

# 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. Steven Andrews, Jr.*

### “The Gift of Celibacy”

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Here's something that I've heard many times as a pastor: “the Church doesn't support single people.” That's probably multiplied by my studies and work in the realm of family ministry. But whether it's from the pulpit, from the teaching, even from the events on the calendar, single individuals feel that isolation from the church community. And an isolating pandemic culture likely hasn't made that any better.

It's good for us to hear and to remember that God's Word actually calls celibacy a spiritual gift. In Matthew 19, Jesus' disciples hear His teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and conclude, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” To which Jesus responds, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom *it is given*...Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.” (Emphasis added) While marriage is a gift from the Lord, so also is the life of those who are not drawn to marriage.

And the Apostle Paul, again teaching on marriage in 1 Corinthians 7, says, “I wish that all were as I myself am. But...it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” He teaches that the married person has many extra responsibilities to care for within their own household, consuming much of their time. But, if one is single as he was, there is more time, and thus opportunity, to share the gospel out in our community.

If you're single, and wish to be married, for this time, continue to give thanks to the Lord for all He has blessed you with. To the church as a whole, know that there is nothing gained from pressuring single people about their relationships. But if you're that single person, to whom marriage and dating just aren't of any interest to you, know that that is a gift of the Lord, and give thanks for it!

Beyond acknowledging that this, too, is a gift of God, we also need to see the bigger picture. The other truths of Scripture still stand. From Genesis 2, “it is not good that the man should be alone,” or from Acts 2, “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts.”

Truthfully, the idea of the Church as a community is worth its own article, but it's a necessary application on this topic, too. Our culture doesn't set us up for healthy communities. We pride ourselves on individualism, independence, and personal freedoms. But at the same time, we rank in the top-three nations globally for loneliness and depression. Isolation is a critical problem.

We are made to come together. It doesn't matter the makeup of your household: one person or seven; one generation or multiple; roommates or just extremely hospitable people.

Together, each of our households makes for a family. Right here. At St. Matthew Lutheran Church. And no household is more or less important than another. Together we are the body of Christ! (Feel free to read Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 on that subject). Each and every one of you is blessed by our Lord, and together we gather to be a community that loves one another, encourages one another, and holds one another accountable as we live for Christ and each other.

So, greet each at other church, but go beyond that. Get to know each other. Live your lives together. Be hospitable, opening up your homes to each other. Make that connectivity important, because it is important. Our singles are their own households. But there are many ways they can merge that household together with another. Maybe you love children, and so you can come alongside a family and be a role model of the faith to their children (recent research suggests that's one of the most critical factors in building strong faith in our children). Maybe you enjoy acts of service, you can partner up with another household to extend the reach of your volunteering. Our households can come together, encouraging each other every day, sharing the skills and opportunities with one another as we live life together for the good of our neighbors.

*God's Blessings,*

*Rev. Steve Andrews Jr.*

❖ **Special Voter's Meeting — Sunday, Apr. 11 at 9:30 a.m.**

A Special Voters' Meeting has been called for Sunday, April 11 at 9:30 a.m. The purpose for this meeting is to present to the voters a proposal for expansion of the East end of St. Matthew Lutheran Church to provide greatly needed office space. This proposal will also include installation of a fire suppression system in the sanctuary (required by the city of Lee's Summit). Finally, significant modifications to the parking lot on the East and South sides of the building are included in this proposed plan.

The St. Matthew Board of Directors has been working on this plan for more than a year. The Board has approved these plans. Elements of this proposal were presented to the congregation at the annual Voters' Assembly meeting in December of 2020.

Drawings from the architect and additional information will be made available to members in the entrance to the Family Life Center on Easter Sunday, April 4.

If the Voters' Assembly approves the expansion plans, the congregation will be asked to approve funding for the project through the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. The estimated cost for this project will be in the neighborhood of \$1.3 million. Final numbers will be presented at the meeting. The existing LCEF loan for the Family Life Center will be paid off by June of this year (six years after the loan was taken out).

A quorum of ten percent of the membership of St. Matthew is required to take action on this proposed expansion. Please plan to join us either in person or by remote participation for this important meeting.

❖ **Altar Guild — *New Volunteers Needed***

The Altar Guild members will meet on Saturday, April 10 at 10 a.m. in the Narthex. We will continue discussion on the memorial purchases, new member recruitment and the banner closet reorganization. Please join us if you are interested in joining the Altar Guild!

❖ **Classics**

It's been a long time since we met! We've really missed our *Classics* friends. We would have liked to resume *Classics* by now, but that hasn't been feasible. We do see some most hopeful signs, with the downward trend of new COVID-19 cases and the increased availability of vaccines. With that in mind, and in the interests of member safety, we are focusing on resuming *Classics* this Fall, perhaps as early as September. Stay tuned, and stay well!

❖ **LWML**

LWML Spring Rally-Sing Unto the Lord — The LWML KC South Zone Spring Rally will be held Saturday, April 24, 2021 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Raymore. This will be an in-person rally with masks and social distancing required. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. and the opening devotion at 9:30 a.m. The fee of \$5 will cover breakfast refreshments. Those who wish to fellowship after the rally should bring their own sack lunch. The program will be presentations of hymns and Christian songs by the societies. The in-gathering will be monetary donations (checks made payable to KC South Zone LWML) to purchase food vouchers for Our Redeemer. RSVP to Jean Stubbs by Sunday, April 11 at 816-225-5964 or [jstubbs@att.net](mailto:jstubbs@att.net).

St. Matthew LWML will have a Society meeting in May. Officers will be elected and installed. The date and additional details will be announced later.

Running the Race...Looking to Jesus! — The LWML 39<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention June 24-27, 2021 in Lexington, KY will be an in-person rally. Go to [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org) for more information.

❖ **Lydia Circle**

Eight ladies from Lydia finally enjoyed our belated Valentine lunch at a restaurant instead of a potluck. Everyone that could attend agreed it was wonderful to be together again. We will have a meeting on Thursday, Apr. 8th at the regular time. By that time we hope more members will feel safe in attending.

❖ **Mary Martha Circle**

Mary Martha met on March 30. Pastor Andrews led the Bible study for us. We had election of new officers. We had a short meeting to discuss the Zone Rally in April at Raymore and our next Society meeting in May here at St. Matthew. Watch for an email about the April meeting of Mary Martha. Joyous Easter! He is Risen Indeed!

❖ **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](mailto:cammac2@swbell.net) or 816-763-4535.

## ❖ The Mission Updates

The Veterans Community Project presentation held on March 6th went well. Chris Admire gave an informative speech about their mission, help that is needed and plans for future expansion of the organization into other cities. There were about 18-20 in attendance and a lot of good questions were asked. For those who did not attend, there is a link on our Church website under Servant Opportunities on our YouTube channel.

I hope to be able to offer a presentation at least once a month after Saturday service to highlight organizations in our community that we as a congregation can get involved with supporting. If anyone has an organization they support that others may not know about, please let me know so I can get in contact to set up a presentation. Attending these presentations is a great way to learn about where our help is needed and in what capacity we can serve our neighbors.

UPDATE from ARM (African Radio Ministries) For the month of February:

New Converts 54	Callers into the ministry radio broadcast 244
Worship groups formed 6	Confirmation learners 212
Baptisms 5	Confirmation graduates 79
Bibles provided 85	Booklets distributed 1300

Please pray for Ethiopia as there are over 2 million people displaced due to fighting in the region near Sudan and Eritrea. Humanitarian aid is currently being stalled by the Ethiopian government and the fighters from Eritrea. As soon as it is allowed to resume, evangelists are ready to bring aid, Bibles, and counseling to as many people as possible.

Christ Cares for Children Kenya. A mailing address has been provided as well as other means of corresponding with our 4 young ladies. There are certain dates by which correspondence must be sent in order to reach them in a timely fashion. Brief biographies and birthdates for all 4 girls are detailed in the binder. If you are interested in sending letters, cards or notes of support, pictures, etc. to the girls, please take a look in the Red Binder in the FLC.

Don't forget to check out the current Mission Minute, a thought provoking monthly short essay with practical applications. Available in the FLC.

*Annie Femrite Member at Large, Missions [annfemrite@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annfemrite@sbcglobal.net)*

## ❖ Lee's Summit North Food Pantry Collection

The Mission Board will once again collect items for the food pantry at Lee's Summit North High School. Any contribution, monetary gift, or gift card is greatly appreciated. Please place donated items in the shopping cart located in the entryway of the Family Life Center. Items requested include: canned corn/peas, canned beans, canned stew/beef vegetable soup, canned fruit or applesauce, pasta sauce (plastic jars or cans), Pasta, canned chicken or tuna, tuna/chicken helper, pancake mix (small package), syrup, instant oatmeal (individual packages), Pop Tarts, individual cereal boxes, granola or protein bars, soup, mac-n-cheese, peanut butter, jelly.

## ❖ Aluminum Can Recycling to End May 1, 2021

I am moving and will no longer be recycling aluminum cans. The money collected has been given to the youth attending the National Youth Gathering every three years. Thanks to everyone who has supported this project for over twenty years.

*Thank you, Mindy LeFevre*

❖ **St. Matthew Volunteers Needed for the Pro Deo Learning Garden**

Enjoy gardening? Interested in mentoring others to enjoy gardening as well? The Pro Deo Rotary Learning Garden at St. Matthew Lutheran Church is the avenue to connect what you like to do with what teens in our community need to know in the life skills area. The goal is for the ten raised garden beds to produce a year-round schedule of harvesting dependent upon the season. From produce to flowers, the raised beds will be the focal point for the teens to create a positive change for the community, the environment and themselves.

Community volunteers who have expertise in urban gardens are needed. You will assist with oversight for the care, maintenance and beautification of the garden. For more information, contact Jan Nelson, garden coordinator and Pro Deo Youth Center board member at [jannelson5@gmail.com](mailto:jannelson5@gmail.com) or is 816-590-9558. Or, you may also call Joyce Martin, [martin2649@sbcglobal.net](mailto:martin2649@sbcglobal.net), 816-350-1773, who is a member of St. Matthew.

❖ **Sponsor a Duffel Bag for Foster Children as part of the Missouri District's Shine! Event**

Your donation will help provide duffel bags filled with hygiene supplies to foster children in our local communities!

As a part of the Shine! statewide servant event put on by the Missouri District during the month of April, the St. Matthew Mission Committee will be purchasing duffel bags and hygiene supplies for children in Foster Care at the Crittenton Children's Center and Drumm Farm Center for Children.



**The Missouri District's first ever statewide servant event**

Crittenton Children's Center offers foster care and foster-to-adopt programs to place children in suitable homes. They provide traditional, medical, elevated needs and therapeutic types of foster home care. Drumm Farm Center for Children helps children by offering on-site housing for families who provide foster care for infants to 18 years of age. It also helps homeless young adults and those aging out of foster care build successful lives by providing forever family environments, emotional and physical well-being, educational opportunities and personal growth programs and services.

**We are asking St. Matthew members to sponsor the cost of a duffel bag and hygiene supplies for \$25 each. Each duffel bag will include: bodywash, shampoo, laundry detergent pods, deodorant, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, wet wipes, band-aids, underwear/undershirts, socks, and snack items like granola bars and crackers. We will also include either a children's Bible or devotional booklet for each child.**

**Cash or check donations will be collected from April 10 - April 25. Checks can be made payable to St. Matthew and placed in the duffel bag display envelopes in the Family Life Center or given to the church office.**

We hope to share the message of God's love with these children who are facing uncertain times in their lives. Thank you!

# St. Matthew



Lutheran Church  
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Lee's Summit, MO 64063  
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God's blessings to each of you in this season of Spring, in which we remember the suffering of our Lord, which He endured on our behalf, and His resurrection.

We are amazed and filled with hope knowing that Jesus is risen, and that we are in Christ. He has called us as His own, that we might love the Lord with all our heart, and make disciples in this world.

Return to our Lord, who calls you.

## APRIL NEWSLETTER - 2021

### ❖ Holy Week Services

Please sign up for Holy Week Services online at [gracefaithlove.org](http://gracefaithlove.org). New worship times this year!

Services will also be livestreamed from the home page of our website.

*Come home to your congregation, your place to hear the Lord's call to discipleship, and to receive His grace.*

**Maundy Thursday (Apr 1) 4:00 & 7:00 p.m. – "Return to the Table"**

**Good Friday (Apr 2) 12:00 & 7:00 p.m. – "Return to Truth"**

**Easter Sunday (Apr 4) 7:15, 9:00 & 10:45 a.m. – "Return and See"**

### ❖ Thank You from Bert Schmidt

Just when I think my life is as blessed as it can be, along came my church family to bless me even more on my 94th birthday. I am humbled by your thoughtfulness and overwhelmed, as always. It certainly was a surprise to receive all the wonderful cards, calls and visits. The best gifts are the ones given from the heart. *Thank you from the bottom of MY heart, Bert Schmidt*

### ❖ Thank You from the Torres Family

We cannot put into words how thankful we are for all of the love, support and prayers you have all offered during this difficult time. We are overwhelmed by your generosity. The emails, calls, cards, monetary gifts and most importantly the prayers have been such a blessing to our family. We cannot imagine going through something like this without the support from all of you! The prayers are working, and we are seeing God's work firsthand. Ellie is responding to the chemo and making progress toward beating the cancer. Please know, we wish that we could personally thank each and every one of you. *With gratitude,*

*Aaron, Katy, Ellie, and Thomas*