

# Happenings at The Mount

JULY–AUGUST 2026



July and August fall within the long Season after Pentecost (sometimes called “Ordinary Time”). Our focus will be on Christian growth, discipleship, and the mission of the Church.



## A Message From Pastor Ron

My fellow Disciples of Christ,

Ah yes, summertime is here and I am reminded by the famous song from Porgy and Bess

*Summertime,  
And the livin' is easy  
Fish are jumpin'  
And the cotton is high*

In the early days of Chapin many of you remember picking cotton and heading over to the mercantile with the bales. I think of a summertime when I was a kid too, and walking barefoot and fishing in the creek was 'livin the dream' in every town in America. There is nothing better than being a little carefree and enjoying the sweet tea feeling of summertime.

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Although we breathe a little easier amid the heat, our lives continue to move at a slower pace. The ministry of Jesus Christ through The Mount — Mt. Horeb Lutheran — does not. Our ministry teams are buzzing like bees around the church. We experience worship while weaving with Fiber Friends, picking strawberries with Leisure Timers, discovering new stories with the Book Club and pouring concrete for the new handicap ramp with the Property Team.

We have fun learning new games with Mah Jong and collaborating with all our creativity, planning and building another epic float for the Labor Day parade.

Church doesn't slowdown in summer; it ramps up to exchange the light of Christ throughout the year.

We will be discovering that all the above are ways in which we can collectively draw different groups together to have worship, in addition to Sunday mornings.

On Saturday July 11th from 9-2 p.m. Pisgah Lutheran in Lexington SC will be hosting a program called "Greenhouse Day," led by Rev. Dr. Adam Beck and sponsored by the SC Synod. This will be an innovative experience where we will be inspired as the disciples we are called to be. It actually will make us more aware how we are having worship through the experiences we are already having. It is a fresh expression of sharing Jesus Christ with others.

As we continue to grow and serve Christ here at Mt. Horeb, I am reminded of how we are more than a campus of bricks and mortar, but active ministry breathing in and out hope for others to experience too. It reflects what Jesus shares in Matthew 6: 33-34  
33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

We all can relate to the conclusion of the song from Summertime:

One of these mornings; We're going to rise up singing  
Then we'll spread our wings; And we'll take to the sky.

But until that morning, we will not slow down but enjoy the journey with which God is blessing us, and we will fill the harvest with all the laborers here, to God be the glory. With excitement for our tomorrows,

— **Pastor Ron**

# SC Synod Assembly 2026 Summary



The 2026 South Carolina Synod Assembly was held at Brookland Baptist Church in Columbia SC June 11, 12 and 13. Attended by Delegates Rod Davis, Bill Dukes, Trina Free, Virginia Herlong and Pastor Ron Philabaum.

The primary vision is for a synod characterized by unity, inclusivity, and courage, inspired by biblical figures such as Paul and Solomon.

The aim is to be a welcoming church that embraces all people each equal children of God, and to be ready to answer the call to serve the wider world. The importance of facing challenges with collective wisdom and maintaining love and respect despite differences was highlighted.

We had 394 voting delegates in attendance and 40 visitors. The reports from all our supported ministries were inspiring and the far-reaching impacts made witnessed to the fruits of their labor. The harvest is plentiful and we need more laborers to join in the joy of the ministry.

A significant challenge discussed is the shortage of rostered leaders and open positions in congregations. A strategy proposed is to quicken and improve the candidacy process for new leaders. Utilizing synodically authorized preachers to fill immediate needs.

Recognition that growth is possible with creative thought, communication, and leveraging available resources. A strong desire to build stronger partnerships with Lutheran organizations and colleges, retreat centers and service providers was emphasized. There is a focus on ensuring all congregations, especially those on the periphery, feel included and supported.

Promoting interconnectivity between churches through technology and intentional communication. To encourage ministry growth and innovation the Synod is looking into diverse ministry approaches tailored to local needs, while maintaining shared mission. Use of technology and administrative skills to fund and grow ministries.

An example was shared from Mount Tabor Lutheran, which set and surpassed a goal of 150 new members in three years through intentional growth strategies and new connection points.

Commitment to standing firm against external challenges and defending the church's mission and resisting outside division from

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the Great Commission that we are all called to. Emphasis on not being intimidated, but rather communicating and supporting each other.

Where we can stand in support is to give testimony to the impacts of the work that the SC Synod is doing through each church in South Carolina. We are stronger together than a part and each of us are making a collective impact to celebrate. These are great coffee table talking points to be excited about and to tell the good news that Jesus is doing through all of us, not just individually.

We are one in the Spirit We Are One in the Lord, and we pray that all unity will one day be restored, and they'll know we are Christians by our love, yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Following the announcement of retirement from our Bishop Ginny Aebischer, elections were held to elect a new Bishop for a six-year term. There were 77 names submitted by ecclesiastical ballot. The names narrowed over 4 ballots, and by the 5th Pastor Wade Roof of Mt. Tabor in Columbia was elected to serve the SC Synod. His term begins in September of 2026. Please pray for Bishop Elect Roof as we look forward to his leadership.

In God's grace,

— **Pastor Ron**

## Congratulations to Bishop Elect the Rev. Wade Roof



From his address to the Synod assembly:

"Today is not about me, we are being called to move forward together as the church of Christ...I am so honored..Bishops Ginny, Herman, and Donges, I've seen here, these are massive shoulders I get to stand upon.. Thank you, thank you...We will serve each other and glory to God."



## Bishop Ginny Aebischer Honored

During the second night of the South Carolina Synod Assembly, Newberry College presented retiring Bishop Rev. Virginia “Ginny” Aebischer with an honorary degree in appreciation for her service and leadership. Rev. Aebischer’s six-year term concludes on Aug. 31.

## We hosted a forum on Human Trafficking in our Community: Awareness and Response.

MAY 5 –A panel of local and state leaders presented a community conversation about human trafficking in South Carolina, how it impacts our communities and how law enforcement, service providers, and advocates are working together to prevent exploitation and support survivors. Attorney General Alan Wilson opened the discussion.



# Lutheran Men in Mission

## Focusing on Faith, Fellowship and Service

MAY 11 – The Lutheran Men in Mission enjoyed a presentation on Safe Stress by Sarah Dippity of SCHEMA.ORG.

The program was based on the book, “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus.”



JUNE 8 – Pastor Jim Kinsler entertained the Lutheran Men, recounting his adventures on the Appalachian Trail.



The Appalachian Trail (AT) turned 100 years old in 2025. This 2,197-mile footpath follows the peaks and valleys of the Appalachian Mountains from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Katahdin in Maine. The fastest known time (FKT) to traverse the entire length of the “AT” was set in 2024 by Tara Dowler (trail name, Candy Mama). She finished the trail in 40 days and 18 hours.

Pastor Jim Kinsler, retired pastor of Lutheran Church By The Lake, (trail name, SLOWjourner) is working on the slowest known time (SKT). He started hiking the AT before he graduated high school in 1973. He reached Katahdin on August 19th in 2025, but he is still not finished! As he explains, “I only have 70 miles left to hike, and there is no rush because the erosion of the Appalachian mountains is even slower than I am.”

The Lutheran men will not meet in July. The annual Fish Fry Meeting will be on Monday, August 10, at 6:30 p.m. All men and women are invited.

On August 20, the Mt. Horeb Men will host the meeting of the Lutheran Men in Mission of the Heartland Conference.

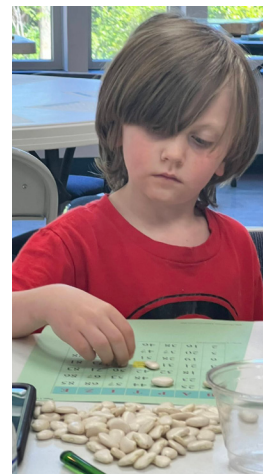
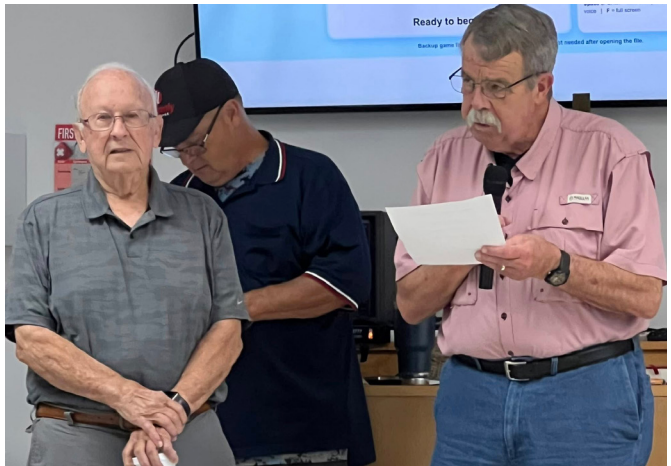
## MAY 16 – Outside Cleanup Day

The Mt. Horeb Property Team and Lutheran Men spent Saturday morning cleaning out two exterior storage buildings and painting the one in the East Boundary Street parking lot.



## MAY 16 – Baptize Bingo

An afternoon of fun, fellowship, and entertainment.



# Property Committee Summary

Activities as of 5/17/2026

- Outside HVAC Equipment Room Door & Frame Replacement: Completed door replacement.
- Carpet & Floor Cleaning Completed: Cleaning of Sanctuary carpet including 1 chair and 1 pew cushion, narthex floor, administration offices carpeting, youth room, 1st floor foyer tile, kitchen, and 4 bathrooms.
- Remaining floor Maintenance Scheduled: Fellowship Hall tile floor strip and reseal, balcony (at spiral staircase), and partial 2nd floor hall, to be completed Thursday-Saturday, May 28,29, & 30. Preschool carpet, rugs, and 4 bathrooms to be completed Monday June 1. Fellowship hall will be used June 1,2, & 3rd to clean & dry preschool rugs.
- Roof mounted HVAC for Kitchen: During seasonal maintenance and filter replacement by Bishops HVAC, found a bad condenser motor. In process of finding vendor for motor replacement.
- Exterior Cleanup Day, Saturday May 16: Cleaned out and painted East Boundary St. storage building. Partially cleaned out storage building adjacent to waste disposal area. Thanks to the following participants: Barry McCall, Don Martin, Todd Comalander, Hal Hutchens, Sonny Shealy, Rick Setzer, Stan Shealy, Pastor Ron, Esther Philabaum, Rosemary Frick, and Marion Frick.



## The Ramp is Underway

In my early twenties I finished cement with my late brother Jim. It is a real art form, which I did not get the gift for. These guys will have our new ramp finished great.

The rest of the ramp will be poured after it gets formed and inspected.  
Exciting developments!

**-Pastor Ron**

# Social Ministry Report

The Social Ministry often serves as the “front door” of the church during times of grief and loss. Its members provide and serve meals to bereaved families in the church when a member passes.

The Ministry also sends supportive cards to young adults after their high school graduation and organizes donations for the

SONshine bags that are delivered to shut-ins in July. These small gestures provide encouragement and an unexpected bit of cheer during exams and holidays.

If you’d like to learn more, please contact Deena Bishop at [all4cu@gmail.com](mailto:all4cu@gmail.com) or Kay Shealy at [kayshealy@bellsouth.net](mailto:kayshealy@bellsouth.net).

## Visitation Team



The Visitation Team is a very active subcommittee of the Social Ministry Team, a dedicated group providing a critical ministry for Mt. Horeb. Their call is to visit and provide communion to our members who can’t actively attend services in person due to being infirmed, suffering an illness, or having surgery.

The Visitation Team meets each Monday with Pastor Ron to review and schedule visits that need to be made with these members. Also, Pastor Ron blesses the communion elements that they carry with them on their visits. We are blessed to have the following members serve on this team (pictured from L to R):

Glenda Lindler, Lorraine Irwin, Vicky Shealy, Shana Grier, Pastor Ron and Kay Shealy. (Not pictured are Gail Bundrick, Joann Dukes and Esther Philabaum).

We thank them for their dedication to this ministry!

## Worship Team Activities

### June 21 – Fathers Day

Coffee and “goodies” were provided on Sunday, June 21, in recognition of all the men of the church for Father’s Day.

Also, mark your calendars for Sunday, August 30, 2026, for another outdoor service. Stay tuned in the bulletin for further information.

# Mount Horeb Preschool

Celebrating 50+ Years of Faith, Family, and Early Learning

Class space is limited, so be sure and return your Enrollment Form along with the registration fee so we may hold your child's spot in our exciting program.

Enrollment forms can be picked up through the Preschool or church office. Please call the Preschool at **(803) 345-6441** if you need further information.



## Finance Committee Report

Russ Burleson-Chair, Lisa Smith-Treasurer, Rod Davis Vice Chair, Todd Soderlund, Tom Griffin-Council Rep, Pastor Ron Philabaum

Our year-to-date offerings growth rate through May is 12.79%, down from 18.34% in April.

While this moderation may reflect the beginning of the summer vacation season — a time when offerings have historically declined, it serves as an important reminder of the ongoing need for faithful and consistent support of our church's ministry.

As many families travel during the summer months, we encourage everyone to maintain their regular giving whenever possible. Your

continued generosity ensures that Mt. Horeb Lutheran Church can faithfully carry out its mission, meet its financial commitments, and continue serving our congregation and community without interruption.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment and for responding to God's abundant blessings with joyful generosity. Your faithful stewardship makes a meaningful difference in the life and ministry of our church

# Cemetery Committee Report

By Tom Griffin

GIS Mapping Team Update – During the month of May, the GIS Mapping Team continued refining the cemetery GIS map by updating grave sites and reserved plot information to ensure the accuracy of our records. The team also discussed procedures for site reservations and is working to develop clear, consistent policies and documentation.

These documents and procedures will be further refined and reviewed over the coming months to support effective cemetery planning and administration.

Mt. Horeb Cemetery Historical Designation Update: The Historical Architectural Resources Survey commissioned by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) for the Columbia Avenue Improvement Project evaluated whether properties affected by the proposed road widening and improvement project were eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

After reviewing 44 properties within the project area, the survey determined that the Mt. Horeb Lutheran Church Cemetery Wall was the only resource found eligible for potential National Historic designation. As a result of this determination, the Mt. Horeb Cemetery Team is now working with the Chapin Historical Association to begin the formal nomination process. This process requires extensive historical research, documentation, photographs, mapping, and

preparation of a detailed nomination package that demonstrates the wall's historical significance and integrity.

The nomination must also be reviewed by the appropriate state preservation authorities before it can be forwarded for consideration at the national level. This process is being funded by a grant from the Chapin Historical Association. If successfully listed, National Register designation would recognize the historical importance of the cemetery wall, and could create opportunities to pursue preservation grants, endowments, and other funding sources to assist with its long-term maintenance and conservation.

The designation would also help preserve an important part of Mt. Horeb's heritage for future generations while honoring those who are buried within its historic grounds.

The Cemetery Team will continue to keep the congregation informed as work on the nomination progresses and appreciates the support of members and the community throughout this important preservation effort

# Cemetery GIS Report

By Billy Griffin

Over the past year, our cemetery committee has been compiling data and records to create a spatial database, GIS, for our cemetery. This process is nearing completion with all of the known graves entered in GIS. This information includes the occupied graves as well as those reserved by others for future burial.

This information can be viewed on the Mt. Horeb website under the tab "about us" and following the link to "cemetery." The cemetery is shown with basic outlines of grave sites and reserved grave spaces with the colors representing the status of the grave.

Graves that are designated as "Occupied," "Reserved," or "Veteran" can be found using the search tool that is shown on the screen. By typing in a name, the system will search records for matches and highlight the selected grave.

Many gravesites are reserved in our records, but some confusion is encountered because of our past record keeping. "Plots" were reserved by families, but individual graves were not assigned to a specific family member.

A lot of work has been done to create the GIS and the system is usable today. Until individual grave details are specified, the possibility of undue stress on families exists. In the coming months, we would like to dig

into these specifics and get our GIS into the robust system our congregation deserves.

We can be reached through the church office or email us at [cemetery@mtthoreb.net](mailto:cemetery@mtthoreb.net)  
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# Stewardship Committee Report

Members: Pastor Ron Philabaum, Tom Griffin- Council Rep, Rod Davis- Council Chair, Lisa Smith-Treasurer, Russ Burleson, Bill Dukes, Katie Morgan, Pam Pope, Pam Shear, Stan Shealy

According to our financial reports, through May 31 the Stewardship for All Seasons campaign has been a success. Our goal was to increase offerings by 10%, and we thankfully report that offerings are up 12.79% through the end of May.

We are deeply grateful for the continued generosity and faithful financial support of our members. Your gifts make it possible for

Mt. Horeb Lutheran Church to carry out its ministry and mission in our community and beyond.

As we enter the summer months, when giving often declines due to vacations and travel, we encourage everyone to prayerfully continue your regular financial support. Together, we can sustain this positive momentum and ensure that our ministries remain strong throughout the season. Thank you for your commitment to faithful stewardship and for sharing God's blessings through your generosity.

## Agape Circle Note

Agape Circle's July meeting will be on Thursday, July 9, 5:30 p.m. due to the Fourth of July holiday. All women of Mt. Horeb are invited and welcome to attend!

We will resume our regular first Thursday meeting schedule on August 6.

# God's Work, Our Hands

Mark your calendar for Sunday, Sept. 13, when congregations of the ELCA will join together for our annual day of service, "God's work. Our hands."

Participating in service projects is one way to celebrate who we are as the ELCA — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in faith and life. As we continue our tradition of service, we remember the words of Martin Luther, "Our faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing." With our hands, we do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ's name.

**God's work. Our hands.**



September 13, 2026

# A Note From Wanda Rister

I want to thank all of you for the prayers, cards, and acts of love you all gave to me when I was in the hospital. I am doing well.

Also, thank you, Pastor Ron, for your visit and phone calls.

May God Bless!

## Congregational Birthday Party

Save the Date! Congregational Birthday Party is planned for August 23, from 3 to 5 p.m.. On this Sunday afternoon we will celebrate everyone's birthday!

There will be 12 Birthday tables set up, one for each month! Join your birthday month group to celebrate, and enjoy eating and visiting your friends.

After eating cake for your month, feel free to visit any other table and eat and celebrate with that group!

When we have eaten all we can, we will then have an old-fashioned hymn sing-along, and we need your voice! This event is a true "fellowship" celebration. Everyone has a birthday, so all are expected to participate!

We will be asking for volunteers and/or recruiting helpers to make birthday cakes and decorate tables. Each table should have a theme for that month and decorated accordingly! Please save this date and plan on eating cake with your friends

# Birthdays & Anniversaries

## JULY & AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

**July 1** Barry McCall  
**July 2** Mike Naughton  
**July 4** Brett Gowans  
**July 5** Rae Davis  
**July 5** Kenly Derrick Neely  
**July 5** Charlie Neely  
**July 8** Cole Comalander  
**July 9** Yu Wang  
**July 13** Linda Olsten  
**July 15** Gene Shealy  
**July 17** Rosemary Frick  
**July 18** Virginia Herlong  
**July 19** Katelyn Hill  
**July 19** Alex Soderlund  
**July 20** Michael E. Epting  
**July 22** Kim Goodman  
**July 24** Cameron Prince  
**July 24** Ryan Dukes  
**July 25** Lorraine Irwin  
**July 26** Mattie Smith  
**July 30** Greg Shealy  
**July 31** Joey Bishop  
**July 31** Bryce Shealy

**August 2** Danny Free  
**August 2** Kelly Wessinger  
**August 3** Bailey Shealy Baird  
**August 3** Esther Philabaum  
**August 5** Craig Hess  
**August 5** Ann Hutchens  
**August 7** Wes Hill  
**August 8** Rick Setzer  
**August 8** Bernard Slice  
**August 9** Wil Hutchens  
**August 9** JoAnne Hill  
**August 10** Brandon Miller  
**August 12** Jerry D. Shealy  
**August 13** Bonnie Counts  
**August 13** Peggy Roche  
**August 17** Drew McCall  
**August 17** Peyton Wessinger  
**August 22** Margaret Robinson  
**August 22** Stan Shealy  
**August 24** Annette Stuck  
**August 27** Taylor Ann Fiber  
**August 28** Jordan McCall Ramage  
**August 28** Jenna McCall  
**August 29** Phyllis Metts  
**August 29** Brandon Prince

## JULY & AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

**July 2** Jesse Ray & Jeannie Frick-65  
**July 8** Todd & Holly Comalander-31  
**July 18** Ray & Pam Shear-45  
**July 26** Billy & Katie Morgan-40

**August 4** Pete & Sandra Ayoub-63  
**August 4** Ken & Joan Heintz-42  
**August 4** Gene & Sherry Teal-52  
**August 11** Aubrey & Mary Nell Metts-53  
**August 13** Mike & Joni Epting-38  
**August 26** Robert & Hazel Smith-65