

St. Thomas Lutheran Church Newsletter

Date: April 2026
Interim Pastor: Rev. Ozzie Herlong
Address: 215 St. Thomas Church Rd.
Chapin, SC 29036
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The Easter Candle: A Reminder

It's there in the chancel of St. Thomas. What's there? It's the Paschal Candle! It's the Easter Candle! It was lighted again on Easter Sunday. Why is it there? It's a large, decorated candle that symbolizes our Lord's glorious Easter Triumph over the darkness of death and sin. It is reminiscent of the pillar of cloud and fire that led the people of God to the promise land. Read about God's deliverance in Exodus 14: 19-20. Paschal candles have been used in worship since about the fifth century. Some are four feet tall and weigh hundreds of pounds to indicate the magnitude of Christ's Easter victory.

So, it was lighted on Easter Sunday, and it will remain in the chancel during the weeks of Easter, and it will be lighted for all worship services during the season. You will pass it or see it as you go to Holy Communion. On the Day of Pentecost, the acolyte will extinguish the paschal candle, and it will be moved and lighted for each baptism and for funerals. It is a visual connection between baptism and Easter reminding us that in our baptism we are buried and raised with Christ (Romans 6:3-5):

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For it we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We need reminders. We get caught up in the fear of a loved one getting sick, the death of family members or friends, and the unrest in the world. Amid the disruptions of our daily life, it is so easy to forget that we are baptized and have God's own promise that we are his – forever!

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



**Church Council Minutes
March 8, 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 February with a current operating fund balance of \$72,594.34

Current operating fund expenses during the month of February: \$13,439.75

February receipts: \$ 19,231.94

YTD income (current fund) for 2026 through the month of February: \$23,444.64

YTD income (current fund) for 2025 through the month of February: \$31,862.55

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



St. Thomas
Lutheran Church

3002 Capital Improvement Fund:	\$7,817.39
3015 Undesignated Memorial Balance:	\$6,971.44
3210 Sanctuary Enhancements Fund:	\$21,499.58
3006 Music/Hymnal Fund	\$8,808.39
3004 STLC Youth Fund:	\$3,442.28
3400 Cemetery Fund:	\$7,748.99
3402 Memory Wall/Columbarium Fund:	\$(4,630.67)**
3403 JLB Endowment Principal Balance:	\$91,674.39
3404 JLB Endowment Interest Balance:	\$44,518.06
3408 JLB Loan Balance:	\$16,910.63
5309 Parking Lot Maintenance*	\$33,190.00

*Parking lot maintenance will be funded going forward

** transferred to Cemetery Fund

Lacy Derrick reported; additional handouts provided included: Balance Sheet of Current Assets/Consolidated Fund Activity Report, Income statement with Budget Comparison, and Disbursement Request Form. The Consolidated Fund report balances less than 1% of total cash that falls within your committee. These funds were given as a memorial - please use them

- 4. Call Process Update:** Review Call Process 'At-A-Glance' Timeline with Pastor Herlong
- a) Pastor Ozzie reports that certain things need to be in place: Is the Constitution up to date? We can use the new 2025 Model Constitution for congregations from ELCA. Pastor Ozzie will assist with this beginning in April. Is the Child Protection Policy updated? Plan to work on this April/May. Jeanne Lever as youth rep, Elizabeth Hill, and Beth Bedenbaugh will complete.
 - b) May - Congregation Vitality Survey will be completed - what's important to our church. Model in council what we will do in September with the congregation. Rev Carter and Council will work on this together.
 - c) May - need to update covenant and goals with Pastor Herlong
 - d) June - set a date in Sept for congregation to update/approve constitution
 - e) Goal for Summer months: finish constitution, anything needing to be completed on grounds/pastor office should be finished
 - f) September: develop Ministry Site Profile and Meet with the congregation with a meal with Pastor Carter/Bishop Staff to discuss vitality survey with the congregation and compile data for profile before Call Committee is appointed. Call Committee is appointed and Service of Installation.

- g) October: Call committee with Bishop (new Bishop to be elected - we won't know who it will be)
- h) What is this process doing? Any new Pastor wants to see our updated constitution, our values, if we are sending voting members to synod, is this congregation giving to the ELCA, to mission support??
- i) Process Plan - this is it - use this chart - Pastor Ozzie suggests Don announce to the congregation each step - "This month we are going to ...". Also can place in Newsletter so congregation can see how they will be able to participate/give input
- j) We will need to check the constitution if the council appoints the Call Committee or who? (no copy of constitution available during council meeting). Can we move the Constitution update faster since it's been recently updated? We will look over and hope we are further along in order to get to the Ministry Site Profile.
- k) Beth B asks if the call committee will do the Ministry profile - or the profile team? Profile Team can be appointed per Pastor Ozzie. He will check if the Call Committee can do the Ministry profile.
- l) Call Committee - Question: Can any off-going council members be on the call committee? We will need to check the Constitution.
- m) Can September duties be moved to August to allow more time for Homecoming? We will look at the calendar and try to plan accordingly. Homecoming is the 3rd Sunday in September.
- n) Christy Brasington, Don Hill, and Fred Falls volunteered to assist the Pastor with the Constitution update - plan to start in April.
- o) Copies of the Call Process At A Glance, Congregational Vitality Project were given to all council members.

5. Committee Reports:

Stewardship & Finance (Lacy Derrick)

- a) Looking at how to do kitchen supplies - who/how to get approval using the disbursement request form. The SAM's credit card was cancelled due to fee of \$50 dollars per year.

Cemetery (Christy Brasington)

- a) Stephen Hill got approval to work on his Eagle Scout project: Scatter Garden

Christian Ed Committee (Beth Bedenbaugh)

- a) No Sunday School on 3/29 for High School/Youth - they will be having an organization meeting.
- b) No Sunday School on Easter Sunday (4/5/26) - for everyone
- c) Beth B. will be working with Pastor on 1st Communion and catechism

Property (Ricky Derrick)

- a) March 28th from 9-12 noon: Planning a Spring workday with hot dog lunch.
- b) Lock change on church doors update: the locks are ordered and shipped on
- c) 3/4/26. Installation to be scheduled with Lee Attaway with Mountain Enterprises
- d) Insurance representative did annual inspection: need to get fire extinguishers serviced - Ricky to follow up and he recommend legal advice for playground - Ron Derrick to follow up with Trey Harrel re signage that would protect the church and allow for community use.
- e) Plan to meet with Integrated Media on 3/10 to get a quote to upgrade WiFi and look at our sound system.
- f) Worship Sign was re installed on the Hilton sign
- g) Bench and posts were put back in place at the Memorial Wall
- h) Picnic Shed roof was cleaned of tree limbs debris

Outreach/Evangelism (Beth Ervin)

- a) Our coat drive ended in February - donating to Sharing God's Love this week
- b) **Shrove Tuesday/Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper:** Tuesday, February 17th at 6:30pm - We had a fantastic attendance - about 60!!
- c) On March 7th we hosted a **community class** for **Dementia Day** - 9-12:30pm - Tori Anderson with the SC Department of Aging spoke presenting Dementia 101 and Dementia 102. We had a good turnout - about 28 total.
- d) **WELCA Update:** The Angel Tree outreach provided 32 presents for 4 children this past Christmas. We hosted the Lenten Service on Feb 28 - we had 68 attendees, 13 pots of soup, sandwiches and desserts. Golden Agers date April 19th. Next meeting March 19 at 6:30pm.
- e) GAME NIGHT - We are going to defer game night during Lent .
- f) 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) Organizational meeting planned for Sunday, March 29 following worship service - any adults from church are welcome to be on this committee to grow this ministry.

Worship and Music Committee (Fred Falls)

- a) On May 10th Ginny will be at Zack's graduation – will need an organist to fill in.

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. 3/08 - Fred Falls/Debbie Rennhack (Worship & Music/Altar Guild)
 - 2. 3/15 - Don/Elizabeth Hill (Children and Youth)

b) Tracking secretary admin hours - thanks to Debbie for the time sheet - may offer comp time but will offer pay if needed. Christy asked if someone else will cover that time? Volunteer? Maybe add to time and talent sheets? Don will think about it.

c) Communion Cards - how do we need to do this? Hand out? Need to place in pews. Need to place information in the newsletter and announce why we have communion cards and per our constitution you need to commune at least 1 x year, etc. Possibly hand to the ushers? Worship and Music will handle this going forward.

d) Annual Congregation Report completed - going forward should document the information and where to find it.

7. New Business:

- a) 2026 Synod Assembly – St Thomas can send up to 3 ‘regular’ members plus 1 additional member under 30. The theme is “Created to Create”. Dates June 11-13 in Columbia. Register by May 1st.
- b) Baptism next Sunday March 15
- c) First Communion Instruction planning after Easter
- d) Catechism - planning with Pastor Ozzie
- e) Synod Assembly June 11-13 in Columbia - (see handout) - we get 3 voting members + Pastor Ozzie as synod staff. Could also have a youth member. Should try to do this - look at the budget for registration - may look at memorial money - we feel the church should cover the fees - augment it in the future. Take what is budgeted and add. We have \$600 budgeted. Announce next week and see if there are any volunteers. A council member should be part of the 3. Christy Brasington and Beth Bedenbaugh will attend.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer.

March 2026 St Thomas Church Call Process Update
(Don Hill, St Thomas Church Council President)

Recall, last November when I provided my last formal update I said a key first step would be to identify an Interim Pastor, since that individual would guide Council, the Congregation, and eventually the Call Committee in the Call Process itself.

That critical first step has been taken with the appointment of Rev Ozzie Herlong as our Interim Pastor.

Over the past month Council has worked with Pastor Herlong to get our house in order – we submitted our annual Congregational Report, identified representatives from the Congregation to attend the upcoming SC Synod Assembly this summer in Columbia, and reviewed our Church Constitution for currency. This month we've also worked with Pastor Herlong to put together a Call Process Plan. Starting in April, we will work to ensure our Church's Child Protection Policy is up-to-date. We will also establish a list of names for the Call Committee. And for those of you who have already indicated a willingness to serve on the Call Committee, we have not forgotten about you!

In May we will once again meet with Pastor Rick Carter, Assistant to the Bishop, SC Synod, to discuss the Call Process, take a Congregation Vitality Survey, and prepare for the Ministry Profile that will occur in October.

In July we will formally appoint and install the 6 members of our Call Committee. Once installed, the Call Committee will elect a chair.

Following the appointment of the Call Committee by Council (probably August) we will hold a Congregational Meeting to develop the Ministry Profile which will be used by the Call Committee to help guide their selection. Then the fun begins!

Questions? Catch me at Church or give me a call!

WELCA NEWS:

GOLDEN AGERS' LUNCHEON: This will be held after church on Sunday, April 19. Look for more information in this newsletter.

PANTRY REMINDER: We worked hard cleaning out, organizing, and labeling the kitchen pantry, so we are asking everyone to please put items back in their assigned space, so the next person can easily find the supplies and items they need. THANKS!

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 donation suggestions can be found in the bulletin each week.

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- Saturday 4/18/26 10am
(set up for Golden Agers Luncheon)
- Thursday 4/23/26 6:30 (kitchen clean up/organization)
- Wednesday 5/20/26 6:30pm
(regular meeting)

We would LOVE to see all the women of St. Thomas at our meetings! Come join us in our ministry!



RSVP - You will please write name and who will attend with you - a spouse, family member, or caregiver and your lasagna preference. You will find this sign up sheet on the Narthex table.

Name of Golden Ager attending lunch	+1 spouse/family member/caregiver?	Meat lasagna or vegetable lasagna preference-please circle
	Yes or No	Meat or Veggie

Outreach/Evangelism April

- We are providing **Easter bags** for all the children attending Easter service - thank you Gale Smith for putting these together. Happy Easter !! **He is risen, he is risen indeed - Hallelujah!!**
- The coats collected in February were donated to **Family Promise of the Midlands** - a non profit in Columbia helping families experiencing homelessness achieve sustainable independence through a network of congregations, providing shelter, meals, and intensive case management to help them find housing, jobs, and stability.
- **GAME NIGHT** - We are going to defer game night until after Easter.
- On March 7th we hosted a **community class** for **Dementia Day** - 9-12:30pm - Tori Anderson with the SC Department of Aging spoke presenting Dementia 101 and Dementia 102. It offered a comprehensive introduction to dementia types, stages, warning signs, risk factors, navigating a diagnosis, current treatments, care planning and support resources available. Katrina Shealy - former SC senator also spoke about her personal experience as a caregiver for her spouse who has Alzheimer's. We created a Thrivent Action Team for \$250 to sponsor the brunch. We had a good turnout - about 28 total. We hope to possibly sponsor another class later this year.
- Our **time and talent sheets** were collected and all names were given to all council reps for committee participation. If you have not filled out a time and talent sheet - please look in narthex on the table and give it to any council member or Beth Ervin.
- **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.
- August 2, 2026 following the church service - we will have a **cook out and ice cream party** to celebrate our kids returning to school.
- Our **next meeting is April 22 at 6:30** - anyone is welcome to attend

Thank you.
Beth Ervin



GraceWorks 2026

Lifted Up By . . .

June 28th– July 2nd

The GraceWorks Leadership Team is incredibly excited for our 13th annual GraceWorks Youth Servant Camp here in the Midlands!

Here's some key information for congregations, adult volunteers, youth, and parents.
What is GraceWorks? GraceWorks is a local servant camp for Midlands Youth who are rising 6th graders through recently graduated 12th graders. GraceWorks develops servant leaders as these youth serve various agencies around the Columbia area. Most of these agencies serve vulnerable children or adults. In addition to doing physical labor like painting, cleaning, yardwork, and organizing, youth also learn about the ministry of these agencies and often have opportunities to interact with those they are serving.

What does it cost: This year's cost will be \$50* per youth, this covers supplies, snacks, and our recreation day for all our participants.

*Cost should never be a deciding factor for any youth. If the cost is a barrier please reach out to Walt Hampton for scholarship information.

Where is GraceWorks this year? Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1301 Richland Street, Columbia, 29201. This will be our home base, most of our service experiences will involve traveling offsite via bus or by foot.

When is GraceWorks this year? This year GraceWorks begins Sunday June 28th with a meal and worship. We will gather at Ebenezer from 5:00-7:00pm to get to know each other, learn about our service agencies for the week, and worship together. Monday through Thursday, June 29th- July 2nd we will gather between 8:00 and 8:15am to start our day and will be finished and ready for pickup at 5:00pm. Your congregation youth leader will make sure you arrive and depart on time.



For more Info contact your youth leader or
www.facebook.com/GraceWorksSC

Instagram: @graceworks_sc



In Christian Service in April

Lay Readers:

- 5 Beth Ervin
- 12 Lynn Rennebaum
- 19 Jeanne Lever
- 26 Beth Bedenbaugh

Greeter: Christy Brasington

Ushers: Bill & Christy Brasington

Keeper of the keys:

Christy Brasington

Altar Flowers:

- 5 The Rennhack Family
- 12 Open
- 19 Open
- 26 Open

MEMORIALS

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

Donnie Slice by Brenda Slice

Marge Gray by John P. Gray

Lila Shealy by Mark & Roseann Laroque

Bill, Margaret, Steven Brasington by Elizabeth Sowards

Lewis Ballington by Joyce Ballington



- 1 Johanna Rennhack
- 2 Jessica Rennhack
- 3 Roger Bickley
- 6 Dennis Lindler
- 7 Tom Vacula
- 9 Jackson Derrick
Ronnie Saville
- 11 Dianne Shealy
- 12 Mary Nichols



- 12 Emory Bedenbaugh
- 14 Tyler McCartha
- 17 Gracie Derrick
- 28 Anne Shealy
Brandon McCaslin
Nell Derrick
Gracie Rennhack
- 29 Steven McCaslin
- 30 Fred Falls

- 22/1978 Harry & Gloria Freeman
- 23/1988 Richard & Helen Miller
- 30/1994 Roger & Terri Bickley
- 29/1995 Ronnie & Lisa Derrick



**A Record of Our Faithfulness
Through 3/31/2026**

2026 Budgeted income	\$ 234,126
2026 Monthly need	\$ 19,511
2026 Actual income	\$ 46,897
Monthly avg income	\$ 16,632

Worship Attendance

Date	Attendance
Mar 1	66
Mar 8	61
Mar 15	73
Mar 22	53
Mar 29	73

March Worship Service Average

Attendance = 78

**Chapin We Care
Most Needed April Items**

- Canned greens
- Jiffy mix
- Jelly/jam (plastic jars please)
- Boxed noodles
- Canned meats (beef stew, spam, etc)
- Pancakes/syrup
- Grits (instant)
- Rice (1 pound bags)
- Instant potatoes
- Pop tarts, crackers and other snacks

We also ALWAYS need toiletries, dish soap, laundry detergent & cleaning supplies!



The Young at Heart will meet on Tuesday April 21st at 11:30 am
for our fellowship luncheon. BBQ, sides, and desserts are on the menu.

Hope you'll join us!


FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

We will meet at Palmetto Roads on *April 9th & April 23rd at 8:30 am.* You are invited to come and share in this Dutch Treat time of good food and fellowship.



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) • John Swygert (liver cancer / home healthcare) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christopher Lindler (recovery from orthopedic surgery) • Family of Clay Falls (who died on November 15th) • Ethan Lindler (health issues) • Jackson Shealy (recovery at home from surgery/ grandson of Anne Shealy) • Toni Kleckley (recovery from surgeries) • Kristen Lee-Fish (Lexington ICU / friend of Janet Crump) • Melissa Derrick (upcoming kidney transplant) • Pam Meetze (medical testing) • O'Neal Bickley (rehab / Still Hopes in West Columbia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bobby Kinard (placed on hospice / cousin of Holly Wessinger) • Brenda Thomas (aunt of Holly Wessinger) • Wendall Bedenbaugh (uncle of Holly Wessinger) • Carl David Lindler (recovery from back surgery / in Mt Pleasant on April 1st) • G B Slice (increased health issues / brother of Margaret Epting) • Betty Wessinger (recovery at LMC from fall and surgery / on March 30th) <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>
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St. Thomas
Lutheran Church

215 St. Thomas Church Road
Chapin, SC 29036

STLC Newsletter
April 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