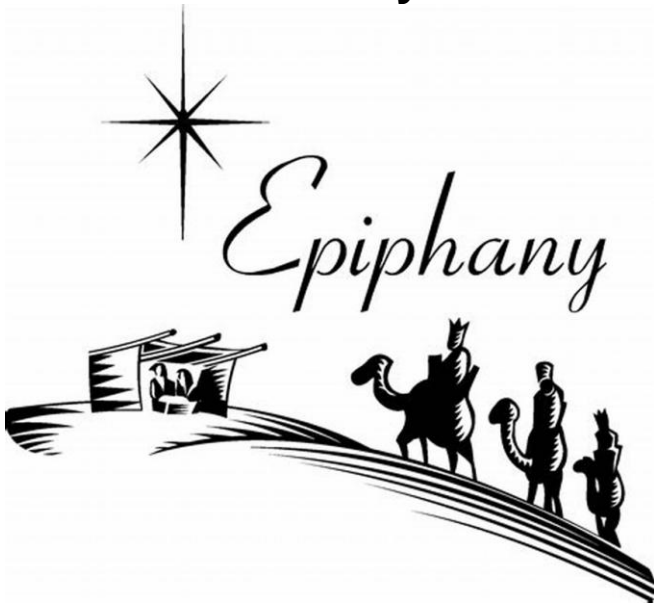


St. Matthew's News

The Newsletter of
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
WWW.Sml-Lex.org

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church is a community of Christians whose purpose is to worship, witness, educate, support, and serve in response to God's Word, to make Jesus Christ known to all people.

January



Wishing you a happy and prosperous
New Year!

God's blessings to you in 2019!!

A few words from Pastor Hawkins...

Whenever my mother had trouble persuading my sisters and me to get up and moving on school mornings she would simply flip on the light switch in each bedroom. In the blink of an eye, we were transformed into screeching demons squirming to dive deeper under the covers and pillow to block the enemy light. Our howls of protest never worked. The light had done its work.

Epiphany is the season of light – the light of Christ that shines in the darkness of sin and exposes its awful truth – a truth we often would rather not confront; a truth we do our best to ignore and dive deeper into the comfortable and protective ignorance of darkness.

Our best efforts to hide may work for a while, but eventually the light of Christ will have its way. It is good news we can cling to, but the process of welcoming and embracing the light is tough. It insists we see ourselves in the light – our limits, our prejudices, our failures, our wounds. The Light also insists that we not despair because we stand in the light of Christ whose purpose is not to condemn but to save.

Already, the Year of Our Lord 2019 promises to be a year of light shining into dark places. Light shining upon our nation. The ELCA will shine light upon women and justice and upon human trafficking.

Closer to home, we'll be shining light into the Parish Register, into closets filled with old equipment, into boxes of files, upon scripture, and into our own lives to speak Jesus' words of hope and promise – a word that declares good news: darkness does not have the last word. Only God has the last word, and that word is ***Let there be light!*** *And the light was good, very good.*

May God continue to shower us all with God's grace and mercy!

Pastor Karen



MONTH OF JANUARY

LAY ASSISTANT

6- Stefni King-Smith
13- Miranda Cox
20- Ronald Norris
27- Doug Whittle

NURSERY

6- Kaye and Kristi Steele
13- Delores and McKayla Lowman
20- Jan Lowman and Jessica Cason
27- Tammy Kyzer and Sheila Smith

ACOLYTE

6- Kylie Steels
13- Abby Whittle
20- McKayla Lowman
27- Hailey Wicker

CRUCIFER

6- Hailey Wicker

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sign up for
2019 is
posted in
the narthex

GREETERS

6- Ann Smith
13- Barry Steele
20- Lois Roof
27- Joey Keisler

USHERS

Ronnie Smith, Head Usher
Eddie Roof
Bruce Smith
Roger Shumpert

ALTAR GUILD

Dorcas Dooley
Tammy Smith

OFFERING COUNTERS

6- Doug and Beth Whittle
13- Jan and Jessie Lowman
20- Lisa Buzhardt and Tammy Moorer
27- Charles Norris and Karen Smith



We pray for our church disciples who are ill, recuperating, or homebound.

Roy & Olivia Whittle, Lydia Lindler, Nettie Bell Alewine, Brice McCartha, Taylor Dorward, Russell Smith, Bobby Counts, Betty Jo McCartha, Junior McCartha

We pray for extended church family and friends:

Martin & Nina Watts, Annie Wannamaker, Pam McCracken, Jerry and Betty Steele, Shannon Brinton, James Jumper, Bonnie Harmon, Anthony Clamp, Hampton Schulz, Saylor Robinson, Wilma Sharpe, Roger Williams, Brodie Derrick, Tom Campbell, Scott Roper, Shirley Burkett, Family of Dianne S. Wells, Billy Mayse

We pray for all who serve in our armed forces

Gus Monaco, Dallas Moses, Douglas Vance, Amy Storrs, Megan Asbill, DJ Hoover and Matt Livingston, Clarke Stocker

To add names to the prayer list, contact the church office at 803-957-9345. Names will remain on the list for one month. If you desire a name to remain on the list for another month or if a name needs to be removed, please contact the office.

Our member of the month looks forward to receiving your cards and letters, drop a note to *Frances Smith 375 Jeter Road, Gilbert SC 29054*



Happy Quilters

The Happy Quilters will meet on January 9, 2019 from 9 am – noon. We will be making scrappy quilts. We will gladly accept donations of yarn, fabric, old sheets, and old blankets, etc. Contact Ann McCartha for more information.

BUDGET REPORT

Year to date revenue as of 12/13/2018

Need to date - \$\$158,479.21

Received to date - \$142,571.34

Shortage \$15,907.87 short

Mission Lexington - \$260.00

Children in Need - \$1245.00

Family in Need - \$700.00

Cemetery - \$990.00

Checking account balance - \$42,813.41



January 20, 2018 - LMM Meeting at 7:45 am
Jeff and Jessie Lowman cooks



All articles for the monthly newsletters should be e-mailed to the Church office, jan@sml-lex.org or you may submit a copy (rough draft) that can be typed into the newsletter, no later than the **15th of each month**. Thank You for your help.

Attention Committee Members and Treasurers

Please begin working on the list of members for your committee, as well as responsibilities for 2019 and the report of activities for 2018. All information for the church's yearbook needs to be submitted to the church office as soon as possible. All treasurers need to submit their reports as soon as possible after receiving the final bank statement. Thanks for your assistance.

In case of a Pastoral Emergency after office hours call Pastor Hawkins at 803-252-1327. Please leave a message if necessary and Pastor Hawkins will return your call as soon as possible.

The **2019 Offering Envelopes** will be in the narthex in the next few weeks. Please pick up your box and any of your family members. If there is not a box with your name on it, please notify the church office and a box will be provided for you.

2019 Church Directory

Please review your present church directory and note any changes that have occurred in your family during the year. Please notify the church office of changes (address, telephone numbers, cell numbers etc.) as soon as possible to be included in the new directory. We would like to have an email address if one is available.

Attention

All of Jan's contact information for email was lost when we had to replace the computer. Please send her an email with your information. Thank you.



01 Rachel Lowman	16 Mary Roof
01 Paul McCartha	18 Helen Smith
03 Hoy Heywood	21 Nettie Bell Alewine
04 Natalie Reeves	21 Marsha Jordan
06 Jamie Dooley	21 Jayna Lowman
06 Jerald Swygert	22 Tammy Smith
09 Katie Leigh Shelby	24 Dorcas Dooley
09 April Stroud	24 Matthew Porth, III
09 Johnny Wicker	27 Terry Alewine
12 Amy Monts	28 Anne McCartha
12 Madisyn Moorer	30 Amanda Hicks
13 Jared Taylor	30 Kitty Dillard
14 Judy Rivers	31 Karlie Steele
14 Cynthia Smith	
16 L.F. McCartha, Jr.	



ANNIVERSARIES

08	John and Julia Ann Derrick
08	Jim and Dianne Kyzer
18	Ronald and Tara Norris
20	Melvin and Carolyn Whittle

Please let Jan know if there are changes to birthday or anniversary list.

December Council Highlights

- Devotions were led by Doug Whittle. Council watched the 2019 SC Synod Mission Video and discussed briefly
- Heard that Sunday school for children will be devoted to the children's Christmas program rehearsal from November 18 until the program date on December 16.
- Heard that the Stewardship Team is reviewing pledge campaign materials.
- Barry Steele, chair of Recreation and Fellowship Committee expressed his thanks to committee members for their work over the past three years.
- Approved the congregation's participation in Lutheran Services of the Carolina's *Love One Another* capital campaign
- Approved training of communion ministers to distribute communion to disciples who cannot regularly be present at worship.
- Approved recommending the 2013 and the 2016 ELCA Church wide Assembly Amendments be adopted and added to the St. Matthew's Constitution and Bylaws. The amendments will be presented and voted on in a special congregational meeting January 20, 2018.
- Began the process of appointing a Constitution Review/Study Team to review and make recommendations to update the St. Matthew's Constitution.

A Christmas message from The Rev. Dr. Herman Yoos, South Carolina Synod Bishop

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." Luke 1: 39-45

Just recently my family was together with my pregnant daughter, who is expecting her first child in early January. Several times she would interrupt our conversation and say, "Put your hand here, the baby is very active." Most of the time, the person who placed their hands on her tummy were disappointed because that would be the very moment the baby stopped kicking or became shy to another's touch. Yet even when we couldn't detect the "kick," our daughter certainly did. The effect on us was a sense of this unborn child letting us know she was already a part of our family and was making her presence known. These were joyful moments.

In this passage, Mary is visiting her elder relative, Elizabeth, who thought at her late age she would never get pregnant. Much to her surprise, however, she also was expecting her first child. It was right when these two expectant moms came together that the unborn John the Baptist decided to leap inside Elizabeth's womb and make his presence known. Elizabeth interpreted this "kick" as something more than just a baby kick; instead it was a sign from the Holy Spirit that Mary was carrying the Christ child. And she exclaimed with joy, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb . . . And blessed is she who believed there would be fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

This year when you watch most of the Christmas movies on television, I invite you to notice how often they use the word "believe" or "faith" to talk about who Santa is or what Santa does, or why Santa comes. Our culture loves to play around with this concept of "faith and Christmas" belonging together. Yet what is missing most is the messiness of an

unexpected human pregnancy to a adolescent peasant girl in Palestine who dared to believe in God's promise that she would give birth to the Messiah. I can't help but wonder what God may be inviting us to pay close attention to this Christmas, and how our lives can also be a witness to God's incredible loving promises for our world.

Let us pray.

Dear God,

Open our eyes this Advent and Christmas season to the mystery of your promises being fulfilled in and through the birth of Jesus. Free us from cynicism and indifference to the hurts and needs of others, and use our words and actions to share your loving and forgiving intentions for humanity. In the name of the Christ Child and for his sake we pray.

Amen.

Congregations and Synods

Our nearly 10,000 congregations and 65 synods across the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are where you'll find us hard at work loving and serving our neighbors, and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Congregations are communities of faith that reach out to all people, serve all people and help us negotiate the complexities and questions of life with a daring confidence in God's grace and love. Synods support, connect and guide the leaders and ministries of congregations, working together to achieve things on a scale and scope that we could never do otherwise.

Together, we are a church that is deeply rooted and always being made new. We strive for strong, vibrant congregational ministries that are relevant to our ever-changing neighborhoods and world, actively engaged in God's mission. Whether a congregation is new or has a long, rich history, these ministries are places within our communities where God is at work building the church.

The blessing of ELCA congregations and synods working together is that we are able to draw upon a wealth of leaders, resources, networks, support, ideas, experiences, diverse perspectives and diverse communities for doing God's work in the world.

Book of Faith


We are a church whose unity is in Jesus Christ, who gathers us around word and water, wine and bread. We believe that people meet God in Scripture, where God's relationship to — and intention for — humankind is revealed.

The Book of Faith Initiative strives to increase biblical literacy and fluency for the sake of the world. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed to this five-year initiative encouraging members, congregations and synods to dig deeper into our book of faith — the Bible.

For many, the encounter with Scripture is limited to the excerpts that are read on Sunday morning. Many of us — and many of our neighbors — are somewhat intimidated and unsure of how to engage Scripture. We believe all are invited to open Scripture and join the conversation.

In order to delve deeper in the word, the Book of Faith Initiative recommends a four-fold method for reading the Bible: devotional, historical, literary and Lutheran theological reading. It's up to you and your faith community to decide how the Book of Faith Initiative will become a vital part of your ministry so that together we grow in our deep engagement with the word of God.





**They set out;
and there,
ahead of them,
went the star
that they had seen
at its rising,
until it stopped
over the place
where the child was.**

Matthew 2.9



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

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Email: pastorhawk958@gmail.com

jan@sml-lex.org

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