



The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Springfield, Pennsylvania

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From Our Pastor

Connect
Care
eEquip
Cultivate

“The beginning of the Gospel (Good News) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” – Mark 1:1

While we began a new Church Year with Advent on November 30th, the new calendar year begins this month. As we come to a new year, we often think about what we would like to do in the coming days. It may be something we have not done before, like exploring a new city or country. It may be a chance to change a pattern of behavior we have found to be a problem, with the thought of making better decisions going forward. Whatever it is, we may feel a certain pressure? impetus? opportunity? to start again, and find what is new for our life. Which brings to my mind (thanks to a prompting from my wife) the above verse from Mark. She asks, “What is “new” about the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God?” Particularly for those of us who have been a part of the Church for many years, is there anything “new” about Jesus at all?

At our December Council meeting, Joe Link, our Vice President, raised a similar question for the Council’s consideration. He asked, “In what new way are you planning to bring Jesus more into your celebration of the holiday?”

As Christians we say we believe that Jesus still lives and moves among us by the Holy Spirit. When we proclaim “the mystery of the faith,” we say that Christ has died, Christ IS risen, Christ will come again. If we believe that Christ IS risen, and still moves among us, then how can we make sure we do not keep Jesus in the past? How can we ensure we allow Jesus to “make all things new” in us?

This is not always easy. At Christmas time we are often so focused on the baby in the manger that we romanticize the Savior. We hold him in a place and time that is comforting and safe, full of memory and sentiment. But since Christ came as Emmanuel, God with us, how *can* we see the *new* in the Good News of Jesus Christ? I suppose one way to see what is new is to keep in constant contact with the One who first came so long ago. By prayer and worship, by meditation and reflection on the word, we can hear again what Jesus has to say.

In my family, before we eat a meal, we say a prayer. Very often this prayer is, “Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed.” One thing is true: when we ask Jesus to be

present, Jesus shows up. What is also true is that when we ask Jesus to be present, we don’t always sit still long enough to welcome him.

But when we make room, both for Jesus to come, and for us to listen, we can experience the love of God in new ways, in each new day. We may find that we are comforted in ways we cannot imagine. Or we may find we are challenged in ways that make us uncomfortable. As Jesus speaks to us, we may begin to sense that what we *thought* Jesus said might not be what Jesus *actually* said. By engaging with the Word, we can be sure that the story of Jesus does not become “old hat,” but remains fresh and new.

And so, we begin a new year. As we move through the days to come, may you always be made new by the Good News that God, in Jesus, continues to reconcile the world to himself, and us to each other.

Pastor Karl M. Richard

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2026. Lunch and the Annual Meeting will take place following the 9:30 service.

What has gone on at our Church Property

This month we had to replace four windows in our education wing second floor room. Although these are not the original windows, they are over twenty-five years old. Some of the windows have lost their vapor seal, thus losing heat. These are the first of many that show wear, have not been able to open, or are falling out when moving up or down. We will be replacing these as needed and money is available.

We had our fall clean up done, picking up leaves, weeding and our final cut of the mowing season. All ready for snow and ice, (hope not much). In November we lowered our chandeliers, cleaned and replaced light bulbs as needed. A Big Thank You to those who helped with the project.

In December, our Fire Alarm System is checked, our Water backflow is checked, and our electrician is moving light switches into our Nursery room and fixing the switch in Pastor’s office.

Looking forward to a healthy and quiet NewYear.

Joe Regan

Bible Study Returns

January 14 we will resume our Midweek Bible Study with a five-week session prior to Lent. We will be looking at the Book of James, of which Luther said, "It is an epistle of straw," as a way to signify his lack of enthusiasm for this letter. Come and discover why Luther did not care for it, and why it is still worth having within the canon of Christian Scripture. Wednesdays at noon and 7:30 PM, live in the parlor and available by Zoom.

Pastor Karl M. Richard

February Newsletter Deadline

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

Fellowship Notes

On November 30th, fourteen of us enjoyed a train ride on the Wilmington Western Railroad. Santa came to visit all the children and take a picture with them. Next year we will plan early and rent the Parlor Car to allow more people the opportunity to join us.

We will have coffee hour between the services on January 11th hosted by Fellowship. We are looking for committees to host coffee hour. Please let me know if you can host. We are open to any suggestions for Fellowship functions. If you have an idea, reach out to a committee member.

Barb McClintock

Christian Education Update

We are still looking for a few good substitutes for Sunday School. Please let Julie Cirillo know if you are interested in helping with our Sunday School.

Please save the date for Vacation Bible School, July 27th - July 31st. All are welcome!! We will be going to the Rainforest! If interested, please reach out to Julie.

Julie Cirillo

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

Gemma Services

To everyone who donated so many Rubik Cubes, stuffed animals, remote-controlled cars, all kinds of books, Legos, puzzles, card games, Crayola craft kits,

toiletries for children, a big THANK YOU. Our total count was 188. The staff at Gemma appreciated all our efforts. Following the collection nine ladies traveled to Gemma to wrap all the gifts for the children. The ladies spent the morning wrapping and were treated to lunch too. Thank you, ladies!

Nancy Regan

Youth Group

We would like to thank everyone who helped us with our jar fundraiser. We appreciated all the support.

Julie Cirillo

Welcome Church

The cold winter weather is here. 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 begin a new year, may we be guided by gratitude for what has been and clarity for what lies ahead. Grant us wisdom in every financial decision, integrity in our stewardship, and unity in our shared commitment to serve. Bless the resources entrusted to us, that they may be used faithfully and with purpose to strengthen our ministry and support our community. May this year be marked by growth, generosity, and grace. Amen.

	<u>Oct. 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Giving/Income	\$ 26,856.	\$ 473,156.
Expenses	<u>38,851.</u>	<u>483,467.</u>
Plus/Minus	(\$ 11,995.)	(\$ 10,311.)

Summary: Although October closed with a deficit, monthly expenses decreased compared to the prior month and remained within budgeted expectations. No unusual or unanticipated expenses were incurred, reflecting continued careful fiscal management.

Envelope/General Giving: Envelope giving was lighter this month; however, our year-to-date contributions remain strong. As we approach the close of the 2025 fiscal year, we encourage continued faithfulness in giving. Every contribution—no matter the size—plays an important role in supporting our shared mission and sustaining our work.

Giving Opportunities: As we end the 2025 year, please continue with supporting our church community in a way that helps us end this season on solid financial footing. Every gift, whether one-time or ongoing, strengthens our ability to serve, sustain our programs, and care for our community. Thank you for giving in a way that truly makes a difference.

Roof Fund Pledges: We encourage everyone to keep

contributing toward their Roof Fund pledges. We depend on these gifts to replenish our endowment and maintain the financial stability of our church. When each of us follows through, we strengthen our shared ministry and ensure that our resources remain strong for the years ahead. Thank you for the generosity and commitment you continue to show—your support truly helps sustain our future.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Cunningham and
Rebecca DeSantis

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Children's Corner

In 2026, the traditional date for Epiphany is Tuesday, January 6th, marking the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles (Three Kings Day), but in the U.S. and some other countries, we celebrate it the first Sunday after January 1st, making it Sunday, January 4, 2026.

Here are some ways you can celebrate with your families.

Crafts & Activities:

Crowns & Stars: Make paper crowns or star ornaments with glitter and lace.

Procession: Have kids carry nativity figures or wear costumes as they walk through the house, singing.

Camels' Treats: Leave grass and water for the camels by the door, replacing it with candy overnight.

Hide Baby Jesus: Hide a baby doll (Jesus) and have kids, pretending to be Wise Men, search for him.

Stargazing: Go out to look at the stars, imagining the journey.

Read the Bible: Read Matthew 2:1-12, the story of the Magi.

Gift Giving: Give small gifts to godparents or choose family gifts for charity.

Julie Cirillo

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Social Ministry

Once again, we want to thank all of you so very much for once again embracing our Christmas Pajama Project for the children of Faith Immanuel. All of the gifts were delivered in time for their annual Christmas party.

We wish everyone in our congregation a very happy and healthy New Year!

Cheryl Morrell

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Nursery School

As we enter the new year, we reflect with joy on the beautiful celebration of Christ's birth that we shared together in December. Our children enjoyed learning about the birth of Christ and the true meaning of the season of giving, participating in activities that helped them understand God's love and generosity.

We also want to remind our church family that we still have openings in both our full-day and AM programs. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please reach out to Jenny Redding at 610-543-5589 for more information.

Looking ahead, starting in February, we will begin enrolling new students for the 2026–2027 school year. We look forward to welcoming more children into our nurturing and faith-filled learning environment.

Jenny Redding
Nursery School Director

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Vital Statistics

Death:

Carl Smith

Died November 23, 2025

Funeral November 29, 2025

Wedding:

Abigail Richard and Christian DeMusis

November 30, 2025

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Monthly Mailbag

Dear Joan Krauter,

We are deeply grateful for the wonderful bag of goodies you shared with our residents at Fair Acres. The religious items, planners, calendars, puzzle books, cards and more were received with joy and appreciation. Each gift brings comfort, inspiration and engaging activities that brighten their days and strengthen our sense of community.

We are especially thankful for the way you continue to bless our residents throughout the year with thoughtful donations like these. Your ongoing generosity reflects a true commitment to caring for others, and it makes a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Susan Harrar
Director of TAS & Volunteer Services
Fair Acres

Dear Amazing Saint Matthew Friends,

We are very grateful for Saint Matthew's continued friendship and generosity to Gemma Services! Thank you for your donation of 11 "Everything but the Turkey" bags including nine (9) \$25 Shop Rite gift cards and two (2) \$25 Walmart gift cards. This kind gift will help ensure that families in Gemma's programs have the staples they need for a special Thanksgiving meal this year. Your support helps Gemma continue to provide vital behavioral health, prevention, and child welfare services and specialized education through our Martin Luther School for youth and families who are facing challenging times. Your friendship matters a great deal to us – thank you!

We would be happy to welcome any of our friends from Saint Matthew to visit one of Gemma's locations to see firsthand the programs you are helping us to provide.

We look forward to hosting a group of volunteers from Saint Matthew to assist with holiday gift wrapping and will continue

to share additional volunteer opportunities as they become available. You can learn more about all of Gemma's programs, latest happenings, and current support needs by visiting www.gemmaservices.org.

Should you have any questions or wish to schedule a visit, please contact me at 610-825-4440 ext. 3307 or Abryant@gemmaservices.org. On behalf of all at Gemma, thank you!

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

Dear Saint Matthew Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$50.00 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,
The Rev. Daniel Rift
Director, Congregational Generosity
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dear Pastor Richard,

Thank you for your incredible support! Happy Holidays from everyone at the Beds for Kids Program!

OHAAT (One House At A Time)

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