



St. Matthew
Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE ACTS...of God's People

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~April 2021~



There will be some who will say that 2020 was the most significant year in recent history.

They will be wrong. 2021 will be the year that matters. It's not the tragedy we have been through that will change us. It's what we do next that will matter. And it's all about how we complete this sentence, "The first thing I'm going to do is ..."

After 12 months of being banned from so much of what we know, what we care about, what we want, we are nearing an end. There is a light at the end of the tunnel, and it's beckoning us forward, leading us somewhere. Whether it is back to what used to be, or on to something entirely new, is yet to be seen. And we have a role to play in that.

So what do you want to do first?

You probably have a long list. Surely it includes some very basic things – eating at a restaurant, going to a movie theater. Undoubtedly there are many much more essential simple things – shaking someone's hand, having a face-to-face conversation, hugging a grandchild. Sitting in church? A long catalog of unhappiness and emptiness calls out to us with urgency and hope. We can hardly wait. Except ...

... what you probably think is the first thing may not actually be the first thing.

Wisdom tells us that journeys are determined in their first steps. That's why faith is so focused on baptism. Our first step is chosen by the Holy Spirit, and we live in the constant promise is that when we lose the path (which we mostly always do) we can return to the place where it all began and try again. Now, as we take that first huge step away from where we have been into what is next, let make it a good step!

Karl Vaters suggests that we ask ourselves some questions:

Are we representing Jesus well as we come out of the lockdown? Among the many outcomes of the pandemic, the world is enduring a great spiritual crisis. Not that we haven't been in the midst of one before, but this past year has amplified the tremendous challenge of faithfulness

Pastor continued



and discipleship. Our role and responsibilities in the world are greater than ever, but so is our opportunity. Now is the time to recover our witness to the Kingdom of God and bring its light to bear as we move forward from the challenges of the year past.

What have we learned – and what are we still learning? It seems a given that the experiences of the past year will lead to change. Whether or not that will be change for the good remains to be seen. Unless we allow ourselves the space to reflect on what we have experienced, unless we find the courage to honestly assess our own brokenness and our contribution to the injustice and corruption that dominate this world, any change will be change for the worse.

How well are we serving our online church members and visitors? Even as we have added new technologies to our ministry tools as a matter of survival, we have discovered their potential to affect our calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. Online community is uncharted waters for us, but the community of faith has always been called to grow in its witness and service to the world.

How are people hurting, and what can we do to help them? There can be no doubt that this year of social distancing has affected everyone. There has been abundant suffering and there will be abundant grief left in its wake. Easter people are needed more than ever now. Our message of hope and new life will be the salvation of the world.

This is the day that the Lord has made, and we are the people he has made for it!

~Pastor Glen

In-Person Worship



We are beginning our return to in-person services!

We will offer both limited indoor services (reservation required) and outdoor services!

Please read the details on the following page.

In-Person Worship



In-person Worship in the Church is beginning

Limited in-person, indoor worship will begin on April 4th (Easter Sunday). We can accommodate about 25 persons into the sanctuary and maintain necessary social distancing. **ADVANCE RESERVATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED.** The only way to reserve your space is to contact Pastor Glen directly by calling or texting him at 402-740-6395. You will be required to follow these guidelines:

- Everyone **MUST** wear a face covering (masks will be available for anyone who does not have one).
- Use hand sanitizer (will be available in several locations including narthex and pews).
- Restrooms will be limited to one person at a time (a parent may accompany a child). Each individual using the restroom will be responsible for wiping down and sanitizing after use per posted instructions.
- Attendance limited to 25 persons per worship service for in-person inside services.
- Reservations are required in advance. Reservations can only be made by calling Pastor's cell phone (402) 740-6395. The deadline for making a reservation is Wednesday night. Anyone without a reservation cannot attend the in-person inside service.
- Social distancing will be in place. Pews have been marked to maintain social distancing. Family members living in the same house may sit together subject to the ability to accommodate them and maintain appropriate social distancing for all in attendance. Non-family members **MUST** maintain 6 foot social distancing.
- Attendees will be directed to their designated seat (it will not be open seating). Pews will be filled from the front of the church to the back of the church. After the service attendees will be dismissed one row at a time starting from the back of the church.

~ Continued On Next Page

In-Person Worship (cont.)



- Single use bulletins and pre-packaged communion elements will be in the narthex. Please pick up what you need on your way into the Sanctuary. After the service, please dispose of your used bulletin and the empty communion elements in the provided receptacle as you exit the church (do not leave your trash in the pews).
- There will be no sharing of peace or shaking of hands.
- Offering plate will be in the narthex.
- We cannot allow social gatherings before or after the service. When you are dismissed you must leave the church immediately. Please do not congregate in the narthex or outside the church.
- Children attending the service must remain with their parent(s)/ guardian(s). Congregating or interacting with other children outside their immediate family (those living together) cannot be permitted. The nursery must remain closed.
- Doors will be held open by an usher (gloves will be provided) or propped open in order to avoid multiple persons having to touch common door handles.

This will be our plan through April and May. In addition, we will have outdoor worship services in the North parking lot on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 10:30 am. Mask wearing and social distancing guidelines will also be used for outdoor services. In case of unpleasant weather, you can stay in your car and listen on your radio.

8:30 AM WORSHIP SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO BE LIVESTREAMED ON THE CHURCH FACEBOOK PAGE AND WEBSITE.

We will continue to closely monitor the infection and hospitalization levels in Douglas county and these plans may change at any time.

Please remember: as long as the virus is active in the community, it remains a threat to spread and infect others or mutate into new forms that may be hard to contain. It is our Godly duty to behave responsibly for the safety of all of our neighbors. These safety practices are our way of showing our faithfulness to the values of the Kingdom of God.

Calendar of Events @ St. Matthew

APRIL

We are returning to in-person worship services and events at St. Matthew. This calendar includes only days with events during this time.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1

7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Livestream

FRIDAY, APRIL 2

7:00 pm Good Friday Livestream



~SUNDAY, APRIL 4~

**8:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM W/
LIMITED IN-PERSON WORSHIP
VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15 AM
10:30 AM OUTDOOR SERVICE**



TUESDAY, APRIL 6

6:00 pm Worship Ministry Team Mtg

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7

7:00 pm New Bible Study Online
7:30 pm Children & Youth Ministry
Team Meeting

THURSDAY, APRIL 8

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, APRIL 10

10:00 am Jochebed Circle

~SUNDAY, APRIL 11~

**8:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM W/
LIMITED IN-PERSON WORSHIP
VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15 AM**



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14

7:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, APRIL 15

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, APRIL 17

10:00 am Loaves & Fishes

~SUNDAY, APRIL 21~

**8:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM
W/ LIMITED IN-PERSON
WORSHIP
VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15
AM
10:30 AM OUTDOOR SERVICE**



MONDAY, APRIL 19

ACTS Articles Due
7:00 pm Council Meeting

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21

7:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, APRIL 22

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, APRIL 24

9:30 am Deborah Circle

~SUNDAY, APRIL 25~

**8:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM
W/ LIMITED IN-PERSON
WORSHIP
VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15 AM**



TUESDAY, APRIL 27

7:00 pm Phoebe Circle

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28

7:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, APRIL 29

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom



~April 2021~

Date	Time	Ushers	Camera Tech	Video Tech
April 4	8:30	Randy Cramer Valorie Zentner-Cramer	Glen T	Naomi K
April 11	8:30		Luke C	Kent T
April 18	8:30		Dave S	Andrew R
April 26	8:30		Luke C	Shane W

Don't Social Distance from Faith

There are many opportunities to connect with one another even as we are physically separated because of the pandemic.



New Bible Study– Wednesday, 6:00 pm (live on Facebook)

Bible Study (via Zoom) - Thursday, 1:30 pm

Online Worship - Sunday, 8:30 am (or anytime after) with limited in-person attendance. Link on church website www.smlutheran.com or on our Facebook page

Virtual Coffee & Fellowship Time - Sunday (about 9:15 am via Zoom)

Outdoor Worship– 1st and 3rd Sundays of April and May

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.

Cultivating Kindness



Kind hearts are the gardens.
Kind thoughts are the roots.
Kind words are the flowers.
Kind deeds are the fruits.

Take care of your garden
and keep out the weeds.
Fill it with sunshine,
kind words and kind deeds.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Christian Symbol



LILY—The lily that blooms around Easter is a symbol of Christ’s resurrection because it rises from a seemingly lifeless bulb decaying in the ground. It is also used as a symbol of Christ himself. The lily, a symbol of purity, is often used to represent the Virgin Mary.

Believing



Sometimes we get caught up in thinking we need to understand God in order to have faith. But faith is more about trust than knowledge; it’s more about believing in someone than believing information. A child, for instance, doesn’t have to know the precise roads to Grandma’s house; he only needs to believe *in* his parents and their ability and desire to get him there safely. Similarly, we need not understand all the intricacies of how God works; we can take a cue from the disciples and let belief *in* the risen Christ transform and empower us.

In the words of Madeleine L’Engle (*The Rock That Is Higher*): “The disciples did not bother to try to understand the resurrection body. They doubted, and then they believed. They believed something so wonderful that it changed this broken, fragmented, beaten-down little group of men and women in a moment from depression to enthusiasm, from despair to new life, vibrant and unafraid.”

Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry



~Current Pantry Needs~

Boxed Cereal

Breakfast Bars

Bottled Juice

Peanut Butter

Boxed Pasta (not spaghetti)

2021 Pledges



Stewardship information for 2021 has been sent out via mail. Thank you to those that have returned their pledges! If you have not returned your form yet, please do so or contact the church office if you have questions or need assistance.

If you are considering enrolling in electronic giving, you have until the end of the year to fill out the form and return it to church. The form can be found on the church website. If you are a current electronic giver and have increased your pledge this year, you do not have to complete a new form.

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!**

Virtual Sunday School



On Sundays, Lower and Upper Elementary students will have the opportunity to participate in Sunday school ONLINE!

Each Sunday, the St. Matthew Sunday school team will present a fun, pre-recorded lesson for families to enjoy on their own schedule! Join Kiley and Bri every Sunday morning for Bible lessons, crafts, and music!

Middle and high school youth will meet on Wednesday evenings at 7pm with Luke to study and fellowship together LIVE via Zoom.

Church Staff



Pastor ~ Glen Thomas
Administrative Assistant ~ Carrie Conley
Bookkeeper ~ Veda Keebler
Custodian ~ Jack Wiese
Music Director ~ Ric Swanson
Organist ~ Kim Hansen
JuBELLation Ringers Director ~ Ginger Britt

Church Council



Glen Thomas ~ Pastor
Brett Fuller ~ President & Social
Media
Bill Stott ~ Vice President
Linda Hill ~ Secretary
Sue Ties ~ Treasurer & Staff Support

Luke Compton ~ Faith Formation
Dave Sherwin ~ Community Care
John Hollenbeck ~ Property
Linda Hill ~ Worship and Music
Teri Yeoman ~

Church Office Information



OFFICE HOURS ~ Monday and Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and Friday 9:30 am - 10:30 am. 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 Carrie.

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 **second or third Monday of each month**. Specific date listed on the monthly newsletter calendar page.

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.

Financial Report

~February 2021~



General Fund Activity

Beginning			Transfers	Ending
Balance	Receipts	Payments	In (Out)	Balance
52,378.41	19,356.50	12,529.23		59,205.68

Benevolence Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
1,990.00	1,792.17

Hunger Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
160.00	60.00

Women of the ELCA

~Bible Study Groups~ Deborah Circle

9:30 am Saturday April 24th

Study Leader: Constance Hollenbeck

Hostess: Jeannine Zeeb



Jochebed Circle

10:00 am Saturday April 10th

Study Leader: Cindy Gengel

Hostess: Margie Magnuson

Change: Meetings will now be the 2nd Sat. of the month at 10 am

Phoebe Circle

7:00 pm Tuesday April 27th

Study Leader: Mary Peters

Hostess: Janet Sievers

Service Project ~ Toothpaste/brushes

~Daily Devotional "Daily Grace"~

Women of the ELCA website: www.womenoftheelca.org

You can go to the free site (above) to access short daily devotions as you wish, or subscribe for daily emails.



"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 @ 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Holy Communion Every Week

~SUNDAY COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP~

9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

~SUNDAY SCHOOL~

9:40 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.

A journey for everyone from 2—102!

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!

