Lent Worship and Events

All services and gatherings will be virtual except for Simple Prayer Services.

Simple Prayer Service, Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
St. Matthew's will welcome up to 20 congregants to attend each Simple Prayer Service in March. COVID protocols will be followed. Watch for information on how to sign up each week.

Lenten Book Study, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Isaac and Dr. Johnsie Cogman (see page 2) in the study of Magrey R. deVega's book, Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Uncertain Times. Books are available in the Church Office for $7. The study runs through Wednesday, April 7. The Zoom link is: http://bit.ly/WedsLentStudy or call in to 301-715-8592 and enter Meeting ID: 958 3099 6378 and Passcode: 608998.

Palm Sunday, March 28 at 10 a.m.

Looking Ahead to Holy Week:
April 1, Maundy Thursday Service at 7 p.m.
April 2, Good Friday Services
  12 Noon: Focused on Stations of the Cross
  7 p.m: Led by youth from St. Matthew's and Bowie UMC
April 4, Easter Sunday Service at 10 a.m.
April 7, Final Lenten Book Study at 7:30 p.m.

March 5 is World Day of Prayer

Join us for prayer on Friday, March 5. That day, special for Christians around the world, is known as World Day of Prayer and takes place each year on the first Friday in March.

This year’s prayers will focus on the inhabitants of Vanuatu, a country made up of islands that is located in the South Pacific Ocean.

St. Matthew's United Methodist Women will lead the prayer gatherings via Zoom at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Zoom links will be published in the March 4 Mid-Week Messenger and sent out in an alert.
An Update from the St. Matthew's Administrative Council

Pastor Vacancy
As announced at the February 14 service, St. Matthew’s has been assigned a new full-time pastor beginning July 1 (see page 4). Dr. Johnsie Cogman (our District Superintendent) is continuing to act as our interim pastor until then. We have been blessed to have Rev. Katy Hinman as our "pulpit pastor", and to know that she will be staying with us through Easter!

For pastoral care, you may reach out directly to Dr. Cogman (who prefers to be addressed as "Dr. C"); her contact information is: 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@stmatthews-bowie.org, respectively.

Financial Status
Additional mortgage reduction donations have been received, and the outstanding balance has decreased to $441K. (See article on page 10.) The Early Education Center (EEC) received a second Federal PPP (COVID-relief) loan, and Fall registration is underway. It is anticipated that the EEC will be able to continue to make the normal rent payments to the church while operating at reduced capacity.

Several large, unbudgeted repairs to the church property were necessary in January resulting in an operating loss for the month. (See the Trustees’ report on page 9.) Apportionments and all other invoices have been paid. No funds were removed from the investment account in January, but the investment account balance was down due to market performance.

Thank you for your continued support, which enables St. Matthew’s to continue to function during this challenging time.

Lisa Wilson
Acting Chairperson
Administrative Council

Dr. C is our DS … and Interim Minister

Rev. Dr. Johnsie W. Cogman, who goes by "Dr. C", serves as the Washington East District Superintendent of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church, which means she's St. Matthew's "DS". As well, during our pastoral transition, she is our Interim Minister. Be sure to read her biographical sketch – there are lots of accomplishments, both in ministry and in life. But, she wants you to know that she is a child of God, saved by grace, redeemed by the blood, delivered from suffering, forgiven through mercy, walking in wisdom, living by faith while proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ though the actions in her life.

"This is the day that the Lord has made and I WILL REJOICE in it!"
New Wine for Old Wine Skins

The facts are clear:

- Over the past decade, we have had four senior pastors and are now expecting a fifth. Membership has declined by over 50% in this period. No new appointment has changed this trend!
- We, like many others, are an aging congregation.
- Our demographics are badly out of sync with our changing community.
- COVID has masked these issues and other issues since we have not met in person for almost a year.
- Underlying this, of course, are the ongoing divisions in the denomination itself. Fully 25% or more of local UM churches have indicated they plan to disaffiliate with the denomination.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference has created a project called the Catalyst Initiative to encourage and support local congregations seeking to address these challenges. Resources are limited. The Lilly Foundation has provided a grant to the Conference to help about 100 churches catalyze their strategies to address these tough trials. St. Matthew's has applied, as have hundreds of others. The survey you were asked to complete is part of that application. Be hopeful.

However, whether we are or are not successful in gaining additional conference resources, we MUST act to define a path forward. Simply continuing to do as we have done will not work. A new pastor is essential but not a "silver bullet." We must engage.

We need renewal! Working together to remove the albatross of mortgage debt is a tremendous first step in finance. Creativity in other areas must be as bold. We have great strengths, but they are diminished.

Bowie is a mission field awaiting witness, service, outreach, and collaboration. What would the community miss if St. Matthew’s ceased to function? We have become an old wineskin now in need of new wine in the form of fresh ideas, new plans, programs, and the next generation of Christian leaders.

Gary Allen, Lay Leader

Kudos to Katy!

We're excited that Katy will be the pulpit pastor for St. Matthew's through Easter! She has been a blessing!
New Pastor Appointment

As announced on February 14, Rev. JW (JongWoo) Park has been appointed to St. Matthew's effective in July. Rev. Park is currently finishing his eighth year as the Central Maryland District Superintendent, and he has served four churches in Maryland since beginning his ministry. JW's wide-ranging background includes a M. Div. at Wesley Theological Seminary and MBAs in the U.S. and Korea. His ministry focus is making disciples of Jesus Christ, and bringing harmony and reconciliation among the people. He has a high interest in racial harmony, inclusiveness, and justice issues. JW has extensive experience working with multi-racial congregations through cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. He is astute with financial management. JW's wife, Rev. Dr. HiRho Park, is also an ordained clergy of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference. Read more about JW in his biographical sketch, and look for information about how St. Matthew's will welcome him and his wife.

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 am. See dial-in instructions on page 12.

Our Prayer for Wisdom: Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

March Prayer Leaders: (In week order) Pastor Galen Menne, Bill Schneider, Irene Schneider, Bill and Irene Schneider, Mary Jennings.

If you are interested in joining our team of prayer leaders, please contact Irene Schneider. We would love to have you work with us.

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

With Love and Gratitude, Irene Schneider
Prayer Team Coordinator

March International Prayer Focus

In Ethiopia, government control of the country may have a plan in mind that includes starvation as a weapon of war. Crops in the field have been burned and livestock were slaughtered. With farmers losing crops and animals, more persons are now hungry. This now has become a major concern as starvation had already been on the rise. Read more stories here.

Seek the power of prayer and witness God’s presence as healing prayers are answered.
Christian Book Club

The Book Club meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. on a Zoom link that is available from Isaac Borocz.


The book for April 20 is Rowan Williams' *Luminaries: Twenty Lives that Illuminate the Christian Way*.

Adult Classes

Sunday School

Jim Wiedman continues his series on *Wisdom in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament*. The class meets via Zoom at 9 a.m. on Sundays. Y'all come!

Lenten Book Study

Isaac Borocz and Dr. Johnsie Cogman are leading the study of Magrey R. deVega's book, *Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Uncertain Times*. Join them on Wednesdays at 7:30 via Zoom. More details are given on page 1.

Local Community Mission Work

For the second time, used the church's truck to deliver about 1600 lbs of chicken from the *Bowie BaySox’s Mega Chicken Truck Load Sales* event to the *Capital Area Food Bank*.

Provided 124 Hot Beverage Treat Bags (coffee, tea, hot chocolate and condiments) to *Bowie Food Pantry* and *Little Free Pantry*, thanks to the donation of Coffee Hour supplies and gifts from members.

Provided hygiene and cleaning supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, hats and scarves, and comforters to *CHAMP House Recovery, Inc.*

Donated $1725 ($1225 congregational donations and $500 from the Missions budget) to *Bowie Food Pantry*; the *Pantry’s February Newsletter* included a thank-you: “Words cannot express the depth of gratitude we feel for all those who have supported us since COVID-19 took over our lives last March.”

Donated $500 to *Mission Central* for Covenant support.
Guatemala Library Usage During Covid

During Covid (Jan./Feb. 2021), Impacto Ministry has used the library in several ways to benefit the community. St. Matthew’s continues to provide book resources and Internet support for the library:

On February 8, Impacto Ministry shared on their Facebook page: “Today is a wonderful day! We are starting Stitches of Blessings after almost one year! We are continuing with the women from last year as they were only able to receive two or three classes. We are doing smaller groups each day so that we follow guidelines put in place by the [Guatemalan] government. Please pray we will continue to stay open so that the women may learn and receive their machines this year.”

Impacto Ministry is providing laptops and helping with Internet so that Guatemalan pastors and others have access to the virtual Bible Institute. Several U.S. churches have stepped up to provide the needed infrastructure.

News from Our Missionaries and International Partners

Miguel Mairena and Nan McCurdy, Mexico, Give Ye Them to Eat: February Newsletter

Helen Roberts, Liberia, General Education and Ministry: Liberia Education Dec 2020 Update

Operations Classroom: December Thank You

St. Matthew School, Liberia: Provided $2000 ($1000 congregational donations and $1000 from the Missions budget) for scholarships; “Greetings from St. Matthew UMS Logan Town”

Impacto Ministry, Guatemala: December Thank You

Global Ministries: Missionaries Thank You

Missionary Prayer Focus: jointly launched by the Prayer and Mission Teams; check it out monthly for our missionaries' and international partners' specific needs.
Breaking Down the Acronym: Q

So far, we have defined the four major identities in the LGBT+ acronym: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Although many may think that the acronym stops there, there are actually three more major identities that are commonly included in the acronym, especially when cited by fellow LGBT+ people: queer, intersex, and asexual. These three were only added to the acronym in the '80s-'90's, though they existed long before then. This month, we will be talking about Q for queer.

Today, Queer is generally used as an umbrella term for any and every sexuality and gender minority—otherwise known as everyone who is not cisgender or heterosexual. In essence, the term "queer" can be used as a self-descriptor by anyone within the LGBT+ community, and is also often used interchangeably with "LGBT+". If someone refers to "the queer community," "queer people," etc., you can rest assured that they are referring to all LGBT+ people.

Use this link to a full article to read more about the term queer and its history.

Beck Hastings

UMW Meetings

Friendship Circle will meet by Zoom on Monday, March 8. Join at 12:30 for social time and at 1 p.m. for the business meeting. Look for the link in your email. Feel free to invite others who would like to spend some time with other women of the church! For questions, contact Beth Obear.

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

Life Changes

Deaths:
Barbara Mills, wife of Richard Mills and long-time member of St. Matthew's (died February 4).

Thank you:
Our heartfelt thanks to all who sent us their love and thoughts of kindness through cards and prayers at the passing of our sister Patricia Schneider OSB. She lived and loved through the life she chose as a nun in the Order of St Benedict. We all have another Angel looking after us.

Blessing to you all, Bill & Irene Schneider

Pat Young - March 1
Phyllis Jensen - March 7
Walter Shifflett - March 8
Marty Bridgewater - March 14
Loretta Statham - March 20
Jean Arvin - March 21
Lee Jensen - March 21
Betty Ciomei - March 26
Jean Baker - March 27
Judy Springer - March 28
Marty Cronlund - March 30

Please join us in wishing those in our church family who are 80 and older a very Happy Birthday!
Dear St. Matthew’s Church Family,

Did you know that March is National Reading Month? In honor of Dr. Seuss’ birthday, March is designated National Reading Month—a month to motivate Americans of all ages to read every day. Reading is fun and has many benefits, regardless of your age. It’s a key component of education and also has immediate and long-lasting health benefits, such as increased cognitive function, memory, vocabulary, and empathy as well as decreased levels of stress.

We would like to announce a new cooperative program between the church and the EEC called “Storytime Fridays”. We are looking for church members that are interested in having themselves recorded reading an age-appropriate story for our young EEC learners. The school will provide thematically related literature from which you can choose, or you can share an old favorite, and we’ll schedule you for a recording session at the church. We will then share your recorded book reading with our preschool classes.

While this program was in the works a year ago, and we were hoping to have guest readers in every classroom, we decided that this was something that could still be accomplished through the benefits of technology. If you are interested, please contact Becky Roper at beckyroper@stmatthews-bowie.org or Marian Eisinger at marianeisinger@stmatthews-bowie.org for more information, or to schedule your recording session.

Happy Reading,
Christin Vare, Director, EEC
Trustees Have Been Busy

The St. Matthew's Board of Trustees continues to care for and keep your church alive and well. We were very busy in January, addressing several items needing repair or replacement:

- The red fire hydrant, located by the back driveway by the playground was replaced. ($8,000)
- The pump for the Sprinkler system in the Wesley Wing quit working and had to be replaced. ($6,800)
- While in the Sprinkler Room, the contractor told me there was a Black Widow spider over my head. Of course, I didn't believe it, so he took a picture. We had the "Bug" man come out and spray everywhere. No More Spiders! ($200)
- The sprinkler heads in the Wesley Wing (all 3 floors) were filled with rust and dust. We had them all cleaned. ($4,772)

In addition, we had toilets fixed; fire extinguishers checked, replaced, and tagged; and heaters in the EEC office and in the Wesley Wing repaired.

All in all, we've kept busy. At our January meeting, each Trustee was assigned an area of the church to monitor for cleanliness/neatness. Don't be surprised if you hear from us on your area.

I would say this is a reasonable list of repairs for an almost 58-year-old building. If you have questions/suggestions for the Trustees, you can e-mail trustees@stmatthews-bowie.org, or contact me in the Church Office on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Blessings, Jackie Gerard, Chair, Board of Trustees

Curbside pancake pickup!
Sunsetting Our Mortgage: Where We Stand at the End of 2020

St. Matthew's incurred its mortgage in 2003 when we built the Wesley wing. The original balance was about 2.2 million dollars. The congregation had steadily reduced this amount to $1,157,017 when we kicked off our mortgage campaign in March 2019 with the ambitious goal of paying off the mortgage in 3 years. Retiring the mortgage would mean freeing up $114,000 per year for church programs, deferred church maintenance, and missions.

By July 2019, our parishioners pledged nearly two-thirds of the funds needed to retire the mortgage.

- Total Pledged: $786,819

By the end of December 2020, the campaign stood as follows:

- Pledge Money paid to date: $548,587 (about 70%)
- Number of Pledges paid in Full: 34
- Pledge Money Remaining: $238,231

The mortgage balance on December 31, 2020 was $464,801.

**Big If’s**

IF we collect all of our remaining mortgage pledges, and if the principal portion of our monthly bank payment continues to pay down the principal at the current rate, the remaining balance in December 2022 will be $30,000.

IF your family budget permits, please consider accelerating payment on your pledge. The faster the pledge money comes in, the more of our monthly payment goes to debt retirement and less to interest to the bank.

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**Lectionary Readings for March 2021**

March 7 – 3rd Sunday in Lent
Exodus 20:1-7; Psalms 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

March 14 – 4th Sunday in Lent
Numbers 21:4-9; Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-18

March 21 – 5th Sunday in Lent
Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalms 51:1-12
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

March 28 – Passion/Palm Sunday
Liturgy of the Palms:
Matthew 21:1-11; Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29

Liturgy of the Passion:
Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalms 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11;
Matthew 26:14-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54
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.

ST. MATTHEW'S FINANCES IN GRAPHS (January 2021)

**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
14900 Annapolis Road
Bowie, Maryland 20715-1898
Phone: 301-262-1408
E-mail: churchoffice@stmatthews-bowie.org

WE’RE ON THE WEB!
STMATTHEWS-BOWIE.ORG
Facebook: stmbowie

Weekly Schedule

Sunday 10 a.m. Worship
The Order of Worship is emailed and posted on the website and Facebook
Live-stream:
  • St. Matthew’s UMC Facebook
  • St. Matthew’s UMC Website
Zoom: email georgewood@stmatthews-bowie.org
Call-In: 301-715-8592 Mtg ID: 996 0251 9769 Passcode: 14900

Wednesday 7 p.m. Simple Prayer Service
The Order of Worship is emailed/posted as it is 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


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.