

JULY 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.



The ordination to the holy ministry of Deacon Robert Alan Shivers is scheduled for Saturday, July 11, at 4 p.m. He was approved for ordination by the Association Council of the American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC) on June 25th during the AALC Convention. The Rev'd. Dr. Cary Larson, Presiding Pastor of the AALC, will be the preacher and ordinator. A congregational supper in McSwain Center will follow the ordination. Please sign up on the easel in the Narthex if you plan on attending the dinner so we know how many to prepare for. ***The deadline to sign-up is Sunday, July 5th. As this is a catered event, late sign-ups will not be accepted.***



As I complete my first year as Director of Choral Ministry, I find myself reflecting with gratitude on the joy of making music together in worship. It has been a blessing to work with our choir, congregation, and musicians as we lift our voices in praise each week.

One of the discoveries I've made this year is the wealth of beautiful Christmas and Easter choral music written with orchestral accompaniment. As Bill and I cleaned out the music office for its summer renovations, we have come across many orchestral scores used at the Christmas Eve and Easter services. We envision the organ and the addition of orchestral instruments, providing a heightened sense of musical offerings as they accompany the choir for the Christmas Eve 8:30pm service and provide instrumental Prelude music before the 11:00pm service.

To make this possible, however, we would need to hire additional professional musicians beyond what our regular music budget can support. For that reason, I am inviting those who feel called to support this vision to consider making a special gift designated as "Christmas Eve and Easter music". Whether large or small, each contribution will help us bring these sacred works to life and offer our congregation an even richer experience of worship during the most important seasons of the Church Year.

Thank you for your encouragement and support throughout this past year. It is a privilege to serve among you, and I look forward to all that God has in store for the music ministry of St. Matthew's in the years ahead.



Praise and Play

Families of students ages 0-5 years old join us for *Praise and Play* on Saturday, July 18th at 10am for a fun picnic out in the courtyard! We will have some food, and chalk and bubbles for the kids to play with! We cannot wait to see you there!

Family Fun Night

This month we will be hosting a movie night for Family Fun Night on Friday, July 31st. We will have food, drinks, and small activities for students to enjoy while watching the movie! Come out and join us!



Greetings from Pastor Sam

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“Change and decay in all around I see. O Thou, who changest not, abide with me” (Henry F. Lyte, LBW #272).

This year’s General Retreat of the Society of the Holy Trinity was held June 15-18 at St. Meinrad’s Archabbey in Indiana (<https://www.saintmeinrad.org/>). From my arrival by Uber from the Louisville KY airport, I sensed the Lord’s peace enveloping this place, where Christian men have lived, prayed, and worked together since the 19th century. The rolling, wooded terrain lies 8 miles off I-64 down a winding two-lane road through farm country. The Benedictine’s motto is “Ora et Labora” (Pray and Work). Through the years the brothers have produced handmade wooden caskets, liturgical vestments and paraments, and edible products like peanut butter. Today, those ordained to the priesthood serve surrounding Roman parishes, and scholars among them teach at their seminary and their lay school of theology.

I was welcomed warmly by the lay people who work there. The food was good and plentiful. Each guest room was private with its own shower, desk, single bed, and rocking chair for reading. The St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel of the seminary was a gorgeous space with a mighty pipe organ. It was a place for very beautiful singing and liturgy. One evening, I slipped away from our practicum on individual confession and went to the Archabbey Cathedral to join the 65 monks as they prayed Compline (Prayer at the Close of Day) at 7 p.m. Their other daily corporate prayers are sung at an early 5:30, 7 a.m., 10 a.m. mass, noonday, and Vespers at 5 p.m. From past experience praying with monks, I knew they sing quietly, listening closely to one another, so that their prayers rise with one voice. Compline was so quiet, which was a revelation having come not long before from the very loud Lutheran prayers of over 100 pastors.

Over meals, old friends and new renewed or made connections. We missed those, who like Pastor Carl Voges, were unable to be there due to illness or recovery. Those of my generation and older talked about all those we have known who have joined the Church Triumphant. We noted we are now the elders in our own families: our parents, siblings (in my case, all), and countless dear ones with the Lord. It was good to be praying in a community of faith founded by St. Benedict (480-547 AD). Change and decay is all around us, but the gates of hell will not prevail against Christ’s Church (not denominations).

By happy coincidence, David Rutland and I traveled on the same plane from ILM to Washington Reagan on Monday morning. On Thursday evening, David and I discovered at Charlotte Douglas that we were to fly home on the same plane until weather delays kept us in the airport all night long trying to sleep sitting up. Wearily, we boarded a 7 a.m. flight home on Friday. Shortly after, the same storms made it here.

Dear ones, none of us knows what more than the present moment will bring. This is why we gather to hear God’s Word and to be drawn again into the eternal life and love of the one true God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We receive our Lord Jesus at His altar, and He goes with us that we may do our Father’s good and gracious will in daily life and work. The Holy Spirit prays with us and for us as daily we listen carefully to God’s Word, pray the psalms quietly like those Benedictine brothers, and are filled with that hope that will not be disappointed no matter what changes and chances may come. Christ is risen!

Each week, we challenge one another to pray daily and worship weekly. Each bulletin insert points us to the daily readings for that week from the daily lectionary in the front of the Lutheran Book of Worship. Each week’s email includes a chart for praying all 150 psalms over a 30-day period. Please think on this.

Your father in Christ,



Pastor Sam Zumwalt+
Szumwalt54@gmail.com



Church Council

For the month of June, Council approved the following:

- Receipt of the June 2026 distribution from the ELCA Foundation be apportioned as follows: Seminary Scholarship Fund, 5%; Salaries Subsidy Fund, 60%; SMELC Endowment Fund, 35%.
- Continuing Resolution No. C13.10AA26 (SMELC Special Congregation Team for Call of an Associate Pastor) be retired based on the results of the special congregation meeting held 31 May 2026 that elected, on a contingency basis, Robert Allen Shivers as the Associate Pastor.
- The proposal from Cohan Contracting, LLC, in the amount of \$74,473.80 for renovations to library, music office and finance office be accepted and work to begin as soon as possible.
- The not-to-exceed amount of \$1,500 be approved for operational expenses (movement of furniture and computers) associated with the renovation project.
- Draw down \$30,000 from the line of credit to help finance the renovation project.
- The use of \$4,500 from the Contingency Fund to apply toward funding of the renovation project.
- The landscape contract with Landscapes Unlimited in the amount of \$4,483.60 funded by the SMELC Endowment Fund be approved.

<u>Operating Fund: May 2026 FINAL</u>		
	Month	YTD
Revenues:	47,978.17	256,204.40
Expenses:	<u>51,722.43</u>	<u>314,471.74</u>
Income/ (Loss)	(3,744.26)	(58,267.34)



Stephen Ministers: The After People

People often ask, “What exactly is a Stephen Minister?”. One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the *After People*. *Stephen Ministers are there:*

- ...*after* the phone call you hoped you’d never get.
- ...*after* the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life.
- ...*after* the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you’ve held at bay come crashing in on you.
- ...*after* the doctor says, “I’m sorry, but there’s nothing more we can do.”
- ...*after* the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, “Welcome to your new home.”
- ...*after* the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away - and the house suddenly seems empty.
- ...*after* the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- ...*after* the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- ...*after* you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
- ...*after* your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the “After People”. They are ready to come alongside you - or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives - and provide comfort and support for as long *after* as needed.

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Training for Stephen Ministry will begin in September. Stephen Ministers work alongside our pastor to care, encourage and provide emotional and spiritual support to people who are going through a difficult time. If you are interested or have questions, please contact one of our leaders: Ana María Jackson 910-599-5622, Jon Lindsay 770-356-5093, Terry Miller 910-619-3742, Pastor Sam Zumwalt 910-538-6705.

Gifts to Honor and Remember

In Memory of Dot Springs, a gift to Pastor's Discretionary by Val and Ted Froneberger, Roy and Laura Vaughn, Florence Pointer; a gift to the Youth Fund by Charles and Darlene Schucker.

In Memory of Margo Russell, a gift to Christkindlmarkt from Ken and Susan Maruyama, Dick and Laurel Mazziotti.

In Memory of John Tullous, a gift to the General/Operating Fund by Sondra Tullous.

In Memory of Alec Chambers, a gift to the General/Operating Fund by Sondra Tullous.

In Memory of Larry Troutman, a gift to the General/Operating Fund by Norma Troutman.

In Honor of St. Matthew's Graduates, a gift to the Youth Fund by Joe and Diane Rumsey.



Matthew Daniel Pope was received into Christ's Church by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on May 9th. He is the son of Daniel and Shannon Pope, and grandson of Darin and Karen Pope. We welcome Matthew Daniel to the body of Christ and to the St. Matthew's Church Family.

Lilliana Theresa Strutt was received into Christ's Church by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on June 14th. She is the daughter of Michael and Tammy Strutt, and granddaughter of Darin and Karen Pope. We welcome Lilliana Theresa to the body of Christ and to the St. Matthew's Church Family.



- 1 Denise Benoit
- 2 Lea Shipman
- 3 Needham Hall
- 6 Carrie McDonough
- 6 Pr. Peter Hoyer
- 10 Lois Kuppler
- 10 Nova Gregg
- 10 Thomas Weybrecht
- 11 Judy Daniels

- 17 Elsie Shaver
- 17 Christie Cribb
- 18 Isaiah Calkins
- 18 Todd Darnell
- 19 Rhonda Mough
- 19 Mike Thompson
- 19 David Blesch
- 20 Don Butzin
- 22 Devon Donaldson
- 24 Dave Davis
- 25 Clare Zumwalt
- 26 Tiffany Ward
- 27 Evan Marker
- 28 Joan Voges
- 29 Tina Occhiuzzo
- 30 Angie Woodrum



- 1 Howard and Lani Beuerman
- 2 Greg and Donna Adams
- 3 Paul and Sue Mowrey
- 12 David and Keri Rutland
- 13 Jennifer and Scott Sumner
- 16 Todd and Melissa Shaver
- 18 Alan and Beverly Hunsberger
- 19 AJ and Patty Hemphill
- 27 David and Connie Forler



Our Christian sympathy is extended to...

Harry and Tanya Puckett at the death of their son, Frank Puckett.

Betty Schedler and Marcie Schedler, and family, at the death of their husband and son, Tim Schedler.

Gina Williams and family at the death of her mother, Kathy Cherry.

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
Don Butzin
Steve Weidman
Sheila Leach
Dennis Hall
Dwight Crim
Todd and Tracy Darnell

Joe Huppmann
Brigitte Walters
Alex Schwartz
Laurie Tobin
Howard and Lani Beuerman
Tina Medlin
Beth Jarrott
Doris Isaacs
Joey, Twesa, and Eliana Ruby
Rachel Shaltanis
Alex Monroe
Rod Andrew
Grace Koder
Chris Tennant
Elsie Cates
Jon Lindsay
Lou Painter
Ruth Rice

Brent Labriola
Sally Birnstein
Frank and Marti Felter
Helen Knoll
Helen Stansbury
Karen Schmoke
Leah Sparks
Patty Macino
Karin Cook
Sondra Tullous
Dianne Zenz
Erika Braje
Ed Ludacer
Peggy Davis
Mike Burns
Janet Hall
Bev Miller

FRIENDS/FAMILY OF MEMBERS

Amie Knauer
David Schwartz
Megan McKinney
Rev. Dr. William White
Fred Peck
Bill Pearson
Albert Rossetti
John Jones
Janet Nix
Scott Howl
Vic Weidman
Angie Barlow
Matthew Hall
Chuck Teigland
Jean Brooks
Frank Britton
Jill Miller
Cat Garcia Miller
Gene Przybranowski
Luke
Ruth Schucker
Amy Johnston

Bonnie Gaspari
Vance and Ann Alphin
Natalie Pressley
Robert Zenz
Virginia Mough
Russ Kuhn
Paulette Myers
Lorraine Fritz
David Pearson
Janice Hilliard
Pr. Joe Christina
Bill White
David Searle
Luke Corbin
Judy Constantino
Emily Smith
Carol Roberts
Penelope Wamboldt
Franklin Alvarez
Michele Watson
Ken Gurganus
Rev. Patrick Rooney

Evan Scott
Janet Kiley
Daniel O'Neill
Karin Yoshimura
Tom Howard
Betty Mowrey
David Medlin, Sr.
Levi Fritz
Shirley Bartholomew
Rhonda Melton
Rafa Sanabia
Debbie Kosh
Elizabeth Kincaid
Diane Risberg
Damian Walters
Tim Ford
Katelyn Schwenzer
Jimmy Romano
Jonathon Santini
Suzanne Harrell
Kilie Styers
Carol Stacherski

REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS:

Elsie Cates
Jane Dove

Ruthann Getsinger
Pat Mahl

Nancy Miller
Elaine Nelson

Those Serving in July 2026

ALTAR GUILD

July 4-5

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

July 11-12

4:00 Beth Hales
8:30 Karen Ruefle
11:00

July 18-19

6:00 Peggy Davis
8:30 Karen Ruefle
11:00

July 25-26

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

LECTORS

July 4-5

6:00 Sandy O'Donnell
8:30
11:00 AJ Hemphill

July 11-12

4:00 Ordination Service
8:30
11:00 Bev Miller

July 18-19

6:00
8:30
11:00 Patty Hemphill

July 25-26

6:00
8:30
11:00 Lynette Farmer

USHERS

July 4-5

6:00 Dave and Diane Sundberg
8:30
11:00

July 11-12

4:00 Ordination Service
8:30
11:00

July 18-19

6:00
8:30
11:00

July 25-26

6:00
8:30
11:00

ACOLYTES and CRUCIFERS

July 4-5

6:00
8:30 Tom Ullring
11:00

July 11-12

4:00 Ordination Service
8:30
11:00 Joey Campos

July 18-19

6:00
8:30 Tom Ullring
11:00

July 25-26

6:00
8:30
11:00

GREETERS

July 4-5

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

July 11-12

4:00
8:30 Suzanne Asmus
11:00

July 18-19

6:00
8:30 Cathy Aleksandravicius
11:00

July 25-26

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

ALTAR FLOWERS

July 5

Janet and Denis Hall
Lani and Howard Beuerman

July 12

Liz Newbery
Barbara Duff

July 19

Beverly and Alan Hunsberger
Janet and Denis Hall

July 26

Barbara Duff
Dave and Connie Forler

HOSPICE MEAL

July 3 - Bob and Barbara Haack

July 24 - Joyce Crouch

Upcoming Worship and Events

August 1-2 - Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Eucharists 6:00 pm, 8:30 am and 11:00 am;

August 3 - Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm

August 5 - Eucharist and Healing Prayer, 12:00 pm

August 8-9 - Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, Eucharists 6:00 pm, 8:30 am (Contemporary) and 11:00 am

August 10 - Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm

August 12 - Eucharist and Healing Prayer, 12:00 pm

August 15-16 - Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, Eucharists 6:00 pm, 8:30 am and 11:00 am

August 17 - Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm

August 19 - Eucharist and Healing Prayer, 12:00 pm

August 22-23 - Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Eucharists 6:00 pm, 8:30 am (Contemporary) and 11:00 am

August 24 - Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm

August 26 - Eucharist and Healing Prayer, 12:00 pm

August 29-30 - Feast of John the Baptist, Rally Day, Eucharists 6:00 pm, 8:30 am and 11:00 am

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
			1 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 12:00 Healing Svc Higher Things Conf. - Youth	2 10:00 Quilt Ministry 7:00 Midtown AA Higher Things Conf. - Youth	3 Church Office closed Hospice Meal - Bob & Barbara Haack Higher Things Conf. - Youth	4 Independence Day 6:00 Eucharist
5 6th Sunday after Pentecost 8:30 Eucharist 11:00 Eucharist 12:30 Executive Team	6 9:00 Counting Team 9:00 Club W Volleyball 12:00 Conversations 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA 7:00 Harbour Towne Band rehearsal	7 9:00 Club W Volleyball 10:00 Staff Meeting 10:00 Prayer Group 5:30 Joyful Noise	8 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 Club W Volleyball 11:00 Finance Team 12:00 Healing Svc.	9 10:00 Quilt Ministry 6:30 Council 7:00 Midtown AA	10	11 4:00 Ordination Service & Eucharist; Dinner reception after
12 7th Sunday after Pentecost 8:30 Eucharist (C) 11:00 Eucharist 12:30 Grief Support	13 9:00 Counting Team 12:00 Conversations 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA 7:00 Harbour Towne Band rehearsal	14 10:00 Prayer Group	15 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 12:00 Healing Svc	16 10:00 Quilt Ministry 7:00 Midtown AA	17	18 10:00 Praise & Play (0-5 yrs) 6:00 Eucharist
19 8th Sunday after Pentecost 8:30 Eucharist 11:00 Eucharist	20 9:00 Counting Team 12:00 Conversations 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA 7:00 Harbour Towne Band rehearsal	21 10:00 Prayer Group 6:30 Stephen Ministry	22 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 12:00 Healing Svc	23 10:00 Quilt Ministry 7:00 Midtown AA	24 Hospice Meal - Joyce Crouch	25 6:00 Eucharist
26 9th Sunday after Pentecost 8:30 Eucharist (C) 11:00 Eucharist	27 9:00 Counting Team 12:00 Conversations 6:00 Evening Prayer 7:00 Midtown AA 7:00 Harbour Towne Band rehearsal	28 10:00 Prayer Group	29 8:30 Men's Breakfast Bible Study 12:00 Healing Svc	30 10:00 Quilt Ministry 7:00 Midtown AA	31 7:00 Family Fun Night	