



# PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

MARK 1:3



# St. Matthew

## LUTHERAN CHURCH

### CENTERED IN CHRIST

Celebrating Love • Serving All

**Second Sunday of Advent**

**Please tear this page off  
and put in the offering basket as you leave:**

***WE WELCOME YOU!***

Date: December 10, 2023

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Attending **8:30 or 10:30 a.m.**

\_\_\_ I/We would like to add or update my email for the Messenger and other email updates. (Be sure to include email address changes below.)

\_\_\_ I/We would like to add or update my/our address for mailings. (Be sure to include name & contact changes below)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# St. Matthew

## LUTHERAN CHURCH

Phone: 717-637-7101

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30 W Chestnut Street Hanover PA 17331

Email: [info@stmattlutheran.org](mailto:info@stmattlutheran.org) [www.stmattlutheran.org](http://www.stmattlutheran.org)

Facebook: St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Hanover PA

Instagram: @stmatthanover

Livestream Worship:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/StMatthewLutheranChurchHanoverPA>



Welcome! Whether you are a long-time member of St. Matthew, a first-time visitor, or somewhere in between, we are thankful you are here today. We have more information for you to read on the welcome sheet in the pew. We're excited about the many ministries of St. Matt's, and we hope you'll find a way to plug in that makes sense for you!

**About today:** *We gather as a community for worship around word, wine, and water. Put another way, in worship we meet Christ in scripture proclaimed in speech & song, in the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism celebrated or remembered, and in community gathered together.*

Our regular weekend schedule includes Saturday worship at 5 p.m., Sunday indoors at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. (livestreamed).

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Pastor: God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

PRELUDE with silent reflection

*Comfort, Comfort*

arr. Manz

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – THE CANDLE OF PEACE

Advent Prayer: Today we light the candle of peace. We are reminded of God's goodness in our waiting and watching. Let us pray:  
Praise to you, O God, who gives us courage to start again.  
You fasten righteousness around your waist  
and baptize with the Holy Spirit's fire.  
Bless us as we mirror your mighty fire in these simple flames,  
and teach us to mirror your justice in the paths we prepare.  
We ask that peace abound,  
until none hurt or destroy over all the earth.

**ALL: Amen.**

HYMN

*Light One Candle to Watch for the Messiah*

Wold



## WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: In the tender compassion of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

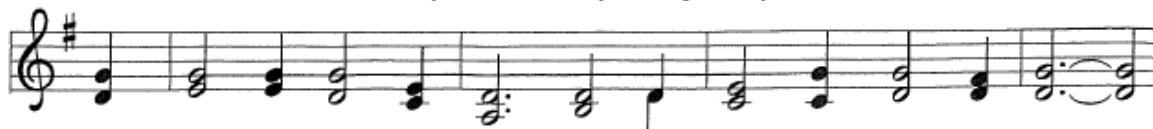
**ALL: Amen.**

*Please stand as you are able.*

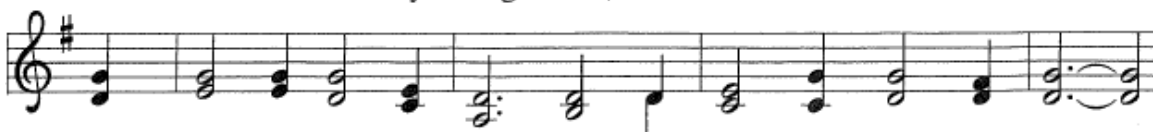
## OPENING HYMN

### *Prepare the Royal Highway*

Franzén



- 1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
- 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
- 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
- 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

## APOSTOLIC GREETING

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**All: And also with you.**

*Please be seated.*

*(10:30) Children ages 10 and under are invited to meet our Children's Church Leader at the baptismal font at the front of the Nave. She will take the children for Children's Church at the "Pray-ground" in the Fellowship Hall. They will hear a Bible story from this week's lectionary in an age-appropriate format and spend some time exploring their faith and creativity together. They will return during the passing of the peace.*

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**All: Amen.**

**THE READING: Isaiah 40:1-11** *In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.*

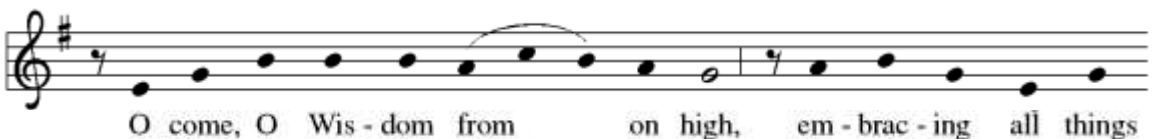
Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

*You may remain seated for the Gospel reading.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Köln





Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

**HOLY GOSPEL Mark 1:1-8** *The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.*

Lector: The Gospel of our Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

**THE MESSAGE**

Pastor Kathy Vitalis Hoffman

**SERMON RESPONSE**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Köln

O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel.

*Please stand as you are able.*

**CONFESSION OF FAITH**

*Apostles' Creed*

Assisting Minister: Let us confess our faith with the words of the Apostles' Creed.

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## PRAYERS

Assisting Minister: Each petition concludes, *“Merciful God,”* and the congregation responds, *“receive our prayer.”*

*Children return from Children’s Church.*

## PEACE

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**All: And also with you.**

*(The congregation is invited to greet one another with the words “Peace be with you,” and gestures respecting personal space and comfort levels.)*

*Please be seated.*

<b>MUSICAL OFFERING (8:30)</b>	<b><i>On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry</i></b>	<b>arr. Kosche</b>
<b>(10:30)</b>	<b><i>English Advent Carol</i></b>	<b>Liebergen</b>
	<b>Adult Choir with Caleb Leckrone, Clarinet and Deb Smith, Director</b>	



**Text:** Come, O come, Emmanuel, come to ransom Israel  
 That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
 Come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer, cheer our souls by Your Advent here;  
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

## GENEROSITY MOMENT

*We celebrate God's generosity embodied in this community's time, talents, and treasures shared with one another. **Thank you for your presence** in worship today. **Thank you for offering** the "first fruits" of your finances. Offerings may be placed in the baskets near the entrances/exits of the worship space or through online giving on our website. **Thank you for sharing** your spiritual gifts with our church, local, and global communities.*

*Please stand as you are able.*

## OFFERTORY

### Create In Me

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
 spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your  
 pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me, Re -  
 store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,

*(Continued next page)*



## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. God our provider,

**All: by your merciful hand  
abundance springs up from the earth.  
Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.  
Let them be a sign of your steadfast love  
and faithfulness for all people,  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## THE MEAL

### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER WITH WORDS OF INSTITUTION

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy  
kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our  
trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and  
lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For  
thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever  
and ever. Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*Please be seated.*

## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*All are welcome to the Lord's Supper. The meal is served in several ways. Choose what is appropriate for you.*

**Individual packets** are available for those wishing to remain in their pew.

**If you are unable to come forward**, but would like communion served by the pastor, please let one of the ushers know and the Sacrament will be brought to you at your seat.

**Continuous manner** – Come forward at the direction of the ushers, take the wafer from the pastor, “The body of Christ, given for you”, and eat it. (Gluten-free wafers are available) Then move to the next station and take one of the cups of wine (red) or grape juice (white) “The blood of Christ, shed for you”, and drink it.

**Children who do not yet receive communion** are invited to come forward to receive a blessing.

## IN-PEW COMMUNION

Pastor: The body of Christ, given for you.

**All: Amen.** (Eat wafer)

(Pause)

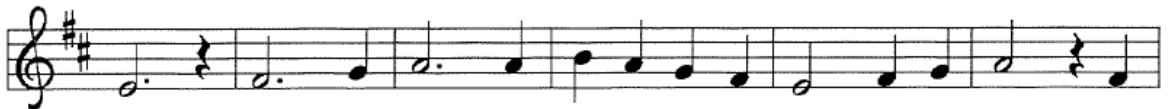
Pastor: The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**All: Amen.** (Drink wine)

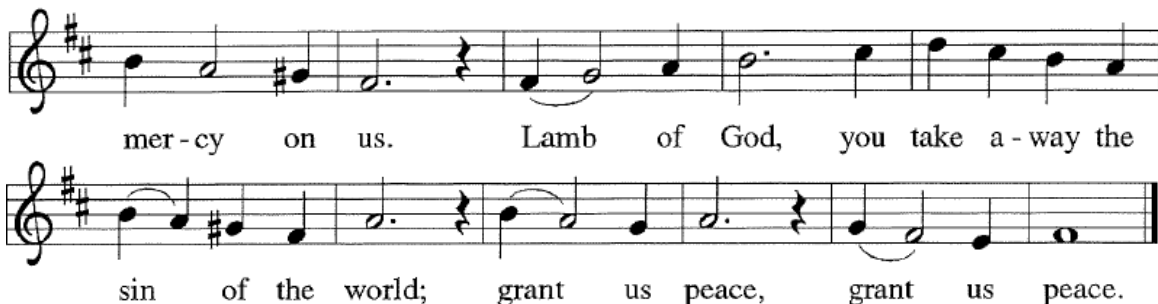
## LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on

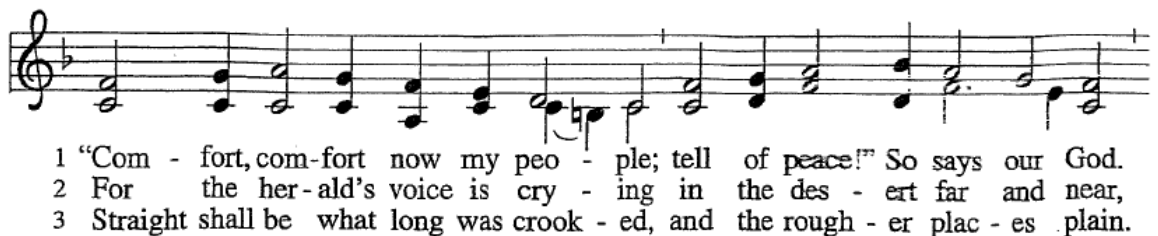


us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have

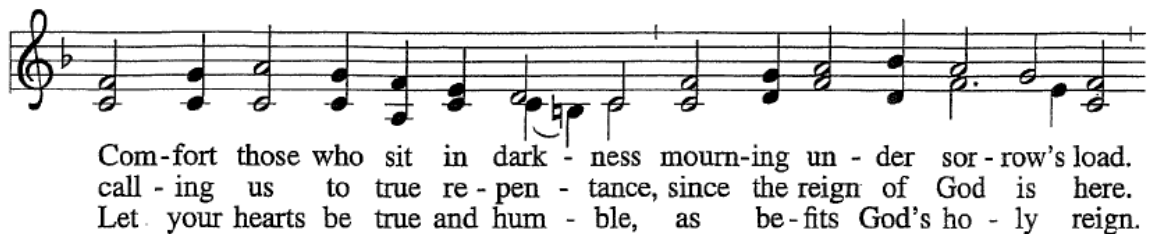


mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

**COMMUNION HYMN** *Comfort, Comfort Now My People* Olearius/Winkworth



1 "Com-fort, com-fort now my peo-ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.  
2 For the her-ald's voice is cry-ing in the des-ert far and near,  
3 Straight shall be what long was crook-ed, and the rough-er plac-es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark-ness mourn-ing un-der sor-row's load.  
call-ing us to true re-pen-tance, since the reign of God is here.  
Let your hearts be true and hum-ble, as be-fits God's ho-ly reign.



To God's peo-ple now pro-claim that God's par-don waits for them!  
Oh, that warn-ing cry o-bey! Now pre-pare for God a way.  
For the glo-ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a-broad,



Tell them that their war is o-ver; God will reign in peace for-ev-er.  
Val-leys, rise to greet the Sav-ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa-vor.  
and all flesh shall see the to-ken that God's word is nev-er bro-ken.

*Please stand as you are able.*

### **POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you  
and keep you in his grace.

**All: Amen.**

### **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. Generous God,  
in bread and cup you have revealed your glory  
for all people to see together.  
Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim  
your good news of liberation and release,  
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

**All: Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

Pastor: The God of peace bless you,  
the love of Christ sustain you in hope,  
and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you  
now and forever .

**All: Amen.**

### **SENDING HYMN**

***Hark the Glad Sound***

**Doddridge/Haweis**

**(Next Page)**



1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior  
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's  
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing  
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come



prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -  
bond - age held. The gates of brass be -  
soul to cure, and with the trea - sures  
shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal



pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.  
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.  
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.  
arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

## DISMISSAL:

Assisting Minister: Go in peace. Christ is near.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

## POSTLUDE

## *Hark the Glad Sound*

Manz

\* \* \* \* \*

Please note: Music for this service is covered under CCLI # 1000682 –  
Also #A-708989 One License.net

## St. Matthew Lutheran Church



Scan for  
e-giving

Rev. Kathryn Vitalis Hoffman, Lead Pastor, ext. 231

*[pastorkathy@stmattlutheran.org](mailto:pastorkathy@stmattlutheran.org)*

Rev. Faye C. Snyder, Visitation Pastor

Rev. Mark Vitalis Hoffman, Interim Teaching Pastor

*[PastorMark@CrossMarks.com](mailto:PastorMark@CrossMarks.com)*

Tim Peck, Youth Ministry, ext. 230, *[youth@stmattlutheran.org](mailto:youth@stmattlutheran.org)*,

Melissa Smith, Children and Family Ministry Coordinator, ext. 229

*[msmith@stmattlutheran.org](mailto:msmith@stmattlutheran.org)*

Doris Deitzel, Lay Pastoral Assistant, ext. 225, *[ddeitzel@stmattlutheran.org](mailto:ddeitzel@stmattlutheran.org)*

Deb Smith, Interim Youth and Adult Music Ministry Leader,

*[musicmama1@comcast.net](mailto:musicmama1@comcast.net)*

Lindsay Ampsacher, Interim Children's Music Ministry Leader,

*[Lindsay.ampsacher@gmail.com](mailto:Lindsay.ampsacher@gmail.com)*

**THE ALTAR FLOWERS** have been given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Carlene Badman and her parents Carl and Martha Horvath by Terry and Holly Badman and Kate Korneick; and in loving memory of Malcolm Sterner by Doris and family; and in loving memory of Steve Hagarman by Cristy, Hans, Alexi and Amanda Leonhardt.

**THE BULLETINS** have been given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Carlene Badman and her parents Carl and Martha Horvath by Terry and Holly Badman and Kate Korneick; and in loving memory of Steve Hagarman by the family; and in loving memory of Roscoe and Helena Stewart and my wife Emily of 55 years by Richard Stewart and family.

**THE SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND CHRISTIAN BURIAL** for Yvonne McDowell will be held on Tuesday, December 13 at Murphy Beck Funeral Home. Though we celebrate the departure of her life to be with the Lord, we also include in our prayers of support the members of her family and all who are bereaved.

***Our warm thanks*** to all those assisting in the Sunday worship services:

Musicians ..... 8:30 & 10:30 Karl Mincemoyer, Organist  
10:30 Adult Choir with Caleb Leckrone, Clarinet and Deb Smith, Director  
Advent Readers..... 8:30 Barb Rupp and Walt Porowski  
10:30 the Fralic family  
Altar Flower Delivery ..... Doris Deitzel  
Altar Guild ..... Anna Marchio, Judy Porowski  
Assisting Minister.....8:30 Mike Jones; 10:30 Pastor Phil Covert  
Children’s Church Leader (10:30) ..... Melissa Smith  
Communion Assistants .....8:30 Amy Beck, Sara Staub  
10:30 Bobbie Lidard, Barbara Strangfeld  
Communion Preparers..... 8:30 Nancy Bealing, Sarah Morris  
10:30 Penny Rutters, Debby Seibert  
Couriers..... 8:30 Walt Porowski, Sara Staub  
10:30 John Mancini, Bob Strangfeld  
Greeters ..... 8:30 Ardis Kunde, Gail Mummert  
10:30 Alan & Pam Cashman, Barb Rupp  
Lector .....8:30 Amy Beck 10:30 Tom Shultz  
Live Stream (10:30)..... Tom & Susie Shultz  
Ushers ..... 8:30 Team 9 – Tim Peck, Hunter Crabbs, Tyler Fett, Elijah Fisher,  
Aaron Smith, Addyson Trostle  
10:30 Team 1 – Tom Shultz, Bob & Kit Curlen, Sean Huston,  
John Mancini, Linda Wheeler  
Welcome Place ..... Mary Jones



**Prayer List:** God hears and understands our prayers. Fully putting our trust in God, we lay our requests before him. Our next prayers are in gratitude, knowing that God is already at work in our situation. Names will stay on our Prayer List for a maximum of 30 days. If you would like us to remove your name sooner, please notify the office. You may also access our Prayer Chain by contacting Beth Koontz at 717-624-3907.


Bob	Pat	Vicki
Yvonne	Sandy	Kathy
Margaret	Jeffrey	Loretta
Colin	Harriet	

**DEATHS:** Yvonne McDowell  
Bryce Little, father of Drew Little

**RECOMMENDED SCRIPTURE READINGS** for the week beginning December 10:

Sunday: Mark 13:24-37	Thursday: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10
Monday: Revelation 15:1-8	Friday: Acts 11:19-26
Tuesday: Revelation 18:1-10	Saturday: Mark 11:27-33
Wednesday: Luke 21:34-38	

<b>Attendance:</b>	(12/02)	5:00 p.m.....	37
	(12/03)	8:30 a.m.....	100
		10:30 a.m.....	138
	(11/27-12/03)	Online views .....	145
	<b>Total</b>	.....	420



**THE MITTEN/SOCK/HAT/SCARF TREES** are located in the church office lobby and the Gathering Place. Let’s cover the trees with colorful mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, ear muffs, socks and other winter wear. Coats may be placed under the tree, too. Please be sure all items are new or very gently worn. They may be for children or adults. Thank you for helping our neighbors in need!

## St. Matthew Calendar December 10-17, 2023

Sun.	Worship with Holy Communion (Nave).....	8:30 a.m.
	Faith Connections .....	9:30-10:20 a.m.
	Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsal (Fellowship Hall).....	9:30-10:20 a.m.
	Splash Class (Prayground).....	9:45-10:15 a.m.
	Worship with Holy Communion (Nave).....	10:30 a.m.
	Spirit Singers Rehearsal .....	11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
	Community Meal (Fellowship Hall) .....	3:00-6:00 p.m.
Mon.	Discovery Place Classes.....	8:45-11:30 a.m.
Tues.	Discovery Place Classes.....	8:45-11:30 a.m.
	Staff Meetings (Library) .....	10:30 a.m.
	No Junior Choir Rehearsal	
	Cub Scouts.....	6:30-7:30 p.m.
	No All Committee Night	
Wed.	Discovery Place Classes.....	8:45-11:15 a.m.
	Advent Dinner/Church.....	5:30-6:30 p.m.
	Boy Scouts.....	6:00-8:30 p.m.
Thurs.	Discovery Place Classes.....	8:45-11:30 a.m.
	Preschool and Primary Choir Rehearsals.....	4:15-5:00 p.m.
	St. Matthew Ringers Rehearsal (Nave).....	6:15-7:00 p.m.
	Adult Choir Rehearsal (Nave).....	7:15-8:15 p.m.
Fri.	Discovery Place Classes.....	8:45-11:15 a.m.
Sat.	Worship with Holy Communion (Nave).....	5:00 p.m.
Sun.	Worship with Holy Communion (Nave).....	8:30 a.m.
	Christmas Pageant! (Fellowship Hall) .....	9:30-10:20 a.m.
	Worship with Holy Communion (Nave).....	10:30 a.m.
	Spirit Singers Rehearsal .....	11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
	Christmas Caroling!.....	2:00-3:30 p.m.
	Youth Handbell Rehearsal .....	5:00-5:45 p.m.

**CHECK OUT THE NATIVITY SCENES** in the display case in the Fellowship Hall



hallway for other members' scenes! Please contact Robert Strangfeld of the Generosity Team at [rstrangfeld133@gmail.com](mailto:rstrangfeld133@gmail.com) or by cell phone, 570-468-9679, if you would like to see your Nativity set on display.

### **YOUTH MINISTRIES**

**2**

**SECOND SUNDAY CONVERSATION** High School Youth will gather the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday monthly for faith-focused conversation. This month we will meet Sunday, **December 10 at 9:30-10:20 a.m.** in the Youth Suite.



**OUR COMMUNITY MEAL** with a **Christmas Story Time and Craft** for children, is a new event to St. Matthew and will be held **THIS** Sunday, December 10, 3-6 p.m. Entertainment is listed below. Santa will be visiting the children. **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

3:30 p.m. Christmas Carol Bingo

4:00 Songs with Brody Rummel, Madison Maloney,  
Carys Lunn

4:30 Mini Ministers Puppet show

5:00 Story time and Craft

4-5:00 p.m. A visit from Santa Claus



**Promises Fulfilled? Promises Unimagined. Promises Kept!**  
**Dinner Church is back for Advent!**



This **Wednesday evening is our last Advent Dinner Church service in the Fellowship Hall.** The meal will be served at 5:30 and while people are finishing up with their dinner, the service will begin at 5:55. Our time together will include table discussions, singing, a short Bible study and new this year, age appropriate activities at the table for children.

Our focus is on **Promises Unimagined. Promises Kept!**

John the Baptist's parents were quite old. Were they even imagining that they might still have a son? Were Jesus' parents ever imagining that Mary would get pregnant in some unbelievable way? Where have you experienced the promises of God in your own life in ways you never imagined?

Advent is a time of preparation, and it is a time when we see God's love and grace unfolding in marvelous promises made and promises kept! Dinner Church is time well spent for Advent. Sign-up on the tear off sheet on the last page of this bulletin, the Gathering Place, or call the church office or email, [info@stmattlutheran.org](mailto:info@stmattlutheran.org).

***SPLASH CLASS***

Parents of infants and toddlers 3 months to 3 years old are invited to attend Splash Class- a "baby and me" style group class. Together, parents/caregivers and children will explore what's next after you've been "splashed" in the waters of Baptism. Adam and Lindsay Amspacher, will lead this 30 minute class **THIS** Sunday, December 10.



***CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2023!*** "The First Christmas" will be performed on **December 17 at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. All Are Welcome!**

## **CALLING ALL CAROLERS!**



Dress Warm & Join the Fun - Meet in Fellowship Hall.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17. 2 – 3:30 p.m.**

We'll Carpool and use the Church Van.

**BRING COOKIES TO SHARE AFTERWARD.**



## **REPORT ON PHASE 1 OF VISIONING PROCESS**

The LEAD Committee would like to thank all who completed our survey and participated in one of the ten forums that were held. We would like to share some of the general themes that we heard in our conversations with the members of St Matthew.

In response to how you would describe St Matthew, we consistently heard welcoming, friendly and caring. Many expressed appreciation of the leadership of the church as well as its strong music ministry. Many were pleased with the increased outreach of the church within the community and beyond. The strength of the youth groups and meaningful sermons delivered by the pastors was also cited frequently.

The response regarding what members are passionate about centered primarily on the programs involving music and our younger members. Our music program has the ability to draw people into the church through the variety of choirs for all ages and the concert programs. Many expressed how the musical selections enhance the message of the day. There seems to be a consensus of offering a blend of traditional and contemporary music within the service.

Members have enjoyed seeing the younger members of the congregation actively involved in all aspects of the service. Interest was expressed in terms of offering a full day preschool program. In order to get more school aged children involved in activities, an effort should be made to offer invitations to be involved as the seasons change. Finally, there was interest in trying to get a young adult group formed for fellowship.

*(Continued next page)*

Finally, we wondered how members felt about our community. The consensus was that St. Matthew does care about the community as evidenced by the Caring Cupboard, Community Meals and special drives to benefit those in need.

However, many recognized the plight of the homeless, those dealing with mental health and addiction problems, and food insecurity. These problems are significant and many thought beyond the ability of St Matthew to solve by themselves. A large number of people suggested possibly partnering with community agencies to be part of the solution

The above were the main themes discussed. Some individuals provided some excellent suggestions for consideration. Again we thank all of you for your thought and willingness to share those thoughts with the committee.

We now move onto Phase 2 which will involve talking to various local agencies and organizations to get their insight on the Hanover Community. We look forward to those discussions and hope to come away better educated on the needs of Hanover and what role we at St Matthew can play in being part of the solution.

If you have any questions, please contact any of the LEAD Team members: Hunter Crabbs, Sherry Crouse, Randy Kline, Tim Peck, Kelli Reed, Kayla Steffens, Jen Troup, Pastor Kathy Vitalis Hoffman, or Vicki Wildasin

## **December**

- 10      9:30-10:20 a.m. Christmas Pageant Dress rehearsal – Fellowship Hall  
          9:45-10:15 a.m. Splash Class  
  
          3:00-6:00 p.m. Community Meal – Fellowship Hall  
          5:00 p.m. Story Time and Craft – Upper Room
- 13      5:30-6:00 p.m. Advent Dinner – Fellowship Hall  
          6:00-6:30 p.m. Advent Worship Service – Fellowship Hall
- 15      10:30 a.m. Discovery Place Preschool Christmas Program - Nave
- 17      9:30 a.m. Christmas Pageant – Fellowship Hall  
          1:45-4:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling to our Homebound

22 10:00 a.m. Packing and delivering Gift Bags – Fellowship Hall

12:00 p.m. Church Office Closes

23 5:00 p.m. Saturday Worship Service

24 9:30 a.m. **Worship Service**



CHRISTMAS EVE



24 **Christmas Eve Services:**

4:30 p.m. **Family Service**

7:00 p.m. **Candlelight & Carol Service**

9:30 p.m. **Candlelight & Carol Service**

25 & 26 Church Office Closed

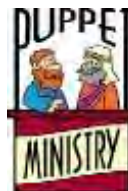
29 12:00 p.m. Church Office Closes

30 5:00 p.m. Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)

5:45 p.m. Sandwiches

6:30 p.m. Mini-Minister Puppet Show

31 9:30 a.m. **Worship Service**



## January - 2024

1 Church Office Closed

5-7 Winterfest (Offsite)

7 9:45-10:15 a.m. Splash class

12 7 p.m. Joseph Martin & Friends Concert

13 Choral workshop



## **Help and encouragement after the death of a loved one.**

At our 13-session GriefShare group you'll find understanding, guidance, relief, and a safe place to navigate the challenges of grief. Come join us! Mondays 6:30 – 8 p.m. January 29 through April 22, in the Upper Room.

Call or email the Church Office to register. You may email Pastor Faye at *nicksong@comcast.net* or call her, 717-451-0851; or fill out the tear-off sheet on the inside back of this bulletin and place in the offering basket.



**News from Discovery Place Preschool !** A way to help support your church preschool program is by displaying a CAR DECAL with the Discovery Place Preschool logo. There are some available at the hospitality desk, with a suggested donation of \$5. Help us advertise our preschool with a decal on your vehicle.

**Registration for the 2024-2025** preschool year will begin in late January. An Open House to meet the teachers will be announced online in the new year - keep watch on our Facebook and Instagram accounts. Please share our preschool information with families with young children.

**AS A REMINDER TO THE CONGREGATION**, all holiday envelope giving becomes part of our commitment to our world mission outreach. This is a practice that has been in force at St. Matthew for many years and was approved by Church Council. Holiday envelopes include Wednesday Lenten offerings, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.



**IN ORDER FOR YOUR END-OF-YEAR OFFERINGS** to be posted in 2023, they must be **RECEIVED** in the church office by **Thursday, December 28 at 9 a.m.** Any offerings arriving in the office after that date and time will be posted in January of 2024.



## Christmas Gift Bags

**Who in your life has had a difficult year and needs to be cheered up?**

**Relative? Friend? Fellow Church Member? Co-worker?**

You can help cheer them up by supplying information below.

We will deliver Gift Bags (fruit, candy, cookies, Christmas ornament, and more) to folks in grief, lost their job, sick, injured, lonely, sad or upset for ANY reason.

Please help locate them.



**Not limited to St. Matthew members, but MUST be located within 15 miles of Hanover.**

Questions? Submitting a recipient? Helping to pack or deliver?

Contact Pastor Faye through the office, or at *nicksong@comcast.net*.

Or drop filled-out form into offering basket by **Deadline December 11.**

Recipient Name \_\_\_\_\_

Recipient Address \_\_\_\_\_

Recipient Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Help pack on December 22? \_\_\_\_\_  
22? \_\_\_\_\_

Help Deliver on December



***VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED*** to deliver the Christmas poinsettias to our homebound members. We will deliver them on Thursday, December 28, at 9:00 a.m. Please fill out the form on the inside back cover of this bulletin or call Doris in the church office, 717-637-7101, ext. 225, or email her, [ddeitzel@stmattlutheran.org](mailto:ddeitzel@stmattlutheran.org) if you are able to help.

***THE YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM*** is seeking adults interested in supporting our youth programming. The Team would meet monthly at a time convenient to its participants. An organizing meeting will be held in February 2024. Contact Tim Peck if you are interested or have questions, [youth@stmattlutheran.org](mailto:youth@stmattlutheran.org)

## SIGN-UP FORM

[Please fill out the section(s) that pertain to you (and your family and friends),  
tear off the page and place in the offering basket at the rear of the Nave. Or  
email the church office, *info@stmattlutheran.org*]

### Advent Dinner/Church

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Attending December 13: \_\_\_\_\_

### Deliver Poinsettias – December 28 9:00 a.m.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

### Grief Share – 1/29 to 4/22

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-11**

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength.

O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

**Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13**

**SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-15a**

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be dissolved.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

**GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,"

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."