



# THE WORD

January 2025

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



Pastor Robin Fero

## Pastor's Page



### Happy New Year!

Welcome to a brand-new year to regroup, refresh, and be renewed in God's Promises. In January, we will experience the Christmas Season (the 12 days after Jesus' birth), the Epiphany, and the first portion of the seven weeks after the Epiphany.

That seven-week season is often viewed as a time of spiritual enlightenment (the "aha" moments of Epiphany) and a time of growth. The liturgical colors of the season are green on purpose—they represent growth.

I encourage you to pick up one discipline this year; don't wait for Lent. Here are some ideas. Perhaps one or more will work for you.

- **Follow the Weekly Lectionary readings.** The readings for the next week are listed on the back of your worship bulletin. Read them first thing Monday morning, and then read them in a different way each day. Remember to give this daily reading time a priority and start with prayer. Ask God to speak to you. Encountering the scriptures during the week, before you enter the worship space is helpful for a number of reasons. Hearing the familiar scriptures read aloud once again in worship will enhance your worship experience. It gives you time to ask questions like "who is speaking?", "where is the trouble in the text?", "how does God meet the need?", and "how does this pertain to what I just read in the news this morning?"
- **Follow the Daily Lectionary.** In the back of the ELW (our cranberry hymn book), there is a schedule of readings for each day of the week. Year C's readings begin on page 1143. The readings are chosen so that the days leading up

to Sunday (Thursday through Saturday) prepare for the Sunday readings (the "Weekly Lectionary"). The days flowing out from Sunday (Monday through Wednesday) reflect upon the Sunday readings. Check this out! In no time, you will discover how the scriptures support the weekly text and theme of the season. If you need a hymnbook at home, please let me know. I will put one in your hands.

- **Christ in our Home.** The quarterly devotional booklet that the church provides follows the Daily Lectionary and provides a commentary for each day's readings.
- **Come to Bible Study at noon on Wednesdays.** We gather around the table each week and begin with prayer. Anyone is welcome at the table, no matter how much you know about the Bible. We are all there to learn. We basically walk through the worship bulletin, encountering the Prayer of the Day, the scriptures, and the Sunday hymns that are scheduled to be sung in worship. There is a Let's Dig Deeper segment that can be about the background of the text, or the liturgical practices involved with the season, or a textual comparison. The purpose of the study is to help make the scriptures come alive within the community that is gathered. If you are unable to attend on Wednesdays because of your schedule, please let me know what time(s) of the week would work for a second study time.
- **Add a new Bible translation or interpretation to accompany your Bible reading.** My personal favorite is Eugene Peterson's The Message, which is a Bible in contemporary language. I use this as a study aid to get a new perspective on a difficult passage in the Bible.
- **The Chosen.** Check out the Chosen! Some of my colleagues find the Chosen to be a theological challenge, mostly because its producers come from a different theological perspective than our Lutheran tradition. I have found this particular series, available on TV and in print, to be helpful in painting the picture of the incarnate Christ in

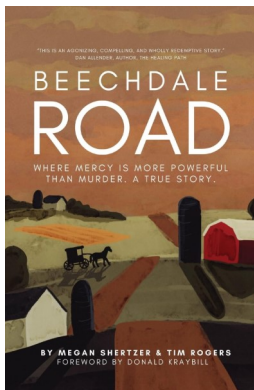
the Gospels. Jesus comes alive in the Chosen in a way I have never seen in media. The writers take liberties on backstories and help provide a new angle for us as Jesus steps onto the scene.

- **Make space for Worship.** Give renewed priority in your schedule to be present in weekly worship. Our worship planning and the monthly activities and outreach of our church follow the lectionary closely. One of the responsibilities of the Body of Christ is to build each other up. I encourage you to grow during this coming “green” season, and become witnesses of how the Holy Spirit is alive in this community.

-Pastor Fero

## Learning & Loving—Beechdale Road

Please join us for a different type of Learning and Loving, TUESDAY, January 28<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm. We will be hosting Pastor Tim Rogers and his daughter Megan Shertzer, authors of the book Beechdale Road: Where Mercy is More Powerful Than Murder.



On Sunday, June 21, 2020, 18-year-old Linda Stoltzfoos of Bird-in-Hand, PA was kidnapped on Beechdale Road and later murdered by Justo Smoker. Justo is Tim’s brother-in-law and Megan’s uncle. Beechdale Road is their attempt to share their story of grief, anger and pain but also unexplainable grace, kindness and mercy at the hands of the Amish community. Tim and Megan’s hope in sharing their story, you can experience what it’s like when undeserved mercy confronts undeniable evil, when kindness upends condemnation, when heaven engages hell. This is what they experienced at the hands of the Amish community and are hopeful its healing power can reach even further to you.

This Learning & Loving event will be open to the public, all are invited, and books will be available for purchase. We hope to see you there.

-Erin Conahan



## Council Corner

As we enter the new year, I wish you all well and that your new year will be a healthy one for all of us. Only God knows what the future will bring.

If you think back to the annual Congregational meeting, you will remember that our Treasurer Steve Feldmann stated we are in good shape as of the end of October, but that could change at any time with our aging building. Our “Building on Faith” campaign was a success that showed we can give more when necessary.

I am asking for all of you to open your hearts this new year to help maintain our budget by giving a little more if you can.

Let’s continue to support St. Matthew Lutheran Church and all our programs.

- RIC with its support of Pride Festival and the “Loving and Learning” programs.
- Social ministry programs, quilting, community meal and support for the Food Hub and for Brecht School.
- Evangelism committee with the “Conversations around the Corner”, bringing the community into our building with the yard sale, caroling and more.

We are an awesome part of this community and wish to continue to support it.

My best wishes to all of us for this new year.

-Council President Barbara Elsen

## Evangelism Committee Corner

The Evangelism Committee convened on December 15, 2024 with six members in attendance. Devotions led by Barb Eshbach, Chair, focused upon Chapter 3 of the book, 25 Advent Reflections in Keeping Christmas as Ebenezer Scrooge learns to keep Christmas in his heart through faith, hope and charity.

Our Learning and Loving Series, sponsored by RIC, will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup> has been scheduled for an organ concert by our organist, Phil High.

Conversation around the Corner for 2025 will occur in February, with artist Richard Ressel, Penn State Extension in the spring and author, Gregory Scott, returning with his newest book, Urban Alphabet in the fall.

Our annual Grandview Heights Yard Sale is scheduled for the third Saturday in July, under the direction of Barb Emmerich. Our Pet Blessing will follow in October with Nancy Smith in charge.

Christmas Caroling/ Christmas Market is under discussion for December 2025. A future date for Game Day is also being discussed.

A labyrinth was suggested with the addition of benches to occupy an area of the church grounds.

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2025, following worship.

-Kay Gontner

### Music Ministry News—Thank You!

Christmastime and celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus, is my favorite time of year. The air is filled with extra doses of love, joy and sweet music at St. Matthew. There are so many folks who share their gifts of instrumental and vocal music to give glory to God and warm the hearts of God's people. To all of you...THANK YOU...for all of the time that you give to prepare and then offer your exquisite musical gifts at the manger. I am so very grateful for your music throughout the year...and especially at Christmas!

#### Bell Choir

Brad Charles, Sheila Charles, Barb Elsen, Barb Eshbach, Pastor Cliff Eshbach, Steve Feldmann, Philip High, Nora Hudack, Nancy Pokopec, Mark Smith, Sam Sweitzer

#### Bell Ensemble

Erin Conahan, Nora Hudack, Fiona Smith and Mark Smith, bells  
Philip High, piano

#### Chancel Choir

Barb Elsen, Barb Eshbach, Pastor Cliff Eshbach, Steve Feldmann, Pastor Robin Fero, Kay Gontner, Nora Hudack, Marly Huehnergath, Linda McIntyre, Peg Sampson

#### Bassoon

Pastor Cliff Eshbach

#### Organist/Pianist

Philip High

-Sue Feldmann

### Social Ministry

**Quilting Workshops in 2025:** The 3rd Saturday of every month from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

January 18, February 15, March 15, April 19, May 17  
June 21, July 19, August 16

Social Ministry is asking for your help. Our quilting supplies are low and anything you can give would be greatly appreciated. All of our materials come from donations, and we are always in need of

fabric, thread, or a monetary contribution to help with the cost of supplies. Envelopes will be in the foyer. Thank you in advance for helping in any way that you can.

Please stop by Fellowship Hall during one of our Saturday workshops and see what is being created. It's always a "happening" place. Everyone is welcome.

St. Matthew is always very proud of the number of quilts that we are able to donate to those in need through Lutheran World Relief.

The holiday boxes in Fellowship Hall will continue to collect items for the **Lancaster County Food Hub** on Queen Street through January 19th. 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 are being collected as well. All of these items can be placed in the boxes.



The Hygiene Bank at the Food Hub 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!"

Giving to those in need warms the hearts of everyone.

- Sheila Charles

### New Members—Nick Boehm & Ellen Kim

Meet Ellen & Nick!

Nick Boehm and Ellen Kim are happily living in the house on Crest Lane that was once lived in by our own Cameron Johnson. How they have settled in the Grandview community is quite a story.

Nick enrolled as a psychology major at the University of Alabama, arriving from upstate New York, his family home. Pursuing his doctorate, he entered Iowa State in 2019, meeting Ellen who was also enrolled as a doctoral candidate in

psychology. When COVID became a reality, it altered the direction of Nick's career to that of marketing, ultimately resulting in his becoming a military contractor, working from home.



When Ellen was ten years of age she moved to China, completing her education at the University of Hong Kong, before returning to her family home in South Korea. She then moved to Iowa State, graduating in May of 2024, which resulted in her joining the faculty of Franklin and Marshall College in the psychology department in which she is currently employed.



Their romance flourished at Iowa State and in 2021 Nick and Ellen were married in South Korea, Ellen's birthplace, in the traditional setting befitting a young bride and groom. She also retained her surname as is the custom of her culture. As an interesting sideline, Ellen is versatile in only stove top cooking as there are no bake ovens in her homeland.

She has two siblings who have remained in South Korea. Nick has one sister, residing in upstate New York. They are the proud parents of Meatball, their cat, who provides them with many moments of joy in their new home.

Welcome to our newest members, Nick and Ellen.

*-Kay Gontner*

## Thank You

Good morning and Happy ThanksGIVING!

I am writing to say THANK YOU to you and your parishioners for their ongoing and amazing generous support of our Brecht families. Thanks in HUGE part to you, we were able to provide a very

nice amount of food to 13 families. We even have a sufficient amount of food to provide an additional 2 boxes each to our 11 Power Packs families over the Christmas break. **Such a blessing!**

In total, 24 families received food. Beyond the 13 from Brecht's and St. Matthew's food drive, 6 boxes of food were provided from another school; Love, Inc. helped 2 families; and 3 additional families received food from the food drives at the school buildings that their older siblings attend. 55+ children benefited :)



Each family received a large box of food, a box lid of canned goods, 2 grocery bags of food and a bag of 3 rolls of paper towels. There were leftovers for Christmas, too!

Our Brecht PTO donated \$20 Aldi's gift cards for each family as well, to purchase perishables such as bread, milk, butter etc.

THANKS AGAIN for your kindness and generosity!!

Francine Rickert, M. Ed.  
School Counselor  
Brecht Elementary School  
Manheim Township School District

## Birthdays

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Shirley Wertz 1/6   | Terry Tice 1/8       |
| Sarah Jordan 1/9    | Judith Birunas 1/10  |
| Betty Sheaffer 1/13 | Ned Longenecker 1/15 |
| Sue Feldmann 1/25   |                      |

## Anniversaries

Terry & Linda Tice 1/27

## *Worship Assistants*

### **Altar Care for January** – Barb Elsen & Kay Gontner

#### **January 4 – Saturday 5pm**

- Assisting Minister: Nancy Pokopec
- Reader: Nancy Pokopec

#### **January 5 – Sunday 10am**

- Assisting Minister: Steve Feldmann
- Reader: Norm Drescher
- Greeter: OPEN
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Brad Charles & Linda Tice

#### **January 11 – Saturday 5pm**

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Brad Charles

#### **January 12 – Sunday 10am**

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Peg Sampson
- Greeter: Kay Gontner
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Barb Elsen & Brenda Stauffer

#### **January 18 – Saturday 5pm**

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

#### **January 19 – Sunday 10am**

- Assisting Minister: Linda McIntyre
- Reader: Linda McIntyre
- Greeter: Carol Rothweiler
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Carol Rothweiler & Linda Tice

#### **January 25 – Saturday 5pm**

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Norm Drescher

#### **January 26 – Sunday 10am**

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





**Officers (2025)**

Barb Elsen, President

Nancy Smith, Vice President

Kay Gontner, Secretary

Brad Charles, Financial Secretary

Barb Eshbach, Treasurer

**Staff**

The Rev. Robin Fero, Pastor

Susan Feldmann, Director of Music

Phil High, Musician

**Church Council**

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Barb Elsen    | Barb Eshbach  |
| James Frasier | Kay Gontner   |
| Nancy Pokopec | Peg Sampson   |
| Nancy Smith   | Toni Sweitzer |
| 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](http://www.stmatthewelc.com). Copies of the Full Statement are also  
 available in the Education and Resources Stand in the Fellowship Hall.)*

St. Matthew

January 2025

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday                             | Friday                   | Saturday                                       |
|--|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
|  |  |   | 1<br><b>NEW YEAR'S DAY</b>  | 2                                    | 3                        | 4<br>5pm - Worship                             |
| 5<br>10am - Worship                              | 6  | 7<br>12pm - Better Bones at St. Matthew                                   | 8<br>12pm - Bible Study<br>6:30pm - M.T. Democratic Committee<br>6:30pm - RIC Committee Mtg | 9<br>6:30pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal  | 10<br>1:00pm - CPR Class | 11<br>5pm - Worship                            |
| 12<br>10am - Worship                             | 13   | 14<br>12pm - Better Bones at St. Matthew                                  | 15<br>12pm - Bible Study  | 16<br>6:30pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal | 17                       | 18<br>2pm - Quilting Workshop<br>5pm - Worship |
| 19<br>10am - Worship<br>11:15am - Evangelism Mtg | 20<br>9am - Community Meal<br>5:30pm - CPR Class | 21<br>12pm - Better Bones at St. Matthew<br>7pm - Church Council          | 22<br>12pm - Bible Study  | 23<br>6:30pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal | 24                       | 25<br>5pm - Worship                            |
| 26<br>10am - Worship                             | 27   | 28<br>12pm - Better Bones at St. Matthew<br>6:30pm - Beechdale Book Event | 29<br>12pm - Bible Study  | 30<br>6:30pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal | 31<br>1:00pm - CPR Class |  |

# ***ST. MATTHEW***

700 Pleasure Road  
Lancaster, PA 17601

(Return Service Requested)

*The Little Church with the Big Heart*

