

St. John's Lutheran Church  
Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center  
9 am Worship Service  
Third Sunday of Easter  
April 19, 2026



## *Welcome to Worship!*

Today's gospel begins with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss, and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel! Yet the risen Christ walks with them and then opens their eyes in the breaking of the bread. Each Sunday our hearts burn within us as the scriptures are proclaimed and Christ appears to us as bread is broken and wine is poured. The story of Emmaus becomes the pattern of our worship each Lord's day.

## *Welcome to Worship!*

PRE-GATHERING MUSIC/WELCOME

GATHERING SONG            *"I Love You, Lord" (2x)*

I love you, Lord,  
And I lift my voice  
To worship You;  
O my soul, rejoice.

Take joy, my King,  
In what You hear;  
Let it be a sweet,  
sweet sound in Your ear.

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

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

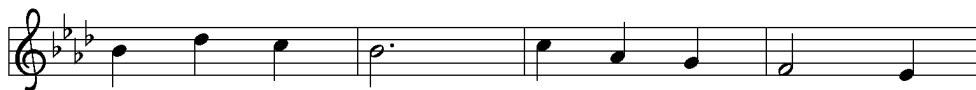
“Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!”



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus is ris - en!  
 2 Walk - ing the way, Christ in the cen - ter  
 3 Je - sus the vine, we are the branch - es;  
 4 Weep - ing, be gone; sor - row, be si - lent:  
 5 Cit - y of God, Eas - ter for - ev - er,



Trum - pets re - sound - ing in glo - ri - ous light!  
 tell - ing the sto - ry to o - pen our eyes;  
 life in the Spir - it the fruit of the tree;  
 death put a - sun - der, and Eas - ter is bright.  
 gold - en Je - ru - sa - lem, Je - sus the Lamb,



Splen - dor, the Lamb, heav - en for - ev - er!  
 break - ing our bread, giv - ing us glo - ry:  
 heav - en to earth, Christ to the peo - ple,  
 Cher - u - bim sing: O grave, be o - pen!  
 riv - er of life, saints and arch - an - gels,



Oh, what a mir - a - cle God has in sight!  
 Je - sus our bless - ing, our con - stant sur - prise.  
 gift of the fu - ture now flow - ing to me.  
 Clothe us in won - der, a - dorn us in light.  
 sing with cre - a - tion to God the I AM!

*Refrain*



Je - sus is ris - en and we shall a - rise.



Give God the glo - ry! Al - le - lu - ia!

### 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: O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### YOUTH MESSAGE

*Adriana McMurphy*

### THE FIRST READING

**Acts 2:14a, 36-41**

<sup>14a</sup> Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd]:

<sup>36</sup> “Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” <sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” <sup>38</sup> Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” <sup>40</sup> And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” <sup>41</sup> So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19— *Read Responsively*

<sup>1</sup> I love the LORD, who has heard my voice, and listened to my supplication,

<sup>2</sup> **for the LORD has given ear to me whenever I called.**

<sup>3</sup> The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave came upon me;

I came to grief and sorrow.

<sup>4</sup> **Then I called upon the name of the LORD: “O LORD, I pray you, save my life.”**

<sup>12</sup> How shall I repay the LORD for all the good things God has done for me?

<sup>13</sup> **I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.**

<sup>14</sup> I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all God’s people.

<sup>15</sup> **Precious in your sight, O LORD, is the death of your servants.**

<sup>16</sup> O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.

<sup>17</sup> **I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon the name of the LORD.**

<sup>18</sup> I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all God’s people,

<sup>19</sup> **in the courts of the LORD’s house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!**

### THE SECOND READING

**1 Peter 1:17-23**

<sup>17</sup> If you invoke as Father the one who judges impartially according to each person’s work, live in fear during the time of your exile. <sup>18</sup> You know that you were ransomed from the futile conduct inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. <sup>20</sup> He was destined before the foundation of the world but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. <sup>21</sup> Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your trust and hope are in God.

<sup>22</sup> Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual affection, love one another deeply from the heart. <sup>23</sup> You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

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

**Luke 24:13-35**

<sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup> but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” <sup>19</sup> He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him.” <sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. <sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” <sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup> They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

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

THE MESSAGE

*Pastor Rachel Connelly*

SONG OF RESPONSE      *“Open the Eyes of My Heart”*

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.  
Open the eyes of my heart,  
I want to see you, I want to see You. (2x)

To see you high and lifted up,  
Shining in the light of Your glory;  
Pour out Your power and love,  
As we sing, “Holy, holy, holy... (Repeat from beginning)

Holy, holy, holy  
Holy, holy, holy  
Holy, holy, holy  
I want to see You.

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”*

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.

*“Here is Bread”*

*Refrain*

In this bread there is healing, in this cup is life forever.  
In this moment, by the Spirit, Christ is with us here.

Here is bread, here is wine, Christ is with us, he is with us.  
Break the bread, taste the wine, Christ is with us here. *Refrain*

Here is grace, here is peace, Christ is with us, he is with us  
Know his grace, find his peace, feast on Jesus here. *Refrain*

Here we are, joined in one, Christ is with us, he is with us.  
We'll proclaim till he comes Jesus crucified. *Refrain*

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

*“I Heard an Old, Old Story”*

I heard an old, old story, how a Saviour came from glory,  
How he gave his life on Calvary to save a wretch like me;  
I heard about his groaning, of his precious blood's atoning,  
How Jesus saved me from my sins and won the victory.

*Chorus*

*Oh, victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever!  
He sought me and brought me with his redeeming blood;  
He loved me ere I knew him, and all my love is due him  
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.*

I heard about his healing, of his cleansing pow'r revealing,  
How he made the lame to walk again and caused the blind to see;  
And then I cried, “Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit,”  
And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory.

*Repeat Chorus*


I heard about a mansion he has built for me in glory,  
And I heard about the streets of gold beyond the crystal sea;  
About the angels singing and the old redemption story,  
And some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory.

*Repeat Chorus*

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:	Lynn Pode
	Greeters:	Stan & Kay Gartner
Musicians:	Tom Ward, Ray Burroughs & Dave Devoe	

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### **Our Church Family**

Andera Stroud, healing-Seneca Rehab  
Jerry Cobb, healing, Rehab  
Joe Kent, healing  
Polly Kent, healing  
Jana Snelgrove, baby JoCassee 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 family of Joan Whitesel

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

Michelle Leggett, hospice  
Betty Mantell, The Oaks  
Jeanne Welch, home/healing  
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, tornados in Kansas.  
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)  
Dimitri Haddad, (young friend of Safrit's)  
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



## MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

**TODAY** following worship, Middle School youth will be gathering for lunch and a Bible lesson. We will read about God's creation and paint garden rocks.



## 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 is at 11am in the Sanctuary.



## WEDNESDAY LUNCH

Lunch will be held on **Wednesday, April 22**. All are welcome to join us at 11:30am for tasty food, fun and fellowship. We ask for a \$5 donation towards the meal (you can't eat anywhere for \$5 anymore). Sign-up in "Information Alley" so we can estimate attendance.



## A DAY IN THE GARDEN

On **Saturday, April 25** everyone is invited to the South Carolina Botanical Garden in Clemson. We will gather in the parking lot between 10 and 10:15am. We will take in some of the sights and smells of God's creation by walking through the gardens. Parking and admissions are free (and if you are a plant lover, the annual Spring Plant Sale is happening at this time as well)!

If you need transportation, a carpool can be arranged. In case of inclement weather, we will reschedule. Please reach out to Adriana with any questions!



## 2026 LUTHEROAD DAY CAMP

St. John's is hosting Lutheroad Day Camp at Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center on **June 22-26, 2026. Deadline for Early Registration is May 1.**

Camp runs 9am - 4pm Monday - Thursday, 9am - 12 pm on Friday For children completing Kindergarten through 5th grade. Cost is only \$175 (\$150 Early Bird Special) 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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**Administrative Assistant—Melissa Rasley**  
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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  
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.

