



*Title: Jesus teaches the people by the sea. Date: 1886–1896. Artist: James Tissot, 1836–1902.*

Third Sunday in Lent  
*Open My Ears, Lord*  
March 8, 2026, 11:00 am

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*St. John's Lutheran Church*

*Salisbury, North Carolina*

# WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S!

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

**St. John's Library** – Our library will be temporarily closed while the newly formed Library Committee spends time refreshing, renewing and energizing this space for members and the community. There will be a grand re-opening at a later date. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kathy Rusher at [kathyrusher@gmail.com](mailto:kathyrusher@gmail.com).

**St. John's Book Club Start Up** - Interest Meeting on **Wed., Mar. 4 from 5:30-6 pm in the Goodman Dining Room**. All are invited to this drop-in introductory planning session, where we will discuss meeting times, places, reading topics/preferences, etc. Our hosts are Gary Rhodes and Gerrie Blackwelder. If you are unable to attend and would like to provide some input, please contact Gerrie at (704) 798-1849.

**"Open My Life, Lord"** – Wednesday Lenten Services continue at **6:30 pm** (Sanctuary or Online). **Mar. 11**, Guest Pianist Dr. Lawrence Quinnett; **Mar. 18**, St. John's Musicians; **Mar. 25**, Holden Evening Prayer.

**Men's Ministry at Work** – **Mar. 14, 8:30 am** in Ritchie Hall, where breakfast will be provided for all Volunteers. To volunteer, scan the QR code below. If you have a simple home project request or yard work you would like assistance with, you may Scan the Project Request QR code below to provide some details, or call the church office.



Project Request



Sign up to Volunteer

**New Members Class** – **Mar. 14, 9:30 am in the Goodman Dining Hall**. Take the next step at St. John's. Learn about our faith and heritage, our ministries, and the many ways you can grow, serve and belong. Sign up with the QR code here or via the Faith Life email.



**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.



**9:27 Unplugged** – *"Be Still and Know"* – **Fri., Mar. 20, 6 pm in the Chapel**. Join us for a peaceful evening of acoustic worship with our 9:27 musicians. It will be a candlelit time of worship, prayer and reflection. We invite you to sing along, listen, or simply rest in God's presence.

**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 March 10**.



**5th Grade Milestone** – *"Prayer"* – **Sun., Mar. 22, 1-3 pm**. Join Mrs. Stacey in the Well! **RSVP by Mar. 16** to [stacey@stjohns-salisbury.org](mailto:stacey@stjohns-salisbury.org).

**Stripping of the Altar**—**Maundy Thursday, Apr. 2, 7 pm in the Sanctuary**. This is a very significant and meaningful part of Holy Week which symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by his followers and the stripping of Jesus by the soldiers before his crucifixion. Any interested adults in assisting during the service, please contact Melody Moxley ([mamoxley@icloud.com](mailto:mamoxley@icloud.com)) or Maria Lewis ([mhlewis3@gmail.com](mailto:mhlewis3@gmail.com)), **no later than Mar. 19**.

**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 sign up via Faith Life or contact Mindy Hochuli ([malindahochuli@gmail.com](mailto:malindahochuli@gmail.com)) or Marian Hough Schouweiler ([mlhough17@gmail.com](mailto:mlhough17@gmail.com)).



*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.*

## CONFESSION 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.**

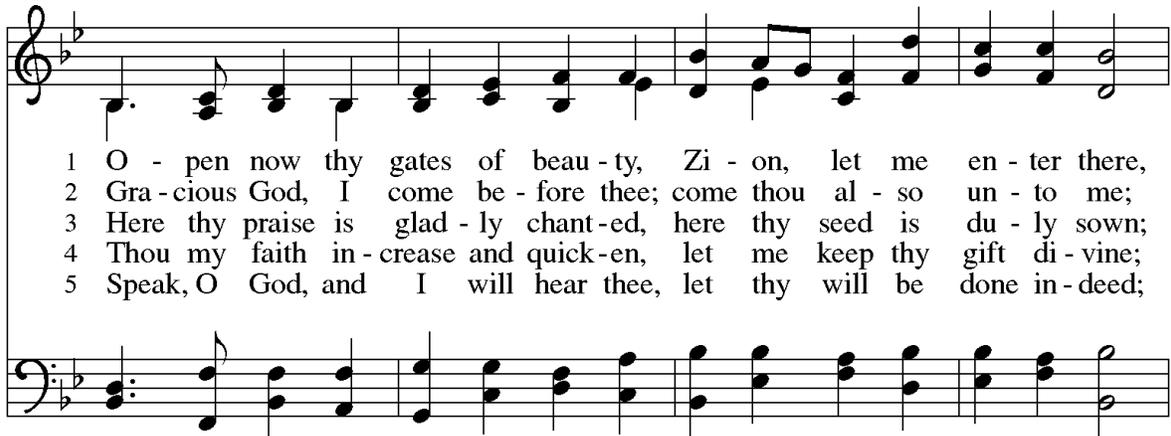
Lord of all life,

**when we are hardened against our neighbor,  
open our hearts and heal our resentment.**

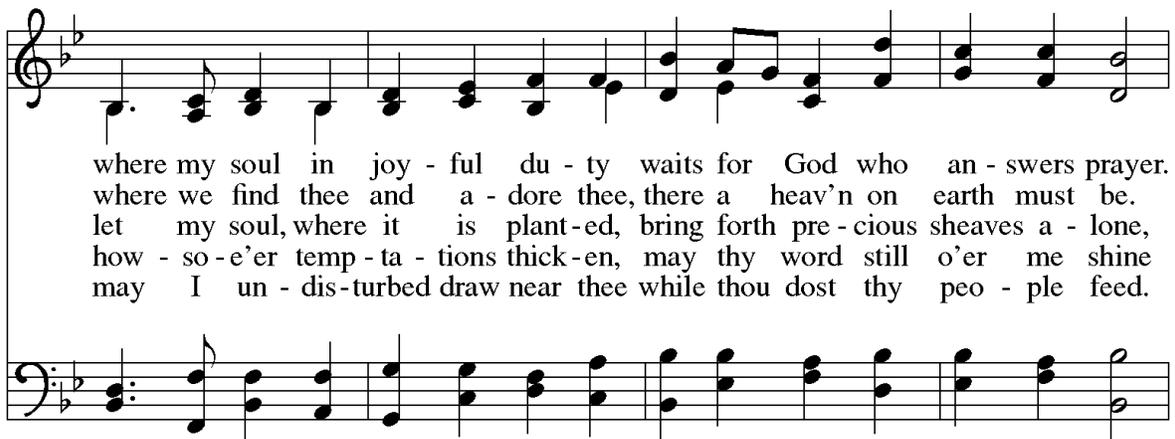
Lord of all life,

**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.**

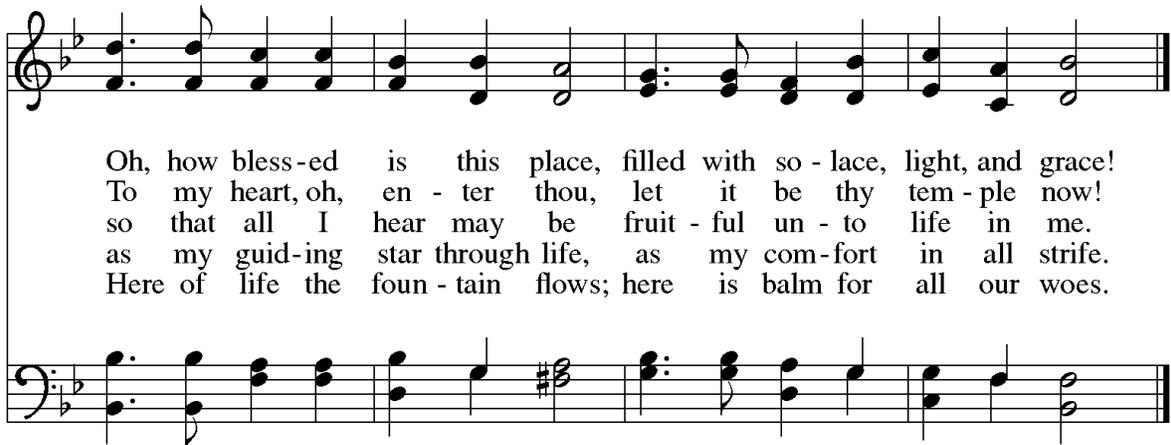
God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, our lives have been transformed by the righteousness of Christ. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are made new. **Amen.**



1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,  
 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;  
 3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant - ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;  
 4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick - en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;  
 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.  
 where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.  
 let my soul, where it is plant - ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,  
 how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thicken, may thy word still o'er me shine  
 may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.

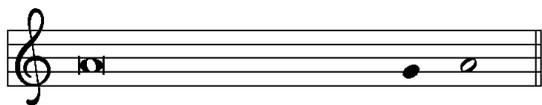


Oh, how bless - ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!  
 To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!  
 so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.  
 as my guid - ing star through life, as my com - fort in all strife.  
 Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

## 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.**

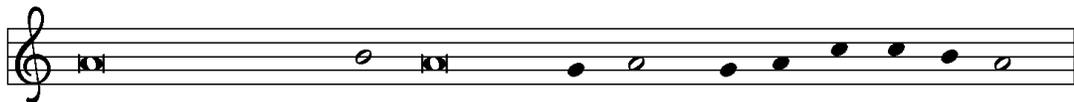
# LORD, HAVE MERCY



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.



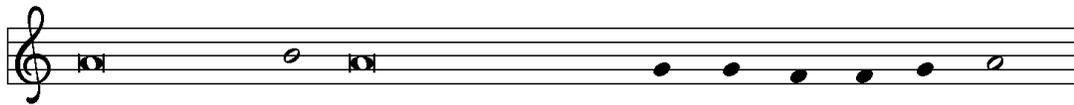
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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 ears, Lord, to heed your will for our lives. Help us not only to hear, but to listen and understand with our hearts. 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

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 19:1-13**

A reading from 1<sup>st</sup> Kings, the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter.

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup>Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." <sup>3</sup>Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. <sup>4</sup>But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." <sup>5</sup>Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." <sup>6</sup>He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again. <sup>7</sup>The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." <sup>8</sup>He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. <sup>9</sup>At that place he came to a cave and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>10</sup>He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." <sup>11</sup>He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, <sup>12</sup>and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. <sup>13</sup>When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

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

*We rise.*

**GOSPEL READING**

**Matthew 13:10-17**

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 13<sup>th</sup> chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>10</sup> Then the disciples came and asked him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup> He answered, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>13</sup> The reason I speak to them in parables is that ‘seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.’ <sup>14</sup> With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

‘You will indeed listen but never understand, and you will indeed look but never perceive. <sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, so that they might not look with their eyes, and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them.’

<sup>16</sup> “But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup> Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

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

*Be seated.*

**SERMON**

**Pastor James Demmel**

**REFLECTION SONG**

*Baptismal family gathers at the font.*

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

**Henry Blaze Weisensel and Wyatt Cooper Weisensel**

*Children of Sam and Christy Weisensel*

*Godparents: Lauren Jackson and Mike Harring (Henry) and*

*Jack Weisensel and Samantha Garver (Wyatt)*

## PRESENTATION

People of God, do you promise to support Henry and Wyatt.  
and pray for them in their new life in Christ? **We do.**

## THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church ...  
Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God, the powers of this world that rebel  
against God and the ways of sin that draw you from God? *We renounce them.*

*We rise.*

People of God, do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**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.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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

## THANKSGIVING AT THE FONT

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We give you thanks, O God...unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

## RITE OF BAPTISM

*The Rite of Baptism includes three symbols used in baptismal liturgy since the beginning of the church: water (for cleansing), oil (for sealing), and light (for proclaiming).*

*Baptism with Water. Henry and Wyatt are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

*Imposition of Oil. Oil is used to make the sign of the cross on their foreheads, a symbol that seals them in relationship with Christ.*

*Gift of Light. Henry and Wyatt are welcomed into the Family of God. A candle (the light of Christ) is presented to them with the words, "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).*

Let us welcome the newly baptized: **We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: Join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative redeeming Word to all the world.**

*As they are introduced to the congregation; all are invited to sing:*

## BAPTISMAL SONG

### 'Jesus Loves Me'

ELW 595

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so;  
little ones to him belong, they are weak, but he is strong.

*Yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me,  
yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.*

Jesus loves me! He who died, heaven's gates to open wide;  
he will wash away my sin, let his little child come in. *Refrain*

## 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

## 'O Jesus, I Have Promised

Thomas Keesecker

*O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;  
remain forever near me, my master and my friend.  
I shall not fear the battle if you are by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.*

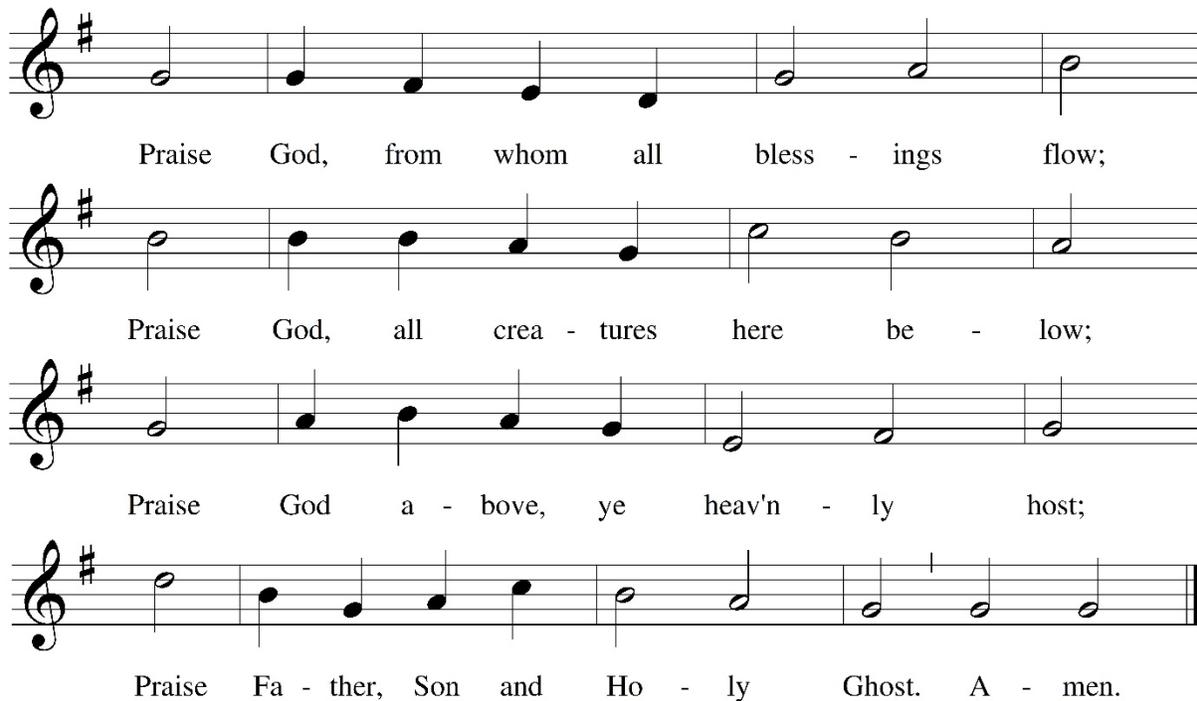
*Oh, let me feel you near me; the world is ever near.  
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear.  
My foes are ever near me, around me and within;  
but, Jesus, then draw nearer to shield my soul from sin.*

*Oh, let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still  
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will.  
Now speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;  
now speak and make me listen, O Guardian of my soul.*

*O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you  
that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.  
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;  
oh, give me grace to follow, my master and my friend.*

We rise.

## RESPONSE AND PRAYER



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow;

Praise God, all crea - tures here be - low;

Praise God a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host;

Praise Fa - ther, Son and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

*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.**

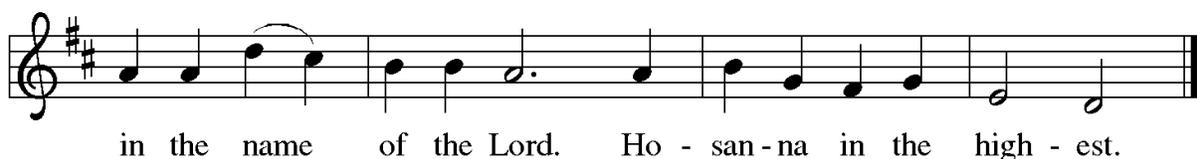
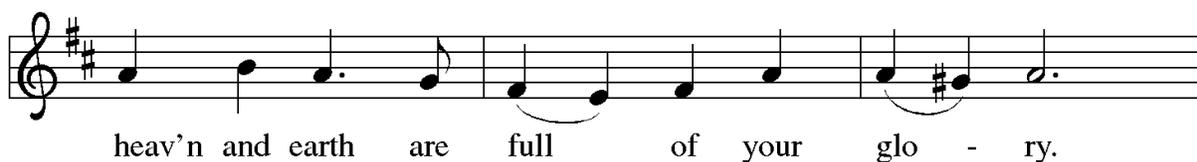
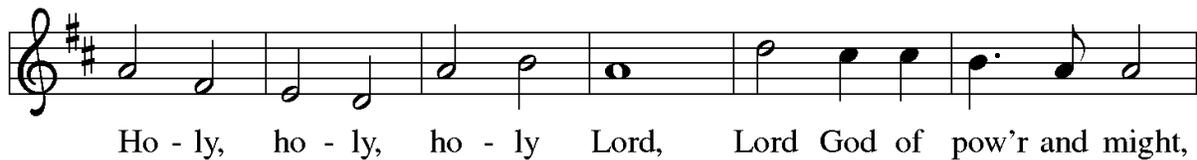
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**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



## 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

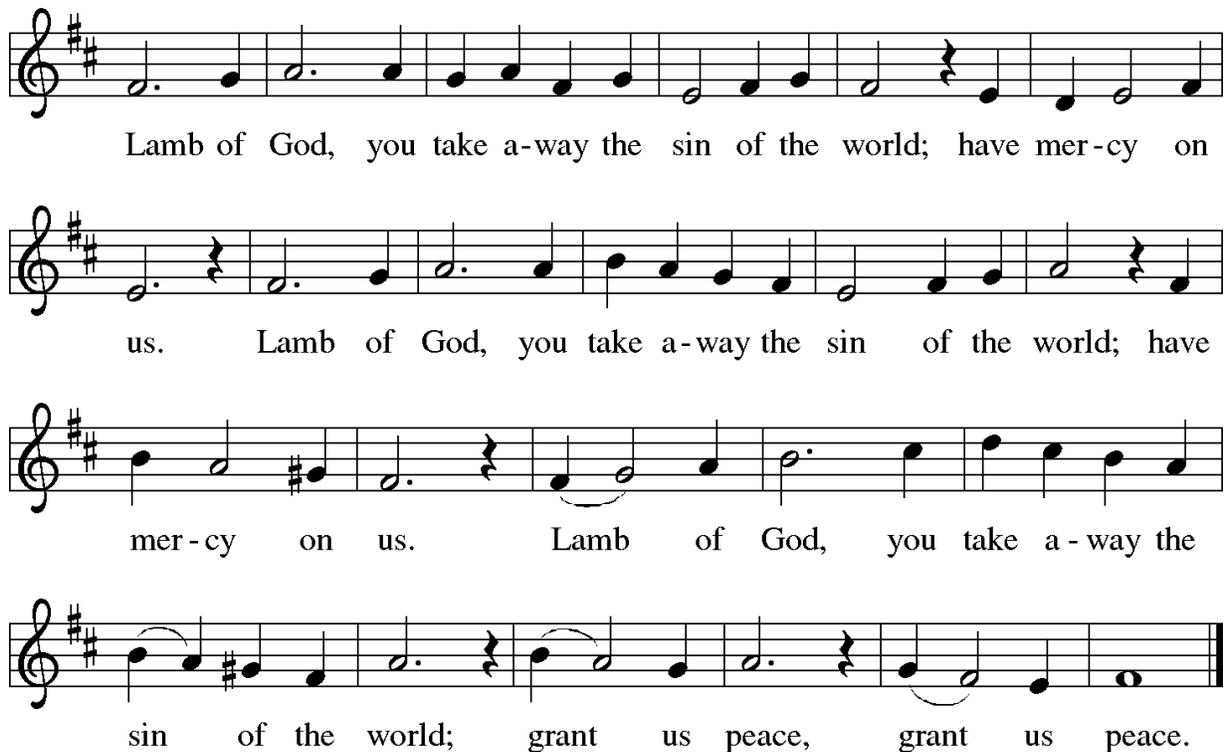
Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy. **Thanks be to God.**

*Be seated.*

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*All baptized Christians are welcome to receive Communion in the nave, following 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

'Deep River'  
arr. Marianne Kim

*performer, Lea Anne Thomas*

## COMMUNION HYMN

'Bread of Life from Heaven'

ELW 474

*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

## 'Go, My Children'

ELW 543



1 "Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, nev - er a - lone.  
 2 "Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.  
 3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, clos - er to me.



Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.  
 Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.  
 Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.



In my love's bap - tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for - ev - er.  
 Here you heard my dear Son's sto - ry, here you touched him, saw his glo - ry.  
 Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here my ten - der com - fort stilled you.



Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, you are my own."  
 Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure."  
 Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, joy - ful and free."

## DISMISSAL AND POSTLUDE

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

## WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Cantor.....Malachi Overcash  
Reader.....Chuck Moll  
Preacher.....Pastor James Demmel  
Presider.....Pastor Dan Joyner Miller  
Liturgist.....Pastor James Demmel

## ORDER OF ST. JOHN'S

Acolytes.....Jackson Williams and Mary Masters Goodman  
Crucifer.....Sam Goodman  
Banner Bearer.....Anna Kate Goodman

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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.*