



THE WORD

March 2024

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church
700 Pleasure Road, Lancaster PA 17601
(717) 394-9607 www.stmatthewelc.com



Pastor Robin Fero

Pastor's Page



Many blessings to you, pilgrims, as we make our way through the Lenten wilderness, on our way to the cross. Our Lenten journey is complete on March 31 this year, when we hear the Good News of the Resurrection of our Lord.

Here are some worship service highlights in March:

March 10, Sunday (Lent 4), our musicians Phil High and Susan Feldmann will be enriching our worship with an organ/piano duet, Amazing Grace.

March 17, Sunday (Lent 5), a trio of Chancel choir singers, Kay Gontner, Peg Sampson, and Linda McIntyre will be singing Create in Me a Clean Heart.

March 23,24 is Palm Weekend! We will have our traditional palm procession into the worship space. The Chancel Choir will sing Total Praise on Sunday.

March 28 is Maundy Thursday. We will meet at 12noon in the sanctuary, have scripture readings and prayer, and solemnly strip the altar.

March 29 is Good Friday. Identical Tenebrae services will be held at 12noon and 7pm. Within the service, we will be led through the stations of the cross by scripture reading and hymn singing. The gradual extinguishing of the candles sets the quiet moment for those who wish to adore the cross at the end of the service.

March 30, Saturday Vigil is a spoken service. Within this service we will observe the history of God's care for the world, light the Paschal candle and profess our faith anew.

March 31, Resurrection of our Lord (Easter Sunday). The sanctuary will be decorated with spring flowers and the bell choir and chancel choir will join the saints and angels in proclaiming that Jesus Christ is risen!

-Pastor Fero

Growing in God's Love...Living our Welcome Statement

We extend heartfelt gratitude to all who joined us for our inaugural Learning & Loving session on mental health. The positive feedback we received reflects the impact of our speaker, Bethany Kyper, whose presentation was truly outstanding. Your participation made the event a success!

If you have any insights or suggestions regarding the Learning & Loving series or any aspect of RIC, please feel free to connect with any of the RIC members. Your input is valued and essential as we strive to foster a supportive and inclusive environment.

As we stand committed to our public pledge of being an Open and Affirming congregation, we invite you to join us in commemorating Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31, 2024. This day serves as an opportunity to celebrate the lives and contributions of transgender individuals while shedding light on the challenges they face, including poverty, discrimination, and violence.

Transgender Day of Visibility is not only a celebration of the transgender community but also a call to raise awareness about the discrimination they endure globally. Let us recognize and honor their valuable contributions to society.

Approaching Holy Week, where we collectively reflect on Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, let us acknowledge the prevailing forces that manifest in anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ legislation and actions. It is our responsibility to be a force for good, championing the gospel of life and standing against efforts to erase or eliminate any group of people.

May our congregation continue to be a beacon of love, acceptance, and advocacy for justice.

- Erin Conahan



Music Ministry News

On Our Lenten Journey

I went into the desert looking for...
but all I found was...

Gracious and merciful God, in your Wisdom,
thank you for Being, not what we think we want,
but always... all we could ever need. Amen.

"I went out into the desert looking for a house
but all I found was shelter
I went out into the desert looking for a feast
but all I found was food
I went out into the desert looking for a pool
but all I found was water
I went out into the desert looking for a religion
but all I found was forgiveness
I went out into the desert looking for a belief
but all I found was faith
I went out into the desert looking for a method
but all I found was truth
I went out into the desert looking for friends
but all I found was love
I went out into the desert looking for a god
but all I found was a Savior
I went out to look for everything I thought I wanted
but all I found was everything I could ever need"

Excerpt from **WATER FROM THE DESERT**
BY AARON GLEASON

- Susan Feldmann

Evangelism Committee Corner

The Evangelism Committee convened on February 18, 2024 at 11:15am with eight members in attendance. Devotions, led by Barb Eshbach, chair, focused upon an old Jewish tale titled "It Could Be Worse". It is a story of crowding our lives with what we think are necessities and proceeding to empty our house of those "necessities" as we ready ourselves for the Easter season.

Special thanks again to Steve Feldmann for his presentation on Estate Planning, given on January 17, 2024 as part of our Conversation Around the Corner series. Part 2 will be offered to our congregation in the near future. News releases have secured a place in the Manheim Township Merchandiser. LPN's Faith and Values is another avenue to be pursued for future conversations.

Additional suggestions for Conversation Around the Corner include Richard Ressel, artist, Gregory Scott, architect, therapy/service pets from United Disabilities Services, and an officer from the Manheim Township Police Department.

Game Day is fast approaching with Sunday, March 10, 2024 reserved from 11:15am to 2pm for a fun afternoon of games, puzzles, pizza and fellowship. It is also Sammy Sweitzer's birthday which we will celebrate with a special cake.

Barb Eshbach is encouraging an emerging program titled "Sharing Sunday", a once-a-month invitation to any friend to join us on a Sunday morning in comfortably sharing their personal story.

Our next meeting is scheduled for March 17, 2024 following our worship service.

- Kay Gontner

Plan For Your Future... And St. Matthew's Too!

Over a dozen people attended our Conversation Around the Corner last month to hear about Essential Estate Planning. Attorney Mark Smith and I discussed the things everyone who owns property needs to do to guide their loved ones in distributing their stuff after their death.

We are going to hold two sessions on the weekend of April 13-14, after church, for the congregation and any other interested people, repeating the essentials of estate planning, but taking it a few steps further.

As you know, our congregation faced a very large deficit last fall. Many of you responded generously to the call for additional support, and we closed the year with a much reduced deficit of about \$7,000. This is significantly less than the nearly \$20,000 deficit we were looking at in October, and over \$10,000 less than the deficit budgeted for in 2023.

A number of the St. Matthew family expressed a desire to do more to help St. Matthew survive and thrive in the future. We will be adding an important component to the April sessions, showing how we can use our assets and planning opportunities to benefit, not just ourselves and our loved ones, but also the charities we care about (including St. Matthew!).

Deacon Marianne Brock, who represents the ELCA Foundation in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, will be with us, both to preach, and to show us the resources available to all Lutherans to support their congregations and the ministries of the ELCA.

Pastor Fero and I have both known Sister Marianne for many years. She has an infectious enthusiasm and a kind and spiritually uplifting heart and mind.

Please plan to stay after church on April 13 or 14 to hear information that could benefit you, your family and your church.

-Steve Feldmann, Treasurer

Tutoring Ministry by Nancy Smith



You all know about the relationship between Brecht Elementary School and St. Matthew, as you have been very generous in donating to the Thanksgiving Food Drive each year. Thanks to the members of St. Matthew and the Social Ministry

Committee, chaired by Sheila Charles, many Brecht families have been able to enjoy a Thanksgiving that they might not have had otherwise.

In October Principal Nicole Irish contacted Pastor Fero and Sheila with a new need that the school was working to address. Three Spanish-speaking students had been enrolled in Brecht, and although they were receiving extra services and intervention from the school district, she felt they could use more assistance in the form of one-on-one tutoring. Because I'm a retired Spanish teacher, Pastor forwarded Nicole's email to me and asked if I would be interested.

I had taught teenagers for 47 years, and I've been volunteer-tutoring adults in the Community Education Program of Intermediate Unit 13. But I hadn't worked with elementary students for over thirty years, when I tutored English as a Second Language to two children who had been adopted from El Salvador. I wasn't sure how I felt about working with little ones, but the fact that it was different from what I had mostly known interested me.

I met with Nicole, who shared some information about the students, and told me about the Pennsylvania clearances that I would need. As luck would have it, I was already in the process of renewing my clearances for the IU, so it was no problem. I was finally able to start in December, after having to delay it because of a bout with

COVID in November.

Although I've been meeting with the kids for only two months, I am getting to know them (a boy from Honduras in second grade and two girls in fourth grade, one from Guatemala, and one from Cuba). I meet with them individually from 1 to 3 PM every Monday, after spending the morning at the IU.

Both volunteer jobs have their merits, but I especially enjoy tutoring the kids because I can make up fun things for them to do to review the material they are learning from a workbook. Last week my second grader, Santos, and I played a color/shapes Bingo game. I was the caller for one game, and he asked if he could call the colors and shapes for the second game. The fact that he could name most of the colors and shapes without help was very rewarding, and at the end, he said, "Me like that game! We do again?" If I had any doubts about taking on that tutoring task, they were erased in that moment!

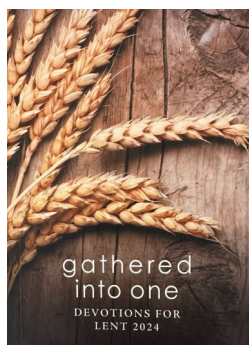
-Nancy Smith

Daylight Saving Time

Don't forget to Spring Forward on Saturday night March 9!



Lent Devotional Booklet



Copies of this year's Lenten devotional booklet, *Gathered Into One*, are still available in the church lobby. This daily devotion walks through the epistle of 1 Corinthians and offers reflections and prayers pertinent to the contemporary life of a Lenten pilgrim. This booklet finishes up on Easter Sunday, but can be started/ finished at any time.

Thank You

Dear Pastor Fero,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you again for all the support you have provided our family especially over the last few weeks. You and your church are really models of what a faith community should be. We appreciate the time you took, out of what I'm sure is a busy schedule, to visit my Dad and to work on what was a lovely funeral service.

I also like to thank the members of the church who sent cards to Dad, even after he was unable to be an active member of the congregation. He looked at those over and over and they meant a lot.

Please accept this contribution in memory of my Dad to further the work that your community does.

With appreciation,
Sharon Resh Forni

Thank You

Thank you for your outpouring of love and generous gifts during the Advent and Christmas Season. It is a joy to share Jesus with you at St. Matthew!

-Pastor and Jeff

Thank You

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Please receive my greetings from United Lutheran Seminary here at Gettysburg campus.

Grace and Peace be with you.

My name is Rev. Emmanuel Mchomvu, I am writing this letter to you, St. Matthew, Lancaster and Congregation Council and members in general to acknowledge your effort in doing God's work all over the place. Speaking of God's work, I want to say thank you and I appreciate your effort in making sure that I am doing well with my studies here, so as my life too by providing the money for me.

Your support of \$300 for each month until I finish my semester, will help me but mostly will help my family back in Tanzania because even though I am here studying, they are still looking for my support. I am thankful for that because through supporting me to live here while I am studying, you support my wife and children back home. I am out of words on how to show my appreciation for what you did. The best way to say is that, AHSANTE SANA NA MUNGU AWABARIKI (Thank you very much and God Bless you).

The support that I will be receiving shows how much you as the Church and body of Christ, care and love God's creation. I have a story to tell about God's love and that story is you, is from you. Thank you Pastor Cliff in one way or another for making this happening. God bless you.

My wife is thankful for what you guys did, for what the church did to me. Thanks again.

I do not have any other words to show my appreciations to you. It is just what I wrote. Please receive my appreciation as they are.

Be blessed abundantly,

In Christ's Love,

Rev. Emmanuel Mchomvu



Be here after worship for a fun afternoon of games, puzzles, pizza, and fellowship!

Bring one of your favorite games or play one we have at church!

Birthdays

Barb Emmerich 3/9	Sammy Sweitzer 3/10
Buzz Rothweiler 3/14	Pat Smith 3/14
Ray Shaub 3/17	Sarah Teichmann 3/27
Judith Miller 3/30	

Worship Assistants

Altar Care for March – Nancy Pokopec, Linda Tice & Anna Neal

March 2 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Nancy Pokopec
- Reader: Nancy Pokopec

March 3 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Linda McIntyre
- Reader: Linda McIntyre
- Greeter: OPEN
- Usher: Barb Elsen
- Counters: Barb Elsen & Brad Charles

March 9 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Brad Charles

March 10 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Barb Elsen
- Reader: Peg Sampson
- Greeter: Carol Rothweiler
- Usher: Brenda Stauffer
- Counters: Brenda Stauffer & Carol Rothweiler

March 16 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

March 17 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Steve Feldmann
- Reader: Barb Elsen
- Greeter: Kay Gontner
- Usher: Barb Elsen
- Counters: Linda Tice & Barb Elsen

March 23 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Nancy Pokopec

March 24 – Palm Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Linda McIntyre
- Reader: Linda McIntyre
- Greeter: Toni Sweitzer
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Brad Charles & Carol Rothweiler

March 29 – Good Friday 12pm

- Greeter & Usher: Nancy Pokopec
- Reader: Linda McIntyre & Phyllis Wimer

March 29 – Good Friday 7pm

- Greeter: David Ostrander
- Reader: Linda Tice & Steve Feldmann

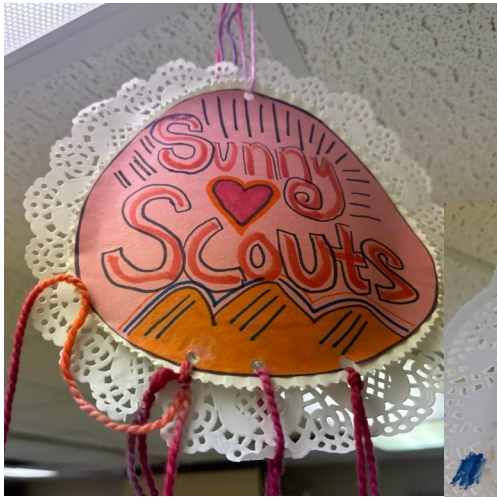
March 30 – Easter Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Barb Emmerich

March 31 – Easter Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Barb Elsen
- Reader: OPEN
- Greeter: OPEN
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Brenda Stauffer & Brad Charles





Officers (2024)

Barb Elsen, President

Barb Eshbach, Vice President

Phyllis Wimer, Secretary

Brad Charles, Financial Secretary

Steve Feldmann, Treasurer

Staff

The Rev. Robin Fero, Pastor

Susan Feldmann, Director of Music

Phil High, Musician

Church Council

Barb Elsen

Phyllis Wimer

Steve Feldmann

Nancy Smith

Barb Eshbach

Kay Gontner

Nancy Pokopec

Pastor Fero

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
Statement of Welcome, Affirmation
and Full Participation**



Welcome to St Matthew, the little church with a big heart.
We are a Reconciling in Christ (Open and Affirming) congregation, so when we say
"all are welcome", we really mean it.
We strive to live that out in our actions as well as our words. We publicly and humbly
commit to do what it takes to truly be a sanctuary filled with warmth, love,
understanding, safety, respect and care for all who enter here.

*(Please see our Full Statement of Welcome, Affirmation and Full Participation
on our website: www.stmatthewelc.com. Copies of the Full Statement are also
available in the Education and Resources Stand in the Fellowship Hall.)*

St. Matthew

March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 5pm - Worship
3 10am - Worship	4	5 12pm - Better Bones at Grandview	6 12pm - Bible Study 6:30pm - M.T. Democratic Committee	7 6pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal	8	9 5pm - Worship
10 10am - Worship 11am - Game Day	11	12 12pm - Better Bones at Grandview 7:00pm - Church Council	13 12pm - Bible Study 6:30pm - RIC Committee Mtg	14 5:30pm - SUNNY Scouts 6pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal	15	16 2pm - Quilting Workshop 5pm - Worship
17 10am - Worship 11:15am - Evangelism Mtg	18 12pm - Community Meal	19 12pm - Better Bones at Grandview	20 12pm - Bible Study	21 6pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal	22	23 10am - Bell Choir Recording 5pm - Worship
24 10am - Palm Sunday	25	26 12pm - Better Bones at Grandview	27 12pm - Bible Study	28	29 12pm - Good Friday 7pm - Good Friday	30 10am - Bell Choir Rehearsal 11am - Vocal Choir Rehearsal 5pm - Worship
31 10am - Easter Sunday						

ST. MATTHEW

700 Pleasure Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

(Return Service Requested)

The Little Church with the Big Heart

