



Saint Matthew
LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Matthew's Messenger

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Volume 66

JULY 2026

Number 7

Greetings People of God:

This month we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Continental Congress adopting the Declaration of Independence. In this season of civic celebration, it can be a bit confusing to know what to make of our current culture, particularly the growing popularity of Christian nationalism. If we are people of faith who love our country, what is wrong with Christian nationalism?

First, we remember that the Constitution's prohibition on establishing religion or prohibiting the free exercise of it is what allows us to worship as we do. We might think it would be good for "our" religion to be the "official" one, but we don't need to look any farther than our own neighborhood to see why that would be a problem: Martinsburg is home to 19 churches of different Christian denominations. Which would be the state-approved version? The same law that protects our neighbors of other faiths protects us as Christians.

But the deeper issue is that Christian nationalism is not primarily concerned with faith. Nationalism—the elevation of one nation above all others—is the central focus; calling it "Christian" is just branding—exploiting religion to make it seem more palatable. Since the gospel very clearly asserts that God so loved the world, we know that nationalism, no matter how it's labeled, and the division and exclusion to which it inevitably leads, is inherently anti-Christian.

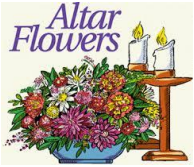
This does not mean we have to lower our flags or put down our sparklers. Our baptismal call to follow Christ invites us to be patriotic Christians. See the difference? Faith is at the center of our lives, compelling us to love our country and do our civic duty, caring for the land that the Creator has made for us to live in and serving the people whom God has made our neighbors. Where nationalism turns others into enemies, patriotism encourages us to sing God Bless America without presuming that God condemns other nations.

This Independence Day, may God make us truly grateful for the nation we celebrate.

~Pastor Traci



Prayers for Christian sympathy and comfort are requested for Jennifer Winston and all those mourning Robert Winston's death on Saturday, June 27th.



Please welcome Elaine Smith as the new flower chairwoman, replacing Margie Smith who is stepping aside after years of dedicated service. If there are any questions regarding altar flowers, please contact Elaine at 434-981-0560.



On behalf of everyone at the Garver Memorial YMCA, thank you for your generous contribution to our "A Place We Call Home" Roof Campaign.

Martinsburg Food Pantry



The Food Pantry will be open for distribution of food on the first and third Thursday, July 2 and July 16 from 9:00a.m.-11:00a.m.

Volunteers from the Brethren in Christ Church will be helping give out food, along with the regular helpers.

Items most needed for July: Peanut Butter and Jelly, Spaghetti and Sauce, Pasta Sides, Hamburger Helper, and Fruit.

Garden produce on the days that the Food Pantry is open, is very much appreciated, which can be dropped off at the pantry by 8:00a.m.

Thank you to Camden for the bags of leaf lettuce to the Food Pantry from his Eagle Scout garden!

*Many Thanks,
Linda Smith*



A Stewardship Minute July 2026

The July issue of *Stewardship* has a fascinating article about an elderly man who practiced stewardship on a daily basis. Although he was crippled and living alone, he did what he could give in many ways. For example, he was so thoughtful of others he had a stream of visitors who visited him for companionship and his abiding cheerfulness. The old man's name was Frank Jones and he was so full of joy and kindness that even his pastor went to his home often to bask in the sunshine of his holiness.

More than a few times, the pastor noticed that lonely widows and widowers visited Frank. Frank offered them great comfort. He also learned that the mailman would visit Frank to rest a few minutes and have a cup of tea with the old saint. A college student who lived nearby often dropped in to have his soul refurbished. He thought of Frank as a true saint. The pastor was there when he saw to his delight; two young children knock on Frank's door. The kids were welcomed joyfully. So much so, their giggles filled the living room. Of course, Frank handed each child a tiny piece of candy.

Frank was in his eighties. His wife had died sometime before. He told the pastor that often in the late-night hours he would sit with his hand on his Bible and pray. That, of course, was where he found inner strength for living and loving.

As the pastor rose to leave, inevitably Frank would insist that the pastor would take an envelope with his love offering for the church. Once the pastor said, "Frank, the church has been blessed with members who are giving generously. So why don't you keep your gift for your own needs?" "Pastor, I am happy the church is doing so well financially. But even if the church does not need my offering, I need to give it for my soul's sake."

The pastor never made the mistake of telling Frank to keep his offering again.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, you but open your hands and all of our needs are met.*

Encourage us to open our hands in giving and serving that we may be pleasing to you by our stewardship. Amen

SERVING GOD AND US
JULY 2026

| Date | July 5 | July 12 | July 19 | July 26 |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Lectors | Stacy Kuster | Gavin Kuster | Destarta Carberry | Andrea Paul |
| Altar Guild | Jean Sinal | Jean Sinal | Jean Sinal | Jean Sinal |
| Offering | Beth Garner | Beth Garner | Beth Garner | Beth Garner |
| Counters | Jim Barley | Jim Barley | Jim Barley | Jim Barley |
| Audio/Video | Camden Kuster | Camden Kuster | Camden Kuster | Camden Kuster |
| Ushers | Stanley Smith | Tina Harclerode | Greg Haffling | Steve Oswalt |
| Assist. Min. | Jean Sinal | Jane Hoenstine | Amanda Decker | Lottie Ebersole |

Anniversaries for July

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Jim & Jane Fagans | 15 Mike & Christine Panek |
| Keith & Andrea McGraw | 16 Paul & Marjorie Helsel |
| 3 William & Cheryl Gigante | Dr. Murray & Sharon Smith |
| 4 Rachel Kensinger & Tammy White | 26 Shawn & Wendy McCauley |
| 10 Zane & M. Jane Staily | 26 Greg & Julie Russell |
| 14 Casey & Jessica Hoover | 29 A J & Jane Hoenstine |
| 15 Mark & Lori Johnson | |

Birthdays for July

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 3 Glenn Baker | 11 Scott Paul | 25 Julie Dick |
| 5 Sharon Hicks | Barb Wilt | 26 Douglas Bush |
| William Stahl | 15 Martie Gilbert | Amy Haffling |
| 8 Marjorie Helsel | 18 Jordan Smith | Dr. Shawn Orczeck |
| Shaffer Johnson | Wyatt Sweinhart | Carol Rugh |
| Cora Sweinhart | 19 Melissa Fetzer | 27 Arnold Moore |
| 9 Jerry Allen | 21 Tom Fishburn | Calleigh Wright |
| Jeffrey Hoenstine | Dan Tremmel | 28 Kylee Frederick |
| Brandi Ross | 22 Tripp Crilly | Larry Frederick |
| Jeremy Smith | Brandon Oswalt | 30 Beth Rager |
| Janet Stewart | | |

2026 COUNCIL DIRECTORY AND MINISTRY STAFF

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

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|------------------|----------|
| Pastor | Rev. Traci Marriott | 935-9267 | Evangelism | Peggy Steinfurth | 515-6205 |
| Admin. Assistant | Jen Ripka | 935-3801 | Stewardship | Vacant | |
| Assistant Admin. Assist | Laura Orzeck | 224-1208 | Finance | Jim Barley | 793-4623 |
| President | Greg Haffling | 793-9827 | Social Ministry | Lottie Ebersole | 232-6665 |
| Vice President | Don Bulger | 329-3412 | Worship & Music | Tina Harclerode | 317-5312 |
| Secretary | Carla Brumbaugh | 932-4082 | Staff Support | Beckie Erb | 312-7087 |
| Treasurer | Beth Garner | 932-4156 | Sexton | Phil Claar | 215-0885 |
| Property | Paul Decker | 330-6345 | | | |
| Christian Ed. | Amanda Decker | 934-8798 | | | |

HIGHLIGHTS BY COUNCIL IN JUNE 2026

1. The Christian Education and Social Ministry committees purchased 40 one-day passes from Morrison's Cove Memorial Park to be distributed to local youth through the Martinsburg Community Library. The passes can be used for skating, bowling, or swimming.
2. The Social Ministry committee will serve the community meal on September 14 at 6:00 p.m. at the Church of God.
3. The Blessing of the Backpacks will be held on August 16.
4. Sunday School will resume on September 13.



Allegheny Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

How has God gifted YOU with skills
& passion for our shared ministry?
We want to know!

Please complete the Allegheny Synod's Life Together Survey to help Bishop Kevin and his staff connect members of our synod with each other and the committees and teams working to spread God's love & light in the world. Access the survey with this QR code or on the Synod website. Contact your church office or the synod office for a paper copy.





Emergency Training

St. Matthew will hold training in CPR and AED use in case we need to respond to a medical emergency. Training will be Wednesday, July 22nd at 6:30PM.

Training will not include certification, but you may get certificates online.

Please RSVP to the office by July 19th to ensure we have enough materials.

Talk-O Tuesday



Fellowship, Food, & Faith Conversation
Tuesday, July 28th at 6PM
La Fiesta at the Airport
RSVP to the office by Noon

Join the Allegheny Synod for



Reserve Tickets Through St. Matthew's Office
\$5 Per Person, Due to Jen by July 31st
(food & drinks not included)

Social Ministry Committee Corner



YOUNG AT HEART LUNCHEON

There is still plenty of time to make your reservation for the 2026 Young at Heart Luncheon. The reservation deadline is July 10. We will do the cooking, come and enjoy a delicious family style meal prepared by some of the BEST cooks at St Matthew.

Entertainment will feature Tina Walter.

A takeout meal will be delivered to our homebound members if they call and place their name in the delivery list.

Also, if you would like to help in any way contact Lottie Ebersole.

A brief Social Ministry meeting will be held Sunday July 19th following the service.

It is hard to believe we are starting the second half of 2026, May each day be filled with the love of Christ in our actions.

Next Social Ministry Committee meeting will be Monday August 24, 6:30 p.m. via zoom..

Lottie Ebersole

Social Ministry Committee



July 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 |
|---|-----|-----|---|---------------------------------------|-----|------------------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | | 9-11 am Food Pantry, Allegheny St. | | Independence Day |
| | | | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| | | | 2-5 pm Pastor in Office | | | |
| | | | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| | | | 2-5 pm Pastor in Office | 9-11 am Food Pantry, Allegheny St. | | |
| | | | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| | | | 6:30 CPR and AED Training, FH | | | |
| | | | 29 | 30 | 31 | |
| | | | 2-5 pm Pastor in Office | | | |
| | | | 7 | | | |
| | | | 6 pm Morrisons Cove Agricultural Parade, Martinsburg | | | |
| | | | 14 | | | |
| | | | 21 | | | |
| | | | 12:00 pm Young at Heart Luncheon, FH | | | |
| | | | 28 | | | |
| | | | 12:30-3:00 pm Knotty Ladies, QR  | | | |
| | | | 6:00 pm Talk-O Tuesday, La Fiesta, Airport | | | |
| | | | 6 | | | |
| | | | FH—Fellowship Hall CE-Christian Ed Office CL-Church Lounge QR-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 | | | |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 6th Sun. after Pentecost 9:30 am Worship in Sanctuary | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 7th Sun. after Pentecost 9:30 am Worship in Sanctuary | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 8th Sun. after Pentecost 9:30 am Worship in Sanctuary | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |
| 9th Sun. after Pentecost 9:30 am Worship in Sanctuary | | | | | | |