



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

Stacy
Pastor Kathy
Tim Peck
Pastor Alex
DAVE B
Pastor Faye
Melissa Smith
Jane Lawrence
Stacy Brodbeck
Dave Brodbeck

Come share in the wonder and joy of Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ!

Advent & Christmas

Nov. 30	11:45am	Church Decorating (Nave)
Dec. 1	6:30pm	Blue Christmas (Nave)
Dec. 6	9:00am	Cookie Sale
Dec. 7	3:00pm	Holiday Meal (Fellowship Hall)
Dec. 14	9:45am	Christmas Pageant (Fellowship Hall)
Dec. 17	5:30pm	Caroling
Dec. 19	10:00am	Cheer Bag Packing & Delivery (Fellowship Hall)
Dec. 21	9:30am	Cookie & Coffee Fellowship (Fellowship Hall)
	10:30am	PJ & Christmas Sweater Worship
Dec. 24	4:30pm	Family Service (Nave)
	7:00pm	Carols & Candlelight Service (Nave)
	9:30pm	Carols & Candlelight Service (Nave)
Dec. 25-26	ALL DAY	Church Office Closed
Dec. 27	5:00pm	Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)
	5:45pm	Meal & Puppet Show (Fellowship Hall)
Dec. 28	9:30am	Combined Worship Service (Nave)
Jan 1-2	ALL DAY	Church Office Closed

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Ethan Draper Our new Organist and Choir Director

We are delighted to introduce Ethan Draper as our new Church Organist at St. Matthew Lutheran Church. Ethan joins us as he completes his final year at Lebanon Valley College, where

he is pursuing a BA in Organ Performance and Sacred Music with a strong academic record and extensive private study in organ, piano, voice, and conducting.

Ethan brings a remarkable depth of musical experience. He currently serves as the Organ Scholar at Market Square Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, assisting with a vibrant music ministry, accompanying weekly worship, supporting a 50-voice choir, and helping administer its musical and visual arts series. His work as a collaborative pianist, choral conducting scholar, and accompanist for college and community ensembles has further shaped his skill as a church musician and leader.

He has participated in nationally recognized masterclasses, attended regional and national conferences, and earned honors including several music awards and a prestigious national research grant

from the American Bach Society. His ongoing research and recording work with J. S. Bach's Orgelbüchlein speaks to both his musicianship and his passion for the sacred music tradition.

Ethan is an active member of the American Guild of Organists, serving on the AGO Young Organists National Committee and as Sub-Dean of the Harrisburg Chapter.

He was drawn to our congregation through our shared values and mission, and he expressed a clear sense of calling to contribute to the ministries of St. Matthew. His appreciation for diverse musical styles, empathetic leadership, and organizational strength make him a wonderful addition to our worship life and music program. Ethan plans to relocate to the Hanover area in the spring and is eager to become an active part of our community.

We are grateful for the gifts Ethan brings and excited for the leadership he will offer in worship and music ministry. Please join us in warmly welcoming him to St. Matthew Lutheran Church.

With appreciation and blessings,

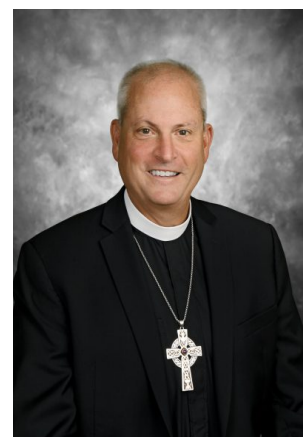
Chris Zumbrum, Chair of the Selection Committee

Join us for a reception on January 11, following the 10:30 service, as we welcome him to St. Matthew.



Celebrating the Installation of Bishop Stephen Herr

On October 25, St. Matthew hosted the installation of Stephen Herr to the office of Bishop in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, welcoming rostered ministers and bishops from around the country and the world. Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry preached and installed Bishop Herr. We also welcomed Bishop Mwakihaba from our companion synod, the Konde Diocese in Tanzania.



We give thanks to everyone who made this event possible - our staff, greeters, ushers, parking lot assistants, members of the choir, the bell choir, kitchen volunteers, nursery volunteers, tech help, etc. Thank you. Pictures can be found to the left.

We continue to pray for Bishop Herr, his family, and our wider synod as he steps into this new call.



Christmas Cheer Bags

Know someone who has had a tough year and could use some extra cheer? A friend? A relative? A co-worker?

You can help cheer them up by submitting their name and contact information. We will deliver gift bags to folks in grief, who have lost their job, are sick, injured, lonely, or sad for any reason.

Note: Bags are not limited to St. Matthew members, but they must be located within 15 miles of Hanover.

We'll need volunteers on **December 19** to help pack bags at 10:00 a.m. and deliver them at 11:30 a.m.

You can submit names and sign up to volunteer using the QR code above, by visiting our website, or by completing a form available on the Hospitality Desk and placing it in the offering plate. **Deadline to submit names is December 15.** For questions or more information, contact Pastor Faye through the church office or by email.



Blue Christmas

Monday, December 1 at 6:30pm



A gentle service for anyone carrying grief or sadness of any kind this holiday season. Soft light, restful music, and words of hope centered on Jesus' love. Emmanuel—God with us. Come find rest, comfort, and company. You're not alone. There is space for your sorrow and your story. Contact Pastor Faye with questions or more information.

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE

**DEC 6, 9:30–11:30AM
DEC 7, BETWEEN SERVICES
\$10/ BOX OF COOKIES**



The Social Ministry committee is looking for donations of cookies to fill the boxes. We are asking bakers for 6 dozen cookies to share. Cookies can be dropped off in Fellowship Hall, Friday Dec 5 from 4-6:30p. We will begin packing boxes at 6:30p. Money raised will go to the ministries of Tree4Hope. **To volunteer or for more info contact Amy Beck (Abeck1976@comcast.net).**

HOLIDAY COMMUNITY MEAL

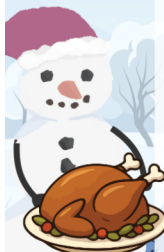
December 7, 2025 3pm–5pm

Come and enjoy a turkey dinner!
FREE for the community!

The menu includes: turkey,
mashed potatoes, stuffing, corn,
and an assortment of desserts.

To sign up to donate or volunteer,
use the QR code or the sign-up at
the Hospitality Desk.

Contact the office with questions
or for more information!



Christmas Caroling

Wednesday, December 17, 5:30pm

Come join us as we go out to share songs of hope, joy, and light with those who may need a little encouragement this Christmas. We'll be at our first caroling site by 6pm. and return for food and fellowship. All are invited to help spread Christmas cheer!



Intergenerational Ornament Event

Crafters of all ages joined in Fellowship Hall to make over 250 ornaments that will be making their way into the cheer bags this December. We had three ornament options to be made. The wooden star was probably the busiest table, but the Christmas Candle may be the favorite of the day. Our crosses, which may have been the hardest choice of the three, had a crew that were able to stand up to the challenge!



Where Faith & Life Intersect - Sundays 9:30am

A discussion class based on current events and our faith, located next to the Gathering Place. Contact Beth Koontz at BethK9245@gmail.com for more information.

Women of the ELCA - 1st Tuesday of the month, 2:00pm on the 2nd floor in the Upper Room.

Senior Hangout - 3rd Monday of the month, 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall

Cyber Women - 3rd Tuesday of the month, 6:00pm (5:30 for dinner) at Panera in North Hanover.

SoulFire Band - Every other Tuesday at 5:45p
December Dates: 12/2 & 12/16

Adult Bell Choir - Thursdays at 6p

Adult Choir - Thursdays at 7p

The Adult Choir and Adult Bells will sing and ring at the 9:30pm Christmas Eve service.

Advent Devotional

Humble and Holy: An Advent and Christmas Daily devotional can be found on the Hospitality Desk and in the church office.

Young Adult Bowling and Lock-In

December 27

Bowling at South Hanover Lanes, 5pm

Lock-In, 7pm-8am

Young adults are invited to gather for an evening of fun during the holiday season. Bowling will begin at 5pm; bowlers will cover their own cost for their games and their shoe rental (final pricing is TBD). Then, come to the church for a lock-in for fellowship, baking cookies (everyone is invited to bring cookie dough) and enjoying a Christmas movie together. Contact Tim Peck for more information.



Bible Study - Dec 2 & Jan 6 at 2pm

St. Matt's WELCA group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 2pm for Bible study.

All women are invited to attend a Bible Study led by Pastor Kathy called Flourishing in Relationships. Come to discover how our relationships sustain us and help us to grow. For more information, call the church office.

Find out more about the Women of the ELCA by going to this website: WWW.LSS-ELCA.ORG. Go to "Mission Partners" at the top of the home page and then down to Women of the ELCA LS SWO.

Upcoming Lower Susquehanna SWO Event:

Cabin Fever - March 7 (tentative) at St. Bartholemew in Hanover.

Senior Hangout

**3rd Monday of the Month, 10:00am
Fellowship Hall**

Senior Hangout is a ministry that began this summer to give our senior members a time of fellowship, fun, and learning. The December Senior Hangout will feature spending some time in the Christmas Spirit with carols, crafts, and treats.

In October, Deb Smith led a presentation on the Salem Witch Trials. And in November, Scott Fredericks led a presentation on the organ and gave tours of the beautiful instrument.



God's Love in Guatemala

Bobbi Lidard

Charley, Sally Staub and I, along with other volunteers from different areas, recently returned from Guatemala where we were fortunate to attend graduation at Hope Academy. This year's graduation was extra special as it was the first group of girls who had attended Hope Academy all the way through from kindergarten through sixth grade. For those who may not know, Hope Academy is a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) school for girls founded to help break the vicious cycle of poverty and pregnancy so prevalent for females in Guatemala. You can help make a difference in a girl's life by sponsoring her education at Hope Academy for only \$130 a month through Tree4Hope.

Hogar Miquel Orphanage is also supported by Tree4Hope. Children are placed here usually by the

authorities after being removed from abusive homes. Not only were the children abused, but they lived in homes with dirt floors, leaky roofs, no bathrooms, no running water and no electricity. At the Hogar, they are fed, clothed, educated, given medical care and more importantly, loved. The Hogar receives no funding or support from the government and exists solely on donations from sponsors like us. You can sponsor a child in the food program which provides all their daily meals for only \$30 a month. Food sponsorships can also be done through Tree4Hope (Tree4Hope.org).



SongFest Concert

Friday, January 16 at 7:00pm

PIANIST JOSEPH MARTIN presents SongFest Concert, The Gift of Alleluia: A Concert of Celebration, Contemplation and Proclamation,

featuring Joseph Martin, Sean Paul, Steve Roddy, Patti Drennan and the 65+ voice SongFest

Choir. Friday, January 16 at 7 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 17 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.

GriefShare®

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.

Our 13-session GriefShare group is scheduled to begin, **January 26, 2026 at our new time, 3:00-4:30pm**, on the 2nd floor in the upper room. 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.

Annual Reports

TO ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS: Annual reports are due in the church office by Monday, January 26.

Remember that this is a historical document, and we like to have a clear report of the past year at St. Matthew and our activities. If you have email access, please email your report to info@stmattlutheran.org. If you do not have email access, we would appreciate if you could have the report typewritten. If you need a copy of your committee's report from last year, or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Stacy (ext. 223) or Jane (ext. 226) in the church office (717-637-7101). Thank you for your time!





Faith Formation Classes - Sundays 9:30am

Age 3 - 5th grade Classes resume January 11

Splash Class - Select Sundays 9:45-10:15am

Birth - age 3 (Dec. 7, Feb. 1, Mar. 8, May 3)

Junior Choir & Bells - Tuesdays, 4:30-5:15pm

3rd-5th grade

Children's Choir - Thursdays, 4:15-5:00pm

Age 3 - 2nd grade

**The Children and Junior choirs will
sing and ring at the Family
Christmas Eve Service at 4:30pm.**

Splash Classes – Sundays, 9:45am Dec. 7, Feb. 1, Mar. 8, May 3

Our Splash class is our class geared toward the littlest among us and their families. Led by Ms. Lindsay and Mr. Adam, families with babies and toddlers are invited to join them as they dive into what it means to have a child "splashed" in the waters of baptism. This highly interactive class includes music, play, and connection -- offering space to grow in faith together through movement, song, and joy.



2025 Christmas Pageant December 14, 9:45am

Rehearsals - Nov. 23, 30 & Dec. 7 at 9:30am

Rehearsals are underway for our Christmas pageant! We are working hard to get everyone into their perfect parts. We are now in full-force with costume fittings and running lines. Our kids—along with their dedicated adult leaders—are working hard to bring the story of Christmas to life in this year's pageant. Come celebrate their creativity, energy, and joy as they share the good news in their own beautiful way!



**Family
Christmas
Eve Service**



December 24 - 4:30pm





Puppet Show and Meal Saturday, December 27 at 5:45pm

Bring the kids (and the kids-at-heart) for a meal and a puppet show from St. Matthew's own Mini-Minister puppet team! Expect giggles, sing-along, and lots of fun. This is free and everyone is welcome! Come early for our 5pm worship service!



Children's and Junior Choirs sang during the 10:30 worship on October 20.

Children's and Junior Choirs sang during the Veterans Breakfast on November 9.



Toddler Time for ages 3-5 was held on Nov. 8 & 15.

PJ Storytime with Ms. Lindsay was held on Nov. 2.



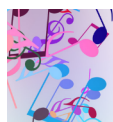
Music JAM (Jesus and Me) for K-5th grades was held on Nov. 8 & 15



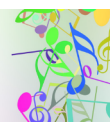
New Story Bibles for 3rd-5th graders

This year we introduced a new Story Bible for our 3rd-5th graders—an intentional step to help them transition from our younger Story Bibles to reading the Bible itself. This resource opens the door to more stories—some less familiar—while giving kids a safe, guided place to learn and ask questions.

Pastor Alex has created a lesson plan for Faith Connections on Sunday mornings, giving teachers and students space to learn, wonder, and ask questions together. Each chapter also includes the corresponding scripture reference so families can revisit the story at home and dig deeper in their own Bibles if they wish.



Steven Courtney Concert Sun, Feb 22 at 4:00pm



We're thrilled to announce that beloved children's musician Steven Courtney is joining our 2025 Concert Series! With fun, engaging songs that spark imagination and joy, Steven's music is perfect for kids and families alike. Mark your calendars and get ready for a lively, laughter-filled afternoon you won't want to miss!





Confirmation - Sundays 9:30am

6th-8th grade

On Christmas break Dec 14-Jan 4; Classes resume January 11

High School Faith Connections - Sundays 9:30am

9th-12th grade

On Christmas break Dec 14-Jan 4; Classes resume January 11

Youth Choir & Bells - Sundays 11:45am-12:30pm

6th-12th grade

Youth Group - 1st & 3rd Sundays, 6:00-8:00pm

6th-12th grade

No Youth Group on Jan 4 due to Winterfest

The Youth Choir and Bells will be playing and singing at the 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service.

Celebrating Milestones

We celebrated two milestones with Troy L. this fall. He was baptized at our Youth Group gathering on October 5. He then affirmed his baptism (was confirmed) and became a full member of the congregation on October 26th.



Serving Together

Trunk or Treat and Community Meal

We held our annual Trunk or Treat and Community meal on October 27. We thank everyone who made this event possible - those who provided and served food, those who led the crafts, those who donated candy, and those who sponsored trunks. This continues to be an event that brings joy to our neighborhood and strengthens our connections with families in our wider community.



Veterans Breakfast

On November 9, our youth hosted our second annual Veterans' Breakfast to honor those who have served in the armed forces. We give thanks for the veterans and their families who joined us, and for all the youth and adults who cooked, served, and extended warm hospitality. It was a beautiful way to say "thank you" and to build connections across generations.



VNA/Hospice Memorial Service

Also on November 9 Our youth had the privilege of playing "It Is Well with My Soul" at the VNA/Hospice Memorial Service—a service where the names of patients who died on hospice care are read aloud and remembered. Their music added a moving layer of comfort and reverence to this sacred time.



Having Fun Together

Youth Group

1st & 3rd Sundays, 6:00–8:00pm

All youth in grades 6-12 are invited to an evening of fellowship, faith, and fun! We meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month from 6-8pm. Youth are always welcome to bring friends to join us. We will have snacks and drinks. Contact Tim for questions or more information. Below are some memories from our Fall Youth Group events.



Youth Lock-In December 20–21

All youth in 6th-12th grade are invited for an unforgettable overnight full of games, laughter, and late-night snacks! Stay on December 21 for Coffee and Cookies Fellowship. Then, wear your best Christmas PJs or Christmas sweater to worship at 10:30.

Puppet Show and Meal Saturday, December 27 at 5:45pm

Our Mini-Minister youth will be hosting a puppet show for kids, their families, and the young at heart, following the 5pm service on Dec. 27. The puppet show will include a light meal.



WINTERFEST

Building Authentic Christian Community

**Winterfest
January 2–4, 2026**

Join youth and young adults from across our synod for a weekend of worship, service, and community built around the theme "Better Together." Enjoy music, speakers, small groups, and a 30,000-meal food-packing service project! High school and college students can sign up with Tim. **Cost: \$60 per youth.** **The church will cover the remaining registration fee.**

Registration deadline: Dec. 5. Space is limited

Memories from 2025's Winterfest are above!



Changing Lives Shelter

The Changing Lives Shelter extends thanks to the members of St Matthew who have volunteered at the shelter or have donated food for the shelter.

Now that the Cold Weather Shelter has opened there are close to 40 clients on any given night. Additional volunteers would be helpful. If you have an interest in volunteering from 5-9 pm on any given night, please contact Randy Kline (rldkline@yahoo.com) or Beth Syzmanski (bszymanski3@hotmail.com).

Donation bins remain in the elevator lobby and in the gathering place. We thank you for supporting this ministry!

Some of the cold-weather items donated for the Mitten Tree will also go to the Hanover Area Council of Churches as they serve folks in their cold-weather shelter.

Faith Connections Christmas Break

There will be no Faith Connections on December 21, 28, or January 4. Classes for all ages will resume on January 11.

Coffee & Cookie Fellowship & Christmas PJ/ Sweater Worship

December 21 - 9:30am & 10:30am

On this last Sunday in Advent, come cozy, come festive, come ready to celebrate! Bring your favorite Christmas treat to share and enjoy cookies and coffee in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m. Then join us for 10:30 a.m.

worship in your best Christmas pajamas or Christmas sweater as we rejoice in the season together.



Guess who's coming to dinner?

Early February

Dinner groups will be forming in early February. Keep an eye out for more information!

NEWS FROM DISCOVERY PLACE PRESCHOOL!

Our preschool year is off to a wonderful start!

THANK YOU to all the fantastic bakers who donated to the Election Day Bake Sale. We had an impressive amount of baked goods, and a wide variety as well! We appreciate you!

Registration for the 2026–2027 school year will begin in late January. An Open House to meet the teachers is scheduled for Thursday, January 29 from 5:30–7:00pm. Please share our preschool information with families that have young children.



Amy Wolf

Discovery Place Director
discoveryplacehanover@gmail.com
717-637-1864



Pastor Kathy's Sabbatical A Time for Renewal

Dear Friends,

Late last year, the Congregation Council approved the Personnel Committee's recommendation to adopt the Lower Susquehanna Synod's guidelines for pastors to receive a sabbatical.

Due to the commitment of our current staff and the ongoing support from Pastor Alex and Pastor Faye, I am able to begin my 8 week sabbatical on Monday, January 19th. My plans include intentional reading related to congregational leadership and preaching. I will also worship with other congregations and learn from their leaders.

With gratitude, Pastor Kathy

Estimate of Giving Cards

If you have not yet returned your Estimate of Giving Cards, we ask you to return them by placing them in the offering basket or by sending them to the office. We thank you for your prayerful consideration as you support the ministries of St. Matthew.

In Our Church Family

Recent life events in our community

Baptisms

June 8 - Cooper Page Thomassy, son of Eric and BriAnna (Meyers) Thomassy with sponsors Brian and Jocelyn West

October 5 - Troy Jacob Linebaugh, grandson of Laura and Wayne Beck

Affirmation of Baptism (Confirmation)

October 26

Troy Jacob Linebaugh

Deaths

July 23 - Robert (Bob) Martin

August 22 - Larry Bankert Sr.

September 22 - Curtis Hoff

September 30 - Lena Mae Dulling

October 9 - Richard Stewart

October 26 - Joan Marchio

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.

Celebrating 20 years at St. Matthew

Jane Lawrence, one of our administrative staff, is celebrating 20 years in her role at St. Matthew. Following the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 7, we will be hosting a reception in her honor. Come help us thank Jane for her 20 years with us so far!

A special thanks

I would like to thank everyone for your prayers, cards, well wishes and meals as I have gone through some health issues. Thank you to the pastors and the staff also, for your prayers and support. All of the support has meant so much and carried me through the scary moments. God bless you all!

Jane Lawrence

End-of-Year Offerings

In order for your end-of-year offerings to be posted in 2025, **they must be RECEIVED in the church office by Tuesday, December 30 at 9 a.m.** Any offerings arriving in the office after that date and time will be posted in January of 2026.

Congregation Meeting Results

At the Congregation meeting on Sunday, November 16, the budget was approved for 2026. There are copies available in the church office if you would like one. We voted into Council the following members: Gordon Grady, Stephanie Klansek, Darlene Klenk, Randy Kline (2-years) and Beth Szymanski. We thank outgoing council members Rollie Kunde, Darlene Klenk and Barb Rupp. We thank all Council members for their service to St. Matthew.



Save the Dates

December 7 - Thank you reception

December 30 - End-of-Year Offerings Due

January 3-5 - Winterfest (High-School Youth)

January 11 - Faith Formations Resumes

January 15 - Newsletter Articles Due

January 16 - Joseph Martin Concert (7:00pm)

January 19 - Pastor Kathy's Sabbatical Begins

January 26 - GriefShare Session Begins

January 29 - Discovery Place Preschool Open House (5:30pm)

February 7 - Guess Who's Coming for Dinner?

February 18 - Ash Wednesday

February 22 - Steven Courtney and the Suitcase Musicians Concert (4:00pm)

**We will be moving to a quarterly format for the Messenger.
The next Messenger will cover the Spring:
February, March, and April.**

**Articles for the Spring Messenger are due on:
January 15, 2026**

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St. Matthew
LUTHERAN CHURCH of HANOVER

Where the Welcome is Wide and the Love is Real