



Becoming A Member of St. John's

Thank you for worshiping with us and for your interest in becoming part of our church community! We hope you are experiencing St. John's as an open, inclusive, and welcoming place where you are known and loved and where you can grow in your journey of faith and life.

As you consider becoming a member of St. John's, you may have some questions about what membership means to us. We hope that the information below will help as you consider making St. John's your church home.

What does it mean to be a member of St. John's?

We believe that membership is a conscious decision to become an active part of a church family *because* it feels like the right next step in your faith journey – a step that will deepen both your spirituality and your sense of belonging. “Active Membership” is a term you may hear at St. John's.

What does Active Membership look like?

“Active Membership” means a commitment to our **Core 4** values as a church: Worship, Grow, Build Community, Make a Difference.

Worship

Breaking bread together is at the heart of our identity as Episcopalians. It is a central part of the rhythm of our lives to gather on the first day of every week to

- worship God together
- engage scripture with our hearts and minds
- seek hope, wisdom, guidance, and strength through prayer
- offer our gifts of thanksgiving
- receive the love of God made tangible through the body and blood of Jesus Christ at communion

Sunday worship is the primary activity that most of our parishioners attend. One of the most obvious expressions of Active Membership is attending Sunday worship on a regular basis.

Grow

Following Christ is a journey in which we are called to constantly learn and grow, individually and as a community. At St. John's, we are committed to providing opportunities for individuals of all ages to grow and mature into their best selves. Being an Active Member of St. John's means joining in the educational and formational life of our community, reflecting a personal commitment to continued growth and maturity in every aspect of one's life.

Build Community

"Building Community At The Crossroads Of Faith And Life" is the mission of St. John's. Everything we do is done through the lens of building community – helping people connect to people. Whether we worship, learn, grow, or serve, everything is meant to move us toward deeper community with God and with one another. We believe that building community is at the center of what it means to be a church. By becoming an Active Member you become “a part of the family” that cares for one another. Becoming an Active Member of St. John's also means a transition from being a guest at the table to joining us in making St. John's hospitable for all others who walk through our doors as guests.

Make A Difference

At St. John's we believe that we are called to be witnesses to the love of Christ. This translates into making a positive difference in the world, both within and beyond the walls of our church. Active Membership means joining us in our commitment to making a difference. Wherever we may be as we live our daily lives, being a witness to the radical love and grace of God is what we strive to do.

In addition to the difference that we can make as individuals, we believe that we can make a difference together, as a community. To that end, Active Membership at St. John's entails contributing time and resources to sustain our church's ministry and to have a bigger impact. **Getting involved in a ministry of one's choice and making a financial pledge** are the two most fundamental ways that our members contribute to the life and work of our church. The best way to find a ministry that fits your passion and your schedule is to speak to our Deacon and Minister for Community Engagement, the Reverend Anne Derse (aderse@stjohnsnorwood.org or 301-401-5717), who will help you find the right fit. The best way to pledge is to do it online by visiting our website at www.stjohnsnorwood.org. We encourage our members to practice proportionate giving as an act of worship. Our 5 Practical Steps To Becoming A More Generous Giver follows below.

Now that you have a sense as to what it means to be a member of St. John's, what is the next step?

How Do I Become a Member?

Simply complete the New Member Form included in this packet and return it to the church office. You may also communicate your interest in membership to Deacon and Minister for Community Engagement, the Reverend Anne Derse, by email or phone.

Twice a year, in October and February, we offer a Liturgy of Welcome during all services, to recognize and welcome new members of our community. If you would like to participate (participation is not required to become a member), we would love to welcome you at our next Liturgy of Welcome!

Please be in touch with the Reverend Anne Derse, Deacon and Minister for Community Engagement, aderse@stjohnsnorwood.org, 301-401-5717, if we can answer any questions or provide further information.

You are very welcome at St. John's!

5 Practical Steps To Becoming A More Generous Giver

1. **Move away from dollar figures and begin to think more in terms of proportions.** Even though the New Testament does not talk about tithing, it is very clear that *proportionate* giving* – or, as the apostle Paul puts it, "giving according to one's means" is still the biblical model for giving. *Proportion- ate giving means giving a percentage of your income
2. **Set for yourself a Generosity Benchmark.** Decide on a percentage of your income - that you will set for yourself and won't go below - as your generosity benchmark. Because the tithe is one clear standard of giving in the Bible, many Christians choose to set their generosity benchmark at 10%. In general, aim to give at between 5 and 10 percent of your income.
3. **Gradually work toward your benchmark.** Some have the means to easily begin giving at that chosen benchmark level; others need to work toward it gradually. One practical way is to take the total amount you currently give away, figure out what percentage of your current income that amounts to, and then gradually move up to the next percentage point until you reach your benchmark. So, if you are currently giving away 2% of your income, plan to give 3% next year, and then 4% the following year, etc. *Remember: we want to leave our comfort zones and head into our stretch zones but not go so far that we wind up in our panic zones.*
4. **Enjoy the act of giving away your money to causes that are greater than you.** God has de- signed us in such a way that we experience a deeper fulfillment when we give than we do when we receive. Tap into the power of generosity in your life by savoring each opportunity to be a generous giver.
5. **Remember the church when it comes to your giving.** There are many worthy causes, and you should give to as many of them as you can. But remember that the church is not just another institution, it is the body of Christ to the world. By giving through the church, you equip the church to effectively deliver the good news of Christ to the world in word and deed.