

St. Thomas Lutheran Church Newsletter

Date: March 2026
Interim Pastor: Rev. Ozzie Herlong
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Why the Sign of the Cross?

Why do some Lutherans use the sign of the cross? Or why do some Lutherans sign themselves with the sign of the cross? Why do we do that? Roman Catholics do it, Episcopalians do it and some Lutherans do it as well. Why? The *Small Catechism* gives part of the answer. In the section on “Morning and Evening prayer”, which are instructions for parents in having evening devotions, there is a section for Morning Prayer. There it states: How the head of the house is to teach the members of the household to say morning and evening blessings.

In the morning as soon as you get out of bed, you are to make the sign of the holy cross and say: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit watch over me. Amen.

Again, in the section for Evening Prayer, it says:

“In the evening, when you go to bed, you are to make the sign of the holy cross and say: God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit watch over me. Amen.

So, there it is in the *Small Catechism*. It is there because Luther elsewhere encourages us to use the sign of the cross as a remembrance of our baptism. Most all of you have been to a baptism in the Lutheran Church. You know that the pastor signs the newly baptized with the sign of the cross, and in the “Welcome to Baptism,” the pastor says “Receive the sign of the cross, a sign of God’s endless love and mercy for you.” (ELW, p. 233) Luther’s encouragement to us was to sign ourselves with the sign of the cross as a way of remembrance, to remind us that we belong to Christ and are promised that nothing can separate us from God’s love made known in Christ (Romans 6:3-5). We get caught up in so many things in our daily life, our cares and concerns. We all need reminders who and whose we are, children of God.

Wrenley Lorena Merchant, child of Haley Wicker and Austin Merchant, will be welcomed into the body of Christ and St. Thomas congregation in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on March 15, 2026. Her baptism will be a reminder that we are baptized and have God’s own promise that we are his – forever! **In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (+). Amen**

Pastor Ozzie

CHURCH COUNCIL

President
Don Hill

Vice President
Christy Brasington

Secretary
Beth Ervin

Youth and Children's Ministry
Jeanne Lever

Christian Education
Beth Bedenbaugh

Worship and Music
Fred Falls

Property
Ricky Derrick

Evangelism and Outreach Ministry
Beth Ervin

Stewardship and Finance
Lacy Derrick

Cemetery

Christy Brasington

STAFF

Interim Pastor
Rev. Ozzie Herlong

Director of Music
Ginny Lindler

Administrative Assistant
Sharon Dickert

Sexton
Tina Dyches of
Genie in a Bucket

LEADERS

Treasurer
Jennifer Wicker

Memorial Recording Clerk
Sharon Dickert



ELCA

**Dutch Fork Cluster Lenten
Wednesday Evenings**

6:00 PM Dinner * 7:00 PM Worship

Date	Guest Pastor	Host Church
Feb. 25	Pastor Tom Cassem	St Thomas
Mar 4	Pastor Frank Anderson	Mt Olivet
Mar 11	Pastor Ozzie Herlong	St Michael
Mar 18	Pastor Michele Fischer	Mt Hermon
Mar 25	Pastor Tom Cassem	St John's

**Church Council Minutes
February 8th, 2026**

1. Opening Prayer: Don Hill
2. Check Roll: all present
3. Treasurer's Report:

The Consolidated Funds Activity Report shows that we ended the month of January with a current operating fund balance of \$67,853.92.

Current operating fund expenses during the month of January: \$28,822.85.

January receipts: \$8,194.32.

YTD income (current fund) for 2026 through the month of January: \$7,994.32.

YTD income (current fund) for 2025 through the month of January: \$11,046.23.



St. Thomas
Lutheran Church

The January 2026 consolidated activity report includes the following designated funds with totals representing at least 1% of total cash assets:

3002 Capital Improvement Fund:	\$7,817.39
3015 Undesignated Memorial Balance:	\$6,821.44
3210 Sanctuary Enhancements Fund:	\$21,299.58
3006 Music/Hymnal Fund	\$8,708.39
3004 STLC Youth Fund:	\$3,442.28
3400 Cemetery Fund:	\$3,407.07
3402 Memory Wall/Columbarium Fund:	\$4,630.67
3403 JLB Endowment Principal Balance:	\$91,674.39
3404 JLB Endowment Interest Balance:	\$27,553.94
3408 JLB Loan Balance:	\$16,910.63
5309 Parking Lot Maintenance*	\$0

*Parking lot maintenance will be funded going forward

Ron Derrick reported; additional handouts provided included: Balance Sheet of Current Assets/Consolidated Fund Activity Report, Income statement with Budget Comparison, Budget 2024-2026, and Disbursement Request Form.

4. Call Process Update:

- a) 1st step completed - Pastor Herlong has accepted our request to be St Thomas' Interim Pastor (verbally); need to fill out 'Covenant for Interim Pastor.' This form will include anything we think is important that our interim pastor is responsible for - office hours, visitation, confirmation class, etc. The form will be completed by the Executive committee, Stewardship and Finance Chair, and Pastor Herlong. Once covenant is signed and initialed by the SC Bishop, it will be official.
- b) Interim Pastor will be 50% time.

5. Committee Reports:

Stewardship & Finance (Ron Derrick/Lacy Derrick)

- a. Discussed the best way to report - currently may have too many reports so looking at consolidating as much as possible.
- b. Anyone who has questions regarding budget/money please go through Stewardship/Finance first then they will talk with Jennifer Wicker (Treasurer).
- c. JLB loan was to be funded in August from current fund but was just done.
- d. Plan to schedule monthly meeting to sit down and discuss status with Jennifer Wicker (treasurer) Don Hill (council president).

Christian Ed Committee (Beth Bedenbaugh)

- a. Waiting for Pastor Herlong to begin officially to discuss confirmation, etc.
- b. Will be looking at age groups for confirmation. Need a teacher for K-4th grade - Elizabeth Hill has been filling in.

Property (Ricky Derrick)

- a. March 28th from 9-12 noon: Planning a Spring workday with hot dog lunch.
- b. Annual service on water system was performed 2/3/26.
- c. Fire extinguisher check - Ricky to check regarding need to replace or certify them yearly.

Outreach/Evangelism (Beth Ervin)

- a. We are having a COAT DRIVE starting February - box in cry room.
- b. Shrove Tuesday/Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper: Tuesday, February 17th at 6:30pm - council to help and serve.
- c. We will have Lenten meal on February 25th - WELCA is coordinating.
- d. GAME NIGHT - We are going to defer game night during Lent .
- e. Bold Women's Sunday March 1, 2026 - women will lead the service. Pastor Jane Mitchum will be our pastor that Sunday.
- f. On March 7th we are hosting a community class for Dementia Day - it is free, but you must register.
- g. On August 2, 2026, following the church service we will have a cook-out and ice cream party to celebrate our kids returning to school.

Children's/Youth Committee (Jeanne Lever)

- a. Jeanne will be meeting with Don and Elizabeth Hill regarding planning for this year.

Worship and Music Committee (Fred Falls)

- a. On May 10th Ginny will be at Zack's graduation – will need an organist to fill in.
- b. Suggest adding worship/music training with usher training planned by Outreach. Beth will coordinate with Elizabeth Hill.

6. Old Business

- a. Time and Talent Sheets/Campaign: Time and Talents Sheet needs to be revised. The following people will speak to congregation
 - 1. 2/15 - Don Hill (Finance)
 - 2. 2/22 - Beth Bedenbaugh (Christian Ed)
 - 3. 3/1 - Ron Derrick to speak (Property)
 - 4. 3/08 - Fred Falls/Debbie Rennhack (Worship & Music/Altar Guild)

7. New Business:

- a. Christy Brasington stated that during the printing of last-month's newsletter the copier went down and Sharon had to come in an extra day- she was worried about it - Christy talked with Sharon and Don - Sharon will need to keep track of hours. How do we accommodate if she has to go above her hours? She is salaried. Don suggested she track her hours with a time sheet and let Council know – reimburse-

ment would be comp time or \$20 x number of hours (we prefer to use comp time). Debbie to send Don a copy of the time sheet they use at the District office. The church secretary is reporting to the council president at this time. (will change once we get a new Pastor)

- b. Beth Ervin reports we need to start collecting communion cards again (Pastor Hager-ty used to keep up with this). She will place them in the pews - a reminder needs to go in the bulletin/newsletter - per our church constitution all members need to com-mune at least 1 x year.
- c. Beth Ervin asked about who can take bulletins to recycle - bulletins are collecting in the cry room. Christy and Fred volunteered to handle recycles each Sunday.
- d. Annual Congregation Report - Don Hill reports this needs to be filled out. He will take lead but may need some help. Beth Ervin asked about how we are confirming membership numbers.
- e. Beth Ervin reports she would like to have an AED update for our congregation so that all members are aware of where the AED is located, who is specifically trained in CPR/AED, and how easy it is to follow the machine prompts. Beth to give some dates soon.

Meeting adjourned.

WELCA NEWS:

LENTEN MEAL: THANK YOU to all who helped with the community Lenten meal on Wednesday February 25! Thank you for making pots of soup (13!), set up tables, set up and decorate for the meal, and clean up! This wouldn't be possible without our whole congregation helping with this!

PRAYER BLANKETS: We continue to make and deliver **prayer blankets**. If you know someone who needs one, contact Beth Ervin or Elizabeth Hill.

GOLDEN AGERS' LUNCHEON: SAVE THE DATE! This will be held after church on Sunday, April 19. More information coming later.

WE CARE REMINDER: Don't forget that we continue to gather donations for We Care. Donations can be placed on the designated cart in the Narthex. A list of dona-tion suggestions can be found in the bulletin each week.

Our next meeting is Thursday 3/19/26 at 6:30 in the parish building. We would LOVE to see all the women of St. Thomas there! Come join us in our ministry!

Holy Baptism Service: *Wrenley Lorena Merchant* will be welcomed into the body of Christ and St. Thomas congregation in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on March 15, 2026. She is the child of Haley Wicker and Austin Merchant. Other sponsors and family members include Phil and Brittney Lindler, Godparents; Jason and Jennifer Wicker, grandparents; April and Finley Wix, grandparents; Ben Merchant and Melanie Fogle, grandparents; Janice Trotter, great grandparent; great granddaughter of Dianne Shealy; and great -great granddaughter of Jim and Margaret Williams.



Outreach/Evangelism Report:

- Our coat drive ended in February - the coats will be donated - Thanks to all who contributed.
- **Shrove Tuesday/Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper:** Tuesday, February 17th at 6:30pm - We had a fantastic attendance - about 60!! Thanks to our church council and their significant others for helping us cook and serve the meal. Thanks to Janice Lindler for making our King Cake Cupcakes - they were delicious!! Congratulations to Jaycee Wicker who found the baby in her King Cake cupcake! We wish her good luck and prosperity and she was the designated 'Mardi Gras Queen' for the night.
- **GAME NIGHT** - We are going to defer game night until after the Lenten season.
- On March 7th we are hosting a **community class** for **Dementia Day** - 9-12:30pm - this class will be presented by Tori Anderson with the SC Department of Aging. It will offer a comprehensive introduction to dementia types, stages, warning signs, risk factors, navigating a diagnosis, current treatments, care planning and support resources available. You will also learn practical problem-solving strategies to help support meaningful relationships through a dementia diagnosis. Brunch will be provided but registration is required. At time of this writing we have 15 signed up! Our committee will be assisting the day of the event. We have a Thrivent Action Team created and will use the \$250 toward food. Invite your friends/family to attend - contact Beth Ervin if you need assistance in registering.
- **VISITATION** for our Shut Ins: Ongoing - trying to get volunteers to help. Pastor Ozzie is onboard now and thanks to Margaret Epting for helping distribute bulletins and visiting our Shut Ins. More to come!!
- **Save The Date:** August 2, 2026 following the church service - we will have a **cookout and ice cream party** to celebrate our kids returning to school.
- Our **next meeting is April 22 at 6:30** - everyone welcome to attend

Thank you.
Beth Ervin

In Christian Service in March

Lay Readers:

- 1 Bold Woman's Sunday
- 8 Fred Falls
- 15 Beth Bedenbaugh
- 22 Debbie Rennhack
- 29 Don Hill

Greeter: Beth Bedenbaugh

Ushers: Beth & Todd Bedenbaugh

Keeper of the keys:

Beth Bedenbaugh

Altar Flowers:

- 1 Lent / No Flowers
- 8 No Flowers
- 15 No Flowers
- 22 No Flowers
- 29 (Palm Sunday) Open

Church Work Day...

Workday is scheduled for **Saturday, March 28th from 9:00 to Noon**. There are plenty of chores planned inside and on the grounds for that day. Bring your yard tools and gloves. After the work is done, we will have a Hotdog lunch.



Young at Heart will meet **Tuesday March 17th at 11:30 am** for lunch and fellowship. Menu: Fried chicken tenders, baked beans, slaw, broccoli slaw, deviled eggs, potato salad, pimento cheese, dessert

We Care is in need of non-food items so if you would like to help, please bring an item from the We Care list on page 10.

MEMORIALS

Given to the glory of God and in loving memory of:

Donnie Slice by Brenda Slice

Marge Gray by John P. Gray

Lee Wessinger by Michael, Holly & Sara E. Wessinger

Lewis Ballington by Joyce Ballington

Lila Shealy by Roger & Tricia Edwards, Jimmy & Alice Lindler





Care Center
Chapin Interfaith Outreach

Please note that we are doing the list a little differently this month as we put a focus on non-food items. These items are rarely donated but always needed, so we want to put this need in front of the community.

Non-Food Most Needed

Laundry detergent, dish soap, bar soap, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, razors/shaving cream, toothpaste/toothbrushes, hand soap, toilet paper, paper towels

FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

We will meet at Palmetto Roads on *March 12th & March 26th at 8:30 am.* All are invited to come and share in this Dutch Treat time of good food and fellowship.



- 1 Thane Martini
- Erica McCaslin
- 7 Brandon Falls
- 8 Ronald Derrick
- Brenda Slice
- 16 Gloria Freeman
- 17 John Swygert
- 24 Amanda Bickley Kimbell



- 25 Anne Orange
- Caroline Tapp
- Sara Elizabeth Wessinger
- 26 Hal Bickley
- Valerie White
- 27 Norman Monts
- 30 Norman Wilson
- 31 Margaret Epting

- 03/2001 Steven & Cindy McCaslin
- 07/1987 Ronald & Lacy Derrick
- 09/1991 Ricky & Lisa Derrick
- 31/1968 Bennie & Lib Derrick



A Record of Our Faithfulness Through 2/28/2026		Worship Attendance	
2026 Budgeted income	\$ 234,126	Date	Attendance
2026 Monthly need	\$ 19,511	*Feb 1	0
*2026 Actual income	\$ 27,080	Feb 8	57
Monthly avg income	\$ 13,540	Feb 15	59
*1st Sunday was cancelled due to inclement weather		Feb 18 Ash Wednesday	46
		Feb 22	52
		February Worship Service Average	
		Attendance	= 53
		*1st Sunday cancelled due to inclement weather	

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

If you have a name which you would like to have listed, please indicate by filling out a pew card or by calling the church office. Names will then remain on the prayer list for four weeks, unless we are notified to extend the time. Thank you.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STLC, Staff & their families • SC Synod, Bishop, Staff & their families • Zachary Lindler (prayers for his senior year at seminary) • Mary Nichols (dementia / Laurel Crest Community, West Columbia) • Joe Epting (continued kidney dialysis treatments) • Betty Koon (Harbison Shores) • Melverta Sandel (rehab at Wellmore in Lexington) • Greg Rennhack (pancreatic cancer / brother of Andy Rennhack) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Swygert (liver cancer / home healthcare) • Christopher Lindler (recovery from orthopedic surgery) • G B Slice (health issues / brother of Margaret Epting) • Bobby Kinard (health issues with kidneys / cousin of Holly Wessinger) • Family of Clay Falls (who died on November 15th) • Ethan Lindler (health issues) • Jackson Shealy (recovery at home from surgery/ grandson of Anne Shealy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family of Lila Shealy (mother of Gale Smith who died on February 8th) • O'Neal Bickley (health issues / NHC Health Care, West Columbia) • Toni Kleckley (recovery from surgeries) • Kristen Lee-Fish (Lexington ICU / friend of Janet Crump) • Melissa Derrick (upcoming kidney transplant) • Betty Koon (health issues / hospitalization) • Pam Meetze (medical testing)
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Lutheran Church

215 St. Thomas Church Road
Chapin, SC 29036

STLC Newsletter
March 2026

Forwarding Service Requested

Interim Pastor
Rev. Ozzie Herlong

Director of Music
Ginny Lindler

Administrative Assistant
Sharon Dickert

Council President
Don Hill

Council Vice President
Christy Brasington

Council Secretary
Beth Ervin

Treasurer
Jennifer Wicker

Memorial Recording Clerk
Sharon Dickert

New Church Office Hours
Tuesday - Thursday:
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Interim Pastor
Rev. Ozzie Herlong
803-360-1877

Church Phone: (803) 345-2993

Office email: sttom215@yahoo.com

Web: www.stthomaschapin.com

In Case of Emergency:
Council President
Don Hill
703-774-5341