



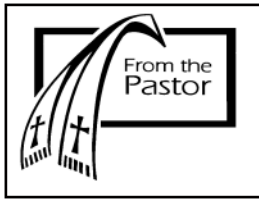
The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Volume 77, Number 2

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Internet Web Site: www.stmattspringfield.org



From Our Pastor

Connect
Care
Equip
Cultivate

“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.”
– Luke 16:10

In our relationships, faithfulness is key. We know this to be the case. In this month when we celebrate Valentine’s Day, in which those who do not have a significant other might hope for one, and when people who do have a significant other are encouraged to re-affirm their affection for their beloved, it becomes a time in which we are reminded how faithfulness is the basis and ground of such a loving and longed for relationship. If one is found faithless in small things, it is difficult to trust that person with the truly important things of our lives and of our hearts. When faith is broken, the relationship is also. When faith is gone, the relationship typically ends.

As Christians we are called to be faithful to God and faithful to our neighbors, following the example of the One whose name we bear. This is true in our most personal relationships – with family and significant others. But this is also true in all our relationships – even with neighbors we do not know, or do not like. In Christ we are called to be faithful in our relationships with them, even when they are faithless to us. This is not a call to be a doormat. This is not a call to be a fool. It is a call to act with care and concern for the well-being of others, just as Jesus is concerned for their well-being. We are called to live with integrity, even in a world that does not always value integrity.

The Church is called to be the embodiment of Jesus. We are often called “the hands and feet” of Christ. As such, we are called to care for those that the world overlooks. I am remembering the story of the Good Samaritan, who cared for the man set upon by robbers, even though the man who was hurt (a Jew) would ordinarily have no regard for the man who gave him aid (a Samaritan). At the end of this story Jesus asked, “Who acted like a neighbor to the one who was harmed? Go, and do likewise.” I am remembering the story of the rich man who walked over the poor, diseased man named Lazarus, with no regard for the condition of this, his neighbor. In this story, it does not go well for the rich man, as his reward when he dies is not paradise, but torment, because he did not honor the call to Love God with one’s whole heart and Love one’s Neighbor as

oneself. I am remembering the many times the Scriptures call the faithful to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the widow and orphan in their distress, and protect the foreigner who lives in your neighborhood.

In our relationships, faithfulness is key. Regardless of how the world acts, we are called to act with integrity. Regardless of the faithful-, or faithless-ness of others, Christians are called to be faithful in our love of God, and love of neighbor. It can be hard, but faithfulness is what makes true relationships possible. Being faithful in little demonstrates we can be faithful in much.

May you live as faithful servants of Jesus, even in a faithless world, so that the Love of Jesus may be made known.

Pastor Karl M. Richard

Epiphany Bible Study

During these weeks of Epiphany, and before Ash Wednesday, we are continuing with Bible Study each Wednesday at 12:00 and 8:00 p.m. As usual, we are meeting in the parlor, or via Zoom. I am calling this session "Jesus, the Early Years", and we are looking at the small segments of Jesus' life before his baptism and the beginning of his public ministry. These stories of his origins and early growth are not often considered in depth, as we move from the Manger to his Baptism in a matter of one or two weeks in the Church year. We will be covering segments from the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke. Join us as we continue to look at the backstory of Jesus and his life.

Pastor Karl M. Richard

Altar Guild

Altar Guild needs your help. While we have a handful of very faithful volunteers helping with the set up and clean up for Sunday services (and I am ever grateful for your dedication), more and more we are finding that it is down to one person and because we are not using a schedule we never know who or how many volunteers to expect. So we want to get back to scheduling our volunteers. Altar Guild duties have simplified greatly from the past and consist of: (1) setting up for the 8:00 a.m. Sunday morning service either early on Sunday or on Saturday, (2) cleaning up after the 8:00 a.m. service and resetting for the 9:30 service, and (3) cleaning up after the 9:30 service. Setting up involves setting up for communion, and cleaning up means doing dishes and occasionally taking home linens to wash. I am looking to

schedule volunteers through April (Easter). Hoping the current volunteers will continue as well as those who don't know from week to week if they can attend (extra hands are always welcome)! Please let me know if I can put you on the schedule. Many thanks!

Pat McHugh

Christian Education Update

During the Advent Season, the Sunday School Families collected money for Good Gifts. We collected \$234.66 to help families. We decided to purchase one irrigation system, two water filters, a goat and two chicks. Thank you for all your support with this project!

Please save the date—along with Fellowship and Christian Education, we are going to have a nighttime Easter Egg Hunt. It will be on Friday, April 11, at 6 p.m. We will be spreading the eggs on the front lawn. We need small individual-wrapped candy. Please no nuts. Thank you for helping. If you have any questions, please reach out to Julie.

Also save the date for Vacation Bible School, July 28th-August 1 from 9-11:30 a.m. All are welcome!! Please see Julie with any questions at manoal1stgrade@hotmail.com.

Julie Cirillo

News from Your Property Committee

In the closing days of December and early January, the Fire Alarm system was checked and new batteries were installed where needed. Our water alert alarms for our water heaters, (there are seven in our church), were replaced. New batteries were replaced in all six of our carbon monoxide alerts. Our annual water back flow valve was checked and approved.

We had two ice and snow events. On December 20th and 21st, we had a light snow and ice. And on the 24th, ice and light snow came again. Our landscaper salted twice and shoveled as need on both events.

Hanging of the Greens was on December 21st. All went well, and we had the church, parlor and outside done in record time. We had a good lunch, a great pageant, and sang some carols—all done by early afternoon.

Joe Regan

Financial Update

Heavenly Father, we give thanks to God for the faithful stewardship of our congregation throughout this fiscal year. May the blessings of God continue to flow through our offerings, enabling us to fulfill our mission and serve our community in Jesus' name. Amen.

	<u>Dec. 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Giving/Income	\$ 43,310.	\$ 528,544.
Expenses	<u>46,598.</u>	<u>553,851.</u>
Plus/Minus	\$ (3,288.)	\$ (25,307.)

Summary: For December we finished in the negative almost \$3,300. For 2024 we ended in the negative of over \$25,000. Our budgeted loss for the year was a little over \$23,000.

Additional Cost to Budget: We spent \$8,300 for the replacement of the control box for the Elevator Sump Pump in December.

Envelope/General Giving: We ended with December giving of \$35,409, higher than budgeted. Although, Year to date our giving was just over \$342,000 we fell short by \$9,000 of budgeted amount for the year.

Giving Opportunities: Please remember to submit your pledge cards for the General Campaign Fund as well as continuing to submit your Look up, Trust God pledges. Let's start 2025 strong!

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Cunningham and
Rebecca DeSantis

Social Ministry

Beginning in March during Lent, through Easter, Social Ministry will be collecting donations of individually wrapped breakfast bars for The Welcome Church. There will be a bin in the hallway for your gifts. Thank you, in advance, for remembering those in need.

Cheryl Morrell

Fellowship Committee News

We will be having a luncheon before Lent season begins. We hope you can join us. More information will be coming soon.

Fellowship along with the Christian Education Committee will be having an Easter Egg Hunt on Friday, April 11, at 6 p.m. We need to stuff at least 1,000 eggs. We are looking for donations of candy to stuff in the eggs. Please no nuts.

Please join us on Easter Sunday for breakfast.

Julie Cirillo

Monthly Food Drive

As we continue with our monthly food drive, we are so thankful for the support from the congregation. Last month we delivered the trunk full of food which the team there weighs as it goes into the building, and they reported to us that they had 400 pounds of food from Saint Matthew. Thank you to everyone who donates. Our next drive date is February 2.

Nancy Regan

Gemma

The ladies of Women of the ELCA continue to support Gemma Services with treat bags that are filled with candy treats at every monthly meeting.

Nancy Regan

Welcome Church

The Welcome Church for the homeless continues to need coffee, gloves for winter (especially large sizes for men) and toiletries.

Joan Krauter

Newsletter Deadline

Articles for the March newsletter are due in the church office by **noon on Friday, February 14.**

Children's Corner

Dear Children,

"Love is patient and kind, love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful." 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

FEBRUARY—aw—the “love” month. As the Christmas and New Year’s holidays wind down, our hearts and minds turn to the next day of celebration—Valentine’s Day. Once again, the stores are decorated with red and white and the ads are encouraging us to buy that special card, chocolate, or extravagant gift for a loved one. As LOVE is the “token” word of the month, let’s focus our hearts and minds (as Pastor says every Sunday) on the love that Jesus has for us. The Bible verse above reminds us how Jesus wants us to turn to him for comfort and care and then express this love to others. It is a simple task to love those who are kind and good to us, but the real challenge comes when we need to love those who are difficult. I am sure we can all think of that someone who tests our kindness—my mother used to say, “Be careful, you need to walk on egg shells with so and so.” Living here at Maris Grove, I see people from grumpy to sweet and I have tried to engage in conversation with many residents. Compliments are a good way to begin a little chat and will make the other person feel special. As we center in on our word of the month LOVE, remember how much Jesus loves us and how He wants His children to share that LOVE with families, friends, neighbors, schoolmates, etc.

A little work for you. Can you unscramble these words as you think of February?

evol ydnac tearh sowerfl rdac enitnelav
etalccooh ilyamf eeacp guh

Dear Parents,

I am sure cookie baking and card making will help to fill a rainy Saturday. Sharing your February projects with others would be a nice way to show the love of Jesus as we work through some of February’s dreary days.

Sylvia Yost

Nursery School

We are so excited for the month of February at our Nursery School! We are looking forward to Groundhog Day and celebrating Valentine’s Day. We will be having our Parent-Teacher Conferences this month as well. Registration for the 2025–2026 School Year is now open! We continue to offer programs for 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds. Classes are filling up fast! Just fill out our Registration Form online at <https://www.stmattscns.org/registration-forms-1> or contact the office at 610-543-5589 if you are interested in enrolling your child for the fall. Also, please remember to “like” and follow us on Facebook to see the hard work of the staff and students! Let’s hope that Punxsutawney Phil does not see his shadow so we can have an early spring!

Warmly,
Ana Fischer, Executive Director

Vital Statistics

New Address:

James and Karen Angstadt
200 Sandy Bank Rd.
Media, PA 19063-1329

Baptism:

Eleanor Jean McClintock
Daughter of Cody and Shelby
McClintock
Born January 23, 2024
Baptized January 19, 2025

Monthly Mailbag



Dear Family of Saint Matthew,

Thank you for your very generous Christmas gift. Once again you overwhelm me with your generosity, not just to the ministry, but to our staff, and me personally as well. It seems each year you bless us more abundantly, both with this monetary offering, and with your prayers and support as we live and work and worship together. For all you do, and for all you are, my family in Christ, I thank you.

Pastor Karl

To my Saint Matthew Friends and Family,

It continues to be an honor and blessing to be able to serve you in ministry as well as worship beside you, and never more so than in the Advent/Christmas season. Thank you so much for remembering me with gifts of baked goods, chocolates and other treats, as well as a very generous cash gift. I wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year filled with the wonder and joy from being a child of God.

With Love,
Pat McHugh

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the beautiful Christmas cards, baked goods and chocolates, and the very generous cash Christmas gift. They are all very much appreciated. It is truly a blessing to be a member of the congregation and staff of Saint Matthew—you all make it a pleasure to be here. May 2025 be a year filled with God’s blessings for each of you.

Love,
Janice Gardner

Dear Members of the Church,

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! I would also like to thank everyone for the Christmas gift—also the cakes and cookies and chocolates were great. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ted Hidell

Dear Friends,

On behalf of UNICEF USA, thank you for your philanthropic investment in support of UNICEF’s mission. We appreciate your trust as we work toward a more equitable world for children everywhere.

As a steadfast partner, you play an integral role in equipping UNICEF with the resources needed to deliver innovative solutions that address the problems children face. From humanitarian emergencies to development challenges, your support helps deliver lifesaving aid and strengthen critical systems—such as health, education and child protection—to advance longer-term sustainable change.

For over 75 years, UNICEF and UNICEF USA have been driven by a shared vision: a future where all children survive and thrive. Together, we have worked alongside young people, local communities, governments and partners to save and protect

children's lives, support their development and fulfill their vast potential.

As a global UNICEF community, our relentless commitment to safeguarding the rights of children endures, and we are grateful that you have joined our efforts to create a world fit for every child.

In partnership,
Darla Silva
Chief Program Officer

Dear Pastor Richard,

We are very grateful for Saint Matthew's friendship and generosity! Thank you for the donation of \$500. This gift supports Gemma's vital behavioral health, prevention, child welfare programs, and Martin Luther School. Your support truly matters!

With the help of partners like all of you, Gemma is able to accompany more than 3,000 youth and families each year as they face life's challenges, heal from traumas, manage mental health difficulties, learn new skills, and work to reach their individual goals. We would be happy to welcome any of our friends from Saint Matthew to visit one of Gemma's three locations to see firsthand the programs you are helping us to provide. Should you be interested in exploring volunteer opportunities, please let us know. You can also learn more about all of Gemma's programs, latest happenings, and current support needs by visiting www.gemmaservices.org.

Thank you for being a part of Gemma! Together, we are working to create a world where every person knows they matter. Should you have any questions, wish to schedule a visit, or explore volunteering, please contact Lynn at 610-825-4440 ext. 3206 or

Lunipan@gemmaservices.org. On behalf of all of us at Gemma, thank you and best wishes.

Sincerely,
Lynn Unipan
Chief Development & Communications
Officer
Amanda Bryant
Director of Donor & Volunteer Engagement
Gemma Services

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Dear Saint Matthew Friends,

Thank you for thinking of the children and families of Gemma Services this holiday season! We have received and appreciate your very generous donation of gifts including Squishmallows, super hero action figures, journals, fidgets, art and craft kits, Legos, games, and more to help create lasting and joyful memories for youth and their families this year. Thank you, also, to the volunteers who helped wrap nearly 500 gifts for the children in residence at Gemma on December 12, 2024. We are grateful for your friendship and generosity.

Your support truly matters! Thank you for joining with Gemma to warm the hearts of the youth and families who participate in our programs this year. With the help of friends like you, Gemma is able to accompany more than 3,000 youth and families annually through difficult times.

Sincerely,
Amanda Bryant
Director of Donor & Volunteer Engagement
Gemma Services

