



Saint Matthew
LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Matthew's Messenger

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

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“Should we worship?”

Dear People of God:

Every May I attend Luther Seminary’s Festival of Homiletics, an international continuing education event where 1500 participants from various denominations spend a week listening to sermons and lectures about writing sermons from some of the best preachers working today. This year’s Festival was to have been held in Atlanta; instead, like everything else these days, I watched it from my living room. Instead of hearing the applause and “Amens” of several hundred people, the only sound I heard besides the preacher’s voice was the distant hum of my neighbor’s lawn mower. All this is by way of saying that from both the pulpit and the pew I understand how impoverished our current worship experiences are; I, too, dearly wish we could fill the sanctuary for in-person worship again. So, if that’s what we all want to do, why don’t we?

It’s worth noting that suspending worship is not primarily a legal issue. Recently the President expressed the opinion that churches should re-open; however, the authority to cancel or reinstate worship does not fall within the purview of the government. From the beginning of our state restrictions, the Governor designated churches as life-sustaining entities so that the government was not perceived as interfering in the practice of religion; it was left up to faith leaders to act responsibly on behalf of the communities we serve. As even life-sustaining and essential businesses have been required to comply with mitigation efforts, the Synod has been advising us regarding how to operate within guidelines—the same way that, for instance, we would have to comply with fire codes. But since our hiatus from in-person worship always was and continues to be self-imposed, it’s good to remember that the question is not “Are we allowed to worship in person?” but “Should we worship in person?”

Unfortunately, it turns out that most of what we do in corporate worship is exactly what spreads this disease. Even without passing the peace or receiving communion, returning to the church building would involve spending an extended period of time inside with others, singing, and speaking in unison—all risky behaviors. Although nobody is immune, our congregation is comprised of many individuals who, because of age or underlying health issues, are in greater danger of dying if they are infected. Every few days we read about another church that unwittingly provided the opportunity for the virus to wreak havoc—not only within their congregation but in their wider community.

As counties move to the yellow or green phases, limits on the size of groups, masks, and social distancing efforts are still necessary because the virus is still active and as yet there is no vaccine or effective treatment. Even reaching the green phase of reopening does not mean we are “safe” from catching coronavirus; it only means our health care system has enough capacity to treat us if we get sick.

It helps to look at distance worship like other mitigation efforts. We already know that masks are more effective at stopping a contagious person from spreading the virus than they are at protecting a healthy person from catching it—or as we’ve been told, “My mask protects you; your mask protects me.” This means that wearing a mask is not an act of fear but an act of compassion toward others. In the same way, we wait to resume in-person worship not out of fear for ourselves but because we care about others—our congregation members, those in the community with whom we interact, and the healthcare professionals who would treat us if we got sick or infected others.

So yes, we are allowed to worship in person according to civil law. But as people of faith, we answer to a higher power. When we measure our responsibility as disciples—loving others as Christ loved us—the bar is set much higher than doing what is legal but dangerous. Since we have yet to plan a way to make in-person worship reasonably safe, the answer to “Should we worship in person?” remains, sadly, “No.” Yet, as the church is not the building but the body of Christ in the world, we are not now and never have been closed; we are doing our best to adapt to circumstances which we did not envision, as the people of God have always done when necessary. It is not perfect, but neither is it permanent. Our hope is that by exercising patient distancing now, nobody will be missing from the fold when the flock is back together again.

+Pastor Traci

Worship Schedule

Monday: Hymn Devotions, 9AM & 9PM (pre-recorded)

Tuesday-Friday: Morning Prayer, 9AM

Tuesday-Friday: Kids' Devotions & Otto Sings Camp's Greatest Hits, Midday

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: Night Prayer, 9PM

Wednesday: Holden Evening Prayer, 7PM

Tuesday: Camp Sequanota Holden Evening Prayer, 7PM (Zoom link on Camp's page)

Study Schedule—NEW!

Thursday: 3PM & 7PM Book Study on Zoom: "Awaken Your Senses: Exercises for Exploring the Wonder of God" by Bill & Booram

ZOOM.US

Just a reminder--any Zoom meeting can be joined by telephone for those not using internet. Dial any number listed here (try another if one is busy) and enter the ID and Password when prompted. (Charges would apply according to your calling plan.)

+1 301 715 8592

+1 253 215 8782

+1 312 626 6799

+1 346 248 7799

+1 646 558 8656

+1 669 900 9128

Meeting ID: 596 621 1441

Password: 8675309



Starts, June 7, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.



Prayers and Congratulations go to...

- Leah & Derek Park upon the birth of a son, Brian Robert, born May 19, 2020. Grandparents are Rick and Shanda Imler.
- Jimmy and Lori Reimer upon the birth of a daughter, Vivienne Rose, on May 18, 2020. Grandparents are Rick and Cindy Snyder and Great grandfather is Don Smith.

Martinsburg Food Pantry

The food pantry has continued to be open during this COVID-19 crisis to serve those in need of food. Just several regular volunteers will distribute food on Thursdays, June 4 and June 18. In order to handle the distribution in a careful and safe way, the bags of food are prepared ahead of time and only one person can come in at a time to receive the bags of food and a food voucher for C & S Market or Rhodes Meat Market. Masks are worn. We have been serving about 80 families each month. The need has been great! Until our church is allowed to be open again, donations of food can be placed in a collection box at the C & S Market or donations of money can be made out to Martinsburg Food Pantry and mailed to Linda Smith, 118 Spring St., Martinsburg, PA 16662.

Items most needed for June are: Fruit, Peanut Butter, Pasta Sides, Tomato Sauce (cans), Spaghetti, and Cleaning supplies. *Many Thanks!*



Attendance for April 2020

No regular attendance was observed since Covid-19 started March 15, 2020 for St. Matthew. We worshiped online through Facebook and Zoom with an average attendance of 100 viewers.

Chapel Service Attendance None
because of Covid-19

Average Sunday Worship attendance 2019 – 84
Average Sunday School attendance 2019 – 29



St. Matthew Sunday School

The Christian Education Committee expresses thanks and appreciation to everyone who has helped during this year 2019-2020. Your willingness to serve as Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Secretaries is greatly appreciated! See everyone September 13th for rally Sunday! *Christian Education Committee*



Prayers and Christian Sympathy

Prayers and Christian Sympathy are asked for ...

- Rick and Cindy Snyder and family upon the death of Rick's brother, Jeff Snyder, on Monday, May 18, 2020.
- Arnold and Becca Moore upon the death of Arnold's mother and Becca's grandmother on Tuesday, May 19, 2020.



Transformational Ministry

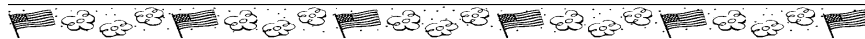
We will ALL lift our needs up in prayer on a daily basis together in our homes for the month of June.

Oh GOD, we thank thee for all that thou hast provided for us. Because of all you have done for us, we are able to appreciate the birds, the flowers, our homes, churches and the fellowship of our fellow man.

Sometimes we have difficulty accepting the challenges before us such as Malaria, SARS, Covid-19, death and disability. When we begin to understand these challenges we usually begin to accept the situation and become a stronger person. We try to adapt ourselves to handle the problem and this could lead to new associations, closer friendships, and a feeling of wellbeing.

And now Oh Lord, we ask thee to help us in our endeavors, protect those who are near and dear to us, and give our leaders the ability to make better decisions concerning our country and our citizens. Let us remember those who fought for our Freedom and grant us Peace. Amen

Please join us in daily prayer as we lift these concerns to the Lord.



June Anniversaries

2	Joey & Lori Tremmel	13	Derek & Leah Park 5 th
3	Colin & Debra Hoover Mike & Connie Lamborn	15	Carl & Dawn Alexy
7	Dean & Mary Lou Hinish	16	David & Jackie Lightner
10	E. Allen & Stacy Kuster	24	William & Dorothy Stahl
11	David & Audrey Stern	28	Larry & Sharon E. Frederick
		30	Jeff & Beth Garner

Birthdays for June

2	Rodger S. Hoover	7	Sarah Detwiler	19	Lottie Ebersole
	Ashley Zanfino	8	Mary E. Creps		Donald Grove
4	Jane C. Hoenstine Audrey Stern		Stacey M. Kensinger	21	Kim E. Lee
5	Jack Howsare	12	Seth Gunnett	23	Terri Rodgers
6	Warren Daniel Sheena Tremmel		Andrew Smith	25	Paul Decker
		13	Michael Tremmel	27	Madison Rodgers
		16	Max A. Baker	28	Nathan Smith
				29	Bill Selby

Congratulations to Our 2020 Graduates!

Olivia Day – Graduated from Hollidaysburg High School. Throughout her school years she has been involved in many activities such as Treasurer of many clubs and organizations. She played tennis, was a member of the school swim team and played Bocce ball. She also currently serves on the Allegheny Lutheran Synod Council as the youth representative. She was rewarded with the 2020 John McDonald Memorial Award, the Principal Special Recognition Award, and an academic Honor Cord to be worn at graduation. She plans to attend Juniata College.



Miles Lamborn – Graduated from Penn State with a BS in College of Health and Human Development, Hospitality Management. Selected to represent PSU in an international hospitality competition in Switzerland that was unfortunately canceled. Graduated cum laude from the Penn State School of Hospitality Management. Was the Vice President of two student organizations: American Hotels & Lodging Association and Eta Sigma Delta (Hospitality honors association focused on volunteering), also received the Statler Scholarship of Excellence as well as additional scholarships from several other organizations. Plans are undecided. He has a position offer from Marriott Corp.

Jason Close – graduated from Northeastern Ohio Medical University. He will begin his internal medicine residency on July 1st at Cleveland Clinic Akron General Hospital. Jason is the son-in-law of Shawn and Laura Orczeck.

Matt Knauss – graduated from Duquesne University with a BS in Physics, BS in Math, Computer Science Minor, Certificate of Excellence in Physics, Materials Science research assistant and SULI (Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internship) recipient. He plans on furthering his education at William and Mary, PhD in Physics.



Sequanota

Lutheran Conference Center & Camp

PO Box 245, Jennerstown, PA 15547

(814) 629-6627

www.sequanota.com

May 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Sequanota!

Sequanota has been a place of joyful play and spiritual growth, loving service, and relationship building for 72 years. As a member of the Sequanota nation - you have most certainly experienced these gifts of God in this holy place. In this difficult time, please remember how God gathers us and how togetherness makes us stronger. It is in that spirit that I write today.

On Friday night, I met virtually with Sequanota's Board of Directors to make a determination about this summer's resident camp program. Many of the board leaders have been part of the Sequanota community for a long time. Some board members were campers, or former staff members and all have served as volunteers. Some are parents of campers and parents of staff members. Their love of camp knows no bounds and it is their and my love for Sequanota's people that lead the conversation and decisions.

Over the last eight weeks, the board has reviewed facts gathered from the ELCA's Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, the American Camp Association, the Center for Disease Control and the PA Department of Health. The Sequanota administrative team gathered survey information from parents, created multiple scenarios, and tested them with current understandings of best practices. The Board put summer camp plans and preparations on hold for the last several months, but we could no longer avoid making final decisions regarding programming. After final review of all available current information and discussion of multiple scenarios, the board and I have concurred that there is no alternative in these uncertain times, but to announce: *all resident camps, hosted ministries and other programs we offer will not take place this summer. The health and safety of our campers and staff is our top priority and will guide all decision making in regards to future programming.*

I know this is a huge disappointment for campers and staff, who love spending part of their summer at Sequanota. Connections are the fabric that make Sequanota feel like our home away from home. (Eating together, singing together, worshipping together, living together, hiking, swimming and playing together...) With the health guidelines that are currently in place (and which we expect to remain), the connections we are accustomed to sharing at camp just can not happen. Sequanota nation as a whole, will share this sorrow together.

It will be hard to not fill the dining hall with laughing campers or Luther League chapel (way up on the hill) with singing. It is deeply emotional for me to realize there will be no staff training or epic game of capture the flag this summer. Please know that in these challenging times, we are all missing connections with one another. We know it and feel it too. However, this decision is just that - one decision.

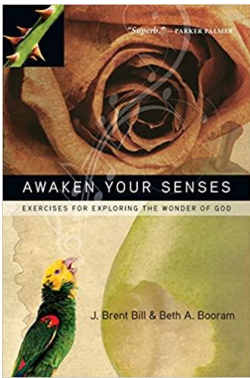
It is our plan to continue to explore how we can be a catalyst within our synod and beyond to inspire all of us to discover other ways to connect together. Tomorrow the staff will begin to “plant new seeds” that will bring forth the fruits of hope, inspiration, and community, as we continue the mission of Sequanota by supporting the work of our congregations and partners in the wake of this pandemic. There is no playbook to help us know how to build community and to do God’s work with our hands during a pandemic. We strongly believe that we are in this together. We do not know what the future holds, but we do know God holds the future. We will continue to communicate plans and share updates as we move forward.

If you have registered a camper or reserved a facility the Sequanota staff will be in contact with you in the next week. Together I invite you to join me in prayer for the Sequanota leaders, who seek to determine the best ways forward. On their behalf, I thank you for your support. Together, God will lead us through this challenge into a new day!

God’s peace, love, and blessing to your family,



Rev. Nathan A. Pile
Executive Director



Next Zoom Book Study: Awaken Your Senses

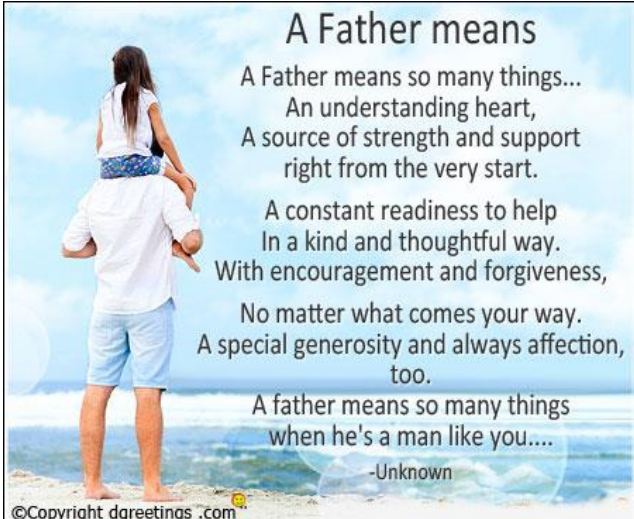
Beginning on Thursday, June 11 at 3 PM & 7 PM, we will begin our next book study on “Awaken Your Senses: Exercises for Exploring the Wonder of God” by Bill & Booram. The book is also available for Kindled, Nook, etc. For the June 11 discussion, please read the Introduction and Part One: Taste (pages 11-56). You can participate in Zoom gatherings by computer or telephone. Contact Pastor Traci with questions.



Milk Giveaway!

Morrisons Cove Memorial Park is a location for a free milk giveaway as sponsored by the PA farmers association to needy individuals.

June 4th.



A Father means

A Father means so many things...
An understanding heart,
A source of strength and support
right from the very start.

A constant readiness to help
In a kind and thoughtful way.
With encouragement and forgiveness,

No matter what comes your way.
A special generosity and always affection,
too.

A father means so many things
when he's a man like you....

-Unknown

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2020 COUNCIL DIRECTORY AND MINISTRY STAFF

Pastor	Rev. Traci Marriott	935-9267	Property	Warren Daniel	935-9249
Admin. Assist.	Lori Tremmel	696-3802	Christian Ed.	Bonnie Casey	285-1610
Assist. Admin. Assist.	Laura Orczeck	224-1208	Evangelism	Les Loomis	(570) 885-0572
President	Melissa Fetzer	793-2735	Stewardship	Greg Haffling	793-9827
Vice President	Sheena Tremmel	515-2962	Finance	Jim Barley	793-4623
Secretary	Elaine Smith	(434) 981-0560	Social Ministry	Peggy Freyer	614-4552
Treasurer	Beth Garner	793-3966	Worship & Music	Jane Fagans	793-4401
Financial Secretary	Anna Klepser	793-2094	Staff Support	Kaye Burket	224-5224

HIGHLIGHTS BY COUNCIL IN MAY

1. Pastor Traci's change of compensation for housing allowance was approved. The amount of total compensation to be redesignated as housing allowance for May 1-December 31, 2020 is adjusted to \$21,000.
2. Council approved the new policy regarding the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) as part of the St. Matthew Personnel Policy.
3. Council agreed to cancel the Life Line Screening and the Young at Heart Dinner until further notice.
4. Summer Worship is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. starting June 7th via Facebook and Zoom.

Giving

2020 April		Year to Date as of 4/30/2020	
Current	\$15,216.60	Current	\$60,776.00
Benevolence (Synod)	\$1,805.50	Benevolence (Synod)	\$7,188.00
Youth & Camping	\$1,184.50	2nd Qrt. Youth & Camping	\$1,184.50

2019 April		Year to Date as of 4/30/19	
Current	\$15,977.09	Current	\$66,618.00
Benevolence (Synod)	\$1,507.00	Benevolence (Synod)	\$6,150.55
Youth and Camping	\$1,288.00	2nd Qrt. Youth & Camping	\$1,721.00

2020 Income vs Expenses		
Current	April	Year to Date as of 4/30/2020
Actual	\$367.09	(\$6,167.63)
Per Budget	(\$3,414.48)	(\$13,748.33)
<u>Benevolence</u>		
Per Commitment to Synod	(\$361.17)	(\$1,478.67)

Ways to Make Donations to St. Matthew

Giving Online: Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions and view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Simply follow these easy steps:

- 1) Visit the church website at "www.stmatthewlc.com"
- 2) Click on the "Give" button, (on the top white banner)
- 3) Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your recurring contributions.

BarCode Offerings:

- 1) Visit "Play Store on your mobile device"
- 2) Find QR Code (this app is free)
- 3) Click on the "Install" the app
- 4) Open the app on your device
- 5) Scan the BarCode: (follow the prompts)

