



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Around the Church

December 28, 2025

Merry Christmas



CHRISTMAS DAY 2 (OR DAY 1?)

While I write this it is snowing again, and A *Peanuts Christmas* soundtrack is playing in the background (it is THE best Christmas music, in my opinion). The lights of our tree are on, and yes, "all is calm, all is bright." Except my puppy and cat competing for attention. Oh well. When you read this, the presents will be open, the wrapping paper thrown away, and life will be "back to normal."

It'll still be Christmas for me though. My profession and others like mine mean the best opportunity to relax and dwell in peace with the reason for the season begins on Dec. 25. I imagine that's true for a lot of you as well. Which is why I would love to see the traditions of the Twelve Days of Christmas come back! (Except I don't need "three French hens, two turtledoves, and a partridge in a pear tree.") So many people do so many thoughtful things leading up to Christmas, I just don't have the bandwidth to do the same. I truly wish I did.

The Twelve Days run *after* Christmas, which means we have until Jan. 6 to keep the decorations up, listen to Christmas music, and eat cookies. And send cards and maybe shop for presents. It's Twelve Days to do those things you want to do, but maybe without the rush that comes with the preparing. We can prepare but not be ready. I think readiness is more of a mental/ spiritual attitude, an "openness" that's a fruit of faith. You can prepare by going through the motions, but *faith* brings with it *anticipation*. That openness to "what next" also has elements of readiness. Which also makes faith forward-looking. Call that hope. I have a lot of hopes this Christmas.

It's also Twelve Days to sit with the message of Christmas, which is broad and deep. There are a lot of aspects to the story—social, personal, political—that we need to chew on. The heart of Christmas is simple and deep. Love came down, the fullness of God's divinity became a human being in the fullest sense of the word—as a newborn baby! That message is full of grace, truth, and love for us. Twelve Days can't exhaust it, neither can a lifetime!

Merry Christmas!

Pr. Christian



BABY SHOWER FOR JESUS EXTENDED TO JAN. 4:

The Chester County Hospital OB/GYN Clinic is grateful for any donations. Their essential needs include: **diapers, new or gently used onesies, new or gently used newborn and 3 mo. clothing, wipes and baby blankets (new or gently used).** The labor and delivery department is collecting new supplies for antepartum patients. Needs include: **Chapstick, adult blankets, adult pjs, body wash, lotion, fuzzy socks, nail supplies, water bottles, non-perishable snacks, refillable water bottles.** We are also collecting new or gently used items to occupy these patients: **puzzle books, board games, playing cards, coloring books, colored pencils, books, etc.**

Please bring any donations to the church office (Monday-Friday 9:00am-1:00pm), or drop off to the office porch bin after hours, through

January 4. For any questions, please text or email Karen Astheimer at 610-212-6065 or email: karenlally79@gmail.com.

Holiday Hours...



HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

School resumes on Monday, January 5.
Friday, December 26: 9:00am-11:00am
Monday, December 29: 9:00am-11:00am
Tuesday, December 30: 9:00am-12:00pm

New Year's Eve & New Year's Day
December 31 & January 1: CLOSED
Friday, January 2: 9:00am-1:00pm



YOUTH NEWS

COLLEGE PANEL FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH AND PARENTS - On Sunday, January 4 from 4:00-5:30pm, we will provide another opportunity for older high school youth to sit with current college students and learn from their experiences. This year, we will also offer a chance for high school parents to talk to college parents to get *their* advice on how to navigate the process of preparing for college with their student. **Sign up is in the online ATC to participate.**

THE WINTER-SPRING YOUTH EVENT SCHEDULE is now posted and available on the church website's youth page; be sure to check it out and block out dates for upcoming activities!

THE FIRST HIGH SCHOOL OASIS BIBLE DIVE will be on Sunday, January 11 from 6:30-8:00pm at St. Matthew's. Spend an evening unwinding from the stress of everyday life while finding rest in God's Word to us. Advance sign-up isn't necessary; just show up!

OUR NEXT GOOD WORKS YOUTH WORK DAY is Saturday, January 24 from 8:15am-3:45pm (**meet at the Good Works warehouse in Coatesville**). Come spend the day helping fix up homes for families who don't have the means to do it themselves. Anyone in 8th-12th grade is welcome to join us, including friends. **Sign up is located in the online ATC, sign up by Monday, January 12 to participate.**

DON'T MISS OUR YOUTH EVENT AT TOPGOLF IN KING OF PRUSSIA on Sunday, January 25 from 12 Noon-3:00pm! Spend a couple of fun hours showing off your golf swing (or developing one), eating, and having fun with friends! ALL youth in grades 6-12 are invited to participate, including friends. The household cost will be \$20 for one participant, or \$35 for two or more participants from the same household. Sign up is in the online ATC, don't throw away your shot!

ASP Appalachia SERVICE PROJECT[®]

YOUTH REGISTRATION FOR APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT IS NOW OPEN!

Current 7th-12th graders are able to participate in this annual trip to Central Appalachia to help make homes safer, warmer, and drier for families in need. This year's ASP trip will be July 11-18, 2026 (Saturday through Saturday), with three prep sessions happening Sundays April 19, May 3, and May 31.

To register, go to ASP's registration portal at <https://apps.skycoq.com/reg/APPSERV/SignIn.asp> (link is in the online ATC and church website) and do the following:

1. Log in to your ASP account. (If you have never attended ASP before, you will need to create a new account in the participant's name, not the parent's.)
2. Enter 16866 for the group number, to find our trip.
3. Complete the registration, release, and medical forms online.

The cost per participant will be \$400; youth will have the opportunity to earn money toward their trip by helping with fundraisers in late winter and spring. This trip has filled up for the past three years, so don't wait too long if you want to come with us this summer!

Questions? Contact Craig Miller at craigyouthmin@gmail.com, or by text or phone at 484-320-0785.



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.

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



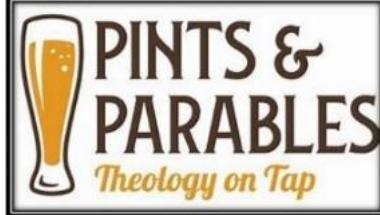
YOUTH MINISTRY ALUMNI OPEN HOUSE, JAN. 4

WE WILL HAVE A SPECIAL YOUTH MINISTRY 'ALUMNI' OPEN HOUSE on Sunday, January 4 from 6:00-8:00pm at St. Paul's! College students home on break and other young adults from St. Matthew's and St. Paul's are invited to come for an informal opportunity to reconnect and catch up with your faith friends from high school, and to put your mark on our new youth room. Food and drinks will be provided. **Please RSVP on the online ATC if you would like to attend!**



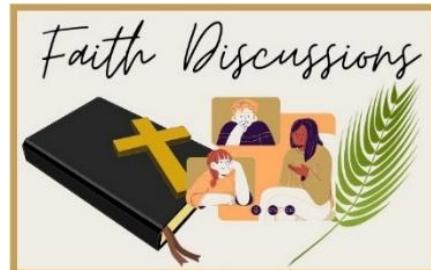
COFFEE & CHRIST, JAN. 3

Join us for coffee and good conversation at our next session of Coffee & Christ, **Saturday, January 3 at 8:30am at Starbucks in Chester Springs!**



PINTS AND PARABLES, JAN. 5 NOW AT MAGERKS!

Come join us for stimulating conversation & fellowship, in a laid-back relaxing atmosphere on **Monday, January 5, 7:00pm, We will meet at MaGerks, 174 Eagleview Blvd. in Lionville.**



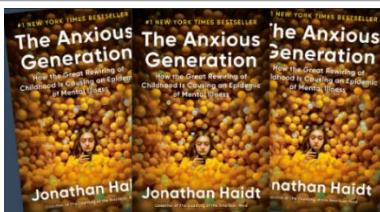
FAITH DISCUSSIONS, JAN. 6

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 6 at 7:00pm in the Lounge. We will be discussing Matthew 5: 43-48 and Matthew 6: 1-18. Hope to see you there!



MISSION IN: MEETING JAN. 11

Please join us for our first meeting of 2026 on Sunday, January 11 at 10:45am in the CLC.



ANXIOUS GENERATION BOOK STUDY, JAN. 11

OUR NEXT "THE ANXIOUS GENERATION" BOOK STUDY will be on **Sunday, January 11 from 3:00-4:30pm at St. Paul'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; December's session was cancelled by the snow, so you won't have missed as much as you think! This month's conversation will focus on the third section of the book, The Great Rewiring: The Rise of the Phone-Based Childhood. For questions, contact Craig Miller at craigyouthmin@gmail.com or 484-320-0785.



DESIGNER BAG BINGO JAN. 16

Join us for Designer Bag Bingo for St. Matthew's School on Friday, January 16. Snow Date January 23, 2026. Doors open at 6:00pm, BINGO begins at 7:00pm

\$35.00 per person. Reserve your tickets in advance for friends and family. There are a limited number of tickets available for this event. Email Sandy stmatts.sandy@gmail.com.

More details and info for corporate sponsors are posted on the church website on the Events page!



MEN'S BREAKFAST, JAN. 17

Please plan on bringing something to cook and share with the group on **Saturday, January 17**. Food prep begins at 8:00am with breakfast starting at 8:30am. Please contact Tim Guyer at ttguyer@gmail.com with questions.



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. Now is a great opportunity to join us as the new year approaches!

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>

