

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The Saint Matthew Congregation Council held its monthly meeting on February 15, 2010. Below is a recap of the key points of discussion.

1. Following devotions we reviewed recent correspondence, including a thank you letter from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, for our ongoing financial support. We also discussed the upcoming annual Synod Workshop scheduled for Saturday, March 20th. Please mark the date on your calendars. Registration forms are on the foyer table.
2. Following the individual Ministry reports, upon Faith Steinfert's recommendation, we agreed to delay until the March meeting further discussion on the new Saint Matthew Lutheran Church Employee Handbook.
3. Jack Horton provided us with a report on a meeting held recently at Saint Matthew by himself, Pastor Wengert and Rene Cherson, along with Moorestown Township personnel. The subject matter was Emergency and Disaster Planning, and the session included an audit of our current level of preparedness. Based on these findings, and based on Council's desire to be proactive in this matter, the aforementioned Saint Matthew members will be meeting again shortly to develop a plan of action on this topic and will present it to Council.
4. We discussed the exciting new "e-Messenger" as well as the recent use of periodic "e-blasts", or email event reminders, being issued under the direction of Brandie Pasket's Communications Ministry. While these new forms of communication to our members will need to be better refined and coordinated over time, Council believes that this is clearly a positive new way to keep our members informed of events at Saint Matthew. That said, we're not yet sure how to best deal with the paper Messenger copies which are being placed in the church mailboxes but are not yet being picked up. Any and all ideas are welcomed.
5. We also discussed in depth the Treasurer's Report from Tom Cassel, and agreed to specific recommendations to be presented at the upcoming semi-annual Congregation meeting on February 21, 2010. There was sincere appreciation expressed for the efforts of the Stewardship and Finance Committee to move Saint Matthew towards the goal of a sustainable annual operating budget.

Bill Acheson, President

SOCIAL CONCERNS MINISTRY

Hygiene Kits

Thank you all for your generous donations of Hygiene Kits for LSMNJ Refugees during the month of February. Your generosity is appreciated by the Social Concerns Team, LSMNJ's Immigration & Refugee Department and, of course, those receiving your donations. Your giving spirit is a blessing to many.

S.N.A.K. Program

S.N.A.K (Sustenance, Nutrition and Kindness) is a new after-school supplemental snack program for youth attending the open gym at the Recreation Center in Moorestown. At least 5 Moorestown area churches have responded to providing food and water 4 days each week on a rotation basis and our church is one of them! Watch for a sign-up sheet to help. We'll also announce it ahead of time. Thanks again for your anticipated help for such a good cause!

Additional Help Needed

We have received some response to our request for help. We are happy to welcome anyone and look at all ideas to serve our God through social concerns ministry.

Coupons

Thank you for continuing to bring coupons for Bridege of Peace Church in Camden. This is an on-going ministry, so keep bringing them in! Look for the pink striped box near the bulletin board.

Food Pantry Items

Our food pantry for BOP Church was overflowing and has been delivered to Camden. Let's remember to bring items since the need continues. Thanks for your participation.
Nancy Nugent and the Social Concerns Team

EGGSciting Easter Project

Please help us share God's love and bring a smile to a child's face at Easter! Family Service of Burlington County is grateful to work with Saint Matthew Church in collecting Easter baskets for the children in their program. Either custom made baskets or pre-made ones from stores are delightful during this special season.

There will be a basket in the church foyer, filled with Easter eggs containing a child's name, gender and age. The deadline for bringing the filled baskets is Palm Sunday, March 28.

With your help, we hope to make this an annual tradition for Saint Matthew Church.

Brandi Bocelli

Mutual Ministry

The end is near, we think!! Not the end of the world, but the completion of the Saint Matthew Staff Handbook. The goal of Mutual Ministry was to provide a living document, one that could be easily changed and adjusted as needed and would foster the ministry of both the congregation and the staff of Saint Matthew Church.

After several months of discussion and revision, Mutual Ministry presented the handbook to the Congregation Council, where it was reviewed and discussed and recommendations for revisions were offered. A draft which incorporated Council's recommendations was then presented to staff for review and input. Again many revisions were made.

A final draft is now being completed which will be presented to Council for further review. If necessary, revisions will be made, after which it will be presented to Council for approval.

The process has been long and painstaking, but we believe the end result is a prayerfully thought out, carefully scrutinized and informative handbook that fulfills our purpose.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Sunday School News

60th Anniversary Celebration

Fellowship Sunday in March will focus on the 60th Anniversary Celebration. The banners the Sunday school classes created will be presented for all the classes to see before the banners are displayed in the Sunday school hall. Also, the children will be learning a special song for the anniversary which will be sung in church for the Anniversary Celebration.

Bulletin Cover Contest

SCS students are invited to participate in a Bulletin Cover Contest. Requirements will be distributed by the Sunday school teachers. The winning cover will be used for worship on Sunday, April 18, the day of our 60th Anniversary Celebration. All entries will be displayed for everyone to enjoy.

New Sunday Church School Ideas

Some ministry members are investigating new ideas for the Sunday Church School, with particular interest in a rotation model. A field trip is planned for visiting a church using this model. The rotation model seems to capitalize on the special gifts of teachers and offers a broad range of experiences for children.

Confirmation

Mentors for 8th grade confirmation students will be assigned in mid-May. The Mentor Dinner will take place May 26, 2010.

Youth Group News

Youth group continues to be going well. **Lee Zandra** reported that the Synod Winter Youth Assembly, at which she was a presenter, provided a great opportunity to meet with other youth leaders. Although Saint Matthew youth did not attend this year, it is hoped they will be able to go next year. Lee would also like the youth to participate in the National Souper Bowl next year, an event which focuses on alleviating hunger.

Service to others

The February activity was helping with games at Fastnacht. In addition, youth are aiding the Saint Matthew Bosnia participants with fundraising, including pizza sales, car wash, and cabaret.

Bosnia

Fundraising results

The **Joe Corbi** sales netted \$800 and the Valentine goodies brought in \$400. Thank you to all who worked on these events and all those who supported them!

Cabaret - April 16 - to benefit Saint Matthew Bosnia participants. More details to come.

Faith Steinfert, Ministry Chair

**You are invited to celebrate
The 60th Anniversary of
Saint Matthew Lutheran Church
at an**

Anniversary Luncheon Gala

**Sunday, April 18, 2010
at 2:30 pm at the
Moorestown Community House *
16 East Main Street**

Adults & Children ages 13 and over: \$35.00

(includes wine bar)

Children 5~12: \$15.00

Tickets available in the church office and in the church foyer on Sundays.

Reservation deadline: April 11

** where Saint Matthew was chartered April 16, 1950*

Parson To Person

By Gods Grace: Celebrating Our First Sixty Years of Ministry

Can we *celebrate* during Lent? Of course! Did you know that Sundays are not counted in the forty days of Lent, because we can't help but celebrate the resurrection every Sunday? Lent is really a celebration of God's graciousness to us in spite of our sinfulness, so Lent is a very appropriate time to celebrate God's grace.

For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:22-24)

The reformers (or confessors) of the 16th century understood "justification by grace through faith" as the crux of our relationship to God, which was scandalous at that time when people were mostly taught that we must be contrite, or do good works, or somehow merit God's forgiveness. The confessors believed that if it depended on us, we would become either self-righteous due to our good deeds or despairing due to our guilt. Despairing, because we could never be sure we were repentant enough or that we did enough good or that we believed enough. God's relationship to us depends fully on God and not on us – God justifies us by grace as a pure gift.

God has scandalously, graciously justified this mission outpost in Moorestown for sixty years, and will continue to do so as long as there are any sinners to walk in the doors on Sunday morning. Perhaps that's what we should put out on our sign out front: "Sinners welcome!" or better, "Welcome to all who fall short of the glory of God", or better yet "God graciously welcomes all sinners, here".

SPIRITUAL LIFE MINISTRY

MMM (media, movies & munchies)

Friday, March 5, 7:00 pm

Shockey Lounge

This month's movie: *Doubt*

This 2009 Oscar nominated film is set in a Roman Catholic church and school in Boston in 1964. It pits the very traditional head school nun against the new priest who believes in changing with the times. It plays on themes that are very current today in both Catholic and Lutheran churches. It offers much material for discussion while we enjoy our munchies.

***Lenten Presentation
At the Foot of the Cross
presented by
St. Matt Players
Sunday, March 14, 2010
3:00 pm in the sanctuary***

Cast of Characters

Simon Peter *played by Bert Carlson*
Judas *played by Joel Boehmler*
Mary, the mother of Jesus
played by NancØ Carlson

There will be three first-person stories from people who knew Jesus and are standing at the foot of the cross: Simon Peter, the disciple who denied his Lord on that fateful day; Judas talking about his life with Christ; and Mary, the mother of Jesus who tells of her relationship with her son. The play also includes a unique choir accompaniment to set the mood of the play; to represent the Good Friday crowd; and music to provide a background for Mary's viewpoint.

The play is open to the public and the Saint Matthew congregation is encouraged to bring family and friends for this special event in our Lenten journey. A free will offering will be taken. A dessert reception will follow the performance.

***Lenten Vespers
Luther's Catechisms***

***Wednesdays of Lent, 7:30 ~ 8:00 pm
February 24; March 3, 10, 17, 24***

Holy Week and Easter2010

Palm Sunday, March 28

8:30 & 11:00 am: Holy Communion

9:45 am: Sunday Church School and Adult Forum

Maundy Thursday, April 1

12:15 & 7:30 pm: Holy Communion

First Communion for Fifth Grade

Good Friday, April 2

12:00 noon: Community Ecumenical Service

Trinity Episcopal Church

7:30 pm: Tenebrae Service at Saint Matthew Church

(service of shadows)

Easter Sunday, April 4

8:30 & 11:00 am: Holy Communion

9:45 am: Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall

(no Sunday Church School or Adult Forum)

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

God's Grace in the Book of Romans
(in keeping with our 60th Anniversary theme)

Monday Track ~ 11:00 am

February 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22

Tuesday Track ~ 7:30 pm

February 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23

Easter Flowers

A variety of Easter flowers will be available again this year to help beautify our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. If you would like to make a donation in memory or in honor of someone, complete the form and place it, with your check, in the offering plate or send it to the church office. Please indicate how many of each flower you wish to order. You may take the flowers you ordered after the 11:00 worship service.

Cost is \$7.00 each for a Tulip, Lily or Hyacinth. Hydrangeas are \$12.00. Forms are available in the church office or the Sunday bulletin.

Deadline for ordering: Sunday, March 14, 2010

21st Annual

CONFERENCE ON CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES

Sponsored by the NJ Synod, ELCA

**March 20, 2010; 8:00 am ~ 3:30 pm
Steinert High School, Hamilton Township, NJ**

**Kristen Glass, Keynote Speaker
Director for Youth & Young Adult Ministry
(18 ~ 30 year olds)
Vocation Education Unit, ELCA**

**4 Workshop Opportunities
with sessions based on Core Values of the NJ Synod
*Faithfulness, Respect, Diversity,
Generosity, Change and Interdependence***

**Workshops for children
Lunch available
Registration forms in the church foyer**

ALMSGIVING in LENT

Giving “alms” (Greek root *mercy*) has been part of Christian worship from the beginning and continues each Sunday as the offering plate is passed and a portion of the money is given outside of this congregation. In order to prepare for Easter, during Lent Christians have traditionally fasted, given alms, and spent time reading the Word and praying. There will be almsgiving receptacles around the church during Lent and you are invited to give your change each Sunday which will benefit the mission trip to Bosnia this summer. The ministry to Bosnian children helps to forge early relationships between Christians and Muslims (who were persecuted during the 1990's war by Christians). Two people from Saint Matthew Church will join about 30 others from around the New Jersey Synod to carry out this day camp ministry.

Easter Breakfast

Sunday, April 4, 2010

9:45 am ~ 11:00 am

in Fellowship Hall

Eggs, meat, potatoes, bread, Danish

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

(Payable at the door)

***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!

PROPERTY MINISTRY

Annual Spring Clean-up

Saturday, March 27, 2010

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

(Rain Date: Saturday, April 3)

Lunch Bunch

*(ministry providing monthly lunch to homeless patrons of
New Visions Community Center in Camden)*

Those willing to make sandwiches for this ministry will meet on Thursday, March 11, at 7:30 pm in Teen Den. The patrons love the baked goods so keep baking and bringing cakes, brownies and other treats on disposable plates/containers and leave them in the church office.

Blood Drive Report

On January 22 we had a moderately successful blood drive, collecting 47 units. (In 2009 we collected 70 units.) A big thank you to those who gave and who signed up to give. (I understand work related problems detained several hopeful donors.) A big thank you also to the callers - a frustrating task - **Ray & Sue Kuhn, Joyce Schultz, Marian Duda, Alice Graybill and Lynne & Bob Ganskopp.**

Special thanks to Wendy Werner who signed up people at NW Sign Industries and to **Bill Byrne** who supplied Subway Best cookies for the donors .

Dr. Elise Korman

Music Notes from the Cantor

It's Okay to Sing During Communion... Really!

A couple months ago, I wrote about the importance of words as they relate to the music that we use in worship. I mentioned that Pastor and I attempt to select hymns that pertain to the readings for the day, whether for our Gathering Hymn, Hymn of the Day, Sending Hymn or the Anthem, the text is what drives the selection. And the text is what drives our selection of hymns that are sung during Communion.

Unfortunately, too often, during Communion we suddenly go quiet, become reserved, and move into observation mode. After all, the person next to me isn't singing so, why should I? Besides, this is the time to see who else is at worship that day... We tend to turn Communion into a spectator event, and rather than sing or participate, we do nothing.

I'm here to assure you that, even if the person next to you isn't singing, even if it is Lent, even if your upbringing taught you to be reverent at this time, it is, in fact, okay for you to sing the communion hymns. There is nothing to be afraid of. In fact, it's okay for you to take your hymnal up to the rail with you (GASP!). You'll find that the hymns actually do contribute to the worship service in supporting the message found in the readings for the day or, in contributing to the action that is taking place at the altar.

So, next Sunday, I encourage you to continue to participate in worship during communion. I encourage you to fight the desire to go into spectator-mode. Feel free to sing out, just as you do on the other hymns. Worship is a participatory act. Worship is a communal act. And we need you to take part!

*Soli Deo Gloria,
David D. Harp*

Membership Directory

Watch for a new Membership Directory in your church mailbox before Easter. A blast e-mail will be sent to notify members when they are available. There have been many changes in the past year plus additions from two groups of new members. Please discard previous membership directories and use the new one with a gold cover.

NEWS OF SAINT MATTHEW WOMEN of the ELCA

The Morning Circle will meet at 10:00 on Friday, March 12, in the Shockey Lounge. After the meeting the group will have lunch at GG's on Fellowship Road. Contact **Virginia Sheppard**.

Saint Matthew Readers

The selection for March is *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok and will be discussed on Monday evening, March 22, at 7:30. Few stories offer more warmth, wisdom, or generosity than this tale of friendship between two Jewish boys growing up in 1940's Brooklyn. It is set against the backdrop of the historical events of the time - the end of WW II, the death of President Roosevelt, the revelation of the Holocaust and the struggle for the creation of the state of Israel. **Pastor Wengert** will be the discussion leader.

Copies are available in the office at a cost of \$10.25.

OWLS News

The Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors will be gathering in the church library on Thursday, March 4, at 12:00 noon. Please join us for a very informative program on "*Identity Theft*". Bring a sandwich - beverages and dessert will be provided. Hope to see YOU!

Note this: There will be no Vacation Bible School at Saint Matthew Church this summer.

March in Adult Forum

Shockey Lounge, 9:45 am, each Sunday

March 7 - *Saint Matthew: Celebrating the first 60 years of being the Lutheran congregation in Moorestown*

March 14 - *Celebrating the first 60 years of social ministry at Saint Matthew Church*

March 21 - *Celebrating the first 60 years of worship at Saint Matthew Church*

March 28 - *Palm Sunday* - no Adult Forum.

There will be a display in the lounge from the previous 3 Adult Forums on social ministry, worship and being Lutheran

Thanks for your help. . .

In February a check for \$3,320 was sent from Saint Matthew Church to the ELCA for disaster relief in Haiti. Monetary gifts such as this are used entirely for immediate relief and ongoing recovery from the devastating January earthquake. The ELCA has received more than \$5.8 million in gifts in response to the earthquake, including a matching gift of \$320,000 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. The ELCA has been able to increase its contribution as well as distribute additional funds to Lutheran related agencies working with Haiti relief, including the Lutheran Church there. In an e-mail message on February 19, Rev. Joseph Livenson Lauvanus, president of the Lutheran Church in Haiti, wrote, "Port-au-Prince has now become a desolate place with no sign of activities. The buildings that are still standing are potential problems for both those who have their tents near them and the pedestrians. The government now is trying to smash down all the buildings that have cracks and cannot be used any more. The aftershocks are still prominent in Port-au-Prince." He also wrote that church yards "are the best shelter place one can find," and are crowded with people. There is a great need for food. Power outages, sanitation and children without parents or guardians are an ongoing challenge. Lauvanus also wrote, "As we are reaching out to those who are living in distress, we request your prayers and continuing support to share God's love, grace and compassion to our brothers and sisters who are currently undergoing one of the worst times of their life."

Many thanks to all in our congregation who have contributed to help to relieve the terrible suffering in Haiti. Additional contributions can still be made through Saint Matthew Church or the ELCA website at www.ELCA.org/haitiearthquake or by calling 800-638-3522.

Town Hall Forum

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson will host a second Town Hall Forum on Sunday, March 7 at 4:00 pm CST (5:00 EST). You can participate by watching the event live for one hour at www.elca.org/townhall; log in to post questions; post comments using Facebook Connect; or Tweet about the event using the hashtags #ELCA and #BishopHanson. Bishop Hanson hosted a town hall forum in December 2009 and thousands participated online in a nationwide conversation about the mission and ministry of the church.

By Gods Grace

Celebrating Our First 60 Years of Ministry

Since worship is the heart of who we are as a congregation, it makes sense in our 60th year, to look backward and forward at our worship life.

*The architect for our sanctuary, built in 1971, was a member of the congregation. **Herman Hassinger**, an influential church architect of the 20th century, became known on the East Coast for designing church buildings to enhance the liturgy and worship life of the congregation. Last month Herman wrote about the basics of church architecture through the years. For this month he has provided some background on how the present worship space at Saint Matthew Church came to be. Next month we'll read about the architecture of Saint Matthew Church in particular.*

-Pastor Wengert

Herman Hassinger and his wife Doris were members of this parish from the time they moved to the 300-year-old village of Moorestown in 1965 until last month when they transferred their membership to a Lutheran church in Rhode Island, near their current home on Block Island. Here they raised their four children and Herman served on the church council for eight years.

The congregation's worship space was an old Presbyterian church which needed updating and expanding. It was actually three separate buildings in loose formation.

In 1968 the parish was in the process of calling a new pastor. Herman was chair of the call committee and they visited a northern New Jersey town to hear a sermon by lay theologian, Herluf Jensen, who had worked for the national church for many years but was now seeking ordination. After the service, Herman asked Herluf to join the committee for a discussion in the church basement. The result was a call from Saint Matthew for him to become the new pastor and be ordained in the New Jersey Synod of what was then the Lutheran Church in America.

Herman wrote that Pastor Jensen was initially opposed to building a new worship space. "Being involved in social ministry, I was more interested in putting our resources into people," he said. Eventually he agreed and Herman was asked to be the architect. Pastor Jensen was impressed by Herman's theological insights as expressed in architectural design. "He is more sensitive to Lutheran traditions and needs in worship than any other architect I know. While his designs are modern, they do not lose the transcendent mood that is part of our worship tradition. Herman is sensitive to communicate the fullness of our theology of God."