

. . . from the pastor

By God's Grace - celebrating our first 60 years

Happy Birthday, Saint Matthew!

On April 16, 2010, we will turn sixty years old. This congregation has lived a full life, but we're nowhere near retirement age! This year we'll look back over six decades to celebrate all that God has done through the people and ministries here. Life has changed drastically since 1950, and the congregation, too, has changed. But one thing remains the same - God's grace has always been at the center.

There will be numerous opportunities to look at and learn about our history, but we won't forget to celebrate God's grace in and among us today, as well. You see, God's not through with us yet - 2010 is merely our *first* sixty years! *Pastor Wengert*

***Save this date
April 18, 2010
Celebrating 60 years of
Ministry
of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
Special Worship Service
followed by a Luncheon Gala
at the
Moorestown Community House
(where the church was chartered)***

MUSIC NOTES

O Come Little Children

The theme for this year's Advent/Christmas concert is "*O Come, Little Children, O Come, One and All.*" The inspiration for the concert comes from a Susan Cherwien poem titled "Christmas Eve". In it she speaks of getting older, experiencing a variety of life's challenges: sickness, death, war, violence, loss of a job, etc. She warns that growing older can be perilous in that it is easy to become hardened, cynical, walled off. But, she writes:

"Christmas Eve dares to sing to us of angels and shepherds, of stars bursting with light, of an ordinary family and the birth of a baby. And, surrounded by candlelight and greens growing in winter, and the voices of children, and Glorias, and light in the darkness, perhaps we begin to thaw a bit, perhaps the wall cracks a bit. Perhaps we begin to feel, we begin to remember to bring into our bodies again something we had been in danger of losing... wonder... wonder"

In preparing for the concert I asked the choir to provide me with titles of songs that brought back

cherished Christmas memories of their childhood. Many of these, where appropriate, have been included in the concert. Of course, some of my favorites are included and, hopefully, we've included some of yours as well.

I hope that you will be able to join us on December 13 at 4:00 as we return to the manger with the eyes of a child; that in the singing of carols and hearing the timeless story again, we thaw a bit and are able to experience the wonder we once had at the arrival of this Noble Guest who comes to bring us peace, joy, and love.

Soli Deo Gloria,

David D. Harp, Cantor

**An Old Fashioned Potluck Supper
and Children s Craft**

**Special Guest: Stephen Deal
Missionary from Costa Rica
supported by Saint Matthew Church**

**Sunday afternoon, December 13
following the Advent Concert**

**Sign up in the narthex to bring
appetizer, salad, main course,
vegetable or dessert**

(Arrangements will be made to keep
food warm during the concert.)

Saint Matthew Readers

To celebrate the sixty years of ministry by Saint Matthew Church, the book group has chosen books from each decade which reflect current events or were written by outstanding authors during the decade. The group meets the last Monday of each month at 7:30 pm. They will discuss *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac on January 25, a novel chosen by TIME magazine as one of the 100 best English language novels from 1923-2005. All are welcome.

**O Come, Little Children, O
Come One and All**

**Advent/Christmas
Concert**

**Sunday, December 13, 2009
4:00 pm
in the sanctuary**

An afternoon of readings, hymns, and musical
selections by the choirs of Saint Matthew Church
and soloists

**ADVENT and CHRISTMAS
at Saint Matthew Lutheran Church**

November 29 ~December 20

**8:30 and 11:00 am: Holy Communion
(with lighting of the Advent Wreath candles)
9:45 am: Sunday Church School**

December 13

**4:00 pm: *O Come Little Children, O Come One and All*
An Advent/Christmas Concert of Readings, Hymns
and
Musical Selections featuring Saint Matthew Choirs
Followed by a Potluck Supper**

Christmas Eve Festival Services

**4:00 pm: Christmas Carol Service
for families with small children
7:00 pm: Christmas Candlelight Service
10:30 pm: Christmas Candlelight Communion
Service**

Christmas Day

9:30 am: Communion Christmas Morn

December 27

**8:30 & 11:00 am: Holy Communion
(No Sunday Church School)**

Annual Giving Tree

We have the opportunity to bring Christmas joy to the young clients of Family Service of Burlington County again this year. The giving tree in the narthex, beginning November 29, will have tags with name, age and gender of the child. Where available, there is a clothing size and a few have a wish list which might be helpful.

We invite you to take a tag from the tree and attach it to your wrapped gift. All gifts must be under the tree by noon on Sunday, December 13. There can be no exceptions because the gifts will be picked up by Family Service following the 11:00 worship service. We cannot make arrangements for late gifts to be delivered!

We appreciate your willingness to make Christmas happier for those less fortunate. Thanks to **Joyce Hagen** and **Vicki Seehafer** for making arrangements for the Giving Tree.

Looking ahead. . .

Save this date ~ February 13, 2010

7:30 ~ 9:30 pm in the church foyer

That is the date of our Seventh Annual Saint Matthew Wine and Cheese Tasting (Adults Only). Enjoy trying wines and cheeses from around the world. Soft drinks will also be available.

Join us for a wonderful evening of sampling, mingling, and fun.

Thank You. . .

Thank you all for your kind words, thoughts and prayers on the death of my brother. Your cards meant a great deal to me. We are blessed to be a part of this congregation and to have friends like you.

David Harp

CAMDEN KIDS CHRISTMAS PARTY
hosted by Saint Matthew Lutheran Church

Come one, come all, we ll have a ball!
Tuesday, December 8, 2008
6:30 pm in Fellowship Hall

Dinner prepared by Saint Matthew Women:
pasta, salad, Texas toast, punch

Needed:

- ▯ Help with set up, decorations, cooking, serving, cleanup, supervising book room**
- ▯ Donations of new and gently used books
(There is a box in the narthex.)**
- ▯ Donations of money and prayers**

**Sign up in the foyer on the bulletin board
and indicate how you can help**

Food, fun and fellowship for the whole family!!
Call Mae Trebing at 609-239-4942 for more information.

“Holidays in Iraq”

The Villani Family will once again work on a service project with other people of Lockheed Martin to send Christmas gifts to members of the New Jersey Army National Guard, serving in Iraq and Kuwait. Last year they sent 235 boxes and would like to do that and more this year. Please drop off items on the porch of the Villani home at 729 Signal Light Road, Moorestown by Wednesday, December 9. In addition the soldiers like to receive letters from kids with a few kind words of cheer and hope. There is a mail box for such items at the drop off site at the Villani's as well.

Some items suggested for the deployed soldiers: cookies, crackers, coffee creamers, cocoa, M&Ms, Reisen Candies, Caramel Chews, drink mixes, peanut butter, hard candy (all sorts) granola bars, beef jerky, Ramen noodles, Kraft Easy Macaroni & Cheese, microwave pop corn, peanuts, dried fruit, sunflower seeds, trail mix, paperback books, hot sauce, current magazines, one time use cameras, batteries - AA, AAA, fly traps, razors, nail files, shaving cream, hand wipes, moisturizers, etc. The complete list is posted on the bulletin board in the church foyer.

Contact **Kim Villani** if you have questions: 439-9227 or e-mail: kimberly.g.villani@lmco.com.

Semi-annual Congregation Meeting

January 31, 2010

following the 11:00 am Worship Service

- a review of expenditures & receipts for 2009
- presentation of financial plan for 2010
for approval

Decorating the Church

There will be “greening of the church” during the 11:00 worship service on Sunday, December 20. Help is needed for preparing decorations for the Christmas season on Saturday, December 19, at 9:00 am. All “helping hands “ will be most welcomed.

Greens and holly are also needed. Anyone who may be able to supply these should contact **Lynne Ganskopp** at 234-2458, to make arrangements for getting them to the church.

December Staff Anniversary
Pastor Wengert ~ 4 years

*We wish you joy in this holy season
as we celebrate the birth of Gods
only Son, our Lord. May Gods
love and peace fill your hearts and
homes now and in the coming year.*

*Pastor Wengert, David Harp, Bill Lawrence
Rozella Bower, Kim Bohley, Dave Fulon*

2010 Bosnia International Servant Trip

Last year Saint Matthew Church sponsored Pastor Wengert and five other members of the congregation for a Bosnia Servant Trip. In 2010 **Rene Cherson** will be joining people from the New Jersey Synod on the annual trip to work with the children of Bosnia, sharing God's love through healing, hope and peace. They will leave June 20 and return July 3 and while there they will hold Friendship Camps throughout the country, focusing on music and art therapy and cooperative games that build self-esteem and teamwork. Each year 2,500 children from all ethnic backgrounds participate and the camps help change communities and people's lives. More information on how people in the congregation can help will follow next year.

Notes from Saint Matthew OWLS

All Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors are invited to the annual Christmas covered dish luncheon on Thursday, December 3, at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. Please bring an appetizer, salad, meatless casserole, vegetable or dessert. A sign up sheet is posted on the bulletin board. Also bring a \$5.00 unisex wrapped gift for a gift exchange. A free will offering will be collected to give to two worthy organizations. Call **Mary Cross**, 856-829-7028, if you need transportation or have questions.

On Thursday, January 7, the OWLS will be traveling to the New Jersey State Police Headquarters to tour their museum and learning center. (Thanks to Carl Williams for making this tour possible.) After the tour we will have lunch at Mastori's. We will leave the church in car pools at 9:00 am. The cost for the day is \$21.00. Make checks payable to *Fifty Plus OWLS* and give to **Bud Koch** by January 3.

SOCIAL CONCERNS MINISTRY ITEMS

Coupons for Camden

The congregation is encouraged to continue to save coupons for Camden (cut out ones for groceries only - no restaurant ones). They could be for sundries; i.e., deodorant, toothpaste, etc.; paper goods; i.e., paper towels, tissues, etc.

Alternate Gift Giving

Sunday, December 6, Saint Matthew Adult Forum will focus on Alternative Gift Giving. These alternative gifts are another way to make a difference and to give a gift of significance for mission. See **Virginia Sheppard** for more information.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

The date is Friday, January 22, 2:00 - 8:00 pm in the gym at Saint Matthew Church. Contact **Elise Korman** with any questions.

Blanket Sundays

January 24 and 31 will be Blanket Sundays. "From something as simple as a blanket, amazing things can arise...with your help...(our) congregation can provide warmth and protection to victims of a disaster, seeds and tools to struggling farmers and water and health to impoverished communities by (participating) in a Church World Service Blankets+ Offering." Think about how you can help.

Lunch Bunch

Regular meetings to make lunches for the homeless at New Visions Community Center in Camden will be Thursdays, December 10, 2009 and January 14, 2010 in the Teen Den at 7:00 pm. Don't forget to continue to bring baked goods on/in disposable containers and leave them on the desk outside the office for us to use or freeze until needed. Thanks a bunch - a "lunch bunch"!

Information on the Giving Tree and the Camden Kids Christmas Party can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

An Aging Society and Ministry Among Older Persons by W. A. Lawrence, AIM Parish Coordinator

Last month we examined the answers to the Aging Quiz. I know some of us may disagree with those answers and might be perplexed by that one statistic (#25) regarding economic status in the year 2010. It's probably questionable here in the year 2009, but back in 1998 that was considered a solid statistic.

At any rate, now that we're on the same page, let's investigate ageism, ageing and...how old is old?

What is "ageism"? - According to "dictionary.com" the following definition is supplied for age-ism; noun

1. Discrimination against persons of a certain age group
2. A tendency to regard older persons as debilitated, unworthy of attention, or unsuitable for employment.

(Origin: 1965-70; AGE + ISM, on the model of SEXISM, RACISM, etc. Related forms: ageist, adjective, noun.)

I don't know about you, but when I read those words my blood begins to boil. Where'd all that come from? Come to think of it, probably from the same place those other two illustrations (sexism, racism) came from - our hardened hearts, our sinful self. (Well, maybe not us...but, those other guys, for sure.) The sad truth is it did come from us. We created it and utilize it. Ofttimes it is very subtle and we may find ourselves unconsciously indulging in it. That answer to question #20 particularly rankles me. The proposition is how do we minimize...or, better yet, eradicate ageism? Well, I guess the first step in that process would be to recognize it...and then make a concerted effort to avoid falling prey to it. Now that we have all the answers to the facts on aging, it might be easier to recognize ageism and avoid its devious machinations. The fact of the matter is we're not getting any younger - our society is aging. Therefore, it makes sense that we now make a cooperative effort to tackle this vicious culprit together.

Then there's aging and how old is old? We've all got a handle on that one - right? In reading through Elizabeth MacKinlay's book "*The Spiritual Dimension of Aging*", I have found a few interesting tidbits. Seems that back in the 19th century 65 was considered old age; primarily because that was when one was entitled to receive a pension - and few people were expected to live longer than 65. Since then (around the 1990s) another three-way classification has emerged - that of young-old 65-74 years; old-old, 75-84 years; and oldest-old, 85 years plus. This system seems useful since it fits the lifespan of the majority of people. It also recognizes that aging is

not one specific homogenous period, but is comprised of different periods.

While perusing MacKinlay we also learn that chronological age isn't always a determining factor as to how old one really is. "Some people are 'old' while still in their fifties, while others are still young in their eighties." A classification being used more recently has been third age and fourth age. Third agers seem to be defined as those who are older and living independently, while fourth agers are those who are older and frail, being unable to live independently. This classification is based on function rather than chronological age; functional capacity does become more important than medical diagnosis in the latter stages of the lifespan." (*The Spiritual Dimension of Ageing*, MacKinlay, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, p. 13.)

As we grow as a society, we may have to continually change the definition of old in order to avoid limiting people into outmoded roles and predetermined expectations of aging. Who knows, somewhere down the line in the not too distant future, we may think of anyone over 100 as old, and not before.

Peace, **Bill**

Devotions for the Advent Season

Again this year we appreciate the efforts of **Professor Tim Wengert** who has written daily devotions for the congregation of Saint Matthew Church. The booklet is available on the table in the foyer.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The Saint Matthew Congregation Council held its monthly meeting on November 16, 2009. For your information, here is a recap of our key points of discussion:

1. Devotions were led by Bill Grosspeter. The scripture reading and the ensuing discussion focused on the Lutheran tradition and understanding of God's Grace.
2. We reviewed new correspondence from Joe and Jen Cassel, whom we help support in their exciting mission of Campus Crusade for Christ.
3. We also reviewed a special "Thank You" note from MEND, expressing that organization's appreciation for our continuing support.
4. Tom Cassel presented the Treasurer's report, including a status update on the Current and Benevolence budget deficit for 2009. While we are continuing to experience a serious shortfall in revenues versus budget, we were very thankful to hear that over 30 commitments have been received in association with our recent deficit reduction appeal - with hopefully more commitments on the way. However, we still anticipate finishing 2009 with an operating deficit for the 3rd consecutive year. On a more positive note, the Capital Campaign revenue receipts are currently running slightly ahead of plan. Initial 2010 budget planning documents were also distributed to the Council Ministry Chairs, for completion and submission in early December.
5. In response to our ongoing C and B financial challenges, the Stewardship Team will be initiating a new and different type of campaign this year, featuring a focused educational process along with a special dinner in early January - dates and all other details are being finalized as of this writing. Council's sincere hope is that, as a result of this campaign, we will be able to increase our C and B revenues in 2010 and beyond, such that we can balance our budgets, maintain all of our current key ministry programs, and position Saint Matthew for sustainable growth in the years ahead.
6. Following the monthly Ministry reports, Faith Steinfert requested and obtained input from Council regarding some final open issues regarding the proposed new Saint Matthew Lutheran Church Employee Handbook. Following a staff review this month, Council will be prepared to vote its approval at the next Council meeting - scheduled on December 21, 2009.
7. Initial plans and agenda items for the January 31, 2010 Congregation Meeting were discussed.

Excitement is building for Saint Matthew's multi-faceted celebration in April of 2010 of "Our First 60 Years of Ministry". More detailed information will be available in January.

Bill Acheson, President

WELCA News

Morning Circle

The December meeting will be Friday, the 11th at 10:00 for a Christmas program. Afterwards they will have the traditional Christmas luncheon at Braddock's Tavern in Medford. Cost for the meal is \$16.00 and should be paid by December 6 to **Virginia Sheppard**.

In January the group will meet on the 8th at 10:00 in the Shockey Lounge.

WELCA Semi-Annual Meeting

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 12 at 6:30 pm with a covered dish dinner, followed by a brief meeting and a presentation by Louisa Groce, retired ELCA pastor.

Annual Mini Retreat

This Twelfth Annual Mini-Retreat will be on Saturday, February 6, at 9:00 am. A fabulous breakfast will be waiting for all those attending. The leader will be Ruth Stotsenburg, former Director of Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church, Moorestown. She is a small group leader and has organized and led trips to Israel, Italy and other memorable places. Women from other Lutheran churches will be invited in addition to women from First Presbyterian, Moorestown.

Church Women United

January 9, 2010 is the date for Church Women United's annual meeting, which will be held at First United Methodist Church, Pleasant Valley and Camden Avenues (enter on the Camden Avenue side). There will be continental breakfast at 9:30 am. Donna Baines will show slides from the Methodist Church Bell Choir trip to Europe. A brief business meeting will follow. All are welcome.

Information on any of the above events is available from Mae Trebing, 609-239-4942 or gtrebing@comcast.net.

Notes About Folks and Other Things

Dorothy Shockey was recently honored by Lutheran Care at Moorestown by being the first recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, given by the volunteers and the auxiliary of Lutheran Care. Congratulations, Dorothy.

Who stopped by?... Sonia Vicinanza recently stopped in the office on her way to a dentist appointment. She is a former member of Saint Matthew Church, now living in New York City. She sang in our church choir but says the one in her current church does not begin to compare with the quality of the Adult Choir here. She also spoke of how she enjoys reading everything in the *Messenger*.

Susan McLaughlin made the front page of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* on Saturday, November 14, as she was taking pictures of the nor'easter that came through Avalon at the Jersey shore.

Congratulations to **Paul & Anne Otto** who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 21.

The two side **bulletin boards** in the church foyer (narthex) will be used by the Stewardship Ministry and the 60th anniversary events in upcoming weeks. The main bulletin board will continue to be reserved for congregation activities.

Bread bakers are needed for making the bread for communion. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex. The recipe is there also.

Grief Support Group

Christmas is one of the most difficult holidays when you are grieving the loss of a loved one. The Rev. Nancy Truscott, Chaplain from VITAS Innovative Hospice Care will offer pastoral care and conversation over the lunch hour, 12:00 - 1:00 pm, on December 4, 11 and 18 at Saint Matthew Church. Please bring a lunch.

Saint Matthew Flower Guild

In January 2010, Saint Matthew Church will begin a “Flower Guild Project” with the purpose of beautifying the sanctuary whenever needed. Classes on flower arranging will be held for one hour on two Saturday afternoons every month. There will be a nominal fee per class to cover materials and every arranger will take home a finished centerpiece.

From beginner to expert, male or female, all are welcome to participate, share, learn and enjoy this new project dedicated to the greater glory of God.

For more details contact **Carmen von Wrangell** at 856-866-0452 or mariposah@verizon.net.

Adult Forum in December 9:45 am in the Shockey Lounge

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic & Leader</u>
12/6	Alternative Gift Giving (led by Karen Widin)
12/13	Our Mission in Costa Rica (led by the Rev. Stephen Deal and family)
12/20	Bethlehem
12/27	No adult forum

DivorceCare Seminar at Methodist Church

First United Methodist Church of Moorestown will host “DivorceCare: Surviving the Holidays” for people facing the holidays after a separation or divorce. A children’s program for children 6-12 will be provided and nursery care for those 5 years and under will be available. Contact Lee Grapes at 856-866-1679 or mvance12@juno.com.

What's Happening with Stewardship?

As the congregation looks forward to Advent and the beginning of the new church year, the Stewardship Ministry has been at work on the fall campaign for Saint Matthew's upcoming budget. Those of you who have responded to the church's annual pledge campaigns in the past are no doubt wondering about the schedule for this year since normally pledges would be sent and collected by this time. This year the campaign has taken a different turn. As was disclosed at Adult Forum on November 1, the church has consistently run a deficit in its operating budget, called the Current and Benevolence (C&B) budget, of between \$25-30,000 each year. Through various one time measures, freezing spending and borrowing from the Memorial Fund (which must be paid back with interest), the church has squeaked through the last three years.

This article is one of the means that the Stewardship Ministry is communicating these facts to the congregation. Consistently under funding the C&B budget means that the ministries and programs that the church has for its members and the community are scaled back or don't happen at all. Further, without fully funding the budget, Council will be forced to take a hard look at our staffing and the programs they support in the budget.

The Stewardship Ministry will be making these points in different forums from Thanksgiving to the New Year and then will be seeking the congregation's support for fully funding the C&B budget. The results of these efforts will be presented in a new budget at the Congregation Meeting in late January. While this message is more specific about the financial outlook of the church than in years past, giving remains a faith based act for each person and household. We ask you to consider the mission of the church in being the face of God in the community, its call to worship and the support that we give each other in good times and bad in responding to the annual pledge campaign.

The Stewardship Ministry

Introducing the Anniversary Logo

The Executive Committee of the Congregation Council is acting as the Steering Committee for the 60th Anniversary Celebration events under the direction of **Charlotte Hack** who is the Anniversary Coordinator. They are making big plans with the ministries of Saint Matthew Church for various activities and events to help us celebrate such a milestone.

Kristen Bower submitted four possible designs for a logo and the Executive Committee selected the one using a butterfly with a contemporary look, shown above, as the primary logo for use on letterhead, envelopes, notecards, etc. Another design was selected for a banner for the sanctuary. (The original design is in full color.)

Kristen wrote the following explanation for the butterfly design:

“A butterfly’s life is a metamorphosis as it changes from a caterpillar to a butterfly. My thought in using it was to symbolize the spiritual evolution of the church and its parishioners through the years. A butterfly is also a symbol of spring and renewed hope for the future. In this particular logo, I took it a step further and used three basic shapes to create the butterfly. The three shapes are meant to symbolize the Holy Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how they blend together to form one true God. The colors used are similar to the colors of the cross that hangs in Saint Matthew’s sanctuary.”

All Saints Sunday

The custom of commemorating all of the saints of the church on a single day goes back at least to the third century. Baptisms have occurred on All Saints Sunday since about that time. On this day we celebrate the baptized people of God, living and dead, who make up the body of Christ.

On November 1, the congregation observed All Saints Sunday by remembering those who died in the previous year as well as those who have been baptized since last All Saints Sunday. Those commemorated in death were **Jacquelyn K. Hemphill, James C. Montgomery, Phyllis Hoffman Truskolaski, Anna Kaisa Finke, Florence H. Klemmer, Bonnie J. Shockey and Jeannette Urica Knight**. Those recognized as “saints” through their baptisms were **Kyle Emanuel Schoenberger, Chase Ethan Collins, Piper Joleigh English, Addison Jane Douglas, Alexandria Grace Faino, Gianna Elisabet Faino, Ashton James Carlson, Sean Christopher Bedell, Jax Lennon Drayton**

Sally Kohl Dies in Florida

The office recently learned of the death of **Sally Kohl** on November 11. Sally and her husband Menton were charter members of Saint Matthew Church and were actively involved in the early days of the church’s development - Sunday school, signing the charter at the Community House, the purchase of this property, renovations of the building for our worship, etc. They were “fixtures” here for many years and a number of people in this congregation have fond memories of them. Menton died as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident in 1986. Sally continued to live in Moorestown until the mid-1990's when she moved to Florida to be near her daughter Ellie Springer. She participated in the 45th anniversary of the congregation and returned in 2000 to help us celebrate our 50th anniversary. This congregation has much to be thankful for in having people like the Kohls as well as others who wanted a church badly enough to make special sacrifices to help it become a reality.

Sally had celebrated her 94th birthday with all three of her daughters on November 9. A service will be held at Saint Matthew Church early next year. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Ellie Springer, 18904 Emerald Ridge Drive, Hudson, FL 34667.