

April Associate Pastor report
Rev. Elizabeth Eckman
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My first Holy week with St. John's was exhausting and wonderful. We added distribution of communion back into worship and another opportunity for people to volunteer to serve. I've loved being able to connect with the congregation in this way since I have not been able to serve communion to each person since I began here during COVID. We tried something new with Maundy Thursday with a foot washing and had a great response to this expression of discipleship. Overall I felt the Holy Spirit at work over the four days of worship and am looking forward to ushering in the ideas Pastor Sarah and I had as we experienced holy week together.

We had 33 people participate in the YWCA's Race against Racism lead by Sandra Kroft. We met 3 times to discuss the information that was being learned and ended our event with a walk and supporting a black owned business - Zachary's BBQ & Soul Food in Harrisburg. It was a great intergenerational group that engaged many of the Racial and Social justice issues that are prevalent in our society. The group came up with action items and are working to make Racial and Social justice work a priority at St. John's.

I attended the Children's Garden open house and introduced myself to many parents as well as representing the church. It was a great chance for me to be more visible with the parents who will be entering the building in the days to come.

We said goodbye to our Seminarian at the End of April and look forward to hosting another one next year.

I have accepted the invitation to be the Director of Mass Gathering for the 2024 Youth Gathering in New Orleans. This means that I will head up a team of people to plan, produce and run the evening events in the Superdome. While it is certainly more responsibility, it will not take away from my call here at St. John's. It is simply an extension of my work to the greater church. For the most part I get to make the schedule for our team meetings and will be traveling but always keeping in mind the important holidays/events/schedule of St. John's. There will be times for St. John's to help host our team and show our hospitality to those traveling from all over the country to help plan this event. We will take advantage of picking the brains of our youth so that they have input in the event and help build the excitement for it! I am very excited for this opportunity to have a voice in this process and help once again to plan the Youth Gathering and this once in a lifetime faith formation event for our young people. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about this. I want everyone on council to feel comfortable and understand the work that is being done when I am out of the office. I love talking and sharing about the many ways to be involved!

Pastoral Visits: 4