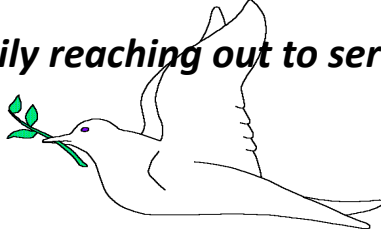


# ST. MATTHEW'S UCC WHITE DOVE FLYER

*"A faithful family reaching out to serve Christ"*



January 2024

Secretary Office Hours are:

**Mon., Wed., Thurs. 10am—2pm**

**Phone: 610-381-2442**

**Email: [stmatts@ptd.net](mailto:stmatts@ptd.net)**

**Website: [stmattsucckunkletown.com](http://stmattsucckunkletown.com)**

Sunday Services

9am Worship

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CIA Class

start at 10:30am following  
worship services.

**Ms. Cheryl Dorshimer**

Council President

**Mrs. Starlene Barr**

Treasurer

**Mrs. Staci Gower**

Christian Education

**Mrs. Renée Keiper**

Office Manager

**Mr. Dan Smale**

Music Director

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Kunkletown, Pa 18058

102 Church Road

St. Matthew's UCC

LEHIGHTON, PA 18235

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## Letter from Linda

Dear Friends in Christ,

The gifts have all been opened. All that remain from the Christmas cookies are a few crumbs. The ugly Christmas sweaters are now buried in the back of the closets. (Personally, I like them and miss them.) Parents are still walking around in a daze wondering where in the world are they going to find room for all the new “stuff” Santa brought!



January 1, 2024. A new year is arriving, and I’m trying to figure out how we got here so soon?

If you’re like me, it will probably take six months to get used to writing the year “2024” on doctor forms and other important documents like checks. Oh wait. Are we still writing checks? Or is AI (Artificial Intelligence) now taking care of all my bills? Ha! Like I would trust AI with anything. Look how great they’re doing with it in the new cars. (Another subject for another time.)

And then there’s New Year Resolutions. Who thought up that brilliant idea?

Blame it on the ancient Babylonians. First recorded about 4,000 years ago, they celebrated the new year in mid-March when the crops were planted. They made promises to their pagan gods to pay their debts and return any objects they had borrowed. They were the forerunners to our New Year resolutions. If the Babylonians kept their promises, their gods would bestow favor on them for the coming year. If not...well let’s just say their gods would not be pleased.

Then there were the ancient Romans. Circa 49 BC, the emperor Julius Caesar tinkered with the calendar and established January 1 as the beginning of the new year. Named for Janus, the two-faced god whose spirit inhabited doorways and arches, January had special significance for the Romans. Believing that Janus symbolically looked backwards into the previous year and ahead into the future, the Romans offered sacrifices to the deity and made promises of good conduct for the coming year.

For early Christians, the first day of the new year became the traditional occasion for thinking about one’s past mistakes and resolving to do and be better in the future, which we’ve been doing for over 2,000 years.

But despite the tradition’s religious roots, New Year’s resolutions today are a mostly secular practice. Instead of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions only to themselves, and focus purely on self-improvement (which may explain why such resolutions seem so hard to follow through on).

All those who make the New Year resolution to lose weight each year, raise your hands!

According to recent research, while as many as 45 percent of Americans say they usually make New Year’s resolutions, only 8 percent are successful in achieving their goals. But that dismal record probably won’t stop people from making resolutions anytime soon—after all, we’ve had about 4,000 years of practice. You know what they say...practice, practice practice!



Continued on next page .....

### **Letter from Linda continued:**

What does God say about making New Year resolutions? I like what Billy Graham said.

“The Bible certainly encourages us to examine our lives and resolve to change them, if necessary, although not just at the beginning of a new year.”

Sometimes our resolutions fail because they aren't realistic, only wishful thinking.

I usually resolve to give up drinking too much Coke. I resolve to lose at least 50 lbs. I promise to do more volunteering in a way that helps those less fortunate. I don't really end up accomplishing any of those. Why? Because I'm not willing to make the sacrifices necessary to reach them. Matthew 26:41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Graham says, “The real problem is within ourselves, within our own hearts and minds. We'd all like to be better people, but no matter how hard we try, we find ourselves tripped up by our own moral failures and weaknesses. Even the Apostle Paul experienced this: ‘I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.’ (Romans 7:18.)

What's a girl to do?

Graham says the solution is to turn to God, confess our sins, seek His help to live the way we should.

“Begin the New Year by turning to Jesus Christ and invite Him into your life. Then ask Him to help you become the person He wants you to be. This is what Paul did, and that's why he could say, ‘I can do all this through him who gives me strength.’ (Philippians 4:13.)

Who's with me in making a New Year's resolution to begin each day with this Bible verse our daily mantra? Maybe, just maybe we can bring our resolutions to fruition this year.

Good luck and may God be with you all. I wish everyone a year of happiness and good health.

Yours in Christian Love,  
Linda

### **Staci's Stuff**

#### **By Staci Gower, Coordinator of Christian Formation**

Happy new year of Christian Education lessons, events, and faith formation! Our CE team has a lot to share with church families in 2024. From baptism to Confirmation, and everything in between, we are here to be your spiritual guide and shine the light of Jesus.

The Christian Education committee is looking for new members and ideas for Faith & Family Night activities. Please join us on January 7 at 10:30 a.m. to help plan events and learn about what we do here at St. Matthew's.

Are you ready for Snow Much Faith & Family Fun on January 19? It's our first event of the new year! We will make homemade ice cream, build a snowman (indoor relay game), and play winter bingo. I will lead our Bible lesson be about Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16). It will be held 6-8 p.m. in the social hall. Please invite friends and neighbors!

Sunday School will meet January 14, February 11, March 10, April 14, and May 19. Join us at 10:30 a.m. for a Bible lesson, activities, crafts, and discussion. May 19 is our end of the year party in the grove.

Children's Church will continue to meet each week 9:15 to 10:00 a.m.

Mark your calendar for Camp Firelight VBS July 15-19, 9 am to noon in the grove. We are seeking students ages 3-11; youth helpers ages 12-17; and adult leaders ages 18 and up (must have PA background clearances).

For more information or to sign up for events, [stacigeorge0317@gmail.com](mailto:stacigeorge0317@gmail.com).

## WHO IS THIS BABE IN A MANGER?

The claim it requires blind, unreasonable faith to believe that Jesus was anything more than just a good, moral man is one of the biggest misconceptions about Christianity. Because the term *faith* often means different things to different people, apologist Greg Koukl admits he is not fond of the word. He claims it is too easy to mentally add the words “*blind*” or “*leap of*” to it. But that is not what the Story has in mind. (*Reality*, 133) Blindly putting faith in anything without using reason or evidence is not only foolish but potentially disastrous.

So what does Scripture say about faith and whether or not we are to blindly believe what it teaches? Christian theologian and apologist Norm Geisler explains that “while God does want to reach our hearts, He does not bypass our minds in the process. The Jewish prophet Isaiah wrote, “Come now let us reason together, said the Lord” (1:18). The apostle Peter urged Christians to “give a reason for the hope that is in them” (1 Peter 3:15). Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). John added, “Believe not every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1). Indeed, **Christ does not call on us to make a leap of faith in the dark but to take a step of faith in the light—in the light of the evidence.**” (Geisler, 5)

Geisler goes on to explain that “Christ does not call on people to make thoughtless decisions about this life or about the next one. Instead, he insisted that we must love God with our mind as well as our heart (Matt. 22:37). He warned against “false prophets” (Matt. 24:11) and false religion (Matt. 23:13f) which will mislead many. So, it is necessary for a truth seeker to demand reasonable evidence.” (Geisler, 5)

I have often heard new atheists, such as Richard Dawkins, claim that faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence. Let me be very clear, this definition falls short of how faith is defined and taught in the Bible. As we read above, the Bible teaches us to *test the spirits, to reason together, and to love God with both our minds and our hearts*. We are not taught to run from or be afraid of the evidence, but instead to embrace and seek through reason where the evidence leads.

How would you answer the question, “Can a person be saved by *faith*?” The answer is... no. Faith can save no one, not even a Christian. With just a little reflection it becomes clear it is possible to have an unshakable faith in something false which ultimately leads to an unshakable delusion.

Do not miss this important distinction! Of course faith is important, but it must be grounded in something that is TRUE. “Reason helps us know what is actually true, leading to accurate belief. Faith is our step of trust to rely on what we have good reason to believe is so.” (Koukl, 137) And what do we have good reason to believe is so? A Babe, who is Christ the Lord, born in a humble manger on a Bethlehem night over 2000 years ago. Faith without Jesus will do us no good. It is JESUS, the Way, the TRUTH, and the Life, who saves *through* faith.

Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year to you all!  
Soli Deo gloria,  
Dan Smale ([dlsmale@gmail.com](mailto:dlsmale@gmail.com))  
M.A. Christian Apologetics

References and Resources can be found at <http://bit.ly/ktownnsltr1223>



**Shirley Kuntz**—Getz Personal Care Home, 1026 Scenic Dr, Kunkletown, PA 18058

**Edith George, Gladys & Ray Smith**—Scenic View Personal Care, 1305 Church Rd, Palmerton PA 18071

**James Borger**—Moravian Village Health Ctr, Rm 142, 634 E. Broad St, Bethlehem PA 18018

**Larry Hahn**—Gracedale, 2 Gracedale Ave, Nazareth PA 18064

**Joyce Smale, Gladys Meixsell**—Pleasant Valley Manor, 4227 Manor Dr, Stroudsburg PA 18360

**Leah Jane Sterner**—300 Covered Bridge Rd, Kunkletown, PA 18058

**Kyle Frable**—104 5K Lane, Kunkletown, PA 18058

**Velma Silfies**—Mrs. Bush's Personal Care, 302 Kunkletown Rd, Kunkletown, PA 18058

**Jesse Ziegenfus**—Brookmont Healthcare Ctr, 510 Brookmont Dr, Effort PA 18330



## **PRAYER CONCERNS**

Marilyn McCloud, Ellen Kresge, Ray Smith, Kyle Frable, Diane Bonser,  
Barbara Souders, Shirley Smith, Edith George, Doris Neumeyer, Jeannie Anewalt,  
Janet Gower, Joyce Gower, Bruce Gower, Conner Brawley, Gabrielle Collins, Gene Borger,  
Sharlee Ahner, Ronald Frantz, Sheila Sherer, Margaret and Larry Hahn, Hudson Stewart,  
Conner Bittenbender,

Marlene Long, Roberta Heffley, Gladys Lindenmoyer, Dennis Smale,  
Mike Heller, Martin Krechel (Henry's nephew) and Brian Holderman. (Wendy Peddigree's brother),  
The families of Nancy Kresge, Shirley Borger, Helen Gower and Gladys Lindenmoyer.

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 DIANE HUBER

2 RISTON BARR, JESSE ZIEGENFUS

5 DONNA WALTZ

6 KIM BUSKIRK, CHERYL HUMMER, RODNEY SMITH

7 LYNN BYERLEY, DEBBIE KEMMERER, DAVID KREISER

8 BETTY KLEINTOP

9 HENRY KRECHEL, ASHLEY SMITH

11 LESLEY BYRNE

14 JEFFREY GOWER

15 JENNIFER HALL

16 BONNEY KRESGE

17 HAILEE SNYDER

19 RYKER BARR

20 CAROL KING, LINDA KOEHLER

21 JENNIFER RAY, LARRY SMALE

23 ROSE FRITZ, JAMIE GARITA

24 KURT ECKHART, JAMES SMITH

25 KATHY BEIDLEMAN

26 CHARLOTTE KLEINTOP, WANDA WUNDER

28 RACHEL FRABLE, AUBREY FREEBY

29 KATELIN ARACE



**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

### Income for November 2023

11/5/23—86 Attending—\$2,252.00

11/12/23—80 Attending—\$2,470.00

11/19/23—61 Attending—\$2,770.00

11/26/23—62 Attending—\$1,677.00

Paypal \$150.00

**Total \$9,319.00**

### Income for November 2022

11/06/22—108 Attending—\$4,415.00

11/13/22—60 Attending—\$1,790.00

11/20/22—105 Attending—\$2,237.00

11/27/22—57 Attending—\$1,302.00

**Total \$9,944.00**

TWIX BARS  
DIANN BITTENBENDER  
MAKES 1 DOZEN

INGREDIENTS:

|                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| CLUB CRACKERS               | 1/3 CUP MILK          |
| 1 CUP GRAHAM CRACKER CRUMBS | 1/2 CUP MARGARINE     |
| 1/4 CUP BROWN SUGAR         | 2/3 CUP PEANUT BUTTER |
| 1/2 CUP SUGAR               | 1 CUP CHOCOLATE CHIPS |

PLACE 1 LAYER OF CLUB CRACKERS ON THE BOTTOM OF A GREASED 9" X 13" PAN. IN A LARGE SAUCEPAN OVER LOW HEAT, COMBINE GRAHAM CRACKER CRUMBS, BROWN SUGER, SUGAR, MILK AND MARGARINE. LET BOIL FOR 5 MINUTES (WATCH CLOSELY, KEEP TEMPERATURE LOW). POUR MIXTURE OVER CRACKERS IN PAN. COVER WITH ANOTHER LAYER OF CLUB CRACKERS, IN A MICROWAVE OR DOUBLE BOILER, MELT PEANUT BUTTER AND CHOCOLATE CHIPS, STIRRING OFTEN UNTIL SMOOTH. POUR MELTED CHOCOLATE MIXTURE OVER TOP LAYER OF CLUB CRACKERS. REFRIGERATE AND CUT INTO BARS..



# January 2024

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

|  |                         |           |   |           |  |  |
|--|-------------------------|-----------|---|-----------|--|--|
|  | <i>1</i>                | <i>2</i>  | <i>3</i>                                    | <i>4</i>  | <i>5</i>   | <i>6</i><br>Beer, Brats,<br>Breakfast<br>8am |
| <i>7</i><br>CE meeting<br>10:30am  | <i>8</i><br>Council 7pm | <i>9</i>  | <i>10</i>                                   | <i>11</i> | <i>12</i>  | <i>13</i>                                    |
| <i>14</i><br>Sunday<br>School<br>10:30am<br><hr/> Property<br>Meeting 10am | <i>15</i>               | <i>16</i> | <i>17</i><br>Laymen's<br>Fellowship<br>10am | <i>18</i> | <i>19</i><br>Faith &<br>Family Fun<br>Night<br>6p—8p | <i>20</i>                                    |
| <i>21</i>  | <i>22</i>               | <i>23</i> | <i>24</i>                                   | <i>25</i> | <i>26</i>  | <i>27</i>                                    |
| <i>28</i>  | <i>29</i>               | <i>30</i> | <i>31</i>                                   |           |  |  |