



SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

October 3 St. Francis Day

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
9:45 a.m. Adult Forum
11:00 a.m. Outdoor Family Worship -
Blessing of the Animals

October 10 & 24

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
9:45 a.m. Adult Forum
11 a.m. Outdoor Communion Service

October 17

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
10:00 a.m. God's Work, Our Hands
Sunday - Service Projects

October 31 Reformation Sunday

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
9:45 a.m. Adult Forum
11:00 a.m. Outdoor Family Worship

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

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

Whether it's the fresh, crisp smell of autumn air, the fun of picking apples and pumpkins, or the beauty of leaves falling in varieties of red, orange, purple, and yellow, I must admit fall has always been my favorite season. The traditional time of harvest is late September/early October, and since biblical times has been a season to celebrate the hard work of the past year. It is also an appropriate time for us to reflect on our own harvest as fruit-bearing Christians, to recall the good work we have done and to commit ourselves once again to the reconciling work of God in the world.

As we mature on the Christian journey, there comes a time for all of us when we bear good fruit in the world. This fruit takes many forms. One person's fruit is different from yours, depending on what each person's gifts are. Some may bear the fruit of service and volunteer at local charities or take the lead on mission projects. Others may bear the fruit of justice and be active in transforming unjust systems. Some may bear the fruit of hospitality and eagerly welcome and encourage their brothers and sisters. Whatever your fruit is, the professional expertise you offer or a lifelong passion you share, we all have fruit to share with the world.

As we consider the theme of bearing fruit, we thank you for contributing your gifts (your fruit) of time, talent, and treasure. It is because of you and your generosity that St. Matthew Lutheran Church can bear fruit in the world. Your generosity allows for this ministry to be possible. Your generosity enables us to dig deep, reach out, and change lives.

We invite you this month to fill out an intended giving (pledge) card for 2022, which you will receive in the mail. Please return your pledge card to the church office by October 31st. This will help us in preparing for another year of ministry and of bearing fruit in the world. Thank you for your generosity in the past and for your continued commitment to our congregation.

Blessings,

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.



ADULT FORUM: Autumn of Christian Life: Finding Meaning and Joy Amid Change and Loss

A Six Week Series, 9:45 a.m. Sunday Mornings

In October, we continue with "The Autumn of Christian Life," a study about the unique aspects of the faith journey in the last quarter of life. Some are blessed with retirement during this time, but no matter employment status, certain faith questions come up at this stage of life, as well as questions on how to live well.

- ◆ October 3 "Plentiful Harvest or Scarcity?"
- ◆ October 10 "Change and Loss"
- ◆ October 17 *Day of Service, no class*
- ◆ October 24 "Why Suffering? Why Loss?"
- ◆ October 31 "Wisdom: Sharing Across the Generations"

Join us as we engage the questions, and mine the scriptures and our own experience! We meet in the Hall of the Evangelists; we are also on Zoom. Please reach out to the office for remote access information.

SUNDAY SCHOOL Sunday School will meet on Sunday October 3rd for our next outdoor family worship and the blessing of the animals! Two weeks later, October 17th, we'll join in on "God's Work Our Hands" Sunday. And our next outdoor family worship will be October 31st, Reformation Sunday.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atrium, our new PreK-K classroom, is open for tours. Contact the church office if you'd like to see it!



CONFIRMATION KICK OFF EVENT AT WEST HARTFORD RESERVOIR

Confirmation kicks off with an event sponsored by several Lutheran churches across Greater Hartford. Our time at the West Hartford Reservoir will focus on creation care in a fun and hands-on way!

Classes this year will be on Monday evenings, and with a focus on Luther and the Reformation, as well as a New Testament overview. We welcome your 7th or 8th grader! Please reach out to the office if you still need to register your child.



MEN'S GROUP

The men's group will not meet for breakfast this month, instead we're going on a weekend retreat to Camp Calumet! We leave Friday October 22nd and will return Sunday October 24th. Cost is \$170 per person. This includes lodging and meals from Saturday morning through Sunday lunch. Contact Pastor Brian if you're interested.

PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE NOW FORMING The Council has recently given its approval to forming a committee to consider building a playground on church grounds. This playground would be for church families as well as community members and a sign of our commitment to reaching out to young people. The Council is inviting interested members to join in the planning, and especially invite those with young children and those with building experience to join. Please contact the office for more information.

**God's work.
Our hands.**

GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS SUNDAY On **Sunday, October 17 from 10 a.m. to noon**, we will bear the fruit of service and celebrate "God's Work Our Hands" Sunday. Two service projects will be offered: (1) Fill backpacks with school supplies for Lutheran World Relief in the Hall of Evangelists; or (2) Help gather the fall harvest, clean the greenhouse, and paint at Gifts of Love Farm in Simsbury. Sign up through the weekly Constant Contact emails. Lunch provided by our Fellowship Committee at both locations!



BIBLE STUDY Bible Study will meet on Thursday October 6th and Thursday October 20th at 10:00 a.m. in the Hall of the Evangelists. We also plan to have a hybrid option available for those who prefer to attend virtually.

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!



WANTED: TECH TEAM RECRUITS! Our Tech Team is looking for teens and adults to enhance our ministries, including running our live stream, providing tech support for Sunday morning services and classes, maintaining our website, and promoting St. Matthew's message and ministry on social media. Please contact the office if you are interested.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS Our last council meeting started with discerning the will of God so that we can grow as a congregation within and also extend outward into the community. In this vision we discussed our strategic planning. This planning was seen through the lens of a post pandemic reality. Capturing this view, we continue to move forward with initiatives to reconnect within via small groups, and build outward by moving forward with new plans for a church playground.



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 office@stmatthewavon.org 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.*

GOOD THINGS:

- ✦ Our live streaming crew has extended their ministry to include providing a simulcast of funeral services for overflow attendees who, due to social distancing precautions, cannot sit in the sanctuary. The live stream also reaches family members who cannot attend the funeral due to health conditions or distance.
- ✦ The Congregational Council held an indoor and outdoor retreat this month, focusing on telling the story of our faith and congregation, using a resource entitled, *Unbinding the Gospel*. We are grateful to God for these committed leaders at St. Matthew!
- ✦ We kicked off the program year with a banner St. Matthew/ Rally Day Celebration! The Outdoor Family Service featured a fruity scavenger hunt and discussion based on Jesus' words in John 15, to "bear much fruit." The service was followed by Sunday school registration, tours of the new Pre K - K classroom (known as The Atrium), and a fabulous picnic lunch provided by Avon Prime Meats and organized by our terrific Fellowship Committee. It felt SO GOOD to be together again, and we look forward to welcoming more people back as well as meeting new friends.
- ✦ Adult Forum welcomed 15 people for in-person and virtual discussion of "Autumn", part of the *Seasons of Christian Life* Series. Join us 9:45 a.m. on Sundays.
- ✦ Our Fall Worship schedule welcomes people to worship in three ways: in the sanctuary at 8:30 a.m., live streamed at our Youtube channel at 8:30 a.m., and outside in the backyard at 11:00 a.m. Thank you to all who make these services possible!
- ✦ Your faithful giving continues to support St. Matthew's mission to 'dig deep, reach out, and change lives in Christ's name.' Thank you for your generosity and commitment!

We have so many good things to be grateful for!

God is good.

All the time!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
October 2021					1	2 10:00 Confirmation Event—W. Hartford Reservoir
3 St. Francis Day 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Outdoor Family Worship - Blessing of the Animals	4 7:00 Confirmation 7:00 Finance Committee	5 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Church Council	6	7 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	8 10:00 Eleanor Swanson Funeral	9
10 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Outdoor Communion Service	11 Columbus Day Indigenous Peoples' Day 1:00 Staff Meeting	12 6:00 Centering Prayer	13	14 2:00 Centering Prayer	15 VOICE DEADLINE	16 9:00 Y12SR Yoga
17 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 10:00 God's Work, Our Hands Sunday	17 18 1:00 Staff Meeting 7:00 Confirmation	19 6:00 Centering Prayer	20	21 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	22 Calumet Men's Retreat	23 Calumet Men's Retreat
24 Calumet Men's Retreat 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Outdoor Communion Service	25 7:00 Confirmation	26 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Centering Prayer	27	28 2:00 Centering Prayer	29 1:30 Piano Tuning	30 9:00 Y12SR Yoga
31 Reformation Sunday Halloween 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Outdoor Family Worship	Notes:					



October 2021



MEMORIAL GARDEN The Council has recently given its approval to forming a committee to consider building a small memorial garden on the church grounds. The memorial garden idea comes from member Bob Brown, who passed away in 2018, who dreamed of a memorial garden that was esthetically pleasing as a place of contemplation and accessible to the public. The Council believes that a place of remembrance outside the church building could be a gift to St. Matthew members as well as a place of quiet for neighborhood members to gather, and invites interested persons to contact the office.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Operating Income: Offering income was \$17.3K 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 \$20.6K lower than budget as the higher income partially offset the lower money received from Endowment.

Operating Expenses: Total YTD Operating Expenses were \$29.8K lower than budget, with most categories being below budget.

Net Operating Fund Activity: Net Operating Activity was negative \$6.5K for the month and negative \$3.3 YTD vs. the budget of negative \$12.5K YTD, due to the items noted above. Note that net income would have been \$46.7K 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 \$11,254.60 at June 30th; we paid \$500 in loan principal via EFT during August.

We received forgiveness of the full amount of the PPP loan and will record that in the September financial statements.



ST. MATTHEW HAS A NEW LOGO! As part of the SMLC Strategic Plan, our Marketing & Communications Committee has been working on one part of the plan - updating SMLC's brand identity to align with the broader strategic plan to "tell the story" of our congregation by sharing our personal faith in God both within the St. Matthew community and by reaching out to the communities beyond the four walls of our sanctuary.

While the red Winged Man of our former logo has been a steadfast and somewhat literal representation of our church (the Winged Man is a symbol of the Gospel of Matthew and represents the tracing of the human ancestry of Christ), the Committee was tasked with creating a new visual representation of our mission statement "Digging Deep, Reaching Out, Changing Lives" which would be appealing and accessible to those both inside and outside the congregation.

The Committee recognizes that many of us have been overwhelmed with change in the last 18 months, and that the stability of the known, of the same, can seem preferable to yet another change in a seemingly endless cascade of changes. Yet in embracing our faith, we are trusting in God to transform us, to transform our understanding. Jesus lived and died for us so that we might be forgiven our sins; He rose again and ascended into heaven so that we may join him in everlasting life. The very foundation of our faith is, in fact, the story of change and transformation. We live out this faith on a daily basis, and enacting our strategic plan is one way we do this. (continued . . .)



(...continued)

The new logo is only one piece of the plan, but it is an opportunity to share with YOU, the congregation, that we are moving forward with intention to achieve the goals we set together before the world was turned upside down. The Committee shared this with the Church Council. There was conversation, thought and prayer before Council approved the Committee achieving the goal of designing a new logo to represent “Digging Deep, Reaching Out, Changing Lives.”

We hope you agree the new branding and logo adeptly represents St. Matthew as we go in peace and share the good news.

Here is a brief synopsis of the brand identity and logo elements:

ELEMENT ONE: WHY BLUE?

- The new color Blue was chosen for both its lay and liturgical meaning.
- In the ELCA, Blue is the color of Advent, and it is the color of hope.
- When we feel overwhelmed with uncertainty or negativity, hope is the reason we can rise each day and continue to work to create the world we want to live in.
- Blue is also representative of the healing power of water.
- After this long year, we are overdue for healing, both physical and spiritual.

Blue is also the color of fidelity, sincerity, and wisdom; all traits that align with our Christian values and our strategic goals.

ELEMENT TWO: THE CROSS

- The Christian cross, or “high cross” is the most recognizable symbol of our faith.
- The outside edges of the cross have been slightly rounded, both to modernize the symbol and to transform or soften the hard edges. The softening is representative of the grace and forgiveness that sometimes seem lacking in the world today, but that can be put to powerful use to help change lives.
- The cross also reaches down into the words of St. Matthew, taking the place of one of the t’s in Matthew. This is symbolic of our rebranding/ transformation as well as a visual representation of “digging deep.”

ELEMENT THREE: THE WINGS/RAYS

- The last piece of the logo is an homage to the Winged Man as well as a visual representation of “reaching out.” They are rays of light extending out to the congregation and beyond in a recognizable winged shape. They continue the theme of hope as well; our hope to share our light with the world, through good words and good deeds.

DIGGING DEEP • REACHING OUT • CHANGING LIVES

224 Lovely Street • Avon, CT • 06001-4018 • 860-673-3301 • stmatthewavon.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

August 24, 2021

St Matthew Lutheran Church
224 Lovely St
Avon, CT 06001-4018

Dear St Matthew Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift(s) given to your synod, received by ELCA World Hunger in June 2021.

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God (Romans 5:1-2).

As a church, we believe that God's grace is freely given to us. This brings us peace and hope. It makes a difference in our lives. Through your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, you are sharing this amazing grace with others. You are helping people around the world feel the transformational power of God's love.

Your generosity is getting at the root causes of hunger and poverty in over 60 countries including the United States. It is providing access to clean water, health care, agriculture, livestock, education, and peace and justice. Through your gifts, you are joining with the whole church as we work toward a just world where all are fed.

Thank you for your gracious gifts. The glory of God is shining through you.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin K. Brown".

The Rev. Robin Brown
Director, Congregational Mission Funding

P.S. Please see the reverse side of this letter for your receipt.



Gifts of Love

August 23, 2021

Pastor Julie Reuning-Scherer
St. Matthew Lutheran Church
224 Lovely Street
Avon, CT 06001-4018

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire Gifts of Love family, and especially our clients, thank you for your donation.

Your gift of food, school supplies, and baby blankets, received on 8/12/2021, helps us meet our clients' most pressing needs of food and basic necessities. There are more than 400,000 people in Connecticut who fight food insecurity every single day. More people than ever before need the basic necessities that Gifts of Love provides - and the sense of hope and comfort that comes when easing financial hardship.

Assisting families during difficult times is truly at the heart of Gifts of Love – Neighbors Helping Neighbors. We are so grateful for your support.

Warmest regards,

Ryan Pettengill
Executive Director

*THANK YOU ST. MATTHEW!
WE ARE GRATEFUL!*

- Ryan