

New Year's Message
FROM THE PASTOR

Change

It is a brand new year. Most of us start off the New Year with a resolution. We make promises to ourselves to make our lives and those around us better. Some of those promises include: saving money, weight loss, no smoking, no alcohol, no drugs, being patient, more family time, and the list goes on and on. We live in a community of believers when we are dedicated members of his character. We are family, in good times and in bad, and we need to connect with each other. Have you considered what change you can bring to the family of God? Community is about serving and humbly allowing others to serve you.

To help you along on your life's New Year resolution, I challenge you to write a mission statement for your life. Ask yourself these few questions:

What do I want my life to be about?

What passions and desires do I have for my family, my church, and myself?

How will I serve others?

Where are my gifts and abilities?

Will I find forgiveness for others and myself?

Remember that Paul said that what you build your life with will either be destroyed or it will last forever.

I Corinthians 3:10-15 "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, or costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day (Christ) will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one going through the flames."

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Sundays at St. Matthew's

9:00am: Prayer Circle in the Parlor

9:15 - 10:15am: Sunday School Classes &
Youth Confirmation Class

10:30am: Worship Service

11:30am: Coffee Fellowship

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Acolytes

Jan. 3 Gigi Raymond
Jan. 10 Sabrina Hoffritz
Jan. 17 Nicole Rich
Jan. 24 Emily Rich
Jan. 31 Sydney Capasso

Greeters

Jan. 3 Pamela & David
Kaznica, Sean & Liam
Jan. 10 -
Jan. 17 -
Jan. 24 -
Jan. 31 -

Lay Readers

Jan. 3 Shirley Jones
Jan. 10 Bob Velazquez
Jan. 17 Karen Cuddihy
Jan. 24 Judy Schaner
Jan. 31 Jeff Rich

Coffee Fellowship

Jan. 3 -
Jan. 10 Margie & Dennis Phillips
Jan. 17 Dan Barrett
Jan. 24 -
Jan. 31 -

Ushers: Team 1

Andy Federmann - Leader
Clayton Errington
Keith Kanaley
Christian Kanaley
Donn Mergenhagen
Jeff Rich
Kurt/Luke Rich

Altar Guild

Sue Rich

Children's Church

Jan. 3 FROG Room: Jeff Rich;
Kaznica Family
K-2nd Grade: Tammy
Kruszka & Starr
Jan. 10 Lambert Family;
Brook'Lynn Clausell
K-2nd: Margie & Jessi
Phillips
Jan. 17 Shroust Family
K-2nd: Beth & Aydan
Stormer
Jan. 24 Dawn Goetz; Juliet
Hoffritz
K-2nd: Sue Rich;
Nathan Capasso
Jan. 31 Hamm Family; Trevor
Hoffritz
K-2nd: Michelle Kemp;
Gigi Raymond

Ministry of Welcome and Hospitality

If you'd like to share a smile, handshake, words of welcome or even a snack or two with friends and visitors, please remember to sign up to take a turn hosting (or co-hosting) coffee hour and/or greeting people on the landing on their way to Worship. (Sign-up sheets are on the landing.)

December Worship

Attendance:

Dec. 6 - 145
Dec. 13 - 120
Dec. 20 - 167
Dec. 24 - 150
Dec. 27 - 88

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Ryan McMillan	2
Brook'Lynn Clausell	4
Clayton Errington	4
Donn Mergenhausen	4
Paul Rich	8
Kim Hamm	14
Jane Duewiger	17
Sharon Mooney	20
Gail Burdick	21
Judy McNerney	23
Blake Shrout	24
Barbara Middaugh	26
Christine Kolodziej	27
Paul Federmann	31

Karen Kaitanowski family (Karen's brother-in-law, Greg, passed away)
 Paul Federmann & family
 Major Phillips & family
 Those in the Military & Veterans
 Stephen Ministers & Care Receivers
 Those who are Homebound
 Ralph & Marilyn Fenske
 Sy & Peggy LaVett



Those Residing in Assisted Living
 Maxine Helm
 Lois McMoil
 Henry & Jan Poppendeck
 Miriam Sheffield

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Tracy Meyers & Marna Pritchard
 January 22nd

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, January 24,
 during worship, leaders
 elected at our Annual
 Meeting will be installed
 and the outgoing leaders
 will be recognized.
 Please plan to be
 present.

Reminder from our Financial Secretary

Please check your
 church mailboxes for
 your giving statement
 and 2016 offering
 envelopes.

Thank you,
 Diane Whytas

New Year's Message

FROM THE PASTOR (continued)

It's a New Year! We have the power through the direction of the Holy Spirit to make these positive changes happen. This year is a year of change.

What positive changes can we do?

*Pray often and seek the Lord for direction.
 Visit with each other in Christian fellowship.
 Connect with some spiritually.
 Witness to those who don't know Christ.
 Do what is right according to the bible.
 Choose your friends wisely.*

God loves us so much. He sent his only Son to us so that he would be born, suffer and die on a cross so that we ALL would have eternal life. God's love for man is the same and will not change. Let us change in the direction that God has for our lives. Our church can be a more powerful group of believers by our commitment and positive change.

Have a Blessed New Year!

~Rev. Bill

Thank you to all who supported our Christmas Poinsettia Garden. The plants really added to the splendor of the Sanctuary.

We wish you all a healthy new year.

Shirley Haberman and Altar Guild.



Thank You

NOTES

Thank You All ~ who have supported me in my Director of Christian Education position, as well as the many thoughtful words and gifts I received from the Congregation, Pastor & Church Council.

May God's grace be with you all, through the New Year.

Margie Phillips

A sincere "Thank you" to Rev. Bill, Carla, Blake, Christian and Caleb for a wonderful Open House.

They not only opened their home, but their love as well to all church members.

Our parsonage looked like a Christmas showplace with amazing decorations inside and out (mostly made by Carla) along with an array of delightful treats.

Thank you again, for your generosity, love and caring.

May God Bless you all.

Your St. Matthew's Family

Dear St. Matthew's Congregation and Church Council,

Thank You for the thoughtful and very generous Christmas gift.

I love serving God at St. Matthew's as your secretary and friend.

Blessings for a wonderful, safe and healthy new year!

Michelle Kemp

We would like to thank the following people and organizations for their kindness to us this past Christmas:

To the Council and congregation: Thank you for your generous gift; thank you for having faith in the work we do. It is a pleasure serving such a down to earth, caring group of people.

Thank you to the Activity Group for your kind gift. It is nice to work with you for your events. Let us know if there is anything special you need and we will try to accommodate your request.

Finally, thank you to Rev. Bill for the poinsettia plant, it was a lovely surprise.

We hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful Christmas. Best wishes and good health in 2016.

In Christ's service, Pamela and David Kaznica, custodians

Dear Bill,

Thank you for the opportunity to baptize my great grandson, Tyler. Our family was made very comfortable by your congregation. It was a very warm welcome for all the guests.

Blessings,

Alva



No meeting in January and February.

We hope all of you will join us on Thursday, March 17th!



All families with babies and little ones are welcome to utilize this room. There are toys, cribs, high chairs and a full-service changing station. This is a room where parents can rock their little ones while hearing and seeing the worship service, and take care of any of their baby's needs.

Spiritual Life would also like to thank you for signing the guest book in the Family Nursery; your comments are being read weekly.

~Dennis Phillips

2015 Christmas Pageant

On December 20th, we celebrated our Christmas Pageant during worship. Thanks goes out to the pageant committee for their direction and help in telling their version of the Christmas story: Sydney and Andrea Capasso, Brook'Lynn and Joy Burger; Vanessa Rich for caring for our costumes; Norm Wahl, Kenny Kruszka and Nicole Rich for their special music; Joe Capasso for his photography; as well as our special thanks for all who participated in the pageant... "Great Job" to you all!

Extra special thanks for Sue Rich for listening to her calling from Christ Jesus to direct this wonderful program and gifted us all with a unique 2015 Christmas Pageant!



SPIRITUAL LIFE UPDATE

Spiritual Life continues to meet and look at the spiritual direction of our church along with Reverend Shrou. Topics include: staying current on church committee work from Stephen Ministers, Altar Guild, Caregivers, church membership and any spiritual need identified either current or in our future.

The committee is working to finalize a church logo and put together welcome gift bags for visitors and new members. We are also in the process of working together with a committee from within the church to update our website. Rev. Shrou is working with Spiritual Life and BCE to begin a bible study series called 'War Room' which focuses on the power of prayer in our lives. Lyn Rich continues to organize our group outing to the 'Women of Faith' conference in February.

We want to say a special thank you to Tammy Kruszka who has just completed her term as a member of our committee and look forward to welcoming our newest member in January.

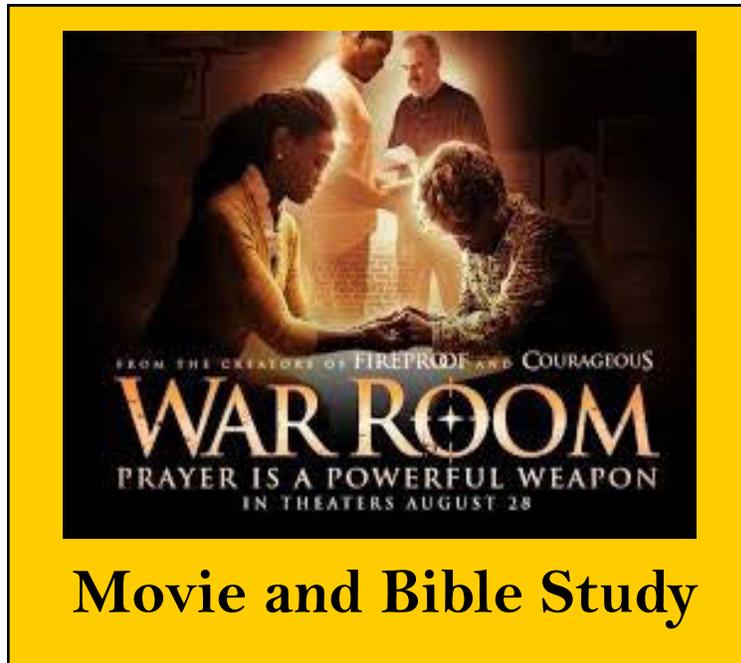
During our January meeting we will also be reviewing our leadership roles within the Spiritual Life Committee.

~Tracy Meyers



Blessings of Gratitude

~ Margie Phillips



Wednesdays, starting January 6, at 7pm

at the home of Lyn and Howard Rich

5831 Rush Creek Court, Hamburg (Deerfield Subdivision)

Please join us to watch the nationally acclaimed movie, **“WAR ROOM,”** on January 6th, (popcorn included!) followed by 5 sessions of bible study.

This study will focus on prayer and praying effectively. Couples or singles...we hope **all** will join us for this time of fellowship and discovery.

Please note that the study will be hosted by Lyn and Howard at their home. (See address above.) Call us at 648-2165 with any questions.

Thanks! Lyn and Howard

Adult Confirmation Class

On December 16th the Wednesday night Adult Confirmation Class was completed. Rev. Bill stated he will be passing out certificates to all the 11 adults who completed this Bible Study, in 2016: Dave & Joy Burger, Joe Capasso, Pam Lach, Don McMillan, Brandi & Carl Nichols, LaDonna Painter and Dennis & Margie Phillips.

All others that needed to step out of finishing this class, as well as others that are interested in taking an adult confirmation class, Rev. Bill will be holding one in the future – TBA.

We thank Rev. Bill for his great spiritual leadership and knowledge of the United Church of Christ, the Bible, Our Heavenly Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit! We were all excited to hear his opinions of our gifts and talents, as well as welcoming all of us as his spiritual friends!

~Margie Phillips

F.R.O.G. (Fully Rely On God) (3yr olds – K)

This class consists of little ones that are coming to learn a biblical message. In December, they talked about symbols of Christmas and will be continuing their lesson planning into the new year. Some were even in the Christmas pageant in December.

We welcome all children in this age group to join Andrea Capasso every Sunday morning at 9:15 am in the classroom across from offices. Parents: please remember to sign in/out your child from class. Thank you.

Disciple Zone (1st – 4th Graders)

This room has been prepared to offer a fun and comfortable learning environment. Class is going well. These boys love meeting together each week on the third floor, for a special bible lesson. In December they enjoyed learning about God's Promise and the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As we move in to the New Year, we are excited about the lessons being planned. Whether there's a story, video, craft or game. Class also, teaches our young students god's grace about fellowship with others.

God Squad (5th-7/8th Graders)

This class continues to 'live the year with Jesus'; remembering the prophecies of Jesus' coming to Jesus' birth, baptism, temptation. During Advent, they looked at life-changing encounters with Jesus by the Samaritan woman and Zacchaeus. They also went through Advent lighting a candle each week and making and learning about Chrismons. Michelle Kemp & Joann Ertel have good discussions with their students focusing on Jesus and having a personal relationship with him.

CROSSROADS (High School Class)

This class is still focusing on weekly 'DEVO' conversations, current events in the world and kids' lives. They conclude each week with a prayer list, talking about their prayer concerns and following up later in the month with them as to how these situations are processing in their lives.

In December, kids enjoyed painting the new ornaments for the Hanging of the Greens service and a few participated in the pageant.

After the holiday season, this class will fire up the 4-week series of "Not a Fan" teen edition. I'm sending out a Thank You to Joe Capasso & Holly Dobrick

Friday Morning Men's Bible Study

This group will resume January 8th and continue to meet at 7:30am every Friday for approximately 1 hour in the Fellowship Hall. Their topic of studies is the book of Romans.

All men of the church and friends are invited. Any questions can be directed to Steve Jankowski or Rev. Bill.

Youth Confirmation Class

Classes resumes on January 10th, with the regular Sunday school classes. Confirmands also attend weekly worship where they take notes on Rev. Bill's sermon. On the last week of Advent, the confirmands and mentors lit the four candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love ending with a congregational prayer.

These three students, continue to meet with their mentors weekly. They're learning the books of the bible, going over chapters of Luke and other knowledge of the United Church of Christ and doing special projects. Like making a poster of the Christian Flag. Please keep these students and mentors, as well our pastor in your daily prayers.

Adult Sunday School Class (1st Quarter of 2016)

Jan. 10th – Sunday school classes resume. (Lesson continues from last year.) – Last episode of “The Christmas Experience.”

*Followed by “The Christmas Experience” movie – set up to run in two-part series.

Jan. 17th – (Part One)

Jan. 24th - (Part Two)



January 31st – March 20th

“The Easter Experience”

The passion and resurrection of Jesus brought to life through dramatic story telling and challenging teaching done in a highly cinematic style by author: Kyle Idleman.



Jan. 31st – Episode 1: “My life has a purpose.”

Feb. 7th – Episode 2: “My life can change.”

Feb. 14th – Episode 3: “My pain is understood.”

Feb. 21st – Episode 4: “My life has a plan.”

Feb. 28th – Episode 5: “I have the promise of eternal life.”

Mar. 6th – Episode 6: “I have a hope that never dies.”

*Followed by “The Easter Experience” movie - set up to run in two-part series.

Mar. 6th – (Part One)

Mar. 13th – (Part Two)

All the adult Sunday school classes will be held in the *Parlor on the second floor from 9:15 – 10:15 am; led by Carla Shrout and Dennis Phillips.*





I came across this “Living Life” statement, and I felt like sharing this with all of you words to live by for the New Year!

“LIVING LIFE”

Life is NOT a Race – But indeed a Journey. Be Honest. Work Hard. Be Choosey. Say “Thank You,” “I Love You,” and “Great Job” to someone each day. Go to Church, Take time for Prayer. The LORD giveth, and the LORD taketh. Let your Handshake mean more than pen and paper. Love Your Life and What you’ve been Given, it is Not Accidental... Search for Your Purpose and do it as Best you can. Dreaming Does Matter. Do Not Worry, Less Wrinkles are more becoming. Forgive, it Frees the Soul. Take Time for Yourself. Plan for Longevity. Recognize the Special People you’ve been Blessed to know. Live for Today. Enjoy the Moment. – Author Unknown

2016 Plan for Making a Real Life – for Yourself

When we get to finally ‘Live Life’ we get to the end of ourselves and finally realize we aren’t strong enough, smart enough, or talented enough to not include Jesus in our daily lives! When we get to this point, then ironically we have never been in a better position to be used by God in significant ways.

Real life is found at the end of you and me. I am praying that Jesus will take you on a path to the end of you – and straight into your real life in Him.

Let’s join together in this Christian faith journey of ours in our daily lives.

FUN FELLOWSHIP! A bowling party is planned for the Youth Confirmation Class and younger on February 15th. Look for more details and permission slip at the end of this month and in the February Messenger. We hope to see all 3yr olds to 8th graders join in this annual Fun Fellowship!



New Year...
New Format...

St. Matthew’s is blessed with many children who participate in our weekly Children’s Church that takes place during the worship hour, following Rev. Bill’s children’s message.

Tammy Kruszka (and BCE) has put together a program designed to offer some fun and fellowship, as well as fitting in a bible lesson. In the weeks since we started, it has become apparent that we need to make some changes in order to better fit the needs of the children and create a positive experience for all.

When the children leave the Sanctuary, there will now be two options:

- Children 2-4 years** will be in the F.R.O.G. room (across from the church offices). This will be a time of childcare without a formal lesson being taught. Structured playtime is good for these youngest ones!
- Children in Kindergarten thru 2nd grade** will be in the high school room (downstairs), and they will experience programming more like the initial plan – a bible lesson, craft and snack.

We are excited about the new format and welcome all students, teachers, classroom leaders and helpers!

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

5289 McKinley Parkway
Hamburg New York 14075
716-649-1532
stmattucc@verizon.net

Minister:

The Rev. Dr. William B. ShROUT, Jr.
1-336-596-1868
revdrbillshROUT@yahoo.com
In office: Wednesday 9-11am
Parsonage: 4388 Richwood Drive

Director of Music:

Norman D. Wahl
716-440-5176
normwahl@gmail.com

Director of Christian Education:

Margie Phillips
716-467-1085
bcestmatt@verizon.net
In office: Wednesday 9-11am

Administrative Assistant:

Michelle Kemp
Office: 649-1532
In office: Mon. & Wed. 9am-2pm,
Thurs. 9-12, and
Fri. 12:30-3:30pm

Custodians:

Pamela & David Kaznica
716-823-2568
716-913-7504 (c)



**Friends of
Night People**

Our next outreach will be Wednesday, January 6th. Please sign up to volunteer for February 3!

If you have questions, contact Tom Schaner (646-0368).

Your donations of warm clothes, toiletries, and children's books are delivered on the day we serve.

Caring for you ...

Stephen Ministers

Stephen Ministers provide confidential one-to-one Christian care to people experiencing a crisis or going through a difficult time. They listen, empathize, encourage, pray and provide emotional and spiritual support on a weekly basis to hurting people. Questions? Contact Lyn Rich or Cheryl Larson.

Caregivers

Do you or someone you know need a Caregiver service—a ride to a doctor's appointment? a home cooked meal? house or yard work? Call Karen Kaitanowski or the church office.

Support Through Prayer

Circle Prayer - Join in the circle of prayer at 9am in the Parlor. (Sunday School classes follow at 9:15.)

Prayer Chain - Call Rev. Bill (336-596-1868), Dolly Errington (823-6210), Jane DUEWIGER (649-2085) or text Lyn Rich (863-8636) to begin the chain of texts/phone calls to those committed to pray when they receive the request—anytime; anywhere. Text/call Lyn if you'd like to be a link in the prayer chain.

CIA Christmas carolers spread Christmas joy!

140 carolers went to 10 group homes to bring cheer. Thanks to all who participated!



Family Emergency Fund

St. Matthew's has established a special fund to provide financial assistance to members and friends of our congregation. Please contact the minister if there is a need.

January 2016



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3  EPIPHANY WORSHIP 10:30am	4	5 BCE 7pm	6 AA 10:30am Staff 9am <i>Bible Study</i> <i>7pm (Lyn & Howard Rich's)</i> Band 7pm (Parlor)	7 Praise Band 6:15pm Choir 7pm Website 7pm OA 7:30pm	8 Men's Bible Study 7:30am	9
10 Sunday School 9:15-10:15am WORSHIP 10:30am	11	12 Stephen Ministry 4pm Council 7pm	13 AA 10:30am Staff 9am <i>Bible Study</i> <i>7pm (Lyn & Howard Rich's)</i> Band 7pm (Parlor)	14 Praise Band 6:15pm Choir 7:00pm OA 7:30pm	15 Men's Bible Study 7:30am	16
17 Sunday School 9:15-10:15am WORSHIP 10:30am 	18 Spiritual Life 7:00pm	19	20 AA 10:30am Staff 9am <i>Bible Study</i> <i>7pm (Lyn & Howard Rich's)</i> Band 7pm (Parlor)	21 Praise Band 6:15pm Choir 7:00pm OA 7:30pm	22 Men's Bible Study 7:30am	23
24 Sunday School 9:15-10:15am WORSHIP 10:30am <i>Installation of Church Leaders</i>	25	26 Stephen Ministry 4pm Quilters 7pm	27 AA 10:30am Staff 9am <i>Bible Study</i> <i>7pm (Lyn & Howard Rich's)</i> Band 7pm (Parlor)	28 Praise Band 6:15pm Choir 7:00pm CIA 7:00pm OA 7:30pm	29 Men's Bible Study 7:30am	30
31 Sunday School 9:15-10:15am WORSHIP 10:30am	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <p>NOTE: In the event of a winter storm, go to: WKBW Channel 7 (wkbw.com) or WGRZ Channel 2 (wgrz.com) to find out if church services/meetings are cancelled.</p> </div> 					

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

5289 McKinley Parkway

Hamburg NY 14075



St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

5289 McKinley Parkway, Hamburg, NY 14075

Phone: 649-1532

Email: officestmattucc@verizon.net

Website: stmattsucc.org

Our church building is fully accessible.



No matter where you are in your life's journey, you are welcome here!