

Mt. Hebron Lutheran Church

August 2025

A note from the Pastor's desk:

On Wednesday evening, July 30th, more than 30 members of the congregation gathered in the fellowship hall to share a meal and to discuss the future of the church. The main topic of discussion was finances. In short, for the past few years, contributions have not kept up with expenses.

(To be clear, this is not anyone's fault. The purpose of the meeting was not to point fingers at anyone! If I had to pick one reason for why this is, it would be church attendance. Not only at Mt. Hebron, but at most churches, attendance has been falling for several decades now. This is also not the fault of any one person. With fewer people in the pews, fewer contributions come in as well.)

During the course of the conversation, I heard many of you talk about Mt. Hebron with passion, and make suggestions for ways we might reduce expenses, increase attendance, and make people more aware of the financial situation. One suggestion was to include a summary of the monthly treasurer's report in the newsletter. That's a swell idea, and I intend to make that change, starting with the September newsletter.

Discussing finances is not always very pleasant. I commend the members of the Finance Committee for being willing to come directly to the congregation with this situation. And I commend the members of the church for being willing to engage in this conversation.

One fear I've heard several times is that somewhere down the road – 10 or 20 years from now – the church doors may close. I certainly share that sentiment. I do not want to see that happen.

Why not? I've been your pastor for four years now. In that time, I've seen so many good things happen here. We've given money to the Christian Ministry Center, Wittenberg food bank, Lifebridge of Newberry, Circle Volunteer fire department, the synod, and other organizations. We've collected food for CMC, school supplies, and items for the Lifebridge "baby boutique." In the fall, we put together flood buckets and children's comfort kits for Lutheran Disaster Response, in the wake of Hurricane Helene.

Not only that, but Mt. Hebron has been making a difference in the lives of many generations of people for nearly 127 years now: making disciples, teaching the faith, providing in times of need, baptizing, sharing the Lord's Supper, and making God's love known here, in the community, and throughout the world.

I want this church to continue because I see God's work being done here, in so many ways. And so I will pray that the Holy Spirit would lead us all together through these financial questions, that we could continue being God's hands and feet in the world for as long as possible!

-Pastor Christopher

PRAYER GARDEN



Renovations to the prayer garden continue! Recently, the concrete was poured for new walkways into the area. The next step is some general landscaping: cleaning out the old beds and putting in some pine straw. The installation of new plants will wait a few months until the weather is cooler.

Many thanks to the members of the Property Committee for directing the renovation work! Also, thank you to members of the Worship & Music Committee for overseeing the use of money in the Memorial Fund, which is paying for the renovations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



The LMM met Sunday, July 20th at 9:00am. Eleven people were present. Waffles and fresh fruit were provided by Pastor Christopher and Sarah. The pastor led devotions based on Exodus 3 and 4. God sent Moses on a mission to Egypt, to free the Israelites. Even though Moses had many reasons why he wasn't suited for the job, God sent him and worked through him despite his doubts.

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and approved, and \$80 in dues were collected. Since the May meeting, dues in the amount of \$668 were paid to the state LMM for 2024 and 2025. The current balance of the LMM account is \$5,125.83.

Plans were discussed for the next 5th Sunday breakfast on August 31st. Looking ahead to November, it was noted that the LMM will have activities on three consecutive Sundays: 11/16 will be a regularly scheduled meeting, 11/23 will be the Thanksgiving dinner (hosted by LMM) and Chrismon tree assembly, and 11/30 will be a 5th Sunday breakfast (also hosted by LMM).

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting will be **Sunday, September 21st at 8:30am**. All men are invited to join us!

AMEN FOR LUTHERAN MEN!

NEW WAY TO GIVE

There's a new way to give! Mt. Hebron now has an online giving platform where you can give a memorial, a one-time offering, or set up a recurring gift. This can be done through the **Tithe.ly** app. To begin, download the app on your phone. After you've set up an account, search for Mt. Hebron Lutheran Church, Leesville SC as the recipient of your donations. Enter the amount of the gift and your debit or credit card number to complete your donation.

If you are interested in setting this up and have questions or need assistance, please contact Denise Derrick or the pastor! Thank you Denise for working to establish this for our church!

The last day to bring donations for our school supply drive is **Sunday, August 10th!**

Church council will meet **Sunday, August 10th, time TBD**. Council members, please remember to review and bring the minutes of the last meeting.

Youth group will meet **Wednesday, August 27th at 5:00pm**. We will have snacks, conversation, devotion time, and a game! Bring a friend!

WELCA will meet **Thursday, August 28th at 6:00pm**. All women are welcome!

LMM will host a 5th-Sunday breakfast on **Sunday, August 31st at 9:30am** in the fellowship hall. All are welcome to attend!

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS



There will be a blessing of the backpacks during worship on **Sunday, August 10th**.

Students, teachers, and other school staff, please bring your backpacks/ tote bags/ laptop bags to church that morning as we pray for God to bless you during the coming year!

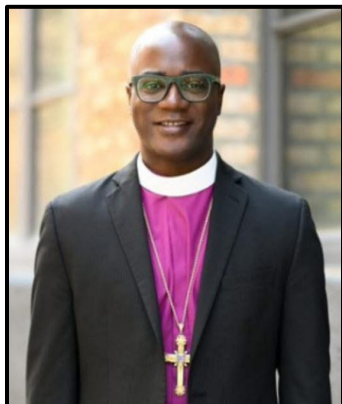
HOMEcoming

Mt. Hebron's annual homecoming service will be **Sunday, August 17th at 10:30am!**

This year, our guest speaker will be a former Mt. Hebron pastor: **Rev. Tommy Lineberger!** Rev. Lineberger served Mt. Hebron from 1998 to 2000. We are excited to welcome him back! He currently serves as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Vale, NC.

There will be a covered dish lunch after worship. Please help spread the word to family and friends who might like to attend. All are welcome!

NEW ELCA BISHOP



The Rev. Yehiel Curry was elected July 30th to serve a six-year term as presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, beginning later this fall.

The election took place during the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly being held July 28th through August 2nd at the Phoenix Convention Center. The ELCA gathers in a Churchwide Assembly only once every three years.

Rev. Curry steps into the role being vacated by outgoing Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, who has served as presiding bishop of the ELCA since 2013. He will be the first Black presiding bishop of the ELCA.

Speaking to the assembly after his election, Curry reflected on his membership at Shekinah Chapel in Riverdale, Ill., where he eventually became a lay mission developer while he participated in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries program, which prepares individuals for ordained ministry in the ELCA, with a focus on emerging ministry contexts like ethnic-specific, multicultural, rural, and inner-city settings. He spoke to the assembly about his initial hesitation in accepting that first ministry role.

“Perhaps I’m out there in one of you,” Curry said. “I never saw myself as good enough, so for two years, I said no. I finally said yes. When I said yes, your support, this church’s support, of that ministry meant everything. So if you want to know what your benevolence dollars look like, it looks like me, and I want to say thank you. Thank you for your investment.”

Curry has served as bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod since 2019. He previously served as mission developer (2009-2012) and pastor (2012-2019) of Shekinah.

Please pray for Rev. Curry as he begins this new role!

IN THE MAIL

Church Family,

Not sure how to say what I want to say. Transferring my membership from Cedar Grove was the hardest thing I have ever had to go through. I was going through a mourning period, but I visited Mt. Hebron and you all made me feel so welcome. I am truly glad I decided to join this family. Thank you for your kindness and for the beautiful replica of the church. It is so beautiful, I just love it.

Pastor Christopher, thank you also for your patience and kindness with me during this transition. God Bless you all and may He guide and strengthen all of us in the coming years.

With love and peace,
Jo Ann Williams

Mt. Hebron,

I wanted to send one massive thank you to my church family for celebrating my graduation. I really appreciate the service, Bible I received, and lunch after. Thank you for everything.

-Avery Derrick

Dear Mt. Hebron Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for your recent monetary gift to the Loaves and Fishes food pantry. This gift will enable us to give a box of food to 15 families!

This gift is much appreciated by us and is a blessing to these families. It is gifts like these that help us to show love for our neighbors.

Sincerely,

Loaves of Fishes Food Pantry
Wittenberg Lutheran Church

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



For nearly twenty years Farrah Leapheart and her husband Benji have been part of this congregation. After several years of struggling to find a church, they tried Mt. Hebron because it was Benji's grandparents' church. They liked it and decided to stay!

Farrah serves our church in many ways! She is on church council, youth committee, finance committee, and communications and PR committee. She also teaches adult and youth Sunday School and helps plan congregational events such as the annual fall festival and VBS. Farrah enjoys cultivating the fellowship and the community of our congregation. She also says that her favorite part of worship is hearing the sermon!

One special memory Farrah has is her son Matthew's baptism. She was moved by the words of the baptismal vows, and strives to live up to the promises made that day. Her whole family came to church for the baptism. Several of those family members have since passed, making her memories of that day even more special. During the baptism, Matthew was so excited to see the water in the font that he tried to grab the entire bowl! Pastor Timothea joked that he must have wanted to be dunked instead of just sprinkled!

Outside of church, Farrah enjoys spending time with her family and two dogs. She stays so busy that having a day at home to just relax is a rare treat!

Something you may not know about Farrah is that she grew up on a small hobby farm. Her dad raised pigs, and she loved those animals just like any other pet, and remembers just how smart they were!

Unlike many of Mt. Hebron's members, Farrah has not been here her entire life. However, the church has been a huge part of her adult life. She's watched Matthew grow up in this church, and is happy for the memories he's made. She loves this community of people around her who shares her beliefs and lends their support in tough times. Farrah, the church is blessed by your faithfulness and presence!

CHURCH HISTORY FROM A TO Z

H is for Heaven, the abode of God, paradise, a place of eternal rest. Commonly thought of as the place you go when you die, if you've been good enough. The Bible gives no clear description of heaven, but does make clear that faith in Jesus (and not good deeds) is what gives us access to eternal life. In some interpretations, Jesus will establish heaven on earth when he returns.

H is for Hell, the opposite of heaven, the final resting place for those who have turned away from God. The Bible gives no clear description of hell, though some of Jesus's parables have been interpreted as referring to hell. Later, post-biblical authors depict hell as a place of great torture and suffering. Just as likely, the main characteristic of hell is the complete absence of God.

H is for Hus, Jan, early 15th-century church reformer. Hus was born in Bohemia in 1369. He became a priest, and started speaking out against the abuses of the church. Drawing the ire of the pope, he was excommunicated in 1412, and burned at the stake in 1415. (For a fuller bio, see the July 2023 newsletter!)

H is for Herod the Great, the Roman / Jewish king of Judea who reigned from 37 BC until his death in ~1 BC. Herod is known for his building projects, most notably his expansion of the Temple. In Matthew 2, it was Herod who met the Magi and killed the innocent children. His son, Herod Antipas, executed John the Baptist and played a role in Jesus's trial (Luke 23:6-12).

H is for Holy Land, an area of the Middle East that today consists of Israel and Palestine. The Holy Land holds great significance for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as the location of many foundational events to each religion. The Holy Land has seen countless wars and territorial disputes for many centuries, and has been the destination of millions of pilgrimages.



Assumption of the Virgin, by Botticini,
a 15th-century representation of heaven and its angels

Memory Verse of the Month

Let's memorize scripture together!
Take time this month to memorize
the following verse:

*"Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and prosper for us the work of our hands –
O prosper the work of our hands!"*

-Psalm 90:17

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for Delores Spires as she is recovering from a hip replacement and pneumonia. Pray the Lord would grant her comfort and strength at this time.

Pray for Avery Derrick, Ethan Barr, and all our students, as they start back to school! Ask the Lord to be with them, protect them, and help them learn.

Pray for teachers, administrators, and other school staff, that all classrooms would be welcoming and accepting, and the stage would be set for a successful school year.

As we celebrate our homecoming this month, pray that the Lord would bless our efforts to pass along our faith and share God's love throughout the world.

Pray for our newly elected ELCA Bishop, Reverend Yehiel Curry, as he prepares to serve the next 6 years in this role. Pray the Lord would help and guide him.

During this hottest part of the summer, pray for those who are homeless, immigrants and refugees travelling to new homes, and others who must endure the heat.

Contact Pastor Christopher!

If you have a prayer request, questions,
or would like to speak with our pastor,
you can reach him at:

803-580-5215 (office)

803-940-7143 (cell)

mthebronpastor@gmail.com

AUGUST HELPERS

Greeters / Ushers

Billy and Beth Derrick

Lectors

8/3 - Denise Derrick

8/10 - Heather Lindler

8/17 - Candace Oxner

8/24 - Hoyt Prosser

8/31 - Carlin Shealy

Tabulators

Benji Leaphart and Cathy Lindler

Alternate: Carlin Shealy

Altar Guild

Glenn and Amy Harman

Acolytes

8/3 - Kellen Shealy

8/10 - Atley Derrick

8/17 - Ahlyer Derrick

8/24 - Matthew Leaphart

8/31 - Kellen Shealy

Crucifers

8/3 - Atley Derrick

8/17 - Garrett Barr

Torchbearers

8/3 - Ahlyer Derrick and Matthew Leaphart

8/17 - Matthew Leaphart and Kellen Shealy

Flowers

8/3 - Billy and Beth Derrick

8/10 - Glenn and Amy Harman

8/17 - WELCA

8/24 - OPEN

8/31 - Wade Oxner and family

Nursery

8/3 - Kristen Derrick and Benji Leaphart

8/10 - Carlin Shealy and Heather Worthly

8/17 - Amy Harman and Farrah Leaphart

8/24 - Kristen Derrick and Sarah Shealy

8/31 - Benji Leaphart and Heather Worthly

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

8/5 - Emmaline Kneece

8/7 - Briggs Cromer