



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

January 1:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Lessons & Carols Service

January 8, 15, 22, & 29:

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service

10:15 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Forum

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

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

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Happy New Year to you all! It was a blessing to celebrate our Lord's birth on Christmas together and to welcome the new year with a service of lessons and carols on January 1st. Thank you for a wonderful 2022 and I look forward to a great start to the new year!

One of my favorite things about the time following Christmas is to watch the daylight come back. December 21st was the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year; and now we can watch the days grow longer. And then January 1st provides a time to make New Year's resolutions, to look at ourselves and consider how we want to live better lives in the coming year. This rhythm of the year is powerful and can reflect our spiritual lives. After the birth of Christ, light shines longer in our hemisphere and we are inspired to make new resolutions about how we can grow more and more into the people God calls us to be. Whether or not we keep our resolutions we know we are loved by God and promised eternal life with Him. But the joy of living in eternity is growing into union with God, something we can mature into a little more each year. Perhaps by taking up a spiritual practice like meditation, or reading our Bible more faithfully, or reciting Psalms and singing a hymn every morning. There are many, many ways we can let our light grow in 2023 and invite the light of Christmas to shine in our lives the whole year round. Blessings to you this New Year and may Christ shine ever brighter in your heart and soul.

Peace,

Pastor Brian



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.

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.



ADULT FORUM

Join us for Adult Forum in January! Our planned conversations include:

- ♦ January 1st - No Adult Forum.
- ♦ January 8th - Sarah Lindquist and Cole Liljedahl sharing about Camp Calumet.
- ♦ January 15th - Special Guest Speaker, Annmarie Boulay, on The Underground - (a Christian organization which brings churches in CT together to fight against the injustices of human trafficking) - hosted by Diane Oates.
- ♦ January 22nd - George and Carol Reider - slides of their trip to Africa - with "safari" refreshments!
- ♦ January 29th - A devotion from Richard Rohr - led by Rev. Dr. Brian Rajcok.

CHOIR UPDATE

The St. Matthew Choir meets to rehearse on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join us. If you want to take part but cannot commit to every rehearsal and service, please reach out to Sarah Schiener to explore the ways in which you can be involved.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

We're looking forward to Sunday School in the new year! Our two older classrooms are combining and our younger class will still be featuring [Catechesis of the Good Shepherd](#). Even if you haven't been to Sunday School yet this school year, January is a great time to start coming. We hope you'll join us!

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is being held Sunday evenings 5:00—6:00 p.m. and Monday evenings 7:00—8:00 p.m.. The same material will be covered during both meeting times. This month's schedule is below:

♦ January 1 & 2	NO CLASS
♦ January 8 & 9	Ruth
♦ January 15 & 16	David
♦ January 22 & 23	Solomon
♦ January 29 & 30	Elijah



CENTERING PRAYER group continues to meet every Wednesday at 5:00PM 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!

THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY

Thursday morning Bible study will meet the first and third Thursday Jan. 5th and Jan. 19th. 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, January 21st at 8:30 a.m. We'll enjoy our meal together and have discussion about potential new books to read for this year. Men of all ages are welcome!

FINANCE UPDATE

Total operating fund surplus of \$32 thousand year to date November is well above budget! As we enter budgeting season we pray that St. Matthew's finances will continue to be strong. Thank you to those who have pledged already and for those who have not yet done so, please help us by sending in your intended 2023 giving.



ANNUAL MEETING

St. Matthew's Annual Meeting will take place after worship on Sunday January 22nd. Our snow date is January 29th. Please come to worship and the meeting that day to vote on the budget, elect new council members, and assess the needs of St. Matthew for the coming year. Thank you for your partnership in our ministry together!

**COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

1. **2023 Budget** - The Stewardship drive is well underway and the finance committee is working on the budget for the upcoming year. Currently, our pledge dollars are 12% less than last year at this time, with 30% fewer members pledging. If you haven't had a chance to submit your pledge yet, you can contact the office or Pastor Brian.
2. **We want your input!** In January we will be distributing an Activities Planning survey to guide our future activity planning. Be on the look out for it and help us as we prioritize our goals.
3. **Nominations are now open for Council positions.** Any nominations can be placed in the box in the narthex or by contacting the office.
4. **Annual meeting.** Our annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2023 following the worship service.

NOMINATIONS FOR CONGREGATION COUNCIL: DUE JANUARY 6

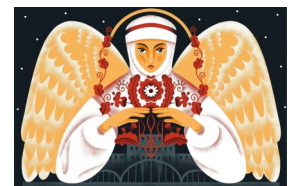
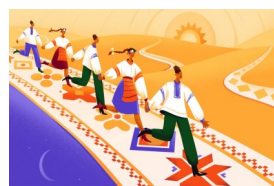
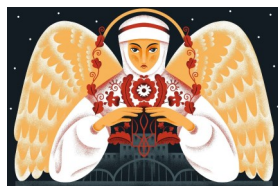
The Congregation Council is accepting nominations for 2023! Council members are elected spiritual leaders of the congregation, who promote the mission of the congregation and provide financial and organizational oversight.

Please give prayerful consideration as to who you think would make a good Congregation Council member and submit their names for consideration. Our Nominating Committee will follow up with all nominees in January to ascertain who is willing to serve. The official vote will occur at our Annual Meeting which is scheduled for Sunday, January 22nd.


Nominations can be submitted in person in the receptacle in the Gathering Space, or remotely by calling the church office at (860) 673-3301 or emailing office@stmatthewavon.org. A special thank you goes to Ben Wright as he completes six years on Council as a member.

Congregation Member responsibilities:

- a. Actively communicate with members of the Congregation to both convey information about the direction of the church and to listen to people's feedback on all aspects of our community life at SMLC.
- b. Regular attendance at monthly Council meetings.
- c. Participate in one annual Saturday morning retreat per year.
- d. To serve as Council Liaison to one standing Church Committee, to be assigned annually.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day 9:00 Lessons & Carols Service	2 Office Closed	3	4 9:30 WW Meeting 5:00 Centering Prayer 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	5 10:00 Bible Study 6:30 Marketing Committee	6	7
8 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	9 Annual Reports Deadline 7:00 Confirmation 7:00 Finance Committee	10 7:00 Avon Land Trust 7:00 Church Council	11 9:30 WW Meeting 5:00 Centering Prayer 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	12	13	14
15 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	16 Office Closed. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. 7:00 Confirmation	17	18 9:30 WW Meeting 5:00 Centering Prayer 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	19 VOICE Deadline 10:00 Bible Study	20	21 8:30 Men's Breakfast
22 SMLC Annual Meeting 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	23 7:00 Confirmation	24	25 9:30 WW Meeting 5:00 Centering Prayer 5:15 WW Meeting 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	26	27	28
29 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:15 Sunday School & Adult Forum 5:00 Confirmation	30 7:00 Confirmation	31				

January 2023