

St. John's Lutheran Church  
Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center  
9 am Worship Service  
Sixth Sunday of Easter  
May 10, 2026



## Welcome!

Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world.

## *Welcome to Worship!*

PRE-GATHERING MUSIC/WELCOME

GATHERING SONG            *"I Love You, Lord" (2x)*

I love you, Lord,  
And I lift my voice  
To worship You;  
O my soul, rejoice.

Take joy, my King,  
In what You hear;  
Let it be a sweet,  
sweet sound in Your ear.

*1978 House of Mercy Music (admin. Universal Music -  
Brentwood Benson Publishing)*

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb! **Amen.**

Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Merciful God, you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come. You lead us beside still waters. We thank you for the waters of creation: morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves.

We thank you for the waters that nourish us. Blessed are you.

**You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness who accompanies us on our journeys. We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection. We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow. Blessed are you.

**You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows. Break down barriers that divide us. Fill us with the breath of peace. Blessed are you.

**You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism, and for making us a new creation. We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise, now and forever. **Amen.**



OPENING SONG                      *“Faith of Our Mothers”*

Faith of our mothers, living still,  
In cradle song and bedtime prayer;  
In nursery lore and fireside love,  
Thy presence still pervades the air.

*Refrain*

*Faith of our mothers, living faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.*

Faith of our mothers, living faith,  
Fount of our childhood's trust and grace;  
Oh, may they consecration prove,  
Source of a finer, nobler race. *Refrain*

Faith of our mothers, guiding faith,  
For youthful longing, youthful doubt;  
How blurred our vision, blind our way,  
Thy providential care without. *Refrain*

Faith of our mothers, Christian faith  
In truth beyond our stumbling creeds;  
Lad us in service and save the Church,  
And breathe thy spirit thro' our deeds. *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: Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, 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

*Adriana McMurphy*

THE FIRST READING

**Acts 17:22-31**

<sup>22</sup> Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. <sup>23</sup> For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.

<sup>26</sup> From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, <sup>27</sup> so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup> For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we, too, are his offspring.’ <sup>29</sup> “Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. <sup>30</sup> While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Psalm 66:8-20— *Read Responsively*

<sup>8</sup> Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard.

<sup>9</sup> **Our God has kept us among the living and has not allowed our feet to slip.**

<sup>10</sup> For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us just as silver is tried.

<sup>11</sup> **You brought us into the net; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.**

<sup>12</sup> You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

<sup>13</sup> **I will enter your house with burnt offerings and will pay you my vows—**

<sup>14</sup> those that I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

<sup>15</sup> **I will offer you burnt offerings of fatlings with the smoke of rams;**

**I will give you oxen and goats.**

<sup>16</sup> Come and listen, all you who believe, and I will tell you what God has done for me.

<sup>17</sup> **I called out to God with my mouth, and praised the Lord with my tongue.**

<sup>18</sup> If I had cherished evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me;

<sup>19</sup> **but in truth God has heard me and has attended to the sound of my prayer.**

<sup>20</sup> Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, nor withheld unfailing love from me.

THE SECOND READING

**1 Peter 3:13-22**

<sup>13</sup> Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated,

<sup>15</sup> but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, <sup>16</sup> yet do it with gentleness and respect. Maintain a good conscience so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight lives, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

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 14:15-21**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup> This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you. <sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

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

THE MESSAGE

*Pastor Rachel Connelly*

SONG OF RESPONSE

*“In the Morning When I Rise”*

In the morning when I rise, in the morning when I rise,  
in the morning when I rise, give me Jesus.

*Refrain*

*Give me Jesus, give me Jesus.*

*You may have all the rest, give me Jesus.*

Dark midnight was my cry, dark midnight was my cry,  
dark midnight was my cry, give me Jesus. *Refrain*

Just about the break of day, just about the break of day,  
just about the break of day, give me Jesus. *Refrain*

Oh, when I come to die, oh, when I come to die,  
oh, when I come to die, give me Jesus. *Refrain*

And when I want to sing, and when I want to sing,  
and when I want to sing, give me Jesus. *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

*“Go My Children, with My Blessing”*

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.  
Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own.  
In my love’s baptismal river  
I have made you mine forever.  
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.  
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.  
Here you heard my dear Son’s story,  
here you touched him, saw his glory.  
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.


Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me.  
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.  
Here my Spirit’s power filled you,  
here his tender comfort stilled you.  
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you, and give you peace.  
I the Lord will smile upon you, and give you peace.  
I the Lord will be your Father,  
Savior, Comforter and Brother.  
Go, my children, I will keep you, and give you peace.

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

 <p>Serving Today in Worship</p>	<p><u>Serving Today</u></p>	
	Pastor:	The Rev. Dr. Rachel Connolly
	Lay Assistant:	Cathy Plowden
	Lector:	Torrie Landon
	Greeters:	Scot & Linda Williams
Musicians:	Tom Ward, Ray Burroughs & Dave Devoe	

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### **Our Church Family**

Gary Cabbage, rehab & healing (knee surgery)  
Andera Stroud, healing-Seneca Rehab  
Jerry Cobb, healing/home  
Joe Kent, healing  
Polly Kent, healing  
Jana Snelgrove, baby JoCasse 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**

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)  
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 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.



## TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Rachel's Tuesday morning Bible Study on Galatians and Colossians is at 11am in the Education Building.



## GOD'S WORK~OUR HANDS DAY

Saturday, May 16, 2026

Each year St. John's participates in God's Work~Our Hands day of outreach. It is our opportunity to go into the community to help our neighbors. For the past several years we have focused on the needs of Lakeview Assisted Living. It is located on 320 Camp Rd. in Walhalla. We gather at **9am at the church** for a brief send-off prayer and instruction. All work should be completed before 1pm. Please sign up on Information Alley. Contact Joan Lewis with any questions.



## 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.



CHURCH  
OFFICE  
STAFF

**St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA**  
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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.

