



THE VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, AVON, CT Summer 2019

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Julie Reuning-Scherer, Lead Pastor
Brian Rajcok, Associate Pastor
Richard Silbereis, Director of Music
Cynthia Zakowski, Office Administrator
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St. Matthew Lutheran Church
224 Lovely Street
Avon, CT 06001-4018
(860) 673-3301

Website: www.stmatthewavon.org

Summer Worship Service:

9:00 AM Sunday / 7 PM Thursday

DATES TO REMEMBER:

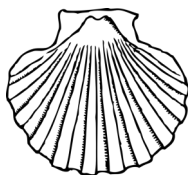
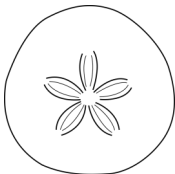
July 4 - Independence Day. Church Office Closed

July 13 - Rolling Hills 5K, 9:00 a.m.

LOOKING AHEAD:

August 14 - Blood Drive, 9:00 a.m.

September 8 - Return to two services each Sunday at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.



A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

It's Time to Acknowledge our Accomplishments

In a two-year period of time, we have come through a transition period. Pastor Julie has completed her first two years as Lead Pastor, Pastor Brian began his ministry as our Associate Pastor this past January, we welcomed Dick Silbereis as our new Music Director, selected our own Roy Zurell as our new Sexton, and recently welcomed Cynthia Zakowski as our new Office Administrator.

Having reached the six month mark following Pastor Brian's arrival, we can officially disband the call committee and thank them for their many efforts. We can all celebrate the fact that we are now fully staffed and that our two pastors are available to meet congregational needs. Being fully staffed has brought us to a place where we can now begin a focus on our future and our ministry together. We are, as a congregation, now actively involved in developing our Vision Plan which will set our course for the next five years. Our "Community Conversations" have resulted in 274 suggestions being shared by our members to help us meet our mission and goals as a congregation. As we look forward to our future, we can give thanks for the ministries and ministers who have served this congregation in the past and have enabled us to reach this new and exciting place together.

The many suggestions shared at our Community Conversation planning meetings will need expanded participation by our members. Every member can help us achieve our mission. Every member can, through their involvement, make a difference - and every member can, through their faith and gifts, move us in a positive direction. Join Pastor Julie, Pastor Brian and our Church Council as we acknowledge our accomplishments, celebrate the end of our transitional period and look toward a future where we can continue to make a positive difference in our community and the world at large.

- Jack Pietrick, SMLC Council President

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.

JUNE COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

In June the council approved a re-voicing of the organ, as a congregational donor has stepped forward to cover the cost. The council is also considering a plan to support Kurt Saenger-Heyl, who plans to attend Wartburg Seminary in the fall.

Our congregation received a gift to our Endowment Fund, and the council is discussing short term income trends and long term financial health. The summer months tend to be lean months, so please keep up your giving!

The council planned for the June 23rd Community Conversation, and identified the following values for St Matthew:

These are the timeless and relevant principles for our mission that apply under any conditions.

Christ centered:

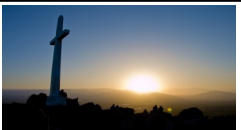
Grace and Love	Supportive Community
Integrity and Trust	Spiritual Healing and Transformation
Generosity	Hospitality



ORGAN PROJECT APPROVED: At our June 4th Council meeting, the members were informed that a St. Matthew family has generously donated the funds to complete the entire re-voicing project. This wonderful gift will enable us to complete the project sometime this fall. The contract will be sent to us shortly and upon its return we will then be placed on the waiting list. Since other projects are ahead of ours, Foley-Baker will begin the project of re-voicing our organ as soon as they can fit us into their busy schedule. As we mentioned in an earlier article, the organ will be playable while the re-voicing is completed. Our hope is to have the project completed prior to Advent 2019. This generous contribution will allow us to complete the project and do so without having to use our Memorial Fund. A motion was made at the Council Meeting to move ahead with the re-voicing project. The Council unanimously approved the project.



COMMUNITY CONVERSATION UPDATE: On Sunday, the 23rd, immediately after worship services, some 40 people gathered in the Hall of the Evangelists to consider further the many ideas submitted by the Congregation, and to indicate their interests in actually implementing those that had personal appeal. The ideas had been organized under the 4 Major Goals determined by the Visioning Process. The gathering was very energetic, and it was especially encouraging to have a number of people there who have just recently started attending St. Matthew. The sign-up sheets were collected for review and further organizing by the Vision Planning Team. This latest phase of the Process will be completed over the next several weeks and the entire Congregation can anticipate further news as we get ever closer to really engaging our community by : Digging Deep, Reaching Out, and Changing Lives."



THURSDAY EVENING WORSHIP: Join us for an informal and intimate midweek service each Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m., continuing through the summer. Faith stories and ice cream to follow. Good for all ages!

ST. MATTHEW'S OUTREACH COMMITTEE prepared twenty casseroles (200 meals!) on Tuesday, June 25th, which were delivered to Grace Lutheran in Hartford for their Friday night community dinner. Foodshare is now providing Grace with an increased amount of delicious frozen foods. Grace lacked sufficient freezer space to accommodate both our frozen casseroles and Foodshare donations, however, the Outreach Committee had the financial resources (with recent designated memorial funds) to provide Grace a 20 cubic foot freezer. A win-win! Thanks to all for your continuous support over the past four years. It is proving to be a wonderful and rewarding partnership. Grace is circled by one of Hartford's most in-need neighborhoods.

FRIDAY NIGHTS AT GRACE: Join others from St. Matthew in serving at Grace Lutheran Church's Friday night gatherings! We send volunteers on the 4th Friday of each month (6/28, 7/26, and 8/23 this summer) to assist in serving and clean-up for the community meal. Volunteer responsibilities include things like cutting and plating desserts, buttering bread, refilling milk and sugar bowls, serving food, wiping tables, and visiting with those attending the meal. There is no training needed, and there are jobs for all ages. If you want more details, or are interested in joining, please contact Sarah Burns.

Kurt Saenger-Heyl Is Going to Seminary!

It is our privilege to announce that St. Matthew member Kurt Saenger-Heyl is planning to attend Wartburg Lutheran Seminary in Iowa this fall! We at St. Matthew know him as a gifted assistant minister, Sunday school teacher and youth group leader, council member and call committee participant. We will send him off officially with a service of Godspeed and Farewell in worship on **August 18 at 9 AM**. We hope you can join us on this Sunday!



CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

Congratulations to St. Matthew's high school graduates:

Mark Beauregard	Madison Blades	Adison Brown	Matthew Fitts
Nathaniel Mather	Charles Parchen	James Pelehach	Abigail Royer

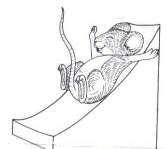
Please join us in praying for these young men and women as they begin the next adventures in their lives. Congratulations to them and their families!

GOOD THINGS

The Holy Spirit has been busy among us this month of June! Here are just a few of the blessings we shared at St. Matthew:

- ✠ We received 6 new people as members with us and joining in our mission to nurture our own community and to reach out in service beyond our walls. Welcome Joe and Susan Gest, Kimberly Griffith, Kathy and Steve Hartford, and Theresa Roginski!
- ✠ Brady, Amelia, Reed, and Ben affirmed their baptisms and have joined us as adult members of the church. The Holy Spirit has been working powerfully in their lives. God's blessings, confirmands!
- ✠ The choir finished up their year of leading our congregation in song and praise. We are grateful for the inspiration they and Dick, our musician, provide every week.
- ✠ Missy Lindquist, Bill Parchen, and Kurt Saenger-Heyl shared their experiences attending the New England Synod Assembly June 7-8 in Worcester. We are blessed with strong partners for ministry across the Synod and with strong St. Matthew leaders to represent us!
- ✠ A St. Matthew building crew worked on a Habitat for Humanity house being built with support from Thrivent Financial. Another team brought lunch to the workers. Thank you to Tim Beaulieu and Jane Hanson, who led this day to help our neighbors.
- ✠ Storytelling and communion has started on Thursday nights. We were gifted with faith stories from Steve Wilson and Deb Brodeur.
- ✠ 50 people attended the final Community Conversation of the year and dined on to ministries that further St Matthew's mission. It's summed up in the new tag line, "Digging Deep, Reaching Out, Changing Lives".
- ✠ As of the end of May, we have received offering gifts of \$184K, which is 50% of our total anticipated receipts for the year and \$39K higher than 2018! Our operating account revenues exceeded expenditures by \$1.4K year to date. We are thankful for the gifts we have received and as we go into the summer months, we hope that people will keep current with their pledges!

God is good, all the time.



July 2019:

Sunday worship & Holy Communion at 9:00 a.m.
(every Sunday in July).

Thursday evening worship services at 7:00 p.m.
(every Thursday in July).

Staff meetings: every Monday at 2:15 p.m. in July.

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Church Council meeting: July 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Healing Prayer Team Workshop: July 8 at 7:00 p.m.

Rolling Hills 5 K: July 13, starting at 9:00 a.m.

Bible Study: July 18 at 10:00 a.m.

Property Committee meeting: July 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Fourth Friday at Grace Lutheran Church: July 26 at
5:00 p.m.



August 2019:

Sunday worship & Holy Communion at 9:00 a.m.
(every Sunday in August).

Holy Communion: Sunday, August 4 at 11:00 a.m.

Thursday evening worship services at 7:00 p.m.
(every Thursday in August).

Staff meetings: every Monday at 2:15 p.m. in August.

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Bible Study: August 1 & 10 at 10:00 a.m.

Stewardship Committee meeting: August 5 at 11:30
a.m.

Church Council meeting: August 6 at 7:30 p.m.

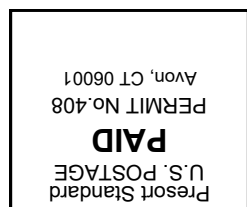
Blood Drive: August 14 from 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Evening Readers: August 19 at 6:00 p.m.

Fourth Friday at Grace Lutheran Church: August 23
at 5:00 p.m.

Property Committee meeting: August 27 at 7:00 p.m.

Electronic Service Requested
Summer 2019



Non-Profit Organization

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





New England Synod

SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2019: WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

That was this year's theme for synod assembly, a gathering of 500+ Lutheran lay and rostered leaders from across New England in Worcester, MA, June 7-8. Melissa Lindquist, Bill Parchen, Kurt-Saenger-Heyl and Pastor Julie attended workshops on topics such as planning worship in the context of your community, ecumenical partnerships, and storytelling. We heard from Pedro, a Guatemalan refugee resettled by Ascentria, and Lindsay, a student from University Lutheran in Harvard Square who has dedicated her time in the local sanctuary movement by hosting a family in the Sunday school rooms of her church. We heard about synod resources for best practices in congregations, including coaching and Forward Community, which enables congregations to navigate the waters of change and set a course for mission. The assembly voted to support the Poor People's Campaign, urge policies that treat Palestinian children with dignity, and maintain funding for Augusta-Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem. The Bishop shared the good news that 35 new calls were extended in 2018, 21 of which are new pastors to our Synod. This represents a major step toward providing pastors for parishes during a time of clergy shortage.

Bishop Hazelwood announced the launch of Jubilee 2020, an initiative to alleviate the seminary debt of current New England Synod pastors. The issue of clergy seminary debt has become pressing for many of our clergy of all generations, as many pastors answered the call in the 90's and 2000's when tuition climbed rapidly and little financial support beyond loans was available. Given the clergy shortage, we need all our synod's pastors to be serving for years to come. They cannot do this saddled with a collective \$1.7 million in seminary debt. Ten congregations have already stepped forward to make a contribution, and the assembly discussed additional ways to raise funds. Our voting members will be sharing more about this issue in the months to come to raise awareness.



ROLLING HILLS 5K: MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

This year's Rolling Hills 5k will be held on Saturday, July 13 at 9 AM. Register online at: rollinghills5k.racewire.com. If you would like to help with this year's race, please contact Pastor Brian.



American Red Cross

Our next **American**
14 from 9 am-
CROSS (1-800-

REDCROSSBLOOD.ORG.

**BLOOD
DRIVE**

Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for Wednesday, August 2pm. If you are interested in donating, please call 1-800-RED 733-2767) to schedule an appointment OR visit

If you are interested in volunteering at the drive, please contact Stephanie Montminy. One successful drive can collect enough blood units to save almost 100 lives; help us make our August drive one of those successes!



ST. MATTHEW READERS!

Our Monday, August 19th meeting will be at the Baruffi's house - thanks, Lil and Rick! - at 6:00 p.m. We don't have a book yet . . . Watch the bulletins for news of the book title. Contact Debbie Steinberg for more info or to be included on the book club email list OR just show up at a meeting - whether you finished the book or not - **WE LOVE VISITORS!**



WELCA FALL MINI-RETREAT:

Saturday, September 28, 2019, 9 – 2 PM at St. Peter's Harwich, MA (on Old Cape Cod). We are giving tribute to bold women, our ordained women, as we celebrate 25 years of female ordination. Please support your lady clergy and deacons. \$15/person (+ \$5 for childcare), includes lunch!

Contact Carolyn Bascetta to register: 401-383-0558 or cbascet@verizon.net.

GUARDIAN ANGELS

If you are looking for an opportunity to help migrant youth, consider this. "Guardian Angels," an ELCA AMMPARO program, offers physical, spiritual and emotional accompaniment of migrant minors and their families. The Synod's Immigration & Refugee Task Force hopes to start a program at Hartford's immigration court. Two volunteers, one using Spanish-speaking skills, and the other, note taking skills, will work together. They will talk with migrants and their families before their court time and then be in the courtroom. It's been found that with "Guardian Angels" present, judges & officials treat the young person with more respect! Watch the ELCA video: *Guardian Angels: An Introduction*, at <https://vimeo.com/157458987>

On **Saturday, September 14 at 9:30 a.m.** Mary Campbell, Director of AMMPARO, will train us in a 3+-hour session at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Hartford, CT. Our own parishioner, Gayle Murphy, plans to attend. You can reach out to her, or one of the pastors, to learn more. Guardian Angels will commit to volunteer two times a year, 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon, on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month. To sign up, or ask for more information, contact Doreen Rinas at doreen.rinas@gmail.com.



BE A PART OF SUNDAY SCHOOL 2019-2020!

The Sunday School program provides a weekly space for building faith, friendship, and service. We invite you to participate in the following for the 2019-2020 year:

Classroom Teaching: Pre-k - Kindergarten, Grades 1-3 & Grades 4-6

Sunday School Coordinator: This individual works with staff on overall scheduling and parent communications throughout the year.

Christmas Pageant Co-Director: Work with the pageant director, the Pastors, and Music Director to organize the 2019 Christmas Pageant.

Other: Would you like to help with youth music? Do you have talents or interests not listed? Let us know - we will find a place for you!

Please contact Meredith Trimble with your interest.

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