

ST. MATTHEW

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWS

August 2022



THE ACTS ... of God's People



Is this *THE END?* Of course not!

Well, probably not ...

It is kind of a “go to” for human beings that when times are difficult we assume that there is something larger at work, that God is exercising his wrath toward the punishment of sin or something like that. We think we are pretty good about seeing God’s motives. We are of course usually wrong about that.

In fact it is an absolute truth that everyone who has predicted at the end of the world has been wrong... so far.

The thing is, it’s just easier to assume that’s something larger is happening to cause all of the problems in the world rather than take responsibility that we are the agents of all of this doom and disaster. Allowing ourselves to be held accountable is not an easy thing. Changing the way we think and act is even harder. And so we just lay the blame on God and

hope that we will somehow escape any eternal consequence of what we have done.

I think that might be wishful thinking.

If we are in fact witnessing an apocalyptic nightmare in the world it is of our own making and entirely our own fault, which is actually why it might not be a bad idea to go ahead and spend a little time in that great and mysterious wonder of the Bible that we call the book of *Revelation*.

Beginning on Wednesday, August 3rd, I invite you to join me for a six-week reading and study from that enigmatic, but really amazing, writing. Unfortunately, because COVID continues to be a challenge in our community, the study will be entirely online. *(continues page 5)*



Worship: Sundays, 9:30am
1725 S. 60th St., Omaha, NE
Phone: 402-556-7030
Email: office@smlutheran.com
Website: www.smlutheran.com

GOD IS CONSTANTLY AT WORK

See page 2 for Pastor’s Message: ...“He gave his son so that we should live.”

VITALITY INITIATIVE for Congregations

On page 4 see how you can provide input for our missional perspective!

ICE CREAM SOCIAL & SAFE WALK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

On August 15th St. Matthews is proudly supporting Belle Ryan Elementary School by sharing ice cream and welcoming ****400**** students and their parents! See page 9 for details!

REFLECTIONS

~ by Pastor Glen ~

Scorching summer days make it easy to understand why the church has usually portrayed hell as “the hot place.” It’s torturous! Personally, I have always disliked the cold more than the heat, but as the years pass I find it more and more difficult to tolerate the heat. It has a way of sucking the life and energy out of you, and if that isn’t the definition of hell then I’m not sure what is.

Of course, it’s not the heat that is making people think about the end of the world. It’s the other stuff (i.e., the raging violence, increasing economic hardship and poverty, rampant diseases and human suffering, endless brokenness in human relationships, tempestuous changes in the climate, etc.). I have come to wonder though, if our vision of the end of the world is really just wishful thinking. At some point we all ponder how much more of this we can take. Given how futile our efforts to fix the problems of life seem to be, perhaps it would be nice if God would just “wrap the whole thing up.

We’re tired—that’s understandable—and it’s not like this is the first time things have been bad. There have been pandemics before. There are some among us who have lived through global financial crisis and worldwide war. Maybe the problem is not so much that bad things are happening, as it is that they are still bad. Will we ever learn the mistakes of the past and change?

Will it ever get better?

That is the right question. That is a very faith-filled question because the Word of God tells us that of course it will... just as soon as we do.

It needs to be said, perhaps over and over again, that the challenges of our days are not the work of an angry, wrath-filled, judgmental God. That is not what the Bible tells us (though it is unfortunately what a lot of preachers with agendas have told us). Of course there is right and wrong. Of course it matters which we “choose.” But nothing that we are experiencing is arbitrary or random. Our lives are cluttered with consequences of our own creation.

Which means that we can do something about it.

The ecology of our planet has been destroyed because we have

preferred comfort and profit over the responsibility to be good stewards of the creation God has gifted us. There is endless division and strife because entitlement is part of our culture, because we are comfortable with inequity, and because we are unwilling to do the hard work of justice. There is violence because we attend our personal fears rather than the well-being of others. The church is dying because we have tied its fortunes to the values of this world and lost our holy purpose.



There is not one single thing in that previous paragraph that we cannot fix. There is not one single thing in that previous paragraph that the Holy Spirit cannot overcome.

Do you believe that?

Pessimism is easy. The industry of this world is fueled by it. There is a simple reason why bad news fills the media: We are more attentive to it, interested in it, and manipulated by it. Bad news is self-reinforcing. It excuses us from having either to care or do. Hope is much more difficult. It demands that we give everything we are and everything we have in order to move ourselves and our world closer and closer to the Kingdom of God. Hope is hard.

But hope is also sustaining.

In the end, our self-indulgent pessimism is its own hell. We do not need God to punish us for our shortcomings—we are more than capable of doing that work ourselves. Which is probably why God is much more interested in filling us with promise and possibility. God is constantly at the work of giving us gifts, and showing us visions, and leading us forward in grace, not merely for our own sake but ultimately for his. God did not give his own son that we should be tired or angry or hurt.

He gave us his son so that we should live. Forever and abundantly.

And we can do that.

The Question of the Day...



Each Sunday through the end of August we are going to pose a question of the day, and you may respond either by writing your response (preferably using one word) on a post-it note or 3x5 card (if you attend service in person), or send by email if you attend on-line. We look forward to hearing from you!

(continued from page 1)



Enter the **BIBLE**

I will share the study LIVE on Wednesday evenings on Facebook and the church website at 6:00 p.m. As always, you can check it out any time at your own convenience as well.

The book of Revelation is a fascinating insight into the work of faith in difficult times. That alone is well worth the time and effort.

Dates to Remember



2022
August

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Aug. 8-12 - 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly
Columbus, OH
(<https://www.elca.org/>
churchwideassembly for more info.)



Aug. 14 - Special Goodbye Prayer for Kathy and Mark (Davis) during worship service and at Coffee Fellowship afterward

Aug. 15 - Bellevue Ryan Elementary Safe Walk to School night, and Ice Cream Social

Aug. 21 - "Welcome Day" at St. Matthews. Join us to welcome our new members to the congregation!

August 2022

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
WEEK 32	Aug 1 9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5)	2 9:00am Sewing for Babies (Art Room) 6:00pm Worship Ministry Team (Zoom Meeting)	3 6:00pm Pastor's Bible Study ((Online Only))	4 1:30pm O Devot Glen
	8 9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5)	9	10 6:00pm Pastor's Bible Study ((Online Only))	11
WEEK 33	*2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly* (Columbus, OH)			
	15 12:00am Luther College Track Team (Leave) 9:00am Tanzania 5:00pm Belle Ryan Safe 7:00pm Church Council	16 9:00am Sewing for Babies (Art Room)	17 6:00pm Pastor's Bible Study ((Online Only))	18 1:30pm O Devot Glen 6:30am A Elmw
WEEK 34	22 9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5)	23 7:00pm Phoebe Circle	24 6:00pm Pastor's Bible Study ((Online Only))	25
	29 9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5)	30	31 6:00pm Pastor's Bible Study ((Online Only))	Sep 1
WEEK 35				

April 2022							September 2022						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	26	27	28	29	30		
29	30	31											

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	5	6	7 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship
	12	13 9:00am Jachebed Circle (Lounge)	14 9:30am Sunday Worship (Special Goodbye) 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship 7:00am Luther College
	19 Coffee & Fellowship with Pastor	20 9:00am Loaves and Fishes Food Party (Fellowship Hall, Lower Level classrooms)	21 9:30am Sunday Worship (Welcome New Members) 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship
	26	27 9:30am Deborah Circle	28 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship
	2	3	4

WORSHIP SERVANTS

Readings are e-mailed weekly on Mondays (contact the church office if you do not receive them), and if you are unable to make your scheduled service, please attempt to find a substitute and notify the church office of your unavailability and replacement. Thank you for your faithful service!

AUGUST 2022

Sunday Date	Lector	Communion Assistant	Usher(s)	Camera Tech	Altar Guild
AUG. 7	Michael Waits	Chris Chubb Shane Waits	Dennis & Margie Magnuson	Derek Copenhaver	Mark Davis & Mary Peters
AUG. 14	Lorie Thomas	Marlys Hanson	Michael Lisko Dave Sherwin	Derek Copenhaver	Mark Davis & Mary Peters
AUG. 21	Scott Albright	Susan Hollenbeck	Terri Yeoman Nate Houfek	Derek Copenhaver	Mark Davis & Mary Peters
AUG. 28	Nate Houfek	Deanna Hansen	Kent Ties	Derek Copenhaver	Mark Davis & Mary Peters



***Worship Servants** ensure our gatherings function efficiently and effectively so our worshippers can experience the Word of Grace in all its fullness. We are in need of recruiting additional servants to join the Altar Guild and the Acolytes. Please contact Pastor Glen if you are interested.*

SAFE PRACTICES UPDATE

At this time, **we want to eliminate as much as possible the handling of the communion cups.** We continue to try to balance our worship practices against the risk created by the ongoing CoVid endemic.

- ***If you distribute the wine:*** Please hold the tray and let the communicants take the cup for themselves (unless they require assistance). Please do not pick up the empty cups (even when communing at the altar).
- ***To our worshippers:*** Please place your empty cups at the end of the side aisles in the baskets.

Thank you for your attention to our ongoing adjustments to the procedures.



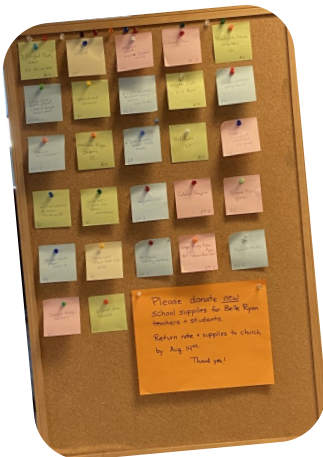
BELLE RYAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SAFE WALK TO SCHOOL NIGHT and ICE CREAM SOCIAL

On Monday, August 15th, Belle Ryan School will have its “Safe Walk to School” night from 5pm - 6:30 pm. We will be sharing in this special event by handing out ice cream treats to 400 students and parents and WE NEED YOUR HELP to welcome them all as their new school year begins. Hope to see you there! Use the Yellow Form to sign up or contact Pastor Glen.



Back-to-school
Night

BELLE RYAN'S SCHOOL SUPPLIES WISH LIST



We have filled many requests from the Belle Ryan Teachers Wish List for school supplies.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

There are a few more items remaining on our bulletin board in the narthex. Simply select a tag from the tree, fill the stated need, and remember to include the tags with your items so we can deliver them to correct teachers.

Again, thank you all for your kindness, support, and generosity!

ST. MATTHEWS FINANCIAL REPORT

June 2022

Beginning Balance: \$ 33,075.29

Receipts: \$ 11,470.00

Payments: \$ 16,662.87

Transfers: \$ 0

Ending Balance: \$ 27,882.42

Benevolence Offerings

Receipts: \$1,377.00

Dispersed: \$1,505.00

Hunger Offerings

Receipts: \$ 50.00

Disperse: \$ 40.00

FREE OFFER

Be sure to redeem your Gift of God's
Unconditional Love anytime!
(Coupon good now thru infinity.)

Hello everyone,

Loaves and Fishes served 16 families (38 individuals) on a very warm Saturday in July. Thanks go out to Bill & Kelli Stott, Kent Ties and Marlys Hanson for their service on pantry day, as well as Deanna Hansen for picking up milk, eggs, yogurt and bread from Project Hope. We could not do this without the support of our volunteers! If you or someone you know would like to volunteer at the pantry, please let myself or Mary Peters know and we can get you scheduled!



Thank you to those who continue to support the pantry with your donations.

Our needs for August are as follows:

Apple sauce, toilet paper, bar soap, Ritz or Saltine crackers, diced tomatoes, boxed potatoes, and boxed cereal.

Your servant in Christ,

~ Sue Ties ~

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor ~ Glen Thomas
Office Administrator ~ Lena Johnson
Music Director ~ Ric Swanson
Organist ~ Kim Hansen
JuBELLation Ringers Director ~ Ginger Britt
Custodian ~ Jack Wiese

CHURCH OFFICE INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS ~ Monday through Friday 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

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, please call the church office and speak to Lena Johnson, our Office Administrator. She will be happy to assist you!

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 **20th of each month.**

PAPER RECYCLING ~ We recycle church bulletins and other printed items once no longer needed. You may leave your Sunday bulletin in the box on the table in the narthex when the service is over.

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church
1725 S. 60th Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68106-2149
402-556-7030
office@smlutheran.com
www.smlutheran.com



“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

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!



~CONTACT INFORMATION~

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

~WORSHIP SCHEDULE~

Sunday @ 9:30 a.m.
Holy Communion Every Week

~SUNDAY COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP~

10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall