

St. Matthews Episcopal Church, Evanston, IL Annual Report | January 30, 2022



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

146nd Annual Meeting Agenda

Sunday, January 30, 2021

Joy & Gratitude

- 2:00 Opening Prayer/Words of Gratitude
- 2:05 Approval of the Minutes for 145th Annual Meeting (page 4)
- 2:10 Activity
- 2:15 Special Thanksgivings
- 2:20 Report from the Co-Treasurers
- 2:30 Election of Officers (page 3)
 - Vestry Officers & Members
 - Trustees of the Endowment
 - Delegation to Annual Diocesan Convention
- 2:45 Activity
- 2:50 Address by the Outgoing and Incoming Senior Wardens
- 2:55 Closing Prayer & Dismissal

Standing for Election

For Vestry

For Incoming Warden: Damon Doucet

For Vestry Members

1-year term: Molly Purse (to fill Rick Worden's unexpired term)

3-year terms: Deborah Williams, Curt Nilsson, Bill Widmer

With Thanksgiving for Departing Vestry Members: Connie Conley, Bob Purse, Rick Worden

For Trustee of the Endowment

3-Year Term: Stephen Carr

With Thanksgiving for Our Departing Trustee: Dustin Vincent

For Delegation to the 185 Annual Convention of the Diocese of Chicago

November 18-19, 2022

To be announced at the Annual Meeting



Proposed Slate of Elected Officers

Melissa Warden, *Senior Warden*

Damon Doucet, *Junior Warden*

Members of the Vestry of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

Penelope Boardman, Karen LaBranche, Molly Purse, Steve Steiber (2023)

Bill Siegfried, Penny Whiteside (2024)

Deborah Williams, Curt Nilsson, Bill Widmer (2025)

Trustees of the Endowment

Tim Patenode (2023) Damon Doucet (2024) Stephen Carr (2025)

Submitted by Jennie Woodring

The 145th St. Matthew's annual meeting was held via Zoom in response to continuing COVID-19 restrictions, with approximately 50 people in attendance.

With a theme of Gratitude, the meeting was opened at 11:27 a.m. by Fr. Charlie de Kay with a reflection on gratitude and a prayer.

All attendees were invited to share expressions of gratitude for others at St. Matthew's through the Zoom chat.

Minutes of the January, 2020 annual meeting were APPROVED unanimously as presented.

The 2020 financial report - Allison Zidek and Chris Motogawa (co-treasurers)

Allison thanked the finance committee (Chris Motogawa, Jeff Hayden, Dustin Vincent, Rick Worden). She also expressed thanks to parishioners for honoring pledge payments in 2020, for those who pre-paid 2021 pledges, for the parish as a whole for exceeding the originally projected total pledge amount for 2021, and to the anonymous donors who offered a matching pledge challenge to fellow members of St. Matthew's.

As the annual finance report was previously sent to parishioners, and a detailed discussion of the proposed budget for 2021 was held the previous Sunday, only a brief summary was presented. The actual 2020 budget deficit was \$41K, less than the budgeted \$48K. The 2021 budget includes a \$50K deficit, resulting from continuing uncertainty and COVID-19's negative effects on fundraising and building use fees.

The 2020 deficit was funded by a COVID-19 relief Payroll Protection Plan loan, and a second PPP loan is anticipated for 2021, which will help offset the projected shortfall for the coming year. Allison stressed that these are unusual times, and that this model will not continue into the future.

Chris Motogawa also expressed thanks to those who pledged, and to the anonymous matching fund donors; funds will allow St. Matthew's to focus on mission in the coming year. He reminded the congregation that he and Allison are always available to answer finance-related questions.

Elections

Submitting votes into the Zoom chat, the congregation unanimously elected the following:

Vestry members were ELECTED:

Melissa Warden, Junior Warden (2022) and Senior Warden (2023)

2-year term (to fill Melissa Warden's unexpired term): Karen LaBranche (2023)

3-year terms: Bill Siegfriedt (2024), Penelope Whiteside (2024), Rick Worden (2024)

Trustees were ELECTED

Dustin Vincent (2022) Damon Doucet (2024)

Delegates to the annual diocesan convention (Nov 19-20, 2021) were ELECTED:

Delegates: Damon Doucet, Mary Clark, Ann Searles

Alternates: Sally Craige Christensen, Sandi McPhee, Melissa Warden

Concluding remarks

Charlie expressed thanks to departing vestry members Cynthia Doucet (Senior Warden) Monique Austin, Susan Cherco, Dave Turner, (vestry members since January 2018), Jennie Woodring, Clerk (3 years of service), and departing trustees Don Churchill and Karen McKay.

Cynthia Doucet, outgoing senior warden, offered appreciation for all at St. Matthew's with whom she worked during her time as warden.

Kristin Jacobsen, incoming senior warden, added her thanks to Cynthia for her leadership. She expressed her intent to work with all to put St. Matthew's mission into action.

The meeting was closed with a prayer and dismissal at 12:10 p.m.

STAFF REPORTS

RECTOR'S REPORT

Submitted by the Rev. Charles A. de Kay

2021: Adaptive Experimentation Takes Root and Grows

If the year before last – 2020 – was the Covid-19 Crisis Year, in which leaders rose heroically to meet unprecedented challenges, last year was the year in which the continuing crisis morphed into an opportunity to practice adaptive change on a systemwide scale. Covid-19, variants, and their requisite safety protocols shifted and we danced with them in all aspects of our common life. Perhaps nowhere more so than in our worship. Episcopal worship, like many Christian traditions, emphasizes the gathered community. Episcopal worship, in particular, works to engage each of our five senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Each of these aspects in our worship had to be reconsidered, reviewed, and known risks weighed against the ever (and still) emerging science around the disease.

Together we learned about “fomite transmission,” air-borne particles, air-flow patterns, and much more as we considered how we might safely gather as a participatory community, in which we engage all five senses. Building community, long a missional objective at St. Matthew’s, has been recognized to flow organically from such practices as gathering together for worship, in congregational singing and certainly shared meals (which we also do as followers of Jesus, a man with a radically open idea of table fellowship). How can we adapt our practices and hold fast to our primary mission during the pandemic of keeping as many people safe as possible?

While in 2020 we found deep and abiding gratitude for technologies new to us, especially the Facebook Live video-streaming service, Zoom meeting platform, and YouTube Video service, as the pandemic moved from a discrete event to an ongoing reality, could they meet our needs? Could we effectively provide meaningful worship on these platforms? Could we hold productive and engaging meetings? Could we share important information to the community? Could we provide healing pastoral care online? We reflected together: What were the limitations and what, for us, was essential?

In 2021, recognizing that the pandemic was lasting longer than anyone anticipated, we asked these questions again with a new vigor and with invaluable experience at our fingertips. We had all, each of us, to make serious, life-and-death decisions about our everyday choices, for so many ordinary choices were now fraught with actual risk. Mask or no? Cloth mask or surgical mask? Children in school or remote learning? Our own shopping or Instacart? Meals out or take-out in? We learned to watch the positivity rates like the weather, and the CDC guidelines like the nightly news.

While over the past 50 years, Evanston became a liberal bubble and so our decisions about vaccinations, shut downs, and other precautions were made without much of the divisiveness, tension and fears of violence found elsewhere, we have not been immune to loss. We mourned the loss of human interaction, especially with our loved ones, often now further isolated by quarantine protocols,

especially at care facilities. We mourned the loss of friends and family taken ill across the country. For many of us the pandemic came home with the death of the “Mayor of Evanston” and friend to many at St. Matthew’s, Hecky Powell in May 2020. Then the cruelty of the pandemic struck at the very beating heart of St. Matthew’s with illness and swift death of Don Cherco, who had been fully vaccinated, in September 2021.

The stakes could hardly be higher. And so, we began to stretch. We began to learn not just new jargon and to manage our daily risk management, but we began to ask more of ourselves. We continued our adaptive experiments, still out of critical necessity, but with a new awareness and wondering about how this all would impact our capacity to live out our sense of mission. We actively engaged in the work set out in Tod Bolsinger’s book: *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* that so many of us had read and discussed, at the suggestion of our then bishop, Jeff Lee. We’d adopted a new mission statement in 2021 to be “Welcoming All In Community, Joyfully Doing God’s Work In The World.” What exactly, we wondered together, did that new mission actually look like? What was our focus and whom were we going to serve?

A mission-focus discernment team (informally dubbed the Mission Possible Team) met online to parse the mission statement to further define it. I’ll never forget the night, October 15th, that I received the jubilant email from Melissa Warden, who shepherded this essential work. The subject line read: “WE DID IT! Mission/Passion Meeting Success!” St. Matthew’s had discerned a clear call to be welcoming above all. This charism of welcome would be directed both inward (toward potential new members) and outward (toward community members whom we might reasonably never expect to see at church service, such as refugees of other faiths). Expressed as “Welcoming Neighbors: Near and Far,” the newly announced missional identity provides us with a yardstick by which the vestry and clergy will measure our ministries. Does Ministry A meet the criteria of a St. Matthew’s mission? It is sure to prove invaluable for us as we move into the future.

In the short term, it has already paid off giant dividends. Right away, the new language led to vestry and community conversations using Thom Rainer’s *Becoming A Welcoming Church*, and a springboard for at least a pair of experiments that the vestry heard about during our winter meetings. Welcoming Neighbors Near (to St. Matthew’s) led to a team dedicated to reimagining the prime entry to the church through the intentional lens of a visitor and enhancing first impressions of welcome. Welcoming Neighbors Far opened the door for an already emerging new ministry of the St. Matthew’s – St. Andrew’s Pentecost Partnership Team to co-sponsor a refugee family with the help and through the auspices of RefugeeOne.

There is a further idea still in the idea stage – re-imagining the Buildings and Grounds Team to focus on the question: how welcoming is our property? This new “Welcoming Buildings Team” could be tasked with the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of our property and its systems (e.g. the heating system, the roof) with a new sense of purpose – how do these systems and property enhance or

diminish the objectives of our mission? The shift builds in the “why” of the team’s sense of purpose (mission). In so doing, it provides new incentive to make sure that our beloved property is a house of welcome for those seeking faith, and healing, and connection with God. If you’re interested in being a part of this, please contact me directly.

One small but important change in how our building speaks welcome happened when the vestry requested that the church purchase an LGBTQ+ Pride flag and install it beside the banner that proclaims “Black Lives Matter to God and to Us.” I am so very humbled by our leaders who proclaim God’s love in word and action; surely, hate has no home at St. Matthew’s.

Throughout 2021 our Covid-19 response team (originally the Return-to-Church Task Force) continued to meet to reflect on what was possible with worship under the current conditions. We invited the parish into our conversations with strategically timed surveys specifically and in targeted conversations more generally. I will forever be grateful to these dedicated volunteers and staff members who spent hours in their own reflections and conversations and many Saturday mornings (and a Wednesday night in Advent) to think and share with me about next steps in response to the emerging and receding and re-emerging waves of the pandemic. Their wisdom and counsel guided my decisions about what we can do safely and what needs to wait, how we make it work, and, along the way, what equipment and protocols are needed and how best to communicate these expectations to the parish. While in the end, the decisions about how we keep each other safe were mine, or mandated by the leadership of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, their efforts and care for our safety – yours and mine – gave those decisions creativity and wisdom beyond what I could have offered.

We learned and developed new strategies, invested funds in new equipment and new initiatives, wrote grant requests, and are still learning new skills (how to worship with a camera trained on you, for instance, has, perhaps more than any other of the past year’s changes, catapulted us into the twenty-first century).

Senior Warden, Kristin Jacobsen called, assembled and sent forth a whole new ministry to meet our moment: “the St. Matthew’s Tech Team.” Led by Diane Senechal, a gifted lighting designer in the world of Chicago theater, the Tech Team runs our livestream for every 10:30 Sunday morning service, and weddings and funerals as needed. These volunteers, who include Don Churchill, Mark Crayton, Kristin’s brother Mark Jacobsen, Steve Steiber, and often Diane herself are not seen on camera, but they control everything that we see (and sometimes hear) on the livestream. We owe them our heartfelt thanks. The system is not complicated. If you might be interested in learning more about this ministry, please contact me; we could use additional volunteers to share the ministry.

Armed, lovingly, with a renewed clarity of mission, new technology to facilitate safe worship, and a practiced hand at turning on a dime – such as when we completely re-imagined Sunday worship without a priest when I learned on Saturday that I’d been potentially exposed to Covid earlier in the week – we are primed to embrace and to live into our mission with grace and skill.

The pandemic has taken a toll, too. I would be dishonest if I didn't mention the fatigue that has hit all of us. We have lived with grief, with loss, with new hardships, with isolation, and with an ongoing sense of dislocation/disorientation. In this new reality, sometimes we are quite simply unmoored. It is vitally important that we continue to support one another, and to choose compassion and forgiveness. All around us and across the nation we see the impact of such disruption – fatigue, rage, hatred. We need to check in with ourselves and with each other when we can. I don't believe that we can assume that “no news is good news” – in other words, if we don't hear from one another, all is well. Our community developed the saying that “Love is an action.” Let us be proactive in how we take good care of ourselves and in the ways that we love one another. Our savior Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, expects no less of us than that.

With love and gratitude,
Charlie+

A Few of the Notable Events of the Past Year

Terri J. Morrissey is ordained as a deacon at a service at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, on Saturday, February 27th, 2021. The Rev. Terri Morrissey begins her ministry as an ordained cleric in earnest on Sunday, February 28, 2021.

The Quercus Society, a planned giving group led by Sandi McPhee, goes public, April. Brochure are sent to the parish and reinforced on St. Matthew's Day, September 26th. The team also includes Steve Carr, Mary Clark, Damon Doucet, and Tim Patenode.

St. Matthew's re-establishes reduced office hours: Julie MWF 8-2; Charles de Kay Th 12-5 in May.

Frances Tenison Angel Fund is established, this Trust – formally known as Trust II – now primarily contains Fran Tenison's generous bequest of \$192,000.

Penelope Boardman gifts the church a grand piano that now graces the sanctuary, followed by moving each of the many pianos in the church, June.

Choir moves to new home on second floor of the education building, September.

Land Acknowledgement researched, written, approved and published by subcommittee of the Antiracism Team led by Jennie Woodring, October.

Fundraising: Between Charlotte Bishop and Melissa Warden's creatively re-imagining the Annual Gala into an after-church firepit on the lawn named “S'More(s) Fun” on Halloween and an exhibit by Jack Lerman of his artwork and that of his wife Elise Pike on the second weekend in November, fundraising efforts raised almost \$20,000 in the midst of a pandemic. Extraordinary!

Mutual Ministry Review: Representatives of the vestry, the wardens, and I met with the Rev. Kevin Caruso, rector of Trinity, Wheaton, for an open, frank, and productive conversation in our annual Mutual Ministry Review on Monday night, November 8th. The vestry, wardens, and I are developing goals for 2022.

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago held the 185th Annual Convention of the Diocese via Zoom on Saturday, November 20th. St. Matthew's was represented by a full delegation, which included for the first time ever the Rev. Terri J. Morrissey as a clergy representative. My thanks to every member of the delegation who devoted their Saturday to this important work.

Stewardship: At the time I'm writing this, your generous contributions have covered more than 90% of our pledge budget. Thank you!!! And deep thanks to Steve Steiber and his team of miracle workers.

COOPERATIVE VENTURES AND PARTNERSHIPS

St. Matthew's – St. Andrew's Pentecost Partnership Team discerns a call and develops a plan to co-sponsor a refugee family through RefugeeOne. Initial costs to be covered by Trust III.

Confirmation (CnC): First cooperative class of St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, and St. Luke's students, teachers, and mentors enters second year. See "Formation."

Ricky Byrdsong Annual Race Against Hate:

- Creation of Evanston Team "Episcopalians United Against Hate" bringing together the four Evanston Episcopal Churches in a collaborative fundraising event.
- Virtual Juneteenth/Race Against Hate 5K run/walk, a journey that took participants past each Episcopal Church in Evanston: St. Matthew's (start) to St. Andrew's Pentecost to St. Mark's to St. Luke's (finish), 7am, June 19, 2021.

Evanston Deanery organizes the biennial Evanston Deanery Workshop 2021: A Conversation on Race, February 13, 2021

Evanston Interfaith Clergy and Leaders events:

- Evanston Community Lament and Service in the Wake of the George Floyd Verdict, Evanston Farmer's Market, April 21, 2021.
- Press Conference in support of District 65 antiracist curriculum, James Park, Evanston, July 20, 2021.
- Community Lament & Rally after the Kyle Rittenhouse Verdict, Fountain Square, November 21, 2021.

- The Annual Interfaith Evanston Community Martin Luther King Jr. Worship Service
“Prophetic Words Make All the Difference, Zoom, January 16, 2022.

ICIRR Rally at the Thompsons Center, Chicago, calling for justice for immigrants, with the Episcopal Peace and Justice Commission, July 8. Attended by Rep. Jan Schakowsky and Gov. J.B. Pritzker, among others.

The Four-Church Conversation (across Episcopal Churches in Evanston & Wilmette), which was so vital when I arrived in 2011, has been resurrected. An initial conversation with the rectors and wardens of St. Matthew’s, St. Luke’s, St. Mark’s, and St. Augustine’s (Wilmette) took place on Zoom, Tuesday evening, November 16. It was a positive and productive meeting with ideas for collaboration following the CnC model. Initial areas of potential collaboration include antiracism and green team. Since that meeting, it appears that refugee resettlement support might also be an interest. [Representatives from St. Andrew’s Pentecost did not respond to the invitation.] The next meeting is planned to be set after St. Mark’s new interim, the Rev. Fran Holliday, starts in February 2022.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

I celebrated my 10-year anniversary as the rector of St. Matthew’s on April 24, 2021. My sincere thanks to Kristin Jacobsen, our vestry, and staff, and all who contributed to the most excellent gifts and the celebration! I was deeply touched, and I treasure each of the gifts.

I started running as a hobby on New Year’s Day, 2018. This practice has remained with me. I ran the Chicago Marathon, October 10, 2021. My time was 4 hours, 44 minutes and 58 seconds, which – while in no way exceptional – counts as my first in-person marathon finish, a simple source of joy. I am currently training to run a spring marathon and a fall marathon with dreams of eventually hitting a qualifying time for the Boston Marathon.

Charlie+

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

Submitted by Kristin Jacobsen

"If it's not about love, it's not about God." Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Since details of the vestry's work are recorded in the monthly minutes produced by Deb Williams, our wonderful clerk, I want to focus my report as senior warden on a broader view of the vestry and its dedicated group of leaders. During this unprecedented time of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in the midst of lives that are busy even in "normal" times, I am very grateful for these fellow followers of Jesus. They truly exhibit Bishop Curry's emphasis on love being a key part of our identities as Christians.

The vestry of St. Matthew's exhibited love in many forms over the last year:

Love of *God and our parish* led them to devote time and energy to help lead St. Matthew's in a positive direction.

Love of *truth and authenticity* led them to give their best in vestry meetings, to have the fierce conversations necessary to carry on the work of the church.

Love of *each other* led them to show gratitude and support of each other and of fellow parishioners during this difficult and challenging time.

Love of *Jesus' teachings* led them to engage in the hard work of discerning how we at St. Matthew's can best do God's work in the world.

Love of *neighbor* led them to focus on a mission outside the church walls, to fulfill our baptismal covenant to "seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself."

I am incredibly grateful for the work of these Christ-centered leaders. I especially want to thank Melissa Warden for being an inspiring partner in her work as junior warden, and for Charlie de Kay for keeping us firmly focused on the love of Jesus.

Kristin Jacobsen

Senior Warden

DEACON'S REPORT

Submitted by The Rev. Terri Morrissey

The candle that we received at our baptism is the abiding sign for us of what a life of faith is meant to be. Sometimes it burns more brightly than others, but we never see very far ahead. I believe God wants it to be like that. However frustrating it may be, God wants us to take these important steps in life, in faith and trust. It can be frightening to step out and put our hand in the hand of God.

Br. Geoffrey Tristram, Society of Saint John the Evangelist

As I read Br. Geoffrey's reflection on faith, his words seemed to echo my own journey with God. It is a journey that has been guided by the promises made in our Baptismal Covenant and the call to love one another as Christ loved us. My faith journey eventually led me to discern the call to become a deacon. My call has been clear and steadfast throughout years of discernment, study, field education, postulancy, candidacy, and on the pathway toward ordination. I am thankful for all who have walked alongside me on this journey.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been inhabiting the liminal space between 'what was' and 'what's next' - or the mostly unknown. In spite of this uncertainty, the year 2021 began with promise, hope, and the anticipation of my ordination to the diaconate.

On February 27, 2021, I was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Glen Ellyn by the Rt. Rev. Douglas Sparks, Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Indiana. Due to COVID restrictions, attendance in the church was strictly limited to fifty - and each ordinand was only allowed to invite ten guests, including presenters and vesters. However, the wonder of modern technology - Zoom and Facebook Live - made it possible for a great cloud of witnesses, beloved friends, and family to participate from far-flung locations. I am thankful for members of the diocesan staff who worked to make this day possible, to the Rev. George D. Smith III, Rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the staff at St. Mark's, Glen Ellyn, the Rt. Rev. Douglas Sparks, Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Indiana; my Presenters - the Rev. Charles de Kay, Karen LaBranche, and Donald Churchill, and my Vester - Suzanne Dutcher. Thank you also to Jon Dutcher, Gary LaBranche, Nancy Churchill, and my dear friends, Linnea and Wolf Koch for their love and support. I would like to extend a special thank you to the Rev. Christopher Griffin, who has been my companion in faith throughout my journey, and who joined me for the trip to Glen Ellyn. It was a glorious, Spirit-filled day!!

The next morning, February 28, 2021 was my first Sunday as your Deacon - on Zoom. This, too, was a glorious day! Thank you to those who joined us in worship and to everyone who has affirmed my ministry at St. Matthew's.

Following the service, I received an intriguing text from James Janssen asking about my favorite psalm or hymn text or tune. The hymn was predictable - Hymn 8 - *Morning has broken*. A favorite psalm?? Psalm 100, *the Jubilate*. That afternoon, to my surprise, James composed a new setting for *The Jubilate* - to the glory of God and "for The Rev. Terri Morrissey on the occasion of her ordination". My eyes were veiled in tears as we sang it for the first-time during a Morning Prayer service. A heartfelt thank you to James for the wonderful surprise and for sharing your gift for music with me and the people of St. Matthew's.

What is the ministry of a deacon?

Deacons have played a role in the life of the church from the early days of Christianity. In Chapter 6 of Acts (Acts 6:1-6), the twelve called together the whole community of disciples to select “seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom...” There have been many “waves” of deacons since the first seven were called. A renewal of the order of deacons began with the advent of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer**. The current role of deacons continues to be interpreted and integrated into the life of the church.

Deacons have a number of roles within the church, in the community and in the diocese. One of the most visible roles that a deacon has is within the liturgy. It is the deacon who proclaims the Gospel, preaches on occasion, sets the Eucharistic table, and dismisses the gathered congregation at the end of the service. In all of these roles, the deacon serves as an icon of Christ’s diaconal ministry. The deacon also serves as a bridge between the church and the world, and at the dismissal calls the people of God to a life of service in the world.

Diakonia is a Greek word that is defined as *sacred agency*, and points toward the work of deacons among the baptized. One of the roles of a deacon is to lead, equip, empower, encourage, and support Christian people in their ministry. All Christian people are called to serve Christ by virtue of their baptism and have a responsibility to share in the ministry of Christ in the world.

Deacons are also involved in pastoral care and “hold space” for others through their gift of presence, prayer and their willingness to walk alongside others on their journeys. It is a ministry of meeting people where they are, without judging them, or trying to fix them, or to influence the outcomes; recognizing that in all ministry, we are channels of God’s abundant grace.

While the ministry of a deacon shines a light on the needs of God’s people, it is also important to recognize that a deacon is called to serve in direct relationship to the bishop. Because of this special connection, a deacon reports annually to the bishop and on occasion serves alongside the bishop. The work of a deacon is also non-stipendiary.

* *The Ordination of a Deacon* begins on page 537 in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Pastoral Care

When the pandemic made it necessary to suspend most in-person gatherings, it did not stop the work of ministry. For more than 20 years, and as a deacon, I have been called to a ministry of pastoral care, which is about building relationships and walking the path of love with others. I have continued this work with parishioners, families, and caregivers - by phone, and whenever possible, in person. Presiding Bishop Curry would call this “navigating with God’s GPS.” It’s a space filled with God’s abundant grace and where transformation can take place.

Staff and Worship

Throughout 2021, I have participated in worship and staff meetings on a weekly basis and have preached somewhat regularly. I look forward to gathering for our weekly staff meetings on Zoom with Charlie, Julie, Mark, and James. I am thankful for all of you and all that you share with the community at St. Matthew’s. With the help of this talented staff, I have increased my knowledge of liturgy, helped plan virtual and in-person worship, learned about the technology as it relates to virtual

choral music and livestreaming. In the spring, we planned the cautious transition to worship on the lawn and beach church; and our return to in-person worship in the church with livestreaming.

On Saturday, November 13, I had the privilege of serving as deacon alongside the Rt. Rev. Chilton Knudsen, Assisting Bishop of the Diocese of Chicago at an area-wide Confirmation Service that was held at St. David's Episcopal Church in Glenview. It is customary for a bishop to have a deacon present when making a visitation. As a cradle Episcopalian and someone who grew up in the era of the *1928 Book of Common Prayer*, I noted the significance of having three women at the altar that day – a bishop, priest, and deacon.

Beyond St. Matthew's, I attended five virtual retreats – A Women's Spiritual Retreat, a Formation and Celtic Prayer Retreat, a Lenten Clergy Retreat, a Fall Clergy Retreat, and an Advent Retreat that was led by Pádraig Ó Tuama.

I have attended monthly meetings - both virtual and in person - of the Evanston Interfaith Clergy and Leaders (EICL), the Evanston Deanery, Diocesan Clergy and Leadership calls (Zoom) and Deacons Gatherings (Zoom). Prior to the pandemic, the deacon community met three times during the year. Our monthly gatherings have created an additional layer of support and have deepened our connection to each other. I also attended our virtual Diocesan Convention in November and for a time, Province V of the Episcopal Church Migration Ministry meetings.

Pet Blessing

On October 10, I led a deferred St. Francis Day Pet Blessing on the Lawn along with Penelope Boardman and Curt Nilsson. It was wonderful to greet parishioners, and some of St. Matthew's neighbors, and to offer a blessing to their furry companions. Thank you, Penelope and Curt, for being a welcoming presence and for taking pictures!

Shared Ministries and Continuing Education

I continue to lead Stephen Ministry along with Steve Steiber and coordinate our Home Communion Ministry. I am also a member of the St. Andrew's Pentecost - St. Matthew's Partnership Team, and a member of the Antiracism Team.

Throughout the year, my continuing education efforts have been focused on the social justice issues that have been identified by the St. Andrew's Pentecost - St. Matthew's Partnership Team (Immigration and refugees) and the work of the Anti-racism Team. Over the last several months, I have continued to learn through a series of webinars and workshops encompassing a variety of topics including antiracism, immigration, refugee resettlement, DACA, asylum, Indigenous history and art, iconography, and poetry. The Anti-racism Team's work on the St. Matthew's Land Acknowledgement left me wanting to expand my knowledge on the topic and led to my participation in the BexleySeabury Pathways for Baptismal Living course on the Doctrine of Discovery. It was eye-opening and forever changed my perspective on history. I was also interested in learning more about racial justice on the local level and took part in the Evanston Faith, Justice, and Reparations series. In the area of art and faith, I immersed myself in a virtual series about the life, art, and music of Hildegard of Bingen.

I am thankful for the many rich learning experiences that were offered through the Episcopal Church, Province V of the Episcopal Church, Migration Ministry – Neighbor to Neighbor, Episcopal Migration Ministries, RefugeeOne, the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing, the Diocesan Sanctuary Task Force, the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, Trinity Wall Street, the Church of the Heavenly Rest, the Shift Network, and the CEEP Network.

In the spring of 2021, I completed Year 4 of EfM (Education for Ministry) and became an EfM graduate.

Ministry in Action

On July 8, I joined, along with Craige Christensen and Charlie de Kay – and members of the Diocesan Sanctuary Task Force, a “Citizenship for All – We Can’t Wait” Action at the Thompson Center. The action was sponsored by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), the Diocese of Chicago Sanctuary Task Force, and others. I joined a community rally in James Park to support Evanston/Skokie School District 65’s antiracism curriculum, and interfaith prayer vigils in downtown Evanston.

My Ministry as an Artist

Before I stepped onto the path toward ordained ministry, I spent more than 34 years as an art teacher and a lifetime as an artist. My diaconal formation left me with little time to nurture my creative spirit and even less time for creating art. Thankfully, that is changing, and I fully recognize my need to be deeply engaged in my own artwork - which includes drawing, painting, designing and making vestments, and iconography. As a deacon, it’s important for me to continually discern the gifts that I bring to my ministry, and to help others do God’s creative work in the world. I have long recognized the intersection of art, faith, and prayer - and been working to develop a number of hands-on workshops that will be accessible to artists and non-artists alike. It is my hope to joyfully share this work in small group settings when it becomes safe to do so.

Faithfully yours on the journey,

Deacon Terri

MUSIC PROGRAM REPORT

Submitted by James Janssen and Mark Crayton

Making a joyful noise to the Lord was certainly different in 2021! Of course, the beginning of the year through the summer was completely virtual, which presented its own set of challenges for the music in our worship. All of our professional singers in the choir were engaged in recording their individual parts of anthems at home, which were then engineered by Jonathan Weyant, Scott Bass (two of our pros), and Mark. This allowed us to keep choral singing and solos from time to time as part of our weekly Zoom Morning Prayer Sunday services. With Zoom lag, Mark and I would then have to sing/play to you as you sang along with hymns and canticles in the privacy of your muted microphones. What a way to worship! But... it worked!

Since September, however, we've been worshiping in person with the full choir masked and distanced to help keep us all as safe as possible. The choir has really done amazing work under these circumstances. Now that we've found a safe way to sing together as a congregation, it's probably clear how much work it is to sing through a mask! Since COVID-19 will probably keep us in this "new normal" state for some time, we will continue to be diligent with our safety protocols as we work to bring you meaningful worship through sung and instrumental music.

Looking ahead, we have some special music Sundays planned (The Movies Go to Church Sunday with music from *Sister Act* and Old Time Religion Sunday with early-American hymns and anthems). For Holy Week and Easter, the choir will be offering the Charles Wood *St Mark Passion* on Good Friday, and on Easter morning, *All of Us*, a wonderful piece from the choral work *Considering Matthew Shepard*, written about the young gay Wyoming man that was tortured and left to die tied to a fence beside a country road.

As always, thank you for supporting our music ministry. We look forward to praising God through singing throughout the coming year!

PARISH ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Submitted by Julie Hinz

Work is no longer simply a job or occupation; it is a calling, a vocation. It is a summons from God. Vocation is also where the Spirit sanctifies the Christian's life, not in a self-centered quest for perfection, but rather in humble service to the neighbor.

-Martin Luther

No matter what 2021 threw at us, the church office functioned well thanks to the wonders of modern technology and the love, perseverance, and understanding of God's people here at St. Matthew's. God continues to be present and working in the mundane things of church life.

My largest role continues to be communication, in all forms, to the congregation and to the larger community. From printed bulletins for any service to the design of posters, banners and lawn signs, to making sure updated covid protocols are posted throughout the building, it usually originates at my desk or moves from my desk into the world. During COVID it often has surprised me how much time I spend at my computer; designing, editing, inputting, meeting, emailing, coordinating... the basic work of the church is communicating God's love to the world. The work of the office is no different.

One of my joys is working with members of St. Matthew's to make things happen. As always, I assist as needed when asked. Everything from creating and distributing marketing materials to supply ordering, serving on the Return to Worship Task Force, providing Zoom training, or collaborating with the staff on worship needs.

During this last year I have spent less time working with the financials at St. Matthew's. Chris Motogawa has been handling the processing of payables. I do handle mailing checks as needed and the filing of all payables. I continue to manage our data system (onRealm) which tracks membership, contact/personal information, Pledges, giving records, etc. During the yearly pledge drive it is my task to run donor lists, provide status information, create pledge accounts, and see to forms and online capabilities. I work closely with the Stewardship team to assure communications are sent; they are kept updated on anything necessary to achieve their budget goal.

This past year office hours resumed on Monday, May 3 with me in the office MWF from 8a-2pm. Working both in the office and at home certainly has its challenges and has forced me to be more organized, which is absolutely a good thing.

There have been some smaller projects accomplished in the last months. What was "The Gallery" in the past is now "The Library" with sorted and cataloged books of all kinds. We are using Tiny Cat, a system that caters to non-profit small libraries such as ours. Books from the nursery, the children's table, and everything found in the old foundation office (2nd floor, SE corner) have been integrated into the online system, so we know what we have. I am working to secure a second-hand computer for the library to assist with using the library more fully. Once that is completed folks can search our library from the website to see if what they are looking for is available. In this same vein, our Little Library on the Lincoln St. lawn has proven to be quite popular. I check it weekly and there is a regular

rotation of reading materials of all types for all ages inside. Check it out and see if something appeals! But don't forget to add to the fun.

The Lerman Art Show in November was months in the planning. Posters, flyers, pictures, etc. were the product of the church office. Working with Jack to manage the facility requirements, and marketing needs as well and coordinating with Terri on the day-off needs and financial aspects were all part of my job.

From a work perspective, 2021 was much the same as 2020. Personally, the biggest change was getting to hug some folks and see your faces which makes it so much better!

MINISTRY REPORTS

ACOLYTES

Submitted by Bob Purse, Coordinator

Like some other programs at St. Matthew's, the acolytes went on hiatus with the shutdown and the subsequent move to virtual services. At the time of the shutdown, we had 11 acolytes. By the time we returned to church, three of those acolytes had left the team, and at this time, we have had no additional members. So, there are now eight acolytes, by chance comprising four teams of two, each of them from one family unit, along with a ninth auxiliary member who has filled in on occasion.

While this is, by far, the lowest number of acolytes we've had in the 53 years I've been involved with acolyting at St. Matthew's, at this moment, it's working out fine, as, under COVID, we are only able to use two acolytes per service, meaning that everyone takes a turn about once a month. I am hopeful that, once a level of normalcy returns, there will be additional young people (and perhaps adults) who will be eager to join the team.

ALTAR BREAD MINISTRY

Submitted by Deborah Williams, Coordinator

The work of the Altar Bread Ministry has been on hold since last March. Our team eagerly awaits the day when in-person worship is allowed to resume and we are able to once again provide homemade bread for the Eucharist.

Grocery-store shortages of flour and yeast over the past months have testified to something bread bakers already understood: the restorative power of mixing, kneading, baking, and finally enjoying a fragrant, delicious loaf of homemade bread. For those who would like to try their hand at bread baking during these days of relative isolation, here is our tried-and-true recipe.

Whole Wheat Altar Bread

7/8 cup very warm (not hot) water
1/4 cup honey
1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) vegetable oil
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 package yeast

2 cups whole wheat flour
2/3 cup white (all-purpose) flour

Combine 1/2 cup water with the honey, oil, salt, and yeast. Stir until the yeast is dissolved. Check after 5 to 10 minutes to see if the yeast mixture has formed bubbles (the sign that it is active).

Combine both flours with and yeast mixture. Mix thoroughly, adding water as necessary. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for about 5 minutes, until it is smooth and elastic. Add small amounts of white flour or water as needed.

Form into a ball and return dough to bowl. Cover with a towel, place in a warm space to rise for 1-1/2 to 2 hours (until doubled in size.)

Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead 2 to 3 minutes. Form into a ball and place onto a lightly oiled baking sheet. You want a circle about 1”thick. Cut a cross into the center.

Bake at 350 degrees F for 18 to 22 minutes. It may not get very brown. To test, tap the center bottom of the loaf. If it sounds hollow, it’s done! Allow to cool on a wire rack.

ALTAR GUILD

Submitted by Kate Lauderbaugh

In 2021 the Altar Guild continues to let go of any expectations around the timeline for a return to church as we knew it pre-pandemic. It has been an exercise in flexibility and transformational change and I am very grateful for those that have continued to journey through this and help provide a meaningful Sunday experience during these challenging times.

In 2021 the Altar Guild:

- Continued to participate in the “return to church” task force
- Supported outside worship on Hartrey and at the Beach
- Began to worship in person in the church in the fall
- Moved from Zoom church to live streamed services
- Adjusted protocols as the CDC and the diocese updated guidelines. This included moving to compostable cups and then to no wine at Eucharist.

We continue to take stock of where we are and use this opportunity to make sure we have a sustainable model. We have enjoyed being able to come together again with our teams. We hope to broaden the reach and inclusivity of our group. Please consider joining our community.

ANTI-RACISM

Submitted by Kristin Jacobsen, Leader

In our second year, the Antiracism Team continued meeting monthly to educate ourselves and to act, so we can work against racism and for the love of neighbor that Jesus teaches in the Gospels. Highlights of 2021 included informational activities and vestry approval of three antiracism resolutions.

In addition, the team has begun working on collaboration outside the parish. Team leader Kristin Jacobsen has been attending meetings of Interfaith Action's Social Justice Committee so the team can increase our voice and impact by partnering with other religious groups. A fall meeting of rectors and wardens of Evanston and Wilmette Episcopal churches will hopefully lead to additional cooperation regarding antiracism efforts.

While we are impatient to act and to see change, we periodically remind ourselves that we must understand our history and current reality in order to change it. Educational activities to help further this goal included:

- Discussing what a land acknowledgement means and how we can be good stewards of the land and supporters of our Native American brothers and sisters.
- Thinking about cultural appreciation versus cultural appropriation.
- Learning about the Doctrine of Discovery and the church's role in perpetuating violence against non-white peoples.

The antiracism resolutions approved by the vestry were:

- To purchase from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) businesses as much as possible (passed in February).
- To support Evanston/Skokie School District 65's antiracism curriculum (passed in August).
- To approve a land acknowledgement for the bulletin and the website (passed in September).

St. Matthew's Land Acknowledgement

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church sits on the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa nations. This land was also a place of travel and trade to many other tribes, including the Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Miami tribes. These Native Peoples were forced off their lands with the Second Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1829. After a series of land transfers, St. Matthew's acquired its current site within this territory in 1906. Today, Cook County is home to tens of thousands of Native Americans from many tribes. We acknowledge and respect our Indigenous neighbors, as we strive to be good stewards of this Native land.

Some of the larger goals we've discussed around the land acknowledgement and supporting Native Americans include the desire to:

- **Educate** our church members and the wider public about Native American history, to acknowledge what happened in the past and change how we as Christians react in today's world. We want to find ways to redress the wrongs of a system of annihilation.
- **Support** Native Americans and make visible the needs of a community that has been abandoned. As we develop relationships with indigenous peoples and support their organizations, we can better discern our future direction as a team.

We plan in 2022 to identify ways we can get to know and support other communities of color, especially the Afghan refugee family that the parish will adopt in the spring.

We continue to be inspired by leaders in the Episcopal church, especially Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. In a 2016 video, he talked about the Black Lives Matter movement as “the cry of our young people, a cry of so many who have been crying in silence, and now the silent scream is speaking” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXRn0IxSe_s). The way to defeat racism, Bishop Curry wrote in *The Washington Post*, is with love that is rooted in action: (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/31/black-man-i-understand-anger-our-streets-we-must-still-choose-love/>).

If you are interested in learning about antiracism, join us at our meetings on the third Tuesday of each month. Contact Kristin Jacobsen (kejcat@gmail.com) for the Zoom link. Also take a look at resources from the Diocese of Chicago's Antiracism Commission at <https://episcopalchicago.org/antiracism/> or the guide put together by the Antiracism Team (<https://www.stmatthewsevanston.org>, under the Social Justice tab).

APPALACHIAN SERVICE PROJECT

Submitted by Mike Muyres

Due to the Coronavirus, there was no ASP activity during 2020.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Submitted by Julie Hinz

An aging building requires constant attention. I am forever grateful for our amazing handyman, Jorge Lopez, who makes life easier by being a positive self-starter who responds quickly and with a smile. Jorge monitors the building throughout the week for water and drainage issues, gutter clogs, HVAC needs, plumbing issues, etc. and reports in on what he has accomplished. He continues to

tackle small and large projects around the building as needed, from hanging banners to checking heat pumps.

This past year he has replaced the exterior lights under the parish office steps and is working to make that entrance safe and clean. The basement door to the alley was reported as not opening easily and has since been fixed. He has added 3 permanent electrical outlets to the south wall of the church as to accommodate fans and air scrubbers throughout the space. He removed the antiquated curtain mechanism from the church office (when it began to fall out of the ceiling) and has replaced various light switches in the building to timers so our exterior lights come on appropriately.

Over the summer the pianos in the building were shifted around and the choir room was moved out of the basement to the second floor. Jorge addressed safety and security issues by replacing doors/locks on the second floor, so our music resources were secure. In November, as you know, we lost a heating pump and were without heat. Jorge worked with Chris Motogawa and Hayes Mechanical to see that we were restored as quickly as possible, and the building continued to be usable. During this time, he was attentive to the reality that the lack of heat can damage plumbing and thus placed heaters in bathrooms and other key areas to assure that plumbing was not a secondary expense.

Jorge is also the one who handles the installation and removal of all air conditioning units, removed a large hornets' nest from the second floor window and is anticipating doing some window repair in the warmer months. You will also find that the Chapel floor has been stripped and waxed, the chapel window trim has been painted,

The office was involved in the installation of the additional cable modem for the sanctuary as well as the discussion of livestream equipment. I continue to coordinate with Jorge, with the cleaning company and the landscapers regarding special needs, events, details needing to be attended, etc.

CHRISTMAS CHILD

Submitted by Kati Olsen and Susan Rundle

Our annual Christmas Child program looked different once again this year, as the coronavirus pandemic continued to affect all aspects of fulfilling the wish-lists of the children of needy birthparent families associated with The Cradle. For the safety of all involved, the folks at the Cradle decided that e-gift cards to Target would be the best way to provide the means for families to purchase gifts of warm clothing and toys. The goal was to receive adequate funds/cards to allot \$100 per child, so that parents could take advantage of sales to purchase warm clothing and toys for their children.

St. Matthew's sent out emails and published announcements in the Sunday bulletins and e-newsletter, and our congregation responded. In the end, The Cradle was able to provide e-gift cards of \$85 each for 129 needy children. We know it was a challenging year for The Cradle to run this valuable holiday assistance program, and are thankful to and for the St. Matthew's parishioners who contributed this year.

COFFEE CREW

Submitted by Jennie Woodring, Coordinator

The Coffee Crew ministry helps to make St. Matthew's a welcoming congregation by providing a time for fellowship after each Sunday service. The dedicated Coffee Crew members started off the year as usual, preparing coffee, tea, and treats in the parlor after the 8:00 service, and at the back of the sanctuary after the 10:30 service.

And then...COVID. We look forward to rebuilding the team in 2021 when we are able to once again gather in person, and we are especially eager to welcome new members; please contact Jennie Woodring (jenniewoodring@sbcglobal.net) to find out how you can be part of the team.

FORMATION: GENERAL

Submitted by Charlie de Kay

Lectio Divina January - mid June: Thursday mornings 7:30 - 8:30. Summer break. Reestablished on Wednesday mornings, same time, October - present.

Don Scott's Bible Class is more popular than ever before! Sunday mornings at 8:15am on Zoom.

Confirmation (CnC) - First full year with St. Matthew's, St. Luke's and St. Mark's students. Spent the year adapting to Covid and our students' health needs.

Lenten Series 2021 on service (Wednesday Lunch Program - hunger; Music & Art; Green Team - environmental sustainability; St. Matthew's Partnership Team - immigrants & refugees; Anti-Racism team)

St. Matthew's Book Group 2021: Online on Zoom, in Penelope Boardman's lovely outdoor patio, and again online, members of St. Matthew's gathered to discuss our country, our world, and our church in a series of book discussions. We reviewed *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson; *Love Is the Way* by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry; and *Becoming A Welcoming Church* by Thom S. Rainer.

Vacation Bible Camp: After heart-wringing reflection, VBC 2021, planned for the last full week in July, was canceled in early June.

FORMATION: SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Submitted by Don Scott

We began the study of Ecclesiastes (Hebrew: Qohéleth) on November 29, 2020 and concluded the book with a final review on December 5, 2021. The entirety of the class was taught on zoom. There were 20 to 28 attendees throughout the year. One couple attended from out of state, several from Chicago and other suburbs and a few from Westminster Place here in Evanston, who did not participate when the study group was in person.

The focus of the group was an attempt to unravel a too often mistaken view of the writer of Ecclesiastes (Qohéleth) as negative and deterministic. The door was opened, at least, to an alternative view that the book is about examining life closely and finding the meaning in one's actions.

GREEN TEAM

Submitted by Christina Padilla, Chair

2021 was a somewhat slower year for the Green Team. Since returning to church we have finally resumed our regular duties involved in keeping the St. Matthew's facilities as close to zero waste as possible and were pleased to be able to offer a sustainable alternative for our individual communion cups. Other area churches even asked for referrals so they could purchase the sustainable cups as well! Early in the year, the Team published brief endorsements of various reusable, plastic-alternative products, complete with photos, which have since been gathered into an archive for easy reference. We hope to keep adding to it as we encounter more alternatives to disposable plastics. Our Team continues to welcome new members and ideas, whether for a one-time project, an educational offering, or a cooperative endeavor! Contact ctpadilla75@yahoo.com for more information, or to share your thoughts!

HOME COMMUNION MINISTRY

Submitted by Terri Morrissey, Coordinator

Each Sunday toward the end of our service, Home Communion Ministers are “sent forth” to bring the Eucharist to the homebound and extend the celebration of the gathered congregation. The commissioning of Home Communion Ministers each Sunday – “Go forth with these holy gifts, so that those to whom you go may share with us in Christ’s body and blood.” reminds us that “We

who are many are one Body, because we all share One Bread, One Cup.” During visits, Home Communion Ministers follow an abbreviated order of service, which includes prayers, scripture readings from the Sunday service, and the distribution of the Eucharist. Whether for the short term or over the course of several years, it is a blessing and a privilege to be invited into the lives of our homebound parishioners.

This practice continued until the beginning of March 2020, when the pandemic made it necessary to suspend Home Communion visits. During the months that have followed, I have continued to maintain contact with our homebound parishioners and/or their families by phone and electronically.

The Home Communion Team at St. Matthew’s in 2020 included: Susan Cherco, Catharine Hamrick, Karen MacKay, Terri Morrissey, Steve Steiber, Janie Stevens, Susan Turner, Melissa Warden, Penny Whiteside, and Dorothy Wyandt.

Should it become possible to resume in-person visits, and you know someone who would like to receive a Home Communion visit, please contact Charlie de Kay or Terri Morrissey.

HOSPITALITY

Due to COVID and our inability to gather together, the hospitality team was inactive this past year.

INTERFAITH ACTION OF EVANSTON

Submitted by Corky Siegfriedt

We are called on to care for one another. As part of our call, St. Matthew's is a member organization of this important coalition called Interfaith Action of Evanston who set out to care for our most vulnerable citizens.

Inspired by diverse faiths and shared values, Interfaith Action of Evanston brings people together to serve hungry and homeless people, pursue interfaith dialogue, and engage in advocacy that promotes social justice. The coalition operates a winter emergency shelter open every night from November to March. Six of Evanston’s faith communities host our homeless on a rotating schedule. There are daytime drop-in centers, meal programs, food pantries, clothing resources, hygiene including showers, storage lockers, computer use with internet access, and counseling services.

A small paid staff and an army of volunteers make all of this possible.

While the pandemic forced some program adjustments, our community moved forward, determined to continue to serve the hungry and homeless.

There are many opportunities to volunteer or provide financial support for these programs. Watch for announcements in our newsletter or contact me for information about getting involved.

ART EXHIBITION CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND ART OF ELISE PIKE LERMAN AND JACK LERMAN: A BENEFIT FOR ST. MATTHEW'S

Submitted by the Rev. Terri Morrissey

An Art Exhibition celebrating the life and art of Elise Pike Lerman and Jack Lerman took place at St. Matthew's on November 12, 13, and 14, 2021. The works represented in the show included drawings and paintings in a variety of media - and drew friends and visitors from as far away as Arizona. It was truly a celebration and tribute to both Jack and Elise. This exhibition was a benefit for St. Matthew's and raised \$11,000+. Thank you to Jack for his generosity and for donating fifty percent of the proceeds to St. Matthew's.

It's also important recognize the tremendous amount of time that Jack spent preparing for this show - curating, framing, and transporting artwork. Thank you to everyone who helped make the exhibit a success - Dick Clark, Charlie de Kay, Bill Harper, Paula Harper, Julie Hinz, Diane Kotin, Terri Morrissey, Chris Motogawa, Christina Padilla, Dave Turner, and Susan Turner.

MISSION/PASSION TEAM

Submitted by Melissa Warden

To guide the congregation's outreach energies and help with decision-making—including how to spend the annual yield generated by Trust III—a “Mission Passion” group met regularly via Zoom to discern St. Matthew's missional focus. The “Mission Passion” group consisted of the leaders of large ministries, the Vestry, and parishioners interested in narrowing the focus of St. Matthew's new mission statement “Welcoming All in Community, Joyfully Doing God's Work in the World,” which was discerned in 2020.

The group dreamed big, assessed the potential impact and effort of various ideas, commissioned a report from FaithX on our local community, and discussed where we believed there was true passion to build on. After months of faithful and methodical discernment, the group determined our passion lies with **“Welcoming our Neighbors Near and From Afar”—and, even more specifically, our neighborhood and refugees.** Charlie shared this new focus with the congregation in his 10/31/21 sermon.

The next step is to put this focus into action. St. Matthew's has money to support our efforts to welcome our neighbors and refugees; annually we receive a “distributable yield” from Trust III that must be used for missional purposes. Anyone in the congregation can apply to receive a portion of

these funds to support the new focus via a “Mission Passion” grant application that the Vestry votes on; please contact Melissa Warden (melissa.warden@yahoo.com) or any Vestry member to discuss the application and the process. We are excited to hear your ideas!

In October the Vestry approved a grant application of \$11,000 to support the St. Matthews/St. Andrew Pentecost Partnership Team’s proposal to RefugeeOne, who then in December chose that group to co-sponsor a refugee family in 2022! The churches expect to be matched with a family in late Spring and are already beginning to make plans. For information on how to get involved, please contact Cynthia Doucet (cdoucet32@comcast.net).

Expect to see more communications in 2022 about the missional focus, grant application, and activities aimed at welcoming our neighbors and refugees. Remember, all ideas are WELCOME!

MOVIE GROUP

Submitted by Ann Searles

The St. Matthew’s movie group has met almost monthly in 2021. Meetings have been held at various times of day. They have been through zoom, in person at member homes, on the lawn at St. Matthew’s and in the Assembly Room, depending on the church covid guidelines at the meeting times. Light refreshments are served and the host or another designated person has led the discussions.

We most often discuss current movies but sometimes study older films. The movie choice is the host’s. Some discussions have been centered on the technical aspects of the films or the acting performances while others have related the film’s messages to our own lives in today’s world. All have been enjoyable.

Some of the 2021 films we discussed were *The Mission*, *My Octopus Teacher*, and *Crip Camp*. The last two movies discussed both related to music as well as social issues: *Summer of Soul* and *The Power of Song*. Discussions were lively as we noted that the same issues which were prominent in the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s are still being addressed today (pollution of waterways, treatment of physically handicapped people, oppression of people of different faiths and races, defilement of natural resources).

There are no requirements to participate but it is necessary for attendees to see the film before the meeting. Notices appear in the St. Matthew’s communications, and all are welcome to attend. For many of us the Movie Group has been an easy, enjoyable fellowship activity which has given us an opportunity to become better acquainted with church members and spouses whom we might not have otherwise known. Average attendance is around 15 adults.

The movie group plans to continue in its current format for the year 2022. New faces are always welcome to participate in this very enjoyable activity.

PRAYER GROUP – no report submitted.

QUERCUS SOCIETY (Planned Giving)

Submitted by Sandi McPhee (Chair)

St. Matthew's has a planned giving initiative. *The Quercus Society* launched on September 26, 2021. "Quercus" comes from the Greek word for oak tree and honors the strong and enduring oak trees that line streets in Evanston.

Planned giving is a way to enable members of St. Matthew's to make provisions for the church after their deaths. There are a wide variety of ways to do this and the committee is ready and able to discuss these options with you.

Members of the committee met multiple times during 2021 via Zoom as we developed a means of planning and publicizing a wide variety of planned giving options. Conversations have begun with some members of the congregation, and we anticipate that will continue into 2022. We also hope to have a social event to celebrate those who have joined the Quercus Society and those who would like more information.

Members of the committee are: Steve Carr, Mary Clark, Damon Doucet, and Tim Patenode. The group is ably advised by Charlie deKay.

ST. MATTHEW'S CONSTITUENTS

Submitted by Julie Hinz

The Parish Administrator is the primary contact for all our building users. While communicating has never been a problem, covid and its restrictions and protocols have posed challenges for these groups. Our facility was closed to them until we began to slowly reopen our doors in the spring of 2021.

At the behest of the Rector and Vestry an addendum to all building use contracts was created to address covid issues. This includes the requirement that masks be worn, all participants be physically distant during gatherings, and that each group have a method of contact tracing which would be communicated to us as cases were discovered. They were responsible for all sanitizing of surface areas and materials they used. Once vaccines were in place, this was also added to the requirement list.

The first to return to the building was Hallie Rehwaldt and the Lincoln Street Ballet. This small group of women were completely vaccinated and able to easily keep distance and have been meeting MWFS Mornings since February.

Below you will find a list of our building users and their status in our facility.

- AA - have returned to the building on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. Groups are smaller and are able to distance. There is no food/drink and no childcare provided at this time due to space requirements and the challenge of small children and the spread of germs.
- Boy Scouts - have resumed but are meeting less in person and more on zoom.
- Evanston Chamber Opera Company (EChO) - Presented a concert in the spring for Francis Lynch's birthday and are now in rehearsal for Hansel and Gretel. All participants wear singers masks, are vaccinated, and maintain physical distance as much as possible
- Fairytale Ballet/Lincoln Street Ballet Studio - both have returned to the building and resumed their previous schedule.
- ESIC (Improv Group) - Peter Civetta continues to use our space for his afterschool improvisation group. During August of 2021 he held 2 weeks of summer camp using our back yard, kitchen and bathrooms as he had the year before. This program is always a great success. they continue to meet in the Parish Hall and outside as the weather permits.
- Lerman (Jack) Art Studio - Jack Lerman, after the Lerman Art Show in November has vacated the room he used as studio space. He no longer holds classes at St. Matthews.
- OA - overeaters Anonymous continues to meet on Wednesday and Saturday mornings but also use Zoom, depending on covid rates and the comfort level of the group members.
- Voice Lessons with Judith Haddon - Judith Haddon from Roosevelt University uses the Assembly Room on Monday afternoons to conduct voice lessons. Again, due to covid, her requirements change but we have been able to be flexible with her needs.
- Wiggleworms - Wiggleworms is our biggest user and one that makes the largest contribution to our operating budget. Because these programs are designed for Children, they have not yet returned to their prior level of functioning and have not been in our building. Now that younger children are being vaccinated, they are hopeful of returning to our space in March for their 2nd session of Spring classes. This will obviously depend on how Omicron plays out over the next months.
- Yoga Studio - We have a new facility user waiting to come on board. Patrina Dobrish with Jennie Woodring will be using St. Matthew's to host yoga classes. They will open their space as soon as covid allows. This has been in the works since last July but Covid continues to push their occupation date.

ST. ANDREW'S PENTECOST / ST. MATTHEW'S PARTNERSHIP

Submitted by Cynthia Doucet

We dedicate this update in honor of Edna Ross, our friend and founding member who was also the original inspiration for our group's decision to focus on social justice. May her memory be a blessing to all who knew her.

Our partnership's hope is to make a positive impact together through conversations, learning and shared events. In addition to fellowship, our focus continues to be on social justice issues including standing together in support of refugees and asylum seekers.

Early in 2021 we learned from Attorney Victoria Carmona about the DACA ("Dreamers") process which helps people brought to America as children obtain the documentation needed to attend school, begin their careers and contribute fully. This process can be daunting and expensive, and we're honored that our combined churches donated to support the filing fees for six wonderful young people, facilitated by the nonprofit Immigration Law Clinic at the Chicago-Kent School of Law.

Also, in 2021 we were excited that our application to RefugeeOne to co-sponsor a family new to the United States was accepted! We expect to be matched with an Afghani, Syrian or Congolese family in Spring 2022, and we have been blessed to receive a grant supporting this work, approved by the St. Matthew's Vestry. The co-sponsorship will include setting up a welcoming apartment for the family; providing basic needs like rent, groceries and transportation; and importantly providing friendship and mentoring weekly for 6 months. There has been wonderful energy and interest in this effort, and we currently have 30 participants ~ it is a diverse team of caring friends from both of our churches and beyond. We welcome everyone's interest and prayers for our sponsored family, and please watch for ways you can help including donating during our upcoming household items drive.

Other group initiatives included an open-to-all presentation by Laura Youngberg about the important work of MIRA (Middle Eastern Immigrant and Refugee Alliance) in Chicago, and thanks to Ann Searles for another excellent calendar drive (almost 200 calendars!) for RefugeeOne's use with arriving families.

We look forward to our continued collaboration and friendship and are excited about the RefugeeOne Co-Sponsorship that arose from the Partnership!

For more information please contact any of the team members (Marta Humphreys, Victoria Thompson, Reva Bess, Rev. Lee Gaede, Roberta Buchanan, Craig Chistensen, Cynthia Doucet, Rev. Terri Morrissey, Ann Searles, Corky Siegfried)

S'MORE FUN (GALA) TEAM

Submitted by Charlotte Bishop

Over the years St. Matthews has had a lovely capacity to find fun and create community. This ability was apparent as we collectively faced a second Fall Gala during the Covid pandemic where we could not gather in-person to “party” and enjoy each other’s company. So, what did we do? We celebrated the opening day of the buy-in parties and silent auction by hosting a S’Mores party on the front lawn following the 10:30 service. The weather provided a perfect Fall day for toasting marshmallows over firepits and enjoying cider and s’mores. Everyone celebrated being together outside and the opening of the buy-in party/silent auction.

The online experience that we created brought together members of the congregation, local shops and restaurants to provide buy-in parties and silent auction items. There was a wide range of buy-in parties, goods, services, and auction items to choose from...Bidding was fun. Many of us watched as the bids were entered and we got to choose if we would increase our bid. I want to thank and applaud the individuals who contributed as well as the various ministries, Vestry, area shop owners and restaurants who made the experience something we can be proud of. Because of the generosity of all involved, we earned \$13,000 from this event!

I want to offer a special thank you and acknowledgment of the work and contribution of the Gala team:

Kristen Jacobsen, Melissa Warden, Connie Conley, and Terri Morrissey. This team made the reimagined gala happen.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Submitted by Terri Morrissey and Steven Steiber

Stephen Ministry at St. Matthew’s, now in its ninth year, has been restrained by the pandemic and ensuing quarantine and the prohibitions on personal gatherings. Prior to this, however, Stephen Ministry has been a way for our congregation to provide confidential, high quality, ongoing one-on-one care to people experiencing the difficult times in life. The pandemic of 2020/21 has sidelined most in person activities and forced others to shift to socially distanced or electronic contact. Stephen Ministry has risen to the challenge and embraced digital connectedness as well. As we plan for 2022, we are looking to have Stephen Ministers reach out to our entire membership. If you have questions about the Stephen Ministry or feel you or someone you know would benefit from an empathetic ear, please feel free to share, in confidence, with the Stephen Minister who calls.

Stephen Ministers care for individuals experiencing grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, relocation, hospitalization, and many other crises. Stephen Ministers are congregation members who have gone through 50 hours of training to provide Christ-centered care to people in time of need.

In response to discussions within the Spiritual Life Committee, the Pastoral Care Committee and the Crossroadsconversations, the Vestry approved funding to begin a Stephen Ministry at St. Matthew's in 2013. The initial leadership training began in June 2013 when Charlie de Kay and Terri Morrissey took part in Stephen Ministry Leadership Training in Orlando, Florida. After returning, Stephen Ministry at St. Matthew's was launched. Subsequently, Steve Steiber was added to the leadership team following his leadership training.

In October 2013, Terri began training willing members for Stephen Ministry at St. Matthew's. Upon completion of 50 hours of training six members of St. Matthew's were Commissioned as Stephen Ministers. We also have welcomed a new Stephen Minister from another congregation, Penelope Boardman. Every Stephen Minister continues to participate in a Peer Supervision Group and ongoing Continuing Education throughout their time as a Stephen Minister.

STITCHERS AND KNITTERS

Submitted by Ginger Carr (g-carr@northwestern.edu)

Jennie Woodring (jenniewoodring@sbcglobal.net)

The Stitchers and Knitters is a social group that provides an opportunity for members to engage in fellowship while working on any personal needlework project such as knitting, embroidery, quilting, or (even!) mending. The group meets approximately monthly, for about 2 hours. Teens and adults are welcome. Under normal circumstances, gatherings are at members' homes; but in Covid times, gatherings have been at the parish house, where greater separation and ventilation is available.

TECH TEAM (LIVESTREAMING)

Submitted by Mark Crayton

Greetings from the folks behind the camera! This year saw the installation of our new livestream system including cameras, a new modem/wifi specifically for the sanctuary, and the technology to run it all. As there are market delivery pressures, we are still waiting for the delivery and installation of the speakers which will provide better sound and more clarity for those with hearing difficulties. We are also considering adding a few more microphones (if financially feasible) to make our services clearer. This might include replace the type of lavalier that is used by our presider and deacon. We were grateful for the donation of a laptop that houses the software that we use. Our team spent a few harried weeks learning how to run the system and, just now, are beginning to feel more comfortable with the process. In the next few weeks, we will be adding a livestream feed to Facebook in the hopes of sharing our worship with more folks. Many thanks to our fearless leader, Diane Senechal, for her hard work and brilliant mind. Come join Mark Jacobsen, Steve Steiber, Donald Churchill, and, occasionally, Mark

Crayton in getting our services out to the world. Watch out for more changes and additions over the next year.

USHERS – No report submitted

Bill Siegfriedt & Curtis Nilsson

WEDNESDAY LUNCH PROGRAM

Submitted by Kati Olsen

Since February 1, 2015, the faith communities of St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Episcopal Churches of Evanston have served lunch each Wednesday at St. Mark's to anyone who enters our doors. For the most part, our guests are homeless, at risk of being homeless, or those who have lost their jobs. Many of our guests attend weekly, while others attend at the end of the month when money is tight or during a period of financial strain. We serve 35-50 individuals each week, and approximately 300 individuals over the course of the year.

We began 2021 with a stalwart group of 4-5 volunteers who met on Wednesdays to bag lunches with bottled water, fruit, cookies, and utensils before distributing them from the lobby of St. Mark's. Our numbers (and the cost) increased from 2020, so in January we began to alternate weeks preparing sandwich lunches and soup ourselves with ordering prepared takeout meals.

Last year, we received grants/financial support from Evanston Lighthouse Rotary, Faith in Place, the Chicago Episcopal Diocese, and the North Shore CROP Hunger Walk. We have also been grateful recipients of in-kind donations such as cases of water, juice boxes/pouches, and homemade cookies. In November, we were happy to offer inside seating, serving our prepared meals in Cunningham Hall. We followed safety protocols – open windows, doubled tables, limited seating, mask requirement, sanitizing seats/places before and after they are occupied – and were pleased with how everything was going.

Unfortunately, the highly contagious Omicron variant has put a damper on inside seating as of January 2022, but we hope to be able to return to inside seating soon.

Many thanks to Joyce Weber, Roberta Buchanan, Deb Williams, and Dorothy Wyandt, who join with members of St. Mark's and other volunteers in their stalwart dedication to this ministry. Thanks also to Donna Richardson, the St. Mark's coordinator, whose contributions and guidance have been, and continue to be invaluable.

If anyone is interested in assisting with this rewarding ministry, please do not hesitate to contact me (kati2219@gaillcom).

WORSHIP

Submitted by Charlie de Kay

Over the past year, worship continued to change in response to our changing conditions.

The year began with St. Matthew's regularly offering Morning Prayer on Zoom on Sunday mornings.

As Lent arrived, St. Matthew's offered a touch-free "Do-it-yourself" imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday (individual bags of ashes were made available for pick up outside the church doors with Lenten packets for devotions at home). Holy Week was reimagined once again: daily services were offered on Zoom from Palm Sunday through Easter morning; new services of Morning Prayer on Monday and Tuesday; Holy Wednesday saw the re-introduction of Tenebrae; Maundy Thursday worship was livestreamed from the church.

St. Matthew's joined St. Andrew's Pentecost in virtual worship on the first Sunday after Easter, April 11th.

At the end of April, in-person services became possible outside on a limited basis, advance reservations required, on the Hartrey lawn. This was the early service; Morning Prayer on Zoom continued at 11am.

On June 27, a simplified and stripped-down series of Beach Church services began with Zoom Morning Prayer at 11am for those not comfortable worshipping in person.

With the Pride Parade canceled this year due to the pandemic, it seemed right and proper to celebrate Pride at church. Hence, this past summer saw the institution of a Pride Service – fourth Sunday in June.

Indoor services in church with livestream of 10:30 service and restoration of 8/10:30 schedule begins September 12. We celebrated St. Matthew's Day with the baptism of Ashley Raab, and welcomed her family with great creativity outdoors after the service.

After some expressed concern about how welcoming our liturgies are, we once again reviewed the language of our worship and sought to offer truly inclusive liturgies (reducing patriarchal language for the divine).

St. Matthew's welcomed St. Andrew's Pentecost to an in-person Eucharist on October 24th.

All Saints' Day was celebrated in a particularly moving service on November 7th. Also, of note that day, in the larger community, the Rev. Debra Bullock, rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church,

Evanston, celebrated her final Sunday service after resigning her position to pursue a career in teaching.

In Advent, with a new set of advanced protocols – new N95 mask requirement, sign in for contact tracing, sitting in newly redesignated seating – St. Matthew’s reinstated congregational singing just in time for Advent Lessons & Carols. This year we welcomed Daniel Biss, Mayor of Evanston; Susan Murphy, Executive Director, Interfaith Action of Evanston; Eleanor Revelle, Seventh Ward Councilperson; and Susan Trieschmann, Executive Director, Curt’s Café, as our guest lectors.

For Christmas this year, we tried a mix of old and new. The Christmas Eve Family Service introduced the first ever “Brown Bag Christmas Pageant” where participants were given a script and a prop when they entered, stood to read their lines from their seats (keeping physical distance), and sat down after. It was a tremendous success for all who participated. Midnight Mass was livestreamed with music starting at 10pm. Christmas morning at 9am was a subdued but meaningful service. Christina Padilla preached a beautiful and rich sermon at the latter two services. The next day, the first Sunday after Christmas, at 10:30, was a livestream of Christmas Carol Sing! (in place of the sermon) where parishioners called out their requests from their seats, and we would sing a verse or two. Given our inability to go Christmas Caroling as a parish in 2021, the Carol Sing was much appreciated.

On Saturday, January 8, 2022, a family member tested positive to Covid-19. I hastily called our staff together who agreed that it did not make sense for me to preside and preach the next day. That evening, the staff and I swung into action, rewrote the Sunday liturgy to a service of Morning Prayer, informed the parish, and Mark Crayton wrote a sermon that he gave the next morning. I watched the livestream from my home office with a tremendous sense of pride. My gratitude for our talented staff knows no bounds. That we could turn on a dime this way, and provide a meaningful worship service, is a vivid demonstration of just how far we have traveled.

The pandemic fostered deep reflection for most of us. As a result, some made significant life changes – new jobs, new homes, and even changes to the communities where folks choose to live. We offered farewell blessings to a number of individuals and families before they departed Evanston, including: Alex Schultheis, Andrea Mainelli and their son Christian (Providence, Rhode Island), Nancy Trimble (Fisher’s, Indiana), Bill McCrory & Leslie Maclin (Leelanau County, Michigan), Don and Susan Cherco (La Grange Park, Illinois).

The marriage of Madeline Beck (Elizabeth Goodbody’s daughter) to Evan Fujito on New Year’s Eve at St. Matthew’s was postponed when the bride tested positive for Covid-19 on the Tuesday before the Friday wedding. While it was heart-breaking, Madeline has recovered beautifully. The couple are now looking forward to being married at St. Matthew’s, July 23, 2022.

Other weddings scheduled at St. Matthew's for 2022 include Anna Hamrick and Theodore "Teddy" Keenan, June 25; and Molly Purse and Sean Mennecke, December 10.

We lost dear friends and extended family in 2021. St. Matthew's provided funerals for Danielle Pickard and Don Cherco, and burials for Danielle and Richard Pickard and Margaret and Albert Lott. A few funerals that were planned for this past year have been delayed due to Covid-19, including services for Margaret Lott and Lawrence McCormick "Mac" Detmer.