

*Title: The Apostle Paul. Artist: El Greco (Doménikos Theotokópoulos), Greek (active Italy and Spain), 1541–1614. Date: 1598-1600.*

First Sunday in Lent  
*Open My Eyes, Lord*  
February 22, 2026, 11:00 am



*St. John's Lutheran Church*

*Salisbury, North Carolina*

# WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S!

*We're so glad God has brought you here!*

**Lent Devotionals** – “*Love Outpoured*” – Devotionals are available in our literature racks and at our services.

**Bibles and Brew** – Men’s Ministry - **Feb. 24 at 6 pm**. Join us at Goose & Monkey, 401 S. Railroad St., Lexington, NC.

**“Open My Life, Lord”** – Wednesday Lenten Services, **begins Feb. 25 at 6:30pm** (Sanctuary or Online). Feb. 25, Holden Evening Prayer; Mar. 4, Guest Organist Dr. Philip Burgess; Mar. 11, Guest Pianist Dr. Lawrence Quinnett; Mar. 18, St. John’s Musicians; Mar. 25, Holden Evening Prayer.

**Men’s Ministry Breakfast – Feb. 28, 8:30 am in Ritchie Hall.** Guest speaker will be Catawba College’s Head Football Coach, Tyler Haines. Sign up by scanning the QR code here or call the church office. **Please RSVP by Friday, February 27.**



**Catawba Singers in Concert** – “*How Can I Keep from Singing?*” – **Sun., Mar. 1 at 4 pm in the Sanctuary.** St. John’s will host the Catawba Singers in their first Spring Concert. The 60-voice choir is under the direction of Dr. Phillip E. Burgess, Dean of the Shuford School of Performing Arts at Catawba College. The choir will be accompanied by Ms. Susan Trivette as well as various instrumentalists and the St. John’s Chancel Choir. The concert is free and open to the public.

**Men’s Ministry at Work – Mar. 14, 8:30 am** in Ritchie Hall, where breakfast will be provided for all Volunteers. Scan QR code below to sign up. Also, if you have a simple home project or yard work you need help with, Scan the Project Requests QR code below to provide the information or call the church office.



Project Request



Sign up to Volunteer

**Easter Lilies, Palms and Flowers** — Ordering **deadline is Mar. 20**. Be part of the beautiful tradition at St. John’s as we decorate our worship spaces for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. You may place an order in honor or memory of your loved ones by scanning the QR code here or by completing a paper form located in the narthex and in all our literature racks.



**St. John’s Kindergarten – “80 Years of Loving, Learning, and Leading”** Fundraiser- Heading into its 80th year (2026-2027) the St. John’s Kindergarten has discerned the need to open a second pre-Kindergarten classroom. Join us for a dinner and program on **Mar. 21 from 4:30-7:00 pm in Ritchie Hall** to learn more about this vision for the future and how you can support us as we grow. We will also have artwork and performances from current SJ Kindergarten students and testimonials from past students. Cost for the dinner is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child under 12. Register at the QR code here, or by calling the church office. **RSVP deadline is Mar. 10.**



**Decorating Help Needed for Easter**—**Sat., Apr. 4 from 9 am—3 pm.** The Decorating Team is looking for volunteers to help decorate our Sanctuary, Faith Center and Peeler Hall with flowers for Easter. To volunteer, please contact Mindy Hochuli (malindahochuli@gmail.com) or Marian Hough Schouweiler (mlhough17@gmail.com).

**Altar Flowers**—will once again adorn our altar after the Lenten Season concludes on Easter Sunday. You may scan the QR code here or visit our website, to reserve flowers for various available dates.





*The congregation is invited to respond where words are in **Bold**.  
Hymns are found by number in the red worship books located in each pew.*

## PRELUDE

*We rise and face the cross.*

## CONFSSION AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross **†**, the sign that is marked at baptism,  
as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, **†** one God, who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt  
and blots out all offenses (*silence is kept for reflection*).

Lord of all life,  
**when we cannot see the beauty of your creation,  
open our eyes, that all living things thrive and grow.**

Lord of all life,  
**when we neglect the poor, the sick, and the grieving,  
open our hands to do your work in the world.**

Lord of all life,  
**when we ignore the cries of injustice in our midst,  
open our ears, that all will know your love.**

Lord of all life,  
**when we are hardened against our neighbor,  
open our hearts and heal our resentment.**

Lord of all life,  
**when we are closed to the grace you long to give us,  
open our lives and turn us to follow in the way of the cross.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, our lives have been transformed by the righteousness of Christ. In the name of **†** Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are made new. **Amen.**

1 God, whose al - might - y word cha - os and dark - ness heard  
 2 Christ, who once came to bring, on your re - deem - ing wing,  
 3 Spir - it of truth and love, life - giv - ing, ho - ly dove,  
 4 Ho - ly and bless - ed three, glo - ri - ous Trin - i - ty,

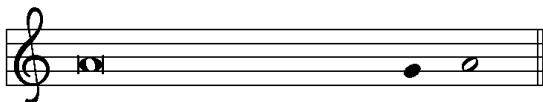
and took their flight: hear us, we hum - bly pray, and where the  
 heal - ing and sight; health to the trou - bled mind, sight where il -  
 speed forth your flight; move on the wa - ter's face bear - ing the  
 Wis - dom, Love, Might: bound-less as o - cean's tide, roll - ing in

gos - pel day sheds not its glo - rious ray, let there be light.  
 lu - sions blind; oh, now to hu - man-kind let there be light.  
 lamp of grace, and in earth's dark - est place let there be light.  
 full - est pride, through the earth, far and wide, let there be light.

## APOSTOLIC 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.**

## LORD, HAVE MERCY



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



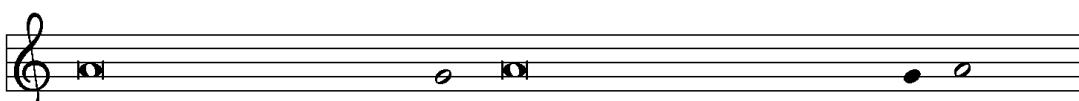
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



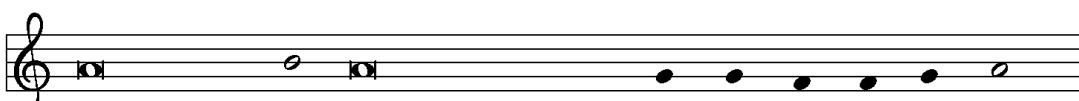
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

*Let us pray:* Open our eyes, Lord, to perceive your desire for the world. Remove those things that block our vision and widen our gaze to encompass all you would have us see. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

*Be seated.*

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Children ages 3 through 3rd grade are now invited to **Kingdom Kids**, exiting through the door near the baptismal font. Children will return to the worship service after the sermon.*

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## WORD

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



## READING

**Acts 26:4-18**

A reading from Acts, the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter.

<sup>4</sup>“All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup>They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. <sup>6</sup>And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, <sup>7</sup>a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, Your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! <sup>8</sup>Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

<sup>9</sup>“Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup>And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. <sup>11</sup>By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme, and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

<sup>12</sup>“With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, <sup>13</sup>when at midday along the road, Your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. <sup>14</sup>When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ <sup>15</sup>I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup>But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen

me and to those in which I will appear to you.<sup>17</sup> I will rescue you from your people and from the gentiles—to whom I am sending you<sup>18</sup> to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*We rise.*

### GOSPEL READING

**Matthew 4:1-11**

Lord, o - pen my eyes.  
Lord, o - pen my hands.  
O - pen my ears. O - pen my heart.  
Lord, o - pen my life.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. <sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple,<sup>6</sup> saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' " <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory,<sup>9</sup> and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' " <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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

Be seated.

## SERMON

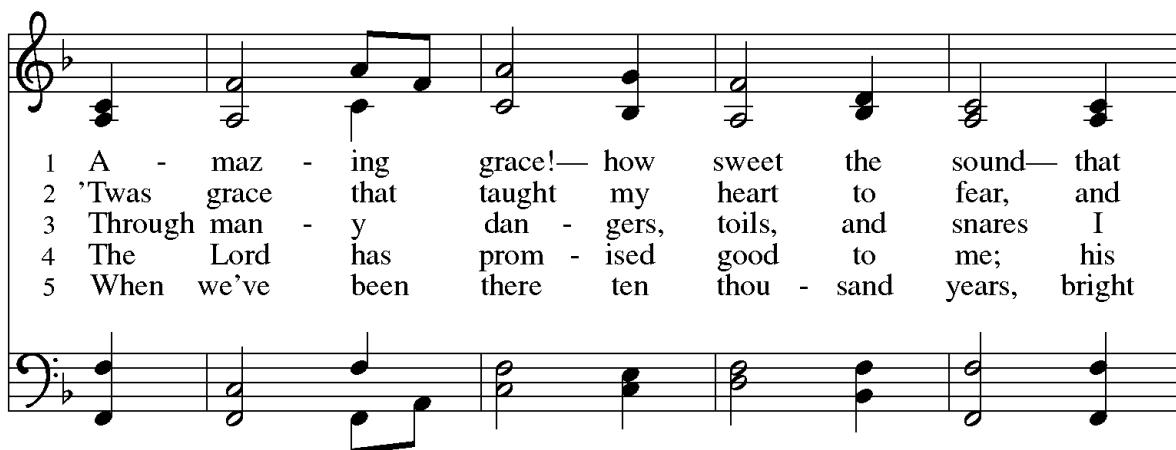
Pastor Lori Carter

We rise.

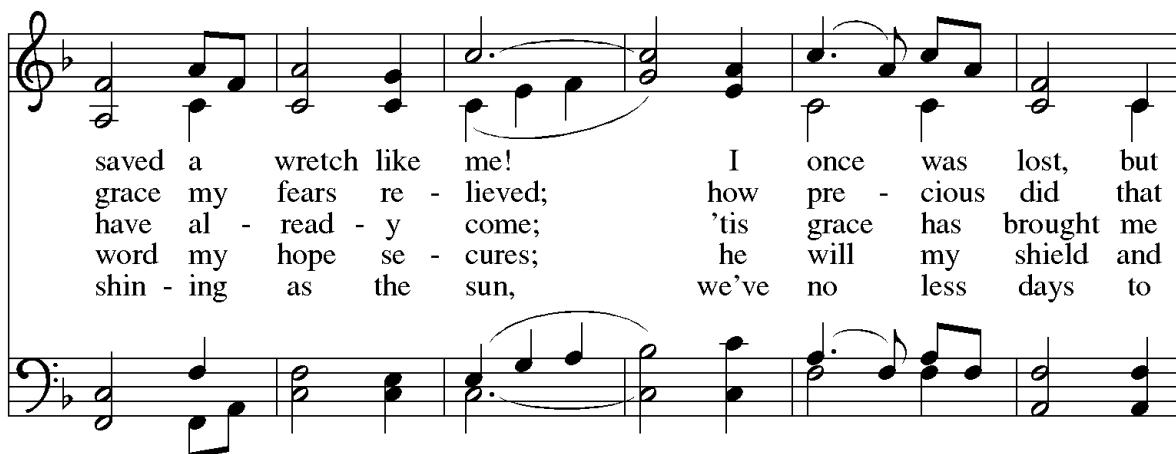
## HYMN OF THE DAY

‘Amazing Grace’

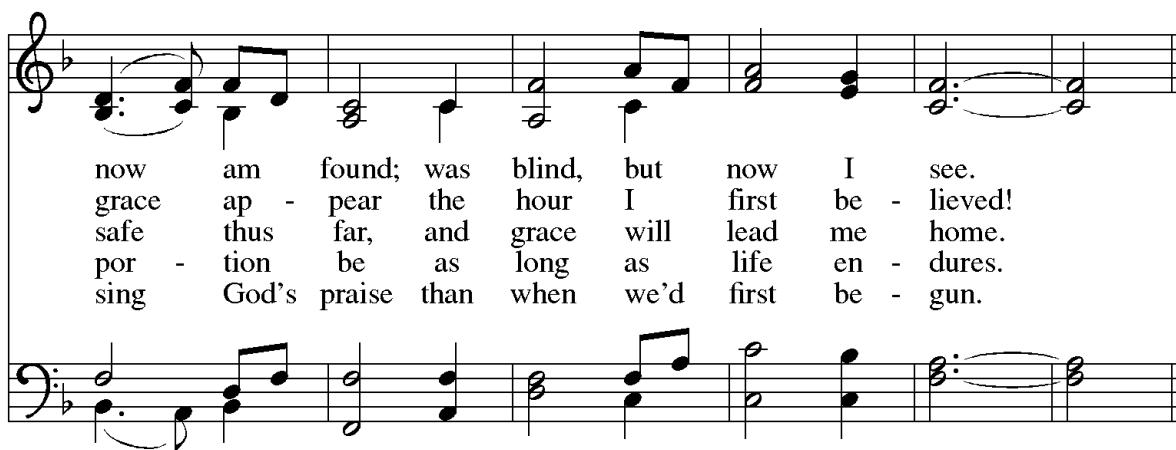
ELW 779



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that  
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his  
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and  
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

## APOSTLES' CREED

With the whole church, we confess our faith:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day He rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection  $\dagger$  of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen**

## PRAYERS AND PEACE

*Each petition concludes with the following:  
Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.*

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

*Be seated.*

**OFFERING AND ANTHEM**

**'Sacred Ground'**

**Benjamin Harlan**

*To wonder, Lord, awake my sight, to see that Christ is all around,  
so feel my gaze with heavenly light, 'Til common things are sacred ground.*

*You gift us, Lord, the world you own, to mirror here your grace above.  
A child's embrace, the neighbor known, in simple signs we see your love.*

*Come now to us in stranger, in friend; in daily meals, on table shared;  
in simple cup, in common bread, renew our vision to see your care.*

*All earth is filled with heaven's light, bid wondering eyes to see all around;  
when Christ, diffused in all our sight: the common things, are sacred ground.*

*We rise.*

## RESPONSE AND PRAYER

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Let us pray:* God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. Fill us with good things that we may come to the help of all in need, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord. **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, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r 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.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, 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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,  
**we await his coming in glory.**

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us: **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

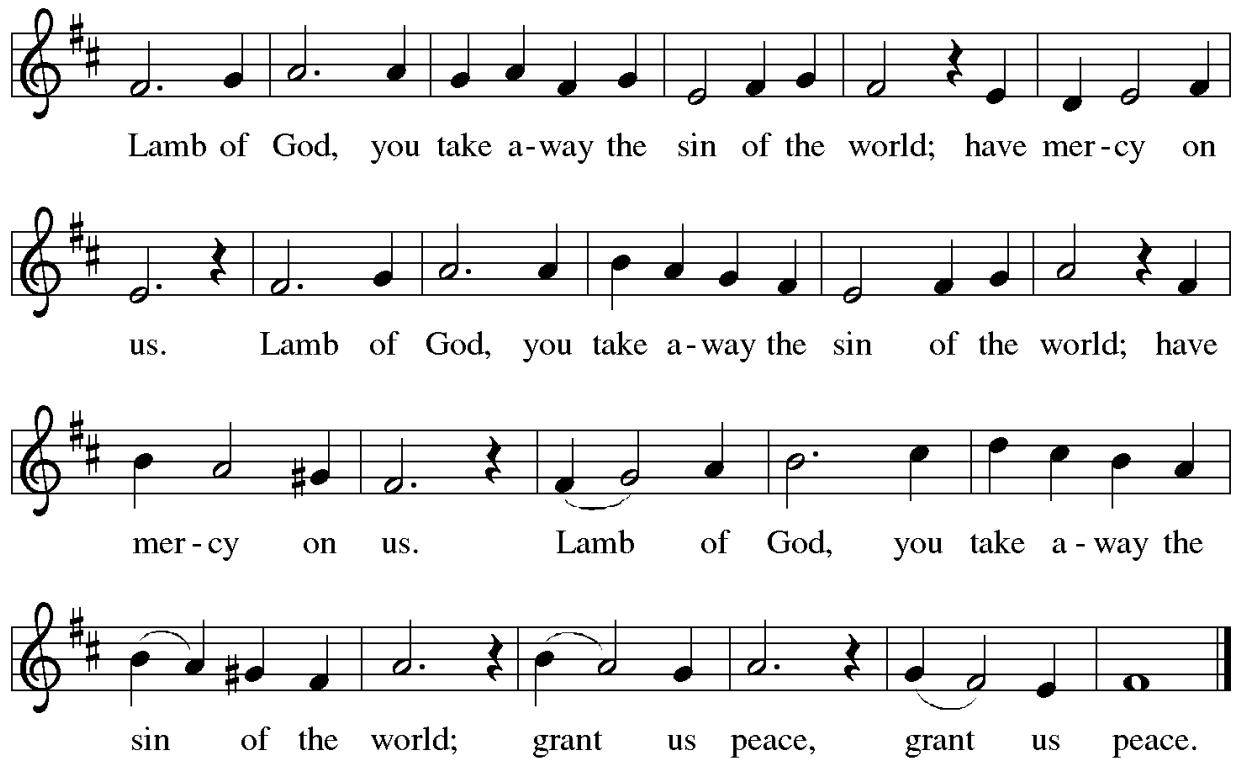
Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy. **Thanks be to God.**

*Be seated.*

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*All baptized Christians are welcome to receive Communion in the nave. Please follow the usher's guidance. In the nave, communion is by intinction, dipping bread (gluten free by request) into wine (or grape juice). Those not receiving Communion are invited forward to receive a blessing (crossing your arms across your chest as a sign to the pastor). If you need Communion brought to you, please signal the servers when they come down from the chancel.*

## COMMUNION HYMN



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

## COMMUNION SONG

### COMMUNION HYMN

### ‘My Faith Looks Up to Thee’

ELW 759

*We rise.*

## COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen.**

*Let us pray:* God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens our life for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ’s body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**



## BLESSING

Go into the world with eyes open to the transforming light of Christ, hands open to serve those you meet, ears open to the call of the Spirit, hearts open to the bountiful love of God, and lives open to follow Christ to the cross. The God who opened for us the way of everlasting life + bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN

## 'Be Thou My Vision'

ELW 793



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,  
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,  
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

## DISMISSAL AND POSTLUDE

Go in peace. Christ is with you.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Cantor.....	Lea Ann Thomas
Reader.....	Kathy Norris
Preacher.....	Pastor Lori Carter
Presider.....	Pastor Dan Joyner Miller
Liturgist.....	Pastor James Demmell

## ORDER OF ST. JOHN'S

Acolytes.....	Katie Ann Dangerfield and Abbi Kowalski
Crucifer.....	Elli Kowalski
Banner Bearer.....	Jeffrey Stephenson

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# ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

200 West Innes Street, Salisbury, North Carolina 28144 | 704.636.3431  
stjohns-salisbury.org | To contact a staff member: *first-name@stjohns-salisbury.org*

## Pastoral Ministry

Senior Pastor.....Dan Joyner Miller...ext. 2060  
Pastor for Congregational Care .....Lori Carter...ext. 2050  
Pastor for Youth and Outreach .....James Demmel...ext. 2040

## Worship and Music Ministry

Pastor for Worship and the Arts.....Spence Robertson...ext. 2080  
Production Manager.....Taylor Hutchins...ext. 2190  
Associate Parish Musician.....Janie Rollins  
Contemporary Worship Leaders.....Michael Board and Ondria Witt  
Director of Music *emeritus*.....Karl Kinard, Jr., *deacon*

## Program Ministry

Children.....Stacey Shafer...ext. 2020  
St. John's Kindergarten (4 & 5 year olds), Director.....Bonita Rowland...ext. 2120  
Child Development Center, Executive Director.....Lea Anne Thomas...ext. 3212

## Administrative Team

Church Administrator.....Deborah Cross...ext. 2030  
Office Manager.....Vivian Connor...ext. 2000  
Bookkeeper.....Mark Bias...ext. 2170  
Communication Specialist.....Stephanie Mesimer...ext. 2220  
Ministry Program Coordinator.....Mary Wymbs...ext. 2180  
Facility Manager.....David Ellenburg...ext. 2070  
Custodian.....Steven Elliott



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