



SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

January 2 Epiphany Observed

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
9:45 a.m. Adult Forum: The Resurrection
11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service

January 9 Baptism of our Lord

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
9:45 a.m. Send-off celebration for Pastor Julie
11:00 a.m. Family Worship in the Sanctuary:
Your stories of memorable baptisms!

January 16 Second Sunday after Epiphany

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
9:45 a.m. Adult Forum: Pentecost
11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service

January 23 Third Sunday after Epiphany

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service

January 30

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
9:45 a.m. Annual Meeting
11:00 a.m. Family Worship in the Sanctuary

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

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

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.

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Fish on the Shore

Jesus said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch..." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats... All who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken... Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. Excerpts from Luke 5:1-11.

This luminous story from the Sundays after the Epiphany speaks to me these days. Fishing has long been associated with ministry, and at St. Matthew, I have been your lead fisherman. Together we have let down our nets into the deep waters of prayer, bringing up the treasures that lie beneath the surface, feeding one another from its bounty, and sharing its riches with those beyond our community. I feel the abundance of this ministry, the 'amazing catch' as it is called, as I consider all we have accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit together: giving thanks for past ministries and assimilating those gifts into new directions; a visioning process that spawned eight new ministries and engaged new leaders; learning to use new tools of technology for ministry in short order in pandemic times, and embracing the gift of community in new and creative ways; reopening our ministries in a thoughtful and safe way, as we focus on re-gathering our own community and reaching out to the community to live out our mission in Christ beyond our walls. I am both proud of and grateful for all that God has done through and among us.

I also feel like Simon Peter, called from the familiar patterns of life and work to follow Jesus to places unknown. I look at all the blessings of our time together, the relationships formed and strengthened, the prayers lifted and answered, the strengthening of the ministries of the people of God, and it does indeed seem like we have the equivalent of the two boats in this story, overflowing with fish. Here I am, leaving this great catch on the shore and walking away. Part of me wonders, what will happen to all the fish? (continued on page 2 . . .)

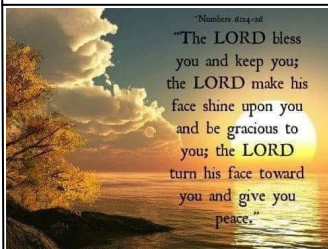
ST. MATTHEW MISSION STATEMENT

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) And then the Holy Spirit whispers to me... what do you suppose happened to all those fish on the shore? And suddenly I see in my minds' eye children spying the great catch of fish, ready for the taking. I imagine them grabbing fish and running to the village, shouting to tell others of their good fortune. I imagine the old, coming from their homes and hobbling down to the lake to see if it is true, joining with nursing mothers with toddlers in tow, tax collectors looking for a deal, people from all walks of life celebrating this bonanza of bounty, praising God for the fortuitous gift of this windfall. And suddenly I understand: nothing is wasted. The truth, stated succinctly by St. Paul in Romans, is this: "God works all things for good for those who love him." The truth is that God uses it all. Times of stability and times of change. Times of patient waiting, and times of abundant harvest. Most of all, God uses us, the fisher folk in the boats, the children on the shore, disciples picking up for a new life. We are all those things, each of one us. God has worked powerfully through our ministry together during these last years, and God will continue to prosper God's plan among you long into the future.

I end with the words of St. Paul from later in Romans: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." I will hold you in my heart as fellow members of Christ's precious body, always.

Pastor Julie



JANUARY 9TH AT 9:45 A.M. - SEND OFF CELEBRATION FOR PASTOR JULIE

Join us in between services in the Hall the Evangelists on January 9 to celebrate Pastor Julie's ministry among us. This is her last Sunday with us. Sign-ups are encouraged to help us plan. Sign up [here](#). Pastor Julie is available until January 9 for short visits to say goodbye. Please contact the office to arrange a meeting. A reminder that after January 9, Pastor Julie will not be available to conduct or participate in events such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, hospital calls, emergency calls, or any other pastoral functions, as outlined in the expectations of the New England Synod document "Healthy Transitions." Pastor Julie welcomes you to friend her on Facebook to keep in touch.

ADULT FORUM The books of the bible the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles is a story in two parts by the same author. Join us as we examine the narrative arc of this series from Jesus' birth to the founding of the church to the good news of Jesus spreading throughout the world. We will use brief videos from the Bible Project to introduce the themes for our exploration.

Jan. 2 The Resurrection of Jesus, Luke 24 **Jan. 9** No class; Send-Off Celebration for Pastor Julie

Jan. 16 Pentecost, Acts 1-7

Jan. 23 No Class; Pastor Brian at Calumet with Confirmation Class

Jan. 30 No Class; Annual Meeting



MEN'S GROUP The men's group will meet for breakfast on Saturday, January 8th at 8:30 a.m. in the Hall of the Evangelists.



BIBLE STUDY Bible Study will meet on Thursday, January 6th and Thursday, January 20th at 10:00 a.m. in the Hall of the Evangelists. You can also join us virtually via Zoom. All are welcome!



CENTERING PRAYER

Centering prayer group meets every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. and every Thursday at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom. Contact Pastor Brian or the church office if you'd like to join us. We're starting a new book in January so it's a good time to join, and this practice makes for a great New Year's resolution!



COUNCIL UPDATE Our last meeting was filled with mixed emotions, as Pastor Julie announced her resignation, but the Holy Spirit clearly worked within all of us to set up the next steps for St. Matthew. Transparency, openness and communication were agreed upon as key qualities in working through this change. The Council will continue to keep the congregation informed throughout the transition process.

NOMINATIONS FOR CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL DUE JANUARY 8

The Congregation Council is accepting nominations for 2022! 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 30th.

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 Debbie Steinberg as she completes six years on Council as a member, and for her extraordinary service as Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer spanning two decades!

Congregation Council 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
- e. Council members worship regularly and are encouraged to serve as worship leaders.




SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, JANUARY 30, 2022 AT 9:45 A.M. Your attendance is much appreciated and encouraged as we review 2021 and look forward to a new year!

GOOD THINGS:

- ✠ We celebrated Christmas Eve at three services in the sanctuary and were thrilled to celebrate our first major holiday indoors since the onset of the pandemic!
- ✠ On December 12th Sunday School hosted a DIY Intergenerational Christmas Pageant where Christians of all ages participated in leading worship and enacting the Christmas story.
- ✠ Confirmation class went Christmas caroling to some of our older members homes, bringing them gifts of song and cookies.
- ✠ St. Matthew is partnering with Valley Community Baptist and other congregations in our area to help resettle a refugee family. Our team's leader, Susan from Valley, led Adult Forum one Sunday and several St. Matthew members completed training to join the Avon co-sponsorship team.
- ✠ Endowment met and agreed to recommend the distribution of funds to 19 different organizations this year.
- ✠ Finances are on track to finish 2021 in the black, due to lower than expected expenses and your faithfulness in giving. Thank you!

God is good. All the time!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
January 2022						1 NEW YEAR'S DAY
2 Epiphany Observed 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	3 7:00 Confirmation	4 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Centering Prayer	5	6 Epiphany 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	7	8 8:30 Men's Breakfast
9 Baptism of our Lord 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Send-off celebration for Pastor Julie 11:00 Family Worship in the Sanctuary	10 7:00 Finance Committee 7:00 Confirmation	11 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Church Council	12	13 2:00 Centering Prayer	14	15 VOICE DEADLINE
16 2nd Sunday after Epiphany 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	17 OFFICE CLOSED Martin Luther King Jr. Day	18 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Centering Prayer	19	20 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	21 Confirmation class to Calumet	22 Confirmation class at Calumet
23 3rd Sunday after Epiphany Confirmation class at Calumet 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 11:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	24 1:00 Staff Meeting 7:00 Confirmation	25 10:00 Hulme & Sweeney-grand piano tuning 6:00 Centering Prayer	26	27 2:00 Centering Prayer	28	29
30 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Annual Meeting 11:00 Sanctuary Communion	31 7:00 Confirmation	Notes:				

January 2022

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

