

St. Thomas Lutheran Church Newsletter

Date: May 2026
Interim Pastor: Rev. Ozzie Herlong
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Chapin, SC 29036
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Election of a Bishop

In 2026 the South Carolina (SC) Synod has entered an exciting time of celebration of ministry, past, present and future. At the Synod Assembly, voting members from congregations across the synod will gather to give thanks for the faithful leadership of Bishop Virginia Aebischer for her nearly 18 years of leadership of the SC Synod, both as bishop, 2020-2026, and as assistant to the bishop for 12 years. Since Bishop Aebischer is not seeking reelection, a new bishop will be elected during the assembly, to lead our synod into our shared future taking office on September 1, 2026.

The SC Synod is one of the oldest synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. While the synod marked its 200th anniversary in 2024, its roots extend even further back to German Lutheran settlement in South Carolina in the early eighteenth century. In 1803, these early congregations joined churches in North Carolina and Virginia to form the first Lutheran Synod in the South, before organizing separately at the SC Synod in 1824 at St. Michaels', Irmo. Its geographic boundaries have remained largely unchanged since that time, fostering long-term stability and a strong sense of shared identity, while also shaping the synod's distinctive character and patterns of life together.

The synod has a long tradition of supporting institutions and ministries on its territory and beyond, from early missionary efforts to Japan, with whom it is still a companion synod, to ministries closer to home, such as Lutheran Homes, SC Lutheran Retreat Centers, Newberry College, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Lutheridge, Lutherock, and Lutheran Services Carolinas. The synod has 137 congregations and 34,944 baptized members.

St. Thomas, having been organized in 1876 and now celebrating its 150th anniversary year in 2026, has been a vital part of this synod for three-quarters of the synod's existence. When the synod gathers June 11-13, 2026, at Brooklyn Baptist Banquet and Conference Center, West Columbia, St. Thomas will have two voting members present in the assembly. Beth Bedenbaugh and Christy Brasington, as voting members, will participate in the process of the "ecclesiastical ballot" for the new bishop as well as the other business of the synod.

The word "synod" means "walking together". St. Thomas is among the congregations of this synod "walking together" with other congregations to share God's love and grace.

In Hope and Faith,
Pastor Ozzie



St. Thomas
Lutheran Church

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



COMMUNION CARDS

As you receive communion, please fill out a communion card located in the pew rack. After signing and dating it, you may place it in the offering plate or give it to an usher.

Only one card per year is needed (although there is no harm in submitting multiple!). This record of communing, along with contributions records, helps us maintain accurate accounting of active membership at St. Thomas. Such membership is important, as it helps determine eligibility to use Church facilities, be interred in the St Thomas Church cemetery, and vote on matters affecting the life and decisions of our church.



Church Council Minutes April 12, 2026

1. **Opening Prayer:** Pastor Ozzie
2. **Check Roll:** all present
3. **Treasurer's Report:**

The Consolidated Funds Activity Report shows that we ended the month of March with a current operating fund balance of \$74,393.27

Current operating fund expenses during the month of March: \$19,300.19

March receipts: \$ 23,581.79

YTD income (current fund) for 2026 through the month of March: \$43, 919.13

YTD income (current fund) for 2025 through the month of March: \$65,934.87

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

3002 Capital Improvement Fund:	\$6,158.53
3015 Undesignated Memorial Balance:	\$7,641.44
3210 Sanctuary Enhancements Fund:	\$19,940.72
3006 Music/Hymnal Fund	\$8,808.39
3004 STLC Youth Fund:	\$3,442.28
3400 Cemetery Fund:	\$9,656.49
3403 JLB Endowment Principal Balance:	\$91,674.39
3404 JLB Endowment Interest Balance:	\$44,418.06
3408 JLB Loan Balance:	\$16,910.63
5309 Parking Lot Maintenance*	\$3,310.00*

*Please note there was a typo for this line-item reporting for February

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:

- a. Don spoke with Pastor Ozzie regarding would it be possible to accelerate call process? Pastor Ozzie says it can begin in July (this is changed from October time frame. See updated timeline given by Pastor Ozzie.
- b. Need to identify call committee this month
- c. Pastor Ozzie reviewed constitution - it was updated by the 2022 model - this constitution is satisfactory. We can do a 2025 update later (requires a congregational meeting - September/October is already a busy time with our Church Homecoming/150th year celebration).
- d. Child Protection Policy: Pastor Ozzie recommends looking at what we have and compare to the policy Pastor emailed. Beth B reports that we need to be better about implementing the plan. Beth B will lead the policy review with Jeanne Lever and Elizabeth Hill.
- e. Vitality Project Meeting is scheduled for May 12 at 6pm with Pastor Rick Carter - Don will confirm if it is a Zoom meeting or in person at church.

5. Committee Reports:

Stewardship & Finance (Lacy Derrick)

- a) See handout
- b) Lacy reported we are \$14, 613.81 under giving compared to 2025, averaging about \$2000 per Sunday. We may need to give a friendly reminder to the congregation regarding giving. Don will write up an announcement with Lacy and Ron assistance.

Cemetery (Christy Brasington)

- a) Scouts met to clean out old gazebo to build a new scatter garden for Stephen Hill's Eagle Project. Project ongoing.

Christian Ed Committee (Beth Bedenbaugh)

- a) Confirmation: Pastor Ozzie talking to different youth - he would like to complete first Communion class first before starting confirmation - First Communion class will be after church and meet for 30 min - date TBD.
- b) VBS - Beth to contact Pastor at Bethel to see if we will participate together this summer
- c) See attached report for more details

Property (Ricky Derrick)

- a) Pinnacle Fire quote is recommended to replace new fire extinguishers - council agrees
- b) See attached report for more details

Outreach/Evangelism (Beth Ervin)

- a) Golden Agers Luncheon next Sunday
- b) Suggest having outside service at Picnic Shelter while weather is nice - maybe a couple of times
- c) See attached report for more details

Children's/Youth Committee (Jeanne Lever)

- a) Discussed Camp Lutheridge camp prices: \$775 (tier 1) to \$1000 (tier 3) for camp - Don suggests that the Youth budget cover half of camp cost for Michael Lindler who requested help to cover cost of summer camp at the beginning of council meeting.
- b) Can also use funds budgeted for Retreats/Conventions (~\$600) to help pay for cost of camp
- c) Beth E suggest we may want to see if other youth is interested
- d) Don and Elizabeth to talk to Brittney re: camp
- e) See attached report for more details

Worship and Music Committee (Fred Falls)

- a) We should acknowledge graduates - discussion regarding this in New Business
- b) March 22 meeting to review bulletins, etc
- c) Need to remind lay readers prior to Sunday - text from Sharon was suggested
- d) Beth E gave a copy of Usher training to Fred - will also email digital copy - Fred suggests maybe May will have training? Another copy was given to Don and Beth E will place a copy in narthex for ushers to refer to.

6. Old Business

- a) Communion Cards - information regarding using communion cards needs to be in the newsletter and bulletin. Christy received 2 cards so far as usher. Don will create an announcement. Will have Sharon add it to the communion process blip in the bulletin. Also need to add to the newsletter - maybe include a few months in the newsletter to give everyone a chance to read it. Have the communion cards been ordered? Start with 200 - Fred to follow up. Christy B asked "Who will check/track?" Ongoing.
- b) 2026 Synod Assembly- Beth B and Christy B will go - they have offered to pay their fees - Don still offered that the church can reimburse the fees.

7. New Business:

- a) Michael Lindler asked the church council if church will help pay for Camp Lutheridge. Council asked for additional details and agreed to look at ways to offset costs.
- b) **High School/College/Seminary Graduates Recognition:** WELCA has recognized high school graduates in the past. This year we have a seminary graduate - Pastor Ozzie stated it is an honor and commendation for this congregation to raise up a seminary graduate. Typically a stole or cross is gifted to the graduate - Zachary may have a specific request. A presentation will be planned. Beth B suggested a stole - graduation may be May 8 or 10th - Beth/Fred will contact Ginny. For college graduates - we will ask families to let us know - we will send a card from St. Thomas and recognize them in the newsletter (include info college/date/major) and/or bulletin. Sharon can ask for information via the bulletin/newsletter and send out an email to ask for this information so that we do not miss anyone. Don suggests High School Graduate gifts/recognition will shift to the Children/Youth Committee.
- c) **Membership Audit/Update:** Don reports when filling out the membership report - he gathered numbers from Pastor Hagerty. He asked Sharon to look for a membership list/book. We need to confirm our membership per our constitution. We will contact those who have not attended/given money/communed and let them know what the requirements are for membership. Christy, Debbie, Don - will join together to help look at membership rolls. This also impacts the cemetery. Ongoing.
- d) **Call Committee:** We asked for volunteers last fall - how does this process work? The council should have an impact on choosing the call committee. You need 6 voting members - it does not say if they need to be on council. Don has 10 volunteers. Pastor Ozzie suggests we establish principles: Example: 1-2 council members, equal men vs women, newer member vs lifelong member, and possibly a youth member. Question: if you are on council can you be on the call committee? Pastor Ozzie to check with Pastor Rick Carter. Don listed names of volunteers. Pastor Ozzie reported from the constitution: "C1304" just asks for 6 voting members for Call Committee - no other specific requirements. Don is asking that we look over the list of names and add others you think we should consider.

TLC Council Report Children & Youth Committee April 12, 2026

1. On Sunday, March 29th we had a meeting to identify committee members. They include: Elizabeth Hill, Don Hill, Jeanne Lever, Beth Ervin, Jennifer Wicker, and Brittney Lindler.
2. We decided that Children's Ministry would be K-6th grade and Youth Ministry would be 7th - 12th grade.
3. Child Protection Policy will be updated by a sub-committee made up of: Elizabeth Hill, Beth Bedenbaugh, Jeanne Lever, Beth Ervin, and Brittney Lindler.
4. Our designated youth fund can be used to offer scholarships to children/youth who want to go to Lutheridge summer camp.
5. Grace Works service camp in Columbia, SC is June 28-July 3 (6th-12th graders).
6. Next Committee meeting will be Sunday, April 26 after church.

Property Committee

- a. Lock Change on Church Doors Update- Lee Attaway (Mountaintop Enterprises)
 - The locks have been received. Scheduling a date for the third week of April to install. The Property Committee will have a key assignment log set up after Church for those who need keys.
- b. Church Workday was a success. See the list of workday items with the highlighted items complete. A big thank you to all who participated and special thanks to Stephen Hill and the boy scouts who participated.
- c. Our insurance representative did their annual inspection 3/5. Items noted:
 1. We should get the fire extinguishers serviced. Ricky will follow up with a company he knows.
 2. Recommended legal advice regarding the playground. He said the playground is not required to be insured, but suggest we add a sign for member use only. Ron is to discuss with Trey Harrel and bout signage that would protect the church and allow for community use. **Both items are being worked.**
- d. Integrated Media is to install the WIFI system on 4/9 and make the transition from Spectrum to Carolina Connect. Once complete, Spectrum's service needs to be cancelled. They will also run a diagnostic on the sound system and make a recommendation to include bringing sound to the fellowship hall.
- e. Carolina Connect Installed the new connection and modem on 4/1. **Network STTOM215. Password – STLC1876***
- f. Bickley Cooling repaired a freon leak in the Church sanctuary HVAC on 4/4.

Christian Education Council Notes 4/12/26

1. Current curriculum and teachers

- **Britney/Jennifer:** Nursery
 - **We still need a teacher here (w/ Elizabeth Hill filling in for now):** Sparks (Wicker/Lindler twins)
 - **Open:** Here We Stand (confirmation)/ 5-8? (not being held right now) Pastor Herlong?
 - **Beth B.:** ELCA Faith Lens (based on the lessons each week)/ 8-12 (Hill/White children -haven't met since 3/7 for various reasons/will start back next Sunday 4/19)
 - **Fred/Phillip:** First and Second Lessons of the day / Adults
2. **Committee will meet** before next council meeting to discuss when SS will stop for the summer.
3. **VBS?**

Outreach/Evangelism April 2026:

- We provided **Easter bags** for all the children attending Easter service and gave everyone a miniature Jesus Easter Sunday.
- 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.
- Our **time and talent sheets** were collected and all names were given to all council reps for committee participation.
- Trying to update the TV screen **in narthex** - needing an updated laptop - Beth E willing to donate a Chromebook if I can find the charge cord - will order a new one if needed.
- **VISITATION** for our Shut Ins: Ongoing
- August 9, 2026 - Back to School Party/Cookout
- **WELCA update:**
 - ◇ Kitchen clean up planned for 4/23/26
 - ◇ State Convention June 19-20, 2026
 - ◇ Heartland Conference will be planning convention - mtg 4/12/26
 - ◇ Golden Agers Luncheon - Italian theme - April 19, 2026 following service
- **Our next meeting is April 22 at 6:30**

WELCA NEWS:

GOLDEN AGERS' LUNCHEON: This was held after church on Sunday, April 19. Thank you to those who attended. A special thank you to Beth Ervin who organized and lead this special event. The theme was "Italian Night." Thank you also to those who provided lasagna, tiramisu, salad, bread, and drinks and to those who helped set up, serve, and clean up. The food was delicious! The game "Which Came First" was played, and attendees had their pictures made in Italy!

KITCHEN ORGANIZING AND CLEAN UP: Thank you to those who were able to help clean up and organize the fellowship hall kitchen on Thursday, April 23. We were able to do part of the kitchen. We will meet again soon to continue this effort.

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 MEETING: 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!**

COMING SOON

Vacation Bible School/VBS (children and adult)

Bethel Lutheran - White Rock

July 19-23 (Sun -Thurs)

5:45 - 8:00 PM

The last night is more of a celebration night.

The next planning meeting will be **Thursday, May 7th at 1:00 at Bethel.** ANYONE interested in helping in the planning please come! If you can't come at this time and/or date, and would like to help with this year's VBS, let Beth Bedenbaugh know.

Outreach/Evangelism

- **Game Night Kickoff** has been rescheduled for **Friday, May 15th at 6:30pm** in the Parish Building. We have a **sign-up sheet in the narthex** - please sign up if you plan to join us. We are providing pizza, drinks, and dessert. Also bring a game of choice - we will divide into groups once everyone arrives - families welcome - this will be a time to socialize, play some games and help plan future game nights. Everyone is welcome!!
- **VISITATION** for our Shut Ins: We are coordinating with Pastor Ozzie and planning to help visit. Don't worry, we will call first!
- **Event set up/take down team** - we have volunteers from our Time and Talent Sheets who will assist with planned church events - please contact them well ahead of an event to plan for appropriate table arrangement/chairs needed.
 - ◇ Ricky Waites
 - ◇ Christy Brasington
 - ◇ Ron and Lacy Derrick
 - ◇ Jeanne Lever
 - ◇ Fred Falls
 - ◇ Don Hill
 - ◇ Rick Rennebaum
- **Hospitality Teams:** We have volunteers who will provide after service beverages/snacks starting in May - this is a work in progress and may not happen every Sunday but we are excited to offer this again for fellowship with each other and visitors.
- **Instant Church Directory** - just a reminder we can access our congregation address/phone/pictures via this app. Please contact Beth Ervin or Christy Brasington with questions.
- **Save The Date:** August 9, 2026 following the church service - we will have a **cookout and ice cream party** to celebrate our kids returning to school.
- **Save The Date:** Movie Night - October 9th at Picnic Shelter
- **Our next meeting is July 30 at 6:30** - everyone welcome to attend

Thank you.

O&E Committee (Beth Ervin, Christy Brasington, Debbie Rennhack, Lisa Derrick, Susan Waites, Jessica Ervin)







UPCOMING

CHILDREN & YOUTH EVENTS

31 MAY	PIZZA AT BELLACINO'S AND BOWLING AT ANCHOR LANES After church for Children & Youth
28 JUNE	GRACEWORKS June 28 th to July 2 nd (6 th -12 th graders)
19 JULY	VBS AT BETHEL LUTHERAN July 19 - 23, 5:45 - 8:00 PM
25 JULY	CHRISTMAS IN JULY CRAFT TIME Snacks and crafts in the fellowship hall



 <h3 style="margin: 0;">Graduation Recognition</h3> <p>If you or a member of your family will be graduating this year from high school or college, please notify the church office. Include the graduates' name, school, degree, future plans and other details you would like shared. We want to be sure no one is missed as we honor this special milestone!</p>	 <h3 style="margin: 0;">GraceWorks 2026</h3> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Lifted Up By . . .</i></p> <p style="margin: 0;">June 28th - July 2nd</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <p style="font-size: small;">For more info contact your youth leader or www.facebook.com/GraceWorksSC</p>  </div> <p style="margin: 0;">Instagram: @graceworks_sc</p>	

In Christian Service in May

Lay Readers:

- 3 Don Hill
- 10 Beth Ervin
- 17 Philip Lindler
- 24 Jeanne Lever

Greeter: Deb Morell

Usher: Deb Morell

Keeper of the keys:

Don Hill

Altar Flowers:

- 3 Open
- 10 The Ervin's
- 17 Mike & Kerry Lindler
- 24 Open
- 31 Ron & Lacy Derrick

MEMORIALS

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

Donnie Slice by Brenda Slice

Marge Gray by John P. Gray

G.B. Slice by John & Judy Swygert, Roger & Trish Edwards, Sharon Dickert

James & Edith Wessinger by Elizabeth Tapp



- 3 Claire Harvey
- Mary Vacula
- 4 Heyward Bickley
- 9 Jessica Ervin
- 10 Vic Englert
- 15 Victoria Shuler



- 18 Weston Bickley
- 27 Robert Cullum
- 28 Rick Rennebaum
- Cindy Woodham
- 30 Robin Shuler
- 31 Haley Wicker

- 4/1985 Rick & Lynn Rennebaum
- 21/1993 Tim & Molly Slice
- 22/1955 Bill & Melverta Sandel
- 26/1989 Ken & Cissy Comalander
- 26/2012 Chris & Nickie Powell
- 27/1955 Jim & Margaret Williams



**A Record of Our Faithfulness
Through 4/30/2026**

2026 Budgeted income	\$ 234,126
2026 Monthly need	\$ 19,511
2026 Actual income	\$ 46,897
Monthly avg income	\$ 15,915

Worship Attendance

Date	Attendance
Apr 5 (Easter/Holy Week)	170
Apr 12	58
Apr 19	62
Apr 26	56
Total	346

March Worship Service Average

Attendance = 87

May Food Pantry Needs

- Vienna sausages
- Jiffy mix
- Ramen noodles soup
- Grits
- Rice (1 lb bag)
- Soup (large can)
- Canned salmon
- Chili / chili beans
- Baked beans / pork 'n beans
- Canned peas
- Non-food items such as paper products, dish soap, laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, shaving cream, etc.



Thank you so very much for your generous support!



The **Young at Heart** will meet on **Tuesday May 19th at 11:30 am**

for our fellowship luncheon. Menu...TBD please watch the bulletin for more info. Hope you'll join us!

FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

We will meet at Palmetto Roads on **May 14th & May 28th at 8:30 am**. You are invited to come and share in this Dutch Treat time of good food and fellowship.



Game Night Kickoff

Join us on **Friday, May 15th at 6:30 pm** in the Parish Hall for a great time! We are providing pizza, drinks, and dessert. Also bring a game of choice - we will divide into groups once everyone arrives - families welcome - this will be a time to socialize, play some games and help plan future game nights. Everyone is welcome!! **A sign-up sheet is in the narthex** - please sign up if you plan to join us.

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"> • Christopher Lindler (recovery from orthopedic surgery) • Ethan Lindler (health issues) • Jackson Shealy (recovery at home from surgery/ grandson of Anne Shealy) • Toni Kleckley (recovery from surgeries) • Melissa Derrick (upcoming kidney transplant) • Pam Meetze (medical testing) • O'Neal Bickley (rehab / Still Hopes in West Columbia) • Brenda Thomas (aunt of Holly Wessinger) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wendell Bedenbaugh (uncle of Holly Wessinger) • Kristen Lee-Fish (transferred to rehab facility for young stroke victims / friend of Janet Crump) • Carl David Lindler (recovery from back surgery / in Mt Pleasant on April 1st) • Betty Wessinger (continued recovery at home) • Morgan Ward (cousin of Holly Wessinger) • Family of John Carroll Swygert (who died on April 28th) <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 60px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"></div>
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We extend our deepest condolences to Holly Wessinger on the death of her cousin, Bobby Kinard, who died on April 2nd.

We extend our deepest condolences to Judy, and the family and friends of John Carroll Swygert who died on April 28th.



St. Thomas
Lutheran Church

215 St. Thomas Church Road
Chapin, SC 29036

STLC Newsletter
May 2026

Forwarding Service Requested

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Council President
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Council Vice President
Christy Brasington

Council Secretary
Beth Ervin

Treasurer
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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