
ST. MATTHEWS LUTHERAN CHURCH ESKO, MN

A family of believers grounded in, growing in and reaching out in Christ

ADDRESS:

St. Matthews Lutheran Church
Four Elizabeth Ave.
Esko, MN 55733

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Email - stmattsesko@aol.com
Web - www.stmatthewsesko.org

OUR PASTORS:

Jeffrey Walther, Pastor
Home - (218) 878-1246
Cell - (218) 591-1436
Email - jeffreywalther@aol.com

Tom Brinkley, Associate Pastor
Cell - (218) 343-2080
Email - Brinkley57@yahoo.com

OUR STAFF:

Jennifer Keske
Preschool Director/Teacher
Cell - (763) 354-0180
Email - keskejennifer@yahoo.com

Belinda (Lindy) Barta & Sybil Halvorson
Preschool Teachers

Christina Walther
Youth Coordinator
Cell - (218) 391-3649
Email - waltherchristina@gmail.com

Gerry Paulson, Parish Nurse
Cell- (218) 340-5225
Email - g.paulson@aol.com

Brenda Hall, Office Manager
Rebecca Bauer, Secretary

God's Unfailing Love

Scripture Reading — Psalm 119:41-48

*May your unfailing love come to me, Lord, your salvation,
according to your promise. — Psalm 119:41*

It's February already! When I think of February, I think of Valentines and when I think of Valentines, I think of love and when I think of love, I think of the greatest love of all. God's unfailing love! We see this love shared in Psalm 119.

Some people have compared Psalm 119 to a string of pearls. Rather than develop one theme, the psalmist adds one pearl at a time so that together they create a beautiful strand of truth and wisdom. The pearl of this section is God's "unfailing love."

God's "unfailing love" is the most important term in the entire Bible. Over and over, we read stories in the Bible that show God's steadfast, unfailing love for his children—through thick and thin, and often despite their own tendency to wander from God.

In this section, the psalmist highlights God's unfailing love and reminds us of the relationship between God's Word and us. God reveals himself and his unfailing love for us through his promise that he will never leave us or forsake us (see Joshua 1:5). As we read of God's love and promises, a chain reaction sets off within us. God's Word fills us with awe and wonder for God himself, and we, in turn, grow in our desire to love, please, and serve God and others.

Do you want to grow in your faith? Dig deeply into God's Word. As you delve deeper, you will grow in knowledge and grace with a desire to love and serve God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love others as yourself.

Prayer:

***You have steadfastly loved us, Lord. Help us to love and delight in your Word as we grow in loving you and others.
Amen.***

Peace,

Pastor Tom Brinkley

John Eng is Now Deacon Johnny

Congratulations to St. Matthews member John Eng, who recently completed online courses through Concordia University, Portland to receive a “Licensed Lay Deacon” degree.

What is a “Lay Deacon” you might ask? Licensed lay deacons assist pastors in the roles of evangelism, outreach, small group ministries, visitation, mercy work, worship, preaching, etc. Here at St. Matthews Deacon Johnny is also prepared to be involved in visiting sick and shut-in individuals, lead Bible Studies or various small group ministries. The need for licensed deacons to help in ministry is enormous.

Deacon Johnny is a huge blessing to many. He leads “Experience Recovery” on Thursday evenings for all those who battle various addictions in their lives. He leads Bible study on a regular basis at the Carlton County jail. He also offers counseling to those folks who are going through addiction or have a friend or relative who may be struggling with an addiction in their life.

Deacon Johnny is under the supervision of Pastor Jeff, Pastor Tom, and the Board of Lay Ministry. Deacon Johnny is currently volunteering his services and thus his position does not affect the budget at this time. Deacon Johnny has taken courses such as: “Lutheran Worship,” “Congregational Change: Recognizing and Managing It,” “Missional Church and Outreach,” “New Testament and Old Testament classes,” “Fundamental Pastoral Care,” “Teaching the Faith,” “Preaching and Proclaiming the Faith,” and “Spiritual Leadership Formation.”

We praise God for Deacon Johnny’s accomplishment, but especially his ministry among us.

In Christ,

Pastor Jeffrey Walther

Lent Mid-Week Worship Services at St. Matthews

Wednesdays beginning February 26th

Soup Supper Starting at 5:30 p.m.

Mid-Week Lent Worship at 6:30 p.m.

Mid-Week Lent services begin on Wednesday, February 26 at 6:30 p.m. The Ash Wednesday service on February 26 will include the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion.

Enjoy fellowship and Soup Supper. Stay for Lent Mid-Week worship.



January

Funeral

January 11, 2020

Roland Uran

May God comfort this family through the Living Lord Jesus.



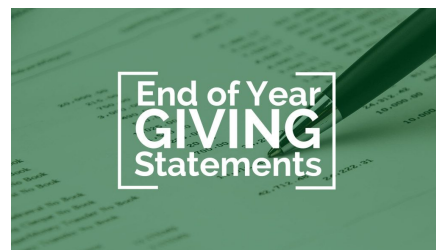
St. Matthews Offering Income

January 14, 2020

Month	Given	Budget	Difference
July	40,000	43,800	(3,800)
Aug.	37,800	43,800	(6,000)
Sep.	45,000	43,800	1,200**
Oct.	38,500	43,800	(5,300)
Nov.	43,600	43,800	(200)
Dec.	51,300	43,800	7,500**
Jan.	15,000	21,900	(6,900)*
	271,200	284,700	(13,500)

** 5 Sunday Month

* 2 out of 4 weeks



2019 Offering Statements

The 2019 yearly offering statements for your taxes have been completed and are in your mailbox. Anyone who does not have a mailbox but gave an offering can ask the office for their statement.

St. Matthews thanks you for your generosity. It is your offerings that enable us to have hard working Pastors, a Youth Coordinator and office support staff. Much work is being done in our ministries to help the people inside and outside of our congregation. Continuing budget shortfalls have been a concern and could threaten the health of these ministries. Let's show our support for this church and all it has to offer in the coming year.

Most of all we thank the Lord who is owner of all and continues to shower us with His riches. This statement represents the monies given to St. Matthews for ministry work. If you gave money to the LWML, Little Eskomo Preschool, Youth or other organizations outside the main church work, those offerings will not be on this statement.

If you have any questions on your statement, please feel free to call me.

Joe Wischnewski
(218)348-5603

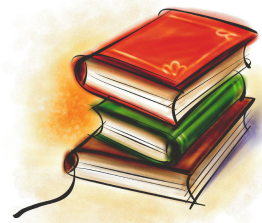


FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1- Sarah Bohren
- 3- Jaydon Lawrey
- 5- Alex Kazel, Isabelle Warpeha
- 6- Kim Linder, Thomas Ruemmele, Kenleigh Nikunen, Rachel Bartell, Emma Cekalla
- 7- Bryce Hipp, Mikko Rahkola, Mason Taylor
- 8- Jennifer Prachar, Nona Kavajecz, Cory Hester
- 9- Rod Johnson, Laurie Hester, Aryanah Bentley, Collin Young
- 10- Jason Juntunen, Gabe Rice, Pat Johnson
- 11- Hailey Salo, Jennifer Kangas, Sheri Ruemmele, Erin Bianconi
- 12- Megan Reuer
- 13- Jill Crow, Renee Lawrey, Sophie Einbu
- 15- Kiley Issendorf
- 16- Sarah Pierre
- 18- MyKenzie Dammer
- 19- Mark Schmidtke, Clifford Neff, Leah Sickmann, Addison Lanthier
- 20- Nate Rengo
- 21- Steve Knutson, Chloe Hart
- 22- Jami Hansen, Logan Grayson, Madelyn Hill, John Stephenson
- 23- Raegan Grayson
- 24- Dana Kazel, Zach Greniger, Nancy Stanius, Jeff Walther, Kenny Putnam
- 25- Lillian Biebl, Florence Maki, Lois Anderson, Olivia Forslund, Ezra Modich
- 26- Amber Greniger, Ethen Carlson, Kelsey Miller
- 27- Kathy Peterson
- 28- Chris Schultz
- 29- Marlys Kilen, David Warren

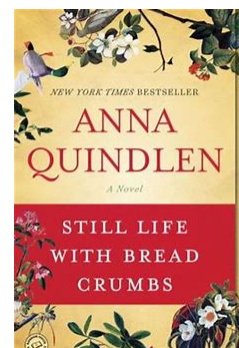
BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

The next Birthday Luncheon will be held on Thursday, February 13th at 11:30 a.m. at the Buffalo House.



BOOK DISCUSSION

For February we will be reading a Duluth Public Library Book Club Book in A Bag selection "Still Life With Bread Crumbs" by Anna Quindlen. We will discuss this February 19th at 12:30 pm in the Fireside Room. Please call me if you would like a library book. Judy Nelson 218-590-1521.



ST. MATTHEWS & PEACE IN CHRIST

YOUTH LOCK-OUT

FEB. 7
Grades 7-12

OPEN GYM, CLIMBING WALL, SWIMMING, SKATING, BOWLING, TRAMPOLINE PARK, FOOD

- UMD
- INCLINE STATION
- PLANET3
- SURPRISE BREAKFAST
- ST. MATTHEWS

LOAD BUS AT ST. MATTHEWS AT 6:30. WE WILL MEET OTHER BUS AT PEACE IN CHRIST THEN HEAD TO DULUTH AND RETURN TO CHURCH BY 1:30 AM FOR REMAINDER OF THE NIGHT. PARENT PICK-UP AT ST. MATTHEWS 6AM

\$35 PER PERSON
SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

REGISTER ONLINE & PAY BY FEBRUARY 2
<https://forms.gle/K6op6d6Em9obJxoW6>
Scholarships available!

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CHOIR

Mn Adult & Teen Challenge

Join us for songs of hope and stories of freedom from addiction.

February 9th - 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Worship
St. Matthews - 4 Elizabeth Avenue, Esko

 For over 30 years, Mn Adult & Teen Challenge has been restoring hope to people struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. In addition to our effective and affordable shorter-term programs, Life Renewal, and our distinctive long-term faith-based recovery program, we have extensive prevention and transitional/aftercare services.



HEART TO HEART

A Gathering of Women... Meeting in Friendship & Fellowship in Christ

Event will be held: Saturday, February 8, 2020
9:30—11:30 AM
(Registration begins at 9:15)
Queen of Peace Catholic Church
102 4th Street, Cloquet

GUEST SPEAKERS:
Sarah (Tuttle) Crowe, sharing her message:
"God...He's Still Making Miracles Happen."

Outreach Speaker:
Jackie Meyer, Program Manager at the
Outreach Center in Cloquet.

Music: Sarah (Tuttle) Crowe

Please RSVP by contacting:
Bonnie Chapman: 218-499-8003
(or) bchapman1919@gmail.com
or Candy Kramer: email
kramerfamily280@gmail.com
or Karen Raisanen—text: 218-731-1303

Childcare is available upon request.

HEART TO HEART IS A NON-DENOMINATIONAL FRIENDSHIP MINISTRY IN OUR AREA BRINGING WOMEN TOGETHER FOR A TIME OF COFFEE, FELLOWSHIP AND FUN.
THE GOAL IS TO OFFER WOMEN OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITIES WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH WORD AND DEED.

THE OUTREACH CENTER IS IN NEED OF PERSONAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS (EX: SOAP, TOOTHPASTE, TOOTHBRUSHES, DEODORANT). PLEASE FEEL FREE TO BRING AN ITEM TO THIS EVENT IF YOU WISH. THANKS!

A \$2 Donation for this event is appreciated very much.
PLEASE JOIN US & BRING A FRIEND!



Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge Choir
Sunday, February 9
8:00 and 10:30 a.m. worship services
9:15 a.m. bible study.

After 10:30 worship, come to the Family Life Center for a potluck fellowship meal.



LWML BINGO

The LWML will be hosting bingo at local Nursing homes:

Inter-Faith Care Center on Wednesday, February 12th starting at 3:00 pm, and
at Sunnyside Health Care Center on Thursday, February 20th starting at 2:15 pm.
Please join us as we help with bingo.



Small wrapped gifts are needed for prizes, and your donations would be very welcome. Here are some ideas: stationery, small photo frames, lotions, wheelchair pouches/bags, coin purses, socks, knickknacks, door décor, combs/brushes, puzzle books, scarves (accessory type), and soft candy without nuts. Please mark wrapped candy so we can avoid giving those gifts to people on special diets. If the gift is for a man or woman specifically, please mark the package.

Thank you in advance for helping to brighten the day for the residents in our local nursing homes. There will be a box by the mailboxes for the gifts.



**LCMS Service of Worship - every Sunday at
9:30 a.m. televised by KBJR Channel 6 NBC**

Main Street Living Northland is a locally produced TV program that includes a 30 minute worship service led by participating pastors of the Minnesota North District of our LCMS, along with a 30 minute remastered program called "This is the Life" from Lutheran Hour Ministries (starting at 10:00 a.m.).

February 2
Pastor Tom Brinkley
St. Matthews Lutheran Church
Esko

February 9
Pastor John Bonk
Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church
Two Harbors

February 16
Pastor Matt Kohl
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Cloquet

February 23
Pastor David Schoessow
Christ Lutheran Church
Superior



LWML

The combined meeting of the LWML groups was held on Tuesday January 14th, 2020 with Pat Johnson presiding; seven members were present.

Minutes of the November meeting were read and approved.

The treasurer's report was read and approved.

Correspondence included thank you messages for the Christmas bags, a thank you for a delivered meal, and a newsletter from Whispers of Hope.

Old Business: The Senior Citizen Christmas dinner was held Wednesday, December 4th. It was successful and food was delicious.

Many volunteers made it possible for 38 Christmas bags to be distributed.

New Business: The dates of Monday, and Tuesday, February 3rd and 4th, 9am to 2pm, were set for sewing back packs and pillowcase dresses.

It was decided to order 10 dozen doughnuts and 6 dozen rolls for the pot luck of Sunday February 9th when the Teen Challenge choir is here.

It was decided to have a lady's movie night on Sunday February 16th at 6:30. All ladies 7th grade and up will be invited. Bring a snack, a comfortable chair, and a blanket if needed.

Bingo at the nursing homes will be: - Inter Faith, Carlton, Wednesday, February 12th starting at 3:00 pm – Sunnyside, Cloquet, Thursday, February 20th starting at 2:15 pm.

We will serve the soup supper on Ash Wednesday, February 26th at 5:15 pm. Candy Jutila will cook again. A signup sheet will be available at the next meeting.

Easter bags: Easter is April 12th – tabled until next meeting.

Pat Johnson spoke about the need for a new faucet for the sink next to the refrigerator in the kitchen. Tony Hanni has been contacted for ideas about what would be available.

Christy Rice will be organizing a Spaghetti dinner fund raiser for Sunday, January 26th after church at 11:30. Please call Christy to volunteer.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, February 11th at 6:30. We will be discussing Chapter 16 in *Love Rules; A Study of the Ten Commandments*. Please remember to bring your book.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Nelson

Members often ask how we are paying our bills when our offerings are often short of our budgeted needs. The short answer is that we need to budget for all expenses we are obligated to pay. At the end of each month, we will show how our offerings are actually being spent. Any surplus funds at the end of our fiscal year (June 30) will be used to pay down the church mortgage (\$791,185 on 12/31/19).

Church Operating Expenses Paid:	October	November	December	Total
Salaries	17,527	17,196	17,673	104,333
Benefits	6,799	6,246	7,186	43,335
Debt Payments	7,166	7,166	7,166	42,996
District/Synod Support	2,417	2,417	2,412	14,493
Electricity	877	899	1,007	4,914
Christian Education	253	200	121	2,007
Church Property	659	498	1,868	5,042
Office	1,605	1,043	1,563	7,518
Worship	700	100	515	2,324
Youth	-	-	111	573
HRA	55	170	339	1,021
Heating Fuel	342	641	855	2,278
Repair and Maintenance	109	-	75	3,387
Outreach/ Missions	300	-	200	1,153
Conferences	-	-	-	170
Insurance	-	-	-	(82)
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	38,809	36,576	41,091	235,462
Budgeted Needs	43,783	43,783	43,783	262,698

Stewardship Corner

Of the three things a person is not to talk about in polite company – religion, politics, and money – the church is called, in one way or another, to talk about all three. Perhaps this is the reason why teaching about stewardship often seems to be an afterthought. It's something that happens only out of necessity when financial constraints are already nipping at the heels.

There is a more excellent way. Stewardship shouldn't be the kind of teaching that comes up only when there is a financial crunch. It should be part and parcel of the ongoing instruction of Christians as they live out their faith in their vocations – members of their family, their society, and their church. This teaching touches upon every facet of our lives; it stakes a claim upon our time, our presence, our prayers, and our possessions.

Stewardship begins with the acknowledgment that we are stewards. A steward is a manager of someone else's possessions. In Christian stewardship, we recognize, according to the Apostles' Creed, that God is the owner of all things as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And in His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, He gives us what is His to manage here below.

The principal virtue for stewards is faithfulness. As St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth:

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” (1 Cor. 4:2)

Stewards must manage that which belongs to the owner according to the owner's wishes. That is what it means to be faithful in stewardship.

That raises a question: How are Christian stewards to be faithful in their managing of what God has entrusted to them to manage? In other words, what are the specific duties of a Christian steward?

This depends upon what God has revealed in His Word for each of our vocations in life as those in a family (fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children), society (governors or citizens), and the church (pastors or laity). The Table of Duties from *Luther's Small Catechism* lays this out in helpful and orderly way.

Let's look just at what the laity (hearers as it is labeled in the catechism) owe their pastors:

“In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.” (1 Cor. 9:14)

“Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” (Gal. 6:6–7)

“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer deserves his wages.’” (1 Tim. 5:17–18)

See “Stewardship Corner” continued on page 10

“Stewardship Corner” continued from page 9

“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.” (1 Thess. 5:12–13)

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Heb. 13:17)

We can see that the Lord commands hearers to support the work of the ministry with the gifts God endowed them – their time, their presence, their prayers, and their possessions. This is the means by which God blesses His people with His gifts: the ministry with the support of those whom they serve, and the hearers with the work of the ministry.

St. Paul expounds upon this further in his letters to the church at Corinth. He instructs them to give regularly (1 Cor. 16:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first-fruits (1 Cor. 16:2) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

All of this teaching is set forth squarely within the context of stations to which God calls us. This is always appropriate for the church to speak because it instructs God’s people in how they are to live out their faith as His stewards under those who are created, redeemed, and sanctified by Him.

A note from Johnny

It is kind of starting to feel like it, and before we know it spring will have sprung. Yes, I know we still have some shoveling to do, but we only have a short time and we will have the lawn and garden equipment back out. I myself am working on getting a head start on the growing season in my basement. But with the changing of the season we have joy and pain, and sometimes joy through pain. At ER we are starting the series called “Acts of God”. It asks the question of why? Why does this bad stuff happen? There will be tears shed by myself and perhaps others as we watch each half hour segment and then discuss what we each saw and our own thoughts on it. That will start on Feb 6.

I don’t have all the answers, but I can help you work on a solution, or maybe just be a sounding board. You can call or text (I’m not big on texting but I’m trying) 218-310-1385. If I am unable to answer, please leave a message and I will get back to you. Or you can stop by ER.

Experience Recovery (ER) is a group that meets here at St. Matthew’s every Thursday from 6 to 7:30pm. (Sometimes we get here just a couple min late.) We are here for **any** hurt, habit, or hang-up. Let’s be honest, who doesn’t have one or two of those. We use the 12 steps as shown us in the bible to work on the solution to our problems.

Memorial Fund

*Sincere thanks to each person who honored and remembered a loved one or a friend with a gift
to The Memorial Fund in December, 2019*

Gifts have been given in Memory of

Cliff Weber

Cliff Weber

Clifford Trevena

In Honor of Bob Peterson's Birthday

Undesignated Fund

Building Fund for

Capital Improvements

Sunday School Fund

Undesignated Fund

Please notify the church if you do not receive a Thank you from the family or the church for your gift.

For more information on Memorial gifts, please call a member of the Memorial Committee: Winnie Anderson, Walt & Shirley Behm, Eileen Christopherson, Elaine Lindquist, Gene & Margaret Lindquist, Florence Maki, Judy Nelson, Marilyn Pykkonen, Don & Ardy Pykkonen, or Judy Uran

Anyone wishing to make a contribution to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of a friend or loved-one, is welcome to do so. Please include the following information. Memorial folders are also available at the Welcome Center and on the table in the Narthex of the church. Contributions may also be made from our church website at www.stmatthewsesko.org. Select *Giving and Fees* in the top menu bar.

Memorial Fund

In Loving memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Given to St. Matthews Lutheran Church by

Name _____ Address _____

Fund _____



**ST. MATTHEWS LUTHERAN CHURCH
LITTLE ESKOMO LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL
4 ELIZABETH AVENUE
ESKO MN 55733**

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Sundays - Worship 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

**Ash Wednesday, February 26 Worship 6:30 p.m.
Come for Soup and Fellowship 5:30 p.m.**

www.stmatthewsesko.org