



Saint John's FESTIVAL OF NEW BEGINNINGS

Catalog of Online Classes & Groups

Updated September 3, 2025

All are welcome - Invite your friends!

BREAD & BELONGING: BIBLE STUDY TOGETHER (FULL 28-WEEKS)

Thursdays 6:30 – 8:00pm

September 18 – April 30 (28 weeks)

In Person and Online

Led by Rev. Hilary Marchbanks, Shelley Walters, Laura Schwarcz, Javi Lopez-Shultz, and Midge Epstein

Gather with us weekly throughout the academic year for Bread & Belonging: Bible Study Together – a time of scripture study, fellowship, and prayer. Following the lectionary readings, we'll explore the Bible alongside reflections from a wide range of theologians and pastors, listening for wisdom from many voices. Together, we'll discover how scripture continues to shape us and how God is calling us to live with faith and love in community.

You can sign up for the whole 28 weeks, or you can sign up for short sessions (dates listed below).

Register for the full 28-weeks at bit.ly/breadbible

BREAD & BELONGING: BIBLE STUDY TOGETHER (SHORT SESSIONS)

Session 1: September 18 - October 2: Taste & See (3 weeks) - bit.ly/breadbible1

Session 2: October 9 - November 20: Beloved Blueprints (7 weeks) - bit.ly/breadbible2

Session 3: December 4 – December 18: All the Earth Waits, Advent (3 weeks) - bit.ly/breadbible3

Session 4: January 8 - February 12: Epiphany (6 weeks) - bit.ly/breadbible4

Session 5: February 19 - March 26: Lent (5 weeks) - bit.ly/breadbible5

Session 6: April 9 - April 30: Easter (4 weeks) - bit.ly/breadbible6

THE TEARS OF THINGS - FINDING GOD IN LIFE'S FRACTURES

Mondays 6:30-8:00 pm, September 8, 15, and 22 (3 weeks)

In Person and Online

Led by Ed Wilder, Bob Walker, and Midge Epstein

Where is God in a hurting world? What if our wounds aren't detours, but doorways?

Join us for a three-week study on Richard Rohr's *The Tears of Things*. This short, contemplative book invites us to explore how to find God not just in triumph, but in the "tears of things"—the brokenness, the imperfection, and the messiness of life. Through open discussion, this class explores how Christian hope is born in lament and how we are called to be both healed and healers in a hurting world.

Discover wisdom in the weeping and hope in the cracks.

The Tears of Things is available online and in bookstores. Please join us even if you have not read the book!

Register at bit.ly/tearsofthings



COMMON GROUND: HEALING OUR SOIL, FEEDING THE FUTURE

Mondays, September 29 and October 6

6:30 - 8:00 pm

In Person and Online

Teachers: Saint John's Green Team

Join us for a class exploring the documentary Common Ground, which examines the ways farming practices shape the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the water we drink through the health of the soil. Together, we'll unpack what the film teaches us about the connections between agriculture, environment, and community, and consider how these insights might guide our own choices. For more information about the film, visit commongroundfilm.com

Preparation before class: Watch the documentary "Common Ground: Healing Our Soil, Feeding the Future" either on Amazon Prime or with the JOY group on Tuesday, September 23 at 12:00 noon at the church.

Register at bit.ly/sjcommonground

ONLINE CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

Every other Wednesday starting September 17

12:00noon - 12:45pm

Online only

Leaders: Robert Culbertson, Shelley Walters, and Eva Jordan

Gather with us over Zoom midday, midweek to reinforce and deepen your contemplative practices with group meditations and sharing.

*All participants are asked to complete an in-person retreat or a one-on-one session before attending the mid-week gatherings.

Contact Shelley@stjohnsaustin.org for more information.

PUTTING ON THE MIND OF CHRIST: NEUROSCIENCE AND CONTEMPLATION

Sundays, October 26 and November 2

1:30pm - 3:00pm

In Person and Online

Leaders: Robert Culbertson and Shelley Walters

This new, two-session short course will relate foundational neuropsychological research to the contemplative experience. We will take brief but substantive looks at Michael Gazzaniga's split-brain research and Jill Bolte Taylor's life-altering experiences following a stroke that shut down her left brain.

We'll ask: What is the "you" that perceives reality; that meditates? How might neuroscience help shape our understanding of "putting on the mind of Christ?"

Register at bit.ly/sjmindofchrist



LGBTQ+ ALLY TRAINING

Dates TBD

Online

Leaders: Members of our Rio Texas Reconciling Ministries Team

Join us for LGBTQ+ Ally Training, a single-session workshop designed to help us practice creating safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ people. Together we'll learn practical skills for becoming intentional allies – building understanding, comfort, and confidence in how we show up for others. If you are newer to the conversation, this session will introduce common language and terms as well as answer many of your questions; if you already have experience, it will deepen your awareness and practice.

This 1.5-hour training on Zoom uses the nationally recognized Safe Zone Project curriculum. This course is open to anyone in our conference, and all are welcome.

Dates are being finalized. Please email Shelley@stjohnsaustin.org for more information.

BREAD FOR OUR JOURNEY

Bread for Our Journey is an online approach to faith development you can do as an individual, in informal small groups – and it even includes activities for families.

This weekly collection of reflections is intended to deepen our understanding of scripture, to open our awareness of different voices and wisdom, and to broaden our spiritual practices that bring creativity and justice to our world.

Visit stjohnsaustin.org/ministries/bread-for-our-journey to receive this resource weekly.

SUNDAY MORNING FOR ADULTS AT 10:00AM

SEEKERS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

This class primarily consists of adults aged 50 and above, including both single and married individuals, as well as people at various stages of their faith journey. Our goal is to provide a warm, casual environment where relationships can be developed and spirits can be nourished. All classes are available both in person and on Zoom. Our curriculum is based on the works of a variety of authors on a wide range of topics, including both biblical studies and current social issues. A rotation of volunteer class members leads lessons, which generally include a great deal of class discussion.

To build community, several social events are held each year. A weekly newsletter is provided to keep you up to date when you can't make it to class; a class directory is maintained to provide easy access to member contact information. The class supports various local, national, and international mission activities and also offers local volunteer service opportunities.

We meet in the Fellowship Hall downstairs in the main building,

WESLEY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

The Wesley Class engages in Bible Study each Sunday. A book of the bible is selected for study in detail. Modern commentary sources are used to compile the lessons. We alternate between Old and New Testament books. The study of each book may take several weeks to complete. We have discussions after the lesson is presented regarding relevance to modern daily life.

Led by Roy Walker. During construction, this group meets in the Library - Room 211 upstairs in the main building and online.