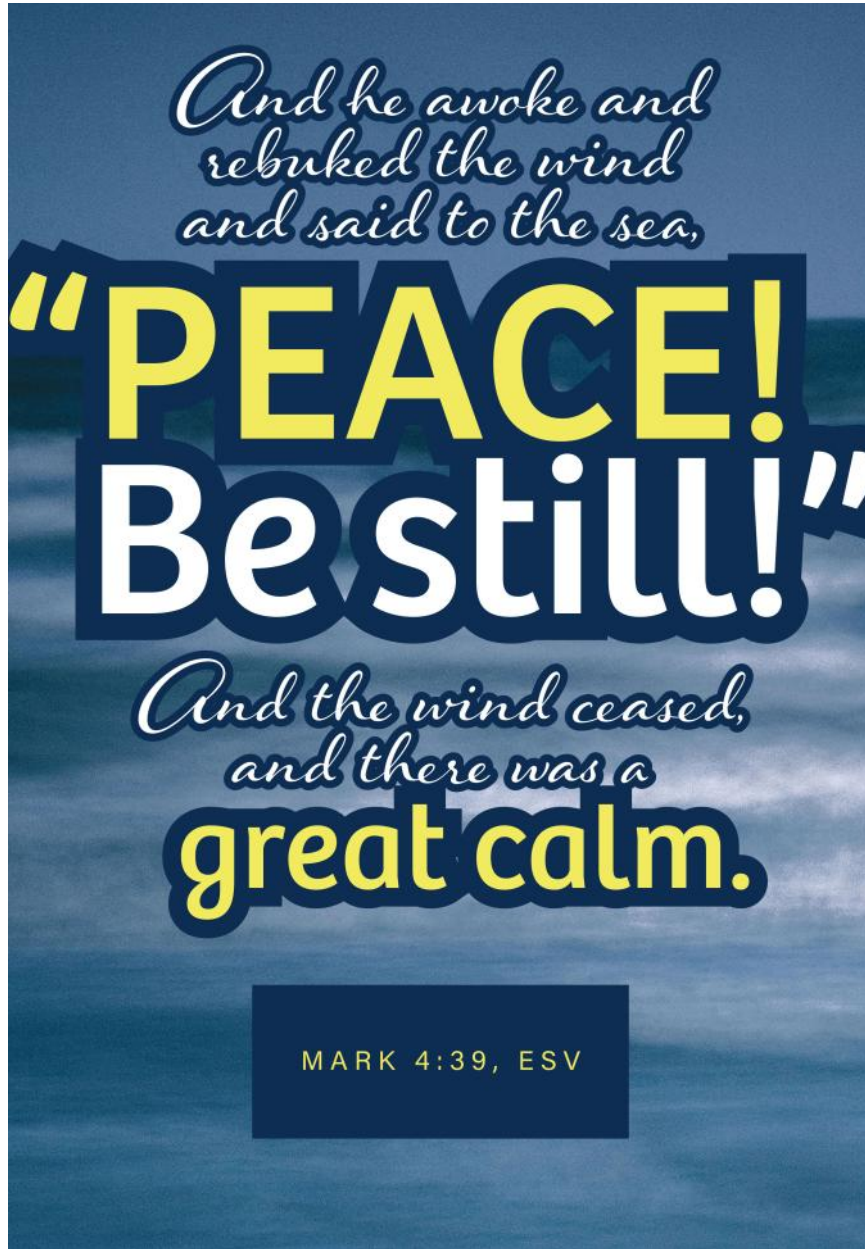


LUTHER LINES

JAMES ISLAND, SC 29412 MARCH 2026



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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March—WatchWord of the Month is PEACE



Encounters with Christ

As we enter the sacred season of Lent, we begin a journey of reflection, repentance, and renewal. Lent invites us to slow down, to listen more deeply, and to open our hearts to the transforming presence of Christ.

Last Sunday, we reflected on Jesus' time in the wilderness. After His baptism, Jesus is led into the wilderness where He fasts for forty days and faces temptation. In this profound encounter with the devil, we see not only Christ's humanity but his *unwavering trust* in the Father.

The wilderness is not just a physical place — it is a spiritual reality we all experience. There are seasons of uncertainty, testing, and spiritual dryness. Yet it is often in these wilderness moments that we encounter Christ most clearly.

My encounters with Christ for the most part been pretty low key with very little fanfare. Yet the impact has always been significant and transforming, helping me to understand that in the wilderness:

- We confront our distractions and misplaced priorities.
- We learn dependence on God's Word.
- We rediscover who we are as beloved children of God.

Jesus responds to every temptation with Scripture, reminding us that spiritual strength is rooted in God's truth. Lent offers us the opportunity to ask:

- What voices am I listening to?
- Where am I being tempted to rely on myself instead of God?
- How is Christ inviting me to deeper trust?

In the following four Sundays in March the homilies will reflect on Jesus' encounters with Nicodemus, The Samaritan Woman, A Blind Man, and Lazarus. People just like us; distracted, confused and searching for something, yet, coming to realize what we truly need has always been there.

A Lenten Invitation - This March, I'd like to encourage you to embrace practices that create space for encountering Christ:

Prayer – Set aside intentional daily time with God.

Fasting – Let go of *something that distracts you* from spiritual growth.

Giving – Share generously as an act of gratitude and compassion.

Reflection – Spend time in Scripture, especially the Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry.

As we journey toward the cross and ultimately the joy of Easter, may this season be one of meaningful encounters with Christ — in Scripture, in worship, in service, and in the quiet spaces of your heart.

Let us walk together through this Lenten season with humility, hope, and expectation.

“Lord, lead us through the wilderness and meet us there.”

Blessings and peace,
See you Sunday!
Pastor Kathleen

Oh, Love, How Deep!

Oh, love, how deep, how broad, how high
beyond all thought and fantasy
that God, the Son of God, should take
our mortal form for mortals' sake!

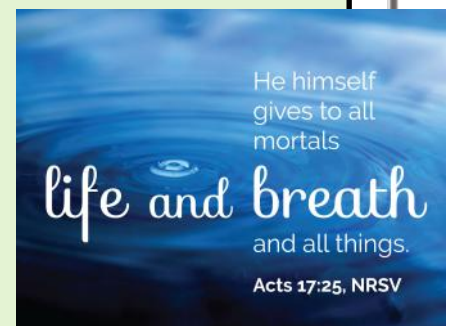
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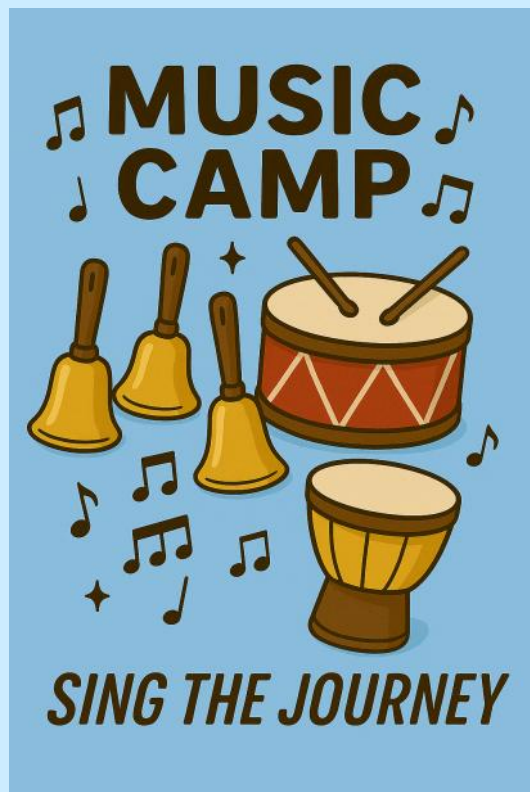
Our hymn of the month is *Oh Love, How Deep*. It was our Gathering Hymn on Lent 1 and will be featured as prelude music throughout the month. One stanza of words will be printed each week for your reflection, while variations of the hymn tune “Deo Gracias” are played.

We will sing it again on Palm Sunday. It is my hope and prayer that you will be blessed through this intentional reflection of our Savior’s deep, deep love for us!

Deo Gracias! To God be the Glory!!!

Gina





It's a GO!

Music Camp '26 will be held **July 27-31** at Martin Luther Church from 9 AM until Noon each day.

Our theme will be **“Sing the Journey”**.

This is a Free Camp for rising 5k-7th grade. Older youth are invited to serve as helpers.

Teacher assistants are needed!

Please contact Gina for more information.

843 737 2113 Ginashuey@gmail.com

**REGISTRATION WILL OPEN VERY
SOON!**



Palm Sunday, March 29th • 10:00 am

Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! As we wave our palm branches in praise, we remember the King who entered Jerusalem in humility and love. May our hearts welcome Him anew this Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd • Noon

On this sacred day, we reflect on Jesus washing the disciples' feet and teaching us to serve with humility. Take a moment this week to offer simple acts of grace — a listening ear, a meal shared, or a quiet prayer lifted for someone in need.

Good Friday, April 3rd • Noon

Good Friday invites us to pause and remember the weight of Christ's sacrifice. As we reflect, may we hold close the truth that his love reaches us in every season — steady, unwavering and full of mercy.

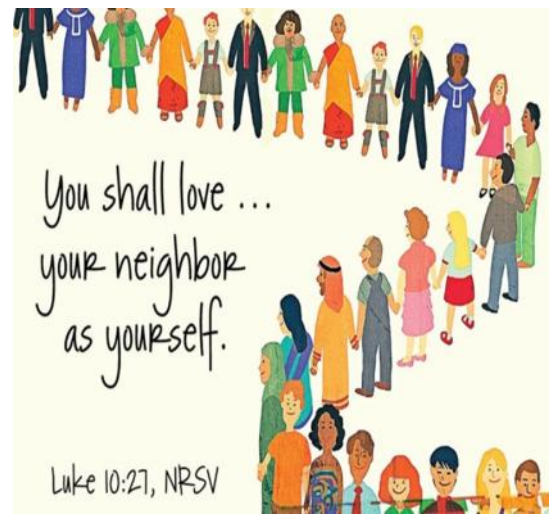
**EASTER SUNDAY
THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD**

April 5th • 10 AM

He is risen! Easter calls us to celebrate with joy and gratitude. Christ's resurrection reminds us that darkness does not win and hope is always rising. Let's rejoice together in the good news that transforms our lives.

A note from Barbara

Thanks for your support of the Love Your Neighbor project. Different personal hygiene items will be collected each month. In March, bars of soap and a wash cloth will be the focus. So when you are shopping, please remember your neighbors who need these bare essentials.



Don't forget to join the Lunch Bunch on March 5th. Just bring your bag lunch and Eat with your church friends. We will join in the World Day of Prayer.

If you don't see someone at service on Sunday, reach out to let them know that you missed them. It only takes a few minutes of your time and can mean the world to them.

See you at Lunch Bunch and in Church.

Thursday, March 5	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	World Day of Prayer
Thursday, April 2	After Maundy Thursday Noon Service / Pot Luck	Lent
Thursday, May 28	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	Bingo and Father's Day
Thursday, June 18	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	Game Day
Thursday, July 2	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	Independence Day
Thursday, August 13	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	
Thursday, September 10	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	
Thursday, October 8	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	
Thursday, November 5	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	Chrismons
Thursday, December 3	11:30 Brown Bag Lunch	Baking Cookies and Bread



On Sunday, February 15th, we had the honor of welcoming Thomas “Tom” Hennessy into our “flock” by Affirmation of his Baptism. Tom is coming to us from Florida.

We welcome Tom into our “Caring Family of God” with open arms and open hearts.

Martin Luther Church is gladly accepting online contributions through [Tithe.ly.com](https://www.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**!!!

RESPIRE 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

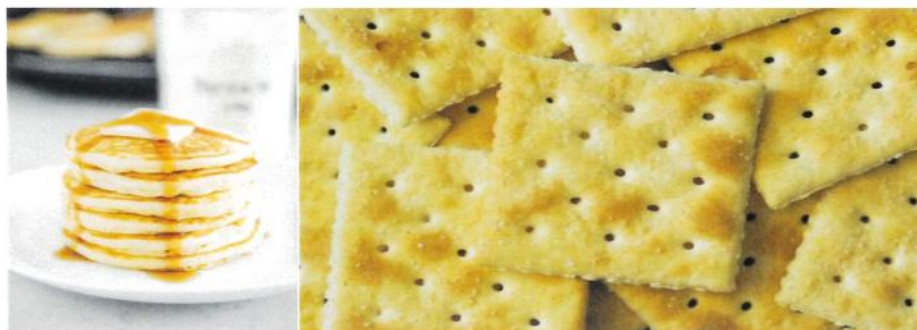
December—Seeing

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 CHURCH IS THE CRACKERS AND PANCAKE MIX CHURCH



FOR JAMES ISLAND OUTREACH

**SUNDAY FEB 8 WAS SOUPER BOWL
SUNDAY – MARTIN LUTHER
CHURCH COLLECTED \$134 and 68
food items that were distributed to
JAMES ISLAND OUTREACH AND
NEIGHBORS TOGETHER. Thanks everyone!**



A Quick View of our January 2026 Finances

Budget: \$15,018.25

(Expenses: \$12,479.90)

Offerings: \$ 11,879.00

Difference: (\$ 3,139.25)

Let's all get in the habit of bringing a can of food to place in the blessing box each Sunday. Soup is a favorite and it's easier for those who are in need to have the pop-top cans. Thank you for your generosity!

CALL UPDATE FROM MLLC COUNCIL

Council completed the Sustainability Assessment-Resource N which is part of the Ministry Site Profile. Once submitted, this allowed Bishop Ginny Aebischer and Pastor Rick Carter to meet with Council. This meeting took place in January. One of the options discussed by the Bishop was to partner with a church and share a pastor, and it was decided that Bishop Ginny and Pastor Rick would meet with Faith Lutheran on John's Island to discuss their needs and wants. Following their meeting with Faith, Council received a letter that stated that Faith has decided to continue with their Stated Supply Pastor for the current season.

Presently, MLLC Council continues to meet and work on what is required from Synod before we can transition into the Call Process. Council will work on the Ministry Site Profile, and our Constitution is being updated. Once these documents are finalized and submitted to Synod, we will receive direction from the Bishop's office as to how to proceed. (As a reminder, a poster has been placed in the Fellowship Hall for members to follow along with our progress.)

Council continues to ask for your prayers and support as we move forward.

MLLC COUNCIL MEETING

Sunday, January 11, 2026

IN ATTENDANCE:

Pastor Kathleen Miko, Brandt Armstrong, Ada Arthur, Jimmy Knight, Linda Leone, Joni Suggs, Kathy Swittenberg

President Ada Arthur called the meeting to order.

Devotions were presented by Brandt Armstrong.

DECEMBER COUNCIL MINUTES:

Minutes from the December 2025 Council Meeting were read by Secretary, Linda Leone.

Brandt Armstrong moved that the December Council Minutes be approved as read. Joni Suggs seconded the motion and there being no corrections or additions, the motion was carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer Brandt Armstrong highlighted some of the points in his December report. ***(CORRECTION TO THE TREASURER'S REPORT. THERE WERE ONLY FOUR SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER.)**

Income for the month was \$17,233.30 and expenditures were \$12,454.55. For a gain of \$4,778.75.

Keep in mind that December had 5 Sundays as well as Christmas.

Operating account had a balance of \$65,389.00 on Jan 1.

Operating account was \$98,540.00 on Jan. 1 2025.

We moved \$22,000.00 out of operating to the new CD during the year.

The difference for the year was \$11,151.00.

This equated to a \$929.00 average per month shortage.

The County has changed how they are collecting the Stormwater fee, instead of this fee being collected monthly on our Water through Charleston Water, the County sent a bill for the full annual amount due in January of \$3034.68. After discussion with the County, they have allowed us to make 6 monthly payments of \$505.78.

FYI that the Total for the giving from the entities that operate in our building was almost \$6500.00 for the year. All have made contributions except Post Partum Charleston.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

Pastor Kathleen will get together with Gina Shuey to discuss the 2026 Lenten Services.

(continued on next page)

A meeting has been scheduled for January 14, 2026, between MLLC Council, Bishop Ginny Aebischer and Reverend Rick Carter. In preparation of this meeting, Council is to provide Synod with a Congregational Sustainability Assessment – Resource N which is part of the Transition Package. This will be completed at today's Council meeting. In lieu of this, Council decided to table the following topics and put on the agenda for the February 8, 2026 Council meeting:

Sunday worship service times. Go back to the congregation to vote on remaining at 10:00 AM or going back to the previous time of 9:00 AM. Important to note that this should be sent out to all current members and not just the members attending a Sunday service.

The use of the MLLC facility by groups outside the church membership.

A council workshop hosted by MLLC Council.

The Council worked on and completed the Congregational Sustainability Assessment – Resource N of the Transition Packet (attached). This will be sent to Synod.

PROPERTY REPORT:

Jimmy Knight reported nothing of urgency needs to come before Council at this time.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD:

Brandt Armstrong noted that Council member Joni Suggs, was retiring after 50 years of dedicated service from the nursing profession.

CLOSING

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Leone

Secretary, MLLC Council

NEXT MEETING IS SUNDAY, *FEBRUARY 15, 2026

DEVOTIONS – Kathy Swittenberg

***CORRECTIONS TO THE JANUARY 11, 2026, COUNCIL MEETING ARE NOTED IN RED.**

MOTIONS FROM THE JANUARY 11, 2026

THE KING NO ONE EXPECTED

Sometimes we speak—or even shout—the truth without realizing just how right we are. That’s exactly what happened on the first Palm Sunday.

Jesus entered Jerusalem not on a prize-worthy stallion, but on a young, humble donkey. The crowd erupted in joy, shouting, *“Hosanna! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!”* They waved palm branches, symbols of peace, and hailed Jesus as their king.



Was He a king? Jesus didn’t deny it. When the Pharisees told him to silence the crowd, he replied, *“I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”*

Later, Pilate—the Roman governor—mocked the religious leaders by saying, *“Here is your king.”* The chief priests bristled with anger, shouting, *“We have no king but Caesar!”*

When Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified, he made one last jab at the furious crowd. John 19:19 tells us he ordered a sign to be placed above the cross. Written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, it declared:

“Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

The chief priests demanded the sign be changed, but Pilate refused. *“What I have written, I have written,”* he said.

Was Jesus a king? The witnesses of His resurrection knew the answer. In Acts 17:7, the early believers were accused of “saying there is another king, Jesus.” And the book of Revelation looks ahead to the day when all creation will know the truth:

“The Lamb will triumph ... for He is Lord of lords and King of kings.” — Revelation 17:14

Jimmy Stone's Writings

Dear Friend,

I've been reflecting lately on the profound impact of divine grace in our lives, and how its presence, or absence, shapes our very spirit. It strikes me that when we neglect to acknowledge or open ourselves to God's boundless grace, a seed of bitterness can quietly take root, slowly poisoning our outlook and relationships. This bitterness often stems from unaddressed hurts, unmet expectations, or a struggle to release past grievances.



Conversely, when we consciously embrace the loving-kindness and undeserved favor that is grace, a beautiful transformation begins. It cultivates fertile ground within us where genuine forgiveness can not only germinate but truly flourish. This isn't just about forgiving others, but also about extending that same compassion to ourselves, acknowledging our imperfections with gentle understanding.

The wisdom of the old saying, 'The longer we walk in the garden, the more likely we are to smell the flowers,' resonates deeply with this spiritual journey.

It reminds us that spiritual growth and insight aren't always immediate; they are often the gentle fruits of consistent presence and mindful attention. Just as a gardener tends to their plants daily, our spiritual lives require continuous nourishment.

Indeed, the more we intentionally steep our hearts and minds in this divine grace, allowing it to permeate every aspect of our existence, the more naturally and effortlessly we find ourselves capable of extending that same grace to those around us. It's a beautiful, restorative cycle: receiving grace empowers us to become conduits of grace for others, fostering understanding, patience, and love in a world that so desperately needs it.

May your days be filled with reflection and the blossoming of true grace.

With heartfelt prayers,

Jimmy Stone

Bill's Writings

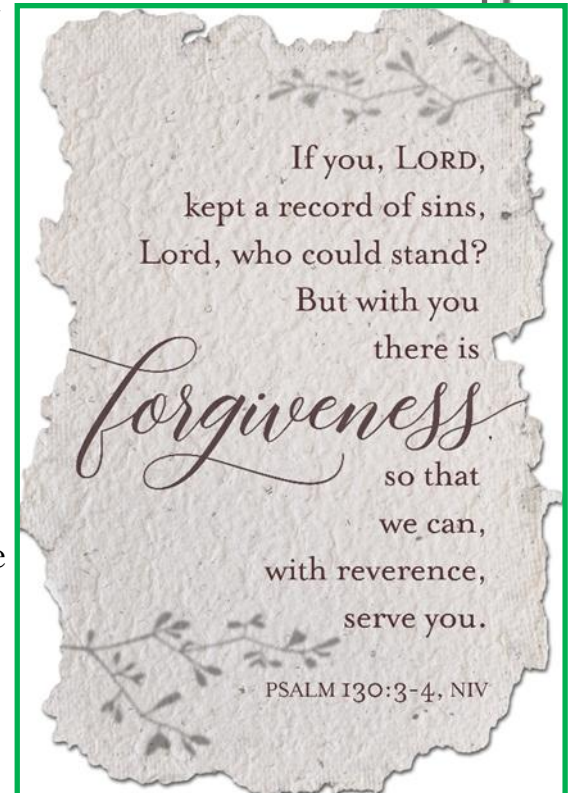
What is achieving the fulfillment of creation? What does salvation mean? When you seek salvation, you have to be a doer. Do you think they go hand in hand? It's not going to be a word you read somewhere – it's a path way to heaven you must get on and follow it in faith.

I wonder if they have anything to do with the month of March? March Madness – that symbolizes a race, achieving the realization of one's dreams, hum, I wonder. I dream of going to heaven. I guess that's a metamorphosis – ending one's life and beginning another state of being – a biological recycling (if you will). Now, what if I told you that makes you a trophy of time, preparing you for perfection? That sounds complicated but it's not.

Look at life. Some of us get to live to an old age. Are we not the brilliance of creation? You don't have to live long lives to achieve it. Whenever life ends, there's a direction, a pathway to our God. It is obtained through salvation, the cleaning of our souls, a purification. You don't get it by wishing. You have to be a doer.

I heard recently song that goes, **“GETUP, GET UP OUT OF THAT GRAVE!”** Do you know what it is saying? The message is that you are still alive. Sure, we all have sinned, but we are alive. We're not dead in sin yet. God is a forgiver. He is Love. He is Mercy. *“God, I'm sorry. Thank you, Lord, for giving me the time in my life to ask for your forgiveness.”* Forgiveness - that's what you get. It's a reward believers get as they pass through the doorway of perfection. Always say, “If he did it for you, He can do it for me.”

Bill Mariorenzi





Next Spring

Could your spiritual journey use a tune up? Have you sensed a calling into a deeper relationship with our Lord and Savior?

Through a partnership between Pastors and Lay Leaders with full reliance on prayer and the Holy Spirit, the SC Lutheran Via de Cristo has been helping people to enrich their relations with Jesus for MANY years.

The SC Via de Cristo Community invites you to “Come and See”

Dates for next weekend event is

April 30 — May 3, 2026

For more information, visit www.scviadecristo.org or any one of the following people. We would be thrilled to sponsor you to attend a weekend; Sherry and/or Richard Fowler, Gina Shuey, Laura Jordan, Peggy Oxendine, Wayne Rimer, Joni Suggs, Pastor Kathleen and Julie Carter. Just ask!!!!

PEACE

Patience

Empathy

Action

Caring

God-Centered

- Ada Arthur

God, help me
to be who you
created me to be,
To be where you
want me to be,
To meet who you
want me to meet,
To say what you
want me to say;
and keep me out of your way.

Adapted from a prayer by FDNY Chaplain
Fr. Mychal Judge

IF GOD HAD VOICEMAIL

Have you ever wondered what would happen if God used voicemail to handle all our prayers?

Let's imagine it for a moment.

I had just finished gossiping and wanted to confess, so I got ready to pray—or rather, to “call.” Immediately, a voice answered:

“You’ve reached the throne room of Heaven, the Prayer Department. All of our representatives are currently assisting other callers. Your call is important to us, and we want to help you. Please stay on the line, and your request will be answered in the order it was received.”

Soft music plays. Then another message comes on:

“Listen carefully to the following options and press the appropriate number.

Press 1 for prayer for a loved one.

Press 2 for prayer for your church.

Press 3 to give thanks.

Press 4 to confess sins.

Press 5 for salvation.

Press 6 for physical needs.

To repeat this menu, press 9.”

Since I had a sin to confess, I pressed 4.

Another voice responded cheerfully:

“We’re so glad to help you with your confession of sins. Please select from the following options:

If you cursed, press 1.

If you yelled at your spouse or another family member, press 2.

If you gossiped, press 3...”

The list went on and on.

About then I decided to hang up and keep on gossiping. But then I remembered what the Bible says about God and how he attends to our needs. He doesn't route our prayers through a heavenly call center or put us on hold. We don't get busy signals, menus or automated voices.

Instead, our Father listens instantly, personally, and lovingly. Instead of a voice mail system, he says, **“Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.” (Isaiah 65:24, KJV)**

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
 Ada Arthur
 Ralph Shrivalle

The Disciples and
 Leaders of Martin
 Luther Church

Our friends and family

Mary Frances Lundy
 Travis Hughes
 Bishop Ginny Aebischer
 Nancy Holden
 Chip Guffin
 Harold McMillan
 Evan McMillan
 Ariel Howcroft
 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
 Paul Holmes
 Elizabeth Sweet
 Bob Webb
 Gus Martschink
 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



BIRTHDAYS

Caitlin Donaldson 3 / 5
 Will Waters 3 / 7
 Linda Armstrong 3 / 8
 Elisabeth Diffenderfer 3 / 19
 Judy Simmons 3 / 26
 Richard Fowler 3 / 27

Mary Lou Hoover 4/12
 Ned Balzano 4/18
 Luke Rimer 4/21
 Lori Hamill 4/27
 Julie Carter 4/28
 Gina Shuey 4/29
 Jerri Snider 4/30
 Torren Thomas 4/30

ANNIVERSARIES

Linda & Joe Sproles 3/1

ANNIVERSARIES

Sherry & Richard Fowler 4/7
 Barbara & Andy Young 4/21
 Laura & Eddie Jordan 4/23

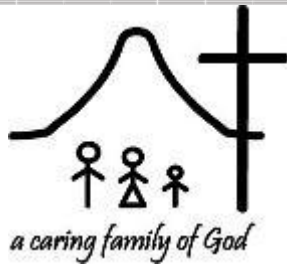
WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

MARCH

DATE	Lesson Reader	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Usher	Offering Counters
March 1	Richard Fowler	Ada Arthur	Maria Namie	Brandt Armstrong	Linda Armstrong Joni Suggs
March 8	Jim Swittenberg	Lynn Shaddrix	Lynn Shaddrix	Jim Swittenberg	Addie McKeithan Janice Knight
March 15	Ada Arthur	Matthew Rimer	Matthew Rimer	Wayne Rimer	Kathy Swittenberg Lynn Shaddrix
March 22	Peggy Oxendine	Laura Jordan	Kathy Tillman	Ricky Suggs	Linda Armstrong Joni Suggs
March 29	Tracey Arthur	Sherry Fowler	Tracey Arthur	Jimmy Knight	Maria Namie Janice Knight

APRIL

DATE	Lesson and Prayer Leader	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Usher	Offering Counters
April 5 Easter	Kathy Swittenberg	Ada Arthur	Maria Namie	Brandt Armstrong	Joni Suggs Linda Armstrong
April 12	Lynn Shaddrix	Lynn Shaddrix	Tracey Arthur	Wayne Rimer	Janice Knight Lynn Shaddrix
April 19	Sherry Fowler	Sherry Fowler	Addie McKeithan	Richard Fowler	Kathy Swittenberg Addie McKeithan
April 26	Tracey Arthur	Ada Arthur	Lynn Shaddrix	Ricky Suggs	Linda Armstrong Joni Suggs



MARTIN LUTHER EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1605 Harbor View Road
Charleston, SC 29412

843 795-4855
Email: mllc@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

