

St. Matthew's Lutheran

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Jesus said, "When you did it to one of these my brethren, you did it unto me." Matt. 25:40

Volume I

DECEMBER 2001

Issue 5

Advent is the beginning of the liturgical church year. You will notice that the Advent candles are blue and pink rather than purple and pink. The Catholic Church saw the need to emphasize the difference between Advent and Lent nearly twenty years ago. Lent is penitential and associated with the color purple. That means it is a time to prepare for Easter by remembering the things we did that were not within the will of God and repent. It is also a time to remember the things we failed to do to live up to the call and claim of Christ upon our lives.

Advent was once considered a "little lent" before Christmas. The change to the color blue focused more on anticipation rather than penance. When the church changed to the color blue they related it to Mary the mother of Jesus. Blue is Mary's color. It is said that ancient artists found blue to be the most expensive color for an artist to mix when making paint. Mary was usually portrayed in blue; a blue between navy blue and Carolina blue.

Consider the anticipation of Mary and Joseph as they waited for the very Son of God to be born with them as earthly parents. Matthew 1 tells us, "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

Can you imagine the great anticipation of these earthly parents waiting for the coming of the Messiah in and through their family?

Advent is a time of great anticipation and expectation. Remember when you were a kid, and some of you still do this, you worked so hard to get a "peek and the presents" you were to receive. That's anticipation and expectation.

Advent should have that kind of energy in our anticipation and expectations about God and Christ's coming again. At this time of the year we should be so filled with anticipation of what God can do in our lives and in the world that we "peak and the presence" of the Spirit of God which can transform life as we know it. Are you filled with joyful anticipation and expectation of what God can do to make your life even better? Are you ready for something wonderful to happen to you?

**Shalom,
Mike**

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 - Adella Pray Karie Bridgeman	18 - Donna Dorwart
3 - Rebecca Ramirez Dan Eberhardt	20 - Meghann Dominic Richard Howell
7 - Phil Ogden	21 - Carol Chapman
8 - Amy Eberhardt	22 - Amber Alexander
12 - Robin Shields	25 - Lorene Biggs
14 - Nate Unruh	30 - Marie Strub Mary Bullard
16 - Heather Shackelford David Gibson	Virginia Bachelor

HELP'N HANDS

Help'n Hands Group are looking forward to our trip to the "Rudy Theatre" in Selma, N.C. to attend the "Country Christmas Show" on December 8th. We will leave the church parking lot at 10:30 a.m. and have lunch before attending the show at 1:40 p.m. Due to busy schedules at the church there will be no December Meeting. In January, we will have a new group of helpers who will plan activities for the group and we are looking forward to a good year. Join us if you will and be a helper. Merry Christmas to all!

Eva Smith, Adult Coordinator

ONE-BY-ONE

Ministry in God's Church comes in many forms. The gifts of time and talents are very special, given freely from the hearts of those who love the Lord and their fellow man. ONE-BY-ONE has seen so many wonderful volunteers help so many deserving students. It has been truly awesome. The ministry has involved schools, businesses, teachers, families, neighborhood volunteers, and most importantly the people at St. Matthew's whose lives were touched by the Holy Spirit to give of themselves. There is no doubt that our Lord has guided and blessed everyone who has been involved. The success in increasing reading skills have been undeniable. The greater success has been seen in the growth of the students' beliefs in themselves. To date, through our doors, 150 students and teachers have passed on to greater learning and greater loving. More than 7,000 collective hours have been devoted to the glory of God. We love what is happening in ONE-BY-ONE. We are currently in the process of beginning a second phase of ONE-BY-ONE. Our young people will teach older citizens basic computer skills so they will feel comfortable in this computer era. We will give as much individual help as needed. From all of us to all of you, MERRY CHRISTMAS!

ONE-BY-ONE MINISTRY TEAM

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

- ◆ EMERGENCY FUND
 - ⇒ from the Ruth-Ethel Smith Circle
 - ⇒ in honor of Amy Eberhardt's birthday (Dec. 8) from her Secret Prayer Partner
 - ⇒ from Help'n Hands Senior Group
 - ⇒ in honor of Mary Sue Grady's birthday (Nov. 25) from her Secret Pal
- ◆ POWER BILL from the Thrift Shop
- ◆ BUILDING MAINTENANCE FUND in memory of Doug Hood from Betty Probst

"NEVER ASSUME YOU HAVE TOMORROW"

We hear that statement so often that now we barely notice when it is spoken. Listen to this story. Odessa, Texas pastor and cancer survivor Ernest Easley said those very words not so long ago when he discovered a lump in his neck. The 40 year old pastor was in the prime of his life when he was given the diagnosis of cancer in a lymph node in his neck. His doctor took more biopsies and found Easley's right tonsil was the primary source of the malignancy. The doctor removed the right tonsil and a day later recommended a much more invasive surgery: an ear-to-ear incision and removal of every lymph node and all muscle tissue that might be infected. The surgery would have included removal of the pastor's voice box. Easley sought a second opinion and after seeing seven head-and-neck oncologists, he was given an alternative: forty-four radiation treatments, which would require him to move to Houston. Easley likened his situation to that of King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:1-6. Hezekiah was deathly ill and had been told by the prophet Isaiah to "set your house in order, for you shall die." With much weeping, Hezekiah asked God to extend his life, and God did. Like Hezekiah, Easley knew he needed to set his house in order, which he did. With much weeping, Easley raised his hands to God and prayed: "God, I know you are aware of what's happening here in my life right now; and I believe with all my heart there's nothing that can come to me except what comes through You. And for that reason, I thank You for this cancer." "I don't know if I'm going to live or die, but I do know that I trust you with everything I have." God heard Easley's prayer and granted him a life extension. Easley stopped assuming on tomorrow! How many people on September 11th assumed they would have tomorrow? They started the day's routine as usual but the events that came proved to be eternal. Some never had a chance to whisper God's name, others had only a few seconds to react, and still others had a few minutes possibly not even thinking about God. We will never know how they spent those precious moments; we can only hope and pray they knew God when their time ran out. How are you spending the precious time left in your life?

-Anonymous



A SPECIAL THANKS to all our volunteers and everyone who has supported us during the year 2001. Stay tuned for some very special information in our January Newsletter. Happy Holidays!

Lee Anna Sproul,
Chairperson

CHILDREN'S CHOIR NEWS

I would like to **thank** all the people who have helped coordinate the kids **Christmas Musical**.

I am just one person and without all the volunteers, participants and parents working with their children at home there would be no performances like what you have been seeing.

Thank you so much for your dedication in getting your kids to church for practices. Dr. Hale asked the kids to be in the choir at the Community-Wide Thanksgiving Service and parents and children stepped up to the challenge of learning the song in 2 weeks. I am very proud to say they were **AWESOME!** If you were not there, you missed out on something really special. Most of all I would like to **thank** all the kids who have been working so hard to send God's message through song. You have been doing a great job! I look forward to many more learning experiences through song with you.

Thanks again,
Ms. Cathleen

YOUTH NEWS

November was a busy month. We had our Spaghetti Luncheon on the 4th. We would like to **thank** everyone who came and gave their support for our trip. Also a special thanks to **Dan Eberhardt, Wayne Hager** and **Jeff Anderson** who helped with the luncheon. Without their help, we would not have been able to do this. We also attended a "Pilgrimage" on November 9-11. We had a great time in the midst of 5,470 other youth. A special thanks to **Wayne Hager, Julie Anderson** and **Shirley Dominie** for chaperoning the event.

We have several things planned for December. We are going **Christmas Caroling** on the 15th from 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. After that we will have a **Christmas Party**. We are also planning on adopting family for Christmas. On New Year's Eve, we are planning to have a **Lock-In** at the church.

Once again, **thank you** all for your support and help over the last month. God bless!

Meghann Dominie,
Youth President

LOOKING AHEAD:



DECEMBER

2-Hanging of the Greens & Chrismon Service,
7:00 p.m.

16-Christmas Cantata, 7:00 p.m.

23-Children's Christmas Musical, 6:00 p.m.

24-Christmas Eve Communion Service, 6:30 p.m.

COMPUTER TIPS FOR CHRISTIANS

Do you find the Bible difficult to read? If you have a computer connected to the Internet, you can listen to the Bible being read online.

AUDIO BIBLES:

Bible Gateway Audio Bibles

<http://bible.gospelcom.net/bg/bgaudio.html>

Audio Bible

<http://www.audio-bible.com/bible/bible.html>

MISCELLANEOUS CHRISTIAN AUDIO RESOURCES:

SermonAudio.com

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/>

Blue Letter Bible Commentary

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/audio-video.html>

Bible/Christian Audio Resources

<http://www.audiotreasure.com/audiolinks.htm>

Calvin Rome

romec@nc.rr.com





UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

When you read this, we, as United Methodist Women will have a little less than a month to accomplish our goals for 2001. Self-evaluation is probably best at this point...how did you do? Were you at all the General Meetings? There were only 4 counting the one tomorrow night. Did you participate in your Circle's Mission Projects? There were 9 or 10. Have you agreed to be in a leadership position for 2002? Pray that the year 2002 will be even better than 2001. **Thanks** to all who contributed in "Operation Christmas Child" Shoebox Gifts. Franklin Graham reports that he has high hopes that 90,000 of these boxes will be distributed to two remote refugee camps located in Western Afghanistan. He reminds us, "What is impossible with men is possible with God." (Luke 18: 27, NIV) We sent 40+ boxes. Make plans to attend our General Meeting tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. and bring your goodies. We will also elect officers for 2002. **Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and God bless you!**

Mary Rozier, President UMW

RUTH- ETHEL SMITH CIRCLE

Where has the year gone? I can hardly believe it is December already. This is the time of year when we really focus on the birth of our blessed Savior. A time for sharing and giving to the less fortunate in honor of Jesus. Our circle met November 14th. I appreciate Jewel Sharpe filling in for me during my absence. We will be meeting December 12th for our Christmas meeting and Eva Smith will be hostess. Don't forget to bring your Prayer Partner's gift as well as an extra gift to exchange. The most important business will be electing officers. Be much in prayer about this. It will, as always, be a fun meeting. I wish everyone a very **Merry Christmas**. Be safe and always in God's Grace.

Catherine Morgan, President

NIGHT OWL CIRCLE

Our project for November was Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes. We also elected officers for 2002: **President - Barbara Thompson, Vice-President - Rebecca Ramirez, Secretary - Ruth Caldwell, and Treasurer - Karen Ogden**. The December meeting will be held on Thursday, December 13th at the home of Roberta Brown. This will be a "Covered Dish Christmas Party". We invite all ladies of the church to join us for fun and fellowship. Our project for December is for each person to donate a bag of groceries to the Food Pantry. Wishing everyone a **Blessed and Joyous Christmas!**

Rebecca Ramirez, President

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

"Two-Step Pound Cake"

4 cups All Purpose Flour
1 pound Butter, softened
6 large Eggs



3 cups Sugar
3/4 cup Milk
2 tsps Vanilla Extract

Place flour, sugar, butter, milk, eggs, and vanilla (in that order) in a 4 qt. mixing bowl. Beat mixture at low speed with a heavy-duty electric mixer 1 minute, stopping to scrape down sides. Beat at medium speed 2 minutes. Pour batter into a greased and floured 10-inch tube pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour and 30 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan on a wire rack 10 minutes. Remove cake from pan, and cool completely on wire rack. Yield: 1 (10-inch) cake.

TRADITIONAL METHOD:

Beat butter at medium speed with an electric mixer 2 minutes or until creamy; gradually add sugar, beating until light and fluffy. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating after each addition. Add flour to butter mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour. Beat at low speed just until blended after each addition. Stir in vanilla. Pour batter into a greased and floured 10-inch tube pan. Bake cake as directed in two-step method.

"FOOD FOR THOUGHT"

SOMETIMES BETTER IS REALLY WORSE AND MORE IS REALLY LESS

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less. We buy more but enjoy less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice.

We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete. Remember, spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

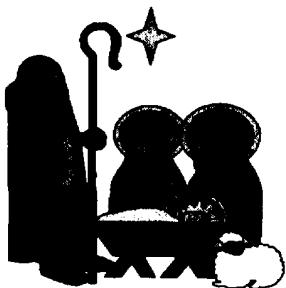
Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember to say, "I love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again. Give time to love, give time to speak and give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

A Wonderful Message by George Carlin



"Merry Christmas" & "Happy New Year"

From Your

St. Matthew's United Methodist Women

DECEMBER

ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2001

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2 Children Practice Musical – 3:00pm Hanging of the Greens/Chrismon Service – 7:00pm</p>	<p>3 UMW General Mtg. & One-By-One – 7:00pm</p>	<p>4 Prayer Group – 7:00pm</p>	<p>5 Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & BS – 6:30pm Choir Practice-7:30pm</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>1 <hr/>8</p>
<p>9 Children Practice Musical – 3:00pm</p>	<p>10 One-By-One-7:00pm</p>	<p>11 Prayer Group – 7:00pm</p>	<p>12 Ruth-Ethel Smith Circle 10:30am Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & BS – 6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:30pm</p>	<p>13 Night Owls meet at Roberta Browns – 6:30pm</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16 UMM Breakfast 8:00am</p>	<p>17 One-By-One-7:00pm</p>	<p>18 Prayer Group – 7:00pm</p>	<p>19 Home Extensions-9:30am</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>Children Practice Musical – 3:00pm Cantata – 7:00pm</p>	<p>24 <u>OFFICE CLOSED</u> Christmas Eve Service – 6:00pm</p>	<p>25 <u>OFFICE CLOSED</u> Merry Christmas! NO Prayer Group</p>	<p>26 <u>OFFICE CLOSED</u> NO Card Ministry WNA & BS – 6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:30pm</p>	<p>27 <u>(OFFICE OPEN</u> PASTOR _____ <u>SUNDAY</u> <u>SCHEDULE</u> Children' Choir 9:30 am Sunday School 9:45 am Worship Service 11:00 am</p>	<p>28 9:00AM-3:00PM ON _____</p>	<p>29 VACATION _____</p>
<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>					