



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Around the Church

August 23, 2026



CONFESSING **CHRIST,** **FORMED IN** **FAITH**

(Adapted from
Sundays and Seasons)

In late August,

students are preparing to go back to school, and many churches gear up for a new year of Christian education. It is a good time to be reminded of the heart of Christian formation: conformation and transformation (Rom. 12:2).

Disciples are formed over time—shaped by learning, worship, and all aspects of Christian life in community. As it was for Peter, part of our formation is learning to confess Jesus as the Messiah, not only with the right words but also through an experience of the living God in Christ. And along with Peter, through such formation we also discover who we are in relation to God: After Peter “confesses” Jesus’ identity of Messiah, Jesus “confesses” Peter’s identity by calling out his name and vocation.

Traditionally, Lutheran worship contains two confessions which keep forming us: a confession of sin and a confession of faith. In the first, we acknowledge who we are as sinner and saint, and in the second, we acknowledge who God is in the mystery of the Trinity. Like Peter’s, our own identity is revealed in those truths. And, we might say, we are continually formed by and through them. Peter’s confession is not a precondition for following Jesus; it comes in the middle of his journey of discipleship. Our formation too is a long process—lifelong, in fact—which begins at baptism (and even before!) and is guided by those who travel before and with us. At this time of year, as we explore our own formation, identity, and vocation as disciples of Jesus, Isaiah entreats us, “Look to the rock from which you were hewn” (51:1). Envisioning Peter the “rock” (Matt. 16:18), we might also consider how we are “chips off the old block” of our forebears in faith.

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Reflections adapted from *Sundays and Seasons.com*.



Spiritual Gifts Assessment

WHAT ARE YOUR **SPIRITUAL GIFTS?**

We all have “spiritual gifts”—things that we want to do, like to do, are good at that God has put in our hearts and minds for the sake of building up the Body of Christ which is the church.

Summer is ending and fall programming will begin soon. How can you get involved?

This Sunday, Pr. Christian will preach on Romans 12:1-8, where St. Paul uses the image of the body and the different functions of its parts to explain how we each can contribute. He will describe what his gifts are and would LOVE it if as many people as possible would take this “spiritual gifts assessment” and share the results on Sunday.

The link is posted in the online ATC, on the front page of the church website, and on the Facebook page.

The assessment is from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s (our Lutheran denomination) website, and when you click on “Read more” under the individual gift, it will give scriptural references and a description of what it means and could look like in a congregation’s ministry. Your answers might change depending on the day and your mood, but the overlap between the gifts is interesting and can be illuminating.

Thank you in advance for your participation!



RISE AGAINST **HUNGER OCT. 25,** **REGISTER NOW!**

This year’s event will be held on Sunday, October 25 from 11:00-5:00pm in the

CLC. Last year, 385 volunteers packaged 62,500 meals...and hopefully, we can beat that again this year!

The registration link is now live, and posted in the online ATC and on the church website!

If you are interested in helping to fundraise or help in the planning of the event from behind the scenes, please contact Troy Sisum at tdsisum1@yahoo.com.



**SPEAKING TO GRIEF
PRESENTATION,
AUG. 30**

**What to Say, How to Listen,
and When Simply to Be
There: Sunday, August
30 following the 9:30am**

Worship Service in the CLC.

Please join us for a special presentation by Joanne Cooper, RN, BSN, M.Ac, a Clinical Liaison with Journey Hospice and Palliative Care. Pastries will be served.

Supporting someone who is grieving can feel difficult, especially when we are afraid of saying the wrong thing. Drawing from brain-based research and lessons from hospice and palliative care, this compassionate presentation explores how grief affects the mind and body, why some well-intended responses can be unhelpful, and what grieving people often need most.

More information about the presenter and the presentation can be found in the online ATC, and on the church website under Events. If you have any questions, contact the church office.



**CHURCH PICNIC:
SAVE THE DATE FOR SEPT. 13**

We are delighted to host the annual St. Matthew's Church Picnic on Sunday, September 13 following the morning worship service. Coffee and Pastries will be available between 10:30–11:00 AM.

Food, beverages, and music to be provided.

We request your RSVP, so we can plan for an appropriate amount of food. Please also indicate if you can provide a dessert, side dish, help set up before, or clean up after.

FUN IS GUARANTEED! Let's kickoff the fall season reconnecting with St. Matthew's friends and family.

The RSVP link is now posted in the online ATC, church website and Facebook page.

Contact Jennifer Burgess with any questions (484.744.1630, jnnfrbrgss@yahoo.com)



**FOOD AND
HYGIENE DRIVE
NOW-AUG. 31**

On Friday, August 14, the High School Seniors running the Caring for Friends Food and

Hygiene Drive, supported by the Outreach Team, picked up the first batch of donations that were collected on the church office porch and in the Narthex. As you can see, their trunk was very full, and they were amazed at the generosity of our St. Matthew's congregation. The drive will continue through August 31, so there's still time to contribute to this project!

They need the following items:

- Canned goods with pull tabs
- Trail mix
- Granola bars
- Shampoo and soap
- First Aid supplies
- Toothbrushes and Toothpaste

Please ensure that toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste) are travel size, as Caring for Friends can more easily distribute them to the people they serve.

Drop off supplies to any of the collection bins on the church office porch, the Narthex, and the CLC. For more information about this collection, contact Christine at christinemwills21@gmail.com or Diya at diya.kondoor@gmail.com



Outreach: Please join us for the next Outreach meeting TODAY, Sunday, August 23 at 10:45am in the CLC. We will be discussing current and upcoming projects! Contact Kathy Meltzer with questions: kmeltzer@comcast.net

Faith Discussions: We are taking a break for the Summer, see you at our first Fall meeting on September 1 at 7:00pm

Coffee & Christ: Saturday, September 5 8:30am at Starbucks in Chester Springs.

Pints & Parables: Monday, September 14, 7:00pm at MaGerks in Lionville. Come join us for

stimulating conversation & fellowship, in a laid-back relaxing atmosphere.

Men's Breakfast: We are taking a break in August, we'll see you on Saturday, September 19!

Mission In: Next meeting Sunday, September 20 at 10:45am in the CLC. Hope to see you there!



St. Mary's
Franciscan Shelter
For Homeless Families

IAC ST. MARY'S MEAL, AUG. 25

St. Matthew's will provide dinner for 15 residents at St. Mary's Homeless Shelter (Phoenixville) on Tuesday, August 25, as part of the Interfaith Action Community's week of meals.

We would like to prepare a home cooked meal in St. Mary's fully licensed kitchen on August 25. We will need a team of chefs/bakers to prepare 2 entrees, a vegetable, a salad, and a dessert. St. Mary's has 2 ovens for the team to use. Please contact Louise Rutledge:

larutledge51@gmail.com or 484-459-3389 if you would like to prepare part of the meal.



ST. MATTHEW'S SPONSORED BLOOD DRIVE: SEPT. 8

Great news...if you gave blood at our last drive on July 14 (whole blood, not PowerRed), in most cases, you will be eligible to donate at our next Blood Drive on Sept. 8!

We will sponsor the next Red Cross Blood Drive on Tuesday, September 8 (the day after Labor Day) from 1:00-6:00pm in the CLC. To register to give blood, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or go to RedCrossBlood.org. The direct link to sign up in on our website and in the online ATC. Search "19425" and scroll down to the St. Matthew's drive.

Those who participate in this drive will receive a Hello Kitty collectible while supplies last!



YOUTH NEWS

THE FALL 2026 YOUTH EVENTS SCHEDULE IS UP and available for viewing on the church website, or by clicking on this QR code. All events are updated in real time, so this is where to find the most current information and links to event signups!

OUR OFFICIAL FALL KICKOFF LOCK-IN will be held Saturday evening, Sept. 19-Sunday morning, Sept. 20 at St. Matthew's. We will spend the overnight "locked in" at the church, and lead the 9:30am worship for St. Matthew's on Sunday. More details and signup info are in the online ATC.

GOOD WORKS YOUTH WORK DAYS will start up again on Saturday, September 26 from 8:15am to 3:45pm. Spend a Saturday helping make repairs to homes for people in need in our area. All 7th-12th graders are welcome to join us; if you're thinking about participating in Appalachia Service Project next summer, this is a great way to get some idea of what that ministry is all about! Sign up by Wednesday, Sept. 16 to participate, link is posted in the online ATC.

SUMMER 2027 YOUTH TRIP INFO SESSIONS

(yes, already) - There are TWO big trips in the works for our youth next summer: The triennial (every-three-year) ELCA Youth Gathering June 28-July 2 in Minneapolis, MN; and our annual Appalachia Service Project Work Week July 17-24. All 7th-12th graders, and their parents, are encouraged to attend one of two information sessions to learn more about these opportunities:

- **St. Paul's Fellowship Hall on Sunday, September 13 from Noon-1:00pm;** or
- **St. Matthew's CLC on Sunday, September 13 from 4:00-5:00pm.**

Registration for both of these trips open in October, so we will need to get our groups assembled soon!

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH PEER MINISTRY

RETREAT - If you are in 9th-12th grade and interested in being trained as a Peer Ministry Leader, reserve the weekend of November 13-15 on your calendar to attend a special retreat in Bethany Beach, DE. More information coming in early September!



COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

Our summer growing season is off to a great start! This year's veggies include several varieties of tomatoes, tomatillos, bell peppers, banana peppers, summer squash, gordini lettuce, pole beans, bush beans and cucumbers. We are also growing some herbs including papalo (a heat tolerant herb that can be used like cilantro), basil, chives and parsley.

So far, we have harvested **694 pounds** that we have donated to the Chester County Food Bank. Even if you are not renting one of our 16 beds, we would love to have some new faces join us in helping plant, maintain, and harvest the vegetables we grow in the five dedicated food bank beds. No experience is necessary!

Also if you have gardens at home or belong to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and have extra vegetables that you would like to donate we would be happy to help coordinate.

If you are interested in helping in the garden, please contact Meghan Comegys (megcomegys@gmail.com or 484-684-3109), Desiree Lee (dal2123@yahoo.com or 610-425-0484) or Jim Rutledge (jrutman2005@yahoo.com or 484-459-3255).



**ST. MARY'S
MEAL:
NEXT MEAL
SEPT. 27**

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the August meal.

The next meal delivery to St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter will be on Sunday, September 27, and the sign up is now in the online ATC.

There are many options to provide a meal for at least 15 people residing at the shelter, including providing groceries for their kitchen team to prepare, deliver ready-to-eat items, donate a grocery gift card, or use their kitchen to become a guest chef/baker for parts of the meal.

Full details with the requirements are listed on the church website and on the Sign-Up

Genius. If you have any questions, please contact Mindy Elmer: mlong1011@comcast.net

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

DRIVE OUT HUNGER: SEPT. 17

This year's proceeds will benefit Grace Crossing Food Pantry, the West Chester Food Cupboard, and the Coatesville Youth and Women's Alliance.

Registration is now open!

Check out our new registration link that makes signing up easier than ever!

<https://tithe.ly/event-registration/#/11321685>

(You can also find this link in this week's online ATC and on a button on the front page of the church website!)

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church 2026 Golf Event

Drive Out Hunger.

~ Proceeds Benefit ~

GraceCrossing Community Food Pantry,
West Chester Food Cupboard,
Coatesville Youth and Women's Alliance.

Raffle Prizes, Mulligans, Hole Sponsors, Fun, Food, and Music!

Kimberton Golf Club

\$125 Per Golfer — includes a BBQ Lunch

\$20 Lunch Only — Children under 10 eat Free!

September 17, 2026

7:00 am Registration

8:00 am Shot Gun

Live Music



Questions? Contact, Patrick Miller, 610-291-3002 or pjmill98@yahoo.com