St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



Reformation Sunday

October 25, 2026

Jesus' summary of the law in today's gospel echoes our first reading from Leviticus. We are called not only to love God with heart, soul, and mind, but also to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is out of such deep care that Paul shares the gospel with the Thessalonian community. In the confession of sins, we acknowledge that we have not loved God, neighbor, and self; yet we gather to hear the word of forgiveness and to be strengthened by word and meal to be signs of God's love and mercy in the world.

Holy Communion *(ELW Setting 7, page 175)*
Evangelical Lutheran Worship

†*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
"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" **ELW #858**

Kyrie Page 175

Prayer of the Day:
P. Let us pray,
O Lord God, you are the holy lawgiver, you are the salvation of your people. By your Spirit renew us in your covenant of love, and train us to care tenderly for all our neighbors, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
C. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message Wanda Ebright

First Reading Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

1 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:
2 "Speak to all the congregation of the Israelites and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. 15 "You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. 16 You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand idly by when the blood of your neighbor is at stake: I am the Lord. 17 "You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."

L: The word of the Lord
C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm1 **Tone 2**

1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel | of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats | of the scornful!
2 **Their delight is in the law | of the Lord,**
and they meditate on God's teaching | day and night.
3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that | do not wither;
everything they | do shall prosper.
4 **It is not so | with the wicked;**
they are like chaff which the wind | blows away.
5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when | judgment comes,
nor the sinner in the council | of the righteous.
6 **For the Lord knows the way | of the righteous,**
but the way of the wicked shall | be destroyed.

Second Reading **1 Thessalonians 2:1-8**

1 You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. 3 For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, 4 but, just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals but to please God, who tests our hearts. 5 As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed, 6 nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, 7 though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse

tenderly caring for her own children. [8] So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

L: The word of the Lord
C: Thanks be to God.

✝ Gospel Acclamation Page 179

Gospel **Matthew 22:34-40**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.
C: Glory to you, O Lord.

[34] When the Pharisees heard that [Jesus] had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, [35] and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. [36] "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" [37] He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' [38] This is the greatest and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' [40] On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.
C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon *"Why Reform?"*
Pastor Taylor Burton Edwards

✝ Hymn of the Day
"Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" **ELW #517**

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: Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.

A brief silence.

A: Gracious God, as we remember the Reformation, we thank you for all those who have worked to hold the church accountable to its mission. Protect them as they speak truth to power. Hear us, O God,

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We give thanks for the beauty of the world's islands, coastlines, and low-lying places. Keep them and their inhabitants safe from harm. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

A: We thank you for the diversity of humankind, made in your image. We pray for the future of endangered languages and cultures. Preserve them to show forth your glory. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

A: We pray for the healing of all who are sick or injured, especially those who cannot access medical care. We remember those whom we love who are suffering or in pain. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

A: We give thanks for retired clergy and their families, honoring their faithful service to your church. Bless them as they find new ways to live into their vocation. 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: We thank you for all the departed who embodied love for every neighbor, especially Mario Mion. By their example, help us to seek after you with heart, soul, and mind. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

P: Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
C: Amen.

The Peace Page 180

Meal

Anthem *"That Priceless Grace"* Choir

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 180

Holy, Holy, Holy Page 181

Lord's Prayer "Our Father, who…" Page182

Lamb of God Page 182

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
"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" **ELW #505**

Dismissal
A: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God

In Memory of:

Leokadja "Kathy" Hovatter, 2004



REFORMATION SUNDAY

Protestantism is a branch of Christianity that emphasizes justification of sinners through faith alone, the teaching that salvation comes by unmerited divine grace, the priesthood of all believers, and the Bible as the primary source of authority for Christian faith and practice.

Protestants follow the theological tenets of the Protestant Reformation, a movement that began in the 16th century with the goal of reforming the Catholic Church from perceived errors, abuses, and discrepancies. The Reformation began in the Holy Roman Empire in 1517, when Martin Luther published his *Ninety-five Theses* as a reaction against abuses in the sale of indulgences by the Catholic Church, which purported to offer the remission of the temporal punishment of sins to their purchasers. Luther's statements questioned the sale of indulgences, by which people could purchase a certificate declaring forgiveness of sins for themselves or someone else. Luther argued against the practice of buying or earning forgiveness, claiming instead that salvation is a gift God gives to those who have faith. Lutheranism spread from Germany into Denmark–Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, and Iceland. The political separation of the Church of England from the Catholic Church under King Henry VIII began Anglicanism, bringing England and Wales into this broad Reformation movement, under the leadership of reformer Thomas Cranmer, whose work forged Anglican doctrine and identity. Calvinist churches spread in Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, England, Scotland, Switzerland, France, Poland and Lithuania, led by Protestant Reformers such as John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli and John Knox.

Reference: ELCA June 11, 2025, *The Reformation (alt.)*
https://www.elca.org/event/test-the-reformation

THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL *Meeting*



St Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

NOV | 22nd | 2026

Right after the worship service!
Please help us celebrate 2026
and look forward to 2027!

READINGS AND PSALM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2026

Daniel 12:1-3
Psalm 34:1-10, 22
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12



"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

October 18, 2026
Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

ATTENDANCE - 55
(IN-PERSON— 46, YOUTUBE - 9
2026 BUDGET-$185,981

OFFERING

Benevolence	$	2,310.00
Building	$	100.00
70 for 70	$	70.00
Memorial*	$	150.00
Total	**$**	**2,630.00**

**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 October 25, 2026

Opener/Closer	Dave Bonaker
Worship Assistant	Rose Johnson
Communion Assistant	Amy Hoag
Lector	Katherine Kelly
Communion Ushers	Jim Sperry & Ron Ullman
Altar Guild	Debby Ullman
	Martha Vargas/Jaxson Gardner
Greeter	Isabelle Clark
Live Streaming	Paul Hicks

Serving November 1, 2026

Opener/Closer	Rose Johnson
Worship Assistant	Shannon Gardner
Communion Assistant	Samantha Thies
Lector	David Thies
Communion Ushers	Randy & Sandy Craven
Altar Guild	Lane Brown
	Rose Johnson/Jaxson Gardner
Greeter	Isabelle Clark
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." —1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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
St Matthew Congregational Council
Dan & Laura Alexander
Rigney Cofield
Charlotte Moore
Traudel Mosely
Debby Owen
Dorothy Redden
Jean Clemmons
Nancy Edmundson
Lynne Funck
Brandy Garnett
Moses Glidden
Doris Grier
Frank Henderson
Petra Henderson
Norma Kilby
Ken Korn
Emma Kump
Remi Lindquist
Robert Lowe
David & John Lucas
Michelle Matthias
Brady Meeks
Debi Nelson
Vincent Pawlowski
Beth Price
Tiffany Richardson
Phyllis Roan
Dayna Ryan
Shirley Scott
Dou Shizhen
Anne Sims
Ricky Skinner
Fred Turpin
Charlie VanHousen
Dawn VanHousen
Martha Zimmerman

Hicks Family
Mion Family
Wandersee/Mackenzie Families

People of Lebanon
People of Iran
Gaza
Palestinian People
Israel
Ukraine
People of Russia
Eastern Congo
People of Columbia

M Blank Salon
Chevron
Bargain Furniture
Dollar General
Citgo

Please let the church office know when you need someone added or removed from the prayer list. Unless otherwise notified, we will remove people from the list after 30 days.

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.

Sunday School: We have Sunday School for pre-school thru 5th grade which meets from 9:15-10:15 each Sunday before our morning service.

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 & plastic bags

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 & 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 the Fellowship Hall. Wear comfortable clothing and sneakers.

Save the Date

- October 26th - Chair Yoga cancelled
- October 27th - 10:15 AM-Bible Study - Church House-Study Room
- October 28th - 5:30 PM - Choir Practice
- November 14th-10:00 am-Operation Christmas Child Packing-LH
- November 15th-6:00 PM- WNN Unity Service-Living Grace Church
- November 19th-9:00 AM - WNN Care Packing
- November 19th - 5:00 - Council Meeting
- November 22nd - Annual Congregational Meeting-After worship

Wynnton Neighborhood Network needs your help for the holiday giveaways. Please bring the following food items that will serve 250 families at Thanksgiving and 250 at Christmas:

Cranberry sauce
Brownie Mix
Green Beans
Corn
Chicken broth (box or can)
Corn Bread Mix
Pumpkin Pie Mix
Stuffing
Canned Yams
Evaporated Milk
Cream of Mushroom Soup
Jelly
Macaroni and Cheese

APPRECIATION!

Wynnton Neighborhood Network Volunteer Appreciation
October 30 at 11:30 AM
St. Thomas Episcopal Church in the All Saints Hall.
No reservation needed. Come join us!



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

Ashleigh Duncan, Sexton

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music

Penny Davis, Nursery Director