

Newsletter

December, 2016

BELLRINGER



Wednesday, November 30

We will be decorating the church beginning at 5:30 pm. This will be a wonderful opportunity for families to join us as we will be making advent wreaths you can bring home, placing ornaments on the church Christmas tree, and get the church ready for the Christmas season. We will provide a pizza dinner that evening as well so it is one less evening you have to worry about dinner.



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
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Youth Ministry
Audrey Subhan-Church Adm.
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November 27, Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Scripture Lesson: Luke 1:26-33 (Gabriel)

Worship 9 & 10:30

Wednesday, November 30, Hanging of the Greens,

Decorating the church/tree along with crafts beginning at 5:30 pm with dinner to follow.

December 4, Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 1:18-25 (Joseph)

Worship 9, 10:30 & 5:30 pm

December 11, Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Scripture Lesson: Luke 1:34-38 (Mary)

Worship 9 & 10:30

December 18, Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Christmas Pageant 9am

Worship 10:30 & 5:30

Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24 Worship Services

3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m.

No Worship Christmas Day, December 25

First Sunday after Christmas, January 1

One Worship Service, 9:30 a.m.

Epiphany Sunday, January 8

Worship Services, 9:00 & 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.



Grace and Peace to you,

It is hard to believe that I completed my Camino pilgrimage over a month ago, it was an inspiring experience. The countryside was breath-takingly beautiful. And I met amazing people from around the world. It was physical challenge and I did it!

It was a mental challenge centered around the question, "Why am I doing this?" People undertake the pilgrimage for a host of reasons. Some for penance for past sins, some to ask St. James for a healing for loved one. Many walk for the challenge and the international experience. Some walk as an act of mourning and a turning over to God the loss of a loved one. Many walk as a way of opening themselves to God.

Oddly since most people walked for religious or spiritual reasons, conversations about faith were rare. My only extended conversation about faith was with an agnostic from England. Her mother was dying and she was struggling with the loss of her mother and whether there was a God who cared and what if anything her experience could tell her about God. It is one of my most cherished conversations from the Camino.

If a village or town had a church, they would hold a pilgrim's mass in the evening. One evening I attended mass in an ancient little church which held at most 50 people. At the time of the mass the church was filled with 70 or more people. No one talked about their faith during the day but many worshiped in the evening. It was at this point that I realized how important the spiritual journey was to so many of the pilgrims.

It was also the time when I most missed St. Matts. Usually the mass was in Spanish and it was a Roman Catholic mass. That evening the monk lead the service in English. When I heard the Great Thanksgiving in English I longed to be able to speak those words to the pilgrims in that church and to speak those words to the people of St. Matts.

For five weeks, I lived in a world within the world. Life on the Camino is totally different from and disconnected from life in the outside world. The outside world is noisy, busy, angry; the world of the Camino is centered, quiet, peaceful. Pilgrims leave their world to come to the Camino. The experience on the Camino has an impact on each pilgrim. At the end of their journey they return to their world changed and ready to be a gentle influence in the noisy, busy, angry world they left.

The Camino is a form of the church. We leave our outside worlds and gather together every Sunday morning, hoping to meet Christ and be transformed more and more into the image of Christ. Then we are sent out into our worlds to be an influence for the good of the world.

Jesus told his disciples that they are the salt of the earth. You and I are the salt of the earth. When we leave worship, we are sprinkled over the face of the earth to be Christ in our specific place and time. To share the love that God has lavished on us with a world desperately in need of God's love. You are the salt of the earth.

May you know the hope, peace, joy and love of God this Christmas season and throughout the new year.

Pastor Tina

welcome to youth news

Hello everyone. By the time you read this, I will have celebrated my first 90 days on the job. It has been a whirlwind of activity and I have been blessed (almost every minute) to have the opportunity to work with such wonderful youth and adults. Thank you to all the parents that have helped out in some capacity to contribute to a successful joint Youth program.

I hope you have taken the opportunity to join our Facebook group at St Matthew's/St Paul's Youth Group and follow us on Twitter and Instagram at smspyouth. I have been busy with many activities and out in the community watching the youth participate in some sporting events. Pictures are displayed on a rotating basis on the bulletin boards and on social media so please be sure to check them out.

The Kindergarten through 5th grade children have enjoyed a mini golf outing and a trip to the pumpkin patch. Our 6th-8th grade youth started things off with a very successful Kick-Off Swim Party and enjoyed attending the Synod's Junior Youth Gathering retreat. The 9th-12th grade youth also started off the new school year with a very successful Kick-Off Party and went on a weekend retreat to Camp Innabah which was a lot of fun. The high school youth and the confirmation age youth meet on the first and third Sunday nights and attendance has been strong.

We just had our Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser on November 11th and it was a HUGE success. Between the two churches we sold tickets for 249 people and raised almost \$2200. Almost all food and beverage items were donated and what wasn't donated, was purchased with cash donations that were received. A big thank you to everyone for your support, and especially to those that worked in various capacities to make it such a success. The young youth (through 5th grade) made crafts and cards that night which will be included in the Thanksgiving baskets, distributed as part of meals served to those in need and delivered to the homebound.

Ten high school youth and adults participated in a day of service for Good Works on Saturday, November 5th. We hope to make this a regular event.

Our December events include Christmas Caroling and a pizza party on Sunday, December 11th for the 6th-12th grade. At that time we will hand out crafts made by the young youth at their own Christmas celebration to be held on Saturday, December 10th.



Christmas
celebration.



I still need **volunteers** for events big and small. So please let me know if you would like to help. We cannot succeed without the help of many wonderful adults.

God's peace,

Sheila Lanzalotto aka "Mrs L"



St. Matthews Outreach Ministries

Serving God's People



November 12 -20, 2016

Join the county-wide effort to bring greater awareness to the issues of hunger and homelessness to ensure that there is **HOUSING & FOOD FOR ALL 365!**

MON.
NOVEMBER 14
5:30-7PM

KICK OFF:

The Graduate Center @WC University, 1160 McDermott Dr. West Chester - Free event focusing on poverty among children/youth & Community Champion Award presentation. Open to the public. Visit: www.hfa365.org

SAT.
NOVEMBER 12
5-9PM

WARMTH FOR ALL:
Kimberton Waldorf School, 450 Seven Stars Road, Phoenixville
Free Event: Please bring blankets, coats and canned goods for Phoenixville area shelters, food cupboards. Visit: www.OrionCommunities.org/wfa/

TUES.
NOVEMBER 15
100M-2PM

OUR STORIES MATTER:
St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 121 Church Street, Phoenixville
Learn about food & shelter needs in our community. This event begins with a brief intro to local initiatives.



THUR.
NOVEMBER 17
ALL DAY

TAKE TO THE STREETS:
Across Chester County
Inform passersby about the current state of homelessness in our county & how to get involved to help our neighbors in times of need. Visit www.decadetodoorkaysa.org



WED.
NOVEMBER 16
12-2PM

WCU RESOURCE POVERTY INFORMATION TABLE:
Sykes Student Union lobby, 110 W. Rosedale Avenue - Learn about hunger and homelessness in Chester County & how the West Chester University's Resource Pantry is helping.

ALL WEEK LONG :

PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING POVERTY BY PARTICIPATING IN THE BACK PACK PROJECT - THOSE INTERESTED SHOULD CONTACT lindsey@bridgeofhopefcc.org

THE CHESTER COUNTY FOOD BANK IS ACCEPTING DONATIONS OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD AND TURKEYS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON. FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT DONATING AND/OR VOLUNTEERING chestercountyfoodbank.org 610-873-6000

