



# The GOOD NEWSLETTER

of  
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church  
Springfield, Pennsylvania

Volume 75, Number 11

December 2023

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



## From Our Pastor

Connect  
Care  
eQuip  
Cultivate

### The Advent of Our God

*The advent of our God  
shall be our theme for prayer;  
come, let us meet him on the road  
and place for him prepare.*

*Charles Coffin, 1676-1749*

This entire month seems like an exercise in waiting, preparing, and anticipating. As we prepare for Thanksgiving, as we begin to get ready for Christmas, as we decorate our homes, purchase gifts, plan meals and gatherings, and feel the hubbub of the season we are filled with all these “ings.” Waiting can be hard, as we have to wait in line, wait for orders, wait on the mail, wait for responses. Preparing can be exhausting, as we strive to make all things right for family, friends, and indeed ourselves as the holidays fold one into another. Anticipating can bring hope, but also anxiety as we look forward to all that is to come, and yet fear we may not be ready.

The liturgical season of Advent combines all of these “ings,” even as the focus is somewhat different. While this month is about waiting, preparing, and anticipating celebrations of things that have happened (Thanksgiving and Christmas), Advent is a season of waiting, preparing, and anticipating that which is yet to be. In Advent, which is a word that means “coming,” we anticipate the time when Christ will come again and bring to fulfillment all the promises of the Kingdom of Heaven. As we hear in our lessons in November, the people of faith can become weary of the waiting, tired of the constant preparation, and fade in their anticipation of Jesus’ coming, as it has been so long since he was here, and since the promise of his return was made.

Yet, every year, we bring out the Advent wreath, we mark the time with candles, we are called to look ahead, we are encouraged not to grow weary, but instead continue to anticipate, with joy, the Advent of our God. Can we still find time to prepare our hearts? Can we put aside the frustration of waiting? Can we find joy and excitement in anticipating Jesus’ coming again? Even as this month is so full, this is my hope and prayer: that we would never grow weary of looking for Jesus, that we would rejoice in the opportunity to worship him, that we would yearn for his

presence, that we would gather together to encourage one another in the waiting, the preparing, the anticipating.

Getting ready for the holidays is what we do as families. Getting ready for the coming of Christ is what we do as a family of faith. Let us worship, let us pray, let us sing, let us look forward *together* as we wait, prepare, and anticipate Jesus.

Pastor Karl M. Richard

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## Christian Education Updates

Please join us every Sunday at 9:00 am in the church for our opening program. We then go into our classes. We have classes for all ages. We are still in need of substitute teachers. Please let Julie know if you are interested.

Please join us on December 17<sup>th</sup> for the Hanging of the Greens. The children will be working on desserts and maybe a skit!

Julie Cirillo

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## Worship and Music Notes

You should have received the Advent Devotional booklet and hopefully are setting aside time daily for your faith journey during the Advent Season. *The Light of Grace* was mailed to adult households. In conjunction with the Christian Education Committee, *Do Not Open Until Christmas* was sent to those households with young children with the corresponding Advent Calendar being given out to the children during Sunday School. *Advent Seasonings* was mailed to our teens.

Along with the normal rush and crush between Thanksgiving and New Year’s, this year is especially jam-packed for the church faithful. Advent is celebrated over 4 Sundays starting on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Check your calendars and you will see that the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent falls on December 24<sup>th</sup>, aka Christmas Eve. So on December 24<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating 4<sup>th</sup> Advent at the 10:15 service, and Christmas Eve celebrations will be held in the afternoon and evening.

During Advent we will be using a liturgy setting written by Marty Haugen. It should be familiar to you as we have used it in the past. Marty Haugen is the gifted liturgist who wrote the beautiful Holden Evening Prayer service, as well as some of my favorite hymns.

We will celebrate Advent at the 8:00 and 10:15 a.m. services on the first three Sundays in December. (Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup>). Hanging of the Greens will be held Sunday, December

17<sup>th</sup> after the 10:15 service. We will start with a light lunch at 11:30 followed by church decorating to begin at noon. Everyone is urged to come and give a hand as there is much to be done, both inside and out. There is word that the kids/youth will be providing desserts and entertainment.

Decorating will set the stage for our annual Christmas caroling on Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. While scheduled to be outside, this event will move inside depending on the weather. Cookies and cocoa will follow the caroling.

4<sup>th</sup> Advent will be celebrated on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at the 10:15 service and we will light the last Advent candle. Note - there will NOT be an 8:00 a.m. service on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

Christmas Eve services will be held at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. These will both be our traditional services featuring special music, communion, carols and singing *Silent Night* by candlelight. Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> will be Lessons and Carols. Watch your calendars and check your emails and the church website to track the many other events happening throughout the month.

May you be blessed throughout the month of December delighting in the gift God bestowed upon us.

Blessings,  
Pat McHugh  
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### Advent and Christmas Schedule

**1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays in Advent  
December 3, 10 and 17**

Worship Services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>—Hanging of the Greens at Noon**

11:30 Light lunch followed by decorating the church inside and outside

**Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>—Christmas Caroling - 6:30 p.m.**

Candlelight Christmas caroling, cookies, and cocoa outside in the parking lot

This event will be moved inside if necessary due to weather.

**Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**

10:15 a.m. 4th Sunday in Advent

**Christmas Eve Services**

3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service with Communion

8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service with Communion and Candlelight

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>—Lessons and Carols**

8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

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### It's Time to Order Christmas Poinsettias

Orders for the lovely poinsettias that beautify our sanctuary each Christmas season may be placed by signing up in the church hallway or calling the church office. The cost of a plant is \$12.00, and they may be taken home following the 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Orders may be placed until Monday, December 18.

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### Fellowship Committee News

The Fellowship Committee would like to thank the Property and Stewardship Committees for hosting the coffee hour. Please consider attending the upcoming events. The Chester Children's Winter Concert is on Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. The concert is at the Lang Music Building at Swarthmore College beginning at 7:30 p.m. The Rose Tree Park Light Festival is on Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. More

information will be posted in the bulletin. We will be attending *Miracle of Christmas* at Sight and Sound Theater on Thursday, December 28th.

Barb McClintock  
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### Could you Bake Cookies?

Could you bake 2 dozen cookies for our Christmas Caroling event on December 20, at 6:30 p.m.? There is a sign-up sheet on the hallway table. Thank you!

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### Young Adults Group

Join us December 9th at 7:00 p.m. at Rose Tree Park to see the Christmas Lights. We will be going to Lisa and Tony Thompson's home afterwards for hot chocolate and devotions. We will also be looking to plan our Winter/Spring events, so bring any ideas that you may have.

We have gotten together the past couple of months. In October, we did a train ride on the Wilmington and Western Railroad Train. In November, we gathered at the Thompson House for a Friendsgiving event (Thanksgiving meal with friends). Fun was had by all at both events.

The Young Adults Group is open to any 20 – 40 year old who wants to connect with other Young Adults at Saint Matthew. Contact Lisa Thompson at LBA0417@gmail.com with any questions or be on the look-out for our events.

Lisa Thompson  
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### Your Property Committee Updates

Our elevator now has a working phone. In the event that there is a problem in the car, you can now push the phone button and it will connect to 911. The ongoing door problem has been fixed temporarily. We have fixed the sensor strips on the car; now we are waiting for an estimate to improve the wiring on the top of the car. This should be completed in the next few weeks.

The chandeliers' parts are in and we are waiting for our contractor to schedule a date to install. We will notify all when we have this date, and will be asking for help in cleaning the globes of the chandeliers.

Our last Coffee Connection was Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by your Property Committee. A special thanks to our members and spouses for all the great cakes and breads.

Our tent has been taken down and will be stored until the Spring. Thank you, Ted, Steve, Pastor, Bill, and Kathy--excellent job done by all.

We have replaced the toilet in the bathroom in room 5 of the Nursery School with a lower child-size toilet, and we replaced the old rusty sink in the bathroom in room 3. All are working well.

An update on **UNANTICIPATED REPAIR WORK THAT HAS TO BE DONE**: As noted in our last newsletter, our chandeliers have been paid for with donations. We also have a family that will match up to \$5,000.00 for more of these repairs that had to be done. We are almost there with donations of \$3,520.00 as October 31<sup>st</sup>. A big thank you to all who contributed.

Joe Regan  
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### Men's Breakfast

We have scheduled the December Men's Breakfast for Saturday, December 16, at 7 a.m. at The Court Diner in Media. It's a great way to start the day!

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## Financial Update

The Finance Ministry Team met on November 8th. For the year we are in the negative, but we are still close to our budget. For the month we finished in the positive. This reflects the fact that we transferred over the 5% from the endowment fund for the year in October. Envelope giving was light and for the year we are below from a budget standpoint. Don't forget that this is the season for giving. I hope you all have a Merry Christmas.

Kevin Cunningham

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## Food Collection Report

Thanks to everyone who donated food for the food collection. We were able to deliver a car full of much needed food to the Media Food Bank last month. The staff there now look for us to come on the first Sunday. Our next collection date is Sunday, December 3rd. Please leave your donations in the large soup can in the back hallway or we will be outside from 11 a.m. to noon.

Nancy Regan

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## Social Ministry

Thank you in advance to all of you who are participating in purchasing pajamas and other gifts for the children of Faith Immanuel Lutheran Church. Please bring your WRAPPED gift WITH THE TAG ATTACHED to the church parlor by December 12th so that our committee can deliver them in time for their children's party. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Liscom, Marge Kobasa, Gina Milana or myself.

Wishing all of you a blessed Christmas with family and friends.

Cheryl Morrell

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## January Newsletter Deadline

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

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## Gemma Halloween Candy Collection

Thank you, thank you for all the candy that was donated to the treat bag project for Gemma Services. We received so many items and such a variety that will allow the ladies to assemble treat bags for all the children in the residential treatment program. The ladies assemble 56 bags every month using the candy donated. Thank you for all the donations.

Nancy Regan

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## Everything But The Turkey

Thank you to everyone who donated gift cards and food to the Everything But The Turkey program. Through the generosity of the people of Saint Matthew, we were able to collect, assemble, and deliver 9 complete gift bags loaded with everything needed for a delicious Thanksgiving meal.

Nancy Regan

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## Gemma Services Christmas Gift List

Christmas will soon be here and the Christmas list from Gemma Service has arrived! We will be collecting the following items. There will be idea labels to assist

everyone. Please feel free to take them.

Lego and Lego Friend Sets

Gel pen sets (with 25+ pens)

Matchbox or Hot Wheels cars

Tracks for Matchbox or Hot Wheels cars

Remote Control cars

Card games (Uno playing cards, Phase 10)

Bop-it or Simon electronic games

Squishmallows stuffed animals (small and medium)

Activity books for kids (Sudoku, word search, mazes, sticker by numbers, etc.)

Crayola art sets (Crayola brand does not come with scissors or pencil sharpeners, so no safety concerns)

The Women of the ELCA will be traveling up to Gemma Services on the morning of Thursday, December 14, to help wrap the gifts. Let us make this Christmas a special one for the children in the residential treatment program.

Nancy Regan

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## Children's Corner

Dear Children,

In my opinion, no other holiday awakens the five senses like Christmas — the smell of pine, the twinkly night sky in early winter, the warm melodies of the Christmas carols, the touch of glittery wrapping paper, and the taste of delicious cookies from the oven! How lucky we are that the Creator endowed us with these senses so we can enjoy the birth of a very special baby. Saint Matthew is so fortunate to have a beautiful sanctuary and I will always remember the lovely decorations this time of year — I especially think about the two trees that are lovingly decorated with Chrismons (embroidered by the ladies of our church).

I thought you might want to learn about Chrismons and their history. The word "Chrismon" is a blending of the words Christ and monogram. Chrismons are a rather recent tradition in Christian churches and they remind us of the celebration of the birth of Christ. Chrismons originated in Virginia (in a Lutheran Church) by Frances Spencer in 1957 and the idea quickly spread to other denominations. Chrismons need to be handmade (not factory produced) using the colors white for purity, and gold for God's majesty and glory. Some of the symbols are: the dove, fish, Celtic cross, Jerusalem cross, shepherd's crook, chalice, shell, and others. These beautifully embroidered decorations represent a phase in the life and ministry of our Lord. Saint Matthew has two decorations for every symbol. Often, if a church decorates two Chrismon trees, the "like" symbols need to be placed on the tree in "mirror image" which is rather challenging. Maris Grove has a Chrismon tree with a special ceremony explaining all the meanings of each Chrismon. If you want to know more about each symbol, you can find the symbols explained on the internet.

Dear Parents,

Although this is a busy time of year, perhaps it can also be a time of learning. In the past, I have helped with the decorations and I knew many of those ladies who meticulously embroidered these fragile pieces. You may want to help your youngster with their search for the symbolic meanings of

Chrismons. Chrismons can also be made from white and gold paper and some sparkles. Have fun!

Sylvia Yost  
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## Nursery School

Saint Matthew Christian Nursery School's school year is underway, full steam ahead! We provide high quality early childhood education in a Christian environment that reflects the attitude of Christ to "love as I have loved you," with an exceptional developmentally appropriate academic curriculum delivered by our highly qualified teachers. We have policies, procedures and protocols in place to ensure the health and safety of all our families, students and staff. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please contact the Nursery School's office at 610-543-5589 or visit our website [www.stmattscns.org](http://www.stmattscns.org). I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Warmly,  
Ana Fischer, Executive Director  
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## Women of the ELCA

Our annual December breakfast will be held in Elbert Hall on December 2, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. Our guest speaker is Tim Emmett-Rardin, Communications and Development Manager of the Media Food Bank. All are invited to attend. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the hallway so we can plan the food, but if you decide at the last minute to attend, please do!

Wishing our church family a blessed Christmas.

Carol Penjoke  
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## Vital Statistics

**Death:** **Dolores Bratz**  
Died: October 23, 2023  
Funeral: October 27, 2023

**Baptism:** **Joseph John Stasis, Jr.**  
Son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph John Stasis, Sr.  
Born May 7, 2023  
Baptized November 19, 2023  
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## Monthly Mailbag

Dear Joanne,

We have received and thank you for the Lutheran Church Women's generous donation of \$25 that will help us continue to provide vital behavioral health, prevention, child welfare, and educational services for youth and families who are facing extreme challenges. Your support truly matters! We are very grateful for your continued friendship and generosity to Gemma Services (formed by the merger of Silver Springs-Martin Luther School and the Village)!

We are grateful for Saint Matthew's continued support of Gemma Services. We have received and greatly appreciate your kind donation of small treat bags for the children in the Residential Program. These will make the perfect fall treats and are sure to make the boys and girls smile!

With the help of friends like all of you, Gemma is able to provide assistance for more than 3,000 youth and families each year as they heal from traumas, manage mental health challenges, and navigate difficult times. We would be happy to welcome any of

our friends from Saint Matthew to visit any of our three locations to see firsthand the programs you are helping us to assist. We are especially grateful for your ongoing partnership during these continued times of challenge for those we serve and for our communities. On behalf of all of us at Gemma, thank you and best wishes!

Sincerely,  
Lynn Unipan, Chief Development Officer  
Gemma Services

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your recent generous gift of \$56.25 to Lutheran World Relief's Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund. The kindness and love you show your neighbors in Christ is truly transformational. Quilts and kits are both practical and comforting. Wherever they are in the world and whatever challenges they face, the families who receive them can truly feel the love and care that quilters and kit makers put into them.

In colder regions of Tanzania, quilts are actually helping children grow! Researchers recently discovered that many children in these regions did not have adequate bedding and were using too many calories to keep their bodies warm — taking away valuable energy they need to grow. For children who are already hungry or malnourished, this can create long-term problems with their physical growth and mental development. But, wrapped in a warm and cozy quilt, they can sleep soundly and grow up healthy.

And that is just one example of how your generosity helps. Whether a quilt or kit reaches a family in a refugee camp, a new mother in an urban area or a child in a remote village, your kindness brings comfort and hope to people when they need it most. I am so grateful for the love you are bestowing on our neighbors around the world.

Thank you,  
Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard  
President and CEO  
Lutheran World Relief

Dear Joan,

Thank you for your donation. Your continuous generosity never goes unnoticed. The residents always enjoy these special gifts.

There is always a resident in need of a nice lap blanket or someone looking for some new cosmetics. The calendars come in handy all the time and with Christmas right around the corner, they will look forward to finding that perfect card to send to loved ones.

Thank you once again for your kindhearted contribution. It is always appreciated.

With all my gratitude,  
Susan Harrar  
Director of TAS and Volunteer Services  
Fair Acres

Dear Saint Matthew Lutheran Church,

Thank you for gift of \$185.00 to Lutheran Disaster Response.

As a church, we believe that God's grace is freely given to us. This brings us peace and hope. It makes a difference in our lives. Through your gifts to the ministries of the ELCA you share this amazing grace with others and help people around the world feel the transformational power of God's love.

Your Spirit-filled generosity helps families and communities reeling from disasters. No matter the variety of disaster, no matter the variety of need, your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response enable people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods now and far into the future. Thank you for your gracious gifts. The glory of God shines through you.

In Christ,  
Amanda White, Director  
Congregational Generosity  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dear Patti and Members of Saint Matthew Lutheran Church,

Thank you for providing the 5 twin blankets, 2 queen blankets, 16 bags of beans and 2 bags of rice. They will be very much appreciated. It is a tangible way of letting them know that they are not alone—that there is someone who cares about their needs as they begin to settle in. Thank you for your dedicated time and effort in supporting us.

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 and Melissa Haught  
Chester County Migrant Ministry

Dear Friends at Saint Matthew,

We are very grateful for Saint Matthew Lutheran Church—Springfield’s continued friendship and generosity to Gemma Services (formed by the merger of Silver Springs-Martin Luther School and the Village)! Thank you for your donation of 9 “Everything but the Turkey” bags, 2 fleece blankets and 2 Rubik’s Cubes. Your support will help us continue to provide vital behavioral health, prevention, child welfare, and educational services for youth and families who are facing extreme challenges and truly matters!

With the help of friends like you, Gemma accompanies more than 3,000 youth and families each year as they heal from traumas, manage mental health challenges, and navigate difficult times. We would be happy to welcome any of our friends from Saint Matthew to visit any of our three locations to see firsthand the programs you are helping to support.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Bryant  
Senior Development Officer  
Gemma Services

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### **Worship Responsibilities**

We will not schedule these responsibilities at this time. We will ask people to serve each week as needed.

**M & M Cookie Mix and  
Cocoa Brownie Mix in a jar  
For Sale \$15 each**



**The youth of Saint Matthew are selling  
mason jar mixes for \$15 each.**

**Proceeds from this sale will go toward the  
Tuscarora Youth Retreat and the Youth National  
Gathering. Thank you for your support!**

**Any questions, please contact  
Julie Cirillo [manoa1stgrade@hotmail.com](mailto:manoa1stgrade@hotmail.com)**

## **Advent and Christmas Schedule**

**1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays in Advent  
December 3, 10 and 17**

Worship Services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>—Hanging of the Greens at Noon**

11:30 Light lunch followed by decorating the church  
inside and outside

**Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>—Christmas Caroling - 6:30 p.m.**

Candlelight Christmas caroling, cookies, and cocoa  
outside in the parking lot

This event will be moved inside if necessary due to weather.

**Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**

10:15 a.m. 4th Sunday in Advent

**Christmas Eve Services**

3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service with Communion

8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service with  
Communion and Candlelight

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> —Lessons and Carols**

8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.