

Good News
From New Road
St. Matthew Lutheran Church, God's Family in Service

December 2020

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



A liminal space is the time between the “what was” and “what’s next.” It is a sacred space of transition, waiting, longing, and often, not knowing, and a lot of times grief. We have been in a constant state of liminal space since the pandemic began. A place that has been met with grief, sadness, broken up with bits of joy and laughter.

Whether we are grieving the loss of a loved one or for things that have not been, it is a time of feeling caught in between. Everything we thought we knew is turned on its head, and we struggle to find a sense of “normal” knowing that there is and will be no normal. The holidays, we are told, is a time of joy and light and festivity, but, for those in the liminal space, the thought of going through the heirloom ornaments and setting the table for Christmas dinner does not bring forth images of light and merriment. Instead, they are simply more painful reminders of what was lost and who is absent.

Advent is a season of liminal space, where we exist in between. Derived from the Latin word “adventus” meaning “coming,” it moves us into a new year in the life of the church. But rather than moving straight from Christ the King coming in glory to the joy of the anticipated Christ child’s birth, as our culture might have us do, we enter into a period of waiting, restlessness, and longing. In many modern churches, the color of Advent is blue. Blue is a color traditionally associated with sadness. Elvis croons about having a Blue Christmas and, when we’re down or depressed, we’re “feeling blue.” But the blue of the season of Advent carries with it countercultural tones, challenging us to see this color, and this time of darkness, in a different way. Blue in Advent takes on a second meaning. As Diana Butler Bass notes:

“Blue candles symbolize the color of the sky right before dawn, that time when the deepest dark is just infused with hints of light. Blue holds the promise that the sun will rise, and even after the bleakest, coldest, longest night, the light will break forth as the new day arrives. Blue may be the color of sadness, but blue is also the color of hope.”

Advent is countercultural. It challenges the accepted norm that this is a time reserved for light and merriment. Instead, we are given a new narrative where the in between is not a place to be feared or avoided, but a place to dwell, where light and dark can and do coexist, where blue can represent both sadness and hope, and where the word “rejoice” is sung in a minor key. It is in the midst of the interplay of light and dark that we are given the promise of Emmanuel – God with us – coming into the world, into that liminal space, as the blue of our grief gives way to the blue signaling the dawn of a new day.

Advent Hope to you and yours!

Pastor Kelsey

(article adapted from Deacon Heidi Larson – “Grief and the Holidays”)



Church Council Zoom meeting November 17

Members present: Stephanie Abright, Sally Engelbrecht, Sharon Gripp, Shelly Jasek, Paula Jenson, Pastor Kelsey, Kirk Krause, Paul Larson, Linda Stanford, and Jeremy Wallace

Members absent: Cynthia Tingle

- The checking account balance, as of October 31, 2020, is \$232,213.64. Income less expenses is \$10,120.32 for the month of October and \$47,364.62 year-to-date.
- St. Matthew's Reformation Day event was successful. Thank you to Hope Cotner for taking an idea and putting it all together.
- Thank you to everyone for thoughts, prayers, and reaching out to Pastor Kelsey during her quarantine time and a special thanks to Pastor Kris for doing the online service.
- Due to COVID-19 numbers rising, all in-person worship services and small groups are stopped; however, the Facebook online services will continue. Pastor Kelsey will continue Evening Prayer and Jarvis and Jesus on a weekly basis.
- The Thanksgiving Service will be on Tuesday, November 24, via online.
- Advent Services will be on Wednesdays in December.
- The Congregation Meeting will be on Sunday, December 13 following the worship service. It will be an online meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Engelbrecht, Secretary

This format is to provide highlights of the Council Meeting. A copy of the minutes will be available from the church office no later than the end of each month.

Thrill of Hope - Advent Worship

We are partnering with First Lutheran to offer midweek advent services over zoom. They will begin at 7:00 p.m. If you don't have access to a computer you can dial in to the services. The **meeting ID**



for the **Advent services** will be **840 3011 7186**



December 2



December 9



December 16

Grace to Go

On **Sunday Dec. 6** from **3:00p.m-5:00p.m.**, you are invited to drive thru at St. Matthew to receive communion and from Pastor Kelsey. Advent devotional material will be available in addition to the new Portals of Prayer. Like the last event please enter the church Parking lot from New Road, keep distance from the car in front of you, and have a mask on in your car when the windows are rolled down.

Christmas Eve Worship



A thrill of hope - the weary world rejoices. We are weary of computer screens and phone calls. We would much rather be gathered together shoulder to shoulder singing "Silent Night" by the glow of candles, but just like many churches this year, we recognize this isn't our reality. And though we remain home, we cling to the promise of Emmanuel - God with us, wherever we are, no exceptions. This is the hope that doesn't fade or disappoint.



The worship and music committee has been busy planning and preparing to bring some of those special Christmas Eve moments to our online worship. Christmas Eve worship will premiere on Facebook on **December 24 at 7:00 p.m.** and on zoom for those joining by phone.

Poinsettias

As we won't be in our space Christmas Eve, we will be doing honorary poinsettias this year. Instead of money going to purchase a physical plant, the money collected will go to Lutheran Sunset Ministries. If you would like to purchase an honorary poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one, please fill out the attached form and send a check or cash for \$10.00 putting poinsettia in the memo line. Names will be printed in the worship materials. **The deadline is December 18.**

Zoom Bible Study

Wednesday Morning Bible study will be on pause until after Christmas.

Holy Happy Hour

Join members of this community for fellowship online, Thursday nights at 5:30 pm. This is a great way to connect with those we have been missing these last couple of months. If you need information on how to participate email or call Pastor Kelsey.



Dear St. Matthew Family,

Thank you, members of St. Matthew, for all the lovely cards, texts, phone calls, food, prayers, donations and support during this difficult time. We were moved to tears by your many expressions of Christian love and caring.

The family of Ron Peterson

Prayer Requests and Concerns

If you have an update or a concern, please call the office and leave a message or reach out to Pastor Kelsey directly.

**Members with Prayer Concerns:**

Alfred Gstattenbauer, Steve Jensen, Agnes Decker, Clydine Arthur, Ron Lambring, Lauren Roller, Elnora Schwake, Eunice & John Linda, Ty Henrichs, Tammy Vickrey, Stephanie Partin, Irene Erickson, Melba Hafer, Mary Ann Lippe, Toni Barnum, Darlene Cureton, Denise Self

Those for whom prayer is requested:

Allen Fields (Beth Pristash)
Carlos Remedios, Rodney Roller, Patrick Dalton, Brenda Light, Blake Griffin, Lou Brazil (Terry Roller)
Roger Sanders (Clydine Arthur)
Jimmy Moore, Laura Burney (Ross & Kim Browne)
Philip Reyna (Mary Koon)
Melva Williamson (Donna & Bobby Zimmerman)
Larry Warenke (Jean Moeller)
Kay Peterson (Mary Herring)

**It's the Season for Giving to our Staff**

The Church Council is accepting **donations for our staff's Christmas gifts.** Please make your check payable to St. Matthew and note "Staff Christmas" in the memo line. **The deadline is December 15.** Please either mail to the church or drop off by the church office during regular business hours.

Thank you, Church Council

Congregational Meeting

The annual congregational meeting will be on **December 13 at 10:30 a.m.** via zoom. Information will be sent electronically for those that receive the church email, and mailed to those who do not. If you do not receive a packet in the mail prior to the meeting either over email, or regular mail, please contact the church office. We will use the same zoom link we do for Sunday mornings.

Blue Christmas Service

On **December 21 at 7:00 p.m.** we will have a blue Christmas service over zoom. This is a service of hope designed for anyone in the community who may not feel like celebrating. During the holidays, grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss can be magnified. The Blue Christmas service acknowledges pain and longing, while offering hope and comfort for the broken-hearted. By gathering on the longest night of December, we anticipate the coming light of the world.

Melva Williamson (Donna Zimmerman)
 Jerry Murphy (Peggy Tooker)
 Ty Croford (Linda Stanford)
 Janice Richter (Meridith Sellers)
 Patsy Forrester (Bill and Diane Jones)
 Buddy Allen (Bradley Linda)
 Debbie Vonasek (Elnora Schwake)
 Vicki Terry (Carol Linda)
 Tera Grace Bush (Jean Bush)
 Kenneth and Paula Moerbe

Wedding anniversaries

4 Lee & Marilyn Cruse
 7 Donny & Shannon Adams
 10 John C. & Eunice Linda
 10 Lee & Kathy Nordt
 16 Terry & Betty Bracken
 17 Karl & Karen Aho
 27 Tommy & Jean Bush

NEWSLETTER 

We express our Christian Sympathy to:

† the family and friends of Henry Lippe, Charles Cook, and Jo Bob Gough

Thank you for keeping members of the congregation, and their friends and family in your prayers. We know that situations change, and as we work to ensure best care of those in need of prayer, we will keep people on the list for a month at a time. Please contact the church office with any additions or removals.

The **monthly newsletter deadline** is the **3rd Sunday of each month**. Please send submissions to cvanauken@grandecom.net or place your handwritten information and thank you notes in the wooden box near the entrance of the workroom. Thank you.

Online Calendar

As we work to keep our online calendar up to date, please contact Sally Engelbrecht, sengel1918@yahoo.com, for any additions or corrections

Offering Giving Option

Simply Giving is offered through the church office for automatic withdrawal from your checking or savings account to give to St. Matthew Lutheran Church. In addition, you can give from your phone using the GivePlus+ app and entering zip code 76710 to find St. Matthew.

MERRY
 CHRISTMAS

December birthdays

8 Brooke Evans
 8 Karl Mattlage
 9 John Linda
 10 Patti Hueston
 11 Diane Jones
 11 Teresa Umberger
 18 Betty Krienke
 21 David Evans
 21 Bob Kane
 28 Sophia Martin
 29 Bill Jones
 29 Carol Linda
 31 Abigail Jasek

Honorary Poinsettia Order Form

If you would like to purchase an honorary poinsettia for Christmas worship, please complete the form below, place in an envelope along with your check or cash payment (poinsettia in the memo line), and send it in the mail or drop it by the church office during regular business hours. Money collected for honorary poinsettias will go to Lutheran Sunset Ministries.

The deadline is December 18th

Please print clearly and specify either

In memory of _____

or

In honor of _____

If neither is filled out, your purchase will be listed "To the glory of God by [your name]"

Your Name _____

Phone Number _____



How to Join a Zoom Meeting

If you have been invited to a zoom meeting, the host of the meeting should send you a link (the meeting ID) and a couple phone number options. You can join the meeting a few ways:

1. **Join the meeting on a computer:** Click the link the host shared with you. If this is your first time using Zoom on that computer, you will be prompted to download a plugin in order for Zoom to run. Nothing needs to be done prior to the meeting—click on the link when it is time to join, and the computer will walk you through the process of downloading the plugin. You do NOT need a Zoom account to join a meeting.
 - a. If you join on a computer that has a camera (such as a laptop), you can join with video.
 - b. When you join the meeting, you'll be asked if you want to use the computer microphone and speakers, or call in using a phone for the audio. If you want to use the phone to call in for the audio of the meeting, choose that option and the number to call will be provided to you.
2. **Join the meeting via phone:** this is a good option if you don't have a computer available to you. Call into one of the phone numbers your host provided to you, and follow the prompts (you'll need the meeting ID). Calling in this way of course won't allow you to join via video—only audio.
3. **The 3rd option is to put the Zoom App on your smart phone,** and join the meeting through the app. Download the app to your phone, open the app, and choose to "join meeting" (again, you do NOT need to create an account to join the meeting!), then put in the "meeting ID" that the host gave you, and you will be joined via the mic and camera on your phone.

If you want more information, here's the link on the Zoom help page about joining meetings:
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-Meeting>

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Add food item to box each
day in December until
Christmas Eve



December 1	.....	Box of Cereal
December 2	.....	Peanut Butter
December 3	.....	Stuffing Mix
December 4	.....	Boxed Potatoes
December 5	.....	Macaroni & Cheese
December 6	.....	Canned Fruit
December 7	.....	Canned Tomatoes
December 8	.....	Canned Tuna
December 9	.....	Dessert Mix
December 10	.....	Jar of Applesauce
December 11	.....	Canned Sweet Potatoes
December 12	.....	Cranberry Sauce
December 13	.....	Canned Beans
December 14	.....	Box of Crackers
December 15	.....	Package of Rice
December 16	.....	Box of Oatmeal
December 17	.....	Box of Pasta
December 18	.....	Spaghetti Sauce
December 19	.....	Chicken Noodle Soup
December 20	.....	Tomato Soup
December 21	.....	Can of Corn
December 22	.....	Can of Mixed Vegetables
December 23	.....	Can of Carrots
December 24	.....	Can of Green Beans

Ideas for Creating your own Advent Wreath

Creating an Advent wreath is a wonderful way to usher in the season. Make a family or personal ritual of lighting the candles each week or each day and working through a devotional. Having a few minutes of peace and faithful focus is a gift during the hectic holiday season. If having real candles burning in your home is not wise for safety reasons, replace with battery-operated candles or votives. Here are a few ideas to get you started!

The Minimalist: Forget the wreath, and just put out the candles using whatever candle holders you have around the house. They can go in a line, a diamond, or a circle.

The Crafter: Make a simple wreath by cutting a donut shape out of green paper or placing the candles on a green paper plate. Decorate your paper wreath with stickers or markers. Great for kids!



The Recycler: Find a Christmas wreath you already have, or pick one up from a thrift store. Lay it flat and place the candles in tall candleholders around the inside edge. Make sure the candles flames are far enough above the wreath to not be a fire hazard.

The Live Wreath: Want the full experience? It's not as hard as it sounds!

1. Buy an oasis foam wreath base and four candle stakes from a craft store or florist. Before beginning, soak your wreath base in a bucket or bathtub for at least four hours.
2. Buy the desired live greens to make your wreath, or go on a hunt around your yard and see what you can trim. You'll want pieces of greenery that are about 8 inches long.
3. Insert the four candle stakes evenly around the wreath. Then insert the greens into the wreath, stripping the leaves off the inserted stems if necessary. It's best to insert the greens at a slight angle, and to continue that angle all the way around the wreath. Make sure that the greens are clear of the top of the candles to reduce chance of fire.
4. The wreath should stay relatively fresh for two weeks, at which point you'll either want to soak the whole thing in the tub again, or use water globes to steadily release water into the wreath to keep it moist.

**Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
800 North New Road
Waco, Texas 76710**

Address Correction Requested

Want to CONTACT us at Saint Matthew
Lutheran
Telephone: 254/772-9349

Website: www.saintmatthewwaco.org

Email: Church Office
smlcoffice@saintmatthewwaco.org

Friend us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/SaintMatthewLutheran

Church Office Hours:
Monday through Thursday 9:00 am -1:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am - 12:00 noon.

Remember: If you **do not have a code** to the alarm system (which is different from the code to the key pad outside the front and back doors), **DO NOT enter the building after office hours**, or if no one else is already in the building. All Council members and the various group leaders that meet at St. Matthew have codes for the alarm system.

Church Council Members:

President: Paula Jenson
cspjenson@aol.com
Vice-President: Stephanie Abright
S_abright@yahoo.com
Secretary: Sally Engelbrecht
Sengel1918@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Shelly Jasek
sjasek@hotmail.com

Council-at-large:

Kirk Krause Kirkkrause84@gmail.com
Cynthia Tingle catingle@yahoo.com
Sharon Gripp Sharon_k_johnson@baylor.edu
Jeremy Wallace JWallace@harmonytx.org
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