



**St. John's  
Episcopal  
Church**

# The Red Door

WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME

*Monthly newsletter of the people and ministries of  
St. John's Episcopal Church*



**February 2026 - Volume 2, Issue 1**



**Fr. Mitch Yudasz**

## Share Your Gifts With Your Fellow Parishoners

There's been a lot going on at St. John's since our last newsletter. First off, I'm thrilled beyond belief at Mary's ongoing recovery. The fact that she's working back into her routine is wonderful, and I'm so glad to be writing this for the Red Door, that hopefully from this point will be a regular thing again!

So many things have happened in the last few months. The most significant of which is our Deacon. Jenny was assigned to St. John's effective December 1, for a year for starters/. After a year, the assignment will likely continue. Since her and her spouse Jacquie arrived in the parish, we've seen a flurry of activity going on. Our Facebook viewership is up. We've gotten about 450 new viewers (and climbing each week.) An intentional effort has been made to post various things on the Facebook page, which is gaining a lot of attention.

Speaking of which, I'd like to improve our online experience. Anyone who's watched an online service sees one camera view that's moved around as needed, and the audio is not very good at all. In my office, I have 3 or 4 webcams and a studio quality microphone. We used these items at my last parish, and they produced excellent results. I would like to set these up so we can use multiple cameras to produce multiple views, and have a mic that makes things audibly clear. The only thing that we need to make this happen is a computer. An older one would do - as long as we can access a web browser on it. Please let me know if you have an older computer that still works that we could utilize for this.

We have some events coming up in the near future. Short-term, we will be having a Shrove Tuesday pancake supper on Tuesday, February 17, then an Ash Wednesday service the next day which kicks off the season of Lent. Please spread the word about the pancakes! We had a great turnout last year - let's try for an even better one this year. There's also been some talk about an Easter egg hunt the Saturday before Easter, and possibly a craft fair at the beginning of May. Things are starting to happen at St. John's - baby steps.... and this is just the start!

If you haven't gotten involved in things at church, this may be your battle call to do so! We have a lot of eager people that put in a lot of work. We always need help, and everyone is welcome to do as they are able. Like I have said in my sermons before, it takes a village to make things happen. Doing things here at church is more than just work. It's a ministry. And those that do things here are sharing the gifts they possess to do the work. Please consider sharing those gifts that were given to us by the Holy Spirit!

Our Christmas service was superb! The luminaries lighting the driveway in and all the sidewalks were a special touch, with a lantern at the front of the drive to welcome people. It was quite peaceful taking a walk out there before service while the carillon played Christmas carols. The addition of a trumpet (thanks so much, Dan, for making that happen) made the service even more spectacular. Thanks to everyone for everything you did to make this happen! A few pictures from Christmas Eve at St. John's are on page four.

*Article continued on page 2.*

### *Worship With Us - All are Invited*

#### Sunday Services



**Feb. 1      9:30 am    Holy Eucharist**  
*Celebrant & Preacher:*  
*Fr. Mitch Yudasz*

**Feb. 8      9:30 am    Holy Eucharist**  
*Celebrant & Preacher:*  
*Fr. Mitch Yudasz*

**Feb. 15     9:30 am    Holy Eucharist**  
*Celebrant & Preacher:*  
*Fr. Mitch Yudasz*

**Feb. 22     9:30 am    Morning Prayer**  
*Officiant: Nick Hamblin*  
*Reader: Sande Godbout*

#### Ash Wednesday Service

**Feb. 17     7:00 pm    Holy Eucharist/Ashes**  
*Celebrant: Fr. Mitch Yudasz*



*Continued from page one*

## Share Your Gifts

Although I may be a bit hopeful talking about it, it's not too early to think about spring projects. In addition to our usual gardening clean up around the church, we will be doing some power washing and painting. Most importantly with this will be turning all the exterior doors on the building bright (I mean bright) red. This tradition within the Episcopal Church and several other denominations has quite a lot of significance to it. More about all this when the time gets closer.

-Fr. Mitch +



*Shrove Tuesday* Pancake Supper

One of the favorite traditions that many Episcopal congregations embrace is the annual pancake supper on the Tuesday evening preceding Ash Wednesday. We will observe this custom on **Tuesday, February 17th from 5:00 – 7:00 pm**. Please join us for great food and excellent company as we celebrate this fun day!

## The Captain's Bell

Most of you may have noticed a big cast-iron bell attached to the wall in the sanctuary. While I spoke of this during announcements earlier in January, many may not have heard the story about it.

Back in the late summer, I got two bells that I restored and put on on posts at my house - one in the front, one in the back. The bells fascinated me because the concept of having a bell outside the house goes back to the mid-1800's. Almost every farm had a bell, which was used to call folks from the fields for dinner, if there was an emergency, etc. While the bell I have out front is mostly new parts, the one in the back came from someone in Harrison Twp. in Macomb county. He had it in front of his house for 30 years. Who knows where it was before that. Kinda neat that my bell could be 150+ years old!

When I came to St. John's, Sande Godbout told me that I was the "Captain of this ship." Although I disagreed (and still do) with her on that one, I just smiled and went on about whatever I was doing. I noticed when I was ordering some parts for the bell that I was restoring that the company that currently makes the original bells (from the original molds in the 1850's,) offer other things besides farm bells. Then I saw it - the same bell I have by my front porch, in a different bracket. Set up with this bracket, it's called a "marine bell" or a "captain's bell." These were standard on all watercraft, and rung to change watch duties, if there was an emergency, but most importantly, when the captain arrived.

So I ordered myself one. To me, from me, for Christmas, to hang in my office here at church.

The bell is portable - well as portable as that hefty piece of cast iron can be. So the idea hit. Order a second bracket and put it in the church. That way it can be moved back and forth.

And then thinking further: we are afterall, the Great Lakes state. So even though we don't have water in the vicinity of the church (unless you count the Rouge River over by Eloise,) our marine roots hold much significance. I am not the captain of this ship. First mate perhaps, but definitely not the captain. But I can tell you who is - Jesus Christ himself! So.....

During the consecration of the elements of bread and wine, when I elevate the bread or the cup the bell will ring in the traditional pattern that was used: 2 fast rings, 3 times. Bells are customarily rung at this point to make us aware that Christ is now present in those elements. So, in short, when the bell rings, the Captain is here!

The bell is quite a bit louder than our traditional bells or the organ chimes. Someone made a comment it was a bit loud and should be toned down. No deal! Everyone should be made aware loud and clear of that significant moment when Christ becomes present to us in the elements!

I hope you enjoy the symbolism, not to mention the beauty of the bell!

# The View From the Second Pew

By Jacquie Ritter

Welcome to **View from the 2nd Pew**. Chuck suggested that name for our newsletter column heading. Father Mitch has deemed us as the "Growth" team. Chuck suggested notes from our first meeting should become the first "**View from the 2nd Pew**" article. The following is an excerpt of what we discussed in our meeting:

Jacquie outlined outreach priorities, including Christmas Eve banners and Luminary bags, the tradition of chalking the doors, and listed many event ideas (see below) Jacquie detailed plans to list items on Facebook Marketplace and prepare welcome bags for new families.

First of all, thank you to ALL who made our Christmas Eve Service Shine! It was absolutely beautiful and what a glorious celebration it was!

Now that I have had some time to get to know some of you and figure out the roles in church, I am excited to join in and help with all we have planned for this year!

Notes on Events and Ideas:

2/17: Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras pancake dinner. We need purple and gold bead necklaces. Not sure if they were amongst any donations or left overs from the Preschool. Decorating the Parish Hall would be great and I volunteer!

4/4: Holy Saturday and Easter egg hunt in front of the church. All are welcome. We need plastic eggs and candy. Do we have an Easter banner?

5/9: Mary and I are resurrecting the Spring Bazaar (Craft/flower/bake sale)! More details to come. If anyone has crafty talents or friends who are crafters, have them get a hold of me, as I will be taking calls. Jacquie 248-982-8588.

*Summer:*

Evening events: family game nights, movie nights (Chuck has a Screen Projector). We can set it up in the parking lot, have a concession stand and always accept free will offerings.

Wayne Road Cruise!

Ice Cream Social!

Ferndale Pride!

Drag Queen Bingo!

Outreaching to surrounding churches to see if there are any events we can do together.

BBQ/restaurant fundraiser for a new roof.

*Fall:* Rummage Sale. We could also offer baked goods for sale. Who doesn't love a nice treat after all that rummaging!

Oktoberfest! More details to come!

*Christmas:*

--Giving Tree

--Visit from Saint Nicholas

***If you are interested in being involved in an Outreach Committee to help plan and run church events, please join us after our February 15 service.***

Finally, thank you for your wonderful hospitality and making me feel so much at home. I felt it the first day we walked into St John's, we were home.

If you are on Facebook, please invite your friends to LIKE our St John's Facebook page. Please also SHARE our events, as you never know, who is looking for a church family.

*For His Sake,  
Jacquie Ritter*



## Birthdays:

- 13 Jenny Ritter
- 15 Jacquie Ritter
- 19 Alexander Fowler
- 22 Elizabeth Daupan



***Our apologies if your name should have appeared here! Please help us update our list. Send your special day to: [minutemgr@gmail.com](mailto:minutemgr@gmail.com)***

*Christmas Eve at St. John's*



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry Visited St. John's on December 14, 2025**

Bishop Bonnie joined us for a potluck and discussion after the service. Her presence in our church is always a such a Blessing!

**February Altar Guild Schedule**

- Feb. 1 Sande G., Julie J.
- Feb. 8 Wendy C., Violet S.
- Feb. 15 Sande G., Priscilla H.
- Feb. 22 Sande G., Julie J.



**St. John's Episcopal Church**

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Parish office hours: Mon. & Thur. 10 am-2pm

[www.stjohnswestland.com](http://www.stjohnswestland.com)

[stjohnschurchwestland@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnschurchwestland@gmail.com)

We're on Facebook!

St. John's Church Westland

Live-streamed every Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsepiscopalwestland>

**FOOD PANTRY OPEN**

Thursday, February 12,  
11:00 am - 12:30 pm

On the last Sunday of the month collection plate donations go to our Food Pantry Ministry.



**FEBRUARY EVENTS CALENDAR**

- Sun. Feb. 1 Daughters of the King, *after service*
- Sun. Feb. 8 Vestry Meeting, *after service*
- Sun. Feb. 15 Outreach Discussion\* *after service*
- \*for anyone interested in an Outreach Committee
- Tues. Feb 17 Pancake Supper, 5 pm - 7 pm

Join us for Coffee Hour *after our 9:30 services.*  
*Enjoy coffee, tea, light refreshments and fellowship.*

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
CLERGY & STAFF**

Rev. Mitch Yudasz, Priest-in-Charge  
[frmitchy@gmail.com](mailto:frmitchy@gmail.com)

Rev. Jenny Ritter, Deacon  
[jjritter@comcast.net](mailto:jjritter@comcast.net)

Janet Swanson, Parish Secretary  
[stjohnschurchwestland@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnschurchwestland@gmail.com)

Dan Dillingham, Music Director/Organist  
[mcllungave@comcast.net](mailto:mcllungave@comcast.net)

**2026 OFFICERS**

- Sande Godbout, Senior Warden
- Don Streeter & Nick Hamblin, Junior Co-Wardens
- Mary Vellardita, Clerk
- Erin Downey-Tarnowski, Treasurer

**2026 VESTRY MEMBERS**

Amelia Hamblin, Nick Hamblin, Julie Jones, Susan Mallard