

ST. MATTHEW

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWS

July 2022



THE ACTS ...of God's People



Welcome Summer!

Recently there was an article about ways to meet with God this Summer. The writer said one thing that can easily fall off during our hectic summer schedules is quality time with God, so here are a few suggestions to stay connected:

Spend time with God outside: Grab a lawn chair with a good beverage and enjoy reading your bible. Listen to worship music or marvel at the beauty and sounds of creation near you (i.e., birds singing, trees swaying in the breeze, cloud watching, etc.).



While on vacation, refer to your Devotional booklets (in the narthex). They're small, easy to pack, and have daily devotionals at the ready!

When was the last time you let the sun warm your face and shared quality family time? Enjoy the days! God can be found anywhere (especially when we look). *Have a wonderful summer, stay safe & enjoy God's gifts!*



Worship: Sundays, 9:30am
1725 S. 60th Street
Omaha, NE 68106

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

See page 2 for Pastor's Message: *"It's Time To Get To Work."*

SAVE THE DATE

The 34th Annual Quilt Auction at Carol Joy Holling Retreat Center is on July 30th! (See stories on pages 4-5.)

Hickory Street House

For an update, see page 10. (Stay tuned for more !)

REFLECTIONS

~ by Pastor Glen ~

I had the opportunity the other day to assemble a piece of furniture that I had purchased on the Internet.

You think I would have learned better by now than to buy cheap furniture in a box and assume it will be anything like the picture on the box. But sometimes you just have to make things work—whether it's the budget or room size or shape or color, and so you make choices and you find ways to make things work. Like all unless unassembled furniture, there were bolts that did not necessarily line up perfectly with holes, they were not enough of some parts and too many of others. There were complicated directions and interesting design choices, and of course it all had to be put together with one small Allen wrench.

But I managed, and now I have a very nice TV stand for my wonderful new large screen TV.

And isn't that what life is really all about? Finding ways to make what is complicated and unusual and imperfect and turn it all into something that is functional and surprisingly beautiful. I look at the world around me and I have no doubt that this truth is at the heart of how God created the world. The creation is full of uniqueness and challenge and it is not hard to convince ourselves that, given a second opportunity, perhaps things should have been done differently.

But this is how God made it. This is how God made us. And who are we to question his eternal wisdom?

Of course we do that all the time.

Why is it so hard for human beings to accept other human beings who are not like them? Why is it so easy for us to shun, to oppress, to bring violence of all kinds against our siblings on the basis of their race, sexual orientation or gender identity? How arrogant we are! That we should be so sure that we are what is right and that we should dare to look at another and imagine they are what is wrong is surely a great sin.

But we do that. And if we don't do it directly then we most certainly allow others to do it on our behalf. When we refuse to show not just sympathy but solidarity with all of our fellow human beings then we allow ourselves to become part of an inhumane system that turns the sin of human pride into the pain and suffering of others. And knowing that most, if not all, of this tragedy is done in the name of Jesus Christ is a hard reality to bear.

It is no longer a question of whether we can do better. It is now time to name our shared responsibility, our common discipleship, to bring an end to every "ism" that results in the mistreatment of our neighbor. We can no longer afford to love merely in words. We can no longer afford to sit on the sidelines while hatred is being promoted as "just another political opinion." We cannot watch bigotry and discrimination to be systematized in the world and pretend that it's not our business. We are supposed to be in the business of loving our neighbor.

It's time to get to work.

I learned a while back that there are over 10,000 different varieties of azaleas. That little factoid stands out to me as almost miraculous. What kind of God would create 10,000 different varieties of the same plant? Wouldn't one have been enough? Or ten? Or 100?



The truth is that the creation is not one simple same thing. It is infused with variety, it is replete with complexity, and it calls us every day to take what we have been given and build something that is functional and beautiful. The end result will almost surely not be but we thought it should have been. The work will test our creativity and our grace. We will be tempted by the lie that we could have done it better ourselves.

Of course, we are not the ones in charge. And who are we to despise anything that God has made?

NEBRASKA LUTHERAN OUTDOOR MINISTRIES

34th Annual Quilt Auction

For more than 30 years on the last Saturday of July, hundreds of friends and quilters have gathered on the grounds of Carol Joy Holling Camp, Conference & Retreat Center for fun and fellowship while generously supporting camp. This year we anticipate our largest crowd yet at the 34th Annual Quilt Auction on Saturday, July 30th. Proceeds from the auction support summer camp scholarships and programs and your continued support allows us to live out faith in ways that show everyone they belong and are loved by God. There'll be snow cones or you can take a hayrack tour! We look forward to seeing you at this very important and fun-filled day at camp! Sincerely,

*Gera Schultz,
Associate Director of Marketing
Carol Joy Holling Camp.*

HEARTLAND PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL

Saturday, July 16th



Let's turn out in support of our LGBTQIA+ siblings!

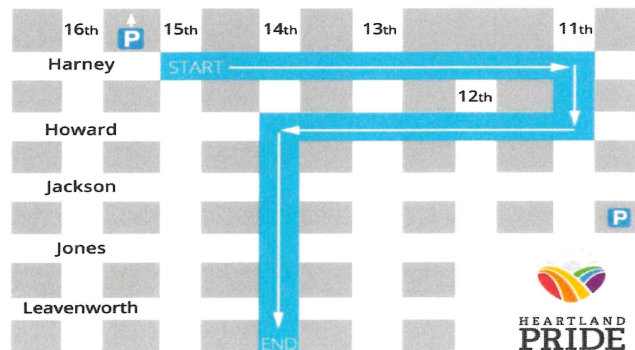
St. Matthew will be joining our partner *Reconciling in Christ* Omaha congregations in the 2022 Heartland PRIDE parade on July 16th in the Old Market. After the parade, we will be sharing a booth at the Heartland PRIDE festival at the CHI Health Center to share information about St. Matthew and our ministry.



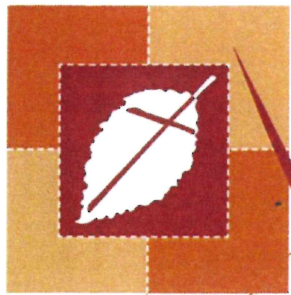
2022 PARADE

For more information, please contact Pastor Glen and you can sign-up as a volunteer/representative for one or both of these events.

2022 HEARTLAND PRIDE PARADE ROUTE
JULY 16, 2022 10 AM



Mark Your Calendars



You are invited to Carol Joy Holling Camp's

Quilt Auction

Saturday, July 30, 2022
Starts at 9 a.m.



Quilts handcrafted by individuals, congregations, and groups from Nebraska and beyond will be auctioned to fund summer camp scholarships.

View quilts, schedule, and more:

CJHCenter.org/quilt-auction

More than just an auction! Bring the family for a day of fun: camp tours, BBQ lunch, and more!

Free parking & admission!

Carol Joy Holling Camp
27416 Ranch Road, Ashland, NE 68003

ST. MATTHEW
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

July 2022

August 2022

July 2022

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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			

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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						

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Jun 26	27	28	29	30	Jul 1	2
3 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship	4 8:00am 4th OF JULY HOLIDAY	5 9:00am Sewing for Babies (Art Room) 6:00pm Worship Ministry Team (Zoom Meeting)	6 6:00pm Final Road Trip with Pastor Glen (Livestream on Facebook /	7 1:30pm Coffee & Devotion with Pastor Glen	8	9 9:00am Jochebed Circle (Lounge)
10 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship	11 9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5)	12	13	14	15	16 9:00am Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry 10:00am PARADE - 2022 12:00pm FESTIVAL -
17 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship	18 9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom) 7:00pm Church Council Meeting	19 9:00am Sewing for Babies (Art Room)	20	21 1:30pm Coffee & Devotion with Pastor Glen	22	23 9:30am Deborah Circle
24 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship	25 9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5)	26 7:00pm Phoebe Circle	27	28	29	30
31 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship	Aug 1	2	3	4	5	6

WORSHIP SERVANTS

READINGS WILL BE EMAILED on Mondays (please contact the church office if you do not receive them). If you cannot make your scheduled service, please attempt to find a substitute, and contact the church office if you are unable to attend. Bless you for your faithful service!

WORSHIP SERVANT SCHEDULE - JULY 2022					
Date	Lector	Communion Assistant	Usher	Camera Tech	Altar Guild
<i>JULY 3 9:30 AM</i>	Michael Waits	Chris Chubb/ Shane Waits	Dennis and Margie Magnuson	Derek Copenhaver	Teri Lisko Kim Hansen
<i>JULY 10 9:30 AM</i>	Lorie Thomas	Marlys Hanson	Michael Lisko/ Dave Sherwin	Derek Copenhaver	Teri Lisko Kim Hansen
<i>JULY 17 9:30 AM</i>	Scott Albright	Susan Hollenbeck	Terri Yeoman Nate Houfek	Derek Copenhaver	Teri Lisko Kim Hansen
<i>JULY 24 9:30 AM</i>	Nate Houfek	Deanna Hansen	Randy and Val Cramer/ Dave Sherwin	Derek Copenhaver	Teri Lisko Kim Hansen
<i>JULY 31 9:30 AM</i>	Linda Hill	Nate Houfek	<i>* TBD *</i>	<i>* TBD *</i>	Teri Lisko Kim Hansen

FINANCIAL REPORT

~ MAY 2022 ~

Beginning Balance: \$33,571.34

Receipts: \$ 13,630.44

Payments: \$ 14,126.49

Transfers: \$ 0

Ending Balance: \$ 33,075.29

Benevolence Offerings

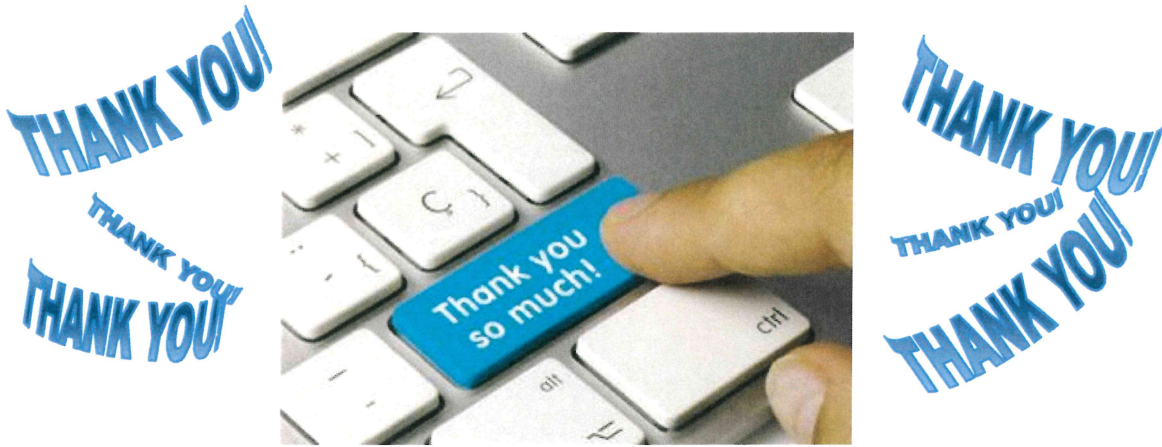
Receipts: \$ 1,505.00

Dispersed: \$1,345.00

Hunger Offerings

Receipts: \$ 40.00

Disperse: \$ 40.00



I am writing to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your generosity and kindness shown to me since I began working here as your Office Administrator. Starting a new job is never easy, and since I have been here I feel as though working to support you all was the best decision I ever made! Coming from the stressful medical center environment to this wonderful, lovely congregation where each one of you have contributed to making me feel welcome, I cannot help but be grateful. **The ability to smile as I come to work is truly a daily gift that is given to me from all of you every single day!** THANK YOU for making me a part of your church family. I will always do my best to take good care of everyone here at St. Matthew.

Wishing you God's best,

Lena Johnson

NEW BISHOP ELECTED

Rev. Johnson is currently serving as Director of Campus Ministry at Midland University in Fremont, NE, and describes himself as a farm boy at heart, a Lutheran, a loving (if flawed) husband, father, son, and brother, a people-loving introvert, and a church-loving questioner. Rev. Johnson will be installed as our next Bishop of the Nebraska Synod on September 24, 2022 at 1:00PM at First Lutheran Church in Kearney, NE (2215 Avenue G, Kearney, NE 68847).



HICKORY STREET HOUSE

On Sunday, June 26th, the congregation held a special meeting, and voted 44 to 4 to allow the members of the Church Council to sell the Hickory Street Rental property. Detailed information regarding the sale will be shared as it becomes available. Thanks to all who participated!



Hello everyone,

On a very warm Saturday in June, we served 16 families comprised of 34 individuals on pantry day. Thank you to Carl and Mary Peters, Jen Schell, Mina (a foreign exchange student at UNO), and Kent Ties for making the pantry run smoothly! We were able to provide milk, cheese, eggs, frozen meat and fresh produce to our guests as well as our self stable foods!

Understanding that prices at the grocery store have gone up, as well as other things, money is tight for most of us. Any help you can provide in picking up one of the items listed below is so greatly appreciated. F

Food shelves across the area, as well as the nation, are suffering from lower donations. Grant money is becoming harder and harder to obtain. We are called to serve those less fortunate, so let's dig deep and keep our shelves full!

Our needs for our July pantry include the following:

Spaghetti noodles (regular and thin); crackers (Saltine and/or Ritz, Beef ramen noodles; instant oatmeal packets, boxed cereal; canned chili, canned pasta (Spaghetti & meatballs), hamburger helper; dish soap, fruit snacks; Spam; bar soap and toilet paper.

Thank you all so much for your continued support and generosity!

Your fellow servant in Christ,

Sue

CHURCH STAFF

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

Bishop Eaton issues pastoral message on SCOTUS ruling regarding Roe v. Wade

6/24/2022 12:25:00 PM

Dear church,



Whatever personal perspective one might take on the June 24 abortion ruling from the Supreme Court, it is the legal framework in which we now minister, and I wish to speak a pastoral word at this time.

The Supreme Court has voted to overturn Roe v. Wade, removing federal constitutional protection for safe and legal abortion and leaving decisions about abortion law largely to the states. As a result, safe and legal abortion will likely not be [accessible in every state](#). This church's 1991 social statement *Abortion* argues that "the number of induced abortions is a source of deep concern" but teaches that the practice should be legal (pp. 3, 9-10). In other words, "Laws should be enacted and enforced justly for the preservation and enhancement of life, and should avoid unduly encumbering or endangering the lives of women" (p. 9). Overturning Roe v. Wade and placing decisions about abortion regulation at the state level encumbers and endangers the lives of all persons who need to make decisions about unexpected pregnancies.

First, as a pastor of this church, I want to acknowledge that this decision affects many people, especially those whose pregnancies unfold in complex situations and the people who love them. Many now find their moral agency restricted because federal law no longer guarantees access to legal and safe abortion. They already face difficult moral questions, and the Supreme Court decision only adds to their anguish. As our social statement reminds us, we have both the freedom and the obligation to serve neighbors in complex situations. As a church, we are called at this moment to recognize and spiritually support people who are struggling with decisions around pregnancy.

Second, as presiding bishop, I want to remind this church that, despite this new legal landscape, we continue to depend on our social teaching for guidance. Our social statement provides the moral framework for our church's communal discernment and ministry, holding in tension both the strong Christian presumption to preserve and protect all life as well as the complex moral situations in which pregnancy sometimes occurs. Our social teaching is complex and does not hew to clear categories or labels such as "pro-abortion" or "anti-abortion."

That complexity is reflected in several points. The statement recognizes that pregnant persons have moral agency; they are the ones to make decisions about a pregnancy (see pp. 5-6). This church and its ministers trust them to decide but expect them to make such decisions in relationship—with God, self, partner, family, ministers, and others.

I also want to underscore for the whole body of Christ the statement's exhortation "that those who counsel persons faced with unintended pregnancies respect how deeply the woman's pregnancy involves her whole person—body, mind and spirit—in relation to all the commitments that comprise her stewardship of life" (p. 5).

Further, our church teaching holds that there are no exclusive rights in pregnancy. A pregnant person does not have an exclusive right to abort a fetus at all points during the pregnancy. A developing life does not have an exclusive right to be born (p. 2). This church does not support abortion as a normative form of birth control but rather understands it as necessary in some morally responsible circumstances. This church does not condone late-term abortions except in extreme circumstances, which must be determined by the individual with their medical caregivers (p. 7).

This church acknowledges that individuals and religious traditions hold divergent viewpoints over when life begins. These divergent views are not only scientific but also biblical and cultural. The ELCA social statement acknowledges these ethical ambiguities and states that "the closer the life in the womb comes to full term the more serious such [moral] issues become." (p. 7).

As we live into this new legal framework, we can respond to and minister in the current situation, for instance, by ministering to individuals who seek abortions; advocating for laws that provide free or affordable health care, child care and education; providing and promoting sex education; continuing to be a community of discernment where thoughtful and diverse perspectives can be shared and heard; and advocating for state laws that provide legal, safe and affordable abortions, and against legislation that would outlaw abortion in all circumstances (p. 9).

Finally, I wish to remind everyone that this church supports peaceful means of expression within a diverse society. Peaceful protest is a crucial element of civic engagement; violent protest is not, and this church reproves it. Likewise, this church is on record against hate speech. Let us be instruments for peace where there is none. Let us listen to one another. Let us serve the needs of neighbors in all the complexities life presents. God calls us to be *for* others, just as God in Christ is for us.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshiping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands.," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

For information contact:
Candice Hill Buchbinder
773-380-2877