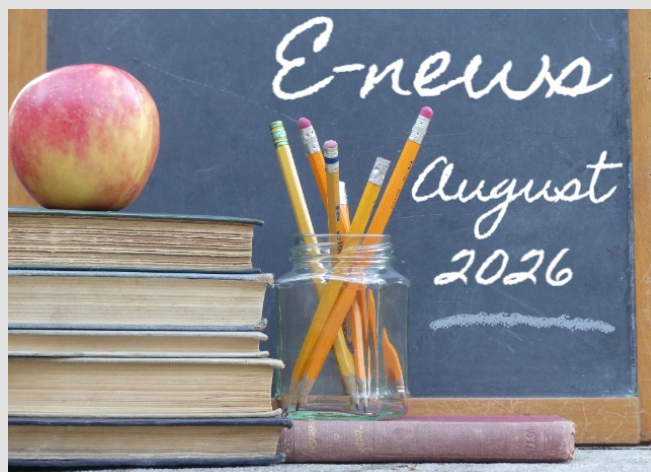




St. John's Monthly Chimes E-Newsletter August 2026



Pastor's Notes

Dear Friends:

Many of us learned that old Sunday School song:

***I am the Church, You are the Church, We are the Church Together.
All of God's People, All Around the World, Yes We're the Church together.***

I am so happy to see that we have been living out these sentiments in deep and rich ways through our summer season. We have been "church together":

- In our lake worship at Biggerstaff where we have drawn many newcomers to join us in God's beautiful creation. St. John's is so blessed to have this place apart to gather, and;
- Through relationships formed through our "Meet Up and Connect" groups and events like "Wednesdays Dip and Dive" at Biggerstaff, Hiking, Craft days, and Kayaking; and
- In the smiling faces of our youth and children at Lutheroad Daycamp as they make new friends, enjoyed crafts, lifted their voices in songs of praise and silliness; and
- Through lunches, and trips, and fellowship hosted by the Survivors and Parish Life groups;
- In the dedication of our new Columbarium and the placement and prayers for the first urns to go in their niches;
- Through the ongoing planning and meetings of faithful committees, the congregation council, and task forces;
- In the meals shared with those recovering from surgeries or illness and visits made to shut-ins; and,
- Through special music and vocalists who have provided inspiration at our worship services as we draw nearer to God.

While it is hard to believe, this Sunday we will recognize and lift prayers for students and teachers, administrators, bus drivers, and other school staff as they begin a new school year. We will also celebrate a baptism at the 11am worship.

We are boldly moving into the next steps of our *Imagine* Capital projects, awaiting final development drawings and construction cost estimates from our architect and contractor, considering funding, and preparing for a groundbreaking in the late fall. We will have a congregation meeting on Wednesday, August 26 to discuss the possible sale of the Ballenger House to help with the funding of our projects and hear updates from our project teams.

I am looking forward to the ways that we continue to live more fully into our mission of: Embracing a Changing World in Christ's Love and Service.

Come out and be church together!

Pastor Rachel Connelly

NOTICE - CONGREGATION MEETING WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26

5:30pm - Light Meal served

6:00pm - Meeting

Agenda

Updates on:

- **Main Street Accessibility Project**
- **Biggerstaff Capital Project**
- **Recommendation from Council to sell the Ballenger House property.**



Family Life Ministries



This summer has been filled with many fun activities: Lutheroad Day Camp, where we hosted 20 campers for a week; a trip to Oasis Ranch mini-golf for our older youth, complete with milkshakes and feeding the koi fish; a cake walk at our July picnic; and finally, a Back to School Bash for our youth, families, and teachers.



As summer comes to an end and we enter a new school year, new opportunities are coming this fall:

On **Sunday, August 2** at both worship services, we will have a Backpack Blessing. All students and teachers are invited to bring their backpacks to church and place them at the altar for a special blessing to begin the school year.

On **Wednesday, August 12** at 6pm, church choir practices are resuming. Youth and families are invited and strongly encouraged to come participate and learn to make joyful noises together for the glory of God, led by our choir director John Fallon.

On **Sunday, August 16** at 10am following worship, Confirmation classes will resume for our youth grades 6 and older. Confirmation is taught by Mr. Mark McLean and parents can expect to receive a letter welcoming the students back as we approach the start date. Sunday school classes for our elementary youth will resume at 10am on this day as well.

On **Sunday, August 23** at 4pm, we will have a movie night at the church. Snacks will be provided. All are invited to come!

On **Monday, August 24**, Monday Evening Bible study will begin again starting at 6pm at the church. While the specific topic is still to be determined, I can promise it will be enlightening and thought-provoking!

I pray everyone has a good start to the new school year, with open minds and open hearts ready to learn.

"So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God." - 1 Corinthians 10:31

Peace,
Ms. Adriana



Music Notes

Handbell Choir

St. John's Praise Ringers are currently practicing Tuesday's at 5:30pm. Anyone interested in joining, please contact Deb Blackmore.



Chancel Choir

St. John's Chancel Choir will begin practicing on **Wednesday, August 12** at 6pm. Anyone interested in joining, please contact John Fallon.



Praise Band

We are thankful and blessed to have member-volunteers leading our 9am worship. Special thanks to Ray Burroughs, Dave Devoe, and Tom Ward who continue to share their musical talents!

This Summer we welcome Sadie Thatcher, as our summer music intern at Biggerstaff, and she will be singing with the Praise Band. Thank you, Sadie, for sharing your musical talents with us.

Note: The 9am worship is now at Biggerstaff until mid October.

Ministry Updates

School Supplies Collection

The Gloria Shealy Circle will be collecting school supplies for Oconee County students **during the month of July**. There will be collection boxes at Biggerstaff and at the church.

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.

We'd like to thank the congregation for supporting this project. **The last day for donations will be Sunday, August 2.**





Biggerstaff Happenings

Biggerstaff was busy in July. Many enjoyed St John's joint service and fellowship picnic. There was yummy food, great conversations, and an enthusiastic cake walk.

The 9 o'clock service continues to be well attended by members and visitors alike. Meet Up & Connect held their midweek dip and dive each Wednesday in July. Keep a look out for more outing and events.

In August, event bookings slow down compared to previous months, but is consistent each year. If you or someone you know is looking for a unique and beautiful place to hold an event information can be found on St John's website or by reaching out to church office.

Mark your calendar for fun to come! September has some St John's fellowship group event opportunities to enjoy. St John's Biggerstaff annual Low Country Boil is on the calendar for November 7th.

Upcoming Events



St. John's Meetup and Connect Thursday, August 6 at Biggerstaff - 5pm-8pm

MIDWEEK DIP AND DIVE - We are opening up Biggerstaff Retreat to the community on **Thursday, August 6** from 5-8pm. BYO chairs, blanket, food and drink, floats, etc.

Because there is no lifeguard on duty, an adult 18+ must be present to swim. Life jackets are available. Event will be cancelled during inclement weather.

Email meetupandconnect@gmail.com for further information

Wednesday Lunch

WEDNESDAY LUNCH starts again on **August 26**. We know that means DELICIOUS! All are welcome to join us at 11:30am on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month 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 on Information Alley so we can estimate attendance.



This year we will be looking for "Guest Chefs" to prepare our meals. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer to cook lunch for approx. 20 people on a Wednesday. We will work around your schedule. I know that many of you are excellent chefs- this is a chance for you to show off your gifts! Contact Joan Lewis with questions or if you would like to help.

St. John's Book Club News

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday, August 18** at 7pm to discuss the novel *This is Happiness*, by Niall Williams. Niall Williams was born in Dublin in 1958. His critically acclaimed and bestselling fiction has been shortlisted for the *Irish Times* Literature Prize and longlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the IMPAC Award.

His novel takes place in the village of Faha that is on the very brink of the coming of electricity. It is about the joy of reminiscing and the joy of first love.

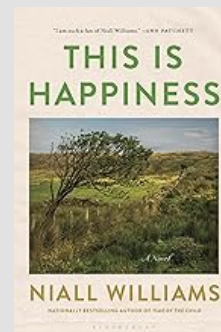
St. John's Book Club meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00. Our September meeting is always an organizational meeting where we meet together to suggest books for the eight months to come. The facilitator roll changes as well so, if you've read a book you'd like to discuss or join our group for any of the books we are discussing, please join us.

For more information contact:

Cindy Honeycutt cindychoney@gmail.com

Martha Murtiashaw murtiashawm@bellsouth.net

Cathy Plowden ceplowden59@gmail.com



We'd love to have you!

ST. LUKE FOOD PANTRY- Volunteers needed!

Come join your friends at St. John's and St. Luke Methodist on the 4th Wednesday of each month as we help distribute grocery boxes to over 200 people in need in the community.

St. Luke Food Pantry has been distributing meals to those in need in our community since 2011. Since COVID, meals have been distributed outside in the driveway. Clients drive up and volunteers load a box(es) into their vehicle. It is fast and efficient- a well-oiled machine! Distribution takes place from 4:30-5:30, volunteers are asked to be at the St. Luke lower-level parking area by 3:30pm. They will begin distribution earlier if there are cars in line.



This ministry is open to all ages- our younger youth will need a parent with them. **Sign-ups through August** are on Information Alley or click the button below.

[Click to Sign Up](#)

God's work. Our hands.



GOD'S WORK~OUR HANDS DAY

The 2026 Autumn God's Work~Our Hands Day is scheduled for **Saturday, September 26**. We will be working at the Early Childhood Center at Hope Village (formerly Tamasee DAR School). More information available soon.

From our Ministry Groups



WELCA News

St. John's is pleased to announce that Risse Snelgrove has been elected to the Executive Board of the Churchwide WELCA. **Congratulations Risse!**

WELCA Meetings for 2026

Saturday, September 26 at 10am location to be determined
Saturday, December 5 at 11am location to be determined
(Christmas party with lunch and gift exchange)





Lucy Klaren Circle

LKC had a great time Saturday, June 22 relaxing at Whitewater Lake in Salem.



LKC summer break will be in July & August.

The Lucy Klaren Circle is still collecting feminine hygiene products for the St. Luke's share box. The collection bin is near the television in the gathering area. A collection box will also be at Biggerstaff for the 9am service.



Gloria Shealy Circle

The Gloria Shealy Circle is on vacation, but would like to thank the congregation for the donations of school supplies. In June, our members gathered to plant 20 ceramic flowers at Lakeview Assisted Living, as shown in the picture above.



We are on summer break now for July and August, but will let you know details of our September meeting in time for you to join us.



The Survivors Group



The Survivors group have three events planned for August. On **Tuesday, August 11** we will go to the Fugi Japanese Steak House for lunch in Anderson. We will carpool for this lunch.

Then on **Monday, August 17** we will meet at the Premier Cinema in Seneca to attend the free movie .

On **Thursday, August 27** we will go to Easley to have lunch at Silver Bay. Carpooling will be available if needed.

The picture above is from the "High Tea" we attended with WELCA on July 21 at "A Day in the Country" in Hendersonville.

For more information on any event, contact Jan Long or Shonda Mahler



Knitters & Crocheters

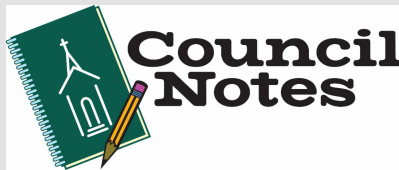


On May 17th our ladies continued our ongoing project to honor 2026 Walhalla High School graduates Parris Campbell (pictured on the left) and Merada Jackson (pictured on the right) with handmade blankets. We hope that these blankets will remind them of their church family and that the Holy Spirit is always with them. We pray for God's continued guidance in their continuing education and careers.

Our upcoming meeting dates are **Wednesday, August 12 and August 26** at 10 am. If you would like to learn how to knit or crochet or just update your skills, join us for devotions, sharing outreach projects, and helping each other.

Contact Barbara Wilson at hickoryhollowbw@bellsouth.net.

Council & Committee Updates



St. John's Congregational Council Meeting Minutes

Please click on the button below to read the Council Meeting Minutes from **July 20, 2026**.

[Click to read more](#)

Main Street Accessibility Committee

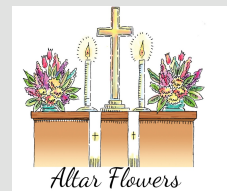
Please click on the button below to read the Main Street Accessibility Committee Meeting Minutes from **July 23, 2026**.

[Click to read more](#)

Volunteer Opportunities

Altar Flowers

Reminder that there is a sign-up chart for Sunday altar flowers in the Gathering area outside the Sanctuary doors. Flower arrangements for the altar are \$40 for both arrangements and can be designated as you choose. Flowers are arranged by a member of our altar flower team and placed on the altar Sunday morning. You can take your arrangements home on Sunday after 11am worship or choose to give them to a shut-in. Sign-up today.



We are looking for 2 volunteers to be in charge of the ordering and placement of approx. 15-20 Christmas poinsettias.

For more information, please contact Joan Lewis.

Worship Assistants Needed

We are in need of Ushers and Lay Assistants at both Biggerstaff and Sanctuary service. These volunteers are needed:

Ushers to greet and to collect offering and to direct people to the communion rail (11am only).



Lay Assistants to help with Communion, the Creed and Prayers.

If interested, please contact Joan Lewis. **Training will be provided.** Worship assistants are an essential part of the worship experience. Please help!

Thursday Meal Delivery Volunteers Needed

Through many generous member donations, and the ceaseless efforts of our volunteers, St John's has been fortunate to continue to provide meals to 20 of our members who are elderly, live alone or need a few extra meals per month. St. John's volunteers prepare and deliver over 1000 meals per year - this has become an amazing outreach.



Many thanks to the 30 volunteer drivers who deliver each week- without them we could not do our work. On the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Thursdays our established Chefs ministry prepares and delivers meals .

On the 4th, and 5th Thursdays we have partnered with the culinary arts students at the Hamilton Career Center. The students, under the direction of Rodney Quick, have been preparing the meals. This is a win-win ministry- we are supporting the students and they are helping us. In the words of Mr. Quick "the teaching tool of learning to give back is priceless".

I speak for myself, our volunteers, and our recipients when I say thank you to all involved for your continuing support of this ministry. As with all our ministries and outreach opportunities there is a turn-over of volunteers. We are always in need of men and ladies to prepare and/or deliver meals. We will work with your schedule and with your gifts. Please contact Joan Lewis at (864) 710-1756 or joanlewissc@aol.com if you can help in any way.



St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA
301 West Main St.
Walhalla, SC 29691
864-638-6363
stjohnsluther@gmail.com

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am - 1pm



Our tithes and offerings are an important part of our faith journey. St. John's encourages its members and friends to be "Generous Givers" in providing consistent ongoing support of St. John's mission and ministry.

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