



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH *The Herald*

Volume LII Issue II

February 2025

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

1700 Years of Nicea

In 2025, it is difficult to imagine that there was once a time when the Christian faith existed without any formal statement of faith. The Church existed around faith in the Risen Christ, but as time went on, questions began to arise that the earliest Christians did not spend much time thinking about. What exactly was the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Was Jesus a created being? How could a Son be equal to a Father? Did Jesus have a role in the creation of the world? Just how many Gods are there anyway, one or three?

As these questions became more prominent, division in the early church increased. The fledgling Jesus movement had survived the crucifixion of its leader and generations of oppression and persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire, but could it survive its own internal debates?

Two major parties emerged with different answers to these questions. The first, and by some accounts larger party, were the Arians, so named for the leader of their faction, the priest Arius. Arius taught that God is one and, therefore, could not be divided; thus, there could be no way that Jesus could be both God and human. He further taught that while Jesus was divine, he was only the "firstborn" of creation, meaning he was a creature made by God the Father and sharing some qualities with God the

Father, but was not God or equal to God. Jesus may have been a divine son, but he was not eternal like the Father and there was a time when he did not exist.

While popular, the ideas of Arius marked a departure from what Christians had taught since the beginning, that the Father and the Son are co-eternal and co-equal, sharing the same substance of divinity. The departure of Arius and his followers from this central teaching served to deepen tensions in the early church.

To quell the destabilizing effect of these divisions, Emperor Constantine invited all the bishops to gather in the coastal city of Nicea (now İznik, Türkiye) in 325 AD to settle this and other matters. During the council, the orthodox position was affirmed and the Arian position was denounced. This affirmation of Christian orthodoxy survives in the Nicene Creed, which was first written at the Council (it would be elaborated upon at the Council of Constantinople in 381).

Today, the Nicene Creed stands as the primary symbol of our essential unity with the teachings of the early church. It is a sign of our continuity with forebears in the Christian faith, a symbol of the most central ideas of what it means to hold the Christian faith. When we profess the Creed in worship, we stand in continuity and unity with Christians past, present, and future, spanning time, geography, and ecclesial differences.

Let us give thanks for the Nicene Creed and those brave souls who risked everything to put the Faith of the Church in writing for us. May we hold its tenets dear to our hearts.



Coffee with Pastor: Planning Your Funeral

The loss of a loved one brings a great deal of sadness, but it also brings with it anxiety over planning an appropriate funeral or memorial service. Families often do not like to talk about what their loved ones may want after their death, but these can be vital conversations. Gather with Pastor Robb and other members on Wednesday, February 19 at 10:00 am to talk about the theology and practice of funerals, and begin work planning your own service.

St. John's Lutheran Church
5 Clifford Street, Charleston, SC 29401
Church Office: 843-723-2426 info@stjohnscharleston.org

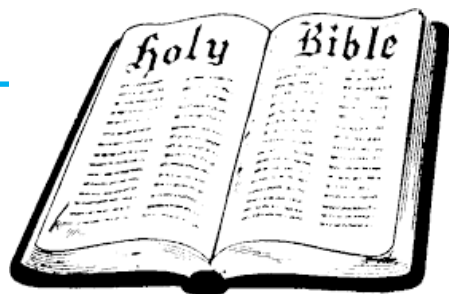
Join Pastor Robb on Facebook Live

each Wednesday at 8:30 AM for a short devotion.

You can access St. John's Facebook page via the app or any web browser at <https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsLutheran>

2025 Bible Challenge

Our 2025 Bible Challenge continues! With February upon us, we are wrapping up Matthew and starting with Mark. If you didn't start on January 1, this is a great time to pick up the challenge as we begin a new Gospel! Reading schedules may be found in the back of the church or in your weekly email update.



Winter Bible Study

Men's and Women's Bible Studies continue on Tuesdays from 6:00-8:00 PM beginning with a light supper.

Following supper, the women gather to study *Discerning the Voice of God* by Priscilla Shirer.

The men gather to study Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic book, *Life Together*.

POC: Lynda Marchant/Linda Martschink for the women and Pastor Robb for the men.



Children's Choir

The children's choir now has their own choir room upstairs in the parish hall. They rehearse every Sunday from 9:30 – 10:00. Rehearsals begin with an African drum ensemble. Then we move on to Solfege where they are taught to read music and sing on pitch. Currently, we are working on the African hymn "Amen, Siakudumisa" and "Lord of the Dance" by John Rutter. They will be singing in church soon!

Handbell Choir

The Handbell choir is busy preparing for Epiphany, Lent, and Easter.

News From the Special Projects Committee



Save the Date: March 1st, 2025 5-7 PM
Lowcountry Mardi Gras in Parish Hall

Our next Front Porch Day will be held on March 9th from 1-2:30 PM. We will keep our doors open to guests to tour St. John's.

Please reach out to Elizabeth Marchant if you would like to help with this event.
843-693-1885 ecmarchant@gmail.com

Next Special Projects Meeting will be Monday, February 10th, 2025 at 11 AM.

Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9:30 AM -2:30 PM
843-723-2426 info@stjohnscharleston.org



Please scan the QR code
for easy online giving
to St. John's!



Lowcountry Mardi Gras Celebration

Saturday, March 1st, 2025
5-7pm
in the Parish Hall

Jambalaya, King Cake,
and non-alcoholic drinks
will be provided.

Please bring a salad, side
or dessert to share.

(Remember your serving utensil.)
BYOB beer and wine ONLY, please.

Please RSVP by dropping this into the offering plate
OR click the link in the weekly e-news to sign up online.

Family name _____

Number attending _____



“How can I serve my church?”

We are in need of additional people to assist with worship. You will be guaranteed a seat near the altar and you gain the joy of serving in a very specific way in communion with others. Never served before? No worries! We will train you. Helpers are needed for Communion set-up before the 8:30 AM service, Communion clean-up after 11:00 AM service, filling candles, acolyte, crucifer, worship assistants, and lectors. Contact someone you see serving, or contact the church office: info@stjohnscharleston.org

Tovey Circle

The Tovey Circle will meet on February 6th, 11:00 a.m. at the home of Kathryn Tolley. Sally Fulmer will present the program. All ladies are invited to attend.

Lee-Freyschmidt Circle

The Lee-Freyschmidt Circle will meet at 10:30 on
Wednesday, February 5th in the Parish Hall.



Altar Flowers/Greens

Please contact Susan at the church office to sponsor
flowers or greens in 2025!

843-723-2426 or email: info@stjohnscharleston.org

The cost is \$55 per vase.

Would you like to sponsor a vase on February 16 or 23?



The Vestry meeting was called to order on Saturday, January 25th by Vestry President William Dowd. The following represents the highlights of our Vestry meeting:

1. Noted in attendance were all members. Excused were Melissa Spaulding and Martha Harken.
2. Pastor Robb Harrell began the meeting with a Prayer.
3. The December 2024 Vestry Minutes were approved.
4. Pastor Harrell gave his report during which the Vestry approved the requests for two weddings, one in 2025 and one in 2026.
5. Pastor Harrell made the motion to accept the donation of an iPad and new amplifier to update the existing sound system. An anonymous donor has given funds to purchase a new mixing board to complete the sound system upgrade. The motions were approved unanimously.
6. The 2024 Year end Treasurer's Report will be finalized and submitted at the February Vestry meeting.
7. Vestry approved the facilities request for L'Organo to hold an organ recital May 27, 2025.
8. The various Committee Chairpersons provided an update on the activities and action occurring within their areas, mostly via written reports that were distributed to the Vestry in advance of the meeting. Upcoming events include:
 - * Souper Bowl in February
 - * Lowcountry Mardi Gras in the Parish Hall March 1
 - * Front Porch Sunday, March 9
9. The next regularly scheduled Vestry meeting will be Tuesday, February 25th at 6:30pm. There being no further business, the Vestry meeting was adjourned.



Please mark your calendars!

Weekly

Sundays

Children's Choir coincides with Sunday School at 9:30 AM, for children in grades 1 through 8!

Tuesdays

6:00 PM supper and men's/women's Bible study

Wednesdays

8:30 AM Facebook Live with Pastor Robb

5:30 PM Handbell Choir rehearsal

6:30 PM St. John's Chorale rehearsal

February

Tuesday, February 4

9:30 AM - Worship & Music Meeting

Wednesday, February 5

10:30 AM - Lee-Freyschmidt Circle

Thursday, February 6

11:00 AM - Tovey Circle

Monday, February 10

11:00 AM - Special Projects Meeting

Friday, February 14

Valentine's Day

Wednesday, February 19

10:00 AM—Coffee with Pastor: Planning Your Funeral

Monday, February 24

Deadline for Herald Newsletter content

March

Saturday, March 1

5:00-7:00 PM - Lowcountry Mardi Gras Celebration

Wednesday, March 5

12:00 PM and 7:00 PM - Ash Wednesday services

Sunday, March 9

Front Porch Day

FEBRUARY

Birthdays

2/1 Fran Bean
 2/3 Amy Butler
 2/3 Travis Julian
 2/6 David Sines Thomasson
 2/7 Billy Lesemann
 2/8 Kirk Poulnot
 2/8 Amanda Littlejohn
 2/8 Lilly Wertan
 2/9 Claire Moore
 2/9 Jim Giertz
 2/9 Turner Fulmer
 2/10 Hank Tolley
 2/11 Chris McDonough
 2/11 Thalia Gerard
 2/13 Denise Doyon
 2/14 Jack Eller
 2/14 Michael McCarthy
 2/14 Brinkley Norton
 2/15 Jan Kyle
 2/16 Douglas Kilgour
 2/18 Rosemary Allen
 2/25 Marianne Albrecht
 2/25 Mark Jordan
 2/26 Sophie Fulmer
 2/28 Miles Martschink

Congregational Concerns & Prayers

We remember in our prayers:
 Deborah Bussey
 Terry and Sandra Butler
 Ted DeHart
 Jerry Duck
 Chere Edwards and Leslie Weikle
 Peggy Flood
 John Foltz
 Christian Groff
 Jason Hilton
 Dan Marchant
 Denny McKeever
 Michele Meisten
 Linda & Larry Mohr
 Paul Morris
 Michael Rossetter
 Barbara Siegling
 Charlotte Smith
 Betty Wieters
 Allison Williams
 and our members who have
 experienced the loss of
 loved ones, including the family of
 Barbara Tamsberg.

Our Loved Ones Away From Home

We remember members and
 friends who are serving
 in our military:
 Charles T. Clark
 Grant Hoel
 Thomas McCarthy



St. John's Lutheran Church

2025 Staff, Officers, Vestry & Committee Chairs

Staff at the Office: 843-723-2426

Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Robb Harrell pastor@stjohnscharleston.org
Office Manager/ Church Administrator	Susan Messersmith info@stjohnscharleston.org
Director of Music	Allison Williams music@stjohnscharleston.org
Financial Administrator	Carole Jordan financialadmin@stjohnscharleston.org
Director of St. John's Chorale and Director of Digital Ministries	Brink Norton media@stjohnscharleston.org

Vestry Officers

President	William Dowd	Secretary	Barbara Allen
V- President	Genevieve Lagonera	Treasurer	Martha Harken

Vestry Members

Brenda Carr, Michael Lagonera, Elizabeth Marchant,
 Chris McDonough, Lewis Moore, Melissa Spaulding,
 Sheila Sines Thomasson, Marshall Wilson

Committee Appointments

Christian Education	Melissa Spaulding
Communication	Sheila Sines Thomasson
Endowment	Frickie Martschink
Evangelism	Michael Lagonera
Finance	Dan Prickett
Archivist and History	Sallie Springer
Lutheran Men	open
Nursery	Christian Education Committee
Property	Lewis Moore
Social Ministry	Brenda Carr
Special Projects	Elizabeth Marchant
Stewardship	Chris McDonough
Women of the ELCA	Anita Mitchum