



# THE VOICE

1420 S. Gables Blvd.  
Wheaton, IL 60189  
630.665.1236  
[www.stmatthewucc.org](http://www.stmatthewucc.org)



MARCH  
2017

## WHAT'S INSIDE

*Lenten Schedule*  
Page 2

*Christian  
Education*  
Page 3

*Notes from the  
Music Room*  
Page 4

*Mission News*  
Page 4-5

*Congregational  
Life & Upcoming  
Events*  
Page 5-7

*Children & Youth*  
Page 8-9

*Financial  
Statement*  
Page 10

*Calendar*  
Page 11



## PASTORAL MESSAGE Rev. Allen Mothershed

### Facing Death

I have never envied doctors who are sometimes in the position to break the news to an anxious patient or their loved ones that he or she is terminally ill. When I worked in the emergency room as an on-call chaplain I was amazed by a doctor or two who had deep empathy and such a loving manner with their patients and were as pastoral as I understood my job to be. However, many doctors, especially new ones, approached this hard task with such anxiety and did such a poor job of communicating the bad news, that I was left to deliver the bad news more frankly. I can understand, no one wants to be the one who shatters hope for life.

We often speak of death as if we are in some way immune to its reality, as if it is something that happens to other people. But death is an integral part of our lives and casts its shadow over us long before we have to experience its cold touch. Maybe our denial of death is an adaptive strategy not to allow the fear of it to dominate and diminish our lives. But I have been amazed by people who have cancers in temporary remission who strangely seem more alive and attuned to pleasure and joy than those of us who have the luxury of imagining that death awaits us far in the future. In their facing the fear, they have learned to cherish the life they have and to seize every moment for the gift that it is.

The pastor who wrote the first devotion on our denomination's Lenten devotional, "Diving Lessons," tells about a service of imposition of ashes on the foreheads of members of her church. "Remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return", she said to each one. The reality of that statement began to hit her in such a way that she found it almost impossible to continue. Who wants to be reminded that death is our fate?

As Christians, we have a rather unique take on death. Our view of death is formed by the fact that at the right moment in Jesus' life he intentionally turned to walk towards Jerusalem where he knew a cross was waiting for him. Jesus faced death willingly and with a great purpose.

(cont'd. on pg. 2)

In the same way, each Lenten season we are invited to turn towards Jerusalem where we will pick up our own cross. This means our facing death. By facing death, we are invited to see the great value of our lives and to make sure that what we are living for is worthy of our limited time.

The Lenten journey to the cross is our opportunity to let go of anything and everything that we allow to foolishly take us away from living. Lent is a yearly invitation to let go of our self-engrossed egos and pettiness and to wake up to our connectedness to God and one another. We walk away from our self-**absorbed importance and discover our life's eternal** value and worth in the love God has for us and the love we send out into the world for both those who are dear and the stranger in need. Figuratively speaking, we put to death the old self, that with Jesus a new large more transcendent self may be born anew with his resurrection. And the Good News is that we do not have to wait to leave this world to experience this resurrection.

Join us on Ash Wednesday, March 1st at 7pm to begin the journey.

(Mary Luti - Lent Devotional 2017/Diving Lessons, pg. 1)

## LENT TO EASTER - THE JOURNEY OF HOPE

This Lenten season we take our Lenten journey together by way of the Old Testament, with Adam and Eve, Sarah and Abram, Moses of the Hebrew People, Samuel and Ezekiel. We learn from the faith of ancient people what it means to trust in God and find the grace we need each step of the journey to hope. We hope you can join us for each Sunday.



March 1	Ash Wednesday	Taize Service with Imposition of the Ashes and Communion
March 5	True Temptations	Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
March 12	<b>Called to Go But Where's the Map?</b>	Genesis 12:1-4a
March 19	A Rock and a Hard Place	Exodus 17:1-7
March 26	Not as Mortals See	1 Samuel 16:1-13
April 2	Can These Bones Live?	Ezekiel 37:1-14
April 9	Palm Sunday	Matthew 21:1-11
April 13	Maundy Thursday (Tenebrae and Communion)	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
April 16	Easter Sunday	John 20:1-18

Note This year we will hold a Sunrise Service (details to follow) and ONE later service at 9:30am in the Sanctuary.

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## FAITH AND LIFE SERIES

We will begin with dinner at 6:15pm provided by one of our committees, then enjoy hearing about the Faith and Life journey of the following people:

### WEDNESDAYS 6:15-8pm

March 1st – Dinner before 7pm Ash Wednesday service (No speaker)

March 8th – Brian English

March 15th – Carol Honeywell

March 22nd – Lori Chatten

March 29th – Susan Wold

April 5 – Quinn Rosenthal

Please sign up on the attendance sheet in the narthex so we make sure to have enough food!

## BOOK and BIBLE STUDY - **RETHINKING JOHN'S REVELATION**

Join us for a fresh look at the Revelation of John, the last book in our Bible. This combination book and Bible study will meet for five consecutive Wednesdays from 6:30-7:45pm from April 26th to May 24th.

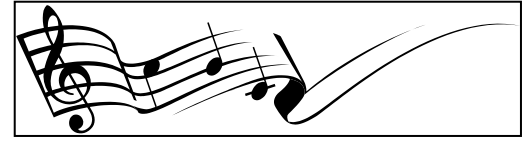
**We will be studying the book "Unholy Allegiances: Heeding Revelation's Warning," by Dr. David deSilva.** Books are available for purchase in the church office for \$10.

The Book of Revelation and speculation about the apocalypse is confusing and troubling to many people. Dr. DeSilva explains in his book how the Book of Revelation was written by John as practical lessons for seven congregations that actually existed during the time of the Roman Empire. During our study we will explore the myths about Revelation, how John addressed his readers to discern the truths and untruths of the Roman authority, and through Revelation how we can learn to be radically obedient to God.

Contact the church office, 630.665.1236, or <http://www.stmatthewucc.org> with questions.

# NOTES FROM THE MUSIC ROOM

## VOICES NEEDED



## FOR CHOIR AND PRAISE BAND

### IMMEDIATE OPENINGS!

Our singers would like some help. They can sing harmony, melody, and convey different feelings, but the one thing they cannot do is to multiply themselves on Sunday! Solos, duets, octets are all wonderful, but there are some songs that scream for multiple voices. We **have had some join us for "open choir sing" Sundays, for which we are thankful. There are more who have told me they wanted to sing on those Sundays but haven't made it for one reason or another. We need YOU!** There are several Sundays coming up fast when extra voices would be wonderful – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter Sunday.

We have started rehearsing the music for these and other Sundays now, but you can still join us. By working ahead, we all have more confidence and it allows for times when not everyone can make each rehearsal.

Please come join us. **It's not only rewarding, it's fun!**

Peace,

Jamie

630.202.6788

[Lanni1@comcast.net](mailto:Lanni1@comcast.net)

P.S. - Next open choir sing is March 19th.

#### WEEKLY REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

##### Tuesday

IntergeneRingers

6pm

Chancel Ringers

7:30pm

##### Wednesday

Praise Band

6:30pm

Sanctuary Choir

7:30pm

## MISSION NEWS

### FOOD ON THE FIRST

For the past two months, the greatest request from those using the PRC Food Pantry has not been food but personal items. If you are planning to donate this month, please consider choosing an item from the list below.

- Shampoo
- Soap
- Feminine pads
- **Men's deodorant**
- Shaving cream
- Disposable razors
- Body wash



*Please make sure items have not expired and packages are unopened.*

Call Betty Greer, 630.682.4084 if you have any questions.

Blessings to all.

## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & UPCOMING EVENTS

The Congregational Life and Membership Committee will be hosting a number of events in the coming months. We hope you will be able to join us for many of these:

-We will be providing a meal for the Wednesday evening Lenten Series on March 15th.

**We'll be serving Sloppy Joes, salad and chips before the service.**

-We will partner with Christian Education to host the annual Easter Egg Hunt at St. Matthew on April 8th. This fun event allows us to serve our own, as well as open our doors to those in our neighborhood

-For those who like to play cards, we have a regular series of Friday night Euchre events held in Dobstaff Hall, the next of which is scheduled for April 7th. Players of all skill levels are welcome.

-We are in the early stages of planning other events, including a trip to the movies or a theatrical production (e.g. Jesus Christ Superstar) followed by a discussion.

-We are gearing up for our all-Church picnic in June and planning a return to a Kane County Cougars baseball game this summer.

We are always open to new ideas, so please let the church office or one of our committee members know if you have suggestions.

### SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE TIME – We Need Your Help!

Socializing on Sunday morning is an important element of our Church life. Our committee hosts coffee hour, providing coffee and juice along with treats donated by members of the congregation. We are in need of volunteers to set up before church and folks to clean up after the service. If you are interested in volunteering to help on occasion, please contact Rob Neufelder or Wendy Fanning.

If you wish to contribute goodies for our weekly after-church coffee hour, we suggest the following schedule as a means of spreading out the contributions. Last name starting with:  
A, B, C, D - 1st Sunday of the month; E, F, G, H- 2nd Sunday;  
I, J, K, L-3rd Sunday; M - Z: 4th Sunday; anyone: 5th Sunday.

The proposed schedule is not mandatory – if the inspiration hits you any time, bring something to share!

### DIRECTORY UPDATE

An updated version of the St. Matthew directory will be sent out by the end of the month.

**Please send updates to your family's contact information or a new picture to Kathy, at [office@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:office@stmatthewucc.org) by Monday, March 13th.** Thank you!

NOVEL APPROACHES

The novel to be approached in March is “The Sympathizer” by Viet Thanh Nguyen. A powerful story of love and friendship and a gripping espionage novel, this book examines the legacy of the Viet Nam War in literature, film and the wars we fight today (publisher’s note).

Date: Friday, March 3rd, 7: 30pm.

Place: The Mooks, 1523 Surrey Drive in Wheaton

LOOKING AHEAD: “The Underground Railroad” by Colson Whitehead

All are welcome, join us for fellowship, food and friendly discussion.

EASTER EGGS!

Please take a bag or two of empty Easter eggs from the narthex to fill for our annual Easter Egg Hunt! Based on the turnout at Trunk or Treat, we are going to have lots of kids this year! If you would like to purchase your own empty eggs and fill them as well, we would be grateful! Filled eggs need to be returned by Sunday, April 2nd.

*The Easter Egg Hunt is Saturday, April 8th beginning at 10am.*

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who so graciously prayed for me during my recent surgery. Kathy and I appreciated the kind wishes and prayers that helped sustain us during this difficult time. The cards and calls went a long way toward reinforcing our faith in and love for St. Matthew. I have made it through the worst of the recovery but the total recovery may take a total of three months. So keep us in your prayers and we will do our best to do the same for all of you.

Thanks again.

Al and Kathy Skwara



MARCH BIRTHDAYS	
1	Hillary Blake Jessica Blake
6	Bob Crooks Cheryl Umbeck
8	Erin Walsh John Price
12	Brian English
16	Julie Barnshaw
20	Lisa Curda John Ribe
21	Nicole SooHoo Adam Kirincich
23	Elijah Baird Andrew Kouns
29	Lori Chatten
30	Emily English



## MANNA Program

Manna is coming in "like a lamb" this month, but let's make it go "out like a lion"!

By the end of March, we'll be a quarter of the way through the year. We have a \$4,000 budget line for fundraising, and if we expect the Manna Program to do that for us we need to make \$1,000 per quarter. So far, through February, we've made about \$400.

To reach our goal, let's make our Manna program ROAR!

If you are a Manna participant, thank you for your continuing support. If you have not tried it yet, stop by the Manna table in Dobstaff Hall on Sunday for more information on this no-cost to you fundraiser!



## Faith Club: A Women's Interfaith Book Discussion Group

Join women of other Muslim, Jewish, and Christian faith communities for a discussion of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. The group will meet every other Thursday from 3:30-5pm, through May 11th, with meetings rotating among the five faith organizations supporting the group. The March 30th meeting will be held at St. Matthew. Please contact Tina Ciner, 630-393-6543 with questions.



WHY SHOULD PEOPLE OF FAITH CARE  
CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

### God's Gift and Call To Us

As people of faith, we look to the scriptures for guidance for the choices we make in our lives. Genesis 1 says that when God created the heavens and the earth, God saw that everything was "very good." We learn in Genesis 2 that as humankind has the freedom to make moral choices, each of us lives with the responsibility for our personal actions or inactions. With the freedom of God's gift, the prophet Micah guides us towards moral and responsible lifestyle choices: we are to do justice, love kindness and mercy, and walk humbly with our God [Mic.6: 6-8].

### Our Response To God

We understand scriptures compel us to act on our faith grounded in wonder, reverence, love, and respect for all of God's creation. But clearly, God's creation is groaning under the burden of injustice, greed, and arrogance. Our choices have resulted in vanishing and degraded farmland, air unfit to breathe and water unfit to drink, unsustainable energy processes and consumption, and the perilous immediate and long-term worldwide consequences of global warming and climate change. Poor communities and communities of color will disproportionately suffer the unjust consequences of our choices. And now we realize more every day that our choices threaten the voiceless natural systems that sustain all of life itself.

### Our Choices Now

When confronted with environmental responsibility, people of faith now face an additional choice: to live in despair or to live with hope. We in the United Church of Christ are called to live with hope. We are called to go beyond lifestyle adjustment. We are called to spiritual and lifestyle transformation based on justice and reverence for all of God's creatures and creation. We are called by Jesus to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. With God's grace, we invite individuals to transform their lives and their communities to become hopeful, restorative, and just.

For more information about UCC Environmental Ministries visit <http://www.ucc.org/environmental-ministries>

# CHILDREN & YOUTH

Thank you to the teachers and shepherds who led the children for the *Fruit of the Spirit* workshop rotation: Marla Mothershed, Francine Alavi, Dawn Schubert, Kenna Anderson, Patti Woods, Leslie Ortman, Carol Honeywell, Miegane Bresingham, Diane Mook, Kira Mothershed, Kelley Passini and Ethan Woods. You are a blessing to the children and our ministry.



The children and their parents gathered to fill care packages for our St. Matthew college students and the Henderson family. The care packages arrived filled with snacks, school supplies, cards, a craft made by the M&M participants, etc. We gathered around the boxes and prayed for each person who would receive our Love and Kindness in a box. Thank you to all who donated items and shipping costs. Your kindness shows each recipient that we think of them while they are away from home.

March 5th – April 9th is our Lenten workshop. The children will receive a coloring book telling the Easter story. Each week while learning about Christ's journey to the cross, they will color in their book. At the end of the rotation the children will have a book, colored by them, to share with their family on Easter Sunday.

The children will be singing during the worship service on either March 5th or 12th. I will contact the families once the date is determined. The songs they have been working on are "*Fruit of the Spirit*", "*Joy Joy Joy*", and "*Jesus Loves You and Me*".



The Sunday School department will take part in making St. Matthew a church that is environmentally conscious. In celebration of Earth Day we will do all crafts for the remainder of the Sunday School year using recycled materials (**this includes the Mother's Day and Teacher Appreciation craft**). We also plan to do our part to help restore the dying monarch butterfly population by planting milkweed on the church property. More information will follow on the changes the Sunday School will be making in other areas such as cleaning products, hand sanitizers/soaps and helium, etc.

## March Birthdays

Christy Banaszewski 3/15, Bryce Holshouser 3/21,  
Ava Sancken 3/21, Cole Hutchison 3/23, Luke Mothershed 3/30





Upcoming dates to Remember:

March, TBD:	Children sing during worship service
March 5:	Lenten workshop begins
April 8:	Saturday, Easter Egg Hunt, 10am (invite your friends and family)
April 16:	Easter Sunday, no Sunday School
April 23:	Earth Day celebration/activities
May 7:	Teacher Appreciation
May 28:	Summer Sunday School kick-off: Prayer Walk, Ice Cream Social
	First day of 10:30 dismissal
June 12th-16th:	Vacation Bible School

Susan Wold,  
Director of Children's Ministry



Hello church!

I hope everyone enjoyed the early spring weather as much as I did, despite the specter of climate change. This winter has been relatively great, for snow-haters and for crazies. It's time to re-energize, and I hope a

few breaths of fresh air can help the youth group and the whole congregation do just that. As we move toward summer, I am nailing down details of the Boundary Waters Trip. See me if you're interested in coming with us. I do hope you'll join the youth and me at the Chicago Wolves game at Allstate Arena on March 5th. Let me know if you can, or sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Along with all that, we are planning the 30-hour famine with lock-in for the youth during an upcoming March weekend (the exact date will be determined soon), and Confirmation will be doing a visit to St. Michael's parish to hear a mass.

My office hours are still 1-6pm on Saturdays. Feel free to drop by and visit. It gets lonely in here!

I know it's a bit scary out in the world right now, but keep your heads up everyone, and I'll see you around.

Quinn Rosenthal,  
Director of Youth Ministry

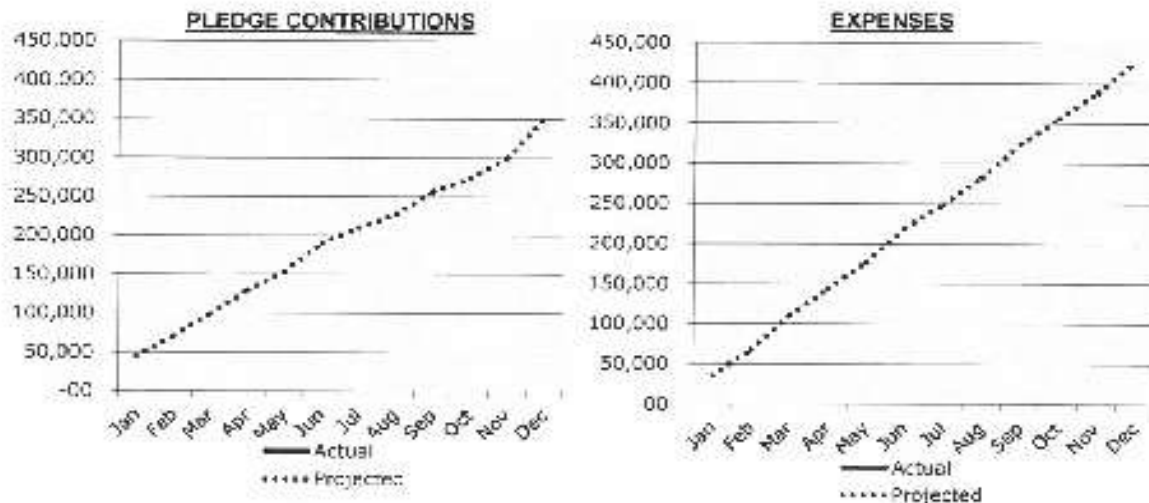


**ST. MATTHEW UCC GENERAL OPERATING FUND  
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES**

For the Period Ending January 31, 2017

	ACTUAL CURRENT MONTH	ACTUAL YEAR-TO- DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>			
Pledge Contributions	44,743	44,743	350,000
Loose Offerings	390	390	10,000
Rental Income	200	200	3,300
Fund Raising	271	271	4,000
Investment Income	355	355	300
More Property	-00	-00	21,000
Miscellaneous Income	138	138	5,000
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>46,097</b>	<b>46,097</b>	<b>393,600</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>			
Ministry	17,681	17,681	234,971
Building	10,249	10,249	102,216
Loans & Notes	-00	-00	26,750
Mission / OCWM	-00	-00	26,900
Committees:			
Christian Education	242	242	8,000
Membership/Congregational Life	265	265	3,000
Music	251	251	4,200
Worship	91	91	1,500
Memorial/Endowment	-00	-00	100
Stewardship	-00	-00	100
Misc. & Contingency	-00	-00	1,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>28,778</b>	<b>28,778</b>	<b>408,787</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$17,319</b>	<b>\$17,319</b>	<b>\$(15,187)</b>

**2017 Activity - Actual vs. Projected**



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

# MARCH 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>TUESDAY NIGHTS</b>  6pm Intergene-Ringers  7:30pm Chancel Ringers	<b>WEDNESDAY NIGHTS</b>  6:30pm Praise Band  7:30pm Sanctuary Choir	1  10am <b>Women's</b> Prayer Group  6:15pm All-Church Dinner 7pm Ash Wednesday Service	2	3  7:30pm Novel Approaches	4
5  9:30am Worship Service  2pm Chicago Wolves Game	6  7pm Building Committee  7pm Christian Education	7  7pm Membership  7:30pm Mission	8  10am <b>Women's</b> Prayer Group  6:15pm Faith & Life  PADS	9  PADS  7pm Finance Committee	10	11
12  9:30 am Worship Service <i>Daylight Saving Time begins</i>  6pm crazies	13	14	15  10am <b>Women's</b> Prayer Group  6:15pm Faith & Life	16	17	18
19 8:15am Open Choir 9:30am Worship Service 11am SRC  VOICE ARTICLES DUE  6pm crazies	20  7pm Council	21	22  10am <b>Women's</b> Prayer Group  6:15pm Faith & Life	23	24	25
26  9:30am Worship Service  6pm crazies	27	28	29  10am <b>Women's</b> Prayer Group  6:15pm Faith & Life	30  3:30-5pm <b>Women's</b> Interfaith Book Group	31	



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Find us at: [www.stmatthewucc.org](http://www.stmatthewucc.org)  
Facebook, Pinterest and YouTube



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St. Matthew United Church of Christ  
630.665.1236 (Office)

Office Email:  
[office@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:office@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](mailto:allen.mothershed@stmatthewucc.org)

Susan Wold, Director of Children's Ministry  
[susan.wold@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:susan.wold@stmatthewucc.org)

Quinn Rosenthal, Director of Youth Ministry  
[quinn.rosenthal@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:quinn.rosenthal@stmatthewucc.org)

Jamie Craig, Director of Music/Choir Director  
[jamie.craig@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:jamie.craig@stmatthewucc.org)

Brian Dobbelaere, Organist/Pianist  
[brian.dobbelaere@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:brian.dobbelaere@stmatthewucc.org)

Kim Congdon, Handbell Director  
[kim.congdon@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:kim.congdon@stmatthewucc.org)

Kathy Robson, Administrative Assistant  
[office@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:office@stmatthewucc.org)

Alicia Drabik, Business Manager  
[business.manager@stmatthewucc.org](mailto:business.manager@stmatthewucc.org)