

Sharing Christ's Love: St. Matthew's Outreach in Action

You Can End World Poverty Now Part I

by The Rev. Susan J. Barnes, Chair of the World Mission Board, The Diocese of Texas.

Many thanks to the Rev. Michael Kinman for information from his weekly email update "What One Can Do". To receive it, email him mkinman@gmail.com

We are the first generation that could actually end world poverty. Stop and take that in: **we could end world poverty.** When the nations of the world realized it was a real possibility they wrote a set of goals—the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). **Every nation on earth** has signed on to these goals, as has every major religion and countless world leaders. *Time Magazine* named Bill and Melinda Gates and the rock star Bono their Persons of the Year for their work fighting poverty and disease in the developing world.

The Diocese of Texas signs on. In faithfulness the Great Commandment, and to our baptismal vows, the Diocese of Texas unanimously approved a resolution at the 157th Council in February 2006, pledging to support the goals with at least 0.7% of the 2007 diocesan budget.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental stability; and Promote a global partnership for development.

Here's one fact Every day more than 60,000 people worldwide die needlessly because they lack food and basic health care. 30,000 are children. That's one child dying needlessly every three seconds. Four children have died preventable deaths in the time it took you to read this paragraph.

"In the Global Village, distance no longer decides who is your neighbor, and 'Love thy neighbor' is not advice, it's a command." -- Bono

A Safe Roof over Our Heads by Amy Novak
Homelessness is a reality for hundreds of Austin families. Beginning June 18th, St. Matthew's will provide food and housing to three families for three weeks. Two of the families are headed by single fathers, the other by a new mother. The eight children range in age from 7 weeks to 13 yrs. To support these families, we will need volunteers to help set up living spaces, to cook and serve meals, and to be gracious hosts. Evening hosts help with activities between dinner and bedtime. Overnight hosts stay on campus with the families through the night in case of an emergency. We'll also need donations of diapers, juice and breakfast foods.

There is a good chance that a fourth family will arrive during our hosting period. IHN staff is already starting to work closely with a number of families who are facing eviction due to the termination of their FEMA support. Key dates are May 31 and June 30 -- our host period straddles the latter. A volunteer signup table will be set up on Memorial Day Sunday and on Pentecost Sunday. You can also volunteer by calling Amy Novak (795-8089), Margaret Carpenter (345-7630) or Susan Barnes (345-8314).

The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana Needs Our Help!

by Vicki Blumhagen, Outreach Commission Co-Chair

Through prayer and persistence.....the Outreach Commission has revised the mission trip to New Orleans. We will be working with the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana to help families and individuals who have been affected by hurricanes Rita or Katrina from June 25 through July 1. St. Matthew's volunteers will be housed at the parish house of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Metairie, Louisiana, a suburb of New Orleans. The only expenses for volunteers will be food and transportation. Participants can be as young as 15, but any volunteer under 18 must be with their parent at all times during the actual work day. Check out www.edola.org (once in the web site go to Office of Disaster Response and then Volunteer Resources) to get specific information about various volunteer duties and the accommodations (pictures too!) at Gayle Hall, St. Martin's parish house. Please contact Susan Robertson, srobertson44@austin.rr.com or Vickie Blumhagen, vblum@austin.rr.com **by Friday June 2nd if you are planning to go.** We'll plan a meeting for those going about a week or two before the trip.

St. Matthew's Day School - Finding a Precious Pearl

by Millie Roden, St. Matthew's School Board

St. Matthew's celebrated thirty-three children graduating from their Kindergarten classes on Thursday, May 18. The graduates each received a beautiful Children's Bible (a gift of St. Matthew's Church) and a silver cross necklace (that was lovingly donated by an anonymous person).

All classes for next year have been filled. St. Matthew's Day School continues to have a well-deserved reputation for excellence. Please look for an article about Pre-Schools in the upcoming May edition of *Austin Monthly*. Once again St. Matthew's School is listed as one of the top ten preschools in Austin.

The Preschool Parent's Council prepared a delicious Teacher's Appreciation Luncheon for our entire staff on May 3rd. Our parents continue to highly praise our outstanding teaching staff. The teachers and staff members all felt very appreciated.

As the school year ends, so does my time on the board of trustees. What a wonderful and eye-opening experience this has been! I had never realized how truly exceptional St. Matthew's School is. The love and joy that radiates from the classrooms are heartwarming. The teachers are so dedicated to their work and very innovative in their approach to teaching. I've heard several stories of children that have amazed others with what they have learned here.

Recently, one of our little boys impressed the "Bug Man" at Austin's Children's Museum with what he had learned in his St. Matt's class.

For those of you who haven't had a first-hand experience with the school, I urge you to visit the school next year or attend a chapel service on a Wednesday or Thursday morning. Go by the school office and meet School Director Pam Littlefield, Business Manager Debbie Noack, and Purchasing Manager Pattie McDonald. Pam has been working in early childhood education for 29 years and has been Director at St. Matthew's for the last seven years. Her experience, professionalism, and gentle spirit are invaluable.

How wonderful it would be if all children had the benefit of going to a school like St. Matthew's where the Love of God is shared everyday!

Conversations on Prayer by Fr. Jim Williams

It is 5:15 p.m., late on a Sunday afternoon. What's going on in the church? A few people have gathered in silence on the west side. Some pick up a folded card with a sparse liturgy outlined on it. An altar table is set in front with candle burning. The lighting is subdued. A credence table near the altar holds the implements and elements for Holy Communion. A cross stands behind. A chair and a small table sit to one side, with Bibles and a brass bowl with striker to serve as a bell. The Contemplative Holy Eucharist is about to begin.

What is a Contemplative Holy Eucharist? Basically it is a service that is steeped in silence. It has been said that silence is the first language of God. It is in silence that we grow, we heal, we open to God. We observe the "rule of silence," which means that everyone protects the silence of others. We enter and leave in silence and people may remain until they are ready to leave.

The Liturgy of the Word begins. The priest enters in silence, and a simple opening prayer is prayed in unison. Typically there are three readings. These may include a selection from the works of the great devotional masters, selections from the Old Testament and the Epistles, the words of a hymn read as a poem, or other poetry or prayers. One selection is always from the Gospels. Selections are often read from different translations or versions. Readings are not from the lectionary for a given Sunday, but always reflect the seasonal themes of the church year. Following each reading is a period of silence for reflection of at least five minutes duration. Each period of silence ends with a bell.

The prayers follow the outline of the Prayers of the People. We pray for "the whole state of Christ's Church, and the World." The prayers are structured by biddings, followed by silences for individual petitions and intercessions.

Now the service moves forward into the Liturgy of the Table (based on "An order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist," BCP 400-402, sometimes referred to as "Rite III"). The table is set in silence. A simple and informal Eucharistic Prayer is prayed for the Blessing of the Bread and Wine, following the familiar pattern of "take, bless, break, give." After the Lord's Prayer comes the Communion of the People, as usual, followed by a period of silence. Finally, the Prayer of Thanksgiving is prayed in unison (the prayer of St. Francis), followed by the Blessing and the Dismissal, on or before 6:00 p.m. The priest leaves in silence, and remains available following the service for prayers or consultation.

This service has become a tradition at St. Matthew's. Even though it is always announced in the Weekly Word, it seems a good time to focus on it here, with some simple explanations. It is always an option for us in our life together in worship. This is what goes on at 5:15 p.m. on Sunday afternoons at St. Matthew's.

Almighty God, in whose presence we are always present, draw us in your vast silence, to open to you, that we may receive grace and courage to move from contemplation into action, and then return us to contemplation, as was the pattern of our Lord, Jesus Christ. May we continue to come more deeply into your silence and to go forth more fully into your world. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

Save the Date for this Important Parish Meeting
Mid-Year Review and Discussion of Parish Finances
Capital Expenditures, and Issues of Faith and Giving
Sunday, June 25, Huffman Hall
9:15—10:15 a.m.

It's Time for a Summer Adventure! by Kathy Dugat

Summer's here and we are ready for an adventure! We have a Super Summer Adventure planned to knock your socks off...whether you are a pre-schooler, have just finished the fourth grade or are somewhere in-between. Beginning Thursday, June 22nd, children *and their parents* are invited to join us each Thursday morning for fun, arts and crafts, fellowship and Bible study. We will gather at 10:30 for some playground fun...meeting new friends and keeping up with "old" ones. At 11:00, we'll all move to Huffman Hall for games and all sorts of projects. At 11:30, parents will be dismissed to go have a little "adult fellowship time" of their own, while the children gather with the Super Summer Adventure leaders for a half hour or so of Bible study, songs and group games. At noon, we'll say good-bye to those who have other plans...OR...you might choose to bring a sack lunch or go in with another family and order a pizza from across the street or make a run to Wally's and *stay for lunch*. You are invited to come each Thursday, or just one Thursday during the course of the summer...whatever your calendar will allow.

Our Super Summer Adventures will continue for our "school age children" on Tuesdays with outings and activities. Each Tuesday from June 27 until the end of July, except for the 4th of July, we will offer a different special event or adventure of some sort. We will alternate by age groups to offer our children a variety of age-appropriate adventures. Children who will be entering Kindergarten, first grade or second grade are invited to join us, with their parents, on June 27 and July 18. Children who will be entering third, fourth or fifth grades in the fall, and their parents, are invited to join us on July 11 and July 25. We might visit the Nature Center one week and take a tour of the capital the next. We might do a service project one week and make ice cream sundaes on our next outing. Although we will leave campus most Tuesdays, we will always gather at St. Matthew's and return to St. Matthew's at the end of our adventures. Times for our Tuesday adventures may change slightly from week to week depending on our destination, but generally speaking, we will gather at St. Matthew's at 9:00 and return about noon.

Note that this is a Super Summer Adventure intended for parents **AND** children alike. Unlike traditional Vacation Bible School programs where parents drop off their children, parents and/or adult care givers are an important element of this program. We want the "big people" to have a summer adventure too! Who says the kids should be the only ones having fun! Our relaxed Thursday mornings and our off-campus Tuesday adventures will give you an opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new friends. No hidden agendas...no lessons to prepare...no preparation time...no strings...just come relax, visit and have fun...open yourself up and enjoy the adventure! You are welcome to invite neighbors and school friends (and their parents) to be part of the adventure as well. The more, the merrier!

"God's Own Fools" by Phil Webster

The evangelical counsel of St. Francis of Assisi – preach the Gospel often, use words when necessary – is one of the more frequently quoted phrases in Christianity. In response to this charge, the youth of St. Matthew's Praise Band chose to share their faith in song. "God's Own Fools" is the title for this youth band's first musical recording project.

An important part of the youth ministry at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (Austin) is youth-led worship. Each month the youth of St. Matthew's design and lead a special worship experience – Celebration – for the whole church family. Most months the youth praise band leads the congregation in singing a variety of high-energy contemporary praise and worship music. The motivation for the creation of this album was two-fold. First, the members of the youth praise band wanted to share their musical gifts with others. Second, it was hoped that this album would make quality praise and worship music accessible to members of the community for both inspirational and educational purposes. In fact, the presentation of this album, in CD or MP3 format, has been made available to youth and adults free of charge. If you have Internet access, please visit <http://www.betarecords.com/godsownfools> to listen to this fine work.

As the youth minister at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, it has been my pleasure to work with such talented and committed youth. I am also very grateful to Ben Wright for his regular work with the band and for his leadership and commitment in the direction, production, and delivery of such a high quality album. Thanks to the efforts of St. Matt's youth praise band, the youth ministry of our church may continue to share the Gospel always – even with song!

As of May 23, Liam, Kiah and Phil Webster have returned to Ohio to continue their ministries. Godspeed!



Fire Hydrant! No Parking Please!~

In our normal maintenance cycle we will soon be marking the area by the fire hydrant on Steck as a no parking spot. Thank you for your help in ensuring the safety of the congregation and the security of our buildings.

Deadline for the July issue of The Word will be Friday,

June 16. Send your articles to

office@stmattsaustin.org and jerim@austin.rr.com

Children's Ministry- Sunday Chapel Service by The Rev. Susan Barnes

"I Believe..."

I believe, yes, I believe, in God who loves everyone...

I believe, yes, I believe, in Jesus his son...

I believe, in the Spirit, too, who comes to live in me and you...

The hauntingly simple words of our Children's Creed, penned and put to music by our own Marjorie Bounds, are the springboard for an exciting new adventure in our lives here at St. Matthew's. **Beginning on Sunday, June 18, we will offer a Chapel Service geared to the needs of the youngest members of our St. Matthew's family.** It will take place at the time of the Liturgy of the Word (10:30-11:00) of the main service. Through carefully chosen words, music and activities, the daily lessons, our Episcopal heritage and the rhythm of our liturgy will come to life in the hands and hearts of our children. The Chapel service will be led by a team of trained volunteers, with the help and support of our clergy. The Chapel Service will be geared to the needs of children ages three years through fifth grade, but "lap sitters" are always welcome with a parent. In fact, the Chapel Service may offer a nice change of pace for "children of God" of *any* age from 3 to 93 on any given Sunday!

We will all have a chance to celebrate the beginning of our Sunday Chapel Service on June 18 during our regular 10:30 service in the Sanctuary. On that Sunday, we will all have an opportunity to get just a taste of what we will be offering our children...through music...through movement...through a special sermon masterfully presented by Jim Williams. Then beginning June 25, the Chapel Service will be held in B 21 while our regular 10:30 Worship is held upstairs. Parents are invited to deliver their children directly to B 21 before they go to the sanctuary...OR...families may prefer to enter the sanctuary and begin the worship service together, and then allow the children to follow the cross downstairs to the Chapel Service at the appropriate time. The Chapel Service will end in time for families to be reunited in the sanctuary at the Peace.

The Sunday Chapel Service promises to be an exciting new chapter in our lives together as we continue to seek ways to "know Christ, grow in Christ, and share Christ's love" with each other and the world around us...no matter what our age! (We welcome your help in this adventure! If you are interested in being a part of this new chapter of our life together, please give Susan Barnes or Kathy Dugat a call. We'd love to have the opportunity to share more details with you! Kathy 343-7989, or Susan 345-8314)

Super Summer Adventure "At-a-glance"

submitted by Kathy Dugat

Thursdays, June 22nd - July 27th - Super Summer Adventure for all children who are currently three through those entering 5th grade and their parents - 10:30 - 12:00 (or 1:00 if you want to bring a lunch)

Tuesdays, June 27th & July 18th - "Primary" Adventures Children who will enter kindergarten in the fall through those entering second grade and their parents are invited to join us for an "off campus" adventure. Meet at St. Matthew's at 9:00. We'll be finished by 12:00 or 1:00, depending on our destination.

Tuesdays, July 11th & July 25th - "Advanced" Adventures Children who will enter third, fourth or fifth grades in the fall and their parents are invited to join us for an "off campus" adventure. Meet at St. Matthew's at 9:00. We'll be finished by 12:00 or 1:00, depending on our destination.

Note from Susan Barnes and Merrill Wade: We are delighted that Kathy Dugat will be helping us to create times for families and children this summer. Our goal is for parents to have easy and pleasurable "adventures" with their kids, getting to know church friends better!



GOOD READ OF THE MONTH

Support St. Matthew's Library by Rita Eccles

Gospel Medicine Pub.1995, Bread of Angels Pub.1997, Home By Another Way Pub. 1999

These books, by Barbara Brown Taylor, are composed of sermons that bring bible (readings) stories into our everyday lives. I became curious when Merrill quoted her in a couple of his sermons. It didn't take long into the first book to find out why he respects her views.

I found all three books penetrating, fast reading, with some humorous parts, but mostly deeply inspirational and clear for our life today. I have a favorite, but yours may be different. She answers many questions; those asked and those unstated. I'm sure you will find all three of these to be "Good Reads"