



ST. MATTHEW'S

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Circuit Rider

February 2021

Volume 58, Issue 2

Lent at St. Matthew's 2021



SHROVE TUESDAY

Shrove Tuesday is February 16. Our Pancake Supper will look different this year. We will provide a drive-thru take-home dinner for you and your family from 5-7 p.m. All donations will go toward our

ASP mission trip. Watch for more details! For questions or to volunteer, please contact Becky Roper by phone or at beckyroper@stmatthews-bowie.org.

Ash Wednesday is February 17. Join us for a special on-line service at 7 p.m. for this important day in the church calendar.



On the Wednesdays of Lent, beginning February 24, there will be a **special on-line book study** at 7.30 p.m. after the Simple Prayer Service. Magrey R. deVega's book, *Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Uncertain Times*, will be the centerpiece for this series. Books will be available through the church office for \$7. Isaac will lead the study each week through the **Wednesday after** Easter (April 7). A special Zoom link will be made available closer to the date.



Please join us as we celebrate Lent through our Lent take-home bags. Pick up a bag containing a Lent Devotional and items to guide you through Lent for the adults. In a separate bag for children, there will be a Devotional and Family Activity Calendar. Bags will be available for pick-up during **drive-thru Communion on February 7** and in the narthex beginning February 8. If you are unable to pick up a bag, please contact Becky Roper to arrange a porch drop-off.

A Message from Administrative Council Chair



As January comes to a close, it's a good time to update everyone on the activities of your St. Matthew's Administrative Council. As the

acting chairperson for 2021, I commit to providing a regular reporting from our group.

Pastor Vacancy

With the departure of Rev. Mark Schaefer at the end of December, we moved into a transitional pastoral time. Our bishop will make an appointment for a new pastor for us; until then, "pulpit supply" will continue to be provided by our Conference, as we have seen in January with Rev. Katy. Our SPPRC is working with the Cabinet (which includes the Bishop and several appointed ministers for the Baltimore-Washington Conference) to ensure our needs are met.

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Message from Administrative Council, continued

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For now, Dr. Johnsie Cogman (our District Superintendent) is considered our acting pastor, and is tasked with providing pastoral care for St. Matthew's. Dr. Cogman asks that all of St. Matthew's be in prayer regarding our upcoming appointment. You may reach out directly to Dr. Cogman; her contact information is:

email: jcogman@bwcumc.org

work cell #: 202-365-4994

You may also reach out to Isaac and Becky by calling the church or emailing them at isaacborocz@stmatthews-bowie.org and beckyroper@stmatnews-bowie.org, respectively.

Return to Worship

While COVID has been keeping us apart, the first availability of the vaccine brings us hope. As of this writing, our area is taking reservations for folks in phase 1B and 1C of the vaccine schedule. Some of our congregation have already received their first injection, and others are signed up. Efforts are underway to offer assistance to those who need help in registering and/or establishing appointments. Watch for more details.

Naturally, we prefer to worship in person, but right now that's not possible. However, the Return to Worship Task Force is still in place! Once local government restrictions ease (or the schedule for their easing is announced), the Task Force will resume its work to define and implement plans for safe in-person worship. Jane Thessin continues to coordinate worship assistants (readers, etc.) for our remote services, so please reach out to her to volunteer to help. We remain very grateful to the rest of the team who ensure we can continue to worship remotely on Sundays and Wednesdays.



Financial Status

St. Matthew's received a \$69K Federal PPP (COVID-relief) loan in May 2020, and we have received word this loan has been forgiven; we do not appear to be eligible for a PPP2 loan.

The EEC has applied for a PPP2 loan, and if approved it would allow the EEC to continue to make rent payments to the church while operating at reduced capacity.

The Ad Council has approved an interim budget for 2021. Due to the mortgage reduction campaign, it is hoped/expected that the mortgage would be paid off by the end of 2022. The finance committee has requested that the conference permit a reduction in apportionments for 2021 and 2022 in order to obtain a balanced budget.

EEC Operations

The Early Education Center has been able to continue its in-person operation at about 50% capacity. Since children and teachers are present Monday through Friday, please remember to use the main church entrance (the Narthex doors) when you visit the church, wear a mask, use the sanitizer by the Narthex doors, and limit your access when inside the facility. As 7-9 a.m. is a very busy time for the EEC, please plan to arrive **after 9 a.m.**

Thank you for your continued support (in prayer, financially, and by your actions) which enables St. Matthew's to continue to function during this challenging time. Please stay safe, as I am looking forward to seeing you back in worship later this year!

Lisa Wilson
Acting Chairperson
Administrative Council

A Poem by Rev. Michelle Mejia

In those days...

The familiar story begins,
a decree went out...

And my brain wanders off.

I wonder what it meant to be
living in those days?

Is it, at all, similar to these days?

These days of exhaustion
as

silly little emperors
declare ridiculous things
gasping their last breaths.

As their grip slips
from power
they grasp tighter
their fingernails still piercing through
the skin of others
clutching for all their might
to the ghost of glory.

Is it, at all, similar to these days?

When people are dying
all over the world
the suffering is so great
and yes

so many people care
but it seems like
just as many
if not more
Don't.

Is it, at all, similar to these days?

When anger fuels
their maskless faces
propping up arms bearing arms
Protests of Me. My. Mine.
Rights. Resistance.
and Reopen McDonalds now,

so I can eat crunchy fries
while your grandmother
dies alone.

Is it, at all, similar to these days?

Where hunger grows
and cold nights lengthen
and people long for work
that makes their heart sing,
or at least
work that puts food on the table
and for a warm bed at night.

Is it, at all, similar to these days?

When hate-filled faces
scale public spaces,
an armed mob of
contemptuous, smug,
white supremacist gazes
on full display
lounging in halls of power
is whiteness
terrorizing the powerless
under the guise of
freedom, law, and order.

Tears flow for all these days.

Anger burns for all these days.

Weariness weighs upon all
these days.

But even in those days

Despite those days

Specifically, in the face of those
days

Something incredible came to be.

In those days,

A son was born.

For whom there was no room.

And yet some made room.

The son grew up

In those days

And was baptized.

A son, the Beloved of God.

And more knew their own
belovedness.

The son lived

With justice and kindness,
compassion and love,

in a way no other had ever done
in those days.

Fully. Truthfully. In Shalom.

And more joined the way.

So in these days

That are all so terrible,

As the tears flow

and the anger burns

and the weariness weighs

Remember those days too.

Move over.

Make some room.

Beloved, you know the way.

Put your hand in mine

And let's walk together.



Rev. Mejia is pastor at University United Methodist Church.

Reprinted with permission.

UMW Meetings

Friendship Circle will meet by Zoom on Monday, February 8. Join us at 12:30 p.m. to socialize and stay for our business meeting starting at 1. Look for the link in your email and direct any questions to Beth Obear.

Koinonia Circle will meet on Monday, February 15 via Zoom at 7 p.m. Contact Lisa Klein for an invitation to attend.



Morning Prayer To Start The Day



Morning Prayer Call

Morning Prayer Call is a ministry by phone. Begin your day **"remembering who we are and whose we are, one in Christ Jesus."** Join us for 15 minutes Monday through Saturday at 6:30 a.m. See dial-in instructions on page 12.

Our Prayer for Love, by Mother Teresa:

"Prayer in action is Love, Love in action is Service. Amen.

Romans 12:10 - Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

February Prayer Leaders: (In week order) Irene Schneider, Peter Saderholm, Bill Schneider, Ray Orocco-John

If you are interested in joining our team of prayer leaders, please contact Irene Schneider. We would love to have you work with us. Grow your spiritual connection with God in preparation and delivery.

We hope you will join us soon. "May peace prevail on Earth."

In Love and Gratitude, *Irene Schneider*
Prayer Team Coordinator

February International Prayer Focus



In Syria, the movement of refugees has become seriously restricted. The nation is surrounded by walls built by five nations. Those wishing to flee from violence and other injustices now are limited in finding their way out. Read more stories [here](#).

Seek the power of prayer and witness God's presence as healing prayers are answered.

Children and Youth

Children can attend Sunday School via Zoom and our youth are meeting each Sunday. For more information, please contact Becky Roper at beckyroper@stmatthews-bowie.org.

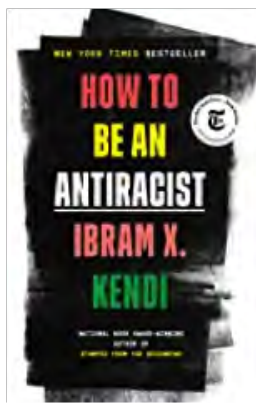


Adult Education

During February, Jim Wiedman will continue his series on *Wisdom in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament*. The class meets via Zoom at 9 a.m. on Sundays.

Christian Book Club

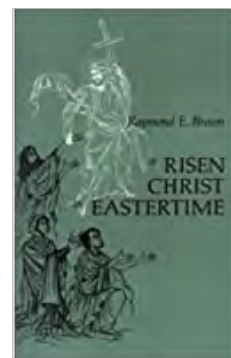
The February meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, February 16. This is the day before Ash Wednesday, aka Shrove Tuesday, Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras, or Fasching.



The book, suggested by Mark Schaefer, is Ibram X. Kendi's *How to be an Antiracist*.

The March meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 16. and

the book is Raymond E. Brown's *A Risen Christ in Eastertime*.



Contact Isaac at isaacborocz@stmatthews-bowie.org to get a link to attend the discussion.

Social Justice - Dr. King's Relevance to Us Today

On Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, I was reading some of [his quotes](#). Here are a few that really spoke to me, for they address issues we are still facing today as a nation and call us each to a better person:

- "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."
- "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"
- "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend."
- "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."
- "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."



An article on www.resourceumc.org, [Making the 'Dream' a Reality: The legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.](#) discusses how King's legacy matters to United Methodists.

Marian Eisinger, Lay Leader

Social Justice - LGBT+ Community

Breaking Down the Acronym: T

This month, we will be talking about the fourth letter in the LGBT+ acronym: “T” for transgender.

A transgender person is someone whose psychological gender does not correspond with their birth sex. This means that a trans man is a man who was assigned female at birth (afab) while a trans woman is a woman who was assigned male at birth (amab). “Transgender” is sometimes used as an umbrella term for all gender nonconforming (gnc) people, or anyone who doesn’t fit into the gender binary; this includes typical trans people as well as people who are non-binary (aka people who don’t identify as either male or female), genderfluid (people whose gender identity is not fixed, who may feel more male some days and more female other days), and agender (people who are genderless).

The term “Transgender” was only coined in the mid-20th century, but this doesn’t mean trans people didn’t exist before 1970. Human civilizations from across the world have a long history of gender nonconformity. What makes this history uniquely different from LGB history is that many societies actually had traditional or spiritual roles within their power structures specifically made for gender nonconforming individuals. From the people of the Balkans who swore off sex to become socially recognized as men, to the pre-colonial African tribes (like the Igbo and the Nuba) with important religious roles for people seeking to switch sexes, all the way to the genderless priests of ancient Mesopotamian cultures, the traditional third and fourth genders still acknowledged across all of Polynesia, the hijras in India, and the two-spirit Native Americans (both of which are socially recognized third genders that still exist to this day within those societies), there is no shortage of people throughout history who do not conform to the modern idea that there are only two genders/sexes. That said, terms like “transgender” and “non-binary” specifically cater to the modern gender binary, and therefore should not be used to label historical people from societies where gender was not considered a binary matter.

As with most other LGBT+ issues, transgender activism really started at the turn of the 20th century. Several isolated cases of transgenderism and gender nonconformity cropped up across the world from the Medieval period to the modern era, but by the 1890s, enough people were writing about it for scientists to take note of the phenomenon. Thus came the Institute of Sex Research, founded in Berlin immediately after WWI: a scientific and medical research facility that advocated for LGBT+ rights and performed several gender reassignment surgeries for transgender people across Europe. It was disbanded in 1933 by the Nazi party; all of their groundbreaking research was burned, and the members, scientists, and patients were tracked down and sent to concentration camps. This forced transgender activism into obscurity. But come the 1960s, trans activism re-emerged into the public eye alongside other LGBT+ activists. And like



St. Matthew's in Mission

Warm Nights



200 lunches were provided to Warm Nights during the week of Christmas.

Tom Eisinger pictured



News from Our Missionaries and International Partners

[Princess Jusu](#), Liberia, Women's Leadership Training Center

[Miguel Mairena](#) and [Nan McCurdy](#), Mexico: [Give Ye Them to Eat](#)

[Helen Roberts](#), Liberia, General Education and Ministry: [November Newsletter](#), [Christmas Letter](#)

St. Matthew School, Logan Town, Liberia: 95 students graduated on January 15, 2021. Classes have started for 2020-21.

Mission Work is Alive!

The mission of Missions is alive at St. Matthew's during COVID. It may look a little different, but it is still loving and serving, and needs you. There is an opportunity for everyone to safely participate. Check out the [2021 Mission Summary](#) to see where you might want to get involved. Please pray for these missions and watch the Midweek Messenger, church alerts, and Circuit Rider for ways you can get involved. If you are unable to safely come out, we will find a way for you to be safely involved from home. Please contact Missions@stmatthews-bowie.org to volunteer or discuss questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Little Free Pantry Update

Thank you so very much for stepping up to see that our hungry neighbors were helped. In 2020, you donated many items for the LFP and \$3,220; all of it was used. The LFP is often nearly empty and it takes on average several reusable grocery bags of food each day to replenish it. In December, the LFP was listed on www.cityofbowie.org/food and received a [\\$1000 grant](#) from [Crescent City Charities, Inc.](#)



Thank You...

Thank you, St. Matthew's family, for your prayers, cards, and condolences for my two brothers.



Good wishes and blessings for the new year.

Gratefully and Lovingly,
Olive Domingo and Family

Lectionary Readings for February 2021

February 7 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31, Psalms 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39

February 14 – Transfiguration Sunday

2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalms 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Mark 9:2-9

February 17 – Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, Psalms 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10, Matthew 6:1-6

February 21 – 1st Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9:8-17, Psalms 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15

February 28 – 2nd Sunday in Lent

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16, Psalms 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38

Life Changes

Births:

Layla Amelia Abril-Monroe born December 30, 2020. Parents are Gabrielle Monroe and Jacinto Abril-Caballero and proud sister is Gianna Monroe (pictured). Grandparents are Ruthie and Dave Monroe; great-grandparents are Mary Ann and Joe Anzallo.



Landon Carroll born December 2020. Parents are Alicia and Jeff Carroll; big sister and brother are Alyssa and Ryan.

Deaths:

Marion "Celeste" Bedwell, long-time member of St. Matthew's (died December 22).

Dan Wise, husband of Marion Wise and long-time member of St. Matthew's (died December 27).



Mabel McGann, mother of Kathi Flammang and grandmother of Allie, Matthew, and Lauren. Long-time member of St. Matthew's and the UMW (died January 21).

Patricia Schneider, sister of Bill Schneider (died January 24).



Please join us in wishing those in our church family who are 80 and older a very Happy Birthday!

February 02 – Gloria Swisher
February 03 – Marilyn Hammond
February 04 – Barbara Rooney
February 05 – Edward Riekert
February 10 – Joan Cyphers
February 22 – Olive Domingo
February 26 – John Jones

EEC Corner



Hello St. Matthew's Family,

February is a very busy month at the EEC. This is the time when we typically open our doors to potential families and show off our amazing early childhood program. Unfortunately, we have had to redesign the format of our open house to accommodate restrictions due to COVID-19. However, we are up to the task. Through the use of multiple technology tools, we have recreated the experience of an in-person school tour virtually. If you are interested in learning more about the EEC, check out our website at www.stmatthewseec.org. Here you will find grade-level tour videos hosted by our very own teachers and an FAQ section. If you know someone interested in registering at the EEC, they can also submit an Admission Inquiry Google form to set up a private appointment.

Registration for the 2021-2022 school year begins Wednesday, February 3. For more information, call the school office at 301-464-1813.

Christin Vare, EEC Director



Around the Church



The Altar Guild continues to amaze us with their beautiful altar decorations for the seasons. We are thankful for their talent and thoughtfulness.

St. Matthew's is blessed to have our January Pulpit Pastor, Rev. Katy Hinman, in our midst! She and Becky Roper did the honors with drive-through Communion distribution in January.



Breaking Down the Acronym: T

Continued

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all of the social movements championing civil rights from that era, the issues regarding trans rights are still being fought for to this day.

Some notable transgender people in history include radiology pioneer Alan L Hart, gospel singer Wilmer Broadnax, actress Laverne Cox, directors of “The Matrix” the Wachowski sisters, decorated Union soldier Albert Cashier, and author and activist Janet Mock. There are many more gender nonconforming individuals throughout history who are theorized to have been transgender, non-binary, or a third gender—like Joan of Arc (who swore she would never dress in women’s clothes unless God told her to) or the Pharaoh Hatshepsut (who was depicted as fully male in several pieces of artwork despite being born a woman)—but because these people died long before the modern terminology regarding trans people came into use, it is impossible to say whether or not they would have considered *themselves* transgender.

Finally, when interacting with or talking about transgender people, it is of utmost importance to use the name and pronouns they ask you to use. Respecting a trans person’s pronouns is the first and *most important step* to show your trans friends, trans family members, and the trans community that you care about them. Being mindful of our trans brothers, sisters, and siblings is one of the most important things that we, as a Reconciling Church, can do to help make our community a safer place for trans people to exist.

Beck Hastings

To Ponder ...

Even with the last presidential election in the rearview mirror, this quote is worth our consideration:

October 6, 1774

I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them

- To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy,
- To speak no evil of the person they voted against, and
- To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side.

John Wesley



The Circuit Rider is published monthly by St. Matthew’s United Methodist Church

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Editorial Staff: Sharon Heidenreich, Kim Huffman, Beth Obear

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circuitrider@stmatthews-bowie.org

Articles are due by the 15th of each month. Please e-mail articles to the above address or submit to the church office.

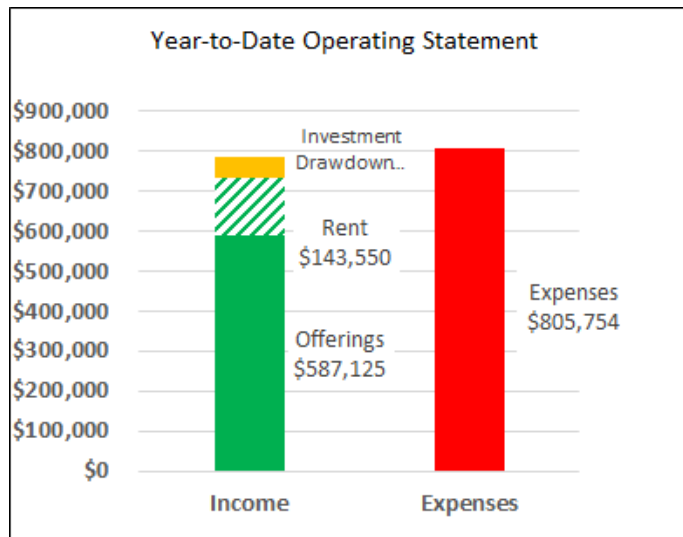
Please call to verify receipt of any faxed articles.

Finance Report: St. Matthew's Finances at a Glance

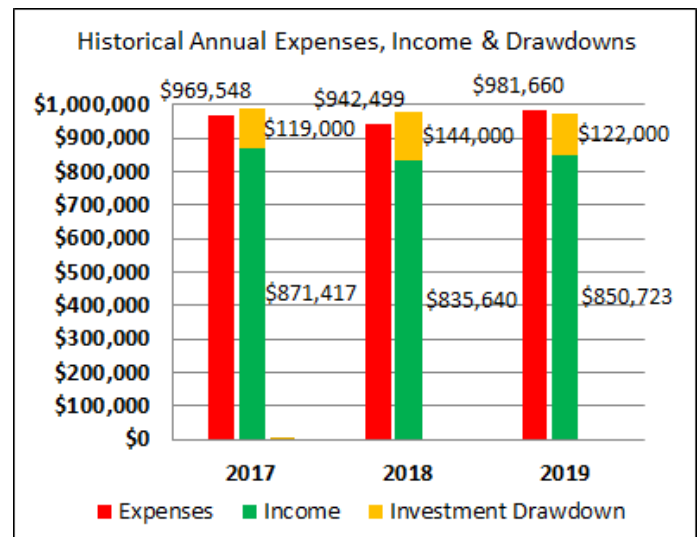
St. Matthew's Finance Committee works very hard to prepare reports for the Administrative Council. It is the Council's desire to share our financial status with the congregation on a monthly basis. Please direct any questions to our Finance Chair, Ray Orocco-John, at finance@stmatthews-bowie.org.

Click here for
Online Giving

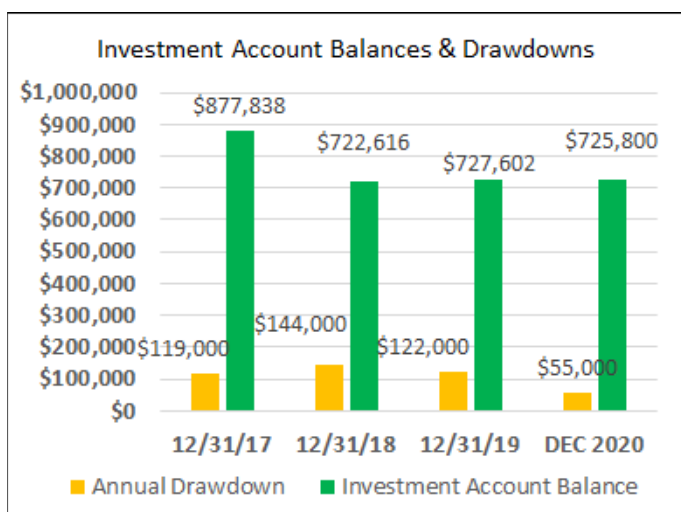
ST. MATTHEW'S FINANCES IN GRAPHS (December 2020)



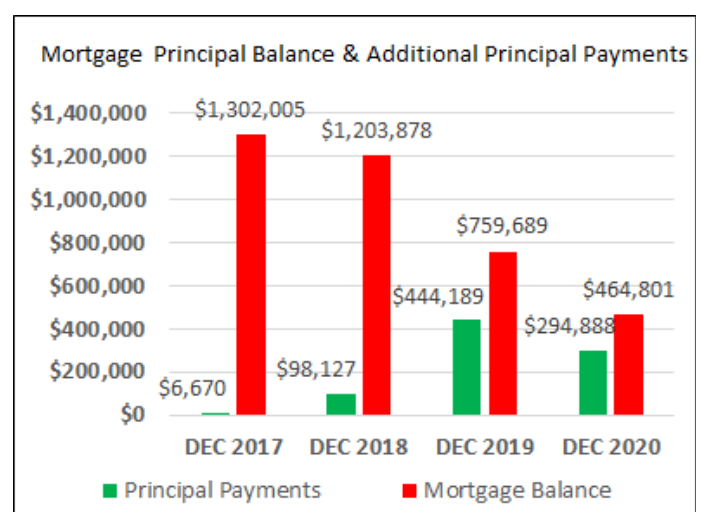
GOAL: Operating income should be greater than or at least equal to operating expenses



GOAL: To not need to draw down our investment portfolio to pay for routine operating expenses



GOAL: To allow our investment portfolio to grow by not needing to use it to pay for routine expenses



GOAL: Mortgage burning party on December 31, 2021



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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
STMATTHEWS-BOWIE.ORG

Facebook: stmbowie

Time Dated Material
Please Deliver Promptly



Weekly Schedule

Sunday 10 a.m. Worship

The Order of Worship is emailed and posted on the web site and Facebook

Live-stream:

- [St. Matthew's UMC Facebook](#)
- [St. Matthew's UMC Website](#)

Zoom: email georgewood@stmatthews-bowie.org

Call-In: 712-775-7031, code 111-576-270#

Wednesday 7 p.m. Simple Prayer Service

The Order of Worship is emailed/posted as done for Sunday.
Live-stream and Call-in (see Sunday Worship)

Daily

6:30 a.m. Morning Prayer (except Sundays)

Call-in 712-775-7031, code 111-576-270#

Daily Devotional (except Wednesdays)

Posted on Facebook by 8 p.m.

St. Matthew's Welcome Statement

Inclusive Community. Connecting in Christ. Making a Difference.

St. Matthew's UMC is an inclusive church, connected to our community, and committed to welcoming all persons in every phase of church life. We choose to live by Christ's example, affirming that all people are created in the image of God.

We celebrate our diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, age, marital status, nationality, physical abilities, mental abilities and economic position. Through the Spirit we commit to live in the words of John Wesley to "love alike though we may not always think alike."

Wherever you are in your faith journey, you are welcome here.