



ST. MATTHEW

Celebrating

67
years

Messenger

The Newsletter of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church - February 2024

LENT BEGINS FORTY DAYS and FORTY NIGHTS

It's an idiom that appears throughout the scriptures. It's the length of the storm that flooded Noah's world. It's the time Moses spent on the mountain to receive the revelation of the Law of God. It's the period of flight and hiding Elijah entered after Ahab's wrath at the defeat and destruction of Baal's prophets on Mount Carmel. And it's the time Jesus spent in the Judean desert, driven there by the Holy Spirit, immediately following his baptism by John.

And it's the duration of the season of Lent that we enter with a service of communion and imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, February 14, at 7:30 p.m.

Christians developed this season initially simply as a way for the faithful to experience solidarity with Jesus in the forty day fast in the desert that launched his public ministry. We have letters from a bishop in Syria as early as the late second century commending this kind of observance to other bishops around the Mediterranean world. The evidence suggests he wasn't the only one. The practice of a 40 days period of more intense spiritual disciplines leading up to Easter, including fasting at least two days a week (Wednesday and Friday) during this time, seems to have spread quickly.

As it spread, it developed an additional purpose. By the second half of the second century, most of those converting to the faith were converting from various forms of paganism. This means they required extensive training over time to become deprogrammed, as it were, from the religious practices and worldview they had inherited in order to become oriented to the commitments of discipleship of Jesus. By the early third century, this period of training, widely known as the catechumenate, appears to have become normalized as a three year process. So by the early third century, the forty day time of intense spiritual practice was serving double duty, both deepening the commitments of the already baptized, and providing a final period of intensive training of the catechumens (those learning to "echo" the way of Jesus in their lives).

These two purposes have remain the focus of Lent to this day. Believers deepen their commitments to follow Jesus by focusing more intently on ways to live out the vows of baptism more faithfully. And the church as a whole may function as a kind of midwife alongside those in whom Christ may soon be born through the waters of baptism.

This year, we will focus primarily on the former while remaining open to how the Holy Spirit may make the latter possible among us.

And so this Lent will be like a 40 day fast in the desert: more silence, less music, piano rather than organ accompaniment, and a stronger focus on our baptismal vows and practices that can help us live them, including but not limited to prayer. Ash Wednesday will set the tone. Our Lenten Retreat will help those who participate choose a particular way to focus on growing in faithfulness through this season. And weekly Wednesday evening prayer at 5:30 will provide an additional opportunity for us to gather to hear the word and pray for the church and the world each week.

May this time in the desert be for each of us a time of focus and renewed commitment that launches us into more faithful discipleship to our Lord and ministry in his name and the Spirit's power in the time ahead.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Taylor

Lent Worship Schedule

SHROVE TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 13
5:30 AT ST. THOMAS

ASH WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 14
7:30 P.M.

LENT MIDWEEK WORSHIP
EVENING PRAYER

FEBRUARY 21, 28
MARCH 6, 13, 20
5:30 P.M.

MAUNDY THURSDAY
MARCH 28
7:00 P.M.

GOOD FRIDAY
MARCH 29
7:00 P.M.

2024 Council

Zocia Barr: Wynnton Neighborhood Network Liaison
Donna Doughty: Education
Nancy Gates: Secretary
Rose Johnson: President/Worship & Music
Katherine Kelly: Treasurer
Lisa Pettit: Fellowship
Allena Sperry: Vice President, Ministry & Missions
Carla Stickles: Property
Pastor Taylor Burton Edwards

Gracious God, as you have called workers to varied tasks in the world and in our church, so you have called these servants to this ministry of congregational council. Grant them joy and a spirit of bold trust, that their work may stir up each of us to a life of fruitful service; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(ELW, page 74)

St Matthew's Lutheran Church Invites You To

Reach In

A Lenten Discipleship Retreat

You are wholeheartedly invited to attend a two-day retreat of education, introspection and conversation. Together, we'll explore seven aspects of discipleship, reflecting on our own growth as disciples, and prayerfully reflect on how we can grow in these dimensions of our lives.

Who: All interested participants, from St Matthew's and beyond!
What: Lenten retreat focusing on individual discipleship and growth
Where: St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Columbus GA
When: 6:00-9:00 PM on Friday, 16 February and
9 am-4:30 pm on Saturday, 17 February
Why: To begin our Lenten journey in introspection and prayer
What to bring: Your own lunch for Saturday

To register, e-mail office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com or go to website at <https://forms.wix.com/r/7154127640259985731> to fill out registration form.

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to Rachel Zarnke:
rzarnke@gmail.com or 815-708-4039

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind ... Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. Ephesians 4: 14-15



BLESSING OUR NEIGHBORS



WYNNTON
NEIGHBORHOOD
NETWORK

I'm super excited to announce that our church has been approved to join the Wynnton Neighborhood Network! After I was elected to Council, I heard Allena Sperry talk about volunteering at Wynnton Neighborhood Network one day a week. I always wondered what and how this group helped people. My interest was again peaked as Pastor Taylor and Joyce Moore started speaking to businesses on Macon Rd and their need for our prayers, and we began to pray for them. During our last Tuesday night study at Mr. Pizza, I asked Betty Townsend more about the Wynnton Neighborhood Network, how she served and if she could get me information on the Network. The next time I checked my email, I received information from Mary Lou Jarrell. She and I have sent lots of emails since that morning about their work in the Wynnton Road area. Wynnton Neighborhood Network provides groceries, a few household items and help with past due utilities for qualified families in Columbus. She was excited that I wanted our church to join their group since we are a part of Wynnton Road. I received information on how our congregation could join this ministry, and I asked Council to consider joining. We voted in December to join the Network, but the story isn't finished. I submitted a letter asking for our church to be considered to join the Network. We were accepted and now we can continue to serve our neighbors in our community. Our Council did approve a monetary donation for the year, and we will be asked to supply certain household needed items for two months each year. If you would like to volunteer at the Network, I have a copy of the job descriptions for each area. We will continue to collect and donate non-perishable food items, household items, and personal care items for St. Anne's, Brown Bag and Stewart Home. Zocia Barr and Allena Sperry will serve as our liaisons to the Network, and they will relay information to us concerning the needs for the months and pertinent information. Let's pray for this ministry, volunteers, churches and those that will receive the help from Wynnton Neighborhood Network. ---Submitted by Rose Johnson

MISSION FOCUS

JANUARY 7, 2024 THRU FEBRUARY 25, 2024

Brown Bag of Columbus

Groceries For Older Adults

Started in July 1987, Brown Bag of Columbus provides groceries to low-income older adult individuals in Columbus, GA. There are MANY older adults falling through the cracks and are unable to get needed assistance from Federal or Local programs. Since November of 2021, food prices have increased almost 14% , forcing many older adults to make choices about where to reduce their budgets. Many older adults will cut their food budgets before they will cut medications, and that means that they will reduce the amount of good that they eat each day. **YOU CAN HELP US TO HELP THEM!!**

We are collecting canned goods thru February 25th that will be donated to Brown Bag of Columbus. Please leave your donations in the Narthex.



TACKLE
HUNGER
AT THE
SOUPER BOWL!

FEBRUARY
18, 2024
12:00 PM
FOLLOWING
CHURCH IN
LUTHER HALL

*PLEASE
DONATE YOUR
NON-PERISHABLE
ITEMS TO HELP
US TACKLE
HUNGER!
LET'S GET TO
THE END ZONE!*

SMALL GROUPS

GROWING IN GRACE

Meets every Friday from 9:00-11:00 AM in the Church House. God's grace is freely given to us. Join the group to learn to cultivate an attitude of grace in your daily life by learning about and adopting habits to move into a state of grace. Contact Beth Hoag at 706-604-8110 for more information.

REMEMBRANCE GATHERING

This group meets on the second Tuesday at 3 PM in the Church House each month. The Gathering is not a committee, but an open invitation to come together and share personal stories or recollections of someone else's life from all wars and conflicts. Would a movie, book, or an invited speaker sharing our subject matter enhance your participation? Please come share your ideas or just support those of others this coming **February 13th at 3:00 PM.**

Bible Study

This group meets in the Church House from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. each Tuesday where they read and talk about the scriptures for the coming Sunday.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please see Zocia Barr in the Narthex, before or after Sunday services, to ensure that the information we have for you in the Directory is correct. We would like to validate name, address, phone number and email. Thank you for your help in keeping our records current.



To the congregation of St. Matthew:

Thank you so very much for celebrating our wedding on November 5th. It means so much to us that you had us in your hearts and thoughts. We are incredibly lucky to have people in this world who care about the way this congregation does. Thank you again!



With love,
Katie & Jack Steinagel

(NOTE: Jack is the son of Michael & Renee Steinagel and the grandson of Zocia Barr).

WE ARE NOW ON YouTube LIVESTREAM!

Thank you for making this dream become a reality! We began livestreaming on January 21st! You can get to the livestream from our website or go to <https://www.youtube.com/@st.matthewlutheranchurch4457> and click on the LIVE tab. Thank you to Cecil for all his hard work on getting this setup for us. Thanks to Jaxson for faithfully running it each week!





February Birthdays



1 Shannon Gardner	12 Monika Harrison
3 Benny Jackson, Jr.	15 Adam Schwarting
4 William Klein	16 Katharina Burns
10 Madelyn Peterson	21 Sandra Craven
11 Mairetha Jackson	24 Charlotte Owen
12 Zocia Barr	

Birthday Celebration will be on 2/4/2024 this month in the Fellowship Hall after the worship service. Please join us!

Finance Committee Report

	December 2023	Year to Date
Income	\$26,368	\$168,199
Expenses	\$14,740	\$144,462
Difference	\$11,628	\$ 23,737

All Saints

WJ Barrs



Prayer Requests

The Armed Forces, their families, & victims of war	Brandy Garnett
Persecuted Christians	Becky Goldsmith
The ministries of St. Matthew	Estrella Gonzales
Bishop Kevin Strickland	Doris Grier
Southeastern Synod Staff	Petra Henderson
Pastor Taylor Burton Edwards	Beverly Huckaby
Laura Alexander	Norma Kilby
Zocia Barr family	Ken Korn
Keandra Bashful	Boyd Lester
Carol Bingemann	Laura Lester
Dave Bonaker	Robert Lowe
Pat Bonaker	Michelle Matthias
Eva Brown	Tim Moore
Betty Davidson	Gary Nearhoof
Ken Hoag	Kimberly O'Malley
Myrna Hoag	Michael Owen
Bennie Jackson	Angela Paul
Mairetha Jackson	Vincent Pawlowski
Marga Miller	Dwight Redmond
Traudel Mosely	Tiffany Richardson
Debby Owen	Dayna Ryan
Dorothy Redden	Yuliia Savitska
Connie Sieg	Shirley Scott
Joan Smith	Ricky Skinner
Carla Stickles	Betty Townsend
Albert VanHousen II	Charlie VanHousen
Margarete Walsh	Dawn VanHousen
Monika Wright	Martha Zimmerman
Gary Anderson	
Judy Bultman	
George Capps	
Kyle Carter	
Jim Chappel	
Jean Clemmons	
Xavier Danguilan	





Business Prayer Requests

Mr. Pizza	Gold Teeth World
Quality Inn	Apparel King & More
Smoke Buddy's	Hollywood Barber Shop
Days Inn	The Cell Plug
Enterprise	Plaza Furniture
Comfort Inn	Guthrie's
Octapharma Plasma	Master-Kleen
Kamoree's Beauty Salon	Title Max
Broken Tarot Tattoo & Piercing	JD Wings
Beaute' Matrix	Burger King
5 Fourteen	Animal General Hospital
DQ	Klose Kutz
Freedom Adult Day Center	Xpert Tax Service
Transformation Salon	Family Worship Center
Pathway Worship Center	Bi-City Driving School
Menzie Dance Company	Sunset Finance
Frankie's Hair Design	Diamond Kutz
AMG Financial	Kee J's
Acceptance Auto	Angel's Nails
Phuong's Tailor Shop	Y & J Health
Walgreen's	Hidden Lake Grocery
USPS	Beauty Queen
Peachtree Immediate Care	Brewster's
Hidden Lake Bottle Shop	Waffle House
Vance Brooks Funeral Service	E&S Clothing
Striffler Hamby Funeral Service	One Financial
El Carrizo	Tasha's Dance & Prep
M. Bland Salon	Bargain Furniture
The Ellands Event Center	Dollar General
Chevron	Citgo
Grace Apostolic Church	Landmark
#1 Nails	McKibben Insurance
Valley Rescue Donation Center	Rooster's Beer & Wine
Mario's Tire	Woodville Apartments
Mariner Finance	

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

February 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						
				1	2 GROW WITH GRACE 9:00-11:00	3
<p>4 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany</p> <p>Worship 10:30 AM Communion</p> <p>Birthday Celebration after service</p>	<p>5</p> <p>AA 8:00 PM -LH</p>	<p>6</p> <p>BIBLE STUDY 10:30AM CH</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Ten Commandments Study at 6:00 PM LH</p>	<p>8</p> <p>GERMAN CLUB 5:00 PM LH</p> <p>AA 8:00 PM -FH</p>	<p>9</p> <p>GROW WITH GRACE 9:00-11:00</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11 6th Sunday after Epiphany</p> <p>Worship 10:30 AM Communion</p>	<p>12</p> <p>AA 8:00 PM -LH</p>	<p>13</p> <p>BIBLE STUDY 10:30AM CH</p> <p>Remembrance Gathering 3:00 CH</p> <p>Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner At St. Thomas 5:30</p>	<p>14</p> <p>ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE AT 7:30 PM</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>COUNCIL MEETING 5:00</p> <p>AA 8:00 PM -FH</p>	<p>16</p> <p>GROW WITH GRACE 9:00-11:00</p> <p>REACH IN RETREAT-6:00-9:30 PM AT ST. THOMAS</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Reach In Retreat 8:00 AM-4:30 PM at St. Thomas</p>
<p>18 1st Sunday of Lent</p> <p>Worship 10:30 AM Communion</p> <p>Tackle Hunger Souper Bowl - LH</p>	<p>19</p> <p>AA 8:00 PM -FH</p>	<p>20</p> <p>BIBLE STUDY 10:30AM CH</p>	<p>21</p> <p>LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICE AT 5:30 PM</p>	<p>22</p> <p>AA 8:00 PM -FH</p>	<p>23</p> <p>GROW WITH GRACE 9:00-11:00</p>	<p>24</p>
<p>25 2nd Sunday of Lent</p> <p>Worship 10:30 AM</p>	<p>26</p> <p>AA 8:00 PM -FH</p>	<p>27</p> <p>BIBLE STUDY 10:30AM CH</p>	<p>28</p> <p>LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICE AT 5:30 PM</p>			

Contact Us . . .

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

4026 Macon Road
Columbus, GA 31907

(706) 561-3406
office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com

Visit us on the web at
www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com

Worship: Sundays at 10:30 am.
YouTube is also available

[https://www.youtube.com/
@st.matthewlutheranchurch4457](https://www.youtube.com/@st.matthewlutheranchurch4457)

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday/Thursday 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Friday - 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church Mission Statement

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

Staff . . .

Pastor
Parish Administrator

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards
Sonja Metcalf
office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com

Minister of Music
Nursery Attendant
Sexton

Sandra Nearhoof
Penny Davis
Lisa Pettit

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED