



# THE ORACLE

SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



## Greetings from Saint Matt's Stewardship Committee

2020 has been a year of great challenges for St. Matthew's Church, as for all churches and their members. Even so, we have moved forward, making changes to continue to provide for our members during COVID-19, and expand our ministries in confidence that better days lie ahead. For example, we updated our technology to provide online worship and meetings, we experimented with outdoor worship, we added small groups, we increased the hours of the Parish Manager to support our Interim Rector and we increased the hours of our Youth and Family Ministries Coordinator to design and launch our Lifelong Learning initiative. We committed to providing quality early learning to children in our community by reopening our Nursery School in September.

In planning for 2021, we continue to seek to be good stewards of our resources, while funding those things that will allow our dreams as a parish to come to fruition. In this season of stewardship, we would like to share with you our plans and challenges.

We will soon be bringing in a new Rector, and we need to offer a competitive compensation package that allows us to call an experienced member of the clergy. We are looking forward to having new leadership to continue in our mission to preach the Gospel, care for the sick, visit the bereaved, represent our church in the community, develop a vision for the future, and provide administrative support to the whole congregation. To properly support our new Rector, we will need to continue to provide administrative support through our Parish Manager, Parish Secretary, and Youth and Family Ministries Coordinator.

While we are seeking to increase our in-person worship opportunities as allowed and is prudent, we will continue to support live-streaming of our services, and online meeting opportunities. We plan to upgrade our accounting and management software to streamline our operations, and will continue to maintain our facility to the standards we have come to expect.

## Stewardship Committee Letter, continued

The following is a history of our pledge support:

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
# Pledges	165	148	140	118
Total Pledge \$	\$383,419	\$362,576	\$342,873	\$295,824

At the current level of staffing, the total resources required to perform and carry out our mission is **\$460,000**. Recognizing other income (investments, plate, Nursery School assessment) of \$103,000, we would need **pledges for 2021 of \$357,000**, a 21% increase from 2020. If we were to reduce staff hours, we could get by with pledge income of \$332,000, a 12% increase over 2020. Maintaining the increased staff hours would free our new Rector to spend time getting to know the congregation and taking on new initiatives. *As you can see, our level of pledging exceeded the \$357,000 amount just two years ago.*

We realize that 2020 has been difficult for many of you. There are increased demands on our time, our energy and our financial resources. We believe strongly in the mission of our church, and feel that we are poised to move forward and bear good fruit in our community, but cannot accomplish that without financial resources. We ask that you give prayerful consideration to pledging as much as you can to support the mission of St. Matthew's Church.

**To make pledging easy, we are offering an online form at**

**<https://forms.gle/EjdE1CLy7PJokPEM6>**, or you can detach the form included in this newsletter and mail it to the church, or you can email our Parish Manager directly ([parishmanager@saintmattsec.org](mailto:parishmanager@saintmattsec.org)).

We would ask that you complete your pledge by **November 1st**, so that we can properly budget for next year.

Thank you for your consideration and faithfulness.

**The Stewardship Committee: Karen Randall, Chris Suhy, Marie Clark, Tim Walsh**





**The vote** is a solemn act where we encounter our identities as both citizens of the United States and as the people of God. Our Christian witness calls us to make our voices heard at the ballot box.

To that end, during each election cycle, Saint Matthew's offers its campus as a community polling location. This is because we are steadfast in our belief that everyone be given a safe space to cast their vote — without any barriers.

For the nine days leading up to the vote, we will join other Episcopalians across the nation in praying a novena for the election. This will culminate with a day to *Pray at the Polls*. Details below:



## ELECTION SEASON AT SAINT MATT'S

# Prayer at the Polls | 11.3.20

We invite you to join us live **and** online for *Prayer at the Polls*, being held at Saint Matt's on election day.

### **All-Day Sacred Space**    ***11.3.20 Election Day***

Beginning at 6:00 AM, our sanctuary will be open for quiet reflection, meditation, and prayer. Come light a candle, place it in the sand, walk a labyrinth, and sit in the stillness before or after casting your vote. This space will be open from start to close on election day. This space is outfitted to comply with the current COVID-19 guidelines.

### **Services for Justice, Peace and Unity**

Additionally, we will offer 20 minute prayer services for justice, peace, and unity at three-hour intervals. These services can accommodate up to 25 masked worshippers in-person. Hesitant to attend live? We will offer a Zoom link for your participation. These services will be held at **9:30 AM, 12:30 PM, 3:30 PM, and 6:30 PM**. Let us commit ourselves to God by offering our fears and frustrations, but also our hopes and dreams. Join at any time on election day: **<https://zoom.us/j/95910035264>**

*Want to lend your help? Have questions? Contact Anthony: [anthony@saintmattsec.org](mailto:anthony@saintmattsec.org)*

### **Register to Vote**

The deadline to register for voting in the Commonwealth is October 19th. If you are not already registered, you can do so at:

**<https://www.vote.org/register-to-vote/pennsylvania/>**

### **Additional Election Resources**

You may have questions, or need a clarification. Please read Rvd. Dr. Peter's *Pastoral Letter Regarding the Election and Christian Responsibility* on the next page, or The Most Reverend Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's sermon "What Did Jesus Do?" **<https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/presiding-bishop-currys-word-church-what-did-jesus-do>**

# #VOTEFAITHFULLY

# A Pastoral Letter Regarding the Election and Christian Responsibility

## The Rev. Canon Dr. Peter B. Stube

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A parishioner said to a friend of mine that he did not like political sermons and my friend replied, "you must not like Jesus then because Jesus was decidedly political." He said it with his usual humor and a smile. My friend explained he understood being political meant that we understand that Jesus is deeply concerned about people and the quality of their lives and their basic needs and that we are willing to work for these things. There can be little doubt that Christ confronted the systems that oppressed his people. He was in solidarity with the Old Testament prophetic tradition. See Luke 4:18-19.

At their best our political systems are deeply concerned about the common good and how best to address the quality of life of the peoples they serve. What are the basic human needs? Our nation's founding vision was articulated in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."* -From the Declaration of Independence

*"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."* -From the Preamble of the Constitution

We have never lived into this vision fully. At first, our founding fathers restricted this vision to free white men (because they could not resolve the question regarding the evil of slavery, and they chose not to enfranchise women). Since then, we have struggled mightily to extend these tenets to all our people; people of color, women, people with different sexual orientations and resident aliens. It has often required of us movements and protests led by the oppressed that then drives us to move to a new place.

Through this summer we have been called as a nation to discern anew the need to fully empower all men and women, all Americans, and all residents of the United States of America. We have heard cries of fear from Americans of African descent and immigrants who experience violence, a violence that grows out of our systems and structures which deny segments of our society fair labor and wage, adequate education, fair housing, opportunity to excel in a job they love, and adequate health care. Is it possible that God is deeply concerned that we recover our national founding vision applied now to all our people? Is it not time to relinquish the ancient sins of colonialism and slavery which have so formed us?

We are even further away from the Judeo-Christian vision that we were all created in God's image and declared good, (Genesis 1); that Christ came to save all of us (John 3:16); that "in Christ there no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all



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of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3: 28). I could add countless Scriptures from the Old and New Testaments that speak precisely to these points of attentiveness to those whom we have shunted to the margins, either through our silent complicity or through our intentional action and legislation.

In the Episcopal Church our discernment about the vision of God emerges slowly and deliberately. Informed by Scripture, tradition, and reason; and to some degree experience we have always asked what God is saying to the Church today. We understand that the vision of God is a work in process in which we value the questions our culture is asking and then seek through careful study to determine what Scripture and tradition might have to say to these questions. When Scripture and tradition are silent on a particular question, we prayerfully discern what the Spirit is saying and offer it to the larger Church for spiritual discernment from the larger church. A good example is the recent work done by members of the diocese around the question of racism which is to be presented at Diocesan Convention 2020 for prayerful consideration. The Episcopal Church understands that all truth is God’s truth.

Our political parties have different visions of how we serve the common good and fulfill the American vision. In a perfect world these different perspectives function as a check and balance in caring for our nation and fostering the common good. Civil debate leads to compromise and/or new discoveries that reflect the debate and better serve our people. In more peaceful times, Congress has been closer to our founding vision to “establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity . . .” As we prepare to vote, we must prayerfully consider which candidates’ vision most fully brings us closer to our founding vision.

We Christians as we prepare to vote, must know God’s clear vision. This is always true, but perhaps more so this year. Prayerful Christians will differ on how they vote on election day about which vision of the common good best reflects the heart of God, but our vote must be informed not by ideology or even primarily by political party, but by what God speaks to us in our prayer and study of Scripture as we prepare to mark our ballot.

It is our privilege and responsibility as Americans to vote. It is also our need and responsibility as Christians to intercede for this nation in the days ahead as we select again the one who will lead us for four years. I encourage you to take the time daily to pray for our nation and this election.

I will pray for the day when God’s vision is more fully reflected in the ways we live with each other in this nation and that we will fully embrace our nation’s continuing pledge, “one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.”



# Rector Search Committee Update

As of September 25th, St. Matthew's has been blessed with many responses to our posting for a new full-time rector. The Search Committee has been very busy meeting with the candidates to discern our potential future together. Each candidate provides their own unique set of skills and talents and we learn something from each and every interview that helps us on our path to finding our new rector.

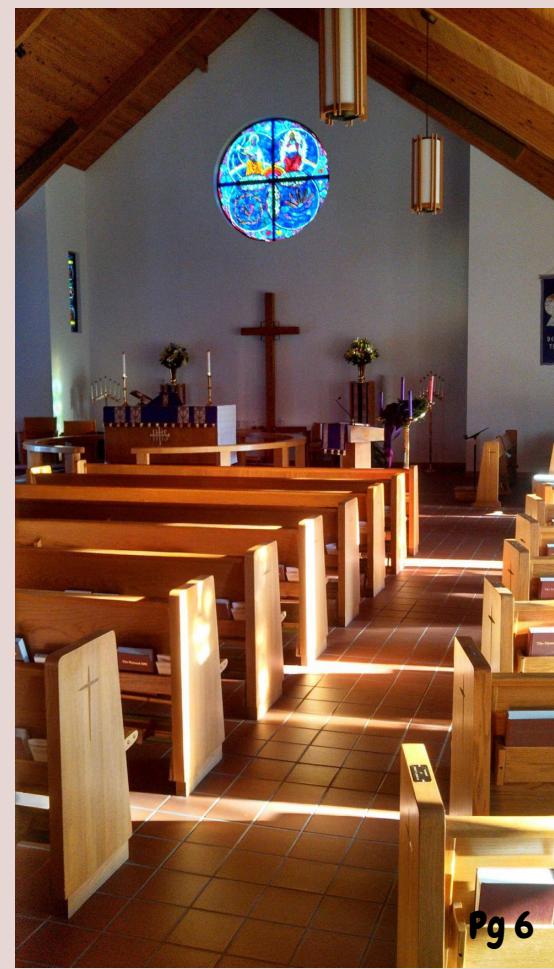
It has been an exciting, and busy time since the posting went live in May.

We are receiving some excellent responses and are witnessing the breadth of experiences and skill sets available to us. This is a true blessing to us and a sign of the strength of St. Matthew's Church. Every candidate has commented about the strong health of our congregation. They also remarked that we are a very desirable destination for any clergy, due to our active congregation, fiscally responsible management and beautiful campus.

I am pleased to announce that we are fast on our way to identifying our finalists. We have completed several second interviews and an on-site interview at St. Matthew's this month. If mutual discernment with our finalists continues as planned, we would expect to issue a call to our new rector in the near future. We have much to be proud of at St. Matthew's and our new Rector will help us achieve our goals and dreams that we established in our parish profile.

Faithfully,

Search Committee: **Jon Clark, Trent Coombs, Connie Dee, Antonia Green-Edwards, Gabrielle Pascuzzi, Karen Sawyer (co-chair), Manny Sevilla, Roger Sumner, Tim Walsh (co-chair), Nancy Williams**



# Lifelong Learning Ministry

*a new, exciting path for Christian Education at Saint Matthew's*

Anthony Carrella, Lifelong Learning Committee Chair & Youth Ministry Coordinator

## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our first meeting for Sunday School was a joy! We had one student eager to learn with us live on Sunday Morning, and several others participating as they could throughout the month. Our Sunday School resource is designed to mimic a live atrium experience, and to provide resources for your child's christian education that works on *your* schedule.

Our next session will be held on Sunday, October 11th at 8:45 AM when our teachers present *The Parable of the Sower*. On the Friday before the session, you are welcome to pick-up materials at Saint Matt's that will help you facilitate this lesson on your own at home. Contact Linda Baier with additional questions. You can join Sunday School here:

**<https://zoom.us/s/93674535173>**

## MS and HS YOUTH GROUPS | Wednesdays at 5:00 PM

Did you know that Youth Group is happening at Saint Matt's this year? Well now that you do, I hope that you might join us for a session! We've got great plans lined-up for you, and we'd love to have you participate. After all Saint Matt's is your church, right? There's a group for everyone — High School students, Middle Schoolers, and even an opportunity to come together at the end of each month. These sessions are being held over Zoom until it is safe for us to gather live and in-person.

We had a good start to the program year at youth group! Our HS students must be busy with school, but our MS had a blast joining us! Together we caught-up, studied James' letter, and began thinking about service projects and mission trip. This week we are inviting *all* of Saint Matt's MS and HS students to our first combined meeting. Join Youth Group here:

**<https://zoom.us/j/91363746529>**

## CONFIRMATION

Confirmation plans were put on hold when the coronavirus pandemic began getting serious. We are planning a path forward for this group to be confirmed in early 2021, and to invite the next class of confirmands into a period of discernment and learning. Stay tuned for additional details.

## ADULT EDUCATION

We have been blessed to gather together week after week for the *Adult Lifelong Learning Forum*, which is held on Sundays at 11:00 AM. Led by a group of rotating leaders, the forum aims to focus on understanding the root causes of systemic racism, and how Christians are called to respond. Join the forum every Sunday at 11:00 AM on *Zoom* here:

**<https://zoom.us/j/98791689123>**





SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
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Church Office: 215-646-4092



## St. Matthew's 2021 Pledge Card

As an expression of faithfulness to God's work in the world, I wish to offer, along with gifts of my time and talent, the following financial investment in the ministry of Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church.

\$ _____	weekly	}	Total annual pledge:
\$ _____	monthly		
\$ _____	quarterly		
\$ _____	other		
			\$ _____

☐ Check this box if you would like to make your offerings through electronic funds transfer (EFT). You will be contacted by the parish office directly.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like offering envelopes? If you do not give using EFT, the counting process is both easier and more accurate if you utilize envelopes.

Envelopes?	
Yes	No