



St. Matthew Lutheran Church
Sundays at 9:00am
WOW Wednesdays at
5:30 pm (Sept—April)
stmatthewmonticello@gmail.com
Pastor Dave Raemisch
Cell Phone (319) 975-0512
Office Phone (319) 465-3262



Cover art is from a beautiful bulletin board at church by Marty Scharff

**As We Live By Faith in 2023, Let's
Remember That God's Greatest
Gift Was, And Still Is,
Our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ**

A message from Pastor Dave...

Pasto Dave's 2022 Annual Report

Let's start with a question, a question that many of you have already asked yourselves about the future of our church: As the years go by, what is going to happen to our church?

Numerically, like almost every other church in America, our worship attendance is declining and has been for over 40 years. More than once I've heard some of you describe our church by saying, "Our church has an old congregation." As a case in point, six years ago when I preached my very first sermon here at St. Matthew, I was all set to do a Children's Sermon but there was only one problem... there were no kids in church, none at all, not even one! Today, we have many children and youth participating in worship every Wednesday at WOW. That is a blessing, and that is what we are called to be as a church. Still, challenges remain.

Overall, worship attendance for Sunday and WOW declined from 182/week in 2019 to 111/week in 2022, a 38% decrease! These deeply troubling trends in worship attendance are consistent with national trends. Nationwide worship attendance has declined by 35% percent from 2019 to 2022. Declining worship attendance at St. Matthew is attributable to long-term, and on-going, cultural dynamics, the aging of our congregation, and the effect of coronavirus.

Those of us who love God, and love the church, feel sadness and sorrow over the decline of the church in America, and specifically the decline of worship attendance here at St. Matthew. Although I've only been here six short years, I've personally witnessed, and felt, the loss of so many of our beloved members, members who loved God and loved our church. Over the last six years I conducted funerals for the following people.

Vera Schoon, Clara Tsauris, Kathleen Behrens, Lawrence Brockhohn, Betty Brockhohn, Marie Schoon, Nancy Marsh, Ron Steiner, Jay Hayen, Alfreda Lange, Phyllis Wilken, Shirley Hearn, Phil Tuetken, Katie Harms, Charlie Tonn, Vera Schoon, Ann Lee, Marvin & Adel Wink, Betty Richardson, Judy Rundle, Laura Ambuehl, Ardis Hagen, Berniece Like, Betty Hinrichs, Milly Hinrichs, Dilly Wennekamp, Allen Martinsen, Joyce Erdahl, Meta Tobiason, Carlene Adams, Don & Ardis Hagen, Irene Mardorf, Joanne Yousse, Charles Bacon, Mike Martinsen, Shirley Saliger, Fred and Fran Iben, Jim Peterson, Garnett Helgens, Dale Zimmerman, Mary Wink, Armin Jacobs, Dave Paulsen, Lloyd Fink, Dan Yousse, Suzanne Joslyn, Ruth Hinrichs, Lee O'Brien, Riggs Richardson, David Plueger, Luverne and Anne Marie Plueger, Linda Lock Michaela Devany, Loren Freese, Gladys Tholen, Ron Wink, and Jim Avery. We also lost Norm Hinrichs, Ken Weber, Ed Brokens, and Ray Kleinow during my time here at St. Matthew. continued...

As time goes by, whether we like it or not, change happens. I recently heard it said that change is inevitable, but growth is optional. There's no doubt that our church is changing, but that does not mean that our church will disappear in the future. As our church continues to change, how we measure the success or failure of our congregation hinges upon whose criteria we use. I read somewhere that God has a different perspective on his church than most of us. In Isaiah 55:8-9 God said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

Coming out of the corporate realm, my thoughts naturally tend to gravitate toward numerical analyses, counting success and failure in human terms. It's been hard for me to fully grasp and embrace the reality that God has a whole different way of measuring the worth of a man or woman and the worth of a church. In John 13:34-35, Jesus told us what's important to God when He said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my people, if you love one another." It's important for us to remember that Jesus doesn't worry about the things that most of us worry about. Did you hear that... Jesus doesn't worry about the things that most of us worry about! Let that sink in, and remember it the next time you start worrying about things that don't even matter to God.

On a personal note, I turned 65 years old this past summer but am hard pressed to come up with any advantages to getting old - my hair is getting greyer and thinner, my waist is getting bigger, my body aches in ways it never did before and they tell me it's not going to get better any time soon. However, as we prepared the new church budget for 2023 I discovered one advantage to getting old. Because I'm now on Medicare, our church will save over \$7,000.00 per year on my health insurance costs Thank God for small miracles!

As we enter 2023, our church is not what it used to be, but in all the ways that matter to God it's as good as it ever was, maybe even better because being grateful, gracious, and generous counts for much in God's economy. As we enter 2023 we are financially strong and – thanks be to God – becoming ever more spiritually humble, what a beautiful and godly combination that is! Thank you for allowing me to serve as your pastor, and thank you for your generous support of ministry at St. Matthew. Peace be with you in 2023, and beyond.

Faith, Hope, Love...
Pastor Dave



**New 2023 Offering Envelopes
are available in the Narthex**

Please Notice This



ST. MATTHEW ANNUAL MEETING

**Sunday Jan. 29, 2023
After Worship**

**Here's an Opportunity to Help Our Church and Families
Who are Experiencing the Loss of a Loved One.**

We're looking for a few volunteers (men or women) to help serve meals following funerals at St. Matthew. The meals are catered or provided by the family so you don't have to bring any food, all we need is a little help serving the meals. If you can help, please call Regena Busch at (319) 480-1539.

Worship at WOW Bible Lesson Schedule

- Jan. 11 Parable of Good Samaritan (Communion)
- Jan. 18 The Parable of the Rich Man & Lazarus
- Jan. 25 Parable of the Prodigal Son (Communion)

- Feb. 1 Parable of the Talents
- Feb. 8 What is the Bible and What is the Church (Communion)
- Feb 15 Parable of Counting the Cost, and the Parable of the Two Sons
- Feb. 22 **Ash Wednesday**, Parables of the Money Lender, and Unfruitful Fig Tree (Communion)



- Mar. 1 **Lent** Parable of New Cloth & Wine Skins, and Parable of the Homeowner
- Mar. 8 **Lent** Parable of the Rich Fool (Communion)
- Mar. 15 **Lent /Spring Break** Parable of the Place of Honor, and the Parable of the Great Banquet. Lenten worship will happen, but no WOW classes.
- Mar. 22 **Lent** Parable of Pharisee & Tax Collector (Communion)
- Mar. 29 **Lent** Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

- Apr. 5 **Last WOW of Year**, Pizza & cake party followed by worship; no classes. Lesson - What is Holy Week & The Cross (Communion).
- Apr. 9 **Easter Sunday**
- Apr. 16 **Confirmation Celebration – 9:00 am Sunday**

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE			
WEEK OF:	SUNDAY	WOW	TOTAL for WEEK
December 18	51	No Wow	51
December 24 (3:30)	102	No Wow	
December 24 (6:00)	57		159
January 8	54	No Wow	54
January 15	54	58	112
December	St. Matthew Ministry	Benevolence	Building
Income	\$ 13,102.71	\$554.50	\$ 4,704.00
Expenses	\$ 9,912.43		
January 1 Balance	\$ 94,333.70		
December 31 Balance	\$ 92,083.09		
Year-to-Date			
Income	\$146,149.98	\$ 5,797.50	\$26,559.00
Expenses	\$138,532.95	\$12,905.82	



February & March Ushers & Communion Assistants

February Ushers: Greg Wink, Jim & Jackie Reuter, Nanci Paulsen
February Communion Assistant: DaLana Rigby
February Altar Guild: Pam Kray
March Ushers: Jim Eby, Cliff Mardorf, Dan Lahr, Craig Thompson
March Communion Assistant: Pam Kray
March Altar Guild: Pam Kray

	<p>Weather related church cancellations for St. Matthew can be found on KCRG.</p> <p>If you can't make it to church, for any reason, our worship services are broadcast on Local Access Cable 4 every Friday at 10:00 am & Sunday at 9:00 am year-round. You can also view our worship services anytime on our church website: stmatthewmonticello.com.</p>	
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In Sympathy

We extend our sympathy and prayers to the families of:

	<p>Gladys Tholen, who died on January 2, 2023</p> <p>Fran Iben who died on January 8, 2023</p> <p>Ron Wink who died on January 9, 2023</p> <p>Jim Avery who died on January 9, 2023</p>	
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Lenten Worship Services

	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Meal</u>	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Classes</u>
Ash Wed.	Feb. 22	5:30 pm	6:15 pm	6:45 pm
Lent & WOW	Mar. 1	5:30 pm	6:15 pm	6:45 pm
Lent & WOW	Mar. 8	5:30 pm	6:15 pm	6:45 pm
Lent *	Mar. 15	5:30 pm	6:15 pm	no classes
Lent & WOW	Mar. 22	5:30 pm	6:15 pm	6:45 pm
Lent & WOW	Mar. 29	5:30 pm	6:15 pm	6:45 pm
Lent & WOW	Apr. 5	5:30 pm	6:15 pm	end of year party

Lenten soup supper served every Wednesday evening Feb. 22nd to Mar. 29th.

* Lenten supper and worship will be held on Mar. 15th, but there won't be any WOW classes after worship due to Spring Break.

Please remember our members with a prayer, a card, or a visit.

Pinicon Place

1615 Breca Ridge Dr, Anamosa, IA 52205

- ◆ Lorna Rieniets 105
- ◆ Raymond Rieniets 104

Monticello Care Center

500 Pinehaven, Monticello, IA 52310

- ◆ Denny Joslyn 402
- ◆ Dorothy Norton 512
- ◆ Deb Johnson 503

Pennington Square

502 Pinehaven, Monticello, IA 52310

- ◆ Mary Tschantz 101

Individual Addresses:

Sycamore Gardens, 107 E. 9th St., Monticello, IA 52310:

John Boss #102	Ann McNamara #118
Jean Robison #110	David Griffith #122

- ◆ Darlene Gottleaber, 327 N. Gill, Monticello, IA 52310
- ◆ Irene Behrends, The Views of Marion, 720 Oakbrook Dr., D104, Marion, IA 52302
- ◆ Dan Ulferts, 1701 Meadow Ridge Dr., Apt. 37, Anamosa, IA 52205
- ◆ Bonnie Chappell 316 S. Sycamore, Monticello, IA 52310
- ◆ Kim Stadtmueller, 2005 49th St., Marion, IA 52302

Proposed 2023 Church Budget

(To be voted on at January 29 annual meeting)

	2022 Budget	Proposed 2023 Budget
PASTOR EXPENSES		
Pastor's Salary*	\$19,681.00	\$23,102.50
Housing Allowance*	\$37,344.00	\$37,344.00
ELCA Pension & Health Ins.	\$32,390.00	\$25,000.00
Travel Reimbursement	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 0.00
Supply Pastor	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Cont. Ed	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Total Pastor Expenses	\$91,415.00	\$86,446.50
*Pastor Dave's 6% pay increase for 2023 is his first pay raise in 5 years. Pastor's 2023 pay (\$60,446.50 / year) equals salary and housing allowance combined.		
OFFICE MAINT/ADMIN EXP.		
Church Secretary Salary	\$ 9,531.60	\$10,103.50
Janitor	\$ 7,800.00	\$ 8,268.00
Organist	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,200.00
Employee Payroll Tax	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,500.00
Office Supplies	\$ 2,650.00	\$ 3,000.00
Copier & Computer Exp.	\$ 900.00	\$ 1,000.00
Church Electric	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,000.00
Church Water	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 1,000.00
Church Gas	\$ 4,250.00	\$ 6,000.00
Church Phone & Internet	\$ 1,850.00	\$ 2,000.00
Total Office Maint/Admin Exp.	\$37,731.60	\$41,071.50
YOUTH & CHRISTIAN EDUCATION		
Youth Director Salary	\$ 8,200.00	\$ 8,200.00
Christian Education	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 4,500.00
Scholarships	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Total Youth & Christian Ed	\$13,700.00	\$13,700.00
WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP EXP.		
Worship & Altar Guild	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 4,000.00
Convention	\$ 500.00	\$ 200.00
Total Worship & Fellowship Exp.	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,200.00
Totals	\$146,250.00	\$145,418.00

Every year our church gives benevolence gifts to a variety of charitable causes as determined and allocated by our church council and Mission Endowment Committee. Specific benevolence spending is reported in our annual report.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
226 N. Cedar
Monticello, Iowa 52310

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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NO. 111
MONTICELLO, IOWA**

