



THE VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, AVON, CT Apr. 2018

STAFF:

Julie Reuning-Scherer, Lead Pastor
Bill White, Pastor
Michelle Horsley Parker, Director of Music
Terri Bendell, Office Administrator
Steven Smolnik, Publisher
Marion Knapple, Doreen O'Leary, Carolyn Boswell, Jan Davidson, Robin Lindquist, and Barbara Mitchell, Circulation

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
224 Lovely Street
Avon, CT 06001-4018
(860) 673-3301

Website: www.stmatthewavon.org

Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

April 1 - Easter Sunday Worship: 8:00, 9:30, 11:00 a.m.

April 20-22 - Women's Weekend @ Calumet.

April 22 - Young Adult Group get-together.

April 29 - Holy Communion & Healing Prayers at both services.
New Member Welcome Lunch 12:00.

LOOKING AHEAD:

May 3 - National Day of Prayer 12:00.

May 6 - Reception of New Members at both services.
First Communion at 11:00.

May 20 - Confirmation at 11:00.

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

"I am the good shepherd... I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice." John 10:11, 16.

Jesus' words from the Gospel of John bring a beloved image to mind: Jesus, the Good Shepherd. We remember this image every year during the Easter season, relishing our inclusion in his flock, and experiencing the care of Jesus our shepherd. It is a beautiful image about the community of which we are a part and the leadership that makes such safety, companionship, and support possible.

This year as I read Jesus' words, I am reminded of the community beyond our doors who do not have a place of safety and care. In the months of self-study leading up to calling me as lead pastor of St Matthew, the Congregational Assessment Tool indicated 4 top priorities across age and demographics:

- Develop a strategy for reaching new people and incorporating them into the life of the congregation
- Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth
- Develop new ministries of outreach and renewal
- Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.

These priorities mirror Jesus' goal to bring in those outside the fold. They are faithful to the spirit of Jesus the Good Shepherd who went in search of the one lost sheep.

These priorities have guided our work together during first year as pastor and people, and they continue to shape our ministries for the future. We are tuning our ministry for people who are not yet among us. Building on ministries already in place such as greeters, ushers, cookie deliveries, and new member luncheons, we are also learning new musical styles, redesigning and augmenting our online presence, and becoming a more obvious presence in the local community so that we, like Jesus, go out into the community and "bring them in also."

Jesus' love and care for each of us is precious, and the people of St Matthew have a beautiful way of living it out. As we continue to grow in our calling as God's people at St Matthew, may we embody the priorities of the Good Shepherd, and bring in others who long to hear Jesus' voice of acceptance, healing, and care.

Pastor Julie





EVENING READERS

Join the Evening Readers on **Monday, April 9th at 7:00 p.m.** when we will discuss *Neverhome* by Laird Hunt.

The contact person for Evening Readers is Debbie Steinberg at deborahsteinberg@mac.com

*"She turned to the sunlight
And shook her yellow head,
And whispered to her neighbor:
'Winter is dead.'"*

— **A.A. Milne, When We Were Very Young**



EXCITING NEWS!!!

After many months of research and committee proposals, St. Matthew Lutheran Church Council and Worship & Music Committee have decided to support the acquisition of a grand piano for our sanctuary. It is being delivered during Holy Week and we are absolutely thrilled to unveil this beautiful instrument.

We believe that this piano will greatly improve our music ministry by providing:

1. an instrument with a tonal fullness and dynamic range suitable for support and encourage 100+ worshippers singing hymns;
2. an instrument with which choral and instrumental collaboration is most possible (because there is no wall obscuring sight lines between pianist and singers/instrumentalists).

Funds for the instrument come from the Memorial Fund. We hope you will share in our enthusiasm for the addition of this wonderful instrument in our worshipping life together!

Adult Forum

Come Join us for **ADULT FORUM** in the Hall of the Evangelists:

Sunday mornings 9:40-10:40
(coffee cups are welcome, too!)

The heading above is always our invitation, however this month we get to add a **Very Special Invitation!**

Come join our Bishop Jim Hazelwood at Adult Forum Beginning **April 22!** *Okay, Bishop Hazelwood won't exactly be here, at St. Matthew.*

However, we will be examining and discussing a very provocative paper he wrote:

The Church is not dying but being Born Again

Copies will be available beginning April 8 after worship in the Greeting Area after worship, or you can access it sooner on-line at <http://bishop.nesynod.org/goingforward.pdf>

The schedule at Adult Forum:

April 1 - Easter Sunday (3 worship services/ no Forum)

April 8 - "What's so Amazing About Grace" Session 5/Final

April 15 - Preparing to Forgive: Our last week on Forgiveness - Living out forgiveness day to day

April 22 - The Church is not Dying but Being Born Again session 1

April 29 - The Church is not Dying but Being Born Again session 2

Now all we need is for you to Come Join us and bring a friend!

CALL/SEARCH COMMITTEE BEGINS ITS WORK

The Call/Search Committee for a new full-time staff person met with Pastor Paul Sinnott of the New England Synod this past month. Pastor Paul walked the group through the call process and shared information about congregations hiring lay people for ministry positions. The Call/Search Committee members appointed by the Church Council are: Melissa Bender, Margaret Byrne, Mark Coslett, Fred Fenn, Sheila Jarka, Kelly O'Connell, Kurt Saenger-Heyl, Joe Pelehach, Debbie Steinberg, and Pastor Julie. We will keep the congregation informed as the search progresses.



COME TO THE LARGEST GATHERING OF LUTHERANS IN NEW ENGLAND!

You are invited to attend the **New England Synod's Assembly, Thursday, June 7 – Saturday, June 9 in Springfield, MA**, with the theme, "Stir It Up!" The event gathers Lutherans from all over New England to worship, learn about ministries throughout our synod, hear inspiring speakers, pick up best practices, and deliberate on matters of church policy—this year we will vote for our next bishop.

Check out newenglandsynod.org for more info! Every year St Matthew can send three voting members—one male, one female, one age 30 or under. Visitors are also welcome to attend worship, hear the speakers, and experience the proceedings. Finally, much of the assembly is available for viewing at newenglandsynod.org, so we hope you will attend in person or tune in online!

If you are interested in attending as a voting member or a visitor, please speak to Pastor Julie or Pastor Bill.



YOUNG ADULT GROUP

Meet other young adults (21+) once per month!

Enjoy camaraderie, good food, and a little Lutheran cheer. Our next get-together is **Sunday, April 22 at 12:15 p.m. Location: TBD.**

Contact Kurt Saenger-Heyl (kurt@thekeds.org) or Jill Brunetti (jtrick0@gmail.com) for more information.



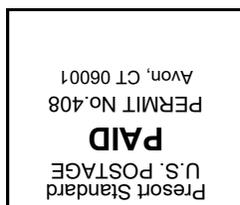
THE MOUSE On April 1st, we will celebrate The Resurrection of our Lord! It is such a magnificent event that it takes a "week of weeks" to celebrate. The seven weeks of Easter, the great fifty days, are a unique festive time in the life of the Church. For seven entire weeks we celebrate our Lord's victory over death and the grave. This mouse sure will be celebrating...I actually started with a breakfast feast on Palm Sunday. Led by Peggy Beauregard, Gayle Murphy and a little administrative support from Terri Bendell it was a great morning; with help from the people setting up, the people that brought in all the yummy goodies, egg bakes, sausages, fruit and juices...my cup was overflowing...But not to worry...Roy Zurell is always nearby with a mop when our cups runneth over. Now that we have our new bulletin format, you would think Ann Eberhard would be out of a "job", but she is still in the office every week working on something. Although it's not the same with the sad loss of Carolyn Staub, the ladies of the Altar Guild, led by Deb Brodeur, were in and out during Holy Week setting up the altar and making sure everything was just right with the Alleluia parament and beautiful Easter lilies. Speaking of ladies, the Women of St. Matthew (and friends) are heading to Camp Calumet in New Hampshire on April 20th for a weekend; I saw Debbie Steinberg, Anne Fenn, and Sandy Betsch in the conference room making plans for the best weekend yet. Maybe I'll stow away and check it out? I bet that's a fun place for women and mice too! Alleluia!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 EASTER 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Holy Communion 11:00 Holy Communion	2 1:00 FAVARH Student 7:00 Finance Committee 7:00 Fellowship Committee	3 6:30 Confirmation 7:30 Church Council	4 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Staff Meeting NO Choir Rehearsal	5	6	7
8 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00 Worship May VOICE deadline	9 7:00 Evening Readers	10 NO Confirmation	11 10:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	12 10:00 Office Helpers 1:00 Church Historians	13	14
15 8:30 Worship 9:40 Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00 Holy Communion	16 5:30 Technology Committee 6:30 Evangelism Committee	17 6:30 Confirmation	18 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	19 12:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry	20 Women's Weekend>>>>>	21 >>>@ Calumet
22 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00 Worship 12:15 Young Adult Group Get-Together	23 7:00 Endowment Committee	24 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 Property Committee	25 11:00 Staff Meeting 12:00 Staff Luncheon 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	26	27	28
29 8:30 Holy Communion & Healing Prayers 9:40 Sunday School, Adult Forum & First Communion Class 11:00 Holy Communion & Healing Prayers 12:00 New Member Welcome Lunch	30 1:00 FAVARH Student 7:00 Finance Committee	Notes:				

April 2018

Electronic Service Requested
April 2018



Non-Profit Organization

SAINT MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH
 224 Lovely Street, Avon, Connecticut 06001-4018



May Madness!

Perhaps you filled out a basketball bracket in March and cheered our Huskies to the Final Four. Now here at St. Matthew we are continuing the madness with a great stewardship giveaway that we are calling **May Madness!**

Here's the deal:

St. Matthew has money to give away! Through the Thrivent Choice Dollars program, members of our congregation who have Thrivent products, have directed monetary gifts to St. Matthew. These gifts have been accumulating for a few years and the total is now over \$9,000. Our church also donates 10% of our communication tower receipts each year. Right now, we have about \$15,000 to give away.

Here's how you can get involved:

On the form below, submit your idea for a charitable organization/cause recipient. (Form deadline: April 15th in the office) We will take up to 32 different organizations/causes to create our bracket. We will vote during the worship services on the first three Sundays in May:

On May 6th, we will vote the 32 choices (or 16 pairs) down to the Sweet Sixteen.

On May 13th, we will vote the 16 choices (or 8 pairs) down to the Elite Eight.

And on May 20th, we will vote the 8 choices (or 4 pairs) down to the Final Four.

Those Final Four will be the recipients of the **May Madness** gifts from St. Matthew!

✂ _____

May Madness Charitable Organization/Cause Suggestion Form

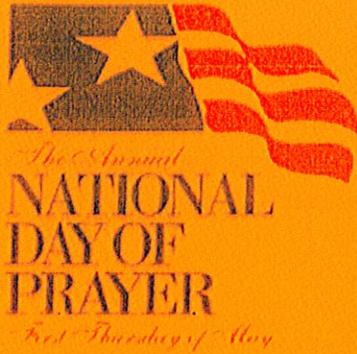
My Name: _____ My May Madness Suggestion: _____

If there is a specific financial need, please specify the dollar amount (up to \$3,000): _____

Why I am suggesting it:

Address/Website:

This form is due in the office by Sunday, April 15th.



**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
THURSDAY MAY 3, 2018
12:00 NOON
Carmon Family Center
301 Country Club Road in
Avon**

A celebration of the National Day of Prayer will be held at **12:00 Noon** at the Carmon Family Center 301 Country Club Road in Avon on **Thursday, May 3, 2018.**

This year's theme is unity based upon Ephesians 4:3 *"Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*

Clergy and lay people from several places of worship and the town will lead us in prayer for our towns, state and nation. The colors will be presented. There will be special music including a group of students singing from Avon High School.

This is the 67th Annual National Day of Prayer and is based upon both an Official Statement from Governor Malloy as well as a Presidential Proclamation requesting prayer.

Carmon Family Center will be providing coffee, tea, soft drinks, and assorted sandwiches from New England Pasta Company immediately following the program.

"I urge you, first to pray for all people...Pray this way for kings and all others who are in authority, so that we may live in peace and quietness, in godliness and dignity...." I Timothy 2:1-4

For additional information, please contact Steve and Beth Wilson at (860) 404-0708 or Dr. David and Donna Wittmer at (860) 673-4053.

Note: *This program is not sponsored by the Carmon Family Center*