



ST. MATTHEW'S

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Circuit Rider

November 2024

Volume 61, Issue 11

Consecration Sunday is Nov. 10



Be sure to read about the stewardship campaign in an article by Ad Council Chair, Chuck Hastings, on page 3.

"God Can Do It: We Can Help"

Please bring your pledge card on **Sunday, November 10**, when the cards will be consecrated to God. If you will be away on November 10, please bring the card on November 3.

Advent Projects 2024

It's that time again; we have been asked to join St. Pius X Catholic Church in purchasing Christmas gifts for some unhoused families. After I receive the list in mid-November, you may decide which family you would like to adopt. I will supply you with the name, age, gender, and wishes of each family member. Families, groups, and kids can all participate in this effort. Gifts will need to be in my hands by **Monday, December 9**. Please contact me to express your interest in making a family's Christmas bright.



- Pat Clunies, Outreach Coordinator

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service



**Sunday,
November 24
4 p.m.**

**at CCPC
Christian Community
Presbyterian Church
3120 Belair Dr., Bowie**

Potluck Dinner to Follow

Join others from the community for a special service of thanksgiving. Stay for a potluck dinner and fellowship.

Rev. Park's Pastoral Pondering



Dear St. Matthew's Family,

As we embark on this season of stewardship, I invite each of us to reflect on what it means to be faithful stewards of the many blessings God has entrusted to us. Stewardship is not merely about our financial contributions, though they are important; it is also about the whole of our lives—our time, talents, and treasures—being offered back to God for God's purposes.

The Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 9:7: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." This verse beautifully captures the spirit of stewardship. It is not about obligation, but instead about joyfully participating in God's work in the world. When we give—our time, abilities, or resources—we are responding to God's generosity toward us.

In this stewardship campaign, we are reminded that everything we have is a gift from God. Psalm 24:1 declares, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." We are merely caretakers of the blessings we receive, and through our giving, we partner with God to bring hope, healing, and transformation to our community and beyond.

This year, I encourage each of us to prayerfully consider how we can participate in the life of St. Matthew's through our stewardship. Whether through financial gifts, volunteering, or offering your unique gifts to serve, every contribution is a vital part of the body of Christ.

As we move forward in faith, let us remember that stewardship is ultimately an act of worship. It is our way of expressing gratitude to God, trusting that God will take what we offer and multiply it for the sake of God's kingdom.

May we give with hearts full of joy and anticipation, knowing that through our combined efforts, God will continue to do great things in and through our church.

*Blessings,
JW Park*



Saturday, November 2
8 a.m. until 1 p.m., rain or shine

Come and help with our Fall Cleanup. We will be pulling weeds, trimming shrubs and trees, and just generally beautifying the outside of our church. Let's make St. Matthew's the envy of the neighborhood!

From the Ad Council Chair: Our Stewardship Campaign



As mentioned last month, our Stewardship campaign has begun. Current members by now should have received a Stewardship letter and pledge card. Consecration Sunday will be November 10 when we will offer our estimates of giving for 2025 and consecrate them to God. If you will be away, please bring your pledge card on Sunday, November 3.

As I alluded to last month, we entered 2024 with a projected budget deficit of over \$70k, requiring withdrawals from the investment accounts in order to cover the projected expenses. In the face of this challenge, we set out to keep our expenses under control while continuing to try and make a difference. Some highlights:

- We cleaned our basements and attics, held a yard sale in the heat, and raised over \$3,300 for our social justice efforts.
- We answered the calls for community assistance by volunteering our time and making donations to support those distressed by food insecurity, medical need, and convalescence, and provided aid for those afflicted by profound weather events.
- Through the generosity of our members and our Missions partner organizations, we supplied both workers and determination to build homes, raised funds for furnishing disaster and school supplies by varying and specific need, provided scholarship aid to our local and far-away school students, and helped to provide housing for a refugee family.
- Completed the ranks of pipes in the pipe organ.
- Installed new phone services and completed initial work on an improved security system.

Due to some unexpected generosity, we ended up with more contributions than were pledged and will have a budget surplus for the year. But there is so much more we could do. Please pay heed to the different messages provided and give them careful consideration as we prepare for Consecration Sunday.

Chuck Hastings, Chair



The Gloria Ringers and percussionists played "Bwana Asifiwe" on International Sunday, September 29.

Administrative Council Update from October



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 \$43.2k, which is \$5.2k under budget for the month. YTD total income is \$750.8k, which is \$130.1k over budget excluding grants and transfers from investments. Total expenses for the month were \$71.8k, which is \$2.1k over budget for the month. Apportionment is current. YTD total expense were \$612.9k, which is \$7.9k under budget, excluding capital improvements.

There was an operating loss of \$15.4k for the month, with a YTD operating gain of \$137.9k (including grants and budgeted transfers from investments).

Investments increased by \$8.6k last month; however, the \$100k was transferred back from investments to cover costs that will be reimbursed from an upcoming grant, so the investment account balance decreased to \$615.2k. For the year, the investment account decreased \$18.6k from \$633.8k. \$68.0k was transferred from investments

in May, \$100k was transferred into investments in July, and \$100k was transferred back in October.

The average weekly attendance last month was 125 which is up from 122 the previous month. Average weekly attendance last year was 140.

Annual Church Conference

We had our 2024 Church Conference on October 22 via Zoom. We shared our Zoom session with three other churches in our conference. After opening with worship, we heard highlights from the other congregations and shared some of our own. It was encouraging to hear positive stories from other congregations in our conference, as well as a review of some of our successes from the past year.

Each congregation then split out into separate sessions to examine the annual reports and approve important actions including the pastoral compensation and the leadership roster for next year. Everything for St. Matthew's was approved unanimously by the members present.

Overall, it was a very successful conference!

Chuck Hastings, Chair



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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.

Adult Study and Worship Opportunities

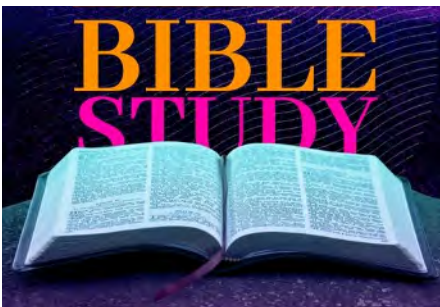
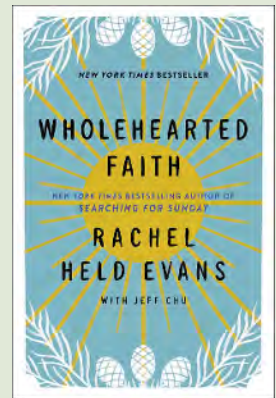
Music During Worship

Our Music Director, Isaac Borocz, will be away for most of November. During his absence, please welcome Rev. Dr. David Thayer as guest organist/musician on November 10; on November 17, Betsy Lord will be the organist and accompanist for the Chancel Choir.

Christian Book Club

Christian Book Club will not meet in November.

On Tuesday, December 17, we will discuss the first 56 pages Rachel Held Evans' book, *Wholehearted Faith*. As usual, our meeting will be via Zoom, beginning at 7 p.m. The link is sent out the day before the book club meets. All are welcome.



Bible Studies

Tuesday Morning Bible Study with Isaac *will continue* to meet during the month of November despite Isaac's absence. The group will study the Gospel of Mark each Tuesday at 9:45 a.m. in the Church Parlor.

Tuesday Evening Bible Study with Rev. JW Park will meet each Tuesday at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The Zoom link is sent out each Monday.

Worship Volunteers Needed

The worship committee needs your help! We are looking for new volunteers to help with our subgroups (Altar Guild, Acolytes, Ushers, Greeters/Welcome Desk, Liturgists, and Simple Service). You can email me at STMWorshipChair@gmail.com and mention the group(s) you're interested in helping, or you can complete the following electronic form at [Worship Committee Volunteer Request](#). Your information will then be relayed to the appropriate head of that subgroup, who will be in contact with you.



Picture St. Matthew's in Mission



Liberian Principal Responds to Blessing
"The blessings of having you guys as brothers & sisters in Christ" - A. Sieh (Liberia)

Alphonso Sieh, the principal of St. Matthew United Methodist School in Liberia, wrote, "As I watched the [Blessing of the Backpack video](#) tears rolled down my cheeks, most especially seeing what you guys were demonstrating. We are blessed to have you as our partners in mission ..." Read the rest of his letter [here](#).

Our Little Free Pantry is Blessed with Food...

...from a September food drive held by the [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints \(LDS\)](#) in Bowie. They also blessed [Crofton Christian Caring Council](#) Food Pantry at [St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church](#) and a mobile food bank in Annapolis. We received 755 food items including canned proteins, vegetables, fruits, beans, peanut butter, cereal, soup, pasta, pasta sauce, and rice.



Blessing of the Pets



The tradition of the Blessing of the Pets continued on a lovely Saturday afternoon with Isaac leading the way.



Hunger Action Month Recap

During September's Hunger Action Month, St. Matthew's explored food insecurity in our local area and what we can do about it as individuals, families, and a church. Then we took action to help the hungry in our community:

- We prayed daily, "Give us today our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11).
- Our church shared and reflected on [2024 Hunger Month Daily Actions](#).
- During two coffee hours, we made 54 Senior Treat Bags and 24 [Build-a-Bags](#) for the Bowie Food Pantry. The Build-a-Bags provided nonperishable food for 24 households. Note: the Pantry gives out 4 times this amount **every week** and our donation was greatly appreciated. *(see the photo on page 11)*
- We worshiped together. Thanks go to Becky Roper and Mark and Lisa Behringer for their children's messages and to the Altar Guild for the beautiful altar. Thanks also to our speakers: Michaeline Gandolph (Bowie Food Pantry), Kelly Gresham (Little Free Pantry), and Jean Siers (Delmarva's [Society of St. Andrew](#)).
- Our congregation generously donated: \$595 to The Little Free Pantry, \$885 to the Bowie Food Pantry, and \$739 for the communion offering to Hunger Action. This communion offering helped to buy food for the Build-a-Bag project and to support our [Little Free Pantry](#) and the [Society of St. Andrew](#).
- The Martha-Agape Circle prepared and delivered a meal to the men at the Prince George's County's Men's Shelter.

September is over but food insecurity is NOT. A [September 2024 Washington Post article](#) reports that food insecurity is prevalent in the DC Metro area and 50% of Prince George's County is now food insecure. Please continue to do what you can when you can, and to pray so that all of God's people get the healthy food they need. You make a loving difference to the hungry in our community and world.

Marian Eisinger

Social Justice – Poverty and Food Insecurity Lead



Support our LFP at Giant Food



Make the world a better place by supporting our Little Free Pantry! During the month of November, the Free State Giant will donate \$1 to our LFP for each \$2.75 reusable Community Bag purchased.

The Free State Giant is located at 15500 Annapolis Road, Bowie.



Our Little Free Pantry is located in the parking lot next to the exit to Rt. 450.

Social Justice: Yard Sale Results 2024

St. Matthew's hosted another successful yard sale on August 25. Thanks to all of our hard-working volunteers and the generous donations contributed to that success and its meaningful impact on our community. **The yard sale brought in \$3,300** to support our Social Justice endeavors, and our youth earned \$140 for their mission trip to [Appalachia Service Project \(ASP\)](#) by selling food.

Additionally, the Social Justice team worked to ensure the yard sale was environmentally friendly and that our community benefitted. Nearly all unsold items went to worthy causes. The rest were recycled with only a few items going to the landfill. Highlights of those blessed with unsold items include:

- [House on the Hill - Sacred Heart Church](#): clothing, shoes, linens, housewares, and baby items.
- [Homes Not Borders](#): household supplies.
- [Books for International Goodwill \(BIG\)](#): 8 boxes of adult books.
- [Mission Central](#): 2 printers, 3 boxes of electronics, an air filter, and a night stand.
- [Orphan Grain Train](#): 2 bicycles.
- Our [Little Free Pantry](#): Several lidded, plastic bins for food storage.
- [Goodwill of Bowie](#): toys, sports gear, CDs and videos, tools, decorative items, and housewares.
- [Impacto Ministry, Guatemala](#): a box of small toys and 3 boxes of girls' dresses.

Thanks to the generosity of a former 5th grade teacher who donated an abundance of classroom and art supplies, books, and teacher resources, we were able to support our EEC staff and local educators with discounts and/or donations.

As always, our yard sale was a wonderful outreach opportunity, giving the community a chance to meet us and to share the Gospel message of God's love well beyond our walls.

Corey Smith, Social Justice Chair



Several EEC teachers score some great items for their classrooms!



United Women in Faith (UWF) News & Meetings

All are invited to attend any or all of our circle meetings. Please join us!



United
Women
in Faith

Martha/Agape Circle

meets **Friday, November 8** in the Parlor at 10:30 a.m.
All are welcome; no preparation is needed.

Friendship Circle meets **Monday, November 11** in the Parlor. Come at 12:30 p.m. for socializing and then the business meeting at 1 p.m.

Koinonia Circle meets **Monday, November 18** in the Parlor at 7 p.m.

Life Changes

Birthdays:

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



Harold Patterson	November 5
Ina Ray Foskey	November 10
Bill Haddock	November 14
Frank Seabolt	November 14
Kathy Hunt	November 20
Judy Cullen	November 23
Mike League	November 25

Lectionary Readings for November 2024

November 3 – 24th Sunday after Pentecost; All Saints Sunday

Ruth 1:1-18; Psalms 146
Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

November 10 – 25th Sunday after Pentecost

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17; Psalms 127 or Psalms 42
Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

November 17 – 26th Sunday after Pentecost

1 Samuel 1:4-20; 1 Samuel 2:1-10 or Psalms 113
Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25; Mark 13:1-8

November 24 – Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday; United Methodist Student Day

2 Samuel 23:1-7; Psalms 132:1-12 (13-18)
Revelations 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

November Communion Offering: UM Student Day



This special Sunday is a denomination-wide celebration focused on the value of education. We honor this day by giving generously to support scholarships like The Gift of Hope Scholarship. By supporting our students now, we contribute to community transformation and leadership empowerment, building future leaders.

Your gift is a practical expression of care, equipping students to shape a hopeful future. Contributions to the United Methodist Student Day offering send young leaders into the world with wisdom and understanding.

Children and Youth: "Trunk or Treat" and Youth Hike



This year, St. Matthew's teamed up with our Early Education Center (EEC) for a Trunk or Treat Fall Fling! They hosted 96 children and youth in costume, with parents often in costume as well. Thanks to the folks who supported this event, helping with games and providing treats.



(above) James and other youth help with games.

(above) The Clarke family is ready to "Trunk or Treat"!



(right) Becky Roper, our Director of children and Youth Ministries, wore a message of love.

(left) Erin and Henry enjoying the festivities.



Our youth enjoyed a hike on a beautiful Sunday in October.

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 September 2024 [here](#).



On Sunday, October 27, St. Matthew's welcomed six new members!

Front row, left to right, our new members are:

Rev. Dr. Sheila Garrison-Johnson,

Lorraine and David Clarke (and their daughters, Fiona and Maya),

Bob Matthews, Barbara Sieger, and Willie Taylor.

A reception in Fellowship Hall followed the service.

On Sunday, October 6, the congregation packed 24 boxes of canned goods and 24 bags of dry goods for the Build-a-Bag Hunger Action project. A big **THANK YOU** to all who donated food, helped pack the food, and assisted in getting it to the Food Pantry.





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](https://www.facebook.com/stmbowie)



Time Dated Material
Please Deliver Promptly



Weekly Schedule

<p>Sunday Services In person</p> <p>8:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School, Parlor</p> <p>10 a.m. Worship in Sanctuary w/Children's Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Matthew's UMC Facebook • St. Matthew's UMC Website <p>Zoom: Contact church office for the link.</p> <p>11 a.m. Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall Children's Sunday School, Rm 222 Adult Sunday School, Parlor</p>	<p>Tuesday 9:45 a.m. Bible Study in the Parlor p.m. Bible Study with Rev. Park on Zoom</p> <p>Wednesday 7 p.m. Simple Prayer Service In-person or call-in 267-807-9601, access code 111-576-270#</p> <p>Daily 6:30 a.m. Morning Prayer (except Sundays) Call-in 267-807-9601, access code 111-576-270#</p>	<p>7</p>
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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.