

St. Matthew Messenger



News of the Community of St. Matthew Presbyterian Church January 2019



Mary Martha Circle Update

by Julia McBee

The Mary Martha Circle meets this Wednesday, January 9, to continue their study of God's Promise. Thecla Braithwaite leads this month's lesson.

We will be having a pot-luck luncheon to celebrate a 90th birthday. All of the women are invited. The lesson starts at 10:30. The luncheon will begin at 11:30. Call Julia McBee or Ruth Sasscer if you have any questions or need a ride.

Greetings from Leslie

By Leslie Klingensmith

Happy New Year, dear friends! There's something about the turning of the year that leads me to pause and reflect on what has been and what will yet be. As a child, I hated the season after Christmas...it felt like such a letdown after the excitement and festivities of Advent and Christmas. Now, I see the days between Christmas Day and the Twelfth Day of Christmas as a marvelous time of quiet and contemplation - I look forward to those days as much as or more than Christmas Day.



Many of you all know that I love to decorate my home for Christmas, and have an extensive collection of tree ornaments, nativities, light-up houses that form a "Christmas town," and many other decorations. Lots of them belonged to my late grandmother, Mimi, so putting them out for the season brings up wonderful memories of her and the many Christmases we shared. I've noticed, though, that as much as I enjoy the decorations I am always ready to take them down as well. I rarely make it to the turning of the year before I am getting the house back to normal! Wrapping up the fragile ornaments, moving the furniture and bookcases back into place, closing up the boxes and putting them away...it all feels cleansing to me in a way I cannot fully describe. It is a signal that we are getting back to routine, and the process reminds me of all the gifts an "ordinary" day offers us.



Remembering, Caring and Sharing during Advent

by Linda Rhoad

True to form, members of St. Matthew responded heartily to the opportunity to give to the two charities highlighted this year. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance received \$1,280 to address ongoing needs caused by hurricanes, floods, and wildfires in the United States.



Extra-Ordinary Birthdays (EOB) received \$1,430 to help that organization give birthday parties to children in local homeless shelters -- and to help EOB rebuild after their headquarters were ravaged by a fire set by an arsonist. The Mission Commission is most grateful for the congregation's generosity..



At the time of this writing, the season of Christmas has three more days...by the time you read it, we will be back (briefly) in the liturgical season of Ordinary Time (also sometimes called the "Sundays after Epiphany"). But the glitz and glitter of the holidays mean nothing if we are not transformed by what

happened in Bethlehem. Charles Dickens's writings often refer to "keeping Christmas," a 19th-century way of saying "celebrating," or "participating." What would it mean to "keep Christmas" in our hearts and minds, even as we put away our decorations for another 11 months? In my reading these past couple of weeks, I have been taken with this poem by theologian Howard Thurman - I offer it to you as a way of keeping Christmas.

Now the Work of Christmas Begins

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.*

Friends, it is up to us to make the presence of Christ real and visible on this earth. How's that for a way to keep Christmas all year round?

Grace and peace,
Leslie

Children's Christmas Play Sunday, December 23



Liturgist Schedule for January-June 2019

by Jeanne Meyer

Please respond to the Breeze email notification sent prior to the Sunday you are scheduled to serve. If there is a problem, please find your replacement and inform the Church Office at (301) 498-4400 by Tuesday prior to your scheduled date.

January

- 6 - Ida Leong
- 13 - Bruce McPherson
- 20 - Donna Chirwa
- 27 - Bruce Dorrier

February

- 3 - Kit Boyle
- 10 - Leigh Leslie
- 17 - Al Luce
- 24 - Julia McBee

March

- 3 - Linda Rhoad
- 10 - John Meyer
- 17 - Bill Leffingwell
- 24 - Sara Lou Cardwell
- 31 - Phil Henjum

April

- 7 - Deidra Gallagher
- 14 - Louise Boyle
- 21 - Amy Hartley
- 28 - Jim Leong

May

- 5 - Jody Hursh
- 12 - Nulty Lynch
- 19 - Tom Benedict
- 26 - Norman Hammer



Cast, director, and music director take a bow

If you missed December 23, you missed a wonderful presentation by 11 of children (and 2 of our young adults). After months of practice, they presented an original play entitled "Follow the Star". They did a wonderful job and helped all of us follow the star to the manger of our Lord. Thanks to:

Matthew Winter
Aine Lynch
Ryann Berry
L. Emmanuella Gui-Diby
Angelina Thompson
Stacey T. Gui-Diby
Abby Acosta

Maxine Berry
Julianna Thompson
Louise Boyle
Eseme Koge
Maggie Ayuk
Hannah Ayuk

A special shout out to Eseme Koge and Louis Boyle for their constant support and help, to Jeremy Young for all his assistance, the parents for their help, Terry DeJong and Bruce McPherson and their "crew" for setting up and taking down the stage, the 7th Day congregation for lending us their sound equipment, and to Amy Brantner for running the sound equipment. It's team work like this that sets the stage for a tremendous success. Thanks!

-Konni Brantner

June

2 - Janet Froom

9 - Thecla Brathwaite

16 - Bill McBee

23 - Steve Hursh

30 - Abby Hartley

For any questions or changes regarding this schedule, contact Jeanne Meyer at jredmeyer@comcast.net.

Thank you for serving as Liturgist.



Annual Reports

It's that time of year folks! All Commission, Committee and Board of Trustee Chairs are reminded that their 2018 report of activities was due in the church office by December 15, 2018.

If you'd like to have a copy of the report you submitted last year, give Al Conner a call and he will be able to assist you.

CONGREGATION NOTES

Stewardship Update: We're in the Pink!

by Paul Neal

The 2019 Stewardship Campaign was challenging due to the loss of many long-term members and a projected lack of cash carryover from 2018. Despite this, the campaign's results are to be celebrated.

We've raised \$311,428 from 99 pledges or 97% of our goal; good enough to be called a **PINK SHIRT** worthy success. There were 10 new pledges and 95% of our existing pledgers either maintained or increased their pledge by an average of 9%.

The average pledge for 2018 was \$3,145, well above the average for the denomination and an increase over last year. As of this writing, there are a few members whose pledges we still have not received. We are currently \$10,600 from our goal but, the substantial increase in new pledges and the 9% increase in our existing pledges will enable us to minimize budget cuts.





Columbarium Update

by Millie Ames

The Columbarium is sleeping until Ground Hog day. Some clean-up of fallen limbs is ongoing. Reviewing old records and creating new forms for use of the Columbarium is ongoing.

In keeping with the desired natural wooded look minimal holiday decorations were done. We are looking forward to a happy new year.



Sanctuary Carpet To Be Replaced

by Phil Tarnoff

GOOD NEWS! Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, we are able to afford the replacement of the tired old carpeting in the sanctuary and narthex. The new carpeting will also be installed on the stairs, and rooms adjacent to the narthex. The donated funds are adequate to completely pay for the cost of the carpet and installation, without the need to use funds from either our depleted deferred maintenance or operating budgets.

The new carpeting has been selected by the Interior Committee, and a contract has been signed for its installation. Work is scheduled to occur all week during the week of January 21st, completed in time for the Sunday worship on January 27th. Odors from the carpet are not anticipated to pose any difficulties for those with allergies, since the newer resins are green and certified non-toxic. This project represents a grand finale to our ambitious improvement program.

And a big thanks to our donor.

SAVE THE DATE!



BE THE ROCK

St. John's Lutheran Church and **St. Matthew** Presbyterian Church present their

ANNUAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Christmas Orchestra 2018, Sunday, December 16



The orchestra was jammed--and so was the audience



Important Contacts

Leslie A. Klingensmith,
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301-598-4400

Konni Brantner, Director
of Youth Education and
Outreach
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Jeremy Young, Director
of Music and Organist
301-681-8013

Al Conner,
Church Office
Administrative Assistant
301-598-4400

Janet Froom,
Clerk of Session
301-871-7239

Bill and Julia McBee,
Newsletter Editors
301-603-0450



Justin and Joe model their Christmas sweaters

JANUARY YOUTH NOTES

by Konni Brantner



Start saving your bread bags and bread ties: Martha's Table Sandwich Making, Date To Be Announced

Martha's Table is in the process of moving, so we cannot confirm a spring date for a few weeks- but stay tuned for more information about our spring sandwich making marathon!

But for now....please start saving those bread ties and sandwich bags! As always, we'll need lots and lots of whole wheat bread, baggies, meat, cheese, peanut butter and jelly!



Angels we have heard on high

Children's Christmas Pageant, Christmas Eve, December 24

Until you see the Christmas story through the eyes of a child, you have missed one of the joys of the season!

This year our children acted out the story as Janet Froom, told the story from Mary's perspective.

Our angels were: Abby Acosta, Angelina Thompson, Maxine Berry and Emma Gui-Diby.

Our shepherds were: Raymond Fox, Nnaji Duru, Declan Gallagher, Stacey Gui-Diby and Beatrice Duffy, with a Evie Lynch as our lead shepherd.

Our Kings were: Aine Lynch, Julianna Thompson and Ryann Berry. Mary was Amy Brantner and Joseph was Esemé Koge.

Thanks to all our actors for bringing to life this wonderful event.

Many thanks for photographs: Paul Neal, Konni Brantner,
Leslie Klingensmith, John Lem, Bill McBee