



ST. PETER'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

EST. 1868

A wide-angle photograph of the interior of St. Peter's Episcopal Church during a service. The view is from the back of the sanctuary, looking down a red carpeted aisle towards the altar. The altar is a large, ornate structure with a central cross, flanked by floral arrangements and candles. Above the altar is a large, circular window with a radial pattern. The pews are filled with people, and the overall atmosphere is solemn and liturgical.

— THE —
CORNERSTONE

Letter from the Rector



The word advent means approaching. When Jesus spoke about the kingdom of heaven, he described it as "at hand." We often think of heaven as somewhere we go at the end of our life, but Jesus saw it differently. For Jesus, heaven is where God dwells. Jesus said God's dwelling is coming to us. God is coming to us. Jesus told his disciples that God was coming soon.

In a few weeks, my family and I will drive to Florida for the Christmas break. I anticipate that before our car crosses the Mississippi River, our kids will ask the inevitable question, "are we there yet?" Who knows how many times they will ask over the next fourteen hours! Advent is a lot like a long road trip. It is a beginning of an annual journey. Advent kicks off a new liturgical year. Isn't it interesting that our new year does not begin on Christmas Day when Jesus is born; it begins with waiting and anticipation for Jesus to come to us. Advent is not all fun and games either. The scripture that we will hear in church this season is both hopeful and frightening. Isn't that true of God? God is the source of comfort, AND God calls us out of our comfort zone into a new life of wonder and joy beyond what we could dream for ourselves. To discover that, we must be willing to sacrifice our comfort for something greater.

Now we are in another season of waiting and anticipation at St. Peter's as we make plans for transition and a new rector. Clergy come and go; but God is always here waiting to be discovered. Where will we find God in this season? Where will God excite us, challenge us, draw us out of something old into something new? Where will God speak to us and inspire us? Because God is here in this parish. God is at hand at St. Peter's! Let's seek God together during this holy season.

Peace,
Luke

A Reflection on Advent

"Human discontent is proof we are made for the Infinite."
-Giacomo Leopardi

As I sit in my office writing this reflection, it is very clear that the season has changed; the passion, the warmth, the leisure, the heat of summer has given way to falling leaves, overcast days, and a slight chill.

We, too, in the church are moving into a new season. The season of Advent is a time of waiting, a time of hope, a time of becoming, and, yes, a time of darkness, as we wait eagerly for the True Light of the world.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Let's not miss this opportunity that the Church offers us. Beloved, darkness is an integral part of what it is to be a human being, no matter how hard we try to numb or avoid it. Darkness, too, is an essential part of our life of faith.

There is a light in us that only darkness itself can illuminate. It is the glowing calm that comes over us when we finally surrender to the ultimate truth of creation: that there is a God and we are not it. Life is not about us; we are about the project of finding Life. When we come to understand this, our spiritual vision illuminates all the rest of life. And it is that light that shines in the darkness.

Disciples once begged of their dying Rabbi: "[Teacher], how can we possibly go on when you are gone?"

And the old rabbi answered them: "It is like this: Two men went into the forest together but only one carried a light. When they parted there, the one with the light went on ahead while the other floundered in the darkness."

The disciples insisted: "Yes, that is how it is and that is why we are so frightened to be without you."

The old man fixed them with a long, strong stare and said, "Exactly. That is why you must each carry your own light within you."

The light we gain in darkness is the awareness that, however bleak the place of darkness was for us, we did not die there. We know now that life begins again on the other side of the darkness. Another life. A new life. After the death, the loss, the rejection, the failure, life does go on. Differently, but on. Having been sunk into the cold night of black despair – and having survived it – we rise to new light, calm and clear and confident that what will be, will be enough for us.

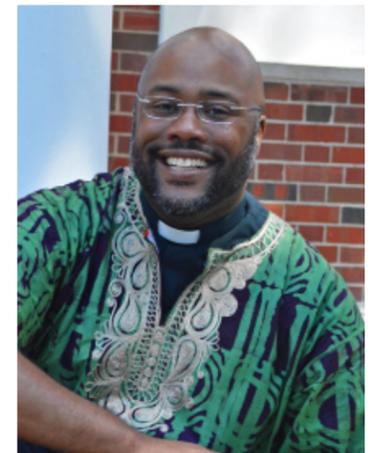
Beloved, growth is the boundary between the darkness of unknowing and the light of new wisdom, new insight, a new vision of who and what we ourselves have become. After darkness, we are never the same again. We are only stronger, simpler, surer than ever before that there is nothing in life we cannot survive because, though life is bigger than we are, we are meant to grow to our fullest dimensions in it.

Og Mandino once said, "I will love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness because it shows me the stars." The stars that come with darkness are the new insights, the new directions, the new awareness of the rest of life that darkness brings. Then, at the end of the struggle with it, the spirit of resistance finally gives way to the spirit of life.

May it be so with us!

A blessed Advent,

Fr. JWW





Advent Lessons & Carols
 Sunday, December 8 @ 5:00 p.m.

A Noisy Advent Secret

BY DAVID SINDEN, ORGANIST & DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

I have a secret to tell you.

It's not about choral or organ music, but rather the three musical instruments placed just outside the church: the bells in our tower.

These bells ring before all our Sunday services. You might also hear the bells ring at other times. Perhaps you've heard the bells signal high noon. But I think few parishioners are aware of what the bells do daily at 6:00 p.m.: they ring the Angelus.

The ringing of the Angelus is an ancient custom which can be traced back to the 11th century. At Wells Cathedral in England, a set of rules from 1331 dictated that "three strokes should be struck at three several times upon the great bell in quick succession." This pattern is still carried out at St. Peter's today: three rings, a pause, three rings again, a pause, and a final three rings. This pattern is followed by the ringing of the bell for about a minute or so.

So what is this all about? Well, in a word, Mary.

This traditional Angelus ringing pattern was often accompanied by a prayer that begins by recounting the story of the Annunciation ("The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary"). This pattern, if we let it, can help to focus our minds on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Mary is a central figure in this season of the Church's year. This should go without saying, but you can't tell the story of the birth of Jesus without telling about his Mother! And our annual Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent does exactly this. This year's service will be held on Sunday, December 8 at 5:00 p.m. The final section of the service is focused on the God-Bearer, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

For the past several years I feel like I've enjoyed a secret during this service, and it's just too good not to share: because this service begins at 5:00 p.m., the timing is such that the Angelus begins to ring during either the singing of a carol about Mary, or her very own song, the Magnificat. At this moment the whole church – inside and out – is proclaiming a truth about this season: that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

We continue to proclaim the message rung out by these bells all through Christmastide and at the Epiphany Carol Service on January 12 at 5:00 p.m.

Now that you know about the Angelus, and that if you listen closely you can hear it rung during the Advent Carol Service, I hope you'll come and enjoy sharing the secret with me this year.

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O LORD, Thy grace into our hearts; that, we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

ST. PETER'S
**MEN'S
 RETREAT**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11
 MARIANIST RETREAT CENTER

WITH FACILITATOR THE REV. SCOTT GUNN

CONTACT FR. JOSEPH FOR MORE
 DETAILS AND TO REGISTER.

2020 EYC Mission Trip

- Appalachia -
 with
 Appalachia Service Project

June 14 - June 20, 2020

Contact Fr. Joseph for more details!

Sign up today!

St. Peter's Christmas Pageant through the Years

BY ANN BABINGTON,
DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The children of St. Peter's Church gather around the manger on Christmas Eve. They are nervous, but each takes his or her part seriously, wanting the Christmas Pageant to joyfully tell the good news of the birth of Jesus Christ for their parents and all the parishioners who have come to worship with them. Angels brush their wings together and hold their stars aloft; Joseph, Mary, a very small donkey, and the baby Jesus settle themselves in the stable; the Innkeeper, Emperor and Roman Soldiers keep watch as Shepherds and their sheep draw close to hear the Angel's proclamation.

Every year our Christmas Pageant gets a little bigger and better: in 2013 we had 33 children and 4 youth assistants involved in the Pageant; in 2018 there were 69 children, 3 probationers, and 12 youth assistants, totaling 84 participants. There are no small parts, and some of the wonderful additions over the years have included: a donkey with a bow tie, four kings (you can never have enough), a polar bear (specially requested), two black sheep, 13 white sheep, seven seraphims and seven cherubims, treasure chests, angel stars, two cows, a tiger, and a grey and white rabbit.

On Christmas Eves gone by, there was a king who, as he walked down the aisle, asked "Do I feel warm to you?" The mom who declared it a Christmas miracle that both her girls were well and able to be in the Pageant. The camels that bolted and raced in front of the kings, blocking the latter's path to draw near and present their gifts to the baby Jesus. Shepherds whispering the Good News to parishioners in each pew is always something of a surprise - what exactly will each one say? "This is an amazing celebration each year," one mom said, "my children told me the Pageant is their favorite part of Christmas."

Each year, everyone delights in watching the children of the parish grow into different Pageant roles. A child who once was Joseph is now a Confirmation shepherding wriggly cast members; a little girl who started out as a sheep becomes a radiant Mary; a lowly Innkeeper transforms into the Emperor; a Polar Bear miraculously grows to be the Angel of the Lord. Each year the youngest among us join the Pageant cast for the first time, creating a whole new dynamic. Always, we thank our amazing and patient parent volunteers without whom the Pageant wouldn't be possible.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOUR CHILD PARTICIPATE IN THIS YEAR'S PAGEANT

Our annual Christmas Eve Pageant is on Tuesday, December 24th at 4:00 p.m.! Our one and only Pageant Rehearsal will be on Saturday, December 21st at 10:00 a.m.; in order to take part in the Pageant your child **must attend this rehearsal**, so save the date! Age 4 to children in 5th grade will have a costumed part, and students in 6th and 7th grades will serve as Readers. Our brave Confirmation Class will shepherd the children throughout the performance. New this year: we will have a Toddler Christmas Story and Living Nativity during an extended Children's Chapel on Sunday, December 22nd 10:00 to 10:25 a.m.

Watch for more information coming to you soon about the Pageant. If you have questions, please contact Ann Babington, Director of Christian Education, annbabington@gmail.com.



Christmas at St. Peter's

CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 p.m.
Holy Eucharist and
Children's Pageant

6:00 p.m.
Choral Eucharist with
Strings

11:00 p.m.
Holy Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist

The Church Office and
Buildings will close at noon
on December 24, and remain
closed through December 27.



A Note from the Vestry: Giving at St. Peter's

BY CHARLIE PETERS

Retirement gives me time to reflect and reconsider the events that formed me. Recently, I've been thinking about generosity and its relationship with giving, and in particular, the first complete story I remember. It took place at the post office, two blocks from our two-room apartment on a dreary Saturday, December 24, 1960. My father was a \$500-a-month engineer at a steel fabricator that employed 20 shop workers. The company's owner had alluded to a \$30 bonus that had never seemed to materialize. Knowing he had left for Florida, all 20 gathered with my father and me at the post office at noon on the slim hope that there were checks in the mail that would allow them to rescue their family gifts from layaway. Hope turned to futility at 3:15 when the postmaster announced there was no more mail to sort. It was then that the memorable thing happened. My

father pulled out his checkbook and wrote 20 checks for \$30. My clearest memory is of this moment; the men's giddy elation, their sincere gratitude and the joyous feelings we shared.

Earlier this year I heard a great idea at a seminar entitled, "Wealth and Families." The leader suggested that parents who are committed to raising caring children should give them opportunities to experience giving. He told of a family who in the summer paired each child with a charity and had the child make a contribution, making sure that the charity addressed the thank you letter to the child. The parents then kept this letter until Christmas when they placed it under the tree and had the children open and read their letters as part of their Christmas morning festivities. The seminar referenced the author Shawn Achor who chastises today's society for being built around

a survival of the fittest theme that drives each of us to be better than everyone else and amass the most in what he sees as a, "feeding frenzy of individual achievement." Achor argues that this approach brings superficial happiness that at best is both limited and fleeting. Instead, Achor teaches that true success must also involve, "connecting with, contributing to and benefiting from the community of people around us." He concludes that, "while happiness is a choice, it is not just an individual choice; it is an interconnected one," and that, "the more you help people find their light, the brighter you all will shine."

This last thought brought back memories of the post office – that gray afternoon that ended brightly illuminated by 22 smiles. In recent years I had asked my father about the Christmas bonuses, especially after I'd written a short story about

the event where I drew the conclusion that, "my father chose to take care of others by placing limits on himself and frankly, his family." Interestingly, he remembered it differently. My first question was about his bank balance that day. When he said \$700, I muttered to myself, "who does that?" I then asked why he did it, to which he simply replied, "I knew it would make me feel good." And then when I challenged how giving away all our money was putting his family at risk, he offered that, "I never worried about having nothing, we grew up with nothing and I was just as happy as ever since we loved each other and we were in it together."

Still, it took the "Wealth and Family" seminar to complete my understanding of the Christmas bonus story. I now think of gratitude and giving as a journey. The gate to the path is sincerely feeling grateful. Further, I now understand that everyone's journey is different and that we all reside at a different point on our journey. In recent years I've been part of starting a nonprofit that helps schools of all types by researching and measuring their inclusivity and equity environment to level everyone's perspectives and define programs to improve the climate. This work immerses me in the concept of privilege. As I thought about my father, I realized that this privilege concept might apply in an unusual way. My father had grown up with six siblings on a 3-acre plot the family had kept after losing their farm when my grandfather had his hand cut off at the beginning of the Depression. With no income and no adult able to work, the family was left to grow their own food. As the oldest male, my father was put in charge of the garden, supervising his two younger brothers. Together, they worked each day for three or four hours to feed the family. It soon dawned on me that between ages 8 and 18 my father received the advanced expert version of a course in helping others in his community "find their light," and experiencing the joy it brings. In a sense, my father was privileged to be forced onto his giving journey at such a young age, because for the rest of his life he truly understood and shared through example the real reason we must give and live in community with others.

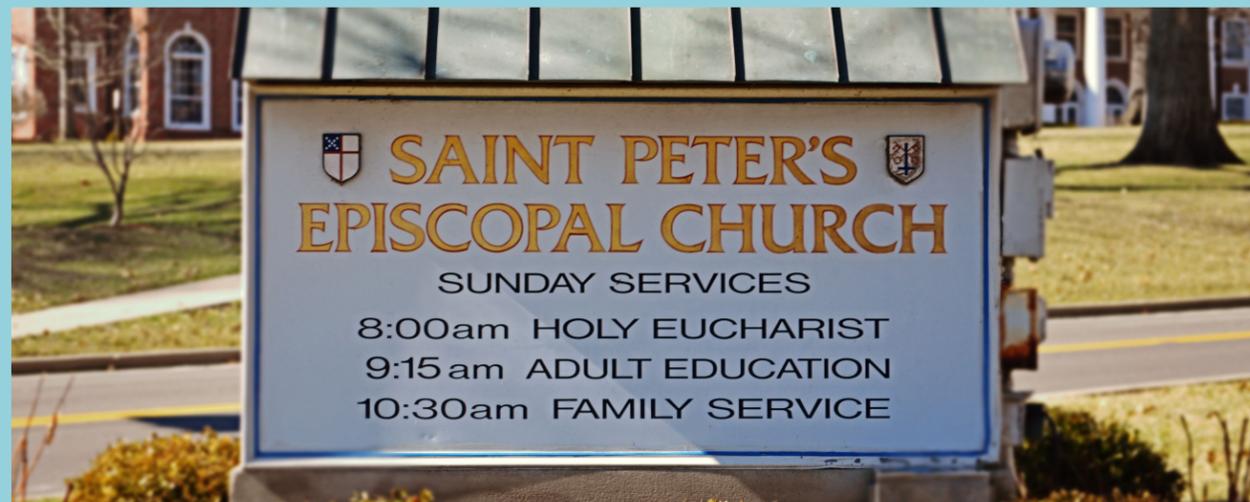
This made me realize that my development as a giver had been significantly delayed. I spent most of my life as a, "less than 1% giver," focused instead on being the fittest with the most. Sorting through my childhood memories and the experiences since has deepened my understanding. His examples taught me that giving is a



path to joy, and that the anxiety over losing the assets I've built is not real. As I move forward in the journey, I now realize that giving greater than 10% of my wealth, and more importantly, a majority of my time and talents, is the path to rewards that are both unlimited and enduring.

Today the church speaks of a feeling of gratitude working in concert with proportional and intentional giving. My understanding now begins with gratitude. It acknowledges that intent is required both to get over the fear of parting with things as well as to point me in the direction of experiencing a joyous life. Collectively, it encourages me to give more, effectively in proportion to my progress on my journey.

Charlie Peters



2020 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

As of DEC. 4



201 PLEDGES
(39% of households)



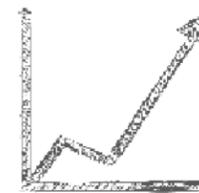
\$756,255
(54% of Goal)



MAKE A GIFT

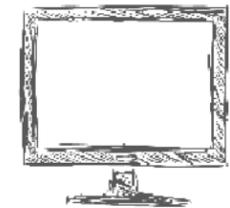
See what God will do next

AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH



STOCK

contact Janet Rouse in the church office



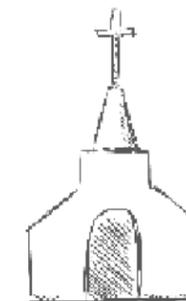
ONLINE

give at www.stpetersepiscopal.org



MAIL

110 N. Warson Rd.
St. Louis, MO
63124



AT CHURCH

drop your gift in the Sunday offering



SMARTPHONE

download the REALMCONNECT App and login to your Realm account

PLANNED GIVING

Planting seeds for the future is both an act of hope and an expression of faith. Planned giving offers the opportunity to provide financial stability for the future of St. Peter's and its mission and ministries.

In general, planned gifts are made through:

- **A Bequest in a Will or Trust**
- **A Life Income Gift** such as a pooled income fund, a charitable gift annuity, or a charitable remainder trust
- **Gifts of Special Assets** (stock, life insurance, retirement accounts)

Planned giving usually involves financial or estate planning; however, it does not have to be complicated. It is a means by which individuals may make decisions about how the gifts they leave may benefit organizations that are important to them. Please consult an attorney or financial advisor to determine which option best fits your individual needs.

Through planned giving, you have the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy dedicated to keeping St. Peter's Church a thriving community of faith for generations to come.

For further information on how you may make a planned gift to the church, please contact Janet Rouse at janetr@stpetersepiscopal.org or 314-993-2306.



Upcoming Events



SANDWICH MAKERS

SUNDAY, DEC. 8 @ 9:15 A.M.

Gather in the kitchen to assemble sandwiches for Sunshine Ministries in downtown St. Louis. This enables Sunshine Ministries to provide lunch to homeless men seeking shelter and support. All are welcome!



MEN'S BREAKFAST

TUESDAY, DEC. 10 @ 7:15 A.M.

Join the men of St. Peter's Church and their friends on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:15 a.m. The morning features a warm welcome, a hearty breakfast, and good conversation. Everyone is welcome!

Next: January 14, February 11



ADVENT EUCHARIST @ THE GATESWORTH

THURSDAY, DEC. 19 @ 11:00 A.M.

All are welcome to gather with parishioners who reside at the Gatesworth for a special Advent celebration of the Holy Eucharist in Club West, across from the Bistro in the West Wing of One McKnight Place.



ADVENT LESSONS & CAROLS

SUNDAY, DEC. 8 @ 5:00 P.M.

This popular annual service reflects the Advent season's growing anticipation. The music includes works by Guerrero, Walton, Britten, Judith Weir, Francis Pott, Sasha Johnson Manning, and Melissa Dunphy.



YOUNG ADULT CHRISTMAS PARTY

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18 @ 6:30 P.M.

The Young Adults Group will host their annual Christmas Party, full of food, fun, and ugly sweaters! If you are interested in more information about the Young Adult group, please contact Fr. Joseph.



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT REHEARSAL

SATURDAY, DEC. 21 @ 10:00 A.M.

In order to take part in the Pageant your child must attend our one and only Pageant rehearsal, so save the date! Please contact Ann Babington with any questions.

Upcoming Events



CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY

TUESDAY, DEC. 24

4:00 p.m. - Holy Eucharist & Children's Pageant

6:00 p.m. - Choral Eucharist with Strings

11:00 p.m. - Holy Eucharist

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 25

10:00 a.m. - Holy Eucharist



ST. JOHN'S PEACE MEAL

SATURDAY, DEC. 28 @ 2:00 P.M.

If you would like to cook and/or serve dinner for St. John's Peace Meal at St. John's Tower Grove, contact Bill Gilbert, turkgobble@aol.com or 314-283-5288. Volunteers must be at least 12 years old.

Christmas LESSONS & CAROLS



CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS

SUNDAY, JAN. 5 @ 10:30 A.M.

On the Second Sunday after Christmas, there will be a Service of Lessons and Carols celebrating the Christmas season with carols sung by the congregation and choir. The service will also include Holy Communion.



CAROLS & COCOA AT COFFEE HOUR

SUNDAY, JAN. 5 @ 11:30 A.M.

During Coffee Hour on January 5th, cookies and cocoa will be provided, and the choir might have a special surprise in store! All are welcome to join in the excitement of the season.



YOUNG ADULT BYOB (BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE)

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 8 @ 6:30 P.M.

Young Adults BYOB will meet at Fallon's Irish Bar & Grill, 9200 Olive Blvd, #116.

Next: February 12



MEN'S RETREAT

SATURDAY, JAN. 11

Men of St. Peter's are invited to take part in a one-day retreat at the Marianist Retreat Center. Our facilitator will be The Rev. Scott Gunn, Executive Director of Forward Movement. Contact Fr. Joseph to register today!

Upcoming Events



EPIPHANY LESSONS & CAROLS

SUNDAY, JAN 12 @ 5:00 P.M.

This candlelit service of music and readings for the season is sung by the St. Peter's Singers. Music by Vaughan Williams, William Walton, Jane Marshall, John Weaver, Nico Muhly, and David Sinden.



EYC - EPISCOPAL YOUTH COMMUNITY

SUNDAY, JAN. 19 @ 2:00 P.M.

EYC will meet following the 10:30 worship service. This will be a time for us to seek a deeper connection to Christ and one another through fun, fellowship, and intentional time exploring the complexities of life and asking questions of faith.

Next: February 23



PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JAN. 26 @ 9:00 A.M.

Please plan to attend the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 26 at 9:00 a.m. in the Undercroft. Come for breakfast and the meeting!



LUKE'S LAST SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 9

Join us for worship and to wish Luke a farewell on his last Sunday at St. Peter's.



CHORAL EVENSONG

SUNDAY, FEB. 9 @ 5:00 P.M.

Our fourth annual joint service with the Choir of St. Michael and St. George Church (Robert Lehman, Choirmaster).



SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25 @ 5:30 P.M.

Plan to join us for our annual pancake supper in the Undercroft. Pay at the door: \$5 per person, \$15 per family, and children under 5 are free. Hosted by the youth, the pancake supper will help fund our youth program. Come celebrate with music, food, and friends!



ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 26

7:30 a.m. - Holy Eucharist in Grace Chapel

12:00 p.m. - Holy Eucharist

7:00 p.m. - Holy Eucharist



On November 25, the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri elected the Rev. Deon K. Johnson as its 11th diocesan bishop today at Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis. He was elected on the first ballot during an election that involved 164 voting delegates. He received 71 votes from lay delegates and 42 votes from clergy.

A veteran Episcopal priest with deep experience in social justice issues and ministry to gay and lesbian communities, Johnson, who lives in Michigan with his husband and two children, has been rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brighton, MI, since 2006.

Johnson was elected to lead a community of more than 10,000 worshippers in the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. Church delegates and clergy members chose their 11th bishop on Saturday during the 180th diocesan convention.

"I am overwhelmed with joy, humility, and gratitude," said Bishop-Elect Johnson from his home in Michigan to the people of the Diocese of Missouri. "The Holy Spirit has brought us to this day, for such a time as this. I am looking forward to walking with you as we share the liberating love of Jesus. My husband and our family are looking forward to being with you in the new year."

Johnson will assume the post upon the retirement of the 10th bishop of Missouri, the Right Rev. George Wayne Smith, who has shepherded the diocese since 2002. Smith announced his retirement, effective with the ordination of the new bishop, in April 2018. Johnson was elected by a majority of both lay and ordained delegates to the annual diocesan convention, according to the rules of the convention.

The Rev. Dawn-Victoria Mitchell, president of the standing committee, expressed her joy at the election results. "It's a very, very exciting day for the diocese. We've only had 10 bishops in our 178-year history. And to have this done on the first ballot was really exceptional."

A veteran Episcopal priest with deep experience in social justice issues and ministry to gay and lesbian communities, Johnson is a native of Barbados who immigrated to the United States at age 14 and found his call to ministry nurtured by parishioners at a church near Case Western University in Cleveland, where he earned his undergraduate degree.

Others on the ballot for today's election were the Rev. Stacey Fussell, rector at Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Bradford, PA; and the Rev. George D. Smith, rector at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Glen Ellyn, IL.

This historic election will be submitted to bishops and diocesan standing committees for their ratification. Once those consents are received, the service of ordination, by which Johnson becomes a bishop and assumes responsibility for the pastoral and administrative work of the diocese, will take place on Saturday, April 25, at St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church in St. Louis. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will be the chief consecrator at the service. A reception will follow at the Polish Heritage Center on St. Stanislaus' grounds. Media are welcome.

