

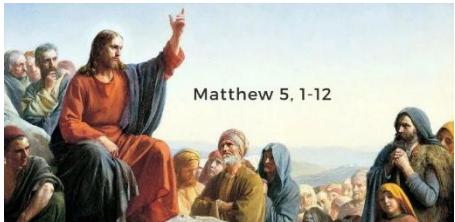


St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Around the Church

February 1, 2026

SEEING AND BELIEVING



Matthew 5, 1-12

We often say that “seeing IS believing” but that’s not quite true. I read a brief newsletter

article from Scientific American this week (1/27) with the headline, “How video footage messes with our brain.” It led with the question, “How can different people watch the same video footage and yet see such vastly different things? ... ‘Seeing is not just what our eyes physically see,’ says Sandra Ristovska, an associate professor of media studies at the University of Colorado Boulder, ‘but also the experiences and ideas that viewers bring to images.’” The article then outlines different biases that influence how we interpret them—like camera perspective, selective attention, personal beliefs, etc. It then ends with a quote from a law professor, “People intuitively tend to believe that video gives them the objective reality of what it depicts. This is naive realism.”

I watched two videos of Alex Petti's shooting by ICE agents. Like a lot of people, I am very much against ICE's tactics and the administration's method of immigration enforcement—even though I do believe our system is broken. The Scientific American article did not mention any of that, but the elephant is still in the room. What the article *did make me think about* are the biases we ALL bring to what we “see” and “believe.” What does this have to do with God, you might ask??

Jesus in the Beatitudes this Sunday (Matt. 5:1-12) gives us a very counterintuitive *world VIEW*. “Happy are they who mourn... happy are the meek... happy are the merciful... happy are the peace makers...” I “see” the people Jesus describes and they don’t “look” happy or blessed to me. I hear his promises for *them* and still don’t “see” how those promises are true according to what the world rewards. Reading the Beatitudes, seeing is *NOT* believing. Rather, *believing* shapes what we see. How does Jesus’ world view shape what you see?? For me, that’s the Big Faith

Question. Will I believe him? Will I follow him? Will I see the world through *H/S* eyes?

**Peace,
Pr. Christian**



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: FEB. 1

Please join us for our Annual Congregational Meeting TODAY, February 1 after the 9:30am service in the Sanctuary. This is an opportunity to reflect on the past year, and plan for the upcoming year.

We will:

- hear updates from ministry leaders,
- present the 2025 financials
- offer the 2026 budget for approval
- elect new members to council.

We look forward to seeing you there. For more information, please contact Council President Doug Ditillo (dougditillo@gmail.com).

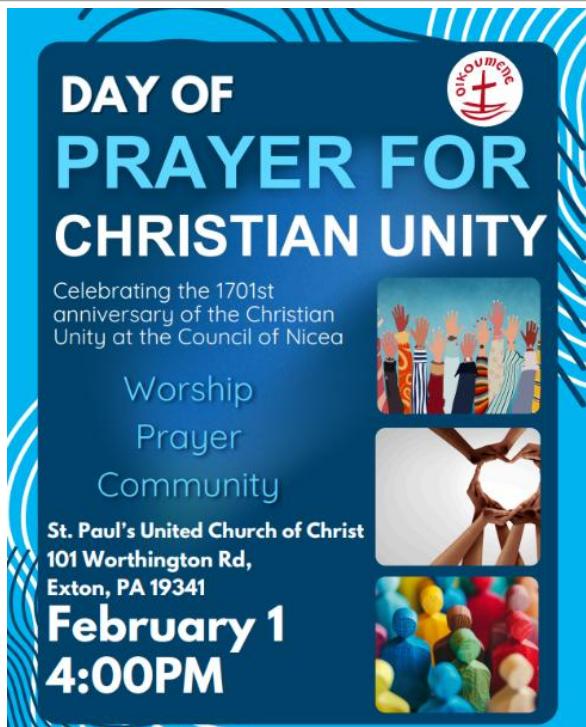
Electronic or print copies of the annual report may be requested by contacting the church office (office@stmatthews-church.org)



2025 YEARLY GIVING STATEMENTS

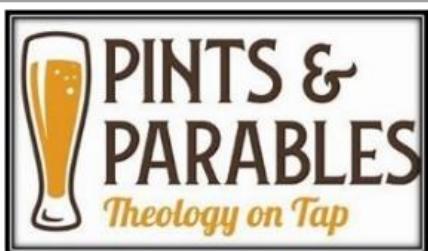
The 2025 Yearly Giving Statements were mailed or e-mailed out last week (prior to the snowfall) to everyone who offered donations over the past year. If you didn't receive your statement, have questions, or find problems in your statement, please contact Sara Richardson in the office (srichardson@stmatthews-church.org, or 610-458-5675 during office hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-1:00pm).

Thank you to everyone who has saved the church the cost of postage and envelope costs by changing to e-mailed quarterly statements and/or by discontinuing printed giving envelopes. If you would like to switch to one or both of these options, please reach out to Sara as soon as possible!



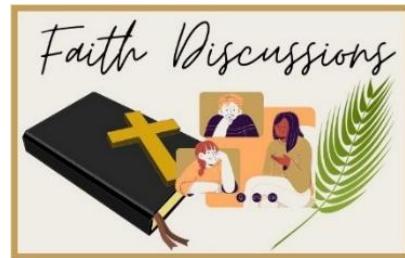
MINISTERIUM CHRISTIAN UNITY SERVICE, FEB. 1

You are welcome to attend the gathering of our local Christian churches as we celebrate with a special service on Sunday, February 1, at 4:00pm. The service will be at St. Paul's UCC (101 Worthington Rd. Exton, PA) with Pastor Stacy Gonzalez from Grove United Methodist preaching. Last year we were snowed out of celebrating the 1,700 year anniversary of Christian Unity through the Nicene Creed, so we hope you can gather for this celebration!



PINTS AND PARABLES, FEB. 2 NOW AT MAGERKS!

Come join us for stimulating conversation & fellowship, in a laid-back relaxing atmosphere on Monday, February 2, 7:00pm. We will meet at MaGerks, 174 Eagleview Blvd. in Lionville.



FAITH DISCUSSIONS, FEB. 3

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 3 at 7:00pm in the Lounge. We will be discussing Matthew 6:19-34. All are welcome...hope to see you there!



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!**



MISSION IN

MISSION IN: NEXT MEETING FEB. 8

The next Mission In meeting will be held on Sunday, February 8 at 10:45am in the CLC. The Mission In team is looking for people who knit or crochet who would be willing to make prayer squares. The squares can be 2"x2" up to 4"x4" in any color. Mission In will be attaching a sentiment and giving these to members who might need a lift and/or are on the Prayer List. Please say a prayer over the square prior to donating it. There will be a collection box in the lobby of the CLC. Thank you for your help!



YOUTH NEWS

REGISTER NOW FOR THE TUSCARORA LUTHERAN YOUTH RETREAT! This annual synod-wide youth event will take place **Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, March 20-22**. ALL 6th-12th graders are encouraged to participate, and friends are welcome to join us, too! The cost is \$175 per person; scholarships are available. The sign up link is on the online ATC and church website, **the registration deadline is TODAY, Sunday, February 1**.

THE NEXT HIGH SCHOOL OASIS 'BIBLE DIVE' will be **TONIGHT, Sunday, February 1 from 6:30-8:00pm at St. Paul's** (note the change in date!) Our first session involved a really good discussion around baptism and the Holy Spirit. Come spend some time relaxing from the stresses from life and resting in God's Good News! Open to all 9th-12th graders, including friends. No sign up necessary; just show up.

AN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

OPPORTUNITY! 6th-12th GRADE YOUTH are invited to participate in our trip to **Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area on Saturday, February 21 (snow date February 28)**. Meet at St. Matthew's at 7:30am to carpool to Middle Creek and spend the day hiking, exploring, and hopefully seeing some of the amazing snow goose migration. Bring snacks and water; hot dogs and hot chocolate will be provided. Sign up is on the online ATC.

DON'T MISS OUR RESCHEDULED YOUTH EVENT AT TOPGOLF IN KING OF PRUSSIA on Sunday, February 22 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!



FAMILY TRIP TO MIDDLE CREEK, FEB. 21

BACK THIS YEAR! OUR FAMILY TRIP TO MIDDLE CREEK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA will take place on **Saturday, February 21**. Meet at St. Matthew's at 7:30am to travel to Middle Creek (about an hour's drive), or meet us there at the Willow Point Trail parking lot (off Kleinfeltersville Road) for some hiking and exploration. Hopefully we'll get to see some of the amazing snow goose migration that takes place through the area. Bring snacks and water; hot dogs and hot chocolate will be provided. **Sign up in the online ATC to join us! Snow date will be Saturday, February 28.**



MEN'S BREAKFAST, FEB. 21

Please plan on bringing something to cook and share with the group on **Saturday, February 21**. 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, FEB. 22

You can choose from a few options when you sign up to provide a meal, two are listed below:
-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 February 22 is in the online ATC.



ST. MATTHEW'S SCHOOL WINTER CARNIVAL, FEB. 28

Join us for the annual St. Matthew's School Winter Carnival on Saturday, February 28 from 10:00am-1:00pm!

This is the perfect event for the age 7-and-under crowd! Three hours full of fun! Games, Crafts, Face Painting, Balloon Magician, Raffle Baskets, Dance Room with great music. Lunch will be served from 11:00am-1:00pm.

The entry fee is \$10.00 per child and it includes all activities! Hope to see you there!

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.



RENT A GARDEN SPACE IN 2026!

Interested in renting a growing space in our thriving community garden? We have one raised garden bed available for rent for the upcoming 2026 growing season. The cost to rent the bed for a single season (April-November) is \$50. With our well-maintained garden space and drip watering system, you do not have to be an experienced gardener to enjoy growing your own veggies. If you or anyone you might know from the community is interested, please contact Meghan Comegys at megcomegys@gmail.com or 484-684-3109. We would love to have new faces join our existing team of gardeners!



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. Scheduling is flexible and training will be provided!