



St. Thomas Lutheran Church News

St. Thomas Lutheran Church is a Christ-centered community that lives, shares, and celebrates God's grace with all people!

June/July 2026

XLVIII Issue 6

From the Pastor of Youth and Christian Nurture

Writing my last newsletter article as Pastor of Youth & Christian Nurture at St. Thomas Lutheran Church is a difficult undertaking. I don't know quite how to convey the depth of my love for you and how I will miss being your pastor. It has brought me such joy to see so many of you week after week, and to watch all of you, young and old, grow in faith. I am deeply grateful for our time together. Thank you.

Thank you for calling me to be your pastor, for trusting me to walk alongside your children and youth, and for sharing your lives with me.

Thank you for surrounding our family with love and care during Miriam's birth, for helping us prepare to welcome her, and for giving us precious time together after she was born.

Thank you for showing up for Word in the Woods, mini-retreats, Sunday School, and so many other opportunities to learn and grow together in faith.

Thank you for volunteering as teachers, leaders, organizers, and faithful partners to join the work of faith formation for this congregation. I especially want to thank Leah Iversen for serving as Sunday School coordinator, particularly as we transitioned back to in-person ministry after COVID and during my parental leave, and Kris Stewart for serving as VBS Coordinator, helping move VBS to a daytime program and taking the lead during my leave.

I will continue to love you and pray for you, but I will no longer be your pastor. Because of that, I will not be available for pastoral care, weddings, or funerals. While I will always be glad to hear news of new jobs, graduations, births, and other milestones, I will receive that news in ways that respect the boundaries of my departure and support Pastor Adrienne in her role as your pastor. This does not mean my love or prayers for you will end, but it does mean stepping back so that you can embrace the pastor God has given you and the leadership she provides.

My last Sunday will be June 28. We will worship together in one service at 9:30 a.m. followed by a reception so there will be time to say goodbye, to reflect, to pray, and to celebrate what we have shared. I hope you will join me in embracing this as a holy time marked by gratitude, honesty, and trust in God's unfolding call for us all.

Your partner in ministry,

Pastor Lucia

Pastor Lecia

From the Senior Pastor

In the cycle of the church year, over half the year is given to "ordinary time" - primarily the long, green season after Pentecost that continues until Christ the King Sunday in November (with some festivals like Holy Trinity, Reformation, and All Saints thrown in for good measure). There is also a shorter season in the Sundays between Epiphany and Transfiguration Sunday. For a long time—and still in the Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church—these seasons were collectively labeled "ordinary time." In the Lutheran Church, the term ordinary seems at odds with what liturgical scholars Gail Ramshaw and Mons Teig call "the extraordinary nature of each Sunday's celebration of word and sacrament," we've tried "the Nth Sunday after Pentecost" and now a rather unwieldy "Sunday between DATE and DATE—Lectionary N."

But this time isn't called "ordinary" because it is plain or common. On the contrast, it draws from two realities. First, that the Sundays are numbered, that is, ordered. And the second is a thread from ordinance, where the regular rhythm of worship was written down in a prescribed way, called "The Ordinary of the Mass" ("mass" is the final word of worship, the part where the people are sent in peace). It seems worth noting that the legal and ecclesiastical uses of the word "ordinary" predate the common use of the word by more than 200 years.

However, I think when we lose the name "ordinary time," what we most stand to lose is not about the nature of our weekly celebration (though I don't really quibble with that argument). I worry that what we lose is a sense of our own, ordinary lives through and in which God does extraordinary things. The reality is, most of our lives are pretty ordinary, mundane, day-to-day. We wake, we work, we eat, we attend to our relationships, we care for our bodies and homes, we sleep. In an ordinary life, there are

certainly times of great joy and also times of unspeakable sorrow. But there is also a lot of the same thing, different day. How does God speak to us then? How do we live as the Body of Christ then?

This summer, we commit ourselves to these kinds of questions while studying other ordinary lives. Our lectionary readings will guide us through the lives of Abraham and Sarah and their descendants. There is a push and pull here: these are the patriarchs and matriarchs whose faithfulness is a model for our own. In this way, they are extraordinary. On the other hand, this faithfulness is modeled not by heroic action, but in marriages and births, in sibling rivalries and reunions, in a million everyday yeses to the call of God. Their lives, like our own are ordinary and anything but ordinary, are common and are uncommonly touched by God.

Of course, part of *our* ordinary lives is the particular pattern of summer: travel, camps, longer days. We've purchased beautiful art journals from A Sanctified Art to connect St. Thomas members and friends with this theme, wherever an ordinary summer (or one that is anything but) may find you. Reserve a copy on the Welcome Desk and pick it up anytime after June 7 (forgot to reserve a copy? There's plenty, and no limit per family or per neighborhood! Pick one up for a friend).

In Christ,

Pr. Adrienne

Pastor Adrienne

One more thing—I am always happy to meet with you! You can schedule an appointment to meet with me [here](#) or by [contacting the church office](#).

From the Director of Music

For the last few summers, congregants have offered their own special music during worship services. Because it has been so successful, we will continue our "Make a Joyful Noise!" program this upcoming summer. All ages and ability levels are encouraged to offer their gifts. Our goal this year is to continue filling both services each Sunday with music. Those interested can [contact me](#) with their ideas for [available dates](#). I am happy to help in any way.



Matthew Benkert

Matthew Benkert

Summer Staff Vacations

Pr. Adrienne will be guest preaching at Our Savior Lutheran Church on Sunday, June 7. Beginning Monday, June 8, she will be away on vacation, and she will return to the office on Monday, June 22. Pr. Lecia will be available for pastoral emergencies.

Matt Benkert will be away from the bench on Sunday, June 14. Mary Thomason-Smith will play for us that day.

The church office will be closed Friday, June 19 and Friday, July 3 for the Juneteenth and Independence day holidays, respectively.

Erica will be away on vacation June 19-July 4, returning to the office Monday, July 6. Office hours will be limited during this time.

Pr. Adrienne will be out of the office to attend the ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering in Indianapolis, July 6-9. She will respond to any pastoral emergencies during this time. Please e-mail her or call the pastoral emergency line, 812-727-4902.

Pr. Adrienne tentatively will be out of the office July 27-August 1.



From the Finance Committee

We are grateful to those who have made additional gifts to support our congregation and its ministries. Please note that gifts offered for specific ministries or mission partners are held in our congregation's restricted funds for their specified purpose and do not affect the general fund nor our congregation's daily expenses.

Financial status at the end of April 2026 (33.33% of the year):

	Amount	Percent	2025
Income	\$192,922.27	40%	38.43%
Expenses	\$171,347.64	35%	36.90%
Net Income	\$21,574.63		\$6,967.04

Click [here](#) to give to St. Thomas.



In These Times: 5000-Hour Volunteer Challenge



Thank you to everyone who pledged volunteer hours, who committed to the challenge, and who requested help finding places in our community to serve. Continue (anonymously) submitting your volunteer hours [using this form](#) or scan this QR code (which is on the bulletin board outside the office). Did your whole family volunteer together? Reporting multiple dates? Combine everyone's hours and submit the form once—we want to keep it simple for you!

As of the end of May, we have nearly 1400 hours! Keep up the great work!



Celebrating Our Ministry

From the Mission Committee

The Mission Committee is thrilled to announce a new missionary has been selected. This year we decided to sponsor someone from YAGM, Young Adult Global Mission. The program trains and places young people between 21-35 for a year of international service. They volunteer their time to share God's love with support of the ELCA and congregation and individuals' support. There are six different areas around the globe each with a different focus.

Our missionary is Jensen Harms, who is from the Indiana Kentucky Synod and is from Granger, IN. He will be serving somewhere in the United Kingdom. We will know more later as he participates in the training events and is given a specific site. Hopefully we will be able to make a personal connection with him before he leaves this fall for ministry. Let's add Jensen to our prayers and give thanks for his willingness to serve.

Here is [a link](#) if you'd like to learn more about YAGM. See a photo of 2025-26 Young Adults in Global Mission on the next page.



A word of thanks from the Worship Committee

Thank you to Matt Benkert, Ben Wegner, and the St. Thomas Adult Choir for a glorious musical offering of Evening Prayer on May 3. Heartfelt thanks to all who generously participated in the spring choir reception that followed, from setup, serving, and cleanup, to the beautiful platters of delicious treats abundantly provided.



Worship Committee offers our profound gratitude and appreciation to Pastor Lecia Beck for her countless contributions to our worship through the years. For children's sermons that echo and linger in our hearts, for Advent, Epiphany, and Lenten retreats that enriched our personal devotion, for preaching that calls us to recognize we're beloved children of God, and much more—thank you, Pr. Lecia. Our committee offers our devoted prayers of blessing as you and your family move into this new chapter.



Food Ministry Grant Received

St. Thomas has been selected to receive an Indiana-Kentucky Synod Food Ministry Grant of \$600. This was made possible through the generous gift of the Clifford and Nancy Ball bequest. The funds will be used to help support our efforts to help feed the unhoused that gather at the Welcome Table each week at First Christian Church. St. Thomas has scheduled to quarterly provide 100 bagged lunches which include a homemade treat from our fabulous St. Thomas bakers. The lunches get delivered early Sunday morning for folks to get after they have enjoyed a hot breakfast at First Christian Church. There is no other place in Bloomington where hungry folks can get food on the weekends. We typically fund the project with \$250 grants from Thrivent; however, with rising food expenses, this often does not cover the full cost of the project. This Food Ministry Grant will help greatly. If you have access to Thrivent grants and would like to sponsor an event, please contact [Allison Ward](#). This project is a fun way to share God's love!

Oral Histories Project

The Archives at St. Thomas has a collection of oral history interviews conducted primarily in 2010. Forty-four people were interviewed. Many interviewees have passed away. We viewers have an opportunity to step back in time and learn about these children of God. Other interviewees remain familiar faces in our congregation.

Carolyn Sowinski is now selecting excerpts from these interviews which will be highlighted on our website. Jim Ward is the technical expert, splicing together these excerpts and creating a presentation that flows well for the viewer. These excerpts primarily highlight St. Thomas: the building, worship, and activities. In

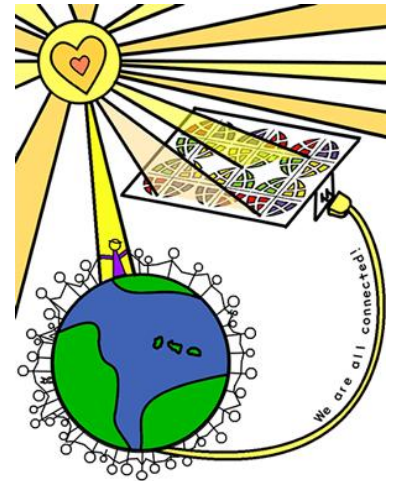
other segments you will hear stories of faith and the journeys people have traveled. Many of the people interviewed are still alive and each person has agreed to have these excerpts presented online.

The oral histories begin with the interview of charter member Karen Blaisdell. More interviews will be added periodically. Find the interviews [here](#).

Creation Care Calling

The St. Thomas new solar ground array is taking shape on a fast track to replace our first roof array during peak solar production season. We are fortunate to be able to use energy from the sun for electricity to heat and cool with minimal flame and the products of combustion.

The first chapter of Genesis says in the beginning God created Heaven and the Earth, and God said let there be light and there was light, and God saw the light, that it was good. Since then, energy has taken many forms throughout history, mostly burning peat, wood, coal, oil or fossil gas. That's a lot of fire and smoke, while human population on earth has grown to more than 8 billion in our lifetime. The air, land, water and people are suffering from continued pollution.



Much of our lifestyle is a tradeoff between cost and comfort; more comfort usually has higher cost. Coal, oil and gas are expensive. The solar project will provide energy savings for decades as electric rates are expected to increase. The church's annual electricity budget is now about 6% of its cost 20 years ago.

More than half of the solar project has been funded by leadership gifts. A little discomfort for a few weeks can help pay the remainder. Buying one less cup of coffee daily for three months could save hundreds of dollars. For example, a \$10,000 donation could be made by 100 families each giving \$1 each day for 100 days. You may want to make a more substantial donation as you consider the benefits of long-term energy solutions.

For now, we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 1 Corinthians 13:12



Upcoming Events



Worship Time Change

Beginning **Sunday, May 31**, St. Thomas worship will be held at 8:30 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. We will keep this summer schedule until Sunday, August 23.

Are you 60+ and interested in exploring the sacred life of bread?

In 2023, Meghan Murphy-Gil released her fascinating book *The Sacred Life of Bread: Uncovering the Mystery of an Ordinary Loaf*. Here's a brief synopsis of the book:

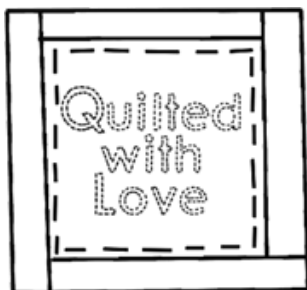
The pursuit of bread, from the time a single grain is planted in the soil to the moment a baked loaf is broken and consumed, satisfies longings not only physical but spiritual. Nearly all the world's religions count bread-related proverbs and prayers among their sacred scriptures. In Christian tradition, bread is often referred to as life itself, thanks to its ability to meet the most basic need of all that live: sustaining food.

The life of bread is as ordinary as it is sacred. It offers a path toward understanding the inner workings of the world, ourselves, and the relationship between the two. In these pages Meghan Murphy-Gill explores the world of bread and its rich meanings--from the exuberant joy of the hotdog roll to the inactive time as bread slowly rises. Engaging a bread practice is both spiritual and process focused, and bread invites us to community and communion in ongoing, fulfilling, and profoundly life-giving ways.

The making and breaking of bread are spiritual practices that reveal deep truths as well as pathways toward meaningful relationships with ourselves, our communities, and our environment.

We are gathering a few 60+ers to meet once a month to discuss a chapter in this book and then we will try out some of the bread recipes on our own. All bread making experience levels are welcome. We will have our first organizational meeting on **Tuesday, June 23 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at my home at 2200 E. Autumn Drive**. I will provide a light snack and beverages. If you are interested in joining us, please contact me [via email](#).

Warmly, [Kris Stewart](#)



St. Thomas Piecemakers

We plan to continue meeting to assemble quilts through the summer, at **10 a.m. on both June 13 and July 11**. Please plan to join us for some fellowship while helping assemble and tie quilts that will be sent to victims of war and disaster. We'd love to have you!

Come Together: News from the Outreach and Community Care Committee

Ice Cream Social, Saturday, July 18, 3 p.m. Join us outside on the circle in front of Heritage Hall for an ice cream cone or a sundae, some summer fellowship, and lawn games. Bring a comfy lawn chair or a blanket. We'll provide ice cream, sundae fixings, lemonade, and a few lawn games (and invite you to bring yours). Sunshine or rain (we'll move indoors). Look for a sign-up sheet on the Welcome Desk later in June.

Save the Date for Pizza and Trivia Night Saturday, September 12 starting at 5:30 p.m. Trivia Night returns, with our amazing trivia master Rance Fawbush.



Worship in the Park

The psalmist writes, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it" (24:1). Worship in creation on **Sunday, July 26 at 11 a.m.** We've reserved space at the Sycamore Shelter at Lower Cascades Park, which saw some damage in recent storms. As we draw closer to the date, we'll confirm this location, but the time, date, and planned potluck will happen! The 8:30 a.m. service will be held at St. Thomas.

Christian Nurture

Prayer at Noon on Zoom

Prayer and self-reflection are part of the disciplines of Lent. On **Wednesdays, June 3 and July 1**, join Pr. Adrienne for Prayer at Noon on Zoom [here](#) for a quiet twenty minutes of prayer and support.



Worship at Redbud Hills & Bell Trace

St. Thomas members and friends at Redbud Hills are invited to join us in the activities room for worship on **Mondays, June 8 and July 13 at 10:15 a.m.** Members and friends at Bell Trace are invited to join us in the Chapel for worship on **Mondays, June 15 and July 20 at 9:45 a.m.** Pr. Lecia will lead worship in June.

Ice Cream Meet Up for Youth

Have ice cream at Jiffy Treet (233 S Pete Ellis Dr) with Pastor Lecia one last time on **Sunday, June 21**. High school students will meet at 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. and students entering 6th-9th grade at 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Please let [Pastor Lecia](#) know if you plan to join us!



Pastor's Bible Study

Join the pastors for Bible Study on the upcoming Sunday readings on Monday afternoons at 1 p.m. in the Conference Room. There is no need to prepare ahead. We read the text together and explore what interests us and what it means for us today. Questions encouraged!

- **June 1:** Genesis 12:1-9; Psalm 33:1-12; Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 9:9-13,18-26
- **June 8:** Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; Romans 5:1-8; Matthew 9:35--10:8
- **June 9:** Genesis 21:8-21; Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39
- **June 22:** Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42
- **June 29:** Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
- **July 6: NO Bible Study.** Genesis 25:19-34; Psalm 119:105-112; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
- **July 13:** Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30,36-43
- **July 20:** Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52
- **July 27:** Genesis 32:22-31; Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21
- **August 3:** Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28; Psalm 105:1-6,16-22, 45b; Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33



Summer Camp with LOMIK

Camp is a place to grow in faith! For many youth, camp activities in a Christ-centered community creates a way for faith to take deeper root in their lives. Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Indiana-Kentucky has camps for children entering first grade through twelfth grade.

[Registration is open now!](#)



Ministry Opportunities for Getting Involved

Pantry 279 Summer Volunteer Opportunities

St. Thomas continues to send a group of volunteers once per month to Pantry 279 to help out. On the last Wednesday of the month we volunteer from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. repacking bulk items, pre-packing delivery bags, and helping customers as they grocery "shop." Summer days will be **June 25, July 29, and August 26**. There are both sitting and more physical jobs. This is a wonderful opportunity to assist the busiest food pantry in Monroe County on their busiest day of the month.



For the summer months we will also be helping with Pantry 279's Children's Summer Supplemental Food Program. We will be taking the Pantry van to the Fayetteville Elementary School parking lot (223 Old Farm Rd, Bedford) on **Thursdays afternoons from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. beginning May 28** to distribute weekly bags of child friendly food. This provides summer breakfast and lunch food to children who receive free breakfast and lunch at school during the school year. We need at least two volunteers per week to help with this program.

Sign up sheets for both volunteer opportunities can be found on the Welcome Desk. We also welcome food donations for either program. There are collection shelves for the Pantry behind the welcome desk. If you have any questions about the programs, please [contact Susan Kinzer](#).

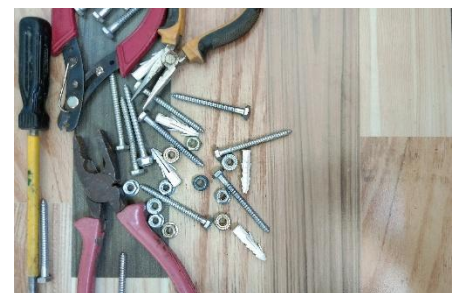


Altar Flowers

Flowers bring the beauty of creation to our worship. To reserve an arrangement, contact the church office [via email](#) or sign the sheet on the bulletin board by the coat room by Wednesday each week. The Flower Guild makes the arrangements, and you may take the flowers home after the second worship service and then return the vase later. Each arrangement costs \$20, with "flowers" in the check memo line.

Property Committee Work Days

Help our co-chairs Jim Ward and Ian Bensberg with manual tasks such as decluttering, painting, occasional cleaning, or tasks that require special expertise such as electrical, plumbing, or drywall work. Join a work day on the second & fourth Saturdays every month (usually not on holiday weekends). Please contact [Jim](#) or [Ian](#) if you'd like to participate or have any questions, comments, or suggestions.



Prayer Chain

The Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar once said, "the most we can do through genuine prayer, is to make as much room as possible, in ourselves and in the world, for the kingdom of God, so that its energies can go to work." We invite you to be part of a little group making room in the world for God to work in people's lives. When prayer requests come, we receive an email and pause to pray. Occasionally we receive an update about those we hold in prayer. If you are interested in joining us, [email](#) Susan Colston.

Prayer Requests

Martin Luther said, "Pray, and let God worry." When something worries you, others can carry you along in prayer. Send requests for prayer to Susan Colston [via email](#).



Caring for Our Neighbors



NEWHOPE
FOR FAMILIES

New Hope for Families

It's easy to feel discouraged about the problem of homelessness. Your ongoing support of New Hope may help to replace discouragement with empowerment.

Thirty to forty percent of people experiencing homelessness are members of families with young children. New Hope for Families provides emergency shelter and excellent early learning programs to keep families together and lift every child into a promising future.

To learn more about the Hope Movement in Bloomington and how you can support New Hope's remarkable success in moving families directly from shelter into a lease in their name [visit their website](#).

Volunteers Needed for Garden Walk

New Hope for Families has been selected as one of 6 local gardens to be featured in the 2026 Summer Garden Walk. The event, run each year since 1938 by the Bloomington Garden Club, showcases the finest private gardens in our community. This year's event (the first ever to include a homeless shelter!) will be on **Saturday, June 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Sunday, June 7, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.** St Thomas Lutheran has been invited to play a role in this historic event. If interested in volunteering, click on this [sign-up sheet](#) for more information!

June 2026

St. Thomas Lutheran Church

Regular Sunday Schedule*

8:30 a.m. Worship/Livestream Worship

10:15 a.m. Worship

*see each Sunday for additional events

Pastor Adrienne Out of Office

Friday June 5 Through

Sunday June 21

Matt Out of Office

Sunday June 14

Erica Out of Office

Friday June 19 through

Friday July 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	2	3 12 pm Prayer at Noon on Zoom	4	5	6
7	8 10:15 am Worship at Redbud Hills 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	9	10	11	12	13 10 am Property Committee Work Day 10 am St. Thomas Piecemakers
14	15 9:45 am Worship at Bell Trace 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	23	24	25	26	27 10 am Property Committee Work Day
28 Pastor Lecia's Farewell Sunday 9:30 a.m. One Service 10:45 a.m. Reception	29 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	30	<p>All dates and times are subject to change. Please confirm via the online church calendar: https://stlconline.org/about/news/</p>			

Due Date for **printed** Weekly Announcements: Wednesdays.

Due Date for **emailed** Weekly Announcements: Thursdays.

Due Date for **August Newsletter** articles: **Thursday, July 23.**

Unsubscribe from this list or update your preferences by emailing:

parishadmin@stlconline.org

July 2026

St. Thomas Lutheran Church

Regular Sunday Schedule*

8:30 a.m. Worship/Livestream Worship

10:15 a.m. Worship

*see each Sunday for additional events

Erica Out of Office

Friday June 19 through

Friday July 3

Pastor Adrienne Out of Office

For ELCA Rostered Ministers
Gathering Monday July 6 through
Thursday July 9

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
All dates and times are subject to change. Please confirm via the online church calendar: https://stlconline.org/about/news/			1 12 pm Prayer at Noon on Zoom	2	3 Office Closed	4
5	6 NO Pastor's Bible Study	7	8	9	10	11 10 am Property Committee Work Day 10 am St. Thomas Piecemakers
12	13 10:15 am Worship at Redbud Hills 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	14	15	16	17	18 3 pm Ice Cream Social
19 12:15 p.m. Council Meeting	20 9:45 am Worship at Bell Trace 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	21	22	23	24	25 10 am Property Committee Work Day
26 11 a.m. Outdoor Worship in Sycamore Shelter at Lower Cascades Park	27 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	28	29	30	31	

ST. THOMAS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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the Living Waters**
Cherokee, North Carolina

Linked with
Sister Parish
Iglesia Santo Domingo
de Guzman, Chichipate
Parish of San Pedro, El Estor,
Izabal, Guatemala

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Melissa de Graaf
Children's Choir Director

**St. Thomas Lutheran Church and LCM-IU
are Reconciling in Christ Ministries**

**We are a Christ-centered community that lives,
shares and celebrates God's grace with all people!**