



THE VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, AVON, CT March 2024

"In Christ, we are digging deep, reaching out, changing lives."



224 Lovely Street, Avon, CT 06001-4018
(860) 673-3301 www.stmatthewavon.org

MARCH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

March 3-17:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
10:20 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Forum

March 7-21:

6:00 p.m. Mid-week Lenten Service

March 24:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service

March 28:

7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service

March 29:

7:00 p.m. Good Friday Service

March 31:

9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Easter Sunday Service

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Meg Kraft, President	Greg Boyd
Rick Hanson, Vice President	Erica Connors
Ellen Ericson, Secretary	Fred Fenn
Pastor Brian Rajcok	Perry Hasson
	George Reider
	Ben Wright

STAFF:

Brian Rajcok, Pastor
Sarah Schiener-Redenz, Director of Music
Ryan Heckman, Director of Christian Ed.
Paul Martin, Church Administrator
Roy Zurell, Sexton
Steven Smolnik, Publisher



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.

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Lent is going well here at St. Matthew. Ash Wednesday was a deeply moving day. It is always humbling to mark ashes on the foreheads of people, from children a few years old to those nearing the end of life. We are all dust and to dust we shall return. Lent is a solemn season and it is good to dwell with the solemnity of death and contemplate the inevitability of our mortality, as well as the mystery and promise of what lies beyond death. Recognizing death as the reality it is helps prepare us for the cosmic event of Christ's victory over death that's on the other side of Good Friday.

This Lent we have been enjoying Holden Evening Prayer on Thursday midweek services. During these services we have been exploring the covenants God made in the Old Testament. On our first Thursday evening we began with the covenant God made with Noah and explored God's promise to never again destroy the world, to never start from scratch again but rather to work with broken humanity to heal, redeem, and save the world. The second week we explored the covenant made with Abraham and Sarah, the promises God made to make of them a great nation, to give them offspring, land, renown, and that through their offspring all the world would be blessed. In the coming weeks of Lent we'll explore the Ten Commandments and the covenant God made with Moses and the people of Israel at Mount Siani. During the fourth week we'll explore God's covenant with King David. And in the final midweek Lenten service we'll read about God's promise to the prophet Jeremiah that God will give the people a new covenant and new hearts. We hope you'll join us to learn about God's promises throughout history, and hear God's promise of grace and love for you in the midst of it all.

Blessings to each of you this Lent. May God bless your spiritual journey and enliven with God's great and glorious promises!

Blessings,
Pastor Brian



STEWARDSHIP

Thank you to all who have turned in an estimate of giving card for 2024. If you haven't yet it's not too late, we would very much appreciate anyone who can help us meet the 2024 budget.

Also, the stewardship team would like to invite you to consider remembering St. Matthew in your will. Tithing 10% of your will to the church is a wonderful way you can support the ministry of our congregation after you have transitioned into eternal life. Please consider making such a gift to St. Matthew in your will. Thank you for your support and generosity to Christ's church.

ADULT FORUM

Adult Forum meets 10:20-11:20 a.m. on Sunday mornings after worship. Grab some coffee and refreshments and join us for forum. Here's a look at what's coming up in March:

- ✂ March 3: Thrivent presentation by Kent Tedford
- ✂ March 10: Music of Lent presentation by Sarah Schiener-Redenz
- ✂ March 17: From the Upper Room to Gethsemane with St. Mark by Pastor Carter
- ✂ March 24: Palm Sunday Potluck Breakfast

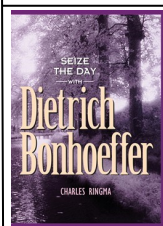


BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study will meet at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room on the first and third Thursdays of the month: March 7th and March 21st. All are welcome!

CENTERING PRAYER

Centering Prayer group meets on Zoom, Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. Join us for a time of silent contemplative prayer followed by a time of *lectio divina* and conversation. All are welcome!



MEN'S GROUP

March men's breakfast will be the third Saturday of the month, March 16th at 8:30 a.m. We'll continue our discussion of [Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#), a 365 daily devotional with excerpts from Bonhoeffer's writings.

RSVP by Thursday March 14th so we know how many to prepare for. See you there!

FEBRUARY COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- * The Church council welcomed 4 new members at the latest meeting: Greg Boyd, Erica Connors, Perry Hasson and Ben Wright.
- * New Church council officers were elected:
 - Meg Kraft, president
 - Rick Hanson, vice-president
 - Ellen Ericson, secretary
 - Dawne Ware, treasurer
 - Debbie Steinberg, assistant treasurer
- * Final work on the Uplift the Parsonage has been completed. Continued financial support is encouraged because we would like lower the outstanding balance and minimize the amount we need to borrow from Endowment.
- * Lent and Holy Week plans are finalized. Look for ongoing communication about upcoming opportunities.

PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST

St. Matthew's Annual Palm Sunday Breakfast is on March 24th after worship. This year the breakfast is a potluck with a free will offering to benefit all the youth programs at St. Matthew.

RSVP and sign up to contribute a dish to the potluck in the Gathering Space!



LENTEN EDUCATION SERIES - "LENTEN LITURGICAL JOURNEY"

Lent is a liturgical passage packed with symbolism, meaning and tradition. This year St. Matthew will be exploring some of this symbolism, meaning and tradition by examining our Lutheran patterns for worship called "liturgy." We will glimpse how God is at work in each element of our worship services and we'll come away having a deeper understanding of this question: "Why do we do the things we do on Sunday mornings?" This education series will take place after each midweek Lenten service (Feb 22, Feb 29, March 7, March 14, March 21).

LENT MIDWEEK WORSHIP & EDUCATION HOUR

We will continue to have our midweek Lenten services in March. We'll continue worshipping with Holden Evening Prayer at 6:00 p.m., followed by an education hour beginning at 6:45 p.m. led by Director of Christian Education Ryan Heckman.

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| <p>⇒ Thursday March 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Worship 6:00 p.m. – Holden Evening Prayer ◆ Education 6:45 p.m. – Lenten Liturgical Journey |
| <p>⇒ Thursday March 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Worship 6:00 p.m. – Holden Evening Prayer ◆ Education 6:45 p.m. – Lenten Liturgical Journey |
| <p>⇒ Thursday March 21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Worship 6:00 p.m. – Holden Evening Prayer ◆ Education 6:45 p.m. – Lenten Liturgical Journey |



ST MATTHEW COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT

St. Matthew Lutheran Church's Annual Easter Egg Hunt is on Saturday March 23 at 10:00 a.m.! The Easter Egg Hunt is open to the whole Farmington Valley community and all children are invited to participate along with their friends and family whether you are a member at St. Matthew or not!

If you are interested in helping with this year's Easter Egg Hunt, check out the sign-up forms in the Gathering Space at church. The St. Matthew Confirmation Class is proud to be the host for this year's event and they would love to see you there as a helper or as a participant.



SAVE THE DATE! Music at Greenwood: Saturday, March 9th, 4:00 p.m.

The brilliant pianist Paul Bisaccia will open the 2024 season of St. Matthew's revitalized concert series with a performance in the sanctuary on Saturday, March 9th, at 4:00 p.m. As a special homage to all of his "great great musical grandfathers," Paul will play music by Beethoven, Haydn, Czerny, and Liszt, with some Gershwin for added fun. After the one-hour program, please stay for a reception of light appetizers. An offering will be received at the door (suggested donation: \$10 per person). Please join us for this exciting occasion, and invite your friends! All are welcome.



EASTER CHOIR: Help Us Raise a Joyful Noise!

The St. Matthew Choir needs your help to sing inspiring anthems this Easter! During Lent, our rehearsals occur on Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. or immediately after each midweek Lenten service. If you would like to sing, please let Sarah know of your interest and keep an eye out for additional information as Easter draws nearer. We hope you will join us!



MESSAGE FROM JAN PECKHAM

One of our homebound members, Jan Peckham, would like to extend her thanks to all of the confirmation students and SMLC members who created such lovely cards during the Valentine's Day Intergenerational Event. Jan says she misses her St. Matthew family very much and is hoping to come during one of the Easter services this year!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
						1	2
3 New Member Sunday 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:20 Sunday School & Adult Forum	4	5 10:00 A.A.	6 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting	7 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer 6:00 Mid-week Lenten Service 6:45 Lenten Education 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	8	9 4:00 Music at Greenwood	
10 Daylight Saving Time starts 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:20 Sunday School & Adult Forum	11	12 10:00 A.A. 7:00 Avon Land Trust Meeting 7:00 Finance Committee	13 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting	14 VOICE Deadline 2:00 Centering Prayer 6:00 Mid-week Lenten Service 6:45 Lenten Education 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	15	16 8:30 Men's Breakfast	
17 Saint Patrick's Day 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:20 Sunday School & Adult Forum	18	19 10:00 A.A. 7:00 Church Council	20 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting	21 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer 6:00 Mid-week Lenten Service 6:45 Lenten Education 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	22 6:30 Divorce Support Group	23 10:00 Easter Egg Hunt	
24 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:30 Potluck Palm Sunday Breakfast	25	26 10:00 A.A.	27 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting	28 2:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	29 7:00 Good Friday Service	30	
31 9:00 Easter Sunday Service 11:00 Easter Sunday Service							

March 2024

Non-Profit Organization

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





**2024
HOLY WEEK
SCHEDULE**

ALL ARE WELCOME

MAUNDY THURSDAY

7:00 P.M.

GOOD FRIDAY

7:00 P.M.

EASTER SUNDAY

9:00 A.M. & 11:00 A.M.

H E I S R I S E N

224 LOVELY ST., AVON - 860.673.3301

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