



St. Matthew
Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE ACTS...of God's People

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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- ✪ Wednesday Night Services
- ✪ Christmas Eve Service

~December 2021~

Sharing worship together again is important to building up our community and fellowship.

We will also do our best to use safe practices as we wait for the CoVid virus pandemic to pass.

Persons who are vaccinated may attend worship without masks or restrictions. You are also welcome to continue to follow the CDC recommendations of wearing masks for indoor gatherings.

If you have not been vaccinated, you must wear a mask and practice appropriate social distancing for worship.

We are now sharing the holy communion in a continuous manner for those who would like. **YOU MAY CONTINUE TO TAKE THE COMMUNION IN THE PEW IF YOU PREFER.** If you are unable to come forward, you must commune in your pew (Pastor will not be able to come to you).

There will be coffee fellowship following worship in the upstairs lounge on Sundays. Please sign up to share a turn hosting the coffee hour.

Faith Formation classes for young children are available via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 10:45 AM.

As we return to in-person indoor routines, it is important that you return to your previous services as ushers, readers and communion assistants. Because we will continue to livestream worship services on Facebook and the church website, we are always in need of technical help as well.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Glen or any Church Council member.

God bless, and we look forward to seeing you in Church on Sunday!

∞ Church Staff

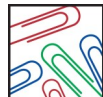
Pastor ~ Glen Thomas
Office Manager ~ Deanna Burkins
Custodian ~ Jack Wiese
Music Director ~ Ric Swanson
Organist ~ Kim Hansen
JuBELLation Ringers Director ~ Ginger Britt

∞ Church Council

Glen Thomas ~ Pastor
Brent Thomsen ~ President
Bill Stott ~ Vice President
Linda Hill ~ Secretary, Worship & Music
Sue Ties ~ Treasurer & Staff Support

Brett Fuller ~ Social Media
Dave Sherwin ~ Community Care
John Hollenbeck ~ Property
Margie Magnuson ~ Financial Secretary
Luke Compton ~ Faith Formation

∞ Church Office Information



OFFICE HOURS ~ Monday through Friday 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. 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 Deanna.

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 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.



We are living in a very strange time.

It's not just the newness of the technology or the ongoing decline of the basic social institutions that we have always taken for granted or the peculiar lifestyle choices of these new generations that is changing. It's us. We are changing. We are learning new things, asking new questions, facing old assumptions with new eyes. And we are anxious, scared, helpless, lost.

And what may be the strangest aspect of the time is how widely shared this experience is. Everyone stumbles across difficult moments in life, most of which are unique to our personal experience. But this moment cuts across the diversity of the entire community. We have all lost something important, we have all been interrupted on our journey. We have all faced the discomfort of not knowing what is coming next.

In faith, of course, we know what's next. The Kingdom of God is next. What we do not know is the how, the when, the where. And the "what-do-we-do-now" part either.

Or do we?

That is the purpose of the Gospel, to fill out the "what-do-we-do-now" part, to direct and empower us for life in the Kingdom of God. Faith is not a spectator sport, it is our daily calling, purpose and mission. It is what we do in the here and now, how we create meaning in this strange and confusing time. Discipleship is not about our comfort or our fear. It is about how we live in the midst of both.

Does life take some strange turns? I remember well a particularly grim Council meeting in March 2020 when the council first decided that we could not in good conscience hold in-person worship services while the pandemic was raging. We thought it would be for a couple of weeks at most. It was more than a year later before we felt that vaccinations were widespread enough to meet in person again.

Does life ask more of us than we have to give? The constant need for adaptation is overwhelming. How much more bad news can we actually bear? There is an old cliché that says “God never gives me more than I can carry.” I don’t know that I believe that so much anymore.

Do plans fall apart? There is an old proverb that goes, “Men plan, God laughs.” Life feels like one of those finger puzzles – the harder you try to get out of it, the tighter it becomes. How long has it taken to implement our good ideas successfully? We have been frustrated at every turn, yet by perseverance we have moved forward, in only slowly.

So what do we do at the end of the day? We do what we were supposed to have been doing the whole time. With all of our being, our words and our deeds, we sing the praise of the God of Jesus Christ! We work for justice and peace. We love and care for our neighbor as ourselves. We pray for mercy, we show our gratitude, we hope.

We keep the beat. We hear deep in our souls the rhythm of the song of God, and we move with it toward light and grace.

We are living in a very strange time. It’s called Advent. It is the announcement of the end of times, the calling out of God’s judgment on the brokenness of this world and the proclamation of the arrival of what comes next.

We know one other thing: we know why. Why is the kingdom of God next? By his grace.

~ Pastor Glen

Don’t miss these special Advent messages:

November 28th: Lean Into the Curve
December 5th: See What’s in Reserve
December 12th: Stay on Your Feet
December 19th: Keep the Beat



Calendar of Events @ St. Matthew

December

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1

5:30 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:00 pm The Story Bible Study
6:30 pm Advent Vespers



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2

1:30 pm Coffee Hour

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4



~SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5~

9:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM
W/IN-PERSON WORSHIP
10:30 AM COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP
10:45 AM CHOIR PRACTICE



MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

9:30 am Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

9:00 am Sewing For Babies
6:00 pm Worship Ministry Team
meeting

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

5:30 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:00 pm The Story Bible Study
6:30 pm Advent Vespers

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9



1:30 pm Coffee Hour
6:00 pm WELCA Christmas
Gathering

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

9:00 am Jochebed Circle



~SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12~

9:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM
W/IN-PERSON WORSHIP
10:30 AM COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP
10:45 AM CHOIR PRACTICE



MONDAY, DECEMBER 13

9:30 am Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15

5:30 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:00 pm The Story Bible Study
6:30 pm Advent Vespers



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

1:30 pm Coffee Hour

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

10:00 am Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry



~SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19~

9:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM
W/IN-PERSON WORSHIP
10:30 AM COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP
10:45 AM CHOIR PRACTICE



MONDAY, DECEMBER 20

9:00 am Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21

9:00 am Sewing For Babies
7:00 pm Congregation Council meeting

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22

5:30 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:00 pm The Story Bible Study
6:30 pm Advent Vespers

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25

Merry Christmas



~SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26~

9:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM
W/IN-PERSON WORSHIP
10:30 AM COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP
10:45 AM CHOIR PRACTICE



MONDAY, DECEMBER 27

9:30 am Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28

1:00 pm Phoebe Circle

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30

1:30 pm Coffee Hour

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

9:00 am Funtastic Fibers





Women of the ELCA

Christmas Gathering

**Thursday,
December 9th
6:00 PM**



**All are
invited**



Please Bring:

*1 dozen tea
sandwiches or
1 dozen cookies

*2 "white elephant"
Christmas bingo prizes



Lutheran Women Of Omaha

TUESDAY, December 14th, 2021
12:00 noon

Place: Rejoice! Lutheran Church
2550 S. 138th St.

Cost: \$7.00, lunch provided

Program: Mr. David Wells, historian
and storyteller

“How Christmas Evolved in History”

Free Will Offering: Salvation Army
“Heat Fund”

RSVP to Mardelle Gocek at
(402) 292- 1328 by
Sunday, December 12, 2021





Poinsettias



Reserve your Christmas Poinsettia now. Add beauty to our Christmas worship and bring the Christmas spirit home with you after church. Poinsettias are \$12 each. You may take them home any time after the Christmas Eve worship services. Complete the information below, include your payment, and place in the offering plate or turn into the office by December 17th.

I would like to order _____ poinsettia plant(s) at \$12.00 each.

Poinsettia plant(s) given: ____ In memory of or ____ In honor of

Given by:



ELCA World Hunger

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

God's grace and peace to you!

As the holidays approach, it is hard to believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be part of our lives for another season. Over the past year, as hunger around the world rose sharply and we called on you to respond, your generous support of God's work in the world through ELCA World Hunger overflowed. We are deeply grateful for you and for your trust in our shared mission.

Generous donors have established a matching fund of \$168,000, inviting you to double your impact when you give by December 31st. All gifts will be matched dollar for dollar until we reach our goal! Will you make a gift today that will go twice as far? Please make a gift online at ELCA.org/hunger, or call 1 800 638 3522 to give by credit card. Thank you!



Happy Ha Ha Holidays!



Q: How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?

A: Nothing. It was on the house.

Q: What did the third wise man say after his friends had already presented gold and frankincense?

A: "But wait, there's myrrh!"

Q: What do you call Santa at the South Pole?

A: A lost Clause

I asked my wife what she wanted for Christmas. She told me that nothing would make her happier than a diamond necklace. So I bought her nothing.

Elvis Presley





Gingerbread

INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled-off with back edge of knife
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 2/3 cup mild-flavored molasses, such as Grandma's Original (not Robust or Blackstrap)
- 2/3 cup boiling water
- 1 large egg

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9-in square pan with nonstick cooking spray with flour, such as Baker's Joy. (Alternatively, grease the pan with butter and lightly coat with flour.)
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon and cloves. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the melted butter, brown sugar, molasses, and boiling water. When the mixture is luke warm, whisk in the egg.
4. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and whisk until just combined and there are no more lumps. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for about 35 minutes, or until the edges look dark and the middle feels firm to the touch. Set the pan on a rack to cool slightly, then cut into squares and serve. This cake is best served warm out of the oven or reheated.

∞ Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry



We distributed 14 Thanksgiving meals and served 19 families on November 20th. A HUGE THANK YOU to all who "picked a pumpkin or two" to complete our baskets. Each household received a turkey, stuffing, potatoes, gravy mix, yams with marshmallows, fixings for green bean casserole, a cherry jello salad, and a cake mix with frosting. We also provided a full pantry to each household who came. With the success of our Third Annual Hike for Hunger, we were able to restock our shelves with most of the items we were short on.

Unfortunately, we still have some needs to make our shelves complete. The requests for December include:

- Pancake mix and syrup
- Salsa
- Tortillas
- Boxed potatoes
- Dish soap
- Paper towels
- Breakfast bars .

As the year winds down, please know that your continued support of the pantry is so very much appreciated. Food insecurity is a real problem in Omaha and unfortunately it seems to be growing. It makes my heart full when I ask for something, it appears. I thank you all again for your support as we serve our neighbors in need.

Thank you to Kelli Stott, Andrew Rouillard, Brent Thomsen, Kent Ties and Michael Pribyl for your help in distributing our Thanksgiving baskets and pantry.

Sue

Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule



Mid-week Advent Worship:

a time of Prayer and Reflection to
enjoy the beauty of the season

Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm

December 1, 8, 15 and 22.

Featuring Holden Evening Prayer

Christmas Eve Worship:

Beginnings and Endings
with Holy Communion and

Candlelight prayers

December 24th, 5:00 pm





Thank You!

Words of gratitude and thanks can't begin to describe the Third Annual Hike for Hunger. 50 mile an hour winds, snow flurries and 30-degree temperatures did not deter these brave men and women to complete their 14-mile hike and deliver 891 items for our food pantry!

We had volunteers from St. Matthew and Minnesota to help welcome, sort, count and restock our shelves. Other volunteers made sure the soldiers were fed and rehydrated. Thanks to a Thrivent Action Team Grant secured by Debi Buike, we were able to provide a hot meal to all who participated.

While the requirement of the hike was to carry 30lbs of food in their packs, one soldier carried 100 lbs.! Another soldier donated \$100 because he said he didn't have time to shop. Some of these soldiers have participated all three years, while for some it was their first time. One civilian woman hiked just to support her soldier.

We even made the nightly news on KETV!

Thank you members of 126th Chem BN, CERFP, HHC 402nd MP BN, RRBN North Team, JFHQ, B CO 2 -134th IN BN (ABN) G CO 2-104th AV and OCS Class 65 for your generosity and grit to complete this hike despite the conditions of the day in support of our pantry,

I would like to thank St Matthew members Carl & Mary Peters, Charlotte Jensen, Janet Sievers, Margie Magnuson, Brent Thomsen, and Kent Ties for their help. A special thank you goes out to our college friends from Minnesota; Jane & David Schwartz, and Marilyn & Jim DuBay who turned their visit to Omaha into a service project!

I encourage you all to keep the Fourth Annual Hike for Hunger in your thoughts and perhaps mark your calendars for November 2022 so you too can witness the generosity of our men and women who serve not only our country, but our community as well.





Angel Tree



We will be working with the Center for Healthy Families Program of Lutheran Family Services to brighten up the Christmas celebrations of some children and their families. On the special tree in the narthex, you will find tags with information about the children and their families and gift ideas. There are three gift tags per child, and gift card ideas for their families as well. Please take one and redeem it. Bring the gift unwrapped, in a gift bag, and place it under the tree. Please return the gift in a gift bag or store bag (no wrapped gifts) with the ornament tag attached by Friday, December 17th.





Memorial Tree



The Memorial Tree is a way that we hold our loved ones close during the Christmas season. You are welcome to have an ornament placed on the tree with the name of someone you want to remember during Christmas. You may bring your own ornament or we have a few for sale.

May this
remembrance
bring you
peace and joy!



Hope for the Holidays



Join Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in spreading hope to children and families in immigration detention this holiday season.

LIRS is the only national non-profit organization that has this special partnership with the family detention centers. Each year, we are given access to information about children who are being held in detention over the holiday season. With that information, we are able to hand-select gifts like books, journals, art supplies, teddy bears, and soccer balls.

**For information on how to donate,
go to LIRS.org/hope, or call 877 291 7061.**



For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. -Matthew 25:35



**Please join us on
December 12, 2021
at 7:00 PM**

**Resurrection Evangelical
Lutheran Church
153 S McKenna Avenue
Gretna, NE**

Free Will Offering





Advent Vespers Worship Servants December 2021

Date/time	Time	Lector	Usher	Camera Tech	Video Tech
December 1	6:30 PM	Linda H	Dennis and Margie Magnuson	Derek C	Lorie T
December 8	6:30 PM	Linda H	Randy And Val Cramer	Derek C	Lorie T
December 15	6:30 PM	Linda H	Nate Houfek	Derek C	Lorie T
December 22	6:30 PM	Linda H	Nate Houfek	Derek C	Lorie T

Sunday Worship Servants December 2021

Date/time	Time	Lector	Communion Assistant	Usher	Camera Tech	Video Tech
December 5	9:30 Am	Glen T	Chris Chubb	Curt Losee	Derek C	Naomi K
December 12	9:30 Am	Michael W	Lorie Thomas	Dennis and Margie Magnuson	Derek C	Shane W
December 19	9:30 Am	Scott A	Marlys Hansen	Randy and Val Cramer	Derek C	Kent T
December 26	9:30 Am	Lorie T	Deanna Hansen	Michael Lisko	Derek C	Andrew R

Don't Social Distance from Faith



Coffee Hour - Thursday, 1:30 pm in the lounge
 Online Worship - Sunday, 9:30 am (or anytime after) with in-person attendance. Link on church website www.smlutheran.com or on our Facebook page.

Facebook

Like and Share our St Matthew Facebook page!

**You will find updates and news throughout the month,
 and find links to our remote services!**

Financial Report



~October 2021~

General Fund Activity

Beginning			Transfers	Ending
Balance	Receipts	Payments	In (Out)	Balance
30,306.20	11,441.57	16,869.61	0	24,878.16

Benevolence Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
1,275.00	1,609.84

Hunger Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
60.00	75.00

A New App

Keep in touch, give and participate with our new app!

We encourage you to join our church's app, Vanco Mobile. You can download the app for free at the Apple App Store or Google Play. Once downloaded, simply open the app and search for our church name.





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



~CONTACT INFORMATION~

Office Phone (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

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!

