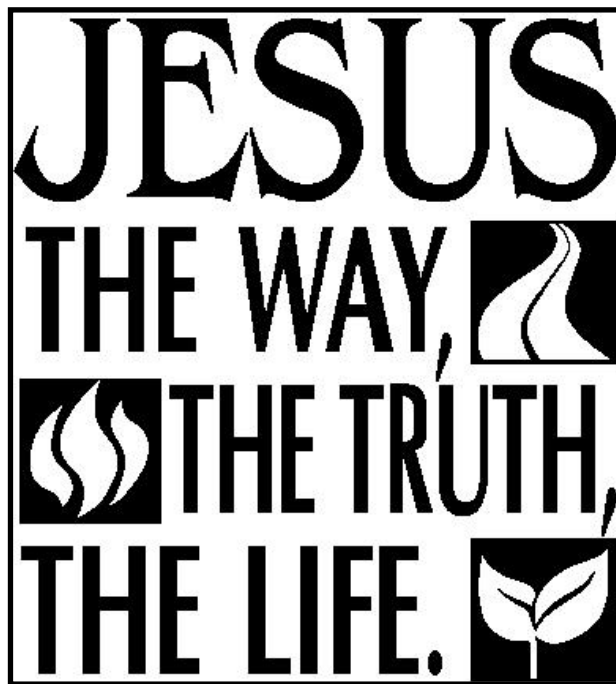


St. John's Lutheran Church  
Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center  
9 am Worship Service  
Fifth Sunday of Easter  
May 3, 2026



***Welcome to Worship!***

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

## *Welcome to Worship!*

### PRE-GATHERING MUSIC/WELCOME

#### GATHERING SONG      *“Lord, Be Glorified” (2x)*

In our life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified;  
in our life, Lord, be glorified today.

In our song, Lord, be glorified, be glorified;  
in our song, Lord, be glorified today.

In your church, Lord, be glorified, be glorified;  
in your church, Lord, be glorified today.

*Text: Bob Kilpatrick  
Music: BE GLORIFIED, Bob Kilpatrick*

### THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb! **Amen.**

Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Merciful God, you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come. You lead us beside still waters. We thank you for the waters of creation: morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves.

We thank you for the waters that nourish us. Blessed are you.

**You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness who accompanies us on our journeys. We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection. We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow. Blessed are you.

**You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows. Break down barriers that divide us. Fill us with the breath of peace. Blessed are you.

**You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism, and for making us a new creation. We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise, now and forever. **Amen.**



## OPENING SONG

### *“All Are Welcome”*

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

*Refrain*

***All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.***

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus. *Refrain*

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:  
a banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us. *Refrain*

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger: *Refrain*

Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter: *Refrain*

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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## THE APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all. **And also with you.**

## THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us  
grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen  
life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now  
and forever. **Amen.**

## YOUTH MESSAGE

*Adriana McMurphy*

THE FIRST READING

Acts 7:55-60

<sup>55</sup> Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” <sup>57</sup> But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. <sup>58</sup> Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup> While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup> Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16— *Read Responsively*

<sup>1</sup> In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.

<sup>2</sup> **Incline your ear to me; make haste to deliver me.**

<sup>3</sup> Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.

<sup>4</sup> **Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, for you are my tower of strength.**

<sup>5</sup> Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.

<sup>15</sup> **My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.**

<sup>16</sup> Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.”

THE SECOND READING

1 Peter 2:2-10

<sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. <sup>4</sup> Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and <sup>5</sup> like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in scripture: “See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>7</sup> This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,” <sup>8</sup> and “A stone that makes them stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.*

THE ALLELUIA VERSE

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia;  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

THE GOSPEL

**John 14:1-14**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup> “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to the place where I am going.” <sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” <sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” <sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. <sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE MESSAGE

*Pastor Rachel Connelly*

SONG OF RESPONSE

*“Bind Us Together”*

*Refrain*

*Bind us together Lord, bind us together  
with cords that cannot be broken.*

*Bind us together Lord, bind us together Lord,  
Bind us together with love.*

There is only one God.  
There is only one King.  
There is only one Body;  
that is why we can sing. *Refrain*

You are the family of God.  
You are the promise divine.  
You are God chosen desire,  
you are the glorious new wine. *Refrain*

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

*After each prayer petition—* Merciful God, receive our prayer.

## THE SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you always. **Congregation: And also with you.**

## THE OFFERING

*Our gifts and offerings are gathered for the mission of the church.  
Plates are passed by the ushers.*

## THE OFFERTORY SONG

*"You, Lord"*

We stand here in awe before you, Lord.  
We kneel here and honor you, Lord.  
For love never ending, for grace freely giving.  
We come here to thank you, Lord.

It's you, Lord, only you, Lord.  
To you we bring this offering of praise.  
It's you, Lord, only you, Lord.  
Everything I give; my life I want to live for you, Lord

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting: Merciful God, accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more. Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love. In the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

## THE MEAL

*All are welcome at the table of communion*

### THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

#### COMMUNION SONGS      *“Sanctuary/I Exalt Thee/Holy Ground Medley”*

Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary  
Pure and Holy, tried and true.  
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living  
Sanctuary for You.

I exalt Thee, I exalt Thee, I exalt Thee O Lord  
I exalt Thee, I exalt Thee, I exalt Thee O Lord

Holy Spirit, fill this vessel  
Make my heart to, burn within  
Purify me, make my life be  
A sanctuary for You.

We are standing on holy ground,  
and I know that there are angels all around.  
Let us praise Jesus now.  
We are standing in his presence on holy ground.



*“Jesus Loves Me!”*

Jesus loves me! this I know,  
for the Bible tells me so;  
little ones to him belong,  
they are weak, but he is strong.

*Refrain*

Yes, Jesus loves me,  
yes, Jesus loves me,  
yes, Jesus loves me,  
the Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! he who died  
heaven's gates to open wide;  
he will wash away my sin,  
let his little child come in. *Refrain*

Jesus loves me! he will stay  
close beside me all the way;  
when at last I come to die,  
he will take me home on high. *Refrain*

Text: Anna B. Warner, 1820-1915, alt.

THE PASTORAL BLESSING

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assisting: Holy One, through this meal you have made your home among us and are making all things new. Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts, to love our enemies, and to bring your healing to the nations. In the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

THE BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, and the Spirit, our advocate and peace, ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

*“They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love”*

We are One in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.  
We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

***Refrain***

**And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.  
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.**


We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand.  
We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand.  
And together we’ll spread the news that God is in our land. *Refrain*

We will work with each other; we will work side by side.  
We will work with each other; we will work side by side.  
And we’ll guard each one’s dignity and save each one’s pride. *Refrain*

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come.  
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son.  
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one. *Refrain*

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

	<u>Serving Today</u>	
	Pastor:	The Rev. Dr. Rachel Connelly
	Lay Assistant:	Patty Shepard
	Lector:	Grace Schmeelcke
	Greeters:	Stan & Kay Gartner
Musicians:	Tom Ward, Ray Burroughs & Dave Devoe	

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### **Our Church Family**

Gary Cabbage, rehab & healing (knee surgery)  
Andera Stroud, healing-Seneca Rehab  
Jerry Cobb, healing, rehab in Greenville  
Joe Kent, healing  
Polly Kent, healing  
Jana Snelgrove, baby JoCassie born 3/21/2026  
John Champion, healing  
Beth Davis, health/healing  
Tom Ward, treatment of a neurological disease  
Tiffany Chapman, healing  
Katie Johns, home, healing  
Charlie (health) & Debbie (lung cancer) Busch

### **Those Grieving**

The friends and family of Michelle Leggett

### **Our Elders at Home or Assisted Living**

Jeanne Welch, hospital/healing  
Betty Mantell, The Residences (Wells Highway)  
Thelma Miller, The Residences (Wells Highway)  
Brenda Cantrell, home  
Linda Humphries, home  
Frances Carter, home/hospice  
Marie Palmatier, home  
Peg Turner, home in Central  
Lynne Williams (Pawleys Island)



### **Other Prayer Concerns**

For those affected by military actions in the Middle East  
For our country amidst on-going nationwide violence.  
For wisdom for military leaders involved in the events  
unfolding in the Middle East.  
For those dealing with loss from recent natural disasters  
and severe weather.  
For all those who have lost their jobs due to recent  
government changes.  
For peace for our country and protection for our  
government officials.  
For colleges & universities across our country.  
For those dealing with loss and fear from gun violence.  
For peace in the Middle East, and comfort to those  
impacted by violence.  
For Bishop Ginny Aebischer and Synod staff  
All military Personnel

### **Our Extended Family and Friends**

Joan Kramer, successful treatment (friend of Williams')  
Marie Simon, healing (friend of Williams')  
Riley Medlin, cancer diagnosis (WHS student)  
Stetson Underwood in NICU in Greenville (infant  
grandson of Kathy Radford)  
The family of Doug Wilson and his wife Elaine  
Kathy Quickel, healing (mother of Mike Goyne)  
Doug Scanlon, healing (friend of Grace Schmeelcke)  
Maggie Ormes, healing (friend of Mary Sprouse)  
Billy Joe Lindley, healing (friend of Kents)  
The family of Ruby Hendrix (grandmother of Travis  
Tilson)  
Barbara Cary, comfort (sister of Dave Devoe)  
Betty & Herman Brock, healing (friends of Lois Sharpe)  
Karen Connelly Pierce, healing (Pastor Rachel's sister)  
Teresa Newton, healing (friend of Kents)  
Buffy McCarthy, healing (daughter-in-law Kathy Scherter)  
Stephanie Williams, cancer/chemo (cousin/ Pastor Rachel)  
Kathy Smith, liver cancer (cousin of Cathy Plowden)  
Isabel Fogel, healing (granddaughter of Fogel's)  
Dwight Amick, hospice (Stephanie Champion, step dad)  
Danny Childress, comfort (nephew of Safrit's)  
Larry Smith, (friend of Jane Harris)  
Bonnie Blanchett, healing (mother of Ryan Raab)  
E. Christian Gauderer, hospitalized in Lisbon, Portugal  
(brother of Michael)  
Janelle Gibson, healing (Aunt of Jan Day)  
Bob Lidwin, (nephew of Bill Pickard)  
Erica McKee Skinner, healing (friend of Tina Barrett)  
Ben Harding, healing (brother of Allen Harding)  
Chad Cobb (son of Wilma)  
Kay Davis, recovery (mother of Stephanie Champion)  
George Rogers, lung cancer (half brother of Micky)  
Kelsey Bowman, healing (daughter-in-law of Bowmans)  
George Combes, (brother of Grace Lichtenwald)  
Lauren Bowman, Lyme disease (daughter of Gary and  
Barb Bowman)  
Jacquelyn Moore, (niece of Kathy Scherter)  
Bennie Smith, health (nephew of Wards)  
Dohnvan (grandson of Kathy Scherter)  
Dolorico Perez (father of Josie Perez)  
Gina Daly, health (daughter of Bob Johnson)

*Please let the church office know of  
any updates to our prayer list.*



# The Bell Tower— Ministry News



## MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Learn about the Life of Jesus from infancy to the Resurrection. Led by Adriana from 6-7pm in the Education Building.



## TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Rachel's Tuesday morning Bible Study on Galatians and Colossians is at 11am in the Education Building.



## GOD'S WORK~OUR HANDS DAY

Saturday, May 16, 2026

Each year St. John's participates in God's Work~Our Hands day of outreach. It is our opportunity to go into the community to help our neighbors. For the past several years we have focused on the needs of Lakeview Assisted Living. It is located on 320 Camp Rd. in Walhalla. We gather at **9am at the church** for a brief send-off prayer and instruction. All work should be completed before 1pm. Please sign up on Information Alley. Contact Joan Lewis with any questions.



## ST. JOHN'S MEET UP AND CONNECT HIKING DAY

Friday May 29, 2026

**Our Hike:** Kings Creek Waterfall at Burrells Ford. **Hike description:** Easy to moderate, about 2.25 miles total. Partly along the Chattooga River; the water fall is stunning. **Meet at:** St. John's Schedule: 9am to carpool to trail parking (35 min drive). Back to St. John's by 2pm. **Pack a Lunch/Bring Water:** Pack a small lunch and water that you can carry on the trail. **What to wear:** Good hiking/walking boots or shoes, hiking clothes and a hat. **Hike Leaders:** Jeff and Torrie Landon. If weather is questionable check the Meetup and Connect website calendar. Cancellation will be posted by 7:30 am that morning. You can also call or text Jeff Landon: 704-770-6276.



## 2026 LUTHEROAD DAY CAMP

St. John's is hosting Lutheroad Day Camp at Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center on **June 22-26, 2026**. Camp runs 9am - 4pm Monday - Thursday, 9am - 12 pm on Friday For children completing Kindergarten through 5th grade. Cost is only \$175 for the week and scholarships are available.

**Registration deadline is June 1.** Same family multiple child discounts available. *Registration forms are available in the church office.* Join us for a great week of fun for children of our church, grandkids, friends, and kids from the community!! For more information, contact the church office at 864-638-6363.



**CHURCH  
OFFICE  
STAFF**

**St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA**  
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Facebook — St. John's Lutheran, Walhalla

**Pastor—The Reverend Dr. Rachel Connelly**  
Cell: (910) 515-0897 or Email: stjohnspastorrachel@gmail.com

**Director of Family Life Ministry—Adriana McMurphy**  
Email: stjohsadriana@gmail.com

**Administrative Assistant—Melissa Rasley**  
(864) 638-6363 or Email: stjohsluther@gmail.com  
Office Hours: Monday—Friday 8:30am to 1:00pm

**Additional St. John's Staff**  
Ray Burroughs, Facilities Manager  
Joan Lewis, Spiritual Gifts Coordinator  
Cathy Plowden, Congregational President

WELCOME TO  
church

**Our tithes and offerings** are an important part of our faith journey.

- Electronic offerings may be given through the GIVELIFY app.
- You may also go to our website: [www.stjohnswalhalla.org](http://www.stjohnswalhalla.org) and click on the "Give Now With Givelify" button
- Another option is to scan this QR code to go directly to our Givelify page.

