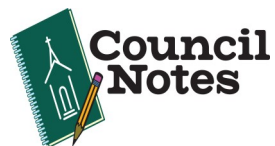


Congregational Council Meeting - March 20, 2023
Abbreviated Minutes



Members Present: Pastor Rachel Connelly, Vicar Emily Whitlow, Jan Long, Grace Schmeelcke, Scot Williams, Greg Harris, Allen Harding, John Hewell, Sandra Pruitt, Jeremy Chapman, Bill Pickard, Lynn Pode and Stephanie Champion.

Meeting called to order by President Greg Harris at 6:00pm.

Devotion/Dwelling in the Word by Jeremy, using the scripture from Matthew 5:1-11.

Prayer Requests taken and Pastor Rachel led members in prayer.

February Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved.

Pastor's Report: Lenten Wednesday soup and prayer evenings have been going well. Pastor Rachel praised all those who have been volunteering in the office. Pastor and Emily attended a Supervisor/Intern retreat March 6 & 7 in Hickory, NC.

Vicar's Report: Vicar Emily has been busy finishing her internship project and is also working on a Tuesday morning adult bible study that will resume after Easter.

Treasurer's Report: Income YTD has exceeded expenses by \$1,528. Expenses were \$4,164 under budget YTD (utility costs over budget-\$1,382 YTD). General Fund checking account balance \$51,239.

Worship and Music: The next meeting will be held later this week when they will continue planning for Holy Week.

Parish Life/Outreach: Putting together care kits for people in need when released from the detention center. The kits include hygiene items and a \$10. food gift card. Planning is underway for the Isaqueena bike ride on April 15th.

Property: The committee recommends replacing the globes and re-wiring the light fixture in the Narthex. Period appropriate globes are being sourced and will cost approximately \$100. each. John Hewell second this and after further discussion, Council voted to approve.

Biggerstaff: Stephanie Champion reported we had about 20 people last Saturday, March 18th out at Biggerstaff for the Spring clean up. Many of the damaged boards on the gazebo were replaced as well. The board reviewed their guidelines and fee structure and have made several suggested changes for Council to review (the proposed changes were distributed to members for review). Council voted to approve, with minor suggestions.

Administrative Assistant job opening update. Interviews will begin this week.

Strategic Planning Champion Team Assignments discussed. A finalized list will be available soon. Teams shall meet a minimum of once a month and will report at the Council Meetings each month on their progress. Decisions and expenditures must be ratified by the Council and in some instances the Congregation, prior to proceeding. The Executive Committee of the Council will coordinate the activities of the four Champion Teams, with direction and approval of the Council.

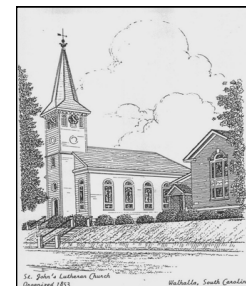
Pastor Rachel passed out information on a program offered by GSB entitled "Stewardship for the Seasons". This program has been effective in highlighting faithful stewardship and the cost is partially covered by the Synod, the balance would be covered by us. The first year of our congregations' participation would require an outlay of \$1,800. Council members decided to table further discussion until they could review this plan, but the start is time sensitive.

Dwelling in the Word, Next Meeting will be done by Grace Schmeelcke.

Next Council Meeting is April 17, 2023 at 6:00pm

Adjourned at 7:50 pm, closed by praying the Lord's Prayer

Lynn Pode, Congregational Council Secretary



THE CHIMES — APRIL 2023

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

Mission: Embraces a changing world in Christ's love and service.

PLEASE NOTE: Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 9am-1:00pm
OFFICE CLOSED ON FRIDAYS IN APRIL

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Biggerstaff Christian Retreat
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"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."
Zechariah 9:9.

Dear Friends:

Jesus intended that his entrance into Jerusalem should say something about the kingdom of God to be established through his approaching death and resurrection. He entered Jerusalem without the trappings of earthly power. The crowds welcomed him as a king, a son of David, but his arrival threw the city into turmoil. **"Who is this that comes riding in on a donkey?"**

At the beginning of Holy Week, we gather to celebrate Christ's presence as King in our lives, but like the citizens of Jerusalem we should not be surprised if his presence questions our hearts. Are we ready to welcome a king who shunned the outward signs of wealth, success, and earthly powers? Are we ready to follow the King who called out those whose outward actions and laws made them appear righteous but whose hearts were empty. Jesus' kingdom was about crossing boundaries, opening the circle of God's welcome and love, and sharing grace and mercy with those who were often seen as poor, outsiders, or unacceptable to the religious leaders in power.

Yes, the kingdom that Jesus brings forth is the one that Paul's great hymn in Philippians summons us to embody to *"have the mind that was in Christ Jesus"*. We are reminded that although his nature was divine, Jesus did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself, assuming the role of a servant. It was from this humility that Jesus gave himself as bread and wine, offered no resistance to those who struck him, and endured the mockery of the crowd. We are not divine, and yet how stubbornly we cling to the illusion of what we imagine ourselves to be. It is so easy to fill our lives with superficiality of every kind. Jesus emptied himself. He was humbler yet, even to accepting death on a cross.

The invitation is for us is to mark the time of Holy Week with deep reflection, prayer and gratitude. In the services of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, we enter into Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in a special way. In reality these are not distinct services but one service extended over the "Triduum", the sacred three days that recount Jesus' last day of life on earth, the events of the passion and resurrection, when the Lamb of God laid down his life in atonement for our sins.

With so much happening in the world and in our country these days — death, loss, and destruction due to tornados and spring storms, another mass shooting in a school with the crushing loss of adults and children to gun violence, polarizing politics, and with so many hurting due to economic or life situations — we need the promise of Christ's presence and the community of faith more than ever.

Our closing hymn for Palm Sunday worship is *Go to dark Gethsemane*. As we share in these days, I pray for God's Spirit to give us strength and focus to face the cross and await with hope the Easter dawn.

Go to dark Gethsemane,
You who feel the tempter's pow'r;
Your Redeemer's conflict see;
Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away;
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Calv'ry's mournful mountain climb
There' adoring at His feet,
Mark the miracle of time,
God's own sacrifice complete:
"It is finished!" Hear the cry;
Learn of Jesus Christ to die

In Christ's Service,

Pastor Rachel Connelly

A Big Thank You



To all who came out for the Biggerstaff Work Day and offered their help. It made difference and Biggerstaff is ready to begin its on-season!
A reminder that 9AM Worship Services begin out at Biggerstaff on Sunday, April 9, 2023 (Easter) and run-through mid-October.

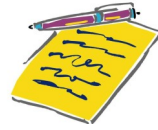
The church office will be closed on Monday, April 10
in observance of the Easter holiday.



Grace and Peace to you, friends!

The warm weather and sunshine are here, for now, which means that spring is here too! It's hard to believe that Holy Week Services and the Easter season are already here.

From the
Vicar



While we are approaching a joyous season in the liturgical calendar, we still are called to reflect constantly—as we have especially during Lent, but also into Holy Week—on what Jesus' death meant and continues to mean for our salvation and for the salvation of the world. Jesus' died not only for the forgiveness of our sins, for our redemption, but also for the promise of life eternal. We give thanks for that Good News and we also lean into what our continued call as children of God is: to continue to spread Jesus' ministry of unconditional love that knows no bounds. We are called to go beyond using just our words for this, but to jump into action.

Look into what ways you can be apart of the action: what opportunities our congregation has to serve the communities that surround us, opportunities through the larger Church—the ELCA. Live into the true joy of this upcoming season of Easter: that we are saved, not by our works, but by the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. And because of that, we are given the space and are encouraged to go out of our way for others, to be in reflection often as to "Where God Is In All of This."

I pray that this season brings you joy and continued reflection on what God's call for you might be!

Blessings upon blessings,
Vicar Emily

Dear Friends,

I am looking forward to our Easter celebration. We can finally sing Alleluia again! For me it is hard not to be able to sing "alleluia", because my favorite music is praise music. I don't mean *praise music* as in the modern context, meaning a particular style contemporary Christian worship music. I like some of that, too, as the early service musicians and those who attend these services well know! To me, though, "praise music" means any genre of music that praises God. Song is my favorite way to communicate with God; with Jesus; with the Holy Spirit. The adult choir and early service band have been working very hard on some beautiful and inspiring music to help the St. John's family celebrate this most important day and we are looking forward to sharing it with everyone.

We have to get through the hard part first, though. This coming week I always find very difficult—not because of all of the services and the musical responsibilities that go with them, but because of why we are doing them. I find it extremely difficult to hear the gospel description of the crucifixion. Troubling may be the better word...or maybe deeply sorrowful is the most accurate. It makes me cry every year during Holy week to think that we human beings could do something so terrible to another human, let alone the Son of God himself. I find it difficult to even find music to express this deep sorrow. After a brief Palm Sunday celebration at the beginning of this next service, we will turn to meditative music. We hope this will touch all of our hearts; bring us closer to Christ; and help us to contemplate the sorrowful events that took place in order to bring us to the joyous day of the Resurrection — Easter — that we will be able to celebrate in just a few days with many alleluias!

May God bring you all peace, comfort, joy, and many beautiful songs,

Carla Padgett
Music Director



From the
MUSIC DIRECTOR



WELCA REPORT

The WELCA Spring Foothills Conference will be held on April 22 at Trinity Lutheran in Anderson, SC. April 1 is the deadline to sign up or call Barbara Wilson. Plan to attend our next local WELCA meeting on Saturday, June 10 at 9:15AM when we will make personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief. Joy offerings will be received in May. Isle of Palms Retreat—May 5-7, 2023—Bible Study by Risse Snelgrove. Registration form is at scwelca.com. If you have not received emails about WELCA information from Barbara Wilson, please respond to hickoryhollowbw@bellsouth.net or call/text 864-723-3376.

KNITTERS & CROCHETERS

Would you like to learn how to knit/crochet? Or need help to revive your skills? Consider meeting with the group on Wednesdays April 12 and 26 at 10am in the Fellowship Hall.

One-on-one teaching is available.

Questions? Call or text Barbara at (864) 723-3376!



THE GLORIA SHEALY CIRCLE

The Gloria Shealy Circle will meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, April 18 at 5pm for the next meeting.

If you're interested in getting involved with the Gloria Shealy Circle, contact Anne Craig at (803) 292 - 4492.

Gloria Shealy Circle



THE SURVIVORS GROUP



Survivors Group

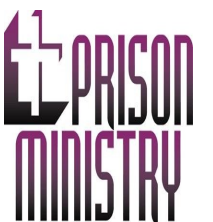
The Survivors group has two events planned for April. **On Friday, April 21** we will meet at **10:00 am** at the Oasis to play miniature golf. After golf we will go to lunch at the Mello Mushroom in Clemson. **On Sunday, April 23** Vicar Emily will conduct a session on how to use our cellphones at **3:00 pm**, so have your questions ready! Cookies and tea will be provided. All widows/widowers are welcome to any event.

OUTREACH PRISON MINISTRY — Donations Needed

We have gotten a good start on this project – 15 Hygiene Bags have been given to OLEC to be distributed to individuals as needed – Both for women and men. Thank you for your donations so far. I am listing the items below that we are in need of – again, these need to be the "travel" size please.

- \$10.00 gift cards from Burger King or McDonalds
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Dental Floss
- Tubes of Antiseptic Cream
- Brushes/Combs
- Socks – Men and Women (in bulk is fine – we open them and put a pair in each bag)
- Washcloths – gray or dark color
- Men's Deodorant
- Pads and Tampons (bulk is fine with these items too)

Cards with words of encouragement made by St. John's members will also be included. A container will be near the Spiritual Gift's table for donations to this project. Thank you so much for supporting this ministry,. Questions? Contact Libby McLean (mmclean7070@att.net) or Patty Shepard (pattypaulmann@yahoo.com).



Issaqueena's Last Ride — Saturday, April 15th



Issaqueena's Last Ride

St. John's Lutheran Church is hosting Issaqueena's Last Ride cycling event again this year on Saturday, April 15th. The ride departs from St. John's at 9:00 A.M. When the more than 200 riders return, St. John's will feed them again with soups, pasta salad, sandwiches, cookies and drinks. Volunteers needed to donate to donate and serve the food. Sign-up soon at the Spiritual Ops table.