

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH

WHITE DOVE FLYER

"A faithful family reaching out to serve Christ"

Christmas Eve Services

3:00pm and 8:00pm



December 2024

Secretary Office Hours are:

Mon., Wed., Thurs. 10am—2pm

Phone: 610-381-2442

Email: stmatts@ptd.net

Website: stmattsucckunkletown.com

Diann Bittenbender

Council President

Rick Rufenacht

Interim Pastor

Starlene Barr

Treasurer

Renée Keiper

Church Secretary

Dan Smale

Music Director

DATED MATERIAL. PLEASE DO NOT HOLD



Kunkletown, Pa 18058

102 Church Road

St. Matthew's Church

LEHIGHTON, PA 18235

PERMIT NO 74

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MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Pastor Rick Rufenacht

A middle aged woman had a heart attack and was taken to the hospital. While on the operating table she had a near-death experience. During that experience she saw God and asked if this was her time. God said no and explained that she had another 30-40 years to live. Upon her recovery she decided to stay in the hospital and have a face lift, liposuction, and a tummy tuck. She even had someone come in and change her hair color. She figured that since she had another 30 or 40 years, she might as well make the most of it. As she walked out of the hospital after the last operation, she was killed by an ambulance speeding up to the hospital. When she arrived in front of God again, she questioned, "I thought you said I had another 30-40 years?" God replied, "Sorry, I didn't recognize you."

Christmas is the time when we focus on Jesus. He is truly the reason for the season, but often there seems to be some mistaken identity that surrounding Him. Who is Jesus really?

For some people Jesus is always just part of the Christmas vignette. Jesus is the baby in the manger which makes the nativity set complete. He's just a character along with all the other characters that come around at Christmas. Maybe the story of Jesus is just one more Christmas story or the baby just one more one piece in all of the decorations. Many people want to make sure they do Christmas up right. They don't want to leave out any part of the celebration, so if Jesus is part of the Nativity which is part of Christmas, then by all means, let's include Him.

You know Dasher and Dancer and Donner and Blitzen, Frosty and Rudolph, Mary and Joseph, the Grinch, and Macy's and Gimbles and Jesus and Santa.

For some the identity of Jesus becomes just a reason for going to church a couple of times a year. Jesus is someone that is relegated to Christmas and Easter. We aren't really solid on who Jesus is, but we know that special attention is given to Him on at least a couple of occasions. For some Jesus is definitely the reason for the season - all two of them.

Others see Jesus as the Iconic Jesus. Jesus is the picture on the wall in your bedroom or family room, the figure with the hands folded on your shelf, the current screen saver on your computer, or one of the ornaments on your tree. The identity of Jesus is for show and tell. People think more of us when they think we have a spiritual side, so the purpose of Jesus is to help us look and feel spiritual.

Even in His own time, Jesus dealt with mistaken identity. In one conversation Jesus asked his disciples to let him know who others thought He was. The responses were varied. Some say you are John the Baptist. Some say you are Elijah. Some say you are one of the prophets. But it was Peter who correctly answered "You are the Christ - the very Son of God".

That word Christ speaks of the true identity of Jesus. It means that Jesus was the anointed of God. He was the Son of God who came to take His rightful place as prophet, priest and King. He is the anointed Son of God who would offer Himself to die on a cross to take away the sin of the world.

Jesus is God's love in human form. Jesus is the savior of souls destined for Hell. He came not just to be born in a stable, but to die on a cruel cross so that we could have eternal life and fellowship with God our Creator.

He is not just a baby in a manger reserved for Christmas time. He is not a part-time Lord and Savior who is relegated to seasonal worship. Jesus is the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the One we honor and worship daily. He is the author of life and the One who brings us abundantly each and every day.

Continued from page 1:

This Christmas let us be reminded that Jesus is asking us the same question He asked His disciples. Who do you say I am?

If you say that He is the Christ - the Son of God, then you must decide what you will do with Him. Will you let Him affect your life? Will you give your life over to His control?

John 1:11-12 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God —



Annual Christmas Pageant

Hello Families! We would like to have our Annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 15 during Church Service. Following our presentation in Church, we plan to go to Mrs. Bush's to repeat our performance. The name of our performance will be Christmas, Jesus & Santa. Now all we need are the children & a baby Jesus! We will have two practices: Sunday, December 1 at 9:00 am, during Church and Friday, December 6 during Family, Faith & Fun Night, from 6-8 p.m. For Family, Faith, & Fun-Night, we will decorate Christmas cookies, make a Christmas craft & practice our pageant. Please let me know if your child will be able to participate, at ddtartar929@gmail.com or text me at 570-730-9931.

Thanks,
Dora, Gabby, Cheryl, Laura, Eileen

The Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 8th, during the worship service.

Please plan to be here to learn important information about St. Matthew's and vote for new Council members and the 2025 Budget.

See the proposed budget on page 5.

We will also hear the results of our church assessment at that time.

We want to thank Devoe Breinich, Magen Snyder and Brenda Sheckler for their years of service on the Church Council.

THE MYSTERY AND WONDER OF THE INCARNATION: GOD WITH US

As we enter the Christmas season, we are reminded of the profound mystery at the heart of our Christian faith: the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Apostles Creed, which we recite regularly in worship, encapsulates this mystery with the words, "**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.**" This statement, though simple, is rich with theological meaning and significance. It reveals the foundations of our faith and the events that changed the course of history.

At Christmas, we celebrate not just the birth of a child, but the birth of the Savior who is both fully God and fully man. The Creed begins by affirming two key truths about Jesus' birth: **Jesus was born of a human mother**, Mary, and **He was conceived by the Holy Spirit**. These truths are based on the biblical accounts found in **Matthew 1:18-25** and **Luke 1:26-38**, and they speak to the heart of **who Jesus is: truly human and truly divine**.

JESUS: TRULY HUMAN

The first part of the Creed emphasizes Jesus' humanity. He was born into the world as we are born—of a woman. He shared our human nature, our joys, and our sorrows. This is crucial to our faith. Jesus' full humanity means that He understands our experiences, our struggles, and our pain. He knows what it means to be human, to face temptation, to suffer, and to die. As the apostle Paul writes in **Galatians 4:4**, "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman." Jesus' birth into the world means that we have a Savior who can identify with us at the deepest level.

JESUS: TRULY DIVINE

But Jesus' humanity is only half of the story. The Creed also affirms that He was "conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit." From the moment of His conception, Jesus was marked out as unique. He is the **Son of God** in every sense. **He did not "become" the Son of God** at a certain moment in His life, as some early Christian heresies claimed. No, **He was always the Son of God**, even from the moment He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The virgin birth is essential because it demonstrates that Jesus is not merely a human being like us; He is also fully divine. His divinity was not something added later, but something inherent from the very beginning.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INCARNATION

Why does it matter that Jesus is both fully God and fully human? Because **we need a mediator—someone who can represent both God and humanity**. In any broken relationship, reconciliation requires a go-between who can stand in the gap and represent both sides.

As Paul writes in **1 Timothy 2:5**, "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Jesus, fully human and fully divine, bridges the gap between God and us. If He were only human, He would need saving, and if only divine, He couldn't relate to us. But because He is both, He is the perfect mediator who restores our relationship with God.

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION: GOD WITH US

At Christmas, we celebrate the mystery of **God with us**—the eternal Son of God taking on flesh and dwelling among us (**John 1:14**). This is not just a historical event, but the beginning of God's saving work, which reaches its fulfillment in Jesus' death and resurrection, restoring our relationship with God.

As we celebrate Jesus' birth, let's marvel at the wonder of the incarnation—our Savior, fully God and fully human. This truth is the foundation of our faith and the source of our hope, for Jesus understands us, stands in our place, and makes reconciliation with God possible.

May this Christmas season fill you with awe and gratitude for the incredible gift of Emmanuel—**God with us**.

2025 Budget - St. Matthews UCC

ACCOUNT NUMBER	EXPENSE ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	2024	2025 NOTES & CHANGES (Revised 11/11/24)	2025
6207	BANK FEES	\$ 200	PayPal Fees, Bank Fees or Interest	\$ 225
6602	SNOW PLOWING	\$ 3,750	Church Snow Plowing	\$ 3,750
6800	MINISTER		MINISTER (W2)	
6801	MINISTER SALARY	\$ 14,500	MINISTER SALARY (\$33,000 Interim Included)	\$ 59,000
6803	PENSION & DISABILITY	\$ -	PENSION & DISABILITY	\$ 3,600
6805	MINISTER CHURCH PAID S.S.	\$ 1,109	Effective Salary \$26,000 x 7.65% = \$1,989 ETPS	\$ 1,989
6806	CONTINUING ED / PASTOR EXP.	\$ -	CONTINUING ED / PASTOR EXP.	\$ 1,500
6807	MINISTER LIFE & LTC INS.	\$ -	MINISTER LIFE & LTC INS.	\$ 1,900
6808	MINISTER HOUSING ALLOWANCE	\$ -	MINISTER HOUSING ALLOWANCE	\$ 15,000
6809	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$ -	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$ 2,000
6810			CONTINGENCY FOR NEW PASTOR EXPENSES	\$ 5,000
	6800 MINISTER TOTAL:	\$ 15,609		\$ 89,989
6810	PARSONAGE			
6814	PROPERTY TAXES	\$ 3,700	PROPERTY TAXES	\$ 3,750
6815	MAINTENANCE	\$ 500	Repairs	\$ 500
6816	IMPROVEMENT	\$ 500	Renovations	\$ 500
	6810 PARSONAGE TOTAL:	\$ 4,700		\$ 4,750
6820	WORSHIP			
6821	CHURCH LITERATURE	\$ 650	Worship Service Ads / Upper Room Magazine / TN	\$ 650
6822	CONFIRMATION CLASS	\$ 200	Active Confirmation Class	\$ 200
6824	MUSIC / WORSHIP / VIDEO LICENSES	\$ 2,500	Used For or In Sanctuary Worship / CVU / Resi	\$ 1,300
6825	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$ 1,500	VBS, Sunday School	\$ 1,500
6826	STATIONARY & OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 1,500	Relating to Office Use (not copier)	\$ 2,200
6827	COPIER SUPPLIES & EXP.	\$ 6,000	Copier Maintenance & Service, Paper & Toner	\$ 3,000
6828	BULLETINS, INSERTS & NEWSLETTERS	\$ 1,285	CCLI-Split, Newsletter, Copy Corner \$780	\$ 1,285
6829	OFFERING ENV. & LEDGER	\$ 1,500	AmericanChurch / Checks4Less	\$ 1,500
6830	POSTAGE	\$ 1,200	Bulk Mailings, Annual Permit Fee & Stamps	\$ 1,200
6831	CONFERENCE EXPENSES	\$ -	PNEC	\$ -
6832	ALTAR FLOWERS EXPENSE	\$ 300	Off-Set by Altar Flower Income - 4113	\$ 300
6839	CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION	\$ 1,300	5.56% of Envelope Income per 3rd & 4th Qtr (EC)	\$ 3,114
	6820 WORSHIP TOTAL:	\$ 17,935		\$ 16,249
6840	CHURCH EMPLOYEES (W2)		All W2 Employees	
6841	CHOIR DIRECTOR	\$ 9,283	Daniel \$188 per Week - Paid Bi-Weekly	\$ 9,776
6842	YOUTH DIRECTOR	\$ 9,802	\$14.50 x 13 hrs per Week - Paid 4th Sunday *	\$ 2,450
6843	SEXTON	\$ 3,492	Sandra \$13.86 x 21 hrs per Mo - Paid 2nd Sunday	\$ 3,492
6844	PASTORAL SECRETARY	\$ 15,600	Renee \$15.96 x 20 hr per Week - Paid Bi-Weekly	\$ 16,600
6845	TREASURER	\$ 8,100	Starlene \$675.00 per Month - Paid 3rd Sunday	\$ 8,100
6846	SUPPLY PERSONNEL (W9, 1099)	\$ 8,800	\$150.00 x 4 weeks	\$ 600
6847	FINANCIAL SECRETARY	\$ 1,800	Diane \$300 per Bi-Monthly - Paid 1st Sun Even Mo.	\$ 1,800
6849	CHURCH % OF S.S. & MED.	\$ 3,678	Based on Total Employee Salary x 0.0765	\$ 3,230
6861	CARETAKER	\$ 1,000	Caretaker	\$ 1,000
6862	CHURCH EMP. MILEAGE	\$ 2,500	(also includes Supply Pastor Mileage)	\$ 2,000
6863	EXPENSE FOR CHOIR DIRECTOR	\$ 750	Daniel's Music Expense	\$ 500
6864	EXPENSE FOR YOUTH DIRECTOR	\$ 300	Youth Expense	\$ 300
	6840 CHURCH EMPLOYEES TOTAL:	\$ 65,105		\$ 49,848
6850	CHURCH PLANT EXPENSE			
6851	CHURCH HEAT	\$ 7,500	Fuel Oil & Propane	\$ 7,500
6852	CHURCH ELECTRIC	\$ 7,400	PPL	\$ 7,500
6853	CHURCH TELEPHONE & INTERNET	\$ 1,900	BRCTV Communications & Palmerton Telephone	\$ 1,900
6854	CHURCH MAINTENANCE	\$ 2,200	Repairs / ABE Labs / AllenOrgan / Licenses	\$ 2,300
6855	INSURANCE & WORKER'S COMP.	\$ 6,800	Church Mutual Insurances	\$ 10,700
6856	GENERAL PROPERTY EXPENSES	\$ 5,700	WM, Altronics, Fire, Pest, Elevator Contract	\$ 5,700
6856	MOWING	\$ 16,000	Mowing - Grove, Cemeteries, Church & Hill	\$ 16,000
6857	SEXTON SUPPLIES	\$ 1,000	Clean Church (Toilet Paper, Towels, Soap, Etc)	\$ 1,000
6871	GROVE IMPROVEMENTS	\$ 4,000	Renovations	\$ 4,000
6872	GROVE ELECTRIC	\$ 1,600	PPL	\$ 1,800
6891	CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT	\$ 6,000	Unplanned Expenses to the Budget	\$ 5,000
	6850 CHURCH PLANT EXP. TOTAL:	\$ 60,100		\$ 63,400
TOTAL 2024 BUDGETED EXPENSES:		\$ 167,399	TOTAL 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET:	\$ 228,211

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

Edith George, Gladys 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

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

Joann Hunsicker—Mrs. Bush's Personal Care—2W, P.O. Box 327, Kunkletown PA 18058

Prayer Concerns

Jason Frantz, Wayne Halliday, Dawn Hockman, Brenda Hawk, Ralph Wunder (Dan's brother), Brooke Beck, Marlette Palermo, Tina Martin (Pat's daughter), Todd Kresge, Alysha Katz, Wendy Peddigree, Rhonda Cramer (Randy and Ray's sister), Ellen Kresge, Beverly Frantz, John Blundetto, Jessica Speer, Tom and Lee Byrne, Barbara Souders, Debra Kemmerer, Joan Madden, Janet Smith, Marilyn and Howard McCloud, Kyle Frable, Diane Bonser, Shirley Smith, Edith George, Doris Neumeyer, Janet Gower, Joyce 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, Mike Heller, and Brian Holderman (Wendy Peddigree's brother), Barry and Danny Serfass (Brenda Hawk's brothers), Barbara Marks (Pat Martin's sister-in-law), Georgia Smith (friend of Connie Frantz and Dora Tartar), Helen Alpaugh, Leni (friend of Helen), Logan Mackes (Rose Fritz's grandson).

KUNKLETOWN CHRISTMAS AT ST. MATTHEW'S
JOIN OUR HOLIDAY MUSICIANS,
ST. MATTHEW'S CHOIR AND MORE TO
CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS
DECEMBER 7TH AT 6:00PM!!!

CIA Cook's Corner
Sweet Potato Casserole
Renee Keiper



1 cup milk
2 tbs cornstarch
18 oz can sweet potatoes (drained and mashed)
2 beaten eggs
Cinnamon – a couple of dashes
 $\frac{3}{4}$ stick margarine
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

Mix milk and cornstarch, add the remaining ingredients. You may need a mixer to get the lumps out. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 – 30 minutes.

Topping:

1 cup crushed cornflakes
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pecans or walnuts
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup margarine
1 cup coconut
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar

After the margarine is melted add remaining ingredients. Stir until well coated. Spread over sweet potatoes. Bake another 10 minutes.

October Offering—2024

10/6/24—95 attending—\$4,190.00
10/13/24—58 attending—\$2,913.00
10/20/24—62 attending—\$1,650.00
10/27/24—71 attending—\$1,880.00

Total—\$10,633.00

October Offering—2023

10/1/23—69 attending—\$2,370.00
10/08/23—74 attending—\$3,182.00
10/15/23—45 attending—\$1,560.00
10/22/23—57 attending—\$2,265.00
10/29/23—67 attending—\$2,727.00

Total—\$12,104.00

December 2024

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1	2	3	4	5	6	7 6PM KUNKLETOWN CHRISTMAS
8 ANNUAL MEETING & ASSESSMENT RESULTS DURING THE SERVICE	9 COUNCIL 7PM	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 LAYMEN'S MEETING 10AM	19	20	21
22	23	24 SERVICES 3PM AND 8PM	25 	26	27	28
29	30	31 				

December Birthdays

1 Leilani Frantz, Sally Haydt
 2 Bruce Pozza
 3 Rose Arace, Denise Brotzman
 4 Brian Beidleman
 5 Ty Borger, Nancy Frantz, Robert May
 6 Delbert Kresge
 7 Kayla Frable
 8 Connie Moretz
 9 Lisa Everett, Kathryn Fritz
 11 Lynn Courtright, Kaitlin Silliman
 12 Ted Kreger, Sterling Kresge, Rocky Smith
 Julie Sterner, Gerald Voorhees
 15 Brittany Handelong
 16 Ricky Gower
 17 Kay Frable, Kyle Frantz, Jennifer Kibler,
 Nadine Scheller
 18 Kim Scheller

20 Beverly Frantz
 21 Chelsea Salerno
 22 Kevin Yapple
 23 Mitchell Hawk
 24 Devoe Breinich, Luciano Garita
 25 Lynn Witt
 26 Janine Krechel
 27 Daniel Frantz
 28 Alysha Kresge, Wendy Peddigree
 30 Tracy Buskirk, Kaylee Hawk
 31 Jeremy Smith

Happy Birthday Jesus

Born so I could live,
 Happy Birthday Jesus Christ,
 Thank You for your gift

