

St. John's Lutheran Church
Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center
9 am Worship Service
Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 17, 2026



Now they know that
everything you have
given me is from you;
for the words that
you gave to me
I have given to them.

John 17:7, NRSV

Welcome!

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family.

Welcome to Worship!

PRE-GATHERING MUSIC/WELCOME

GATHERING SONG "Christ Our Peace" (2x)

Christ, our peace, you break down the walls that di - vide us;

Christ, our peace, come, make us one bod-y in you.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

OPENING SONG

“Ten Thousand Reasons”

Refrain

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul;

Worship His holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul;

I'll worship Your holy name.

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning;
It's time to sing Your song again,
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,
Let me be singing when the evening comes. *Refrain*

You're rich in love, and You're slow to anger.
Your name is great, and Your heart is kind.
For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. *Refrain*

And on that day when my strength is failing,
The end draws near, and my time has come;
Still, my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore! *Refrain*

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 of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

YOUTH MESSAGE/GRADUATION RECOGNITION

Adriana McMurphy



THE FIRST READING

Acts 1:6-14

⁶ When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³ When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35— *Read Responsively*

¹ Let God arise, and let God’s enemies be scattered; let those who hate God flee.

² **As smoke is driven away, so you should drive them away;
as the wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

³ But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; let them also be merry and joyful.

⁴ **Sing to God, sing praises to God’s name; exalt the one who rides the clouds;
I AM is that name, rejoice before God!**

⁵ In your holy habitation, O God, you are a father to orphans, defender of widows;

⁶ **you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners into freedom;
but the rebels shall live in desert places.**

⁷ O God, when you went forth before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,

⁸ **the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain,
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**

⁹ You sent a bountiful rain, O God; you restored your inheritance when it languished.

¹⁰ **Your people found their home in it; in your goodness,
O God, you have made provision for the poor.**

³² Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord.

³³ **You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ancient heavens; you send forth your voice,
your mighty voice.**

³⁴ Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is in the skies.

³⁵ **How wonderful you are in your holy places, O God of Israel,
giving strength and power to your people! Blessed be God!**

THE SECOND READING

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

^{5,6} Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

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 17:1-11

¹ After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples,] he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. ⁶ "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, ⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

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

SONG OF RESPONSE

“We Are Called”

Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God.

Refrain

*We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

Come! Open your heart! Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless so all hatred and blindness will be no more. *Refrain*

Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other as sisters and brothers united in love. *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

“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”

Refrain

*Just a closer walk with thee,
grant it, Jesus, is my plea;
daily walking close to thee,
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

I am weak but thou art strong:
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
as I walk, let me walk close to thee. *Refrain*


Through this world of toil and snares,
if I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. *Refrain*

When my feeble life is o'er,
time for me will be no more;
guide me gently, safely o'er
to thy kingdom shore, to thy shore. *Refrain*

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

 <p>Serving Today in Worship</p>	<u>Serving Today</u>	
	Pastor:	The Rev. Dr. Rachel Connolly
	Lay Assistant:	Patty Shepard
	Lector:	Lynn Pođe
	Greeters:	Anne Fogel & David Blakeney
Musicians:	Tom Ward, Ray Burroughs & Dave Devoe	

Our Church Family

Gary Cabbage, rehab & healing (knee surgery)
Andera Stroud, healing-home
Jerry Cobb, healing/home
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, healing/rehab Lila Doyle
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

Jean Deal, healing (sister-in-law of McLean's)
Tina Sanders, knee replacement 5/21 (friend of Jan Long)
Joan Kramer, successful treatment (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)
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. **This will be the last Monday Evening Bible Study until August.**



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.



ST. JOHN'S MEET UP AND CONNECT CRAFT DAY

Friday, June 16, 2026

Create a festive July 4th table decoration using sustainable materials. Craft will involve painting and using hot glue. **What to bring:** 3-14.5 oz cans. Cans should be clean, label and glue removed ready to paint. All other material will be provided. **Craft Leaders:** Alan and Mary Boggs **Class size:** To ensure adequate materials are available and time to complete the craft 20 seats are available. Sign up in Information Alley. For any questions, please call Alan Boggs: 864-499-4533



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
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** and click on the "Give Now With Givelify" button
- Another option is to scan this QR code to go directly to our Givelify page.

