Throughout the year there are special dates of which to make note. Mark your calendar. You won’t want to miss out! See separate Children’s Ministries Calendar insert for lesson details.

- Sept. 8: Education Year Kick-off Sunday
- Sept. 11 (Wed.): Hand in Hand and Confirmation classes begin**
- Sept. 15: First Sunday in new Fall classes
- Oct. 26: Truck or Treat city event
- Dec. 1*: Holiday Weekend (movie day)
- Dec. 15: Children’s Advent/Christmas Service
- Dec. 22*: Holiday Weekend (movie day)
- Dec. 29*: Holiday Weekend (movie day)
- Jan. 5: SS resumes
- Jan. 8 (Wed.): Hand in Hand and Confirmation classes resume
- Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23: SS Break Out classes (Rotation)
- Apr. 10 (Fri.): Good Friday Family Event
- Apr. 12: Holiday Weekend (no movies)
- May 3: Confirmation Sunday
- May 24*: Holiday Weekend (movie day)
- May 31: Summer Sunday school begins

5 Great Evenings of Summer!, Vacation Bible School (June 28-July 2)

*Sundays that fall on holiday weekends often make it difficult to staff the Sunday school program, as well as being typically lower attendance Sundays. On many (but not all) of those Sundays, Christian family movies will be shown in an upper level classroom during the normal Sunday school hour.

** Hand in Hand and Confirmation class dates—pg. 11

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:1-3

2019-2020
St. Matthew Handbook for

CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES

RISE!
D.C.L.C. is a licensed year-round Christian childcare/preschool which is a mission of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. D.C.L.C. is not under the St. Matthew ‘Children’s Ministries’ umbrella. The program is directed by Julie Sventek.

For more information about D.C.L.C. visit their website at: www.dclearningcenter.org or call 763-789-4030.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
4101 Washington St. NE
Columbia Heights, MN  55421

Website: www.stmatthew-ch.org
Phone: 763-788-9427

Brenda Hugo (Children’s Ministry) brenda.hugo@stmatthew-ch.org
Pastor Bill Hugo (Confirmation): bill.hugo@stmatthew-ch.org
Carol Blase (Choirs): carol.blase@stmatthew-ch.org
Faustina Allen (Youth Ministry): faustina.allen@stmatthew-ch.org
Ruth Petersen (Office Mgr.): ruth.petersen@stmatthew-ch.org
Servant Opportunities

Children’s Ministries are administered by the Children’s Ministries Coordinator (Brenda Hugo) under the supervision of the pastor and the Discipleship Vision Board. The program is supported by several of the lay leaders of the Children’s Ministries program. This group is charged with the responsibility of assisting parents with the Christian training of their young families. We welcome constructive comments.

You are invited to share your gifts/talents and your love of Jesus with the children at St. Matthew. Opportunities to volunteer may exist in any of the areas outlined in this handbook. All volunteers age 18+ will undergo a simple background check.

Teen and Adult Education

A number of opportunities for Bible study are offered for teens and adults on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and other days/times. We encourage teens and parents to engage themselves in some kind of group Bible study on a regular basis. The clearest way God speaks to us is through His Word. What a blessing and privilege it is to study His Word!

In addition to group Bible studies, all are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the ‘RISE! daily Bible readings.

Teens: Grades 7-12
Sunday morning Bible study at 9:30 am (Summer: 9:00)
Wednesday evenings: 6:45/7:00-8:00 pm, and other periodic events

Adults:
Sunday mornings 9:30 am (Summer: 9:00)
Men’s Bible study: Tuesdays, 6:30 am
Women’s Bible study: at Community Grounds Coffee Shop, Thursdays at 9:30 am and 12:30 pm.

Watch communications for changes or additions to the current Bible Study schedule. You may also call the church office for further information.

St. Matthew Children’s Ministries

St. Matthew Lutheran Church is a member of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

St. Matthew Children’s Ministries is established to assist parents in the Christian education of their children. Through Bible instruction and application St. Matthew strives to nurture faith development which is begun in the child at baptism.

Parents, please offer your prayer support for and involvement with the Children’s Ministries staff as they are also praying for you and your children.

Communication

At St. Matthew, children can participate in a variety of Christian education classes, choirs, activities and family events. Info about these happenings are detailed in this handbook. However, info may get updated or changed. You want to stay in the loop! Here’s how:

Communication from the Children’s Ministries coordinator to/with Children’s Ministries families occurs most frequently via email.

Other places you may find Children’s Ministries news and info:
- Monthly Newscene (St. Matthew newsletter)
- Weekly (Sat./Sun.) worship announcement bulletins
- St. Matthew church website (www.stmatthew-ch.org)
- Your church mailbox
- St. Matthew Facebook page

Occasionally items may be mailed to you.

For emergency purposes, emergency contact person/people and phone contact information will be requested.

Please be sure the Children’s Ministries office has your current email, phone contact numbers and mailing address on file.
**Arrival and Dismissal Safety**

**Arrivals:**
Please make every effort to have your child in his/her classroom on time. Late arrivals disrupt learning. Please do not leave your children unsupervised in the classroom.

**Dismissals:**
Please avoid going into the classroom to pick up your child early unless it is absolutely necessary, as this is disruptive to the rest of the class.

For the safety of the children, please do not instruct your child to meet you across the street in the parking lot.

**Please come inside the building to pick up your child.**

It is safest to meet your child outside of the classroom or in the gathering area outside the worship center; or in the front door area. However, if this is not possible, please designate another area inside the building at which to meet.

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**Sunday School Openings**

Each week the Rotation and Sojourner classes join together in Room 211/212 (upper level) promptly at 9:30 a.m. for a short opening to Sunday School. At this time, birthdays and baptism birthdays are recognized, information on the current Sunday School mission project is shared, God is praised with music, and prayers are offered. Students won’t want to miss the fun music and announcements so please make every effort to be on time. Parents are welcome to attend these opening sessions (approx. 10-15 minutes).

*(FP/EL students do not take part in these opening sessions.)*

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**Family Events**

**Good Friday, SMCT, VBS**

**Good Friday**— Friday, April 10 (mid-late afternoon)
We will host a special interactive experience geared for families and open to the community.

This experience will encompass events of Holy Week from Palm Sunday, through Easter.

Dramatic actors from grades 5—adult will rehearse on Wed. evenings between Lenten worship services.

Watch communications for more details as the date approaches.

**St. Matthew Community Theater (SMCT)**

This fall, the SMCT will announce which musical they will perform in the spring, during a performance/fundraising evening at St. Matthew, on Friday, Sept. 27.

Auditions are usually held in January and rehearsals are generally on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons (leads usually have additional rehearsals). Families are encouraged to audition!

Performances are currently scheduled for Apr. 23-26 and Apr. 30-May 3. Watch communications for further details.

*Past performances have included: Big Fish. Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Beauty and the Beast, Pirates of Penzance 7 Brides for 7 Brothers, The Wizard of Oz*

**Vacation Bible School (VBS)**

This special event open to families in our community takes place mostly on our parking lot! Games, crafts, dramas, snacks and music make Bible stories come alive!

Information is presented and volunteer sign-ups usually begin in February, and participant registration will begin in late May or early June. Watch for communications about this event after Christmas.

**VBS 2020**
Sunday, June 28—Thursday, July 2, evenings
Advent/Christmas Worship Service—Sunday, Dec. 15

Each year children/families have the opportunity to tell the story of Jesus’ birth and lead the congregation in worship. This year’s Advent/Christmas Service will take place on: Sunday, December 15th at the 10:45 a.m. worship service.

Mark your calendars and plan to participate!

While children are the main leadership focus of this service, parents/grandparents are invited to participate with their children—especially younger children who may be afraid to be in front of the congregation.

Plans are to use a mostly all-in-one format where the majority of the participants prepare for the worship service during the Sunday school period (early start at 9:00 am instead of 9:30) the morning of the worship service presentation. Key drama actors may rehearse earlier.

All participants will be asked to register prior to this worship service so I will know exactly who to expect and plan accordingly. Watch for registration dates/details in Nov. communications.

Truck or Treat—Saturday, Oct. 26, 1:00-4:00 pm

This event is run by the City of Columbia Heights Police and Fire Departments.

This year we will also participate by hosting a ‘fishing’ game with prizes. Volunteers will be needed to run this game.

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Family Events

Truck or Treat, Adv./Chr. Worship

Faith Play & Early Learners

Sunday School

Faith Play (FP Class)

Age range: Birth—Age 2 and Parents

Time: 9:30 A.M. -10:30 A.M. (Summer: 9:00 A.M.—9:45 A.M.)

Classroom: Main level, Day Care Toddler Room, across from the Lounge

Description: This class has simple stories, songs, and maybe crafts for the little ones. Following time with the babies/toddlers, adults continue with supportive discussion based on joys and challenges of parenting, the Bible readings for the week, or themed Bible study.

Leaders: Teresa Anderson and Jeff Anderson (as his time allows)

Early Learners (EL Class)

Age range: Age 2 (by Sept. 1) - 3/4 year olds, and Parents or another responsible adult (grandparent, aunt/uncle)

Time: 9:30 A.M. -10:30 A.M. (Summer: 9:00 A.M.—9:45 A.M.)

Classroom: Main level, Day Care Toddler Room, across from the Lounge

Description: This class follows the same themes as the Rotation SS students using age appropriate stories, games and activities. (see inserted Sunday School Calendar)

Leaders: Teresa Anderson and Jeff Anderson (as his time allows)

**The Faith Play and Early Learner classes will be combined until sufficient interest exists to separate them. Until then, the class will include a combination of the two descriptions.**
Rotation
Age range: Age 4 (by Sept. 1) = Grade PreK - Grade 4
Time: 9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. (Summer: 9:00 A.M. - 9:45 A.M.)
Classroom(s): Upper Level, room 211/212 (Opening Classroom), From there, children will be directed to upper level classrooms.
Description: One story or theme will be covered each month, while the students ‘rotate’ between workshops. Each week students will participate in a different workshop with age-based, Biblical activities connected to the theme/story. Workshops utilize a variety of resources to include drama, movie, arts & crafts, games, cooking or science, etc.. The Rotation participants may be divided into an Older Group and a Younger Group, or may function as one group as numbers dictate. Students who have received their Bibles in 3rd grade, and 4th grade students, should bring their own Bibles to class. (see Sunday School Calendar insert)
Shepherds: Candy Nelson, Jesse Davies, Sr.
Workshop Leaders: vary

Sojourners
Age range: Grades 5 and 6
Time: 9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. (Summer: 9:00 A.M. - 9:45 A.M.)
Classroom(s): Upper Level, room 211/212 (Opening Classroom), then move to the ‘Sojourner’ classroom.
Description: Students will be viewing/discussing the ‘Visual Bible’ book of Matthew (one chapter a week), and also participate in discussion of the daily RISE! readings which they are expected to read at home. Each student will receive a workbook containing the Sunday lessons, daily RISE! readings and a fun page pertaining to each lesson, all in one binder! Students will need to bring a Bible and the workbook to each class session.
Leader: Mike Alm
Shepherd: Makayla Feely

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Leader: Mike Alm
Shepherd: Makayla Feely

Hand in Hand
Age range: Grades K - 4
Time: 6:45 pm—8:00 pm
Classroom(s): Upper Level ‘Art Room’
Description: This is an education class based on the RISE! stories and themes. While the stories/themes will be the same as those of the Rotation Sunday school group, there will be different story formats and activities. Relationship building and prayer are key components of this class.
Leader: (tbd at this writing)
Assistant: Jesse Davies

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Assistant: Jesse Davies
**Wednesdays**

**General/Safety**

Things are hopping at St. Matthew on Wednesdays! Here is a list of evening events and contact people if other than the Children’s Ministries Coordinator (Brenda Hugo)

- Confirmation (usually grades 5 & 6, 4:30-5:30) - Pastor Bill Hugo
- Children’s Choir (grades K-6/7, 5:30-5:58) - Carol Blase
- Youth/Adult Choir (grade 7—adult, 6:00-7:00) - Carol Blase
- Potentially an adult Bible class (7:00-8:00)
- Grief Share (adults) — Sarai Kretschman
- Various church board meetings (Discipleship Vision Board, Lay Ministers, BeFriends, etc.)
- Hand in Hand (grades K-4, 6:45-8:00)
- Teen Ministries (grades 7-12, 6:45/7:00-8:00) — Faustina Allen
- Ecuadorian Ministries—Pastor Pedro Guaman
- Other groups on occasion

For the convenience of those participating in any of the above activities, we offer:

- $2 Simple Supper (5:30-6:15)
- Supervised Gym (4:30-8:00)

Because the doors are unlocked, and many people are in/out of the building, for the safety of the children (yes, even teen children), no child/teen is allowed to roam the building or hang in the halls unsupervised. All children/teens must be in or en route to a supervised space (classroom, gym, Fellowship Hall).

Note: all St. Matthew staff/volunteers age 18+ who work with children or vulnerable adults must undergo a background check.

*Gym may close at 6:45—dependent on volunteers for continuing till 8:00.*

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**Sunday School**

**February Break-Outs**

The Rotation Sunday school students will have special topical breakouts during the month of February. The purpose is to allow special teaching focus apart from the thematic workshop format.

**Break Out Topics**

- Feb. 2020
  - PreK/Kind. - Love
  - 1st Grade - “The Lord’s Prayer”
  - 2nd Grade - “God and Me” *(religion requirement for scouting advancement)*
  - 3rd Grade - Introduction to the Bible (Bible presentation)
  - 4th Grade - “Introduction to Confirmation”

*(FP/EL and Sojourners will continue with their curriculum as usual.)*

First through fourth grade PARENTS are asked to participate weekly in their child’s breakout sessions. These are important classes in the next step of your child’s faith walk. Please plan to attend.

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**Sunday School**

**Mission and Service Projects**

We would like to encourage the children to help support mission and service projects for the following reasons:

- Help children learn to see beyond themselves to the world around them.
- Educate children in the diverse manner and areas (locally/globally) in which the Church is doing ministry.
- Provide opportunity for children to be directly involved in the mission of the church and to share Christ’s love.

We will have one on-going project this year—quarters in mini-M&M tubes for Feed My Starving Children. Watch for details in the ‘Newscene’ or other communications.

Short-term projects may also come up. Keep checking those forms of communication.
Putting God’s Word to memory is important. Through memorization, children (and adults) remember God’s love and commands throughout daily living. Committing to memory these verses will provide your children with valuable resources for times in their lives when they need to draw comfort and guidance from God’s Word.

The theme verse on the front cover of this handbook will be the basis of ministry throughout the year. We will regularly review the verse and talk about what it means for us in our daily lives.

Additional memory challenges from Luther’s Small Catechism will also be available, starting in October. Upon completion of memorizing portions of the catechism, students earn award certificates which can be saved and redeemed, along with attendance award certificates, toward gifts from the awards cabinet outside Pastor’s office.

Families may choose to memorize one verse a week from the daily RISE! selection of verses.

Sunday School Theme Verse/Memory Challenges

Sunday and Wednesday Worship Attendance

Sunday school and Hand in Hand are Christian education programs. Although the classes do include periods of devotion and prayer, they are not worship. The Children’s Ministries Team encourages parents to include children in the church worship experience on Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings, and Wednesday evenings during Advent/Lent, as regularly as possible. Only by attending often will the child become familiar with worship and be comfortable knowing what is expected of him or her.

Worship isn’t taught, it is caught. It is an action we do in response to God’s love for us.

The strongest role model for a life of worship is to regularly sit next to a parent in church.

“RISE!” Daily Bible Readings

The entire congregation will be encouraged to read short daily verses based on our theme: RISE! And, because we are risen in Christ, other verses pertain to what fruits God want to grow in us.

Pastor Hugo has developed a daily reading schedule of RISE! Bible verses. There are two options. One has just the schedule of Bible verses which you can look up in your own Bible. The other is a bound journal where the verses are written out for you including space to ‘journal.’

Children are included in this activity.

Children (grades 4 and younger) who are not readers, may have the verse read to them by an older family member. Talk about them!

Children (grades 4 and younger) who are able to read the verses themselves are encouraged to take their own journal. Read each verse in the morning (so they can think about it during the day) and in the evening. Encourage them to draw a picture or make a bumper sticker version for each verse.

Sojourners will have their RISE! verses printed in their class workbooks, and do not need to take a separate sheet/journal.

(Watch further communications about an incentive program for reading the RISE! verses.)