

MARTIN LUTHER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

LUTHER LINES

JAMES ISLAND, SC 29412

JANUARY 2026



January—WatchWord of the Month is HOPE



MLLC's Mission Statement

We are a caring family of God brought together by grace and nourished by the Word.

Led by the Spirit, we are sent out in service to share God's love.

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My Dear Children of God,
As I write on this late Christmas evening,
my heart is still full from our beautiful
Christmas Eve service. What a joy it was
to worship with you and visiting family,

local visitors, and even a family from Ohio. The sanctuary glowed
with candlelight, music filled the air, and God's presence was
unmistakable.

It's hard to believe we have now shared two Advent seasons and
two Christmas Eve services together. This past year has been a
blessing, and I am deeply grateful for each of you and for the
ministry we continue to share. Thank you for your faithfulness,
your kindness, and the trust you place in me as your interim
pastor.

I want you to hear my heart clearly: I am with you until God says
it is time to go. Until then, I remain committed to serving
faithfully, shepherding with care, and trusting God's guidance in
this season of waiting. I believe God is preparing the perfect
pastor for Martin Luther, and I invite you to join me in praying for
that person even now.

Scripture reminds us, "The Lord is my shepherd... He restorest
my soul." As we follow Christ's leading, we can trust that all true
direction comes from God. My calling, as 1 Peter says, is to "tend
the flock of God... willingly and eagerly," and I hold that calling
close.

As we move into a new year, may we stay grounded in prayer,
rooted in Scripture, and intentional in loving one another well. I
am grateful for what God has done, encouraged by what Christ is
doing now, and hopeful for what the Holy Spirit is preparing for
us.

Blessings and peace,
See you Sunday!
Pastor Kathleen

Dear friends,

Thank you so much for bringing joy to this beautiful Christmas season at Martin Luther Church! Our worship together has been Christ centered and Hope filled! Your participation in worship is the key element to our song of praise. Whether in the choir, ringing bells, or lifting your voice from the pew...

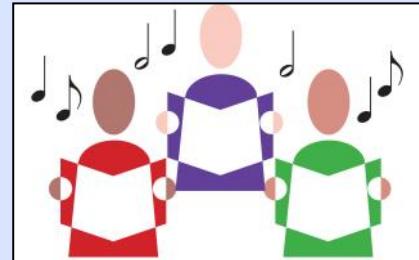
It takes the whole village (congregation) to praise our awesome God!

Thank you also for the many acts of kindness you have shared with me personally! I cherish you all and have great *hope* (confidence!) that God is leading us to His will for this church.

May 2026 bring you great joy, peace and love as we are assured by the *hope* that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

Blessings!

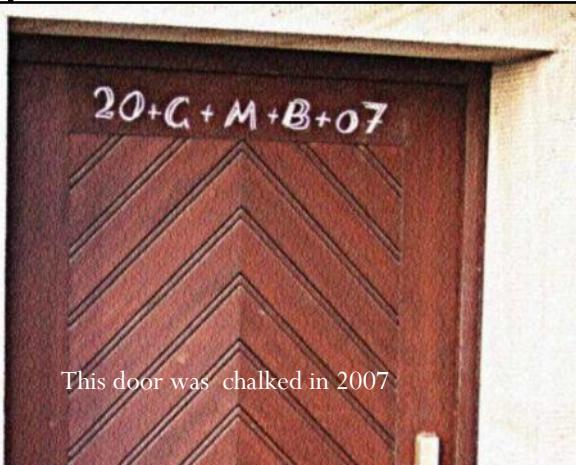
Gina



Jeremiah 29:11

FOR SURELY I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU, SAYS THE LORD, PLANS FOR YOUR WELFARE AND NOT FOR HARM, TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE WITH HOPE.

Chalking the Door for Epiphany



CHALK + BLESS YOUR HOME

FOR EPIPHANY - JANUARY 6

This Epiphany tradition is a way of blessing all who enter, exit, and dwell in your home or church.

You simply write the number of the new year and the letters C, M, and B in chalk on the door or doorframe. The letters stand for the three traditional names of the Magi in Matthew 2: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.

The letters can also be a Latin acronym for “May Christ bless this dwelling.”

CHALKING THE DOORS LITURGY FOR HOMES

Leader: Peace be to this home, and to all who enter here. All: Amen.

One or more of the following prayers may be said: May all who come to our home this year rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is your incarnate Word, now and forever. Amen.

God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only-begotten One to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this home and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

Loving God, bless this household. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness, and abiding in your will. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

All may take turns chalking the door: 20 + C + M + B + 26 .

The three Wise Men, Caspar [C], Melchior [M], and Balthasar [B], followed the star to Bethlehem and the child Jesus 2000 [20] and 26 [26] years ago. [+ +]

May Christ bless our home [+ +], and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

All say the Lord’s Prayer .

From buildfaith.org/chalking-the-door/; prayers by Bosco Peters.

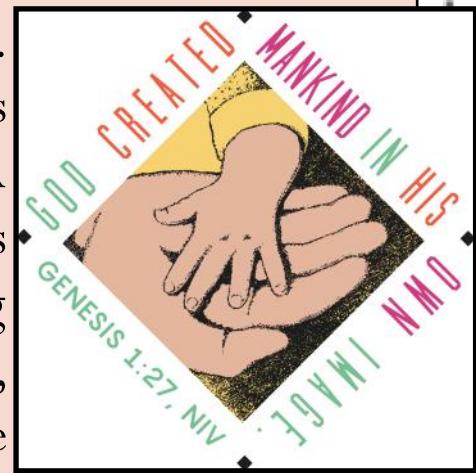
Shared from the SC Synod ELCA E-News.

God in the Movies

Really? On TV I saw how Jesus became God. Look for all those unbelievers in Genesis 1:26. It says, "Let **US** make man in **OUR** image". You don't have to be a Rhodes Scholar to know who they were—talking about Jesus that's who. We know you, me, and everyone in between us believers. By the way, in the Holy Bible it also states "And the Word was among us". In Genesis 3:22 God said, "The many has now become like one of us". Jesus said, "You believe in God, believe in me also". You know, by the time you read this article it will be 2026. My God, where has the time gone? That's right, New Years a time to celebrate. Go ahead, you deserve it for making it this far. My grandfather used to say "Happy For New Year Me Too". You know how those old timers were. No—wait—I'm one of them. Where has all the time gone? Speaking about time, it's that time "Happy New Year Everyone" and I sure do wish it's a good one.

January has another holiday. January 19th is Martin Luther King day! Also, on the 19th, another one you'll like—it's National Popcorn day. Go take you honey to a movie. Congratulations to every one who made it this far. This year is going to be a good one. Maybe if we're lucky, we might meet Jesus in Paradise—Our Forever Home.

- By Bill Mariorenzi





THANK YOU very much for your generous Christmas gift. I am truly grateful for your kindness and thoughtfulness, and I appreciate your generosity more than words can express.

I am deeply thankful for your prayers, encouragement, and support throughout this past year. It is a blessing to serve as your pastor, and I am humbled by your care and generosity. Your gift is received not only as financial support, but as a sign of your love for the Church and its ministry.

Please know that you are remembered in my prayers. May the Lord bless you abundantly, and may the peace and joy of Christ fill your hearts this Christmas season and throughout the coming year.

Blessings & Peace,
Pastor Kathleen

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With deep gratitude, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks for the generous Christmas gift. Your kindness and thoughtfulness continually amaze me and fill me with appreciation.

THREE DECADES OF BLESSINGS

As I reflect on my time here, I am filled with thankfulness for the 30 years + that I have been privileged to serve at Martin Luther Church. Throughout these decades, we have journeyed together through seasons of loss as well as countless blessings. Every experience, whether joyful or challenging, is cherished and has shaped the fabric of our community. I hold all these moments close to my heart.

A GENEROUS AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

This church exemplifies generosity in so many ways. Our congregation consistently rises to meet any challenge, whether it is extending a helping hand to our neighbors or uplifting one another with encouragement. The spirit of giving and mutual support within our church family never ceases to inspire me.

With the most love, Sherry

On a recent Sunday afternoon, I had the privilege to visit with and take communion to two lovely ladies. Both have issues which keeps them from attending church but both miss it very much. Both really love Martin Luther Lutheran Church. Although they were very excited to have communion brought to them, it was I who was blessed. Both Andy and I felt God's presence. We truly believe he sent us to do his work.

I urge you to accept God's presence in your life and listen for his call to you.

God's Peace to you,

Barbara Young

MARTIN LUTHER CHURCH IS THE CRACKERS AND PANCAKE MIX CHURCH



FOR JAMES ISLAND OUTREACH

A Quick View of our November 2025 Finances

Budget: \$15,794.17

(Expenses: \$17,016.85)

Offerings: \$ 14,580.45

Difference: (-\$ 1,213.72)

In case you did not know—Sherry Fowler, our Director of Congregational Ministries, is also a **Notary Public**.

If you need documents notarized, please call Sherry either at the church office (843 795-4855) or on her cell phone (843 442-3593). There is no charge for this service.

Martin Luther Church is gladly accepting online contributions through [Tithe.ly.com](https://tithe.ly.com).

Anyone can access this new App through the MLLC website. Just go to the green Giving Option Button on the opening page! If you need some assistance, please give Sherry a call in the church office! Now you can give, even when you are out of town!!! Tell your friends and family that they can give to MLLC online!!!

RESPITE CARE CHARLESTON

Upcoming Respite Care Charleston Support Group Meetings at MLLC

10 AM — Tuesday Morning Respite Group

6:30 PM— Tuesday Caregiver Support Group Online

10 AM—Wednesday Caregiver Support Group 2nd and 4th Wednesday

10 AM—Wednesday Early Memory Loss Group

10 AM—Friday Morning Respite Group

If you know of anyone who might benefit from any of these groups, please invite them to join us!

*Sara Perry
Executive Director RCC
843 647-7405*

2026 WATCHWORD

Of the Month

January—Hope

February—Love

March—Peace

April—Life

May—Grace

June—Joy

July—Freedom

August—Returning

September—Rest

October—Mercy

November—Giving / Serving

December—Seeing

We hope that everyone is aware of our Watchword of the Month, we invite you to be mindful of this ongoing emphasis throughout the month.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

As part of our focus, we encourage all members to actively observe and recognize instances where the Watchword is demonstrated. Please be prepared to share your observations, or “sightings,” of the Watchword each month. Your contributions will help us collectively reinforce the theme and ensure its presence is felt within our community.

MARTIN LUTHER LUTHERAN CHURCH

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

December 7, 2025

The annual congregational meeting was called to order by Council President Ada Arthur.

REPORTS:

- Ada Arthur gave an update on the call process for a new pastor. One of the requirements by Synod is that a 100-page document, must be completed by both membership and clergy before a call committee can be formed. The entire process from our present status, to forming a call committee and then Synod supplying us with the names of possible candidates could take up to three years. Ada asked that we continue to pray for MLLC during this period.
- A survey will be sent to all members after the first of the year. The purpose of the survey is to profile what MLLC is looking for in a pastor.
- Synod will meet in January 2026, for a council training day. Synod has asked MLLC to host this event and other area churches will be invited.
- Ada Arthur reported that she had contacted Post Partum, regarding the possibility of donating some money towards the use of MLLC facility. Following discussion and questions from the congregation, it was decided that council will continue to look into this matter, as there has been no resolution at the time of this meeting

BUDGET:

The main purpose of this meeting was to vote of the proposed 2026 budget.

Treasurer Brandt Armstrong and Peggy Oxendine have worked very hard to streamline next year's budget. Brandt went over the budget and explained where and why there are changes from the 2025 budget. Following this explanation, a motion by Sherry Fowler was made to accept the proposed budget. The motion was seconded by Wayne Rimer and the floor was open for discussion. Following discussion, there was a call for the vote.

The motion to accept the 2026 budget as proposed by council, was passed by a unanimous vote.

Pastor Kathleen Miko gave a blessing for our brunch and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Leone

Linda Leone

MLLC Council Secretary

PRAYERS



Our Church Family

Joyce Guffin
 Andy Young
 Connie Baker
 Carl and Judy Simmons
 Caitlin Donaldson
 Polly Sutton
 Mary Baldwin
 Brenda Burke
 Margaret Balzano
 Claire Diffenderfer
 Myrl Kluge
 Joe and Linda Sproles
 Stephen Harmon

The Disciples and Leaders of Martin Luther Church

Our friends and family

Nancy Holden
 Amy Guffin
 Harold McMillan
 Evan McMillan
 Ariel Howcroft
 Georgie Mae Follin
 Alyssa Baker
 Judy Gilford
 Autumn Young
 Connie Wurster
 Chieko Jordan
 Fran Lingenfelter
 Trey Crayton
 Sara Perry
 Johnny Hallman
 Alice and Ned Vendrick
 Dwight Hartsell
 Paulwyn Boliek
 Rusty Sims
 Robert Suarez
 Eric Wohltman
 Jean Chesno
 Boose Sims
 Nancy Schwartz
 Katie Carrole
 Elizabeth Sweet
 Pastor Russell Seabright
 Linda Miller
 Ann Smith
 Rick Carroll
 Betty Jones
 Mike Shuey
 Linda Wells
 Lora Ullery
 Korky Dunn
 Judy Giford
 Matthew Huber
 Chelan Price
 Martha and Jimmy Stone
 Marilyn and Stacy Smith
 Wendy Thomas
 Carter Ketchum
 The children and staff at Harbor View Elementary
 The Staff and Clients at Respite Care Charleston
 The Staff and Clients at Postpartum Support Charleston



FEBRUARY

BIRTHDAYS

Jacob Hamill	1/03
Margaret Balzano	1/06
Joseph Donaldson	1/09
Linda Leone	1/17
Beverly Weed	1/19
Carl Simmons	1/26
Brooke-Lynn Burke	1/31

BIRTHDAYS

Janice Knight	2/02
Adelaide McKeithan	2/07
Matt Rimer	2/09
Ralph Shrivalle	2/09
Mary Baldwin	2/18
Mikalynn Burke	2/21

ANNIVERSARIES

Mary Beth & Jim Brennan	2/14
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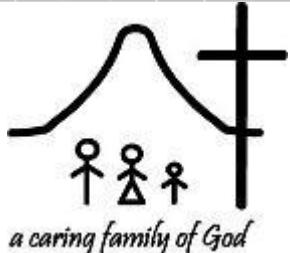
WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

JANUARY

DATE	Lesson Reader	Communion Assistant	Usher	Offering Counters
Jan 4	Sherry Fowler	Maria Namie	Brandt Armstrong	Maria Namie Joni Suggs
Jan 11	Jim Swittenberg	Lynn Shaddrix	Jim Swittenberg	Janice Knight Linda Armstrong
Jan 18	Ada Arthur	Matthew Rimer	Wayne Rimer	Kathy Swittenberg Addie McKeithan
Jan 25	Peggy Oxendine	Kathy Tillman	Ricky Suggs	Maria Namie Janice Knight

FEBRUARY

DATE	Lesson and Prayer Leader	Communion Assistant	Usher	Offering Counters
Feb 2	Kathy Swittenberg	Maria Namie	Brandt Armstrong	Joni Suggs Linda Armstrong
Feb 8	Lynn Shaddrix	Tracey Arthur	Wayne Rimer	Janice Knight Maria Namie
Feb 15	Sherry Fowler	Addie McKeithan	Richard Fowler	Kathy Swittenberg Addie McKeithan
Feb 22	Peggy Oxendine	Tracey Arthur	Jim Swittenberg	Maria Namie Janice Knight



MARTIN LUTHER EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1605 Harbor View Road
Charleston, SC 29412

843 795-4855
Email: mlc@knology.net

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.MARTINLUTHERCHURCH.ORG

“A CARING FAMILY OF GOD”

STAFF AND CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

STAFF

Interim Pastor

Rev. Kathleen Miko

Director of
Congregational Ministries

Sherry Fowler

Director of Music

Gina Shuey

Office Hours are
Monday—Friday
9 AM to Noon

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Officers

President—

Ada Arthur

Vice President—

Kathy Swittenberg

Secretary—

Linda Leone

Treasurer—

Brandt Armstrong

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jimmy Knight

Joni Suggs

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

