



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Around the Church

July 19, 2026



JUDGMENT AND MERCY

(adapted from Sundays & Seasons)

Matthew's gospel knows little compromise: sheep or goats, wheat or weeds, good or evil. Finding the good news of God's love for all people, for all creation, can be a challenge in this book. Today's gospel is no exception. Jesus interprets a parable for the disciples; he announces that all evildoers will be thrown into the furnace of fire, while the righteous will shine like the sun. The "Son of Man" will judge the world. Matthew's phrase "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to . . ." occurs here for the first time in this gospel (Matt. 13:24). Jesus' parable is a genuine metaphor—it is best viewed as a whole with no point-by-point comparison. The kingdom of believers has the same potential as those of the world to do good and to do evil. Jesus' allegorical interpretation encourages believers to strive for righteousness and emphasizes God as judge.

However, in his letter to the church at Rome, Paul focuses on God as merciful judge. He proclaims that all creation will be freed from decay and receive redemption. Paul reminds us that our hope lies with God, our parent through a spirit of adoption. This dichotomous picture of God as judge and giver of mercy began with last Sunday's texts and evidences itself in readings from Romans and Matthew across the next four Sundays. In some cases the God of mercy is highlighted in Paul's letter, at other times in the gospel. This good news, however, is always present!

The exercise of judgment and mercy reflects God's emphasis on justice over fairness. A fair God condemns those who do evil. A just God moves beyond fairness to justice, peace, and reconciliation. As evil-doers, sinners, one and all, we are grateful for God's justice towards us and all people.

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Reflections adapted from Sundays and Seasons.com.*



Q2 2026 GIVING STATEMENTS

Giving Statements for the Second Quarter of 2026 were mailed and e-mailed

this week to everyone who offered donations through June 30. If you didn't receive your statement, have questions, or find problems in your statement, please contact Sara Richardson in the office (srichardson@stmatthews-church.org, or 610-458-5675 during office hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-1:00pm).

Thank you to everyone who has saved the church the cost of postage and envelope costs by changing to e-mailed quarterly statements and/or by discontinuing printed giving envelopes. If you would like to switch to one or both of these options, please reach out to Sara as soon as possible!

SUMMER OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Here are two wonderful ways you can provide hope and help to others in need this Summer...see below for full details!

- Collection for school supplies for the children at Gemma Services. Traditionally, we provide Christmas gifts to these children; our youth host a special holiday event at Elmwood Zoo; and we collect supplies for the new school year for students. This collection ends Aug. 6
- Collection for the homeless hosted by two Downingtown high school seniors. There are flyers posted around the church campus with the QR code that details desired items for the homeless. Bins will be located in the narthex, CLC, and church office porch. This collection runs through Aug. 31.

The Outreach ministry team truly appreciates the generosity of our St. Matthew's family. In so many ways, we are the body of Christ reaching out to show God's love to others in our community. Thank you for consideration!



**SCHOOL
SUPPLIES
DRIVE FOR
GEMMA
SERVICES
NOW-AUG. 6**

Our Outreach team is once again sponsoring a school supplies drive to benefit Gemma Services, now through August 6. Let's help them fill new backpacks for the children and teens they serve. They will be delivered to Gemma before the next school year begins. Supplies can be dropped off in the back of the Narthex, the CLC or in the bin on the Church Office porch.

Fill a NEW Backpack with:

- 4 Pocket Folders
- 3 Composition or Spiral Notebooks
- 1 Box of 12 Pencils
- 2 Handheld Erasers
- 2 Glue Sticks
- 1 Box Colored Pencils or Markers
- 1 Box of 24 Crayons

Contact the church office with any questions: office@stmatthews-church.org



**FOOD AND
HYGIENE
DRIVE
NOW-
AUG. 31**

St. Matthew's Outreach Team is supporting two local high school seniors, Christine Wills (Downtown East) and Diya Kondoor (Downtown STEM

Academy), who have organized a Food and Hygiene Drive to benefit Caring for Friends!

They need the following items:

- Canned goods with pull tabs
- Trail mix
- Granola bars
- Shampoo and soap
- First Aid supplies
- Toothbrushes and Toothpaste

You can also scan the QR code to provide something on their Amazon wish list.

A collection bin is currently on the church office porch, and will also be in the CLC.

For more information, contact Christine at christinemwills21@gmail.com or Diya at diya.kondoor@gmail.com



St. Mary's
Franciscan Shelter
For Homeless Families

**ST. MARY'S MEAL:
NEXT MEAL JULY 26**

The next meal delivery to St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter will be on July 26, and the sign up is now in the online ATC.

There are many options to provide a meal for at least 15 people residing at the shelter, including providing groceries for their kitchen team to prepare, deliver ready-to-eat items, donate a grocery gift card, or use their kitchen to become a guest chef/baker for parts of the meal.

Full details with the requirements are listed on the church website and on the Sign-Up Genius. If you have any questions, please contact Mindy Elmer: mlong1011@comcast.net



Coffee & Christ: Saturday, August 1, 8:30am at Starbucks in Chester Springs.

Join us for coffee and good conversation at our next session!

Pints & Parables: Monday, August 3, 7:00pm at MaGerks in Lionville. Come join us for stimulating conversation & fellowship, in a laid-back relaxing atmosphere.

Mission In: We are taking a break in July, see you August 9 at 10:45am

Faith Discussions: We are taking a break for the Summer, see you at our first Fall meeting on September 1 at 7:00pm

Men's Breakfast: We are taking a break in August, we'll see you on Saturday, September 19!



BLOOD DRIVE: THANK YOU AND SAVE THE DATE FOR SEPT. 8

Thank you to everyone who came out to give blood during our Summer drive last week! Great news...if you gave blood on Tuesday (whole blood, not PowerRed), in most cases, you will be eligible to donate at our next Blood Drive on Sept. 8!

We will sponsor the next Red Cross Blood Drive on Tuesday, September 8 (the day after Labor Day) from 1:00-6:00pm in the CLC. To register to give blood, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or go to RedCrossBlood.org. The direct link to sign up in on our website and in the online ATC. Search "19425" and scroll down to the St. Matthew's drive.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN! **ANNUAL DRIVE OUT HUNGER** **GOLF OUTING: SEPT. 17**

This year's proceeds will benefit Grace Crossing Food Pantry, the West Chester Food Cupboard, and the Coatesville Youth and Women's Alliance.

Registration is now open!

Check out our new registration link that makes signing up easier than ever!

<https://tithe.ly/event-registration/#/11321685>

(You can also find this link in this week's online ATC and on a button on the front page of the church website!)

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church 2026 Golf Event

Drive Out Hunger.

~ Proceeds Benefit ~

GraceCrossing Community Food Pantry,
West Chester Food Cupboard,
Coatesville Youth and Women's Alliance.

Raffle Prizes, Mulligans, Hole Sponsors, Fun, Food, and Music!

Kimberton Golf Club

\$125 Per Golfer—includes a BBQ Lunch

\$20 Lunch Only—Children under 10 eat Free!

September 17, 2026

7:00 am Registration

8:00 am Shot Gun

Live Music



Scan to Sign Up!

Questions? Contact, Patrick Miller, 610-291-3002 or pjmill98@yahoo.com



COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

Our summer growing season is off to a great start! This year's veggies include several varieties of tomatoes, tomatillos, bell peppers, banana peppers, summer squash, gordini lettuce, pole beans, bush beans and cucumbers. We are also growing some herbs including papalo (a heat tolerant herb that can be used like cilantro), basil, chives and parsley.

So far, we have harvested **366 pounds** that we have donated to the Chester County Food Bank. Even if you are not renting one of our 16 beds, we would love to have some new faces join us in helping plant, maintain, and harvest the vegetables we grow in the five dedicated food bank beds. No experience is necessary! If you are interested in helping in the garden, please contact Meghan Comegys (megcomegys@gmail.com or 484-684-3109), Desiree Lee (dal2123@yahoo.com or 610-425-0484) or Jim Rutledge (jrutman2005@yahoo.com or 484-459-3255).



**MORE
WORSHIP
ASSISTANTS
ARE NEEDED
THIS
SUMMER!**

We are in great need of more worship assistants this Summer. Our current, very faithful group of assistants will be taking some time off for vacations. It's a great time to try something out to help in the life of the church.

We need more lectors, communion assistants, altar assistants, greeters, Audio/Visual assistants (both for the slides and for streaming), youth acolytes, and families to provide Fellowship after Worship. Training will be provided, and scheduling is flexible!

Please contact Sara Richardson in the church office ASAP if you are interested in giving anything a try!
srichardson@stmatthews-church.org, 610-458-5675 (9:00am-1:00pm M-F)



**EARLY ATC
DEADLINES
FOR JULY AND
AUGUST**

Our Church Admin will be taking some time off over the summer, and we will have the following early deadlines for the Around the Church print newsletters:

**August 2 and August 9:
Wednesday, July 29 9:30am**

*If you have any questions, please contact Sara at srichardson@stmatthews-church.org
Thank you for your cooperation!*



**CHARLIE ZAHM OUTDOOR
CONCERT AT ST. MATTHEW'S
UCC, TODAY, JULY 19**

Country and Folk Singer-Songwriter Charlie Zahm will have an outdoor concert this Sunday, July 19 at St. Matthew's United Church of Christ, 2350 Conestoga Rd. Chester Springs. The concert starts at **3:00pm on the hill behind the church.** Please bring your own chair. The concert will be held indoors if rain. Enjoy an engaging performance featuring original songs and favorites that inspire, uplift, and entertain. A free will offering will be collected.