



St. Matthew
Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE ACTS...of God's People

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ✪ A Message from Pastor Glen (pg 4)
- ✪ Food Pantry Needs (pg 8)
- ✪ Worship Servants (pg 12)
- ✪ Bible Study (pg 14)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ✪ LCW Omaha (pg 10)
- ✪ Annual Meeting (pg 9)
- ✪ Ash Wednesday is March 2nd

~February 2022~

Appropriate Gathering practices during the CoVid pandemic

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.

During the current surge in CoVid cases we are asking everyone to wear masks and practice social distancing at all gatherings at the church (and all community group meetings) in order to make sure we are not contributing in any way to the ongoing spread of the virus. We will return to low contact worship practices (for example, we will commune in the pews) and we will not hold coffee hour for the time being.

Thank you for your patience! The Douglas County Health Department website this morning seems to indicate a peak in case numbers, which should lead to a parallel decline in hospitalizations soon and allow us to relax some restrictions.

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
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
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.

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.

Pastor Glen

Whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him ... Philippians 3:7-9

It has been a year of great loss, literally and figuratively.

Well, not just a year but an era.

Certainly, in a very literal sense, the world has seen great loss through this time of pandemic. Millions have died from this dreadful virus, and our grave responsibility as those who believe in the sanctity of life is overwhelming. As Paul reminded us, in the body of Christ we suffer with those who suffer, we grieve with those who grieve. We should never pretend that that is not significant.

At the same time, we have undergone a tremendous loss of so many things. In two short generations we have watched the decline and demise of treasured institutions and social structures. We've been overwhelmed by change, and we do not know where to turn. Our ability to trust has taken a beating. Our hope has been eroded.

What do we do with this terrific sense of loss?

We give it to God.

Paul's words to the Philippians are impossible. More than just "looking for the silver lining," Paul is challenging the very nature of our faith. Our deep investment in the things of this world is a barrier to our complete attachment to Jesus in faith. It is more than just a matter of balancing the two. We are called to make a complete and total commitment to one at the loss of the other.

No, I do not believe that Paul is telling us that there is nothing of value in this world. It is clear from his writings that discipleship is found in the daily vocations of life. We are sent into the world - into this world just as it is. Yet Paul is always making it clear that while we are in this world, we are not of this world. We belong to a different Kingdom. We belong to a greater Kingdom. We belong to the Kingdom of God.

And we cannot fully live in the Kingdom of God while we are holding on to this world with both hands.

We should not discard the things of this world lightly. Nor is all of the loss we have experienced good or godly. Who would worship such a god? Yet there is an opportunity now for us to take measure of what it is that we value the most. How important are the institutions and traditions of this world to us? Could we imagine surviving without them? Are we willing to forego all things for the sake of our faith in Jesus Christ?

The dramatic changes in the world in the past two generations, and particularly the challenges of the past two years, have brought out the worst in people, probably because we are so bad at dealing with loss. Anger is a normal part of grief, but too often it seems like it is the only part of our grief. Faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit that draws our attention away from this moment toward what lies ahead at the end of this journey. There is nothing in this world that can save us - not church, not tradition, not wealth or status, not privilege nor pain. Those are all things that we must in time discard.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the power to let it all go. And prayer is the moment in which we do just that.

Placing all that we have (and all that we don't) in the hands of God is precisely what Paul means when he says to "suffer the loss of all things." By "all things" of course he means all that we are. In prayer we fully submit it to God. And in doing so, we are given the gift of Christ.

~ Pastor Glen

Calendar of Events @ St. Matthew

FEBRUARY 2022

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

9:00 AM—SEWING FOR BABIES
6:00 PM WORSHIP MIINISTRY TEAM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

6:00 PM—THE STORY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5

9:00 AM—CLUSTER NOMINATING
MEETING AT
AUGUSTANA
LUTHERAN CHURCH



~SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6~

9:30 AM IN-PERSON
WORSHIP W/LIVESTREAM



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7

9:00 am Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

9:00 AM SEWING FOR BABIES
12:00 NOON—LUTHERAN WOMEN
OF OMAHA (AT KOUNTZE
MEMORIAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH)



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

6:00 PM THE STORY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

9:00 am Jochebed Circle

~SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13~

9:30 AM IN-PERSON
WORSHIP W/LIVESTREAM



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14

9:00 am Tanzanian Treasures



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

9:00 am—Sewing for Babies
7:00 PM CONGREGATION
COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

6:00 PM THE STORY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19

10:00 AM LOAVES & FISHES
FOOD PANTRY



~SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20~
9:30 AM IN-PERSON
WORSHIP W/
LIVESTREAM



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21
9:00 am Tanzanian
Treasures

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22
9:00 AM SEWING FOR BABIES
7:00 PM—PHOEBE CIRCLE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23
6:00 PM THE STORY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25
9:00 AM—FUNTASTIC FIBERS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26
9:00 AM—DEBORAH CIRCLE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27
9:30 AM IN-PERSON
WORSHIP W/
LIVESTREAM



10:30 AM—
ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
CONGRETAION

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28
9:00 AM TANZANIAN TREASURES



LENT BEGINS MARCH
2ND



DAILY DEVOTIONS
WITH PASTOR GLEN
MONDAY - FRIDAY
8:00 AM
ON THE ST. MATTHEW
FACEBOOK PAGE



☞ Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

Our pantry in January came after our first “real” snowfall of the season. Thanks to our plowing service, the parking lot and sidewalks were shoveled and ready for guests. Due to the weather, we only served four families! Two of those were brought to our pantry by the sign and flags on our lawn, and one of our guests arrived on foot. We assume the weather kept others at bay, but are thankful that we were open for those who needed us.



Be on the look out for new signs on our lawn in the coming months. Our current sign is fading and needs a face lift! I have ordered two new signs that will be two-sided so that people traveling on 60th Street will be able to read them in both directions. The signs will be located at the corner of 60th and Walnut and at the entrance to our lower parking lot (where our current sign is located).

Our pantry needs for February are:

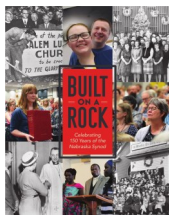
- Instant Oatmeal packets
- Bottled juice
- Saltine Crackers
- Canned Pasta

Thank you to all who are donating the items we list each month. Also a special thank you to those who give monetary donations. These help us provide frozen meat and fresh produce to our guests. We couldn't do this without all the help and support you all provide.

Sue

Epiphany 2022 - sermon series: We can pray ...

February 6 - Forgive us our trespasses
February 13 - Lead us not into temptation
February 20 - Deliver us from evil
February 27 - The Kingdom and the Glory



Annual Meeting of the Congregation Sunday, February 27th *Immediately following the 9:30 am Worship Service*

- Election of Church Council
- Election to Endowment Board
- 2022 Budget Approval

Financial Forum - review the 2022 budget and current finances: Sunday, February 20th after the 9:30 am worship service. Nominations needed for Church Council - talk to any Council member.



Lutheran Women of Omaha

TUESDAY, February 8th, 2022

12:00 noon

Place: Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church - 2650 Farnam Street

Cost: \$ 3.00 - Bring your own sack lunch

Program: Ryan James & Sarah Anderson - Lutheran Service Corps

Free Will Offering: Lutheran Service Corps

RSVP to Mardelle Gocek at (402) 292- 1328

By Sunday, February 6, 2022

HELP WANTED!



Office Administrator St. Matthew Lutheran Church

The Office Administrator provides clerical support to the pastoral staff, department and committee coordinators of church ministries and to the Congregational Council. The Office Administrator serves as the receptionist and coordinates the overall functions of the church office. The Office Administrator promotes a healthy spiritual and emotional atmosphere for the community through everyone he/she has contact with. The Office Administrator reports directly to the Church Pastor.

This position requires a high school diploma and experience and fluency in speaking, writing and reading English. The position requires good organizational and problem-solving skills, self-initiative, flexibility, and the ability to adapt to multiple tasks. Experience in reviewing, proofing, sorting and collating of information and documents for distribution is expected.

This position requires strong computer skills, including word processing, desktop publishing, PowerPoint, internet use and social media, as well as filing, a basic knowledge of bookkeeping, spreadsheets, and processing mail. Experience with Church Windows software for membership management is desired but will allow for training. This position requires confident personal and welcoming telephone skills. Experience working with copiers and folding machines is desired.

This job is 20 hours per week (4 hours per day, 5 days per week), with additional hours during holiday seasons, for funerals, and end-of-the-year reporting. Work hours will be set with the supervisor to reflect consistent weekly hours of operation.

Full vaccination against the CoVid-19 virus is required for this position.



Lutheran Disaster Response

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need

Lutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster — following Christ's call to bring hope and healing to our neighbor in need. Some key areas of work include:

Providing emotional and spiritual care for people who have been affected by a disaster and for leaders who respond to a disaster

Coordinating volunteers through our local affiliates

Assisting refugees in a holistic way by meeting the varied needs of the community

Promoting disaster risk-reduction by helping communities build their assets thereby reducing the effects of likely disasters

Providing long-term recovery efforts by addressing the unmet needs months or even years after a disaster strikes.

Donations to LDR made be placed in the offering plate on Sunday to be forward to the Nebraska Synod.



Date/time	Time	Lector	Communion Assistant	Usher
February 6	9:30 Am	Glen T	Chris Chubb	Curt Losee
February 13	9:30 Am	Michael W	Lorie Thomas	Dennis and Margie Magnuson
February 20	9:30 Am	Scott A	Marlys Hansen	Randy and Val Cramer
February 27	9:30 Am	Linda H	Brent Thomsen	Michael Lisko
March 2	7:00 pm	Charlotte Jensen	Deanna Hansen	Nate Houfek

Date/time	Time	Camera Tech	Video Tech
February 6	9:30 Am	Derek C	Naomi K
February 13	9:30 Am	Derek C	Shane W
February 20	9:30 Am	Derek C	Lorie T
February 27	9:30 Am	Derek C	Andrew R
March 2	7:00 pm	Derek C	Kent T

Readings will be emailed on Monday—please contact the church office if you do not receive them.

Communion Assistants duties are temporarily suspended during the Omicron surge. They will continue when the surge has subsided.

If you cannot make your scheduled service, please attempt to find a substitute or contact the church office if you cannot.

Bless you for your faithful service!

Financial Report



~December 2021~

General Fund Activity

Beginning			Transfers	Ending
Balance	Receipts	Payments	In (Out)	Balance
\$26,243.77	\$33,444.54	\$22,063.24	0	\$37,625.07

Benevolence Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
\$1,894.75	\$1,227.74

Hunger Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
60.00	60.00

Don't Social Distance from Faith



Coffee Hour - Thursday, 1:30 pm TEMPORARILY
SUSPENDED DURING THE OMICRON SURGE

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!**



At the Water's Edge **Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg**

Today we're going to spend a moment looking at the dramatic scene right before the crossing of the Red Sea. The Israelites have left Egypt in haste as the consequences of the tenth plague came down. They took their reparations. And they got out.

But then, of course, we know, power does not give up power so easily, and Pharaoh had a change of heart, decides to go recapture his workforce. So we've got the Red Sea ahead of us, the Egyptians advancing steadily behind us. And all is not chill with the Israelites.

Read Exodus 14:10-14

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them. Greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to God. And they said to Moses, "Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us be, and we will serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness'?" But Moses said to the people, "Have no fear! Stand by, and witness the deliverance which God will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you will never see again. God will battle for you; you hold your peace!" Then God said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. And you lift up your rod and hold out your arm over the sea and split it, so that the Israelites may march into the sea on dry ground.

Rabbi Lew described this as a general way that we can all respond to situations when we feel trapped—proverbial chariots coming one way and nowhere to move forward:

"We find ourselves in a terrible dilemma and we are appropriately frightened. We know something must be done, but we have no idea what, and this terrifies us. So (1) we stop running away from our fear; (2) we collect ourselves, we stand still, we let go of our terror, and we allow the world to reconstitute itself. Then (3) we see our experience for what it really is; and (4) this brings us to a point of deep stillness. Only then does the next action—the necessary action—arise out of this stillness, and we move forward, not really acting ourselves but giving ourselves the action the moment requires."

(The seventh day of Passover is regarded by the Jewish tradition as the anniversary of the date when the Jews crossed the Red Sea)

Here's a beautiful poem by the wonderful Rabbi Rachel Barenblat from her powerful new book, From Narrow Places: Liturgy, Poetry, and Art of the Pandemic Era, and her poetry collections.

Pantoum for the Seventh Day
Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

Step into the water.
You can't see the far shore.
Is the foam rising, or receding?
Take a deep breath and keep walking.
You can't see the far shore.
There's no knowing what's ahead.
Take a deep breath and keep walking,
Cultivating faith in your body.
There's no knowing what's ahead.
This is what the sages mean by
"Cultivating faith in your body."
Can you trust that you'll make it?
This is what the sages mean by
"The water is wide, I cannot get o'er."
Can you trust that you'll make it?
You're not crossing the sea alone.
"The water is wide, I cannot get o'er."
The only way out is through.
You're not crossing the sea alone.
Sing with me as we make our way.
The only way out is through.
Is the foam rising, or receding?
Sing with me as we make our way.
Step into the water.

Engage with these texts in any way you like, but here are some questions

- When have you been the Israelites, terrified to move forward? How did you find that will?
- Have you ever done something like what Rabbi Lew describes? What happened? Did it work?
- What's terrifying about taking that first step to cross the sea? What happens once you start walking?
- Have you ever started walking and regretted it? What happened then?



"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!

