



**April  
2024  
Newsletter**

## **New Members Class**

Have you found “a place to belong” here at St. Matthew? If you would like to take the next step and become a member of St. Matthew we are holding a new members class on **Sunday, April 14** at noon in the Vine Cafe. A light lunch will be served followed by the membership class led by Senior Pastor, Bob Swickard. You will also learn about the different ministries of St. Matthew and have a chance to meet the ministry leaders.

If you would like to attend this class, or would like more information, please contact Scott Ferguson at: [sferguson@stmatthew.church](mailto:sferguson@stmatthew.church) or by calling the church office at 618-397-5994. We appreciate the RSVP so we can plan accordingly for the lunch!

## **New Member / Baptism Sunday**

On **Sunday, April 21** we will welcome in our new members and baptize those who would like to be baptized. Baptisms will also be available on the following Sunday (April 28).

If you would also like to be baptized on this Sunday, or would like to learn more about baptism, please contact Scott Ferguson at: [sferguson@stmatthew.church](mailto:sferguson@stmatthew.church) or by calling the church office at 618-397-5994.

## **Free Concert**

Please join us on **Saturday, April 13 at 3:00 pm** in the St. Matthew Chapel for a free concert courtesy of the Don James Band. Come on out for a great time of great music. This is a wonderful opportunity to introduce someone new to St. Matthew.

## **National Day Of Prayer**

The National Day of Prayer is **Thursday, May 2**. The theme is “Lift Up The Word - Light Up the World” based on Samuel 22:29 - 31: *You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord turns my darkness into light. With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall. As for God; his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.* (NIV).

We invite you to join us for a time of worship, praise and prayer in the St. Matthew Chapel at 12:00 noon on Thursday, ay 2.

A light lunch will be available following prayer time for a free-will donation. Please call the church office to register or use the sign-up sheet at the Connection Center located in the foyer. We look forward to sharing with you in prayer.

THE 73RD ANNUAL  
NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER  
THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024



**LIFT UP THE WORD -  
LIGHT UP THE WORLD**  
2 SAMUEL 22:29-31

## **Movie Matinee**

Join us on **Sunday, April 21 at 3:00 pm** for the monthly Sunday matinee with popcorn! This month’s movie is *The Diary Of Anne Frank*. According to IMBD: *In Nazi-occupied Holland in World War II, shopkeeper Kraler hides two Jewish families in his attic. Young Anne Frank keeps a diary of everyday life for the Franks and the Van Daans, chronicling the Nazi threat as well as family dynamics. Otto Frank returns to the attic many years after the eventual capture of both families and finds his late daughter's diary.* Bring your friends and family!

If I asked you what subculture of people stands out to you, would you have one that comes to mind? All of us have more than likely seen evidence of sub-cultures within our American culture. Does anyone remember the “Hippie” subculture? (Maybe some of you *were* a part of that subculture?) 😊 The list can go on: Rock and Roll subculture; Biker subculture; Fitness subculture, just to name a few.



What is interesting to me about these subcultures is that daily life is/was very much influenced by the nuances of that subculture. Hippies could be identified quickly (rightly or wrongly), by their bell bottoms, hair style and sunglasses. (And their common messages.) A biker subculture could be quickly identified by their motorcycles, the vests they wore, not to mention where they hung out. Fitness folk will be seen eating clean, dressing for a workout and talking about the latest in fitness trends. Every subculture has identifying marks that make them stand out.

So as a follower of Jesus, would people know you fall into that subculture? (The “Christ-Follower” subculture)? If there is such a thing as a Christian subculture, (or a Jesus culture), what do you think would be the identifying marks of such a person? Would this culture affect the words that came out of our mouths? Would it affect how we dress in public? Would it inform the conversations we have with others? Would it affect where we hung out? With whom we hung out? How we interacted with each other? How we interacted with people we don’t know? I think the answer is, “of course!”

As Easter people, we are the ones who should have the most hope, the most grace, the most love, joy, patience, kindness and generosity the world has ever seen. Easter changed EVERYTHING! Because Jesus was raised from the tomb on the first day of the week, we now have hope! We now have joy! We can “try again” when we fail in following Jesus. And ultimately, we now have a promise of eternal life through Christ with the exclamation point of an empty tomb! We have a LOT to be thankful for as “Easter People,” because this is our subculture! This is why around the throne there will be people from every tribe and tongue!

My prayer for each of you is that you are able to find those identifiable marks in your life as a Jesus-Follower. I pray that all of us might have grace to live each day as an Easter person: One who has infinite hope because Jesus conquered the grave!

Praying with you that Jesus would be seen in us!

Bob

**Great big “Thank you”** to all our wonderful volunteers who came out on March 23 to help at the Children's Easter Celebration! We had an egg-cellent day of loving on our kids, families and celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. Please keep praying for our families!

**Rice Bowl cash collection ends April 3!** Keep filling those bowls full of loose change and return it to Kids Town by Wednesday, April 3. All donations will be sent to Rice Bowls Organization to put food on the tables of Christian orphanages around the world. If you would like to give online to the kids mission, here is the link: <https://ricebowls.networkforgood.com/projects/218854-st-matthew-church>. Thank you for helping us “Make Some Change” in the name of Jesus!

**SCUBA Vacation Bible School** is June 10 – 14 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm for potty trained 3 year olds through kids who have finished 6th grade. Join us for underwater adventure where we dive into a friendship with God as we explore the book of John. It's free, so bring your friends as we explore God's beautiful underwater playground and truly dive into His Word! Free registration is available at: [vbspro.events/p/stmatthewvbs2024](https://vbspro.events/p/stmatthewvbs2024). It's going to be a fantastic week!

**SCUBA V.B.S. Volunteer sign up** is available in the main foyer! We have many different ranges of jobs available like crew leader, snack helpers, door greeters, hallway monitor, etc. We have the perfect spot for you no matter how involved or not you'd like to be.

**Wednesday Kids' Club & Nursery** meets every week from 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm for preschool – 6th graders in Kids' Town. Our Nursery opens at 5:45 pm for our little ones 3 years and under. The last day of Club & Nursery for the semester will be May 1!

**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!

**Parents, for your calendars:** Scuba VBS Set Up (June 3 – 5 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm), Scuba VBS (June 10-14 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm), Beulah Bible Camp for finishing 4th – 6th gr. (June 24-27), Beulah Beginning Camp for finishing 1st – 3rd gr. (June 28 & 29).

**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](mailto:lvollmar@stmatthew.church). We will continue to provide your kids and families with opportunities to Know, Grow & Go in the name of Jesus!

## **Youth Ministry:** *Matt Vollmar - 618-795-6250 - [mvollmar@stmatthew.church](mailto:mvollmar@stmatthew.church)*

**Sunday Night Youth** - Each Sunday at 5:00 pm in the Youth Room. **BUT - No Youth April 7 this month.**

**Wednesday Night Youth Band:** 5:30 pm - 6:00 pm in the Youth Room with Matt Vollmar.

**Wednesday Night Youth:** 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm in the Youth Room with Matt Vollmar.

**April 5-7, Branson, MO** - Young Christian's Weekend

## **College Ministry:** *Ross Atherton - 508-209-4635 - [ratherton@stmatthew.church](mailto:ratherton@stmatthew.church)*

If you are 18 to 25 we would love for you to join us for fellowship and diving deeper into the word.

Our normal meeting times are Wednesdays starting at 7:00 pm and Thursdays starting at 6:00 pm.

We 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 25**

The 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 20/30**, led by Ross & Veronica Atherton, will meet for Bible study in the Park Room.

**LifeGroup 40/60**, led by Bob & Gina Swickard, will meet for Bible study in the Side Vine Cafe.

## Prayer Ministries

At St. Matthew we believe that a healthy prayer life is an essential part of our walk with Jesus. There are many opportunities for prayer throughout the week at St. Matthew.

**Tuesday Morning Prayer** – Join us each Tuesday morning at 8:00 am in the Prayer Room off the Sanctuary.

**Friday Morning Women's Prayer Group** – A group of ladies get together each Friday morning for prayer at 8:00 am in the Prayer Room off the Sanctuary.

**Sunday Morning Prayer Teams** – Are you a prayer warrior?! Is praying for and with people a spiritual gift you are willing to share? Each Sunday morning we have a group of people praying during, and over, the worship service they do not attend. What does that mean?

If you attend the 10:45 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, for the Holy Spirit to move, for hearts to be changed ... or however you are led.

If you attend the 9:00 service and would like to pray for the 10:45 am service you can meet in the Disciple Room at 10:45 and pray for the congregation, the worship leaders, the praise band, the pastors, the message, for the Holy Spirit to move, for hearts to be changed ... or however you are led.

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, stop by the Connection Center to sign up.

## Stewardship Corner

“God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8).

Part of stewardship is keeping track of our blessings and counting them daily. Yes, we could keep a ledger of things we don't have, but why focus on that? With the abundant blessings we receive daily, our heartfelt response should be to praise God “from whom all blessings flow.” (David Jeremiah)

**NEW LIFE CLUB** is **Thursday, April 18 at noon in the Vine Cafe.** Our program will be a great time of music "The Songs We Sang," by the "60s Chicks." Our devotion will be presented by Sharon Goetz. Jack Lampe and friends will be cooking and serving Chicken Pot Pie. Please join us and bring a friend for this special time with Christian friends.

**Senior Bible Study** will be April 11th and 25th and starts with coffee and donuts at 9:30 a.m and Bible study at 10:00. Shelby Walasin leads this study. It's a wonderful group of praying folks who love the Bible and its message to us. Drop in!

**ST. MATTHEW SR. TRAVELS**

The Ark Encounter - April 15-16, 2024 ( A Few Openings)

"Steel Magnolias" At Stages - St Louis And Hodaks For Dinner - June 13, 2024

**Coming Soon:**

Kansas City - May, 2024

I-75 Grand Tour Of Michigan - September, 2024

Fireside Dinner Theatre - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1, 2024

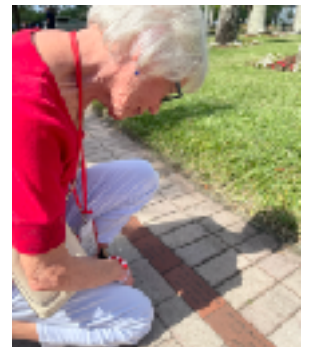
Christmas In Branson -Nov. 18-21,2024

And More.....

Come And Travel With Us In Our New Big Red Bus.

Brick Dedication Remarks

Spring Training - March 14, 2024



Today is March 14...

Three-fourteen ... Three ...one ...four ...

In math circles, it's known as "Pi Day."

"Pi" is a mysterious number. It's a mathematical constant that signifies the relationship between the diameter of a circle and its circumference. As school kids, we learned that it "goes on and on forever with no repeating pattern." No matter the size of the circle, the relationship is unchanging. Computers have been used to attempt to capture the number with some finality, but 62.8 trillion digits later, they've still been unable to accomplish that. It's one of those things that mankind has tried to put into a box to comfort our finite minds...much like we try to do with God. So, what a perfect calendar day brings us to this place!

How fitting that we would be remembering our Coach Patton, a math teacher, on Pi Day!

How fitting that the adjectives "constant", "infinite", "unchanging", and "unexplainable" also describe our God, to Whom Larry Patton had given 100% of his heart and life!

And, finally, how fitting that another three-fourteen, Philippians 3:14, could very well echo the sentiments of our beloved Larry, as he entered his eternal home in Glory: "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

- Written by Tracy Martz



## **Christian Salt & Light - Sunday School Class Invitation**

On **April 7**, The Christian Salt & Light Co. Class, taught by Ken Williams, will begin a new series of lessons on Bible prophecy. All are welcome to attend. The class meets in the Handbell Room, #2, on the lower level. If you have any questions about this new series, please contact Ken at 277-5343.

## **Souders Scholarship**

The Edward and Evelyn Souders Scholarship is awarded to one college student each year. The recipient should be an active participant in St. Matthew and not a child, spouse or dependent of a St. Matthew staff member. Preference will be given first to a student preparing for full-time ministry, second to one with financial need, and third to one enrolled in a Christian college or university. If you would like to apply simply email Casey at [cskelton@stmatthew.church](mailto:cskelton@stmatthew.church) for an application. Or you can pick up a hard copy in the church office. Please return all applications to Casey Skelton no later than **May 31**.

## **Update: One More Child / Summer Sack Lunch Ministry**

We completed our final 8 weekend lunches for 16 children and they will be delivered in April & May. We will begin the program again at the end of August following summer break. With inflation, the cost is now \$7.00 / child. With serving approximately 16 children for 8 weeks that brings our food order to a total of approximately \$900.00. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the people of God. Thank you for your ongoing support. We covet your prayers.

The Summer Sack Lunch Program ministry will begin in June and continues for approximately 12 weeks. St. Matthew provides 250 - 300 lunches each Monday throughout the community. Watch for details in the May newsletter.

## **Medical Mission Supplies Needed**

We need your help in collecting medical supplies for our medical missions team.

Please place all items in the donation bin in the foyer. Thank you in advance for your help!

### A list of suggested medical items for donation

Ibuprofen  
Children's Ibuprofen (Liquid & Chewable)  
Tylenol  
Children's Tylenol (Liquid & Chewable)  
Prenatal Vitamins (No Gummies)  
Children's Vitamins (No Gummies)  
Adult Multivitamins (No Gummies)

Hydrocortisone Cream  
Triple Antibiotic Cream  
Anti-fungal Cream  
Antacids  
Allergy Medications  
Cough Drops  
Glasses: Old Prescriptions / Readers / Cheaters



OR: Monetary donations (please write "medical missions" on your check)

Please join us every Friday evening starting at 6 with a free dinner.

At 7 we join together for large groups and worship, and at 8 we split into men's and women's open share groups.

Chrissy and I are so excited to be able to announce that with your support, we are returning to Paraguay once again this year to continue seeding new Celebrate Recovery groups, helping the leaders we met with last year, and bringing more Spanish curriculum. We will be taking seven St Matthew Celebrate Recovery leaders and one leader from CrossRoots Celebrate Recovery in Effingham. We ask for your prayers as we prepare for our trip in August. Stay tuned for more information and details regarding this mission opportunity! Be sure to come and join us on Fridays this month for encouraging lessons and inspirational testimonies, and on the 26th...Baptisms!

April 5 - Chrissy Oplinger will be sharing the importance of having a "SPONSOR" or mentor to be there for guidance and support as you walk through the recovery process or even just the day to day challenges that life throws at us.

April 12 - We will watch a video of the founder of Celebrate Recovery, John Baker, as he shares his testimony. This is a great opportunity to hear about how Celebrate Recovery came into being when John said YES to God's call on his life!

April 19 - Allison Knapp will share a lesson titled "MORAL" Allison will tell us why it is so important that we make time and analyze our past to help us understand how we became the person we currently are. This information can help us grow into the person God designed us to be.

April 26 - Jana McDonald will be with us to share her incredible life story. It is both heartbreaking and inspiring. You do not want to miss it. Pastor Bob Swickard will be with us and we will have a baptism service following Jana's testimony. This will be a special evening.

**Celebration Place** meets every Friday night and is offered to our kids as a "pre-recovery" 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.

## **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](http://stmatt.co/wed-meal)

### April 3

Roast Beef  
Mashed Potatoes & Gravy  
White Shoe Peg Corn  
Salad Bar  
Rolls  
Dessert

### April 10

Bacon Wrapped Pork Filets  
Baked Potatoes  
Honey Glazed Carrots  
Salad Bar  
Rolls  
Dessert

### April 17

Spaghetti & Meatballs  
Peas  
Salad Bar  
Garlic / Cheese Bread  
Spumoni Ice Cream  
Cookies



## **Special Events Calendar**

|          |                              |
|----------|------------------------------|
| April 1  | Church Office Is Closed      |
| April 9  | Never Alone                  |
| April 11 | Senior Bible Study           |
| April 13 | Women Of Worth Meeting       |
| April 13 | Don James Band Concert       |
| April 14 | New Member Luncheon          |
| April 18 | New Life Club Luncheon       |
| April 21 | New Member Sunday / Baptisms |
| April 21 | Movie Matinee                |
| April 25 | Senior Bible Study           |
| April 25 | LifeGroups                   |
| April 26 | St. Matthew Carnival         |

## **Sunday Worship Opportunities**

9:00 am & 10:45 am

Kid's Worship: 9:00 am & 10:45 am

**Senior Pastor: Robert Swickard**  
**Associate Pastor: Ross Atherton**

**NEED PRAYER?**

**Submit a prayer request here:**

[stmatt.co/prayer](http://stmatt.co/prayer)

### **In This Issue:**

**Page 1:** New Member Class, New Member / Baptism Sunday, Free Concert, The National Day Of Prayer & The Movie Matinee

**Page 2:** The Pastor's Pen

**Page 3:** Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry & College Ministry

**Page 4:** LifeGroups, Prayer Ministries & Stewardship Corner

**Page 5:** Senior Ministry

**Page 6:** Christian Salt & Light Sunday School Class Invitation, Souders Scholarship, One More Child / Summer Sack Lunch Update, & Medical Mission Supplies Needed

**Page 7:** Celebrate Recovery & The Wednesday Meal

**Page 8:** Special Events Calendar

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

[youtube.com/@saintmatthew-belleville](https://youtube.com/@saintmatthew-belleville)