



# THE VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, AVON, CT

January 2020

*"In Christ, we are digging deep, reaching out, changing lives."*

## STAFF:

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Website: [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org)

Sunday Worship Services

8:30 AM & 11:00 AM

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

**January 1:** New Year's Day/Office Closed

**January 5:** Epiphany Observed

**January 11:** Open Mic Night/Potluck 5:30 PM

**January 12:** Baptism of Our Lord/Welcome Lunch/February VOICE submissions deadline

**January 20:** MLK Day / Office Closed

**January 24:** Fourth Friday at Grace

**January 25:** Men's Breakfast

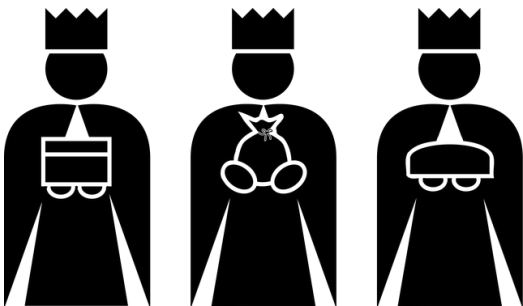
**January 26:** Annual Congregational Meeting

## LOOKING AHEAD:

**February 7—9:** Confirmation Retreat.

**February 9:** March VOICE submissions deadline

**February 26:** Ash Wednesday - First day of Lent.



## A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

### CARE TEAMS AT ST. MATTHEW

The holidays are over, but I am still thinking about one of my favorite Christmas picture books entitled, A Cup of Christmas Tea. It is a story in rhyme about Great Aunt's invitation to take time out of the busy holiday season to have a cup of Christmas tea. I won't spoil the story for you, but suffice it to say that the author discovers the best gift is the quality time you spend with others.

We are launching a new ministry here at St Matthew which trains people to visit our homebound members and spend some quality time with them. We're calling them Care Teams, because each team has two people who share prayer, conversation, and communion, if desired, with parishioners who can't get to church. It's another of the ideas that emerged in our visioning process, and a ministry I have started at other churches I have served.

If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, please join me for an informational meeting on Tuesday, January 28th at 7:30 PM in the Fireside Room. Feel free to bring a bag lunch with you. RSVPs to the office are helpful, but not required. If you know of someone who would appreciate a visit, please contact the office.

Visitation ministry is a gift to both those who visit, and those who are visited. We have an amazing roster of older members, and I always leave with a song in my heart. I can't wait to share them with you!

*Pastor Julie*

### NEW HOMELESS MINISTRY

One of the ideas from the visioning process was to get involved in a ministry with people experiencing homelessness. Our sister church, Emanuel Hartford, is participating in an initiative among city churches, the "No Freeze Team" provide overnight warming space for people who can't get a bed in a shelter. Emanuel has committed to housing women and families one night a week between December 1st and March 31st.

Organizers at Emanuel are looking for area Lutherans to pair with Emanuel members who have been trained to stay overnight with the guests. Please contact Pastor Julie if you are interested in learning more.

**ST. MATTHEW MISSION STATEMENT:** *St. Matthew Lutheran Church is a worshipping community called to proclaim God's love for all and to grow spiritually together. Challenged by Jesus' example, we strive to connect people of all ages, abilities, and needs, and to nurture them to be disciples of Christ. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to the wider community and welcome our neighbors to a life of worship, preaching, teaching, Christian care, service, and spiritual growth.*



January in Adult Forum takes a look at the intersection of Science and Religion with Pastor Brian, as well as a session led by Sandy Betsch on exploring Epiphany through the Jewish art of storytelling called midrash.

- † **January 5** Epiphany and Midrash
- † **January 12** Science and Religion
- † **January 19** Science and Religion
- † **January 26** Annual Meeting during the education hour

**SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, JANUARY 26, 2020 at 9:30 AM**

Your attendance is much appreciated and encouraged as we ratify our revised constitution, review 2019, and look forward to a new year!



**SUNDAY SCHOOL** This month Sunday School will meet Jan. 5th, Jan. 12th, and Jan. 26th. We will not meet Jan. 19th, due to the holiday weekend.

Also, remember that on the fourth Sunday, Jan. 26th, students will sing at the 11 AM service!



**YOUTH GROUP!** January 5th youth group will have Youth Hour in the morning 9:40-10:40 AM in the youth loft, and then that same afternoon immediately following church we're going snow-tubing! Sign up for both on the youth board or by emailing Pastor Brian.

**YOUNG ADULTS** Young adult group will meet for brunch on January 19<sup>th</sup> following second service. If you're a college student on break, join us while you're home! Newcomers always welcome!



**MEN'S BREAKFAST** Men's ministry will meet for breakfast in the parsonage intern apartment on Saturday January 25<sup>th</sup> 8:30-10:00 AM. Pancakes are on the menu this month! Come eat and enjoy fellowship; and help us with a special event we're planning for some special people!



**CENTERING PRAYER** Centering Prayer group will meet this month the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 PM and second and fourth Thursdays at 2:15 PM. Since the first day of the month is a Wednesday, take note that the second Thursday comes before the second Tuesday. Thus, the Tuesday group will meet Jan. 14 and Jan. 28, and the Thursday group will meet Jan. 9 and Jan. 23. Read Keating chapter 3 for the first meeting and Keating chapter 4 for the next. And if you haven't joined us before please feel free to join us anytime! Newcomers are always welcome!

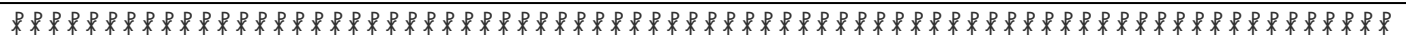
**ORGAN WORK SCHEDULED FOR EARLY JANUARY**

Work on the organ, discussed in previous newsletters, is scheduled for next month. This type of work is referred to as "revoicing." The somewhat "shrill" sound of the organ has been a concern to current and past organists, as well as to a number of worshippers. The purpose of this revoicing project is to "warm up", or "sweeten", the full organ sound, so essential for the performance of major organ literature and, most importantly, for supporting the congregation's hymn singing.

The project is expected to take ten days. The Foley Baker organ company will remove about a third of the pipes and transport them to their shop in Hartford. After the pipes are gone over, they will be re-installed, tuned and finished. While the pipes will be out for one Sunday, the organ is still useable without them. Our thanks to the generous donor who made this project possible by covering the whole cost!

**POTLUCK DINNER/OPEN MIC NIGHT** will be held on January 11<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 8 PM in the Hall of the Evangelists. All are welcome! Please bring a dish to share - and stay for a fun time of poetry reading and music of all kinds.

And it's not too late to sign up to share a talent! We'll have microphones, cool cafe type stools, and music stands ready and waiting! Contact Anne Fenn for more information.



## **THE ST. MATTHEW PROPOSED 2020 CONSTITUTION IS APPROVED!**

At our special Congregational Meeting on December 8th, our congregation passed the revised St. Matthew Lutheran Church Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions. The Constitution will serve to govern the ministry at St. Matthew. The last time our Constitution was updated was in 2005. The St. Matthew Constitution is based on the ELCA's 2019 Model Constitution and includes sections such as our Beliefs, Nature of the Church, Statement of Purpose, Powers of the Congregation, Property Ownership, Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Membership and Rostered Minister (Calling & Termination of a Pastor). As a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we are guided by the wisdom of the larger National Organization. Their legal team determined that sections were necessary in the document and all congregations were required to include them in their Constitutions.

At our Annual Meeting, scheduled for Sunday, January 26th, we will have the final vote to ratify the revised Constitution. Thank you to all who brought this project to fruition.

*Jack Pietrick, SMLC Council President*

## **COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**


- The Church Council prepared for the December 8, 2019 Congregational meeting concerning the proposed changes to the St. Matthew Constitution.
- The Council accepted the Endowment Committee's proposal for dispersing funds for the coming year that will be presented at the Annual Meeting.
- Pastor Brian updated the plans for Vacation Bible School for next summer. It will be managed by Camp Calment staff. Watch for details.
- Under Milestones and Concerns, Councilperson Dawne Ware announced that her recent Ted Talk presentation has been published.

To read the church Council Meeting Minutes, please refer to the Council binder on top of the mailboxes in the church office.

## **GOOD THINGS happened at St. Matthew in the month of December!**

- ✠ About 50 people gathered to paint pottery, share fellowship, and write cards of hope and prayer to families living in detention at the border at our Advent Workshop. Heidi Beaulieu, the Fellowship Committee and Maggie Anderson led this effort.
- ✠ Seminarian Kurt Saenger-Heyl wrote prayers of intercession which were prayed in worship on the first Sunday of Advent.
- ✠ Three moms and two grandparents enjoyed swapping tips and stories this month at Toddler Time, along with four toddlers who played happily in the refurbished nursery. Two of the moms are new to St. Matthew.
- ✠ Sandy LaBel provided a delicious, enhanced coffee hour after the congregational meeting, in which we approved a revised St. Matthew constitution.
- ✠ 6 confirmation students led worship and shared cookies and carols with residents of Luther Ridge, an assisted living home in Middletown, CT, run by Ascentria (formerly known as Lutheran Social Services of New England).
- ✠ Pastor Julie shared photos and stories from her two-week study leave in Wittenberg, Germany during Adult Forum.
- ✠ 25 members had their pictures taken to update our photo directory. You can access it online at our website; please contact the office for the login info.
- ✠ Youth group members gathered for a Christmas party and the Women's Fellowship Group celebrated the season with a card and cookie swap. Under the capable leadership of Kelly O'Connell, our Sunday school children presented a Christmas pageant on December 22nd with enthusiastic response!
- ✠ Thank you for your continued generosity! Giving was \$12K better than budget through November 30th, which has resulted in a surplus in the operating fund activity. If this continues through December, we will not need the full amount from Endowment that was included in our budget this year!

**God is good, all the time.**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Notes:			<b>January 2020</b>			
			1 <b>NEW YEAR'S DAY—OFFICE CLOSED</b>	2 10 AM Bible Study	3	4 7 AM Yoga Fundamentals
5 <b>EPIPHANY OBSERVED</b> 8:30 AM Worship 9:40 AM Sunday School 9:40 AM Youth Hour 9:45 AM Adult Forum 11 AM Holy Communion 12-3 PM Youth Snow Tubing	6 1:45 PM Staff Meeting  7 PM Fellowship Meeting 7 PM Finance Committee	7  6 PM Confirmation Meeting 7 PM Church Council	8 9 AM Gentle Yoga  7 PM Sanctuary	9 9:30 AM Toddler Time Playgroup  2:15 PM Centering Prayer 2:30 PM Visioning	10	11 7 AM Yoga Fundamentals  5:30 PM Open Mic Night / Potluck
12 <b>BAPTISM OF OUR LORD</b> 8:30 AM Holy Communion 9:40 AM Sunday School 9:45 AM Adult Forum 11 AM Worship 12 PM Welcome Lunch  <b>Feb. VOICE submission deadline</b>	13 1:45 PM Staff Meeting  7 PM Evening Readers	14  6 PM Confirmation Meeting 7 PM Centering Prayer 7 PM Stewardship Committee	15 9 AM Gentle Yoga  7 PM Sanctuary	16 10 AM Bible Study  12 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry	17	18 7 AM Yoga Fundamentals
19 <b>RECEIVE NEW MEMBERS</b> 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Adult Forum 11 AM Holy Communion 12:30 PM Young Adult Gathering  5 PM Youth Group in Hall of the Evangelists	20 <b>MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY.—OFFICE CLOSED</b>	21 1:45 PM Staff Meeting  6 PM Confirmation Meeting	22 9 AM Gentle Yoga  7 PM Sanctuary Choir	23 9:30 AM Toddler Time Playgroup  2:15 PM Centering Prayer	24 5 PM Fourth Friday at Grace Lutheran Church	25 7 AM Yoga Fundamentals  8:30 AM Men's Breakfast
26 8:30 AM Holy Communion 9:30 AM Annual Congregational Meeting 9:40 AM Sunday School 11 AM Worship—Children Sing	27 1:45 PM Staff Meeting  7 PM Worship & Music Meeting	28 6 PM Confirmation Meeting 7 PM Centering Prayer 7 PM Property Committee 7:30 PM Care Team Informational Mtg	29 9 AM Gentle Yoga  7 AM Sanctuary Choir	30	31	

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