

**Good News
From New Road
St. Matthew Lutheran Church, God's Family in Service**

January 2026

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

Isaiah 43:18-19

Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

A happy and healthy new year to you all! 2026, what will unfold this year? It seems every single year that is the question. What will we see, what will we experience, what will we learn? Time, of course, will tell, but through it all we remember that we have this incredible gift of presence in this moment. That presence, is the presence of Jesus in our lives. As we read in Isaiah, God is about making things new, and in this new year I hope we can remember that, the past always has a point to make and is important for us to ponder and learn from it. But the present is now and God is making things new, always, and so we also must learn to bend and grow in the newness that God is always bringing. As a Lutheran, change is inevitably hard to deal with, and yet it is in the movement of change, that growth and learning come about. So in this new year, 2026, let us open our minds and our hearts to new understandings. May we be open to understand that we are all beloved children of God, and that all of us have a place of belonging, and that belonging should always start in the church. May we find and experience God's grace in new and powerful ways this year and may we take those with us into the world and share God's unfailing love with all we encounter. May 2026 be a year filled with new possibilities and new ways of experiencing God's grace.

Happy New Year!

In Christ,
Austin Nickel



Finance Update

The balance in the checking account at the end of November was \$199,531.90



WELCA NEWS

Circle of Faith

As we journey through 2026, with Nancy's leadership, we will explore our faith using the book *Devotional Classics* edited by Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith. If you haven't obtained your copy of the book it is available online at Amazon for \$8.83. So "add to cart" and get that overnight delivery we have come to expect and appreciate from Amazon. If you don't use Amazon, one of the Circle members can order it for you or introduce you to the magic of shopping with Amazon where everything and anything is at your fingertips. The book is also available through Google Books (books.google.com) at no charge if you would like to read it on your phone or computer. **The 52 selections in the book have been organized to introduce us to many great devotional writers and should be a very enlightening and enjoyable 2026 study.**

God's Work - Our Hands

So this is Christmas
And what have you done?
Another year over
And a new one just begun.

John Lennon from the song "So This Is Christmas"

Your acts of kindness throughout 2025 brought hope to people when they desperately needed the assurance that someone cared about them. Your small act could be the thing that kept someone from giving up. Thank you for your generosity and for letting Christ's light shine out into the world through the gifts you gave to others.

In 2025, the St Matthew family **donated 1,717 pounds of food to the Caritas Food Pantry.** Caritas believes no one should have to wonder where their next meal will come from in these uncertain economic times. The Food Pantry provided a source of food to over 100,000 families that needed a little help. **Thank you for offering to help others through your donations.**

In 2025, the St Matthew family **participated in TWO toy donation events to help the Mission Waco Toy Store.** St Matthew donated well over 400 toys, books and puzzles. In total, the Toy Store provided new toys to 1,320 children this year. Your donations helped to preserve the joy, dignity and hope for so many of your Waco neighbors who need a little help right now. **You gave them the priceless gift of happiness and joy at Christmas.**

In 2025, the St Matthew family **donated quilts, very beautiful handmade quilts, school back packs and health kits to Lutheran World Relief.** Our group of quilters is truly the backbone for our donation efforts to LWR. Without them we would not have the many back packs we filled with school supplies for children who desperately want to learn but need help obtaining supplies. **The quilts our quilters lovingly work on every single Friday morning are a welcome gift to many people** experiencing devastation in their lives from war, extreme poverty or natural disasters.

In 2025, the St Matthew Family donated food and supplies to **fill our Church's Blessing Box** so people can come and get a snack or water when they are in need, gloves to warm their hands, socks to warm their feet and hats to keep their heads warm in the cold winter season. **Your kindness gives many of our neighbors hope for a better day.**

From John Calaway and Baillie Rouse of Mission Waco

"As we approach the close of another year, we are reminded of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 9 where he encourages the early church to give generously, confidently and joyfully trusting that God "is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times you will abound in every good work." What a beautiful picture of what happens when God's people sow into the lives of others.

Thank you St. Matthew for partnering with us. Collectively 1,493 volunteers have given over 18,850 hours of service in 2025. Volunteers are essential for us to empower, equip and engage our community, and through your service and donations **you have lovingly been the hands and feet of Christ to our Waco neighbors."**

A Word of Thanks from St. Matthew Staff

I just want to say thank you so very much for the incredibly generous Christmas staff gifts in December. I appreciate you all so very much and give thanks for the ministry we are doing together here at St. Matthew Lutheran Church. You are all a gift to me and I give thanks for each and every one of you. With much gratitude,

-Pastor Austin Nickel

We at Saint Matthew would also like to collectively give our huge thanks for the staff gifts we received this year! We are blessed to have such a supportive and loving congregation, and we are extremely grateful to everyone in our congregation as we look forward and start a new year together.

-St. Matthew Staff



Midweek Book Study Resumes January 21



Starting on **January 21 at 5:30pm** the Matthew book study continues. We will meet in the parlor at St. Matthew, **Wednesdays January 21, 28, and February 4, 11, and 18th at 5:30 pm.** All are welcome to attend.



Faith in Film is January 24

Our January Faith in Film movie night will be on **Saturday, January 24 at 2:00 p.m.!** We will also be **collecting can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House** on the evening of the showing.

January Coffee Fellowship is January 29

Coffee fellowship for January will take place on Thursday, January 29 from 1 to 3. Details are pending, but will have more details sent out via email when we get closer to the event.

2026 Offering Envelopes

Offering Envelopes for 2026 are available and are in the gathering area to be collected. If you have not been assigned a physical envelope but would like one, please contact Nate at the church office. **When collecting your envelope please double-check the name and number, as the assigned numbers have changed.**

New Cameras for Online Worship

As of Thursday, December 11, our new cameras have been installed in the sanctuary to enhance our online worship experience. **Many thanks to Jay Dittmann and Bradley Linda for installing those!** Check out our worship service online through our Facebook page and be sure to follow St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Waco.

Fellowship for Single Women

Fellowship for Single Women will be meeting on **Tuesday, January 27th at 10:00 a.m. at Cafe Cappuccino.** We meet the **fourth Tuesday** of every month. **All singles are invited.** For any questions, please contact Rosemary Fielder (fielderatwaco@aol.com)

Friday Quilters Meetings

Friday Quilters meet in the Fellowship Hall on **Fridays at 8:30 a.m.** We usually finish up around **10:30 a.m.** Come join us. If you can tie a knot, you can help us assemble the quilts. We have a great fellowship time.



Dear St. Matthew family,

Thank you for the prayers and flowers that were sent to the family of Jay Peterson and myself. We were also pleased by the meals and the cards. Even though he was not a member Jay was warmly received.

-Sharon Peterson

Prayer Requests and Concerns

We continue to pray for one another and those close to us. If you have an update or a concern, please call the office and leave a message.

**Members with Prayer Concerns:**

Rita Bruer, Cora Gillespie, Bill Gillespie, Ty Henrichs, Jean Moeller, Stephanie Partin, Tammy Vickrey, Sharon Peterson, Farrel Bolte, Florence Anderson, Denise Self, Arlene Schwarz, and Mary Krause.

Those for whom prayer is requested:

Elizabeth Dale, John Woods, Michael Puig, Dora Torres (Beth Pristash), Rodney Roller, Janice Byrd, Rich Buckner, Tony Knoss, Larry Burgin, Emma Cox, Julie Kross, Brian Thomas, Lauren Roller, Rodney & Kim Roller (Terry Roller), Jimmy Moore, Harold Strand, Sandy Peterson Penny Reese (Ross & Kim Browne), Wanda Stanford, Cory Stanford, Jacen Stanford (Linda Stanford), Vicki Terry, Duane Knudson (Carol Linda), Curtis Forrester (Bill & Diane Jones), Frank Simons, Ruthie Simons, Kris Braswell, (Colleen Early), Octaviano Estrada Jr., Abby Peters, Ann Mitchell (Meridith Sellers), Renlee Montgomery, the Montgomery family (Marcyl Howell), Bryan, and Zoe Cruse (Lee & Marilyn Cruse), "Red" Tiner Kathy Coleman, Nancy Hensel (Del & Sue Hensel), Diana & Saul Guajardo (Ashley Jenson), Wendell Mosley, Nancy Lynch (Paula Jenson), Wolfgang, Gert Gstatenbauer, Werner Gstatenbauer (Roger & Betty Fornelius), Dylan James Tristian Smith (Teresa Umberger), Darlene Gemath, Hannah Herring, Bell Hutchings, Robbie Rash (Mary Herring), Lambring & Collander Families, Anita Minchew, Addison Lowery, Michael Garrett III, Leana Davis (Maggie Lambring), Reba Widmer, Roland & Sharon Krienke (Teresa Bancale), Todd Butts (Bancale & Krienke Families), Jose Sanchez (Nancy & Larry Zelisko), Bryanna & Calen Orta (Kay Wallace), Amy Siller (Edna Dietrich), Henry, Cassidey, & Dylon Person (Daylon Crye), Caden Engelbrecht (Sally Engelbrecht), The Kris Familiy, The Waite Family (Billie A. Hueske)

January Birthdays

Michael Frey	1/04
Shelly Jasek	1/04
Eric Brewer	1/07
Megan Stanford	1/08
Margaret Brewer	1/11
Roger Fornelius	1/15
Teri Vickery	1/15
Cynthia Tingle	1/16
Macoy Umberger	1/16
Kirk Krause	1/19
Brenda Henry	1/20
Paul Dittmann	1/21
Hayden Stanford	1/22
Pilar Larson	1/22
Clay Sellers	1/23
Kathe Stanford	1/23
Rachel Kincaid	1/23
Cameron Vickrey	1/24

January Anniversaries

Linda & Don Stanford	1/08
----------------------	------

Our **monthly newsletter**
deadline is the 3rd

Sunday of each month.

Please send submissions

to cvanauken@grandecom.net or you may place
your handwritten information and thank you
notes in the wooden box near the entrance of the
workroom. Thank you!



January 2026							Feb 2026 ▶
◀ Dec 2025	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Church Office Closed	2 9:00am Quilters	3
4 9:30am Lessons and Carols Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	5		6 11:00am-Noon <i>Deanery</i>	7	8	9 9:00am Quilters	10 9:00am-4:00pm Calligraphy Guild
11 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	12		13 10:00am Circle of Faith	14	15	16 9:00am Quilters	17
18 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	19		20 11:00am-4:00pm Domino (42) Group	21	22	23 9:00am Quilters	24 2:00pm Faith in Film
25 9:30am Worship Service 10:45am Sunday Learning	26		27 10:00am Fellowship for Single Women	28	29 1:00pm-3:00pm Coffee Fellowship	30 9:00am Quilters	31