



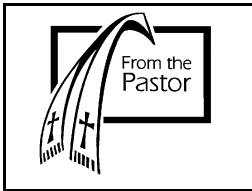
The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Springfield, Pennsylvania

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From Our Pastor

*"Fast away the old year passes,
Fa la la la la la la la!
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,
Fa la la la la la la la!
Sing we joyous all together!*

*Fa la la la la la la la!
Heedless of the wind and weather,
Fa la la la la la la la!"*

As you may know, this is the third verse of the popular Christmas song "Deck the Halls." It is a reminder of the swiftness of time, and of the excitement promised with the coming of a new year. As we enter this new year, I am excited about where we have been, and where we are going. We have been doing wonderful things as a community of faith. We have been:

- caring for the hungry.
- providing clothes, toys and school supplies for children in our area and around the world.
- making quilts for people in far reaches of our world.
- preparing young children to enter their school years, grounded with a sense of Christian love and respect.
- teaching children from 3 through "93" about the love of Jesus.
- providing Bibles for our children.
- sending our youth into the world on mission trips to live the Gospel we preach and teach.

This is just a small sample of what we have done, and what we continue to do.

As we move into 2015, we are planning to do even more for the Lord. I once heard a pastor say "We can stop our work when we hear there is a "No Vacancy" sign on the gates of heaven!" I like this sentiment, because it reminds us that there are many more people in this world, and even in our community, who need to know of the grace of God given in Jesus Christ.

To continue the work Jesus gives to us, I am excited about

the goal of expanding our staff at Saint Matthew. It is helpful, even necessary, to have people of faith and commitment coordinate the various parts of our work together. There is only so much any one person, or even a small team of people, can do to keep things going as they are. As we look to the many new people in our community, and the various ways they can benefit from a relationship with Jesus and His Church, we need to add to our ability to connect with them and coordinate ways to share the Gospel with them. I am grateful for the way members of our congregation have been supporting this idea. I am anxious to see who God will send to us to help us make a difference in His name.

One thing I know will help as we go into this new year is also found in the verse above. The song says "Sing we joyous all together, heedless of the wind and weather." Going forward together, going forward with a sense of joy in the Lord, makes so many things possible. There will be times of rough weather in this year, as there are in every year. We are strong as a family of faith, and we are strong because the Lord is the head of this house. As we keep our heads up, and our focus on the ways in which we can make a difference for Jesus, the wind and weather will not overwhelm us.

May God bless us as we go into the new year. May God fill us with a song of joy, and may God lead us into the future God has planned for us!

In Christ,
Pr. Karl M. Richard

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Annual Congregational Meeting

Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2015, beginning at 11:30 a.m. A light luncheon will be served following the 10:15 a.m. service. Please mark your calendars and plan to be present.

The 2014 Annual Report will not be mailed. Copies will be available in the church by Sunday, January 18, the week before the meeting. If you are unable to get to the church and would like a copy of the report, please call Janice in the church office at 610-543-8700.

Bible Study Resumes



Wednesday Bible Study will resume on January 7 at 6:30 a.m. in the Library, and noon in the Parlor. We will have 6 weeks to meet together before we reach Ash Wednesday, at which time we will break for Lent. Because of this timing, and hearing the desire of the majority of the group to look at a book from the New

Testament, we will be studying the Letter to the Ephesians. This letter happens to have 6 chapters, so we will plan on looking at one each week. Ephesus is a city in modern day Turkey which was a site of an early Christian community. Paul spent time in Ephesus, both as a preacher, but also as a prisoner for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus. Come join with us to see what this letter had to say to the people of Ephesus nearly 2,000 years ago, and see what lessons we might learn from it for our lives today!

- Pastor Richard

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Lutheran World Relief Update

In June, Carol Penjoke and I delivered 8 quilts and 59 school kits to an in-gathering site in Harrisburg. The women of the congregation made the quilts and the School kits were assembled by the youth from materials donated by the congregation and purchased through last year's Jar Mix fundraiser.

The quilts were sent to the small West African country of Burkina Faso in August.

Some of the school kits were sent to Jordan in October and some to Lebanon early in December. I can't tell from the tracking website if all of the school kits have been shipped. I will check back in a couple of months to see if there is any further news. It is exciting to know that the generosity of Saint Matthew is being felt around the world!

- Ginger Heck

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Christian Education Committee

Happy New Year, everyone! The Hanging of the Greens was a special time together as a congregation. So many volunteers helped to make our church look beautiful. The cooks prepared a chicken dinner for us all to enjoy. The instrumentalists played wonderfully while the youth engaged us in a skit entitled "Just a Little Christmas." We lifted our voices singing carols in the sanctuary and ate delectable cookies afterwards. Thank you one and all for keeping this delightful and meaningful tradition alive at Saint Matthew as we looked forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Our next project will be to support the Souper Bowl of Caring event in our community. We will encourage our families to participate in any way they can. Be sure to look for flyers advertising the details of this event soon.

- Carol Penjoke

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Children's Corner

Dear Children,

As we read this newsletter, many of us have that "let down" feeling as the rush and excitement of Christmas is now past, and **now what?** Well, actually those people who belong to the Eastern Orthodox churches have their Christmas with gifts and special celebrations on January 6th and often call it "little Christmas." Officially, however, we are celebrating the Season of Epiphany. The word Epiphany means "manifestation" or the showing of Christ to the Gentiles (those who were not Jewish.) We also think of Epiphany as the worshiping of Jesus by the Wise Men (Magi) from the East. Matthew is the only Gospel that tells the story of the Wise Men coming from the East and information about them is quite scarce. The word Magi means "sage" (a person noted for wisdom), and it is possible that they were astrologers from Persia. They realized that the King of the Jews had been born when they saw an exceptionally brilliant star rising in the East. Some people believe that this special star was really a mix of the sun, moon, and other stars. These men followed the star to Bethlehem, and each brought the Christ Child a special gift. The stories of the Wise Men are often conflicting, and may perhaps be legendary, but the following information will give you some interesting details:

"The first king was called Melchior, and he was an old man with white hair and a long beard; he offered gold to our Lord. The second, Gaspar, was young, beardless, and had a reddish face; he offered frankincense to Jesus. The third, Balthasar, was an African, with a heavy beard who offered myrrh - a heavy perfume that foretold the death of Jesus."

Many other legends surround this wonderful piece of history, and it has been fun for me to revisit these stories. Moving beyond the many legends, we know that Epiphany represents a special time in the Church Year. On the First Sunday of Epiphany the paraments are white for purity, and the Sundays thereafter, the colors are green symbolizing the growth of the church and our growth in Christ as we journey through life.

Dear Parents,

"We Three Kings of Orient Are" will give your youngster an idea of the journey and gifts of each "king." Take time to review all the words as they tell a story. A map would be helpful too as you can locate the origin of the Wise Men - Persia, Ethiopia, and Bethlehem - trace the distance that the Magi had to travel. Discuss their mode of transportation. Check out our library for

more information.

- Sylvia Yost

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Family Ministries Event

Family Ministries is hosting a Scrapbooking Night on January 30 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Fall and Christmas papers and embellishments will be available for your holiday pictures. Please bring at least five photos. Hope you can join us for a fun evening! R.S.V.P. to Heather Markland by January 26 at hmteach@hotmail.com.

- Heather Markland

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Men's Breakfast

Our first Men's Breakfast meeting of the new year will be held at The Court Diner, 140 E. Baltimore Pike, Media, on Saturday, January 17, at 7:15 a.m. 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.

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Jar Mix Fundraiser

A big thank you to everyone who supported the Youtherans' Jar Mix Fundraiser. We sold approximately 90 jars resulting in over \$700 that will help offset the cost of transportation to the ELCA National Gathering in Detroit next July. Five Youtherans and two chaperones are going on the trip and we are very grateful for your support!

Additional funding of \$500 will be provided by Thrivent Financial Delaware County Chapter through its Care Abounds in Communities® program.

- Ginger Heck

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First Thursday Friends ("FTF")

The First Thursday Friends will be celebrating the new year at Valentino's Ristorante Italian on January 8 (not the First) at 11:30 a.m. Valentino's is located at 2902 West Chester Pike, Broomall, PA 19008.

Please join us. All are welcome. Contact John Stefl at 610-544-2816 for more information.

- John Stefl

Saint Matthew Christian Nursery School News



Happy New Year from the Nursery School staff and children. We will return to school on Monday, January 5, 2015. The new year will be filled with wonderful activities, continuation of the alphabet recognition, printing skills, and enjoying friends. School will be closed on Monday, January 19, for the celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Parent teacher talks will take place January 27 to January 30. School will remain open during conferences with substitutes in place. Registration for 2015 for our in-house students returning in September will take place at this time. Any prospective families who are interested to have their child attend our school in the fall of 2015, please contact the Nursery School office at 610-543-5589.

We wish you many Blessings in the coming year!

- Linda M. Maylie, Director

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Social Ministry

Happy New Year to everyone! We hope all of you had a joyous Christmas! We want to thank all of our members who participated in our pajama gift project for the children of Faith Immanuel Lutheran Church. Your gifts were delivered in plenty of time to be distributed to the church at their annual Christmas Party.

Rick Link continues to lead a group on the 4th Thursday of every month who help pack food for the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry. If you can help with this effort, please contact Rick.

The Souper Bowl of Caring event will take place again this year. Please watch for other notices for more information on this very worthwhile project.

- Cheryl Morrell

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Silver Springs Wrapping Trip

On Wednesday, December 10, nine ladies from Saint Matthew traveled through the snow showers to wrap the gifts for the children at Silver Springs - Martin Luther School. Between 9:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., we wrapped six gifts for each of the sixty-nine resident treatment children, or that would be 414 gifts. Thank you to Joanne Castagna, Marge Kobasa, Linda Kulp, Jessica Krauter, Joan Krauter, Dotty Engelbrecht, Frankie Savage and Sylvia Yost. It was a wonderful way to spend a day in this season of giving.

- Nancy Regan

Silver Springs Christmas Gifts

Thank you to all who donated to the toy collection for Silver Springs-Martin Luther School. We were able to make three trips to deliver toys. We know that the children will have a Merry Christmas because of our efforts.

Thank you to all.

- Nancy Regan

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Monthly Mailbag

Dear Saint Matthew Congregation,



This is an overdue thank you for the reception held in September in recognition of my work with the youth of the congregation. I also want to say thank you for the lovely flower print. I will hang this in my new sewing room as a reminder of the youth and my entire Saint Matthew family!

Sincerely,
Ginger Heck

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Dear Saint Matthew Congregation,

I would like to thank you for the beautiful flower delivered by Social Ministry. A blessed holiday to all. Thanks again.

Sincerely,
Jane Millar

* * *

Dear Friends at Saint Matthew Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous gift of quilts and kits for LWR's distribution overseas. These gifts of your hearts and hands are beautiful expressions of God's grace and love to people all around the world. Your care and compassion makes it possible for families and communities to keep themselves healthy, warm, educated, and employed.

Since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in March 2011, many Syrian refugees have fled to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. Since 2011 LWR has been responding to the Syrian refugee crisis, and thousands of families have been given access to items that fulfill their basic needs. Thanks to your generosity, in addition to meeting immediate needs through shelter repair kits, cash-for-work and water filtration projects, LWR will also be distributing Quilts, Personal Care Kits, Baby Care Kits and School

Kits to Syrian families to help them as they rebuild their lives.

On behalf of our neighbors in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and countless others in villages, schools, hospitals, and refugee camps around the world, I extend deepest thanks for your contribution, and pray God's richest blessings on all of your ministries!

In Christ,
Melanie W. Gibbons
Quilt and Kit Ministry Manager
Lutheran World Relief

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Dear Friends,

We recently received your gift of \$140.00 to Lutheran World Relief. Thank you! I'd like to share a story of the great work your gift will support.

Sevu once struggled to support his family on his farm in Kenya's notoriously dry Makindu district. The region has a rainy season during which the Makindu river bed fills with water, but farmers didn't have a good way to capture that water. This made it difficult for Sevu to grow food to eat and sell year round. With your gift, you provide lasting solutions for farmers like Sevu. With local partners, we worked to install a sand dam - a structure built onto a dry river bed that captures water-filled sand and holds it in place. Now, Sevu and his family have a source of water for growing crops year round and, because of the sand dam, he can afford to send his children to school and they no longer struggle with chronic hunger.

On behalf of LWR, our partners and those we serve, please accept my thanks for your generous support and partnership. May God bless you!

Warm Regards,
Daniel V. Speckhard
President and CEO
Lutheran World Relief

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Dear Pastor Richard and Congregation,

We were very grateful to you, Pastor Richard, for visiting Bill in the hospital during his last stay. It was of much comfort to him. The family so appreciated all you did for us following Bill's death. Your helpfulness and advice when we made the final arrangements was welcomed, as we were floundering. Thank you so much for the beautiful service you performed. Most of the family is Catholic and were very impressed with you and Saint Matthew's.

I also wish to thank the congregation for their prayers, and support during this difficult time.

Sincerely,
Mary Long and Family

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Dear Pastor Richard:

We thank you and all of our friends at Saint Matthew Lutheran Church, Springfield for celebrating with us the achievements of the boys and girls at Silver Springs-Martin Luther School with a November 19, 2014 gift of \$290.00.

It is no secret that these days are particularly challenging for children's programs. Your generosity speaks volumes as to the congregation's friendship and steadfast commitment so that Silver Springs may continue to be a place of education, nurture and healing.

Thank you so much for being such loyal friends to our boys and girls.

Sincerely,
Joan Piasecki
Gift Coordinator
Silver Springs-Martin Luther School

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Dear Members of Saint Matthew,

Thank you to all our church family for the prayers and cards we received upon my mother's passing.

The altar flowers we received were a warm remembrance of her 105 years with which we were blessed.

Sincerely,
Lance and Marie Miller

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Vital Statistics

Birth: **Anna Josephine Godfrey**
 Daughter of Tim and Katie Godfrey
 Born October 24, 2014

The Good Newsletter, a congregational newsletter, is published monthly, September through June by Saint Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church, 400 Lynbrooke Road, Springfield, Pennsylvania 19064-3599. Please direct all correspondence pertaining to this publication to the Editor, Dr. Carl E. Aronson, at the above address. The deadline for submitting copy is 12 noon on the 15th of each month.