

Greetings, Beloved Church of God!

Greetings St. Matthew's Family, Happy New Year! I hope you have had a blessed holiday season, whether it was filled with celebrations and festivities or seemed more bittersweet.

Many years ago I had a science teacher who claimed to have grown up in the circus - we'd often walk into his classroom and find him doing some kind of trick that we'd only ever seen in the circus (hence, why we never challenged his claim!). Until I walked into class one day and saw him balancing at least 6 plates of different sizes and patterns on posts of different lengths and widths, I had never considered that spinning plates was something you could do in your daily life, or how many factors went into keeping all of the plates spinning - yet it's an image and a metaphor for life that has stuck with me for all these years.

We've only just come through the seasons of Advent and Christmas, yet we are already starting to plan for Lent. The Liturgical Cycle spins just as one of those plates does – cycling between the anticipation

and celebration of Jesus' birth to preparation for his death and resurrection...

Our lives spin the same way – cycling between moments of anticipation, celebration, preparation, loss, and so many other moments in between! Consider the words of Galatians 2:20 (NIV): "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." When we center ourselves in Christ, new cycles of life and faith begin. There might be moments when we need to be steadied or something feels "off kilter" and needs to be adjusted, but even in unpredictable moments there is a rhythm to it. A balance can be found, especially when we are centered in God.

Gracious God, we acknowledge that You are with us in each moment of life. Help us to be centered firmly in You, now and always. Amen.

Blessings,
Rev. Kayti Dean, Pastor

Member Conversations

Hope to see you there!

We are going to be hosting Membership Conversations – anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the St. Mathew's are welcome to join us for a series of Membership Conversations after Sunday worship on January 26, February 2, and February 9. Current members are also welcome – and encouraged! – to come and be part of the conversation so we can learn and grow together!

- On January 26, we will talk about what it means to be a Member of the UCC – how we are active in our faith, supporting the Christian Church locally and through our global connections.
- On February 2, we will talk about the sacraments and core beliefs of the UCC, including the authority of scripture, Christian unity, the Trinity, and so forth.
- On February 9, we will talk about some of the history of the UCC and the history of St. Matthew's, as well as more specific information about who the church family at St. Matthew's is and how our church is organized.

Interested in becoming a member of St. Matthew's? Please contact Pastor Kayti at Pastor@StMattsUCC.org or the [Church Office](#) so she can follow up with you directly. We would like to welcome new members as part of our worship service on February 23, 2025.

If you are unable to join us for Worship in person but are interested in these conversations and in joining the church, please contact Pastor Kayti; if there is enough interest, she will host these conversations via Zoom as well.

Installation of Pastor Kayti

A warm Thank You to everyone who helped prepare for and to all those who attended Pastor Kayti's Installation service. It was a time filled with joy, fellowship, and a lot of cake and goodies!

And, as an added bonus, despite many die-hard fans skipping the game to attend the Installation...the Bills won!



Thank You to all those who worked to organize, set up and clean up and cook/bake for the celebratory reception!

Holiday Dessert Exchange

The Dessert Exchange went very well with 12 attending. We had a nice variety of desserts to share with everyone. Some great conversation with a few games and then a time out to enjoy the homemade desserts. Nancy J. made purse tissue holders for everyone.

Hope you can attend a Hospitality Committee fun event in 2025.

LaDonna Painter



St. Matthew's in the Hamburg Holiday Parade!

November 30, 2024

Several families braved the cold, wind, and snow to represent St. Matthew's in the Holiday Parade in the Village of Hamburg.

It was a great time to connect to the Hamburg community and spread God's love and our message, 'Wherever you are in life's journey you are welcome at St. Matthew's.'



Thanks to everyone who persevered through the snow and those who cheered on the sideline. -Corey Wilson

Fun & Fellowship at Advent Workshop!

December 8, 2024



Thank you to the Board of Christian Education (BCE) for the crafts and overall planning and setting up, and to Council members for providing the soup!



Missions & Outreach

Ongoing Recycling to Support Our Children's Ministry & Ronald McDonald House

St. Matthew's Board of Christian Education has set up a fundraising account at the Can Bottle Return Company (CBR) on 4255 Clark Street in Hamburg. Funds will support children's activity days and missions throughout the year. When you go to CBR, ask that your return money go to St. Matthew's.



Before you take your cans to CBR, remove the tab and bring your supply to church. The metal tabs are delivered to Buffalo's Ronald McDonald House and recycled. The money pays for their utility bills. There are 2 plastic containers for your donations on the collection table by the back door.

Ongoing Collection of household items for refugees

St. Matthew's continues to collect items that will support the families that are re-settling in the Buffalo area through the work of Churches In Action.

The new or gently used items we have chosen to collect are as follows:

- 8 mugs for hot drinks**
- 8 plates...8 bowls**
- Toaster....Toaster oven**
- 8 glasses**

You can place your donations in the bin located near the back entrance. This is an ongoing collection as we will continue to support new families and have supplies on hand because typically the moves happen at the last minute.

Collection bins are located in downstairs hallway near entrance door.

Ongoing Collection of food and pantry items for those in need locally

St. Matthew's continues to collect items for the SS. Peter & Paul Outreach Center – the local hub that gives out food and needed household items to those in need. A list of suggested items is at the collection site.

St. Matthew's Supports Hurricane Helene Survivors

In November, our Mission Committee chose to financially help the people affected by Hurricane Helene through Bounty & Soul, a nonprofit organization in Western North Carolina that continues their tireless efforts to meet the ever-changing needs of the hard-hit communities.

The Founder and Executive Director of the 10-year-old organization is Michelle Kemp's sister, Ali Casparian. Michelle knows first-hand the wonderful, expanding and trustworthy work of Bounty & Soul.

This is text from their handwritten Thank You note:

Dear Mission Committee, Please accept our deepest gratitude for your generous donation of \$500 made on November 16th. This contribution will provide fresh food, wellness education, and critical support to those impacted by Hurricane Helene.

We are so grateful for your compassion and commitment to our mission.

With Gratitude,

The Bounty & Soul Team



Baptism News

On Saturday, December 21, Annie Joy Asboth was baptized in a family service at the church. The following Sunday, Annie was presented to the congregation for a Baptism Affirmation when we promised our love, support, and care for her and her family, Devon, Bill and Rose.



Coffee & Connection with Pastor Kayti!

Connect with Pastor Kayti in the office, Panera Bread, Comfort Zone Cafe, or your home or hospital. Here is her weekly schedule:

Mondays: Office 9am-2pm

Tuesdays: Office 9am-12noon * Panera Bread 12:30-3:30pm

Wednesdays: Comfort Zone Café 9am-12noon

Thursdays: Office as needed

Fridays: Sabbath day of rest

Hours may vary, so please contact the church office to check Pastor Kayti's availability.

Holy Communion is always available to you. If you missed a Communion Sunday for any reason and would like the sacraments at home, please contact Pastor Kayti (call the office 716-649-1532 or her cell phone 716-473-2606).



Please keep the following in your thoughts, prayers and acts of loving kindness:

For those who are seeking peace, comfort and healing:

Tracy Meyers, positive results of tests

Carl Waible, shoulder surgery on January 22

Doug (Pastor Kayti's friend)

All who are grieving and who are in need of God's healing and wholeness in mind, body & spirit

For those who are homebound or in assisted living:

Donesse Lindsay

Joan Haney

Lola Donner

Yvonne Shearer

For those who have lost a loved one:

The family of Jewell McFarland, the sister of Alva Looze and aunt of Debbie Zdrojewski; passed away on December 23, 2024.

The family of Helen Wilson, including her son and daughter-in-law Chris and Corey Wilson; passed away on December 31, 2024.

All who participate in the life of our community from their homes

For those in the military:

Alex Steinbroner

Aydan Stormer

All who are serving at home and abroad

For those impacted by Natural Disasters

The devastating wildfires in California, including Cheryl Larson's sister-in-law Karen & husband Rob
The long-term recovery efforts of lives affected by Hurricane Helene

For those who are celebrating or have had prayers answered.

Tracy Meyer's successful surgery

Do you have a Prayer Request?

Please give your requests to Michelle in the church office. Let us know if you'd like the name(s) to go into the bulletin and Newsflash and/or sent to the prayer text chain which has dedicated, confidential prayer warriors ready to pray when they receive a text request.

Names will appear in the bulletin and Newsflash for 2 weeks; after which time, if you'd like them to remain on the list, please contact the office. This way, we are lifting up in prayer those with immediate needs at a critical time.

If you would like to be a prayer warrior who receives prayer requests through texts, contact Michelle by calling or texting her at 716-245-1692.

Happy Birthday!

January: Clayton Errington (1/4), Carl Waible (1/5), Bill Asboth (1/8), Sharon Mooney (1/20), Gail Burdick (1/21), Jay Dean (1/23), Barbara Middaugh (1/26)

February: Don McMillan (2/2), Jeanette Haberer (2/4), Bill Hamm (2/22), Robynn Rich (2/27)



Happy Anniversary!

Tracy Meyers & Rev. Marna Pritchard (1/22/1985)

Steve & Nancy Jankowski (2/1/1969)

Clayton & Dolly Errington (23/15/1955) **70 YEARS!!**

Ken & Sharon Mooney (2/18/1965) **60 YEARS!**

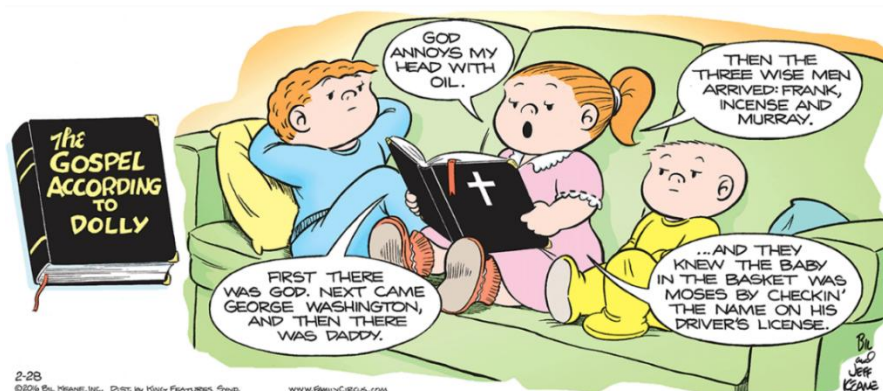
Do you have brand new item(s) that you don't use? Don't want anymore?

LaDonna Painter is putting together raffle baskets for Senior Wishes' annual fundraiser. She's wondering if anyone has something they'd like to donate towards a basket. LaDonna would create a basket with that item. If you have something, please contact LaDonna at 716-715-7310.

Update: Viewing St. Matthew's Services Online

Please note that for the next couple of weeks, the service will be posted to the church Facebook page later in the afternoon that Sunday (not live at 10am).

You can watch the service live through YouTube starting at 10am, but note that if you miss tuning in between the 10-11am service live, it will then take a little while for the video to upload permanently. In other words, if you don't see the video listed on our YouTube page at noon (or thereabouts), it is because it hasn't been permanently uploaded yet. Give it a little more time and then check. Thank you for your patience.



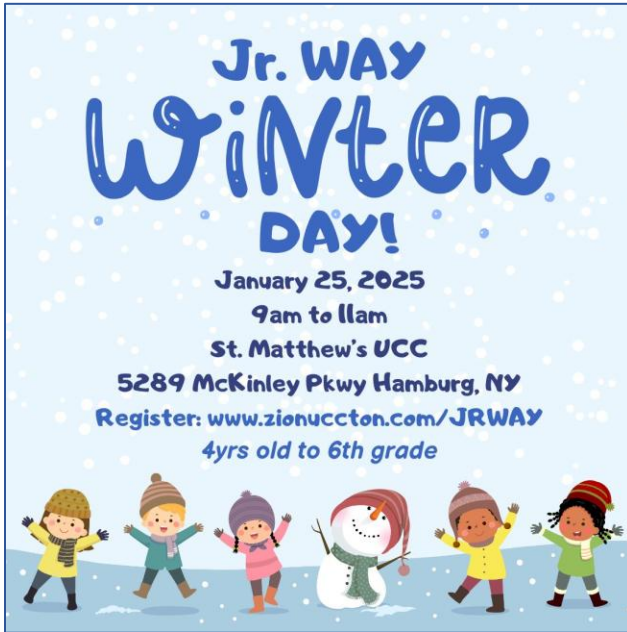
Coffee Fellowship Hosts Needed

St. Matthew's is blessed to have volunteer hosts who welcome people and provide snacks after worship service twice a month.

If you have ever thought of hosting or co-hosting a Coffee Fellowship Hour, please take a moment to sign up on the table in the Narthex, or contact Joyce Corlett if you have any questions or concerns (call/text 716-983-0909).



For the Kids...



A fun Jr. WAY* event is coming to St. Matthew's! Kids ages 4 through 6th grade are welcome to attend! Register soon ... the 25th will be here before you know it.

*Western Area Youth (kids from UCC & Disciples of Christ churches in WNY)

UCC's 2025 Climate Hope Art Contest

We have officially launched the UCC's 2025 Climate Hope Art Contest for children and youth. Our theme this year is "Planting Seeds of Hope." We'll accept art submissions from February 2-March 14. Like last year, we will have winners for different age groups and an overall winner who will receive an all-expense paid trip to visit Washington, DC with a parent or guardian. The winning art will additionally serve as the logo for UCC Climate Hope advocacy work throughout 2025.

Register now for your church to participate!
www.ucc.org/the-uccs-2025-climate-hope-art-contest/

We will send you a PDF of the art contest page on which artists will create their masterpieces. We are looking forward to seeing the amazing creativity and talent of our children once again.

With gratitude for each of you, Sue Mueller, Lead Climate Hope Organizer, United Church of Christ



"What do the angels say to God when He sneezes?"

Thank You

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

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

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www.stmattsucc.org



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

† Worship Service: 10:00 am Sunday mornings
2nd & 4th Sundays: Children's Sunday School and Coffee Fellowship