

December 2014

The Drug War and the Killing of Michael Brown

Many of us from the church who are working with the Community Renewal Society had an engaging afternoon at John and Jeannine Adams' home as we watched a documentary together: "The House I Live In." The film peels back the complex layers and reasons so many are stuck in dehumanizing and destructive ghettos in our inner cities. The film does this by looking at the long history of drug use and the war against drugs in our nation. Most helpfully, it shows the horrific affects of the drug war on the people hopelessly caught in those neighborhoods. The film lays bare the terrible human cost and the enormous financial burden of the war on drugs. It does this through conversations with those who are intimately involved: a judge, a prison guard, those imprisoned, families whose loved ones are imprisoned, police officers, and those who study these issues.

I wish every person in our congregation would watch this film, which is now in our church library. I wish every American would watch it. I believe it would be especially helpful as we attempt to understand the rage of the people in Ferguson, Missouri, at the grand jury's decision not to indict Office Darren Wilson in the killing of Michael Brown. Perhaps we could all gain a new level of empathy and understanding of one another. I fear that the tragedy of Michael Brown's shooting will find no redemption if we do not come to see the racism and injustice that is very much alive in our nation.

So much focus has been on whether Darren Wilson is guilty of shooting this unarmed teenager.

Frankly, I find it rather interesting that any of us is really in a position to so easily judge the rightness or wrongness of the grand jury's verdict. Some seem so convinced of Darren Wilson's guilt and others of his innocence. We should all not want the rage of many in Ferguson to possibly scapegoat one police officer. Nor should we want the shooting of another unarmed black youth to be excused and justice denied.

A Christian response requires that we identify with vulnerable, disadvantaged, and poor communities. That is gospel. That is Jesus. That means attempting to understand the rage that is behind the reaction of the black community. We ought to ask the question as to why a community has risen up with such rage. That rage needs to be validated and put into context. There is an undeniable history of unfair application of the laws in Ferguson as there is in our nation. Racial minorities, especially black and Hispanic, will testify to what it is like to live with the fear of racial profiling (just ask someone who is a minority). Only a nation that wants to turn away and not look at the truth and leave our brothers and sister in pain will continue to ignore the deeper issues.

This Christmas, we will celebrate that the light of God came into the darkness of our world. Jesus was born into a poor family in a world that experienced gross injustice and oppression. When we read our scriptures we see him daring to speak up to those who were in power, even to the point of sacrificing himself for the disadvantaged. We as followers of Jesus are called to take this same path of working for peace and justice.

Food on the First

Thank you to all who donated in the month of November. More families were able to have a nice Thanksgiving dinner because of your donations.



These are the items that were requested for the month of December:

- Canned pineapple
- Canned peaches
- Canned tuna
- Canned chicken
- Canned vegetables
- Cake mixes
- Frosting
- Baby formula
- Baby food
- Diapers size 5 and 6
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste

Proverbs 19:17

"He who is kind to the poor, lends to the LORD, and He will reward him for what he has done."

As always, please make sure the food is not expired and the packages are unopened. If you have any questions, please call Betty Greer at 630.682.4084. Thanks for your generosity!







Pennies from Heaven

Christmas will be here before we know it and Manna cards make great gifts. Cash is always appreciated and you don't have to worry about sizes – one size fits! If you are planning on giving Manna cards as Christmas gifts, please be sure to order them by December 14. With an increase in orders and deliveries in December, Manna cannot guarantee that an order placed on Dec. 21 would be delivered in time for Christmas.



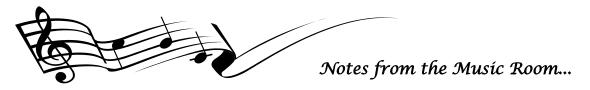
Will you be preparing holiday meals, doing some baking, or hosting gettogethers? Buy your grocery cards through Manna. Traveling for the holidays? Get your gas cards from Manna. Thank you for your continued support of St. Matthew.

<>< Edie DeBoard



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Joe Chumas Elizabeth Hambrick-Stowe
- 5 Judi Gonzalez
- 6 John Adams
- 7 Jerry Stoller
- 8 Jan Beaton Mike Thornton
- 9 Peter Lindquist
- 10 Laura Christensen
- 11 Alex Alavi
- 13 Anna Neufelder
- 16 Dave BoydMatt Guerrieri
- 18 Laurel Caldwell
- 19 Carolyn Armstrong
- 20 Lisa Stubbee
- 23 Rachel Cole Cathy SooHoo
- 27 Dave Mook
- 28 Jeannine Adams Carol Domal Blake Erickson
- 29 Tyler Faith Sharon Schlenker
- 30 Bob Barnshaw



December, of course, brings us to the end of the calendar year. AdventAdvent, on the other hand, is the beginning of the church year, a time to reflect and anticipate the coming of Jesus. 'Peace Child', which is our Advent song, has several tunes associated with it. The arrangement that we are singing this year was arranged by our own Brian Dobbelaere. It is a very sing-able melody, and everyone will be singing it.

The Christmas Cantata will be presented on December 7th. "Love Came Down at Christmas" by Joel Raney is a beautiful new cantata with several original pieces that incorporate snippets of familiar carols. The choir has been working hard since the beginning of October, and it sounds wonderful. This is a great time to invite friends to St Matthew.

December 14 is another opportunity to invite friends: our handbell choirs will be supporting the service with their Advent selections. It is always a pleasure to listen to their music.

I hope you are able to make it each Sunday to worship together and enjoy wonderful musical presentations of the season.

From all those involved in music, and KC, Brian, Wendee, and myself, we wish you all a Very Merry Christmas, and a safe and happy New Year.



Jamie Craig 630.202.6788 Lanni1@comcast.net



SUNday School

BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS December 21st

During the Sunday School hour

Games

Crafts

BIRTHDAY CAKE

Songs

Advent Season in Sunday School December 2014

Our Advent season is a fun and meaningful time for the Sunday School children. For three of the four Sundays the children, preschool – fifth grade, will gather together to sing Christmas songs and watch a fourpart movie of the Christmas story. Following the movie they will join their age-appropriate classmates for activities and crafts. Our special Sunday is "The Birthday Party for Jesus," when the children celebrate Christ's birth in fun ways and the Family Christmas Eve service is a special time for families to come together to celebrate the true meaning of the season. I hope that your children can join us.



December 7th: A Message for Mary The children will watch a short video where the Angel Gabriel approaches Mary with God's message that she would give birth to the Christ Child. They will learn about Mary's answer; "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word," Luke 1:38. The children will make the first of their Advent crafts, an angel.

December 14th: Mary and Elizabeth The children will learn about Mary's visit to her relative Elizabeth, and Joseph's tough decision to accept God's plan for his and Mary's life. They will watch the second part of the video lesson, followed with activities and a nativity craft.

December 21: Birthday Party for Jesus The children will learn about the birth of Jesus by watching the third part of the video lesson. They will celebrate with a birthday party for Jesus, where they will play games and make a craft of baby Jesus. At 10:30am the children will be taken downstairs to Dobstaff Hall, where they will join their church family to sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and eat birthday cake. Each child will receive a gift in honor of Christ's birth.



December 24th: The 6 pm Christmas Eve service This service is a "family friendly" celebration of Christ's birth. If you plan to attend this service and your child would like to be part of the nativity scene – Joseph, Mary, Angel, Shepherds, Kings, sheep, etc. – please let me know. These are not speaking parts. The children will go to the front of the church and get in position as the Christmas story is read by older youth. The service will end with the entire congregation lighting candles (battery-operated candles are provided for young children) and singing Silent Night. This beautiful service is a wonderful prelude to the important Christmas morning message: Jesus is the reason for the season!

December 28: The Magi The children learn about the Magi who traveled many miles to bring gifts to Jesus; the Kings will learn that Jesus had a way better gift for them than they had for Him. The children will make a Three Kings craft to complete their nativity.



crazies SHOUT OUT

November was Nice!

Thanks to all who were a part of a fantastic November with the crazies at St. Matthew. From Christmas shopping for the

Outreach Christmas Store, to conversations about ancestors like Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, to one heck of a Turkey Bowl Football Game on Thanksgiving day, we've been a very busy crew! Here's to a December that's just as awesome. We hope to see YOU there!



Today, Advent is observed during the four weeks leading to Christmas--but the original observance was something completely different. In the 4th and 5th centuries, Advent was a six-week preparation for the season of Epiphany, not Christmas. Back then, Advent was a time for self-reflection and soulwork (kind of like Lent today); new converts to the faith prepared themselves for baptism, faithful believers examined their hearts, and everyone spent time reflecting on the Christian story and their place within God's mission to bring the Kingdom come.

Be sure to give yourself a little quiet time this Advent season--do a little listening to God's still-speaking voice. Then stop by Emmy's office and share what you think: What do you love about the story of Christmas, and the whole Christian story? How is God calling our youth group? How is God calling you?



St. Matthew UCC





Don't Forget!

Crazies Christmas party is on Sunday, December 21!









Pictures from the Marian Park
Thanksgiving Dinner.
Thank you to everyone who
volunteered and made this a
special Mission and wonderful
fellowship event with the
Marian Park residents!



Costa Rica Mission Trip for 2015

This year we will be joining First Church of Lombard, UCC to travel to Costa Rica. We will be going to the area of Nosara, which is on the Pacific Ocean side. We will be building in a rural community with lots of wildlife to see and walking distance to the ocean. The dates for the trip are June 29 to July 7. There will be a meeting on January 11, after church if you are interested in learning more about the trip. Thanks, Julie Schubert- tijjr7@att.net



Muldoon's Fundraiser

Thanks to all who participated in the fundraiser held on Sunday, October 19. We earned \$179.35 for St. Matthew. The response to this event was very positive, so please let Dawn Schubert know if you would like to organize another event of this kind in 2015!





Annual Report Update

Please have <u>ALL</u> year-end committee reports into the office by Friday, January 9, 2015, so that they can be published in the Annual Report. Please contact Diana or Dawn with any questions.





Do you have a gently used iPod that you no longer need? The Music & Memory Organization, which recently released a documentary film called ALIVE INSIDE, uses iPods to help thousands of people struggling from dementia and other chronic cognitive and physical impairments reconnect with family, friends and caregivers through a personalized digital music program. Your donation will help spread the healing power these iPods can provide through the personalized playlists that are put on them. The iPods will be delivered to a local care facility that participates in this program. They do not accept headphones, for hygienic reasons, but they do

appreciate iPod connector cords. As technology improves, iPods are being supplanted by smartphones and other multimedia devices, so the iPods are often lying around at home, unused. An iPod donation is a great way to repurpose these devices, get them into the hands of those who could benefit most and keep them out of landfills.

A box labeled "iPods" will be left in the office. If you have questions, feel free to contact Patti Woods at pwoods4@aol.com or 630-357-7146.

If you wish to know more about this you can go online to the website: http://musicandmemory.org/ or view the documentary film - ALIVE INSIDE - now available on Netflix.

"I Believe Even When..."

Worship and Sermon Series: Advent and Christmas Eve 2014



The stories of the Advent season which lead us into the glorious birth of the Christ Child are like the early morning hours of the day, that darkness that preceded the rising of the sun. That time of waiting for the dawn by the characters of the Christmas story was filled with doubt, disgrace, fear, oppression, anticipation, and hope.

On the four Sundays of Advent we experience in worship this journey of the characters of Christmas to the birth of our Messiah. By looking at the first chapters of each of the Gospels, we will reflect on how these experiences relate to our own common human experience. Someone once said, "I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining." Our Advent journey

will support us to have faith, hope, peace, and love even as we wait for the light to shine in our darkness.

Theme Song: Peace Child - Shirley Erena Murray (Shirley wrote this song the day before the start of the Gulf war in 1990.)

Peace Child, in the sleep of the night in the dark before light you come, in the silence of stars in the violence of wars --Savior, your name.

Peace Child, to the road and the storm to the gun and the bomb you come, through the hate and the hurt, through the hunger and dirt -bearing a dream. Peace Child, to our dark and our sleep to the conflict we reap now come -be your dream born alive, held in hope, wrapped in love: God's true shalom.

December 7- Matthew 1: "I Believe in God Who Gives Wisdom in Difficulty." "Not what I expected." That must be, to put it mildly, what Joseph thought when he discovered Mary was pregnant. How often do we have to adjust our expectations when life does not go as planned? Joseph had the wisdom of God to act in love and to do the right thing. How do we listen for God's wisdom in difficult times?

December 14- Mark 1: "I Believe in God, Who Speaks the Truth in Love."

God sends Jesus, but first God sends John. We all need people in our lives who are willing to talk boldly to us when we are headed in the wrong direction. John invites us to journey into the wilderness to hear the truth about what is broken in this world and our lives. Are we open to hearing God's truth?

December 21- John 1: "I Believe Even When..."

In this last week of Advent, we are ever hopeful that the same God who creates life in the beginning comes to bring life once again. The Word Becomes Flesh and dwells among us...filled with grace and truth. Are we open to receive both God's grace and God's truth, that we may be made whole?

December 24 - Christmas Eve "Unto you a child is born, and he will be the Prince of Peace."

The night of mystery and awe has arrived, and Jesus is born into a world fully human and finite in its pain and beauty. God breaks in upon our lives. Can we accept that God can come to us in our imperfections and limitations?



And now, for something completely different...The December poem from Linda Leinweber

Noël: Christmas Eve 1913

Robert Bridges, Poet Laureate, United Kingdom (1913)

Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Peace and goodwill to all men)

A frosty Christmas Eve when the stars were shining Fared I forth alone where westward falls the hill, And from many a village in the water'd valley Distant music reach'd me peals of bells aringing: The constellated sounds ran sprinkling on earth's floor As the dark vault above with stars was spangled o'er. Then sped my thoughts to keep that first Christmas of all When the shepherds watching by their folds ere the dawn Heard music in the fields and marveling could not tell Whether it were angels or the bright stars singing. Now blessed be the towers that crown England so fair That stand up strong in prayer unto God for our souls Blessed be their founders (said I) an' our country folk Who are ringing for Christ in the belfries tonight With arms lifted to clutch the rattling ropes that race Into the dark above and the mad romping din. But to me heard afar it was starry music Angels' song, comforting as the comfort of Christ When he spake tenderly to his sorrowful flock: The old words came to me by the riches of time Mellow'd and transfigured as I stood on the hill Heark'ning in the aspect of th' eternal silence.



Once again, I offer this lovely Christmas poem by Robert Bridges from the early 20th century. Some of you might recognize it, as it was set to music and performed by John Denver. I am also told that Gerald Finzi set the piece to music in a work entitled In Terra Pax, for chorus and orchestra. I take pleasure in the mystical quality of a person walking alone on Christmas eve yet being in touch with humanity and the wonder of the night through the bells. Happy Holiday!



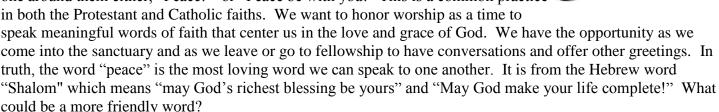
Name Tags

Every Sunday we say to people that "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here." As a congregation we want to give everyone an extravagant welcome. We are excited to share with you that we have made permanent (or long-lasting) name tags. • We already have one made with your name on it, if you are a member and/or a regular attendee. • The name tags are on a board just past the steps at the north entrance. (Please note that the name tags are magnetic. If you have a Pacemaker or would like a pin tag, please let Diana know.)• If you do not see your name

tag hanging, look in the basket. • If for some reason we have overlooked you, write us a note on the clipboard and we will get you one for the next Sunday. • There are also sticky ones for our guests and for the children. Of course, it is up to you to find your name tag on the board and put it on. Also, remember to place it back on the board (in alphabetical order) before you leave. This is a great way for each of us to give our guests and those who are new an extravagant welcome, but also for all of us to avoid the awkward times when we just can't recall someone's name! The good news is that the cost of doing this has been covered by a memorial fund from John Roberts that has not been used for many years. Those of you who remember John Roberts will remember that he was the guy who every Sunday greeted people at the door by name and with a warm smile. He was always ready to greet everyone "with a warm hand and a warm heart." His spirit of hospitality lives on as long as each of us remembers to put on our name tag!

Worship Note for Advent

In the Advent season, reflection and times of silence take central importance. To honor this we are changing the placement and the style of "Passing the Peace" in our worship for Advent. For the next four weeks, soon after the Prayer of Confession, we will be asked to give a sign of God's forgiveness by saying a word of peace to those around us. We are asking that everyone remain in their pews and simply say to each one around them either, "Peace!" or "Peace be with you!" This is a common practice in both the Protestant and Catholic faiths. We want to honor worship as a time to





Prayer Wall

Don't forget to stop by the Prayer Wall in Dobstaff and write a prayer request, your name, or simply the name of someone in need of prayer and tuck it in the ribbons. We invite you to take a prayer request today and pray for that person throughout Advent or

bring the card back next Sunday and pray for others in the coming weeks.

Christmas Eve Prelude Performance

We are currently looking for children to perform the

prelude at our 6pm

Christmas Eve service. Please contact KC at handbell.director@stmatthewucc.org or 309. 397.9638 if your child is interested. Thanks!



Canticum Novum

Songs of Great Joy





Canticum Novum, a vocal ensemble comprised of area musicians, will present a Christmas program of seasonal favorites by Michael Praetorius and John Rutter with excerpts from Vivaldi's splendid Gloria. You also won't want to miss our audience sing-a-long so bring your best voice! Join us for an evening of great music.

Call 630-665-1236 for information

St. Matthew United Church of Christ December 13, 2014

> 7:00 PM 1420 S. Gables Wheaton, IL



Please join us for this combined fundraising event for St. Matthew and the chamber choir. Tickets are \$10 each and are available at the door or through John Kouns.

Please contact John with any questions at 630.690.4641.

Upcoming Events



NOVEL APPROACHES Novel Approaches will not meet in December but looking ahead to January, the novel to be approached is "Necessary Lies" by Diane Chamberlain. "Necessary Lies" is the story of two young women, worlds apart and both haunted by tragedy, are thrown together and must ask themselves: How can you know what you believe is right when everyone is telling you it's wrong?

CHRISTMAS CANTATA Advent is the time of preparation before Christmas. As part of the preparations, the Music Ministry of St Matthew will present "Love Came Down at Christmas". This wonderful new work by Joel Raney will be shared during our regular worship on the second Sunday of Advent, December 7th. With the help of several additional "choir members" from in and out of our congregation, as well as several excellent musicians, it will be a great way to start December for one and all. Please make plans to be here that day, and perhaps bring a friend or two to enjoy the cantata.





FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN The annual Feed My Starving Children trip is coming up. It will be on January 19th, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. We'll meet at the church at 1:45pm, and carpool to FMSC to pack food for starving children in countries all over the world. We will pack from 2:30 to 4:30pm and then carpool back. If you haven't packed before, it is a great experience and we always love to have new people join us. There are only 45

spots reserved, and the sign-up board will be up in the narthex in December. Please contact Alex Johnson if you have any questions: 630.890.7244, 630.665.7577, or alexanderjohnson30@yahoo.com. Save the date!

<u>PARENTS' DAY OUT!</u> Parents, we invite you to enjoy a few hours of shopping or wrapping Christmas presents without your kids on Saturday, December 20th from 1-4 p.m. At the church we will provide crafts, games and a movie to keep your kids happy and having fun. Please sign up in the narthex. If you would like to volunteer to help, please sign up as well. Merry Christmas! -The Christian Education Committee



At our Thanksgiving outreach project at Marian Park, one of the delightful residents prepared what some of us said is the best turkey we have ever tasted. It was made with a rich Italian gourmet sauce and as juicy a turkey as we have tasted. I joked that I bet he would never give out such a delicious ancient Italian family recipe, but he did. So if you were disappointed with the bird you cooked this year, here is your redemption just in time for Christmas:

Roberto's Italian Turkey

Day before marinade: Butter, Worcestershire sauce, salt, meat tenderizer, paprika, seasoned salt.

Tomato Sauce:

15 tomatoes

1/2 Cup Worcestershire sauce

1 large onion

1 large green pepper

4 Bay leaves

Pickling spices (toss first)

Sesame seeds

Pasilla chile pods

Garlic

-Blend all the ingredients and boil. Toss in Italian olives and prunes. Adjust this recipe to your family's taste and enjoy!

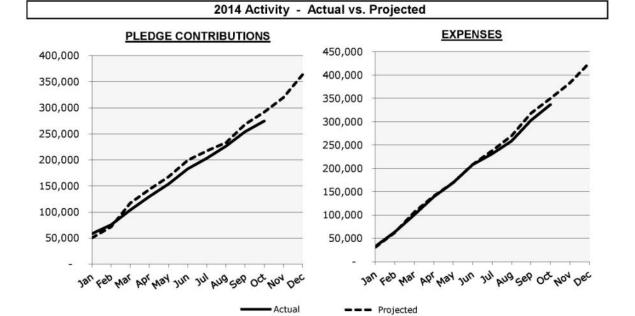
December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7p Christian Ed	2 -2p Digital Ministry -7:30p Mission	3	4	5	6 3:30p Cantata Rehearsal
7 -9:30a Worship Service: Cantata -Memorial Committee meeting after worship -6p crazies	8	9	10 Marian Park Gift Delivery	11 7p Finance	12	13 7p Canticum Novum
14 -9:30a Worship Service: Bells and Communion -6p crazies	15	16	17	18 -6p SRC -7 Council	19	20
21 -9:30a Worship Service: Children's Choir Performance -Birthday Party for Jesus -5-8p crazies Christmas Party	22	23	24 Christmas Eve -6p Christmas Eve Family Friendly Service -10p Cristmas Eve Candle Light Service	25 Merry Christmas Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27
28 -9:30a Worship Service -no crazies	29	30	31 New Years Eve			

ST. MATTHEW UCC GENERAL OPERATING FUND STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES

For the Period Ended October 31, 2014

	ACTUAL CURRENT MONTH	ACTUAL YEAR-TO- DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
RECEIPTS:	2	-	
Pledge Contributions	20,445	274,620	363,658
Loose Offerings	323	5,218	6,000
Rental Income	-	2,455	5,000
Fund Raising	367	3,551	10,000
Investment Income	(12)	(169)	-
More Property		20,750	41,500
Miscellaneous Income			
TOTAL RECEIPTS	21,123	306,425	426,158
EXPENDITURES:	11		100
Ministry	16,605	175,259	224,348
Building	8,890	98,507	122,810
Mortgages & Notes	2,229	22,292	26,750
Mission / OCWM	4,543	20,073	29,000
Committees:	(15. 4 5. (5. (5.)		
Christian Education	839	7,179	9,600
Membership	353	1,855	2,750
Music	236	2,553	4,500
Worship	104	870	2,500
Endowment	123	-	1,000
Congregational Life	-	269	800
Memorial		-	100
Misc. & Contingency	-	7,931	2,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	33,799	336,788	426,158
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$ (12,676)	\$ (30,363)	\$ -



Please contact John Adams if you have questions or need additional information.



St. Matthew United Church of Christ

630.665.1236 (Office) 630.665.1436 (Fax)

 ${\bf Office\ Email:}\ office @stmatthewucc.org$

Web Site: www.stmatthewucc.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday, 9a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Friday, 9a.m.-1p.m.

Sunday Worship: 9:30 a.m.

Sunday Church School: 10 a.m.

Our Purpose:

Become, Live, and Serve as Disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our Identity:

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome and accepted here at St. Matthew United Church of Christ.

Our Staff

Rev. Milton Allen Mothershed, Senior Pastor allen.mothershed@stmatthewucc.org

Susan Wold, Director of Children's Ministry susan.wold@stmatthewucc.org

Emily Davis, Director of Youth Ministry emily.davis@stmatthewucc.org

Jamie Craig, Director of Music/Choir Director jamie.craig@stmatthewucc.org

Brian Dobbelaere, Organist/Pianist brian.dobbelaere@stmatthewucc.org

Kim Congdon, Handbell Director kim.congdon@stmatthewucc.org

Karen Lindquist, Business Manager karen.lindquist@stmatthewucc.org

Diana Padilla, Administrative Assistant diana.padilla@stmatthewucc.org