



THE WORD

December 2024

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



Pastor Robin Fero

Pastor's Page



"So, what is your story?"

Happy (liturgical) New Year to you, church!

In December, we begin a new walk through the Year C Gospel of Luke. We will pretty much stay in Luke for the entire year, except for a detour during the

Easter Season, where we will witness some rich post-resurrection accounts of Jesus in the Gospel of John.

This is a year full of biblical stories of characters that we can easily relate to. I always appreciate the first two chapters of Luke and often find myself jumping with excitement as prenatal John the Baptist did when he heard Mary's voice.

Angels make announcements before Jesus is born and on the night of his birth. These glad tidings of great joy come to people like us, in the midst of their life vocations. God makes the impossible possible right before our eyes!

Of course, my favorite Easter story is Jesus walking the shoreline of Galilee and cooking breakfast for his hungry and discouraged friends. This story of Jesus has personally met me just as it did the disciples, in the right time and place in my life, more than once.

Occasionally in the 3-year liturgical cycle, a fixed-date Feast Day or "lower festival day" will occur on the weekend, and we will have the joy of celebrating that day in our worship services. The Presentation of our Lord (Feb. 2), Peter and Paul, Apostles (June 29), and Holy Cross Day (Sept. 14), are examples of such special occasions this year.

In this next year, not only will we walk with the disciples/ apostles as they experience Jesus face to

face and in the post-resurrection days, but we will also walk, run, and wrestle with the early church as they are changed by the Good News and as they struggle with those whom they are carrying the Word to, as well.

So, what is your story? How has Jesus stepped into your life in the most unexpected times, places, and ways?

The Good News, as we find out early in the Gospel of Luke, is for all of us ("all people"), no matter our station in life.

I thank God for the gift of digging deeper into this with you in the coming year. Blessings on the pathway. God is with us.

-Pastor Fero

Social Ministry



A HUGE thank you to everyone who helped support neighboring families at Brecht Elementary School. Food is being provided so these families might have a more plentiful holiday season this year. About twenty-five families within our community were helped this month. Wow, that was a lot of boxes and bags that were delivered on November 19th!!

Since our last "Learning & Loving" opportunity on homelessness, Social Ministry has decided to collect items for the Lancaster County Food Hub on Queen Street. Our drive will be focused on clothing and personal care. (All products distributed at the Hub are donated and FREE to their clients.)

Look for the holiday boxes in Fellowship Hall at the beginning of December. The Hub is in need of new underwear and socks (all sizes - men, women and children). Gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves for all sized heads and hands will be collected as well. All of these items can be placed in the boxes.

The Food Hub Hygiene Bank is in need of shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, bar soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste. These items can be placed on the table beside the holiday boxes.

"The Lancaster County Food Hub is helping our neighbors thrive through the resources they need the most: food, clothing, & shelter all with faith & compassion!"

St. Matthew donated three quilts to the Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania for their 2024 Quilt and Craft Auction on November 3rd at Camp Nawakwa. This year's auction raised over \$15,374 for the Endowment Fund which helps to financially sustain the LCC's ministries so that many future campers can experience a joyful and faith-building outdoor ministry. Our donated quilts brought a total of \$220.

- Sheila Charles

Music Ministry News

Music is in the air at St. Matthew as the Bell Choir and the Chancel Choir are preparing music for Advent and Christmas Eve! On December 24th at 4:00 pm, the Bell Choir will be ringing *Sing We Now of Christmas and Still, Still, Still*. The Chancel Choir will be singing *Gloria and The Jesus Gift*.

In addition to the choirs, our Christmas Eve Worship music will greet the Christ Child with Christmas organ solo selections, music for flute/bassoon and organ, as well as a special piece being offered by Erin Conahan, Mark Smith, Nora Hudack and our youngest musician, Fiona Smith!

Invite your family and friends to join you for this blessed worship service of Word and music.

O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

-Susan Feldmann

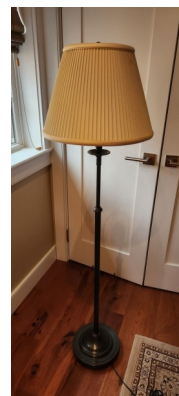
Gifts for Settling Refugees

St. Matthew family has responded generously since our August Learning & Loving presentation on Supporting Our Refugee and Immigrant Neighbors.

Our guest presenter, Ahmad Faizi, promised to update us periodically on specific items that households need. He spoke of bicycle transportation as a high priority in the meeting. Recently he provided a list of baby items that a family needed.



So far, these items have been donated to our neighbors: 3 bikes, a rocking chair full of baby supplies, and a matching pair of floor lamps.



Stay tuned for more supply lists...

-Pastor Fero

**The next Evangelism meeting will
be held after church on
Sunday, December 15**

St. Matthew's Chrismon Tree

At the beginning of Advent, congregants of St. Matthew decorate the Chrismon tree in the church sanctuary. Please take some time this season to admire the tree and the Chrismons ("CHRIST MONograms") that adorn it. Chrismons symbolize Christ's life ministry and our faith in Him. All of the Chrismons used to decorate the tree are white and gold to symbolize our Lord's purity, perfection, majesty and glory. The small white lights intensify this thought of purity and perfection, and that Christ was the Light of the World.



The first Chrismon tree was erected in St. Matthew Lutheran Church in 1959. The first Chrismons were made by Ruth K. Leidich, a member of this congregation. Chrismons were originated by her sister, Mrs. Harry Spencer of Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville, Virginia. Since 1957, the practice of decorating a Chrismon tree has spread from American Lutherans to other denominations around the world, including Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists and the Reformed.



Each Chrismon ornament is handmade and signifies the ancient symbols for Christ or some part of Christ's ministry. For example, the lamb signifies Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

There are a variety of star Chrismons, each with its own meaning. The five-pointed star represents the five wounds of Jesus. And the IHS ornament symbolizes the first three letters of JESus in the Greek alphabet. For more information regarding Chrismon ornaments and the symbols they represent, we have pamphlets available in the Fellowship Hall. You can even try to locate the different ornaments on our tree, if you like.



In December 2021, Lancaster's newspaper, the LNP, printed an article about St. Matthew's Chrismon tree. The photos included in this article were taken by LNP staff photographer, Suzette Wenger.

- Jeff Auer

Thank You

Two members of the Church Council are finishing their terms this year.

Council Secretary Phyllis Wimer and Treasurer Steve Feldmann have both served two 3-year terms, which included the tough "COVID" days.

Phyllis has been active at St. Matthew since the day she and husband Bob stepped through our doorway. Besides being on Council, she has been active on the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) committee and has been St. Matthew's unofficial photographer for publications and special projects.

Steve wears many hats at St. Matthew besides his financial duties. He often humorously describes himself as the "assistant choir director", performing whatever duties his music director wife Susan asks of him. Steve served as President during the height of the COVID pandemic, and offered to move to Treasurer when that office became vacant.

Thank you, Phyllis and Steve for your service on Council, and for all you do at St. Matthew.

Pastor Fero

Hello Pastor Fero,

I have really loved working alongside you, Sheila, and the rest of your congregation to support our Brecht Bobcats and their families in a variety of ways over the years. It's been an honor. Thank you for all you do for Manheim Township and our students and families. You are an incredible partner and add such value to our community.

Warmly,

Nicole

Dr. Nicole Irish
(former) Principal
Brecht Elementary School

Devotions Booklet



Christ in our Home booklets (for January, February, March) are available in the church lobby.

These are free and for anyone to take.

Please take multiple copies and share Jesus in your community.

- Pastor Fero

Birthdays

Phyllis Wimer 12/4	Cathy Stephens 12/8
Ellen Kim 12/14	Kay Nolt 12/17
Norman Drescher 12/20	Jesus Christ 12/25
Elsa Teichmann 12/27	Daniel Mink 12/29

Worship Assistants

Altar Care for December – Barb Elsen

December 1 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Steve Feldmann
- Reader: Barb Elsen
- Greeter: Anna Neal
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Brad Charles & Linda Tice

December 7 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

December 8 – Sunday 10am

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

December 14 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Barb Emmerich

December 15 – Sunday 10am

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

December 21 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Brad Charles

December 22 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Linda McIntyre
- Reader: Linda McIntyre
- Greeter: OPEN
- Usher: Barb Elsen
- Counters: Linda Tice & Brenda Stauffer

December 24 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Steve Feldmann
- Greeters: Pam & Neely Frye
- Usher: OPEN

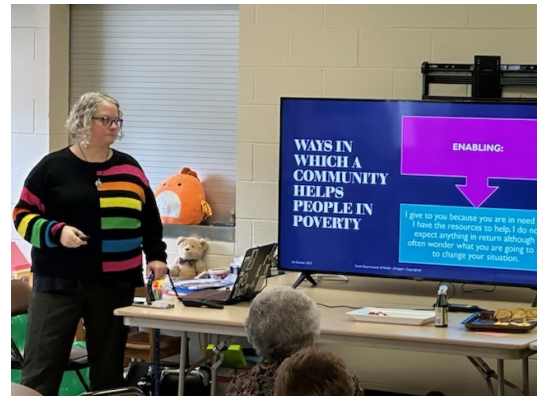
December 28 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

December 29 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Barb Elsen
- Reader: Barb Elsen
- Greeter: Anna Neal
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Brad Charles & Barb Elsen







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

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10am - Worship	2	3	4 12pm - Bible Study 6:30pm - M.T. Democratic Committee	5 6:00pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	6 1:00pm - CPR Class	7 5pm - Worship
8 10am - Worship	9	10	11 12pm - Bible Study 6:30pm - RIC Committee Mtg	12 6:00pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	13 1:00pm - CPR Class	14 5pm - Worship
15 10am - Worship 11:15am - Evangelism Mtg	16 9am - Community Meal	17 7pm - Church Council	18 12pm - Bible Study	19 6:00pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	20 1:00pm - CPR Class	21 10am - Bell Choir Rehearsal 11am - Vocal Choir Rehearsal 5pm - Worship
22 10am - Worship	23	24 4:00pm - Christmas Eve Service	25 CHRISTMAS	26	27	28 5pm - Worship
29 10am - Worship	30	31				

ST. MATTHEW

700 Pleasure Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

(Return Service Requested)

The Little Church with the Big Heart

