

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
July 5, 2026

As we become clear about the call to proclaim the gospel of the nearness of God's kingdom, we need to be equally clear about the context in which we proclaim it. Whether we want to say it is because of some sinful nature, as Paul does, in Romans 7, or because of the self-interests of various rival human groups, as Matthew describes, we speak of good news in a world in which many may not be ready to receive it. Still, we proclaim it, frustrating as it may be at times. For in the end, our proclamation is about nothing less than the winter is past, the rains are over and gone.

Holy Communion

Now the Feast and Celebration

† *Congregation stands as able*

GATHERING

Prelude

Sandra Nearhoof

P: Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**C: And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever.
Amen.**

P: If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Let us confess our sin to God who is faithful and just and who has promised to forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

P: Most merciful God,

C: Have mercy on us. We confess to you that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not trusted you with our whole heart; we have not loved one another in deed and in truth. In your compassion forgive our sin and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ our light and our truth. Amen.

P: Almighty God, rich in mercy, abundant in love, forgives you all your sin and grants you newness of life in Jesus Christ.

C: Thanks be to God!

Gathering Hymn

"Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun"

ELW #557

Kyrie

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Now the Feast

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Prayer of the Day:

P. Let us pray,

You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Katherine Kelly

First Reading

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

⁸ The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. ⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. ¹⁰ My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. ¹¹ For now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. ¹² The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. ¹³ The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 145:8-14

Tone 11

- ⁸ The LORD is gracious and full ¹ of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in ¹ steadfast love.
- ⁹ **LORD, you are ¹ good to all,
and your compassion is over ¹ all your works.**
- ¹⁰ All your works shall praise ¹ you, O LORD,
and your faithful ¹ ones shall bless you.
- ¹¹ **They shall tell of the glory ¹ of your kingdom
and speak ¹ of your power,**
- ¹² that all people may know ¹ of your power
and the glorious splendor ¹ of your kingdom.
- ¹³ **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your
dominion endures through- ¹ out all ages.
You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and
loving in ¹ all your works.**
- ¹⁴ The Lord upholds all ¹ those who fall
and lifts up those who ¹ are bowed down.

Second Reading

Romans 7:15-25a

- ¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ²¹ So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self,

²³ but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ^{25a} Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

✠ Gospel Acclamation

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Gospel

Matthew 11:16-19

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] ¹⁶ “To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, ¹⁷ ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ ¹⁸ “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; ¹⁹ the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon *“Realities of This Generation”*

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

✠ Hymn of the Day *“Day by Day”*

ELW #790

You may sit, stand or kneel for the prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

A: Trusting in God's steadfast love for all God has made, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A: God our unity, your church flourishes in different languages, cultures, and movements. Grant us wisdom to discern when our yokes are too heavy, that we may live and serve in the freedom of your rest.
God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our life-giver, we grieve the pains placed upon our common home through war and neglect. What you have lovingly crafted, guide us to lovingly tend.
God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our freedom, you are no tyrant but bring peace. As this nation marks its declaration of independence, teach us our part in announcing peace for future generations. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our comfort, liberate all in our community who are captive to fear, who have become isolated or ill, or who are in any need. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our guide, we do not always have the strength to do the good we wish to do. Free us from the cycles of violence that bind us, that all know your liberation.

God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: For all those who have asked us to pray for them....God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our home, you model freedom through the love shared across communities of trust and goodwill. As we remember those now gone to eternal rest, we thank you for the gifts of life together. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundance grace of Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

The Peace

NTF-Page 10

MEAL

Anthem *"When We Break the Bread"*

Choir

The gifts may be brought forward.

As the Grains of Wheat

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Offering Prayer

A: Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever.

C: Amen.

✝ Great Thanksgiving NTF-Page 11

Holy, Holy, Holy NTF-Page 11

Lord's Prayer "Our Father, who..." NTF-Page 13

Lamb of God NTF-Page 14

Communion

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Each person may respond, Amen.

✝ Table Blessing

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

Thanks Be to You NTF-Page 15

Prayer after Communion

A: Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.

C: Amen.

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Hymn

“O Beautiful for Spacious Skies”

ELW #888

Dismissal

A: Go forth in the name of our Triune God.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God

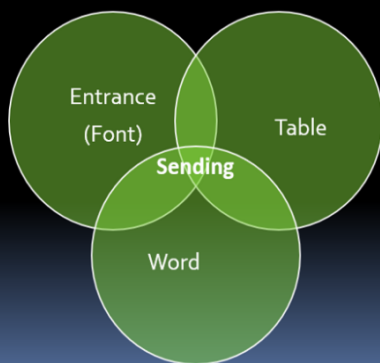
In Memory of:

Norma Horan, 2020

You're invited to **VBS!**



THE SHAPE OF WORSHIP



Get ready for an amazing adventure at **Vacation Bible School!** Join us for an unforgettable week of songs, games, and discovering God's love.

July 13th-15th
5:30-7:30 pm
St. Matthew Evangelical
Lutheran Church
4026 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31907
706-561-3406

RSVP:
Register at

<https://www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com/ingevents>



Email:

office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com

July Birthdays

- 1 Shirley Ashley
- 3 Sandra Nearhoof
- 9 Allena Sperry
- 10 Jacob Vargas
- 16 Danny Alexander
- 16 Rev. Taylor Burton Edwards
- 19 Charlotte Moore
- 25 Katherine Pettit
- 27 Lane Brown
- 29 Anthony Hicks



Supplying hygiene items to
students in all 58 schools



MCS D

Hygiene Closet

Items needed:

Soap, toothbrush's, toothpaste,
deodorant, and lotion.

Travel or full size welcome

Place in baskets in Narthex



READINGS AND PSALM
SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2026

Isaiah 55:10-13
Psalm 65:1-13
Romans 8:1-11
Matthew 13:1-9



*"The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet,
it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of
me." —Martin Luther*

June 28, 2026
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

ATTENDANCE — 54

(IN-PERSON — 36, YOUTUBE - 18

2026 BUDGET-\$185,981

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$ 1,205.00
Building	\$ 100.00
Memorial	\$ 50.00
Other (VBS)	\$ 100.00
Total	\$ 1,455.00

*Memorial gifts will be acknowledged
quarterly.*

*St. Matthew Lutheran Church (ELCA) will not engage in any act or public
statements to endorse or oppose any candidate for public office.*

Serving July 5, 2026

Opener/Closer	Allena Sperry
Worship Assistant	Rose Johnson
Communion Assistant	Shannon Gardner
Lector	Toni Mion
Ushers	Sandy Craven Randy Craven
Altar Guild	Rose Johnson Allen Sperry/Jaxson Gardner
Live Streaming	Jaxson Gardner

Serving July 12, 2026

Opener/Closer	Rose Johnson
Worship Assistant	Dave Bonaker/Raymond Lawton
Communion Assistant	Allena Sperry
Lector	Katherine Kelly
Ushers	Jim Sperry Bill Wallace
Altar Guild	Terri Niederhammer Allen Sperry/Jaxson Gardner
Live Streaming	Paul Hicks

Pray Without Ceasing



"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

5:16-18

—1 Thessalonians

The Armed Forces,
their families,
and victims of war

The ministries of
St. Matthew

Bishop Yehiel Curry

Bishop Kevin
Strickland

Southeastern Synod
Staff

Pastor Taylor Burton
Edwards

Pastor Rachel Zarnke
St Matthew

Congregational
Council

Laura Alexander

Carol Bingemann

Isabelle Clark

Randy Craven

Myrna & Ken Hoag

Marga Miller

Charlotte Moore

Traudel Mosely

Debby Owen

Dorothy Redden

Gary Anderson

Eric & Tinisha Bryant

Jean Clemmons

Nancy Edmundson

Lynne Funck

Brandy Garnett

Sandy Gibbs

Moses Glidden

Estrella Gonzales

Doris Grier

Laura Jett

Norma Kilby

Ken Korn

Emma Kump

Robert Lowe

David & John Lucas

Michelle Matthias

Brady Meeks

Lynne Meinhold

Tim Moore

Debi Nelson

Vincent Pawlowski

Beth Price

Mark Purushotham

Tiffany Richardson

Phyllis Roan

Dayna Ryan

Shirley Scott

Dou Shizhen

Ricky Skinner

Fred Turpin

Charlie VanHousen

Dawn VanHousen

Eric Young

Martha Zimmerman

Carlson Family

Gates Family

Sankey Family

People of Lebanon

People of Iran

Gaza

Palestinian People

Israel

Ukraine

People of Russia

Eastern Congo

People of Venezuela

Menzie Dance Company

Frankie's Hair Design

AMG Financial

Sunset Finance

Diamond Kutz

Kee J's

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to St. Matthew: Jesus Christ offers himself to all. All baptized Christians are invited to feast with us at the Lord's Table.

We invite you to join our congregation if you have not yet found a church home. We are people of God that share a living, daring, confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person, questions, complexities and all. Join us, as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

Nursery: St. Matthew provides nursery service for children ages 6 and younger. All children are welcome to attend worship with their families. If a child needs a break during the service, they may sit with a parent/guardian in the Narthex.

Mission Outreach Opportunities:

- All unused all occasion and holiday cards
 - Lion's Club: Glasses, sunglasses and old cell phones
 - Family House of West GA: Pop tabs
 - Flags to Retire: Used flags to dispose of properly
 - MCSD Hygiene Closet: Any size toiletries
 - SafeHouse/St. Benedict's Sealed plastic utensils (take-out meals)
- Leave donations in the labeled containers in the Narthex.

Bible Study: Please join us on Tuesdays at 10:15 in the Back Room of the Church House to review & discuss scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday.

Craf-Tea: This group will meet on the 3rd Friday of each month at 10:00AM-12:00 PM in Luther Hall. If you enjoy crafts and tea, this group is for you! Please see Linnea Grosse for more information.

Save the Date

- July 7th - 10:15 AM - Bible Study - Church House-Back Room
- July 13-15 - 5:30-7:30 - Vacation Bible School
- July 16th - 9:00 am - WNN Care Packing
- July 16th - 5:00 - Council Meeting - Fellowship Hall
- July 17th - 10:00 AM - Craft Tea - Luther Hall
- July 23rd - 5:30 - Men's Group - Deorio's

YARD SALE 2027

If you have donations, please contact Allena Sperry at 706-563-3107 or asperry@bellsouth.net to coordinate drop off at your earliest convenience.



Memorial brick orders will be taken until August 1, 2026. Order forms are available in the Narthex. Place order with payment attached and put into the offering plate or turn into the office. Bricks are \$50 each and will be dedicated in the Memorial Garden, All Saints Day, November 1, 2026.



Pick up your own copy of the printed Lord's Prayer in the Narthex. Please feel free to take as many as you would like to have.



The changing table has been removed from the bathroom in order to provide easier access for those on walkers or in wheelchairs. If you have the need for a changing table, please use the one in the nursery.

WNN SPECIAL REQUEST!!

WNN is requesting healthy snacks for the summer to be added to food bags for families with children. Suggested snacks include individual packages of:

- Dried fruit
- Fruit cups
- Goldfish
- Crackers with fillings
- Pretzels
- Trail Mix
- Fruit roll-ups
- Popcorn
- Granola



Place donations in the WNN basket in the Narthex.

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church Mission Statement



Reach in to grow in Christ

Reach up to worship God

Reach out to welcome and witness



To give online, please scan the QR code to the left to be taken to the [give.tithe.ly](https://www.give.tithe.ly) website form. You can just fill out the form and click the Give button. You can also go to our website and click on the ONLINE GIVING button.

ST. MATTHEW EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

4026 Macon Road, Columbus, Georgia 31907

(706) 561-3406 - Office Hours - Tues & Thurs 2:30-5:00 PM, Friday 9:00-1:00 PM

Pastor Taylor Burton Edwards Email: twbe@liturgyfolks.com

Phone: (765) 602-1426

Office email : office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com

A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

Southeastern Synod

www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@st.matthewlutheranchurch4457/streams>

The Rev. Taylor Burton Edwards, Pastor

Sonja Metcalf, Parish Administrator

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music

Penny Davis, Nursery Director