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All in-person activities and worship services are suspended until further notice.

We look forward to seeing you again soon!

<u>Pastoral Message</u> Pastor Allen Mothershed

A Conversation

"We would be better off if we were not such a charitable nation." I had to catch my breath when I heard a good friend speak those words with absolute conviction. "What? You are against charity?" I asked. I began to wonder about my judgment when it came to friends. He could see the shock on my face and started to laugh. "No, I really mean it." He continued, "We middle-class people give money all the time to charities. We go to benefits and buy things at charity auctions. We are one of the most generous people in the world when it comes to giving. I have a problem with that."

"You know you are talking to a pastor who preaches generosity as a core faith value," I countered. He said, "Well, it is not being generous that I have a problem with. My problem is that we deceive ourselves and justify ourselves by our charity while we tolerate the fact that our nation, the richest in the world, allows people to live in the streets and have no guaranteed healthcare." "Oh, now I understand," as I began to relax. "Your problem really isn't charity; your problem is that our rationalization prevents us from confronting systemic injustice." "You got it," he applauded me.

He was onto something. I remember when I was a young pastor in rural Mississippi and hearing church people tell me that they did not believe in government handouts. They were against welfare and food stamps. They would then say, "It's the church's job to help people, not the government's." It's hard to argue with part of that. Churches are called to serve the poor. But there was a lack of honesty about how generous church people actually are and how big the problem is. Most churches don't get far beyond making their meager church budgets, and there are some who complain during annual pledge drives. Those who thought this way had a complete failure to understand that, in the scriptures, God holds the nations accountable for injustice and violence. They had no awareness that scripture has justice and peace as a dominant theme.

There is a lot of room to disagree with how the government goes about dealing with injustice. You'll find good suggestions from both ends of the political spectrum. But, you would think the gross gap between the haves and have-nots is so morally repugnant that we would not dare argue about that.

(continued)

Those gaps are glaring in this time of economic shut-down. We see who has power and who does not. We see where the bulk of government virus relief goes (about 5% to individuals). We know who gets the tax breaks and the generous tax write-offs. We see who must live as the exposed in order to survive economically and who can afford to stay safe.

"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

The prophet Amos was speaking for God as he commands the religious people who come to the temple to make their offerings on the Sabbath day only to tolerate injustice to the poor every other day. God's tolerance had come to an end.

Ok, homework this week: read Amos 5. It will broaden your faith and encourage us to stand with the most exposed in these times. And yes, charity has its place. So, be generous.

Blessings,

Pastor Allen



As far as we can tell, the first name given by others to first Christians was "people of the way." There was something unusual about how they lived that made them stand apart from what others practiced. Long before Christians had an established building, such as a church, they had a way of life to live. In this time when we are social distancing and our usual worship routines have changed, I invite you to put into practice some of the great disciplines of the faith.

Each week beginning June 7th, I will be preaching on a different faith practice to encourage you to be more deliberate in the living of your faith. Some of my insights and stories will come from Barbara Brown Taylor's book, "An Altar in the World."

June 7th	Mark 6:30-34	Solitude as a Path to Relationship
June 14th	Exodus 3:1-10	The Practice of Paying Attention
June 21st	John 13:2-9	Caring for the Body
June 28th	Genesis 2:4-15	The Holiness of Work
July 5th	1 Kings 17:8-24	Find God in Every Human Being
July 12th	Matthew 7:7-12	The Practice of Praying
July 19th	I Corinthian 11:23-25	Giving the Blessing

A message from our Council President

Greetings to all of you, and may God's blessings of peace be with you all. Howard and I miss seeing each one of you, and look forward to the time when we can be physically together for worship and fellowship.

Thanks

First of all, I want to thank everyone who has worked so hard to prepare our worship services for online viewing. Thanks to the tech team who works hard every week to pull the pieces together. Thanks to the music team who tries to bring the musical feeling of our in-person services into our homes remotely. Thanks to Susan for continuing to create and present meaningful messages to the children. Thanks to the scripture readers, announcement readers, worship service planners and, of course, to Pastor Allen, who are all doing a great job of learning to navigate this method of worship.

I also want to thank our office staff, Dani and Jean, for keeping the administrative side of things operating as close to normal as possible.

And to all the other volunteers – those working on the building and grounds, those working on committees and in on-going ministries, and to everyone else who takes even just a bit of the load to keep St. Matthew running smoothly – my sincere thanks.

Financial Health

I also want to inform you all about something we are doing to help ensure the financial viability of St. Matthew over the coming months. After careful consideration and much healthy debate, Church Council approved the decision to apply for an SBA Payment Protection Plan loan, and we were successful in gaining those funds. We received a loan of approximately \$44,000 to ensure that we can keep all of our employees fully paid during this time, especially given the uncertainties associated with contribution levels. Based on numerous webinars I have attended over the past few months, I am confident that, from a government perspective, we will be granted loan forgiveness (i.e. the loan becomes a grant, and does not have to be repaid). However, depending on how pledge revenues evolve, we can make our own decision as to whether we repay all or part of the loan (at 1% interest and payable over two years). In the meantime, to borrow a statement from our member John Adams, this loan "ensures we stay an active, thriving congregation who contributes significantly to the community."

Please reach out to Howard Peterson (Treasurer) or myself with any questions on this.

More Property Development

The company that is developing the More property (7 homes along the Prairie Path) plans to begin work this summer. As such, you may see construction equipment and work being done. This is good news for us, as it includes improvements to our drainage system, as well as some other aesthetic improvements.

The Future

Finally, we are exploring and discussing ways to use this time to consider how St. Matthew can become even stronger in the future. As we have heard in the faith-based webinars we have been attending, we should take this opportunity to craft what a new normal will look like, rather than simply yearning for the old normal! I ask for your prayers as well as your ideas as we move through this unchartered territory.

God Bless!

Dorothy Peterson

Pennies From Heaven (SCRIP)



SCRIP orders are suspended until we resume in-person activities.



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- Noah Baird
 Allan Franz
 Bob Armstrong
 Wendy Fanning
 Randy King
 Andrea DiOrio
 Kenna Anderson
 Lesley Sareny
- 18 Aimee LegatzkeWill Matthei

Justin Ciner

23 Kelly Chapple

20

- Tim Raymond
- 25 Roseanne King
- 26 Andrew Craig
- 28 Dennis Luehring
- 30 Julie Schubert

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Derek Breese
 - Martin Breese
 - Mikaela Breese
 - David Uhrig
- 3 Diane Breese
- 5 Brooke Stubbee
- 9 Nancy Lewis
 - Becca Staton
- 11 Krista Kapsa
- 15 Patti Woods
- 16 Marla Mothershed
- 17 Priscilla Barnett
- 19 Cindy Bute
- 22 Karen Fernandez
- 25 Hope Erickson
- 27 Lindsay Schaal
- Michelle Kirincich
 29 Carol Honeywell
 - Dan Miller
- 31 Marge Brooks





Jesus walked this lonesome valley; He had to walk it by Himself.

We sing this spiritual in Lent, but at times these days, do we feel like we are walking in our own lonesome valley? I know for me, at times, it feels that way. Staying at home, rarely seeing family, let alone friends, can make us feel lonely. One way to let yourself

escape is through music. Listen to some of your favorite music, be it rock or pop, classical or jazz. Sing along to your heart's desire. Show tunes are a good way for many to sing out. Don't worry if you think you can't sing. There are physical benefits to belting out a good song. You get more oxygen. Your endorphins increase. You feel better. Music is therapeutic, not only for the listener, but for the performer, even if it is in the shower.

As we move into the summer months, it seems there is a glimmer of hope that the restrictions we are under will be easing. The unknown is what will happen as we loosen up. That remains to be seen. So we will continue to sing for our online services with selections recorded and submitted. If you are interested in submitting a video, we would love to see it. I just ask that you reach out to me first to confirm how you are recording it. We have learned there are a few simple things to do and not to do, which make a difference.

Peace to you and your family. May you continue to stay safe and healthy.

Jamie

Jamie.craig@stmatthewucc.org

630.202.6788



While we are unable to meet, we need to keep each other in thoughts and prayers. We don't want anyone to feel isolated or alone. Please send prayer requests via the following links and we can share them (or keep them private, if you prefer). You can also email them to the office.

You can make a public prayer request here: https://www.stmatthewucc.org/joys-and-concerns

Private prayer requests can be made here: https://www.stmatthewucc.org/prayer-chain



Music Appreciation Sunday

It was requested that I put a copy of my Music Appreciation message in The Voice for those who didn't get to see the service. –Jamie

Good morning,

Today is the weekend before Memorial Day and is also what we call Music Appreciation Sunday. It is that Sunday when both our bell choirs are in full presence, our praise band is leading our singing, and the Sanctuary Choir has a special anthem to end the church year. This is also known fondly by KC as an All-Skate.

Well, I look around our beautiful sanctuary, and I don't see the full bell choirs here. I don't see the praise band here. I don't see the choir here. And I don't see you here. What a strange way to end the musical year.

Rehearsals and in-person services stopped in March, with the initial hope that there might be a chance to be together for Palm Sunday, or at least Easter. Well, as we know, that didn't happen, and now two months or so later, we may or may not be any closer.

As you all know, our services have drastically changed in these past couple of months. Social distancing means that a very limited number of us gather to put the service together, with planning done by phone, email, and Zoom meetings. Where we can involve people via recording, such as for the announcements or scriptures, we have done so. The 'He Is Risen' videos sent in by many families are another way we connect. For music, that is much more difficult. Rehearsals for bells cannot be held remotely as the bells are here at church. The choir and praise band cannot rehearse together because of the close proximity needed in a rehearsal. And, of course, the same goes for Sunday morning. So what can we do? Brian and I are here putting the music together for the service, and John Kouns has volunteered to join us so we have some harmonies. But what could be done for a choir? So I took a gamble and asked if the choir would be interested in trying to put together a virtual choir. The answer was an overwhelming, "Yes, let's try it!" And you have seen the results.

We prepared and recorded an anthem for Easter Sunday and then another for the Call to Communion at the beginning of this month. The process is quite intensive, and I won't go into all of it here, but I want to tell you some, so you know the dedication of the people involved. They had to rehearse their parts on their own. No rehearsal to ask questions, no fellow tenor or soprano to rely on in an area they may not be comfortable with, none of the confidence boost that comes from singing in a group. It comes down to just recording themselves singing their part while listening to an accompaniment track. And then they have to listen and watch it to make sure no mistakes were made, or they moved out of the camera view. We are our own worst critic, which doesn't help. Then they send it off to me, waiting until the service is put on the web to see how they did. To everyone that made a video for these virtual choirs, for all the effort that you put into them, I thank you.

Now, that is the easy part. When the videos are received, they all have to be blended and matched up. This is not an easy task or a quick one. Several trials are made before we arrive at a finished product. I cannot take credit for this process. The tireless work of Gwen Johnson and Marge and Joe Hall made the choir's efforts come together and appear seamless and professional. Gwen, Joe and Marge, I thank you for all that work. As it looks like we will not be back together for a while, I anticipate a few more of these efforts.

Of course, I don't want to minimize the input and efforts of our bells and praise band. Tirelessly, they rehearsed and graced our services all year until sidelined by the stay-at-home orders necessitated by Covid-19. And they would be here today if not for those orders. I thank you all, and especially those of you who are here today to help us worship, socially distant from each other, but not from God.

Now for me, this church year also started strangely. I was trying to recover from a severe case of vertigo that kept me from commuting to my day job, and I found I could not direct the choir. I could not stand without the strong possibility of falling into the drums or music stands. I couldn't even drive here. Fortunately, Joe Hall stepped up without hesitation, took the baton, and filled in for me until my balance returned enough for me to retrieve it. Joe, I want to thank you again for your willingness and talent to step in. And Rachel, thanks for driving me each week until I healed enough to drive myself.

Finally, we recognize our teachers and musical groups, but I realized that there is one other group that we, as a congregation, need to thank. Without these people, our worship would be significantly different, be it when we are together or in these current days. I am referring to those who work and support the audio/visual aspects of our service. There is a great deal that goes into making it look easy. Each week all the prayers, songs, scriptures, announcements must be entered and proofread, just like the bulletin. The slides are changed for our prayers and congregational singing. The audio is monitored throughout. The service is recorded and then uploaded to the website, breaking out the sermon and the different selections by our musical groups. Those supporting this ministry include Gwen Johnson on video; Rick Jungk, John Adams, Joe Hall, and Marge Hall on entering the information for the screens and then running it on Sunday; Joe Hall, John Adams, Rick Jungk and myself all help on the sound, along with Andrew Kouns, my son Andrew, and our newest sound techie during these socially distant days, Lisa Curda.

I don't know when we will be back together as a congregation, but I'm grateful to those people I have noted today in their willingness all year long to share God's word through music or for the behind-the-scenes work needed to support our worship services.

Thank you to all of you, including you at home.

Stay safe, and God Bless you.





Here is what we have been doing in crazies.

In crazies, we have been doing Zoom meetings, where Blessy and I get to see the kids and interact with them. We sometimes do an activity with them; for example, a scavenger hunt, arts and crafts, or Blessy will do a quick cooking class. A couple of weeks ago, we all made peanut butter cookies, which turned out pretty well for everyone. We miss everyone at church, and hope we can see you again soon!

God bless! ~ Mel

Children's Ministry June/July 2020

Thank you Kenna Anderson and Dawn Schubert for helping create and distribute the **Take-Out Sunday School and Shepherd boxes**. We delivered boxes to 29 homes, bringing Sunday School to 49 children and youth. The boxes were filled with crafts, games, scripture, prayer scavenger hunts, conversation starters, dice games and more. It was our way of showing God's love to the Sunday School children and our Shepherd helpers.

Each Sunday, along with our online worship service, is the **Children's sermon.** I hope the children have been watching these as I so badly want them to stay connected and in relationship with Christ, as well as our church and church family. I want them to know that even though we cannot see each other, I think about them, pray for them, and enjoy preparing a sermon for them each Sunday. In addition, Kenna Anderson and I have read stories and given craft demonstrations. The YouTube links to the sermons, stories, and craft videos can be found on our St Matthew Facebook page. **Thank you Kenna for helping me connect with the children in this way.**

Sunday, May 31st was **Teacher Appreciation Sunday**. Sunday School families and I were able to thank and celebrate 9 teachers and our M&M leader by making yard signs, which we placed in their yards to thank them for donating their time, planning and implementing wonderful lessons and activities, and sharing their faith in Christ with the Sunday School children. This year, the M&M get-together and Easter lesson were cut short when we had to close the church for the safety of our congregation. I felt such loss over that separation from our church, until God started to bring to mind all the ways we remain a congregation and are able to worship and fellowship together through our online service. **Thank you to the St. Matthew teachers, Shepherds, M&M leaders, Library coordinator, Acolyte leader, Nursery Care Givers, Youth helpers and Christian Education committee members who have devoted their time to our ministry.**~Miss Susan



Reid, Parker and Bryce with their God's Eye weaving



Molly and Cole watching the Children's sermon

Sunday School Take-Out Boxes





June birthdays:

Sean Walsh
Annabel Sturm
Mikey Henderson
June 13th
June 14th
June 19th

July birthdays:

Tyler Bute
Noah Leimberer
Luke Jerome
Braden Lindberg
Linnea Miller
Kai Krasinski
July 2nd
July 6th
July 6th
July 21st
July 24th
July 31st

Congratulations to our St. Matthew graduates!

2020 High School Graduates

Chris Achammer graduated from Wheaton Warrenville South High School and will be attending Illinois State University to study Physics and History.

Nicole Bute graduated from West Chicago High School and will be attending the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to study Animal Science, pre-veterinary medicine.

Justin Alec Kirincich graduated from Wheaton Warrenville South High School and will be attending Creighton University to study Emergency Medical Services.



2020 College Graduates

Michelle Bresingham graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Bachelor's degree in Molecular & Cellular Biology. She plans to attend physician assistant school beginning summer 2021.

Emily Ciner graduated from Sullivan University in December with a degree in Hospitality Management. She received the President's Award and Summa Cum Laude distinction. This is in addition to the Associate of Science in Baking and Pastry Arts that she completed two years ago. She is working full-time at Sweet Surrender Dessert Café in Louisville, Kentucky.

Ryan King graduated from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture.

Payton Neufelder graduated from Loyola University with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology last December. He will begin a Master's of Public Policy at Loyola in August.

2020 Graduate School Graduates

Emily English graduated from Governors State University with her Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

<u>Announcements</u>



Prairie Path Clean-Up Revised Schedule

Our first Prairie Path Clean-up (weather permitting) will take place on Sunday, June 14th at 2pm. We will limit this to 8 individuals max. Please bring your own mask. Gloves, vests, and bags will be provided. This event will be listed in the weekly Happenings, so watch for updates there.

The second Prairie Path clean-up will take place on Sunday, July 19th at 2pm. Same guidelines as above.

Please email Dawn Schubert (<u>rural_rococo@msn.com</u>) with questions or if you want to help. Please do NOT just show up — we need to limit the numbers for the time being.



The Men's Group continues to meet via Zoom at 8am for 75-90 minutes every Tuesday morning.

We consider a variety of topics, often based on the sermon of that week. Men of all ages are welcome.

To get a Zoom invitation, please contact byronmiller@ameritech.net



Interested in some Outdoor Moving Meditation/Yoga?

With weather changes and maintaining small groups (4-7 people), we will have to plan ahead. We are blessed to have a beautiful and shady church setting. All are welcome!

Contact Marla Mothershed, mmothershed63@gmail.com or 630.441.5963 for times and to sign up.

2020 Voice, Happenings, and Bulletin Due Dates



All submissions for the weekly Happenings and bulletin should be submitted to the office <u>no later than 9am Tuesday for the week it runs.</u>

<u>2020 VOICE deadlines:</u> Typically the second to last Sunday of the month, with exception of November and December.

July 19th, August 23rd, September 20th, October 18th, November 15th, and December 13th.

The Voice is not published in July.

Every Cloud has a Silver Lining

It has been heartening to hear stories about positive things that are going on in the world around us. As you've seen during our online Worship, we've started our own Silver Linings

Collection.



You can submit your Silver Lining in any of these ways:

- 1. Click the link to go to Silver Linings on our webpage https://www.stmatthewucc.org/silver-linings
- 2. Send an email to office@stmatthewucc.org
- 3. Call the office phone and leave a voicemail at 630.665.1236

You can submit these with your name, or request it be anonymous – the choice is yours. We look forward to reading some happy news!

Simple Communion Bread

Ingredients:

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/3 cup vegetable oil

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup water

While any bread or juice will do for Communion, if you like and need something creative to do during this time at home, then try this simple communion bread recipe.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Mix flour, oil, and salt together in a bowl; add water and mix using a pastry cutter until dough is soft. Form dough into 6 balls and press into disks onto the prepared baking sheet using your hands.

Bake in the preheated oven until bread is cooked, 8 to 10 minutes.



<u>Check out the</u> St. Matthew website!!

For the most up-to-date St. Matthew information, please check the St. Matthew website! You will find instructions on accessing the Sunday online service, make a prayer request, send a Silver Lining, sign up for the newsletter, learn about online giving, and so much more!

https://www.stmatthewucc.org/

Online Sunday Worship



While we are unable to share Sunday worship as a group, please join us online for Pastor Allen's weekly message and worship service. The service will be posted by Saturday evening.

There are three ways to access Sunday worship:

Through YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/StMatthewUCC

Once you are on YouTube, you have the option to turn on closed captioning and resize the font. Once the video is playing, click on the setting wheel in the lower-right of your screen, choose Subtitles/CC, then choose English.

Through the St.Matthew Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/stmatthewucc/ Select YouTube on the left side.

Through the St. Matthew website: https://www.stmatthewucc.org/ Click on Full Service under the banner.



Online Giving

During this time when we cannot worship together in-person, please make an effort, if able, to continue your offerings. We are so grateful for your continued support of St. Matthew.

If you would like to give to St. Matthew UCC, you can donate in the following ways:

- Mail a check to the church (1420 S. Gables Blvd., Wheaton, IL 60189)
- Online with PayPal
- 1. <u>Simply click here to be directed to PayPal</u> (or copy and paste): https://www.stmatthewucc.org/donate and click the yellow DONATE button.
- 2. You will then be directed to PayPal where you can use your own personal PayPal account or a credit card to make your donation.
- 3. Click on either <u>+Write a note (Optional)</u> on the first page or <u>+Add special instructions to recipient</u> on the "Review your donation" page. Please indicate Sunday Offering so the money gets credited to the correct account.
- 4. Please include your <u>phone number</u> so that we may contact you if we have any questions, and your <u>address</u> if you would like to receive a giving statement.
- NOTE: You will be credited for the full amount of your gift on your giving statement; however, PayPal charges a \$.30 + 2.2% fee on each transaction. St. Matthew will receive the net amount. **The minimum amount for this online contribution method is \$25.**
- Monthly electronic donations from your checking account

If you would like to set up monthly electronic donations, please download this form: **Electronic Donation Authorization**, fill it out, and mail it to the church. You can also scan this form, along with a voided check, and email it to financial.secretary@stmatthewucc.org.

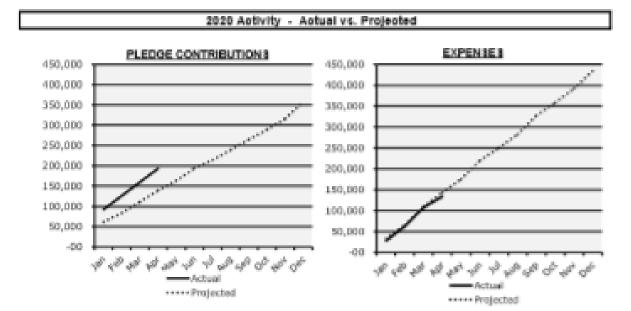
These options are also listed on the St. Matthew website: www.stmatthewucc.org

Questions can be directed to Edie DeBoard at financial.secretary@stmatthewucc.org.

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

For the Period Ending April 30, 2020

	ACTUAL CURRENT	ACTUAL YEAR-TO-	ANNUAL.
	MONTH	DATE	BUDGET
RECEIPTS:			
Piedge Contributions	33.814	193,714	358.364
Loose Offerings	-00	572	5.000
Rental Income	600	2.800	9.600
Fund Raising	23	339	2,200
Investment income	14	78	120
More Property	-00	-00	37,000
Miscellaneous Income	44,638	46,807	5.000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	79,089	244,309	417,284
EXPENDITURE 8:			
Ministry	17,861	81,219	245,572
Building & Admin	6,944	37,419	116,678
Loans & Notes	-00	6.688	26,750
Mission / OCWM	1,300	5.500	27.250
Committees:			
Christian Education	-00	1,982	8,000
Membership/Congregational Life	-00	26	3,000
Music	-00	819	4,895
Worship	55	457	1.500
Memorial/Endowment	-00	-00	-00
Stewardship	-00	-00	-00
Misc. & Contingency	-00	-00	1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	26,159	134,109	434,645
SURPLUS / (DEFIGIT)	\$62,800	\$110,200	\$(17,281)



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



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: 9am-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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