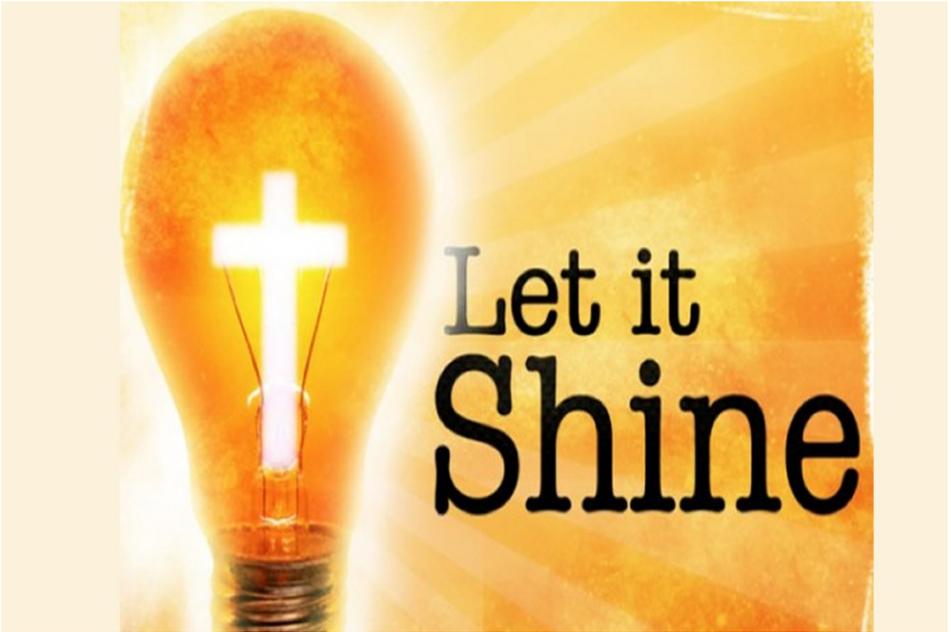


St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 15, 2026

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

Holy Communion

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

(ELW Setting 9, page 193)

† 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: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

P: Gracious God,

C: **Have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 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

"Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death"

ELW #452

Kyrie

Page 193

Prayer of the Day:

P. Let us pray,

Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C. **Amen.**

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Rose Johnson

First Reading

1 Samuel 16:1-13

¹ The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ² Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the

LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'"³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you."⁴ Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?"⁵ He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the LORD."⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here."¹² He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him, for this is the one."¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 23

Tone 8

¹ The LORD^l is my shepherd;

I shall not^l be in want.

² **The LORD makes me lie down^l in green pastures
and leads me be-^l side still waters.**

³ You restore my^l soul, O LORD,

and guide me along right pathways^l for your name's sake.

⁴ **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall^l fear
no evil;**

for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they^l comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence^l of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is^l running over.

⁶ **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days^l of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the^l LORD forever.**

¹¹ Indeed I swore^l in my anger,

'They shall never come^l to my rest.'

Second Reading

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸ Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light,⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them.¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such

people do secretly, ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

✠ Gospel Acclamation

Page 198b

Gospel

John 9:1-7, 35-38

P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷ saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

“Living in the Light”

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

✠ Hymn of the Day

“Christ, Be Our Light”

ELW #715

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,
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: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray
for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

A: God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in
our community and across the globe in right paths for your name's sake.
Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue
endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and
save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant, and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

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

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live until we too dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

P: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

C: **Amen.**

MEAL

Anthem

"Be Thou My Vision"

Choir

The gifts may be brought forward.

Offering Prayer

A: O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name.

C: **Amen.**

 Great Thanksgiving	See Insert
Holy, Holy, Holy	Page 200
Lord's Prayer "Our Father, who..."	Page 201
Lamb of God	Page 201

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: God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for your mission. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: **Amen.**

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Hymn

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

ELW #815

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Live in the light!

C: **Thanks be to God.**

The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God

In Memory of:

Frederic "Fred" Sieg, 2019

**READINGS AND PSALM
SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026**

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11
John 11:1-45



"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 8, 2026
Third Sunday in Lent**

ATTENDANCE — 44
(IN-PERSON— 34, YOUTUBE - 10
2026 BUDGET-\$185,981

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$	3,857.00
Building	\$	200.00
Memorial	\$	250.00
Other	\$	80.00
Total	\$	4,387.00

Memorial gift acknowledgments will be sent/mailed quarterly.

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

**March 4, 2026
Mid-week Lenten Service**

ATTENDANCE — 16

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$	85.00
Memorial	\$	50.00
Total	\$	135.00

Serving March 15, 2026

Opener/Closer	Jeff and Nancy Gates
Worship Assistant	Lisa Pettit
Communion Assistant	Amy Hoag
Lector	Dave Bonaker
Ushers	Matt Pettit
	Bill Wallace
Altar Guild	Nancy Gates
	Terri Niederhammer
Live Streaming	Jaxson Gardner

Serving March 22, 2026

Opener/Closer	Katherine Kelly
Worship Assistant	Shannon Gardner/ Terri Niederhammer
Communion Assistant	Lis Pettit
Lector	Raymond Lawton
Ushers	James Sperry
	Ron Ullman
Altar Guild	Debby Ullman
	Martha Vargas
Live Streaming	Matt Pettit

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

Dayna Ryan

Shirley Scott

Dou Shizhen

Ricky Skinner

Amanda Steinagel

Sara Steinagel Sturgis

Fred Turpin

Charlie VanHousen

Dawn VanHousen

Martha Zimmerman

People of Iran

Venezuela

Gaza

Palestinian People

Israel

Ukraine

People of Russia

People of Minneapolis

Eastern Congo

People of Nigeria

Family of Rachel Savage

Family of Jerry Johnson

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. 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
 - Brown Bag: Travel 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 4th 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.

Chair Yoga: Meets every Monday at 11:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall. Wear comfortable clothing and sneakers.

It is time to order Easter Lilies in honor and/or memory of someone. You can take these home after the service on Easter Sunday. Deadline to order is Sunday, March 22nd. Please fill out the insert and place in the offering plate or return to the church office. Cost is \$15 each lily.

Save the Date

- March 16th - 11:00 - Chair Yoga - Fellowship Hall
- March 17th - 10:15 - Bible Study - Church House-Back Room
- March 18th - 5:30 - Mid-Week Lenten Service
- March 19th - 9:00 - Care bag packing
- March 19th - 5:00 - Council Meeting - FH
- March 25th - 6:00 - Choir Practice
- March 27th - 10:00 - Craf-Tea - LH
- March 28th - 9:00 - Garden Refresh

Ordinary Mystics
✨ Tapping into Your Spiritual Roots ✨
A Women's Retreat

Hosted by All Welcome Lutheran Church

📅 March 20-22

📍 General Coffee State Park

Join us for a gentle, grounding weekend designed to help you reconnect with God, yourself, and the deeper spiritual roots that sustain everyday faith.



With Retreat
Leader
Patti Axel
Pastor & Coach
Southeastern
Synod

For more info/registration, contact
Vickie Horst at:
horstvictoria@gmail.com

CANCELLED

The Spring Potluck, originally scheduled for 3/29/26 after the service has been **CANCELLED.**

We will be having Easter Breakfast the next Sunday, April 5th that we hope you will join us for.

We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience.

HAPPY

March

BIRTHDAY

8 AIDAN GARDNER
11 PAUL HICKS
15 BRANDON HOAG
15 ANDREA SNELLINGS
17 CALLIE GARDNER
18 DEBBY OWEN
22 ANDREA MARSHA
24 JOSEPH STEINAGEL
27 REV. GRACE BURTON EDWARDS

Mission

- ◇ Wynnton Neighborhood Network food & monetary donations are March, April & May. Please drop food donations in the narthex basket and monetary donations in the offering plate.
- ◇ Care bag packing at Wynnton Neighborhood Network on March 19th at 9:00 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



To give online, please scan the QR code to the left to be taken to the 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

Lisa Pettit, Sexton

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music

Penny Davis, Nursery Director