

ST. MATTHEW

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWS

THE ACTS...of God's People

Faith

A living, daring confidence in God's grace.

When Lutherans talk about faith, we are talking about the relationship God's Holy Spirit creates with us. It's a relationship where God's promise of steadfast love and mercy in Jesus opens us to a life of bold trust in God and joyful, generous service to everyone we know and meet in daily life.

Martin Luther was exuberant when he described the freedom of "a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that believers would stake their lives on it a thousand times." He once wrote, "Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good things unceasingly."

Faith convictions expressed as statements of belief flow from this confident trust in God. ELCA Lutherans share faith as expressed in the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, in the Lutheran confessional

writings (collected as the Book of Concord), and in the ELCA Confession of Faith.

At the same time faith does not close our minds to the world and our hearts to others. We continue to listen to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We listen to the witness of others and we watch for the ways God is active in the world around us. Faith opens a place for engaging others in conversation, for seeking the truth, for asking questions and speaking love in word and deed.

Faith is a full life, liberated for a living, daring confidence in God's grace.



Worship: Sundays, 9:30 am

1725 S. 60th St., Omaha, NE

Phone: 402-556-7030

Email: office@smlutheran.com

Website: www.smlutheran.com

September 2022



THE WORLD NEEDS JESUS

See page 2 for
Pastor's Message:
"The world needs us
to BE Jesus..."

MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT MEDICARE

See page 4 for a
special invitation to
join us for a presen-
tation from a valued
authority on the
subject!

VITALITY INITIATIVE CONTINUES

We are going to ask
you to brainstorm
with us how ideas
you have shared
with the team might
take form into actual
programs and
ministries. Put your
thinking caps on!

REFLECTIONS

~ by Pastor Glen ~

You see it everywhere you go, on bumper stickers, on Facebook posts and political ads. The world needs Jesus. The world needs more Jesus. That, we are sure, is the solution to all our problems and the hope of making sense of this very messed up world.

That's true. Although maybe not in the way many people think.

Too often, sadly, Jesus is just a gimmick, a campaign, a public pretense hiding a private hypocrisy. It's nostalgia, a power trip, a cartoonish notion founded in a superficial reading of the Bible. Sometimes it's just a power trip disguised as religion. Sometimes it's just wishful thinking void of any actual meaning. Which is why it doesn't work.

There is a reason why "none of the above" is the fastest growing religious group in America. It has nothing to do with Jesus. It has everything to do with our unwillingness to follow Jesus as he actually lived and taught.

Yes, the world needs Jesus. The world needs us to BE Jesus.

So let's do that.

1. Let's be the Jesus who seeks out the lost, the least, the ones who need him the most. Let us forgo wealth and power and status in favor of the work of grace and compassion in the world.

2. Let's be the Jesus of radical forgiveness and reconciliation. Let us be the Jesus who puts people before principle, who enacts Godly justice as if our lives depended on it.

3. Let's be the Jesus who values the poor and forgotten and does not overlook the needy at our own gate. Let us not trust in our own comfort and security but be defined by the way we seek out and serve the least among us.

4. Let's be the Jesus of undiminished hope. Let us break free of the prison of this world's fear and nihilism and build a life on the promise of what God can create from even the smallest bit of faithfulness.

5. Let's be the healing Jesus, and let us be his healed people. Let us share open up the power of grace in this world to mend and make new, and let us lay aside our sufferings and troubles and live lives of gratitude and wholeness.

What if we change the way we do faith in the world, and instead of treating Jesus as a noun, a thing, an expectation or an aspiration we saw Jesus as a verb, an active presence in the world, a living? If we read the Bible, if we watched Jesus do and heard Jesus say, then we might be transformed in thought, word and deed. If we knew the real Jesus we could be the real Jesus, and that could change everything.

The problem is not that the world does not know Jesus. The problem is that the world knows a false Jesus, an image of human expectation and greed and desire, a sterile and empty Jesus who demands but does not give, who cares more about what might happen than what actually does, who protects institutions while people suffer, who is helpless before sin and doubt.

But we know a different Jesus, one who lives in both spirit and reality, who feeds and heals, who touches and blesses, who challenges and transforms. And we know this amazing baptismal promise: that Jesus lives on in us. We are his body, his light shines through us and words are realized in our very lives. We are the body of Christ in the world, and the world needs us to be that Jesus.

I asked you recently what you thought the community and the world needed most right now. Your answers mostly followed a simple refrain: compassion, love, acceptance. Just another way of saying that the world needs Jesus.

Now let us commit ourselves to being exactly that.

In July and August, the Vitality Initiative Project team asked the congregation to give responses to a series of questions to help us dream dreams for the ministry and mission of St. Matthew. We asked, "If you overheard someone talking about St. Matthew, what would you hope they would say?" and "What are your dreams for St. Matthew?" and "What do you think are the greatest needs in the community and the world around us?" Your responses looked like this:



In September and October, as part of the weekly Message, we're going to ask you to brainstorm with us how those ideas might take form as actual programs and ministries in specific ways. Watch each week in the Monday morning email and the bulletin for more details about how you can share in that conversation.

MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT MEDICARE?

Retirement is supposed to be the time when we can sit back and relax, when we don't have to worry about so many complicated things. If only.



One of the more complicated parts of planning and entering into retirement is signing up for Medicare and choosing a supplemental plan. Along with other aspects of that stage of life, it's a great mystery for most of us, the solution of which is terribly important.

On **Wednesday, September 14th, at 7:00 pm**, we are inviting Cory A Liemann of Thrivent Financial to share a presentation called "Making Decisions About Medicare," with us. This should be a valuable time for anyone, whether you are retired (and want to review your choices) or are about to retire (and don't know anything about it).

It would be helpful to have you sign up in advance for this event. Use the back of the yellow form on Sunday or contact the church office directly.

NEBRASKA SYNOD BISHOP INSTALLATION



*Bishop-Elect Scott Alan Johnson will be installed as our next Bishop of the Nebraska Synod on **September 24, 2022**, at 1:00 pm, First Lutheran Church in Kearney, NE (2215 Avenue G, Kearney, NE 68847)*

Next Steps for the Synod Staff



During this season of transitions and new beginnings in our synod, Bishop-Elect Johnson and the synod staff are taking time to discern their next faithful steps together as a team. This time of adapting, relationship building, visioning, and learning is a valuable moment for our synod. To contact the main office, call 402-896-5311 (or email office@nebraskasynod.org) for assistance.

Dates to Remember

- Sept. 07 - JuBELLation Choir rehearsal reconvenes Wednesday evenings, 7pm
- Sept. 11 - Festival Choir rehearsal reconvenes Sunday mornings, 10:45am
- Sept. 14 - Presentation by Cory Lienemann of Thrivent entitled "Making Decisions about Medicare"
- Sept. 24 - Scott Alan Johnson will be installed as the next Bishop of the Nebraska Synod in Kearney, Nebraska.

ST. MATTHEWS FINANCIAL REPORT

JULY 2022

Beginning Balance: \$ 27,882.42

Receipts: \$ 10,283.00

Payments: \$ 16,918.44

Transfers: \$ 0

Ending Balance: \$ 21,246.98

Benevolence Offerings

Receipts: \$1,260.00

Dispersed: \$1,377.00

Hunger Offerings

Receipts: \$ 40.00

Disperse: \$ 50.00

Welcome to All



*Welcome to St. Matthew
new members!
We are happy you have
joined our congregation!*



September 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Aug 28	29	30	31
4	5	6	7
9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship	Labor Day (United States)	9:00 am Sewing for Babies (Art Room)	6:00pm Pastors Meeting (Online) 7:00pm Jubilee Practice (Bible)
11	12	13	14
9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship 10:45am Festival Choir Practice (Sanctuary)	9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5) 6:00am Worship Ministry Team (20am Meeting)		7:00pm Jubilee Practice (Bible) 7:00pm Presentation of Offerings (Making a Difference in Medicare)
18	19	20	21
9:30am Sunday Worship (Welcome New Members) 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship 10:45am Festival Choir Practice (Sanctuary)	9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5) 7:00am Church Council Meeting	9:00 am Sewing for Babies (Art Room)	7:00pm Jubilee Practice (Bible)
25	26	27	28
9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Coffee & Fellowship 10:45am Festival Choir Practice (Sanctuary)	9:00am Tanzania Treasures (Classroom 4 & 5)	1:00pm Phoebe Circle	7:00pm Jubilee Practice (Bible)

MATTHEW
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

SUNDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<p>Sep 1</p> <p>1:30pm CoFees & Devotion with Pastor Glen</p>	2	3
<p>Men's Bible Study (only)</p> <p>ELLaton Bell Choir (Bell Choir Room)</p>	8	9	<p>10</p> <p>9:00am Jochebed Circle (Lounge)</p>
<p>ELLaton Bell Choir (Bell Choir Room)</p> <p>Orientation - Making decisions about Medicare</p>	<p>15</p> <p>1:30pm CoFees & Devotion with Pastor Glen</p> <p>6:30am Akaarben Elmwood Neighborhood Association (Fellowship Hall)</p>	16	<p>17</p> <p>10:00am Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry (Fellowship Hall, Lower Level classrooms)</p>
<p>ELLaton Bell Choir (Bell Choir Room)</p>	22	23	<p>24</p> <p>9:30am Deborah Circle</p> <p>1:00pm NE SYNOD BISHOP INSTALLATION (First Lutheran, Kearney NE)</p>
<p>ELLaton Bell Choir (Bell Choir Room)</p>	29	30	Oct 1

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!

SEPTEMBER 2022

Sunday Date	Lector	Communion Assistant	Ushers	Camera Tech	Altar Guild
SEPT. 4	Michael Waits	Nate Houfek	Dennis and Margie Magnuson	Derek C.	Linda Houfek Lucy Younie
SEPT. 11	Lorie Thomas	Marlys Hanson	Michael Lisko Dave Sherwin	Derek C.	Linda Houfek Lucy Younie
SEPT. 18	N/A	Chris Chubb	Terri Yeoman Nate Houfek	Derek C.	Linda Houfek Lucy Younie
SEPT. 25	N/A	Deanna Hansen	Randy Cramer and Val Zentner-Cramer	Derek C.	Linda Houfek Lucy Younie

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.

Hello everyone,

We served 16 families (35 individuals) at our August 20th pantry. Thank you to Kelli & Bill Stott, Deanna Hanson, Daniel Cobb and Kent Ties for helping serve our guests. We had quite a few new families. Some who stopped by because they saw our signs while driving by the church. Advertising works! We had 5 families with 5 members.



Our guests received fresh produce, some of which was donated by Mary and Carl Peters as well as from our own garden that is cared for by the Jochebed Circle. We also received fresh produce from Saving Grace, a food rescue program here in Omaha. Thank you! Our guests really welcome fresh vegetables and fruit!

We received many donations over the month and I want to thank those who are contributing to this ministry. I would like to remind you that before donating items out of your own personal pantry, please make sure that the expiration dates have not come due. We cannot give out food that has an expired shelf life. We also cannot give out items that have been opened or partially used. We can accept items if they are individually wrapped if you have bought in bulk and don't need all that you purchased. We welcome your generosity and hope it will continue.

Our needs for September include:

Ritz crackers, Pan Cake mix & Syrup, Corn Muffin Mix, Bottled juice, Spam, Canned potatoes, Cream of Mushroom Soup, Cream of Chicken Soup, Hamburger Helper, Tuna Helper, Manwich Sloppy Joe Sauce, Toothpaste and Boxed cereals

Again, thank you everyone for your continued support of this ministry.

Blessings to you all.

Sue Ties

ELCA World Hunger Education and Networking Grants Now Open!

Hunger Education and Networking Grants are one of the ways ELCA World Hunger accompanies congregations, synods, organizations, partners and local teams throughout the US and the Caribbean. We know that learning about the root causes of hunger and effective responses is key to ending hunger locally and globally. That's why we and the Micah 6:8 team are excited to share that our application for ELCA World Hunger Education and Networking Grants is now open!

How to Apply

Applicants must pre-register on ELCA GrantMaker in order to access the grant application. Approval of registration may take up to ten business days, so register now at [ELCA.org/grants](https://elca.org/grants), and submit your application by December 1st.

If you have any questions, please email Ryan Cumming, program director for hunger education, at Ryan.Cumming@elca.org or hunger@elca.org.

New Church Directory in the Works!

Someone thoughtfully left a directory with corrections to be made in the church office (but we do not know who you are so we can thank you). To those of you who did not wish to have your telephone numbers listed, they have been omitted at your requests. However, if any omissions were made in error please call Lena and she will update the records as soon as possible.

Thank you, and may you all have a blessed day.

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.

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Omaha, Nebraska 68106-2149
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“Empowered by God as committed disciples, we boldly care for and serve our congregation, our community and our world.”

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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