

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2026

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

† *Congregation stands as able*

GATHERING

Prelude

Sandra Nearhoof



P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God, who forgives us all our sins, whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen.

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 “*God Is Here!*”

ELW #526

Kyrie

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Prayer of the Day:

P. Let us pray,

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Amy Hoag

First Reading

Genesis 50:15-21

¹⁵ Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?"

¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father."

Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 103:8-13

Tone 1

- ⁸ **LORD, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love;**
⁹ you will not al- | ways accuse us,
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.
¹⁰ **You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,
nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.**
¹¹ For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear
you.
¹² **As far as the east is | from the west,
so far have you removed our transgres- | sions
from us.**
¹³ As a father has compassion | for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear | you, O
LORD.

Second Reading

Romans 14:1-12

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God. ⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether

we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

✠ Gospel Acclamation

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Gospel

Matthew 18:21-35

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him

by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.'²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.'³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?'³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon *"Deal With Differences"*

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

✝ Hymn of the Day

"In Christ There Is No East or West"

ELW #650

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,**

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the
dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

You may sit, stand or kneel for the prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

A: Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we
offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

A: Move your church throughout the world away from
judging and despising others. Lead us to embody the
forgiveness you have given us in Jesus.

Hear us, O God,

C: Your mercy is great.

A: The endless beauty of your creation reminds us of
your mercy. Protect those who care for farms and
ranches. Guide those who lead us to wonder at your
creation. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Raise up leaders to hold all in authority accountable
for any misuse of the power entrusted to them.

Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Calm the fears of all in need with your promises.
Compassionately free the lives of any who feel bound
by their failures. Remember your children in need
Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Ground this congregation in the welcome you show
us in forgiving our sin. Inspire each of us to welcome
others for your honor and glory. 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: With you is found the joy and promise of eternal life.
Keep us in that joy as we remember Mario Mion all
those who have gone before us. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Grant the prayers that we have offered, what we
have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see
that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

The Peace

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MEAL

Offertory *"Will You Come and Follow Me"* **ELW# 798**

The gifts may be brought forward.

Offering Prayer

A: God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.

C: Amen.

✝ Great Thanksgiving	Page 152
Holy, Holy, Holy	Page 153
Lord's Prayer "Our Father, who..."	Page 154
Lamb of God	Page 154

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: Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

C: Amen.

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Hymn

"Will You Let Me Be Your Servant" **ELW #659**

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Care for this creation, hope for the new creation.

C: Thanks be to God.



The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God

In Memory of:

Joseph Kopiness, 2005



READINGS AND PSALM SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

Jonah 3:10--4:11
Psalm 145:1-5
Acts 2:14-21, 33-35
Matthew 20:1-6



*"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*

September 6, 2026 Creation in Christ Sunday

ATTENDANCE — 61

(IN-PERSON — 40, YOUTUBE - 21

2026 BUDGET-\$185,981

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$ 2,640.00
Building	\$ 100.00
Memorial*	\$ 150.00
Total	\$ 2,890.00

**Memorial gifts will be
acknowledged quarterly.*



If you have any photos you have taken from events that have happened at the church, please email those to the church office at office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com. We need these for our archives and our newsletter!

Serving September 13, 2026

Opener/Closer	Dave Bonaker
Worship Assistant	Lisa Pettit
Communion Assistant	Matt Pettit
Lector	Dave Bonaker
Communion Ushers	Katherine Kelly, Jim Sperry
Altar Guild	Lane Brown
	Allena Sperry/Jaxson Gardner
Greeter	Isabelle Clark
Live Streaming	Paul Hicks

Serving September 20, 2026

Opener/Closer	Allena Sperry
Worship Assistant	Shannon Gardner
Communion Assistant	Allena Sperry
Lector	Toni Mion
Communion Ushers	Randy & Sandy Craven
Altar Guild	Rose Johnson
	Allena Sperry/Jaxson Gardner
Greeter	Isabelle Clark
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

Eric & Tinisha Bryant

Jean Clemmons

Nancy Edmundson

Lynne Funck

Brandy Garnett

Sandy Gibbs

Moses Glidden

Estrella Gonzales

Doris Grier

Frank Henderson

Petra Henderson

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

Anne Sims

Ricky Skinner

Fred Turpin

Charlie VanHousen

Dawn VanHousen

Eric Young

Martha Zimmerman

Hicks Family

Mion Family

Wandersee/Mackenzie
Families

People of Nepal

People of Tibet

People of Lebanon

People of Iran

Gaza

Palestinian People

Israel

Ukraine

People of Russia

Eastern Congo

People of Venezuela

People of Columbia

Beaute' Matrix

5 Fourteen

DQ

Burger King

Animal General Hospital

Klose Kutz

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. Changing table available there if needed.

Love in Action 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)
- WNN Non-perishable foods

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.

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

Save the Date

- September 14th - 11:00 - Chair Yoga - Luther Hall
- September 14th - 7:00 - Congregational Leaders Zoom
- September 15th - 10:15 AM - Bible Study - Church House-Back Room
- September 17th - 5:00 - Council Meeting - Fellowship Hall
- September 18th - 10:00 - Craf-Tea - Luther Hall
- September 24th- Men's Group - 5:30 - Deorio's



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.



Thank you to everyone who helped to make Celebration Sunday a success. The food was delicious. 400 care bags were filled for Wynnton Neighborhood Network and cards written to members unable to attend services.

With grateful hearts,
God's Work our Hands & Fellowship Committee



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