

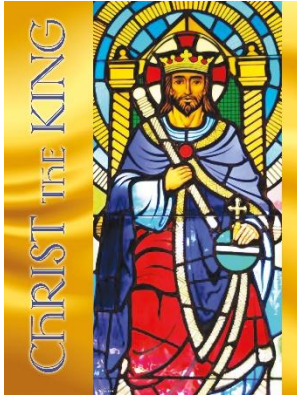


St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Around the Church

November 23, 2025

happy
thanks
giving



CULTURE WARRIOR

This Sunday is Christ the King Sunday. It's the last Sunday of the "church year" and it's kind of funny. "Why?" you might ask. Well, Jesus is shown to be the very *opposite* of a King or Ruler. We get a little bit of Good Friday; the gospel reading is always from a part of the crucifixion story. One thief dying on a cross said to another man

dying on a cross, "Jesus, remember me when you come into *your kingdom!*" And Jesus replied, "Truly, I tell you, *today* you will be with me in paradise."

I think y'all know me well enough by now to know that I hate "bubbles," the kind that reinforce the "culture wars"—that is, all the fights about meaning and values, and how they should affect our society. That does *not* mean I don't agree with some "bubbles" more than others. I am not opposed to the efforts of the social justice groups that have formed. I do get nervous, however, with the passions that come out of "echo chambers." Where is the impulse "to understand rather than be understood" to quote St. Francis' Prayer? How is it that Jesus gets claimed by Christians at opposite ends of the political spectrum?? That bothers me. For me, Jesus the culture warrior is the crucified one. The powerless one. This image of Christ is about as far away as you can get with the images of power being wielded today in the name of an ideal."

Just a few weeks ago on All Saints Sunday Jesus commanded us to love our enemies (Luke 6:27, 35). He gives that command twice in Luke 6. Jesus wasn't crucified because of that command. Imagine his accusers telling Pilate, "This man is a rebel and should be killed!" Pilate asks, "Why, what's he done?" They say, "Because he tells people to *love their enemies!*"? I can't imagine that either. This Sunday he goes so far as to *forgive* his enemies, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

I can't help but feel like Jesus transcends all the ways we coopt him—particularly when we use him in our culture wars. After all, he was all about forcing people to be in relationship with each other—to love your neighbor, including your enemy. In other words, *everyone*. Maybe what really got him killed was trying to unify people. There's a King for you.

Peace,
Pr. Christian



NO SHAVE NOVEMBER CONTINUES

Don't forget about our No Shave November Fundraiser to benefit our Sharing Thanksgiving program and families in need in the Owen J. Roberts School District. Envelopes can be found in the pews and in the Narthex. To make an online donation go to <https://www.stmatthews-church.org/give> and choose "No Shave November" from the drop-down menu.

To date, we have raised \$120.00! If we raise \$400...the youth get to decide what to do with Pastor Christian's beard! All men are invited to join in!



THANKSGIVING DAY MEAL DISTRIBUTION AT HOLY COMMUNION CHURCH, NOV. 27

For nearly 20 years, St. Matthew's has teamed up with the Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion at 21st and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia to help prepare and deliver turkey dinners to 250+ people.

**THANK YOU...OUR VOLUNTEER LIST IS FULL!
WE ARE STILL ACCEPTING FINANCIAL
CONTRIBUTIONS!**

To contribute online, go to: <https://stmatthews-church.org/give#> Click "Give Online Now" and then select "Thanksgiving" from the drop-down menu on the next screen that appears. You can also write a check to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, and in the memo line, write "Thanksgiving."

If you have any questions, please reach out to Patrick Miller (pjmill98@yahoo.com) or Troy and Diana Sisum, (tdsisum1@yahoo.com).

COLLECTION FOR HATS, GLOVES, SCARVES & SOCKS

This is the last chance to bring in items for our collection of hats, gloves, scarves and socks. If you forgot yours today, please bring them to the Church Office tomorrow during business hours. We will bring them when we go to Philadelphia on Thanksgiving Day. Thank you for your generosity!

INTERFAITH/MINISTERIUM **THANKSGIVING SERVICE, NOV. 23**

The Interfaith Action Community and the Exton/Lionville Ministerium invite you to the third annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on TONIGHT, Sunday, November 23 at 7:00pm at the Hari Om Yoga Center at 348 Boot Road, Downingtown.



TOY DRIVE FOR MARTIN LUTHER SCHOOL/GEMMA SERVICES: *We only have a few open slots left!* This year we have a Wish List for 50 children. Please, use the Sign-Up Genius located in the online ATC and the church website, select your gift and provide your name and e-mail. All unwrapped gifts should be returned to the church office on or before Monday, December 1. After hours, gifts can be left in the bin on the church office porch. Toys can also be left in the Christian Life Center by the small Christmas Tree during church hours.

The school is also in great need of gift certificates (Amazon, Target, Walmart, Visa, and ShopRite - \$25 Increments). The school will help distribute to those in the community in need and can be left at the church office. Any cash donations can be made to Gemma Services. Any questions please contact Kristen or Brian Delin at bdelin@verizon.net or 610-585-0335 or 610-952-4906.



DISPLAY YOUR NATIVITIES FOR ADVENT! The Worship and Music Team will decorate the windowsills in the Sanctuary to prepare for Advent. All adults and children are welcome to bring in a personal Nativity scene that you would like to share and display. Please leave them on the upper shelves in the Narthex (labelled) and the team will use them to decorate before the first Sunday of Advent on November 30. You may also add an index card with the history of the piece (ex. who it belongs to, special meaning, or a simple Bible verse). We will treat them with care.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING SIGN UP: All families are invited to sign up for one of the four Sundays in Advent to read the Scripture and light the wreath. You can find the Sign Up Genius in this week's online ATC and on the church website. Thank you for making our Advent Season brighter by participating!



HOLIDAY MOVIE DAY: THE GRINCH ON DEC. 7: We will host a Family Movie Day, showing Dr. Seuss' "The Grinch" on Sunday, December 7 from 1:00-3:00pm in the CLC. All are welcome! We will provide the popcorn, a hot chocolate bar, and a winter craft. We are also in need of a few volunteers to help everything run smoothly. Please reach out to Troy and Diana Sisum to volunteer, or for questions (tdsisum1@yahoo.com)



ORDER POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE: You are invited to share in the beauty of the Christmas Eve services by purchasing red poinsettias. Forms are now in the pews and can be found in this week's online ATC and the church website.

Place the form in the offering plate, or send it to the Church Office with a check payable to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church.

The poinsettias are \$10.00 each. This year's ordering deadline will be Friday, December 12.



MISSION IN: THINKING OF OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Mission In team will be sending thinking of

you cards and gift cards to our college students in early December as students are preparing for finals. For the next three Sundays, please write a brief note and sign the cards which will be on a table in the narthex. Faith Formation children will also be signing the cards.

If you have a son/daughter or grandson/granddaughter in college, please send their current address to the church office to be added to the list.

Our next Mission In meeting will be held on Sunday, December 7 at 10:45am in the CLC.



YOUTH NEWS

THE ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL OASIS

'FRIENDSGIVING' GATHERING will be held tonight, Sunday, November 23 from 6:00-8:30pm at the Sanders' home. Come celebrate and give thanks for the faith friendships you have developed through our congregations! ALL 9th-12th Graders are invited to come. Bring a side dish or dessert to share. Sign up information is coming soon!

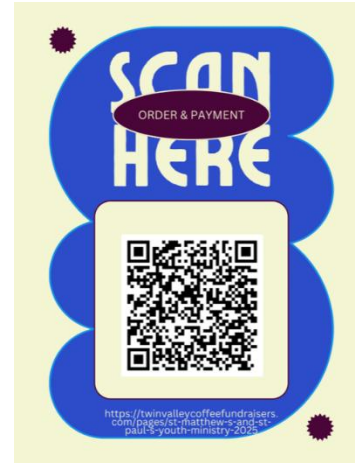
IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR OUR ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL TRIP TO ELMWOOD PARK ZOO hosting students from Gemma Services for their "Wild Lights" holiday display! On Sunday, December 7, 9th-12th graders are invited to help make the Christmas season a bit brighter for some elementary-aged kids who are in challenging family situations. Meet at St. Matthew's at 4:15pm to carpool to Elmwood Park Zoo, and meet the Gemma Services group at 5:00pm. Walk with them through the zoo's light show and animal exhibits, and share some Christmas love with kids who could use some extra happiness in their lives. **The cost will be \$10 per person; if you wish to chip in additional money to help cover admission for our guests, you are welcome to do that as well. Sign up in the online ATC take part.**



ASP 2026: LEADERS NEEDED!

ADULT LEADERS NEEDED FOR NEXT SUMMER'S APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT WORK WEEK! As we get ready for our July 11-18, 2026 work week in Central Appalachia, we need to get our adult leaders in

place in order to determine how many youth we can accommodate. We need a MINIMUM of four male and four female leaders to take all of the youth who are likely to participate this year. **If you are interested in helping, please contact Craig Miller at craigyouthmin@gmail.com, or 484-320-0785, by November 30.**



TWIN VALLEY YOUTH FUNDRAISER NOV. 28- DEC. 12

Our Youth Ministry will be having another Twin Valley Coffee Fundraiser beginning on "Black Friday" November 28 and running through December 12. The link to preview the

products available is now posted in the online ATC and church website, or scan this QR code.

The profit for every purchase you make goes directly to our Youth Ministry. The funds raised will go toward supporting all the youth events held at both churches including OASIS, middle school and high school retreats, service projects and more!

FREDDY'S DINE AND DONATE FOR YOUTH MINISTRY, DEC. 10

For the printable flyer, please check this week's online ATC or the church website!



FUNDRAISING WITH *Freddie's*

**FREDDY'S IS PROUD
TO CONTRIBUTE
15% of Event Sales!**

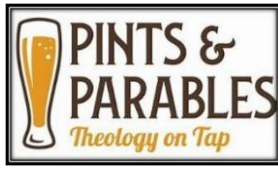
IN-STORE
Show this flyer or say
"I'M HERE FOR THE FUNDRAISER"
at checkout

ONLINE OR MOBILE
Use Promo Code:
GIVEBACK

**A FUNDRAISER SUPPORTING:
ST. MATTHEW'S & ST. PAUL'S YOUTH GROUP**

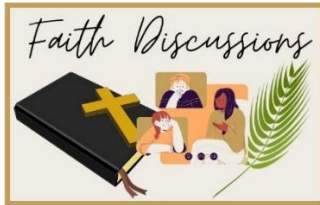
**DECEMBER 10, 2025 | 4PM-8PM
221 EAGLEVIEW BLVD.
EXTON, PA 19341**

Offer valid only on select items. Only non-profit organizations are eligible to participate in the Freddie's fundraising program. Freddie's will donate 15% of qualifying food and beverage sales to the organization. Tax, gift cards, catering and delivery are excluded from the donation. Offer good if flyer is distributed in or near the restaurant. For more information about fundraising email fundraising@freddys.com ©2024 Freddie's LLC



**PINTS AND
PARABLES, DEC. 1
NOW AT THE
STABLES!**

Come join us for stimulating conversation & fellowship, in a laid-back relaxing atmosphere on **Monday, December 1, 7:00pm, AT A NEW LOCATION!** We will meet at The Stables, 160 Park Road Chester Springs.



FAITH DISCUSSIONS, DEC. 2

Our next Faith Discussion meeting is Tuesday, December 2 at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary.

We will begin our study of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). On December 2nd we will focus on the Beatitudes and "Salt and Light" (Matthew 5: 1-14). Our contemplative approach includes a group reading of the passage, quiet meditation, and shared discussion. **All are welcome.**



**COFFEE & CHRIST,
DEC. 6**

Join us for coffee and good conversation at our next session of Coffee & Christ,

Saturday, December 6 at 8:30am at Starbucks in Chester Springs!



**ST. MARY'S MEAL
DELIVERY
NEXT MEAL,
DEC. 28**

You can choose one of these options when you sign up to provide a meal:

- Provide groceries for their kitchen team to prepare dinner. Plan a meal for 15 people, including a main dish, a vegetable or salad and a dessert. Groceries can be dropped off the day before or by 2:30 pm on the day of the meal.
- Deliver a ready-to-eat meal (frozen or fresh) from a grocery store or pizza parlor.
- Donate a \$40 grocery gift card to ACME, Giant, Redners or Costco so they can purchase the ingredients to prepare that evening's meal.
- Become a guest chef/baker and prepare your favorite meal or baked treat in their kitchen.

More information is on our Church website, and the sign up for the next meal on December 28 is in the online ATC.



CALL FOR WORSHIP ASSISTANTS!

We are in need of more Worship Assistants in all areas: Audio/Visual Assistants, Greeters, Altar Assistants, Lectors, Communion Assistants, Fellowship Providers and Youth Acolytes.

The need is greater now, especially as we approach the Holiday season.

If you are interested in any of the positions available, please contact Sara Richardson in the office: srichardson@stmatthews-church.org. Scheduling is flexible and training will be provided!

OUR GIFTS TOGETHER:

PLEASE FILL OUT OUR SURVEY!



Please scan this QR code from your mobile device to open a survey about what gifts and skills that you would like to share with your St. Matthew's family. You can also go to the link below to access the survey.

Additionally, it will be posted in the *Around the Church* email newsletter and around campus.

<https://forms.gle/PC66D8dp7Qpnus4t8>



This Sunday's Altar Flowers are given by Sue and Don Hummerston, "in honor and gratitude for

Granddaughter Nina's First Birthday!"

The November-December Sign Up for Altar Flowers is now posted in the online ATC!



**SAVE THE DATE FOR DESIGNER BAG
BINGO! JANUARY 16, 2026
MORE INFO TO COME!**

OFFICE CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING

Our Church Office will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday on Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28. We will resume normal business hours on Monday, December 1 from 9:00am-1:00pm. **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!**