

# St. Matthew Newsletter

*Our Vision:* Connecting the world with Jesus Christ

*Our Mission:* Faithfully living as the Body of Christ, and sharing the Gospel that brings salvation

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❖ Pastor's Message

Rev. Craig Otto

## The Risk of Allowing Them In

He knew to play conversation lightly. Home life is what it is. Keep everything brief if anyone asks about your family. Fly under the radar, make sure bills are paid, don't ruffle anyone's feathers.

She knew not to disclose much of her personal life to anyone, although words slipped out against her better judgment occasionally. She told herself no one was really interested. She didn't want to invite others to share their own not-so-similar experiences with her, nor did she want anyone offering help for something they couldn't do anything about.

The two fictional profiles above are hardly fictional. They are profiles that could describe many who have a very small circle of people they trust. Who is in your circle of trust?

A therapist described some of his clients as open, trusting, easy-to-laugh, and vulnerable... but only with him. They kept regular appointments, considered him more than a therapist, and found relief in his pledge of confidentiality. They were receiving therapy, in part, because they had few people with whom they could talk about anything.

When you consider your own confidants, what sets them apart as trustworthy? Why do you allow *them* access to your personal life?

Sharing your personal thoughts carries some risk. Different worlds demand different criteria.

It's good having a set of friends in school, but it doesn't make students immune to gossip, lies, and crushing words directed at them. Your children develop protective ways, learning from those who misuse trust, to confide only in a few.

You're no longer in high school and are navigating the seas of family, friends, and acquaintances as an adult. You allow some people in, while others remain outside your circle of trust. You speak of your faults with humorous self-awareness with a few, and are thankful for their acceptance. Most others will never enter the circle of you for various reasons.

Is there a right way to determine your circle of trust, something between too open/too private? Jesus speaks about connections when he says, "Love one another; as I have loved you, so you must love one another." To love assumes you interact with others, entering their world for the sake of care.

It's so much easier to remain private and let others be. The risk appears more containable.

But there is a cost to keeping it close to the vest, and loss incurred. The cost is becoming an emotional hermit, which tends to make a reserved person increasingly unhappy. There's also the incalculable loss of friendships never formed, graces ungiven and unreceived, because you were unable to allow someone new in.

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Two thoughts are worth addressing... forgiveness and touch.

There is consolation and forgiveness for all of us learning the ways of friendship. We experience, grow, and mature. There is no use punishing ourselves for being young, nor for experiencing pain and betrayal. We wish we could avoid conflict in relationships as adults, too, but that is not realistic.

Directing our eyes to the cross, we put ourselves and relationships in perspective. We confess we have been imperfect in our words and actions toward others in the past, and agree that we have been hurt by others in varying degrees. We beg the Lord to have mercy on us, for we are all sinners.

Our consolation is in hearing that we have died with Christ in our baptism, and have risen with him to new life. It means that Jesus does not hold against us what we formerly experienced. He practices ongoing grace toward us when we walk in repentance and faith, trusting in our Father's mercy.

This gift opens up a new ability to a Christian ... to let down your guard and touch other lives with respect, grace, and care.

This is not to say that we will not have a circle of trust, with only a few inside. But it means we pray that God will use us to bring moments of grace to others. We first learn to pray for this, and then we open our eyes to see whom the Lord is leading us to bless.

My own experience is of surprise; that is, I could not have sought out or arranged the friendships I have. I continue to measure the main ingredients going into my soup of friendships, but others provide the seasoning that make each batch unique in different seasons of my life.

Jesus sees the value in our connecting with others; such random opportunities to bless and be blessed are part of being His touch on earth. "Love one another; by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

There can be healing for what is in the past. There can be a growing confidence you can allow new people into your circle of trust. There can be moments to come alongside others and learn who they really are, and the gift of seeing they also care about you.

We need love. Love comes from connecting with others. It is the way God has made us, a gathering of the wounded consoled by the Wounded Healer, and sent into the world to heal.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Otto



## ❖ Altar Guild

The Altar Guild members will meet on Saturday, January 12 at 8:30 a.m. We will take down the Christmas decorations followed by a short meeting. If you're interested in helping Altar Guild, please join us at church on January 12.

## ❖ Mary Martha Circle

Mary Martha Circle of LWML will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 29th at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Family Life Center. We will be packing our Valentine Care Packages for St. Matthew college students. Remember to bring all your goodies: cookies, crackers, popcorn, hot chocolate mix, candy, gum, pens, notepads, etc. Mindy LeFevre will serve as hostess and have our closing devotion. We will also have a Bible study and a short business meeting. Please plan to join us for this mission project and fellowship.

**PARENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS** – Please make sure the church office has your student's address so we can send them a care package. THANKS !

## ❖ Lydia Circle

The Circle did not have a regular meeting in December, however that didn't mean we were idle. The Circle along with the rest of LWML Society took part in the Vespers service that marked the beginning of the Advent season. Afterwards we shared a potluck dinner with the rest of those present. On the following Saturday we sponsored and worked in the annual Cookie/Candy sale benefitting Our Redeemer Lutheran. That meant lots of baking on the part of many members of the congregation and setting up and staging the sale. THANK YOU, THANK YOU to all involved-whether you worked, baked, bought and/or nibbled cookies and candy. The results were \$969 to help feed and clothe the homeless near Our Redeemer. From all the Ladies in Lydia Circle, we wish you and your loved ones the most blessed of Christmases. Come join us in 2019.

## ❖ Lutheran Women in Mission—Mission Projects Update

Candy/Cookie Sale-Thanks to St. Matthew members who generously supported this fundraiser, \$969 was collected for Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Kansas City and mites. (90%/10% split)

LUMAA Christmas Project: The same weekend as the candy/cookie sale, St. Matthew members provided 34 dozen cookies and 800 Hershey kisses for the Lutheran Urban Mission Association Auxiliary. Treat bags with a scripture verse included were assembled and the majority were distributed to the Jackson County Detention Center and four area Lutheran churches (Our Redeemer, KC; Jesus el Buen Pastor, KC; Immanuel Lutheran KC, MO; and Immanuel Lutheran, KC, KS). Thank You!

**LWML Society Board meets January 14, 6:30 PM.**

## ❖ Classics

Many thanks to the Kobels and Schmidts for hosting our December Classics. We were treated to a great feast of Christmas delights, along with the Sounds of Summit choir from Lee's Summit High School. Many Partridges in lots of Pear Trees. We are so grateful to Susan and Tony Velasquez for coordinating Classics for this past year. It was so nicely done. And suddenly – it's a New Year! We'll get it started with our January Chili and Soup festival. Several folks volunteered to bring Chili and Soup. Please bring a favorite salad, side dish, dessert or beverage to go with that. After our meal, we'll have a lively game of BINGO! We ask everyone who is playing Bingo to bring a wrapped food gift (\$5 limit) as a prize for the winners. And everyone will be a winner. We'll have some special surprises, as well. So come on out Thursday, January at 11:30 here at Church. Bring a friend to join in the fun.

# St. Matthew

Lutheran Church  
700 NE Chipman Rd.  
Lee's Summit, MO 64063  
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“And this is his command-  
ment, that we believe in the  
name of his Son Jesus Christ  
and love one another, just as  
he has commanded us.  
Whoever keeps his  
commandments abides in  
God, and God in him.”  
1 John 3:23-24

## JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER

### ❖ New Member Information

Transferring In:

Douglas, Sara, Mary and Douglas Horn - 5404 Northgate Crossing, LSMO 64064

Graig, Marina, Timothy and Kaitlyn Peterson - 2701 SW Golden Eagle Rd., LSMO 64082

### ❖ LWML Mission Grants

LWML Grant #16: Educational Loan Repayment – Dec 2018

Church workers are preparing for a life of service and often times are discouraged from entering into the ministry, due to huge loan debt. This grant of \$100,00 will provide \$2,500 towards educational debt for each qualified full time church worker. Please keep this grant in your prayers, asking for God's blessings on our church workers.

LWML Grant #17: Nursing Students with Mercy Medical Team – Jan 2019

This grant of \$100,00 will provide a group of nursing students with a greater understanding of nursing as a calling as well as a career by giving them missionary experience while they provide medical needs to the people of Madagascar. Pray for this mission and give your mites to help.

### ❖ St. Matthew Prayer Partners

Do you have a prayer request? Are you interested in being on our e-mail list notifying you of prayers of the congregation? Please e-mail Carrol McAllister at [cammac2@swbell.net](mailto:cammac2@swbell.net) or you may call her at 816-763-4535.