



SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

✠ **Sundays at 9:00 a.m. indoor and livestreamed.** Please preregister to reserve your seat [here](#), or call the office. For the safety of all, wearing of masks is required for the time being.

✠ **Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. outdoors.** Join us for "Prayer & Popsicles", with leaders from our Sunday school and confirmation families. No registration needed and masks are optional. Worship will be moved indoors in case of inclement weather.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Jason Lindquist, President | Kevin Reichler |
| Fred Fenn, Vice President | George Reider |
| Lanelle Gallo, Secretary | George Spoering |
| Debbie Steinberg, Asst. Treasurer | Dan Tuve |
| | Ben Wright |
| Bette McIntire | Pastor Julie Reuning-Scherer |
| Jack Pietrick | |
| Bill Parchen | Pastor Brian Rajcok |

For contact information, our online church directory is available to all members. Please reach out to the office for the code to access the directory.

STAFF:

Julie Reuning-Scherer, Lead Pastor
 Brian Rajcok, Associate Pastor
 Richard Silbereis, Director of Music
 Diane Oates, Church Administrator
 Roy Zurell, Sexton
 Steven Smolnik, Publisher

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

In many ways the past 15 months have been a time of dormancy, a period of spiritual germination in the soil. Surrounded by decaying plant matter, a seed spreads out its roots and grows upward toward the shining rays of sunlight. In a similar way church, and society in general, has spent the past 15 months germinating in the ground awaiting something new. Our religious tradition is filled with themes of rebirth and transformation, of death and resurrection. And we are well poised for a time of rebirth and transformation in our own time. Like any true rebirth experience, the circumstances that led us here are not what we would have chosen. There has been much loss. There has been loneliness and suffering. There has been disease and death. But the months and years ahead offer us a time to spread our roots, emerge through the mud, burst forth into new ground, grow, and bear good fruit.

Jesus often used the metaphor of a seed dying in the earth - dying to be reborn as a plant which bears good fruit. This metaphor speaks to our situation at this moment in history! And so, it is time for us to consider how to spread our roots and how we can bear good fruit in the world. Let this summer be a time of preparing ourselves for harvest, for the good work ahead. For the work of visioning for our future. For the work of discerning our God-given calling and growing in Christian maturity. For the work of loving and serving the world in our own unique way. For the work of digging deep, reaching out, and changing lives.

This summer carry with you the image of a seed growing into a mature plant that bears good fruit. As you emerge from the hidden soil of the pandemic, may God bless you with vision, inspiration, and a newfound energy to manifest God's will and love in the world. As we break ground into the sunlight of new life, let us ponder where we are called as a congregation, as the church universal, and as the whole human family. May the Spirit continue her transformative work in us and may we be ready for whatever adventure God has in store!

Pastor Brian

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.

We Are Here For You A reminder that your pastors are here for you whenever you have a pastoral need. The pastors are fully vaccinated and are making in-person visits. We 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.

REOPENING TASK FORCE UPDATE *The Reopening Task Force is very excited about our recent reopening for in-person worship in the sanctuary. The approach described below, as developed by the Task Force, was approved by Council at their June 8th meeting. The Task Force will continue to present its recommendations to Council as the summer proceeds.*

St. Matthew opened the sanctuary for 9am indoor worship on June 20th, with a celebration following the service. These 9am Sunday services are being livestreamed for those who still prefer a virtual worship option. Since outdoor worship remains a highly safe option, we will continue to have services outdoors via the midweek Wednesday evening services at 7pm.

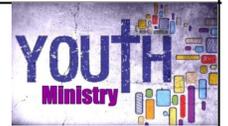
In order to respect the unvaccinated, the most vulnerable, and children in our community, we will continue to require masks indoors for the time being. Masks offer protection, especially for singing indoors. Masks are not required for outdoor worship.

The St. Matthew family has been busily working behind the scenes to make all of this happen and will continue to revise policy and procedure in the coming weeks as appropriate.

We are pleased that we have been able to relax many restrictions, but it's important to continue to be vigilant. Our biggest priority continues to be maintaining a safe environment for all.

Thank you all for your understanding and patience.

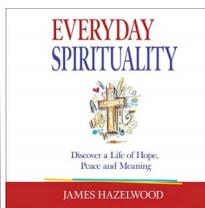
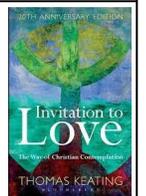
YOUTH GROUP Summer Mission Trip! Youth group will be travelling to North Carolina this summer for a trip of mission and fun. It will be from July 31 – August 7. Let Pastor Brian know ASAP if you are interested!



SUNDAY SCHOOL Sunday School will not be meeting over the summer. But we will be back to in-person classes this fall! Our Pre-K class will be using Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. This curriculum focuses on nourishing the spirituality of the child through a Montessori based approach. Our older classes will use Dig-In, lessons focused on Bible stories and themes. We are always looking for new teachers and helpers, so contact the office if you are interested!

CENTERING PRAYER

Centering prayer group meets every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. and every Thursday at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom. We are currently reading *Invitation to Love* by Thomas Keating. Contact Pastor Brian or the church office and we'll send you the Zoom link and get you a book!

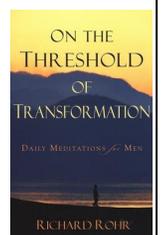


TUESDAYS TOGETHER

Tuesdays Together continues to meet every Tuesday morning 10:00-10:30 a.m. on Zoom. We are currently reading Bishop Hazelwood's book *Everyday Spirituality*. Contact the office or Pastor Brian if you would like a copy. Bishop Hazelwood himself will be joining our Zoom call on July 20th!

MEN'S GROUP

Men's group will be taking a break in July and August, but we are planning to meet in-person again come September, barring a serious rise in covid cases. This year we are reading Richard Rohr's *On the Threshold of Transformation: Daily Meditations for Men*. Copies of this daily mediation book are available for free to anyone who would like one, just come to church and pick up a copy.



BIBLE STUDY Bible Study will be on hiatus for the summer months of July and August, but we will be meeting again in-person come September, barring serious rises in Covid cases.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES!

Congratulations to our high school graduates of 2021! The following young adults of St. Matthew have graduated high school and were honored in worship on June 27th:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| ◆ Drew Abbott | ◆ Will Allen | ◆ Maya Krodel | ◆ Ben Montminy |
| ◆ Maddie Pascavis | ◆ Jimmy Stickles | ◆ Catherine Ware | ◆ Leighton Wittig |

ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Assembly was an inspiration and demonstration that The Church always adapts, as evidenced in the 411 registered attendees, skilled leadership, awesome principal speakers, dedicated support - all on Zoom!
- The changes brought on by the pandemic so far did not paralyze the New England Synod; we will continue to be challenged but are blessed with historic examples and amazing leadership and committed laity.

Thank you to Sandy Betsch, Bill Parchen and Debbie Steinberg who attended this year!

**COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

We are grateful to continue our leadership in how our congregation can best fulfill our mission of *digging deep... reaching out... and changing lives in Christ's name!*

Bob Brown's two sons, Wade and Myles, visited the meeting to talk about their dad's vision of a possible Memorial Garden at St Matthew. We are grateful for their talent and support of St Matthew's mission! In addition, the council discussed other ideas related to the outside space at St. Matthew, including a new playground.

Meanwhile we are excited by our June 20th opening celebration. Please bring your friends, family, or neighbors!

GOOD THINGS:

June was all about reopening!

- ✚ Our garden club did a beautiful job weeding and planting annuals in the Garth, as well as the beds surrounding our church. Thanks, Carol, Paula, Jie Jie and Jean!
- ✚ The remainder of the old playground was dismantled and removed. Thank you to Jack, Roy, David, Carl and Ben.
- ✚ Live streaming equipment was installed and tested in the sanctuary. Thanks to Ben, George, Bob and John.
- ✚ The fellowship committee planned a lovely outdoor reopening celebration. We are grateful for their efforts as well as council support.
- ✚ June marked the 10th month of regular meetings for our Reopening Task Force. We couldn't have gotten to this point as safely without their evaluation, renovation, and innovation. Thank you, RTF!
- ✚ We reopened the sanctuary, started our summer worship schedule on June 20, and celebrated with our high school graduates on the 27th.
- ✚ People have continued their faithful monetary giving, and we continue to receive thank you letters from recipients of our endowment fund awards.

We have so many good things to be grateful for!

God is good.

All the time!

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|-----------------|---|----------------|---|
|  Notes: | | | | <h1>July 2021</h1> | | 1 2:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Reopening Task Force | 2 9:00 Yoga | 3 |
| 4 Independence Day 9:00 Sanctuary Worship with Holy Communion | 5 Independence Day Observed Office closed | 6 10:00 Tuesdays at 10 6:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Finance Committee | 7 7:00 p.m. Outdoor Worship Service with Holy Communion | 8 2:00 Centering Prayer | 9 9:00 Yoga | 10 | | |
| 11 9:00 Sanctuary Worship with Holy Communion | 12 1:00 Staff Meeting | 13 10:00 Tuesdays at 10 6:00 Centering Prayer | 14 7:00 p.m. Outdoor Worship Service with Holy Communion | 15 2:00 Centering Prayer | 16 9:00 Yoga | 17 | | |
| 18 9:00 Sanctuary Worship with Holy Communion | 19 1:00 Staff Meeting | 20 10:00 Tuesdays at 10 with Bishop Hazelwood 6:00 Centering Prayer | 21 7:00 p.m. Outdoor Worship Service with Holy Communion | 22 2:00 Centering Prayer | 23 9:00 Yoga | 24 | | |
| 25 9:00 Sanctuary Worship with Holy Communion | 26 1:00 Staff Meeting | 27 10:00 Tuesdays at 10 6:00 Centering Prayer | 28 7:00 p.m. Outdoor Worship Service with Holy Communion | 29 VOICE DEADLINE (September issue) 2:00 Centering Prayer | 30 9:00 Yoga | 31 Youth Mission Trip | | |

July 2021

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

Non-Profit Organization



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**Operating Income:**

- Offering income was \$32K higher than budget YTD due primarily to prepayments of pledges (note the straightline budget was adjusted in February to account for holdover pledges from 2020).
- The budget included a \$37,500 transfer from Endowment that we have not yet requested.
- Total YTD Operating Income was \$5.4K lower than budget as the higher income partially offset the lower money received from Endowment.

Operating Expenses:

- Total YTD Operating Expenses were \$11.5K lower than budget, with most categories being below budget.
- Compensation expense was higher than budget due to timing as the budget had July as a 3 payroll month vs. April.
- Property was \$4K lower than budget, with various line items better or worse due to the timing of expenses.

Net Operating Fund Activity:

- Net Operating Activity was positive \$1.1K for the month and \$21K YTD vs. the budget of \$14.9K YTD, due to the items noted above. Note that net income would have been \$43.5K higher than budget had we requested and received the funds from Endowment.

Cash and Restricted Cash:

- The Endowment external contributions approved at the annual meeting were distributed in April, with the exception of \$5,000 for Grace Lutheran Church, which will be distributed for a specific project.

Loans:

- The balance of the loan from Endowment is \$12,454.60 at May 31st.
- We are working with People's to submit our application for PPP loan forgiveness and expect the full amount of the loan to be forgiven.

ENDOWMENT FUND REQUESTS The Endowment Fund makes yearly disbursements to outside charities as well as to important internal needs. The Endowment Committee would like to invite the congregation to **submit requests for any outside charities or internal needs for consideration**. The potential disbursements will be considered by the Endowment Committee, voted on by the Church Council, and then approved at the Church's annual meeting. To submit your requests, please send an email to Sheila Jarka at sheilajarka1@comcast.net no later than November 1. *Please include why you believe your suggested charity should be considered, and a web address and contact name for the organization.*



JOIN THE SUMMER YOGA CHALLENGE! Roll out your mat . . . roll away your problems (just for a little bit). Join St. Matthew member and certified yoga instructor Lanelle Gallo in the Summer Yoga Challenge! Meet in the Hall of Evangelists at 9 a.m. on the 5 Fridays in July: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th. Through a rigorous practice targeting your CORE, you will unwind and strengthen your body. Summer is a great time to deepen your practice. Take advantage of the summer to reboot and recharge! Cost: Your commitment to stick to the challenge! Suggested \$5 donation to be given to a local charity. If you are fully vaccinated, it is your choice to unmask while on your mat. The space is well ventilated and there is plenty of space to safely practice.

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INTERNSHIP UPDATE FROM KURT SAENGER-HEYL

Greetings, Siblings in Christ! I am writing to you to give you an update on my seminary journey. For those who do not know me, I attended St. Matthew from July 2017 to July 2019. In August of 2019, I moved to Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa to begin my seminary studies which are preparing me to become a rostered pastor in the ELCA. It has been an incredible place to learn, and I am very thankful for the many opportunities for growth and formation that have been made possible during my studies at Wartburg.

In March of 2020, when the pandemic struck, we moved completely onto Zoom for all our classes and have remained there throughout this entire academic year.

The entire seminary formation process is four years, of which I have now completed two. On August 1st, I will begin the next piece of this formation which is a year-long internship in a church. This is bringing me back to Connecticut as I will be serving in New Haven at Bethesda Lutheran Church across the street from Yale! I am very excited to be coming back to the Northeast! I will be serving fulltime at the church and will not be taking any classes during this time. My supervisor and I will shape my goals, duties, priorities, and responsibilities of the internship during the first few months, and I will be preaching regularly throughout the year. I look forward to being able to see many of you again during this next year while I am back in Connecticut!

At the conclusion of the internship, I will return to Iowa to finish out my final year of classes beginning in September of 2022 and culminating in May of 2023 with graduation. I am incredibly grateful for the generosity and support that you continue to show me throughout this entire formation journey. It has enabled me to focus on my studies and continues to be a source of hope, affirmation, and peace throughout this journey. Blessings to you this summer and I hope to see you again soon!

✠ Peace, Kurt Saenger-Heyl



Kurt with ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." --John 10:11

COMING TO ST. MATTHEW: THE CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Beginning this fall, St. Matthew plans to offer the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to the 3-6 year old Sunday School class.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. It was developed in Rome, beginning in the 1950s, by a scripture scholar, Dr. Sofia Cavalletti, and a Montessori educator, Gianna Gobbi; and has spread throughout the world.

Central to the CGS method is the *Atrium*, a specially prepared environment containing beautiful but simple Montessori-style materials through which the children focus attention on key scripture passages and liturgical moments. By using their hands to explore this carefully prepared environment, the children are drawn ever more deeply into prayerful, joyful relationship with Christ.

The young child's spiritual capacity is often dismissed by adults. Dr. Montessori, through her work as a scientist and educator, was led to believe otherwise: "We know how in well-led Montessori classes the children often have a remarkable susceptibility to holy and divine things. . . .we often find ourselves with unexpected revelations." (Maria Montessori, God and the Child)

Or as Sofia Cavalletti put it: "Between Christ and the children there exists a profound affinity."

This is the beautiful spiritual journey to which our children, and the adults who work with them, will soon be invited. If you are interested in learning more about the Atrium at St. Matthew, contact the office. We'd love to give you a tour!

You can find a summary of the spiritual themes and biblical texts explored in the 3-6 year old atrium through [here](#). For further information, visit <https://www.cgsusa.org>



CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Curriculum for Children ages 3 - 6: Some Themes and Biblical Texts

THE LITURGICAL YEAR: *Celebrating the Life of Jesus*

Liturgical seasons and colors: Advent (blue), Lent (purple), Christmas and Easter (white), Pentecost (red)
Growing time (green).

THE ALTAR: *Jesus is present with us in the Sacrament of the Altar*

Nomenclature: altar, fair linen, chalice, paten, cross, candles, candlesticks, lectern, bible, worship book, sanctuary lamp, candle extinguisher, corporal, purificator, veil.

GEOGRAPHY OF ISRAEL: *Jesus lived among us as one of us*

Nomenclature: Israel, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Mediterranean Sea, Sea of Galilee, Jordan River, Judea, Samaria, Perea

ADVENT PROPHECIES: *Who is this mysterious Child? Truly God and fully human*

The Light: Isaiah 9:2

Emmanuel: Isaiah 7:14

The Names: Isaiah 9:6

Star and Scepter: Number 24:17

Little Bethlehem: Micah 5:2

INFANCY NARRATIVES: *Who is this mysterious Child? Truly God and fully human*

The Annunciation: Luke 1: 26-38

The Visitation: Luke 1: 39-56

The Birth of Jesus and Adoration of the Shepherds: Luke 2: 1-20

The Adoration of the Magi: Matthew 2: 1-12

The Presentation: Luke 2: 21-39

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM: *The powerful mystery of the Kingdom of God*

The Mustard Seed: Matthew 13: 31-32

The Pearl of Great Price: Matthew 13: 45-46

The Leaven: Matthew 13: 33

The Hidden Treasure: Matthew 13: 44

The Seed: Mark 4: 26-29

THE GOOD SHEPHERD: *We are in loving relationship with Jesus*

The Good Shepherd: John 10: 3b-6, 10b - 16

The Found Sheep: Luke 15 4-6

Psalm 23

The Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd: Christ's loving gift of himself in the Eucharist

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY: *We accompany Jesus on his journey to the cross and beyond*

The City of Jerusalem: location, walls, pools, Temple, Upper Room, Mount of Olives, Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod, Calvary, the tomb, the angel & the women on Easter Day

The Upper Room: Luke 22: 7-13; Mark 14: 12-17, 22-24

The Mystery of Life and Death: John 12:24

Easter Celebration of Light: Matthew 28: 1-7

PENTECOST CELEBRATION: *The gifts of the Spirit are ours*

The story of Pentecost: Acts 2: 1-4

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Isaiah

THANK YOU, ST. MATTHEW, FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Through the St. Matthew Endowment, we were able to give away \$36,000 to ministry partners nearby and around the world! Here are a few of the ways these dollars are making a difference in our community!



Dear Pastor Julie,

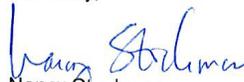
On behalf of West Hartford Social Services, thank you for your generous gift of \$2,000 to *The Town That Cares – Food Pantry*. Your gift will make an immediate impact on our residents during this challenging time.

No one could have ever imagined a year like we have experienced. Between job losses, reduced wages, medical issues and losing a loved one, life has not been easy. These difficult times have brought our community together. The generosity and compassion from people like you has allowed us to assist our neighbors as we continue to see a significant increase in need.

Last year over 1,000 households benefitted from *The Town That Cares*. This fund provides relief to West Hartford residents during a crisis situation when alternative resources are unavailable. Assistance may include help with groceries, utility bills, shelter, medical expenses, clothing, and other needs. *The Town That Cares* also offers several seasonal programs. More than 690 students participated in our "Back to School" Program. We provided Thanksgiving meal assistance to more than 420 households and more than 650 children participated in our Holiday program.

We rely solely on donations and the compassion of community members. *The Town That Cares* is about helping one another in our West Hartford community. Your support truly makes a difference. Thank you!

Sincerely,


Nancy Stockman
Food Pantry Coordinator

Thank you for your very generous gift to the food pantry.



Farmington Food Pantry, Inc.
Helping Our Neighbors In Need

Dear Saint Matthew Lutheran Church,

The Farmington Food Pantry is pleased to acknowledge your donation in the amount of \$2,000.00 on the date of April 5, 2021

Your donation is greatly appreciated and will make an immediate difference in the Farmington Food Pantry's fight against hunger. **Thank you!**

In response to the pandemic, our Client Choice format changed in mid-March 2020 to optimize the safety of our clients and volunteers. For now, pre-packed food bags are distributed to clients through a curb side drive-up pantry staffed by dedicated pantry volunteers. To minimize COVID exposure to both our clients and donors, the pantry can only accept limited and pre-approved food donations from the public at this time. Details of current food drive and donation restrictions can be found on the home page at www.farmingtonfoodpantryct.com.

The pantry was able to make the transition to a model that involves purchasing a large percentage of our food because of the generous monetary donations received from donors like you via mail and the secure and convenient Pay Pal link on our website. (www.farmingtonfoodpantryct.com) These donations have truly made a meaningful difference in the lives of our food insecure Farmington neighbors, and are crucial to our mission of ending hunger in Farmington.

Saint Matthew Lutheran Church, the pantry gives thanks for the continued generous support you have shown as we fight to end hunger in our community. Because of you, many families have the assistance they need to put food on the table. **We are honored to count you as a partner in our effort to feed our neighbors in need, and to eliminate hunger in Farmington.**

Sincerely,

Rachel White, Volunteer
Farmington Food Pantry