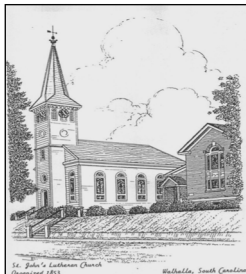


THE CHIMES — FEBRUARY 2024



St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

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

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

Biggerstaff Christian Retreat
biggerstaffretreat@gmail.com

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

Dear Friends:

On Sunday, February 11 we move to the mountain of Transfiguration. This Sunday in the liturgical calendar is a touchstone moment in the church year. In so many ways, Transfiguration looms in the background right from the anticipatory season of Advent. Certainly, from the day of Epiphany and the revealing of the Christ child to the Magi, and from then on, the next revealing of Christ the Messiah is on the way. The words spoken at Jesus' Baptism foreshadow the words spoken at his Transfiguration on the mountain: "This is my Son, the beloved."

And this mountain stands before the valley to come, the valley of Lent that will push Jesus towards that next hill, the hill of Good Friday and another revealing of who he is as the Christ, the Savior of the world.

Within this newsletter are many opportunities for gathering as God's people to worship, to study, to serve, and to share together in conversations with the shadow of the cross and the hope of the empty tomb calling us to deeper faith and discipleship.

In Christ's Love and Service,

Pastor Rachel Connelly

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING—Sunday, February 11

DONATIONS OF SOUP CANS AND DOLLARS

We will be collecting cans again this year as part of the "Souper Bowl of Caring" program that is all about tackling hunger in local communities.

All donations of soup cans can be placed in the boxes on or by the Spiritual Ops table.

(Share your Team spirit by placing in either the "Chiefs" or "49ers" box)

On Sunday, February 11, we will also have Soup Pots out for collections of your dollars and change.

Church "CAN"STRUCTION

During the Youth and Children's time at the 11am worship service, there will be an interactive time of building a church with all the soup cans.

All donations received will be donated to St. Luke's Methodist Food Pantry.



This month I will wrap up survey and oral narrative collection for my internship project, *Resurrection Song*. Ash Wednesday is the last day to contribute your stories! This project is about acknowledging what was lost and gained, about building greater understanding and healing so that we can move forward together. And it is about documenting how St. John's navigated a challenging time, not just for our greater wisdom, but for the generations to come.

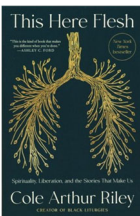
*From the
Vicar*



I will analyze the data, combining quantitative insights from the survey with the richness of our oral narratives. Then, through the season of Lent, we'll come together weekly over a soup supper on Wednesdays at 5:45pm, where I will present and lead discussion on my findings. We will hold that time and space to process and pray, together. I will say more about our Lenten journey through the wilderness to the cross and resurrection in next month's Chimes! For now, I will invite you to join in that journey—I look forward to our Wednesday conversations and prayer time.

Grace & peace,

Vicar Olga-Maria Cruz



St. John's Book Club will meet **Tuesday, Feb 20th at 7 pm** at the parsonage. February's book is **This Here Flesh**, by Cole Arthur Riley, available in hard or soft cover, audiobook or kindle e-book. Also, our monthly meetings will now be **hybrid events!** Please **RSVP** when you can, via email or text (502-644-0176) -- and be sure to let Vicar Olga-Maria know if you'll be attending in person or joining us via Zoom so she can send you a link.

Happy New Year!

For musicians, this is the awkward time of year right after Christmas, when we are tired from all of the Christmas activities, but we suddenly and quickly have to switch gears and look toward Lent and Easter. This always puzzles me. We only get a few weeks to go through Jesus' birth, life and death in a whirlwind tour and then we have months with not a whole lot going on aside from Pentecost until the fall. I guess maybe it shows us how brief Jesus' life was compared to all of the rest of human history, but what a profound effect He had on humanity in that short time. It definitely makes church musicians stay on their toes.

If you are musically gifted and are interested in joining our choir or bell choir for Easter, we would love to hear from you. Feel free to contact me or Deb Blackmore or Frances Guldner, our bell coordinator and director to find out more information about these groups. Also, if you play a musical instrument, please let me know.

I now have a homework assignment for you, if you are interested. I would like to know: what are your 3 favorite hymns. They can be any style or genre. Please send them to me by email at carla@carlasart.com with the subject line "Favorite Hymns". If you can't narrow it down to three, send me your top five or ten!

Blessings to you all in the new year,

*Carla Padgett,
Music Director*



St. John's Praise Ringers are looking for new members. If you've ever wanted to learn how to play Handbells, this is your opportunity. No prior music experience is necessary and you don't have to be able to read music; we will train you. Handbells practice is on Tuesday evenings at 5:30pm. Contact Deb Blackmore for more information at blackmoredm@icloud.com

WELCA REPORT



WELCA will be holding its quarterly meeting on **Saturday, February 10 at 9am** in the Fellowship Hall. Any Lutheran woman is considered a member of WELCA and is welcome to attend any meetings or functions. Contact Jan Long with any questions janlong4999@yahoo.com.

KNITTERS & CROCHETERS

Would you like to learn how to knit or crochet? Need help to revive your skills? One-on-one teaching is available. Upcoming meetings are on **Wednesday, February 14 and 28 at 10am**. Questions? Call or text Barbara at (864) 723-3376.



Gloria Shealy Circle



THE GLORIA SHEALY CIRCLE

The Gloria Shealy Circle will meet on **Tuesday, February 20** at Paesanos Restaurant in Seneca at 5pm for dinner and a short program. Donation will be gift cards for the Lucy Klaren Jubilee auction. Please let Ann Brackett or Sandra Pruitt know if you will be attending, so they can make reservations.



LUCY KLAREN CIRCLE

The next meeting for the Lucy Klaren Circle is scheduled on **Thursday, February 15** at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us as we finalize our Jubilee plans! Contact Stephanie Champion for more information 864-710-2588.

Lucy Klaren Annual Jubilee and Silent Auction . . .

The evening of **Saturday, February 24, 2024**, LKC will be hosting its annual Jubilee and Silent Auction at the Walhalla Depot. There will be lively music, tasty food, a variety of beverages, and lots of great items to be auctioned off. Childcare will be provided at the church. Tickets will be \$25 each. All proceeds go towards scholarships for Walhalla High School seniors who demonstrated a passion for community service. If you're not able to attend and would like to be a sponsor, please contact Stephanie Champion at 864-710-2588 or any LKC member.



THE SURVIVORS GROUP

The Survivors group will have a Valentine's lunch on **Monday, February 12**. We will have our lunch at Raines on Exchange in Pendleton at 11:30am. We always look forward to this monthly lunch. On **Sunday, February 18** we will have a soup potluck lunch with a meeting after late service. Then, we are planning a trip at the end of the month. All widows/widowers are welcome to any event. For further information, contact Jan Long or Shonda Mahler.



2024 LUTHEROAD DAY CAMP

St John's is partnering again with Camp Lutheridge
for a week of faith-filled Day Camp.

Our dates for Summer 2024 are June 17-21

Hosted at Biggerstaff Retreat

Registration information will be available in late February.



St. John's Council Abbreviated Minutes - Jan. 15, 2024

Members Present: Pastor Rachel Connelly, Vicar Olga-Maria Cruz, Greg Harris, Jan Long, John Hewell, Jeremy Chapman, Cathy Plowden, Bill Pickard, Allen Harding, Patty Shepard, Bill Brackett, Stan Gartner, Pilar Riddle and Lynn Pode

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

Devotion/Dwelling in the Word by Allen Harding, using the scripture from Titus 1:7-14 and Matthew 20:28. Members discussed as a group.

Prayer Requests taken and Pastor Rachel led members in prayer.

Welcome and Introductions by Greg Harris. A brief review of 2023's accomplishments and regrets was made by members along with hopes for 2024. These results will be further discussed and examined during an upcoming retreat.

December Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved.

Strategic Plan Update: Accessibility: The surveys have been completed and given to the architects. They will review and meet with the committee to work on next steps. **Biggerstaff:** Allen reported they met with Don Nepl (landscape architect) and he will submit a drawing in the next 30-45 days with suggested changes for use incorporating feedback from the committee and the survey results. Tony Niemeyer, has experience with various developments (Reserve, Kiawah Island, Amelia Island, etc.) and will be joining the board to help with the planning efforts. **Eldercare:** The committee will transition from planning to a task force. (Accessibility will play an important role).

Families with Youth and Children: Jeremy reported the youth adopted a DSS child for Christmas and also delivered Christmas Eve meals with Patty Shepard. The next date night will be February 24 (during the LKC Jubilee).

Treasurer's Report: During the month of December income exceeded expenses by \$18,340. 2023 income exceeded expenses by \$23,374. 2023 expenses were under budget by \$19,294. General Fund checking account balance is \$62,026.

Stewardship for all Seasons: Jan reported that 70 commitment cards have been received so far. Fifty one of those show an increase in giving for 2024. In December a generous member agreed to match \$100 for each card sent in up to \$2,000 (20 cards). Since then we have received 16 cards - 4 more cards are needed to receive the full match. **The matching funds will go toward improving the sound system in the Sanctuary.**

Pastor's Report: Pastor Rachel stated that December was full of much joy and some sorrow. Dottie Brandt's death was a great loss to the congregation.

Vicar's Report: Vicar Olga-Maria reported she enjoyed the many connections she made with members and their families during December. The evening book club she started is going well and has opted to become a hybrid experience where they will include via Zoom those who can't come in person.

Old Business: Council Retreat set for February 17th, location TBD.

New Business: Election of Officers for 2024; President, Greg Harris, Vice President, Lynn Pode and Recording Secretary, Cathy Plowden. Ministry Committee/liason assignments; Cong. Care, Bill Pickard, Outreach, John Hewell, Property, Patty Shepard, Worship/Music, Jan Long, Finance, Stan Gartner, Faith Formation, Pilar Riddle, Stewardship, Bill Brackett, Families with Youth, Jeremy Chapman and Biggerstaff, Allen Harding.

Announcements: Greg reported that a three person Audit Committee needs to be appointed. (Must be non-Council members).

Next Council Meeting/Retreat is February 17, 2023 at 9:00am, location TBD.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:05pm by praying the Lord's Prayer.



THRIVENT MEMBERSHIP

Apply for or renew your Associate Membership today- Your Associate Thrivent membership includes exclusive benefits designed to keep you informed and help you stay connected and give back generously to your community. Yearly membership dues are \$19.95. Forms are available at the Spiritual Ops table.

SAVE THE DATE

ISSAQUEENA'S BIKE RIDE – SATURDAY APRIL 20, 2024

St. John's will be hosting the annual bike ride by providing breakfast and lunch to the 200+ riders. Volunteers will be asked to work a 3-hour shift and donate soups/salads/sandwiches.

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON