

October 22, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

St. John's came into our lives in the spring of 2015. My then-friend Dale introduced me to St. John's, and I remember vividly walking through the church's red doors and being warmly welcomed by Susan Pinkerton (rector) and Bill Eakins (priest associate). Little did we know back then that St. John's would become such an essential foundation for us.

Intrigued by the warm welcome of the parish, the beautiful church with its building and grounds, the Sunday service steeped in the Anglican tradition with its magnificent choir, and many other events, we felt at home and became regulars. Thus, after taking an inquirer's class in early 2016, I decided, after having been raised Lutheran, to be formally received into the Episcopal Church. I felt called to lay ministry and have truly enjoyed lay reading over the last two years, and more recently being a welcoming ambassador of St. John's by joining the team of ushers.



The Stretz Family

Dale and I were married at St. John's in the fall of 2016. We were blessed again by the birth of our beautiful daughter Abigail ("Abby"), who brings so much personality and joy to our and others' lives. Her baptism last year at St. John's marked her formal introduction into the Christian faith.

St. John's has offered us myriad opportunities for spiritual and personal growth. We felt honored to be part of last year's Christmas Festival committee to help organize such a wonderful event benefiting St. John's. When Susan started Education for Ministry last year at St. John's, I was not quite sure what to expect, but was interested to embark on a study of the roots of scripture, the history of the church, and Christian theology. The discussions at our weekly classes were wonderful, and our group formed a close-knit community of fellow learners. While the path, with its challenging reading assignments and dialogues, was rocky at times, we would support one another during this time of study, only to find and experience God's presence again and again through fellowship.

We call St. John's our spiritual home. In our busy lives of working in different places and raising a one-year-old daughter, being able to return to this place for spiritual refocusing is indispensable. St. John's provides us with spiritual food, fellowship and an opportunity to build bridges with God and the community we are a part of.

We feel blessed to be part of St. John's and are happy to support such a welcoming, vibrant parish, which is an example of God's working in countless ways. We hope you will join us in pledging your support to this community for the coming year.

Christoph, Dale & Abigail Stretz