

***Holy Week
and
Easter Services
2009***

Palm Sunday, April 4

8:30 & 11:00 am: Holy Communion

9:45 am: Sunday Church School and Adult Forum

Maundy Thursday, April 9

12:15 & 7:30 pm: Holy Communion

First Communion

Good Friday, April 10

12:00 noon: Community Ecumenical Service

Trinity Episcopal Church

**7:30 pm: Tenebrae Service at Saint Matthew Church
(service of shadows)**

Easter Sunday, April 12, 2009

8:30 & 11:00 am: Holy Communion

9:45 am: Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall

(no Sunday Church School or Adult Forum)

Parson To Person

On Your Mark, Get Set...Come!

Evangelism 101

Getting Evangelism Backwards

In past articles, I've mentioned that the Greek "*euagellion*," is translated *gospel*, literally "good news," and that the word "evangelical" is not the property of a particular group, but rather, over the centuries has described all Christians who speak the good news.

The word "evangelism" made a later entrance into English (circa 17th century) and in the last quarter of the 20th century many congregations added evangelism committees to their organizational structure. I propose that one reason many Christians are uncomfortable with the thought of evangelizing is that we get evangelism backwards. For example, Wikipedia defines evangelism as "the practice of attempting to convert people to a religion." That's the problem! Many Christians understand evangelism to be about convincing another person to believe.

In all four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), the term is not used in this way. Jesus *proclaims* the good news wherever he goes, and he "called to him...and he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him and to be sent out to *proclaim* the good news..." (Mark 3:14), and even those whom Jesus heals go about the countryside – not convincing people to decide for Jesus – but "*proclaiming* it freely" (Mark 1:45).

If one understands that you must decide for Jesus, that you must choose Jesus as your personal Savior, then of course, convincing and converting become necessary to such a decision. However, as Lutherans understand that faith is a gift from God, and that the Holy Spirit brings us to faith through the Word, we understand that we do not decide nor choose – the Holy Spirit gives us faith as a gift as we hear the Word. In this case, our responsibility is to proclaim the good news of and about Jesus and trust the Holy Spirit to do the rest.

The other backwards understanding is that there is a time faith is off, and when it gets switched on then it's on for life. Lutherans understand that we are very much like the man who said "Lord I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24) who experiences both all of the time. The Holy Spirit is the one who does the work, through the proclaimed Word, to "turn on" faith. We need to put ourselves in the way of the Word over and over again – oh, let's say at least every Sunday – for the rest of our lives, because if left on our own, we won't believe.

In this way, we follow closely how scripture describes evangelism and don't mix up the Holy Spirit's work with our own. We don't need to debate, convince or convert people. We merely share our experience, proclaiming or telling the good news of and about Jesus Christ, and let the Holy Spirit do the rest!

Pastor Wengert

. . . from the Parish Coordinator

In my February and March articles I discussed ways we were already assisting people in our local neighborhoods with food, and also opportunities where we might be able to do more. Here, with this information I've borrowed (with permission) from our NJ Synod website, we can see how just a few quarters can make a monumental difference in the lives of our sisters and brothers across the waters - via the ELCA World Hunger program.

How are our quarters used?

The ELCA World Hunger Appeal helps hungry people at home and around the world through relief, long-term development, education and advocacy. Trusted partners, such as Lutheran World Relief and the Lutheran World Federation, provide food to refugees of war and famine and help people escape the "silent disaster" of extreme poverty through sustainable development. Here are some ways hope comes to people in need:

Food for Babies: 25-50 Cents provides food for a baby in a refugee camp in Tanzania or Angola whose family has fled war or famine.

Daily Bread for an Orphan: \$1 feeds an AIDS orphan in Malawi or an abandoned "street child" in Zimbabwe for a day.

Soil-saving Trees: \$10 plants Eucalyptus or Pawpaw seedlings that keep the soil from eroding, preserving productive farm land in Zambia.

School Gardens: \$100 helps students plant and tend cashew trees in their school garden in Mozambique. Students eat and sell the nuts and use branches for firewood.

Goats and Cows: \$250 provides two goats to help AIDS orphans escape hunger in rural Uganda. \$500 provides a high-yielding cow that supplies nutritious milk for a poor family in Kenya. Farmers also sell extra milk-often using what is earned to keep children in school.

Water of Life: \$5,000 funds for a month a comprehensive community-development project in Ethiopia that helps villages build dams and canals that prevent famine in cyclical droughts.

(Gifts may be given through your congregation or directly to: ELCA World Hunger Appeal, PO Box 71764, Chicago IL 60694, www.elca.org/hunger.)

Next month we'll learn about "Angel Food Ministries."

W. A. Lawrence, AiM Parish Coordinator

April Staff Anniversaries

David Harp ~ 4 years

Dave Rulon ~ 12 Years

MINISTRY OF THE MONTH

Evangelism

The Evangelism Ministry at Saint Matthew Church is chaired by Jack Horton, who also serves as the Council liaison. Traditionally, this ministry provides opportunities for witness to the community and is committed to welcoming and supporting new members. Ministry members attend new member classes, arrange new member receptions, provide new members with gift bags and welcome notes, and aid in assimilating new members into the life of the congregation. Evangelism ministry, through publicity, welcomes and encourages community members to join us for fellowship, learning and worship.

Greeters welcome members and visitors on Sundays before each service. They are assigned by Pam Bowen from a list of people who have volunteered through the Spiritual Gifts sheets. Anyone who might be interested in adding your name to the list should contact Pam or the church office.

Carole Scarpa prepares Visitor Packets which contain information about the church for visitors who worship with us.

Bill Grosspeter, a relatively new member in the congregation is anxious to invite new people in the community to worship with us. He receives lists of new families in the area and assigns others on the ministry to help with handwritten notes to each of these, which includes worship schedules.

The Evangelism Ministry has also been responsible for the Kiddie Karnival as an outreach ministry to the community. This year, however, there will not be a Kiddie Karnival because of the tremendous expense involved for the church. Because of the tightened economy and a more limited budget, it is not a viable activity. Instead of this, the ministry is planning to sponsor a booth on Moorestown Day in early June. There will be more about this in next month's *Messenger*.

As always, the Evangelism Ministry welcomes anyone who might be interested in helping with their activities.

Lenten Candlelight Vespers

The Ten Commandments

Wednesday, April 1

8th, 9th & 10th Commandments

SPIRITUAL LIFE MINISTRY

New Activity Begins In May

Over twenty-five people attended the Saint Matthew Readers (book group) in February to discuss *The Shack*. We believe many Saint Matthew members and friends go to the movies and would enjoy discussing them. In May, Spiritual Life Ministry will begin a new parish activity - "MMM" - Media, Movies, & Munchies. Each month on the first Friday there will be an opportunity to come together with family and friends to discuss a recent movie from a Christian perspective.

In the planning stages we expect to alternate movies each month. One month will offer a family film for parents, grandparents and children and the next month, an adult movie not meant for children under age 14 will be offered.

On family nights, we will view the movie together, after which children will have a discussion and perhaps a craft project, separate from the parents. The length of the evening will vary by the movie and whether or not there is a supper (2½ to 3 hours).

The program will run May through September, 2009. We will then evaluate to see if there is an interest in continuing monthly, bi-monthly or not at all. In our culture today everyone is faced with the impact of the media on our lives and our children's lives, whether it be music, television, the internet or another type of media which we encounter daily. It seems fitting that we should take time to talk about the media from a Christian perspective and the impact on all of us.

Consider joining us on "*First Friday - MMM*"

Nancé Carlson, chair

We would appreciate your answers to the following questions. Return them to the church office or place in the offering plate.

1. Would you like to have a light supper available? _____
2. Should there be a light supper only on family nights? _____
3. Would you prefer having only munchies? _____
4. Would you be willing to help with dinner/munchies? _____
5. What is a good time to begin in the evening? _____
6. Can you suggest a movie?

April in Adult Forum Sunday mornings at 9:45 in the library

April 5: *The Passion Interpreted in Music/Drama -*

a video presentation; Wayne Becker, leader

April 12: NO Adult Forum

Attend the Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall

April 19: *Sharing the good news: Evangelical Lutheran vs. Evangelical Christian I*

Pastor Wengert, leader

April 26: *Sharing the good news: Evangelical Lutheran vs. Evangelical Christian II*

Pastor Wengert, leader

Music Notes from the Cantor

Over the past few months, people have asked me about the appropriateness of applause in worship. To answer this question, we should begin by asking what kind of message is being sent by the congregation's applause.

Imagine if one week the Cherub Choir sang and received applause after their anthem. Then, the following week the Adult Choir sang and, for whatever reason, did not receive applause. Does it mean that the contribution of the Adult Choir is any less important? Does it mean that the Cherub Choir holds a higher place in the eyes of the congregation than those who work hard in other areas? And what about the Pastor, should she receive applause after a sermon? Should the lector receive applause after the readings or the worship assistant after leading the prayers? Of course the answer is no, not because it is undeserved or that the leaders are not appreciated, but because it can often send a contradictory and unintended message.

We live in a society in which we constantly seek to be entertained. From our car radios and our televisions, to our sporting events and the internet, we crave entertainment. And when we finally are entertained we respond with applause, whether the performance merits it or not. This association of applause with entertainment immediately encourages the idea that music in worship is entertainment and, in turn, worship is entertainment, which we know to be false.

This is not to say that applause is never warranted. Often times, it is an obvious and appropriate way to offer care and support. When Sunday School teachers or new council members are installed, applause signifies our support and joy at their calling. When a newly married couple is introduced for the first time or a newly baptized child is introduced, applause signifies a message of care and welcome.

But, as it relates to music within worship, I encourage you to consider other options to voice your support and care. A hearty "amen" is never out of place. A simple "thank you" to the choir members is also a welcome sign of support. Most importantly, your prayers and your participation in the worship life of the church is the best sign of your appreciation.

*Soli Deo Gloria,
David D. Harp, Cantor*

The Lunch Bunch

*(a ministry providing a monthly lunch for the homeless at
New Visions Community Services in Camden)*

The next meeting will be Thursday, April 9, in the Teen Den. This is Maundy Thursday. Please note: The lunch preparers will meet after the worship service - approximately 8:30 pm. Don't forget to bring in your baked goods any time. If necessary, they will be frozen until needed.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

High school seniors and students currently enrolled in colleges may apply for scholarship money from the Memorial Fund of Saint Matthew Lutheran Church. Applications are available on the narthex tables. The deadline for submitting to the Memorial Fund mailbox beside the church office is April 26. *Bruce Arruda, Chair, Memorial Fund Trustees*

WELCA Morning Circle

The ladies will meet at 10:00 am on April 10 at Perkins Pancake House on Route 38 (at the K Mart Shopping Center) for brunch. Because it is Good Friday, this change of format will permit attendance at the service at Trinity Episcopal Church which begins at 12:00 noon. For reservations, call Mae Trebing, 609-239-4942.

OWLS June Riverboat Trip

On Wednesday, June 10, the 50+ OWLS will carpool to Toms River, NJ for a delightful lunchtime cruise on Toms River/Barnegat Bay. Riverboat Tours, Inc. will lead the group on an authentic paddleboat and the captain will present a history of the region. A delicious lunch will feature a choice of three entrees, complete with salad and dessert. (These three-hour lunch cruises are available only on Wednesdays.)

Those who are interested in attending must sign on the list posted in the narthex and give your \$33 per person check to Bud Koch, OWLS Treasurer, by May 3. Checks should be made payable to 50+ OWLS.

Thank you. . .

I just wanted to thank our new Saint Matthew family for all your prayers, cards and caring encouragement during my recent neck surgery. I would also like to thank Pastor Wengert for her many visits, prayers and care as well. It has all helped during the painful surgery and now during the long recovery. There hasn't been a day that passed that I haven't found this deeply comforting. I feel blessed to be part of such a prayerful and caring group.

In Christ, Nancy Nugent

*Friends at Saint Matthew Lutheran Church, thank you so much for your prayers and concerns as our daughter, Dianne Sada, had her cancer surgery. She was given a good prognosis and has received strength from God and all of your prayers.
Thank you again. Archie and Russ Brown*

Congratulations to...

Alexandra (Alli) Borris for receiving the 2009 Inquirer Student Citizenship Award from the Philadelphia Inquirer. Schools in Philadelphia, Bucks, Delaware, Chester, Montgomery, Camden, Gloucester and Burlington counties have each selected one senior who significantly demonstrates the qualities of civic or community contribution, good scholarship and school participation. Alli was selected from Moorestown High School. At the award ceremony held at the National Constitution Center, this year's award recipients received a commemorative medallion and a \$100 gift card. Each participating school receives a trophy plaque for permanent display, with the name of each year's award winner added to the plaque.

Alli received the nomination for being part of a peacekeeping delegation in Bosnia (from Saint Matthew Church), working with children affected by the nation's civil war. She volunteered at a school for special needs children in Honduras. She also lends her time at the Teenline Crisis Hotline, Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge and the Voorhees Animal Shelter. She hopes to study education and Spanish at Wagner College on Staten Island, NY. In an interview with the Inquirer she said, "If I want to be happy in life, I have to do things for other people. It's not about getting a job or getting into college. It's about improving people's lives."

Auxiliary to Lutheran Care at Moorestown

We wish to thank everyone who donated to the auxiliary's annual drive. We topped the amount usually given by our church and are so grateful for your generosity.

The auxiliary has a need for clean used men's shirts, or large or extra large women's sizes to be used as smocks for the residents during their arts and crafts projects at the home. Bring any shirts to church and put them in the bin so labeled in the church narthex.

Again, thanks for your caring and assistance in bringing a little extra joy to the residents of Lutheran Care at Moorestown.

Elise Korman & Jan Miller, Key Women

Reports of Illness

Lutheran Care Chaplain

Pastor Stephanie Steele, Chaplain at Lutheran Care of Moorestown, and a Saint Matthew member is receiving treatment for lymphoma of the thyroid. For more information and to send messages to her, go to www.caringbridge.org/visit/stephsteele.

Former Pastor's Granddaughter

Allison Huff, 12-year-old granddaughter of former pastor Gordon Huff, is critically ill in Children's Hospital in Chicago. Without any previous warning, she collapsed during gym class in January and was rushed to the hospital. She has been diagnosed with an enlarged heart, with the bottom part not functioning, and is awaiting a heart transplant. A fund has been established to help pay the astronomical medical bills not covered by insurance. St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Cherry Hill, where Sheila Huff is the Director of Music, is collecting donations in this area. Tax deductible contributions, made payable to St. Michael's, can be sent there, 601 Kings Highway N., Cherry Hill 08034, and they will be sent to the Allison Huff HOW Fund. More information is available on the blog <http://allisonhuff.blogspot.com>. Allie is the daughter of John and Fran Huff who are former Saint Matthew members. The family would appreciate our prayers.

Job Support Request

Several people in our congregation have lost their jobs recently because of the downturn in the economy. If anyone hears of a job opening or perhaps the company you work for has job postings, please contact the church office.

SAINT MATTHEW READERS

The book group will meet Monday, April 27, at 7:30 pm to discuss *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. This religious classic uses Bible verses mixed with allegorical characters to preach its evangelical message. Pastor Wengert will lead the discussion.

STEPHEN MINISTERS CONTINUE TO LEARN

Continuing education is an important component of Stephen Ministry. Once Stephen Ministers have been commissioned by our congregation, the group meets once or twice each month to expand and deepen our knowledge and skills so that we may provide more effective, sensitive care for our care receivers. Since our first commissioned class in 2001, that is a lot of continuing study!

Early in the winter, Linda Cushing, a lawyer for the County Office on Aging, outlined the many services provided by the agency. Later Dr. John Diepold, Jr., clinical psychologist and a member of our congregation, described his approach in helping people more confidently manage their lives and gave us material on adult/child relationships. Following his very worthwhile session, Susan Clark, longtime friend of the Kuhns and a faithful Christian, came to describe to us her brain injuries, extensive therapy and healing from a brutal robbery in her home last year and its impact upon her service in the Mt. Holly Presbyterian Church.

Currently Stephen Ministers are watching and discussing the DVD series created by Lutheran pastor, Walter Wangerin, Jr., which deals with his diagnosis of lung cancer.

All of this continuing study is to help Stephen Ministry work better for you. It is your ministry. Remember we in Stephen Ministry would like to offer you comfort if you are in a place where you need someone who really listens with Christian love and is committed to confidentiality.

To learn more, talk with Pastor Wengert or any one of us in Stephen Ministry. We welcome your participation.

Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you. (Psalm 55:22a)

Sue Kuhn, Stephen Leader

CROPWALK 2009

Sunday, May 3

Come one, come all, limber up those legs!

Ask families, neighbors and friends to sponsor your walk!

Make it a family fun event!

1, 3 and 5 mile loops beginning at First Presbyterian Church,

Bridgeboro Road, 1:30 pm

Sign up in the church narthex

Mae Trebing, 609-239-4942; e-mail: gtrebing@comcast.net

Last year Saint Matthew church had twelve walkers. Let's raise that number and bring our total contribution to a new high.

Sunday School Picks Mission Sponsorship

Leaders of Youth and Family Ministry have selected the schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) to receive sponsorship funds. Formerly the base of the congregation's sponsorship came from Sunday school contributions and were designated for the Murnyak family in Tanzania. These were supplemented with additional monies from the church. Following the death of his wife Meredith and his remarriage, Dennis Murnyak has now retired from missionary service and is living in North Carolina.

The Sunday school has established a relationship with Juliana, one of the students in the Lutheran Schools, through ELCA missionary Sister Sylvia. Information from Juliana and Sister Sylvia has been included in previous issues of the *Messenger*.

In January the bishops, spouses and staff members of the ELCA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) traveled to the Holy Land for the Bishops' Academy, an annual gathering for study and worship. One reason for choosing that sight was to show an expression of accompaniment with the ELCJHL. They worshiped with some of those congregations, whose leader is Bishop Munib Younan, a tireless worker for peace in the Middle East. In the midst of the darkness of the strangulation of occupation, the diminishing Christian population and the fear of war, they saw light in the determined presence in Bethlehem and Jerusalem of Lutheran ministries that transform lives and keep hope alive. (They were there shortly after the outbreak of violence in Gaza in January.)

The congregations and ministries of the ELCJHL and Lutheran World Federation were precious "living stones" as the bishops saw their faithful and remarkable witness in worship and in their commitment to be the body of Christ now in the places where he once taught and healed. Without discrimination, the ELCJHL welcomes all children into schools, providing excellent education and the spirit of dignity and bridge-building that respects all traditions.

The Sunday school of Saint Matthew Church has chosen a worthy project for support from this congregation.

(Information for parts of this article came from a report of the Presiding Bishops of the ELCA and the ELCIC.)

NEWS FROM BRIDGE OF PEACE

(our partner in ministry in Camden; Giselle Coutinho, Pastor)

Recent newsletter items included a report of the home cooked "soul food dinner" held by the youth of the church to raise funds to go to New Orleans for the Youth Gathering. A total of \$550 was raised for their trip.

The knitting group at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Hainesport has provided prayer shawls to those at "the Bridge" needing God's care and healing.

Financial Aid Available for College Students

A limited amount of financial aid for college students is available for Lutheran students through the Karl, John, Elizabeth Wurffel Memorial Fund. The aid will be provided in the form of student loans; however, the terms for the loans will be very beneficial for the recipients. Any member of a NJ Synod ELCA congregation planning to attend or currently enrolled in a 2-year or 4-year accredited college or university may apply. Loans are for undergraduate study only. Priority of consideration is based on church activity and need. Additional information and application forms are available in the church office.

Cross Roads Summer Camp

Cross Roads is a welcoming ministry of the NJ Synod of the ELCA and the Episcopal Diocese of Newark (formerly known as Camp Beisler). This summer they will be offering a variety of camping experiences for youth and families. These include programs for youth who have completed grades 1-2; grades 3-5; grades 6-8; and grades 9-12. In addition there is a camp for youth with special needs (ages 5-21). There is also a Families and Friends Week August 16-21. Brochures including information and registration forms are available on the narthex table.

Red Cross Seeks Volunteers

Volunteers are needed for Red Cross Blood Drives in Moorestown. Duties include registration and serving refreshments. For information, please call the Red Cross Chapter Office, 609-267-9595.

News from HOPEWORKS 'n CAMDEN

Four of the youth of Hopeworks began college in January and they are working hard to follow their dreams. They have been busy working, creating personal web sites, and studying, studying, studying for their classes!

Hopeworks is getting excited about the release of the 2009 Camden map. Youth have been working hard on the map and the youth sales team has been busy selling advertisements all over Camden and the surrounding areas. The new map will feature pullout coupons in addition to enhanced transportation information. It will be printed in April.

Hopeworks is partnering with Rutgers School of Law and its Financial Literacy Project to help trainees understand money and finance and the role that financial decisions play in their lives. Hopeworks is grateful for the contributions of volunteers from Rutgers and proud to be in a city with a law school that firmly believes in community engagement and social justice.

More information is available on the Hopeworks website, www.hopeworks.org.

Carol Riley Retiring from New Visions

Friends and colleagues of Carol Riley will honor her upon her retirement this spring, after more than twelve years as Director of New Visions Day Shelter. Those interested in contributing to a cash gift which will be presented to her to help with her retirement may send a check, payable to Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey, marked "Riley Retirement" on the memo line. It should be mailed to Development Office, Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey, 6 Terri Lane, Suite 300, Burlington, NJ 08016 or you can donate online by visiting www.lsmnj.org and clicking on "Donate Now."

Pastor Margaret Herz-Lane wrote, *"Her heart for the clients of New Visions enabled her to reach out with love to many people considered to be 'outsiders' by civil society; thus, no one was turned away from the doors of New Visions under her watch. The ecumenical spirit that supports and guides New Visions reflects the vision of our board, but Carol Riley put the vision into action. Carol was able to connect with Christian congregations, Jewish synagogues, Buddhist fellowships and Islamic mosques revealing to them the face of the poor and reminding them of their calls to provide help for all human beings in need of assistance."*

Online Community and Resource Center for Caregivers

AARP, the largest organization for people age 50 and over, announced an exclusive new online resource center for caregivers across the country in their unique daily challenges. Best selling author, Gail Sheehy, will serve as a major contributor to the online caregiving portal.

The author of *Passages* will communicate through interactive webcasts featuring exclusive videos of caregiving families, personal blogs and online chats. Her mission is to guide members through the emotional and practical sides of the caregiver role and to build a community of ideas and practical solutions. She traveled around the country to film the personal stories of families in different phases of the caregiving journey. She also interviewed experts who have the best resources. The first installments are available now on www.aarp.org/gailsheehy. Ms Sheehy has written, *"Many of us find ourselves thrust into this universal passage with nowhere to turn and a sense of helplessness and fear that only add to the stress. Through the power of the AARP community, I can share my own personal passage as a caregiver and that of the thousands of people I have met along the way with the many millions who feel alone and without direction. To be able to do this in real time on the Web offers me a unique opportunity, and I am grateful to AARP for their vision and dedication to this issue touching so many Americans."*

Second Jazz Concert at Saint Matthew

In March the church hosted a wonderful afternoon of jazz with John Coliani and his quintet, sponsored by the Tri-State Jazz Society. On Friday, April 17, 6:45 to 9:45 pm the Society will sponsor a concert featuring Canadian trumpet player and vocalist Bria Skonberg, with Jim Fryer on trombone and euphonium and musicians on reeds, piano, string bass and drums. Ms Skonberg has a degree in jazz performance, co-leads and manages three jazz bands, has been a guest on Riverwalk Jazz and won numerous awards. Jim Fryer has toured internationally, played television, radio, theaters, jazz clubs and concert halls and currently tours with a Nashville based traditional jazz band. Admission is \$15 for members of Saint Matthew Church; \$20 for adults and \$10 for students.

Annual Spring Clean-up

Saturday, April 4, 2009

9:00 am ~ Noon

All ages welcome: men, women, youth!

**Work outside (raking)
and inside (polish pews, clean windows)**

Bring rakes, tarps and gas blowers

**Mid morning snack and light lunch
provided by Parish Life Ministry**

(Rain Date: Saturday, April 11)

Easter Breakfast

Sunday, April 12, 2009

9:45am ~ 11:00am

in Fellowship Hall

Eggs, meat, potatoes, bread, Danish

Suggested donation: \$5 per person; \$10 per family

**If you wish to donate any pastry items, there will be a
sign up sheet posted in the narthex.**

Don't forget to make your reservation!

SILENT AUCTION

The Silent Auction to benefit our youth going to the Youth Gathering will be held April 26 - May 3, 2009. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) will be holding a National Youth Gathering in July 2009 in New Orleans. Over 30,000 Lutheran youth will take over the city for a week of worship, service, and fellowship. Nine of our youth plus adult helpers have made a commitment to attend this youth gathering.

In support of those attending the Gathering, our Youth and Family Ministry is sponsoring a silent auction. This is a new event for our congregation but an exciting one! We are asking for the congregation's help in making this auction a success by donating items and/or your time. We would appreciate your keeping the following guidelines in mind:

- \$ All donated items should be new. Please do not include yard sale or flea market type items.
- \$ Donations might include gift certificates for local stores and restaurants, professional sports memorabilia, themed gift baskets (i.e., music, sports, wines, teen items), art work, handmade craft items, a week-end get-away at your vacation home, electronic items, tickets to sports or musical events, etc.
- \$ If you have a green thumb, consider donating a potted porch/deck plant or a window box, or if you are known for your baking skills, you could donate a dessert tray or a specialty cake.
- \$ Drop off items in the church office and they will be secured until time for the auction. If you need help getting something to the church, contact Lee Zandstra, Youth Group Advisor, or the church office.
- \$ Deadline for donating items is April 19.

The auction items will be on display, with a bidding sheet for each item the week of April 26 - May 3. Write your name and bid on the sheet for the items you wish to bid for. After the 11:00 service on May 3, the bidding sheets will be collected and the winners notified. Payment should be made by check, payable to Saint Matthew Church, indicating "Youth Gathering Trip" on memo line.

ELCA CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly will be held this summer in Minneapolis, MN with the theme, "God's Work, Our Hands." When the 1,045 lay and clergy voting members from across the country gather in August, much of their time will be devoted to making decisions about matters that have been placed before them by the ELCA Church Council and synodical assemblies. These resolutions include full communion with the United Methodist Church (<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Bilateral-Conversations/Lutheran-United-Methodist.aspx>) and the social statement on human sexuality (<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statement-in-Process/JTF-Human-Sexuality.aspx>) or call for a hard copy of either document 1-800-638-3522.

ELCA Television Ads

ELCA television ads will be broadcast nationally March 30 - April 19 and May 11 - 31, 2009 (CNN, Headline News, DIY, Fox News, HGTV).