



THE WORD

September/October 2026

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



Pastor Robin Fero

Pastor's Page



WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY IS BACK!

Bible study is back after a summer break. Beginning Wednesday, Sept. 2, at 12noon, the group will meet each Wednesday in the fellowship hall.

You do not have to be a biblical scholar to participate. We learn together!

The hour begins with a personal checking in time and a prayer. Then we take the next Saturday/Sunday bulletin and read through the upcoming worship service, including each of the scriptures. We also open the hymn book and read through the hymns that we will be using in the Sunday service.

Depending upon the season and the topics within the lectionary, we use creative methods to bring the Bible passages to life within the circle that is gathered.

This weekly Bible study serves as a time for fellowship and for study. The hope is for us to encounter the Word before we enter the worship space later in the week.

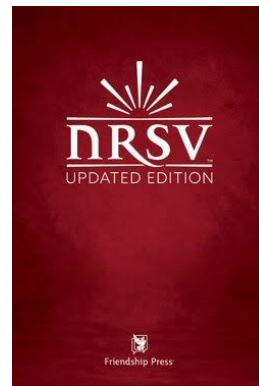
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

A couple of years ago, I discovered a free tool online to create crossword puzzles. Each week, I design a crossword puzzle that uses the lectionary scriptures for the week. These puzzles are printed out and are on the table in the fellowship hall. They can also be done online. Just ask me to email you the puzzle weekly, and I will. A crossword puzzle featuring the scriptures for September 5-6 can be found on page 9 of this newsletter.

NRSVUE.

Do you recognize this acronym? Unless you recognize its earlier edition in the first four letters, you may be tempted to believe I am seeking to introduce you to a new make of car.

The New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) is exactly what it reads; it is the updated edition of the NRSV, and what the ELCA's publishing arm, Augsburg Fortress, uses for our worship resources. The NRSVUE has been around since 2021, but in June of 2025, digital versions of the NRSV became unavailable, thus forcing our change.



So, every once in a blue moon, when you hear the scriptures read in worship at St. Matthew, you may encounter a new word or revised phrase.

For instance, Jesus will cure a man with a skin disorder, instead of the traditional "leprosy". Out of its 750,00 total words, the NRSVUE has 12,000 substantive edits from the NRSV (think about repeated words).

There have been several "authorized versions" of the Bible throughout the years. We all know the date of

the most popular one: 1611. That is when the King James Version (KJV) was authorized and published.

The National Council of Churches authorized the Revised Standard Version (RSV) in 1952 and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) in 1989.

Why change the words in our English-language Bibles? Language, for one thing, does change over time. Some words that were used in 1611 and appear in the KJV, or words that were used in the prior 14th and 16th century English Bibles are not easily recognized in 2026. Words also change meaning over time. We see that in our current society. Have a substantial conversation with a couple of people who are 30 to 40 years younger than you, and you will find out quickly how words can have different meanings.

Biblical scholarship also plays a role in revising the Bible. Scholars learn more about ancient civilizations that are referenced in the Bible and that can lead to new perspectives on the meaning of what the original author was trying to convey.

A closer look at the original language in the text can also lead to changes in a new edition. For some time, scholars have recognized that the Hebrew language in Genesis 1:1 is more in the spirit of "when God was creating...", instead of "God created...", and that change is reflected in the NRSVUE.

(Source: Biblegateway.com)

Blessings on the pathway!

God is with us.

- Pastor Fero

Council Corner

Welcome to September!

Throughout the pages of this issue you will read about several things that have happened, are happening, and will be happening at St. Matthew. As you read them, I hope it will excite you to share with your friends and neighbors how this faith community operates and functions to serve God through our worship, witness, and service. Your sharing (and invitation to others to join us) by word of mouth is a very, very important aspect of sustaining our mission now and into the future.

One real life example of sustaining is coming up in September. I hope all of you will participate in the kickoff of our StewardSix emphasis at the end of the month. This is a unique opportunity to both learn and live our faith in creative, constructive ways.

Your Congregation Council is also at work. Later in September they will participate in a synod-wide continuing education Zoom session regarding

council best practices and leadership development skills. When presented with this opportunity, everyone said yes to participate in this session. I really like working with this group!

And it is not too early to circle the date of Sunday, November 8. That is the date for our annual congregation meeting. It will be held immediately after worship that day. The usual business is on the agenda. We will receive the annual report, adopt a ministry spending plan for 2027, and elect members to the Congregation Council. If you are a voting member, you are to be there. Under our rules, a voting member is defined as a member who has both communed and made a contribution of record during the year. Simple, right?

See you in church!

-Cliff Eshbach, Council President

Social Ministry

~~~ Brecht Elementary School ~~~

**Thanks~GIVING Service Project**

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

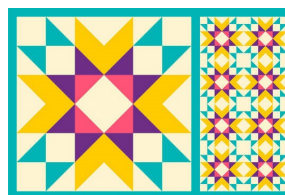
You are invited to donate any of the items listed below. Last collection day will be Sunday, November 15th. Items can be placed on the table in Fellowship Hall.

**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.

**SAVE THE DATE!!!** St. Matthew will be holding its Lutheran World Relief In-Gathering Weekend on Saturday, September 26th and Sunday, September 27th. Quilts will be on display and dedicated during both services.



Through the simple combination of fabric and thread, we reach out to people in their time of greatest need with a strong message of hope ~ you are not alone. "Those who sleep under a quilt, sleep under a blanket of love."

Lutheran World Relief has persevered for more than 80 years, and last year it expanded its Quilt and Kit ministry to serve neighbors here in the United States. Your gifts of love have surrounded families who have lost everything. Neighbors reached coast to coast including those impacted by Hurricanes Helene and Milton, wildfires in California, severe weather across the South and Midwest, and flooding in Central Texas.

No matter how the world changes or what adjustments we need to make, we're always grateful we can count on you to wrap your neighbors in love and comfort.

- Sheila Charles

## RIC Committee News

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has participated in and supported the RIC Committee and our involvement in Lancaster and Lititz Pride events this year. Your presence, encouragement, and willingness to stand alongside our LGBTQIA+ neighbors are a beautiful reflection of God's call to love our neighbors and welcome all into God's family. Thank you for helping St. Matthew to continue to open doors, create a place of belonging for all neighbors, and share the message that all are created in God's image, all are loved, and all are welcome.



-Erin Conahan

## Celebrating Pride

### Why St. Matthew At PRIDE Matters

The two PRIDE festivals that St. Matthew Lutheran attends each year are very different from one another. But our presence at each one presents our volunteers with opportunities to share the Love of Christ.

Lititz PRIDE was born out of an act of hate in Lititz borough, when a PRIDE flag on a personal residence was torn down by vandals. The LGBTQIA community rallied to start Lititz Chooses Love, and began a town festival that opened its arms to everyone.

We started attending Lititz PRIDE as a part of Embrace, Lancaster County's coalition of open and affirming churches, and this evolved into having our own table in the "churches" section of the festival.

By comparison, Lancaster PRIDE feels almost like a convention. It has been going on a lot longer, and attracts many people from out-of-county. Both attract many vendors and food trucks.



PRIDE festivals have a reputation for being kind of wild and wooly, but our festivals are pretty even-keeled. It is Lancaster County, after all. Yes, you will see some folks in bizarre or revealing costumes, and the music is loud and boisterous, particularly at Lancaster.

But what strikes me is the large number of people who bring families, the number of middle-aged and even older folk who attend PRIDE. This demonstrates something that far too many of our Christian siblings who condemn LGBTQIA+ people are missing. The clear fact is that these neighbors are really just like everyone else. Some are loud and outlandish, some are quiet and shy, some are comfortable in their own skin, and some are learning how to find peace with themselves and with each other.

And, really, aren't we all like that, too?

It's clear from the many conversations I have had with folks at PRIDE, young and old, is that many people have been deeply hurt and rejected by the faith communities in which they grew up. They have been told to leave, that they were going to hell if they didn't "change their decision," and they were judged for not conforming to standards they could not find in the Bible. For instance, I spoke with a man at Lititz this year. He was just a regular guy in T-shirt and shorts on a hot day, who worked maintenance in Dauphin County. He was ostracized from a conservative church where his family had gone for being gay, his family doesn't want him around, and his brother told him that, while he

would always love him, he was going to hell. His workplace had all the right HR policies in place to protect him, but it was obvious by the side conversations he overheard that gay people were unwelcome and would be treated badly in all the subtle ways people use to avoid trouble with HR but still get their point across. The only place where he could be himself, he said, was at home with his partner and at festivals like these.

The churches that have come to understand that Jesus loves everyone, first and foremost, and that God want us to leave the judging up to God, have a lot of making up to do. We have an opportunity at these two festivals to show up, to be kind, to listen, and to let folks know that they are OK, and that God loves them for the way that God made them.

And that's why it matters for St. Matthew to be at PRIDE.

-Steve Feldmann



## Balancing Faith and Finance

# balancing faith and finance

Through the end of July, our year-to-date deficit is \$5,759.74, resulting from income that is \$8,572.63 below budget. Expenses, however, are \$6,604.54 under budget. Regular giving is below both our 2026 budget and last year's pace for most months.

As we begin preparing the 2027 budget, we will continue to watch our income and expenses closely. Every gift matters, and small increases can make a significant difference. That's one of the ideas behind this fall's Steward Six initiative.

| January - July 2026   |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund          | Actual              |
| Regular Giving        | \$ 75,573.00        |
| Other Income          | \$ 13,149.45        |
| <b>Total Income</b>   | <b>\$ 88,722.45</b> |
| <b>Total Expenses</b> | <b>\$ 94,482.19</b> |

(\$5,759.74)

- Barb Eshbach, Treasurer

# StewardSix

Six weeks.

One faithful practice.

Stewardship isn't a word that gets used very often. When I hear it, I have to admit that my mind goes to some pretty familiar places. An annual campaign. Pledge cards. A financial commitment.

But, beginning in September with **Steward Six**, that idea is being turned around. Instead of asking for money, St. Matthew will be giving you money (and other small resources) in your own Steward Six booklet and inviting you to discern how to use them.

Granted - these are small amounts! But that is exactly the point.

Think back to the challenge I put forth during our annual meeting last November: If just half of our giving units—30 households—would increase their weekly giving by \$6.00, the impact would be significant.

Over the 30 weeks from January through the end of July 2026, an additional \$6.00 per week from 30 giving units would have generated \$5,400. That alone would have covered nearly all of our current \$5,759.74 deficit. Small amounts really can make a difference when we put them together.

While that idea led to the development of Steward Six, it quickly expanded as a way to help us rediscover generosity as a way of life rather than merely a financial act. With Steward Six, we are creating opportunities to practice generosity and then reflect on what we learn from it.

There is something powerful about making a commitment to generosity. When we decide ahead of time that some of what we have will be used for others, that decision can begin to shape the choices we make. We may think twice about a purchase, notice a need we might otherwise overlook, or find a way to make room for giving. Generosity becomes more than something we do when we happen to have a little extra; it becomes part of how we live. Steward Six gives us a chance to begin practicing that kind of intentional generosity—not by asking you to make a pledge, but by giving you small opportunities to decide what you will do with what has been placed in your hands.

Each week, the gift in the booklet serves as a prompt. It gives us something concrete to work with, but its purpose is to get us thinking: What do I have? What matters to me? Where do I see a need? What can I share?

The gift is small. The possibilities are not.

## STEWARD SIX TIMELINE

### Kick-off Dinner Church and Ingathering

Saturday, September 26  
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

This is an all-congregation event!

There will be worship, dinner, the blessing of the quilts, and a brief program explaining the Steward Six initiative. Those in attendance will receive their Steward Six booklet. If you can't join us, don't worry—we'll make sure you receive your booklet.

#### ***What's inside the booklet?***

There are six pockets—one for each week. Each contains a small resource and an invitation to think, pray, and decide what to do with it.

#### **Week 1**

September 27-October 3

You'll find \$6 in cash in your booklet for this week. What can you really do with \$6.00?

#### **Week 2**

October 4-10

A \$6 grocery gift card (Stauffer's or Giant). Who might this help?

#### **Week 3**

October 11-17

6 postage stamps—who might need a kind word from you this week?

#### **Week 4**

October 18-24

\$6 in cash with a pew envelope—ready for the offering plate!

#### **Week 5**

October 25-31

An index card to list places or ways you share your time, talents, or resources beyond the congregation.

#### **Week 6**

November 1-7

\$6 in cash—have you thought about how it could make a difference?

We'll finish just in time for the annual meeting, which is on Sunday, November 8!

### **Wrap-Up Gathering**

We will have another congregational meal event, with the date and time to be determined.

- Barb Eshbach, Treasurer

## *Evangelism Corner*

The Evangelism Committee convened on Sunday, August 16 at 11:30am.

The committee discussed sending occasional notes and gift cards to our college students to encourage them as they pursue their academic studies.

Our eleven nonagenarians (90+ years of age) were honored at our August 15 and 16 services with a special tribute given by Pastor Fero. Five members were recognized by their presence: Marly Huehnergath, Jim Nolt, Anna Neal, Marie Bernlohr and Joan Bowers. Cupcakes were enjoyed by all in Fellowship Hall with a delightful table prepared by Barb Eshbach. Each honoree also received a lovely invitation for this event, courtesy of Barb.

Our annual Pet Blessing will be held Saturday, October 3 from 1 to 2pm on the church lawn (inside in case of inclement weather). Nancy Smith will chair this occasion with help from committee members as we prepare gift bags to be given to each pet that arrives.

Our fall "Conversation Around the Corner" will be held on Wednesday, October 21 at 6:30pm in Fellowship Hall focusing upon "Medicine in the 1800's". Details available closer to the event.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, September 13 at 11:15am.

-Kay Gontner

## *Music Ministry News*

The first **Chancel Choir** rehearsal for the fall begins on Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-7:30 pm in the choir room and the **Bell Choir** will start rehearsals in mid-November to prepare anthems for Christmas Eve Worship.

The Chancel Choir will sing an anthem in Worship in September and will prepare a special piece for Reconciling in Christ Sunday on October 11<sup>th</sup> which is also National Coming Out Day. Observance of National Coming Out Day annually on October 11<sup>th</sup> began in 1988. It is intended to support LGBTQIA+ people in coming out and living openly. As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, we celebrate our LGBTQIA+ siblings and delight in the gifts that God has given to each of us to use in full participation as we love and serve God and one another.

Our choirs welcome new singers and ringers as we prepare and offer our musical praise to God this fall! Prior experience is not needed, only a desire to share God's love through music. The Chancel Choir and Bell Choir rehearsal schedules are ready... all we need is YOU! Please see me or contact the church office for more information about becoming a member of either choir or to be a vocal or instrumental soloist. We would love to have you!

- Sue Feldmann

# StewardSix

## *Saturday Dine Out*

### **Saturday After Church Dine Out is Back!**

Our first Saturday evening Dine Out will be September 5, immediately following the service.

Pacific Blue Sushi & Grill is at 1500 Oregon Pike, across the intersection from Walgreens and Burger King.



-Pastor Fero

## *Welcome Our New Members*

### **Welcome Aboard, Matthew, Susan and Noah!**



Matthew and Susan Kolb with their son, Noah, became members of St Matthew at the Saturday service on August 1, 2026. They have been attending our church regularly and in a leap of faith transitioned from Redeemer to our congregation. They are great fans of Pastor Fero and from their first meeting with him, knew our members would be as welcoming as he. Both Matthew and Noah help deliver the community meals when needed. Barb Elsen is always most appreciative of their willingness to serve. Matthew is also a faithful assisting minister at Saturday services.

Matthew is a graduate of Hempfield H.S. and Millersville University (B.S. and Master's Degree), currently serving as a school counselor for the School District of York City, being there for fifteen years.

Susan is a graduate of Elizabethtown H.S., Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA with a degree in communication, and Penn State University with a master's degree in education. She is currently working for Alvernia University as Assistant Vice President of Enrollment, recruiting and assisting adult and graduate students from admissions to graduation.

Matthew and Susan were married on July 1, 2018, and together they purchased a home in Mountville with a considerable history going back to the 1800's. Susan's two children, Noah and Chloe, became a special part of their family as well. Noah is in his second year at Stevenson University in Owings Mills, MD and Chloe is employed at Eurofins.

Matthew's outside interest involves Lutheran Disaster Response, working closely with Rev. Glenn Beard, well known to many of us. Susan is involved in community relationships, notably Women2Women, on the board of Milagro House, and enjoys musical theater.

Both Matthew and Susan exemplify busy, productive lives but remain very humble in all that life offers them. It was especially kind of them to bring a rose from their garden as we met together in this special time and place.



Welcome to St. Matthew!

-Kay Gontner

## *Thank You*

*Thank you to Pastor Fero and the St. Matthew Family for the prayers, cards, and visits for Bob's recovery from his hip fracture on April 16th. His recovery took awhile with the Rehab Hospital until May 5th and in home therapy until June 25th. A second thank you for the loan of the transport wheel chair. The chair eased my anxiety not knowing which offices had wheelchairs for patient use. We are truly grateful for all the support.*

Hugs,  
Phyllis and Bob Wimer

## *Birthdays*

Kathleen Nightingale 9/5  
Scarlett Jordan 9/6      Kaye Ames 9/8  
Susan Kolb 9/9      Marilyn Huehnergarth 9/12  
Barb Eshbach 9/22      Brenda Stauffer 9/29  
Steve Feldmann 10/1      Jacqueline Roderick 10/1  
Samuel Jordan 10/8      Pam Frye 10/11  
Barbara Elsen 10/13      Jean Schweers 10/16  
Dave Kontrye 10/16      Nora Hudack 10/18  
Russell LaBar—10/21      Pastor Fero 10/29  
Suzanne Mink 10/30      David Ostrander 10/30  
Anna Neal 10/31

## *Anniversaries*

Harold & Kathleen Nightingale 9/10  
Pat & Shep Smith 9/10  
Carol & Buzz Rothweiler 9/11  
Jacki & Clint Roderick 9/14  
Sam & Sarah Jordan 9/24  
Ray & Lunda Shaub 9/25  
Cliff & Barb Eshbach 9/27  
Kaye Ames & Andrea Farris 10/3  
Dan & Suzanne Mink 10/6  
Jeff Auer & Pastor Fero 10/17  
James & Kay Nolt 10/21



## *Worship Assistants—September*

**Altar Care for September** – Carol Rothweiler & Linda Tice

### **September 5 – Saturday 5pm**

- Assisting Minister: Brad Charles
- Reader: Brad Charles

### **September 6 – Sunday 10am**

- Assisting Minister: Barb Emmerich
- Reader: Peg Sampson
- Greeter: Roxanne Koch
- Ushers: Andrea Farris & Kaye Ames
- Counters: Carol Rothweiler & Linda Tice

### **September 12 – Saturday 5pm**

- Assisting Minister: Matthew Kolb
- Reader: Matthew Kolb

### **September 13 – Sunday 10am**

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

### **September 19 – Saturday 5pm**

- Assisting Minister: Nancy Pokopec
- Reader: Nancy Pokopec

### **September 20 – Sunday 10am**

- Assisting Minister: Steve Feldmann
- Reader: Peg Sampson
- Greeter: Kay Gontner
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Brenda Stauffer & Sandy Tucker

### **September 26 – Saturday 5pm**

- Assisting Minister: Sheila Charles
- Reader: Sheila Charles

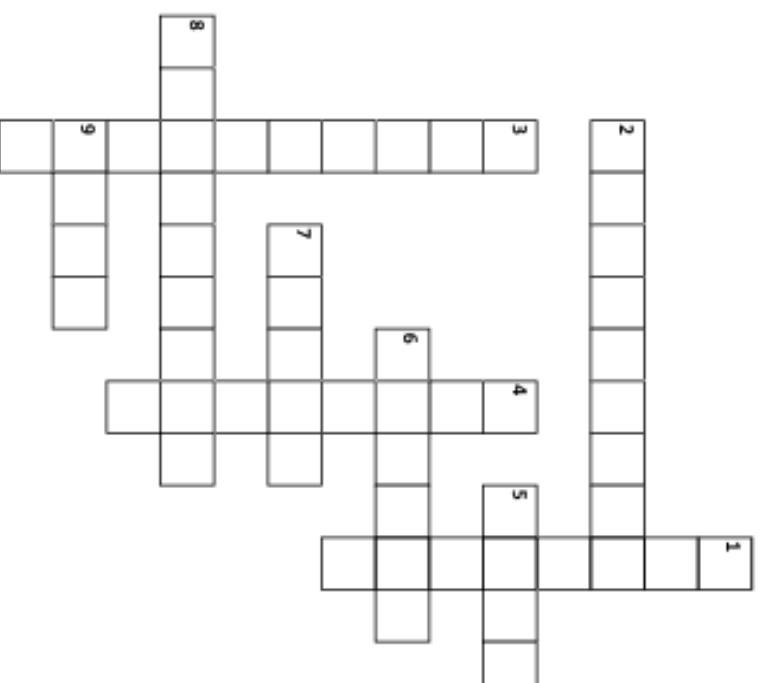
### **September 27 – Sunday 10am**

- Assisting Minister: Linda McIntyre
- Reader: Linda McIntyre
- Greeter: Toni Sweitzer
- Usher: OPEN
- Counters: Brad Charles & Linda Tice

# August at St. Matthew



# Ezekiel 33:7-11. Romans 13:8-14. Matthew 18:15-20



## Across

2. (Romans) Make no \_\_\_\_ for the flesh.
5. (Matthew) Whatever you \_\_\_\_ on earth will be bound in heaven.
6. (Ezek.) "...I have no pleasure in the death of the \_\_\_\_..."
7. (Romans) Let us put on the armor of \_\_\_\_.
8. (Romans) This is nearer to us now than when we became believers.
9. (Matthew) Where two or three are gathered in Jesus' \_\_\_\_, he is there.

## Down

1. (Ezek.) "...I have made a \_\_\_\_ for the house of Israel..."
3. (Romans) Love is the \_\_\_\_ of the law.
4. (Romans) Summary of the commandments: "You shall love your \_\_\_\_ as yourself"



### *Officers (2026)*

Rev. Cliff Eshbach, President

Laurie LaBar, Vice President

Kay Gontner, Secretary

Brad Charles, Financial Secretary

Barb Eshbach, Treasurer

### *Staff*

The Rev. Robin Fero, Pastor

Susan Feldmann, Director of Music

Ann Hossler, organist

### *Church Council*

Rev. Cliff Eshbach

Barb Elsen

Andrea Farris

Roxanne Koch

Laurie LaBar

Barb Eshbach

Kay Gontner

Peg Sampson

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

# September 2026

| Sunday                                                        | Monday                                                   | Tuesday                       | Wednesday                                                      | Thursday                       | Friday                                          | Saturday                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                               |                                                          | 1                             | 2<br>12:00pm - Bible Study<br>6:30pm - MT Democratic Committee | 3                              | 4                                               | 5<br>5pm - Worship<br>6pm - Saturday Dine Out                                  |
| 6<br>10am -Worship<br>1:00pm - Legends of Lititz<br>Worship * | 7<br>5:30pm - CPR Class                                  | 8                             | 9<br>12:00pm - Bible Study<br>6:30pm - RIC Committee Mtg       | 10<br>6:30pm - Vocal Choir Reh | 11<br>10:30am - CPR Class<br>1:30pm - CPR Class | 12<br>5pm - Worship                                                            |
| 13<br>10am - Worship<br>11:15am - Evangelism Mtg              | 14                                                       | 15<br>7:00pm - Church Council | 16<br>12:00pm - Bible Study                                    | 17<br>6:30pm - Vocal Choir Reh | 18<br>10:00am - CPR Class<br>1:30pm - CPR Class | 19<br>5pm - Worship                                                            |
| 20<br>10am - Worship                                          | 21<br>9am - Community Meal<br>6:00pm - Finance Committee | 22                            | 23<br>12:00pm - Bible Study                                    | 24<br>6:30pm - Vocal Choir Reh | 25                                              | 26<br>9:30am - CPR Class<br>5pm - Worship<br>Dinner Church Steward Six Kickoff |
| 27<br>10am - Worship                                          | 28<br>5:30pm - CPR Class                                 | 29                            | 30<br>12:00pm - Bible Study                                    |                                |                                                 |                                                                                |

# ***ST. MATTHEW***

700 Pleasure Road  
Lancaster, PA 17601

(Return Service Requested)

*The Little Church with the Big Heart*

