



Outdoor Worship continues 9:30 throughout the summer

All through the summer our worship services will continue to be held outside under the pavilion. We are singing; the praise band and choir are singing; and we are not requiring the use of masks. We will enjoy coffee and other refreshments before, during and after worship.

St. Matthew's mugs are available with a suggested donation of \$5. Look on the table outside the pavilion on Sunday or call the church office. (Visitors will receive a specially filled mug as a welcome gift.)



Bringing Communion to You

Now that Pastor Lynn is vaccinated, he is able to visit and bring Communion to all those who are unable to attend worship. If you (or a loved one) are interested, please speak with the pastor. He is looking forward to being with you and offering the sacrament.

Everyone is welcome!
Bring a friend!

Sunday, July 11, 2021
Following Outdoor Worship

ANNUAL CHURCH
Picnic

Please take a moment on Sunday morning (or call church office at 649-1532) to sign up so organizers can plan the food.

What's New & Exciting?!

St. Matthew's is getting a new sign!

If you hadn't noticed, our sign had fallen into disrepair and is barely standing. (We had to reinforce with wires and stakes.)

Mr. & Mrs. Tom & Lisa Koch have generously donated a new granite sign to replace our old sign. The donation and design of the sign has been approved by church council, and we are excited for you to see the improvement.

The removal of the old sign happened last week; the installation of the new one will begin soon.

Once again, a big thank you to Tom and Lisa for their generous donation.

Pride

Pride is a touchy thing for us Christians. It has traditionally been identified as one of the seven deadly sins. Proverbs 16:18 says, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Pride is not just a problem for religious people either. Bragging, arrogance, superciliousness – these are not traits we look for in friends nor are these the tendencies we welcome in the workplace.

And yet, what child doesn’t yearn to know that her parents are proud of her? Who would think that the satisfaction of surveying a job well done with pride in the accomplishment is a sign of sin? Isn’t it, rather, part of the joy we experience as co-creators with God?

Where is the line between healthy self-respect and vanity? How long is too long to stand before the mirror, fixing one’s hair or makeup? Do we need to set a timer? “Siri, stop my preening before I become vain.”

I practice my sermons. I do so in part, so I can better focus my meandering thoughts to address the issues raised in the scripture readings. I do so in part, so I don’t embarrass myself and to the extent that it’s possible, so I look reasonably intelligent and coherent. I think hard about these “Sips,” often erasing paragraphs and sentences that wander, changing a word here and a phrase there. I check the spelling and grammar. I enlist my live-in copy editor to check them before I publish them. Why? Because I want only my best work to be delivered to your inbox. (Yes, sadly, this is about as good as I get.) That’s driven by my respect for you and for the work God has given me to do, but it is also because it is demanded by my sense of pride. I would be ashamed to give you less than my best.

Notice, if you will, the relationship between pride and shame. They function as opposites, don’t they?

Just as there is healthy pride that impels us to live and work and groom ourselves in a way that befits respect for ourselves and others, there is healthy shame. When we are faithless to our true values,

that is, when we violate our integrity, we rightly feel shame. In scripture, the first human couple feel shame after their sinful violation of God’s will. They feel exposed. They have revealed their willingness to violate a trusting relationship to satisfy a selfish desire. When we violate our core values, the first pain we feel comes from facing this truth about ourselves which we would rather not see. Having seen it in ourselves, our urge is to prevent this flaw from being seen by others. We cover up. We hide. We dissemble. We are ashamed.

The discomfort of our shame can lead us to alter our ways so that we can begin again to feel OK with ourselves and reveal ourselves to the world with greater ease and openness. No one likes the feeling of being ashamed. The healthy response to the uncomfortable feeling is to reassess our behavior and start acting less shamefully. We all know that some people tragically are able to ignore the signals that healthy shame sends. They act shamelessly. Shameless people spread chaos and misery wherever they go.

Healthy pride and healthy shame are like the stripes on the highway that define the lanes. They help us regulate our behavior within the boundaries that have been established for us.

There’s the rub. Most of the norms that serve as lane markers are social conventions. They often masquerade as moral absolutes, but they frequently are more cultural and conventional than universal and timeless absolutes.

My ruminations on pride and shame are prompted by the celebration of Pride Month. My journey to embracing LGBT pride began about 35 years ago. At the time I was a student pastor, still in seminary, when I had the privilege of making the acquaintance of Sam Loliger. Sam was an untiring, hope-filled, positive lay leader in the Western Area. Sam was smart and funny and kind and a great role model. Sam was also the first proudly, openly gay man I had ever known well enough to converse about the subject.

(continued on next page)

Because he was so open and unguarded, he allowed me in time to feel free to discuss my own conflicted feelings with him. One of our first talks about pride was prompted by my objection that he was more than open about his orientation; it occupied too prominent a part of his self-presentation. I argued that I didn't advertise my heterosexuality and that gay assertiveness was likely losing friends rather than gaining greater acceptance. Sam took the time to help me see that my heterosexuality was advertised too – by my wedding band and casual references to my wife, by the listing of clergy spouses in the Area directory and by the many other ways in which the norms of the culture just took heterosexuality as unremarkable. More than that, the culture (and especially the majority of the church culture) did more than take heterosexuality as unremarkable; it declared it the only acceptable standard.

Eventually, he helped me see that his brave public openness and the pride he took in the loving relationship he shared with Don was a refusal to be ashamed. His pride was not vanity. His pride was not arrogance or pushiness. It was a refusal to be shamed for being who he was. It was a refusal to be ashamed of the love which he recognized as a gift of God which he shared with his partner (who was eventually able to become his lawful husband). He was unashamed of their love as a couple, a love that

they did not merely spend on each other, but which together they shared with the world.

I think I am not all that unusual. A lot of straight people initially react to LGBT pride events with confusion. They don't understand why they feel the need to be so "out there." As a white, male, straight old codger I am not pretending to speak for my gay friends. But I do think that what Sam taught me is important for us straight folks to hear. Pride celebrations are a public turning away from shame which was, and still is, imposed on LGBT people. Gay pride is reclaiming the truth of the inherent created goodness of all people. Pride refuses to accept the judgement that labels some people defective. Pride celebrations, at their best, celebrate the goodness of creation and the holiness of love.

And that kind of pride is surely not a sin.

Prayer: *Author of love, you have gifted us with our emotions. Elation and fear; joy and pride; shame and guilt; anxiety and bliss, and everything in between; all are part of the language of the soul that you use to speak to us and which allow us to understand ourselves and our neighbors. You have made us for yourself just as we are. Help us to accept ourselves with an easy pride because we are your workmanship. Grant that we never stop you from continuing that work in our lives. Amen.*



Jeff Cotton; Jane Duewiger; Cynthia Heitman; John & Karen Kaitanowski;
Bessie Nottis; Pauline Syms; Helen & Marvin Wilson

If you have a prayer request for the bulletin/newsflash and/or to go through our prayer chain, please contact the church office (649-1532) or Pastor Lynn (866-3085) OR fill out a Prayer Request card before worship (located on one of the tables) and place in offering plate.

Your prayer(s) will appear in our bulletin & newsflash for a couple of weeks (please keep us updated). You are also invited to be a prayer warrior on the confidential text chain, committing to pray for those entrusted to our care through prayer.



Stars don't really twinkle. The flashing is a "space mirage". The light from stars is steady and constant but the Earth's atmosphere interferes to make the stars appear to twinkle.



Birthdays:

Liam Kaznica (7/7), Ken Kruszka (7/8), Luke Rich (7/8), Ed Simon (7/12), Jessica Goetz (7/16), Phil Vara (7/17), Lynn Marie Kaznica (7/21), Alva Looze (7/21), Doug Stormer (7/24)

Anniversaries

John & Karen Kaitanowski (7/10/1971) *Happy 50th!*

Gary & Gail Burdick (7/16/1994) * Bill & Devon Asboth (7/20/2019)

Adam & Kim Hamm (7/21/2007) * Ed & Kathee Simon (7/22/1967)

Community Outreach in July

FeedMore WNY (aka Meals on Wheels)

During the month of July, FeedMore WNY (aka Meals on Wheels) counts on St. Matthew's members and friends to help deliver meals to homebound residents of Hamburg as part of the adopt-a-route program. It's not too late to volunteer! Please call Pamela Kaznica at 913-7504, and put your love into action.

Missions Collections

- Nonperishable food items, paper products, toiletries, personal hygiene items or other necessities will be delivered to #feedhamburg.
- Pull can tabs will be delivered to the Ronald McDonald House in Buffalo. Pull tabs are recycled and the money purchases household items for the Ronald McDonald House.



First, I would like to thank everyone who helped make our Chicken BBQ a success. The wind was a challenge, thanks to all the set-up people that made sure that all the tents had enough bricks and weights, so that we stayed in St. Matthew's yard and not flying down McKinley Parkway.

It was another nice day for the BBQ and for fellowship, when we could actually see your faces. We got to see a lot of our members. We got great support from our congregation.



We did ask people where they heard about our BBQ. Some from the Sun, WECK radio, drive time, the Girl Scouts church flyer, Devon's neighbors from the flyers she put in their mailboxes and the church sign; it was a nice variety. Thanks to Michelle for making and sending out the flyers to our church groups, other churches and "The Sun."

We had a profit of \$1,119.00 from the dinners and several tips. We will be making donations to the following: The Kathleen Mary House, aiding domestic victims in Hamburg; HEART - animal rescue and adoption in Hamburg; Warm the Children, provides warm clothing for children in Hamburg (we will send that donation later in the fall); and we will make a donation to St. Matthew's toward the monthly utility bills.

Again, thank you for all your help and everyone who prayed for good weather.

Thanks, LaDonna Painter & Fundraising Committee: Marilyn Rich, Nancy & Steve Jankowski



Image of God, Image of Humanity

“He is the image of the invisible God...” (Colossians 1:15a)

Most of you who read these devotionals are churchy people. We churchy people are used to looking at Jesus to catch a glimpse of what God is like. We believe, as Paul wrote in Colossians, that Jesus is the human embodiment of God.

So, we look at Jesus to see the nature of God. From Jesus we learn that the transcendent God is also intimate; God comes close. In Christ we experience God as seeking, loving, sacrificial, forgiving and life-giving. As a paid-up member of the preacher’s union, I would encourage you to contemplate the nature of God revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus. We believe that Jesus is fully divine and so in him we can indeed see God.

Jesus is also fully human. Maybe it’s time we examined Jesus’ story to discover what a fully human life looks like. Jesus doesn’t just reveal God; he reveals what it means to live a full and rich life as a human being. Jesus came, he said, that we might have abundant life, not just in some heaven someday, but here and now, as the earthly creatures we are.

Jesus was a man who embraced his earthly life, making wine for wedding receptions and hosting picnics for 5,000 friends at a time. He cared for the body as well as the soul; why else did he heal? Like Jesus, we should luxuriate in the warmth of the sun and the touch of skin on skin. We should savor the food we eat and cherish the glass of wine shared with our friends.

As we consider Jesus as the model for what it means to be human, we come to realize that humanity is the place of God’s dwelling. We manifest God’s presence in the world. God acts through us to do God’s will. We are the ones who can heal and do the miraculous when we allow the Divine to flow through us. We are God’s agents of liberation and life. We are God’s sacrifice of love, poured out and broken to bring life and hope to the forgotten and forsaken.

Christ reveals the God of the universe who comes near. Christ also reveals the majesty and dignity of our humanity, drawn up and made part of the divine purpose in the world.

Prayer: *God of mystery and might, God of breath and heartbeat, reveal yourself in me and make me more fully human. Amen.*

Bulletin Dedications

If you’d like to honor, memorialize or celebrate a person or event, you may dedicate a bulletin. Your donation will be put into the Memorial Fund and the dedication will appear in that chosen week’s bulletin. Special envelopes will be provided or contact the church office.



Doritos are flammable and can be used as kindling. Though you can make kindling out of nearly anything, the flavored corn chips are particularly handy because they'll burn for a long time because they're made of flammable hydrocarbons soaked in oil. The more covered in powder-flavoring, the longer it burns.



Happy dogs wag their tails to the right, sad ones to the left.

No spring chicken... Chicken farmers generally sold chickens in the spring. The chickens born in the springtime yielded better earnings. Buyers would claim the older birds are "no spring chickens" and the term came to represent anyone past their prime was "no spring chicken".

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

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How beautiful a day can be
when *Kindness* touches it.

-George Elliston