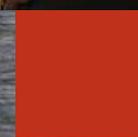
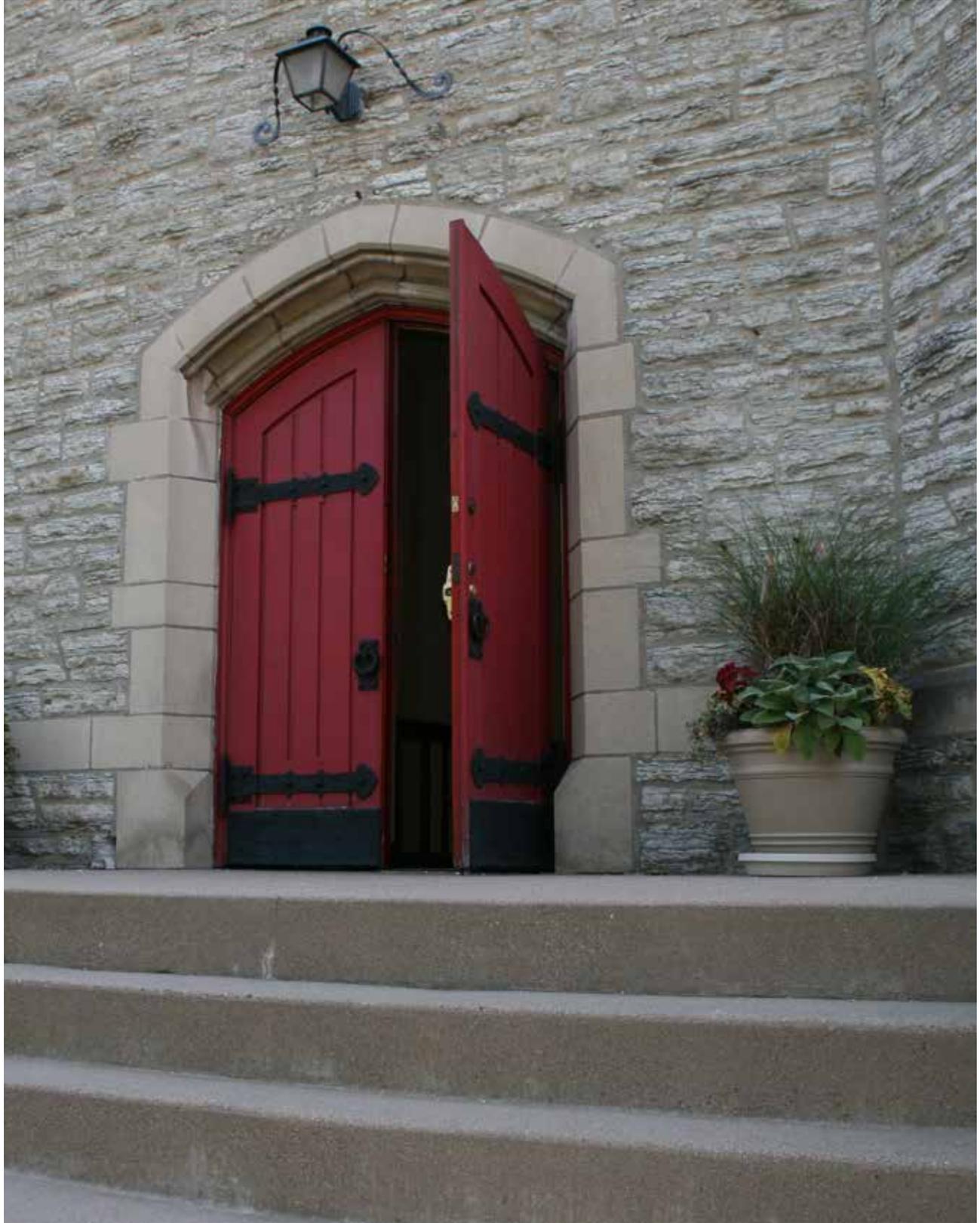



ST. JOHN'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

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 conducted a 2018 parish-wide survey, reviewed input from our 2017 Keeping Faith capital campaign, drew on our 2015 Missional Assessment Profile, and included staff and vestry insights.



“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.”

*based on the words of
Henri-Frederic Amiel*



Who We Are

We are a community.

We are a 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, as well as a gift we share with each other and the world outside our walls.

We are a community that recognizes traditions constantly evolve and grow, creating interesting and fruitful tensions between old and new.

We are a community that acknowledges true mission grows out of partnerships based in mutuality and trust, and that those partnerships are based on relationships, which take love and commitment.

We are a community that is always inviting and welcoming new members because they will challenge us, change us, and give us a view of the world we may not yet have seen.

We are a community that is both stable and evolving, as new generations with a variety of expectations about church join a dedicated core of members who have served St. John's for decades.

We are a community that both welcomes and grapples with the opportunities and challenges that our complex world brings. We ask for God's help as we face these complexities and challenges together.

We are a community in Christ.

“St. John's is an awesome place. We need to not only welcome new folks, but help them find small groups, programs, and friends.”

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 1917. After several remodeling projects and additions, in 2007 we reached the maximum size building allowable on our lot. In 2017, we undertook the renovation of the lower level of our Sanctuary building, significantly enhancing those facilities both for our use and that of our tenant, Linden Hills Child Care Center. We also tended to long-needed maintenance of our 100-year-old Bell Tower, a symbol of strength and unity in our community.

Our membership includes about 300 households of various sizes, with average Sunday attendance during the program year of about 225. Roughly a third of our members arrive as Episcopalians looking for a new church home and the rest come from many different traditions. We are an intergenerational community, with approximately one-fourth of our members under the age of 18 and one-fourth over the age of 60 – the remaining half are between 19 and 59. Although initially a neighborhood church, fully half of St. John's households are from outside the Linden Hills zip code. New members tell us they feel we are a warm and welcoming community and they can sense we are a healthy parish. Some new members say they like our size after coming from larger churches where they feel lost or unconnected.

In our 2018 all-parish survey, 93% agreed (61% strongly) that “being a member of St. John's is significant to me.”

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 became involved in ministries for those suffering from AIDS. We also began intentionally to welcome, affirm, and provide leadership opportunities for LGBTQ individuals and their families. At the same time, we continued to expand our offerings for families and children to meet the demands of a growing and changing congregation.

“I love St. John's. It's my church home, my community. It's where I consider my faith journey to be centered. I have made many friends here.”

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





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

"I sit there on Sundays, surrounded by people I have known for years, and listening to the music and the sermons, and I just feel so lucky."

God is relational, so is good pastoral care. We strive to be the hands of God in the world. We are also called to be the eyes and ears of God, to notice one another's needs, and to respond in love. This is the work of all ministers at St. John's: the entire congregation, Sunday school teachers, the Wednesday Spirit Group, our lay Eucharistic Ministers, and other small groups.

More formally, a Pastoral Ministry Committee oversees ministries of prayer, visitation, meals, and other kinds of support in grief or crisis. It includes some members from the Community of Hope, people with innate pastoral gifts who have been trained to serve in pastoral care.

Among 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 a loss of any kind, 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 most deeply live that joy is through fellowship and music. From lingering in the pews after services, weekly Coffee Hours, seasonal potlucks, Wednesday Children's Choir suppers, gatherings in members' homes, and pop-up adventures around town – St. John's members delight in each other's company. Add in a monthly Open Mic night, a Shrove Tuesday New Orleans-inspired jambalaya and pancakes dinner, and periodic fundraising concerts, and there is a little something for everybody.

"St. John's feels like home. It's the rock in the storm. The place to hang onto."

We commit ourselves to personal and spiritual maturity...



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 take part in teaching.

In our 2018 all-parish survey, 94% agreed (49% strongly) that "St. John's supports me in deepening and living out my Christian values."

During the Sunday morning education time between services, the Adult Forum meets in the Parish Hall to explore a variety of topics. Past programs 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 (a 2012 statewide ballot question); Environmental Stewardship; and Inspiration in Nature. The theme for the 2017-18 forums and our service work is "Loving the Stranger."

Also during the Sunday education hour a group called Encountering Today's Scripture offers a reflective group conversation on the day's lectionary readings. Two contemplative Bible studies meet during the week.

The path to spiritual maturity includes a commitment to deeper self-knowledge as well as understanding the forces that shape our faith. In recent times we have hosted workshops on Spiritual Gifts and on the Enneagram. We have also held Quiet Days in Lent and Advent, where a theme of study is presented along with the opportunity to pray on the Labyrinth.

But there is more than one road to spiritual maturity. Other avenues include teaching Sunday school, participating in the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage by our teenagers, meeting in Cursillo prayer groups, Yoga, Tai Chi, potlucks, 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 that 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 first service, at 8:00 a.m., is a spoken service, quiet and intimate in our chapel, using Rite II from the Book of Common Prayer.

The second service, at 9:00 a.m., is an innovative service anchored in and structured by tradition – while using 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 animating this service, led by our full-time Minister of Music, is drawn from a broader, more progressive palette that ranges from Bach to Bluegrass. Sources include Taizé, African American Spirituals, and music from an assortment of hymnals. Instrumentation at this service is equally diverse, including piano, guitar, percussion, accordion, and the occasional banjo. This “house band” is composed of several singers and instrumentalists who help lead the congregation in worship. This is our most well attended service, includes a large number of families with children, and is occasionally standing room only.

The third service, at 11:00 a.m., is a Rite II Eucharist from the Book of Common Prayer. For many, the practice of following the Book of Common Prayer provides a time to be challenged by language that calls us into a deeper relationship with the holy, quieting the noise of our contemporary world for an hour a week, and being renewed for going back into the world with its joys and demands. The hymns are from the Hymnal 1982, accompanied by our pipe organ and a small choir who help lead the congregation in worship.

In our 2018 all-parish survey, 82% agreed (38% strongly) that “worship at St. John’s sustains me.” Sunday liturgy and worship was also identified as one of the three most important programs at St. John’s.

“We expect profound sermons that make the congregation think, to which individuals can connect, and that leave members feeling uplifted and ready to do more good in the world.”

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 regular presence of a festival choir (for major feast days), two children’s choirs, a youth choir, a chime choir, and an assortment of soloists and small groups.

An important thread that unites all three Sunday morning services is preaching. When asked what our members are seeking in a new rector, 75% named preaching as a top priority. We are privileged to have a variety of gifted preachers, including the associate clergy, staff members, visitors, and members of the congregation – but we expect our rector to be our primary preacher. The congregation has learned to value, and to expect, sermons that are inspiring and challenging, grounded in scripture while relevant to our daily lives, intellectually stimulating, and emotionally honest. We know that this kind of preaching requires hours of prayerful preparation and we provide time in the rector’s workweek 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 Eucharistic healing service Tuesday evening and a Maundy Thursday service that offers foot washing and communion. A canvas Labyrinth is available for prayer and meditation through Holy Saturday noon. 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 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 thriving Kids Choir and Supper ministry on Wednesday nights. Our full-time Minister of Children, Youth, and Families is responsible for nursery through Young Adult Ministry.

During the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services, Children's Chapel is offered for younger 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. Nursery care is available for our very youngest worshipers if desired.

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. Middle and High School curriculum is designed each year by the teachers in response to student interest.

In our 2018 all-parish survey, 98% agreed (64% strongly) that "St. John's is a supportive faith community for families with children." Children and youth programming was also identified as one of the three most important programs at St. John's.

Our Minister of Music and Director of Children's Choirs oversee a beloved Wednesday evening program that includes supper for the families and rehearsals for the children's choirs. This special night each week provides the space for parents and children of different ages to gather weekly in a relaxed, familial atmosphere.

Programming for youth includes a 6th-8th grade Youth Group, 8th-10th grade Pilgrimage Preparation, and Confirmation for post-pilgrimage youth. Bi-annual Pilgrimage destinations have included Holden Village in Washington, the Isle of Iona in Scotland, Ireland, and the Camino de Santiago in Spain. In addition, youth are encouraged to participate in a variety of retreats, service opportunities, and leadership roles through programs with the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.

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 and nuclear disarmament 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 and 2010's, members played important leadership and organizing roles related to public policy advocacy on a variety of issues including affordable housing, immigration, anti-racism and same-sex marriage.

Today, work on those issues continues, with a greater focus on building partnerships and personal relationships that help us bridge differences of race, class, culture, and opportunity. The members of the Justice and Service Committee, some of whose "day jobs" are in the field, bring extraordinary knowledge and passion to this ministry.

People have long been drawn to St. John's by the strong commitment we have to serving, and they have supported the ministries with hands, hearts, voices, and donations. The 2017 capital campaign, Keeping Faith, included a tithe to create a Centennial Fund for Social Justice, designated for local projects. As the pledges are fulfilled, the Fund will reach at least \$200,000, giving St. John's the opportunity and the challenge to engage at a new level in the Twin Cities.

In our 2018 all-parish survey, social justice, service, and outreach was identified as one of the three most important programs at St. John's.



St John's serves the needs of our own neighborhood by renting the building's lower level to Linden Hills Child Care Center and offering space to Alcoholics Anonymous and other Twelve Step groups.

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

- **Housing:** Our commitment to housing includes monthly workdays with Urban Homeworks, a North Minneapolis based housing program.
- **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), as well as financial gifts to both and to the Joyce Food Shelf.
- **North Minneapolis:** St. John's has partnered in various ways with the Northside Achievement Zone, a multi-organizational movement modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone which provides resources to families living in the most under-served area of Minneapolis. Recent Northside partnerships include relationships with Circle of the Beloved (a branch of the Episcopal Service Corps) and Liberty Community Church.
- **International Partnerships:** Since 2007, St. John's has been formally partnered with the parish of St. Philippe/St. Jacques in Gressier, Haiti. This partnership provides annual 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, particularly with the village of Nueva Providencia.
- **Earth Matters:** Our Earth Matters group works to further our commitment to issues involving climate change and stewardship of the environment. Members advise St. John's leadership about environmentally responsible improvements we can make in our building; share their expertise on practical and systemic issues regarding the environment with the congregation as a whole; organize Earth Day events annually; and connect St. John's to the work of Episcopal Earth Keepers and Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light.

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

In the past few years, St. John's has undertaken two major initiatives to help plan for our future: the Missional Assessment Profile (MAP) in 2015 and the Keeping Faith capital campaign in 2017.

The MAP process helped us identify areas of importance to our congregation as a foundation for further growth and development. Without question, the most important part of who we are was identified by naming our many outreach, service, and justice programs and partnerships. This was followed closely by members' intense commitment to and love for our worship, music, and programs for children and youth. We also learned that our members are eager for ways to grow and deepen both internally as a community and externally with partners.

Our Keeping Faith campaign raised an amazing \$2 million to do much-needed maintenance on our 100-year old bell tower, update our lower level so it is more hospitable for members of all ages as well as our Child Care tenant, and establish a Centennial Fund for Justice and Service by dedicating 10% of all campaign funds raised to this dedicated purpose. As we prepared for this campaign, our fundraising consultants shared these findings:

- St. John's parishioners are a warm and welcoming community of individuals, couples, and families who are drawn to expressing their faith through action and service.
- St. John's is a parish of curious, outspoken, and devoted participants – they want to know more, they want their voices heard, and they want to be involved.
- Members identified the welcoming community, commitment to social justice, programs for young people, and the music as some of St. John's greatest strengths.

As individuals, and as a community, much has been given to us at St. John's. Jesus teaches that from those to whom much is given, much is expected. We are praying for a new rector who will help us give as much as we have received.



Who are we seeking in a rector – our challenges and our opportunities

In our 2018 parish survey, we listed several qualities of a rector and asked members to select what they saw as the three most needed in the new rector. The highest responses went to: **Preacher-75%, Visionary-39%, and Spiritual Guide-33%**. Other qualities which received votes from 15-25% of respondents were: Pastoral Care Provider, Liturgical Leader, Social Justice Leader, Teacher, Facilitator, Evangelist (attracts new members), and Administrator.

But numbers tell only part of the story. We are looking for:

- A rector to inspire us, both from the pulpit as well as in our daily interactions.
- A spiritual guide who can deepen and refresh the spirituality that gives us strength and purpose.
- A visionary who can point us to possibilities not yet seen, with a practical sense of how to live into this unfolding future.
- A pastor who both cares for us and helps us to care for each other.
- A leader who shares our commitment to justice and service, and who can help us continue to grow in that commitment.
- A rector who will value and support our exceptional staff and will continue the growth of our lay leadership.
- An inspirer who will grow our congregation at all services and appeal to many demographics.
- A relationship-builder who can continue our tradition of welcoming all who come through our red doors, while helping us with the challenge of integrating new members and deepening their commitment to St. John's and all it stands for.

And finally, we pray for a priest who will share our joys and sorrows, who will open us to the presence of God in our midst, who will celebrate that presence with love and authenticity, and who is yearning to grow and learn along with us. And we commit ourselves to love our new priest as well.

The Bible tells us the Spirit of God moves, and we believe the Spirit of God has been moving in this congregation. We have been blessed with two strong and different leaders these past 25+ years, each of whom has left her mark on St. John's. Now, we ask, "Who are we called to be?" For that, we look to God, to Christ, to the Spirit and to our new rector, who will guide, encourage and love us into being who we are.



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*Thanks to
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