

Amens & Alleluias – March 2026

St. John's Episcopal Church, Congaree

1151 Elm Savannah Road, Hopkins, SC 29061

Sundays, 10:30 am - Holy Eucharist Rite II; **Wednesdays**, 12:00 pm - Holy Eucharist Rite II and healing prayers

Phone: 803.776.9292 - Website: www.stjohnscongarree.net – Office email: stjohnscongarree@gmail.com

MISSION STATEMENT

We, as members of St. John's Episcopal Church, Congaree, are an open, caring, nurturing community, committed to living the Word of God by witnessing through Christ and growing in grace through prayer, fellowship, education and service.

Letter From the Rector – March 2026

Dear friends at St. John's,

As I announced in church this morning, I have a personal update that I'd like to share with you. My husband Garrett has been accepted to the Doctoral program in Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, NJ. His term begins in August and so later on this summer, we are moving to New Jersey, and I will be leaving St. John's.

This is hard news to hear, I know. Even though this move is what is best for our family, I am devastated to leave St. John's. When I accepted the call as your rector, I intended to stay longer. Our time together feels so short, and yet it has been a beautiful two and a half years. This congregation came into my life at a critical moment of my ministry, and I cannot thank you enough for your kindness, energy, enthusiasm, openness, and love. And please know I return and reciprocate that love which makes this goodbye that much harder.

What's next for St. John's?

I have been working with the wardens, staff, and vestry to begin planning next steps. Bishop Richards and Canon Janey Wilson have also been indispensable to Garrett and me, and have pledged to support you during this transition. After I leave, someone from the diocesan office will work with the vestry to discern about what comes next. I am *extremely* confident you will find a wonderful new priest when the time comes. St. John's has so much to offer clergy, and I am already a little envious of the person who gets to love you next – you are *easy* to love.

What's next for me?

I do not yet know what I'll be doing or where I will serve next, though I am in early stages of conversation with the Diocese of New Jersey. I trust that God will lead me to where I ought to be. I am looking forward to being closer to my family and only a 20-minute drive away from my best friends and their children. I am also deeply proud of Garrett. He is one of only a handful of accepted students out of hundreds of applications. He worked so hard for his long-held dream of getting a PhD, and he will be (and is) an amazing scholar and priest. My biggest immediate priority is to continue to be your pastor in the best way I can.

I'm not going anywhere fast. I have some previously scheduled vacation in April after Easter and one Sunday off in June that I will take—both for weddings. But the date of my last Sunday will be sometime in late July.

What I pray for is for us to take the time to say goodbye really well. I pray that we will continue to keep Jesus Christ in the center of everything that we do. I pray that we will continue to steward and shepherd St. John's into this new era of growth. I pray that you know how proud I am to be your rector and how much I deeply care for each of you. (con'd pg 2)

I am reminded of something Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." Each of us has the privilege of planting and watering seeds of growth here, but don't forget that it is our Lord at the helm. And I know that He has wonderful things in store for you. Please, join me in praying for St. John's, and for Garrett and me as we make a big leap. You will remain in my prayers each day.

Please do not hesitate to call me or visit the office if you'd like to talk. All will be well.

In the love of Christ Jesus, Katie+

FROM YOUR SENIOR WARDEN

God puts special people in our lives at just the right time, sometimes for long periods and sometimes for only a short stay. I feel God brought us Katie and our time has been special. She has added so much to our life at St. John's and will be sorely missed. I know I speak for the vestry and the congregation that we wish her and Garrett the best as they move into the next phase of their lives.

As a congregation, we will celebrate with Katie and say our heartfelt goodbyes. Then we will get to the business of building on what she has given us. After she leaves the vestry, we will need your support and prayers as we form a search committee and begin the process of choosing the next rector for St. John's. As the Senior Warden I will do my best, guided by the Spirit, to keep you informed and lead us through this transition...together.

"Almighty and everlasting God, ruler of all things in heaven and on earth, hear the prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. "

BCP

Thank you to the pancake "flippers" and bacon/sausage cookers, Rusty, Frank, Treye, and Drew along with Julie who served pancakes providing a great dinner on Shrove Tuesday. It was a great time to be together. I want to put in a plug for the Oyster Roast on March 7. Many hands have put in a lot of time and effort to make this a great event with our partner, the Eastover Ruritan Club. So, mark your calendars for **March 7th** and contact Jim, Butch or Bud to see how you can help out.

What is Lent to you? I have spent some time pondering this question the past few days as I consider how I plan to make Lent meaningful to me. We are called to pray, fast, reflect and prepare for the celebration of Easter. This thought caught my eye as I was reading this week... "Lent this year is like a pilot whose airplane has been on autopilot, but is now coming in to land, he re-takes the control.... shutting down some of the systems and focusing on landing." This speaks to the intentionality of Lent, allowing the Spirit to move within you to focus on what is important for your growth and preparation. Our Lent Formation class for both youth and adults is one possibility. Come and join us!

Lisa Clarkson, Senior Warden

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

If you are aware of or see any issues or have any concerns regarding the property, please don't hesitate to bring it to my attention. Rusty 803-422-2882

ANNUAL OYSTER ROAST/SHRIMP BOIL FUND-RAISER

As this is written, our oyster roast and shrimp boil fund-raiser is this WEEK – March 7 from 3-7pm. Ticket sales have gone pretty well and we are excited to host this special event along with the Eastover Ruritan Club. All available hands and backs are needed this week, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, from 3 to 6pm to set up tents, tables, chairs and anything else that needs to happen before Saturday. Please help! Ladies, we are looking forward to the desserts you will be bringing to top off the evening. If you have any questions, please call me. Jim Hiott (803)783-4214

ST. JOHN'S MARCH CALENDAR AT A GLIMPSE

Sunday, Mar 1	-Adult Formation & Youth SS at 9am - Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II
Monday, Mar 2	-Vestry Meeting 6:30pm
Wednesday, Mar 4	-Noon Eucharist
Saturday, Mar 7	-Oyster roast/shrimp boil beginning at 3pm
Saturday, Mar 7	-Daylight Savings Time Begins – spring forth 1 hour B4 bedtime
Sunday, Mar 8	-Adult Formation & Youth SS at 9am -Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II
Wednesday, Mar 11	-Noon Eucharist
Sunday, Mar 15	-Adult Formation & Youth SS at 9am -Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II -ECW Meeting at 11:30am
Wednesday, Mar 18	-Noon Eucharist
Sunday, Mar 22	-Adult Formation & Youth SS at 9am -Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II
Wednesday, Mar 25	-Noon Eucharist
Sunday, Mar 29	-Worship at 10:30am; Palm Sunday procession begins in Zion Hall or outside -Covered dish luncheon at 11:45am

SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK

- March 29 – Palm Sunday – 10:30am with procession beginning outside
- April 1 – Wednesday – Noon Eucharist
- April 2 – Maundy Thursday – service at 6:30pm
- April 3 – Good Friday – service at noon
- April 5 – Easter Sunday – Continental Breakfast & Easter egg hunt & flowering the Cross – 9:15am
Worship Service at 10:30am – He Is Risen!!!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE BAPTIZED?

If you are not baptized but would like to be, let Katie know! We will be offering baptisms during the Easter Season and on Sunday, May 24th.



ADULT LENTEN FORMATION SERIES

Join us on Sunday mornings in Lent to reflect on the Passion according to St. John. We will be using the devotional book "Love Set Free" by theologian Martin Smith. Books will be provided.

When: Sundays in Lent beginning Feb. 22 - March 22 at 9:00 in Zion Hall.

Note that youth/children's Sunday school will be held concurrently. See you then!

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL – CHILDREN IN THE BIBLE

Our Lenten Youth Sunday School began on Sunday, February 22 with the story of Joseph. Alex Peraza did a great job playing the role of the boy with the coat of many colors. Thank you, Alex! We will continue Sunday School on March 1, 8, 15, and 22 and will learn about Moses and Miriam, Samuel, and David. Please join us at 9:00 am on Sunday mornings for stories, Bible trivia games, snacks, and fun fellowship. Bring A Friend!

VESTRY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

February 2, 2026

- The sink in the sacristy was found to be rusty and leaking. It will be replaced.
- Repair work will be done to the handicap entrance at the church and the door by the organ will be checked as it is often hard to open.
- Plans for the Oyster Roast, scheduled for March 7, are progressing, and everyone is encouraged to sell tickets.
- The schedule and topics for adult Lenten study and youth Sunday School were announced.
- Volunteers for the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper were secured.
- An opportunity for community vacation Bible school was presented and discussed.
- The next vestry meeting will be Monday, March 2, at 6:30 pm.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

“Our life is March weather; savage and serene in one hour”

...Ralph Waldo Emerson



Thank you to all who helped with Terry Catoe’s reception. I am proud of how St. John’s Congaree is always ready and willing to provide not only nourishment in the form of refreshments but also the comfort and care to the families who need us in difficult times.

March is a busy month with Lent activities and the 2nd Annual Oyster Roast! If anyone becomes aware of any needs that Hospitality can assist with, please do not hesitate to reach out—email me at rdandz@gmail.com, call or text **803-622-2929**, or contact the church office.

Have a blessed month ~ Debbie

ALTAR GUILD

Thank you to the Altar Guild members who served in February. We observed the Presentation, the Transfiguration, Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of Lent. The volunteer work you undertake each week, including the Wednesday noon service, to prepare for worship and the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, is appreciated. During March, there are no flowers on the altar. There will be palms on Palm Sunday. There is an opportunity to purchase Easter lilies to help decorate the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. An order form is attached to this newsletter (see page 9).

March Volunteer Schedule: Mar 1 – Lisa Clarkson; Mar 8 – Louise Barker; Mar 15 – Julie & Frank Claytor; Mar 22– Corrie Blasi; Mar 29 – Rita McCaskill & Betsy Cate.

Please prayerfully consider joining this important ministry and call Lisa at 803.237.2892 to volunteer. Training will be available. Lisa Clarkson, Altar Guild Director

NEWS FROM YOUR EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

The ECW met on Sunday, February 15 at 9:30 am. Here are the highlights of our meeting:

- The make-up date to provide refreshments for the Gadsden Elementary teachers is set for Monday, March 2. If you are responsible for any of the snacks, they should be delivered to church on Sunday, March 1.
- The ECW will coordinate desserts for the Oyster Roast on Saturday, March 7.
- Plans were made to host the Easter Sunday continental breakfast and egg hunt on April 5 at 9:15 am.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 15 at 11:45 am. Please join us to help plan for Easter Sunday.

Peace and Love - Julie Claytor, Rita McCaskill, Fran Burnett, and Corrie Blasi

OYSTER ROAST – DESSERTS NEEDED!

Our oyster roast is fast approaching, and desserts are needed for the March 7 event. The ECW is asking for the sweet treat donations to be finger food style; easy to pick up (i.e. cookies, brownies, cake slices). It would be most appreciated if the desserts were already placed in storage bags (2-4 cookies/bag or 2 brownies/bag). You can bring your desserts to church on Thursday, March 5 or on Saturday, March 7 between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm. Let us know if you are unable to get your dessert to church, and we will make arrangements to pick it up. Thank you for the yummy goodies!

FOOD COLLECTION FOR SENIOR RESOURCES

The ECW continues to collect non-perishable food items to help stock the pantry at Senior Resources. This food will be shared with people who are on a waiting list to begin Meals-on-Wheels. The food you donate should be single serving and easy to open or pop-top items. Senior Resources is also accepting donations of pet food for cats and dogs. Please bring your donations to our monthly covered dish lunches. There will be a basket in the parish hall for the food collection. Thank you for your help with this project! P.S. Senior Resources also desperately needs drivers to deliver Meals-on-Wheels! If you are willing and able to help, please call 803.252.7734.

GADSDEN MINISTRIES

Gadsden Backpack Ministry

Each weekend in the school year, we supply 20 students with supplemental meals for the that include breakfast items, fruit cups, juice, milk, protein, and snacks. Need help in deciding what to contribute? Suggestions can be found at <https://www.stjohnscongaree.net/volunteer-opportunities>. Thank you to all who contribute one way or another to the success of this ministry. Contact Anne Lott if you have any questions.

Suggestions can be found on our website at <https://www.stjohnscongaree.net/volunteer-opportunities>. Your support is important and greatly appreciated, and we are truly grateful for all you do. There is also a hard copy list of suggestions on the Narthex table for your convenience.

Gadsden Elementary Little Free Library

The Little Free Library at Gadsden Elementary has been stocked with new books for the children. The students are using the Little Free Library bins in their classroom and are enjoying the books. Our goal is to provide a variety of reading material that will spark the love of reading in the students. Thanks to contributions from the church and community we are in good shape with books. We will always accept donations of new or gently used books appropriate for children between the ages of 3 and 11. Thank you for your support!

THE GOOD NEWS GRAPEVINE

If you have news about yourself or your family you wish to share for the April newsletter, please send it to the church office no later than March 23rd at: stjohscongaree@gmail.com.



MARCH CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS IN MARCH

2	Bev Watkins	23	Brenda McCracken
6	Danny McCracken	24	Melinda Hotinger
11	Sandy Yuille	25	Sharon Catoe
13	Lloyd Ash	28	Betsy Cate
16	Tori Thompson	30	Van Lott, III
17	Lykes Claytor	30	Roy Brazzell

ANNIVERSARIES IN MARCH

24	Lynn & John Davis
30	Ann & Bob Harding
30	Julia & Drew Robb

WORSHIP TEAM SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

	<u>WORSHIP LEADER</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>VIDEOGRAPHER</u>	<u>GREETER</u>
March 1	Van Lott	Anne Lott	Jose Peraza	Mary Ann Hiott
March 8	Jim Hiott	Julie Claytor	Van Lott	Louise Barker
March 15	Lisa Clarkson	Aaron Floyd	Frank Claytor	John Davis
March 22	Fran Burnett	Rita McCaskill	John Davis	Debbie Davis
March 29	Louise Barker	Alex Peraza	Selman Watson	Julie & Frank Claytor

A BLESSING

*Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts
of those who travel the way with us.
So, be swift to love; make haste to be kind.
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
be with you today and remain with always.*

-Henri-Frederic Amiel

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Gifts received from January 1 through February 25, 2026

In honor of Anne and Van Lott

Given by Jill and Chet Wingate

FINANCIAL REPORT through January 31, 2026

Operating Fund Checking Account:

January income: \$12,086.62

January disbursements: \$11,404.66

Difference: \$681.96

Cemetery & Grounds Checking Acct:

January income: \$500.14

January disbursements: \$1070.00

Difference: ~~-\$569.86~~

Building Fund Checking Account:

January income: \$0.01

January disbursements: \$405.00

Difference: ~~-\$404.99~~

FROM YOUR STEWARDSHIP CHAIR

Thank you for your continued support of God's ministries at St. John's through your faithful giving. If you would like to donate online, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/stjohnspledge2026> or scan this QR code:



In Christ,

Julie Claytor, Stewardship Chair

ST. JOHN'S PRAYER LIST

<u>Please Pray For:</u>	<u>Requested by:</u>
Brenda Manning	Ed Manning
Mary Clarkson	Parish
Debby Watson	Parish
Judy Addison	Parish
Michelle	Jane Rye
Holly Davis	Parish
Chris	Lloyd & Sara Ash
Maria Brady	Debbie Davis
John Train	Selman Watson
Don Burton	Selman Watson
Tom Moore	Carol Fowles
Austin Mintz	John & Lynn Davis
Lesley Antley Marshall	Annie Antley
Roy Brazzell	Tammy Brazzell
Heather Tsahalis	Corrie Blasi
Joseph Brazitis	Holly Brazitis
Betty Thompson	Parish
Nancy Vosbaugh	Sarah Murphy
Jimmy & Brandy Hughes	Rita McCaskill
Penny Teague	Debbie Davis
Jewell Sams	The Floyd Family
Annie Antley	Parish
Karen Niehaus	Debbie Davis
Laura Timmons	Lisa Clarkson
Charlie & Phyllis King	Julie Claytor
Jacob & Angela Pendleton	Lisa Clarkson
The Owens Family	Bev Watkins
Clay Davis	Holly & Jason Davis
Bertha Fox	Nora & Tommy Claytor
John Grimball	Parish
Mike Kelly	Rusty Davis
Mitzee Teague	Katie Ayers
Bill Death	Van Lott
Andrew Knight	Bev Watkins
Liz Crice	Sheryl Moureaux
Susan Crice	Sheryl Moureaux
Cooper Edens	Parish
Janet McKinney	Bev Watkins
Viv, Karen, Jimmy, Brady,	Liz & John Vogt
Jonathan, David, and Adam	Liz & John Vogt
Corrie Blasi	Parish

Please let us know if you have someone to add to the Prayer List, and if there are folks who have recovered, please let us know that important news as well.

EASTER LILIES FOR SAINT JOHN'S

Name: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

I would like to give ____ lilies for the Easter services at St. John's.

In honor of or in thanksgiving for: (PLEASE PRINT)

In memory of : (PLEASE PRINT)

I am enclosing \$20.00 for each lily ordered.

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

You may place this form in the offering plate at church or send to the Church office at 1151 Elm Savannah Road,
Hopkins, SC 29061.

PLEASE PLACE YOUR ORDER BY MARCH 29, 2026.