

# St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Annual Report '23

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SUN. NOVEMBER 19, 2023

10:00 AM

PREPARED BY THE

Clergy, Staff, Vestry, and Volunteers of St. Matthew's

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ST MATTHEW'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
919 TENNIS AVENUE  
MAPLE GLEN, PA, 19002

## *Pray For the Parish*

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

# Meeting Agenda

1. Meeting is Called to Order
2. Review and Approve the **2023 Agenda**
3. Review and Approve the **2022 Meeting Minutes**
4. Elect Members of Vestry, Diocesan Delegates
5. Reading of the **2023 Annual Report**

## Report Contents

- **Rector's Report**
- **Treasurer's Report**
- **Parish Manager's Reports**
- **Communications Director's Report**
- **Nursery School Director's Report**
- **Program Ministry Reports**

6. Public Forum and Questions
7. Meeting is Adjourned.

# Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting

Respectfully submitted by Roger Sumner, November 2022

The meeting was called to order at 9:51 am on Sunday, November 13, 2022 by the Rev. Rodney Roehner.

AGENDA | Pat John moved to accept, seconded by Treva McLaughlin. Unanimously accepted by those present.

MINUTES | The minutes from November 2021 were presented. A correction was noted that the meeting was called to order at 9:50, not 10:50 as originally written. A motion to accept minutes with correction was offered by Derek Casey and seconded by Pat John. They were unanimously accepted by those present.

ELECTION OF VESTRY AND DEANERY/CONVENTION DELEGATES: Fr. Rodney presented the slate for the Election of the Vestry and the Deanery/Convention Delegates. Nominations for the Vestry for a three-year term beginning in January, 2023 are:

- Jon Clark
- Trent Coombs
- Pam Dunlap

Nominations for the Deanery and Diocesan Convention Delegates for the year 2023 are:

- George Bishop
- Judy Groben
- Jeanne Garrison

Alternate Delegates are:

- Pam Dunlap

A motion to accept all Vestry and Convention Delegates was made by Mary Anne Noon, seconded by Cathy Haas. All were unanimously approved.

RECTOR REPORT: Fr. Rodney thanked retiring Vestry members for their hard work during the past three years: Bill Reynolds, Mary Anne Noon, and Marie Clark. He also gave special thanks to those members who worked hard to keep the parish moving forward: Carolyn Bedics, Joe Buesgen, the Arise band, and the 10:30 choir director, Phil LeFevre, who will be leaving us shortly.

Noted that St. Matthew's is averaging 123 parishioners on Sundays, which is 2/3 pre-Covid levels. Most churches in the Diocese are averaging 50-60%, so we are doing well in comparison. This is also notable considering the transition over the past several years, in the midst of Covid. Coffee hour is vibrant and 62 people were recently invited to a newcomer event, not held since 2019.

Our Bylaws have been updated since they were 20 years old. Fr. Rodney encouraged all to read them, as there are "good nuggets of understanding" for us as a church and congregation.

Our future is to seek to grow our community with a focus on the Christian message of hope, faith, vibrancy, and joy. Plans to have a structure focused on Outreach as well as Inreach. He suggested a New Year's Resolution for all members to be more active, as we need more Lay participation. He encouraged us to meet for fellowship and build bonds stronger than one hour on Sunday.

A motion to accept the Rector's Report was made by Ed Greer, seconded by Antonia Greene-Edwards. The report was unanimously approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jim Garrison included his full report in the printed Annual Report. He congratulated the congregation on surviving 2020, 2021 and 2022 during which Fr. Dave retired, we had an interim rector and a search, and finally the installment of Fr. Rodney. He noted that there is "not a lot of fluff" in the current budget to look at reductions and so we need creativity on growing revenue. We have survived the worst of Covid – which deserves congratulations – but now need to transition to grow.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by Tim Jennings, seconded by Treva McLaughlin. The report was unanimously approved.

PARISH MANAGER'S REPORT: Report was submitted in the printed annual report.

A motion to accept the Parish Manager's report was made by Trent Coombs and seconded by Karen Sawyer. The report was unanimously approved.

Other reports such as **Communications, Nursery School, Lifelong Learning Ministries, and Pastoral Care** ministries were submitted in the printed annual review and reviewed.

A motion to accept the other reports was made by Dave Robinson and seconded by Melissa Brown. The reports were unanimously approved.

In the public forum, Fr. Rodney again recognized Fr. Dave's continuing contributions as well as Joe Buesgen for making our live stream videos such a success.

Motion to adjourn was made by Trent Coombs, seconded by Bill Reynolds. It was unanimously approved.

Go Forth in Peace, to Love and Serve the Lord

Respectfully submitted,  
**Roger Sumner**

# *Election of* **Vestry Members**

Our grateful and heartfelt thanks extend to those members who are now transitioning off the Vestry; **Karen Sawyer, and Roger Sumner.**

Nominations for **Vestry** for a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024, are:

**Sue Acquaviva**

**Chris Hastie**

**Paul Williams**

# *the* Annual Report

November 2023

# *From the Rector*

Rev. Rodney Roehner

St. Matthew's Family,

We are approaching three years together as parish and priest, and, needless to say, it has been a busy stretch! This would be a very lengthy report if I highlighted everything that has taken place at and through St. Matthew's over the past year, so let me focus on only one of them to give an insight into the vibrancy and life of our congregation.

My example is outreach. One of the primary topics discussed during the rector search in 2020 was the desire for St. Matthew's to become more involved in the wider community and beyond. The effort required to make that part of a parish's ethos takes time, trying different things, and lots of communication with others outside of our parish. We still have much work to do, but, thanks be to God, this has borne much fruit, and St. Matthew's is now recognized as an active and sought out participant in the life and needs of our community.

Although I'm undoubtedly leaving items off the list, here are several of the outreach ministries with which we've participated over this past year. We've become an even stronger contributor to the Mwamba scholarship fund in Kenya. Operation Bear Hug has continued for Christmas, and we've consistently supported the food ministries at Mattie Dixon and Feed the Hungry. St. Matthew's hosted our first Red Cross blood drive in a number of years, and we've once again started collecting for the Episcopal Church's United Thank Offering. You've supported natural disaster relief after Hurricane Ian and the Maui wildfires, and graciously offered funds to help a family in our parish community with an urgent medical need for their child.

Support for St. James School has remained constant, and our knitting ministry recently completed many scarves and hats for the Seamen's Institute. Parishioners helped at the clean-up day for College Settlement, and we've contributed toward the new Miracle Field that will be built in Horsham Township. And how much can be mentioned about the Little Pantry! Consider this one point. A conservative estimate of the monetary value of the items placed in the pantry over the course of one year is at least \$10,000. This has become a much sought out offering by the community, and it has been a blessing to our parish.

Another part of successful outreach is to also combine efforts with other faith communities in order to make an even greater impact. In this township, we've teamed with Horsham Interfaith Connected to hold our Lenten clothes drive, and we host the monthly Project Roadmap meetings to help people navigate different areas of life. We've also become involved in the Wissahickon Faith Community, which is a very active group. We will be hosting their Thanksgiving Community Service on Tuesday, November 21 at 7 pm.

St. Matthew's has also begun reconnecting with Interfaith Housing Alliance (now Family Promise), a ministry with which our parish has been very involved in past years. Additionally,

as a result of the terrible attacks in Israel on October 7th, I've been in frequent contact with Congregation Beth Or (right around the corner on Welsh Road) and have attended an event at Temple Sinai in Dresher to show our unwavering support for our Jewish neighbors.

That is our engagement with our community and beyond within the last year alone. That is one ministry among many happening at St. Matthew's, making a difference, providing hope, revealing our commitment and love for others. Please prayerfully consider and talk with me about how you can be a part of our many outreach opportunities.

I certainly can't leave off talking about 2023 without giving thanks to our magnificent staff and volunteers. Much appreciation is extended to Carolyn Bedics, our parish manager, Joe Buesgen, who handles much of our communications, the Vestry, our livestream crew, our musicians, and, especially this year, Judi Kearney who has done remarkable work reinvigorating our music program for the 10:30 service and holy days. Many thanks are also given for Jackie Anderson and our preschool teachers. And, of course, we greatly appreciate Fr. Dave Robinson's continued willingness to minister among us.

As we prayerfully prepare for 2024, we look forward to continuing our strong emphasis on fellowship and outreach. Much work will be done on our landscaping plan, which has not been addressed in many years. Connected with that are ongoing conversations about how best to use our open space on the north side of our property. Another project that will need to be addressed is the deteriorating modular building that houses the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd classes on Sunday and the possibilities moving forward. The Parish Hall will soon need a new roof, and we are preparing for several upgrades for the interior of that frequently used space.

Thanks be to God and your ongoing dedication to St. Matthew's, we are steadily moving forward. That is saying something in the current landscape of churches. Lord willing, we will finish the year with an average Sunday attendance of about 150. The average in the diocese for in-person worship on Sunday is in the 40s. I mention 'in-person' because, although many churches now do so, I have not been in the habit of counting 'online' attendance in our numbers because it is so difficult to gauge. Please look at the financial report for more details, but we are pleased that, although a deficit budget was passed for the year, we have more than filled that gap.

As frequently mentioned, our main priority as Christian people is to glorify God at all times through our thoughts, words, deeds. May our loving Lord and Savior continue to embolden us to do so with ever-increasing courage, compassion, and love. Many thanks to all of you, the family of St. Matthew's, and may the strength of the bonds we share with one another be a testimony of the life made possible through the mercy and goodness of Jesus Christ.

With love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rodney" followed by a small cross symbol.



# From the Treasurer

Jim Garrison

## Operations Income Statement Summary

2022 and Nine Months ended September 30, 2023

|                                       | <u>2022</u>        | <u>September 2023 YTD</u> |                    |                    | <u>2023</u>        |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                       |                    |                           |                    | <u>Actual Over</u> |                    |
|                                       |                    |                           |                    | <u>(Under)</u>     | <u>Annual</u>      |
|                                       | <u>Actual</u>      | <u>Actual</u>             | <u>Budget</u>      | <u>Budget</u>      | <u>Budget</u>      |
| <b>PreSchool:</b>                     |                    |                           |                    |                    |                    |
| Total Income                          | \$ 357,773         | \$ 253,675                | \$ 240,048         | \$ 13,627          | \$ 348,191         |
| Staff Expense                         | (258,559)          | (178,710)                 | (190,012)          | (11,302)           | (263,240)          |
| Other Expense                         | (94,518)           | (61,400)                  | (62,130)           | (730)              | (90,960)           |
| Total Expense                         | (353,076)          | (240,110)                 | (252,142)          | (12,032)           | (354,200)          |
| <b>Net Inc. (Exp)</b>                 | <b>\$ 4,697</b>    | <b>\$ 13,565</b>          | <b>\$ (12,094)</b> | <b>\$ 25,660</b>   | <b>\$ (6,009)</b>  |
| <b>Church Operations:</b>             |                    |                           |                    |                    |                    |
| Pledge and Plate Receipts             | \$ 352,270         | \$ 261,023                | \$ 248,680         | \$ 12,343          | \$ 336,000         |
| Other Income                          | 103,554            | 75,157                    | 69,128             | 6,029              | 93,200             |
| Total Income                          | 455,824            | 336,180                   | 317,808            | 18,372             | 429,200            |
| Staff Expense                         | (281,881)          | (207,444)                 | (212,117)          | (4,674)            | (276,291)          |
| Property Expense                      | (97,172)           | (59,962)                  | (68,822)           | (8,860)            | (91,630)           |
| Other Expense                         | (78,148)           | (62,484)                  | (66,283)           | (3,799)            | (82,628)           |
| Total Expense                         | (457,201)          | (329,890)                 | (347,222)          | (17,333)           | (450,549)          |
| <b>Net Inc. (Exp)</b>                 | <b>\$ (1,377)</b>  | <b>\$ 6,290</b>           | <b>\$ (29,414)</b> | <b>\$ 35,704</b>   | <b>\$ (21,349)</b> |
| <b>PS &amp; Church Net Inc. (Exp)</b> | <b>\$ 3,320</b>    | <b>\$ 19,855</b>          | <b>\$ (41,508)</b> | <b>\$ 61,364</b>   | <b>\$ (27,358)</b> |
| <b>COVID-Relief</b>                   | <b>\$ 49,056</b>   | <b>\$ -</b>               | <b>\$ -</b>        | <b>\$ -</b>        | <b>\$ -</b>        |
| <b>Bequests</b>                       | <b>\$ -</b>        | <b>\$ 70,000</b>          | <b>\$ -</b>        | <b>\$ 70,000</b>   | <b>\$ -</b>        |
| <b>Total Net Inc. (Exp)</b>           | <b>\$ 52,376</b>   | <b>\$ 89,855</b>          | <b>\$ (41,508)</b> | <b>\$ 131,364</b>  | <b>\$ (27,358)</b> |
| <b>Capital Spending</b>               | <b>\$ (39,398)</b> | <b>\$ (7,421)</b>         | <b>\$ (18,000)</b> | <b>\$ (10,579)</b> | <b>\$ (24,000)</b> |
| (from investments)                    |                    |                           |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Total After Capital Spending</b>   | <b>\$ 12,978</b>   | <b>\$ 82,434</b>          | <b>\$ (59,508)</b> | <b>\$ 141,943</b>  | <b>\$ (51,358)</b> |

# Cash and Investments

**BALANCES** as of September 30, 2023

WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS

BANK ACCOUNTS  
**\$78,945**

BANK ACCOUNTS  
**\$56,262**

MONEY MARKET  
**\$226,783**

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INVESTMENTS  
**\$811,255**

INVESTMENTS  
**\$6,947**

GRAND TOTAL  
**\$1,180,192**

**INVESTMENT DETAIL** as of September 30, 2023

VANGUARD BALANCED INDEX FUND  
**\$352,205**

VANGUARD WELLINGTON FUND  
**\$403,001**

T. ROWE PRICE – US TREASURY FUND  
**\$56,049**

T. ROWE PRICE DIVIDEND GROWTH YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP  
**\$6,947**

**ACTIVITY** as of September 30, 2023

|                                    | Without Donor Restrictions |              |             |              | With Donor Restrictions |              |             |           | Grand Total  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
|                                    | Bank Accounts              | Money Market | Investments | Total        | Bank Accounts           | Money Market | Investments | Total     |              |
| Balances - December 31, 2022       | \$ 91,871                  | \$ 161,591   | \$ 750,317  | \$ 1,003,780 | \$ 50,297               | \$ -         | \$ 6,546    | \$ 56,842 | \$ 1,060,622 |
| Activity Jan 01 - Sept 30, 2023:   |                            |              |             |              |                         |              |             |           |              |
| Collections and Contributions      | 589,855                    |              |             | 589,855      | 10,933                  |              |             | 10,933    | 600,788      |
| Expenses and Capital Spending      | (570,000)                  | (7,421)      |             | (577,421)    | (4,986)                 |              |             | (4,986)   | (582,407)    |
| Transfers In (Out)                 | (103,628)                  | 65,128       | 38,500      | -            |                         |              |             | -         | -            |
| Increase (Decrease) in Liabilities | 846                        |              |             | 846          |                         |              |             | -         | 846          |
| Interest & Dividends               |                            | 7,485        |             | 7,485        | 18                      |              | 199         | 217       | 7,702        |
| Investments Gains (Losses)         |                            |              | 22,438      | 22,438       |                         |              | 202         | 202       | 22,640       |
| Bequests                           | 70,000                     |              |             |              |                         |              |             |           |              |
| Net Increase (Decrease)            | (12,926)                   | 65,192       | 60,938      | 113,204      | 5,965                   | -            | 401         | 6,366     | 119,570      |
| Balances - September 30, 2023      | \$ 78,945                  | \$ 226,783   | \$ 811,255  | \$ 1,116,984 | \$ 56,262               | \$ -         | \$ 6,947    | \$ 63,208 | \$ 1,180,192 |

**CAPITAL SPENDING DETAIL** as of September 30, 2023

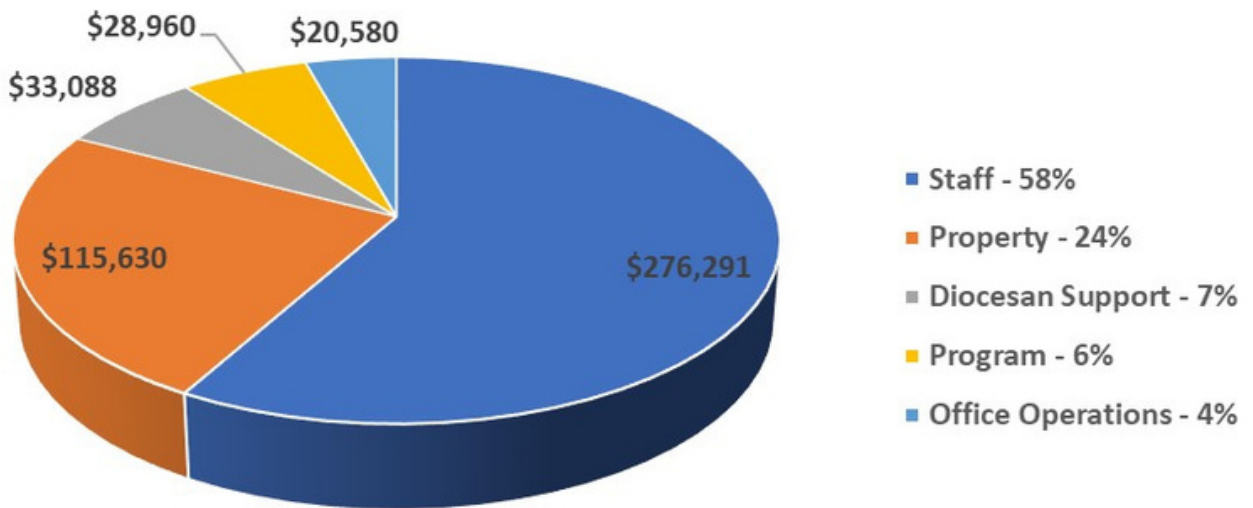
REPAIR SACRISTY DOORS  
**\$1,761**

PAINTING - PRESCHOOL  
**\$5,660**

TOTAL  
**\$7,421**

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### Where Does Your Money Go?



Based on 2023 Budget. Property incl's Maint.,  
Repairs and Improvements

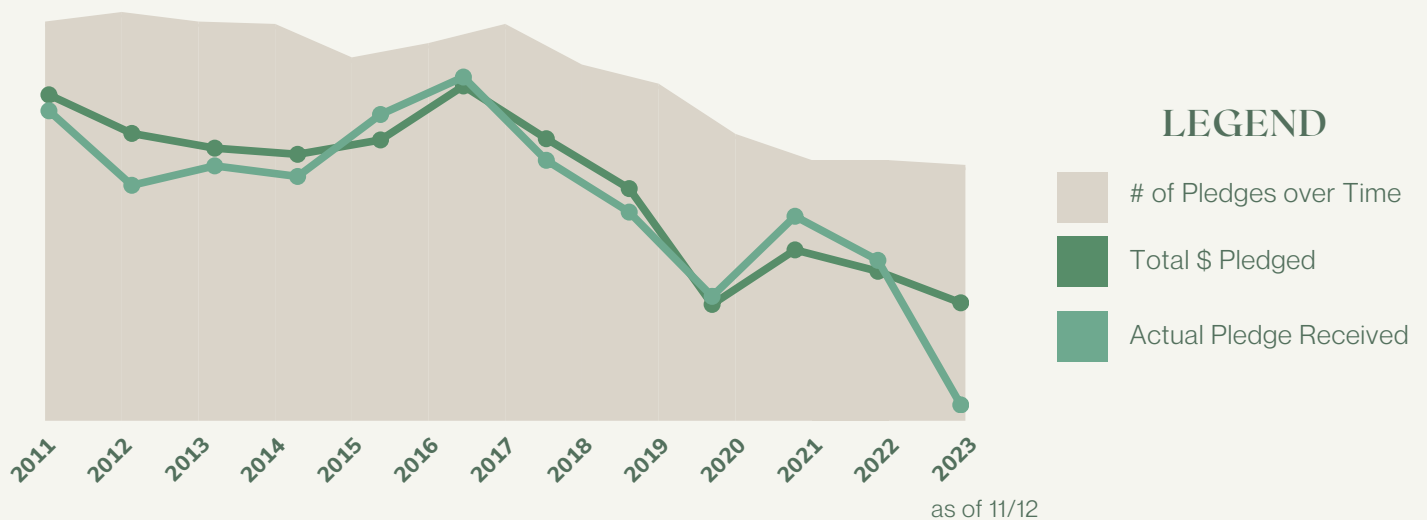
# From the Parish Manager

Carolyn Bedics

## Stewardship Report

| <u>Year</u> | <u># of Pledges</u> | <u>Total \$ Pledged</u> | <u>Annual Avg. per Household</u> | <u>Weekly Avg. per Household</u> | <u>Actual Pledge \$ Received</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2011        | 166                 | \$377,795               | \$2,276                          | \$43.77                          | \$369,867                        |
| 2012        | 170                 | \$379,923               | \$2,235                          | \$42.98                          | \$373,605                        |
| 2013        | 166                 | \$364,670               | \$2,197                          | \$42.25                          | \$344,180                        |
| 2014        | 165                 | \$358,854               | \$2,175                          | \$41.82                          | \$351,852                        |
| 2015        | 151                 | \$356,411               | \$2,360                          | \$45.39                          | \$347,668                        |
| 2016        | 157                 | \$362,092               | \$2,306                          | \$44.35                          | \$372,146                        |
| 2017        | 165                 | \$383,419               | \$2,324                          | \$44.69                          | \$386,940                        |
| 2018        | 148                 | \$362,576               | \$2,450                          | \$47.11                          | \$354,054                        |
| 2019        | 140                 | \$342,873               | \$2,449                          | \$47.10                          | \$333,594                        |
| 2020        | 119                 | \$297,124               | \$2,497                          | \$48.02                          | \$300,304                        |
| 2021        | 108                 | \$318,662               | \$2,951                          | \$56.74                          | \$331,946                        |
| 2022        | 108                 | \$310,210               | \$2,872                          | \$55.24                          | \$314,536                        |
| 2023        | 106                 | \$297,753               | \$2,809                          | \$54.02                          | \$257,419                        |

as of 11/12/23



### LEGEND

- # of Pledges over Time
- Total \$ Pledged
- Actual Pledge Received

# Stewardship Report (II)

## 2023 Pledge Distribution

| <u>Weekly Pledge</u> | <u># of Pledges</u> | <u>% of Pledges</u> | <u>Total Annual \$</u> | <u>% of Annual</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Under 5.00           | 2                   | 1.89%               | \$420.00               | 0.14%              |
| 5.00 - 9.99          | 6                   | 5.66%               | \$2,240.00             | 0.75%              |
| 10.00 - 14.99        | 6                   | 5.66%               | \$3,912.00             | 1.31%              |
| 15.00 - 19.99        | 7                   | 6.60%               | \$6,540.00             | 2.20%              |
| 20.00 - 24.99        | 16                  | 15.09%              | \$18,780.00            | 6.31%              |
| 25.00 - 29.99        | 10                  | 9.43%               | \$14,000.00            | 4.70%              |
| 30.00 - 39.99        | 4                   | 3.77%               | \$7,080.00             | 2.38%              |
| 40.00 - 49.99        | 14                  | 13.21%              | \$32,566.00            | 10.94%             |
| 50.00 - 74.99        | 16                  | 15.09%              | \$47,865.00            | 16.08%             |
| 75.00 - 99.99        | 9                   | 8.49%               | \$39,990.00            | 13.43%             |
| 100 & over           | 16                  | 15.09%              | \$124,360.00           | 41.77%             |

## Giving History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Receipts</u> |              |              |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
|             | <u>Pledge</u>   | <u>Plate</u> | <u>Total</u> |
| 2011        | 369,867         | 23,879       | 393,746      |
| 2012        | 373,606         | 23,033       | 396,639      |
| 2013        | 344,180         | 18,975       | 363,155      |
| 2014        | 351,852         | 16,529       | 368,381      |
| 2015        | 347,668         | 15,526       | 363,194      |
| 2016        | 372,146         | 24,362       | 396,508      |
| 2017        | 386,940         | 16,050       | 402,990      |
| 2018        | 354,054         | 29,124       | 383,178      |
| 2019        | 333,594         | 22,921       | 356,515      |
| 2020        | 300,304         | 23,740       | 324,044      |
| 2021        | 331,946         | 37,668       | 369,614      |
| 2022        | 314,537         | 40,943       | 355,480      |

# *From the* Parish Registers

## Holy Baptisms

Karley Jean Reynolds: April 23  
Bowen Charles Kee: May 6  
Logan Lawrence Kee: May 6  
Renee Alexa Cherrin: May 13  
Matteo Vincenzo Carrullo: May 21  
Dominic Armando Velivis: June 4

## New or Returning

Chris Adesanya & Tope Mabo Gunje  
Aleth & Colwin Bocasan  
Mary DePaul  
Diana & John Glaubitz  
Phyllis Greco  
Bernadette Taddei  
Eileen Warren

## Attendance History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Average</u> |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| 2011        | 10,796       | 208            |
| 2012        | 11,010       | 208            |
| 2013        | 10,504       | 202            |
| 2014        | 10,283       | 198            |
| 2015        | 9,484        | 182            |
| 2016        | 10,584       | 208            |
| 2017        | 10,189       | 207            |
| 2018        | 10,391       | 199            |
| 2019        | 9,287        | 181            |
| 2020        | ----         | 136*           |
| 2021        | 4,732        | 91             |
| 2022        | 6,698        | 129            |

\* through March 8th

## Transfers

Mary & Bill Waterman

## Funerals *and* Memorial Services

Louis Waters: January 25  
Alice Mahan: March 3  
Herman Hengeveld: March 18  
Wister Baisch: May 5  
William Lauder: October 8  
Gary Landis: November 4

# *From the* 2022 Parochial Report

Church School Students

30

Baptized Members

333

Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)

129

# *From the Nursery School Director*

## Jackie Anderson, Director

St. Matthew's Nursery School opened our doors in 1992 and our staff has nurtured thousands of children ages two and one half to five. Our reputation is well established throughout the area, primarily due to our phenomenal staff, caring parents, and strong support from Father Rodney.

The configuration of staff at the nursery school includes six (6) classroom teachers, seven (7) enrichment teachers, and six (6) teacher's aides. Our school prides itself on its inclusivity, supporting the needs and abilities of all learners. The school staff works closely with county agencies to ensure accommodations and IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) are effective.

Children's imaginations are engaged daily with core skill building, arts and crafts, cooking, stories, physical education, music, chapel, library, and other enrichment opportunities. Our Lunch Bunch program offers meals, and extended programs daily from 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Throughout the school year, learners of all ages interact with special guest speakers, and older children enjoy short field trips. Annually, the school hosts a Family Event and a one-week optional camp.



The Nursery School is growing closer to attaining its desired credential of being a Licensed Childcare Facility by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. On November 7th a Representative from DHS visited the school for the initial inspection of the building. There were several violations found that are expected to be completed within thirty days and then the school will be given a provisional certificate of compliance. The representative will visit again in six months to complete a full inspection and provided there are no violations, the school will be given a regular certificate of compliance that will be in effect for a twelve month period.

Please get in touch with the Nursery School by telephone at (215) 646-4466 or via email at [nurseryschool@saintmattsec.org](mailto:nurseryschool@saintmattsec.org).

Respectfully submitted,  
**Jackie Anderson**  
Director



# *From the* **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for Children**

St. Matthew's has embraced the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) program for over 30 years. The teaching method is based on the work of Maria Montessori whose methods of educating and empowering children are world famous. Our program aims to nurture each child's unique relationship with God using specially chosen and unique materials, prayer, song, reading and listening to the words and stories in the Bible, and spiritual self-exploration: **"Help me come closer to God by myself"**

- Level 1: Led by **Nancy Cunningham** and **Nancy Williams**. In 2023, a total of 3 children aged 3-5 years old are enrolled.
- Level 2: Led by **Linda Schindewolf** and **Linda Baier**. A total of 9 children in Kindergarten to 2nd grade are enrolled.
- Level 3: Led by **Judy Groben**. A total of 15 children in 3rd to 5th grade are enrolled.

Nancy Cunningham, Linda Baier, and Linda Schindewolf have been catechists for over 30 years and were involved with birth of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd from its very beginning at St. Matthew's. Judy Groben has been a catechist at St. Matthew's for 22 years. Nancy Williams has been a catechist for 10 years.

These five experienced catechists have undergone rigorous training for hundreds of hours to lead our CGS program. Our Catechists frequently re-take levels of training to keep up with new materials, new or changed presentations, and ways of presenting new materials.



Catechists direct the Sunday school through prayerful stewardship of monetary and human resources, with responsibilities including; providing administrative structure; defining our mission, goals, and objectives; problem-solving; establishing and maintaining lines of communication; program development; and ensuring the quality of our program.

In addition, we have a staff of dedicated volunteers who assist our catechists, including **Sue Acquaviva, Diane McCleary, Caryn Brannen, and Mike Acquaviva.**

Over the past few years, there had been a general decline in the attendance of families and staff members. In response, we have had to make some difficult decisions, including the discontinuation of the Toddler Atrium. Other changes include adjustments to our instructed Eucharist program, Solemn Communion. After discerning a new approach with Fr. Rodney, CGS has opted to align its Eucharistic instruction with increased attention to aspects of our Episcopal tradition.

CGS has seen an increase of new families coming to St. Matthew's and is pleased to welcome them. During 2023, CGS has been blessed with welcoming 8 new children to our atria.

Our team has exciting offerings planned for the community in 2024. A highlight is the annual Liturgy of Light. This children's worship service is modeled after the Episcopal Easter Vigil and allows children to lead a service that celebrates the risen Christ.

As always, CGS plans to maintain its strong program and add new and updated materials.

Our hope for the future is to continually attract new families to our parish so that more children can benefit from our wonderful program. We also hope to recruit and train new catechists and assistants.

Respectfully submitted,

**Linda Baier**, Lead Catechist (jg)



# *From the Property Committee*

## David Brock and Bill Reynolds

During the past year we have completed several necessary property projects to help maintain and upgrade our facilities. During the summer all the Nursery School classrooms and hallways were painted to help keep the classrooms looking clean and fresh. The Nursery School Kitchen was upgraded with new cabinets and we plan on new countertops next year. Fr. Dave continued to support us with various wood working projects, and the wood decks and railings around the modular were cleaned and stained.

There are a number of projects, both short-term and long-term being addressed by the Vestry. This autumn we will begin a major update of the church grounds. Tree care projects will include removal of several large diseased trees that could present a hazard to the church itself. A soil grading project will also be completed around the perimeter of our buildings. This is an acute issue, as water runoff flows toward, not away from, our foundation in most areas.

Our Long Range Plans will require some major upgrades to the facilities and include the following projects:

- New roofs for the church and Parish Hall
- New Carpets in the halls and stairs in the Education wing
- Upgrade/Replacement of the Modular Building (this will require significant capital expense, and we are currently assessing various options)
- Crack repairs and sealing of the parking lots.
- Painting of the church and Parish Hall interiors.
- Landscaping upgrades to maintain trees and beds.
- Replacement of privacy partitions in bathrooms

The job of maintaining St. Matthew's requires the work of many, and other smaller projects are always being done by the Property Committee members. Their efforts are greatly appreciated, with special thanks to Bill Graham for his efforts regarding the church grounds, and Bill Garver for all of the odd jobs done on site, as well as the cleaning and maintenance of our public road signs.

Respectfully submitted,

*David Brock*  
*Bill Reynolds*

# *From the Pastoral Care Ministry*

## Mr. George Bishop and Ms. Treva McLaughlin

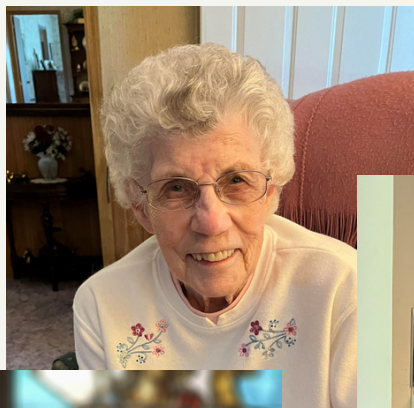
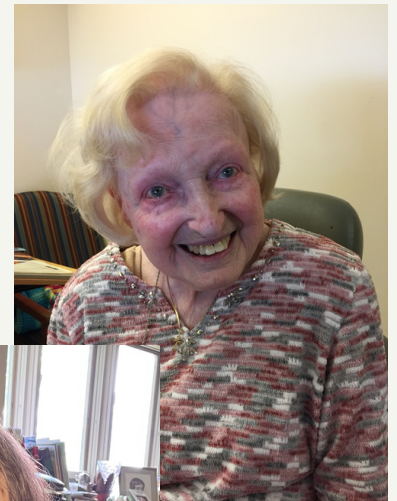
The Pastoral Care Team is comprised of parishioners who have undergone pastoral care training and are interested in serving in this important ministry.

Current Team members include **Alan Broadhead, Jon Clark, Nancy McElwee, Susan Ricciardi, Karen Sawyer, Josephine Smith, Pat Varleta and the coordinators below.**

Our core mission is to minister to and visit parish members who are homebound, infrequently attend church, or need support. A typical visit includes contemplative conversation, fellowship, prayer, and frequently providing the Eucharist. When our team is not performing visits, we interface with parishioners via handwritten notes, calls, texts, and other means of communication. Occasionally, we deliver prayer shawls prepared for us by the Knit Wits and other volunteers. Bimonthly, the team members meet to communicate and serve as a support system for one another. Fr. Rodney provides supervision and ministry support.

Respectfully submitted,

**George Bishop and Treva McLaughlin, Team Coordinators**



Here are some of the amazing people we have the pleasure of visiting...

# *From the Music Ministry*

## Martha Reynolds, Arise Band Co-Leader

Our main goal as the Arise Band is to provide meaningful worship music in a contemporary style, that reflects the scripture each Sunday morning at the 9:00 service.

Starting this past September, we added a new member to the band, **Joe Tumolo**. You will see him playing, electric guitar, drums, and bass. He is a talented musician, and we are blessed to have him.

Some of the youth musicians have offered their talents to us also. **Sophia & Alexa Roehner** and **Xavier Buesgen**. We look forward to hearing them play this Christmas Eve at the 3:00 service and in the new year also!

Looking ahead, we hope to continue to keep the worship music fresh, enjoying the old songs but bringing out new songs with great messages praising our Lord. We look forward to an even better year!

In Christ,

**Martha Reynolds** (coordinator) and **Anne Flood** (conductor)



# *From the Music Ministry*

## Judi Kearney, Organist & Choir Director

Has it really been a year? As I look back on my first year as the Choir Director and Organist at St. Matthew's, I suddenly realize just how much the 10:30 a.m. music program has grown. Initially, with less than three weeks of preparation under a new director, your very dedicated adult choir presented an exciting and challenging Christmas Eve liturgy. Their enthusiasm for new music is infectious, and together, we have introduced revised psalm settings, new service music, and expanded our use of the hymnals. We pray and learn together. At Easter, we were blessed to have new cottas for the Hallelujah Chorus! Thank you! Throughout the summer, I have introduced a variety of guest musicians and soloists to create a new and welcoming worship experience here at St. Matthew's. I hope we can continue to explore local talent to broaden the musical offerings at our worship service.

The newest addition to the Music Program is our handchime choir. There are 14 volunteers, rehearsing on a regular basis. We plan to provide special music at the 10:30 a.m. service as often as time and space permit. The handchimes were a memorial donation from Bill and Dorothea Graham. Bringing the handchimes into the worship experience honors this very special gift. Thank you, Bill and Dorothea!

I am grateful and very humbled to have your support as we work together to create new and meaningful worship experiences for the congregation here at St. Matthew's.

Make A Joyful Noise unto the Lord!

*Judi A. Kearney*



# *From the Outreach Ministries*

## **Little Pantry**

Since the “The Little Pantry” ministry began in November of 2021, it has been obvious there is a need in our community for help with food, toiletry items, cleaning supplies....

Every day the pantry is being used, so there is a continuous need for donations. We are in constant need of tuna fish pouches, peanut butter, crackers, dish washing liquid, paper towels, toilet paper, shampoo.....There is a list of items in the Narthex on the table, feel free to grab one to have on hand when at the grocery store if you feel led to contribute!

The pantry is checked every day; we are blessed to have a team of dedicated members to stock the supplies. Our team of pantry stockers are:

**Saturday - Martha Reynolds**

**Monday – Eliana Detrich**

**Wednesday – Angie Pack**

**Friday – Jane Baker**

**Sunday – Melissa Brown & Kay Williams**

**Tuesday – Karen Becker**

**Thursday – Joan and John Achey**

Thank you to all who have and are donating to this much needed ministry!

In Christ,

*Martha Reynolds*

## **MWAMBA**

Mwamba Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that was founded in 2000, with the goal of building mutual partnerships that enhance human capacity through education, sharing of resources, and cultural exchanges. Because education is power, Mwamba Foundation seeks to transform individuals and communities in Kenya by enhancing education. Mwamba offers scholarships for high school education, which is not free in Kenya, to needy boys (25%) and girls (75%). Each scholarship costs \$400 per year per student, and covers the majority of their expenses.

St. Matthew’s has been a supporter of Mwamba Foundation for 20 years, and over that time has provided scholarship funding of over \$72,000! That means that your generous donations have supported over 45 students through all 4 years of high school!

# *From the Outreach Ministries*

## **Mattie N. Dixon Community Cupboard**

Mattie Dixon ministry collects food items for families in need in the Ambler area and surrounding communities throughout the year. The Community Cupboard plays an important role working to help hundreds of local people in need of food, and has been serving the community for the past 45 years. St. Matthew's parishioners support the Cupboard by donating non-perishable foods, which are delivered by volunteers on a monthly basis to the Cupboard location in Ambler. A list of needed foods is usually found in the weekly bulletin. There is also a special large collection in early November for Thanksgiving. This year (2023), we donated 158 pounds of food to the Cupboard for Thanksgiving!

## **Feed the Hungry (Cecil & Grace Bean's Food Pantry)**

The St. Matthew's community continues to contribute generously to the Feed the Hungry program. This allows us to commit to sending \$250 each month to Grace Bean Soup Kitchen at Saint John's Church in Norristown. As many as two hundred persons receive a nourishing meal on a regular basis through this ministry.

## **Operation Bear Hug**

Operation Bear-Hug is a powerful outreach program that has been in operation for many years at Christmas. On or near Christmas Eve, parishioners deliver stuffed bears to facilities in the community where people are in need. This includes local area hospitals, senior living facilities, and people who are not able to easily leave their homes.. The kind words and prayers, along with a teddy bear to hug, offer a bright reminder of the promise of Christ's arrival.

## **Additional Outreach in 2023**

In addition to the outreach items noted above, the following organizations have also been recipients of aid from our parish:

- Red Cross
- Hurricane Ian Relief
- Maui Wildfire Relief
- St. James School
- Horsham Interfaith Lenten Clothes Drive
- United Thank Offering (UTO)
- And more!

# From the Fellowship Committee



Fellowship this year has continued its expansion of coffee hour, which continues to be very well received. Additionally we have provided food for Spring Fest to celebrate the end of the church and school season, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner, St. Matthew's Day and Trunk or Treat. 2024 will see the return of Chili Bingo and other possible events. Opportunities are available for additional parishioners to assist in the planning, purchasing, cooking, and setup/cleanup for each of these joyous events.

