

## Rector Search: Generosity at St. Matthew’s

In seeking to follow the Way of Jesus, our congregation has discerned important spiritual practices to guide us, including the practice of generosity. We discern generosity to mean trusting in God’s abundance and sharing what God has entrusted to us. Generosity has been the central theme in our pledge drives.

We strive to make our stewardship program a year-round event. Often this has meant identifying acts of generosity in the parish and highlighting them in either mid-service announcements or in the weekly newsletter, Tidings. We try to remind our members when generosity plays an important role in individual, family, or congregational life. While St. Matthew’s is bigger than a “family” parish, we have a strong community feeling that enables us to worship, pray, learn, serve, mourn, and celebrate together.

During the fall stewardship campaign, we have a very methodical approach to both emphasizing those aspects of parish life that bring us together and making sure that all are aware of the opportunity to pledge for the coming year. The congregation has been very accepting of this process.

When large building maintenance or improvements have been important, our parish has consistently given generously and we have paid those costs through additional pledging and gifts over just a few short years.

Our annual average pledge consistently exceeds that of other parishes in our diocese and during the COVID pandemic our total pledged amount has actually increased. Though about 42% of our pledge income comes from 10 households, our middle group of pledges have shown consistent increases. We believe our parishioners see the ministry of St Matthew's important to support with their time, talent, and money.

Some overview of our past pledging history:

<b>St. Matthew’s</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Membership	377	373	379	382	382	393	
Average Attendance	132	133	129	128	128	79*	
Dollars Pledged	\$356,580	\$360,090	\$387,118	\$394,501	\$385,777	\$426,667	\$443,357
Number of Pledges	98	92	102	106	101	107	101
Average Pledge \$	\$3,639	\$3,914	\$3,795	\$3,722	\$3,820	\$3,988	\$4,241
<b>MN Diocese</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>		
Average Pledge \$	\$2,583	\$2,670	\$2,727	\$2,689	\$2,998		

\*COVID-Additional attendance via web