



St. Matthew Lutheran Church Newsletter April 2021

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[Letter from the Pastor](#)

Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus our risen Lord and Savior

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia! This Eastertide greeting we proclaim to each other is a whole lot sweeter this year. For the first time in a whole year when I proclaimed this within the walls of our sanctuary, the response I heard came from a whole lively congregation of people; and for this I thank God.

In the midst of the Easter season we commemorate the reality that Christ has left the tomb. All around this country there

are signs of life coming back to us once more. After a year's worth of uncertainty and darkness there are many stones being rolled away from our tombs and St. Matthew Lutheran Church is no different. Worship attendance is growing, we are back to singing once more, gone is the spoken word liturgy and in it's place comes the familiar setting from the Lutheran Book of Worship. While we are still not taking communion at the railing or going without masks, there are signs of life and normalcy returning to the congregation.

As more people get vaccinated and as the trend of covid infections within the surrounding area continue to fall, your council and I will be diligently monitoring the state of the world around us and will decide when it is safe for us to return to 100% normal operations. Till then, we remember the promise of the resurrection. The tomb is empty, our lord and savior is risen once more. As the apostle Paul writes in his first letter to the church of Corinth, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your

sting?” Because our savior lives we continue on living in hope and for that we give thanks to God almighty.

Respectfully yours in Christ

-Pr. Blake W. Shipman



President's Letter

Greetings to all!

First, I apologize for delaying the distribution on this newsletter by a couple days – my second shot of the COVID vaccine left me a little too tired for a day or so to type, but all is well and I am fully vaccinated now, and it feels liberating!

As I noted last month, as more people are vaccinated in-person attendance continues to climb. Over Holy Week our largest gathering exceeded 45. We are back to our regular liturgy schedule now with singing under our masks, and we are looking at what safety protocols need to be followed to return to regular communion at the altar rail. We hope to have an update on this in early May.

In the meantime, Roger Johnson completed installation of high-definition video and audio in the fellowship hall last week, so we can watch and listen to services in the sanctuary while downstairs. We can also watch DVDs, computer presentations, or listen to musicians after pushing just a few buttons; no more disconnecting cables and figuring out what cords need to be plugged in to which socket, and what needs to be powered on or off for any specific application. And we are, technology-wise, backward compatible for those with older devices. I look forward to having us all experience this new capability in the near future.

By the time you receive this newsletter you will have received an email about the annual Birdies for Charity campaign, and someone will be giving you a call to discuss it shortly. The important point here is that we will be clearer in presenting to you the capital improvement projects that we plan to use your contributions for to fund to keep improving our building infrastructure. Our congregation's financial health is good. The Birdies for Charities funds are ear-marked for mid- and longer-term projects that keep our building, utilities and technology viable well into the future.

Finally, just to let you know that over the next few months your Council members will be reviewing the Strategic Plan adopted by the congregation a few years ago. As part of that review, we will be discussing the lessons learned from Thom Rainer's book *the Post-Quarantine Church* which surveys the challenges church congregations like ours may be facing as we seek

to a return to a new normal. If any member would like to know more about this book or the on-going discussion, please contact a member of the Council for more information.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in church again soon.

Bryan Daniel



We recently received a letter from the pastors at the mission church we support in Ixtapa, Mexico. Shirley Friedl takes the money we collect here, directly to them every winter.

To Pastor Blake and the family of God at St. Matthew Lutheran Church.

How we thank God in the receiving of your kind gift for the ministries of Ixtapa Christian Fellowship here in Ixtapa Guerrero, Mexico. It's always a delight to have Shirley with us year after year and to know her heart for the work here. Do look after her well please, on our behalf.

We heard encouraging words about you, Pastor, from Shirley who speaks highly of you. Our prayer for you is that people will have a closer walk with the living God as they grow under your ministry there where you live.

Blessings and many thanks are sent your way from Ixtapa Christian Fellowship.

Sincerely in Christ

Rin and Rose Cavenagh





April 03

April 06

April 08

April 21

April 22

April 27

Marie Kempert

Jacquelyn Miller

Darin Wohler

Deb Hyland

Ethan Baltz

Jennifer Anderson



April 14
April 26

John and Jean Carlson
Todd and Tonya Vanderlinde



Income \$8,693.33

Expense \$9,384.15



St. Matthew Lutheran Church
127 South High Street,
Galena, IL 61036
815-777-1134
www.stmat.net

Service Times: Sunday at 10:00 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!

