

St. Matthew

Lutheran Church

Newsletter

DECEMBER 2021

## ***The Lutherans: Posting Vital Information Since 1517***

### [Letter from the Pastor](#)

Greetings and peace to you in the name of Christ our Lord and Savior

This first weekend of December was always one of the most stressful weekends in my college career. Going to a Lutheran college there was a big emphasis put on the Christmas season and this culminated into a large performance put on by all five choirs, one wind ensemble, one orchestra, one hand bell choir, and an organist, we lovingly called Christmas with Wartburg. I remember how my anxiety spiked every year as my choir directors handed out pieces of music for the show, this usually meant that the stress of memorizing music would soon mix with the stress of the end of a semester. What was odd though that no matter how stressed we were, when the first weekend in December came around and it was time to perform the show all this stress melted away. Some would leave the stage in tears of elation, others would be left speechless, some would wish for just one more show even though they

knew full well of the stress it brings. After all the stress we endured, Christ still came into our midst and reminded us why it is we celebrate this season.

I reflect often on this coming weekend three years removed from my last Christmas with Wartburg. In the Christmas season how often do we find ourselves stressing out? How often do we find ourselves fretting over small things? Time and time again we make for ourselves these large, seemingly stressful situations and time and time again when December 25<sup>th</sup> rolls around we are reminded for the reason of the season. We are assured that Christ is coming into our world and all shall be well and stress free. In the moments of stress and uncertainty this is most certainly true. May it be true for you this Holiday season amidst the stress the world thrusts upon us.

In the world of clergy this is a stressful and joyful time of year. There is a lot that goes into the front end of planning for the Christmas season, yet when it gets here and the spirit works through that which has been put together it is a reminder why I am doing the work I am.

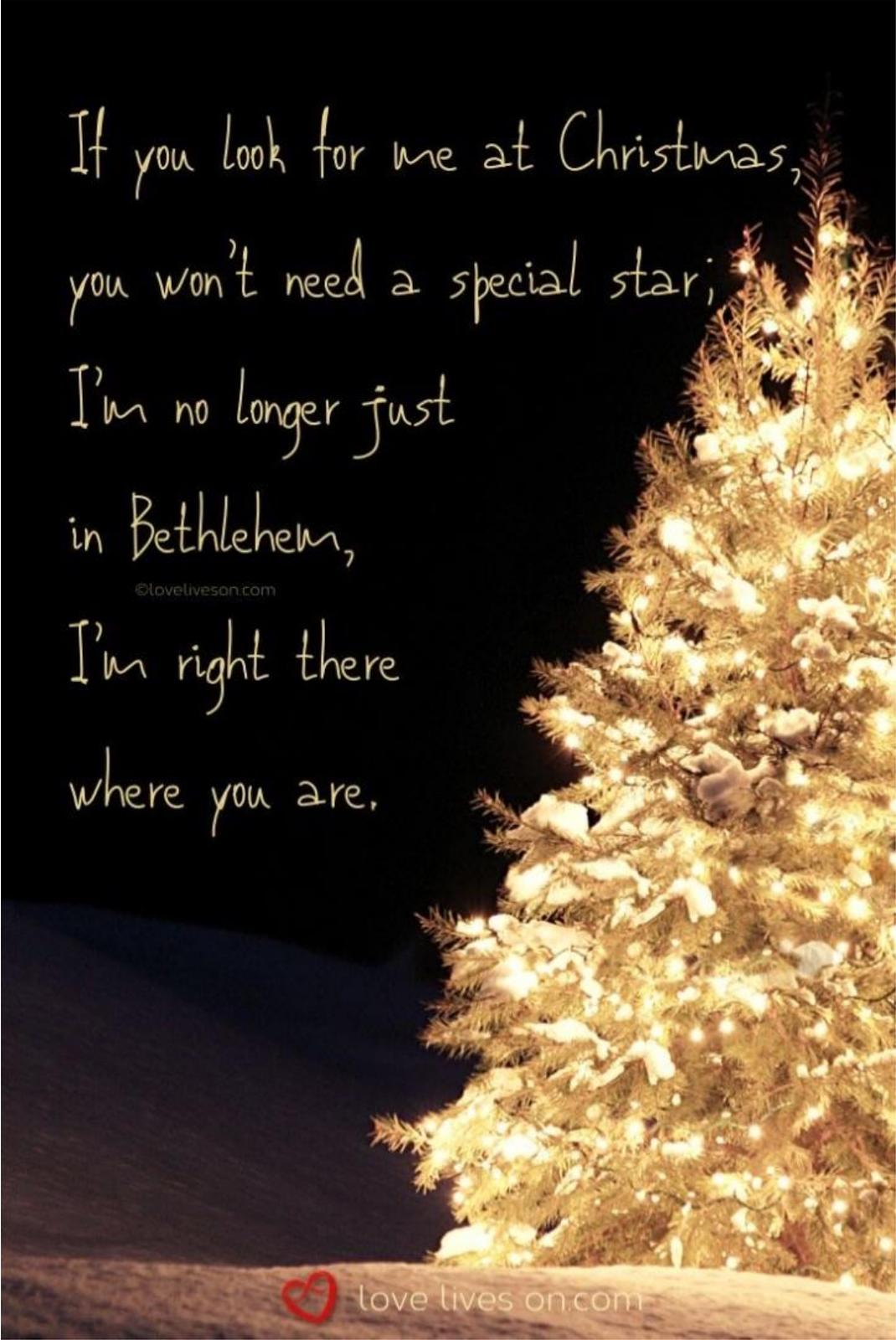
Please join us for our first in-person Christmas eve service since the pandemic, it will be very special to have you all back in the sanctuary once more. Saturday night worship is switching to Holden Evening Prayer for the season of Advent and Christmas, if you remember the midweek book studies last year you will remember this service. Join us on Saturday at 5:30 for this vespers service.

Starting the week after Christmas, Sunday morning worship will switch to a liturgical setting called, "Now the Feast and Celebration." There will be ample opportunity to learn the setting beforehand and some of the music you will know because we've been using some pieces from the liturgy for our hymn of the month the past two months. Christ is coming into

our world very soon and it is an exciting time to be a person connected with St. Matthew Lutheran. I wish you all a happy Christmas season and look forward to seeing you soon for worship.

Respectfully yours in Christ

Pastor Blake W. Shipman



If you look for me at Christmas,  
you won't need a special star;  
I'm no longer just  
in Bethlehem,  
I'm right there  
where you are.

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## President's Letter December 2021

Greetings to all!

We had a very successful annual meeting on November 21. Thank you to all members who participated in person and via Zoom. This year's meeting was our first attempt at allowing members to join remotely, and it went of very well from all reports. Again, our thanks to Roger Johnson for bring all this technology and his know-how to our church community. We will continue to explore ways to use this technology going forward to spread the message of the Lord and what is happening within our congregation. A special thanks again for all the hours of prep work Charlie Marsden and Connie Consedine put in bringing all the information together into a succinct and understandable format.

The building has been winterized, snow removal arrangements put into place, and plans for services for December and January (during Pastor Blake's absence due to health and school commitments) are finalized. We look forward to seeing everyone on the upcoming cold Saturdays and Sundays, weather permitting.

The Council will be busy during this time reviewing our current Strategic Plan (February) and exploring how to better utilize our fellowship hall and outreach opportunities while continuing to meet the spiritual needs of our members (and many more matters!). If you have any ideas for us to consider, please let me or a member of the Council know.

With that, looking forward to seeing all of you in church again soon.

Bryan Daniel. President

## Offering Envelopes for 2022

While our overall giving remains good, fewer members are using their offering envelopes on a frequent basis. As a result, some changes have been made to the number of boxes ordered for 2022.

Members who used their envelopes frequently, either during worship services or in directly mailing contributions to the church, should have a new box to pick up for 2022. These will be in the welcome center for pickup by the weekend of December 11<sup>th</sup> or sooner.

Members who have been giving through their investment accounts, through bank online bill pay or less frequently are encouraged to use the standard envelopes found in each pew. We can track your donation from the name on your check. If you make a cash contribution, please be sure to write your name in the space included on the outside of the envelope.

There will be some bundles of standard envelopes next to the numbered ones. Please take some of those home with you to use if you don't see a box with your name and number on it.

We are in good financial shape at the start of this new fiscal year, but face a challenge for next year. This is brought about by the death of some dear long time members and the fact that other members have moved out of the area. Each person's continued thoughtful giving will help us to reach our future goals together as a congregation.

Connie Consedine,  
Treasurer

## OUR MISSION OF THE MONTH

### Ixtapa Mission Congregation

**The focus ministry for the month of December will be:** *the Ixtapa mission congregation in Mexico.*

Each year in January, Shirley Friedl takes our offering directly to the church in Mexico. Please help support this very important ministry.

If you would like to give to our mission of the month, please put your donation in an envelope marked MONTHLY MISSION and place in the basket in the welcome center.

"When God Blesses You Financially,  
Don't Raise Your Standard Of Living. Raise Your  
Standard of GIVING"



Ron Lawson

Mazin Plumb

Sandra Wild



## November Financial Information



Income \$5,616.01

Expense \$10,475.0



St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
127 South High Street,  
Galena, IL 61036  
815-777-1134  
[www.stmat.net](http://www.stmat.net)

Service Times:  
Saturday at 5:30 pm  
Sunday at 10 am

Recorded Service Available On Our Website After 12:30 pm

Where God's work happens 7 days a week.  
A First Century Church for the Twenty-first Century  
Look for us on Facebook!