

St. John's Lutheran Church
Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center
9am
The Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 29, 2025



Welcome to Worship!

Welcome to our worship!

We have no good apart from God. That makes Jesus' call to follow him an invitation to freedom. This is freedom to revel in the Spirit's fruit: love, joy, peace, and patience. This is freedom to not be imprisoned by anything that would keep us from the fullness of the life God has given us. This is the path of life.

PRE-GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

Merciful God,
you free us to love others, but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way. You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace, but we turn away from the abundant life you offer. You surround us with patience, kindness, and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right. In your mercy, forgive us. Do not give up on us. Heal us, break our bonds, and show us the path of life. Amen.

You belong to Christ Jesus and you are God's children through faith. In the cross of ✠ Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation. **Amen.**

OPENING SONG: *"Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God"*

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, Alleluia

Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and you shall find;
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Allelu, Alleluia

We do not live by bread alone, but by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God. Allelu, Alleluia

THE APOSTOLIC GREETING

Pastor: 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: Sovereign God, ruler of all hearts, you call us to obey you, and you favor us with true freedom. Keep us faithful to the ways of your Son, that, leaving behind all that hinders us, we may steadfastly follow your paths, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

YOUTH MESSAGE

Adriana McMurphy

THE FIRST READING

1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21

¹⁵ Then the Lord said to [Elijah,] “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.”

¹⁹ So he set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him. ²⁰ He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” Then Elijah said to him, “Go back again; for what have I done to you?” ²¹ He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

Psalm 16— Read Responsively

¹ Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;
I have said to the Lord, “You are my Lord, my good above all other.”

² **All my delight is in the godly that are in the land,
upon those who are noble among the people.**

³ But those who run after other gods shall have their troubles multiplied.

⁴ **I will not pour out drink offerings to such gods,
never take their names upon my lips.**

⁵ O Lord, you are my portion and my cup; it is you who uphold my lot.

⁶ **My boundaries enclose a pleasant land;
indeed, I have a rich inheritance.**

⁷ I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
my heart teaches me night after night.

⁸ **I have set the Lord always before me;
because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

⁹ My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices;
my body also shall rest in hope.

¹⁰ **For you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor let your holy one see the pit.**

¹¹ You will show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

THE SECOND READING

Galatians 5:1, 13-25

¹ For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. ¹⁶ Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

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

Please stand as you are able for the reading of the Gospel.

THE ALLELUIA VERSE

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

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

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 9:51-62

⁵¹ When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; ⁵³ but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then they went on to another village. ⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹ To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

⁶⁰ But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

⁶¹ Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

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

THE MESSAGE

Pastor Rachel Connelly

SONG OF RESPONSE: "Will You Come and Follow Me"

1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call
2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call
3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call
4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call
5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call

your name? Will you go where you don't
your name? Will you care for cruel and
your name? Will you set the pris - 'ners in -
my name. Let me turn and fol - low

know and nev - er be the same?
kind and nev - er be the same?
free and nev - er be the same?
side and nev - er be the same?
you and nev - er be the same.

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my
Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life at -
Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as
Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the
In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and

name be known, will you let my life be
tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer
this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I
world a - round, through my sight and touch and
foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and

grown in you and you in me?"
pray'r in you and you in me?"
mean in you and you in me?"
sound in you and you in me?"
grow in you and you in me."

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949
Music: KELVINGROVE, Scottish traditional
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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 petition— God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

THE SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

THE OFFERING

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

THE OFFERTORY SONG “We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise”

We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord;
We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord.
And we offer up to you the sacrifices of thanksgiving;
And we offer up to you the sacrifices of joy.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Creator God, in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good and the harvest is plentiful. Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth and our labor, that we may work for the good of all; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **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 HYMNS “Sanctuary”

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

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

THE PASTORAL BLESSING

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assisting: Mothering God, you gathered us to your table and we drank deeply of your grace. Send us out by your Spirit to love our neighbors as ourselves and proclaim your love in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

THE BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

The love of God abound in you; the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts; and the life of the Spirit ✠ bless you and give you peace.
Amen.



SENDING SONG *“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”*

Refrain



Just a clos-er walk with thee, grant it, Je-sus, is my plea;



dai - ly walk-ing close to thee, let it be, dear Lord, let it be.



1 I am weak but thou art strong: Je - sus, keep me from all wrong;

2 Through this world of toil and snares, if I fal - ter, Lord, who cares?

3 When my fee - ble life is o'er, time for me will be no more;



Refrain

I'll be sat - is - fied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee.
 Who with me my bur - den shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.
 guide me gent - ly, safe - ly o'er to thy king - dom shore, to thy shore.

Text: North American traditional
 Music: CLOSER WALK, North American traditional

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Live by the Spirit. **Thanks be to God.**



Serving Today



in Worship

Pastor:
 Lay Assistant:
 Lector:
 Greeters:
 Musicians:

Serving Today

The Rev. Dr. Rachel Connolly
 Patty Shepard
 Patty Shepard
 Jason Dickard & David Blakeney
 Tom Ward, Ray Burroughs,
 Dave Devoe

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The Bell Tower—Ministry News



Summer Hours

Starting July 4th the church office will be closed on Fridays for the month of July.

SAVE THE DATE!



On **Sunday, July 6** we will be having one worship service at **Biggerstaff at 10:30am** with a picnic to follow. *(No worship at St. John's Sanctuary)* Sign-up on Information Alley and indicate what side dish you will provide. Drinks, hot dogs and burgers will be provided. *Join us and bring a friend or two!*



Fresh Produce Boxes for Seniors

On **Thursday, July 10 from 10am to noon**, St. John's will once again partner with CenterWell Senior Primary Care of Seneca in a distribution of fresh produce boxes to people in the community and our congregation who are 60+ years old (one box per senior). Spread the word.



School Supplies Needed

The Gloria Shealy Circle will be collecting school supplies for Oconee County students during the months of June and July. There will be a box to place them in the Gathering Space. Any new school supplies will be accepted: notebooks, notebook paper, pens, pencils, crayons, glue sticks, rulers, index cards, composition books, spiral bound notebooks, calculators, notebook index tabs, report folders, etc.



Family Ministry Volunteers Needed! If you feel called to support St. John's families with children & youth, we have a place for you! From providing meals for special events like Parent's Night Out, to assisting in children's church on Sundays, and everything in-between, there are plenty of upcoming opportunities to be involved. For details please reach out to Adriana in the church office or

Our Church Family

New parents Michael & Chelsea Lawrence
and baby Jackson
New grandparents Chris & Karen Lawrence
Andera Stroud, healing
Tiffany Chapman, healing
Wilma Cobb, upcoming surgery
Robert Smith, healing
Thelma Miller, healing
Katie Johns, home, healing
Charlie (health) & Debbie (lung cancer) Busch

**Those grieving**

Adriana McMurphy & family, death of her grandmother (Ellen Stephens Brown)

Our Elders at Home or Assisted Living

Marsha Cabbage, home
Ann Biemann, home
Brenda Cantrell, home
Linda Humphries, home
Marie Palmatier, home
Peg Turner, The Oaks
Betty Wallace, Belvedere
Bill Watt, home
Jeanne Welch, home
Jack & Lynn Williams (Pawleys Island)

Other Prayer Concerns

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 the Israeli hostages and their families.
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.
All military Personnel
Bishop Ginny Aebischer and our Synod Staff

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

Our Extended Family and Friends

Sheila Rogers, hospice (sister of Diane Harper)
Danny Childress, comfort (nephew of Safrit's)
Linda Beaver, cancer (sister of Libby McLean)
The family of Debbie (Tony) Stapleton (friend of Snelgrove's)
The family of Kristen Antley (friend of Pastor Rachel)
Pastor Jason Antley & daughters (friend of Pastor Rachel)
Gabino Vivaldo, healing from chemo
The family of John Gerber (family of Bobbie Duncan)
The family of Chelsea Cliborne (friends of Lattimore's)
Hubert Barrett, stroke (brother-in-law of Tina Barrett)
Larry Smith, (friend of Jane Harris)
Chloe Bestawros, healing (cousin of Cathy Plowden)
Barbara Williams, healing (mother of Cathy Plowden)
Bonnie Blanchett, healing (mother of Ryan Raab)
Cheryle Hurley, cancer & chemo (friend of Pastor Rachel)
Dan Fogel, healing (son of Fogel's)
E. Christian Gauderer, hospitalized in Lisbon, Portugal (brother of Michael)
Risaline Sioson, breast cancer (Sister of Josie Busch)
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)
Ernestine Addis, healing (sister-in-law of Richard & Connie Addis)
Kay Davis, recovery (mother of Stephanie Champion)
Pam Hester, (cousin of Ann Brackett)
Ruth Williams, cancer (sister of Grace Schmeelcke)
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)
John Heasley, diabetes (son-in-law of Johnsons)
Dohnvan (grandson of Kathy Scherter)
Dolorico Perez (father of Josie Perez)
Gina Daly, health (daughter of Bob Johnson)





CHURCH
OFFICE
STAFF

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Office Hours Monday—Friday 8:30am to 1:00pm

Additional St. John's Staff

Ray Burroughs, Facilities Manager
Joan Lewis, Spiritual Gifts Coordinator
Lynn Pode, 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** and click on the “Give Now With Givelify” button
- Another option is to scan this QR code to go directly to our Givelify page.

