



St. Matthew  
Evangelical Lutheran Church

# THE ACTS...of God's People

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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- ✪ Adult Bible Study– Thursdays via Zoom

~December 2020~



*Each winter as the year grows older,  
we each grow older, too.  
The chill sets in a little colder;  
the verities we knew  
seem shaken and untrue.*

**The** experts say that it will be a cold and dark winter. Aren't they all?

It is my least favorite part of winter, waking up in the dark, driving home from work in the dark. It's not that the days are actually shorter, they just feel that way. Darkness invades our beings, the poverty of sunlight leaves hearts unwarmed and souls lost in the gloom. If we could glimpse only the slightest speck of light then we could have a way through the dark, a bit of hope, a reason to move forward.

And then arises a star in the east.

Into the darkness he comes, when time seems short and threats surround, he emerges into the world, a small child, helpless as we are, yet the very glory and promise of God, incarnate and real. To those who wander lost and afraid he brings a way, a strength, a hope. Do not be afraid, sing the Angels, for unto us, right now and here, a Savior is born. He is the chosen of God, the fulfillment of promises ancient and true. He comes now to re-ignite that light within us, so that all may know the eternal boundless love of God.

He came once that we might see him as he comes again and again. He was born in Bethlehem then that he might be borne in us today. This is not merely a history we tell, it is the story of our own dark night and the light given to us in baptism.

It is the story of how we become the light.

*When race and class cry out for treason,  
when sirens call for war,  
they overshout the voice of reason  
and scream till we ignore  
all we held dear before.*

~ Continued On Next Page

## ☞ Pastor continued



We are hardly the only ones in the dark. They are all around us, neighbors near and far who suffer in the darkness of racism, injustice, hatred, violence. They cry out for light, for warmth, for shelter and help. They beg that we might make the light in our hearts shine for them in spirit, in truth, in life.

Let your light so shine, he dares us, that the world may see what is good and right and just and in those works, find a reflection of our heavenly Father's grace. Discipleship is not an option, it is a command, a responsibility, given not only by a Savior to certain followers long ago but amplified and echoed in the darkness of the world here and now.

Yet in fear we hide in the darkness, we conceal the light of grace under the cover of fear and regret. We conspire in the shadows, we cower in ignorance and miss the most important promise of grace. We forget, we deny, that we carry the power of light in the world within, and darkness cannot overcome our faith.

*Yet I believe beyond believing  
that life can spring from death,  
that growth can flower from our grieving,  
that we can catch our breath  
and turn transfixed by faith.*

*---Each Winter as the Year Grows Older (William Gay)*

It is going to be a long dark winter. It is beginning to look like there is an end in sight, a vaccine on the horizon that could bring an end (or something like it) to this horrible journey. That will be then. In the meantime, we will have to pass through now. Given the shortcomings of our human efforts, there will be far too much suffering and loss along the way.

But there is light. Perhaps it seems small and dim in the midst of this great darkness. It always does. That does not make it cease, that does not make it end. Darkness can never overcome light. It never has. It never will.

And by that promise, we will be transformed. We will be saved, and we will save the world.

*~Pastor Glen*

# Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry



A very huge THANK YOU to the men and women of the Nebraska Army National Guard for their donations to our food pantry with our Hike for Hunger. Twenty soldiers from 7 different divisions braved the cool weather to hike 13+ miles with food on their backs. These soldiers donated 768 items for our shelves! Some of the soldiers were unable to attend the hike due to having to be quarantined, so they delivered 86 more items the following week! We received so much food that we shared some of it with our partner, Project Hope. We would also like to thank Margie Magnuson, Laura Pribyl and Mary Peters for assisting in serving lunch, and sorting, counting, and re-shelving all of these items. Your help was so appreciated! I think we would still be going through everything without it!

Thanks to a Thrivent Action Team grant we were able to serve a box lunch to each participant in the hike. SSG Neil Wesley, who coordinated the event has assured me that this will become an annual event! I can't wait to see what they come up with next year! If you come across any of these service people, please give them your thanks for their service not only to our country, but to our community.

Another thank you goes out to Mary Mayfield and her efforts in joining the Thrivent Food Challenge which benefits our pantry in two ways. She has collected over 500 food items for the pantry and Thrivent will award us \$500!! The Sewing for Babies ministry that works out of our facility is to be commended for their efforts in this challenge.

All of this came at just the right time. We served 22 families in November. We also provided 20 families with a Thanksgiving Meal Basket and two of the families received Ham Meal Baskets! We were very busy due to the increase in families served, and with all this new food we were able to provide them all with a choice pantry in addition to their holiday meal.

Even with all the food items that were donated this past month, we still have some holes in our shelves.

The following is a list of items we are currently out of :  
Bar soap, Paper towels, Bottled juice, Crackers (Ritz and/or Saltines),  
Boxed Pasta (any kind), Men's and Women's Deodorant., Dish Soap, Whole  
Wheat Flour, Ketchup, Salad Dressing, and Dried fruit (fruit snacks)

Other items needed are: Baked beans and Knorr Rice Side Dishes

## Food Pantry (cont.)



Thank you all for your generous contributions to our pantry. As this pandemic continues to keep climbing in numbers and more and more restrictions are put in place, food insecurity is becoming more and more prevalent in our community. The fact that we doubled our guests this past month is a sign of this increasing need.

If you are looking for a fun activity for the Advent season, try doing a reverse advent calendar! Just put one item in a bag or box each day in Advent and on Christmas morning you will have 25 items to donate to the pantry! This is a fun activity for all ages and don't be afraid to pass this idea on to others!

May the blessings you receive become the blessing to others.

~Sue & Kent Ties

## 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.

## Angel Tree



**The** Angel Tree will look quite different this year, but we will still do our best to make Christmas special for youth in our community!

Stay tuned for more information about how YOU can participate in the Angel Tree program this year!

# Reverse Advent Calendar



**The** Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry invites you and your family to experience the joy of giving each day during Advent instead of receiving....a reverse Advent Calendar if you will. On day One, find a box or a grocery bag and decorate it together. On day two, put something in the box that can be used in the food pantry. Each day during Advent, you add an item into the box. On Day 25, you will have donated 24 items for the food pantry! We invite you to bring your completed box to church after Christmas or right after the New Year. Listed below are suggested items that you may want to include in your box:

Pasta, a can of fruit, a canned vegetable, a can of soup, a can of tuna/chicken, can of pork & beans, Pancake mix, box of cereal, hamburger helper, rice/pasta side dish, peanut butter, box of crackers, boxed potatoes, Jell-O, spaghetti sauce, canned pasta, oatmeal, dried fruit/fruit leathers, and whole grain items.

Many of these items may already be in your own pantry. The Dollar store is a great place to find items. Watch for coupons; ask friends and/or neighbors to help. Be creative! Our guests appreciate everything our community here at St. Matthew does for them in providing the food that they need.



# Sympathy To

**Family** and friends mourning the deaths of Mary Suverkrube, Donna Hansen, and Mary Anderson, who passed away during the month of November.



## 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.

## Cold Comfort

**While** some people dread winter, my motto is “The colder the temperatures and the deeper the snow, the better.” In fact, my mom and I have a tradition of walking into the season’s first snow ... barefoot. The white sky, crisp smell and plunging temps provide a sense of calm.



Though I realize not everyone feels this way, I was shocked when a dear friend shared her reaction. When snowflakes appear, a cloudiness settles into her soul. She experiences deep sadness and anxiety because she suffers from seasonal depression, which I hadn’t known about.

That reminded me how we can continually learn from one another and discover how our creative God uniquely “made and fashioned” (Psalm 119:73) each of us. Jesus calls us to embrace people’s differences and needs as the seasons of the year — and the seasons of life — change.

—Janna Firestone

## A Fresh Look



**Just** when everything is bearing down on us to such an extent that we can scarcely withstand it, the Christmas message comes to tell us that all our ideas are wrong, and that what we take to be evil and dark is really good and light because it comes from God. Our eyes are at fault, that is all.

God is in the manger, wealth in poverty, light in darkness, succor in abandonment. No evil can befall us; whatever men may do to us, they cannot but serve the God who is secretly revealed as love and rules the world and our lives.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, God Is in the Manger

## Calendar of Events @ St. Matthew

# December

All in-person worship services and events at St. Matthew are suspended until further notice. This calendar includes only days with events during this time.

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

6:00 pm Worship Ministry Team Mtg

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

7:30 pm Children & Youth Ministry  
7:00 pm Advent Service Online

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

**~SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6~**  
**WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM**  
**VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15 AM**



### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

7:00 pm Advent Service Online

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

8:30 am Jochebed Circle

**~SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13~**  
**WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM**  
**VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15 AM**



### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

7:00 pm Advent Service Online

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

10:00 am Loaves & Fishes

**~SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20~**  
**WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM**  
**VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15 AM**



### MONDAY, DECEMBER 21

ACTS Articles Due  
7:00 pm Council Meeting

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22

7:00 pm Phoebe Circle

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

7:00 pm Advent Service Online

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE  
5:30 pm Christmas Prayers on the sidewalk  
7:00 pm Christmas Eve service online

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25



### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26

9:30 am Deborah Circle

**~SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27~**  
**WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM**  
**VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15 AM**





## Alternative Gift Giving



To honor that special person in your life, or remember a loved one, give a monetary gift in their name that supports Tella Lutheran, our Partner Parish in Africa

Just send the name of your honoree and a check to  
St Matthew Lutheran Church  
1725 South 60th Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68106  
\*\*\*with notation - Gift to Tella \*\*\*

We will send you a thank you and this lovely card for you to mail or deliver to your honoree or loved ones family

Your money will purchase ink and paper for the copier we gave Tella Lutheran as a Christmas gift in 2016. The copier is a prized possession for the school and church and makes worksheets available to school children who have only a few books and a thirst for learning.

THANK YOU for your support of our Tella Lutheran, Partner Parish on Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, East Africa!

## Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry



### Current Pantry Needs

Bar Soap	Paper Towels
Bottled Juice	Crackers (Ritz or Saltines)
Boxed Pasta	Deodorant
Dish Soap	Whole Wheat Flour
Ketchup	Salad Dressing
Dried Fruit (fruit snacks)	Baked Beans
Knorr Rice Side Dishes	

## Advent & Christmas



**We need *more than* a little Christmas. And we need it right now!**

Certainly some of the usual trimmings and traditions will appear, perhaps slightly altered. Shopping will be different (I hope!), as will as office parties and Christmas concerts and any number of other customary practices. Yet the heart of the season, the purpose, the very life of it, will not.

It doesn't matter how it looks. It doesn't matter how we do it. Christmas will come.

You should meet it when it arrives!

We will share online **mid-week Advent gatherings beginning on Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm**, featuring the music of Holden Evening prayer and a time of much needed devotion and prayer as we reach deep into our hearts for the Spirit of Christmas. These will be posted on our Facebook page and church website [www.smlutheran.com](http://www.smlutheran.com).

**On Christmas Eve**, we will have a very special online celebration of the birth of our Savior, sharing the ancient Christmas story, singing our favorite carols, partaking of the Lord's supper and offering our prayers in the light of the Christmas star.

And then, we will have one other special moment. At **5:30 pm on Christmas Eve**, we will gather in-person on the sidewalk on the south side of the church for a few minutes to light our candles against the cold and dark of the December night, sharing our prayers for our troubled hearts and troubled world and singing our gratitude in the silence of the nightfall. If you need to stay in your car, you will be able to listen on your car radio. However we do it, we will lift up the Spirit of Christmas and share in its glory!

## 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!**

## ☞ 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.**

Compline - Wednesday, 8:00 pm (via Zoom)

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

Online Worship - Sunday, 8:30 am (or anytime after). Link on church website [www.smlutheran.com](http://www.smlutheran.com) or on our Facebook page

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

## ☞ A New App



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

We have exciting news about a new way you can connect with St. Matthew! We are now using Vanco Mobile, a mobile app that will allow our congregation to virtually gather and communicate.

The way we come together to worship today is different since we have shifted to virtual ministries, but we are still a community.

Vanco Mobile will help us strengthen and maintain that connection.

We will use this app to let you know about upcoming events, share news about our community and speak directly with you. You can use Vanco

Mobile to communicate with church staff and fellow members, get involved in our many ministries and express generosity through eGiving.

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.

## 🌀 Holiday Worship Schedule



We will share online **mid-week Advent gatherings beginning on Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm.** These will be posted on our Facebook page and church website [www.smlutheran.com](http://www.smlutheran.com).

**On Christmas Eve**, we will have a very special online celebration of the birth of our Savior

At **5:30 pm on Christmas Eve**, we will gather in-person on the sidewalk on the south side of the church for a few minutes of prayer. If you need to stay in your car, you will be able to listen on your car radio.

## 🌀 Advent Wreath



**The** Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as we anticipate Jesus' birth. The wreath's circular shape symbolizes eternity, or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World — he brought light and life to a dark world (see John 1:4-5). On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light a new candle. As the light grows, so do our hope and joy.



*The staff at St. Matthew pray that  
you have a peaceful Advent season  
and a blessed Christmas!*

*Pastor Glen*

*Carrie*

*Jacob*

*Ric*

*Kim*

*Ginger*

*Jack*

# Puzzle!

Use the code to complete Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, our Savior.



CODE:

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
R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q

10 23 13      17 14      6 18 21 21

11 14      12 10 21 21 14 13

6 24 23 13 14 1 15 4 21

12 24 4 23 2 14 21 24 1 ,

22 18 16 17 3 8      16 24 13 ,

14 5 14 1 21 10 2 3 18 23 16

15 10 3 17 14 1 ,      25 1 18 23 12 14

24 15      25 14 10 12 14 .

I S A I A H 9 : 6 , N I V

Answer: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Isaiah 9:6, NIV

## Church Staff



Pastor ~ Glen Thomas  
Administrative Assistant ~ Carrie Conley  
Communications Coordinator~ Jacob York  
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  
Bill Stott—Vice President  
Randy Cramer— Secretary  
Tammy Nelson—Treasurer

Teri Yeoman - Financial Secretary  
Luke Compton— Faith Formation  
Dave Sherwin— Community Care  
John Hollenbeck— Property  
Veda Keebler - Worship and Music

## 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

~October 2020~



### General Fund Activity

<b>Beginning</b>			<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Ending</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>In (Out)</b>	<b>Balance</b>
37,887.67	17,824.77	12,623.40		43,089.04

### Benevolence Offerings

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Dispersed</b>
1,460.00	1,430.00

### Hunger Offerings

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Dispersed</b>
105.00	112.05

## Women of the ELCA



**Service Project ~ Pasta**

~Daily Devotional “Daily Grace”~

Women of the ELCA website: [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org)

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

## Electronic Giving



~Enjoy the convenience of electronic giving!~

**OUR** church offers electronic giving, which allows you to make donations on a scheduled, automatic basis. It's very convenient for you and provides much-needed donation consistency for our church. You will no longer need to write out checks and prepare envelopes every week. Even when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, your electronic contributions will continue to be received on an uninterrupted basis.

To set up electronic donations, simply complete the authorization form available on the website and return it to the church office. Donations can be debited automatically from either a checking or savings account.



"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](mailto:office@smlutheran.com)  
Web Site: [www.smlutheran.com](http://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!

