

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH

WHITE DOVE FLYER

"A faithful family reaching out to serve Christ"

WORSHIP SERVICE
9:00 AM SUNDAY
CIA CLASS
10:30 AM SUNDAY

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE AND
CHILDREN'S CHURCH
TAKES PLACE DURING THE
9:00AM WORSHIP
SERVICE



January 2025

Secretary Office **Hours are:**

Mon., Wed., Thurs. 10am—2pm

Phone: 610-381-2442

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Diann Bittenbender

Council President

Rick Rufenacht

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LEHIGHTON, PA 18235

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Kunkletown, Pa 18058

102 Church Road

St. Matthew's Church

Letter from Pastor Rick

One of the advantages of growing up in a small town of 3,000 and attending a high school with a graduation class of 130 is that one can know many people. Although I could not name all my classmates after these many years, I could in my younger days recite the names without fail.

At my last class reunion I got to connect with some terrific people who I had not seen since high school graduation. Even though we had all aged, there was still a great sense of connected camaraderie. The memories and shared experiences, although decades old now, still seemed fresh as the room was filled with wonderful laughter and conversation. I came away from that event considering the blessings of important relationships. If I could go back to Jr high school and start fresh, knowing what I know now, I would definitely focus more on developing and pouring energy into relationships. I can't go back, and neither can you, but we can start where we are and we can make more of an effort to invest in quality relationships. Let me give you two words that will help you build better relationships.

The first is **VALUE**. It all begins here. The question we all need to ask is how much do I value people? How much do I value my sister or my brother or my mom, my dad? How much do I value my mate? How much do I value my classmate or my co-worker?

If we were more conscious of the value of the people around us, perhaps we would react and respond differently. That very familiar verse in the Bible, John 3:16, tells us a lot about value. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." That shows value. God valued people enough to make a way for them to have abundant life.

Some of the main sticking points we are dealing with in the United States political and cultural landscape really come down to valuing people. Race, abortion, and an up-tick in crime are just a few of those issues which spark intense debate. But what is rarely brought to the table during discussions surrounding these topics is the importance of valuing people. A Christians the starting point in any of these discussions must be the sanctity of life. God tells us to value life. If one believes that all mankind is created in God's image with value and worth then how we approach the difficult topics in our nation will be different.

See, when you value something, you protect it, you care for it, you keep it safe. You don't take it for granted. Just imagine valuing other in that way.

The second word is **HONOR**

We can't get to honor unless we value. But Honor is the obvious sequence.

In Romans 12:10, the Apostle Paul writes *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

The word honor comes a Greek word that means - value, respect, highly esteem. It means to treat as special, as receiving much more weight than anything else.

When you honor someone you give weight to their position, their ideals, their preferences.

I wonder what would happen to our spouses and our children if we would start to show them honor? Wives, what would happen to your husband if you started to show him honor? Husbands, what would transpire in your wife if you chose to honor her? Students, what transformation would happen in your parents and your teachers if you would show them honor? Honor lifts up. Honor encourages.

Pastor Rick— continued on page 2

Pastor Rick— continued:

Many times people have trouble honoring others because they feel the other person doesn't deserve it. However, the truth about honor is this. Respect is earned, but honor is given. Honor is something that we freely give.

Honor is what Jesus gave to us when He went to the cross. In this passage of scripture "1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you **were bought at a price...**" the word *price* comes from the same Greek word that is translated many times as *honor*.

Jesus freely paid a heavy price to purchase us or redeem us back to a right relationship with the Father. We really didn't deserve it, but that high price Jesus gave was given as an act of honoring we who are created in God's image.

How would our relationships change if we decided to give honor and bring value to others? How might the news stories change if every segment of our society started to practice just these two things, considering others valuable and giving them honor?



Income for November 2024

11/3/24—116 Attending—\$2,934.00
11/10/24—70 Attending—\$2,025.00
11/17/24—85 Attending—\$2,040.00
11/24/24—71 Attending—\$2,863.00

Total \$9,862.00

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



THANK YOU TO DEVOE BREINICH, BRENDA SHECKLER AND MAGEN SNYDER FOR THEIR TIME
SERVED ON THE CHURCH COUNCIL.

WELCOME RISTON BARR, CHERYL HUMMER AND KYLE STROHL AS OUR NEWEST MEMBERS
OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL.

Passionate Spirituality: Unlocking the Key to Church Growth and Personal Transformation

In his book *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality*, Christian A. Schwarz offers a transformative approach to spiritual growth that emphasizes passion, balance, and personal connection with God. His groundbreaking research, which examines over 60,000 churches, demonstrates that **church growth is not driven by marketing strategies or numerical goals, but by the spiritual quality of the individuals in the pews. When individuals experience deep spiritual passion, this energy fuels not only their personal transformation but also the vibrancy and health of the entire church community.**

Schwarz challenges the commonly held view of spirituality, which often focuses solely on the personal relationship between the believer and God. While this individual connection is vital, Schwarz argues that it is incomplete if it does not also influence other areas of life. **True spiritual growth involves more than just a personal devotion to God; it leads to a transformation in how we live, interact with others, and engage with our communities.** Schwarz stresses that **real spiritual growth** is not about accumulating more material possessions or seeking static states of peace but is **about a continuous, dynamic process of intensifying love for God and deepening personal transformation.**

One of the core concepts in *The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality* is the idea of **radical balance**. Spirituality is often misunderstood as a state of mediocrity or lack of passion. However, Schwarz redefines spiritual balance as a combination of deep passion and mature faith. **It's about knowing your personal spiritual style—whether contemplative, energetic, or somewhere in between—and nurturing that style to strengthen your relationship with God.** By embracing your unique spiritual style, you can grow in passion and authenticity, resulting in a more profound and fulfilling faith.

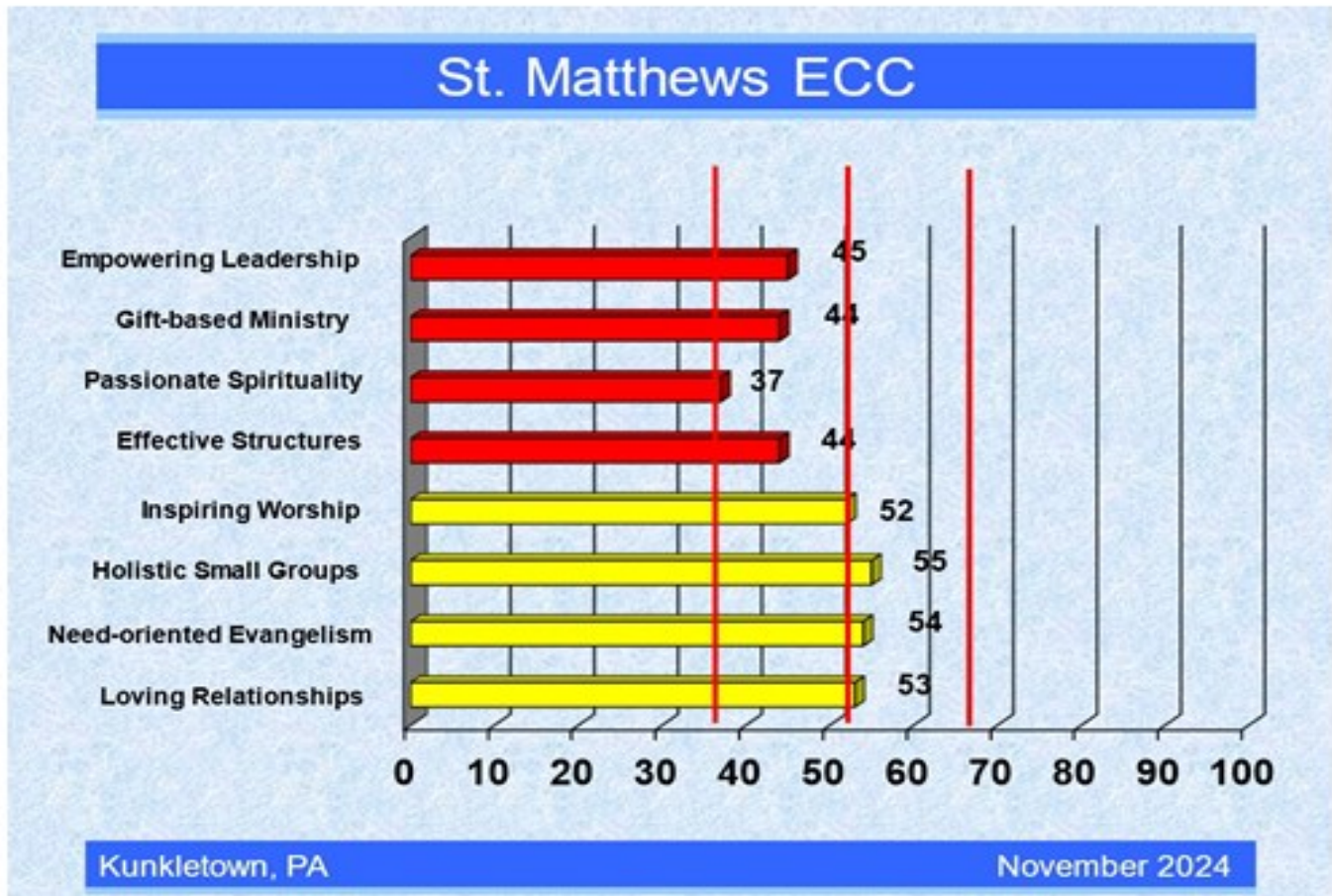
Schwarz also highlights the **importance of the communal and social aspects of spirituality**. A vital part of Christian life is **participating in holistic small groups and fostering loving relationships** with others. These elements are essential for developing passionate spirituality, as they allow believers to support each other in their faith journeys and collectively fulfill the biblical command to “love your neighbor.” Strong, spiritually vibrant churches are those that foster these communal qualities, **creating environments where believers can grow both individually and as a part of a larger, interconnected body of faith.**

The book also confronts **the dangers of nominalism—when faith becomes lukewarm or complacent**. Schwarz warns that **churches and individuals are at risk of spiritual stagnation when their faith lacks passion**. Jesus' warning in Revelation 3:15-16 underscores this message: “I wish that you were either cold or hot, but because you are lukewarm, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” Schwarz emphasizes that a vibrant, passionate spirituality is a mark of healthy Christian living. **The key to overcoming nominalism is a renewed commitment to spiritual growth, which involves both a deepening of personal faith and an active engagement with the larger church community.**

Ultimately, Schwarz's message is one of hope and transformation: **by identifying and embracing your personal spiritual style, growing in it with passion, and connecting with others in a balanced, supportive way, you can experience both personal and church-wide renewal.** This process of **nurturing passion, balance, and maturity is the pathway to overcoming spiritual complacency and creating a thriving, dynamic church community.**

In this series of newsletter articles, we will focus on how to ignite passionate spirituality within our own church. We will uncover practical steps to help us grow in our own spiritual styles, deepen our relationships with one another, and cultivate an environment of transformative faith. As we embark on this journey, we will discover how **passionate spirituality is the key to both personal and communal transformation, leading to a vibrant church that thrives in the love and mission of Christ.**

Church Health

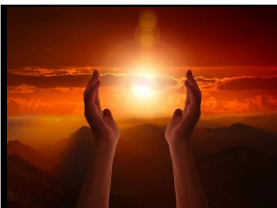


A Transition Team has been created to address the minimum factors from our Assessment Report pictured above. Please pray for the Team face the challenges and develop solutions to help St. Matthews move to increased health.

Transition Team Members:

RJ Cramer
Dan Smale
Cheryl Dorshimer
Penny Hawk
Brenda Sheckler
Kyle Strohl
Magen Snyder





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

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, 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, 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).
The family of Albert Borger.



Beginning January 5, St. Matthew's has a goal!!

We will begin distributing 48 empty shoe boxes.

Operation Christmas Child/Samaritan's Purse will kick off an eleven month campaign to fill the boxes by November 16, 2025. Information will be available to help you search for gift items. We believe the spirit of the Christ Child lives in us all year long. Please take one or more boxes and start filling today!!

CIA COOK'S CORNER

CREAMY SAUSAGE TORTILLA SOUP

EILEEN RUFENACHT

YOU WILL NEED : SKILLET and a SLOW COOKER OR CROCKPOT

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 lb. sweet Italian sausage
2 cups diced sweet onions
1 1/2 cups diced carrots
1/2 cup diced celery
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 1/2 qt chicken broth
2 cups heavy cream
4-6 oz baby spinach
1-14.5 oz can diced tomatoes
1-19oz bag frozen cheese tortellini
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon oregano

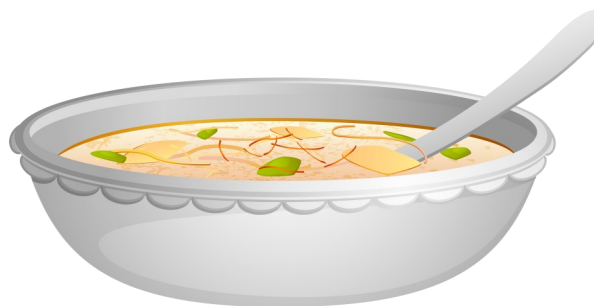


Sauté sausage in olive oil in a skillet until browned, breaking into bite sized pieces, then put into a slow cooker. Sauté onion, celery, carrot and garlic in sausage fat until slightly browned, about 5 to 8 minutes. Add a splash of broth to deglaze the pan and add to slow cooker.

Except tortellini, add all other ingredients to slow cooker and cook 3—4 hours on low. After 2 hours, add in the tortellini and cook until the tortellini is tender.

Serve immediately. Enjoy!!

LOOK FOR INFORMATION ON A CIA SOUP SALE FOR SUPER BOWL SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY!!!



JANUARY 2025

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1 	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 Council 7pm	14	15 Laymen's 10am	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

THE SUPER BOWL IS FEBRUARY 9TH. STARTING ON FEBRUARY 2ND BRING IN CANS OF SOUP FOR THE WEST END FOOD PANTRY AND PVEN. YOU CAN ALSO PUT CASH IN THE POT MARKED FOR THE TEAMS PLAYING IN THE SUPER BOWL GAME!!! GAME TABLE WILL BE LOCATED IN THE GATHERING ROOM!!!

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS!!!!

1 Diane Huber	20 Carol King, Linda Koehler
2 Riston Barr, Jesse Ziegenfus	21 Jennifer Ray, Larry Smale
5 Donna Waltz	23 Rose Fritz, Jamie Garita
6 Kim Buskirk, Cheryl Hummer, Rodney Smith	24 Kurt Eckhart, James Smith
7 Lynn Byerley, Debbie Kemmerer, David Kreiser	25 Kathy Beidleman
8 Betty Kleintop	26 Charlotte Kleintop, Wanda Wunder
9 Henry Krechel, Ashley Smith	28 Rachel Frable, Aubrey Freeby
11 Lesley Byrne	29 Katelin Arace
14 Jeffery Gower	
15 Jennifer Hall	
16 Bonney Kresge	
17 Hailee Snyder	
19 Ryker Barr	