



St. Matthew
Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE ACTS...of God's People

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~June 2020~



I think people who work in IT have a standard response that they give without a second thought: “Did you reboot your computer?” I find it a funny thing about computers, that when they are not working correctly, all you have to do is turn it off and start again, and voila! – it’s like the problem never happened.

If only that worked for everything else in life.

There are, in fact, numerous moments in my life where I simply wish I could go back in time and do them over. I am convinced that if I could change one decision, undo one mistake, my life could have turned out much differently. I am absolutely convinced that this is true. I know that some will say that every moment of our lives is important, that for good or bad they all lead to the person we become, the life we live. That it would be impossible to modify even the smallest thing without changing everything.

Would that be so bad?

In the midst of the Great 2020 Pandemic, there is a constant refrain of voices crying to go back to life as it was before this all began. That is a natural desire, a common experience. It is founded in grief and pain and formed in the illusion that this moment in history is just a blip, an oddity that when past will disappear like it never happened at all.

I am not sure it will.

But I don’t believe it should.

The hard truth of life right now is that while no one is specifically responsible for causing or creating this tragedy, we are all responsible for its aftermath. Like every significant event, it ripped open the scars created by sins of pride, injustice, violence. We cannot hate what this pandemic has done to us without confessing what we have done to ourselves, to each other. We are not merely facing a global medical catastrophe, we are experiencing the fruits of our own labors, the works of our own hands. The list is long:

That we tolerate unsafe and unhealthy conditions for some workers
That we underpay the actually important members of our economy

Pastor continued



That we are overinvested in entertainment
That we are uninvested in family
That we do not really understand what it means to live in community
That we worship the false god of independence and individuality

All of these, and many more, are direct causes of our current misery. And our suffering is by no means mitigated by the truth that we have always been like this, that our world has always been like this. The only important question, the only thing within our control is this: does it have to be like this? Can't we change?

That would require us to go back to the beginning. Luckily, we can do that!

The story of faith begins with a family, a man named Abram and his wife Sarai. And God of course. In those first days God set forth a path of life for his chosen. He taught them, provided for them and protected them. He blessed them and directed them to be a blessing for future generations. In those first days, God revealed everything necessary for faith and life.

But we have come a long way since then, and along the way we got lost. We have forgotten what it was like at first, what it felt like to be called to faith, what God asked of his children and what he gave. The best thing we could do right now is return to those primary stories of faith and life and start again – not because all we have done would vanish, but that we might take an opportunity to move forward from this moment in a better way, as better people, for a better world.

Thomas Wolfe wrote that you couldn't go home again, that the mistakes and missteps which happened of life were simply too much to overcome. He must have not read his Luther. The great reformer taught us that baptism was not simply a one-and-done, but a touchstone that we could return to over and over and over again. As much as we needed. A daily new start. A reboot.

This summer, as (hopefully!) we take our first post-social-isolation steps, let us turn back to those early moments in our story. As we re-read and re-learn and re-see those days, let us seek the people we used to be, that we were meant to be, in trust and hope for whatever comes next.

~Pastor Glen

☞ When to Call the Pastor or Office



Your church staff wants to serve you, and it is our goal to do this as effectively and efficiently as possible. Most important to us is being available to you in times of sickness or trouble. Here is a partial list of occasions when you should call the pastor or the church office.

- IN CASE OF EMERGENCY – this includes any life-threatening situation, serious injury or illness, especially when there is a death in the family or whenever it appears that the death of a member is imminent, or any other urgent family crisis or personal trauma. Your pastor should be notified immediately when a member has died; however, it is best if the pastor can be contacted before death occurs, when possible, so that he can minister to the dying person as well as to the family. In such a case, please call the pastor immediately day or night.
- Whenever you or someone in your family enters the hospital, or faces impending surgery.
- When you have suffered a loss in your life; such as the death of a loved one, an impending divorce, a miscarriage, unemployment or loss of a business, or lingering illness or injury.
- Four to six months or more before a wedding is anticipated and right away if a wedding is to be cancelled.
- When a baby is born or adopted, and when a baptism needs to be scheduled.
- When Holy Communion is desired by someone homebound or unable to attend Sunday worship.
- When you are troubled, struggling with a problem, or facing a major decision.
- When you have questions about Christian faith and life, the Bible or theology.
- When you are aware that a member needs help or is becoming inactive.
- When an unchurched neighbor moves into the community.
- When you are upset with the pastor or about something in the congregation.
- When something wonderful has happened to you!

Update on Services



As the pandemic continues to spread in our community, we are working hard to discern when it will be safe to return to in-person worship at St. Matthew. The Church Council continues to try to find the best path forward. We are considering all of the questions and options available to us, and we are praying and listening with all our hearts to discern God's Word in these challenging times.

We continue to believe that it is not safe enough yet to return to in-person worship. We know that many members of our community are especially vulnerable to this virus, and we have absolutely no interest in putting them in danger. The added challenges of in-person worship under social distance restrictions is also a consideration at this time.

The Council will review the situation again at our June 15th meeting.

We are working hard to be the church now, to stay connected to God in worship and prayer and to one another in fellowship and mutual support. Please join us for Sunday morning worship and coffee hour and Wednesday evening prayers each week via our website or Zoom. The technology can be a challenge, but we can help you with that! In the future, these tools are going to be an important part of our ministry.

Stay safe and hopeful!

Welcoming the Holy



Abraham and Sarah welcomed three strangers who turned out to be the Lord. Jesus said, "If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple," the giver will be rewarded (Matthew 10:42, NIV). An ancient Jewish proverb asserts: "Hospitality is one form of worship." A Russian Orthodox monk is said to have told a younger one, "Sometimes I see a stranger coming up the road and I say, 'Oh, Jesus Christ, is it you again?'" And an old Gaelic poem declares, "Often, often, often, goes the Christ in the stranger's guise."

Sometimes we think we must do something big to serve God. Today, when you smile at someone on the street, take time to entertain a child's question, bring cookies to a new neighbor, thank a server or clerk ... know that you are serving Jesus, that you are worshiping God.

—Heidi Mann

Calendar of Events @ St. Matthew

June

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, JUNE 2

6:00 pm Worship Ministry Team Mtg

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

7:30 pm Children & Youth Team Mtg

8:00 pm Compline Prayer via Zoom

THURSDAY, JUNE 4

1:30 pm Adult Study

**~SUNDAY, JUNE 7~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM**



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

8:00 pm Compline Prayer via Zoom

THURSDAY, JUNE 11

1:30 pm Adult Study

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

8:30 am Jochebed Circle

**~SUNDAY, JUNE 14~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM**



MONDAY, JUNE 15

ACTS Articles Due

7:00 pm Council Mtg

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

8:00 pm Compline Prayer via Zoom

THURSDAY, JUNE 18

1:30 pm Adult Study

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

10:00 am Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

**HAPPY
FATHER'S
Day!**

**~SUNDAY, JUNE 21~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM**



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24

8:00 pm Compline Prayer via Zoom

THURSDAY, JUNE 25

1:30 pm Adult Study

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

9:30 am Deborah Circle

**~SUNDAY, JUNE 28~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM**



Thank You

Thanks to all who took the time to wish Frank a Happy 80th Birthday– So much appreciated!



God Bless you all,
Dixie & Frank Fleming

Sunday Mornings

We are still church!

Sunday morning at 8:30 am



Online worship will be at 8:30 am via the church website www.smlutheran.com or on our Facebook page or anytime afterwards.

VIRTUAL Coffee Hour on Zoom!
Starting after the service (about 9:15 am).
Find the zoom link on facebook page or email

Hope to "see" you!



Special Dates

Trinity Sunday, *June 7, 2020*
Guest preacher: Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

First day of summer, *June 20, 2020*

Father's Day, *June 21, 2020*



Facebook

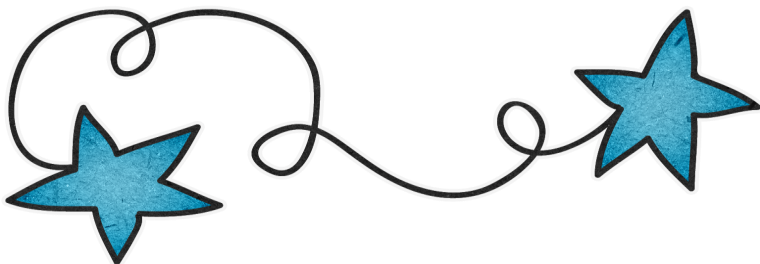
Like and Share our St Matthew Facebook page!
You will find updates and news throughout the month– and find links to our remote services!

www.facebook.com/St-Matthew-Evangelical-Lutheran-Church-191409984237851/

☞ Seeing Stars

The stars shine over the mountains,
the stars shine over the sea,
The stars look up to the mighty God,
the stars look down on me;
The stars shall last for a million years,
a million years and a day,
But God and I will live and love,
when the stars have passed away.

—Robert Louis Stevenson



☞ Food Pantry

**~Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry~
Items Needed**



Canned Veggies– beets, baked
beans, canned potatoes

Condiments– Ketchup, Mustard,
Salsa, BBQ Sauce

Pancake Mix

Cream of Mushroom Soup

Saltine Crackers

White– All Purpose Flour

White Sugar

Jelly

Corn Muffin Mix

Boxed Potatoes

Worship Servants & Donations



As the Covid-19 virus spreads throughout our community and across the globe, we must make difficult and painful choices in order to respond to this situation appropriately.

All worship services and events at St. Matthew are suspended until further notice. This is at the recommendation of the civil authorities and of our Bishop.

We are livestreaming a worship service at 8:30 am on Sundays. You can join live or watch anytime on our Facebook page.

STAY TUNED FOR CHANGES AS WE MOVE THROUGH JUNE

Availability



Office hours will be erratic for a while. Pastor Glen will be reducing his time in public as much as possible without neglecting his call. **IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF A PASTORAL PRESENCE HE WILL BE THERE FOR YOU!** Call him and he will be there—of just call to talk!

Pastor Glen Cell (402)740-6395

A Surprising Solution



The only solution for being broken is ... brokenness. By brokenness, I mean the acknowledgment of it, the full and unflinching acceptance that we are bankrupt, poor in spirit and have nothing to offer. In our culture, that's a hard sell. ... Brokenness is not trending on Twitter. It's not written on anyone's résumé, and it's no business strategy at all. It is, however, the one hope Jesus holds out for us, the inside-out, upside-down way that is somehow the only path that ultimately is right side up. Embrace the paradox: brokenness is the way to wholeness.

—Kyle Idleman, *The End of Me*

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

~April 2020~



General Fund Activity

Beginning			Transfers	Ending
Balance	Receipts	Payments	In (Out)	Balance
22,033.18	13,757.00	19,429.02		16,361.16

Benevolence Offerings

Hunger Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
1,385.00	1,607.00

Receipts	Dispersed
105.00	125.00

Women of the ELCA

Service Project ~ Laundry & Dish Soap



~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.

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 at church 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."

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church
1725 S 60th Street
Omaha, NE 68106-2149

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



~CONTACT INFORMATION~

Office Phone (402) 556-7030
Email: office@smllutheran.com
Web Site: www.smllutheran.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!

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!

