

St. Matthew Ev. Lutheran Church

Good News

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
5566 Chambersburg Road
Huber Heights, OH 45424
Telephone: 937-233-4632



FEBRUARY 2025

From the Pastor's Desk

Blessing for this "Time After Epiphany"



During this time after Epiphany, the Gospel offers us glimpses of the life of Jesus. Think of these readings each Sunday as a television series, eight stories form a single season. Consider how you would describe these stories as a whole. What does it have to say about the human experience? The primary goal for this series and/or season is to keep the focus on baptism. We are reminded that the "means of grace" provide life & salvation as quoted by Luther and yes, forgiveness of sins.

May God prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Lent, wherein we all make that journey to the cross, made by Jesus, our Lord & Savior. We are reminded that Jesus' death and resurrection is a precursor to our baptism and a new life in Christ in the Kingdom that has no end.

God bless all our families and friends of St. Matthew as we enjoy our journey through His Word & Sacraments during this time of Epiphany.

In Christ,
Pastor Kelly

Comments from the President

Comments from the January 12, 2025 Vestry meeting.

The President thanked all members for their willingness to serve St. Matthews and welcomed James Greening as our new Vice President.

Main topic of the meeting was to establish the Activity Calendar for 2025. The President presented a draft which was reviewed and some minor changes were made. A copy of the Activity Calendar will be in the 2025 Church Director which will be available in the near future.

The Treasurer's report provided balances of all the Church's accounts as of 12/31/24. In addition, the balances in all the memorials and designated funds were provided. The funds that we continue to collect for are: Ukraine Relief, Seminary Adopt-A-Student, LCMS Disaster Relief, and the Ethiopian Pastor.

Church Properties reported that the Ladies restroom by the nursery is begin remodeled and members should not enter it. The other restroom by the nursery is currently available.

Pastor Reagan reported on his activity in December. In addition, he announced that Confirmation Graduation will be held on March 2nd and as a result there will be no Sunday School on that Sunday. Pastor and Rebecca thanked the congregation for the generous gift they received on Christmas Eve.

Under New Business it was announced that a picture of our current Adopt-A-Student, Jonathan Pietrowski and his family, along with a newsletter from Ebenezer Ethiopian Lutheran Church in Columbus, is posted on the board in the Fellowship Hall. A copy is also included in this Newsletter.

It was also announced that EJ and Madelyn Berger will attend the Ohio District Junior High Gathering at Camp Christian in Marysville in March. Kary Ellen will also attend as an adult chaperone which is required. When they return EJ and Madelyn will give a presentation to Vestry on their experiences at the camp.

Upcoming dates: January 20th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day. February 2nd - Vestry meeting at 11:00 a.m. February 5th is our Valentine's Day dinner at TJ Chumps in Huber Heights at 6:00 p.m. This is open to everyone to attend. A sign-up sheet is on the table in the Narthex. We need to know how many people will attend. Please come out for some fun and fellowship. February 17th is President's Day.

Miscellaneous:

Some members have asked if we are collecting funds for the wildfire disaster in California. Below is an article from the District Connection that addresses this.

"Many of you are likely wondering how you can best help the victims of these terrible fires. Our eagerness to serve and help those affected is part of loving our neighbor. It's important, however, to give the "right" help as expressed by victims, not what we may assume they need.

Emergency Network Los Angeles (enla.org) has recently reported to us that they are seeing donation centers being overwhelmed and people "self-deploying" to disaster areas. While

intentions are good, the results are not. Thank you for your willingness to give and serve, and also for your patience as the needs will emerge and evolve over the coming days, weeks, months, and even years - and your help will be needed over the long-term.

- Pray - Continue to lift up the victims, first responders, communities and all of us in prayer as we experience this significant disaster. This includes praying that we recognize the opportunities we have to share the light and love of Jesus to so many in need. See below for a prayer you can offer. Especially be in prayer as another significant wind event is expected through Wednesday 1/15.
- Donate - Victims will have a significant immediate need for financial resources to purchase basic items, pay for hotel stays, pay for meals, etc. The PSD has a standing fund which you can donate funds to for this purpose (see below). We have already distributed about \$4000 in gift cards to area congregations, and will continue to do so - thank you to so many who have contributed. A generous donor has offered a donation challenge to our subscribers, matching your donations up to \$10,000. Please donate if you can.”

Until further notice our Disaster Relief funds will go to the Pacific Southwest District – LCMS to support the congregations, schools, and individuals who have been affected by the fires. Thanks in advance for your support.

Pastor Reagan Contact Information

Pastor Reagan: 614-564-7317 (cell)

k_w_reagan@yahoo.com (email)

If you require pastoral assistance in any way and/or are scheduled to go into the hospital or end up there unexpectedly, please contact me so that I/we can include you in our prayers (unless instructed to maintain privacy) and I can visit you. Your health and well-being is important to all of us!

From the Congregation

Read the Bible in a Year

The Lutheran Hour Ministries has presented a classic reading plan to read the Bible in a year. This is a challenge to all members. Enlarged copies of the plan are available on a table in the Narthex for all!

Newsletter Articles

Newsletter articles are due the 20th of each month. Articles should be submitted to Kary Ellen Berger, by email, at karyellen.berger@gmail.com

Prayer List

IN OUR PRAYERS WE REMEMBER: Larry C; Laurie Miller; Kevin Younger, Kelland Reagan; The Stapleton family; Andrew Reagan; Trish & Richard Jordan; Carol Reagan; Marliese Driver; Elizabeth Karns-Poole; Tom Lingg; Ron Brock; Bill Yorgen; Paul Woods; Alisa Quinn; Andrew; Marita Gabler; Ezra Gonzalez; Linda Moncel, Jay Popkin, Jim Anderson, Edie Spriggs, Drew Gerig, Bob Brown, Tony Campen, BJ Bowling, Phill Bullock, Patricia Singer, Brian Tucker, Khalia Lawrence & Lori C. We ask that you be with those who are away serving our country, all absent members, and those suffering from manmade and natural disasters. We continue to pray for the deliverance of your people oppressed around the world.

Special Dates

- African American History Month
- Valentine's Day, February 14, 2025
- Presidents Day, February 17, 2025

Those Celebrating Birthdays in February:

Ron Brock	Feb. 9
Evan Stacy	Feb. 12
Bill Wise Jr.	Feb. 15
Eleanor Woods.	Feb. 26

Those Celebrating Anniversaries in February:

Ron & Linda Brock	Feb. 21
-------------------	---------

Poetry Feature by James Greening

From his collection, *Death Fields & Love Storms*

The Possibility

Feel the chest quicken with the thoughts of what could
be.

And, yet...I still sit at a distance.

A distance that is always too far to see.

But, will this ever change?

Will this dream of reality turn into a real fantasy?

For I can think all I want,

But that has never satisfied my longing,

Nor filled the hole of belief for what could be.

'Til something, someone,

Makes the universe tilt to break all space between you
and me,

I fear,

I'm afraid,

That all we

Shall remain is a dream within a dream.

The Waste

Humans are a waste – yes we are.
We waste precious air on pointless conversations
and plastic packaging.
We waste wishful water on whimsical drinks and
withering skin.
We waste formed earth on forced fortunes and
foundations for farces.
Wasting parts of Truth on so-called
philosophies, childish wallows, common fakes.
We waste pure thoughts on perilous violence and
perverted perspectives.
We waste warranted bodies on warring wardens
and wandering waists.
We waste forged emotions on fictitious fads and
faithless familiarities.
Wasting parts of Soul on so-called
religions, clever wishes, cinched freedoms.
All for what?
A simple, eternal, pathetic thought.
Yet, here, I sit,
And still want to have sought.

True Love

Many of us celebrate Valentine's Day in both fun and serious ways. Children exchange treats and humorous cards with classmates and friends; some bring home handmade cards for the adults in their lives. Romantic partners may go out to eat and present each other flowers, chocolate, a fancy card — maybe even an engagement ring!

As playful as Valentine's Day can be, it's also a great time to remember the serious side of love, as indicated by these quotes:

- "When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be." —Leo Tolstoy
- "You don't love someone because they're perfect; you love them in spite of the fact that they're not." —Jodi Picoult
- "Love ... is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. ... It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses." —Ann Landers

We can do the difficult work of true love — actions, not just feelings — only because God loved us first. He did (and does) so despite our imperfection, and in Jesus, God shows us how to share true love with others. This Valentine's Day, if you don't remember any other profound quotes, hold this one in your heart:

- "We love because God first loved us." —1 John 4:19 (NCV)

Leave it to God

Fourth-century theologian Augustine urged again and again that we focus on practicing love in the here and now, not on worrying about our lives in the hereafter.

In *Beautiful Bodies*, Margaret Miles writes that especially regarding complicated doctrines like predestination and challenges like “The one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13), we can’t do anything but leave those to God. It’s impossible for humans to take responsibility for ourselves in such matters. If we could determine our afterlife destiny by means of effort, persuasion or bribery, self-pride would surely be the accompanying sinful result.

“In fact,” Miles writes, “preoccupation with one’s eternal destiny distracts from a Christian’s present business. ‘Leave it to God,’ St. Augustine said, and place your attention on living lovingly in the body of Christ here and now.”

Bible Quiz



The short Old Testament book of Lamentations is a set of communal laments (sorrowful songs) about the destruction in 587 B.C. of which city, by which people?

- A. Babylon; the Assyrians
- B. Jerusalem; the Babylonians
- C. Rome; the Greeks
- D. Caesarea Philippi; the Romans

Answer: B (See Bible commentaries.)



Pietrowski Family

In Fort Wayne, IN

“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity” - Micah 5:2. Advent greetings to you from the Pietrowski family. We want to thank you for your generous support as I study to prepare for pastoral ministry at Concordia Theological Seminary.

The winter quarter began on December 2nd, and I am taking a full load of classes (Confessions I, Liturgics I, Church History II, and Pastoral Counseling). I have classes until December 20th, and then we have a three-week, mid-quarter break.

Anastasia and Zoe are busy with studies at Concordia Lutheran High School. Anastasia is playing on the varsity basketball team, and Zoe recently began working at Hobby Lobby. Sabrina and Griffin are also doing well at St. Paul's Lutheran School.

Kathy continues to volunteer at St. Paul's school, attends the Monday evening Bible study, and runs her clothing design business KPea Original (kpea.co).



November – Advent 2024 Somali & Ebenezer Gospel Mission Highlights

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2:10 -11

The Gospel is an appeal that the light of Christ is always visible and shines for all the world. By the grace of God at work through Ebenezer Church, lives are being eternally transformed as we proclaim Jesus's love to immigrant communities that came from different nations.



This past Thanksgiving, we were blessed to build a relationship with, witness the Gospel, and invite Muslim immigrants from Somalia, Yemen, and Senegal to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Some of those invitees are still coming back. Due to stringently intolerant Islamic rules, it is nearly impossible to bring the Gospel to these people in their own home countries. Yet, thousands of Muslims live around us here in central Ohio, where we can tell them about Jesus with a lesser threat to them and us. The Lord is at work. The freedom of worship God gives us here, we cannot take it for granted. We invite others to join us to worship Him with us. Thanks be to God!



Baptism and Discipleship at Ebenezer

God is blessing Ebenezer Church with more youth eager to learn the Word of God and be catechized. Currently, 10 Ebenezer confirmands actively participate in catechism classes. Three of these catechumens have never been baptized, and they are so excited to be baptized.



Ebenezer current Catechumen



Celebrating the baptism of baby Nathan

Reaching Somali Muslims for Jesus

Christmas is a special time to share God's love with Somali Muslims. We go into their apartment complexes and share food (groceries) with those in need. This is the best way to initiate a relationship, or friendship and gradually invite them to Church.



Sharing food/groceries with those in need

Prayer Request

- Here at Ebenezer Church, as people loved and saved by God, we are convinced that we continually live in the light of the Great Commission and reach unreached people, because the eternities of God-created people depend on this endeavor.
- Please pray for the abundance of the Lord's grace and Spirit to strengthen, and work with/through us.
- Please pray for Somali Christians to grow in faith, and multiply in numbers.
- Please pray for the safety of Somali Christians as they continue to experience rejection and hatred from their Muslim community.
- Several Somali Christians are praying to start small businesses where they can work together to sustainably lead their lives as tent-making missionaries, most of all, to use these businesses as a platform to attract Muslim Somalis and share the Gospel with them. Please pray for God's provision of finances.
- It is a heavenly joy for us to share the Good News of Jesus with the least evangelized people groups here in Central Ohio (Luke 15:7; Isa. 52:7; 1 Tim. 2:4). This cannot happen without you. Would you please continue supporting Ebenezer Church in reaching Somali Muslims and other nations here in Columbus? Please help us fulfill this God-pleasing mission and increase the Kingdom's impact in 2025.

God bless!

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Berhanu Arsse
Pastor & Missionary – Ebenezer Church

FEBRUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 Choir, 9 a.m. Holy Communion Vestry, 11am Choir, Noon	3	4	5 Bible Coffee, 10:00 am <i>Valentine's Day Dining Out, T. J. Chumps, 6 p.m.</i>	6 Al Anon, 10:30 a.m.	7 A.A., 8:00 p.m.	8
9 Choir, 9 a.m. Holy Communion Choir, Noon	10	11 Yarn Matters, 6 pm	12 Bible Coffee, 10:00 am	13 Al Anon, 10:30 a.m.	14 A.A., 8:00 p.m.	15
16 Choir, 9 a.m. Holy Communion	17 President's Day	18	19 Bible Coffee, 10:00 am	20 Al Anon, 10:30 am	21 A.A., 8:00 p.m.	22
23 Choir, 9 a.m. Holy Communion	24	25 Yarn Matters, 6 pm	26 Bible Coffee, 10:00 am	27 Al Anon, 10:30 am	28 A.A., 8:00 p.m.	

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church
 5566 Chambersburg Road
 Huber Heights, OH 45424

Phone: (937) 233-4632
 E-Mail: ST_MATTHEW_EV_JESU@att.net
 Web page: www.stmatthewlutheran45424.com