

## ST. MATTHEW'S REFORMED CHURCH

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

*"A Faithful and Welcoming Congregation"*

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Patsy Davis, Pianist † Leigan Hoffman, Choir Director

Cindy Shrum, Office Assistant

Faye Painter, Church Treasurer

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THE GRAPEVINE

FEBRUARY 2024



Last month, we talked about the Bible being the *Word of God*. Continuing on that line of thinking, this month's article is about GOD. First, if the Bible is God's Word, we need to see what it says about God. The book, *My Confirmation*, shares six statements on what the Bible says about God, and I want to share them with you.

1. God is spirit.
2. God is the Creator of all things.
3. God is good.
4. God is a loving parent.
5. God is like Jesus.
6. God is more than we can know or think.

While we cannot see God, we can see God at work within our world. We see God in the faces of our fellow humans, as well as in nature. It's hard for me to believe it, but some people don't believe in God, and I often wonder how that is possible. I see

God at church on Sundays, but I also see God at the beach. I don't know how anyone can go to John's River Valley Camp and not experience God.

We see the spirit of God in nature, and we also acknowledge that God is the creator of all things. If you read the narrative of the creation after God created the world, he said that his creations were "Good." This brings us to the fact that God is comparable to a parent except that God is the perfect version of a parent. All the goodness that we have from our earthly parents is nothing compared to the goodness that comes from God.

Often, we tend to think of God more in human terms than we should, and we shrink God down in size. In reality, God is so much more than we can even know or think. God is greater than we could possibly imagine.

One thing I left out is how God is like Jesus, but next month I will say more on that subject. I hope this helps you focus on your Lenten journey.

-Rev. William M. Sowers

### St. Matthew's Church Family

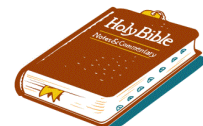
Thank you so very much for the beautiful flower basket you sent for Larry's funeral. Your love, friendship and especially your prayers are what is helping us to get through these tough days.

With all our love,  
The Larry Parker Family

### PLEASE NOTE ...

A reminder that hearing devices are available for use during programs, services, etc. held in the sanctuary. Please see a sound system worker for pick up use during the service and return device before leaving church.

Thank you!



### PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

The Bible Study Class began on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. and will continue for 12 weeks.

Dr. David Jeremiah Bible Study series on the Book of Romans is being used.

## Consistory Meeting Minutes January 14, 2024

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

### Guest in attendance:

Faye Painter (Treasurer)

### Call to Order, Prayer & Devotion:

Jan Rice

**January 14, 2024 Agenda:** Add to 'Committee Reports' Membership Report, add to 'Old Business' the Property Appraisal Miles Hamrick, add to "New Business" Board of Christian Education and Shredding of Records. Motion to accept **amended Agenda** made by Robin Caskey, seconded by Pat Barkley. **Approved.**

**Nominations for Consistory Officers.** Motion for **Susan Stewart to be 2024 Consistory President** motion made by LaDonna Goodson, seconded by Jean Funderburk. **Approved.** Motion made for **LaDonna Goodson to be 2024 Consistory Vice President** made by Candace Carpenter, seconded by Cindy Shrum. **Approved.** Motion made for **Candace Carpenter to be 2024 Consistory Secretary** made by Pat Barkley, seconded by Cindy Shrum. **Approved.**

**Financial Report** given by Faye Painter. County Water usage was higher than typical for December (\$120) due to sprinkler and County draught usage-tier fees. **January's Water Bill** is back to normal (\$53). Special General under Missions (\$340) were for the poinsettias. Motion made to approve Financial Report made by LaDonna Goodson, seconded by Wanda Snider. **Approved.**

**Consistory Minutes.** Information for the CDs was added to

minutes post-meeting. Candace Carpenter asked for all to review. Helms Security System issues still not corrected; Cindy Shrum will contact them. Candace Carpenter to get Emmanuel Watts to inspect and clean the Parsonage gutters. Motion to approve December 2023 Consistory Minutes made by Wanda Snider, seconded by Pat Barkley. **Approved.**

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Pastor's Report.** 18 visits, 4 meetings. Advent and Christmas season were wonderful, really enjoyed the Children's program. Ash Wednesday will be on February 14. Youth Group Calendar presented with events coming up over the next six-months. The 2024 lock-in will be held and our youth will be allowed to invite a friend to join. Motion to approve Pastor's Report made by Jean Funderburk, seconded by Pat Barkley. **Approved.**

**Property Committee.** A formal meeting was held on Sunday Jan 7, 2024. Chris Carpenter was selected as the Chair, Walter Rice Vice Chair, and Candace Carpenter the Secretary. GSM to be contacted to see if they are coming out for periodic inspection under the Sanctuary.

**Board of Christian Education.** Matthew Hawn and Jan Rice are the new 2024 Members. Susan Goodson was elected as the Chair of BOCE. Vacation Bible School theme and Director(s) will be needed. Request for individuals to attend meetings from other Committees to help.

**Personnel and Pastor Relations.** This team will be reviewing the current Committees and roles, responsibilities to bring back recommendations to Consistory.

**2023 Membership Stats.** Lealta

Smith shared the January thru December 2023 Membership list (gains and losses).

Motion made to approve all Committee Minutes made by Wanda Snider, seconded by Jean Funderburk. **Approved.**

## OLD BUSINESS

**Action Items List.** Candace Carpenter did reach out to the Financial Audit Company, left two voicemails and 1 email, with no response. Candace Carpenter will send one final email with requests for knowledge of how our financial information is being stored and how it will be removed if they are not interested in working with us. An overview of the task list line items was reviewed for the new Consistory Members. Pictorial Directory task force to be started.

**Roofing Evaluation.** Need to have a company come out to look at our shingles/roof to let us know the overall condition. Charles Bumgarner will contact Ballard Roofing. Pastor Sowers to ask Lealta if she can find records of when the current shingles were put on and if there's any paperwork on the installation and materials.

## NEW BUSINESS

**New Bank Signatures.** A letter will need to be prepared to remove, add, and keep respective names for the 2024 Officers to be able to sign for each banks' checks/accounts (Fifth Thirds and Peoples). Jane Lemmond to serve as the fourth signature on the accounts.

**Landscaping.** Kyle with Integrity would like to improve our backyard grass for approximately \$300. Motion made to approve made by Robin Caskey, seconded by Candace Carpenter. **Approved.**

## Parsonage Flooding.

Continued on page 3

Consistory Minutes-Cont'd from pg. 1

The heavy storm brought bad flooding to the Parsonage basement. Walter Rice was able to help clean up and dry out the basement. Two appointments are scheduled with Hydro-Help and Dry-Pro for January to uncover the issues and recommendations on corrective action.

**Shredding of Financial Records.**

There are many boxes of financial records stored all over the Church. Motion made to shred anything older than 2010 made by LaDonna Goodson, seconded by Wanda Snider. Approved. Faye Painter to contact Shred-It.

Motion to adjourn made by Jean Funderburk, seconded by LaDonna Goodson. Approved. Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**Next Consistory Meeting:**

Monthly Meeting: Sunday, February 11, 2024 at 6pm

Minutes respectively submitted by Candace Carpenter, Secretary



All four Sundays in the month of March are available for Flower Sponsors.

Please confirm or reserve any dates you wish to have during the year by contacting Lealta Smith (828) 428-8327 or email: smithlea@charter.net.

— Thank you —

**ATTENTION!!! NEWS for high school seniors, college or graduate students** who meets eligibility requirements. Bethel United Church of Christ, Hickory, NC will grant the **Whitener Scholarship** of a minimum \$1,000.00 for the academic year 2024-2025 to an active UCC church member in Catawba County. Guidelines and forms are available in the church office and will need to be completed and returned by April 30, 2024 to the address provided on the form.

**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.

The Community Prayer Breakfast program will be special singing by Janice Tutherow 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.

The deadline for sign-up was February 7<sup>th</sup>.



Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Children mark your calendar! A fun time is coming up soon with hunting Easter eggs on the church lawn, fellowship with friends, fun activities, story-time, concluding with a hot dog lunch. Note to members... Donations of small individually wrapped candy that will fit in Easter eggs and desserts for the meal will be helpful and appreciated.

**Sunday School Record**

Date	Attd. 2024	Offg. 2024	Attd. 2023	Offg. 2023
1/07	38	43.00	40	64.26
1/14	46	43.00	36	59.00
1/21	46	45.00	35	44.00
1/28	44	47.13	37	54.25

Levi Barnes, Linda Hawn, Buff Hawn, Jacquelyn Barger, Wells Carpenter, Wilson Sowers, Cameron Goodson, Susan Stewart, Charlotte Sowers, Annabel Barger, Katie Painter, Roger Beard, Greg Barkley, Pam Shrum, Joan Campbell, LaDonna Goodson, Abby Sowers, Terrell Bumgarner, Ruth Haynes, Shirley McRee, Vick Lancaster, Chris Barger, Faye Painter, Burl Shrum, Jean Funderburk, Pastor Sowers, Pat Barley, Patsy Davis, and Michael Davis.



We extend a warm welcome Ms. Connie Stone, new member to our Church family. Connie is an accountant and works in Charlotte.

She grew up in Maiden with 3 brothers and 1 sister. She has 2 children, Jesse and Emma and 2 step-children, Lynn and TJ. She lives in Maiden at 91 PJ McRee Road with her 91 year old father.



**SUNDAY**

**MONDAY**

**TUESDAY**



◆ Birthdays  
 ▼ Wedding Anniversaries

**3 THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT**

9:30 A.M. Sunday School for all ages  
 10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service  
 4:00 P.M. BOCE Meeting  
 NURSERY: Abby Sowers & Pat Barkley  
 CHILDREN CHURCH LEADERS: Autumn Arruza  
 ◆ Jean Funderburk, Ashley Shrum, Joseph Bost

**4**

**5**

6:30 P.M.  
 Bible Study

◆ Joseph Bost

**10 FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**  
**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS**



9:30 A.M. Sunday School for all ages  
 10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service  
 One Great Hour of Sharing Offering  
 11:45 A.M. Youth Lunch & Meeting ( 11:45 A.M. - 1:30 p.m.)  
 6:00 P.M. Consistory Meeting  
 NURSERY: Jacquelyne Barger & Susan Stewart  
 CHILDREN CHURCH LEADERS: Kristal Shrum

**11**

**12**

6:30 P.M.  
 Bible Study

◆ Meredith Lee

**17 FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**  
**ST. PATRICK'S DAY**



9:30 A.M. Sunday School for all ages  
 10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service  
 NURSERY: Annette Wray & Katie Barnes  
 CHILDREN CHURCH LEADERS: Brittany Cook

**18**

**19 SPRING BEGINS**

10:30 A.M.  
 Young at Hearts

6:30 P.M.  
 Bible Study

**24 PALM SUNDAY**



9:30 A.M. Sunday School for all ages  
 10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service  
 3:00 p.m. His Kids Youth Meeting  
 NURSERY: Brittany Minter and Aubree McCrary  
 CHILDREN CHURCH LEADERS: Katie Barnes

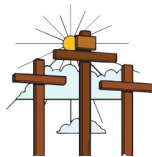
**25**

**26**

6:30 P.M.  
 Bible Study

◆ Greg Barkley

**31 EASTER SUNDAY**



6:30 A.M. Sunrise Service-Arbor  
 weather permitting  
 Breakfast following service  
 9:30 A.M. No Sunday School for all ages  
 10:30 A.M. Morning Worship Service  
 Sacrament of Holy Communion  
 No NURSERY  
 No CHILDREN CHURCH

**VOLUNTEERS FOR MARCH 2024**

Acolytes..... Charlotte Sowers, Annabel Barger, Meredith Lee  
 Greeter ..... LaDonna Goodson  
 Counters ..... Hilda Shrum & Judy Hooper  
 Nursery ..... Volunteers listed on designated Sundays  
 Children's Church..... Volunteers listed on designated Sundays  
 Security/Closer ..... James Cook  
 Ushers..... Charles Bumgarner, Terrell Bumgarner,  
 Sam & LaDonna Goodson

<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>
		<b>1</b> WORLD DAY OF PRAYER	<b>2</b> 8:30 A.M. Community Prayer Breakfast at Catawba Valley Baptist Church 3390 Shepherd Road Maiden, NC
<b>6</b> 1:00 P.M. Women's Fellowship  6:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M. Choir Practice ♥ M/M Roger Beard	<b>7</b>  ♦ Peyton McRee	<b>8</b>  4:00 - 8:00 P.M. Fellowship Hall reserved for Set-up for a birthday party.  ♦ Eleanor Daniels Vick Lancaster	<b>9</b>  4:00 - 8:00 P.M. Fellowship Hall reserved  ♦ Shirley McRee
<b>13</b>    6:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M. Choir Practice	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>    ♦ Keith Goodson Scarlett Hartzoge	<b>16</b>    ♦ Johnnie Stiles
<b>20</b>  6:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M. Choir Practice  ♦ Katie Barnes	<b>21</b>  4:00 P.M. Personnel Committee	<b>22</b>    ♦ Jacquelyne Barger Sharon Smith	<b>23</b>
<b>27</b>    ♥ M/M Chris Lee	<b>28 MAUNDY THURSDAY</b>  6:00 P.M. Choir Practice  7:00 P.M. Maundy Thursday Service/Communion	<b>29 GOOD FRIDAY</b>	<b>30 HOLY SATURDAY</b>  10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. Easter Egg Hunt and Hot Dog Lunch (Please help provide Cookies/Cupcakes.)

7:00 P.M. Youth Lock-in until  
9:00 A.M. on Saturday.

**COMMUNION VOLUNTEERS**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY - MARCH 28, 2024**

Preparers: Lealta Smith, Libby Herman  
Servers: Libby Herman, Marilyn McRee, Wanda Snider, Faye Painter  
Clean-up: Eleanor Daniels, Kaye Crouse

**EASTER SERVICE - MARCH 31, 2024**

Preparers: Hilda Shrum, Libby Herman  
Servers: Buddy Funderburk, Lora Rice, Marilyn McRee, Wanda Snider  
Clean-up: Shirley McRee, Kaye Crouse, Eleanor Daniels

**April 2024**

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				



**LINC Ministry**  
Lent Project



Happy February Friends,

We will be having a Food Drive (canned and non-perishable food items) for In My Father's House Community Support Service Network. This is the ministry by the Gift & Thrift Store.

They provide meals on Saturdays when the Corner Table is closed, distribute boxes of food to those in need, and hold outreach food events where they take boxes of food out into neighborhoods throughout the area.

In 2022 they served over 13,200 neighbors in Newton, Conover, Lincolnton, Hickory, Gastonia & Hudson with boxes of food while providing over 11,752 Hot Meals.

Thank you for your continued support and participation.  
Ryan Calderone

A box has been provided in the vestibule to collect the food for this special Project.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

HIS Kids Refreshment Volunteers are needed. If you can help provide Refreshments for one or more of their meeting times, please sign-up on the form provided outside the Church Office door.

**THANK YOU!**



One Great Hour of Sharing® is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten offering provides crucial support to the disaster, refugee, and development ministries within Love of Neighbor ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. Your gifts toward this offering are welcome and needed at this time.

**Funding the Cemetery**  
**Bud Michael**

Our cemetery has been described more than a few times as one of the nicest and best kept anywhere around. (I'm happy to share that since I'm on the Cemetery Committee!). Sometimes that compliment comes with a small but significant donation.

That small but important donation and all the others we get fund the cemetery. That's because the Cemetery Fund is dependent entirely on gifts and the interest income from donations. A few decades ago, a significant bequeathment was given to the Church "for the maintenance and care of the cemetery." That and a few other gifts were invested in term certificates (CDs) at a time when banks were offering 8% or more. At that rate, savings grow rapidly. Within a few years the Cemetery Fund doubled and tripled thanks to the power of compound interest.

Today, the Cemetery Fund contributes about half the annual cost of mowing our Church property. Other cemetery costs are comparatively modest. We purchase stone cleaning materials from time to time as well as pay for concrete and occasional equipment rental. Cemetery Committee members supply most of the tools and equipment (tractors, loaders, trailers, cement mixers, wheelbarrows and hand tools) to perform projects on scheduled workdays. The Cemetery Fund sometimes pays for footstones for unmarked graves when surviving family members can't be located or are unable to cover that cost.

With the cost of mowing and maintenance increasing every year, each and every gift no matter how small to the Cemetery Fund is deeply appreciated.

**COLOR ME!**



**WORD FIND!**

H	Z	F	N	C	O	Q	N	A	Y	REJOICE
E	P	R	O	Z	J	Q	E	B	I	HEART
A	R	J	E	L	G	R	D	K	H	LOVE
R	T	E	C	J	L	V	L	I	Y	FOLLOWS
T	Y	S	G	O	O	N	N	H	ANGEL	
A	B	U	J	E	L	I	W	D	O	HOPE
H	N	S	O	E	N	O	C	S	P	GENTLE
J	Q	G	Y	Q	T	T	V	E	E	JESUS
W	U	R	E	F	F	S	L	E	S	KIND
T	W	X	H	L	L	N	A	E	A	JOY

- 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.