



SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

November 7 All Saints' Day

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

November 14 New Members Welcome

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
11 a.m. Family Worship in the Hall: Operation Christmas Child

November 21 Christ the King

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

November 28 First Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
9:45 a.m. Adult Forum
11 a.m. Family Worship in the Hall: Cards for the Homebound

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

Re-Gathering at the Close of the Year

November marks the beginning of the season of gathering in the secular world. Thanksgiving inaugurates the season of celebration, as families, friends and co-workers gather. The pandemic, of course, interrupted this time worn tradition, and now as we have the chance to gather again, we are faced with some questions. Priya Parker, author of *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet And Why It Matters*, suggests asking the following questions:

Why are we gathering? Who should be there? How do we want to spend our time?

Parker explains that prior to the pandemic, the answer to these questions was pretty automatic. We didn't think about the basic questions because we didn't have to, and instead we focused on details, like food and decorations. Now as we have the opportunity to re-gather, we also have the opportunity to re-make our communal coming together into something that truly meets our needs and the needs of others.

Take the why question. Of course people come together to celebrate. But according to Parker we also come together "to solve problems we can't solve on our own. We gather to celebrate, to mourn, and to mark transitions. We gather to make decisions. We gather because we need one another. We gather to show strength. We gather to honor and acknowledge. We gather to build companies and schools and neighborhoods. We gather to welcome, and we gather to say goodbye."

It is a more comprehensive list than I might have thought, and leads me to reflect on our own re-gathering at St. Matthew. As I have been talking with the people of St. Matthew, I see that **different people come with different needs**. Some need a word of hope and guidance based on scripture. Some need to share their story, while others need an opportunity to serve. Some need to sing, and others need silence. Some need to be in person to feel community, while others need the freedom to connect online when they have a little down time. (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.

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.

(...continued) These different whys affect the logistics of our gathering, and mean that we do some things differently than before. We offer the familiarity of in-person worship in the sanctuary and online worship. We include Sunday school during a family centered worship service twice a month. We experiment with informal and conversational forms of worship outdoors, and share in the small group settings of adult forum, bible study, and confirmation class.

The letter to the Hebrews says, "let us not neglect our meeting together... but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." As we re-gather, let us keep listening to and sharing the whys of our gathering, and continue to honor the diverse spiritual needs that draw us closer together and closer to Christ.

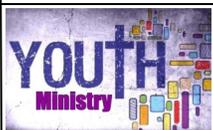
Pastor Julie

ST. MATTHEW RECEIVES NEW MEMBERS ON NOVEMBER 14 On Sunday, November 14 at both services, we will welcome new members into our community. Due to the pandemic, the usual Welcome Lunch is suspended, but the pastors would like to connect with interested individuals and families individually. Please reach out to the office if you are interested in learning more about becoming a new member at St. Matthew.



ADULT FORUM The Sunday morning Adult Forum concludes its study of Autumn of Christian Life, which explores the spiritual and personal questions of later life, on November 7. On November 21, we will turn our attention to an overview of Luke-Acts, the Gospel we will be reading from in the coming year. We meet at 9:45 a.m. in a hybrid format, so you can join us in person or on Zoom. Check weekly emails or call the office for details. Join us!

SUNDAY SCHOOL There will be a Sunday School parent meeting to discuss the upcoming spring semester on Friday November 12th at 6:00pm. This meeting will be both in-person and via Zoom. Watch for an email with a Zoom link.



YOUTH GROUP National Youth Gathering registrations are due Sunday, November 21st. This is a hard deadline set by the ELCA; Pastor Brian will be registering our group after church that day. Please turn in your registration forms along with a \$150 deposit to Pastor Brian or the church office by November 21st.

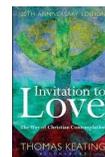
MEN'S GROUP The men's group will meet Saturday November 13th at 8:30 a.m. We are currently planning to meet in-person in the Hall of the Evangelists. This meeting may or may not involve food, as it will be indoors. Check your email for updates.



BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study will meet on Thursday November 4th and Thursday November 18th 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. 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!



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS With the intention of "**regathering**" with a new intent, our council meeting was filled with progressive action steps. Discussions flourished from housing an Afghan refugee family to continuing our ministry to reach out to others within St. Matthew Church. Outreach and vision planning remain on the forefront of hearts as we keep building forward to connect to the greater whole. Two committees were formed to work on building a new playground and a simple memorial garden in the church yard.

CHRISTMAS COTTAGE COMING TO ST. MATTHEW NOVEMBER 4-6 We welcome the Christmas Cottage, a unique “boutique” style shopping experience, to the Hall of Evangelists. Enjoy the handmade products of over 30 local artists and crafters. A great place to start your Christmas shopping! Thursday, November 4 & Friday, November 5, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Saturday, November 6, 9:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m. No admission fee. Come and welcome the local community to SMLC!



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

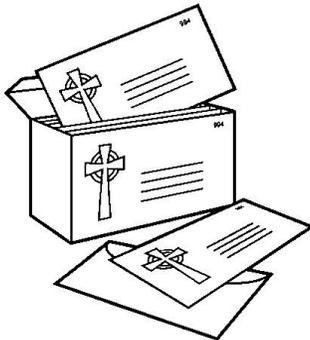
Operating Income: Offering income was \$26.1K higher than budget YTD due primarily to prepayments of pledges.

Operating Expenses: Total YTD Operating Expenses were \$32.5K lower than budget, with most categories being below budget.

Net Operating Fund Activity: Net Operating Activity was positive \$8.3K for the month and \$4.9 YTD vs. the budget of positive \$3.9K YTD.

Loans: The Endowment loan has been paid in full. We received forgiveness of the full amount of the PPP loan.

PLEASE ORDER YOUR 2022 OFFERING ENVELOPES



As many people have moved to online giving, St. Matthew is changing its practice regarding offering envelopes. Previously, every member received offering envelopes for each Sunday of the church year, as well as additional envelopes for special giving, such as world hunger and the capital projects.

This year St. Matthew will provide envelopes for those who request them. Please reach out to the office at (860) 673-3301 or office@stmatthewavon.org to order yours. Deadline for ordering is December 1.

Special gift envelopes for world hunger and the ongoing capital projects fund will be available in the pews and on the ushers' table at church for those who wish to make contributions to those ministries. You can also make contributions to those ministries online at our website www.stmatthewavon.org under the Give tab, or request a set of special gift envelopes to be mailed to your home.

We thank you for your continued generosity!

GOOD THINGS:

- ✦ Members of St. Matthew took part in God's Work Our Hands Sunday on October 17th. We had two service projects. A group travelled to volunteer on Gifts of Love farm, and another group stayed at church to pack school supplies for Lutheran World Relief. Thank you for bearing the fruit of service in the world!
- ✦ Throughout the month of October we heard members share their faith stories about how our congregation has changed their lives.
- ✦ Confirmation classes began meeting and they had a creation care day at the West Hartford Reservoir with several other local Lutheran confirmation classes.
- ✦ We celebrated creation with a Blessing of the Animals on St. Francis Day!
- ✦ The men's group attended a men's weekend retreat at Camp Calumet.
- ✦ Adult Forum, Bible Study, Council, and others met in hybrid fashion utilizing our new technological tool the OWL.

Your generosity has continued to keep St. Matthew strong! Thank you!

God is good. All the time!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
November 2021						
	1 ALL SAINTS DAY 7:00 Confirmation	2 ELECTION DAY 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Centering Prayer	3 10:00 Christmas Cottage Set-Up	4 9:00 Christmas Cottage 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Finance	5 9:00 Christmas Cottage	6 9:00 Christmas Cottage
7 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Sanctuary Jazz Service - Tido Holtkamp Jazz Trio	8	9 6:00 Centering Prayer	10	11 VETERANS DAY 2:00 Centering Prayer	12 6:00 Sunday School Parent Meeting	13 8:30 Men's Breakfast
14 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 11:00 Family Worship in the Hall: Operation Christmas Child Receive new members-both services	15 VOICE DEADLINE 1:00 Staff Meeting 7:00 Confirmation 7:00 Altar Guild	16 6:00 Centering Prayer 7:00 Church Council	17	18 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Centering Prayer	19	20 9:00 Y12SR Yoga
21 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	22 7:00 Confirmation	23 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Centering Prayer	24	25 THANKSGIVING OFFICE CLOSED	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 8:30 Sanctuary Communion Service 9:45 Adult Forum 11:00 Family Worship in the Hall: Cards for the homebound	29 7:00 Confirmation	30 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:00 Centering Prayer				

November 2021

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



JAZZ AT ST. MATTHEW ON ALL SAINTS' DAY: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 11:00 AM The Tido Holtkamp Jazz Trio will be playing at St. Matthew's 11:00 a.m. indoor sanctuary service on All Saints' Sunday, November 7. ***Come and bring a friend!***

Brief biographies of these renowned musicians:



Jen Allen is a pianist, composer, author and educator. She frequently performs in New York, the Northeast US and in venues throughout the world, as the leader of her own groups or as a member of other creative music ensembles. As an active recording artist, Jen is featured on many albums including her new release *Sifting Grace*, her debut album *Pieces of Myself*, *Raise Up* by collaboratively led Trio 149 as well as many albums as a sideman. Jen also composes music for big bands, studio orchestras, string quartet and other smaller ensembles. She has been commissioned to compose music for several universities and grade schools and was a member of the prestigious BMI Jazz Composers Workshop in New York City, a colloquium of the foremost up-and-coming writers of large ensemble jazz music today. Jen has published her first book through Alfred's Publishing called *Sitting In: Jazz Piano* (co-authored with pianist, Noah Baerman). The book was the recipient of Music Inc. Magazine's Editor's Choice Award 2015.



Matthew Dwonszyk is an accomplished bassist, composer, arranger and educator from Rocky Hill, CT. He graduated from the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz studying under his mentor and world-renowned bassist, Nat Reeves. Matthew then went on to receive his Masters degree from SUNY Purchase College. He has been living in Brooklyn, New York the past five years but still frequents back home to Connecticut to perform and teach. Matthew has shared the bandstand with world-renowned jazz musicians such as Steve Davis, Harold Mabern, Jazzmeia Horn, Bennie Wallace, Dr. Eddie Henderson, Herlin Riley among many others. In 2018, Matthew toured through Russia as part of the Rainy Days Jazz Festival with Jonathan Barber and Vision Ahead. He frequently performs at some of the top jazz clubs in New York City including Smalls Jazz Club, Dizzy's Coca Cola Club, Smoke and the Blue Note. Matthew's debut recording, *Wonderful World*, was released May of 2019. He continues to perform with his group, the Dwontet, featuring some of the top jazz musicians on the scene today. In 2019, Matthew toured through Canada with the Oleg Butman Trio and in 2020 he toured the U.S with Jonathan Barber and Vision Ahead.



Tido Holtkamp is a versatile and dynamic musician with professional experience in jazz, latin, R&B, rock, and Americana styles. He brings a creative, original, and soulful approach to the music, and has built a reputation as a musical drummer. Tido plays regularly with the Ricky Alfonso Group, the Chris Casey Trio, the Kenn Morr Band, and the Village Jammers. In addition, he leads his own groups Caravan and Swing Station Jazz. Tido freelances regularly with a wide variety of musicians and is also a member of the St. Paul & St. James Jazz Collective, having played an integral part in the lively jazz service at the venerated New Haven church since 2011.

REMEMBERING THE SAINTS ON ALL SAINTS' DAY

This year's observation of All Saints' Day is on Sunday, November 7 at 8:30AM and 11:00 AM in the sanctuary. We are extending a special invitation to families who have lost a member of St. Matthew's community, as well as families who have celebrated a baptism in the past year, to join us in worship. In baptism, Christ claims us and makes us part of the communion of saints, that community of the faithful which unites the living and the dead. On All Saints' Day, we lift up the continuity of that community, and celebrate that in Christ, we are joined to him and to one another.

During both services on November 7, we will read the names of the newly baptized and those who have died in the past year, giving thanks for their lives and lifting up God's faithfulness. We will place a rose on the altar for each newly baptized person, and a candle on the altar for each member of our church who has died in Christ, which families may take with them at the conclusion of the service. Please join us in lifting up these families in prayer.

REOPENING TASK FORCE UPDATE

The Reopening Task Force (RTF) continues to monitor the State of Connecticut guidance for Covid-19 protocols as well as guidance from the CDC and ELCA. The RTF wishes to provide this update to the St. Matthew family based on the committee's most recent meeting October 12th, 2021. The RTF continues to be in discussion with Church Council as well, in order to coordinate RTF recommendations with Church Council guidance.

The most recent ELCA guidance, **Resuming Care-Filled Worship**, reminds us of the need to balance our priority on gathering together with our responsibility to protect human bodies. We continue to follow State of Connecticut recommendation for masks in settings with vulnerable populations, the elderly, and unvaccinated children. Keeping this collective guidance in mind, at the present time, mask wearing is still required for everyone over the age of 3 years attending the in-person sanctuary service.

We continue taking this approach to ensure that our more vulnerable populations, including our older population, the unvaccinated, and children, are safe and protected. Although the general downward trend in COVID infections in Connecticut is very encouraging, we are also cognizant of the increasing rate of break-through Covid -19 infections among the vaccinated. In addition, current evidence demonstrates that asymptomatic, vaccinated individuals can spread the virus to others, particularly the unvaccinated, in selected settings.

Protocols for worship in the sanctuary as well as other ministries who choose to meet in person have been updated. You can access these protocols by going to the SMLC website at stmatthewavon.org. All of the protocols continue to be based on CDC recommendations and integration of Lutheran theology and ELCA guidance with State of Connecticut metrics and recommendations.

Ministries and committees may meet indoors and outdoors. Small groups (up to 15 attendees) meeting indoors are asked:

- to wear masks. However, if all participants are fully vaccinated, the group can decide whether to wear or remove their masks. Individuals who are vaccinated but choose to wear a mask may continue to do so.
- to ensure unvaccinated individuals wear a mask.
- To maintain appropriate social distancing (6 feet).

Please contact Diane at the office to reserve space in the building or outdoors.

Pre-registration for the 8:30 a.m. sanctuary service is no longer required. Masks continue to be required, based on State of Connecticut public health guidance as well as ELCA recommendations as noted above. This approach is designed to protect the most at-risk individuals in our St. Matthew family who wish to attend in-person, including older individuals, the unvaccinated, and unvaccinated children. The RTF recognizes that a vaccinated adult is typically at low risk for clinical infection him/herself. The RTF guidance on mask wearing balances this individual low risk with overall safety of all of us attending in-person. We appreciate everyone's patience on this issue as the COVID profile in relation to vaccination outcomes continues to evolve.

The Reopening Task Force will continue to monitor the ever-evolving guidance from the CDC and State of Connecticut, and will continue to provide recommendations to Council as additional updates become warranted. As always, comments and questions are welcomed as we all navigate this challenging time together.