

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH

5873 N. Dean Road  
Orlando, FL 32817

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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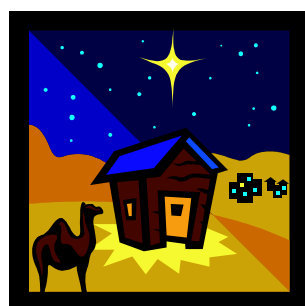
ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH

PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR:

### CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S WORSHIP

Christmas Day Combined Service at 9:00 a.m.

New Year's Day Combined Service at 9:00 a.m.



### CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

4:30 p.m. — Special Music offered by our Children

5:00 p.m. — Children's Pageant &  
Family Christmas Eve Eucharist

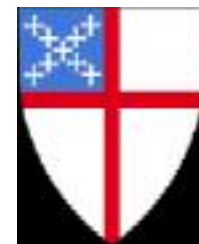
8:00 p.m. — Festival Choral Eucharist

### ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting is January 22 beginning about 11:45 a.m.

This is a very important meeting that will last about an hour.

Please join us for it!



ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## A VIEW FROM ST. MATTHEW'S

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2011



### RECTOR'S MESSAGE

So, what is Christmas, really? We all know that Christmas is the celebration of the incarnation of God in Jesus the Christ, the self-revelation of God to the world in human form for the reconciliation of humanity to God's self.

So what is Christmas about? Why is it so important to the Church? Perhaps for an answer, we need to return to scripture in its raw form – without all the little additives we give to the stories to make them more entertaining and easier to understand. At the heart of the nativity stories in both Matthew and Luke, is a simple fact: amid the struggle of a people who had longed for 500 years for God to act in the world in new ways, God came to be with them in a way that totally identified himself with us, as human beings. Amid the most unlikely of circumstances, to the most unlikely of people, God became a human being to reconcile all peoples to himself (2 Cor 5:18-19).

Personally, I think that the true meaning of Christmas is about possibility. Possibility in the midst of the impossible. It is not the kind of possibility that comes from a confidence in our own skill, knowledge, ability, or a positive mental attitude. It is possibility that comes solely from the fact that God is God, and that he is the kind of God who comes into our own human existence to reveal himself and call us to himself. It is a possibility that is so surprising at its birth that we are caught unaware, and so are left with wonder at the simplicity of its expression in this infant child. It is a possibility that is easily symbolized by a helpless infant that has nothing of its own by which to survive; yet an infant that, because he is Immanuel, God with us, will forever change the world and all humanity. It is this same God who has promised to be with us, with his people, with the church and with us individually, as we live as his people in the world.

Christmas is about hope, but not hope as "wishful thinking." It is hope coming in flesh, hope incarnate. A hope that can be held, a hope that expresses a reality that will live beyond endings and beyond death itself. It is the hope, the possibility, that springs from impossible and insignificant beginnings, infused with the power of God through the Holy Spirit. This is Christmas!



### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

The newsletter deadline is the 15th of each month.

Article or information submissions can be sent to: [stmatthews@earthlink.net](mailto:stmatthews@earthlink.net) in Word document form.

Article or information submissions can be placed in the newsletter folder outside the parish administrator's office.

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## THE SEASON OF ADVENT

### Advent – a short introduction

Christmas has increasingly become a holiday cut off from its purpose of celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, important for Christians to recapture the season of Advent as a time for preparing for Christmas. Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming." Advent begins the church year, starting four Sundays before Christmas. The season of Advent has been set aside as a time of preparation for Christmas since at least the last half of the 6th century. Advent is a time for self-examination and asking for forgiveness as the church is preparing for Christ's Second Coming even as it prepares for Christmas. This is why the color of the season is deep blue or purple (which is used for marking Lent), the season of self-examination preceding Easter. The third week in Advent is set aside as more celebratory than the others. Rose is the color of this week rather than deep blue or purple to mark the week, which is why a rose candle is used in Advent wreaths.

### Some Advent Traditions

#### **An Advent Calendar**

Another way to mark the days in Advent is to use an Advent calendar. These calendars usually have a door to open each night to reveal a picture, a scripture quotation, or an object (such as a small toy or candy). The days of Advent vary each year, so store-bought Advent calendars usually have 24 doors, one for each day in December leading up to Christmas.



#### **An Advent Wreath**

The circle of the wreath and the evergreens that make it up both signify God's endless mercy and undying love. Three deep blue or purple candles and one rose-colored (pink) candle are evenly spaced around the wreath. There is one larger white candle in the center of the wreath. The wreath can be as simple as four candle holders with greenery laid around them to form a circle. However, some traditions attach meanings to using different greens, each signifying another aspect of the season. These include: Ivy—to remind us of the human spirit clinging to God's strength. Cedar—to remind us of eternal life available to all through Christ. Holly—to remind us of Jesus' crown of thorns. Bay—to remind us of victory over sin and

death. Each week, an additional candle is lit. As the light grows brighter, we are reminded that the Light of the World will soon arrive in glory. The central white candle is to be larger (often thicker) than the four in the wreath. This relatively recent addition to the Advent wreath signifies the Light of Christ and is first lit on Christmas Eve and relit on Christmas Day and burns throughout the Christmas season.

### The Twelve Days of Christmas

The **Twelve Days of Christmas** is probably the most misunderstood part of the church year among Christians who are not part of liturgical church traditions. Contrary to much popular belief, these are not the twelve days *before* Christmas, but are the twelve days from Christmas until the beginning of Epiphany (January 6th; the 12 days count from December 25th until January 5th).

The popular song *The Twelve Days of Christmas* is usually seen as simply a nonsense song for children with secular origins. However, some have suggested that it is a song of Christian instruction, perhaps dating to the 16th century religious wars in England, with hidden references to the basic teachings of the Christian Faith. They contend that it was a mnemonic device to teach the catechism to youngsters. The "true love" mentioned in the song is not an earthly suitor, but refers to God. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptized person who is part of the Christian Faith. Each of the "days" represents some aspect of the Christian faith that was important for children to learn.

However, many have questioned the historical accuracy of this origin of the song *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. While some have tried to debunk this as an "urban myth", others have tried to deal with this account of the song's origin in the name of historical accuracy. There is little "hard" evidence available either way. Some church historians affirm this account as basically accurate, while others point out apparent historical and logical discrepancies. Regardless of what is actually true, it is easy fun to think of the Twelve Days of Christmas in a way to teach some of the basics of Christian faith. As a trivia question... what are the Christian symbols one can attach to the days in the songs (NO cheating...see if you can figure them out).

## OUTREACH

### A WHITE CHRISTMAS

Dear St. Matthew's:

A huge thank you to everyone that helped support our Feed the Flock Program and for your financial assistance in helping to restock the Hope Food Pantry and the East Learning Community Food Bank. They were both in serious need of restocking their supplies and this need will continue through- out the holiday season. That said, please continue to bring in non-perishable food items.



In addition to food, the Outreach Committee will also be sponsoring our annual "White Christmas" clothing drive. I spoke with the social workers at the East Learning Community and they shared with me that they are in desperate need of warm clothing and underwear, particularly for elementary aged students. They do not care if the clothing is new or used and they especially asked for jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, pajamas and warm long pants. If your children have outgrown any of these items, particularly in sizes 5-14, we need them.

This drive will last until Sunday, December 15th. Check through your children's closets and see what they have outgrown. Of course, direct financial donations are also encouraged. Thank you again for all that you do for the needy families in Seminole and Orange counties.

Sylvia Boyd

### THE JOURNEY OF A SHOE BOX



The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to needy children around the world and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The Greatest Journey is the exciting follow-up discipleship program used by Operation Christmas Child to help children become faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Operation Christmas Child, the unique international project of Samaritan's Purse, has delivered more than 85 million gift-filled shoe boxes to needy boys and girls in 138 countries worldwide since 1993.

St. Matthews is sending 103 shoe boxes this year thanks to your generous donations. Thanks so much for your support; we are giving many children around the world their first gift. Please remember to pray for these kids as they learn about Jesus and throughout the year. I collect shoe box items all year long so if you come across a great sale please let me know. And if you want to buy things throughout the year I will gladly collect them from you. I can be reached at 407-341-2691 or [fldear6@yahoo.com](mailto:fldear6@yahoo.com) or you can send me a message on Facebook. Thanks again for all you do to share your love for Christ to those in need. This is why St. Matthews is so special to me.

Debbi Dearolph

National Restaurants	
Applebee's \$10.0 @8.0%	Mim's Cafe \$10.0 @8.0%
Applebee's \$25.0 @8.0%	Mim's Cafe \$25.0 @8.0%
Arby's National \$10.0 @8.0%	O'Charley's \$10.0 @13.0%
Arby's National \$50.0 @8.0%	O'Charley's \$25.0 @13.0%
Bahama Breeze \$10.0 @9.0%	Olive Garden \$10.0 @9.0%
Bahama Breeze \$25.0 @9.0%	Olive Garden \$25.0 @9.0%
Baskin Robbins \$2.0 @9.0%	Outback Steakhouse \$25.0 @9.0%
Bonafish Grill \$25.0 @9.0%	P.F. Chang's China Bistro \$25.0 @7.0%
Boston Market \$10.0 @12.0%	Panera Bread \$10.0 @9.0%
Bruster's Ice Cream \$5.0 @8.0%	Papa John's \$10.0 @8.0%
Buca di Beppo \$25.0 @8.0%	Papa John's \$50.0 @8.0%
Burger King \$10.0 @4.0%	Pizza Hut \$10.0 @8.0%
Burger King \$50.0 @4.0%	Qdoba Mexican Grill \$25.0 @7.0%
California Pizza Kitchen \$10.0 @6.0%	Quiznos \$10.0 @10.5%
Carabba's Italian Grill \$25.0 @9.0%	Rainforest Cafe \$25.0 @10.0%
Chart House \$25.0 @10.0%	Rainforest Cafe \$50.0 @10.0%
Chart House \$50.0 @10.0%	Red Lobster \$10.0 @9.0%
Chesapeake Factory \$25.0 @5.0%	Red Lobster \$10.0 @9.0%
Chili's \$10.0 @11.0%	Red Lobster \$25.0 @9.0%
Chili's \$25.0 @11.0%	Red Lobster \$25.0 @9.0%
Chipotle \$10.0 @10.0%	Red Lobster \$50.0 @9.0%
Cold Stone Creamery \$10.0 @6.0%	Ruby Tuesday's \$10.0 @8.0%
Copper River Grill \$25.0 @8.0%	Ruby Tuesday's \$25.0 @8.0%
Cracker Barrel \$10.0 @9.0%	Seasons 52 \$10.0 @9.0%
Cracker Barrel \$25.0 @9.0%	Seasons 52 \$25.0 @9.0%
Dave & Buster's \$25.0 @14.0%	Seasons 52 \$50.0 @9.0%
Denny's \$10.0 @7.0%	Smokey Bones \$10.0 @7.0%
Dominio's \$10.0 @8.0%	Starbucks \$5.0 @7.0%
Dominio's \$50.0 @8.0%	Starbucks \$10.0 @7.0%
Dunkin Donuts \$10.0 @4.0%	Starbucks \$25.0 @7.0%
Hard Rock Cafe \$25.0 @8.0%	Steak 'n Shake \$10.0 @8.0%
Honey Baked Ham \$25.0 @15.0%	Subway \$10.0 @3.0%
IHOP \$25.0 @8.0%	Subway \$50.0 @3.0%
KFC \$5.0 @9.0%	Sweet Tomatoes/Souplantation \$25.0 @9.0%
Landry's Gift Card \$25.0 @10.0%	Texas Roadhouse \$10.0 @8.0%
Landry's Gift Card \$50.0 @10.0%	The Capital Grille \$10.0 @9.0%
LongHorn Steakhouse \$10.0 @9.0%	The Capital Grille \$25.0 @9.0%
LongHorn Steakhouse \$25.0 @9.0%	The Capital Grille \$50.0 @9.0%
LongHorn Steakhouse \$50.0 @9.0%	T-Rex \$25.0 @10.0%
Macaroni Grill \$10.0 @11.0%	T-Rex \$50.0 @10.0%
Macaroni Grill \$25.0 @11.0%	Wendy's \$10.0 @4.0%
Maggiano's Little Italy \$10.0 @11.0%	Wendy's \$25.0 @4.0%
Maggiano's Little Italy \$25.0 @11.0%	
National Retailers	
Aeropostale \$25.0 @8.0%	Marshalls \$25.0 @7.0%
American Eagle Outfitters \$25.0 @8.0%	Men's Warehouse \$25.0 @7.0%
Banana Republic \$25.0 @14.0%	Michael's \$25.0 @4.0%
Best Pro Shops \$25.0 @8.0%	Motherhood Maternity Outlet \$25.0 @9.0%
Bath & Body Works \$10.0 @18.0%	Nike Gift Card \$25.0 @13.0%
Bath & Body Works \$25.0 @18.0%	Old Navy \$25.0 @14.0%
Bealls \$25.0 @8.0%	Payless Shoes \$10.0 @13.0%
Bed, Bath & Beyond \$25.0 @6.0%	PetSmart \$25.0 @4.0%
Brooks Brothers \$25.0 @14.0%	Pier 1 Imports \$25.0 @9.0%
Cabela's \$25.0 @11.0%	Pottery Barn \$25.0 @6.0%
Catherines \$25.0 @7.0%	RJF Stores \$25.0 @6.0%
Champs Sports Store \$25.0 @9.0%	ROSS Dress For Less \$25.0 @9.0%
Clare's \$10.0 @9.0%	Sam's Club \$25.0 @2.0%
Crate and Barrel \$25.0 @4.0%	Sam's Club \$100.0 @2.0%
Dillard's \$25.0 @9.0%	Sears \$25.0 @7.0%
Disney Stores \$25.0 @2.0%	Sears \$100.0 @7.0%
Disney Stores \$100.0 @2.0%	Sears \$250.0 @7.0%
Disney Stores \$500.0 @2.0%	Sports Authority \$25.0 @6.0%
Disney Stores \$1000.0 @2.0%	T.J. Maxx \$25.0 @7.0%
Express \$25.0 @11.0%	Talbots \$25.0 @9.0%
Finishline \$25.0 @11.0%	Tanger Outlet Stores \$25.0 @4.0%
Foot Locker \$25.0 @9.0%	Target \$25.0 @2.0%
Gap Tn-Card \$25.0 @14.0%	Target \$100.0 @2.0%
Hallmark \$25.0 @5.0%	Target \$250.0 @2.0%
HomeGoods \$25.0 @7.0%	Ulta Cosmetics and Salons \$25.0 @4.0%
JCPenney \$25.0 @7.0%	Visa \$25.0 @2.0%
JCPenney \$100.0 @7.0%	Visa \$50.0 @2.0%
Jo Ann Fabrics \$20.0 @6.0%	Walmart \$10.0 @2.0%
Jo Ann Fabrics \$50.0 @6.0%	Walmart \$25.0 @2.0%
Kohl's \$25.0 @4.0%	Walmart \$50.0 @2.0%
Kohl's \$100.0 @4.0%	Walmart \$100.0 @2.0%
Lane Bryant \$25.0 @7.0%	Walmart \$250.0 @2.0%
Macy's \$25.0 @10.0%	Williams-Sonoma \$25.0 @8.0%
Macy's \$100.0 @10.0%	
Office Supplies	
Office Depot \$25.0 @3.0%	Staples \$25.0 @5.0%
Office Max \$25.0 @4.0%	Staples \$100.0 @5.0%
Pharmacy/Drug Stores	
CVS \$25.0 @4.0%	Walgreen's \$25.0 @2.0%
CVS \$100.0 @4.0%	Walgreen's \$100.0 @2.0%
<b>Grand Total: \$</b>	
<b>Comments/Notes/Special Instructions:</b>	
We can not be responsible for lost or stolen certificates. Please sign below in the appropriate box to indicate your preference for delivery.	
<b>Send Home with Child:</b>	<b>Pick Up in Office:</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



## TREASURER'S REPORT

FROM: Hugh Fisher  
SUBJECT: October 2011 Financial Report

freeze spending for anything not essential to maintaining operations or under contract for the next month.

**Income:**  
Income for the month of October was \$16,949. This was under budget by \$4,051, which is again disappointing. Pledge income was under budget by \$234 at \$7,383. Non-pledge contributions were down at \$2,906 under budget. Year-to-date we are \$8,794 under our revenue projections. Third quarter statements have been distributed.

**Fund Balances:**  
The checking account shows a balance of \$30,375 in designated funds. This includes \$4,832 in the Renovation Fund 2011.

We have \$19,271 in the operating fund.  
The Money Market Account has a balance of \$38,003.

**Expenses:**  
Total expenses for the month were \$22,826, over budget by \$3,132. A significant portion of that is early expenditure of budgeted funds. Year-to-date we are showing expenses as \$4,429 over budget. Based on expenses being over budget and revenue under, I have requested that we

It is very important that pledge cards be returned by early December. This is a key part in our budget preparation for next year. Thanks to those who have already returned theirs.

## FROM THE PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

As stipulated by IRS regulations, all 2011 contributions need to be in the office or post-marked no later than December 31, 2011 in order to appear on your 2011 contribution statement. Contribution statements will be mailed as soon as possible in January, 2011. Please note that there are several ways to contribute to the church and increase your tax benefits for 2011. Check with your financial advisor or accountant for further details.

New 2012 contribution envelopes will be ready and in the church foyer to be picked up beginning Sunday, December 18th. *You must request 2012 envelopes on your pledge cards.* If you wish, they can be mailed out to you, just notify Sharon in the office. For any questions, please contact Sharon in the office, 407-657-9199 or sharonbailey@earthlink.net.



NORTH ROCK ESCB

**VESTRY NEWS**

**November Vestry Meeting Summary**

In January, members of St. Matthew's will elect 6 new vestry members to serve a 3-year term. If parishioners feel called to this important form of service, they should talk with a vestry member or to Sonia.

The Cottage Meetings were a great source of input and fellowship; with 71 families attending a meeting

Pledge cards for the 2012 church year should be turned in by Sunday, December 4, in order to give the Finance Committee time enough to thoughtfully prepare the 2012 church budget, which will be reviewed with the parish at our **January 22 Annual Meeting**.

Bids are in process now to repair the Sanctuary roof, which was damaged in the recent unnamed storm.

A new Bible Study class will begin on Thursday, January 5 at 9 a.m. led by Sonia, and will continue on successive Thursdays. For those who prefer evenings, Bible Study will also be held on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The evening sessions are brown-bag events.

On Wednesday, January 11, we will start a Contemplative/Taize worship service, to be held 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month, at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Paige Hinton, Vestry Secretary

**VESTRY ELECTIONS  
( Coming in January)**

Yes, you read the word "elections." It has been the custom of St. Matthew's to come upon its Vestry members by "drawing lots." While this is not necessarily a bad system, it is not the system set up in the diocesan or national church canons. The Episcopal Church is a church with a democratic form of leadership and election from among the people is an essential part of that.

We will be electing five (5) folks from among us to serve on the Vestry. One of them will be completing an unexpired term for two years and the other four will serve a normal term of three years.

The Nominating Committee for the Vestry consists of Jim Lott, Greg Hess, Ann Groendaal, Syl-

via Boyd and Debbi Dearolph (these are the people finishing their Vestry terms). These folks are ready to speak to any of you who would be willing to serve God through the church in this way. They will also be approaching people to ask them to consider serving on the Vestry. We would like to have at least eight or nine people offer themselves for this ministry.

At the Annual Meeting, everyone who is 16 years old and older and who consider themselves to be members of the church will be voting for our next set of leaders. We will have pictures and short profiles of each person ready in the January newsletter so that you may get to know them.

If you have any questions about this change, please do speak with Pastor Sonia.

**UnitedScrip Gift Cards - How does this work??**

Pick up an order form at church or in the newsletter. Take a look at this form and think about your week or the month ahead. Where will you shop this week? Where will you eat out? What essentials will you need? Does the car need gas? Who has a birthday party coming up? Who needs shoes? What groceries do you need? Is it time to begin some Christmas shopping?

Fill out the form and return it with a check to cover the items to the offering plate or to the church office or even Pastor Sonia. The orders taken on Sunday will be filled by the next Sunday. Most

often, the cards will be available in the office on Thursday in case you need them for the upcoming weekend. How do the Youth Groups benefit?

UnitedScrip purchases millions of dollars worth of gift cards (SCRIP) yearly from national vendors. Our church purchases these same cards from UnitedScrip at a discount. We in turn offer this scrip to our members and friends at face value. You receive dollar for dollar the value of cash for these items. Example: \$50 of a gas debit card will purchase \$50 of gas at any of its pumps, nationwide. IT'S THAT SIMPLE!

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church					
In Partnership with www.unitedscrip.com					
Family Name	Payment:	Check:	Cash:		
UnitedScrip Certificate Form by Category 2011					
Certificate	Qty	Total	Certificate	Qty	Total
Automobile Care/Gas Cards					
Advance Auto Parts \$25.0 @7.0%			Marathon \$100.0 @3.0%		
AutoZone \$25.0 @9.0%			Shell Gas\$25.0 @2.5%		
BP Gas Stations \$50.0 @1.5%			Shell Gas\$50.0 @2.5%		
Chevron Gas \$50.0 @1.5%			Speedway Gas \$50.0 @4.0%		
Marathon \$25.0 @3.0%			Sunoco \$50.0 @1.5%		
Jiffy Lube \$25.0 @12.0%			Walmart Gas Card \$50.0 @2.0%		
Book Stores					
Barnes & Noble Bookstores \$5.0 @9.0%			Books-A-Million \$15.0 @8.0%		
Barnes & Noble Bookstores \$10.0 @9.0%			Family Christian Stores \$25.0 @9.0%		
Barnes & Noble Bookstores \$25.0 @9.0%					
Catalog/On-line Stores					
Amazon.com \$25.0 @5.0%			Omaha Steaks \$25.0 @10.0%		
Amazon.com \$50.0 @5.0%			Omaha Steaks \$50.0 @10.0%		
Amazon.com \$100.0 @5.0%			Overstock.com \$25.0 @9.0%		
Eddie Bauer \$25.0 @7.0%			Shutterfly \$25.0 @14.0%		
L.L. Bean \$25.0 @18.0%			Walmart.com \$25.0 @2.0%		
Lands' End \$25.0 @14.0%			Walmart.com \$100.0 @2.0%		
Lands' End \$100.0 @14.0%					
Children/Teen Specialty Stores					
Babies-R-Us \$10.0 @1.5%			Kids-R-Us \$10.0 @1.5%		
Babies-R-Us \$25.0 @1.5%			Kids-R-Us \$25.0 @1.5%		
Build-A-Bear Workshop \$25.0 @8.0%			Toys-R-Us \$10.0 @1.5%		
Children's Place, The \$25.0 @14.0%			Toys-R-Us \$25.0 @1.5%		
Gymboree \$25.0 @13.0%					
Electronic/Technology					
Best Buy \$25.0 @3.0%			iTunes \$15.0 @5.0%		
Best Buy \$100.0 @3.0%			iTunes \$25.0 @5.0%		
Dell \$100.0 @4.0%					
Home Improvement					
Home Depot\$10.0 @4.0%			Lowe's Home Improvement\$25.0 @4.0%		
Home Depot\$25.0 @4.0%			Lowe's Home Improvement\$50.0 @4.0%		
Home Depot\$50.0 @4.0%			Lowe's Home Improvement\$100.0 @4.0%		
Home Depot\$100.0 @4.0%					
Hotels/Travel					
Disney Cruise Lines \$25.0 @2.0%			Walt Disney World Resort - Florida \$25.0 @2.0%		
Disney Cruise Lines \$100.0 @2.0%			Walt Disney World Resort - Florida \$100.0 @2.0%		
Movie/Entertainment					
AMC Theatres/Loew's \$9.5 @15.0%			Regal Entertainment \$10.0 @8.0%		
AMC Theatres/Loew's \$25.0 @7.0%			Regal/United Artist Single Use Ticket \$8.5 @11.0%		
GameStop \$25.0 @3.0%					

## ST. MATTHEW'S CHILDREN



Our November Armored for God was a blast as we continued to build our armor by making the "belt of truth". We also talked about the

things that we are thankful for...take a peek, our "thankful turkeys" are hanging in the parish hall!

### Something special is coming....

Our December Armored for God will be about giving! We are taking our singing voices on the road and blessing local nursing home residents in song!! I am so excited for this and I know the kids will love it! This will be a great way for us to practice our songs for the pageant and give the gift of music to others. Tentatively reserve December 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00PM! More details to come...Be watching your email and the St Matthew's Facebook page for updates!



*If you are not receiving regular Sunday School related emails, please contact Jen Latterell at [jenalatterell@aol.com](mailto:jenalatterell@aol.com) so that we can add you to the contact list! We do not want you to miss any of our fun and exciting events!*

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

If your children would like to participate in our Annual Christmas Pageant, please send an email to [jenalatterell@aol.com](mailto:jenalatterell@aol.com) as soon as possible. We have lots of parts available for everyone! Some are speaking parts and all children will be singing. We have practice each week during the 10:15a.m. service and the pageant is Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> during the 5:00p.m. service.

Calling all performers!!! If you or your child are interested in performing for the pre pageant music on December 24th, please email Jen Latterell at [jenalatterell@aol.com](mailto:jenalatterell@aol.com) so that we can add you to the program! Looking forward to seeing you at the pageant!! Pre-pageant music will begin at 4:30 prior to the start of the 5:00p.m. service.



## Pledge Card Practicality and You

That little 4 x 5 card which could seem like "not a big deal" is quite important to St. Matthew's as we enter 2012.

The covenant you make with God about your giving back to God is a personal and prayerful matter. The "first fruits" of your labor and how you choose to share them is solely about your commitment to God and how you intend to live it out. In every sense, your pledge is truly a spiritual matter!

And, along with being a spiritual matter between you and God, it is a practical matter for St. Matthew's.

The Vestry purposefully entered 2011 with a \$35,000 deficit budget...they knew we would spend \$35,000 more than we had in committed to us in pledged income or regular giving by those who don't sign pledge cards. There was money in reserves to cover that \$35,000.

**However, 2012 is very different.** We do not have an extra \$35,000 sitting in an account to supplement our budget. In fact, with some major repairs looming (the roof leaks, the sanctuary ceiling water damage, and the air conditioners, just to name a few) we need to be very aware of what cash is sitting in reserve accounts.



## THE CONTEMPLATIVE CORNER

*Brought to you each month by your spiritual directors, Jan Rogers & Louise Samuelson*

### The Annunciation to Mary Read: Luke 1:26-38

Whether or not we ever experience physical pregnancy, God calls us to give birth to the holy in our lives. Therefore, we are sisters (and brothers) of Mary and share in her sacred creativity. Like Mary, God invites us to be "co-creators" as we continually seek to bring Christ into the world. Dorri Sherrill, in her sermon "The Annunciation," writes, "God invites us all to be God-bearers, to reveal God's love and grace, to embody God to the world.... We are invited to continue the incarnation, which was not a once-and-for-all event, but rather a process; something that continues still, a continual coming of God in Christ to be present to us."

God *invites* us. And, like Mary, we choose. The call to bear Christ in us does not ask for passive acceptance, for passivity will not provide the strength to survive the birth. The call does not demand conformity of unquestioning submission, because, as Mary discovered, agreeing to bear the Christ often requires stepping outside societal boundaries and asking, "How can this be?" In the shadows of Mary's assent to "let it be" lies the possibility that she—or we—can choose to let it *not* be. God leaves the choosing to us.

Co-creating with God, being in partnership with God, bringing forth the Christ...what do these images mean?

How do these images challenge, affirm, disturb, or welcome you?

Jan L. Richardson, *Sacred Journeys-*  
*A Woman's Book of Daily Prayer*, page 26



## December Birthdays

Steve Duranceau	December 1	Amanda Dearolph	December 13
Peg Cordell	December 3	Armando Alvarez	December 15
Danielle Brunson	December 5	Ethan Hornbeck	December 15
Richard Lashley	December 6	Mark Matlock	December 15
John Hitt	December 7	Amber Tyrie	December 15
Hilary Newman	December 7	Corey Davis	December 17
Pete Rahman	December 7	Kashandra Holiday	December 17
Don Hershisier	December 9	Dan Dearolph	December 27
Vicki Brown	December 10	Martha Hitt	December 27
Kayla Sinjakovic	December 10	Richard Wheatley	December 28
Don Johnson	December 11	Janet Charran	December 30
Glenn Futrell	December 12	Jeff DeRosier	December 31
Chris Rahman	December 12		

## December Anniversaries

Hershisier, Don & Theresa	December 1
Palmer, Ian & Doslyn	December 14
Lashley, Richard & Yvonne	December 21
Hitt, John & Martha	December 23
Cross, Conrad & Debbie	December 27



## PASTORAL CARE AND PRAYER CHAIN

**Pastoral care, prayer chain and prayer list ministries** are continuing to provide prayers and/or services to those from the parish who are in need. We can only provide if we are made aware of needs. If you know of someone who needs prayers or visits from the pastoral care team, please call or e-mail the office, 407-657-9199, [stmatthews@earthlink.net](mailto:stmatthews@earthlink.net); or Ann Groenendaal at 407-365-8751, ([groenena@bellsouth.net](mailto:groenena@bellsouth.net)), or Bill Young at 407-282-0436, ([walyoung@bellsouth.net](mailto:walyoung@bellsouth.net)).

There are also cards provided in the pews for prayer requests. Fill them out and place in the collection plates.

We also provide meals for people who have had recent surgeries or births. We help those who need a ride to church or to medical appointments.

We take communion to the homebound. We are available for home or hospital visits to those who need someone to talk with, pray with, or just sit with.

We also like to hear and give thanks for good news, so pass that along as well.

**We are Praying for:** Rachael Patterson, Sara Johnson Borner, Laurie Hernandez, Margaret Collison, Karen & Rodica Sears, Sgt. J. Morgan Klingshin, D.C. Poplin, Gordon Bentley, Penny Morales, Delmer Morgan, Bruce Layman, Tyler Ferguson, Eric Martin, Jim and Terri Buchanan, and Penny Miller.

**Individual Healing Prayers** are available following each service. Please approach the altar rail where Deacon Dave will be glad to pray with you.

### High School Mission Trip July 1 – 7 New York City

We will join other teen volunteers to prepare and serve meals at soup kitchens; provide recreational activities and companionship to young, formerly homeless children; distribute food and supplies at food pantries; socialize and bring snacks to people in drop-in centers.

Our teams will go a different service site each day so that, by the end of the week, the team has seen a variety of different services provided in the city and different neighborhoods in that city. On one evening, we prepare a meal for homeless people who sleep in a shelter nearby. The shelter guests and our team come together for a relaxing dinner and social time. This relatively brief service project gives us a common experience and begins to break down stereotypes about homeless people.

One afternoon we will meet with a resource person, someone involved in direct service to homeless and hungry people or advocacy. In sharing frontline experiences and reflections, the speaker draws the students into a discussion on the causes of homelessness and hunger, society's response to homelessness, and the students own feelings about these issues.

After our work is done each day, we will take much needed showers, power naps, and then explore and enjoy the city.

The total cost of the trip is \$500 and **NO** additional money will be needed by the students unless they choose to purchase souvenirs. Deposits of \$125 are due Nov. 30, Jan. 30, March 30, and May 30.

In order to participate in the trip, students must attend at least half of our Youth Group Outreach events and a retreat weekend such as Happening or the Spring Retreat. The student and family must participate in fund raising activities.



### Middle School Mission Trip July 29 – Aug 3 To Savannah GA

While Savannah is a lovely Southern city with much to

brag about, its rapidly growing population has contributed to city struggles such as poverty and homelessness. Our group will reach out to this community through partnering with local ministries to serve the homeless, the elderly and children and assist the city with house painting and repair projects. We will join with youth from all over the southeast to carry out our work, to worship, and to play. It will be an amazing week of self discovery and faith building!

On our way home, we'll stop to play at Summer Waves and celebrate a job well done!

The total cost for the trip is \$325. This covers **everything** – no additional money (even spending money) will be needed. Deposits of \$82 are due on Nov. 30, Jan. 30, March 30, and May 30.

In order to participate in the Mission Trip, a student must attend at least half of our normal youth group meetings and a retreat weekend such as New Beginnings or Spring Retreat. The student and family must participate in fund raising activities.



YOUTH GROUP DINNER TEAM

**YOUTH NEWS**

**High School (grades 9-12)**



The High School Youth rose early on November 13<sup>th</sup> (5 a.m.) to head down to Compassion Corner and help set up, serve, and clean up breakfast for about 200 homeless people. It was a morning we will all remember for a long

time. The morning started off with "Circle Time" of the volunteers for a few directions, a devotion, and prayer. We got organized and the homeless folks were welcomed into the fellowship hall of 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian downtown. We served gallons coffee with lots of sugar and cream and then joined in powerful worship. After our spirits were fed, we served oatmeal and overflowing plates of breakfast food. More gallons of coffee and milk were served. Then, we helped transform this dining hall into a worship space for 500 (that is a lot of folding chairs). It was a pretty amazing morning --- being fed while we fed others!

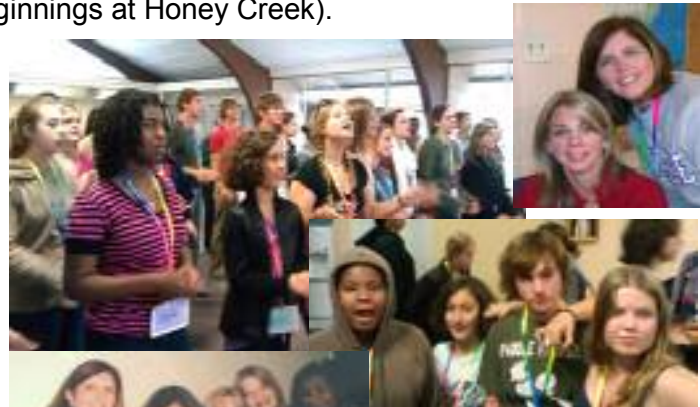


**DECEMBER 11** – We will meet at church at 3:00 p.m. to go to the Hubbard House at ORMC where we will be making and serving dinner to the residents. Designed and built as a "home-away-from-home" for families of patients from outside the Orlando area, the Hubbard House can help restore a sense of calm during troubled times of illness or injury.



**Middle School (grades 6-8)**

The older youth of the Middle School Youth Group enjoyed a wonderful retreat weekend away (New Beginnings at Honey Creek).



All of our middle school youth have spent the other Sundays of the month learning to knit and then knitting bears to give to children who are victims of HIV/AIDS through the Mother Bear project. Thankfully, we had some great help from older members of our congregation who sat one-on-one with our students to teach them this skill. Pastor Sonia is going to have to take remedial classes, we are afraid! This is a unique outreach project shared with us by one of our members.



**DECEMBER 4**, 6:00p.m. – 7:30p.m. – Advent Tradition Construction

**DECEMBER 11**, 12noon – 1:30p.m. – Advent Bingo with Prizes

**DECEMBER 18 – JAN 1** - No meetings...enjoy the holidays with your family!

**PARISH LIFE**



Saint Matthew's Church  
 Holiday Homecoming Celebration  
 Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 4:00pm to 7:00pm

*Look what we have planned for you!!!*

An "Italian" feast for the adults – Free!

Pizza, popcorn and a movie for the little guys – Free!

Family holiday photo opportunity – Free!

12 Decorative Christmas Tins filled with homemade cookies will be given as door prizes – Free!

*Join us for this holiday celebration with your Saint Matthew's Family.  
 The greatest gift you can give is your presence.*

And for those of you who are still shopping for that perfect gift....  
 We will raffle off gift baskets and hold a small silent auction that includes:

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Materials and labor to paint a room            | 3 homemade pumpkin rolls |
| An original painting by Mary Alice Kephart     | Christmas quilt          |
| "A trip to Tallahassee" lottery ticket tree    |                          |
| "Brookstone" digital picture show              |                          |
| Dinner for 6 with celebrity chef "Pasta" Sonia |                          |

*Proceeds will be used to offset the cost of this event.*

**Successful Cottage Meetings at St. Matthew's**

We had a great season of Cottage Meetings! I wish I could personally thank each of you who were able to attend, but alas, that would be impossible. The things I learned about people and about the joys, frustrations, and hopes for St. Matthew's will be inspiring for a long time to come. Your input is already being implemented in small ways and in significant ways. You'll begin to see this in the coming weeks, if you haven't already. If you were unable to attend a meeting and would like to share feedback with us about

our church, please do so by making an appointment with Pastor Sonia or speaking to one of the Vestry members.

One of the significant uses of the feedback from the Cottage Meetings is the basis for the development of the 2012 budget for the church. The rough draft of the budget was developed from early feedback and the Finance Committee will take the summaries of all the meetings to form the proposed budget. After we have received the pledge cards for 2012, the Finance Committee will then fund the budget based on the needs of the church and the desires of the membership.

### Saying "So long...."

We are very thankful for the devotion of our Interim Minister of Music, Richard Mangiagli. Richard has been a great blessing to St. Matthew's through his faithful service among us since November 2010. He came to St. Matthew's when we were in a difficult spot and provided leadership to both the choir and the congregation so that we might continue to praise God through music.

On Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate Richard's time among us as our Interim Minister of Music. While he will be with us through Christmas Day, it seems better fitting for our thanksgiving not to get lost in the Christmas celebrations.

So, please do plan to be with us on December 18<sup>th</sup> as we give thanks to God for Richard's presence among us and as we wish him well in the work God will call him to next.

### Your "Pew" Neighborhood

Do You Know Your Neighborhood?

Because of the layout of our sanctuary, it is difficult to know all the people who join you for worship on Sunday mornings....but you can get to know those who sit around you in your "pew" neighborhood.

If you don't know someone's name, introduce yourself. It is the responsibility of each of us to reach out to another! Don't be afraid to engage in conversation! Ask the obvious questions like do they have children, where do they work, what do they like to do, what do they do at St. Matthew's, etc.

If someone is missing for more than a Sunday, let the ushers or Pastor Sonia know.

### Bible Studies to begin in January

#### EVENING STUDY

On 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday nights (starting Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>), we'll have a Brown Bag Bible Study beginning at 6:30p.m. Bring your dinner or snack and come ready for a great discussion based on the Gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday. We'll look at it in context of when it was written and how it might impact our world today. No preparation for this Study is necessary!

#### MORNING STUDY

Beginning January 5<sup>th</sup>, Thursday mornings at 9a.m., join us for an hour of exploration of the Bible. We'll conquer a book at a time starting with Paul's letters -- putting the writing in context, discussing what the impact of such writings were for the people who received them, and seeking ways which they impact our lives today.

### New Mid-Week Service Coming Soon!

- “ Have you longed to have another opportunity, mid-week, to worship God with your church family?
- “ Do Sunday's not really work for you, so you would like another option for worship?
- “ Does your spirit hunger for space & quiet in the midst of your busy and noisy life where you can listen to God's voice?

If so..... You will be glad to hear that in the New Year, St. Matthew's will be offering a mid-week, Contemplative Worship Service. Of course, like everything we do at St. Matthew's, childcare will be provided. Keep your eyes and ears open as the New Year comes around to find out more details.

### Chili Cook-Off, Hay Rides, and Mischief



Saturday, December, 17th, 5:30p.m.

If you are a chef, bring your favorite chili to share!

Wiener Roast & S'mores & Drinks provided.

@ Al & Jan Johnson's (15227 Lake Pickett Rd.) 407-247-9842

Directions: from St. Matthew's, turn left out of the church, left onto University, right onto Alafaya, right on McCulloch, at the 2nd light turn right onto Lockwood (this turns into N. Tanner); at the dead end, turn left, go about 1.5 miles and you'll see the property. The gate will be open with a sign or balloons. Go to the end of the driveway and find the 3rd barn. You'll find the festivities!

### Minister of Music Called

For the past six months, the Music Search Committee has diligently been praying and working to discern and call the next Minister of Music for St. Matthew's. We are very pleased to announce that as the result of this thorough and excellent work, Elizabeth (Libby) Sellers will join us beginning in January 2012 as our Minister of Music. Libby comes to us with a rich background in the music and liturgy of the Episcopal Church. She has directed choirs of adults and children in churches, in schools, and in the community. She is a fine organist, an amazing pianist, and a superb vocalist. She is well versed in traditional hymnody, contemporary music, and other styles as well. She has a great deal of energy for building on our strengths and helping us to grow in our musical worship.



### Christmas Flowers

We are entering the Christmas season now and once again will be asking for volunteers to assist us with decorating the church. We will begin with hanging of the greens, then preparing the flowers and then preparing arrangements for our beautiful Christmas Eve service.

Please contact me if you can help, as it is such a wonderful part of the Christmas celebration. Below is our schedule, so if you can help on one of these dates, even if it is only an hour or so, it would be

greatly appreciated. We can all take pride in how magnificent the church will look with all the beautiful flowers.

Thurs - 12/22 9:00 a.m.

Prep flowers and begin arranging greens in containers.

Fri - 12/23 8:00 a.m.

Begin preparing arranging flowers, decorate Christmas trees.

Blessings, Debby Wunderly  
407/920-7827

### **CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S WORSHIP**

Christmas Day Combined Service at 9a.m.

New Year's Day Combined Service at 9a.m.