

## Welcome to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

December 10, 2023



**Welcome to worship.** Welcome to the promise of Advent: Amid barren trees, Isaiah announces spring growth — a “shoot” representing new life in Jesus (11:1). Guests, please fill out a yellow welcome card and hand it to an usher or place it in the offering plate.

**Giving Tree Deadline for Gifts is December 10:** Thank you for all of the generous gifts purchased for our four organizations: Eras (serving seniors), Allies for Teens in Foster Care, Cross Lutheran Church and Reformation Lutheran Church. If you still have a gift that needs to be brought in, please bring it tomorrow, Monday, so that it can still be part of the distribution. Thank you, St. Matthew's, for your strong participation in The Giving Tree this year!

**2024 Church Offering Envelopes** are available for pickup on the lower level, near the church office, outside the glass walled conference room.

*“The Nativity”*

**St. Matthew's Christmas Pageant today:** Scenes dramatizing the story will be presented throughout the worship services accompanied by music from the Senior Choir, New Generation Choir, New Creation Choir, and Praise Kids. Thank you to the families of the participants for making this presentation possible!

**Allies for Teens in Foster Care is looking for Christmas gift wrappers** from 1-3:00pm on December 10th at St. Matthew's church, in Fellowship Hall. Adults wanted and welcome. Youth welcome with supervision. Make it a family activity and join us.



**The Pray Ground Children's area** in the sanctuary will return in January. Being able to add the additional seating during this busy time of year is one of the benefits of having this flexible space. We look forward to creating the Pray Ground space again after the New Year.

**Deborah Circle** will meet tomorrow, Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 11:30 am for a luncheon in the Upper Room.

**Today's Adult Education Session will be led by the Church Council**, to share results of the congregational survey this fall. We've received some great thoughtful responses, and the council has tabulated them, organized the data, and will share what we've learned about “the pulse” of St. Matthew's. Please join us in the Upper Room at 9:45 am.

**A large-print bulletin** is available from an usher. If it's helpful to you or someone you are worshiping with, please take one.

## Bulletin Insert for Sunday, December 10, 2023

**Upcoming Adult Education:** Join us, and let's learn together! We'll gather at 9:45 am in the Upper Room each week.

**Sunday, December 17** Advent Reflection with St. Matt's member Laura Staats  
*"Hope, Joy, Peace, Love and Everything in Between"*

**We're Giving FIVE Family Farms through ELCA Good Gifts** this Advent and Christmas. Help a family break the cycle of hunger and poverty – for good. A cow, a couple of goats, a dozen chickens, two pigs, farming tools, seeds and agricultural training can create a world of opportunity for a family living in poverty. With eggs, milk and meat to eat and sell, and tools and training to increase the harvest this gift can make all the difference. **How can you give toward this gift?** Give online at St. Matthew's website giving page:

<https://www.stmattslutheran.org/give> or you can give a check made out to St. Matthew's marked ELCA Family Farms. Each farm costs \$715; we have a goal of FIVE farms!

Need to give a gift to someone who already has everything they need? Give the gift of a donation toward Family Farms in their honor, and pick up a card on Sunday morning that you can use to notify them of your gift. See the display in the Upper Commons.

Help us give 5  
ELCA Family Farms



**December Saints Gathering is a Special Holiday Concert!**

**Wednesday, December 13, 11:30 am** (one week earlier)

**Elm Grove Women's Club Choir** Directed by Patricia Engelhardt

The choir sings beautiful arrangements of traditional carols and some fun new carols. We will gather upstairs for opening devotion and lunch, and then enjoy the concert after lunch. The concert begins about

12:15pm. Choose from turkey or ham City Market box lunch when you sign up; suggested donation is \$11. Sign up at the Welcome Center or in the church office by Monday am.

**Pastor Karen Natterstad is retiring** in the next few weeks. Her last Sunday with us will be Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Karen has been such a gift to our congregation, council, staff and overall ministry in her two and one half years with us. We wish her well in retirement, as she and her husband plan to travel more, as well as spend more time with family, including her mother. Join us on January 7<sup>th</sup> for a celebration of thanks for her time with us.

HOW CAN WE  
*thank*  
= God =  
ENOUGH FOR YOU?  
- 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10 -

**What's next for pastoral leadership?** The synod office staff is working to recruit another interim pastor for us, and we will share that information when we have it. Our Call Committee continues to work and hold interviews to find a new lead pastor to lead us. 2024 will be a year for new beginnings, again.

**Children's Ministry Gathering in December** 1st -5th graders Join us for Combined KFC & DOC **Friday December 15th from 6-8pm.** We will gather to have pizza, play flashlight tag, games, have sundaes and end with a devotion. Please sign up in the church office. Friends are welcome. Cost is \$5. Please bring a flashlight!!

**Stephen Ministry** We will be offering a Stephen Minister training class in Winter 2024! If you are interested and feel called to explore this ministry further please contact a Stephen Leader; Pastor Ann, Ginny Cleppe, Carl Johnson or Sue Swing. Or, leave a note at the Stephen Ministry Center in the Library Commons and we will follow up with you.

**Opportunity for Service in the December: Community Warehouse-Partners in Hope** Volunteers needed to prepare/bring food for a meal for Community Warehouse/Partners-In-Hope dinner, on Wednesday, December 20th for their Wednesday night Huddle. They work with men and women coming home from prison to realize their God given potential. Please contact Conor Williams, [conorw1@me.com](mailto:conorw1@me.com) if you can help. You can also sign up at the Welcome Center.

**Mt. Meru Premium Coffee has many choices for great Christmas gifts.**

- Regular and decaf, grind or bean, 12 oz., \$12.00.
- Christmas Sampler, 6 pack, \$20.00.
- Christmas Sampler, 4 pack, \$15.00.
- Flavored coffees, four choices, regular or decaf, 10 oz., \$12.00.
- Single serve, regular or decaf, 12 count box, \$9.00.
- Peaberry blend, drip or bean, 12 oz., \$18.00.
- Four pound packages, regular or decaf, drip, perk, or bean, \$52.00.

Some coffees are in stock and others need to be ordered. Stop by the coffee cart on Sunday for more information. ***Mt. Meru Coffee: Justice Never Tasted so Good!***

**Plan Now to Help at Church during the Christmas Services:**

The sign-up for worship assistants is now available at the Welcome Center for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, as well as Sunday, December 31, when we'll have one service at 10:00 am. Give of yourself during one of the most important holy events in the church year. Please consider signing up today!



**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! Or come to all of them. You're sure to enjoy the discussion. See the website, under 'Adult Ministry' for the complete list.

**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.

**Year-End Giving at St. Matthew's:** Bring in your offerings to the church office by Friday, December 29, 4:00 pm OR place them in the Sunday morning offering on Sunday, December 31, to have your donation applied to the 2023 giving year. If mailing an offering, please make sure it is postmarked by December 30, 2023. *Thank you* for your giving this year, and please help us to finish the year strong!

**Altar Flower & Library Book Sign-Up:** *The 2024 months are now available.* You are invited to sign up for altar flowers or a library book for a special occasion which will be noted in the bulletin. Flowers are \$35 and will be ordered from Alfa Flower shop by the office staff. Please make out a check and mark it for altar flowers. You can sign up to donate a book to the library. A book will be chosen for the occasion and you will be notified of which book was chosen. Library books are \$20. This is a great way to support St. Matthew's worship and library ministries in a meaningful way. The Sign-up Book is at the Welcome Center.

## Upcoming Events at St. Matthew's

<b>Sunday, December 17</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent Adult Education: Advent Reflection, 9:45am
<b>Sunday, December 24</b>	<b><i>Christmas Eve</i></b> <b>Services at 2:00pm, 4:30pm and 7:30pm</b>
Monday, December 25	<b><i>Christmas Day – Festive Worship at 10:00am</i></b>
<b>Sunday, December 31</b>	One Worship Service at 10:00am
Friday, January 5	Book Discussion Group, 7pm
<b>Sunday, January 7</b>	Pastor Karen's last Sunday at St. Matthew's Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, 8:30 & 11:00am Sunday School Big Group, Women's Group



### 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](http://www.stmattslutheran.org)**



## Thank you to our Assistants for worship services today!

*(It's possible some of these people have switched dates since the bulletin was printed on Thursday morning. "Open" means this spot was not filled when bulletin was printed.)*

**Volunteer Host:** Al Van Lith.

**Acolytes:** (8:30) Shane Fisher. (11:00) Claire Foley, Chase Slager.

**Coffee Hosts:** John & Kristen Charlson.

**Greeters:** (8:30) Dollie Kirchner. (11:00) Judy Holmes, Allan & Debbie Land, Dan Brovarney.

**Ushers:** (8:30) Jim Blomquist, Brad Forrest, Tim Goetsch, Luke Grove, Fred Reinke, Bob Kettler (*captain*). (11:00) Zachary Peterson, *open*.

**Welcome Center Host:** (8:30) Erin & Rob Weileder.

**Library Assistant:** Dee Birschel.

**Stephen Minister:** Sue Swing.

**Worship Technology:** (8:30) David Locher, Noah Weileder. (9:45) Brian Smith. (11:00) Ed Bross, Owen Schaar.

***Are you on the list of assistants??*** *If not, please consider helping on a Sunday morning with one of these tasks. It's a great way to get involved, meet people, and contribute to the Sunday morning worship experience for our church. Scheduling can be worked into your own schedule, and switching dates can always be arranged if you end up with a personal schedule change. Contact Al Van Lith at [al@stmattslutheran.org](mailto:al@stmattslutheran.org).*

YTD Financial Results as of:	12/03/23
General Fund Receipts	\$866,462
General Fund Budget (total monthly)	\$964,024
Over/(Under) Budget	(\$97,562)
 Benevolence Disbursements	 \$176,551
 Building Fund Balance	 \$169,199

Pastoral Staff: Karen Natterstad, Interim Lead;

Ann Williams, Associate Pastor

Volunteer Ministries/Small Groups/Adult Education: Sue Swing

Youth Ministries & Children's Education: Gretchen Haugse, Lynne Thomas

Children's Minister: Donna Gardner Manke.

Music Minister: John Paradowski.

Interim Senior Choir Director: Alexa Doebele.

Music Staff: Jeff Reeves, Amy Dankwardt, Heide Hughes

Technology Coordinator: Brian Smith.

Custodial Staff: Marsha Olson, Dave Fagerberg, Bob Gardner.

Church Administrator: Al Van Lith.

Office Staff: Bridget Smith, Sonja Mohr.



Link thru your smart  
phone camera to give  
to St. Matthew's