

THE CHIMES — AUGUST 2023

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

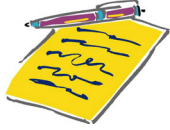
Mission: Embraces a changing world in Christ's love and service.

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

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

Biggerstaff Christian Retreat
biggerstaffretreat@gmail.com

From the Vicar



And just like that, 12 months have come and gone! It's hard to believe that it's been a year since I started with you all at St. John's. It's been a wonderful year of learning, togetherness, and growth and I have every single one of you to thank for it. In reflecting on this year together, the word that keeps coming to my mind to describe this time is growth. Growth in myself and my pastoral identity, growth in relationship, and the growth emerging at St. John's.

It's been a privilege to witness the growth that has happened and will continue to happen in this congregation: from the beginning phases of a Strategic Plan, the delegating of various ministry tasks within that plan and across additional ministry areas, to discussions about the state of the church at large and what that means for this congregation. I've witnessed the growth of the faithful people of St. John's in your attending Sunday School, Bible Study, Youth Trips, and in discussions surrounding our individual faith lives. While I'm sad to be leaving St. John's, I'm excited for the growth that will continue. There is so much in store for St. John's and myself. As you begin the process of welcoming your next Vicar, Olga-Maria, I know that you all will continue to thrive in following out the church's mission of raising up new, equipped leaders for future in ministry. In all our discussions throughout various meetings, worship with one another, welcoming visitors with open arms, St. John's has proved to know a thing or two about joyfully inviting all to love, serve, and grow in Christ while embracing a changing world. I urge you to remember that mission of this church and of God's mission as a whole and the rest will follow.

We know that growth in our faith comes from the grace and mercy of God and in community with one another. It has been a blessing to be a part and to serve as a part of this community. I extend my sincerest thanks, gratitude, and appreciation to every person here at St. John's. Each of you have played a pivotal role in this journey of growing in my ministry towards becoming an ordained minister of the Word and Sacrament. The work we've done together has been enormous...and yet there is so much more to come. How exciting is that? Maybe a little overwhelming, too? Through the life and death of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit, we can trust that God is with us, in both our excitements and overwhelm, our joys and sorrows, our smooth patches and especially in our rough patches. I look forward, with you, to all the ways that trusting in God and God's faithfulness, leads the people of this beloved congregation to continue in their call of God's love and good news. Thank you for the honor and privilege to serve and to walk alongside you all throughout this year. I know the lessons I have learned here will stay with me my entire life. I am excited for our paths to cross again, one day, and until then I leave you with these words from the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians (Philippians 3:13-14):

"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."

Vicar Emily Whitlow

FAREWELL DINNER AND ROASTING FOR VICAR EMILY

Saturday, August 12th 6:00—8:00 pm

Vicar Emily's year with us will be coming to a close soon. Before we send her on to her last year of seminary, we would like to take some time to celebrate her time with us here at St. John's. The Internship Committee and St. John's staff are hosting a Farewell Dinner and "Roasting" for Saturday, August 12th at Biggerstaff.

Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, and Drinks will be provided. We are asking the congregation to sign up for side dishes and desserts. Sign up board is in the back of the worship area at Biggerstaff and in the Gathering area at Church. If you have a special "Roasting" to share, contact Bill Brackett or Pastor Rachel.





BACK to SCHOOL



CALLING ALL FAMILIES WITH YOUTH AND CHILDREN!



On **Sunday, August 6 at 4PM-7PM**, join us for an afternoon of celebrating the end of summer vacation and the start of a new school year! We'll be grilling hot dogs, enjoying sides and desserts, swimming in the lake, going for boat rides, and enjoying time together. Bring yourself, a friend, and a life jacket if you've got it!

Life jackets will also be provided at Biggerstaff.



Vicar Olga-Maria Cruz begins her ministry with us in late-August. Our traditional welcome or "pounding" for the intern usually includes the donation of food items and cleaning supplies. This year our "pounding" will look somewhat different than in the past. Vicar Olga-Maria has a well-established household and also has a number of specific food and skin allergies so we have asked her to provide a listing of specific items she can use:

1. Favorite Food Items: rice, quinoa, polenta/grits, gluten free oats, sorghum, cassava, oat, brown rice, or quinoa flours. All items **MUST** be gluten and dairy free.
2. Safe Cleaning Products: fragrance free trash bags, vinegar, baking soda, *Seventh Generation Free & Clear* hand soap, dish soap, laundry pods, dishwasher tabs, spray cleaner- this brand of cleaning products are available on Amazon or can be purchased at Publix and Target.
3. Gift Cards: Amazon, Ingles, Publix, Aldi, Walmart, Gather Uptown – any amount is fine.

You are able to sign-up on line and let us know what you are giving at:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SPDyfTy9m0SEJPG2r4RQqdwGqXwfpxCNJsGXRApJAFc/edit#gid=0>

or take an item from the board located in the Gathering area at church. Please bring all items from the list to the fellowship hall by August 15.

4. Amazon Wish List: There is also an Amazon wish list she has established located online at:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1BRHB9GAJ5H4?ref_=wl_share

Items ordered from this list should be sent to the church address.

Summer Greetings!

The choir has been working on our concert music over the summer along with our singing friends from outside of the church. We have made great progress and will continue to work on our music, but we are postponing our concert until April 28, 2024. This will allow us more time to prepare and have all of the instrumentalists available to play with us. We will keep you posted and remind you of the date closer to that time.

The choir will come back to sing in the 11 A.M. service starting the first Sunday of August. We will continue to practice weekly from 6:00 until 7:30 on Wednesdays. We will be sad to see Vicar Emily leave us as she has been a great help singing in the choir and with the early service band and we will miss her lovely voice and smiling face. We do look forward to getting to know our new Vicar Olga Maria in a few weeks and extend to her a warm welcome!

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer. Blessings to all,

Carla Padgett
Director of Music
864.561.0822





WELCA REPORT

After a 4 year "COVID break" **St. John's Tour of Tables event is returning on Saturday, August 19th at 11:15 am.!** Tour of Tables is a luncheon sponsored by WELCA at which 10 ladies choose a theme and decorate their table with that theme. It's a fun day- *best part we get to see St. John's creativity at its finest!* Tickets will be sold beginning Sunday 7/30. Ticket price is \$20 this year- covering the cost of the luncheon and donation. Our speaker will be Pastor Jackie Utley. You may recall that Pastor Jackie "entertained" us in 2019- you won't want to miss her 2023 appearance! Also, **Knitters and Crocheters will have a boutique of handmade items at 11 am. and after the luncheon.** We still need a few more ladies to donate a door prize in a gift bag. Questions? Contact Barbara Wilson or Joan Lewis.

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 August 9th and 23rd** at 10am in the Fellowship Hall. Come join us!



THE GLORIA SHEALY CIRCLE

Gloria Shealy Circle



Gloria Shealy Circle is collecting school supplies through the first week in August. The supplies are to be placed in the labeled box near the table in the gathering area. Needs include: pens, pencils, pencil holders, binders, notebook paper, spiral notebooks, rulers, index cards, crayons, colored pencils, highlighters, loose leaf binders, glue sticks, scissors, dividers. Thanks to everyone for all of your continued support of this very important need in our community. The next Gloria Shealy Circle meeting will be **Tuesday August 15, 5:00pm**, at Biggerstaff. If you haven't yet joined a circle, we sincerely hope you will attend this one. Give me, Anne Craig, a call a 803-292-4491 and I will fill you in on the details. Everyone is welcome!

THE SURVIVORS GROUP

The Survivors group is planning a trip to Dillard Ga. on **Sunday Aug. 13**. We will leave church after the 11:00 worship . We are planning on having lunch at the Cupboard. On **Friday Aug. 25** the Survivors will go to Murphy NC for a day of fun! All widows and widowers are invited to any event.



Survivors Group

VOLUNTEER NEEDED TO CARE FOR OUR CREMAINS GARDEN



Do you have a green thumb or enjoy gardening? Or maybe you have a desire to give care to those saints who have gone before us? We need a volunteer to help care for our **Cremaains Garden**. If you are interested in sharing your time and talents in this area, please call or talk to Greg Harris or Pastor Rachel.

We are currently restructuring our Bereavement Groups. Each of these groups are called upon on a rotating basis to provide light refreshments at funerals and memorial services. Groups are rarely called on more than once a year. We also need volunteers to help with set-up and clean-up. This is a wonderful ministry offered by St. John's to its members. If you would like to be on the bereavement team, please sign-up at the Spiritual Ops table or contact Joan Lewis for more information



Thank you everyone for all the love, support, cards, food, flowers, donations, and patience you have shown Dave and I over the past 2 years as he fought his illness and passed on May 20th. You have been my rock and foundation through everything. You are a blessing to me and a blessing to St. John's. It firms my belief that WE ARE A FAMILY here. I love all of you. Joan

St. John's Congregational Council Abbreviated Minutes July 17, 2023



Members Present: Pastor Rachel Connelly, Vicar Emily Whitlow, Jan Long, Greg Harris, John Hewell, Allen Harding, Sandra Pruitt, Jeremy Chapman, Bill Pickard and Lynn Pote

Meeting called to order by President Greg Harris at 6:05pm.

Devotion/Dwelling in the Word by John, using the scripture from Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

Prayer Requests taken and Pastor Rachel led members in prayer.

May Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes; by John, second by Bill. Minutes approved.

Strategic Plan Update:

Accessibility: Greg reported that 4 architects have been contacted. They have met with one firm, 2 will meet next week and 1 the following week.

Biggerstaff: Allen said the committee and board have had 7 meetings over the last 2 months. They have met with several firms to discuss possible uses and getting a survey and review of building/zoning codes. Further information will be discussed under New Business.

Eldercare: Committee has met 1 time so far. They will be scheduling a follow up meeting.

Families with Youth and Children: Committee will meet tomorrow night at 5:30pm.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Rachel stated it has been an extremely busy time with many of the Strategic Planning committees beginning their meetings and all the pastoral care visits. New intern, Olga Maria Cruz, and Pastor attended an internship orientation May 30-31st. Lutheroad Day Camp went very well.

Vicar's Report: Vicar Emily reported she only has 1 month left at St. John's, her last Sunday will be August 13th. She is working on finishing her final essay due Aug. 31st. She announced she will be getting married in September and will be moving to Tuscaloosa, AL. She will finish her last year of Seminary remotely, although every 5 weeks or so she will travel back to SC.

Treasurer's Report: Financial report submitted by Mark McLean. During the month of June income fell short of expenses by \$2,214. For the first 6 months of 2023 income is under budget by \$16,113. Expenses YTD are under budget by \$17,753. General Fund checking account balance is \$51,672.

Congregational Care: Wednesday lunches are back on track, July 26th will feature lasagna and is only \$5. per person. These Wednesday lunches are open to everyone.

Faith Formation: The big faith kick off is Sept. 17th Rally Day and concert.

Worship and Music: The choir is working on songs for the Sept. 17th concert and will be hosting an organ recital in October. Bell storage has moved to the Sunday School building.

Outreach: John stated the committee met in June. The guest speaker was Peggy Gamble from Senior Solutions in Walhalla. Senior Solutions serves age 55+, including meals, exercise equipment and classes, Medicare and Medicaid help. Ms. Gamble stated the primary concerns of members are transportation needs, house and lawn maintenance. Many live alone. John discussed the possibility of St. John's being involved in making phone calls to some of these seniors as a weekly check in.

Old Business: Allen reported that the sale of the mobile home on the Biggerstaff property has gone through and the money has been deposited. The home has not been moved yet.

New Business: Endowment Chair and Audit: Joe Sears served the last 10 years as Endowment Chair and has asked to have someone else head up this committee going forward. An audit will be arranged shortly in preparation for turning this position over. We hope to have a new chair in place by August to review requests. This committee typically meets 2x's a year. The Biggerstaff Strategic Planning Team and Board have determined that Nepl Landscape Architecture and Planning, LLC has proved to be the team best able to access our potential property usage and develop a master plan for Biggerstaff's future use.

The Motion: In addition to the \$10,000. approved by the Congregation for Biggerstaff's property assessment, an additional amount of up to \$5,000. from the Biggerstaff Capital Fund be approved for assessment and planning costs. John Hewell seconded this motion from committee. President, Greg Harris called for a Council vote. The motion was approved. Adjourned at 7:55 pm

Lynn Pote, Congregational Council Secretary



St. John's continues it's ministry of Thursday Meal Delivery to those in our congregation who are shut-in, undergoing medical treatment and those who just need a weekly visitor. Those involved in this ministry find gratification in knowing they have reached out in such a meaningful way. If you have considered becoming part of this ministry NOW IS THE TIME! We need additional volunteers. Please contact Joan Lewis for information on how you can help.