



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Around the Church

November 30, 2025



THANKSGIVING

By the time y'all read this, you will hopefully have recovered from eating lots of food the day before, spending time with friends and family, and watching the Cowboys lose. Hopefully, the Eagles will have also returned to winning ways actually playing well. Or maybe you'll be resting your feet, propped up in front of the TV or with a good book after standing in lines on Black Friday. That brief period between Wednesday and Sunday of Thanksgiving week has always had good memories for me. Growing up, we usually hosted Thanksgiving, I loved seeing some aunts and uncles, eating lots of good food, and then it was a tradition to decorate the Christmas tree on the Saturday and Sunday after Thanksgiving. Down south, it wasn't too cold, but there was a crisp to the air, and lingering beauty in the fallen red, gold, and brown leaves.

We have a lot to be thankful for. One thing I am thankful for is all y'all's generosity. Sara and I were talking about that in the office this week after she dug through all of the winter clothing donations for the Thanksgiving meal at Holy Communion Lutheran Church. And the money donated for the meal and the church. And this was after all of the donations of food for the Chester County Food Bank. And the money coming in for the Owen J. Roberts School District appeal (the one where I'll shave my beard... and *maybe my head*)... Given all the anxiety, worry, uncertainty, and general "angst" in the world, it is SO refreshing to see generosity, giving, and empathy as a response to it all.

Rather than huddle in bubbles of anger and fear, it is wonderful to see people coming out of "self-protective" mode and help others who truthfully need help, need some protection from hostile circumstances and conditions. It's one thing to pull back into our shells (I'll admit I want to do that sometimes) or get reactive and want to attack "those people"... it's a whole 'nother thing to want to engage and give, to get out of ourselves for just a little while. I am thankful for all of the ways y'all do that. Thank you!

It is an act of faith to give. Even if we have abundance and privilege it opens us up to others. I think the Holy Spirit works in those cracks and openings between ourselves and others, like air that can move

through the smallest gap. The Spirit is wind and breath; let us open the "windows" to our soul with acts of giving.
Peace,
Pr. Christian

P.S. In total, we collected over 50 multipacks (packs of 2 pairs or more) of socks, over 100 pairs of gloves, over 30 scarves, and over 200 hats, which we brought to Holy Communion on Thursday. Again, thank you for your generosity!



NO SHAVE NOVEMBER CONTINUES

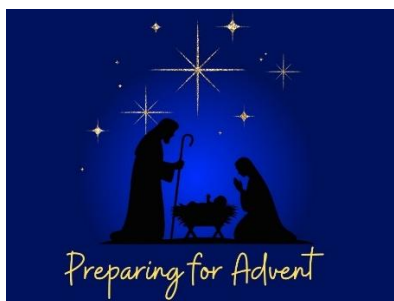
Don't forget about our No Shave November Fundraiser to benefit our Sharing Thanksgiving program and families in need in the Owen J. Roberts School District. Envelopes can be found in the pews and in the Narthex. To make an online donation go to <https://www.stmatthews-church.org/give> and choose "No Shave November" from the drop-down menu. To date, we have raised \$182.00! If we raise \$400...the youth get to decide what to do with Pastor Christian's beard! All men are invited to join in!



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.



CHRISTMAS CONGREGATIONAL BREAKFAST, DEC. 21: Please join us for our Christmas Congregational Breakfast in the CLC on Sunday, December 21, immediately following the 9:30am Worship Service. Share some Fellowship with us as we prepare for the coming of Christmas!

Volunteers are needed to bring some dishes and to help cook the breakfast. We also need help with set up and clean up.

If you can volunteer in any capacity, please find the Sign Up Genius in the online ATC.

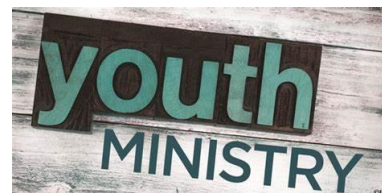
If you have any questions, please contact Troy Sisum at tdsisum1@yahoo.com



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. This Sunday, 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

OUR ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL TRIP TO ELMWOOD PARK ZOO WITH STUDENTS FROM GEMMA SERVICES is coming up on Sunday, December 7! All 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 by taking them through Elmwood's "Wild Lights" holiday display. We'll

meet at St. Matthew's at 4:15pm to carpool to Elmwood Park Zoo and meet the Gemma Services group at 5:00pm, returning to St. Matthew's around 8:30pm. 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 to take part.**

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL MANIA! CHRISTMAS PARTY will be on **Saturday, December 20** from 4:00-5:30pm at Pastor Stuart's house. Come have a fun, festive afternoon with plenty of food, games, and our traditional gift exchange! Be sure to bring an inexpensive (\$5 or less), WRAPPED gag gift. All 6th-8th graders are invited, including friends, for our annual exchange. **Sign up in the online ATC to join the merriment.**

OUR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY will be on **Sunday, December 21** from 6:00-8:00pm at Pastor Stuart's house. Spend an evening with friends having fun, playing games, and of course taking part in our annual gift exchange! (Bring an inexpensive, WRAPPED gag gift for the exchange.) All 9th-12th graders are invited, including friends. **Sign up in the online ATC.**



ASP 2026:

LEADERS ARE STILL NEEDED!

WE STILL NEED SEVERAL MALE AND FEMALE ADULT LEADERS 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.**

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!

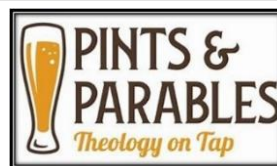
FREDDY'S DINE AND DONATE FOR YOUTH MINISTRY, DEC. 10

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



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 Freddy's fundraising program. Freddy'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 7 days in advance of event. See the restaurant. For more information about fundraising at Freddy's, visit fundraising@freddys.com. ©2025 Freddy's, LLC.



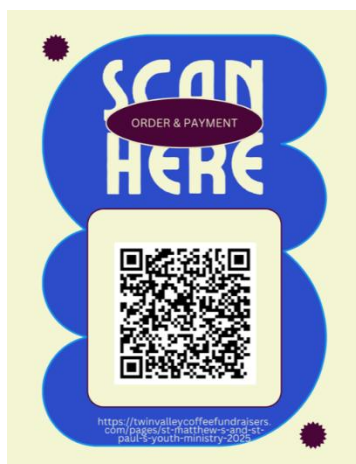
PINTS AND PARABLES, DEC. 1 NOW AT THE STABLES!

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.**



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

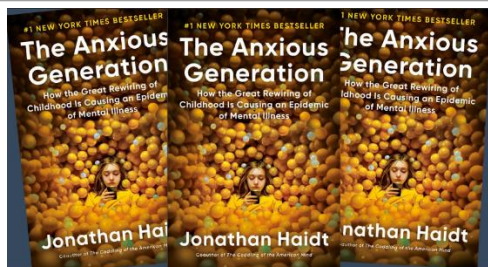


COFFEE & CHRIST,

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!



ANXIOUS GENERATION BOOK

STUDY, DEC. 14

OUR NEXT "THE ANXIOUS GENERATION" BOOK

STUDY will be on Sunday, December 14 from 3:00-4:30pm at St. Matthew's. Parents with children in preschool-5th grade are welcome to join us as we talk about issues around children and social media. Even if you haven't been able to attend until now, you are still invited to participate. This month's conversation will focus on the third section of the book, The Great Rewiring: The Rise of the Phone-Based Childhood.



MEN'S BREAKFAST: DEC. 20

Please plan on bringing something to cook and share with the group on **Saturday, December 20**. Food prep begins at 8:00am with breakfast starting at 8:30am. Please contact Tim Guyer at ttguyer@gmail.com with questions.



St. Mary's
Franciscan Shelter
For Homeless Families

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>



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