



# St. Matthew Lutheran Church Newsletter April 2020

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

[Letter from the Pastor](#)

Greetings and peace in the name of Christ Jesus

“wondrous love that seeks and finds me, Word that raises and unbinds me, When my sin enslaves and blinds me.”

These words come from a setting of the Kyrie by the musician Marty Haugen’s gift of God mass. It is a tune I find myself singing a lot these days. The Latin is chanted over and over and translates to Lord have mercy Christ have mercy Lord have mercy and on top of these words verses are sung yet it is this the 5<sup>th</sup> verse that speaks to me most. We are going on three weeks of social distancing and more cases are coming daily. This time has been hard for myself and I am sure for you as well. It is in these times of hardship we find ourselves calling out Kyrie Eleison, oh Lord have mercy upon us. It is fitting too for the Easter season we are on the verge of entering for before Easter comes, we mark the difficult time of Holy Week.

These 3 days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are days where we remember the suffering Christ endured up to the hour of his death.

We, however, are not marking these dates together. We are facing our own prolonged holy week in a sense. We are going through a historic event that looking we just cannot see the depth of yet. I am calling as many of you as I can in a day to see how you are holding up. I hear your hopes for life after this, I too hear your fears of what may come and do know I hold those same fears. The good thing about Holy Week though, as painful as it is to get through, is that it is just one week. The agony that was the death of Christ lasted three days and on that Sunday the sun rose, and the Son rose too. These are trying and unprecedented times for all of us. While we journey through feels like our own personal Holy Week, we hold out hope knowing that there will be an Easter dawn coming when the sun will rise, and we will rise too and gather hand in hand once more. COVID-19 is trying us all, yet the proclamation of the coming Easter is more powerful. Christ is risen and through his life we find our own life. Alleluia and may this strengthen and keep us in the difficulties that face us today.

Your ever faithful servant in Christ  
Pastor Blake W. Shipman



A letter from your president .....

“President’s letter

*“Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”*

Romans 5: 2-5

Dear friends, this past month has been like none other that we have ever experienced. While many of us have lived through eras of other health issues ie: other types of flu, polio, measles, smallpox, etc., and many of us have lived through times of war, none of those times were accompanied with the inability of worshipping together at church. With the rare exception of a terrible snowstorm, we have always been able to come together on the weekend and lean on each other both physically and in prayer. Many of us have received that well-needed strength by worshipping with our church family. We are sadly unable to do that at this time. Caution dictates that we must stay away from each other for a while. While Pastor Blake is doing a wonderful job of presenting the worship services online, it just is not the same as being there.

And so, my church family, I urge you to continue to pray for each other. Get outside and enjoy the beautiful weather the Lord is providing for us. Take a walk. Listen to the birds. Read your Bibles!! In a few short weeks we will be able to worship together once again. We will be able to celebrate the joy of Easter! The Lord is with each and every one of us. Place your concerns in His hands and thank the Lord for the many blessings he has bestowed on each and every one of us.

In His service, Bruce Etzel



# **Thank you...Thank you...Thank you...**

Thank you to Pastors Shipman and Baltz, Deb Hyland, Tanya and Todd Vanderlinde, Roger Johnson and Kim Miller for assembling, producing, and distributing the bulletins and worship services while we are in this time of separation. It helps so much to keep us all connected!



## CELEBRATIONS IN APRIL

### BIRTHDAYS

- 03 Marie Kempert
- 05 Alex Montgomery
- 08 Darin Wohler
- 14 April Oldenburg
- 15 Rachel Oldenburg
- 21 Deb Hyland
- 22 Ethan Baltz
- 25 Logan Farrey



### ANNIVERSARIES

- 14 John and Joanne Carlson
- 21 Bill and Elaine Fitch
- 26 Todd and Tanya Vanderlinde
- 28 Sam and Deanna Gross



## **Some words of wisdom from Martin Luther –**

When the plague enveloped Wittenberg in 1527, Luther gave great advice: Take care of yourself, then as you can in your vocation and are able, care for others. (The situations of the bacterial plague in Luther's day and today's viral pandemic are not completely parallel, so his determination in the passage below to "go freely" would be nuanced for pastors.) Luther continues:

*Use medicine; take potions which can help you; fumigate house, yard, and street; shun persons and places wherever your neighbor does not need your presence or has recovered, and act like a man who wants to help put out the burning city. What else is the epidemic but a fire which instead of consuming wood and straw devours life and body? You ought to think this way : "Very well, by God's decree the enemy has sent us poison and deadly offal. Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely. ...See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.*

(from an open letter from Pastor Matthew Harrison, President, The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, April 2020)

## MARCH FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Income. \$9,127.92

Expense \$10,448.53



41490370 pixel, 13.8" x 3.2 inch, 35,132,64 centimeter



## Church Office News

If you need to contact Kim Miller, Church Clerk or Tom Staver, Financial Secretary, please call the church office at 815-777-1134 or email [contact.stmatt@gmail.com](mailto:contact.stmatt@gmail.com). There is an inbox on the desk in the office for messages, receipts, etc. Please include your name, phone number and

Please submit articles, pictures or information for the newsletter to [contact.stmatt@gmail.com](mailto:contact.stmatt@gmail.com) no later than the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month.





St. Matthew Lutheran Church 127 South  
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815-777-1134

Service Times: Saturday at 5:30 pm  
Sunday at 10:00 am

Where God's work happens 7 days a  
week. A First Century Church for the  
Twenty-first Century. See our website for  
our full calendar of events and follow us on  
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