



Saint Matthew
LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Matthew's Messenger
St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Volume 61

APRIL 2021

Number 4

The Light is Coming!

Beloved Children of God:

We begin this month in the midst of Holy Week, in the quiet following Palm Sunday’s shouts of Hosanna, in the deadly darkness before the dawn of new Resurrection life. This is perhaps the hardest place to be—knowing the joy that comes next in the story but not yet being able to celebrate.

In a way, Holy Week is a microcosm of our place in God’s salvation story. Evil, sin, and death have already been defeated on the cross, and we know how the story ends, which is in the redemption of all things and union with God. But we are still living in the in-between times. In the same way that we dwell in the sorrow of Christ’s passion before skipping ahead to Easter, we open our eyes to the reality around us instead of focusing only on the hereafter. We are cautioned not to become “so concerned with heaven that we’re no earthly good.”

We are indeed surrounded by grief: over a half million of our friends, family, and neighbors have died in the pandemic in just this country alone. As communities have begun easing restrictions on gathering in public places, mass murders have returned to the nightly news. And these are just the corporate tragedies; we each have our own personal burdens that we bear.

Even as we navigate these struggles, we trust in the future that God has promised to us, not because we turn away from present difficulties—not because we minimize them or grit our teeth through them or force a silver lining around them—but because we find God present with us in them. We would not choose suffering for ourselves, but God chose a fully human existence with all the joy and pain that experience brings. In Holy Week, we look to the cross, because from the cross, God looked on us with love.

Let us not lose hope as we eagerly await more joyful days—not just because God keeps God’s promises in the future, but because God is faithful to us right now.

+Pastor Traci

Home Communion

Pastor Traci is vaccinated and will be available for home communion visits. These can take place inside (for those vaccinated) or outside, weather permitting (for those not yet vaccinated). Call 814-935-9267.

Return to In-Person Worship

St. Matthew’s Council plans to welcome worshippers to in-person services beginning the first Sunday of next month (May 2nd). You will receive information about the schedule and safety measures later in the month; please keep an eye out for that mailing.

Worship Times during April

Facebook Schedule

Morning & Night Prayer, Monday - Friday, 9:00 A.M. & 9:00 P.M.

Holden Evening Prayer, Wednesday, 7:00 P.M.

Kids' Devotions & Song Time, Tuesday & Wednesday, Midday

Worship Schedule for Holy Week is on page (4) of the Messenger this month.



Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our Hands.

Letter from Bishop Rhyne

March 17, 2021

Dear sisters and brothers of the Allegheny Synod,

May God's grace and peace be with you. We have now lived one full year with COVID-19. March 15, 2020 was our last 'normal' Sunday. That day I was blessed to worship with Trinity Lutheran in Johnstown and that afternoon gather with First Lutheran in Portage to celebrate the installation of Pastor Mark Fisher. We could still shake hands, be closer than six feet, and none of us had masks. The following week our statewide shutdown began. It has been one year-- however, it feels like much more time has passed.

I believe that is because we have carried so many burdens during this pandemic. We were working (and we still continue to work) to take care of our family, our friends, and ourselves when the world seems to be turning upside down. This has been hard. If you are like me, you are ready for all of this to be behind us. We are all ready to be in that place where we have gotten a majority of people vaccinated and we can see each other face to face again, safely.

I want to first thank God and our Lord Jesus that we have been given the strength and courage to make it through thus far. Throughout the pandemic, Jesus continued to lead and guide us even when the church buildings were closed. **Because of Christ, the work of the church has continued on.**

In this last year, congregations learned how to be church together even though we were apart. We have learned about livestream and Zoom services. In better weather we took the worship of Jesus into our parking lots and into the streets. Many congregations found ways to make sure that our members who were most vulnerable were being taken care of. We have seen congregations find new ways to reach out to and support the community. The Holy Spirit has shown us, time and again, that God will find a way to see that God's will is done. God does that in and through you. My deep and abiding prayer is that this is a lesson that we can take from this time.

I also thank God that we have seen rates of COVID infection begin to go down since the beginning of February. We have seen vaccines begin to be distributed. I hope you see these as signs that we will get through this.

What is important for us now is to continue listening to and following that recommendations of the CDC and the PA Dept. of Health. Since things are finally looking a little better, the temptation is for us to slacken our adherence to our safety protocols. That is a natural human response. We want this pandemic to be behind us, we want to move on with our lives. **However, if we stop these safety practices before health and science officials tell us it is safe to do so, we could see another spike in infections and the spread of the virus.**

As we begin to gather together more in groups, and we are prayerfully considering when we will resume our worship in person, I cannot overstate how important it is for us to continue the good work that we have been doing. Continue to maintain social distance. Keep wearing your masks when in public. Until we begin to reach the point where 70 – 80% of the population is vaccinated continue to wear masks, use hand sanitizer, and refrain from group singing in worship.

We are going to get through this. We have to hold on for a little bit longer and make sure we are doing our part to prevent any further infection and transmission of this virus.

May God bless you and keep you.

+Bishop Michael Rhyne

ENDOWMENT FUND



Third Century Fund (Endowment Fund)

The Third Century Fund had good earnings year in 2020 and as a result has \$5,437 for distribution in 2021. You or your committee may request funding in writing by contacting David Lehman, chairperson or committee members Allen Kuster, Laura Orczeck, Beth

Garner or Pastor Traci.

Deadline to submit a request is Sunday, May 30, 2021. Funds will be distributed in June 2021. You can email Dave at: dlehman1@atlanticbb.net

The following is from the by-laws of the Third Century Fund and outline the guidelines for fund requests.

PURPOSE

The St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund is established to encourage responsible Christian stewardship and to promote the mission of the congregation. In response to God's love and mercy, the Endowment Fund seeks to enhance and expand the mission outreach objectives of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Members and friends of St. Matthew congregation are encouraged to practice responsible Christian Stewardship by making contributions to the Endowment Fund. There are a variety of ways such gifts can be made such as, Cash, Securities, Bequests through wills or living trusts, Life insurance policies, charitable gift annuity and Life estates.

The Endowment Fund provides financial support for the church in a manner that is separate from the expenditures normally funded by the annual operating budget of the congregation,

USE OF THE FUND

All contributions to the St. Matthew Lutheran Church Endowment Fund will be undesignated and added to the principal balance of the fund. The Endowment fund principal balance will be retained and only the dividend income will be used for annual disbursements.

Consideration for awarding fund requests will be given using the following guidelines.

1. Youth of all ages - scholarship support of congregational members and their children; for youth events, for church camps or similar Christian programs and education.
2. Christian outreach ministries and missions of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, its members and the ELCA.
3. Worship and music - support for the worship of St, Matthew.
4. Capital Projects - major renovations or building projects of St. Matthew.

April Birthdays

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Amanda Decker | 6 Wendy McCauley | 17 Jace King |
| Paul Helsel | 7 Abby Carder | Michael Lamborn |
| James C. Walter | Camden Kuster | James Russell |
| 2 L. Colin Hoover | 12 Robert P. Dickson | 18 Robert E. Ritchey |
| 3 Rachel L. Kensinger | Keith A. McGraw | 20 Ruth E. Johnson |
| 4 Jane S. Carpenter | 14 Elaine Hoover | 21 Miles I. Lamborn |
| Makaila Tremmel | 15 Mary Jane Allison | 23 Randy C. McGraw |
| 5 Jay Hoenstine | | |

April Anniversaries

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 17 David B. & Linda L. Lehman 50 th | 25 Wade T. & Michele M. Smith |
| Bruce & Brandi Ross | 30 Hal & Nan Grove 55 th |
| 25 Jim & Pam Russell | |



Camp Sequanota Registrations

The Finance Committee is making you an offer they hope you can't refuse. In past years we have paid your way to camp if your family paid the registration fee. Now the Finance Committee is recommending to Church Council that we offer the same deal to a friend who would like to go to camp with you. **The friend does not have to be a member of St. Matthew.** If your friend's family can pay the registration fee, like your parents do, the committee is asking Council to pay the remainder of your friend's fee for a regular week of camp just as they do for you. Should the family of any camper aged child of St. Matthew, or a friend's family, be unable to pay the registration fee they should call the Pastor or speak to a member of Church Council. Church Camp is a life altering experience. **Now our young people can invite a friend to share that experience with them.**

Register online at: www.sequanota.com

Sequanota is open and getting ready for our spring, summer and fall seasons. Pr. Nathan has made a quick video to share some exciting news about our summer programs. Scholarships, Scholarships, Scholarships!!!! Watch the youtube video, link it to your congregations' website or social media account, play it during your announcements - either virtually or in person.

<https://youtu.be/4MI6gduJuak>

If you have questions please contact us at 814-629-6627, nathan@sequanota.com or check out the website at www.sequanota.com.

The camp is also offering pool passes and swimming lessons to the public this summer. Check out the website!

God's peace,

The Sequanota Staff

The Rev. Nathan A. Pile, Executive Director

Sequanota Lutheran Conference Center & Camp

P.O. Box 245

Jennerstown, PA 15547



Transformational Ministry

Each month and on a daily basis, we ask you to join us in prayer. Our April special prayer request:

Lord God Almighty, shaper and ruler of all creatures, we pray for your great mercy, that you guide us towards you, for we cannot find our way alone. Continue to guide us through this time with *the Covid-19 Virus, here and around the world. God have mercy, open our hearts to hear you through your words for mankind. Amen*

As we search our hearts for answers to today's problems, let us pause and hear the words from the tomb "HE HAS RISEN" AND IS WITH US.

Please join us in daily prayer as we lift these concerns to the Lord.



St. Matthew's Website www.stmatthewLC.com

Have you checked out the website lately?

- ❖ You can find a monthly calendar of events
- ❖ Weekly copies of the Sunday Bulletin
- ❖ Monthly copies of "The Messenger"
- ❖ Links to ELCA important sites
- ❖ Online giving options
- ❖ And so much more

We also are on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/stmatthewlc

APRIL OFFICE HOURS:

Lori's Office Hours: Every Tuesday & Thursday
9 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Pastor's Office Hours: Every Monday &
Wednesday 1-4 p.m. (except Wed., April 14th)

Worship Schedule for Holy Week:

Monday: Hymn Devotions with Dr. Smith

Tuesday: Morning & Evening Prayer at 9 a.m. & 9 p.m.

Wednesday: Holden Evening Prayer at 7 p.m.

Thursday: Stations of the Cross, available starting at Noon

Friday: Good Friday Tenebrae, available starting at Noon



April 2021

The common ant is one of God’s most amazing creatures. An ant is able to carry 50-60 times its own weight. An ant uses this ability in order to bring food back to the entire colony.

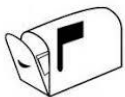
People have amazing abilities too, as well as an imagination that allows us to put these abilities to a multitude of uses! You have no idea how much you can do to use your abilities to help mankind until you try. In our complex society, everyone’s abilities and skills can be put to use to improve all of our lives.

Christian stewards recognize that these abilities were all given to us by God and that the ultimate reward comes in putting them to use in God’s service. In Galatians 5:13, Paul writes:

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.”

Using our abilities in service to one another ultimately transforms our lives. The current issue of *Stewardship* makes this point clearly in a story about a young artist named Joseph Peterson who used his abilities and imagination to spread God’s Word and built a very successful Gospel card business, while fulfilling the lives of many others.

Prayer: *Gracious and loving God, help us to glorify you in all that we do and serve you with diligence and dedication. Through Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen*



**NOTE!
ADDRESS CHANGE**

NEW ADDRESS

Nell Snyder
212 Esau St
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Ways to Make Donations to St. Matthew

Giving Online: Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions and view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Simply follow these easy steps:

- 1) Visit the church website at “www.stmatthewlc.com”
- 2) Click on the “Give” button, (on the top white banner)
- 3) Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your recurring contributions.

QRCode Offerings:

- 1) Visit “Play Store on your mobile device”
- 2) Find QR Code (this app is free)
- 3) Click on the “Install” the app
- 4) Open the app on your device
- 5) Scan the QRCode: (follow the prompts)



Martinsburg Food Pantry

The Food Pantry will be open for distribution of food on Thursdays, April 1 and April 15 from 9:00 until 11:00 am.

Those Volunteers helping will be from the Clover Creek Church of the Brethren besides the regular volunteers.

These are the items most needed for April:

Beverages, Hamburger/Tuna Helper, Scalloped Potatoes, Cans of Apple Sauce, and Soap Products

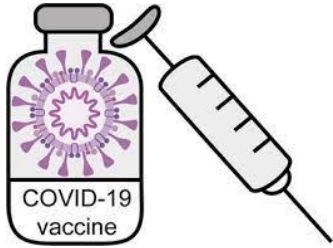
Many thanks for your monetary gifts, food and paper items donated to the Food Pantry.

Linda K. Smith

Prayer Vigil

Scheduled at St. Matthew Lutheran Church on Friday, April 2, from 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Members are asked to commit one half hour to pray for any concerns of a personal, church, or worldwide nature. **We are asking for you to pray at home.**





COVID VACCINE INFORMATION

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is making the COVID-19 vaccine available to adults over the age of 65 and people with certain health conditions. You can call the PA Department of Health hotline at 1-877-724-3258 for information about the vaccination process.

To get access to the vaccine, click on the following link:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>

www.vaccinatepa.org

Then click on the box titled "When Am I Eligible?"

Scroll down to the "COVID Vaccine Eligibility Quiz" (click in the appropriate answers)

If you are eligible, you can scroll down your screen to see the map of available vaccination sites; click on the dot to find the phone number and/or website for your location of choice.

The website of the pharmacy or distribution site will walk you through the process of making an appointment or tell you if appointments are not available. If no appointments are available but you are eligible to receive the vaccine (you are 65+ or you have a qualifying health condition), keep checking back for an appointment.

If you don't have access to a computer, you can use the following phone numbers to register for the vaccine:

Nason Hospital: 814-224-6224

UPMC 1-844-876-2822

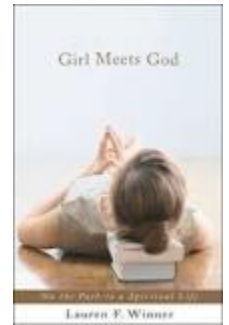
If you are having trouble navigating the websites, call Pastor Traci at 814-935-9267 for help.

Holy Hike

Our first Holy Hike of 2021 will be at Canoe Creek State Park, Saturday, April 24th at 10AM. We will walk a little over a mile of relatively flat terrain and worship with communion. Meet at the far left of the main parking lot, near the bridge below the educational building. State Parks require masks indoors and for outdoor programs; please wear a mask.

Book Discussion

We will meet on Zoom to discuss Lauren Winner's "Girl Meets God" on Thursday, April 22nd at both 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. The whole book will be fair game for discussion during both sessions, but we can continue the following week if we need more time.



Simple, Serene, Small Retreat & 5K Weekend at Camp Sequanota

Camp has opened the Bowersox Enrichment Center, with Covid mitigation measures, for midweek getaways. Pastor Traci will be in residence Wednesday, April 14 through Saturday, April 17, offering Morning and Evening Prayer and yoga. Additionally, the 5K Benefit weekend runs that Friday through Sunday. If you want to retreat or participate in the 5K, contact Sequanota at 814-629-6627. You can still reach Pastor Traci at camp by cell phone (814-935-9267), but if you have an immediate pastoral emergency, please call Pastor Drew McCaffery at 814-538-9036.



Many thanks for the prayers and cards that were sent to our family members. Lyndsay Yon has recovered fully, Betty Helsel is home and still recovering, and Michelle Iwanski is home and still recovering. *Lori Tremmel & Families*

2021 COUNCIL DIRECTORY AND MINISTRY STAFF

Pastor	Rev. Traci Marriott	935-9267	Property	Ed Kreider	793-4302
Admin. Assist.	Lori Tremmel	696-3802	Christian Ed.	Jean Sinal	793-9507
Assist. Admin. Assist.	Laura Orczeck	224-1208	Evangelism	Vacant	
President	Melissa Fetzner	793-2735	Stewardship	Greg Haffling	793-9827
Vice President	Peggy Steinfurth	515-6205	Finance	Jim Barley	793-4623
Secretary	Elaine Smith (434)	981-0560	Social Ministry	Peggy Freyer	614-4552
Treasurer	Beth Garner	793-3966	Worship & Music	Jane Fagans	793-4401
Financial Secretary	Anna Klepser	793-2094	Staff Support	Kaye Burket	224-5224

HIGHLIGHTS BY COUNCIL IN MARCH

- Council voted last month on the purchase of a new program from Park Security to enable us to reprogram the Key Fobs at a cost of \$1,200.00. Council during the March meeting voted on taking the money from the Dedicated Building Fund Line Item.

Giving

2021 February		Year to Date as of 2/28/2021	
Current	\$13,764.25	Current	\$25,342.19
Benevolence (Synod)	\$1,602.00	Benevolence (Synod)	\$3,186.50
Local Needs	\$907.00	1st Qrt. Local Needs	\$2,084.99

2020 February		Year to Date as of 2/29/2020	
Current	\$13,576.46	Current	\$28,749.84
Benevolence (Synod)	\$2,340.00	Benevolence (Synod)	\$3,879.50
Local Needs	\$1,142.50	1st Qrt. Local Needs	\$2,231.50

2021 Income vs Expenses		
Current	February	Year to Date as of 2/28/2021
Actual	(\$1,379.47)	(\$6,127.43)
Per Budget	(\$4,816.08)	(\$11,818.48)
<u>Benevolence</u>		
Per Commitment to Synod	(\$564.67)	(\$1,146.83)

On Easter Day

By Celia Thaxter, 1835-1894

Easter lilies! Can you hear
 What they whisper, low and clear?
 In dewy fragrance they unfold
 Their splendor sweet, their snow and gold.
 Every beauty-breathing bell
 News of heaven has to tell,
 Listen to their mystic voice,
 Hear, oh mortal, and rejoice!
 Hark, their soft and heavenly chime!
 Christ is risen for all time!



In the beginning, God created our first parents to live in the Garden of Eden. They knew God, walked with God, and there was no death. They were granted life in perfect communion with the Lord who created both heaven and earth as well as themselves. But by the 3rd chapter of the Bible-Adam and Eve broke the one command that God gave them for their safety; this meant a broken covenant and relationship with God. Sin entered into the world because humans did things their own way, rather than listen to the direction and loving care of their heavenly Father.



The good news is that even though our first parents left the garden, God never left them. The entire story of the rest of Holy Scripture is that of God calling us back to life with God. God is continuously calling all people back to God's eternal life and turning us from sin and our own destruction.

God was so committed to this work of reclaiming leaders like Moses, and David, he sent prophets like Isaiah and Elijah. All of them consistently telling them and us to turn from our evil ways and to follow the path that God has called us to. Frequently, neither they nor we listen.

If we search Holy Scripture we see that God is much more patient than any of us would ever be. Again and again God keeps sending God's Word and messengers to call people out of darkness and into the eternal light.

Eventually, after thousands of years of calling to us, God did an amazing and unexpected thing. The eternal God took on a human body and came to live with us: Jesus. He is the living God who came into our existence to save us from our sin and our own self-destructive behavior.

God did this in Jesus Christ because God loves us. Jesus loves us. We matter, and are personally known, by the Lord who holds all eternity. You are loved more than you can ever know; loved by the creator and the source of all things.

We see that love poured out for us in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ-- Jesus became flesh to save us. He gave up his body and his blood on the cross. On the cross we see that Jesus Christ loves us so much that he would die for us.

And then, when it looked like sin and death had won, Jesus rose from the dead-- showing us he is more powerful than death. Death cannot hold the one who is the source of all life. This same Jesus has claimed us in the waters of baptism, promises to be with us until the end of the age, and says he will not lose any of us who have been entrusted to his hand.

The one who is more powerful than death is the one who has you and has claimed you. God's answer to the original sin of our first parents was to come to save us from sin, death, and from ourselves.

The Risen Lord Jesus Christ shows us the power and love of God. The power to re-write the rules of reality and make death subject to his will. We see the love of God who stops at nothing to call us back and set us on the right path.

Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia! I pray that you are fully aware of the blessed presence of our Lord Jesus as we celebrate his resurrection and his victory over sin, death, and the devil. Happy Easter!

+Bishop Michael Rhyne
Easter 2021