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This time of year you hear a lot of discouraging words about New Year's resolutions. Allow me to summarize the salient objections to making resolutions:

It's an artificial time for self-improvement; pick any Thursday and be done with it.

No one keeps these resolutions; they just make you feel like a failure.

They only address trivial concerns like cosmetic weight loss.

Conversely, they trivialize deeper concerns like addictions.

Being (a) more organized, (b) less procrastinating, (c) better organized won't make you a better person.

I will not argue with any of these points. They may all be true to some extent, but just the same, I would never discourage someone from making a resolution at New Year's or whenever. For one thing, even though we often fail to keep the promises we make to ourselves about self-improvement, we don't fail 100% of the time, so why stop trying?

Perhaps more significantly, I am 'pro-resolution' because it is an affirmation that change is possible.

For everyone.

Always.

Even the worst of us.

God says so.

I'm no Pollyanna. I'm actually a glass half-empty sort of guy, truth be told; but I know that if we believe the Gospel, it means we believe that God transforms people and shapes them to conform to God's own image. During this season of Christmas, we are reminded of the words of Athanasius, that "God became what we are so that we might become what He is." The early Greek theologians of the Church called this Divinization. We call it on-going conversion and growth in holiness that begins when we turn our lives over to God in Christ and won't be complete until we see God face to face and are transformed and made like Christ (1 John 3:2).

So I say, take advantage of the calendar to consider where it would be good to grow and change. While we think of those extra pounds or giving up smoking, we might also think about being kind and responding to the people in our lives with compassion. We may well fail in all our attempts at self-improvement. The Gospel prepares us to expect that too. We rely on God's forgiveness when we fail and the strength and comfort of the Holy Spirit to help us grow in faith and in holiness. But the same God who has called us to new life in Christ, is at work in us renewing us and making us more fully into the image of Christ.

That is true on January 1<sup>st</sup> and every day.

See you in church!

-Pastor Lynn



# January Worship Participants

## Altar Guild

Robin Federmann

## Lay Readers

1/7 Bill Hamm  
 1/14 Linda Velasquez  
 1/21 Perry Kaupa  
 1/28 Jacob Zdrojewski

## Childcare

1/7 Jeff Rich  
 1/14 TBD  
 1/21 Lauren Zdrojewski  
 1/28 Pamela & Dave Kaznica

## Ushers: Team 1

Andy Federmann—Leader  
 Clayton Errington  
 Donn Mergenhausen  
 Jeff Rich  
 Kurt Rich

## Coffee Hour Hosts

1/7 Pamela & Dave Kaznica  
 1/14 Dolly & Clayton  
 Errington  
 1/21 Joann Ertel  
 1/28 Mary & Bill Hamm

## WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

### December

3	99
10	70
17	82
24	103 (am)
	109 (pm)
31	53

## Good News to Share

This past Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, I announced to the congregation with great joy that Reverend Lynn Morgan accepted our call to be St. Matthew's full-time transitional pastor for a one-year term beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>. He will be taking over all pastoral responsibilities, including calling and visitation. His contact information is below, and can also be found in the weekly bulletins or by contacting the church office.

In the upcoming months, we will be selecting a pastoral search committee, who will begin work on updating our profile.

Please welcome Pastor Lynn and Sandy as he accepts his new role here at St. Matthew's!

Beth Stormer,  
 Council President



## Contacting Pastor Lynn

### Rev. Lynn & Sandy Morgan

3607 Cumberland Lane, Hamburg 14075  
 lrmorgan@live.com  
 (home) 648-4289; (L-cell) 866-3085\* (best way to reach)  
 (Sandy cell) 408-6655

\* If you or someone you know would like to have a visit from the pastor, please contact the church office (649-1532) or Rev. Morgan (cell: 866-3085). Individuals who are not able to attend services are invited to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion in their homes.

Home visits are not just for those who are not well enough or mobile enough to attend services. There are many occasions in our lives where the prayerful support from a caring person can be of help. Your church family and your pastor are resources you can call on to stand with you in times of illness and hardship as well as joy. Please let us know how we can help; we count it a privilege to share the pilgrimage with you.

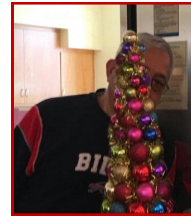
### 2017 Church Directory

There are copies of the 2017 directory on the table in the Narthex. This is also a one-page document of all the changes since the last printing.



## Activity Group CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

On Thursday, December 21, the Fellowship Hall was transformed into a beautiful venue for a special Christmas party by Robin Federmann. Folks from St. Matthew's and the community joined together to enjoy each other's company, eat a delicious catered lunch, and sing Christmas carols (accompanied by Ken Haberman & Gary Burdick).



Everyone is welcome to these monthly gatherings on the third Thursday of every month, except January & February; July & August. Mark your calendars for the next gathering on March 15.



## 2018 Christmas Pageant

Under the leadership of Tammy Kruszka, the children and some adults of St. Matthew's told the timeless story of the birth of Christ during the morning service of December 24.

*"The First Christmas"*



"F.I.R.ST. Certificates" are always available to purchase. These \$10.00 certificates never expire and are used at many Southtowns restaurants.

## Friends of Night People

Please sign up to help on the first Wednesday of the month.  
**More volunteers are needed on February 7.**



5289 McKinley Pkwy, Hamburg, NY  
716-649-1532; stmattucc@verizon.net  
Website: stmattsucc.org

*Transitional Pastor:*

Rev. Lynn R. Morgan  
716-866-3085  
lrmorgan@live.com

*Director of Music:*

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

*Administrative Assistant:*

Michelle Kemp  
716-245-1692  
Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 9am-2pm,  
Thurs. 9-12, & Fri. 12:30-3:30pm

*Custodians:*

David & Pamela Kaznica  
716-913-6927 (David)  
716-913-7504 (Pamela)



David and I wish to thank the church council, congregation and Activity Group for their gift to us this past Christmas.

If any group or individual needs anything special, just ask and we'll try to accommodate your request.

Again, thank you and our best wishes to everyone for a happy, healthy new year.

God bless. Pamela & David Kaznica

Dear friends,

Thank you so very much for the generous Christmas gift. It is a blessing to work with and for you all. Wishes for good health, joy, peace, and love in 2018. Michelle Kemp

Karen Kaitanowski  
Those in the Military & Veterans  
St. Matthew's Church  
Those Residing in Assisted Living:  
Jane Duewiger, Maxine Helm



If you would like prayers publicized here, and/or prayers communicated through the text/phone chain, please contact the church office or text Michelle Kemp at 245-1692 to begin the chain.

**Happy Birthday!**

1/4	Brook'Lynn Clausell	1/17	Jane Duewiger
1/4	Clayton Errington	1/20	Sharon Mooney
1/4	Donn Mergenhagen	1/21	Gail Burdick
1/8	Paul Rich	1/26	Barbara Middaugh
1/14	Kim Hamm	1/30	Lisa Schulz

♥ **Anniversary Blessings** ♥

1/22/1985 Tracy Meyers & Marna Pritchard

**Ways to Give to Those in Need...**

Here is a list of things we currently collect and the ministries we support. Collection baskets are on the table in the classroom closest to the Fellowship Hall.

- \* **Seasonal clothing, toiletries, children's books** for *Friends of Night People*.
- \* **Empty plastic pill bottles** for *Matthew 25: Ministries*. These bottles meet the dual needs of improving medical care in developing countries and caring for our environment.
- \* **Canned/nonperishable food items** for *Blasdell Food Pantry*. Food items can be brought to the church on the first Sunday of the month (to be delivered that week). Volunteers are needed once a month. Please sign up on the bulletin board to take a turn delivering the food to the pantry in 2018. More information is on the sign-up sheet.
- \* **Can tabs** for the *Shriner's Children's Hospital*—helps with the transportation costs of getting sick children to Shriner's Children's Hospital in Erie, PA for treatments.
- \* **2018 calendars, current magazines or Guideposts** for *shut-ins and senior care facilities*.



**Winter Closings & Delays**

Check Channels 2 or 7 for the latest news of closings or delays.

# January 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2  Folk Group 6:30pm	3 AA 10am  Friends of Night People outreach	4 Praise Band 6:15pm Choir 7:00pm  OA 7:30pm	5 Men's Bible Study 7:30am	6
7  EPIPHANY Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:30am	8  Council 7pm	9  BCE 7pm  Folk Group 6:30pm	10 AA 10am	11 Praise Band 6:15pm Choir 7:00pm  OA 7:30pm	12 Men's Bible Study 7:30am	13
14 Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:30am	15 <i>Martin Luther King Jr. day</i>	16  Mission Com. 7:00pm  Folk Group 6:30pm	17 AA 10am	18 Praise Band 6:15pm Choir 7:00pm CIA 7:00pm OA 7:30pm	19 Men's Bible Study 7:30am	20
21 Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:30am	22	23  Folk Group 6:30pm	24 AA 10am	25 Praise Band 6:15pm Choir 7:00pm  OA 7:30pm	26 Men's Bible Study 7:30am	27
28 Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:30am	29	30  Folk Group 6:30pm	31 AA 10am			

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ  
5289 McKinley Parkway  
Hamburg, NY 14075



5289 McKinley Pkwy, Hamburg, NY 14075  
Phone: 649-1532  
Email: [officestmattucc@verizon.net](mailto:officestmattucc@verizon.net)  
Website: [stmattsucc.org](http://stmattsucc.org)  
Our church building is fully accessible.

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