

# St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



## Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 30, 2025

*This morning's reading from Joshua briefly documents a series of significant transitions undertaken by those entering the promised land. Early Christians helped newcomers seeking baptism to work through the challenges of transitioning to a new life in Jesus Christ through a process called the catechumenate, most intensely during Lent. These transitions are difficult but essential for disciples to learn to live this life themselves to its fullest.*

## Holy Communion

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

(ELW) Setting 10, page 203

† 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. Most merciful God,

**C. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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 loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P. God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of +Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**C. Amen.**

**Gathering Hymn**      *"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"*

**ELW #807**

Kyrie

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Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray,

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Shannon Gardner

**First Reading**

**Joshua 5:9-12**

<sup>9</sup>The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

<sup>10</sup>While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup>On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land,

unleavened cakes and parched grain. <sup>12</sup>The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

L: The word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm 32

**Tone 9**

- <sup>1</sup>Happy are they whose transgressions <sup>1</sup> are forgiven,  
and whose sin is <sup>1</sup> put away!
- <sup>2</sup>**Happy are they to whom the LORD im- <sup>1</sup> putes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there <sup>1</sup> is no guile!**
- <sup>3</sup>While I held my tongue, my bones with- <sup>1</sup> ered away,  
because of my groaning <sup>1</sup> all day long.
- <sup>4</sup>**For your hand was heavy upon me <sup>1</sup> day and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the <sup>1</sup> heat of summer.**
- <sup>5</sup>Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- <sup>1</sup> ceal my guilt.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."  
Then you forgave me the guilt <sup>1</sup> of my sin.
- <sup>6</sup>**Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers  
to you in <sup>1</sup> time of trouble;  
when the great waters overflow, they <sup>1</sup> shall not reach them.**
- <sup>7</sup>You are my hiding-place; you preserve <sup>1</sup> me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts <sup>1</sup> of deliverance.
- <sup>8</sup>**"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that <sup>1</sup> you should go;  
I will guide you <sup>1</sup> with my eye.**
- <sup>9</sup>Do not be like horse or mule, which have no <sup>1</sup> understanding;  
who must be fitted with bit and bridle,  
or else they will <sup>1</sup> not stay near you."
- <sup>10</sup>**Great are the tribulations <sup>1</sup> of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust <sup>1</sup> in the LORD.**
- <sup>11</sup>Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice <sup>1</sup> in the LORD;  
shout for joy, all who are <sup>1</sup> true of heart.

### Second Reading

**2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

<sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

L: The word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel**

**Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 15th Chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.]  
<sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."  
<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>11b</sup>"There was a man who had two sons.  
<sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.  
<sup>25</sup>Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

*The Transition*

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

**Nicene Creed**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the  
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

*You may sit, stand or kneel for the prayers.*

**Prayers of Intercession**

A: Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

- A: God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy,  
**C: receive our prayer.**
- A: God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy,  
**C: receive our prayer.**
- A: God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy,  
**C: receive our prayer.**
- A: God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy,  
**C: receive our prayer.**
- A: God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and ethnic-specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. God, in your mercy,  
**C: receive our prayer.**
- A: For all those who have asked us to pray for them...  
**C: receive our prayer.**
- A: God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died especially Margarete Walsh, Patricia Bonaker, Betty Davidson, and Mike Regnier. We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. God, in your mercy,  
**C: hear our prayer.**
- P: Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.  
**C: Amen.**

## MEAL

Anthem

“Hosea“

Choir

*The gifts may be brought forward.*

Offering Prayer

A: Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. .

C: Amen.



Great Thanksgiving

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Holy, Holy, Holy

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Lord's Prayer

"Our Father, who..."

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Lamb of God

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**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.

Prayer after Communion

A: Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new.

Send us now to set tables of love and grace in your communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

**SENDING**

Blessing

**Sending Hymn**

*"Restore in Us, O God"*

**ELW #328**

**Dismissal**

A: Go in peace. Resist evil in the strength of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

**The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God**

**In Memory of:**

*Bobby Wright, 2023*

**READINGS AND PSALM**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2025**

Isaiah 43:16-21  
 Psalm 126  
 Philippians 3:4b-14  
 John 12:1-8



*"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*

**March 23, 2025**  
**3rd Sunday of Lent**

ATTENDANCE — 76  
 (IN-PERSON— 64, YOUTUBE - 12)

**OFFERING**

Benevolence	\$	1,115.00
Building	\$	100.00
Memorial	\$	700.00
Other	\$	120.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,035.00</b>

***Save the Date***

- March 31st- 11:00 - Chair Yoga - Luther Hall
- April 1st - 10:15 - Bible Study (bring lunch) - Church House
- April 2nd - 5:30 - Wednesday Lenten Service
- April 4th - 10:00 - Craf-Tea - Luther Hall
- Mon, Tues, Thurs, Friday - 5:30 - Online Evening Prayer

**Serving March 30, 2025**

Opener/Closer	Bill Wallace
Worship Assistant	Donna Doughty
Communion Assistant	Rose Johnson
Lector	Amy Hoag
Ushers	Sandy Craven Randy Craven
Altar Guild	Rose Johnson Catherine Sayers
Live Streaming	Jaxson Gardener

**Serving April 6, 2025**

Opener/Closer	Allena Sperry
Worship Assistant	Rose Johnson
Communion Assistant	Donna Doughty
Lector	Bill Wallace
Ushers	Sandy Craven Randy Craven
Altar Guild	Rose Johnson Catherine Sayers
Live Streaming	Jaxson Gardener



# *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  
Persecuted Christians  
The ministries of  
St. Matthew  
Bishop Kevin  
Strickland  
Southeastern Synod  
Staff  
Pastor Taylor Burton  
Edwards  
St Matthew  
Congregational  
Council  
Laura Alexander  
Carol Bingemann  
Dave Bonaker  
Matt Bonaker  
Davidson Family  
Myrna & Ken Hoag  
Mairetha & Bennie  
Jackson  
Sean Jeffery  
Marga Miller  
Charlotte Moore  
Traudel Mosely  
Terri Niederhammer  
Debby Owen  
Dorothy Redden  
Regnier Family  
Connie Sieg

Allena Sperry  
Carla Stickles  
Harold Vinson  
Eric & Tinisha Bryant  
George Capps  
Jim Chappel  
Jean Clemmons  
Xavier Danguilan  
Penny Davis & Family  
Nancy Edmundson  
Lynne Funck  
Brandy Garnett  
Mike Gewin  
Moses Glidden  
Becky Goldsmith  
Estrella Gonzales  
Sarah Goodman  
Doris Grier  
Petra & Franklin  
Henderson  
Norma Kilby  
Ken Korn  
Emma Kump  
Melissa Lancheros  
Laura & Boyd Lester  
Robert Lowe  
Michelle Matthias  
Sandra McPeters  
Brady Meeks  
Tim Moore  
Moser Family  
Nearhoof Family

Angela Paul  
Vincent Pawlowski  
Beth Price  
Mark Purushotham  
Bill Rahm  
Tiffany Richardson  
Ruocco Family  
Dayna Ryan  
Shirley Scott  
Dou Shizhen  
Ricky Skinner  
Amanda Steinagel  
Torrijos Family  
Fred Turpin  
Charlie VanHousen  
Dawn VanHousen  
Molly Wright  
Martha Zimmerman  
  
Israel  
Ukraine  
Gaza  
Lebanon  
Western North Carolina  
Los Angeles  
  
Mr. Pizza  
Quality Inn  
Smoke Buddy's  
Gold Teeth World  
Apparel King & More  
Hollywood Barber Shop

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome to St. Matthew:** Jesus Christ offers himself to all. May you be blessed as we celebrate God's love for us. All the baptized are invited to feast with us at the Lord's Table. The Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday.

**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:**

### **Mission Focus:**

- Lion's Club: St Anne's Glasses, sunglasses and old cell phones
- Family House of West GA: Pop tabs
- Flags to Retire: Bring used American flags that you no longer want or need.
- St. Anne's: Feminine hygiene products, Personal hygiene products (travel size), toilet paper, and non-perishable food items
- Safe House Sealed plastic utensils (take-out meals)

Leave donations in the labeled containers in the Narthex between bathrooms.

**Craf-Tea:** This group will meet Fridays 10:00-12:00 PM in Luther Hall. If you enjoy crafts and tea, this group is for you! Please see Beth Hoag for more information.

**Men's Group:** This group usually meets the 4th Thursday of the month. However, in March, we will meet Tuesday, March 25th at 5:00 at Mr. Pizza.

**Chair Yoga:** We are meeting every Monday at 11:00 AM in Luther Hall. Wear comfortable clothing and sneakers.

**March 19, 2025  
Ash Wednesday**

ATTENDANCE — 28  
(IN-PERSON — 21, YOUTUBE - 7)

### **OFFERING**

Benevolence	\$	110.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>110.00</b>

Garden & Grounds work on March 22 was very well attended! Please take an opportunity to look around and see the great work that was accomplished readying our church for the Easter Season.



**Remembrance Gathering- cancelled until further notice.**

# LENTEN CHALLENGE!

Lenten challenge begins Ash Wednesday! Here is your challenge:  
 Each day of Lent, place an unwanted items in a box or bag for donation to our annual yard sale. Drop off dates for yard sale donations at the Sieg building from 10-noon are:  
 April 12th, May 17th and June 7th.  
 Thank you for participating and good luck on the challenge!

There are 2 copies of the Living Lutheran magazine available in the Narthex on the table.

## *Lent Worship Schedule*

### **LENT MIDWEEK WORSHIP** *EVENING PRAYER*

**APRIL 2, 9**  
**5:30 PM**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**  
**APRIL 17**  
**7:00 PM**

**GOOD FRIDAY**  
**APRIL 18**  
**7:00 PM**

**HOLY SATURDAY - APRIL 19 - 10:00 AM**

**St. Matthew Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
Mission Statement**



Reach in to grow in Christ  
Reach up to worship God  
Reach out to welcome and witness

**ST. MATTHEW EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

4026 Macon Road, Columbus, Georgia 31907

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

Pastor Taylor Burton Edwards Email: [twbe@liturgyfolks.com](mailto:twbe@liturgyfolks.com)

Phone: (765) 602-1426

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*A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,*

*Southeastern Synod*

[www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com](http://www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com)

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

The Rev. Taylor Burton Edwards, Pastor

Sonja Metcalf, Parish Administrator

Lisa Pettit, Sexton

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music

Penny Davis, Nursery Director