

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

December 2021

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



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### Practicing Gratitude

Dear Beloved Community,

As we come to a time of year where we give thanks for the blessings in our lives and begin to prepare to enjoy time with family and friends, I wanted to take a moment and focus on gratitude and ways that we can make gratitude part of our daily habits.

Here are three ways to practice gratitude throughout this season and into the new year:

1) **Train your eyes**, and look for good all around. Really look and pay attention.

This time of year, going shopping for groceries or other goods can be difficult. The crowds are greater, the parking lots are fewer, the lines are sometimes longer, and when you get there and they are out of the thing you went to buy in the first place. As I was frantically making my way through H-E-B to pick up a couple of groceries (I was running a little late), a woman was making her way around the store with two small children. As you can imagine grocery shopping isn't fun for most of us, and with small children, it can be an adventure. I was already in a check-out lane waiting when I saw this woman come to the lane a couple down from mine. You can by her face it had been a long day and her children were getting cranky. There were two sets of college students in line in front of her, and both groups let this woman go in front of them. A simple, unselfish thing to do. Good doesn't have to be about great things, but rather paying attention to the good that is already around us.

2) **Pay attention**, to the small everyday details of life and try to savor them (maybe even take a moment to write them down).

Sometimes when our days are overwhelming and nothing seems to be going right or we are stressed with things that are out of our control, sometimes one piece of inspiration, one good thing can make all the difference. I don't know if you noticed a piece of art hanging on our walls as part of the Art as Worship collection, it has unicorns on it. This piece was submitted by a wonderfully bright and talented six-year-old. It had been a busy week for me, I was tired by Saturday night, and then I spoke to this little girl about her art. So incredibly proud that her lines were symmetrical, finding joy in the unicorns that made her happy, and as she said happiness helps us heal. That conversation with this child is what snapped me out of my stressed and fatigued mindset to focus on what was going on around me. So, pay attention you may end up finding a unicorn.

3) **Express your gratitude**, For God's beauty all around by lifting up a prayer of thanksgiving or by thanking someone important in your life.

It doesn't take much time to pause and give thanks either throughout the day or before going to bed at night. I often do this at night when I can't sleep. I thank God for the day for what was and sometimes grieve what wasn't, and I know God hears it. But it is also important to tell people directly that you are grateful for them. I am continually grateful for this community of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. The road we have walked together hasn't always been easy, but it has been done in love and with the trust of the Holy Spirit. I am grateful for each gift you bring to this community of faith and your love and consideration for one another. I encourage you this season to write a note to someone who have been meaning to thank and haven't had the chance, or someone who haven't talked to in a while, but they were influential in your life. You will feel a sense of joy doing it, and they will be happy to receive it.

"Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you built to over-come evil and welcome good." – Maya Angelou

Christ's peace and joy to you,  
Pastor Kelsey





The Church Council is receiving donations for the **STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFT**. If you would like to make a contribution to this gift, please use one of the white pew envelopes and write on it "Staff Gift." **The Deadline for contributions is December 16<sup>th</sup>** so that gifts may be distributed the following week.

**From the CDC:**

"To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission." According to the CDC and the local health district, McLennan and many other Texas counties, have been identified as high transmission areas. To help prevent the spread to the most vulnerable in our community, masks are recommended indoors for worship and group gatherings, but not required at this time.



**Council Meeting Highlights**  
**November 8, 2021**

Members present: Stephanie Abright, Linda Stanford, Pastor Kelsey, Kirk Krause, Cynthia Tingle, Terry Roller, Denise Masters, Ashley Jenson, & Beth Pristash

Members absent:

- The Balance in the checking account at the end of the month was \$281,000.
- Approved Spending plan to be presented at the Congregational Meeting.
- Nominations approved to be presented at the Congregational Meeting.
- New Employee Handbook approved.
- Voted to approve funds to support a Music Performance Scholarship



*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.*



**Annual Congregation Meeting**

We will be holding a congregational meeting on **December 5<sup>th</sup>**. We will gather in the Sanctuary after worship on December 5 to discern where God is leading us for the next year. Packets with the agenda, spending plan, and the previous meeting's minutes will be available for pickup at church on **Nov. 28**, and will also be sent out by email.

**Regarding group meetings...**

As we begin to move our worship indoors and allow groups to meet inside the church we will also begin updating the website calendar to organize when groups will be meeting. If you wish to hold a group meeting at the church, call the church office to add your group to the list to be added to the calendar.

**W-ELCA**

Circle meetings for the Mary Martha Circle meet once a month on the **First Wednesday** at 5:30 p.m. in the Parlor. Circle meetings for the Katherine Luther Circle will meet monthly on the second Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. and the Grace Circle will meet monthly on the second Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. Check with your circle for any special meetings over the holidays

**Bible Study**

Join Pastor Kelsey for Bible Study on **Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.** Bible Study will **NOT** be held on **December 29<sup>th</sup>**.

**Time for Lutefisk**

It's Lutefisk time of year again! Plan on attending this annual event at Cranfills Gap **Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**. We will meet at the church and carpool to the Gap for the 6:00 p.m. serving. **Please sign up** on the list in the back of the church. The cost is \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Frey.

## The Christmas Light

During the Sunday morning service on **December 12<sup>th</sup>**, we will present a musical celebration of our journey from Advent to Christmas as the St. Matthew Choir and chamber orchestra present, *The Christmas Light* by Benjamin Harlan.

### From prayer Angels to Care Companions

We give thanks for the ministry of the Prayer Angels over the last several years. As different needs continue to rise in the congregation this ministry is shifting as well. Care companions will work along side Pastor Kelsey in keeping in contact with those in our church who are in nursing homes, homebound, or dealing with health concerns. We continue to keep those on our prayer list in our prayers weekly. If this sounds like a ministry you might be interested in please reach out to Pastor Kelsey.

**Stephen Ministry Supervision** meets on the second Sunday of each month at 8:30 a.m. in the conference room. We'll meet this month on **December 12<sup>th</sup>**.



### **Stephen Ministry Continuing Education**

The Stephen Ministry continuing education group **will NOT meet in December.**

If you have any questions or want more information, please ask Peggy Tooker, Carol Linda or Bill Abright.

### Fellowship for Single Women



There will be **no meeting in December.** The next meeting for fellowship for single women will be January 25, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at Cafe Cappuccino. For any questions, please contact Rosemary Fielder

([fielderatwaco@aol.com](mailto:fielderatwaco@aol.com)).

## Advent Services

St. Matthew and First Lutheran will be holding midweek services for Advent at St. Matthew beginning at 6:30pm on Thursdays: **December 2,9,16,&23.** We will be following the service of Holden Evening Prayer. Pastor Kelsey and Pastor Austin will alternate with short messages each week.

### Sound Volunteers



Help during worship doesn't always look like reading or serving up front, sometimes it means helping in the back behind the scenes. If you are interested in learning how to run our sound and help with the live-stream please reach out to Pastor Kelsey or call the church office. A guide is being prepared to help to make it as simple as possible.

### Blue Christmas Service

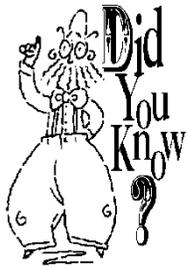
On **December 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.** there will be a Blue Christmas Service here at St. Matthew. This is a service of hope designed for anyone in the community who may not feel like celebrating. During the holidays, grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss can be magnified. The Blue Christmas service acknowledges pain and longing, while offering hope and comfort for the broken-hearted. By gathering on one of the longest nights of the year, we anticipate the coming light of the world.

### Friday Quilters Meetings

Friday Quilters **are meeting again** in the Fellowship Hall on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. We usually finish up around 11:00 a.m. December meetings will only be held on **December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and December 10<sup>th</sup>**, then resume in January. Come join us. If you can tie a knot you can help us assemble the quilts. We have a great fellowship time.



**Emergency Fund**



Through your generosity, St. Matthew now has an Emergency Fund available to members of the St. Matthew community for up to \$250 per year. This fund is to assist individuals/families with immediate needs related, but not limited to, food, housing medical costs, job

loss, and other emergent situations. Hard copies of the applications are available in the church office. If you would like to contribute to this fund you may do so by indicating “emergency fund” on your offering envelop or write it in the memo line of your written check. If you have questions please contact Pastor Kelsey or Stephanie Abright, Council President.



**Members with Prayer Concerns:**

Steve Jenson, Agnes Decker, Clydine Arthur, Ron Lambring, Lauren Roller, Elnora Schwake, John Linda, Ty Henrichs, Larry Henrichs, Tammy Vickrey, Stephanie Partin, Melba Hafer, Lee Cruse, Rita Bruer, Weldon Howell, Janet Rawlings, Carol Linda.

**Those for whom prayer is requested:**

Melanie, Charlotte Sperfslage, Heather Sperfslage, Shawn Sperfslage (Beth Pristash)  
 Rodney Roller, Patrick Dalton, Kylie Kubicki, Ralph Sparks, Wanda Brinegar, Lorraine Mclane, Elaine Mclane, Betty, Matthew, James Hurst, Jamie Byrd (Terry Roller)  
 Roger Sanders (Clydine Arthur)  
 Jimmy Moore, Laura Burney (Ross & Kim Browne)  
 Philip Reyna (Mary Koon)  
 Larry Warenke, Joyce Collins (Jean Moeller)  
 Joann Bottoms, Sharron & John Collier (Mary Herring)  
 Ty Croford (Linda Stanford)  
 Vicki Terry (Carol Linda)  
 Kathy Neill (Bradley Linda)  
 Bill Mosley, Rodney Castilleja, Chris Mosley, Carson Wiltse (Paula Jenson)  
 Dale Pommer (Sharon Peterson)  
 Paula Barfield Unger (Rilla Viereg)



Pastor Kenneth and Paula Moerbe, Candice Vonasek, Debbie Vonasek, Dusty Engelholm (Elnora Schwake)  
 Tricia Fabiani (Doris Akard)  
 Lee Family (Anna Steggerda)  
 Patsy & Curtis Forrester (Bill & Diane Jones)  
 Jeanette Velvetsky Quintanilla (Denise Self)  
 Frank Simons, Kris Braswell (Colleen Early)  
 Jinnie Lynn Washmon (Sue & Del Hensel)



Thank you for keeping members of the congregation, and their friends and family in your prayers. Please contact the church office with any additions or removals.

**December Birthdays**

Brooke Evans	12/08
Anthony Bush	12/08
John Linda	12/09
Patti Hueston	12/10
Randall Woods	12/11
Diane Jones	12/11
Teresa Umberger	12/11
Henry Bush	12/12
CJ White	12/13
Betty Krienke	12/18
David Evans	12/21
Bob Kane	12/21
Sophia Martin	12/28
Bill Jones	12/29
Carol Linda	12/29
Abigail Jasek	12/31

**December Anniversaries**

Lee & Marilyn Cruse	12/04
Lee & Kathy Nordt	12/10
Tommy & Jean Bush	12/27



The **monthly newsletter deadline** is the **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month**. Please send submissions to [cvanauken@grandecom.net](mailto:cvanauken@grandecom.net). Thank you.

