



THE VOICE

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

Jan. 2018

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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:

January 7 - ALL Annual Reports due to Terri's office.

January 13 - 10:00 a.m. FVAMC food packing event

January 14 - February VOICE deadline

January 15 - MLK, Jr. Day (Office Closed)

January 27 - 5:30 p.m. Annual Chili Cook-Off

January 28 - 12:00 Annual Congregational Meeting

IMPORTANT DATE:

January 7 - 9:40 a.m.

A SPECIAL ADULT FORUM in the Hall of the Evangelists regarding future staffing at St. Matthew Lutheran Church.

In case you missed the meeting on December 17th, this will be your chance to hear the same presentation.

We will cover potential job description, funding, and a timeline in preparation for future action at the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 28, 2018. Please bring your comments and questions.

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

God's Hope and Justice Shines Through in 2018

I will bless you with a future filled with hope—a future of well-being, not of suffering. Jeremiah 29:11

Will you be making a New Year's Resolution for 2018?

Would you consider adding a **"Spiritual Resolution"** to your 2018 Resolve?

First, I want to tell you that I have already made my "Spiritual Resolution" See last paragraph of this article ... **Teaser!**

I received a BIG head start at www.time.com online, Rabbi David Wolpe was asked to lift up the same idea. I am going to use his topics and give you one or two of my thoughts PLUS invite you to read all of Rabbi Wolpe's article at your leisure.

1. Engage with People more than Pixels: Modern Americans new norm is our eyes glued to a screen. Develop strategies to break the habit: A basket for all screens during meals, no screens in the bedroom, emails or texts – choose the number of times per day to engage and only then.

More important – How will you engage face to face with more people today, this week, next week?

Stop reading, call a friend, talk to a co-worker or go for a walk.

2. Take your Soul Seriously: What we hear, read, watch and open our hearts to day in and day out affects us. Find more joyful news, happy experiences, less violent books & movies and gentle experiences with family & friends.

Stop offering unkindness to unkindness - it hurts. (therefore)

3. Increase your Kindness: I could go on and on. (**My #1 wish!**) **Please**, tell me if you take this resolution on, and what you are doing!

I will be working on community organizing with the Christian Activities Council and attempting to increase Kindness through Justice. Ask me more!

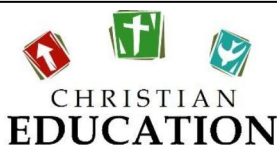
4. Choose someone to Forgive: Forgiveness will be our Adult Forum theme for Lent at St. Matthew Lutheran Church for 2018. Forgiveness can be difficult and complex. It can also be life restoring when God's help is invited.

5. In forgiving, include yourself: Leave behind perfectionism and imagine a life where you forgive yourself or at least begin to attend to this life-giving journey. God's arms are wide open hoping to be part of that process. (continued...)

(continued...) My Own: I have been given a vision of not only helping those in need today (charitable giving) but joining others in working for God's Justice to help change laws and practice that will last beyond my lifetime (organizing).

Would you like to know more? Please ask me and join The Adult Forum during the season of Epiphany: Sundays at 9:40 a.m.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! *From Pastor Bill*



Please Join us for Adult Forum in the Hall of the Evangelists:

Sunday mornings 9:40-10:40

Adult Forum: Epiphany 2018 – God's Church Serving the World

Jan. 7 – Special Adult Forum regarding future staffing at St. Matthew.

Jan. 14 – The Christian Church around the world.

Please Welcome – Special Guest: **Pastor Ramy Marcos from Egypt**: PHD Student at Hartford Seminary. Pastor Marcos Major: Christian and Islamic Relations.

Jan. 21 – How the local churches serve/partner with local mission. Gifts of Love in Simsbury, Avon & Canton's local food banks, Habitat for Humanity's ELCA connection, Meals at Grace Lutheran Hartford and other ways St. Matthew's members serve.

Jan. 28 – ELCA Disaster Relief – Learn more about one of the highest rated charitable Organizations in the US, and it's all part of the ELCA. PLEASE JOIN US Plus, more to come in early February

ASK THE BISHOP - 500 QUESTIONS

Do you have questions for our Bishop?. On Thursday, January 18, at 7 p.m., you'll have the chance to "Ask the Bishop" anything you want (well, almost anything). Via GoToMeeting and FaceBook live, Bishop Hazelwood will be available to answer YOUR most burning questions. Please let the Synod office know you'd like to join in by emailing office@nesynod.org with your name and email address so they can send you log in instructions. It would be helpful if you would forward your questions in advance as well, although they will be accepted that evening.



Free
Community
Dinner

FOURTH FRIDAYS AT GRACE LUTHERAN

Join members of St. Matthew and Grace Lutheran Church in Hartford serving a free meal to the community the fourth Friday of each month. This is a wonderful opportunity to join others in service and fellowship. We will be serving on Friday, January 26th beginning at 5 PM. Contact Sarah Burns at 860-321-7366 or sarah.r.burns@gmail.com for details. Sign up on the bulletin board in the Carter Gathering Space.



INCLEMENT WEATHER

If we ever cancel an event due to weather, you can view the status on Eyewitness News 3 WFSB, or NBC Connecticut 30 WVIT, or listen to WTIC AM 1080 on your radio. We may also send an email through our Constant Contact mass emails. To receive these emails, you must sign up on our website at www.stmatthewavon.org



EVENING READERS

Happy New Year! Join the Evening Readers on Tuesday, January 16 at 7:00 p.m. when we will discuss *A Piece of the World* by Christina Baker Kline.

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

"Every moment is a fresh beginning." —T.S. Eliot

THANK YOU! We are truly blessed by the generosity of our church family during the **Stewardship Intended Giving** campaign. Your pledges and generous giving throughout the year are key to developing our 2018 budget, planning, and support our great staff, programs and church. To date we received 109 pledges totaling \$275,595 for 2018. Happy New Year and many blessing to you and your families!



CHILI COOK-OFF Saturday, January 27, 2018 at 5:30 PM Hall of the Evangelists

Who will take home the top prize this year? Come share your favorite chili, side dish or dessert. Prizes will be awarded for spiciest chili, sweetest chili, most unusual chili, vegetarian chili and best overall chili, as well as best macaroni & cheese, best side dish/cornbread and best dessert. **All ages are welcome!** If you have any questions, please contact Meg Kraft (meg.kraft@yahoo.com) or any member of the Fellowship Committee. Sign up in the Carter Gathering Space **or come last minute**. We hope to see you there!



NEW YEAR REMINDERS

Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 28th at Noon**. Your attendance is much appreciated and encouraged as we review 2017 and look forward to a new year.

Nominations for Church Council membership are in order. Find the Nomination Box in the Carter Gathering Space this month.

2018 Offering Envelopes are ready for pick up. Please take yours today. If you need to have envelopes assigned to you, please call Terri 860-673-3301 or email office@stmatthewavon.org

If you wish to donate altar flowers during 2018, please sign-up on the Flower Chart in the Narthex. Cost is \$30. Make checks payable to St. Matthew ("Flowers" in memo line) and place in the offering or leave in the office when you sign-up. Thank you!

Thrivent Financial members can direct 2017 *Choice Dollars* through March 31. *Choice Dollars* can be directed to St. Matthew. Visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice or call 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted say "Thrivent Choice". At the second prompt say "*Choice Dollars*". A representative will then work with you to direct your *Choice Dollars*.

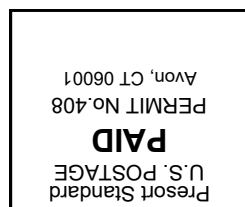


MOUSE

Felice Anno Nuovo! Sorry, I mean, Happy New Year! My cousin, Luigi, from Italy was visiting during Christmas and we spoke a lot of Italian. Scusami (pardon me)...what a glorious Christmas I shared with my family here at St. Matthew. The building was all decked out in its holiday finery...the beautiful Christmas tree decorated by the High School Youth Group, the large wreaths in the front that Donna Brown orders each year, and the wreaths on the back door supplied by Jean & Jim O'Herron. Michelle Horsley Parker was spectacular...with the help of Meredith Trimble and Stephanie Montminy organizing the youth to produce an angelic Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve; the traditional music was so lovely, and the candlelight at each of the services gave the building a beautiful glow. You probably don't realize how much work goes in to preparing the building for this joyous season, and keeping things maintained, but I am always dodging the feet of people from the Property Committee in and out of the building with contractors keeping everything ship shape. It's hard not to run in to Ben Wright, Clint Harriman, Bill Ferrigno, and Dave Newberry, who installed new shelves in Terri's office. I really like those shelves; they give me new napping places. Speaking of new – have you seen the new church website? You **HAVE** to check it out www.stmatthewavon.org. Jason Lindquist put in a lot of man hours revamping, restructuring, and refreshing the website...it's a must see! Melissa Lindquist presented the updated website to the Church Council and they were impressed. My tummy is rumbling...I better go find a snack...I can't wait for the Chili Cook-Off later this month on the 27th! Meg Kraft is leading the charge for that event which is always a tasty good time. I'm sure there will be leftover desserts for the Annual Congregational Meeting on the 28th. Lastly, remember to sign up to give blood on January 31st. It's a nice way to start 2018 and make your Spiritual Resolution (*read Pastor Bill's lead article*) to increase your kindness, and give the gift of life. Blessings to all for a happy and prosperous 2018!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Notes:	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY OFFICE CLOSED	2 12:00 FAVARH student	3 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	4	5	6 EPIPHANY
7 8:30 Worship 9:40 Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00 Holy Communion	8 11:30 Stewardship 7:00 Finance Committee 7:00 Altar Guild	9 6:30 Confirmation 7:30 Church Council	10 10:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	11 9:30 Church Historians 10:00 Office Helpers	12	13 10:00 FVAMC Food Packing —Confirmation
14 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00 Worship February VOICE Deadline	15 MARTIN LUTHER KING Jr. DAY OFFICE CLOSED	16 12:00 FAVARH student 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 Evening Readers	17 9:30 Bible Study 10:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	18 12:00 Prayer Shawl	19 4:00 Confirmation Class to Calumet	20
21 8:30 Worship 9:40 Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00 Holy Communion 5:00 Back from Calumet	22	23 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 Property Committee	24 10:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	25	26	27 5:30 Chili Cook-Off
28 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00 Worship 12:00 Annual Congregational Meeting	29 7:00 Worship & Music Committee	30 12:00 FAVARH student 6:30 Confirmation	31 10:30 Staff Meeting 1:00 - 6:30 Red Cross Blood Drive 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	January 2018		

Electronic Service Requested
January 2018



Non-Profit Organization

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



SMLC Financial Snapshot at the end of November:

Eleven months of the year have passed, and we should have received about 91.6% of our anticipated income. We should have used no more than 91.6% of our budgeted expenses.

Income:	2017 Budget	Income	Percentage Rec'd
Envelope/Regular Giving	\$346,300	\$319,503	92%
Tower/Facility Use/Other	<u>\$46,700</u>	<u>\$44,331</u>	95%
Total Income Budget	\$393,000	\$363,834	92.5%

Expenses:	2017 Budget	Expenditures	Percentage Used
Category:			
Church Life & Outreach	\$52,800	\$41,132	78%
Staff & Office	\$216,850	\$169,146	78%
Building & Un-budgeted	<u>\$123,350</u>	<u>\$105,412</u>	85%
Total Expense Budget	\$393,000	\$315,690	80%

Do You Know? The Endowment Fund

(A monthly Voice series from St. Matthew's Stewardship Committee)

The Endowment Fund distributes monetary gifts to organizations outside the walls of St. Matthew and to projects and programs within our church. Every year the congregation votes on the Endowment Committee's donation recommendations at the January annual meeting. Since these gifts will have an impact on St. Matthew's mission for the coming year, the Stewardship Committee thought it would be timely to talk about St. Matthew's Endowment Fund in January's Voice.

Origin: Proceeds (about \$300,000) from the 1980 sale of the 1964 gift of land from Lucienne Grunewald, given in memory of her husband, Edward, and parents.

Operating Policies: The current policies and procedures were approved in the early 90s to formalize the rubrics for the distribution of the Fund's yearly investment income. The principle would not be touched; the committee uses a formula to determine the amount "available for distribution". At least 50% of the awarded amount must support programs outside the congregation of St. Matthew. Only a congregational vote can change the rubrics.

Approval: The Endowment Committee sends its recommendations to the January Council meeting for approval; Council votes on the recommendations and sends them on to the Congregational Annual Meeting.

First Gifts: In 1991, St. Matthew's Endowment fund gave \$50,000 to Foodshare so they could buy a refrigerated truck, and we set aside (to hold and grow within the fund) another \$50,000 for future staffing at St. Matthew.

Gifts over the Years: St. Matthew's Endowment Fund has given away almost **\$1.2 million!**

Externally to: Camp Courant, local food/fuel banks, Foodshare, Luther Seminary, missionary support, the Bonhoeffer project, Camp Calumet, and ELCA Disaster Response, among others.

Internally to: staffing support (\$146,000 over 5 years for Pr. Sinibaldo), new furnace/phone system, sabbaticals, Bring Back the Interns project, new rank for the organ, and budget support for the mortgage, among others.

Fund Balance: At the end of 2016, total Endowment Funds were \$724,993.

Management: The Fund is managed by 7 members of St. Matthew, plus the Pastor and the Council President, and our advisors at YHB Investments.

Donations TO the Endowment Fund: The fund can receive gifts 'in honor/memory of' just like the Memorial Fund.

Thanks to: Tom Leonard and Ron Howard, Committee members, for the greatly appreciated help with this history.