

August 2025

HERE AND NOW

²⁰ Once Jesus^[g] was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed, ²¹ nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you." *Luke 17:20-21*

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus often tells His disciples, "The Kingdom of God is near." In Luke's Gospel, this isn't just a distant promise—it's a declaration that God's Kingdom is breaking into the world right now. It's not just something we wait for; it's something we are called to live in and live out, each and every day.

When we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," we are asking God to make His presence and purpose real in our world. We long for heaven's peace, justice, love, and truth to shape our lives here on earth. And that begins now.

We have entered the long, green season after Pentecost—a time the church sets aside for **growth**, **renewal**, **and reflection**. The green paraments on our altar remind us that this is a season of spiritual flourishing. Even in the quiet, ordinary weeks of summer and early fall, God is at work—planting seeds of faith, nourishing our spirits, and calling us to grow.

As part of this season of renewal, our search team is prayerfully seeking a new Director of Music. We are deeply grateful to Ryan Price, who continues to faithfully lead our musicians in both traditional and contemporary expressions of worship. We are thankful to the choir who are dedicated and lead us in worship each week. Thank you also to you: the congregation, who worship with open hearts, regardless of style—offering your voices, your presence, and your joy as an offering to God.

In all of this, we are reminded: **we are living in the Kingdom of God today**. God is not far off—He is here with us, moving among us, working through us. We serve a timeless God— "the same yesterday, today, and forever"—and we are invited to live fully in the present, while trusting in the hope of what's still to come.

Let's continue to worship, grow, and serve in this season. God is with us. The Kingdom is near. And that is good news for us all.

Sister in Christ, Pastor Gina

CHURCH COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

Congregational Council Minutes June 2025

ATTENDANCE: Absent - Fran Bouknight, Mary Koon, and Jennifer Miller

CARES AND CONCERNS: Prayers for the families of Francis Eargle and Kenny Drafts at their passing; prayers for the safety of Mary, daughter of Robin Machajewski, who is in Bogota, Colombia, which is experiencing political unrest and a devastating earthquake; Crystal, a visitor who is in need; and for our Music Director Search Committee.

MEMBER CARE: We are working to get missing photographs for the pictorial directory.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Accepted as presented with the correction of Al Stevens having devotions this month, not Mary Koon.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES: Accepted as presented with the correction of adding Wayne Corley to the list of volunteers for the Jeff Jones Driver Education Class.

REPORTS:

- Pastor Gina: Report for May and June 2025 was submitted. Pastor Gina will be out of town July 6, and we cannot find someone to lead music for that day so we may just have a Service of the Word if no musician can be found. There are eight Lutheran churches in our area currently without music directors.
- Treasurer: Budget Comparison Last Month for May 2025 and Designated Funds Last Month for May 2025 were submitted. Our income for the year is currently short of our expenses. We now owe only \$45,500 on The Building on Holy Ground loan, and it should be paid in full in about nine months.
- Financial Secretary: Funds Report for May 2025 was submitted.
- Executive Committee: Executive Committee recommends that Ben Bernstein be awarded the Spring 2025 disbursement of the Stephen Price Scholarship in the amount of \$700. PASSED unanimously.

Team Reports/Recommendations:

Team for Ministry:

Care: Written report submitted.
Outreach: Written report submitted.
Support: Written report submitted.

Finance: No report submitted.

Teach: No report submitted. Please sign up if you're planning to attend VBS.

Worship: Written report submitted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- 1. SC Synod Assembly June 12-14, 2025 Pastor Gina and Terry Swygert will attend.
- 2. Music Director Search Committee Everyone has accepted their invitation to be part of the Committee and now the work begins. The Committee plans to meet with the choir and music leaders to determine our issues and needs.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Next Meeting: Sunday, July 13, 2025, at 11:30am
- 2. Next Month's Devotions and Lock Up Sherwood Garrett

Sheila Eargle, Council Secretary

Congregational Council Minutes July 2025

ATTENDANCE: Absent - Mary Koon, Jerry Price, and Terry Swygert

CARES AND CONCERNS: Prayers for Isaiah, friend of Skyler Miller who lost his home in a fire; Jane Sexton; Terry Swygert and family; Jennifer Miller at the passing of Sarge; and for DJ Plummer who will give birth soon.

MEMBER CARE:

ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Accepted as presented **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**: Accepted as presented

REPORTS:

- Pastor Gina: Report for July 2025 was submitted. Pastor Gina plans to broach the idea of reviving Lay School of Religion to her pastors' group. The Leadership Retreat will be January 9-11, 2026, at the Isle of Palms Retreat Center. The driver's training class was a success, and Jeff Jones has asked us to host this class 2-3 times a year with the next session likely occurring in September.
- Treasurer: 1c Designated Funds Last Month for June 2025 and 1b Budget Comparison Last Month for June 2025 were submitted. We had a good month and collected more than we spent, but we're still \$8,000-\$9,000 behind budget for the year. It was noted that we spend approximately 25% of our budget on outreach each year, with most of those funds going to our Food Pantry.
- Financial Secretary: Funds Report for January-June 2025 and June 2025 were submitted.
- Executive Committee:

Team Reports/Recommendations:

Team for Ministry:

Care: Written report submitted.

Outreach: No report submitted. Drive By Prayer will be July 24.

Support: Written report submitted. The stage curtain has dry rotted and needs to be replaced. A quote from Georgia Stage was acquired. We will address this further in next month's

meeting.

Finance: No report submitted. **Teach**: No report submitted. **Worship**: No report submitted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- 1. Director of Music Search Team The Team was installed during the worship service today. A survey will be sent to the members of the choir and handbell choir, and the group will meet on Sunday, August 3 at 3:00pm to talk about the results of the survey and to give input to the Search Team.
- 2. SC Synod Assembly Update A Vice President was elected, and the event went well.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Next Meeting: Sunday, August 10, 2025, at 11:30am
- 2. Next Month's Devotions and Lock Up Wayne Corley

Sheila Eargle, Council Secretary

ATTENDANCE REPORT

	<u>In-person</u>	Live Streaming	<u>Total</u>
June 1	79	121	200
June 8	85	125	210
June 15	135	121	252
June 22	103	n/a	103
June 29	91	102	193
July 6	58	138	196
July 13	100	148	248
July 20	87	102	189
July 27	79	142	221

TREASURER REPORT

Loan Balance 06/30/2025	64,943.52		
	Actual	Actual	
2025 June	Income		Difference
Current & Benevolence	23,104.19	22,336.14	768.05
Building Improvement	3,005.00	333.50	2,971.50
Building Fund	4,985.00	4,954.48	30.52

	Actual	Actual	
2025 Year to Date	Income	Expense	Difference
Current & Benevolence	126,863.77	134,016.84	(7,153.07)
Building Improvement	7,821.00	5,940.21	1,880.79
Building Fund	13,087.88	8,683.11	4,404.77

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS



Thank you so much for the beautiful Peace Lily celebrating the lifetime of Kenny Drafts. Your thoughtfulness and kind words mean a lot during this sad time in our lives. We feel comfort in our Lords presence. Much Love, *The Roland's & The Davis's*

Mt. Hermon Family; Thank you all for supporting me over the last 4 years at Clemson. I am so thankful to know I always have a home to come to. Please continue to pray for me as I start Graduate School. Love Samantha Bucknam





Thank you for all the prayers over the last few months for my sister Nina and support after she gained her wings. We are so Blessed with calls, cards and many who supported us from our Mt Hermon family during her funeral. *Mary & Wynne*



The Travel Team is on the move. Mt.

Hermon Travelers are on the road again. Save the date for our next adventure on Wednesday, August 27th where we will go apple picking in Hendersonville. More details are to follow.

CARE TEAM HAPPENINGS

The Care Team meets on the 1st Monday of every month at 5:30 pm in the conference room. If you would like to serve on this team, please contact Alyson Price and Sheila Starkey or any team members and attend the next meeting!

Care Connection

If you live alone, join the Care Team's Care Connection! It's as simple as a quick text in the morning to say hi, send an emoji, or whatever you prefer to be sure your "Care Connection Partner" is safe and well. If you are interested in participating in this daily check in, please contact Sheila Starkey at starkey.sheila@gmail.com or text 803-315-2990.





He-Brews Supper Clubs will meet on September 13th. This will give our members an opportunity to share a meal together, get to know others in our congregation, and encourage one another in our faith journey. Sign-up sheet is in the breezeway, or you can also register online. The deadline to register is September 8th.

New Care Team Ministry: The Care Team is putting together a medical team that

can help should there be a medical emergency during worship, Sunday school, church events, etc. If you work in the medical field and would like to be part of this team, please contact Myra Kinard at 803-920-0222.

Already the Medical Team has received a number of medical devices which anyone may use. If you have medical equipment that you wish to donate to this ministry, please contact Myra Kinard at 803-920-0222 or Sheila Starkey 803-305-2990





Meal Train: The Plummer family is busy welcoming Wayne to their family! See the link below for a Meal Train if you are interested.

https://mealtrain.com/96k06o

OUTREACH TEAM HAPPENINGS

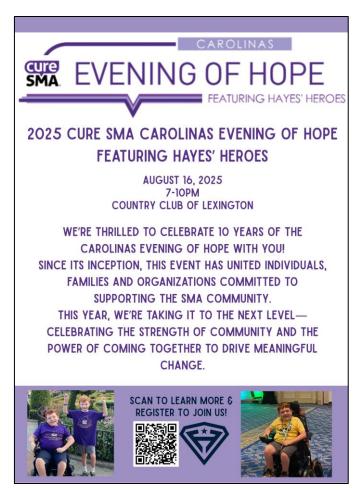
The Outreach Team meets on the 3rd **Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm** in the **conference room**. If you would like to serve on this team, please contact **Bonnie Bouknight**, **Melanie Jackson**, or **any team member** and attend the next meeting.

Outreach Columbia - The Outreach Team is still looking for volunteers for the food bank on Saturdays. We need help with praying with participants, to load groceries and restocking set ups. Please consider volunteering for this very rewarding project. Please contact Diane Boulware or any member of the Outreach Team.





Adopt-A-Highway, The next Adopt-A-Highway pickup is scheduled for Saturday August 16th at 9:00 am. We will leave from the church parking lot. The next Adopt-A-Highway is scheduled for November 15th. Please join us if you can.



SUPPORT TEAM HAPPENINGS

The Support Team meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm in the conference room. If you would like to serve on this team, please contact Ronnie Fulmer or any team members and attend the next meeting.

Completed Repairs/Maintenance notes:

- Assisted in hanging 2 Televisions for Driver Training classes.
- Outdoor clean up, cleaned the yard, cut grass, and removed fallen tree in preparation for outdoor worship.
- Spoke with Midlands Lock and Key about servicing locks around the church. There are problems with locks working properly. A date will be scheduled to meet and check locks.
- Purchased lockbox (real estate type), to go on Scout Hut for Pickleball equipment storage to be located inside Scout Hut.
- Met with Georgia Stage Sales Representative to give us a quote and fabric samples for replacing torn stage curtain in the Fellowship Hall.

Fellowship Hall Clean out and Clean up

Please see the note in the Worship Team section of the newsletter.



TEACH TEAM HAPPENINGS

The Teach Team meets on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 11:30am in the conference room. If you would like to serve on this team, please contact Mary Koon, Cyndi Leaphart, or any team member and attend the next meeting.



Rally Day: Join us on Sunday, August 10th for Rally Day as we rally in the new school year. Sunday School classes will welcome rising grade levels as we continue to live and learn among God's faithful people. The congregation will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30^{am} to enjoy a potluck brunch, learn about classes offered to both children and adults, and round the morning out with a classic game of Mt. Hermon Bingo!

Blessing Of the Backpacks: Calling all students and educators! Bring your backpack or school bag to worship on Sunday, August 10th for our annual blessing of the backpacks. Our congregation will pray over these vessels to usher in God's love, protection, clarity, and grace as we embark on a new school year!





Have Mercy! During the month of August, Teach Team is collecting donations for MIRCI (Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc.) To support their efforts in ministering to vulnerable and homeless adults in our community. Some of our congregation interacted with a vulnerable adult who sought refuge at Mt. Hermon for several days in June. MIRCI

stepped in and helped us to connect this individual with transportation, shelter, and food/medical resources. As Matthew 25 reminds us, "I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me". If you would like to contribute to a love offering for MIRCI so they can continue these efforts, please note "MIRCI" on a collection plate or tithe offering in August. Learn more about their mission at www.MIRCI.org

Seeking Volunteers to Share

Your Faith! Are you passionate about helping children grow in their faith? Do you have a heart for teaching and a desire to make an impact in young lives? We are currently seeking additional Sunday School teachers to join our team for the upcoming season. Whether you've taught before or are simply



feeling called to serve, we'd love to talk with you. Training, materials, and support are provided — All you need is a willing heart and a love for god's word.

Here's how you can make a difference:

- Teach or assist about once a month, based on your availability
- Help children and youth build a strong foundation of faith
- Serve alongside a supportive and joyful team

If you're interested or would like to learn more, please reach out to Mary Koon (803-807-0283 or mhbkoon@gmail.com) or Pastor Gina. Help us go out and make a difference in the world — one bible story at a time!



Camp Firelight Thank

You's! A huge shout out to each disciple who helped make camp Firelight VBS a joyful success! From our activity leaders, group guides, theme decorators, puppeteers, musicians, and chefs – Our combined efforts helped us share God's love with over 50 Children and 70 adults! Camp Firelight taught us that we can trust God to lead the way, which is especially helpful in times of fear and uncertainty. Way to go out and make a difference in the world!

WORSHIP TEAM HAPPENINGS

The Worship Team meets on the **4**th **Sunday at 11:30am** in the **conference room**. If you would like to serve on this team, please contact **Marion Leaphart** or **any team member** and attend the next meeting.

Eucharistic Ministry Team

The worship team would like to announce the development of a Eucharisitc Ministry Team. Anyone interested in more information, please contact Pastor Gina.



Fellowship Hall Clean out and Clean up

You may have heard or seen ... the curtain in the Fellowship Hall has seen it's better days. The fabric has deterioriated to the point of no return. The hardware to open and close the curtain are also out of the construction/use code and must also be replaced. The Support and Finance Teams

are making recommendations to the council in August for it's replacement. Meanwhile, the Worship Team is coordinating a Clean Out and Clean Up for all items on the stage. If you have any personal items stored on the stage, we ask that you remove them from the church grounds (don't put them somewhere else to store them). All items will be removed from the stage and placed in the Fellowship Hall beginning August 18th. All items remaining in the Fellowship Hall on August 28th will be hauled away.

Director of Music Search Team

The Team was commissioned during worship on July 13. Those serving on the team are Marion Leaphart, chair of Worship Team, Charlene Corley, chair of Personnel Team, Nancy Addison, Ann Addy, Fran Bouknight, Scottie Marsh, and Jerry Price, These seven were commissioned and sent out to find the next Director of Music.



SERVING IN WORSHIP AUGUST

	Aug 3	Aug 10	Aug 17	Aug 24	Aug 31
Ushers	Jeff Price	Herb Bucknam	Joey Koon	Frankie Jackson	Larry Amick
	Blake Allen	Blake Allen	Teddy Koon	Melanie Jackson	Kay Bryant
Crucifer	Chanler Coppens	Cameron Bucknam	Sam Koon	Braydon Rutherford	Hayes Wingard
Acolyte	Brayden Johnson	Hayden Eargle	Walker Kinard	Dylan Whitaker	Bryson Johnson
Lector	Alyson Price	Herb Bucknam	Sam Koon	Frank Bouknight	Larry Amick
Comm Assts	Chanler Coppens	Cameron Bucknam	Mary Koon	Frank Bouknight	Kathy Cooper
	Kirby Johnson	Hayden Eargle	Sam Koon	Braydon Rutherford	Wayne Corley
	Marie Gardner	Debbie Fulmer	Walker Kinard	Dylan Whitaker	Charlene Corley
	Cheri Coppens Daryl Leigh Anthony	Parker Boulware	Elyse Kinard	Frankie Jackson	Susan Busby
	Marion Leaphart Cyndi Leaphart	Diane Boulware	Arron Kinard	Melanie Jackson	Terry Swygert
Audio	Ryan Corley	Arron Kinard	Blake Allen	Brandon Donaldson	Ryan Corley
Video	Breanna Metze	Quentin Kinard	Breanna Metze	Marie Gardner	Rick Duval
Nursery	Kay Bryant	Charlene Corley	Alyson Price	Cassie Swygert	Melanie Jackson
	Larry Amick	DJ Plummer	Brittany Allen	Laura Carroll	Katie Donaldson
Flowers	Eric & Abbey Carroll	Maddox	Andrea Bowers	Sherwood Garrett	Scotts

SERVING IN AUGUST

COUNCIL REP: Wayne Corley ALTAR GUILD: Jennifer Price

TABULATORS: Diane Boulware, Ann Bouknight

^{*} If you are unable to serve, please ask someone to serve in your absence.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



Aug 01	Nancy Addison, Laura Carroll, Allison Swyger			
	♥ Aug 02 Eddie & Amanda Robinette			
	♥ Aug 06 Tommy & Kelli Mills			
	♥ Aug 10 Jimmy & Doris Maddox			
	♥ Aug 11 Frank & Bonnie Bouknight			
Aug 13	Watson Martin			
Aug 14	Tiffany Kaylor			
Aug 17	Quentin Kinard, Kay Little, Charlotte Threatt			
	♥ Aug 19 Marvin & Gabrielle Bouknight			
Aug 19	Gloria Mathias			
Aug 20	Doris Carver			
	♥ Aug 20 Johnny & Marie Lewis			
Aug 21	Teddy Koon, Noah Swygert			
Aug 22	Melanie Jackson			
Aug 23	Skyler Miller			
Aug 24	Brayden Rutherford			
	♥ Aug 24 Noah & Cassie Swygert			
Aug 25	Sam Koon			
Aug 26	Adelaide Bryant, Wynne Price, Danny Scott			
Aug 27	Jason Addy			
Aug 29	Hayden Eargle			

Please let the office know if your information is not printed in this listing. office@WeAreMtHermon.com or 803.240-3143

MT HERMON PRAYS

Continual Prayer

Patricia Bachman, Asbury Arms Lauvenia Butts, Lakeside Place Doris Carver, Presby Home Georgianna Gray, home James Hallman, Lakeside Place Marie Kleckley, Lex Ext Care

Gloria Mathias, *home*Jane Sexton, *Phoenix Asst Living*Jean Shealy, *Lexington Medical*Cyndi Thurman, *home*Linda Waters-Hamilton, *Encompass*

Members in Special Need of Prayer

Chris Carroll Debbie Duval Michelle Gantt

Joye Haygood Dennis Thurman Mary Frances Sease Jim Whitaker

Family and Friends Who Have Requested Prayer

Billy Huckabee, friend of Danny Scott Stetson Cooper, grandson of Dan Cooper Paula Miller, friend of Brittany Allen Dawn McIlwain-Merck,

friend of Robin Ellisor John Catoe, family of the Ellisors Mrs. William L. Coleman Jr (Carolyn),

friends of Marion & Cyndi Leaphart
Iris Wellborn, sister of Earl Sease
Mrs. Cruz, teacher of Abbey Carroll
Phil Dennis, brother of Lavonne Roof
Nancy Lail-Hulon & Family,

friends of Debra & Dave Butts
Sandra Watson,

aunt of Courtney Bucknam Jaimie Womack,

friend of Ryan & Jennifer Price Cynthia Rabon,

friend of Ryan & Jennifer Price Blase Rhine,

grandson of Frank & Bonnie Bouknight
Jeslyn, friend of Scarlett Bryant
Faye McCartha, mother of Debra Butts
Robbie Rector, friend Jennifer Miller
Bill Geddings, father of Allison Swygert
Jane Baxley, cousin of Michelle Gantt

Joyce Davis,

grandmother of Jaquelyn Hawlik Will & Summer Satcher,

friend of Courtney Bucknam Dorothy Collins, friend of Ryan Price Lauren Addy,

friend of Kathy Cooper and Metzes
Sam Lockridge, friend of Scottie Marsh
Mary Duffie, mother of Alyson Price
Thelma Moyer, mother of Diane Boulware
Kaiden Howell,

friend of Jacquelynn Hawlik
Randy Stonehill, friend of Ryan & Jennifer
Linda Bennett, mother of Beth Jordan
Neice of Abbey Carroll's teacher
Singley & Parisano families,

friends of Sam & Kathy Cooper Joy Jordan,

friend of Michelle Gantt Homer Settles, friend of Ryan Price



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	9:00am Food Pantry (Laura & Al Stevens)
3 9:00am Worship 10:30am Sunday School 3:00pm Choir & Handbell Meeting	5:30pm CR: Care Team 6:30pm Team for Ministry	5 5:00pm Executive Team 6:00pm GR: Grief Support	6 9:00am Food Pantry (Fran Bouknight, Angie Hydrick, Sherwood Garrett) 10:00am Staff Meeting	7	8	9 9:00am Food Pantry (Diane & Parker Boulware)
10 9:00am Worship – Backpack Blessing 10:30am Rally Day 11:30am Council Meets	11 6:30pm Lutheran Men & Women	12 6:30pm LIFE Group at Jackson's	13 9:00am Food Pantry (Ann Addy, Ann Bouknight, Sharon Keefe) 12:05pm OneBody	14 6:00pm CR: Travel Team	15	16 Adopt-A-Highway FH: Roberta 9:00am Food Pantry (Koon Family & Elaine Clawson)
17 9:00am Worship 10:30am Sunday School 11:30am CR: Teach Team 12:00pm FH: Gloria Mathias	18 FH: Worship Team	19 FH: Worship Team 6:00pm CR: Finance Team 6:00pm GR: Grief Support	20 FH: Worship Team 9:00am Food Pantry (Diane & Parker Boulware, Mary Frances Sease) 10:00am Staff Meeting	21 FH: Worship Team 6:00pm CR: Outreach Team	22 FH: Worship Team Newsletter Info Deadline	23 FH: Worship Team 9:00am Food Pantry (The Kinard Family)
24 FH: Worship Team 9:00am Worship 10:30am Sunday School 11:30am CR: Worship Team	25 FH: Worship Team	26 FH: Worship Team 6:30pm CR: Support Team 6:30pm LIFE Group at Jackson's	9:00am Food	28 FH: Worship Team	29 FH: Worship Team	30 FH: Worship Team 9:00am Food Pantry (Wayne & Charlene Corley)
31 9:00am Worship 10:30am Sunday School						



Mt Hermon Lutheran Church 3011 Leaphart Road West Columbia, SC 29169

NON PROFIT ORG US POSTAGE PAID PERMIT # 958 COLUMBIA, SC

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Rev. Gina D. Metze <i>, Pastor</i>	803.951.3784	PastorGina@WeAreMtHermon.com
Roberta Smith <i>Parish Administrator</i>	803.240.3143	Office@WeAreMtHermon.com
Here and Now		1
Church Council Happenings		2
Attendance Report		4
		4
Community Happenings	••••••	5
Care Team Happenings	••••••	<i>6</i>
		<i>8</i>
		8
		<i>9</i>
		11
Serving in Worship August		
Birthdays and Anniversaries	••••••	
		14