



The St. Matthew MESSENGER

December/January 2025

Vol. XIV Issue 6

From the Staff:

The Staff of St. Matthew Lutheran Church
wish you all a most joyful and peaceful holiday season.
May the light of Christ shine upon you always!

Debbie *pastor Louise* *Missy*
Ben *Tim* *Hannah*
Pastor Alex *Pastor Kathy* *Jane*
DAVE B *Wayne* *Frank* *Stacy*
David M

Join us as we celebrate the birth
of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ!

- 21 5:00 p.m. Saturday Worship Service (Nave)
- 22 8:30 a.m. Worship Service (Nave)
- 22 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour with Coffee & Cookies
(Fellowship Hall)
- 22 10:30 a.m. Worship Service (Nave)
- 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 & 27 Church Office Closed
- 28 5:00 p.m. Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)
- 5:45 p.m. Food
- 6:30 p.m. Mini-Minister Puppet Show
- 29 9:30 a.m. Worship Service (Nave)
- Jan. 1 Church Office Closed

(See full schedule on calendar insert page)

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THE 2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES are available in the hallway outside of Fellowship Hall. Please pick up your envelopes and those of any relatives and friends who may not visit us regularly. Many thanks to Bryant and Ann Meckley and Randy Kline, for placing the labels on the envelopes.



GOOD NEWS, GREAT JOY: An Advent and Christmas Daily Devotion Book can be found on the Hospitality Desk and in the church office. There are also On Eagle's Wings devotions available.



IN ORDER FOR YOUR END-OF-YEAR OFFERINGS to be posted in 2024, they must be **RECEIVED** in the church office by **Monday, December 30 at 9 a.m.** Any offerings arriving in the office after that date and time will be posted in January of 2025.

The Luckenbaughs would like to thank the Ministerial Staff, Ministers of Music, Support Staff as well as the many members of our Church Family who have reached out and expressed condolences for the loss of our mother/grandmother, Josie Luckenbaugh. The care and support we received was exceptional and we are extremely grateful. The Bereavement Team (Ardis, Mary and Sally) did a fantastic job. The music was absolutely beautiful. Thank you, Ben, Deb, Madison and Dan. Special thank you to Pastor Kathy, Pastor Faye and Pastor Alex. The Holy Spirit is certainly with you.

A Grateful Family,
The Luckenbaughs

CONGREGATION MEETING RESULTS:

At the Congregation meeting on Sunday, November 10, the budget was approved for 2025. There are copies available in the church office if you would like one. We voted into Council the following members: Amy Beck, Sue Covert, Sherry Crouse, and Irvin Sowers. We thank outgoing council members John Mancini, Kelli Reed, Sara Staub and Drew Steffens. Also, Rollie and Ardis Kunde were elected to be the voting members for the June 2025 Synod Assembly. We thank all Congregation Council members for their service to St. Matthew.

LIFE EVENTS

September 15 - November 15, 2024

Baptism

September 15 – Grayson Carter Smith, son of Benjamin Smith and Sarah Cutler
 October 13 – Iroh Selbygrey Ardis and Ripley Windham Ardis, children of Tesla Ardis and Patrick Ardis, with sponsor Melissa Smith
 October 13 – Affirmation of Baptism for Azura Lovanna Ardis, Patrick Michael Ardis and Tesla Ardis with sponsor Melissa Smith
 October 20 - Emerson Rose Mai, daughter of Brady and Brooke Mai, with sponsors Brandon and Kelsey Dreamer

Confirmands

We celebrated our Confirmands as they affirmed their baptism through the Rite of Confirmation on Reformation Sunday, October 27.

Landry Crabbs, Hallie Doll, Claire Fralic,
Meredith Staub, Addyson Trostle, and Landen Zinneman

Deaths

August 24 – Edna A. Koch
 August 27 - Erma M. Price
 August 31 – Louise E. Kauffman
 September 7 – Lucinda S. Anderson
 September 10 – Curtis D. Hoff

September 19 – Sandra Smith
 September 24 – Thomas A. Shields
 September 29 – Fred L. Gable
 October 4 – Josie Luckenbaugh
 October 31 – Janet "Polly" Heller
 November 5 – William L. Cover

Life Events in the



From the Minister of Music:

Dear St. Matthew Family,



Where has this year gone? I feel like I just got here and hit the ground running. Here we are almost a year later. We have so many wonderful musical offerings coming this Advent and Christmas season. All of our musical ensembles are offering something special during the month of December. We have a wide variety of music offered throughout our three Christmas Eve worship services.

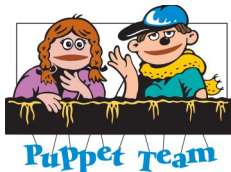
- 4:30 p.m. Family Service: Children's Choir, Junior Choir, Junior Bell Choir and other ensembles.
- 7:00 p.m. Candlelight and Carol Service: Youth Choir, Youth Bell Choir, SpiritSingers, SoulFire Praise Team and other ensembles.
- 9:00 p.m. Candlelight and Carol Service: Adult Choir, Adult Bell Choir and other ensembles.

All of these offerings are sure to lift your spirit and bring you the Joy of Christ's Birth.



From Associate Minister of Music Deb Smith:

Our children's, junior, and youth choirs and bells have been having a great year. The Youth Bells performed at the VNA/Hospice Memorial Service in November. The children's choir and junior choir sang at the Veterans Day breakfast. We had a wonderful Pajama Storytime with Ms. Lindsay and Ms. Deb. Thank you to Tim and Landen for our chicken nuggets meal. We look forward to another storytime in the spring.



Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 28. Following the 5:00 pm service, there will be a light meal and puppet show by our Mini Ministers.

As part of our in home music ministry, Deb will be leading a Carol Sing at Utz Terrace on December 2.

In January we have 3 special musical moments:

- Sunday, January 12 at both services we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our magnificent and world renowned pipe organ. I am especially excited to welcome our Minister Of Music Emeritus, Scott Fredericks, to join us for this.
- Friday, January 17 and Saturday, January 18 we will be hosting the Music in the Valley Conference, where hundreds of Church Musicians come for a wonderful weekend of hearing new music. On Friday at 7 pm, we host the Directors Choir with Joe Martin and esteemed guests. We look forward to seeing you there.
- Sunday, January 18 we will be joined by Joseph Martin at the piano and his wife, Sue, in worship. Joe Martin and Ben will be playing a variety of Piano and Organ Duets.

God is Awesome and the Music is alive and well here at St. Matthew. As we approach this holiday season, remember HE is the reason for the season. I look forward to the new year here with you as we continue to make a joyful noise together!

Be Blessed,
Ben Boellner
Minister of Music



PIANIST JOSEPH MARTIN will be joined by Pepper Choplin and Stacy Nordmyer, Sue Martin, along with Steve Roddy at the piano and organ, and a 75-voice choir of choral directors in concert on Friday, January 17, at 7:00 p.m. This is always a great evening here at St. Matthew Church! The concert is free and open to the public, and no tickets are required.

This concert is part of a two-day event featuring the music of Shawnee Press/Hal Leonard Publishing. The pianists/vocalists will offer selections, and the choir will sing several songs written by the featured guests. The music will be accompanied by organ and piano. The guest musicians entertain the audience with comical comments on music and music makers but also share inspiring stories of the power of music. The Saturday, January 18 workshop for choral directors is attended by hundreds of musicians from the East Coast. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. for this open-seating concert. A free-will offering will be collected. Joseph Martin will also perform at both services Sunday, January 19.



You Are Welcome in our GriefShare Group.

- Be with other people who are grieving. You don't need to be alone in your grief!
- This is a safe place where you can be yourself.
- You can say exactly how you feel to others who understand your pain.
- Your participation in this group will change you.

Robin Proctor Culp says, "This class was amazing. I highly recommend it. I was in the first class in January and it truly opened my eyes and heart."

Our 13-session GriefShare support group is scheduled to begin **Monday, February 17, 2025 6:30-8 p.m.** in the St. Matthew Upper Room, located on the 2nd floor. The room can be reached by elevator or stairs from the glass doors on Franklin Street.

To register, call the church office, 717-637-7101. If you have questions, you may email Pastor Faye at nicksong@comcast.net or call her at 717-451-0851.



THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA and the INTERGENERATIONAL FAITH CONNECTIONS will again be collecting items to assemble **Personal Care Kits** for Lutheran World Relief. People who must flee their homes quickly due to disasters or safety often do not have time to pack essential items. Personal Care Kits can help those in need to maintain personal hygiene while living away from their homes. The Kits also contribute to a new start for those who can return home.

Each Personal Care Kit includes:

- *One new bath-size towel(approx.52"X27"), dark color recommended
- *Two bath-size bars(4-5oz) of soap (must equal 8-9 oz.) in its original wrapping
- *One adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging
- *One sturdy, wide-toothed comb
- *One metal nail-clipper

You may drop off items in the designated boxes located in the elevator lobby or the church office. Monetary donations may be made to be used to purchase bulk items (checks should be made payable to *St. Matthew Lutheran Church* with "Care Kits" in the memo line). \$10 will cover the cost of the items and help with shipping costs. The Women of the ELCA and the Intergenerational Faith Connections are combining their efforts for this event. **The packing of the kits will take place in June.**

NEWS FROM Discovery Place Preschool! THANK YOU to all the fantastic bakers who donated to the preschool Election Day Bake Sale. We had a large amount of baked goods, and a wide variety as well! The voter turnout was great this year, and WE SOLD OUT by 2pm. We anticipate another successful bake sale next year. Again, thank you, bakers.



Another 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 2025-2026 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 page. Please share our preschool information with families with young children.



BLUE CHRISTMAS

A Worship service for those who are stressed, hurting, grieving or lonely in this Holiday Season will be held on Monday, **December 2** at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Candles flicker, comforting words are spoken, sweet music fills our souls, messages of Christ's love, hope, and comfort enfold us. Emmanuel... God is with us. You are not alone.



2024 COOKIE SALE

This year's Cookie Sale will be held in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, **December 7**, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. or until Sold Out! There will be already packaged boxes of homemade cookies for \$10 a box. Proceeds will be used for the Hope Academy in Harrisburg, PA. Come enjoy delicious homemade treats made by members of our congregation!



DECORATING THE CHURCH

Come join us as we decorate our church for Christmas on Sunday, **December 8**, from 3-5:00 p.m. At 4:45 p.m. (or when the decorating is finished!) we will enjoy pizza for dinner. Everyone will begin in Fellowship Hall with instructions. Sign up by emailing info@stmatthlutheran.org so we know how many will be helping and how much pizza to order. This is a very fun day – come join us!

COMMUNITY HOLIDAY MEAL SUNDAY DECEMBER 15 3:00-6:00 P.M.

It's almost time for our 2024 Community Holiday Meal and we're looking for volunteers to help with this fun outreach event! There will be classic holiday foods, music, bingo, and puppets. We will need help baking turkey and ham, making centerpieces, preparing other food (corn, potatoes, gravy, rolls), making dessert, serving the meal, setting up beforehand, cleaning up afterwards, photographing the event, and more.

If you are willing to help, please email Amy Beck at Abeck1976@comcast.net.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

To deliver the Christmas poinsettias to our homebound members. We will deliver them on December 30, at 10:30 a.m. Please call the church office, 717-637-7101, or email, info@stmatthlutheran.org if you are able to help.



CORN DRIVE

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2024 Corn Drive for New Hope Ministries. We collected 792 cans of corn and \$730 in donations, so we exceeded our goal and will help to provide a Thanksgiving meal for many families in the Hanover Community and Beyond!



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Happening this year on Wednesday, **December 18**, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. Bring the kids—the whole family! Let's meet for PIZZA in our Fellowship Hall before we go out to sing carols to our shut-ins. That'll get us warmed up and ready to sing our favorites to people who will be so happy to have us on their doorsteps. We can't wait to see smiles on their faces as we belt out Jingle Bells, Old Saint Nick, and Silent Night. What's your favorite? We will have the best time! Song sheets will be provided and we will carpool. Please sign up by emailing info@stmatthlutheran.org so that we know how many homes we can visit.



Season of Sharing

December provides us with so many opportunities to share God's love and abundance. We celebrate Advent which is a very special time to prepare us for the birth of Jesus. There are work and school parties, get-togethers with friends and family gatherings. All of these are wonderful with good food and happy memories. But think for a moment about those who aren't at these functions. Maybe someone who has to work long hours through the holiday season, maybe someone who lives alone with no family, maybe someone who's been abandoned by family due to family struggles and disagreements or maybe someone who has recently lost a loved one.

All of these people are children of God who need our love, understanding and especially at this time of year, our friendship. Something we do during this season is carry signed Christmas cards with us when shopping with an uplifting message about Jesus. Thanking that person, we hand these out to cashiers, bankers, and drive-thru workers and anyone who helps make things go more smoothly. Smile, hand them the card and say, "This is for you, have a blessed Christmas". Such a small thing that makes their day instead of complaining about the long lines and slow check out.

Another idea, when going to a restaurant, we always seem to overhear a waitress talking to someone about a sick kid or how hard the holidays are going to be because her husband just left her. Many times this isn't even our waitress but God puts her in our path. We use our Christmas cards to include a monetary gift and when we hand it to her, say "God wants you to have this".

Make a phone call, drop in for a visit, bring a small gift, write a heart-felt note to those who may need it. Sometimes, all it takes is a smile. You're not just spreading Christmas joy, but you're also spreading God's love.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year

Generosity Ministry Team



Smile for the Camera!

We're updating the St. Matthew Church Directory and need your help.

- Have you moved this year?
- Have you changed your home or cellphone number?
- How about your email?
- Would you like your picture in the directory?

If you already have a listing in the St Matthew Directory, you can access the directory online by signing on to: instantchurchdirectory.com. Click "Member Sign In" on the top line. Your "User ID" is your email address. If it's your first time, you will be prompted to create a password. **NOTE:** You must use an active email address that you provided on your registration form to access the on-line directory (forms are available on the Hospitality Desk). Anytime you access the directory on-line, you can make address, phone, and picture updates. Any updates you make will appear as soon as the Directory Administrator or Editor ok's them, usually within 24 hours. Your "on-line" listing is what will appear in the printed edition.

If you need to have your picture taken, contact Mike Jones, (717) 965-6680 or Bobbie Lidard, (717) 634-7362 and we'll be happy to set up a time that's convenient for you. We'd like all changes completed by January 15, 2025. This gives you time to go through those holiday pictures (ugly Christmas sweater pictures accepted) and choose a good one for the directory!!!

A Promise to Hold & A Path to Walk

Advent Midweek Worship Series— Wednesdays, December 4 & 11
Dinner at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, Worship at 6:30 p.m. in the Nave

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:78-79)

We gather together around food and in worship in this two-week Advent series, centered around these two verses from Zechariah's prophecy. For our first week (December 4), we hold onto the promise of God's tender mercy that is the light that breaks forth in our darkness. For our second week (December 11), we open ourselves to the ways that God's mercy guides us into a way of peace.

The services are intended to be contemplative and relatively short (about a half an hour) with a brief reflection from one of the pastors. Please email info@stmatluthern.org to sign up for meals.



**INSTALLATION OF PASTOR ALEX
January 11 at 5pm, Reception to Follow**

Mark your calendars!! Celebrate with us as we officially install Pastor Alex as our Associate Pastor!! The service will be held in the Nave, with a reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall.

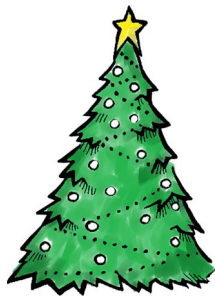


SPLASH CLASS

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 at St. Matthew from 9:45-10:15 a.m. on the following Sundays: **12/8** - Lower Level Nursery, **1/19, 3/2, 4/6, 5/4** in the Pray Ground in Fellowship Hall.

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Faith Connections Classes will start back up on Sunday, **January 5** at 9:30 a.m. in the Lower Level.



THE MITTEN/SOCK/HAT/SCARF TREE is ready for decorations in 2 locations, 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. Often people coming into the office during the week will choose something from our tree, so we hope to keep refilling it during the Advent season. Thank you for helping to keep our neighbors in need warm this winter!

2024 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Come and join us as the children of St. Matthew perform their rendition of "The First Christmas." Let's share the Good News of Jesus' birth! Rehearsals will be on **December 1 and 8** (dress rehearsal) in Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m. Invite all your friends and family for our performance on **December 15** at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

ANGEL TREE

The Social Ministry Committee is having an ingathering of Christmas Gifts through New Hope Ministries. These gifts will be distributed to those who otherwise may not have any Christmas gifts. The Christmas tree is displayed in the Gathering Place until December 5.

Please remove an ornament, purchase the gift and return the gift **unwrapped, with the ornament attached** and place under the tree or bring to the church office by **Thursday, December 5**. We are also collecting \$25 Wal-Mart gift cards for teens from New Hope Ministries and for HUD residents. **Please put the gift card in the envelope and place it in the offering basket or return it to the church office by Thursday, December 5 at 9 a.m.**



Social Ministry Committee will deliver the gifts to New Hope in time to be delivered to Hanover area families by Christmas. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of these families and making this year a brighter Christmas.

Social Ministry Committee

**THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS:
FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

December 24 at 4:30pm

Join us for our Family Christmas Eve Service!! This family-friendly service will immerse us in the story of Jesus' birth, as told through *The Story of Christmas* by Sparkhouse. Interwoven with our favorite carols and communion, worshippers of all ages are invited to enter into God's love made real in the arrival of baby Jesus. Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to celebrate with us!! All are welcome!!

**CONFIRMATION SCHEDULE
(6-8th grade)**

We will have Confirmation on **December 1 & 8**. We will take a break for the holidays. Confirmation will resume on **January 15**, as we begin the New Testament!



As the year draws to an end, the youth want to express their gratitude to everyone for their support throughout the year! Our congregation's generosity is a great blessing. Over the next two months, the youth will engage in the following activities:

- **December 1**—Youth Group 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the third floor youth suite.
- **December 7**—Youth serving dinner at former Youth Alumni wedding.
- **December 8**—Help decorate the church for Christmas. Starts at 3:00 p.m. with pizza at 5:00 p.m.
- **December 15**—Christmas Pageant from 9:30 to 10:20 a.m. Youth contact Deb Smith (dsmith@stmattlutheran.org) or Missy Smith (msmith@stmattlutheran.org) to help.
& Youth Group 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the third floor youth suite.
- **December 18**—Christmas caroling at 6:00 p.m. (meet in Fellowship Hall).
- **December 22-23**—Youth lock-in and Christmas Party (6-12th grade) starts at 6:00 p.m
- **December 25**—Merry Christmas
- **December 28**—New Years Eve puppet show following the 5:00 p.m. service.
- **January 1**—Happy New Year! Be Safe!
- **January 3-5**—Winterfest "Fingerprints" 2025 for 9-12th graders and college age young adults.
- **January 5**—No Youth Group
- **January 19**—Youth Group 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the third floor youth suite.
- **January 23-26**—Tim at Extravaganza for Youth Leaders



December Faith Connections

There will be NO Faith Connections on December 22 or 29.

On December 22, we will have a Fellowship Hour, beginning at 9:30 a.m. We will provide light refreshments. You are invited to bring your favorite Christmas treat to share!

Contact Missy Smith (msmith@stmattlutheran.org) or Pastor Alex (pastoralex@stmattlutheran.org) for questions or concerns.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO DONATE

Rich Carson, a member of St. Matthew, was recently diagnosed with liver cancer. Our community is keeping Rich and his family in our prayers. Through him we are learning about his need for a liver donation and how living donors can save his life and the lives of others. If you would like to pursue the possibility of donating a piece of your liver, you are encouraged to sign up to help Richard Carson at www.livingdonorreg.upmc.com. Donors must be 18-55 years old.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Members and friends who wish to honor or memorialize a loved one by placing a poinsettia in the chancel this Christmas are asked to **complete and return the sign-up form below with \$13** per listing to the church office. After the cost of the poinsettias is met, the memorials/honorariums will support LWR Hurricane Relief. **The deadline is Wednesday, December 4.** Please print clearly when filling in names. Please make checks payable to **“St. Matthew Lutheran Church”** with **“Poinsettias”** in the memo line.

I/We wish to (please check one)

Honor Memorialize

Name(s): _____
(Person to be memorialized or honored)

Given by: _____

Your offering envelope number: _____



Christmas Cheer Bags

Know someone who had a bad 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 us 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, 717-637-7101, or at nicksong@comcast.net.
Or drop the filled-out form into an offering basket by the **Deadline: December 16.**

Recipient Name _____

Recipient Address _____

Recipient Phone number _____

Your name _____

Your phone number _____

Help pack on December 20, 10am _____ Help Deliver on December 20, by 11:30am _____

St. Matthew Lutheran Church

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***The next issue of the Messenger will cover February & March.
Articles for the next Messenger are due by January 15.***



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