

HE WILL
BAPTIZE YOU
WITH THE
HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE

LUKE 3:16



St. Matthew

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Where the welcome is wide
and the love is real.

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. If you have questions or need visual, audio, or mobility accommodations, please let a name-tagged usher know. 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!

Our Purpose:

Welcoming all as we share God's love.

Our Core Values:

Celebrating together in worship

Deepening our faith in Jesus

Engaging children and youth

Walking with our neighbors

Embracing one another as God created us

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 indoor worship at 8:30 a.m., and Sunday indoor worship at 10:30 a.m. (livestreamed).



Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

Third Sunday of Advent
December 15, 2024

PRELUDE

All is Well
Aria, Soloist

Wall

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

All: Amen.

Pastor: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one
another.

Silence for reflection

Pastor: God of mercy,

All: We confess that we have sinned.

We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.

We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

Pastor: God of might,

All: We confess that we have sinned.

We have turned away from our neighbors.

We have trusted false promises.

Pastor: God in our midst,

All: We confess that we have sinned.

We plead: come to us.

Bring your mercy to birth in us.

Pastor: A righteous branch springs forth:

it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,

in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,

receive the grace and forgiveness of God

through ✝ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**



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.

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.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Reader: **Third Sunday of Advent – Candle of Joy**

We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, and of deep and everlasting joy, as a sign that we are those who walk with a skip in our step because

we can see the destination, and it is pure joy. We are ascending to God's promise.

The candles are lit while we sing verse 3 of "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (ELW#240, Wold).



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

(10:30) *After the singing of "Light One Candle," Children second grade and under are invited to meet our children's 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 the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; 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 WORD ✠

THE READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20 *The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.*

Lector: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 12:2-6 (*Read Responsively*)

² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.

³ **With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.**

⁴ And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name;
make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this
name is exalted.

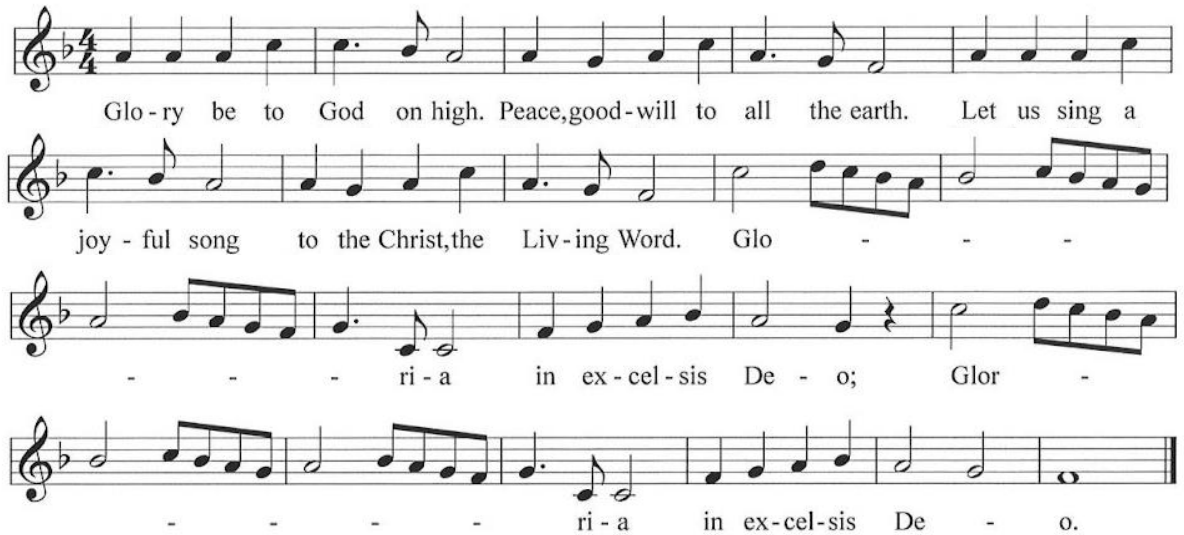
⁵ **Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.**

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Eck (Verse 1)



Glo-ry be to God on high. Peace, good-will to all the earth. Let us sing a
joy-ful song to the Christ, the Liv-ing Word. Glo - - -
- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glor -
- - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 3rd chapter.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18 *John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.*

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

THE MESSAGE

Pastor Kathy Vitalis Hoffman

GOSPEL RESPONSE

Eck (Verse 2)

Love has come to dwell with us. Light now shines on ev - 'ry - one. Hope has lift - ed
up our hearts. Joy has made, in us, a home. Glo - - - - -
- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glor - - - - -
- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

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

Assist. Min: Each petition concludes, *“Lord, in your mercy,”* and the congregation responds, *“receive our prayer.”*

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.)

(10:30) Children return from Children’s Church.

(8:30) MUSICAL OFFERING

***Advent Song*
*Adult Choir***

Nagy

Through the night, through the pilgrim’s slumber, far from sight,
Sheltered still by her womb, stirs there a child of whom the prophets thunder.
Stirs there a child whom the angels hail in endless wonder, understanding.
Through the ride, set astride her donkey, mounted on a humble donkey,
Night slips by to the beat of her heart, as the miles go by them.
Some day He’ll ride on a beast as humble. Some day He’ll ride into Jerusalem.
All in time to be born and to die. First to speak to all. He has come to call.
Ride on through dawn, weak, yet drawn. Ride on, though weary for so long.
On toward that hill, the tomb, and still to rise into life fulfilled.
Come! You are wanted. Come! We all wonder. We are waiting.
We are here. Come! Jesus, come.
Yes, come. To His own, through the world’s long labour,
As we groan in travail with the earth. He will come! We will cry with surprise!
He will come! Opening our eyes.

(10:30) MUSICAL OFFERING *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*
St. Matthew Ringers

McChessney

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

Eck

Your bless - ings are im - mea - sura-ble. Our homes are warm, our
praise you, God, for love, for life, for sav - ing us from

bel - lies full. Your bless-ings are im - mea - sura-ble. Our homes are warm our
dark - est night. We praise you, God, for love, for life, for sav - ing us from

bel - lies full. We of - fer now our - selves - to you.
dark - est night. Now send us forth so we may tell

God, the good news of any way you choose. We
of E - man - u - el.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assist. Min: Creator God,

All: you made the whole world,

even the farthest stars,

and you draw near to feed us.

We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.

Strengthen us with this food

that we may live in expectation

for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

✠ THE MEAL ✠

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

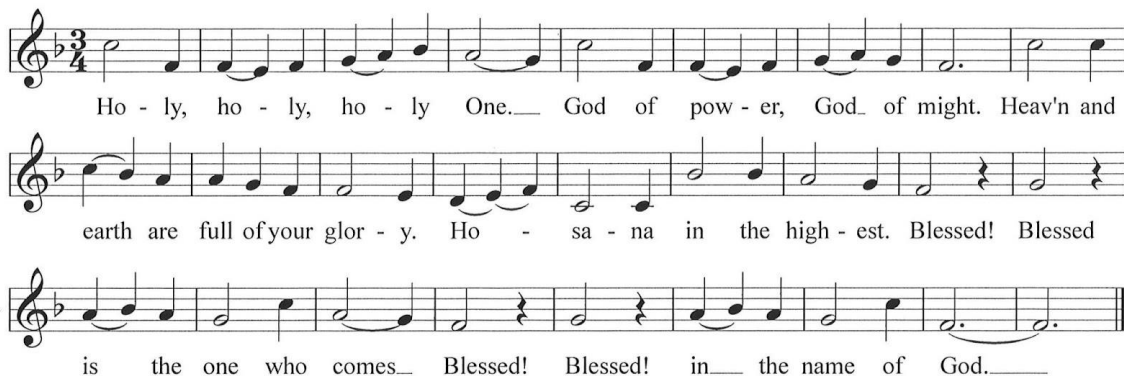
All: We lift them to the Lord.

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

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

(10:30) Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly One. — God of pow - er, God of might. Heav'n and
earth are full of your glor - y. Ho - sa - na in the high - est. Blessed! Blessed
is the one who comes — Blessed! Blessed! in — the name of God. —

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 three 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.

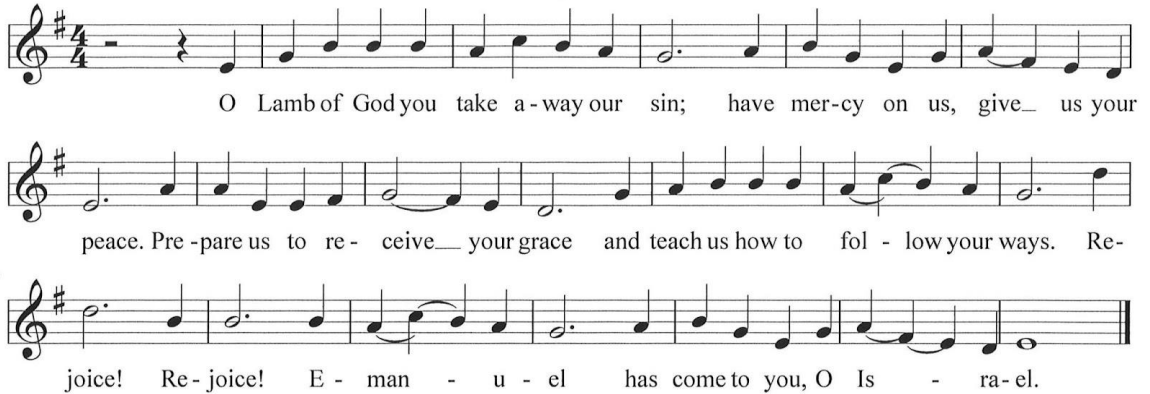
All: Amen. (Eat wafer)

(Pause)

Pastor: The blood of Christ, shed for you.

All: Amen. (*Drink wine*)

LAMB OF GOD



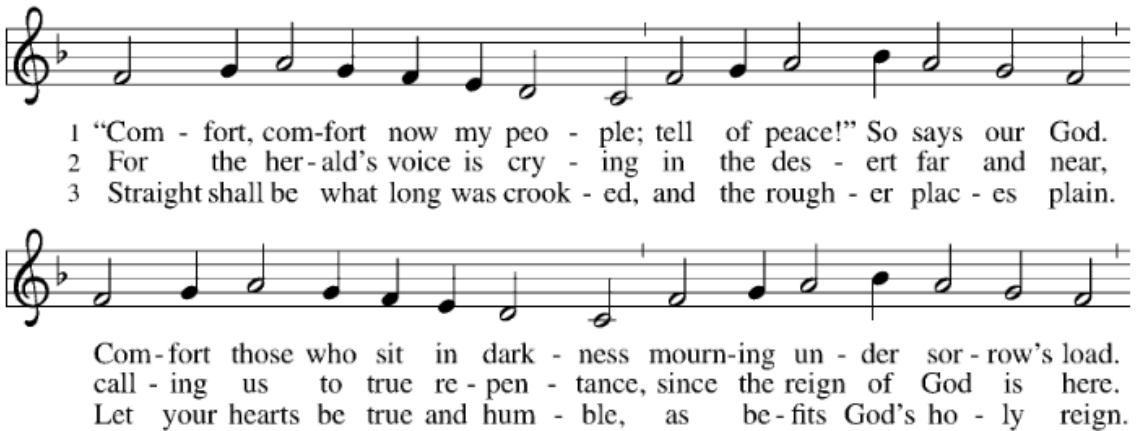
O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give us your
peace. Pre-pare us to re-ceive your grace and teach us how to fol-low your ways. Re-
joice! Re-joice! E-man-u-el has come to you, O Is-ra-el.

COMMUNION HYMN

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

ELW#256

Olearius/Sehr



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

Assist. Min: Generous God,
we thank you for the gift of life,
for the bread of salvation.
We thank you for coming among us,
for leading us into peace.
We thank you for showering us with mercy,
for sending us into the world.
Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us
as we feed the hungry in your name.

All: Amen.

BLESSING

Pastor: God of endings and beginnings,
God in the darkness and the light,
God, our hope for the journey,
✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

All: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Joy to the World

ELW#267

Watts



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

DISMISSAL:

Assist. Min: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

All: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Hark a Thrilling Voice is Sounding

Archer

* * * * *

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

Our warm thanks to all those assisting in our worship services this morning:

- Musicians 8:30 Aria, Adult Choir
- 10:30 Aria, St. Matthew Ringers
- Advent Readers..... 8:30 Rhoderick Family
- 10:30 Kuhn Family
- Altar Flower DeliveryTina Schaffner
- Altar Guild Martha Hempfing, Sally Staub
- Assisting Minister.....8:30 Darlene Klenk, 10:30 Hunter
- Children’s Church Leader.....Mya Maloney
- Communion Assistants8:30 Sara Staub, Lee Baughman
- 10:30 Carolyn Markle, Melissa Smith
- Communion Preparers..... 8:30 Sara Staub, Meredith Staub
- 10:30 Deb Anker, Debby Seibert
- Couriers8: 30 Sara Staub, Lee Baughman
- 10:30 Carolyn Markle
- Greeters8:30 Ken & Gloria Koontz, Maria Martin
- 10:30 Leo & JoAnne Hilbert
- Lector 8:30 Amy Beck, 10:30 Aaron
- Live Stream Tom & Sue Shultz

Ushers8:30 Team 3 – Darlene Klenk, Terry Badman, Tyler Klenk,
 Barb Rupp, Dirk Wildasin
 10:30 Team 9 – Tim Peck, Hunter, Tyler, Elijah,
 Aaron, Addyson, Landen
 Welcome Place Lori Unger

THE ALTAR FLOWERS have been given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Luther Bowman by their niece and family; in loving memory of Kimberly F. Peck who would have observed her birthday on December 18 by the family; in loving memory of The George Sunday family.

THE BULLETINS have been given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Luther Bowman by their niece and family.

PRAYER LIST: In our intercessory prayers we pray for individuals who have offered permission to have their names included. These names will be listed up to a month unless otherwise requested. After that time, prayers will continue for each person through our prayer chain. Newly added names will appear in bold. If you would like to be included in the prayers of the prayer chain **but not listed** in the bulletin, you may contact Beth Koontz at bethk9245@gmail.com or by calling the church office at 717-637-7101.

Bill Schlitzer

Jim Muller

Tom Bell

Kent Woods

Barry Unger

Nancy Leister

Rich Carson

Laurel Bell

Harold Kepler

Robert Moseley

A SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND CHRISTIAN BURIAL was held for Gary Starner on Tuesday, December 10, here at St. Matthew Church. Though we celebrate the departure of his life to be with the Lord, we also include in our prayers of support the members of his family and all who are bereaved.

RECOMMENDED SCRIPTURE READINGS for the week beginning December 15:

Sunday: Luke 3:7-18

Thursday: Hebrews 10:10-18

Monday: Hebrews 13:7-17

Friday: Hebrews 10:32-39

Tuesday: Acts 28:23-31

Saturday: Luke 13:31-35

Wednesday: Luke 7:31-35

Attendance:	(12/07)	5:00 p.m. Service	36
	(12/08)	8:30 a.m. Service	68
		10:30 a.m. Service	158
	(12/02-12/08)	Online views	210
		Total	472

INTENT CARDS FOR 2025

Thank you to all who have returned their Cards stating their intentions for giving for 2025. We have received 138 cards. For any who have not returned a card, it is NOT too late. We have extra cards and envelopes at the Hospitality Desk. Please remember that our goal is to receive 300 cards by December 31.

TEXAS ROADHOUSE – HANOVER AGAINST HUNGER FUNDRAISER

Come support Hanover Against Hunger by eating from Texas Roadhouse, Hanover, on December 15 and 16, between 11am and 9pm. Be sure to mention that you are there for Hanover Against Hunger or show a flyer to your server and they will donate 10% of your bill. There are flyers on the Hospitality Desk.

JOIN US IN GUATEMALA!

In October, 2025, a group from St. Matthew will be travelling to Guatemala to visit the children at Hogar Miquel Magone Orphanage as well as attend the Graduation Ceremony for the girls at Hope Academy. The dates for this trip are Sunday, October 19 – Monday, October 27, 2025. There are currently only 5 slots available. If you’re interested in joining, please contact Bobbie Lidard, bclidard@comcast.net or call 717 634-7362 for an information packet. This is a life-changing experience and one you’ll never forget.

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.



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.



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!

EMMANUEL UCC PLANS ANNUAL CAROL SING

The 114th Annual Community Carol Sing will be held at 7 pm, Sunday, December 22, at Emmanuel UCC, 124 Broadway, Hanover. Enjoy singing along to beloved carols, complemented by special musical performances and narrated stories of the carols' origins. Afterward, join us for a dessert reception in Fellowship Hall. Admission is free and free-will offerings are gratefully accepted.

St. John's Lutheran Church in Abbottstown invites us to their **CHRISTMAS MARKET** on Saturday, December 21 from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Flyers with more information are on the Hospitality Desk in the Gathering Space.

SIGN-UP FORM

Please fill out the pertinent part(s) for you, tear off this page and put in the offering basket or email the church office at *info@stmattlutheran.org*, listing what you are signing up for and the information requested. See Announcements Page for more details.

_____ I'd like to receive _____ e-mail updates and/or _____ newsletter in the mail. (Provide name, e-mail, and/or mailing address)

_____ I am a member of St. Matthew and below is updated contact information.

Name

Phone Number

E-mail

Mailing Address

Help Pack/Deliver Christmas Cheer Bags Friday, December 20



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.

Contact Pastor Faye through the office, 717-637-7101, or at
nicksong@comcast.net.

Or drop filled-out form into offering basket.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

I can:

_____ Help Pack (10 a.m.)

_____ Help Deliver (by 11:30 a.m.)

St. Matthew Lutheran Church

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info@stmattlutheran.org

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pastorkathy@stmattlutheran.org

Rev. Alex Sheppard-Witt, Associate Pastor, ext. 229
pastoralex@stmattlutheran.org

Rev. Faye C. Snyder, Visitation Pastor, ext. 225
nicksong@comcast.net

Benjamin Boellner, Minister of Music, ext. 235
bboellner@stmattlutheran.org

Deb Smith, Associate Minister of Music, ext. 236
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Tim Peck, Youth Ministry, ext. 230, *youth@stmattlutheran.org*,

Melissa Smith, Children and Family Ministry Coordinator, ext. 232
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Hannah Chiacchierini, Communications Administrator
hannahc@stmattlutheran.org



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Scan for
e-giving

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments
against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing
¹⁸as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the LORD.

Psalmody: Isaiah 12:2-6**SECOND READING: Philippians 4:4-7**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say,
Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to
everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry
about anything, but in everything by prayer and

supplication with thanksgiving let your requests
be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding, will guard
your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be bap-
tized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned
you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits
worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to
yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor';
for I tell you, God is able from these stones to
raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax
is lying at the root of the trees; every tree there-
fore that does not bear good fruit is cut down
and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then
should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them,
"Whoever has two coats must share with any-
one who has none; and whoever has food must
do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be
baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what
should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no
more than the amount prescribed for you."
¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should
we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money
from anyone by threats or false accusation, and
be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation,
and all were questioning in their hearts con-
cerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,
¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize
you with water; but one who is more powerful
than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the
thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with
the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is
in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to
gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff
he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he pro-
claimed the good news to the people.