



# St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

## Around the Church

### February 15, 2026



#### **EXERCISE YOUR HEART**

As I write this, I'm looking out a bay window at the snow, bright in the sunlight but cold. But melting!—at least it will be later today... “Lent” starts next week on Ash Wednesday. “Lent” comes from an old English word that means “lengthening,” the lengthening of daylight as Spring approaches. If you're wondering what “Lent” is all about, it's that 40-day time in the church year when we prepare for Easter, for Jesus' death and resurrection. Like a lot of things of deep importance, we need to *prepare*. That takes time and effort, discipline. I think of gardeners who are *already* thinking about the preparation for planting while the ground is still snow covered. That's discipline! Me? I don't know what I'm doing next Monday!

In order to *internalize* the work to prepare and plant, I imagine the gardener would have had to have thought about it and develop habits of mind and behavior over time. Same with any athlete (for example: Winter Olympians preparing every 4 years). The spiritual life isn't any different; Lent is like the boot camp class at your gym but for the spirit. Unfortunately, “discipline” isn't a very appealing word. Neither is “work.” We Lutherans have historically been very skeptical of works without faith or discipline without grace. Jesus' death and resurrection is not dependent on me or anything I do. He embodies God's *mercy*. Mercy by definition is something that is *undeserved*, that comes freely from the heart of the One showing mercy. We Lutherans call that “grace,” grace as *favor*. The next question—that has nothing to do with God—is: how does that affect us? What are we going to do with it?

Lent begins with the *proclamation* that Jesus is God's Son; and the “disciplines” are meant

to help us “do something” with the *promise* in that proclamation. Look around the church this Sunday, read through the ATC announcements—what do you see that could help you “exercise” your faith? What would you *like to see*? Is there something the Spirit is putting on your heart toward these ends?

Peace,  
Pr. Christian

## OFFICE CLOSED

#### **OFFICES CLOSED FEB. 16**

Our Church and School offices will be closed on Monday, February 16, observing the Presidents' Day holiday. Normal hours will resume on Tuesday, February 17. Have a great Holiday weekend!



#### **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES, FEB. 18**

Lent is coming! We will have two services on Ash Wednesday, February 18...a short, late morning service at 11:30am, and a full worship service at 7:00pm. The 7:00pm service will also be live-streamed on our YouTube channel and church website!

As of press time, we will still need an audio/visual assistant for the 7:00pm service! Please sign up on the link located in the online ATC, or contact Sara in the church office ASAP.



## **OUTREACH LENTEN COLLECTIONS FOR GRACE CROSSING AND CYWA**

The Outreach Team is sponsoring this year's Lenten Collections, to benefit Grace Crossing Food Pantry and the Food Pantry Van for the Community Youth and Women's Association (CYWA). The collections will run through Sunday, March 22. You can place food items in the bins inside of the Narthex before Sunday Worship, in the CLC, or in the bin on the Church Office porch.

To give financially, go to [www.stmatthews-church.org/give](http://www.stmatthews-church.org/give) select "Give Online Now," and in the drop-down menu on the next screen, select "Outreach." You can also drop any donations in the collection in an envelope marked for Grace Crossing or the CYWA.

### **Grace Crossing's most needed items include:**

- Large Sweet Potatoes (40 oz., only need 9)
- Canned Pineapple (sliced only, need 26)
- Canned Green Beans
- Canned Mixed Vegetables (any brand is fine)
- Canned Pears
- Boxed Mac and Cheese
- Cookies (VARIETIES OTHER THAN CHOCOLATE...NO CHOCOLATE CHIP)
- Cereal (other than Cheerios or cornflakes - they receive these from Food Bank)
- Jelly (strawberry and grape, glass jars OK)
- Salad dressing of any flavor

*Items will be used as sides for Grace Crossing's Easter Meal.*

The CYWA Food Pantry Van picks up donated food every day from our partners, such as Wegmans, Giant, Acme, Walmart, and several others to provide food for over 500 families a month, delivering about 1 million pounds of food a year to the most needy.

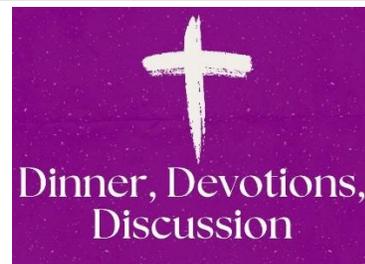
The operation of the van costs CYWA about \$10,000 annually, and the cost of gas alone is about \$4,000 of that total. Please consider a monetary donation or a donation of gas gift cards to help offset the gas costs.



## **SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER FOR YOUTH MINISTRY, MAR. 6**

THE ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER AND YOUTH FUNDRAISER will be held on Friday evening, March 6 at St. Matthew's! As in past years, there will be two seatings, one at 5:30pm and one at 7:00pm. Unlike past years, tickets will not be sold, but a freewill offering will be collected to benefit the St. Matthew's/St. Paul's youth ministry; suggested donations are \$10 per adult and \$5 per child 12 and under, or \$30 per family. **To reserve your seats, go to the link in the online ATC or church website.**

**LOOKING FOR SPAGHETTI DINNER FOOD DONATIONS!** We are looking for people to donate food and supplies for our March 6th Spaghetti Dinner. Donations should be dropped off at St. Paul's by Thursday, March 5 or at St. Matthew's by noon Friday, March 6. **Sign up link is in the online ATC or church website.**



## **LENTEN DINNER, DEVOTIONS, DISCUSSION BEGINS FEB. 25**

We will be offering "Dinner, Devotions, Discussion" every Wednesday evening during Lent, starting Wednesday, February 25 and running through March 25, in the CLC from 6:00pm-7:15pm.

It's a great opportunity to get together, reflect on the meaning of the Lenten season with fellow church members, and share a meal! All are welcome!

If you would like to contribute to the meals, please sign up on the link posted in the online ATC or the church website.

## Upcoming Meetings

**Faith Discussions: Tuesday, February 17 at 7:00pm in the Lounge.** We are continuing our study of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:1-12.

**Men's Breakfast: Saturday, February 21.** Please bring something to cook and share. Food prep begins at 8:00am with breakfast starting at 8:30am. Questions? Tim Guyer: ttguyer@gmail.com

**Pints & Parables: Monday, March 2, 7:00pm at MaGerks in Lionville.** Come join us for stimulating conversation & fellowship, in a laid-back relaxing atmosphere.

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



### **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.**



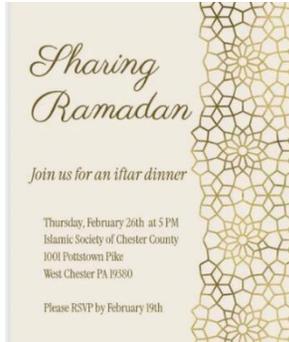
### **ST. MARY'S MEAL DELIVERY NEXT MEAL, FEB. 22**

**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.**



### **INTERFAITH IFTAR DINNER, FEB. 26**

**The Chester County Interfaith Action Community cordially invites you to an Iftar Dinner hosted by the Islamic Society of Chester County to share in the blessings of their**

**holy month of Ramadan, on Thursday, February 26. Please RSVP by clicking the link in the online ATC.** RSVPs are needed by Thursday, February 19.



### **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!**



### **MATCHING CAMPAIGN FOR LANTERN HILL TRIP**

We have a group from St. Matthew's who will volunteer at Lantern Hill in July 2026, and would love your help to kickstart our mission! Donations will be matched! You can donate 3 different ways:

Please add Lantern Hill as your memo line for each payment option: Checks (written to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church), through Tithe.ly online payment on the church website, or by sending a Venmo to Stephanie McMullan: @Stephanie-McMullan1

Help us lay a path forward for Lantern Hill!



Lecture Series:

Faith Traditions and Beliefs: The Beginning of Life and Birth

## **INTERFAITH LECTURE: BUDDHIST FAITH TRADITIONS, MAR. 12**

The Chester County Interfaith Action Community cordially invites you to the next event in our lecture series:

**"Buddhist Faith Traditions and Beliefs re: the Beginning of Life and Birth"**

by Venerable Amy Miller

March 12, 2026, 7:00-8:30 pm (lecture and fellowship)

St. Francis-in-Field Episcopal Church  
689 Sugartown Rd. Malvern, PA 19335

Please check the online ATC and church website for more information!



## **YOUTH NEWS**

**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.

**COME JOIN 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 is \$20 for one participant, or \$35 for two or more participants from the same household. **Sign up in the online ATC; don't throw away your shot!**

**THE NEXT GOOD WORKS YOUTH WORK DAY is Saturday, February 28 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 eighth through twelfth grade is welcome to join us, including friends. **Sign up in the online ATC by Monday, February 16 to participate!**

**ATTENTION ALL YOUTH AND PARENTS: HELP NEEDED FOR THE SPAGHETTI DINNER AND FUNDRAISER!** We need 6th-12th graders, along with their parents, to come out and be part of the youth ministry's biggest fundraising event of the year. **We're looking for people to help with setup, decoration, cooking, and serving on Friday evening, March 6. Sign up in the online ATC to help out.**

**OUR HIGH SCHOOL OASIS GROUP meets again on Sunday, March 8 from 6:30-8:00pm at St. Matthew's, in the downstairs lounge.** We will continue our Bible Dive series with a focus on the history of the early Christian church, from Acts up through the first three hundred years. Our first two Bible Dive sessions have had some really deep, thoughtful discussion and reflections; come and see what this is all about. All 9th-12th graders are welcome to attend, including friends. No advance signup necessary; just show up!



## **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-Saturday), with three prep sessions happening Sundays April 19, May 3, and May 31. A link to registration information is on the church website and in the online ATC.**

Questions? Contact Craig Miller at [craigyouthmin@gmail.com](mailto:craigyouthmin@gmail.com), or by text or phone at 484-320-0785.