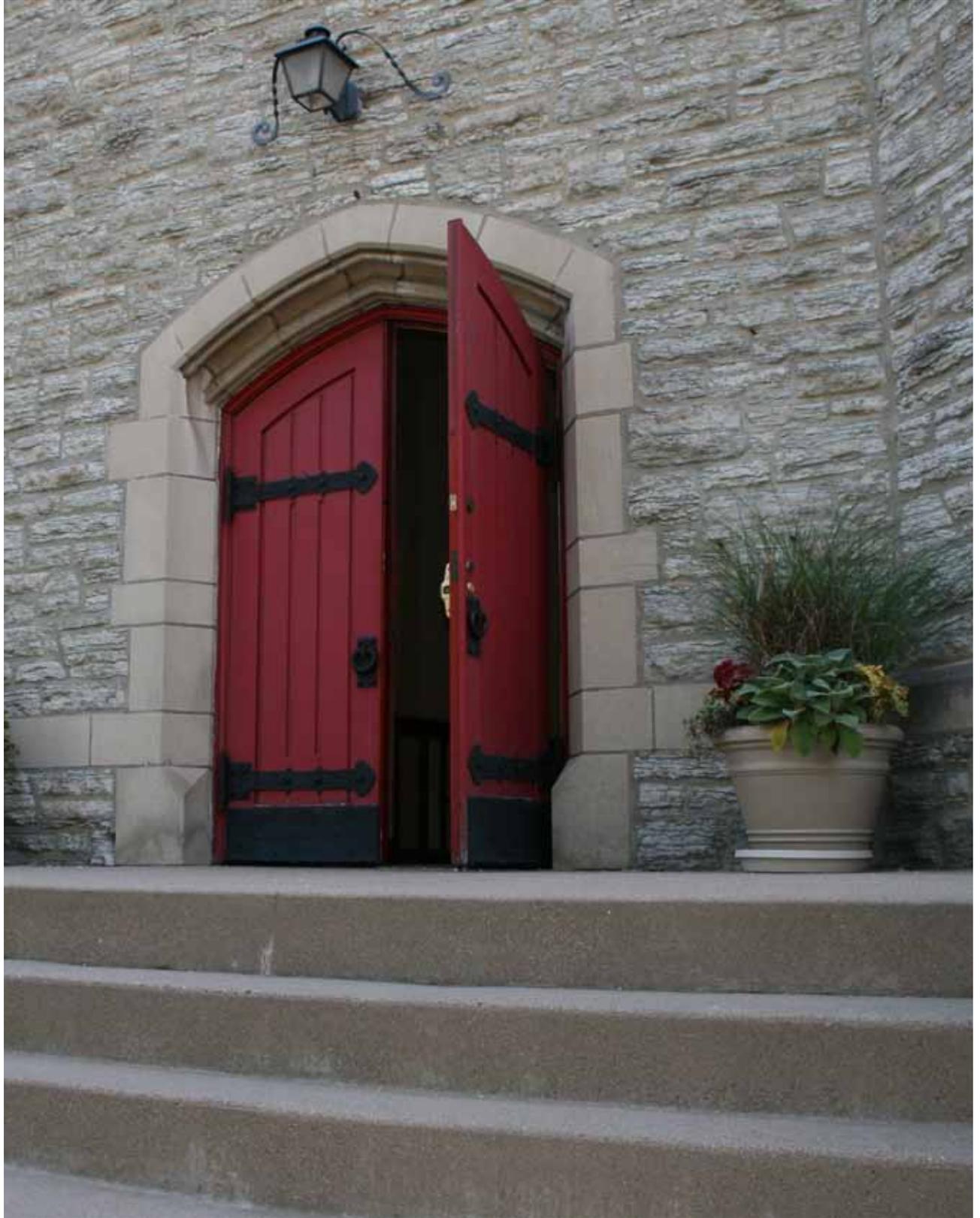





ST. JOHN'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

PARISH PROFILE







St. John's Parish Profile

*We celebrate the gift of Christian community
and welcome all, without distinction,
to share the joy and pain of life's passages.*

*We commit ourselves to personal and spiritual maturity,
both traditional and innovative worship,
the healthy nurturing of children,
and reaching out, beyond the Church,
seeking Christ in all persons.*

Since 1993, this mission statement has been used as a plumb line to guide our reflections and actions at St. John's. We affirm it in our bulletins and recite it at annual meetings and other community gatherings. We are now using the mission statement as a way to organize our parish profile.

In addition to being guided by the mission statement, we have conducted a parish-wide survey, led small group discussions, and interviewed people from outside the parish who have relationships with St. John's.



“Life is short and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us along the way. Be quick to love, make haste to be kind and the God of compassion will go with you.”

a familiar blessing in our worship based on the words of Henri-Frederic Amiel



Who We Are

We are a progressive community that defines itself through worship and service to others. This is where our talents, our spirituality, and our caring for one another create an offering to God and a gift we share with each other.

We are a traditional community that recognizes that traditions constantly evolve and grow. Yet sometimes we experience tension between the old and the new.

We are a missional community that acknowledges that true mission grows out of partnerships based in mutuality and trust. Yet, at times, we struggle to find consensus on what our missional focus should be.

We are a growing community, experiencing an infusion of new talents, energy, and spiritual hunger, joining a dedicated core of members who have devoted decades to serving this church. Yet even as we grow, we experience the pains and challenges that growth inevitably brings.

We celebrate the gift of Christian community and welcome all, without distinction...



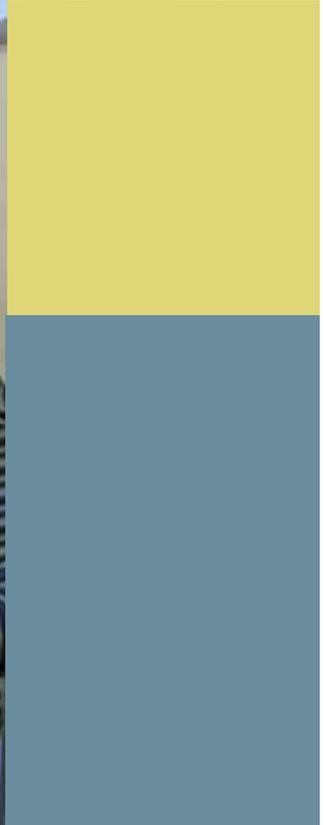
People began to worship at St. John's Episcopal Church in the southwest Minneapolis neighborhood of Linden Hills in 1903 and built the existing sanctuary in 1915. After several remodeling projects and additions, the most recent of which was completed in 2007, we now have the maximum size building allowable on our lot.

During the past ten years we've grown from 400 members to 770, with an average worship attendance of 285. Nearly 45% of us began attending St. John's within the past eight years. Less than half of us are cradle Episcopalians and the rest of us come from many different traditions. We are an intergenerational community, with approximately one-third of our members under the age of 18 and one-fourth over the age of 55. Although initially a neighborhood church, 70% of St. John's members come from outside the Linden Hills zip code.

As we strive "to welcome all without distinction," St. John's has developed a reputation as a place of progressive hospitality, aspiring to "seek Christ in all persons." Forty years ago we housed an outpatient chemical dependency program. We also began intentionally to welcome, affirm, and provide leadership opportunities for GLBT individuals and their families. We also became involved in ministries for those suffering from AIDS. At the same time, we continued to expand our offerings for families and children to meet the demands of a growing congregation.

"I am grateful that we don't fly a rainbow flag outside the door, that we don't have 'reconciling and welcoming' posted all over our marquee. My partner and I come here because we are simply a community of individuals and couples, families and children—friends. There is no LGBT quota. We aren't tokens. We feel normal, ordinary, just like everyone else. You cannot imagine how refreshing that is."

...to share the joy and pain of life's passages...





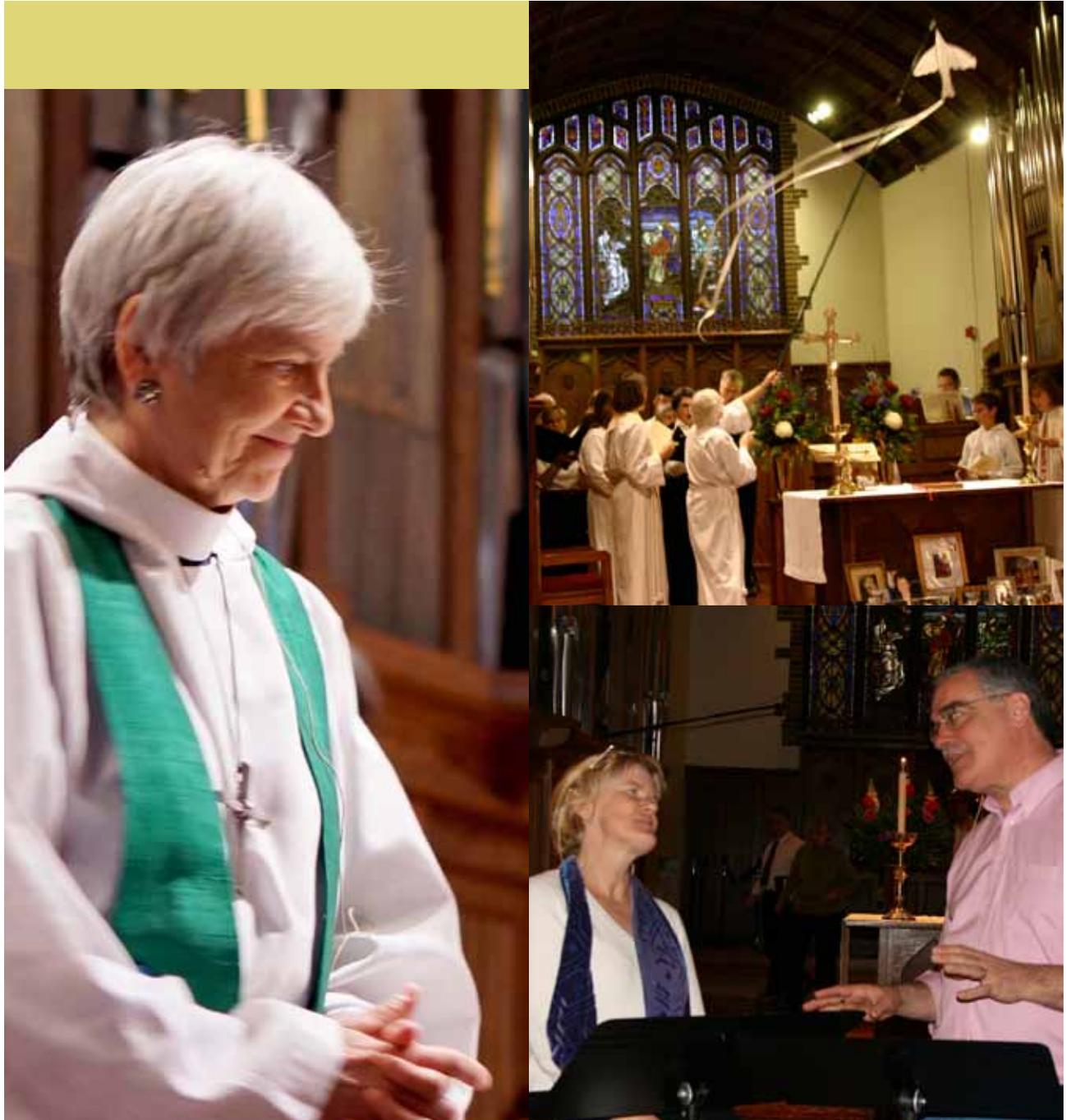
At St. John's, *caring for each other is part of our fabric*. Clergy and laity share in this rich, diverse ministry. Our personal relationships are created and deepened through worship, social gatherings, shared interests, small groups, and service opportunities.

God is relational; so is good pastoral care. We strive to be the hands of God in the world. Some days, we also need to be the eyes and ears of God, to notice the needs of others, and to respond in love. This is the work of all ministers at St. John's, the entire congregation. Sunday school teachers, youth workers, the Wednesday Spirituality Group, lay Eucharistic Ministers, and the Adoptive Families Group, are just a few of the groups that intentionally carry out our ministries of care. In addition, we care for each other with a new-baby ministry (where families receive a gift basket when they return home), the prayer chain, a hot-dish ministry (which delivers meals to the ill and bereaved), and hospital visits.

Another of the ways we recognize the "pain of life's passages" is with our annual Service of Loss and Remembrance. Held on an evening in Advent, this service is for anyone in the community who is grieving, feeling alone, or sad due to the deaths of beloved family members or friends. This service and the reception are quiet and comforting reminders that none of us is alone.

But life is also filled with joy. And one of the ways we express this most deeply is through music. For several years St. John's has had a tradition of joy-filled concerts and events. Often used as fund-raisers for outreach programs, these concerts have run the gamut from a "U-2charist" (which uses the music of U2 to communicate the Gospel message), to the Thanksgiving Leftovers Bash featuring American Roots music, to the annual Harmony for Habitats concert featuring the talents of St. John's members who are also members of the Minnesota Orchestra. Add in a variety show or two and a Shrove Tuesday New Orleans-inspired pancake dinner, and there is a little something for everybody.

We commit ourselves to personal and spiritual maturity...





The path to spiritual maturity includes a commitment to more knowledge and a deeper understanding about the forces that shape our faith. We recognize the need to integrate our theological inquisitiveness with our personal spiritual experience, asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance on our paths, individually and as a community. Parishioners, as well as clergy and other staff, are encouraged and empowered, not just to learn and reflect, but also to teach.

During the Sunday morning education time between services, the Adult Forum meets in the sanctuary to explore a variety of topics. This year's forums have included a History of the Creeds; a discussion of Richard Rohr's *Falling Upward*; Advent Inspiration in Art; Church History: Reformation to Today; a discussion of the proposed Marriage Amendment (an issue in the November 2012 elections here in Minnesota); Environmental Stewardship; and Inspiration in Nature. At the same time, a group called Encountering Today's Scripture offers a reflective group conversation on the day's lectionary readings.

St. John's also offers Short Sessions, informal groups proposed and led by lay people, organized around a book or topic, that meet for a period of 2-5 weeks. Recent Short Sessions have included writing as a spiritual exercise, reflecting on spiritual aspects of art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, book and video discussions, the Life Keys program, and Tai Chi Chih.

But there is more than one road to spiritual maturity. Other avenues include teaching Sunday school, meeting in Cursillo prayer groups, sharing pot lucks, singing in the choir, being involved in outreach ministries, as well as being a part of any number of other small group opportunities.

We commit ourselves to both traditional and innovative worship



The ways we worship together are the fullest expression of who we are as a community. There are three distinct Sunday morning services which share important common ground: God's table is open to everyone, all liturgies follow the order for celebrating Eucharist, and the same sermon is preached at all services.

"The high point of my week...because I consistently leave the service feeling grounded, motivated and inspired."

The first service, at 8:00 a.m., is a spoken service, quiet and intimate in our small chapel, using Rite II from the Book of Common Prayer.

"I appreciate being with a small group of people who are regulars...In this small chapel, I imagine what it might have felt like for the early Christians to worship...There is a tendency for people in crisis to stay away from church because they are feeling emotional and weary. This service invites people to maintain a vital connection to their faith community during critical junctures of their lives."

The second service, at 9:00 a.m., is an innovative service firmly anchored in and structured by tradition, which uses language that strives to be vibrant, inclusive, and accessible. This liturgy is created and adapted by members of the community and the rector. The music for this service, led by our full-time Director of Music Ministry, is drawn from a broader, more progressive palette that ranges from Bach to Bluegrass. Sources include Taizé, African American Spirituals, and hymns from *Gather*. Instrumentation at this service is equally diverse, including piano, guitar, flute, percussion, accordion, and the occasional banjo. This "house band" is supplemented by several singers and cantors, who help lead the congregation in worship. This is our most well attended service and in fact, on some Sundays, is standing room only.

"The liturgy is alive and relevant to daily life while still carrying a touch of the mystery and awe. The music and sermons fully enhance the liturgy... Comfortable...Embraces children...Feeds me...Exudes hope...Connects us with one another and with God...Lets us listen to and experience God wherever we are...The essence of St. John's comes through in the music...God loves us, and we're happy about that."



The third service, at 11:00 a.m., follows the Rite II Eucharist from the Book of Common Prayer. For many long-time Episcopalians, this service is the most familiar and comfortable. The hymns are taken from the 1982 hymnal, accompanied by the newly restored pipe organ and a small group of cantors who lead the congregation in worship.

“This is what connects us to our heritage...I find comfort and oftentimes deeper meaning in the repetition offered at this service...I come for the type of music played and sung, and the more traditional worship style...the quietness of the service...I like the ritual, formality, rhythm and cadence of prayers. I want my kids to grow up knowing them....During difficult times in my life it offers a quieter place for me to worship.”

While the 9:00 a.m. service has the largest attendance, each of the services has a committed, devoted, and passionate following that is both diverse and intergenerational. Both the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services also benefit from the presence of an adult choir, a festival choir (for major feast days), two children’s choirs, and a chime choir. All of these provide worship leadership on a regular basis.

An important thread that unites all three Sunday morning services is preaching. When asked what our members are seeking in a new rector, 79% named preaching as a top priority. We have been privileged to have a variety of gifted preachers, including the associate clergy and staff, visitors, and members of the congregation. The congregation has learned to value, and to expect, sermons that are inspiring and challenging, grounded in scripture and relevant to our daily lives, intellectually stimulating and emotionally honest. We know that this kind of preaching requires hours of prayerful preparation and expect the rector’s workweek to allow time for that.

In addition to the Sunday morning services, St. John’s offers a contemplative prayer service on Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in the chapel. This lay-led 45 minute service emphasizes encountering the mystery and presence of God through the practice of silent meditation, reflection, and prayer.



And just as we strive to make weekly worship an opportunity for everyone to encounter the mystery of God's presence, Holy Week provides a special opportunity to embrace that presence even more fully. Beginning with Palm Sunday services that emphasize the drama of the Holy Week readings, we continue with a Maundy Thursday service led by youth which offers foot washing and communion, followed by the youth keeping vigil through the night. A labyrinth is available for prayer and meditation. Good Friday services provide the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the somber quiet at the cross. On Holy Saturday we offer two services: one making the Easter story accessible to families with young children, and an evening Easter Vigil followed by a late-night wine and dessert reception.

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

Ephesians 5:2



We commit ourselves to the healthy nurturing of children



Families with young children are drawn to St. John's for many reasons: the presence of other young families, program offerings for youth and children, as well as the integration of young people into the worship and community life of the church. We have a part-time Children's Minister, whose responsibilities include nursery through fifth grade as well as a full-time Minister for Youth, Outreach and Social Justice who is responsible for programming of grades 6 through Senior High.

During the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services, Children's Chapel is offered for small children in the Parish Hall. At the passing of the peace, the children return to the sanctuary for communion with their families. Children are always welcome to remain in the sanctuary for the entire service.

Sunday School is held at 10:10 a.m. for children from the age of 3 through high school. Godly Play curriculum is used for the youngest children and Weaving God's Promises for grades Kindergarten through 5. Classes are taught by teams of three adults.

Programming for youth includes Sunday School for grades 6-8 and 9-12, a 6-8th grade Youth Group, Pilgrimage Preparation for grades 9 and 10 and Confirmation for post-pilgrimage youth. Pilgrimage destinations have included Holden Village in Washington, the Isle of Iona in Scotland, Ireland, and the El Camino trail in Spain. In addition, youth are encouraged to take part in our intergenerational service trips to Alabama and Guatemala.

We commit ourselves to reaching out beyond the Church, seeking Christ in all persons.

St. John's has a long history of outreach and social justice work. Our members demonstrated for Civil Rights in the 1960s, created a chemical dependency recovery program in the 1970s, and became a resource for AIDS ministry in the 1980s. In the 2000's, members played important leadership and organizing roles related to public policy advocacy on a variety of issues including affordable housing, immigration, and anti-racism. In 2011, St John's members raised and distributed more than \$100,000 for our outreach and social justice programming. This commitment to outreach and social justice recently resulted in the creation of a half-time position specifically devoted to furthering our work of reaching out beyond the church. In addition, for many years St John's has rented part of the building's lower level to Linden Hills Child Care Center and has offered space to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Currently St. John's is actively involved in the following:

- Housing: Our commitment to housing includes monthly work days with Urban Homeworks, a North Minneapolis based housing program and biennial trips to work with Habitat for Humanity in Baldwin County, Alabama.
- Food: St. John's provides meals bi-monthly for Minneapolis organizations Our Saviour's Shelter (a homeless shelter) and First Nations Kitchen (a Native congregation).
- Northside Achievement Zone: St. John's is in a developing relationship with this multi-organizational movement modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone which provides resources to families living in the most under-served area of Minneapolis.
- International Partnerships: Since 2007, St. John's has been formally partnered with the parish of St. Philippe/St. Jacques in Gressier, Haiti. This partnership regularly

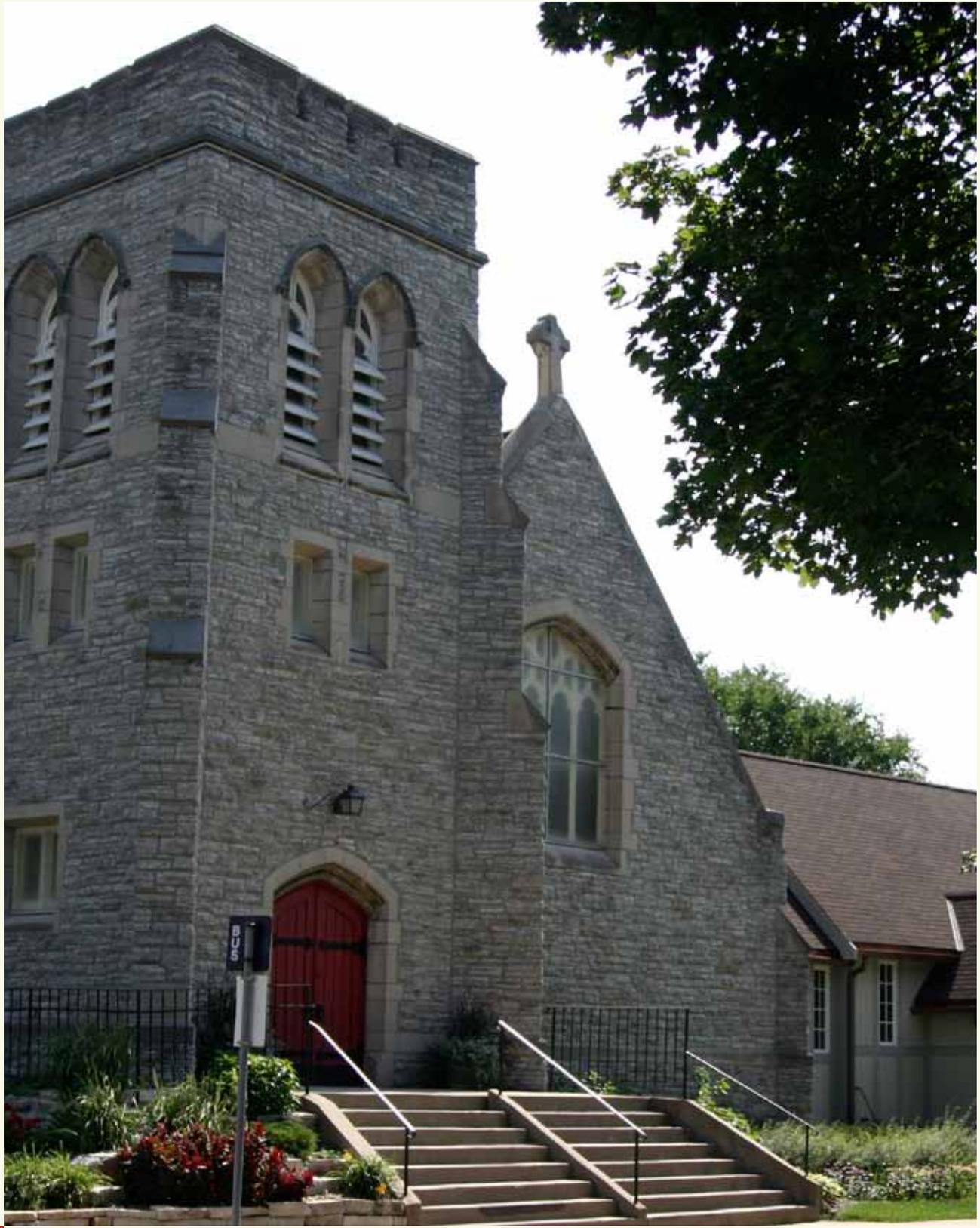


provides medical clinics as well as financial support for the parish school at St. Philippe and St. Jacques. In addition, St. John's works with the Catholic mission in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala and is in the initial stages of developing a relationship with the village of Nueva Providencia in Guatemala.

- The Green Team: Beginning in 2011, St. John's created a "Green Team" which works to further our commitment to issues involving climate change and stewardship of the environment.

While these ministries are the most obvious "official" ministries that St. John's is engaged in, much of the real work of outreach and social justice is done by our members in the world outside St. John's, as their passions lead them. We support and encourage these ministries as they evolve and grow. People engaged in these ministries say that St. John's is where they get the energy, inspiration, and spiritual refueling that helps them fulfill their callings.





Who We Are Called to Be

During the last few decades, while the Episcopal Church in general has declined in membership, St. John's has experienced a period of stability and growth. By striving to create a community of progressive hospitality, St. John's has carved out a unique place in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. According to our parish survey, 90% of our congregation is on-board with where we are, but we are also ready to move forward. We recognize that we are poised on the brink of something new, although the outlines are not yet clear. As individuals, as a community, much has been given to us. Jesus teaches that from those to whom much is given, much is expected.

The Bible tells us the Spirit of God moves, and we believe the Spirit of God has been moving in this congregation. Still, we ask, "Who are we called to be?" For that, we look to God, to Christ, to the Spirit and to our rector, The Reverend Susan J. Barnes, who will guide, encourage and love us into being who we are.





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CHURCH

*Thanks to
Vicki Madsen
for the gorgeous
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