



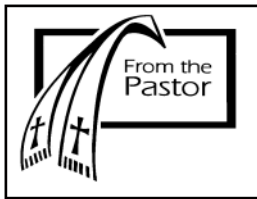
The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Volume 68, Number 11

December 2016

Internet Web Site: www.stmattspringfield.org



From Our Pastor

Connect
Care
eQuip
Cultivate

First things first...

The Gospel of Matthew is placed first in the order of books in the New Testament. Its placement at the beginning of the Christian Scriptures makes a good hinge with the end of the Hebrew Scriptures, which we often call the Old Testament. In this account of the life of Jesus the author continually points out how he sees Jesus bringing to completion the words of long ago. A frequent phrase in Matthew's Gospel is "this was to fulfill what the prophet said..." Matthew quotes the Hebrew Scriptures over 60 times in his telling of the story of Jesus Christ.

As we come to Advent we begin a new liturgical year. With each liturgical year, we begin walking through a different Gospel account: one year Matthew, the next Mark, and the last in the cycle is Luke. The Gospel of John is scattered throughout the three year cycle, and does not have a year of its own. This year, as you may surmise, we return to Matthew.

Matthew is unique in many ways. One is the way in which this Gospel ties Jesus to the fulfillment of prophecy, and related to this is the use of images showing Jesus to be a "new Moses." Another unique feature of Matthew's Gospel is his account of Jesus' birth.

We are most familiar with the story of Jesus' birth from Luke's Gospel: the angel appearing to Mary, the shepherds heading to Bethlehem to see the sight, the heavenly host singing "Glory to God in the Highest." We often hear this in movies, and it is the centerpiece of "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

In the Gospel according to Matthew Joseph takes center stage. An angel appears to Joseph in a dream, telling him the news and assuring him his wife has not been unfaithful. In this account we see parallels to Joseph the son of Israel, who also had visions and dreams for the sake of the people of God. In the birth story we see

connections to Egypt, and the way in which God brings his people "out from" danger and slavery and "into" a new promised land.

As we begin this new year, listen to the ways in which Matthew shares the story of Jesus. Look for the ways in which promises are fulfilled. Look for the ways in which God brings us into a new relationship with God and each other through Jesus. Look for the ways in which we are called into the journey from exile to home, from death to life. Look for the ways in which this Gospel can be a hinge between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures, and between the Christian Scriptures and your life today.

Wishing you joy in discovery,

Pr. Karl M. Richard

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The Vicar's View: "In very nature God"

Once December rolls around, I start trying to get myself into the holiday spirit, reflecting on all the typical joys of Christmas: the food, the eggnog, the Christmas tree lights, window shopping, romantic walks in the snow, and of course, thinking about ancient Christian heresies.

Docetism was a heresy which claimed that, even though he appeared to be, Jesus was not really a human being with a body. After all, he is God; how could he be a human being who is born, who suffers, and who dies like us? So, when Jesus was up on the cross, he wasn't actually suffering, since he didn't have a body like ours. While this heresy eventually got rooted out (at least officially), I often find myself tempted to forget that Jesus was once a flesh-and-blood creature just like us. I sometimes neglect the fact that Jesus got hungry and thirsty and dirty, that he most likely made a living with his hands before starting his public ministry.

This month, we celebrate the physical birth of our Lord and Savior in Bethlehem. Not as a fully-formed adult or a disembodied spirit, but as a human baby. Our

proclamations of Jesus' status as both fully human and fully God may be greeted with confusion, disbelief, or charges of blasphemy. People reacted the same to the apostles when they preached these aspects of the Gospel as they do now. But against the claims that Christianity just stole the idea of a god becoming man from the surrounding religions, or that it is below God to be physical or to live like a normal human being, we hold up again and again the love of the God who came to us in flesh and blood. We hold up Jesus, "who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; but made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness" (Philippians 2:6-7).

As much as this may seem foolish or like a stumbling block to faith in God, this belief is vital for our lives as Christians. We have been redeemed by God, saved by a man who was born, who walked and worked, ate and drank, and who suffered on a cross for all of humanity. Behind all the family gatherings and presents and food, this Christmas season is about a God who loved us enough to live amongst us and deal with our imperfections, doubts, and insecurities. And knowing this in our hearts is worth more than all the gifts in the world.

Vicar Daniel Smith

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Christian Education

Thanksgiving Food Drive: A big thank you for all the donations of nonperishable food items collected in November. We targeted items that would help make a Thanksgiving dinner special. Remember that people are hungry all year long. There is a large red can in the hallway for food donations. Items are accepted all year long for Loaves and Fishes, a food bank in Prospect Park.

Confirmation: Congratulations to the 12 young people who completed the confirmation program and renewed their baptism on All Saints Sunday, November 6, 2016. They were presented with new Bibles. A reception was held for them and their families. We would like to thank the members of Women of the ELCA for coordinating this reception. Our 12 confirmands are Jacob Baumann, Tyler Bennett, Jenna Cirillo, Tyler Engberg, Jordan Hale, Matthew Johnston, Shane Knoell, Ethan Kraft, Nora Larkin, Jack Psenicska, Tyler Scally and Ethan Scott.

Hanging of the Greens—December 17, 2016: Mark your calendars now and get ready to celebrate this special day at our church. The sanctuary will be transformed with trees, lights, holly, and bows in anticipation of the Christmas celebration. Christian fellowship is alive. A delicious chicken dinner will be served. Our Sunday School classes will present "The Backwards Christmas Pageant". Bring the entire family. Guests are always welcome.

2:30 to 4:30 p.m.: Decorating of the church and Christmas pageant rehearsal. Childcare will be available during this time period.

4:30 p.m.: Dinner

5:15 p.m.: Christmas Pageant

6:00 p.m.: Cookies and beverages

6:30 p.m.: Caroling in the sanctuary

Many hands are needed to make this event happen. Please check the various sign up sheets in the hallway to see where you can help.

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

Carol Penjuka

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Children's Corner

Dear Children,

Tonight as I peered out our living room window, I saw the most beautiful sunset--the sky was ablaze with shades of purple, orange, and red with a tinge of yellow: a beautiful entrance into the winter months. Yes, it is becoming colder and yet the sky still maintains that beautiful robin's egg blue! Certainly signs of a chilly December--winter coats, fluffy mittens, and of course, the anticipation of Christmas!! In our Lutheran tradition as well as many other Christian churches, the season of **Advent** begins four Sundays before Christmas Day and this time is used to prepare for the coming of our Lord. We can look at three meanings of the "coming"--the first happened about 2000 years ago when Jesus came into the world as a baby (as predicted in the Old Testament); the second happens in the present because Jesus wants to enter our lives **now**; and the third is in the future when Jesus comes into the world as **King**!!

Although there are many traditions regarding **Advent**--some people fast (Orthodox and Eastern Catholics); the liturgical churches use either one candle or an Advent Wreath with five candles; kids enjoy an Advent Calendar (the ones with 24 pieces of chocolate are really very nice) and worshipers sing Advent carols. When I was a little girl, we sang all the Christmas carols every Sunday starting at Thanksgiving, but Lutheran Churches sing carols specifically written for the "coming"--*People Look East, Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*, and one you will most likely recognize, *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*. Although it took me a while to become used to these carols--think of the words in each one as you sing--they tell a story.

As I get older, I think that the best way to prepare for the Coming of Our Lord is to think of ourselves in the present--as Jesus wants to enter our lives. How can we let Him in to share our thoughts and actions? He is always with us--at home, school, the basketball court, at a shopping mall, at a friend's house. Certainly shopping for presents, parties, writing cards, hanging decorations, baking cookies---these are all ways we do prepare for the season of Christmas---but letting Jesus into our hearts is perhaps the best preparation of all.

Dear Parents:

This season presents many ways to let Christ into our lives--Saint Matthew often has Christmas crafts for the children

--check the tables in the lobby; look for donation boxes for winter outer wear, toys for Silver Springs; scan the bulletin board in the hall for donations of pajamas. Make Advent more meaningful for your youngster as we put the Christ in Christmas!

Sylvia Yost

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Worship and Music Notes

Do you believe it is December already? The Worship and Music Committee has been busy planning the services for the four Sundays in Advent, for the three services on Christmas Eve, and for the service on Christmas morning followed by Lessons and Carols on January 1! Advent starts on November 27. On each of the four Sundays in Advent an additional candle will be lit in our beautiful Advent Wreath. Saturday, December 17, is the Hanging of the Greens and the Christmas Pageant.

On Christmas Eve we will have our traditional three Candlelight services in our beautifully decorated sanctuary at 5 p.m., 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. The 5 p.m. service includes a message geared for our youngest members (which is enjoyed by all ages) and the singing of a few Christmas carols, but has no communion. Communion is offered at both the 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. services and each service will include special music. Then on Christmas morning we will have one service at 10:15 a.m.

Please invite family and friends to come with you to the services offered throughout the month as it is ever so special celebrating the season with all of you!!

Pat McHugh

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Call for Musicians

It is not too late to be a part of the musical offerings for this Advent and Christmas season. Vocalists, instrumentalists, and bell ringers will all be busy this month and we would love to have you join us. The Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday, December 17, which is always a fun event. We will have special music at both the 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve services as well as on Christmas Day at 10:15 a.m. Contact Pat McHugh at patmchugh5@verizon.net or 610-952-8169 for more specifics and the rehearsal schedules.

Pat McHugh

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Silver Springs—Martin Luther School Christmas

Christmas is coming! The 72 children in the residential treatment program are in need of gifts. These children live at Silver Springs and have come from sad situations. Many of the children will be staying at the school for Christmas because there is no safe home for them to go to. Our hope is that we at Saint Matthew can help provide them with gifts to share on Christmas morning. We

have been provided with a Christmas letter and also several special news items that are on the easel in the hallway.

If you would take a label and return the gift to the box in the office unwrapped by December 6, the ladies of Women of the ELCA will deliver them to Silver Springs. Also, several of the ladies will be spending the day at Silver Springs wrapping all the gifts. Thank you for your willingness to help the special children in this season of giving. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Nancy Regan

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Family Ministries' Holiday Movie and Pizza Party

Family Ministries will be hosting a Holiday Movie and Pizza Party in Elbert Hall (downstairs), on Saturday, December 10, from 6-8 p.m. Bring your comfy clothes and any favorite blanket, pillows, and sleeping bags. See you then!

Melissa Lavery

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A Frost on the Pumpkin Date Saver

Formal preparations for the Souper Bowl of Caring, 2017, have not yet begun but please think ahead! The Super Bowl will be on Sunday, February 5, with Souper Bowl of Caring events the weekend and day before.

Natalie Rees Berry

natberry@rcn.com

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 3 and 5 day children will have their Christmas Program, "A Child's Christmas" on Monday, December 12, at 10:00 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Our 2 day children will have their Christmas Program, "A Magical Christmas" in the sanctuary on Tuesday, December 13, 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 re-open on January 2, 2017.

Linda M. Maylie, Director

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Men's Breakfast

The December Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, December 17, at 7:15 a.m. at The Court Diner, 140 E. Baltimore Ave., Media, PA 19063. 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.

It's Time to Order Poinsettias for Christmas



Orders for the lovely Christmas poinsettias that beautify our sanctuary each Christmas season may 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 taken home following the 10:15 a.m. Christmas Day service. Orders may be placed until Sunday, December 11.

500th Anniversary of the Reformation

We will be celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the 75th Anniversary of Saint Matthew Lutheran Church in 2017. Bishop Claire Burkat will be with us on Sunday, October 8, 2017; and there will be a luncheon and program at The Oaks Ballroom that day. If you would like to be part of the committee planning this event, please contact Nicole Smith or the church office.

Lessons from a Collie Dog

Working farm dog is a joy to behold. Not only is he in tune with the needs of his friend and master, but also the wiles of his charges—the sheep and the cows. My respect for a farm dog is immeasurable and therefore I must introduce my dear friend, Jack, a black and white Border Collie.

In the fields on my uncle's farm when it was time for milking, Jack the dog would go bounding out to fetch the cows and gently guide them to the milking shed. Fences never stopped him when he leaped joyfully to his duty. I marveled at the way he would fly towards a fence and, without changing stride, he turned his body at the last second to pass through between the wires.

I thought how cool that looked and endeavored to try this maneuver myself. I sprinted at top speed behind him and turned my body, just like he did, in full stride and BAM! My shoulders hit both wires as I tried like Jack to pass through. Ow! It hurt so much! I had learned the hard way that I was not built in the same form that Jack was. It was a painful lesson I remember to this day!

There are consequences in life that we encounter if we are not careful in thinking about our actions. I was most fortunate for this lesson while riding one day standing behind Unc on the tractor as we towed a trailer out to gather bales of hay. The trailer wheels had only steel rims as no tires were necessary on the grass fields. These rims cut into the soil

behind us as we lumbered over a dip in the field when suddenly I lost my balance and fell behind the tractor. Instantly, when I hit the ground, I rolled away as the rims came churning towards me. Unc was so shocked as he quickly halted the rig—he thought I was a goner! The lesson that I had learned from my friend Jack saved me from a terrible injury on that day.

On visiting the homeland several years ago, I wanted to see the farm again. I couldn't remember how to get there, so I stopped at the store to ask directions. In a small town everyone knows everybody and yes they knew where Auntie Lil and Uncle Norman once lived. Off I drive again to enjoy a place of my youth once more.

What greeted me as I came down the road was a sad disappointment. The lovely house and garden were no more. The fruit trees were gone. There had been a fire and the whole house went up in flames before the fire trucks could get there. The fields and fences and milking shed were still in place as I remembered. It had been raining and I took off my shoes and socks to walk on the wet grass and once again feel my roots of love.

The bond which was formed for me by my close family I feel as strongly today with them all now gone. Love never ceases when we pass on. We still feel it. It sustains those who are left behind in this beautiful world. Who would think this is all there is?

May His love join us together. We are never alone.

Tony Webb

First Thursday Friends

First Thursday Friends will gather on Thursday, December 1, at 11:30 a.m. at Carrabba's in Springfield Mall. For more information contact John Stefl.

January Newsletter Deadline

Articles for the January newsletter are due in the church office by **noon on Thursday, December 15.**

Social Ministry

Thank you to everyone who signed Christmas cards that are being sent to the men and women in local prisons. We are grateful that so many of you embraced this new project.

We also want to remind those members of our congregation who have taken tags and are purchasing Christmas pajamas for the children from Faith Immanuel that we are requesting that your gifts be put in the church library **with the tag attached by December 11.** This will give us time to deliver your gifts in time for their Christmas party. Please see Cheryl Morrell if you have any questions.

We wish all of you many blessings during this joyous season as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Cheryl Morrell

Library

Hello again. I trust you all made it through Thanksgiving not eating too much and falling asleep. Hope you all enjoyed being with family and friends giving thanks to the one who made this all possible. His name is Jesus.

Now we move on to the next holiday, which is the most special of all—Jesus is the reason for the season—Christmas. This month's book is *Faces at the Manger* by J. Barrie Shepherd, found on Shelf 263/SHE. *Faces at the Manger* is an imaginative and creative collection of poems, stories, and prayers from one of the great religious poets of our time. J. Barrie Shepherd describes the thoughts, feelings, questions and dreams of those who gathered around the manger a long time ago—Mary, Joseph, the animals, the shepherds, the innkeeper, and the Magi. Other “faces” include his daughter on an Advent New York day, an embarrassed dad in a Christmas pageant, a younger version of the author on Boxing Day, and the child in all of us.

O come let us adore him. The time is now—that time when we must be there. Simply be there and adore. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. God bless all of you.

Barbara Kinsey

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Women of the ELCA

An angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and said Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)

As we join with others in the hustle and bustle of preparing for Christmas may we thank God for the best gift, his Son, Jesus our Lord and Savior.

We invite men, women and children to breakfast:

**Saturday, December 3, at 8:30 a.m.
Parish Education Building
Vicar Dan Smith will be our speaker**

There is a sign-up sheet on the church hallway table. A free-will offering will be taken.

Other Women of the ELCA Events:

Dec. 10—LWR Quilting—10:30 a.m.—
Parish Education Building

The Ronald McDonald Quilting Group will not meet in December. They will resume on January 18.

This month we will collect for the Welcome Church the following items: cups, plates, bowls, plastic forks and spoons, and cookies (homemade are always welcome). Everyone has been so generous—thank you.

Joan Krauter

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Monthly Mailbag

Dear Pastor Richard and the Saint Matthew Congregation,

Thank you so much for the care package. It is important to remember the support I have through my family of the congregation, especially when it is easy to get lost in school work. I appreciate the thought and hope everyone has a wonderful All Hallows Day.

Sincerely,
Sarah Larkin

Dear Saint Matthew Family,

As I write this note, I am thinking of all the beautiful cards with such wonderful notes from so many of the Saint Matthew Family that we received following the loss of my mother and also the loss of my brother-in-law.

Thank you to everyone who came to our door with food and flowers to help us in the time of our sorrows.

As our granddaughter, Jenna, wrote in her confirmation essay how we were all comforted by the support our family received, we knew it was what made Saint Matthew so special.

Thank you to Pastor Karl for his visits with my mother and also his funeral service and his comforting presence. Thank you also to Vicar Daniel for our conversations.

The Saint Matthew Family is helping us through a difficult time, but we know that Mom is in a better place resting in the Lord.

Sincerely,
Nancy Regan and Family

Dear Saint Matthew Friends,

You are terrific friends to the boys and girls of Silver Springs—Martin Luther School! Thank you for the wonderful Halloween treats for the children. The treats you delivered were awesome and much appreciated! You helped to bring many smiles to little faces this Halloween!

We are very grateful for your caring partnership in our ministry. With your help, we are able to provide education, nurturing, and healing services to 2,400 children and families each year. Together we are helping children and families to reach for bright futures!

Sincerely,
Lynn Unipan
Development Director
Silver Springs-Martin Luther School

Dear Altar Guild,

The flowers were a lovely surprise and such a special treat for my birthday. They lasted a long time—as a matter of fact, I have a few of them tucked into a vase with some other flowers I received. The house is alive with beautiful flowers thanks to you!

Love,
Carol Jo

Dear Pastor Richard and Saint Matthew Family,

We want to take a moment to thank you for your prayers, visits and flowers during George's recent hospitalization.

God Bless,
Portia and family

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Vital Statistics

Confirmation: **Jacob Baumann**
Tyler Bennett
Jenna Cirillo
Tyler Engberg
Jordan Hale
Matthew Johnston
Shane Knoell
Ethan Kraft
Nora Larkin
Jack Psenicska
Tyler Scally
Ethan Scott
November 6, 2016

60th Wedding

Anniversary: **Robert and Eleanor Schaaf**
December 29, 2016

Deaths:

George Bahl
Died October 31, 2016
Funeral November 5, 2016

Mary Runkle
Died November 4, 2016
Funeral November 9, 2016

New Address:

Laura O'Brien
9 Carter Rd.
Thornton, PA 19373

Krystin Dukes
Annalise
951 Maple Ave.
Glenolden, PA 19036

Marc Grantland
Thomas
323 Ballymore Rd.
Springfield, PA 19064

Kyle Hendrickson
334 Gramercy Dr.
Clifton Heights, PA 19018

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Worship Responsibilities

Altar Guild **Coordinator: Jeff Wesley**
Dec. 4 Jeff Wesley, Dawn Liscom
Dec. 11 Marie Miller
Dec. 18 Pat McHugh, Margie Larkin

Dec. 24 7 p.m.—Chris DiSanto
10 p.m.—Pat McHugh, Beth Camagna
Dec. 25 Jeff Wesley, Maureen McCleary

Worship Assistants **Coordinator: John Kampmeyer**

Dec. 4 8:00 a.m. Vicar Daniel Smith
10:15 a.m. Vicar Daniel Smith
Dec. 11 8:00 a.m.
10:15 a.m. Joe Link
Dec. 18 8:00 a.m. Abby Richard
10:15 a.m. (No assistant needed)
Dec. 24 7:00 p.m. Kathie Morgan
10:00 p.m. Fran Gordon
Dec. 25 10:15 a.m. Jeff Wesley

Acolytes

Dec. 4 8:00 a.m. **Coordinator: Dawn von Berg**
10:15 a.m. Abby Kiely
Crucifer: Ethan Kraft, Rebecca Engberg
Matt DiSanto
Dec. 11 8:00 a.m. Tyler Bennett
10:15 a.m. Madison Wesley, Briana Burdette
Crucifer: Rebecca Engberg
Dec. 18 8:00 a.m. T. C. Cobb
10:15 a.m. Matt DiSanto, Ethan Kraft
Dec. 24 7:00 p.m. Stephen Scott
Torchbearers: Cole Bennett, Tyler Bennett
Bookbearer: Ethan Scott
Crucifer: Jacob Scott
10:00 p.m. To be announced
Torchbearers:
Bookbearer:
Crucifer:
Dec. 25 10:15 a.m. Abby Richard

Communion Servers

Dec. 4 8:00 a.m. **Coordinator: Joan Krauter**
10:15 a.m. Steve and Jean McGarvey
Chris and Karen DiSanto
Dec. 11 8:00 a.m. Kevin and Karen McCormick
10:15 a.m. Bea Toomey, Morrow Ziff
Dec. 18 8:00 a.m. Steve and Cheryl Morrell
10:15 a.m. Meredith Harris, Dan Lazaro,
Joe Link
Dec. 24 7:00 p.m. Dave and Joan Krauter
10:00 p.m. Janice Sadowski, Jeff Wesley
Dec. 25 10:15 a.m. Gail Hendrickson,
Vicar Daniel Smith

Lectors

Dec. 4 10:15 a.m. **Coordinator: Jeff Wesley**
Dec. 11 10:15 a.m. Heather Markland
Dec. 18 10:15 a.m. Maureen McCleary
Dec. 24 10:15 a.m. Carol Parsons
Dec. 24 7:00 p.m. Phil Kline
10:00 p.m. Linda Shipley
Dec. 25 10:15 a.m. Vicar Daniel Smith

Sunday Nursery

Dec. 4 10:15 a.m. **Coordinator: Janice Gardner**
Dec. 11 10:15 a.m. Mike and Melissa Lavery
Dec. 18 10:15 a.m. Sue and Brian Barber
Dec. 25 10:15 a.m. Kristen and Ivan Plachuta
Gary Pflieger

Greeters

Dec. 4 8:00 a.m. **Coordinator: Nicole Smith**
10:15 a.m. Dee and Doug Bratz
Phil and Sue Kline

Dec. 11	8:00 a.m.	John and Patti Stefl
	10:15 a.m.	Paula Toland, Carol Mueller
Dec. 18	8:00 a.m.	Diane Frattini, Barbara Kinsey
	10:15 a.m.	Rick and Joelle Link
Dec. 24	5:00 p.m.	Greg and Nicole Smith
	7:00 p.m.	Linda Shipley, Jim Snyder
	10:00 p.m.	Gus and Karen Franchi
Dec. 25	10:15 a.m.	Josh and Lori Martin



Coffee Connection

*Join us for Fellowship
Sunday, December 11, 2016*

**Refreshments and treats will be served
in the parlor after each service**

