



**March  
2024  
Newsletter**

## **The Joy Of Easter**

Save the date for the *Joy of Easter* on **March 28 & 29 at 7:30 pm.**

The Joy of Easter presents the gospel through a musical drama depicting the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Live animals, beautiful costumes and amazing sets accompany the cast of over 200 that includes choir, orchestra, a drama team and our technical support staff and crew. Please invite your family, friends and neighbors to this wonderful, free event. Invite strangers! We want to pack the house both nights to bring people to Jesus this Easter season!

## **The Joy Of Easter - News**

**Stage canvas laying is Sunday, March 3 at 5:30 pm** and we need all able bodies to help stretch canvas, carry props down, staple canvas to prepare for the set construction that begins March 4. Your help is greatly appreciated!

**Final Cast Costume Fittings on February 28 & March 6 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm** in the Costume Room (under the Sanctuary, through the Choir Room).

**Would you be able to help** in the Joy of Easter Kid's Room or Nursery? We are looking for several people on Thursday, March 28 or Friday, March 29 that would be able to spend some time with our kids and little ones. Contact Lindsay if you are interested. (Background check included).

## **Children's Easter Celebration**

Our Children's Easter Celebration will be **Saturday, March 23 at 10:30 am** in the Vine Café this year. For 4<sup>th</sup> grade and under, join us for story time & music, crafts, snacks, tons of goodies and an Easter Egg Hunt. Bring your family!



## **Easter Lily Orders**

Easter Lilies are available to purchase for \$12.00 each. Order forms are at the Connection Center. You can drop your order form and payment in the offering plate/box or bring it to the church office. You may designate the lily as being in memory of, in honor of, or as a love gift. All orders must be received by March 24 in order to appear on the recognition sheet. You may take your lily home after the Easter Sunday Service.

## **Church Directory Updates**

There will be a table in the foyer the first four Sunday's of March for you to review your contact information and make any necessary changes. This information will be published in the church directory that you receive in the mail. **PLEASE make sure you stop by this table and check your information!** If you would like to be removed, simply cross your name off the list. If you would like to be added, there will also be forms available to fill out to do that. Thank you!

In 1738 John Wesley had an intense religious experience at a meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. Following that experience, he began preaching throughout the country, forming "classes" and "bands" of new converts to Christ. These classes and bands were Christians who would come together to encourage each other, pray for each other and they watched over each other in love.

Members met regularly for learning and personal accountability. The following questions were used by Wesley for self-examination--and are sure to be a bit convicting and motivating even for us today.

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?



Twenty-Two questions! As we approach Easter, I was only going to ask one question: "How is it with your soul?" But in one sense, maybe we can only answer the question about our soul in light of how we answer the 22 questions! Clearly, intentionality of discipleship is crucial in our walk with the Lord.

I enjoy praying for you as the congregation. I enjoy praying for individuals as I come to know situations. In fact, if there is something you would like me to pray for, please reach out to me through email at [bswickard@stmatthew.church](mailto:bswickard@stmatthew.church) and let me know how I can pray for you. We really have been given a gift in each other and I consider it a privilege to be on the journey with you!

I hope the Lenten season continues to be a blessing to you and that you find great joy as we together celebrate Palm Sunday on March 24 and Easter Sunday on March 31! Also, be sure to see the Joy of Easter productions in between the two Sundays. We have so much to celebrate! God is so Good!

Grateful for you!

Bob

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bob', written over a faint circular line.

Our **Children's Easter Celebration** will be Saturday, March 23 at 10:30 am in the Vine Café this year. For 4<sup>th</sup> grade and under, join us for story time & music, crafts, snacks, tons of goodies and an Easter Egg Hunt. Bring your family!

**Rice Bowl cash collection continues!** Pick up a rice bowl in the Kids Town gazebo, fill it full of loose change and return it to Kids Town, repeat until 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>.

**Wednesday Kids' Club & Nursery** meets every week from 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm for preschool – 6<sup>th</sup> 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!

**Celebration Place** meets every Friday night and is offered to our kids as a “pre-covery” 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 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 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> gr. (June 24-27), Beulah Beginning Camp for finishing 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> gr. (June 28 & 29).

**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](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. **THIS MONTH NO YOUTH on March 24** (day after Winter Jam) or **March 31** (EASTER)

**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.

**March 3** - Canvas laying. Normal youth night from 5 to 7:30 but we will be helping lay the canvas for our Easter production. Wear closed toe shoes and clothes you can work in!

**March 23** - Winter Jam/cost is \$15. Still working out travel plans as we might have to leave early to stand in line since the location moved. See Matt for details!



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.

**LifeGroups:** *Gina Swickard - [doxa715@gmail.com](mailto:doxa715@gmail.com)*

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.

**LifeGroups will not meet in March because that evening is the Joy of Easter.**

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.

## Legacy Giving

St. Matthew Church recently received a significant bequest from someone who has never been to the church, whose sole contact was her friendship with someone here. She also watched St. Matthew's services over the internet.

To use an old phrase, it is important to "do your giving while you're living so you'll be knowing where it's going." Current tithes, offerings and special gifts are what enable the ministries of St. Matthew to continue day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year.

But as Psalm 78:6 says so clearly, it is also important to leave a legacy "so the generations to come" might know the Word of God and teach its precepts to their children. Certainly the main emphasis here is spiritual, but it also includes other aspects, including financial.

Would you prayerfully consider naming St. Matthew Church as a beneficiary in your will and in your estate plan? Our goal is to reach as many people for Christ through as many means as possible before His return.

Through your current gifts, you can minister in Jesus' name now. By remembering St. Matthew Church in your will or estate plan, you can continue to have a powerful impact for the gospel long after your earthly life is over.

If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Dan Harry, Financial Administrator; Ron Buerges, Finance Committee Chair; or Ken Williams, Administrative Board Chair.



**NEW LIFE CLUB is Thursday, March 21 at noon in the Vine Cafe.** Our program speaker will be Diane Isbel with the "History of Aprons." A taco lunch will be prepared and served by Jack Lampe and crew. Our devotion will be presented by Cindi Meinardi. Please join us and bring a friend. We are so happy to be meeting more new folks. No reservations are required. Just drop in and enjoy the food and Christian Fellowship.

**Senior Bible Study** will be March 14th and 28th and always starts with coffee and donuts at 9:30 a.m and Bible study at 10:00. Shelby Walasin leads this study. We continue to get new folks joining in. Bring your Bible and join us!

**"Redeemed Again" - The Thrift Shop of St. Matthew:** We are in need of towels, baby clothes and children's clothes as well as Easter items. We also can use a new person or two to work one "4 hour" shift a week. Please call me, Connie Bergmann or Pat Cook if you want to inquire further. We are blessed!

**New Life Club Choir** meets Wednesdays in the Park Room at 4:00 p.m. We have many senior centers lined up for April, May and June. We'd love to have you join us. We are not looking for soloists. We need folks that love to make a joyful noise and enjoy the songs of the church. Give it a try!

### **ST. MATTHEW SR. TRAVELS**

St. Louis Cardinal Spring Training - March 10-18, 2024

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

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

#### **Coming Soon:**

Kansas City - May, 2024

St. Louis City Tour - St. Louis Historian Barnes Bradshaw - August 8, 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.

Thank you for supporting our Senior Ministry. It touches many people in many ways.



On Monday, February 11 the New Life Club enjoyed a day at the Omnimax theatre at the St. Louis Science Center, then lunch at Favazza's on the hill followed by a stop at Vitale's Bakery for some sweet treats! Consider traveling with us in 2024! It's always a good time.



Meet Shelby Walasin!

Shelby is the Thursday morning Senior Bible Study leader, and what a leader she is! Her love for the Lord is contagious. We appreciate all her hard work in putting together thought provoking and insightful studies for us each month.

Join us on March 14th and 28th and see for yourselves. We begin with coffee and donuts at 9:30 am!

### **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**.

### **Wednesday Night Bible Study**

James Schuetz is now doing the Wednesday Night Bible Study at 6:00 pm in the Park Room. The class is called "Culture And Conflict In Biblical Times". He will feature the Ray Van Der Land series "That The World May Know". The series will begin with the study of the churches in Asia Minor that John wrote to in Revelations chapter two and three, particularly Ephesus and Pergamon. All are welcome!

### **Wednesday Night Meal Price Increase**

Please forgive us as the continued rising cost of food is forcing us to raise our prices. Beginning in March the Wednesday night meal's prices will raise by \$1.00. So, adult meals will now be \$8.00 and children's meals will now be \$4.00. Meals for those 3 and under are still free of charge. We thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to still provide you great food and great fellowship at a great price!

### **Daylight Saving Begins**

Don't forget to spring forward an hour for Daylight Saving to begin on **Sunday March, 10!** Lose the sleep but gain the sun!



### **National Day Of Prayer**

Mark your calendars for Thursday, May 2. That is this years National Day Of Prayer. More details to come!

### **Thoughts On The Newsletter Response**

Thank you to those of you who reached out with feedback about the newsletter, we had about a dozen responses. I appreciate you taking the time to let your voice be heard. We always value your opinions.

## Stewardship Corner

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

What we do with our money is both an indicator and a determiner of where our hearts are.

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.

2024 is off to a fast start at Celebrate Recovery. Tracy Crawford is leading a women's step study that will take you through a self searching process that helps identify the good and bad patterns in your life and gives you the tools to help change them. This study will close after the first book is complete so be sure to reach out if you are interested by calling the church office. Stay tuned for info on a men's step study coming up!

March 1 - Cassy will be talking to the group about when we make the "TURN" in our lives. We turn away from certain old things and turn to the new things that our Higher Power, Jesus, brings into view.

March 8 - My great friend and brother, Richard Hood will be with us to share what God is doing in his life. Richard has a great testimony , God has brought Richard from a very dark and hopeless state to a new life and even career in recovery.

March 15 - Max is going to reach the ACTION lesson. We can only talk about and think about making changes for so long. We eventually have to take action and step out in faith into the new reality God is showing us for our lives.

March 22 - Tyra Lafoon, Ministry Leader for Centralia Nazarene Celebrate Recovery will be with us to share her testimony. Tyra is one of our Southern IL. CR leaders who are plugged in to her community and actively plans and promotes events to bring Celebrate Recovery to people outside of her CR group, you don't want to miss hearing her story.

March 29 - we will be going to "the Joy of Easter " I hope you will be able to come and experience the story of Christ's ministry , death, and resurrection brought through drama and music in a unique way. You will be blessed !

**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@stmatthew.church](mailto:lvollmar@stmatthew.church)) know if you can help on a rotating basis.

## 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)

### March 6

Beef & Noodles

Green Beans

Salad Bar

Rolls

Dessert

### March 13

BBQ Pork Steaks

Potatoes “Ala Jack”

Baked Beans

Salad Bar

Rolls

Dessert

### March 20

Meatloaf

Mashed Potatoes & Gravy

Peas

Salad Bar

Rolls

Dessert



## **Special Events Calendar**

March 1	World Day Of Prayer
March 3	Joy of Easter Canvas Laying
March 5	Personnel Committee Meeting
March 10	Daylight Saving Begins
March 12	Never Alone
March 14	Senior Bible Study
March 21	New Life Club Luncheon
March 23	Kid's Easter Celebration
March 24	Palm Sunday
March 28	Senior Bible Study
March 28	Maundy Thursday / Joy Of Easter
March 29	Good Friday / Joy Of Easter
March 31	Easter Sunday
April 1	Church Office Is Closed

## **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)

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