

**Good News  
From New Road  
St. Matthew Lutheran Church, God's Family in Service**

September 2025

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



Remember to laugh...

*"You are living in the midst of vanity. Therefore enjoy life, and do not let yourself come to ruin through your indignation, but drive the grief from your mind. You cannot mock the world more effectively than by laughing when it grows angry. Let it be enough for you that you have a gracious God. For what is the malice of the world in comparison with the sweetness of God?"*

*-Martin Luther*

Not too long ago I was not feeling well and I went to see the doctor. When the doctor was telling me what I needed to do to get better, the final suggestion was "remember to laugh." I loved that sentiment, and had never heard that from a doctor before. I remember thinking, how have I not heard that one before, because that is so very important. After all, laughter is the best medicine, I once heard, and it's true. In a time where things can seem so dismal, and our anger can get the best of us, these are the moments in which we need to remember to laugh, because humor has a way of healing. Luther said it best in the quote above, to paraphrase a little, life is going to happen, the good and the bad, and there's not a thing that we can do about it, so we might as well enjoy it and find room for laughter.

In Philippians 4:4 it says "rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice!" It is a reminder that it is God's good pleasure to see God's creation express joy, and laughter. It is amazing to me that this is a practice that often gets overlooked, the power of laughter is so liberating and so good for the soul. Sometimes we take things far too seriously, this is when laughter can play a vital role in making us feel better.

20 years ago, in 2005, I had the great privilege of getting to hear Dr. Patch Adams speak at Augustana College in Sioux Falls. You may have heard about him from the movie Patch Adams with Robin Williams. He is a Doctor who believes in practicing humor and laughter in his medical practice. Because he is convinced that laughter does bring about healing, and I have to agree with him. Sometimes you just have to be silly, ridiculous, and just laugh. After the presentation, I had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Adams as well as get my picture with him, however, he said the only way I will take a picture with you is if we do something silly, so here is a picture of us picking our noses. Every time I see this picture I laugh, and I remember the importance of laughter.



It is important in our faith journey that we find laughter, to remember to rejoice. One of my all-time favorite images of Jesus happens to be one in which Jesus is laughing. It is comforting to see this image when most of the images of Jesus are so serious. I believe that Jesus expressed immense laughter in his life on earth, in the celebration of healing the sick, in the dinner gatherings with people from all backgrounds, at the wedding in Cana, maybe feeling a good buzz after drinking some of that amazing wine he turned water into.

I love the image of Jesus laughing, because rejoicing is something that is important to practice in our faith. So if you're having a bad day, things are difficult, or you just want to feel good, let out a good belly laugh, be silly, find something that brings you laughter, rejoice in it, and know that God loves you and laughs with you. And always remember to laugh.



With love and laughter,  
Austin Nickel



### Finance Update

The balance in the checking accounts at the end of June was \$218,976.99



### WELCA NEWS

#### Circle News – Circle of Faith

Please plan on attending **our first combined Bible Study on Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.** Our Bible study will be led by Nancy Zelisko. We have decided to discontinue using the Gather magazine. Study material will be selected and provided by Nancy. **We will meet on the second Tuesday of each month.**

#### Helping Our Community Through Kindness

In a world that is currently heavy with uncertainty, the kindness shown by St Matthew's church family is truly a blessing to many. Your kindness is a force for good that has the power to change our community one small act of kindness at a time. Each act of kindness sets off a chain reaction of positivity that touches countless lives.

Kindness does not have to be a grand gesture to be important. Small acts like putting bottled water or snacks in the Blessing Box, donating a bag of pet food to the Meals on Wheels pet food pantry, donating canned goods or boxes of pasta to the Caritas food bank and donating school supplies to the Lutheran World Relief School Kits make a significant difference to someone who is struggling. Thank you for caring!

As a very wise person said "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

— Dr. Seuss

### God's Work – Our Hands

Throughout the year, our church family joyfully does God's work with our very busy hands. **God's Work – Our Hands 2025 designated Sunday is September 7<sup>th</sup>.** This day is a special opportunity to celebrate who we are as the ELCA in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. This year for God's Work – Our Hands Sunday we will continue to collect School Kit items for LWR. In 2024, LWR distributed 140,117 School Kits in 9 countries.

**It is exciting to see that the collection boxes in the narthex are starting to fill up.** Any donation is welcome. You may donate **a complete school kit (except the bag) or any of the items on the list.** **If you would like to donate cash or a check, please use the envelope in the pews and indicate the donation is for LWR School Kits. Checks should be made payable to St Matthew WELCA.** At this point we already have 39 kits packed and ready to ship. Based on your kind generosity, the number of School Kits we contribute will surely double!

We would not be able to make the donation of School Kits to LWR without **our Quilter Group. These women are amazing!** In addition to making the **bags for the School Kits**, they also make the **quilts we donate to LWR.** In 2024, LWR distributed 370,818 quilts in 14 countries. **St Matthew's quilters made over 250 of these quilts! Again, these women are amazing!**

#### August General Meeting

**What a great turnout we had!** A total of 22 people attended and enjoyed a very tasty salad/desert buffet while we discussed WELCA business and listened to an extremely interesting presentation on the local bird life in Waco given by Anna Dunbar. **It was decided we would combine our three Circles into one that will be called Circle of Faith. Circle of Faith will meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m.** Nancy Zelisko will select the study material and lead the Bible study group.

**NT-NL SWO Convention**

The convention will be held on **October 10<sup>th</sup>—11<sup>th</sup>** at **Calvary Lutheran Church in Richland Hills**. Scholarships are available to cover the cost of the convention. There will be an election of officers during the Convention. **In addition to providing a Silent Auction item we will be collecting feminine hygiene products and diapers for shelters.**

**Church Office Closed**

The church office will be closed on **September 1<sup>st</sup>** in observance of the Labor Day holiday. If there is a pastoral emergency, please call the office line and follow the prompts.



Choir starts back on **Wednesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 p.m.**

**St. Matthew at Ridgecrest**

Join us on **Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.** at **Ridgecrest Retirement Home** on 1900 W Hwy 6 West, for a **Lutheran Worship service with communion and Melissa on piano**. All are welcome to attend.

**God's Work Our Hands Sunday**

God's Work Our Hands Sunday is **September 7<sup>th</sup>**. This day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor**. This year for God's Work Our Hands Sunday we will continue to collect school kit items for Lutheran World Relief. You may drop your donations in the box located in the Narthex or contact Cindy Tingle. Also if you have a **yellow God's Work, Our Hands tee shirt**, be sure to wear that for service.

**Sunday Learning**

Summer is over and school has begun to start once again. Our first class for both Sunday Learning classes will be after worship on **Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>!**



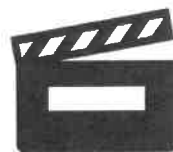
**Meeting September 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.**

**Game Night**

Come join the fun!



**Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> from 6:00—8:00 p.m** in the Fellowship Hall.

**Faith in Film**

On **Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.**, bring your own dinner and join us as we watch the film

**Awakenings** and discuss different biblical and theological themes that come up in the film. **Please sign up on the podium outside the sanctuary.** We will meet in the fellowship hall, **come one, come all!**

**Coffee Fellowship**

On **Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1-3 p.m.** we will have a **coffee fellowship** in the fellowship hall. Please come to hang out, chat, and have some coffee!

**Members with Pledged Roof Offerings**

For those members who pledged an amount to the roof in their offerings for 2025, you can either let it continue to be given where the church council decided those funds will then be put in the Capital Improvements/Repairs dedicated account for future items on the Property Committee's Priority List such as AC Units, parking lot, outside lighting etc. If you would prefer to designate it as you want or add it just to your pledged offering please let Nate know in the office so he can start posting as you would like.

**Coming  
Soon**

### Smorgasbord 2025

Get ready to celebrate the 200th anniversary of

Norwegian immigration to the U.S. **this fall** by attending the Norse Smorgasbord at Our Savior's Lutheran Church outside of Clifton.

The Smorgasbord is an annual fundraiser put on by Our Savior's Lutheran Church Women. **The date is Saturday, November 8 with serving times of 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.. Tickets are \$25 each.**

#### How this works:

1. We need you to sign up on the sheet in the gathering area.
2. Write a check to St. Matthew Lutheran Church for **\$25 per person**, place in a white envelope, write at the bottom "Norse Smorgasbord", and drop the envelope in the offering plate
3. We will mail a St. Matthew check to Our Savior's Church for the number of tickets we would like to purchase and our preferred serving time of 6:30 p.m. **The order will go into a drawing on September 28** and if our order is drawn they will send us the tickets. If the order is not drawn, they will return the St. Matthew check to the church and we will return your checks to you.
4. **If we are chosen, we can meet at the church to carpool on November 8.**

So make sure to **add your name to the sign-up sheet in the gathering area and put your payment in the offering plate before September 1<sup>st</sup>.**

See Beth Pristash if you have any questions.

### Confirmation Classes

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in confirmation, please let Pastor Austin know and sign up on the sheet located in the Narthex. Once we have an idea of how many would participate, we will develop a schedule and meet to discuss the process.

What is confirmation? It's a time for young people to explore their faith, learn about Christianity from a Lutheran perspective, and decide how they will live out their faith as confirmed members of the church.



### Fellowship for Single Women

Fellowship for Single Women will be meeting on **Tuesday, September 23rd at 10:00 a.m. at Cafe Cappuccino**. We meet the **fourth Tuesday** of every month. **All singles are invited.** For any questions, please contact Rosemary Fielder ([fielderatwaco@aol.com](mailto:fielderatwaco@aol.com))

### Friday Quilters Meetings

Friday Quilters meet in the Fellowship Hall on **Fridays at 8:30 a.m. We usually finish up around 10:30 a.m. Come join us.** If you can tie a knot, you can help us assemble the quilts. We have a great fellowship time.



### Art as Worship



Art as Worship is the **annual art exhibit** that graces our hallways and fellowship hall for the seasons of

Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas. **In this small way, we celebrate our Creator God from whom we all receive our own creative spirits.** This is our **15th annual exhibit**, and each year we display **25-30 pieces of art that respond to the theme for the year.** A few of the artists are from St. Matthew, and we have welcomed artists from all over Central Texas and beyond.

**This year's theme is ANCESTORS**, and the call for artists is out now, so **if you want to create something or you know someone who might want to participate, please go to this website:** for all of the information that is needed for submitting artwork.

<https://fineartsministry.blogspot.com/2025/02/2025-art-as-worship-theme-announcement.html>



The **deadline** for artwork is **November 10**. There are also photos on that site showing all of our exhibits over the years to give you an idea of how transformative the exhibit is in our spaces.

**And please make plans to attend the opening gala on Saturday, November 15 from 6:30-9:00 p.m.** We have hors d'oeuvres, wine and other beverages, and live music, all alongside the newly hung art and festive atmosphere.

If you have any **questions** about the exhibit, please reach out to **Jeanne Dittmann** or **DeAnna Toten Beard**, and *if you would like to help with the evening's food, please speak with Beth Pristash.*



### **Prayer Requests and Concerns**

We continue to pray for one another and those close to us. If you have an update or a concern, please call the office and leave a message.



### **Members with Prayer Concerns:**



Rita Bruer, Cora Gillespie, Bill Gillespie, Ty Henrichs, Jean Moeller, Stephanie Partin, Tammy Vickrey, Sharon Peterson, Farrel Bolte, Florence Anderson, Denise Self, Arlene Schwarz and Jay Peterson



### **Those for whom prayer is requested:**

Elizabeth Dale, John Woods, Michael Puig, Dora Torres (Beth Pristash)  
 Rodney Roller, James Hurst, Janice Byrd, Rich Buckner, Tony Knoss, Larry Burgin (Terry Roller)  
 Jimmy Moore, Harold Strand, Joy Peterson (Ross & Kim Browne)  
 Wanda Stanford, Cory Stanford, Jacen Stanford, Kathryn Medford (Linda Stanford)  
 Vicki Terry, Vikki Dzamba (Carol Linda)  
 Curtis Forrester (Bill & Diane Jones)  
 Frank Simons, Ruthie Simons, Kris Braswell, (Colleen Early)  
 Octaviano Estrada Jr., Abby Peters, Ann Mitchell (Meridith Sellers)  
 Renlee Montgomery, the Montgomery family (Marcyl Howell)  
 Bryan, and Zoe Cruse (Lee & Marilyn Cruse)  
 "Red" Tiner, Kathy Coleman, Nancy Hensel (Del & Sue Hensel)  
 Diana & Saul Guajardo (Ashley Jenson)  
 Wendell Mosley, Nancy Lynch (Paula Jenson)  
 Rhonda Smith Owens (Denise Self)  
 Wolfgang, Gert Gstatenbauer, Werner Gstatenbauer (Roger & Betty Fornelius)  
 Robin Waite (Billie Hueske)  
 Dylan James Tristian Smith (Teresa Umberger)  
 Joann Bottoms, Darlene Gemath, Hannah Herring (Mary Herring)  
 Lambring & Collander Families (Maggie Lambring)  
 Reba Widmer, Roland & Sharon Krienke (Teresa Bancale)  
 Todd Butts (Bancale & Krienke families)

**September Birthdays**

Karl Aho	9/07
Peggy Tooker	9/07
Alicia Boeche	9/10
Gary Herzberg	9/16
Jean Melzer	9/16
David Hafer	9/19
Robert Krienke	9/10
Dennis Kincaid	9/20
Karen Mullens	9/22
Arlene Schwarz	9/23
Bill Abright	9/25
John Jasek	9/25
Tammy Vickrey	9/26
Lee Nordt	9/27
Marilyn Cruse	9/30

**September Anniversaries**

Jay & Jean Dittmann	9/03
Del & Sue Hensel	9/10
Terry & Janet Roller	9/13
Michael & Cynthia Frey	9/18



Our **monthly newsletter** **deadline** is the **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month**. Please send submissions to [cvanauken@grandecom.net](mailto:cvanauken@grandecom.net)

or you may **place your**

**handwritten information and thank you notes in the wooden box near the entrance of the workroom. Thank you!**

**Did You Know?**

That you can fill out an attendance card online? Scan the QR code at the front of the bulletin.

That you can use your phone or electronic device to view the Sunday Worship bulletin?

That St. Matthew has a new website? Check it out: [www.stmattwaco.org](http://www.stmattwaco.org)

September 2025							Oct 2025 ▶
◀ Aug 2025	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed	2 12:00pm-1:00pm <i>Deanery</i>	3 6:30pm Choir	4 11:00am Communion Worship at Ridgecrest	5 9:00am Quilters	6	
7 9:30am Worship Service/ God's Work Our Hands	8	9 10:00am Circle of Faith	10 6:30pm Choir	11	12 9:00am Quilters	13 9:00am-4:00pm Calligraphy Guild	
14 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	15	16 6:00pm Game Night	17 6:30pm Choir	18	19 9:00am Quilters 6:00pm Faith in Film	20	
21 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	22	23 1:00pm Coffee Fellowship	24 6:30pm Choir	25	26 9:00am Quilters	27	
28 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	29	30 11:00am-4:00pm <i>Domino (42) Group</i>					