

THE CHIMES — SEPTEMBER 2023

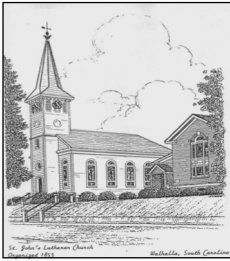
St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

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

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

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Dear St. John's:

Warm greetings to you all! I'm so happy to be here with you in Walhalla. The classic question, "Where are you from?" is a challenging one for me, though. I've journeyed through many places: from Germany to Oregon, Virginia (elementary school), Florida (jr. high, high school, & college), Kentucky (grad school), and both North and South Carolina. Oh, and a brief stint in England. For the past five years, I headed Winthrop Ecumenical Lutheran Campus Ministry through Grace Lutheran of Rock Hill. I'm also a candidate for ordination to Word and Sacrament in the SC Synod, and studying at LTSS in Columbia.

Recently, I discovered another approach to this question, inspired by the poem "Where I'm From" by Kentucky author George Ella Lyon. This idea looks at "being from" not just a place, but all the family traditions, foodways, values, and encounters with nature that shape our childhoods and carry our cultures.

Here's my take:

I am from the West Coast and then East, but mostly
the American South

I am from *ropa vieja* and *plantanos*
from green grapes
and Kraft Macaroni n' Cheese

I am from mossy creekbeds full of fossils
and slippery tadpoles

I am from honeysuckle
on the chain-link fence.

I am from tailors and butchers
from musicians and veterans

I am from opera and folk songs

I am from hope and toil
from oppression and resilience

I am from more than one place
one nation or people
more than one idea or story

I am fruit of a sprawling
family tree.

*From the
Vicar*



In the coming weeks, I'm eager to get to know this place, to get to know you as individuals and as a church family. I'm excited to learn how you connect to the story of St. John's, of Walhalla, and the Carolinas. I'm looking forward to making music with you and sharing God's Word. I hope you'll help me discover places to walk, jog, hike, and paddle. I'm on the lookout for dogs and horses to visit—and cats if the dogs and horses are busy! I'm hoping to find some folks to teach me how to grow some vegetables, and folks who will share their stories with me, as I will share mine with you.

Thank you immensely for the warm welcome I've already received—I so appreciate you who have introduced yourselves and wished me well. I'm especially grateful to those serving on my internship committee.

A **big** thanks to those who prepared the parsonage for me by moving furniture and cleaning; I'm truly enjoying the house. And to everyone who contributed gift cards and pantry supplies, your kindness touched me deeply. Every gift made a big impact. Walking into a house filled with fragrance-free cleaning products and opening a fridge with unsweetened almond milk made me feel right at home. Oh, and I'm managing to keep the beautiful peace lily alive so far!

With gratitude,

Vicar Olga-Maria Cruz

St. John’s Mission—Embracing a Changing World in Christ’s Love and Service

² *The LORD answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it.*

³ *For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end and does not lie.*

If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

⁴ *Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith. HABAkkUK 2:2-4*

Strategic Plan Update: Summary August 30, 2023

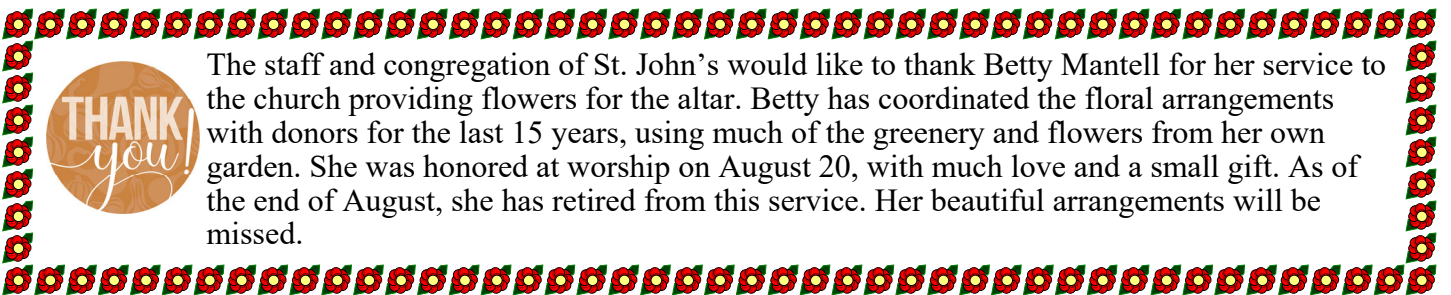
Accessibility: Greg reported that 3 of the 4 architect firms that we have met with, have submitted proposals. The committee met on Aug. 23 to review and discuss next steps. Two firms were deemed a good fit. Greg will approach the one firm to visit our church in person (the original meeting was by Zoom) and have them provide a more detailed proposal. The committee agreed that with any firm we choose, we will need to provide a topographical survey so Greg will contact Thomas Edwards (a local surveyor) to get price and hopefully schedule the survey. Committee members also agreed that we will need to speak with clients of these 2 firms and visit one or two recent projects.

Biggerstaff: Allen reported the chosen firm, Nepl Landscape Architecture and Planning, LLC has moved into phase 1, which is surveying the property. The firm discovered there is no original plat on file with the County, so there is additional work they need to do. Phase 1 should be completed by the end of September.

Eldercare: Pastor Rachel reported the committee has met twice. They are in the process of accumulating congregational involvement data to determine our current percentage of members involved in some form of eldercare already. This will help us to plan out our goal of 60% congregational involvement. Another meeting will be scheduled to discuss these findings and how to move forward.

Families with Youth and Children: Jeremy stated the youth event at Biggerstaff, a fun celebration with activities and swimming, was well attended. Thirteen youth and families attended (27 people total) which also included dinner and great fellowship. The next event will be a “Date Night” with youth gathering in the Fellowship hall for a movie night. The team met on Tuesday, August 29 and reported on Parents Night Out which was August 25 and had a total of 19 children, youth and adults. The gathering included food, fellowship and use of the new big “blow up screen” for movie-watching. The team also discussed Youth and Family staffing which is one of the tactics of the Strategic Plan for Families with youth and children. All agreed that the idea staff person would be an Associate Pastor that would commit at least 50% of their time to working with families with youth and children . As discussion moved forward it was recommended to share their consensus on this staffing with the council.

Eldercare: Pastor Rachel shared that this team has met with a focus on considering our current ministries with elders in our congregation. Task is to focus on new ministries to those both in the congregation and those in the community based on known needs of elders. The team will meet again in September. John Hewell has also had conversations with staff at Senior Solutions about how we might partner with them more in the future.



The staff and congregation of St. John’s would like to thank Betty Mantell for her service to the church providing flowers for the altar. Betty has coordinated the floral arrangements with donors for the last 15 years, using much of the greenery and flowers from her own garden. She was honored at worship on August 20, with much love and a small gift. As of the end of August, she has retired from this service. Her beautiful arrangements will be missed.



WELCA REPORT

Thanks to all of the organizers, table decorators, servers, Gather Uptown, door prize donors, and Pastor Jackie Utley for a great Tour of Tables on Saturday, August 19th! Over 70 ladies enjoyed the day, and we made a donation to Ascension Lutheran Church in Columbia. Knitters and Crocheters also made a donation from the boutique. The next local WELCA meeting will be on Saturday, **September 23 at 9:15 am** in the fellowship hall. The Fall Foothills Conference will be held on **Saturday, October 21**, at St. Michael Lutheran Church in Greenville from 10 am to 2 pm. Guest speaker will be Mandy Learo, a representative of Jasmine Road in Greenville, whose mission is to provide a path to healing and employment for women survivors of sex trafficking, prostitution and addiction. Lunch is provided with a short business meeting. Hoping for two carloads to attend. Sign up on Joan's table or send an email to Barbara Wilson by Saturday, September 30.

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 September 13 and 27** at 10am in the Fellowship Hall. Come join us!
Questions? Call or text Barbara at (864) 723-3376



THE GLORIA SHEALY CIRCLE

Gloria Shealy Circle



The Gloria Shealy Circle will meet on **September 19, 2023**, at 4pm, at the Tamassee DAR School. Please bring a picnic dinner. We will be given a tour of the facility. Contact Anne Craig or Shonda Mayer for more information.

THE SURVIVORS GROUP

The Survivors group will be going to Cracker Barrel in Anderson on **Monday, September 11** for lunch. We will carpool from the church. Please be at the church by 10:30am. Also, in September there is a Winds concert at Walhalla High for our group to attend. All widows and widowers are invited to join us for any event.



Survivors Group

LUCY KLAREN CIRCLE



The ladies of LKC would like to thank everyone who contributed to our annual LKC Jubilee scholarship fundraiser this year. Joezie White, Raeyanna Chapman, Derrick Lee, and Erin Fogerty were chosen as our scholarship winners this year, and each was presented with a check for \$1000 on senior awards night at Walhalla High School. We are so grateful to the many people and local businesses that contributed to help us continue this tradition. We welcome any ladies of the congregation who would like to come join our WELCA circle. Please contact Stephanie Champion (710-2588) or Kelly Singer (723-0909).



Just a reminder for Group Leaders and Committee Chairs... Please coordinate with the office before scheduling meetings so the church calendar can be updated. Thank you!



The church office will be closed Monday, September 4, 2023 for observance of Labor Day. The office will reopen Tuesday morning at 8:30 am.

St. John's Congregational Council Abbreviated Minutes August 20, 2023



Members Present: Pastor Rachel Connelly, Jan Long, Greg Harris, John Hewell, Allen Harding, Cathy Plowden, Scot Williams, Jeremy Chapman, Bill Pickard, Stephanie Champion and Lynn Pode. Excused: Sandra Pruitt.

Retreat planning began by Pastor Rachel with a team building exercise then said a blessing over the meal. After eating members discussed Where we've seen God most at work in our St. John's community since our retreat in January and what area do we think needs more attention in the fall.

Congregational Council Meeting for August called to order by President, Greg Harris at 6:45pm. Dwelling in the Word by Scot, using multiple scripture references relating to the power of prayer. Members discussed as a group. Prayer Requests taken and Pastor Rachel led members in prayer.

July Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved.

Strategic Planning goals discussed (see separate report).

Pastor's Report: Pastor Rachel stated our new intern, Olga Maria Cruz, will begin moving in on Monday. Her first Sunday with us will be August 27th. Vicar Emily's farewell party at Biggerstaff on August 12th was well attended and a wonderful send off. Tour of Tables was held yesterday with about 100 people total.

Treasurer's Report: Financial report submitted by Mark McLean. During the month of July income exceeded expenditures by \$2,569, however income is under budget for the first seven months by \$19,808. If not for expenses also being under budget, it would be an extremely difficult situation to overcome. A giving statement and letter to members will be coming out soon. General Fund checking account balance is \$54,241.

Committee Reports: Pastor Rachel reminded everyone of the big faith kickoff on Sept. 17th that is planned, which will include a new Sunday School class and a new Bible Study. God's work our Hands is being planned for September, which may become a month long project as opposed to a 1 day event. Clean up dates for the cemetery and Short Street lot will be held in September.

Old Business: Joe Sears has retired from the Endowment Chair position, we still need someone to chair the Endowment Committee. This committee typically meets 2 times per year. Stewardship for all Seasons, program to begin in the fall. Possible November meeting for congregation, planning meetings continue.

New Business: The property committee voted unanimously to present the following Motion to the Council. The committee asks the Congregational Council to submit a petition to the Oconee County commissioners asking them to demolish the old courthouse across from the church which has been vacant for more than 20 years, is an eyesore to our members and visitors, and is a hazard to pedestrians and vehicles. If Council votes to approve this, a draft letter by President Harris would also be included in a presentation by Luther Lyle to the Oconee County Commissioners at their September, 2023 meeting. After a brief discussion by Council members, Greg called for a vote. Motion approved. Congregational meeting for fall will be Nov. 12th. Pastor Rachel noted that the 170th anniversary of our congregation's founding is coming up November 20, 2023. Council discussed the anniversary celebration and came to the conclusion that Sunday, November 19th made the most sense. We would have one worship service that day at 10:30am with a celebration lunch to follow at noon. This will allow everyone to celebrate together.

Next Council Meeting will be September 18th at 6:00p.m



BabyRead desperately needs volunteers to read one-on-one to moms and their babies or toddlers at public venues twice a month for one hour each time. They currently have 10 new families who are waiting for a volunteer reader. All of their current readers are assigned to other families. To become a BabyRead volunteer, visit www.babyread.org.