



THE VOICE

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

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

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(860) 673-3301

Website: www.stmatthewavon.org

Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 AM and
11:00 AM

DATES TO REMEMBER:

November 3 - Daylight Savings Time ends.
- St. Matthew Celebrates All Saints Day

November 10 - December VOICE submissions deadline.
- Misson Sunday.
- GIFT - Generations in Faith Together
Event at 9:40 a.m.

November 11 - Veterans Day.
- Evening Readers at 7:00 p.m.

November 17 - Youth Leaf Raking at 2:00
p.m.

November 22 - Fourth Friday at Grace at
5:00 p.m.

November 27—29 - Office Closed.

LOOKING AHEAD:

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

December 8 - January VOICE submissions deadline.

December 22 - Christmas Pageant at 11:00
a.m.

December 24—27 Office Closed.

give thanks
to the Lord
for He is good
1 CHRONICLES 16:34

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

A Spirituality of Thankfulness

November has always been a month when I remember what I'm thankful for. With Thanksgiving at the end of the month, the time leading up to it can be used as time to reflect on the gifts we've been given and all the blessings we have in life. And while Thanksgiving is not a religious holiday, it certainly offers us a chance to consider all the blessings God has given us. This year I'm thankful for all you, for being so lovingly welcomed as one of your pastors. I'm thankful for my family and a new nephew who was just born. I'm thankful for the friendships I've made here and for being able to be involved with exciting new ministries at St. Matthew.

With all we have to be thankful however, the human brain has a way of focusing on the negative. It's been said 'the positive' slides off our brain like Teflon and 'the negative' sticks to our brain like Velcro. Biologically this has purpose as it has helped our survival as a species, because it's more important to think about the bear that could kill you than about the pretty flowers that smell nice. However, in modern society this has led to a tendency to always reflect on the negative; and reveals just how much we need to train our minds to intentionally count our blessings and focus on the positive.

Voicing our gratitude and thanksgiving is a wonderful spiritual practice. Reminding ourselves of all we have to be thankful for is healthy for body, mind, and soul. In the past I've done an exercise to take five minutes and write as quickly as possible as many things I can think of that I'm thankful for. This is an excellent way to kick-start your spiritual practice of gratefulness. Then work on the art of gratefulness whenever you get the chance. Being attentive to the details of every day and considering the beauty of all we see is a powerful way to direct our minds toward gratitude. Seeing colorful autumn leaves or smelling harvest in the air can make us pause and admire the beauty of creation. Try to be attentive to nature as much as possible, and let it direct your attention to gratitude and thanksgiving.

Gratitude can also be grown when we reflect on the (continued...)

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.*

(...continued) blessings of our relationships. Remembering loved ones who have departed, and spending time with those still with us, can instill a sense of love and gratitude for the gift of family and friends. In addition to the beauty of the world and the beauty of relationships, we can reflect on the mystery of life itself and feel intense gratitude. Reflect on the sense of gratefulness you feel for the gift of being alive. Feel simple awe at the fact that you are aware of anything at all—the miracle that you have being, awareness, and conscious experience. It is truly incredible! And finally, reflect with thanksgiving on God's love for you. Let this love sink in, fill you up, and pour out of you to others. Reflect on the love of God has shown to us in Jesus Christ, and practice the art of gratitude as you grow more and more in love with God.

Blessings to you this month as you practice the art of gratitude. I pray that you have much to be thankful for and that you may know how much you are loved by God.

In gratitude,
Pastor Brian

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT AT THE END OF THE THIRD QUARTER—9/30/19

Looking ahead to our 2020 Operating Fund Budget *from: the Finance and Stewardship Committees*

Below is a brief spreadsheet, in broad categories, of our operating fund budget and year to date actual at 9/30/19.

- ◆ We have been blessed with faithful givers: Intended giving and close the gap amounts have been received regularly to place us slightly ahead of budget.
- ◆ Our expenditures are slightly lower than the budget, and we are at slightly better than a breakeven at the end of the third quarter.
- ◆ We do anticipate some budgeted expenditures from property this fall - painting the outside trim on the church is the largest. We will monitor all inflows and outflows these next months.
- ◆ In October we will receive from Endowment \$15,000, or half of the \$30,000 2017 gift that is included below in the Other Income Streams portion of the 2019 budget.
- ◆ Looking ahead to our 2020 budget:

- ⇒ Our expenditures will not decrease but we hope to have a 2020 budget that is close or just a bit higher than 2019.
- ⇒ We want to fund our operating expenditures through anticipated giving and rental income. We do not want to deplete the Endowment Fund to cover operating expenditures.

- ⇒ As we contemplate our Intended Giving for 2020, each parishioner should consider using the total 2019 giving - original pledge, Close the Gap increases and one-time gifts - as the starting point. 2020 receipts will need to be the same or slightly higher to cover all of our programs, staff, facilities upkeep, and mission.

SMLC 2019 Operating Fund Budget & Year to Date Actual				
Category:	2019 Budget Revised after Close the Gap	% of Total Income or Expense	2019 Actual at 9/30/19	% of Budget (s/b approx. 75%)
Operating Income:				
Anticipated Giving Receipts	365,747	80%	287,472	79%
All Other Income Streams	94,000	20%	54,172	58%
Total Operating Income	459,747	100%	341,644	74%
Operating Expenditures:				
Church Life/Outreach	49,900	11%	35,072	70%
Staff and Office	272,759	59%	200,158	73%
Buildings and Property	137,088	30%	103,537	76%
Total Operating Expenditures	459,747	100%	338,767	74%
Net	0		2,877	



Following its study on the biblical book of Ruth as a migration story, the Adult Forum looks at two ministries in the larger church that works with refugees and immigrants.

November 3 AMMPARO.

Explore the ELCA strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities with Doreen Rinas, New England Synod AMMPARO team member.

November 10 GIFT: Generations In Faith Together.

Join with members of all ages for a mission project to benefit Samaritan's Purse.

November 17 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Learn about their 80 year history and present day mission.

November 24 ELCA, A Sanctuary Denomination.

Our national church body voted to become a sanctuary denomination last August. What does that mean?

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.

GOOD THINGS

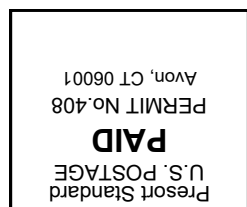
The month of September saw many good things happening at St. Matthew:

- ✦ Four members of our stewardship committee shared "Stewardship Minute" talks, based on the biblical idea that God has entrusted God's resources to us, and that we are to manage these resources to God's glory.
- ✦ The Sunday School children sang in worship on the fourth Sunday of the month, and learned about the church year and colors with a display of miniature stoles and a puzzle of the Sundays of the liturgical year.
- ✦ Yoga classes, Centering Prayer, and the Women's Fellowship Group all launched this month! We are grateful to the members who have stepped forward to lead these groups as well as those who are participating and inviting friends.
- ✦ Our property committee continues to keep up our facility. Members recently installed wifi at the parsonage, replaced two toilets with low flow models, and added a doorbell at the main office for great security.
- ✦ A small but dedicated group of folks ensure we have coffee each Sunday morning.... Isn't that wonderful??
- ✦ Our Mutual Ministry Committee met with each staff member this month for support and oversight, ensuring that our gifted staff have the resources they need to continue to serve the Gospel here at St Matthew.
- ✦ The confirmation class is studying the Gospels and learning a rap with the names of the New Testament books of the Bible. Ask them to demonstrate the dance moves!
- ✦ Each week our altar is adorned with beautiful flowers, shining silver, and bright candles, and food for the soul, thanks to our Altar Guild. They are an example prayer in action!
- ✦ Five new counters have stepped up to help tally each week's giving. Thank you for your service!
- ✦ By Reformation Sunday, we received 53 Intended Giving Cards, for a total of \$206,470 pledged so far. We give thanks for this outpouring of generosity in our midst!

God is good, all the time.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
November 2019					1 ALL SAINTS DAY	2 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals
3 ALL SAINTS SUNDAY DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS! 8:30 & 11 AM Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School & Youth Hour 9:45 Adult Forum 4:00 Journey Through Grief	4 1:45 Staff Meeting	5 6:00 Confirmation Meeting 7:00 Church Council	6 9:00 Gentle Yoga 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	7 10:00 Bible Study 6:00 Evening Bible Study	8	9 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals
10 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 GIFT Event: Shoeboxes 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Worship	11 VETERANS DAY 1:45 Staff Meeting 7:00 Evening Readers	12 6:00 Confirmation Meeting 7:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Stewardship Committee	13 9:00 Gentle Yoga 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	14 9:30 Toddler Time 1:00 Church Historians 2:00 Centering Prayer	15	16 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals
17 8:30 Worship 9:40 Sunday School 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Holy Communion 12:30 Young Adult Gathering 2:00 Youth Leaf Raking 4:00 Journey Through Grief	18 1:45 Staff Meeting 7:00 Healing Prayer Ministers Meeting	19 6:00 Confirmation Meeting	20 9:00 Gentle Yoga 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	21 10:00 Bible Study 12:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00 Evening Bible Study	22 5:00 Fourth Friday at Grace Lutheran Church	23 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals
24 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Worship (Sunday School Sings)	25 1:45 Staff Meeting	26 6:00 Confirmation Meeting 7:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Property Committee	27 OFFICE CLOSED 9:00 Gentle Yoga 7:00 Sanctuary Choir	28 THANKSGIVING OFFICE CLOSED	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30 7:00 Yoga Fundamentals
Notes:						

Electronic Service Requested
November 2019



Non-Profit Organization

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

