

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Meeting  
January 30, 2022



**St. Matthew's Episcopal Church**

A Neighborhood Church with a Worldwide Community

2136 Carter Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108 + 651-645-3058 + [www.stmatthewsmn.org](http://www.stmatthewsmn.org)



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## ST. MATTHEW'S WAY OF JESUS

- **Story:** Learning God's story and finding ourselves in it
- **Prayer:** Attending with openness to God and the world
- **Simplicity:** Decluttering our lives so we can be faithfully present to God and one another
- **Discernment:** Reflecting together on what God is up to in our lives and neighborhood using scripture, tradition, and reason
- **Reconciliation:** Joining God's movement to heal and bring people into relationship across differences
- **Hospitality:** Opening space in our hearts and lives to give and receive in relationship with neighbors and strangers in need
- **Generosity:** Trusting in God's abundance and sharing what God has entrusted to us
- **Gratitude:** Living lives of thanksgiving for everything God has given us, and breaking bread with others in this spirit

## AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

Pre-Meeting Photos and Thank-Yous

Opening Prayer led by Retiring Senior Warden Amy Fisher

Election of Annual Meeting Clerk

Approval of 2021 Annual Meeting minutes and Annual Meeting reports

Constancy and Change: A Homily by Assistant Priest Maggie Nancarrow

Election of New Vestry Members

2022 Budget Presentation and Q&A by Treasurer Ben Reinhardt

Constancy and Change: A Conversation with Cradle Episcopalians of St. Matthew's by Cohen James Stember-Albrecht, with the help of his parents, James and Brynn; Lis Christenson; and Martha Hotchkiss

Small Group Discussions: What we hold dear and what we dream for St. Matthew's

Transition Update by Incoming Senior Warden Gary Johnson

Thanksgivings

Closing Prayer led by 2022 Senior Warden Gary Johnson

# MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING 2021

Annual meeting, January 31, 2021

Via Zoom with approximately 81 participants

Blair Pogue called the meeting to order and Susan Monkmeyer led the group in an opening prayer.

A motion to elect Connie Starns as clerk for the meeting was moved, seconded, and approved.

The minutes of the Annual Meeting from 2020 were moved, seconded, and approved.

Cody Tuttle read Psalm 111 and a Dwelling in Scripture followed.

Thanks were given to departing vestry members Susan Monkmeyer, Ben Reinhardt and Devene Matthews, as well as thanks to Episcopal Church of Minnesota delegates Marilyn Grantham, Laura Bathke, Terese Lewis, and Karen Dickson.

A slate of new vestry members was moved, seconded and approved consisting of Amy Fisher (Senior Warden), Mary Ann Evander (Junior Warden), Rosa Uy, Michelle Chiezah, and Jake Anderson.

The following members of the congregation spoke briefly about new experiments and God's faithfulness in 2020 - a year marked by a pandemic.

- Barbara Toren: unexpected gifts that arrived at the doors of members during the year, which included begonias, Pentecost doves and Christmas ornaments. She also spoke about Onward, a group for recent widows.
- Barrett Fisher: Adults growing in faith together through studying books and meeting via Zoom.
- Spencer Hosch and Frankie Billing: Godly Play through boxes sent to the homes of families with children. Spencer especially enjoyed the candles and the paper fish chain. Frankie especially enjoyed advent candles, decorating the crosses and finding Jesus in a treasure hunt.
- Birdie Carter: Reminded us that God stands with us even when we could not be with family members during health crises.
- Elaine Tarone: Reported that Project Home and MICAH still had needs that could be met even if the temporary homes in churches were suspended. Relationships with former mothers deepened during this challenging year and when those mothers expressed their needs, the congregation stepped up and the needs were met. The Zoom meetings of the MICAH organization allowed for deeper relationships.
- Natalie Jansen: Youth offerings were different due to the pandemic, but Covid-safe activities of hiking and biking continued. She enjoyed the Theology of Justice classes over Zoom.
- Gwen Odney: She and her husband joined the outdoor services at St. Matthew's because their home church was not offering such an option. They found the joyful and warm welcome of St. Matthew's so appealing that their "meantime" intention has become "beyond meantime" and they have joined the church membership.
- Richard Burns: The Zoom coffee hours have created connections and taught him to love the children in absentia.
- Dan White: The Generosity Campaign is the most successful campaign ever, both in terms of funds raised and the number of donor households. This speaks to the people of St. Matthew's.

Blair spoke about the new experiments and learnings from 2020 and the 2021 vision and priorities. The God who works outside also works within us. Even a year like 2020 and early 2021 is evidence that God's light continues to shine even through the darkest days and He will equip us to go forth. As we prepare to re-enter our church building, we will re-visit the usage of the new kitchen and hospitality spaces. Outdoor worship is likely to continue. God will always illumine a way forward.

Ben Reinhardt addressed the budget, which was a bit different due the circumstances of the pandemic. Rental was down since gatherings were diminished but there were also savings on utilities, custodial costs and some interest expenses. The balance sheet was strong since some parishioners paid their pledges early. The campaign to pay off the mortgage of the kitchen project may be slightly delayed, but he anticipates that it will be paid by the end of 2021. The 2021 budget will show an increase in salary now that Maggie is a priest and the church will reinstate some expenses for conference attendance. Music/worship budget is reduced since there is not as much music in services. Ben is proud that St. Matthew's has been able to pay full salaries and benefits to the staff. Building costs will increase as the building re-opens. There is some struggle and much prayer over the decision to balance generosity of paying salaries of individuals whose workload has been reduced while being good stewards of the finances. Blair thanked Ben for his role as Treasurer.

Blair extended a warm welcome to the five new members: Richard Burns, Kristine & Chris Granias and Gwen & Eric Odney.

In a session of thanksgiving for this unusual year, members expressed thoughts and gratitude for the way that St. Matthew's staff and members have pivoted to the challenges of this year.

Those thoughts included: appreciation for Morning Prayer, support for those who have had family members in distress, appreciation for how important church is (especially if the choice to attend has been removed), gratitude for the myriad ways that the parish stayed together through delivery of gifts, continuing the crafting group via Zoom, provided needed items of clothing, prayers, phone calls, meals, and support. Many expressed thanks to Blair for her leadership, Lars for his technological skills, Maggie for her creative energy and for the entire staff for their innovative, energetic, and sensitive ways of leading the congregation during this unusual year. Blair continued to walk with members who lost loved ones during a year when it was difficult to meet and to craft memorial services that were Covid-friendly but very meaningful. Members continued to keep up the garden and to visit the church regularly to make sure the building is operating even without congregants. Maggie thanked the parents of young children who became teachers as well as parents and for those members who helped strategize and bring the changes necessary to make this year meaningful. A member reiterated that church is not a physical space but the people who join together. This year made that obvious. The logistics necessary to pivot to outdoor worship, the Thanksgiving feast and worship around the steps during Advent are all evidence of the remarkable members of this congregation. As Blair reiterated, there is no challenge we face that the Holy Spirit won't help solve.

Amy Fisher ended the meeting with a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Connie Starns

## ST. MATTHEW'S VESTRY SLATE 2022

**Gary Johnson, Senior Warden**  
**Rosa Uy, Junior Warden**

**Rotates off in 2023**  
**Rotates off in 2024**

Martin Anderson  
Martha Hotchkiss

Rotates off in 2023  
Rotates off in 2023

Michelle Chiezah  
Jake Anderson

Rotates off in 2024  
Rotates off in 2024

**Jenny Bach**  
**Terese Lewis**

**Rotates off in 2025**  
**Rotates off in 2025**

Names in **bold** indicate new vestry members and/or vestry members running for a different position or term.

### Departing Vestry Members:

Amy Fisher, Senior Warden  
Mary Ann Evander, Junior Warden  
Elizabeth Hosch

## VESTRY BIOGRAPHIES



### **Gary Johnson, Senior Warden**

When I was young, I was nurtured in the Way of Jesus by Christian parents and within a warm conservative Lutheran Church community. When I met my wife Joan almost 40 years ago, she drew me into the Episcopal Church and I have found it a wonderful home to mature in my Christian life. (I now chuckle when I recall, as a young boy, how many times I heard the invitation to accept Christ as my Savior. I wondered, “Yes, I have . . . but can’t we move on now?” I found the Anglican tradition gave me a richer understanding of the Christian life and community.) I have always yearned to live in harmony with God, to stay daily in contact with God and to follow the example of Jesus.

I have had the privilege of serving in many capacities within the Episcopal Church: Past Senior Warden and building committee chair here at St. Matthew’s; a Trustee of the Diocese of Minnesota;

Trustee of the Episcopal House of Prayer, Trustee of General Seminary in New York (the oldest Episcopal



seminary in the U.S.) and currently a trustee of a charitable trust supporting theological education and the nurture of Episcopal priests around the country.

I am a retired estate planning and tax attorney and also a retired CEO/President of a trust company. Joan and I have four married children and 10 grandchildren whom we adore. Retirement has allowed me to read more, play golf, travel with Joan (before this pandemic), nurture friendships and generally to savor whatever I am doing with less sense of being hurried or efficient. Joan and I have enjoyed our ministry of hospitality in our home.



### **Rosa Uy, Junior Warden**

I was born to Chinese immigrants in the Philippines and learned about Jesus when my father sent all his kids to the Episcopal school to learn English and Mandarin Chinese. I left home after college to pursue graduate studies at the Ohio State University. After completing my M.S. in Chemical Engineering and Ph.D. in Biochemistry, I moved to Minnesota. The U of M Biochemistry Department offered me a postdoctoral position. Due to the notoriety of the winter here, I planned to live here for two to three years and then move on. This is the start of my 48th year in Minnesota. I believe that God had an exciting plan for me in Minnesota: I met Warren, 3M offered me a job, and I found St. Matthew's. I had to look for a church for our upcoming wedding and found St. Matthew's through the yellow pages. Warren and I were married by the interim priest in 1980. St. Matthew's has since been my home away from home.

I served as a vestry member while Jean White (Dan's mom) was the bookkeeper, served many years as treasurer, and currently co-chair the Brother Lawrence Guild with Karen Pfeifle. Our son Nathan grew up in the church choir; Michael let him sing in the choir at age nine. My husband Warren is the caretaker of St. Matthew's boiler and is learning how to live-stream. I spend my spare time cooking, baking, and investing.

My time as vestry expired this January but was humbled to be asked to stay to serve as Junior Warden. This is an exciting time for our faith community. I look forward to listening, praying, and discerning with you to find out what God's plan is for St. Matthew's.



### **Martin Anderson**

Hello, my name is Martin Anderson. My wife, Linda, and I first encountered St. Matthew's on Christmas Day 2018. Walking out after the morning service both of us turned towards each other and said "Yes." As we have participated in various aspects of St. Matthew's we have felt that this is a welcoming and healing community that we want to be a part of. I believe that we are to use our gifts and was humbled to be asked to do so by being part of the vestry.

I have been employed at Bethel University for 37 years, and currently am the controller for the University's foundation. My daughters gave me a "Life is good" t-shirt with Jake pushing a lawn mower because I enjoy working in the yard, but you will also find me with a good book, planning our next trip, or enjoying our new grandchildren Jonas and Lena.



### **Martha Hotchkiss**

I was raised in St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, participating in the youth group and singing in junior choir. I left for 20 years, and then returned to the Episcopal church when I discovered that it was a place where serious discourse, doubt, and joyful practice could exist side by side. I'm eagerly anticipating vestry service as a way to deepen my connection to St. Matthew's and God.

My day job is teaching. My interests are global affairs, hiking and biking, and good food. My best days are spent with my family: wife Elizabeth, and daughter Alice.



**Michelle Chiezah**

My name is Michelle Chiezah, and I am originally from St. Thomas, Jamaica. In the early 1980s, when I was a teenager, my family emigrated from Jamaica to Kentucky. Several years later, when I was a sophomore in college, my parents and my four younger siblings relocated permanently to Georgia. I have resided in St. Paul since 1992.

Currently, I am employed at the Minnesota Department of Health as the State’s Infant Health and Mortality Reduction Specialist. I hold master’s degrees in Sociology/Population Studies from Kansas State University, and a Master’s in Public Health/Maternal and Child Health from the University of Minnesota, Twin-Cities. Additionally, I have also completed extensive training and coursework in population studies/demography and quantitative analysis while studying in a doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, listening to music, going on long walks, reading, and catching up on current

events. I look forward to serving on the vestry again at St. Matthew’s to help make important decisions about the operations of the church. More importantly, I am excited about being able to draw on the knowledge and skills I have gained over many years of public health practice to help the church transition safely and seamlessly out of the pandemic. Like so many of you, I also eagerly anticipate the day when we can all congregate again for worship and other important events at St. Matthew’s.



**Jake Anderson**

Jake Anderson is originally from Lansing, Michigan, and was raised in the Lutheran faith. His wife Elizabeth was baptized at St. Matthew’s and they were married at St. Matt’s in 2015. Jake became a member in 2017 when they moved from Chicago to Minneapolis. Their now-two-year-old daughter, Sophia, played baby Jesus in the 2018 Christmas pageant.

Jake’s professional background is in non-profit administration. He is currently the Manager of Annual Fund and Special Events at Project for Pride in Living. He brings with him a wealth of experience in non-profit operations, fundraising, event planning, database management, financial planning, and program development. Prior to working with Project for Pride in

Living, Jake was the Manager Director of Ragamala Dance Company in Minneapolis, Manager of Artistic Administration at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance in Chicago, and the Patron Programs Manager at the Glimmerglass Festival in New York.

Jake finds himself closest to God when he is in the outdoors, listening to or playing music, cooking, or spending time with friends and family. He played the saxophone at several of our outdoor services in 2020 and 2021.

Jake is honored to be considered to serve on the vestry to promote and support the continuing growth of St. Matthew’s and further his involvement in the local community.





### **Jenny Bach**

I'm a committed member of the St. Matthew's community, pleased to accept the request to serve on the vestry. I've been a member here since my late husband and I were married at St. Matthew's in 1998. I've served on the vestry twice before, once during our last interim time and once as senior warden during Blair's tenure. I am a member of the choir (make a joyful noise!) and lead the Counting Ministry.

Away from church, I retired from a career with a local government association in August where my last job was organizing their online profile of information topics for city officials. Since then, I have been learning how to relax. I read books in the daylight (a delight) and take online art classes that play with color and repetitive shapes, since I have no real drawing talent! I love Irish music and culture and for many years taught Irish dance and ran an Irish dance school and a performance group.

I hope my organizing and administrative skills, along with my love for the St. Matthew's community, will be a helpful addition to the vestry during our time of transition and search for a new rector.



### **Terese Lewis**

The first time I approached the red doors of St. Matthew's, I was waddling up the front steps, weeks away from delivering the first of our three sons. My husband Paul Kiehne and I were lured in by the sound of a lively choir accompanied by African drums, and the first parishioner to greet us was Birdie Carter, who welcomed us (and especially my pregnant belly) with wide open arms.

Nearly 27 years later, St. Matt's is still home. Our family has been nurtured and supported by a vibrant community devoted to living out the good news of the Gospel and showing Christ's love to one another and to our neighbors. We have been challenged to grow, as well; when Blair arrived, she immediately put me to work serving on the vestry, and I've been honored to serve a couple of terms as senior warden during exciting seasons of discernment and growth. I also worked for about eight years on staff as director of children's, youth & intergenerational formation and editor of Tidings, converting our monthly newsletter to a

weekly electronic publication. There is just too much good news to share at St. Matthew's!

I currently serve as a full-time tutor in MN Reading Corps, working with K-3 students in my Hamline-Midway neighborhood. I fill up my spare time with knitting, reading, cooking, camping, or working on the 17th draft of my first novel for middle-grade readers. I love a story that continues to unfold in new ways and surprising ways, and I'm excited to serve on the vestry as we enter St. Matthew's next great chapter together.

# ABOUT CHRISTIAN DISCERNMENT

Christian discernment involves distinguishing God’s voice from other voices around us, in our culture, and in our heads. It involves prayerful examination of a variety of perspectives and possibilities with open minds and hearts.

In discernment, we care about the outcome, but more than trying to achieve the outcome we want, we are open to God’s leading, whatever it might be. This requires trusting that God’s Holy Spirit is present and will lead us, if we pray, listen, and open ourselves to God’s leading.

Discernment is not democracy, nor is it about taking a particular course of action because we don’t want to hurt someone’s feelings.

Instead, discernment is about lovingly putting a variety of different ideas on the table for consideration, and then vetting them thoughtfully, without attachment to any particular outcome.

Ongoing discernment is important because we live in an era of great change, and the Holy Spirit is constantly on the move. Just because something worked in the past does not mean it will work today or in the future.

We must constantly reexamine our assumptions, means, goals, and motives. We must remain agile, like a sailboat, able to change direction quickly to catch the changing winds of the Holy Gust (Ghost). \*

Discernment is one of the eight spiritual practices in St. Matthew’s Way of Jesus. While our church has engaged in major, church-wide and in-depth discernment processes every couple of years, we’ve also committed ourselves to cultivating a culture of ongoing discernment. This means that we regularly evaluate what we think God is up to—and how we are responding, or not.

We must regularly step back and take a prayerful look at all of our ongoing ministries. Is the congregation still energized about this particular ministry? Are there more life-giving ways of doing things? Might God be calling us to move in a new direction? What are the best uses of our time, talent, and gifts?

Even though it is easy (and understandable) for us to get attached to certain ways of doing things, faithfulness requires listening to God—as well as having enough trust in God to respond to the Holy Spirit and change course when needed.

\* This metaphor/insight about a church needing to be like an agile sailboat, able to catch the changing winds of the Holy “Ghust,” is taken from Patrick Kiefert’s book *We Are Here Now*.

## **A Simple Process for Corporate Discernment at St. Matthew’s**

- Decide on a key question (or questions) on which the group will focus.
- Open and close with prayer.
- After the opening prayer, take 10–15 minutes to “dwell” in a passage of scripture. Read a short passage of scripture out loud (stories work well), observe a brief silence, and then invite people to share what captured their imagination – an image, a word, or perhaps a phrase. In this dwelling time, wondering questions are raised, but they are not answered.
- Allow group members to reflect, one by one, on the question(s) at hand. See below for ground rules to guide this reflection.

## **Some Ground Rules Conducive to Life-Giving Group Discernment**

- Decide ahead of time if everyone must agree on a particular issue or decision, or if only a majority of group members must agree to move forward. If a majority, can those who disagree support the group's next steps or decision, as members of the church community?
- Turn off and put away all electronic devices.
- If possible, take a few minutes to center yourself and let go of the pressures and emotions of the day.
- Consider everything said in the group discernment process as confidential, unless the group decides otherwise.
- Open yourself to God's presence and leading, and come with great expectation that the Holy Spirit will work in and through group members, revealing something of importance to all of you.
- Once you have spoken, make sure everyone else present has a chance to speak before you speak again.
- Allow a period of silence after each person speaks, to consider what they said and allow the group to receive its meaning and respond accordingly.
- Give your full attention to others and what they are saying, rather than formulating your response while others are talking.
- Say what you need to say in this time of discernment, rather than afterwards to others (i.e. no "parking lot" conversations!). Have enough respect for and trust of other group members to share different opinions and disagreements in this time of discernment. If there are no differences of opinion, it will be hard for the group to engage in discernment worthy of the name.
- Listen for words, themes, images, and metaphors that keep coming up.
- Pay attention to people's body language and tone of voice. Are there times in the conversation that people lean forward in their seats, get more energized as they speak, laugh together, seem to be thinking the same thoughts? These may be signs that the Spirit is moving amidst the group.
- Is the group able to come to a common mind after everyone has shared their concerns, objections, etc. (without "Minnesota nice")?

# SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

As I was reviewing last year's Rector's Report, I realized that I could begin my report by recycling Blair's first sentence with a change to just one digit:

The year 2021 was like no other!

St. Matthew's innovative spirit and good-natured flexibility appeared consistently as we made the transition from fully online worship and faith formation to a standing-on-the-sidewalk Easter celebration to lounging-in-lawn-chairs Sunday morning worship to socially distanced, air-scrubbed, livestreamed indoor worship on two levels of our building. We kept some 2020 COVID-prompted innovations, such as Faith Forum and Morning Prayer via Zoom, while we adapted others, such as a new podcast in place of an electronic worship bulletin. In-person children's formation resumed with a new, all-ages format where families learned together, and Rosa's Famous Fried Rice reappeared in take-out containers.

Lest you think that it's all about us: Our ties to our larger community were strengthened too. Our Good Friday Prayer Walk culminated with prayer and a word from Valerie Castile at the Philando Castile Memorial Garden, we visited with Project Home guests at their new quarters at Provincial House in Highland Park, and we returned to serving at Loaves and Fishes.

None of this, and I mean none, would have been possible without the generosity of our clergy, staff, and all of you. Blair and Maggie planned, revised, tried, revised, and ultimately devised ways to provide worship and education. Their boundless enthusiasm, vast knowledge, and willingness to experiment resulted in opportunities for everyone in the St. Matthew's community to participate. Michael assembled scores, instrumentalists, and vocalists, sometimes under cover of a canopy, so that we could have live music during our services. As our Deacon, Vant braved the windy conditions of the park and masked conditions indoors. Lars, well, Lars held everything together, overseeing all our digital and print communication, keeping track of approximately a million moving pieces in our office, and answering questions with unflagging patience. Bookkeeper Fariba, volunteer treasurer Ben Reinhardt, and volunteer counters recorded, managed, and reported our finances.

Their reports were joyful indeed. Dan White headed up a 2021 Generosity Campaign so successful that you pledged MORE than the goal! Your faithful fulfillment of your pledges covered all our operating expenses, and you gave generously above that so that we could purchase ventilation equipment to reduce the risk of COVID transmission in our building.

Your generosity wasn't limited to financial gifts. You contributed your time and talents with graciousness. As you read the reports that follow in this booklet, you'll be overwhelmed by the number of people and by the creativity that abounds in the way we serve one another and our community. Just a few examples:

- Vergers adjusted to ensure smooth worship in varying venues. Ushers and chalice bearers changed their routines and added a downstairs location so that we could follow the liturgy and participate in communion.
- Benjamin Johnson led a livestreaming initiative, so that when we returned to our building, all could participate digitally. John DesHarnais and Warren Poole embraced difficulties as welcome moments of learning as we troubleshooted this new technology.
- Liz O'Toole maintained the aesthetic appeal of our grounds.
- Tony Hunt and many others led morning prayer each weekday.

Seriously, please read all the reports for a full picture of your combined magnificence.

Not only did we survive 2021, Year Two of a pandemic—we thrived. We forged stronger bonds with one another and welcomed new members. Of course, we also learned that 2022 would start with a massive goodbye when Rector Blair Pogue announced on December 2 that she would be leaving St. Matthew's. After more than

sixteen years, she was hired into a new position as Canon for Innovation and Vitality for the Episcopal Church of Minnesota. This was and is the most excellent sort of news for Episcopal churches throughout Minnesota but a deeply felt loss for St. Matthew's.

Blair's departure invites us to look forward to new chances to innovate, adjust, and love one another and people in our local and global communities as we follow the Way of Jesus in 2022. I will not attempt any sort of specific prophecy here, but I say with confidence that St. Matthew's future will be shaped by undoubtedly awesome new directions of the Holy Spirit.

Amy Fisher, Senior Warden

### **An Addendum of Thanks**

As an addendum to the Senior Warden's report, I would simply like to add a deep thank you this year to the leadership of the St. Matthew's Vestry. This leadership body has spent countless hours discussing our hopes and dreams for gathering and re-gathering during the pandemic, thinking through detailed plans, and preparing for a leadership transition. The grace, generosity, and hope that these leaders have displayed in 2021 goes above and beyond in so many ways. It is a gift to serve St. Matthew's with them, a gift to have their wisdom as we take tentative steps into an unknown future, and a gift to have their support as the staff. A reflection on the state of the parish could not be done without adding a note of deep thanks for the way our vestry showed up this year.

In Peace,  
The Rev. Maggie Nancarrow, Assistant Priest

### **Vestry 2021**

It's a rare year in which St. Matthew's Senior Warden gets to contribute annual report reflections on our entire church as well as on the work of the vestry. When Blair asked me, way back in pre-pandemic times, if I would be willing to serve as 2020 Junior Warden and 2021 Senior Warden, I had no idea that I would be doing just that!

This year's vestry transitioned from a focus on COVID to the work of supporting Blair in discernment of God's leading for St. Matthew's. As we read and discussed chapters of Scott Cormode's book, *The Innovative Church*, we asked questions Cormode suggested to guide us: "What are the longings and losses of the people entrusted to St. Matthew's care? How can we create shared stories of hope that make spiritual senses of those longings and losses?" These questions inspired us to pinpoint learnings from our time in the park that might transfer indoors (such as a slightly shorter service) and consider new ways of telling shared stories of hope (such as the addition of livestreaming).

The livestream increased electronic accessibility for our worship services. In the real world, the replacement of several pews with movable chairs increased physical accessibility in our nave. My heart sings (but not my mouth; no one wants to hear that) when I see people with mobility devices able to participate in more comfort. The vestry also researched and approved ventilation systems that maximized psychological accessibility by minimizing COVID risks.

Now I will tell you about the biggest mistake I made as your Senior Warden. At the beginning of November, I said out loud, "Only two more laid-back vestry meetings and the annual meeting and my term will be over." Mere weeks later, we learned that Blair would be leaving St. Matthew's (I am joking about there being a cause and effect between my statement and Blair's departure; Blair was undeniably and positively called to her new



work). The vestry sprung into extra action with additional meetings to plan Blair’s goodbye and lay the groundwork for a smooth transition to new church leadership in 2022.

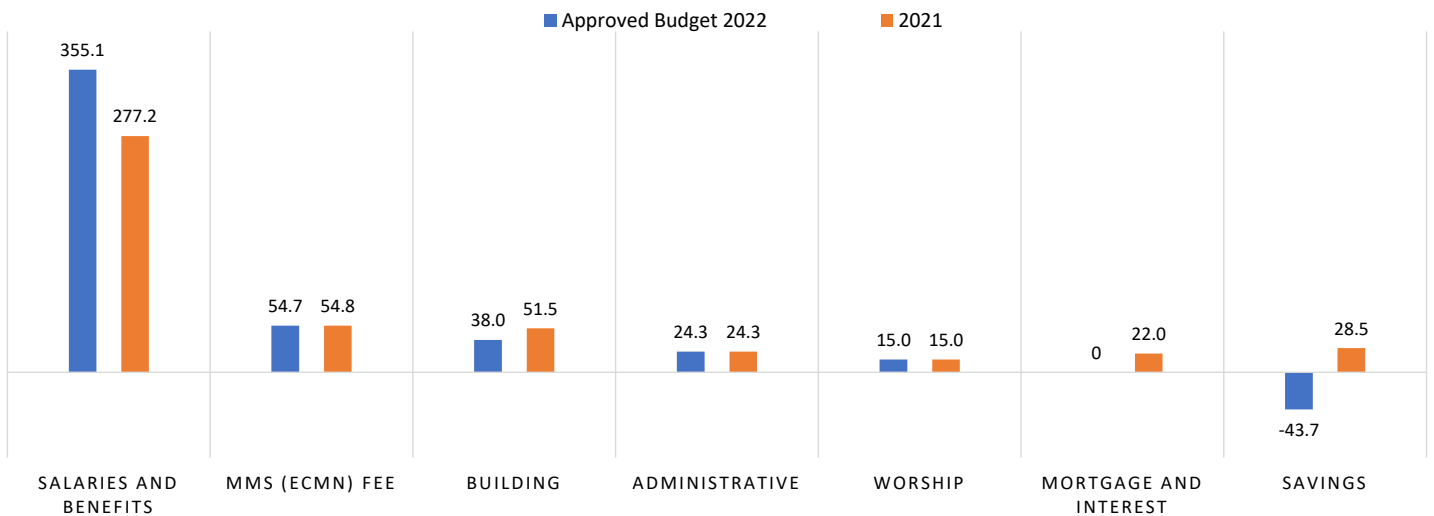
I cannot possibly thank all of the 2021 vestry members with enough vigor to convey the depth of my gratitude. Junior Warden Mary Ann Evander and vestry members Jake Anderson, Martin Anderson, Michelle Chiezah, Elizabeth Hosch, Martha Hotchkiss, and Rosa Uy together created a team that has selflessly served St. Matthew’s.

Respectfully submitted, Amy Fisher

## TREASURER’S REPORT

### 2022 Budget Overview

**REVENUE: 2022 = \$443K OF PLEDGES**  
**2021 = \$429K OF PLEDGES + \$21K HVAC + \$10K CHAIRS + \$13K PLATE**



- **4.0% increase in 2022 compensation:** No merit increases have been given in several years and individual amounts were allocated with vestry approval
- **Rector transition costs and benefits:** The 2022 budget includes \$30,000 of transition costs (including moving costs) plus additional amounts for health benefits for a new Rector, which will be partially funded by our 2021 savings
- **Building costs will decrease in 2022:** New HVAC equipment was installed in 2021, but heating costs are budgeted to rise in 2022
- **0% increase in 2022 Episcopal Church in Minnesota (ECMN) Mission, Ministry and Support (MMS) Fee:** Amount is based on prior operating revenue that stayed relatively flat
- **No Mortgage Payments:** The Kitchen and lift were paid off with a portion of 2021 pledge revenue

## Our Current Financial Position

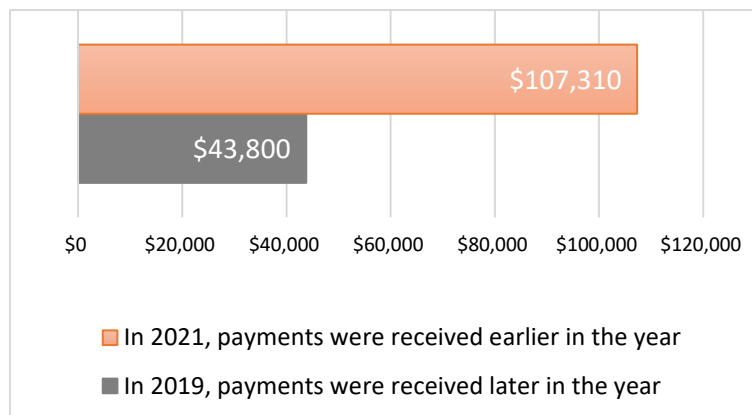
December 31, 2021

### Available Non-Operating Cash

Building (post-HVAC estimate)	\$30,819
Social Justice	\$14,297
Columbarium	\$9,870
Pipe Organ	\$5,206
Brother Lawrence	\$3,777
Library	\$2,681
Children and Youth Retreat	\$2,548
Art	\$743
Women's Retreat	\$446
Men's Retreat	\$290
Acts 2	\$63
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$70,740</b>
<b>Available Operating Cash</b>	<b>\$101,232</b>
<b>Prepaid '22 Pledges and Misc. Liabilities</b>	<b>(\$44,439)</b>

Early pledge payments result in higher available operating cash and prevent the need for excess cash reserves.

### Monthly Average Operating Cash



Ben Reinhardt, Treasurer

## ACOLYTES

When we suspended holding Sunday morning worship services in the sanctuary in March 2020, we also stopped having acolytes participate in them. And we didn't have processions while holding services in College Park. When services resumed in the sanctuary in mid-October 2021, they were scaled back from pre-pandemic practice. We aren't having a gospel procession so there's no need for torchbearers to accompany bringing the lectionary book down into the congregation from the lectern. We currently have four people serving as crucifers: Sylvie Christensen, Natalie Jansen, Devene Matthews, and Isaiah Terveen.

We really do need additional crucifers, and hopefully we may again be able to also schedule torchbearers. Any young people aged 8 and older can serve. We offer "on-the-job training" for new acolytes until they feel comfortable carrying out their responsibilities.

Parents: Please talk with your children about this opportunity to actively serve in worship services. Also talk with the Rev. Maggie Nancarrow or me. We would welcome additional young people to this important ministry.

Marilyn Grantham  
m.grantham@comcast.net or 651-279-1841

## ADULT CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

### Faith Forum

In his book *Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life*, Rowan Williams states that being a disciple means "... very simply going on asking whether what we do, how we think and speak and act, is open to Christ and Christ's Spirit..." He continues that being disciples is "also about how we as a Church go on being a learning community, how we grow in depth of relation with each other and God."

This past year those who participated in Faith Forum at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings wrestled with being a disciple as we read: *Walking the Way of Love*, edited by Courtney Cowart; *Living the Resurrection: The Risen Christ in Everyday Life*, by Eugene Peterson; *Being Disciples: Essentials of The Christian Life*, by Rowan Williams; *Lost in Wonder: Rediscovering the Spiritual Art of Attentiveness*, by Esther De Waal; and *Broken Signposts: How Christianity Makes Sense of the World*, by N. T. Wright. Each week that we met we dwelt in the Word, engaged together with the text, and went away with homework to explore different spiritual practices.

Due to Covid the meetings were via Zoom, but this allowed for greater participation from a wider regional area. The timing was arranged so that the meetings would end so that local participants could come to outdoor or indoor worship afterwards.

After Blair's departure in January, Dave McEachron has taken over as facilitator. Dave had previously led evening book discussions at St. Matthew's, most recently *The Old Testament in Seven Sentences* in January–February 2021. The group is currently discussing *Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality* by Margaret Silf.

Martin Anderson, Participant

## **Lenten Series**

The Lenten series gathered four times during Lent on Tuesday evenings over Zoom, each led by a different facilitator. With all the divisiveness and brokenness in the world, the theme of the Lenten series was “Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace,” focusing on “the four L’s”—Listen, Learn, Lament, and Love. After presentations and the introduction of spiritual practices of listening and lament by Dan Johnson, Don Samuels, Dr. Reed Carlson, and MICAH participants, the series ended with a time of spiritual discernment around the question, “How might God be calling us to respond in love?”

Martin Anderson, Participant

## **Living Faith**

Living Faith met once a month in the fall over Zoom to reflect theologically on contemporary issues. A short presentation based on that month’s book was followed by small group discussion which offered time to listen and respectfully converse with different insights and points of view. Dan White led the session on Mark Allan Powell’s book *Giving to God: The Bible’s Good News about Living a Generous Life* in September. Harry Boyte and Marie-Louise Ström presented on Amanda Ripley’s book *High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out* in October, and also introduced us to the work of Braver Angels. In November, Blair and Elaine Tarone hosted the discussion on *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*.

Martin Anderson, Participant

## **Sunday Morning Book Group**

In 2021, we continued to meet most of the year on Zoom. We started the year by reading *The Unexpected Joy of the Ordinary* by Catherine Gray. Then we moved on to *Love is the Way* by Bishop Michael Curry.

We took a hiatus in the summer, but we continued our tradition of getting together for a social time. This year we met at Pat Owen’s and enjoyed a tasty meal and lots of good conversation!

In the fall, we met outside and started to read *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness and Bliss*, by David Bentley Hart but decided it wasn’t what we expected. We are a flexible group, so we just said no more of that book (!) and moved on to the more engaging one, *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman. Once it got too cold to meet outdoors, we moved to the library. We ended the year by discussing a book by a favorite author, Rachel Held Evans’ *Wholehearted Faith*.

We welcome others to join us on Sunday. We tend to read a chapter or two at a time, and really, you can join the discussion whether you have read the book or not!

Linda Lopez



## ALTAR GUILD & FLOWER MINISTRY

Our church building was sadly closed March 2020 through August 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic. In October 2021, we were allowed to worship once again inside our church again following safe protocols.

The Episcopal church allowed us to have outdoor worship with communion in College Park. All of us wore masks and households needed to be 6 feet apart.

We keep our communion safe by offering consecrated gluten-free wafers (separately wrapped) and pita bread and consecrated individual grape juice in “coffee creamer” cups.

Special thanks to the following individuals:

- Janet Murphy and Karen Pfeifle volunteer weekly taking care of our altar linens. This demands a strict procedure to wash and dry pure linen.
- Nancy Alholm donates additional communion bread purchased at Holy Land grocery.
- Additional behind-the-scenes volunteers: James Albrecht, Nancy Alholm, Laura Bathke, Sylvie and Lars Christensen, Marilyn Grantham, Martha Hotchkiss, Alice Hotchkiss-Frost, Maggie Nancarrow, Liz O’Toole, Gwen Odney, Karen Pfeifle, and Brynn Stember-Albrecht

The Altar Guild ministry prepares the church for the Sunday morning, the Wednesday noon Eucharist, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals, and any other church-related services. Throughout the church year, the Altar Guild is also responsible for the care and preparation of the altar linens, priests’ and vergers’ vestments, brass, silver, pottery, candles, and flowers. Our ministry also cleans and decorates the church at Christmas and Easter with the help of many volunteers! (The pictures are of the children decorating the steps for the outdoor Easter services.)

We offer gluten-free bread at all services for those who need this option. These precautions are not only necessary medically, but they demonstrate compassion for those who want to receive communion but are unable to receive wheat communion bread.

We continually strive to educate our youth (teens and grade-school age) to increase their awareness of the seasonal color changes and why the Eucharist is set the way it is, the Altar Guild history, and to pique a young person’s future interest of service to the church.

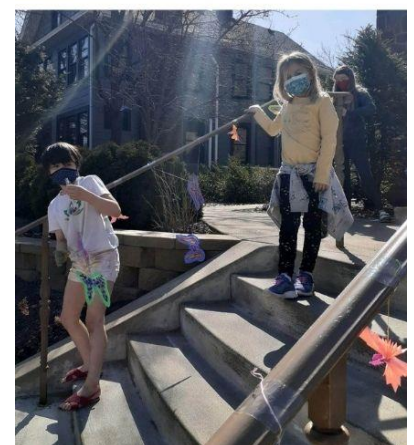
All men, women, young people, families in the Episcopal Church are encouraged to volunteer with our Altar Guild work. Please consider joining our ministry!

We also direct the Altar Flowers Ministry. We always ensure that the church looks beautiful.

Anyone may purchase flower arrangements for the altar in memory or thanksgiving for loved ones. Please contact the office manager /Altar Guild for procedure/prices in ordering

Respectfully submitted by:

Liz O’Toole, Altar Guild Ministry Leader





## ART MINISTRY

With COVID restrictions still a driving force in our daily lives, the Art Ministry team was still on hiatus for a large portion of 2021. When it was determined that we would be back in the church for worship in mid-October, we knew it was time to schedule our first art exhibit in well over a year. The theme was “How We Survived During COVID.” We received a wonderful variety of art—both 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional. The creative spirit that helped members stay focused on the blessings of everyday life was inspirational and very much appreciated.



We finished the year with an incredible art show, “How Spirit Eagle Gave Night Eagle Light.” The works are vibrant and strikingly symbolic—and look absolutely fabulous in our space! The artists, MaryBeth Garrigan and Petra Johnita Lommen, attended the opening reception and shared with us the inspiration and meanings of the works, and even some of the techniques used to create several of the pieces. This exhibit continues through February 2022.



We were not able to host the “Celebration of Community” Art Show in 2021 and decided it was still not safe to schedule one for 2022. While we are disappointed that the Community Art Show is still on hold, we are looking at moving ahead cautiously with several smaller shows and limited access. Prior to Blair’s departure, she was planning to do the PEEL Project with members of St. Matthew’s. (She wrote about PEEL in the [October 14, 2021 issue of Tidings](#).) The project was tentatively slated for display in March. It is uncertain if it will move forward at this time under new leadership. We are also in discussion with members of the University of Minnesota Women’s Club – Art Section regarding an exhibit in May 2022, which hopefully will help raise funds for their scholarship program.

As we move through 2022, we must remain cautious and always keep members and visitors’ health in mind. We appreciate the continued support we receive from the many wonderful people at St. Matthew’s. We couldn’t do it without you. And, should you be interested, please consider our invitation to join us as art enthusiasts, not necessarily trained artists.

Art Ministry Team (Nancy Alholm, Janet Murphy, Susan Hardman)

## BROTHER LAWRENCE GUILD

Our 2021 year of the pandemic saw us still in take-out and delivery modes, and one outdoor celebration picnic.

For outdoor services in the park, we provided take home treats in the basket and to celebrate new members and Analivia's baptism we brought a cake.

For drive-through Ash Wednesday services, we prepared and dished up 120 containers of five different soups for parishioners to take home along with home-baked breads. Warren baked a large batch of flatbreads daily for six straight days beforehand! We also delivered meals to 20+ others at their homes.

On Easter Sunday we prepared Easter boxes for outdoor pickup after parishioners attended outdoor services. Besides chocolates, we included hot cross buns, deviled eggs, and Rice Krispie bars. Thanks to Mingli Halker for special decorations on the boxes.

As part of the bishop's visit to confirm our young people, we put together picnic boxes for the celebration in the park. Thank you again to all the volunteer cookie bakers and those helping with filling up the boxes. We served over 70 fried chicken and vegan picnic boxes!

Another traditional luncheon we like to host in the undercroft turned into an outdoor picnic and drive through take home lunch for Commitment Sunday, complete with Rosa's bacon fried rice. We also delivered some buckets to some members staying at home.

Praying we can return to more meals together in the future,

Submitted by Rosa Uy and Karen Pfeifle



## CENTERING PRAYER

When activities in the church ended last March due to the pandemic, we also had to cease holding Centering Prayer in the church library on Saturday mornings. Although CP is an activity that can just as readily be practiced alone, we had enjoyed gathering together as a group. And the group included a number of members of a veterans' AA group so at times as many as 16 people came.

After the church ventilation improvement was finished, those of us who are St. Matthew's parishioners resumed meeting from 9:30 to 10:00 am on Saturdays. We do wear masks and observe social distancing. And all of us are fully vaccinated.

We welcome new members. People come when they can; coming every Saturday isn't a requirement. CP is spiritually refreshing, an opportunity to sit quietly and listen to God speak to us individually, rather than us doing the speaking. A spiritual discipline but not one hard to learn. Please join us and experience God's peace for a refreshing 30 minutes.

If you'd like more information, please contact me, either at [m.grantham@comcast.net](mailto:m.grantham@comcast.net) or 651-279-1841.

Marilyn Grantham



## CHALICE BEARERS

2021 was an interesting year for Chalice Bearers (aka Basket Bearers). For the first nine months services moved outdoors or virtually. During that time, Chalice Bearers were not scheduled; assignments were instead based on who was there. When we began inside services, scheduling resumed with a need for a third person to serve downstairs. We added more people to the roster and the needs have been met. We do have over 30 in the Chalice Bearer group, but we can always use more. Vacations, illness, and babies can deplete our numbers quickly. If you are interested in participating in this central part of the Eucharist, please let me know. Scheduling is done through CCB.

Vicki McKenna

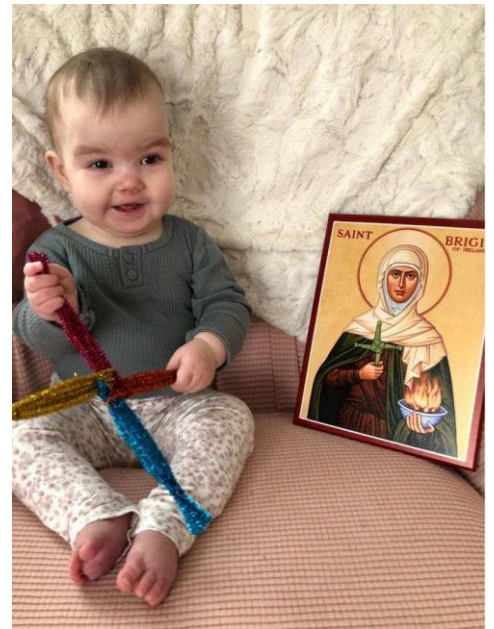
## CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY

The 2021 year for Children, Youth, and Intergenerational Formation started in a quiet, winter setting while faith formation was delivered to the home. Our delivery kit faith formation brought learning home for children ages 2 to 5th grade, beginning with Epiphany and continuing for three sessions to the second Sunday of Easter. In the spring, some of the highlights of the lessons were:

- Making Brigid's Crosses and learn about how Christianity learned from pre-Christian traditions in Europe
- Growing some beans to learn about the Parable of the Seed
- Making a digital "Alleluia" banner for the Easter Electronic Worship Service
- Sending postcards to people in the church each Sunday in Lent

Over the summer, as we launched park-church again, our kids gathered to play and run in a supportive, low-key worship environment. It was a joy to watch families connect and learn from each other during this time. Youth formation in the spring included an online class on the Women of the Bible, and in the summer we held an outdoor confirmation class for the youth. The class was focused on practices, so we walked the labyrinth at Como Park, made prayer beads, and engaged the prayer book. When Bishop Loya visited in late August, we joined with several congregations and celebrated the confirmations of Jide Abasiri, Valencia Carlson, Sylvie Christensen, and Natalie Jansen. (Adult confirmands included Dave McEachron and Isaiah Terveen, and people from St. Mark's Cathedral, Church of the Advent in Farmington and Holy Apostles in St. Paul were also confirmed or received.)

In the fall of 2021, we restarted in-person faith formation with an all-ages class that





incorporated parents, toddlers, children, and teens—though functionally, over time, we found that families with younger children were more attracted to the class. Each week we gathered in a big group in the parish hall, kids and their grownups, and learned together. This allowed us to continue to incorporate toddlers and infants who were previously unable to attend a traditional Faith Formation class like Godly Play, and it allowed parents to learn alongside children. In the mid-fall, we also added a practice of conducting a simple, instructed Eucharist each week. This allowed families who were unable to attend church for various reasons to receive the sacraments, and it also helped children fully participate in our Eucharistic life.



This year we welcomed three new babies: Liv Tuttle (5/13), Bowen Hotchkiss-Frost (6/13), and Cohen Stember-Albrecht (12/31—a surprise 2021 baby!). Five of our young people graduated: Luke Zscheile, Armel Mwanatambwe, Noah Jenkins, Zoe Johnson, and Chisomu Abasiri.

In Gratitude,  
Maggie Nancarrow

### **Parents of Young Children**

Parents of young children were able to gather a couple times this year, but it continues to be difficult to find time and navigate Covid-19. It is especially hard considering that kids under 5 are still unable to be vaccinated. A job transition also made it more difficult for me to find time to connect. My hope is to reconvene this group in the coming year.

Please reach out to me (davemceachron@gmail.com) for further ideas or suggestions on gathering this group. I'd like to see parents connecting more and there to support one another, both with "littles" and without.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dave McEachron

## **CHURCH COMMUNITY BUILDER**

We are now in our fourth year using Church Community Builder (CCB). During the pandemic, we made an effort to ensure that everyone was on CCB in order to receive the announcement emails. For many, receiving those announcement emails is the extent to which they use CCB. However, CCB offers several other useful features as well, all accessible by going to <https://stmatthews.ccbchurch.com/>. If you have not yet logged in, you can contact me at [office@stmatthewsmn.org](mailto:office@stmatthewsmn.org) and I can help you set up your account. You can also write me with any problems you encounter once you are able to log in.

In 2020, I worked to upload photographs and include contact information for everyone on the platform, in order to help everyone to stay in better touch during the pandemic. If your profile does not yet have a photograph, we would all appreciate you sharing a photograph of yourself so other church members will be able to recognize you. Unfortunately, this year we realized that some contact information was only visible to administrators, when we thought it was accessible to all members (not publicly searchable, but available to all logged in). There wasn't a way to automatically change the visibility of the parameters for everyone, so you may find that you

cannot see the contact information for some people. I am continuing to work to make searching for people on CCB easy for all church members.

During the pandemic we stopped using CCB to schedule those with specific roles in our services, but we began doing so with outdoor services on August 1, and continued when we moved inside on October 10. The ministries of chalice bearers, counters, and ushers also use Needs on CCB to plan their schedules, which I add to the service schedules. The scheduler automatically will send reminder emails before the services and help us make sure everyone remembers their roles.

We also use CCB to keep track of donations. The easiest way to pay pledges is to set up a repeating payment, using the “My Giving” tab. In 2021, 29 households used a repeating weekly or monthly payment to pay their pledges. You can also look at your profile to check your giving history or print out statements for your tax records.

Lars Christensen

## COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

Church communications continue to be important during the pandemic, as plans can change quickly. We have been encouraging those checking out the church to sign up for our mailing lists earlier, just to make sure they find out any last-minute changes and are able to sign up to events with limited attendance. If you think you are not on the lists described below, please contact me ([office@stmatthewsmn.org](mailto:office@stmatthewsmn.org)) and I can add you. Since these are over email, there are sometimes problems when they end up in a spam or junk mail folder. If you think you should be receiving emails but are not, check there, and if you find some messages there and mark them as “not spam,” then future messages should be delivered to your inbox. If not, we may have a wrong email address; please contact me and I can check.

As reported above, CCB remains the medium for most email communications. Almost everyone in the parish receives messages posted to “Our Church – Announcements,” and most people are also subscribed to other groups as well, according to the ministries they serve in or their interests. Most weeks, the announcements list sends two announcements, including the bulletin and instructions for attending the service. You can always change your email preferences for any groups by logging into CCB and going to your profile.

We continue to use Mailchimp for Tidings (our weekly e-newsletter, sent on Thursday afternoons) and electronic worship bulletins (now the podcast announcements, sent on weekends); both of these are sent using the same mailing list. We have continued to attract new subscribers to our Tidings list. The mailing list currently has 363 subscribers, about ten percent higher than last year (which was also up ten percent from the previous year). We now have an average open rate of 39.1%, up a few percent from last year, and quite good by mailing list standards (Mailchimp documentation shows that religion-related lists have one of the highest open rates, but that average is only 27.6%). This mailing list is separate from CCB and the printed parish directory, and there are a few subscribers, including some former members or family members of parishioners who live far away, who only interact with our church there.

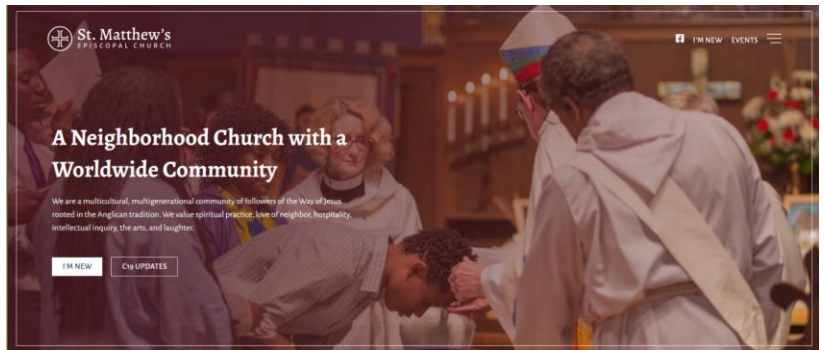
About two-thirds of our readers use a desktop email client, and about one-third read it on a mobile phone. For this reason, I try to ensure that it functions well on both kinds of screens. If you ever have trouble reading it on your preferred device, please let me know. I have troubleshooted a few instances where the email client was not optimally set up to display images. I also appreciate feedback on how to improve the appearance and functionality with various screen sizes and browser settings.

We also have a few readers who prefer not to use email at all. During the pandemic I fell out of the habit of printing all our issues, but by the start of 2021 I had resumed making printed copies of Tidings for those who did not have convenient email access. There are currently three members to whom I send the printed versions

every few weeks, and there are a few other members who prefer reading printed versions who come to church and gather them then. Please let me know if you wish to receive printed versions in the mail. I can also make copies of any back issue since 2018 that you may be interested in.

Thank you to all of you who have written articles or taken photos for inclusion in Tidings over the year. In order to better represent the diversity of people in this congregation, I encourage your submissions of anything you think fellow parishioners would be interested in. The deadline for inclusion is Wednesdays at noon. We also try to put in lots of pictures to build reader interest. If any of you take any pictures at St. Matthew's services or events, you are most welcome to share them with me. It is always helpful to have pictures that we can include in future issues and as photos for the website. Thank you especially to Laura Bathke, Jen Hunt, Gary Johnson, and Kurt Walther for their photos over the past year.

Since the major overhaul last year, we have not made many changes to the website (<http://www.stmatthewsmn.org>); the landing page (at right) still looks the same. We do post all events, sermons (usually the podcasts), and spiritual practices there. The constantly changing pandemic situation has made it difficult to keep even the basic information up to date. This is unfortunate, since we know that a significant portion of our visitors encounters us via the website. If you notice anything missing or that needs to be updated, please feel free to let us know.



Lars Christensen

## COUNTERS MINISTRY

The Counting Ministry works with the church bookkeeper and treasurer to accurately track financial gifts that fund church operations and activities. We currently have 12 members in this ministry.

For about the first half of the year, we used a steady team of two counters—Mary Griffin and Jenny Bach—going to the church office weekly to count offerings that came by mail during the week or that were made at any outdoor services.

Gradually during the summer months, as outdoor attendance expanded and Covid restrictions relaxed, and continuing after we returned to indoor worship this fall, we used the CCB scheduling functions again to allow any counter ministry member to sign up for the weekly two-member team. We are encouraging team members to increase their participation after the lengthy period away from a regular schedule because of Covid protocol accommodations.

We process contributions made at worship and those received during the previous week (kept securely in the office safe) on Sundays after the service. Funds are deposited in the bank immediately after counting.

We use an Excel spreadsheet specially crafted for St. Matthew's for ease in tracking your gifts. Thank you to Ron Matross for the excellent design. The spreadsheet must then balance against a separate physical count of check and cash contributions.

We count check and cash pledges, and offerings for special purposes like memorials, the capital campaign, the rector's discretionary fund and others. The Counting Ministry encourages check writers to put the purpose of their gift in the memo line of the check.

- You can write one check for multiple purposes if the memo line clearly says the amount for each intended purpose.
- If you do not list a purpose we assign it to your pledge account, if any, otherwise to the open plate offering.
- Undesignated Christmas and Easter offerings we credit to our social justice ministries.

The bookkeeper uses the Counters’ spreadsheet information to make final entries in our financial system. Finally, contributors receive printed quarterly statements to review their giving records for accuracy.

Jenny Bach

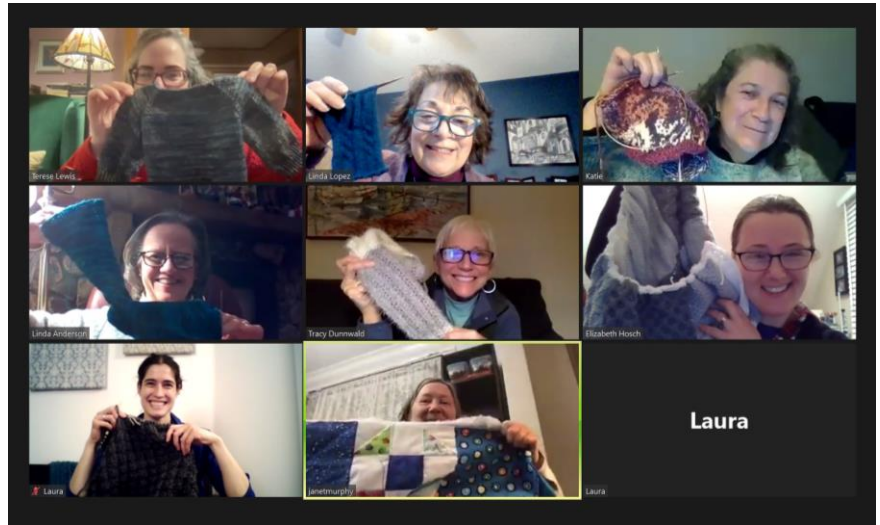
## CRAFTING AND FELLOWSHIP GROUP

Our crafting group continued to meet via Zoom all year as this is the most convenient for all. However, we did have several outdoor social meetings in person which were lovely.

During our meetings, as we work on our own projects, we chat about our week, crafts, books, family, work, celebrations, and struggles. We have a “question of the night,” and we have a “show and tell” where we show what craft we are working on.

We generally have six to twelve people who show up and we welcome anyone who is interested. No pressure to come every Wednesday!

Linda Lopez



## EUCCHARISTIC VISITORS

The Eucharistic Visiting ministry resumed in 2021 when COVID-19 Vaccination became readily available. While the ministry is still discerning how to safely approach in-home visits in our current situation, we had faithful visitors bringing the Eucharist to homebound members, members who were ill, and even occasionally dropping off the elements for members who were in quarantine. Martha Hotchkiss, Kathryn Grambsh, Laura Bathke, and Marilyn Grantham were most active in the ministry this year.

Submitted by the Rev. Maggie Nancarrow, Assistant Priest

## GENEROSITY/2021 PLEDGE DRIVE

It is very easy to see the Holy Spirit at work in St. Matthew’s Generosity Campaign. The trend line for the number of pledges is moving up and remaining steady at St. Matthew’s while the trend line for the number of pledges at the diocesan level (and national church) is going down. The dollars pledged are moving consistently up, year after year, at St. Matthew’s while it is moving down at the diocesan level (and in the



national church). We have something special going on here. For 2022 we have 103 pledges for a total of \$443,357. That is about \$17,000 more than 2021, but with five less pledges. Pretty amazing.

What we have learned through trial and error is that people give for a lot of different reasons. Early on we tried to focus on a single reason for giving—that turned out not to be helpful. Now we recognize that everybody comes to God from a different place and gives accordingly. We gratefully accept them all. Personally, I am in awe of the geographic diversity of St. Matthew's. We come from all over the metro area, but we are united by our belief and our understanding of St. Matthew's as our parish home. So, thank you! We have completed yet another very successful pledge drive, one where the Holy Spirit was clearly our partner. We pray for continued blessings on St. Matthew's.

Dan White

## GROUNDS

Our goal is to have welcoming, colorful curb appeal!

St. Matthew's grounds have numerous colorful perennials, annuals, container pots, and a fairy garden.

Many volunteers give many generous hours over the growing season to keep our gardens weed-free, replacing plants, maintaining many shrubs, cleaning up the gardens and lawns in the spring and fall.

Volunteer time donated by: John DesHarnais, Ann Nerland, Liz O'Toole, Karen Pfeifle, and Elaine Tarone. Also, thanks to Paul and Jack Kiehne—they kept our church lawns nicely trimmed and mowed!

Our Columbarium Garden (to the left of the red front doors) have beautiful sun/shade perennials where church members' ashes rest: Duke Addicks, Robert Bulger, Donna Bulger, Bryce Crawford, Malcolm Evans, Robert Hardman, Geraldine Jenkins, Chuck Land, David Noble, and Keith Ringold.



If you like to work outdoors, we welcome your help! Thank you volunteers!

Respectfully submitted by:

Liz O'Toole, Church Gardens Ministry Leader

Ann Nerland, Columbarium Gardens Ministry Leader

## HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY

The Healing Prayer team continues to pray, holding the people of St. Mathew's in our hearts and minds. When the church began meeting in person again, we developed a new process for Sunday morning prayer. People are invited to write prayer request in the side chapel during communion. A member of our team then prays over each request in the moment.

Once this current surge of Covid subsides, we hope to offer individual prayer again, person to person. Each week, we pray over the names listed on our church prayer list faithfully. We are notified by email if there is an urgent need for prayer during the week. This is a first-response ministry team. We may not directly interact with each person making a request, but we pray in earnest. We hold the hurt and grief in our hands and ask Jesus to walk alongside those who struggle or experienced great loss. We hold the fear and anger we have experienced

as a community and ask the Spirit to intercede. We pray for strength to do the hard work ahead together. Feel free to reach out to any member of the team to ask for prayer. We hold your prayer requests in strictest confidence. During this transition period, please know we are praying. We are here to listen and support you in this time of great need.

I thank the ministry team members: Lis Christenson, Liz Colwell, Marilyn Grantham, Heather Halker, Dan Johnson, Sherry Latty, and Valerie Matthews.

Judy Niemi Johnson

## **LIVESTREAMING**

When St. Matthew's returned to in-person services, I got a call from Rev. Pogue. Would I be interested in setting up a livestream for the newly returned services? I was happy to be able to say yes.

I had access to most of the needed equipment, through the streaming preparations that my wife, Kirsten Whitson, had asked me to make as part of her solo cello performance. She had purchased the necessary camera and computer, and with the pandemic still in full swing, was willing to let me use them on Sunday mornings.

The start of regular streaming was a bit rocky, but it steadied enough to think about adding an audio/video feed into the undercroft so that more people could be present at services. That has gone well also, with a couple of hiccups here and there. Thank you for your patience. We currently livestream our Sunday morning service on Facebook ([facebook.com/stmatthewsmn](https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewsmn)), and upload that to our [YouTube channel](#) later on Sunday. Our goal is to have all of our services moving forward available online.

We will add more people to the streaming team, to join Warren Poole and myself, and look for more ways to make our coming together in worship and fellowship available to as many people who wish to be a part of it.

Putting this together, both connecting the cables and getting all the sound and video to the correct places, and having the people involved in expanding what St. Matthew's can offer to those not able to be in person, has been a really good thing for me. After a year and a half of not being at services, I was concerned about how to return. How could I get involved with people I had been studiously avoiding? Having a directive with a definite outcome has helped me restart my attachment to the people here at St. Matthew's. I have had many people thank me on a weekly basis, and I have to keep reminding myself to say "You're welcome" back. I'm more involved than I was before March of 2020, and I'm looking forward to 2022.

Benjamin Johnson

## **MEAL MINISTRY**

The meal ministry continues to provide meal assistance to parishioners in need of help after illness, surgery, the birth of a baby, or a difficult situation. Often our generous cooks simply plan and deliver meals when there is a need. However, if a computerized Mealtrain is appropriate, Jane sets up the plan after talking with the family to determine food preferences, scheduling, and delivery instructions.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joan Hershbell and Jane White

## MEN'S GROUP

The men of St. Matthew's enjoy being together. That is what we learned this year. Each of our three events in 2021 were attended by 25 to 30 guys. Not the same 25 to 30 guys each time, but always a strong turnout. It was pretty clear that the Holy Spirit was guiding turn out at our "Welcome Spring" event, at the barbeque in Roseville's Central Park and at our retreat in Victoria, MN. It makes me quite enthusiastic about what we can do in 2022. We are grateful to Rosa and Warren Poole for hosting our "Welcome Spring" event at their home in April.

In 2022 we will start with an interactive presentation including compline on February 8 at the church. We will repeat "Welcome Spring" and the barbeque, and we have some new ideas for a fall retreat. The bishop is again committed to join us! Thanks to all who participated in 2021 and welcome to all for 2022!

Dan White

## MUSIC

In the first few months of 2021, we continued using electronic worship bulletins which included recordings of appropriate music from Jeff and Amanda, using the process outlined in last year's annual report. We continued issuing electronic worship bulletins until May, by which point we were doing in-person services again, with Michael directing the music. Since we no longer needed new recordings and were not holding regular evening services, Jeff and Amanda left the staff over the summer. Jeff returned once in October to lead an evening Taizé service in-person.

Lars Christensen

### Director of Music Ministries Report

When I returned from medical leave during Holy Week 2021, I found a community valiantly persevering in the face of the worldwide pandemic. In my absence, all of my colleagues on staff had gone to great lengths to create and maintain connection despite being physically separated; each became to me a shining example and gave me courage and inspiration to push forward into the unknown.

My first charge was to provide music for live worship outdoors beginning on Easter Sunday. At the request of our rector, I composed a short composition for handbells which became an "Alleluia" that was used for the next seven weeks. The composition required six players and a cantor; the vestry had given approval for one person to sing wearing a mask and be positioned at least ten feet away from any other person. On a beautiful sunny day, Jenny Bach, Lars Christensen, Sylvie Christensen, Laura Corcoran, Heather Craig, Lynn Jenkins, and Cheryl Olman gathered around the front of the church to ring "Alleluia" for the first time. It was the enthusiasm of this initial group that formed the ongoing bell choir that has continued to the present. Other ringers who subsequently participated include Lindsay Craig, Kristine Granias, Susan Jones, and Dave Wilkowske.

At first, extreme precautions were taken including setting up chairs and music stands using a yardstick to ensure they were at least six feet apart and wiping the handles of the bells with disinfectant. As more and more





information became available about how Covid-19 was transmitted, we calculated the safety of what we were doing. As more people became vaccinated, it became clear that singing together outdoors was not a big risk.

Another group that made an appearance on Easter day was our resident brass quartet (Tina Maynor, Jack Vishneski, Lindsay Craig, and Richard Burns). This quartet continued to play at the outdoor services approximately once per month.



Later on, when services were moved to the park across the street, stringed instruments were added to the variety of ensembles (including Richard Burns with his guitar, Laura Corcoran playing violin and Kristine Granias with her cello). Katie Lowry also joined us playing the piccolo and flute.



Worshipping outdoors presented me with challenges such as maintaining my own skills on several instruments, creating musical arrangements of hymns, and preparing for the possibility of wind and rain, but it was a highly rewarding experience!

Upon reentering our church building in October 2021, we pulled back a bit and restricted singing to a masked choir of four singers, later expanding to eight, and finally to the full choir (approximately 12–13 singers). Only time will tell what will be possible in the future, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us through whatever challenges are put before us.



J Michael Compton

**Parish Choir:** J Michael Compton, director; Jenny Bach, Lars Christensen, Mahlon Collins, Laura Corcoran, Heather Craig, Elaine Eyre, Kathryn Grambsch, Kristine Granias, Lynn Jenkins, Susan Jones, Dave McKenna, Sandy McTavish, Cheryl Olman, Christopher Sibia, and Dave Wilkowske.

**Musicians in recordings for electronic worship bulletins:** Richard Burns, Lars Christensen, J Michael Compton, Laura Corcoran, Francois Harewood, Lynn Jenkins, Jeff Kidder, Kristen Kidder, Sarah Larsen, Amanda Leger-Harewood, Laura Peticara, Phil Reitz-Jones, Christopher Sibia, Bob Straughn, Mariana Tuttle, Kirsten Whitson, and the parish choirs of St. Matthew's and Gethsemane.



## **NURSERY**

*Nursery services have been on hiatus since March 2020. Unfortunately, we do not know when it will once again be safe to reopen it.*

## **ONWARD: A NEW SUPPORT GROUP FOR THE RECENTLY WIDOWED**

This group was started last year to support parishioners who had experienced the death of a spouse during the past two years. Members met monthly with Blair to share concerns, experiences, and helpful resources and to pray together as they continued to mourn. The group recessed during the latter part of the summer and when queried in the fall, indicated that they no longer felt the need to meet as a group.

This experience, though, indicates a need at times for such special groups to help parishioners address shared issues and experiences.

Marilyn Grantham

## **OPERATIONS**

In my fourth year as Office Manager, I continue to work primarily from home, going in to church usually on days with a service (Wednesday and Sunday) and a few other times to prepare things. Our bookkeeper Fariba Sanikhatam is generally in on Mondays and Thursdays. On days we are not there, Elaine Tarone brings in the mail and checks the building. Thanks!

The year began with us continuing to produce electronic worship bulletins, using recorded sermons from Blair or Maggie, recorded music from Jeff or Amanda, and other materials to make a self-guided worship experience. As we returned to in-person worship in the spring, we began using weekly bulletins again. We have been sending all bulletins out over CCB, usually the day before the service, but nearly all parishioners have reverted to using the printed copies that ushers hand out.

Last year we began a procedure for reserving spaces in services, in order to avoid overly crowded situations. As it became clearer this year that Covid seldom spread outside and we had plenty of space in the park, we stopped counting spots for worship. However, when we moved inside in October, it became necessary to set up a reservation system that could accommodate about 100 worshipers (upstairs and downstairs) each week, without the stress of handling them all. Many of our parishioners were familiar with SignUp Genius, since Loaves and Fishes and Project Home had used them in the past, so I used it to create weekly sign-up sheets and assisting those who had trouble signing up. You are always welcome to contact me directly if you encounter problems with the sign-up.

As our computers age, and especially when more and more of our work is done on a computer, they need to be replaced sometimes. In September, we purchased a newer computer to replace the “office” computer (which has been at my house since we began working from home in 2020). Thank you to Maggie Nancarrow for researching the computer and making the purchase. The plan was to use the replaced computer (which was purchased in 2015) as the computer in the church office, where it is used by the counters, the bookkeeper, me while I’m at church, and others needing to print materials. Since those uses are light work for a computer that had previously been used for video editing, I thought it would work out okay. However, it has really not held up well, and is quite slow and frustrating, especially for the counters team. We have decided, with support from those watching the finances in the vestry, to purchase another new computer, similar to the main one I now use, to replace it, which I will do soon.

On the other hand, our printer is doing well. Our contract expired last year, and the staff collectively decided to continue leasing that printer (considered leasing a used printer) for three more years. This saves us considerable money over upgrading to a new printer, as well as saving everyone the hassle of setting one up and learning how to use it. So far, the printer has continued to be very reliable and we are happy with the decision. Thanks to Rosa Uy for handling this negotiation.

This winter we have continued to use the same snow removal service as last year, to provide a consistent clearing of the sidewalks around the church. Lawn care over the summer was spottier; thanks to Paul Kiehne for stepping in when arrangements didn't work out. As always, thanks to John DesHarnais and Liz O'Toole, who continue to address many building concerns inside and out (as you can read in their respective reports).

My final task for the year is, of course, the preparation of this report! In previous years, Blair helped me tremendously in getting everything ready, but this time we had to assemble it without her. Thank you to all who submitted reports for the ministries in which they are involved, and especially to Mary Ann Evander, Amy Fisher, Mary Griffin, and Maggie Nancarrow, who helped me gather the materials and proofread to make the best report possible. I look forward to the meeting on Sunday.

Lars Christensen, Operations Manager

## PROPERTY TEAM

Like our own lives, the church building spent much of 2021 adapting to Covid.

Not long after the annual meeting, as vaccinations moved from being a theory to an appointment, the vestry began looking at what it would mean to return to using the building for regular services. This was no small task. The science is still being written today and was certainly not settled then. The diocese had a voice in the process and asked churches to provide a reopening plan.

An inventory of all of the rooms in St. Matthew's was taken to see how fresh air and filtering could be improved. This guided the decision to add HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filters to the existing HVAC (Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning) systems that serve the office and Parish Hall. The Sanctuary has radiators, so the only air flow comes from the windows which are closed during heating seasons. Research was done on portable HEPA filters. Estimates and bids were used to develop a budget which was sent to Vestry in April. Once money was raised to finance the plan, contracts were signed, and things began to move over the summer.

In August new electrical outlets were installed so the new HEPA filters in the Sanctuary could be plugged in. The wiring was on the west wall and a few outlets were added at each window so that the fans no longer need an array of extension cords. The portable filters also arrived in August. After waiting a while for parts from Mexico the HEPA filters for the HVAC units were installed in September.

Last year's report stated that we had completed the last vestige of the kitchen remodel when a screening wall was built to hide the shiny ductwork on the chapel roof. That was not entirely



true. The wall kept us from seeing the ducts from Carter Ave. The large black walnut tree adjacent to the Columbarium mostly obscured the rest of the ducts. The tree was in our neighbors' yard and they removed it in late winter. This left our neighbors two doors over, who sit higher than us because the whole block is a hill, at eyeball level with the offending shiny ducts when they are sitting on their back porch.

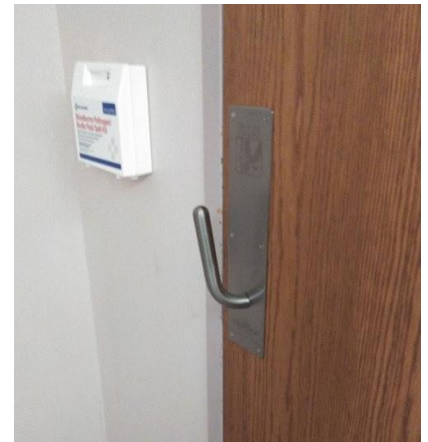
Discussions were had and paint was attempted as a low-cost solution to reduce the glare. The first coat was applied in August. In retrospect it was also a lipstick on a pig solution. We all agreed the pig looked much better, but it was still a pig. The neighbor suggested a decorative plastic lattice that we were able to attach to a safety rail. This was installed on a balmy (50 degree) December day.



In July pews were temporarily removed from the Sanctuary to test how chairs might be substituted in strategic places. Having chairs would mean the space continues to seat as many people as usual, but could be quickly reconfigured by an usher to accommodate entire ranges of accessibility solutions. A front and back location was chosen because some people are introverts and others extroverts, some show up ten minutes early and others ten minutes late. In late October the experiment was deemed a success by vestry. The old pews will be given away. The chapel chairs will be used until new ones arrive sometime this year.

In August the front doors were repainted from a “Stop Sign” red to a more traditional “Antique Red.”

In October we discovered that the phone system to the church had not been functioning for several months. It went unnoticed because staff was working from home and relying on their cell phones, and there is no need when the building is empty. It was repaired by the phone company. There may be some discussion in the future about getting a system that fits our actual and future needs.



In October new restroom door handles were installed. The design is open at the top which allows a wrist to pull the door. This makes it more sanitary since skin would not touch the common handle. It is also easier from an accessibility perspective since there are many conditions that can make it difficult to use the old-style handle.

In October a live-stream broadcast of the service was accomplished. The operation was a success but there were wires everywhere! Over time the wires that were tripping hazards, or dangling from the ceiling hazards, were moved into walls, under floors and over ceilings. In the case of the internet connection, it went from a less reliable wireless system to a hidden wire run directly to the computer. From the Property Team perspective, it was important to make the remarkable live-stream development as physically safe and unobtrusive as possible.

John DesHarnais

## READERS AND PRAYER LEADERS

The readers and prayer leaders were coordinated this year by the clergy and staff. Because of our continuously changing worship plans and protocol, we found this the easiest way to manage our changing needs. Over the course of the year, over thirty people were active in our reading and prayer leading ministry, including three members who joined in the last year.

Submitted by the Rev. Maggie Nancarrow, Assistant Priest

# **SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES**

## **Blue House**

This has been a difficult year in Uganda, as well as in the U.S. COVID is a serious issue there, as well as here. Vaccines are scarce, so relatively few people have been able to get them. Medical care in rural areas like Kazo is very limited. Schools have been mostly closed all year. Drought also is very serious. Food production has been sharply reduced. Still, the children cared for at the Blue House and in their homes and the girls away in postsecondary education are well and very, very grateful for our continuing love and care.

We've been unable to hold most of our usual fundraising activities since March 2020. Our annual Boutique, scheduled the first weekend in December, is our largest fundraising event, generally accounting for about 45% of our annual operating expenses. In 2020, we held an "Un-Boutique" that weekend, asking donors to give what they would have spent, had we held the Boutique. We received \$12,792, compared with the \$22,932 that the Boutique earned in 2019. This year, even with the restrictions required to avoid COVID, the Boutique earned an estimated \$21,870, thanks to our devoted volunteers that make it happen!

We hope that we'll be able to resume holding some other fundraising events this year, for example, the Tea for Girls Who've Lost Their Mothers in May, in cooperation with St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church; a summer barbecue; the annual Fall Lost Foresters' Run; and another Boutique, again the first weekend in December. We'd also like to hold a capital fundraising campaign to buy some more land, adjacent to the existing Blue House property.

Rather than writing more, I'd like for you to read what Gloria, the Blue House Director, recently said in a letter of appreciation to us.

Marilyn Grantham, Blue House Board Member/Fundraising Chair

### **Appreciation Letter to the Blue House Board Members and Funders in the USA**

Warm greetings to you all and I hope you are all fine in the USA.

Glory to God for the protection, love and care he has always shown us through you, our funders, and also for protecting us all through the second wave of Covid-19 which claimed lives of many worldwide.

Big thanks to our dear board members and funders in the USA for supporting us always, even in the hard times of Covid-19. As the Blue House Director, without your support I can't make it, because without your full support I can't implement anything at Blue House. May the Almighty God bless you always, give you good health, watch over you and your families and bless whatever you are doing. I promise to work hard as the director and keep the good name of Blue House in Jesus' name.

Thanks for approving my second request for assistance for home-based boys and girls. They were happy and they appreciated the food items and other basic necessities we took to their homes on our visitations.

I thank God for the children's health this year 2021. It's God's grace that they are safe and for protecting them throughout the lockdown which was a long one.

Thanks for allowing the girls to do tailoring during the lockdown. They designed and sewed their Christmas dresses for this year 2021. Also, thanks for giving us additional laptops which helped the girls learn basic computer skills during this lockdown. I know this will help them when they return to school since computer is one of the subjects at secondary level.

Thanks for funding the girls' and boys' education. This year they attended school for only one term and those in lower primary (Primary 1, 2 and 3) didn't attend school for the whole year. However, they had coaching classes after the lockdown and this gave them hope of going back to school in 2022.



Secondary and postsecondary students needing to take examinations were allowed to attend school. Our Tumwebaze Immaculate who was completing Senior 6 performed very well in her final exams at national level. So she was admitted on government scholarship at Kyambogo University for a degree in microfinance. All this is because of your full support which enabled her to attend a good secondary boarding school.

This year we have a total of 41 boys and girls under Blue House care. We have 4 boys home-based, 4 girls home-based, 27 Blue House residents, and 6 girls in postsecondary education (two at university and four in vocational training programs). They stay with their extended families while at postsecondary institutions. Your support enables us to care for all 41 children.

This year 2021, Kembabazi Monic completed a hair dressing course and Naturinda Sylvia finished a tailoring course at The Margret Krohn School here at the Blue House. Thanks for funding their studies and helping them to achieve their educational goals. These skills will enable them to support themselves now that they've completed their formal education.

Thanks to Professor Lucy Dunne and her design students at the University of Minnesota for again designing and making good clothes for the girls. They like them so much and are always happy and smart whenever they put them on. The class makes unique designs and uses good fabrics.

I and my family really do appreciate the monthly salary I get at Blue House which has enabled me to help my husband in supporting our family.

Once again thanks for wiring the funds whenever I contact you and for always approving my requests whenever I contact you which has enabled me to achieve all my planned activities for the whole year. May you be blessed always.

Merry Christmas and prosperous new year 2022, full of joy, peace, and happiness.

Yours sincerely,  
Muhimbise Merab Gloria  
Director Blue House Uganda

## **Loaves & Fishes**

Loaves and Fishes is a feeding ministry that is one part of Catholic Charities' larger mission of ending homelessness in the Twin Cities. Volunteers prepare and serve a meal for around 200–300 people at each of our four yearly volunteer sessions at the St. Paul Opportunity Center. After one year away due to the pandemic, volunteers from St. Matthew's returned to Loaves and Fishes in 2021. With the vaccine widely available, we were able to resume volunteering in August and returned in November.



Like many aspects of our lives, we learned to adjust to the “new normal” of life in the pandemic. Instead of our usual teams of fifteen volunteers each for food preparation and serving, we reduced our numbers to ten and used masks and social distancing to keep our volunteers safe. Through our two sessions in 2021, we served around 500 meals to those in need. If it is safe to do so, we hope to double that number in 2022. We've also learned how to better meet the needs of our patrons by watching and listening while we serve. This has led to changes to our menu that have led to tastier and more nutritious meals for our guests.

We continue to be blessed with a diverse group of new and experienced volunteers at each session and are grateful for the many volunteer contributions to the success of this important ministry. As we look forward to 2022, we will continue to prioritize volunteer safety and engaging new volunteers.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mahlon Collins

### **Housing Ministries: MICAH and Project Home**

During 2021, St. Matthew's has engaged members in two ministries working in concrete ways to address the serious and growing lack of affordable housing for poor and working people (most of them people of color). First, volunteer time and donations helped Project Home provide safe, respectful shelter for families with children who are homeless in greater St. Paul. Second, volunteer time and donations supported the St. Paul Chapter of MICAH, which works at both the federal and local levels to engage elected representatives and local residents in increasing the supply of affordable housing.

During 2021 Project Home was a major focus of our social justice work. In addition to providing financial support, volunteers helped to prepare rooms for Project Home families with children when they moved into Provincial House in March, and then in August, helped serve lunches and dinners on weekends. A small group of volunteers from St. Matthew's regularly spent time keeping donated clothing and personal supplies organized at Provincial House, to keep items accessible to residents. St. Matthew's members also donated supplies to families when they moved out of Provincial House and into unfurnished rental units at the end of their stay in Project Home. During 2021, we continued our supportive relationship with a family we met 3 years ago through Project Home—we helped Cheriya find an affordable 3-BR rental home not once, but twice: at the beginning of the year, and again at the end, when her landlord told her the house would be sold. On February 1, 2022, she, her partner and her 5 children will move into an affordable 3-BR home in St. Anthony Park (the existence of such a place seems like a miracle in itself!).

During 2021, MICAH engaged members of St. Matthew's in monthly Zoom meetings, educating us and leading us to donate time and funds in support of several initiatives, most notably (1) a legislative breakfast to support affordable housing initiatives, (2) a rent stabilization campaign in St. Paul, and (3) support for an affiliate group of homeless and previously homeless people called Freedom from the Streets. Two achievements were passage of the rent stabilization initiative, and more than \$11,000 in donations and grants to help provide food, clothing, blankets, and tents for homeless people living in encampments.

Through these ministries, we have seen the Holy Spirit at work in the world, richly rewarding our efforts to support our neighbors seeking to find and stay in affordable housing. Even when the odds have seemed impossible, we have been surprised time after time to find our efforts rewarded, and often in ways we did not expect. In 2022, we plan to continue and expand our support for Project Home, and for MICAH's projects. If you would like to hear our stories, or to offer time or donations for Project Home or MICAH, please contact either Elaine Tarone (eetarone@gmail.com) or Elaine Eyre (eelaïneeyre@gmail.com)

Elaine Tarone

## **USHERS**

After a period of pandemic-enforced dormancy, St. Matthew's team of dedicated ushers has roared back, bigger, better, and badder than ever! (In this context, "badder" means larger, friendlier, more helpful, and even more hospitable.) After months of worship online (surprisingly, no one seemed to need any ushering to make it to their home computer), outdoor services in College Park provided the opportunity to resume our

responsibilities in a reduced capacity. As we gathered, socially distanced and appropriately masked, one usher helped to distribute bulletins and count attendees (it is important to maintain those math skills) as well as transport various items to the church after the service.

When we resumed indoor worship in October, the ushers' role was both familiar (greeting worshipers, distributing bulletins, answering questions) and strange (friendly smiles concealed by masks; attendance list to check; communion cups to gather). Another innovation—streaming worship downstairs—required the addition of a third usher.

I will admit to some skepticism that we would be able serve both upstairs and downstairs. Fortunately, the return of ushering in 2021 resulted in a number of new volunteers who have joined several faithful veterans to swell the ranks of ushers to an impressive 21 participants!

Our success is one more indication of the value that St. Matthew's places on being together as the visible embodiment of the Body of Christ; it is a reminder that the "church" is not really the building, but those who gather in it. I am grateful for the many ushers who have helped to make that possible in 2021 and look forward to even deeper involvement in 2022.

Barrett Fisher

## **VERGER MINISTRY**

Verging is a ministry of hospitality, and the role of vergers again varied widely in this second year of the Covid pandemic. Our role is to serve by coordinating worship details before, during, and after services so that the clergy can attend to the liturgy and so that worshippers can worship. In-person worship returned indoors in October of 2021, which required even more flexibility than before, in that it was a new context for all. Summer 2021 was the second summer in which worship was held outdoors when weather allowed. When services were held in College Park, vergers worked closely with clergy to determine practices that were both worshipful and low risk for transmission of coronavirus. Many thanks to all vergers who served this year: James Albrecht, Laura Bathke, Sylvie Christensen, Martha Hotchkiss, and Kennedy Nyenya.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Martha Hotchkiss

## **WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON PRAYER GROUP**

A prayer group began meeting in St. Matthew's parish hall in December 2021. This group has actually been meeting together for a long time. Some members have known each other since they met at the University Episcopal Center/Holy Trinity Parish that met on the West Bank at the University. Members had been meeting in each other's homes until the pandemic began. We then met outdoors when the weather permitted. With the arrival of fall and winter weather, that was no longer possible, so we asked if we could meet at St. Matthew's. Several members of the group are St. Matthew's parishioners, Pat and Juola Haga, Bob McDonald, and Marilyn Grantham.

The group generally meets from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. We read and discuss a book of spiritual nature, currently the retired Episcopal Bishop Steven Charleston's *Ladder to the Light*, which was published in Minneapolis in 2021. Then we take turns offering names and situations that we want to pray for, pray for them, and close with the Lord's Prayer.

Now that the weather is less desirable for gathering together, we are using Zoom for our prayer meetings. We welcome others to join us. If you would like to do so, please contact Marilyn Grantham, either at [m.grantham@comcast.net](mailto:m.grantham@comcast.net) or 651-279-1841 to have your name added to the contact list. Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 2.

Marilyn Grantham

## WORSHIP MINISTRY

Our life of worship at St. Matthew's in 2021 took many different forms, and the number of different offerings that we experimented with this year were truly only possible by the work of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the year, St. Matthew's prioritized safe in-person gathering while maintaining digital connections to our extended community. In early 2021, we offered an incredibly diverse set of worship offerings, including:

- Online zoom services of Morning Prayer during the early winter months
- Outdoor, in-person services on the church steps
- An asynchronous digital service emailed to the congregation each week

When the weather warmed and Covid-19 vaccination became readily available in May, we eagerly joined again for in-person worship:

- In May–September, we returned to one worship service in College Park, frequently drawing over 100 people to our celebratory services in our neighborhood.
- We were able to return to our practice of Wednesday Noonday Eucharist and lunch, re-gathering in our updated parish hall for worship around a common table.
- On October 10, we returned to our building for Sunday worship service for the first time since March 8, 2020. We remembered those who were no longer with us. Thanks to a meticulous Covid safety plan, new Iso-Aire purifiers, and our congregation's dedication to safe gatherings, we have worshipped in person each Sunday since then.



Our digital offerings, as we expanded in person worship, changed to include a podcast rather than an emailed worship service. Once we moved indoors, we began livestreaming the 10:30 worship service thanks to Benjamin Johnson and a crew of dedicated technological wizards.



In 2021, we welcomed nine new members, baptized three people, and celebrated the birth of three new babies. Welcome Liv (5/13), Bowen (6/13), and Cohen (12/31—a surprise 2021 baby)! We said goodbye to Craig Jahren, remembered the five men we lost while we were unable to worship in the church, and we continue to welcome new visitors each week.

The resounding theme of 2021 was the incredible dedication, flexibility, and service of countless people who made worship happen in new and creative ways. For the first half of the year, we continued to record music for the electronic worship service, thanks to Jeff Kidder, Amanda Leger, and Michael Compton. Our services on the steps were accompanied by the bell choir, the organ on “blast-it” mode, brass ensembles, singers, and countless other instruments. When we moved indoors, we were able to restart our choir and return to beloved practices like the Celtic liturgy. The vergers and altar guild remained resilient amid all the constant change, adapted quickly and with grace, and we were all able to live into the joy of our new reality. St. Matthew’s is strong, and God’s presence has been here among us in each way that we have adapted to our continued pandemic life.

That said, the year was not without its struggles: the constant pivoting took its toll, and our continued efforts to be available both digitally and in person spread our staff and volunteer ministers thin. We were not able to return to all things, like our Sunday evening meal and service, though we tried a Taizé service in October. Despite it all, we found that we could thrive thanks to the skills we learned as a congregation about innovation, experimentation, and discernment.

On January 2, 2022, we celebrated Blair Pogue, said goodbye, blessed her, and concluded her tenure as rector at St. Matthew’s after 16 years. This was a significant moment in the worship life of our community, as it was full of members naming the work of the Holy Spirit, singing in praise, mourning our loss, and looking forward in hope. If our worship life together in 2021 taught us anything, it is that we are capable of adapting to considerable change, and that God continues to be faithful to us. Our worship life will change under the tenure of a new rector, yet we remain grateful to Blair for all her tireless work to build joyful, global, innovative, curious, and experimental worship here at St. Matthew’s. Because of her efforts to network, bring out the gifts of our members and staff, and try new things, our worship life is forever transformed for the better.



Respectfully Submitted,  
The Rev. Maggie Nancarrow  
Assistant Priest

## PARISH STATISTICS

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b><u>Households</u></b>	<b><u>156</u></b>	<b><u>152</u></b>	<b><u>149</u></b>	<b><u>153</u></b>	<b><u>153</u></b>	<b><u>158</u></b>	<b><u>159</u></b>	<b><u>146</u></b>	<b><u>138</u></b>	<b><u>132</u></b>
<b><u>Baptized Members</u></b>	<b><u>315</u></b>	<b><u>305</u></b>	<b><u>304</u></b>	<b><u>317</u></b>	<b><u>368</u></b>	<b><u>374</u></b>	<b><u>329</u></b>	<b><u>389</u></b>	<b><u>337</u></b>	<b><u>316</u></b>
Active (16 & over)	285	269	270	277	304	299	230	175	206	188
<i>Active (under 16)</i>	30	36	34	40	64	75	96	138	131	128
Inactive (16 & over)										
<i>inactive under 16</i>										
<b><u>Left Parish</u></b>	<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>	<b><u>13</u></b>	<b><u>11</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>	<b><u>10</u></b>	<b><u>11</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>	<b><u>18</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>
Died	0	5	3	2	2	4	3	1	1	3
Transferred Out	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	7	4
Removed	2	0	10	9	6	6	8	10	10	7
<b><u>New Members</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>	<b><u>8</u></b>	<b><u>34</u></b>	<b><u>16</u></b>	<b><u>18</u></b>	<b><u>60</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>
<b>New Attending Only</b>			12		25	45	22	19		
<b>Baptisms</b>	3	1	2	3	3	2	2	8	5	6
<b>Confirmations</b>	6	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Marriages</b>	0	2	3	0	2	3	2	2	1	2
<b>Burials</b>	2	5	4	2	2	5	4	2	2	3
<b>Pledging Units</b>	103	108	106	103	107	105	94	97	83	83
Epiphany 1	–	129	141	112	149	143	161	165	161	205
Epiphany 2	–	127	131	136	121	150	166	174	149	158
Lent 1	–	145	78	129	150	122	143	147	140	146
Lent 3	38	–	154	151	130	159	145	158	143	125
Palm/Passion Sunday	85	–	189	210	160	185	193	190	153	194
Easter	184	–	258	256	260	233	272	308	248	262
Easter 4	–	–	146	165	143	153	141	164	194	149
Pentecost	109	–	137	173	141	168	122	128	174	133
Last September	80	53	128	137	153	205	155	160	189	181
All Saints Sunday	102	52	165	159	174	201	172	198	165	187
Advent 1	103	41	134	146	183	141	177	159	208	179
Christmas Eve/Day	259	101	279	273	294	295	309	303	312	325
<b>Total</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>1940</b>	<b>2047</b>	<b>2058</b>	<b>2155</b>	<b>2156</b>	<b>2254</b>	<b>2236</b>	<b>2244</b>

The attendance statistics for 2020–21 include in-person indoor and outdoor Eucharist and Zoom Morning Prayer, but do not count the electronic worship bulletin or podcast. Due to the irregularity of the pandemic situation, we chose not to officially remove anyone from the rolls except those who requested it.