

## ST. MATTHEW'S REFORMED CHURCH

4575 Maiden Hwy., P. O. Box 739  
Maiden, NC 28650

*"A Faithful and Welcoming Congregation"*

Church Phone: 828-428-9651

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Church Website: [www.stmatthewsmaiden.org/](http://www.stmatthewsmaiden.org/)

Reverend William M. Sowers

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Cindy Shrum, Office Assistant

Faye Painter, Church Treasurer

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**Original Church Sign - Early 1970's**

**VOLUME 50 ISSUE 1**

**THE GRAPEVINE**

**JANUARY 2024**



Often pastors, Sunday school teachers, and Bible scholars tell people to read the Bible, but what does this mean? *What is the Bible, and how did we get this important book?* First of all, the Bible isn't just simply one book, but it is made up of many books or booklets that are bound together. The Bible is made up of a total of 66 books – 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The books were written over hundreds of years, and then it still took hundreds of years more to make it into the form as we know it today.

The stories in the Old Testament were passed down from parents to children in an oral tradition until they were finally written down. The first 5 books of the Bible are often called the Books of Moses because they are thought to be written by Moses. Many of the books were written and stored in the temple of

Jerusalem as it was being built during King Solomon's reign. The Canon, or the collection of the books that we call the Bible today, dates back to the Reformation. This was the time period when the books were selected that make up the Bible. I am, of course, over simplifying a process that took over a thousand years.

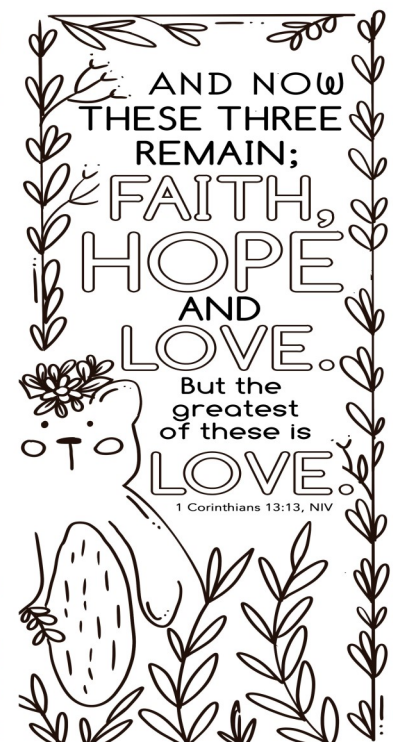
Let us not forget where the hand of God comes in all of this. The Bible is the witness to God's word, and it is in fact, *God's word*. We might notice that the phrase "Word of God" is itself biblical. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah all introduce their messages with "Hear the word of the Lord." In the book of John, we are told that the "Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Bible comes together as a collection of books, yet it is much more than that. The Bible is God's word dwelling among us.

The hands of humans – humans who were inspired by God, wrote the Bible. These human hands wrote down on paper the words and thoughts that God put into their hearts and minds. The church teaches that God called the writers of scripture to a

special duty of committing their witness to writing.

So, the next time you pick up your Bible, remember that the Bible isn't a book that somehow just haphazardly came into existence. It was a long time in the making, and not only was it inspired by God - *It Is The Word of God*.

Rev. William M. Sowers



**ST. MATTHEW'S REFORMED CHURCH  
MAIDEN, NC.**

**Consistory Meeting Minutes  
December 10, 2023**

**Consistory Members in attendance:** Charles Bumgarner, Robin Caskey, Candace Carpenter, Jean Funderburk, LaDonna Goodson, Sonya Leonard, Jane Lemmond, Lora Rice, Jan Rice, Burl Shrum, Susan Stewart, Rev. William Sowers (ex officio)

**Guest in attendance:**  
Faye Painter (Treasurer), Pat Barkley and Walter Rice (2024 Consistory Members)

Call to Order, Prayer & Devotion:  
Jan Rice

**December 10, 2023 Agenda:** Add to 'New Business' Sanctuary Rug and American Cancer Society. Motion to accept **amended Agenda** made by Jean Funderburk, seconded by Sonya Leonard. **Approved.**

**Financial Report** given by Faye Painter. Discussion held on status of CDs. Frank Snider and Jan Rice visited banks to renegotiate the terms. The **CD at Peoples Bank** was opened on December 6, 2023 in the amount of \$63,061.88 for the term of 11 months. This will mature on November 6, 2024 with the fixed rate of 5.25%. The **two CD's at Fifth-Third Bank** were cancelled and two new ones were opened on January 2, 2024. Each was opened in the amount of \$81,658.93 for 5 months at the rate of 4.88%. They will mature on June 2, 2024. Motion made to approve Financial Report made by Susan Stewart, seconded by Robin Caskey. **Approved.**

**Consistory Minutes.** Motion to approve November 2023 Consistory Minutes made by Sonya Leonard, seconded by Lora Rice. **Approved.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Pastor's Report.** 22 visits, 7 meetings. Advent actively underway and planning for Christmas. Youth Group went to lunch and had a great time. Trips to Tanglewood for the Christmas Lights were very enjoyable. **Bible Study** will be held on the book of Romans, scheduled for 2024. Looking to schedule a Spring service at the Little White Church in Blowing Rock. **Amanda Snider Trexler** transferred her membership from St. Matthew's to First Baptist Church, Rockwell, N.C. **Connie Stone** would like to join St. Matthew's. Motion made by Susan Stewart to approve **Membership for Connie Stone**, seconded by LaDonna Goodson. **Approved.** Motion to approve Pastor's Report made by Lora Rice, seconded by Jean Funderburk. **Approved.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Action Items List.** Remove 'Key Box' line item. Candace Carpenter to reach back out to the Financial Audit Company and circumvent the original contact. Property Committee to be reorganized and hold a meeting with all interested members after Church Sunday Jan 7. Helms Security has not come to the Church yet to correct issue.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**New Rug for Sanctuary.** Want to purchase a larger rug for the Sound System entrance area. Would like it to match the current rugs in the Sanctuary. Motion made to purchase made by Susan Stewart, seconded by Robin Caskey. **Approved.**

**American Cancer Society.** Letter came to St. Matthew's. No action to be taken.

**Gutters at Parsonage.** Asking Emmanuel to inspect, clean and repair the Parsonage gutters.

Motion to adjourn made by Lora Rice, seconded by Candace Carpenter. **Approved.** Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**Next Consistory Meeting:**  
Monthly Meeting: Sunday,  
January 14, 2024 at 6pm

Minutes respectively submitted by:  
Candace Carpenter, Secretary



*Our Christian  
sympathy is  
extended to Mrs.  
Vicky Parker  
and family at the death of her  
husband, Larry Edward  
on January 12, 2024.  
We extend our prayers, love, and  
support to this family.*

**“Be of One Mind,  
Live in Peace.  
And the God of Love and  
Peace will be with You.”**

2 Corinthians 13:11

**CHRISTIAN MINISTRY OF  
LINCOLN COUNTY, INC.**


You are invited to our  
46th Annual Meeting at

First Baptist Church  
201 Robin Road  
Lincolnton, NC

on Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>  
at 7:00 P.M. In case of snow our  
meeting will be moved to  
February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Everyone is invited.  
Refreshments will be provided.  
Wearing a mask is optional.

Each member church has  
2 voting delegates.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	<p><b>VOLUNTEERS FOR FEBRUARY 2024</b></p> <p>Acolytes ..... Charlotte Sowers, Annabel Barger, Meredith Lee                      Greeters ..... Chris and Candace Carpenter                      Counters ..... Bud &amp; Deanie Michael                      Nursery ..... Volunteers listed on designated Sundays                      Children’s Church..... Volunteers listed on designated Sundays                      Security/Closer..... Walter Rice                      Ushers..... Mike &amp; Susan Stewart, Bud &amp; Deanie Michael</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥ Wedding Anniversaries      ♦ Birthdays</p>	
<p><b>4 FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY</b></p> <p>9:30 A.M. Sunday School for all ages                      10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service                      11:35 A.M. Cemetery Committee Meeting                      4:00 P.M. BOCE Meeting</p> <p>NURSERY: Sonya Leonard &amp; Cindy Minter                      CHILDREN CHURCH LEADERS: Autumn Arruza</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>11 TRANSFIGURATION</b></p> <p>9:30 A.M. Sunday School for all ages                      Consistory packets prepared during the                      Sunday School hour                      10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service                      11:45 A.M. Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser                      Soup/Sandwiches - Fellowship Hall</p> <p>6:00 P.M. Consistory Meeting                      Nursery: Jan Rice &amp; Lydia DeMarmels                      Children’s Church Leaders: Kristal Shrum                      ♦ Joan Campbell</p>	<p><b>12</b> Lincoln’s Birthday</p> <p>♦ Cindy Shrum</p>	<p><b>13</b></p>
<p><b>18 FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT</b></p> <p>9:30 A.M. Sunday School for all ages                      10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service                      Guest Minister: Rev. Kelly Barefoot</p> <p>Nursery: LaDonna Goodson &amp; Cindy Shrum                      Children’s Church Leaders: Brittany Cook                      ♦ Jason Goodson</p>	<p><b>19</b> President’s Day</p> <p>♦ Marilyn McRee,                      Pat Barkley</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>10:30 A.M.                      Young at Hearts Meeting                      Lunch at Brookwood</p> <p>Newsletter Deadline</p> <p>♦ Jean-Paul La Bounty</p>
<p><b>25 SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT</b></p> <p>9:30 A.M. Sunday School for all ages                      10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service                      11:45 A.M. Youth Lunch and Meeting (11:45 A.M. -1:30 P.M.)</p> <p>Mission Trip Interest Meeting                      3:00 P.M. His Kids Fellowship Meeting                      Nursery: Lora &amp; Vada Rice                      Children’s Church Leaders: Katie Barnes</p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>6:30 P.M.                      Adult Bible Study                      (See page 3 for more info)</p>

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY																																																	
<p><b>March 2024</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>2</b> Groundhog Day</p> <p>♦ Ashley Turner Sandra McRee Aven Arruza</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>
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<p><b>7</b></p> <p>1:00 P.M. Women's Fellowship</p> <p>6:30 P.M. Choir Practice</p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p>																																																	
<p><b>14</b> Ash Wednesday Valentine's Day</p> <p>7:00 P.M. Ash Wednesday Service</p> <p>♥ M/M Max Bumgarner, Sr.</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>																																																	
<p><b>Pastor on vacation - February 15 - 21, 2024</b></p>																																																				
<p><b>21</b></p> <p>6:30 P.M. Choir Practice</p>	<p><b>22</b> Washington's Birthday</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>♦ Annabel Barger</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>																																																	
<p><b>28</b></p> <p>6:30 P.M. Choir Practice</p> <p>♦ Courtney Herman</p>	<p><b>29</b> Leap Day</p>	<p><b>BIBLE QUIZ ...</b> Use the same word below to complete all the blanks in the Scripture passage:</p> <p><i>"Dear friends, let us ____ one another, for ____ comes from God. Everyone who ____ has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not ____ does not know God, because God is ____."</i></p> <p>A. believe B. help C. love D. forgive</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Answer: (Read 1 John 4:7-8, NIV.)</p>																																																		

**Sunday School Record**

Date	Attd. 2023	Offg. 2023	Attd. 2022	Offg. 2022
12/03	43	37.00	34	45.00
12/10	46	47.00	30	40.00
12/17	51	42.00	38	55.00
12/24	48	50.00	--	--
12/31	39	53.00	--	--

Indy Hawn, Linda Hawn, Buff Hawn, Karlee Cook, Jacquelyne Barger, Wilson Sowers, Susan Stewart, Charlotte Sowers, Morgan Burgess, Sonya Leonard, Katie Painter, Roger Beard, Greg Barkley, Cindy Minter, Jerry Minter, Abby Sowers, Sammy Goodson, La Donna Goodson, Shirley McRee, Vick Lancaster, Pam Shrum, Chris Barger, Faye Painter, Walter Rice, Burl Shrum, Pat Barkley, Patsy Davis, Michael Hoffman, and Pastor Sowers.

**Church Officers for 2024**

President: Susan Stewart  
 Vice President: LaDonna Goodson  
 Secretary: Candace Carpenter

**Congratulations!**



**PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY**

Pastor's Sowers will lead a Bible Study Class beginning Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. It will continue for 12 weeks. A sign-up sheet has been posted in the hallway if interested in attending.

We will use Dr. David Jeremiah Bible Study series on the Book of Romans.

**Remarkable Treasure**

Bud Michael

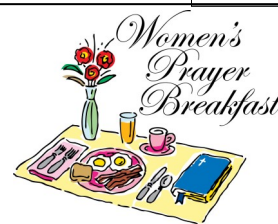
Those of us who haunt thrift stores, flea markets and the occasional yard sale often look for "that thing that catches the eye", perhaps a patterned dish, a first edition book, or a vintage tool. Collectors seek with purpose, which is to say, to add value to a "find".

Few if any of us expect to ever find that rare thing that makes the headlines. You know, that original copy of the US Constitution hidden behind a mundane picture in a wood frame or that once in a lifetime Navaho blanket worth zillions. Yet, exhilarating finds do sometimes occur right in the old backyard, so to speak.

Reverend Sowers was recently gifted two little vintage booklets by a former parishioner at Hedrick's Grove Reformed Church in Davidson County. He said something to the effect that. "My wife saw these in a local junk store and realized one had the name of your Church printed on it." Reverend Sowers was quite excited to see they were original copies of the Minutes of the North Carolina Classis dating back more than a hundred years. You might recall that in our history book, "Six Miles Up the Island Ford Road", we noted that our founding minister, Reverend John G. Fritchey, was instrumental in organizing the North Carolina Classis in 1831. Moreover, one of the booklets was the Minutes of the 1926 North Carolina Classis meeting held at St. Matthew's Reformed Church.

Reverend Sowers, delighted with the find, said something to the effect of, "By any chance are there any more of these?" "Oh yes", he responded "She saw a whole stack. And if you want them, we'll pick them up for you."

Now, thanks to a keen eye for a rare find, Rev. Sowers adds 19 historical booklets to his collection.



**Community Women's Prayer Breakfast**

**March 2, 2024**  
**Catawba Valley Baptist Church**

3390 Shepherd Rd.  
 Maiden, NC 28650

**Registration - 8:30 A.M.**  
**Breakfast - 9:00 A.M.**

All women in the church are invited to attend the 31<sup>st</sup> Community Prayer Breakfast. The program will be special singing by Janice Tutherford and Morgan Lee with speaker, Amanda Barker-Assell.

The chosen charity this year is The Corner Table Community Kitchen in Newton. Attendees are asked to bring 3-compartment plastic-to-go containers, green peas, and baked beans (would prefer large cans but any size would be appreciated). Monetary donations are also welcome.

A sign-up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board in the Sunday School hallway if you are planning to attend. Deadline for sign-up is February 7<sup>th</sup>.

We WELCOME a new member, Connie Stone to our church family. She joined by Letter of Transfer on January 21, 2024. More info in next month's issue of "The Grapevine".

**MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER**

Soup and Sandwiches will be available following worship on February 11, 2024.

HELP support our YOUTH.

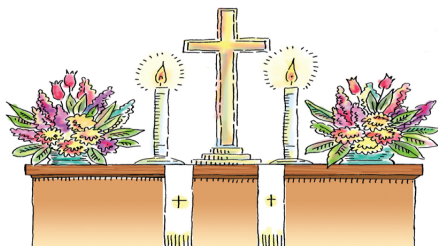




**Thanks to all Volunteers who served during 2023!**

**You helped to make our year a success at SMRC.**

Overflowing With Thanks



**Altar Flowers**

The following Sundays are available for sponsors **February 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, & 25<sup>th</sup>**. Please confirm or reserve any dates you wish to have during the year. Please contact Lealta Smith (828) 428-8327 or email: [smithlea@charter.net](mailto:smithlea@charter.net)

— Thank you —

**Christian sympathy** is extended to all members and friends who have lost a loved one in the last few weeks. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. May the Lord bless each of you and give you comfort in the coming days.

**Christian symbol**



**CROSS OF ASHES**

— On Ash Wednesday, as Lent begins, worshipers' foreheads are often marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. The ashes traditionally come from burning palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. In the Old Testament, ashes were a sign of mourning and repentance. Today, some worshipers wipe off the ashes before leaving church, to symbolize being cleansed from sin by Jesus' death; others wear the ashes the rest of the day, carrying the cross of Christ into the world. Reciting Genesis 3:19 often accompanies the placement of ashes: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return."

(Copied from Newsletter/Newsletter February 2024 issue.)

# Puzzles!

After solving the equations, write the words on the correct numbered lines below. Complete Ephesians 1:3 (NIV) to discover how God shows his great love for us.

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 14 - 7 = ___ Father    | 10 + 15 = ___ in        |
| 10 + 9 = ___ heavenly  | 10 - 5 = ___ God        |
| 9 + 9 = ___ the        | 6 - 3 = ___ to          |
| 12 + 12 = ___ blessing | 12 - 6 = ___ and        |
| 2 - 1 = ___ Praise     | 6 + 6 = ___ Christ      |
| 7 + 7 = ___ has        | 18 - 9 = ___ our        |
| 11 + 11 = ___ every    | 22 - 11 = ___ Jesus     |
| 13 + 13 = ___ Christ   | 1 + 1 = ___ be          |
| 8 + 8 = ___ us         | 7 + 6 = ___ who         |
| 10 + 10 = ___ realms   | 2 + 2 = ___ the         |
| 8 + 9 = ___ in         | 10 + 5 = ___ blessed    |
| 5 + 5 = ___ Lord       | 4 + 4 = ___ of          |
| 10 + 11 = ___ with     | 10 + 13 = ___ spiritual |

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22		
23	24	25	26		

**Ephesians 1:3, NIV**

Answer: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:3, NIV

- VISION ...** To strengthen our ministry to youth, to provide fellowship opportunities, to grow in membership, to deepen in faith, and to expand the church's outreach to the community.
- VALUES ...** Strive to love and serve God, to love one another and keep relationships healthy, and to welcome and befriend new-comers.
- MISSION ...** To worship God, to provide training and support for discipleship growth, and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and deed.