

## **Simplicity: Decluttering our lives so we can be faithfully present to God and one another**

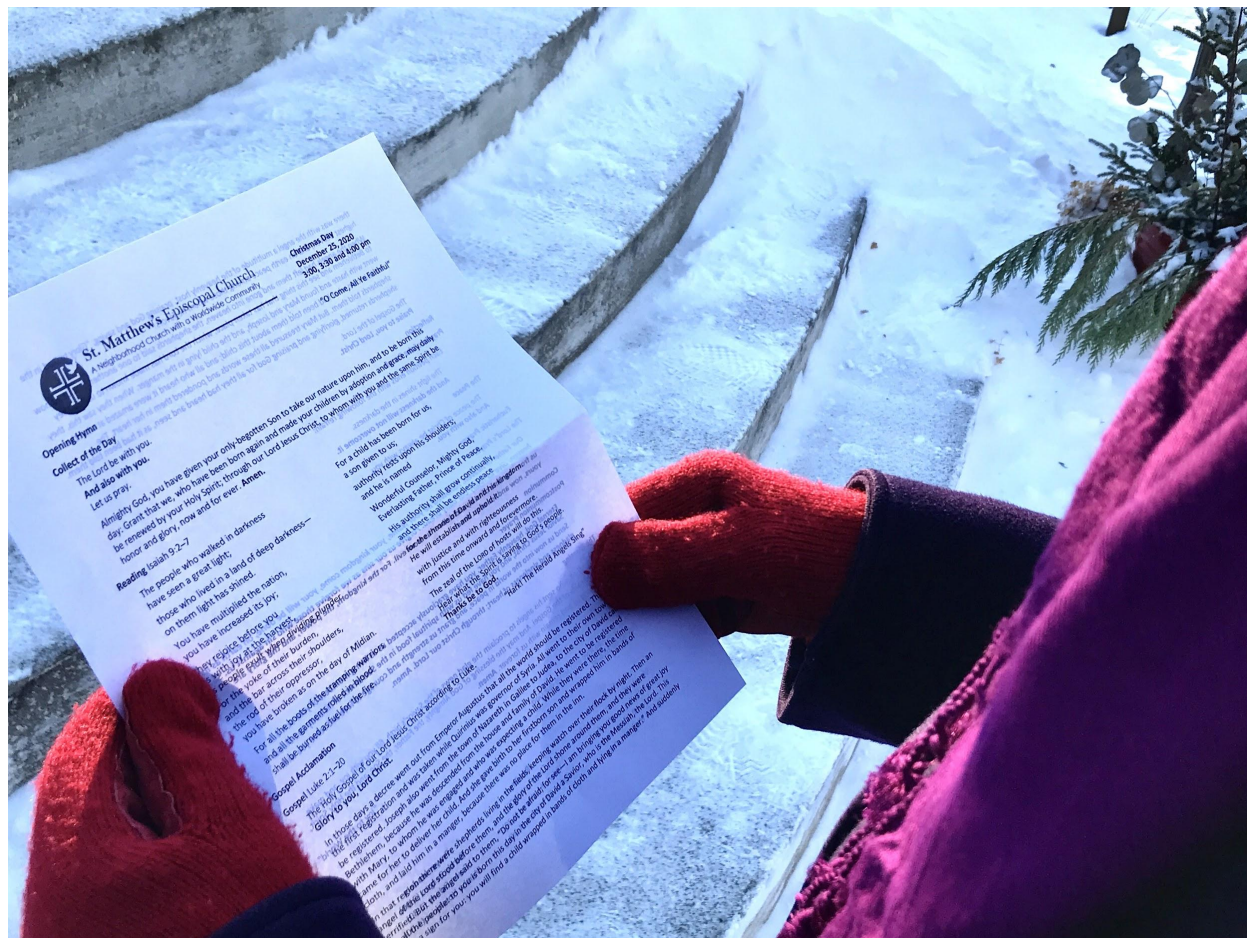
In our individual lives and in our life together, cultivating simplicity often means saying “no” or “not yet” to some things, so we can say “yes” to the one or two things God is calling us to do. There is no shortage of great ideas at St. Matthew’s! We are an energetic, creative, and passionate lot and we are eager to engage in new ministry ideas for the sake of God’s world. While discernment practices help guide our decision-making, the practice of simplicity allows us to focus our energies and respond with agility to new challenges. It enables us to hold some things lightly and let go when the time is right.

As individuals, practicing simplicity might mean choosing to live below our means when we can, freeing us to give generously to causes we care about. It might mean working fewer hours to make time and space for loved ones, and observing a weekly Sabbath, trusting that God will take care of us while we rest. For some, practicing simplicity means making choices that lessen our impact on God’s beloved creation.



*Isolating for safety in 2020, Sunday school children work with Godly Play kits at home.*

These choices are supported by simple spiritual practices that help us see what's important to God. Each month or liturgical season, we try out a new spiritual practice. Highlighting one practice at a time reminds us that we can focus on the one or two simple practices that are most helpful in connecting to God in this season. Each Sunday, we practice a moment of silence after the sermon, taking time to reflect and ponder a question posed by the preacher. Silence has become a welcome friend to our community.



*A simple COVID-safe Christmas Eve service on the front steps of the church in 2020*

Pre-pandemic, our Sunday night service incorporated other spiritual practices to help us cultivate simplicity, including Taizé services and dinner church, celebrating the Eucharist as part of a meal. Other practices and learning experiences have helped us consider how to focus on the one or two priorities God is calling us to attend to in our lives; faith forums, book groups, and retreats have focused on ways to declutter and simplify our lives and draw closer to God.

The practice of simplicity was forced upon many of us during the pandemic. By necessity, we retreated from obligations and events that could sometimes be overwhelming. At the same time, life became complicated by new protocols and new ways of navigating work and family life. We had to make decisions about what to let go. Now, as we slowly transition into a new normal, the desire to have less clutter in our days remains, and we will need to choose how to rebuild our lives. These are decisions we need to make as individuals, as members of family groups and friendship circles, and as a community gathered by the Holy Spirit in this time and place. We look forward to discerning together how God is calling us to focus and steward our energies and resources in the coming months.