turned in your pledge card we hope you are able to soon so that the Finance Committee can complete their 2023 budget for the church.

If you did not receive a pledge package, please see me (Julia Aston). There are also some 2023 packages in the rack in the back of the church so you can take one from there as well.

I will send out reminder notes to those we have not heard from by mid December.

Thank you for your continued support of St. John's!

Julia Aston
Stewardship Ministry 2023

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Advent & Christmas Worship Opportunities

November 27th, December 4th (w/ Baptism), 11th, and 18th ~ 10am

Family Christmas Service, Saturday, December 24th ~ 5pm
Evening Service (w/ Choir) ~ 9pm

Sunday Service Christmas Day ~ 10am

A Festival of Carols & Lessons, Sunday, January 1st ~ 10am

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Candle & Flower Memorials for 2023

If you wish to remember a loved one or friend on a particular day (or holiday) in the New Year, please notify Sandy St. Clair or the office.

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Christmas Prayer List

Please forward names in remembrance (or in thanksgiving) for our Christmas prayer list to the parish office *no later than Thursday, December 20th* – thank you!

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Looking ahead....

Annual Meeting

Kindly mark your calendars: St. John's Annual Meeting will convene **Sunday, February 5th, 2023 at 11:30am.** Accomplishments and church financials for this year will be reviewed, in addition to the budget approval for 2023. Our goals for the New Year will also be discussed, as well as the election of officers, vestry members, and delegates. We look forward to everyone's participation for this important gathering!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Word Search

Can you find these terms associated with Christmas carols?

H K Q H O H A R K N D V C S H A K Y
 P P K D Y P H O L L Y H E R H J A M
 S W M O U N T A I N I Q X R A C F S
 R S D T Q A U Z P Q E A U A E M P I
 S H E M M A N U E L X J L V S H G L
 S H I I D S M T O W L C T M Q E L E
 K B E P E L J I V N Q A A O P R Y N
 I B N P O W Q I D I C O T T R A D T
 N Y L U H Y Y L T N U F I J L L W P
 G M F T W E R H O D I W O H W D F L
 S S B W E E R S F J I G N I C M X N
 Z G E W M W L D W A R V H I J N F X
 I N H M M E H B S G I B I T N O G S
 F Y U A G A S P O P X T K N O N Y K
 N R P N D W L B I B E T H L E H E M
 D C A Z V O E Z R Q B I W F L W A T
 G K C Y S D R S P M Y R R H U U J P
 I W B R A H O E V U B O Z F L L O K

Adore ~ Angels ~ Bethlehem ~ Divine ~ Drummer ~ Emmanuel
 Exultation ~ Faithful ~ Hark ~ Herald ~ Holly ~ Joy ~ Kings
 Midnight ~ Mountain ~ Myrrh ~ Noel ~ Shepherds ~ Silent

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***Have a very blessed and merry Christmas, and
 a healthy, happy New Year!***

Officers: The Rev. John T. Beach, Priest-in-Charge, Brenda Caggiano and Daniel Casey, Jr., Wardens, Phil Littlehale, Treasurer, Paul Felci, Assistant Treasurer, and Kristina Palazzo, Clerk of the Vestry

Vestry: Duana 'Dee' LeMay (2024), Sandy Mears (2025), Donna Manoogian (2024), and Kenneth Webber (2023)