



The Beacon

January 2026

Resolved: Let's Combat Bigotry

People's "new year's resolutions" are famous for falling short of, maybe, February 1? Even if we keep paying for that gym membership, something happens to our willpower on the way to meeting our goals. Sometimes it's an injury (those machines are harder than I thought) but more often, more urgent needs push into the allotted time. And then little excuses horn in, like "I can improve my strength at home, I don't really need to go to the gym to work out." Sound familiar?

This new year, my goal is more communal: to combat bigotry and racism when it rears its ugly white-privileged head. Have you been paying attention to recent statements from some elected officials, basically claiming that it's fine to be publicly racist and anti-Muslim in America again? To say out loud that some nationalities make untrustworthy citizens; some countries are, um, latrines; some skin colors are undesirable; some genders don't count. The home of one of the Samaritans refugee families was shot up during Christmas week; no indication of why, except that it's a neighborhood of immigrants. They've been moved to a new place during an extra-hectic time of year.

Some haters claim that Christianity informs and supports their bigotry. Can we agree on this much, at least: Jesus was not a White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP, like me). His skin was olive to light brown, his hair was dark and his eyes were brown, like 99% of semitic people. Forget about the "blond, blue-eyed Jesus" of Renaissance (and contemporary) paintings. Nobody in first-century Palestine was a blonde!

Jesus, Mary and Joseph had no say over who ruled the territory of Galilee or the province of Judea. But there are a few places in Scripture that hint at some diversity among the Jewish people – especially that tongue-twisting passage in Acts 2:9-11 listing the many nationalities of visitors in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost.

St. Jude's Episcopal Church

106 E. ELIZABETH STREET
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(810) 629-5681
STJUDEFENTON.COM

OFFICE HOURS:
MONDAYS & THURSDAYS
9 AM - NOON

TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS
9 AM - 4 PM

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SEXTONS

"Resolved..." continued

And in their different languages, they hear the apostles proclaiming God's kingdom, open to all, thanks to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

If you've not yet enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with someone who is from another culture, maybe 2026 will be the year to work on that. Personally, I'm drawn to new foods and styles of music when there are multi-cultural events! Let's go. Let's learn for ourselves the reason that Jesus said in John 3:16 "God so loved the world..." That encompasses billions of beautiful, interesting, fully-worthy human beings. And America has the bandwidth to appreciate them all, just like the Church does.

Happy new year,

Susan

The 2025 Christmas Families: Thank You for Your Loving Generosity

St. Jude's faith community shared generously this Christmas by providing gifts to 2 Family Promise families, 3 families from our Basic Needs Pantry, 2 local families, and a family we learned about through Pastor Susan.

This year the Outreach Committee decided once again to follow one of our baptismal vows, which is to "respect the dignity of every person". In doing so, we provided gift cards for 29 individuals...parents and their children, and supplies for wrapping gifts for all the families. We were also able to provide a gas card to each family.

Our faith community has again met the needs of those on the margins, as we came together to generously provide a special Christmas. This was our 21st year of brightening the lives of many at Christmas by the outpouring of your love.

Blessings for a Happy New Year!

Mike & Judy Marinco

Dave & Denise Rayner

Clay & Diane Putnam

On behalf of your Outreach Committee – and each and every one of you!



Reflections

Submitted by Judy Marinco from "Our Daily Bread", December 31st edition

Resolving to Do Less

Apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5



When we think about New Year's resolutions, what probably comes to mind is a list of lofty ambitions we rarely achieve (80 percent of New Year's resolutions are already abandoned by mid-February). Author Amy Wilson suggests a better idea might be to reject entirely "the idea that we have to fix ourselves before our lives can get better." Wilson suggests that, instead of adding commitments, we see the new year as an opportunity to do less, to finally "start saying no" to some of the "oversized and ongoing commitments that take our time and energy without giving us much in return."

In a world of constant pressure to do and be more, it can be easy to miss the radically different rhythm of life Jesus invited His disciples

into—one of abiding in Him. In John 15, Jesus described Himself as "the true vine" (v. 1) and His disciples as "the branches" (v. 5).

Vine branches don't grow through working harder but through the nourishment received from the vine. So, too, the growth we long for can only be experienced when we let go of self-reliance in exchange for resting in and finding nourishment in Christ, for "apart from [Him] you can do nothing" (v. 5).

Through Jesus, we have hope for a life of less anxiety. Less striving. And more resting in God's love and letting it flow to those around us (vv. 12, 17).

By Monica La Rose

Reflect & Pray

What might God be leading you to say no to this year? In what areas of your life might God be inviting you to greater surrender?

Gracious God, please help me surrender my self-reliance to rest in You.

For further study, read [How God Loves Us.](#)

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, 1/14

1 pm: Outreach Meeting

Thursday, 1/15

6 pm: Book Club @ Church

No Two Persons by Erica Bauermeister

Wednesday, 1/21

7 pm: Vestry Meeting

Thursday, 1/22

6:30 pm: Imperfect Club Meeting

Sunday, 1/25

Annual Meeting Sunday
Meeting during 10:30 am church service with soup supper to follow

Friday, 1/30

LifeLine Health Screenings in Vandenbergh Hall

January Birthdays

3 rd	Jim Kortge
9 th	Fred Wright
10 th	Elizabeth Brewer
11 th	Ron Spaulding
	Lynne Ronthi
12 th	Mary Felix
14 th	Denise Rayner
15 th	Mike Marinco
18 th	Catherine Trimmer
19 th	Mike Wells
28 th	Sharon Aldrich
	Mary Warren

January Anniversaries

22nd Kelly & Lisa Cronk (48th)



Thanks from Crossover Outreach

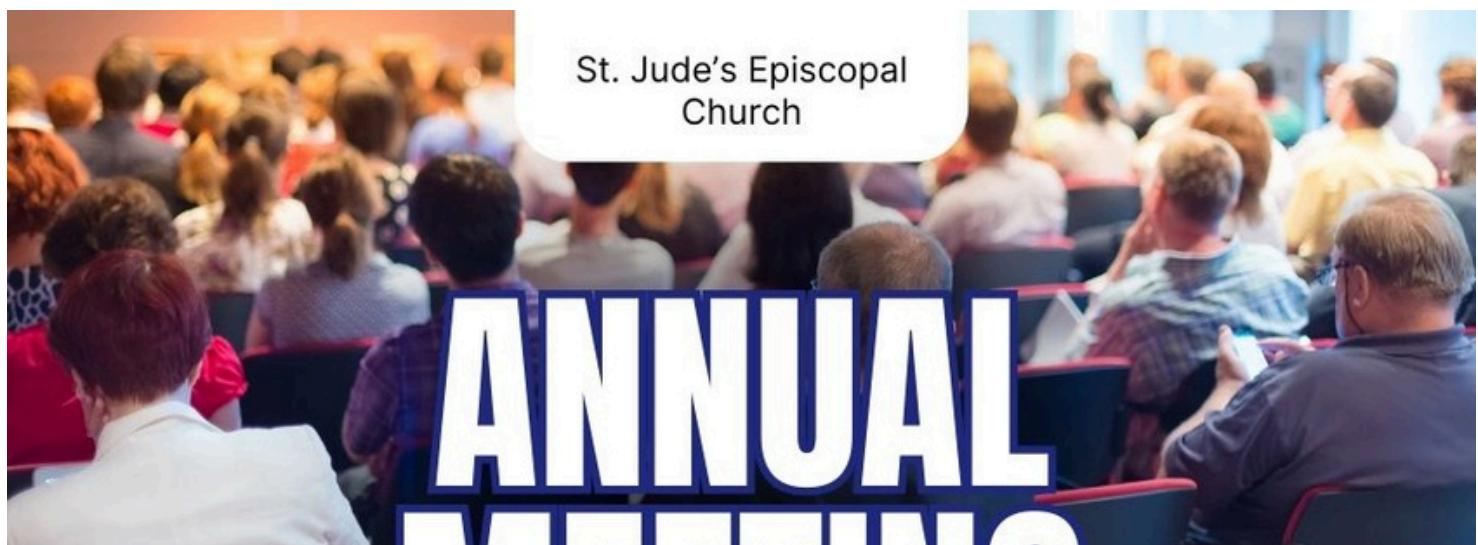
Dear friends at St Jude's,

Thank you so much for helping uplift youth this Christmas, as well as all other people we serve. The Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service was such a blessing. The PJs, monetary gifts, storage bins, and the opportunity to share about Crossover Outreach, are all such wonderful blessings! May God truly and richly bless you all, as you have blessed our neighbors in need.

Blessings and gratitude,

Denise Diller

Executive Director, retired as of 1/1



A photograph showing the back of a church congregation seated in rows of red chairs, facing a stage area. A white speech bubble is positioned in the upper left of the image, containing text.

St. Jude's Episcopal Church

ANNUAL MEETING

We will hold our Annual Meeting as part
of the 10:30 am church service
on **Sunday, January 25, 2026**

**Join us to discuss our ministry and church life in 2025
and look ahead to 2026!**

JOIN NOW
A soup supper coffee hour will follow in Vandenbergh Hall

Annual Meeting at the end of January

Speaking of our excellent leadership, be sure to join them for a review of 2025 and preview of 2026, at the Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, January 25 at the 10:30 service. We do a well-paced blend of Eucharistic worship and Parish meeting which is followed immediately by lunch in Vandenbergh Hall. This year, the Social Committee is putting together a Soup & Salad Supper for our celebratory event. You will be hearing more about all these good things, but please mark 1/25/26 on your calendar of “Don’t Miss” events.

Vestry Candidates for the 2026-2029 Term

We’re thrilled to announce that we have four outstanding candidates for Vestry, whom the congregation will affirm at the January 25th Annual Meeting! Please talk with them any time about your hopes for the future of St Jude’s, along with our continuing Vestry members.

- **Mark Jagos**, active with Outreach and Adult Formation.
- **Diane Putnam**, active with Outreach, Book Club, Children’s Formation, Counter.
- **Denise Rayner**, active with Outreach, Book Club, Ushers, Lector, Adult and Children’s Formation.
- **Dolores Ruby**, active with Book Club and a new Lector.

Continuing Vestry members are:

Doug Hill, Dave James, Charlie Johnston, Sue Premo and Megan Rosa.

Join the Imperfect Club

On **January 22 at 6:30 pm**, the whole congregation is invited to a no-prep-discussion as we share a soup dinner with a group from First Presbyterian Church who will cross the street to our Vandenbergh Hall. The topic is a documentary called “Toward a New Social Awakening – The Social Creed, 1908-2008.” Both our Churches and many others, at the national or international level, covenanted in 1908 to work together to help the most vulnerable people in society, especially children. How did they/we do? What might we accomplish together today? We’ll be out by 8 pm. A sign-up will be posted.

January Book Club

... read the same book the same way. St Jude’s Book Group is reading “No Two Persons” by Erica Bauermeister for the meeting on January 15, starting at 6 pm. It’s potluck and we never go hungry! It will be held this month at church, to be sure of parking and snow-plowing; and the discussion will be led by Dolores Ruby. [Read the book](#) and join us!



LifeLine Health Screenings

LifeLine is again using Vandenbergh Hall on Friday, January 30 to provide health screenings for cardiovascular and stroke risks, chronic disease risks and more. There is a sign up to volunteer to “building sit” while they are here. You can sign up for a health screening by going to: <https://hearthealth.lifelin.escreening.com/>

WORSHIP LEADERS for January 2025

Lay Eucharistic Minister(s)	2 nd Chalice	Reader	Intercessor	Ushers	Altar Guild	Vestry Person of the Day	Live - Streamer	Coffee Hour Host(s)
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January 4

Holy Eucharist - The Rev. Susan Anslow Williams

Paul Dolza	Amy Freeman	Deb James	Dave James	Dave & Denise Rayner	Everyone	??	Dave Rayner	???
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January 11

Holy Eucharist - The Rev. Mary Jo Schuetz

Amy Freeman	Dee Grossmann	Rev. Wayne Knotts	Dolores Ruby	Charlie J. Jessica M.	Dee G., Lisa Cronk	Dave James	Lynn Hopper	Dave & Deb James
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January 18

Holy Eucharist - The Rev. Susan Anslow Williams

Dee Grossmann	Amy Freeman	Rev. Bill McDonald	Nancy Day	Lisa and Kelly Cronk	Terri H, Fran J.	Bill Anderson	Dave James	Mike & Judy Marinco
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January 25 - Annual Meeting

Holy Eucharist - The Rev. Susan Anslow Williams

Mary Louise S.	Rev. Wayne Knotts	Pedro Melchor	Paul Dolza	Nancy Day, Lynne R.	Sarah D., Lisa Cronk	Megan Rosa	Paul Dolza	Social Committee
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February 1

Holy Eucharist - The Rev. Susan Anslow Williams

Amy Freeman	Mary Louise S.	Ellen Tripp	Nancy Day	Dave & Deb James	Mary Louise S., Diane Hill	Sue Premo	Paul Dolza	??
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Monday Office Volunteer(s):

5th - Francine Johnston

12th - ??

19th - Office Closed - MLK Jr. Day

26th - Heather Ludwig

Thurs. Office Volunteer(s):

8th - Judy Marinco

15th - Lynne Ronthi

22nd - Dave Little

29th - Nancy Day



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VESTRY

2026

Bill Anderson

Paul Dolza

Heather Ludwig

Dave Rayner

2027

Doug Hill

Dave James

2028

Charles Johnston

Sue Premo

Megan Rosa-Norred

Delegates to the Diocesan Convention

Dave & Debbie James

Alternates: Paul & Sarah Dolza