

THE ORACLE

ST MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Matthew's Family,

As the program year has now begun in earnest, we are glad to present a new edition of the Oracle newsletter. Many thanks to Pam Dunlap for volunteering her time to make this possible, and also to those who submitted material for inclusion. There are several ways in which St. Matthew's communicates information on a weekly and monthly basis, but the newsletter is frequently mentioned by parishioners as the most popular method for doing so. Thanks be to God, a great deal happens on a regular basis in this vibrant parish, and sharing that information will be the main focus of each edition of the Oracle.

The intention is to release one other publication before the end of 2023, and then, Lord willing, a monthly edition beginning in January. The Oracle will highlight upcoming events, updates on various ministries, financial reports, information on the nursery school, a 'closer look' on a member of our church family, and an increasing number of photos capturing happenings at St. Matthew's.

You will also notice a full calendar of activities in the coming months. In addition to regular, yearly events, such as the Blessing of the Animals and Trunk or Treat, please mark two dates in particular. On Saturday, October 14th, we will hold a Spaghetti Dinner in the Parish Hall. Proceeds will go toward youth mission trips, which we hope to resume in 2024. Of course, the major event this fall will be the bishop's visitation and confirmation on Sunday, October 29th. St. Matthew's has eleven confirmands, and we will celebrate with them at a grand celebration planned following the service.

One change that you will notice this fall is the timing of our annual pledge drive. To better align with stewardship programs and the common practice within the Episcopal Church, St. Matthew's will now emphasize prayerful giving from mid-October through Consecration Sunday on November 26th.

May all of you have a blessed fall season. With thankful hearts may we, as St. Paul writes, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, Rejoice."

With Love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney" followed by a small cross symbol.

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 3, 11 & 17 -

HEARING GOD BIBLE STUDY 7:30 - 8:45PM

OCTOBER 8 -

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS 4:00PM

YOUTH GROUP 4:00 - 6:00PM

OCTOBER 14 -

MEN'S BREAKFAST 8:00AM

OCTOBER 14 -

SPAGHETTI DINNER, MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER 5:00PM

OCTOBER 28 -

TRUNK OR TREAT 4:00PM

OCTOBER 29 -

HOLY EUCHARIST AND CONFIRMATION

BISHOP GUTIERREZ PRESIDING 10:00AM

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 5 -

YOUTH GROUP 4:00 - 6:00 PM

NOVEMBER 11 -

MEN'S BREAKFAST 8:00AM

NOVEMBER 19 -

ANNUAL MEETING 10:00 - 10:30 AM

YOUTH GROUP 4:00 - 6:00 PM

NOVEMBER 26 -

CONSECRATION SUNDAY 7:45; 9:00; 10:30AM

MINISTRY UPDATES

Hearing God Bible Study

This Bible Study continues in October on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 – 8:45pm, except on Vestry weeks when we meet on Wednesdays. Here are the topics that are finishing up our Bible Study in October. Remember, it is not necessary to read the book. You are welcome to join us at any time.

October 3 (Tuesday): Question to be discussed: Do you want to hear God's still, small voice? In this session we will read 1 Kings 19:2-18 and explore that God speaks primarily in the still, small voice as we develop a conversational relationship.

October 11 (Wednesday): Question to be discussed: What if you hear something unexpected or unwanted? In this session we will read Acts 10:9-23, 44-48, and recognize that God may say unexpected things and ask us to interact with unfamiliar people.

October 17 (Tuesday): Question to be discussed: What might happen if you work as a collaborator with God? In our last session, we will read 1 Chronicles 14:8-17 and observe how collaborators with God freely engage in conversation with God.

Decision Point & Youth Group & Youth Mission Trip

Decision Point is our Sunday School curriculum for Middle School and High School Youth. Our curriculum is based on navigating through life by making choices. Each session has short video segments which lead to discussion questions and journaling in a workbook. Our youth ensure that our discussions are lively, engaging, and pertinent to today's situations.

Youth Group is also made up of Middle School and High School Youth. The events planned for October and November include:

October 8: 4:00 – 6:00pm – Topic: Animals are a Blessing - Bring your animals for the annual Blessing of the Animals and for sharing and conversation about if we treat our animals better than other people in our lives?

November 5: 4:00 – 6:00pm – Topic: What's on your mind? - We will have dinner and a discussion, hopefully around a fire pit.

November 19: 4:00 – 6:00pm – Topic: Gratitude - We will take donations for the Little Pantry and discuss the importance of gratitude in our journey and share what we are thankful for and why.

We are currently **investigating potential Mission Trip opportunities** for summer of 2024. We are considering a Youth Works sponsored trip to Niagara Falls. A mission trip is an experience for youth and adults to go out into the world to help those in need, whether the needs are physical or spiritual. Our intergenerational group will come alongside existing organizations to meet ongoing needs through food and clothing distribution, home repair projects, community beautification projects, and youth programming at a local community center. After the service day, the group will learn more about the community by participating in evening activities to experience some of the hardships of those living in poverty, visit the beauty of the Falls and share a time of fellowship with partners and community members.

Consecration Sunday - New date! Our annual pledges are given in thanksgiving and gratitude to God for our many blessings. Consecration Sunday, the day we come forward to offer our annual pledge for 2024, will take place on **Christ the King Sunday, November 26**. Take time to reflect how grateful you are for this community and God's presence among us as you contemplate your 2024 pledge.

St. Matthew's Welcomes Newcomers!

The Fall season is here and the month of October will include some great opportunities for our Congregation to meet and greet each other, socialize, have fun and most importantly, enjoy and give thanks for God's gifts of love and faith. These events include the Blessing of the Animals at the Church on October 8th at 4PM, a festive spaghetti dinner on October 14 at 5PM, and our annual Halloween Trunk or Treat on October 28 at 4PM. We love seeing you on Sundays and hope you'll be able to enjoy these wonderful fellowship occasions.

MINISTRY UPDATES

Fellowship Opportunities

A **Spaghetti Dinner is planned for Saturday, October 14, 2023 at 5:00pm.** This is a fundraising event for the Mission Trip. Donation to cover the cost of dinner is \$10 for individuals and \$35 for families - additional donations to help fund our trip would be welcomed.

Coffee Hours continue weekly at 10:00am. You are welcome to bring goodies for the food table. Drop items off any time before the 9:00am service.

Men's Breakfasts continue monthly with the next two breakfasts on October 7 and November 11.

Trunk or Treat is scheduled for October 28, at 4:00pm.

Arise Band

The new church year is here, and it is wonderful to have the full band back singing and leading worship for the 9:00 service. During the summer, the Arise band continued to lead worship, but with fewer members. We were so blessed to have Joe Tumolo help us out. He plays drums, bass, and electric guitar. What a treasure it was for us that he was willing to use his talents for the Lord.

We are now happy to announce Joe will be joining us on a regular basis. You will be seeing him play the electric guitar, or whatever instruments when needed this fall.

We also invited some of our youth, Sophia, Alexa and Xavier to play with us this summer, so nice of them to offer up their musical abilities. They will be joining us on other occasions too. Looking forward to singing and praising the Lord with you all!

Psalm 150: 5-6: Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath, Praise the Lord!

In Christ,
Martha Reynolds (Coordinator) and Anne Flood (Conductor)

Choir

Rejoice in the Lord always and again, I say, Rejoice Phil. 4:4

In some biblical texts, the word "rejoice" was often used as a greeting - a salutation. A call to Experience JOY! REJOICE! Come and worship!

During the Fall season, the choir will lead us in learning new service music Glory to God, Sanctus, and Fraction Anthem. We are setting aside, for a time, the old familiar melodies, to allow beautiful new hymns and texts to blossom. We will also explore some hymns in the RENEW hymnal. We hope you will embrace these opportunities to experience new offerings in liturgical music.

St. Matthew's is blessed to have dedicated choir members, who volunteer their time and talent. I am lucky enough to be their guide. The choral music we sing each week creates a bond, a harmony to be shared with the listener. And so, we share our harmony with you, our church community. Won't you think about joining us?

And If you're not a singer, think about volunteering for a new group learning to ring handchimes. Stop by the organ console to ask questions.

Be the change you wish to see in the World,
Judi Kearney, Organist & Choir Director

NURSERY SCHOOL UPDATE

This year the Nursery School opened its doors on Monday, September 11, 2023. The 2 ½ year old classes began with a visiting day in which a parent comes to school with their child and stays to play and visit with the teacher and aide. The 3 year old classes begin with a short session in which students come by themselves for an hour. The 4-year old and Pre-K classes begin with a regular full day. By the second day of school, almost all of the children are settled in and happy and ready for lots of fun!

This year the nursery school welcomes several new staff members:

- Mrs. Kristen Messina will teach the 3's MWF class.
- Mrs. Louise Kadingo will teach the 3's T-TH Class.
- Mrs. Krista Forst will assist in the 2 ½'s T-TH and 4's MWF classes.
- Mrs. Samantha Spingler will teach our morning and afternoon Pre-K classes, and
- Mrs. Lauren Freda will assist on Thursdays in our 4's M-TH class.

All have had their own children or grandchildren come through St. Matthew's, and will be wonderful additions to our staff this year!

The Nursery School children will again be participating in Chapel with Father Rodney, Music with Mrs. Martha Reynolds and Gym with Coach Barry and Coach Jocelyn. They will enjoy many programs that visit the school- the Horsham Fire Company, Horsham Police Department, Gold Fish Swim School, and a traveling farm. The 3 and 4 year old classes will visit several different places in the community for field trips. Enrichment classes are held weekly for children in the 4 year old and Pre-K classes and include: Mathemagic, Science, Book and Cook, Kreative Kids, and Reading, Writing and Fun. The 3 year old classes can participate in Kids in Motion as well as Sensational Art.

In late September the 4's and Pre-K Classes went to Tabora Farms for a wagon ride and apple picking. In October the 3's classes will visit Kohler Farms for a hayride and pumpkin picking. The school will also join the church for a Trunk or Treat at the end of October. Over the summer the classrooms all received a fresh coat of paint as well as the hallways. A special thank you to Bill Reynolds for all that he did to prep for the painters and for power washing the playground equipment. The Nursery School cannot thank Father Rodney and the Vestry enough for their continued support!

-- Jackie Anderson

Highlighting - Antonia Greene-Edwards

Reflecting on what it means to serve . . .

Greetings Church family! I am Toni Edwards, a member of our Vestry and VBS ministry. As we prepare for the season of giving, I was asked to reflect about my time in the military and how it feels now to be retired from the service. I remember the feeling, being led by the Spirit and joining Army ROTC just after the tragic events of Sept. 11th, 2001. I was a sophomore at Temple University and amidst all the assignments, excitement and distractions, recall an undeniable sense of duty, of obligation, of servitude stirring within. It was underpinned by an unflinching courage I had never felt before and I knew then, God was with me.

He solidified His will and sent a messenger, the late Master Sergeant Anthony Middleton, an ROTC instructor who ultimately became my 20+ year mentor and closest confidant. During my training and my state-side missions, I discovered my true potential, surpassed physical, mental and emotional limits I didn't know I had, grew in confidence and humility; grounded in faith. At war, I drew closer to the Lord than ever before, experienced His living power firsthand and came to know His ways are not ours. Amid suffering and loss, I found hope and strength. Undeniably the most defining chapter of my life. The Lord is my shepherd, my rock, my salvation. Psalm 23 and 62 - my soul's song.

As I look back and begin to reflect on my time of service, I am reminded of Jesus' example of a good and faithful servant. That we are all called to serve first, to share and multiply the unique gifts the Spirit has blessed us with and do so in service to others without expectation of reward or reciprocation. This parallels Army life. Some say "bearing our Nation's burden" but I've come to know that it is following in Christ. There are crosses to bear and hardships we carry forever - with service comes sacrifice, but over the course of my career I learned giving selflessly is its own reward. I am rich in experience, in meaningful human connections and above all in communion with God. Having served, I gained so much more than I have lost. I will continue to trust in Him, serving when and where the Spirit moves me. I am thankful, grateful and truly blessed.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Revenues and Expenses: August YTD operating net income (excludes Bequests and Memorials) is \$10K. This is \$54K better than the planned loss at this point of (\$44K). These positive results are due to pledge collections close to budget (Thank You!), strong non-pledge receipts (mostly Preschool tuition and fees and plate collections) and expenses below budget (helped by having no snow this past winter). We expect that this positive margin may erode somewhat over the next several months, but we should end the year better than budgeted.

Capital Spending: Only \$7K of the planned \$24K in capital projects has been spent so far this year (Sacristy door repairs and painting in the PreSchool) because cost estimates on some planned projects were significantly higher than expected, causing a need for reevaluation. In turn, this may cause some spending to spill over into next year.

Bequests: With thanks to God, we received three bequests totaling \$70K this year. St. Matthew's has long been blessed by the generosity of its members in giving above and beyond annual pledging. I urge you to take a moment and prayerfully give thanks when you next walk past the Tree of Life in the hallway outside the sanctuary!

Cash and Investments: Given the \$10K in operating net income and the \$70K in Bequest proceeds, our cash and money market balances are up by \$80K compared to the end of last year. Our investment accounts have also increased by 6 percent this year. Altogether our unrestricted funds total nearly \$1.5M.

- Jim Garrison, Treasurer

Annual Meeting Reminder!

Our **Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 10:00am on Sunday, November 19** during coffee hour. At this meeting, our Rector will report on the strengths of the Parish and our Treasurer will summarize our finances. Please come, listen, and ask your questions.

Finance Committee

Did you know that St. Matthew's has a Finance Committee? Yes! Kim Brown, Hans DeViso, Brian McCleary, Angie Pack, Bill Rhydderch and Norma Snyder meet with me every 3-4 months and interact much more frequently via email. They are a terrific sounding board for new ideas, freely offering their opinions and insights. They have valuable institutional knowledge of past events and practices. They offer their services for special projects. In short, your Treasurer (me!) and Vestry feel blessed to have them. Tell them "Thanks" next time you see them!

-- Jim Garrison

Income Statement Summary Eight Months Ended August 31, 2023

	YTD		Actual Over (Under) Budget	Annual Budget
	Actual	Budget		
Nursery School:				
Total Income	\$ 217,074	\$ 202,246	\$ 14,828	\$ 348,191
Staff Expense	(153,556)	(160,217)	(6,662)	(263,240)
Other Expense	(53,197)	(53,939)	(741)	(90,960)
Total Expense	(206,753)	(214,156)	(7,403)	(354,200)
Net Inc. (Exp)	\$ 10,322	\$ (11,910)	\$ 22,232	\$ (6,009)
Church Operations:				
Pledge and Plate Receipts	\$ 234,660	\$ 223,730	\$ 10,930	\$ 336,000
Other Income	63,510	58,586	4,924	93,200
Total Income	298,170	282,316	15,854	429,200
Staff Expense	(185,037)	(190,514)	(5,476)	(276,291)
Other Expense	(113,108)	(123,948)	(10,840)	(174,258)
Total Expense	(298,145)	(314,462)	(16,316)	(450,549)
Net Inc. (Exp)	\$ 24	\$ (32,146)	\$ 32,170	\$ (21,349)
NS & Church Net Inc. (Exp)	\$ 10,346	\$ (44,055)	\$ 54,402	\$ (27,358)
Bequests & Legacies	\$ 70,000	\$ -	\$ 70,000	\$ -
Total Net Inc. (Exp)	\$ 80,346	\$ (44,055)	\$ 124,402	\$ (27,358)
Capital Spending (from investments)	\$ (7,421)			\$ (24,000)

OUTREACH UPDATE

The Little Pantry

As we drive into the St. Matthew's Church parking lot, it is quite noticeable that the Little Pantry is being used. It seems to be emptied out every day, which tells us there is a real need for help in our community.

Prices at the grocery store have skyrocketed. For people who are living paycheck to paycheck, trying to make the electric bill, the mortgage, the rent is getting harder, groceries usually come last. This ministry is a small way to help people put food on the table, get items that are now so expensive such as paper towels and toilet paper....

Who is in need of these items? Who comes to the pantry? Are some people really in need? All that is in the Lord's hands. We at St. Matthews offer our help, and the Lord does the rest. We are always in need of donations to the Little Pantry. Please pray about donating on a regular basis, whether it be picking up pasta once a week, or cereal when you go shopping. Every little bit is a help. There are little cards in the narthex with a list of pantry needs. A great way to help out our community!

In Christ,
Martha Reynolds



Many Thanks!

To those of you who have donated to The Little Pantry and Mattie Dixon Food Cupboard! We see the need in our community increasing and are grateful for your contributions. Thanks for your frequent donations!

ST MATTHEW'S WEBSITE (www.saintmattsec.org)

If you have not visited our website recently, we invite you back! Various updates and changes have been made, including:

- **Worship Services** - Including links to bulletins, lyrics, and livestream events.
- **Upcoming Events at Saint Matthew's** - A list of weekly happenings and events at the parish with links for more information.
- **Recent News & Information** - Links to recent events including links to Zoom meetings.

Join Us for Worship Services this Sunday

No matter where you are in your spiritual journey, you are welcome at St. Matthew's. As Episcopalians, we seek and serve Christ in all people.

7:45 a.m. – Rite I Holy Eucharist (In-Person)

9:00 a.m. – Rite II Holy Eucharist with Contemporary Music (In-Person and [Livestream](#))

10:30 a.m. – Rite II Choral Eucharist (In-Person)

Upcoming Events at St. Matthew's

SEP	6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	🔗
11	ETC Rehearsals	
SEP	6:30 pm - 8:00 pm	🔗
12	Vestry Meeting	
SEP	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	🔗
13	Holy Eucharist & Healing Prayers	
SEP	6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	🔗
13	ETC Rehearsals	
SEP	7:30 pm - 8:45 pm	🔗
13	Hearing God Bible Study	
SEP	7:30 pm - 9:00 pm	🔗
13	Arise Rehearsal	
SEP	9:00 am - 10:00 am	🔗
14	Morning Prayer	

Recent News & Information

Men's Breakfast

September 1, 2023

Join us Saturday, September 9 at 8:00 AM for good food, fellowship, and conversation. A sign-up sheet is available in the narthex.

[Read More](#)

Hearing God Bible Study

September 1, 2023

This seven-week Bible Study is based on the book Hearing God by Dallas Willard. This study will meet on Tuesday evenings (Wednesdays on Vestry weeks) from 7:30-8:45pm and will explore... Read the full article...

[Read More](#)



ST MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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"And God saw everything that he had made, and
behold, it was very good." *Genesis 1:31*