



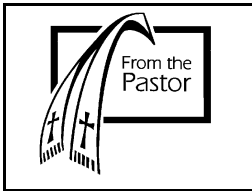
The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Volume 66, Number 10

December 2014

Internet Web Site: www.stmattspringfield.org



From Our Pastor

What was your favorite Christmas gift ever? Do you have one that comes to mind? When I have been asked this same question, I must admit I do not have any one gift that I recall. I am embarrassed to say that I do not remember from year to year what I was given. Nor do I remember from year to year what I gave. But I do remember being “gifted.”

I have been gifted with a wonderful family. My Mom and Dad surrounded me, my brother and my sisters with love, care and concern. They brought me to Church and Sunday School. They supported me through college, giving advice when appropriate, and having me make some decisions on my own when that was needed. They were thrilled when I married Leslie.

As Leslie and I started life together, I was gifted by another Mom and Dad, and two more brothers and sisters-in-law. They, like my original family, have been a support to me as I have gone through settling into married life, the coming of children, the purchase of homes, and all the restoration and renovation that goes with starting the “nesting” process. They have given counsel and advice, and sometimes just a place to vent and struggle.

I have been gifted by Leslie, Amanda and Abigail as we have grown as a family together. With all the ups and downs life can throw at a person, I have been blessed to have these three with me to enjoy the ride and share the burdens. When I was younger, I could not imagine life with a wife and children. Now I cannot imagine life without them.

Certainly at this time of year I am very aware that I have been gifted by God and the Church. I have been given the gift not just of life, but of new life in Baptism. I have been given grace and mercy through Jesus. I have had the gift of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide me. I have been blessed to serve several wonderful congregations. I have been gifted by the love, support and partnership that you, my family at Saint Matthew, have given. I know it is the “Sunday School” answer to give, but I am truly reminded that the best Christmas gift I have ever received is Jesus.

And I am so glad to be a part of His family at Saint Matthew Lutheran Church.

These gifts I have received truly are gifts from God. I suppose that is part of why I went into the ministry. I know it is why I feel a need to make gifts to the church. It is strange that it is not just a desire, but a need for me to give. I feel a need to be connected with my family, my friends, my Lord and my church. I am not complete without them. And so I give, so they know I feel gifted.

As we come to this season of gift giving, I hope you will keep in mind the giftedness of your life. I trust that you, too have been blessed with family, friends, the Lord and the church. Be generous this month in your giving, remembering that all these people, and this Jesus, are the gifts that you have received from our loving, generous God!

Thankful for the gift of you,
- Pr. Karl M. Richard

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Christmas Eve Services

There will be three worship services held on Christmas Eve:

5 PM - A simple worship service describing the meaning of Christmas - for families with children of **all** ages

7 PM - Candlelight Service with Holy Communion

10 PM - Candlelight Service with Holy Communion featuring the Adult Choir in a special choral presentation

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Hanging of the Greens - December 20, 2014

Hanging of the Greens is a special day at our church. The sanctuary will be transformed with trees, lights, creche sets, holly, and bows in anticipation of the Christmas

celebration. Christian fellowship is alive. A delicious chicken dinner will be served. A skit entitled "Just a Little Christmas" will be presented by our Sunday School classes. Bring the entire family. Guests are always welcome.

3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Decorate the sanctuary
Christmas program rehearsal in Elbert Hall

5:00 p.m.

Dinner in Elbert Hall

6:00 p.m.

Christmas Program in Elbert Hall
Cookies will be served after the carol sing-along
in the Sanctuary

Many hands are needed to make this event happen. Some projects start early in the morning. Please check the various sign-up sheets in the narthex to see where you can help.

So that we may prepare enough food for dinner, please use the sign-up sheets on the tables in the narthex. A free-will offering will be collected.

We hope to see you there!

- Carol Penjuke
Christian Education

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Saint Matthew Christmas Pageant - Saturday, December 20, at 6:00 p.m.

We are very excited to announce that once again this year's Sunday School Christmas program will take place after the Hanging of the Greens dinner on Saturday, December 20, at 6:00 p.m. on the stage in Elbert Hall. This year's program, "Just a Little Christmas" by Sharon Kay Chatwell, is a play with music (both instrumental and vocal) and will display the awesome talents of our young people.

We encourage all students in the Sunday School to participate. There is room for everyone with opportunities for speaking, singing, or playing an instrument. Small group rehearsals are planned to take place on Sundays - either during Sunday School or before/after worship. However, the final dress rehearsal will take place at the church during the Hanging of the Greens at 3:30 p.m.. While the sanctuary is being decorated, the children will put the finishing touches on their performance on the big stage of Saint Matthew.

The program is being coordinated by Carol Penjuke, Christian Education Committee, and Pat McHugh, Musical Director, with assistant musical direction by Karen DiSanto and Chris DiSanto. Feel free to contact them with any questions, or if

you would like to volunteer to help with the production. We will definitely need some volunteers to help during the dress rehearsal, so let us know if you are available! Also, if you and/or your children play a musical instrument and want to join the ensemble, please contact Karen DiSanto or Pat McHugh.

Save the date - Saturday, December 20. Invite family and friends. Any and all are welcome to join in some or all of the festivities that day - decorating the church, sharing a meal, and of course watching the performance. This is sure to be one of the highlights of this joyous season! Don't miss it!

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Women of the ELCA Christmas Breakfast

Don't forget to reserve a place at the breakfast table for the Women of the ELCA's Advent/Christmas Breakfast on Saturday, December 6, 2014, at 8:30 a.m. in the Parish Education building. When you sign the reservation sheet on the table in the hallway, we would appreciate your prepayment of \$10.00. This is necessary in order that our caterer, Chef Rick Link, knows how many to plan for. Envelopes are on the table for your convenience. Please give your envelope to Janice Gardner or place it in the Women of the ELCA mailbox in the main office. Our speaker for the morning will be a representative from Migrant Workers Assistance in Kennett Square.

Come and enjoy good food, fellowship, a sing-along, a fun game and your first chance to wear your Christmas apparel. All are welcome! We look forward to seeing **you** on December 6 at 8:30 a.m. Deadline for reservations is Sunday, November 30, 2014.

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Christmas Musical

During the 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service, the choir will be presenting Lloyd Larson's new Christmas work "Were You There on That Christmas Night?" While none of us were physically present on that first Christmas night, we relive the beauty of that night because of God's timeless gift to us. Lloyd Larson blends the familiar with the new for a beautiful telling of this simply astounding story that touches all our lives and reminds us constantly of His love. We are blessed to have an amazingly talented choir who is putting their hearts and souls into this work. The choir is delighted to give you this gift in celebration of this holy night. Hope to see you there.

FYI - there is still time to join the choir for our Christmas Eve musical. If you can commit to coming to the next 2-3 rehearsals and also work at home with the rehearsal CDs, we would love to have you join us!

- Pat McHugh

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Advent Crafts for Children

Once again this year there will be children's craft kits available each week in Advent. The kits will be in the hallway each Sunday morning - November 30 and December 7, 14 and 21. Pick up a kit each week and work on it together with your child(ren.) It's a great family activity!

We thank Pat Daniels for ordering and putting together these kits.

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Pictorial Directory

Thank you to all the members of the congregation who signed up to have their pictures taken for our new church directory. We hope this will be a useful tool for all of us to get to know each other better. Thank you, too, to everyone who served as a hostess during the four days of picture taking. Your assistance really helped everything go smoothly. I especially want to thank Kathie Morgan and Carol Penjuke for being the best assistants I ever could have hoped for, and Janice Gardner, who helped remind me of a few things I forgot!

We still have other parts of the directory to design and more candid pictures to take, so it will not be until early 2015 until everything is finalized and submitted. I will update everyone when I have a better idea when we will be receiving our directories.

- Cheryl Morrell

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Children's Corner

Dear Children,

As you read this Children's Corner, the beautiful blue skies of October and the sparkling chilly weather of November are behind us - Columbus Day, Halloween, Veteran's Day, and Thanksgiving are now memories. Another piece of the Church Year is now here - Advent - meaning "the coming" of the Christ Child. Advent starts the last Sunday of November (November 30) and continues for three more Sundays. This is a very busy time for everyone as people are baking cookies, buying gifts, and decorating the house - our lives become very chaotic. I think a rest from this busy time is in order; and, although these fun preparations are necessary, let's carve some space in our schedules for a more thoughtful way of waiting for Jesus. We are blessed with four weeks to turn our busy lives into something meaningful. Think about the meaning of Advent, listen to the words of the Advent hymns (Come Thou Long Expected Jesus; Comfort, Comfort Ye My People; O Come, O Come Emmanuel) and look at the banner colors. Blue means hope - we wait in hope for the coming of the Savior (purple is sometimes used too.) As you journey through these next few weeks, here are some ideas you

might try to bring your heart back to the long-expected Jesus:

1. Make a simple Advent wreath lighting the candles (with an adult) as you say a thankful prayer.
2. Use an Advent calendar - each day write a prayer or a Bible verse.
3. Select a peaceful time and keep a journal (a thankful journal, a memory journal.)
4. Make dinner place mats showing how you can help others.
5. Design a chrismon (a round ornament that is embroidered - usually hung on a tree.)
6. Bake cookies with a friend to give to someone who needs to be cheered.
7. Make Christmas cards to send to the military.

Dear Parents,

Many of these ideas can be found in our children's library - check out the new location. While you are looking for any directions for the above items, the library has many wonderful stories about Advent and Christmas. Getting ready for Christmas can be very hectic, but time spent in reflection about "the grandest gift of all" will slow us down to a more contemplative pace.

- Sylvia Yost

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Library



All but the end of another year - hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving. Christmas is around the corner. Remember to keep Christ in Christmas. He is the reason we are here. A few reminders - the Children's Library is in the Christian Education building where the stage used to be. To all parents, there are some parenting

books in the regular Library on the outside wall. For those of you who are newer members, the Library is located beyond the Parlor. When taking out a book, there is a card in back of the book. Remove the card, put your name and date (including year,) then place the card in the clear index box which is next to the file cabinet. Please return book by 6 to 8 weeks or renew name and date on card. When finished with your book, place it in the basket under the small table.

This month's book is "A Treasury of Christmas Miracles" found on Shelf #242.3/KIN and is written by Karen Kingsbury. It is a collection of true stories about ordinary people whose lives are touched in the most extraordinary ways - a chance encounter that

changes everything . . . help that appears from nowhere . . . kindness when we least expect it. We've all experienced miracles in our lives. As we search for truth and joy during the Christmas season, events happen that we can't explain, perhaps allowing us to see the hand of God working in the world.

Merry Christmas everyone!

- Barbara Kinsey

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First Thursday Friends ("FTF")

Please join First Thursday Friends at Pho Street, 204 Baltimore Pike, Springfield, PA 19064. This Vietnamese food restaurant was a **big** hit with our group last year. The food is nothing like Chinese, is not spicy; and the staff is very helpful. Try it once and you will go back. Meet us on December 4 at 11:30. Everyone is welcome. Contact John Stefl at 610-544-2816 if you want more information or would like to share a ride.

- John Stefl

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Men's Breakfast

Our December Men's Breakfast meeting will be held at The Court Diner, 140 E. Baltimore Pike, Media, on Saturday, December 20, at 7:15 a.m. All men are invited to join us for morning devotions, a great speaker, an excellent breakfast and good fellowship. Please come and enjoy an excellent way to start the day.

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Thank You to Jeff and Kathie Morgan from the Worship and Music Committee

What was designed as a children's ministry turned out to be so much more over the years. It wasn't just the children who thoroughly enjoyed the wit and the antics of those special Dudley and Kathie moments. You could just see the adults sit back with grins on their faces and wait with anticipation to see what cleverness was about to be delivered.

Therein lies the problem with being so good at a particular ministry and making it look so easy and natural. We overlook the time and imagination needed to write those scripts, (not to mention being your own stage crew and sitting on a chair meant for a 2 year old!) and don't want to see it end.

So thank you, Jeff and Kathie, Dudley and the other miscellaneous cast of characters. We have been blessed to have you not only create this special ministry for us, but also to have continued it for 10 great years!

- Worship and Music Committee

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Saint Matthew Christian Nursery School



As the children and staff celebrate the holiday season together, we share the gift of friendship and love. The children will celebrate "Jesus' Birthday" with a Coloring Book and Crayon Pollyanna. Each child will enjoy the gift of giving as they exchange a coloring book and crayons. Our 2 day children will have their Christmas Program "A Magical Christmas" in the sanctuary on Tuesday, December 16, at 10:00 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Our 3 and 5 day children will have their Christmas Program "A Child's Christmas" on Wednesday, December 17, at 10:00 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Please come and join us as we celebrate the Holiday Season.

During the holiday season, the staff and I would like to wish all of you a wonderful Christmas with many blessings. Our school will reopen on January 5, 2015.

- Linda Maylie, Director

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Social Ministry

For those of you in the congregation who are purchasing pajama gifts for the children of Faith Immanuel Lutheran Church in East Lansdowne, please remember to bring your wrapped gift, **with the tag attached**, to the church library by **December 10**. This will give us plenty of time to deliver your gifts to the children before Christmas. As always, we thank you for your generosity.

- Cheryl Morrell

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Halloween Candy for Silver Springs

Thank you! Thank you to everyone who donated candy for Silver Springs - Martin Luther School. The response from everyone was wonderful. The ladies of the Women of the ELCA groups will make favors each month for the children to enjoy. We are grateful for your help.

- Nancy Regan

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Eagle Scout Project

Paul Schneider, a member of Covenant Methodist Church and Boy Scout Troop 503 here at Saint Matthew, invites the congregation to help him complete his Eagle Scout project. During the month of December, Paul will be collecting new and gently used winter outerwear to be given to Loaves and Fishes for those in need. You can help by donating coats, jackets, sweatshirts, hats, scarves, mittens, and gloves for all ages. A box to receive these donations will be in the church hallway. Any contributions you are able to make will be greatly appreciated and will help our neighbors stay warm this winter.

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It's Time to Order Poinsettias for Christmas



Orders for the lovely Christmas poinsettias that beautify our sanctuary each Christmas season may now be placed by signing up in the church hallway or calling the church office. The cost of a plant is \$10.00, and they may be picked up and taken home following the 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Orders may be placed until Sunday, December 14.

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Silver Springs Christmas Gifts

As we have done in years past, we will be collecting gifts for the children at Silver Springs. There are several ways you can support this project. There are lists from Silver Springs on the table in the hallway. There will also be envelopes for a donation. Also, there will be a bulletin board in the hallway soon with several special gifts the Christmas planners are hoping to get. There will be a box in the office where you can return your gifts - no wrapping necessary. The ladies of Women of the ELCA will be going to Silver Springs to wrap soon. We ask all gifts be placed in the box before December 10.

Thank you for your support of this special project.

- Nancy Regan

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Stewardship

Thank you to all of the hosts, leaders and participants for our 2015 stewardship cottage meetings! 2015 will be an exciting year as we work toward expanding our ministry at Saint Matthew. The events were a lot of fun and gave us a chance to make new and renewed connections with one another. If you have not filled out a card for your planned 2015 financial giving, we ask that you prayerfully consider what you can give as we make decisions about our ministry and budget. Thank you for all of your gifts of time, talent and treasure.

- Stewardship Committee

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Monthly Mailbag



Dear Saint Matthew Congregation,

We wish to extend sincere thanks to all who sent cards and notes after the passing of Bob's sister, Dot Lefever, in October. Thank you also for the church's flowers.

God Bless,
Muriel and Bob Wagner

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Vital Statistics

New Members: Mr. Vernon Spangrud
366 Westbourne Dr.
Broomall, PA 19008

Mr. and Mrs. Quintin Stotts (Lindsay)
600 Andrew Rd.
Springfield, PA 19064

Baptisms: Jocelyn Alene McCallum
Daughter of Jared and Katie McCallum
Born August 22, 2014
Baptized November 9, 2014

Logan Michael O'Brien
Son of Nathan and Laura O'Brien
Born September 5, 2014
Baptized November 9, 2014

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The Good Newsletter, a congregational newsletter, is published monthly, September through June by Saint Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church, 400 Lynbrooke Road, Springfield, Pennsylvania 19064-3599. Please direct all correspondence pertaining to this publication to the Editor, Dr. Carl E. Aronson, at the above address. The deadline for submitting copy is 12 noon on the 15th of each month.

