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December 2018

Double Vision

Every year many churches repeat the annual Advent battle. On one side of the battle line is a liturgist (typically the pastor, but not infrequently the music minister). On the other side is pretty much everyone else. Where the Advent battle rages, the points in contention are things like: will there be Christmas carols sung during Advent? Will the church be decorated with anything other than candles and an Advent wreath prior to Christmas Eve? Will there be a Christmas tree in the sanctuary?

In seminary, professors of liturgy and sacramental theology act as the recruiting officers, trying to enlist as many green clergy recruits as they can. I half-heartedly signed up in 1984, but I surrendered and made my own private peace with carols before Christmas, trees in the sanctuary, and the whole business about ten minutes into my first Advent battle as a new pastor.

It's true that I'm weak and cowardly and have no taste for conflict, but that's not the only reason for my early defection from the ranks of the Advent purists. I think that there is actually a good reason to allow the anticipation of Christmas during Advent. This season is a time for double vision. We look towards the end of history and the fulfillment of God's promises, and we also look to the birth of Jesus as the inauguration of the kingdom of God on earth.

All of the Advent scriptures are oriented toward the coming of the Lord's Anointed who will fulfill all the promises of God and who will establish a reign of perfect justice and unending peace. We know that the fulfillment of these promises is still to come. Jesus was born and lived among us and yet perfect peace did not break out. Injustice, cruelty, hatred and oppression still afflict humankind. We look to the Second Advent – Christ's glorious return – to resolve all the tension between the promises of God's reign of peace and our present imperfect reality.

And yet we know that in Bethlehem, the birth of a baby to a peasant girl was the pivot point of history. We rejoice for God's decisive act in coming among us and dwelling with us, not in tents woven of cloth but in the tabernacle of flesh and blood. Because the dwelling place of God is with mortals, we not only hope for peace and justice at the end of history, but we know that God is working in us with every step we take toward forgiveness and mercy to transform the world into God's perfect reign of justice and peace.

Advent is a time of longing for the fulfillment of the petition that Jesus taught us to pray: that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven. Advent is also a time of preparation to celebrate the beginning of the fulfillment of that promise in the birth of Jesus. Because God in Christ has come to us, we know that God's promised Kingdom is dawning.

Throughout Advent we prepare to celebrate Emmanuel: God with us. We prepare to celebrate Jesus as Emmanuel. We also prepare our hearts to be the dwelling place of God so that we too might be Emmanuel: God's presence in us shaping our lives, our history, and our planet in conformity to God's gracious will.

See you in Church! Pastor Lynn



ADVENT
BIBLE STUDY
 Wednesdays
 Nov. 28–Dec. 19

CHRISTMAS
PAGEANT
 Sunday, Dec. 23
 Birthday Party for Jesus

Christmas Eve
 Candlelight &
 Communion Service
 7:00pm



Sunday's Participants in **DECEMBER**

Altar Guild

Shirley Haberman,
Robin Federmann

Lay Readers

12/2 Linda Velazquez
12/9 Jacob Zdrojewski
12/16 Gail Vara
12/23 Christmas Program
12/24 Beth Stormer
12/30 Dave Burger

Ushers—Team 1

Andy Federmann
Donn Mergenhagen
Clayton Errington
Jeff Rich
Kurt Rich
Don McMillan
Ken Kruszka

Greeters & Coffee Hosts

12/2 LaDonna Painter
12/9 Robynn & Jeff Rich
12/16 Joy & Dave Burger
12/23 Dawn Chmielowiec
12/30 LaDonna Painter

Thank you to the December coffee hour hosts and greeters.

If you would like to host a coffee hour please see or call me at 715-7310.

-LaDonna Painter

WEEKLY WORSHIP AT ST. MATTHEW'S

Saturday Services of Word & Sacrament - 4:00pm

Sunday morning worship service—10:30am;

Children's Sunday School begins after Children's Time



Christmas PAGEANT December 23

Happy
Birthday
Jesus

Children of all ages are invited to join in a birthday party for Jesus on Sunday, December 23, following the Sunday School Christmas pageant. We will have a birthday cake and celebrate the birthday of Jesus in the Fellowship Hall. Please plan to attend the party and celebrate the real reason for the season.

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
(Isaiah 9:6)*



Party Crashers

When was the last time you went to a wedding reception uninvited? How about the last time you crashed a birthday party? Anniversary? Graduation?

I didn't think so. Very few people would have the nerve to show up at a party uninvited. Sure, the buffet looks awfully good and the band makes us want to get out on the dance floor, but we stay outside the banquet room and make our way to a table in the main dining room. We know we don't belong in the banquet room at someone else's party. If we showed up we would be interlopers, imposing on the friends and family who do belong there.

Imagine you have never been to St. Matthew's church. Let's say you are interested in what's happening at our family celebration, that a part of you longs to be included. But still, you might be more than a little hesitant to come on in. You might feel like a party crasher.

You have family members, friends, and associates who have never been invited to join the party we celebrate each (Saturday and) Sunday when we are invited to feast on God's Word and eat at the Lord's Table. The Advent/Christmas season is a splendid opportunity to extend the invitation. Invite someone to come to church. Help someone to connect with the real message of Christmas that can't be found in the malls and at holiday cocktail parties.

Family & Friends of:
 Jane Cotton, James Walsh,
 Geraldine Zimmer (Rebecca Wightman's
 mother)
 Jean Roth
 Jane Duewiger
 Marilyn Mergenhagen



Kathee Simon
 Gayle Woodruff
 Karen Kaitanowski
 Vera & Lena (Andy Federmann's sisters)
 Those affected by natural disasters
 Military personnel & veterans
 Those who are homebound

*If you would like prayer requests listed here, please contact the church office or fill out a Prayer Request Form.
 If you have a more immediate prayer concern, text Michelle Kemp at 245-1692 or call Dolly Errington at 823-6210 to begin the prayer chain.*

Happy Birthday!

- 12/5 Jeff Rich
- 12/11 Beth Stormer
- 12/15 Ron Larson
- 12/28 Chelsea Kanaley
- 12/28 Sy LaVett
- 12/28 Casey Nistor

Anniversary Blessings

- Brian & Kim Snyder**
 December 6, 2014
- Phil & Gail Vara**
 December 9, 1995

New Members of 2018!

Tom & Dawn Chmielowiec
 4490 Rushford Drive, Hamburg
 14075
 716-646-5845
 Email: nuknee14@yahoo.com



We would like to Thank everyone for the wonderful warm welcome to your church, our family is excited to share in the word of God and grow in His Love with your family at St. Matthew's.
 Tom & Dawn

Rev. Marna Pritchard
 4141 Chatham Drive
 Hamburg, NY 14075
 716-474-7298
 Email: pastorm822@aol.com

Being led to rejoin the family of faith that is St. Matthew's UCC is a blessing. As the called pastor at First Congregational UCC In Niagara Falls, I was expected to become a member of the congregation in which I served. That was fifteen years ago. This church family has always been warm and welcoming when I was a visitor at worship or special events. We anticipate it will be "home" for our family once again.

Karen Cuddihy is proud to announce the birth of her first grandchild, Emily Grace Michael, born October 29 to Sarah (Cuddihy) and William Michael. Great-grandparents are Shirley & Ken Haberman.



Activity Group

Thursday,
 December 20
 12noon



LUNCHEON

All are welcome to this special catered turkey dinner on December 20. The cost for full-time members is \$5; guests \$10.

See Shirley Haberman or Donna Lee Melberg by December 13 to purchase your ticket.



I am thankful for my loving and caring church family. I have been blessed and encouraged by your prayers, cards and visits during my rehab. I am settling in to Eden Heights, so many changes!
 Love to you all,
 Jean Roth

Eden Heights of Eden, 4071 Hardt Rd, Apt 403, Eden, NY 14057
 716-575-4469

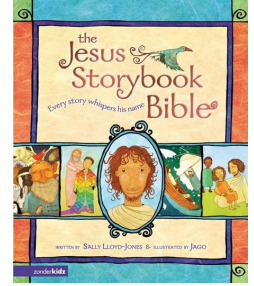


Decorating for Christmas!

Everyone is welcome to help decorate the church for Christmas on Saturday, December 1, at 10:00am.



The Christmas tree is up and gift tags are on! This year, we have been asked to gift the children with a special bible, "The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name" and we have already purchased 40 bibles. If you'd like to give one of these bibles to a child at Cornerstone, please take the Snoopy tag from the tree and place it with \$6.30 per bible in the big box under the tree. (Cash will be accepted; checks should be written to St. Matthew's-note Cornerstone.)



There are also tags for PJs or slippers for adults or children. Cornerstone will not turn anything away, so if you have additional items you'd like to give, please make sure they are unwrapped and put under the tree by December 10. Contact Joann Ertel if you have any questions (684-6808).



Friends of Night People Outreach

Serving our neighbors in Buffalo a warm meal on a cold night. Come be part of this monthly outreach ministry on the first Wednesday of the month; next one is December 5.

The sign-up sheet to volunteer is on the landing.

We are also collecting warm winter clothing/ coats/mittens/socks/ scarves for those who go to Friends of Night People.

The collection bins are in the classroom closest to the Fellowship Hall.



Join Us for
Caroling

CIA Christmas Caroling

Sunday, Dec. 9, meet at 6:30pm at
Hamburg Presbyterian Church

Another fun-filled evening of singing, fellowship and refreshments! Everyone is invited to participate! We meet at Hamburg Presbyterian Church to get our assigned group home, gather our cookies & apple cider, and warm up our vocal chords; then groups of 10-15 people will go to their assigned location to sing and fellowship with the residents.

Anyone interested in attending, or have any questions, should contact Sue Rich to sign up to carol and/ or to bake cookies (648-5785 or goat2rich@verizon.net).

Come share Christmas joy!



There are many behind-the-scenes volunteers at St. Matthew's called "Caregivers" who give of their time and talents to help friends in the congregation by making/delivering a meal; driving to a doctor's appointment; cleaning house/ yard and other ways. The Caregiver Volunteer Form lists ways we support those in need.

If you'd like to volunteer to do any of the above, please fill out the form and give to LaDonna Painter (or put in mailbox #67).

Also, if you or someone you know could use help by receiving a meal or ride, etc., please contact LaDonna, Pastor Lynn or the church office.

150th Anniversary Luncheon

October 28, 2018

It all started with a meeting in February with the Anniversary Committee. There were a lot of meetings, calls to the caterer Mike Aurello, time to organize the pictures, The Sun article, the Vineyard write-up, the monthly Anniversary memory moments, Jay Rich and Perry Kaupa's memories, sending letters to former pastors to see if they would be able to make it to the luncheon, getting the pictures organized and labeled (Marilyn and I even enjoyed one evening with the music of the Folk band in the Fellowship Hall while we labeled the pictures—we were singing and doing some chair dancing that night!); and of course waiting for the football schedule to come out so we could pick a date that would be best for everyone attending without a lot of traffic. That is how it all came to be....



We sold 111 tickets and we had a full house enjoying a lovely dinner with Ken Haberman's floral centerpieces to brighten up the tables and the donations from Gateway printing of the tickets and napkins. Brenda Carver made the beautiful bookmark keepsakes and Michelle helped with the programs and getting the word out about the luncheon.

Beth Stormer, President of Church Council, was our Master of Ceremonies starting with the unveiling of our beautiful wall hangings by Gail Burdick and Gail Vara, and then Pam Kaznica's reflection of memories in her heartfelt poem she recited to us.



Thank you to Norm and the Choir for their special music, but we at St. Matthew's are use to our choir being special every Sunday. Thank you to Norm for his time writing the music for the special anthem.



Thank you to Andy Federmann, Bill Hamm, Donn Mergenhausen, and Dave Kaznica for their help with the water issues and clean-up. Thank you to Bob Velazquez for catching some memorable moments thru his camera lens. These pictures will be shared and enjoyed by everyone for years, adding to our history.

We enjoyed a nice program of former and guest pastors celebrating their memories with everyone and Rev. Lynn Morgan closing out the program with his memories and starting with his own memories with St. Matthew's way back when.



It was a very nice dinner for fellowship and celebration of St. Matthew's 150 years of sharing Christ's love.

Thank you to everyone that made the day an enjoyable time for everyone. And a special thank you to my committee.

LaDonna Painter, Com. Chair



Anniversary Committee:
Marilyn Rich, Perry Kaupa, Steve Jankowski, Brenda Carver, Darlene Nistor, & Rev. Lynn Morgan

How beautiful a day can be when kindness touches it.
Thank You

Dear Pastor Lynn and Members of the 150th Anniversary Committee,

The Celebration was a very moving and healing experience. Great is God's faithfulness. Nothing can separate us from God's love or God's mercy which awaits us everyday. If we forget that God's grace welcomes us.

Thank you St. Matthew's for many great memories and blessings.

*With much love,
Dick Hemann*



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Pastor:

Rev. Lynn R. Morgan
 716-866-3085
 pastor@stmattsucc.org

Director of Music:

Norman D. Wahl
 716-440-5176
 normwahl@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:

Michelle Kemp
 716-245-1692 (h)
 716-649-1532 (o)
 Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 9am-2pm, Thurs. 9-12, & Fri. 12:30-3:30pm

Custodians:

David & Pamela Kaznica
 716-913-6927 (David)
 716-913-7504 (Pamela)



A Christmas blessing

May you have
 the *Spirit of Christmas*,
 which is PEACE,
 the *Gladness of Christmas*,
 which is HOPE,
 the *Heart of Christmas*,
 which is LOVE,
 the *Gift of Christmas*,
 which is CHRIST.

—Ada Hendricks

Christmas Gift Idea

F.I.R.S.T. certificates are a great gift idea for your hairstylist, paper person, mailperson, neighbor, babysitter, family member or even keep one for yourself.

These \$10 certificates are accepted at many of our local independent restaurants.

Purchase these for \$10 each and use them like a \$10 bill at participating local restaurants.

See Steve or Nancy Jankowski at church or call 826-0012.



Your special gift to this UCC offering provides direct financial assistance to individual retired UCC clergy. It helps remind these Veterans of the Cross that they have not been forgotten and the Church is grateful for their service. This special offering will be taken up on Sunday, December 23.

How the proceeds from the SHED benefited us!

During the last several months, our income from the St. Pauly shed donations made it possible for us to purchase 15 new padded arm chairs for the counting/meeting room.

This room now looks very business like and uniform. THANK YOU and our community for all your clothing donations that made this purchase possible.

You are welcome to stop in and see these very comfortable chairs!

Thanks again & God Bless,

Nancy Jankowski

Average Attendance: October (including Saturday Services): 80

Giving Last Month: October 2018

	General/Building	Mission
Total Received:	\$17,923	\$ 238
Monthly Goal:	\$16,125	\$1,148

Note: November figures will be in next month's Messenger.



The November-December issue is available on the table in the Narthex. There are special Advent scriptures and devotions.



December 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Decorating the Church 10am Service of Word & Sacrament 4pm
2 1 st Sunday of Advent Worship & Children's Sunday School 10:30am	3	4 Folk Group 6:30pm	5 AA 10:30am Friends of Night People Outreach ADVENT Bible Study 7pm	6 Praise Band 6pm Choir 7pm OA 7:30pm	7	8 Service of Word & Sacrament 4pm
9 2 nd Sunday of Advent Worship & Children's Sunday School 10:30am CIA Christmas Caroling 6:30pm	10	11 Folk Group 6:30pm	12 AA 10:30am ADVENT Bible Study 7pm	13 Praise Band 6pm Choir 7pm	14	15 Service of Word & Sacrament 4pm
16 3 rd Sunday of Advent Worship & Children's Sunday School 10:30am	17	18 Folk Group 6:30pm	19 AA 10:30am ADVENT Bible Study 7pm	20 ACTIVITY GRP Christmas Lunch 12noon Praise Band 6pm Choir 7pm	21	22 Service of Word & Sacrament 4pm
23 4 th Sunday of Advent Worship 10:30am Christmas Pageant Birthday Party for Jesus 11:30am	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion 7pm	25 Merry Christmas	26 AA 10:30am No Bible Study	27	28	29 Service of Word & Sacrament 4pm
30 Worship Service 10:30am	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>					

Michelle out of the office 24-28

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ
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Hamburg, NY 14075



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Our church building is fully accessible.

No matter where you are in your life's journey, you are welcome here!