

February

2019



of



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Pastoral Message

Pastor Allen Mothershed

The Limits of Forgiveness

"If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them." [Luke 17:3-4](#)

A prominent pastor and president of the Southwest Theological Seminary, Paige Patterson, was dismissed and reassigned from his position after a letter of complaint was received accusing him of sexist and abusive comments. The letter represented a massive backlash from women involved in the evangelical "Me Too" movement. One of the accusations included his using a sermon illustration where he told a woman not to leave, but to forgive, her abusive husband. He said a true Christian must forgive regardless of what has been done.

Most, or perhaps all, of us are appalled by such outrageous advice given by a man to a woman who has been repeatedly abused and is in danger at the hands of another man. We talk often about unconditional forgiveness. We hear Jesus say in Luke 17, "Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive them." Such a teaching leaves us cold when we put it in the context of abuse and danger. It leads to the absurdity of men in authority telling women that they owe it to their man to forgive any act of violence or abuse.

Unfortunately, we have long thought of forgiveness as an emotional issue, a matter of working through our feelings, when in scripture, forgiveness is not something we feel, but an action we choose to do. In the Hebrew tradition, forgiveness was something that was not required in every situation and it always involved repentance as a condition to be given. Repentance involved going to the person who you have wronged and requesting forgiveness as an act of contrition and repentance. A person can refuse this request two times; if they have not forgiven after a third request, the one requesting forgiveness is free from the obligation to the one they have wronged. Furthermore, there are some sins where there is no requirement for someone to forgive; for example, a murder. In addition, the only one who can forgive you is the one you have injured.

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I find it interesting that in Luke's gospel which repeats Jesus' words in Matthew about forgiving that Luke also uses the words "and repents." Repentance means turning a new direction and includes a transformation on the part of the one who has done wrong. Repentance is an essential element of forgiveness. Only with repentance can a relationship have the chance of being restored, though a fully restored relationship is not necessary the required outcome of forgiveness.

The importance of repentance informs how we are to deal with those men who have been exposed in the "Me Too" movement and how we respond. Are men who have been exposed for their abuses and hurtful actions ever to be allowed to be restored to their previous roles and place in society? We are complex human beings. None of us wishes to be completely defined by our worst moments and aspects of who we are. There is more to us than that. Grace requires we acknowledge this truth. But repentance takes the initiative to bring healing where we have committed wrong and can be used as one condition for restoring those who have abused to the community.

So is forgiveness dependent on the wrong-doer repenting? Can a person who has experienced harm not come to a place of forgiveness regardless of what the wrong-doer does? At an emotional level, it is possible to work through our hurt and free ourselves psychologically from the grip of resentment that ties us to the one who has harmed us. Surely, this is something we must choose to do, not so much for the wrong-doer, but for ourselves.

-Pastor Allen

ADULT ED CLASS IN MARCH

"Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life"

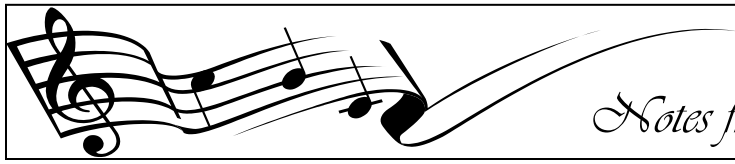


"Compassion is intrinsic in all human beings, each of us needs to work diligently to cultivate and expand our capacity for compassion." **Alan Bayert will guide us through Karen Armstrong's book, "Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life," in a three-part series on Sunday mornings, March 3rd, 10th, and 17th at 10:45am.** We will be exploring our natural capacity for empathy, the importance of open mindedness, compassion for the self, and loving the enemy.

Karen Armstrong is the author of "*A History of God*", "*Buddha*", and "*The Case for God*". The former nun is a passionate and prolific writer who brings together the deeper wisdom of our Christian faith, but also draws upon the wisdom of the great world religions. She also speaks a profound story of the history of altruism in human history.

Alan Bayert is a musician and composer with a Master of Theology, who comes to us as a lay member of Glen Ellyn First Congregational Church. He has experience in leading retreats and Christian Education sessions on a variety of topics. Once a month you can also hear Alan as a new musician and voice in our Chancel choir and Praise Band.

Reading the book "*Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*" is a plus but not required to benefit from this study. Copies of the book are available for purchase in the office for the cost of \$10.



Notes from the Music Room.....



The Sanctuary Choir and Praise Band are always looking for more singers. In February and March, several of our singers will be out of town. If you are able to help in any of them, we greatly appreciate it. The choir works several weeks ahead, so it is not mandatory to attend every rehearsal. Please look at your schedules to see if you can join for more than just Open Choir Sundays.

Our Open Choir Sundays continue to produce wonderful music. Please make sure the dates are on your calendar, even if you aren't sure you can make it. If they aren't on the calendar, it is easily overlooked.

Open Choir dates through May:

February 24th

March 31st

April 28th

May 19th

Peace,

Jamie Craig

630-202-6788

jamie.craig@stmatthewucc.org

WEEKLY REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Tuesday

IntergeneRingers

6pm

Chancel Ringers

7:30pm

Wednesday

Praise Band

6:30pm

Sanctuary Choir

7:30pm

Pennies From Heaven SCRIP (MANNA) Program

Participation in the SCRIP program is still languishing. If we could double our participation, we could double our profits. Remember - retailers are willing to make donations to us, so this is a fundraiser that costs us nothing! Incredible!



Thinking of Valentine's Day? Order your Scrip cards by February 3rd so they can be picked up on February 10th.

Think candy (Fannie May donates 24%), flowers, a unique gift, travel, dinner at a nice restaurant, or a romantic movie!

Check out the Scrip table in Dobstaff Hall on Sunday.



February BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----|------------------------|
| 1 | Kevin Cole |
| 2 | Taylor Holland |
| | Tim Schubert |
| 4 | Charles Hambrick-Stowe |
| | Lee Staton |
| 6 | Bruce Anderson |
| | Linnea Karpenske |
| 10 | Elizabeth Baird |
| | Marilyn Giese |
| | Kirk Stubbee |
| 11 | Charlene Cooper |
| | Mary Henderson |
| 12 | Stuart Blake |
| 14 | Daniel McGrath |
| | Amber Quinn |
| 16 | Courtney Christensen |
| | Lee Craig |
| 19 | Abby Johnson |
| 22 | Carl Anderson |

(continued)

- | | |
|----|--------------|
| 24 | Liliana King |
| 25 | Joyce Boyd |
| | Tony Kresl |
| 26 | Tracey Blake |
| | Cathy Miller |



Pastor Allen's schedule varies from week to week. He is in and out of the office during the day for meetings, visits, and study. Please call ahead to check his schedule or to set up an appointment. His cell phone number is 630.441.5962. He is available by phone when not in the office.

OFFICE HOURS

office@st.matthewucc.org

Monday-Thursday: 10am-2pm

Friday: 9-11am

Mission News



Food on the First

Thank you so much for the January donations. They are always appreciated!

Here is what is needed in February:

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

- Canned pineapple slices
- Canned soup
- Cold cereal
- Oatmeal
- Shampoo
- Disposable razors
- Baby wipes
- Shaving cream

Blessings to all.

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN TRIP

Thank you to all the St. Matthew volunteers who came out to Aurora to pack meals on January 21st. This year, our session packed 41,040 meals, enough to feed 112 children for a year. As with every year, I am reminded how dedicated and passionate our church is for mission opportunities such as this one. Thank you all for volunteering!

-Alex Johnson.



Congregational Life/Membership News

Promotion:

The committee met recently and reviewed the various marketing channels we use to promote St. Matthew. Cathy SooHoo is our Publicity Chair and handles these activities for the church. She noted that the lead time needed to get published has grown earlier over time. If you have an event that you would like to promote, please let her know as soon as possible. Along those lines, the committee considered promoting Handbell Sundays to attract new visitors as the handbell choirs under KC Congden are excellent and greatly enhance our worship experience, especially when combined with our vocalists under Jamie Craig and Brian Dobbelaere's direction. Andrew Kouns will coordinate with KC on a write-up.

Coffee Hour:

In our effort to continue being more environmentally friendly, the committee is in the process of purchasing additional dishwasher-safe cups for children to use during coffee hour. This will cut down on the plastic waste and ensure we are doing the little things to earn the Earth Day Flag presented last year. Thanks to Tracey Blake for leading this effort. Also, thanks to The Mooks, the Rudnicks, and Linnea Karpenske for hosting the weekly coffee hours and to the cadre of folks who clean up afterward. The treats have been a bit scarce recently, so we ask that you consider supporting this ministry by bringing treats to share.

Welcoming Visitors:

Thanks to the Mothersheds for hosting an informal dinner gathering on February 10th for frequent visitors to share a meal and learn more about St. Matthew. The committee will support this event by attending and assisting with meal preparation.

Upcoming Events:

We've begun mapping out our event schedule for the year and have the following dates for you to mark your calendars:

Sunday, February 10th—Pickleball at the Warrenville Park District

Sunday, February 17th—Cooper's Corner, Wheaton, for lunch after church

Sunday, March 10th—WafflePalooza in Dobstaff Hall after church

Monday, March 25th—Pal Joey's, West Chicago, for dinner

Saturday, April 13th—Easter Egg Hunt

Monday, May 20th—Mullen's, Warrenville, for dinner

Sunday, June 2nd—All-Church Picnic after church

Summer date TBD—Kane County Cougars game

As always, if you have ideas on how to better engage our members and guests, please let Rob Neufelder or anyone on the committee know.



Sunday, February 10th

Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in America today. It is a fun sport created for all ages and skill levels that combines many elements of tennis, badminton and ping pong.

Adults are invited to come play pickleball on Sunday, February 10th from 3:45-5:45pm at the indoor pickleball courts at the Warren Ave. Warrenville Park District facility. The cost for participants will be approximately \$12/person which includes instruction for beginners as well as a little something extra for the instructor. Grabbing dinner afterward will also be an option.

This Congregational Life event is limited to 30 participants and sign-up is required. The sign-up sheet is in the narthex. You may also contact Linda Raymond at 630.702.1212 (lindaraymond2002@yahoo.com) or Tracey Blake at 630.946.4884 (stutra@hotmail.com) with questions or to reserve a spot.

Wafflepalooza!!



Join us after church on Sunday, March 10th in Dobstaff Hall for St. Matthew's 3rd annual Wafflepalooza. Congregational Life/Membership Committee members will be serving waffles with assorted toppings.



Pal Joey's Get-Together

If you would like to grab a great meal and meet up with friends for a good time, please sign up for the Pal Joey's get-together. Congregational Life is sponsoring the event at 6pm on Monday, March 25th at Pal Joey's on Roosevelt Road in West Chicago.

We have reserved a room which holds up to 40 people. We will order off the menu, and separate tabs will be kept. The sign-up sheet for this event is in the narthex and is required due to our capacity limit. Please contact Tracey Blake at stutra@hotmail.com with any questions.



Children's Ministry

We are off to a good start in the new year; however, I am also reflecting on the blessings that Children's Ministry brought to my life over the past year. Writing my annual report brought to mind so many moments that made me smile when thinking back. The picture below is one of the rare moments where I am actually in the photograph and it captures my

joy. I will treasure the memory of that moment with the children as they waited to enter the church; **thank you, Annette English for taking the picture!**



Thank you to the parents for helping with costumes, photos, and rehearsal times. Your children did an amazing job on Christmas Eve and I was so proud of them. They are real life angels to me!

Thank you to the teachers, leaders and shepherds who helped with the Christmas workshops, birthday party for Jesus and the M&M get-together.

Exodus: Through Water and Wilderness – Our current workshop picks up from where we left off before Advent, when Moses was a baby. Our focus is the rough journey that Moses took his people on after their escape from Egypt, and how their trust in Moses and faith in God was challenged, reminding us that though we may turn our back on God, He never turns from us. **Video:** Watch a clip from movie showing how the people escaped and complained when times got tough. Acting out the speech Moses spoke to his people. **Art:** Creating a colored sand bottle that represents the journey. **Cooking:** Making manna to eat and special containers to save some manna for later. **Drama:** Acting out the story with drama and puppets. **Games:** Play games that relate to the journey and the behavior of the Hebrews.



© Can Stock Photo

Sunday School Care Package Mission Project – We have begun collecting items and postage donations for the college student and military care packages. Collections will go through February 17th. In the narthex is a basket for donations, and a list of donation ideas. After worship is over on the 17th, parents can come upstairs where we will pack the boxes, pray for the recipients and have donuts. Parents, be sure to come upstairs right after worship as your child will not be able to start until you arrive.

Mark your calendar, the VBS date has been set. VBS will be held the week of June 17th-21st. Be sure to spread the word to family and friends. Once we have decided on a theme the registration forms will be in the narthex and on the website.

**Vacation
Bible
School**



Zelda Chapple February 8th
Jack Legatzke February 8th

Happy Valentine's Day!

"For God so loved the world
that He gave His only son"

-Susan Wold, Director of Children's Ministry



crazies

After a long two weeks of fun and enjoyment over Christmas break, the crazies got back to their regular routine. Even though the parents were jumping up and down for the kids to start school again, it didn't stop them from coming to

youth group. I was on vacation, but was fortunate to have Pastor Allen, Kenna Anderson, Dawn Schubert, and Jon Chumas fill in while I was gone. Crazies and some of the congregation members went to "Feed My Starving Children" on Martin Luther King Day to pack meals for hungry children around the world.

I do have one request to see more parents and adults volunteer for crazies. Even though Blessy (my wife) is here, it would be great to have other adults experience crazies. There is no planning involved, you just need to show up and have fun! The sign-up sheet is hanging in the narthex. Thank you!

-Mel Jerome, Director of Youth Ministry



Uncle Sam may not need you right now... but the crazies DO!

Despite the sign-up sheet in the narthex and continued requests for chaperones and volunteers to provide dinner for the youth of St. Matthew, our sign-up sheet remains BLANK for the upcoming weeks. Although Mel has been hired as the new youth director and is here each week to lead crazies, it is imperative that we have a sec-

ond adult. Our Safe Church Policy requires that there be two adults present; and although Mel's wife Blessy is present often and hopes to be that second adult, we cannot always count on her to be there.

SO.... we need folks to sign up as chaperones and to offer to bring a simple meal for the kids. These meals can be very simple; the kids love mac-n-cheese, tacos, sloppy joes, baked potato bar, sub sandwiches, chicken tenders... you get the point. We ask that you have the food at church by 6pm, and the kids are usually finished eating by 6:30-6:45pm. If Blessy is there, you could leave after the meal (including clean-up), and you would not have to stay for the lesson. If Blessy is not able to be there, we would ask that you stay until 7:30pm (the new end time).

Although the kids might not LOVE having their parents serve as chaperones, we are very hopeful that the parents of the participating kids offer to cover at LEAST one Sunday a quarter.

We support ALL sorts of wonderful missions and causes here at St. Matthew; please let's invest some of our time to the youth of the church. They ARE the future, and they deserve our love and support.

Thank you for your consideration.

FAMILY CAMP 2020

Fond Remembrances

This month we continue our series of "Fond Remembrances" -- other church members' thoughts on what Family Camp has meant to them. This month's article comes to us from David and Diane Mook.

When John Rodgers became our pastor in 1983, he brought with him the idea of "family camp" which he had experienced in his former church in Western Springs. At St. Matthew he found two people, Sue and Eck Lellbach, who were delighted to help him get started because they had experienced it in their former church back east. And the rest is history! Family Camp has been a part of St. Matthew church for the past 36 years.

The experience of 'community' is powerful. David and I were a family of only two since our boys were grown, but that mattered not as we soon became immersed in the St. Matthew family. We became "honorary" members of other families and they became "honorary" members of ours, as the Bairds mentioned in last month's article. There are some young adults at St. Matthew today that we still consider part of our family from our days of "family camping."

Family Camp has given us the opportunity to visit parts of the country that we may never have seen. We traveled from Colorado to Cape Cod, from the Finger Lakes and Niagara Falls in New York to West Virginia, from Michigan to Tennessee, from South Dakota to New Hampshire, from North Carolina to the Gateway Arch in Missouri, along with many friends we enjoyed.

There are so many highlights that we can think of, but just a few very special ones are climbing Pike's Peak, hearing a long-silent carillon play again after Joe Hall and crew repaired it in West Virginia, a "fish boil" hosted by Susan Wold and family on Washington Island, white-water rafting in three different states, building a miniature golf course in New York, the whole group crafting at Estes Park, zip lining, learning what a "jaglot" means, considering "bat hats" at LaForet, lunch at the Broadmoor -- we could go on and on. Family Camp is a unique experience - you should try it!

Thank you to the Mooks for sharing some of the history of Family Camp, along with some of their most favorite memories. Come be a part of this great St. Matthew tradition! The next Family Camp will be July 19th-25th, 2020, at the YMCA of the Rockies, just outside Estes Park, Colorado. Sign-up sheets are in the narthex, and Mark Hutchison would be happy to answer any questions. Find him at 630.639.1448 (call/text), markah22@gmail.com, or at church.



Announcements and Events



Cooper's Corner Brunch 2.17

The Congregational Life/Membership committee invites you to join your church family for brunch on Sunday, February 17th. We will meet at Cooper's Corner (27W150 Roosevelt Rd, Winfield) after church at 11am. They offer a nice selection of omelets, pancakes, salads, and burgers. All are welcome. Hope to see you there!

NOVEL APPROACHES

The novel to be approached in February is "Us Against You" by Fredrik Backman.

" - a declaration of love for all the big and small, bright and dark stories that give form and color to our communities. With immense compassion and insight, Fredrik Backman reveals how loyalty, friendship, and kindness can carry a town through its most challenging days." (Publisher)

The Place: Linnea Karpenske's, 21W144 Glen Park Road, Lombard

The Date: Friday, February 22nd at 7:30pm

LOOKING AHEAD: "The Rent Collector" by Camron Wright



Yoga Classes



Interested in learning or practicing Yyoga at St. Matthew? Marla Mothershed will be completing her 200-hour yoga training this spring, but is gathering information about possible participants, and offering a few sample classes in the next few months. Emphasis for the class will be on breathing, building strength and balance, and gentle stretching. No matter where your body is on its journey, you are welcome here! Just let her know your contact information and interest. 630.441.5963 or mmothershed63@gmail.com.



2019 Voice, Happenings and Bulletin Due Dates

All submissions for the weekly Happenings and bulletin should be submitted to the office no later than 9am Wednesday for the week it runs.

2019 VOICE deadlines: Typically the second to last Sunday of the month, with exception of March and December.

February 17th, March 17th, April 21st, May 19th (for June and July), July 21st, August 18th, September 22nd, October 20th, November 17th, December 15th. The Voice is not published in July.

February

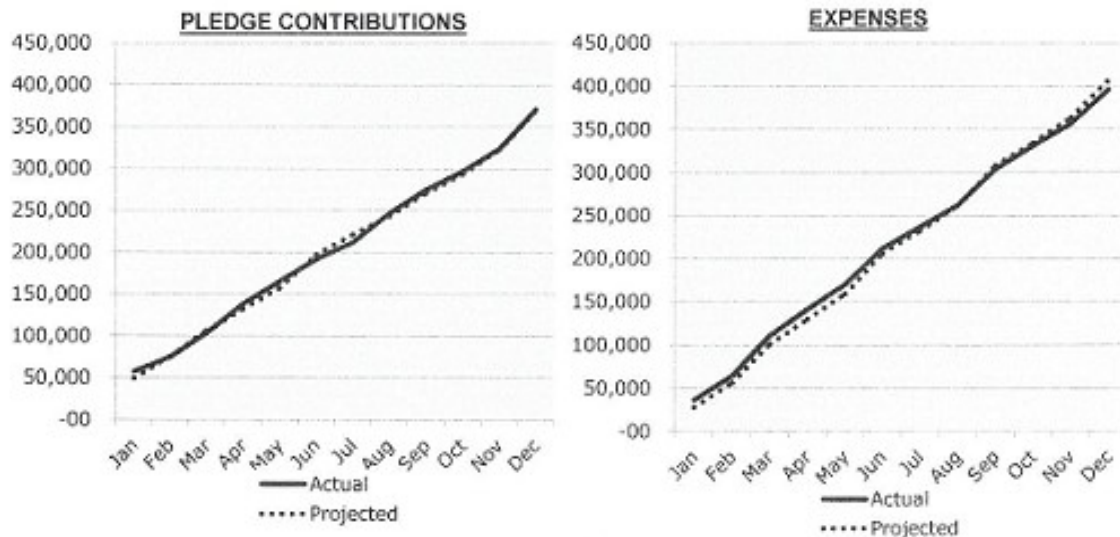
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		TUESDAY NIGHTS 6pm Intergene-Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Ringers	WEDNESDAY NIGHTS 6:30pm Praise Band 7:30pm Sanctuary Choir		1	2 Groundhog Day 
3 9:30am Worship Communion Bells No crazies	4 7pm CE meeting	5	6	7 1pm Women's Prayer Group	8	9
10 9:30am Worship 11am M&M event 3:45pm Pickleball 5pm "Get to Know Us" gathering 6pm crazies	11 6pm Confirmation mtg	12	13 PADS	14 1pm Women's Prayer Group Happy Valentine's Day 	15	16
17 9:30am Worship 11am Cooper's Corner brunch VOICE articles due 6pm crazies	18 President's Day  Office closed	19 7pm Council meeting	20	21 1pm Women's Prayer Group	22 7:30pm Novel Approaches	23
24 9:30am Worship Open Choir 6pm crazies	25	26	27	28 1pm Women's Prayer Group		

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

For the Period Ending December 31, 2018

	ACTUAL CURRENT MONTH	ACTUAL YEAR-TO- DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
RECEIPTS:			
Pledge Contributions	47,004	370,494	370,000
Loose Offerings	3,915	8,871	4,000
Rental Income	1,000	8,300	8,525
Fund Raising	563	3,447	4,000
Investment Income	47	898	300
More Property	-00	15,000	15,000
Miscellaneous Income	-00	7,324	5,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	52,530	414,335	406,825
EXPENDITURES:			
Ministry	19,097	218,517	230,855
Building	10,089	111,916	104,580
Loans & Notes	6,688	26,750	26,750
Mission / OCWM	1,200	26,154	26,950
Committees:			
Christian Education	761	5,390	8,000
Membership/Congregational Life	70	1,060	3,000
Music	1,409	3,976	4,200
Worship	137	1,402	1,500
Memorial/Endowment	-00	600	100
Stewardship	-00	-00	100
Misc. & Contingency	-00	50	1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	39,452	395,816	407,035
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$13,078	\$18,519	\$(210)

2018 Activity - Actual vs. Projected



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

THE VOICE
OF
St. Matthew
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1420 South Gables Blvd.
WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60189



St. Matthew United Church of Christ
630.665.1236 (Office)

Office Email: office@stmatthewucc.org

Web Site: www.stmatthewucc.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 10am-2pm

Friday: 9-11am

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

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