

## Gratitude: Living lives of thanksgiving for everything God has given us, and breaking bread with others in this spirit

Gratitude begins with the Eucharist, in the Great Thanksgiving. God gives first, and we respond with gratitude and generosity toward God and others. At St. Matthew's, the longest part of our annual parish meeting is often the period of thanksgiving that comes at the end of the meeting. Late parishioner Denis Dailey started this tradition in 2007 when he stood up at the end of the meeting and asked if he could share a few words of thanks to the congregation for supporting him during a rough time. Ever since then, our annual meeting ends in an outpouring of gratitude as parishioners express our thanks to one another and the community for love and support during times of hardship, celebration, or transition. This outpouring of thanks goes on until it's time to head upstairs for our worship service, sometimes late, where we continue our thanksgiving in the Eucharist.



Our ancient stove tells another story of gratitude. Installed as part of a 1950's kitchen remodel, it was paid for by a restaurant St. Matthew's ran at our legendary State Fair. For several years, parishioners of all ages worked at our Fair restaurant to raise funds for the new kitchen. That kitchen and stove served our community well for more than 60 years with many meals cooked and much laughter and tears shared while members worked in the kitchen.

At the end of the stove's life, though, it was becoming less safe and reliable. Lovingly nicknamed "The Dragon," it occasionally shot flames into the air, unprovoked. When we remodeled the kitchen in 2019, we looked for a way to express our gratitude for its long

service and for the cooks who used it to provide so many meals. Through a partnership with our Art Ministry and our Hospitality Vision Team, and our connections with nearby Bethel University, [we asked a class of sculpture students](#) to propose their ideas for transforming the stove into a beautiful sculpture.

The students visited St. Matthew's and listened to parishioners tell stories about the kitchen and the community, and studied our worship and fellowship spaces. Each student proposed a vision for re-making the stove into a sculpture and presented it to the committee of parishioners. The committee chose a design from an amazing range of thoughtful proposals and commissioned winning student Chase DuBose to make her sculpture. All of the students' designs were featured in an art show that fall, "Phoenix: From Flaming Stove to Inspiring Sculpture."



*Chief Cooks Rosa and Karen keep us well-fed.*

Chase's sculpture was installed on the wall above our newly created coffee station; it is dedicated to two leaders, Rosa Uy and Karen Pfeifle, who have lovingly served in the kitchen for many years at the head of our kitchen ministry, the Brother Lawrence Guild. The Dragon lives on in art form, a unique symbol of our gratitude for God's faithfulness: for the building which was given to us by previous generations; for our current remodeled kitchen that we can use for hospitality for years to come; and for our loving members who care for one another with love and thanksgiving.