

Greetings People of God:

Several winters ago, I experienced a deep disappointment that muted the joy I usually feel in this season. It was slowly but surely becoming apparent that a personal hope of mine was not going to come to fruition—at least not in this lifetime. It was the strangest December: both full of the anticipation that marks the Advent season and devoid of a hope that I didn't quite know how to let go.

We sing *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* each Advent to the God who comes to us in History, Mystery, and Majesty: Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem; Jesus, whose body and blood comprise the Eucharist; and Jesus, who has promised to return as victorious Lord of all. This season is specially set aside not only to remember the humility of God becoming flesh, or to appreciate the presence of God in the sacraments we celebrate, but to eagerly wait for God to make all things new—to finally and forever restore all that is broken in our lives and our world.

Though it was once customary to use purple for both, we now use liturgical blue to differentiate Advent from the more penitential season of Lent. Advent's deep blue, like the sky just before dawn, reminds us that as the sun rises whether we will it to or not, the hope we celebrate in Advent is entirely dependent on the Son who reconciles and heals what we never could on our own.

We can spend Advent contemplating our hopes—both those we still hold on to, and those we've had to let go—trusting that, as the beloved Christmas carol says, the hopes and fears of all the years are met—in the one we call Emmanuel, God With Us.

*Advent & Christmas Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Traci*

Worship Schedule for December

10:30 AM Worship in the Sanctuary—Full Spoken Liturgy of Word & Sacrament with Communion every Sunday

Christmas Eve Service: December 24 - will have a Candlelight Communion Service at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 29 - service of Lessons & Carols at 10:30 a.m.



Mitten Tree

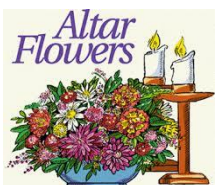
Our Mitten Tree is available to be decorated during Advent with mittens, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, and earmuffs until Sunday, December 15. These items will be distributed to children in need at the local elementary schools before Christmas.

Any donations of money can be placed in a pew envelope marked with "Mitten Tree". These donations will be used to purchase needed items for the children. Help these children have a warmer Winter!



May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child this Christmas Season.

*From the staff of
St. Matthew Lutheran Church:
Pastor Traci, Jen, Laura, Phil, Camden, Mary, De and Jay*



The 2025 Altar Flower chart is posted on the Narthex bulletin board. Altar Flowers are a perfect way to remember loved ones or to honor loved ones.

There are plenty of dates available. Please sign up now for the Sunday you wish to place flowers on the Altar.



Thank you for the very generous gift from the St. Matthew Endowment Fund to help with my college tuition.

*Thank You,
Max Baker*

2025 Offering Envelopes



Everyone who is a confirmed member or is a **visitor and has requested envelopes** receives Offering Envelopes.

The Offering Envelopes will be **MAILED** directly to your homes monthly.

Please **do not use** the **“Initial Offering Envelope”** until 2025.

The other options for offering or tithing are below:

Ways to Support St. Matthew

Offering Envelopes: These are mailed to our contributors at their homes monthly.

Giving Online: St. Matthew is excited to announce that you can now manage your giving online! Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Simply follow these easy steps:

- 1) Visit the church website at “www.stmatthewlc.com”
- 2) Click on the “Giving” button, (at the left side of the main screen)
- 3) Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your recurring contributions.

QRCode Offerings:

- 1) Hold your mobile phone in the camera position over the “QR Code”
- 2) A link will pop up on your phone and tap the link
- 3) Follow the instructions on your phone.



On behalf of the Fellowship Committee, a sincere thank you to those of you who donated food and helped in the kitchen and dining room at the funeral meals For the Gilbert Family and the Hite Family. Many of you donated Food for and helped prepare and serve both meals. We are so fortunate At St. Matthew to have a supportive and compassionate church family. God bless you all for your generosity and willingness to step in when help is most needed.

Jane Fagans



To the Ladies of St. Matthew Church,

We just wanted to take a moment to thank ALL you ladies – your generosity and hard work in preparing such wonderful desserts for our recent Thanksgiving Breaking Bread supper meal on Monday, November 11, 2024. Your kindness and talents truly added a special touch to this special gathering, and it was clear that everyone enjoyed the sweet treats you shared. Your thoughtfulness and dedication to serving others is such a blessing to our community. We’re soooo grateful! Again, many heartfelt thanks!

*Pastor Jim Shaffer
and the Breaking Bread team members*



Martinsburg Food Pantry

We will be open for food distribution on Thursdays, December 5 and December 19 from 9:00am until 11:00am. Volunteers from Refined Community Church will be assisting along with the regular helpers. There are 12 churches, one for each month that help at the food pantry.

Holiday foods will be the focus in December: Sunny D Drinks (40 oz. bottle), Cereal, Fruit (pineapple), Mashed Potatoes (packets), and Paper Towels.

Many thanks to all who generously have given all year to the Food Pantry! It is greatly appreciated!

Linda Smith.



**A Stewardship Moment
DECEMBER 2024**

There is a touching story in the December issue Stewardship about a very ill old man named Joe, who loved God and his church passionately.

Joe's pastor, Rev. Goodrich, visited Joe and was impressed with what might be called Joe's saintliness. Joe loved God so much that he wanted to do his best to see that God's work on earth was carried out. That is why he tithed his income to the church. The pastor saw how poor Joe was and decided that the church ought to do something to show the church's appreciation of him. So one day, Rev. Goodrich took \$100 out of a fund designated for people who truly needed financial help, put it in an envelope and delivered it to ailing old Joe.

When Joe opened the envelope and found the money, with a broad smile tugging at his lips, he said eagerly, "Now I will be able to do something I've never been able to do before. I'd like to give \$50.00 to the orphanage and \$50.00 for mission work."

Such is the attitude of saints. They have loving hearts for God and loving spirits to give as best they can to the hurting and needy people and other work of the church.

Prayer: Dear God, help us each to understand that we need to be good stewards for the health of our own souls. In Christ's name we pray.
Amen

A **Stewardship Minute** is available to subscribers of **Stewardship** at www.parishpublishing.org.



Prayers and Christian Sympathy are requested for the family and friends of George Gilbert upon his death on Thursday, November 14th.

Prayers and Christian Sympathy are requested for the family and friends of Audrey Hite upon her death on Saturday, November 16th.



Volunteers Needed and Donations Requested for Journey to Bethlehem

Sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex for the following:

--Help to set up scenes for Journey to Bethlehem.

Please indicate your preferences and availability to help with setting up the sets. Hopefully, we can accomplish the set-up during a few of the time frames allotted.

--Donations for food for lunch for the cast members and helpers.

We plan to serve soup, ox roast sandwiches, fruit salad, and dessert at lunch time for the cast and helpers. If you would like to donate soup, meat, rolls, or a dessert, please indicate on the form that is posted. We are serving salad and pizza for supper. We will order in pizza.

--Donations for cookies for refreshments for Journey to Bethlehem.

Please indicate how many cookies you wish to donate for refreshments.

Thank you for your willingness to volunteer and for your donations to enable our presentation of Journey to Bethlehem to be successful.

Cove Christmas Love



The Martinsburg Ministerium is, again, helping to provide presents for Spring Cove School Children in need. Our congregation's goal for this year is to provide gifts for about 50 children through Cove Christmas Love, like we did last year. Please return the unwrapped gift(s), WITH THE TAG, no later than today, Sunday, DECEMBER 1st. These unwrapped gifts will be distributed on Saturday, DECEMBER 7 at the Church of

God. You can direct any questions to Peggy Steinfurth or Linda Smith. Thank you for sharing with the community as we help families in need at this time of Christmas cheer!



Advent Devotionals provided by On Eagle's Wings missionaries are available at the Usher Station.

Care Packages



The last project for the 2024 Social Ministry Committee will be making care packages for St. Matthew college students and military. We have received a grant from Thrivent Action Team to cover costs for the items and postage. The packages will be assembled on Monday December 2, at noon. All members of St. Matthew, especially the youth, are welcome to help. Lunch will be provided consisting of tacos. There will be cards for members to sign in the narthex to express our support.



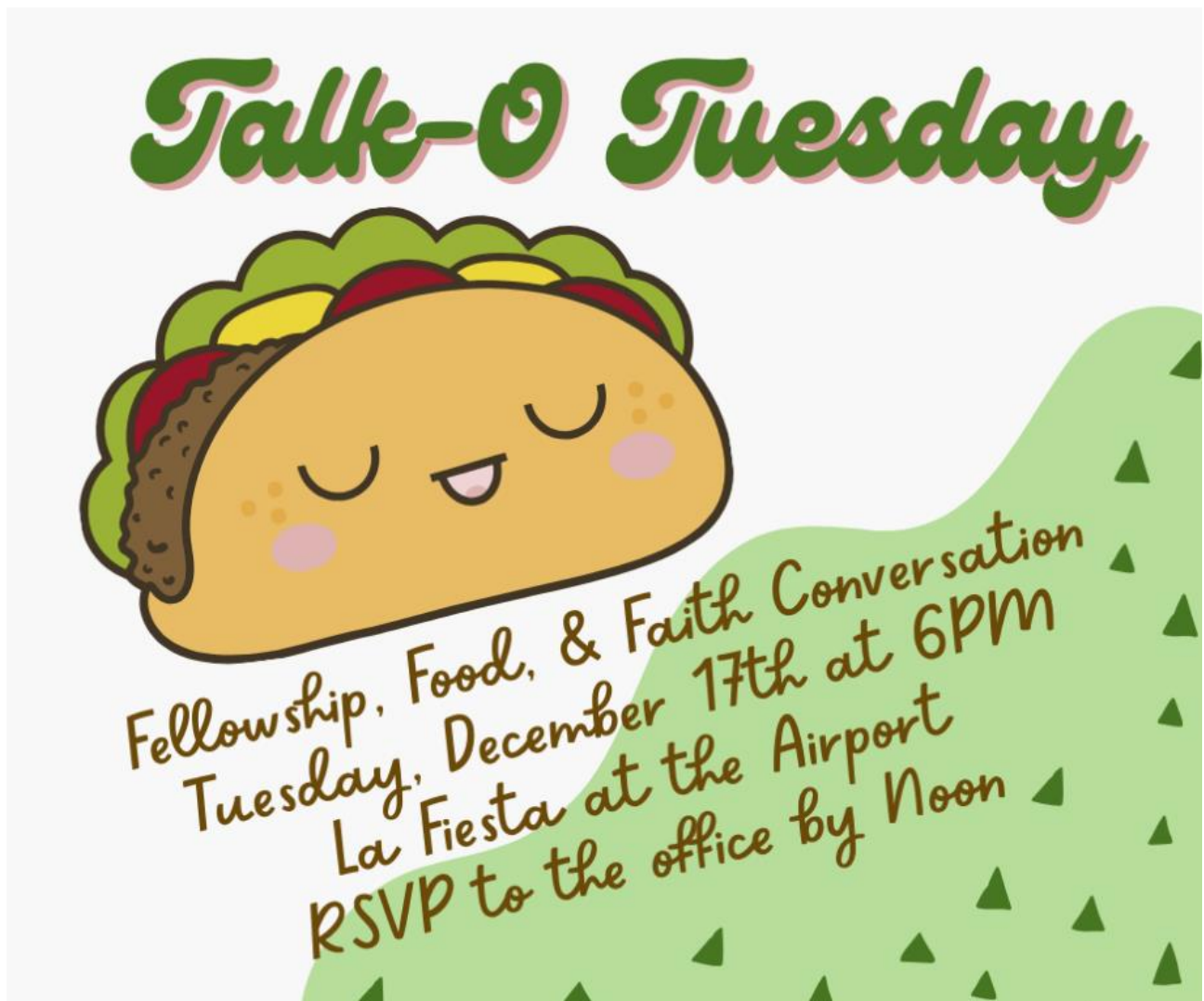
This year's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held at the end of the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, December 15th. Copies of the 2025 Proposed Congregational Budget, 2025 recommendations for Ventures In Faith and Special Envelopes, and Giving Report are enclosed with the Messenger. Additional copies are available at the usher station or the church office. The congregation will be asked to approve these proposals for 2025 at the 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting If you have questions about the budget in advance of the meeting, please see Treasurer Beth Garner or Finance Committee Chair Jim Barley.

Birthdays for December

02	Chris Cronrath	10	Andrea McGraw	18	Larry Irvin
	Alexis Hicks	11	Mace Baker	19	Tonya F. Walter
	Kyla Paul		Leah Park	21	Tyson Rodgers
03	Cathy Henzler	12	Samantha Tremmel	27	Beth N. Snyder
	Norah Kuster	14	Jennifer Metzler	28	Noah Metzler
05	G. Devin Baker	15	Emily Gunnett	30	Carlos A. Lamborn
06	Katherine Orczeck		John Russell	31	Ivy Haffling
08	Elizabeth Bithell		Rev. Anamae Storbeck		
	Beth Garner	17	Russell G. Dickson		
	Joshua W. Gilbert		Ed C. Kreider		

Anniversaries for December

13	Mark & Debra Guyer	24	Dennis R. & Barbara A. Brown
19	Glenn & Elaine L. Diehl	26	James A. & Janet F. Stewart
		30	Adam & Ashley Zanfino



SERVING GOD AND US December 2024

Date	December 1	December 8	December 15 Congregational Mtg.	December 22 Youth Sunday	December 24 Christmas Eve	December 29 Lessons & Carols
Acolytes	Jay Hoenstine	Lucy Lightner	Lily Lightner	Gavin Kuster	Gabby Decker Lily Lightner Lucy Lightner	Mace Baker
Lectors	Carla Brumbaugh	Andrea Paul	Kaye Burket	Youth	Shawn Orczeck	TBD
Ushers	Martie Gilbert	Stanley Smith	Ed Kreider	Paul Decker	TBD	Tina Harclerode
Assist. Min.	Jane Fagans	Greg Haffling	Tina Harclerode	Youth	Jane Fagans	Elaine Smith
Altar Guild	Tina Harclerode Jackie Lightner Jane Fagans	Tina Harclerode Jackie Lightner Jane Fagans	Tina Harclerode Jackie Lightner Jane Fagans	Tina Harclerode Jackie Lightner Jane Fagans	Tina Harclerode Jackie Lightner Jane Fagans	Tina Harclerode Jackie Lightner Jane Fagans
Audio/Video	Camden Kuster	Camden Kuster	Camden Kuster	Camden Kuster	Camden Kuster	Camden Kuster
Offering Counters	Jim Barley Beth Garner	Jim Barley Beth Garner	Jim Barley Beth Garner	Jim Barley Beth Garner	Jim Barley Beth Garner	Jim Barley Beth Garner

2024 COUNCIL DIRECTORY AND MINISTRY STAFF

All phone numbers start with (814) unless otherwise noted.

Pastor	Rev. Traci Marriott	935-9267	Christian Ed.	Jean Sinal	793-9507
Admin. Assist.	Jen Ripka	935-3801	Evangelism	Vacant	
Assist. Admin. Assist.	Laura Orczeck	224-1208	Stewardship	Vacant	
President	Martie Gilbert	793-4461	Finance	Jim Barley	793-4623
Vice President	Greg Haffling	793-9827	Social Ministry	Lottie Ebersole	232-6665
Secretary	Carla Brumbaugh	932-4082	Worship & Music	Tina Harclerode	317-5312
Treasurer	Beth Garner	793-3966	Staff Support	Kaye Burket	414-8541
Property	Ed Kreider	793-4302	Sexton	Phil Claar	215-0885

HIGHLIGHTS BY COUNCIL IN NOVEMBER 2024

1. Candy was distributed to 273 trick-or-treaters on October 31.
2. The Social Ministry committee will send college student/military care packages during the first week in December. Members of St. Matthew are invited to help with this project on Dec. 2. Lunch will be provided. The committee received a \$250 grant from Thrivent Action Team for this project.
3. The congregation will vote on the proposed 2025 budget and open council positions at the congregational meeting on Sunday, December 15.
4. Advent begins December 1, and there will be a Christmas Eve service on December 24 at 7:00 p.m.

1967 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE



A TIME FOR BURNING REVISITED



Join us for an online discussion and preview of a new documentary that revisits a classic film about a congregation wrestling with racial justice. Hear interviews with filmmaker Bill Jersey—60 years after he made his film; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; and others.




Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024
7p.m. Central
bit.ly/BurningRevisitedRegister



Please note that this presentation is at 7PM CENTRAL time, 8PM our time, and since it starts so late, we will not stream it at the church building. If you need help signing up for the link to watch it from home, please ask Pastor Traci for help.



December 2024
St. Matthew Lutheran Church
 115 E Penn St., Martinsburg, PA 16662-1127
 Email: stmatthewmartinsburg@gmail.com 814-793-2413

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <u>1st Sunday of Advent</u> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship in Sanctuary 3:00 pm Gingerbread Village Lutheran Home *Cove Christmas Love Presents Due	2 12:00 pm Care Package Assembly with Lunch, FH	3 12:00 pm Care Package Assembly with Lunch, FH	4 1-4 pm Pastor in Office	5 9-11 am Food Pantry, Allegheny St.	6 The Weekend Synod Event grades 6-12	7 The Weekend Synod Event grades 6-12
8 <u>2nd Sunday of Advent</u> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship in Sanctuary The Weekend Synod Event grades 6-12 Fellowship Hall in Use 1-8 pm	9 6:30 pm Council Mtg, WR/Zoom	10 6:30 pm Council Mtg, WR/Zoom	11 1-4 pm Pastor in Office	12 1-4 pm Pastor in Office	13 Pastor's Sabbath	14 Pastor's Sabbath
Journey to Bethlehem preparations....fellowship hall in use.						
15 <u>3rd Sunday of Advent</u> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship in Sanctuary Congregational Meeting Following Worship <i>Journey to Bethlehem</i> 1:30 pm Mobility Device Friendly, FH 2-4 pm & 6-8pm	16 6:00 pm Worship & Music Meeting, Zoom	17  6:00 pm Talk-O Tuesday, La Fiesta Mexican Restaurant, Airport	18 1-4 pm Pastor in Office	19 9-11 am Food Pantry, Allegheny St.	20 Pastor's Sabbath	21 Pastor's Sabbath
22 <u>4th Sunday of Advent</u> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship in Sanctuary Youth Led Worship	23 10:00 am Employee Meeting, FH	24 Office Closed Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7 pm in Sanctuary	25 Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27 Pastor's Sabbath	28 Pastor's Sabbath
29 <i>10:30 am Service of Lessons & Carols with Communion</i>	30	31	1 Office Closed	FH—Fellowship Hall CE-Christian Ed Office CL-Church Lounge OR-Quilt Room WR- Window Room K—Kitchen In case of emergency, Pastor Traci maybe reached at 814-935-9267 Jen will be in the Office Mon.-Fri. from 9:00 am-12:00 pm		