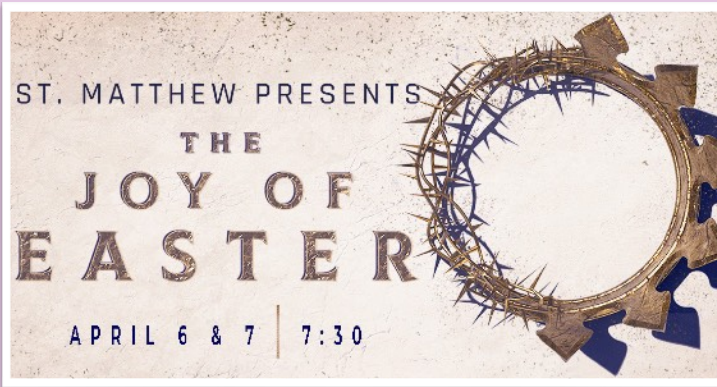




SAINT MATTHEW

**April
2023
Newsletter**



The Children's Easter Celebration

Our Children's Easter Celebration will be **Saturday, April 1 at 1:00 pm** (the Saturday before Palm Sunday) in the Vine Café. For 4th grade and under, join us for story time & music, crafts, snacks, tons of goodies and an Easter Egg Hunt. Make sure you bring the whole family out to celebrate Jesus' resurrection!

The Joy Of Easter

We invite you to join us at **7:30 pm** on **Thursday, April 6 and/or Friday, April 7** as we present our Easter outreach production, The Joy of Easter. Join us as we share the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus our Savior!

Invite your family or friends! A production like this is the perfect opportunity for us to become fishers of men. Help us cast the net wide to bring new people to St. Matthew ... and to the Lord.

We Need Your Help!

We are looking for help on **Saturday, April 8 at 8:00 am** to strike the Easter production set, clean the church and prepare for Easter Sunday. We will also be staying Friday night after the production to clear the stage and move props if that time works better for you. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

Calling All Prayer Warriors

Are you a prayer warrior?! Is praying for and with people a spiritual gift you are willing to share? Each Sunday we are looking for people to pray during, and over, the worship service that you do not attend. What does that mean?

If you attend the 11:00 service and would like to pray for the 9:00 am service you can meet in the Prayer Room off the Sanctuary at 9:00 and pray for the congregation, the worship leaders, the choir, the orchestra, the pastors, the message, etc.

If you attend the 9:00 service and would like to pray for the 11:00 am service you can meet in the Disciple Room at 11:00 and pray for the congregation, the worship leaders, the praise band, the pastors, the message, etc.

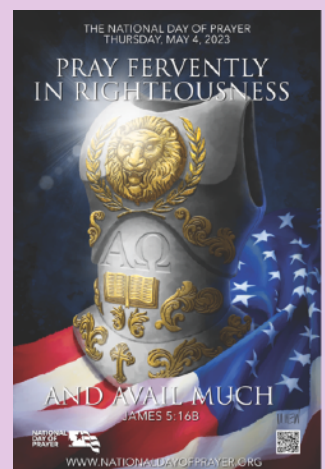
Then, at the end of each service you can make yourself available to pray with those in the congregation that would like prayer. If this sounds like your ministry then please sign up at the Connection Center. We hope to get enough prayer warriors to rotate a schedule.

National Day Of Prayer

The National Day of Prayer is **Thursday, May 4.**

This Year's Theme is: **Pray Fervently In Righteousness And Avail Much.** The theme is based on James 5:16b, and serves as a reminder of the promise that, "The effective, fervent prayers of a righteous man availeth much."

We invite you to join us for a time of praise and prayer in the St. Matthew Chapel at 12 noon on Thursday, May 4.



It's hard for me to believe April is already here! It seems like the last time I looked at my calendar, it was October! How did 7 months pass so quickly? But April is a great month, right? There are several things we can celebrate besides tax day.



According to one source, April 1 is International Pillow Fight Day; (which begs the question, how do we celebrate this? By picking a pillow fight with one from another country?) April 3 is Sweet Potato Day; April 10 is Gopher Tortoise Day (in Florida); April 7 is National No Housework Day and April 16 (or the 3rd Sunday in April) is Go Fly a Kite Day. Apparently, there is even a day called “Blah Blah Blah Day” in which we are invited to do the things others have been encouraging us to do but for whatever reason, we have dismissed their “encouragement” as “blah, blah, blah.”

But of all the days in April on the calendar – perhaps none are as powerful and significant as Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. To me, these two Sundays are high points for us as we celebrate Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem revealing his Kingship, and his victorious conquering of the grave on Easter Sunday! In fact, of all the days we celebrate throughout a given year, these two are right at the top for me!

I hope you will allow your April celebrations to include these two great Sundays. I also hope you will plan on bringing a friend or neighbor to one of the two performances of the Joy of Easter. The production will be on April 6 and 7, beginning at 7pm. Bringing a friend or co-worker or neighbor is a great way to have them experience the Gospel of Jesus.

Easter is more than just a theological concept or a historical fact. It is truly a Life-Transforming Reality. Share Easter with us here at St. Matthew Church and share it with your friends by inviting them to church!

Thankful for the Empty Tomb!

Bob

One More Child Update / Summer Sack Lunch

We sent the second 8 week food order of weekend lunches for 15 students (720.00)!! This will provide food during April and May! Thank you for your needed continued financial support. We covet your prayers.

Lunches for the Summer Sack Lunch Program will begin in June and continue for approximately 12 weeks. Watch for details in the May Newsletter!

- Diane Patton.

Beulah Kids Camp registrations are now available at <https://brushfire.com/beulahholinesscamp>. Beulah Bible Camp is for kids finishing 4th – 6th grade and held on June 26 – 29. Beulah Beginning Camp is for kids finishing 1st – 3rd grade and held on June 30 – July 1. To stay in the church cabins and for a price break, please make sure you join the “St. Matthew Church” group (passcode: Lindsay). Packing info & more info coming closer to camp time!



QR for VBS

“STELLAR” Vacation Bible School is June 12 – 16 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm for preschool through finishing 6th graders. Child & Volunteer Registration is now available at vbspro.events/p/stmatthewvbs2023. Join us on this epic adventure as we journey into outer space to truly learn how to Shine Jesus' Light. It's free! (V.B.S. Work Week is June 5 – 7 from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

Wednesday Night Kids' Club continues from 6:00 – 7:00 pm in Kids' Town. Nursery will be available from 5:45 – 7:15 pm for parents attending classes. Contact Lindsay if you'd be interested in helping! Our last day of club for the semester will be May 3.

We love new friends in Children's Ministry and have plenty of opportunities for you to serve. Let God use you in a mighty way by investing in the spiritual formation of our amazing kids! Not sure where your “sweet spot” would be? Meet with Lindsay and we'll find you a perfect place!

***Email Updates & Activities.** If you have a child or grandchild in the Children's Ministry and do not receive our emails, please send your email address to lvollmar@stmatthew.church. We will continue to provide your kids and families with opportunities to know, grow & go in the name of Jesus!

Joy of Easter

***Cast practice continues** on Wednesday nights at 7:35 pm in the Sanctuary. Check the Rehearsal Schedule and Production Outline for a list of practices you will need to attend. Dress rehearsals are April 4 & April 5 at 7:30 pm for choir, cast, orchestra & crew. Contact Lindsay for more info.

Youth Ministry: Matt Vollmar - 618-795-6250 - mvollmar@stmatthew.church

Sunday Night Youth - 5:00 pm in the Youth Room.
NO YOUTH APRIL 9 / EASTER SUNDAY

Youth Band - Wednesday Nights from 5:30 pm - 6:00 pm in the Youth Room.

Youth Bible Study - Wednesday Nights from 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm in the Youth Room.

March 31 - April 2 - Young Christians Weekend, Branson, MO.



Our youth, leaders and sponsors at Fire-Up 2023!

College Ministry Meets every Wednesday Night at 6:00 pm in the College Ministry Center (door 7).



Throughout the month of March, College Ministry has been in a 5-week study on the Love of Jesus, and the discussion has been fantastic!

On March 11, the group went to Maryland Heights to participate in a day of zip-lining and a high ropes course (pictured left). Although it was a cold day, the group had a great time swing through the trees — especially, Andy!

Next month, College Ministry will take their annual Spring Retreat to Little Grassy in Makanda, IL for a weekend of renewal and worship.

LifeGroups: *Gina Swickard - doxa715@gmail.com*

We now have a LifeGroup opportunity for every age group in the church, so that people in their 20's to people in their 90's can have a large group with which to gather and grow in their faith together. All LifeGroups will meet the fourth Thursday of each month. April's meeting date is **Thursday, April 27**.

The new schedule is as follows:

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

LifeGroup 70 +, led by Bob & Gina Swickard, will meet for Bible study in the Side Vine Cafe.

6:15 pm - 7:00 pm

Dinner will be served in the Vine Cafe for **ALL LifeGroups**

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

LifeGroup 20/40, led by Brian Caringer, will meet will meet for Bible study in the Park Room.

LifeGroup 50/60, led by Bob & Gina Swickard, will meet for Bible study in the Side Vine Cafe.



Your St. Matthew staff and kitchen crew were overjoyed to serve you for our Ash Wednesday spaghetti dinner!

Join us on Thursday, April 20, for our monthly New Life Club meeting at noon in the Vine Cafe. Our program will be presented by Tom Myrda, entitled "The Golden Era of Music." Our Devotion will be presented by Tona Eckley, Club Secretary. Our meal will be prepared and served by our Minister of Music, Hank Oplinger, for a small donation of \$5.00. We will also be having our annual "Plant and Flower - A- Rama." Please contact Jeannette Rettle or Judy Rowe for any contributions you have for us. This is a great time to get great new plants for a fraction of the price you would pay retail.

Larry Patton's Bible Study will be held April 13 and the 27th 2023, with coffee and donuts at 9:30, Bible Study at 10:00 a.m. and the 27th will be "Bring Your Own Lunch" day. We meet in the Vine Cafe. This is a great way to learn and understand the Bible as Larry addresses our comments and questions. You'll be glad you came!

"REDEEMED AGAIN," THE THRIFT SHOP OF ST. MATTHEW - We thank you for providing our needs. We are currently in need of men/women's underwear, kids' socks, men/women's socks, king sized sheet sets, linens, dishtowels, bath towels and jewelry..... We are always blessed with your donations.

NEW LIFE CLUB CHOIR - We meet Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m. in the Park Room. We are excited to announce that we will be singing at the Atrium and Keystone Place in April and Holly Brook and Grand Manor in May. The door is open again for us to visit our area assisted living etc. facilities. Praise the Lord!

ST. MATTHEW SR. TRAVELS

- "QUEEN ESTHER" at the Sight and Sound Theatre, Branson, MO. April 12-13, 2023. This trip filled up in the January meeting with a waiting list. We are looking at taking another group in June possibly. If you might be interested, please let me know.
- Josephine's Tea Room - May 25, 2023 - \$50.00 upon booking.
- St. Louis Cardinal Game - Busch Stadium - National Car Rental Club Suite - Wednesday, August 20, 2023 - 1:15 Game Against The San Diego Padres. All inclusive upscale buffet, indoor climate controlled reserved seating, private bathroom all on the third base line with great views - \$180.00 upon booking. We have a few openings. I can get more tickets for a while. Please call.

Many more great ventures to come presented at the April 20th meeting and beyond.....

We'd love for you to join us for a great time of Christian fellowship and lunch and plant shopping. All seniors of all denominations are welcome.

The Wednesday Night Meal Preview

Meal service is from 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm. Dine in or carry out!

You can order a meal by: calling the church office, signing up in the foyer, or on line here: stmatt.co/wed-meal

April 5

Taco Wednesday

Tacos

Enchiladas

Chips & Salsa

Salad Bar

Dessert

April 12

Roast Beef

Mashed Potatoes & Gravy

Green bean Casserole

Salad Bar

Rolls

Dessert

April 19

Meatloaf

Mashed Potatoes & Gravy

White Shoe Peg Corn

Salad Bar

Rolls

Dessert

Disaffiliation Update

The vote to disaffiliate from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference was held by the District Superintendent on March 2, 2023. The vote passed 321 in favor, with 10 opposed, or 97%.

Any member of St. Matthew who wishes to remain a member of the United Methodist Church should notify Casey Skelton in the church office as soon as practical. The Conference has directed that your membership will then be transferred to Union United Methodist Church in Belleville. You may also request your membership to be transferred to some other church.

Name Change

St. Matthew United Methodist Church will no longer exist after May 6, 2023. St. Matthew Church, Inc. will then be officially in place. You can begin using the new name on your checks now, but after May 6, please be sure to use the new name: St. Matthew Church.

Also, if you have named St. Matthew UMC in your will or estate plan, please have that changed to St. Matthew Church, Inc.

If you have any questions about either of these subjects, please contact Ron Buerges (Finance Chair), Dan Harry (Financial Administrator) or Ken Williams (Administrative Board Chair).

Never Alone

This monthly support group is for those who have lost a spouse. As long as we have God with us and each other, we will never be alone! Please feel free to invite people from outside our church, everyone is welcome. We are going to meet in the Chapel on Tuesday, April 11 at 11:00 for approximately one hour. After the meeting, we can go to lunch, if anyone is interested. Let's all come together and see what God has in store for us!

Cinco De Mayo Trivia Night & Silent Auction

Mark your calendars and save the date for the *Cinco De Mayo Trivia Night & Silent Auction* on Friday, May 5 at 7:00 pm in the Vine Cafe! This event is a fund raiser for the Guatemala mission trip in June and the Paraguay mission trip in August.

Tables of 8 cost \$75.00. OR you can purchase a single entry for \$10.00. You can purchase your table or entry by calling the church office (618-397-5994).

We are planning to have some great items in the silent auction (more information coming later!). If you have an item to donate for the silent auction please drop it off at the church office with it's value and donator (if desired). Donating and / or attending on May 5 is a GREAT way to be part of our missions efforts. Both mission teams greatly appreciate your involvement.



We are grateful to
all who attended the
Special Church
Conference on
Thursday, March 2!





We celebrate these new members through our membership class: (above, top to bottom) Matt Osborn, Karen Osborn, Taylor Miller, Mark Vandiver, Kathy Lugge, Cindy Beckman, Debra Kraft & Myrna Jones. (Not Pictured: Paul, Zachary, Alex & Abigail Beckman.)

We celebrate this new member by her commitment through baptism: Sydney Hurdle (below).



Celebrate Recovery: *Aaron Oplinger - 618-406-0287 - aoplinger@stmatthew.church*

Friday Nights: Dinner at 6 pm. Large group at 7 pm. Open share groups at 8 pm.

We are heading into a great Spring at Celebrate Recovery here at St. Matts! We want to say thank you to everyone for your prayers, financial support, and word of mouth promotion. Thanks to you, each week between 60 and 80 people come into our Friday night meeting to be encouraged and find support for the many trying ares in life. With God's help, you are making a positive difference in people's lives. Here is what is going on in April,

April 7 - We will be attending The Joy of Easter together as a group on this good Friday! Show up early and look for our group location in the sanctuary.

April 14 - Allison Knapp will be teaching. a lesson called "Moral". Allison will share how making a moral or honest inventory of our lives can help us to see the different ways we have affected others and how their actions have affected us.

April 21 - Our Training coach, Tracy Crawford will be sharing her testimony with us. Tracy has become a very strong leader in our CR and she has been a sponsored several women who come into the program. Come and listen to how God has worked and is working in Tracy's life.

April 28 - Tom Partelow will be walking us through the process of creating our life inventory and why this step is so important.

Celebration Place meets every Friday night and is offered to our kids as a “pre-covey” kid’s group for Celebrate Recovery. Kids begin in the Chapel with their parents at 7:00 pm to be a part of worship time, then head upstairs to Kids Town for their own lesson, small groups, snack, game time & more. We need volunteers to help us teach on Friday nights, so please let Lindsay (lvollmar@stmatthewumc.org) know if you can help on a rotating basis.

Stewardship Corner

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1).

“Mindful of this spiritual principle, that everything belongs to God and He has entrusted me with the privilege and responsibility of being a good steward, I will seek every opportunity to invest all the time, talents and treasure available to me while I am still alive for the enhancement of the kingdom of God” (Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ).



SAINT
MATTHEW

Special Events Calendar

April 1	Kid's Easter Celebration
April 2	Palm Sunday
April 4	SPRC Meeting
April 6	Joy Of Easter & Maundy Thursday
April 7	Joy Of Easter & Good Friday
April 9	Easter Sunday
April 10	Church Office Closed
April 11	Never Alone
April 11	Trustees Meeting
April 13	NLC Bible Study
April 18	Finance Committee Meeting
April 20	New Life Club Luncheon
April 27	NLC Bible Study
April 27	LifeGroups

Weekly Worship Opportunities

Sunday

Morning: 9:00 am & 11:00 am

Kid's Worship: 9:00 am & 11:00 am

Wednesday

6:15 pm in the Park Room

Senior Pastor: Robert Swickard

Associate Pastor: Andy Black

NEED PRAYER?

Submit a prayer request here:

stmatt.co/prayer

In This Issue:

Page 1: All Things Easter, Calling All Prayer Warriors & National Day Of Prayer

Page 2: The Pastor's Pen & One More Child / Summer Sack Lunch

Page 3: Children's Ministry & Youth Ministry

Page 4: College Ministry & LifeGroups

Page 5: Senior Ministry & Wednesday Night Meal

Page 6: News & Events (Disaffiliation Update, Name Change Information, Never Alone & Trivia Night,)

Page 7: Welcome New Members, Celebrate Recovery & The Stewardship Corner

Page 8: Special Events Calendar

St. Matthew has a YouTube channel! Click on this link and Subscribe!

youtube.com/@saintmatthew-belleville