

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

September 2023

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

Why the collar?

If I stop at the grocery store on my way home from church or go out for lunch with Jon, I can't help, but get the feeling that people are staring at me, and are really confused. I can see the thought process that goes through one's mind; "Isn't that a Catholic Church thing, but wait, that is a woman." Because there aren't as many female clergy in this part of Texas, I have been taking the opportunity to wear my collar more in the community, and not just on Sundays, and here is why...

It's a symbol.

Often associated with Roman Catholic priests, the clerical collar is worn around the world by Christian clergy of nearly every denomination and practice, as an identifying symbol of their vocation.

For many clergy, this vocation is both a job, and more than a job. The call to ordained ministry is a significant part of our relationship to God and to the world, and that can be both a blessing and a struggle. Part of the reason I wear the collar, then, is to remind myself that I am not alone—that I stand in a long line of faithful pastors who have passed on the faith to me, and that I have colleagues all over the world doing similar work, with similar struggles and similar joys. Not all of them wear the collar, but the symbol itself serves as an act of solidarity and unity in Christ.

It's also an act of hospitality.

One of the realities of life as a young woman in ministry is facing up to the fact that I don't often fit the picture of what most folks have of "what a pastor looks like." Very few people, when visiting SMLC for the first time, would assume that the young woman is the pastor. The clerical collar, however, is a universally understood marker for clergy. When I'm in the building, it serves as a silent, unobtrusive way to identify who I am and what I'm doing here. It also saves everyone the awkward questions and embarrassment that come with a vendor or visitor making other assumptions—including, but not limited to: "Oh, are you the pastor's wife/daughter/secretary?" (I have been asked the question by more than one funeral home in Waco). No one, myself included, wants that conversation to be our first impression of one another.

Even when I'm not in the building, the collar serves as a quiet invitation to conversation. For example: One Sunday at the end of October, closest to Halloween, I stopped at Starbucks for my Pumpkin Spice Latte. The barista, in all seriousness, seeing my collar, asked if I was wearing a Halloween costume. I said no, and explained that I am a local Lutheran pastor and on my way to church. At first, she was taken aback, but then asked for an extra prayer, she was struggling with a few things, and after giving me her name I prayed for her and whatever she needed.

Visibility

Shortly after we moved to Waco, I was trying to find my coffee shop. The place to get work done outside of the office. On more than one occasion I was at a particular coffee shop, where I heard a middle-aged woman speaking to a first-year female college student (I assumed first year) about women's roles in the church. I know that this is something across denominations that we will not all agree on, but as I was preparing my sermon for Sunday, it was so jarring to hear the middle-aged woman say that it is not the woman's role to interpret the scripture. "There are a lot of ways you can contribute to the church" the woman said. "You can teach the kids and study, but women are not to preach." I wanted to slip that college student my business card and say to call if she needed anything. But I wasn't wearing my collar, I was unidentified, and frankly, I didn't have the confidence. All I could think though, was what if she thought of going to seminary? What if she felt called to pastoral ministry? I was in my first year of college when I felt my sense of call to ministry. Wearing the collar shows young women and girls that if they feel a call to ministry, there are others just like them, and they can do and be anything.

Why the collar?

A clerical collar on anyone will evoke a wide variety of responses: some will be put off, some will be drawn in, and others will be indifferent. But in my experience, seeing a young woman in a clerical collar creates more curiosity than anything else—and in a time when interest in the Church, in faith, and in engaging with a pastor is dropping off quickly, I give thanks to God for every conversation, every curious look, and every unexpected prayer.

In the hospitality of Christ,
Pastor Kelsey

Council Notes

- The balance in the checking account at the end of July was \$199,964.78.
- Work on the roof has begun
- A ministry action team will be created for Roof funding ideas.
- The sound system upgrade has begun and will be done in phases and is continuing.
- The new youth group had its first meeting with four students and 15 total in the combined group
- The congregational meeting is scheduled for December 3rd.

**Monthly Circle Lunch**

All Circle members are invited to meet for lunch and fellowship the second Monday of the month at George's in Hewitt at 11:30. If you are interested in attending please contact Kim Brown at 254-709-2417 to sign up. Thank you Kim for organizing these opportunities for us!

NTNL-SWO Convention October 13 and 14th

Everyone is invited to attend the NTNL-SWO Convention to be held **October 13--14 at Grace Lutheran in Carrollton, TX**. We are still in need of a voting delegate. A \$150 scholarship is available to help towards the cost of the hotel room and registration fee.

**W-ELCA NEWS****Sept Circle Bible Study**

Mary Martha Circle	9/6 @ 5:30 pm
Grace Circle	9/11 @ 10:00 am
Katherine Luther Circle	9/11 @ 4:30 pm

LWR School Kits

A **huge thank** you to the **Quilters** who have been extremely busy **making bags for the school kits** again this year. A

LWR school kit may provide the only school supplies for the children returning to school after the disruption of war. As a church we are collecting the supplies to fill the bags. We have a **goal of 200 bags!** A list of items for the kits is in the church bulletin. A big thank you in advance for your generosity. **Your small gift of supplies costing under \$6 per bag will make a very big difference to the children.**

W-ELCA 2023 Gift to Church

As approved in our last General Meeting, W-ELCA donated toward the purchase of a digital screen for the Fellowship Hall. This 55-inch screen will serve as our electronic bulletin board to announce events of the church, church organizations, and Sunday Learn.

Fund Raiser

Taco Soup Fund Raiser is planned for November. Linda Heyde will apply for another Thrivent Grant (\$250) which will pay for the ingredients. If you are interested in helping with the cooking (at Home) please contact Linda Heyde.

2023 WELCA Yearbook

Copies of the WELCA **yearbook** are still available. Check in the WELCA mailbox in the mailroom for a copy.

**Pastor Kelsey out of Town**

Pastor Kelsey will be out of town in September from the 16th to the 19th. As always, if there is a pastoral emergency call the church office and follow the prompt.

Combined Youth Event September 10

Our next youth group event for all middle school and high school students will take place on September 10. This will be a learning and volunteer opportunity with Mission Waco from 5:00-7:00pm. Location is to be determined. If you have any questions or if your student needs a ride please reach out to Pastor Kelsey.

Sunday Adult Learning to begin September 10

Join St. Matt member Matt Lee who serves as Professor of the Social Sciences and Humanities at Baylor; Director of the Flourishing Network at Harvard, for a two-part series 9/10 and 9/17, "The Abundant Life: A Christian Understanding of Human Flourishing." Flourishing, thriving, complete well-being, deep happiness -- these words describe the nearly universal human desire to be well and to live well, in harmony with others and with the natural world. But what does a Christian lens add to our understanding of what it means to truly flourish? For Christians, 'the abundant life' is not free from suffering and persecution. It entails a fullness of life that is grounded in a particular kind of relationship to God and neighbor that redeems circumstances that, on the surface, might seem hopeless or impossible. We will explore these themes with the help of two metaphors for flourishing: the garden and the boat.

Welcome New Members at Potluck September 24

We will welcome four new members to the St. Matthew community on September 24. Following worship you are invited to a potluck in the fellowship hall Sign-up sheets for main dishes, side dishes, and desserts will be in the gathering area outside the sanctuary.

Book Study Beginning in September

Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water and Loving the Bible Again by Rachel Held Evans

If the Bible isn't a science book, instruction manual, or position paper, then what is it? New York Times bestselling author Rachel Held Evans invites readers on a journey of rediscovery as she explores the magic of the Bible, engaging the old, familiar stories in new ways that honor the past and enlighten the present. You are invited to fall in love with Scripture all over again with Pastor Kelsey. We will meet every other Tuesday (twice a month) at 7:00pm beginning on September 12 in the adult classroom at St. Matthew.

You will be responsible for the purchase of your own book. If you need assistance please reach out to Pastor Kelsey. We will meet 9/12, 9/26, 10/3, 10/24, 11/7, 11/21, 12/5, 12/12. We will discuss the Introduction, The Temple, and Origin Stories at our first meeting.

Blessing of the Animals October 1

To celebrate St. Francis and the wonder and beauty of God's creation we will have a blessing of the animals at 5:30 pm on Oct. 1. This will be a short prayer service followed by a blessing for each of our beloved pets. You are invited to bring your furry, scaled, hooved, creepy, and crawly friends on a leash, in a carrier, or in a bowl etc., to the lawn of St. Matthew. If your pet isn't good being around other pet friends you are invited to bring a picture.

Digital screen for signs/information

Thank you to the Women of the Church for their donation toward the purchase of a digital screen for the Fellowship Hall. This 55-inch screen will serve as our electronic bulletin board to announce events of the church, church organizations, and Sunday Learn. **Thanks to Bradley Linda** who helped discuss our needs and who investigated possible screens and TVs. **Thanks to Jay Dittman** who also investigated what we needed and hunted until he found just the right combination of equipment and software to fit our needs. **Jay** also mounted the screen and provided electricity to that wall.

**Many
Thanks**

Lets Raise the Roof

The leadership of St. Matthew is continually grateful for the generosity of the people of this congregation. As we anticipate the new roof and repairs this month, there are a few different ways you can give to help with this project. If you already give offering through automatic withdraw through Vanco, you are able to update this giving and add the roof as part of your recurring payment. Forms to update your giving will be available on the table outside the sanctuary or in the church office. If you give or do a recurring gift through the Vanco app, there is now an option to give to the roof repair. Finally, you are always welcome to give using the white envelopes in the pews and designate a gift to the roof repair. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to Nate in the office at smlcoffice@stmattwaco.org.

Work Day Every Third Thursday

Every third Thursday of the month there will be a small **work-day** led by the property committee for anyone interested in helping with small projects around the building. They **will gather Thursday, September 21st from 9:00 a.m. - noon**. If you are interested or have any questions please reach out to Michael Frey theyerfs@aol.com.

**Blessing Box**

Thank you for your continued donations to the Blessing Box. It is often the case that **we fill it one day and it is nearly empty the next.** We are certainly filling a need in the community. **Water and hygiene products are always needed.**

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday Bible meets every Wednesday at 11:00 a.m.



Save the Date!

September 10: Sunday Learning Begins
 September 24: New Member Reception and Potluck
 Oct. 8 Combined youth group hike
 October 15: Beer & Hymns with First Pres.
 Oct. 22 Quilt Blessing in Worship and Visit from
 NTNL Bishop Erik Gronberg
 October 29: Reformation Day/Commitment Sunday
 Octoberfest

Valor Parking

We are grateful for our partnership with Valor. They have made many improvements to the gym over the last couple of years, this has included installing air conditioning, updating the floor and locker rooms, and this year, installing a new PA system. During the school year, Valor utilizes our parking lot on **Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays**. You will see the cars of both students and teachers parked around our building near the Valor side and in the back by the gym. They also use our parking lot as a drive-thru for their car line. Be aware that if you come by the church early in the morning on Mon. Wed. And Fri. or in the mid-afternoon you may find yourself in the car line. It is quick moving, and if you need to swing into a parking spot to come into church you will be able to do so. Traffic patterns are different so please plan to come into the church parking lot off of New Road.

Pictures of Saint Matthew

Four new photos of St. Matthew are on display in the cubbies near the offices. The Art Committee wanted to share some images from our archives, and they took this opportunity to create an installation for these niches. The images progress through time in order from left to right, with changes in the landscaping and the building itself visible over time. One of the images is a sketch that was used on our stationery, and the final image was taken earlier this year. If you're tall enough, you might also glimpse the series of hymnals that the images are standing on, another symbol of our church that has changed over time.

Thanks to Jeanne Dittmann who took the pictures and set them up in the cubbies to show them!

Stephen Ministry Meetings

The Stephen Ministry meeting times have **changed**, we will meet on the third Thursday every January, April, July, and October. Our **next meeting** will be on **October 19th, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.**

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



women's
fellowship

Fellowship for Single Women

We meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Our next meeting will be September 26th at 10:00 a.m. at Cafe Cappuccino. For any questions, please contact Rosemary Fielder (fielderatwaco@aol.com).

Friday Quilters Meetings

Friday Quilters meet in the Fellowship Hall on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. We usually finish up around 11:00 a.m.

Come join us. If you can tie a knot you can help us assemble the quilts. We have a great fellowship time.

**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.

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 to, 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 envelope or write it in the memo line of your written check. If you have questions please contact Pastor Kelsey or Linda Stanford, Council President.



Art As Worship

The Fine Arts Committee is excited to announce that this year's Art as Worship theme is **[in]finite**. You can respond to either of the words in this dual theme or both of the words. And please save the date of Saturday, November 11 at 6:30 p.m. for the opening gala event.



Vickrey

Members with Prayer Concerns:

Rita Bruer, Cora Gillespie, Ty Henrichs, John Linda, Jean Moeller, Stephanie Partin, Jan Richter, Elnora Schwake, Denise Self, and Tammy

Those for whom prayer is requested

Melanie, Charlotte Sperfslage, Elizabeth Dale (Beth Pristash)
 Rodney Roller, Patrick Dalton, Kylie Kubicki, Ralph Sparks, Wanda Brinegar, James Hurst, Carolyn Hurst, Janice Byrd, Rich Buchner, Barbara Bradshaw, Jerry Mars, Jim Guest, Emma Cox, Datre, Ralph Sparks (Terry Roller)
 Jimmy Moore, Laura Burney (Ross & Kim Browne)
 Lou Brazile (Jean Moeller)
 Joann Bottoms, Jeff Mcneff, John P. Collier, James (Buddy) Smith, (Mary Herring)
 Ty Croford, Wanda Stanford, Cory Stanford (Linda Stanford)
 Rhonda & Shane Owens (Denise Self)
 Vicki Terry, Vikki Dzamba (John & Carol Linda)
 Kathy Neill, Jeff Ford (Bradley Linda)
 Bill Mosley (Paula Jenson)
 Dale Pommer (Sharon Peterson)
 Paula Barfield Unger (Rilla Viereg)
 Pastor Kenneth Moerbe, Dusty Engelholm, Jason Lees Copeland, Glenn Lusford Family, Becky Allen (Elnora Schwake)
 Patsy & Curtis Forrester (Bill & Diane Jones)
 Frank Simons, Ruthie Simons, Kris Braswell, (Colleen Early)
 Don Carlson (Farrel Bolte)
 Octavio Estrada Jr. (Meridith Sellers)
 Janell, and Rose Janke (Arlene Schwarz)
 Daniel Cockrell (Denise Masters)
 Colter Clenents (Abrey Garret)
 Jeremy Cox (Cynthia Frey)
 Renlee Montgomery, Glen Howell (Marcyl Howell)

Russell, Bryan, and Zoe Cruse (Lee & Marilyn Cruse)
 Sherlon Dyer, J.J. Williams (Del & Sue Hensel)
 Jerry Murphy (Peggy Tooker)
 Roy & Florence Anderson
 The Ronnevik Family

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.**

September Birthdays

Karl Aho	9/07
Meghan Grip	9/07
Peggy Tooker	9/07
David Hafer	9/19
Robert Krienke	9/10
Karen Mullens	9/22
Arlene Schwarz	9/23
Bill Abright	9/25
John Jasek	9/25
Tammy Vickrey	9/26
Lee Nordt	9/27
Marilyn Cruse	9/30

September Anniversaries

Jay & Jean Dittmann	9/03
Rita & LuDean Bruer	9/09
Del & Sue Hensel	9/10
Terry & Janet Roller	9/13
Michael & Cynthia Frey	9/18
Daylon & Brenda Crye	9/26

NEWSLETTER 

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!

September 2023							Oct 2023 ▶
◀ Aug 2023	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:00am Quilters	2
3 9:30am Worship Service	4	5	6 11:00am Bible Study 5:30 pm Mary Martha Circle 6:30pm Choir	7	8 9:00am Quilters	9 9:00am Waco Calligraphy Guild	
10 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	11 10:00am Grace Circle 4:30pm Katherine Luther Circle 6:30pm Church Council	12 6:00pm Aggie Moms 7:00pm Book Study Week 1	13 11:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Choir	14	15 9:00am Quilters	16	
17 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	18	19	20 11:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Choir	21 6:00pm Stephen Ministry Supervision and CE	22 9:00am Quilters	23	
24 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am New Members and Church Potluck	25 2:30pm WELCA Bible Study Leaders	26 10:00am Fellowship for Single Women 7:00pm Book Study Week 2	27 11:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Choir	28	29 9:00am Quilters	30	