

THE VOICE OF St. Matthew

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1420 SOUTH GABLES BLVD.
WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60189

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www.stmatthew-ucc.org



MAY 2016

Prayer and Asking God for What We Need

Pastoral Message

Rev. Allen Mothershed

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” Matthew 7:7-8

For the longest time in my life, I approached prayer as my time to make a request to God with the expectation that God in some way would answer my prayer. Sometimes things turned out as I wanted, sometimes nothing seemed to happen, and other times something changed, but not as I expected. Such responses to my prayer requests were confusing to me, especially when we read verses like Matthew 7:7 which says, “Ask and it will be given to you.”

Jesus, who said these words from Matthew 7, lived in the real world as I do and He must have known that not every request we make to God is fulfilled as we wish. Still, He told us to pray and to ask. God provides like a father provides for his child. Maybe prayer is something more than imagining God as a divine dispenser of gifts. Maybe it is not a “hotline to

heaven,” and God is not a magical genie who we can manipulate by asking in the right way or making a bargain. We do not approach God like a consumer ready to buy what we want by our good deeds or intentions. We are not to be like a slave who placates a master just to get what he wants. Prayer is more a way of being in relationship where we are beloved and God is honored and loved.

As my faith has matured, my understanding of prayer has changed. I have come to understand that the very act of praying changes me rather than changing God. There is an old Jewish teaching from a medieval rabbi, Leon Modena, who expresses the truth of prayer as follows: *“Imagine a man in a boat who is pulling himself to shore. If one did not know better, it could appear that he is pulling the shore to himself. But indeed, it is the one in the boat who is being moved, because the shore is fixed. So it is, he said, with prayer. We think that when we pray we are moving God closer to our will. But true prayer does quite the opposite: It moves us closer to God's will.”*

“If we rise from our prayer as better human beings than the ones who sat down, our prayers have been answered.”

The Jewish teaching and the quote are from Belief Net.com
“Is Anybody Listening?”

MISSION NEWS

FOOD ON THE FIRST

A big thank you to all who donated in the month of April. Everything was very much appreciated. Here is what is needed for May:

- Diapers - sizes 4, 5, & 6
- Disposable razors
- Baby wipes
- Cans of pineapple slices
- Feminine pads
- Cans of chicken
- Birthday candles
- Cold cereal
- White rice

As always, please make sure items are not opened or expired.

If you have any questions, please call Betty Greer at 630.682.4084.

Blessings to all.



NOTES FROM THE MUSIC ROOM

At the worship service on April 17th we held an Open Choir Sunday. Five individuals came to join us and learn an anthem to present during the service. They did a wonderful job of sight reading and, as the video on our website documents, brought a nice depth to the choir that only multiple voices can do. I know there are still some who wanted to participate but were unable to, so we will be doing this again. While the date has not been chosen yet, there will be a rehearsal starting at 8:15am that day at which anyone who likes to sing can come, rehearse, and present the anthem that morning. Please watch the Sunday bulletins and the Happenings for the date. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

On the 22nd of this month, we end our 2015/2016 musical season. Bells, Praise Band and Choir will all be present during worship to share their gifts. As always, it will be a wonderful celebration of God's music. This also means that it is time to think of signing up to help provide music for worship so these many individuals who sing and play may enjoy some well-earned rest. Please add your name to the sign-up list in the narthex for summer music.

Peace,

Jamie Craig

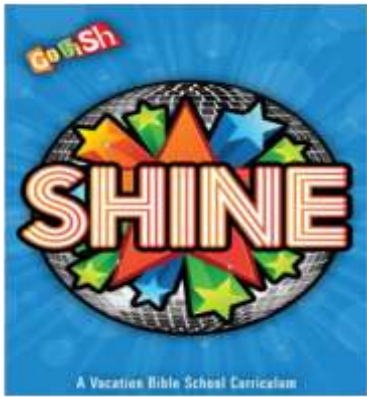
630.202.6788

music.director@stmatthewucc.org.

Lanni1@comcast.net



CHILDREN & YOUTH



St. Matthew Vacation Bible School
June 20th-24th
9am-12pm

Those who look to HIM are radiant...
Psalm 34:5

Since children are bombarded with messages from the world at a constant pace, events like VBS give us the opportunity to combat these messages with the Word of God. The key to a successful VBS isn't the material, decor or clever ideas. Our confidence is in the Scriptures and the power of the Holy Spirit to work through the children and volunteers during their time together.

Thank you to the teachers who taught the Road Trip rotation:

Judi Gonzalez, Dawn Schubert, Kenna Anderson, Deb Felsenthal and to the shepherds who accompany the children each Sunday: Miegan Bresingham, Carol Honeywell, Dave Boyd, Emily Ciner, Jeannine Adams, Leslie Ortman and Bob Barnshaw.



As the 2015/2016 Sunday School year comes to a close we have some fun plans:

- May 1 – Prairie Path Prayer Walk and Ice Cream
 - May 8 – Make a special Mother's Day gift
 - May 15 – Teacher Appreciation Sunday, no Sunday School
 - May 22 – Children's choice movie and popcorn
 - May 29 – Memorial Day weekend and the start of 10:30am dismissal
 - June 5 – First day of summer Sunday School
- *The schedule could change due to weather



We are in need of volunteers for Vacation Bible School and summer Sunday School. If you are able to help in any way please contact Susan Wold: susan.wold@stmatthewucc.org

May Birthdays

**Jeremy Passini 5/1, Kelley Passini 5/2, William Jung 5/5,
Alexander Bono 5/20, Cristian Padilla 5/27, Amelia Roser 5/27**

Susan Wold
Director of Children's Ministry



crazies Fellowship and Study
NO crazies
crazies Fellowship and Study
crazies End of Year Party

Sunday, May 1st
Sunday, May 8th
Sunday, May 15th
Sunday, May 22nd

6-8pm
OFF Mother's Day
6-8pm
TBD



A Big THANK YOU to all who participated and volunteered at this year's 30 Hour Famine!

From Friday, April 22 to Saturday, April 23, the crazies fasted to learn about hunger. We gathered for an overnight where our activities and lessons all centered around hunger awareness, and then we broke our 30-hour fast together with communion and lunch. All the while, we were fundraising for Heifer International. If you would still like to make a donation in our name, please go to <http://www.heifer.org/> and donate today!

Plant Pick-up Reminder

If you purchased plants through our plant sale this year, pick-up is Friday, May 20th from 5-7pm.



Tuesday

Hang Out Tuesdays (HOTS) are coming back
Keep an eye out for the crazies summer calendar in the next newsletter. We'll have regular Sunday meetings, some weekends away and HOTS all summer long!

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



Thank you to Roseanne and Randy King for organizing another Euchre Night on April 15th. The next one will be held in mid-July.

Upcoming opportunities for congregational fellowship include:

- The All-Church picnic, which will be held on **June 5th** immediately after the worship service. Be sure to save the date and think of a side dish or dessert you would like to bring. Also, if you have a family favorite game that you'd like to share with your St. Matthew family, please let us know. A sign-up sheet will be posted in May.
- Our return to the Kane County Cougars is set for **Thursday night, June 30th**. The in-game entertainment is provided by the ZOOperstars! The ZOOperstars! are a traveling inflatable entertainment act utilizing comedy, acrobatics, tricks and maneuvers accompanied by synchronized dancing. The Zooper-Stars! are an act sure to draw many smiles. A fireworks show will begin immediately following the game. We will begin selling tickets after church in May and June to offset the deposit we were required to submit.

Thanks to those who have provided ideas on how we can come together as a church family – keep them coming!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

1	Curtis Holland Howard SooHoo
3	Linda Leinweber
4	Brian Anderson Jamie Craig Jackie Tobin
6	Wendee Passini
12	Alison Chatten David Wold
13	Daniel Ciner Michael English Kelly Gonzalez Susan Neufelder
15	Nigel Barnhill
18	Barbara Giordano
20	Monnie Stoller
22	Jason Schubert
27	Ann Ogorzalek
31	Griffen Price



Women's Interfaith Event

On Sunday, April 10th, St. Matthew hosted an interfaith event for women called **Faith, Friendship & Sisterhood: Women's Walk for Peace**.

The event began with a presentation by Nadia Qazi of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, who addressed the topic of how women can unite as sisters and work for peace in their respective communities. Nadia shared interesting information about Muslims and the Islamic faith. An interfaith moment of prayer led by Sister Dhiya Bakr and Tina Ciner concluded the presentation.



Ellen Bintz Meuch of Global Healing Response then gave an introduction to the Labyrinth Walk, and participants gathered in Dobstaff Hall to walk the labyrinth. To learn more about labyrinths, visit www.veriditas.org.

During the final part of the program, participants broke into groups and had open discussion and an opportunity for self-reflection.

Thank you to Gwen Johnson for coordinating and running the media system during the presentation. Also, a huge thank you to all the St. Matthew women who helped make visitors feel welcome and assisted with set-up and clean-up afterwards.

We had over 60 women in attendance! Thank you to everyone who came in solidarity and friendship.

Submitted by Tina Ciner



ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Open & Affirming

St. Matthew is now officially an Open & Affirming church, after a congregational vote on April 10th. The results were 151 in favor, 14 against. The Open & Affirming statement is on the St. Matthew website in the About Us section.

A Note From Pastor Allen

I want to thank each of you for your love of our church in being willing to have mature conversations about this issue. I appreciate the honesty and the loving way we worked together through this process to discern how God is leading us. We began this conversation with my having great confidence in each of you and our faith community. That confidence has only increased.

As the Body of Christ, it is the essence of our call to discern through prayer, study, and conversation how God is calling us to move into the future as a faithful people. This can be difficult as we all simply may not come to the same discernment. As the Apostle Paul says, “For now we see obscurely in a mirror, but then it will be face to face. Now I know partly; then I will know fully, just as God has fully known me.”

I appreciate each of your comments and the respectful tone we have had as we shared our questions and thoughts. I give thanks to each of the Open and Affirming committee members, Alex Alavi, Jennifer Buhmann, Carol Honeywell, Diane Mook, Leslie Ortman, and Dorothy Peterson, and to Lee Staton, who chaired the committee. Also, thanks to Dawn Schubert, Rick Jungk, and Bruce Anderson, who guided this through as council chairs.

We have much wisdom in our leadership.

Volunteer Appreciation

Have you taught Sunday school this year? Do you volunteer your time with the crazies? Did you help with Vacation Bible School? Do you volunteer in the nursery? Have you taught an adult education class? Then **Sunday, May 15th is dedicated to you!** Please join us as we thank **YOU**, our teachers, for your time, talent and dedication. The children will have a special gift for you and we will celebrate you with a cake after the service.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Novel Approaches

The novel to be approached in May is “**The High Mountains of Portugal**” by Yann Martel.

Filled with tenderness, humor, and endless surprise, this novel takes the reader on a road trip through Portugal in the last century – and through the human soul.

Date: Friday, May 20th, 7:30pm

Place: the Mooks
1523 Surrey Drive, Wheaton

All are welcome! Please join us for lively discussion, food and fellowship



St. Matthew UCC

2016 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

**June 20th-24th
9am-12pm**

Music-Games-Snacks-Stories-Crafts

**Family Ice Cream Social & Performance
Friday 6/24
7pm**

Treats Needed - Coffee Fellowship

The fellowship time after worship is very important and we need YOUR help for our Coffee Hour. The Coffee Committee takes care of the behind-the-scenes details of our coffees (setting up, providing coffee and paper products and cleaning up). Everyone else needs to participate to ensure we have enough treats to share. Store-bought items are appreciated as much as home-baked goods, and fruit, cheese and crackers are always gobbled up.

If following a schedule works best for you, here is a suggestion for when to bring treats to share:

Those with last names beginning with:

- A, B, C - contribute on the 1st Sunday of the month
- D, E, F, G - contribute on the 2nd Sunday
- H, I, J, K - contribute on the 3rd Sunday, and
- L-Z - contribute on the 4th Sunday.

In months that have a fifth Sunday (this year, May, August and November), please help us have a successful fellowship time and donate again in those months.

Thanks for helping!



Thank You Very Much!

Dear St. Matthews Parish,

My name us Antony. My family received a lot of donations for Christmas from you for the children and I wanted to take the time to say thank-you properly. I was amazed at the amount of presents that were donated to us. You all are such a blessing and gave my children a Christmas like no other they have ever seen. I've never seen my kids so happy and light up they way they did on Christmas morning when they opened their gifts. My 9 year old son Draeden was so amazed he kept pinching himself and asking if he was dreaming. He said to me "Daddy, I better not be dreaming. Is this real? Am I really awake?" It brought tears of joy to my eyes to see them all having such a blessed day (something I could have never done without your help). It warms my soul to know that there are groups of people out there willing to help families like mine who have fallen on hard times. My family and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts and promise to pay your kindness forward to others in any way we can. May God bless all of you.

Sincerely,

Antony, Shaylee, Draeden, Alexander and Savannah

Members of St. Matthew-

Thank you so much for the care package! It is very motivating and comforting to be thought of like this! I am very thankful to have the support of a great congregation. It was so nice receiving such a thoughtful gift. Thanks to all who donated and to the whole congregation for the support!

Michael English

St. Matthew -

Thank you for the care package! I read the email for the VOICE the week before they were sent, and the rest of the week I was waiting in anticipation. It is always nice to know I have support from Wheaton. School is going well and I'm finally getting to classes that are directly related to what I want to do. Thank you again,

Elijah Baird

Dear Members of St. Matthew-

Thank you so much for the wonderful care package of food, supplies and drawings! I felt so loved and special when I received it in the mail. I am so excited to see you all when I come home for break. Thank you again for being so thoughtful!

God bless you all!

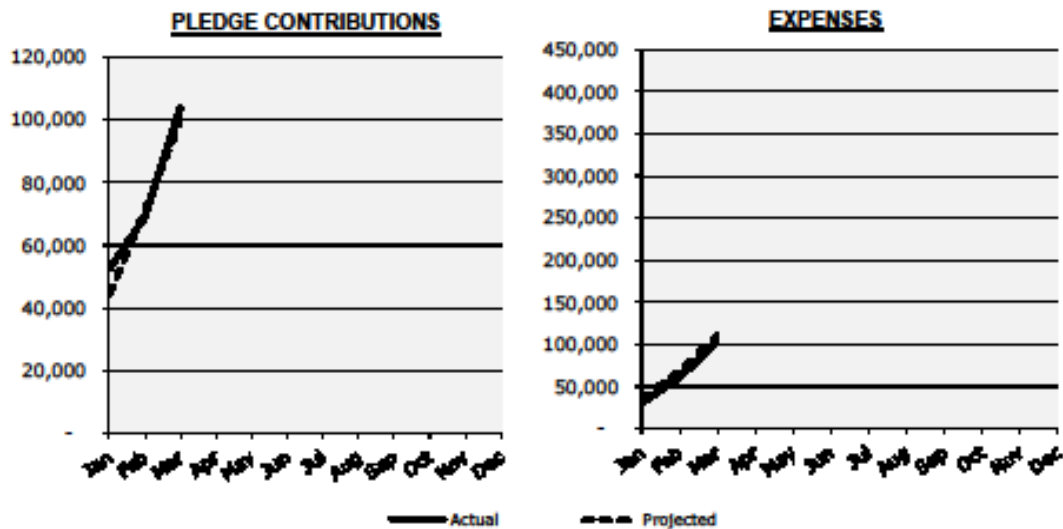
Love, Abby Johnson

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

For the Period Ended March 31, 2016

	ACTUAL CURRENT MONTH	ACTUAL YEAR-TO- DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
RECEIPTS:			
Pledge Contributions	34,988	103,903	353,000
Loose Offerings	525	1,033	10,000
Rental Income	240	640	5,000
Fund Raising	395	988	8,000
Investment Income	2	7	-
More Property	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Income	-	-	-
TOTAL RECEIPTS	36,128	106,571	376,000
EXPENDITURES:			
Ministry	22,357	58,472	234,195
Building	11,217	27,959	118,253
Mortgages & Notes	2,229	6,688	26,750
Mission / OCWM	5,000	5,200	29,200
Committees:			
Christian Education	559	2,127	9,970
Membership	42	124	2,750
Music	603	1,090	4,700
Worship	36	410	1,500
Congregational Life	99	199	800
Memorial	-	45	100
Stewardship	-	-	500
Misc. & Contingency	-	100	1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	42,143	102,414	429,718
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$ (6,015)	\$ 4,157	\$ (53,718)

2016 Activity - Actual vs. Projected



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

MAY 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:30am Worship service 1pm CROP Walk Registra- tion -2pm CROP Walk -6pm crazies	2 7pm Christian Edu- cation	3 7pm Membership 7:30pm Mission	4 1:30pm Women's Prayer Group 7pm Adult Bible Study	5	6	7
8 9:30am Worship service No crazies Mother's Day	9	10	11 1:30pm Women's Prayer Group 7pm Adult Bible Study	12 7pm Finance	13	14
15 9:30am Worship Service Christian Educa- tion Appreciation Sunday VOICE Articles Due 6pm crazies	16	17	18 1:30pm Women's Prayer Group 7pm Adult Bible Study	19 6pm SRC 7pm Council	20 5-7pm Plant pick-up	21
22 9:30am Worship Service Music Apprecia- tion Sunday TBD- crazies End of Year Celebration -7pm Piano Recital	23 7pm Ministry Chairs Meeting	24	25 1:30pm Women's Prayer Group (Final Meeting for the Church pro- gram year.) 7pm Adult Bible Study	26	27	28
29 9:30am Worship Service	30 Memorial Day OFFICE CLOSED	31 Tuesday Nights 6pm Intergene- Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Ringers	Wednesday Nights 6:30pm Praise Band 7:30pm Sanctuary Choir			



We're on the web:
www.stmatthewucc.org

St. Matthew United Church of Christ
630. 665.1236 (Office)
630.665.1436 (Fax)
Office Email: 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

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