



The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Springfield, Pennsylvania

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From Our Pastor

Connect
Care
Equip
Cultivate

"First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen." – Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, in his eulogy of President George Washington

February is the month in which we celebrate Valentine's Day, and also the month in which we "celebrate" Ash Wednesday. In the past I have written about the juxtaposition of these two disparate days and noted that each one is about love in its own way.

February is also the month in which we remember two of our greatest presidents: President George Washington, the 1st President and "father of our nation," and President Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President, who presided over the American Civil War, kept our nation together, and took action to end slavery in this nation.

I do not ordinarily write about Presidents' Day, as it is not a religious observance. Neither is Valentine's Day the way we celebrate it, but it is at least grounded in one who is named a saint. But these days, I feel compelled to remind us of some common understandings we have from these leaders of our nation that have a grounding in principles the Church has held. Neither man was perfect. Neither man was without controversy. But they are considered two of our best presidents because of what they did well, and the precedence they set for how this country should be run and who should be welcome within it.

President Washington was the paragon of humility in office. Having served as the Commander of the Continental Army, when the War of Independence was won, he relinquished his sword willingly. He had a strong sense that the military needed to be subordinate to civilian authority, and that grabbing and amassing power was not in the interest of the people. And then after serving two terms as our first president, an office he assumed reluctantly, and in which he refused such honorifics as "Excellency," preferring the title Mr. Washington or Mr. President, he stepped aside from office, even though there were not limits to his serving longer, because he knew that one person in power too long was not good for the people and the concept of self-rule. While wishing to be careful in my application of this verse, Mr. Washington embodied the words of Philippians 2:3-4, where Saint Paul encourages the people of faith with these words:

"³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." (NIV)

President Lincoln ran for office with the understanding that the sin of slavery needed to be abolished. His position that "all men are created equal" needed to extend to Black people caused first South Carolina, and then the rest of the Confederate states, to withdraw from the Union, which then led to the Civil War. His moral conviction that this institution was evil reflected both the understanding in Genesis 1:27, that

"God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them;" (NIV)

and the words of Saint Paul in Galatians 3:28, where he writes,

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (NIV)

Neither man was perfect. Washington owned slaves. Lincoln was slow to apply his moral conviction fully across his policies. Neither man was "Christian" in the way our Evangelical siblings would claim, as neither ever publicly "took Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior," and each was open to the faiths of other people. But both men espoused values that resonate with scripture, and with people of many faiths.

Presidents' Day is not meant to be about mattress sales and auto deals. It is a time to recall these ideals of humility, equality, and care for all people in this nation, which these two, who are considered to be our greatest presidents, set as the precedent for what it means to be a part of this nation.

These ideals are being tried and tested these days, as we are again divided along racial and ethnic lines, as we see little humility in our governance, and as we do not live with an extension of equality to all. Lincoln's words in the Gettysburg address seem apt, as we wait to see where we will be after this period of divisiveness.

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure."

As people of faith, it seems to me we are called to live as Jesus lived, and love as Jesus loved, caring for all people

with the love of God in whose image we were all created. We are called to stand up for those whom the world discounts, whom the scriptures refer to as the 'widow and the orphan' and the 'sojourner in your land.' We are called to live out our love of God in our love of neighbor. And while it is not from the Bible, I believe the ending of Lincoln's second inaugural address holds keys for how we should move forward both as people of faith, and as citizens of this nation:

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

May it be so.

Pastor Karl M. Richard

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Christian Education Update

Thank you to all of you who are supporting our weekly Sunday School. There is Worship with Sunday School every Sunday during the 9:30 service. All are welcome. We have classes from preschool until high school.

Please SAVE THE DATE for Vacation Bible school. It is July 27th - July 31st. Our theme is the Rainforest. Please let Julie know if you are interested in helping. It will be an amazing week!

Julie Cirillo

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What is new with the Property Committee?

The last weeks of December and early weeks of January saw three ice and snow events and one ice event to start the New Year off with a bang. Ice and light snow events are when they spread a pre salt mixture and then, after the ice or light snow comes to an end, more salt is applied. For the one storm that we received three to five inches of snow, the parking lot and walks were plowed, shoveled then salted. This was done very quickly, exceptionally clean, and ready for Sunday Services and Nursery School.

The end of December we decorated our Church both inside and outside. Weeks later it all came down and was put away till next year. The early part of the year hopefully will be quiet on repairs. So, we can look forward to some improvement to our building, like painting and some repairs and improvement to our audio and visual aids.

Joe Regan

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Financial Update

Heavenly Father, We are grateful for the many blessings entrusted to us and for the generosity of our community. Guide us to steward our resources with wisdom and purpose, and deepen our commitment to giving. May our shared efforts strengthen our church, foster growth,

and empower us to serve others faithfully.

	<u>Nov. 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Giving/Income	\$ 64,356.	\$ 537,512.
Expenses	<u>42,890.</u>	<u>526,356.</u>
Plus/Minus	\$ 21,466.	\$ 11,156.

Summary: We show a positive for the month of over \$21,000 and for year to date we are positive in the amount of \$11,200. This puts us \$68,400 ahead of budget.

Envelope/General Giving: Worship envelope giving came in below what was budgeted for the year, while other giving was very close to projected expectations. Overall, contributions remained steady, and we are grateful for the continued generosity and faithfulness of our congregation, which supports the ongoing work and mission of the church.

Giving Opportunities: There are many meaningful ways to support the work of our church beyond regular giving. Special offerings and designated gifts allow members to contribute to specific ministries and outreach efforts that make a direct impact in our community. We invite you to prayerfully consider how you might participate as we continue this work together.

Roof Fund Pledges: We remain grateful for the continued support of the Roof Fund and the pledges that have already been honored. These contributions are helping us rebuild our reserves and plan responsibly for the future needs of our church. As we move forward together, your ongoing commitment allows us to care for our facilities and sustain the ministry we share.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Cunningham and
Rebecca DeSantis

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Financial Update

Heavenly Father, as we close this year, we give thanks for the many blessings we have received and for the faithfulness and generosity of our community. We are grateful for the resources entrusted to us and for all that has been accomplished through them. Guide us as we reflect on the year behind us and prepare for the year ahead, that we may continue to steward our gifts with wisdom, gratitude, and purpose. May our efforts strengthen our church and allow us to serve others with compassion and hope. Amen.

	<u>Dec. 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Giving/Income	\$ 52,039.	\$ 589,551.
Expenses	<u>60,622.</u>	<u>586,978.</u>
Plus/Minus	(\$ 8,583.)	\$ 2,573.

Summary: We closed the year with a positive financial position, finishing ahead of what had been anticipated in the annual budget. This outcome reflects careful stewardship and the continued generosity of our congregation. Additionally, the year-end endowment balance remains strong, allowing for a healthy contribution toward next year's operating budget and providing a solid foundation as we plan for the year ahead.

Envelope/General Giving: Envelope giving for the month exceeded what was budgeted, reflecting strong generosity during the season. Other giving came in below expectations, but overall contributions for the month remained positive. We are grateful for the continued faithfulness of our congregation and the support shown throughout the year.

Giving Opportunities: As we close out the year, we are thankful for the many ways our congregation has supported the mission and ministry of the church. Year-end gifts, special offerings, and designated funds provide meaningful opportunities to give with intention and impact. We invite you to reflect prayerfully on how you might continue to support this work as we prepare for the year ahead.

Roof Fund Pledges: We are grateful for the ongoing support shown through Roof Fund pledges and the commitment of those who have continued to give faithfully. As we move into the new year, we encourage pledged contributions to continue coming in as planned. These gifts play an important role in maintaining our church and supporting long-term financial stability. Thank you for your continued generosity and dedication to the future of our church.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Cunningham and
Rebecca DeSantis

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Social Ministry

During Lent, Social Ministry will once again be collecting boxes of individual breakfast bars to serve to the people who worship with the Welcome Church in Philadelphia during their coffee hour. The Welcome Church is a congregation made up predominantly by people experiencing chronic homelessness. Your gifts remind others that they are not forgotten. Thank you, in advance, for your gifts.

Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land." (Deuteronomy 15:11)

Cheryl Morrell

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Fellowship Committee News

The Fellowship Committee will host a coffee hour on February 1st between services. The Nursery School will be having their open house on February 22nd. They will host a coffee hour after the 2nd service. The Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Friday, March 27th, at 6 p.m. We would appreciate donations of nut-free, individually wrapped candy to stuff the eggs.

Barb McClintock

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Monthly Food Drive

As we continue to deliver food to the Media Food Pantry, we thank everyone who provides us with the many bags that we can deliver. Over the holidays we did deliver 4 frozen turkeys and 1 ham along with the many

bags to support the families in need. We will deliver items on February 1. We will also accept paper and plastic bags to deliver.

Media Food Bank has given us a list of their most needed items: newborn diapers, size 5 diapers, size 4T/5T Pull-Ups, bottles of juice, corned beef, honey, vegetable cooking oil, white sugar, canned beets, sardines, shelf-stable dairy milk and flour.

Nancy Regan

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Gemma

Thank you to all the wonderful members of Saint Matthew who donated so many wonderful gifts to the children who are in the residential treatment program at Gemma Services. Those children were treated to a Christmas party and given a large stack of gifts. We were able to provide 188 gifts this year including remote control cars, Rubik's Cubes, puzzles, Squishmallows, toys, games, hygiene products and more. Those gifts were wrapped by some of the ladies from the Women of the ELCA group who traveled to Gemma to spend the morning wrapping.

Nancy Regan

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Beds for Kids

We continue to collect items for the Beds For Kids program to support providing beds and bedding for children who are bedless. We will accept new or gently used sheets, blankets, bed spreads, and new pillows. Also, we will accept children's books. There is a box under the table in the hallway Thank you for supporting this program.

Nancy Regan

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Soda Tabs and Welcome Church

Thank you all for the tabs that were delivered to Ronald McDonald House. It helps to pay their heating bill.

Also thank you for the socks, hats, gloves, toiletries and coffee delivered to the Welcome Church (homeless). They appreciate our continued support.

Joan Krauter

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Newsletter Deadline

Articles for the March newsletter are due in the church office by **noon on Friday, February 13.**

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Children's Corner

Growing in Faith, Hope, and Love
A Message from Christian Education
February reminds us of the power of love—not only romantic love, but Christ-centered love that teaches, nurtures, and transforms hearts. As we continue our journey of Christian education, we focus on helping learners of all ages grow deeper in faith, wisdom, and service, reflecting the love

of Christ in all we do.

"Let all that you do be done in love." — 1 Corinthians 16:14

Theme of the Month: Love in Action

This month, our lessons will emphasize:

- God's unconditional love
- Loving others as Christ loves us
- Serving with kindness, patience, and compassion

Students will explore biblical examples of love through scripture, discussion, and hands-on activities that encourage faith in action.

Memory Verse of the Month

"We love because He first loved us." — 1 John 4:19

Encourage children and families to practice this verse together at home.

Spotlight: Learning Beyond the Classroom

Christian education doesn't stop on Sunday. Families are encouraged to:

- Pray together daily
- Read one Bible story each week
- Practice kindness intentionally at home, school, and work

Faith grows best when it is lived out every day.

Prayer Focus for February

- Our children, youth, and educators
- Families growing together in faith
- Hearts open to God's love and guidance

Thank You!

We thank our teachers, volunteers, and parents for your dedication and love. Your commitment helps shape hearts and minds for Christ.

Sharon Gibson

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Nursery School News

January Highlights & Upcoming Open House

January has been a busy and joyful month here at the Nursery School! The children settled back into routines after the holidays and jumped right into learning and play. We explored winter themes through stories, songs, sensory activities, and art projects. The classrooms were filled with creativity as the children worked on fine motor skills, practiced letters and numbers, and enjoyed hands-on learning through play. We also focused on social skills such as sharing, taking turns, and working together, while continuing to enjoy outdoor play whenever weather permitted. It has been wonderful to watch the children grow and thrive during this winter season.

We are excited to share that we will be hosting a **Nursery School Open House on Sunday, February 22nd**, for families interested in registering for the **2026–2027 school year**. Families are invited to attend the **9:30 a.m. church service**, followed by the **Open House from 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.** During the Open House, families will have the opportunity to tour the school, ask questions, complete registration

paperwork, and submit the **\$65 non-refundable registration fee**.

Yard Signs – We Need Your Help!

In February, we will be welcoming new families through our Open House, and we would love your help spreading the word. We have approximately **50 yard signs** available for families to display in the community. If you are able to place a sign in your yard, we would greatly appreciate your support. Additionally, if you own a local business and would be willing to display flyers at your place of business, we would be very grateful.

Yard signs and flyers will be available for pickup in the **church office**.

Thank you for your continued support of our Nursery School. We truly appreciate our wonderful families and church community and look forward to seeing you at Registration Night and our upcoming Open House as we prepare for another amazing school year.

Jenny Redding
Nursery School Director

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Vital Statistics

Birth:

Dorothy Dawson

Daughter of Kyle Dawson and

Stephanie Bearish

Born December 18, 2025

Deaths:

Kerry Hoffert

Died January 21, 2026

Funeral January 29, 2026

Ben Lambert

Died January 24, 2026

Funeral January 30, 2026

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Monthly Mailbag

Dear Family of Saint Matthew,

Thank you for your very generous Christmas gift. Once again you overwhelm me with your generosity: to the ministry, to our staff, and to me and my family 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. In this past year we were also blessed in your outpouring of love and well wishes for Abigail and Christian in their marriage. I am so grateful that you are our family in Christ. 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 Saint Matthew Family,

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 2026 be a year filled with God's blessings for each of you.

Love,
Janice Gardner

Dear Saint Matthew Congregation,

I am deeply grateful for the generous gift you shared with me. Your kindness and thoughtfulness means so much. Thank you again for your kindness and for being such a wonderful part of my life. May God continue to bless you abundantly.

With gratitude and love,
Ted Hidell

Dear Lutheran Church Women of Saint Matthew,

We are very grateful for Saint Matthew's friendship and generosity! Thank you for the donation of \$25. 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 challenges, 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, MSW, CFRE
Chief Development & Communications Officer
Amanda Bryant
Director of Donor & Volunteer Engagement
Gemma Services

Dear Lutheran Church Women of Saint Matthew,

Thank you for your generous gift of \$25 to KenCrest.

This year marks KenCrest's 120th anniversary, and you are part of the incredible community of supporters who have helped make our work possible over the years. Your

generosity builds on the legacy of our founders to make the world a better place for every person we serve.

Each of KenCrest's programs and services for individuals from birth through adulthood are designed to improve quality of life based on their personal desires, preferences and goals. Your gift helps ensure that every person can reach the highest level of independence and success possible.

Thank you again for your support and the part you play in the KenCrest community.

Sincerely,
Russ Stewart
Director of Community Philanthropy
KenCrest

Dear Lutheran Church Women of Saint Matthew,

Thank you for your gift of \$40 to Lutheran Disaster Response.

As a church, we are empowered to love and serve our neighbors as Christ first loved us. Your gifts to the ministries of the ELCA help people around the world feel the power and hope that flow from God's full, boundless love. Drawn together and guided by the Holy Spirit, we accomplish together what none of us could do alone, grace upon grace.

Your Spirit-filled generosity helps families and communities reeling from disasters, in the immediate aftermath and far into the future. No matter the disaster, no matter the need, your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response enable people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Thank you for your gracious gifts. You make God's love real.

With gratitude,
Rachel Wind, Executive for Development
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dear Saint Matthew Friends,

We are grateful for your generous donations to Gemma Services this holiday season! We have received and are grateful for your contribution of gifts including Squishmallows, remote cars, hygiene products, puzzles, Rubik's cubes, toys, games, and more received in November and December. Your gifts helped create holiday joy for the children and families who participated in Gemma's programs this year.

Thank you also to the wonderful group of elves who volunteered their time on Friday, December 12, to wrap gifts for the annual holiday party for children in residence at Gemma. The gifts looked beautiful and the children were thrilled to receive such thoughtfully wrapped presents.

With appreciation,
Amanda Bryant
Director of Donor & Volunteer Engagement

Lent, Holy Week and Easter Schedule

Ash Wednesday, February 18

12:00 Noon Service in Sanctuary
 7:00 p.m. Service in Sanctuary and live via Zoom

Midweek Lenten Services: Wednesday, February 25, March 4, 11, 18, and 25

12:00 Noon and 7:00 p.m.

Palm Sunday, March 29

8:00 a.m. Communion Service in Sanctuary
 9:30 a.m. Communion Service in Sanctuary and live via Zoom
 Video of this service is also available

Maundy Thursday, April 2

12:00 Noon Communion Service in Sanctuary
 7:00 p.m. Communion Service in Sanctuary and live via Zoom

Good Friday, April 3

12:00 Noon Springfield Community Service at Church of the Redeemer
 7:00 p.m. Service in our sanctuary and live via Zoom

Easter Sunday, April 5

8:00 a.m. Communion Service in Sanctuary
 9:15 a.m. Easter Breakfast
 10:30 a.m. Communion Service in Sanctuary and live via Zoom

