

## Congregational Council Meeting - April 17, 2023 Abbreviated Minutes

**Members Present:** Pastor Rachel Connelly, Vicar Emily Whitlow, Jan Long, Grace Schmeelcke, Scot Williams, Greg Harris, Allen Harding, Cathy Plowden, 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 Grace, using the scripture from Luke 9:28-36.

**Prayer Requests** taken and Pastor Rachel led members in prayer.

**March Meeting Minutes:** Minutes approved.

**Strategic Plan Update:** Greg announced that the first Strategic Planning meeting with the Biggerstaff Board will be held this Wednesday evening at 7:00pm.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Rachel stated that all the Holy Week services went well and we had good attendance. She thanked all the volunteers who worked in the office for the last 3 months while we were without a paid Administrative Assistant. Our newly hired Admin. (Melissa Rasley) started today. Our next year's intern will be Olga-Maria Cruz. Pastor and Olga-Maria will attend an intern orientation in May. Pastor Rachel encouraged members to consider attending the SC Synod Assembly June 8-10 in Columbia, we need a few voting members to attend.

**Vicar's Report:** Youth Sunday, (April 16th) was very successful and Emily enjoyed working with them all to prepare. We are very proud of each one of them. Hymnal is finalized and will decide on a printer this week so it will be ready for Sunday, April 23rd, lay minister training day. A 6 week adult Bible Study will begin this Tuesday at 10am.

**Treasurer's Report:** Cathy Plowden provided a recap of Mark McLean's March report. Income YTD has exceeded expenses by \$5,818. Expenses were \$11,094 under budget YTD. General Fund checking account balance is \$55,529.

**Congregational Care:** Bill Pickard reported the Chef's groups are doing well, they are self funded and average around 15 meals per week.

**Faith Formation:** Grace provided an outline regarding principles of faith formation. She emphasized that just attending a sermon on Sunday (while worthwhile) is not enough. If we want to raise Christian youth, we need Christian parents and adults sharing and modeling that behavior.

**Worship and Music:** Carla (Music Director) is planning on a concert series in June, August and October, which will include the handbell choir. May 21st will be the Sunday the afghans are given out to the WHS graduates at the 11am service. The possible need for sound board training for a few operators is being discussed. Barbara Wilson was elected the new Chair of the Worship and Music Committee.

**Property:** Scot Williams updated that the sprinkler system will be worked on this week.

**Biggerstaff:** Stephanie Champion reported that the mobile home on the property will be sold. **Old Business:** The program offered by GSB entitled "Stewardship for all Seasons" which was discussed at the last meeting was revisited now that members had a chance to review. This program has been effective in highlighting faithful stewardship. The cost is partially covered by the Synod, the balance would be covered by us. The first year of our congregation's participation would require an outlay of \$1,800. The balance would be covered by the Synod. St. John's would be asked to contribute back to the Synod (through mission support) 10% of the increased revenues generated until the congregation has reached 10% of regular offerings as mission support.

**Council vote approved adoption.**

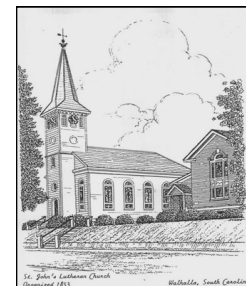
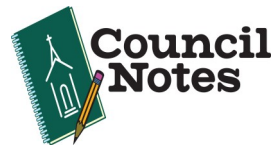
**New Business:** Greg announced we were notified that St. John's is expecting to receive a bequeath willed to us from past members.

**Dwelling in the Word, Next Meeting will be done by Lynn Pode**

**Next Council Meeting is May 15, 2023 at 6:00pm**

Meeting Closed by praying the Lord's Prayer

Lynn Pode, Congregational Council Secretary



# THE CHIMES — MAY 2023

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

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

PLEASE NOTE: Office Hours: Monday—Friday 8:30am-1:00pm

Email: stjohsluther@gmail.com  
Website: www.stjohnswalhalla.org  
864-638-6363

Biggerstaff Christian Retreat  
biggerstaffretreat@gmail.com

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Acts 2:42-45*

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10*

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church** – Embraces a changing world in Christ's love and service.

**Vision** – A community where all God's people are welcomed, accepted, and nurtured in faith and life.

Dear Friends:

As we continue through the great 50 days of Easter, St. John's has had much activity and ministry happening as we seek to live out our mission as God's people and grow forth our vision. Much of the New Testament letters and writings speak of the identity and practices of the early church as those new Christians were witnessing to Christ's resurrection and living more fully into the community they were called to be as the body of Christ.

I find that in 2023 we, as a faithful congregation of believers, continue to strive and to live out this calling in the world today and the community we serve. We are reminded that we are the people of Christ's "marvelous light".

Recently Vicar Emily and I shared in a Lay Eucharistic Minister training with individuals whose spiritual gifts focus on faith, compassion, Biblical knowledge, and care. In the ELCA there is an understanding that congregations provide for communion of the homebound, sick, and those who live in nursing facilities or those who may be imprisoned. As an extension of the Sunday worship, the Eucharistic Ministers that we have trained along with Pastor Rachel and Vicar Emily will take the elements to those unable to attend Sunday worship. We have also been blessed with Hymnals for Home communion that Vicar Emily created for her internship project, and our new wood communion sets given in honor of Vicar Emily.

In a document of the ELCA called, *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament*, we read this principle:

We are a church that centers itself on the central things of our faith—Water, Word, and Meal; central things that point us to Christ who is our center. We remember that, "In every celebration of the means of grace, God acts to show forth both the need of the world and the truth of the Gospel. In every gathering of Christians around the proclaimed Word and the holy sacraments, God acts to empower the Church for mission. Jesus Christ, who is God's living bread come from heaven, has given his flesh to be the life of the world. This very flesh, given for the life of all, is encountered in the Word and Sacraments."

Our Eucharistic Ministers that were trained and commissioned at worship last Sunday are: Bill Brackett, Andrea Carlson, Jan Long, Pastor Gary and Brenda Safrit, Grace Schmeelcke, Tom Ward, and Barbara Wilson. Be sure to thank them for sharing in this special calling.

In Christ's Peace and Love,

*Pastor Rachel Connelly*

The church office will be closed on Monday, May 29, 2023  
in observance of Memorial Day.



Grace and Peace to you, friends!

This past month has been busy and filled to the brim with various ministry happenings. One of which has been the finalization of my Internship Project. For my project, I have been working on and have completed a Homebound Hymnal in Coordination with the Renewal of the Lay Eucharistic Ministry at St. John's. Our church has more than 40 members that are "Senior Saints"—members eighty years or older, many of whom are home-bound and/or are not able to make it to church anymore. As we heard in the Gospel text on April 30, however, these members are certainly still a part of the sheepfold! Jesus knows them and so do their fellow sheep.



To further extend that grace of being a part of Christ's sheepfold, the Homebound Hymnal I've created is a means of extending our *Sunday Worship* services to those home-bound folks. While the hymnal is in coordination with the renewal of the Lay Eucharistic Ministry, it also contains hymns selected by our home-bound folks, scripture verses, and the order for home communion which contains well-known prayers and Gospel texts. For people who may be feeling isolated at home, in nursing facilities, in hospitals or hospice centers, the singing of songs is a reminder not only the faces and experiences they've seen and heard over the years in Worship...but it also a reminder of the tunes and Words of the Body and Blood of Jesus given for us that promise all of us a love beyond measure. The Words that are full of grace and mercy and peace.

If you would be interested in taking a look at this Homebound Hymnal I've created, there are copies in my office at the church that you're welcome to look through! The process of creating this hymnal has been a joyous one and I look forward to its use with our Lay Eucharistic Ministers.

Blessings,  
*Vicar Emily Whitlow*

Dear Friends,

As we move through the post Resurrection season and toward Pentecost, my mind drifts toward guinea fowl. While they are not the brightest of God's creatures, I have enjoyed keeping guineas over the years; hearing their signature "potaracking"; and watching them happily rid my farm of harmful insects. Even though they dug up my entire garden one year the day after I had planted it, it is spring and I miss them. I once sang to my flock of half-grown guineas. They had never heard music. They stopped their potaracking and pecking and scratching and stood completely still — mesmerized— looking at me with their heads cocked to one side. Music touches something deep inside of us, human and animal alike.

I have long felt that some churches largely ignore the Holy Spirit—a brief mention on Pentecost Sunday and that is it. This may be because it is difficult to explain exactly what the Holy Spirit is. (I am glad I get to play the organ and sing and don't have to worry about that part!) To me, the Holy Spirit is especially important, though, because I believe that our music is a gift that comes directly from the Holy Spirit. If we are willing to open our hearts, the Holy Spirit can flow through us in the form of music to touch the hearts of others. Thus, the traditional Latin chant for Pentecost is a favorite of mine — "Veni Creator Spiritus". The English translation begins "Come Holy Spirit, our hearts inspire".



How does the Holy Spirit inspire you?

Carla Padgett  
Director of Music

***A few ways you can help...***

Be part of our Thursday Senior Meal delivery (aka Chefs). We need volunteers to cook part of a meal and/or deliver on Thursdays between 10:30 and 12 noon. There are openings in groups that deliver 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays each month. Be part of our Wednesday lunch team. We need cooks to prepare a meal or part of a meal on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month. Be part of our Worship Assistant team. We need volunteers to serve as Lectors, Greeters and 11am Communion Ushers. Be part of a transportation team who can be on call for our senior members who need rides to doctor appointments, etc.

Feel free to contact Joan Lewis at 864-710-1756 or joanlewisc@aol.com if you are interested.

**WELCA REPORT**



**May 7th--Rachel's Day--**Women of the ELCA observe annually recognize the first Sunday of May to mourn the loss of our children and to renounce the forces of violence and fear. Please prayer for solutions for these issues both locally and globally.

**May 21st--WELCA Sunday--**Women will serve as worship leaders and assistants at both services. Joy Offerings will be received and later taken to SC WELCA Convention in June. Walhalla High School graduating Seniors will be recognized.

If you have not received emails about WELCA information from Barbara Wilson, please respond to [hickoryhollowbw@bellsouth.net](mailto:hickoryhollowbw@bellsouth.net) or call/text 864-723-3376.

**KNITTERS & CROCHETERS**

Would you like to learn how to knit or crochet? Do you need help to revive your skills? One-on-one teaching is available. The group meets on Wednesday May 10th and 24th at 10am in the Fellowship Hall. Come join us!

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, May 16th 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.



**THE SURVIVORS GROUP**

The Survivors group has three events planned for May. **On Thursday, May 4th at 5pm**, we will be having dinner together at Paesano's Restaurant in Seneca. **On Friday, May 12th** we will be taking a shopping trip to Strawberry Hill and Gaffney. We will be meeting at the DAR Thrift Store parking lot on Highway 11 at 8:30am to car pool. **On Sunday, May 14th**



Survivors Group

**(Mother's Day)**, we will be going out for lunch following the 11am service at The Lighthouse. The cost for seniors 65+ will be \$24 for their Mother's Day Lunch Buffet. Following lunch you are invited to attend the Oconee Winds Concert at 3pm at Walhalla High School. All widows and widowers

are invited to attend these events.

**ISSAQUEENA BIKE RIDE RESULTS**

Many thanks to all who participated in making the Issaqueena Bike Ride 2023 a success. We had 45 volunteers preparing soup, pasta salad, sandwiches, and cookies, purchasing the supplies and breakfast foods. There were 22 shift workers who worked from 7am until 6pm. All together we logged in about 200 work hours. The cost of food and supplies was covered by \$250 Thrivent gift card- thanks to Mark and Libby McLean for applying for the funds. We had \$56 donated from the riders. All together we served 160 riders and 25 Issaqueena Ride staff. We were able to donate leftover sandwiches and pasta salad to Christ Central Ministries- serving approximately 25 men at that facility. St. John's will receive approximately \$1000 from the ride proceeds to donate to the Oconee County Backpack Lunch program.



Issaqueena's Last Ride

A Note from Joan and Dave Lewis:

Thank you to our St. John's family for all the thoughts, prayers, cards, love and support you have shown Dave and I over the past months as he faces health challenges. We are both blessed to have a church family that truly cares. My work at St. John's and all its members are what get us through each new road we face. Words can never express our appreciation and love for all of you.