



# *The Valley Echo*

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

April 2018



## **Contact Information**

### **Pastor**

**Debra Wilcox**  
**301-471-3200**

### **Council**

**President:** Donna Geiman  
**Vice-Pres:** Sharon Chaman  
**Secretary:** Betty Cree  
**Treasurer:** Carolyn Smith

### **Elders**

Angie Bowersox  
Donna Geiman  
Jean Means  
Genny Rohrbach  
Robert Smith

### **Ministry Team Leaders**

**Finance:** Carolyn Smith  
**Christian Ed:**  
**Outreach:** Sharon Chapman  
**Pastor/Staff:**  
**Property:**  
**Worship:** Betty Cree

### **Committees/Groups**

**ABC Singles:**  
Pat Desautels

**Book Club:**  
Vicki Huber-Geiman

**Fall Fest:**  
Donna Geiman

**Wellness:**  
Donna Geiman

## **Pastor's Column**

See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

*-Isaiah 43:19*

These are probably familiar words of hope for all of us. Especially in these recent days, when the spring we long for has been covered over in so much old winter, these words reach my soul. Here is a little more of the chapter, taken from The Message Bible:

This is what GOD says,  
the God who builds a road right through the ocean,  
who carves a path through pounding waves,  
The God who summons horses and chariots and armies—  
they lie down and then can't get up;  
they're snuffed out like so many candles:  
"Forget about what's happened;  
don't keep going over old history.  
Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new.  
It's bursting out! Don't you see it?  
There it is!

As I write this, it's hard to see anything but snow. I know there are promising spring crocuses and daffodils under all that white, because I saw them myself before they disappeared under the snow. I know

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*The Valley Echo* newsletter is published monthly.

**Deadline is 2 p.m. the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.**

Articles may be emailed to: [office@saintmatthewsucc.org](mailto:office@saintmatthewsucc.org) or placed in the church office "Inbox". Information received after the deadline may not be included. Submissions are subject to editing for space and content. Articles taken from publications (newspapers,

### **Pastor's Column (cont.)**

the ground was warming up—I know it was actually warm enough to not need a coat—even days before the snow began! And I sincerely hope that by the time we read this, we are surrounded once again by all the promises of springtime.

But I like the reminder, in this message from Isaiah, of God's might and power. God can make a walking path through the ocean! God can destroy an army! I look out my window and see that God can be present in a seemingly endless snowfall on the first day of spring.

Is this a new thing? It feels like it! We had been debating whether we would ever have such a significant snow fall again in this part of the world. Surprise! We did.

Sometimes I think everything God does is either very, very old; or very, very new. And either way can be a surprise. When we are full of sorrow, in pain, and wondering how life can be so bad... surprise: you suddenly recognize God's healing presence, as someone who loves you shows up with flowers and hugs. As cards of caring arrive, or phone calls, or a nurse who does her work with compassion. Good old God, always by your side—especially when you have forgotten that that would be true.

And then, remember March 19, when the world was so surely aimed for spring. A new thing. Crocuses, grape hyacinths, daffodils were poking their way proudly through the earth; children were running and playing and throwing off their coats; buds were plainly visible on the lilacs and forsythia... surprise: snow! Lots of snow. Was that a new thing, or just a reminder of God's power all around us?

Maybe it's more like the words of a song I keep thinking about: "Everything old is new again." Maybe the new things God does are actually the things that God has always done and will always DO; maybe they are new because of the way we will perceive them. Every time it snows endlessly immediately after a day of spring-type warmth and sunshine, we are awed by the surprise of it.

Every time we think all hope is lost, and then a sudden window of opportunity appears before us, we are humbled by the miracle of it.

Every time we forget that God is with us, always, we turn around and there God is, present all along, and waiting patiently for us to see it.

Maybe the "newness" lies in our reaction, our surprise, that a presence so powerful and so mysterious as God could always be so available to each and every one of us—the unrepentant, the unforgiving, the forgetful. Is this a message for us? What if our response to all this constancy is gratitude, and joy, and an overwhelming desire to turn around and do likewise? What if the "new thing" that follows happens within each one of us, as we turn around and give easily the power and the love and the compassion that is bestowed on us constantly?

That, my friends, would be a bigger and better thing than snowstorms in springtime. There is something new, and God tells us, "See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland."

Those words are God's invitation to us all. The rivers are so we will not go thirsty. And the pathway is for us to follow, as we all do this new thing together.



## NEW MISSION STATEMENT FOR ST. MATTHEW'S UCC

*"St. Matthew's UCC is a center of faith in a caring community. Reflecting the love of God within us, we seek to respond compassionately to the needs of our church, our community, and the world"*

Between now and April 29<sup>th</sup>, the Council is asking our membership to prayerfully consider this proposed new Mission Statement. It will be posted in the vestibule outside the sanctuary along with "post-it notes" on which you are invited to place your suggestions for changes. **The Statement, in its final form, will then be offered to the congregation for adoption during worship on April 29<sup>th</sup>.**



### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR:**

**April 1** – Easter Sunday Services: Sunrise – 7:00 am, Regular – 10:45 am

**May 5** - Pastor Debra Graduates from Lancaster Theological Seminary

**May 13** - Mother's Day

**May 20** - Pentecost Sunday- don't forget to wear your red!

**May 27** - This is a special Memorial Day celebration. As we will celebrate the documented 100<sup>th</sup> time the community has conducted this service. Service starts at 2pm, walkers leave the church to walk up to the cemetery at 1:45.

Many folks have been asking, what is the date for the CROP Walk that we normally participate with in New Windsor. After several calls, we have discovered that they have chosen to move the walk to the fall. As soon as we get a date, we will share it with you. We can all build our stamina until fall for that 5 mile stroll!



## **Prayer Flags**

As the worship ministry team prepares for our fifth Sunday in April, we wanted to give folks a head start. One of the activities we will be doing is making prayer flags. Prayer flags express prayer concerns that we have, it may be words or symbols. The flags are hung outside for the wind to carry our prayers via the wind to get them answered.

The Tibetan monks have made these prayer flags for years. The colors used in them have special meaning. White is symbolic for the air, red for fire, green for water, yellow for earth and blue for the wind and sky. The prayer flags are thought to emit positive spiritual vibrations. Their messages carried by the wind are silent prayers. They may hang horizontally or vertically. It is disrespectful for the flags to touch the ground.

As the colors fade it is symbolic that the prayers have been carried by the breezes. The prayer flags promote peace, compassion, strength and wisdom. They are a benefit to all as they spread goodwill to all who see them.

Those who choose to make a prayer flag are only limited by your imagination. Take a few moments to think about what you would like to put on your flag, how you might design it. We will have the flags constructed, you will just need to decorate them.



### **A Garden of Love**

You may notice some work being done on the side garden at the church. The area is being reinvented, we needed a place to prayerfully place the left over elements from communion. We are in the process of designing this area. Any suggestions are greatly accepted. See Donna Geiman, 410-848-0010 or [donna.a.geiman@gmail.com](mailto:donna.a.geiman@gmail.com)



## “LITTLE FREE LIBRARY” PROJECT

St. Matthew’s is taking up the challenge this year to respond to the UCC’s campaign “3 Great Love—Love of Neighbors, Love of Children, and Love of Creation”.

Our Little Free Library project is one way we can express our love for our neighbors in Pleasant Valley.



The first “Little Free Library” was built in 2009 and since that time, 25,000 Little Free Libraries have sprung up across all 50 US states and in many foreign countries. Little Free Library has been called a global literacy movement and a revolution in neighborhood conversation. Everyone in the community is invited to stop and browse the books, take one home, or bring one to share. When people pause to flip through the books, they are just as likely to strike up a conversation with their neighbor or make a new friend. Books are placed in the hands of those who may have no other access to them. Children visiting Little Free Libraries get excited about reading and return day after day to see what new book may have been added. Research has shown that having books at home significantly increases a child’s level of education. Folks in the neighborhood get to learn more about each other’s likes and interests by the topics of the books that show up in the library over time. A Little Free Library just down the street encourages a walk to the “library”, offering a chance to exercise and breathe fresh air. Once our “Library” is on the “map”, folks who spend their free time going from one Little Free Library to the other may venture into Pleasant Valley, perhaps for the first time.

We already have a fair supply of books for our Library but we need the library box! A basic box is 2’ x 2’ with a door containing a plexiglas window. The box needs to be waterproof. Other than that, creativity can run wild—there is no limit to what our Library can be. Plans to build a basic box are available in the book “The Little Free Library Book – Take a Book, Return a Book” which is available to browse—just ask someone on the Outreach Committee. Basic plans and building tips are also available at [www.littlefreelibrary.org](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org). *If you are interested in building the box, please let us know.* Thoughts are that once the box is built, the youth may wish to “personalize” it. We would like it to be installed and ready for “Opening Day” by mid-June.

IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA for the construction (size and shape) of our Library or for how to “customize” it, i.e., should it look like a school house or a church, should it be painted red and yellow, or green and blue, etc., should it include colorful designs? Should it have one shelf or two? Should there be a place to include the exchange of vegetable and flower seeds? Give your thoughts and suggestions to anyone on the Outreach Team (Donna, Jean, Kettie, Sharon, Timna) by the end of April, if possible. We would like to begin construction shortly after that!! And, by the way, be sure to thank Phyllis for this fantastic idea – a way for us to build up the Pleasant Valley community and to grow literacy as well.

CHECK OUT “Little Free Library” at [facebook.com/LittleFreeLibrary](https://facebook.com/LittleFreeLibrary) and [pinterest.com/littlefreelibrary](https://pinterest.com/littlefreelibrary)

# Kid's Korner

## Easter Sunrise Surprise

He is not here; he has risen! Luke 24:6a (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



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
B	M	W	Q	O	I	U	A	D	Z	S	K	R	X	G	C	Y	E	H	J	V	L	P	F	T	N

- 22-6-21-6-26-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3-5-2-18-26 \_\_\_\_\_
- 25-5-2-1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13-8-6-11-18-9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11-25-5-26-18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16-13-7-16-6-24-6-18-9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8-3-8-17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13-5-22-22-18-9 \_\_\_\_\_

women tomb	stone rolled	away living	crucified raised
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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> <b>Easter Sunday</b> A – Naomi Smith L – Mike Smith G – Jean Means U – Donna Geiman, Timna Shaw O – Lydia Bandy  <b>Lynn Walter</b>	2	3	4  <b>Richard Smith</b>	5	6	7  <b>Emily Barnette</b>
<b>8</b> A – Elena Geiman L – Susie Gist G – Pat Desautels U – Mike Smith, Carolyn Smith O – Lydia Bandy  <b>Jolene Wagner</b>	9	10	11  <b>Allison Wagner</b>	12  <b>Dorothy Myers</b>	13	14  <b>Carol Fogle</b>
<b>15</b> A – Nichole Green L – Sharon Chapman G – Terri Smith U – Bob Smith, Susie Gist O – Deanna Davis  <b>Nadine Lee</b>	16  <b>Tim Gist</b>	17	18  <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	19	20	21
<b>22</b> A - Elsie McKenzie L – Timna Shaw G – Dan Smith U – Timna Shaw, Genny Rohrback O – Deanna Davis  <b>Sam Bankert</b>	23	24	25  <b>Timna Shaw</b>	26	27	28  <b>Penny Gist</b>
<b>29</b> A – Naomi Smith L – Lynn Walter G – Carolyn Smith U – Sharon Chapman, Mike Smith O – Deanna Davis	30					



## **GO GREEN**

Help save resources by joining St. Matthew's email list, you'll be notified monthly when the newsletter has been posted to our website, and a paper copy will no longer be printed and mailed to your household.

To join, please send an email to [office@saintmatthewsucc.org](mailto:office@saintmatthewsucc.org) requesting the electronic newsletter or complete the form below and place in the offering plate.

Attention: Church Office

My family wishes to receive the newsletter electronically and not have a paper copy.

Family Name:

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Email Address:

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Please check if you would also like to receive the weekly announcements electronically. \_\_\_\_\_



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*Purpose: To echo and reflect the love of God in the life of the Christian Community as a ministry of the church, and to serve our members.*

**St. Matthew's United Church of Christ**  
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