



Saint Matthew
LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Matthew's Messenger

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church
115 E. Penn Street, Martinsburg, PA 16662-1127

Phone 814.793.2413 • Fax 814.614-4003 • e-mail stmatthewmartinsburg@gmail.com

• web: www.stmatthewlc.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stmatthewlc

Volume 66

JANUARY 2026

Number 1

Greetings People of God:

Allow me to make my annual confession that I am terrible at New Year's resolutions. I am exactly the person the gym hopes will join—one who will sign up with good intentions but not darken the doorway for eleven months after running out of resolution-steam. (My total truthful confession is that I only joined the gym to have a place to shower when I was working on my bathroom; sometimes I didn't even exercise first. I really ought to cancel that membership.)

It is no wonder that after the busy excitement of the Christmas season we want the renewed sense of purpose that a resolution provides, especially in our Pennsylvania winter climate, which can be awfully dreary at this time of year. But our resolutions, which so often tend towards will-powered self-help endeavors, tempt us to forget what we just celebrated at Christmas: *Emmanuel—God with us*. We don't have to do it all on our own.

If you are challenging yourself to establish some new habits in this new year (or you are trying to break an old habit), I wish you well in your resolution. But I'd also encourage you to remember that your baptismal call makes every day a brand new start, empowered not by your own strength and perseverance, but by the Spirit who guides and gives you help.

Peace,
Pastor Traci



Dear St. Matthew Social Ministry Committee,



Thank you so much for the thoughtful final exam care package. It truly meant a lot to me and was a great encouragement during a busy time. Your continuous kindness, generosity, and prayers remind me that I am supported by the St. Matthew Church Family even when I am miles away. I am very grateful for the love and effort that went into the package. Thank you again for continuing to support me in so many ways.

*With gratitude,
Olivia R. Day*

Thank you for your thoughtful Christmas gifts, cards, and well-wishes. It has been another wonderful year working at St. Matthew. I appreciate everyone's kindness, concern and prayers for my family as they have been experiencing health issues.

Jen Ripka



Special Thank you to the Flower Committee helpers who prepare the Altar Flowers to go home each Sunday:

Elaine Smith, Jean Sinal, Mary Nelson, Martie Gilbert, Cindy Snyder, Jeanie Smith, Sarah Detwiler and Margie Smith.



St. Matthew Social Ministry,

Thank you for all of the goodies delivered to me today and food brought to me in the past. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated. Hope to get in there for a service when not too cold and roads are good. I watch the service on TV and can see you.

Jean Stonerook



At 10:00 a.m. on Christmas morning, local churches rang their bells in unison to celebrate Jesus's birth. Thank you to Jeff and Jay Hoenstine for ringing the church bells at St. Matthew this year!



Congratulations to a very generous congregation. Donations for Cove Christmas Love, Healthy for the Holidays, and the Mitten Tree were over and above expectations. Thank you to everyone for contributing to help make Christmas more joyful for area students.



The CHS Tennis Boosters would like to send out a large thank you to St. Matthew Lutheran church for allowing us to host our tennis banquet in your beautiful fellowship hall at the last minute following a scheduling conflict. We are especially grateful to Pastor Traci, Jen Ripka and Jane Fagans for answering text messages after hours to schedule our event. We would also like to thank you for the use of tablecloths napkins and the dragon (Pastor Traci's). Everyone said how nice the banquet and the space was. Thanks for providing that space.

CHS Tennis Boosters



Prayers and Christian Sympathy are requested for the family and friends of Dennis R. Brown upon his death on Thursday, November 22nd.

Outgoing and continuing Council members (2025 Council):

Please return the brief synopsis of your committee's work in 2025 to the office as soon as possible.



**A Stewardship Minute
JANUARY 2026**

“In looking to the coming year, remember that rooted deeply and firmly within scripture and our Christian tradition is the vision that we are expected to be faithful stewards of all we are and all we have.”

Those last few words are from the January issue of Stewardship: We are expected to be faithful stewards of all we are and all we have. Now that is a challenge, isn't it? The newsletter reminds us that since we are starting a New Year, some Christians will be making resolutions. And since it quotes one Christian who is making some vows to strengthen his spiritual life, it surely will help us all to know those vows.

One vow is to spend time with the Lord daily. It is spiritually helpful to spend time in prayer, vowing to keep in touch with our Creator. Many Christians read portions of the Bible daily. That holy Word offers great wisdom for living a fruitful and meaningful life. Another resolution is to serve God by using one's talent and time. Let God lead you to the needy people in your community. Did you know that the Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries, St. Vincent Depaul's charity work, and Habitat for Humanity were all started by Christian groups? The point is that Christians are intended to work in the hurting places of the world. God uses people to be Christ's servants; people like us who will dare to be good stewards of our time, our talents, and our resources wherever there is a need. Let get to work!

Prayer: *Dear Lord, our blessings are many and our challenges are often many, as well. Guide us and enable us to have the wisdom and strength to serve you in this wonderful world you have given us. In Christ's name. Amen*

Ways to Support St. Matthew

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

Person Bank Drafts if you would like to use this method contact your bank and have the donation taken from your bank account and sent to St. Matthew (usually monthly automatic bank drafts from your checking account. **(There is no fee to the church or to you for this convenient donation.)**)

“Simply Giving” by Vanco. If you would like to use the on-line program of automatic bank drafts/debit card from your checking account. **(Forms are in the church office. Please see Jen. The church gets billed a monthly fee for this service.)**

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 **“Give”** button, (on the top white banner)
- 3) Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your recurring contributions.

Mobile Giving: Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions. Electronic giving offers convenience for individuals and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. Simply follow these easy steps:

- 1) Visit **“Play Store on your mobile device”**
- 2) Find the **“Vanco Payment”** app (this is free)
- 3) Click on the **“Install”** button
- 4) Open the app on your device
- 5) Follow the onscreen instructions to schedule your one time contribution or recurring contributions. **(There is a processing fee at the time of the transaction. You have the choice to pay the fee for the church or have the fee taken from your donation.)**



SERVING GOD AND US January 2026

Date	January 4 <i>Epiphany of Our Lord</i>	January 11 <i>Baptism of Our Lord</i>	January 18	January 25
Acolytes	Gabby Decker Lily Lightner Lucy Lightner	Ben Decker Gavin Kuster Norah Kuster	Mace Baker	Norah Kuster
Lectors	Kaye Burket	Dawn Alexy	Jane Hoenstine	Carla Brumbaugh
Assisting Minister	Tina Harclerode	Amanda Decker	Shawn Orczeck	Greg Haffling
Ushers	Dennis Smith	Paul Decker	Randy McGraw	Martie Gilbert
Audio/Video	Camden Kuster	Camden Kuster	Camden Kuster	Camden Kuster
Altar Guild	Jean Sinal Jane Fagans	Jean Sinal Jane Fagans	Jean Sinal Jane Fagans	Jean Sinal Jane Fagans
Offering Counters	Jim Barley Beth Garner	Jim Barley Beth Garner	Jim Barley Beth Garner	Jim Barley Beth Garner



Birthdays for January

01 Anna Weaver	10 Catherine Corcoran	24 Doris L. Waddick
02 Stacy Kuster	11 E. Kaye Burket	28 Ryan Frederick
Margie J. Smith	13 Janelle R. Dennis	Jackie Lightner
04 Jenna Metzler	15 Michele M. Smith	Kim Oswalt
05 Peggy Freyer	16 Thomas Beyer	Michele L. Smith
06 Laurie S. Smith	Gavin Kuster	29 Dwight Kensinger
07 Dr. Murray S. Smith	20 Jean L. Stonerook	
09 B. Ann Baker	22 Bill Brown	

Announcing the 2026 Council

On Sunday, December 14th during our Annual Congregational Meeting new Council members were elected:

Secretary	Carla Brumbaugh
Treasurer	Beth Garner
Staff Support	Becky Erb
Evangelism	Peggy Steinfurth

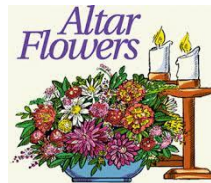
2025 Nominating Committee

Stacy Kuster

Installation of Council Members will be Sunday, January 4, 2026 during the 10:30 a.m. worship service.

Anniversaries for January

06 Michael B. & Kathryn A. Panek
28 Paul L. & Rosie Johnson



The 2026 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. Price-\$40.00.

A Christmas Message from Interim Bishop Barbara Collins

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. John 1:1-5



“In the beginning...”

What was your “beginning” memory of Christmas? The lights? The giving and receiving of gifts? The gathering of family? The music of the season? Baby Jesus? For me, it was sitting in a church sanctuary with everyone holding small lit candles while singing Silent Night. Even as young as I was, I knew it was a special night, a Holy Night, even though I didn’t fully understand the depth of God’s Word made flesh. The depth of God’s gift to us in Jesus – the reason for our gathering and our worship that night.

I once asked a class of students what they felt was the most important holiday for the church and for them. Their answer was Christmas! I asked why. And they said, “That’s when Jesus was born!” Our limited human understanding of life inevitably sees birth as the beginning. But this reading from the gospel of John speaks of another “beginning.” The beginning of all things with the Word, who was with God and who was God. The Word from whom all things came into being.

Jesus is the Word, was with God and is God from the very beginning. In him is the beginning of life, and all stages of life. In him is the light of all people, shining for us through our brightest and darkest days. Through him we see, and experience, God’s glory full of grace and truth which leads us through all the days of our lives, from our beginning to our end.

Together, we have journeyed to the end of another year and now look toward the future year with hope and expectation. There are new things on the horizon, new things coming into being, all of which continue to be surrounded and guided by the Holy One who has been with us from the beginning. May God’s holy light shine on our path and through us as children of the light.

Holy One, who is the Word, we give thanks for our beginning with you. We celebrate your birth, when you became flesh to live among us, the greatest gift from the greatest love. Continue to guide us, to light our way, and help us remember that your beginning in our lives never ends. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Social Ministry Committee Corner

Social Ministry Committee shared the love of Christ and giving by completing the following:
Made and delivered 7 food boxes for our college students and sent 1 to our military member



This year the committee extended our giving to family members in a local nursing home in addition to our members and homebound.

Social Ministry assembled 25 Christmas Bags to be distributed to 35 people.



Thank you to ALL who donated the delicious cookies for our bags and our youth who provided a lasagna meal for our homebound.



The Committee also wants to thank the Delivery Team: Ed Kreider and Dean Grubb, Sarah Detwiler, Jane Fagans, Martie Gilbert, Kaye Burket, Lottie Ebersole and Pastor Traci.

On Saturday December 30th, Kaye Burket and I visited 8 residents at Homewood. They were very appreciative of the Christmas bags. We had the time to visit with them and shared a brief Christmas prayer. That is what Christmas is all about!

Our next meeting is Monday, January 5th at 6:30 p.m. via zoom.

As we begin 2026, let the love of Christ fill our days with peace, joy and happiness.

Happy New Year

Lottie Ebersole, Social Ministry Committee Chairman



If services need to be cancelled for inclement weather, we will attempt to notify you using email (like we do for the Sunday Bulletin and Messenger) and Facebook. On days when the weather is questionable, please check these notifications before you travel. If you need a phone call instead, please let the office know.

Office Closure During Inclement Weather

On days that the Spring Cove School District cancels or delays instruction due to weather, the church office will be closed as well. In the event of an emergency, Pastor Traci can be reached at 814-935-9237.



Martinsburg Food Pantry



Volunteers from St. Matthew will be helping and assisting in the distribution of food on Thursdays, January 1 and January 15 from 9:00-11:00 a.m. Needed will be 3 or 4 helpers on those days. See Elaine Buchart if you can help.

January food items most needed:

Instant Oatmeal, Fruit, Rice Sides, Peanut Butter, Jelly

Our thanks to all who have contributed food, supplies or monetary donations during this past year. We ask for your continued support and prayers in 2026!

Linda Smith



Mitten Tree Thanks!

We want to thank everyone who contributed to the "Mitten Tree" by bringing many colorful homemade, bought items, and financial gifts for needy elementary school children. Because of your kindness, they will have a Warmer Winter!

These items were distributed to Martinsburg and Spring Cove Elementary Schools. The total items received were 101 items! [12 pairs of mittens and gloves, 59 hats, 12 hat and glove sets, 10 pairs of socks, 3 scarves and 2 hat, gloves and scarves sets].

2026 COUNCIL DIRECTORY AND MINISTRY STAFF

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

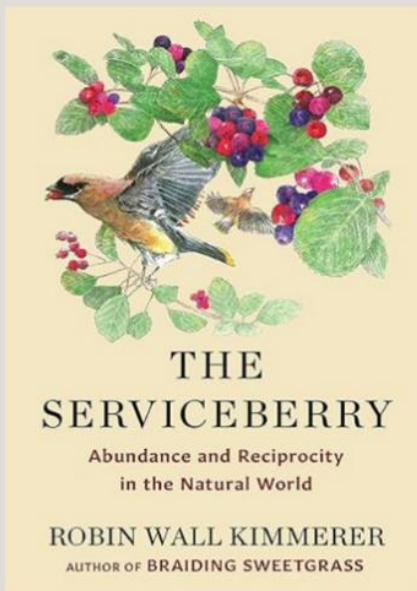
Pastor	Rev. Traci Marriott	935-9267	Christian Ed.	Amanda Decker	934-8798
Admin. Assistant	Jen Ripka	935-3801	Evangelism	Vacant	
Assistant Admin. Assist	Laura Orczeck	224-1208	Stewardship	Vacant	
President	Greg Haffling	793-9827	Finance	Jim Barley	793-4623
Vice President	Don Bulger	329-3412	Social Ministry	Lottie Ebersole	232-6665
Secretary	Carla Brumbaugh	932-4082	Worship & Music	Vacant	
Treasurer	Beth Garner	793-3966	Staff Support	Becky Erb	
Property	Paul Decker	330-6345	Sexton	Phil Claar	215-0885

HIGHLIGHTS BY COUNCIL IN DECEMBER 2025

1. The church received a thank-you card from the boy scouts for the donation towards replacing tents that were destroyed by a windstorm.
2. The Social Ministry committee sent out checks totaling \$2736 from Ventures in Faith contributions designated for “local needs”.
3. The Evangelism committee continues to provide greeters for Sunday morning worship services and to send cards to homebound members.

Join us this January for Cross Country Book Study

*St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Martinsburg, PA &
St. Timothy Lutheran Church of Hudson, IA*



Pastor Traci & Pastor Dena invite you to meet members of our extended church family and discuss by Zoom Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *The Serviceberry*

Thursday, January 29th
7PM EST / 6PM CST

See your Pastor for the Zoom link

Talk-O Tuesday




Fellowship, Food, & Faith Conversation
Tuesday, January 6th at 6PM
La Fiesta at the Airport
RSVP to the office by Noon



January 2026
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
	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					
4 <u>Epiphany of Our Lord</u> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship in Sanctuary	5 6:30 pm Social Ministry Meeting., Zoom	6 1-4 pm Pastor in Office  6:00 pm Talk-O Tuesday, La Fiesta, Airport	7	8 9-11 am Food Pantry, Allegheny St.	9 Pastor's Sabbath	10 Pastor's Sabbath
11 <u>Baptism of Our Lord</u> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship in Sanctuary	12	13 3-6 pm Pastor in Office 6:30 pm Council Mfg., WRZoom	14	15 9-11 am Food Pantry, Allegheny St.	16 Pastor's Sabbath	17 Open House @ Lutheran Home for Bishop Collin's Farewell 2-4pm
18 <u>2nd Sun. after Epiphany</u> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship in Sanctuary	19 MLK Jr Day	20 <div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Pastor Traci at Conference at Sequanota . Can be reached at 814-935-9267. </div>	21	22	23 Pastor's Sabbath	24
25 <u>3rd Sun. after Epiphany</u> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship in Sanctuary	26 6:00 pm Worship & Music Mfg., via Zoom	27 2-5 pm Pastor in Office	28	29 Book Study "Serviceberry" 7pm Zoom	30 Pastor's Sabbath	31