

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

❖ Pastor's Message

Rev. Craig Otto

Living Hopefully

I've lived hopefully through 2020, asking the Lord's help for each of you. We enter 2021 with optimism too, knowing our security is in Christ, *and we have work to do "in the fields" reaching others for Christ!* We recently held our annual voter's meeting in December, and there are a few things to communicate. Here is a summary:

My report:

- 1) Special thanks to our elders, altar guild, and care ministry for their extra time in preparing for worship services and reaching out to our members with caring cards.
- 2) Thanks to our mission committee and fellowship volunteers for organizing food drives and helping us stay outward-focused during coronavirus times.
- 3) We started offering Holy Communion at every service, due to families being unsure when they can attend, so it's here when you come.
- 4) Comparing attendance from June to December (covid times) with the same months from 2019, we are averaging 65% of last year's attendance. Of our regular worshipping members 95% have returned to worship at some point since the April shut-down.
- 5) It's been a good season for outreach and adult instruction, with several new members and families joining St. Matthew, and several more beginning in 2021.
- 6) Thank you to everyone for being a patient congregation... we are blessed!

Elders: While we still intend to call a third full-time staff person to serve our church (Director of Family Life), the process is on hold. We've discovered that potential candidates are less willing to consider calls until the pandemic subsides.

Finances: 2020 contributions (Jan – Nov) were \$32,000 higher than the same months last year.

2020 Officers: *President*, Brian Mitchell. *Vice-President*, Doug Clark. *Secretary*, Don Sanders. *Treasurer*, Kirby Bock. *Financial Secretary*, Jim Stubbs. *Members at large:* Ann Femrite (missions) and Aaron Bruening (education). We still need to fill two Board positions (properties and fellowship).

Constitution changes: We approved changes to make our language more consistent throughout the St. Matthew Constitution, and approved that elders now serve 2-year terms instead of 3.

Mortgage for Family Life Center: The congregation has \$725,898 in undesignated funds, so it was recommended we pay \$480,361 on our principal. As we continue to pay our monthly service of \$6,259.22 per month, we will have the building paid off entirely by this summer.

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Church office: We hope to have a third person join our ministry staff, and to provide an office in the same area as the rest of the staff. The city approved a “footprint” for the exterior walls in 2013, but we need detailed architectural drawings for the interior to secure bids. A member has generously offered to pay for these. There is no approval for a building project. This is a first step to determine what the cost may be for renovation and expansion.

Preschool: We have 74 students this year, and our staff and board have followed guidelines for a safe school environment. Our interim director is Traci Waugh-Rinehart.

Mission gifts: At the end of the year we approved three mission gifts:

- \$5,000 to POBLO (People of the Book Lutheran Outreach) which establishes International Friendship Centers to lead Muslims and international students to Christ;
- \$5,000 to African Radio Ministries (since radio sermons and Bible studies are a common way for small groups to hear God’s Word in their own language);
- \$5,000 to Christ’s Care for Kenya (a ministry to teach and care for children in East Africa).

We live hopefully as the new year begins! We sincerely want to be Jesus’ disciples, doing what we are called to do in His Great Commission. This means we engage in reading the Bible, commit to growing spiritually in 2021, and find creative ways to interact with our local community to provide for their physical needs and to share the Gospel.

Guide us, Lord, in all that we do. We are Your people, the sheep of Your flock, and we receive every good blessing from Your hand. You teach, rebuke, and correct us, and you gladly restore us through the forgiveness bought for us through Jesus’ death on the cross. When we were baptized, we were joined to Christ in His resurrection and are new creations. Bless us as Your children, and bless the people here at St. Matthew. We pray for Your guidance as we bring the good news to our families, to this community, and to a world which needs salvation. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen +

Yours in Christ, Pastor Otto

If you would like to discuss how to read the Bible, or see some possible devotional resources to get you re-engaged with your own spiritual growth, please contact me and I’d be glad to help you get started. Email: otto@gracefaithlove.org, or my cell to text or call is 816-916-4935.

Bible Classes:

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Pastor Andrews teaches on the Gospel of Matthew (in-person and online)

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Pastor Otto will be teaching faith milestones to various age groups

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Sunday school for children is in the Preschool Gathering Area

Teachers: Nate and Hannah Bain, Hannah Andrews, and parent volunteers

Wednesday 10:00 a.m. Pastor Otto is teaching on the Book of Proverbs (in-person and online)

Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Pastor Nicolaus is teaching on “Angels and Demons” (in-person)

❖ Altar Guild — *Help us prepare for Worship and Holy Communion*

The Altar Guild members will meet on Saturday, January 9 at 9 a.m. to take down the Christmas decorations. Members of the congregation are encouraged and welcome to come help! We will then have a brief meeting afterward to discuss the 2021 monthly schedule and the new member recruitment campaign. Hope to see you on January 9! A Happy and Blessed New Year to all!

❖ Classics

In the interests of member safety, we have postponed Classics through at least April, 2021. We look forward to resuming Classics gatherings when we are able to do so safely.

❖ LWML Grant

LWML Grant #17, \$60,000 “Christ for you, Anytime, Anywhere: Radio station KFUO, owned and operated by the LCMS, was officially dedicated to the service of the Triune God in 1924 and is the longest continually operating Christian station in the United States. Listeners all over the world hear the message of love, hope, mercy, and salvation found only in Christ.

❖ Mary Martha Circle

Mary Martha Circle of LWML will meet on Tues. Jan. 26th at 7 p.m. in the Family Life Center. We will have a Bible study and a brief meeting. After the meeting, we will be packing *Valentine care packages for St. Matthew students who are living away from home*. **If you have a student that you would like us to send a package to, please get their address to the church office.**

❖ Preschool Prayer Partners / Pen Pals

St. Matthew Preschool is *looking for individuals to be prayer partners/ pen pals to 36 “graduating” preschoolers*. These 36 preschoolers will most likely move onto kindergarten the next school year. We are asking that between the month of January to May you pray for a specific child and exchange notes of encouragement. This is a great opportunity to bridge St. Matthew Preschoolers with St. Matthew Church Families. Contact our director, Traci, at stmatthewps@gracefaithlove.org.

❖ 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? Contact Carrol McAllister at cammac2@swbell.net or 816-763-4535.

❖ *We now support... African Radio Ministries*

Below is an excerpt from the African Radio Ministries newsletter regarding some of the most recent progress: *“A new prison has been added to ARM’s ministry in the Afar area in northeast Ethiopia. Many Afar people live in the Danakil Depression, an extremely dry region where world record high temperatures have been recorded. The Afar are a pastoral people using camels. They truly are an unreached people group with Christians estimated to be fewer than 1% of their population. Evangelist Dereje reports that 15 new believers have begun studying for Confirmation in the prison in Asaita town. Thank you so much for your support and prayers. We are grateful for the privilege of participating in this Mission with you.”* *The actual Newsletter will be on the table in the FLC if anyone wants to read it in its entirety.

At our December meeting, the St. Matthew Board of Directors approved sending an additional check for \$5000 to African Radio Ministries. In addition, two other checks in the same amount were designated for Christ’s Care for Children Kenya (CCCK) and POBLO International to fulfill our calling of taking the Gospel of Christ to the Nations. CCCK is an LCMS program in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya. The amount given from our congregation, with gratitude again for the generosity and mission hearts of Wally and Connie Schleuter, will sponsor about 5 children for the next year. Please keep all these organizations in prayer.

Blessings, Annie Femrite - Member at Large-Missions, annfemrite@sbcglobal.net

St. Matthew



Lutheran Church
700 NE Chipman Rd.
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PERMIT NO. 84
LEE'S SUMMIT, MO

Regular Worship Times

5:00 Saturday

8:00 Sunday

10:45 Sunday

Welcome!

JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer.*

*Share with the Lord's people
who are in need.*

Practice hospitality.