

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA
Walhalla, South Carolina
11 am Worship Service

Third Sunday in Lent
March 23, 2025



*A man had a fig tree planted in
his vineyard; and he came
looking for fruit on it ...*

LUKE 13:6, NRSV

Welcome to Worship at St. John's!

We are glad that you are with us today as we worship our Lord Jesus Christ!

++Please be courteous and respectful. Please turn off all electronic devices during worship .++

Welcome to Worship!

The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE GATHER

CONFESSiON AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

Compassionate One,

you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.

Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross.

Amen.

Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever. **Amen.**

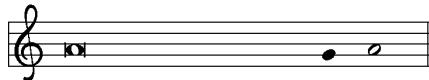
OPENING HYMN *"O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts"* *ELW 658*

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.**

KYRIE

ELW pg. 147



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



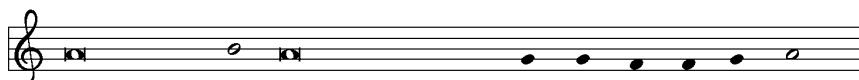
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CHILDREN & YOUTH MESSAGE

Adriana McMurphy

THE FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:1-9

¹ Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴ See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. ⁵ See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. ⁶ Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Psalm 63:1-8— *Read Responsively*

¹ O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

² **Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,
that I might behold your power and your glory.**

³ For your steadfast love is better than life itself; my lips shall give you praise.

⁴ **So will I bless you as long as I live and lift up my hands in your name.**

⁵ My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

⁶ **when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the night watches.**

⁷ For you have been my helper, and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

⁸ **My whole being clings to you; your right hand holds me fast.**

THE SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

¹ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did.
⁷ Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” ⁸ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹ We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰ And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³ No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

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

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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 HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 13:1-9

¹ At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.² [Jesus] asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.⁴ Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem?⁵ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none.⁷ So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’⁸ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it.⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

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

THE SERMON

Pastor Rachel Connelly

HYMN OF RESPONSE

"Light Dawns on a Weary World"

ELW 726

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, in your mercy, receive our prayer.

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.*

OFFERING ANTHEM

*"Bless, O Lord Us Your Servants"
St. John's Chancel Choir*



THE OFFERTORY

"Create in Me a Clean Heart"

ELW 186



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting: Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. **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

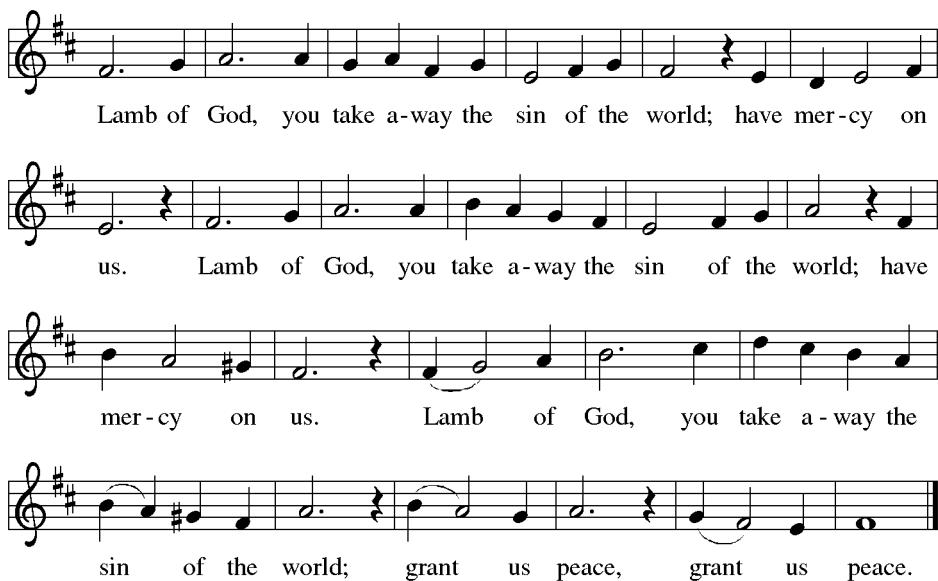
pg. 154

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

COMMUNION HYMNS “*Lamb of God*”

pg. 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.

THE PASTORAL BLESSING

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assisting: Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

THE SENDING HYMN

“Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer”

ELW 618

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you. **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE



Serving Today



Serving Today in Worship
Pastor: The Reverend Dr. Rachel Connolly
Assisting: Barbara Wilson
Lector: John Hewell
Supply Organist: Grace Lichtenwald
Guest Choir Director: Deb Blackmore
Cantor: Tina Barrett
Greeters/Ushers: Bill & Ann Brackett
Altar Guild: Ann Brackett



Our Church Family

Wilma Cobb, upcoming surgery
Nancy Carter, recovery & rehab
Jan Day, healing
PJ Daniels, recovery/healing
Danny Daniels, healing from surgery
Tiffany Chapman, healing and well-being
Robert Smith, healing
Thelma Miller, healing
Katie Johns, home, healing
Beverly Hardin, recovery
Charlie (health) & Debbie (lung cancer) Busch

For Those Grieving

The Family of Doug Deane

Our Elders at Home or Assisted Living

Marsha Cabbage, home
Ann Biemann, home
Brenda Cantrell, home
Linda Humphries, home
Marie Palmatier, home
Peg Turner, The Oaks
Betty Wallace, Belvedere
Bill Watt, home
Jeanne Welch, home
Jack & Lynn Williams (Pawleys Island)

Other Prayer Concerns

For all those who have lost their jobs due to recent government changes.
For all those affected by the wildfires in Los Angeles.
For all those needing assistance in NC and Tennessee.
For peace for our country and protection for our government officials.
For the Israeli hostages and their families.
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 those impacted by natural disasters.
All military Personnel
Bishop Ginny Aebischer and our Synod Staff

Our Extended Family and Friends

John Gerber, valve replacement (friend of Bobbie Duncan)
The family of Tim Barnes (friend of Tom Ward)
Chloe Bestawros, healing (cousin of Cathy Plowden)
Barbara Williams, healing (mother of Cathy Plowden)
Bonnie Blanchett, healing (mother of Ryan Raab)
Debbie Stapleton (friend of Snelgrove's)
The family of Tony Stapleton (friend of Snelgrove's)
Cheryle Hurley, cancer & chemo (friend of Pastor Rachel)
Dan Fogel, healing from surgery (son of Fogel's)
Margaret Barger, healing (cousin of Brenda Safrit)
E. Christian Gauderer, hospitalized in Lisbon, Portugal (brother of Michael)
Sandy & Ron Fulton, cancer (friends of Scot & Linda Williams)
Brian Hollen, kidney surgery (friend of Dolores Krueger)
Delaine Hollandsworth, testing (daughter of Millie Hawbecker)
Nancy Coleman, healing (friend of the Williams)
Risaline Sioson, breast cancer (Sister of Josie Busch)
Janelle Gibson, healing (Aunt of Jan Day)
Bob Lidwin, late stage Alzheimer's (nephew of Bill Pickard)
Erica McKee Skinner, healing (friend of Tina Barrett)
Ben Harding, healing (brother of Allen Harding)
Chad Cobb (son of Wilma)
Ernestine Addis, healing/cancer (sister-in-law of Richard & Connie Addis)
Josh McIntyre, recovery/healing (friend of Tina Barrett)
Tommy Moss, lymphoma (brother of Tina Barrett)
Kay Davis, recovery (mother of Stephanie Champion)
Elizabeth Bateman, (friend of Safrits)
Pam Hester, left eye blindness (cousin of Ann Brackett)
Ruth Williams, ovarian cancer (sister of Grace Schmeelcke)
George Rogers, lung cancer (half brother of Micky)
Kelsey Bowman, healing (daughter-in-law of Bowmans)
Larry Greene, lung cancer (brother-in-law of Patty Shepard)
George Combes, healing (brother of Grace Lichtenwald)
Lauren Bowman, Lyme disease (daughter of Gary and Barb Bowman)
Jacqulyn Moore, healing/MS (niece of Kathy Scherter)
Bennie Smith, health (nephew of Wards)
John Heasley, diabetes (son-in-law of Johnsons)
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



Youth Group Meetings

St. John's Youth Group (grades 7-12) will be meeting at the Walhalla Burger King on Sunday **March 23rd at 4:30pm**. Join us for food and fellowship.



Lenten Bible Study on 1 & 2 Samuel

Tuesdays at 11am



LENTEN SOUP & STUDY

Lenten Soup and Study will be held on Wednesday evenings. We gather at 5:45pm for soup supper. Lenten study will begin at 6:30 and last approximately 30 minutes. A \$5 donation (\$10 max per family) will be collected. 5-6 volunteers are asked to provide soup each Wednesday. Sign-up sheets are located on the clipboards on Information Alley (next to the office).



Easter Lily Orders

This year Easter Lilies will be \$15 each. We only have 25 available, so it's first come, first served. Order forms are in "Information Alley" (next to the office). Please submit completed forms and payment to the office. Deadline to order is **Sunday, April 13**.



2025 LUTHERROAD DAY CAMP

St. John's is hosting Lutheroad Day Camp at Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center on **June 23-27, 2025**



WHAT IS DAY CAMP? It is a five-day program where many of the benefits of Camp Lutheridge come right to the local church. Trained counselors come for the week and share in a program that includes fun, worship, games, Bible study, fellowship, crafts, sharing and prayer.

- Deadline for Early Registration is May 1st.
- Camp runs 9am - 4pm Monday - Thursday, 9am - 12 pm on Friday
- For children completing Kindergarten through 5th grade
- Cost is only \$160 (\$135 Early Bird Special) for the week and scholarships are available. Registration ends June 10. 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

301 W. Main Street, Walhalla, SC

www.stjohnswalhalla.org

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Pastor—The Reverend Dr. Rachel Connolly

Cell: (910) 515-0897 or Email: stjohnspastorralch@gmail.com

Director of Family Life Ministry—Adriana McMurphy

Email: stjohnsadriana@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant—Melissa Rasley

(864) 638-6363 or Email: stjohnsluther@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

Lynn Pode, 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.

