



Dangerous Singing

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!
Thou art the potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after thy will,
while I am waiting, yielded and still.

(Adelaide A. Pollard, 1906)

I have known and loved that song for as long as I can remember. (It's #154 in my well-worn copy of the 1966 edition of *The Methodist Hymnal*, which I liberated from the church of my youth years ago - well beyond the statute of limitations.)

As you will see posted in many a choir rehearsal room, St. Augustine said, "The one who sings, prays twice." I don't know if it counted as praying twice or not, but I have sung this hymn many times with no one else to listen but God.

As I sing this hymn, my mind conjures images of skilled hands shaping clay on a potter's wheel, gently smoothing and shaping the pliable clay.

When I pray this hymn, that's what I am inviting God to do – to gently shape and smooth me into the kind of person God wants me to become.

Prayer: *I've got a good thing going. I've got plans I'm looking forward to. I'm ok with some minor revisions, but let's rule out any smushing and re-making, okay? Oh well, on second thought...*

*Have thine own way, Lord!
Have thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway.
Fill with thy Spirit till all shall see,
Christ only, always, living in me!*

It's a lovely image. It's an earnest prayer. It totally ignores the scriptural origin of the hymn.

[Jeremiah 18:1-11](#) describes the prophet's visit to the potter's house and God's word to him there. The word of the Lord to Jeremiah is not about gentle shaping and smoothing with God's loving hands. Instead, God tells Jeremiah to pay attention to what the potter does when the vessel being turned is not coming out as intended.

The potter smushes the clay down and goes at it again.

If clay had feelings, I bet it would hurt a bit.

I know it hurts when it happens in real life.

Offering one's life to God means that you are saying yes to more than gentle nudges, small adjustments, and careful smoothing.

Saying "yes" to the Potter means that you are ready to be made over completely.

If you're going to sing to God, you better be careful. God may just take you at your word.



Pottery has been around for a long time and is found in nearly every civilization in some form. The potter's wheel was invented in Mesopotamia between 6000 and 4000 BCE, bringing pottery to the next level as potters could craft their wares more quickly and efficiently, with more symmetrical and even shapes. Evidence of ancient pottery is found on 6 of the 7 continents from virtually every civilization.



Palm Sunday

April 2 ~ 10:00 am Worship followed by Coffee Hour

Maundy Thursday

April 6 ~ 7:00 pm Service

Good Friday

April 7 ~ 7:00 pm Service



Sunday, April 9 ~ 10:00 am Easter Worship Service



Sacrament of *Baptism*



Welcome to the newest member of St. Matthew's church,

Rose Mabel Asboth!

We were blessed to share in the joy with Devon and Bill as they presented Rose to receive the sign of Christ's grace in baptism on March 12, 2023.

Blessings to Rose and to the whole family!



It's a Boy!!

Robert Kenneth Michael was born on March 8th to Sarah and William Michael. (His middle name is for his great-grandpa Kenneth Haberman!) Everyone is healthy and happy, including older sister Emily. Congrats to Cuddihys and Habermans!

(Robert is pictured in the top of his dad's tool chest.)

Wander with Wonder

You will sometimes hear people complain that our reliance on GPS has led to a collective loss of navigational awareness and that ‘these young people’ can’t even read a map. It’s probably true that GPS technology has degraded some skills that used to be quite necessary. By the way, people were initially quite suspicious of written language as well, sure that it would diminish the ability of people to memorize the sagas that preserved the story of the people. (They were right. Do you know anyone who has memorized the Iliad? Poems like this were once memorized and passed on word-for-word for generations.)

Most of us don’t care about the degradation of map-reading skills. We don’t chastise ourselves for mental laziness because we can’t or won’t memorize turns and landmarks. We want to get from A to B without drama, and our phone or our car’s navigation system does that pretty well.

Most of us, most of the time, just want to get from here to there the best way.

But some of us, sometimes, want to wander.

Sandy and her mom (long before the advent of smart phones) used to get in the car and take a drive, intentionally trying to get lost. Getting lost and wandering aimlessly through country roads was at the heart of their day’s adventure. It the road was unpaved, that was a special bonus!

They didn’t worry about how far they went. They went to see what they could see and to spend time together. Seeing the unplanned and unexpected vistas, the houses and farms, the oddities of yard art, the roadside wild flowers was all they asked. Having the windows down and catching the scent of the forest and the earthy

aromas from farms, they spent the day in discovery mode.

When we think of the wilderness wanderings of the ancient Israelites, we often think of it as a time of testing (and failing), and that’s true. We look at it as a time of “not yet” — of longing to get to the Promised Land of blessing, and it was that too.

But it was more; it was a time of discovery. In the wilderness they learned about God and themselves. They learned something about living in community and what God had in mind for them.

Maybe our times of wandering, when we’re not sure where we’re headed, are also opportunities to awaken our senses, to pay attention to both the exterior and interior landscapes.

Time in the wilderness, when we know we haven’t arrived, doesn’t have to feel like wasted time. It can be a time for discovering who we are.

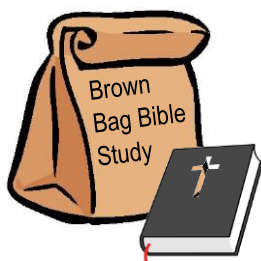
Sometimes, when you don’t know where the road is headed, you can think about what really matters. You can be less concerned with where you’re going and more concerned with who you are becoming.

Lent is the season when we are invited to go into the wilderness on purpose, without a map or a phone or an agenda. To go off the well-worn paths. To travel with our eyes open and the windows down.

Travel expectantly — keen to see what God wants to show you.

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets.



Brown Bag BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays 12 noon

Come with your lunch and bible to the Council room to visit with each other and learn and grow in the Word with Pastor Lynn.

All are welcome ... bring a friend!



Please keep in your prayers: John & Karen Kaitanowski, Donn Mergenhagen, Molly, Pat Nagel, Bob Yager, Lynn Yager; our elderly members & friends in assisted living or homebound: Lola Donner, Marilyn Fenske, Jewell McFarland, Reta Rauker, Jean Roth, Peggy Scales, Yvonne Shearer, Helen Wilson; those serving in the military: Alex Steinbronner, Aydan Stormer

Happy Birthday!



Tyler Myers (4/1), Ben Hamm (4/2), Chrissy Mellerski (4/5), Nancy Williams (4/5), Linda Ferraro (4/8), Vanessa Rich (4/8), Grady Hamm (4/9), Diane Whytas (4/14), Donesse Lindsay (4/15), Robin Federmann (4/16), Ken Haberman (4/19)

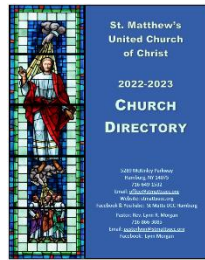
Happy Anniversary!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Ron & Cheryl Larson (4/8/1978) Tom & Janet Kromer (4/14/1971)
Bill & Mary Hamm (5/12/1973) Jeff & Robynn Rich (5/18/2002) Carl & Joann Ertel (5/22/1992)



We remember the life of long-time member and friend **Jessie R. Gillette** who passed away on March 6, 2023. A Service was held at St. Matthew's on March 10.



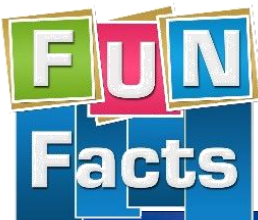
There have been several changes in the church directory so if you want a copy, please contact Michelle in the office and she will be happy to send you a copy. Remember, Birthdays & Anniversaries are included.

Registration is now open for the 2023 Camping Season at Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center!

Go to www.dunkirkcc.com for more information and to register or contact Jay Rich (716)479-5252 for more information and registration form.

Register by April 15th to receive the Early Bird Discount. Other discounts are available, including a scholarship from St. Matthew's.

For a list of camps, see the flyer posted on the bulletin board near the Fellowship Hall, and help yourself to their 2023 brochure located on the shelf there or in magazine rack in Narthex.



Crows can remember the faces of individual humans. They can also hold a grudge.

There were female Gladiators in Ancient Rome. A female gladiator was called a Gladiatrix or Gladiatrices.



The main part of a castle is The Keep, the name of the big tower in the middle of the castle. This is where the most important people lived and often everyone else would sleep in the great hall for warmth and protection. Instead of a fireplace, there would be a big fire in the middle of the hall and straw on the floors instead of carpets.

March 2023 Church Council Update

by Tracy Meyers, Council President

It has been a few months (or more) since my last update and I am glad to once again share with you. At our last Council meeting in February, we looked at our recent attendance numbers. January saw an attendance average of 100+ per week. Interestingly our in-person attendance was 47 per week and our online attendance brought that average up. This is a trend which has been consistent since the pandemic. We are grateful for each of you who are committed to supporting our church.

We are approaching the anniversary of the vandalism of our church. I am pleased to say that all of the repairs have been completed. We are in the process of compiling the overall expenses and will be making our final submission to the Insurance Board for our final reconciliation. After this is completed, we will ask for our Insurance company to come take a final walk-through with us and provide us with an updated quote to cover our building and its contents. I have no doubt there will be adjustments to our policy but will have a sense of peace knowing we will be up to date with this process.

Recently we held our first-ever Chili cookoff after church. The feedback was positive and certainly fun was had by all who attended and participated. Thank you to Corey Wilson for organizing this and decorating beautifully.

We are currently continuing our fellowship opportunities the first and third Sundays after church. We are meeting weekly on Thursdays during Lent for a simple soup & bread supper followed by a service held in the Fellowship Hall. Coming up we will be having a BBQ lunch after service on March 19th. Please know we would love to have each of you join us for fellowship and so consider yourself invited!!

Our committees continue to hold meetings and do the work of the church:

- Our Mission Committee recently chose to match donations to the UCC for support to Turkey & Syria. \$1,800 donated through church donations matched by the Mission Committee for a total of \$3,600 donated.
- Our By-Laws Committee is actively working to update our Constitution & By-Laws. After making its way through the Council it will eventually be brought through the congregation for final approval. It has been many years since these have been updated. Church Council member Corey Wilson is heading this process.
- Buildings & Grounds is a committee that is always in motion. With a building built in the 1960's we are always working on facilities management. Over the years we have had very dedicated and knowledgeable members to guide us. That has not changed. Being that this is where most of our physical labor is needed, we are always looking for more members to contribute to this process. We are gearing up for our annual grounds cleanup which will be held June 3rd. Please see Kurt Rich or Steve Jankowski if you are interested to help on this committee or can be available to help on June 3rd. No skill is too small. We can use people to rake, weed, pick up debris, paint or a myriad of other simple physical tasks. It is true, many hands make light work and this is one time we really can use many bodies. Thank you in advance for your help!

I am writing this the Saturday prior to a Church Council meeting. I am grateful for each of our members who donate their time and efforts to keep all of our committees running smoothly. I appreciate the members who serve on our Council. I am thankful for a minister who is always available and often goes above and beyond. We truly are fortunate to have Pastor Morgan. Lastly, I want to send my thanks to each of our members and dedicated friends of St. Matthew's. We are a loving church family I know, as I see it and experience it daily. If you are not currently a member but are interested in joining, please talk with Pastor Morgan. We love it when our church family grows!

Blessings to each of you,

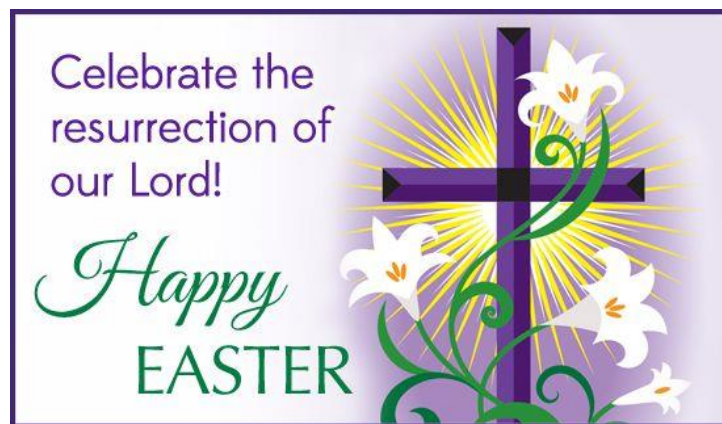
Tracy

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Sunday, April 2, 2023 10:00am Easter Service

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ