

THE VOICE OF

St. Matthew

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1420 SOUTH GABLES BLVD.

WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60189

630-665-1236

Fax 630-665-1436

www.stmatthew-ucc.org



December 2017

The Life We Have

We have made it to December. Now we have Advent, Christmas, and finally, a happy end to 2017. I wonder how we each will reflect and evaluate what sort of year we have had. For some, you have welcomed a child and it seems everything has changed. Other have become grandparents and have all the joy that goes with having a child, without all the responsibilities! Others of you did not start the year expecting that you would have a major surgery in store for you, but you made it through. Others have married off a child and felt the contentment of watching a child fly the coop. Some have been making the drive to colleges, either to anticipate their child's leaving home or to visit a them at school.

We have not had many deaths in the church this year, but some of you have still felt the pain of saying goodbye to a loved one. Others struggle with chronic pain and troubles that come under the category of "things we must learn to bear." Some, like myself, are watching a parent in declining health and are bracing for the loss of someone we love. I am sure many have felt bitter disappointments when life has not gone as expected and maybe you feel you are moving into a future clouded by uncertainty.

The writer of Ecclesiastes says there is a time for everything. It is vanity of vanities to imagine that we can escape the cycle of life. Accept the good and the bad; come to terms with life as it is, not as you insist it should be. Pain comes from the illusion that you should be able to control life. Joy comes from accepting what is with gratitude, knowing what is bad will pass and seeing pleasure as a gift, even if it does not last forever. The writer of James in the New Testament sums this up best:

"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit'— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes."

Want a more hopeful word? You can turn to the Apostle Paul for that: "Rejoice in the Lord, always, again I say rejoice." Rejoice not just when the list of thanksgivings is far longer than the list of problems. No, rejoice always. How is that possible? Because life is a gift and God is ever present to sustain and love us. We are held close in love by the One who does not let go. Grace is all around for those who open their spiritual eyes to see the gift of life.

*Peace,
Pastor Allen Mothershed*

Food on the First

Thank you for all of the November donations! Here is what is needed in December:

- Canned peas
- Canned carrots
- Canned pineapple slices
- Canned peaches
- Canned fruit cocktail
- Salad dressings
- Olives
- Pickles
- Diapers (sizes 2-6) and wipes
- Shampoo

Please make sure all items are not expired and packages are unopened. If you have any questions, please call Betty Greer at 630.682.4084.

Blessings to all.



Pennies From Heaven/Scrip

Scrip cards are always a great gift for Christmas - one size fits all, without the hassle of returns. Not only are you giving gifts to your family and friends, but the retailers also donate to St. Matthew. Wow – two gifts in one! Stop by the Scrip table in Dobstaff for a list of ideas for men, women, and stocking stuffers. Are you hosting celebrations this season or making dozens of yummy cookies? Get your cooking and baking supplies with grocery cards from Scrip.

Orders will be taken as late as December 17th. They will be available for early pickup at church by December 20th or after the morning service on December 24th. No orders will be taken on December 24th because the Scrip office will be closed the following week.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3	Joe Chumas Elizabeth Hambrick-Stowe
5	Judi Gonzalez
6	John Adams
7	Jerry Stoller
8	Jan Beaton Mike Thornton
10	Laura Christensen
11	Alex Alavi
13	Anna Neufelder
16	Dave Boyd
20	Lisa Stubbee
23	Rachel Cole Cathy SooHoo
27	Dave Mook
28	Jeannine Adams Carol Domal Blake Erickson
29	Tyler Faith Sharon Schlenker
30	Bob Barnshaw

**Please join our Christmas Eve
Evening Worship Services:
6pm Family Friendly Service
10pm Candle-Light Service**





Notes from the Music Room....

I hope everyone had a happy Thanksgiving, which, of course, has become the official start of the holidays. And December, while full of joy, can get overwhelmingly busy. My wish is that you are able to take some time throughout this month to remember the gift of hope, peace, and promise that was given to us with the birth of Jesus, and that you somehow share that gift with those less fortunate. And that through this sharing, a greater peace is given to you.

December is busy for music, too. The bells, choir, and praise band have all been rehearsing for this month's music. The Sanctuary Choir and Praise Band will both share music on December 3rd; the Sanctuary Choir will present the Cantata "Peace Child," arranged by our own Brian Dobbelaere on December 10th during the regular service; December 17th we will enjoy selections by the IntergeneRingers and the Chancel Ringers; on the morning of December 24th we will have a congregational carol sing, and at the Christmas Eve 10pm service, the bells and Sanctuary Choir will add to our traditional Candlelight Service. A busy month it is, but all for a wonderful season of joy.

Music can be very powerful, running the gamut of eliciting joy or sadness, elation or sorrow, strong emotions that are positive or even no feeling at all. Songs that are chosen for congregational singing are looked at carefully with consideration giving to the words of the songs and how they relate to the scripture and message of the day, as well as the music, rhythm and feeling that support those words. We are acutely aware of how different music relates to different individuals. Looking into the new year, we will be asking for some feedback from you, the congregation, about some of the music selections for congregational songs. More details will be coming after the holidays, but we want you know what is in the works and that we are aware of worshippers' feelings on this.

KC, Brian and I, and all who are in music, wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Peace,

Jamie
630.202.6788
jamie.craig@stmatthewucc.org

Advent and the Coming of Peace

This December, we focus on the disposition of peace with our sermon series on *Attitudes of the Heart*. Peace is not the absence of conflict or problems, but a deep abiding sense that we are beloved and held in God's grace. We reflect this Advent on God's peace which passes all understanding. We do so in a world that is divided and hostile, but a world where we trust that the child who is to be born is our peace. Join us for worship and preparation to receive this child, this peace.

December 3rd--Genesis 2:4-25--Eden: God's Peace
10th--Matthew 3:1-12--The Peace of a New Possibility
17th--Isaiah 11:1-9--The Longing for Peace
24th--Luke 1:26-38--Welcoming God's Peace
24th--Luke 2:1-20--The Peace of Christ
31st--Galatians 4:4-8--The Peace of Adoption



PEACE CHILD: Birth of an idea

By Brian Dobbelaere

In 2014, Pastor Allen was preparing a sermon series for Advent when he came upon a resource that included the powerful lyrics of “Peace Child,” by New Zealand hymn writer Shirley Erena Murray. The words convey a message of peace brought through the birth of the Christ child, bringing this peace to bear through some distressing imagery certainly not typical of most Advent/Christmas works.

While I was familiar with the text from a published setting some 18 years earlier, the tune that had been composed for use with this resource, while pleasant, wasn’t especially singable. I thought I could do a better job at setting the text in a way that would be immediately accessible to a congregation. The setting came quickly and was used to great success that Advent season. I shared this song with friends whose responses were enthusiastic and encouraging.

A few years passed, and all the while I had been thinking about how best to further use this song. With the sad shift in political proclivities to the profound bigotry and downright hatred of immigrants and refugees in the United States, a group of fellow musicians and I mounted a “Concert for Hope” in May 2017 to support outreach ministries. The program was inspired by Leonard Bernstein’s quotation, “This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before.” It included my composition for piano and violin called “Promises of Hope,” written especially for the occasion.

This sparked my creative energy and led me to encounter more fully the beautiful words of Shirley Erena Murray. Her hymns have been described as “distinguished by their inclusive language... their bold appropriation of secular terms and their original poetic imagery drawn from nature and domestic life, but equally by the directness with which they confront contemporary issues.”¹ This cantata uses several of her seasonal hymns to present the message of peace and our call, as people of God, to be that peace in the world — a call that often falls on the deaf ears of the rich and powerful and is instead put into action by those of much more meager means.

It is the kind of response Mary had when God sent an angel to her. It is the call of the Good Samaritan, the transformation of Saul, and the call of Jesus, who sought the outcast and destitute throughout his ministry. God has always found the unexpected individual through whom to work. It is such a great mystery that the hand of God is most frequently found in the least expected places.

May this work be a blessing to those who encounter it.

¹ University of Otago to honor hymn writer.

1 December 2009. Retrieved 9 December 2013



More about Brian: BRIAN DOBBELAERE began music studies with piano lessons in second grade. He has been playing organ since high school. Brian majored in Theory-Composition and Organ at the University of Northern Iowa. His first major orchestral composition won first place in the Des Moines Symphony Composition Contest. He holds master’s degrees in both Organ and Composition from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. As a child, Brian often asked his mother, who also took piano lessons, why she didn’t want to write the music, too. He has continued his own desire to compose, and we hope you will join us December 10th to hear his latest work in this year’s Christmas Cantata.

New Face in the Office

We are pleased to welcome our new administrative assistant, Danielle (“Dani”) de Leon. She begins work December 4th.

Having grown up in Glen Ellyn, Dani is a lifelong DuPage County resident. She and her family have lived in Wheaton for 11 years, and are neighbors of the Mooks and Bairds.

Dani and her husband, Mike, have two children – Mikaela, 17, and Andrew, 14, who both attend Wheaton-Warrenville South High School.

Dani was already familiar with St. Matthew from the years when her children attended the Gymboree program that was hosted in Dobstaff Hall. Her niece and nephew attended the Prairie Path Preschool when it was a part of the church. She says now that she had a good feeling coming back to St. Matthew because “it was always a welcoming place.”



Dani brings a wealth of experience, both volunteer and professional. She held several titles at Eastman Kodak, including office manager. She has served in parent leadership positions at Madison Elementary and Edison Middle School, and more recently as a co-chair of the Spirit Wear committee at South. She is active in the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She and her family are members of St. Michael’s Catholic Church in Wheaton.

Dani replaces Kathy Robson, who left us for a full-time position but who will join us occasionally for choir and bells.

In her job, Dani says, “I’m looking forward to being part of another community. I wanted to do something where I felt like I was trying to help make a positive change.” She said she is looking forward to meeting everyone, and we’re looking forward to everyone getting to know her, too!



Stewardship 2018 - *Lean on Me*

Thank you to all who have returned pledges and agreed to volunteer time to support our ministries in 2018. If you have not had the opportunity to make a pledge we are still accepting them in the Church office, in the collection plate, or by contacting our financial secretary, Edie DeBoard.

We have received 75 pledges thus far with 9 new pledging units. A total of 48% families increased their yearly pledge and another 42% kept their pledges the same. Our total pledge amount is down 2% from 2017, which is why we are still encouraging additional pledges, but our average family pledge amount is up 5%.

Thank you for making St. Matthew such a vibrant and supportive church family!

Sincerely, The Stewardship Committee

New Year's resolution: Share your talent and passion with the church

As the new calendar year approaches, we will be seeking members to fill positions on the church's various ministry committees. We know we have many talented members in our congregation, and hope you will consider volunteering for one of these committees.

The committees represent a wide variety of ministries and activities, so there is sure to be one that could use your passion and interests. As the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Here is a brief description of what each committee does.

Christian Education: This committee oversees the activities of many aspects of the church's Christian education programs, for children, youth, and adults. This involves many activities throughout the year, including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, confirmation classes, the crazies youth group, and adult education. New members needed: 2.

Congregational Life/Membership: This committee plans fellowship activities – everything from group dinners to movie showings and euchre tournaments. It also develops and maintains relationships with current and prospective members, through in-person contacts as well as maintaining our social media accounts and promotional activities. They're always open to new ideas, and would welcome new members. New members needed: 1-2.

Memorial/Endowment: This committee coordinates with individuals and families who have lost a loved one and wish to remember them through donations and memorials to the church. The committee also maintains the St. Matthew memorial garden. The committee also oversees the church's endowment fund. Several new members needed.

Mission: This committee oversees St. Matthew's activities related to benevolence needs both in our community and the broader world. These include our ongoing relationships with DuPage PADS (where we provide overnight housing and meals for the homeless), Marian Park, Outreach Community Ministries, Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi, overseas Mission trips and our popular Shopping Cart Brigade in Wheaton's July 4th parade. Because of attrition, this committee has a particular need for new members. New members needed: 5.

Worship: This committee's duties include working with the pastor and the music staff in developing worship experiences; to oversee and coordinate sacraments such as communion and baptisms; to provide ushers and others involved in worship services; and to decorate the sanctuary as appropriate for the season. New members needed: 3.

If you see a committee you would like to serve on, or have questions about the requirements, please ask any member of the nominating committee: Bruce Anderson, Edie DeBoard, Rick Jungk, Dawn Schubert, or Lee Staton.

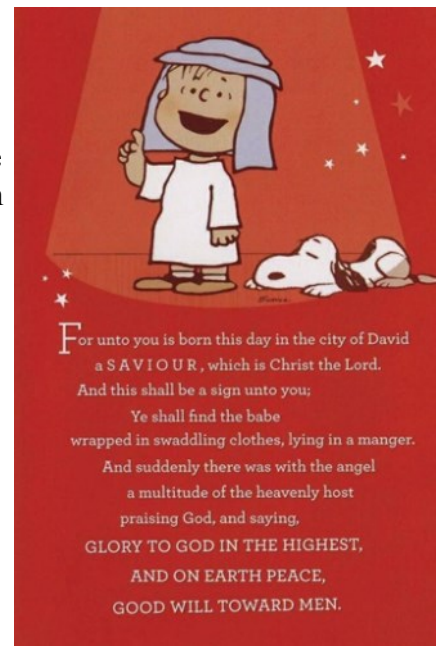




Children's Ministry December 2017

I loved the Peanuts comic when I was a child, but because of my soft heart it always bothered me that Charlie Brown never got a break. I'm sure many others felt the same way. Maybe Chas. Schulz had a message in mind, as he liked to implement messages into his cartoons, but come on, not one break? Couldn't he let Charlie catch the football, fly the kite, or win the ball game once in a while?

Then to top it off, in 1965 the "Charlie Brown Christmas Special," Charlie gets the smallest and least attractive Christmas tree, causing him to be humiliated in front of his friends...again. If Charlie wasn't being mocked, he was being ignored. I really hurt for him. (And yes, I know he was fictional!) However, the one shining light for Charlie was that he had Linus for a friend, and what a wise and good friend Linus was. I tear up every time Linus starts telling Charlie the true meaning of Christmas. How wise Mr. Schulz was to bring Christ into Christmas that year, even though the producers were against it. He couldn't have known that the low-budget TV special that took him only a few weeks to write and was deemed a failure by the producers and network after it aired, would go on to receive outstanding critical acclaim, winning an Emmy and Peabody award. He never could have fathomed that the little "Charlie Brown" special that he threw together in a few weeks would still be viewed every year since it first aired and has been shown in 75 countries and translated into 21 languages. We can't even begin to guess how many hundreds of thousands of adults and children have heard Linus give that message of what Christmas is all about, year after year. It touched my heart way back then, but it took many more years for me to realize that Charlie had something bigger and greater than getting the lucky breaks in life, he has Jesus as his Savior, and of course Linus to remind him of it. Chas. Schulz once said that he created Linus to represent himself and his Christian faith. Charlie Brown may be fictional, but his story is very real. Many people cannot get a break, are ignored and misunderstood. My prayer this Christmas is for all those Charlie Browns out there. I pray that God will put a Linus in their life, leading them to Him who loves them just as they are. - *Merry Christmas, Mrs. Susan*



Christmas Workshop Rotation: This Advent season in workshop rotation the children will have a Charlie Brown Christmas lesson. We will begin by watching and discussing the "A Charlie Brown Christmas" movie, with popcorn of course. Our lessons, games and crafts will be about Charlie's sad little Christmas tree, Linus' important message of what Christmas is all about and Snoopy's consumerism. In the fun of implementing "A Charlie Brown Christmas" into our Advent season, our main focus will, of course, be the birth of Jesus as we unfold the story from Mary receiving God's message to the Kings' arrival on Epiphany.

Parents Shopping Day: This year, on Sunday, December 3rd, we are offering a babysitting service to our St. Matthew parents so they can have some time to themselves for shopping, lunch, (a nap?). From 11am-2pm parents can leave their children at church to enjoy crafts, Christmas movies and games. Send a sack meal with your child for us to serve them for lunch. Sign-up is in the narthex.

Birthday Party for Jesus: Sunday December 17th, during the Sunday school hour the children will have fun celebrating Jesus' birthday with crafts, games, gifts and birthday cake. The children will join their families downstairs in Dobstaff Hall after worship to sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and eat birthday cake.

Family Christmas Eve service: On Christmas Eve, St. Matthew will offer two candlelight services. The 6pm family service will have both flame and battery candles for our closing "Silent Night" candlelight song. If your child would like to participate in the service as part of the Nativity scene, please notify me before December 11th.

**Happy Birthday: Jesus 12/25, Greyson Scalora 12/11, Fiona Walsh 12/17
Evelyn Henderson 12/25, Kylie Caprini 12/25, Mary Ortman 12/26**

Parents Shopping Day Out

hosted by Santa's Little Helpers

Parents, we invite you to enjoy a few hours of shopping or wrapping Christmas presents without your kids on **Sunday, December 3rd** from after church until 2pm. At the church we will provide crafts, songs, games and a movie to keep your Sunday School aged children (3+ and potty trained) happy and having fun. (Please send a sack lunch with your child.) Sign up in the narthex so we know how many volunteers will be needed and which children will be staying upstairs after dismissal. If you would like to help, please contact Susan Wold.

Merry Christmas!

-The Christian Education Committee



Since 1975, PRC has brought neighbors together to respond to hunger & poverty in DuPage County.



Purchase tickets today! \$35

Online:

atthemac.org

By Phone:

630-942-4000

In Person:

McAninch Arts Center

425 Fawell Blvd., Glen Ellyn

For box office hours call:

630-942-4000

*Pictures from the Marian Park
Thanksgiving Dinner. It was a blessed
evening and my sincere thanks goes to
our team and faithful friends.*

-Alex Afavi



Marian Park Christmas Giving

This Christmas Season we are very excited to be able to serve the entire Marian Park community! Instead of buying for a few individuals, we will be creating a "Christmas Store" for all of the Marian Park residents to "shop". The tags on the tree are for household and personal essentials. Just as in the past, you will choose a tag, sign it out, and bring your unwrapped items to church by Sunday, December 10th. The date of the Christmas Store is still TBA, but we will need around 20 people to help bring the items to Marian Park, set up the store, and run the store for one night. This will be a great opportunity to meet the residents of Marian Park, as well! If you have any questions, please contact Andrea DiOrio at 630.881.8611 or ADiOrioClarinet@gmail.com.



Prairie Path Cleanup



We completed our 4th and final cleanup for 2017 on Sunday, November 5th. Thanks to all who helped this past season, and look for info next spring about our first cleanup of 2018.

Family Camp 2018

Family Camp 2018 sign-ups continue for Starved Rock! Come spend a week with your church family (Sunday, July 8th - Saturday, July 14th) and explore this amazing hidden jewel right in our back yard.

Starved Rock features amazing history, famous canyons, and surprisingly beautiful waterfalls. In addition to the exceptional hiking trails and natural beauty of the park itself, the towns along the Illinois River boast of museums, historic mansions, and a glass blowing factory.

Family Camp is a St. Matthew tradition dating back more than 30 years! Come be a part of this unique, fun, and relaxing time for fellowship. Sign-up sheets are hanging on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Mark Hutchison at 630.639.1448 or markah22@gmail.com.



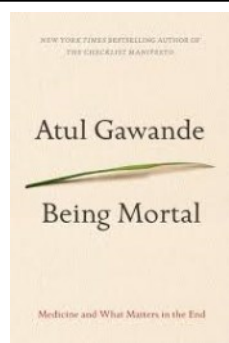
Christmas Fun for All!

Join us for a fun afternoon of watching the movie “Elf,” singing Christmas carols, and sharing cookies! All are welcome at church on Sunday, December 10th at 3pm. Please bring cookies to share; any extra cookies will be donated to PADS. Sign-up sheet is in the narthex. Please contact Annette English at 630.690.6853 with any questions.

—The Congregational Life Committee



NOVEL APPROACHES



Novel Approaches breaks tradition to approach our next book, “Being Mortal” by Atul Gawande. “This book is wise and deeply moving...an essentially insightful book of our times from one of our finest physician writers” (Oliver Sacks). The date: Friday, December 1st at 7:30 pm. The place: The Skwaras, 2035 Cromwell Drive in Wheaton. All are welcome, join us for fellowship, food, and friendly discussion.

THANK YOU!

Thank you SO much to all who gave supplies and monetary donations to send to Puerto Rico. We have sent 26 boxes (plus a couple more going out this week) to San Francisco de Asis church in Aguada, which is distributing aid directly into smaller towns around the island. St. Matthew’s generosity has been a blessing and to many families in Puerto Rico and I cannot thank you all enough for helping to share Christ’s love there!

—Diana Padilla



TAX Benefit Giving To Charity

According to Kimberly Lankford, a contributing editor to Kiplinger’s Personal Finance, if you are over 70 1/2 you can transfer up \$100,000 each year from your IRA to charity, tax-free (called a qualified charitable distribution). The amount transferred to charity counts as your RMD, but isn’t included in your adjusted gross income.



But, you can’t make a tax-free transfer from your 401k to charity. However, you can roll over money from your 401k to an IRA and make future qualified charitable distribution. Your bank or the financial institution managing your 401k should be able to help with any required transfers.

Your professional tax advisor is as always the best source of advice on this or any other provision of the tax law.

December

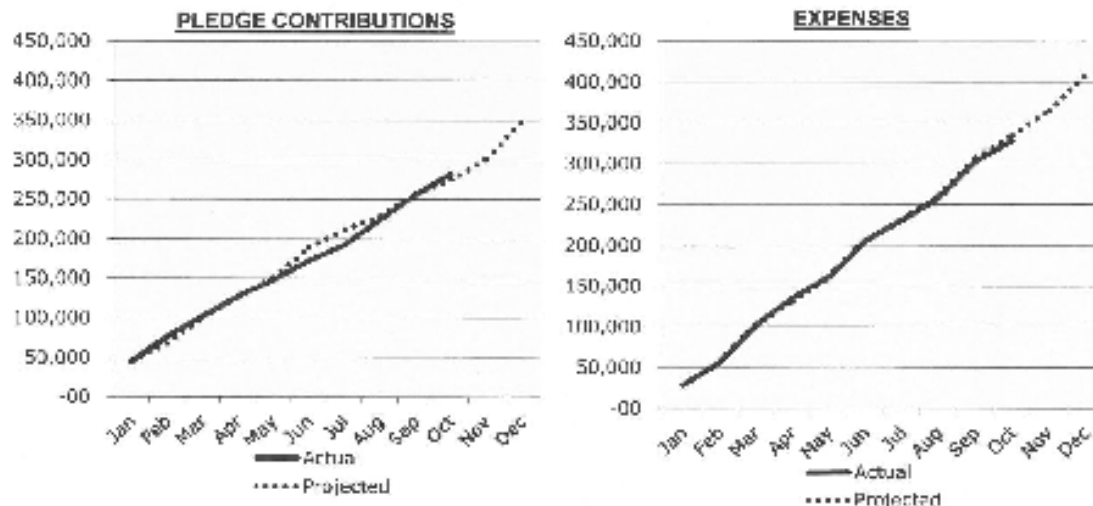
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <i>7:30pm Novel Approaches</i>	2
3 <i>9:30 am Worship</i>	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 <i>9:30a Worship-Cantata 11a M&M 3p Christmas Movie Fun</i>	11	12 <i>1p Digital Ministry</i>	13 <i>PADS</i>	14 <i>PADS</i>	15	16
17 <i>9:30am Worship Bells Sunday Birthday Party for Jesus</i>	18 <i>6p SRC 7p Council</i>	19	20	21	22	23
24 Christmas Eve <i>9:30am Worship Open Choir 6p Family Service 10p Candlelight service</i>	25 Christmas Day <i>Office Closed Merry Christmas</i>	26 <i>Office Closed</i>	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve <i>9:30am Worship</i>		TUESDAY <i>6pm Intergene-Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Ringers</i>	WEDNESDAY <i>6:30pm Praise Band 7:30pm Sanctuary Choir</i>			

**ST. MATTHEW UCC GENERAL OPERATING FUND
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES**

For the Period Ending October 31, 2017

	ACTUAL CURRENT MONTH	ACTUAL YEAR-TO- DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
RECEIPTS:			
Pledge Contributions	26,178	262,837	350,000
Pledge Pre-Pay 2018	6,493	6,493	-00
Loose Offerings	355	3,289	10,000
Rental Income	400	3,150	3,300
Fund Raising	218	2,232	4,000
Investment Income	(199)	1,484	300
More Property	-00	21,000	21,000
Miscellaneous Income	-00	5,481	5,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	33,445	325,765	393,600
EXPENDITURES:			
Ministry	16,116	193,054	234,971
Building	7,596	82,657	102,216
Loans & Notes	-00	20,063	26,750
Mission / OCWM	500	22,785	26,850
Committees:			
Christian Education	444	5,753	8,000
Membership/Congregational Life	305	1,634	3,000
Music	424	2,090	4,200
Worship	(44)	359	1,500
Memorial/Endowment	-00	-00	100
Stewardship	-00	52	100
Misc. & Contingency	-00	-00	1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	25,342	328,457	408,787
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$8,103	\$(2,691)	\$(15,187)

2017 Activity - Actual vs. Projected



Please contact Howard Peterson if you have questions or need additional information.



St. Matthew United Church of Christ

630.665.1236 (Office)

630.665.1436 (Fax)

Office Email: office@stmatthewucc.org

Web Site: www.stmatthewucc.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 9am-4pm

Friday: 9am-1pm

Sunday Worship: 9:30am

Sunday Church School: 10am

Our Purpose:

Become, Live, and Serve as Disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our Identity:

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome and accepted here at St. Matthew United Church of Christ.

STAFF

Rev. Milton Allen Mothershed, Senior Pastor

allen.mothershed@stmatthewucc.org

Susan Wold, Director of Children's Ministry

susan.wold@stmatthewucc.org

Quinn Rosenthal, Director of Youth Ministry

quinn.rosenthal@stmatthewucc.org

Jamie Craig, Director of Music/Choir Director

jamie.craig@stmatthewucc.org

Brian Dobbelaere, Organist/Pianist

brian.dobbelaere@stmatthewucc.org

Kim Congdon, Handbell Director

kim.congdon@stmatthewucc.org

Administrative Assistant

office@stmatthewucc.org

Alicia Drabik, Business Manager

business.manager@stmatthewucc.org