



St. Matthew
Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE ACTS...of God's People

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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- ✪ Pick-up communion supplies May 7th-9th
- ✪ Prayer via Zoom– Wednesday evenings

~May 2020~



I am descended from people without green thumbs.

I remember summer days watching my friends running off to play while I was stuck at home pulling weeds in the lawn that we evidently could not grow. Knowing that my Dad was born on a farm just increases the irony. Not that my own attempts at growing grass have been all that much better. Luckily I married someone who is better at all of that. I do love spring, I just know that others love it more. Others who know how to grow things.

Growing things is going to be a really important skill in 2020.

This metaphor of planting and growing defines us in this season of pandemic. We strain against the long dark winter. The Spirit is at work in the world now. We long to spring forth from the darkness and get back into the sunshine, to stretch out and do what we used to do, to do what we know best. To be normal again.

The word “normal” is fraught with peril. It heightens the disappointment, the boredom, the anxiety we are feeling. It highlights the strangeness of our situation, and who likes strangeness? But this is a false hope, because it was the world that we consider “normal” that created this disaster. An impulsive headlong rush back into old patterns will only insure more sickness and death.

I don't think we can overstate that. It's easy to label the pandemic as an “act of God,” which no one could have foreseen and which no one could stop. That is not entirely true. Our wanton abuse of the creation is surely a factor in this. The refusal to embrace the responsibilities we have to our neighbors (and to strangers) contributed to the spread of the virus. Our pride, our glorification of individuality above community, has not helped. We have failed to lead, we have refused to follow. Injustice born in corruption and greed has amplified the impact. Ignorance and short-sightedness made this worse than it needs to be.

Do we even want to grow?

Of course we do. We want to be better, we want the world to be better. We were made to grow. It is wired into the creation, it is the purpose of salvation, it is the promise of baptism. We were made good. That good has been broken.

➤ Pastor continued



Yet all is not in vain. Even in this dark time, the Kingdom of God is dawning on the horizon, beckoning us to live for that new day. Like plants that strain toward the sunlight, the Spirit stirs within us toward what is possible, refusing to settle for what is. All we need is one breakthrough, one fork in the road, one open door, one “come to Jesus” moment.

Those things happen. Probably more often than we realize or even want, they come. Places where our lives could have diverged toward new ends, moments where a different decision could change everything. They happen in history – after all, the precipitous words of one unknown German Monk changed the entire course of history 500 years ago. Where is Martin Luther today?

I think he’s out there somewhere.

Maybe it’s us.

What if, in the midst of our lament that this pandemic has changed everything, we re-oriented our viewpoint to consider that maybe this pandemic has changed everything? What if we stopped pretending that all is well, that we are everything that we want to be, everything that we could be? What if we opened our eyes and our hearts to see the truth of the world around us and dared to undertake some good to resolve the deep brokenness that the pandemic has exposed?

A social worker I know once told me that change only happens when certain conditions are met. One of those conditions is the discovery that continuing on the same path is just not possible any longer. I think we can admit that now.

No, God has not brought us to this moment on purpose, either to punish or motivate. But I do know this: God is not absent. He is yet at work in us and in our world. He will keep us through this. He will speak to us words of comfort and hope. And he will help us, if we but dare in faith to follow, to arise from this day new beings. Like the risen body of Jesus, we bear the scars of this cross, but we are also new, alive, resurrected.

Even as we battle through what is, let us plant the seeds of the tomorrow that could be.

Pastor Glen

∞ Opportunity to Serve



Even though we are not going to be together in our church building on Mother's Day this year, we want to do our best to share together as we celebrate. To do this well, we need to get communion supplies into people's hands again. There are two opportunities for you to help:

- ◆ We need a few people to be at the church during scheduled times so that people can come pick up the supplies they need for communion. You can pick your hours / days from May 7th through the 9th. **YOU MUST BE FREE OF ANY SYMPTOMS OF THE VIRUS AND REASONABLY SURE YOU HAVE NOT COME INTO CONTACT WITH ANYONE WHO MIGHT BE CONTAGIOUS.** There will be other safety precautions that you will have to observe. For social distancing reasons, we will not schedule more than two or three people to work at a time.
- ◆ We need volunteers to deliver communion supplies to members who are not able to leave their houses. These deliveries should also happen between May 7th and 9th. Same rules and safety precautions will apply.
- ◆ Not on this list but an idea for you to consider. Doing online worship only reaches people who have the ability to be online. Perhaps you know of someone who needs a little help with the technology - to find the facebook page or website, for example. Reach out and see if you can help!

Please contact Pastor Glen at gthomas@smlutheran.com or call 402-740-6395 if you can help or have questions.

This is a good time for us to make an investment in one another. I hope you will prayerfully consider how you might help.

∞ Facebook



Like and Share our St Matthew Facebook page! You will find updates and news throughout the month!

www.facebook.com/St-Matthew-Evangelical-Lutheran-Church-191409984237851/

STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES REGARDING SERVICES IN MAY

Food Pantry



In April we served 10 families. We were surprised that we didn't have more considering the circumstances we are currently facing. The good news is that generous people in our immediate neighborhood are stepping up to help fight this growing need of food insecurity. Brent was looking at his Aksarben Neighborhood newsletter and saw that someone was looking for a place to donate some food items that they had in excess. He contacted the person and suggested that they donate these items to Loaves and Fishes. Not only did this response generate food items for our shelves but also a \$100 donation!

We are still providing a choice pantry but under different procedures. We are not allowing guests into the building so they are given a grocery list of the items we have in stock to make their choices. We then have a group of people who fill the orders and return them to their vehicle. In both March and April this was accomplished with the help of Bill & Kelli Stott, Brent Thomsen, Andrew Roulliard and Kent and Sue Ties. Veda was on site to register the guests. For our volunteers that were assigned to work, I appreciate your willingness to still want to do so. I did make the decision to keep the same crew working as we have mastered our new system. It looks like we may have to continue this method of distribution for a while. Hopefully come summer we can open up and resume our normal practices. If that is not the case, we will make arrangements for those that would like to work the pantry to have an opportunity to do so. Stay tuned!!

Please know that if you find yourself in need of a few groceries to get you through some tough times, the pantry is available to you. Contact Pastor or myself and we will make arrangements to get you taken care of. Also if you have any food donations, they can be dropped off on the Friday prior to our next pantry (May 15th). If you need to drop things off earlier, you can always contact Jack and he will get them from you.

Thanks for all you do to make this pantry available to those in need!

Your faithful servant,
~Sue Ties

Calendar of Events @ St. Matthew



All in-person worship services and events at St. Matthew are suspended until further notice. This calendar includes only days with events during this time.

~SUNDAY, MAY 3~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM



WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

8:00 pm Compline Prayer via Zoom

THURSDAY, MAY 7

Pick-up & Delivery of communion supplies for Mother's Day.

FRIDAY, MAY 8

Pick-up & Delivery of communion supplies for Mother's Day.

SATURDAY, MAY 9

Pick-up & Delivery of communion supplies for Mother's Day.



~SUNDAY, MAY 10~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM



WEDNESDAY, MAY 13
8:00 pm Compline Prayer via Zoom

SATURDAY, MAY 16
10:00 am Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

~SUNDAY, APRIL 17~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM



MONDAY, MAY 18
ACTS Articles Due

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22
8:00 pm Compline Prayer via Zoom

~SUNDAY, MAY 24~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM



MONDAY, MAY 25

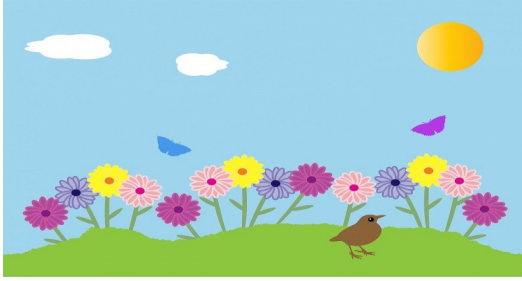


WEDNESDAY, MAY 27
8:00 pm Compline Prayer via Zoom

~SUNDAY, MAY 31~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM



Of Patience and Pruning



In many parts of America, Mother's Day is the recommended date for planting flowers outdoors. Subjecting blooms to the elements any sooner is risky, though sunny spring days sure make waiting tough. Perhaps that's why poet May Sarton calls gardening "an instrument of grace," for it "slows us down and forces patience."

Courage is also required. Gardeners "must be brave enough to cut back the old and sit with bare branches, awaiting new growth," writes Cheryl Richardson (*Waking Up in Winter*). "And we must trust that it will come." When God prunes us, we too must trust that new growth and new life are in store ... and then patiently wait.

Sunday Mornings



We are still church!

Sunday morning at 8:30 am

Online worship will be at 8:30 am via the church website www.smlutheran.com or on our Facebook page or anytime afterwards.

Hope to "see" you!

Special Dates

National Day of Prayer, May 7, 2020
Mother's Day, May 10, 2020
Armed Forces Day, May 16, 2020
Ascension Day, May 21, 2020
Memorial Day, May 25, 2020
Pentecost, May 31, 2020



Mother's Day



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Food Pantry



~Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry~ Items Needed

Canned Veggies– beets, baked beans, canned potatoes

Condiments– Ketchup, Mustard, Salsa, BBQ Sauce

Pancake Mix

Cream of Mushroom Soup

Saltine Crackers

White– All Purpose Flour

White Sugar

Jelly

Corn Muffin Mix

Boxed Potatoes

Worship Servants & Donations



As the Covid-19 virus spreads throughout our community and across the globe, we must make difficult and painful choices in order to respond to this situation appropriately.

All worship services and events at St. Matthew are suspended until further notice. This is at the recommendation of the civil authorities and of our Bishop.

We are livestreaming a worship service at 8:30 am on Sundays. You can join live or watch anytime on our Facebook page.

STAY TUNED FOR CHANGES AS WE MOVE THROUGH MAY

Availability



Office hours will be erratic for a while. Pastor Glen will be reducing his time in public as much as possible without neglecting his call. **IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF A PASTORAL PRESENCE HE WILL BE THERE FOR YOU!** Call him and he will be there— of just call to talk!

Pastor Glen Cell (402)740-6395

A Prayer for Memorial Day



We remember, O Lord, all those people throughout the years who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country, for liberty, for us. Whenever we breathe the air of freedom or claim the right to justice or enjoy the privilege of worship, fill us with gratitude for those who selflessly gave the last full measure of devotion — their very lives — for our benefit.

May these brave men and women now know the joy of eternity and your presence. And may the families of the fallen receive comfort and peace amid their grief. Help us as we minister to their needs. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Church Staff



Pastor ~ Glen Thomas
Administrative Assistant ~ Carrie Conley
Communications Coordinator~ Jacob York
Bookkeeper ~ Veda Keebler
Custodian ~ Jack Wiese
Music Director ~ Ric Swanson
Organist ~ Kim Hansen
JuBELLation Ringers Director ~ Ginger Britt

Church Council



Glen Thomas ~ *Pastor*
Brett Fuller—President
Bill Stott—Vice President
Randy Cramer— Secretary
Tammy Nelson—Treasurer

Teri Yeoman - Financial Secretary
Luke Compton— Faith Formation
Dave Sherwin— Community Care
John Hollenbeck— Property
Veda Keebler - Worship and Music

Church Office Information



OFFICE HOURS ~ Monday and Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and Friday 9:30 am - 10:30 am. Occasionally staff will not be in the office during these times; therefore, please call before coming to make sure we are available to assist you as needed. If no one is available, leave a message and we will call you back as soon as possible.

CALENDAR ~ All events, activities or meetings planned to be held at St. Matthew need to be placed on the church calendar. To schedule an event, activity or meeting call the church office and speak with Carrie.

WEEKLY BULLETIN ~ All information for announcements need to be in the church office by **Wednesday at noon**.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER ~ All information for the monthly newsletter “The Acts” is due in the church office on the **second or third Monday of each month**. Specific date listed on the monthly newsletter calendar page.

PAPER RECYCLING ~ We collect all office related paper items, catalogs, and books for recycling. Cardboard products are not included in this recycling program. The recycling waste containers are located in the secretary’s office.

Financial Report

~March 2020~



General Fund Activity

Beginning			Transfers	Ending
Balance	Receipts	Payments	In (Out)	Balance
24,281.18	15,790.02	18,158.02		21,913.18

Benevolence Offerings

Hunger Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
1,607.00	1,405.00

Receipts	Dispersed
125.00	211.69

Women of the ELCA

Service Project ~ Cereal



~Daily Devotional “Daily Grace”~

Women of the ELCA website: www.womenoftheelca.org

You can go to the free site (above) to access short daily devotions as you wish, or subscribe for daily emails.

Electronic Giving

~Enjoy the convenience of electronic giving!



OUR church offers electronic giving, which allows you to make donations on a scheduled, automatic basis. It’s very convenient for you and provides much-needed donation consistency for our church. You will no longer need to write out checks and prepare envelopes every week. Even when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, your electronic contributions will continue to be received on an uninterrupted basis.

To set up electronic donations, simply complete the authorization form available at church and return it to the church office. Donations can be debited automatically from either a checking or savings account.



"Empowered by God as committed disciples, we boldly care for and serve our congregation, our community and our world."

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church
1725 S 60th Street
Omaha, NE 68106-2149

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



~CONTACT INFORMATION~

Office Phone (402) 556-7030
Email: office@smllutheran.com
Web Site: www.smllutheran.com

~WORSHIP SCHEDULE~

Sunday @ 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Holy Communion Every Week

~SUNDAY COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP~

9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

~SUNDAY SCHOOL~

9:40 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.

A journey for everyone from 2—102!

This newsletter is now available on our church website and is emailed to our members and friends. To help decrease the cost of printing and postage, please notify the church office of your current email address. Thank you!

