



The St. Matthew MESSENGER

February/March 2025

Vol. XV Issue 1

A Message from Pastor Kathy:

Dear Friends in Christ,

During our Faith Connections Pastors' Class, we are studying the Book of Luke. I call this Gospel a story for our times. It is fascinating to me the way Luke introduces his narrative about Jesus.

How did he piece this story together? He listened. The eyewitnesses shared the stories of Jesus. Luke calls them servants of the word. In the telling and listening these experiences of Jesus were passed on from one generation to another. This is how the followers of Jesus grew in numbers and spread across the world. It is as simple as this; people are talking and people are listening. You could call it Holy HearSay because what they hear then is what they say for others to hear and say for others to hear.

The stories that we hear from Luke are fascinating, relevant, surprising and get to the heart of what it means to be a Christian. It has to do with the neighbor and God's love. When this doesn't happen, the consequences are revealed. The story is multi-textured with a plot line that twists and turns.

Here's why I am inspired to lead this study and why I think it is essential that we gather around tables with our Bibles open; the complexities and uncertainties in the second half of the first century resonate with us who live in the first half of the 21st century. The structures in Palestine and Syria at that time were created for the minority of the rich, the mighty and the power brokers. What does it mean to be faithful in such times?

I'm writing this message to make the case for more of us to come to know the story as it is written and as it is proclaimed and as it is lived. There are lies swirling about Christianity that hold absolutely no bearing to the Holy Scripture. It's not too late to join our Sunday morning Faith Connections class. You will find us by taking the elevator or steps to the second floor. We begin as close as possible to 9:30. No Bible Study experience necessary. All are welcome.....

With you in the Story of God's love,

Pastor Kathy

Messages for You

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Ministerial Staff:

Pastor Kathy Vitalis Hoffman
Lead Pastor

pastorkathy@stmatlutheran.org

Pastor Alex Sheppard-Witt
Associate Pastor

pastoralex@stmatlutheran.org

Pastor Faye Snyder
Visitation Pastor

nicksong@comcast.net

Ben Boellner, *Minister of Music*
bboellner@stmatlutheran.org

Deb Smith, *Associate Minister of Music*,
dsmith@stmatlutheran.org

Tim Peck

Youth Ministry
youth@stmatlutheran.org

Melissa Smith,
Children and Family Ministry
msmith@stmatlutheran.org

Church COUNCIL

OUR CONGREGATION COUNCIL members and officers for 2025 will be installed at the 10:30 service on **February 16**. Barb Rupp as president; Lee Baughman, vice president; Darlene Klenk, secretary; and Bob Curlen as treasurer. Welcome to our new Council members, Amy Beck, Sue Covert, Sherry Crouse and Irvin Sowers Jr. Also, thank you to our outgoing Council members, John Mancini, Kelli Reed, Sara Staub and Drew Steffens for their service to the church these past three years. May God bless and guide all of our Council members.



Congregational MEETING

OUR ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING will be held immediately following the late worship service on **February 16**, with a snow date of February 23. Please plan on attending this important meeting. Annual Reports will be available which is a great way to learn about all that is happening here at St. Matthew!

Thank You

Beloved siblings in Christ,

I wanted to take a moment to give my heartfelt thank you for everything you did for my installation here at St. Matt. It was an absolutely beautiful service, and I am so incredibly grateful to all of you. Thank you to the Call Committee/ Mutual Ministry Team for organizing the reception and for your work in the call process. Thank you to all who served in the worship service in any way. And thank you to those of you who were here or who sent their well-wishes. Thank you for welcoming me and my family, including my wife Caitlin, my parents, and my brother and his family. I am beyond thrilled to be here as your associate pastor and to partner with you in this ministry that we get to do together. And I thank God for you all every day.

In the peace of Christ,
Pastor Alex Shepard-Witt

thank you

CONNECTING THROUGH COMMUNITY: Tabling Training for Festivals Sunday, March 30 from 11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Are you ready to share our church's mission - **welcoming all as we share God's love** - with the wider community? Do you want to help build relationships in our community and beyond? Join the Evangelism Committee for a special training on **Sunday, March 30, following the 10:30 service in the Fellowship Hall.**

This session will help prepare you to represent our church at community events like South Central PA People (formerly Diversity Days), PRIDE, and the Snacktown festival. These events are a chance to live out our core values of walking with our neighbors and embracing one another as God created us. And yet, they are also sometimes intimidating or we don't know what to say to folks that stop by our table. Together, we'll learn how to create meaningful connections and engage others in conversation - both about our church and about the kinds of things that motivate them. It is about building true and authentic relationships with the community around us.

To join us, you may fill out this form (<https://stmatthewlutheranchurch.breezechms.com/form/f2e13f>) or scan the QR code below. Beginning in March, we'll also have a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Place. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Alex (pastoralex@stmatlutheran.org).



Scan to Sign-Up

COMMUNION MILESTONE:

COME TO THE TABLE

Is your child ready to explore the gift of Holy Communion? Join us for our Holy Communion Milestone! If you're unsure whether your child is ready, feel free to contact Pastor Alex (pastoralex@stmattlutheran.org) or Pastor Kathy (pastorkathy@stmattlutheran.org).

This milestone is especially geared toward children in **5th grade and younger** who:

- Are not yet receiving Communion and want to start
- Are already receiving Communion but haven't had a communion class, OR would like a refresher!

Families are encouraged to stay and participate, making this a meaningful time of learning and growing together in faith. Refreshments and snacks will be provided.



Scan to Sign-Up

Key Dates:

- Sunday, March 23: **Class** following the 10:30 service (approx. 11:45–12:30 PM)
- Sunday, April 6: **Bread baking** following the 10:30 service (approx. 11:45–12:30 PM)
- Thursday, April 17: **Maundy Thursday Worship at 7pm**, celebrating the Holy Communion Milestone

If you're unable to attend on April 6 or 13, please reach out to Pastor Alex to set up another time. To sign up, please fill out this form by **March 15**: <https://stmattlutheranchurch.breezechms.com/form/6eb129>

For questions or concerns, contact our Children and Family Ministry Coordinator, Missy Smith (msmith@stmattlutheran.org), or Pastor Alex (pastoralex@stmattlutheran.org).



LIFE EVENTS

November 15, 2024 - January 15, 2025

Deaths

November 20 – Robert “Bob” Strangfeld
December 3 – Gary Starner

Baptisms

December 1 - Beau Robert Wood, son of Corbin Wood

January 11 – Zelda Lynn Witt, daughter of Zachary and Jamie (Sheeler) Witt,

January 12 - Myla Rose Burkentine, daughter of Bryan and Cooper (McGarvery) Burkentine

PERSONAL CARE KITS - AROUND THE WORLD AND HERE TOO

The Women of the ELCA and the Intergenerational Faith Connections will 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 don't have time to pack essential items. Personal Care Kits help those in need maintain personal hygiene while living away from their homes. The Kits also contribute to a new start for those who can't return home. Now LWR is expanding to reach our neighbors in need in the United States, as well as world-wide as they have before. That means that kits will now comfort families here in the U.S. and abroad!

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.

FEBRUARY:

- **February 2 & 16** - Youth Group in the Youth Suite on the third floor (304) from 6:00-8:00 p.m. All are Welcome!
- **February 21** - Youth Coffee House: Brewed by Grace in Youth Suite (304) on the third floor from 7:00-9:00 p.m.
⇒ Open Mic, Sing Along, Read a Poem, or Hang Out. With Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate, and Baked Goods.

**MARCH:**

- **March 2 & 16** - Youth Group in the Youth Suite on the third floor (304) from 6:00-8:00 p.m. All are Welcome!
- **March 8** - Winter Jam at Bryce Jordan Center, State College. \$15 donation at the door. Departing at 12:00 noon. We will stop to eat before the show.
⇒ Doors open and pre-show starts at 5:00 p.m. with SEU worship, The Band Table, and We Are Vessel. Line up includes: Skillet, Anne Wilson, KB, Colton Dixon, Newsong, and Micah Tyler. We will return after midnight.
⇒ The Congregation is invited to join us! RSVP using the QR code at the right by Sunday, February 23.
⇒ Transportation will be decided by how many are going.
- **March 21** - NEWSBOYS in York at Appell Center for the Performing Arts. Congregation and Youth are invited. Ticket range is \$45-85. Please RSVP by February 2 with interest. Use the QR code at the right to register to ride together.



For any questions on events listed above, contact Tim Peck (youth@stmattlutheran.org) or call the office at 717-637-7101 ext. 230

**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 Amspacher, registered and licensed pediatric occupational therapist, and Lindsay Amspacher, board-certified music therapist, will lead this 30 minute class at St. Matthew from 9:45-10:15 a.m. in the Playground on the following Sunday mornings: 3/2, 4/6 and 5/4. Mark your calendars and invite a loved one to come along!

FAITH CONNECTIONS FOR KIDS

Kids from 3 years old through 5th grade can join us in the Lower Level for Faith Connections on Sundays from 9:30-10:20 a.m. We have a Pre-school class for 3-4 year olds, Lower Elementary for K-2 grade, and Upper Elementary for 3-5 grade. Join us while we make some music with Ms. Deb, read Bible stories, make crafts and have some fun! We are looking for volunteers to help us lead our classes. Please contact Missy Smith at msmith@stmattlutheran.org if you are able to help out.



MUSIC MINISTRY

Dear Church,

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season. Thanks to everyone, especially the musicians who made our Christmas Eve services wonderful. I would be remiss if I didn't thank Deb Smith, our Associate Minister of Music, who works her magic daily as we move forward toward the Lent and Easter season. There will be lots of extraordinary musical offerings. If you see one of the young people offering their gifts in worship, please thank them. We have the best kids ever! I encourage you to stay tuned for upcoming concerts. There will be concert series flyers available soon. There is room for ALL in the Music Ministry. You do not have to be a member to join. Please see me or Deb if you are interested. We also are looking for volunteers to assist with various projects. Please see me if that may be of interest. Thank you for all you do.



Be well,
Ben Boellner
Minister of Music

MUSIC JAM WITH MS. DEB

Saturday, February 1 from 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Held in Fellowship Hall for students in K through 5th grade. We will sing songs, play instruments, play music games, make an instrument, and have a snack.



PAJAMA STORYTIME

Sunday, March 23 at 5:00 p.m.

Join Ms. Lindsay and Ms. Deb for Pajama Storytime! Held in the Upper Room. This is for preschool through 5th grade children.
5:00 p.m. - Light Meal
5:30 p.m. - Story and Craft



TODDLER TIME MUSIC WITH MS. DEB

Saturday, February 1 and/or February 8

from 12:00-12:45 p.m. Held in the Prayground for children ages 3-5. We will sing songs and play instruments. A parent/guardian will need to stay with the child.



BLACK ROSE CHORALE

Do you love to sing? Are you looking for a community singing group? The Black Rose Chorale is for you! Please check the St. Matthew Facebook page for more information, or talk to Ben Boellner

(bboellner@stmattlutheran.org) or Deb Smith (dsmith@stmattlutheran.org).

The first rehearsal is **Sunday, February 9 at 7:00 p.m.**



IN HOME MUSIC MINISTRY

If you or someone you know needs to be uplifted with music, please contact Deb Smith (dsmith@stmattluthern.org) or Ben Boellner (bboellner@stmattlutheran.org) to set up a time.

BOWLING NIGHT

Join us for an afternoon of bowling at the South Hanover Lanes on **March 30 at 1:00 p.m.** The cost is \$2.50 per person, per game. Please register by March 27.



~ PLEASE USE THE QR CODE AT THE RIGHT OF EACH EVENT TO REGISTER ~



HOLIDAY COMMUNITY MEAL 2024



“The month of December brings with it plenty of holiday festivities and busy schedules, so I want to say *Thank You* to everyone who contributed to the Holiday Meal. I know that it was a very busy weekend in Hanover, but those that attended were very appreciative and all said they were “stuffed” as they were leaving...”



“There was a lot of music, conversation, laughing, games, and entertainment going on in Fellowship Hall that Sunday afternoon in December and it helped to get everyone into the holiday spirit, so THANK YOU!”

~Amy Beck
Social Ministry Committee



THANK YOU TO ALL INVOLVED



Christmas

• CHEER BAGS •

265 Christmas Cheer Bags were created, packed, and delivered.

What a team effort, St. Matthew!
A big *Thank You* to the team - individuals and groups who worked to make it happen.

- ★ Diligently packed red cardinals into Thelma's sweet boxes
- ★ Created gorgeous cards
- ★ Baked delicious cookies
- ★ Made Christmas ornaments
- ★ Contributed items
- ★ Pitched in throughout the prep process in so many ways

God blessed all the hands into which these bags were delivered and God has blessed those who worked on them.
Blessing of the Christ Child to all.

~Pastor Faye



2024 Christmas Caroling



JOIN US FOR DISCOVERY PLACE PRESCHOOLS ANNUAL

Spring
CRAFT FAIR

March 15, 2025

- BAKE SALE • LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES & VENDORS •
- HOME DECOR • SILENT AUCTION • FOOD TRUCKS •
- FACE PAINTING & STORY TIME FOR CHILDREN •
(9AM-12PM) (10:30AM WITH MS. KELLY FROM THE LIBRARY)
- ST. MATTHEW MINI MINISTERS (PUPPET SHOW) •
(11:30AM)

FREE ADMISSION

Stop by to view booths featuring local artists, craftsmen, galleries and more! This unique event happens only once a year, so don't miss out!

9:00am - 3:00 pm
St. Matthew Church
30 West Chestnut St
Hanover, PA 17331

For registration and more information: discoveryplacehanover@gmail.com

PROCEEDS GO DIRECTLY TOWARDS DISCOVERY PLACE PRESCHOOL



DISCOVERY PLACE NEWS

Enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year is open! Anyone who is interested can stop by the church office for registration packets or find us online at stmattlutheran.org under the "Connect" tab.

EASTER GARDEN: Members and friends who wish to honor or memorialize a loved one by donating to the Easter Garden are asked to complete and return the form below with \$10 per listing to the church office by **Monday, March 31**. **After the 10:30 service on Easter Sunday**, those who have paid for honorariums or memorials for the garden can take a flower for themselves or to give to someone. If you are unable to be here after the 10:30 service, you can stop in Tuesday thru Thursday of Easter week, between 9:00 and 1:00 p.m. to pick up a flower.



After the cost of the plants is met, the balance of the memorials/honorariums will be sent to the local Tender Care.

I would like to sponsor an Easter flower in the church: In honor of _____ In memory of _____

Name(s) being honored or memorialized (Please print clearly):

Given by: _____

Envelope Number _____ Amount Given \$ _____

Please include \$10 per listing. Make checks payable to **St. Matthew Lutheran Church** with "Easter Garden" in the memo line. Deadline is **March 31**.

CONFIRMATION UPDATE

Confirmation continues on Sunday mornings during Faith Connections (9:30-10:20 a.m.). In December, we finished our study of the Old Testament. Over the past few months, our confirmation students have engaged in conversation around what it means to be made in the image of God, around sin and grace, God's promises through covenants. We've grounded each lesson in scripture, in discussions, and in activities like Faith 5, hoping to connect what we're learning to our daily lives. We have shifted into studying the New Testament,

digging deeper into the story of Jesus and into the love we receive from God through Jesus.

Confirmation is an important piece of how we as a congregation engage with our youth, nurturing their journey of faith. Thank you for your continued prayers and support for these incredible young people!!

Confirmation Students – Mark your calendars for All Saints' Confirmation Camp

Sunday, June 8-Friday June 13 at Camp Nawakwa

More information on the camp, including registration, will be in the next newsletter.

LENT 2025: ALL WE NEED

We invite you to join us for Lent at St. Matthew! This year's theme is "All We Need." What kinds of things do you need to survive and thrive? What does our congregation need? What are people around us missing and what do they long for? With the help of this series from Barn Geese Worship, together, we will explore what the scripture of this season reveals to us about our needs as individuals, as a church, and as a community.

Topics include:

- Ash Wednesday (March 5) – Our Own and Other's Needs
- First Weekend in Lent (March 8/9) – The Need to Embrace Vulnerability
- Second Weekend in Lent (March 15/16) – The Need for Sleep
- Third Weekend in Lent (March 22/23) – The Need for an Advocate
- Fourth Weekend in Lent (March 29/30) – The Need for Change
- Fifth Weekend in Lent (April 5/6) – The Need for Beauty
- Palm & Passion Sunday (April 12/13) – Jesus needs our Help
- Holy Week (April 17-19) – The Need for Love, Protection, and New Life
- Easter Sunday (April 20) – The Need to Rejoice

Dinner Church will return on Wednesdays during Lent (**beginning March 12**) at 6:00 p.m. These services will include a meal and a healing service that connects with the theme from the Sunday prior.

Lent & Easter Schedule:

Wednesday, March 5, 7 p.m. - Ash Wednesday

Wednesdays, March 12–April 9, 6 p.m. – Dinner Church with Healing Prayer

Sunday, April 13, 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. – Palm Sunday with Children's Parade at 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, April 17, 7 p.m. – Maundy Thursday with Communion Milestone

Friday, April 18, 7 p.m. – Good Friday

Saturday, April 19, 5 p.m. – Holy Saturday

Sunday, April 20, 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. – Easter Sunday

Anything you truly need
is something your neighbor
needs as well.

God is not satisfied
until everyone has
what they need.

Justin Kosec
All We Need: Preachers' Notes
Ash Wednesday



DAY CAMP - June 16-20, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

For kids entering 1st - 5th grade in Fall 2025

VBS - June 23-26, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

For kids age 4 years old - those entering 5th grade in Fall 2025

MUSIC CAMP - August 4-8, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

For kids entering kindergarten - 5th grade in Fall 2025

Building a Culture of Generosity

***GIVE GENEROUSLY TO HIM AND DO SO WITHOUT A GRUDGING HEART,
THEN BECAUSE OF THIS THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL BLESS YOU IN
ALL YOUR WORK AND IN EVERYTHING YOU PUT YOUR HAND TO.***

DEUTERONOMY 15:10

We just completed the Intent Card Campaign for 2025 and the Generosity Mission Team thanks all who responded by returning their Intent Cards. We received 146 Intention Cards which represents 25% of all active members! Even if you did not return your card, we hope that you made your intention known to the Lord in your heart to be more generous this year in your support of St. Matthew and our mission here to grow God's kingdom.

We have such a vibrant, thriving ministry here and your support is vital in continuing to fund our current programs as well as expanding future ones. So, thank you again and God Bless You.



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.

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

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Scan for
e-giving

The Generosity Mission Team

**YOUR GIVING
MATTERS!**