



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

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sept 3: Outdoor Worship:

9:00 a.m. Outdoor Communion Service

Sept 10

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Confirmation Service

Sept 17:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Confirmation Service
10:30 a.m. Sunday School Rally Day!

Sept 24:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Confirmation Service
10:30 a.m. Sunday School & 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



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

When I was called as lead pastor of St. Matthew one of the agreements discussed was to have three weeks extra off to provide a break between my associate pastor and lead pastor roles. Rather than doing that when I was called in March, which was the middle of Lent, we decided to postpone it to the summer. Thus, I recently enjoyed some extended time off and had the privilege of travelling to Europe for three weeks this summer!

My vacation actually began in Indiana where I presided over a friend's wedding and was able to reconnect with old college friends. From there I flew across the Atlantic to the Cortona Conference in Siena, Italy. The conference subject was the relationship between science and spirituality. Participants came from all over the world, and I was one of several students and post-docs who were invited with scholarships to attend for free! The experience was part academic conference and part spiritual retreat. We stayed in a medieval monastery which had been converted into a hotel. The sacred aura of the monastery still lingers there. Our conference was small enough (around 50 people) that I pretty much had the chance to get to know everybody. Our speakers presented on topics like astronomy, quantum mechanics, neuroscience, ecology, and the study of consciousness. Spirituality was openly discussed and we had many exciting conversations. Every morning yoga classes and tai chi classes were held before breakfast, and after breakfast we heard from the lecturers. During the afternoons there were various workshops, which included activities like art, music, and holotropic breathwork. We also had a tour of Siena one day, and I joined friends on a more informal tour of the city one night as well. I made many wonderful connections at Cortona and am happy to share more about my experience with anyone who asks!

After the conference I toured Florence and Assisi. I particularly enjoyed walking the streets Saint Francis and Saint Clare once walked and seeing their churches and burial places. After Italy, I travelled to Malta where I swam in the Mediterranean and took a boat tour to some of Malta's islands. The next country on my journey was Sweden. I stayed in Stockholm and spent a weekend with two friends I went to seminary with—one a pastor from Sweden and the other a professor from Norway, both of whom did a year exchange at Luther Seminary in Minnesota. We toured the palace, explored the Old City, and went to the Viking Museum. After Sweden, my final stop was England. I spent two nights in Essex with a friend I first met when I studied abroad in Cambridge during undergrad. I also went to (continued...)

(...continued) London and toured the British Museum. My last night in Europe I stayed with a friend I grew up with in Bethlehem, who now lives in London with his wife and two children. The following day I flew back to the USA and had an extra week off to relax and debrief.

Thank you for allowing this time of travel and refreshment. God was present in so many ways during my journey: in the beautiful landscapes of Tuscany, in the holy streets of Assisi, in the gorgeous sunsets of Malta, in the time spent with old friends in Sweden and England, and in all the new friends I met along the way. I am grateful for the opportunity to travel this summer and also for the joy of returning home after time away.

As we begin the new program year, I look forward to seeing how these experiences will contribute to my ministry at St. Matthew. I look forward to sharing more of what I learned at the conference and during my travels. I look forward to exploring all the ways God was present in your lives this summer. And I look forward to continuing to grow together as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Blessings & Peace,

Pastor Brian



SUNDAY SCHOOL: RALLY DAY CELEBRATION!

The Sunday School year is about to begin! We're excited to celebrate the beginning of Sunday School with an outdoor party on September 17th. Sunday Schoolers will meet their teachers, play games, enjoy snacks, and get to jump in a giant bouncy house! Join us for church at 9:00 a.m. and Rally Day at 10:00 a.m. — see you there!

CONFIRMATION

The Confirmation year begins in late September, class time TBD. Our first meeting of the year will be for parents and students for our orientation. If you are interested in having your child join confirmation class please contact Pastor Brian or the church office.

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study will resume meetings on Thursday September 21st at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room. After that we'll continue to meet every first and third Thursday at 10:00 a.m. Newcomers are always welcome!



MEN'S GROUP

Men's group will meet for breakfast on Saturday September 16th at 8:30 a.m.

Men's group will also be going on a retreat at [Huntersfield Christian Training Center](#) in Prattsville, NY September 29—October 1, 2023.

CENTERING PRAYER

Centering Prayer group will resume our meetings this month. Join us Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom. We'll be picking a new book to read together so it is the perfect time to join us! All are welcome!



SAVE THE DATE: OKTOBERTFEST, SATURDAY, OCT. 14TH

St. Matthew will be holding an Oktoberfest dinner on Saturday, October 14th in the Hall of the Evangelists with authentic German food and beverages. Save the date now and look in the weekly email and bulletin announcements for more information to come!





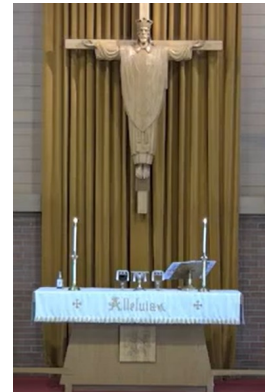
The St. Matthew Choir has begun meeting every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. We are excited to sing together again and hope to welcome new voices to the choir as well. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join us! Please contact Sarah Schiener, or the office, if you're interested.

ST. MATTHEW ALTAR GUILD: CALL FOR NEW MEMBERS

St. Matthew's Altar Guild is looking for new members. Joining the Altar Guild is a way to support the care of the altar. You will learn about the details of how and why the altar is set. There is a team of two that sets the altar each week.

The group meets every other month. At meetings we review our current practice on setting up the altar. We also discuss any changes.

If you would like to hear more, please join us on Saturday, September 9th at 10:00 a.m. in the Gathering Space. Light refreshments will be provided. Please contact Deb Brodeur if you would like to join or have questions. Thanks!



LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE TO MAUI WILDFIRES

Exacerbated by strong winds, wildfires on Maui have claimed dozens of lives and have destroyed homes, businesses and lines of communication. Thousands of people are under evacuation orders, some moving to other Hawaiian islands. Wildfires have also affected the Big Island of Hawaii, and the islands remain vulnerable to more fires this season.

Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the Pacifica Synod and other partners to assess the needs of people impacted by the wildfires. We will work with them to provide for immediate needs and recovery amid the widespread destruction. Lutheran Disaster Response is committed to accompanying recovering communities in the years ahead.

Please use the link to <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/US-Wildfires> if you wish to make a donation. You may also send a check to the church, or place one in the collection plate on Sunday, with the words "U.S. Wildfires" written on the memo line.



FALL COFFEE HOUR

Thanks to everyone who has faithfully and generously baked for our Sunday Coffee Hour. That continues to be an important ministry in our church.

In light of that, we are now heading into September and will need two people to sign up for each Sunday throughout the fall. Paul will put a new sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for September, so be sure to watch for that and sign up whenever you can help. Thank you to all!

- ESPRESSO
- PICCOLO
- CAPPUCCINO
- LATTE
- MOCHA
- AMERICANO
- FILTER
- TEA

SMLC FANTASY FOOTBALL

St. Matthew's fantasy football league returns for another year! The draft is currently set for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 6th (subject to change) which is one day before the regular season kicks off. If you wish to compete against Pastor Brian, Paul, and other members of the congregation, please use the link below. There is room for 12 teams to join the fun. [Click this link to join the fun!](#)



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.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <h1 style="margin: 0;">September 2023</h1>					1	2 10:00 Kurt Saenger-Heyl Ordination at Bethesda Lutheran in New Haven
3 9:00 Outdoor worship with Holy Communion	4 Labor Day	5	6 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Overeater's Anonymous 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	7	8	9 10:00 Altar Guild
10 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	11 7:00 Finance Committee	12 7:00 Avon Land Trust 7:00 Church Council	13 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Overeater's Anonymous 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	14 12:00 VOICE Deadline	15	16 8:30 Men's Breakfast
17 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:30 Rally Day!	18 7:00 Confirmation: first meeting!	19 6:00 Worship & Music Committee	20 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Overeater's Anonymous 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	21 10:00 Bible Study	22	23
24 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:30 Sunday School & Adult Forum	25 7:00 Confirmation	26	27 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Overeater's Anonymous 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	28	29	30
						

September 2023

