Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter

• 216 N. Main Street • Belmont, NC 28012 • Sunday, March 26, 2023 •

Fifth Sunday in Lent



WELCOME/GATHERING

PRELUDE: There Is a Green Hill Far Away

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace.

C Amen.

P Let us acknowledge before God and one another our need for repentance and God's mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Holy God,

C we confess to you our faults and failings. Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word; we take for ourselves instead of giving to others; we spoil rather than steward your creation; we cause hurt though you call us to heal; we choose fear over compassion. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, as we seek to follow in your way of life. Amen.

P Hear the good news: God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that all may receive life. This promise is for you! God embraces you with divine mercy, + forgives you in Christ's name, and revives you in the Spirit's power.

C Amen.

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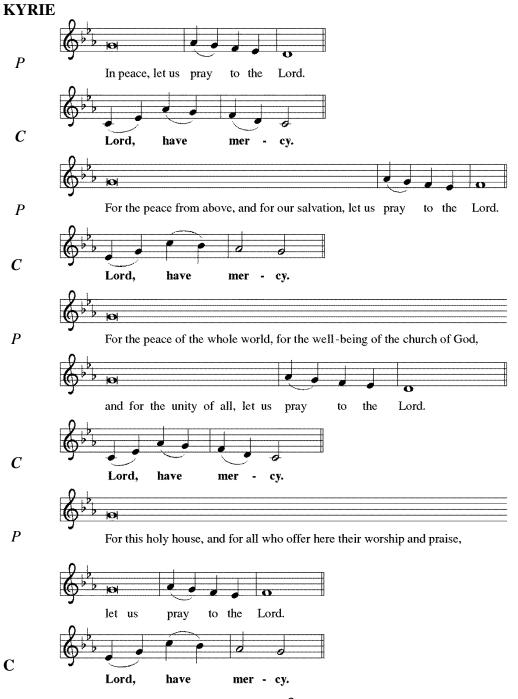
GATHERING SONG: What Wondrous Love Is This



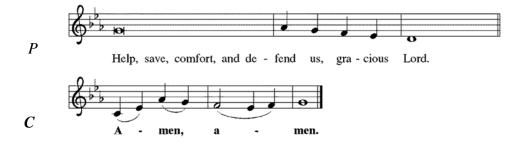
GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.



All Sing



SALUTATION

- P The Lord be with you.
- C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

We invite children to come forward for a children's message before moving to children's church.

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 37:1-14

A reading from the Ezekiel, the thirty seventh chapter.

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the Lord."

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said

to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

- A The word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:6-11

A reading from Romans, the eighth chapter.

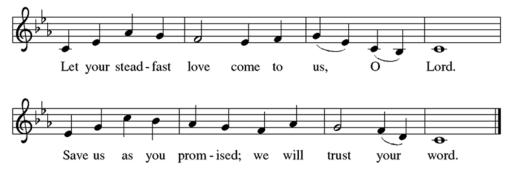
For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in

you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

- A The word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL

JOHN 11:1-45

P The holy gospel according to St. John, the eleventh chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸The disciples said

to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." ¹¹After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." ¹²The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of

God?" ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." ⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

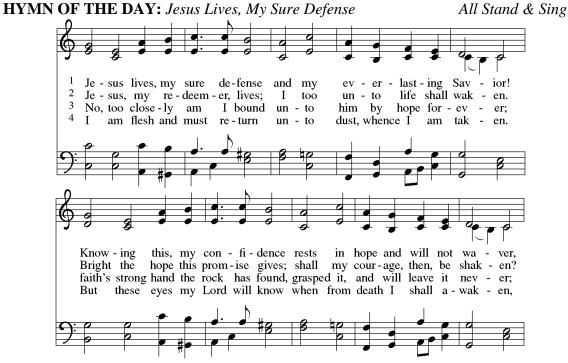
- P The gospel of the Lord.
- C Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

Pastor Micah

Silence is Kept for Reflection.





APOSTLES CREED

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 INTERCESSION

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

You have breathed into us the breath of life. Enliven your church. Deepen our partnerships with our companion churches around the globe, and bless the work of missionaries who accompany them. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Your spirit brings life to creation. Enliven the natural world and restore ecosystems in need of healing. Uplift prophetic voices that turn us to the needs of the soil beneath our feet and the air all around. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You redeem the world and its peoples. Free us from systems of oppression. Unbind nations and societies from sins that push people to the margins. Raise up leaders at all levels of government who work to promote the dignity of every human life. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You weep when we weep. Be present with those who grieve or who are troubled by illness. You hear us when we call to you. Deliver us from the depths of our despair, and free us from the worries that bind us. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Your Spirit of life dwells in our assembly. Bless the music ministries of this congregation and all who lead us in hymns of praise and thanksgiving and in songs of lament and prayer. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You are the resurrection and the life. Even though we die, we will live. With thanksgiving, we remember all your saints who now live in your eternal love. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

- P The peace of Christ be with you always.
- C And also with you.

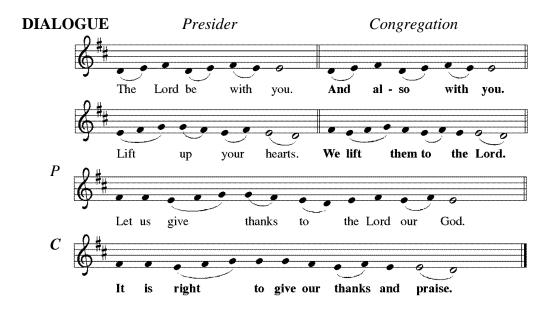
Chamber Choir



OFFERING PRAYER

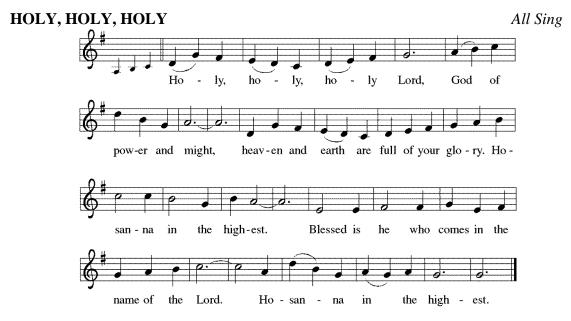
A Let us pray.

C God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. Amen.



PREFACE

P ...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

LORD'S PRAYER

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

- P Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.
- C Thanks be to God.

LAMB OF GOD

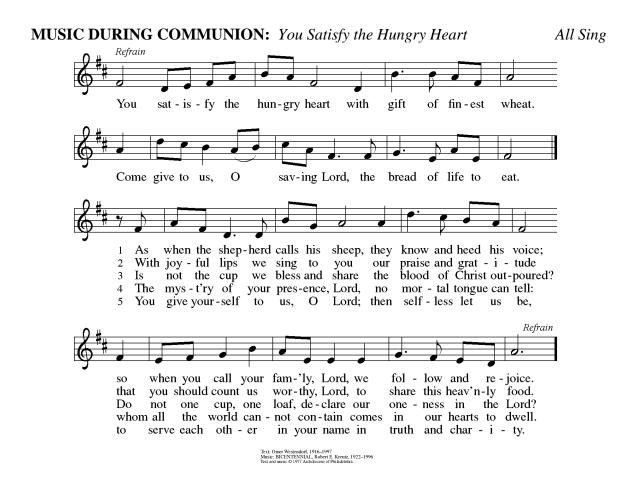
Holy

Lamb of God. you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. you take a - way the sin of the Lamb of God, have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, world; you take a of the world: way the sin grant us peace, grant us peace.

All Sing

COMMUNION

During communion the congregation is invited forward by rows, beginning in the back, and will receive the bread and wine at the front of the aisle. You may either eat and drink then, or return to your seat to do so, and place the cups in the bin in your pew.



- P The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
- C Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

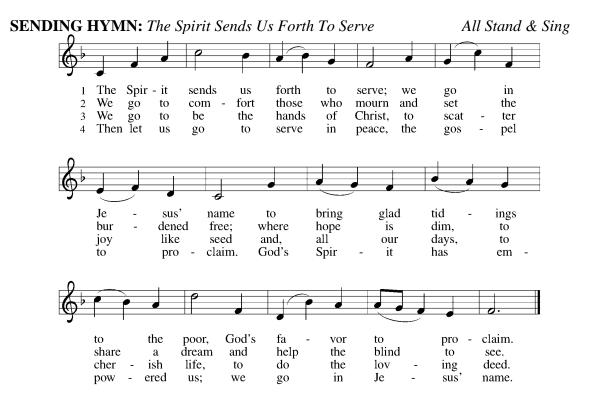
А Let us pray.

Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the С eves of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love. Amen.

BLESSING

God, the giver of love, + Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of Ρ rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

С Amen.



Text: Delores Dufner, osg, b. 1939

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*Special thanks to our Lector, Carole Jolley.

*The altar flowers were given by Carole Jolley in memory of her mother Sybil Jolley.

THIS WEEKS SCHEDULE: Sunday, March 26th 9:30 am – Sunday School 10:10 am – Church Choir 10:30 am – Worship 11:30 pm – Courtyard Dedication 5:00 pm – HCY 5:00 pm – Adult Handbells 6:00 pm – Church Choir Practice **Tuesday, March 28th** 7:00 pm – Nar-Anon Meeting

Wednesday, March 29th 5:30 pm – Youth Handbells 6:00 pm – Congregation Lenten Dinner 6:45 pm – Holden Evening Prayer 7:15 pm – Chamber Choir

Saturday, April 1st

9:00 am - First Communion Class

DECICATION OF THE COURTYARD

P Sisters and brothers in Christ, we are gathered to ask God's blessing as with thankfulness we dedicate this new courtyard, landscaping, and lighting to the glory of God.

1 Peter 2:4-9

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." ⁷ This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," ⁸ and "A stone that makes them stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

- P The word of the Lord
- C Thanks be to God.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE



 5 Landscaping plants, bright gleaming pavers! Sing to the Lord a new song!
Fresh mulch and grass, Architect Lighting! Sing to the Lord a New Song! *Refrain*

- P The Lord be with you.
- C And also with you.
- P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C It is right to give our thanks and praise.
- P Let us pray

We give you thanks, O God, creator of the universe, for your abundant gifts. By your holy wisdom all things have been made to reflect your glory, for the sustenance of life, and for the use and delight of your living creatures. Send your blessing upon us and upon this courtyard, which we set apart today to your praise and honor.

May warmth and welcome fill this place. A place where laughter bursts forth, where stories are shared, and where tears are wiped away.

May it be a place where community is built, where your creation is enjoyed,

Where your love and grace overflow, and where your glory shines forth.

Give us joy in all your works, and grant that this courtyard may always be a place where your will is done and your name is glorified;

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING

P Almighty God bless us, and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

- C Amen.
- P Go in peace. Serve the Lord
- C Thanks be to God

Courtyard Contributions

The initial gift that made this project possible was given by the Yount family and Bill Hollar in memory of John and Myra Yount.

IN HONOR OF:

Claire Carroll in honor of Howard & Yount Families

Sandra Cline in honor of Greg Cline, Shirley Causby, Beth Talbert, Garyn Talbert, Micah Kearney, Jenn Kearney, & Beka Forst

Charles and Beverly Mauney in honor of our children and grandchildren

John and Mary Lee in honor of our children

Tim and Shelia Kelly in honor of Nathan and Amanda Kelly, Grayson and Graham Kelly, & Madison and Sam Harrington-Smith

Lyn and Ann Miller in honor of Becky Richards, Jean Ferguson, Sherry Alexander, & Kay Holden Julia Gunter in honor of all church musicians Jo Anne de la Vega in honor of Greg Cline & Shirley Causby Carole Jolley in honor of Pastor Micah and Jenn Kearney Evan and Brianna Howard in honor of Jane and Jeff Howard Emilie Bruchon and Marcus Cox in honor of Elizabeth Bruchon Mark and Anne Reese in honor of Caitlan Reese Killian & Sarah Reese Tracey and Paul Nault in honor of Carolina Taylor Nault, Aaron Clayton Nault, and Ashton Grace Nault Brian and Lucy Mitchell in honor of Matthew, Joseph, and Claire Mitchell Greg Cline in honor of Shirley Causby & Faye and Warren Heller Mary Godwin in honor of Jeff and Jane Howard, Mark and Rebecca Yount, Jimmy and Sharon Yount, & Bill Hollar Kathy Graves in honor of our senior member, Bill Hollar, and of her son, Blair Stroup Warren and Faye Heller in honor of Dawn & William Mitchell, and Greg Cline & Shirley Causby Jean Ferguson in honor of Pastor Micah, Jenn & their boys, Jeff & Jane Howard, Mark & Anne Reese, Lyn & Ann Miller, Don Robinson, & Becky Richards Sherry and Matt Nelson in honor of all of God's children **IN MEMORY OF:** Beth Talbert in memory of Romania Cline Mark Dabrowski in memory of Brenda Dabrowski Claire Carroll in memory of DeeDee and Granddaddy (Myra and John Yount) Tracey and Paul Nault in memory of William Craig Summey Sr. and Judy Holt Summey Sandra Cline in memory of Romania Cline, Leroy Cline, & Gary Cline Mary Godwin in memory of Eunice Hollar Charles and Beverly Mauney in memory of Heather Mauney Yount, Mary (Sandy) Jane McCoy, & Betsy and Ray Mauney Diana Dukeshire in memory of her parents, John T. Moehring and Jane P. Moehring Roberta Keeton in memory of Ronald Lee Nance Russell and Ellen Fleming in memory of Myrtle, Gerald and Dick Bryan Lyn and Ann Miller in memory of Tom and Lucille Miller, Sandy Miller, Gladys and Roland Parlier, Sandra Benge, Steve Pope, our grandparents: Bessie Lineberger, Lem and Jesse Miller, Robert and Bertha Stevenson, & Richard Holden Debbie Mendez in memory of Alice and Mark Lyerly Larry Siglar in memory of Sue and Larry Siglar Kathy Barker in memory of her parents, Carol and Robert Roth

John and Leslie Crist in memory of H. Ray and Rita Broome and Bill and Rosa Crist Arch Lineberger in memory of Anne Lineberger Trudy Whitener in memory of Henry and Gertrude Norris, & Tommy and Lorene Reid Sue Lahr in memory of Stanley Lahr Nancy Powell in memory of her parents, James and Margaret Sipe Mark T Dabrowski in memory of Brenda H Dabrowski Mary Page in memory of Edith and Bob Page Jeff and Abbey Featherstone in memory and honor of the Featherstone family Mika and Leslie Lugue in memory of Earl Lingafeldt Jim and Jan Buell in memory of Carmen Buell, & Bob Haubenreich Shirley Causby in memory of Tommy Causby Sherry Alexander in memory of Beverly Reynolds Kathy Graves in memory of Bill Graves Roberta Keeton in memory of Ronald Lee Nance Becky Richards in memory of her mother, Lucy Brewer Debbie Williams in memory of Bob Williams, and her parents John and Vivian Lane Mark and Rebecca Yount in memory of "momma and daddy," John and Myra Yount Jean Ferguson in memory of her parents, Roy and Betty Ferguson GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD: Gary and Susan Clark Dean and Diann Halvorson Jill Cassel Bob and Pat Koehler Jo and Harold Singleton Brittany and Riley Lewis Nathan and Amanda Kelly Pat Long Suzanne Fairbairn Karen Hinkley Jimmy and Ellie Holloway Matthew and Martha Hogge Andrew and Veronica Bryant Danny and Rochelle Potter Lynne Sudarich Heather and David Povinelli Jenn and Micah Kearney Andy and Beverly Robinson Tim and Debbie Baker Kurt and Cynthia Scholler Eric and Renee Carpenter **Rita Stewart** Scott and Maria Carr Mike and Jerri Wesson Joyce Barton Scott and Tanya Zander Tom and Melissa Bocchino Donna and Horace Bean Dee Smith and Debbie Bray Fran Holland Greg Byrum Susan and Don Nelson Marc and Linda Cox Brian and Janet Achor Cheryl Fox

These names were provided by those that wished to be shared during the dedication. If we have unintentionally made any errors, or failed to include a mention please contact the church office. Thank you!