



2000s - Moving into the Next Century

We began the 2000s, the beginning of a new millennium, with a sigh of relief, not knowing that our country was about to experience global terrorism. The relief we experienced was world-wide after the turn of the century. No catastrophic events occurred and it was business as usual for the world in general. But our country was to experience the horror of the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York City, from terrorists flying our planes. The decade continued to evolve featuring the hunt for Osama Bin Laden, the leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorists; a former First Lady who became a senator and later Secretary of State; anthrax attacks by mail; a space shuttle tragedy over Texas; the beginning of the Iraq war and the eventual capture of Saddam Hussein, former leader of Iraq; and the southeast Asian tsunami which killed 290,000 people from Sri Lanka to Indonesia. Then Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast killing over 1,300 people from Alabama to Louisiana; the Swine Flu was deemed a global pandemic by the World Health Organization; the economic recession continued to deepen as jobless claims climbed to about 10 percent; and President Obama sent 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan to stem increased efforts by the Taliban in that country.

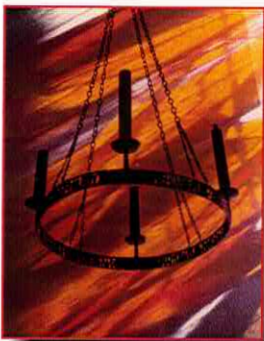
Turning to St. Matthew's, the decade from 2000 through 2009 was an active and productive one. Though the latter part of the decade saw a decline in attendance, the church nonetheless remained active and vital in providing services, spiritual guidance, fellowship, and community support in various capacities. Many traditions, organizations and activities were supported consistently during that period.

Throughout these first ten years of the new century, St. Matthew's provided a variety of worship service opportunities for the faithful, beginning with two Sunday morning worship services: an early service at 8:30 a.m., and a later one at 11 a.m. During the months of July and August, a casual-dress summer service was held at 7:30 am in the outdoor Memory Garden. On Sunday mornings during the services, nurseries were provided for the smallest of the congregation – one for infants to 24 months old, another for two and three-year olds, and a third for preschoolers.

A variety of evening services recognizing significant seasons and observances were available throughout the year as well. An Ash Wednesday service marked the beginning of Lent with a service of Lenten meditation and imposition of ashes, and throughout the season special Lenten services preceded by a soup and salad dinner, were held each Wednesday night. Holy Week worship and opportunities included Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services, a prayer vigil, and Easter Sunrise service prior to the usual Sunday morning offerings.

Thanksgiving was observed as well, with St. Matthew's participating in, and often hosting, a Bowie area joint interfaith Thanksgiving Eve service. Participants in the service throughout the years included a variety of Protestant churches, as well as Catholic, Jewish, Unitarian Universalist and even Muslim groups.

The Advent season was observed with the traditional lighting of the Advent Wreath during Sunday services, and on Christmas Eve three services were provided: a family worship service at 6 p.m., followed by an early traditional candlelight service at 8:30 p.m., and a later candlelight service that included communion at 11 p.m. Finally, the year was closed out with a New Year's Eve communion service offering an informal format, during which worshipers could come and go freely throughout, with communion offered at the altar rail every ten minutes.



St. Matthew's also offered a wide variety of Christian education opportunities through an active and diverse church school program. Classes were held at 9:45 a.m. between the morning worship services from the Sunday after Labor Day through the second Sunday in June.



Adult studies included traditional Bible study classes, spirituality courses, a Disciple program, and unique offerings on a variety of historical, theological and contemporary topics that have varied throughout the years. As always, there was a strong focus on education of young Christians, with children's church school classes for ages three through high school.

The church school children were afforded opportunities to participate in a number of church traditions and programs throughout the year as well. Each November during the 11 a.m. worship service, Bibles were presented to the third grade class, and a ceremony of dedication was held for church school teachers and staff. On the evening of the second Sunday in December, the children put on their annual Christmas program, with the younger children performing Christmas songs and the older students putting on a costumed Christmas pageant highlighted with various instrumental and vocal performances by the church's talented youth members.

In the spring, the children focused on mission and outreach with a visit to Heartfields nursing home, during which they sang for the facility's residents. At the close of the education season in June, the church school was recognized during the 11 a.m. service with a year-end musical performance by the students, followed by recognition of the contributions of the church school teachers and staff. During the summer, a week-long Vacation Bible School program in July welcomed children from St. Matthew's and the community at large.

Supporting the worship services was a talented and dedicated collection of music makers under the leadership of music director and organist Isaac Borocz. Choral anthems and other music during services was provided by a large and robust chancel choir, which performed a variety of traditional, contemporary and spiritual-style pieces for the congregation. Also sharing the task of providing worship service music were the singers of SpiritMove. During the summer months when the choir was on hiatus, as well as on special occasions, a number of talented musicians from the congregation gave individual or small-group vocal and instrumental performances. The young people got in on the act as well, with a children's choir for the congregation's budding musicians who contributed to the services periodically throughout the year. Music was also a tradition outside of worship, with an active Musical Theatre Troupe that regaled us on the stage in Fellowship Hall with a new production every spring and fall.

Throughout the decade, St. Matthew's provided regular opportunities for people to join our family, through new members' classes held twice a year, and confirmation classes for the young people who were ready to join the church. In addition to learning about the practices, principles and beliefs about our church, each class showed its dedication to Christian service by choosing a special mission project to support. New adult members were welcomed to the congregation in Profession of Faith and Membership Transfer ceremonies during worship each spring and fall, and young confirmands were received in a Confirmation ceremony held on Pentecost Sunday.

In addition, throughout the year during services, time was devoted to recognizing achievements and milestones of people within the church. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were both recognized and afforded an opportunity to participate in the service every year, and the church's acolytes were honored for their service to the congregation in late winter. At the end of the school year, St. Matthew's continued its tradition of honoring high school and college graduates, and every March, the United Methodist Women sponsored the selection of a Woman of the Year, saluting one of the church's ladies for her special contributions and support of the church.

A variety of fellowship and support organizations were active within St. Matthew's. The United Methodist Men met monthly at Saturday morning breakfasts, often hosting guest speakers who made presentations on a variety of topics. The United Methodist Women (UMW) were active as well, with a variety of circle meetings available at different locations and times, to include the Susanna Wesley, Agape, Martha, Koionia, Friendship and Evening circles, as well as support of mission work and an annual craft show in November. Friendship Circle disbanded in 2010, and Esther Circle was established in 2011. The UMW also held a Fellowship Tea in early Fall to provide information and invite ladies of the church, who were not yet members of the organization, to take part in one of the circles.



Various committees supporting worship, education, and the church's mission met regularly to conduct business, to include the Worship Committee, Christian Education Committee, Membership Committee, Stewardship Committee, Planning Committee, Building Committee, Trustees, Parlor committee, EEC Committee, Finance Committee, Shelter Committee, Altar Guild, and Missions Committee. There were a number of church-sponsored fellowship activities as well, to include the annual church picnic in the summer, and church-sponsored family camping trips to Camp Harmison, West Virginia, offered over Memorial Day weekend in May and Columbus Day weekend in October. Various potluck and fellowship dinners were held throughout the year, as well as dinner-dances held outside the church, and a fall golf outing sponsored by the United Methodist Men.

The congregation's young people were included in fellowship opportunities as well, as the church continued to provide an active and engaging youth program, with United Methodist Youth Fellowship organizations for both junior and senior high students. At the beginning of the decade, the meetings were held at the Marne Lane house, which was being used as an annex to the church, then moved into the church building after the completion of the Wesley Wing in 2002. The youth groups each met weekly on Sunday evenings, and took part in various activities throughout the year. The senior high youth group devoted a great deal of time and energy conducting fundraisers for their annual summer trip to take part in the Appalachian Service Project. One of the church's traditions was the youth-sponsored Shrove Tuesday pancake supper held prior to the beginning of Lent. An active Youth Ministry provided activities for the congregation's children, to include holiday festivities, movie nights, and an Easter egg hunt in either the Memory Garden and playground areas or Fellowship hall, depending on weather.

On Sunday mornings during the services, nurseries were provided for the smallest of the congregation, with infants to 24 months old in room 116, toddlers aged two to three in room 110, and preschoolers from three to six years in room 106. The St. Matthew's Early Education Center continued to provide a popular and well-respected weekday educational opportunity for both the church congregation and the community at large as well, with classes for children as young as two up through kindergarten, offered on a daily schedule or alternate days, and including before and after-care services for working parents.

In addition to the fellowship organizations, St. Matthew's members supported a wide variety of missions, with the guidance and support of a dedicated Missions Committee. Each month members pitched in to provide the Prince George's County Shelter Meal for the needy, and congregation members regularly supported the Bowie Interfaith Food Pantry with donations of non-perishable foods. St. Matthew's members also took an active role in the Bowie CROP walk to raise funds to feed the hungry. Every year the Missions Committee hosted Warm Nights for homeless people for one to two weeks at the end of December. Members participated in the Christmas in April program annually, making repairs to homes of local residents in financial need.

Support for housing needs was extended beyond the local area, too. Members joined the Volunteers In Mission (VIM) program, sending a team to Juarez, Mexico for "Operation Hogar," which built houses for the poor. Special VIM teams were also formed in response to the several destructive hurricanes—most notably Hurricane Katrina when a VIM team went to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Assistance was provided through donations to hurricane victims in Florida and the Gulf coast after various storms. Throughout each year, the congregation provided support to UMCOR through donations to special offerings and countless volunteers who put together kits and



Merry Methodists: 1 to r; back row: Linda Brizzie, Liz Herra, Helen Hirzel, Lee Jensen and Lew Dodd. Front row: Woody Woodruff, Margie Pekala, Jane Dodd, and Linda Woodruff. Not pictured: Phyllis Jensen.



provided support for UMCOR Mission Central in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. Mission Central is a hub for distributing donated items to distressed people world-wide. In the latter part of the decade, the Merry Methodists formed. This group of mature members of our congregation banded together in 2009 to make cards from old greeting cards. These repurposed cards are then donated to nursing homes or other worthwhile charities, including Mission Central.

Every year during the Advent and holiday season, our congregation showed its generosity through a variety of special projects: holiday food collections for the needy, teddy bears for nursing home patients, a Christmas sweatshirt collection to provide warm clothing for needy school children, and filling Christmas stockings with gifts for children of Prince George's County prison inmates.

St. Matthew's was active in overseas mission support as well, taking donations for the Nothing But Nets program to provide mosquito nets for regions prone to mosquito-borne disease, as well as sponsoring the St. Matthew's United Methodist School in Logan Town, Liberia, which provided educational opportunities for children in the region who would otherwise not be able to attend school.

Other church organizations included the Angel Gang, which met to give prayers for any persons lifted up in prayer requests, and the Knit Wits, who knit lap throws for nursing home residents, and infant sets and hats for needy families. Church members came together to support our military with letters and care packages to those serving overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan, donations for wounded warriors, and cards and greetings for returning service members through Operation Welcome Home Maryland. Early in the 2000s, the church's Clown Ministry was active, and the Deaf Ministry worked to provide services for the hearing-impaired. The church also gave support to the Lions Club, Guiding Eyes for the Blind, Martha's Closet, and periodically hosted blood drives in Fellowship Hall.



2000-2009

In addition to these many aspects of our vibrant church life, the 2000s saw a number of changes and significant events for St. Matthew's. In 2000, printed copies of the sermon continued to be available in the Narthex for further study or for those who missed the service. Margie Dague was honored as the St. Matthew's "Woman of the Year." On April 2nd, the District Superintendent of our Washington East District, Reverend Mary Jane Coleman, visited and gave the message, as well as speaking at the Holy Week Brunch on April 15. The Musical Theater Troupe gave two performances during the year, with "Hello Dolly!" in the spring, and "Nunsense" in the fall. In May, Reverend Patti Smith, our associate pastor, had the honor of attending the denominational General Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Parlor subcommittee of the Wesley Wing Building Committee had formed a list of improvements to the space, including raising the ceiling height, baseboard heating, installing a door to the Memory Garden, and hardwood floors. A possible Columbarium was eliminated from the building project at this point, after having been considered since 1999 as part of the Wesley Wing construction. The location of the Columbarium was at issue because no one wanted to destroy any part of the memory Garden. So an independent Columbarium Committee was formed this year under the leadership of Major General (ret) William Eicher. They began considering alternate sites for the Columbarium.

On June 11, the Needlepoint Kneelers dedicated the completed the new altar cushions, which they designed and worked on by hand to replace the aging cushions that had been in use at the altar rail. The altar cushions were suggested by Rev. Robert Paulen, and the Needlepoint Kneelers committee was formed in 1989. The altar cushions were dedicated to artist (Linda) Diane Cook. Bruce Jones conceived of the idea of the repetitive grape leaves. The stitchers were Beverly Burnett, Joyce Cone, Diane Cook, Linda Cooper, Elizabeth Herrera, Rebecca Hickman, Kimberly Hill, Jody Kelley (Rudd), Anne Kress, Elizabeth Lingg, Lori Mary, Dorothy McHenry, and Nancy Reeder. Many of us got used to seeing these ladies toting around a bag

with a section of the covers in it and working on them during meetings for the 11 years it took to complete the project. It was truly a labor of love and dedication and the efforts of these ladies were greatly appreciated by the congregation.

In addition, congregation members Bill Eicher, Clyde Draughn, Gordon Harvey, Barry Schuliger and Glenn Swisher repaired and painted water-damaged ceilings in the halls. In August, further building improvements were made when carpet was installed and rooms painted in four of the Early Education Center (EEC) classrooms. New lights for Fellowship hall were installed as well as a new sound system. In November, the annual Charge Conference was held. Marne Lane and its ongoing drainage issues were addressed by the Trustees, and plans were continued for the building of a new three-story wing for the church.

By August 2000, the cost estimate of the new wing and other improvements was \$2.2 million after yet more changes to the plans. By November 2000, an updated cost analysis and estimate for the three-story addition had reached \$2.8 million, including architectural and structural design fees, engineering fees, civil engineering fees, furniture, and Prince George's County Permitting and Inspection Fees. Ralph Grutzmacher, an attorney for the County Council, and a member of our congregation at this time, was instrumental in getting the permits, inspections, etc, moving forward, according to Lorri Meadows. Membership stood at 963 persons and our annual budget was \$555,000.

In January 2001, the UMW held its traditional Epiphany Brunch and Rick Adams was named President of the Administrative Board. He was to remain in that position for the next ten years. Also a Parenting Sub-Committee planned and sponsored events for parent education, spiritual enrichment, and social gatherings. The church began offering opportunities for two children's choirs: in addition to the original children's choir for second through sixth grade, a new Angel Choir for four-year-olds through first grade was introduced. Also, the Boy and Girl Scouts began combining their day of service and recognition into one Scouting Sunday in February. In March, the St. Matthew's congregation was afforded the opportunity to enjoy some church history with a tour of Lovely Lane United Methodist Church in Baltimore, Maryland, regarded as the "Mother Church of Methodism" in this region. The Musical Theater Troupe continued their tradition of fine performances with "Iolanthe" in April, and Jody Kelley (Rudd) was named the "Woman of the Year." A Columbarium site was agreed upon in April after consideration of three possible locations.

Also in January 2001, the church was rapidly developing plans for the new Wesley Wing addition. The modified plans specified groundbreaking in April and completion by February 2002. In a presentation to the Administrative Board on April 18, 2001, the Finance Committee proposed a \$2.7 million loan at 7.875 percent interest for 25 years and also proposed to sign a loan agreement with Citizens National Bank for this amount. This loan had a 5-year call provision at which time the bank could change the interest rate and/or call the loan due. As a result of a selection process, which was held in February, the Building Committee recommended awarding Henry H. Lewis the construction contract for approximately \$2.2 million and the Administrative Board approved. Pete Saderholm and Clyde Draughn were selected as our "Project Directors". The contractor used the shelter unit as their site office, and restored it to the condition in which they found it when the building was complete.





Rev. Smith (Fenske) leads groundbreaking with co-chairs Lorri Meadows and Mary Margaret King looking on.



Charter members break ground

The ground-breaking ceremony for the Wesley Wing was held on April 29 at 10:00 a.m. behind the Sanctuary. Lorri Meadows and Mary Margaret King, the Building Committee's co-chairs, turned the first shovelful of dirt, after which they were joined by the charter members, new members from the past five years, and finally the church school classes. See more pictures at the end of this chapter.

The construction of the Wesley Wing began, including renovation of the restrooms near the Sanctuary. Though these projects held the promise of an expanded and improved facility, they also resulted in a good bit of chaos for St. Matthew's members and visitors, as many things such as mail boxes and supplies were relocated for the duration of the project. The restroom renovation meant that people had to use the restrooms by Fellowship Hall, and the Narthex area was frequently in disarray due to materials for the project being placed there. But the congregation persevered as they looked forward to the improvements that were to come.



Wesley Wing workers' response to the Sept 11 tragedy.

By June, the loan papers were signed with the bank.

In July, the church picnic was moved that year to Allen Pond Park. The theme of Vacation Bible School was "Brave Believers." See pictures at the end of this chapter.

September of 2001 saw profound changes not only for St. Matthew's, but for the nation as a whole. The tragedy of September 11 moved the always-generous congregation to take up a special UMCOR offering to assist the victims of the terrorist attacks, and to reflect as well on the truly important things in life.

St. Matthew's held a memorial service to honor the fallen of the Twin Towers. The United Methodist Church began an outreach campaign through commercials aired on television and cable stations with the theme "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors," inviting people of all backgrounds and circumstances to be a part of the family of God.



Clyde Draughn & Pete Saderholm raise the flag for America.



Picture shows Rev. Ginger (not at St. Matthew's yet) blessing the animals. This blessing continues today.

In October, the Musical Theatre Troupe performed a "Top Ten Countdown" musical review of their first 10 shows. An animal blessing service was held in the Memory Garden, giving animal lovers the opportunity to bring in their pets to receive God's blessing. On October 22, 2001, at their monthly meeting, the Trustees decided that they would approve all storage decisions for the new facility (Wesley Wing). The United Methodist Women celebrated their 10th annual craft show in November, and the Charge Conference that year saw a significant change, being held at Mt. Oak United Methodist Church instead of St. Matthew's, where it had been held in the past.

The Trustees "talked" to Jessie Smith about establishing a group with her as a consultant for the church landscaping. In December, the annual UMM's Christmas Dinner Dance was moved from its previous location at the Annapolis Officers' Club to the Bowie Comfort Inn, due to

post-9-11 restriction of access to military posts. St. Matthew's also extended its hospitality to Temple Solel, permitting them to use church facilities for their services on high holy days, and Barbara Hailey left her position as office administrator. Christmas Eve found the ever-moving story told again by our children of Jesus' birth. See pictures at end of chapter. Our annual budget was \$618,300.



Pete Saderholm, James Young, and Clyde Draughn

By the beginning of 2002, the construction had gone well on the Wesley Wing, overseen by the ever-vigilant team of Draughn and Saderholm, who appeared every day on the construction site to make sure our wishes were carried out by the construction team. The building committee toured the addition during its meeting on January 31, 2002, and was "awe struck" by the size of the building.

Early in this year, Mary Mitchell was named 2002 "Woman of the Year," Karen Willis became office administrator, and in April, the Imam Yahya Hendi, Chaplain to Muslim students at Georgetown University, spoke at St. Matthew's on the topic of "Understanding Islam and Muslims." At Easter, our children sang beautiful songs for the congregation. See pictures at end of chapter.



Jim Morehouse, Scot Dahl, Rev. Dick Stetler, Howard Lem, Dave Unnewehr sing in the Men's Quartet plus 1 for the Memorial Day service.

The Musical Theater Troupe performed "Nunsense II", and in May, Pete Saderholm and Dan Blades spearheaded relief efforts for LaPlata tornado victims. Life Time Improvements was awarded the contract to build a new patio in the Memory Garden and to construct a foundation for the new Columbarium. The foundation was laid in June. Also in June, furniture and other items were moved into the new Wesley Wing, and the Marne Lane property was prepared for rental. On June 2, an open house for the Wesley Wing was held after the 11:00 service, and included a "road



map” and refreshments in various rooms. It was followed by covered dish dinner in Fellowship Hall. The preparation of a 40th anniversary booklet began, and that year the church picnic was moved to June 30 instead of July, and returned to White Marsh Park. Vacation Bible School was held in July. See 2002 Vacation Bible School pictures at the end of this chapter.

On July 21, the Memory Garden patio expansion was completed, and work on improvements to the church parlor was begun. Significant changes came to the outside of the building as well, with the beginning of a state project to widen Route 450 that resulted in the loss of the grass parking area in front of the church. The Building Committee asked the Administrative Board to vote on the name of the new Wing on July 10th. The Committee had reduced the choices to three, and the Administrative Board voted for “Wesley Wing”.

On September 8, the consecration of the Wesley Wing was held at last, with District Superintendent Reverend Mary Jane Coleman attending and giving an address. The service recognized the completion of St. Matthew’s fourth major building project. The expansion gave St. Matthew’s greater potential and capabilities to fulfill its mission to serve God and the surrounding community. Construction had lasted approximately a year. The following people served on the Building Committee:

Co-chairpersons: Mary Margaret King, Lorri Meadows

John & Marty Bridgewater
 Bev Burnett
 Bruce Coleman
 Ray Denmark
 Clyde Draughn
 Bill Eicher
 Pete Fauconnet
 Ralph Grutzmacher

Barbara Haddock
 Gordon Harvey
 Aubrey King
 Jim Mott
 Al Romanosky
 Pete Saderholm
 Barry Schuliger
 Rev. Dick Stetler



Wesley Wing

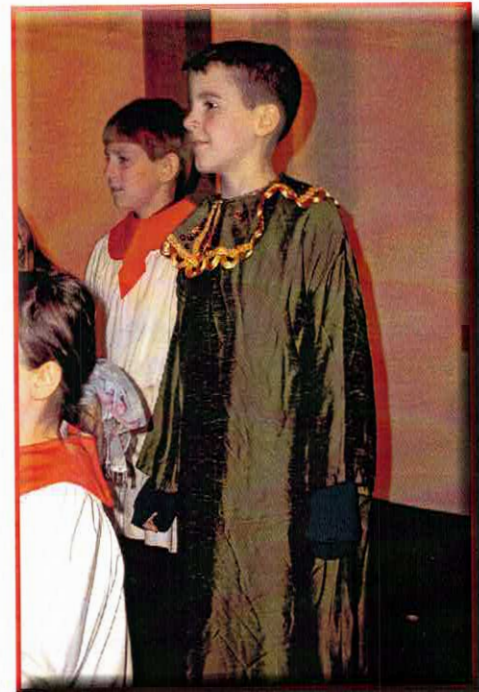
The Parlor Committee:

Marty Bridgewater
 Thelma Harvey
 Casey Kelly

Mary Margaret King
 Lorri Meadows
 Amaryllis Price

The Tavia Wyatt Piano Fund was officially formed this month to work toward replacement of the aging grand piano in the sanctuary. Also in the month of September, the morning coffee hour between the two services was moved from the Narthex to the Fellowship Hall. In October, the Musical Theater Troupe continued their fine tradition with the performance of “Bells are Ringing,” and in December, the children enacted the Christmas story. Our church properties and furnishings were valued at \$4.4 million, and our annual budget was \$809,000.





Yet another project was embarked upon in 2003, with the construction of a Columbarium in the Memory Garden after years of planning since the Columbarium Committee was formed. The Columbarium blends seamlessly into the fabric of the Memory Garden as though it has always been there and provides a beautiful, peaceful final resting place for our members.



Columbarium Committee: Barry Schuliger, Clyde Draughn, Pete Saderholm, Guy Barron, William Eicher, Jessie Smith, Pattie Cone, Pat Clark, Paul Evans, Rev. Pattie Smith Fenske





The Musical Theater Troupe's spring play was "Oklahoma!" and Beth Lingg was named "Woman of the Year." On June 16, a new United Methodist Women's group, the Koinonia Circle, was formed, offering another evening meeting time at the church. On Friday, July 25, lightning struck the church, resulting in damage to the sound and air conditioning systems, as well as disrupting Vacation Bible School, which was being held at the time.



"Nuncrackers." For four separate weeks that year, the Early Education Center expanded by offering a KIDZ KAMP during the summer for three-year-olds through kindergarten. Our annual budget was \$863,700.

The year 2004 began with a special dedication of gifts to the church being held on February 15. This included various items donated by individual congregation members, as well as hymnals donated by the Angel Gang and United Methodist Women. At the January Altar Guild meeting, a suggestion was made that the Chrismons needed replacing. Kay League had recently visited her sister in North Carolina and shared her experience of viewing Chrismons made from gold beads and pearls instead of the styrofoam and braid ornaments we had been using for 20 years. She volunteered to investigate the cost and to report back to the Guild. Thus began a 5-year journey for the ladies of the Altar Guild and others who labored to construct our Chrismons. Ruth Eicher donated \$100 to get the new project started.

In March, the Theatre Troupe presented "Redhead!" and Eleanor Judy was honored as "Woman of the Year." At the March Trustee meeting, Rev. Stetler recommended that the church sign be raised so that it could be seen from the new highway. Chuck McClurg said that he would investigate costs. Within a few months, the cost to raise the sign was deemed too high by the Trustees.

In May, Rev. Patti Smith Fenske conducted a Blessing of the Animals service for the congregation's pets in the Memory Garden. In June, two significant retirements occurred: James Young, who had been the church custodian for 40 years, and Rev. Patti Smith Fenske, the assistant pastor. Rev. Fenske had reached mandatory retirement age for pastors in our Conference, and thus she had to say good-bye to St. Matthew's.

In July, the Rev. Kendrick Weaver joined St. Matthew's as assistant pastor. Raised in this area, Kendrick soon became a much-loved addition to the staff and was our first African American clergy. Vacation Bible School's theme in July was "Power Up." See pictures at the end of this chapter. As a sign of the times, the September bulletins began asking people to turn off cell phones during the service. In addition, webmaster Dick Kaiser began working on church website improvements and Cornerstone Church rented the third floor of the Wesley Wing for one school year while construction was underway at their school.



Kendrick Weaver



Barry and Mike working on the "wall"



Memorial Wall

On the first Sunday in October, the congregation began using a new musical setting for Communion texts, composed for St. Matthew's by Helen Jean Talbott, one of our church members. A new beginner handbell choir was formed, and their first rehearsal was held on November 1. The Musical Theater Troupe's fall presentation was "The Lucky Stiff." Eight St. Matthew's members were on the VIM team to Arcadia, Florida, in the relief efforts from Hurricane Charlie.

Of note, the Trustees voted in November to establish an elementary school grades 1-3 beginning September 2005, and sent their recommendation to the Administrative Board for further study. Kay League, Memorials Chairperson, presented plans to the Trustees regarding the establishment of a "Memorial Wall" to be located in the breezeway between the far end of the Education Wing and the Wesley Wing. The Trustees voted to allow her to proceed with the plans. Jane Greene painted the wall, Kay made the plaques and Mike League and Barry Schuliger hung the plaques and pictures. Our annual budget was \$874,500.

In January 2005, the Sunday morning nurseries were decreased from three to two, divided now into newborns through thirty months, and ages two and a half to six. It was also decided to change the timing of the teddy bears for nursing homes from Christmas to Valentine's day, and in March, Kay League was named "Woman of the Year." The April, the Musical Theater Troupe presentation was "On The Twentieth Century." After reviewing the research studies completed by the Trustees and the Finance Committees, the Administrative Board determined that neither our facilities nor our funding capabilities were adequate to support the Early Education Center expansion of Grades 1-3, or potentially as high as fifth grade. The Administrative Board tabled this issue for the foreseeable future.

On May 29, 2005, the commissioning of our assistant pastor, Kendrick Weaver was celebrated. In July, a team of 14 St. Matthew's persons was sent to Juarez, Mexico, to work on a Medical Clinic. In September, two members were dispatched to Laurel, Mississippi, and in November, six members were dispatched to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina. St. Matthew's sent a large team of youth and adults to Appalachia during July. Vacation Bible School was held in July.





Kendrick Weaver
commissioning

St. Matthew's hosted the installation service of Washington East District Superintendent Reverend Ianther Mills on September 25, and in October the Musical Theater Troupe performed "Nunsense Jamboree."

At this time, St. Matthew's began to experience a sharp decline in attendance. Our membership was listed that year as 751 members and the value of the church and its furnishings was \$4.6 million. Our annual budget was \$917,600.



The first significant event of 2006 was in improvement in church security, when the Trustees, in conjunction with the Early Education Center, installed a visual monitoring system to record movement in the Narthex, Fellowship Hall, and at all exterior doors.

In January, St. Matthew's sent six persons to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, to help repair damage from hurricanes. In February, the church set up an Email Alert System to pass along timely information to congregation members. The Musical Theater Troupe performed "Crazy for You" in March, and Pat Clark was named "Woman of the Year." Also, eight St. Matthew's members were sent on a VIM team to Pascagoula, Mississippi, for hurricane recovery relief from Katrina and Rita.

In April, eight St. Matthew's VIM team members were sent to Juarez, Mexico, to build homes. In June, our church received word that our apportionment (the money our church pays to the Conference based upon our budget two years ago) would be increased to \$100,700, marking the first time that it was over \$100,000.

Over the summer, improvements were made by painting of twelve classrooms and two offices, wooden doors were re-stained, carpets, fabric chairs and pews were cleaned, and the church library was relocated from room 114 to room 123. In July, our ASP team was sent to Summer's County, West Virginia.

On July 3, St. Matthew's Memory Garden was dedicated in honor of Jessie Smith. She was chosen for this honor because she had given so much beauty to St. Matthew's with her loving care of the church's trees, plants, and grounds. Jessie Smith (and her late husband, Bob) had toiled over our grounds since the late 1960s, often with no help. Until the 1990s, Jessie and her team had to drag hoses around our three acres in order to keep our plants and grounds alive. In 1995, the Trustees installed a sprinkler system which made life so much easier. Each decade, Jessie has attempted to resign from her post, but so far, we have been privileged to have her expertise and dedication continue.

The formation of the St. Matthew's Disaster Response Team (DRT) was begun by Dan Blades in September after receiving the approval of the Trustees and the Administrative Board. Also in September, the UMW held its "Welcome Tea." In November, eight VIM team members went again to Juarez, Mexico, to work on the mission house. The Musical Theatre Troupe rounded out the year with the dual performances of "Scenes in Wonderland" and "Wings". See pictures under Theatre Troupe."



The Trustees began to explore lighting fixture alternatives for the Sanctuary. The Environmental Stewardship Committee was co-founded by Jenny Garmon and Elizabeth Buckner during this year. Their purpose was to educate the community about how different aspects of the environment work in relationship to one another and to encourage community members to develop their own sense of stewardship of the Earth. Total membership was 740 persons, and our annual budget was \$947,200.

2007 began with the usual events opening the year. The Angel Gang began a project to raise money through hymnal dedications for the purchase of The Faith We Sing supplemental hymnals in February, followed by the Musical Theatre



Donna Lane and Jody Kelley

Troupe presentation of "Kiss Me Kate" in March. Donna Lane was chosen as "Woman of the Year," and a VIM team of seven was sent to Juarez, Mexico, in April.

In June, the church's assistant pastor, Rev. Kendrick Weaver, left the congregation when he was appointed to serve Glenn Dale United Methodist Church as



ASP team 2007

pastor. In July, an Environmental Action and Awareness Group was formed with Elizabeth Buckner at the helm. Also, Vacation Bible School was held in July. See pictures at end of this chapter, and the youth took their annual ASP trip.

In September, there was a Mission. Also that fall the CROP Walk was moved from April to October. The Musical Theatre Troupe presented "Meshuggah-Nuns," and the Christmas stocking program for children of Prince George's County inmates celebrated its tenth year. The UMW provided its holiday baskets to the needy as they do every year based upon the Communion offering in December. Warm Nights again furnished much needed respite from the cold to needy individuals.



Wrapping presents for baskets & serving at Warm Nights



Jen McClurg

The value of the church and its furnishings was \$4,693,851 and there were 705 members. Our annual budget was \$932,000.

At the beginning of 2008, Jen McClurg joined the St. Matthew's staff as Director of Adult and Family Ministries. Pat Eagan was honored as "Woman of the Year," and Carol Messerli was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award for Christian Service. The Trustees voted to limit the number of new requests for non-church sponsored activities such as scouts and other community groups.



In February, the results of the Sanctuary lighting study were presented to the Trustees by the Lighting Committee. The estimated cost of new lighting was reported to be \$52,469. The Committee was: Joe Anzello, Isaac Borocz, Clyde Draughn, Lorri Meadows, Barry Schuliger, and Howard Waterworth. The Trustees voted to accept the proposal and to proceed to find funding for the project. After a presentation at the next Administrative Board meeting during which the project was approved, Mike League volunteered to run a memorial campaign to raise funds for the new lighting. The system was almost completely underwritten with approximately \$42,000 in member donations through memorials. The new lighting system was essentially completed in September.



ASP team 2008



Left to right: Heather Eisinger, Josh Beringer, Megan Gates, Michael Birkhead, Ashlin Bird, Evangelina Hakes, Nicole Hait, Emily Freeman

The Musical Theatre Troupe's offering was "The Sound of Music" in the spring, and in May, 10 St. Matthew's members went to Juarez to build homes. See pictures in "Missions" section.

In July, Vacation Bible School was held. See pictures at end of chapter. Also in July, we sent adults and youth to ASP.

Under the newly established Adult and Family Ministries position, Jen McClurg featured programs for the children such as "Back to School" in August, Halloween trunk or treating (a version

of trick-or-treating in which congregation members passed out candy to youngsters from the trunks of their cars) and Thanksgiving Feast for the Beasts, to which children were invited to bring a favorite stuffed animal to join in the fun. In September, the Disaster Response Team held an activity day to give help and advice for people to prepare in case of a disaster, and in October, the Theater Troupe performed "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown." November found yet another 12 members going to Mississippi with a VIM team focused on hurricane recovery efforts.

The Christmas story was presented by the children to round out the eventful year. See the pictures at the end of this chapter. Total St. Matthew's members were listed at 674 persons, and our annual budget was \$955,300.

2009 began with an increasingly active Family Ministry holding various holiday parties for the children, which included snacks, crafts, and games, as well as a family movie night. On March 15, Irene Schneider was awarded "Woman of the Year" for her selfless devotion to Missions. She also formed the Narthex Guild this year, which was a committee dedicated to reorganizing the Narthex and ensuring its continued uncluttered look. Benches were installed and the flower book corner was remodeled. This committee was to continue for 2.5 years, disbanding in 2012 by turning its duties over to the Altar Guild.

In May, eight youth were confirmed on Pentecost. The Musical Theater Troupe's spring offering was "Guys and Dolls", and in July, Vacation Bible School was held. See pictures at the end of this chapter. Also that month, ASP volunteers went to Summers County, W. Va. See pics at end of chapter.

August brought a Blessing of the Backpacks ceremony during the 11 a.m. service for the kids returning to school. In September, Feast for the Soul was held to present the year's adult church school classes. Children's Church for kids aged seven years through fifth grade was introduced during the 11 a.m. service.

In accordance with the policy of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, St. Matthew's began a "Safe Sanctuaries Security Plan" program to improve church building security. This new



policy was put into effect August 24, the start of the new school year. The fall Musical Theater Troupe performance was "Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know," and in November, the annual UMW Craft Fair celebrated its 18th anniversary with Lorri Meadows as its organizer.

In October, 11 St. Matthew's persons went to Mississippi with the Maryland House Project, to help build a house for a family recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. "Trunk or Treating" was again presented for the children by Family Ministries. Almost 100 children and adults attended this event.

On All Saints Day, November 1, 2009, approximately 130 gold beaded and pearl Chrismons were dedicated to the people of St. Matthew's by the Altar Guild. A Chrismon is originally a monogram of Christ. Over the years, Chrismons have developed so that now a Chrismon may be a monogram, a sign, a symbol, or a combination of such figures. One requirement is that it refers primarily to our Lord and God. The colors of all Chrismons are white and gold. White, the liturgical color for Christmas, refers to our Lord's purity and perfection; gold, to His majesty and glory. Each Chrismon design has a special meaning to the Christian faith. The use of tiny white lights on the tree points to the Christ as the Light of the world. The evergreen tree symbolizes eternal life. Each lady who worked on this project came away with a reverence in creating such beauty with her hands to dedicate to the glory of God. Memorial funds underwrote a significant portion of the cost of this project over the years. Kay League was the leader of the project, and Elizabeth Zalewski contributed much time and effort. The main Chrismon tree graces our Sanctuary to the right of the pulpit at Christmas time. A Chrismon tree made by children from Vacation Bible School in 2004 sits in the Narthex to greet all who enter.





Review/Overview

As the decade closed, St. Matthew's began an increased focus on growth and development. A special Strategic Planning Conference was held on November 20-22, involving a large number of church members contributing their ideas to enhance worship and appeal to a wider variety of potential new members. This conference was held over a weekend and was organized by Mary McClurg. It turned out to be one of the most important gatherings the church has held.

The Conference produced six priority areas for immediate action with two major tasks to be addressed for each priority area within the next year:

1. Increase participation of all members
2. Youth, young adult, family ministry
3. Technology improvement
4. Establish a common vision (and mission statement)
5. Increase membership
6. Governance and leadership

At a special Administrative Board meeting in January 2010, the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Conference were approved. Our annual budget for 2009 was \$886,800.

The first decade of the new century was an eventful one. Globally, the destruction of the Twin Towers and the occurrence of many natural disasters concerned us greatly. At St. Matthew's, the construction of the Wesley Wing and the Columbarium greatly enhanced our mission to our congregation and the community. St. Matthew's continued to expand its mission efforts and to offer programs for children and adults that were meaningful, interesting and contemporary.

Tasha Bowles-Arnold

Research:

Tasha Bowles-Arnold

Kay & Mike League

Resources:

Circuit Riders

Bulletins

Trustee minutes

Administrative Board minutes





2001 Christmas Program



2002 Bible School



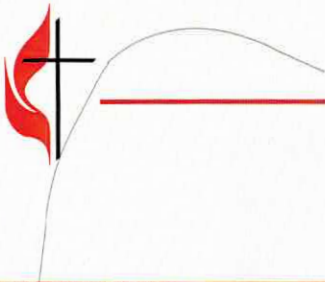


2004 Bible School



2007 Bible School





Wesley Wing





2009 ASP



2002 Easter

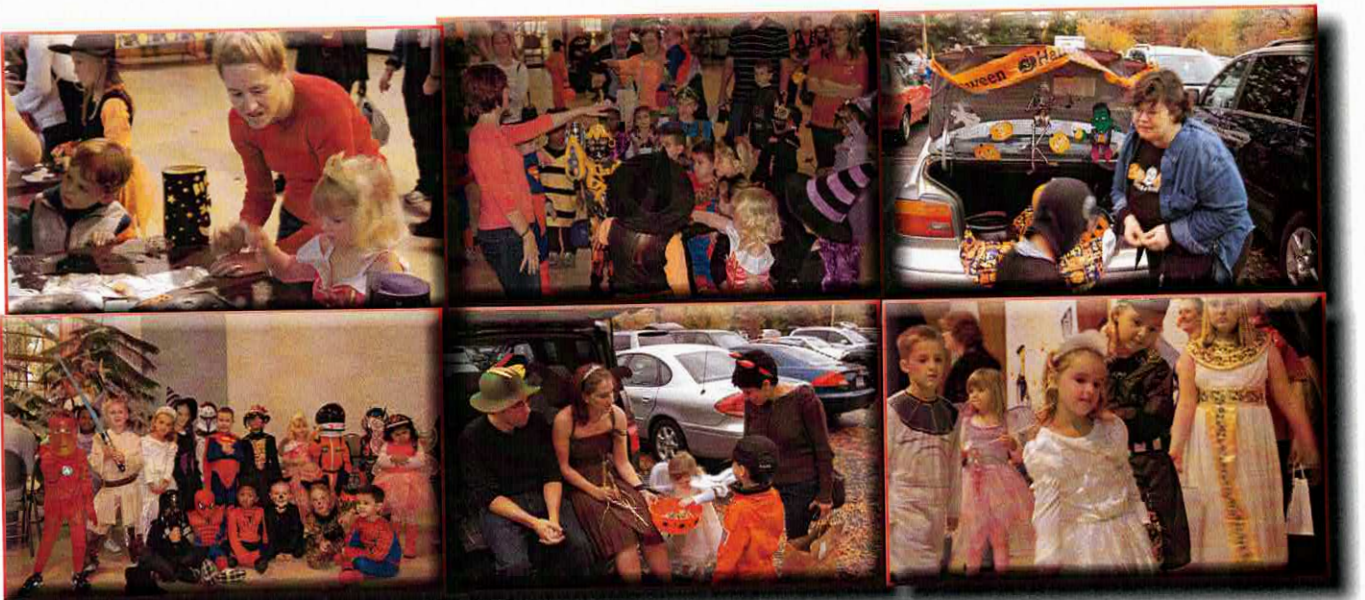




2008 Feast of the Beasts Family Ministries



2009 Trunk or Treat Family Ministries





2008 Christmas





2008 Bible School





2009 Bible School

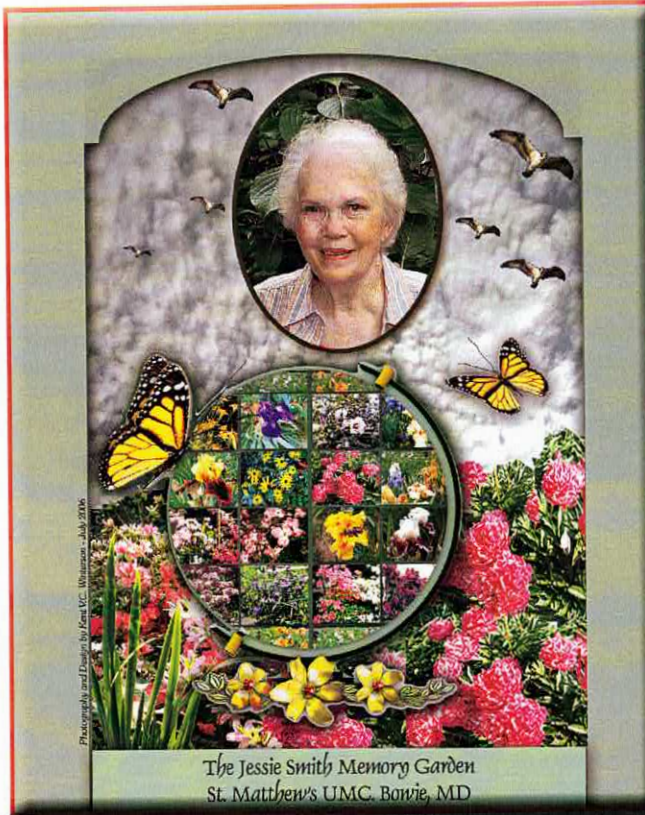


2008 Back to School Family Ministries





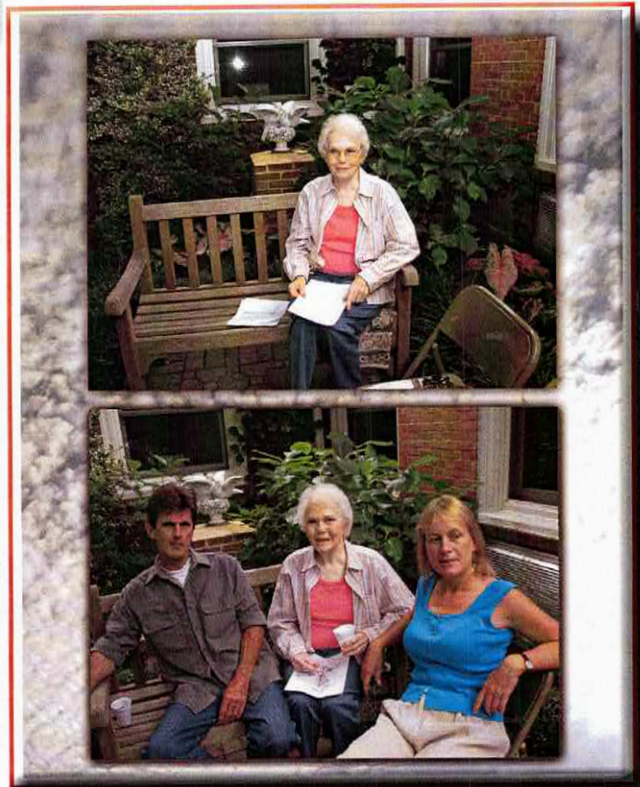
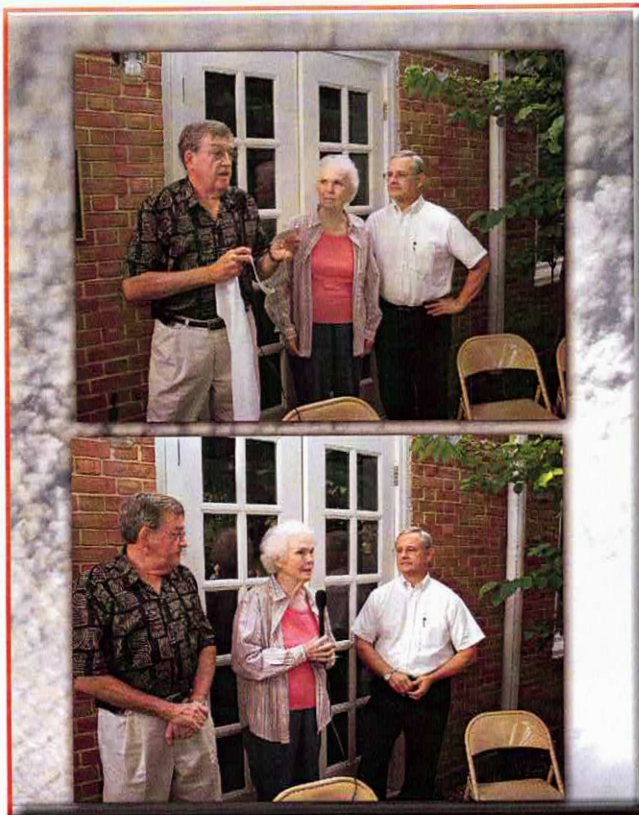
Memorial Garden Dedication



The Dedication of the Memory Garden,
St. Matthew's United Methodist Church,
Bowie, Maryland, in the name of Jessie Smith.



On Sunday, July 30, 2006, during the
7:30 a.m. Memory Garden Service.



Left to right: Jesse Smith
Left to right: Robert and Jenny





2001 VBS

