

Saint Matthew's News

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Jersey City, NJ



December 2003

www.stmatthewsjc.com

83 Wayne St - Jersey City, NJ 07302 - Tel: 201-432-9319

A caring and diverse community of Christ, growing deep and wide.

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good; for God's steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1 NRSV)

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

If we at St. Matthew's never uttered another phrase besides this wonderful verse from Psalm 136, it would probably be enough. During this season of Thanksgiving, we first want to offer our gratitude to God who is renewing us and using us as instruments of hope and healing in the world.

As both the church year and the calendar year draw to a close, we pause to recount some of our blessings, and to share with you the good things that God is doing in and through us:

- We have received thirty (30) new members this year with a few more to be joining before Christmas.
- Our worship attendance has doubled and we're now averaging 54 people a week with visitors almost every Sunday.
- Our ministry "beyond our walls" as we like to refer to our benevolence giving, has extended to include commitments to the Synod's Cross Roads Capital Campaign; Stand with Africa; our Creative Arts Club; Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hudson County; and the Witness our Welcome and Reforming our Welcome Conferences (aimed at greater hospitality and welcome for the GLBT community).
- Our confirmation class has been on three overnight retreats this year including two at Cross Roads.
- We have unofficially kicked off our "In Debt No More in 2004" campaign and reduced our debt from \$109,000 to \$82,000 in 12 months. You'll hear more about this early next year. We covet your financial support in helping us reach our goal of being debt free by the end of next year so we can do more of the important things that God is calling us to do.
- We celebrated Pastor Connie Bonner's ministry with us and wished her well on her departure as she moved to Cleveland, Ohio to become a Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor at St. Vincent's Mercy Medical Center.
- Our council voted last week to employ Paul Bellan-Boyer as our Parish Deacon. Paul will begin with us on the first of December and will do occasional preaching, teaching, leadership training, and administrative work.



Pastor Gladys taken during one of this summer's Services-in-the-Park

We are indeed blessed at St. Matthew's — blessed to be blessings to the world! Now we prepare to journey through the season of Advent, and await the coming of our Savior, Jesus. We count him the greatest blessing of all, God's gift of love incarnate, born for the salvation of the whole world. May your Advent be filled with hope and peace. Please come and journey with our St. Matthew's family anytime you are able.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Gladys

Pie, Prayer and the Envelope folk...



Don Egan as *Carl Current*



Kim Aycox as *Mary Mission Support*



Pastor Moore as *Donna Designee*

November 23, 2003

Bavendam Hall

To kick off St. Matthew's stewardship campaign for 2004 a special "pie and prayer" event was held following a recent Sunday Worship. The pie was fabulous and the special visit by a group of stewardship cheerleaders—the members of the "Envelope family"—was a special treat.

In order to increase our understanding of how we can make sure our financial commitments are used as effectively as possible, the members of the envelope family—Carl Current, Mary Mission Support and Donna Designee—paid a delightful visit to Bavendam Hall. Each family member, dripping with honeyed Southern hospitality, told the story of their role in the family. Pies of many kinds were served. A short Bible study and discussion of reasons for Christian giving were also part of the fun.

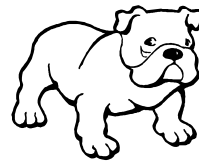
As the cheerleaders – James Splond, Kim Aycox, Peter Jensen, Claudia Perry and Pastor Gladys Moore pointed out several weeks ago— St. Matthew's is not only involved in our local neighborhood, but also supports worldwide and countywide mission efforts. St. Matthew's is also engaged in a pay-down-the-debt campaign so our ministries and church can grow even more. One such ministry, The Creative Arts Club, has drawn community and church support.

While the most obvious symbol of your stewardship to the church is the pledge stating your financial commitment to the church's ministries, there's a lot more to stewardship than much-needed monetary gifts. There are many opportunities for stewardship and care taking at St. Matthew's. You can bring refreshments for coffee hour, help fill bags for people living with HIV and AIDS helped by our food pantry, or assist with worship by collecting the offering, ushering and bringing in the elements of communion. Prayers for our continued growth are always welcome too.

- *Claudia Perry*



The Feast of St. Francis...(aka Blessing of the Animals)



October 4, 2003

Ramos Park



It was a gathering of all creatures great and small on a day not so bright and beautiful. St. Matthew's held the first *Blessing of the Animals* and Pastor Gladys Moore, with her dachshund, Tucker, in tow, said she hoped it would be the beginning of an annual tradition.

Tucker, Pookie, Daisy and five other animal companions were remarkably well composed in the face of being blessed and anointed with water in Ramos Park directly across from the church.

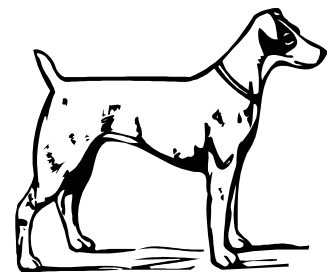
A light rain fell through portions of the events that didn't seem to bother the humans or their animal friends. Occasionally, one of the supplicants would wander off to smell something interesting or make the acquaintance of an unfamiliar animal. Unlike what happens in many such human gatherings, harmony was the order of the day.

Pastor Gladys also offered blessings for animals in absentia, and the ceremony was completed in much less than one dog year. Claudia Perry assisted with the service, and was delighted to reprise her role of dog aunt, a role that she played for a number of years in many varied locations.

Sadly, as the newsletter was going to press, we learned that Daisy, 17, rests in peace. Our condolences go out to Daisy's family—partners Brian McGovern and Jorge Candelaria.

Mark your calendars and bring the dogs, cats, snakes and any other animal companion for another blessing in early October 2004.

-Cluadia Perry



New Faces

The Aycox Family - St. Matthew's New Disciples

As St. Matthew's members continue to understand what it means to be disciples of the church, not just to be members of the church, let us welcome St. Matthew's newest disciples. The Aycox Family, Rodney, Lisa Kim, Rodney Jr. and Lily Aycox joined St. Matthew's in November.

Rodney and Kim are both long time residences of Jersey City. They were married in Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldwick, New Jersey. Zion is New Jersey's oldest Lutheran congregation established in 1714 by Aree van Guinee, a freed slave born in Dutch Guinea, Africa. Kim and Rodney had their wedding reception at Camp Bisler, now know as Cross Road's Camp.

Kim grew up in the Lutheran church as her father was the first Associate in Ministry in Jersey City. She is an employee of The Gallery at the American Bible Society. Rodney is a Program Analyst for The Children's Place. Eight-year old Rodney Jr. is in the 3rd grade. Lily is 4 years old and goes to It Takes a Village pre-school. When not attending church, school or working, the Aycox's enjoy going to the movies and taking long day trips. Be sure to get to know them at St. Matthew's. - Lisa Bishop



Reza Bostani

Mr. Bostani began coming to St. Matthew's shortly after he relocated to Jersey City from Lexington, Kentucky in February of this year. Reza graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1998 with a degree in architecture (yet another architect to add to St. Matthew's membership).

When describing how he found us he says, "My pastor at Faith Lutheran Church in Lexington, KY (Pastor Luckey) gave me a list of Lutheran assemblies in JC prior to my move up here. I found out about St. Mathews by checking out their website. I came to the place and loved it from day one because people were nice, seemed genuine and it is a church with a very diverse atmosphere. I also have made some very good friends and look forward to seeing everyone on Sundays." Reza is a regular on Sundays and has participated in many activities here at St. Matthew's including a couple Jubilee assemblies, the church picnic at Cross Roads, and various bible studies.

It doesn't take long to understand that Reza is a passionate Christian excited about the good news Christ first gave to us. And for this, we are truly blessed to have Reza as part of our congregation. If you have not yet introduced yourself, it's time...perhaps ask him who his favorite architect is? - John Seppanen (AIA)



Join us for the Advent Season!



December 7 — Sunday

- 9:30 AM — Gingerbread House Making
- 9:45 AM — Adult Education Group
Inclusion + Exclusion in the Bible [part 1]
- 11:00 AM — Advent 2 Worship Service
- 1:00 PM — Open House at the Parsonage on Gifford Avenue

December 13 — Saturday

- 11-5 PM — Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair (See Page 7)

December 14 — Sunday

- 12-5 PM — Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair (See Page 7)
- 11:00 AM — Advent 3 Worship Service
- 3:00 PM — Caroling in the neighborhood



December 21 — Sunday

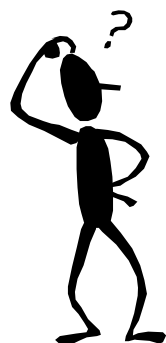
- 9:45 AM — Adult Education Group [part 2]
Inclusion + Exclusion in the Bible
- 11:00 AM — Advent 4 Worship Service

December 24 — Wednesday

- 7:00 PM — Christmas Music Preludes
- 7:30 PM — Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service of Lesson + Carols

December 25 — Thursday

- 11:00 AM — Christmas Day Worship
Service with Holy Communion



St. Matthew's Web site

Have you been to www.stmatthewsjc.com lately?

Not only does it have our schedule of events, but it also has photos of people and events happening in and out of the church.

What kind of information would you like to see on our site? Let us know!

Introducing the Jubilee Interfaith Organization

Have you visited the *new* www.jubileeinterfaith.org? Find out what Jubilee is all about.

Summertime in the Sunshine...



Camping at Bass River State Park **August 1-3**



Congregational picnic at Cross Roads Youth Camp **June 8**





Ist Annual Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair

Annual Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair

Saturday Dec 13th, 2003 11:00 - 5:00pm

Sunday Dec 14th, 2003 12:00 - 5:00pm

Great Gifts!

Cafe Food by Baker Boys Cafe!

Painting Sculpture Paper Arts
Photography Decorations Woods
Hand Made Jewelry

presented by: Baker Boys Cafe & Saint Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Saint Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 83-85 Wayne Street (between Jersey Avenue and Barrow Street) Jersey City, New Jersey 07302 201-432-8319 Just 2 Blocks from the Grove Street Path Station!

What: Baker Boys Café and St. Matthew's Lutheran present the **Annual Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair** - Affordable Arts and Crafts by local and regional artists.

When: Saturday December 13, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM & Sunday, December 14, 12:00 - 5:00PM.

Where: St. Matthew's Lutheran Church , 83-85 Wayne Sreet (between Jersey Avenue and Barrow Street in Downtown Jersey City) By: PATH Train. Get off at Grove Street Station and walk 2 blocks to Wayne St.

Mission: The Holiday Arts & Craft Fair is to create an affordable venue for local and regional artists to sell their work during the holiday season.

Suggested donation: One dollar- \$1.00 - supports St. Matthew's Creative Arts Club - an after-school program for at risk kids.

Artists: local and regional artists will be selling their work in the following areas: Painting, photography, graphics, fiber arts, jewelry, paper and wood.

Contact: **Don Egan** at Baker Boys Café at 201-876-0100 for information.



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