



## Special April Sunday Worship Services

### Sunday, April 21 - Earth Day Sunday



The service is based on Acts 7:33—  
*"Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground...!'"*

The theme for the service is "Holy Ground: Cultivating Connections Between Our Faith, Our Food, and the Climate."

### Sunday, April 28 - Worship and Music Sunday



The special service will feature music from both the Gloria Ringers and the Chancel Choir.

## Join the Team for Christmas in April

[Christmas In April](#) is scheduled for **Saturday, April 27**, from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. Volunteers are needed! Scott Lee will once again be the House Captain for a house here in Bowie.



We will paint, mend fences, and perform 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.



## My Fair Lady

**April 12, 14,  
19, 20, & 21**  
Fri. & Sat. 7:30 pm.  
Sun. 3:00 pm.

St. Matthew's UMC

Read more on page 6!

# General Conference 2024

by Rev. Dr. HiRho Park

After affirming the hope of Easter – transformation into a new life in Jesus Christ, 862 voting delegates (half clergy and half lay, with 55.9% from the U.S., 32% from Africa, 6% from the Philippines, 4.6% from Europe and the remainder from concordat churches that have close ties to The United Methodist Church [UMC]) will gather in Charlotte, North Carolina, from April 23-May 3, 2024. The assembly was postponed three times since the pandemic. The delegates will work on 1,099 valid petitions, available in four official languages: English, French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili. As a reminder, Bishops preside at General Conference sessions but do not have a vote.

The theme of The General Conference 2024 is "...and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:9). Psalm 46 speaks to the UMC's tumultuous context as we gather to face the denomination's schism. According to a Pew Research Center study, until recently, the United Methodist Church was the third largest Christian denomination in the U.S., dominating America's religious culture and landscape. More than 7,600 congregations have received permission to leave the denomination since 2019, according to the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, affiliated with Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

The critical issues at the General Conference 2024 are significant and reflect the challenges and opportunities facing The United Methodist Church amidst its current context. ***Due to space constraints, each issue identified in the following paragraphs is further explained in the full article found [here](#).***

**The first issue will be the adoption of revised Social Principles.** What are The Social Principles? The UMC has a long and rich history of concern for social justice. The Social Principles represent the Wesleyan spirit of social holiness and the prophetic spirit in an effort to respond to the call to discipleship of social engagement between faith

and practice.

**The second issue will be the adoption of a proposed Regionalization Plan.** The Regionalization Plan seeks to restructure the UMC into four regional conferences with equal legislative power. This initiative aims to make the church more connectional, contextual, equitable, and just in its organization. There will be four regional conferences – Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the U.S. – all possessing the same duties and powers to pass legislation for greater missional impact in their respective regions.

**The third issue is the General Book of Discipline (BOD) legislation.** The proposal for a revised General Book of Discipline addresses the need for a more inclusive and adaptable organizational framework. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters has been developing the BOD since 2012. The current BOD is an America-centered document, and central conferences need to adapt the Book of Discipline (Part VI) based on missional needs and differing legal contexts (BOD Paragraph 31). However, no such structure exists to deal with matters solely related to the United States.

**Each of these issues** reflects the UMC's efforts to navigate its internal dynamics while remaining faithful to its mission and values in a changing world. The decisions made at the General Conference 2024 will shape the future direction of the denomination and its ability to effectively engage with social, cultural, and theological challenges.

May God of unity inspire and uplift the hearts of United Methodists as they seek God's guidance and blessing for the General Conference.

—Rev. Dr. HiRho Park  
Pastor, Bethesda UMC and JW's Wife

# Administrative Council Update from March



*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 \$53.7k, which is \$5.0k over budget for the month. YTD total income is \$123.4k, which is \$14.6k under budget. Total expenses for February were \$68.3k, which is \$0.7k under budget for the month. Apportionment is current. YTD total expense is \$137.4k, which is \$0.6k under budget.

There was an operating loss of \$1.4k for February, with a YTD operating loss of \$14.0k.

Investments increased by \$10.1k last month to

\$643.6k. For the year, the investment account balance is up \$10.1k. YTD there have been no transfers from investments.

The average weekly attendance last month was 143, which is up from 142 the previous month.

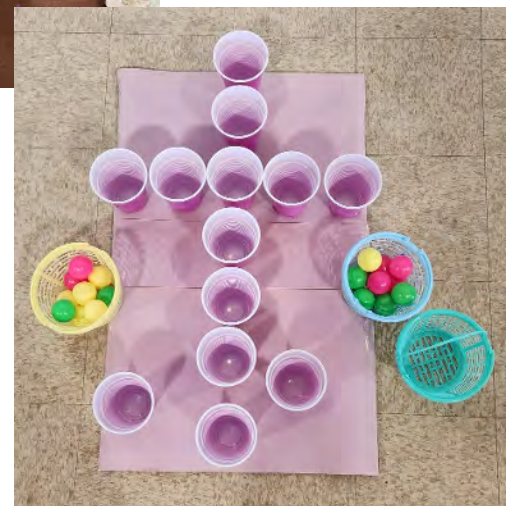
### 2024 Budget

Discussions continue within the Ad Council regarding the projected budget shortfall for 2024. While we continue to explore this important topic, there are no further developments to report. Fortunately, as reported above, we have not had to make any of the anticipated withdrawals from investments so far. We will keep you informed as we make progress on this topic.

*Chuck Hastings, Chair*



Messy Church had crafts, games, Easter Eggs, ... and the cross.



## Children and Families ... Important Notices

Don't forget to **register your child/youth** for Children's Church, Sunday School, and Youth Group.

**Children's Sunday School** will **not** be held on Sunday, April 21.

**Children's Church** will **not** be held on Sunday, April 21. Our nursery will be open as usual for children ages 0 months – 6 years. We encourage older children to remain with their parents during worship. We do have worship activity bags available in the Narthex.

Save the Dates: **Vacation Bible School** will be held Monday – Thursday, June 24-27.



## Keeping Up With the Youth

**Confirmation Class** continues throughout April. This confirmation journey is about equipping our teens with the information, tools, and resources they need to make an informed decision about committing to follow Christ. Our youth will be confirmed on Sunday, May 19.

Our youth group will begin the series ***Claim the Life***. These lessons revolve around a single key word (or phrase) from Scripture. These words are significant to more fully claiming life as a Christian. **Here at St. Matthew's the youth group meets Sunday from 5-7 p.m.**

**ASP Registration** will take place on Sunday, April 7 during Youth Group. This part of the meeting will take place from 5-5:30 p.m. Please join us if you are going to ASP.

### Save the Dates for Youth

ASP Car Wash – Saturday, May 18

Confirmation – Sunday, May 19

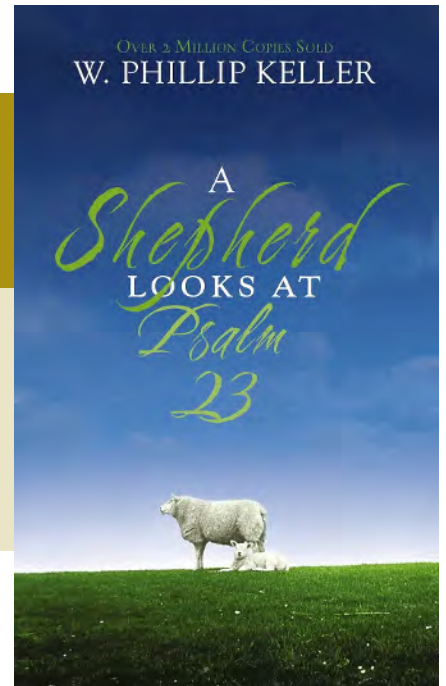
Annual Spring Hike – Sunday, May 19

1 Timothy Scholarship Reminder

This is your last chance ... the St. Matthew's Bowie High scholarship program has a **deadline of Friday, April 12.** Eligible students can mail the application to the Church Office or scan the pages and email the pages to Beth Obear.

Christian Book Club

Christian Book Club will meet on April 16 @ 7 p.m. on Zoom. The book for April is *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* by W. Phillip Keller.



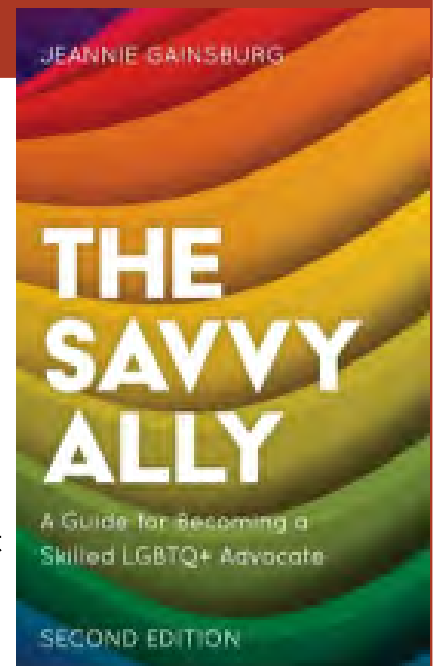
Social Justice Book Club Starts May 3

**Book: *The Savvy Ally* (2nd Edition) by Jeannie Gainsburg**

This is your opportunity to learn more about how St. Matthew's can be more inclusive and caring to the LGBTQIA+ community. The first meeting is in the Parlor on Friday, May 3, at 7 p.m. We have 15 copies of the book for the first 15 people who wish to participate and we can get more. The Book Club will be facilitated by C.J. Mead and Karen Hastings. To sign up and get your copy, call the Church Office at 301-262-1408 or see Karen after church.

We hope you can see the value in our reconciling church being responsible allies. This community is full of God's children. They deserve to be loved. But many have left their churches because they feel unwanted and unloved. We have chosen to love them. Now let's show them this love by respecting their wishes and supporting them in the best ways possible. This book will teach us all how to do that. Please come and join us in becoming savvy allies. Read more about the book [here](#).

Contact Karen Hastings with any questions.



## Hyattsville CROP Walk: Sunday, May 5

In 2024, we continue fighting against disease, disaster, displacement, and other challenges that leave people hungry. Join with us as a walker or walker sponsor to raise funds to help neighbors near and far get the meals they need for today and sustainable food security for tomorrow! Watch the *Midweek Messenger* for details or contact Angela Cockrell. Read more about CROP Walk [here](#).



## Church on the Move is Saturday, May 11

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 11**, for Church on the Move. This year's tasks include making sandwiches, cleaning around the church, assembling kits for Mission Central, and doing a project for Guatemala. Watch for more information in the *May Circuit Rider*!

## "My Fair Lady" is Coming!



*My Fair Lady* is on her way to St. Matthew's! *My Fair Lady* is an endearing tale with warm and vivid characters. Professor Henry Higgins loves language, and Cockney flower girl, Eliza Doolittle,

desires to speak like a lady. With jubilant songs including "I Could Have Danced All Night" and "The Rain in Spain," *My Fair Lady* is frequently called, "the perfect musical." Come early in the run as closing weekend gets very full and we do have space limitations.

"*With a Little Bit of Luck*," you will see *My Fair Lady*. After all, "*Wouldn't It Be Lovely?*" if you plan to come? She won't be "*On the Street Where You Live*"; she'll be at St. Matthew's! *My Fair Lady* has only five performances so you'll be saying "*Get Me to the Church on Time!*" The Troupe members can say that "*We've Grown Accustomed to Her Face*" and we hope that you'll be able to say that, too!

St. Matthew's Musical Theatre Troupe is thrilled to present this show during two weekends in April: **April 12 and 14, and April 19, 20, and 21**. Friday and Saturday evening performances are at 7:30 p.m. The Sunday matinees are at 3 p.m.

Inflation has finally hit ticket prices have finally, but we managed to break the prices into the following categories:

- Adults (Over 18) are \$20;
- Youths (10-18) are \$10; and,
- Children (under 10) are \$5.

Tickets are available after worship, in the church office, or online at <https://shorturl.at/iDIJT>. View the flyer [here](#).

# UWF News and Events

Please mark your calendar for **Saturday, June 15**, when the UWF will host an antique car show, along with takeout pulled pork dinners.

All are invited to attend any or all of the monthly circle gatherings! For more information, email [uwf@stmatthews-bowie.org](mailto:uwf@stmatthews-bowie.org).

**Friendship Circle** will meet on **Monday, April 8**, in the Parlor. We will have social time at 12:30 p.m. and at 1 p.m., our business meeting will begin. We always welcome new women and some of our members belong to two circles! The delicious refreshments are a real plus! Come join us.

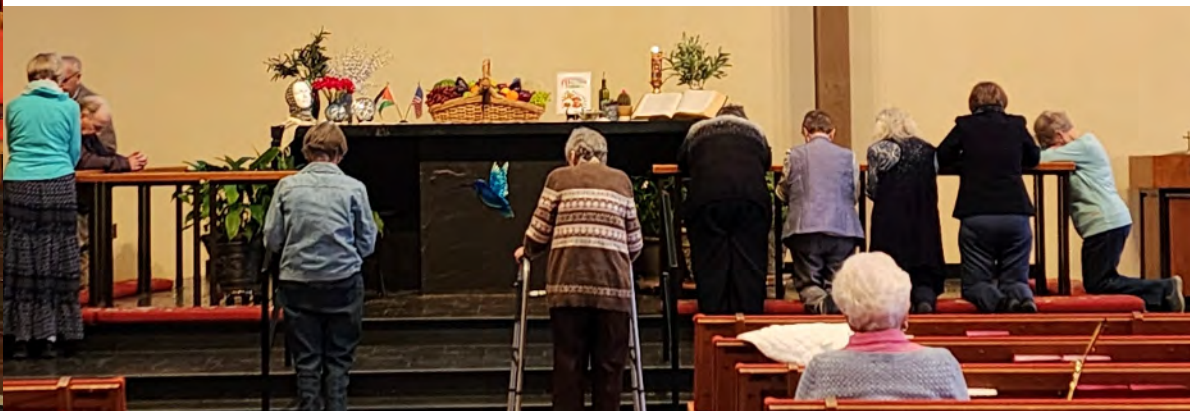
**Martha/Agape Circle** will meet **Friday, April 12**, in the Parlor at **10:30 a.m.** We will continue our video/discussion study of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. All are welcome—no preparation is needed.

**Koinonia Circle** will meet **Monday, April 15**, at **7 p.m.** in the Parlor.



(Above) Rev. Dr. HiRho Park, the keynote speaker at the Lenten Brunch, prepares communion with JW.

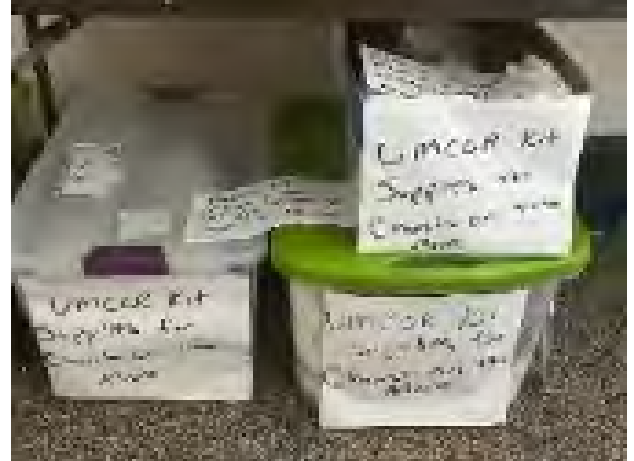
(below) Many prayers were offered for Palestine at this year's World Day of Prayer service.



# St. Matthew's in Mission

## Missions Early Spring Cleaning

Spring cleaning is making space and supporting spring outreach projects at St. Matthew's. Former Merry Methodist supplies will help make 150 [UMCOR Hygiene Kits](#) (100 by the Confirmation Class and 50 by Church on the Move) this Spring. These will be distributed by the LFP locally and will go to Mission Central to help make [UMCOR/Mission Central kits](#). Additionally, card-making supplies found in the Youth closet will be used by the SEALs for the Women's Retreat in Guatemala and other efforts. The Missions Committee challenges you to do spring cleaning in your home; use what you are holding onto "just in case" or something you didn't realize you had, to make a difference to someone in our community and beyond.



## Little Free Pantry (LFP) Welcomes the Bowie Lions Club's New LFP

The [Bowie Lions Club](#) has started an LFP in Old Bowie. On March 4, Bee Scott and Marian Eisinger shared our LFP experience and insights, and provided information on resources and contacts (view their presentation [here](#)). Bee, as a member of both the Lions Club and our LFP pantry team, will continue to help the Lions Club's LFP and foster our relationship.

The kindergartners at the EEC held a food drive and took a *large* donation to the Bowie Food Pantry.







The many transformations at St. Matthew's in March—from the signs of Spring to the moving Good Friday service to the triumphant celebration of the resurrection!



## Life Changes

### Deaths:

**Kim High**, cousin of Pam Hyland (died February 27).



**Alexis Gonzalez**, great-niece of Phyllis Jensen (died in February).

**Millie Bechtold**, mother of Sue Groff (died March 29)

### Thank You:

We send our heartfelt thanks to our St. Matthew's friends who have been so thoughtful following the passing of Aubrey. Your prayers and kindness have kept us going in this difficult time. Thanks for being such good friends.

*Mary Margaret King and family*

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



- |                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Karen Riekert   | April 4  |
| Carolyn Goddard | April 15 |
| Galen Menne     | April 23 |
| Marie Comstock  | April 24 |
| Jessie Matthews | April 25 |
| Margie Pekala   | April 26 |
| Ludene Capone   | April 29 |

# Lectionary Readings for April

## April 7 – 2nd Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:32-35; Psalms 133  
1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31

## April 14 – 3rd Sunday of Easter Native American Ministries Sunday

Acts 3:12-19; Psalms 4  
1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

## April 21 – 4th Sunday of Easter Festival of God’s Creation

Acts 4:5-12; Psalms 23  
1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

## April 28 – 5th Sunday of Easter

Acts 8:26-40; Psalms 22:25-31  
1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8



Small Easter gifts are prepared for an EEC class by a group of Guardian Angels. Each group has volunteered to pray for an assigned EEC class and nurtures the students with small gifts and supports the teachers with prayers and cards.

# St. Matthew's in the Community

Members of St. Matthew’s are making themselves known outside our church building.

On March 10, members of St. Matthew's held our *March God and Guinness* social at Molloy's Irish Restaurant and Pub in Gambrills.



Sixteen lads and lassies of all ages came out to revel in conversation and the company of Pastor JW and friends. *God and Guinness* occurs on the second Sunday each month, so consider joining us on April 14—the location is to be announced.



On the same day, some of our Chancel Choir members joined vocalists from seven other churches to raise their voices in praise at the American Guild of Organists’ hymn festival, *For Everyone Born: Songs of Justice and Joy*. A total of 72

vocalists performed before an audience that included many from St. Matthew's.

Finally, a group of men meet at 8 a.m. every Wednesday morning at Rip’s for breakfast and fellowship. Women are



welcome! The group is ecumenical and includes Baptists, Episcopalians, Catholics, and a Quaker, as well as Methodists.

Watch for future opportunities to go out into the community!



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

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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, Scot Dahl, at [finance@stmatthews-bowie.org](mailto:finance@stmatthews-bowie.org).

Click here for [Online Giving](#)

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



Scenes from Palm/Passion Sunday.



## April Communion



The communion offering in April will go to **Native American Ministries**. The offering is used to develop and strengthen Native American ministries in the annual conferences, and Native American rural, urban, and reservation ministries and communities. It also provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology.

## Directory of Services

A St. Matthew's Directory of Services has been created to provide information and resources to assist our church family in accomplishing a variety of tasks. It will be updated as changes in procedures or the people involved take place. Copies of the directory are available in the Narthex and can be viewed [here](#).



14900 Annapolis Road  
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E-mail: [churchoffice@stmatthews-bowie.org](mailto: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**  
*No Children's Sunday School on April 21*  
**Adult Sunday School, Parlor**  
**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. Simple Prayer 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.**