



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
St. John in the Wilderness

THE VOICE

August 2025

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**The deadline for
The Voice is the 15th
of each month.**

Email submissions to
Mims Yeargin at
[officeadmin@
stjohnflatrock.org](mailto:officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org)
or deliver them to the
church office.

From the Organ Bench

Dear SJW Friends,

August 3 marks the start of my seventh month serving as Director of Music and Organist at St. John in the Wilderness! Time does fly when you are having fun.

The past six months have been filled with many “firsts” for me. Beginning my full-time music ministry in January 1981, I had previously only served in an Episcopal church for four months in 1985. Since I joined you in February, I have been busy exploring the wealth of riches in *The Hymnal 1982* and becoming familiar with the three official supplements of the Episcopal Church: *Wonder, Love and Praise*; *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*; and *Voices Found*. I am so grateful for the guidance of Fr. Josh and the Parish Choir members as I learn what is familiar to the St. John congregation and what may be new. An enormous thank you to all of you in the congregation who are willing to dive in and sing hymns and service music that may be new to you as well as boldly raising your voices on old favorites.

At Tuesday’s staff meeting a few weeks ago, I joked about all the diverse music and worship opportunities that have been offered to me in the last six months: The fun task of learning a new instrument--as every pipe organ is unique! Rite 1 and Rite 2 services were covered in my first two months. Multiple funerals, all with slightly different musical selections. A wedding with 25+ folks in the wedding party alone. A sacred and beautiful Holy Week experience. An awesome Friends of Music and the Arts concert with Tom Keesecker, composer and pianist. Two visits from Bishop José in one month--an ordination and a Pentecost celebration that included an adult baptism by immersion. Wild Wonder week was extraordinary as 60 children and lots of leaders and helpers learned about God’s wonderful creation AND raised their voices in song! A month of awesome educational experiences with the Summer Scholar. A great community party at Little Rainbow Row to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of St. John. And this list could go on and on.

None of this would be possible without the tremendous support and encouragement of you, the people of St. John. You have been so gracious and welcoming to Judy and me! We are still in transition, as our house near Charlotte will go on the market this month, and we will be looking for a home here in the area to replace our monthly rental house. Thank you for your comments and suggestions as I work to enrich the beautiful worship services here at St. John. Thank you to the choir members who show dedication and commitment to leading the church’s song. Thank you to the SJW staff, who show their devotion to Christ and the church every day.

Finally, I issue an invitation to those who would like to sing with the choir. We rehearse almost every Wednesday afternoon from 4:00 to 5:30pm in the Wilderness Room and warm-up at 10:10am on Sunday morning. Please let me know if you plan on attending a rehearsal so there will be a choir folder ready for YOU!

Peace,

Ed Tompkins



Morning worship at Wild Wonder in June

Join Us for a Parish Breakfast

Sunday, August 3, 9:30-10:30am, Parish Hall



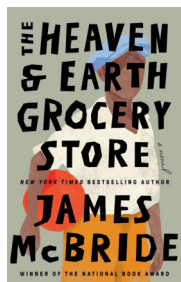
You're invited to a Parish Breakfast hosted by the Chefs of St. John! In addition to the regular offerings of bacon, sausage, eggs, grits, gravy, fruit salad, potatoes, biscuits, and juice/coffee/tea, the Chefs will serve up pancakes.

The cost is \$6 per person or \$12 per family. No RSVP is necessary. We hope to see you there!

Readers in the Wilderness

First Fridays (except January), 10:00am, Library

August 1: *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*,
by James McBride



This novel is a unique blend of literary fiction, historical fiction, and mystery. Set in rural Pennsylvania in the 1920s and 30s, the tale centers around the mutual support between the local Black community and a Jewish couple.

Back-to-School Backpack Blessing

Sunday, August 10, 8:45 & 11:00am Services



Families with children in school, please mark your calendars for Sunday, August 10, when we will offer a Backpack Blessing and some goodies to start the year off right! Please bring backpacks to church to be blessed on this date.



On July 13, we welcomed recipients of the Richard T. Zecher Memorial Scholarship to honor and congratulate them on their accomplishments.

Recipients include Melanie Maldonado, Arisbet Chavez, and Jessica Trejo.

Pictured here with Fr. Josh are Arisbet and her family, who are Episcopalians and members of La Capilla de Santa Maria in Hendersonville.

You're Invited: Baring Society

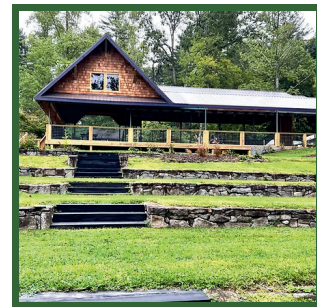
Appreciation Reception

Sunday, August 17, 4:00 to 6:00pm

Treska's on Highland Lake

211 Rhett Drive, Flat Rock

The Endowment Trustees are pleased to announce the fifth annual Baring Society Appreciation Reception, to be held at Treska's on Highland Lake: a beautiful, community-centered event space located near St. John.



All current members of the Baring Society and their families, along with anyone who may be interested in learning more about legacy giving to our endowment funds, are encouraged to attend! Please join us for an evening of fellowship, hors d'oeuvres, and educational information.

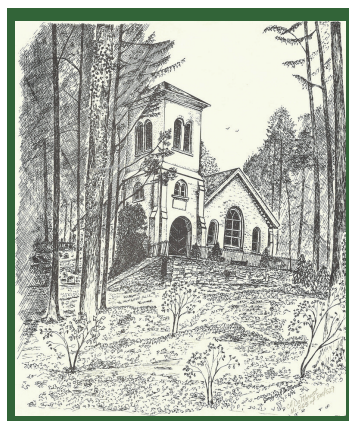
RSVP for this special event by Friday, August 8, at bit.ly/baringsociety2025. Call the Parish Office at 828-693-9783 with any questions!

Historic Flat Rock on Tour:

Explore the History of St. John!

Saturday, August 2, 10:00am-4:00pm, Church

It's been 11 years since our church has been included in the Historic Flat Rock, Inc. Historic Home Tour, but this year, we are a free, unticketed stop! The church will be open on August 2 from 10:00am to 4:00pm and staffed with our team of devoted docents. Please



plan to visit and bring friends and houseguests. You're sure to learn something new and discover something wonderful. The Village of Flat Rock is the largest Historic Site in Western North Carolina, and St. John is a part of that story. History lives here!

Visit www.historicflatrockinc.com to learn more about the Historic Home Tour and other programming.

Young Family Ministry: Summer Social at Camp Ton-A-Wandah

Sunday, August 24, 1:00-4:00pm

RSVP by August 20: bit.ly/YFM-TAW2025

The Young Family Ministry of St. John in the Wilderness invites children and youth of the parish, Wild Wonder campers and volunteers, and their families to join us for an afternoon of summer fun at Camp Ton-A-Wandah, a local camp just a couple miles from the church. Plan for a picnic and swimming! We'll provide the main dish, sides, beverages, and dessert. There is no cost to attend.

Please bring anything you need to be comfortable during and after swimming: our suggestions are a bathing suit, towels, sunscreen, and a change of clothes. Lifeguards will be onsite, and life jackets will be available. You will also have access to dressing rooms.

Please register at bit.ly/YFM-TAW2025 by Wednesday, August 20. We can't wait to see you!

You're Invited: End-of-Summer Eucharist

Sunday, August 31, 10:00am, Parish Hall

We are excited to announce that we will have a special combined-service Eucharist in the Parish Hall on Sunday, August 31, at 10:00am. We invite one and all to join us for a festive yet casual time, when our two services can come together for worship and fellowship. There will be no formation or 8:45 or 11:00am services on this date. Please bring something to share for a special coffee hour afterwards!

Scenes from Our Last Hike: Graveyard Fields



Join Us on our Next Hike!

Tuesday, August 12

8:15am Carpool, 9:00am Trailhead

Our next hike will be led by Bob McCammon, who will introduce Holy Hikers to Headwaters State Park. Learn more at www.stjohnflatrock.org/upcoming-hike.

The August Altar Flowers are Given in Loving Memory of:

August 3

Wendell Rector

by Carol Rector

AND

**Mrs. Jane Ashworth
Robertson**

*by Jane Swanson, Charles Robertson,
and Thomas Robertson*

AND

Jim Wagner

by Galen Reuther

August 10

Tom Darnall

by his wife, Betsy Darnall

AND

**Christopher Eugene (Gene)
Staton, Jr. and his parents,
Gene and Helen Staton**

*by Debby Staton, their children, and
grandchildren*

AND

Terry Bettendorf

*by his family, Judi, Elizabeth,
Hillary, and Lindsey*

August 17

**Gerald (Jerry) Nelson,
USMC, Ret.**

by Victoria Nelson

August 24

Stephen Plati

by Marcelene Plati

AND

**Al and Delsie Welch and
Bonnie and Perry Gibby**

by Charles and Vickie Taylor

August 31

OPEN

*Would you like to offer a flower
memorial in the future? Contact*

Gaston Motes at

gtmotes01@gmail.com to learn more.

*The current suggested donation for
flower memorials is \$85.*

Scenes from The Feast of St. John: Celebrating Henderson County



Thanks to all who came out to celebrate the Feast of St. John on June 28! We prayed the rain away and had a blast listening to the musical stylings of Aaron Burdett and his band, playing yard games, blowing bubbles, feasting on BBQ and baked treats from Hubba Hubba Smokehouse and Flat Rock Village Bakery, and **raising just over \$3,000 for the Flat Rock Backpack Program.**

ECW News

One of the many joys of summer is working in a flower or vegetable garden. There is immense pleasure in seeing God's handiwork in the numerous buds running up gladioli, the magnificent colors that arise from a dahlia plant, or the multitude of green beans you can pick from one small plant.

Our ECW board continues to work toward making connections with the women of the church no matter our stage of life. It is these relationships that make us one body in Christ. We recently held our second Walk in the Park of the year. This one drew new parish members, the youngest being 16 months of age. It was wonderful to get to know each other by joining in a leisurely walk, often changing partners as we made our way around the trails. A spontaneous suggestion was to move on to Ecusta Market and Café for coffee. It was a hit!

As we learn to grow connections with each other, we find that we may have to cultivate bonds in a different way. Per request from our walkers, ECW will host another **Walk in the Park** at the Park at Flat Rock on Saturday, September 13 at 9:00am, followed by an optional coffee at Ecusta Market and Café at 10:30am. If you prefer not to walk, feel free to join us for coffee. More information will follow closer to the date. We hope you will join us!

Bloom where you are planted. (St. Frances de Sales, 1567-1622)

Glory be to God,
Elizabeth Christenbury, *Chair*



Calling All Gardeners:

Share the Abundance, Support the Backpack Program!

Last year, the Popp Shoppe raised \$747.50 for the Backpack Program by selling produce from the efforts of the Good News Gardeners at the Hendersonville Farmers Market. Though the garden at Kanuga was lost to Helene's floodwaters and is being rebuilt, the need for produce to support this effort remains.

Joey Popp of the Popp Shoppe has once again generously offered to sell donated garden produce and flowers at the market, with proceeds going directly to the Backpack Program. **If you have extra veggies or blooms to share, drop them off in the covered walkway in front of the Parish Office (between the flag poles) by 4:00pm on Fridays!** Together, we can turn summer abundance into lasting nourishment for local kids.

No green thumbs? That's okay! You can still support the Backpack Program by shopping for your produce at the Popp Shoppe, located at the Hendersonville Farmers Market. The Farmers Market runs May through October on Saturdays from 8:00am to 1:00pm, rain or shine, in downtown Hendersonville's Seventh Avenue District. Learn more about the Farmers Market at bit.ly/hendofarmmarket.



- 2 Sheri Brown
- 3 Bill Hiatt
- 3 Lii Lii Viola
- 4 David Richeson
- 4 Sue Mack
- 5 Carol Black
- 7 Ken Jones
- 7 Liam Ghahreman
- 7 Meade Inglis-Jenson
- 8 Anna Kinsey
- 9 Linda Giltner
- 9 Athena Brooks
- 10 Susan Conapinski
- 11 Bonnie Dees
- 11 Bob McCammon
- 12 Roy Smith
- 13 Art Mack
- 13 Mary Lou Yeager
- 14 Stacy Knapp
- 14 Betsy Darnall
- 16 Cava Sittnick
- 16 Edward Izard
- 19 Lisa Wills
- 20 Lexi Preisser
- 20 Patty Adams
- 21 Ronnie Doty
- 23 Tom Vellanti
- 25 Marianne Potter
- 26 John Hayes
- 27 Kay Arnold
- 28 Lee Covey
- 28 Katy Brown
- 31 Susan Allen
- 31 Ann Stringfield
- 31 Ed Blackburn

Don't see your birthday here? That means we don't have a record of it!

*Please email Mims in the Parish
Office at officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org
to update your information.*

SJW MTB: Kids Learning to Mountain Bike and Pray

This August, we are introducing a new youth ministry: St. John in the Wilderness Mountain Biking (SJW MTB)! The team is organized by Fr. Josh, who you might know as a longtime outdoorsman, for whom spending time outdoors is a way to feel healthier, calmer, and more connected to the God who shows up in the wilderness of our world and our lives. Fr. Josh started working with kids in youth ministry back in 2009 and has enjoyed taking kids biking, surfing, skiing, and camping ever since. With SJW MTB, we hope to introduce kids to mountain biking as a spiritual practice: a way to have fun with each other and to connect with God.

Who is SJW MTB for, and what will they learn?

SJW MTB is for kids who can ride a pedal bike without training wheels, who are between the ages of 5 and 5th grade. They should be able to start riding entirely on their own and to stop by using their brakes. (If your kid is not yet 5 but they are turning 5 by the end of 2025, and they can ride a bike, then we would be glad to have them try it out.)

Our team will practice biking basics: starting and stopping on the bikes, shifting, accelerating, turning and cornering, going over obstacles, riding skinnies, and even small jumps. We hope to safely work on some street riding skills, also, for the older kids. In prayer, we will learn the basics of Evening Prayer and include Bible stories, the Lord's Prayer, and the 23rd Psalm in our worship.

When and where will the team meet?

The team will meet at St. John in the Wilderness, with a couple of "bonus ride" excursions to other local trails. The initial season will be Wednesdays between August 20 and October 22. Riders should arrive at 5:45pm and be ready to roll by 6:00pm. We will use the back Parish Hall parking lot to practice basic skills, since everyone regardless of skill level needs to work on form, shifting, braking, and bike handling. Then we will use our new trail system, The Trails of St. John, to ride some singletrack. We will use the Wilderness Chapel (part of our trail system), Atrium Chapel, historic church, or woods as places to pray each week.

How much is it, and how do I sign up?

The cost is \$50 per rider, which includes a team t-shirt. A waiver must be signed by the first practice. Scholarships are available as needed. **Sign up at www.stjohnflatrock.org/sjw-mtb.**

We also hope you will sign up for our the Kids' MTB race on September 6--see more information about that on page 7!



The shots above are from a youth group mountain biking trip in 2020! St. John has had a history of hosting youth mountain biking events and groups since Fr. Josh answered the call to be Rector here. In addition to this trip, St. John has served as a sponsor and practice location for the Henderson Hellbenders, a composite mountain bike team for youth in middle and high school.

Save the Date: Grand Opening of The Trails of St. John

Saturday, September 6 and Sunday, September 7

It's official: St. John in the Wilderness will open our new trail system on the weekend of September 6-7! The Trails of St. John will be open to the public from dawn to dusk each day, with rules posted at the kiosks that you will be able to find on the church property. The grand opening of The Trails of St. John includes a kids' mountain bike race on Saturday morning, which you can sign up and pay for at www.stjohnflatrock.org/sjw-mtb, and a ribbon cutting with historical hikes on Sunday at 1:00pm. No sign up is needed to attend the ribbon cutting.

The story of how these trails came to be is a beautiful example of grace, hard work, and rediscovery. Five years ago, Fr. Josh started a ministry called Holy Hikes of WNC, which takes groups hiking each month for a time of recreation and prayer. Shortly after that, the church began working with a member named Rivers Stone who wanted to build an outdoor meeting space somewhere on the church property. Rivers sadly passed away unexpectedly during this time, but he very generously left resources for the church to use however the vestry discerned would be helpful.

Over the years, there has been talk of the old Jerusalem Path, which was developed in the mid-1800s for parishioners to be able to walk to the church. The path was mostly a distant memory, except for one small section of it that was still visible near the historic parsonage of the parish. As the Holy Hikes ministry kept growing, the idea of having trails on our own property sounded more and more interesting, including restoring the historic Jerusalem Path so people could walk from the church to the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, immersing themselves in the complicated history of this holy place along the way. The Trails Subcommittee of Holy Hikes of WNC began to work on planning a trail system that would include narrower single-track trails and a wider gravel path to be called "The New Jerusalem Path." They selected Todd Branham with Long Cane Trails as a trail designer and builder. He seemed to understand how these trails were to be part of the church's identity – the church's story.

In the lead-up to the grand opening of the trails, we'll be telling more of that story, so look out for more to come! In the meantime, please save the date for this special weekend, noting the tentative schedule of events to the right. We're looking forward to celebrating this monumental occasion with you and hope that the trails will be a blessing for both our parishioners and for the broader community.

Tentative Schedule of Events

Saturday, September 6

8:00 - 1:00pm | Kids' MTB Race

Sign up at

stjohnflatrock.org/sjw-mtb

1:00 - 5:00pm | Explore the Trails on your own!

Sunday, September 7

9:30 - 10:30am | Parish Breakfast,

welcoming honored guests

11:00am | "Church Casual" Service

Dress ready to hike!

12:30pm | Refreshments in the Rector's Garden and Parking Lot

1:00pm | Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

1:30pm | Guided Historical Hikes with Fr. Josh, John Barker, and Holy Hike Leaders



The trails have been walked a bit already by clergy, staff, parishioners, friends, and Wild Wonder campers!

Photos courtesy of Joey Popp.

St. John in the
Wilderness
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
PO Box 185
Flat Rock, NC 28731



The Episcopal Church of St. John in the Wilderness

Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Josh Stephens
Rector

The Rev. Dn. Charles Rex
Deacon

Ed Tompkins
Director of Music & Organist

Mims Yeargin
*Director of Parish Communication &
Administration*

Stacy Knapp
Finance & Administration

Missy Izard
Director of Christian Education

Kevin Hunt
Sexton

Vestry

Jerry Holt
Senior Warden

Jim Gibbs
Junior Warden

Marlin Sanders & Bill Williams
Treasurers

Jim Cooper, Patrice German,
Jim Gibbs, Jon Fitzpatrick,
Kitty Olson, Jill Owen,
Catherine Popp, Kim Sanders,
Sandy Skelton, Steve Sittnick, and
Laura Teel



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

8:45am - Rite II Eucharist

11:00am - Rite II Eucharist

**Services are live-streamed to YouTube on a rotating schedule.*

**St. John uses Rite I liturgies during Advent and Lent, and Rite II during
the rest of the year.*

Monday through Thursday

8:30am - Morning Prayer (live-streamed on Facebook)

Wednesday

10:30am - Healing Service in the Wilderness Room

4:30pm - Evening Prayer in the Atrium Chapel

Our Mission Statement

To know and love God as He is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, to bring others
to His saving love, and to serve the world in His name.

828-693-9783

www.stjohnflatrock.org

officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org



[@stjohnwildernessflatrock](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnwildernessflatrock)