



- ST JAMES -

# MONTHLY

June 2026



## GEARING UP FOR VBS

Are you ready to launch into an EPIC interstellar expedition at this year's Vacation Bible School?



# People In The PEWS!

At 91, Tom Downing might be St. James' oldest active member. He came to St. James in 1959, when the church met at the old McClatchey Elementary School. In the early 1960s, Tom and his friend Joe McDonald founded the Wesley Class as a group for young marrieds and singles.

When Lockheed Martin transferred Tom to London, the Tennessee farm boy turned engineer loved visiting historic sites, catching West End shows, and traveling on weekends. But something was missing – or rather, someone. At Westminster Abbey, Tom prayed that when he returned to Atlanta, he would be able to reconnect with Ann Haynes, a DeKalb County teacher he'd dated -- and ghosted.

As you can tell by their presence (pulpit side) every Sunday, Tom and Ann reunited. She was a Baptist preacher's daughter, and they married at Decatur First Baptist. But a house divided on Sunday is a logistical nightmare, and St. James won out. Their kids were baptized at St. James, learned to crawl on the nursery floor, and made lifelong friends at the preschool, from which son John escaped once. Daughter Elizabeth loved youth group and got married at St. James.

Tom coded before coding was cool, back when computers were room-sized mainframes and data was stored on punch cards. He spent almost his entire career at Lockheed, developing projects so fascinating he's not supposed to talk about some of them.

Ann and Tom have one great-grandchild, Murphy, and four grandchildren: Hannah, Rachel, Reagan, and Tom's namesake Thomas. The couple will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary in December. They still attend the Wesley Class.

### *Fun facts about Ann & Tom:*

- Tom went to The Citadel. Hated it. Then he went to Georgia State (liked it) and Georgia Tech (liked it, too).
- Ann went to Tift College in Forsyth, Georgia, and still gets together with classmates four times a year.
- Tom loves opera, Paris, and photography. And Ann, of course.



# Announcements

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† Let's Come Together  
Summer Worship at 10:00am



## SUMMER CHOIR WANTS YOU!

Summertime, and the singing is easy: simpler music, no robes, and no Wednesday night rehearsals. On any summer Sunday, starting May 31, come join the Chancel Choir for 9 AM rehearsal in the choir room followed by 10 AM worship.

It's a relaxed, joyful, low-commitment way to bring your talents to worship; and as vacation travel pokes holes in the ensemble, your voice can help fill the gaps.

Questions? Ask Dr. Andrew Schmidt  
or any member of the choir.

# Announcements

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## THANK YOU, SUSAN VIERS!

We celebrate Susan Viers this month as she completes her time here at St. James UMC as Preschool Director. Susan has brought a passion for loving children, for encouraging parents and teachers, and for assuring the best pathways for young minds to grow and flourish as God would intend.

Susan has attained the great milestone of 12 years, in which she served hundreds of precious children from her role as Director. Please join us in thanking Susan Viers for her dedication and success as our director of 12 years.

May God's love and grace go with you, Susan!



# Announcements

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## A WARM WELCOME TO YOU, MARLA REISMAN!

Join us in welcoming our new St. James UMC Preschool Director,  
Marla Reisman.

Marla will join the St. James faculty this month and will bring nearly three decades of experience in education to her role. Reisman began her career in early childhood education administration at Rock Spring Presbyterian Church in 1997.

With her extensive experience and knowledge of both Mother's Morning Out programs and high-quality early childhood education, Marla says she “looks forward to merging the two together to form a unique program at St. James Preschool.”

Marla says she “loves the fact that St. James has been a well-respected and cherished church program for all these years and I look forward to learning more about what makes it so special while continuing to support the teachers, children and families.”

Marla has a Bachelors in Social Work from the University of Iowa. She grew up in the suburbs of Chicago moving to Atlanta soon after college to escape the cold. She has an adorable black cocker spaniel named Frankie.



# Announcements

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THANK YOU  
FOR  
FIFTY-ONE  
YEARS



On May 17, Dr. Craig Smith had a few words to say on his last Sunday as St. James' lead organist. He first expressed his heart felt gratitude for your listening to him for fifty-one years! He went on to say that our new organist, James Pinder, has his complete and full blessing as he inherits this position. In closing, Craig said, "I have a strong suspicion that you still have not heard the last note from me!"

This is true because we now welcome  
Dr. Smith to his new position as Organist Emeritus!

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## Welcome New Organist, James Pinder!

James started his organ career while a student at Georgia Tech and has served as organist at several local churches. In addition to his musical talents, he is also technically gifted. He is currently restoring a pipe organ in his spare time and even helped with the recent restoration of our St. James UMC organ. His first Sunday with us was Sunday, May 24.

# Announcements

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## ST. JAMES MINISTRY FAIR

Mark your calendars for our Ministry Fair on August 30. We are asking leaders from all of St. James' ministries to set up an information table in the Fellowship Hall for this event. Look out for a sign up to host a table for your ministry area coming soon.



The Youth Choir from  
Cookeville First United Methodist Church  
in Cookeville, TN  
will be joining us in worship on  
June 7 at the 10 AM service!

# Announcements

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## JOIN OUR VBS VOLUNTEER TEAM!



VBS is around the corner and we are excited to invite you to join our team of volunteers this summer, June 15 -18. Being part of VBS is a joy and a calling! Join us in making a difference on our children's faith journey.

We are called to nurture, and to teach our little ones who God is.

We invite you to be part of something special and exciting.

Come and join our SPACE crew for take off!

You can be a part time or full time volunteer.

Sign Up to Volunteer by visiting [tinyurl.com/yc7jrrf7](https://tinyurl.com/yc7jrrf7).

If you have any questions, please contact your Shuttle Captain, Marcela Meeks.

# Announcements

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St. James Atlanta



CIRCLE OF  
**SISTERS**  
*wisdom, spirit, fellowship*

Circle of Sisters, known as COS, is a group of fun-loving St. James women who enjoy sharing their wisdom, spirit, and fellowship with each other.

**Beth Plunkett, Anne Boyd, and Sylvia Bates  
will be the hostesses of our luncheon on  
June 8 at 12:30 PM in the  
St. James Church Parlor**

**We look forward to seeing you ... and we love guests! As  
always, we promise GREAT FOOD, FUN and FELLOWSHIP!**

For further information, please contact  
Barbara Bonapfel at [bsbonapfel@gmail.com](mailto:bsbonapfel@gmail.com)

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## **BBQ Band of Brothers**

Tuesday, June 9  
at 6:30 PM

Come out and join the men of  
St. James for great food and fellowship.  
Contact Jim Costlow with any  
questions at 404-754-3937.

We will meet at  
Fox Bros Bar-B-Q in Brookhaven  
4058 Peachtree Road NE

# Announcements

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We continue with Friendly Open Play Pickleball in the St. James Activities Center on Sundays from 4 - 6 PM. It is a fun group which includes both new beginners (and some old beginners) and also helpful intermediate players. Balls and paddles are provided if needed.

All are invited to join us and no sign up is needed. Feel free to contact Kent Watkins ([kent.watkins@gmail.com](mailto:kent.watkins@gmail.com)) or Matt Cason ([mcason@stjamesatlanta.org](mailto:mcason@stjamesatlanta.org)) or the Church office at (404) 261-3121 for more information.

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## St. James Walking Group Wednesday Mornings | 9:00 AM

Join the St. James Walking Group for weekly walks and hikes around our community and surrounding Atlanta area. To receive information about the walks each week, please contact Jim Branan. 404-538-4867 ([james.m.branan@gmail.com](mailto:james.m.branan@gmail.com))

# Announcements



The graphic features a light beige background with a grid pattern. At the top left is a stylized sun with rays. At the top right is a camera icon. The main title 'St. James UMC Summer Camps' is centered, with 'St. James UMC' in purple and 'Summer Camps' in orange. Below the title are four notepad-style boxes: a purple one with 'All of St. James' Summer offerings!', a green one with a QR code, a yellow one with 'Camps for all ages! 1.5 - 9', and an orange one with the St. James UMC logo and 'ACTIVITIES'. At the bottom left is a signpost with two arrows, and at the bottom right is a map icon. A beach ball and an ice cream cone are also present as decorative elements.

# St. James UMC Summer Camps

All of  
St. James'  
Summer  
offerings!

Camps for  
all ages!  
1.5 - 9

ST. JAMES UMC  
**ACTIVITIES**

Registration & more Info @  
[stjamesatlanta.org/summer-camps](http://stjamesatlanta.org/summer-camps)

Registration Link: [stjamesatlanta.org/summer-camps](http://stjamesatlanta.org/summer-camps)

# Children's Ministry



## DISCIPLES AT PLAY



During the summer season, through July 26, St. James will come together for **One Worship Service at 10 AM.**

. Children can be dropped off at 9:45 in the Nursery and Kidz Zone. During the 10 AM service, we will have the Special Moments with Children and afterwards the children will go downstairs for **Disciples at Play**, a time of learning how to grow as disciples of Jesus.

For ages birth - 5th Grade.

# Children's Ministry

*coming soon to a galaxy near you...*



# **BLAST OFF** **THROUGH GOD'S CREATION** **VBS**

*3... 2... 1...  
blast off!*

**JUNE 15 - JUNE 18**

*Join us aboard space station  
salvation as we blast off  
through god's creation!!*



Register by visiting [tinyurl.com/4c44jc89](https://tinyurl.com/4c44jc89)  
or scan the QR Code.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS JUNE 9.**

# Children's Ministry



## LOCK-IN 345 2026 AUGUST 7 - 8

Join us for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade lock in on August 7 - 8. Drop off in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30 PM for dinner, activities, an amazing dive into the Bible, and a sleep over at the church! Pick up is August 8 at 8:30 AM in the Sanctuary.

Register by visiting [tinyurl.com/muv7bzdv](https://tinyurl.com/muv7bzdv) or scan QR Code.



## CHILDREN'S BIBLES AUGUST 9



After Lock-In 345, we will present Bibles to the children at the 11:00 service on August 9. If your child is in 3rd grade or is new to St. James, please register below so that we can have a new Bible for your child.

Register by visiting [tinyurl.com/bdftewvr](https://tinyurl.com/bdftewvr) or scan QR Code.



# Young Adult Ministry

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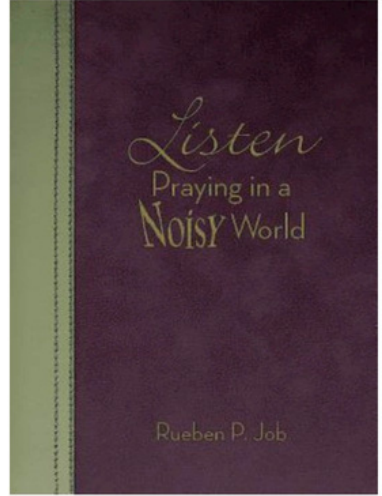
## SUMMER BIBLE STUDY

Young Adults are invited to a Zoom Bible Study where we will cover the book 'Listen, Praying in a NOISY World', by Rueben P. Job.

We will have our gatherings on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 PM beginning June 23.

Sessions will continue on Tuesdays through the end of July.

You can purchase the book at this link: [tinyurl.com/56e5n9m9](https://tinyurl.com/56e5n9m9)  
Please contact Rev. Matt so you can RSVP for the study!



## TRIVIA NIGHT

Come and test your knowledge of geography, sports, pop culture, among many other areas on Wednesday Nights!

For more information, please reach out to Rev. Matt Cason ([mcason@stjamesatlanta.org](mailto:mcason@stjamesatlanta.org)).

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Join our Young Adult Ministry Activities! Sign Up to receive emails about upcoming events at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/WrYIEs6> or by scanning the QR Code



# Youth Ministry



**Summer** St. James UMC **YOUTH**

Join us for all the fun this summer!

- Braves Game- June 7<sup>th</sup>
- Volunteer at VBS- June 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>
- Trampoline Park trip- June 18<sup>th</sup> (after VBS volunteering!)
- World of Coca Cola Trip- July 8<sup>th</sup>
- Atlanta Mission Retreat- July 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>

Also join us for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays -  
June 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>  
July 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>  
After church following worship- 11:30am-1:30pm!  
(Lunch will be provided!)

Instagram- [stjamesatlantayouth](https://www.instagram.com/stjamesatlantayouth)

Questions?  
Contact Victoria Cason  
[vcason@stjamesatlanta.org](mailto:vcason@stjamesatlanta.org)



## World of Coca Cola Trip - July 8

We will leave from the church at 10 AM.

Cost is \$28 per ticket.

We will stop for lunch on the way back to the church.

Please bring money for lunch!

Sign up will be available soon.

# Youth Ministry

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## Mark your calendars!

Atlanta Mission Retreat is back the week of July 20 - 24. We will be working with various organizations serving those in our community through organizations such as Trinity Table, Community Assistance Center, and BreakThru House.

For more information, please email Victoria Cason at

[vcason@stjamesatlanta.org](mailto:vcason@stjamesatlanta.org). To register, visit

[tinyurl.com/4k3dmb3s](https://tinyurl.com/4k3dmb3s).

# Youth Ministry

**BRAVES  
GAME**

**SUNDAY  
07  
JUNE**

**A VS P**

Cost: \$30,  
please bring money for snacks/food!

## Youth Braves Game | June 7

Join us as the Braves face the Pirates! We will leave the church at 11:30 AM for the game at 1:35 PM, and return to the church around 5:00 PM. If the return time is later, parents will be updated accordingly.

The cost for tickets is \$30. Parents are also welcome to join!

Please bring money for any snacks/food at the ballpark.

The deadline for sign ups is June 1.

Link to sign up: [tinyurl.com/a4frjuyj](https://tinyurl.com/a4frjuyj) or scan QR Code.



# Celebrations & Concerns

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## Prayer Concerns

Sharon Whitlow Brody - Home

Sandra Owen - Regency Manor

Jennie Brooks - Home

Natalie Pawelski - Home

Elizabeth Grace - Home

Gail Sinno - Home

Betty Sykes - Huntcliff Rehab

### Celebrating:

Our St. James Graduates.

The birth of Elodie Jean Knudsen, daughter of Jay Knudsen and Michelle Ivy-Knudsen, born May 21, 2026.

The baptism of Penley Collins Oates, daughter of Campbell and Christine Oates, and granddaughter of Ciaran and Patti Brennan.

# Memorials & Honoraria

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### In Memory of Dr. Hahk Kim

(Music Fund)

Young S. Hahn

### In Honor of Dr. Craig Smith

(Choral Scholars Fund)

Elaine & Ben Dooley

### In Honor of Rev. Susan Landry

Louis Landry

# Staff Directory

**Senior Pastor:** Rev. Susan Landry

**Associate Pastor:** Rev. Matt Cason

**Pastor of Visitation:** Rev. Dr. Jim Cantrell

**Director of Music Ministry:**  
Dr. Andrew Schmidt

**Director of Children's Arts and Ministries:**  
Marcela Meeks

**Director of Youth Ministry:** Victoria Cason

**Organist:** James Pinder

**Organist Emeritus:** Dr. Craig Smith

**Building and Grounds Director:**  
Steve Hicks

**Finance and Membership Manager:**  
Shannan Wassel

**Communications and Office Manager:**  
Kitty Turner

**Director of Activities Ministry:** Cody Ellis

**Administrative Assistant:** Lee Padhye

**Preschool Director:** Marla Reisman

**Missionaries:** Will & Ella Faircloth



**St James**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

4400 Peachtree Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, GA 30342

**Church Office** (404) 261-3121 | **Preschool Office** (404) 237-7354

[stjamesatlanta.org](http://stjamesatlanta.org)

*Stay connected with us!*



*"As a Christian community, our mission is to help every person grow in faith that translates belief into action."*

- ST JAMES IS A RECONCILING CONGREGATION -

