The Word

July/August 2025

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

Pastor Robin Fero

Pastor's Page

Communal Healing

This sermon was preached on Saturday, June 21, and is based on the Gospel text of Luke 8:26-39.

I once heard a prayer leader in a worship service speak these words, after there were several petitions for people who needed healing: "We pray for those who are afraid to be healed". There was a low "aha" groan that could be heard in the congregation. Others were hit with the same profoundness in that thought.

Today, we walk with Jesus and his disciples as they encounter a man who is in dire need of being set free from what ails him. This man is a legend in his town. He often is shackled to temporarily control his wild behavior....but he always breaks free from those chains and terrorizes the community.

This man is short of a wild animal in the wilderness... in the local cemetery...in the Gentile region of the Gerasenes.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, steps into this broken world and brings healing...and the healing in this particular case brings chaos. Chaos, because no one knows what to do with this sudden change in daily routine...in identity...in expectations.

The townspeople react with great fear. "Jesus, please leave".

The swineherdsmen have lost their job. Here is a group of animal tenders running from the scene, telling a different story than the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem in Luke chapter 2. These swineherdsmen were afraid...and their lives were greatly affected.

With healing there is risk involved.

Healing is communal. Healing sends a shock wave into communities of perceived calmness and wholeness.

Why do you think the Herodians were afraid of Jesus' teachings and healings?

Why was Jesus on the Roman's radar?

Jesus had a way of tipping that perfectly balanced boat. The oppressors that Jesus encountered had just enough length on those leashes to keep the least of these in their control. The oppressed knew how far to go, to keep "peace" in the camp.

Is this a familiar story for you? Does it sound like the world we live in?

Jesus said to his disciples, "let's head over to the other side". They traveled across to dangerous Gentile territory. This passage in the Gospel of Luke is full of forbidden items for a Jew...especially the swine. There was great risk involved in this "crossing to the other side".

In the end, Jesus does bring healing...and Luke the physician shows the early church 100 years later, made up of Jews and Gentiles, that Jesus meets the oppressor face to face...the oppressor is named "Legion"...reminding the reader of the Roman Empire...the great oppressor of that time. And the oppressor shakes in fear.

This is all Gospel...Good News...Evangelical tidings... healing...for humanity in any age.

Why are people afraid of healing? Because the

effects of healing are felt throughout the entire community. And not everyone is going to be happy. There is communal risk involved. There is a cross to bear. Ask Jesus. Ask the martyrs. Ask the person sitting next to you. Ask the person in the mirror.

If healing…world peace…national reconciliation… were easy, it would happen in a heartbeat. But healing is communal. It doesn't happen in a silo. There is sacrifice involved. There is risk involved. We have to "get over ourselves"…hmmm…that sounds like something Jesus would say. "Deny yourself… follow me".

"We pray for those who are afraid of healing".

Actively praying for our community to be healed involves taking up a cross that we may not think much about. It means risking that "the other"…that one that we have worked our whole life to keep at bay…to keep chained up on the other side of the cemetery…THAT one….it means to risk being willing to walk hand in hand together with them into a community of wholeness. Most often we envision that "other" as going through a process before they come into our presence….they must complete a process of wellness, become fully changed, put clothes on just like the ones we wear, talk the talk that we talk, believe the same way we do…

But here's the kicker…the toughest part about cross bearing is this: Seeing "that one"/ "the other" as being just as worthy to be saved by God's grace as we are. Seeing God miraculously heal "the other", in God's timing…in God's way…and THEN walking with that person in their new/changed life on THEIR side of the street…or walking into a brand new, neutral community of wholeness TOGETHER with the "other".

THAT's why we have a nation full of Christians and major chaos…because Christians are not picking up the cross of Christ and walking down those difficult sides of the street together.

God, you bring us the gift of healing…you paid such a price.

May we walk in your way today, and love and walk with one another. Amen.

-Pastor Fero

Online Giving

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ONLINE GIVING

bit.ly/GiveStMatthew

A New Way to Give – Especially for Guests!

We're excited to make giving more accessible by adding a **QR code** to our bulletin. This quick and secure option is especially helpful for visitors who may want to support our ministry but don't carry cash or checks.

For our faithful members and regular attenders: thank you for your continued generosity! If you currently give through offering envelopes, we encourage you to continue—this remains the best way to ensure your entire gift supports our ministry. However, if it is more practical for you at any time—whether you're traveling, away from church, or simply prefer it—know that the **Online Giving** option is always there!

Here are details of three ways it can work for you:

ONE: We'll set it up for you!
Barb Eshbach, St. Matthew's treasurer, can set up an account for you with Vanco, our secure online platform. We use your envelope number as your Member ID so donations are tracked on your statements.

*To help your donation go even further, consider using your **bank account** instead of a credit card—processing fees are significantly lower.*

- Checking account: Provide a voided check
- Savings account: Provide a routing number and account number
- Credit card: Provide your card number, expiration, and the name and address on the card

Let us know if you would like to help offset the processing and transaction fees associated with online giving.

TWO: Click ONLINE GIVING
at the top of any page on our website (www.stmatthewelc.com) from your computer, phone, or tablet to access our secure donation page. You can contribute any amount, as a one-time or recurring donation, to one or more of the following funds: General (Operating) Fund, Property Improvement Fund, Social Ministry Projects (Quilts), or Social Ministry Projects (Community Meal).

You will be given the option to help offset the processing and transaction fees associated with online giving.

THREE: Use the QR CODE
to access our secure donation page!

We're grateful for every gift, no matter how it's given. Thank you for being a part of what God is doing through our church!

Note: *If you are already using Vanco for electronic giving and would like to help offset the fees associated with either bank account processing (0.6%) or credit card processing (2.95%), please let Barb know.*

Balancing Faith and Finance

Submitted by Barb Eshbach, Treasurer

Why Meeting the Budget Matters

The budget we pass each year at the Annual Meeting is not just a formality; it's a promise we make to each other—a promise to support the ministry we've been called to carry out.

Even though our church has money in the bank, meeting our annual budget is still important. The budget reflects our shared commitment to ministry—supporting staff, missions, programs, and the upkeep of our space. Reserve funds are meant for emergencies or future needs, not to cover regular expenses. When we meet our budget, we demonstrate strong stewardship, maintain trust, and ensure that we're prepared to serve both now and in the future. Every gift, no matter the size, helps us stay on track and move forward in faith—together.

The chart below shows our year-to-date regular giving, other income (including building use, memorials, and endowments), and expenses. While regular giving is the heart of our financial support and reflects our shared commitment to the church's mission, it doesn't cover all expenses. Other income helps fill the gap, highlighting both the opportunity to use our building in creative ways and the importance of planning for estate and legacy giving. Like many churches, we seek sustainability through faithful giving, thoughtful budgeting, and diverse sources of support. With continued commitment and generosity, we can build a strong foundation for the work we do now and for the future we are called to create together.

	January - May 2025	
	Actual	Budget
Regular Giving	$ 61,496.04	$ 66,052.10
Other Income	$ 13,133.57	$ 7,875.00
Expenses	$ 78,957.14	$ 73,926.90
	($ 4,327.53)	

-Barb Eshbach

Dr. Greg Carey Event

Lancaster Seminary professor Greg Carey will be at St Matthew on **Wednesday, July 2**, from 7 to 8pm. The title of his presentation is Tending Your Spirit in a Tumultuous Political Climate. This is a free and non-partisan event designed to build community.

The following information regarding Dr. Greg Carey is taken directly from the Lancaster Theological Seminary website.

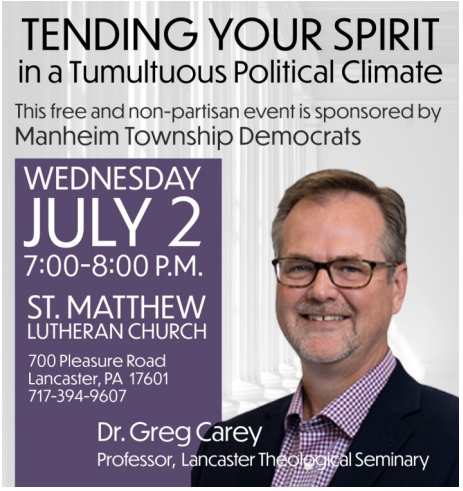
Greg Carey began teaching at Lancaster Theological Seminary in 1999, having previously taught at Rhodes College and Winthrop University. He teaches School of Theology courses in New Testament, along with Introduction to Theological Education, Praxis and Social Change, and research seminars for the MATS and DMin programs.

Greg's primary commitment involves preparing students for public leadership, including public interpretation of Scripture. He has authored or co-edited a dozen books related to biblical studies, with interests in the book of Revelation and other ancient apocalyptic literature, rhetorical interpretation, the Gospel of Luke, and public biblical interpretation.

In addition to academic articles and essays, he also publishes in The Christian Century, Religion Dispatches, and Word & Way, and other venues, emphasizing the relationship between American Christianity and public life.

He has served on the editorial boards of Horizons in Biblical Theology, Biblical Interpretation, and the Review of Biblical Literature and has served in national and international leadership roles with the Society of Biblical Literature. On behalf of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature, he has co-facilitated national workshops on teaching the Bible in racially and ethnically diverse classrooms and on teaching the Bible to multiple publics.

Greg integrates his academic work with public faith engagement. He serves as part-time pastor of Life Church Lancaster and frequently speaks in churches, in bars, and in podcasts and webinars concerning the threat of Christian nationalism and the need for LGBTQ+ affirmation in all dimensions of Christian life. He is an active volunteer with POWER Interfaith and serves as a CASA (court appointed special advocate) for a young man in foster care.



Social Ministry

Highlights:

* Our last quilting workshop for this year will be Saturday, August 16th.
* Lutheran World Relief In-Gathering will be September 27-28th.
* We will continue to collect pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House. Ask family and friends to save them as well. We filled the container almost three times since July of 2024.

For 80 years, people have been putting their faith into action and making quilts for Lutheran World Relief. These mission quilts are then sent to people in need around the world.

And this is not just a few quilts ~~ it is over 28 million quilts!! These gifts of love make life brighter, softer, and a bit more comfortable for our neighbors around the world struggling with chronic poverty, illness, natural disaster and conflict.

LWR says thank you.

At St. Matthew we have been recording our quilt numbers since 2001, and we have donated more than 1631 quilts. And for that I would like to thank you for your generous donations of money and fabric.

"Those who sleep under a quilt, sleep under a blanket of love."

Thank you for your continued support of our service projects and for being an important part of "the little church with the big heart." St. Matthew continues to be mighty in its power of giving to those in need

-Sheila Charles

Evangelism Corner

The Evangelism Committee convened informally following the worship service on June 15th. It being Father's Day and Pastor Ierien's visit as guest presider, several members were unavailable for our meeting.

This also being Holy Trinity Sunday, we are reminded that God's love is meant to move outward- into our neighborhoods, conversations and relationships, helping us seek new ways to reach out with grace, welcome and hope as we listen to the Spirit's voice in our work today.

Pastor Ierien sat with our small group and together we shared our Conversation Around the Corner theme and his thoughts concerning strategies he has found useful in addressing social media.

In regard to our postcard update, the Foundry responded to our request for mailing to residents. Celedon and Stehli Silk Mill have yet to respond.

Upcoming events are being circulated, especially noting the celebration on Sunday, June 22 of Pastor Eshbach's 25th anniversary of ordination.

Dr. Greg Carey will be present on Wednesday, July 2 from 7 to 8pm to speak on "Tending Your Spirit in a Tumultuous Political Climate".

The Welcome to Worship handout has been revamped and ready for distribution.

A new tri-fold brochure will be available at the Grandview Neighborhood Yard Sale on Saturday, July 19.

We are now advertising on the board by the playground.

Our next meeting is scheduled for August 17th, following worship.

- Kay Gontner

June is Pride Month

While Pride Month gives us a special opportunity to celebrate and affirm our LGBTQIA+ neighbors, our commitment to God's inclusive love doesn't stop at the end of June. At St. Matthew, we are called to be a community where everyone is seen, valued, and loved—every day of the year.

We continue to celebrate Pride year-round by:

- **Uplifting LGBTQIA+ voices** in worship, education, and leadership.
- **Offering ongoing support** through pastoral care, inclusive language, and affirming programming.
- **Building partnerships** with local LGBTQIA+ organizations and advocacy efforts.
- **Welcoming all families** and individuals into full participation in the life of our church.

Together, let us keep growing as a Reconciling in Christ congregation—shining God's light of love, affirmation, and justice for all, not just in June, but every month of the year.

- Erin Conahan

Music Ministry News

Happy Summer, Everyone! There are two upcoming special Worship and musical events you won't want to miss that are being held at St. Matthew! You will want to be sure to mark your calendars for the following:

- The Polka Mass during Worship on Sunday, July 27th at 10:00 am. Our regular worship service will be accompanied by the **Heidelberg Brass Band**.
- Cupcake Concert on Tuesday, August 26th on the lawn at St. Matthew from 6:30-8:30 pm. This concert is being sponsored by EMBRACE, Lancaster, with music by Pastor Liz Fulmer from our neighbor, Grandview Church and cupcakes and lemonades by Casey's Cupcakes.

In other news…during the warm months of summer, the Chancel Choir takes a break from rehearsals for renewal. Thank you, Chancel Choir members for your faithful musical leadership in our Worship services from September through Pentecost in May/June. I am particularly proud of your hard work on the Spanish anthem, *Esto Les Digo*, you prepared this year with challenging harmonies and the a cappella anthem, *Risen Indeed* for Easter. Your anthems give glory to God and inspire God's people. And… not only do you prepare and share beautiful music…you're just plain fun!

Our Chancel Choir welcomed 2 new members this past year: Nora Hudack on soprano and Sandy Tucker on alto. We are grateful for the gifts they bring to our choir and Worship services and we welcome new singers of all voice parts. You do not need to read music or have prior experience, just a desire to praise God through music!

The first Chancel Choir rehearsal for the fall will be on Thursday, September 4th from 6:30-7:30 pm in the choir room. We will begin preparing our first fall anthem to share on Reconciling in Christ Sunday on September 21st. Please see me or contact the church office for more information about becoming a member of St. Matthew's Chancel Choir!

-Susan Feldmann

Polka Mass—July 27

Please join the congregation at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 700 Pleasure Road, Lancaster, on Sunday, July 27th, at 10:00 a.m. for a Polka Mass with the Heidelberg Brass Band.

The Polka Mass with the Heidelberg Brass Band made its debut in May of 2015 in celebration of the 25th ordination anniversary of Pastor Glenn Beard, Jr., manager of the band. The Heidelberg Brass Band, formed in 1954, included Pastor Beard's father, Glenn Sr., and two uncles, Jim and Bob. Glenn Beard, Sr. has been the band's drummer for 68 years!

Since the time that he was a student at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pastor Beard had the desire to have a liturgical service comprised of original lyrics set to popular polkas and waltzes which the band could play. With the help and inspiration of Father Frank Perkovich, from Minnesota; Pastor Ed Battiste, from Ohio; and Pastor Carl Witt, from California; Lisa Beard, Pastor Beard's wife, and Dr. C. Jay Hertzog, a former member of the band, put together this unique service of worship. Lisa Beard wrote original lyrics for six pieces of music within the liturgy and Pastor Beard has written words for five pieces as well.

Since its debut, the band has led more than 100 worship services, including a Polka Mass wedding liturgy and a Polka Mass memorial service. The service is a very faithful celebration of Holy Communion and it is a fun and uplifting way to praise God in worship.

Everyone is invited to come out and be part of the fun!

- Glenn Beard

Neighborhood Yard Sale— July 19

Please consider signing up to help with the Yard Sale! We would like to have 4 or more people in each time slot. Detailed instructions will be provided to you after you sign up.

At 6:00am, the Welcome Booth will be set up, signs will be placed, a pet water station will be established and the Fellowship Hall will be set up with tables and chairs to accommodate visitors to sit and eat food from the food trucks or rest and cool as they wait to use the restrooms. Volunteers will also be needed until 1:00pm to man the Welcome Booth and Fellowship Hall.

Please consider being a part of this exciting opportunity to extend hospitality and share the love of Christ with our neighbors!

- The Evangelism Committee

Conversation Around the Corner—

Amish Weddings

Beth Oberholtzer's new book, *Amish Weddings: From Courtship to Celebration*, explores real Amish weddings and their traditions. As a resident of Lancaster County, Oberholtzer shares insights into the Amish courtship process and the unique wedding celebrations that combine religious and community aspects.

The book features vivid storytelling, personal stories, and photography, highlighting the deep faith and traditions involved in these events. She emphasizes that while the Amish may seem unchanged, they evolve while remaining true to their beliefs. Readers will learn about the roles of brides, grooms, and other participants in the weddings and how they contribute to the celebrations' success. The journey to marriage begins within a family-oriented environment, not with a traditional ring presentation.

Beth Oberholtzer is a book designer and author from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Her previous books include *Amish Gardens of Lancaster County, Working Horses of Lancaster County, Plain Meetinghouses*, and more.

Thank You

To my St. Matthew family & friends,

Thank you for being such an awesome support system. Your thoughts, prayers, cards, words, and hugs after my thorasic surgery sent an incredible amount of positive energy which was gratefully appreciated and tremendously helped on those recovery days. My healing continues, and I know God will continue holding my hand as my days move forward. Thank you again for being you. Take care of yourselves, stay well, and know that you are loved beyond measure.

Hugs, Sheila

Birthdays

Peg Sampson 7/3

Mary Miller 7/8

Donna Kilgore 7/15

Jeff Auer 7/21

Kay Gontner 7/24

Erin Conahan 8/7

Conor Stauffer 8/12

Matthew Kolb 8/12

Linda Martin 8/15

Noah Haldeman 8/15

James Nolt 8/20

Toni Sweitzer 8/20

Paul Kilgore 8/20

Jan Bentz 8/21

Jodi McIntyre 8/30

Anniversaries

Matthew & Susan Kolb 7/1

Barb Emmerich & Jennifer Piersol 8/1

Mark Smith & Erin Conahan 8/8

The new bulletin board by the playground

Worship Assistants

Altar Care for July – Linda Tice

July 5 – Saturday 5pm
- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

July 6 – Sunday 10am
- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Linda Tice
- Greeters: Kaye Ames & Andrea Farris
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Brad Charles & Carol Rothweiler

July 12 – Saturday 5pm
- Assisting Minister: Nancy Pokopec
- Reader: Nancy Pokopec

July 13 – Sunday 10am
- Assisting Minister: Linda McIntyre
- Reader: Linda McIntyre
- Greeter: Kay Gontner
- Usher: Brenda Stauffer
- Counters: Brenda Stauffer & Brad Charles

July 19 – Saturday 5pm
- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Brad Charles

July 20 – Sunday 10am
- Assisting Minister: Steve Feldmann
- Reader: Linda Tice
- Greeter: Carol Rothweiler
- Usher: Brenda Stauffer
- Counters: Linda Tice & Carol Rothweiler

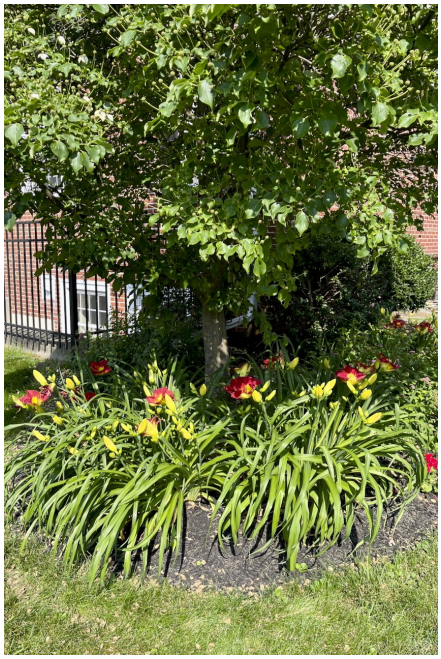
July 26 – Saturday 5pm
- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

July 27 – Sunday 10am
- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Roxanne Koch
- Greeter: Anna Neal
- Usher: Brenda Stauffer
- Counters: Brad Charles & Brenda Stauffer

Conversation Around the Corner

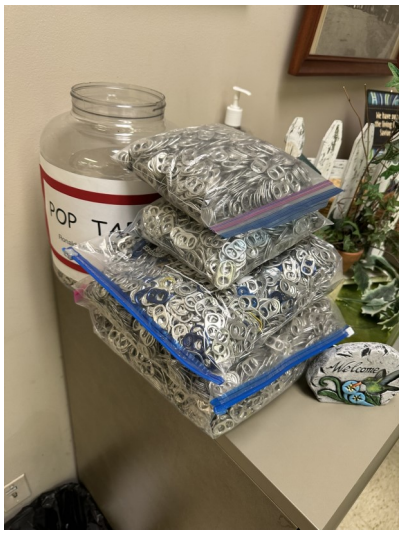
Richard Ressel: The Artist in the Neighborhood

Summer at St. Matthew



CHOIR BIRTHDAYS

POP TOP BONANZA!



COMMUNITY MEAL VOLUNTEERS—JUNE 2025

CLIFF ESHBACH'S 25TH ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY!

Synod Assembly 2025

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 Frazier
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

July 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 12pm – Better Bones at St. Matthew	2 6:30pm – Dr. Greg Carey Event	3	4	5 5pm – Worship
6 10am – Worship	7	8 12pm – Better Bones at St. Matthew	9 6:30pm – RIC Committee Mtg	10	11 1:30pm – CPR Class	12 5pm – Worship
13 10am – Worship	14 5:30pm – CPR Class	15 12pm – Better Bones at St. Matthew	16	17	18 1:30pm – CPR Class	19 6am – Yard Sale 9:30am – CPR Class 2pm -Quilting Workshop 5pm – Worship
20 10am – Worship	21 9am – Community Meal	22 12pm – Better Bones at St. Matthew	23	24	25 1:30pm – CPR Class	26 5pm – Worship
27 10am – Worship	28	29 12pm – Better Bones at St. Matthew	30	31		

St. Matthew
700 Pleasure Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

(Return Service Requested)

The Little Church with the Big Heart