



*December 21, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent*

STREET ADDRESS
104 NEWBERRY ST. NW
AIKEN, SC 29801

803-648-6891
www.stjaiken.org

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. BOX 809
Aiken, SC 29802

Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2026 are now available for pick up. They are located on a table outside of Ward Hall. If you are not able to locate your box and are wanting envelopes, please see Nancy Fairgrieve in the Financial Office and she will assign a box to you.

Sunny Monday

St. John's Senior Adult Council will host Sunny Monday on January 12, 2026. The program will begin at 10:30am in the Faith Center featuring Linda Johnson from the Historical Foundation of Aiken speaking about "Women of the Winter Colony." Lunch at \$5 per plate will be baked ziti, salad, roll and brownie with ice cream for dessert. Please call the church office at 803-648-6891 to make your reservation by January 8, 2026.

Succession Plan Starting January 1, 2026

As we enter our senior pastor succession plan following Dr. Tim's retirement on December 31st, we do so prayerfully, trusting God will lead us in unity and wisdom. The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) wishes to clearly communicate the succession process as dictated by our Book of Discipline:

1. SPRC has named Rev. Butch Blackwell as St. John's Interim Lead Pastor, who has graciously accepted, until a candidate is hired. Rev. Butch will preach church services beginning the first two Sundays in January.

2. SPRC has agreed with Rev. Dr. Jeff Kersey formerly with Mt. Horeb Church (Lexington, SC) to preach the 1st and 4th Sundays of the month until a candidate is hired. Rev. Will and Rev. Butch will split preaching duties the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of the month.

3. Vanderbloemen, the executive search firm hired by SPRC, is currently recruiting and vetting potential senior pastor candidates. The job opening was posted on October 22, 2025. To protect candidates and maintain integrity, some details must remain confidential. We commit, however, to regular updates so you know where we are in the process.

4. As candidates are presented to SPRC and interviews conducted, per St. John's Book of Discipline, SPRC shall present one candidate at a time to the Church Council, where a vote will be taken.

5. Following Church Council vote, the candidate will preach one Sunday service at St. John's, followed by a Question-and-Answer session conducted that same afternoon.

6. A Charge Conference will be required to officially elect a candidate for the Lead Pastor role. While SPRC expects the search process to take approximately 6-9 months, we are committed to moving at the pace that allows for wisdom, prayer, and unity rather than rushing a decision. Our ministries, worship, and mission will continue during this season. We are grateful for our interim leadership and staff who are faithfully serving during this transition. The "Eleventh Hour Prayer Group" meets on Tuesday mornings in the church's chapel from 11 am to Noon to pray for the church. We ask you to pray regularly for the SPRC, for the candidates God is preparing, and for our church to remain unified and hopeful as we trust the Lord together.

Getting to Know Rev. Dr. Jeff Kersey as Primary Preacher

Rev. Dr. Jeff Kersey recently retired as the Senior Pastor of Mt. Horeb Church in Lexington, SC, the largest Methodist congregation in SC with over 5,000 members and an average worship attendance of over 3,000 each week. He is one of the most dynamic preachers in the country. He and his wife, Lynn, have been married for over 47 years and have two children, Ashley and Aaron, and 6 wonderful grandchildren. It will be a blessing for Dr. Jeff to be in our pulpit to provide help to Rev. Will and Rev. Butch in their additional duties during this transition.

WORSHIP SERVICES: Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon, Rev. Butch Blackwell; Rev. Will Altman; Director of Traditional Music - Dr. Matt Caine; Organist - Christopher Nash; 9:02 Band Leader - Jane Timmerman; The 9:02 Band - Chuck Carver, Juli Davis, Earl Melton, Matt Osteen, George Collins, Steve Davis, Alec James, Jeff Krok, Jonathan Cook, Susan Lawson, Marshall Sanders

Crucifer: Rebecca Kreitzer **Acolytes:** Grant Kreitzer and Teddy Nichols

December 8:30 Ushers: Tom Miniard, Randy Shelley, Greg Lowry

December 11:00 Ushers: Paula Blackmore, Donald Leader, Sally Alexander, Rod Alexander, Jeff Wallace, Jean Geiger, Penny Rue, Gerry Hansen, Bruce Carrera, Rea Maynard, Kevin Maynard, Katherine Sturm, Connie Pisko, Mick Pisko, Susie Graven-Smith, Art Smith, Karen Travis, Larry Travis, John Lindsay, Maxine Falb and Kent Falb

December Worship Support: Jean Geiger, Millie Winston and Sandra Jameson

You may text your gift to St. John's by texting **stjaiken** to 1-888-364-4483 and following the instructions. Images and texts used with this service have permission granted under CCLI #2220845.

The 11:00 service is broadcast over WKSX 92.7 at 12 p.m., one week delay.

December 21, 2025

Children's Ministry

Children's Christmas Party during Sunday School today!

We look forward to the Children's Nativity skit at the 5pm Christmas Eve Service!

January 11: Children's Ministry Nerf War. More details to come.

This time of year brings wonderful activities and makes for special memories for our children. Enjoy the photos below from various St. John's Christmas activities.

Thank you to all that helped make our Gingerbread Nativity Event a success!



Nineteen children visited 7 St. John's shut-in homes, Christmas Caroling and spreading Christmas Spirit.

Foundation Student Ministries

(7th-12th Grades)

The Merge will take place on January 11, 2026.

Youth Ski Retreat Jan. 30 – Feb. 1, 2026 to Winterplace "Are You Ready to Ski?" Registration link: <https://links.stjaiken.org/26STJyouthski> or use the QR code on the graphics page.

Young Adults Ministry

Sunday School meets in room 237 at 10am.

St. John's Missions News

Thank you to each of you that participated in our Saturday of Service in the fulfilment of wishes with the Salvation Army and Toys for Tots!

For the month of December, we are collecting gloves and hats. Please place any donated items in the box marked "Grace Kitchen" in the Narthex of each worship service and in front of Ward Hall. Please place only the requested donation items in the Grace Kitchen boxes as these are the current items needed.

Poinsettias will be on display through December 24. 9:02's can be picked up following that service on December 21 and the others may be taken following the 11pm Christmas Eve service.

One Service on December 28

We will hold one service on December 28, 2025, at 10am in the Sanctuary. A reception for Dr. Tim and Cindy McClendon will follow in the gymnasium.

News of the Family

Congratulations to:

Jerry Carson Sublett IV who was baptized December 14, 2025. **"Carson"** is the grandson of **Carson & Sandy Sublett, Jr.**

Bob & Ann Prather, who celebrate their 67th Wedding Anniversary today, December 21.

Welcome our Newest Members:

Andrew & Joanna Siders

Cooper Cunning (through confirmation)

Sympathies to:

In Memoriam

Ms. Peach Abbott-Douglass
December 15, 2025

ACTS Monthly Collection Item

December – peanut butter and jelly

Collection bins are located in both the Narthex and the Faith Center

Thank You St. John's

Thank you to all who sent heartwarming Christmas messages to Veterans like this one: *"Dear Hero, My family is so grateful for people like you who helped pave the way of freedom. Your service is an inspiration to your community. I know this is true because we are also a military family. In a way, that makes you our family, too. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a blessed, healthy, Happy New Year!"* St. John's Women delivered 610 cards to cheer veterans living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities in and around Aiken.

Attendance—12/14/2025

8:30 | 135 9:02 | 221 11:00 | 328

In-person Total | 684

9:02 On-line Live | 171 11:00 On-line Live | 198

Financials

Operation Budget as of 12/17/2025

Year-to-date offering given for what God is asking us to do:	\$2,516,868.91
Year-to-date ministry expenditures:	<u>\$2,054,751.12</u>
	\$ 462,177.79

Missions Budget: Year 2025–2026

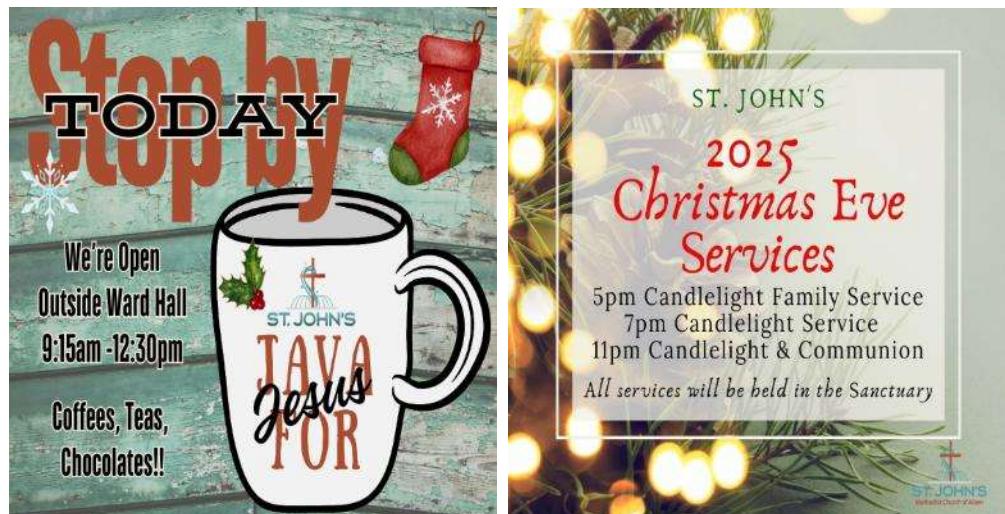
Year-to-date offering given for what God is asking us to do in Missions:	\$ 311,071.33
Year-to-date disbursements:	\$ 262,750.00

*We thank you for your generous support of
St. John's Ministries & Missions!*

Please use our new GIVING QR code to give online.



TODAY IS THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



FINANCE COMMITTEE BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

As we approach the end of the calendar year, the Finance Committee wants to review two "gifting" options for our church members.

1.) Gifting highly appreciated securities (i.e., stocks, bonds, etc.) - please contact Nancy Fairgrieve and/or speak to Mary Ann Barrett, Janney, Montgomery Scott LLC, Aiken office (803-649-6304) per the church's local brokerage account. We ask that transfer instructions be in process on or before 12/20/2025.

2.) Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) - for charitable gifts from IRAs. Please have check made payable to and as beneficiary "St. John's Methodist Church," PO Box 809, Aiken, SC 29802. Nancy Fairgrieve can provide further assistance if needed.

Both of these options can provide advantageous tax benefits to individuals and couples. Please consult your own personal tax advisor if appropriate.



Order of Worship – 8:30 A.M.

We welcome you, no matter who you are, where you come from, or why you are here. We are Christ's people, and this is Christ's place with its doors open wide. Thank you for worshipping with us today. Please silence all electronic devices.

PRELUDE *Fantasy on Good King Wenceslas*
 I Wonder as I Wander
 Chancel Bells

Patricia Hurlburt
arr. Peggy Bettcher

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP *Ding Dong! Merrily on High* arr. Bill Ingram

***OPENING HYMN No. 230, "O Little Town of Bethlehem"** ST. LOUIS

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE **Jim & Carolyn Heffner**

***SCRIPTURE READING Luke 12:13-21 Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon**

SERMON "What Do You Want for Christmas?" Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick 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.

*GLORIA PATRI No. 71. "Glory Be to the Father" GREATOREX

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

DEDICATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen.

***HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 218, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" CAROL**
***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE Right Turn: The Politics of the New South

FOOTNOTE



Order of Worship – 9:02 A.M.

We welcome you, no matter who you are, where you come from, or why you are here. We are Christ's people, and this is Christ's place with its doors open wide. Thank you for worshipping with us today. Please silence all electronic devices.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

PRAISE SONG **Love Came Down At Christmas** **Jars of**
Clay

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick 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.

PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

SERVICE OF CONFIRMATION

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 12:13-21 Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon

SERMON **What Do You Want for Christmas?"** Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon

BENEDICTION

POSTULDE Go Tell It On the Mountain



Order of Worship - 11:00 AM

We welcome you, no matter who you are, where you come from, or why you are here. We are Christ's people, and this is Christ's place with its doors open wide. This service will be livestreamed today at 11am on our website stjaiken.org, our Facebook Page, and the St. John's App. Thank you for worshipping with us today. Please silence all electronic devices.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP *Ding Dong! Merrily on High* arr. Bill Ingram

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

PRESENTATION OF APPLEFEST PROCEEDS

***OPENING HYMN No. 230, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" ST. LOUIS**

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE Rich & Hellen Eichler and Family

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick 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.

***GLORIA PATRI No. 71, "Glory Be to the Father"** GREATEOREX

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

DEDICATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and glory forever. Amen.

***SCRIPTURE READING Luke 12:13-21 Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon**

SERMON "What Do You Want for Christmas?" Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon

***HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 218, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" CAROL**

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE **Bring a Torch** **Jeanette Isabella**

***Please stand, as able.**

Presented by:

Denny & Elaine Bennett
Jeff Bilyeu & Heather Haney,
Kathy Dodgen & Jason Bilyeu
Diane & Walter Daniell
Dick & Alice Eichler

Susan, Luke, Taylor & Luke Jr.
Mabry
Kitty Moore

John & Claudette Strickland
Richard & Betty Thomason
Donna Walker
Kenny & Mimi Wiland

Presented by:

Rod & Sally Alexander

Liz & Rick Benton
Jay & Judy Bilyeu

Paula Blackmore & Donna Mainini

The Bryan Family
Jerry & Kay Buckner and family
Anne & Jim Carpenter
Barry & Paula Clayton
Janelle Connelly
Michael & Teresa Cowen
Jim & Susan Crosby

In Honor of:

Their grandchildren
Jay & Judy Bilyeu

Their children & grandchildren
Their grandchildren: Richie,
Adianez, Jacob & Nathan
Joan Mabry

Shanon, Richard, Alexandra,
Catherine & Alex
St. John's Ministers & Staff
Their daughters and their families
Children: Scott, Greg & Julie
Their grandsons: Hank, Scott, Jones
& Aiden

In Memory of:

Paul J. Alexander, George & Pearl
Alexander, and Henning &
Marion Soderberg
Their son, Alan Benton
Clarence & Ruth Duncan, Pierce &
Pat Bilyeu, and Linda Jenkins
Their parents, Douglas & Dolly
Blackmore
Mason Bentlee Bryan
Reid Talvert
Daughter, granddaughter & parents
Their parents
Buford Connelly
Haley Michelle Cowen
Arthur & Hazel Whittington

Presented by:

Judy Davis
The Donley Family
Rick Endler
First Place Bible Study
Matt & Ashleigh Forrest
Kathy Franklin

Marty & Ann Gillam
Mike & Jill Grandy
Sally Griffis

Peggy Hammons

Carolyn & Jim Heffner
and Doris Hoffman

Lorene Henson

Jeanette Issacson

Gayle Jones

Jeff Krok

Joe & Leah Lewis
and Rev. J. Hilton Roof

Susan, Luke, Taylor & Luke Jr.
Mabry

Donna Mainini

Brenda Meeks

Brian & Bridget Miller

Cary & Hollie Milliner

Diane and Tom Miniard

Terry & Trudy Ortner

Judy Phillips

The Family of Monnie Pitts

The Rhodens & Whiteheads

Greg & Peg Robinson

In Memory of:

Frank M. Davis
Don & Donna Donley
Linda Endler & Rebecca Endler
Mary Jo Wilson Spencer
Mike & Ann Harmon
Steve Franklin
Jeff Hudson
William B. Gillam
Jill's mother, Patricia Miller
William A. Griffis and
Sarah Ann Griffis Dees
Ed Hammons, Nell & Jack
Herrick
Their parents and Herb Hoffman

James H. Henson

Paul Isaacson

Wade Jones

Marlyn Wilhem

Mr. & Mrs. L.L. Lewis
and Mrs. Faye Roof

Fil Mabry

Husband, Leo Mainini

Jack L. Meeks

Parents: Travis & Bobbie Miller

Cary & Dottie Milliner and
Arch & Cass Booker

Their son, Jake Miniard

Sandy & Bob Dunn

Charlie Neill

Joe Cooke & Gary Phillips

Monnie Pitts

Robert James Rhoden

Jim & Idella Bodie and
Helen Rhoden

Kris Kisner

Presented by:

The Rorex Family
John & Diane Schmidt
Rob & Brenda Shellhouse
Sinclair Short
The Simmons Family
Van, Tracey, Jessica, Abigail,
and Madelyn Smith
Gary & Debi Spivey
Larry & Karen Travis
Bill & Carolyn Tyler
Chet & Carrie Tyler

Donna Walker
Jane Weidenbacker
Ron & Sherry Williamson

In Memory of:

Ed, Eleanor and Bill Rorex
Their Parents
Tara Lee Shellhouse
Karon L. Short
Marion Simmons
Dorothy Smith and
 Roland & Peggy Olcott
Their loved ones
Their parents
Edwina Carns
Jane McGee,
 Gene & Francis Tyler
Parents, Robert & Pauline Walker
Bruce Weidenbacker
Their Parents



HONORARY & MEMORIUM

Poinsettias

2025

