

St. Matthew United Church of Christ

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Office Email: office@stmatthewucc.org
Web Site: www.stmatthewucc.org
Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Church School: 10:00 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

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Mark Restaino, Director of Youth Ministries

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Kim Congdon, Handbell Director

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January 2014

As we move from Christmas to the New Year, I want to share with you a devotion that I found to be a meaningful reflection on our faith. Blessings in the New Year. May your faith be enriched and grow as we begin together 2014.

-Pastor Allen

The God Who Dreamed

John 1:1, 14

Seated at the great desk, the Author opens the large book. It has no words. It has no words because no words exist. No words exist because no words are needed. There are no ears to hear them, no eyes to read them. The Author is alone.

And so he takes the great pen and begins to write. Like an artist gathers his colors and a woodcarver his tools, the Author assembles his words.

He takes his quill and spells the first. T-i-m-e.

Time did not exist until he wrote it. He, himself, is timeless, but his story would be encased in time. The story would have a first rising of the sun, a first shifting of the sand. A beginning...and an end. A final chapter. He knows it before he writes it.

Time. A foot span on eternity's trail.

Slowly, tenderly, the Author wrote the second word. A name. A-d-a-m.

As he writes, he sees him, the first Adam.

Then he sees all the others. In a thousand eras in a thousand lands, the Author sees them. Each Adam. Each child. Instantly loved. Permanently loved. To each he appoints a place. No accidents. No coincidences. Just design.

The Author makes a promise to these unborn: In my image, I will make you. You will be like me. You will laugh. You will create. You will never die. And you will write.

They must. For each life is a book, not to be read, but rather a story to be written. The Author starts each life story, but each life will write his or her ending.

What a dangerous liberty. How much safer it would have been to finish the story for each Adam. To script every option. It would have been simpler. It would have been safer. But it would not have been love. Love is only love if chosen.

So the Author decides to give each child a pen. "Write carefully," he whispers.

Lovingly, deliberately, he writes the third word, already feeling the pain. E-m-m-a-n-u-e-l.

The greatest mind in the universe imagined time. The truest judge granted Adam a choice. But it was love that gave Emmanuel, God with us.

The Author would enter his own story.

The Word would become flesh. He, too, would be born. He, too, would be human. He, too, would have feet and hands. He, too, would have tears and trials.

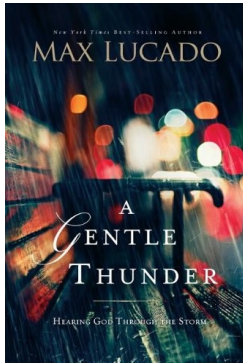
And most importantly, he, too, would have a choice. Emmanuel would stand at the crossroads of life and death and make a choice.

The Author knows well the weight of that decision. He pauses as he writes the page of his own pain. He could stop. Even the Author has a choice. But how can a Creator not create? How can a Writer not write? And how can Love not love? So he chooses life, though it means death, with hope that his children will do the same.

And so the Author of Life completes the story. He drives the spike in the flesh and rolls the stone over the grave. Knowing the choice he will make, knowing the choice all Adams will make, he pens, “The End,” then closes the book and proclaims the beginning.

“Let there be light!”

“A Gentle Thunder”
Max Lucado



Please note that this issue of *The Voice*, as well as past newsletters, are available on our website: stmatthewucc.org.

If you prefer to read *The Voice* online and would like to opt-out of a paper copy, please email or call Diana in the church office.
Thank you.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 - Kathy Oswalt
- 3 - Heather Madsen
- 4 - Darcy Holland
- 6 - Ruth Copeland
 - David Schubert
- 7 - David Biener
- 8 - Jon Breitfuss
 - Gaye Justice
- 9 - Bill Matthei
- 11 - Adam Trunkey
- 13 - Adam Justice
 - Leah Kulczewski
- 15 - Linda Lellbach Dome
 - Laurie Madsen
- 17 – Dan Achammer
 - Jim Fanning
 - Jon Hall
 - Kay Kullman
 - Glen Sorgatz
 - Nicole Uhrig
- 18 – Bob Cooper
- 19 - Mike Justice
 - Brian Raymond
- 20 – Rachel Schubert
- 22 - Mark Hutchison
- 23 – Jen Eugea
- 26 - David Hanna
 - Ryan Phillips
- 27 - Noelle Peterson
- 28 - Brian Nessel
- 31 - Ralph Menini

January 2014

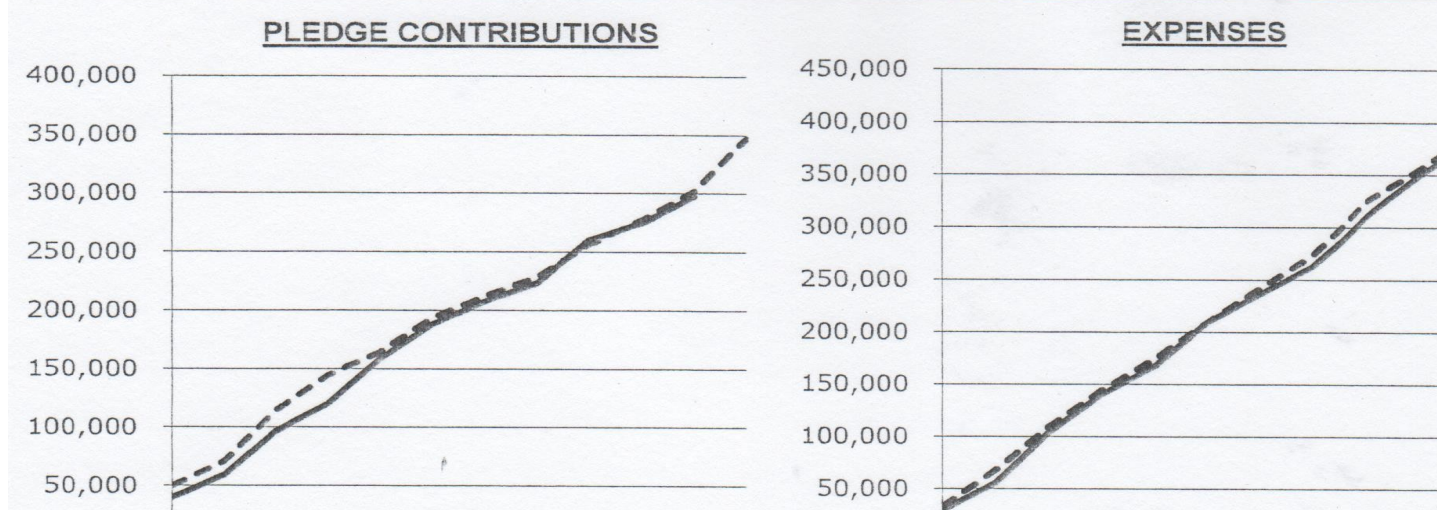
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Every Tuesday: 6p IntergeneRing-ers 7p Bells Potluck 7:30p Chancel Ringers</i>	<i>Every Wednesday: 1:30p Prayer Group 6:30p Praise Band 7:30p Choir</i>		<i>1 Office Closed, Happy New Year!</i>	<i>2 Office Closed</i>	<i>3 1p crazies Winter Retreat</i>	<i>4 Scrapbook-ing Event</i>
<i>5 -9:30a Worship Service with Com-munion and Re-membrance Sunday -Annual Reports Due</i>	<i>6 7p Christian Education</i>	<i>7 -7p Member-ship Committee -7:30p Mission Committee</i>	<i>8 P.A.D.S.</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11 7p Pilgrim-age to Italy Deposit Party</i>
<i>12 -9:30a Worship Service: Bells Sunday -Costa Rica trip Meeting</i>	<i>13 -7p Worship Committee -7p Worship Committee</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16 -6p Staff Re-lations Com-mittee -7p Church Council</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18 8a Men’s Fellowship</i>
<i>19 -9:30a Worship Service</i>	<i>20 1:45p Feed My Starving Children</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24 7:30p Novel Approaches</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>26 -9:30a Worship Service -Annual Meeting -Chili-Cook Off -February Voice Articles Due</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>	

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

For the Period Ended November 30, 2013

	ACTUAL CURRENT MONTH	ACTUAL YEAR-TO- DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
RECEIPTS:			
Pledge Contributions	22,705	297,722	347,136
Loose Offerings	287	4,678	8,000
Rental Income	400	3,640	6,000
Fund Raising	1,925	10,844	10,000
Investment Income	(19)	(113)	500
More Property	13,000	54,500	54,500
More Property (special projects)	-	3,429	-
Miscellaneous Income	-	100	500
TOTAL RECEIPTS	38,298	374,800	426,636
EXPENDITURES:			
Ministry	15,787	196,375	224,061
Building	13,073	122,102	121,775
Mortgages & Notes	2,230	24,521	26,750
Mission / OCWM	1,693	21,446	29,000
Committees:			
Christian Education	1,207	9,258	10,150
Membership	264	1,507	3,900
Music	-	2,056	4,200
Worship	10	790	3,500
Congregational Life	179	477	800
Misc. & Contingency	-	363	2,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURES (before Special Projects)	34,443	378,895	426,636
Special Projects	-	3,429	-
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$ 3,855	\$ (7,524)	\$ -

2013 Activity - Actual vs. Projected



Notes from the Music Room.....

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star. O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.



The commercialization of Christmas can probably be traced back to the wise men's presents that very first Christmas. The consensus of opinion about the Magi, among most serious Bible scholars, is that the astrologers came from Persia (now known as Iran). The fact that astrologers in that land were often priests is probably why they are called Magi. They worked as dream interpreters for the royal family but were not of royal blood or members of the ruling family.

No one really knows how many there were, but because of the use of "men" and the mention of three gifts, society has speculated that there were three. However, the number of gifts had nothing to do with how many wise men brought them, but rather were symbolic of the important three areas of Christ's life: the gold representing his kingly reign, the frankincense symbolizing his ministry, and the myrrh foreshadowing his death and resurrection.

Three kings or not, the story of the wise men has become the focus of the post-Christmas celebration of Epiphany (an appearance of a deity or a sudden insight into reality initiated by some simple, commonplace occurrence).

During the 1800s, Epiphany was traditionally the day the Christmas tree was taken down and children received the gifts and treats that had been hanging on it since it had been cut, brought home, and decorated.

Though he had no children of his own, 37-year-old John Henry Hopkins Jr. enjoyed the childlike spirit of Epiphany that he observed in his nephews and nieces. A brilliant scholar with degrees from the University of Vermont and a law school in New York City, he was still a child at heart. Even though he was an ordained priest of the Episcopal church, he preferred writing to preaching, so upon graduating from seminary and law school Hopkins picked up his pen to become a reporter for a New York newspaper. He then continued his career as a journalist with the New York-based *Church Journal*. He was writing for the publication in 1857 when he confronted a special problem – the conundrum of what Epiphany gifts he should purchase for his brothers' children. Ultimately, Hopkins decided to give a present that would both entertain and educate at the same time.

Having decided on his gift, Hopkins sat down at his desk with a single goal in mind: to write a moving tribute to the legendary visitors from the East described in the gospel of Matthew. The cadence (rhythmic flow) of his melody fully captured the image of a trip across the desert and plains on camels. The carol had an oriental, Middle Eastern feel to it and its rhythm reflected the beat of a march or the sway of a camel's gait.

John Henry Hopkins Jr. never married or had a family of his own. Yet because he loved children, he'd be pleased to know that his most famous Christmas song is one of the most beloved children's carols in the world.

Many thanks to "KC" Congdon for this very interesting musical history lesson. May the New Year be very happy for everyone!

Yours in Christ Through Song,
Jamie Craig
C: 630-202-6788
Lanni1@comcast.net

Children's Ministry January 2014 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The season of Advent will end with an Epiphany celebration. We will talk about the Three Kings and their mode of transportation, the camel. We will also talk about the gifts they brought Jesus. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were a lot different from the usual pack-and-play, knitted blanket, and strollers that are given as baby gifts today.

On January 12th we begin our workshop rotation unit "The Lord's Prayer." This beautiful prayer was taught to the disciples by Jesus. The children will learn why Jesus taught the disciples this prayer and the meaning behind the words. They can then pray from their heart, with understanding, rather than reciting it from memory without meaning. The children will also learn The Lord's Prayer song and how they can sing the prayer to God as a form of praise.

Our Advent season was busy, fun and meaningful. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped keep Christ in Christmas at our birthday party for Jesus, M&M gathering, children's musical, and the prayer mission for military men and woman.

January Birthdays:

Charlie Mitchell 1/18, Mary Kate Muntz 1/18, Anna Muntz 1/24, David Felsenthal 1/21



Children's Musical



Birthday Party for Jesus



Decorating Mary Jane Schnack's memorial tree with animal-friendly decorations made by the M&M partners.



**Children's Musical at St. Matthew
December 15th**

**Bell Choir
December 1st**



Special Music at St. Matthew during December



Choir Cantata December 8th

**A Mostly Marimba Holiday
Performed December 23rd by Chris Dan-
deles, Shelley May Hutchison, Kathy
Kastner, and Ben Wahlund**



Marian Park Christmas Sharing

THANK YOU to everyone who so generously gave beautiful gifts, wonderful donations and precious time. Marian Park Christmas Sharing was a great success this year. As a congregation we raised \$1,670, which allowed us to give generous grocery gift cards to the families and seniors. You shopped for 90 people!!!!!! The breakdown is as follows: 30 Senior Citizens, 17 families (49 individuals), 2 Bridge Community Families that St. Matthew sponsors (5 individuals), and 1 World Relief Family that St. Matthew sponsors (6 individuals). Thank you to our wonderful drivers who delivered gifts directly to their recipients: Kenna Anderson, Brian Anderson, Leah Kulzewski, John Kulzewski, Alex Alavi, John Adams, Jeannine Adams, and Susan Wold. Thank you also to Alex Alavi, Darcy Holland, and Tony Kresl for their help along the way! There is a poster board with pictures and Thank You cards from the gift recipients in the narthex. I invite you to take a look at the wonderful change and happiness you are bringing to those in our community. Thank you again! -Andrea DiOrio



NOVEL APPROACHES

The novel to be approached in January is “The Lowland” by Jhumpa Lahiri. Two brothers bound by tragedy. A fiercely brilliant woman haunted by her past. A country torn by revolution. A love that lasts long past death. An extraordinary new novel, set in both India and America.

The date: Friday, January 24th, 2014 at 7:30 pm

The place: Char & Bob Cooper, 422 W. Evergreen, Wheaton.

Everyone is welcome. Please join us for lively discussion, food and fellowship.



One Holy Night

If you are interested in purchasing the 2013 updated version of “One Holy Night,” which includes these photos of our Sunday School children, please contact Susan Wold.



Mission Trip

The Costa Rica trip is planned for **July 6th - July 13th, 2014**. We will be building a house in San Jose this year. This will provide the group an opportunity to learn about the people of Costa Rica. After working hard all week we will have a chance to do a little sightseeing. There will be a meeting on Sunday, **January 12th, 2014** after church. If you have any questions please email Julie Schubert at tijjr7@att.net.

FAMILY CAMP

Rooms for Family Camp from July 20th - 26th at YMCA of the Rockies outside of Estes Park, Colorado, are filling up. We need to finalize our reservations by **January 12th**! There is an opportunity, however, to reserve rooms with a small non-refundable deposit, if you are still unsure and need more time. If you have any interest, please see Sam or John Kouns, Aimee Legatzke, Mark Hutchison, Barb Evans, or Hi Baird.



Men's Fellowship is planning a visit to a local Buddhist temple in January. All adults in the congregation will be invited. Details will be announced later.

Join Us on an Adventure

We have a fantastic group of your church friends planning on traveling to Italy on **June 16th** for a Pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi, and Florence. We also have room for more to join us. The trip is a rare opportunity to travel with fun people you know and create an experience you will never forget. The trip includes a bit of everything: prayer and spiritual renewal, the world's greatest art, delicious food and remarkable wines, music and festivals, the beauty of the outdoors and some of humanity's greatest historical sites. Best of all, you are with a group of people you love. Call Pastor Allen at (630)441-5962 or email miltonallenmothershed@gmail.com for more information.

Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

Mark your calendars for 6:30 p.m. on **January 20th** and plan to attend the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration. The evening, with gospel music and recognition of scholarship students, will feature an address by Pastor Corey B. Brooks, Sr. from New Beginnings Church of Chicago. Pastor Brooks is widely known as the "Rooftop Pastor." The event will be held at Hammerschmidt Chapel, Elmhurst College. Pastor Allen will take part in the service, as will Becca Staton. The evening will leave you singing and inspired. Don't miss it! Questions: Call Carol Honeywell (630) 665-8451.



And now, for something completely different...

The poem for January, from Linda Leinweber, in Wheaton for the holidays.

On the Ineffable Inspiration of the Holy Spirit
by Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg (1633-1694)

*You unseen lightning flash, you darkly radiant light,
you power that's heart-infused, incomprehensible
being!*

*Something divine within my spirit had its being
That stirs and spurs me. I sense a curious light.*

*Never by its own power the soul is thus alight.
It was a miracle-wind, a spirit, a creative being.
The eternal power of breath, prime origin of being
That in me kindled for himself this heaven-flaring light.*

*You mirror-spectrum-glance, you many-colored gleam!
You glitter to and fro, are incomprehensibly clear;
In truth's own sunlight the spirit-dove-flights gleam.*

*The God-stirred pool has also been troubled clear!
First on the spirit sun reflecting it casts its gleam.
The moon; then turns about, and earthward, too, is clear.*



I found this lovely poem, translated from the German, in *World Poetry*, edited by Katharine Washburn and John S. Major, one of the few poetry books that I did not ship to Kazakhstan. Von Greiffenberg was a baroque poet of a noble family in Austria. The family encountered difficulties when they converted to Lutheranism at a time when religious tolerance was not the order of the day, so she eventually migrated to Nuremberg, where she lived most of her life. Many of her verses delve into a mystical personal relationship to God.