

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. Steven Andrews, Jr.

"The Divine Call"

Near the end of June, I received a divine call to serve as a pastor for another LCMS congregation, Faith Lutheran Church, in Godfrey, IL. I informed you of their call, and over the next few weeks you prayed, I prayed, and they prayed. We talked together. We even had a meeting to discuss the two calls before me. Having gone through this process together, I realized this is something that we don't talk about all that often, and it would be worth reviewing the process so you know how that part of our life together as the Church works.

When a congregation is vacant, that is, without a pastor, they form a call committee, a group of members who volunteer to work towards finding a new pastor. The call committee then will reach out to their Circuit Visitor and their District President. The LCMS is divided for purposes of organization into 35 districts (ours is the Missouri District) which provides oversight, counsel, resources, etc. Each district is then subdivided into circuits, groups of seven or more congregations that are local to one another and can thus encourage and support one another in local ministry (ours is the Kansas City South Circuit), with the Circuit Visitor being a pastor from one of those churches (ours is currently Rev. David Reimnitz from Bethlehem Lutheran in Raymore; I have been nominated to take over this position next summer). The District President will then provide the congregation with the names and information on roughly twenty pastors for their consideration, while the Circuit Visitor will come alongside the call committee and help walk them through the process, often attending their meetings. Members of the congregation are also encouraged to include the names of pastors they know of that they think might be good candidates for the call at this point in the process.

The next step is for the call committee to narrow down that list of twenty or more pastors to just a few, and for the Voters' Assembly of the congregation to then officially opt to call one of those pastors. How the call committee does this varies throughout our Synod. Perhaps the older and more traditional way sought to entrust the work entirely to the Holy Spirit (for it is a "Divine" call) and simply bring the names before the voters with no attempts made to reach out to the pastors themselves. Most committees will take the step of "inquiring" of the pastors on their list, that is simply making a phone call and asking each pastor if they would even be open to considering a divine call at this time. On the other end, some congregations will first inquire, then interview and host on-site visits. There is no command in Scripture on how this process proceeds. The goal is to trust the Lord to guide and provide for His Church.

Once the Voters' Assembly issues the call, the call committee mails their potential new pastor a series of documents that provide important information about the congregation, the expectations, the compensation, etc. Upon receipt of the papers, and not before, the pastor then announces the call to his present congregation. And that begins the clock on deliberating the call, for the pastor to choose between the two divine calls he now has, one to serve in his present congregation, one to serve the calling congregation. This process typically lasts two-to-four weeks. It can be insulting to one or both congregations if the pastor makes the decision too quickly, or unnecessarily burdensome for all if he draws it out too long.

Pastors spend that time in prayer, seeking guidance from the Lord and His Word, as well as from those closest to them, their family and members of their congregation. Both churches are God's people. The pastor can serve in either place. So he thinks through questions like: would it be helpful to my congregation if I stay? Would it be helpful to my congregation if I leave? What skills has God

(Continued)

given me and where can I best use them? How well am I equipped to handle the challenges facing both congregations?

From the pastor's perspective, the divine call actually provides him a choice. Pastors are servants of the Word, called to be living sacrifices, slaves of Christ, stewards of the mysteries. Life, work, and ministry is about serving God and His people. But in this moment of receiving a call, God grants the pastor a little freedom to choose where he would like to serve, raise his family, etc. Both calls are from God, both are God-pleasing. In a sense, there isn't a wrong decision that the pastor can make in choosing between them.

If the pastor chooses to "return" the call, or decline it, he simply remains serving where he is and the calling congregation can choose to return to the names they already were working with, or to begin the process again. If he chooses to accept the new call, the pastor begins the process of moving to the new church, typically four-to-six weeks later.

Within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, we view the Divine Call as coming from God Himself. We believe that there is one office that God institutes in His Church, the Office of Holy Ministry, for which He continues to provide faithful workers, who lead by serving the children of God through faithfully preaching His Word and rightly administering His Sacraments.

As such, this isn't a job like most other jobs. Pastors are not hired, nor are they fired. The pastor is divinely given this position to care for God's people. Should problems arise with the pastor and congregation, the Circuit Visitor and District President often are sought out for counsel, in hopes of reconciliation. Pastors are called to a church with the intention of serving there open-endedly for years to come.

A pastor can leave a congregation in a few ways: accepting a new call, retirement, death, resignation, or removal from the office. There are three grounds accepted among Lutherans for the removal of a pastor from office: persistent teaching of false doctrine, leading a scandalous and offensive life, and the inability or refusal to perform the duties of the office. The process of removing a pastor is often long and painful for all, and may leave the pastor permanently unable to serve in the office again.

In more recent history, the LCMS has sought to aid pastors in caring for congregations, creating other auxiliary offices that serve to assist the pastor in his duties. Many of these are likely familiar to you: deaconess, Director of Christian Education (DCE), parish nurse, Director of Christian Outreach (DCO), Director of Family Life Ministry (DFLM), and Director of Church Ministries (DCM).

The call processes for these positions are similar, as call committees are formed, the Voters' Assembly extends the call, the candidate deliberates the call over a span of a few weeks and then responds. These calls are also intended for the worker to remain where they are for years to come, and would have the same list of possible ways to end.

Hopefully this provides you with a little insight into your church home here at St. Matthew, as well as the larger Church. We have seen just in the past five years two pastors accept calls to leave, one pastor accept a call to come, one pastor decline a call to leave, and one DFL decline a call to come. The call process is sometimes quick, and other times it can draw out over the span of several years. In any and all situations, we pray for the Lord to continue to care for His Church and that He would raise up faithful workers for His harvest.

God's blessings,

Rev. Steve Andrews Jr.

❖ **Lutheran Women in Mission — *Special events Sept. 25 and Oct. 26***

All women of the congregation are invited to the fall program which is scheduled for Saturday, September 25, 2021 in the Family Life Center at St. Matthew. Beginning at 9:15 AM light refreshments will be served. The featured speaker at 10:00 will be **Beth Bock**, St. Matthew member and Assistant Principal at Lee's Summit North High School. She will speak about the challenges that high school students face and the importance of St. Matthew's ongoing collection of food for them.

Following the speaker LWML members will learn about the Board's proposed schedule of mission service projects and social activities for the upcoming year and vote on the groups that will receive proceeds from the fundraisers.

Save the date: On Tuesday morning on October 26, St. Matthew will be hosting the **Fall Zone Rally**. The theme of the rally is "Sharing Love, Sharing Life" based on 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8. The program will feature a speaker from the Lighthouse, an adoption/pregnancy resource center. All women of the congregation are welcome to attend.

❖ **Mary Martha Circle**

Mary Martha Circle of LWML met on Tuesday, August 31. We had Bible study and a business meeting to discuss the Society meeting in September, Honey Sundays, and the Fall Zone Rally here at St. Matthew in October. All ladies of St. Matthew are invited to join us for our next meeting to be held on Tuesday, September 28 at 7 p.m. in the meeting room in the Family Life Center.

❖ **Altar Guild — *Please Consider Serving with Us***

Have you ever considered helping prepare the sanctuary for worship? It takes a team assigned to each weekend to prepare Holy Communion, change the oil in the candles after each service, hang banners and paraments for the time in the church year, prepare fresh flower arrangements for the altar, and present the sanctuary clean and ready for a holy gathering on the weekend.

You will grow in your appreciation for your church's mission and ministry, and the sacred tasks entrusted to us, as you take responsibility for an important part of spiritual life for everyone.

If there are any women or young ladies in the congregation who would like to find out more about Altar Guild and our friendly group, please come to a regular meeting to get acquainted. You may also contact Deb Langsdale, Pastor Otto, or any current member listed below for more information.

Altar Guild members: *Patty Bechel, Nancy Carson, Elaine Froeschle, Marilyn Heineman, Pam York, Raylene Herkamp, Evon Hillan-Johnson, Melanie Johnson, Clare Kapperman, Neysa Kurle, Deb Langsdale, Leah McKeage, Angel Romi, Bonnie Stair, Marilyn Stelljes, and Ann Wesselschmidt.*

❖ **Classics**

Thanks to all who sent your very thoughtful responses about when to resume *Classics*. It was clear that folks wanted to get together again. But due to many factors surrounding the COVID-19 virus, a significant majority of *Classics* attendees concluded that we should not resume *Classics* this Fall. We will consider this again as we approach the new year.

❖ **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.

❖ **Babysitting Needed during our Wednesday Midweek Classes**

We could use some extra hands Wednesday evenings to watch children (infants to 3-years-old) while our Midweek Classes are going on. Carol Moses is scheduled to be in the Nursery every Wednesday, but she needs assistance. Would you consider helping her? Midweek is every Wednesday from 7-8 p.m. (6:30 to 7:30 p.m. during Advent and Lent). High School junior and seniors can count this toward school community service hours. Please contact Pastor Andrews or Carol Moses if you can help. Thank you!

❖ **Bible Classes for Adults, Youth and Children — *Fall Schedule 2021***

Sunday - Pastor Andrews leads Bible class in the Family Life Center at 9:30

Sunday - Pastor Otto leads Adult Information Classes on Lutheran teachings at 9:30

Sunday High School – “Enduring Faith: Apologetics” led by Elisabeth White in the Youth Room at 9:30

Sunday School – Younger children with Hannah Andrews, older with Elizabeth McClain

Tuesday - Pastor Otto leads Bible class at John Knox Village (Gallery Room) at 1:00

Wednesday - Pastor Andrews leads Bible class in the Meeting Room at 10:00

Wednesday - Pastor Nicolaus leads Bible class in the Family Life Center at 7:00

Wednesday – Midweek classes in the Family Life Center from 7:00 to 8:00 (See grade levels & teachers)

K-2 Linda Sanders; 3-4 Tom Gottschamer; 5-6 Pastor Otto; 7-8 Pastor Andrews

❖ **Lee’s Summit North Food Pantry — *Bring food to cart in the lobby***

Now that school is back in session, we are resuming our food collection for the Lee’s Summit North High School food pantry. They provide for families which need nutritious meals and snacks. Please place items in the grocery cart at church. Thank you!

❖ **St. Matthew Preschool — *We are selling mums***

Preschool is selling Mums for \$10. Check out poster board outside of Preschool. Thank you to those who have donated supplies. We appreciate all the support!

❖ **St. Matthew Sewing Group**

The Sewing Group at St. Matthew will meet once again starting in September, the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 12:30 p.m. Please join us then!

The sewing group will be making dignity bibs for the gentlemen in care units. We need gently used men’s cotton button down or knit pullover shirts, medium size and up. There is a display in the entry and a plastic container for your deposit donations.

❖ **LWML Grant—Deaconess Ministry Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch - \$81,680**

The mission of **Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch** is to help at-risk children and their families succeed in the name of Christ. The Ranch provides unparalleled care, expertise, and presence in the name of Christ to keep today’s troubled kids from becoming tomorrow’s troubled adults. Recognizing the need to minister directly with victimized boys and girls, the Ranch called an LCMS deaconess, Kelly Bristow.

This role reflects the reason why a vibrant deaconess ministry was envisioned for our church body. Deaconess Kelly’s work quickly began to bridge many of the gaps that often hinder a child’s healing. Nearly all of the female residents and many of the male residents have been traumatized at the hands of a male figure. This simple reality creates immediate trust issues that can be difficult for a child to bridge, especially when dealing with a male chaplain. The Word of God helps to heal the walls of broken trust. Those at the Ranch are “Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus!”

❖ **Pro Deo *Christmas in July* Update**

Once again St. Matthew members displayed their generous spirit with an abundant gathering of items requested by Pro Deo. Over 1,200 items and \$425 in gift cards were donated!! Thanks to those who donated to Pro Deo!

❖ Mission Minute

Higher Things Conference Presentation — Our July Mission presentation was given after church on Saturday, July 31 by youth who attended the **Higher Things** conference in Colorado. One of the youth put together a Power Point presentation and they all talked a bit about their experience and answered questions. It was unanimously a conference they would attend again, and we all learned things and grew in our faith. (I went as a chaperone along with Pastor Andrews.)

** If you have an organization in mind for a future **Mission Presentation**, please let me know so I can consider featuring the organization. I am wanting to do at least one per month.

Update from Heather and Nathan Pittman, missionaries in Nigeria — Their letter:

“Please pray for [the people in] Jos. There was an attack outside of town before we arrived in Nigeria. Then there was another attack (presumably in retaliation for the first attack) on the other side of Jos from where we are. Inter-ethnic conflicts among various tribes take on religious dimensions, pitting those identifying as Christian against those identifying as Muslim.

“On Sunday, Jos decided to put a 24-hour curfew in place for Jos North (the side of town where the most recent conflict happened) that will continue indefinitely to try to end the cycle of retaliation. We live in Jos South, so we are not required to follow that curfew, but Hillcrest School has decided that we will do online school for now and is encouraging the staff to stay in their compounds. We are safe. We have stayed inside of our compound ever since that announcement on Sunday.

“We would appreciate your prayers in this time of unrest. A lot of families have been affected. We pray for God's peace. We thank God for giving the leaders of Jos the wisdom required to end the cycle of violence.”

Christ Cares for Children Kenya — Our congregation currently sponsors four young ladies with Christ's Care for Children, Kenya... Mildred, Jedida, Sheila and Nancy. There are photos and a brief biography on each girl in a red binder on the table in the FLC. I have updated each girl's section with information and a letter from her to our congregation. There is also information in the binder regarding ways for our members to correspond with these young ladies to encourage and support them. Please take time to look through the red binder and get to know them. You can also follow them on Facebook by searching up **Project 24-Kenya**.

Update from African Radio Ministries:—The August ARM newsletter is in the yellow binder. Please take a moment to read through these letters and learn how African Radio Ministries is reaching the lost with the greatest news of all-salvation through Christ! You can follow them online at **Africanradioministries.com**

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





Digging a deep trench where they pour the footings.



There were mountains of dirt for several weeks as they did site work.



Cowboy concrete squeegee.



Major pipe for sanctuary and office sprinklers.



Plumbing trench thru Pastor's old office.



Left: Here we clearly see two water detention ponds, one on each side of the ridge, at the intersection of Independence and Chipman.



Right: The deep trench is for our water supply pipe connected to the new addition—sprinkler system in sanctuary and offices & plumbing.



Children's play tubes or sewage pipe connectors?



Outer framing was completed in one day.



Wood was delivered to its proper place: CHURCH.



Workers pushing first wall in place.



A view down our new office hallway.



Left: After the exterior framing, the interior wall frames were put in place. We can "walk through the new offices" in broad daylight.



Right: We're beginning to see the new addition take shape prior to roof trusses going up. Hoping for a mid-November building completion.

St. Matthew



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+ Care for your spiritual life +

Let the Word of Christ (the vine) bring His guidance and promises to you (the branches). We don't bear good fruit unless we abide in the Vine. Apart from Jesus' Word and His gift of forgiveness, our branch withers and our fruit sours and then drops off the vine. Jesus invites you, "Abide in Me, and I will abide in you," and "Come to me, you who are weary, and I will give you rest."

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER - 2021

❖ Building Expansion Updates

Blessed by our Lord and thanks to the generosity of members of St. Matthew, our congregation recently paid off the Family Life Center just six years after its construction. This allowed us to begin Phase 2 of sanctuary improvements, enlarging space for offices, volunteers, and meetings on the East side. You can see a detailed construction calendar in the Family Life Center (tentative building sign-off Nov. 12). Our construction loan through LCEF has similar terms to our last, so we pray we continue our good stewardship patterns toward these sanctuary and office projects. Those who wish to make special contributions to reduce our loan amount may use green "Room to Grow" envelopes (on a table near bulletins) or you may write "Building Expansion" on checks and place them in the offering plate. [See 14 more construction photos inside >>](#)

