

MARCH 2026

The Encounter

Monthly Newsletter of St. Matthew's Ev. Lutheran Church

A Stephen Ministry Congregation



"Proclaiming Christ Crucified"

Established 1892

Our Mission

As a Lutheran community of faith, we continue our history of proclaiming Christ crucified through Word and Sacrament in joyful service to God and our neighbor.

Our Vision

A welcoming family, encouraging lives of service to Christ.



Daylight Saving Time begins March 8th.

Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night, March 7th!

ENDOWMENT FUND



Announcing 2026 Grant Application window for St. Matthew's Endowment Fund

As you may have heard in the Temple Talks on February 7th and 8th, the Endowment Team needs your grant requests to help us spend money wisely.

For 2026, the endowment team can distribute up to \$74,484. As of February 10th, we have already approved three grant requests for time-sensitive needs:

- \$1,650 for musicians to play at our Easter services
- \$5,000 for Christkindlmarkt infrastructure
- \$2,400 for the Lenten Prayer Retreat.

This leaves a balance of \$65,434 that is still available for other grant requests. Your grant requests may be for anything that supports the ministries of SMELC and other activities serving God's will.

You can find grant request forms in the mail tray outside the Finance office, or you can get an electronic version by contacting Joan Wazybok (finance@stmatthewsch.org). The form is fairly self explanatory. Please be as specific as you can about what the requested money will be used for and the costs and details of any products or services to be purchased.

Please return your completed forms by March 31st to the Endowment Team mailbox on the McCombs stage. The team will be meeting on April 9th to consider all requests received. If you have any questions, please talk to one of your Endowment Team members: Beth Hales, Sue Miller, Alan Hunsberger, Joan Fracalossi, and Scott Mough, and also Carol Roller, Dusty Pilcher, and Pastor Sam.



Sunday, March 15th
12:30 pm in McSwain Center

CKM is hosting Trivia Time! For \$5 per person fundraiser, come enjoy a light lunch, fellowship, and fun! Sign up sheets will be out in the Narthex.



OWL's Luncheon is March 26th
at 11:30 am in McCombs Hall.

Cost is \$10 per person for beef stew, cornbread, rolls, and dessert. Be sure to sign up on the bulletin board in the Narthex.



We are so excited for our Easter Egg Hunt on April 4th at 10:00 am!

The Easter Egg Hunt will be for children and students up to 12 years old!

As we get ready for our egg hunt this year, we need your help leading up to this event!

We have curated a very detailed Amazon Wish List and have a great need for

Plastic Eggs, age appropriate prizes, snacks, and candy.

Please NO CHOCOLATE of any kind due to allergies and melting in the heat!

Please visit the link to view what we still need to put on an amazing Egg Hunt for all!

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3NEUNEWV0NQPK?ref_=wl_share

Greetings from Pastor Sam

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The entire month of March is set within the Lenten season of the liturgical year with the last day of the month on Tuesday of Holy Week. While Lent is not a Bible word, the season is definitely biblical. Lent corresponds to the forty days our Lord Jesus Christ fasted and was tested in the wilderness by Satan (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:1). Traditionally, Lent (a word meaning spring in old English) is a time of preparing candidates for Holy Baptism at the Easter Vigil and of baptismal renewal for Christ's Church. So, nearing the end of my forty-fifth year of ordained ministry and twenty-second at St. Matthew's, I have observed more than a few things worth sharing.

First, Lent is not a six-week funeral for Jesus. Sadly, that's how many Lutheran pastors treated Lent in my youth. No, every Sunday is a little Easter, and Holy Week is the time of focusing on the events leading up to our Lord's crucifixion for us and our salvation. While on Lenten Sundays we don't say or sing the "A" word, the Sundays are not meant to be gloomy. Yes, Palm Sunday and Holy Week are solemn and contemplative, but they are not gloomy. It's not a tragedy Jesus died. But our sins did kill Him!

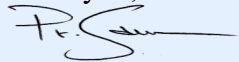
Second, the forty days of Lent (all the days other than Sundays from Ash Wednesday on) are a time of intentional repentance. I suggest you look at the one area of your life that is out of whack and ask the Holy Spirit's help to amend that area, because that area has become idolatrous, a God substitute. You may need to give up something in order to say no to Satan's attempt to destroy your life. You may need to add something(s) to better love your neighbor (near or far). For instance, if your alcohol consumption is causing you relationship, employment, or legal issues, hello, that's your God substitute. If your daily or weekly calendar has little or no time for prayer and worship, hello, something(s) is (are) that substitute. It may be you need more exercise to more faithfully love your neighbors in family, work, and church. If you are married, have children, or are single with friends, perhaps you can team together to change.

Again, this is not the stuff of New Year's resolutions, where you hope to look good by swim suit season or to get greater notice from your spouse or a person of the opposite sex. No, Lent is a time of returning to your Baptism, where you renounce Satan, his works, and his ways. And where you better confess the one true God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Lent is not about meriting God's favor or forgiveness. You will never be good enough, believing enough, or holy enough to deserve God's grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. On His Holy Cross, the Lord Jesus died your death and took the punishment you deserve for your disobedience in thought, word, and deed, by what you have done and left undone. You and I bring nothing to our heavenly Father but our sin and our death. For Jesus' sake, He claims us in Holy Baptism.

So, the things we do in Lent are first of all acts of thanks and praise for God's grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. Secondly, Lent reminds us that good works are for our neighbor. Again, our works do not save us. So, I wonder how many of you are keeping Lent when you don't have time to show up either noon or 7pm for midweek Lenten worship (both are about 30 minutes long). I wonder how many are keeping Lent when worshiping at one of the three weekend services is a rarity (I'm not talking about those whose work interferes or who are ill or shut-in.) Let me say it again, March Madness or your favorite hobby or pastime has become your God substitute if you choose those things over receiving Jesus!

And, one more thing. Do something radical and bring your Bible with you to worship!

I love you,



Pr. Sam+

Your father in Christ



The next New Member Orientation for transferring Lutherans and those in the current Adult Catechism class is Sunday, March 29th at 9:45 a.m., in McComb's Hall. New members will be welcomed on Easter Sunday, April 5th.



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Christkindmarkt News

VOLUME 9

March 2026

ISSUE 3

9th Annual

Christkindmarkt

Saturday, November 21, 2026

An Indoor & Outdoor German Christmas Market



Trivia Time with Carol

**Sunday, March 15th
after the 11:00 Service**

This is a fundraiser for CKM. **\$5.00 for light lunch, fellowship and fun!** Sign up sheets will be out in the narthex. Brush up on History, Geography, Seasonal and Biblical Knowledge.

Maybe win a prize???

CKM 2026 Leaders

- ◆ **Carol Roller**, Festival Leader and Leader of the Finance sub-team
- ◆ **Darin Pope**, Leader—Property and Setup
- ◆ **David Medlin**, Leader—Culinary Services
- ◆ **Beth Hales**, Leader—Retail Management (including Vendor Coordination)
- ◆ **Ashley Cribb**, Leader—Advertising and Communications
- ◆ **Keri Rutland**, Leader—Evangelism and Fellowship

Knickknack Nook

Help us make room for Christmas inventory by clearing out our Easter and springtime decorations. **Visit the table in the Narthex** and consider making a purchase to update the look of your table, yard, etc.

**PLEASE HOLD THOSE
RUMMAGE SALE ITEMS FOR LATER**

We'll have an announcement in the near future.
Thank You!



Church Council

At the regular Council meeting, the following was approved:

- The Continuing Resolution on Spending was amended and approved (C18.02A26).
- The Continuing Resolution for the Endowment Team was amended and approved (B3.07A26).
- A Continuing Resolution for the establishment of the St. Matthew's Lutheran Church Security Advisory Team was approved.
- Council approved an eighteen-month internship beginning in June 2026 for a Director of Christian Education that will be offered to Casey Bartholomew, a student at Concordia University Texas, and fiancé of Kristine Regalado, St. Matthew's Director of Youth and Family Ministry. The expenses incurred for the internship will be covered through a grant request to the St. Matthew's Endowment Fund.
- The process to establish a call committee began. The purpose of the call committee will be to identify a candidate for recommendation to the congregation to serve as an associate pastor. Potential call committee members were identified, and several council members were tasked to contact these individuals to determine their willingness to serve on the committee.

<u>Operating Fund: January 2026 Final</u>		
	<u>Month</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Revenues:	47,209.26	47,209.26
Expenses:	<u>107,166.32</u>	<u>107,166.32</u>
Income/ (Loss)	(59,957.06)	(59,957.06)

Grab your hat, slip on your sunnies, and get ready for the journey of a lifetime June 7th - June 12th from 6:00-8:00 pm! At **Epic Australian Adventure VBS**, kids will hop into the heart of the Outback for an unforgettable week of faith, fun, and discovery. Through interactive Bible stories, upbeat worship, hands-on crafts, and exciting games, children will learn powerful truths about God's love, protection, and purpose for their lives. Visit the VBS table in the Narthex for registration / volunteer information!



Please note that there is a \$5.00 registration fee that can be paid through our online giving portal or cash / check. If you wish to use cash, please place it in a green pew envelope and put your name and VBS Registration. If you pay by check please be sure to write VBS Registration in the memo Line.

As we begin to prepare for Vacation Bible School, we are looking for donations of cardboard boxes, both big and small, to help make fun sets for our students! Please feel free to drop these off Mondays from 10 am - 2 pm or Wednesdays from 1pm - 4 pm! We are also looking for talented individuals to help us create wonderful set pieces / decorations for the week! If you or anyone you know would like to serve, please contact Ms. Kristine!



A Stephen Minister is a lay person who has been well trained to engage in a Christ-centered relationship with someone who is going through a difficult time.

Prayer, and a commitment to honor confidentiality are strong components of this relationship.

Stephen Ministers receive support and guidance from other Stephen Ministers when they meet for supervision.

Training for Stephen Ministry doesn't start until early September, but this is a good time to start thinking about participating. If you feel a call to support someone walking through a challenging journey, please feel free to contact one of our Stephen Leaders. Make prayer part of your decision.

Ana Maria Jackson (910)599-5622, Jon Lindsay (770)356-5093, Terry Miller (910)619-3742, Pastor Zumwalt (910)791-4582.

Gifts to Honor and Remember

In Memory of Bill Baldwin, a gift to Pastor's Discretionary by Dave and Christi Everett.

In Memory of Art and Jan Magnus, a gift to Pastor's Discretionary by Jim and Karen Loftus.

In Honor of Ana Maria Jackson, Fr. Samuel David, and the Medical Personnel at Cape Fear Novant ER, a gift to Pastor's Discretionary by Carol Comeskey.



2 Brennan Swidorski
3 Kathleen Weiser
6 Doris Isaacs
7 Dianne Zenz
10 Ken Shea
10 Matt Vanderwal
11 Suzanne Asmus
11 Barbara Ervin
11 Barbara Haack

12 Linda Andron
14 Elsie Cates
14 Sandy O'Donnell
17 Ron Funke
18 Patty Hemphill
19 Carolyn Hooker
19 Ilana Baldwin
21 Gabriella Sharadin
24 Judi Funke
24 Dave Sundberg
28 Delores Irenze
30 Emily Burke
31 Joe Rumsey



2 Elizabeth & Bryce Gains
6 Alex & Chris Schwartz
7 Rick & Laura Fritz
12 Larry & Becky Knott
24 George & Belinda Taft



Please congratulate Bill Glisson, our wonderful Director of Music, who began service to our congregation in March 2004. We love you, Mr. Bill! Happy 22nd work anniversary!



Thank you to everyone who has signed up so far to supply meals for Lower Cape Fear LifeCare Hospice!
Dates are still open from July through December.

See the sign up sheet and details about meals
On the bulletin board in the Narthex.



Church Staff Contact Information

Rev. Dr. Samuel Zumwalt, Senior Pastor: szumwalt@stmatthewsch.org;

910-791-4582 ext. 101 or 910-538-6705

Deacon Robert Shivers: robert@shivers.com; 910-791-4582 ext. 102 or 910-619-9668

Rev. Michael Bergbower, Visitation Pastor: mbergbower@charter.net; 910-545-7835

Kristine Regalado, Director of Youth & Family Ministry: dyfm@stmatthewsch.org; 910-791-4582 ext. 110

Donna Capozio, Administrative Assistant: dcapozio@stmatthewsch.org; 910-791-4582 ext. 100

Joan Wazybok, Bookkeeper: finance@stmatthewsch.org; 910-791-4582 ext. 103

Bill Glisson, Director of Music & Organist: musicdirector@stmatthewsch.org; 910-791-4582 ext. 104

Betty Curtis, Choir Director: choirdirector@stmatthewsch.org; 910-791-4582 ext. 104

Teresa Hall, Handbell Director & Children's Music: treehall66@gmail.com



MEMBERS

Donna Siegmund
Kenn and Wanda Slocum
George Schwenzer
Laura and Micki Matthes
Christine Dingfelder
Fran Perry
Terry Miller
Donna Lawhorn
Ken and Jenny Manning
Butch Ruefle
Joe Mayfield
Betty LaFave
Bev Miller
Don Butzin
Steve Weidman
Frank and Marti Felter
Sally Birnstein

Ron Salow
Michael Strutt
Ed Ludacer
Carolyn Hooker
Sheila Leach
Dennis Hall
Dwight Crim
Rebecca Seip
Todd and Tracy Darnell
Killian Campos
Joe Huppmann
Brigitte Walters
Alex Schwartz
Charlotte Thompson
Patty Macino
Gabie Walters
Laurie Tobin

Nancy Westmoreland
Howard and Lani Beuerman
Bev and Alan Hunsberger
Doris Isaacs
Ron Asmus
Sondra Tullous
Tina Medlin
Beth Jarrott
Helen Knoll
Peggy Davis
Helen Stansbury
Lou Painter
Erika Braje
Connor Mough
Carol Comeskey
Devon Donaldson

FRIENDS/FAMILY OF MEMBERS

Amie Knauer
David Schwartz
Megan McKinney
Rev. Dr. William White
Tom Seip
Fred Peck
Bill Pearson
Lloyd Moore
Krista Boeger
Albert Rossetti
John Jones
Janet Nix
Scott Howl
Vic Weidman
Angie Barlow
Matthew Hall
Chuck Teigland
Gretchen Zunich
Natalie Merck
Jeremy McCollum
Jean Brooks
Frank Britton

Tim Schedler
Jill Miller
Cat Garcia Miller
Gene Przybranowski
Luke
Elena Andrades
Ruth Schucker
Amy Johnston
Mary Pat Jones
Bonnie Gaspari
Vance and Ann Alphin
Natalie Pressley
Robert Zenz
Virginia Mough
Russ Kuhn
Deisy Epley
Lisa Talmage
Paulette Myers
Lorraine Fritz
Jennifer Boandl
David Pearson
Robert and Janice Hilliard

Fiona Svastics
Pr. Joe Christina
Jerry Sundberg
Bill White
David Searle
Luke Corbin
Judy Constantino
Emily Smith
Carol Roberts
Penelope Wamboldt
Franklin Alvarez
Michele Watson
Ken Gurganus
Pr. Patrick Rooney
Evan Scott
Janet Kiley
Daniel O'Neill
Karin Yoshimura
Tom Howard
Larry Griffin
Betty Mowrey

REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS:

Elsie Cates
Jane Dove

Ruthann Getsinger
Pat Mahl

Nancy Miller
Elaine Nelson

Those Serving in March 2026

ALTAR GUILD

February 28-March 1

6:00 Beth Hales
8:30 Cathy Aleksandravicius
11:00 Karin Cook

March 7-8

6:00
8:30 Cathy Aleksandravicius
11:00 Lynette Farmer

March 14-15

6:00 Beth Hales
8:30 Karen Ruefle
11:00 Karin Cook

March 21-22

6:00
8:30 Karen Ruefle
11:00 Lynette Farmer

March 28-29

6:00
8:30 Karen Ruefle
11:00 Karin Cook

GREETERS

February 28-March 1

6:00
8:30
11:00 Greg and Donna Adams

March 7-8

6:00
8:30 Janet Hall
11:00

March 14-15

6:00
8:30 Cathy Aleksandravicius
11:00

March 21-22

6:00
8:30
11:00

March 28-29

6:00
8:30
11:00 Ana Maria Jackson

USHERS

February 28-March 1

6:00
8:30
11:00

March 7-8

6:00
8:30 Al Glaeser
11:00

March 14-15

6:00
8:30
11:00

March 21-22

6:00
8:30
11:00

March 28-29

6:00
8:30
11:00

LECTORS

February 28-March 1

6:00 Sandy O'Donnell
8:30 Sue Mowrey
11:00 Lynette Farmer

March 7-8

6:00
8:30 Sheila Whitmeyer
11:00 Frances Donaldson

March 14-15

6:00
8:30 Eric Beuerman
11:00 Bev Miller

March 21-22

6:00
8:30
11:00 AJ Hemphill

March 28-29

6:00
8:30 Todd Shaver
11:00 Patty Hemphill

ACOLYTES and CRUCIFERS

February 28-March 1

6:00
8:30
11:00

March 7-8

6:00
8:30
11:00 Joey Campos, Tom Ullring

March 14-15

6:00
8:30
11:00

March 21-22

6:00
8:30
11:00

March 28-29

6:00
8:30
11:00 Irene Glaeser

ALTAR FLOWERS

March 1

Al and Bev Hunsberger
Beth Jarrott and Donna Lawhorn

March 8

Fred and June Doll
Dianne Zenz

March 15

Dusty and Sophia Pilcher
Nancy Westmoreland

March 22

Sharon Callender
Nancy Westmoreland

March 29

James and Karen Burton
Diane Rumsey

HOSPICE MEAL

March 6 - Deanne Labriola

March 27 - Marci Crouch



Investing in our youth is investing in the future of our church.

As our youth program has started to pick back up, we've put together a wish list with items that will help create safe, fun, and faith-building spaces for our students. Thank you for partnering with us through your generosity, prayers, and encouragement.

Here is the link to the Amazon list:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2RNJTQS4GY1PT?ref_=wl_share

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
						
1 2nd Sunday in Lent 8:30 Eucharist 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Eucharist 12:30 Executive Team 4:00 MS Youth 6:00 HS Youth	2 9:00 Counting Team 12:00 Conversations 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA 7:00 Harbour Towne Band rehearsal	3 10:00 Staff Meeting 10:00 Prayer Group 5:00 Club W Volleyball 5:30 Joyful Noise 6:00 Girl Scouts 1327 6:30 Stephen Ministry	4 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 12:00 Lenten Euch. 6:00 Crossways 6:00 Handbells 7:00 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:30 Confirmation 7:30 Adult Choir	5 10:00 Crossways 10:00 Quilt Ministry 5:00 Club W Volleyball 7:00 Midtown AA	6 Hospice Meal - Deanne Labriola 6:00 Club W Volleyball	7 Daylight Saving Begins - turn clocks ahead 6:00 Eucharist
8 3rd Sunday in Lent 8:30 Eucharist (C) 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Eucharist 12:30 Grief Support 12:30 Young Adults 4:00 MS Youth 6:00 HS Youth	9 9:00 Counting Team 12:00 Conversations 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA 7:00 Harbour Towne Band rehearsal	10 10:00 Prayer Group 10:00 Faith Circle 5:00 Club W Volleyball 5:30 Girl Scouts 354	11 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 11:00 Finance Team 12:00 Lenten Euch. 6:00 Crossways 6:00 Handbells 7:00 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:30 Confirmation 7:30 Adult Choir	12 10:00 Crossways 10:00 Quilt Ministry 5:00 Club W Volleyball 6:30 Council 7:00 Midtown AA	13	14 6:00 Eucharist
15 4th Sunday in Lent 8:30 Eucharist 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Eucharist 12:30 Trivia (CKM) 4:00 MS Youth 6:00 HS Youth	16 9:00 Counting Team 12:00 Conversations 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA 7:00 Harbour Towne Band rehearsal	17 10:00 Staff Meeting 10:00 Prayer Group 5:00 Club W Volleyball 6:00 Girl Scouts 1327 6:30 Stephen Ministry	18 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 12:00 Lenten Euch. 6:00 Crossways 6:00 Handbells 7:00 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:30 Confirmation 7:30 Adult Choir	19 10:00 Crossways 10:00 Quilt Ministry 7:00 Midtown AA	20	21 6:00 Eucharist
22 5th Sunday in Lent 8:30 Eucharist (C) 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Eucharist 4:00 MS Youth 6:00 HS Youth	23 9:00 Counting Team 12:00 Conversations 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA 7:00 Harbour Towne Band rehearsal	24 10:00 Staff Meeting 10:00 Prayer Group 5:00 Club W Volleyball 5:30 Girl Scouts 354	25 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 12:00 Lenten Euch. 6:00 Crossways 6:00 Handbells 7:00 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:30 Confirmation 7:30 Adult Choir	26 10:00 Crossways 10:00 Quilt Ministry 11:30 OWL's Luncheon 5:00 Club W Volleyball 7:00 Midtown AA	27 Hospice Meal - Marci Crouch	28 6:00 Eucharist
29 Palm/Passion Sunday 8:30 Eucharist 9:45 Sunday School (NMO) 11:00 Eucharist 4:00 MS Youth 6:00 HS Youth *All classes and activities cancelled except those noted on the calendar.	30 Holy Week I 9:00 Counting Team 12:00 Eucharist 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA	31 Holy Week II 10:00 Prayer Group 12:00 Eucharist				

Upcoming Worship and Events

April 1* - Holy Week Eucharist, 12:00 pm

April 2* - Maundy Thursday, Eucharists 12:00 pm and 7:00 pm

April 3* - Good Friday, Worship 12:00 pm, Tenebrae 7:00 pm

*(*All classes and activities are cancelled during Holy Week, except for those noted on the calendar.)*

April 4 - Easter Egg Hunt, 10:00 am; Easter Vigil, Eucharist 6:00 pm

April 5 - The Resurrection of Our Lord, Sunrise Eucharist 6:30 am, Eucharist 8:30 am, Easter Brunch 9:45 am, Eucharist 11:00am

April 6 - Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm

April 8 - Eucharist and Healing Prayer, 12:00 pm

April 11-12 - Second Sunday of Easter, Eucharists 6:00 pm, 8:30 am (Contemporary) and 11:00 am

April 13 - Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm

April 15 - Eucharist and Healing Prayer, 12:00 pm

April 18-19 - Third Sunday of Easter, Eucharists 6:00 pm, 8:30 am and 11:00 am

April 20 - Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm

April 22 - Eucharist and Healing Prayer, 12:00 pm

April 25-26 - Fourth Sunday of Easter, Eucharists 6:00 pm, 8:30 am (Contemporary) and 11:00 am

*Want to give online to St. Matthew's?
Please open the QR code with your phone's camera.*

