



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

APRIL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

April 2 Palm Sunday:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
10:15 a.m. Palm Sunday Breakfast

April 6 Maundy Thursday:

6:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service

April 7 Good Friday:

12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Good Friday Service

April 9 Easter Day:

8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., & 11:00 a.m. Easter Worship

April 16, 23, & 30:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
10:15 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

I am incredibly blessed and honored to officially be called as lead pastor at St. Matthew! Sunday March 19th was a wonderful day and I cannot thank you enough for your love and support and for your confidence and trust. It has been my privilege to serve St. Matthew as associate pastor for three years and as interim senior pastor this past year. I am truly blessed and grateful to you all.

As promised, I wanted to take the opportunity in this newsletter article to elaborate on my discernment process. To begin, when Pastor Julie left in January of 2022, I honestly did not expect to be staying at St. Matthew longer than six months or so. I knew I would be finishing my PhD soon and felt it would be a good time to move on and follow wherever God was calling me next. I imagined it might be in counseling or as a university professor. I wasn't sure, but I trusted God would provide clarity eventually. At first I did not consider a call as St. Matthew's lead pastor an option. As I stated in a newsletter article last summer, associate pastors do not typically move up to the role of senior pastor. I was completely fine with that and open to wherever the Spirit would lead me. I thought of it as entering into a new adventure, trusting God as I embarked into the unknown.

The first thing I needed to discern was whether I would continue in full-time ministry or pursue counseling or teaching full-time while serving as a part-time pastor. During the spring I was too busy to focus much energy on discernment, but during the summer months I prayed hard for God's guidance on which vocation should be my primary one. As I reflected on this decision, it eventually became clear to me that God was calling me to remain in full-time ministry as a parish pastor and to pursue my other callings of counseling and teaching on a part-time basis.

When I reached a sense of clarity regarding which vocation to pursue full-time, the obvious next step was to ask: where? I submitted my Roster Minister Profile and began considering churches in Connecticut, and possibly other New England states, that needed a pastor. Meanwhile, the leadership of St. Matthew approached the Synod to discuss my (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.

(...continued) eligibility to be a candidate at St. Matthew. Bishop Jim Hazelwood and Pastor Sara Anderson were very supportive of my discernment process and did not want to pressure me one way or the other. A major turning point for me was when I interviewed with another congregation. I obviously couldn't help but compare it with St. Matthew. And it was after that interview that I started to feel the Spirit's call to remain at St. Matthew. I spoke with friends and mentors. I had a long phone conversation with Bishop Jim. One particularly helpful conversation was one I had with a friend from seminary who is a pastor in Minnesota. Months earlier I saw that she had accepted a call as senior pastor at the congregation she previously served as associate. So I reached out to her about her own discernment process and learned that it was actually when she interviewed somewhere else that she felt called to stay. This fact was very affirming to me and I shared that that was exactly what had happened to me. The clarity I had been praying for was starting to solidify.

Then, in January of this year I took a discernment retreat. I arrived at a retreat center Tuesday evening and stayed through Thursday morning, spending the entire Wednesday by myself in discernment. I disconnected from electronics and spent most of the day reading, walking, or in centering prayer meditation. And by Thursday morning I knew what God wanted me to do. That very day I called Pastor Sara and told her the conclusion I had come to. And thanks to the work St. Matthew's transition team and call committee had already put in, it all happened very quickly once I came to that sense of clarity. Finally, on Sunday March 19th the congregation voted to extend the call to me and I officially accepted the call to be your lead pastor.

I am deeply appreciative of your patience and support while I came to this decision. Thank you to the Call Committee and chair Stephanie Montminy for all your hard work and efforts. Thank you also to the Transition Team and chair Ben Wright for all their hard work. And thank you to Church Council, past president Jason Lindquist, and current president Jack Pietrick, for your support. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to continue to be your pastor in this new role. I look forward to all the ministry and growth we will do together. I am excited for what the future holds! Thank you for everything.

Blessings, Pastor Brian



HOLY WEEK

- ✠ **Palm Sunday:** 9:00 a.m. Worship, followed by Palm Sunday Breakfast
- ✠ **Maundy Thursday:** 6:00 p.m. Worship
- ✠ **Good Friday:** Noon & 6:00 p.m. Worship
- ✠ **Easter Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. Worship



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will not meet Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday. We will meet April 16, 23, and 30. Hope to see you there!

Also coming up, fifth graders will receive First Communion Sunday on May 7th. Contact Pastor Brian if you wish to have your child participate.

Our Pre-K class uses the Montessori-inspired [Catechesis of the Good Shepherd](#) and the older class uses Dig In's [Life of Jesus](#) curriculum. Children of all ages are welcome!



A THANK YOU NOTE FROM THE STAFF

We are sending this note to express out thanks for your wonderful gift at Christmas. The generosity of your gift was an amazing way to begin the new year as members of the staff at St. Matthew. We are truly blessed to serve our friends and fellow members in Christ.

Thank you, Pastor Brian, Sarah, Paul & Roy



ADULT FORUM

Adult Forum will not be held on Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday. We'll cover some interesting topics in the following weeks:

- ◆ April 2 Palm Sunday Breakfast
- ◆ April 9 Easter: NO FORUM
- ◆ April 16 Lutheran Soteriology: The Theology of Salvation
- ◆ April 23 Pastor Robert Larochelle's book [/ Love the Church, I Hate the Church](#)
- ◆ April 30 Camp Winni: Heidi & Amelia Beaulieu

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation will get back into our weekly routine on April 16 & 17. Sunday classes meet at 5:00 p.m. and Monday classes meet at 7:00 p.m.

There will also be a service event this month, **Mosaic Cleanup Day**, on Saturday morning April 22.

- ◇ April 16 & 17: [Hands on Hartford](#) speaker
- ◇ April 23 & 24: Martin Luther and the Reformation Part 1
- ◇ April 30 & May 1: Martin Luther and the Reformation Part 2

THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY

Due to Holy Week, Thursday morning Bible study will meet the second and fourth Thursdays of April: April 13 and 27. Meetings are at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room. All are welcome!



MEN'S BREAKFAST

St. Matthew's men's breakfast will meet again on Saturday at 8:30 a.m. April 15th. Men of all ages are welcome!



CENTERING PRAYER

Centering Prayer group continues to meet every Thursday at 2:00PM 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!

MARCH 2023 CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- ⇒ The property committee continues its work on updating our emergency systems. This includes new smoke detectors, monitoring service and more!
- ⇒ New brochures are being designed for new members to our community as well as visitors. If you have any recent photos that could be included, please contact Ellen Ericson or Jack Pietrick.
- ⇒ Eleven new members joined the church on March 12. Be sure to introduce yourself when you see them!
- ⇒ Palm Sunday breakfast will be held immediately after the service on April 2. You can sign up on the bulletin board or online.

OFFICE UPDATES

Unfortunately, there is no news on offering envelopes for 2023. I apologize for the extended delay. Hopefully we see them in April.

Also, the office will be closed the week after Easter. Paul will be taking a much-needed post-Lent vacation from April 10th to April 13th and returning to the normal schedule on Monday, April 17th.



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						
2 PALM SUNDAY 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Palm Sunday Breakfast	3	4	5 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting	6 MAUNDY THURSDAY 2:00 Centering Prayer 6:00 Maundy Thursday Worship Service 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	7 GOOD FRIDAY 12:00 Good Friday Service 5:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Good Friday Service	1 10:00 Easter Egg Hunt
9 EASTER DAY ! 8:00 Easter Worship Service 9:30 Easter Worship Service 11:00 Easter Worship Service	10 Office Closed 7:00 Finance Committee	11 Office Closed 7:00 Avon Land Trust 7:00 Church	12 Office Closed 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	13 Office Closed 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	14 Office Closed	15 8:30 Men's Breakfast
16 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	17 7:00 Confirmation	18	19 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	20 2:00 Centering Prayer	21	22
23 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	24 7:00 Confirmation	25	26 9:30 WW Meeting 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	27 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	28	29
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April 2023

SAINT MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH
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