

**"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17**

# the **Keynote**

**A Publication of St. Matthew's United Methodist Church  
July 1, 2010 • Volume 14, Issue 7**

**Presented by  
The Stonebridge  
UMC  
Upper Alley Singers**



**Sunday, July 25**

**During the Jubilee Service at 11:15am**

One of the biggest off-Broadway and Broadway successes of all time, *Godspell* takes an entertaining and inspiring look at the Gospel According to St. Matthew. As the cast leads us through a string of recognizable songs, such as "Day By Day," "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord," and "Bless the Lord," the audience members get to see the parables of Jesus Christ come humanly to life in a fun and yet inspiring way.

This group of eighth through twelfth graders travels from McKinney, Texas each summer to different areas of the country to perform. In past years they have performed for homeless shelters, the underprivileged and area churches. This year, while visiting the New Orleans area, they will perform at St. Andrews UMC in Baton Rouge, The United Methodist Children's Home in Mandeville, Children's Hospital, and at St. Matthew's. Please consider attending the Jubilee service on July 25<sup>th</sup> to enjoy this great performance, and to show our support for this group.

One of the performers is a former resident of New Orleans who evacuated to McKinney, Texas for Katrina, and has lived there with her family ever since. She and her mom convinced the group to travel to New Orleans this summer so that they can see this great city that we all call home. Please join us and show them all our southern hospitality.

## **Financial Update**

**As of April 30, 2010**

**Year to Date Receipts for Budget: \$116,126.94**

**Year to Date Budgeted Expenses: \$132,172.24**

**Difference: - \$16,045.30**

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## **Mark your calendar for Alex's farewell concert!**

Outgoing Music Director Alex Burtzos will perform a farewell concert on Saturday, July 10 at 7:00pm. The concert is free and open to the public. A reception will follow.



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## **Ministry Team**

**Rev. Jeff Conner**  
pastor@stmatthewsumc.com

**Rev. Becky Conner**  
bconn 444@earthlink.net

**Alex Burtzos, Music Director**  
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**Phil Harmelink, Organist**  
pharmelink@cox.net

**Cindy Lugo, Office Manager**  
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**Jill Patterson, ELC Director**  
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**Information for publication in the July "Keynote" must be submitted by: July 6, 2010!**

# From the Pastor

## Connecting the Dots

Do you remember as a child the connect-the-dots activities your parents would get for you to keep you busy? Actually, I liked those activities because it helped my imagination. You start with a blank piece of paper and some numbered dots. Your curiosity is what kept you going, because as you started to draw you could see something taking shape. You didn't know exactly what it was but you also knew that by the end of the activity it was going to be something you could identify and relate to.

Becky and I have just experienced another Annual Conference, where all the United Methodist Churches of Louisiana come together to make decisions, hear about our State, National and International Church emphases and work, and gather to worship and work together to make a difference in the world. To me it is an experience like connecting the dots. When we just think about our own church and what it does we miss the adventure of seeing how the dots connect to make a picture of what God is doing through the whole of the United Methodist Church. As a church, if we don't do the exercise of connecting the dots we are unable to enjoy the view that God intends for us to have of how we all fit together to change the world.

This year Annual Conference was back in Shreveport. The theme of our Annual Conference was "Whole World, Whole People" This theme was chosen to accompany our concentration on the United Methodist Church's area focus for this Conference year --- Global Health Initiative. This initiative raises the concern for health care both personally and world-wide. We heard stories from ministers in our Louisiana Conference who encountered serious health concerns and found a way to live healthier and more spiritually grounded lives as a result. We heard Bishop Tom Bickerton, Bishop of the Pittsburg Area, Western Pennsylvania Conference who chairs the Global Health initiative for our United Methodist Church Internationally. He spoke specifically of the work to eliminate malaria on the continent of Africa.

In many countries in Africa, parents will only see half of their children grow to be adults because of malaria. The United Methodist Church is working with many private companies, public and private hospitals, and organizations like the Gates Foundation and linking them with the trusted resources of the churches in Africa to educate and distribute preventive tools like bed nets and inoculations to stop malaria. (If you want to help with this effort, go to [www.imagenomalaria.org](http://www.imagenomalaria.org)) Two countries, Rwanda and Tanzania have seen drastic

reductions in deaths due to malaria because of such efforts. God is using the church to save lives spiritually and literally, all because we are working together and connecting the dots.

One astounding figure that we celebrated together was the over \$400,000 that was collected in Louisiana United Methodist Churches for relief work in Haiti after their devastating earthquake. Imagine if we had not connected the dots how much less help Haitians would be receiving! Work teams are now active from Louisiana Volunteers in Mission going to Haiti, because we are connecting the dots. Over \$30,000 was collected from all the churches in Louisiana for the New Church start called "The Well" over in Hammond, where Jack O'Dell, former pastor here at St. Matthew's is leading that effort. Lives are being changed. People are coming to Christ. All because we are connecting the dots. It's fun and energizing. So let's keep connecting those dots! *Rev. Jeff Conner*

## Farewell Reception for Alex

Sunday, July 11

10:00am in the Great Hall

## Special Concert

Bridget Bazile

Sunday, August 22

3:00pm

Renowned soloist, Bridget Bazile, will perform a special concert at St. Matthew's on Sunday, August 22 at 3:00pm to benefit the Gordon Brown Endowed Music Fund. Please join us for this very special event.

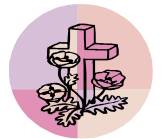


## Memorials

We gratefully acknowledge the generous gifts donated to St. Matthew's UMC.

Given in memory of Martha Doell by Mr. & Mrs. Lomax Floyd.

Given in memory of Smokey Dickerson by Karen Ruthven.



## Condolences

To Dominic Carlone and family on the passing of his wife Traci Carlone.

To Bettie Kernion and family on the passing of her father Henry Cocreham.

# A Memorable Mission Outreach

Where do you go when you leave church? Are you like me and go home to eat and relax? Or, do you go to a restaurant, or maybe to a friend or relative's house? On June 6th, 11 people representing St. Matthew's met a group of people who have a very different after-church-routine. We drove down to the French Quarter and walked to the gazebo at Waldenburg Park. This is the location where three young seminarians, who are part of the *Church Without Walls* organization, hold a service at 9:00am on Sundays. Their congregation varies from week to week, ranging from 15 to 70 people. Regardless of the number, most (if not all) have a lot in common. They live on the streets and their meals are random at best. We all know this group as the homeless. But what we may not realize or think of, is that they each have a unique story about how they came to be homeless.

After singing songs and listening to a sermon about love, we had the privilege of serving a meal to 30-40 people who had gathered at the gazebo. The meal wasn't fancy, but it was a feast for this group. It consisted of hot dogs with chili, spaghetti casserole, chips and cookies, along with water and soft drinks. As happens when you're doing God's work, we had just enough food! After the meal, we had time to sit and talk with some of our new friends. That is when we learned some of their stories, the ones that touched our hearts forever.

There's Scott, known as "Scott Rod" on the street. He's a 56 year old POW, who lives in a tent on the Westbank. When he's not looking for food, he works as a tour guide for other homeless people. He shows them where they can bathe and get food. At one point in time, he served our country, was married, had a daughter and he now has a grandson. I wonder if he ever wanted to be homeless when he grew up?

Ms. Shirley touched many hearts that day. After listening to the sermon and gathering with others in front of the gazebo, Ms. Shirley led us all in the Our Father prayer. Prior to the beginning of the sermon, Shirley explained that she'd had a few operations, including at least one for stomach cancer and needed another operation. But her health conditions didn't dampen her smile or prevent her from thanking us and asking God to bless us.

We also were able to share this special day with Victor. It was his birthday. We sang happy birthday to him. Unfortunately, we didn't have birthday cake or ice cream. That didn't matter to Victor as he just appreciated us being there with him. After the sermon, when we gathered in front of the Gazebo, Victor said a few words revealing his heavy Spanish accent. His sincerity and enthusiasm made us smile.

One of our friends was just visiting New Orleans when his experience turned unfriendly as this gentleman lost all of his possessions. His unfortunate souvenir was a black eye. He is one of the lucky ones, however, because he's staying at the Ozanam Inn until he's able to get money that will be wired to him. Despite his bad fortune, he was thinking of others and asked if he could bring chips and cookies back to his roommates at "the Inn".

There was another young man who had recently broken his ankle in a pot hole. He had come to New Orleans with hope of finding work but remains unemployed. I guess hobbling around with a broken ankle does add an element of difficulty to job hunting.

Then there's the girl with the pink hair! She started out looking pretty rough and stand-offish, but after listening to the sermon and eating a meal, she seemed to soften up and was seen having a warm-hearted conversation with Karen, one of our new mission team members.

I can't end without mentioning someone who touched a few hearts that day, Bernard. He was new to this group and we observed him sitting alone. He was looking for a shelter and wanted to know if we knew of any that he could check into. He'd been evicted from his most recent home... jail! He didn't mention what took him there and we didn't ask because it really didn't matter. Sadly, he did mention that his mother died while he was in jail. He is a father who struggles with the choices that he's made that are not in his children's best interest. He'd already been to Ozanam Inn and to the New Orleans Mission where he has used up his allotted number of days. He desires to find work, and thanks to Troy, one of the seminarians, he might get some work next week. Until then, he will be spending some time on the street. He has skills and is artistically inclined. He just needs a chance to start over. I can still see those big brown eyes, kind of like the little boy who is lost and just a little scared.

I think that I can speak for the entire group when I say that we were blessed by this experience and that we will go back again. But it sure was hard walking away. We gave them food and offered our compassion while we listened to their stories. But is that enough?

That afternoon, after taking a shower and eating a filling lunch, I fell asleep while listening to the rain. As I lay dosing, I couldn't help but think about the people we had met that day. As I listened to the rain outside, I wondered if our new friends had found a dry spot out on the streets.

— Sharon Sagastume

# Thank You

Please let your church know that I received a beautiful, sweet, encouraging card in the mail yesterday from them. It helps to know folks are praying for me/us, in these darkest days. I can literally feel the prayers every day, every minute, for those lifting me up to God, for healing and a miracle. **Suzan B. Corder**

Thank you for your support of Global Ministries' missionaries by contributing to missionary support (Esther Gitobu). We are grateful for your partnership with the missionary community. The need for support during these uncertain economic times is more important than ever, and we offer our deepest thanks to you.

**General Board of Global Ministries**

Greetings! As we get close to our mission team's departure date, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your church's generous love offering. (For Tulane Campus Ministry's trip to Guatemala.) With your contribution to this mission, you have truly enabled our Wesley Foundation to grow in love and service. On behalf of the students who will be traveling with us, I thank you as always for your support and generosity!

**Rev. Max Zehmer, Campus Minister**

I would like to personally thank you for your generous donation to our mission here at the Dulac Community Center. We have a long history of service to the people of Dulac and the success of that long history is largely because of the dedication to our work by people such as yourself. Although our work is focused on social and educational services specifically for women and children we serve a larger community on many levels. I can assure you that it is needed and will be greatly appreciated by the people of Dulac. Please feel free to contact us at any time if you would like information on programming and events. You will be a part of our prayers!

**Jamie Billiot, Executive Director**

Thank you so much for hosting us this week. These are great facilities and we are grateful for your hospitality in welcoming us in. **Jon Cate, UNC Campus Crusade**

I want to thank all of you who visited, called, sent cards, and especially prayed for me during my recent hospital stay. Even though the medical people have yet to determine the cause of the loss of blood, I am getting stronger each day. Once again, I am truly grateful for my Christian family and have turned this over to God.

**Archie Corder**

## Congratulations



To Erik Hanson, son of Dr. Karl and Pam Hanson, who graduated from Brother Martin High School. He will attend Louisiana State University in the fall where he intends to major in Biology.

## Mission Team Dinners

The next mission team Friday night dinner will be September 10. Although we will not have the Friday night dinners during the summer, we will be busy - internationally and locally. In addition to having a group in Mexico from July 7-9, we plan to send groups out to minister to the homeless in local communities. Also, the planning meetings for the November Mexico medical & construction mission will be starting soon. If you are interested in joining one of the mission groups, locally or internationally, please contact Sharon Sagastume, Archie Corder or Cindy Frisard.

## Endowment Extravaganza Provides Gala Event

### Benefits the Endowment Fund

The Church Council Lay Leader, John LeBoutillier, welcomed St. Matthew's members and guests to the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Endowment Extravaganza-Gala, held at *The Elks Lodge* in Metairie. Music was provided by the NOCCA Student Jazz Quartet and delicious culinary presentations of entrées and desserts from some of Jefferson's finest restaurants were the hit of the evening.

### Recognitions

Mitch Bourque, PEC President, thanked Cornelia Adams, auction chairperson, and the St. Matthew's membership & friends for their continued support of the Endowment, as Rev. Jeff Conner gave the opening prayer.

### Net proceeds

Mike Schild, Gala Chairman has tallied a net profit of approximately \$8,000.

### Special Thank

Goes to the UMW Circles and to the families & businesses who donated elegant gifts to the Gala auction, together with our church members and friends who most generously support the St. Matthews Endowment Legacy.

### Gala Sponsored by

The Church Council  
Board of Trustees  
Endowment Committee