

The ParishScope

March
2021



St. Matthew's
United Methodist Church



Stewardship Sunday March 14th

Stewardship Sunday is March 14th. The Stewardship Campaign provides funds for the everyday operations of St. Matthew's:

- Equipment and lighting for our online worship service
- For a Pastor to lead our church, preach and provide pastoral care
- For an Office Manager to publish the *ParishScope* among the many other duties she handles
- For a Music Director to enhance our worship experience
- For a Custodian who helps keep the campus clean and neat
- For St. Matthew's to engage in education and mission work worldwide

Many times we are faced with tasks that are difficult or take us out of our comfort zones. We can ignore the task and things may turn out OK. But, many times we perform these uncomfortable tasks because we know it's the right thing to do. This year the finance committee is asking you to get comfortable being uncomfortable. I would ask you to prayerfully consider your giving and if possible increasing your giving this year. Remember, Stewardship Sunday is March 14th.

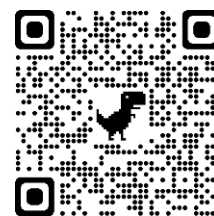
Yours in Christ,
Bob Hernandez
Finance Committee Chair

How to Make Your 2021 Pledge . . .

The easiest way is to go to our website <https://www.stmattsumc.com> and click on the “Pledge Drive.” It takes you right to the link where you can fill out your Pledge Card online.

OR . . Use this QR code at the right. It takes you directly to the link where you can fill out your Pledge Card online.

You can also return your Pledge Card by mail or drop it in the box on the church door. Both the box on the door and the mailbox are checked daily.



Preschool Happenings

The Preschool Advisory Board is thrilled to announce great things are happening. Since we know you are not at church to see we want to let you know things are moving forward!

If you are driving by, please take a moment to swing in and see how great the Playground area looks. (Or see Dick

Cline’s article elsewhere in the *ParishScope*.) For some months the Preschool play area has been closed for safety code reasons. Over the past couple of weeks contractors have been digging, disassembling, dis-installing, leveling, grading, pouring, reassembling, reinstalling, and resolving these issues. Now the playground looks better than new. We want to thank everyone who was involved in this effort, Linda Hall, Bob Hernandez and Pastor Richard. Special shout outs to Marilyn McMullin and Dick Cline, for dealing with all the county, state, licensing and insurance matters needed to make this happen.

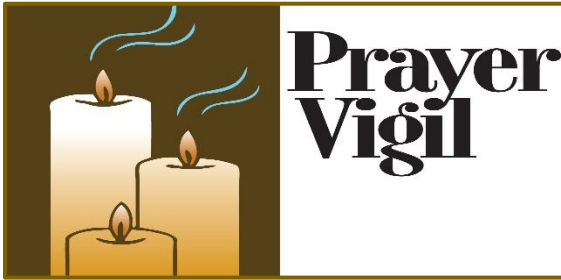
In the midst of all this, and having been closed for COVID, the Preschool Advisory Board wrestled with what the future held. Was this future likely to include viable opportunities to reopen St. Matthew’s United Methodist Preschool as we wanted it to be: a thriving, busy and successful mission of the church? Sadly, over time, we adjusted to the hard reality that to restart our Preschool from scratch (which is what reopening after this closure would require) is not our future.

But, as we’ve been told so many times, when God closes a door, a window opens. We were introduced to Tina Rike, the founder and director of Blessings Preschool in Norwalk. For many years Tina has run a fully licensed school in her home setting. For some time she has been looking to expand and open a second school, preferably on a church site. Voila! We met with Tina and her daughter/business partner Carissa. We all knew immediately that this was an opportunity for our St. Matthew’s facility.

At the Charge Conference held February 25, 2021 the church members approved a Resolution to Enter into Lease with Blessings Preschool. The Lease is being reviewed for approval by the East District, and soon will be signed. Blessings Preschool hopes it can begin operations at St. Matthew’s on April First and to be ready to have children start coming by June First.

Please pray for this endeavor as we move forward into a new era.

Executive Commmittee, Preschool Advisory Board: Linda Hall, Bob Hernandez, Carol Rogers
Marilyn McMullin, David Crain,
Patty Graves, Pastor Richard Bentley



Good Friday Prayer Vigil, April 2nd

There will be a Good Friday Prayer Vigil from 12 noon to 2:00 pm on April 2nd. People are invited to pray at home for 10-15 minutes or longer anytime between 12 noon and 2 pm. (The Sanctuary will *not* be used.)

People taking part in the Prayer Vigil can pray in a variety of ways including:

- focusing on particular prayer concerns in their hearts
- praying for our world and its people as we live through the Corona Virus pandemic
- giving thanks for God's work in our world
- lifting up people who are included on the church's regular weekly prayer list
- requesting God's guidance for our church, our nation, our world
- using a hymn or written prayer to steer one's prayer time
- just sitting quietly in God's presence

Use the resources you have at home. This may include a hymnal, *Upper Rooms*, favorite written prayers, reading scripture passages, Some may wish to use a newspaper or other news source to guide you as you pray for our community and the world.

In addition, each week during the Sunday worship services in Lent, people are being invited to pray silently focusing on certain areas related to healing and wholeness. If a prayer focus speaks to you, you might want to wish to write it down and use it as part of your prayer vigil. So far, some of these areas have included:

- those who have lost family or friends in the pandemic
- those who are still suffering the consequences of COVID-19 or other illnesses.
- medical staff – doctors, nurses, others – all around the world who have shown amazing strength and stamina
- those who have lost jobs or feel helpless to care for their families.
- those whose businesses have gone under, or are on the edge between survival or closure
- all who are working towards solutions and/or giving generously to alleviate suffering
- those with mental or emotional difficulties, especially during this last year of isolation and fear.
- those who find themselves without someone to talk, or a place to steady their hearts and minds.
- all who open their hearts to others or offer healing in our community.
- others whom we name in our hearts

**Good Friday Service,
7:30 pm Friday, April 2, on Facebook**



St. Matthew's is having a Good Friday Service at 7:30 pm on Friday, April 2nd online on Facebook. The service is built around a series of dramatic readings of the passion story using Mark's gospel as a guide. During the service, candles will be extinguished as the sanctuary is gradually darkened. The congregation will help by singing hymns from time to time which link with the readings. There will also be pictures to enhance the readings.

As with all online services at St. Matthew's, you can connect with the service as its happening at 7:30 pm on Good Friday at <https://www.facebook.com/Stmatts1/videos> Or you can join with the service at a later time by either going to either the church's Facebook page, or the church's webpage at <https://www.stmattsumc.com> and clicking on "Recent Services."



The Board of Trustees Reports . . .

Your Trustees have been working on your behalf, making sure things are going smoothly at church, even through the pandemic. We welcome our newest Trustee, Glenn Hayes. He brings a lot of basic knowledge to the Trustees.

Due to lack of use due to COVID, the Trustees voted to give up St. Matthew's Preschool License. The Charge Conference decided to lease out those preschool classrooms to enable them to be put to use. Blessed Preschool is trying to get the premises ready to open as they apply for their own license. Dick Cline has been working with the contractor to get the playground ready for use. Marilyn McMullin has been instrumental, along with Patty Graves expertise, in getting a new lease ready to be signed.

Huber Bongolan has been giving the Boy Scouts Community Service Projects, to clean up our campus, trimming bushes and fig trees, and clearing out the overgrown brush.

Marilyn has also been working to have the parsonage pin-hole leak in the roof repaired, along with toilet repairs.

Mike Gallagher came to her rescue when Office Manager Louise Green reported a heater problem in the office.

There has been some discussion of on-site church, and it will need a lot of safety precautions put on all persons to have that happen.

Meanwhile, kudos to Elaine Ono, who has kept the power of music in our midst, procuring soloists to put joy and rhythm into the Sunday morning worship, as well as, the monthly concerts. Methodists LOVE our music!

As your monetary donations continue to come in, St, Matthew's is able to continue to provide streaming Sunday worship, along with the wonderful concerts.

May God Bless you all! LaVerne Shaffer, Trustees Secretary

Transitioning Back Into “In Person” Worship



This is just a quick note to let you know how the planning is going to transition back to in person worship in our church building over the next several months. It depends upon (among other things) vaccine progress. Get those shots!

And just to be clear, St. Matthew’s will continue offering our service online on Facebook for the foreseeable future. Even when we are back in the

sanctuary, we plan to continue offering the online Facebook option. This has proven to be an unexpectedly significant blessing for many people.

Where to start? St. Matthew’s recognizes that we need a “dry run”, a rehearsal sort of effort outdoors. We are starting with outdoors since meeting outdoors is safer than indoors. We don’t want to push that right up against a Sunday service, so the rehearsal effort will take place on Saturday, March 20, at 9 am. This service will be similar to the Sunday service. It will even feature the same message from the Pastor that we will use in the Sunday Facebook service. We will have more details in the weekly announcements e-mailed each Friday. But for now, if you wish to attend think in terms of:

- bringing your own chair, although chairs will be provided for those who cannot
- checking in at our check-in station, where we will note your presence and check your temperature with a laser thermometer.
- if the day is sunny, you might want an umbrella, but this is up to you
- using properly spaced markings on the lawn to place your chair as an usher directs you.

We also have a memorial service for Wes Ojala coming up the very next Saturday, March 27.

These two efforts will help in developing the logistics & procedures for conducting outdoor services.

Based on what we learn at the services on March 20 and 27, St. Matthew’s intends on holding a dual service on Easter (April 4). The present plan is to hold an outdoor service at 9:00 am and the online Facebook service at 11:00 am. Then we will take at least a week to absorb the lessons learned on Easter. Depending upon how Easter goes, the present thought is to begin holding dual services in mid-April. Likely these services will be at 9:00 am outdoors and 11:00 am Facebook. But, this is something we need to try on Easter to confirm it will really work. As we learn from experience, this will probably keep evolving.

Between now and when in person worship resumes in the sanctuary, we will work out the logistics of where to locate the tech crew in the sanctuary for in person sanctuary-based services. This way, we can both worship in person and continue offering the Facebook option. We also need to get the conference’s approval of the indoor worship plan. The goal is to have all the necessary details worked out so that we are ready to go as things get safer, we can resume in person services in the Sanctuary. Right now this looks like sometime this summer, hopefully in June or July.

It will be helpful to know what people in the church family are thinking about these options. So the week of March 8, surveys will be sent out to the church family by both regular mail and e-mail. Everyone will be asked to give feedback on whether you may plan to attend the outdoor service on March 20 and how you plan to come to Easter – outdoors, online or both. This is not a “hard and fast”, or “cast in concrete” commitment. More generally, the survey will ask your thoughts on coming in person and/or online going forward. This will provide important clues for what to expect which may impact planning. Thank you in advance for providing this input and help through the survey.

– *Taskforce on Resuming In Person Worship*



Preschool Playground News

WE'RE ALMOST THERE! Our preschool playground structure has undergone a major transformation over the past few weeks. This has been a major undertaking that has included complete disassembly of the structure, preparing an entirely new playground "use zone" surface, and putting it all back together in a slightly different position. All of this together with the correction of a few other safety issues has been done to bring the structure fully into compliance with Federal guidelines for playground safety. With a few finishing touches we will soon be able to say "bring on the kids."

Dick Cline





Thank You for Your Generous Support for UMCOR

Thank you for your generous outpouring of love on UMCOR Sunday. \$2,107 in UMCOR Sunday gifts have already been counted as the *ParishScope* goes to press. But, it is possible that additional gifts are on their way.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief, UMCOR, acts as the hands and feet of Christ's church, moving towards the most vulnerable in times of need. People's gifts on UMCOR Sunday are used to cover UMCOR's operating expenses. So during the rest of the year, whenever we take up a special offering to help disaster victims through UMCOR, the entire special offering goes to help the people in need.

There is still time to make an UMCOR Sunday gift. Mark a check or envelop "UMCOR Sunday" and mail it or bring it to the church. Or, give online using the church's website.

Outreach News from the East San Gabriel Valley Coalition for the Homeless

The Emergency Assistance Center is looking for a new office with storage space so we can better serve our clients. We've been at our present location for some time, but feel we must expand to do a better job for our clients.



With the pandemic and health issues, our space is too small for our counselors and clients to safely meet well together. Today's office equipment also takes space. We, the Center, own our own refrigerator and small freezer, both of which are barely accessible. When donations arrive, we have trouble storing them until we can process and distribute them to our clients. Regulations oblige us to account for all distributions and gifts.

Our "Bridge" Family is doing very well and getting finances in order to have some savings towards the rental of their own place. It is brutal how "they" take advantage of persons in need of money to get by. The interest on a loan is often more than the loan!

Thank you for your support.

Marilyn Matthews

Thank You Notes

Dear Louise,

The Worship Committee would like to thank you for the wonderful Lenten display in the Sanctuary. It is a visual that will be a reminder, each Sunday, that we are in the special Season of Lent.

We have heard so many compliments.

Blessings, The Worship Committee

Hi Richard and Louise,

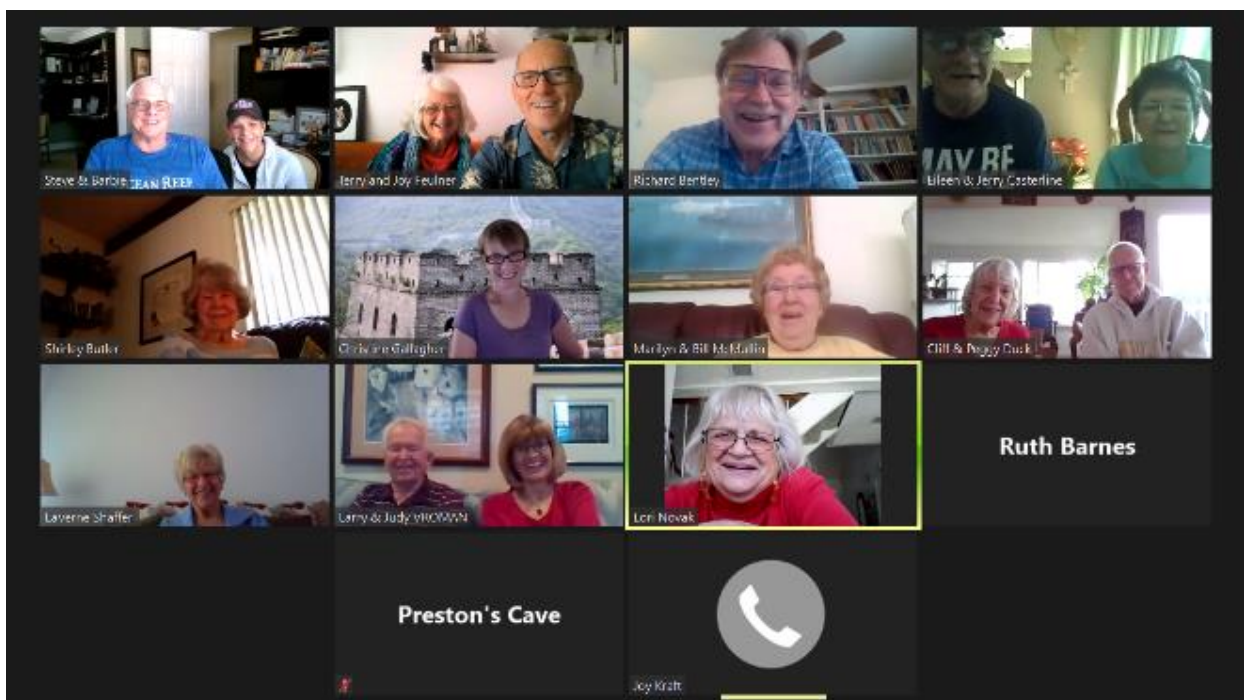
I just want to thank you both and the St. Matthews Church Family for your prayers and good wishes while I was in the hospital and recovering from a bout with a super rapid heartrate. It was quite painful and took them 3 days to calm it down! I'm doing much better now. With good doctors and meds I should be "good as new" in a week or so. It was kind of a wake-up call for me, a Lenten reset if you will.

Anyway, I wanted to thank you all. Even though St. Jude's allowed no visitors, even family; I really never felt alone. I felt surrounded and supported by your prayers, and God's love and care the whole time. So thank you.

And thanks especially for the love and care and friendship you share to my Mom Judy through this time and always. I think she was even more worried than I was!

*Much love and blessings!
Ruth Ketchum*

A Pic from One of Our Zoom Gatherings – Guess Who is Who?





“Top-of-the-Hill”

Top of the Hill Group gets together once a month. The group used to physically meet on a Monday in the Fellowship with lunch served (thanks to Lori Novak). But due to COVID ... they now get together via Zoom. Join in on the second Monday of every month at Noon.

Terry and Joy Feulner head up this group arranging guest speakers and/or different topics each month. Be sure to watch for emails and announcements for further details. All are welcome to join in.



Women's Breakfast Group Gets Together

The St. Matt's Women's Breakfast meets each Wednesday at 8:30 am on Zoom. Since the virus we have all enjoyed keeping together on Zoom. We learn about family happenings, share many joys and sorrows, and just are there for each other. It's nice being able to be as close as before the virus with women who have moved away or are on vacation. We'd love to have anyone join us.....our hearts are big and welcoming.

Joy Feulner



Men's Breakfast

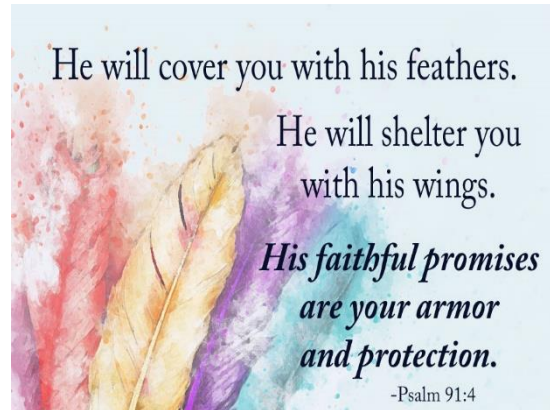
Every Thursday, we get together for a cup of coffee (formerly breakfast) on-line. It's a great opportunity to stay connected with friends and with what's going on at Church. So next time 8 O'Clock Thursday rolls around, drop in on our Zoom meeting — there's plenty of room for more! Go to www.zoom.us. Use the Meeting ID: 638 574 0531, Password: 118405. Or, if your computer has no video camera, just call in: 1-669-900-6833. Contact David Crain at davidwcrain@aol.com for more information.

David Crain

Until Further Notice . . .

It is encouraging that we seem to be moving past the most recent COVID-19 spike. But, being very careful is important to continue holding down the number of new illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths. So, the St. Matthew's Church office will remain "closed" until further notice as a way to keep people as safe as possible. This also helps keep hospitals – including their hardworking staffs – from being overwhelmed.

Although the "office" is closed, the following continues to happen:



- You can call the church office from 10 am to 3 pm Monday to Thursday and 10 am to noon on Friday. Our Church Secretary will answer.
- You can continue sending the church e-mails. And, the church will stay in touch with you through regular e-mails.
- The church's mailbox will be checked on a daily basis.
- The lock box on the front door of the church office will be regularly checked.
- The ongoing business operations of the church will all continue – just differently.



4 Ways to Give to St. Matthew's

- 1) Mail your gift to the church** at 15653 Newton Street, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745. The church's mail comes to a secured mailbox.
- 2) Bring your gift to the church.** There is a locked box on the front door of the office. The locked box is checked regularly.
- 3) Give online.** Go to St. Matthew's website at <https://www.stmattsumc.com> Then, click on "Donate" on the upper right-hand side of the page.
- 4) Text any amount to 84321** to give. Standard message and data rates may apply. Anytime you want to give, you can simply text your donation amount (and fund) to **84321** to initiate an online donation.

Call or email the church office at 626-333-6656 or office@smumchh.org for further instructions of how to "text" your giving.

A Prayer for Putting on a Mask

by the Right Rev. Richard Bott, moderator of the United Church of Canada.

Creator, as I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacrament in the wearing of this cloth –
let it be “an outward sign of an inward grace” –
a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbors,
as I love myself.

Christ, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes.
Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully –
and full of care – to all those I meet.
May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds, be filled with your love.

In your Name and in that love, I pray.

May it be so.

May it be so.



Submitted by Olga Baker

Joining Us on Sunday Mornings

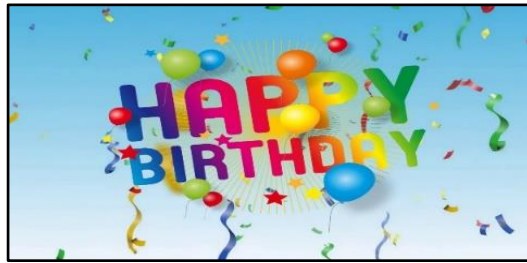
Join us for our Worship Service starting at 9:55 am each Sunday morning:



- 1) Go to the church's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Stmatts1/>
(You do NOT need to belong to Facebook to do this)
- 2) Go to a special page on the church's website.
(This page only works when a Facebook live service is happening)
<https://www.stmattsumc.com/facebook-live/>

During the week, the easiest way to join the worship service is by going to the church's website and click on "Recent Services" <https://www.stmattsumc.com>

For the complete, detailed instruction on how to view St. Matthew's Sunday Services Live – or to view previously recorded Worship Services at any time you like – please contact the Church Office. Email your request to office@smumchh.org or call 626-333-6656. We will be glad to mail or email you complete instructions.



March Birthdays

March 3	Patty Graves
March 4	Jerry Casterline
March 6	Clarice Bongolan
March 8	Swede Rader
March 12	Joan Zoller
March 13	John Clonts
March 20	Ruth Feick
March 23	Carol Rogers
	Morgan Matthews
	Daniel Gonzalez
March 25	Judy Menefee
March 26	Rick Messner
March 28	Jack Weatherford
March 31	Dolores Gonzalez-Hayes
	Steve Straub














March Anniversaries

March 8	John and Ester Elliott
March 29	John and Barbara Clonts



St. Matthew's United Methodist Church

	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 7pm-Trustees Meeting	3 8:30am - Women's Breakfast 3:00pm -The Palms	4 8:00am - Men's Breakfast	5 World Day of Prayer 	6
7 3 rd Sunday in Lent  8:45am – Adult Sunday School 9:55am - Worship	8  Noon – “Top of the Hill” 7:30pm – Lenten Study Class	9 7pm-SPRC	10 8:30am - Women's Breakfast 3:00pm -The Palms	11 8:00am - Men's Breakfast	12	13  Set your clocks ahead 1 hour before bedtime tonight. . .Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 14 th !
14 Stewardship Sunday & 4 th Sunday in Lent  8:45am – Adult Sunday School 9:55am - Worship	15 7:30pm – Lenten Study Class	16	17 8:30am - Women's Breakfast 3:00pm -The Palms	18 8:00am - Men's Breakfast	19	20 9:00am – Outdoors Worship Service (Lawn) 
21 5 th Sunday in Lent  8:45am – Adult Sunday School 9:55am – Worship	22 7:30pm – Lenten Study Class	23	24 8:30am - Women's Breakfast 3:00pm -The Palms	25 8:00am - Men's Breakfast	26	27  10:00am – Memorial Service for Wes Ojala (Church lawn)
28 Palm Sunday  8:45am – Adult Sunday School 9:55am – Worship	29	30 “Easter Baskets” - Food Gift Certificates distributed to Schools 	31 8:30am - Women's Breakfast 3:00pm -The Palms			



TO VIEW ALL OUR WORSHIP SERVICES:

Go to <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Stmatts1>. You can also view past services by going to going <https://www.stmattsumc.com/facebook-live-test/> then click on the service you want.

We continue to keep in touch:

- Every Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m. - *Women's Breakfast Group.*
- Every Thursday morning at 8:00 a.m. – *Men's Breakfast Bunch.*
- Trustees* – First Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. each month.
- SPRC* (Staff Parish Relations) – 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
- Church Council* – To be determined.
- Finance Committee* – to be determined.
- Small Groups also keep in touch by phone during the week.

Be sure to call or email the Church Office with any questions about meetings, classes, or “get togethers” at 626-333-6656 or office@smumchh.org.



ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

15653 E. Newton Street, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

Phone: 626-333-6656

Email: Office@smumchh.org

Rev. Richard Bentley, Pastor
Elaine Ono, Director of Music

Louise Green, Office Administrator
Greg Gomez, Custodian

FIRST CLASS MAIL

St. Matthews United Methodist Church
15653 E. Newton Street
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

