



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Around the Church

January 11, 2026



NEW YEAR'S CLEANSING

Coming out of the Christmas season, the scripture readings jump 33 years to when Jesus is an adult, and the first thing that happens is that he gets baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17). John

is a prophet sent to prepare the way for Jesus, for the "coming of the Messiah." John is a fiery preacher, not one to mince words, and his hearers respond to his calls for repentance. Their response is to be baptized, washed in the river Jordan, confessing their sins, "coming clean" before God and God's prophet. Preparing their hearts and starting fresh for "what's next"—namely Jesus coming into the world and revealing God through his teaching, ministry, and ultimately his death and resurrection.

Comparing the act of "coming clean"—baptism—to New Year's resolutions might be a stretch, but it does seem that with the beginning of a new year people look back and reflect, take a little self-inventory, and "try to be better." That is very similar to "repentance." We all could use a little repentance (or a lot, depending on one's circumstances...), and the *spiritual* act is to wash ourselves on the inside. The *physical* ritual is baptism (a Greek word that simply means "to wash"). I think most New Year's resolutions come with an admission that "I need to do a better job at _____." That's humbling. I don't think any of us like being humbled or having to embrace humility. It looks too much like weakness, admitting that we're wrong, or that others can make claims on us. The world elevates and rewards strength. And yet, humility is at the heart of Christ's teaching, his ethics, his message. He said if you want to be great in the kingdom of heaven then become a servant (Mark 9:33-37).

Jesus doesn't need to come clean in the way I described it or be baptized in the way John was doing it in the Judean wilderness. John even says to Jesus, "I need to be baptized by you!"

People entered the waters to be cleansed of shame and sin, and Jesus did not hold himself above them but *joined them* in this cleansing act of humility. How different and beautiful that is.

**Peace,
Pr. Christian**



TRIP TO LANTERN HILL

MEETING JAN. 29

We're going! Follow the Light to Lantern Hill on our mission week July 20-26 (may be flexed by a day on either end due to travel needs).

A Zoom meeting on Thursday, January 29 at 7:00pm will discuss travel plans, expectations, and possibly feature a visit with the founder of Lantern Hill. Attend this meeting even if you just think you want to go! We will obtain commitments to travel by the end of February.

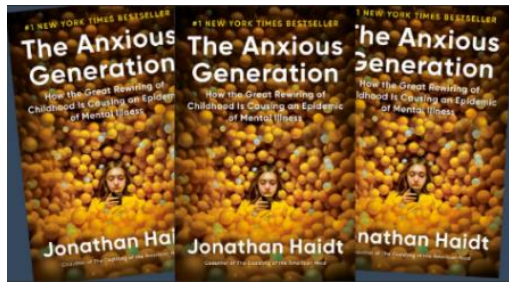
For more information, please contact Stephanie McMullan (mcmullanfour@verizon.net) or Jen Williams (jenwilliamsrp@gmail.com)



MISSION IN:

MEETING JAN. 11

Please join us for our first meeting of 2026 on Sunday, January 11 at 10:45am in the CLC.



ANXIOUS GENERATION BOOK

STUDY, JAN. 11

OUR NEXT "THE ANXIOUS GENERATION" BOOK STUDY will be on Sunday, January 11 from 3:00-4:30pm at St. Paul's. Parents with children in preschool-5th grade are welcome to join us as we talk about issues around children and social media. Even if you haven't been able to attend until now, you are still invited to participate; December's session was cancelled by the snow, so you won't have missed as much as you think! This month's conversation will focus on the third section of the book, The Great Rewiring: The Rise of the Phone-Based Childhood. For questions, contact Craig Miller at craigyouthmin@gmail.com or 484-320-0785.



DESIGNER BAG BINGO JAN. 16

Join us for Designer Bag Bingo for St. Matthew's School on Friday, January 16. Snow Date January 23. Doors open at 6:00pm, BINGO begins at 7:00pm

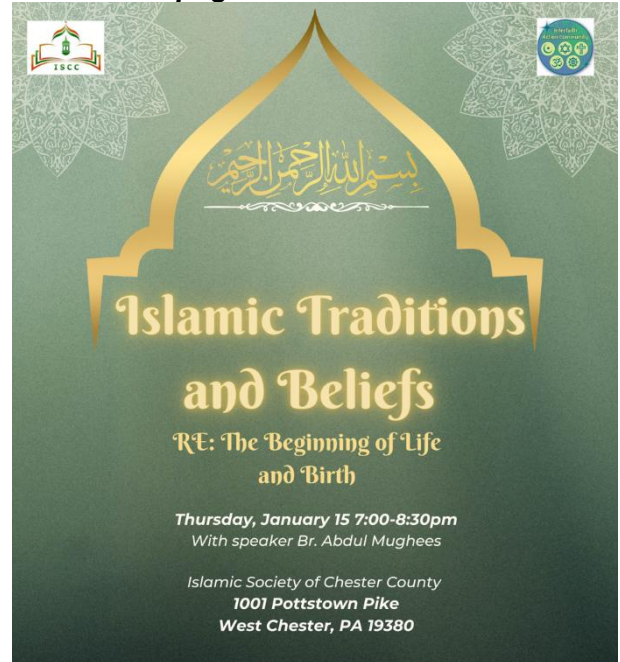
\$35.00 per person. Reserve your tickets in advance for friends and family. There are a limited number of tickets available for this event. Email Sandy stmatts.sandy@gmail.com.

More details and info for corporate sponsors are posted on the church website on the Events page!

IAC LECTURE JAN. 15:

ISLAMIC TRADITIONS & BELIEFS

The Interfaith Action Community of Chester County invites you to a lecture on Islamic Traditions and Beliefs regarding The Beginning of Life and Birth on Thursday, January 15 at the Islamic Society of Chester County. *Please RSVP by using the link provided in the online ATC or on the events page on the church website.*



ASP Appalachia SERVICE PROJECT® **YOUTH REGISTRATION FOR** **APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT** **IS NOW OPEN!**

Current 7th-12th graders are able to participate in this annual trip to Central Appalachia to help make homes safer, warmer, and drier for families in need. This year's ASP trip will be July 11-18, 2026 (Saturday through Saturday), with three prep sessions happening Sundays April 19, May 3, and May 31.

To register, go to ASP's registration portal at <https://apps.skycog.com/reg/APPSERV/SignIn.asp> (link is in the online ATC and church website) and do the following:

1. Log in to your ASP account. (If you have never attended ASP before, you will need to create a new account in the participant's name, not the parent's.)
2. Enter 16866 for the group number, to find our trip.
3. Complete the registration, release, and medical forms online.

The cost per participant will be \$400; youth will have the opportunity to earn money toward their trip by helping with fundraisers in late winter and spring. This trip has filled up for the past three years, so don't wait too long if you want to come with us this summer!

Questions? Contact Craig Miller
at craigyouthmin@gmail.com, or by text or phone at 484-320-0785.



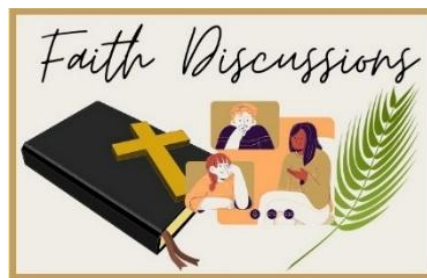
YOUTH NEWS

THE FIRST HIGH SCHOOL OASIS BIBLE DIVE will be on **Sunday, January 11 from 6:30-8:00pm at St. Matthew's**. Spend an evening unwinding from the stress of everyday life while finding rest in God's Word to us. Advance sign-up isn't necessary; just show up!

OUR NEXT GOOD WORKS YOUTH WORK DAY is **Saturday, January 24 from 8:15am-3:45pm (meet at the Good Works warehouse in Coatesville)**. Come spend the day helping fix up homes for families who don't have the means to do it themselves. Anyone in 8th-12th grade is welcome to join us, including friends. **Sign up is located in the online ATC, sign up by Monday, January 12 to participate.**

DON'T MISS OUR YOUTH EVENT AT TOPGOLF IN KING OF PRUSSIA on **Sunday, January 25 from 12 Noon-3:00pm!** Spend a couple of fun hours showing off your golf swing (or developing one), eating, and having fun with friends! ALL youth in grades 6-12 are invited to participate, including friends. The household cost will be \$20 for one participant, or \$35 for two or more participants from the same household. Sign up is in the online ATC, don't throw away your shot!

REGISTER NOW FOR THE TUSCARORA LUTHERAN YOUTH RETREAT! This annual synod-wide youth event will take place **Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, March 20-22**. ALL 6th-12th graders are encouraged to participate, and friends are welcome to join us, too! The cost is \$175 per person; scholarships are available. The sign up link is on the online ATC and church website, **the registration deadline is Sunday, February 1.**



FAITH DISCUSSIONS, JAN. 20

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 20 at 7:00pm in the Lounge**. We are continuing our discussion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and will be discussing Matthew 6:5-18. All are welcome...hope to see you there!



MEN'S BREAKFAST, JAN. 24

Please plan on bringing something to cook and share with the group on **Saturday, January 24**. **Please note the change in date!** Food prep begins at 8:00am with breakfast starting at 8:30am. Please contact Tim Guyer at ttguyer@gmail.com with questions.



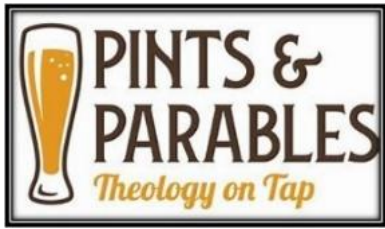
ST. MARY'S MEAL DELIVERY **NEXT MEAL, JAN. 25**

You can choose from a few options when you sign up to provide a meal, two are listed below:

-Provide groceries for their kitchen team to prepare dinner. Plan a meal for 15 people, including a main dish, a vegetable or salad and a dessert. Groceries can be dropped off the day before or by 2:30 pm on the day of the meal.

-Deliver a ready-to-eat meal (frozen or fresh) from a grocery store or pizza parlor.

More information is on our Church website, and the sign up for the next meal on January 25 is in the online ATC.



PINTS AND PARABLES, FEB. 2
NOW AT MAGERKS!

Come join us for stimulating conversation & fellowship, in a laid-back relaxing atmosphere on **Monday, February 2, 7:00pm**. We will meet at **MaGerks, 174 Eagleview Blvd. in Lionville.**



COFFEE & CHRIST, FEB. 7

Join us for coffee and good conversation at our next session of Coffee & Christ, **Saturday, February 7 at 8:30am** at Starbucks in Chester Springs!



PICK UP NATIVITY SETS &
THANK YOU FOR DECORATIONS!

Thanks to everyone who shared your nativity sets for our Christmas display. They were enjoyed by many! **The nativity sets can now be picked up at your convenience after Worship.** Also, a big thank you to all who helped with our lovely Christmas decorations! We are blessed with a beautiful worship space!



RENT A GARDEN SPACE IN 2026!

Interested in renting a growing space in our thriving community garden? We have one raised garden bed available for rent for the upcoming 2026 growing season. The cost to rent

the bed for a single season (April-November) is \$50. With our well-maintained garden space and drip watering system, you do not have to be an experienced gardener to enjoy growing your own veggies. If you or anyone you might know from the community is interested, please contact Meghan Comegys at megcomegys@gmail.com or 484-684-3109. We would love to have new faces join our existing team of gardeners!



CALL FOR WORSHIP ASSISTANTS!

We are in need of more **Worship Assistants** in all areas: **Audio/Visual Assistants, Greeters, Altar Assistants, Lectors, Communion Assistants, Fellowship Providers and Youth Acolytes.** *Now is a great opportunity to join us in the new year!*

If you are interested in any of the positions available, please contact Sara Richardson in the office: srichardson@stmatthews-church.org. Scheduling is flexible and training will be provided!

OUR GIFTS TOGETHER:
PLEASE FILL OUT OUR SURVEY!



Please scan this QR code from your mobile device to open a survey about what gifts and skills that you would like to share with your St. Matthew's family. You can also go to the link below to access the survey. Additionally, it will be posted in the *Around the Church* email newsletter and around campus.

<https://forms.gle/PC66D8dp7Qpnus4t8>