



The St. Matthew MESSENGER

September 2024

Vol. XIV Issue 4

From the Desk of Pastor Kathy:

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings! I hope you are enjoying this last bit of summer while eagerly anticipating September. For many of our community it's back to school time! Here at St. Matthew we are also gearing up for the start of our fall programs. Be sure to see all the details in this Messenger. As you see, there is something for everyone!

On Sunday, September 22, our 8:30 service will come indoors and Faith Connections begins. It is also when we will pick up the biblical themes as they relate to our purpose and core values with the tagline--*Where the welcome is wide and the love is real.*

September 21/22: **Welcoming all as we share God's love**

September 28/29: **Celebrating together in Worship**

Our celebration includes 100 year anniversary of the dedication of our building.

October 5/6: **Deepening our faith in Jesus**

October 12/13: **Engaging children and youth**

October 19/20: **Walking with our neighbors**

October 26/27: **Embracing one another as God created us**

Our worship also includes the celebration of our heritage as reforming Lutherans.

We have clarified our purpose and core values through the strategic planning process. This is the result of in-depth listening of our congregation and our community and specifically our neighborhood. This is who we are and sets the priorities for what we do. Now the hard work begins to put this vision into action by setting goals and implementing them through action steps.

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From Pastor Kathy:*(Continued from page 1)*

I extend deep gratitude to our LEAD/Dream Team who led us to this place. Their many hours of listening to God through scripture, one another, congregation members and our neighbors, has created a culture of learning and growth. Thank you to the team leader, Vicki Wildasin and members, Hunter Crabbs, Sherry Crouse, Darlene Klenk, Randy Kline, Tim Peck, Kelli Reed, Kayla Steffens and Jen Troup.

Beloved siblings in Christ,

I am so incredibly excited to kick-off the program-year with you all. We already have so much in store for the next few months with faith connections and our children, youth, & families ministries. It is a joy and an honor to be working alongside our terrific staff and our faithful volunteers as we put together our fall programs.

As we look to this fall, we'll learn more about God, deepen our faith in Jesus, and practice sharing God's love with others. We'll build relationships and connections among and across age groups that help us to embrace one other and cherish one another as God created us. And I hope that we'll have lots of fun along the way. I believe that we're never too old or too young to build and to deepen a relationship with Jesus. And we're never too old or too young to share our faith in Jesus with others. And I believe that we can learn about Jesus from the youngest among us to the oldest among us, our friends new to the faith and our friends who've followed Jesus for a lifetime. At least, I know I do.

I'll leave the particulars to the various committees and staff members who have contributed to this Messenger. But I want to thank our staff – Pastor Kathy, Pastor Faye, Ben, Deb, Missy, and Tim – for all of their hard work as we move into this fall. And I want to thank all of our volunteers – our teachers, our committee members, our councils – for everything they've done and will do this fall. And of course, I want to thank you – for your support and for your participation in the life and the ministry of St. Matthew.

Peace,
Pastor Alex

For a number of significant reasons, this process is taking longer than we anticipated. I do believe, however, that God, *who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.* Ephesians 3:20

On Sunday, September 28, 1924 people gathered for worship at 10:30 a.m. in the Nave. They were handed a bulletin for the “Dedicatory Services” and at the top was

written, “To the Glory of God.” One hundred years later we also gather for worship each week to glorify God. Some things don't change and here at St. Matthew, Christ is and will be the center of our identity, our purpose and our worship. Thanks be to God.

Together in Christ,
Pastor Kathy



Faith

CONNECTIONS

Confirmation Start-Up (Grades 6-8)

Join us for Confirmation!!

Hey 6th-8th graders! Ready to take a deep dive into your faith?? In Confirmation, we are all about helping you explore your faith in a way that is real, fun, and maybe a bit challenging! Here we equip you to faithfully continue the promises that your family made for you at your baptism.

This year we'll be exploring what the Bible is, what it isn't, and why it matters for us. This is your time to ask questions, to wrestle with what you believe, and to discover who Jesus is for you and for the world. We meet regularly during Faith Connections in the Youth Room (3rd floor). Contact Pastor Alex (pastoralex@stmattlutheran.org) or Tim (youth@stmattlutheran.org) with questions or for more information. We hope to see you there!

Important Dates:

- **September 8** - Family Night (6 p.m. - Youth Room)
- **September 22** – Confirmation Begins during Faith Connections (9:30 a.m. - Youth Room)
- **September 27-29** – Lower Susquehanna Synod Alive Retreat (Nawakwa)
- **November 22-24** – St. Matt Youth Retreat (grades 6-12)

Confirmation (Grade 9)

Welcome back 9th graders!! You are on the final stretch of your Confirmation journey. We are so proud of you! Thank you for your dedication, your questions, and your willingness to explore your faith. And we can't wait to celebrate with you!

During faith connections, you will be getting ready for Confirmation Sunday, and you will be working on your faith statements. On **Reformation Sunday (October 27)**, you will affirm your baptism along with your peers with the support of God and of the church. As a church, we will celebrate with you by hosting a luncheon after the 10:30am service.



If you have any questions or need more information, contact Pastor Kathy (pastorkathy@stmattlutheran.org).

Faith Connections for Adults

The Pastors' Class: Beginning on September 22

The Wide Welcome in Scripture

Adults are invited to attend a Bible Study focused on the ways “*Welcome*” is an important expression of our faith. This welcome is wider and deeper than you can imagine. We will explore God’s welcome of us, God’s welcome of others, welcoming one another and others in our life together and how we welcome our whole selves as loved by God. We meet in the Upper Room on the second floor on Sundays at 9:30-10:20. You can take the steps or elevator by the back door, off the parking lot.

Life Events in the



LIFE EVENTS
May 17 - August 17, 2024

Baptism

June 2 – Nathaniel John Morrison, son of Steven and Miranda (Roop) Morrison

June 15 – Wren Mabel Klunk, daughter of Adam and Elizabeth (Brokenshire) Klunk

July 21 – Amelia Virginia Bralj, daughter of Mladen Foltz Bralj and Jaclyn Foltz-Bralj, with sponsors
Kayla Marnik and Christopher Sproull

August 4 - Kennedy Cole Cox, daughter of Kyle and Samantha (Koontz) Cox, with sponsors
Drew & Kayla Steffens and Lindsay & Adam Amspacher

August 4 - Evelyn Marie Schreffler, daughter of Robby and Abby (Shenk) Schreffler

Deaths

May 21 – David Hoffman

May 27 – Mary Ann Harman

June 21 - Barbara J. Redding

June 27 – Anna Mae Trone

July 12 – Arlene A. Tomecek

August 13 - Larry G. Blocher

The following members of St Matthew have been awarded scholarships:

Fairy Straley and Millard and Helen Nace Scholarships were granted to Lea Coppola, Hunter Crabbs, Elizabeth Huston, Mya Maloney, and Cole Smith. The J H Ehlers Scholarship was granted to Mike Jones and the George F. and Lelia Stouffer Scholarship was awarded to Gracie Troup.

The Scholarship Committee extends their congratulations and wishes for continued success as each of you continue to pursue your education.



Music Ministry Start Up

The music ministry is excited to start again! Please check the following choirs and start times:

- **Adult Choir** rehearses on Thursdays starting on Thursday, September 12, at 7:00 p.m.
- **Adult Handbells** rehearse on Thursdays starting Thursday, September 12, at 6:00 p.m.
- **Children's Choir** (age 3-2nd grade) rehearses on Thursdays starting Thursday, September 19, from 4:15-5:00 p.m.
- **Junior Choir/Handbells** (3rd-6th grade) rehearses on Tuesdays starting Tuesday, September 17, from 4:30-5:15 p.m.
- **Youth Choir/Handbells** (7th grade-12th grade) rehearse on Sundays starting on Sunday, September 22, from 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
- **Mini Ministers Puppet Ministry** (6th-12th grades) rehearses on Saturdays starting Saturday, September 21, from 11-11:45 a.m.
- **SoulFire Praise Team** rehearses every other Tuesday at 7:00 p.m., starting Tuesday, September 3 and Tuesday, September 17.



From the desk of Deb Smith,
Associate Minister of Music:

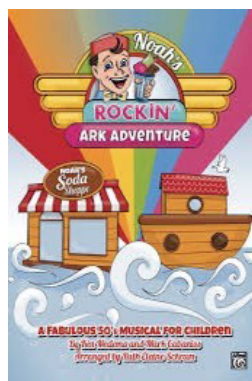
Thank you to our Summer Musicians

Thank you to all our summer musicians for adding to our services. Your time and talent are appreciated!



Noah's Rockin' Ark Adventure

We had an AWESOME music camp in August. The week was full of singing, music games, playing instruments, and lots of goldfish crackers and icee pops (thank you St. Matthew). The



children will be presenting the musical, *Noah's Rockin' Ark Adventure*, on Sunday, September 15 at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

In Home Music Ministry

In Home Music will be provided for our home bound members. Ben or Deb will come to you (with a keyboard) and play for a half hour. Contact the church office if you or someone you know would be interested.

Generosity Corner

*Gratitude
Turns what we have
Into enough to share*

Summer is coming to a close, school is starting, flowers are fading and nights are cooler. It's that time of year when things start to get back to normal. You know, that hectic, lunch-packing, everybody got their backpack? normal. After-school activities, game schedules, starting to think about the holidays kind of normal that we all experience this time of year.

Hopefully, if your church attendance had fallen off a bit this summer due to vacations or just plain old sleeping in, you're getting back on track and we'll see your smiling face again, sitting with family and friends. We missed you.

Now, a question: In the crazy, hustle-bustle of our daily lives, how many times do you stop to thank God? Do you thank Him when the driver in front of you who's been going ten miles under the speed limit turns off on another street? Do you thank Him when all of your family manages to be at home for dinner at the same time? How about when that test result you've been anxiously awaiting turns out to be normal?

Do you stop to thank God for all the generous love and gifts He has given you? How do you reciprocate that love? God calls us to be his disciples, to share His love, but where do we start? A simple smile to an overworked clerk in a store, an offer to return a shopping cart for someone at the supermarket, buying a meal for someone down and out, donating blankets to an animal shelter, or sometimes just giving a hug to an elderly neighbor are good ways to begin.

Our God is a generous God, generous with love and forgiveness. As God's children, we're called to be generous too, with love for God and with love for each other. In gratitude, make someone's day by showing them God's love!

*A message from
Your Generosity Team*

Girl Scouts

We're looking for volunteers and girls interested in joining us for fun and friendship. Girl scouts can be found almost everywhere in our Youth Building on Monday nights from 6:00 -8:00 p.m.! There are 5 troops for girls from kindergarten to 12th grade.

- Daisies Troop 80794
- Brownies Troop 80712
- Juniors Troop 80722
- Cadets Troop 80701
- Seniors Troop 80771



For questions about the Girl Scout program at St. Matthew, contact Janice Peck at 717-637-2651. Her email address is janicenpeck8@gmail.com.

Children and Family Ministry

At the end of June, we had 60 kids with 22 youth and adult leaders come together to make our Scuba Vacation Bible School a huge success! With Bible stories, music, crafts and outdoor activities, (including a water day!) everyone was able to “Dive into a Friendship with God.” I would like to say Thank You again to everyone who made this week so amazing. From the donations given to all of those who spent the week with us, we appreciate all you do!



September 22- Children’s Rally Day

As things will be slightly different this year, we invite all children age 3 through 5th grade to the lower level. At 9:30 a.m., join us in the children’s choir room to sing and make music with Mr. Ben and Ms. Deb. Afterwards, come over to the Faith Connections rooms for a meet and greet with the teachers and make some crafts. Snacks will be available.

September 29- Bible Milestone

If you are a 3rd grader, (or older who has not already received a bible) we ask you to join us at the 10:30 a.m. service on September 29 to receive the gift of the Bible. At this service, you will be asked to come up to the front of the church and then go to Fellowship Hall to have some fun while learning about your Bible. Please contact Missy Smith at msmith@stmattlutheran.org if you will be joining us for this milestone.

Looking forward to this fall, we have lots of opportunities for you to get involved. With Backpack Blessing, Children’s Rally Day, Intergenerational Events, and the Christmas Pageant, you don’t want to miss out on anything! We can’t wait to see you all soon!

*~From Melissa Smith,
Children and Family Ministry Coordinator*

October- Play Group!

We have some exciting news! We will be starting a “Parent and Me” type play group! This play group will be offered for families in our community on Monday mornings from 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m. As we are still getting all the details together for this group, we are asking for some patience. One thing we know we will need is some Play Group Grammies! If you are able to volunteer, please contact Missy Smith at msmith@stmattlutheran.org. More details will be out as soon as we have them!



YOUTH LOOKING FORWARD



~From Tim Peck,
Youth Ministry

Family Night for Confirmation September 8, 2024 in Youth Suite 6-8 p.m.

- More information coming soon.
- Get it on your schedule.



Trunk or Treat and Community meal October 28, 2024 from 5:30-7 p.m.

- **Trunks and activities**
- For the October Community Meal, we will be having Chili, Soup, Corn Bread/Muffins, Hot Dogs, Water, and Popsicles.
- We would like to ask the congregation to help with donations of Chili, Chicken Corn Soup, Corn Bread/Muffins, Bottled Water, and Popsicles. If you could let Amy Beck (abeck1976@comcast.net) know by October 13 what you are bringing that would be extremely helpful.
- We will need help with setup, serving, and clean-up.
- More information coming soon.

Alive for Middle Schoolers 6-8th grade September 27-29, 2024



Lutheran Community for Middle Schoolers

ALIVE is **our annual synod middle-school retreat scheduled for September 27-29, 2024, at Camp Nawakwa.** Congregations from across our synod gather with their adult advisors and youth for this traditionally early fall weekend that includes large group gatherings with singing led by our ALIVE Alumni Band, theme-centered videos and stories, and games, interspersed with small group gatherings, where youth gather with peers and a small group leader, to converse about the theme and its impact in their lives of faith.

The weekend also includes crafts, games, campfires, free-time, and community-building that allows youth and their adult counterparts time to deepen existing friendships, and create new ones.



2024 CORN DRIVE GOAL: 1000 CANS

We Can Do It!

~ Collection Bin will be in The Gathering Place ~
If you would prefer to make a financial contribution, please make check payable to St. Matthew Lutheran Church and put Corn Drive in the Memo Line. Any questions, please email Amy Beck, Abeck1976@comcast.net

CAMP HEBRON - FALL RETREAT

Sponsored By: The Lower Susquehanna Synodical
 Women's Organization

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, October 25, 26, 27

The retreat theme is: "We've Got Mail." Ephesians 3:7-8. Our leader this year is Molly Haggerty, Middletown, PA. There will be faith renewal in worship, laughter and tears, getting reacquainted with old friends and making new friends, refreshing walks in the outdoors or sitting quietly in meditation. Offering motel-type accommodations including linens, private bath and 5 delicious meals (no cooking for a whole week-end ladies). There will be carpooling from the church lot for those interested. There is also an opportunity for Saturday only registration. See registration form for more info. Forms can be picked up in the church office or on the Hospitality Desk. Registrations must be postmarked by Monday, September 9. For more information call Johnetta Miller, 717-637-4259.



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. August 26 through November 25 (No Labor Day session), in the Upper Room. Each session stands alone so you can join us anytime.

For more information or to sign up contact Pastor Faye at nicksong@comcast.net.



Heart-Felt Card Group will meet to assemble cards for Birthdays and for Christmas Gift Bags on Wednesday, September 11 at 2:30 p.m. in the Upper Room.



New Members and Walk-ins Welcome. Don't know how? We will teach you. Please email Pastor Faye at nicksong@comcast.net to confirm your spot.

Save the Date

September 21 - Pumpkin Decorating and Apple Cider with
Personal Care Residents at Utz Terrace, 2 p.m.

November 3 – Pajama Story Time

November 3-December 1 – Christmas Pageant Rehearsals

November 9 – Surviving the Holidays

November 10 – Veterans Breakfast

November 17– Intergenerational Christmas Ornament Event

November 22-24 – Fall Youth Retreat at Nawakwa

December 2 – Blue Christmas Worship

December 7 – Cookie Walk

December 8 – Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsal

December 8 – Decorate Church

December 18 – Caroling to Shut-ins

December 15 – Christmas Pageant / Community Meal

December 28 – Puppet Show & Meal

December 31 – New Year's Eve Lock-in

January 3-5 – Winterfest for 9-12th graders and Young Adults



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