

# St Matthews Service

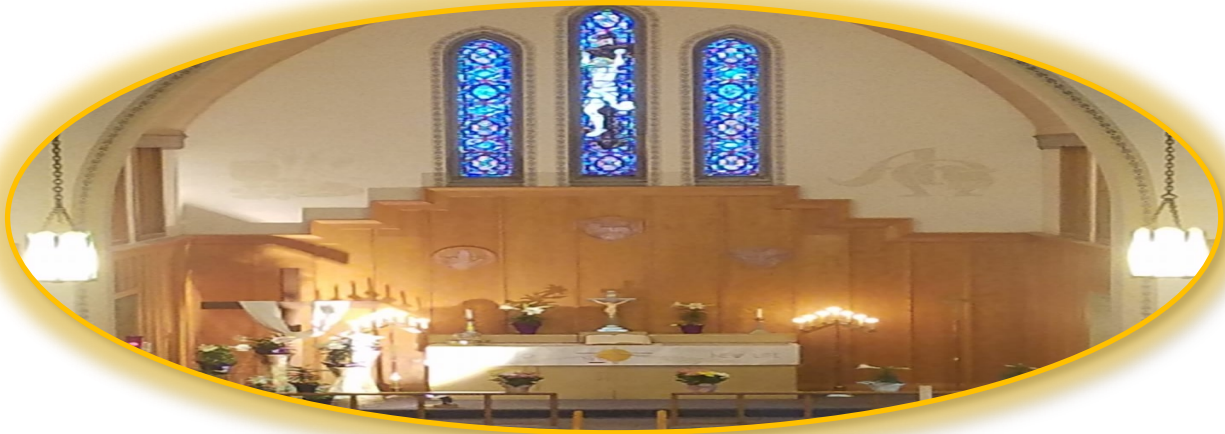


Rev. Christopher LaBoube

*May 17, 2020*

*Sixth Sunday of Easter*

"Trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not on our own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will direct your path." (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)



## **St. Matthew Lutheran Church**

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6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
17 May 2020

St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Mapleton, IA  
Acts 2:42-47 / 1 John 2:7-14

Sermon Title: Early Church Worship—Fellowship  
Sermon Text: 1 John 2:7-14

*“Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and our LORD Jesus Christ.” (2 Tim. 1:2) Amen.*

What is the church? Over the last two weeks, I’ve talked about the early Christian church—and primarily focused on their church life. We keep looking at Acts 2 verse 42 to give us the summary of what the early church was like: *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”*

Last week, we talked more about the importance of devoting ourselves to the apostles’ teaching, that is, devoting ourselves to regular Bible study. Today, I want us to focus on devoting ourselves to fellowship with other Christians in the church.

The biblical Greek word “koinonia” is often translated as “fellowship,” and that’s a good translation. “Koinonia” can also be described as “an attitude of good will // that manifests an interest // in a close relationship.”

Koinonia is a deeper bond than just casual acquaintances. Do you have close relationships with members of your church? If not, what can you do to develop those deeper relationships? Fellowship is often an overlooked area // when church members talk about getting more people to come to church.

Pastor Keith Haney from the Iowa District West office has written extensively about koinonia. In one article titled: “[How To Reach The Elusive Unconnected Family with Young Children](#),” Pastor Haney says this:

“We nurture a community through intentional, authentic, honest, real relationships. A community is not a Sunday morning only experience. This unique relationship is formed by living life together. It is forged over the hot coals of brokenness and restoration. Over the coals of tackling difficult faith issues, and societal contradictions through this journey of faith. Community means daring to have uncomfortable faith conversations.” (<https://alightbreakthrough.org/how-to-reach-family-with-young-children/>)

Does this describe your church? If not, what can you do to nurture koinonia? What can you do to develop “an attitude of good will // that manifests an interest // in a close relationship”?

When the Bible talks about koinonia—about a close fellowship—God talks about relationship. Granted, you might not get along with everyone at church, but God encourages you in his Word to TRY to get along with other people.

The Two Greatest Commandments are—Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Sure, it’s hard to get along with some people, but God gives you his Holy Spirit to give you the strength to love that person, who you don’t like. *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”* (Romans 12:18)

When you work at loving church members, who you don’t like, the same way Jesus loves you, then you are working on fellowship. After all, Jesus tells us: *“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (1 Corinthians 1:9. See also 1 John 1:3)

God call you out of spiritual darkness and into his glorious light of eternal life. God also called out of spiritual darkness the person who you don't get along with at church. God desires that we follow his example—which is the Second Greatest Commandment—love your neighbor as yourself.

This is a hard rule to follow, but with God ALL THINGS are possible. That means that God gives you the strength to pray for the person, who you don't like at church. God gives you the strength to interact with that person. God even gives you the strength to reconcile with that person.

When you read your Bible the you find other verses that can seem hard to swallow such as 1 John 2:9-11: *“<sup>9</sup> Whoever says he is in the light // and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, // and in him there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup> But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness // and walks in the darkness, // and does not know where he is going, // because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”* (1 John 2:9-11)

If you hate a fellow Christian in the church, then God says you live in spiritual darkness. Sure, you can say that you're a good person and that you get along with MOST church members, but that doesn't cut it—AT ALL.

If you hate a fellow Christian, then the light of Jesus is not in you. If a fellow Christian has hurt you, then you need to pray for that person. You also need to work to reconcile that relationship. God does not approve of anyone, who continues to hate his brother or sister in Christ.

Koinonia—fellowship—is not a HAVE TO. Fellowship is something we GET to do. It's a fun time hanging out with other Christians. Koinonia is “an attitude of good will // that manifests an interest // in a close relationship.”

And it's true that relationships get messy. We are all sinners. We have all been born into sin and in sin did our mothers conceive us. That's why relationships get messy. But God has done something about this.

In Ephesians, Paul tells us exactly what God has done for us: *“In [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood, // the forgiveness of our trespasses, // according to the riches of his grace, // which he lavished upon us, // in all wisdom and insight.”* (Ephesians 1:7-8)

Jesus died for you and for me. Jesus died for you and me, because he loves you more than you can ever imagine. Jesus died for you and me, because he wants you to be with him in heaven for all eternity. Jesus wants you to be part of the fellowship of the Trinity. This is what Paul talks about at the end of Second Corinthians: *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”* (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Jesus prays for all believers that they will remain faithful in devotion to him unto the end. Jesus prays: *“I do not ask for these (believers) only, // but also for those who will believe in me through their word, / that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, // that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”* (John 17:20-21)

Jesus wants you to be part of the Trinity and part of the family of God in his presence for all eternity. So when we devote ourselves to fellowshiping with fellow Christians, then we are getting a glimpse of the eternal fellowship we'll be part of in heaven.

*“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”* (Hebrews 10:24-25)

When we stay home and stop gathering to worship with other Christians, then we are hurting ourselves. Of course, some of our members aren't physically able to come to church and gather with other Christians for fellowship. When we know about these members, why don't we ALL go and have Christian fellowship with that home-bound person?

Why do we sit back and complain that people are leaving church and not coming back and then gripe to the pastor as though he is a magician and able to force people to come back to worship? What can you do to reach out to fellow Christians, who don't gather with us for worship and fellowship centered on Jesus?

Since the church is not just the pastor, but the church is made up of all kinds of people, then every one of you members of this congregation should be concerned about the spiritual well-being of every other member? When you are concerned about the spiritual well-being of fellow Christians, then you are hearing God's Word and you are DOING it—you're LIVING it!

The fellowship of the saints—that's you and me and all members—gather around Jesus in Bible study, in fellowship, in Holy Communion and in prayer. This is what the early Christian church did. The early Christian church DEVOTED themselves to these four areas, because they considered these four areas the core of what it means to be a Christian church. To God be the glory now and forever. Amen.

Now, may the peace of God which transcends all understanding guard and keep your hearts in Christ Jesus. Amen.

## **Scripture Readings 05-17-20**

Old Testament Reading: Acts 17:16-31

Gradual: adapt from Matt 28:7; Heb. 2:7; Ps. 8:6

Psalms: 66:8-20

Epistle: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Gospel: John 14:15-21

**SUBMITTED BY OUR SISTER IN CHRIST JULIE BOLLIG.**



Sunday, May 17, 2020

Dear Members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church,

Greetings in the Name of Jesus this Sixth Week of the Easter Season! These long stretches of social distancing have taken their toll on many of us. As I continue calling members, I hear often—"I'm a little bored, but I'm hanging in there."

Over the past couple of weeks, I've had different articles from Lutheran Family Services (LFS) posted on our church's Facebook page. Some of the articles simply remind you that LFS is available for distance or telehealth counseling services. You don't even have to have a computer to talk with an LFS counselor about anything that might be worrying you as you go through this Covid-19 outbreak.

LFS counselors never share your phone conversation. They are confidential and discrete. They are trained Christian counselors, who want to help if you are struggling as this Covid-19 outbreak continues. As your pastor, I am not trained in professional counseling, so I want to encourage you to call them if there is something you want to talk about. Their phone number in Sioux City is 712-276-9000.

I know a lot of you have told me in phone conversations that you can't wait to get back to church. I, too, am anxious to get back to church. I miss receiving God's Word throughout the service—in the readings, the songs and the sermon. I also miss the fellowship of the saints.

What is the church? It's you and everyone else, who is a member of this congregation. And even though we cannot gather together to worship Jesus, we can still worship Jesus individually. Thankfully Jesus is not confined to time and space. Jesus says he is with us always unto the end of the ages. This is encouraging especially as we continue to move through this Covid-19 outbreak.

As we continue social distancing, what can you do to work on church fellowship? One easy thing is to pick up the phone and call another church member. Ask how they are doing and how you can pray for that person. Then, ask if you can pray for that person right on the phone. If they agree, then pray over the phone.

How else can you work on church fellowship as we continue social distancing? You can write greeting cards, postcards and letters to fellow church members. If you use email, you can also send an email to a fellow church member to say that you're just checking in. Some people even keep in touch via text messages.

The church is the body of Christ. The church is made of you and me and all other members in our congregation. When we make the effort to reach out to a fellow Christian, then we're working on church fellowship.

And once we are able to gather together again for worship here at church, you can still use these forms of communication to keep in touch with fellow members, who you haven't see in worship in a long time. I call people every day, but surprisingly not everyone, who I call wants to talk with me. But that same church member, who doesn't want to talk with me on the phone, might be interested in talking with you on the phone. Give it a try!

It's so easy to assume that "church fairies" make everything happen at church. That's ridiculous. Church activities, worship services, Bible studies and more happen, because of members like you. Think how you can help our congregation, and then do it! That's hearing God's Word and then living God's Word. I want to challenge you—and all members—to think of one way that you can help our congregation and then do it.



Maybe your little bit of work is praying for all our members. Maybe your little bit of work is helping clean a part of the sanctuary or Education Wing. Maybe your little bit of work is helping with the S.M.A.S.H. program. What can you do to help grow the fellowship in our congregation?

Sincerely,  
Pastor LaBoube

May God Bless you with many more.

<b>APRIL BIRTHDAYS OF 80+ YEARS</b>	Age	Birthday
<b>GOD'S CHILD</b>		
Robert Conyers	84	Apr 24, 1936
Freda Means	93	Apr 3, 1927
Darlene Dose	86	Apr 24, 1934
Maxine Thies	83	Apr 28, 1937
<b>APRIL ANNIVERSARIES OF 50+ YEARS</b>		
none		

I'm sorry missed them in April, thank you for reminding me Hans. Like everyone is saying remember we are all in this together.

May God Bless you with many more.

<b>MAY BIRTHDAYS OF 80+ YRS.</b>		
<b>GOD'S CHILD</b>	Age	Birthday
Elnora Dose	85	May 11, 1935
Ferne Jacobson	90	May 2, 1930
Richard Johnson	86	May 30, 1934
Delores Livermore	91	May 5, 1929
Hans Witzel	85	May 15, 1935
Lillian Wodtke	104	May 24, 1916
<b>MAY ANNIVERSARIES OF 50+ YEARS</b>		
<b>GOD'S CHILD</b>	# of yrs.	Wedding Anniversary
David and Belinda Bartels	50 yrs.	May 15, 1970
John and Joan Fick	64 yrs.	May 27, 1956
Wayne and Zola Kafton	57 yrs.	May 5, 1963

THANK YOU  
THANK YOU

**A thank you was received from our Sister in Christ, Deloris Livermore :** A very special thank you to Julie Bollig and her helpers for the meal and the box of essentials, a thank you to the ladies of St. Matthew's for the plate of cookies and bars I very much appreciate it.

# The Fullness of God's Grace

It is easy to use the word “grace” without thinking through where grace comes from or how it applies to us. The fullness of God’s grace is the death and resurrection of Jesus, who is God in the flesh for you. To see God’s grace, look at Jesus. In a world where the church is rejected and God’s grace in Christ is ignored, Jesus is still present with His grace. That’s Paul’s point in 2 Thessalonians, where he helps us move our eyes from our suffering to our gracious Savior, Jesus.



by Peter III

1. Read 2 Thess. 1:1–12. Notice “grace” in vv. 2 and 12. How does God’s grace affect you when those who reject Christ afflict you and cause you to suffer? How are God’s judgment and salvation both gracious?

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2. Read 2 Thess. 2:1–12. Does the presence of “the man of lawlessness” in the church mean that Jesus is not present with His grace? How so?

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3. Read 2 Thess. 2:13–17. How is God’s grace in Christ presented in this section (not just v. 16)? How does grace relate to how we live?

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4. Read 2 Thess. 3:1–5. How does Jesus comfort you and bring you His grace in this world in which you suffer?

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5. Read 2 Thess. 3:6–15. What role does Christ’s grace play in Paul’s example to the Thessalonians and as you do good?

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6. Read 2 Thess. 3:16–17. Is Paul’s expression of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ a wish or a declarative statement that does what it says?

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7. What is the significance that Christ’s grace is present at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of a letter to Christians who are rejected by the world?

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Second Thessalonians calls Christians to see their salvation in Christ’s grace, even when they suffer. God’s grace is with you when you are called as a Christian, as you live as a Christian, and as you await Christ’s gracious return for His church. Suffering doesn’t mean God has withdrawn His grace, but shows that Jesus is your gracious Savior in the past, in the present and in the future. Christ’s death and resurrection are always real for you. **LW**

The Rev. Peter III  
is pastor of Trinity  
Lutheran Church,  
Millstadt, Ill.





Please continue to pray for our church leaders.

*"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."* **Romans 12:12**

**Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)**

**PRAYER WARRIORS**— The prayer warriors desire to hear from you as to how they can pray for you. We have 14 prayer warriors. We welcome more men and women to join us. if you need prayer call Alice Miller phone number 712-880-2380.

**Members of St. Matthew with Special Needs and Concerns needing our prayers.** Please call the church office if you want to be added to this list for any reason, thank you.

Nazaria Kaderabek	Lavone Witzel	Bud Dose	Lillian Wodtke	Kevin Dose
Elnora Dose	Robert Banks	Arlene Kiepe	Selma Schrader	Carol Dose
Marilyn Hamann				

**Family / Friends of Members with Special Needs and Concerns**

**Susan Miller** (Alice Miller's daughter) **Sheri Heilman**— Sue Oberg's sister; **Ron Kraffle** friend of Marla & Joe Hogan; **Aiyanan Bowman** Darlene Bowman, (Christiansen) mother-in-law; **Kirby Reitz** son of Don & Carolyn former members their address: 7214 South Bitterroot Court Sioux falls SD 57108. **Boyd Yaden** great uncle of Sarah Schmidt; **Randy Boysen** son of Deloris Boysen.

*Please drop them a line or two, they love getting mail and they would love hearing from their church family.*

*Spread the Fruits of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Gentleness, Kindness, Self Control, Goodness, and Faithfulness. You will be rewarded!*

**Bob Banks** 92 yrs.  
Aug 7, 1928  
Maple Heights Nursing Home  
Sunrise Ave  
Mapleton, IA 51034  
Wedding ann. Nov. 12, 1955  
**Bonnie Banks** 86 yrs.  
Jun 2, 1934  
Main Street Apartments  
516 Main Street Apt 2  
Mapleton, IA 51034  
Battle Creek, IA  
**George Koithan** 88 yrs.  
Sept. 2, 1932  
1726 Marcella Heights  
Carroll, IA 51040

**Myrna Gosch** 79 yrs.  
Jan 9, 1941  
Prime Living Apartments  
725 Pearl St. Apt. 218  
Sioux City, IA  
**Delbert Kroll** 87 yrs.  
Jun. 1, 1933  
Ring Street  
Mapleton IA 51034  
**Evelyn Christiansen** 100 yrs.  
Jul 4, 1920  
4204 SE. 29th Ave.  
Amarillo, TX 79103  
% Joan Valdez  
**Arlene Kiepe** 103 yr.  
July 29, 1917  
Maple Heights Nursing Home  
Sunrise Ave  
Mapleton, IA 51034

**Elnora Dose** 84 yrs.  
May 11, 1935  
Embassy Rehab & Care Center  
206 Port Neal Rd  
Sergeant Bluff, IA 51054  
**Delores Boysen** 81 yrs.  
Mar. 5, 1939  
31153 Juinter Ave  
Hinton, IA 51024  
**Phyllis Fick** 92 yrs.  
Jun 3, 1928  
Willow Dale Care—Assisted Living  
404 1st St.,  
**Lillian Wodtke** 104 yrs.  
May 24, 1916  
Accura Health Care of Spirit Lake  
1912 Zenith Ave  
Spirit Lake, IA 51360  
\*\* indicates new address