



# St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

## Around the Church

### January 4, 2026

# HAPPY NEW YEAR



#### **HEROD THE (NOT SO) GREAT**

Happy New Year, and 8<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas! Coming up on January 6 is the Feast of the Epiphany. Some cultures and branches of Christianity (notably the Orthodox and some Latin American countries) celebrate that as "Christmas"—with the giving of gifts, meals, and big celebrations. Epiphany is one of those funny words that means, "A-ha!" "revelation," where the "light bulb goes off," something is "revealed" or "shown" in its "true light." A lot of what's called "spiritual experience" falls under the category of an epiphany. Most often I've talked about it in personal, individual terms. The Feast in church tradition includes that but expands it to include God's revelation to "the nations," meaning the Gentiles. Israel's promised Jewish Messiah is a gift, a "light" to all of humanity, all of the world. That is represented by the story of the Wise Men—non-Jews—bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the baby Jesus. That particular part of the Christmas story is celebrated on Jan. 6 (the 12<sup>th</sup> Day).

Two themes are the focus of this Sunday. One is the familiar story of the wise men following Christ's star and bringing royal gifts (Matthew 2:1-12). They come first to King Herod, however, inquiring about the baby's birthplace. The other theme is not so well-known; Joseph is warned in a dream that Herod wants to kill the child, so the Holy Family flees to Egypt. Meanwhile, Herod has every child under the age of two killed in Bethlehem (2:13-23). A "not so merry" Christmas.

I've alluded in the past to the political aspects of the Christmas story. This part is tragically political. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus are

asylum-seeking refugees under threat from a hostile ruler. It is an example of how wealth and power corrupt, creating suffering for the weak and vulnerable. It's not a story ripped from today's headlines but it could be. What does it "reveal" (epiphany) for us? One thing for me is that the Holy Family can directly relate to asylum seekers. Does that change the way we treat asylum seekers today? We "see" Jesus, a humble baby king, treated royally, at the same time as we "see" his family, powerless, fleeing for their lives. What does that *reveal* for us?

**Happy Epiphany!**  
**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.



## **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!**

## **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](mailto:craigyouthmin@gmail.com), or by text or phone at 484-320-0785.**



## **YOUTH NEWS**

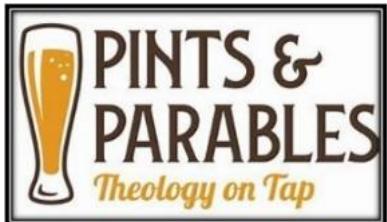
**COLLEGE PANEL FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH AND PARENTS – TODAY, Sunday, January 4** from 4:00-5:30pm, we will provide another opportunity for older high school youth to sit with current college students and learn from their experiences. This year, we will also offer a chance for high school parents to talk 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!

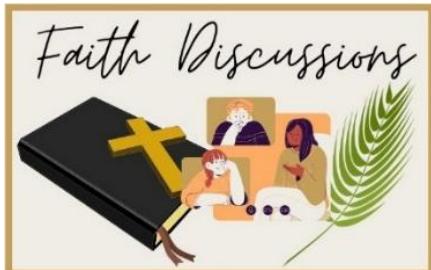
**OUR NEXT GOOD WORKS YOUTH WORK DAY** is Saturday, January 24 from 8:15am-3:45pm (meet at the Good Works warehouse in Coatesville). Come spend the day helping fix up homes for families who don't have the means to do it themselves. Anyone in 8<sup>th</sup>-12th grade is welcome to join us, including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



## **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**

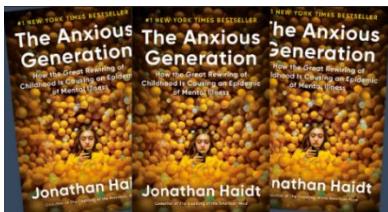
Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 6 at 7:00pm in the Lounge**. We will be discussing Matthew 5: 43-48 and Matthew 6: 1-18. Hope to see you there!



## **MISSION IN**

### **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-5<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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. 24**

Please plan on bringing something to cook and share with the group on **Saturday, January 24**. **Please note the change in date!** Food prep begins at 8:00am with breakfast starting at 8:30am. Please contact Tim Guyer at [ttguyer@gmail.com](mailto:ttguyer@gmail.com) with questions.



**St. Mary's**  
Franciscan Shelter  
for Homeless Families

### **ST. MARY'S MEAL DELIVERY NEXT MEAL, JAN. 25**

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 January 25 is in the online ATC.**



### **COFFEE & CHRIST, FEB. 7**

Join us for coffee and good conversation at our next session of Coffee & Christ, **Saturday, February 7 at 8:30am at Starbucks in Chester Springs!**



### **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 in the new year!**

If you are interested in any of the positions available, please contact Sara Richardson in the office: [srichardson@stmatthews-church.org](mailto: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>