

St. Thomas Lutheran Church News: August 2026

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

XLVIII Issue 7

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August at a Glance

Events for Everyone

Aug 2: Loaves and Fish Food Drive
Aug 9 & 16: Give a Blessing
Aug 9: 3-Congregation Area 10 Agency on Aging Collection Barrel Painting Project
Aug 22: STLC @ Bloomington Pridefest

Events for Teens & Adults

Aug 5: Prayer at Noon on Zoom
Aug 8: St. Thomas Piecemakers

Events for 60+

Aug 2: Film Screening @ MCPL
Aug 9: 60+ Group Meeting
Aug 10: Redbud Hills Worship
Aug 14: T. C. Steele Day
Aug 16: Concert @ Switchyard Park
Aug 17: Bell Trace Worship
Aug 30: Concert @ Switchyard Park

From the Senior Pastor

When I first wrote to officially inquire about become a pastor, I was delighted to receive a sizable package in the mail. Among the flyers for seminary and invitations to discernment events was a little book called *What Shall I Say? Discerning God's Call to Ministry*. Even though I was already overloaded as a full-time student, I poured over the book, highlighting the pages, trusting that it would be a guide for the years ahead. On the very first page was prayer that became quite dear to me, as it does to many Lutherans discerning a path forward, though I later found it in Morning and Evening Prayer:

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Perhaps, at times, the prayer seems a bit much: we cannot see the ending, untrodden paths, unknown perils (in seminary?!!). But when we look out toward an unfamiliar and unpredictable future, most of us resonate with the prayer's pleas for faith and courage and trust in God, that we will lead and nourish as we grow and go on our way.

Many of you have asked what is next for us at St. Thomas. Will we form a call committee and seek a new Pastor of Youth and Christian nurture? Will we otherwise seek program staff to fill the void left by Pr. Lecia?

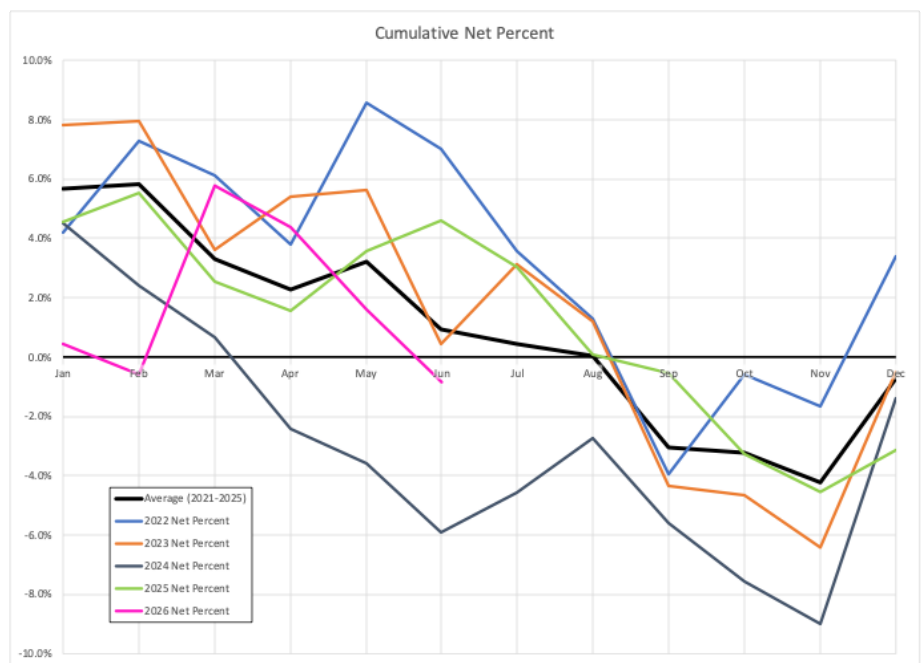
Financial Realities

As you will read in this newsletter, St. Thomas is not currently on sure financial footing. Even with the reduction in the staff salaries budget, it is possible, if we continue at the current rate of giving, that we will not make our budget this year—as we have not in four out of the last five years. It is costly to hire a clergy person: more than \$85,000 for a full-time call and over \$50,000 for a half-time call, with benefits. According to a 2022 survey of Youth Ministry professionals, base salary for a full-time non-clergy is \$45,000 before benefits are added. If we want to be able to hire another pastor, deacon, or professional program staff, we will need our members and friends to make sustaining commitments to raise our congregation's income.

What the Senior Pastor is Reading

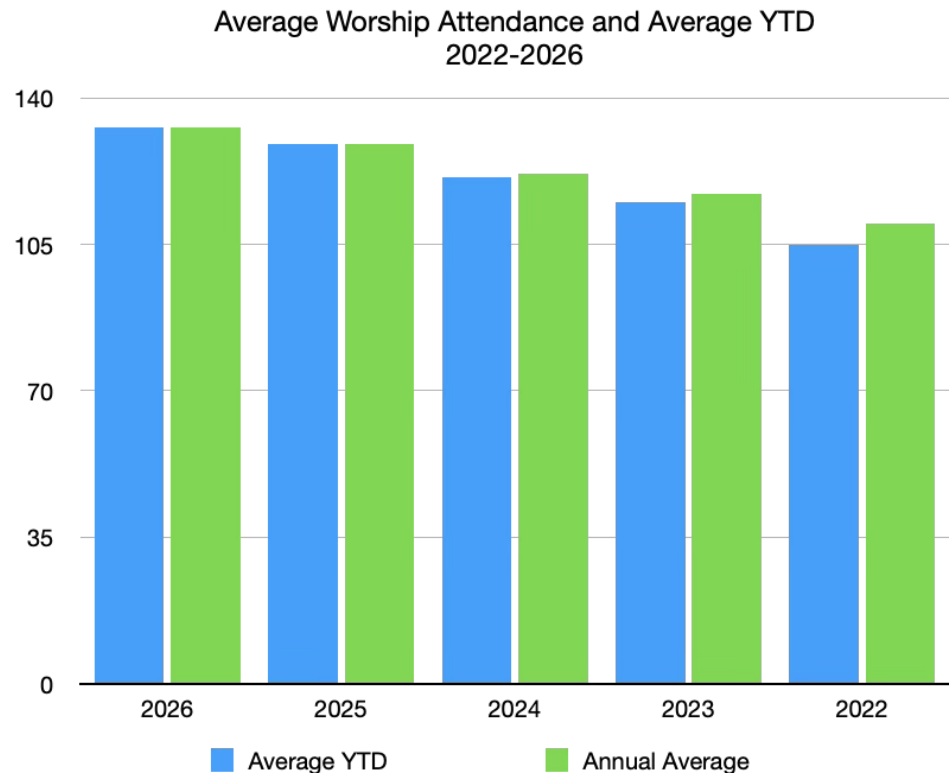
The Correspondent by Virginia Evans

A story in letters about a woman in the final chapter in her life. It is about reconciliation and hope, about what ends and what can begin again. I'm also reading (and recommend) *Reader, Come Home*, by Maryanne Wolf, who, in an early chapter, talks about reading and empathy. *The Correspondent* is a book about empathy, and connections made and remade across lifetimes.



Community Realities

Yet, our community realities are very much in favor of additional professional staff. As you can see in this chart, our average attendance has been steadily increasing since COVID (we have not reached pre-COVID attendance, where average worship attendance was 160-170). Determining the appropriate number of staff is a difficult reality, there's no easy math numbers, and, of course, the involvement of the members and friends of the congregation has to be taken into account. When I look at increasing worship attendance, I always want to be sure that if the front door welcoming new folks is wide open, that we're not neglecting the needs of existing members (and opening up the back door for people to quietly exit). All of this leads to our final reality: discernment.



Discernment Realities

I think it is a very true statement to say that we should not immediately hire a “replacement.” We should take the time to wonder together:

- Do we need additional program staff or not?
- What programming would additional staff run?
- What needs would or could be met better with additional staff?
- Where is our congregation going and growing, and how could we get additional support in that direction?
- If our leaders are focused on where we're growing, is there anything that is being neglected that additional support could cultivate?

These questions go far beyond what a congregation of our “size” would do to get to the heart of discernment: what should *our* congregation do? What could God be calling us to do?

Current Realities

Where does this leave us? Our council is meeting a retreat this month, as has become our custom, to think about the year ahead. We'll welcome Pr. Priscilla Geerdes to talk about our options—options for staffing, options for further discernment.

But, this work is only just beginning and it will require all of us.

It might seem counter-intuitive, but **this is the time to start something!** What are your passionate about? Gather folks to work on it! What ministry have you wanted to take on? Go for it! I'm happy to meet with you to discuss possibilities or to suggest our St. Thomas leaders, members, and friends to include in your plans. We know that we have holes, and we need passionate folks to fill them, but, even more we need to see where the excitement is to discern where we're growing and going.

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.

Pr. Lecia's Farewell

On Sunday, June 28, we bade farewell with our blessing to Pr. Lecia Beck and her family, Arthur Owora and Miriam Owora-Beck. Pr. Lecia will serve as Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Zionsville.



Worship Time Change



Beginning **Sunday, August 23, St. Thomas worship will be held at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.** On Sunday, September 6 (the Sunday of Labor Day weekend), we will host a potluck brunch between services. Sunday School for all ages kicks off on Sunday, September 13.

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 June 2026 (50% of the year):

	Amount	Percent	2025
Income	\$245,331.60	50.25%	56.52%
Expenses	\$249,084.22	51%	52.03%
Net Income	\$-3,752.62		\$20,785.76

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



In These Times: 5000-Hour Volunteer Challenge



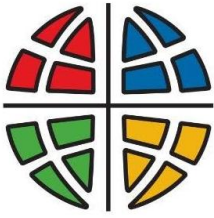
Thank you to everyone who pledged volunteer hours, who committed to the challenge, and who requested help finding places in our community to serve. Continue (anonymously) submitting your volunteer hours [using this form](#) or scan this QR code (which is on the bulletin board outside the office). Did 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 July, we have over 2000 hours submitted! Keep up the great work!



Celebrating Our Ministry

YAGM person selected!



Young Adults in Global Mission

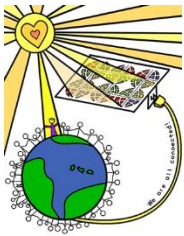
Jensen Harms from Granger, Indiana will be participating in the Young Adult Global Ministries in the United Kingdom this year. We look forward to getting to know him and supporting him as he shares God's love with young people in the United Kingdom.

Pyx Cover

Julianna Drake created and contributed a pyx cover to our altar guild supply. The pyx is a special, lidded box used to hold wafers, in our case, gluten-free wafers. All of our silverware is stored in bags to prevent tarnishing or scratching, but we did not have a bag for the pyx. Juliana created her own design for the cover, which snugly holds the pyx between services.



Creation Care Calling



The Council would like to express our appreciation to those families who have already contributed to the Solar Fund. We have raised more than 90% of what is needed to pay for the newly installed array. We still have just over \$2000 left to raise, and while that seems like a lot, if the families who have not yet contributed can make a gift of just \$25 each, we can surpass our goal. We are very blessed by all your generosity! [Click here to give.](#)

Ice Cream Social

On July 18, in a typically hot Indiana weekend, we enjoyed ice cream and lawn games. Thanks to hosts, Savannah Hadley-DeMark, Casey Main, and Dawn Bakken.



Serving our Neighbors

Collecting “Loaves and Fishes” on Sunday, August 2

Return to school time for our youngest students coincides with the reading of the familiar story of Jesus and his disciples feeding five thousand with 5 loaves and 2 fishes. To mark this occasion the St. Thomas mission committee will be collecting foil packets or cans of fish and small packages of cornbread, biscuit, or muffin mixes. These items will be donated to **Community Kitchen’s Backpack Buddies program** and **Pantry 279’s Food Bank**. Items will be collected at church on **Sunday, August 2** during both services.

Church Neighbors Round Up for Barrel Painting!

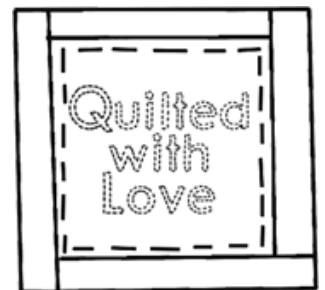


Folks from St. Thomas Lutheran, Congregation Beth Shalom, and University Baptist Church will gather to paint collection barrels for Area 10 Agency on Aging **next Sunday, August 9, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.** The organization Area 10 Agency on Aging works to support the aging population in our community.

Popsicles will be on hand for the painters. No art ability is needed. Children are welcome. Carol Seaman will be the hostess for the event. For more information contact Allison Ward [via email](#).

St. Thomas Piecemakers

The St. Thomas Piecemakers are excited to be making quilts for victims of war and disaster. Our quilts will be sent in to Lutheran World Relief this fall for distribution around the world, including disaster areas in the US. If you'd like to help assemble and tie these quilts, we'd love to have you join in **Saturday, August 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**



Come Together: News from the Outreach and Community Care Committee



St. Thomas at Bloomington Pridefest

We're recruiting folks in twos, threes, or family groups to represent St. Thomas for a couple of hours in downtown Bloomington for this yearly celebration on **Saturday, August 22**. Sign up at the Welcome Desk.

Give a Blessing

Ahead of Bloomington Pridefest, **Sunday, August 9 and 16**, we'll have a table up in the narthex where you can write a short blessing to share. The blessing basket is a feature of our table at both Bloomington Pridefest and Spencer Pride Festival, and it's a small but meaningful way for us to share God's love with all people.

LuMin Lunch Cart begins Sunday, September 13

In less than a month, students will be returning to IU. We'll begin our grab-and-go lunch cart on the second Sunday in September. The **sign-up for hosts and donations will be on the Welcome Desk on August 23**. The food that students take home often goes in their backpacks during the week; we hope it also reminds them of how much our congregation cares about them.



Save the Date: Trivia and Pizza Night



Our trivia master Rance Fawbush will be back with us on **Saturday, September 12, 5:30 p.m.** Come at 5:30 for free pizza and drinks; bring a salad or dessert to share. Or join us at 6:15 (ish) for trivia. We'll have a sign-up in the narthex in late August.

60+ Group News

60+ Group meeting: Sunday, August 9

We have lots to talk about on **Sunday, August 9, 4 p.m. in Community Hall**—our Seniors Helping Seniors project, an upcoming speaker, events in August and September, a euchre group, and maybe organizing a breakfast or coffee group. And then we'll go out to dinner (optional, of course)!

Screening "Stroke: Time is Brain"

On **Sunday, August 2, 2 p.m.** Meet in the auditorium of the **Monroe County Public Library**. Steve Krahnke will host a screening of his film "Stroke: Time is Brain." The film lasts about an hour, with a Q & A session to follow.

T. C. Steele Day in Brown County, Friday, August 14, times TBA

We'll start with a tour of Steele's home and studio and then head into Nashville for a special exhibition of his work at the Brown County Art Guild. Tickets for the tour are \$10 each; admission to the art guild is free. We can also plan lunch somewhere in Nashville. Please contact [Dawn Bakken](#) and let her know you're interested, so we can plan.

Concerts in Switchyard Park

Sunday, August 16, 6 p.m., Switchyard Park. An evening with the Bloomington Jazz Orchestra and Swing Time Big Band.

Sunday, August 30, 7 p.m., Switchyard Park. An evening with the IU Jacobs School Symphony Orchestra.

60+ Group Song Circle

The 60+ group invites singers of all ages and all abilities to a song circle on **Wednesday, September 23 at 3 p.m. in Heritage Hall**. No rehearsal, no audience, just an hour of singing together for fun! We'll sing all kinds of music—folk songs, camp songs, silly songs, brave songs, even some hymns—and we'll have a piano on hand to keep us moving. Can't carry a tune in a bucket? Buckets will be provided. If there's a song you want to make sure we sing, please get with Debbie Witt in advance [via email](#) or (812) 340-2479.



Christian Nurture



Prayer at Noon on Zoom

Prayer and self-reflection are part of the disciplines of Lent. On **Wednesday, August 5**, 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 **Monday, August 10 at 10:15 a.m.** Members and friends at Bell Trace are invited to join us in the Chapel for worship on **Monday, August 17 at 9:45 a.m.**

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!

- **August 3:** Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28; Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b; Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33
- **August 10:** Genesis 45:1-15; Psalm 133; Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32; Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28
- **August 17:** Exodus 1:8--2:10; Psalm 124; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20
- **August 24:** Exodus 3:1-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28
- **August 31:** Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 149; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20
- **September 7: (NO BIBLE STUDY)** Exodus 14:19-31; Psalm 114; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35



Sunday School Teachers

Sunday school teachers will be in Community Hall on **Sunday, August 23 between services** to plan for the upcoming year! We will bless and welcome our teachers at both services on Sunday, September 13, the Sunday School kick-off day!



Lutheran Campus Ministry at IU



If you haven't been around Rose House this summer, you may not have seen some of the updates and improvements we have been making in preparation for our new and returning students. From installing new LED ceiling fans to repainting the sign in the front of the building, to clearing out the overgrown plants along the parking lot, volunteers have been hard at work putting in countless hours to make sure our students feel safe and comfortable in the space when they arrive back on campus later this month. More work is set to continue over the coming months including applying a fresh coat of paint to the living room and a few other spaces.

While I am always excited to talk to you all about Rose House and the great stuff that is going on, you probably noticed that you have not seen me around as much at church recently. Unfortunately, this will be the case for most of the rest of 2026. I have been supply preaching several Sundays a month for congregations without a called pastor and congregations whose pastors are on vacation. It is a blessing and a privilege to be able to preach and preside and I am grateful to God for giving me the opportunities.

What it means for the St Thomas community though is that I need your help. As new and returning students arrive, please introduce yourselves to them and help them feel welcome. If they are alone, offer to have them sit by you. If they are there for the first time, please help them navigate the challenges of being in a new place. If you feel so inclined, invite a small group of students out to brunch afterwards and get to know them (or sign up to host the LuMin Lunch cart on the Second Sunday of September, 9/13).

Thank you all for your continued support and encouragement of our ministry. If you know a college student attending IU this fall and have their contact information, please email their name and contact info to LuMin at lutheran@iu.edu. If you are a student and want to follow along with our upcoming events, they are posted weekly on [Instagram](#) during the school year, and if you want to see photos of our group and activities as the year progresses you can follow us on [Facebook](#).

May God guide us to another faith and fun filled school year.

Peace,

[Pr. Amanda Ghaffarian](#) (She/Her)

Rose House LuMin Campus Minister

Life Together

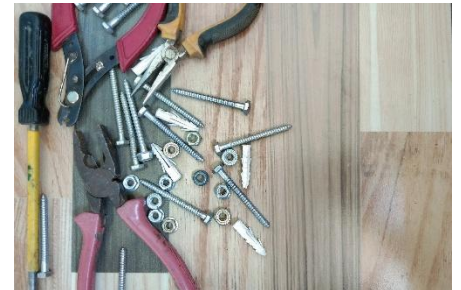
Altar Flowers



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](#).

News and Notes from Ministry Partners

Indiana-Kentucky Regional Gathering

You're invited to join us this fall for one of three IN-KY Synod Regional Gatherings. These one-day events are an opportunity to connect with others from across the synod, share ideas, worship together, and grow in faith and ministry.

Each gathering includes worship with Holy Communion, engaging breakout sessions, a catered

lunch, and time for fellowship. Choose the location that works best for you:

Saturday, September 19: Christ the Savior, Fishers, Indiana (*Pr. Adrienne is attending this event*)

Saturday, October 10: Christ Lutheran Church, Jeffersontown, Kentucky

Saturday, October 24: Christ the King, South Bend, Indiana

Registration is \$30 per person. Register by Aug. 31 and use the code EARLYBIRD to receive 50% off. Registration closes at midnight on Sept. 14. [Register here.](#)

Mark the Date for an autumn SVdP *An Afternoon in the Park*



Bloomington St. Vincent de Paul serving Monroe County usually has their annual benefit in the summer, but this year they are excited to introduce a new chapter with the event, *An Afternoon in the Park*, which will be held on **October 11 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Switchyard Park.**

By moving the event to early fall, we hope to take advantage of beautiful autumn weather, fewer scheduling conflicts with summer and church activities, and a time when more members of our community are in town and are able to join in for the celebration.

Please plan on attending, as YES, they will also be drawing the winning tickets from those who purchase special raffle tickets prior to this event.

New Hope for Families

New Hope for Families provides emergency shelter and excellent early learning programs to keep families together and lift every child into a promising future.

[Click here](#) for ongoing material needs. We have collection shelves behind the Welcome Desk.

[Click here](#) for ongoing volunteer opportunities.

Registration for the annual **Hope for the Holidays** tree festival will begin soon! Keep an eye on [this page](#) for details!

If you have questions about NHFF, please contact [Mary Ann Valenta](#).



St. Thomas Communications

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

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

Due Date for **September Newsletter** articles: **Thursday, August 20.**

Unsubscribe from this list or update your preferences by emailing:

parishadmin@stlconline.org



Dementia Caregiver Support Group

**Second Tuesday of the month
6 p.m. - 7 p.m.**

**St. Thomas Lutheran Church
380 East 3rd Street
Bloomington, IN 47401**

**Questions? Contact Lucie Scott at
812-276-4279 or Lscott24@iuhealth.org.**

Build a support system with people who understand.

Alzheimer's Association® support groups, conducted by trained facilitators, are a safe place for people living with dementia and their care partners to:

- Develop a support system.
- Exchange practical information on challenges and possible solutions.
- Talk through issues and ways of coping.
- Share feelings, needs and concerns.
- Learn about community resources.

August Calendar

Regular Sunday Schedule*

8:30 a.m. Worship/Livestream Worship

10:15 a.m. Worship through Sunday 8/16

11 a.m. Worship starting Sunday 8/23

*see each Sunday for additional events

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
2 Loaves and Fishes Collection	3 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study 7 pm Mission Committee Meeting	4 6:30 pm Worship Committee Meeting	5 12 pm Prayer at Noon on Zoom	6	7	8 10 am Property Committee Work Day 10 am St. Thomas Piecemakers
9 2 pm Area 10 Mission Committee Project 4 pm 60 + Group Meeting	10 10:15 am Worship at Redbud Hills 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	11 7 pm Finance Committee Meeting	12	13 Office Opening Late	14	15
16	17 9:45 am Worship at Bell Trace 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study 7:30 pm Outreach Committee Meeting	18	19	20	21	22 9 am Council Retreat 10 am Property Committee Work Day 2 pm Bloomington Pridefest
23 Late Service Time Change to 11 am 12:15 pm Council Meeting	24 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 1 pm Pastor's Bible Study	All dates and times are subject to change. Please confirm via the online church calendar: https://stlconline.org/about/news/				

ST. THOMAS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3800 East Third Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47401
Office Hours 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone: (812) 332-5252
stlconline.org

Partners in ministry with
**Lutheran Church of
the Living Waters**
Cherokee, North Carolina

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

In covenant with
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Ben Wegner
Adult Choir Director
choir@stlconline.org

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!**