



## Have You "Herd" (or Heard) about SHEEP???

St. Matthew's is merging three teams: Missions, Outreach, and Social Justice. The SHEEP acronym stands for:

**S**upporting,  
**H**elping,  
**E**mpowering  
**E**very  
**P**erson.



Several Bible verses inspire us to be Jesus' sheep. In John 10, Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we are His sheep. In Matthew 18, Jesus leaves his 99 sheep who are safe, to search and help the one sheep who is lost. To follow Jesus' lead and to support, help, and empower those who are in need or lost is God's will for us.

This has been the goal of the Missions, Outreach, and Social Justice teams, so merging these teams into SHEEP allows us to work more effectively together to make our world and our community a better place. But the six-member SHEEP team can't do it alone. *It takes a big flock!*

### **How to Get Involved with SHEEP**

At our 10 a.m. service on **Sunday, February 9**, you will hear more about our plans. We invite you to "flock" to our SHEEP Service Fair in Fellowship Hall

during Coffee Hour immediately following the service. While you are waiting to pick up your Soup-er Bowl order, stop by our booths to see how you can get involved with SHEEP.

*There are projects for all ages, interests, and abilities* to support, help, and empower every person. From senior service projects to children and youth projects, from

riding in the truck for the Annapolis Pride Parade to assembling UMCOR health kits, there is something **you** can do.

Visit the booths at the fair to see what we have planned. Give us your suggestions and sign up to help. We will also have cake and some activities. It will be fun, informative, and empowering.

When we receive new members at St. Matthew's, we re-pledge our own service in the work of the Lord. Here is your chance to serve, however you are able, out in the community and the world.

**So, flock to the SHEEP Service Fair on February 9!**

We need you to help us celebrate this new merger of Supporting, Helping, Empowering Every Person.

—Karen Hastings, SHEEP Co-Chair  
[SHEEP@stmatthews-bowie.org](mailto:SHEEP@stmatthews-bowie.org)

# Administrative Council Update from December 2024

**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 2025 Administrative Council can be found [here](#).**



The average weekly attendance last month was 158 which is up from 143 the previous month. Average weekly attendance last year was 140.

Overall, the year turned out well financially (\$215.5K operating gain), despite the original budget projecting a deficit.

## Financial Status

Offerings were \$70.9K, which is \$22.2K over budget for the month. YTD total income is \$1,021.5K, which is \$193.8K over budget. Total expenses for the month were \$71.5K, which is \$2.4K over budget for the month. Apportionment is current. YTD total expense is \$806.0K, which is \$23.4K under budget, excluding capital improvements.

There was an operating gain of \$12.9K for the month, including a \$73.5K grant reimbursement, with a YTD operating gain of \$215.5K (including grants and budgeted transfers from investments).

Investments decreased by \$16.0K last month to \$619.3K. For the year, the investment account decreased \$14.5K from \$633.8K. \$68.0K were transferred from investments in May.

## Outreach Position

As mentioned last month, the Administrative Council voted to accept the grant funding a new staff member focused on outreach. We signed the grant paperwork this month. SPPRC will be finalizing the position description with the hope that we can hire someone in the first quarter of 2025.

## 2025 Budget

As mentioned last month, the 2025 Budget is currently projected to have a \$95K deficit (made more tolerable by the 2024 surplus). There are some areas where we hope to have some significant savings this year. The Trustees are investigating these areas; we have no updates on this so far but will keep the congregation apprised.

*Chuck Hastings, Chair*

*On Baptism of the Lord Sunday, we renewed the covenant declared at our baptism, acknowledged what God is doing for us, and affirmed our commitment to Christ's holy Church.*

*Rev. JW Park symbolized this by sprinkling water on the congregation.*



## Children's Sunday School

Children's Sunday School will be focusing on God's love for us and how we are called to love others. We will learn about this through scripture, arts and crafts, and music. Children's Sunday School is held in Room 222 following our worship service. We welcome all children and youth.



## Youth News

Our youth will begin a series called "You Were Meant for More." When you let go of what you think your life should be, then you can discover God's plan for you. All youth in middle or high school are welcome to join us. We meet on **Sundays from 4-6 p.m.**

Mark your calendars: our youth will be serving pancakes on **March 4, Shrove Tuesday**. This is a fundraiser for our ASP Mission Trip. We hope you will join us for some delicious pancakes and sausage from 5-7 p.m.



## All Are Welcome to Messy Church Friday, February 7

Is your heart frozen? Do you feel sad during the winter months? Have you had enough of the cold? Join us for *Messy Church—Unfrozen* on **Friday, February 7 at 6 p.m.**

We will begin with dinner in Fellowship Hall, move to the sanctuary for a short celebration, and return to Fellowship Hall for crafts and games. Messy Church will end at 7:30 p.m. All ages are invited!

*If you are interested in serving during Messy Church*, please contact Becky Roper by phone or email ([beckyroper@stmatthews-bowie.org](mailto:beckyroper@stmatthews-bowie.org)).

Messy Church is an intergenerational opportunity to worship God together. Life is messy. God meets us in all of our mess and welcomes us in!



*The Three Kings visit  
St. Matthew's.*

## Adult Studies

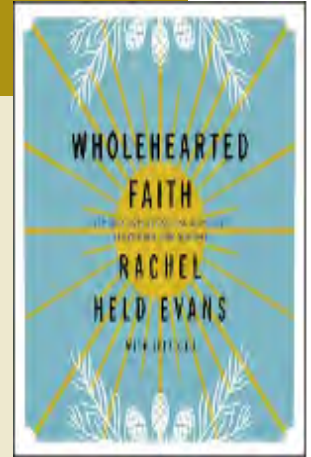
### Bible Studies in Full Swing

The **Tuesday Morning Bible Study**, led by Isaac Borocz, will continue with the study of the Gospel of Mark on **Tuesdays at 9:45 a.m.** in the Parlor.

The **Tuesday Evening Bible Study**, with Rev. JW Park, will meet each Tuesday at **7 p.m. via Zoom**. A link is emailed out prior to the class.

### Christian Book Club

The Christian Book Club will meet via Zoom on **Tuesday, February 18 at 7 p.m.** We will discuss the next section of Rachel Held Evans' book, *Wholehearted Faith*, pages 104-151. All are welcome!



## Adult Sunday School—New Class Begins February 16

On February 2, the 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School Class will wrap up its current series on *Lights, Camera, Faith: Christianity in Popular Movies* with Jim Wiedman leading in the Parlor. You are invited to come explore the intersection of faith and film in *The Mission* (1986).

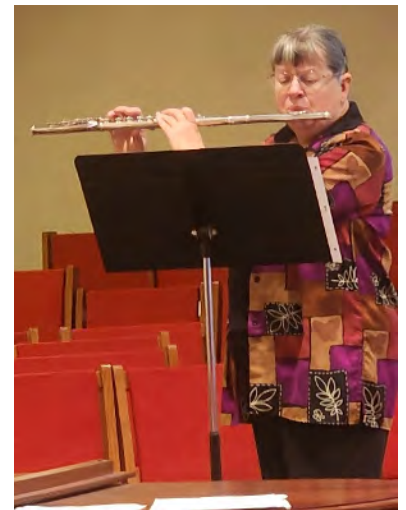
Join us for a new Adult Sunday School series starting **February 16 at 11 a.m. in the Parlor**, as we explore the book, *Jesus for Everyone: Not Just Christians* by Amy-Jill Levine.



This thought-provoking study delves into the historic and cultural impact of Jesus of Nazareth, examining his teachings and their relevance for everyone—Christians, agnostics, and nonbelievers alike. Renowned biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine offers fresh insights into Jesus' life, philosophy, and influence on ethics and civilization, making this a fascinating journey for people of all perspectives.

All are welcome to join the discussion and discover how Jesus' teachings continue to shape the world today.

*Please note: the class that meets at 8:45 a.m. is still on hiatus.*



*On a nasty weather Sunday, when many chose to stay home, Helen-Jean Talbott came in and played beautifully for the congregants in attendance.*

## UWF Meetings, Events

The United Women in Faith of St. Matthew's invite you to these upcoming events:

- **Soup-er Bowl Fundraiser** (see article at right)
- **World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 7**
- **Lenten Brunch on Saturday, April 12**

### Circle Meetings:

**Friendship Circle** will meet **Monday, February 10**, in the Parlor at **12:30 p.m.** to connect before our business meeting starts at 1:00 p.m. Delicious refreshments will accompany our congenial conversations and warm smiles. Come join us.

**Martha Circle** will meet **Friday, February 14**, in the Parlor at **10:30 a.m.** We will continue our video/discussion study. All are welcome—no preparation is needed.

**Koinonia Circle** will meet **Monday, February 17**, at **7 p.m.** in the Parlor.

## Soup-er Bowl Fundraiser



The United Women in Faith are once again having a Soup-er Bowl Fundraiser! Here's how it works:

- **Sunday, February 2** – come to Fellowship Hall following the worship service. Sample the **FIVE (5)** different soups that are offered for sale. Place your order to be picked up on Sunday, February 9. **Payment at the time of order is appreciated** and will expedite your pick-up.
- **Sunday, February 9** – come to Fellowship Hall following the worship service. **Pick up** and, if not already done, pay for your soup order. **Stay and visit the SHEEP service fair!**

Proceeds will benefit the missions of the United Women in Faith. **Thank you for your support of this fundraiser!**

## Mark the Date: World Day of Prayer is March 7

**Friday, March 7, at Noon**  
**Broadcast on Facebook at 7 p.m.**

**Theme: "I made you wonderful" Psalm 134: 14**

The 2025 World Day of Prayer invites you into the knowledge that each one of us was made with care and love by God.

Our prayer focus this year is on the women and children of the **Cook Islands**. The Cook Islands consist of 15 islands scattered over 2 million square kilometers within the Pacific Ocean. It is near New Zealand and Australia.

The Cook Islands are a majority Christian nation where the people are driven by a strong sense of community and cultural values that come from their belief in God.

Come to pray and learn about the people and culture of this part of the world. **Invite your friends, neighbors, and other churches.**



## St. Matthew's in Mission

### Early Christmas Surprise for St. Matthew School in Liberia

In December, the students and staff were very grateful to receive 25 reconfigured Dell Latitude (professional grade) laptops for their computer lab. Our St. Matthew's yard sale proceeds helped make this possible. Special thanks to Santa's elf, Bill Greaves, for enabling the project.

*"With grateful heart, we are overwhelmed to appreciate you all for this donation of computers to the St. Matthew United Methodist school in Logan Town, Monrovia, Liberia. Bill Greaves and I have concluded the deal with the vendor he had shown to us for the Dell computers. The negotiation is done and the installation will start soon. Thank you to great and loving people of St. Matthew's United Methodist Church of USA. We appreciate you so much. May God the Almighty continue to bless you all."*

*—Alphonso T. Sieh, St. Matthew School Principal*



### What a Blessing for the Hungry in Our Community!

In December, [Grace Gives Food](#) (Grace Baptist) and our [Little Free Pantry](#) (LFP) worked together to help the hungry in Bowie. On two December weekends, Grace Baptist provided lots of bread for our LFP and other area food pantries. Thank you, Grace Baptist! Our LFP visitors enjoyed this bread and it was gone almost as soon as it went in. Even though we stocked the bread a couple of times a day, we were given more than we could use in the week, so our stockers put bread in the [Grace Lutheran Church](#) LFP and the [Bowie Lions Club](#) LFP.

Grace Gives Food supports 150 families a week through food recovery. For Christmas, they gave each of their families a reusable insulated bag to transport their produce and meat each week. St. Matthew's Mission Committee and the Social Justice Team joined together to donate \$500 to help provide these bags. Grace Gives Food wrote, "Thank you for the generous donation. Such an answer to prayer!"



# Feb. Communion Offering

The **February communion offering** will go to Human Relations Day. This offering supports social justice and outreach ministries that empower all God's children to realize their full potential as human beings in relationship with one another.



# Change for Communion

Beginning Sunday, March 2, we will begin using a different musical setting of the congregational responses for Communion. Watch this space for details in the *March Circuit Rider!*



# Bye-Bye to Christmas (for This Year)

Many hands made quick work of sending the Advent and Christmas decorations into hibernation until next year.

*Thank you to everyone who pitched in to help!*



# Lectionary Readings for February 2025

## February 2 – 4th Sunday after the Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6  
1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

## February 9 – 5th Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 6:1-8, 9-13; Psalm 138  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

## February 16 – 6th Sunday after the Epiphany

Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1  
1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

## February 23 – 7th Sunday after the Epiphany

Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40  
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

# Life Changes

## Death:

**Nancy Green**, wife of former member Tom Wheeler (died December 29)



**Kathy Wadsley**, former Director of Christian Education at St. Matthew's (died January 3)

**Julia Domingo**, daughter of Olive Domingo (died January 7)



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

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| Barbara Rooney | February 4  |
| Edward Riekert | February 5  |
| Joan Cyphers   | February 10 |
| Maureen Blades | February 13 |
| Ann Rohlfing   | February 14 |
| Vivian Samura  | February 17 |
| Olive Domingo  | February 22 |
| John Jones     | February 26 |



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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.

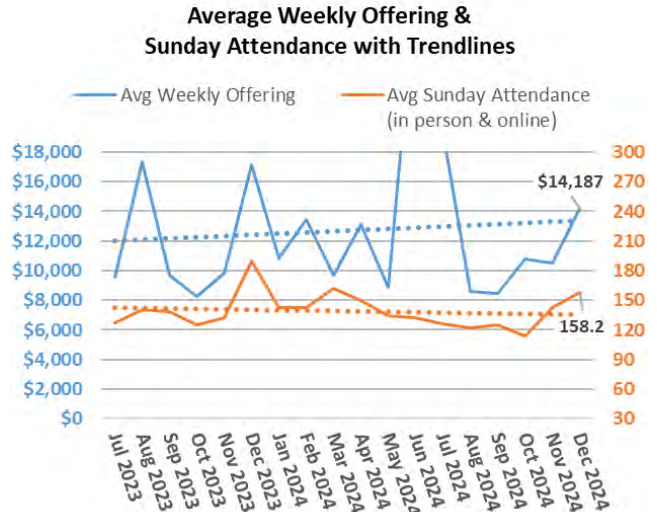
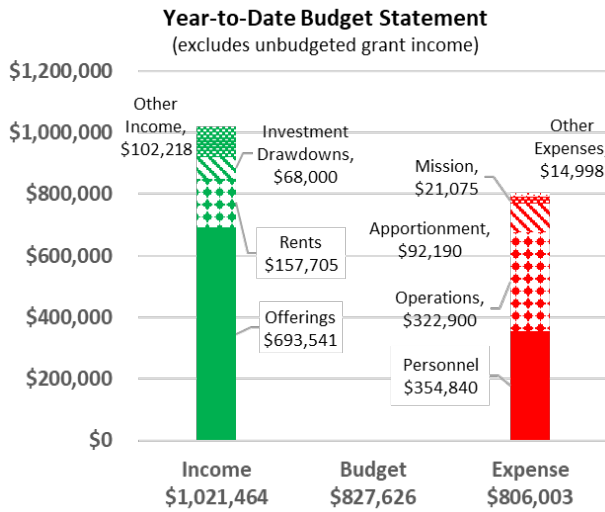


# End of Year: St. Matthew's Finances at a Glance

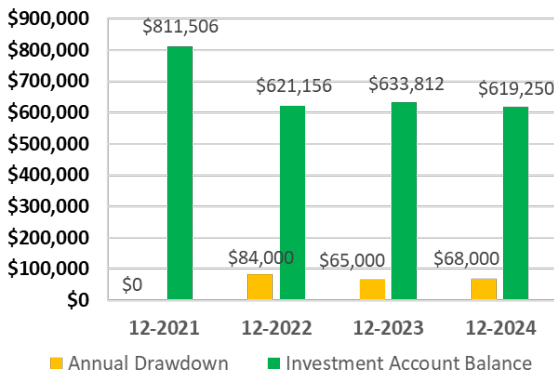
St. Matthew's Finance Committee works very hard to prepare reports for the Administrative Council. It is the Council's desire to share our financial status with the congregation on a monthly basis. Please direct any questions to our Finance Chair, Scot Dahl, at [finance@stmatthews-bowie.org](mailto:finance@stmatthews-bowie.org).

[Click here for Online Giving](#)

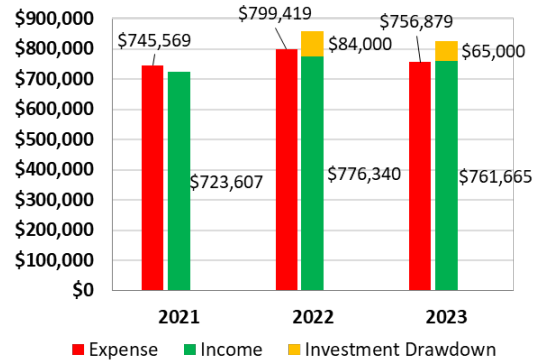
## ST. MATTHEW'S FINANCE CHARTS (DECEMBER 2024)



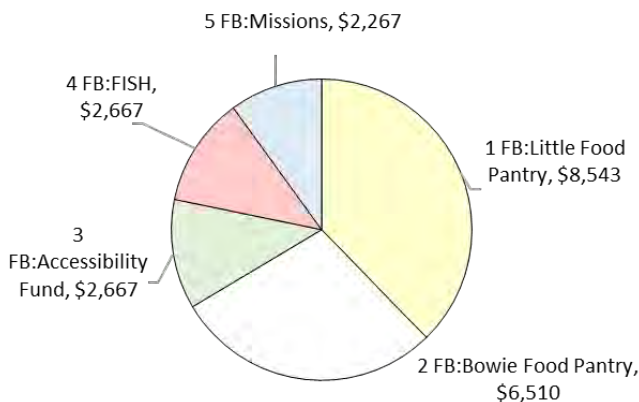
### Investment Account Balances & Drawdowns



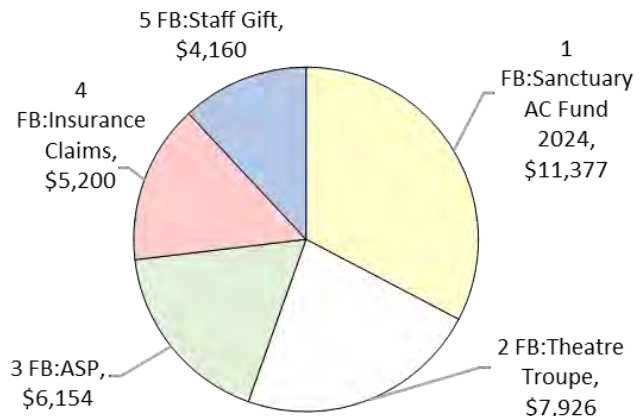
### Historical Annual Expenses, Income & Drawdowns



### Top 5 Mission Fund Donations Received Year-to-Date



### Top 5 Other Fund Donations Received Year-to-Date





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

Facebook: stmbowie



Time Dated Material  
 Please Deliver Promptly



## Weekly Schedule

**Sunday Services** In person

8:45 a.m. **Adult Sunday School** (on hiatus)

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. **Coffee Hour** in Fellowship Hall  
**Children's Sunday School**, Rm 222  
**Adult Sunday School**, Parlor

**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.**