St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
Around the Church
November 22, 2026



WHERE'S WALDO?

Can you tell the difference between a sheep and a goat? I learned this week that it's actually kind of hard. Matthew 25 ends with Jesus telling a parable about sheep and goats (vss. 31-46). The sheep don't know they are sheep, and the goats wish they weren't goats. And neither knew where Jesus was. It's an interesting parable that is simple on one level and surprising on other levels. It also ends with some of the harshest judgment in the New Testament. Simply put, it's The End of the world and the Last Judgment. And "all the nations" are gathered before him. Jesus blesses the "sheep" because they were the ones who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited the sick. When they did this "for the least of these my brethren" they did it for him. They did *not know* they were serving Jesus when they were serving the poor. The goats didn't do these things, and therefore, didn't serve Jesus. The sheep are blessed, the goats are condemned.

It's really pretty simple. But nothing's ever really "simple" in the Gospels. Does this mean that all we "have to do" is simply serve the hungry and poor to get into heaven? Maybe. Does it matter "what we believe"? Maybe not, if all we had was this parable. Besides, what's the point? Is it simply to put donations in the bins around church and support non-profits that help people? All those things are worthy endeavors, by the way, but is duty more important than *relationship*? We would all affirm the importance of being a "good person" for the good life, but where does a relationship with Christ factor into the good life? In the Bible, what you do flows from *who you know*. A branch (us) connected to the Vine (Jesus) "bears much fruit" (John 15).

It's been 2000 years since Jesus walked the earth and there still hasn't happened a Last Judgment. So where's Jesus?? We say he's with us still, but is he really? Fortunately, this is not a "Where's Waldo?" book. We don't need to hunt to find Jesus. Jesus is with us TODAY—in the poor, hungry, those in need of clothing, those who are lonely, those in prison. THERE'S Jesus! There are plenty of ways to meet him… and have a relationship. Are we willing to make ourselves vulnerable?

Peace,
Pr. Christian



FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEATHER TRACY

August 9, 1979 – November 8, 2026

Heather's funeral service will be held at St. Matthew's this afternoon, Sunday, November 22. Visitation will be held from 12 Noon-2:00pm, with the service immediately following. After the service, food and fellowship will be offered in the CLC.

In the sure and certain hope of the resurrection, please keep the Robinson family (Donna Robinson is Heather's mother) and Heather's friends and loved ones in your prayers. Funeral arrangements are being handled by the Cattermole-Klotzbach Funeral Home, you can find Heather's obituary on their website or in this week's online ATC.



SHARING THANKSGIVING AT HOLY COMMUNION, NOV. 26

Please help us prepare and deliver turkey dinners to 250 people on Thanksgiving Day when we travel to the Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion in Center City Philadelphia. We still need volunteers and donations!

The Sign-Up Genius to volunteer is posted in the online ATC. There are two main roles: preparing meals in the LCHC Hall, and being a driver to deliver hot meals to the streets. Please invite your family and friends to share in this morning of service.

A friend of St. Matthew's has covered the cost of the turkeys for the last 20 years. **We would like to provide the sides, beverages and paper products. Our target goal is $1,000.**

To make an electronic gift through the St. Matthew's website, go to https://stmatthews-church.org/give# Click "Give Online Now" and then select "Thanksgiving" from the drop-down menu. You can also write a check to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, and in the memo line, write "Thanksgiving."

If you have any questions, please reach out to Bob McDevitt at roberthmcdevitt@icloud.com



WARM CLOTHING DRIVE ENDS TODAY

We are collecting new and gently used Hats, Gloves, and Scarves for homeless and less fortunate adults in Center City Philadelphia. They will be delivered with a hot meal on Thanksgiving morning near the Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion. **Please drop off items in the collection boxes located in the Narthex, CLC lobby, or on the church office porch by TODAY, Sunday, November 22.**

Christmas is Coming!



ADVENT FOOD COLLECTION FOR GRACE CROSSING, NOW-DEC. 13

We are once again collecting food items for Grace Crossing Food Pantry, this time for their Christmas meal distribution, which will be held on Thursday, December 17. **IMPORTANT NOTE: Please use the Sign Up Genius in the online ATC and church website to bring the following items needed.**

-Canned Pineapple *Slices*
(Slices only please), 55
-Boxed Scalloped Potatoes, 55
-Canned Mixed Vegetables, 55
-Canned Carrot Slices, 55
-Packaged Cookies (All varieties), 55
-Reusable Shopping Bags
(Harder plastic or canvas-type), 55

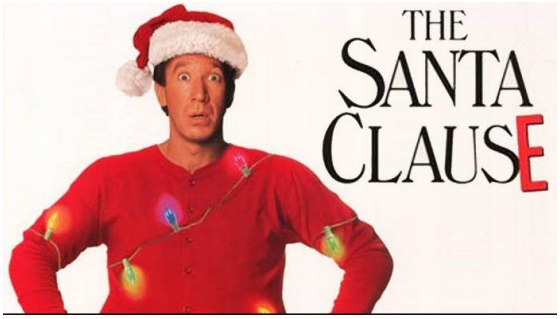
Please drop off all items before December 13 to the bins inside of the Narthex, the CLC lobby or the Church Office porch.
If you have any questions, please contact the church office: office@stmatthews-church.org

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TOY DRIVE WISH LIST IS FULL, BRING IN YOUR GIFTS BY DEC. 6

WONDERFUL NEWS! The sign up is now FULL! *We will leave the link to the Sign Up Genius in the online ATC in case you need to find it.*
All unwrapped gifts or gift cards should be dropped off to the church office on or before Sunday, December 6, 2026. After hours, gifts can be left in the bin on the church office porch. Toys can also be left in the CLC lobby by the small Christmas Tree during worship service hours.
Please contact Kristen or Brian Delin with any questions at **bdelin@verizon.net** or 610-585-0335 or 610-952-4906.



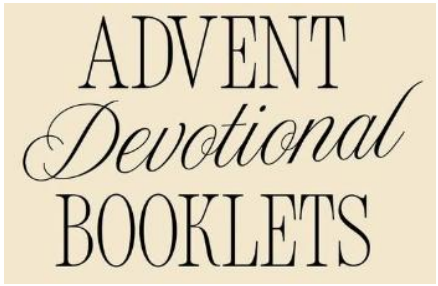
FAMILY MOVIE DAY: THE SANTA CLAUSE, DEC. 6

Please join us for a Family Holiday Movie Day on Sunday, December 6 at 1:00pm in the CLC. We will be showing "The Santa Clause," starring Tim Allen. All are welcome! We will provide the popcorn, a hot chocolate bar, and a winter craft. We also need a few volunteers to help everything run smoothly. Please reach out to Troy and Diana Sisum to volunteer, or for questions (tdsisum1@yahoo.com)



ORDER POINSETTIAS BY DEC. 6

You are invited to share in the beauty of the Advent and Christmas Eve services by purchasing red poinsettias.
Forms are now in the pews and can be found now in the online ATC and church website. Place the form in the offering plate, or send it to the Church Office with a check payable to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. The poinsettias are $10.00 each. **This year's ordering deadline will be Sunday, December 6.**



FAMILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS AND OTHER RESOURCES

These are now available on the table in the Gathering Area outside of the sanctuary. There are options for all ages, from families with young children up through high school age. Some resources have a "suggested donation" envelope inside to help defray costs; if you would like to contribute, simply put cash or a check in the envelope and put it in the offering, or return it to the church office.



HANGING OF THE GREENS, DEC. 6 AND DEC. 13

Church Decorating will take place in two stages, after morning Worship on the Second and Third Sundays of Advent. We will do some initial decorating (including putting up the Tree) before the Mike Borowski concert on December 6, and we will finish the decorating on December 13. All are invited to decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas! Questions? Contact Sue Hummerston, hummerstonsue@gmail.com

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BRING YOUR NATIVITY SCENES TO DISPLAY FOR ADVENT

As we await and prepare for the birth of the Christ child, please consider sharing your favorite Nativity set, if you have one. You are invited to place yours in a windowsill in the Sanctuary as early as November 22, where it will remain throughout Advent and Christmas. Please feel free to add a prayer that reflects this year's Advent theme of Hope. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Sue Hummerston (hummerstonsue@gmail.com)



Outreach: The Outreach team plans to meet Sunday, November 29, after the 9:30am worship service in the CLC. Please feel free to join us as we discuss ways to support our community in 2027. Feel free to contact Kathy Meltzer at kmeltzer@comcast.net with any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Faith Discussions: Next meeting in the Sanctuary on Tuesday, December 1 at 7:00pm, all are welcome! We will continue our discussion on the Magnificat of Mary, Luke 1:46-55. Hope for all in the season of Advent!

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

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

Mission In: Next meeting Sunday, December 13 at 10:45am in the CLC. Hope to see you there!

Men's Breakfast: Saturday, December 19. Please bring something to cook and share. Food prep begins at 8:00am with breakfast starting at 8:30am. Questions? E-mail Tim Guyer: ttguyer@gmail.com

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FINAL COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE OF 2026

Another fantastic growing season in the community garden has culminated in the donation of a grand total of 1240 pounds of veggies to the Chester County Food Bank. Veggies we grew this year included romaine lettuce, butterhead lettuce, gordini lettuce, salad turnips, cucumbers, zucchini squash, tomatillos, several varieties of cherry tomatoes, several varieties of regular tomatoes, green beans (pole and bush), bell peppers, banana peppers, carrots, celery, radishes, arugula lettuce, kale, beets, papalo, chives, basil, parsley and cilantro. Thanks to all of our gardeners for your efforts in maintaining the garden and for your generous donations to the food bank! With the garden at rest for the winter, we look forward to another great growing season next year!

ST. MARY'S MEAL: DEC. 27

St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families

Thanks to all who signed up for today's meal delivery. The next meal delivery to St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter will be on Sunday, December 27, and the sign up is now in the online ATC. Full details with the requirements are listed on the church website and on the Sign-Up Genius. If you have any questions, contact Mindy Elmer: mlong1011@comcast.net

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OFFERING COUNTERS NEEDED!

We are in great need of more offering counters to join our current loyal and dedicated group of people! It only requires 1-2 hours of your time once or twice a month. Two counters must be present in the church office to count and deposit the Sunday offerings every two weeks. **Scheduling is flexible! Please reach out to Sara Richardson in the office if you're interested in joining the team: srichardson@stmatthews-church.org**

IAC THANKSGIVING SERVICE, NOV. 22

The Interfaith Action Community of Chester County and the Exton-Lionville Ministerium cordially invite you to an Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Service TONIGHT, Sunday, November 22 at 7:00pm at the Foundation for Islamic Education.



YOUTH NEWS



OUR ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH 'FRIENDSGIVING' will take place on Sunday, November 22 from 6:00-8:30pm at the Sanders' home. All 9th-12th graders are welcome to join us for an evening of food, friendship, and giving thanks. Attendees are encouraged to bring a side dish or dessert to share with the group. Sign up here to let us know you're coming (and what you'll be bringing) in the online ATC.

THE NEXT HIGH SCHOOL OASIS "DEEP DIVE" will be Sunday, November 29 from 6:30-8:00pm at St. Matthew's. We will continue our conversation around the sacraments, looking at Holy Communion this time. All 9th-12th graders are invited to join us. No signup is necessary; just show up!

OUR ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL TRIP TO ELMWOOD PARK ZOO with the students from Martin Luther School/Gemma Services is coming up on Sunday, December 6, from 4:15-8:30pm. Meet at St. Matthew's at 4:15pm to carpool to Elmwood Park Zoo, where we will meet the kids and host them on a tour of the zoo's "Wild Lights" holiday display. Cost is $10 per person; if you would like to help cover the costs for our guests, feel free to bring more! Sign up in the online ATC to help bring smiles to the faces of some kids who need an extra helping of love.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY will be on Saturday, December 19 from 4:00-5:30pm at Pastor Stuart's house. All 6th-8th graders are invited to come for an afternoon of food and Christmas-themed fun! Bring an inexpensive ($5 or less), WRAPPED joke gift for our traditional gift exchange. Sign up in the online ATC to join in the festivities.

THE HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER will be on Sunday, December 20 from 6:00-8:30pm at Pastor Stuart's house. All 9th-12th graders are invited to come for an evening of food and Christmas-themed fun! Bring an inexpensive ($5 or less), WRAPPED joke gift for our traditional gift exchange. Sign up in the online ATC to join the celebration.

PRIORITY REGISTRATION FOR THE ELCA YOUTH GATHERING HAS CLOSED, BUT... It's not too late to sign up to go to Minneapolis next summer! (You're just going to pay more money.) If you are currently in 8th-12th grade and would like to join our "Gathering Group" going to the Gathering June 28-July 2, contact Craig Miller for a registration worksheet and more information on how to sign up.

TWIN VALLEY COFFEE YOUTH FUNDRAISER

From Monday, November 30-Sunday, December 13, place an order through our St. Paul's/St. Matthew's Youth online store and have it shipped to you in plenty of time for Christmas, or have it sent directly to someone else as a gift! Cross off some of your holiday shopping and support our youth ministry at the same time (or just stock up on some really good coffee). Info on how to order will be coming this week!



CHURCH OFFICE AND SCHOOL CLOSURES FOR THANKSGIVING

St. Matthew's School will be closed for Thanksgiving Break from Tuesday, November 24-Friday, November 27.

The church office will be closed to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27. We will resume normal office hours on Monday, November 30.

Happy Thanksgiving to one and all!