

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

KINGDOM OF GOD

Mustard Seed, Yeast
Treasures, Pearls and the Net



Matthew 13: 31-33; 44 -52

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
July 26, 2026

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

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 love 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

"Let the Whole Creation Cry"

ELW #876

Kyrie

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Now the Feast

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Prayer of the Day:

P. Let us pray,

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Rose Johnson

First Reading

1 Kings 3:5-12

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today." ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to

discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?" ¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 119:129-136

Tone 11

¹²⁹ Your de- | crees are wonderful;
therefore I obey them with | all my heart.
¹³⁰ **When your word is opened | it gives light;**
it gives understanding | to the simple.
¹³¹ I open my | mouth and pant
because I long for | your commandments.
¹³² **Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,**
as you always do to those who | love your name.
¹³³ Order my footsteps | in your word;
let no iniquity have dominion | over me.
¹³⁴ **Rescue me from those | who oppress me,**
and I will keep | your commandments.
¹³⁵ Let your face shine up- | on your servant
and teach | me your statutes.
¹³⁶ **My eyes shed | streams of tears,**
because people do not | keep your teaching.

Second Reading

Romans 8:26-39

²⁶ The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of

the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

† Gospel Acclamation

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P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

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

³¹ [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind;⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad."⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁵¹ "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes."⁵² And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon *“Parables of the Kingdom of God”*
Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

† Hymn of the Day
“What is the World Like” **See Insert**

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 wisdom and our song, we pray for bishops, candidacy committees, those preparing for seminary, those awaiting call as deacons or pastors, and all who seek to lead your disciples in any way especially for Rev. Audra Gehler to be installed today in Oglethorpe. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our breath and our heartbeat, help us to recognize signs of your presence among us. Protect and support diverse ecosystems, from national parks to family farms, from ranches to wild places. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our peace and our guide, help civic leaders hear all their peoples' stories with compassion and curiosity, and remind us of your love from which we can never be separated. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our intercessor and our lawgiver, dismantle the barriers to care and recognition of all who live with chronic illness, mobility struggles, pain, and uncertainty. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our redeemer, may we trust your love above and beyond all else that distracts, annoys, frightens, exhausts, or divides 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: God who seeks, finds, and saves, for our community's part in the ongoing gift of creation, and for the riches of faith and hope of those who have come before, especially Mario Mion, we give you thanks. 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.

MEAL

Hymn “God of Grace and God of Glory” **ELW#705**

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

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Holy, Holy, Holy

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Lord's Prayer “Our Father, who...”

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Lamb of God

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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

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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 *"In Thee Is Gladness"*

ELW #867

Dismissal

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

C: Thanks be to God.

The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God

In Memory of:

Richard Harrison, 2000



Woven Together
FORWARD IN FAITH

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE
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AUG.22

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*"Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you?"
(Psalm 85:6)*

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READINGS AND PSALM SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2026



Isaiah 55:1-5
Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

*"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 19, 2026 Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

ATTENDANCE — 47

(IN-PERSON — 41, YOUTUBE - 16)

2026 BUDGET-\$185,981

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$ 5,920.00
Building	\$ 100.00
Memorial*	\$ 150.00
Other	\$ 0.00
Total	\$ 6,170.00

**Memorial gifts will be acknowledged quarterly.*



Memorial brick orders will be taken until **August 2, 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.

Serving July 26, 2026

Opener/Closer	Terri Niederhammer
Worship Assistant	Rose Johnson
Communion Assistant	Katherine Kelly
Lector	Cecil McGouirk
Ushers	Jim Sperry Bill Wallace
Altar Guild	Debby Ullman Martha Vargas/Jaxson Gardner
Live Streaming	Matt Pettit

Serving August 2, 2026

Opener/Closer	Katherine Kelly
Worship Assistant	Shannon Gardner
Communion Assistant	Terri Niederhammer
Lector	Wanda Ebright
Ushers	Katheine Kelly Jim Sperry
Altar Guild	Lane Brown Rose Johnson/Jaxson Gardner
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
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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

Mion Family

Wandersee/Mackenzie
Families

People of Lebanon

People of Iran

Gaza

Palestinian People

Israel

Ukraine

People of Russia

Eastern Congo

People of Venezuela

Vance Brooks Funeral
Service

Striffler Hamby Funeral
Service

El Carrizo

E & S Clothing

One Financial

Tasha' Dance & Prep

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.



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!

Save the Date

- July 28th - 10:15 AM - Bible Study - Church House-Back Room
- August 2nd - Birthday Celebration - Fellowship Hall
- August 20th - Council Meeting - 5:00 - FH
- August 21st - Craft-Tea - 10:00 - LH
- August 22nd - Revival Day
- August 27th - Men's Group - 5:30 - Deorio's
- August 30th - Bishop Strickland Visit/End of Summer Potluck/God's Work, Our Hands/September Birthday Celebration



Use the QR code to the left to register for the Southeastern Synod Congregational Leaders Zoom with Bishop Strickland on September 14, at 7:00 PM.



Southeastern Synod

Congregational Leaders Zoom

With Bishop Strickland

September 14, 2026 - 7:00 pm (ET)

Register Today!



For Lay and Rostered Leaders

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