



St. Matthew
Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE ACTS...of God's People

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~July 2021~



Perhaps one of them most striking features of the past 15 months has been the shortages.

We're not used to that in this country. We live in the land of plenty, of abundance. We define our lives in terms by our economic well-being, usually at the cost of any other kind of well-being. We measure the quality of our life by the performance of the stock market and the incredible variety of cheap food and widely available consumer goods.

That changed this past year.

For the first time in 2020 I saw empty shelves in the grocery store, something that is happening even now. Disruptions in the supply chain has increased the prices of everything from gasoline to lumber to groceries and on and on. It is almost certainly a short-term problem, but it is both inconvenient and troublesome. Who knows what will be in short supply next?

The short supply of stuff is nothing, however, next to the short supply of truth.

Second only to the 4 million people who have actually died in the pandemic (and the millions more who have been sick, hospitalized and perhaps permanently affected by the virus) is the demise of truth. There is more misinformation and outright falsehood operating in our culture. Some of the lying is undoubtedly purposeful, used by people trying to manipulate others in order to hold on to power or gain more of it.

The problem is not the liars so much as it is their victims. Playing on our widespread anxiety and fears about the immediate challenges of the day and the ongoing generational changes across the land, we have been turned against one another, against our better judgement and against any attempts to do what is right and reasonable. Instead we have thrived on ignorance. Instead of seeking the truth and openly and honestly testing our assumptions and biases, we have spread falsehoods and fabrications as we search for allies and companions in our journey.

And the cost? Consider ...

~ Continued On Next Page

➤ Pastor continued



We may never know the total human cost of the pandemic, but it is undoubtedly higher than the 4 million deaths which have been actually counted, and (most importantly) it is certainly higher than it needed to be. In this age of information and technology it is unconscionable that there should be such unwarranted suffering. We can and should have done better. But we have forsaken our God-given gift of wisdom for what is easy and self-serving. Even a simple vaccine is evidently too great a price to pay against our all-important pride and self-will. And so the virus remains alive in the world with opportunities to continue to spread and mutate. How long before we are back to where we began? And will we be willing to humble ourselves before the truth then?

It's not just the pandemic. Consider the effects of climate change. We have been warned for decades of the effects of the way we are polluting the planet, but each passing year demonstrates our constant stubbornness to make the changes to our lifestyles that are required. It's just easier to pretend that it isn't real, and there are plenty of conmen (and women) who are willing to lead us astray for the benefit of their own egos and bank accounts. The consequence is increased drought, more intense storms, destruction and loss of life. But we hold on tight to the belief that our right to use the gift of the creation for our personal benefit is more important than anything the scientists say.

“The truth will set you free,” Jesus says. Free from the prison of our ignorance? No, free from the prison of our anxiety, our fear, our short-sightedness. Our problems are not political or social, they are spiritual. We have lost our faith. We are so caught up in the moment that we are unable to see the path ahead, the long arc of history and our place in it. We won't make sacrifices because we see only the immediate cost and not our greater purpose. We refuse change because we have forgotten the God who has amazing things in store for us.

Where is God now? He has been here all of the time, he is the one who is present. And he is the end that we seek, if we will walk the path he has set. We are desperately resistant; he is persistently gracious. Let us open our ears and our hearts to the truth, that we might be free to live in such grace.

~Pastor Glen

Safe Worship Practices



Anyone who is fully vaccinated against the CoVid virus may attend indoor in-person worship without reservation or restriction. Masks and social distancing will not be required, though they will certainly be allowed, and we will all be respectful of anyone who prefers these basic safety measures.

If you are not vaccinated, please wear a mask and practice appropriate social distancing.

Streaming worship will continue on the Facebook page and website.

We will also hold outdoor services on the first and third Sunday (weather permitting).

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.

Support Belle Ryan



Support the Belle Ryan Teachers!

Back to School sales are just around the corner!

As students are preparing for fall, we are mindful of the high cost of school supplies and that teachers too often have to purchase with their own money. As we have done in the past, we can support the teachers at Belle Ryan Elementary by helping collect supplies that they need and do not have. We have asked the teachers to provide a list of what they need most. Tags listing the items they need are available in the church lounge – please pick a card or two and when you see school supplies on sale, pick up something to help our hard-working teachers!

Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry



In June we served 8 families and 27 individuals. Of those 8 families 4 were new to our pantry. We are continuing to serve our guests by having them fill out a grocery list and then those are filled and returned to them. Project Hope continues to supply us with milk, eggs and cheese each month as well as a box of produce. This generous contribution gives us the opportunity to spend our donation dollars on meat and other shelf stable foods that we may be short on.

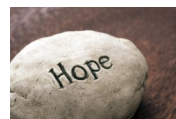
Our needs for July include:

Apple Sauce	Ketchup
Salsa	Salad Dressing
Bottled Juice	Knorr Rice Side Dishes
Crackers (Saltine or Ritz)	

As always, your continued support of our pantry is very much appreciated. Thank you to Brent, Andrew, Bill, Kelli, Kent and Veda for your help on pantry days.

~Sue Ties

Hope Defined



Hoping does not mean doing nothing. It means going about our assigned tasks, confident that God will provide the meaning and the conclusions. It is not compelled to work away at keeping up appearances with a bogus spirituality. It is the opposite of desperate and panicky manipulations, of scurrying and worrying.

And hoping is not dreaming. It is not spinning an illusion or fantasy to protect us from our boredom or our pain. It means a confident, alert expectation that God will do what he said he will do. It is imagination put in the harness of faith. It is a willingness to let God do it his way and in his time. It is the opposite of making plans that we demand that God put into effect, telling him both how and when to do it.

—Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*

Calendar of Events @ St. Matthew



FRIDAY, JULY 9

SATURDAY, JULY 10

~SUNDAY, JULY 11~

**8:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM
W/ IN-PERSON WORSHIP
9:30 AM COFFEE &
FELLOWSHIP**



THURSDAY, JULY 1

1:30 pm Coffee Hour in the lounge

FRIDAY, JULY 2

SATURDAY, JULY 3



~SUNDAY, JULY 4~

**8:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM W/
IN-PERSON WORSHIP
9:30 AM COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP
10:30 AM OUTDOOR SERVICE**



MONDAY, JULY 5

Monday Morning Men
9:30 am-2:00 pm Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, JULY 6

9:00 am-3:00 pm Sewing For Babies
6:00 pm Worship Ministry Team Mtg

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online
7:30 pm Children & Youth Ministry
Team Meeting

THURSDAY, JULY 8

1:30 pm Coffee Hour in the lounge

MONDAY, JULY 12

Monday Morning Men
9:30 am-2:00 pm Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, JULY 13

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, JULY 15

9:00 am Sewing For Babies
1:30 pm Coffee Hour in the lounge

FRIDAY, JULY 16



SATURDAY, JULY 17

10:00 am Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

~SUNDAY, JULY 18~

**8:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM
W/ IN-PERSON WORSHIP
9:30 AM COFFEE &
FELLOWSHIP
10:30 AM OUTDOOR SERVICE**



MONDAY, JULY 19

ACTS Newsletter Articles
Due in the Office Today
Monday Morning Men

9:30 am - 2:00 pm Tanzanian Treasures
7:00 pm Congregation Council Mtg

TUESDAY, JULY 20

9:00 am-3:00 pm Sewing For Babies

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, JULY 22

1:30 pm Coffee Hour in the lounge

FRIDAY, JULY 23

9:00 am Funtastic Fibers

SATURDAY, JULY 24

9:30 pm Deborah Circle

~SUNDAY, JULY 25~

8:30 AM WORSHIP LIVESTREAM

W/ IN-PERSON WORSHIP

9:30 AM COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP



MONDAY, JULY 26

Monday Morning Men

9:00 am - 2:00 pm Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, JULY 27

7:00 pm Phoebe Circle

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, JULY 29

1:30 pm Coffee Hour in the lounge

FRIDAY, JULY 30

SATURDAY, JULY 31



New CDC guidelines will change worship procedures beginning in June.

As vaccinations continue to increase and case numbers go down, it is now safer for people who are fully vaccinated to gather without masks or social distancing. Beginning in June, we will be lifting restrictions currently in place during the 8:30 am service. If you are fully vaccinated you will not be required to wear a mask or keep significant social distancing.

If you are NOT vaccinated you will be expected to wear a mask and keep a proper safe distance.

We ask you please to RESPECT others who will still prefer to wear a mask a keep a safe distance for themselves.

In addition to allowing people who are fully vaccinated to attend in-person indoor worship service at 8:30 am without restriction, we will also have outdoor services on the 1st and 3rd Sundays for anyone who is not yet fully comfortable in crowds. And, as always, worship services will continue to livestream on Facebook and the church website.

☞ Reach the Sun



The quickest way for anyone to reach the sun and the light of day is not to run west, chasing after the setting sun, but to head east, plunging into the darkness until one comes to the sunrise. ... Walk into the darkness rather than try to outrun it.

—Gerald Sittser, *A Grace Disguised*

☞ Living out Scripture

When Texas suffered an uncharacteristic winter storm in February, one couple's act of kindness toward a stranger demonstrated the power of living by the Golden Rule.



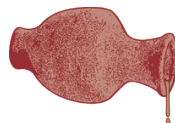
Chelsea Timmons, a grocery store delivery driver, got stuck in the ice-covered driveway of customers Doug Condon and Nina Richardson. Because towing companies were inundated, the couple invited her to stay with them — which she ended up doing for five nights! The three shared meals and conversation, and Chelsea baked them a cake and befriended their dogs. In short, Nina and Doug say, she became “part of the family.”

“Do to others what you would have them do to you,” says Jesus (Matthew 7:12, NIV). Doug echoes Jesus closely when he explains one reason behind their actions: “We have daughters, and we hope if they were ever in a situation like this that there would be someone who would open their house and help them.”

Perhaps Doug and Nina also experienced the delight of another Bible verse: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2, ESV).

—Heidi Hyland Mann

☞ Christian Symbol



OIL—In the Old Testament, oil symbolized consecration to God. The temple altar and king's heads were anointed with oil to set them apart as holy. In the New Testament, oil often represented the Holy Spirit. Jesus and his followers were anointed for their ministries (see Luke 4:18 and Acts 10:38).

Worship Servants



~July 2021~

Date	Time	Ushers	Camera Tech	Video Tech
July 4	8:30		Derek C	Glen T
10:30 am Outdoor				
July 11	8:30	Dennis & Margie Magnuson	Derek C	Glen T
July 18	8:30	Nate Houfek	Derek C	Andrew R
10:30 am Outdoor				
July 25	8:30	Michael Lisko	Derek C	Kent T

Don't Social Distance from Faith



New Bible Study– Wednesday, 6:00 pm (live on Facebook)
Coffee Hour - Thursday, 1:30 pm in the lounge
Online Worship - Sunday, 8:30 am (or anytime after) with in-person attendance. Link on church website www.smlutheran.com
or on our Facebook page
Outdoor Worship– 1st and 3rd Sundays of July

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!**

Church Staff



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

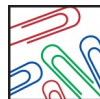
Church Council



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

Teri Yeoman
Dave Sherwin ~ Community Care
John Hollenbeck ~ Property
Margie Magnuson ~ Financial
Secretary
Luke Compton ~ Faith Formation

Church Office Information



OFFICE HOURS ~ Monday through Friday 9:30 am-4:30 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 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

~May 2021~



General Fund Activity

Beginning			Transfers	Ending
Balance	Receipts	Payments	In (Out)	Balance
53,361.36	11,967.67	16,570.43		48,758.60

Benevolence Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
1,233.33	1,695.00

Hunger Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
60.00	60.00

Women of the ELCA

~Bible Study Groups~
Deborah Circle

9:30 am Saturday July 24th

Study Leader: : Linda Houfek

Hostess: Linda Houfek



Jochebed Circle

No Meeting

Change: Meetings are now on the 2nd Sat. of the month at 10 am

Phoebe Circle

7:00 pm Tuesday July 27th

Study Leader: All

Hostess: Barb Englund

Service Project ~ Peanut Butter

~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.
Holy Communion Every Week
Outdoor Service 1st & 3rd Sundays

~SUNDAY COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP~

9:30 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!

