



ST. MATTHEW'S

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Circuit Rider

March 2024

Volume 61, Issue 3

Holy Week



Join us for special
worship and events during Holy Week.

Saturday, March 23 Lenten Brunch 10 a.m.
See details in article in next column.

Sunday, March 24 Palms and The Passion 10 a.m.
*Worship in the Sanctuary with Liturgy of the Palms
and the Passion according to Matthew*

Wednesday, March 27 Soup/Salad Supper 6 p.m.
Special Simple Service 7 p.m.
*Supper in Fellowship Hall, then worship in the Sanctuary;
call-in to listen (see p. 12). The service will focus on an
aspect of the cross and will last about 30 minutes.*

Thursday, March 28 Maundy Thursday 7 p.m.
*Meal at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, followed by handwashing,
communion, and time in the garden, weather permitting*

Friday, March 29 Good Friday 7 p.m.
*The Chancel Choir will offer a cantata "Return to Me" with
scripture, hymns, and prayers.*

Saturday, March 30 Messy Church, Egg Hunt
See details on page 4. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Sunday, March 31 Easter 7 and 10 a.m.
*Early Service at 7 a.m. in the garden, weather permitting,
then breakfast at 8 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Regular service
at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary with Communion, followed by
Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall.*

Lenten Brunch

**Saturday,
March 23
10 a.m.
Fellowship Hall**



*All Men and Women are invited
for Food, Faith, Fellowship.*

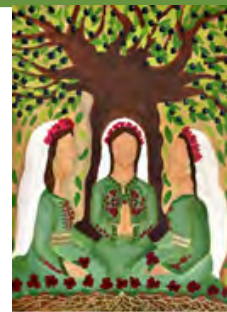
Speaker: Rev. Dr. HiRho Park
*Freewill Offering, no RSVP needed
Please join us!*

World Day of Prayer

**Friday, March 1
1 p.m.**

Join us in the Sanctuary on
Friday, March 1 for the
2024 World Day of Prayer
service. This year, our
prayers will be lifted up for the country of
Palestine.

The program is based on Ephesians 4:1-3:
I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love.
The service will be on Facebook at 7 p.m.
Read about Palestine's history [here](#).



Rev. Park's Pastoral Pondering



Dear St. Matthew's family,

Hallelujah, Christ is risen. Christ is risen, indeed!

As we approach this sacred and joyful season of Easter, I am grateful for the incredible gift of love and salvation we have received through the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Easter is not just a day of celebration; it is also the heart of our Christian faith, a time when we are reminded of the boundless grace and mercy that God extends to each of us.

"And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (Isaiah 25:7-9)

In the story of Easter, we find the essence of the Gospel - the good news that though we were lost, we have been found; though we were dead in our sins, we have been made alive in Christ.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved."

(Ephesians 2:4-5)

The resurrection of Jesus is a testament to God's power to conquer even death itself, offering us hope that extends beyond the troubles of this world, reaching into the promise of eternal life.

This Easter, let us join together as a community of believers to celebrate Jesus' victory over death, marvel at the depth of His love for us, and recommit ourselves to living out that love in our lives. Let this be a time of renewal for us all, a season to refresh our faith, look to the future with anticipation, and embrace the new life that comes through Jesus Christ.

I encourage each of you to take time during this Easter season to reflect on the sacrifice Jesus made for us, the power of His resurrection, and the hope it brings to every moment of our lives. Whether you are going through a period of joy, struggle, or transition, know that the message of Easter is one of ultimate triumph—of light over darkness, life over death, and love over all.

Join us for our Easter service as we worship together, share in the joy of our risen Lord, and reach out in love to those around us. Let us spread the hope of Easter far and wide, living as people of the resurrection, whose lives are transformed by the incredible reality of Jesus' victory.

May the peace and joy of Easter fill your hearts and homes this season and always.

*Blessings,
JW Park*

Administrative Council Update from February



Please note that Administrative Council meetings are open to the congregation, even when we are holding them via Zoom during times of COVID precaution. If you wish to attend, please contact Chuck Hastings for Zoom details; however, be advised that discussion and voting are limited to Ad Council members. A list of the members of the 2024 Administrative Council can be found [here](#).

Financial Status

Offerings were \$43.3k for January, which is \$5.4k under budget for the month. Total income was \$56.5k, which is \$12.5k under budget (including budgeted \$6.5k monthly withdrawals from investments). Total expenses for January were \$69.1k, which is \$0.1k over budget, including extraordinary expenditures of:

- \$1.7k for fire and elevator inspections,
- \$1.1k for Liberia scholarships,
- \$2.4k for snow and ice prep and removal,
- \$1.3k for quarterly Medicare supplement reimbursement, and
- \$1.5k to clear the UWF restricted account.

There was an operating loss of \$12.6k for January. The investment account ended the month with a balance of \$633.5k, down \$300, although no funds have yet been transferred from investments for the year.

Average weekly attendance in January was 142, down from the Christmas-month high of 190 in December. Copies of the January financial reports are available in the Narthex.

Communications Focus Group Initiatives

The Communications Focus Group provided updates on the priorities defined last year. Watch for notifications about updates to the Church

Directory. Check out our new Directory of Services to understand more about our church's many activities and services, and whom to contact with questions or for more information. It is available on our website under "About Us"; hard copies are also available from the Church Office or at the Welcome Desk. Additionally, updates are in process to our church's website, with more to come!

2024 Budget Messaging

A small team is being formed to effectively communicate information about the approved 2024 budget and its projected shortfall. The team will also work to define a plan to overcome the current budget challenges and prevent future recurrences of the necessary investment withdrawals.

Records Management

An additional small team has been formed to review our many church records, including who generates them, where they are located, how they are stored, retention priorities and requirements (as mandated by the Book of Discipline and government entities), and the recommendation of a central electronic storage policy/method. Initial work by this team has resulted in the definition of the objectives, plan of approach, and resources needed. Look for more updates about this exciting work!

Thank you for your continued support of St. Matthew's! I look forward to seeing you in worship!

Lisa Wilson

*(sitting in for Chuck Hastings, Chairperson,
Administrative Council)*

Children and Families

Messy Easter, Easter Egg Hunt

Join us as we focus on the last days of Lent through arts and crafts and how Jesus surprises us in all that he does. **Messy Church** welcomes everyone to share in Jesus' ability to love us for who we are, despite our failures, weaknesses, and fears.

Invite your family and friends—let's get "Messy" together on **Saturday, March 30 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.** We will start with arts and crafts, move to our Celebration experiencing Holy Week, throw in an egg hunt, and share a meal together.



If you are able to **volunteer**, please let Becky Roper know at beckyroper@stmatthews-bowie.org. We are looking for volunteers to bring a dish to share and help with Messy Church. We will also be looking for "actors" for Holy Week. **Donations of candy or small trinkets** will be accepted starting March 1 for our Easter Egg Hunt. Please drop off in the office or to Becky Roper.

Boxes needed—any size or shape—we need lots! Please bring your used boxes, which may be broken down, to Becky.

Keeping Your Children's Paperwork Up-to-Date

St. Matthew's Families! Keep your eyes out for St. Matthew's new Nursery Policy, which we are aiming to release in mid-March. Each family that comes to the Nursery will need to read and sign a policy form. We are also requiring families to register their children for Children's Church, Children's Sunday School, and Youth Group if you have not already done so.

Confirmation Class

Five youth from St. Matthew's continue their journey of Confirmation. We are asking for prayers for our confirmands.

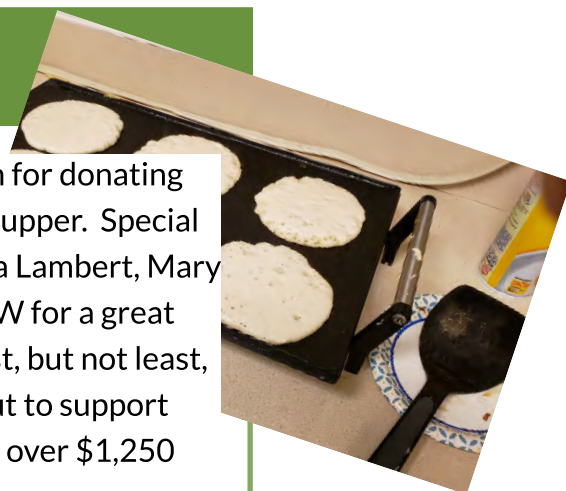
Ashes on
Ash Wednesday



Youth Group News

Pancake Supper Thanks

A huge thank you to Carol and Denny Hulen for donating all the supplies for our successful Pancake Supper. Special thanks as well to our youth, Joe and Barbara Lambert, Mary Adams, John and Mary Jennings, and Rev. JW for a great job in making and serving the pancakes. Last, but not least, a warm thank you to everyone who came out to support our youth fundraiser; your donations raised over \$1,250 for our ASP Mission Trip.



Join the ASP Mission Trip!

We are looking for a male adult who would like to join us on St. Matthew's ASP Mission Trip, which will take place July 7 – 13. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Becky Roper at beckyroper@stmatthews-bowie.org. *Can you spare a week to work with the team for an awesome experience?*

1 Timothy 4:12 Scholarship for Bowie HS Students

Are you a senior at Bowie High School or do you know one? Are you or is that senior already making a difference in the world, even while still in school?

The application forms for St. Matthew's scholarships have been sent to all seniors at Bowie HS. There are four parts to complete: the application with your contact information; a reference by a teacher or mentor; an essay about what you are doing to make the world a better place; and proof of meeting your service hours requirement (from your unofficial transcript or a copy of your report card).

The deadline for applications is April 12, 2024. Please help spread the word to any deserving Bowie High School senior who is a change agent bringing positivity and service to the world. Contact Beth Obear with questions.

Festival of Hymns

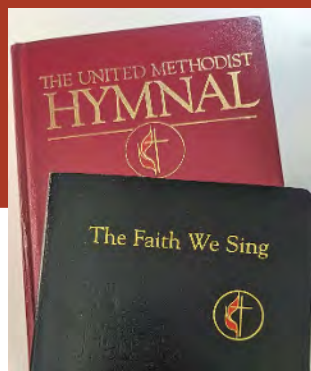
Come to Calvary UMC* in Annapolis, at **3 p.m. on Sunday, March 10**, to hear a Festival of Hymns and anthems around the theme, *For Everyone Born: Songs of Justice and Joy*.

Dr. Daniel Aune, Professor of Organ at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, will direct the event. Choir members from eight area churches (including some from St. Matthew's) will make up the festival choir.

A freewill offering will benefit The Lighthouse of Annapolis and the Annapolis Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, who have organized this event.

This promises to be a wonderful experience for those who will sing or come to listen. Read the flyer [here](#). **Don't miss it!**

***Calvary UMC** is located at 301 Rowe Blvd, Annapolis, Maryland 21401



Helen-Jean Talbott, on flute, and Isaac Borocz, on piano, accompany the Chancel Choir.

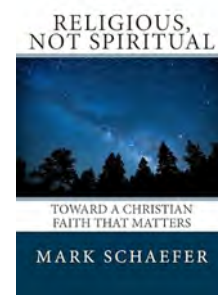
Organ Recital

Storee Denton, a 14-year-old organist from the District of Columbia, will play a recital at St. Matthew's on Sunday afternoon, **March 17 at 4 p.m.** All are welcome—come and hear a remarkable young musician!



Updates on Adult Studies

The **Christian Book Club** will meet via Zoom on **Tuesday, March 19**, and will continue discussing Mark Schaefer's book titled *Religious, Not Spiritual: Toward a Faith that Matters*. Please join us.



Adult Sunday School meets at 11 a.m. in the Parlor.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study, led by Isaac, meets at 9:45 a.m. in the Parlor. **We will begin a study of the book of Psalms on March 5.** Feel free to join us—bring your Bible!

Tuesday Evening Zoom Bible Study, led by Rev. JW Park, meets online at 7 p.m.

Christmas In April ... Save the Date



It is already time for [Christmas In April](#) and volunteers are needed. Scott Lee will once again be the House Captain for a house here in Bowie on **Saturday, April 27 from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m.** We will be painting, mending fences, and performing a number of other tasks, big and small, for the homeowner. This is a great opportunity for youth to get service hours! No special skills are necessary, just a willingness to pitch in and help a family in need. **If you are able to volunteer, please contact Scott Lee.**



*What is this flower and where is it at St. Matthew's?
(Answer is at the bottom of page 10)*

Crop Walk ... Save the Date

Plan to participate in the [Crop Walk](#) in Hyattsville on Sunday, May 5. This event will support the global mission of [Church World Service](#), a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster. The host community receives 25% of the funds raised to support local hunger fighting efforts. The point of contact is Angela Cockrell.



PANCAKES!!

St. Matthew's in Mission

Click for:

[2023 Mission Report](#)

[Full January and February 2024 Report](#)

Advent Reinvented



Many in the St. Matthew's congregation have been missing pre-Covid outreach projects such as Warm Nights, Sweatshirts for Students, and the Stocking Project for children of incarcerated parents. When we were invited to adopt a few families from the Warm Nights program, we joined this pilot program and adopted several homeless families. Their "wish lists" were distributed to various people in our congregation and to the St. Matthew's Early Education Center. We filled eight very large plastic bags with all the gifts and delivered them to the locations where the families were staying.

There was also a family who was going to transition to housing sometime in January and several people purchased housewarming gifts (e.g., ironing board, linens, dishes, utensils, pots and pans, cleaning supplies, bath supplies, etc.) for them to get started. This was an experiment and it went so well that we plan to assist additional families in the future.

Pat Clunies, Outreach

Change Brings Hope: First Village Attends Creation Care Retreat

In Fall 2023, St. Matthew's provided \$3,000 to missionaries [Miguel Mairena](#) and [Nan McCurdy](#) (serving at [Give Ye Them to Eat](#) in Mexico) so they could host five villages at Creation Care Retreats in 2024. During the September 2023 Hunger Action Month, the children and youth's Change Brings Hope Penny War raised \$1,109.82 (almost enough for two villages) and the Missions Committee contributed the remaining amount. Go to [Change Brings Hope and Creation Care Retreats](#) to learn more.

On December 19 and 20, GYTTE hosted the first of five retreats focused on stewardship of the environment. Seventeen members of El Buen Pastor (Good Shepherd) Church from Puebla City participated in the "Stewardship of Creation" workshop, as well as a "Dehydration of Fruits and Vegetables" workshop. They had a great experience at the Tree of Life Center, learning ways to care for the environment, and the children were very happy to be in the countryside.



UWF News, Meetings

Plan to attend two special United Women in Faith events in March! (See page 1 for more details.)

World Day of Prayer **Friday, March 1 at 1 p.m.**

Service will be posted on Facebook at 7 p.m.

Lenten Brunch **Saturday, March 23 at 10 a.m.**

JW's wife, Rev. Dr. HiRho Park, will be our speaker!

Many thanks to all who supported our successful Soup-er Bowl fundraiser. A special thank you to Carol and Denny Hulen for providing the containers for the soup. The proceeds will go to the various mission projects supported by our UWF unit.



The soup packers filled the fridge with delicious soups!

Circle Meetings:

Martha/Agape Circle will meet **Friday, March 8**, in the Parlor at **10:30 a.m.** We will continue our video/discussion study of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. All are welcome—no preparation is needed.

Friendship Circle will meet **Monday, March 11**, in the Parlor. Come at 12:30 p.m. if you want some social time. Our business meeting starts at 1 p.m. We always have a great time and the delicious refreshments are a bonus. Come join us!

Koinonia Circle will meet **Monday, March 18**, at **7 p.m.** in the Parlor.

Life Changes

Deaths:

Jesse Lee Watts, father of Bee Scott (died February 6)

Janet Pierson, mother of Chris Pierson (died February 13)

Kyung-Ja Hong, mother-in-law of Rev. JW Park (died February 19)

Aubrey King, husband of Mary Margaret, former member of St. Matthew's (died February 20)

Sue Hume, sister of Dare Draughn (died February 21)



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



Pat Young	March 1
Phyllis Jensen	March 7
Marty Bridgewater	March 14
Dave Chapman	March 17
Jean Arvin	March 21
Betty Ciomei	March 26
Jean Baker	March 27
Marty Cronlund	March 30



Lectionary Readings for March 2024

March 3 – 3rd Sunday in Lent

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalms 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

March 10 – 4th Sunday in Lent UMCOR Sunday

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

March 17 – 5th Sunday in Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalms 51:1-12
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

March 24 – Passion/Palm Sunday

Palms Litany: Mark 11:1-11;
Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29

Passion Litany: Isaiah 50:4-9a;
Psalms 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11;
Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39 (40-47)

March 28 – Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-4 (5-10) 11-14
Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19
1 Corinthians 11:23-26;
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

March 29 – Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalms 22
Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19:42

March 31 – Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43; Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8

Funds Available for Training/Education

The Staff Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC) has received \$2,500 in restricted funds to support St. Matthew's staff, congregation, and leadership training programs and efforts. Examples of training/education include:

- Hands-on CPR training made available to the congregation;
- Leadership training (e.g., transition from existing to new leaders; learn how to be better leaders);
- Safe Gatherings program fees for certifying congregants (e.g., background checks and online training);
- Staff training.

If you know of an appropriate way to use these funds, please download the SPPRC Training Education Fund document at [SPPRC Training Education Fund Document](#) to learn how to apply.

Don't wait! Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. For further information, please email s-pprc@stmatthews-bowie.org.



On February 4, Rev. JW Park presented Gemina Archer-Davies a Certificate of Approval as a Certified Lay Speaker. Congratulations, Gemina!

Congratulations

Answer to question on page 7:
Lenten Rose (Hellbore), can be found in the garden outside the Fellowship Hall

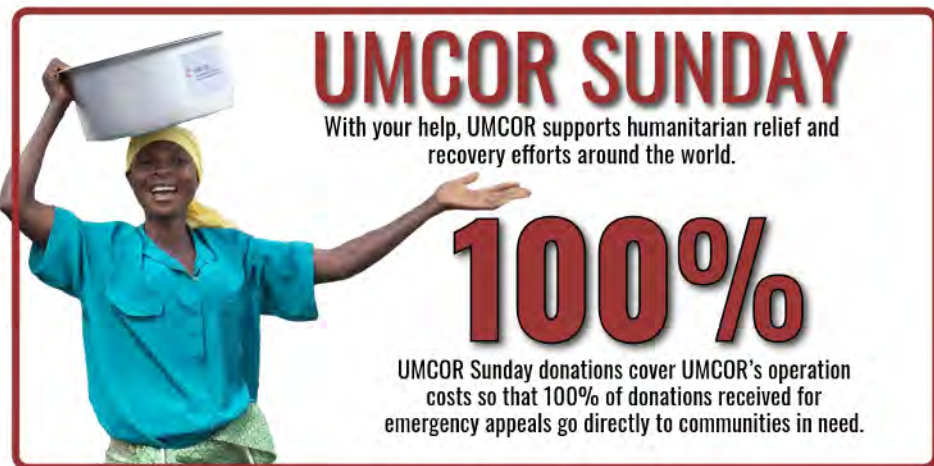
Finance Report: St. Matthew's Finances at a Glance

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, Scot Dahl, at finance@stmatthews-bowie.org.

Click here for
Online Giving

Due to space constraints this month, you can find the charts for January 2024 [here](#).

March Communion Offering



On Wednesday, February 7, St. Matthew's hosted a Listening Session for the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the UMC. Bishop LaTrelle Easterling (left) opened the well-attended session and many of the clergy in attendance shared their thoughts on how to best restructure the districts in the Conference to succeed in making disciples of Christ.



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

Editors: George Huffman, Lorri Meadows

Editorial Staff: Ayo Mseka, Beth Obear, Lisa Wilson

Contact Us: phone: 301-262-1408 fax: 301-262-2148

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.



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



Time Dated Material
Please Deliver Promptly



Weekly Schedule

Sunday Services In person

10 a.m. Worship in Sanctuary w/Children's Church

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

Zoom: Contact church office for the link.

11 a.m. Children's Sunday School, Rm 126 (*tentative*)
Adult Sunday School, Parlor (*tentative*)
Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall

Tuesday 9:45 a.m. Bible Study with Isaac in Parlor
7 p.m. Bible Study with Rev. Park on Zoom

Wednesday 7 p.m. Special Lent Service (Sanctuary)
In-person or call-in 267-807-9601,
access code 111-576-270#

Daily 6:30 a.m. Morning Prayer (*except Sundays*)
Call-in 267-807-9601,
access code 111-576-270#

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.