



St. Matthew
Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE ACTS...of God's People

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ✪ A Message from Pastor Glen
- ✪ Return to In-Person Worship
- ✪ New Bible Study
- ✪ Vacation Bible School

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ✪ Outdoor Service– 1st & 3rd Sundays
- ✪ New Bible Study– Wednesdays
- ✪ Livestreamed Service w/ Limited In-person Attendance – Sunday mornings
- ✪ Adult Bible Study– Thursdays

~May 2021~



Foot drop is a gait abnormality in which the dropping of the forefoot happens due to weakness, irritation or damage to the common fibular nerve including the sciatic nerve, or paralysis of the muscles in the anterior portion of the lower leg. It is usually a symptom of a greater problem ...

Foot drop causes stumbling, tripping, and falling.

The thing about foot drop is that it requires constant attention when walking, which is nearly impossible to do. Try it sometime. Pay careful attention to every step you take, making extra effort to carefully lift one foot each step you take. It's hard to do. Walking should come naturally, subconsciously. Trying to do it intentionally is unnatural, and that makes it hard.

The world is suffering from foot drop.

We have been called to walk the path of discipleship with Jesus. By faith, it should come naturally, easily. But we are broken creatures, and our feet are inclined to not follow the direction of our head and hearts. At any moment, at every moment, we are prone to stumbling, tripping, falling. Unless we learn to move deliberately, purposefully, intentionally, we're going to keep falling down, again, again, again.

As I write these words, the 7 day rolling average of CoVid infections in Nebraska is 412, the same as it was a year ago. A year ago! It is as if we have learned nothing, done nothing, changed nothing. Hospitals continue to be full, people continue to die. Now cases are rising among school children. Will watching our children die be enough for us to finally take the pandemic seriously?

It's also Earth day. We are experiencing the destructive effects of the damage we have done to the creation on an ever-increasing basis. Monstrous storms, floods, droughts. The planet is slowly dying, murdered by the very beings that God created to take care of it. We are the stewards of his good creation, and we are falling flat in our stewardship calling.

This week a jury in Minnesota committed a rare act: it convicted a police officer who killed an unarmed black man. Fear of one another, especially

~ Continued On Next Page

☞ Pastor continued



of people of color, has contaminated the very people whose vocation it is to protect us to the point where we have invented a new crime: driving while black, which seems to justify an immediate administration of the death penalty. Justice is failing all around us.

The work of creating a heavily armed populace is bearing great fruit though. Between terrorists with military grade weapons shooting up grocery stores and factories and teenagers with easily concealed semi-automatic pistols staging gunfights in local malls, we are all caught up in a real-life episode of The Purge. The cost of satiating our addiction to violence is measured by the bodies falling all around us.

Maybe we should call it a faith drop.

People who live with disabilities like foot drop find it necessary to make use of some kind of mobility aid – a cane or a walker perhaps. There are foot and ankle braces, physical therapy and other tools to aid safe walking, to keep a person on their feet even if those feet are fully functional.

There are mobility aids for our faith, too, things to prop up us poor broken human beings, to strengthen our weaknesses, to help us keep our balance, to right us when we are leaning in the wrong direction. There is the Word of God, if we dare to understand it fully and LISTEN to what it is telling us rather than telling it what we think it should say. We can worship and pray, we can find ways to serve and give, to help and encourage our neighbor.

And we can be community.

The second great loss of the pandemic and subsequent quarantine (the first being the loss of health and life) is the separation, the loneliness, the loss of time spent with friends and family, including our church family. We are trying hard to find ways to join together now, with great hopes that we will do more if only patience and wisdom and social conscience would enable us to do what must be done to end this pandemic. I wish I could be more hopeful about that. But as we near the finish line our faith is coming up short and we are stumbling now, perhaps even failing.

~ Continued On Next Page

∞ Pastor continued



We don't have to.

Through the last year (and a bit more) we have worked hard to remain connected, to worship and connect as a community of faith. It's been inadequate I know. But we have let our dissatisfaction rule us, our inability define us, and we have injured the community, stumbled in our calling. We have let anger make our decisions.

But it's not too late to regain our footing. The path has not changed, our work still lies ahead of us, and we are still St. Matthew. Now is the time for us to come back together, one way or another, to restore our support of the ministry and to be present at worship gatherings. Yes, there will only be a limited amount of in-person space at 8:30 am worship service, but there are also outdoor services on the first and third Sundays at 10:30 am. And we are always online – leave a comment and let us know you're out there!

There is an inside joke among people with MS about how long it took to concede to the illness and begin to use a cane or other needed aid. How long will it take us to confess our shortcomings and return to being Christ's church?

~Pastor Glen

∞ 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.

∞ Vacation Bible School



The St. Matthew VBS team is excited to offer a fully in-person vacation bible school for children ages 3-12. We will journey together through the dense rainforests seeking the hidden treasure's in God's word! We will be following updated masking and social distancing protocols to ensure safety for all participants and staff. Join us for a week of songs, crafts, games, and a free dinner each night! To register a child to attend or to be a volunteer, please complete the form on the church website.

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

MAY

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

~SUNDAY, MAY 2~

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



TUESDAY, MAY 4

6:00 pm Worship Ministry Team Mtg

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7

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

THURSDAY, MAY 8

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, MAY 10

10:00 am Jochebed Circle

~SUNDAY, MAY 9~

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



WEDNESDAY, MAY 12

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, MAY 13

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, MAY 15

10:00 am Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

~SUNDAY, MAY 16~

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



MONDAY, MAY 17

ACTS Articles Due
7:00 pm Council Meeting

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19

6:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, MAY 20

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

SATURDAY, MAY 22

9:30 am Deborah Circle

~SUNDAY, MAY 23~

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



TUESDAY, MAY 25

7:00 pm Phoebe Circle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26

7:00 pm New Bible Study Online

THURSDAY, MAY 27

1:30 pm Adult Study via Zoom

~SUNDAY, MAY 30~

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



Worship Servants



~May 2021~

Date	Time	Ushers	Camera Tech	Video Tech
May 2	8:30		Derek C (Glen T)	Naomi K
10:30 am Outdoor		Dave Sherwin		
May 9	8:30		Derek C	Lorie T
May 16	8:30		Derek C	Kent T
10:30 am Outdoor				
May 23	8:30		Derek C	Shane W
May 30	8:30		Derek C	Andrew R

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

In-Person Worship



Limited in-person, indoor worship has BEGUN! 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.
of the Kingdom of God.
- 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.
- There will be no sharing of peace or shaking of hands.

In-Person Worship



- Offering plate will be in the narthex.
- 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).
- 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

Church Staff



Pastor ~ Glen Thomas
Administrative Assistant ~ Carrie Conley
Bookkeeper ~ Steve Peterson
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 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

~March 2021~



General Fund Activity

Beginning			Transfers	Ending
Balance	Receipts	Payments	In (Out)	Balance
75,989.65	14,510.50	14,573.57		75,926.58

Benevolence Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
1,457.50	2,455.00

Hunger Offerings

Receipts	Dispersed
75.00	160.00

Women of the ELCA

~Bible Study Groups~ Deborah Circle

9:30 am Saturday May 22nd

Study Leader: : Lucy Younie

Hostess: Donna Reinig



Jochebed Circle

10:00 am Saturday May 8th

Study Leader: Kiley Compton

Hostess: Jessica Hollenbeck

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

Phoebe Circle

7:00 pm Tuesday May 25th

Study Leader: Margaret Betten

Hostess: Mary Peters

Service Project ~ Cereal

~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!

