

THE VOICE of St. Matthew's

Volume 93, No. 2 - February 4, 2024

*Do you not know?
Have you not heard?*

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.

Isaiah 40:28-29 NIV

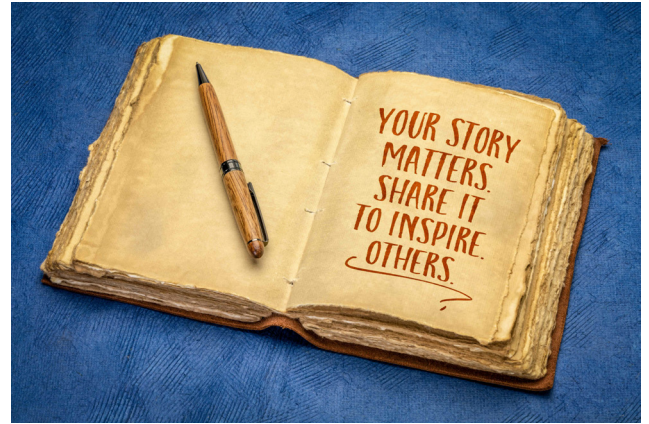


Our Pastor's Voice

Stories that shape us

I have a very vivid memory of rifling through a cardboard box at my grandparents' house. It was filled with old black and white photographs. Some were in albums, some in frames, some still in the envelopes with the negatives tucked inside. Very few of them were labeled. I would sit and ask my grandparents the names of the people in the photos— "How are they related to me?" "What were their names?" "What were they like?" The memories would come spilling out in the form of long-forgotten stories. After they died, I found that cardboard box again and realized that the connection to those people with the horn-rimmed glasses and the corseted dresses was gone. It was as if a whole library had died along with my sweet grandma and grandpa. Without them there was no one left to know their names— let alone their stories.

On my first day of college, I had an Intro to Religion class at 8:00am. Professor Hansen (whom we were allowed to call "Simon") stood in front of us and said, "The Bible is a holy book because it is full of stories. All stories are sacred. If your own story isn't sacred to you— well, there's something wrong with you." I was hooked. From then on, I have had a deep curiosity about stories: our own stories and the stories of our faith.



Stories shape us—as individuals, as families, as a congregation, and as the Body of Christ. That's why

I often tell stories when I preach and that's why I love to hear your stories. So when I ask, "Why do you come to church?" or "Who has nurtured your faith?" or "What does the Bible mean to you?" I really want to know! Because all stories are sacred. Because, as we tell

them, stories shape us and the people listening.

This July marked my 7th year at Saint Matt's. Can you believe it? That means I am eligible for a sabbatical (Thank you Church Council!). I won't be able to leave until 2025, but that gives me plenty of time to prepare for the purpose of my sabbatical, which is—you guessed it—stories. Whenever I think about that cardboard box of photos I wonder, "Can courage, generosity or hospitality be passed down through the generations? How about faith? Resiliency? If stories can shape us, can the faithfulness of our ancestors shape us now? Can the ability to articulate the long story of my family's faith strengthen my faith and, in turn, affect the people around me? My hope is to do some research and uncover some stories from my family's past. But I also want to see how being able to articulate the stories of our faith might strengthen Saint Matthew's as a faith community.

I'm excited, but I need your help. I want to hear more of your stories and I want to give you the opportunity to hear one another's stories too. Keep your eyes open for opportunities to share and listen to our sacred stories.

If this article made you recall a memory that you'd like to share—come see me!

--Pastor Ann Williams

... All stories are sacred.

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
Open, Lead Pastor

Ann Williams, Associate Pastor

1615 N. Wauwatosa Avenue, Wauwatosa, WI 53213

414-774-0441; E-mail: office@stmattslutheran.org

Visit our website: www.StMattsLutheran.org

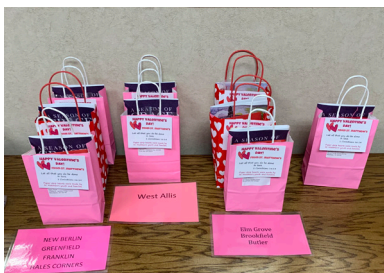
Sunday worship at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

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Upcoming Events

Your Help Needed to Deliver Valentine Gift Bags

With Valentine's Day coming up, we will be delivering gift bags to our members who are not able to make it to church regularly. The bags contain various Valentine treats, including bookmarks made by our 1st-5th grade Sunday School classes.



If you are able to make a short visit and deliver this gift to one of our members, please pick up one (or more) of the bags from the table by the church office on February 11th. Bags are sorted by zip code. Thanks for your help!

Lead Pastor Candidate of Choice Voting Results:



This issue of the VOICE went to print before January 28, so we don't have results for you here. We are hopeful that we will be able to share good news as well as his name and biographical information soon!

For up-to-date information, check our website, and scroll down on the home page to find out the status of this call for our new lead pastor.

Not online? Call the church office, 414-774-0441, and we'll be glad to let you know what's happening.

Join us for Worship on Ash Wednesday February 14 -- Two Worship Services



10:00 am and 7:15 pm
Services include Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

Beer Barons of St. Matthew's - No Skills Required Join us on February 15

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, February 15th, *location to be determined at time of printing. Check emails or Sunday bulletins for details.*

Night in NOLA Dinner Auction

Friday, February 9th

5:30 – Auction viewing and bidding

6:30 – Dinner & Entertainment

Celebrate the sights, sounds and tastes of New Orleans at the Night in Nola Dinner Auction on Friday, Febr. 9th to support our youth mission trip to the Big Easy in June. The event begins at 5:30 with hors d'oeuvres and bidding on auction items until 6:30. Dinner will feature jambalaya, macaroni and cheese, and other New Orleans favorites, and the evening's entertainment will capture the flair of New Orleans.



We hope you can be part of this Cajun Celebration that promises to liven up a cold winter evening! It's a great way to support our "teens going to New Orleans."

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 good condition are appreciated and will help support the Youth Mission Trip to New Orleans. Please talk to Gretchen Hauge if you can help.

Lent Begins with Ash Wednesday on Febr. 14

Our Lenten Journey

Taizé Services to be held on Lenten Weds.

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

With these words we know that we are in the Lenten season, and we are about to embark on a forty-day journey of faith and hope. Lent has a character of turning away from those things that usually preoccupy us and of moving in another direction, as Jesus did when he entered the wilderness. It is a turning away from those things that oppress and dominate us, as Israel did in leaving Egypt. It is a turning away from all those things that prevent us from sensing and living in the steadfast love of God. And, as it was for Israel and Jesus, it is the path into wilderness.

In life's wilderness - in times of doubt, illness, sorrow, loss - the temptations to question the loving presence of God are many. The temptation to place one's loyalty with a false but immediately gratifying god (power, wealth, fame) is strong in the wilderness. So, during the forty days of Lent we intentionally take the path that turns into the wilderness. We take on simple disciplines - prayer, fasting, acts of love - to show our willingness to take on the deeper discipline of turning from all those things that can separate us from God.

The Wednesday Evening 7:15 services will be based on a Taizé Prayer Service. The Taizé community is a French religious order world renowned for its message of trust, peace, and reconciliation. Taizé songs, with their distinctive style, have become popular as a source of meditation and praise worldwide. Singing is one of the most important forms of prayer. In the Taizé style a few words sung over and over again reinforce the meditative quality of prayer. They express a basic reality of faith that can quickly be grasped by the intellect, and that gradually penetrates the heart and the whole being.



Our Lenten path will offer a simple and beautiful service that can be a time to meditate and pray. Our Lenten journey will take us to that glorious Easter Sunday, where we once again can sing "Alleluia." This Lent take time to reflect.

John R. Paradowski, Minister of Music

Join us for the FIVE Wednesdays in Lent

February 21 - March 20

Morning:

10:00-11:00 am Bible Study w/ Pr Ann



Evening:

5:15-6:15 pm Dinner in Fellowship Hall to benefit the Youth Mission Trip

6:15-7:00 pm Family Lenten Time for parents and children up through 3rd grade with Donna Gardner Manke

6:00-7:00 pm Bible Study for adults

5:45-6:30 pm New Creation Choir

6:30-7:00 pm New Generation Choir

7:15 pm Midweek Lenten Service (30 min.)

Have Dinner with Us in Lent!

We hope you'll join us for dinner Wednesday evenings in Lent from February 21st through March 20th. Dinner will be served continuously from 5:15 - 6:20. Suggested donation for the dinner is \$8 for adults and \$5 for children aged 3-10. It's a great way to spend time with your St. Matthew's family before Lenten Family Time and Choirs!

*Parents and Younger Children,
Come Join Us on Wednesday nights!*

**Lenten Family Time, Wednesday evenings,
6:15 - 7:00 p.m. February 21 - March 20, 2024**

Following the Wednesday dinners, join us for the midweek family time, 6:15 to 7:00 each Wednesday. There are stories, songs, projects, prayer and brief worship, led by Donna Gardner Manke. Children 3rd grade and younger are encouraged to attend with their parents. Participants will learn about Bible stories addressing our Lenten theme. We encourage families to come for the dinner (5:15-6:20), then stay for the family time.



It's going to be fun! Come and join us!

Gathered into One: Devotions for Lent 2024

Gathered into One provides daily devotions for each day from Ash Wednesday to the Resurrection of Our Lord/Vigil of Easter (traditionally known as Holy Saturday). Devotions begin with an evocative image and a brief passage from First Corinthians. The writers then bring their diverse voices and pastoral wisdom to the texts with quotations to ponder, reflections, and prayers.

You can find a copy of this devotional at the Lenten table in the Upper Commons.

Adult Education

Sunday Morning Adult Faith Formation in February

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.

February 4 Meeting Paul Anew - Part 3 With Dan Bice

Many of us have been taught that the Apostle Paul taught a "law-free gospel" in which God's grace stands at odds with the works of the Old Testament law. But what if that wasn't Paul's message? A number of leading scholars are suggesting an alternative view that places Paul in his 1st Century Jewish context. Are they right? If so, does this change your understanding of salvation and the Christian life?



February 11 Nehemiah Project - The Milwaukee Center for the Study and Practice of Forgiveness

With Marye Beth Dugan; Executive Director for the Nehemiah Project Planning Team

Forgiveness is a by-product of an on-going healing process. It takes time and can go through various stages including grief, rage, sorrow, fear and confusion. Nehemiah has begun a new initiative to build on their past work with forgiveness, striving to create strong and sustainable forgiveness practices throughout the Milwaukee Metropolitan area. Their intention is to be a community resource extending their outreach to private individuals, professionals and organizations. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about



February 18 What Happened to Monks and Nuns After the Reformation?

With David Zersen

Travel together to monasteries and nunneries where Lutheran spirituality still exists in creative ways.



February 25 (To Be Determined)

Wednesday Night Bible Study 6:00-7:00 PM

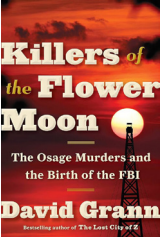
New Participants are welcome!

St. Matt's members, David and Robbie Locher, are facilitating a weekly Bible study on Wednesday evenings at church. There is no homework, advance preparation or sign up/commitment required. There is good faith conversation, fellowship, humor and great snacks! The Lochers are currently leading us through the Gospel of John and we would love to see you there! Come when you can! Childcare can be arranged if needed-just let us know!



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! Here's the list through the end of this season.

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| February 2 | <i>Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI</i> , by David Grann, 338 pages. |  |
| March 1 | <i>Rules of Civility</i> by Amor Towles, 335 pages | |
| April 5 | <i>Janesville: An American Story</i> , by Amy Goldstein, 351 pages | |
| May 3 | <i>The Sweetness of Forgetting</i> by Kristin Harmel, 367 pages | |
| June 7 | <i>Remarkably Bright Creatures: A Novel</i> by Shelby Van Pelt, 360 pp. | |

Farewell and Godspeed, Pastor Karen Natterstad

Pastor Karen Natterstad returned to retirement on January 7, after two and a half years of interim ministry with St. Matthew's as interim lead pastor. She has been invaluable to our staff, lay leaders, council and those who have had the pleasure of getting to know her. We had a wonderful send-off on January 7, with a special cake at coffee time, and lots of well-wishers.



Congregational President Diane DuBois presented Pastor Karen with a generous gift from our congregation.



Pastors Ann Williams and Karen Natterstad



Pastor Dean Natterstad with his wife, Pastor Karen.

A Note from Pastor Karen:

Dear St. Matts family:

Thank you again for the outpouring of gratitude for serving as your interim lead pastor. The cards with your comments, the financial gifts, the cake and our farewell in worship, have been most generous. Thank you!

Pastor Karen Natterstad



Pastor Karen speaks to worshippers on January 7th.



Pastor Karen with Leslie Gardner.



Pastor Karen with Dennis McBride.

Women's Ministry

Women's Ministry Group meets monthly

Grow with us by joining the Sunday morning Women's group! This is a multi-generational group, connecting on a monthly basis to learn something new and explore our faith journeys together. Discussion takes place in small groups so there is an opportunity to get to know one another on a personal level. Next gathering will take place on Sunday, February 4th at 9:45 in the Youth Room! Contact Katie Nickel; katiernickel@gmail.com for more info or just stop in! Everyone is welcome!



About 20-25 women attend the monthly women's group meetings on the 1st Sunday of each month, led by Katie Nickel.

Sign Up Now for the Women's Retreat at Cedar Valley, West Bend

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. Our Retreat Facilitator will be Danette Braun; owner of Abundance Life Coaching. Space is limited so please contact Sue Swing; sueswing@sbcglobal.net for registration information or check the Welcome Center at church. All are Welcome!



A Story of Service

The Women's Ministry group prepared and delivered our first meal for Sojourner Family Peace Center on Jan. 10th. Twelve volunteers provided the various ingredients that were needed for a delicious Chicken Enchilada recipe to feed 60. Home baked desserts were also donated by our St. Matthew's Bakers Group. Special thanks to Anne DeWitt, Gail Hampel, Nancy Bowen and Chris Schroeder for spending the day in the St. Matt's kitchen getting the dinner ready for delivery to the residents at Sojourner. An unexpected blessing was shared as well. Fruit/vegetable trays, sandwiches and desserts were donated by the family of Jack Hastings, whose life was celebrated the day before. The Sojourner staff and residents were surprised and grateful, knowing that they would have enough food to feed them all for several days!



Children's Ministry

Attention Parents! (and parents-to-be) Next Baptism class is April 2024

These classes will be offered about four times per year and taught by one of the pastors. The purpose of the class is to:

- learn about the theology behind this sacrament
- be prepared for the commitment made during the baptism itself
- know how to make baptism part of your family life at home
- ask questions about god parents, scheduling the date and other details
- meet other parents who are raising children in the church

If you want to have your child baptized or if you are expecting a child, mark your calendar!

April 14th 2024

Baptismal Anniversaries Highlighted

Several times each month, babies, children and adults are baptized during our worship services. During the service of baptism, after the person is baptized, the congregation welcomes them and promises to pray for them during their faith development.

“We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world.”

Gifford John Collins	February 27, 2022
Lawrence McCarthy	February 9, 2020
Maverick David Frantz	February 24, 2019
Ruby Aster Steinberg	February 24, 2019
James Peter Daul, III	February 19, 2017
Stella Louise Reuter	February 19, 2017

February & March 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)

Sunday, February 4 from 12:00-2pm

Sunday, March 3, 12:00-2pm

Disciples of Christ (4th & 5th grades)

Sunday, February 11 from 12-2pm

Sunday, March 10, 12:00-2:00 pm



The large and enthusiastic 5K Sunday School class looks forward to creative art projects each week!



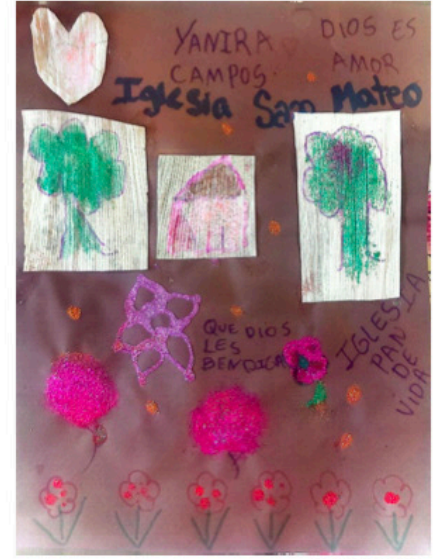
Doreen Steinbock, teacher of the 3-year-olds Sunday School class, helps a student one-on-one with the lesson for the day.



5K students created beautiful Christmas stars from paper bags, led by teacher Sarah Collins.

Beautiful Greetings from our Partners in El Salvador!

The children of Pan de Vida send you greetings and blessings as expressed through their creative artwork! We received photos of 26 pieces of art which are displayed with the translation of their messages near the El Salvador scholarship fund bulletin board in the hallway from the Commons to the Education Wing. It's our goal to grow the El Salvador Scholarship fund so that we can fully support the 39 students who need help with school expenses. Donations of any amount are welcome!



Check out the Bulletin Board in the hallway near the library, leading to the Education wing, displaying the photos of students in El Salvador. There are 39 kids from kindergarten to university who need scholarships.

Education lifts kids out of poverty. Pastora Emely Chavez wrote: "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." Donations in any amount are accepted. Speak to Gretchen if you'd like more details.

Caring Ministries

Stephen Ministry

In February we will be celebrating 6 years of Stephen Ministry at St. Matthew's! Over 40 Care Receivers have been supported with one to one listening, compassion and prayer in a



private relationship with a Stephen Minister. The Stephen Ministers continue to be dedicated to meeting two times per month for ongoing

education and peer support. In the past year some of our education topics have included Empathy, Grief Education, Breath as Prayer, Caring for People Experiencing a Major Medical Crisis, and the beauty of transforming encounters with Jesus. We continue to grow in faith for the purpose of helping others. We want to walk with YOU or anyone you may know who could be helped by prayer and a listening ear. Pastor Ann is our Referral Coordinator and is waiting to hear from you!

Caregiver Group

The next gathering of the Caregivers Group will be Tuesday, February 6th at Noon. Bring your lunch and join us for a little learning, listening, laughter and lots of support! It is a confidential setting. All are welcome!

Grief Group

Meets on Mondays from 1:00-2:30. Led by certified grief educator, Candy Romano.

Attention knitters and crocheters!

Warm hats and mittens are a must for our cold weather. The Quilt Ministry collects and donates hats and mittens during the winter months. A large inventory is nice to draw from at the time of distribution, so we accept donations of these items all year round. Please consider making hats and mittens. The items are donated to Pine Ridge Reservation, The Milwaukee Rescue Mission, and also to Cross Lutheran Church along with the winter coats that we help to distribute. The church office would be happy to take your donations at any time of the year. Simple hat designs can be found online or suggested through the Quilt Ministry participants if desired.



A Reflection for LENT: Fasting and Feasting

By William Arthur Ward

Lent can be more than a time of fasting. It can also be a joyous season of feasting. Lent is a time to fast from certain things and to feast on others.

It is a season to:

Fast from judging others; feast on Christ living in them.

Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of all life. Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.



Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God. Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger; feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.

Fast from worry; feast on appreciation.

Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives

Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer. Fast from hostility; feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal hope through Jesus. Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.

Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicions; feast on truth.

Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from thoughts of weakness; feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that undergirds.

Fast from everything that separates us from the Lord; feast on everything that draws us to the Lord.

Church Family

Jack Hastings, a lifelong member of St. Matthew's, died on December 21 after a short illness. He was married to Arlene for 68 years, and they were regular worshippers at the 8:30 service. Jack leaves a legacy of warmth and humor, laughs and compassion. Our sympathy to his three adult children, Patricia, Jeffery and Lori, as well as six grandchildren and three great grandchildren. A celebration of Jack's life was held at St. Matthew's on January 9, 2024, with Pastor Ann Williams officiating, followed by a luncheon.



A Note of Thanks for the Gifts Given from Allies for Teens in Foster Care:

"I cannot thank you, your team and the Scouts enough for the gifts that you and your family dropped off yesterday. I apologize for crying. My tears were of gratitude for your generosity, time, energy and thoughtfulness that went into preparing it all. Each item was beautifully wrapped and even color coded. I know the girls and staff will be overwhelmed with joy also. I cannot wait until they see everything. Wow, wow, wow! I just keep smiling." - A recipient of the gifts delivered at Christmas.

Will you be a Friend of Luther Manor?

Who are Friends of Luther Manor?

Friends are individuals who support Luther Manor and the older adults that we serve. The Friends of Luther Manor have been around — in one form or another — since 1961.

How are the gifts of Friends used?

A rapidly increasing number of older adults cannot afford the care that they need. Serving these individuals is a part of our mission. At the same time, Medicaid only covers about 50% of the cost of care. The financial support of Friends helps grow our resident support fund, which bridges the gap between Medicaid reimbursement and the actual cost of care.

How do I become a Friend?

Visit tinyurl.com/FriendsLM2024 or scan the QR code below to make a monthly or one-time gift.

Thank you for your support of Luther Manor Foundation.



Be a friend
of LUTHER MANOR

Bulletin Board

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@stmattslutheran.org with a prayer request or if you wish to join the prayer chain.

Remember to check our website for:

- This week's bulletin announcements
- The latest issue of the Voice newsletter
- The church calendar
- The Sunday worship bulletin
- Prayer Request form for immediate needs
- Link to membership directory

www.stmattslutheran.org



Healing Prayer Ministry Team: Connie Malloy, Sue Ernst, Deb Edean, Gloria Potter, Larry Jurss, Anne DeWitt, Arline Koeller, Karen Gastrau, Pastor Ann Williams, Allan Land. They meet monthly on the third Sunday of each month during the Education Hour. This team studies Healing Prayer, and assists with Healing Services through their presence and prayers. Additional Healing prayer ministers are always welcome to join the team.

Upcoming Healing Prayer Opportunities:

Ash Wednesday, February 14,
after the morning & evening services

Maundy Thursday, March 28,
after the morning and evening services

Sunday, April 21, in worship at 8:30 & 11:00

All those desiring private healing prayers for themselves or others are welcome to attend.



St. Matthew's

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

PERIODICALS RATE

Mail Carrier: Please deliver by February 3, 2024.

The Voice of St. Matthew's

We are called to welcome, nurture, equip and send

Next issue of the VOICE is dated March 3, 2024.



Our Advent and Christmas offerings were directed toward ELCA Family Farms, a collection of animals, farming tools, seeds and training. We had a goal of five farms, but St. Matthew's generosity surpassed all expectation, and we collected enough for just shy of TWENTY farms, totalling over \$14,000.



Guest Preacher Pastor Brent Halverson had a special guest during his visit: Nathanael read the Gospel and gave a message on what it was like to be a contemporary of Jesus.

Dan Bice, David Zersen and Conor Williams answered questions from the Bible as a panel of three wise guys on January 21.



The church council offered several listening sessions to hear feedback and suggestions from members about St. Matthew's ministry, and to help the council to plan for the future. This session shown above was facilitated by Fred Heim, and attended by Sunday School parents.



Shown above are a few of the guys who attended the men's breakfast on Jan. 20, featuring guest speaker Kurt Owens (center, in front of Andy Cherney) speaking about Bridge Builders, community development in the inner city. Conor Williams (blue plaid shirt) coordinated the event.