



224 Lovely Street, Avon, CT 06001-4018  
(860) 673-3301 [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org)

## **SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**July 3– August 28**

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service

### **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, Associate Pastor  
Richard Silbereis, Director of Music  
Diane Oates, Church Administrator  
Roy Zurell, Sexton  
Steven Smolnik, Publisher

## **A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR**

As we enter into the summer and continue in the transition process to call a new senior pastor, I wanted to take a moment to explain my own situation and where I stand in my discernment process. As many of you know, my call as associate pastor is *coterminous* with Pastor Julie's call as senior pastor. This means that while I can remain during the interim period, I agreed when I started at St. Matthew that I would not seek a call as St. Matthew's next senior pastor if Pastor Julie left before me. The congregation signaled agreement to this when it issued the coterminous call. When I was serving my first call in Pennsylvania I was an associate pastor as well, and the same rule applied there. Many of you have expressed to me your hopes that I might be considered for the position of senior pastor at St. Matthew. While I am flattered by this and love the community of St. Matthew very much, I do not plan to pursue a call as St. Matthew's next senior pastor. Many synods and denominations have coterminous policies for associate pastors, and there are good reasons. Such a policy allows for more open discernment for both congregations and pastors in associate roles. For example, having this policy in place allows me to be more transparent about my own call process to you, rather than needing to keep everything confidential. It also allows me to be helpful to St. Matthew's transition process with honest feedback, rather than having to worry about whether or not I fit into future plans. The policy is in place because synodical leaders have seen over the years that it helps congregations move into the future, while supporting associate pastors' growth in their ministry.

I also feel it is important to explain that even if Pastor Julie were still at St. Matthew, I would likely be discerning a new call upon finishing my PhD anyway. My doctorate is in pastoral counseling, which enables me to work toward becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). To do that I need 3000 post-graduate hours of counseling. So I am currently discerning whether I should do full-time ministry and part-time counseling, or full-time counseling and part-time ministry. A PhD also opens up the possibility of being a professor, something I would like to pursue someday, although probably not immediately. Lastly, the PhD opens the door to academic research, something which I am passionate about, and I hope to share some of my dissertation research with you all in the near future. (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 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.



(...continued)

Considering all that, this is an exciting time for me. A few months ago I wrote about discernment and how periods of discernment can be a spiritually heightened time. In times of discernment, we are called to more deeply attune ourselves to the will of God; and I feel blessed to be able to discern alongside you about my future and yours.

I am excited to see where the Spirit leads me next, and I look forward to watching St. Matthew move into the future. As a young pastor it is a good experience for me to witness the transition process from the congregation's point of view. I am confident that God will guide the right leader to be your new pastor. Knowing who you are as individuals and as a congregation, I am confident that whoever the new pastor is will love you and that you will love them. I look forward to spending the summer months with you, to discovering where the Spirit is leading me next, and to witnessing where the Spirit will lead St. Matthew.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brian

### **SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPORT**

The New England Synod Assembly was held in Worcester, MA June 9-11<sup>th</sup>. Sheila Jarka, Pastor Brian, and Pastor Sandi attended. Our seminarian Kurt Saenger-Heyl was also there representing his internship congregation. Synod Assembly began Thursday early afternoon with voting on resolutions. Three resolutions were passed: a statement on greenhouse gas emissions, a statement supporting Americans' right to boycott, and a statement encouraging the ELCA churchwide office to remove NDAs (non-disclosure agreements) from all levels of the denomination. A fourth resolution regarding a statement on anti-racism was discussed at length and eventually tabled so that more thought could be put into it with greater input from people of color. You can view more information about these resolutions on the New England Synod website.



**COLLABORATE**  
for Christ's sake  
SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2022

Additionally, elections were held for Synod Council and our own Bill Parchen was reelected as the male layperson from Connecticut representative. Congratulations Bill! Pastor Brian also serves on Synod Council as the male clergy representative from Connecticut—making St. Matthew the only congregation in the synod with two Synod Council members! During the assembly we also elected deans of conferences. Our conference is the Greater Hartford Conference and Pastor Cheryl Hoffman of St. Mark's Glastonbury has been our dean; and she was unanimously elected to continue in that role.

Assembly also had a variety of speakers and presentations, including our friend Sue Carey of Grace Lutheran Church in Hartford who described Grace's Friday night meals and the book she is authoring about the lives and experiences of those who attend Grace's Friday night gatherings. Other speakers included leaders from Ascentria, Calumet, Portico, Together We Thrive, and United Lutheran Seminary - about all that's happening in their ministries. We also heard from UCC and Episcopal denominational leaders in our region.

There were tables set up by various ministries in the hallway to highlight their work. And there were also a variety of workshops we could choose from to learn more about a specific topic. Our St. Matthew delegates attended workshops on stewardship, Forward Leadership training, and the New England Synod's work in the Holy Land.

Aside from the business of Synod Assembly, there were times of worship and fellowship. Thursday evening, we worshipped at Trinity Lutheran Church in Worcester. Bishop Hazelwood preached and we participated in the St. Thomas Mass which included a variety of prayer stations and unique opportunities. Friday and Saturday we had worship in the main meeting hall. There was also a party Friday evening which included games like People Bingo and cornhole. It was also fun to have dinner at local restaurants and to connect with Lutherans from around New England. If you'd like to learn more about Synod Assembly you can check out the synod's website or talk to Sheila Jarka or Pastor Brian about their experience!



### **CENTERING PRAYER**

Centering Prayer group continues to meet every Wednesday at 5:00 pm. on Zoom. Now is a great time to join the group because we just started a new book called *Forty Days to a Closer Walk with God: The Practice of Centering Prayer* by Rev. J. David Muyskens. Join us anytime via the Zoom link in St. Matthew's weekly emails. Whether you're new to the practice or an experienced mediator, all are welcome!

### **MEN'S GROUP**

Men's group had our final breakfast of the program year on June 18th. Thank you Kevin Reichler for cooking! We will be on hiatus for the summer and will get back together for another breakfast in

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

This year, in place of our regular classes, we came together for Family Worship services, which included a Sunday School style lesson in place of the traditional sermon. In the fall we will return to in-person Sunday School. And we are incredibly excited to open our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atrium! This spring Margaret Byrne finished her training to become a catechist (an instructor of the program). Thank you, Margaret, for your time and investment in this ministry! We look forward to being able to meet in-person this fall and to beginning our own Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program!

**CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!** We are happy to recognize St. Matthew members who graduated from high school this year. Congratulations to Alexa Bonini, Charlotte Ferrone, Sarah Lindquist, and Peter Siana. Good luck on all your future adventures!

### **GOOD THINGS:**

**God is good. All the time!**

- ✠ On Sunday June 5th seven youth affirmed their Christian faith in the Rite of Confirmation. Congratulations to Mateo Bautista, Jake Bender, Reese Montminy, Zoe Montminy, Geneva Swanson, Lucas Wells, Hannah Wittig, and their families!
- ✠ On Sunday June 19th we officially received several new members to St. Matthew. We're excited to welcome Priscilla Cifone, Lisa Ogren, Gisela Morton, and the Senofonte family of Morgan, Daniel, and baby Luca!
- ✠ The CAT survey has been sent to the congregation and is ready to be filled out. Ben Wright led a presentation on the Transition Committee's progress on Sunday, June 12th. Thank you to our Transition Committee for all their hard work.
- ✠ Sheila Jarka and Pastor Brian attended Synod Assembly. At Assembly our own Bill Parchen was elected to another term on Synod Council!
- ✠ Fellowship's Gallery Walk was a great success! We saw the artistic talent of a variety of St. Matthew members. We shared food and fellowship. And we welcomed many visitors from the Avon community. Thank you to Anne Fenn and the Fellowship Committee for coordinating this wonderful event, and to our artists Bob and Jan Davidson, Ellen Ericson, Jane Hanson, John Pearson, and George Spoering who showed Lisa's artwork.
- ✠ The Church Picnic was also a great success! It was such a blessing to be together and share a meal together, to play backyard games like cornhole, and to simply be in each other's company. Thank you to Karen Wright for coordinating this event and to the Fellowship Committee and all those who helped make it happen!
- ✠ Margaret Byrne completed her training in becoming a Catechesis of the Good Shepherd catechist (teacher). We are so grateful for the time and energy she has put into this ministry and look forward to opening our own Atrium at St. Matthew this coming fall. Thank you Margaret!
- ✠ We welcomed back Weight Watchers to St. Matthew the last week of June. They had not used our building for their meetings due to the pandemic for over two years, and it is nice to have them back!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>July 2022</b>					1 6:00 McGee Wedding Rehearsal	2 12:00 McGee Weeding
3 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	4 Independence Day  OFFICE CLOSED	5	6 9:30 WW Meeting  5:00 Centering Prayer 5:15 WW Meeting	7  7:00 Church Council	8	9
10 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	11	12	13 9:30 WW Meeting  5:00 Centering Prayer 5:15 WW Meeting	14	15 VOICE Deadline	16
17 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	18  7:00 Finance Committee	19  2:00 Staff Meeting  6:30 CAT Survey Interpretation Meeting via Zoom	20 9:30 WW Meeting  5:00 Centering Prayer 5:15 WW Meeting	21	22 Office closed	23
24 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	25  Office closed	26	27 9:30 WW Meeting  5:00 Centering Prayer 5:15 WW Meeting	28	29	30
31 9:00 Sanctuary Communion Service	Notes:					



Summer 2022

Non-Profit Organization

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





## PASTORAL TRANSITION

**SAVE THE DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 19 — INTERPRETATION OF CAT SURVEY RESULTS** On Tuesday, July 19 at 6:30 p.m., Synod Representative Pastor Sara Anderson will lead a Zoom meeting on the interpretation of the CAT survey results. ***For those without computer access, Pastor Brian will host the Zoom meeting in the Hall of the Evangelists.*** A Zoom meeting link will be emailed prior to the meeting.

**CONFIRMATION** On Pentecost Sunday June 5th at the 11:00 a.m. service, seven of our youth affirmed their Baptism in the Rite of Confirmation. Mateo Bautista, Jake Bender, Reese Montminy, Zoe Montminy, Geneva Swanson, Lucas Wells, and Hannah Wittig confirmed their faith and were received as adult members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. Thank you to them and their families for their commitment to Confirmation class and the Christian life. And remember, Confirmation is not graduation from church—it is a new beginning of being adult members of the congregation!



Adult Forum is on hiatus for the summer. However, at some point there will be a special Adult Forum in which Pastor Brian will present his dissertation research. Watch for an email about this forum event!

### **BIBLE STUDY**

Bible Study is on hiatus for the summer and will pick back up in the fall every first and third Thursday.



### **CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

- ◇ The Transition Team has been working hard on a survey for the congregation and preparing the Ministry Site Profile. Look for communication regarding your opportunity to share your input. For current updates go to [www.stmatthewavon.org/transition](http://www.stmatthewavon.org/transition).
- ◇ The Church Council has appointed a Call Committee. They will begin their work soon. Look for updates.
- ◇ The playscape has been delivered and installation will take place in July.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS**

We are blessed to be able to say that Offering Income is \$11 thousand higher than our budgeted amount through May, however we are slightly behind last year's income number at the same point in time. Our operating income is a positive \$17 thousand through May. We are very thankful for your continued commitment to St. Matthew. Please be faithful with your giving as we enter the summer months so that we can maintain this positive trend!

### **SAVE THE DATE**

**Saturday, September 17:** One-day Women's Retreat (9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.), lunch provided. Led by Anne Fenn & Debbie Steinberg at Debbie's Old Saybrook home. Theme: **Celebration!** Details and sign-up coming soon!

