



THE VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, AVON, CT February 2011

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St. Matthew Lutheran Church
224 Lovely Street
Avon, CT 06001-4018
(860) 673-3301
Website: www.stmatthewavon.org
Sunday Worship 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

February 2 - 10:00 Bible Study
February 6 - Cookie Packing for
College Students and Military
February 11 - St. Matthew Night
Out

LOOKING AHEAD:

Save the Date - May 7; New York
City Bus Trip; Details to follow

A LETTER FROM PASTOR

Happy Epiphany Everyone!

Epiphany is the season of light. The season is traditionally marked by the story of the three wise men following that great star in the night sky, the star that illuminates the world, proclaiming to all the birth of the Savior. During our Christmas Eve services we heard the familiar passage from Isaiah, "The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light (9:2)." It is during this season of Epiphany that the great light of Christ's star shines brightest, shining on the entire world with the wonders of God's promise.

In the Eastern Church, the festival of Epiphany is seen as a great festival. In fact, it's the third largest festival (the first being Easter and the second being Pentecost) because Epiphany is regarded as the climax of Advent. At the nativity we celebrate the birth of the Savior; however, it is during Epiphany that the world is told "God is with us" by the shining proclamation of the star. The belief in the Eastern Church is that it is during Epiphany when Jesus' ministry begins, because it is in this season that people begin to see him, not as the babe in the manger, but as the Messiah.

Epiphany is the time when the star identifies Jesus, as God made flesh, to the entire world outside the stable of Bethlehem. This is the star that the wise men are following, this is the star that we are following, and this is the star that is a great light to all of us walking in the darkness.

The star we read about in Matthew is not limited to the pages of scripture. This star continues to proclaim to us, HERE IS THE SAVIOR! This star continues to light a path for us in the darkness. This star illuminates our lives where we stand, at home and at work, rest and play, lighting our skies and pointing us toward the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

As the star illuminates our hearts and minds this Epiphany, I would like to see where that light finds us. Be it our homes or jobs, private meals or public events - in all these places we stand in the light of the star. From all these places we can see the promises that the star signifies.

Throughout the season of Epiphany, I would enjoy the opportunity to visit as many of you as possible at home, at work, for lunch or for coffee. I'd like to use this time to put together a (*cont., page 2*)

(cont)...photographic collage of the people of St. Matthew. This collage, like the star, will illuminate us where we are, at home with our families, enjoying hobbies, generally living our lives outside of the church.

The importance of the star is that it extends the family of God far beyond the stable to all the shepherds in the fields and the wise men of the East. Likewise, we are connected as the family of God not only when we are sitting in the pews on a Sunday or gathered in a committee meeting, but also in our everyday lives. In the same way, my goal for this collage is to show our congregation as people who live far beyond the walls of the building. By seeing all the places on which the star's light shines, we can get a glimpse of the expansive nature of God's kingdom.

Peace & Blessings this Epiphany Season.

Pastor Hille

Evening Readers

In February, we will meet on Tuesday, the 15th, at 7pm in the Gathering Space and we will discuss *Sally Hemings: A Novel* by Barbara Chase -Riboud.

In March, we will meet on Tuesday, the 15th at 7pm in the Gathering Space and we will discuss *Just Kids* by Patti Smith.



Noon Readers

Join us on Wed., February 9th at noon at Ruth Bedson's home, 2 Westcott Rd., Simsbury to discuss *The Whistling Season* by Ivan Doig. All are welcome. Any questions, call 860-658-0805.

Flowers in Church

If you wish to donate flowers for Sunday Worship during 2011, please sign-up on the Flower Chart in the Narthex. Cost is \$30.00. Make checks payable to St. Matthew (flowers in memo line) and leave the check in the office when you sign up.

Dear Pastor Carter,

On behalf of Gifts of Love, thank you for your recent gift of clothing for the continuation of our basic needs program. Finding enough money to pay for the increased demands on our agency is nearly impossible without your support. We truly appreciate your generosity.

According to the Connecticut Association for Human Services "Pathways From Poverty for Connecticut's Children", almost 1 in 4 CT children live in families where parents work yet struggle just to buy the basics: food, rent, utilities, doctor's visits and medicine. Our mission is always challenged by the continuing economic crisis in Connecticut, which affects the working poor, newly poor, and now the hidden poor.

Assisting a family during a tough time is truly at the heart of Gifts of Love, Families Helping Families. We are so thankful that you are a part of our mission and part of our family.

Diana L. Goode

Executive Director, Gifts of Love

Outreach Committee

Oh Christmas tree, oh Christmas tree. The response to the Mitten Tree was overwhelming! 115 pairs of mittens and gloves, 107 hats, 20 scarves, 25 pairs of socks, 10 t-shirts, 1 new youth sized winter coat, a stuffed doll and a Christmas stocking. These filled six large bags. Two bags each were delivered to the Gifts of Love in Avon, The Village Children and Family Services and Catholic Charities in Hartford. They were thrilled to receive these items and had full use for each one. Your generosity is going to provide a warm gift to hundreds of children this Christmas Season.

Thank you!

The Outreach Committee

Cookie Bake and Care Packages for St. Matthew College Students & Service Members



It's that time of the year when hungry students and service members are in need of support from home. We will assemble care packages on Sunday, February 6th following the 11:00 a.m. worship. Watch for a poster in the Gathering Space where you can sign-up to provide cookies, treats or to help pack boxes for mailing on February 6th. Parents, please verify that the office has the latest address for your student and/or service member. Any questions, contact Lisa Hugel 860-651-1227.

Itsy Bitsy Spider Report

Do you know where to get boots for an average-sized spider? This white stuff is too much for me to venture outside without them, so I am holed up in various corner hiding places, waiting for special Fellowship occasions, beside the Sunday morning coffee hour treats.

The next event is St. Matthew Night Out—OUT! —on February 11th. Options are still being discussed, you know how it is in the winter, but one of the two options will be dinner at First & Last Tavern in Avon. I will be looking for leftover crusts in the kitchen from some kind soul since I doubt I can get there myself. Watch for the sign-up sheets.

And did I hear that there will be a special reception after Pastor Hille's installation in early spring? Whoopee! What do you think he likes to eat?

-Spidey



MOUSE

Here we are at the beginning of February...I always know we're deep in winter when I find myself both swimming and walking through the various gifts brought in on the bottom of people's shoes...Pastor Hille is getting settled and use to all the New England snow! His truck is handling the snow better than his southern nerves...Spring is coming! I got to witness Judy Marshall as she was washed over by the peace of Christ and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism one Sunday in January....welcome to God's family, Judy. My little friend in the kitchen noticed some coffee cup holders missing...I wonder where they have gone...I'm going to look in all the hiding places in the church to see if I can find them. There was much excitement at the Annual Meeting with the rejoicing, elections and reports...thanks to all of those in attendance and to the Church Council members for providing snacks....

Go Green and Receive The VOICE by Email Each Month!



Send Diane (dfirn123@sbcglobal.net) your email address and she will add you to the list to receive The VOICE each month in your email box. If you prefer, you can read The VOICE on St. Matthew's web site: www.stmatthewavon.org. Either way, let Diane know and she will remove your name from the paper VOICE mailing to save on postage.

Electronic Giving

To assist everyone in making the consistent offerings that are so important to St. Matthew, we ask you to consider making automatic, electronic donations. Please contact Diane in the church office (860-673-3301 or at dfirn123@sbcglobal.net) or Pat LaPierre (lapierrep@earthlink.net) with any questions or to sign-up.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 4:15 Grace Notes and Leading Tones 7:30 Church Council	2 10:00 Bible Study 7:30 Sanctus Singers	3	4	5
6 8:30 Worship 9:40 Sun. School + Adult Forum 11:00 Holy Comm. 12:00 Assemble Care Packages for College Students	7 9:30 Staff Meeting 7:30 Altar Guild	8 4:15 Grace Notes & Leading Tones 7:00 Evangelism	9 12:00 Noon Readers @ Bedson's home 7:30 Sanctus Singers	10	11 St. Matthew Night Out	12
13 8:30 Holy Communion 9:40 Sunday School + Adult Forum 11:00 Worship Voice Deadline	14 9:30 Staff Meeting	15 4:15 Grace Notes & Leading Tones 6:30 Property 7:00 Evening Readers	16 7:30 Sanctus Singers	17 12:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry	18	19
20 8:30 Worship 9:40 SS/Adult Forum 11:00 Worship	21 Office Closed	22 No Choir	23 9:30 Staff Meeting 7:30 Sanctus Singers	24	25	26
27— 8:30 Holy Comm. 9:40 Sun School + Adult Forum 11:00 Worship	28 9:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 Finance				Feb. 2011	



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