

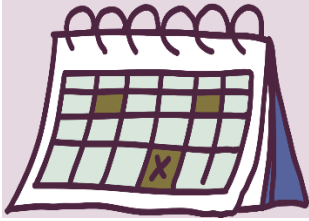


SMLC VOICE NEWSLETTER

Rally Day 2025



SMLC CALENDAR



REGULAR OCCURANCES

Sanctuary Worship (9am)

- Every Sunday

Sunday School (10:20am)

- Every Sunday
- *Beginning Sept. 21*

Adult Forum (10:20am)

- Every Sunday
- *Beginning Sept. 21*

Confirmation Class (10:30am)

- Every Sunday
- *Beginning Sept. 21*

Youth Group (4pm)

- 2nd & 4th Sunday

Choir Rehearsal (2pm)

- Every Tuesday

Bible Study (10am)

- 1st & 3rd Thursday
- *Beginning Sept. 18*

Centering Prayer (2pm)

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Monday, Sept. 1

- Labor Day

Sunday, Sept. 7

- Confirmation & Sunday School Registration Deadline
- Seasons of Giving kicks off drive for "Fall Harvest" (More info to come)

Tuesday, Sept. 9

- 12:30 - 2pm: First Women's Fellowship of the Program Year

Sunday, Sept. 14

- Rally Day Celebration

Tuesday, Sept. 16

- 2pm: First Choir Rehearsal of the Program Year

Thursday, Sept. 18

- 8am: First Bible Study of the Program Year

Saturday, Sept. 20

- 8:30am: First Men's Breakfast of the Program Year

Sunday, Sept. 21

- St. Matthew Day
- 10:20am - Pastor Brian's 10th Ordination Anniversary Coffee Hour
- 10:20am: Start of Sunday School, Confirmation, and Adult Forum

- Every Thursday
- [\(Zoom link to join\)](#)

Women's Fellowship (12:30 - 2pm)

- 2nd Tuesday
- *Beginning Sept. 9*

Men's Breakfast (8:30am)

- 3rd Saturday
- *Beginning Sept. 20*

OCTOBER

Sunday, Oct. 5

- 11:30am: Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, Oct. 12

- 4pm: Music at Greenwood

Friday - Sunday, Oct. 17 - 19

- High School Youth Trip to Calumet

Friday, Oct. 24

- 6pm: Trunk or Treat

Saturday, Oct. 25

- Trunk or Treat (*Rain Date*)

Sunday, Oct. 26

- Reformation & Stewardship Sunday

Thursday, Oct. 30

- 6pm: Harvest Dinner

NOVEMBER

Wednesday - Saturday, Nov. 5 - 8

- Christmas Cottage

Friday & Saturday, Nov. 14 & 15

- SMLC Tag Sale

Sunday, Nov. 30

- First Sunday in Advent

LOOKING BACK

Recapping the Summer at St. Matthew

SYNOD ASSEMBLY RECAP

In May, nine members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church attended the annual New England Synod Assembly. All 160 or so congregations in the New England Synod nominate members to assemble to be voting members trusted with making decisions on behalf of the New England Synod. This year's assembly was a special one because it was the first assembly presided over by our new bishop, The Rev. Nathan Piphio. At this assembly, voting members were asked to hear reports from various Synodical ministries and to deliberate on a three major things:

- A memorial to be sent to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to ask the ELCA to advocate to end Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands and to ask the United Nations to recognize Palestine as an official state.
- A memorial to allow the ELCA to participate in national legal challenges. This is the memorial that has allowed the New England Synod to join a lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security, suing for illegal entry into religious spaces as part of ICE raids.
- Approve the New England Synod's annual budget.
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SANCTUARY REFRESH COMMITTEE FORMED

During St. Matthew's annual meeting in January 2025, there was a brief discussion about our sanctuary beginning to show signs of its age. Since the 1960s, the sanctuary at St. Matthew has only had minor repairs (electrical, sound, cooling) in addition to the installation of the Cassavant organ. In February 2025, a representative committee was formed to begin discussing a refresh of the sanctuary. The committee was formed with representatives from various standing committees including: Property Committee, Altar Guild, Live Stream Team, Finance Committee and Stewardship Committee.

This committee has been meeting throughout the summer to discuss needs and to obtain quotes in order to form a list of projects along with their associated costs.

There will be several opportunities in the coming months for all members at St. Matthew to learn more about the work of this committee. Please keep an eye on the weekly Constant Contact eNewsletter as well as future VOICE newsletters to learn when you can engage in this process.

REV. RYAN DOES AI BOOTCAMP

Artificial Intelligence has been in the news frequently over the last two years. It can be a frightening technology and at the same time, it is an exciting technological step forward. Rev Ryan has been a part of an “AI Bootcamp” class this summer to learn how artificial intelligence might be responsibly used to help do ministry. The Rev. Joe McGary has been teaching this course on behalf of the New England Synod.

Responsible uses for AI in ministry might include:

- Help in brainstorming ideas for teaching and preaching
- Help in designing basic posters, ads, etc.
- Basic editing help with writing
- Helping with curriculums, order and planning

Rev. Ryan’s hope in taking this class is that it helps him move forward boldly in ministry alongside technology while doing so safely and responsibly.

REV. RYAN AT CAMP CALUMET



Time away from home, school, computers and TVs may not be a teenager’s first thought of fun... however our Confirmation kids ranked Confirmation Camp as their number one most favorite thing they did during Confirmation!

Each year, St. Matthew’s confirmation class heads up to Lake Ossipee in Freedom, NH for a weekend of learning about Jesus, exploring the wilderness, playing games, meeting other young Lutherans and of course some shenanigans. It’s a wonderful time for our church’s young people to be with their peers exploring their faith as kids do – with lots of questions both serious and silly.

Next year, we’ll be taking the High Schoolers up to Calumet for a fall retreat in October and then the Confirmation Class will go to Calumet in the Spring on March 6-8, 2026. If you have a confirmation student, mark your calendars now – remember, it was the kids most favorite part of Confirmation!! You won’t want to miss it.

ELCA CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Every three years the ELCA has a churchwide assembly where elected members from each of the 65 regional synods come together to be voting members on various decisions the ELCA must make as a membership organization. The New England Synod's delegation was in attendance this year in Phoenix, Arizona.

This year was a particularly important year for Churchwide as the ELCA was electing a new Presiding Bishop. Every six years our Presiding Bishop is up for election. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is retiring after her term (she has served two terms) so there was a wide-open ecclesial ballot without the incumbent. After five rounds of voting (pretty quick considering there were 77 nominated candidates!), the Presiding Bishop-elect is The Rev. Yehiel (Yeh-ee-yell) Curry, current bishop of the Metro Chicago Synod, who received 562 votes of 799 cast (70%). Presiding Bishop-elect Curry will begin as Presiding Bishop this September.

SEASONS OF GIVING

Wrapping Up Back-to-School Supplies Drive



The Outreach Ministry thanks you for your generous donations of school supplies. Over 800 individual packages of pencils, pens, crayons, notebooks, backpacks and the like were distributed to the 3 organizations we targeted: Gifts of Love, The Village for Families and Children, and Grace Lutheran Church. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

The organizations will still be accepting donations of supplies or financial support. Monetary donations can be made directly to the organization. Use the following link for donations to The Village for Families and Children. <https://thevillage.org/SMLC>

For donations to Gifts of Love, use the following link and specify Back to School Backpack with SMLC as the honory. <https://giftsoflovet.org/donation/>

MUSIC AT GREENWOOD

This summer, we had a delightful time hearing 7 performances by our members and friends. Thanks to your generosity, we raised over \$300 to donate to the Canton Food Bank!

MINISTRY MINUTE

An update from some of our many ministries

Evangelism Committee

The Evangelism Committee is active again and now includes the Marketing and Communications Committee. Members are Greg Boyd, Ellen Ericson, Rick Hanson, Missy Lindquist, Elaine Menezes and Kelly O'Connell. The group is beginning work on creating a picture directory, updating our name tag system and will begin focusing on member recruitment and retention. If you have an interest in helping with these efforts, please contact Rick Hanson.

Outreach Ministry

The Outreach Ministry is continuing its Seasons of Giving initiative by supporting Hands of Grace in New Hartford. The theme will be "Fall Harvest", and we're looking to collect all kinds of non-perishable food items to aid those that need a bit of extra help during the holidays.

There will be more details and advertising materials available in the weeks to come. Keep an eye on our weekly emails and displays in the Gathering Space for more information!

Adult Forum

Our first Adult Forum of the program will take place following worship service on **Sunday, September 21st!** Join us for another season of discussion, education, and fellowship.

Women's Fellowship



Our first women's gathering on **Tuesday, September 9th (12:30 - 2pm)**, will be focused on some of the following questions:

- Why read the Bible outside of Sunday worship?
- Is there a favorite book or verse you have from the Bible?
- When did you learn to read/study the Bible?
- What or who influenced your study?
- How has your reading/understanding of the Bible changed over the years?

The sharing and discussion will be facilitated by Sandy Betsch.

Hope to see many women there on September 9th!

Men's Ministry

The men's ministry meets for breakfast and devotionals on the third Saturday of the month September through June. This year's readings are from Awakened: A 52-Week Progressive Christian Devotional. Each month we also collect a free-will offering to be put towards helping one of our younger members attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering coming up in 2027. All men are welcome!

Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer group continues to meet **on Zoom on Thursdays at 2:00 p.m.** even throughout the summer. This meeting includes 20 minutes time of silent contemplative prayer, followed by the practice of lectio divina with either a passage from scripture or spiritual devotional text. All are welcome to join at any time. Simply click the link in our weekly email blast to join!

Bible Study

St. Matthew's Bible Study group will begin again at **10am on Thursday, September 18th** and continue meeting every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. If you'd like to take part in next year's study drop in on any meeting you are free! All are welcome.

Healing Prayer

On the first Sunday of each month, healing prayer ministers will welcome anyone to request prayer during worship. During the distribution of Holy Communion, healing prayer ministers will be present at the back of the sanctuary to pray for you. We invite you to approach one of them, share your prayer request, and join together in prayer.

St. Matthew Choir



The St. Matthew Choir will soon begin meeting again! Our first rehearsal will be **Tuesday, September 16th, at 2:00 p.m.** If you have not sung with the choir before, this is a perfect time to give it a try! We hope to see you there!

LOOKING AHEAD

Previewing the next few months at SMLC

RALLY DAY

Sunday, Sept. 14

Join us on Sunday, Sept. 14th for the kick-off to the program year! There will be plenty of food, fellowship, and fun to go around, including a bounce house & slide for the kids! This event is our annual celebration that marks the beginning of Sunday School, Confirmation, Adult Forum, and all of the other programs that take place from Fall to Spring at St. Matthew.

PASTOR BRIAN'S 10 YEAR ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY

Sunday, Sept. 21, Following Worship

Pastor Brian will be celebrating 10 years of ordained ministry on September 19th! This is a major milestone and St. Matthew will be celebrating him and his ministry on Sunday, September 21st after worship!

The whole congregation is invited to a special coffee hour after worship on September 21st to mark PB's 10 years of ministry. There will be a basket for cards at this celebration if you'd like to honor Pastor Brian with a card.

We are so blessed with Pastor Brian's ministry here at St. Matthew and give thanks to God for his call to ministry 10 years ago!

YOUTH GROUP: FALL RETREAT @ CAMP CALUMET

October 17 - 19

Youth Group will have it's first meeting in the Youth Loft on September 28th, and we'll be planning our High School Youth Retreat taking place at Camp Calumet on **October 17-19, 2025!**

Camp Calumet retreats are always highly rated by our confirmation students who go annually and so we're going back for Youth Group!

If you have a high schooler who would like to be a part of Youth Group, we meet on the second and fourth Sundays at 4:00pm in the Youth Loft. Contact Rev Ryan with any questions and look for Calumet Retreat registrations coming soon!

ONLINE DIRECTORY

The Evangelism Committee is planning on producing a member picture directory. There will be an opportunity this fall for families and individuals to have their photo taken by our volunteers following Sunday worship. Alternatively, photos can be emailed to the office so they can be uploaded into the directory. Directories will be distributed in print format to those that express interest. Families and individuals have the option to opt-in or out of the directory.

Please contact Rick Hanson or the office for details.

MUSIC AT GREENWOOD

Fall Event

Our next event, with On the Trail Bluegrass Band, is tentatively scheduled for **Sunday, October 12th, at 4:00 p.m.** Keep an eye out for updates in the coming weeks!

TAG SALE TO BENEFIT FOOD INSECURE

We are again holding a tag sale on Friday, November 14 from 5pm - 7pm and Saturday, November 15 from 9am - 1pm. Mark your calendars and start cleaning out those items. We will need help Wednesday evening, Nov.12 and Thursday Nov. 13. Please contact Ellen Ericson if you are able to help.