



Holy Habits

We are still in the season of Lent. So... from the last newsletter:

How are your "paying it forward" experiences going? Any surprises?

What did you 'take on' for Lent (rather than giving up something)?

How is your journey to the cross moving along?

While we are still in the season, as you read this, it is almost time to think about EASTER.

Actually, it is always time to think about Easter, because we are an Easter People!

We believe in Jesus being raised from the dead and living with God in the heavens and also in our hearts because we open them to our Living Lord.

We believe in the power of the resurrection and the eternal hope it brings, no matter what we are going through or have been through in our lives.

We believe in the grace of the resurrection and the mercy it offers because God has shown His love for us in giving us Jesus to walk with us all our days in forgiveness and salvation!

One of the things that I do a lot during this season is read poems and prayers by other people and one of my favorite authors is Joyce Rupp, a spiritual director and mentor to many.

This poem is called: **THE EASTER CHALLENGE**, and you can read it as you continue to make your way through the rest of Lent and into the joyous glorious Easter Season!

"You believe because you can see...Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe." John 20:29

Every year it happens:
earth shakes her sleep head,
still a bit wintered and dull,
and feels new life stirring.

Every year cocoons give up their tenures,
fresh shoots push through brown leaves,
seemingly dead branches shine with green,
and singing birds find their way home.

Every year we hear the stories:
empty tombs, surprised grievers,
runners with news and revelation,
unexpected encounters,
conversations on the road,
tales of nets filling with fish,
and breakfast on a seashore.

And every year the dull and dead in us meets our
Easter challenge:

to be open to the unexpected,
to believe beyond our security,
to welcome God in every form,
and trust in our own greening.

So friends, get your soul ready for the wonderful season of EASTER by reading the stories and praying the Scriptures, and reading poems and thinking on those things and getting ready for the Easter Challenge!

Let's be prepared to celebrate the best and greatest and most joyous service of all on Easter Sunday!!

Blessings,

Pastor Pat

Rev. Patricia Ludwig



Palm Sunday - March 24, 10am Worship

Maundy Thursday - March 28, 7pm Service

Good Friday – March 29, 7pm Service

Easter Sunday – March 31, 10am Service of Celebration

From the Spiritual Life Committee...

Lent is a precious time in the life of Christians. It is a time to reflect on the sacrifice that was made for us on the Cross and celebrate in the resurrection of Easter.

This Sunday, on your way out of service, you will see little bags "**Lent in a Bag.**" Please be sure to grab one for your household to use as a time of devotion either by yourself, or with your loved ones. **If you would like one delivered to you, please contact the church office.**

Upcoming Fellowship Events



Soup Fellowship Meal

Sunday, March 10, following Worship

The Spiritual Life Committee will host a fellowship meal of soup, bread and dessert. Come enjoy soup and visiting with each other! (Sign up is not necessary for this event.)



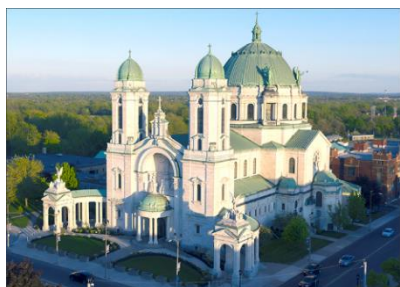
An Evening with The Ridge Ramblers Folk Group

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

You are invited to listen to the folk sounds of the local Ridge Ramblers on Wednesday evening, March 13, 6:30-8:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign up in the Narthex so planners can arrange for seating and refreshments.

EASTER EGG HUNT!

Following worship on Sunday, March 24, children ages 12 and under are invited to The Hunt! Sign up **your child, grandchild, friend and/or neighbor!**



Movie Night

Friday, April 5

Here is another opportunity to enjoy each other's company at church; this time to watch the documentary, "Building A Basilica." Tom Chmielowiec, one of the consultants on the project (and active member of St. Matthew's), will introduce the movie and answer questions. Refreshments included. Watch for a sign-up sheet as it gets closer; or, contact the church office is planning to attend (716-649-1532).

Meals On Wheels

April is the month that volunteers from St. Matthew's deliver meals to our neighbors in need (thru FeedMore WNY but known to us as Meals on Wheels). Pamela Kaznica has the calendar and is asking for volunteers for any weekday(s) in April. You may also call her at 716-913-7504.



Karen & John Kaitanowski, David Kaznica, Chase Middaugh, Blair Morrish, Kathee & Ed Simon; our elderly members & friends in assisted living or homebound: Lola Donner, Marilyn Fenske, Joan Haney, Jewell McFarland, Yvonne Shearer, Helen Wilson, those serving in the military: Alex Steinbroner, Aydan Stormer; for a new pastor at St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

Condolences to Chrissy Mellerski and Kerry Shearer at the death of Chrissy's mom, Helen Mellerski, who passed away February 11, 2024.

Requesting Prayer Concerns

If you have a prayer concern, please contact the church office to have your prayer request published here and in the bulletin **and/or** to notify the prayer chain. Michelle will text your request to the dedicated prayer warriors in the chain and rest assured, your prayers will be lifted up to the Lord. (If you would like to be a link in the prayer chain, send Michelle a text at 716-245-1692.) Please update Michelle each week; names are typically listed for approximately 3 weeks unless the person requesting would like to have them listed longer.



Pastoral Care

If you, or someone you know, is hospitalized, needs pastoral care, or would appreciate a visit or communion at home, you can call Michelle in the church office, or you can contact the Rev. Paula Gustafson directly at 716-476-9261. Pastor Paula will be providing pastoral care while we are without a Called Pastor.

Clergy News

Pastor Pat has accepted the offer to stay as our Supply Pastor until we hire a full-time pastor. We are grateful she will be with us, consistently preaching, instead of us working each week to fill the pulpit with available clergy.

The church profile has been distributed through the UCC New York Conference and our Search Committee is confidentially active in the process. Please continue to pray for the perfect match for our church and the stirrings in the heart and mind of that individual to be directed to us.

Happy Birthday!

March: 3/2 Norm Wahl, 3/5 Karen Cuddihy, 3/5 Michelle Kemp, 3/5 Janet Kromer, 3/10 Karen Kaitanowski, 3/11 Donna Lee Melberg, 3/17 Tim Baker, 3/26 Robin Miller

April: 4/1 Tyler Myers, 4/2 Philip Myers, 4/5 Chrissy Mellerski, 4/5 Nancy Williams, 4/8 Linda Ferraro, 4/8 Vanessa Rich, 4/14 Diane Whytas, 4/15 Donesse Lindsay, 4/16 Robin Federmann, 4/19 Ken Haberman



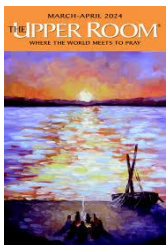
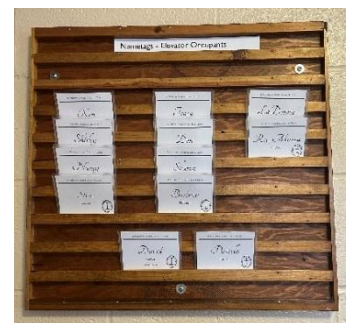
Happy Anniversary!

Tom & Janet Kromer 4/17/1971

New Nametag Board!

We now have a name tag board for people who use the elevator, hung on the wall next to it.

Thank you to Steve Jankowski who took part of Roy Duewiger's original board at the end of the hallway and created this smaller one to match.



Daily Devotionals

The March-April issue of The Upper Room is available. You can find them in the magazine rack in the Narthex or on the small table in the Fellowship Hall.

Help yourself and give one to a friend!

Thank you for your continued generous support of the day-to-day operations and ministries of St. Matthew's.

Church Directory

If you'd like to keep in touch with fellow church members and friends, ask for a copy of the most recent church directory - contact Michelle in the office at 716-649-1532.

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

5289 McKinley Parkway

Hamburg, NY 14075

www.stmattsucc.org



Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

† Worship Service: 10:00am Sunday mornings