



THE VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH, AVON, CT January 2009

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Website: www.stmatthewavon.org
Sunday Worship 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School 9:40 a.m.
Adult Forum 9:40 a.m.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

January 11 - 3:00 p.m., Youth
Sledding

January 23 & 24 - 7:30p.m. - 9:00
a.m., Youth Lock-in

January 24 - 5:30 p.m., 2nd Annual
Chili Cook-off

Annual Meeting Sunday, January 25th - Noon

Come, participate in our Annual meeting. Elections, decisions, budgets, and reports of a wonderful year, as well as updates on Musician Search, AT&T Cell Tower and the announcement of the Parishioner of the Year!

LOOKING AHEAD:

February 1 - Church Council Members
Installed

February 8 - Noon, Cookie Packing for
College Students & Military

February 25 - Ash Wednesday

A LETTER FROM PASTOR

2008 is in the books. Did you notice it was one second longer than a normal year? I suspect you heard or saw one "mini-bit" on the extra second, but if you are like me, you really didn't notice it. Being in the midst of a bruising recession that is being felt around the world was enough to distract attention from the gentleness of one extra second.

We are adjusting to life in a new year. This year will begin with a political transition and very hopefully economic strengthening and an emerging sense of seeking peace in the troubled places of our planet. Yet, this new year offers us a modicum of control in the ability to make choices for ourselves.

So we will choose "go green" or "business as usual" or "go with the flow" or "I don't care..." or "adapt, improvise, overcome..." or "no surrender" as our mantra for a day and move forward. Into a new year of God's grace. I am always thankful when I am reminded of that glorious fact of our faith, that God is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow. Even though our today is always different from yesterday and tomorrow! The undergirding love of God for us draws out the best in us, the Holy Spirit prompts us, and renews our faith. We are faithful. That is a mantra for the ages. Thank you for your faithfulness.

Under the Grand Staircase in the Metropolitan Museum of Art there is a tiny display of Coptic Christian artifacts from 7th century monasteries in the desert of southern Egypt. I always peek in, ever since they first decided to use the space under the stairs for display, just a few years ago. I loved that they found space in an old, neglected cranny that had been used for storage. In December, as I peeked in again I read about "ostraca." Ostraca are texts written on broken pottery, which were employed when parchment was unavailable or too expensive...a large number of ostraca were found in this monastery, even its rubbish heap; they record biblical verses, legal documents, sermons, financial accounts, school texts and letters requesting assistance and prayers. They found a way, when "paper" was scarce, to do their lives, to live their ministry anyway. Any way. They were faithful.

God bless you and St. Matthew in this new year of God's grace as the shape of our ministry together finds new ways to proclaim the changeless truth of God's abiding love.

Peace,

Pastor William Carter

Thank you for your pledge for 2009!

As of December 15th, we have received 147 pledge cards, for a total of \$355, 026. 81 households increased their pledge, 44 remained the same, 8 decreased, and 14 are new for next year. Thank you for your generosity, even in uncertain times.

-The Stewardship Team

St. Matthew Outreach

WE DID IT! Over 600 items of food and personal hygiene items were donated during our two week November Drive. These items were distributed between the Canton Food Bank and Gifts of Love who together serve well over 200 families in the Farmington Valley. These organizations were very appreciative of our donations. In December, we filled the Mitten Tree with mittens, gloves, hats and scarves. January will be Baby Month. We will be collecting baby food, diapers, wipes, etc. on January 11th and 18th. Remember the need for food is ongoing and can always be left in the basket outside the church office. Thanks for your support and generosity.

Pioneers

A fellowship opportunity for families with children in Kindergarten through 2nd Grade.

Meets Tuesday January 6th and 20th @ 5:00 p.m. (Right after Grace Notes).

This fall we had a dozen families engaged in this new opportunity as we met for dinner and an activity.

Pathfinders (Coming this Spring)

A fellowship opportunity for families with children in 3rd-6th Grade.

Youth Group

Opportunities for fun, faith *and service for youth in Grades 7-12.*

- Events in January - Sledding on Jan. 11th @ 3:00 p.m., and our Lock-In on Jan. 23rd @ 7:30 p.m.
- Our Youth Service Organization has ongoing opportunities for our 7th and 8th Graders.
- Our High School Youth are preparing for the ELCA National Youth Gathering.

Contact Vicar Kate for details.

If you'd like to participate in these groups and/or help in the planning of Pathfinders, contact Pastor Sinibaldo.

Thanks from the Pastors!

Thank you to all for your generosity to us and our families in your Christmas gifts.

In this time of anxiety and uncertainty, God continues to bless us in the gift of one another at St. Matthew.

Thank you,

Pastor Carter and Pastor Sinibaldo

The 2nd Annual Chili Cook-off - Jan 24th @ 5:30 p.m.

Come for a romping good time, as we gather for a fun night of food and fellowship.

Bring your favorite chili recipe, or corn bread, or dessert...

Who will be our winner this year? Come and see. Sign-up in the Gathering Space.



Noon Readers

On January 12th we will be meeting at Shirley Slattery's house, 22 Forest Hill Dr., Simsbury. We will

discuss *Run* by Ann Patchett. Contact Shirley with any questions at 651-5967. Bring a sandwich and join us!

Evening Readers

We will gather on January 20th at 7:00 p.m. at church to discuss *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. All are welcome!

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

It's that time of year when hungry students are studying hard and are in the need of snack support from home. We will assemble care packages on Sunday, February 8th following 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 8th. We will also send packages to our military service members. Parents, please verify that the office has the latest address for your student and/or service member.

Mom and Me

An engaging group of Moms (and dads too) with young children, who gather for playtime, support, faith and coffee of course! We will meet Friday, January 16th and 30th from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the Church Nursery. If you would like more information, please contact Tammie Sinibaldi – tamsinibaldi@sbcglobal.net.

Sign-up in the Gathering Space... Future Fellowship Events in the Making:

- Family Ice Skating – early February
- A Meal Out at a Restaurant – late February
- Potluck and Movie Night – March 14th @ 5:30 p.m.
- Palm Sunday Youth Breakfast – April 5th @ 9:40 p.m.
- New York City Bus Trip - May 2nd
- Rock Cats Baseball – May/August
- And don't forget – Dinner with Vicar Kate

Musician Search Committee – Progress Report

As expected, December's activities dampened the number of candidate contacts – church musicians are appropriately too busy with their Holiday assignments! However, this respite does allow a brief overview of our activity to date and a big thank you to our St. Matthew committee. In our 6+ months, we have had active contact with 14 musicians. The degree of individual interest has ranged from a simple salary inquiry to multiple in-depth interviews and auditions; four impressive resumes came from out of state, but all withdrew when we changed from a full-time to a part-time position; one candidate took a job in the Midwest; and, one file is still in early review. At this moment, we feel we do not yet have the exposure needed for making a hiring decision and so we will continue on into 2009. As chair, I extend special thanks to the committee members and both Pastors for their patience, thoughtful participation, and support. - Warren Gedstad

Mouse

Sometimes I get the post Christmas blues. Maybe it is because of all the sweets, the songs, the activity, the joy, the hope that Advent season brings to us as we get ready. But sitting in my little mouse hole I give thanks for the many ministry opportunities we have been involved in this year, and it warms my heart, knowing the caring and thoughtfulness of the people of St. Matthew. 2009 is going to be great!



Thanks to Sheila Jarka, George and Carol Reider for the Food Blitz the last weeks of November with such a tremendous response. Thanks to all who brought food, and for the Pioneer's group who also gave thanks for each item as they put it in the basket. Thanks also to Sheila, Carol and George for the mitten tree that has helped provide warmth to many heads and hands this winter. Thanks to our Office Helpers: Donna Brown, Ann Eberhard, Judy Haag, Laura Hage, Linda Harriman, Cathy Heidt, Leslie Peterson, Suellen Rogers and our Office Administrator, Diane Theriault, who got our offering envelopes ready for us, as well as multiple mailings. Special thanks to Ann Eberhard who tirelessly stuffs bulletins and organizes the music library each week, and to Suellen Rogers who enters the weekly contributions and maintains the Parish Register. Pastor Sinibaldi and Vicar Kate brought me a few crumbs from the tasty treats Judy Haag made for their last meeting.

Advent expectation also filled our halls and sanctuary as we met for worship with great hopes for Christ's coming. Thanks to Michelle Gara's singing on November 30th. Pastor Carter's Advent retreat was made wonderful indeed by Anne Fenn's reading and the flute played by April Brodner-Fitts. Thanks to all who joined together each Wednesday morning for Advent Morning prayer and bible study. Thanks to our choirs, Evan Davis, our Vicar, our pastors and Anne Fenn for their leadership in Advent Vespers. Thanks to Michelle Davis for her leadership with the children for the Christmas Pageant. Thanks for the joy, singing, and faith in the incarnation as we celebrated in worship Christmas Eve.

Thanks to our Search Committee, who diligently continues to seek a Director of Music for St. Matthew. Thanks to Evan and Michelle Davis who continue to lead our choirs in the interim. Thanks to the people of God in this place, who continue to worship, invite, learn and serve into this new year of our Lord. Christ is present. Alleluia!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<h1>January 2009</h1>				1 Office Closed	2 Office Closed	3
4 8:30 Worship 9:40 S. School & AF 11:00 Holy Comm.	5 9:30 Staff 7:00 Finance	6 4:15 Grace Notes 5:00 Leading Tones 5:00 Pioneers 7:30 Church Council	7 9:30 Vicar's Bible Study No Choir	8	9	10
11 8:30 Holy Comm. 9:40 S. School & AF 11:00 Worship 3:00 Youth Group Sledding	12 9:30 Staff Noon Readers @ Slattery's 7:00 Endowment 7:00 Greenwood Music Series	13 4:15 Grace Notes 5:00 Leading Tones 7:00 Evangelism 7:00 Worship & Music	14 9:30 Vicar's Bible Study 6:00 Confirmation 7:30 Sr. Choir & JOYFUL NOISE	15	16 10:00 Mom & Me	17
18 8:30 Worship 9:40 S. School & AF 11:00 Holy Comm.	19 Office Closed Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20 9:30 Staff 4:15 Grace Notes 5:00 Leading Tones 5:00 Pioneers 7:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry 7:00 Evening Readers	21 9:30 Vicar's Bible Study 6:30 Property 7:00 Search Committee 7:30 Sr. Choir & JOYFUL NOISE	22 7:00 Search Committee	23 7:30 Youth Lock-in	24 9:00 Lock-in Ends 5:30 Chili Cook-off
25 8:30 Holy Comm. 9:40 S. School & AF 11:00 Worship 12:00 Annual Congregational Meeting	26 9:30 Staff	27 4:15 Grace Notes 5:00 Leading Tones	28 9:30 Vicar's Bible Study 6:00 Confirmation 7:30 Sr. Choir & JOYFUL NOISE	29	30 10:00 Mom & Me	31