

1010
for

OPEN HEARTS

Firstfruits Giving



Welcome to St. Matthew's!

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

Today we focus on our annual stewardship emphasis. The word stewardship is often seen as a dirty word—a gimmick to get people to dig deeper and “give ’til it hurts.” Nothing could be further from the truth! Instead, stewardship is a precious word that sums up the Christian life. It encourages us to be who we truly are in Christ: Precious people who have been richly blessed by a Father who knows how to give good gifts to his children!

Christians face a daily struggle. We have two paths set before us. The New Man, created within us at baptism, wants to live for Christ and the life that is to come. But our sinful nature focuses us on this life. That struggle pulls us in two directions when it comes to how we set our priorities or use our time. The struggle is especially noticeable when we wrestle with how to use the financial resources God has given us.



The Lord speaks about worldly wealth and possessions in over 2,300+ passages of Scripture. In other words, God speaks to us about worldly wealth roughly three times more often than he does about faith! Why? So that God can get to the “heart of the matter.” Money, possessions, time and talents are God’s gifts to us. Sadly, human hearts often lust after these gifts and forget about the Giver. But God promises great blessings for us, for the Church, and for the world as we put the Giver first—offering back to him the FIRSTFRUITS of everything he has entrusted to us. God is many places. Second place in our hearts dare never be one of them!

Christ’s willing sacrifice for us is our motivation and inspiration to give back to God of our time, talents and treasures. May he open the hearts of his people to offer him our first and our best!

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: O Lord, giver of life and source of all love, we know that all we have received comes from your gracious hand. Help us to always use your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. Send your Holy Spirit to work through us, that many more might come to know the saving riches of your Son. May our faithful stewardship bear witness to the love of your Son in our hearts, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen.

THE WORD

FIRST LESSON

Haggai 1:1-11

The Lord asks his people to give careful thought about the relationship between their finances and their faith

¹In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest:

²This is what the LORD Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD’s house.’”

³Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: ⁴“Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

⁵Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. ⁶You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”

⁷This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. ⁸Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the LORD.⁹“You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the LORD Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. ¹⁰Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. ¹¹I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord God, you created the heavens and the earth.

C: Every animal of the forest is yours as well as the cattle on a thousand hills.

M: Lord, from your hand comes boundless riches.

C: We thank you, Lord, for making us your stewards. We pray that you will grant us faith so we can please you in our stewardship.

M: Lord, help us to see the time, the talents, and the financial resources we have are a sacred trust from you.

C: We ask for your help, Lord, to use all our resources in worthwhile activities that will give you honor and praise.

M: Lord, help us to spend time in your Word and in prayer that you might nourish the faith you give us.

C: Please change us, Lord, from fear and selfishness to trust and generosity.

Special prayers and petitions may be offered here.

M: Help us, Lord, to be wise and fruitful stewards of the opportunities that you give us to use our gifts.

C: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**C: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord's Instructions for His Table

If you are a visitor with us this morning, our communion practices may need some explanation. The Bible says partaking of Holy Communion involves two things: first, understanding what Communion is: a receiving of the body and blood of Christ for our forgiveness along with the bread and wine (1 Corinthians 11:27-30). Second, Communion is an expression of agreement or unity in beliefs with everyone you are communing (1 Corinthians 10:17; Romans 16:17; 2 John 10,11). Receiving communion with others is a public expression of fellowship and unity of faith.

Partaking of communion only with those who share this unity of faith and practice is called "close communion." Years ago, nearly all churches held this practice. In recent years, many have abandoned this teaching because it is often misunderstood. This is how God commands us to show love to him and to you, and honor real unity in his Word.

We are eager to celebrate the Lord's Supper with you according to his commands. If you are a guest and would like to commune with us at St. Matthew's, please speak with our pastor or one of the ushers, that way we can all be confident that we truly are united in faith and honoring the Lord's instructions for his sacred meal.

OUR THANKS

We thank the following people for serving us in worship today:

Organist: Brenda Harle, Katie Alderman (Relief)

Greeter: Jim Bietlich

Ushers: Mike Alderman, Trevor Schobert, Nate Stuebs, Josh Stuebs

Audio/Video: Carl Piper, Dan Wiese

Announcements

Church Announcements

Church Service Recording

Our Sunday worship services are regularly video recorded and posted online. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Pastor.

Sunday School and Bible Study

Join us again this week as we continue in the Bible Study – Concerning Spiritual Gifts. All children, age 4-10 are invited and encouraged to attend Sunday School.

Ash Wednesday Starts Lent

The Lenten season is just around the corner. The word "lent" simply refers to the daylight hours getting longer during the coming months, but the focus of the season in church is on repentance for our sins as we remember our Savior's journey to the cross and his suffering and death. Ash Wednesday sets the tone for Lent. This year again, we will be giving our members the opportunity to receive the imposition of the ashes in one of our two Ash Wednesday services February 26th (1:30pm or 7:00pm). From the earliest days of history, ashes have symbolized sorrow, mourning and repentance. They cause us to think heavily about our sins for which our Savior died. If you have any questions about receiving the ashes this year, please speak with Pastor. And be sure to mark your personal calendars so that you don't miss any of our Wednesday Lenten services (1:30 & 7:00pm) this year.

Church Announcements

Have an announcement that you want to see in the bulletin? Have some information to spread on the pre-service PowerPoint? Need an activity added to the church calendar? Send an email with your important information to secretary@stmatthews-wels.com or place your announcement in Carl Piper's box in the fellowship hall.

Bible Study - Concerning Spiritual Gifts (6 Lessons)

Many Christians shy away from the topic of spiritual gifts because some of them seem so extraordinary and strange. Perhaps you are unsure of what to do or say about speaking in tongues, prophesying, teaching, comforting, leading, being generous and serving others. This course takes seriously what the Bible says about the gifts of the Spirit. Making the time to study this important topic will help you find and rejoice in your niche among God's people as we all work together to glorify Christ, our Head.

Short Special Voters Meeting

Today immediately following the service we will be having a short meeting to discuss the time limitation we placed on our Synod Certification requirement for our Pre-K Call.

Want to give a gift?

All donations & offerings designated "150th Anniversary Gift" will go towards fresh landscaping on the church property.

Get Your Scrip Cards!

Buying Scrip gift cards helps support our school. You buy the gift cards for your favorite restaurants and stores at face value, and a percentage of the cost of the card is given to St. Matthew's School Script fund. Over the past 10 years, the Scrip program has raised over \$11,000 for our school. The Protsman family runs our Scrip program and they have the Scrip cards out by the door after every Sunday service. If you don't see a business that you're looking for, just ask Jan or Kristie, there are many more that they can order for you

Stewardship Stations

Here at St. Matthew's we are blessed to have many opportunities for our members to use our time and talents to serve and support the work of God's kingdom. This Sunday we have an opportunity to find out more about those opportunities and the members of our congregation who are actively involved in them. After our Sunday worship service the Fellowship Hall will be filled with "Stewardship Stations" where you can stop by at the tables and talk with people who will show you wonderful (and some new) ways that you can be a good steward with the generous earthly blessings that our Lord has given you.

Upcoming Call Meeting for our Principal

It was announced last Sunday that Mr. Dan Johnson has returned our call. We will be reconvening our call meeting on February 16 to extend another call once a new call list has been assembled for us. We will have Sunday School and Bible Study this Sunday (February 2) during the normal time. We hope that you'll join us.

Open Forum regarding Fellowship Hall on February 16 at 10:15am in Sanctuary

While reviewing the comments from the Long-Range Planning Survey, it became clear that members have concerns regarding the Fellowship Hall. As a result, the Design Team would like to hold an open forum to discuss the current challenges of the space and gather possible solutions.

Specific concerns we will be asking for feedback on include, but are not limited to:

- congestion as you enter the Fellowship Hall
- information located in multiple areas so things are overlooked
- safety concerns for our littlest members
- functionality of mailbox system
- flow of serving line after church service

We look forward to gathering together to work on the next best steps for St. Matthew's.

Member Family Pictures

Did you see your picture scrolling on our new display screen in the fellowship hall? Was your picture a little bit outdated? Not your favorite shot of your family? If you'd like to update your family picture, simply email a new one to Carl at secretary@stmatthews-wels.com, or ask Karen Fischer if she would be willing to snap a new one for your family. You can help make sure that those photos are an accurate and up-to-date representation of our congregation. Thank You!

Thank You From The Ottos

We want to thank everyone so much who has written us sweet cards and generously gave gift cards. Your gifts are so very appreciated! We look forward to meeting this little girl very soon! Please continue to pray for our family as we get closer to the big day.

1, 2, 3, 4...We declare a Penny War!

The 150th Anniversary committee is challenging a battle of the sexes to help raise funds for our October anniversary celebration. Two containers will be in the fellowship hall over the next 3 weeks, one for the men and one for the women. Scores will be updated weekly! Any questions, please contact Anne Piper.

School Announcements

Preschool & Kindergarten Roundup

This year's open house for the preschool and kindergarten classrooms is scheduled for Friday, February 14 beginning at 8:30 AM. Families are welcome to accompany their child to get a taste of what preschool and kindergarten are like. It is a great opportunity to get small children acclimated to school for the first time. See you there!

Pizza Kit Delivery

Thank you everyone for selling and purchasing in this year's pizza kit fundraiser. We do not take for granted all the time and effort it takes. Our total profit came to \$2,592! That will completely cover our purchase of 12 new Chromebooks for Ms. Oldre's room, way to go! The delivery of your pizza kits is scheduled for after school on Monday, February 10.

School Choice Application Window Now Open!

The application window for parents to apply for a school choice voucher at St. Matthew's next school year is February 3 through April 16, 2020. After that, new applications can no longer be accepted. This program allows your child(ren) or someone you know to attend our school at no cost to the family if they fall within the income limit. To apply, go to our school's website, go to "Programs," then click "Wisconsin Parental School Choice." For help contact Mr. Otto, Mr. Carl Piper (608-799-9318), or Mr. Phil Uebelher (608-483-2080).

Semester I Mission Offering Total

Our school collected \$234.26 in offerings for Native Christians, our WELS Ministry on Apache reservations in the Southwest. This semester we are collecting for WELS Institutional Ministries to support their ministry in prisons, nursing homes, and mental health. Learn more at im.life

Area Announcements

Food Pantry

Looking for a way to directly impact our community? The Stoddard Area Food Pantry located in our Church basement can use your help. To Volunteer contact Paulette Ross (Site Manager) at 608-518-6839 or email her at pross.54632@gmail.com

Recovery in Christ:

Two Opportunities: Recovery in Christ will continue to meet Sundays, 6:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Onalaska. A new session will be held at La Crosse's Coulee Recovery Center, 933 Ferry St, 1:00, Wednesdays). Call 608-567-3038 to verify schedule for either session. Recovery in Christ points to Jesus as the answer for recovery from substance abuse.

Coulee Region OWLS

The Coulee Region OWLS will be holding their monthly meeting on Thursday, February 13, 2020 at First Ev. Lutheran Church, 400 West Avenue South, La Crosse at 12:00 Noon for a Potluck Luncheon. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Coffee will be provided. The program will be Carissa Pagel-Smith with the La Crosse Human Services Department on Aging giving us information on resources available. All church members – men and women age 55 or older – are welcome. Please come for a visit, enjoy the friends you meet, a good lunch, and an excellent program. There will be a free will offering.

GOOD STEWARD REPORT

GOD'S BLESSINGS

2019 is another year for which we say, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good and His mercy endures forever." Our total receipts were \$708,190.00, which is a 1.75% increase over the previous year. We were able to donate \$264,250.00 to Luther High School and \$107,620.00 to other charities, most of which went to area Lutheran elementary schools. We pray that the Lord will enable to continue supporting Christian education in the year which lies before us.

BOARD MEMBERS

The overall operation of the Good Steward Resale shop is managed by a Board of Directors. At the January meeting the following were elected to three-year terms on the board; Larry Gilbertson, Barbara Phillips and James Beitlich. Charles Lukasek was elected to fill an unexpired term. The other board members are Mimi Richmond, Stephen Loehr, James Storey, Paul Kapanke and Denise Priem. Stephen Loehr is the Chairman, James Storey is the Vice-Chairman. We thank all of these people for the willingness to serve. Anyone who has questions or concerns about Good Steward is encouraged to speak to one of our board members.

MORE WORKERS

Good Steward has a large number of volunteers who work in our store. We thank God for all of them. But we can always use more workers. Recently we have had more students from Luther High School working in our store. We thank Mr. John Byus for working out these arrangements. If you have some time to support Christian education by working at Good Steward, or if you know someone else who might be willing to help, please come to Good Steward or invite others to come at regular business hours to find out more. Good Steward is a good place to work with fellow Christians. Good Steward is also a place where you can help to support a very worthy cause-Christian education on the high school and elementary school level.

The daily work at Good Steward is supervised by Store Coordinators, who are another valuable blessing for us. Because God continues to bless us with growth and expansion, the board is currently studying the possibility of hiring a Store Leader, who will help us to be better organized and to operate more efficiently.

GOOD STEWARD GRANTS

One of the ways in which Good Steward helps families with the rising cost of Christian education is thru our grant program. Volunteers who work a minimum number of hours at Good Steward are invited to nominate a student for a grant. Last year the grants for Luther students were \$875 (1st child) and \$615 (2nd child) and for elementary schools \$450 (1st child) and \$315 (other children). We want to remind everyone that the deadline for working the minimum hours to nominate a student for the 2020-2021 school year is May 31. Anyone who has questions should call (608-799-9763) or stop in at Good Steward and ask for a Coordinator.

LAST WEEK AT ST. MATTHEW'S

 150 YEARS 1863-2013 ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND	WEEKEND WORSHIP ATTENDANCE	BIBLE CLASS	SUNDAY SCHOOL	LIVE STREAM
FEB. 2	121	10	18	5
THURSDAY	13	TOTAL BUDGETARY GIFTS		

OUR WEEK IN THE LORD

FEBRUARY 9 - FEBRUARY 16, 2020

Sunday

- 9:00 AM – Worship
- 10:00 AM – Stewardship Stations
- 10:30 AM – Bible Study
- 10:30 AM – Sunday School

Monday

- 6th Grade Knight for a Day
- 3:00 PM – Pizza Kit Delivery
- 5:30 PM – School Board
- 6:30 PM – Church Council

Tuesday

- 2:30 PM – Food Pantry Open
- 6:30 PM – Elders' Meeting

Wednesday

- 8:10 AM – School Chapel
- 4:45 PM – Catechism Class

Thursday

- 7:00 PM – Worship

Friday

- 8:30 AM - Pre-K & K Roundup

Saturday

Sunday

- 9:00 AM – Worship
- 10:30 AM – Call Meeting
- 10:30 AM – Sunday School