

Messenger

*St. Matthew Lutheran Church
of Westfield*

September
2023

21434 East Hardy Road
Houston, Texas 77073



Church Office
281-443-2304



E-Mail
office.smlcw@gmail.com



Website
www.stmatthewlcms.com



Pastor
Rev. Dr. Ronald Bogs



Associate Pastor
Rev. Arturo Mendez



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Traditionally September was the month for the beginning of a new school year and thus was seen as the beginning of new programming for churches as well, like a new Sunday School year, more church activities and functions. For better or for worse, not all traditions continue as they began and as we were taught at the Seminary, be careful what traditions you start

because you never know where they will end (I would remind you of the story of the mother who always cut off the ends of the ham, but never new why).

September brings our annual celebration of Labor Day. According to the internet (and as we know, if it is on the internet it has to be true ☺); “Labor Day is a federal holiday in the United States celebrated on the first Monday in September to honor and recognize the American labor movement and the works and contributions of laborers to the development and achievements of the United States. The three-day weekend it falls on is called Labor Day Weekend.” Although this explanation for our celebration of Labor Day was and is a good reason to celebrate, like many traditions and celebrations it seems over time the reason to celebrate has been forgotten and instead it simply becomes a day to miss work and gather in revelry (which kind of counters the meaning of the holiday). Unfortunately, this lack of understanding many of our holidays exists today. Too few people even know or care for the reasons we celebrate the days we call holidays and simply find them to be days for party and revelry.

Perhaps you have noticed or perhaps not, but I usually list the Holy Days and Holidays of each month, noting especially those of church interest. This month we celebrate Holy Cross Day commemorating the cross of Christ on which He died to pay for our sins; St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelists, bringing to mind the work of the Apostle Matthew, the tax collector turned disciples who gave us the Gospel of Matthew, and St. Michael and All Angels, or as some call it Michaelmas celebrating the three archangels, Angel Michael, Angel Gabriel, and Angel Raphael and the work God sent them to do at various time and in various places. I believe it would do us well to learn about, know and understand why we celebrate what we celebrate so that when we are asked we are better able to give an answer, not only for our celebrating, but also, more importantly for our faith and hope in Christ alone.

God’s richest blessings.
In His Service,

Pastor Bogs
1 Cor. 15:3-5

Don’t forget, if you miss a Sunday, you can read the sermon on my blog: <http://rabswritings.blogspot.com>.

The Lutheran Way - It Makes A Difference? ~ (*Building and Liturgy, part 3*)



Following our hearing of the Gospel, our confessing our faith, our response of faith through our first fruits giving and the offering of our petitions to the Lord we move into the Service of the Sacrament, the Lord's Supper. Usually during the singing of the Offertory or a choral response, the pastor(s) prepare the Altar bringing the elements from the Credence Table to the Altar in preparation for consecration. The *Service of the Sacrament* begins with Scriptural response between pastor and congregation. It includes the *Preface* for the Supper, as well as, the singing of the *Sanctus* in which we are reminded we will be communing at the altar with all the saints in heaven, the heavenly host (sabbaoth). We understand we cannot see them nor can they see us, but we have the assurance they are with us. Indeed, what joy to know it is at this time and place we can be as close as we can while on this earth with our loved ones who have passed on into the Church Triumphant. After we have prayed the very prayer our Lord has given us to pray, the *Lord's Prayer* (and certainly who can give a better prayer for us to pray than our Lord Himself?), the elements, bread and wine, are consecrated with the *Words of Institution* that as we are

given the bread, we are given the body of Christ Himself. And as we are given the wine, we are given the blood of Christ Himself as well.

As the congregants come forward and are invited to the table and kneel, they are given the body and blood of Christ as He tells us, "Take eat this is my body, my blood." Although there is nothing commanded in our being given the body and blood of our Lord, it is quite appropriate we are given His body directly in our mouths so that there is no part we have in being given His body. And it is most appropriate we partake of His blood from the common chalice as there is One Body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints. It is also appropriate we affirm what we are given with the confident word of "Amen."

Here again our church building expresses the importance and centrality of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the Altar is in the middle of the chancel reminding us and teaching us that Jesus comes to us through His Holy Supper. As we are taught, so we practice what we believe, teach and confess about what and how Jesus gives us His gifts.

Following our dismissal from the Lord's Table and following the elements being properly put away, we continue singing the *Post-Communion Canticle*. Most appropriate is Simeon's song as it rejoices in the fact that now as we have seen Jesus in the flesh in His body and blood and tasting He is good, we are ready to meet our Lord, that is, we are ready to pass on from this world, the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant, and what joy that would be at that very moment.

Our Divine Service concludes with the Aaronic *Benediction* being placed on us. The three-fold, Trinitarian benediction again reminds us of our Baptism and prepares us to go out into the mission field where the fields are white with the harvest. Having been fed with the Word and Sacrament as we have been taught and having learned what we believe by the way we practice what we have been taught, we are strengthened in our faith and are able to go out and be ready to give an answer, a defense of the hope we have in Jesus and Jesus alone.

From the very beginning of our walking into our church building, we are being taught the importance of Jesus, His Word, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, the Word read and proclaimed, and His Holy Supper. At the same time we have seen how these important elements are in the Divine Service, that is, in God coming to us to give us the gifts and blessings He has to give: faith, forgiveness of sins, strengthening of faith, life (in this world and in the world to come), and salvation. We see clearly how what we believe informs how we carry out what we believe and how we rehearse what we believe teaches us the same.

Next, what are we missing or are we missing anything? Are we missing anything which might distract us from our being where we are? What else is there which might make a difference?

125th Anniversary of St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Four years ago an attempt was started to get ready to celebrate our congregation's 120th anniversary. That attempt was thwarted by COVID. In one year an eight months we will be celebrating the 125th anniversary of St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Westfield. In order to assure a proper celebration the congregation has authorized an Anniversary Celebration fund. Because a committee has not yet been set for this celebration there is not yet a goal as for how much we would like to collect, but please do not let that stop you from beginning the giving so that we might indeed have a grand celebration.



St. Matthew Lutheran Church ~ 2024 Picnic Committee/Volunteers



We at St. Matthew are re-launching our Annual May BBQ starting in May 2024 and to ensure that it is up & running smoothly for that big celebration we would like to start planning now. With that in mind we will be needing lots of volunteers. We would like to extend a huge thank you to Phillip Williamson for volunteering to chair the picnic again & to Melissa Sindlinger for volunteering to be the kitchen chairperson. They will be meeting soon to get going. Watch the bulletin & newsletter for all of the fun to come. And be ready to say "Yes" when asked to help.

If you would like to serve as we plan for the re-launch of this iconic event see Phillip or Melissa.

4TH FRIDAYS!!!!

The Board of Evangelism and Fellowship is excited about the initial turn out for our "4th FRIDAYS." We will be hosting a monthly movie night in the Fellowship Hall. Our August movie night will be held Friday 09/22. This will be a fun evening of fellowship and movie watching. We will be providing popcorn, snacks and drinks. All we are asking is that you come out and enjoy the fun and bring a friend!



So far we have only received 1 request and that is for the Harry Potter series. If you have a suggestion for a movie that you would like to see let Lester know. We are so excited!!! Can't wait to see you all (and your invited friends).

WANTED: Conscience - Dead or Alive 4th Annual Conference, St. Paul, Austin

Saturday, October 14, 2023 - 10 AM - 5 PM

St. Paul Lutheran (LCMS) 3501 Red River St, Austin, TX 78705

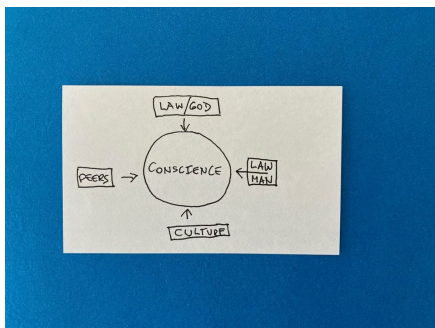
Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller is the main teacher for college students and young adults ages 18 - 35ish.

Teaching, preaching, singing, worship, games, food. Pre- and post conference social events for Friday and Saturday nights. The conference does not provide housing. The 2023 conference schedule will be emailed to you after the registration deadline. To give you a general idea, look at a conference sample at the end of the registration form. Please register now, the conference

registration deadline is Sunday, October 8, 2023. Thank you.

Registration link: <https://forms.gle/aQXZb7taBnjLkxVH9>

Please contact Vera Sweet for questions: txlutheranya@gmail.com



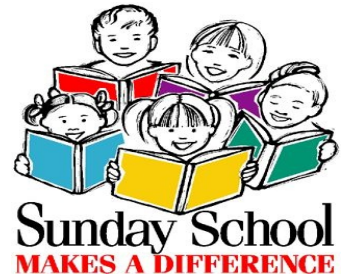
September 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
Those Serving the Lord this Month: Elders ~ Steve Roberts & David Honerkamp Greeters ~ Dave & Tiffany Cowger Ushers ~ Joshua & Noah Montemayor Counter ~ Robert & Melissa Sindlinger Altar Guild ~ Brenda & Rachel Paulsel Acolytes ~ Logan Reed, Ruby Montemayor, Isabella Vaz & Aaron Montemayor						Happy Birthday Steve Nitz!
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8:30am Fellowship 8:45am Sunday School 10am Divine Service ESL Service	Happy Labor Day! Office Closed		10am Bible Class 6:30pm Bible Study w/Larry Harvey 7pm Bible Study w/Pastor Bogs Happy Birthday James Pierce & Mary Pierce!	10am Bulletin Deadline	Office Closed	8am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 10am Board of Elders Meeting
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8:30am Fellowship 8:45am Sunday School 10am Divine Service ESL Service Happy Birthday Edna Ehrhardt!			10am Bible Class 6:30pm Bible Study w/Larry Harvey 7pm Bible Study w/Pastor Bogs Happy Birthday David Honerkamp!	10am Bulletin Deadline Holy Cross Day	Office Closed	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
8:30am Fellowship 8:45am Sunday School 10am Divine Service ESL Service Happy Birthday David Cowger & Dan Pierce! Youth & Young Adult Pool Party	Happy Birthday Aaron Montemayor & Ruby Montemayor!	7pm ESL Classes Happy Birthday Jacob Christy!	10am Bible Class 5:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm Bible Study w/Larry Harvey 7pm Bible Study w/Pastor Bogs	10am Bulletin Deadline 7pm ESL Classes St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist	Office Closed MOVIE NIGHT Higher Things Retreat	Happy Birthday Virginia Lawrence! Higher Things Retreat
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
8:30am Fellowship 8:45am Sunday School 10am Divine Service ESL Service Happy Birthday Leon Lilley!	GET YOUR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES IN!!!	7pm ESL Classes Happy Birthday Rebecca Pfennig!	10am Bible Class 5:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm Bible Study w/Larry Harvey 7pm Bible Study w/Pastor Bogs	10am Bulletin Deadline 7pm ESL Classes	Office Closed St. Michael and All Angels	
October 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8:30am Fellowship 8:45am Sunday School 10am Divine Service ESL Service		7pm ESL Classes	10am Bible Class 5:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm Bible Study w/Larry Harvey 7pm Bible Study w/Pastor Bogs	10am Bulletin Deadline 7pm ESL Classes Happy Birthday Joshua Bogs!	Office Closed	

Opportunities to Study God's Word

Sunday School for All Ages

Preschool - Elementary Classes begin at 8:45 am in Room #5. The children are learning Biblical accounts from the Growing in Christ series.



Sunday Adult Bible Classes

All members and friends of St. Matthew Lutheran Church are invited for coffee and donuts at 8:30 am each Sunday at 8:30 am. Then our Bible Classes begin at 8:45 am. *The Pentetuch* led by Pastor Bogs meets in the **Room #2**. And *Galatians* led by Larry Harvey meets in **Room #4**. Please join us. Bring a friend!



Wednesday Mornings

The Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group will be meeting at **10:00 am** in **Room #2**. We invite everyone who is available to join us to study God's Word. We are studying the Minor Prophets.



Wednesday Evenings

There are two Wednesday evening Bible Classes. The study on *Word & Sacrament* led by Larry Harvey meets at **6:30 pm** in **Room #4**. The study on *Matthew* led by Pastor meets at **7:00 pm** in **Room #2**.

Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Join us for the Men's Breakfast and Bible study on the 2nd Saturday of the month, September 9th at 8:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. The Board of Elders will meet following study at 10:00am.





Holy Days & Holidays in September

September 4th Labor Day

September 14th Holy Cross Day

September 21st St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

September 29th St. Michael and All Angels

Wishing You A Very Happy Birthday

September 2nd Steve Nitz

September 6th James Pierce

September 6th Mary Pierce

September 10th Edna Ehrhardt

September 13th David Honerkamp

September 17th David Cowger

September 17th Dan Pierce

September 18th Aaron Montemayor

September 18th Ruby Montemayor

September 19th Jacob Christy

September 23rd Virginia Lawrence

September 24th Leon Lilley

September 26th Rebecca Pfennig



Confirmation Anniversaries

September 12th Christina Cross

September 12th Daniel Cross

September 29th Kenneth French

September 30th Christian Paulsel



Wedding Anniversaries

September 16th Gary & Lisa McCorquodale ~ 18 Yrs..

~ A Message from Pastor Mendez~

Title: Reviving Faith Amidst Doubt and Uncertainty

In a rapidly changing world, a concerning trend has emerged: the decline in church attendance. As a pastor, I've noticed a growing lack of familiarity with the Word of God among many individuals in their daily lives. This lack of connection is especially prominent in a society saturated with both, information and misinformation, along with the pervasive consequence of sin. I have come to understand and address some of the reasons behind this decline and how, as believers, we can steer towards transformative change.

The Gap in Church Attendance

In an age where technology and distractions are ubiquitous, it is essential to examine why many people have lost the desire to attend church. One of the key challenges is the disconnect between God's Word and everyday life. At times, the church can be perceived as a place of judgment and condemnation, thus moving away from the essence of the gospel: but all this has been the cause of much lack of information between people, governments, social media and individuals, and the consequence of sin, and of the transforming grace of God. The lack of understanding between the law and the gospel, as well as between the cause of sin and the grace of God, can leave people disoriented and distant from the community of faith, which is what has lately been shown towards the Society? What have we as a Church shown to people from the outside? a Hatred of Society a Rejection of its Ideology? or rather an empathy in them not, to say that we approve everything that the Society is doing or "renewing" if we could call it like that, but we Know is because of The Sin in the World, but rather in an empathic way towards them for their lack of knowledge before the Absolute Truth that we can find in Sacred Scripture, and thus be able to lead them with love and patience towards a Transforming truth of the Knowledge of Sin, but in turn of Christ forgiving Love for All Humanity and His Sacrifice on the Cross to forgive us. Are We Doing It Right? Or are we doing it wrong?

A Transformative Approach

As believers, it is our responsibility to share the message of hope and love that Christ brought to the world. Our calling is to embrace God's Word—acknowledging the interplay between the law (sins consequence) and the gospel (God's transforming grace for all humanity). This will lead them to recognize that while the law condemns us, it also reveals our need for a Savior. We must be agents of change, redefining the church as a place of acceptance, healing, forgiveness, and patience, to facilitate spiritual growth in alignment with the Word of God and doctrine.

Motivating Society to Reconnect with God

To draw people back to the church and, more importantly, into a personal relationship with God, we should:

1. **Live the Gospel**: Our lives must reflect Christ grace and love in all areas, becoming authentic examples of the transformation God can achieve within them.
2. **Teach with Clarity**: As Christians, we should present the Word of God clearly and relevantly, helping people see its application in their daily lives. This will guide them to a transformative change through the Word and faith in Christ, having the opportunity to be faithful and fruitful agents of change of disciples of Christ who transform lives through their example and the Word of God.
3. **Create Community**: The church should be a community of faith in Christ, making people feel accepted and loved by a Christian community. This can help dispel the stereotypes that have marked the Church as intolerant due to society's lack of understanding of the Word of God.
4. **Serve the World**: Inspired by divine grace, we should actively engage in service to the needy, demonstrating God's love through our actions.
5. **Cultivate Faith Practically**: Encourage prayer and personal Bible study to strengthen individual relationships with God, preparing them to respond wisely to a society that has been misinformed and unfortunately harbors resentment and intolerance towards the Church. Let us be an example of Christ light to a society living in darkness, with love, prudence, and care, but above all, with patience and Love, just as God is patient with His children.

The decline in church attendance presents a challenge that demands transformative response. As believers, we must carry the light in a world filled with uncertainty and despair. By merging deep comprehension of the law and the gospel with a genuine concern for people's well-being, we can motivate society to reconnect with God and experience the spiritual transformation that only the Lord can provide in His Word and Sacraments. Along this path, we recall Christ words: In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good work and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.(Matthew 5:16).

3rd
Annual
St. Matthew
Arts & Crafts
Festival

October 14 🍁 9 am to 4 pm

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
of Westfield

21434 E. Hardy Rd. 🍁 Houston, TX 77073

Visit stmatthewlcms.com &
follow us on Facebook & Instagram
@stmatthewwestfield

Attention all Crafters and Vendors: We would love to have you be a part of our day. If you are interested in having a booth at our event, please go to www.stmatthewlcms.com/vendors-registration.html. The registration fee is only \$30! You will have one 8 ft. table and two chairs provided, and if you are in need of electricity, please just let us know.

Higher Things Retreat - Zion, Tomball Sept. 22 & 23

It's easy to get lost looking for yourself. It can feel impossible to find a person that you love and respect in the mirror. To find one who lives up to the expectations of your parents, your friends, your church. Vaguely religious calls to hand it over to God don't help much because the deeper we dive into God's word, the more we realize we have two identities that are at war with each other. Sinner. Saint. And that's not a sign something is broken. It's a sign it's working. It feels terrible to have a losing war fought inside you every day, but that identity crisis isn't yours to sort out. In your baptism, old Adam is drowned. Every day. And the new man arises. Every day. It feels like a losing war, but it's already won.



The theme this year is "Identity Crisis," and the main speaker is Pastor Harrison Goodman of Higher Things. The retreat will begin at 7pm Friday evening and end at 4 pm Saturday afternoon. The cost is \$50 per person and includes meals (supper Friday, breakfast and lunch Saturday) as well as overnight accommodations at Zion. We're looking forward to great catechesis, worship, and fun times! See Mrs. Gayle or Mrs. Kathleen if you're interested in going. Adults can come as well.



Youth and Young Adults Swim Party

Thank you to Peg & Gordon Munson for allowing us to come to the home and enjoy their beautiful pool! We are blessed they have offered for us to come one more time before the "cooler" weather. So September's activity will be another Pool Day at the Munson's home on Sunday, September 17 from 12:30 - 3:00 pm. Watch for more information on GroupMe messages!