

# Welcome to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

December 17, 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.

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

**Today's 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”*

**Name Tag Sunday today:** Please put on a name tag this morning so that we may become better acquainted with each other.

**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.

**A Library Book** has been donated to the church library by Chris & Paul Davis in honor of their 56<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

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

## **Come Celebrate Christmas With Us:**

Christmas Eve Worship, Sunday, December 24

2:00 pm Family Service with a Children's Message and Praise Kids Choir

4:30 pm Traditional Candlelight Service with Holy Communion and message

7:30 pm Traditional Candlelight Service with Holy Communion and message

Christmas Day Worship, Monday, December 25

10:00 am Festive Christmas Service with Holy Communion and message

**Worship** for Sunday, December 31 will be all together at one service at 10:00 am. There is no Sunday School or adult education.

**Repairers of the Breach Bag Lunch Assembly Special Date:** We'll pack the Christmas bag lunches on Thursday, December 21 at 9:30 am We hope you can come to help!

## Bulletin Insert for Sunday, December 17, 2023

**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



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

The sign-up for worship assistants is 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! Talk to Al Van Lith for details or with questions.

**Pastor Karen Natterstad is retiring** in a 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.



**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.

**Bible Study Christmas Break:** No Bible Study on December 27 or January 3.

**ELCA Good Gifts Coin Boxes Can be Returned December 17 – 24** Did your kids bring home a coinbox like this from Sunday School? We hope your family is using it! Your donations will help families in need escape the cycle of poverty by giving them livestock, farming tools, seeds, and agricultural training to help them feed themselves and generate an income.



Boxes can be returned to Sunday School on December 17<sup>th</sup> or brought to church on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day and placed in the basket under the Family Farm display. Thanks for giving the gift of sustainability!

**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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!***

### **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.

### **January KFC & DOC dates**

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

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

We will gather for an afternoon of fellowship and fun. Join us for pizza and a game of Capture the Flag. Friends are welcome. Please sign up in advance through the church office or by replying to an email that you receive. Want to join the email list? Let us know at [office@stmattslutheran.org](mailto:office@stmattslutheran.org)

### **Upcoming Healing Services**

Those desiring special healing prayers for themselves and/or other are invited to come forward, along with their support persons or family members.

**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 am**

Check out the Healing Prayer Pew card in the rack in front of you for more information on St. Matthew's Healing prayer ministry and how you can participate.

### **Upcoming Events at St. Matthew's**

**Sunday, December 24**

Monday, December 25

**Sunday, December 31**

Friday, January 5

**Sunday, January 7**

**Christmas Eve**

**Services at 2:00pm, 4:30pm and 7:30pm**

**Christmas Day – Festive Worship at 10:00am**

One Worship Service at 10:00am

*No Sunday School*

Book Discussion Group, 7pm

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



## 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) Chase Assenheimer, Tyler Goeckermann. (11:00) Jacob Dahlgren, *open*.

**Coffee Hosts:** Don Birschel, Susan Bisswurm.

**Communion Preparers:** (8:30) Carrie Ralfs, Lila Welch. (11:00) Siena Petersen, Julie Schmidt.

**Communion Assistants:** (8:30) Nancy & Jim Bowen, Jen Richter. (11:00) Donna McAllister, Allan Land.

**Greeters:** (8:30) Megan Carroll, Bridget & Brian Smith, Betty & Stephen Williams. (11:00) Laura Murray, Sarah & Matt Frets, Joyce Biehn.

**Lay Readers:** (8:30) Marian Benz, Kevin Ede, Matthew Malten. (11:00) Tressa Bruggink, Margaret Crawford, Darla Hium.

**Ushers:** (8:30) Dan Hayes, Flash Gordon, Bill Richter, Brian Due (*captain*) (11:00) Maya Tanel, Robert Wedel.

**Lay Assistant:** (8:30) Conor Williams.

**Welcome Center Host:** (8:30) Diann Lebow.

**Library Assistant:** Peggy Klemme.

**Stephen Minister:** Julie Schmidt.

**Worship Technology:** (8:30) Michael Wolaver, *open*. (9:45) *Open*. (11:00) Eli Schaar, Stephen Skaife.

***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:	12/10/23
General Fund Receipts	\$888,208
General Fund Budget (total monthly)	\$964,024
Over/(Under) Budget	(\$75,816)
 Benevolence Disbursements	 \$188,626
 Building Fund Balance	 \$170,262

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