



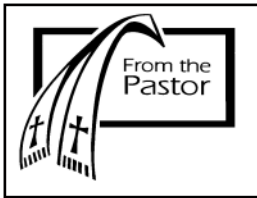
The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Volume 74, Number 11

December 2022

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From Our Pastor

Connect
Care
eQuip
Cultivate

Hope. This is a word that has come my way often in the past several weeks. In articles I have read, in programs I have seen, in conversations I have had, everywhere there seems to be a cry for, a desire for, hope.

Hope.

What comes to your mind when you see this word? Do you have any hope? Or does it seem there is none to be found? As we continue to come out of covid, as we witness the ongoing war on Ukraine, as we live with the inflation that comes as oil and grain supplies are restricted because of this war, as we continue with other struggles around the world, as we experience tension and unrest in our divided country, is there any room for hope? Where can we turn for a sense of hope?

We turn to so many places to find hope in a difficult world. We turn to family, until or unless our family is divided. We turn to our friends, until we feel we have no right to go to them again. We turn to distractions: movies, television, books, walks in the park, drives in the country, trips to the gym. Yet often these things do not fill our need; they do not give any lasting sense of hope.

We know we should turn to God. We know we should lean on Jesus. But sometimes even that feels lacking, as it does not always seem as though we are heard. Or we wish we could hear something back, but we do not have a tangible sense of the presence of Jesus. Yet, particularly as we enter Advent and anticipate Christmas, I want you to remember that *Jesus is* our hope.

Perhaps it helps to remember that, in scripture, "hope" is not the same as "wish." It is not the same as "I *hope* I get this for Christmas." It is rather a statement of confidence in what God has done, and is doing, for us in the person of Jesus. I have this hope, this confidence, this assurance, that God does love us, that God is active, that we are never alone, that there is indeed reason to hope.

The first letter attributed to Peter puts it this way: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great

mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." – 1 Peter 1:3-4.

Or as our liturgy says, "In sure and certain hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we commend to almighty God our beloved."

As we come to this holy season, we are reminded of Jesus coming to us. There is a sense in this season, even in the midst of the hustle and bustle, that there is something more, something beyond, some cause for hope. In some ways we sense hope whenever we see a child, and as we prepare to welcome the Christ Child, the hope we have is sure.

But this hope is sure not because of a baby. It is secure because this Baby of Bethlehem is also the Christ of the Cross. Keith and Krystin Getty are contemporary hymn writers, whose work we have sung. In one of their hymns, "Christ, Our Hope in Life and Death" they write the following:

*What is our hope in life and death?
Christ alone, Christ alone!
What is our only confidence?
That our souls to him belong.
Who holds our days within his hand?
What comes, apart from his command?
And what will keep us to the end?
The love of Christ, in which we stand.*

I do not just *wish* you a merry Christmas. I remind you of the hope that is ours in the Babe, the Christ, the Lord Jesus, our hope in life and death.

Pastor Karl Richard

Christian Education Updates

Please join us every Sunday at 9:00 am in the church for our opening program. We then go into our classes. We have classes for all ages. We are still in need of substitute teachers. Please let Julie know if you are interested.

On December 18 at the 10:15 service, we will be having a Christmas Show. If you are interested in being a part, please let Julie know. We have big and small parts.

Merry Christmas!

Julie Cirillo

Worship and Music Notes

Advent means arrival or coming and is a time of expectation and hope. Ideally Advent should be a time where Christians involve themselves in activities that remind them why we celebrate the birth of the Messiah. Saint Matthew has a full slate of activities and worship opportunities this Advent and Christmas season.

For the beginning of Advent, the Worship and Music Committee sent Advent devotion booklets to our members. In addition to these booklets, this year with the Christian Education Committee Advent devotional activity books were also sent to the families of young children. Hopefully these activity booklets will provide a tool for the families to create traditions and memories for this season.

During each of the services on the four Sundays in Advent (8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.) we will be lighting the candles in the Advent Wreath, lighting an additional candle each Sunday until Christmas Eve. On each of the first three Wednesdays during Advent we are bringing back the Holden Evening Prayer Service at 7:30 p.m. For anyone who hasn't experienced it, the Holden Evening Prayer Service is an extraordinarily beautiful and moving service.

Sunday, December 18th marks the fourth Sunday in Advent and will be a busy day. During the 10:15 a.m. service, our Sunday School children and youth will be presenting a Christmas play. Following that service, we will have a light luncheon at 11:30 and then the Hanging of the Greens. Many hands are needed as we will be decorating the church both inside and out.

On the last Wednesday during Advent (December 21st) we will hold a Candlelight Caroling, Cookies, and Cocoa event at 6:30 p.m. This event is scheduled to be held outside in our parking lot, but will be moved inside in the event of uncooperative weather. Uncooperative weather generally means rain or snow, but if it is bone-chilling cold like last year, we will be inside. Last year looked a bit like a drive in where innovative folks sat in their warm cars enjoying the carols.

Once again we will be asking for donations to sponsor poinsettias to help in the decoration of the church. This year we are requesting donations of \$10. Please sign up in the hallway or call the church office to sponsor and dedicate a poinsettia. There will also be a sign-up for cookies for the luncheon for the Hanging of the Greens and for the caroling.

Christmas Eve service schedule is as follows:

Candlelight Communion Service at 3:00 p.m.

Non-Eucharist service at 5:00 p.m. planned for our youngest and the young at heart

Candlelight Communion Service at 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25th will have one service at 10:15 a.m.

Lessons and Carols will be held at the 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. services on New Year's Day, Sunday, January 1st.

Blessings to you and your family as we move into the Advent season.

Pat McHugh

Sunday School Christmas Celebration

Join us December 9th at 6 p.m. for our Sunday School Christmas Celebration. Pollyanna, karaoke, punch and snacks for all. Sunday school children will exchange names during Sunday school on December 4th for Pollyanna to be exchanged on the night of the 9th. Gifts should cost about \$5.

Any questions, please reach out to Julie Cirillo at manoalstgrade@hotmail.com or Nicole Smith at nicolesmith6907@hotmail.com. Please RSVP on the sign-up sheet outside the office or on the link provided in Pastor's weekly email.

Nicole Smith

Advent and Christmas Schedule

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays in Advent

November 27, December 4, 11 and 18

Worship Services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

First 3 Wednesdays in Advent

November 30, December 7, December 14

Holden Evening Vespers Services at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 18th Hanging of the Greens at Noon

11:30 light lunch followed by decorating the church inside and outside

Wednesday, December 21st Christmas Caroling - 6:30 p.m.

Candlelight Christmas caroling, cookies, and cocoa outside in the parking lot

This event will be moved inside if necessary due to weather

Saturday, December 24th Christmas Eve Services

3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service with Communion

5:00 p.m. A service of story and song sharing the meaning of Christmas with children of all ages (no communion)

8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service with Communion and Candlelight

Sunday, December 25th Christmas Day

10:15 a.m. Christmas Worship Service

Sunday, January 1st Lessons and Carols

8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

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 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Orders may be placed until Monday, December 19.

Could you Bake Cookies?

Could you bake 2 dozen cookies for our Christmas Caroling event on December 21 at 6:30 p.m.? Please contact Pat McHugh or Janice if you are able to help out with this. Thank you!

From your Property Committee

Famco annual maintenance scheduled for December 27th. John Kampmeyer and I discussed our current system. Both of us agree that the system is fine for now, but we should enter in our future plans a complete update, as this system is over 20 years old. Many of these detectors are aging out and will need to be replaced in the near future. John also made a new book with the complete layout of all the detectors, both hard wired and battery operated.

Two benches for the front entrance of the church have been approved by Council and will be installed in the next few weeks.

We also have been approved to convert the old Vicar’s office into a prayer room.

The ongoing problem with lights in Elbert Hall is progressing. We will be meeting with more electricians and deciding our next steps. We are looking for someone to run wires for the TVs in the lobby. This will require being able to crawl in small places in our building. If you have some time and can help, please see Joe Regan.

Upcoming events will include taking down the tent, hanging of the greens, and caroling. We could use help and support.

Joe Regan

Fellowship Chairperson

WE ARE BACK! and have great plans for programs and events both for our congregation and our neighborhood. In order to accomplish this we need a new fellowship chairperson. If you know of anyone or would like to step up, please see Fran Gordon.

Men’s Breakfast

We have scheduled the December Men’s Breakfast for Saturday, December 17, at 7 a.m. at the Court Diner in Media. It’s a great way to start the day!

Financial Update

Honk if you love Jesus. Text and drive if you want to meet him.

	<u>October 2022</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Giving/Income	\$ 32,230.19	\$391,785.53
Expenses	<u>37,988.90</u>	<u>433,673.54</u>
Plus/Minus	(\$ 5,758.71)	(\$ 41,888.01)

Summary: In October we were in the red for \$5,800 while YTD we are in the negative for \$41,900. (Budgeted loss for the year is \$38,000). From a budget standpoint we remain behind on envelope giving by about \$16,800 for the year. As we start to end the year and head into Advent and Christmas, please be generous with your year-end giving for the support of your Church!

Giving Opportunities:

- As part of our outreach to all members, Saint Matthew provides the **Living Lutheran Magazine** to all members. The cost of this each year is about \$1,400. Would you be willing to support some or all of this cost with a special donation?
- We pay about \$125 each month for our offering envelopes – again, would you be willing to support some or all of this cost with a special donation?
- Year-end catch-up gifts, Christmas offerings and special donations are key to our financial health in December of each year. Thanks for being generous in 2022.

Finance Committee

Food Collection Report

Thanks to the amazing generosity of the people of Saint Matthew, we were able to deliver a car full of cans and boxes to the Media Food Bank on November 6th. We know our food gifts will help the families who depend on the food bank to feed their families this holiday season. We will be collecting food on December 4th from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. or please use the “soup can” to drop off your donations. Thank

you again for the support.

Nancy Regan

Lutheran Settlement House

On February 5, 2023 David Chiles, Executive Director of Lutheran Settlement House, will join us for a coffee hour at 9:00 a.m. and the 10:15 a.m. service to share all the wonderful things the settlement house does for the community.

Please join us for this meet and greet and learn about the ways you can get involved. Sponsored by the Social Ministry Committee. Any questions—contact Paula Estornell at pme259@verizon.net.

Paula Estornell

Social Ministry

The bulletin board with gift tags for the pajama gifts for the children of Faith Immanuel is in the hallway along with a signup sheet. When you take a tag, please SIGN YOUR NAME and PHONE NUMBER next to the name of the child on the sign-up sheet. Please place your WRAPPED gift WITH THE TAG ATTACHED in the Library by DECEMBER 12. Due to when Christmas falls this year, the party at Faith Immanuel will be earlier this year and we must complete the delivery earlier. For some of these children, it is the only gift that they receive, so if you can include a book or small toy, it is greatly appreciated.

Please contact me or any member of Social Ministry if you have questions.

We wish everyone a very enjoyable Christmas season.

Cheryl Morrell

January Newsletter Deadline

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

Gemma Halloween Candy Collection

Thank you for all the candy that was collected for the children in the residential treatment care at Gemma Services (formerly Silver Springs). The ladies of the Women of the ELCA circle will package 6-8 pieces into a small bag that will be delivered to the children as a special treat each month. The ladies fill the bags at every meeting eight or nine times each year for seventy children. Your candy donations really go a long way to help us fill those bags for the children.

Nancy Regan

Everything But The Turkey

To all the members who helped us fill the bags for the “Everything But The Turkey” project, we owe a big thank you. With the help from so many we were able to deliver twelve complete dinners to Gemma Services who will deliver them to the families who are part of the ongoing programs. A special thank you to Nicole Smith who was responsible for two dinners from support from the Girl Scouts and Soccer Team. Thank you to all the families who made donations.

Nancy Regan

Gemma Services Christmas Gifts

Christmas will soon be here, and the children of Gemma Services will be looking for Christmas gifts. As we have done for many years, we have a list of the items that we can help supply to make the children's Christmas a special one. The following items can be purchased and placed unwrapped in the box marked Gemma Services in the hallway before December 4th. This year the ladies of the Women of the ELCA circle will be able to do the Christmas wrapping day at Gemma on Wednesday, December 14. Should any other ladies want to join us for a fun morning please reach out to me [610-608-3314].

- Crayola art sets
- Sketchbooks (non-spiral bound)
- Remote control cars/vehicles
- Lego sets
- Gel pen sets (with 25+ pens)
- Squishmallow stuffed animals (small and medium sizes)
- Nike athletic socks (adult sizes for boys and girls)
- Rubik's cubes
- Snap-together car model kits (please none that require glue or paint)
- Barbie Dolls (especially non-Caucasian dolls)

Thank you for your support of this project that we have been a part of for so many years.

Nancy Regan

Children's Corner

Dear Children,

DAH—we are now in the Season of Advent and soon the Big Day will be upon us. I am imagining that you and your family are busy shopping, wrapping gifts, baking cookies, and decorating the house. It certainly is a fun time. Here it comes!!—"Back in the Day"—yes revered moments of "yesteryear" have made me think of my own childhood and the customs of the day which I would like to share with you. As I have mentioned before, I was raised in the Baptist Church in a small town south of Buffalo and the winters were ICY AND COLD!! I don't remember being chilled because we always dressed for those icy winters and hot chocolate was always available. One of my favorite memories was Christmas caroling - we kids all climbed aboard a huge wagon pulled by someone's truck and ventured out into the starry sky to sing carols to our shut-ins. The president of our Youth Fellowship played the ukulele and we even managed some harmony. At most of the homes, the wagon was parked outside, but at one of the homes we all trudged inside where a lovely German lady (almost 100) sang to us. She always sang "Silent Night" in German and she always had tears streaming down her face as she sang. Although I always thought she was sad because she missed her family and homeland, I did not realize the true meaning of her tears until years later. You see, I am a bit of a history buff (especially WWII) and never thought of the horrible conditions in Germany - my guess being, that this sweet lady was remembering this country that she once loved with all the beautiful music and culture that was silenced during the War. Her favorite carol was "Silent Night" and I will tell you the history of this much-loved carol.

This beloved carol was first heard over 200 years ago as it was sung by Austrian villagers who belonged to Saint Nicholas Church. The idea for this hymn came from a priest, Joseph Mohr, who was taking a walk one cold and snowy night after a

brutal war in Europe. As he walked the streets of the little village he noticed the solemnity as he gazed at the stars—as he reveled in the peaceful evening, he composed the words to "Silent Night." The music was written by Frantz Gruber and the two sang it accompanied by Frantz on the guitar. An organ-builder took a copy of this song to his home village and spread this glorious hymn to two families of folk singers - thus this famous carol was born and has been translated into 300 languages.

Dear Parents,

When I was growing up, we sang Christmas carols starting right after Thanksgiving but, of course, many churches wait until Advent or Christmas Eve. Regardless, one might be motivated to find out different holiday traditions from your friends and neighbors of various faiths. Many books are available to tell legends and true stories of the birth of the Christ Child. The story is found, of course, in the Gospels—however which Gospel does not mention the birth, but rather talks of the ministry of Jesus? Look at the birth stories in Matthew and Luke—how are they different?

Sylvia Yost

Nursery School

Saint Matthew Christian Nursery School's school year is underway, full steam ahead! We provide high quality early childhood education in a Christian environment that reflects the attitude of Christ to "love as I have loved you," with an exceptional developmentally appropriate academic curriculum delivered by our highly qualified teachers. We have policies, procedures and protocols in place to ensure the health and safety of all our families, students and staff. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please contact the Nursery School's office at 610-543-5589 or visit our website www.stmattscns.org. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Warmly,

Ana Fischer, Executive Director

Women of the ELCA

Gemma Services: We would like to thank everyone for the Halloween candy contributions. With the candy donations, we are able to make favors for the resident children at the Martin Luther Silver Springs School every month. We are also collecting gifts for the children in this residential program for Christmas. On the easel near the elevator are some suggested items the children like to receive. If you are able, we encourage you to make a donation. On December 14, a group of ladies will travel to "Silver Springs" to help wrap Christmas presents for the children. Please contact Nancy Regan if you would like to go or have any questions about any of these programs.

December Breakfast: **All members** of Saint Matthew are invited to a breakfast on December 3, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. in Elbert Hall. We promise you a hearty breakfast. Our guest speaker will be Lorraine Martinez from Chester County Migrant Ministry. In the spring Women of the ELCA assembled health kits for this organization and in the fall our church assembled more kits for their use to kick off the Sunday School year. Lorraine will share more about this ministry and their various programs. A free-will offering will be received to benefit this ministry.

During December, we do not hold any Circle or Board meetings. We hope everyone has a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you in 2023!

Blessings,
Carol Penjoke

Vital Statistics

Baptism:

Addison Lynn Wueschinski
Daughter of Scott Wueschinski
and Sarah Maurer
Born: January 28, 2016
Baptized: November 13, 2022

Monthly Mailbag

Dear Saint Matthew Friends,

We are very grateful for your continued friendship and generosity to Gemma Services (formed by the merger of Silver Springs-Martin Luther School and the Village)! Thank you for your wonderful donation of treat bags for the children served by our Residential Treatment Program and 12 “Everything but the Turkey” Thanksgiving bags for families we serve in our Community Based Programs (received on October 26 and November 3, 2022). The boys and girls were thrilled to receive the treat bags while Trick or Treating around campus on Halloween and the Thanksgiving meals will be an incredible help to so many families in need. Your support helps us continue to provide vital behavioral health, prevention, child welfare, and educational services for at-risk youth and families.

With the help of friends like all of you, Gemma is continuing to provide crucial programs for vulnerable youth and families who are struggling. Our dedicated teams are working tirelessly to help youth and families to heal from traumas, manage mental health challenges, and navigate these challenging times. As you may know, when the pandemic began, we shifted to provide many of our services remotely via Telehealth and online platforms. We have now transitioned many programs back to in-person with enhanced virus protection and prevention protocols, while we continue to provide



services virtually as needed.

We are especially grateful for your ongoing partnership during these recent times of unprecedented challenge for those we serve, for our communities, and for our organization. Your support truly matters! On behalf of all at Gemma, thank you!

Sincerely,
Amanda Bryant, Senior Development Officer
Gemma Services

Dear Nancy,

We are grateful for Saint Matthew’s continued support of Gemma Services. We have received and greatly appreciate your kind donation of small treat bags for the children in the Residential Program. These will make the perfect fall treats and are sure to make the boys and girls smile!

We are especially grateful for your ongoing partnership during these recent times of unprecedented challenge for those we serve, for our communities, and for our organization. Your support truly matters! On behalf of all at Gemma, thank you and best wishes!

Sincerely,
Amanda Bryant, Senior Development Officer
Gemma Services

Dear Friends,

My most heartfelt appreciation to Pastor Karl for his numerous hospital visits during the illness of my husband, Dan Beggarly. Thank you very much also for the many cards and telephone calls received from members of the congregation and especially the Sarah Circle group during our recent bereavement. So grateful for all the love, support and prayers from our Saint Matthew family.

Lily Beggarly

Worship Responsibilities

We will not schedule these responsibilities at this time. We will ask people to serve each week as needed.



M & M Cookie Mix and Cocoa Brownie Mix in a jar For Sale \$10 each

**The youth of Saint Matthew are selling
mason jar mixes for \$10 each.
The proceeds will benefit the
youth of Saint Matthew.**

**The jars will be available for purchase
starting on November 20.**

**Any questions, please contact
Julie Cirillo manoa1stgrade@hotmail.com**



Join us December 9th at 6 p.m.
for our **Sunday School Christmas Celebration.**
Pollyanna, karaoke, punch and snacks for all.

Sunday school children will exchange names
during Sunday school on December 4th
for Pollyanna to be exchanged on the night of the 9th.
Gifts should cost about \$5.

Any questions please reach out to
Julie Cirillo at manoa1stgrade@hotmail.com
or Nicole Smith at nicolesmith6907@hotmail.com.

Please RSVP on the signup sheet outside the office
or on the link provided in Pastor's weekly email.