

**December
2014**

St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Ithaca, OH

The Messenger

Worshipping God, Growing in Faith, Serving Neighbors--near and far

Our December Council Meeting

will be held on December 8, instead of our usual 1st Monday of the month. All outgoing and incoming council members are invited to a meal at 6:30 p.m., hosted by Pastor Joene, with the meeting to follow.

Head Start Mitten Tree



Hats and mittens for the head start mitten tree are due by December 14. Please bring your donations to church and place them on the Christmas tree.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

On Sunday, December 21, our Sunday School kids will be performing "God With Us" during worship. Please join them in this celebration of our Savior's birth, by agreeing to play a small part, if you are asked.

A brunch will follow worship with a free will offering to go to the Sunday School treasury.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Please join us for our annual Candlelight Service with Holy Communion on December 24, at 7:30 p.m.

Come and celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior!!



Annual Congregational Meeting Highlights

We assembled for our Annual Congregational Meeting on November 9, 2014. Thanks to all members who attended!

Our minutes from the 2013 meeting were approved. These included information on our Handicapped Restroom Project, which we have put on hold due to the pending change in Pastoral leadership.

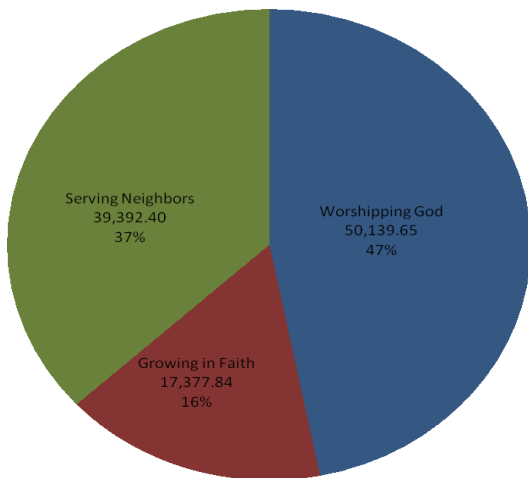
Treasurer's reports for the General Treasury, Sunday School, and WELCA were provided and included a pie chart that shows where our money went this year, in regards to the three parts of our Mission statement: "Worshipping God, Growing in Faith and Serving Neighbors near and far—the charts are shown below. Averages between the three separate expense accounts show that we spent 37% of our offerings on Worship, 29% on Growing in Faith, and 43% on serving our neighbors.

We elected our 2015 council members. The ballot was un-contested. Look for the complete listing of members and their phone numbers in your WELCA directory, which will come out soon.

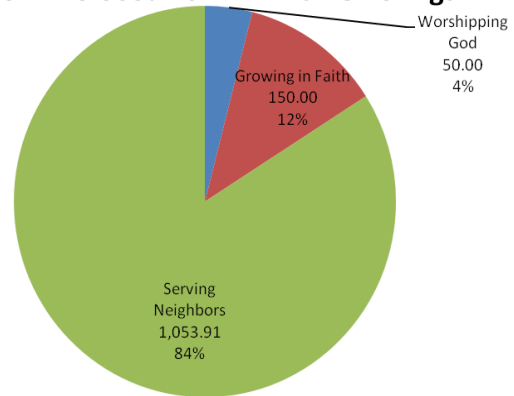
A budget was passed, where the "bottom line" for yearly expenses is \$99,667.00. This means we will need to take in offerings of \$1917 per week.

Finally, before adjournment, Pastor Herr announced, as it was written in a portion of her report, the following: " When I first talked about seeking another call, I mentioned that it might take up to two years to find one. I think two years is long enough for anyone to live in limbo, so with this report I am announcing my intention to leave SMLC as of the end of September 2015, even if I don't have another call."

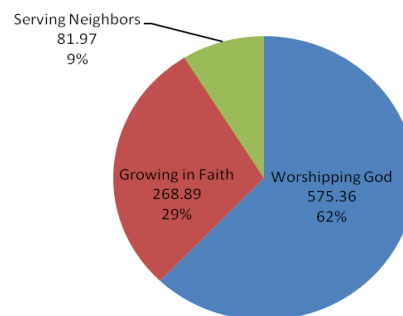
How we used our 2014 General Treasury Offerings?



How We Used 2014 WELCA Offerings



How we used 2014 Sunday School offerings






OUR MONTHLY WELCA MEETING

Due to our "Light Readers" show on the 10th, we will not have a meeting in December. Please bring snacks to the program on the 10th. Please keep your December Gather magazine, we will study some of both lessons at the January meeting.

All voices are needed for our Christmas Caroling on December 7th

ONE Ministry— Castine Food Bank item of the month: Canned meat

 **Christmas needs for the Castine Food Bank:**
Donated items need to be at the church on or before December 14. Thank you in advance for helping to brighten someone's holiday!!

chicken broth	instant potatoes	jello/lite
green beans/corn	corn	lite fruit cocktail
noodles (12/16 oz.)	cherry pie filling	Yellow/white cake mix
Toilet paper (4 roll)	dish soap	shampoo
Laundry soap	toothpaste & brushes	bar soap

Monetary donations for turkey's and perishables

Altar Flower Signup Sheets for 2015

are posted and ready for your signature!!

Prices HAVE changed this year!!

\$28 for a centerpiece or \$33 for a set of vases

Please see the bulletin board in the back of the sanctuary, or Mary Hofacker.

Payments can be made by writing "altar flowers"
on an envelope and placing it in the offering.

Please call Shannon if you'd like a special announcement in the bulletin
concerning the flowers you have donated.



Advent Devotions



There just aren't enough devotions turned in anymore to justify printing a booklet, but here are a few that were submitted to the church office this year.

Today (November 23), during our Christ The King Sunday worship, the service started at the beginning of the church year with Advent and Christmas and continued with Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Holy Trinity, Pentecost and also through the non-festival half of the church year. It was a very impressive service

During the Christmas part of the service, we all sang Silent Night. I have always loved this song, but today I would say I felt the "All is Calm" part of the song more than ever before.

I always try to stay calm at Christmas time while buying gifts, decorating, preparing food, and all the things that needs to be done to make Christmas time a special event, but I know the calmness is not there in all reality. At Christmas Eve Services I sing Silent Night, but after a day of preparing for the family for Christmas Dinner and the giving of presents under the tree, I sometimes realize the "calmness" is not with me as it should be.

Today, I felt the calmness of that Silent Night, Holy Night, All is Calm, All is Bright, and now I will start preparing in me the "calmness" that is needed to know what the Advent and Christmas Season is all about.....

Round yon virgin, mother and child Holy infant, tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

Silent night, Holy night Shepherds quake, at the sight
Glories stream from heaven above Heavenly, hosts sing Hallelujah.
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

May this Advent Season be a blessing to you all, Jane Brown

THE CHRISTMAS TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt give thy heart to Christ. Let Him be at the top of thy Christmas list
2. Thou shalt prepare thy soul for Christmas. Spend not so much on gifts that thy soul is forgotten.
3. Thou shalt not let Santa Claus replace Christ, thus robbing the day of its spiritual reality.
4. Thou shalt not burden the shop girl, the mailman, and the merchant with complaints and demands.
5. Thou shalt give thyself with thy gift. This will increase its value a hundred fold, and he who receiveth it shall treasure it forever.
6. Thou shalt not value gifts received by their cost. Even the least expensive may signify love, and that is more priceless than silver and gold.
7. Thou shalt not neglect the needy. Share thy blessings with many who will go hungry and cold unless thou are generous.
8. Thou shalt not neglect thy church. Its services highlight the true meaning of the season.
9. Thou shalt be as a little child. Not until thou has become in spirit as a little one art thou ready to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.
10. Thou shall not forget to share your joy, hope, peace and faith with those around you.

From the Pastor

I've had an earworm the past couple of weeks. And yeah, it can be contagious; an earworm is a bit of music that is stuck in your mind, long after you heard it.

"We Need a Little Christmas" has been stuck in my head, popping up again and again, since Peter and I saw *Mame* in Dayton, at the theater, in early November. *Mame* is a musical; made popular on Broadway in the '60's with Angela Lansbury, and later in a film with Lucille Ball. The musical is, in part, set during the depression, and during a particularly rough time, a couple months away from December 25th, the cast sings "We Need a Little Christmas."

"We Need a Little Christmas, right this very minute, candles in the window, carols at the spinet, we need a little Christmas, right this very minute, it hasn't snowed a single flurry, but Santa, dear, we're in a hurry..."

So that Christmas song has been in and out of my head the past few weeks. And it's been aided by the decorations and wares for sale in the stores...Christmas has been out since, Halloween. As I write this, before Thanksgiving, a few homes have lights up in the area, and I know more will show by next weekend, when we move "into the season."

There is another earworm that has struggled for some time in my head. "Oh, Come, O Come Emmanuel....and ransom captive Israel." Much slower, less cheerful, this carol comes to my mind during unusual moments. These two songs contrast at this time of year.

"We Need a Little Christmas" is - I think - what we often think of during this month of December. Candles, or lights, carols, Santa Claus, tinsel on the tree, laughter, singing, even fruitcake. The world takes on a festive tone, and there is hustling and bustling about. It's time to get ready for Christmas. Celebrate!

Except for those who are not ready for Christmas. Those in pain, those who've experienced loss, those whose hearts ache. Those struggling with cancer, with job loss, with a family falling apart. "We Need a Little Christmas" is - well - is just too much. Too artificial, too forced, not honest.

And that's when "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" can offer hope. Hope in the midst of the pain, the worry, the wondering what will be. This carol, this Advent carol is honest..."O Come, O Come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of Man appear. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

For those in pain - and the truth is I think that is many of us - we have needs that can't be met by festive lights or decorations on a tree. We are hurt, we are weary, we are tired, and only by recognizing our reality, and inviting Emmanuel - 'God with us' - into our homes, into our lives, into our very hearts, only by recognizing Emmanuel as the center of our world, only then can we find real joy and a peace which passes all understanding. A joy and peace which will last way beyond the seasonal lights, the decorated tree, a joy and peace which will even outlast the fruitcake.

In Christ's Peace, *Pastor Joene*

REMEMBERED

in our thoughts & prayers

December Birthdays

3 — Kim Guttadore
5 — Jane Buschur
7 — Judy Small
Linda Kinninger
10 — Pam Yeomans
14 — Carolyn Fourman
15 — Ken Bailey
19 — Hailey Pahl
20 — Joseph Mills
21 — Beverly Zimmer
24 — Dorothy Hunt
Rick Harman
26 — Phyllis Fisher

December Anniversaries

3—Gary & Jane Brown
8 — Ron & LeeAnn Laird
18 — Jim & Carol Castello
21—Ron & Sharon Rismiller

Prayer Concerns

Judy Baker
Mary Filbrun
Norm Fix
Pharol Dodt
Dorothy Hunt
Sandy Thompson
Larry Harter
Hayley Harleman
Eric Grreen
Debbie Chapman
Carolina van Luvender
Ben & Kim Smith
Rex Shepard
Sharon (Mahaffy) Johnson
Harold Ady
Gayla Fitzpatrick
Shannon McCullough
Mark Berte
Chris Miller
The Pahl family
Pastor Joene
Elease & T Jones
Abigail Stump

Pam Yeomans
Carrie Steele
Paul & Rita Erdmann
Betty Baker
Scott Sease

Blessings

Jacob Blocher
Tom Knick
Marilyn Bridenbaugh
Marty
Donna King

Prayers of sympathy and healing for the families of:

Helen Hoover Fields

**To reach us for the prayer chain, please call Rhonda Kress at 417-7412
or email rhonda.j.kress@gmail.com**

Thank You

Thanks to your generosity, we raised \$460 for the blanket appeal in October and \$279 for the WELCA Thank-offerings in November.

"Thanks to everyone for the calls, cards, well wishes and offers for help during my illness last month" Shannon McCullough

"Thank you for your generous gift of Quilts and Kits for LWR's distribution overseas. These gifts of your hearts and hands are beautiful expressions of God's grace and love to people all around the world. Your care and compassion makes it possible for families and communities to keep themselves healthy, warm, educated, and employed."
Melanie W. Gibbons—Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager

December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 9-11 am—Clergy Meeting/W. Milton	5	6 3 p.m.—Village Singers at Trinity UMC, Arcanum
7 2nd Sunday In Advent Communion Installation of Officers 2:30 Christmas Caroling Lector: Jessica Pahl Acolyte: Alysson Pahl Bread: Anita Schneider	8 6:30 pm—Council meal with meeting to follow	9	10 A.M. Pastor at Stillwater Cluster 7 pm Light Readers “A Mary Christmas” at St. Matthew	11 9-11 am—Clergy Meeting/W. Milton	12	13
14 3rd Sunday in Advent Lector: Sherry Marten Acolyte: Karr Stump Advent Wreath: Keri & Kerigan Covert	15 6 pm—CAFB Packing (Bring a snack to share!)	16	17	18 9-11 am—Clergy Meeting/W. Milton	19 January Newsletter entries due	20
21 4th Sunday in Advent Christmas Program Acolyte: Anna Stump Advent Wreath : The Stump family	22	23	24 7:30 pm—Christmas Eve Service Lector: Rhonda Kress Acolyte: Alysson Pahl Bread: Rhonda Kress Advent wreath—Kress family	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28 1st Sunday of Christmas Lessons and Carols Service Lector: Bob Brown / Donna Miller Acolyte: Karr Stump	29	30	31	 December Greeters: The Covert's		

Church Address

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Pastor Joene Herr

Phone: 937-564-5802
E-mail: joeneherr@yahoo.com

Wheelchair accessible + Elevator on premises +

Holy Communion celebrated - 1st Sunday of every month- major church festivals

We're on the web!!
www.smlc-ithaca.com
Facebook: St. Matthew

Sunday Worship services:

9 am —Traditional worship

10 am—Coffee Break

10:15 am—Sunday School for all ages



St. Matthew Lutheran Church – Ithaca
7820 State Route 722
Arcanum, Ohio 45304

Dated Material