

• **A Very Merry Christmas to You** •

Welcome to Christmas Eve Family 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. The best way to celebrate the greatest gift to humankind is to gather and thank our loving Creator. We rejoice in your presence. May the full meaning of Christmas be real to us all ... now and always.

Introduction to this Blessed Night: On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Paul reminds us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us.

Thank you! to the volunteers who are assisting with our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship services. Special thanks to our musicians, both vocal and instrumental, for their contributions to our joyful services.

Flowers at the altar are given by Priscilla Lietz in memory of her daughter Cheryl's birthday on December 27th.

Christmas 2021 at St. Matthew's:

Friday, December 24:

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Service

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Traditional Service

(Christmas message: Pr. Sheila Rawn)

10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Traditional Service

(Christmas message: Pr. Ann Williams)

Saturday, December 25: In Person Service only

10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service *(Christmas message: Pr. Karen Natterstad)*

Sunday, December 26:

One Service at 10:00 am *(Message: Pr. Karen Natterstad)*

Sunday, January 2:

One Service at 10:00 am *(Message: Pr. Sheila Rawn)*

All Services will be livestreamed and then archived on the St. Matthew's YouTube Page **(Except Christmas Day)**

Candle Lighting during “Silent Night”: We hope to resume this tradition next year, when the health risk of blowing out candles with masks off will be a safer thing to do. We are again keeping in mind the most vulnerable among us.

The Giving Tree: Thank you for your generosity in providing a record number of gifts, including many giftcards, through the Giving Tree.

The Church Office will be closed Mondays, December 27th, 2021, and January 3rd, 2022.

Call Committee Update: Progress toward a New Lead Pastor The Synod Staff is providing names of potential candidates, and interviews have begun. Please keep the Call Committee in your prayers as their work moves into a confidential period for interviews and discussion. *Members of the Call Committee: Nancy Bowen, Andrew Cherney, Diane DuBois, Brian Due, Natalie Ford Sajdak, Michael Wolaver.*

Your Special Offerings for Advent & Christmas have an important purpose -- mark your donations accordingly Advent/Christmas Special Giving will go to help refugees especially mamas & babies and pregnant women. Social ministry made this decision after reflecting on the fact Mary was far from home when she gave birth to baby Jesus and Matthew’s gospel tells us the family then fled to Egypt to escape King Herod’s jealous violence. We felt called to help the modern day women and babies who are in need, far from home, and escaping violence.

Offering Envelopes for 2022 are now available in the Library Commons. If you use the Simply giving electronic contribution method, you will not be assigned envelopes. If you don’t see a box of envelopes and you’d like one, there is a place on the envelope table to sign up to receive a box. Questions? Ask Al Van Lith in the church office.

2021 Year End Giving

As we get to the end of the year, in order to have your contributions appear on your 2021 Contribution Statement, we need to remind everyone that all contributions need to be either in the office or post marked by December 31, 2021.

- **St Matthew’s Website:** If you go to www.stmattslutheran.org and click on the Give button in the upper right hand corner, you can contribute via your credit card.
- **US Post Office:** If you want to mail in your check, the postmark on the envelope must be December 31, 2021 or earlier.
- **Drop off a check in the church office:**
Drop off your check in the church office by 4 PM on December 31, 2021, or earlier.

Following any one of these options will allow your 2021 contribution to St. Matthew’s to appear on your 2021 Contribution Statement.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Al Van Lith in the office at (414) 774-0441 or email him at al@stmattslutheran.org.

Job Openings at St. Matthew's: We currently have two openings, one for church administrator, a full-time position, and one for Youth and Sunday School Assistant, a 12-15 hr/week position. Please contact Pastor Karen Natterstad for more information: pastorkaren@stmattslutheran.org or 414-774-0441.

Looking Ahead to Next Year!

January 2 Adult Education With DAN BICE: "Resolution: I will read a book of the Bible this year." Why is it that so many people who profess to believe the Bible never read it? The scriptures are full of compelling, weird, infuriating and mystifying material. We will help you decide which book to pick, give you some important background information, and help you come up with a plan to keep this resolution. Beginning at 11:00 a.m., *At a later time, after the 10:00 worship service.*

A handwritten-style graphic that says "hello january" in a cursive font. The word "hello" is written above "january", and a horizontal line underlines the word "hello".

Beginning January 5th: Women's Book Discussion, Three Wednesday nights from 7-8 p.m. "Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion." Read chapters 1-3 for January 5th. Contact Sue Swing with questions.

Youth Mission Trip 2022 – Info Meeting Set for January 9th

Plans are underway for Mission Trip 2022! **We know the dates: June 18th – 26th,** but other details are still being worked out. Where will we go? How far will it be? What will we do? How will we get there? So many questions! We will have answers for you at an info meeting on January 9th at noon. The mission trip experience is open to kids who are currently in 9th – 12th grades. If you have any questions, talk to Gretchen Hauge.

First Fridays Book Discussion Group: Discussion by Zoom begins at 7 p.m.

Jan. 7, 2022 The Midnight Library by Matt Haig (304 pages)

More information available from Fred Heim, Book Group Coordinator.

Sunday School: Please Note that there is NO Sunday School on Dec. 26 or Jan. 2nd.

Pastoral Staff: Karen Natterstad, Interim Lead; Ann Williams, Associate Pastor; and Sheila Rawn, Interim Associate Pastor.

Volunteer Ministries/Small Groups/Adult Education: Sue Swing

Youth Ministries & Children's Education: Gretchen Hauge

Children's Minister: Donna Gardner Manke.

Music Minister: John Paradowski.

Music Staff: David Mohr, Jeff Reeves, Amy Dankwardt, Heide Hughes

Older Adults Coordinator: Julia Murphy.

Technology Coordinator: Brian Smith.

Library Coordinator (volunteer) Linda Wunderlich.

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

Office Staff: Al Van Lith, Bridget Smith, Sonja Mohr



The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman (1899-1981)