

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

Walhalla, South Carolina
11 am Worship Service

Palm Sunday
March 29, 2026



PALM SUNDAY

Welcome to Worship at St. John's!

If you are a 1st time Worshiper at St John's, we invite you to sign our
visitor book in the Gathering Area.

Welcome to Worship!

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.



PROCESSION WITH PALMS (*Congregation gathers at the Church Street entrance*)

Leader: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

People: Hosanna to the Son of David!

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray. O Lord God of our salvation, be with us this day that we may with joy reflect upon those mighty acts through which you have given us life everlasting through Jesus Christ.

People: Amen.

THE PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL

Matthew 21:1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

11
1

THANKSGIVING (*The people raise their branches.*)

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: We praise and thank you, O God, for the great acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. On this day He entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was acclaimed the Son of David and King of Kings by those who scattered their garments and branches of palm in His path. We ask that you bless these branches and those who bear them, and grant that we may ever hail him as our Lord and King and follow him with perfect confidence; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

PROCESSION WITH PALMS

Leader: Let us go forth in peace.

People: In the name of the Lord.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: *“Ride on, Ride on In Majesty”*



- 1 Ride on, ride on in maj - es-ty! Hear all the tribes ho - san - na cry;
- 2 Ride on, ride on in maj - es-ty! In low - ly pomp ride on to die.
- 3 Ride on, ride on in maj - es-ty! The wing-ed squad-rons of the sky
- 4 Ride on, ride on in maj - es-ty! Your last and fierc - est strife is nigh.
- 5 Ride on, ride on in maj - es-ty! In low - ly pomp ride on to die,



O Sav - ior meek, your road pur - sue, with palms and scat-tered gar-ments strewed.
 O Christ, your tri-umphs now be - gin o'er cap - tive death and con-quer'd sin.
 look down with sad and won-d'ring eyes to see the ap-proach-ing sac - ri - fice.
 The Fa - ther on his sap-phire throne a - waits his own a - noint - ed Son.
 bow your meek head to mor - tal pain, then take, O Christ, your pow'r and reign!

THE GREETING AND LITANY

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: We gather to worship God and to give thanks to him for his love.

People: We are here to praise God for all his promises and for how they have been fulfilled in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Leader: We are here to remember the day that Jesus entered Jerusalem and was acclaimed as the Messiah by all.

People: We are here to recall how Jesus was enthroned on the praises of his people.

Leader: We are here also to recall how Jesus was abandoned to his death on the cross.

People: We celebrate today-and yet we also know the time is coming for us to mourn.

Leader: As we hear again the word from the Lord, let us give thanks.

People: Let us hear the word of God and worship God and God alone.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MESSAGE

Adriana McMurphy

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 50:4-9

⁴The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. ⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. ⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. ⁷The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. ^{9a}It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Psalm: 31:9-16 — *Read Responsively*

⁹Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.

¹⁰**For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.**

¹¹I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors, a dismay to my acquaintances; when they see me in the street they avoid me.

¹²**Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind; I am as useless as a broken pot.**

¹³For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around; they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.

¹⁴**But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD. I have said, “You are my God.**

¹⁵My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

¹⁶**Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.”**

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING

Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

THE LENTEN VERSE

ELW pg. 151



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

THE PASSION READING according to St. Matthew 26:14-27:56

(Worshippers are invited to read along with the Passion Booklet)



HYMN OF RESPONSE *“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”* ELW 335

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— Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

THE 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.*

ANTHEM

“I Wonder Why?” *by: R. Avery & D. Marsh*
St. John’s Chancel Choir

THE OFFERTORY SONG *“Create in Me a Clean Heart”* ELW 186

Create in me a clean heart, O God.
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence
And take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
And uphold me with your free Spirit.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting: O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus’ name. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW pg. 152

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER/WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

pg. 154

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.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

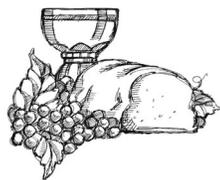
All of God's people who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord are invited to His table for Holy Communion. Those who are not communing are invited to receive a blessing from the Pastor; please indicate this with folded hands. We have gluten-free wafers available.

Please let Pastor Rachel know your preference.

The ushers will guide you as we practice continuous communion

We kneel or stand at the communion rail.

Please join us in singing the communion hymns.



COMMUNION HYMNS

“Lamb of God”

ELW 154

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
 us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
 mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
 sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

“Go to Dark Gethsemane”

ELW 347

THE PASTORAL BLESSING

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assisting: God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ’s body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

THE BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, ✠ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

THE SENDING HYMN

“On a Hill Far Away (The Old Rugged Cross)”

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
the emblem of suffering and shame;
and I love that old cross where the dearest and best
for a world of lost sinners was slain.

Refrain

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.*

Oh, that old rugged cross so despised by the world,
has a wondrous attraction for me;
for the dear Lamb of God left his glory above,
to bear it to dark Calvary. **Refrain**

In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
a wondrous beauty I see;
for 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
to pardon and sanctify me. **Refrain**

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true,
its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Christ will call me some day to my home far away,
where his glory forever I'll share. **Refrain**

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Serving Today



in Worship

Serving Today in Worship

Pastor: The Reverend Dr. Rachel Connelly
Assisting: Brenda Safrit
Lector: Tina Barrett
Interim Organist: Grace Lichtenwald
Guest Choir Director: Deb Blackmore
Greeters/Ushers: Sharon Hamilton
Altar Guild: Diane Rawlins

Our Church Family

Jerry Cobb, healing
Joe Kent, healing
Polly Kent, healing/rehab at Lila Doyle
Judy Beck, healing
Jana Snelgrove, high risk pregnancy
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.
Sandy Peirce & family in death of her mother,
Shirley Rhodes
The family of Ken Burnside.

Our Elders at Home or Assisted Living

Michelle Leggett, home
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, The Oaks
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

Riley Medlin, cancer diagnosis (WHS student)
Stetson Underwood in NICU in Greenville (infant
grandson of Kathy Radford)
Dimitri Haddad, (young friend of Safrits)
The family of Doug Wilson and his wife Elaine
Kathy Quickel, healing (mother of Mike Goynes)
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 Fogels)
Dwight Amick, hospice (Stephanie Champion, step dad)
Danny Childress, comfort (nephew of Safrits)
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

Church Directory



Photograph Sign-Up

ST JOHN'S PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

We are hard at work organizing a new pictorial directory for St. John's and hope that you will help us achieve 100% participation in this endeavor. We are scheduling families and individuals for pictures. Ken Pruitt is our photographer, and he has set up a "studio" in the choir room in the educational building to take pictures for our directory. He will take three shots of each family and then choose the best picture suitable for the directory.

Photo Dates:

March 29 from 12:30-3pm,

April 1 from 5-8pm. If you need help signing up, please contact the office.



MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Monday, March 30 is the last Lenten Evening Bible Study led by Adriana from 6-7pm in the Education Building.



TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Tuesday, March 31 is the last Tuesday Morning Bible Study on Romans led by Pastor Rachel at **11am** in the Sanctuary.

HOLY WEEK/EASTER SCHEDULE



Maundy Thursday, April 2

7pm in St. John's Sanctuary-Worship with footwashing and Holy Communion

Good Friday, April 3

Noon in St. John's Sanctuary

7pm in St. John's Sanctuary

St. John's Lutheran Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

7am – Sunrise worship at Biggerstaff Retreat Center

(398 Biggerstaff Rd, Seneca) A sausage and pancake breakfast follows the service.

St. John's Lutheran Church at 301 W. Main St, Walhalla

10am - Youth & Children Sunday School Event

10:30am - Coffee fellowship

11am - Easter celebration worship in Sanctuary

Worshippers are invited to bring fresh flowers to decorate the "flowering cross" that marks the entrance.





**CHURCH
OFFICE
STAFF**

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA
301 W. Main Street, Walhalla, SC
www.stjohnswalhalla.org
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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 and click on the "Give Now With Givelify" button
- Another option is to scan this QR code to go directly to our Givelify page.

