

Weekly News from St. Matthew's United Methodist Church

Acton, Massachusetts



St. Matthew's Spiritual Retreat: Praying the Psalms
Marie Joseph Center, Biddeford Pool, ME - March 31-April 2, 2017

Growing in Faith, Walking in Love

April 04, 2017

CHURCH NOTICES, SERVICES, UPDATES, EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

- Holy Week Worship
- Easter Breakfast 2017
- Easter Instrumentalists Wanted!
- Time to Order 2016 Easter Flowers
- Registration is Open for St. Matthew's VBS 2017!
- A \$30 Gift is Transforming Lives in Kenya
- Thanks for a Great Retreat

FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Sunday Morning Adult Formation – 9:15 am
 - Living the Questions
 - The Passion of Christ
- Children & Junior High School at 9:15
- Senior High Learning and Exploration at 9:15
- Thursday Women's Study Group – 9:30-11:30 am

REACHING OUT

- Join the 33rd Annual Great Food Walk on Good Friday – April 14
- Anti-racism group forming at St. Matthew's
- Helping Women in Zimbabwe

CHURCH NOTICES, SERVICES, UPDATES, EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Holy Week Worship

April 13—Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm Worship Service

April 14—Good Friday

7:00 pm Worship Service

April 16—Easter Sunday

6:00 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service, held outdoors in a beautiful country field (at the north end of Idylwilde Farms, 120 Sargent Road in Boxborough, just a half mile from the church. From the church, go left on Central St., right on Littlefield Rd., and left on Sargent. There will be signs.)

7:00 - Easter breakfast- first seating.

8:15 - Easter Worship

9:15 - Easter breakfast- second seating. (No Sunday School)

10:00 - Easter egg hunt for the little ones

10:30 - Easter Worship

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## Easter Breakfast 2017



Thank you all for signing up to contribute to the Easter Breakfast! We are still in need of volunteers to make the whole event run!

If you plan to be at the **Sunrise Service**, you could sign up to be a greeter, floating helper, or window server at the first seating or help clean up after the first seating (which starts about 7:00 am).

If you are planning to attend the **8:15 Service**, you could come early to help clean up after the first seating, or be a greeter, floating helper, or window server at the second seating (which starts about 9:00 am) after you attend the service.

If you are planning to attend the **10:30 Service**, you could come early to be a greeter, floating helper, or window server at the second seating (9:00 am), or help clean up before heading in to the Sanctuary. Additionally, come join in the setting-up fun on Saturday afternoon.

Sign up at <http://saint-matthews.org/sign-up-central/easter-breakfast/> to share in the fellowship of this wonderful St. Matthew's event. It can't happen without you. And don't worry, we'll always make sure you've had a chance to enjoy the delicious buffet!

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Easter Instrumentalists Wanted!

Our Easter Sunday service at 10:30 will conclude, once again, with *Hallelujah*, from Handel's *Messiah*. Instrumentalists are invited to join with the choir and congregation for this annual tradition. Please contact David Potts if you'd like to play so that music can be provided.

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## Time to Order 2017 Easter Flowers

As an expression of JOY and VICTORY, the Easter decorations in the sanctuary will feature an interpretive altar arrangement, in addition to the traditional spring bulb plants, which are visible signs of Jesus' resurrection and new life for all of us.

Orders for Easter plants and contributions toward the special Easter arrangements can be placed in the basket on the bulletin board in the hallway or mailed to Thelma Shoneman. **ORDERS MUST BE IN BY SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2017.**

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 A colorful illustration for a children's camp. It features a man in a white turban and blue robe on the left, a girl in a red shirt and blue pants on the right, and various animals including a dog, a rabbit, a pig, a chicken, and a bear. The text reads "All God's Creatures July 17-21 Half-day Camp Pre-K-6th grade".	<p>Registration is Open for St. Matthew's VBS 2017!</p>
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Registration is open and planning is well underway for "All God's Creatures," a unique half-day camp offered by St. Matthew's for all children of Pre-K through 6th grade. Our program will be offered July 17th through 21st from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Daily themes are:

- God Created the Earth
- God Provides Animals For Us
- Caring for All God's Creatures
- We, Too, Are God's Creatures
- Caring for All People

Activity stations will include Bible Stories & Songs, Indoor Activities, Crafts, Snacks, Outdoor Games, and Music. Registration Fees: Early bird Special: \$25 per child/\$40 per family through June 17th; \$30 per child/\$45 per family after June 17th. Parents or grandparents participating in VBS may deduct \$10 from total registration. Register here: <http://saint-matthews.org/events/vacation-bible-school-2/> (Payment is due on Monday, July 17th.)

Thank you to our volunteers! To those of you who have already committed to volunteering this summer—a big THANK YOU! If you are interested in helping out but have not yet heard from me, please let contact Melissa Rollins: mrollins@mr-online.com. Any youth in grades 7 through 12 and any interested adults are welcome. Even if you cannot commit to being present each day, we will find a place for you.

Please spread the word! "All God's Creatures" is open to members of St. Matthew's as well as all children in our surrounding communities and visiting the area. The more children, the better!

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## A \$30 Gift is Transforming Lives in Kenya

Last June you donated money to help the work of Slum Child Foundation in Kenya. Read about how your gift is making a difference for others.

### The Seed Harvest: Table banking report

Last year we supported a small group of 5 parents of the children we work with USD 30 so that we can empower them to be able to support their children in order to relive them from dependency syndrome for things they can do for themselves to make the lives of their children better.

In February, more than seven months, I went for a follow up to monitor their progress, both on the negative and positive side. They told me the journey has not been smooth but they developed a coping mechanism to keep the flame burning. When we started the group, some of used to do their business in the open space, where when sun or rain would not give them peace within the

slum but now through the table banking some of us have been able to have shade for their business and some of us have gone an extra mile of making sure they do not sell what they started with, so it has been a good journey and we are to be independent for certain basic needs.

No journey lack challenges, some have come our way but we have a mechanism to solve them, one, two of our members went home for the fear of post-election violence in the coming election and we recruited two new passionate members to replace them, we are training them to pick up with us, it was not easy to get used to different people who we did not start with but we hope they will pick up.

Another challenge has been, the drought which has affected our country hard and has affected the

slums where we are, some of us used to sell cereals but now they do not do it anymore and they have been forced to look for another business as they await rains, for us it is hard to start another business but we are trying to get used to it.



Caption; Ms Awiti, Mother of Eugene and George from Toto Club selling under her new Shade

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Thanks for a Great Retreat

We give thanks to God for a wonderful retreat at the Marie Joseph Spiritual Center in Maine last weekend, led by Pastor Steve. The sharing was deep; the storm was awesome; the ocean was inspiring; the weather on Sunday was lovely; and best of all the people were wonderful. Special thanks go to Susan LaSante for setting it up. Save the date next year: March 16-18, 2018.



FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday Morning Formation at 9:15 ADULTS

Living the Questions

Living the Questions is an open-minded alternative to studies that attempt to give participants all the answers. Each week the video presentations present conversational questions and insights from leading religious voices, all of which encourage curiosity and thinking outside of the usual lines of doctrine. Several of us worked through parts of this curriculum a few years ago and appreciated the fresh, progressive approach to the issues presented. Please join us as we consider some of the challenging questions for thoughtful Christians in the 21st century. We meet in the **Downstairs Library**.

The Passion Story

Join us as we explore the story of the Passion – what’s in the story (and what isn’t), and what it’s all about. Bring all your best questions. With Pastor Steve, in the **Downstairs Classroom**.

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## Children & Junior High School at 9:15



### **The Stations of Holy Week**

As we have done the past two years, our children and young teens will experience the events of the last week of Jesus’ life. Children will gather in their classrooms and then walk the Stations of Holy Week in Campbell Hall. Together we will share matzo of the Last Supper, pray with Jesus in the Garden, deny Jesus in the courtyard with Peter, wash our hands with Pilate, carry the cross and find Jesus’ tomb empty. We will walk the Stations twice –once with our younger children and once with our junior high group. **Parents are invited to walk with their children, but all adults are welcome to join one of the two groups.** The Christian Formation Team hopes to see you there!

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Senior High Learning and Exploration

The class meets **two** Sundays each month to respect the very busy schedules our teens keep! This Sunday, **April 9th (Palm Sunday)** we’ll continue to look at the issues that matter to us in light of our faith. Our discussion this week will focus on mental health and suicide. The United Methodist Social Principles will offer a place to begin the discussion and activities.

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## Thursday Women's Study Group - 9:30 -11:30

Madeline L'Engle's *The Irrational Season*, has given us lots of food for thought! This Thursday, **April 6<sup>th</sup>**, we will finish exploring her Lenten chapter, *Lion and Lamb*. We welcome new voices in our on-going community. This is a wonderful time to try us out! PLEASE JOIN US! Let Lynne Osborn (gilyn1961@verizon.net) know of your interest.

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## REACHING OUT

### Join the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Great Food Walk on Good Friday – April 14

The 33rd Annual Nashoba GFW ("Great Food Walk") to defeat hunger will be held on Good Friday, April 14, 2017. The money raised by this non-denominational walk benefits two important charities: 90% to Loaves & Fishes, the largest food pantry in North Central Massachusetts, and 10% to Sharing, Inc., which helps impoverished youth in the rural South. You are needed to participate—either as a walker or a sponsor. The more money raised, the more local residents in need are helped. Here's how:

**DATE:** Friday, April 14, 2017

**TIME:** Start anytime between 7:30AM-12:30PM

**DISTANCE:** 5, 10, 15 or 20 miles (course is a 5-mile loop)

**WHERE:** Harvard Common – Congregational Church of Harvard, 5 Still River Road  
Simply bring your sponsor sheet & donations/pledges on April 14<sup>th</sup>

#### **SPONSOR SHEETS:**

- Download at [www.gfwalk.org](http://www.gfwalk.org) or [loavesfishespantry.org](http://loavesfishespantry.org)
- Or pick up at your local library, post office, church (St. Matthew's), Loaves & Fishes

For more information, please email:

- Becca Day-Newsham at [newsha@aol.com](mailto:newsha@aol.com), or
- Jeanie Colony at [jecolony@charter.net](mailto:jecolony@charter.net), or
- Go to the following websites: [www.gfwalk.org](http://www.gfwalk.org) or [www.loavesfishespantry.org](http://www.loavesfishespantry.org)

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Anti-racism group forming at St. Matthew's

In a recent discussion here about racism and the Black Lives Matter sign we came to consensus that St. Matthew's is not yet ready as a congregation to engage in public resistance to racism. A small group is forming to consider what our next step might be. If you feel called to be part of this group, please let Pastor Steve know.

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# Helping Women in Zimbabwe

We have found that there is a lot of interest in reaching out to the women in Zimbabwe by sewing reusable sanitary napkins for them to use. We are planning a "sewing circle" on Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> from 1-3 PM in the education wing, which will provide an opportunity for us to gather together to engage in a fun and meaningful project.



Several of us will be bringing our machines – if you have one and want to bring it, please do. There will be a lot of tracing, measuring and cutting to be done, so plenty for each of us to do, so a machine is not necessary. Please bring scissors and a ruler or measuring tape. You might also bring a cutting mat and a rotary cutter if you have one.

Remember, if you bring your material that day, make sure it is washed and ironed (if needed). We do need soft absorbent cotton material, e.g., flannel, towels, fleece, batting, etc. There is a gray container for fabric at the back door next to the Boston Share Network bin if you would like to leave your fabric there.

Please come and enjoy the fellowship. If you like, you can bring snacks to share. If you cannot make this date and want to sew at home, please contact Sara Wagg at 978-263-7828 or [sarawagg@msn.com](mailto:sarawagg@msn.com) and I will be glad to send you the instructions.

Please sign up at Sign-Up Central or on the website to let us know how many people to plan for.

Thanks so much and we will see you there.

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## CHURCH CALENDAR

Attached to this email you will find a copy of the church calendar for the month of April.

For the most up-to-date church calendar information, please go to the website, or click on the following link: <http://www.saint-matthews.org/happenings/calendar>. Here's how to find what you need:

From the HOME page, click on QUICK LINKS, then CALENDAR. To filter the type of events shown, click on the 'DOWN ARROW' to the right of the AGENDA tab at the top of the calendar. Following are the filters:

- Classes & Small Groups
- Music Rehearsals
- Outside Organizations' Events
- Committee Meetings
- Worship
- U.S. Holidays
- Events

Choose what you would like to see, then 'unclick' all the others. You should be able to see the calendar for as far out as it has been scheduled. If you want to see the location of an event, click on the individual event. We hope this is efficient for you.