



The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Volume 77, Number 11

December 2025

Internet Web Site: stmattspringfield.org



From Our Pastor

Connect
Care
eQuip
Cultivate

A certain radio station has already begun their nonstop Christmas music playlist for the rest of the year. Each year they have a Top 100 Christmas favorites list. What is your favorite Christmas song? There are so many from which to choose. There are secular songs about reindeer and snowmen. There are songs about firesides and loved ones. There are dance songs and humorous songs. There are religious songs, some upbeat like Joy to the World, some reflective like Silent Night.

May I suggest a “sleeper song” in the countdown? One that will not likely ever make the radio countdown, nor would it make most of our playlists. It is a song that is in the “Communion” section of the hymnal, and so it does not hit most people’s radar when we shout out our Christmas favorites. I am suggesting for your consideration, “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence.”

This song is in a minor key, and so it is more reflective than jubilant in tone. But its call to recognize the awe of being in the presence of Jesus, along with its reminder that, while Jesus is our friend he is also the Almighty God, gives a depth of perspective to the celebration that I sometimes do not recognize in the more joyful and more playful songs of the season. Its reminder that the God of all creation has come near, and continues to come near to us in the Eucharist, is a reminder of both the transcendence and the imminence of God.

Tradition holds that this song has its origin in the “Liturgy of St. James,” an ancient liturgy believed to have roots in the Jerusalem ministry of the Apostle James the Just, half-brother of Jesus. It is based in part on Habakkuk 2:20, where we read, “The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence.” We cannot know this, but imagine if we are singing words that can trace back to Jesus’ own brother James and the congregation of the faithful he gathered in Jerusalem!

I trust you are familiar with the tune. The version of the song we have was composed by an Anglican minister and scholar, Gerard Moutrie, in 1859. Here are the words for your reflection:

*Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand,
Ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descending, comes our homage to demand.*

*King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords in human vesture, in the body and the blood,
he will give to all the faithful his own self for heav’nly food.*

*Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way;
as the Light of light, descending from the realms of endless day,
comes, the pow’rs of hell to vanquish, as the darkness clears away.*

*At his feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry:
“Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia, Lord Most High!”*

Text: Liturgy of St. James; tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1829-1885, alt.

May the wonder and the awe of the incarnate God be with you in this Advent and Christmas season.

Pr. Karl M. Richard

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Advent and Christmas Schedule

Sundays in Advent

November 30, December 7, 14, and 21

Worship Services at 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Saturday Morning Breakfast

December 20 at 7 a.m. at the Court Diner in Media—the monthly men’s breakfast.

Saturday, December 20th—Hanging of the Greens

9:00 a.m. Decorating begins inside and outside.

12:00 p.m. Lunch in Elbert Hall.

1:00 p.m. Caroling in the sanctuary.

Plan to spend the day or pop in and out as your schedule permits.

Christmas Eve Services

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

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

Sunday, December 28th—Lessons and Carols

Services at 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

No Sunday School this day

News from your Property Committee

At the end of October through early November, we did not see any major problems or improvements, (thank goodness). We have changed all the batteries in our CO2 monitors. One will be replaced, and one will be added. Our water alert monitors batteries were replaced. These water alert monitors are placed on the floor next to the water heaters and sound an alarm when detecting water. The remaining three original lights in the choir room were replaced.

One of our original wireless microphones has stopped working and should be replaced soon. Then at the end of November we will be lowering our chandeliers and cleaning for the holidays.

Joe Regan

January Newsletter Deadline

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

Christian Education Update

Sunday school is in full swing. We have classes for the little ones five and under in the nursery school room with Jenna Cirillo, Barb McClintock and Jen Conrad. We have lower elementary classes with Kristen Plachuta. Then we have the upper elementary with Dave Russell. Pastor Leslie is in the youth room with the 7th and 8th grade. Will Toland and Nicole Smith are teaching the high schoolers in the prayer room. Come join us!

Julie Cirillo

Christmas Turkeys

If you receive a free turkey that you will not be using for Christmas and would like to donate it, please let us know. All turkeys received will go to needy families.

It's time to Order Christmas Poinsettias

Orders for the lovely red 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 \$12.00, and they may be taken home following the 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Orders may be placed until Wednesday, December 17.

Beds for Kids

We continue to collect items for the Beds For Kids program. We collect new and gently used bedding for children who need a bed to sleep in. Beds For Kids provides a bed and frame, sheets, blankets, a spread, and a new pillow for these children in need. Thank you to all who support the program.

Nancy Regan

Youth Group

The youth are selling Mason Jar Mixes as a fundraiser. They are \$15 each. We have brownies mix and cookie mix. They will be selling in between the services. If you need delivery, please let us know. A very special thank you to all of you who helped with the ingredients.

Calling all youth, Nicole Smith and Julie Cirillo are looking for ideas for fun events. If you have any ideas, contact us.

Julie Cirillo

Welcome Church

The cold winter weather is coming. The homeless will need socks and gloves to keep them warm, as well as coffee and toiletries. Please bring these things to the church. There is a box under the hallway table for your donations.

Joan Krauter

Financial Update

Heavenly Father, As we look ahead with purpose, may we be guided by wisdom in every decision we make. Let our resources be managed with integrity and our plans be grounded in clarity. May this season remind us of the blessings we share and the responsibility we hold in serving our church community. Grant us steadiness and hope as we prepare for a new year of growth and opportunity. Amen.

	<u>Sept. 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Giving/Income	\$ 29,242	\$ 446,301.
Expenses	<u>45,294.</u>	<u>444,616.</u>
Plus/Minus	(\$ 16,052)	\$ 1,685.

Summary: September closed with a deficit; however, year-to-date we remain positive. Compared to the projected year-to-date budget deficit, we are performing better than expected. Monthly expenses were consistent with expectations, and year-to-date expenses remain closely aligned with the budget. No unusual or unexpected expenses were noted.

Envelope/General Giving: While envelope giving for the month was lighter at \$21,400, overall income for the year continues to trend ahead of budget. Your continued support truly strengthens our faith community.

Giving Opportunities: As we move into a new month of worship and service, we invite you to consider the many ways your generosity can strengthen our ministry. Each gift—large or small—helps sustain the programs, outreach efforts, and daily work that allow our church to serve with purpose and compassion. Your support ensures we can continue meeting the needs of our congregation and our community. Thank you for being a vital part of this shared mission and for giving in ways that uplift and inspire.

Roof Fund Pledges: Please continue submitting your Roof Fund pledges. Meeting your commitments is important, as it will allow us to restore our endowment and support the

ongoing strength of our church. Your follow-through directly contributes to our mission and the financial health of our congregation. Thank you for your faithful generosity—together, we are building a secure foundation for the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Cunningham and
Rebecca DeSantis

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Children's Corner



Advent is a special time in the church year when we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The word *Advent* means “coming.” For four Sundays, we prepare our hearts with hope, peace, joy, and love.



The Four Advent Candles

Week 1: HOPE

We light the first candle to remind us that Jesus is our hope.

Try this at home: Think of one thing you hope for this Christmas season—not a gift, but something for your heart.

Week 2: PEACE

The second candle reminds us that Jesus brings peace to the world.

Activity: Draw a picture of a peaceful place where you feel close to God.

Week 3: JOY (The *pink* candle!)

This special candle celebrates the joy that Jesus brings.

Challenge: Do something this week that makes someone else smile!

Week 4: LOVE

The last candle reminds us that God loved the world so much, He sent Jesus.

Question to think about: How can you show God's love to someone in your family?



Advent Activities for Kids

- **Make your own Advent wreath** using paper, crayons, and four paper candles.
- **Kindness Countdown:** Every day until Christmas, do one kind thing!
- **Nativity Seek-and-Find:** Hide a small paper star at home each day and have kids find it.



Advent Prayer for Kids

Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus. Help us prepare our hearts with hope, peace, joy, and love. Amen.

Sharon Gibson

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Food Collection

Our next food collection will be on Sunday, December 7. As we know, there is a great need for food for many families in our area. Thank you everyone who supports

this project. We have been able to deliver many packages of food to the Media Food Bank, who are always glad to see us. We can also deliver paper bags for the food and plastic bags they will recycle into benches. Your support means a lot to many families.

Nancy Regan

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Gemma Services

Thank you to all the Saint Matthew members who supported the Everything But The Turkey food drive. We were able to collect, pack, and deliver 11 complete meals to Gemma Services, who delivered the meals to families in need.

Now we are collecting all kinds of toys to be wrapped by some of the ladies from Saint Matthew's Circle and given to the children for Christmas. There are gift ideas available on the easel next to the elevator. All unwrapped gifts need to be in the box in the office by December 7.

Thank you for all the candy that was donated after Halloween. We received several bags of candy that the ladies in circle will pack into small bags every month to be given to the children in the residential treatment at Gemma Services. We will fill a small bag with 7 or 8 pieces of candy to enjoy every month.

Nancy Regan

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Social Ministry

Just a reminder that all Christmas pajama gifts for the children of Faith Immanuel are due IN THE PARLOR by DECEMBER 14. Please bring your gifts WRAPPED WITH THE TAG ATTACHED. The gifts will be delivered in time for the children's Christmas party.

Any questions, please contact Dawn Liscom, Marge Kobasa, or myself.

Wishing all of you a joyous Christmas season!

Cheryl Morrell

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Nursery School

November was a month filled with learning, love, and gratitude! Our children spent time exploring what it means to be *thankful* — for our families, our friends, and all the blessings God gives us each day. Through stories, songs, crafts, and prayer, we celebrated the spirit of thankfulness together.

The Saint Matthew Christian Nursery School community truly showed up this month — sharing kindness, lending helping hands, and supporting one another in wonderful ways. We are so grateful for our families and staff who make our school a warm, faith-filled place to grow and learn.

As we reflected on the many blessings in our lives, we were reminded of the words from **1 Thessalonians 5:18:**

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

As we look ahead to December, we carry hearts full of

gratitude and joy as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

We currently have room available! If you or someone you know is interested in joining our school family, please call **Jenny Redding at 610-543-5589** for more information.

Jenny Redding
Nursery School Director

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Vital Statistics

Transfer: **Gina and Anastacia Milana**
Good Shepherd Anglican Church
Cornelius, NC

65th Wedding Anniversary Carl and Marjorie Aronson
December 17, 2025

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Monthly Mailbag

Dear Saint Matt's Family,

Thank you so much for the farewell blessings and cake/coffee time. It was very touching and meant a great deal to us. We are going to miss everyone and hope that our new church family is even half as awesome as all of you. Saint Matt's has been an important part of our lives for lots of years. We've made friendships that will last a lifetime. I'm sure we will pop in for a visit in the years to come.

Thanks again, Love & God Bless,
Gina & Doug Milana (& Anastacia)

Dear Saint Matthew Family,

Thank you for all your support, cards and prayers about Joe's mom. It was a difficult time for us and we appreciate all your support. We know that she is in heaven with her husband.

Love
Joe, Julie, Jenna and Joey Cirillo

Dear Lutheran Church Women of Saint Matthew,

Amount Received: \$25.00

Gift Purpose: United Lutheran Seminary Fund

As a new academic year begins at United Lutheran Seminary, I want to thank you – not just for supporting this mission, but for being part of it.

You're not simply helping form future church leaders – you are forming them. When a student steps into the classroom with curiosity and conviction, when they wrestle with Scripture, when they preach their first sermon or comfort someone in crisis: You are right there with them. You are raising leaders for the church. You are teaching theology. You are sustaining a community of faith, courage and hope.

At ULS, we are deeply rooted in the Lutheran tradition, guided by the Spirit's call to be bold, compassionate, and engaged. Our students come from many backgrounds and traditions, but they are united in a desire to serve – and they carry your influence with them. Every time a student answers a call they weren't sure they could fulfill, every time they lead worship with steady hands or bring a word of hope to someone on the margins, you are there. Your generosity becomes books on their desks, mentors by their side, and moments of clarity that shape their call. You may never meet them, but know you are part of their story – and they will carry your faithfulness into the congregations, hospitals, chaplaincies, and communities they serve.

If there's ever a way we can support you, please reach out at advancement@uls.edu. We also invite you to stay connected through our Kindling Faith continuing education programs: uls.edu/kindlingfaith.

With sincere gratitude,
Mr. Conor Brooks, CFRE
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

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**The youth of Saint Matthew
are selling
mason jar mixes.**

**They are wonderful Christmas gifts.
The proceeds will benefit the youth of
Saint Matthew.**



**The jars are available
for purchase now.
Jars will cost \$15.00 each.**

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

