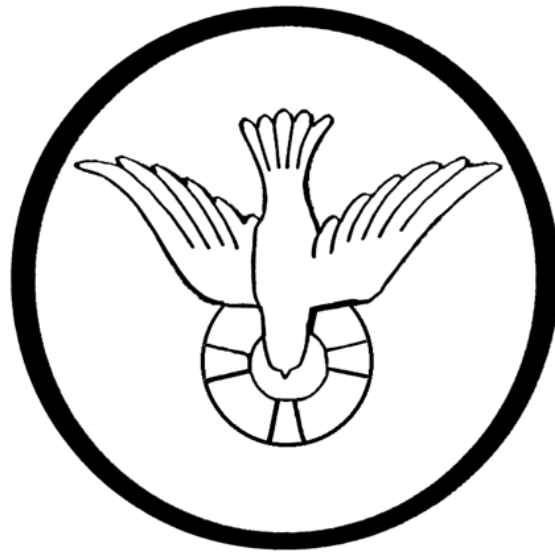


# *Socially Conscious Giving Guide*



*St. Matthew Catholic Church*

*Connected in Christ!  
Moved by the Spirit!*

2010

*Dear Friends,*

*Throughout the year we often become besieged with the consumerism associated with exchanging gifts among our families and friends, in celebration of various events. At the same time we cannot help but be aware of the needs of so many men, women and children right here in our own community. For many of them, a hot meal and a place to stay for the night would be a gift beyond price.*

*Through the efforts of the St. Matthew Peace and Justice Ministry, we are providing a simple catalog of ideas and opportunities to broaden your perspective. Hopefully, these might foster in each of us the spirit of giving to those who, like the Christ Child on the first Christmas, find themselves wanting life's basic needs.*

*As we at St. Matthew strive to become a more engaged parish, I invite you to take a moment and look over the good works that you will find in this catalog. While you may still want to give a gift to your loved ones, I ask that you also consider giving gifts in their name that will foster a spirit of socially conscious giving all through the year.*

*May God continue to bless you always and in all ways.*

*God's Blessings,*

*Reverend Monsignor John J. McSweeney*

*Pastor of St. Matthew Catholic Church*

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704-543-7677 ● [www.stmatthewcatholic.org](http://www.stmatthewcatholic.org)

## A Child's Place

With no permanent residence, homeless children often stop going to school—**the one place that should provide structure in a life of transition**. Without the influence and stability of a classroom environment, these children lose more than a chance to learn. They also lose the crucial sense of belonging gained from interacting with friends and other students. But there is hope for these children—and help—through A Child's Place, founded in 1989, as a collaborative effort between the Charlotte, NC, community and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS).

The goals of A Child's Place are to provide stable, appropriate education to homeless students; to provide support services to enhance their opportunities for academic success; and to provide services to families to ensure long term stability and self-sufficiency

With homelessness involving children swiftly increasing, there is a growing need for monetary donations, individually packaged food items, clothing, and other item donations as well as for volunteers. **Monetary donations** can be made on the website at <http://achildsplace.org> where you also can read about many ways to help throughout the year.

- \$10** Will provide after-school snacks for two homeless children for a week.
- \$25** Will buy a school uniform for a homeless child.
- \$50** Will pay for a dental visit for a homeless child to get a tooth filled.

**St. Matthew Contact: Robin Essenmacher      704-839-1317**  
**Valerie Zerbe      704-910-0737**

## The Angel Tree

The Angel Tree at St. Matthew benefits many organizations throughout our community during the Christmas season. The **donated gifts** go to children from Elon Homes, Smithfield Elementary, Sterling Elementary, Hawk Ridge Elementary, and to families through Charlotte Emergency Housing. Gifts also are given to our RAIN team partners (p. 7) as well as to residents at Holy Angels in Belmont. Wal-Mart **gift cards** enable Senior Citizens to acquire medicine and other supplies. Other recipient organizations include the Mental Health Adolescent Division, Omni Foster Care for abused children and Thompson Children's Center. As the number of parishioners increases, we also seek out additional recipients.

**St. Matthew Contact: Martha Bookout      704-542-6761**

## **Burial Assistance Program**

The Burial Assistance Program is a ministry of Catholic Social Services Charlotte Regional Office (CSS) which began in 1994 when Mecklenburg County discontinued funding assistance for indigent burials. The program assists families with limited resources in the burial of a family member who lived in Mecklenburg County.

CSS provides the social service support and eligibility verification for the program to serve families that have no insurance, are unable to negotiate financial arrangements with a funeral home, and have less than the cost of the burial charged through the program.

For additional information call 704-370-3262 or email [csscro@charlottediocese.org](mailto:csscro@charlottediocese.org). Make a **contribution** online at [www.cssnc.org/burialassistance.html](http://www.cssnc.org/burialassistance.html), then click on Donate Online; or mail a check to: Catholic Social Services, Charlotte Regional Office, Burial Assistance Program, 1123 South Church Street, Charlotte, NC 28203.

## **Christ Our Shepherd Ministries**

Christ Our Shepherd Ministries exists to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children of single and two parent households. All activities focus on sharing the love, compassion and word of Our Savior, Jesus Christ with a goal of improving the quality of life for the single parent and the community at large. Tune in to Cable Channel 21 in Mecklenburg County at 10:30 a.m. on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays to watch “The Single Parent TV Talk Show.” To **volunteer** or **donate**, visit the website at <http://www.cosministries.org/page1-home.htm>.

**St. Matthew Contact: Julie A. Jahn**

**704-845-4673 x202**

## **Family Assist Program**

The St. Matthew Family Assist Program requests Wal-Mart and Target **gift cards** to share with parish families. Gift cards help cover a variety of needs including prescriptions, medical needs and/or clothing, as well as allowing those in the parish community who are ill, families with children, or who have special dietary needs, the opportunity to purchase household products and perishable health-conscious foods.

**St. Matthew Contact: Sharon Davis**

**704-543-7677 x1018**

[swdavis@charlottediocese.org](mailto:swdavis@charlottediocese.org)

## Food Pantry

The Food Pantry maintained at St. Matthew provides gift baskets to Catholic Social Services at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter and to parishioners as needed. Non-perishable items are collected the first weekend of each month and stored in the basement beneath the Daily Mass Chapel. **Volunteers** help sort the donated food the first Monday of each month. **Gift cards** from area grocery stores also are used to supplement the gift baskets and items in the Food Pantry.

**St. Matthew Contact: Brenda Lehtinen 704-541-1551**

## Friendship Trays

Friendship Trays is a community program utilizing volunteers to deliver hot meals to shut-ins throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg. **Volunteers** are needed to pick up meals for delivery between 11 and 11:30 a.m. – [www.friendshiptrays.org](http://www.friendshiptrays.org).

<b>\$22</b>	Provides meals for one person for a week.
<b>\$90</b>	Provides meals for one person for a month
<b>\$585</b>	Provides meals for one person for six months.

**St. Matthew Contact: Robbin Burris 704-847-8058**  
**Patti Olejniczak 704-443-5150**

## Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity helps build low-cost housing for a needy family and provides meals for workers each weekend during the construction phase. St. Matthew has completed 6 Habitat houses.

**Books to Bricks Project:** Professional & Youth groups all over Charlotte are joining hands with the Habitat for Humanity Charlotte ReStore and organizing "**Books to Bricks**" book drives. Any type of book is fine as long as it is in decent condition—no dictionaries or encyclopedias please. More information at <http://www.charlotterestore.org/>

The **Charlotte ReStore** sells the books at Julia's Coffee & Used Bookstore (1133 N Wendover Rd) at a modest price. All the proceeds are donated to Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte. To date 51 affordable home ownerships have been funded by the sale of ReStore donations.

**St. Matthew Contact: Bob Wilcocks 704-542-1541**

**Jeff Wilson                      704-846-2847**

### **Homeless Shelters**

☀ At the **Uptown Men’s Shelter** a group of parishioners prepares and serves dinner on the second Saturday evening of odd-numbered months and lunch on the fifth Saturday of any month. **Volunteers** also serve at the shelter front desk and sort and distribute clothing.

A quarterly November, February, May, and August) **collection** at St. Matthew of men’s underwear is delivered to the Uptown Men’s Shelter for distribution to their residents and clients. Any time during the year they can use the following items:

Men’s underwear	Small soaps
Socks	Toothpaste and toothbrushes
Gently used jeans	Deodorant
Flip flop shower shoes	Gently used shoes
Belts	

An extended list of items needed for the Uptown Men’s Shelter is available at [www.uptownshelter.org/howtohelp.html](http://www.uptownshelter.org/howtohelp.html)

**St. Matthew Contact: Tom Ellis                      704-907-8372**

☀ The **Center of Hope**, housed at the Salvation Army, is a 24/7 facility for women and children who are homeless. The St. Matthew Women’s Guild organizes a collection of bed and bath linens and toiletries for the Center of Hope. An extended list of items needed is at [www.salvationarmycharlotte.org](http://www.salvationarmycharlotte.org).

**St. Matthew Contact: Sylvia Panicara                      704-576-4671**

### **Lunch To Go**

**Volunteers** prepare and deliver sandwiches and cookies twice weekly to the Union County Community Shelter for residents to take with them to work. The shelter provides temporary shelter, food, and basic services to homeless men, women, and families. Call for a list of specific items they might need at the holiday season.

**St. Matthew Contact: Colleen Touranjoe                      704-841-9344**  
**Marie Lander    704-849-8211**



## **Missionaries of the Poor**

The Missionaries of the Poor (MOP) is an international monastic order of Brothers dedicated to Joyful Service with Christ on the Cross to serve the poorest of the poor. The order was started in 1981 by Father Richard Ho Lung and has now grown to more than 500 brothers. MOP has free missions around the globe with the main home in Kingston, Jamaica, where they maintain six apostolates, two monasteries and a retreat house. The Brothers also serve the Lord with their acts of mercy in India, the Philippines, Haiti, Uganda and Kenya.

The Brothers welcome visitors to come and **join them in their work**. And, they welcome **contributions and food donations**. For eight years St. Matthew has collected food and shipped it to Haiti where MOP Brothers distribute it to residents of their mission homes and to people in the community. Teams and individuals from St. Matthew have made mission trips to Jamaica and Haiti since 1998.

In 2008 the Brothers opened Guardian Angels Monastery in Monroe, NC, their first mission house in the United States.

At the MOP website [www.missionariesofthepoor.org](http://www.missionariesofthepoor.org) you will find a list of items always needed as well as music CDs and books for purchase.

**St. Matthew Contact: Peter and Lucie Tonon 704-814-9528**

## **RAIN Regional AIDS Interfaith Network**

RAIN is a Charlotte-based non-profit organization that works with groups of individuals (called **Care Teams**) from faith communities to support persons living with HIV/AIDS. Care Teams provide practical, emotional and spiritual support to a Care Partner (an individual living with HIV/AIDS). Members of the Care Team provide assistance to one or more individuals or provide specialized tasks such as transportation, pastoral care, or companionship. RAIN currently has 64 Care Teams serving 74 Care Partners. In addition, 85 individuals are being served by RAIN's Pastoral Services staff and over 14,000 people have benefited from HIV/AIDS prevention and education programming.

St. Matthew has been a loyal supporter of RAIN for over 10 years and currently has one operating Care Team. RAIN needs committed, available people to share their time and talent by being good listeners, caregivers and friends. What a wonderful gift of self and community. We could all use a little RAIN!

**St. Matthew Contact: Helen Fritsch 704-543-0446**

## Refugee Resettlement Ministry

The Refugee Resettlement Ministry **adopts refugee families** during their first six months in this county. Services include welcoming the family at the airport, donating home furnishings and money, furniture pick-up and delivery, food, and friendship.

**St. Matthew Contact: Bill LaMay                      704-995-0002**

## Urban Ministry Center

In the beginning there was only a soup kitchen. By 1994, the needs of the poor and homeless of our city had grown substantially, and that need was met by the establishment of the Urban Ministry Center (UMC).

Where would you go if you were homeless, hungry, sick, dirty, mentally ill or addicted? What if you lost most of your possessions, your ID and had no transportation or family? Thankfully, there is the Urban Ministry Center. This center provides Charlotte's homeless population with an array of services, including:

- **SOUP KITCHEN** — Serving lunch daily totaling 106,000 meals a year.
- **SUPPORT SERVICES** — An on-site social worker, showers, laundry, prescription and many more services that assist our neighbors to move towards greater self sufficiency.
- **COUNSELING**
- **HOMELESS HELPING HOMELESS** — The voice of the homeless whose mission is to educate and achieve security and success through advocacy, social and political action.
- **ROOM IN THE INN** — Providing over 14,000 beds for the homeless.
- **MOORE PLACE** — Charlotte's first permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless men and women.

Find the items most needed on the UMC Wish List at [www.urbanministrycenter.org/donate/wish-list](http://www.urbanministrycenter.org/donate/wish-list).

The Urban Ministry Center's annual holiday honor card is a wonderful way to honor the birth of Jesus by directly helping the least of our brothers and sisters. The holiday card features artwork by an artist in the UMC's art program. When you send in your donation you can request to have the cards sent to you for mailing or for the cards to be mailed by UMC in your name. Details at [www.urbanministrycenter.org](http://www.urbanministrycenter.org) after October 1.

**Contact: Lauren Cranford                      704-926-0622**  
[development@urbanministrycenter.org](mailto:development@urbanministrycenter.org)

## Additional resources for a Socially Conscious Christmas

**Fair Trade:** A commitment to building relationships. The fair choice is the right choice. The daily decisions we make as a consumer can make a real, positive difference in the world. When we choose to buy fair trade products we are making a strong connection with hardworking, but impoverished workers around the world. Learn more at the Catholic Relief Services website [www.crsfairtrade.org](http://www.crsfairtrade.org).

Alternatives for **Simple Living:** Equipping people of faith to challenge consumerism, live justly and celebrate in responsible earth friendly ways at [www.simpleliving.org](http://www.simpleliving.org).

**Heifer International** provides livestock, trees, training and other resources to help struggling families build sustainable futures. Gifts range from \$10 for a share of a goat to \$500 for a heifer. For more information and/or to place your Christmas orders, go to [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org).

**Crisis Assistance Ministry (CAM)** offers holiday cards for purchase in lieu of traditional gifts. The festive cards feature the artwork of several children whose parents received emergency financial assistance at CAM. View the cards at [www.crisisassistance.org](http://www.crisisassistance.org).

**Volunteers** also are needed to interview, to file, to sort clothing, and/or to work in the clothing store.

**Matthews Help Center** provides care for families and individuals in meeting life's basic needs. They accept monetary donations as well as clothing and/or household item donations for their *Backporch Treasures* thrift shop. Details at [www.matthewshelpcenter.org](http://www.matthewshelpcenter.org).

**Kiva** is a person-to-person micro-lending website, empowering individuals to lend directly to unique entrepreneurs around the globe. To learn more about loans that change lives go to [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org).

**Project Have Hope** works to empower women in the Acholi Quarter of Uganda by providing education to both the women and their children and by assisting the women in establishing opportunities to promote economic stability and sustainability. One way to help is to buy Acholi jewelry made from recycled paper. Find out about hosting a bead party at [http://www.projecthavehope.org/html/host\\_a\\_bead\\_party.html](http://www.projecthavehope.org/html/host_a_bead_party.html). Information about Project Have Hope is at [www.projecthavehope.org](http://www.projecthavehope.org).

## SEASONS OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR

*ADVENT*, a season of hope as well as penance, begins the liturgical year on the fourth Sunday before Christmas.

*CHRISTMAS* begins with Christmas Day, goes through Epiphany (the Twelve Days of Christmas) and concludes with the Baptism of the Lord.

*LENT* is sometimes described as the “Church on retreat”. A season of fasting, prayer and almsgiving, Lent is a time to reflect on how well we are living out our baptism.

*THE TRIDUUM* or PASCHAL TRIDUUM (three days) begins with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday and concludes on Easter Evening.

*EASTER* is the season following Easter and concluding on Pentecost Sunday.

*ORDINARY TIME* is the only liturgical season that comes in two sections. The first begins with the Baptism of the Lord and goes until Ash Wednesday. The second follows Pentecost and concludes with the Feast of Christ the King.

The table below shows the dates for these feasts and seasons for the next ten years.

TABLE OF MOVABLE FEASTS

Year	Ash Wed.	Easter	Ascension	Pentecost	Weeks of Ordinary Time				1 <sup>st</sup> Sun. Advent
					Before Lent		After Pentecost		
					Wks	Ends	Wks	Begins	
2010	Feb. 17	Apr. 4	May 13	May 23	6	Feb. 16	27	May 24	Nov. 28
2011	Mar. 9	Apr. 24	June 2	June 12	9	Mar. 8	24	June 13	Nov. 27
2012	Feb. 22	Apr. 8	May 17	May 27	7	Feb. 21	27	May 28	Dec. 2
2013	Feb. 13	Mar. 31	May 9	May 19	5	Feb. 12	28	May 20	Dec. 1
2014	Mar. 5	Apr. 20	May 29	June 8	8	Mar. 4	25	June 9	Nov. 30
2015	Feb. 18	Apr. 5	May 14	May 24	6	Feb. 17	27	May 25	Nov. 29
2016	Feb. 10	Mar. 27	May 5	May 15	5	Feb. 9	28	May 16	Nov. 27
2017	Mar. 1	Apr. 16	May 25	June 4	8	Feb. 28	26	June 5	Dec. 3
2018	Feb. 14	Apr. 1	May 10	May 20	6	Feb. 13	28	May 21	Dec. 2
2019	Mar. 6	Apr. 21	May 30	June 9	8	Mar. 5	25	June 10	Dec. 1

## ADVENT ACTIVITIES

Remember the true meaning of the Advent season, Jesus' birth, by slowing down your pace and enjoying time with family and friends. Consider adding one of two of the activities below to your family's plans this year.

- Invite someone who lives alone to share a meal with you during Advent.
- Involve your children in helping to refurbish neglected toys and books and/or helping to buy inexpensive new ones to donate to a Christmas toy collection for those less fortunate.
- Make a date to spend family time viewing Christmas lights, writing Christmas cards, and/or celebrating an Advent wreath service.
- Encourage your children to create their own greeting cards.
- Celebrate St. Nicholas' Day (December 6) by having your children leave their shoes out at night to be filled with fruit and chocolate coins.
- On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8), honor Mary by praying the Rosary or reading or telling a story about her life.
- Discuss the true meaning of the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas"  
[<http://www.holytrinitynewrochelle.org/yourti102896.html>]
- Bake a Baby Jesus birthday cake and share it on Christmas Eve.

### *Christmas Prayer*

Lord, your birth brings great joy to the world. you are truly Emmanuel, God with us. As we begin this celebration, bless this day, this food, our family, and our friends. Bless all who travel this day and every day as you blessed the shepherds and wise men who came to adore you. Bless all who are alone or homeless, as you were homeless at your birth. Bring peace to the earth. Teach us to be kind and gentle. May we always share your love with everyone we meet until the day we join you for the eternal feast in heaven. Amen.

—*Catholic Seasonal Celebrations, 1989*

## SAINT JOSEPH'S DAY – MARCH 19

The foster father and protector of Jesus and his mother, Mary, Joseph has long been viewed by Catholics as the epitome of patience, strength, and fatherhood. A seemingly ordinary man, Joseph was selected by God to accept a responsibility greater than what was asked even of Abraham and Moses: the care and nurturing of the Son of God.

Saint Joseph's Day is a good time to:

- Pray for your own father; if he is living, try to call or visit
- Pray for your pastor, another "father" in your life
- Invite a father who is alone to have dinner; if he is a single father, invite his children too

- Say a prayer of thanksgiving to your Father in heaven
- Give thanks for work and the ability to provide for your family
- Pray for the grace and strength to be a good father, husband and provider.

## FINDING EVERYDAY HOLINESS IN LENT

- Remember your own Baptism. Share memories of Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation among your family. Think about what it means to be part of the Body of Christ through these sacred moments.
- Bless your children. If you do not do so already, let Lent be a time to begin blessing your children by making the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads as a reminder of our connection to God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Clean out, give away. Make traditional spring-cleaning symbolic of the interior cleaning of clutter that Lent calls all of us to undertake.
- Practice and seek forgiveness. If you are not ready to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation, participate in your parish's Lenten Penance service.
- Work for justice. Explore the Church's documents on social justice. Investigate, discern, and get involved. Find the lists of documents on the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' website at <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/foundationdocs.shtml>.
- Simplify. Try to keep things uncomplicated as a family and rediscover the simple joys of being together.
- Pray. Offer a brief prayer of praise in the morning and in the evening. Start, return to, or continue praying the Rosary. Spend quiet time listening for God's voice.

### *Easter Prayer*

Risen Savior, I go forth this day to practice your love and to share it with others. May I do nothing I will regret, nothing that offends you, nothing that harms others in any way. May I celebrate your Resurrection each and every day. May I see your face in every person I meet and extend to each great hospitality and love. May I be a light that brightens the way for others as they make their way to you. And when my life is over, may I be with you for all eternity. Amen.

—*Catholic Seasonal Celebrations, 1989*

## **St. Matthew Peace and Justice Ministry**

The **Peace and Justice Ministry** meets on the first Wednesday of October, December, February, April, June, and August.

**Mission Statement:** The Peace and Justice Ministry of St. Matthew Catholic Church strives to shine a light on injustices as well as to educate and to engage our parishioners and our community on ways to achieve justice for every human person.

- As a part of this mission, we have assembled this Socially Conscious Giving Guide.
- A DVD and facilitator's guide for the **Immigration Forum** presented February 12, 2008, at St. Matthew is available in the parish library. These materials can be used by individuals or small groups to explore the complex legal and moral issues at the center of the immigration debate.
- Look for additional workshops and events in the parish bulletin and on the St. Matthew website at [www.stmatthewcatholic.org](http://www.stmatthewcatholic.org).

For more information on the Peace and Justice Ministry, contact coordinator Terri Jarina at [tjarina@windstream.net](mailto:tjarina@windstream.net) or 704-243-4431.