



224 Lovely Street, Avon, CT 06001-4018  
(860) 673-3301 [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org)

### MAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

#### May 7: First Communion Sunday:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary First Communion Service  
10:15 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Forum

#### May 14: Mother's Day:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service  
10:15 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Forum

#### May 21:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service  
10:15 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Forum

#### May 28: Pentecost Sunday

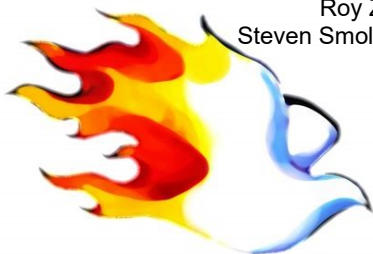
9:00 a.m. Outdoor Worship  
10:15 a.m. Adult Forum

#### COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Jack Pietrick, President	Ellen Ericson
Sheila Jarka, Vice President	Fred Fenn
Meg Kraft, Secretary	Rick Hanson
George Spoering	Kevin Reichler
Pastor Brian Rajcok	George Reider
	Jason Lindquist

#### STAFF:

Brian Rajcok, Pastor  
Sarah Schiener, Director of Music  
Paul Martin, Church Administrator  
Roy Zurell, Sexton  
Steven Smolnik, Publisher



### **A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR**

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia! It is a blessing to celebrate this holy season with you all. It was wonderful to have such a delicious spread for the Palm Sunday breakfast. It was deeply moving to observe Maundy Thursday and Good Friday with you. And it was joyous and exuberant to celebrate Easter Sunday together! Christ is alive; He is risen! Alleluia!

There's something both joyful and mysterious about the season of Easter. One thing I've always wondered is why so many disciples were unable to recognize Jesus at first when He appeared to them. In the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene thinks Jesus is the gardener until He says her name. In Luke, two of Jesus' followers walk with Him on the road to Emmaus and don't realize who He is until hours later "in the breaking of the bread".

Two questions come to my mind. First is a more metaphysical question: what is it about Jesus' resurrected body that makes Him different from before? He still has His scars where the nails pierced Him, so a lot of how He looked must have been the same, right? And secondly, I wonder what this all means for us today. Maybe the early church wanted to emphasize Jesus' disciples not recognizing Him because so often we don't recognize Jesus in the world. Perhaps it's a call to pay attention. When we don't expect to see Jesus, when don't look for Jesus, when don't have eyes to see Jesus—then we don't see Him.

So a good question to ask ourselves is how can we prepare our eyes and our hearts and minds to see Jesus? ...We can come to church and share fellowship with other members of the Body of Christ. We can read the Bible or other spiritual devotions and listen for the Spirit's still small voice. We can walk on a beautiful spring evening and witness the glory of creation. We can sit in silent contemplation and turn our gaze toward God dwelling in us. And if we really challenge ourselves, we can see Jesus in the eyes of others. In the eyes of a child. In the smile of a stranger we pass by on our way out of a restaurant. In the eyes of a homeless man on the side of the street.

Mother Teresa once said, "I see Jesus in every (continued...)"

### ST. MATTHEW MISSION STATEMENT

*St. Matthew Lutheran Church is a worshipping community called to proclaim God's love for all and to grow spiritually together. Challenged by Jesus' example, we strive to connect people of all ages, abilities, and needs, and to nurture them to be disciples of Christ. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to the wider community and welcome our neighbors to a life of worship, preaching, teaching, Christian care, service, and spiritual growth.*

**We Are Here For You** A reminder that your pastor is here for you whenever you have a pastoral need. The pastor is fully vaccinated and is making in-person visits. He can also talk and pray with you over the phone, in a Zoom meeting, outside, or socially distanced indoors at church. Please call the office if you have a pastoral need.

(...continued) human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him." When we truly learn to see Jesus, we are better able to act as His body ourselves, and we make the love of Jesus visible in the world. When we see Jesus in others, like Mother Teresa did and like Jesus calls us to do (Matthew 25) we are training our eyes to a divine way of seeing, and we're making Jesus visible for others to see by the way we live out our faith. And then we can truly recognize: Jesus is everywhere!

So this Easter season, let us pay attention to where we find Jesus in the world. Let Jesus be born in our hearts and let us show the world by our lives that He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Blessings, Pastor Brian



### **FIRST COMMUNION SUNDAY**

Fifth grade students will celebrate their First Communion on Sunday May 7th at 9:00 a.m. service. Join us as we celebrate with them and their families!



### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday School will meet May 7, 14, and 21 and our final day will be May 21st when we'll have an end of the year party! Thank you to teachers Margaret Byrne, Kelly O'Connell, Beth Wilson, Lanelle Gallo, and Steve Wilson for a great year!



### **CONFIRMATION**

Confirmation meets Sundays at 5:00 p.m. or Mondays at 7:00 p.m. There are three more weeks left of the Confirmation year:

- ◆ May 7 & 8: History of the Reformation
- ◆ May 14 & 15: Small Catechism: The Sacraments
- ◆ May 21 & 22: Bible Bowl end-of-year party

Confirmation Sunday will be June 4th this year. Rehearsal will be Saturday June 3rd at 10:00 a.m.

### **SUMMER OUTDOOR WORSHIP**

During the summer months we plan to have worship outdoors once each month. The first of these Sundays will be on Pentecost Sunday May 28th at 9:00 a.m. We hope you'll join us for this special service!

#### **Summer Outdoor Worship Schedule:**

- May 28 • June 18 • July 2 • August 6 • September 3

### **THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Bible study will meet the first and third Thursdays of May: May 4th and 18th at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room. All are welcome!



### **CENTERING PRAYER**

Centering Prayer group continues to meet every Thursday at 2:00 p.m. on zoom. We are currently reading [Forty Days to a Closer Walk with God: The Practice of Centering Prayer](#) by Rev. J. David Muyskens. All are welcome to

try this wonderful contemplative practice!

**WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE**

Worship & Music Committee will be meeting next on Tuesday May 23rd at 6:00PM. Anyone who is interested in helping plan worship is invited to attend! Contact Dan Tuve or Pastor Brian if you are interested in providing input or have ideas about worship at St. Matthew.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST**

St. Matthew's men's breakfast will meet again on Saturday at 8:30 a.m. May 20th. Men of all ages are welcome!

**OFFICE UPDATES**

As you may have seen, the offering envelopes have finally arrived! If you requested a box for 2023, you may pick them up on Sunday after worship, or during office hours. We do have some extra unassigned boxes so please email the office if you didn't have a chance to request them before the year.

Also, I want to say thank you to everyone who made my first Lent & Holy Week season a success! From the confirmation parents and students who organized our Worship Service Leaders to the volunteers of the Palm Sunday breakfast and anyone else who may have helped me navigate the office through one of the busiest times of the year!

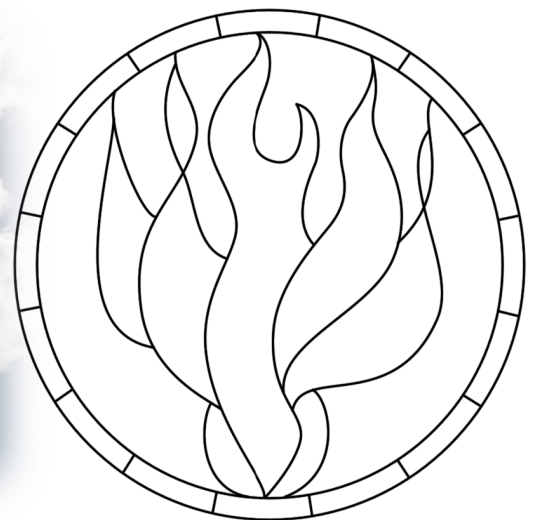
**ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC: Sunday, June 11, Following a SPECIAL 10:30 a.m. Worship Service**

The picnic will be outside, weather permitting, and moved inside if it is raining. The menu will include traditional picnic foods - burgers, hot dogs, salads, desserts and beverages. There will be games and activities for all. Ask a friend to come along - all are welcome!

Sign-up sheets will be available on the bulletin board outside the office, or in the weekly Constant Contact email. If you have any questions about volunteering, or would like to RSVP you and your party, you can always [email the office](#) as well!

**APRIL 2023 CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

- ⇒ Work has begun to develop a job description and post a job opening for a new **Christian Education director**. The hope is to have someone in place by fall.
- ⇒ The **Palm Sunday breakfast** was a huge success with many volunteers helping out and over 75 people attending.
- ⇒ **Pastor Brian shared his plans for continuing education and vacation time this summer**. Additionally he will take some time for reflection as he assumes his new role as the lead pastor.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
 <h1 style="margin: 0;">May 2023</h1>						
	1 7:00 Confirmation	2	3 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	4 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	5	6 8:30 Spring Property Clean-Up
<b>7 First Communion Sunday</b> 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Grief Support Group 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	8 <b>Office Closed</b> 7:00 Confirmation 7:00 Finance Committee	9 7:00 Avon Land Trust 7:00 Church Council	10 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	11 2:00 Centering Prayer	12	13
<b>14 Mother's Day</b> 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Grief Support Group 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	15 7:00 Confirmation	16	17 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	18 <b>VOICE DEADLINE</b> 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	19	20 8:30 Men's Breakfast
21 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Grief Support Group 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	22 7:00 Confirmation	23	24 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	25 2:00 Centering Prayer	26	27
<b>28 Pentecost Sunday</b> 9:00 Outdoor Worship 10:15 Grief Support Group 10:15 Adult Forum 	<b>29 MEMORIAL DAY</b> Office Closed	30	31 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal			

May 2023

SAINT MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH  
224 Lovely Street, Avon, Connecticut 06001-4018

