

St. Matthew's Messenger

Summer 2010

On Saturday, June 5th, over thirty people gathered at St. Matthew's for "*A Day of Prayer, Forgiveness and Reconciliation*". Luther Hall was beautifully decorated with basins of water on each table. Each basin had a floating candle as a "wet" reminder of the waters of Baptism and the Light of Christ. There was a lovely meditation and prayer station on the stage of the hall with a gurgling water fountain next to a wood carving of the word "Love", with a crucifix laid at its base – THE symbol of God's extraordinary love for the world. As the people registered they each chose a stone to carry with them throughout the day. The symbolism of the stone would be revealed at the Eucharist.

After Morning Prayer in the church, we gathered again in Luther Hall for the presentation by Dr. Leonard Jazwiecki (Dr. "Jaz"). Dr. "Jaz" is a highly trained and experienced psychotherapist and a committed Christian man. Though in his practice he treats believers and nonbelievers alike, it is his personal conviction that human beings are all created in relationship to God and that the spiritual dimension of being human cannot be ignored when treating the whole person. In his practice he combines -- to the extent that his patients are open and receptive -- a Christian understanding of what it means to be human with modern psychotherapeutic practice.

He began his presentation by telling the remarkable story of his own life. He came from a dysfunctional family with an abusive and alcoholic father. He loved to paint and wanted to be an artist. Because of a tragic and freak accident with the chemicals he used to mix his paint, at age sixteen he was blinded. His doctors gave him no hope that he would ever see again. He recounted to us the rage that he had towards God, towards life, and towards himself.

Before he went blind he had read the "Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius Loyola – one of the great spiritual and devotional writings of the church. Out of sheer desperation he began to pray and practice the exercises again. He began to experience an all-consuming and overwhelming love which he could not explain. Though he lived in darkness, he experienced a most intense and beautiful light. He began to let go of his anger at God, life, and himself. He began to accept himself because of the love that he was experiencing. As a result of this Divine Love, he was able to love himself and accept his blindness. And then a miracle occurred. Inexplicably, he regained his sight! It was a mystery no doctor could explain. But it was most certainly connected to the experience of the Love of God.

In Dr. "Jaz's" story is the universal story of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We love, because He first loved us. We forgive, because He first forgave us. We can love ourselves, because we have experienced God's personal love for us. We can love our enemies, because God loved us when we were yet ungodly sinners and his enemies. We can turn our cheeks, because Jesus Christ turned his cheek on the cross for us when he said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The thrust of his presentation was that before we can love and forgive others and be reconciled to them, we must be able to love and forgive ourselves. Jesus even said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." We must let go of the burden of resentment, hatred and anger that we carry around in our souls – a burden which causes much unhappiness, depression and physical ailment. Yes! Even physical ailment! Dr. "Jaz" pointed out that there is much scientific evidence to show that body and soul are intimately connected. This is something biblical religion has always understood. Finally, the deeper truth is that we can never love ourselves – and therefore others -- unless we have experienced God's love for us. Forgiveness, reconciliation and the ability to love is all about God – the God who IS love!

Dr. "Jaz" concluded his presentation with a remarkable exercise called the "Jesus Smile" exercise. He turned off the lights and told us to close our eyes. He then took us on a "journey" encouraging us, and talking us into, seeing and smiling at Jesus in the many parts of our body. The purpose of the exercise became clear. By seeing and loving Christ in ourselves, we can more easily love ourselves. One came out of this exercise with a profound sense of peace and self acceptance.

The day concluded with Confession with Individual Absolution and Eucharist. When the people came forward for Individual Absolution they were instructed to bring the stones which they had been carrying all day and then place them in the basket next to the Baptismal Font after Absolution. The symbolism then became clear.

Forgiveness, reconciliation and love are at the core of the Christian life. We not only talked about these grace-filled realities, but we EXPERIENCED them! This is what the Christian life is all about. Have a great summer!

Pr. Eric Mathsen†



A burglar broke into a house one night. He shined his flashlight around, looking for valuables when a voice in the dark said, "Jesus is watching you."

He nearly jumped out of his skin, clicked his flashlight off and froze. When he heard nothing more after a bit, he shook his head and continued. Just as he pulled the stereo out so he could disconnect the wires, clear as a bell he heard, 'Jesus is watching you.' Freaked out, he shined his light around frantically, looking for the source of the voice. Finally, in the corner of the room, his flashlight beam came to a rest on a parrot.

"Did you say that?" he hissed at the parrot. "Yep!" the parrot confessed, then squawked, "I'm just trying to warn you that Jesus is watching you." The burglar relaxed. "Warn me, huh? Who in the world are you?" "Moses," replied the bird. "Moses?" the burglar laughed. "What kind of people would name a bird Moses?" "The kind of people that would name a Rottweiler Jesus..."

My wife sat down on the couch next to me as I was flipping the channels. She asked, 'What's on TV?' I said, 'Dust.' And then the fight started...

When our lawn mower broke and wouldn't run, my wife kept hinting to me that I should get it fixed. But, somehow I always had something else to take care of first, the truck, the car, playing golf. Always something was more important to me.

Finally she thought of a clever way to make her point. When I arrived home one day, I found her seated in the tall grass, busily snipping away with a tiny pair of sewing scissors.

I watched silently for a short time and then went into the house. I was gone only a minute, and when I came out again I handed her a toothbrush. I said, 'When you finish cutting the grass, you might as well sweep the driveway.'

The doctors say I will walk again, but I will always have a limp.

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car. His father said he'd make a deal with his son: 'You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car.' The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer, and they agreed on it. After about six weeks his father said, 'Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut. The boy said, 'You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair...and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair.' To this his father replied, 'Did you also notice they walked everywhere they went?'

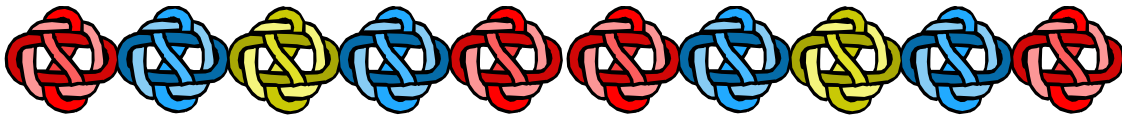
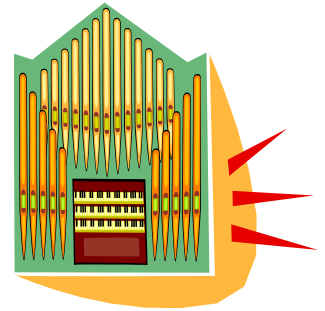
From the Organ Bench.....

During the summer months soloists, small ensembles and our **Summer Volunteer Choir** will enhance our worship life. Everyone from the congregation is encouraged to participate in **Summer Volunteer Choir** on Sundays July 11th and August 8th.

Simply come to the Choir Room on those Sundays to rehearse a simple piece at 9:00 AM to prepare for our worship at 9:30 AM.

Please see me if you have any questions.

Jean Boehler
Director of Music



The W.E.L.C.A. Corner

The Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (W.E.L.C.A.) St. Matthew's Chapter meets the first Saturday of the month in Luther Hall at 10:30 am. We are a service-oriented group, serving the congregation and the community at large. But we also have a lot of fun and fellowship. Membership is open to any woman at St. Matthew's. (Sorry, gentlemen!)

It was another busy year for the WELCA ladies! We sponsored a Bake Sale with all proceeds going to Karen and David Drysdale to help them pay for Karen's medical expenses.

We also held a Christmas Boutique every Sunday in December after worship. We had lovely assortment of religious themed items as stocking stuffers!

We also sponsored "The Tappettes" on April 18th. This was a fun event as one of our own members, Sharon Field, was dancing with the group! Sharon has just become their new choreographer!

In June, we had our annual Spaghetti Dinner with an added treat: a silent auction! The proceeds from the silent auction were again earmarked for the Drysdale's medical expenses.

WELCA has also made generous contributions to the Carillon Fund and the Seminarian Fund.

We are planning our Annual Year-End Luncheon for June 26th at the Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle.

Annual Church Picnic

Sunday, September 12th, 2010

11:00 AM

Bradhurst House

Hawthorne, NY



Please make a note on your calendars that on Sunday, September 12th, at 11:00 AM, we will gather for our annual church picnic at Bradhurst House, Hawthorne, NY. There will be no outdoor worship. Holy Eucharist will be celebrated in the church at 9:30 AM. Please dress casually and bring a favorite dessert or salad to share and a folding chair. Beverages will be supplied by the Picnic Committee. Anyone needing a ride, please be at the church parking lot by 10:30 AM.

Driving Directions:

Take I-287 West to Exit 3 (Sprain Brook Parkway North).

Take Exit 3 and proceed north on the Sprain Brook Parkway.

Take the 2nd exit for the Westchester Medical Center /Rt. 100/Hawthorne

At the end of the ramp, turn right and go to the traffic light.

At the traffic light, turn left.

Proceed to the first left into the parking lot for Bradhurst House.

IMPORTANT!!!

Summer Worship Schedule:



July 4th, 2010 thru September 12th, 2010

**Holy Eucharist begins at 9:30 am!!
Fellowship will follow at 10:30 am on the
2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.**

Please make a note of this time change!

We look forward to seeing you!

**We will return to 10:30 am Worship on
Sunday, September 19th.**



"They're putting choruses in hymnbooks and projecting hymns onto the screen. It's getting so I can't remember what I'm not supposed to like!"



"And this petition requests changing 'sinner' to 'person who is morally challenged.' "

CONFIRMATION

MAY 23, 2010

This year Rachel Claire Mathsen was confirmed in her faith.
We congratulate her and wish her God's many blessings!



Pr. Mathsen, Rachel Mathsen & Diedra Turner (Rachel's godmother)

Taps 'n Treats!!

On Sunday, April 18th, the Tappettes performed for a standing-room only crowd in Luther Hall at St. Matthew's. These gals are a senior performing group who range from 61 - 86 years of age and have been dancing together throughout Westchester County for over 20 years! The performance was organized by the WELCA group of the church. At this performance the group's founder, Selma Rothstein, passed the leadership torch over to Sharon Field. The group still performs and will continue to do so with Ms. Field as their new choreographer.



The Tappettes



Sharon Field and Selma Rothstein

“PK” Appreciation Day!

On Sunday, May 16th a “first-of-its-kind” event took place at St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church: “PK Appreciation Day”. (For those who don’t know, “PK” is the abbreviation for “Pastor’s Kid”.) Luther Hall was decorated from floor to ceiling and we had an old-fashioned cake and ice cream celebration! Chris and Claire Mathsen were quite surprised. They knew that *something* was up, but never expected such a grand reception!



To the People of St. Matthew's:

All we can say is "Thank you" from the bottom of our hearts! Your kindness and generosity to us on May 16th at the "PK Appreciation Day" was overwhelming. We sort of knew that something was going on, but we really had no idea what it was!! Your kind words and gift of money to us were so greatly appreciated. We just hope that you know how much we also love you all. Though we are getting older and getting involved in planning for college (Chris) and a new high school (Claire) we will always think of you as our "church family".

Again, thank you!!

*Sincerely,
Chris & Claire*

