

# Amens & Alleluias – May 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](http://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 – May 2026

Dear friends,

Happy Easter! I hope you are enjoying the abundance of this season and reveling in the relatively mild spring weather. After a vacation, I am back and eager to fully enjoy our last few months together. One of the occasions I look forward to most is Pentecost and Youth Sunday, which will fall this year on May 24<sup>th</sup>. All kids and teenagers are invited to sign up to help lead us all in worship on that day. After church, we will have our annual softball game, the Whippersnappers vs. Geezers – Whippersnappers need a comeback win this year! (I will try not to fall on my face this time but no promises.) We will have lunch together and celebrate all of the reasons we are grateful to be one church, one body.

I was reflecting recently on what it was about my own childhood parish that made it such an influential part of my growing up. I think that in addition to great spiritual formation and meaningful opportunities to serve my community, it was a soft place for me to land. I knew that however far I strayed – in life, in faith – I would have a safe place in that community. I knew this because I was explicitly told how loved and cared for I was by adults who were not my parents, who had no obligation to me and yet chose to shepherd my friends and me through our adolescent years which could be plagued by fear and uncertainty. I am so grateful that they gave of themselves and their time for such a ministry.

I was also taught a sense of forgiveness and empathy that I took with me into the world. I was deeply proud to be a part of St. Andrew's because I believed that it was *that* special of a place – where everyone belonged, with a non-anxious worship style, and a substantial concern about the world with the energy to make it better. Church was never a checkbox for me.

It takes God's grace to nurture places such as those, and I believe St. John's is a church that is a safe place for its young people. All of the combined life experience of those in the pews is assurance to others that no matter their problem, there is probably someone who has overcome a similar situation. It is hard to overstate just how important it is for younger people to have adults who treat them and their experience with compassion and companionship.

It is *this* relationship that we celebrate on youth Sunday. We have become truly intergenerational, a churchy buzzword that describes a community that seeks common ground across ages and stages. Thanks be to God for the Holy Spirit that allows us to be a soft place to land for everyone!

In Christ,

Katie+

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**SUNDAY, MAY 24th**



Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup> is The Day of Pentecost! It will also be our annual Family Picnic/Youth Sunday. Rev. Katie would like to have as many young folks as possible to assist in the worship service. Please let her know of your availability. Watch the weekly "Happenings" for more details. In the meantime, start getting in shape for our softball game. The dress code for the day is casual.

**FROM YOUR SENIOR WARDEN**

We are in the Easter Season, so I want to share how wonderful our Easter celebration was as we welcomed the risen Lord into our church on Easter Sunday. I have been away the past 3 weeks traveling from Paris to Zurich along the Rhine River and then to a small Swiss town of Zermatt near the Matterhorn. As we traveled and visited old cities, some of them with their beginnings in the Roman Empire, I was struck by the churches in the villages, towns, and big cities. They were and still are the center of the city. From great cathedrals to small chapels the church was there at the center of their lives. It made me think of the importance of St. John's as the center of our lives together as we live into the Gospel of the resurrected Lord.

As the Sr. Warden, it falls to me to begin setting the wheels in motion as we move to the next phase of our life at St. John's. As I mentioned earlier, we will celebrate the ministry of Katie as we begin to prepare for our next rector. Before I left, I received an email from the The Rev. Canon Jane Rogers Wilson, Canon for Transition and Congregational Health. In the next week I will be contacting her to set up a meeting to begin the conversation of what the next steps are. I will report back to the vestry her thoughts and insights. It is my goal to be deliberate and transparent about the process. As we move forward, please feel free to ask questions or raise any concerns you might have with me or any of the vestry members. Please remember this is not a quick process and that we will do our best to serve the congregation guided by the Holy Spirit. Please keep us and St. John's in your prayers.

**FROM YOUR JUNIOR WARDEN**

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

**HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE**

"May is the month when nature is reborn, and everything is possible."



The month of May brings longer days, warmer weather, and new opportunities as we look ahead to the joys of summer. One special joy for the Hospitality Committee is celebrating Gina Byars and four grandchildren and the daughter of Tina Rose and Lewis Rye. We will be hosting a baptism reception on May 3<sup>rd</sup> honoring the newly baptized in Zion Hall following the worship service. Thanks to all who made the day meaningful and special.

If you become aware of any needs that Hospitality can assist with, please do not hesitate to reach out—email me at [rdandz@gmail.com](mailto:rdandz@gmail.com), call or text 803-622-2929, or contact the church office. Have a blessed month ~ Debbie

Sunday, May 3	-Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II with Holy Baptism -Reception to follow worship
Monday, May 4	-Vestry Meeting at 6:30pm
Wednesday, May 6	-Noon Eucharist
Sunday, May 10	-Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II, Mother's Day
Wednesday, May 13	-Noon Eucharist
Sunday, May 17	-ECW Fund-raising Brunch, 9:30am -Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II -Gadsden Gift Card donations due
Wednesday, May 20	-Noon Eucharist
Sunday, May 24	-Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II -Youth Sunday, Picnic Lunch & Ballgame following worship
Wednesday, May 27	-Noon Eucharist
Sunday, May 31	-Worship at 10:30am, Holy Eucharist Rite II -Covered dish luncheon at 11:45am

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE BAPTIZED?**

If you are not baptized but would like to be, please let Katie know!

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will celebrate and welcome into the Household of God through Baptisms, Gina Byars, Johnathan Wayne Edward Dubose, Logan Wayne Hunter Dubose, Kevin Edward Dubose, Wyatt Marshall Dubose, and Chelsea Lillian Rose.



**VESTRY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

March 30, 2026

- The Oyster Roast on March 7 brought a total profit of \$6362.99. St. John's and Eastover Ruritan shared this equally at \$3181.50 each.
- Lenten Sunday School was a success because of more engagement with families. The rector sees more children as more acolytes, and she is happy to see children involved in the worship service.
- The vestry agreed that we would help with spring testing incentives at Gadsden Elementary by setting a goal of 40 Wal-Mart gift cards at \$25 each.
- There will be a baptism on May 3-- Gina Byars.
- The rector will be away April 13-20 and June 28 for weddings. July 26 will be her last Sunday with us.
- The senior warden received an email from the diocese asking the vestry to think about what we want when Katie leaves—temporary supply or long-term supply priests. The vestry agreed consistency was needed.
- The next vestry meeting will be Monday, May 4, at 6:30 pm.

**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

**ALTAR GUILD**

Thank you to the Altar Guild members who served in April – a very busy month. We observed Holy Week to include Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day. Easter lilies adorned the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. Many thanks to those who helped decorate and to those who donated lilies. Flowers were given in memory of Terry Catoe on April 12. Remember, you can sign up to give flowers for the altar at the bulletin board in Zion Hall. All Sundays in the month of May are available for giving. As always, thank you to the volunteers who work each week, including the Wednesday noon service, to prepare for worship and the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

<b>MAY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE</b>
May 3 – Louise Barker
May 10 – Corrie Blasi
May 17 – Rita McCaskill & Betsy Cate
May 24 – Lisa Clarkson
May 31 – Fran & Al Burnett

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, April 19 at 9:45 am. Here are the highlights of our meeting:

- Work in “Sallie’s Garden” continues as we plan to put down a layer of mulch and then begin deciding what plants to include in this area.
- Plans were finalized for the fundraiser brunch scheduled for Sunday, May 17 at 9:30 am.
- Corrie Blasi will coordinate “Lemonade Under the Tree” which will begin on Sunday, June 7.
- The ECW pledged to give \$50 towards the Gadsden Elementary Testing Incentive Project.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, May 17 at 11:45 am. Please join us for a short meeting to finalize some dates before we take a break for the summer.

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

**“SALLIE’S GARDEN” MAKEOVER**

“Sallie’s Garden,” dedicated to the memory of Sallie Weston, is getting a much needed makeover. In the next few months the ECW hopes to get the garden ready for new fall planting. With the help of Bill Meares we have cleaned out all of the old plants, roots, and weeds that were crowding out all of the good plants and sprayed to kill any remaining roots. We plan to apply a layer of mulch to the garden to keep the weeds down and then begin the process of deciding what should be planted in this area. Please check out “Sallie’s Garden” as this makeover takes shape. It is a work in progress!

The ECW will hold a fundraiser brunch on Sunday, May 17 at 9:30 am. We will serve a variety of breakfast casseroles, hot grits, and fruit. Help us raise money for our many outreach projects and enjoy a delicious breakfast and great fellowship. See you on May 17!

### **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**

Summer is just around the corner! Even though the school year begins to wind down, we continue to supply weekend meals to our students at Gadsden Elementary. Could you pick up something to put in our red wagon, please? Need an idea? Fruit cups, squeeze applesauce, small packages of chips or cookies, just to name a few. Come visit the Backpack room in Zion Hall for a peek. Thank you.

Suggestions can be found on our website at <https://www.stjohnscongarree.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.

#### **Donations For Gadsden Elementary Testing Incentive**

In the past, St. John's has supported the children and teachers at Gadsden Elementary by donating bicycles and scooters to be used as incentives in their statewide testing program. This year Gadsden is asking for \$25 Walmart gift cards to be given to students when they meet the testing goal. St. John's has pledged to provide 40 gift cards to be used as incentives. We are asking for monetary donations of any amount to help with the purchase of the gift cards. Donations should be designated for "Walmart Gift Cards" and either placed in the offering plate, given to a vestry member, or mailed to the church office by Sunday, May 17. Thank you for allowing St. John's to continue its outreach with Gadsden Elementary. Our support is greatly appreciated by the school.

#### **Gadsden Elementary Little Free Library**

The last delivery of books for the Little Free Library was made to Gadsden Elementary on Monday, April 27. Once again, we had enough books to allow each student to choose a book to keep and take home. The teachers have been very appreciative of the extra reading material for their classrooms. The continuation of the Little Free Library is made possible through support from our church and community. We always accept donations of new or gently used books appropriate for children between the ages of 3 and 11. We will resume book deliveries in August when the students return to school from summer break. Thank you for your support!



**MAY CELEBRATIONS**

**BIRTHDAYS IN MAY**

1	Katharine Kendall	13	Mark Seely
6	Garrett Ayers	13	Wendy Thompson
7	Judy Addison	14	Julie Claytor
8	Johnathan Dubose	15	Alex Peraza
10	Glenda Crouch	22	Nikita Floyd
11	Jessica Byars Hoover	24	Frannie Neal
12	Dorothy Kendall	30	Susanna Wilson

**ANNIVERSARIES IN MAY**

25	Molly & Aaron Floyd
31	Perri & Jose Peraza

**WORSHIP TEAM SCHEDULE FOR MAY**

	<u>WORSHIP LEADER</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>VIDEOGRAPHER</u>	<u>GREETER</u>
May 3 (Holy Baptism)	Jim Hiott	Louise Barker	John Davis	Mary Ann Hiott
May 10	Van Lott	Anne Lott	Jose Peraza	Louise Barker
May 17	Lisa Clarkson	John Lott	Van Lott	John Davis
May 24 (Youth Sun)	Fran Burnett	Alex Peraza	Frank Claytor	Debbie Davis
May 31	Louise Barker	Aaron Floyd	Selman Watson	The Claytors

**THE GOOD NEWS GRAPEVINE**

Congratulations to Chelsea Knotts and Garrett Davis who are to be married on Saturday, May 2!

Congratulations also to Caroline Phillips who is graduating from Winthrop University with a BS in Human Nutrition and Dietetics with a minor in Psychology. She will be continuing her education with Winthrop's Master's Program for the next two years.

If you have news about yourself or your family you wish to share for the June newsletter, please send it to the church office no later than May 21<sup>st</sup> at: [stjohnscongaree@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnscongaree@gmail.com).

**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

**Gifts received from April 1 through April 26, 2026**

***In memory of Terry Wayne Catoe***

Given by Johni and CM "Bubba" Atkinson  
Judy Lavoie  
Lila and Charles Sims

***In memory of Katherine Mallory May Hopkins***

Given by Anne and Van Lott

***In memory of Elizabeth Vanderhorst Penfield***

Given by Elise and Bill Weston

**FINANCIAL REPORT through March 31, 2026**

**Operating Fund Checking Account:**

March income: \$18,557.73  
March disbursements: \$27,168.41  
Difference: **-\$8610.68**

1/1/2026 through 3/31/2026:

Income: \$46,242.76  
Disbursements: \$52,151.86  
Difference: **-\$5909.10**

**Cemetery & Grounds Checking Acct:**

March income: \$600.18  
March disbursements: \$670.00  
Difference: **-\$69.82**

1/1/2026 through 3/31/2026:

Income: \$6881.97  
Disbursements: \$2410.00  
Difference: \$4471.97

**Building Fund Checking Account:**

March income: \$0.16  
March disbursements: \$.00  
Difference: \$0.16

1/1/2026 through 3/31/2026:

Income: \$0.31  
Disbursements: \$405.00  
Difference: **-\$404.69**

<b><u>Please Pray For:</u></b>	<b><u>Requested by:</u></b>
Brenda Manning	Ed Manning
Mary Clarkson	Parish
Debby Watson	Parish
Judy Addison	Parish
Michelle	Jane Rye
Holly Davis	Parish
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
Penny Teague	Debbie Davis
Jewell Sams	The Floyd Family
Karen Niehaus	Debbie Davis
Laura Timmons	Lisa Clarkson
Charlie & Phyllis King	Julie Claytor
Jacob & Angela Pendleton	Lisa Clarkson
The Owens Family	Bev Watkins
Wendi Davis	Holly & Jason Davis
Bertha Fox	Nora & Tommy Claytor
John Grimball	Parish
Mitzee Teague	Katie Ayers
Bill Death	Van Lott
Liz Crice	Sheryl Moureaux
Susan Crice	Sheryl Moureaux
Janet McKinney	Bev Watkins
Viv, Karen, Jimmy, Brady,	Liz & John Vogt
Jonathan, David, and Adam	Liz & John Vogt
Our Military	Parish
Corrie Blasi	Parish
Nick Brady	Debbie Davis
Morris Tajman	Van Lott
Andrew Knight	Bev Watkins
Jeffrey Meadowcroft	Rita McCaskill

**Please let us know if you have someone to add to the Prayer List. If there are folks who have recovered, please let us know that important and happy news as well, and we will take them off the list. Thanks so much for your help in keeping our Prayer List updated.**