



Let's connect faith and life. *Together.*

Living into a New Normal

Being the church in a time of social distancing

By Pastor Rhodes Woolly

The other day a friend said: "This last week has been the longest year of my life."

It feels like that, doesn't it? It wasn't long ago that we were following Super Tuesday results, arguing with Joe Lunardi's college basketball predictions, and gearing up for spring high school sports.

... which feels like a lifetime ago.

Since that time, we've all learned a new vocabulary (social distancing and "shelter in place," for starters), watched way too much Netflix, grown to appreciate teachers more than ever before, and claimed work as a *gift*.

We've also started to think in new ways about how to love and care for each other. We've learned to value FaceTime, hand-written cards, and long walks. Our group of neighbors are enjoying social time at the end of each day — outside, properly distanced from each other!

And we're gaining a new-found appreciation for worship. More specifically, *virtual worship*.

Worshipping online. We began worshipping online Christmas 2018. What started as a single camera in the sanctuary's balcony soon turned into three cameras that are controlled by a single operator from the sound booth. By the end of last year, our online audience had increased from 30 to over 150 each week — which means that 150 devices were tuning into the 11:00 service through our website, Facebook, or YouTube.

How fortunate we have been to test drive online worship this past year. We certainly weren't thinking about a global pandemic when we began, but over a year's worth of experience made it relatively easy to transition to a fully online experience on March 15.

Is virtual the same as live? Of course not. But what we're hearing is that people are craving worship, even if it's from a TV set, phone, or computer screen. On March 15 alone, 1250 devices logged into our worship service. The next Wednesday evening, 250 devices logged into our Lenten worship service.

One thing seems so very clear: In times like these, people long for worship.

Creating Sacred Space. Last Sunday evening, I sat with my family in front of the TV as we watched our worship service on YouTube. It was different, no doubt. Half-way through, I looked around the room to see Matt laid out on the couch, Carter on the carpet, Anna curled up under a blanket, Krista returning from the kitchen with a glass of water and I, well, before I knew it I was checking text messages on my phone.

Which begs the question: How do we create sacred space for virtual worship?

The answer depends on your context and your family dynamics, of course, but a few general thoughts come to mind:

1. Define your space. If you have more than one TV, consider choosing a site that is not often used for casual TV use. Maybe that's a living room, or even around a dining room table. Wherever you choose, declutter and remove distractions in order to create a sense of sacred space.
2. Establish a ritual. I love the idea of families lighting candles as we begin online worship. Or make the sign of the cross on your body. Tangible signs help the body and soul enter into the fullness of worship.
3. Dress for worship. I'll probably get laughed at for this one, but consider the value of "getting dressed" for worship.

I remember visiting an elderly lady when I was on my internship in Virginia. She lived alone in an old farmhouse, unable to worship with us on Sunday mornings. We sat in her kitchen and chatted. She was wearing a simple smock dress; I

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Pastor's Letter



Dear friends,

I look forward to a day that doesn't begin with a coronavirus update. I'm sure you do, too.

Everyone has been affected or inconvenienced in one way or another. First and foremost, we lift up those who have been diagnosed with

the virus, those around the world who have died, and families who have been torn apart by the loss of life. My daily inconveniences pale in comparison to what they are going through.

Likewise, those who have lost jobs or whose income has been severely restricted, who are now stressing over making rent or buying food. I've heard some beautiful stories of landlords halting rent for the foreseeable future and neighbors providing food for each other. And special kudos to our school system for providing breakfast and lunch to students who otherwise might not have a healthy meal to eat. School bus drivers and teachers never imagined using bus routes to transport hot meals to kids, but that's what they're doing every day of the week.

I'm sensitive to those who have lost loved ones during this crisis, who have made the hard decision of delaying funerals or staging small, family-only graveside services.

And what about those with wedding plans? Everything has changed, no doubt.

And our high school seniors? I'm particularly sensitive to that one, of course, because I have a high school senior at home. Spring sports, proms, and all kinds of seniors-only activities have been cancelled, although principals have assured this class of 2020 that they'll think in creative ways to make sure

their senior year is remembered positively.

That applies to our college seniors, too. Walking across the graduation stage is something you remember the rest of your life. I have no doubt they'll find other ways to commemorate this special achievement, but still

How do we navigate our way through all the loss? I'm going to sound extremely sappy right now but bear with me: Be together. Social distancing doesn't mean social isolation, but it does demand that we think in creative ways. Sure, watch movies together, FaceTime together, send handwritten notes to each other, surprise each other with a special message or treat or gift. Be particularly aware of those in your "world" who live alone. Prepare a meal for Rowan Helping Ministries and take it to them (that's a BIG need, by the way). Call a teacher and say thanks.

In other words, show that we're all in this together.

There's a story of Jesus and his disciples in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. When a storm broke out, the disciples were terribly afraid, but found that Jesus was asleep – wondering, perhaps, if Jesus didn't care.

What the disciples soon realized was that Jesus, even then, was preparing to bring calm to their storm. His first words were these: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you." In other words, we're all in this together.

... which gives us every reason in the world to be of good courage, even though life isn't going as planned. Be of good courage, friends, because together we'll make it. God promises us that.

Our very best to you and yours.

+Pastor Rhodes

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was in my usual attire. When I

asked if she wanted to share in holy communion, she asked to be excused and went back to what I assumed was her bedroom. She was gone for 10-15 minutes. I started to get nervous. Then this lovely woman emerged, having changed into a new pair of clothes, with make up and combed hair.

"My mom always taught me to dress for worship," she said. I'll never forget it.

"Dressing for worship" might not be meaningful or necessary

for you, but at the very least I would encourage you to be intentional about how you approach virtual worship.

Otherwise we stand the risk of "watching" worship rather than fully participating in it.

These are uncertain days. Our hope and prayer is that we can be fully present as the Body of Christ, caring for each other, loving each other, and, yes, worshipping together.

Even if you have to start by searching "SJLC" on your favorite mobile device.

Holy Week and Easter Worship at St. John's

The 40-day season of Lent comes to a conclusion on Easter as the church around the world gathers to celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death. Experience the fullness of the story by joining us online throughout Holy Week. Together we'll walk from the gates of Jerusalem to the Upper Room, from the cross to the tomb.

Palm Sunday

April 5

The Passion Narrative retold through dramatic music, instrumentation, drama, and art.

Worship begins with a virtual procession of palms, in which members and friends participate through shared media.

Online worship begins at 11 am.

Maundy Thursday

April 9

A service that remembers "the night on which he was betrayed." Maundy means "command," which draws upon Jesus' final command to his disciples to "love one another." Our worship ends with the stripping of the altar.

Online worship begins at 7 pm.

Good Friday

April 10

A dramatic Tenebrae service of darkness, when we remember the power of God's love and the sacrifice of Christ on a cross.

Online worship begins at 7 pm.

Easter Sunday

April 12

A festival service that celebrates the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Online worship begins at 11 am.

Be of Good Courage

Hear from Stacey Shafer about Kingdom Kids “at home”



Children's ministry at St. John's normally offers milestones, Sunday School, Sunday Children's Worship, Wednesday Night high energy Kingdom Kids, and Kingdom Kids Handbells. Stacey Shafer, Children's Minister, shares how Kingdom Kids has shifted to continue to stay connected and engaged with new material and activities.

Since moving to an entirely digital worship experience, how has your ministry area shifted?

Moving to an entirely digital worship has shifted the normal hugs and high fives from our Kingdom Kids to staying connected through Facebook live and emails. The curriculum we use, Orange, has given us the ability to send parents the weekly bible story and monthly dance videos through a Vimeo link. Staying connected with the curriculum is an important part in children's ministry. Sharing other fun videos and positive encouragement online is a blessing for all of us. I've been blessed to get some good feedback so far, especially from parents of our youngest kingdom kids who are still following along. For us, even though we aren't in person, it isn't all digital. We've made monthly packages available to all our Kingdom Kids so they can follow along with activities, games, crafts, and scripture.

What are some exciting things you have enjoyed so far?

I've had to get outside of my comfort zone and learn things about technology that I normally wouldn't have felt comfortable with. I've enjoyed finding that courage within

myself. I've enjoyed thinking creatively about how to be with you, when I can't be physically, like giving my hugs to Ollie the Owl, the mascot for our First Look, Birth to 3 year old Kingdom Kids, and making sure the kids see him in our videos.

Parents, thank you for your videos and pictures you have sent my way! KEEP THEM COMING! They bring me laughter, smiles and great joy. My heart is full with where God has called me in this ministry.

As we live into the reality of social distancing a little while longer, what opportunities does this present in your ministry areas that St. John's can look forward to?

It looks as though social distancing is going to last a bit longer than we would really like. As I am preparing packages for April, I am reminded of the opportunity we have to grow deeper in faith as individual families and when we are able to see each other again we will embrace the opportunity to become an even stronger church family. In the meantime, we are working on ways to make sure that all our Kingdom Kids are more than just reached, but engaging with the material. And, you never know, we may be seeing more of each other for more fun together on Facebook Live!

I will be taking special attention and time with our youngest Kingdom Kids on Sunday mornings on Facebook Live at 9:30 am. In **First Look**, birth to 4 years old, we will answer the question: Who is alive? Jesus is alive! Each time we see a flower bloom, we can be reminded that Jesus is alive.

In April, our **252 Kids**, K-5th graders, will learn that every day, we have the chance to put someone else first and flip their day upside down. After all, Jesus turned everything upside down. He can help us choose humility and give up what we think we deserve. I will continue to meet on Wednesdays at 4 pm with our 252 Kids on Facebook Live.

Along with the April themes, we are working on providing a special learning experience for children during Holy Week.

Be of Good Courage

Pastor Laura Shares Digital Plans for Youth Ministry

From Pastor Laura: "These last two weeks have been a whirlwind, and I am not sure that I will remember half of it. Overnight, our lives completely shifted. What was once taken for granted will no one, ever be taken for granted. To be completely honest, my life and ministry has been wrapped up in the shift and creative drive for worship services and our Child Development Center, but we've been working on plans to kick off digital youth meetings in April."

Since moving to an entirely digital worship experience, how has your ministry area shifted?

There are the obvious things that have changed, no youth group meetings and a postponed Youth Auction. We went from having a busy schedule of youth Sunday conversation, a lock-in to prep for Youth Auction, and moving towards graduation Sunday to no meetings. My hope is that our youth have been engaging with our youth's social media page and livestreams of our Sunday and Wednesday worship already, but we've been working on more creative ways to engage with the youth digitally.

What are some exciting things you have enjoyed so far?

I have really enjoyed creating a seven-day devotional on Instagram for our students. I am learning now more than ever how connected our students are with each other. We might shake our heads at the fact that students are technology driven, but I find it as a gift for them in times such as these. It is wonderful to see the communities that have formed to be able to sustain them. Even with that connection, our students are grieving the loss of a semester. Our seniors are grieving the loss of their last semester, last season, last prom, last everything. I will continue to reach out to our high school seniors and other students during this time.

I am opening "Laura's Holy Grounds Coffee Shop," digitally of course, on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 12 pm—2 pm for our students to come, and hang out together. Students will have the opportunity to catch up and take a break from school.

As we live into the reality of social distancing a little while longer, what opportunities does this present in your ministry areas that St. John's can look forward to?

You will be seeing more of Bradley for youth ministry during this time. He has been a wonderful addition to our Sunday

nights and will now help to manage Zoom gatherings for our middle and high school youth along with some of our social media content. Here's a taste of what is coming up.

In a series about Easter and the Resurrection of Jesus, called 'Happy Easter,' our high schoolers will learn about what makes Easter so happy— that separation, sin, and death are defeated.

Our middle schoolers' Easter series, called 'Undeclared,' will embrace the truth that Jesus defeated the things that separate us from him so that they can live a life that is undefeated.

And of course, our youth know how to have fun, so we will continue to do so with Netflix Watch Parties, Game Sessions (Scavenger hunts, Scavenger Hunt, Virtual Charades, Virtual Pictionary, Which One? Debates, Masked Speaker), Build a Story, and more!



#7daysofpeace on @sjlc_highschool Instagram

Be of Good Courage

Diane Poole Shares How Senior Seasons is Connecting On-line

From Diane Poole: “When St. John’s Program Managers are hired, one strong directive is to think of the program area as our ministry group, over which we are shepherds. This includes more than just planning programs. As ministry leaders, we must be mindful of building solid, caring relationships with the members we serve. This involves all types of communication from hand written notes, to phone calls, emails, text messages, and advertisements in Faith Life, Eagle’s View, Sunday bulletins, closed circuit TV’s and mailings. Relationship building is one of the reasons we have Wednesday night meals and hot meals during Senior Academy. An important component of any program is the opportunity to remember whose we are – God’s children. Sometimes we put more emphasis on the programs and trips than on the God we serve. The Covid-19 virus outbreak has given us the opportunity to refocus on the God we serve.”



Since moving to an entirely digital worship experience, how has your ministry area shifted?

We’ve had to rethink everything we do, but especially in how we reach our “high risk” population of seniors, who have had to quarantine more than most groups.

The first focus was phone calling all members aged 60+ to (1) assess any physical or emotional needs and (2) to give them information about live streaming, campus closures, or anything else they needed to know. A Communications Team has been organized to continue contacting senior adults on a regular, but not intrusive, basis. If anyone would like to serve on this team, please email diane@stjohns-salisbury.org.

The second focus is the continuation of weekly email blasts on Fridays to encourage and share helpful information about

faith enhancement, activities to alleviate boredom, or other topics of interest. Continuing education is something that our program has emphasized, so we will make every effort to include avenues of learning.

What are some things exciting things you have enjoyed so far?

Brainstorming in staff meetings about potential projects and digital means of reaching members of all ages has been fun. A crisis seems to bring out the creativity in everyone, and it has been contagious. The teambuilding that is occurring is very satisfying. I have enjoyed learning how to live stream services

through Roku at home, and enjoyed staff and members’ encouraging Facebook posts. My favorite thing has been connecting with senior adults to care for them in a deeper way than scheduling a program.

As we live into the reality of social distancing a little while longer, what opportunities does this present in your ministry areas that St. John’s can look forward to?

While not all seniors have the equipment for Zoom Conferencing, I can envision lunch and learns, bible studies, or Senior Academy classes taught in this way. Any group could have a “go out to lunch” day using this app.

Stronger relationships grow from talking to people one on one and helping others. If we could involve the entire church in “checking up on their neighbors,” especially since the needs of people will be varied and probably huge for families, St. John’s might be a closer knit congregation because of it. Planning for future activities, such as the Congregational Retreat at Lutheridge, scheduled for Sept. 18-20 will provide an event that everyone can look forward to.

Be of Good Courage

Digital Plans for Adult Discipleship from Danny Hines

Since moving to an entirely digital worship experience, how has your ministry area shifted?

Adult discipleship has shifted from planning for next season of classes and bible studies to thinking about what we can provide for our adults now. As human beings, we want the daily interactions with people more than we sometimes realize. This time of isolation has shown us that while digital/social media communication is a part of our world, we still crave the in-person interactions that we have every day. I am looking for opportunities that we can put in place sooner, such as classes, bible studies or small group activities that will be online, using Zoom conferencing or Facebook live, so that we can offer faith formation and while apart, still be *together*.

What are some things exciting things you have enjoyed so far?

Alongside our senior ministry team, I have had the opportunity to make phone calls to some of our church members to check in on them. In doing so, I've been able to have conversations with people I don't normally get to talk to. It's amazing that in a time of "isolation" we can reach out and build community simply over the phone.

I have also enjoyed looking at all the digital possibilities to stay in touch with our church community that we may be able to use now and, in the future, when things return to "normal." I think we all know we will need to embrace some "new normal" ideas that will come out of this time of uncertainty and isolation.



As we live into the reality of social distancing a little while longer, what opportunities does this present in your ministry areas that St. John's can look forward to?

The church will see more opportunities for digital discipleship. We are working on what that looks like, but look for opportunities for classes, bible studies, or small groups. Check social media and FaithLife.

If you are currently part of a small group and aren't already set up for digital meetings, we can help walk you through an option that works best for your group.

Another positive that will come out of this is that many people who might have been fearful of social media platforms have had the opportunity and time to learn some communication tools like Zoom and Facebook live.

And for those that don't use computers, remember a phone call and a prayer can help you stay connected *together*.

Be of Good Courage *Rob Durocher on Online Worship and Music*



Rob on organ, captured on a recent Facebook post

From Rob Durocher: “The very first thing we’d like to say to all of you is that we are truly missing our worship, gatherings, rehearsals and the ability to experience these together with your physical presence and participation! While these are strange days and we’re all feeling anxious about the unknowns, we still stand strong in the power of God’s love and presence wherever we are!

While many of our music ministries are currently on hold, our desire to begin these safely again remains positive. We’re grateful to our choirs, ensembles, worship and music leaders for their patience and prayers. We’ll all be able to raise a joyful HALLELUJAH again!”

Since moving to an entirely digital worship experience, how has your ministry area shifted?

We’re so blessed that we have our ‘digital warriors’ like Taylor, Angel, and Mike Agee who have a fresh understanding of digital media’s power. Together with them we’re able to bring worship to and with you via live stream. Although the services are held mostly in the sanctuary, we have been committed to including elements of both traditional and contemporary worship. We’ve also been fortunate to live stream our Wednesday evening services throughout the

season of Lent.

What are some things exciting things you have enjoyed so far?

Some of the joys that we have experienced include being invited into a space where we can reflect the creative nature of our Creator, seeing how our congregation and community are coming together online as we stream worship, hearing the incredible feedback from our worshipping folks about how very much worship in place together is missed, and also all of your encouragement to ‘keep on keeping on!’

We’ve also been able to stay connected to our congregation and community by occasionally offering music of encouragement online. We will continue to offer these throughout the next few weeks, hopefully adding some of our other church musicians, too.

As we live into the reality of social distancing a little while longer, what opportunities does this present in your ministry areas that St. John’s can look forward to?

We’re committed to praying for you and staying in touch with as many of the people that we partner with in our particular ministry area: members of our choirs, ensembles, and worship teams. We want to hold each other up in prayer and encouragement through emails, phone calls and even when possible ‘virtual’ rehearsals and meetings.

As we enter the solemn period of HOLY WEEK and the inevitable EASTER, we are pledged to continue to bring meaningful worship to and with you. It may be very different than we’re used to, but one thing is for sure – God is good and faithful and we will “enter His courts with thanksgiving and praise.” We’ll just be doing it from different screens and devices!

Be of Good Courage *Facility Update with Jon Koppe*

Since moving to an entirely digital worship experience, how has your ministry area shifted?

The pandemic has changed the way we are doing things here from the maintenance and facility management standpoint. We have put an emphasis on our sanitizing and disinfecting our campus. We have installed more hand sanitizing stations and have wiped down door handles, light switches, tables, chairs, and everything where our congregation populates. We have safety in the forefront of everything we do, constantly cleaning and sanitizing areas throughout the campus.



As we live into the reality of social distancing a little while longer, what opportunities does this present in your ministry areas that St. John's can look forward to?

The church has a wonderful volunteer group that is greatly missed during this time of social distancing. Many volunteers have helped with numerous projects that cover the entire campus and their efforts are missed, so we are looking forward to getting through this time period and seeing everyone soon. Please stay safe, and sanitize everything!

What are some things exciting things you have enjoyed so far?

The digital worship experience has helped us to focus on deep cleaning the worship space and high traffic areas. Events at the church being cancelled allows us to complete small projects and get organized in busy areas of the church and the Child Development Center.

Giving During Uncertain Times

The coronavirus has affected nearly everything, including giving to churches and non-profits. For example, giving at St. John's is half what it normally is for the month of March. With that in mind, we've activated a two-part plan for managing income and expenses:

EXPENSES. We've been able to reduce day-to-day expenses by 20 percent by significantly reducing HVAC costs, all program ministry costs, and freezing an unfilled staff position (bookkeeper). When income is below 80 percent of our budgeted income, staff salaries will be reduced by ten percent. The next steps include reducing our synod benevolence and, when income is below 60 percent, reducing staff salaries by another ten percent. After that, staff furloughs will go into effect.

INCOME. 80 percent of our "normal" income comes through the Sunday morning offering plate. If you are able to maintain your financial commitment to St. John's, please mail your offerings to the church or sign up for online giving. It's easy. Just visit our website and click "Giving."

Thank you for your faithful commitment to the church. We know these are challenging times. If we can be of help, please let us know.

Be of Good Courage



Send us your photos!

Make a "Be of Good Courage" Sign

We miss seeing you but want to stay connected. Make a "Be of Good Courage" sign and tell us the ways you are sharing love, positivity, and courage. Creativity is encouraged!

You can send it via social media (just tag @stjalsalibuty with the #BeofGoodCourage), email angel@stjohns-salisbury.org, or mail it to us at 200 W. Innes St. Salisbury, NC 28144.

We can't wait to hear from you, and see your smiling faces!

Christ in Our Home Devotional

If you would like a copy of the devotional "Christ in Our Home," please contact the church office and we will mail it to you. deborah@stjohns-salisbury.org or 704-636-3431.



Church Office Closed

As of Thursday, March 26, church staff began working from home and our administrative offices were closed in order to honor Covid-19 restrictions. Check the weekly FaithLife email for updates, or call the church office at 704.636.3431. We will gladly answer the phone remotely.

Volunteer Opportunities

Community Partners Increased Need for Help During Time of Crisis

Rowan Helping Ministries—

Rowan Helping Ministries is in need of volunteers in a "safe volunteer environment" and folks who can bring a full meal that doesn't have to be prepared on site. 85 are served each evening and morning. 100 are served at lunch. Please contact their volunteer coordinator, Betsy Warner.

Meals on Wheels—

Volunteers are needed for regularly scheduled Monday deliveries using physical spacing protocols. Because deliveries are no longer being made each day, volunteers are needed to make **daily phone call** contacts with participants. To volunteer email scombs@mowrowan.org or call 704.633.0352.

Trinity Oaks—

With a shortage of medical supplies throughout the country, Lutheran Services Carolinas and Trinity Oaks are in need of **isolation gowns**. If you can sew, you can help! They have provided the pattern, which we will share digitally in upcoming FaithLife emails and social media. Completed gowns can be dropped off at Trinity Oaks. If you have any questions, contact Bill Johnson at BJohnson@trinityoaks.net.



Handwashing Hit of the Week

We might as well have some fun!

By Angel Owens

“Have you heard of the ‘Handwashing Hit of the Week?’”

That’s the question Pastor Laura asked Stacey Shafer, Children’s Minister—from six feet away, of course.

Experts say it should take about 20 seconds to wash our hands, the perfect amount of time to say the Lord’s Prayer or sing one of our favorite church songs, reminding us to “Be of Good Courage” as we practice social distancing and stay clean and safe.

With that in mind, we’ve begun sharing weekly videos on our Facebook and Instagram pages, to inspire good handwashing practices, practice some of our favorite church songs, and to simply spread joy.

It’s fun for kids, but it’s good practice for all ages. The videos can be a tool for kids, but we are finding that adults are really enjoying the positivity they inspire!

So far, we’ve shared Pastor Laura and Stacey singing “Jesus Loves Me” and the Gebhardt Ladies singing “This Little Light of Mine.”

Stay tuned. You never know what familiar face you might see next week and what song they might be singing.

Follow along on Instagram and Facebook, @stjsalisabury for more handwashing fun!

The Traditions of Holy Week

By Susan Shinn Turner

The observance of Holy Week — the re-enactment of events of Jesus' last week on Earth — traces its roots to the 4th Century.

This year, Easter Sunday will be remarkably different, but we'll still proclaim, "Christ is Risen, he is Risen indeed!"

Holy Week starts with triumph, moves to travesty, and ends in triumph, explains Rob Durocher. "Of all the feasts we have throughout the church year, this is the most poignant."

There are some who want to move from "Hosanna!" to "Hallelujah!", Rob says. But without Holy Week, you miss the mocking, the betrayal, the crucifixion itself. "We miss out on the passion. We miss out on those few days that were the most trying time in the life of Jesus and his disciples. Their lives were thrown into chaos."

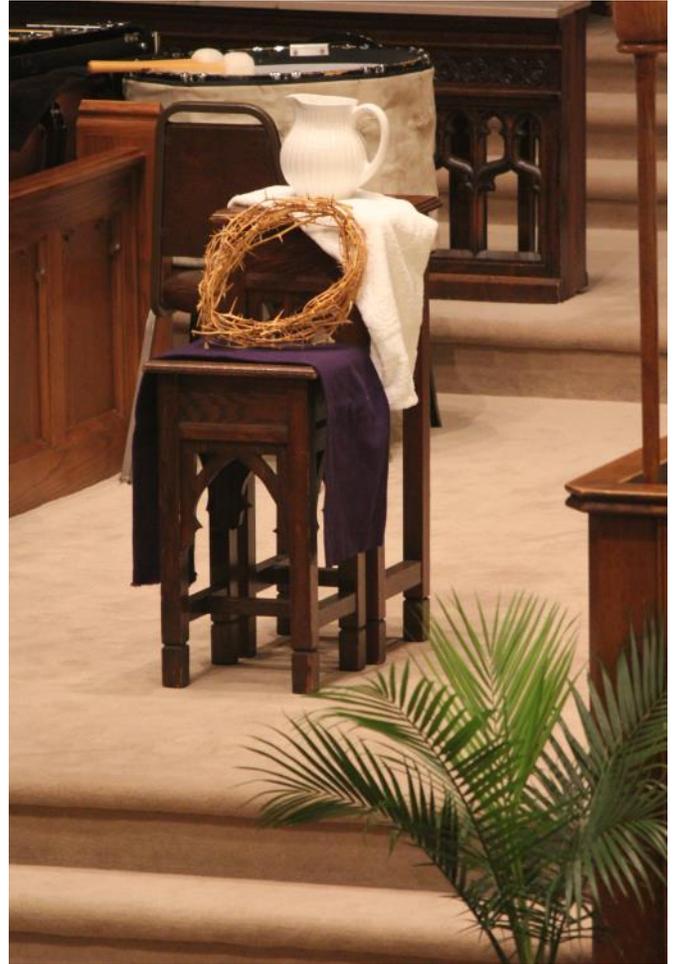
He adds, "People need to know how great God's love was, personified in those final days of Jesus' life. We can't make assumptions that people today know about these events. In a bloody nutshell, Holy Week tells us."

Holy Week at St. John's begins with Palm Sunday, during which the Passion is read. During the Maundy Thursday service, attendees have had the opportunity to have their feet washed, just as Jesus washed the disciples' feet during the night of the Last Supper. St. John's families have played a role in the stripping of the altar, which is symbolic of how Jesus was stripped and beaten prior to his crucifixion.

A particularly dramatic moment is when a large black veil falls and covers the entire altar area. In the 1990s, Tim Freeze and Don Julian developed the idea and installed the veil.

It's a dramatic moment, Rob says. "For me, that veil separates us from God."

On Friday evening, the Good Friday Tenebrae service is held. The word "tenebrae" is Latin for darkness, and candles are extinguished during the readings of the seven last words of Jesus.



Palm Sunday

Pastor Carl Sachtleben developed the idea of a father and son carrying a large wooden cross down the aisle, hammering nails into it, then securing it loudly in a holder. Finally, every light is extinguished. Worshippers are then invited to leave nails at the foot of the cross as they exit in silence.

Finally, on Sunday morning comes the great proclamation, which echoes throughout Christendom: "Christ is Risen, He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!"

"Even if we're worshipping in a closet, Christ is still risen," Rob says. "There is not an empty church that will ever change that. Quarantines can't change that. It will be different this year, but we will celebrate with gusto, still drawn together as the body of Christ."



“Consider the Lilies and how they grow. They toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (Luke 12:27)

Easter Palms, Lilies, and Flowers

Be a part of a beautiful tradition at St. John’s, as we decorate our worship spaces for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Give thanks for the blessings in your life or remember and honor loved ones with the purchase of a palm or lily. Lilies may be purchased for \$15.00. Palms may be purchased for \$25.00.

Money for lilies, palms and flowers may be mailed to the church office. Deadline for ordering will be April 3.

Even though we will worship online, the altar will come alive as a place of celebration and resurrection joy. Thank you for your contributions.



Given by _____

Decoration	Price	In Memory of.....	In Honor of.....
Lily	\$15.00 each		
Palm	\$25.00 each		
Flowers	Amount \$ _____		

Roger and Linda Hull: *Silent Angels*

By Kathy Rusher

On Sunday, March 8, St. John's honored our newest Silent Angels, Linda and Roger Hull, active members of St. John's.

Roger and Linda have been involved in such a variety of ways at St. John's throughout the years. Roger is an excellent photographer and is always willing to help take pictures of church events. Linda has been a faithful choir member for many years.

Together, they are devoted to many of St. John's activities and ministries. They serve as communion assistants and always refresh the pew supplies in the sanctuary and friendship pads, after picking up in the sanctuary after the service. The Hulls are usually found making sure all the doors are locked, and they are last to leave our beautiful sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

They have been involved with the Conservations that Matter team and helped plan the trip to Montgomery, even making the flier for the event. They host a Sunday night small group during the year and have supported the Senior Academy. When they are not busy with church activities and have time



to travel, they are always willing to share in their experiences which assists other church members in their travels.

Linda and Roger's work around the church is evidence of their commitment to St. John's and our ministries. They are always eager to lend a helping hand with a servant's heart.

Thank you, Linda and Roger, for all of your time and interest that you have shared with us at St. John's.



Girl Scout Sunday

On March 1, our Girl Scouts helped lead the 11 am worship, serving as ushers, greeters, and readers. We also had the opportunity to buy their delicious cookies after each service!

Benevolent Foundation Awards \$25,000 in Grants

Each year, the St. John's Benevolent Foundation provides over \$100,000 in scholarships and grants to local and global partners. Grants are awarded twice each year, with the first grant cycle ending March 1.

The following grants were awarded to support ministry that is consistent with the mission and vision of St. John's.

Bethlehem Senior Ministry Care. The grant supports the joint project between St. John's, Christmas Lutheran, and LSC to begin a hospice care ministry in Bethlehem. **\$2,500**

Central NC Council of Boy Scouts. The grant provides scholarships to Camp Barnhart. **\$1,000**

Dramarama Camp. St. Andrew's Lutheran in Columbia SC hosts a drama camp each summer for kids in underserved neighborhoods. **\$1,000**

Homeless Mobile Showers. The grant supports the "Dwelling" ministry in providing mobile showers for the homeless in Salisbury. **\$1,000**

Isenberg Elementary School. This grant helps purchase library books. **\$2,000**

Lutheran Services Carolinas. The grant supports LSC's ministry of refugee resettlement. **\$2,500**

Meals on Wheels of Rowan County. The grant provides one year of meals for two individuals. **\$3,750**

St. John's CDC. Purchasing building blocks for the toddler classrooms. **\$2,000**

The Community Care Clinic of Rowan County. The grant provides continuing education support for the clinic's staff. **\$2,250**

St. John's Archives Committee. This grant provides funds to begin work on volume 3 of the History of St. John's. **\$3,000**

Confirmation Camp ministry at Lutheridge. The grant provides funding for a paid musician during Kairos Camp at Lutheridge. **\$1,500**

St. John's "Jazz Vespers" Ministry. The grant funds one of the congregation's Jazz Vespers programs. **\$1,000**

Sudan Rowan. The grant provides full scholarship support for ten primary grade students in South Rowan. **\$1,500**

Total Awarded **\$25,000**

Save the Date: Picture Day!

Aug. 19-29



August 19 – 29 has been scheduled for Pictorial Directory photographs. Many changes have occurred since the last Directory in 2016. LifeTouch will again assist with the campaign.

Earth Day is April 22: *Recycling at St. John's*



By Angel Owens

Earth day is April 22, and St. John's staff is doing our best to care for God's creation. *Together.*

Until now, the church office has recycled paper supplies. In March, we added two bins to the office for mixed recycling. In addition to paper products, we can now recycle plastics and metals.

Education on just what can be recycled is very important. Once recycling has been contaminated, it can no longer be recycled. According to the Salisbury Post, the national average for contaminated recycling is 5-10%. The average in Salisbury is 25%.

Plastic and metals can be recycled but must be empty and rinsed. Cardboard has to be flattened, and recyclables should not be placed in plastic bags. We have placed infographics above each of the bins. To view the full list of items you should keep out of your recycling bin, visit salisburync.gov/recycle.

Stewardship: *An Invitation to Care for All of God's Creation*

By Michael DeNise

When you hear the word stewardship, what words and phrases come to mind? For many, it is money, giving, the annual campaign, and Consecration Sunday. In the traditional sense stewardship is generally thought as time, talent, and treasure. **The truth is that stewardship is more than that – it is a calling for our whole life to be steeped in generosity and gratitude.**

Stewardship envelopes our whole life: Our relationship with God, with each other, and with the hurting world. Throughout this year, we will be exploring and engaging around different stewardship themes. Our 2020 emphasis will be: Creation Care, Gratitude, Consecration Sunday, and Kids & Money. Together as a faith community, we will explore these together – at every age – so that we can learn to love God, each other and the world more deeply.

This month, we kick-off our Stewardship work together centered in **Creation Care.**

Early in Genesis, God gives Adam the task of caring for God's creation. From the birds of the sky, the land and water animals, and the earth itself. It our responsibility to carry that on and continue to care for all of God's creation. Did you know that 50 years ago, we began celebrating Earth day? Earth Day is one day but caring creation is our duty each and every day.

Recently, my family moved away from using paper towels to reusable cloth "paper" towels. Just yesterday, Moses was helping us roll them back onto the recyclable tube and asked, "Why are we doing this?" What a gift to share with him about how God saw creation and said, "it is good" and by using paper towels like this, we get to help keep it good. For you, it might be cloth towels, but for others it might be doing an energy audit – and getting in the habit of turning off lights. Maybe it is committing to carry (and remember to use!) those reusable bags at the grocery store.

And you aren't alone in this work – our congregation is committed to Creation Care, too. Several years ago, the church committed to stop using styrofoam and instead is taking advantage of other materials when serving meals.

Recently, the St. John's Child Development Center received a grant so they can start to transition to reusable products throughout the center – allowing for a lower cost and dramatically reduce the amount of waste from the center.

Additionally, solar panels were installed on the education building reducing their costs. As phase 2 of G2G kicks off and work is being done take time to look at all the ways the church is caring for creation. What efficiencies are they gaining? During the month of April, I encourage you think about the ways you can engage in stewardship. See where you find caring for creation show up in our worship, with each other, and the outside world.

Anna Grace Woolly Funds Water Fountain Refill Stations at Salisbury High School

By Susan Shinn Turner

Anna Grace Woolly has had an exciting senior year. She's traveled throughout Europe, to Africa, and drove cross-country with her brothers. Last month, she received the coveted Chancellor's Scholarship, a full scholarship at Appalachian State, beginning this fall. And she wrote a successful grant to have six water fountain refill stations installed at Salisbury High School.

"I just wanted to be involved with something," Anna Grace says. "I am passionate about a lot of things, and safe water is one of them."

The grant aligns with Anna Grace's interests of environmental conservation and sustainable development. The daughter of Rhodes and Krista Woolly, she also has interests in anthropology and social justice. The grant combines providing students with safe water, supports hydration, and decreases use of plastic water bottles.

She wrote the \$5,000 grant in February 2019, and the Robertson Family Foundation awarded it in May 2019. The water fountains were installed in mid-September.

She worked with SHS Principal Luke Brown — also a St. John's member — to ascertain the school's finances as part of the grant writing process. Carie Fugle, her Environmental Club advisor, also played a supportive role.

"The water refill stations are a beautiful gift from Anna Grace," Carie wrote to the SHS community. "Last year, she took it upon herself to write a grant for these water refill stations for our campus. We are now the proud host to six water fountains for all of us to use. If you see Anna Grace, tell her thank you and what an inspiration she is to others."

"These water refill stations will allow us to become more sustainable, decrease our ecological footprint, reduce plastic waste, and change habits. Please celebrate these new fountains with us!"

Anna Grace hopes other students will follow her lead.

"It's not super difficult to apply for a grant," she says. "There



are organizations that want to help and contribute to the community. It seems like a daunting task, but you can do it."

Grant writing includes pulling together financial information, writing an essay, and making sure all the materials are submitted on time, Anna Grace says. "It was a good precursor for college applications in the fall."

"Not only was it a substantive issue, it was a strong application," wrote the Robertson Family Foundation committee. "We were impressed that a student showed that kind of initiative, thoughtfulness and creativity, and we were proud to support it."

At Salisbury High, Anna Grace has been a member of the soccer, golf, cross country, and swim teams. She is a member of the Environmental Club, the Key Club, National Honor Society, and Sheroes, a female empowerment club. Away from school, she enjoys traveling, hanging out with friends, and watching "Survivor."

Mike and B.J. Connor Spend 3 Months in the Holy Land

By Susan Shinn Turner

Mike and B.J. Connor have safely returned from a nearly three-month stay in the Holy Land as volunteers at a pilgrim house in the Old City of Jerusalem. The two had to cut their trip short by two weeks because of growing concern about the coronavirus. They spent the first two weeks after arriving home under self-quarantine. So far, they are symptom-free.

Mike has long been active in St. John's Palestinian Ministry, and this was his fifth trip to the Holy Land.

"It was better than I expected," says Mike, who spent three months as an ecumenical accompanier in 2017 in the West Bank.

"It was 100 percent Mike's idea to apply to be volunteers," B.J. says. "I agreed for his sake. It sounded like an adventure. Mike and I enjoy doing ministry together."

In exchange for volunteering five hours a day, Monday-Saturday, Mike and B.J. were provided with room and board. They were also encouraged to engage with members of the communities, the Sisters of Sion and the Chemin Enuf, who operate the guest house. The guest house is built over the second station of the cross on the Via Dolorosa, and tour groups arrived frequently until Mike and B.J. were about to leave. All the proceeds for the guest house come from tourism.

Overall, their experience was good, she says. "We loved it. It was a bigger learning curve for me than it was for Mike."



"Sister Rita, the director of volunteers, made all the difference in the world," says Mike, who experienced much nicer living conditions on this trip than three years ago. "This was like heaven to me."

"It was all about relationships," B.J. says. "The sisters, staff, guests and volunteers are all wonderful people."

She grew especially close to a Muslim woman who worked the front desk with her. "We just enjoyed each other so much."

Because they had Sundays off, and often time during the day, Mike and B.J. took long walks or visited historic sites such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or the Holocaust Museum. The guest house also had a small basilica, along with gardens and plenty of areas to find a quiet space.

On Sundays, the Connors split their time attending services at Christmas Lutheran Church or Redeemer Lutheran Church. One Sunday, they even watched services at St. John's via live stream. They were able to share meals with Pastor Mitri Raheb and Pastor Munther Isaac, St. John's mission partners.

Mike says there are many opportunities like this all over the Holy Land. "It was one of the highlights of our 47 years together."



Impacts of Coronavirus Around the World

Updates from Our Global Ministry Partners

Bethlehem

The virus is especially crushing for Bethlehem and Palestine because 70% of the economy depends on tourism and the timing—right before Easter is the busiest tourism season. Incredibly close living quarters, including refugee camps, make social distancing nearly impossible. Neighboring West Bank towns are now cut off from each other making checking on loved ones impossible. Further border closures increase unemployment. Bright Stars of Bethlehem depends on tourism for 20% of their income, and doesn't foresee tourism returning until February of 2021. Dar al-Kalima University is closed. 10 online classes were launched at the end of March with 100% attendance.

Guatemala

Due to the outbreak of Coronavirus, the Guatemala Ministry of Education has suspended classes for 21 days starting Monday, March 16. The government has also made many other extreme, but necessary, measures that are changing almost daily. Due to some of these measures, many of our families are without work and income. Because of this, GRACES has provided a food bag for every family that we work with, with the help of our gracious supporters. These food bags last for 2-3 weeks depending on family size. If the government orders for schools to continue to be closed after the 21 days is completed, then the school along with GRACES will reevaluate to see how else it can assist the families during this time. Thank you to everyone for your prayers and support.

Stay up-to-date and support GRACES at wearegrace.org.

—Hannah Nadeau Girón, GRACES Executive Director. GRACES is the Fundraising arm for the Escuela Integrada School in Antigua.

Rwanda

In March, Pastor Rhodes received a note from Pastor Mulisa Emmanuel in Rwanda. All YAGM volunteers have been sent home around the world early, including in Rwanda. Due to the spread of the virus in Tanzania, the school in Rwanda has closed for a month. Pastor Mulisa Emmanuel sends his well-wishes to the congregation and asks for prayer for the school and Rwanda, "Let's join our hands together in prayer so God may help and show mercy on us."

South Sudan

Even during the current global pandemic, good work and progress in education is being made in South Sudan. The CEO of Mothering Across Continents, Patricia Shafer, is currently in South Sudan shepherding some of the students who attended either Nyarweng or Gumriak as they prepare for 9th grade in larger towns that have residential secondary schools. The Raising South Sudan project provides 62 scholarships to children from the village of Aliap who have been orphaned in recent conflicts. Sudan Rowan is also currently providing college scholarship funds to older South Sudanese students who are attending university in Uganda and Kenya. So far, the students and educators who are part of St. John's South Sudan ministry have avoided the recent pandemic.

According to United Nations, "Currently, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in South Sudan and UN operations are continuing largely as normal across the country, providing protection, humanitarian assistance and supporting development."

-Karen Puckett, St. John's South Sudan team leader

An Update from NovusWay and Lutheridge

The following Coronavirus update was posted by the Executive Director of Novusway, the parent organization for Lutheridge and Lutherock. Posted March 16th, 2020

At NovusWay Ministries, the safety and health of campers, guests, and staff are always our highest priority. As a 70-year-old camping organization, we have a long history of planning for and managing communicable diseases, and we are closely monitoring developments with respect to COVID-19 (coronavirus). Our staff at Lutheridge, Lutherock, Luther Springs, and Lutheranch continue to be prepared to welcome guests and campers into safe and healthy communities. Out of an abundance of caution, and to play our role in the global community's work to slow this pandemic, we are cancelling or postponing all NovusWay spring programs through the end of April. NovusWay staff will follow up through email with all registered participants with instructions on next steps.

As we continue our work to prepare for a safe, fun and faith-filled summer, we are following recommended guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the American Camp Association (ACA), and the Association of Camp Nursing (ACN). We are consistently listening to and following guidance of the health department local to each of our sites.

While the coronavirus poses no immediate health risk for our summer camps, we are actively reviewing our health-related plans and procedures to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all. We are also working closely with our staff at all four sites and at the NovusWay home office to ensure that we are pursuing our mission in a safe and healthy environment.

Parents and guardians are important partners with us in keeping our campers and guests safe, and we are grateful for the attention you give to our pre-camp screening procedures. If, upon recommendation from health authorities, we need to add additional screening processes for the goal of assuring the highest level of safety, we will communicate those procedures in advance.

We will continue to keep you updated as new information becomes available at novusway.org/healthupdates. If parents, guests, and congregational leaders have questions they can email registration@novusway.org or call 828-684-2361.

As a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we continue to be in prayer for all those around the world impacted by this disease and for the trained healthcare professionals working to care for them and address this situation. We give thanks for the gifts that God has given to those who practice medicine and care for those in need. We have faith that Jesus Christ walks with us on the mountain tops and through the valleys. In partnership with our parents, campers, guests, and staff, we will continue to provide a safe and healthy community where all can experience the love of Jesus.



Consolation

Gary and Betty Pinkston on the passing of Betty's mother, Janie B. Wise, on Tuesday, March 17.

Sandra, Robert, Robert II, and Katherine Sullivan; Steven Gardner, and family, on the passing of Connie Gardner on March 15.

Sidney Honeycutt, Charles Heilig III and family, on the passing of Charles Heilig on March 10.

Terri Martin Morgan, and family on the passing of Art Martin on Saturday, March 7

Happy Birthday!

Congratulations to our Octogenarians

April Birthdays:

Rosalie Adams, Rudy Boksleitner, Audrey Bradshaw, Betty Brown, Ellen Fink, LaNell Martin, Bob Melton, Joanne Myers, Jim Ryser, Alda Smith, Ron Smith, Barbara Waggoner, Julius Waggoner, Gerry Webster



Dear St. John's friends,

Thank you all for your support during my recent knee surgery and recovery. I truly felt your love and concern and appreciate your calls, texts, cards, and continued prayers. I am so blessed to be a part of this congregation!

Jeanie Moore

The Allen family would like to thank all of you who called, visited and lifted us up in prayer over Janie's passing. She loved being a part of St. John's - thank you to the Huddle family for moving in next door and converting us. She especially enjoyed being a part of the Choir! We were all so humbled by the outpouring of past and present choir members who honored her so beautifully during her memorial service. I know she was singing along with you. We appreciate your continued support as we face the challenges of moving forward without Mom.

Many Thanks,
Sonny, Laura, Chip and Lee Allen

I would like to thank everyone for the cards and prayers on the passing of my Aunt Marian. She was a sweet lady.

Gods Blessing

Barb Stauffer an Family

Church-Wide Retreat is Scheduled for Sept. 18-20

By Susan Shinn Turner

The date is set for the annual churchwide retreat to Lutheridge: Sept. 18-20. The theme is also set: One Church, One Purpose, One Weekend — Unified in Christ.

“We’re really trying to bring all three services together and focus on an intergenerational weekend,” says Donna Groce, who’s heading up the planning committee for the retreat.

The memory verse for the weekend is John 15:5 — “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”

Donna plans to utilize Lutheridge’s entire campus, from a hayride to a nature trail scavenger hunt to a Saturday night event that promises lots of dancing, fun, and interactive events.

Last year, Donna shadowed Michael DeNise, who headed the event, in preparation for her leadership role this year. “I’m looking forward to generating some excitement to make it a true intergenerational event.”

Donna is the director of Trinity Oaks University, a lifelong learning program at Trinity Oaks Retirement Community.

“I love working with children and seniors,” she says. “I hope



to use my communication skills and my connections to make it all happen at Lutheridge. I love events and bringing people together to make a big event fun.”

Diane Poole, the staff liaison on the retreat committee, notes that after starting the year with time physically apart due to Covid-19 restrictions, it will be nice to focus on unity as a congregation in the fall.

Due to the impacts of the coronavirus, registrations for the church-wide retreat will be available in June.



CDC Playground Update

The CDC playground project is soon to be underway. Grading has been delayed because of unusually wet weather this winter, but is set to begin in April. The quarantine and other restrictions may delay the project further, but we will certainly begin when the time is right. Thank you again for your support!



Digital Buck-a-Meal Sunday

*(1st Sunday of each month)
April 5*

Every dollar bill donated equals a meal at Rowan Helping Ministries. In April, you can still give to Buck-a-Meal online or by Text Giving.

Online: Go to stjohns-salisbury.org and click "Giving" in the top right hand corner. Enter the amount you would like to give next to Rowan Helping Ministries. Proceed to follow the prompts.

Text Giving: If you have not already registered, text **Funds** to 704.802.1349. If you have already registered, text the amount you would like to give [space] **RHM** to 704.802.1349.

Buck-A-Meal for March was \$437.

St. John's Leadership

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

2020 President Cindy Fink
Vice President Rosalind Hines
Secretary David Phillips
Treasurer Tommy Page
Financial Secretary...Cory Gebhardt
Personnel Secretary ... Jeanie Moore

Term Expires 2020

Larry Cesario
Cindy Fink
David Phillips
Wesley Rhyne
Aleksandr (Sacha) Witt

Term Expires 2021

Randy Overcash
David Hord
Mike Agee
Mary Wymbs
Larry Britt

Term Expires 2022

Christopher Derrick
Mike Edwards
Penny Moss
Dennis Rogers
Rosalind Hines

Youth Members

Grace Shafer and Elizabeth Jones

Benevolent Foundation Trustees

John Henderlite, Chair
Chip Bridges
Chris Agner
Margaret Kluttz
John Denker

MINISTRY GROUP STAFF CONTACTS

Worship & The Arts – Rob Durocher
Discipleship – Pastor Laura Henrik
Mercy & Justice – Pastor Rhodes Woolly
Congregational Life – Diane Poole
Stewarding God's Resources – Ruth Ann Diehl

St. John's Ministry Staff

Pastoral Ministry

Senior PastorThe Rev. Rhodes Woolly
Pastor of Youth and Discipleship.....The Rev. Laura Henrik
Visitation.....Wade Rouzer

Worship and Music Ministry

Minister of Worship and the Arts, Deacon.....Rob Durocher
Associate Parish Musician.....Rosemary Kinard
Director of Music Emeritus, Deacon.....Karl Kinard
Director, St. John's Men's Chorus..... Jason Harwood
Assisting Organist.....Deanna Boksleitner
Bell Choirs.....Kimberly Lentz
Production Manager.....Taylor Hutchins
Contemporary Worship Leader.....Bradley Chestnut

Program Ministry

Adults.....Danny Hines
Children.....Stacey Shafer
YouthThe Rev. Laura Henrik
Senior AdultsDiane Poole
St. John's Kindergarten (4 and 5 year olds)Teresa Stoner
Child Development Center (infant -age 4 and after school).....Courtney Bost

Administrative Team

Business ManagerRuth Ann Diehl
Office Manager.....Deborah Cross
Accounting.....Brenda Munday
Communications Specialist Angel Owens
WriterSusan Shinn Turner
Facilities Manager.....Jon Koppe
Maintenance.....David Ellenburg

The Rev. Dr. Timothy M Smith, Bishop of the NC Synod
The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA

Sunday Worship During Covid-19 Restrictions

Online worship at 11 am

Visit stjohns-salisbury.org and click "listen live,"
watch on Facebook Live, or search "SJLC" on YouTube

Listen to worship each Sunday morning at 11 am on
stjohns-salisbury.org, and click Listen Live. Listen to previous
week's service at 9 am Sunday on WSAT 1280 AM.

Office hours

The office building is closed while church staff members work
from home.

Monday-Thursday, 9 am-5 pm; Friday 9-12.

Telephone 704.636.3431; Fax 704.636.4461

The best way to contact staff at this time is by email.

Staff Email: first.name@stjohns-salisbury.org

Visit us on the web at stjohns-salisbury.org

Kindergarten 704.636.4404

Kindergarten@stjohns-salisbury.org

Child Development Center 704.636.6756

stjohnscdcourtney@bellsouth.net

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Please deliver by April 1

Eagle's View Deadline

The May Eagle's View will be published in April.

Please email stories and news to
angel@stjohns-salisbury.org by **April 10!**

On Call List

If there is a pastoral emergency, please call **704.856.9751**
to reach the pastor on call.

Prayer Chain. Our Prayer Chain is updated daily and
emailed to interested persons Monday through Friday. To
add or subtract a name, please contact Deborah Cross at
deborah@stjohns-salisbury.org. Also let Deborah know if
you would like to receive the daily Prayer Chain.



Let's connect faith and life. *Together.*