



# The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of  
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church  
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Volume 78, Number 3

March 2026

Internet Web Site: [stmatsspringfield.org](http://stmatsspringfield.org)



## From Our Pastor

Connect  
Care  
Equip  
Cultivate

*O sacred head, now wounded,  
with grief and shame weighed down,  
now scornfully surrounded  
with thorns, thine only crown;  
O sacred head, what glory,  
what bliss till now was thine!  
Yet, though despised and gory,  
I joy to call thee mine.*

These are words from one of the most moving Lenten hymns we have. It is a haunting tune, with powerful words, but not easy words to sing or hear. We do not like to think of suffering and death. We do not like to consider that which is painful and gory, either physically or emotionally. We prefer to think of happy things, like the Resurrection rather than sad things like the Cross. Think of how many gather to worship on Easter Sunday, but “refuse” to come to the Good Friday service. Think how few make midweek worship a practice, because it takes time and makes us reflect. In some ways this hymn becomes a good stand in for how many people feel about the entire Lenten season. It is moving, it can haunt us, but it is not easy, and we would rather not bother with it.

Lent is the time of the Christian year that precedes Easter. It is set as 40 days long (excluding Sundays) as a reflection of Jesus spending 40 days in the wilderness tempted by Satan just before he began his public ministry. 40 also reminds us of the 40 years the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness on their journey out of bondage in Egypt, and to the Promised Land. In Scripture, the wilderness is a difficult place to be. It is a place of struggle, both physically and spiritually. It is a place where one wrestles with one’s “demons,” those things we have on our hearts and minds and consciences that cause us to not be at peace with ourselves, God, and our world.

But it is important for us to confront these things, to address whatever part in them is due to our thoughts and actions, and to see if we cannot come to a better place in our relationship with God and others. To do this, we need to enter the process. We need to be honest with ourselves. We need to allow God’s Spirit to move in us, not just to comfort, but to challenge us and lead us through the wilderness to a more wholesome place. And oftentimes that is a place that is haunting, and powerful, and uncomfortable. But it can also be beautiful and

lead us to joy. As the song reminds us, even in the midst of the pain, we joy to call Jesus “mine.”

The point of Lent, the point of this hymn, is to remind us that while we experience the wilderness, we do not journey through it alone. Jesus knows our every need, our every weakness, our every struggle, because he himself has experienced it. And Jesus promises to walk with us through the wilderness until we come out on the other side. The true joy of resurrection comes when we go through the way of death and the cross, and we see how God brings us new life, here, and in the life to come.

I encourage you not to avoid, but to fully enter into this Lenten journey. I invite you engage in the work of reflection and confession this season calls us to do, as individuals and as community. I encourage you to reflect on the way the love of Jesus is so strong that there is no wilderness he won’t wander, when it means he will bring us closer to the promised land of life with God, and community with each other. This sacred head, once wounded, was wounded so we might be healed.

May we find joy in the journey as we move from the wilderness toward the resurrection of our lives.

Pastor Karl M. Richard

\* \* \* \* \*

## Church Council Members for 2026

Church Council Members for the year 2026 are:

- Kevin Cunningham
- Rebecca DeSantis
- Beth Hale
- Lynda Knaggs
- Joe Link, Vice President
- Don Masey
- Barbara McClintock
- Sharon McKee
- Kristen Plachuta
- Nicole Smith
- Lisa Thompson
- Will Toland, Secretary

Gary Gordon, Church and Nursery School  
Treasurer

Craig Gardner, Financial Secretary  
Sue Wueschinski, Reconciliation Officer  
Dawn Liscom, Head of Counting Teams

\* \* \* \* \*

## Worship and Music Update

As we begin this Lenten Season I’d like to ensure that you

received this season's devotional booklet, *Mercy, Passion and Joy*.

I just finished reading Ash Wednesday's Submission and am convinced that this booklet will be a great companion to encourage us all on our Lenten Journey. Every daily submission will include companion quotes from C.S. Lewis. On day one, Ash Wednesday, Jesus is calling us to repent. C.S. Lewis' quote is: "*Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature, who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms.*" (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 59) This quote in itself, for me sets the stage for how I want to contemplate how I need to grow closer to Jesus and take on his ways more and certainly less of my ways! If you have not received your booklet, Janice has extra copies in the office.

Additionally, I am pleased to share that during the month of February, we reestablished a wonderful team of volunteers for the Altar Guild. This group has already met twice with great enthusiasm. While it became difficult to keep the Altar Guild active during Covid, it is very exciting to have a strong group ready to build this team up again. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please reach out to me.

As a reminder, during Lent, there will be midweek Lenten Services on Wednesdays at Noon and 7 p.m. on March 4, 11, 18 and 25.

May you have a meaningful journey through Lent as we journey with Jesus to the cross.

Lynda Knaggs  
Worship and Music Chair

\* \* \* \* \*

## Christian Education Updates

We are getting ready for this year's Easter Egg Hunt. We will be working with the Nursery School for our Easter Egg Hunt. It will be on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. Everyone is invited to join in on the fun. We are in need of helpers to stuff Easter eggs. We will be stuffing over 1,000 eggs. Also looking for candy donations, please remember the piece of candy needs to fit into an Easter egg. Please contact Julie if you are interested.

Julie Cirillo

\* \* \* \* \*

## News From Your Property Committee

The big news was snowfalls at the end of December and month of January. We had over nine salting and plowing events during this time--spending most of our snow removal budget. The bitter cold also gave us frozen pipes in the education wing. They were frozen for a week or more, even with the water running they still froze. Throughout this bitter cold snap our heaters have been working fine.

March has some projects scheduled: hopefully painting, some light fixtures will be replaced and some work on our audio system.

Joe Regan

\* \* \* \* \*

## Fellowship Committee

The Fellowship Committee will be hosting a coffee hour between services on March 1st. The Easter Egg Hunt will take place on March 27th at 6 p.m. We are looking for people to stuff eggs. Please see Julie Cirillo to get your eggs. We will also need helpers during the Easter Egg hunt. We will host Easter Breakfast between services on April 5th. There are sign-up sheets for attendance as well as food donations. We are looking into a date to go to the Blue Rocks game again this year.

Barbara McClintock

\* \* \* \* \*

## Financial Update

Heavenly Father, as we begin this new year, we pause with grateful hearts for Your continued guidance and provision. You have carried us through seasons of challenge and growth, and we enter 2026 trusting in Your wisdom and faithfulness. We ask Your blessing upon this year ahead. As we move forward, may we do so with renewed purpose, strengthened resolve, and confidence that You are guiding every step. Let 2026 be a year of stability, growth, and meaningful impact. Amen.

	<u>Jan. 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Giving/Income	\$ 34,689.	\$ 34,689.
Expenses	\$ 48,839.	48,839.
Plus/Minus	(\$ 14,150)	(\$ 14,150.)

**Summary:** January concluded with a net deficit of \$14,149. This was primarily influenced by two factors. Since there was no in person worship service on the final Sunday of the month, it resulted in one week fewer of deposited contributions. The significant snowfall during the month led to snow removal expenses totaling \$9,900, which impacted our month.

**Envelope/General Giving:** Total income for January finished slightly under budget, primarily due to one fewer week of worship giving. Other giving categories remain steady, and early February contributions indicate positive momentum heading into the new year.

**Giving Opportunities:** With the new fiscal year underway, we encourage continued participation in all giving opportunities, including worship offerings, designated funds, and endowment support. Every gift, no matter the size, plays a meaningful role in sustaining and growing our ministry.

We remember Tom Savage with deep gratitude. We thank You for his leadership, his commitment, and the steady presence he brought as chair of this committee. His dedication helped shape the path we walk today. Comfort those who mourn his loss, and allow his example of service to continue inspiring us in the work ahead.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Cunningham and  
Rebecca DeSantis

\* \* \* \* \*

## Easter Lilies

*Please be seated.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Social Ministry

Social Ministry continues to collect cereal and breakfast bars for the Welcome Church. There is a pink bin in the hallway for your gifts. Thank you!

Cheryl Morrell

\* \* \* \* \*

## Food Collection

We continue to collect and deliver food items to The Media Food Bank at First Church. Last month we were told that the total weight of the food we delivered was 340 pounds. Thank you to all the members of Saint Matthew who are willing to support this project and help provide food to the families who need this support. We find that the volunteers at the bank have come to know us. When we pull in, they come out with large shopping carts to help us unload all the items to help feed the needy who rely on the Food Bank. Our next collection will be the first Sunday in March. Thank you for your continued support.

Nancy Regan

\* \* \* \* \*

## Beds for Kids

We were able to deliver several items including sheets, blankets, comforter sets, bedspreads, many pillows, books, and other items to Beds for Kids. Thank you to all who support this ongoing project. Joe and I also saw the new warehouse in Huntingdon Valley which had all kinds of mattresses, bed frames, and boxes of bedding to go out to the children in need of a safe, warm place to sleep.

The people there thanked us for supporting them to do the work they do.

Nancy Regan

\* \* \* \* \*

## Gemma Services

The people of Gemma Services were grateful for the support of their ongoing projects that we do to support the children who require the services they receive at Gemma. Our work this past year with the Everything But the Bird, the collection of so many Christmas gifts, gift wrapping, and the monthly 60 favors the ladies of our Women of the ELCA meeting assemble from the donated candy are the many ways Saint Matthew supports the programs at Gemma. Thank you to all who support this program.

Nancy Regan

\* \* \* \* \*

## Welcome Church

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

Joan Krauter

\* \* \* \* \*

## Children's Corner

This is the church season of Lent. Lent is a 40-day, solemn Christian season of fasting, prayer, and repentance beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending before Easter Sunday. It commemorates Jesus Christ's 40 days of fasting in the wilderness.

Here are some ways to bring Lent into your household:

- **Giving Bouquet:** Create paper flowers on pipe cleaner stems. Write ways to help others (almsgiving) on each flower and place them in a decorated tube labeled "A Bouquet of Giving".
- **40-Day Prayer Chain:** Cut 40 strips of paper, writing a person, situation, or prayer request on each, and link them together. Remove one link daily to pray.
- **Lenten Vine/Tracker:** Paint or draw a vine with 40 leaves (one for each day). Add three black leaves at the end for Holy Week.
- **Paper Plate Lenten Calendar:** Decorate a paper plate with words like "Pray, Fast, Give," and add a cross in the center, using it to track the 40 days.
- **Crown of Thorns:** Create a crown using brown paper, pipe cleaners, or twigs to represent Jesus' sacrifice.
- **Resurrection Set:** Use clay to make a cave/tomb, a caterpillar (representing death), and a tissue paper butterfly (for Easter).
- **Pretzel Making:** Bake homemade pretzels, which traditionally represent arms crossed in prayer, connecting to the fasting and prayer theme of Lent.
- **Lenten Passports:** Create a "passport" that children get stamped for completing daily devotions, acts of kindness, or attending services.

### Simple & Engaging Ideas

- **Stained Glass Cross:** Use black construction paper for the outline and tissue paper for the cross, making a beautiful window decoration.
- **Sacrifice Bean Jar:** Give children a jar of beans to move from one side to the other when they make a sacrifice or good deed.
- **Stations of the Cross Art:** Children can draw, color, or make small puppets for each of the Stations of the Cross.

Julie Cirillo

\* \* \* \* \*

## Nursery School

February was a joyful and love-filled month at Saint Matthew Christian Nursery School! Our classrooms were buzzing with excitement as the children—and two of their very special guests—came dressed to impress and danced the day away at our Valentine's Sweethearts dance on the 15th. Smiles, music,

and lots of sweet moments made it a day to remember for everyone involved.

We are also excited to share that registration for the 2026–2027 school year has officially begun. This month, we were blessed to welcome new families during our Open House held on Sunday, February 22nd. It was a wonderful opportunity to open our doors, share our program, and connect with families interested in becoming part of the Saint Matthew community.

A heartfelt thank you to the members of our congregation who took a yard sign home to help advertise the Open House. Your support and outreach make a meaningful difference and help our Nursery School continue to grow and thrive. We are grateful for your ongoing prayers, encouragement, and involvement in our ministry to young children and their families.

As we continue this season of growth and fellowship, we are reminded of God's Word:

*“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*  
(Matthew 19:14)

Jenny Redding  
Director

\* \* \* \* \*

## Newsletter Deadline

Articles for the April newsletter are due by **noon** on **Monday, March 16.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## Men's Breakfast

Our March Men's Breakfast will be held at 7 a.m. on March 21 at the Court Diner in Media.

Come enjoy good Christian fellowship.

Yours in Christ,  
John Stefl

\* \* \* \* \*

## Vital Statistics

**Death:** **Thomas L. Savage III**  
Died February 3, 2026

**Baptisms:** **John William Bramhall IV**  
**Olivia Marie Bramhall**  
Children of John W. Bramhall III and Laurie Bramhall  
Born April 15, 2010  
Baptized February 8, 2026

\* \* \* \* \*

## Monthly Mailbag



Dear Saint Matthew Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your recent generous support of Women of the ELCA and its ministries. Your partnership with us is essential in our work to continue to mobilize women to act boldly on

their faith in Jesus Christ. We know that Christ calls each of us in unique ways to serve God, our neighbor, our church and our society. Your gift helps us remain committed to inspiring women to follow the call of Jesus and to provide avenues for women to grow in faith, love and hope. Thank you for your partnership with us!

Sincerely,  
Merrily Burmeister  
Churchwide Board Member  
Women of the ELCA

Dear Nancy,

I wanted to send a quick note to say thank you so much for your generous donation of handmade quilts, books, coloring books, new pillows, stuffed animals, sheet sets, blankets from Saint Matthew Lutheran Church! I really can't tell you how much we appreciate your support.

The goal of the Beds for Kids program is to make sure that no child in our area ever has to sleep on the floor. While we served over 3,400 children aged 2-20 in 2025, the sad fact is that over 6,000 kids in our area still went to sleep on a makeshift bed using blankets, cushions, boxes and whatever else they could find most nights last year. Your generous donation will go a long way to help us end child bedlessness in Greater Philadelphia. In fact, with your gift, we will be able to provide a bedding package including a memory foam mattress, steel bed frame, blankets, sheets, pillows, a toothbrush, bedtime books, and a stuffed animal to more children living in poverty in our community.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support of the Beds for Kids program! You have made a real difference in the lives of the kids we serve.

Thanks to you, children will go to bed, looking forward to a restful night's sleep, some for the first time in their lives, and better off than the night before. Thank you once again for your donation. It means the world to us!

Sincerely,  
Kate Fay  
Executive Director  
OHAAT Beds for Kids

Dear Women of Saint Matthew Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for providing 4 twin-size blankets and 3 full/queen-size blankets. This winter has been especially cold, and our clients will be so grateful to receive a warm blanket. Your genuine concern is a tangible way of letting them know that they are not alone – that there is someone who cares about their needs. Thank you for your dedicated time and effort in supporting us. A special thanks to Nancy and her husband for dropping off the blankets.

May the Presence, Protection and Power of our Lord and Savior continue to be with you all as your testimony of love for God reaches those in need.

Respectfully,  
Lorraine E. Armstrong Martinez  
Melissa Haught  
Chester County Migrant Ministry

Dear Saint Matthew Friends,

We are very grateful for Saint Matthew’s long-standing friendship and generosity to Gemma Services! Thank you once again for your donation of candy-filled treat bags for the youth in residence at Gemma and 10 rolls of wrapping paper. Your generosity brings so much joy to the children, and your support helps Gemma continue to provide vital behavioral health, prevention, and child welfare services and specialized education services through our Martin Luther School for youth and families who are facing challenging times. Your friendship matters a great deal to us – thank you!

Thank you all for your wonderfully generous support of Gemma and “our” kids!

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

Dear Saint Matthew Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$25 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,  
Daniel Rift  
Director, Congregational Generosity  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

\* \* \* \* \*

# ***Saint Matthew Easter Egg Hunt***



***March 27<sup>th</sup> 6:00 p.m.***

**Join us for a fun night of  
hunting for Easter eggs**

**Decorate your own bag to collect eggs**

**Look out for a special guest**

**RSVP by March 23**

**Go to: [stmattspringfield.org](http://stmattspringfield.org) and click the  
link at the top of the page for the sign-up  
sheet.**

## **Lent, Holy Week and Easter Schedule**

### **Midweek Lenten Services: Wednesday, 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