



St John's

Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 26, 2026

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH!

- ❖ We are glad you are worshiping with us! If you're a visitor, please enter your name in the guestbook near the entrance and our pastor will reach out to you.
 - ❖ A printed cross † is an invitation to make the sign of the cross on your forehead or body. We make the sign of the cross to remember our Baptism and the promise: *"You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever."*
 - ❖ **Bold print** indicates a speaking part for the whole assembly.
 - ❖ Restrooms are located in the Narthex to the right of the front door and through the doors behind the choir to the left.
 - ❖ A nursery is available for your use. Ask an usher for directions.
 - ❖ Today's liturgy is **Setting Ten** from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.
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ALTAR FLOWERS

Today's altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in honor of Catherine Ritch by the Congregation of St. John's.

Altar flowers are a meaningful way to glorify God and honor loved ones in worship. A gift of \$75 to the St. John's Flower Fund is encouraged. To sponsor altar flowers, please contact the church office.

HOLY COMMUNION

- ❖ You are welcome to receive Holy Communion. If you would prefer to receive a blessing instead, please come forward during the distribution with your arms crossed.
 - ❖ **Please note: The homemade communion bread is gluten, dairy, and nut free.** If you prefer a wafer, please indicate by raising a finger as you approach the pastor.
 - ❖ Grape juice, instead of wine, is also available.
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PRAYER LIST

We invite you to join us in prayer for members and friends of St. John's. A printed prayer list is available in the Narthex and is emailed each morning at 4:30 a.m. in the *Daily Cycle of Prayer*.

*To add a name, please submit a request through our website or contact the church office.
Scan the QR code below to view the current list.*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

MONETARY GIFTS FOR CATHERINE RITCH

The church will collect monetary gifts in honor of Catherine's nearly two-decade long tenure at St. John's. You may designate a check in her name and place it in the offering plate or in the notes section in online giving.

CLASSIC RESTAURANT OUTING

Following worship next Sunday – May 3rd – we will head to the Classic Restaurant in Denton. If you'd like to join us, sign up in the Narthex or by reaching out to the church office.

FAITH NIGHT AT THE CANNONBALLERS

May 29th is Faith Night at the Cannonballers. We have a group of 20 tickets available. The cost for each ticket is \$13. Please let the church office know if you want tickets.

NC SYNOD GATHERING

The Synod Gathering is scheduled for Thursday to Saturday, May 28–30, at Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory. Church members and visitors, pastors, and deacons from across the synod will gather to develop community, grow in faith, and grow skills for building God's church. All are welcome. To register, visit the synod website.

HERITAGE CENTER COMMUNION SERVICE

Our Heritage Center communion service will be held Tuesday, April 28th at **9am**. Please note the time change; Pastor Matt had a meeting conflict and needed to reschedule.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETS TUESDAY

The Congregation Council will meet for its monthly meeting at 6pm on Tuesday, April 28th in Goins Hall.

UPDATE AND THANKS FROM KRISTIN ROWLAND

We would like to share a joyful update regarding my mother, Lori Jones, who has been on our church prayer list since the end of 2025. As of April 10, 2026, we are beyond grateful to report that she has been told she is cancer free! Our family cannot begin to express how thankful we are for the overwhelming love, support, and faithful prayers that have surrounded us during this journey. Every prayer spoken, every kind word asked about her, and every moment of concern shown over these past several months has meant more than we can put into words. After multiple rounds of chemotherapy and surgery, we truly believe that God worked through the hands of her medical team and through the prayers of this wonderful congregation. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for walking alongside our family during this time. We give all the glory to God and are so grateful for each and every one of you. Thank you!

–Kristin Rowland

VIRTUAL MOTHER'S DAY BOUQUETS

What better way to remember or honor a mom that you love, than with a virtual bouquet? Complete the form below and submit a donation of any size to the altar flower fund. Virtual bouquets will be listed in the bulletin on Mother's Day. Please submit forms no later than Tuesday, May 5th.

GRADUATE RECOGNITION

May 17th will be Senior Recognition Sunday. If you are a high school or college senior, please let the church office know.

A THANK YOU FROM CATHERINE RITCH

What a day! Even though I am an author with 27 books in print, I cannot find the words to adequately express the depth of my thanks for the amazing lunch and celebration held in honor of my years at St. John's following the service on April 19th. I had wanted to walk out the door of St. John's quietly on my last Sunday with no attention or anything special. Well, anything but that happened, as I was totally blown away by all the cards, the gifts, the niceties, the food, the comments, the videos – *everything!* It was an absolutely amazing day, and one I shall never forget. When I finally got home Sunday evening after choir rehearsal and getting some last things done, I read the cards and just sat, stunned, at the many expressions of appreciation and the gifts. Being at St. John's and serving with you all of these years leaves me with many memories and wonderful experiences. You shall always be a part of my life, and I do not intend to be a stranger. You are not just a congregation, you are my family, and you have been to all of my family over these many years. As you begin the search for a new staff person, I pray that you find someone who dearly loves and appreciates you as much as I have over all this time. St. John's is the smallest church in which I have ever served, but you certainly excelled in your outreach and your various ways of ministry. That is what I loved most about my time here. I could not have been with finer people. *Thank you for everything*, and especially for your gifts of appreciation! Sincerely, Catherine Ritch

✠ GATHERING ✠

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME

CHORAL PRELUDE

Every Valley Needs a Lily

arr. Nordmeyer

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb! **Amen.**

Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Merciful God, you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come. You lead us beside still waters. We thank you for the waters of creation: morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves. We thank you for the waters that nourish us; for Dutch Buffalo Creek, Cold Water Creek, and the Rocky River. Blessed are you. **You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness who accompanies us on our journeys. We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection. We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow. Blessed are you. **You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows. Break down barriers that divide us. Fill us with the breath of peace. Blessed are you. **You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism, and for making us a new creation. We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise, now and forever. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

The Lord's My Shepherd

ELW #778



1 The Lord's my shep-herd; I'll not want. He makes me down to lie
2 My soul he doth re - store a - gain, and me to walk doth make
3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear no ill;
4 My ta - ble thou hast rich - ly spread in pres-ence of my foes;
5 Good-ness and mer - cy all my life shall sure - ly fol - low me,



in pas - tures green; he lead - eth me the qui - et wa - ters by.
with - in the paths of righ-teous-ness, e'en for his own name's sake;
for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff me com - fort still;
my head thou dost with oil a - noint, and my cup o - ver - flows.
and in God's house for - ev - er - more my dwell-ing-place shall be;



He lead - eth me, he lead - eth me the qui - et wa - ters by.
with - in the paths of righ-teous-ness, e'en for his own name's sake.
for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff me com - fort still.
My head thou dost with oil a - noint, and my cup o - ver - flows.
and in God's house for - ev - er - more my dwell-ing-place shall be.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



1 Come, let us join our cheer - ful songs with an - gels round the throne;
2 "Wor - thy the Lamb that died," they cry, "to be ex - alt - ed thus!"
3 Je - sus is wor - thy to re - ceive hon - or and pow'r di - vine;
4 Let all cre - a - tion join in one to bless the sa - cred name



ten thou-sand thou-sand are their tongues, but all their joys are one.
"Wor - thy the Lamb," our lips re - ply, "for he was slain for us!"
and bless-ings, more than we can give, be, Lord, for - ev - er thine.
of God who sits up - on the throne, and to a - dore the Lamb.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

✠ WORD ✠

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

TIME FOR OUR YOUNGEST DISCIPLES

Children are invited to come forward for a conversation with the pastor.

FIRST READING: ACTS 2:42-47

A reading from Acts.

⁴² [The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Christ is risen! This is the Word of life. **Alleluia! Thanks be to God!**

PSALM 23

We read Psalm 23 responsively.

¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² **He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;**

³ he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

⁴ **Even though I walk through the darkest valley,**

**I fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.**

⁵ You prepare a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
 you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
 all the days of my life,
 and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
 my whole life long.

SECOND READING: 1 PETER 2:19-25

A reading from First Peter.

¹⁹ It is a commendable thing if, being aware of God, a person endures pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this is a commendable thing before God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

²² “He committed no sin,
 and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

²³ When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Christ is risen! This is the Word of life. Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.

Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.

Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL: JOHN 10:1-10

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] ¹“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

The Rev. Matt Hansen

HYMN OF THE DAY

Have No Fear, Little Flock

ELW #764



1 Have no fear, lit - tle flock; have no fear, lit - tle
2 Have good cheer, lit - tle flock; have good cheer, lit - tle
3 Praise the Lord high a - bove; praise the Lord high a -
4 Thank - ful hearts raise to God; thank - ful hearts raise to



flock, for the Fa - ther has cho - sen to
flock, for the Fa - ther will keep you in
bove, for he stoops down to heal you, up -
God, for he stays close be - side you, in



give you the king - dom; have no fear, lit - tle flock!
his love for - ev - er; have good cheer, lit - tle flock!
lift and re - store you; praise the Lord high a - bove!
all things works with you; thank - ful hearts raise to God!

THE NICENE CREED

With the whole Church, we confess our faith.

We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.

✝ MEAL ✝

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERTORY

I'm in His Care

arr. Dawson

OFFERING

You may give online, by visiting www.stjohnsconcord.com/give or by texting "give" to (704) 706-2115.

OFFERING SONG

He's Done So Much For Me

Sing! Hymnal #169

1. He's done so much for me, I can-not tell it all, I can-not
2. He washed my sins a-way; I can-not tell it all, I can-not
3. He walks and talks with me; I can-not tell it all, I can-not
4. He gave me vic-to-ry; I can-not tell it all, I can-not

tell it all, I can-not tell it all. He's done so much for me,
tell it all, I can-not tell it all. He washed my sins a-way;
tell it all, I can-not tell it all. He walks and talks with me;
tell it all, I can-not tell it all. He gave me vic-to-ry;

I can-not tell it all, I can-not tell it all.

Chords: F, F, Bb, F, C, C7, F, F, F, F, Bb, F, Bb, F/C, C7sus, F

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together. Merciful God, accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more. Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**


Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin; who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy, living, and loving God, we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth. We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood, for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery, and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer. We give you thanks for Jesus who, living among us, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and with a love stronger than death, gave his life for others.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was handed over, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

ACCLAMATION



Christ has died. Christ is ris-en. Christ will come a - gain.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE *(continued)*

Remembering, therefore, his life-giving death and glorious resurrection, we await your promised life for all this dying world. Breathe your Spirit on us and on this bread and cup: carry us in your arms from death to life, that we may live as your chosen ones, clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.



A - men, a - men, a - men.

LORD'S PRAYER

As our Savior Christ taught us, we are bold to say: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table of new life. Receive the risen Lord.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray together. Holy God, through this meal you have made your home among us and are making all things new. **Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts, to love our enemies, and to bring your healing to the nations. In the name of Jesus, Amen.**

✠ SENDING ✠

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

RITE OF FAREWELL & GODSPEED

Catherine, as you leave our congregation, we wish to bid you farewell.

A reading from Exodus: The LORD said, “I am going to send an angel in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.” (*Exodus 23:20*)

When you came to St. John’s, we rejoiced to welcome you into the mission we share as the people of God. Over these many years, you have led us in song, week after week, giving voice to our joy, our grief, and our hope. You have walked alongside our youngest disciples at Vacation Bible School, on mission trips, and at youth gatherings, helping them discover that the story of God includes and celebrates them and their unique gifts. You have written, told stories, and given language to what we sometimes struggle to say. You have helped us mark the seasons of the church year — Advent longing, Christmas joy, Lenten reflection, Easter hope — so that over time, these rhythms and your contributions have become part of us.

Through all of this, God has been at work, blessing you in this place, and blessing us through you. And so today, we give thanks — for the countless, often unseen ways you have helped this congregation pray, sing, and believe.

Let us pray. Gracious God, we thank you for the work and witness of your servant, Catherine. You have given her gifts for music, leadership, creativity, and care, and you have used those gifts to build up your church in this place. Now, as she enters a new chapter, bless and preserve her in this time of transition. Go before her to prepare the way. Walk beside her in moments of uncertainty. Surround her with friends, companions, and communities that will sustain her. Give her a clear sense of your calling, and the courage to follow where you lead. By your Holy Spirit, be present in her pilgrimage, that she may continue to travel with the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Lord of the Dance

Carter

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

*Refrain: Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.
And I'll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,
But they would not dance and they would not follow me;
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;
They came to me and the dance went on. **Refrain**

I danced on the Sabbath when I cured the lame,
The holy people said it was a shame;
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high;
And they left me there on a cross to die. **Refrain**

I danced on a Friday and the sky turned black;
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back;
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
But I am the dance and I still go on. **Refrain**

They cut me down and I leapt up high,
I am the life that'll never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. **Refrain**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia! **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

POSTLUDE

Passacaglia

15th c. English Carol

SERVING TODAY

The Reverend Matt Hansen *Pastor*

Catherine Ritch *Director of Music*

Sheryll Garfola *Lector*

Sheryll Garfola & Angela Ferguson *Communion Assistants*

John Hartsell, David Ritchie, Jacob Sigler, Eddie Walters *Ushers*

Volunteers needed! *Livestream Support*

Bonita Rowland & family *Nursery Attendants*

Angela Ferguson, Sheryl Garfola *Altar Guild*

Vera Drye *Teller Lead*

CONTACT US

BY PHONE

Church Office (704) 436-6081 *(Please leave a voice message)*

ONLINE

Office Email office@stjohnsconcord.com

Bulletin Announcement Email announcements@stjohnsconcord.com

ON-SITE

Address 100 St. John's Church Rd, Concord, NC 28025

Church Office Hours Mon-Fri, 8am to Noon

Pastor Matt's Office Hours Mon-Thu, *by appointment*.

↔ *Please note: Pastor Matt observes Sabbath every Friday* ↔

The mission of St. John's Lutheran Church is to share God's love through revitalization, community, and outreach.

