



# THE VOICE

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

February 2020

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

## STAFF:

Julie Reuning-Scherer, Lead Pastor  
Brian Rajcok, Associate Pastor  
Richard Silbereis, Director of Music  
Cynthia Zakowski, Office Administrator  
Steven Smolnik, Publisher

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

Website: [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org)

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

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

**February 1** - Youth Group Snowtubing  
**February 7-9** - Confirmation Retreat  
**February 15** - March VOICE deadline  
**February 15** - Men's Breakfast 8:30 AM  
**February 16** - Young Adults' Brunch 12:30 PM  
**February 26** - Ash Wednesday - First day of Lent (12 PM & 7 PM Services)  
**February 28** - Fourth Friday at Grace 5:00 PM  
**February 29** - GIFT Event: Square Dancing, 6:00 PM

## LOOKING AHEAD:

**March 5** - Thursday evening Lenten services begin 6 PM  
**March 15** - April VOICE deadline  
**March 27** - Fourth Friday at Grace, 5 PM

**INCLEMENT WEATHER:** If we ever cancel an event due to weather, you can view the status on Eyewitness News 3 WFSB or NBC 30 WVIT, or listen to WTIC AM 1080 on your radio. We may also send an email through our Constant Contact email blasts. In order to receive these emails, you must sign up on our website at [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org). However, worship is RARELY cancelled.

## A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

### YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

I have just completed my third year as your lead pastor here at St. Matthew, and as programs develop and the ministry expands, great communication continues to be at the top of my list of priorities for all of us. Simply put, your voice matters to me. What you like, don't like, what you need, how you experience life at St. Matthew or life in general, and of course, your spiritual path! My goal is to journey together as a community and I am here to listen as well as to speak. I am grateful for the richness that comes from honest and open sharing of thoughts and experiences with me.

Sometimes, however, it is not always clear *how* to make your voice heard in an organization. Here at St. Matthew, Pastor Brian and I welcome your feedback via phone call, email, or face to face conversation. You can call us on our cell phones or reach us at the office. Our council members are also available to hear from you. When you share feedback, it is most helpful to be specific about what you liked so we continue doing it. When something may be an issue, you can be part of positive change by sharing specific examples and offering suggestions. Pastor Brian and I, along with the rest of the staff and leadership, want to continue to create a meaningful worship and community experience with you, so we need your continuing feedback to be able to do that.

A new communication tool that the council and visioning team have introduced in the past year is the Community Conversation. Community Conversations facilitate members hearing from one another in the community—it's communication that happens in many directions between parishioners, not just from leadership and staff to the membership. **During the month of February, our Adult Forum and Worship and Music Committee will host a series of Community Conversations on worship.** The Conversations will focus on principles of planning worship which grow out of scripture and tradition, as well as your feedback on the experience of worship at St. Matthew. We also hope to include a congregational survey about worship to capture feedback from people who may not be able to attend the conversations, or may be reticent to share in a larger group.

Worship is central to our life together, and our praise of God comes from all of us. I invite you to help us expand our conversations about it to grow and deepen our worship experience together as a community.

*Pastor Julie*

**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.*

## ADULT FORUM HOSTS COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON WORSHIP

This month, our Adult Forum will invite the entire community to join in a Community Conversation on Worship. The Conversations will include material from the class Worship 101 which covers the basics of our worship tradition and the development of the liturgy. The group will discuss implications for worship decisions and hear from one another about worship experiences and preferences. A congregation-wide survey will inform the final discussion of the series. Please join us!

† **Feb 2:** Community Conversation: Essential Elements of Worship

† **Feb 9:** Community Conversation: How Can I Keep From Singing?

† **Feb 16:** Community Conversation: Continuity and Change in Worship

† **Feb 23:** Community Conversation: Survey Results Discussion

## DONATIONS IN HONOR/IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

St. Matthew has long received gifts in honor of, or in memory of, members and friends of the church. These contributions have been directed to the Memorial Fund, which is used to further the worship and community life of St. Matthew, or the Endowment Fund, which during its history has disbursed over \$1 million to worthy area ministries and charitable organizations. The council recently voted to add four more options for people to honor or remember a loved one:

The **Music Restricted Fund** pays for special music needs, events and musicians at St. Matthew.

The **Outreach/Grace Restricted Fund** is used for outreach projects which help those in need, which includes ministries at our partner congregation, Grace Lutheran, Hartford.

The **Ongoing Capital Projects Fund** is used for property needs beyond the scope of the annual budget.

The **Pastoral Discretionary Fund** helps families in need, provides for hospitality, and funds new ministries that have not yet been included in the annual budget.

If you would like to make a contribution to one of these funds, make your check out to SMLC and write the desired fund on the memo line.

**RESEARCH TEAMS:** Research teams are beginning their work on longer term ideas from the visioning process. Their work will provide information necessary for the council to determine if any of these projects will move forward for congregational consideration. The research teams are:

**Expanded Relationship with Grace Lutheran:** This team, led by George Reider, focuses on broadening and deepening our relationship with Grace Lutheran into what might become a more integrated partnership.

**Whole Church Faith Sharing:** This team, led by Pastor Julie, is an 8-week small group focusing on prayer and the basics of evangelism.

**Property Enhancements:** Led by Ben Wright, this team focuses on creating a mission-driven agenda for the optimum use of our property.

**Daycare/Eldercare:** Margaret Byrne is heading up a team to take a first look at the possibilities and costs of creating a daycare or eldercare program at St. Matthew. All of our research teams welcome more participants, so please contact the office to get connected! Also, sign-up sheets for everyone's enrollment in these exciting possibilities are posted in the Hall of the Evangelists.

**CARE TEAMS:** We are launching a new ministry here at St. Matthew which trains people to visit our homebound members and spend some quality time with them. We're calling them *Care Teams* because each team has two people who share prayer, conversation and communion, if desired, with parishioners who can't get to church. If you are interested in meeting some of our older, homebound members and in being trained to make visits in pairs to them, or if you know of someone who would benefit from a visit, please contact Pastor Julie or Sheila Jarka via the office.

**SATURDAY MORNING YOGA FUNDAMENTALS** now begins at 9 AM, instead of 7 AM. Please note the change and come join us!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:** In February, Sunday School will meet in their classrooms on February 2nd and 9th as usual. February 16th is President's Day weekend so we will not have class. On February 23rd, classes will meet in their usual classrooms and children will sing at the 11 AM service.

- ♦ Feb 2: Class 9:40-10:40 AM
- ♦ Feb 9: Class 9:40-10:40 AM
- ♦ Feb 16: No class
- ♦ Feb 23: Class 9:40-10:40 AM; students sing at 11 AM service

**YOUNG ADULTS:** The Young Adults group will meet for brunch on the third Sunday of the month, February 16th. We'll meet at *Taprock* (or another location TBD) after the second service, roughly at 12:30 PM. Contact Pastor Brian with any questions!

### **COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**


- At the January 7th meeting, the Church Council examined the proposed budget for 2020 and approved it for introduction at the Annual Meeting on January 26, 9:30 AM.
- The council unanimously approved to forward a motion to the Congregational Annual Meeting to initiate a capital campaign to pay off the mortgage. A \$150,000 gift from the Steinberg-Jensen families has already been given toward this effort.
- In addition, the Council approved a motion to open a Fidelity Brokerage account in anticipation of the proposed capital campaign.
- Council President, Jack Pietrick, advised the group that work had begun to update the SMLC organ.
- The Council said farewell and thanked outgoing council members Missy Lindquist, Prasad Panthagani, Dawne Ware, and Jim Holst.

To read the church Council Meeting Minutes, please refer to the Council binder on top of the mailboxes in the church office.

### **GOOD THINGS: There were a lot of Good Things happening at St. Matthew in January!**

- † Fellowship hosted St. Matthew's Open-Mic Night and had lots of talented members share their gifts! A big thank you to John Jarzbek and his band, Full Circle, for opening for us and playing during dinner. And also thank you to all those who performed:
  - ♫ April Brodeur Fitts and John Fitts, flute and guitar
  - ♫ Fred Fenn and friends, Cynthia Lang and Mackey Pope, bassoon, flute, clarinet trio
  - ♫ Steve Barnhart (son-in-law of the Davidsons), poetry and song
  - ♫ Anne Fenn, poetry
  - ♫ Maya Krodell and friend, Sarah, guitar and voice
  - ♫ Lanelle Gallo, interpretive sign language to "The Lord's Prayer"
  - ♫ Pastor Julie, interactive song
  - ♫ Jake Fitts, ukulele and voice
- † Pastor Brian led Adult Forum on a short series covering Science & Religion, discussing creation one week and evolution the next.
- † We held our Annual Meeting in which we updated the Constitution, passed the budget, and reviewed the annual report.
- † We received four new members this month: Kimberly and Rick Hagfors and Paul and Susan Isaac.
- † We opened a brokerage account at Fidelity in January to allow people to donate marketable securities to St. Matthew, and to earn more interest income on our funds. We now have many ways to support St. Matthew: cash, check, electronic giving, PayPal (please cover any administrative fee if you choose this method) and marketable securities! If you would like more information on any of these options, please contact our Treasurers: Debbie Steinberg or Dawne Ware.

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>February 2020</b>						1 9 AM Yoga Fundamentals  11 AM Youth Group Snowtubing
Notes:						
2 8:30 Worship 9:40 Sunday School / Youth Group 9:45 Community Conversation 11:00 Holy Communion 12:15 Sunday School Teacher's Mtg	3 1:45 Staff Meeting 7:00 Fellowship Meeting 7:00 Finance Committee Meeting	4 6:00 Confirmation Meeting 7:00 Church Council	5 9:00 Gentle Yoga  7:00 Sanctuary Choir	6 10:00 Bible Study	7   Confirmation Retreat at Camp Calumet, Freedom, NH	8 9 AM Yoga Fundamentals
9 Confirmation Retreat at Camp Calumet 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School 9:45 Community Conversation 11:00 Worship	10 1:45 Staff Meeting  7:00 Evening Readers	11 6:00 Confirmation Meeting 7:00 Centering Prayer	12 9:00 Gentle Yoga  7:00 Sanctuary Choir	13 9:30 Toddler Time Playgroup  1:00 Church Historians  2:15 Centering Prayer	14	15 <i>March VOICE deadline</i>  8:30 AM Men's 8'fast 9 AM Yoga Fundamentals
16 8:30 Worship & Install Council 9:45 Community Conversation 11:00 Holy Communion & Install Council 12:30 Young Adults Brunch	17 1:45 Staff Meeting 7:00 Healing Prayer Mtg	18 7 PM Care Team Informational Meeting	19 9:00 Gentle Yoga  7:00 Sanctuary Choir	20 10:00 Bible Study 12:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry	21	22 9 AM Yoga Fundamentals
23 <b>TRANSFIGURATION</b> 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School 9:45 Community Conversation 11:00 Holy Communion (Sunday School Sings)	24 1:45 Staff Meeting	25 7:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Property Committee	26 <b>ASH WEDNESDAY / LENT BEGINS</b> 9:00 Gentle Yoga 12 PM Ash Wed. Svc 7 PM Ash Wed Svc 8:00 Sanctuary Choir	27 9:30 Toddler Time Playgroup 2:15 Centering Prayer	28 5:00 Fourth Friday at Grace Lutheran Church	29 9 AM Yoga Fundamentals  6:00 GIFT Event: Square Dancing

February 2020



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



**YOUTH GROUP:** Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> will be our next Youth Hour; we'll meet upstairs in the youth loft for hot chocolate, donuts, games, and conversation. We are no longer scheduling outside events in advance, but rather will be utilizing Doodle Polls to democratically select the date of each event. So, keep an eye on your email to pick which dates work for you for this month's event!



**EVENING READERS:** Below is the schedule so far for 2020. Please contact Debbie Steinberg for more information 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!**

**February 10th – 7 PM - Brooklyn** by Colm Toibin

**March 9th - 7:30 PM, due to Altar Guild - And Then There Were None** by Agatha Christie

**April 13th (day after Easter) – 7 PM - A Gentleman in Moscow** by Amor Towles

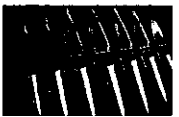
**May 11th - 7:30 PM, due to Altar Guild - Alice in Wonderland** by Lewis Carroll

**June 8th – 7 PM - The Clan of the Cave Bear** by Jean Auel

**MEN'S BREAKFAST:** Men's group will meet for breakfast in the intern apartment on **Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 - 10 AM.** Come eat and enjoy fellowship with your brothers in Christ!



**CENTERING PRAYER:** Centering Prayer will meet the second and fourth Tuesday and Thursday of this month. The Tuesday evening group will meet at 7 PM in the youth loft on Feb. 11th & Feb. 25th. The Thursday afternoon group will meet at 2:15 PM in the conference room on Feb. 13th & 27th. We will read Keating, Chapter 5, for our first meeting and Keating, Chapter 6, for our next. Newcomers are always welcome!



**ORGAN RE-VOICING PROJECT NOW COMPLETE:** The organ re-voicing project, made possible through the generosity of one of our church member families, is now completed. The Foley Baker Company arrived at St. Matthew on the morning of January 2<sup>nd</sup>, removed approximately one-third of the organ pipes, and took them to their factory, where the pipes were carefully gone over. On January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, the pipes were reinstalled, finished and tuned. This work has resulted in a warmer and more balanced tone. As a result, many of the great monuments of organ literature - which, due to the organ's harsh tone, could not previously be suitably registered - can now be offered to enrich the congregation's worship. Perhaps more importantly, the organ will be able to be used in a more fitting and inspiring manner to accompany the singing of the congregation and choir.

Several persons have asked just exactly what it is that the re-voicers do to the pipes. Each of the pipes in question is really a kind of whistle. At the base of each pipe there is a small air hole that sits on the air chest. A little further up from the base, there is a kind of fipple, referred to as the pipe's "mouth". The tone of the pipe is subtly altered by careful artistic micro-adjustments to the air hole and mouth.

Once again, our thanks to the donors whose generosity made this work possible! May our Savior ever more and more bless our feeble attempts to offer him our due thanks and praise for all the wonders of his love!

**ALTAR GUILD MEETINGS:** Below are the scheduled Altar Guild meetings for 2020. All begin at 7 PM except for the September potluck, which will start at 6:30 PM. We love new members! Contact Deb Brodeur for information.

- **JANUARY 13**
- **MARCH 9**
- **MAY 11**
- **SEPTEMBER 14 (Potluck)**
- **NOVEMBER 9**



**TODDLER TIME:** Below are the dates Toddler Time will meet for the remainder of 2020. (All meeting times are **9:30 – 10:30 AM on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month.**) If anyone has a favorite activity, please let Jenna Gray know!

**February 13** (*Valentine's Day-themed*)

**February 27**

**March 12**

**March 26**

**April 9**

**April 23**

**May 14**

**May 28**

**June 11** (*water play outside, weather permitting*)



**COME LEAP AND DANCE IN 2020!** Calling all Generations In Faith Together! The Fellowship Committee has invited a professional Square-Dance Caller to teach us and lead us in an evening of fun on Leap Day, **Saturday, February 29th from 6:00-8:30 PM**. All ages are welcome, and no experience is necessary. If you don't feel like dancing, you can always watch your friends and family twirl and stomp while you enjoy light refreshments and dessert provided by the committee. Just bring comfortable shoes and your sense of fun and fellowship! Sign-up in the Carter Gathering Space. Contact Melissa Lindquist or Stephanie Montminy with questions. We hope to see you there!

---

**SUNDAY BULLETINS:** If you need a large-print bulletin, please let the office know. We have the ability to make large-print copies available to you on Sunday mornings.

---

**FOURTH FRIDAYS AT GRACE:** The next Fourth Friday will be **February 28<sup>th</sup>**. Sign up in the Gathering Space if you are interested in helping to serve meals at Grace Lutheran!

---

**GodLoves  
MARRIAGE**

**LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER:**

2020 Northeast U.S. Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends are below:

- **April 24-26, 2020** at Country Inn & Suites, Ithaca, NY - a hotel with lots of country charm in the beautiful Finger Lakes region of New York.
- **May 1-3, 2020** at Heritage Hotel in Lancaster, PA. - a recently renovated hotel and home of the unique, treehouse-inspired restaurant, "Loxley's."
- **October 2-4, 2020** at Comfort Inn Latham-Albany North - just 10 miles north of Interstate 90 near Albany, the vibrant capital of NY.
- **October 16-18, 2020** at Olmsted Retreat - a stunning, hotel-style retreat center in the Allegheny National Forest, 2 hours north of Pittsburgh.

To register for a Weekend, please go to the national website: <http://www.GodLovesMarriage.org>. There are very reasonable group rates for each weekend and scholarships are available for those who need them.

For questions please contact Northeast US Directors of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, Fred & Julie Schamber, at 724-325-3166 or [fjschamber@comcast.net](mailto:fjschamber@comcast.net).

---

**WOMEN'S RETREAT 2020**



**MERCY BY THE SEA**  
RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

All women of St. Matthew and their friends are invited to join us at the Women's Retreat 2020!

**When:** **April 18, 2020, 9 AM – 4:30 PM** (*this is the Saturday after Easter*)

**Where:** Mercy by the Sea in Madison, CT (*carpools available*)

**Cost:** TBA, but less than \$50 (*Lunch AND Coffee & Drinks throughout the day: part of the cost – provided by Mercy by the Sea*)

**Sign Up Sheet:** on the Bulletin Board in the Gathering Space

Anne Fenn and Debbie Steinberg are working on the theme and schedule. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Steinberg.