

ST. MATTHEW MATTERS



ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Worship 10:00 a.m.

Message from Congregational President

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our focus for December is “The Son of God: Jesus Christ”

In Isaiah 9:6 we read, "***For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace***".

December is a time to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We reflect on family and how blessed we are as Christians to be a child of Christ. We also want to reflect on our congregation and the blessings we continue to share. This year has been different in the fact that we have a Pastor vacancy which St. Matthew has not experienced in several years. However, we have been blessed with many Pastors who lead our Worship Services and support the congregation in other areas as needed. We are also thankful to have each of you that help in making St. Matthew the church it is today.

As we bring 2024 to a close, I want to say “Thank You”. As your President, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve you and this congregation. I look forward to serving you in the year to come. May God continue to guide St. Matthew.

God’s blessing and wishing you a Merry Christmas.

Yours in Christ,

Tim

Stewardship

Repenting of “Yours” and “Mine”

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won't be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn't ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us Lord for Shallow Thankfulness” (*LSB* 788) highlights both this gift and our response.

*Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,
that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost*

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

But there is no way that we deserve anything we get from our Lord. We need that ongoing lesson from God Himself. Thankfulness toward God is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. God's Word works this thanksgiving in us. We need this weekly reminder that Jesus didn't consider “equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” for us, to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:6). He didn't bat an eye. He paid the price! Our life of stewardship is one of daily and weekly thanksgiving inspired by the Lord Himself.

*That knows no barrier of “yours” and “mine,”
assured that only what's withheld is lost.*

Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is “mine!” But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” There isn't anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the “yours” and “mine” and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord's house.

Stewardship Chair
Donald Shotzberger

Evangelism News

The Evangelism Committee would like your help in setting up a food pantry at Harrison Central Elementary. Since we do not collect items in January, February, or March for our Christmas Baskets, we would like to collect items during these months for the school. These would be the same type items we collect for our baskets: canned green, yellow vegetables and tomato products plus pasta, cereals, sugar and flour. Anything would be greatly appreciated.

The committee will assemble and distribute Christmas baskets on Saturday, December 14. We will assemble beginning at 9:00 and be ready for the bags to be picked up at 10:30. If you could help put them together, we would be glad to have you!

As always, you are such a giving congregation and we thank you very much.

ADVENT and CHRISTMAS WORSHIP at ST. MATTHEW

ADVENT

St. Matthew will anticipate Christmas with a three mid-week Advent Worship Services. The theme for the three is *Hymns of Advent*. On the first three Wednesdays of December the evening will begin with a Soup and Sandwich Meal followed by a worship service. A familiar Advent hymn will set the theme for each service.

Wed. 4 Dec. 6: 00 p.m. Soup and Sandwich Supper
7:00 p.m. Worship – Hymn: *O Come, O Come Immanuel*

Wed. 11 Dec. 6:00 p.m. Soup and Sandwich Supper
7:00 p.m. Worship – Hymn: *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye...Gates*

Wed. 18 Dec. 6: 00 p.m. Soup and Sandwich Supper
7:00 p.m. Worship – Hymn: *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

The sermons, based on those hymns, will be in dialogue form. Dave Kernion and Pastor Cooper will be the presenters.

CHRISTMAS

Tues. 24 Dec. 7:00 p. m. Christmas Service with Holy Communion

On Christmas Eve St. Matthew will hold its annual Christmas Candlelight Communion Service. The service will conclude with the singing of *Silent Night* by candlelight. Pastor Adam Cooper will be the preacher.

Sun. 29 Dec. 10:00 a.m. Sunday after Christmas, Holy Communion. Pastor Adam Cooper will preach.



LET US PRAY. . .

for those on the
St. Matthew prayer list,

for our members who are confined to their homes
and, if possible, go by to visit them:

**Donna Johnston
Rosa O'Bannon
Don Burnett**

and for those
in the
Armed Forces,
Fire and Police Departments

O Father, whose care reaches all parts of the earth,
we humbly ask you graciously to behold
and bless those in the military; those who
fight fires; and those who serve in law
enforcement. Defend them from all
dangers of soul and body and grant that
both they and we, drawing nearer to
you, may be bound to your love.
In Jesus' name. Amen



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ST. MATTHEW'S WEB PAGE**

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*To those celebrating
we wish you a*

Blessed and Happy Birthday

5	Zonja Rodocker
6	William Evans
8	Cecelia Oliver
17	Cynthia Chatham
21	Portia Perino
26	Linda Byrd

Blessed and Happy Anniversary

18	Rick & Cyndy Morrissey
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*(If your birthday or anniversary date does not appear
above or is incorrect, please e-mail the church or call
the church office, 864-6264, and give us the information
so our files can be updated.)*

For Your Information

FOR THOSE NEWER TO THE CHURCH: Thank you for being with us today! Please consider filling out the Connection Card in your bulletin, which can be placed in the offering plate during the offering or simply given to an usher or to the pastor. There is also information about the church on the table in the narthex.

2024 BUILDING FUND CAMPAIGN St. Matthew is having a Building Fund Campaign to support the interior remodeling of our Church Building. The funds will be used primarily to replace carpet with new flooring, paint interior walls as needed, and replace any light fixtures that maybe needed. Your support of this initiative is appreciated as we continue to modernize our facility. All contributions should be marked for 2024 Building Fund.

CHURCH COUNCIL meeting to be on Sunday, September 15, 2024 after church service.

ENVELOPES If anyone needs envelopes, please see Rosie or Cynthia. Using envelopes allows Sally to print a tax statement at the end of the year for everyone with envelopes.

REFRESHMENTS Volunteers are needed to provide refreshments after Sunday Church Service. The sign-up sheet is located on the table in the entry hallway.

CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS: The item for September is cash for perishables and pasta/rice, dry beans. Your donations are appreciated and may be placed in the narthex.

LAWN FUND The table with sale items is for the Lawn Fund. If you bring any items, please have sale price on the item.

GIRL SCOUTS will meet at the church every other Friday from 5:30 to 7:15 pm. Please contact Cheryl Boatner if you know of someone that is interested.

The **CONTAINERS** for medicine bottles, eyeglasses, egg cartons, and Mardi Gras beads are on the table in the first hall pass the foyer. These items will be donated to charity.

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>First Sunday in Advent (Blue)</i> Pastor Weier	2	3	4 Soup & Sandwiches 6:00 p.m. Advent Service 7:00 p.m. Pastor Cooper	5	6	7 Christmas Caroling @ Summerfield 3:00 p.m.
8 <i>Second Sunday in Advent (Blue)</i> Pastor Truax	9	10 LWML Potluck Noon	11 Soup & Sandwiches 6:00 p.m. Advent Service 7:00 p.m. Pastor Cooper	12	13	14 Christmas Baskets Assembly 9:00 a.m. Pickup 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary Arrangement
15 <i>Third Sunday in Advent (Blue)</i> Pastor Weier	16	17	18 Soup & Sandwiches 6:00 p.m. Advent Service 7:00 p.m. Pastor Cooper	19	20	21
22 <i>Fourth Sunday in Advent (Blue)</i> Pastor DeSanto	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 7:00 p.m. Pastor Cooper	25	26	27	28
29 <i>First Sunday after Christmas (White)</i> Pastor Cooper	30					

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