

SUMMER 2024

# THE ORACLE

ST MATTHEW'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



St. Matthew's Family,

As I mentioned in my sermon on Easter Sunday, our very identity and calling as Christians is to be 'People of the Resurrection'. In our own lives, as a parish, as the Church Universal, our mission is to bring new life, to build up, to restore, and to heal. We now draw to the close of another program year, and it would take far more space than available here to list all of the positive happenings at St. Matthew's since last September. Our bonds as a parish family continually strengthen through our worship, fellowship, and each new member who finds a home with us. Much has been done to assist our wider community. Even our physical campus has undergone much renewal and more is planned. Thanks be to God, we have been bountifully blessed.

One of the essential aspects of living into our calling as 'People of the Resurrection' is to offer our God-given gifts to make it a reality in our world. Granted, bursting forth in resurrected life after three days in the tomb is quite extraordinary! But each talent, each offering that we bring forth builds upon another to create, through the Holy Spirit, a beautiful and inspiring story of resurrection that is well-pleasing unto our Risen Lord. I see that happening at St. Matthew's on a daily basis. It can be seen in the pages of this newsletter. And have no doubt, it can be seen by those around us.

I pray that all of you will have a restful summer blessed with God's gracious and loving presence wherever you may be. May you be renewed and refreshed, which can often feel like a mini-resurrection in itself! Also prayerfully consider how you can personally live more deeply into your calling as 'People of the Resurrection'. How can you bear witness to the resurrected life we have through a God whose love for us is unquenchable? The harvest is indeed plentiful. Let us labor together in the joy of the Lord to enter those fields and continue writing our story to the glory of God.

With Love in Christ,

*Rodney +*

# CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

JUNE

JUNE 5 & 19

KNIT WITS 10:00AM TO 11:30AM

JUNE 10 - 14

PRESCHOOL CAMP WEEK

JUNE 22

PROJECT ROADMAP 8:00AM TO 10:00AM

JULY

JULY 3 & 17

KNIT WITS 10:00AM TO 11:30AM

JULY 8 - 10

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, 9:00 AM - NOON

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER SERVICE CAMP, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

AUGUST

AUGUST 7 & 21

KNIT WITS 10:00AM TO 11:30AM

AUGUST 25

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS, 9:00 AM SERVICE

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 1

IRON PIGS BASEBALL GAME - ALLENTOWN

6:35 PM TO FIREWORKS

# REVITALIZING ST. MATTHEW'S LANDSCAPE BY BILL GRAHAM

In the Sunday, April 28 Gospel parable from John 15:1-8, Jesus used the simple story of the vine grower to illustrate his lesson. Jesus said to his disciples that he is the true vine and God is the vine grower. God removes every branch that bears no fruit and every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. This lesson has much to say about St. Matthew's Church's landscape where large, dangerous, diseased Pin Oak trees needed to be removed this spring to create a safer, healthier, more attractive setting for our teaching and worship. More work, planning, and "pruning" will be necessary to restore this landscape that suffers from years of deferred maintenance.



before

←  
after

I have been acting in an advisory capacity to St. Matthew's Vestry over the last year. My advice draws on my formative years and my career of 33 years at the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania as Grounds Superintendent, Chief Horticulturist, and Arboricultural Consultant. My learning and experience were greatly influenced by my father who worked in retail garden centers as a salesman and who taught me to propagate and grow nursery stock in our small home nursery. I earned BS and MS degrees in Ornamental Horticulture, the first from Delaware Valley College in Doylestown and the latter from the Longwood Gardens Fellowship Program at the University of Delaware. In my Arboricultural (tree care) specialty, I became one of the first Arborists certified in Pennsylvania, served on the International Society of Arboriculture's Certification Board, and helped to write standards for tree care in the United States. At our home near Doylestown, my wife, Dorothea, and I have designed and built an ornamental garden including building hardscape paths, patio, and sitting wall using design and hands-on skills developed over my career.

The Landscape is the setting for our church. It is a visual testimony to our stewardship and creates a first impression to all who drive-by, visit, worship, and attend activities of the Church. The landscape needs to complement the Church building without hiding or detracting from its architecture. Like renovation of a house, demolition is necessary in the first phase. With our landscape, it is necessary to remove ("prune") dead, diseased, overgrown, and unwanted trees, and shrubs before adding plants or replacements. This spring, large shrubs were transplanted from the handicap parking area and relocated in the empty mulched bed at the Church's gable end facing Tennis Avenue. A short-term goal is to reduce the number of mulched beds (several beds were eliminated this spring) and to use ground covers to reduce maintenance costs.

A comprehensive Master Plan should be developed that will guide future development, budgets, donations, and gifts. Landscape Planning should include outdoor lighting, directional and informational signage, a Memorial Garden makeover, and enhance the front entrance's appearance.

# Take me out to the Ball Game....



On September 1st, twenty lucky individuals from St. Matthew's will enjoy the amenities of a VIP luxury suite at the Coca-Cola Park in Allentown to cheer on the Iron Pigs Baseball Team! One of our group might even be lucky enough to throw out a ceremonial first pitch!

Stay tuned to future communications, as we would like to plan some similar events.

## **The Arise Band**

It's hard to believe we are winding down to summer! What a great year we have had leading worship at Saint Matthew's!

Anne and I would like to thank the band members for all their service and dedication this year. You have blessed us with your talents and your contributions for many years. Some of us have been together over 20 years, and through the years, talented new members have joined us.

God is working in the Arise Band!

As we start to dive into summer, the band will continue to lead in praising the Lord with joyful songs. We will be a smaller but mighty band! We may have a few guest musicians, also hoping to bring back the youth for a few Sundays!

Let's continue to lift up our risen Lord in song!

Psalm 100 - Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

In Christ, *Martha Reynolds* (Coordinator)

*Anne Flood* (Conductor)



## **Horsham Little League - Challenger Division**

The Horsham Challenger Division welcomes players of all ages, who have physical and intellectual challenges, to enjoy the game of baseball along with their peers. The fundamental goal of the Challenger Division is to provide an environment where players can learn and enjoy the game of baseball in a manner structured to their abilities and needs.

The Horsham Little League Miracle Field will be the future home of the Challenger Division. The field is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2025. In the meantime, the Challenger Series continues as it has for a number of years under the Horsham Little League umbrella, using fields in Deep Meadow Park. Trent Coombs and Andrew Birett (currently attending Penn State) have been volunteering with three of the Challenger age groups on Tuesdays and Saturdays. As volunteers they interact and assist the youth in learning basic skills of fielding the ball, running bases, and batting. They also assist the directors of the league in setting up the field with bases and equipment.

**Want more information?** visit these sites: [horshammiraclefield.com](http://horshammiraclefield.com)  
[horshamlittleleague.com](http://horshamlittleleague.com)

**Want to donate toward this amazing project? There are 2 ways** →



@horshammiraclefield

Make checks payable to Miracle Field of Horsham.  
Mail checks to P.O. Box 183 Horsham, PA 19044



# Spring Fest



## Who are we?

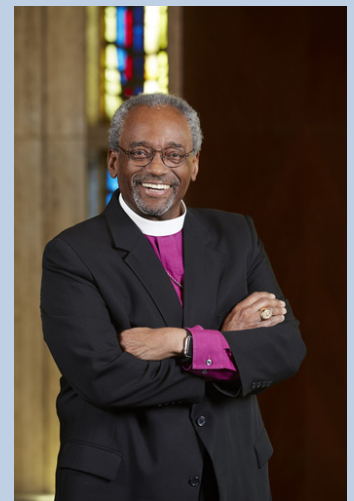
The Episcopal Church is one of the 41 member churches, or provinces, of the Anglican Communion, and is the only U.S. based member. The Anglican Communion is one of the world's largest Christian communities. It has tens of millions of members in more than 165 countries around the globe. Anglicanism is one of the traditions or expressions of Christian faith.

All member churches of the Anglican Communion are in communion – or a reciprocal relationship – with the See of Canterbury and recognise the Archbishop of Canterbury as the Communion's spiritual head. However, there is no central authority in the Anglican Communion. All of the provinces are autonomous and free to make their own decisions in their own ways, although guided by the Archbishop and other counsels.

## Who is the Presiding Bishop?

The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is charged with initiating and developing church policy and strategy, speaking God's Word to the church and the world, and visiting every diocese of the church. They are also a "Primate" within the Anglican Communion, and represent the Episcopal Church at meetings of the 41 member churches.

The term for a Presiding Bishop is 9 years. A new Bishop will be elected this month (June 2024) to replace The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry. **As you may be aware, our bishop, The Rt. Rev. Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez, is one of the 5 bishops being considered for this position.**



Presiding Bishop  
The Most Rev. Michael Curry

## Nominees



The Rt. Rev. Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez  
Diocese of Pennsylvania



The Rt. Rev. J. Scott Barker  
Diocese of Nebraska



The Rt. Rev. Robert Wright  
Diocese of Atlanta



The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe  
Diocese of Northwest Pennsylvania



The Rt. Rev. Dede Duncan-Probe  
Diocese of Central New York

# CHOIR



## E. T. (Entertainment Today) St. Matthew's Style

With the Choirs on a well-deserved break for the summer, we will rely on solos and duets - both vocal and instrumental - to enhance the 10:30 worship service.

When searching for musical pieces for Summer worship, I found that a great many beautiful and reverent songs have come from those talented composers who make a living in Tinsel Town. For years, Hollywood has provided us with an endless volume of entertainment - some fun, some scary, some ethereal, and some inspirational. It seemed a natural place to begin a search. And so...

Do you remember the movie "The Student Prince," and the magnificent voice of Mario Lanza (dubbed in) as Prince Karl sings "I'll Walk With God." That beautiful song has stood the test of time, and, over the years, has been recorded by Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, and Michael Crawford, to name a few. How about Julie Andrews' beautiful voice in "The Sound of Music," or the inspirational "Climb Every Mountain"?

I think you'll be surprised to hear some of the Entertainment Industry's faith-based musical offerings. Listen to the music and hear the message!

Be the change you want to see in the World!

Judi

**VBS**  
JULY 8 - 12, 2024  
9:00 AM - NOON

REGISTER HERE:  
[vbspro.events/p/stmatts2024](https://vbspro.events/p/stmatts2024)

OR  
HERE: 

diving into friendship with God

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# NURSERY SCHOOL UPDATE

Springtime brought the Nursery School Easter egg hunts and parties, Mother's Day concerts and celebrations, as well as many special visitors. Our special visitors began with What Knott Farm coming to school. Martha and Greg Knott bring a variety of baby farm animals for the children to interact with. Each class has an assigned time to go outside and enjoy the animals. Our next visitor was a Police Officer from the Horsham Police Department. The officer spoke with the children about summer time safety. Our last visitor is a favorite, Bubbles the Gold Fish! Bubbles is from Goldfish Swim School and teaches the children about water safety.



End of year picnics will be held at Everybody's Playground in Horsham. Picnics take place on the last two days of school, June 6 & June 7. Children are able to attend an optional week of camp the week of June 10 - 14. Camp is a fun time for the children as each day they move around the building and outside to enjoy music, science, gym, art, snack and playground time.

I also have some exciting news to share. St. Matthew's Nursery School is in the final stage of becoming licensed by the PA Department of Human Services (DHS)! The first step of the process was sending in the application and required paperwork. This was followed by a site visit without children, which took place on November 7, 2023. This was to ensure that our building was in compliance with the Child Care Regulations. After remediating a few violations the school was given a Provisional License. The Provisional License was valid for six months, and then the school was required to provide additional paperwork and a Renewal Application to DHS. Once that was received by DHS, we were in a thirty day window to receive a facility blended inspection. The school had that visit from a Department of Human Services representative on Wednesday, May 8th. We are now awaiting results of the visit, and the official documentation of our licensure!

*Jackie Anderson*, Director

**We would be remiss if we did not offer Jackie our heartfelt gratitude for her dedication to the St. Matthew's Preschool, and all of the hard work she put in to complete the licensing process.**

**Thank you!**





# OUTREACH UPDATE

## The Little Pantry

Thanks to the many donations from you at Saint Matthews, the Little Pantry is thriving. Your donations have helped many people who are struggling these days.

Because we joined the MontCo Anti-Hunger Network, we have access to the Garden of Health headquarters in North Wales. This is a food distribution warehouse, which receives donations from places all over the community. We are allowed to go there once a month to pick up boxes of food. It doesn't provide us with everything we need but is a big help.

I want to thank the people who stock the pantry every week!

**Eliana Dietrich, Karen Becker, Angie Pack, John and Joan Achey, Jane Baker, Melissa Brown, and Kay Williams.**

Their dedication is so appreciated!

**And a special thanks to Pam Dunlap for her time and service to this ministry.**

It's a step out in faith donating to the Little Pantry. We don't see who it is helping, we don't know their story, we have to let God do His work. Not easy sometimes. Even though the Lord is working through us to help others in need, He is also working in us to rely on Him!

***"For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in"***

In Christ,

*Martha Reynolds*

## Many Thanks!

To those of you who have donated to The Little Pantry and Mattie Dixon Food Cupboard! We see the need in our community increasing and are grateful for your contributions. Thanks for your frequent donations!

To donate to the Little Pantry,  
please go here:

[tinyurl.com/SMEC-LittlePantry](https://tinyurl.com/SMEC-LittlePantry)

OR →



# Protecting Yourself...

The timing of a friendly visit to a former neighbor couldn't have been better. When I arrived, she was in a panic and, as I quickly found out, was in the midst of being conned by computer criminals.



She said that a box had popped up on her iPad saying that her device had been hacked and was in need of immediate attention. "Click here to get rid of the virus!" it urged, and by doing just that, she eventually had ended up on the phone with the scammers themselves. Believing that she was talking to the "Bank Fraud Department," They were urging her to withdraw 15,000 dollars immediately, without telling anyone, to fix the issue. My friend was clearly very distressed, and it appeared she had unwittingly given these criminals access to her device along with banking info and her password. Trying to calm her, I explained she should contact her bank right away and tell them about what was going on. When she did, they were able to close her account before any money was stolen.

We often like to think we know how to recognize a scam. I was feeling pretty good about that ability until I received a letter from my pension plan saying that a data breach had disclosed my bank account number, social security number and other personal info. The letter was offering me two years of identity theft protection as a security measure. I didn't think twice about that, I was so angry about the possibility of my information being compromised. First however, I called my bank to talk about options. Right away they asked me if the letter was legitimate. It certainly looked like a real letterhead - but was it? To verify, I called my pension plan which confirmed the letter was indeed real. My banker had opened my eyes to the fact that good old reliable snail mail is yet another way we can be duped by scammers.

I wanted to share these experiences because today we sadly have to question and examine emails, phone calls, and letters that appear to come from trusted sources.

And when that sudden box bursts out on your browser saying you have been hacked... don't click!

*Pat Varleta*

## Some Warning Signs of a Scam:

- Call for immediate action. Scammers use pressure, and don't want you to have time to think.
- "Only do what I say," or "Don't tell anyone," or "Don't hang up." These are all clear signs of a scam.
- Requests for cash, gift cards purchase, for you to move your money to another account, or convert to a different currency. These are always scams.
- Unsolicited calls from seemingly legitimate organizations such as the IRS, Amazon, your financial institution, etc. If you did not initiate the contact, it is likely a scam.
- Texts or pop-ups from unknown numbers on mobile devices claiming that there is fraudulent activity on your accounts, or requesting verification of account info.

## How to Protect Yourself:

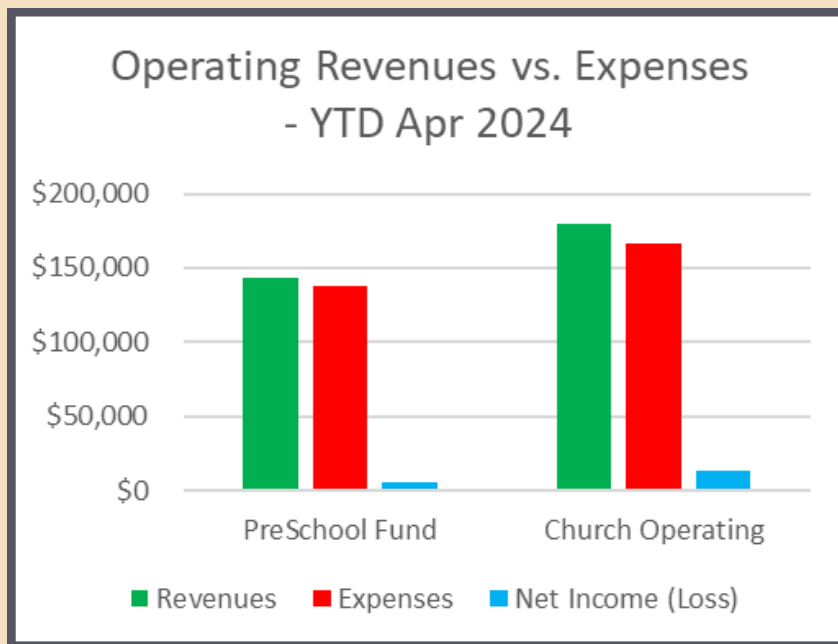
- Never provide personal information in response to an unsolicited request! If you did not initiate the communication, do not provide any information.
- Do not click on links within emails or texts from unknown senders. If an email address looks legitimate, but is requesting immediate action, see the next bullet.
- If you are unsure as to whether the contact is legitimate, contact the financial institution yourself using contact info from a statement, bill, or their official website.
- Never provide your password over the phone or in response to an unsolicited internet request. Financial institutions will NEVER ask you to verify your account info online.
- Review account statements, and credit reports regularly, so as to catch potentially suspicious activity early.

# TREASURER'S REPORT - JIM

By the time you read this report, summer will be just around the corner. But as I am writing, April is a recent memory and Memorial Day is still a vision on the horizon. While it is still early in the year, this is a good time to get a sense of how the year is shaping up financially.

To set the stage, a reminder of what our budget for the year looks like for 2024 is in order. We budgeted for a small operating deficit (about \$10K), capital spending from investments of \$60K and we did not plan on the receipt of any new bequests. As you can see in the chart below, we are off to a good start! Our Operating results (that is, before bequests and capital spending) are \$12K ahead of plan and we have received a \$10K bequest. There has not been any capital spending yet, but we will spend at least the planned \$60K this year. Areas of focus may be the parking lot lighting, parking lot repaving, door entry system and Parish Hall roof replacement.

Total Operating Cash and Investments were \$1.25M as of April 30, up \$43K from the beginning of the year. Thank you all for your faithful support of God's work at St. Matthew's!



In other news, the Legacy Forum held on March 2nd was very well attended and attendees left with plenty of valuable, easy to use information about many important topics, including wills, medical directives and planned/deferred giving opportunities. If you would like a copy of those materials, please see me, any Vestry member, or Fr. Rodney.

Submitted by Jim Garrison, Treasurer

Easter Egg Hunt 2024!





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