



Holy Cross Day
September 14, 2025

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH!

Founded by German immigrants in 1745, St. John's Lutheran Church is one of the oldest congregations in the North Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are part of a rich heritage that now spans 184 congregations and 45,000 Lutherans in North Carolina, nearly 3 million ELCA members across 65 synods in the United States, and a global communion of 78 million Lutherans through the Lutheran World Federation. From a humble meetinghouse in 1745 to our place in the global body of Christ, St. John's continues to share God's love far beyond our own walls, living into the promise of the communion of saints.

THIS SUNDAY AT ST. JOHN'S

- ❖ **Today is Holy Cross Day**, officially the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This Christian feast is always celebrated on September 14th in Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican traditions. It **commemorates the discovery of the True Cross** by Saint Helena in 326 AD, the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 335 AD, and the return of the True Cross to Jerusalem by Emperor Heraclius in 629 AD. **The feast honors Christ's sacrifice on the cross, transforming it from a symbol of torture into a sign of hope and salvation for believers.**
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SERVICE NOTES

- ❖ A printed cross ✝ is an invitation to make the sign of the cross on your forehead or body. We make the sign of the cross to remember our Baptism and the promise: *"You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever."*
- ❖ **Bold print** indicates a speaking part for the whole assembly.
- ❖ Restrooms are located in the Narthex to the right of the front door and through the doors behind the choir to the left.
- ❖ A nursery is available for your use. Ask an usher for directions.
- ❖ Today's liturgy is Setting Eight from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.
- ❖ Have questions? Ask the pastor. He is happy to discuss the movements of our worship service and why we do what we do as Lutherans.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR MATT HANSEN

People of St. John's:

This weekend, the church observes Holy Cross Day, a festival that centers us on what's most important. The cross is not just a nice shiny brass fixture on our altar. The cross is the sign of God's deep love for the world, the place where Christ bore the weight of sin and suffering, and the place where death did not mark the end.



On September 14, 335, Christians gathered to dedicate the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, a church built on what was believed to be the site of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Ever since, the day has been set aside to "lift high the cross," not as an object of sorrow alone, but as a sign of God's power to bring life from death.

We mark Holy Cross Day not to glorify suffering, but to confess that God meets us in our weakness and transforms it. The cross reminds us that the places in life that feel like endings are not the final word. In Christ, God takes those very places and opens them to resurrection hope.

Each time we make the sign of the cross in Holy Baptism, in worship, or even in prayer at home, we are reminded that we belong to Christ forever. Marked with the cross of Christ, we live in hope, strengthened to bear one another's burdens and to share God's love with the world.

This is why this festival day is so important.

The Lord be with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt".

✝ GATHERING ✝

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

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Cross of Christ, Cross of Sorrow

Stainer

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

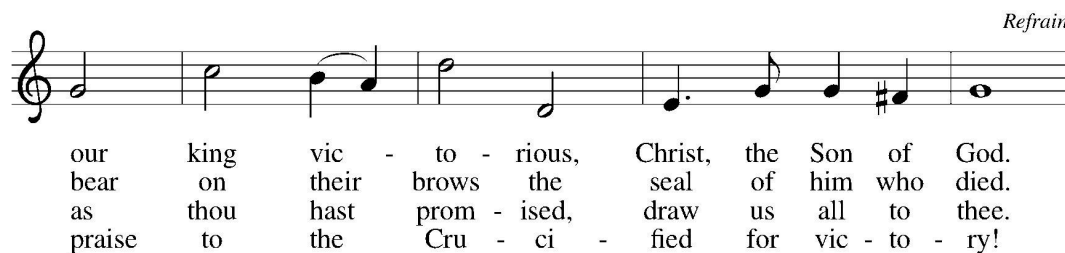
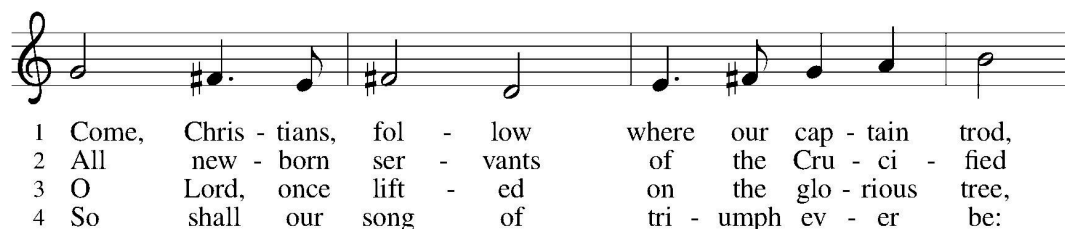
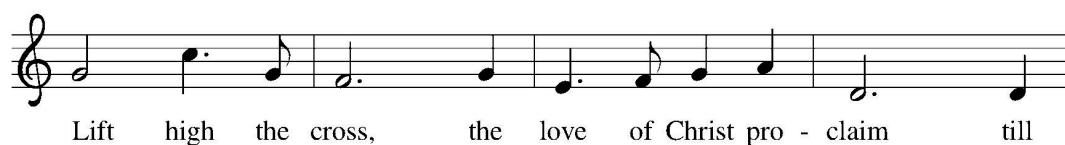
Merciful and loving God,
we are your stiff-necked people.
We trample on the needy.
We grumble about your grace to others.
We turn away from the poor.
Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.
Rejoice over us as ones who were lost and have been found. **Amen.**

Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful.
Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.
You who were lost have been found.
In the name of ✝ Jesus, your sins are forgiven!
Amen.

GATHERING SONG

Lift High the Cross

ELW #660



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.**

KYRIE

Refrain



Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, on our world and on our way.



Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, ev-'ry day.



1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the



2 That we may live out your im-passioned re-sponse to the



3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . for



4 For your Spir-it to guide; that you cen-ter our lives in the



u-ni-ty of all; for



hun-gry and the poor; that



friends and fam-i-ly; for



wa-ter and the word; that you



this ho-ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,



we may live out truth and jus-tice and grace,



life and for love, for our work and our play,



nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod-y and blood,

Refrain



let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross so that he might draw the whole world to himself. To those who look upon the cross, grant your wisdom, healing, and eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

✚ WORD ✚

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

TIME FOR OUR YOUNGEST DISCIPLES

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

FIRST READING: NUMBERS 21:4b-9

A reading from Numbers.

[From Mount Horeb the Israelites set out,] ^{4b} but the people became discouraged on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” ⁶ Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

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

PSALM 98:1-4

We read a portion of Psalm 98 responsively

¹ O sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things.
His right hand and his holy arm
have gotten him victory.

² **The LORD has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.**

³ He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.

⁴ **Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.**


SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-24

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

¹⁸ The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” ²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: JOHN 3:13-17

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

[*Jesus said:*] ¹³ “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.” ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” ¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

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

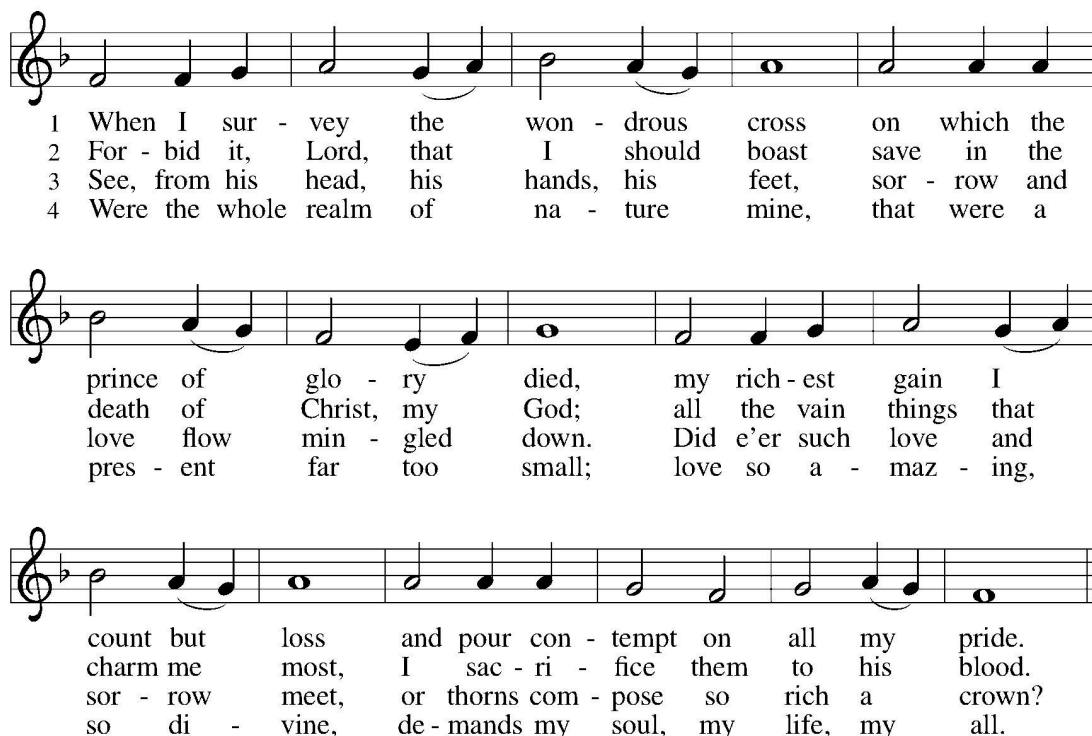
SERMON

The Rev. Matt Hansen

HYMN OF THE DAY

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

ELW #803



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the
3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a
prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that
love flow min - gled down. Did e'er such love and
pres - ent far too small; love so a - maz - ing,
count but loss and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

THE 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 of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

PEACE

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

✠ MEAL ✠

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

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

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

God So Loved the World

Miller

OFFERING SONG

We Give Thee but Thine Own

ELW #686



1 We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;
2 May we thy boun - ties thus as stew - ards true re - ceive,
3 The cap - tive to re - lease, to God the lost to bring,
4 And we be - lieve thy word, though dim our faith may be:



all that we have is thine a - lone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.
and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first - fruits give.
to teach the way of life and peace—it is a Christ - like thing.
what - e'er we do for thine, O Lord, we do it un - to thee.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. Merciful God, through the death of your beloved Son you transformed an instrument of shame into a sign of hope and glory. Receive all we bring before you this day, and renew us in the mystery of his love; through the same Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. **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 and good, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Today we celebrate with songs of praise the cross, the victory-sign of Christ. Once through the fruit of the forbidden tree we fell, now through this tree our Savior cancels all our sin. An instrument of shameful death has become for Christ a throne of glory.

The power of the life-giving cross reveals the judgment that has come upon the world and the triumph of Christ crucified. And so, with choirs of angels and with all the heavenly host, we proclaim your glory and join their unending hymn of praise:

SANCTUS

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

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Great is the mystery of faith. Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again.

LORD'S PRAYER

As our Savior Christ taught us, we are bold to say,

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. Come to this meal of mercy.

DISTRIBUTION

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. O God, through this meal you have strengthened us and appointed us to be your servants. Send us to do good and to share our possessions with all in need. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

✠ SENDING ✠

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

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

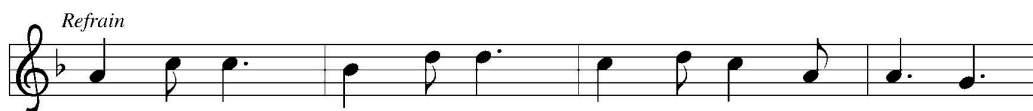
ELW #335



1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,



free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Do not lose heart. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

The Cross of Jesus Christ

MacDonald

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

Beginning September 15, we will explore *The Church: A Guide to the People of God* by Brad East. Books are available for \$7 in the church office.

THANK YOU FROM THE GOODMANS

Thank you all for the phone calls, texts, cards, food, flowers and visits during these past two months. I am finally starting to recover, and hope to be back in church soon. Could not have made it through all this without our church family! Love you all! –Rathel & Ellen

HOMECOMING MUMS

Orders are being taken for mums to be placed in the church for Homecoming Sunday on September 21st. The cost for each mum is \$6.50 (wrapped and bowed in a 6" pot). They may be placed in memory or honor of someone. Please fill out the form found in the Narthex and return to the church office with your payment today.

CHRISTMAS MARKET

Celebrate the magic of Christmas on Saturday, December 13 from 3:00–7:00 pm with a craft market, entertainment, food trucks, and tours of the heritage museum at St. John's Christmas Market Celebration! Come enjoy the season or sell your handcrafted items!

CALL TO DUTY!

In another few weeks, the Nominating Committee will be looking for volunteers to be placed on the ballot for new Congregation Council members. Per the constitution, they will be looking for 8 church members to be placed on the ballot in November, with 4 being elected for a 3-year term starting in December. As mentioned previously from the pulpit, the existing council members wish and hope that each of our members will prayerfully consider to be a part of the church leadership team. St. John's has some new enthusiasm and excitement going after some very slow years with little active growth (and no full-time pastor). And the church can use some leaders that will continue to press on with the growth. The Congregation Council will present the Nominating Committee names to the congregation in September. They will be the ones to contact with interest as a volunteer. Otherwise, they will be on the phone asking for members to be on the ballot. Let's not make the phone calls necessary. Again, prayerfully consider stepping up and being one of the leaders of St. John's Lutheran Church as we continue to move forward.

MISSION DELIVERY

There will be a truck at the Church on Saturday, September 20th from 10am-12pm, for a Kentucky Mission Delivery. Catherine will leave following Worship on September 21 to take our items.

HOMEcoming ON SEPTEMBER 21

The Rev. Cassie Overcash, Assistant to the NC Bishop, will preach at 10am. Wanda Casey and Jeannie Thornton from Cabarrus Hospice will lead a special Sunday School in the Sanctuary at 9am. A covered dish meal will follow worship in the Fellowship Building.

NEW DOOR CODE

There is a new code to access the Education Building. This includes the main office entrance, the side entrance, and the basement entrance to Goins Hall. If you need the new code, please reach out to the church office.

YOUTHQUAKE 2025

October 4th @ St. John's, Salisbury (3rd-5th Graders) Youthquake is a gathering for youth in the 3rd-5th grade from across the NC Synod for fellowship, learning, service, and worship. This year our theme is all about what it means to be "the Church", including learning what a "Synod" is. Cost will be picked up by St. John's and includes lunch and a t-shirt.

BACK TO THE BASICS: TEN WEEKS WITH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

October is the tenth month of the year, and we will begin ten weeks exploring all Ten Commandments. In 1529, Martin Luther published the *Small Catechism* so households could explain to their children in simple terms the basics of the faith: The Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sacraments, and simple prayers for daily living. If you don't have a copy of the *Catechism*, we will begin distributing the pocket editions in the church Narthex over the next few weeks. To support this effort, consider a gift to the Christian Education fund. Additionally, the *Small Catechism* is found in the back of the ELW (red hymnal) and can be downloaded, in app form, for free:

<https://catechism.augsburgfortress.org/>

FALL CLASSIC RESTAURANT TRIP

Meal at the Classic Restaurant in Denton will be on October 5th. Sign up sheet will be in the Narthex.

WELCA FALL CONFERENCE

The Cabarrus/St. John's WELCA Fall Conference Gathering is set for Saturday, September 20th at Mt. Zion in Richfield. Registration begins at 8:30. Cost is \$12.00. See Susan to carpool.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Anyone who would be able to help out in the children's Sunday School class please contact Susan Hayes.

PRAYER LIST

Immediate Care Concern

Susan Hayes (*Recovery from surgery*),
Lynne Childers (*Cousin of Vera Drye, Health condition*),
Ellen Goodman (*Recovery from surgery*)

Ongoing Care Concern

Lisa Edwards (*Health condition*), Judy Fisher (*Health condition*), Rick McRorie (*Health condition*),
Roger Shoaf (*Health condition*), Stan Parnell (*Health condition*), Al Sundling (*Health condition*), Lucy Thomas
(*Health condition*), King Walters (*Health condition*), Pr. Bob Young (*Health condition*)

Residents in Care Facilities

Larry & Faye Cline (*Trinity Oaks*), Pr. Don Deal (*Trinity Oaks*), Betty Ritchie (*Trinity Oaks*), Amelia
Ritchie (*Terra Bella*), Martha Suther (*Brookdale Concord*), Joy Waddell (*Mt. Pleasant House*),
Kay Walker (*Brookdale Concord*)

Homebound

Pat Blackwelder, Gloria Casper, Nancy Deal, Judy Fisher, Elaine Petrea

SERVING TODAY

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| The Rev. Matt Hansen | <i>Preaching & Presiding</i> |
| Catherine Ritch | <i>Organist</i> |
| Rathel Goodman | <i>Lector</i> |
| David Johnson, Jim Thinnes, Bonita Rowland | <i>Communion Assistants</i> |
| John Hartsell, David Ritchie, Jacob Sigler, Eddie Walters | <i>Ushers</i> |
| Rowland Family | <i>Livestream Support</i> |
| Patti and Hailey Fletcher | <i>Nursery Attendants</i> |
| Etta & Bonita Rowland | <i>Altar Guild</i> |
| Larry Allman | <i>Teller</i> |

CONTACT US

BY PHONE

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Pastor Matt's Mobile (612) 704-2828

ONLINE

Office Email office@stjohnsconcord.com
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ON-SITE

Address 100 St. John's Church Rd, Concord, NC 28025
Admin Assistant's Office Hours Mon-Thu, 8am-1:30pm; Fri, 8am-Noon
Pastor Matt's Office Hours Mon-Thu, *by appointment*.
↪ *Please note: Pastor Matt observes Sabbath every Friday* ↩

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



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