



THE WORD

November/December 2025

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



Pastor Robin Fero

Pastor's Page



"God Loves You. Yep, You."

It seems like a simple sign bearing an obvious message, but people need to hear this message more than ever today. And given the fact that most people within our 21st century culture do not step inside a worship service on the

weekend, it is of utmost importance that we, as the body of Christ, step out onto the sidewalk in Great Commission understanding and share the Good News in any way we can.

Our church has been present in the Grandview Heights neighborhood since 1947 and has always served as a beacon of Hope in this part of Lancaster County. One of the things I loved the most about our location on Pleasure Rd when I first arrived at St Matthew was the gift of visibility we have on our busy township street.



Our church sign verbiage is just one of the beacons of Hope that St Matthew shines to our surrounding community. Our rainbow painted doors in the yard are probably the most recognizable of these

beacons. It used to be that I would describe that we are the "little brick church right across the street from Lancaster Catholic High", and people would still often be searching in the air, trying to place us. Now I just say, "we are the church with the rainbow doors in the yard", and I get an immediate response. "Oh yes!". Those doors serve as more of a "God Loves You. Yep, You." message than you realize.

Our annual Pet Blessing is yet another example of a way in which St. Matthew church connects with our neighbors who may not for whatever reason step foot into our worship building space. There is one neighbor who is always the first to line up for a blessing for their dog and they tell us each year that they have a stack of blessing cards from St. Matthew from each year they have participated.

We have invited the public to use our restroom facilities during the neighborhood's annual yard sale and we have held concerts on our lawn. Food trucks have parked along Pleasure Road during these events.

All of these beacons of Hope are creative ways that we can be Good News bearers in a world full of hurt. Not only do we leave notes of Good News, but we also embody it. What other ways can you think of that we can serve within our context?

If you are reading this, I want you to know that God loves you. Yes, buried somewhere in this conglomeration of information about the life of St. Matthew's ministries in November and December, I want you to read and take time to digest that God loves YOU. "God Loves You. Yep, You."

-Pastor Fero



RIC—2025—Year in Review

This year, the RIC team began meeting every other month, centering our time together in prayer and seeking God's guidance as we plan and learn. In light of current national trends and what we are seeing in our own community, our committee continues to focus on building awareness and creating meaningful opportunities for our congregation—and our neighbors to understand and embrace the diverse life journeys of all God's people.

In 2025, our "Learning & Loving" series expanded beyond our congregation by opening its doors to the broader community. This change has brought new faces from across the community and beyond, with some of our largest and most engaging sessions yet. Through this series and other events, our team has created welcoming spaces to listen, learn, and grow together.



Beechdale Road Event

In May, we set up our "God's Doors are Open" display, a visible reminder of our inclusive values, which has remained up through the fall. In August, we hosted a concert on the lawn with Liz Fulmer and EMBRACE a joyful celebration of community and belonging.



The Rainbow Doors

Throughout the year, we also held or participated in events that reflect our ongoing commitment to inclusivity and connection:

- January 28: Beechdale Road with Tim Rogers and Megan Shertzer

- March 31: Transgender Day of Visibility
- May 12: Prison Ministry with Pastor Jane
- June 7: Lititz Pride
- June 28: Lancaster Pride
- August 26: EMBRACE Lawn Concert with Liz Fulmer
- September 21: St. Matthew RIC Weekend
- September 24: Lancaster Negro League with Dr. Jeremy Raff
- October 22: CASA with Erin Small
- November 22/23: Transgender Day of Remembrance with Phyllis Wimer



Prison Ministry with Deacon Jane



Lancaster Pride



EMBRACE Lawn Concert with Liz Fulmer

My heartfelt thanks go to our RIC committee members—Pastor Fero, Steve & Sue Feldmann, Nancy Pokopec, Phyllis Wimer, Barb Emmerich, and Roxanne Koch—for their faith, dedication, and openness in serving our congregation and community.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain committed to reflection, connection, and ensuring that our mission of being Open and Affirming continues to shape every part of our shared ministry.

-Erin Conahan

Social Ministry

Thank you to all the people who have made donations during our Social Ministry programs. Your positive support has been both generous and heartwarming. You exemplify God's plan for us by giving to those in need and discipling to others. God's kingdom is not in one location, for it exists wherever God's will is done, and His will is being done in so many ways through the family and friends of St. Matthew. The work of your hearts and hands is an immeasurable blessing to families in need within our own community and around the world. Thank you again for your many acts of kindness and thoughtfulness.

Community Meal & Quilting

Local Outreach ~ 3rd Monday ~ Community Meal
Global Focus ~ 3rd Saturday (Jan - Aug) ~ Quilting

*Community Meal is served at Zion Lutheran Church in East Petersburg. This outreach ministry continues to provide a "Grab & Go" meal at lunch, trying to offer a variety of healthy meals.

*Quilt Ministry Impact from LWR: When you make a quilt for neighbors in need, you are God's hands sharing love across the world. In 2025, St. Matthew was able to donate 72 quilts to reach our neighbors at home and abroad. Since 2001, St. Matthew has donated 1,703 quilts to Lutheran World Relief.

~~~ Brecht Elementary School ~~~ Thanks~GIVING Service Project

St. Matthew is again reaching out to help neighboring families have a more plentiful Thanksgiving.

You are invited to donate any of the items listed below.

Last collection day will be Sunday, November 16th. Items can be placed on the table in Fellowship Hall.

Thanks~GIVING Shopping List: Rice (bags or boxes), Stuffing (bags or boxes), Mashed Potatoes, Canned Vegetables, Bottled Juice, Cranberry Sauce, Canned Fruit & Fruit Cocktail, Macaroni & Cheese, Beans (black, kidney, baked), Mixes (cookies,

brownie, muffin), Spaghetti & Tomato Sauce, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Cereals, Oatmeal, Pancake Mix & Syrup, Jello, Pudding, Boxes of Granola Bars, Paper Towels

Monetary contributions (for grocery cards) will also be accepted. Labeled envelopes for cash and check (made out to St. Matthew) will be in the foyer. These envelopes, "Brecht School Project," can be placed in the collection plate.

Any questions, contact Sheila Charles.

-Sheila Charles

Evangelism Corner

The Evangelism Committee convened on October 26, 2025 at 11:40am with five members in attendance. Devotions and Prayer, led by Barb Eshbach, chair, focused upon shared reflections from our group concerning the hymns, readings and our Reformation service today, as renewal of our faith. The various responses included a verse, phrase or thought that stood out to each of us. Of special significance were our thoughts regarding what kind of renewal we see in our church today.

A new tri-fold brochure is being readied for distribution at the Grandview Heights 2026 Yard Sale.

Twenty pets received a pet blessing from Pastor Fero on October 4th. A special thank you to Nancy Smith who coordinated the event.

RIC will now be its own committee with its own budget line; it will no longer be a subcommittee of Evangelism.

Upcoming events include handing out treats on Halloween from 6 to 8pm at the church. Caroling on the Corner is scheduled for Dec. 13 at 6pm following our Saturday 5:00 service. Further ideas for upcoming Conversation Around the Corner events were generated and will be considered as we enter 2026.

Barb Eshbach is relinquishing her duties as chair of Evangelism at the conclusion of 2025. A replacement for this position is being sought.

Our next meeting is scheduled for November 9th following our Sunday service.

- Kay Gontner

HELP US REACH 100 KIND ACTS!
✓ Help someone
✓ Pick up litter
✓ Donate something
✓ Your choice!

https://bit.ly/GrandviewKindness

TELL US WHAT YOU DID
kindness@stmatthewelc.com

SEE THE COUNT GROW!
stmatthewelc.com/kindness

CELEBRATE!
at the Block Party 9/27/25!

Celebrating 100 years of Grandview Heights

ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN
KINDNESS BUILDS COMMUNITY

100 ACTS OF KINDNESS
in honor of 100 years

Moving Forward in Faith

ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN 2025 >>> MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH

The **Moving Forward in Faith** campaign has been a wonderful reminder of what our congregation can accomplish together. Thanks to your generosity, we reached our \$5,000 goal two months ahead of schedule! Every contribution—large or small—has helped strengthen St. Matthew’s ministry and ensure that we can continue to serve with faith and purpose.

The campaign **will remain open through the end of the year** for anyone who would still like to participate. Additional gifts will help us build a stronger financial foundation as we prepare for the challenges and opportunities of 2026.

Special envelopes are available in the narthex, and online giving includes *Moving Forward in Faith* as an option. Thank you for your continued support, encouragement, and prayers as we move forward—together—in faith.

-Barb Eshbach

Balancing Faith and Finance

balancing faith and finance

January - September	
Actual	
Regular Giving	\$105,838.10
Other Income	\$ 29,315.30
Total Income	\$135,153.40
Total Expenses	\$132,934.74
	\$ 2,218.66

Our year-to-date financial overview through September highlights the meaningful impact of your giving. Every contribution sustains our ministry and strengthens our shared mission. Thanks to the success of the *Moving Forward in Faith* campaign, income currently exceeds expenses by \$2,218—a sign of your continued generosity and faith in our shared work.

- Barb Eshbach, Treasurer

New Members—Meet Kaye & Andrea

*Love and Marriage, love and marriage
Go together like a horse and carriage.
This I tell ya' brother,
You can't have one without the other.*



This song, popularized by Frank Sinatra and composed by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Huesen, truly depicts the lives of Andrea Farris and Kaye Ames, two of our newest members at St. Matthew. On October 3rd they will be celebrating their five-year anniversary.

Taking a peek into Andrea’s background, she grew up in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania in the Pocono Mountain area. She remembers Hurricane Diane that ripped through her family’s home where members of her family spent many hours searching for each other, eventually being safely reunited.

Her college years were spent at Stroudsburg University where she earned her B.S. in Education. She then moved to Steelton-Highspire where she spent the next 26 years teaching health, physical education and science. Following this she traveled to Temple University and earned her master’s degree and principal’s certificate, Central Dauphin becoming her home district for the next 8 years while serving as principal of the district’s alternative school.

In 2019 Andrea relocated to the Harrisburg area and was transporting her miniature schnauzer to agility classes being offered in Lancaster under the leadership of Kaye Ames, well known in the field of dog training. Thus began an enduring friendship.

Taking a look at Kaye’s formative years, she grew up in Intercourse, Pennsylvania and at an early age came to Lancaster to assist a local veterinarian. As she grew older she eventually assumed the responsibility for grooming and maintaining the kennels on site. After several years, she began looking for a smaller facility which she found at 809 New Holland Avenue, beginning her 25 year career at “Kaye Ames, People Training for Dogs”.

Kaye first raised German short-haired pointers and

rottweilers and later turned her enthusiasm to cavalier king charles spaniels. She continues to teach at her center two days a week. Both she and Andrea enjoy providing a place for dogs to stay at their home when a need arises. For two months in the spring and two months in the fall, they look forward to camping where both enjoy the outdoor space they also call home.

Remembering that old tune at the beginning of the article, we reaffirm that they indeed can't have one without the other. Welcome, Andrea and Kaye to St. Matthew!

- Kay Gontner

Birthdays

Corbin Miller 11/2	Carole Castline 11/3
Andrea Farris 11/3	Fiona Smith 11/4
Neely Frye 11/7	Mabel Frazier 11/18
Joan Bowers 11/18	Nancy Pokopec 11/20
Tina Markley 11/22	Shep Smith 11/22
James Frazier 11/28	Sheila Charles 11/29
Carolyn Rothweiler 11/29	Phyllis Wimer 12/4
Cathy Stephens 12/8	Tracy Longenecker 12/11
Ellen Kim 12/14	Kay Nolt 12/17
Norman Drescher 12/20	Jesus Christ 12/25
Elsa Teichmann 12/27	Daniel Mink 12/29

Anniversaries

Norm Drescher & David Ostrander 11/30

Worship Assistants—November

Altar Care for November – Linda Tice, Barb Elsen, Anna Neal

November 1- Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Norm Drescher

November 2 – Sunday 10am

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

November 8 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Nancy Pokopec
- Reader: Nancy Pokopec

November 9 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Barb Elsen
- Reader: Norm Drescher
- Greeter: Carol Rothweiler
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Sandy Tucker & Brad Charles

November 15 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Matthew Kolb
- Reader: Norm Drescher

November 16 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Barb Emmerich
- Greeter: Kay Gontner
- Ushers: Pat Smith & Sadie Jordan
- Counters: Barb Elsen & Brenda Stauffer

November 22 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Brad Charles

November 23 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Steve Feldmann
- Reader: Norm Drescher
- Greeter: Nancy Smith
- Usher: Barb Elsen
- Counters: Pam Frye & Linda Tice

November 29 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

November 30 – Sunday 10am

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

Pet Blessing 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

Church Council

Barb Elsen	Barb Eshbach
James Frazier	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. Copies of the Full Statement are also
available in the Education and Resources Stand in the Fellowship Hall.)*

St. Matthew

November 2025

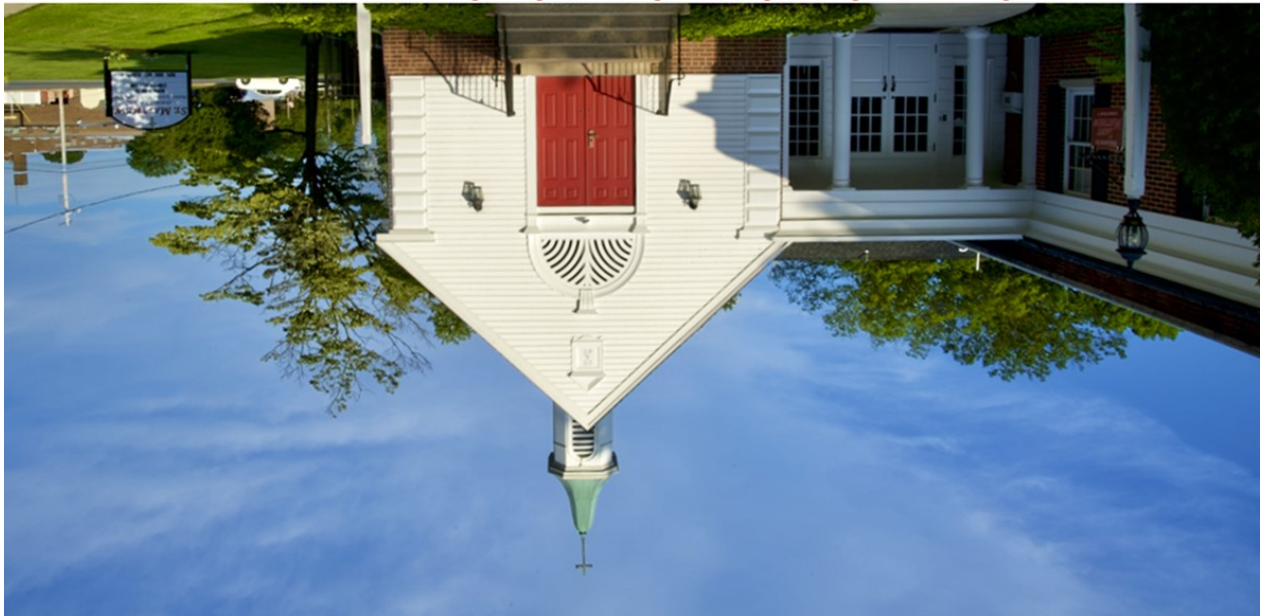
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 5pm - Worship
2 10am - Worship	3	4 GENERAL ELECTION (7am - 8pm)	5 12:00pm - Bible Study 6:30pm - M.T. Democratic Committee	6 6:30 pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	7	8 9:30am - CPR Class 5pm - Worship
9 10am - Worship 11:15am - Evangelism Mtg	10	11 12pm - Better Bones at St. Matthew	12 12:00pm - Bible Study 12:30pm - Head Start Mtg	13 6:00pm - Bell Choir 7:00 pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	14	15 5pm - Worship
16 10am - Worship 11:15am - Congregational Meeting	17	18 12pm - Better Bones at St. Matthew 7:00pm - Church Council	19 12:00pm - Bible Study	20 6:00pm - Bell Choir 7:00 pm - Vocal Choir Rehearsal	21 11:30pm - CPR Class	22 5pm - Worship
23 10am - Worship	24	25 12pm - Better Bones at St. Matthew	26 12:00pm - Bible Study	27 THANKSGIVING	28	29 9:30am - CPR Class 5pm - Worship
30 10am - Worship						

ST. MATTHEW

700 Pleasure Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

(Return Service Requested)

The Little Church with the Big Heart



Newsletter Addendum—December 2025

Worship Assistants

Altar Care for December – Barb Elsen

December 6 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Brad Charles

December 7 – Sunday 10am

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

December 13 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Matthew Kolb
- Reader: Matthew Kolb

December 14 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Barb Elsen
- Reader: Peg Sampson
- Greeter: Kay Gontner
- Ushers: Sam, Sadie, Pat
- Counters: Barb Elsen & Carol Rothweiler

December 20 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Nancy Pokopec
- Reader: Nancy Pokopec

December 21 – Sunday 10am

- Assisting Minister: Linda McIntyre
- Reader: Linda McIntyre
- Greeters: Kaye Ames & Andrea Farris
- Usher: Barb Elsen
- Counters: Linda Tice & Brad Charles

December 24 – Christmas Eve 4pm

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Roxanne Koch
- Greeters: Erin & Fiona
- Usher: OPEN

December 27 – Saturday 5pm

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

December 28 – Sunday 10am

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

Brecht School Thanksgiving Food Drive

Thank you and your generous parishioners for your service, hard work and food donations! Here are the stats for this year's service project.

17 families received food boxes

1 family received food from another building's food drive

(16) \$20.00 Aldi's gift cards from PTO

(1) \$20.00 Aldi's gift card from a staff member.


Food was donated by Brecht families, teachers & staff, and parishioners of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. There was ample food left for us to provide food for our 10 Power Packs families over winter break, plus a "share table" of food set up during conferences for Brecht families to help themselves to.

-Francine Rickert, M. Ed., School Counselor



St. Matthew

December 2025

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

Upcoming Events

CAROLING ON THE CORNER

**SATURDAY
DECEMBER 13**

***Caroling On
the Corner!***

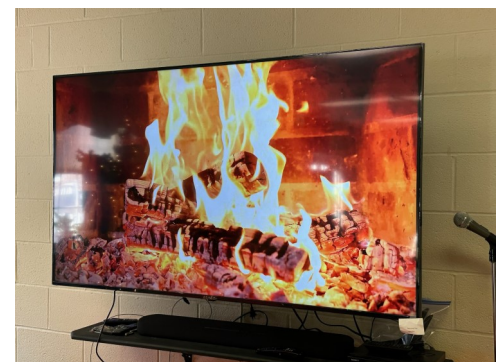
Saturday, December 13, 2025
6:00-7:00 p.m.

**It's back! Join us for Christmas caroling after Saturday evening worship.
We'll gather in front of the church for singing, hot chocolate, flashlights,
and festive fun!**



**Advent 2025 booklets
are available
in the church lobby.**

**These are free for
anyone to take.**



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The Little Church with the Big Heart

