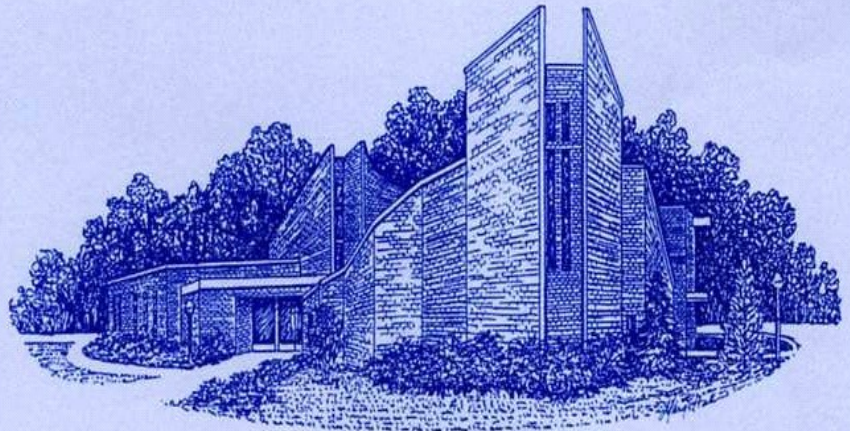


THE VOICE OF

St. Matthew

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1420 SOUTH GABLES BLVD.
WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60189
630-665-1236
Fax 630-665-1436
www.stmatthew-ucc.org



February 2018

Another Word for Love: Justice

It is that time of year again when people rush out to find a Valentine card for their significant other to express love. Love is that word we overuse and use so superficially that it's meaning is nebulous. And yet we know how it feels to be loved. To be held in a loving embrace or hug our children tightly with an embrace that says, "I don't ever want to let you go." Love is what it feels like to have someone completely forgive you when you feel terrible that you have let them down.

I want to suggest another word for "love" which is one the Bible often uses: Justice. Justice is what happens when preferential treatment is shown toward a person who is in a vulnerable, powerless position, such as a person in poverty, an immigrant at the mercy of the country they have fled to, a person who is injured in mind or body, or a group of people who suffer discrimination because of their race or sex or economic circumstances, or when we have hurt someone and show forgiveness.

Biblical justice is different from the way we have come to understand justice in our country. We think of justice as being based on inherited rights that people are endowed with by their maker. People are entitled to such rights given to us by our constitution. It is something that is owed to us. This idea of justice is a significant advancement in our world that has transformed, for the good, our nation and our world. Imagine where we would be without it.

Without negating the positive value of this concept of justice, I invite you to consider a more profound idea of justice based on faith. In the scriptures, there is no idea of us being entitled to be treated fairly. Justice goes deeper. It gets down to the truth that none of us is owed anything. Life is a gift from our creator - There is nothing we have done or can do to earn it or deserve it. It is just lovingly given to us. We are all recipients of gift of this love (or justice). And if God is so good to us, so giving, the question is: "What will be our response?" Will we show reciprocity for this gift? Or will we take it for granted and scorn our benefactor?

If we receive this gift and take it to heart, we will show the same love (or justice) which God has shown us. Here is an example from the New Testament: "Forgive, as you have been forgiven" (Matthew 18). An example from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 10:19) says, "So you should love foreigners, because you were foreigners living in Egypt." God asks us to play favorites to those who are vulnerable. Be merciful! Be compassionate! Be forgiving! This is God's way with you.

This is why, as Christians, we hold our own government to a higher standard than many might choose to do. It is intolerable to think of younger people brought into our country illegally by their parents being sent back to their country of origins away from the only life they have known. It is unthinkable that we should see them used as pawns in a cynical political game. From a faith perspective, this is not about rights, but a matter of our hearts. It is that the love shown to us in our lives compels us to stand up for them.

Meditate on God's unimaginable love and mercy for you and you will always take the side of those who are weak or in positions of less power or greater need. Amen.

*Peace,
Pastor Allen*

Food on the First

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

Here is what is needed in February:

- Canned fruit
- Canned soup
- Cold cereal
- Oatmeal
- Baby wipes
- Disposable razors
- Deodorant
- Feminine pads - no tampons

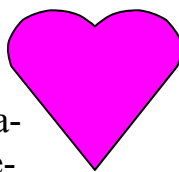
Please make sure items have not expired and are unopened. If you have any questions, please call Betty Greer at 630.682.4084.



Blessings to all.

Pennies From Heaven

Participation in the SCRIP (Manna) 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 4 so they can be picked up on February 11.

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
- 8 Liz Westergaard
- 10 Elizabeth Baird
Marilyn Geise
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
Jeff Westergaard
- 24 Liliana King
- 25 Joyce Boyd
Anthony Kresl
- 26 Tracey Blake
Cathy Miller

A Note from Ruth Greer

I would like to thank the members of St. Matthew for the prayers, cards, and all the support you have given me over the past year. It has been such a help to me.

Love you all, Ruth Greer



Notes from the Music Room....

Music can be very powerful, running the gamut of eliciting joy or sadness, elation or sorrow, strong emotions that are positive or even no feeling at all. I said in the December Voice that we would be asking for some information from the congregation. Our questions are strictly related to the opening song, the one after the message, and the closing song. Selections by the different ensembles or soloists, duets, etc., are not part of this information gathering. Songs that are chosen for congregational singing are looked at carefully with consideration given to the words of the songs and how they relate to the scripture and message of the day, as well as the music, rhythm and feeling that supports those words. The questions are simple, asking how the music affected your worship experience with a multiple choice and a space for why. We have finalized how the questions will read and will request you fill them out each Sunday starting February 4th. The goal is for people to fill one out at each Sunday service, and then either leave it in the pews for the ushers to collect after the service or place it in the mailbox outside the office. We will continue this for several weeks and tabulate the results. If you take the survey home to complete, PLEASE make sure to put the date of the service on the form. That way we can ensure the comments are attributed to the correct song.

Our Open Choir Sundays are going quite well. I have been quite impressed with the music produced on such a short time. We had a total of 16 singers two weeks ago. February Open Choir is on the 18th and in March on the 25th. We will meet at 8:15 before the service.

Peace,

Jamie
630.202.6788
jamie.craig@stmatthewucc.org



Faith and Life Series

Please join us for our "Faith and Life Series" Wednesday evenings, February 21st, February 28th, March 7th, March 14th and March 21st. We will meet in Dobstaff Hall at 6pm to enjoy a complimentary dinner sponsored by a St. Matthew committee. We will then hear about a faith jour-

ney from one of our valued members. Please see the sign-up sheet and list of speakers on the bulletin board in the narthex. We hope you will join us!

Christ Tamil UCC

We are excited to welcome Christ Tamil UCC starting this Sunday, February 4th. They will begin gathering around noon, worship at 12:30pm and should be cleaning up and leaving the church by 5:30-6pm. Please contact Pastor Allen with any questions.

Saturday
March 24th
St. Matthew U.C.C.
EASTER

**EGG
HUNT**

10 A.M.

Get your picture taken

With the Easter Bunny!

Enjoy donuts and crafts after the hunt

Please bring your own basket

1420 S. Gables Blvd.
Wheaton, IL 60189

630.665.1236

www.stmatthewucc.org

EASTER EGG HUNT DONATIONS

The Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, March 24th at 10 am. We would greatly appreciate donations of filled eggs to be put in the box in the narthex. You may grab a bag of empty eggs to fill or may buy your own and fill them. THANK YOU so much!

crazies Update



Hello! I've been absent from the Voice lately due to the scaling back of my hours based on my other professional responsibilities, but I thought it'd be nice to update y'all on what happens between the hours of 6 and 8 pm on Sundays and some things that are coming up on the youth docket. Logistically, support from the church has been great lately. Keep signing up on those monthly helper sign-up sheets in the narthex, and if you already have, thank you from the bottom of my heart. (Special thanks to new members the Rudniks, they are heroes!) If you don't feel like going to the effort of making dinner but still want to hang out with us and do me a solid, just let me know by email in advance and I'll order pizza. Seriously, the kids don't mind. Content-wise, we've recently covered the finer points of asking someone out on a date, the true meaning of Christmas (and Epiphany), and I had the privilege of hearing our youth read Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech from our pulpit. As far as what's upcoming, I'm looking to coordinate a welcome and mingling meal with the youth group of the Tamil church, which I've learned is comparable in size to ours. The families I've met so far who will be sharing our space all seem extremely friendly. Confirmation is also heating up now, we've got mentors involved and will be planning our first sacred site visit soon. My last plug is for an event that I hope you've heard about by now. Our youth group has been invited to participate in an educational retreat with the youth of First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn. This is a program their church has done for many years that is based on the Our Whole Lives curriculum, two resources that the UCC denomination uses to teach young people about healthy decision making, responsibility, and ethics with regards to their sexuality. They are graciously saving spots for us, so if you have a youth of a certain age and are interested, please let me or Pastor Allen know. Personally, I think the program sounds like it would be really valuable to the youth at their age, and I know starting conversations about sex can be uncomfortable and awkward at first, and this seems like a good way to tackle it. The event is at the beginning of March. That's all for now, see you all around.

-Quinn

NEW PARENTING CLASS!

Please join us for a class on **Parenting the Love and Logic Way**. Love and Logic is a proven technique that teaches your kids to listen the first time and ensures that your time with them is well spent and not wasted on anger and harsh discipline. The tools of this class are simple and effective. All classes are Sunday evenings from 6-7:30 pm. Please invite your friends and family to join us for these **FREE CLASSES. Sign up in the narthex.**

April 8: Putting an End to Arguing, Back Talk, and Begging

April 15: Teaching Responsibility Without Losing Their Love

April 22: Setting Limits Without Waging War

April 29: Avoiding Power Struggles

May 6: Guiding Kids to Own and Solve Their Own Problems

May 13: Teaching Kids To Complete Chores... Without Reminders and Without Pay



Feed My Starving Children

Thank you to everyone who came out on January 15th to pack food in Aurora for FMSC. We, along with a few other groups, packed 141 boxes of food, which is 30,456 meals, which will feed 83 children for a year. We really made an impact in 2 hours.

Thank you all for giving up time from your day to make the future brighter for the recipients of this food.



ANNUAL CARE PACKAGES- Sunday School Mission Project: We are accepting donations for care packages for St. Matthew families with college students and military family members. Donation lists are on the poster in the narthex and can be placed in the basket. We are also accepting donations for postage, which is \$10 per box. If you have a family member that you would like to receive a care package please email Susan Wold with their address, swold45@hotmail.com.

"From a pad on the floor, to a key in the door."

"I'm so grateful to DuPagePads and their supporters.
Having a home has given me peace to build my family and begin to follow our dreams again.
You gave us hope and that hope is powerful."
~ Diana, with 5 year old son Gabriel

Scan here for full story or visit our blog:
www.dupagepads.org

Did you know? Over the past 2 years DuPagePads reduced the average length of stay from 57 days to 45 days, a 21% reduction.

* Save the date for our 12th Annual Taste of Hope event on March 1, 2018, 6pm - 9pm at Drury Lane.

DuPagePads
The Solution to End Homelessness No 30 years

Stewardship News – Lean on Me Campaign Concludes

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank all of you who pledged to support St. Matthew in 2018 with your time, talent and treasure. As you likely saw in the Annual Report, we were up year-over-year in all categories, including total dollars pledged, average pledge amount, and total number of pledges. Based on that the Finance Committee was able to build a solid budget for 2018.



We also see new names on the Council and Committee lists to go along with a lot of familiar supporters. Thanks to the new and loyal supporters for continuing to do the work of the church. Collectively we can make a difference from Wheaton, IL to the Mississippi Gulf Shore, to overseas.

If you have not found a place to utilize your talents or if you missed the opportunity to make a pledge, please feel free to reach out to anyone in Church leadership.

Again, thank you for allowing the Church and its beneficiaries to **Lean on You!**

-Edie DeBoard and Rob Neufelder

Congregational Life / Membership News

Welcome to several new members who officially joined St. Matthew on Sunday, January 28th. If you did not get a chance to meet these folks, please make it a point to introduce yourself soon. Those who joined are:

- ♦ Liz and Jeff Westergaard of Wheaton
- ♦ Sunita and Eric Lindberg of Wheaton
- ♦ Kristen and Dan Pierce of Carol Stream
- ♦ Beth and Jim Woods of Glen Ellyn
- ♦ Debbie Lipinski of Warrenville*

**Debbie was under the weather on Sunday, so we will recognize her joining in the future.*

The Congregational Life element of our ministry is planning a series of events that will be published in the bulletin and Happenings. Please watch those for details. We do have a few dates for your calendars as follows:

Saturday, April 7th (3:45 – 5:45pm)
Pickle Ball in Warrenville

Sunday, April 15th (Immediately after church)
Wafflepalooza in Dobstaff Hall

Sunday, April 29th (1-3pm)
Bike / Hike / Walk your pet at Herrick Lake Forest Preserve

Sunday, June 3rd (Immediately after church)
All-church Picnic

MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service in memory of Dorothy McGowen will be held on Saturday, March 3rd at 2pm with a reception following in Dobstaff Hall.



Gauging Interest - Yoga

The Membership Life committee is entertaining the idea of hosting a yoga class or a series of them in Dobstaff Hall. We do not currently have a person who could lead such an event. If anyone has an interest in leading or helping to plan this further, please contact Rob Neufelder.



Kids Sing During Worship

Don't miss our adorable kids singing some of their favorite songs on February 11th right before the children's sermon!

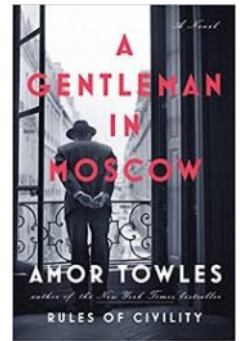


Costa Rica meeting on
February 11th after
church in the parlor. Any
questions please contact
Julie Schubert at
tijjr7@att.net.

Novel Approaches

The novel to be approached in February is “A Gentleman in Moscow” by Amor Towles. “This book is a charming reminder of what it means to be classy. It is an elegant, wise testimony to the beauty and necessity of human connection.” -Miami Herald

The date: Friday, February 23rd at 7:30 pm. **The place:** Home of Linnea Karpenske, 21W144 Glen Park Road, Lombard. All are welcome, join us for fellowship, food, and friendly discussion. **LOOKING AHEAD:** “Origin” by Dan Brown.



More on IRS Option

You can take money from a 401k and roll it over to an IRA and then make a contribution to a charity and pay no tax on the contribution. However, you cannot deduct the contribution against your taxes. If you have an IRA you can move money to a charity with no tax due on the contribution. Again, you cannot deduct the contribution against your taxes. Again, it is always smart to talk to your tax accountant about any change to your tax filing.



Office and Pastor's Hours Reminder

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 be sure his schedule has not changed 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: 9am-1pm

February

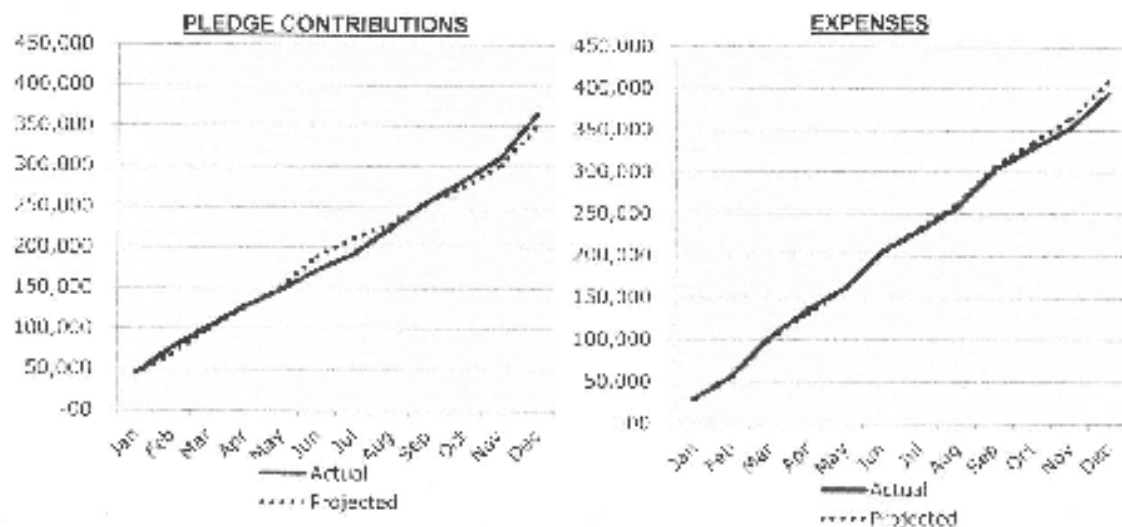
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 <i>9:30a Worship Service and Communion</i>	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 <i>9:30a Worship Service</i> <i>-Costa Rica Mission Trip</i> <i>-11am M&M</i>	12	13	14 Happy Valentines Day	15	16	17
18 <i>9:30a Worship Service (Open Choir)</i>	19	20	21 <i>6pm Faith and Life Series</i>	22	23 <i>7:30pm Novel Approaches</i>	24
25 <i>9:30a Worship Service</i>	26	27	28 <i>6pm Faith and Life Series</i>		Tuesdays <i>6pm Intergene Ringers</i> <i>7:30pm Chancel Ringers</i>	Wednesdays <i>1pm Women's Prayer Group</i> <i>6:30 pm Praise Band</i> <i>7:30 pm Sanctuary Choir</i>

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

For the Period Ending December 31, 2017

	ACTUAL CURRENT MONTH	ACTUAL YEAR-TO- DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
RECEIPTS:			
Pledge Contributions	54,604	385,445	350,000
Loose Offerings	1,728	5,292	10,000
Rental Income	670	3,820	3,300
Fund Raising	338	2,974	4,000
Investment Income	413	1,065	300
Misc. Property	-00	21,000	21,000
Miscellaneous Income	-00	5,481	5,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	57,754	405,877	393,600
EXPENDITURES:			
Ministry	21,871	231,724	234,871
Building	9,411	96,009	102,216
Loans & Notes	6,888	26,750	26,750
Mission / OCWM	2,100	27,895	26,950
Committees:			
Christian Education	560	6,851	8,000
Membership/Congregational Life	-00	1,781	3,000
Music	366	2,671	4,200
Worship	175	814	1,500
Memorial/Endowment	-00	-00	100
Stewardship	00	52	100
Misc. & Contingency	25	25	1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	41,195	394,482	408,787
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$16,559	\$11,395	\$(15,187)

2017 Activity - Actual vs. Projected



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



St. Matthew United Church of Christ

630.665.1236 (Office)

630.665.1436 (Fax)

Office Email: office@stmatthewucc.org

Web Site: www.stmatthewucc.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 9am-4pm

Friday: 9am-1pm

Sunday Worship: 9:30am

Sunday Church School: 10am

Our Purpose:

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

Our Identity:

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

STAFF

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allen.mothershed@stmatthewucc.org

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susan.wold@stmatthewucc.org

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