

• **A Very Merry Christmas to You** •  
Welcome to Christmas Worship!



**Welcome to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church Christmas Eve worship!** This holy night, we sing with the angels: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to all!" As Christians around the world rejoice in Christ's birth, we welcome you to worship. We rejoice in your presence. May the full meaning of Christmas be real to us all.

**Introduction to this Blessed Night:** In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

**Thank you! to the volunteers who are assisting with our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship services.**

**We thank Youth Artist Hannah Malloy** for sharing her talents and creating the bulletin covers we are using for our Christmas Celebrations.

**Our Christmas Celebration Services:**

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

**THANK YOU for Giving Family Farms through ELCA Good Gifts this Advent and Christmas.** 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. Each farm costs \$715; we **had** a goal of FIVE farms, but have blasted that goal and received enough donations for TEN farms! (so far!) See the display in the Upper Commons.

**ELCA Family Farms**

St. Matthew's  
Advent & Christmas  
Offering



**A poinsettia and a library book** have been given by Leslie & Pat Gardner in honor of Hillary's birthday.

**A Library book** has been donated to the church library by Priscilla Lietz in memory of her daughter Cheryl's birthday.

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

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

**Thank you for your generosity with our Giving Tree this year!** So many wonderful gifts, gift cards and postage stamps were donated, which benefited Eras (serving seniors in our community), Allies for Teens in Foster Care, Reformation Lutheran Church and Cross Lutheran Church. You have helped to make Christmas better for so many in our community!



**Interim Lead Pastor Karen Natterstad is retiring.** Join us on January 7<sup>th</sup> for a celebration of thanks for her time with us. 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.

**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.

**January KFC & DOC dates:** St. Matt's Children's Ministry groups

**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) Donna Gardner Manke is our children's ministry coordinator.

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

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!

### **Men's and Women's Ministry January Dates:**

**Women's Ministry Group** meets Sunday January 7 at 9:45 am – Start your new year off right  
**Women's Ministry** prepares a meal for Sojourner Peace House on Wednesday January 10<sup>th</sup>. Help is needed; look for the sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center  
**Women's Retreat** planned March 8-10 at Cedar Valley Retreat Center. Hold the dates and watch for details.

**Men's Ministry Beer Barons of St. Matthew's** – Kickoff meeting on Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at The Good City Brewpub at The Mayfair Collection from 8:00-10:00pm

**Men's Breakfast** – Saturday, January 20 at 7:30 am with "The Bridge Builders Story" with Kurt Owens. Come hear this fascinating story, enjoy some good food and fellowship, and learn how you might wish to get involved with this ministry!

**Monday Morning Men's Study** meets each Monday morning from 6:30-7:30am. Join us.

**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!

Pastoral Staff: Karen Natterstad, Interim Lead;

Ann Williams, Associate Pastor

Volunteer Ministries/Small Groups/Adult Education: Sue Swing

Youth Ministries & Children's Education: Gretchen Hauge, 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