


St. John's Lutheran Church  
Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center  
10:30am  
The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost  
July 5, 2026



**Come to me,**  
all you who are weary and  
are carrying heavy burdens,  
**and I will**  
**give you rest.**

Matthew 11:28

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## Welcome!

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. The prophet describes an everlasting realm that contrasts with earthly nations, one marked by peace, humility, and freedom. Jesus associates with those excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with selfish desires; we lament flawed systems; and we seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather around word, water, and meal by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Here we find rest for our souls and hope for life in beloved community.

## *Welcome to Worship!*

PRE-GATHERING MUSIC

*“The Goodness of the Lord”  
Featuring Sadie Thatcher*

WELCOME

GATHERING SONG

*“Lord, Be Glorified”*

In my life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified; in my life, Lord, be glorified today.  
In my song, Lord, be glorified, be glorified; in my song, Lord, be glorified today.  
In your church, Lord, be glorified, be glorified; in your church, Lord, be glorified today.  
In your world, Lord, be glorified, be glorified; in your world, Lord, be glorified today.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, source of hope in every nation, rest for the weary, glory and peace to the ends of the earth. **Amen.**

Let us bring every burden to God.

God of all mercy,

**we have sinned against you, our neighbors, and your creation. Within ourselves and our communities, our desire to do what is good is at war with the evil that dwells in us. We lament the evil that holds us captive. We repent of the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Rescue us, forgive us, and restore us for lives of compassion and courage through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

All-merciful, Almighty God forgive you all your sins through the grace of ☩ Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit's power strengthen you in doing what is good.

**Amen.**

OPENING SONG

*“Great is Thy Faithfulness”*

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

*Refrain*

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed thy hand hath provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their courses above join with all nature in manifold witness to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *Refrain*

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

*Refrain*

### 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: Lord of all the worlds, guide this nation by your Spirit to go forward in justice and freedom. Give to all living in these lands the blessings of well-being and harmony, but above all things give us faith in you, that our nation may bring glory to your name and blessings to all peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### CHILDREN & YOUTH MESSAGE

*Adriana McMurphy*

### THE FIRST READING

**Zechariah 9:9-12**

<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. <sup>10</sup> He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. <sup>11</sup> As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. <sup>12</sup> Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Psalm 145:8-14— *Read Responsively*

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> **LORD, you are good to all, and your compassion is over all your works.**

<sup>10</sup> All your works shall praise you, O LORD, and your faithful ones shall bless you.

<sup>11</sup> **They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your power,**

<sup>12</sup> that all people may know of your power and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures through-out all ages. You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your works.**

<sup>14</sup> The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.



THE SECOND READING

**Romans 7:15-25a**

<sup>15</sup> I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. <sup>21</sup> So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, <sup>23</sup> but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25a</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

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

*Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.*

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*“Alleluia” (2x)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

THE HOLY GOSPEL

**Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30**

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] <sup>16</sup> “To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, <sup>17</sup> ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ <sup>18</sup> “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup> the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

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

THE MESSAGE

*Pastor Rachel Connelly*

SONG OF RESPONSE      “Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone”

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found  
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.

*Refrain*  
*My chains are gone, I've been set free*  
*My God, my Savior has ransomed me*  
*And like a flood, His mercy rains*  
*Unending love, Amazing grace*

The Lord has promised good to me  
His word my hope secures  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures  
*Refrain 2x*

The Earth shall soon dissolve like snow  
The sun forbid to shine  
But God, Who called me here below  
Will be forever mine, will be forever mine  
You are forever mine

*Text: Isaac Newton*  
*Songwriters: Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio*

Amazing Grace  
how sweet the sound



## 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— God of grace, **hear 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

*"We Are An Offering"*

We lift our voices, we lift our hands,  
We lift our lives up to You: we are an offering.  
Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands,  
Lord, use our lives they are Yours: we are an offering

All that we have, all that we are,  
all that we hope to be, we give to You, we give to You.  
We lift our voices, we lift our hands,  
we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering,  
we are an offering.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting: Blessed are you, O God, for waves of grain and harvesters, fruitful vines and winepresses, for our labor and our rest, for the gifts of your hand in this land. Transform us and what we offer into the banquet of your compassion, serving your love without limits 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

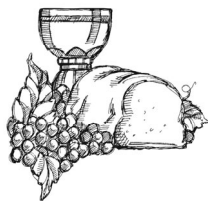
COMMUNION SONGS      *“Sanctuary/I Exalt Thee/Holy Ground Medley”*

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.



## THE PASTORAL BLESSING

### THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assisting: We thank you, God of heaven and earth, that you fill our deepest need with the very gift of Jesus Christ, broken and poured out for us. Pour us out into a broken world. Channel our common life toward the common good, following the way our Savior leads us now and forever. **Amen.**

### THE BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

The Author of life, the Word of salvation, the Breath of new birth, † one God, bless you and equip you for living and serving, today and every day. **Amen.**

### SENDING SONG      *“The Right Hand of God”*



1 The right hand of God is writ - ing in our land,  
2 The right hand of God is point - ing in our land,  
3 The right hand of God is strik - ing in our land,  
4 The right hand of God is heal - ing in our land,



writ - ing with pow - er and with love,  
point - ing the way . . . we must go,  
strik - ing out at en - vy, hate, and greed.  
heal - ing bro - ken bod - ies, minds, and souls,



our con - flicts and our fears, our tri - umphs and our tears  
so cloud - ed is the way, so eas - i - ly we stray,  
Our self - ish - ness and lust, our pride and deeds un - just  
so won - drous is its touch with love that means so much,



are re - cord - ed by the right hand of God.  
but we're guid - ed by the right hand of God.  
are de - stroyed by the right hand of God.  
when we're healed by the right hand of God.

## THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Seek liberty and justice for all.

**Thanks be to God.**

# CHURCH picnic



**CHURCH PICNIC - TODAY!  
ONE SERVICE AT BIGGERSTAFF AT 10:30am**

Let's celebrate 250 years of independence! On **Sunday, July 5** we will have **ONE worship service at Biggerstaff beginning at 10:30am** followed by a congregation picnic AND CAKE WALK! Hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks will be provided.



## CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The Church Office will be closed on **Monday, July 6** and will reopen on Tuesday, July 7.

Serving Today



in Worship

Serving Today

Pastor: The Reverend Dr. Rachel Connelly  
Lay Assistant: Cathy Plowden  
Lector: Torrie Landon  
Greeters/Ushers: Jeff & Torrie Landon

Musicians: Ray Burroughs, Tom Ward, Dave Devoe & Sadie Thatcher

### **Our Church Family**

Chris Radford, surgery/healing  
John Fallon, healing  
Tina Barrett, healing  
Scot Williams, healing  
Andera Stroud, healing in hospital  
Jerry Cobb, healing/home  
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 Arthur Nowell (Greg's brother)  
The family and friends of Peg Turner

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

Jeanne Welch, Terra Bella Summit, Greenville  
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  
Lynne Williams (Pawleys Island)

### **Other Prayer Concerns**

For those affected by earthquakes in Venezuela.  
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**

Susan Ward, cancer (daughter of Joan Lewis)  
Joe & Peggy Dilworth, healing (brother & sister-in-law of Barbara Wilson)  
Barbara Williams, hospice (mother of Cathy Plowden)  
Jon Fowler, brain cancer (cousin of Wilson's)  
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)  
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)  
Barbara Cary, comfort (sister of Dave Devoe)  
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)  
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)  
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

## St. John's Meetup and Connect Kayak/Canoe MEETUP at Biggerstaff Retreat Thursday, July 9, 2026 9:00 am



Please join us for a Kayak/Canoe experience on Lake Keowee. We recommend you wear appropriate clothes/shoes/sun and bug protection, and bring plenty of water! Other gear to bring include Kayak/canoe, whistle, and lifejacket. Max is limited to 12. For more information and weather updates, check the Meetup and Connect website calendar, email [meetupandconnect@gmail.com](mailto:meetupandconnect@gmail.com), or call/text Allen Harding 864-723-5922.

## St. John's Meetup and Connect

### Every Wednesday in July at Biggerstaff - 5pm-7pm



### Mid Week Dip & Dive

**MIDWEEK DIP AND DIVE** - We are opening up Biggerstaff Retreat to the community every Wednesday in July from 5-7 pm. BYO chairs, blanket, food and non-alcoholic 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](mailto:meetupandconnect@gmail.com) for further information

## July Youth Events



On **Saturday, July 11 at 11am**, our middle and high school youth are invited to gather at **Oasis Ranch** in Seneca for a day of mini golf and fellowship. On **Sunday July 26 from 4-6pm**, we will be having our **Back to School Bash** at Biggerstaff. We will have food, frozen treats, outdoor games, and a service project! Families and friends are invited. Contact Adriana with any questions.

## 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. **The last day for donations will be Sunday, August 2.**

## CHURCH RENOVATIONS STARTING SOON



Renovations to the Main Street campus will be starting during the Summer. All activities that normally use the Fellowship Hall will need to relocate to the Education Building. If you would like to use Biggerstaff for your group meeting, please contact Melissa to schedule.



CHURCH  
OFFICE  
STAFF

**St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA**  
301 W. Main Street, Walhalla, SC  
www.stjohnswalhalla.org  
Facebook — St. John's Lutheran, Walhalla

**Pastor—The Reverend Dr. Rachel Connelly**  
Cell: (910) 515-0897 or Email: stjohnspastorrachel@gmail.com

**Director of Family Life Ministry—Adriana McMurphy**  
Email: stjohsadriana@gmail.com

**Administrative Assistant—Melissa Rasley**  
(864) 638-6363 or Email: stjohsluther@gmail.com  
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.

