



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Around the Church

March 22, 2026



THE HOPE OF NEW LIFE

(adapted from *Sundays & Seasons*)

Hope overcomes despair for God's people: this is the message of the readings for today. The hope of new life is evident in the story of "dry bones" from Ezekiel 37. The children of Israel declare their hope is lost. The prophet's experience in the valley of dry bones inspires him to preach renewed hope to the people, and the bones take on new flesh and life. The work of God's Spirit gives hope of new life in Paul's letter to the church at Rome (Romans 8:6-11). The reading from John's gospel tells the hope-filled story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1-45). The gospel gives us encouraging words to sustain us through the approaching despair of Christ's passion and brings us to the fulfillment of hope on Easter. Martha's wistful words to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here... But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him" (John 11:21-22), reflect the hope of God's people in the face of despair, even in the face of death.

Each text encourages hearers to hope in God and God's word. But how do Christians experience unfulfilled hope? This is the challenge for those who interpret today's texts for hearers. Israel's woes are not at an end; other psalms tell of struggle and pain; the Christ-believers at Rome are persecuted; Jesus who raises Lazarus from the dead soon dies. And yet hope is fulfilled as Paul proclaims "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26). Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life," and then promises *his new life* amid the disappointments in our earthly life and death (John 11:25-26). The Christian's confidence in the resurrection of the dead epitomizes our hope in Christ!

Peace,
Pr. Christian

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Reflections adapted from *Sundays and Seasons.com*.



DISCOVERING ST. MATTHEW'S, FIRST SESSION TODAY, MAR. 22

We are excited to offer a three-part class for anyone who may be new or would simply like to learn more about St. Matthew's and our Lutheran faith. Whether you are new to our congregation or have been worshipping with us for some time, this is a wonderful opportunity to connect, ask questions, and grow.

Each session will be led by Pastor Christian McMullan, include members from the Congregational Council, feature leaders who will share about the ministries of St. Matthew's, and provide time for Q&A in an informal setting. **All sessions will be held in the Lounge following the Sunday morning service.**

Session #1 on March 22 will include introductions, time with church leaders, and a look at the history and mission of St. Matthew's. If you have any questions about this program, please contact the church office: office@stmatthews-church.org



HOLY WEEK 2026 SCHEDULE

Please join us to remember the sacrifice and rejoice in the resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, during our Holy Week Worship Services:

Palm Sunday, March 29:

Service at 9:30am

Maundy Thursday, April 2:

Service at 7:00pm

Good Friday, April 3:

Service at 7:00pm

Easter Sunday, April 5:

Services at 7:30am and 9:30am



EASTER EGG HUNT, APR. 4
ST. MATTHEW'S ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT will be held Saturday, April 4 beginning at 10:00am at St. Matthew's. All

kids from toddlers-5th grade are welcome to come participate in the egg hunt and other Easter-related activities. If you know you are coming, sign up in the online ATC to help us with planning the event!

We are still in need of individually-wrapped Easter Candy to stuff more Eggs for the Egg Hunt on April 4. Candy donations may be left in the bin on the church office porch or brought to the Sanctuary before Worship Services. Thank you for your help!



EASTER CONGREGATIONAL BREAKFAST, APR. 5 8:30AM

Our Annual Easter Congregational Breakfast will take place on Easter Sunday, April 5, between the 7:30am and 9:30am Worship Services. We will need a lot of help, especially with cooking and cleanup, and we'll also need a few items!

If you can help out in any way, please use the sign up posted in the online ATC, on church website or in the Facebook group.

Please reach out to Patrick Miller with any questions: pjmill98@yahoo.com



ORDER EASTER TULIPS!

We invite you to contribute to the beauty of our Easter Sunday Services by

ordering tulips! Each plant will be \$10.00 each. **This year's ordering deadline is Monday, March 30.** Please fill out the form and submit it with check or cash to the church office or in the Sunday Collection. Checks may be made payable to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. **Forms are located in the pews and in the online ATC.**



DINNER, DEVOTIONS, DISCUSSION

We will be offering "Dinner, Devotions, Discussion" every Wednesday evening during Lent, 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.**

Calling **ALL** Singers!!

every race, creed, religion, team...



Operation 'If Enough'



OPERATION "IF ENOUGH" SONG RECORDING, MAR. 24

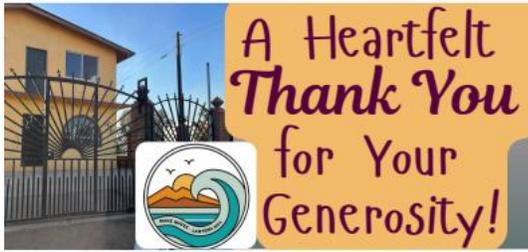
Do you sing? You are cordially invited to join us for an evening of singing to record a song and video, to spread awareness and love to neighbors and friends in dire need. No skill or experience required. **ALL** are welcome. Please join us this Tuesday, March 24 starting at 7:00pm.

If you have any questions, please contact Daniel S. Bower, Music Director at 610-451-0104 or moonlightforestmusic@gmail.com



OUTREACH LENTEN COLLECTIONS FOR GRACE CROSSING AND CYWA

Thank you for the amazing response to our Lenten collection for Grace Crossing and the CYWA! Today is the last day for our collection. We are still accepting monetary donations! Go to www.stmatthews-church.org/give select "Give Online Now," and in the drop-down menu on the next screen, select "Lenten Outreach Collection" and choose if you'd like your donation earmarked from Grace Crossing or the CYWA.



LANTERN HILL: THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for your generous donations to Lantern Hill! Overall, we met and exceeded our goal, and 100% of the \$4,500 in donations will go straight to Lantern Hill! Your support helps them build a new building and to provide essential resources, educational programs, and healthy meals that are crucial for their community. Your commitment to Lantern Hill demonstrates the power of community and the positive change we can achieve together. We look forward to continuing this journey with you and making an even greater impact!
With gratitude,
Stephanie McMullan and Jen Williams



**MISSION IN:
CARE PACKAGES
FOR COLLEGE
STUDENTS,
APR. 26**

Please sign up in the online ATC or on the church website to bake/purchase cookies

or donate candy for care packages being sent to our college students. The care packages will be assembled on Sunday, April 26 at 10:45am in the CLC. Everyone is invited to help the Mission In team assemble the boxes for our students. No cookies with peanuts please. Bakers are asked to bake at least 2 dozen cookies. Please package them in zip lock bags to maintain freshness, and label bags with your name, the type of cookies and whether they contain nuts.
Cookies need to be dropped off in the church office by Friday, April 24 between 9:00 am-1:00pm or on Sunday, April 26 before 10:30am in the CLC. Candy can be dropped off in the bin on the office porch or in the lobby of the CLC. Please add your email address and the amount of cookies you are donating when signing up for a slot. Please contact Louise Rutledge at larutledge51@gmail.com with any questions.

Have a College Student? If your son/daughter's college mailing address has changed since

November 2025, please contact the church office at (610) 458-5675 or office@stmatthews-church.org. Please give them your college student's current mailing address, so that we can ship a package to them at school.



Coffee & Christ: Saturday, April 4 at 8:30am at Starbucks in Chester Springs. Join us for coffee and good conversation at our next session.
Pints & Parables: Monday, April 6, 7:00pm at MaGerks in Lionville. Come join us for stimulating conversation & fellowship, in a laid-back relaxing atmosphere.
Faith Discussions: Tuesday, April 7 at 7:00pm in the Lounge. We will begin a discussion of a book from Martin Luther.
Mission In: Sunday, April 12 at 10:45am in the CLC. All are welcome!



SAVE THE DATE: BLUE JEAN SATURDAY AND CLEAN OUT AROUND CAMPUS, APR. 18

Spring is coming...really, it is...and we are planning our Blue Jean Saturday clean-up has been **RESCHEDULED** to April 18 from 9:00am-1:00pm. This will make sure that our campus is looking its best after a very rough winter. We will need several volunteers...all you'll need to do is bring yourself, your family or friends, and a pair of gloves. We will have tools for weeding and moving mulch. **Please sign up in the online ATC!** Please contact Patrick Miller with any questions: pjmill98@yahoo.com
This will now be combined with the Clean Out Around Campus!
We are in need of many volunteers to assist with the clean out of the CLC closets, the garage and the basement. Please join us on the same date, Saturday, April 18 starting at 9:00am. Many hands make lighter work! For more information, contact Sue Hummerston: hummerstonsue@gmail.com



PENNY WARS

...ARE BACK, WITH A TWIST!

This year, we have a competition not only between Pastor

Christian and Pastor Stuart, but also between two youth from our congregations! John Lueders from St. Matthew's is facing off against Zack Heath from St. Paul's. Beginning next Sunday, four jars will be in the Narthex with the participants' names on them. On April 12, whichever pastor AND youth have the highest amounts in their containers will take part in a slightly embarrassing stunt. As an added bonus, if \$1,000 is raised between both congregations, our Youth Director, Craig Miller, will be involved as well!



YOUTH NEWS

CALLING ALL YOUTH - HELP NEEDED WITH OUR EASTER EGG HUNTS! We need 6th-12th graders who can help hide eggs and run events for both congregations' Easter family events. Helpers are needed on Saturday, March 28 from 3:00-7:30pm at St. Paul's, and on Saturday, April 4 from 8:30am-11:00am at St. Matthew's. **Sign up for one, or sign up for both in the online ATC - the more help we get, the better the events will be for our younger kids!**



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH CHESTER COUNTY FOOD BANK

Please check the online ATC or the church website at www.stmatthews-church.org/news to find open opportunities to assist the Food Bank during this Easter Season!