



St. Matthew
Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE ACTS...of God's People

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~March 2021~



How do we approach a season of preparation in a world that does not believe in preparation?

For the record, I was a good Boy Scout and I fully embraced the motto “Be Prepared.” On my office wall hangs a framed piece of embroidery made by my mother with a picture of Noah’s ark that reads, “Be prepared. It wasn’t raining when Noah built the Ark.” It may well be the most important lesson she taught me.

Not that I get it right all the time.

But that’s not the point really. Once upon a time, in my life before seminary, I worked in the hotel business. As part of learning how to run banquets and other events, a manager taught me to create a well detailed plan ahead of time and, when the event began, to put the plan away in my desk (because nothing ever went as planned.) His point was simple – you can’t adapt to unforeseen circumstances if you aren’t prepared for the ones you can foresee.

It’s the act of planning, not the plan, that matters. Life does not need to go as we expect it for us to need expectations. It’s the mindset, the forward looking posture that brings us to life. It’s hope, and hope only comes when your eyes and heart are open to what lies ahead.

Is this the great lesson of 2020? Not that we could necessarily have foreseen CoVid – but then again, there were some who did, and there were plans that had been made but were ignored, even discarded. And what level of obliviousness does it take to not foresee the consequences of centuries of unrepentant racism, the outcome of intentioned dishonesty and socially sanctioned selfishness and corruption? How could we have prepared for 2020? How could we not?

So now we come to Lent, 40 days set aside from our normal spiritual regimen (or lack thereof) in order to more fully prepare to hear and live out the most important story in our lives. In the world. To revisit the most important moment of faith and life, and to not emerge from Easter with hands as empty as the tomb. Which we will, unless we make use of this time to prepare.

~ Continued On Next Page

↻ Pastor continued



What does that mean? Beyond the piety and the forbearance lies a much more important question: do you want to be ready? Do not be fooled – it is our nature to remain where and when and how we are, even if our present state is less than perfect. Change is hard, so we avoid it by not preparing for it.

But change is the whole point of Easter! Resurrection is an unadulterated transformation from death into life. It is not merely a thing that happened to Jesus a long time ago – it is our daily calling to follow the Spirit leading us to a new path, a journey of discipleship toward the Kingdom of God. To stay the same is to remain in the tomb, so afraid of what comes next that we refuse even the first step into the light of the next day.

How can you be prepared for something new if you don't believe anything new is ever going to happen?

We spend too much of Lent trying to make ourselves feel bad about things that happened in the past. The purpose of this season is to prepare us for the great thing that is about to happen next. We are called on a journey that leads to the world's Salvation. We need to be ready to leave the tomb when the stone is rolled away.

~Pastor Glen

↻ Lent Midweek Worship



This year we are sharing our midweek worship with our metro Lutheran partners. Each of the Congregations will host a different week:

February 24: Augustana and Immanuel
March 3rd: Grace/St. Luke and San Andres
March 10th: Bethel
March 17th: Trinity
March 24th: St. Matthew

Each week's service will be posted on the St. Matthew Facebook page and website at 7:00 pm.

Thank You

Dear Members of St. Matthew - Thank you for the honor of receiving the “Follow the Star” award. I am happy to help out the St. Matthew community during these unprecedented times in order to keep the church running. I miss all of you and am looking forward to seeing all of you again and hearing your voices lifted in worship and praise.



Take care and God bless you all!
Kim Hansen

Reading the Bible Again

Conflict about the Bible is the single most divisive issue among Christians in North America today.

--Marcus Borg



We are living in the midst of a great spiritual crisis right now. And divisions among Christians on what the Bible says is a major contributing factor to the divisions in the world around us. Learning to read, study and proclaim the Word of God is our salvation, and the instrument by which we can bring the light of the Kingdom into the world.

Maybe you have been reluctant to study the Bible because you don't like what you have been told it "says." Maybe you've just found it too complicated. Maybe you think it's just boring. You are missing out on an important spiritual gift of God, an experience that can bring you closer to his grace and love. This is the first step - learn what the Bible really is and discover the Word of God all over again.

Join me live on Facebook and the church website Wednesdays at 6:00 pm or watch the study at your own convenience. I will try to monitor the comments and respond to your questions throughout the week. Forget what you think you know about the Bible or what you see on the TV and come learn and love the Bible all over again.

You can find previous episodes of the study on the St. Matthew website under the menu heading “Grow.”

Sympathy To

The family and friends of Nick Mayfield, who passed away on February 7th, 2021. A memorial service is scheduled for June 12th at 11 am.



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.

Calendar of Events @ St. Matthew

MARCH

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.

MONDAY, MARCH 1

9:30 am Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, MARCH 2

6:00 pm Worship Ministry Team

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online
7:00 am Lent Midweek Worship
7:30 pm Children & Youth Ministry Team

THURSDAY, MARCH 4

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

~SUNDAY, MARCH 7~

**WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM
ANNUAL MEETING- VIRTUAL**



MONDAY, MARCH 8

9:30 am Tanzanian Treasures

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online
7:00 am Lent Midweek Worship

THURSDAY, MARCH 11

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, MARCH 13

10:00 am Jochebed Circle

~SUNDAY, MARCH 14~

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM
VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15 AM**



MONDAY, MARCH 15

ACTS Articles Due
9:30 am Tanzanian Treasures
7:00 pm Council Meeting

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17

7:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, MARCH 20

10:00 am Loaves & Fishes

**~SUNDAY, MARCH 21~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM
VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15
AM**



MONDAY, MARCH 22

9:30 am Tanzanian Treasures

TUESDAY, MARCH 23

7:00 pm Phoebe Circle

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online
7:00 am Lent Midweek Worship

THURSDAY, MARCH 25

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, MARCH 27

9:30 am Deborah Circle

**~SUNDAY, MARCH 28~
WORSHIP LIVESTREAM 8:30 AM
VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR 9:15
AM**



MONDAY, MARCH 29

9:30 am Tanzanian Treasures

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online

Worship Servants



~March 2021~

Date	Time	Council Rep	Camera Tech	Video Tech
March 7	8:30	Randy Cramer	Glen T	Naomi
March 14	8:30	Sue Ties	Luke C	Kent T
March 21	8:30	Bill Stott	Dave S	Andrew R
March 28	8:30	Brett Fuller	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, 7:00 pm (live on Facebook)

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 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 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.

🌀 Laud & Honor on Palm Sunday



The Palm Sunday anthem “All Glory Laud and Honor” is one of Christendom’s oldest hymns. St. Theodulf of Orleans, who helped reform the church under Charlemagne, wrote the lyrics in the year 820 while imprisoned in France.

The lyrics recount Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event the medieval church reenacted every Palm Sunday. Clergy and townspeople processed from fields through the city gates, behind a Jesus figure riding a donkey. At the gates, children began singing the hymn in Latin — *Gloria, laus et honor* — and onlookers soon chimed in.

City gates may be a thing of the past, as the website Hymnary.org notes, yet we still praise our blessed Redeemer “because we know just what kind of King he was and is — an everlasting King who reigns not just in Jerusalem but over the entire earth. What more could we do but praise him with glory, laud and honor.”

All glory, laud and honor to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.
You are the King of Israel and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming, the King and Blessed One.

🌀 A Bountiful Life



“Life is given to you like a flat piece of land,” said actress Jeanne Moreau. “I hope that when I’m finished, my piece of land will be a beautiful garden.”

God, who put the first human in a garden to care for creation, blesses us with talents and resources to wisely manage. In gardening terms, God gives us the plot of ground, the seed, the wisdom and strength to bring forth beauty and abundance. Yet we do the work, with God’s help, to make it a reality. Like Adam, we till, but God gives the increase. God’s provisions and our labor bring the garden — and our lives of stewardship — to fulfillment.

As stewards, we ponder: When God calls us home, what will our garden be like, and what will it have produced?

🌀 Special Dates



- World Day of Prayer, *March 5, 2021*
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 14, 2021*
- First day of spring, *March 20, 2021*
- Holy Week, *March 28 – April 4, 2021*
- Palm/Passion Sunday, *March 28, 2021*

🌀 The Comfort Connection



Amid suffering, we might feel alone and wonder what good can come of it. But later we may discover ourselves equipped to serve precisely because of what we experienced.

Writer and civil rights activist James Baldwin stated: “You think your pain and heartbreak are unprecedented ... but then you read. [Books] taught me that the things that tormented me the most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive or who had ever been alive.” Whether through books or direct human interaction, we often learn that our suffering connects us to other people and that our pain gains meaning by moving us to support someone else who’s hurting.

Paul writes of such connection: “Praise be to ... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NIV). May you share the comfort you have received from God with others in pain. As a bonus, along the way you’ll realize you’re not — and never have been — alone.

🌀 God in My Hands



When I was ready to give up on the Church, it was the sacraments that pulled me back.

When my faith had become little more than an abstraction, a set of propositions to be affirmed or denied, the tangible, tactile nature of the sacraments invited me to touch, smell, taste, hear, and see God in the stuff of everyday life again. They got God out of my head and into my hands. They reminded me that Christianity isn’t meant to simply be believed; it’s meant to be lived, shared, eaten, spoken, and enacted in the presence of other people. They reminded me that, try as I may, I can’t be a Christian on my own.

—Rachel Held Evans

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

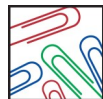
Church Council



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

~January 2021~



General Fund Activity

Beginning			Transfers	Ending
Balance	Receipts	Payments	In (Out)	Balance
41,663.48	29,037.77	18,322.94		52,378.41

Benevolence Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
1,792.17	1,260.00

Hunger Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
60.00	130.00

Women of the ELCA

~Bible Study Groups~ Deborah Circle

9:30 am Saturday March 27th

Study Leader: Judy Miller

Hostess: Charlotte Jensen



Jochebed Circle

10:00 am Saturday March 13th

Study Leader: Jenny Fuller

Hostess: Michelle Keebler

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

Phoebe Circle

7:00 pm Tuesday March 23rd

Study Leader: Kathy Cole

Hostess: Kathy Cole

Service Project ~ Popcorn

~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!

