



# THE VOICE

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

December 2019

*"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 at 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

**December 1** - Advent Workshop 9:30 a.m.

**December 4** - Lifetouch Photos for Church Directory. 2—9 p.m. (by appointment).

**December 8 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETING\*** *immediately following 8:30 a.m. service in Sanctuary.*

- January VOICE submissions deadline.

**December 12** - Women's Ministry Cookie Exchange 7:00 p.m.

**December 22** - Lessons & Carols 8:30 a.m.  
- Christmas Pageant 11:00 a.m.

**December 24** - Christmas Eve:

- 5:30 p.m. Family Service.

- 7:30 p.m. & 10:30 p.m. Candlelight Holy Communion.

**December 20-31** - Office Closed.

**December 29** - Healing Prayer, 8:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.

**December 31** - New Year's Eve/Office Closed

## LOOKING AHEAD:

**January 1** - New Year's Day/Office Closed.

**January 5** - Epiphany Observed.

**January 11** - Open Mic Night / Potluck 5:30 p.m. (Snowdate: January 18).

**January 12** - Baptism of Our Lord.

- February VOICE Submissions Deadline.

**January 20** - Martin Luther King Day / Office Closed.

**January 24** - Fourth Friday at Grace.

**January 26** - Annual Meeting.

## A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

### FLYING BUTTRESSES

Have you ever seen the outside of a Gothic cathedral? The architecture that allows for floor to ceiling stained glass windows places all the supports for the remaining walls on the outside of the building, in the form of spidery supports called flying buttresses. Unlike most modern buildings, all that undergirds the strength of the Gothic cathedral is visible.

There are times in an organization's life where the structures of support are also made visible. We have two architecture features visible right now at St. Matthew. **The first is the Congregational Meeting on December 8 to approve a revised constitution for St. Matthew.** The document might be considered dull reading to some, but its provisions actually undergird everything we do. It lays out our mission in Jesus Christ, it protects our interests, and outlines our structure of organization. This constitution is an important part of our church being able to move forward effectively in ministry. You can review the revised constitution on our website or pick up a hard copy on the table in the narthex/entryway. Please make every effort to join us at 9:30 in the sanctuary on December 8!

The other underlying support that is visible right now at St. Matthew is **our financial stewardship. So far, we have 80 households participating, with 5 new pledges, 37 increased pledges, for an aggregate of \$261,080 to support the ministries at St. Matthew in 2020.** Your generosity supports each ministry, from music that lifts our hearts on Sunday morning, to the prayers shared by our prayer chain and healing prayer ministers; from the coffee cup in your hand after worship to the meals shared with the hungry at Grace Lutheran; from the church year puzzle in the Sunday School classrooms to the publications in your inbox that keep you connected to the life of the church. All these ministries and many more are possible because you choose to support it financially. I want to say a hearty THANK YOU!

**In this season of Advent, we ponder the mystery of another underlying reality made visible: that is, the love of God in Jesus.** God's love entered a human life—Jesus' life. God's love enters human lives today, in part through our ministries here at St. Matthew. May you be blessed this Advent in seeing the architecture of love that supports your life, here at St. Matthew, and through the love of Jesus.

*Pastor Julie*

## **A NEW CHURCH YEAR, A FAMILIAR WORSHIP SETTING**

This summer and fall our congregation has been learning a new musical setting of the liturgy entitled *Now the Feast and Celebration*. It has all the same parts and texts as the setting from ELW that has been in use for some time at St Matthew, set to new melodies. At the same time, we programmed favorite hymns requested by the congregation. Knowing that there are a variety of musical tastes in the congregation, learning this setting has expanded our ability to speak across generation and style to include more people.

On the first Sunday of Advent, December 1, we begin a new church year. We will also return to the familiar musical setting of the liturgy, ELW setting 3. You can expect that we will have some seasonal variation in the elements of the liturgical setting; for example, in Advent we will sing a special hymn during the lighting of the Advent wreath instead of Kyrie or Gloria. The liturgy has some standard portions and other sections which are optional. Given our hour time constraint, we will continue to rotate the elements in the opening rite of our liturgy to accommodate different seasonal emphases.

As always, the staff and Worship and Music Committee welcome your feedback. Specific examples of what you like and don't like help us to understand preferences and how the worship is received. Please include your name, so we may follow up with you to learn more about your wishes. While we cannot satisfy all the people all the time, we do want to give members what they like as often as we can. Our goal is to support our congregation's praise and prayer to God, and each one of you is an important part of our community.

Pastor Julie

## **WE WANT USHERS!**

Ushering is a great way to help out during services as well as meet and greet other members. I have met and gotten to know so many more people because of ushering! We have many long time ushers but of course need to add new ushers to fill out each team.

All are welcome to usher! Individuals, couples, youth, families, mothers/fathers and/or daughters/sons, or combination can help to fill our teams! Once you try it you will feel more engaged and get to know more people at church.

Saint Matthew has maintained "Usher Teams" of four to five people, so there is always a built in 'sub'. Each team covers one Sunday (i.e. the first, second, third, fourth or fifth Sunday of each month) at either the 8:30 or 11:00 Service. If you have to miss a Sunday, no worries! An experienced captain leads each team and they help new ushers to learn how to be an usher.

We currently need ushers for both services. Please feel free to sign up in on the schedule posted on the bulletin board in the Gathering Space or contact me through the office for more information.

Thank you! ~~~~ Kristian Jensen, Usher Coordinator ~~~~



**YOUTH GROUP!** In the month of December, Youth Group will meet the first Sunday of the month, December 1st, at 9:40 a.m., and join the congregation in the Advent Workshop. Youth group will meet the evening of Sunday, December 15th from 5 – 7 p.m. for a Christmas Party! Sign up on the youth board or by emailing Pastor Brian.



**MEN'S GROUP** St. Matthew's men's ministry will not meet in the month of December.

In January, we will meet again for another 4th Saturday breakfast on January 25th, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. in the parsonage intern apartment space. Sign up on the bulletin board or by emailing Pastor Brian.

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** Mark your calendars for the upcoming Congregational meeting on December 8th at 9:30 a.m. (immediately following the 8:30 a.m. service in the sanctuary) to approve the revised St. Matthew constitution. Please make every effort to join us for this important but brief (15 minutes) meeting! Food and fellowship to follow in the Hall of the Evangelists.

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL** We have booked our VBS week for next summer. Camp Calumet counselors will lead **St. Matthew's VBS the week of June 29th - July 3rd, 2020**. Mark your calendars and invite your friends!

**THANK YOU** to those who donated items and those who packed the 50 *Operation Christmas Child* boxes during our first GIFT event. Lots of great conversations were had while adults and kids packed and prayed over these boxes. Children all over the world will receive our gifts in the coming weeks. Visit [samari-tanspurse.org](http://samari-tanspurse.org) to see about the *Operation Christmas Child* program.

**SIGN UP NOW FOR POINTSETTIAS!** Poinsettias will grace the sanctuary this Christmas season. If you would like to purchase one (or more!), please use the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the sanctuary. As with flowers, you may dedicate them in memory of loved ones, in honor of a celebration, in thanksgiving, or simply for the Glory of God! You may take them home after worship on January 5, 2020.

**THE ADVENT WORKSHOP** will take place on **Sunday, December 1st at 9:40 a.m.** in the Hall of the Evangelists for all who signed up to paint pottery. If you have not yet signed up but would like to participate, please contact Heidi Beaulieu as soon as possible. For all ages!

**WOMEN'S MINISTRY COOKIE EXCHANGE** A cookie exchange will take place on **December 12th at 7 p.m.** in the Gathering Space! Please bring 50 cookies and take home about 3 dozen of everyone else's cookies. Wear a Christmas sweater, shirt or outfit and bring your recipe and a favorite Christmas ornament with its special story in your family. Drinks, light snacks and packaging materials will be provided. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Gathering Space.

**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** Please join us as we celebrate the birth of Christ at the children's Christmas Pageant on December 22nd at the 11 a.m. service.

**BIBLE STUDY** Bible Study will continue to be held the **first and third Thursdays** of each month from **10 - 11 a.m.** We hope you will join us for this time of studying Scripture!

## **GOOD THINGS**

### **A lot of good things happened at St. Matthew in the month of November!**

- ✦ Pastor Julie travelled to Wittenberg, Germany for a special two-week seminar on Martin Luther.
- ✦ Pastor Brian attended the New England Synod's "Synod Convocation" November 18-20th.
- ✦ Sunday School, youth group, and adult forum combined for our first ever G.I.F.T. (Generations in Faith Together) event. Missy Lindquist organized the event and led us as we packed shoeboxes full of gifts for Operation Christmas Child.
- ✦ Property Committee hosted Fall Cleanup Day on Saturday, November 10th.
- ✦ Sunday School sang at the 11:00 a.m. service on November 24th and did another fantastic job!
- ✦ Pastor Brian hosted Grace Lutheran's Friday night meal, filling in for Grace's Pastor Rick as he was away.
- ✦ New groups like yoga, centering prayer, men's ministry, women's ministry, and grief support continued to meet and bless our congregation.
- ✦ Giving was \$10,000 ahead of budget; expenses were lower than budget. We have a net operating surplus of almost \$20,000 year to date at 10/31/19.

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
1 8:30 Worship 9:40 Advent Workshop: Pottery Painting 11:00 Holy Communion	2 1:45 Staff Meeting 7:00 Finance Committee	3 6:00 Confirmation Meeting 7:00 Church Council	4 <i>Church Directory Photos Today</i> 9:00 Gentle Yoga 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	5 10:00 Bible Study	6	7 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals	
8 8:30 Holy Communion 9:30 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING (In Sanctuary) 11:00 Worship 12:30 Journey Through Grief	9 1:45 Staff Meeting 6:00 Evening Readers (at Steinbergs' house)	10 6:00 Confirmation Meeting 7:00 Centering Prayer	11 9:00 Gentle Yoga	12 9:30 Toddler Time Playgroup 1:00 Church Historians 2:15 Centering Prayer 7:00 Women's Ministry Cookie Exchange	13	14 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals	
15 8:30 Worship 9:40 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Holy Communion 12:30 Journey Through Grief 12:30 Young Adult Gathering 5:00 Youth Group in Hall of the Evangelists	16 10:30 Organ Tuning 1:45 Staff Meeting	17 6:00 Confirmation Meeting	18 9:00 Gentle Yoga 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	19 10:00 Bible Study	20 <i>Office Closed</i>	21 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals	
22 8:30 Lessons & Carols 9:40 Pageant Rehearsal 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Christmas Pageant	23 <i>Office Closed</i> 1:45 Staff Meeting	24 <b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> <i>Office Closed</i> 9:00 Gentle Yoga 5:30 Family Service 7:30 Candlelight Holy Communion 10:30 Candlelight Holy Communion	25 <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> <i>Office Closed</i>	26 <i>Office Closed</i>	27 <i>Office Closed</i> 5:00 Fourth Friday at Grace Lutheran Church	28 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals	
29 8:30 Healing Prayer with Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School 11:00 Healing Prayer with Holy Communion	30 <i>Office Closed</i>	31 <i>Office Closed</i> 6:00 Confirmation Meeting	<b>December 2019</b>				
Notes:							

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