

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 12, 2026

How do you hear the parable of the sower? Is it pessimistic, focused on all the ways things can go badly? Is it a kind of warning to us not to expect much? Or is it a cause for hope and joy? What does the way you hear it say about your outlook on the gospel and on the life of discipleship to Jesus?

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

"Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"

ELW #533

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

Rose Johnson

First Reading

Isaiah 55:10-13

¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. ¹² For you shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. ¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle, and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 65:1-13

Tone 11

¹ You are to be praised, O ¹ God, in Zion;
to you shall vows ¹ be fulfilled.

² **To you, the one ¹ who answers prayer,
to you all ¹ flesh shall come.**

³ Our sins are strong- ¹ er than we are,
but you blot out ¹ our transgressions.

⁴ **Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your
¹ courts to dwell there!**

**They will be satisfied by the beauty of your
house, by the holiness ¹ of your temple.**

⁵ Awesome things will you show us in your
righteousness, O God of ¹ our salvation,
O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans
¹ far away.

⁶ **You make firm the mountains ¹ by your power;
you are girded a- ¹ bout with might.**

⁷ You still the roaring ¹ of the seas,
the roaring of their waves, and the clamor ¹ of the
peoples.

⁸ **Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will
tremble at your ¹ marvelous signs;
you make the dawn and the dusk to ¹ sing for joy.**

⁹ You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it
very plenteous; the river of God is ¹ full of water.
You prepare the grain, for so you provide ¹ for the
earth.

¹⁰ **You drench the furrows and smooth ¹ out the
ridges;
with heavy rain you soften the ground and ¹ bless
its increase.**

- ¹¹ You crown the year ¹ with your goodness,
and your paths over- ¹ flow with plenty.
- ¹² **May the fields of the wilderness be ¹ rich for
grazing,
and the hills be ¹ clothed with joy.**
- ¹³ May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and
the valleys cloak them- ¹ selves with grain;
let them shout for ¹ joy and sing.

Second Reading

Romans 8:1-11

¹ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For 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, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But 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. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus

from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

† Gospel Acclamation

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Gospel

Matthew 13:1-9

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶ But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ If you have ears, hear!"

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon *"When the Seed Takes"*

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

Apostles' Creed

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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 gardener, you scatter grace like seed across the world. Continue to cultivate the garden of your church with your abundant Spirit. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our joy, your bountiful creation reflects your commitment to life despite our actions disregarding its wonder. We look toward Isaiah's vision, when all creation rejoices, and the trees will clap for joy at your salvation. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our life, you give us the same Spirit by which you raised Christ from the dead. Set our minds on that Spirit whenever fear or condemnation overwhelm throughout the world. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our host and table, we pray for children who hunger and rely on school meals, for all who toil under the hot sun without refreshment, for the chronically ill who have exhausted their resources, and for local concerns. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our source, tend this assembly with your grace throughout this summer season. May those who travel for work or recreation do so safely, and may visitors find refreshment among us. 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: We give you thanks that the roots of your goodness run deep throughout history. We remember those saints who have gone before us in faith 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

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MEAL

Anthem *"I Received the Living God"*

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

"Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

ELW #547

Dismissal

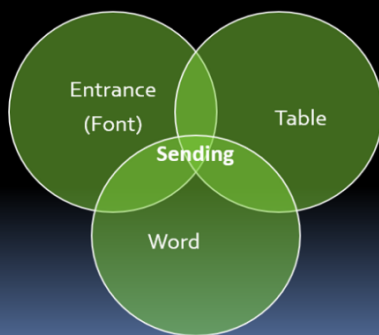
A: Go forth in the name of our Triune God.

C: Thanks be to God.

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/events>



Email:

office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com

The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God

In Memory of:

Patti Vinson, 2024



Columbus
CLINGSTONES
DOUBLE-A AFFILIATE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

FAITH & FAMILY NIGHT
SATURDAY, AUGUST 8 | 6:05 PM
WE ARE WELCOMING ALL FAITHS FOR PRE-GAME MUSIC
AND LIVE TESTIMONIALS BEFORE THE GAME!
GATES OPEN AT 5 PM!

FEATURING POST-GAME
KIDS RUN THE BASES
PRESENTED BY RAISING CANE'S



July Birthdays

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

READINGS AND PSALM
SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2026



Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19
Psalm 86:11-17
Romans 8:12-25
Matthew 13:24-30

*"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*

July 5, 2026
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

ATTENDANCE — 44

(IN-PERSON— 33, YOUTUBE - 11

2026 BUDGET-\$185,981

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$	1,835.00
Building	\$	100.00
Memorial	\$	100.00
Other (70 for 70)	\$	70.00
Total	\$	2,105.00

*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 12, 2026

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

Serving July 19, 2026

Opener/Closer	Dave Bonaker
Worship Assistant	Shannon Gardner
Communion Assistant	Liz McGouirk
Lector	Terri Niederhammer
Ushers	Raymond Lawton
	Jim Sperry
Altar Guild	Lisa Pettit
	Lane Brown/Jaxson Gardner
Live Streaming	Cecil McGouirk

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

Acceptance Auto

Phuong's Tailor Shop

Walgreen's

Angel's Nails

Y & J Health

Hidden Lake Grocery

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.



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.

Save the Date

- July 14th - 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



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.



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

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.

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 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

Obra Williams, Sexton

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music

Penny Davis, Nursery Director