



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church  
496 Lisbon Street / P.O. Box 879  
Lisbon, Maine 04250

## **News from the Pews**

### **September 2008**

Pastor's Letter

Book Club

Missions & Ministries

Adult Sunday School

Treasurer's Update

Garage Band

Women's Group

Operation Christmas  
Child



# Pastor's Letter

Dear Beloved in Christ,

When I came to St. Matthew's just over a year ago, I was genuinely enthusiastic to participate in your ongoing ministry. First impressions have given way to a deeper reality that only increases my passion for providing pastoral care and sacramental leadership to our community of faith.

Here is where I believe we are today.

St. Matthew's brings together the four main threads of Anglican tradition; Anglo Catholic worship, Evangelical preaching, Charismatic expression and Caring in action.

## **Anglo Catholic Worship**

As members of the Episcopal/Anglican branch of Christianity, our walk with Jesus is enriched by a liturgical form of worship. Our Sunday morning services are the celebration of the Holy Eucharist so that we can know God in the "Reading of the Word" and the "Breaking of the Bread." As our Book of Common Prayer states "The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace."

## **Evangelical Preaching**

St. Matthew's clergy provide Bible-based, Spirit-inspired preaching that connects the brokenness of human lives with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. By making the timeless revealed Word of God relevant to individuals, the Holy Spirit can work in the hearts and minds of those who hear.

## **Charismatic Expression**

St. Matthew's holds itself open to the radical experience of the Holy Spirit's power in our lives. Our services contain joyful expressions of our faith in song, particularly in the Platform of Praise. Every service includes an opportunity for public witnessing to the power of God working in our lives and healing prayer so that our walks with Jesus are supported and encouraged by the testimony and prayers of our sisters and brothers in Christ.

## **Caring in Action**

St. Matthew's is a founding member of the Lisbon Area Christian Outreach (LACO) organization. LACO operates a food pantry, distributes clothing, and provides other services in our community. Our members volunteer at the Trinity Jubilee Center in Lewiston and the Mid-Coast Hunger Prevention Program in Brunswick. Each year the parish tithes 10% of our income directly to outreach and missions as a minimum commitment to make Jesus' love visible in our world.

St. Matthew's members can participate in over 70 ministry opportunities that embrace liturgical, teaching, and outreach missions. Join us as we proclaim the saving power of Jesus Christ to our community.

Your Servant in Christ,

Beau +

## **Missions and ministries at St. Matthews**

By The Rev. Beau Wagner

EVANGELISM

SACRAMENTAL LIFE

DISCIPLESHIP

As we start another program year, let us take time to remember that all we do is because of God.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” Matt 28:19 -20a

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has given us a threefold ministry. Go and make disciples, baptize them, teach them. At St. Matthews this translates into Evangelism, Sacramental Life and Discipleship which are under the guidance and accountability of the Rector, Wardens, Vestry and Bishop.

**The Evangelism Committee** oversees St. Matthew's efforts at bringing the Good News of Christ to a lost and broken world. Among other ministries it nurtures the Newcomers committee, run by Mike Adcock, the Direct Evangelism Committee and the Indirect Evangelism committee, chaired by Louise Lord.

**The Sacramental Life Committee** seeks to enhance the spiritual life of the children of God by lifting up specialized avenues of living out our commitment to Jesus. Brian Stowell chairs the Worship Committee, the Rev. Gail White chairs the Vocational Development Committee and Mary Johnston chairs the Pastoral Concerns Committee.

**The Discipleship Committee** creates an environment for ever increasing spiritual growth and depth. Bible Studies, Formation groups (such as the Youth group run by Kelly Bisson), Christian Education Programs (overseen by Teri Bernier), Sunday School (run by Jean Lane) and parish life activities are all designed to teach the followers of the Lord what they need to walk closer with Him.

These divisions aren't perfect. For instance the Sunday Celebration, the Eucharist, is an effective means of grace, an opportunity for evangelism, and a means of spiritual formation.

Please spend some time in prayer seeking your call to ministry. There are actually over 70 possible ways for you to live out your call to ministry here at St. Matthew's. If God puts a call on your heart, please talk with the clergy.

## September Treasurer's Update

Nancy Violette, Treasurer

There is some good news and some bad news concerning our treasury. As you may recall, our original budget projected a deficit of about \$30,000. We saved some money when we refinanced the mortgage and for the most part, people are meeting their pledges. However, our expenses are up considerably due to a long, cold winter and increases in fuel related items. This filters down to many budget lines. As of August 30, we are projecting a year-end deficit of \$15,285. Things will only get worse as the weather gets colder. The only bill that is not paid in full at this point is the diocesan assessment and the deficit is approximately the balance due on that expense. (The assessment is our share of the costs of running the diocese, which includes grants to many churches such as ours. Our grant is \$20,000 from the diocese.)

If you have gotten behind in your pledge over the summer, please try to get caught up as soon as you can. Money is so tight that we need to decide on a weekly basis which bills we can pay, and clearly we are not paying them all. Any increase in giving, whether you have pledged or not, will be very helpful and greatly appreciated.



*Caption: (from left) Deb Calhoun, Grace Anderson, and Judi Dickson at Women's Group Passover Meal held in May that was attended by 22 women. Grace led a Seder that explained what did Jesus do at that "last supper" and what happens at a present Passover meal.*

## **St. Matt's Women's Group fall schedule embraces discipleship, nurtures friendships and helps others**

St. Matthew's Women's Group, open to all women attending the church, creates opportunities to journey through a woman's heart and soul by embracing discipleship, nurturing friendships, and helping others.

The fall schedule begins with a Homecoming Dinner on Sept. 21 at Fuji's in Portland. Organized by Deb Calhoun, this will be an opportunity to spend quality time and try Japanese table side food preparation called "hibachi."

St. Matt's women and their friends are invited Saturday, Nov. 1 at 10 am to the church for an Instructed Eucharist written by Nancy Violette. An Instructed Eucharist means that Father Beau will provide commentary throughout the service, explaining what we've just done, or what we're about to do.

Every service of Christian worship is a drama - a drama in which we enact, proclaim, and participate in the mighty acts of God. We are doing this so that all of us may come to a deeper understanding of our worship and its meaning. This will help us participate with more enthusiasm, understanding, and joy—and ultimately with greater spiritual benefit.

On Saturday, Nov. 22, the St. Matt's Women's group will host over 50 young girls from the community to wrap gifts for Operation Christmas Child. Under the leadership of Leah Gelhar, the Rainbow Girls and Girl Scout troops in the area are collecting items for their shoe boxes. The Women's Group will provide a healthy breakfast and wrapping paper that Saturday morning.



On Saturday, Dec. 6 at 9:30 am, the women of St. Matthew's are invited to take some time to be together in God's presence for an Advent Quiet Morning. Come and be refreshed before being swept up in the activities surrounding Christmas. There will be reflections shared by Louise Lord, as well as times of quiet in prayer, reading, or what you most like to do to experience closeness with the Lord. We will end with lunch (not quiet!).

For more information on any of these activities, contact Mary at the parish office [stmatthews@gwi.net](mailto:stmatthews@gwi.net) or 353-8453.



*Captions: The Shack by William P. Young starts off St. Matthew's Intersection Book Club on Thursday, Sept. 25 at 7 pm.*

## **What happens when a man meets the Trinity in a shack in the woods?**

***Find out at St. Matthew's Intersection Book Club on Sept. 25***

By Allison VanderLinden

Michael W. Smith (the recording artist) says this about *The Shack*: “*The Shack* is the most absorbing work of fiction I've read in many years. My wife and I laughed, cried, and repented of our own lack of faith along the way. *The Shack* will leave you craving for the presence of God.”

*The Shack* is about the heart-wrenching spiritual journey of a middle-aged man named Mackenzie Allen Phillips, called Mack throughout the book, who is a family man with five very wonderful children. The book begins with a tragedy that happens to someone in Mack's family, which comes to be called The Great Sadness.

Mack is invited to a shack in the woods where he is confronted by a theophany of God in three persons. Through his interaction with these people and another tragedy that happens to him, he is able to embrace God, his family and life again.

The purpose of this fictional story is to help people come to know God personally and His deep love for them. It explores questions like: Why does God allow evil to happen in the world? How can a human being forgive someone who does evil to him or a family member?

William Young probes these questions and wrestles with the answers in a very profound and non-conventional way. If you want to know God more deeply and have spiritual and philosophical sensitivities, then this book is for you!

A grass roots movement catapulted *The Shack* from obscurity to its current top spot on The New York Times Paperback Trade Fiction list as of Sept. 8. Self published by two pastors in California in 2007, the book was released with little publicity and depended heavily on word-of-mouth.

The Intersection Book Club meets every Thursday night at St. Matthew's from 7-8 pm. Newcomers always welcome—drop by one week or every week!

Information on ordering books is available at the parish office (353-8453).

***St. Matthew's Intersection Book Club: Where Christian faith meets today's culture***

## Adult Sunday School

We would like to invite each of you to the Adult Sunday School class meeting between services beginning Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>. At that time we will discuss what your desires would be for the class. We are wondering about teaching a video series by RC Sproul on the Holiness of God or studying Hebrews or using as our text a very small guide book about every book in the Bible. Bring your recommendations and hopefully we can settle on a topic for the fall.

We are committed to Adult Sunday School because we think it is very important to study the Bible on a regular basis in order to grow in our love relationships with Jesus. He loves us soooooo much and wants us to know Him, love Him and serve Him with our lives. We hope that you will pray about joining us and making a commitment for the fall. Give it try. Come and

go as you like, but the more you come, the more you will grow in Him! See you in the library on Sunday. (The library is off to the left of the front of the sanctuary.)

In His embrace, David and Allison VanderLinden

**Do you know someone who wants to play in a Christian youth band?**



*Caption: The St. Matthew's Garage Band on June 8, 2008. The group is now open to all youth and teens.*

St. Matthew's Youth Band is now open to any youth or teen that can read music and bring an instrument. Musicians from the worship teams will help teach the Garage Band.

Practices are 9:30 am until 10 am in the church's band room which is two doors down from the Fellowship Hall. Not sure where that is? Just follow the sounds of **Ode to Joy**.

## **Operation Christmas Child 2008**



This year at Saint Matthew's the Women's Group will be assisting with our Operation Christmas Child mission through an exciting community outreach to local girls organizations. On Saturday November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9AM, the Women's Group will be hosting an Operation Christmas Child wrapping/packing day. They will be providing breakfast and wrapping paper for local girl scout troops, Rainbow girls, and Saint Matthew's Sunday School children. The children will be wrapping and packing their shoeboxes which will then be delivered to our regional drop-off location on Sunday, Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*Operation Christmas Child brings joy and hope to children in desperate situations around the world through gift-filled shoe boxes and the Good News of God's love. Since 1993, more than 61*

*million shoe boxes have been packed, shipped, and delivered across the globe. People of all ages can be involved in this simple, hands-on missions project while focusing on the true meaning of Christmas—Jesus Christ.*

Parishoners of Saint Matthew's can still fill their own shoeboxes this year as they have in the past. The deadline for completed boxes would be Sunday November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Another way to get involved, which is new for this year, is to participate by purchasing miscellaneous items or donate cash, so that each child in Saint Matthew's Sunday School will have one box to fill at the Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> packing/wrapping party. There will be a large donation box and cash collection can in the Narthex along with all the Operation Christmas Child brochures and materials. The Women's Group will also be having a cookie sale in November to raise funds to cover the \$7 per box shipping charge for each of the boxes our Sunday School children fill.

If you have any questions regarding St. Matthew's Operation Christmas Child mission/outreach project for this year please contact Leah Gelhar at 353-5565 or [lgelhar@suscom-maine.net](mailto:lgelhar@suscom-maine.net).

## **GIFT IDEAS**

### **TOYS**

small cars, balls, dolls, stuffed animals, kazoo's, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, small Etch A Sketch®, toys that light up or make noise (with extra batteries), Slinky®, etc.

### **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

pens, pencils and sharpener, crayons or markers, stamps and ink pad sets, writing pads or paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books, etc.

### **HYGIENE ITEMS**

toothbrush, toothpaste, mild bar soap (in a plastic bag), comb, washcloth, etc.

### **OTHER**

Hard candy and lollipops (please double bag all candy), mints, gum, T-shirts, socks, ball caps; sunglasses, hair clips, toy jewelry, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries)

### **A PERSONAL NOTE**

In a separate envelope, you may enclose a note to the child and a photo of yourself or your family. (If you include your name and address, the child may write back.)

### ***DO NOT INCLUDE:***

Used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; chocolate or food; out-of-date candy; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items such as snowglobes or glass containers; aerosol cans



*Caption: Arlene Couture, flutist Sabrina Adcock, and angel Belle Michaud ride in St., Matthew’s Episcopal Church’s 4<sup>th</sup> Place “Jesus is Our Silver Lining” float at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Moxie Festival in Lisbon, Maine.*

## **A winning mix of Moxie and evangelism**

Officials estimated 25,000 people lined the streets and there were about 100 vehicles in the parade. Moxie is the “official” soft drink of Maine.

St. Matthew’s Rector, the Rev. Beau Wagner said, “We can’t keep the Good News of Christ inside the church—we need to get out into our communities and witness.”

Deacon Gail White, Ed Langen, Thelma Manson, and Arlene and Bob Couture decorated our award-winning float.

According to Senior warden Teri Bernier, the parish has entered three times in the last ten years. The last time St. Matthew’s received an award was 2001.



*Caption: The Wagner Family (from left, Becket, Beau, Debra and Sam) on a recent trip to Monhegan.*

# Uplifting the Outcasts

( From Samaritan's Purse website regarding Operation Christmas Child)



## HIV-positive children in India's lowest caste hear the Gospel

In this slum in Kolkata, India, people rarely are motivated by good intentions. As members of the Dalits, Hinduism's lowest caste, the community was impoverished and generally avoided. No one from higher castes wanted to claim association with its residents, especially since many of them had AIDS.

In India, those who reveal that they are HIV-positive can be removed from schools, rejected by family and friends, and refused medical care. A 2006 study by the United Nations Development Programme found that 25 percent of people living with HIV in India had been denied medical treatment. Many are children with little hope for the future. After being told not to return to their classrooms, they wander the streets aimlessly.

That day, 100 children listened as Beena shared the story of Jesus, a man who loved all people, a man who physically touched the sick and cared for those who were rejected.

"Though society may discriminate against you, God does not discriminate," she said. "He loves each one of you."

As she pointed to the shoe boxes, she told the children that Christians living on the other side of the world had prepared gifts to demonstrate God's care and concern. As each box was handed out, Beena saw the children's attitudes change. Most had never received a gift.

"There was joy," she said, "a twinkle in their eyes not usually there. They usually look very downcast and malnourished, sadness is written all over their faces."

Since 1993, more than 5 million Indian children have received gift-filled shoe boxes through Operation Christmas Child. Each year, local Christian partners organize distributions and identify groups in need of a tangible expression of God's love.

In 2007, Operation Christmas Child commissioned a consulting firm to survey government officials, parents, community leaders, and Christians living in India about the impact of the program. The study found that Operation Christmas Child has a positive and lasting impact on children, their families, and their communities.

And through Prescription for Hope, the HIV/AIDS ministry of Samaritan's Purse, we've also trained 260 Indian pastors and church leaders how to develop positive, nondiscriminatory, and culturally-relevant approaches to HIV/AIDS in their communities.

"This has opened so many doors to ministry," Beena said. "This ministry (of Samaritan's Purse) helps us get into communities that have never been touched before and is such an avenue to communicate God's love."