

THE VOICE of St. Matthew's

Volume 93, No. 1 - January 7, 2024

A Blessing for the New Year

I am a beloved child of God, marked with the cross of Christ forever.



God's mercies are new every morning.

Thank you, gracious God, for the gift of this new day.

Awaken me to your abiding presence;
open my eyes to your creation;
open my ears to your promises;
open my heart to the needs of others.

Fill me with your Spirit and guide me this day
in works of kindness, justice, and mercy.

I ask this in the name of Jesus, the light and life of the world. Amen.

It's Time to Say Goodbye

I began as your lead interim pastor in August 2021. I'd hoped to stay to see you call your new lead pastor. After 2 ½ years, however, it's time for me to return to my retired life. My time serving in this role will come to a close on Sunday, January 7th.

Using the words of Carol Burnett, I want to say: "I'm so glad we had this time together, just to have a laugh or sing a song, it seems we just got started and before you know it, comes the time we have to say so long."

I joined you when congregations were adapting ways to safely gather during the pandemic. St Matts staff and leaders had worked creatively and exhaustingly to help you connect, worship together, learn, and serve our neighbor. We may only be seeing in part the toll such disruption and isolation has had. I hope you'll continue to explore how meeting these needs are what the Church is most gifted to address with God's message of love, grace, and community.



"Continue praying for the Call Committee and candidates interviewed, and trust God's timing on this."

St Matt's celebrated its 100 year anniversary. Remembering those who've gone before us can also give us hope for the future as we learned about their faith and resiliency to meet congregational challenges in their time. I pray at

the start of a new year that you will continue to have a sense of unity as a congregation; and that you'll use whatever gifts God has given you for serving.

I hope you have been able to see the joy I have had in working with Pastor Ann and all the staff. In this short time some staff have departed, others have joined, all normal changes in the life of a congregation. I have been quite proud of the Church Council, who have stepped up to the challenge of leading. Their meetings are filled with conversation, discernment, and raising more questions.

And finally, thank you for welcoming me and entrusting me for this short while with the role of your pastor. Two female pastors? I'd be pleased if this was a barrier we were able to cross. We can now all agree it's less about gender. Our joy comes when a pastor will love her people, and a people will love their pastor.

Continue praying for the Call Committee and candidates interviewed, and trust God's timing on this.

Our first RV trip for Dean and I, along with our black lab Winnie, is planned for March - a visit to Texas to see family. If we ever get snow, I'll be out on the Ice Age Trail on my snowshoes. My sewing room needs an inventory and I'd like to start some projects to use up my fabric stash. It's time for my second retirement.

Thanking God for the journey we've shared,
Pastor Karen

St. Matthew's Mission Statement

Called to fulfill the Great Commission, St. Matthew's Welcomes all to faith in Jesus Christ, Nurtures our faith journey, Equips us to serve others, and Sends us into the world to make a difference in Jesus' name.

The Voice of St. Matthew's

The newsletter of St. Matthew's Ev. Lutheran Church
Karen Natterstad, Interim Lead Pastor
Ann Williams, Associate Pastor

1615 N. Wauwatosa Avenue, Wauwatosa, WI 53213
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Visit our website: www.StMattsLutheran.org
Sunday worship at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

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Upcoming Events



Notice of Annual Meeting Plan to Attend this Year's Congregational Meeting

The Annual Meeting of St. Matthew's Congregation will be held on **Sunday, January 28, 2024 at 9:45 am.** The Annual report will be available one week prior to the meeting so that you have time to see it before the meeting. Please plan to attend and be updated on all that is happening with our congregation, as well as to vote on the budget for 2024.

Stitches of Love Quilting Ministry provides comfort and warmth to Pine Ridge Reservation

Next Quilt Blitz is January 27th - Join us

While many of the quilts and blankets hand crafted by the Stitches of Love Quilting Ministry are donated to local agencies, we are pleased to bless the kind and hardworking population of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. This partnership continues in 2024 and we need your help! Please join us on Saturday, January 27th from 9am-1:00pm in Fellowship Hall for the next quilting workshop. We will start the meeting by boxing up blankets, clothes, shoes and more. These items are then shipped to South Dakota with financial assistance provided by Thrivent Financial Action Grant. This grant covers the postage to ship multiple boxes to the reservation. After this project, we will continue to work on various other projects – tasks for all! Please join us for the workshop, invite a friend and bring your own lunch and beverage to enjoy. Please contact Bev Etzelmueller at 262-250-3969 or bevetz@sbcglobal.net with questions.



Upcoming Healing Prayer Opportunities:

Sunday, January 21, 2024, during the 11:00 service
 Ash Wednesday, February 14, after the morning & evening services
 Maundy Thursday, March 28, after the morning and evening services
 Sunday, April 21, 2024, in worship at 8:30 and 11:00
 All those desiring private healing prayers for themselves or others are welcome to attend.



Thank you!

We celebrate Pastor Karen Natterstad for her two years of interim ministry on **Sunday, January 7th**

Join us in wishing Pastor Karen a happy retirement as she leaves the position here as interim lead pastor. Pastor Karen has left us in a good place, and helped us to see where God might be leading us as we navigate post-Covid ministry. Be sure to read her column on page 2, and join us for cake, coffee and conversation at 9:30 on Sunday, January 7th, Pastor Karen's last day with us.



Dinner Auction Coming up on February 9th! Night in NOLA Dinner Auction Friday, February 9th

Get ready for the sights, sounds, and most of all, tastes of New Orleans at this year's Night in NOLA Dinner Auction! From jazz to jambalaya, the evening will be an entertaining and tasty way to support the youth Mission Trip to New Orleans next summer.

Auction items will be on display beginning January 21st and will include items from babysitting services to gift baskets to vacation rentals. Bidding will be open from January 21st until February 9th at 6:30pm.

The dinner event begins with final bidding on auction items from 5:30 – 6:30, with dinner and entertainment following.



Auction Items are Welcome

We are always looking for interesting items to offer at our dinner auction fundraiser. Do you work for a business that would consider donating a product or a gift certificate? Do you have a skill or service you could contribute? Vacation rentals are also a welcome item. All donations in very good condition are appreciated! It is especially appreciated if they are donated by January 14th so that they can be on display before the dinner auction. Please talk to Gretchen Hauge if you can help.

Adult Education

You've been Asking... here it is
NEW SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITY!

Midweek Evening Adult Bible Study Wednesdays 6pm-7pm Starting January 17, 2024

Blessed are the ~~cheesemakers~~ peacemakers! For inquiring and spiritual minds, adults of all ages, all genders, couples and singles. Take a pause during the busy week and join us for an hour of fellowship, growth and good humor as we journey through the Bible. We kick things off with the Book of Leviticus Gospel of John! What are the synoptic gospels and why isn't John one of them? Who is the Disciple Jesus Loved? What's up with foot washing? This is an ELCA study; all viewpoints are welcome. Bring ideas and join us for the conversation!

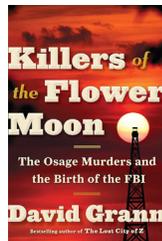


First Fridays Book Group Discussion

We meet on the first Friday of each month for a discussion, beginning at 7:00 pm in the Upper Room at church. You can come just for the books you choose to read with us! You can find the whole list at church (look for the blue paper at the Welcome Center or across from the church office), or on our website.

January 5 *The Housekeeper and the Professor*, by Yoko Ogawa, 180 pgs.

February 2 *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*, by David Grann, 338 pages.



March 1 *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles, 335 pages

April 5 *Janesville: An American Story*, by Amy Goldstein, 351 pages.

Sunday Morning

Adult Faith Formation in January 9:45 - 10:45 am

All are Welcome! Come when you can! Our Adult Faith Formation hour supports the faith growth of our church and on line community. This is a weekly opportunity to engage your mind in faith related topics, meet others with similar interests and connect with your church community. We gather on Sunday mornings from 9:45-10:45 A.M.

January 7
Pastor Karen retirement reception -- No Adult Ed.



January 14 Who Was Stephen?

This adult education session will focus on St. Stephen: Humble servant, Passionate Preacher, Martyr in Christ. The life and death of Stephen directs us to the meaning of the greatest commandments, "Love the Lord your God with all your might" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." St. Stephen became the model for Stephen Ministry, founded in 1975, and part of the mission of St. Matthew's since 2018. If you wish to familiarize yourself a bit ahead of time, read Acts 6:3-8:2. You are welcome to attend and join the discussion whether or not you have read this passage ahead of time! Pastor Ann and Ginny Cleppe



January 21
[Topic not available at time of printing]



January 28 Congregational Meeting

Watch for the Annual Report to be available on January 21, in advance of the meeting.

Women's Ministry *Something for everyone- Join us!*

Next Women's Group Meeting is Sunday, January 7th at 9:45 am

Grow with us by joining the Sunday morning Women's group! Next gathering will take place on Sunday, January 7th at 9:45 in the Youth Room! We connect on a monthly basis to learn something new, grow our faith and share with one another. Discussion takes place in small groups so there is an opportunity to get to know one another on a personal level. Everyone is welcome! Contact Katie Nickel; katiernickel@gmail.com



Serve with us!

Women's Ministry will prepare and serve a meal for The Sojourner Peace House on **Wednesday, January 10th**. Help is needed with providing food items for the meal, preparing the meal at church in the afternoon and serving the meal at Sojourner at 4:30 p.m. Please contact Sue Swing; sueswing@sbcglobal.net or check the sign up sheet at the Welcome Center.



Care for yourself and your relationship with God

by attending the St. Matthew's Women's Retreat the weekend of March 8-10th at Cedar Valley Retreat Center in West Bend. Accommodations are single occupancy and have private bathrooms. Meals are included for Friday night, Saturday and Sunday morning. Look for more info at the Welcome Center in January or contact Sue Swing; sueswing@sbcglobal.net

Men's Ministry -- Join us this month!

Start a New group in the New Year

Monday Morning Bible Study

The Monday morning Men's Bible study meets weekly at 6:30 a.m. A great way to start your week!



Beer Barons of St. Matthew's -

No Skills Required - Join us on January 18

The Beer Barons of St. Matthew's is a group of men who generally make good decisions, looking to break "liquid bread" with other men who are also blessed and broken. Drinking beer is not required, but feel free to join us! The goal here is to simply be men of the church meeting other men where they're at. Thursday, January 18th, we'll be at the Good City Brewpub at the Mayfair Collection on Burleigh St. from 8-10pm.

Men's Breakfast - Saturday, Jan. 20, 7:30am

SPEAKER & TOPIC: Disconnection and reconnection--

The Bridge Builders story

After 23 years of living in the same central city neighborhood, founder Kurt Owens had decided he and his family would relocate to the beautiful suburb of Grafton, Wisconsin. The block he lived on had taken a nosedive. People loitered on his property, throwing trash in front of his house on a daily basis. Some of the homeowners had moved away and were replaced by loud and rambunctious renters.

When Kurt was asked to plant a church on the North Side of Milwaukee, his plan was to drive in from his new home in Grafton. During information sessions with residents, he was heckled by someone from the block – accusing Kurt of making empty promises and leaving the city like so many others. The constant heckling that evening was a wake-up call. "At that moment, my heart was opened to seek transformation on my block instead of chasing after a different life in the suburbs." The move to Grafton was canceled. Hear what happened after that move was canceled, and how Kurt's heart led him to build a better future in the heart of Milwaukee. Join us to learn about, and learn how you can be involved in, missions of holistic transformation on the very blocks Kurt considered leaving five years ago.

Please join us on Saturday, January 20th for the men's breakfast where Kurt Owens will come to share news of the good things that God is doing through Bridge Builders on the Northside of Milwaukee. For more information please visit <https://bridgebuildersmke.org>



SAINTS

First Program of 2024 will take place on Wednesday, January 17

Guest Speaker Kristine Hansen, an author and speaker on famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright

Mark your calendars now for this fascinating presenter who is an author, architecture journalist, and travel writer. Call the church office to sign up and choose your lunch option.



Saints is St. Matthew's Older Adults Ministry which meets monthly for fellowship, devotion, entertainment and a box lunch (suggested donation \$11). Sign up in advance is appreciated, by Noon of the Monday before the gathering. All older adults are welcome, as well as friends from outside our congregation.



December's Saints Gathering was a festive event with lunch in the Upper Commons followed by a concert by the Elm Grove Women's Club Chorus. It was a beautiful concert of Christmas music.



The Church Season after Christmas

Epiphany A Star is Born

Some 2000 years ago, a star was born. It was like no other star that had brightened the night sky before... or since. Some wise men from the East were so struck by this star that they packed up and went to where this star would lead them. It led them to Jesus, the true and only Light, the Bright Morning Star of our lives. In his Light we can see the light of God's love all around us. We can see forgiveness streaming in. And we can see the glow of the heavenly glory to come.

Epiphany means "revelation" – the revelation of Christ to all the world. How is Christ revealed to you on a day-to-day basis?

Star Sightings

Bible readings during the Season of Epiphany track the movements of a certain star named Jesus. Where had he been seen?

At the Jordan River

This is the site of his baptism by John. His ministry officially begins here. We are called to remember our Baptisms during Epiphany.

By the Fishing Boats

Many of Jesus' first disciples were fishermen. We are called to "fish for people" in Jesus' name during Epiphany, spreading the Good News.

In the Synagogue

Jesus made frequent trips to the synagogue to preach. We are called to listen to his Word in worship during Epiphany.

You are a Star

You don't have to be on television or in a major motion picture to become a star. You already are the light of the world Jesus says. [Matthew 5:14] Christ has put his light of love and forgiveness and salvation in you. But so often we don't let the light of Christ shine in us the way we should. We often live instead in the darkness or hatred, anger and fear. But your chance at "stardom" in Christ is never lost. So "let your light shine" [Matt 5:16] Let it shine brightly – by forgiving, loving, and sharing the gifts of God with everyone you meet.



*Arise, shine; for your light has come!
-Isaiah 60:1*

John Paradowski
Minister of Music

MUSIC MINISTRY

Children's and Youth Choirs for Spring

St. Matthew's has outstanding opportunities for our Children and Youth to be part of the music ministry and share their gifts with our church family.

Praise Kids!

Thursdays starting 1/25 -- 4:00-4:50

New Creation Choir

Wednesdays starting 1/17 -- 5:45 to 6:30

New Generation Choir

Wednesdays starting 1/24 -- 6:30 to 7:00

Adult Choirs for Spring

The Singing and Ringing ensembles are starting for Spring, but we are always on the lookout to add to the talent. Come, join us!

Senior Choir –

1/4/2024, Thursdays, from 7:15 to 8:45

Bells Angels

1/4/2024, Thursdays, 6:00 to 7:15

The EmbELLishments

1/30/2024, Tuesdays from 9:30 to 10:15

For more information, contact John Paradowski [JRPmuzik@yahoo.com] and connect to our updated Music Website Page at:

Music Ministry — St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
<https://www.stmattslutheran.org/music-ministry>



Praise Kids on Pageant Sunday



New Creation Choir on Pageant Sunday



Bells Angels handbell choir



Righteous Ringers handbell choir



Embellishments handbell choir

Children's Ministry - Youth

The Pray Ground is Back on January 7th

After a break for the Christmas Pageant and Christmas services, the Pray Ground is returning to its previous spot in the worship space, near the east small chapel. As in the fall, it will be a place for young kids to engage in quiet activities during the worship service, close enough to the altar so they can see and hear what is happening during worship.

Our hope is to welcome and engage our youngest worshippers without overly distracting other worshippers. With that in mind, we ask that parents please follow these guidelines:

- *This area is designed for our youngest children, toddlers and kids in preschool and kindergarten.*
- *Children should be supervised by an adult.*
- *Only quiet toys should be used, such as the ones provided in the baskets. (Refrain from bringing hard plastic or other toys that will make noise if dropped on the floor).*

If you have young children, we invite your family to try it out!



Sunday School Resumes January 7th

Sunday School for Pre K – 8th graders will resume on Sunday, January 7th after a two week break for Christmas. First through fifth graders will meet in Fellowship Hall for a Big Group.

Youth Mission Trip Meeting January 7th at Noon

There is a planning meeting for all those going on the Youth Mission Trip on Sunday, January 7th at noon in Fellowship Hall. Please bring \$5 for lunch.

January KFC & DOC dates:

Join Us for Children's Ministry!

Parents of children in grades 1-5, consider bringing your child for Children's Ministry gatherings. (See the dates below) We will gather for an afternoon of fellowship and fun. Join us for pizza and a game of Capture the Flag.

Kids for Christ (1st-3rd grades) Jan. 14 from 12-2pm

Disciples of Christ (4th & 5th grades) Jan. 21 from 12-2pm

Middle School Game Day, January 28th from Noon – 2:00



If you are a middle school student who misses playing Capture the Flag, this event is for you! Come to the Youth Room for pizza and stay to play Capture the Flag and other fun games. The event is open to all kids in 6th – 8th grade. Please bring \$5 for pizza.

Communion Class for 2nd Graders on January 21st --Learn about Holy Communion

Children of any age are welcome to receive communion at St. Matthew's - some receive it when they are toddlers, while others wait until they are older. Regardless of when children begin to take communion, each year we have a class and service for 2nd graders and their parents to talk about the significance of this sacrament. This year's class will happen on Sunday, January 21st from 9:45-10:45. (The class is also open to kids who might have missed it in previous years).

We will celebrate the sacrament of communion with the 2nd graders at services throughout the spring.

Families of 2nd graders received an email with more detailed information in December.

Morgan Downey celebrates her First Communion with her parents, Mike & Rachel.



Baptismal Anniversaries for January recognized

During the rite of baptism on Sunday mornings, the congregation makes a promise to pray for those baptized. To help us to offer prayers in a more intentional way, we list some of those baptized in January at St. Matthew's for the last few years.

Piper Zellmer	January 1, 2023
Oliver Leto	January 8, 2023
Heidi Zanskas	January 22, 2023
Clayton Thompson	January 16, 2022
Elsie Eve Zanskas	January 10, 2021
Noah Christian Kloth	January 12, 2020
Henry John Robert Gintoft	January 26, 2020
Henry Benjamin Kent	January 26, 2020
Neve Marie Flatley	January 26, 2020

Repairers of the Breach Bag Lunch Assembly happens 2x/month

St. Matthew's has been blessed by the opportunity to prepare bag lunches for Repairers of the Breach, a daytime shelter and resource center for the homeless. The bag lunches are assembled two times per month in the lower kitchen at church on Sunday mornings during the education hour (9:45-10:30 a.m.) It takes a village to make this happen! Thank you to Trudy Zauner for her overall leadership of this ministry. A special shout out to a few of the "behind the scenes" volunteers - Thank you to Richard Olson who does the bulk shopping for the lunches and to Jennifer Kramer who faithfully delivers the lunches to ROTB on Mondays. We are grateful to those who bring the food and help with assembly as well. **If you'd like to help on a Sunday morning please join us!** It's a fun way to get to know some others from St. Matthew's while doing some valuable work for those in need! Contact Trudy Zauner; trudyz5@att.net for info.



NEW OPPORTUNITY!

Donate to the Pan de Vida Scholarship Fund

Give Hope and Opportunity to Kids in El Salvador

Many of the families at Pan de Vida, our sister parish in El Salvador, live on very tight and sometimes unpredictable incomes, which makes it difficult and, in some cases, impossible to afford school costs for their kids. You can help by donating to the scholarship fund at Pan de Vida.

There are 39 kids from kindergarten to university who need scholarships. You can see their photos and learn their names by checking out the bulletin board in the hallway that leads from the Welcome Center to the choir room. (See the accompanying photo),

Education lifts kids out of poverty. In her request for a scholarship program at St. Matthew's, Pastora Emely Chavez said:

Right now, many young people, men and women, see migration or gang integration as the only options for their future. But we need to encourage them to imagine a different future and aspire to more.

Tuition costs by grade level are:

- Grade School - \$200 - \$250
- Middle School - \$300 - \$350
- High School - \$450
- University - \$1600

We welcome one-time or ongoing donations in any amount, and we are grateful to those who have already given. We will share regular updates on the children who receive financial assistance.

Education is a gift of the future to these families. We appreciate your support of the Pan de Vida Scholarship Fund!. If you have any questions, please talk to Gretchen Hauge.



St. Matthew's Christmas Pageant - Dec. 10

For almost 50 years, "The Nativity," which was first presented in 1974, has shared the Christmas message of love coming into the world. Over the years, casts of hundreds of Angels, Shepherds, Villagers, Kings, Soldiers, and choir members have portrayed the Christmas Story to thousands of people. The pageant has undergone changes as we adapted to a new space, re-wrote or added parts here and there, and rotated music selections. But what remains unchanged is the story of God's all-embracing love coming to us in a tiny baby born in a lowly stable – God's entrance into the world that changes us forever.



Angels, played by Kate Charlson, Phoebe Mann, Grace Williams, Emma Richter, Kateri Kirchner, Natalia Byrne, and Lily Buer, announce the birth of a savior.

Abera Wolaver shares the story of the shepherds who heard the news of Christ's birth from angels.



Grant Nickel and Claire Foley tell the story through the eyes of the innkeepers who provided shelter in a stable.



Joy to the World! Let every heart prepare him room.

Our Church Family

Will Robertson died on December 4 after battling cancer. Will shared his faith openly and God's light shone brightly through him. He joined St. Matthew's during the pandemic, and sang in the Senior Choir when his health allowed. He also attended men's ministry events. He will be missed by many. A celebration of his life will take place later this year when the weather warms, following his wishes. *Rest well, good and faithful servant.*



Bulletin Board

Volunteer Thank You!

Thanks to all who donated to the Giving Tree. Our deepest appreciation to Carl Johnson and Beth Schulz, who joyfully delivered the gifts to Cross church and Reformation church!

Family Farms Goal Surpassed! A week before Christmas, money for SIX farms had been collected, and the final numbers weren't yet available for this issue. Thank you, thank you! Several families are going to be blessed with animals, tools, training, and hope through this giving. Thank you for your generous giving toward this effort.



Natalia Byrne, as the Angel Gabriel, reveals the nativity scene.

Note of Thanks from House of Love Youth Homes, Inc.

Thank you so much for your generous donations... While all of us are susceptible to hard times, children and the elderly are at the most risk, and the children are the clients we serve at House of Love Youth Homes, Inc. Your support enables us to help feed and provide shelter for many of these children in the group home. --Julette Francis-Wade, CEO/President

Yes, we'll pray for you... or someone you know... The Prayer Chain continues to faithfully pray for the needs of the congregation and community. If you would like the Prayer Chain to be praying for your needs, please contact the church office at 414-774-0441. You may also e-mail the church at office@stmatthslutheran.org with a prayer request or if you wish to join the prayer chain.



The nativity story was also proclaimed in music by the inspiring singing of the Senior Choir.

Do you know someone who would like a Prayer Shawl?

It may not always be possible to provide hugs to those we love, that are hurting, or just in need of comfort. A Prayer Shawl is a great way to extend a calming presence to someone in need. The shawl would feel like a hug around someone's shoulders. Whether in need of a gentle hug or for sharing with a loved one or friend during an illness, the Prayer Shawls are always available for your use. Please contact the church office to connect with how you may use this ministry as a resource. Through the inspiration of sharing a Prayer Shawl, you may just encourage someone to take up knitting or crocheting a shawl as part of St. Matthew's inventory. Instructions and patterns can be provided upon request.



St. Matthew's

Ev. Lutheran Church ✝ ELCA
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin
www.stmattslutheran.org

PERIODICALS RATE

Mail Carrier: Please deliver by January 6, 2024.

The Voice of St. Matthew's

We are called to welcome, nurture, equip and send

Next issue of the VOICE is dated February 4, 2024.



Special thanks to Dave & Robbie Locher and their daughters Madelyn and Cassie, for their leadership in decorating our sanctuary and upper commons for Advent & Christmas



Dan Bice presented an adult education session on "Meeting Paul Anew" in preparation for a congregational trip in May following the footsteps of Paul where he spread Christianity. Even people not participating in the trip found the session interesting and informative.



Sue and Ken Voigt are welcoming ushers on Sunday mornings.



Katie Nickel leads the St. Matthew's Women's group meeting on the first Sunday of each month.



Carol Heim played clarinet to accompany the Bells Angels handbell choir.



Michael Knutson helped to read the lessons on a Sunday morning in November. He also helps with technology in the sound & video booth.