

St. John's Lutheran Church
St. John's Fellowship Hall

9am

Third Sunday in Lent
March 23, 2025



*A man had a fig tree planted in
his vineyard; and he came
looking for fruit on it ...*

LUKE 13:6, NRSV

The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

Welcome to Worship!

Welcome to our worship!

PRE-GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG *"I Love You Lord"*

I love you, Lord, and I lift my voice to
wor - ship you; O my soul, re - joice. Take
joy, my king, in what you hear; may it be a
sweet, sweet sound in your ear.

1978 House of Mercy Music (admin. Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing)

CONFESSiON AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, \pm one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love. . . Compassionate One,

you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In \pm Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever. **Amen.**

OPENING SONG: *“All Who Are Thirsty”*

All who are thirsty and all who are weak
Come to the fountain dip your heart in the streams of life

Let the pain and the sorrow be washed away
In the waves of His mercy as deep cries out to deep, we sing

Come Lord Jesus, come. Come Lord Jesus, come

All who are thirsty and all who are weak
Come to the fountain dip your heart in the streams of life

Let the pain and the sorrow be washed away
In the waves of His mercy as deep cries out to deep, we sing

Come Lord Jesus, come. Come Lord Jesus, come

Holy Spirit come. Holy Spirit come

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: Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE KYRIE

In peace, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

For the reign of God, and for peace throughout the world, for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

For your people here who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your word, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, and defend us, O God. **Amen.**

CHILDREN & YOUTH MESSAGE

Adriana McMurphy

THE FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:1-9

¹ Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴ See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. ⁵ See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. ⁶ Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Psalm 63:1-8—*Read Responsively*

¹ O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

² **Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,
that I might behold your power and your glory.**

³ For your steadfast love is better than life itself;
my lips shall give you praise.

⁴ **So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your name.**

⁵ My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

⁶ **when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.**

⁷ For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

⁸ **My whole being clings to you; your right hand holds me fast.**

THE SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

¹ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did.

⁷ Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” ⁸ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹ We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰ And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³ No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

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

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

LENTEN VERSE



Re - turn to God with all your heart, the source of grace and
mer - cy; come seek the ten - der faith-ful-ness of God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 13:1-9

¹ At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² [Jesus] asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴ Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.” ⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ ⁸ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’ ”

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

THE MESSAGE

Pastor Rachel Connelly

SONG OF RESPONSE: “*Beautiful Things*”

All this pain; I wonder if I’ll ever find my way.
I wonder if my life could really change at all.

All this earth; could all that is lost ever be found?
Could a garden come up from this ground at all?

Refrain

You make beautiful things, you make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things, you make beautiful things out of us.

All around hope is springing up from this old ground.
Out of chaos, life is being found in you. *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 petition— God, in your mercy, receive 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 “*Create in Me A Clean Heart*”

Create in me a clean heart, O God, that I might serve you;
Create in me a clean heart, O God, that I might be renewed.
So fill me and heal me, and bring me back to you.
Create in me a clean heart, O God, that I might serve you.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. **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 HYMN “*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: Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit,
☩ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG “*Light Dawns on a Weary World*”

Light dawns on a weary world when eyes begin to see
all people's dignity. Light dawns on a weary world:
the promised day of justice comes.

Refrain

The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;
the hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!
We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.

Love grows in a weary world when hungry hearts find bread
and children's dreams are fed. Love grows in a weary world:
the promised feast of plenty comes. *Refrain*

Hope blooms in a weary world when creatures, once forlorn,
find wilderness reborn. Hope blooms in a weary world:
the promised green of Eden comes. *Refrain*

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DISMISSAL

Assisting: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

People: Thanks be to God!



Serving Today



Pastor:

Lay Assistant:

Lector:

Greeters:

Musicians:

Serving Today

The Rev. Dr. Rachel Connelly

Adriana McMurphy

Allen Harding

Scot & Linda Williams

Tom Ward, Ray Burroughs,

Dave Devoe

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The Bell Tower—Ministry News

Youth Group Meetings



St. John's Youth Group (grades 7-12) will be meeting at the Walhalla Burger King on Sunday **March 23rd at 4:30pm**. Join us for food and fellowship.



Lenten Bible Study on 1 & 2 Samuel Tuesdays at 11am



LENTEN SOUP & STUDY

Lenten Soup and Study will be held on Wednesday evenings. We gather at 5:45pm for soup supper. A \$5 donation (\$10 max per family) will be collected. Sign-up sheets are located on the clipboards on Information Alley (next to the office).



Easter Lily Orders

This year Easter Lilies will be \$15 each. We only have 25 available, so it's first come, first served. Order forms are in "Information Alley" (next to the office). Please submit completed forms and payment to the office. Deadline to order is **Sunday, April 13**.



2025 LUTHEROAD DAY CAMP

St. John's is hosting Lutheroad Day Camp at Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center on **June 23-27, 2025**



WHAT IS DAY CAMP?

It is a five-day

program where many of the benefits of Camp Lutheridge come right to the local church. Trained counselors come for the week and share in a program that includes fun, worship, games, Bible study, fellowship, crafts, sharing and prayer.

- Deadline for Early Registration is May 1st.
- Camp runs 9am - 4pm Monday - Thursday, 9am - 12 pm on Friday
- For children completing Kindergarten through 5th grade
- Cost is only \$160 (\$135 Early Bird Special) for the week
- Scholarships are available. Registration ends June 10.
- 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.



Our Church Family

- Wilma Cobb, upcoming surgery
- Nancy Carter, recovery & rehab
- Jan Day, healing
- PJ Daniels, recovery/healing
- Danny Daniels, healing from surgery
- Tiffany Chapman, healing and well-being
- Robert Smith, healing
- Thelma Miller, healing
- Katie Johns, home, healing
- Beverly Hardin, recovery
- Charlie (health) & Debbie (lung cancer) Busch

For Those Grieving

- The family of Doug Deane

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 all those who have lost their jobs due to recent government changes.
- For all those affected by the wildfires in Los Angeles.
- For all those needing assistance in North Carolina and Tennessee.
- 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.
- For those impacted by natural disasters.
- 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

- John Gerber, valve replacement (friend of Bobbie Duncan)
- The family of Tim Barnes (friend of Tom Ward)
- Chloe Bestawros, healing (cousin of Cathy Plowden)
- Barbara Williams, healing (mother of Cathy Plowden)
- Bonnie Blanchett, healing (mother of Ryan Raab)
- Debbie Stapleton (friend of Snelgrove's)
- The family of Tony Stapleton (friend of Snelgrove's)
- The family of Mildred Eades Wallace-Scott (aunt of Bob Craig)
- Cheryle Hurley, cancer & chemo (friend of Pastor Rachel)
- Dan Fogel, healing from surgery (son of Fogel's)
- Margaret Barger, healing (cousin of Brenda Safrit)
- E. Christian Gauderer, hospitalized in Lisbon, Portugal (brother of Michael)
- Sandy & Ron Fulton, cancer (friends of Scot and Linda Williams)
- Brian Hollen, kidney surgery (friend of Dolores Krueger)
- Delaine Hollandsworth, testing (daughter of Millie Hawbecker)
- Nancy Coleman, healing (friend of the Williams)
- Risaline Sioson, breast cancer (Sister of Josie Busch)
- Janelle Gibsen, healing (Aunt of Jan Day)
- Bob Lidwin, late stage Alzheimer's (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/cancer (sister-in-law of Richard & Connie Addis)
- Josh McIntyre, recovery/healing (friend of Tina Barrett)
- Tommy Moss, lymphoma (brother of Tina Barrett)
- Kay Davis, recovery (mother of Stephanie Champion)
- Elizabeth Bateman, (friend of the Safrits)
- Pam Hester, left eye blindness (cousin of Ann Brackett)
- Ruth Williams, ovarian cancer (sister of Grace Schmeelcke)
- George Rogers, lung cancer (half brother of Micky)
- Kelsey Bowman, healing (daughter-in-law of Bowmans)
- Larry Greene, lung cancer (brother-in-law of Patty Shepard)
- George Combes, healing (brother of Grace Lichtenwald)
- Lauren Bowman, Lyme disease (daughter of Gary and Barb Bowman)
- Jacqulyn Moore, healing/MS (niece of Kathy Scherter)
- Bennie Smith, health (nephew of Wards)
- Jaime Henry, heart issues (son of Annie Henry)
- John Heasley, diabetes (son-in-law of Johnsons)
- Dohnvan (grandson of Kathy Scherter)
- Tom Tyree, cancer (friend of Sears)
- Dolorico Perez (father of Josie Perez)
- Eve Mills, cancer (niece of Francoise Fussell)
- Gina Daly, health (daughter of Bob Johnson)



**CHURCH
OFFICE
STAFF**

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

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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.

