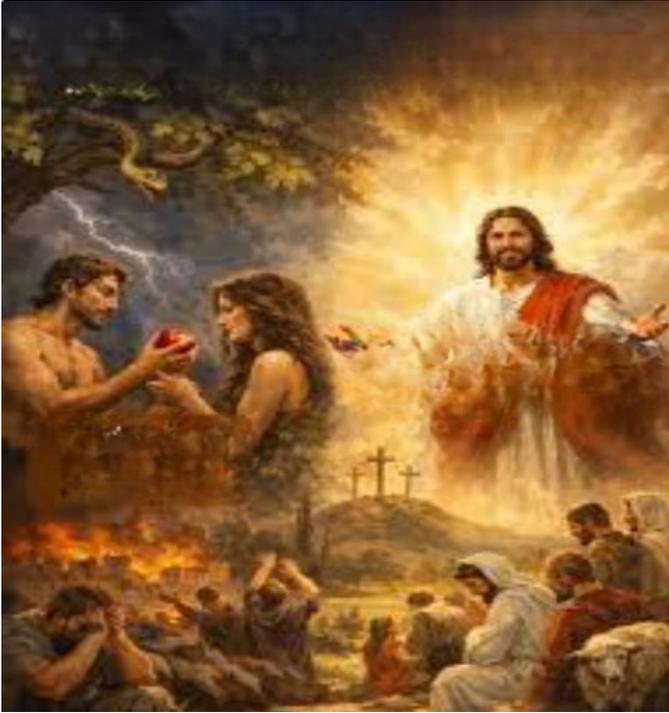


St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



First Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026

In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

Holy Communion

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

(ELW Setting 9, page 193)

† Congregation stands as able

GATHERING

Prelude

Sandra Nearhoof



P: The 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

"Restore in Us, O God"

ELW #328

Kyrie

Page 193

Prayer of the Day:

P. Let us pray,

Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, 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

Amy Hoag

First Reading

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 32

Tone 8

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

Second Reading

Romans 5:12-19

¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's

trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

† Gospel Acclamation

Page 198

Gospel

Matthew 4:1-11

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

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

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon

"Sin, Death, and Life"

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

† Hymn of the Day

"O, Love, How Deep"
(Verses 1, 2, 4, 7)

ELW #322

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 of all grace, grant faith to your church. Give to all the baptized the will
to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone, Hear us, O God.,

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all creation, tend this earth. When human greed and disobedience
threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways
of reverence, awe, and gentleness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all who work for peace. Grant courage to those who challenge, especially around issues of racism and systemic oppression. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick, give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word. 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 of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you. 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

“Thy Holy Wings”

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 the journey. 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

"Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart"

ELW #800

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Fast as God intends..

C: **Thanks be to God.**

The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God

In Memory of:

Betty Davidson, 2025

READINGS AND PSALM
SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2026

Genesis 12:1-4a
 Psalm 121
 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
 John 3:1-17



"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

February 15, 2026
Transfiguration of our Lord

ATTENDANCE — 48
 (IN-PERSON— 30, YOUTUBE - 18
 2026 BUDGET-\$185,981

OFFERING	
Benevolence	\$ 2,115.00
Building	\$ 130.00
Memorial	\$ 50.00
Other	\$ 0.00
Total	\$ 2,295.00

LENTEN CHALLENGE

Spring time means it is time to de-clutter! As you are doing that this year, we challenge you to put 1 item that you no longer want each day of Lent into a bag or box from February 18th thru April 4th. Then on April 11th from 10-12 you can drop off your items to the Sieg Building. Items will either be donated to local organizations or saved for our 2027 yard sale.

Serving February 22, 2026

Opener/Closer	Dave Bonaker
Worship Assistant	Rose Johnson
Communion Assistant	Lisa Pettit
Lector	Jaxson Gardner
Ushers	James Sperry Ron Ullman
Altar Guild	Debby Ullman Martha Vargas Catherine Sayers
Live Streaming	Matt Pettit

Serving March 1, 2026

Opener/Closer	Lisa & Matth Pettit
Worship Assistant	Shannon Gardner
Communion Assistant	Terri Niederhammer
Lector	Toni Mion
Ushers	James Sperry Bill Wallace
Altar Guild	Lane Brown Rose Johnson Catherine Sayers
Live Streaming	Jaxson Gardner

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

Venezuela

Gaza

Palestinian People

Israel

Ukraine

People of Russia

Somali Refugees

Jewish community in
Australia

People of Minneapolis

Beth Israel Congregation in
Jackson, Mississippi

Eastern Congo

People of Nigeria

Family of Alex Pretti

Family of Renee Good

Grigsby Family

Family of Rachel Savage

M. Bland Salon

Chevron

Bargain Furniture

Dollar General

Citgo

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 Church House to review and discuss the 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 Luther 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

- February 23rd - 11:00 - Chair Yoga - Luther Hall
- February 24th - 10:15 - Bible Study - Church House
- February 25th - 5:30 - Mid-Week Lenten Service
- February 25th - 6:00 - Choir Rehearsal
- February 27th - 10:00 - Craf-Tea - Luther Hall
- March 1st - 11:30 - Congregational Meeting

LENT WORSHIP SCHEDULE

25 MIDWEEK LENT SERVICE
FEBRUARY 5:30 PM

4, 11, 18, 25 MIDWEEK LENT SERVICE
MARCH 5:30 PM



2 MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE
APRIL 7:00 PM

3 GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
APRIL 7:00 PM

4 HOLY SATURDAY SERVICE
APRIL 10:00 AM



ST MATTHEW EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
4026 MACON ROAD
COLUMBUS, GA 31907

PILLARS OF ST MATTHEW

Ernest and Marie Scruggs were the first members of our congregation. It was they who contacted the president of the Georgia-Alabama synod of the ULCA and asked his help in organizing a congregation in Columbus. Ernest was vice-chairman of the first congregation council; in succeeding years he was our long-time property chairman. He was a retired Army senior NCO. Marie was descended from the Salzburgers, who fled Austria because of religious persecution and came to Georgia in 1734. She was the quintessential gracious southern lady. In 1966, Marie was one of the first women elected to our congregation council. She and Ernest were deeply involved in the life of St. Matthew throughout their lives.

When Pat and I moved to Windsor Park, we became adjacent backyard neighbors to Ernest and Marie. We visited back and forth frequently. They enriched our lives immeasurably.

RIP, dearest friends,
Dave Bonaker



Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Scruggs

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