



THE WORD

February 2025

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



Pastor Robin Fero

Pastor's Page



Blessings in these "green days of growth" after Epiphany.

Through the bitter cold, under the glistening snow-covered roof, and up the salty sidewalks of St. Matthew, and via our YouTube channel and website, people are heading into the little church with the big heart

and sharing in the life-sustaining Good News of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for being an important partner in this ministry. Thank you for opening your hearts to discovering new ways in which God surprises us around the corner in each new day.

God is with you. All will be well.

-Pastor Fero

Generosity Appeal to Benefit Tanzanian Health Care

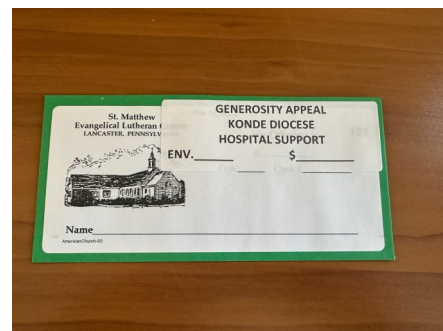
Have you had times when you became frustrated with our health care system? Have you vented about the time it takes to get an appointment, the cost of prescription medicines, talking to an electronically generated voice instead of an actual human being? The list can go on.

Now imagine that your health care choice was... nothing. Such has been the case for many people who live in our companion church, the Konde Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. For a long time, health care was not available in several areas of the diocese. But thanks to God, and the faithful people of the diocese, many

improvements have been made. The latest improvement is the construction of a new hospital in the city of Mbeya (Mm-bay-ah), the largest city in the Konde Diocese.

The various church denominations in Tanzania are responsible for providing the bulk of health care. Leaders of the Konde Diocese have developed a master plan to improve health care, and this new hospital is the latest step in implementing that plan. In 2023, Bishop James Dunlop and I had the opportunity to visit the site of the hospital. From that visit the bishop felt compelled to offer financial help from the Lower Susquehanna Synod so that construction could be completed.

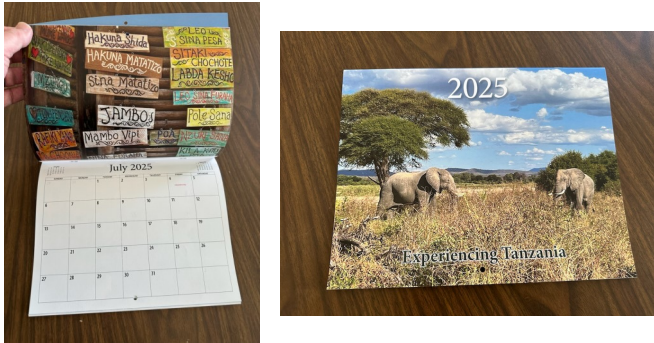
Thanks to careful stewardship of past resources, the Konde Diocese Committee was able to contribute \$60,000 for the building of the hospital. Now we are engaged in replenishing those funds to help with future medical needs. The synod's 2024/2025 Generosity Appeal is to raise \$60,000. This is where we come in.



As of this writing, we are about two thirds to this goal and the building of the hospital is nearly complete. There are various ways to make a gift. The Lower Susquehanna Synod's web site ([Building Global Relationships - Generosity Appeal - Lower](#)

[Susquehanna Synod](#)) has information which will help you learn more and make a gift.

Also, we have envelopes specially marked "Generosity Appeal Konde Diocese Hospital Support" at the church, and you can use them to place your gift into the offering plate. St. Paul Lutheran Church in York prepared a special calendar designed with photos from a recent visit to Tanzania. These are available for free, while supplies last.



The people of the Konde Diocese are our neighbors too. And with our help they will feel more secure when they need medical care. Thank you.

-Pastor Cliff Eshbach

Learning & Loving 2025

We hope you enjoyed our recent *Learning & Loving* session on January 28th with authors Tim Rogers and Megan Shertzer, who shared insights from their book *Beechdale Road: Where Mercy is More Powerful Than Murder*. This event marked a shift from our usual *Learning & Loving* format, as it was open to both the St. Matthew congregation and our broader community and held on a Tuesday evening.

The RIC committee had a banner year in 2024, hosting a wide array of events, activities, and meetings. As we move into 2025, we are thoughtfully restructuring the *Learning & Loving* series to balance the church's full calendar while being mindful of the time and commitments we ask of our speakers. Some presenters, like Tim Rogers and others, are also pastors at their own churches, which can create scheduling challenges.

Looking ahead, the RIC committee is excited to explore and share meaningful topics in 2025, including prison ministry, Christian nationalism, celebrating Lititz and Lancaster Pride, and much more. Stay tuned for details on upcoming sessions—we look forward to continuing this journey of learning and loving together!

-Erin Conahan



Social Ministry

A **HUGE** thank you to the St. Matthew family for your support of our local outreach program -- Lancaster County Food Hub. Our collection of clothing and personal care items for the Clothing Bank and Hygiene Bank will help to make the winter months a lot warmer for some of our neighbors. This agency continues to help our community by "providing hope while fighting hunger and homelessness. St. Matthew continues to be mighty in its power of giving to those in need, and we are humbled to be a partner with the Hub.

Your positive support of Social Ministry programs has always been both generous and heartwarming. God's will is being done in so many ways through the family and friends of St. Matthew. Giving to those in need and discipling to others is part of God's plan for us.

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.

- Sheila Charles

Organ Recital on February 9th

A 🎵 note 🎵 about the organ recital:

I hope everyone can join us on Sunday, February 9th at 4pm for an organ recital to formally welcome St. Matthew's new organ. Don't worry – the program will only last an hour, and you will have plenty of time to make it home for the kickoff. The program will feature performances by the Rev. Thomas Busted and St. Matthew's organist, Philip High.

You will get to hear a wide variety of organ repertoire, from the Baroque era (Bach & Pachelbel) to French Romantic (Boëllmann) to 20th century composers and even some living composers. In addition to the booming full organ, the solo trumpet

and chimes will be featured. There will even be a vocal solo by Pastor Fero, accompanied by the organ, showing off the instrument's versatility and range.

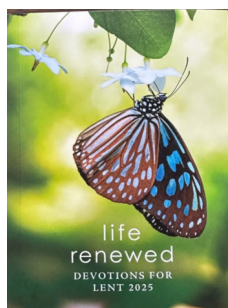
An organ in a church represents a significant commitment by the faithful, financially as well as all of the unquantifiable efforts by many people to discern the need and just 'make it happen'. This Rodgers 770 organ was installed in the church at no cost to St. Matthew due to several generous donations. Primarily serving as one voice in the many, helping to enhance and elevate worship, the organ also has powerful voice of its own, highlighting the creativity God has granted human-kind, from the builders to the composers to the musicians.

The previous Baldwin organ was in a sad state, moving parts were worn, many things simply no longer worked, the sound was unreliable. In 2023 it suddenly stopped working, completely, and after an expensive repair, it couldn't even be returned to the semi functional state it had been in. Parts weren't available, it was simply too old. While not new from the showroom, the Rodgers brings many features that the Baldwin lacked, but more importantly, it's repairable, and 100% functional. It even has the capability to be interfaced to actual pipes, and more!

Some of the best upgrades are 7 speakers instead of 3, a variety of reed stops, adjustable tuning (for playing with other instruments), and the chimes. This organ has struck metal bars inside the console that are amplified through the speakers. A number of other adjustments can be made from the bench; no removing the back and fiddling with electronics. Another welcome upgrade is memory pistons; the Baldwin had 20, now we have 50!

-Philip High

Lent Devotional Booklet



Copies of this year's Lenten devotional booklet, Life Renewed, are now available in the church lobby.

For 2025, the devotions focus on portions of the Easter Vigil scripture readings, plus selections from John 13 for Wednesday and Maundy Thursday in Holy Week. Some of these texts might be new to you, while others might be very familiar.

The readings tell of God bringing new life in unexpected ways, in the most unlikely situations.

This booklet finishes up on Easter Sunday, but can be started/finished at any time.

-Pastor Fero

Better Bones Better Balance is Back

To age with amazing grace is the desire of nearly everyone. But to do so takes some good luck and good choices. Bones reach their greatest strength in our late 20s to our mid 30s after which we start to lose bone density. A few years later we start to lose muscle strength which is a major factor in our balance and well-being. Thus, falls become a significant problem as we pass into later middle age - 55 years plus. Local physical therapist with international acclaim, Dr. Tim Kauffman teaches a Better Bones Better Balance class weekly for one hour, noon to 1 PM most weeks and alternating month to month between St Matthew and Grandview Churches. All are welcome. A donation of \$10.00 is voluntary and it goes to the host church. Classes are fun and promote healthy bones, muscle strength and balance. Questions are encouraged and education is a key component.

-Timothy L. Kauffman PT, PhD, FAPTA, FGSA



Thank You

At the Lancaster County Food Hub, it is humbling to receive the steadfast support of so many friends--like you--who believe in our mission and work.

Your gift of \$495 will help to ensure that free food and clothing, homelessness services, and supportive outreach partners are sustainably available under the red awning at 812 N. Queen St.

Demand for our services is higher than ever, and the numbers tell the tale. Last year, over 58,000 neighbors utilized our services--and the number of people who need support continue to trend upwards.

Because of your generosity, we can uphold our commitment to meet neighbors where they are and support them toward more stable life circumstances, and for that, we are so grateful.

Corinne Foster
Development & Communications Manager
Food Hub

Seeing God in Nature

This article is a re-print of a newsletter article that first appeared in our February 2022 issue.

This column is intended to be a sharing of the joy of Nature through photos of God's wondrous creations. It is my hope that they will brighten someone's day.

Signs of Early Spring

*God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.
- Martin Luther*



February calls to mind many things. My pocket diary notes Valentine's Day and President's Day. And, in Lancaster we have Groundhog Day. However, February means different things to different people and nature lovers look for signs of spring. Snow drops (flowers) emerge from the ground and bloom. Snow geese begin to migrate and gather to feed and rest at places like Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. And, by the end of the month we just might catch sight of honeybees working some crocuses.



God gave us so many gifts. There are many famous naturalists who not only enjoyed nature but became experts by watching things like birds, flowers, and insects. A lesser known naturalist was a woman named Edith Holden. Born in 1871, Edith lived in England and kept a diary which included her personal observations on what she found on her long walks as well as charming sketches and poetry, both her own and that of others. Her diary was written to encourage her pupils at school to learn about nature. The diary in her own hand was passed down to her great niece after Edith's death and was subsequently published in 1977 and became a record-breaking international best seller called *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*. If you haven't seen her work, I encourage you to check the library or consult Google to see if you can obtain a copy of *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*.



Meanwhile, I encourage you to look for signs of spring. I find that my days are more relaxed when I have something to look forward to. I took the flower photos in my garden and the snow geese photo at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area.

-Phyllis Wimer

Birthdays

Eric Teichmann 2/11

Louise Lilley 2/21

Jennifer Piersol 2/22

Chloe Haldeman 2/23

Nancy Maurer 2/24

Anniversaries

James & Mabel Frazier 2/4

Neely & Pam Frye 2/25

Delores Hackenberger

Delores Hackenberger, Lancaster folk artist and former Sunday School teacher at St. Matthew, died on December 9, 2024.

Her LNP obituary tells the story that she is referred to as Grandma Moses of PA Dutch Country. Her distinct folk-art style depicts the Amish community, farms, covered bridges, mills, and historic landmarks.

We have a unique painting by Delores hanging in the fellowship hall, next to the coffee counter. Look closely at Delores' gift to our church community. A younger St. Matthew building (pre-fellowship hall days) is depicted as being built along a country-style dirt lane. Her family requested photos of Hackenberger artwork out in the community to be sent to them, and we sent them this photo.



Worship Assistants

Altar Care for February – Barb Elsen & Carol Rothweiler

February 1 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Barb Emmerich

February 2 – Sunday 10am

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

February 8 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Norm Drescher

February 9 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Barb Elsen
- Reader: Peg Sampson
- Greeter: Kay Gontner
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Barb Elsen & Linda Tice

February 15 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Nancy Pokopec
- Reader: Nancy Pokopec

February 16 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Norm Drescher
- Greeter: Carol Rothweiler
- Usher: Barb Elsen
- Counters: Brad Charles & Brenda Stauffer

February 22 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

February 23 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Linda McIntyre
- Reader: Linda McIntyre
- Greeter: Anna Neal
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Barb Elsen & Carol Rothweiler





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

James Frasier

Nancy Pokopec

Nancy Smith

Pastor Fero

Barb Eshbach

Kay Gontner

Peg Sampson

Toni Sweitzer



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

February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 5pm - Worship
2 10am - Worship GROUNDHOG DAY	3 5:30pm - CPR Class	4 12pm - Better Bones at Grandview	5 12pm - Bible Study 6:30pm - M.T. Democratic Committee	6 6:30pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	7	8 5pm - Worship
9 10am - Worship 4:00pm - Organ Recital	10	11 12pm - Better Bones at Grandview	12 12pm - Bible Study 6:30pm - RIC Committee Mtg	13 6:30pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	14 1:00pm - CPR Class	15 2pm -Quilting Workshop 5pm - Worship
16 10am - Worship 11:15am - Evangelism Mtg	17 9am - Community Meal	18 12pm - Better Bones at Grandview 7pm - Church Council	19 12pm - Bible Study	20 6:30pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	21	22 5pm - Worship
23 10am - Worship	24	25 12pm - Better Bones at Grandview	26 12pm - Bible Study	27 6:30pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	28 1:00pm - CPR Class	

ST. MATTHEW

700 Pleasure Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

(Return Service Requested)

The Little Church with the Big Heart

