

Saint Matthew's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

2019 Annual Report



Annual Parish Meeting

February 2, 2020

Annual Meeting 2020

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church | Wilton, Connecticut

Opening Prayer

Please join in by reciting the verses in bold aloud.

Gracious and Loving God, send your Spirit upon this church community. We pray that our Annual Meeting may be a time when we come together to be inspired by the work that we have done, and be fortified to continue in the work that you have given us to do. Guide us to perceive your will, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Gracious and Loving God, we pray that you may enlighten us with your Word, strengthen us with your grace, and give us the peace that surpasses all understanding. Teach us to listen to those far from us – the cry of the oppressed, the plea of the forgotten, the longing of the sick and lonely. Lord, teach us also to listen to one another and to ourselves. Give us the grace to hear your voice echoing in the depths of our hearts and in the hearts of those around us. **Lord, hear our prayer**

Gracious and Loving God, we pray for the courage to show your love to the world. Remind us that we are called to be bearers of Christ's life, light, and love to all we meet. Give us the grace to see our work here at St. Matt's as a part of the larger vision your Kingdom – for we are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs, and prophets of a future not our own. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Gracious and Loving God, **you are in the midst of us.**

We are tired. **Lead us to rest.**

We are filled with doubt. **Give us faith.**

We need renewal. **Fill us with the Holy Spirit's fire.**

Our patience wears thin. **Help us to stay in relationship.**

We need healing. **Grant us peace and wholeness.**

Gracious and Loving God, help us look beyond ourselves and reach out to those in need whether they stand next to us or are a world away. In all that we are, all that we do, and all that we say, help us claim the promise of your presence and lift our common voice to you in praise and thanksgiving. These things we pray in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the one we call Christ, in whose name and hope we gather together as a community. **Amen**

*Compiled by Meg Stapleton Smith from various resources,
including the words of the Rev. Elizabeth T. Wade and the Rev. Oscar Romero.*

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2020 Annual Meeting Agenda

February 2, 2020

10:15 am

Call to Order	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Opening Prayer	Meg Stapleton Smith
Approval of the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Remarks from the Director of Children, Youth, & Family Ministries	Samantha Trolice
Remarks by the Senior Warden	Chris Perry
Nominating Committee Report	Jen Kepner
Election of Vestry, Officers and Delegates	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Recognitions	Jen Kepner
Remarks by the Deacon	The Rev. Dcn. Don Burr
Remarks by the Rector	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
2019 Financial Review & 2020 Budget	Keith DeAngelis
Questions and Answers	
Closing Prayer	The Rev. Dcn. Don Burr
Adjournment of Annual Meeting	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

2019 Wardens, Vestry and Officers

Senior Warden	Chris Perry
Junior Warden	Jen Kepner
Treasurer	Keith DeAngelis
Assistant Treasurers	Bruce Beebe & Andrea Sato
Clerk	Anne Newton
Diocesan Delegates	Pam Ely, Sharon Ely Pearson
Diocesan Alternates	Chris Perry, Steve Hudspeth

Vestry Class of 2019

Dave Cristini
Peter Denious

Vestry Class of 2020

Kim Hall
Tim Jarvis
Andrea Sato
Michael Kaelin

Vestry Class of 2021

Dodo Roberts
Brian Angerame
Jessica Christ

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
February 3, 2019 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes
10:12 a.m.

Call to Order and Opening Prayer: The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach, Rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, called the meeting to order at 10:12 am.

Attendance: 80 parishioners in attendance

Approval of 2018 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2018 Annual Meeting was made; it was seconded and approved by parishioners in attendance.

Remarks by the Senior Warden Chris Perry

The full report is included with the Annual Report. Some highlights from the Senior Warden's report included:

- ❖ Welcomed St. Matthew's new rector, The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach with a brief summary of the search process
- ❖ Shared information on improvements to St. Matthew's Rectory and Marissa's Office
- ❖ Looking forward to a renewed sense of Fellowship
- ❖ Welcomed new parish Administrator, Nancy Johnson
- ❖ Acknowledgement of Becky Hudspeth's retirement in the Spring as Director of Children & Youth Ministries
- ❖ Recognized challenges that St. Matthew's will be facing while being grateful for new opportunities
- ❖ Appreciated the dedication of St. Matthew's Staff, Vestry, our numerous Ministry Teams, Discernment and Search Committees, Finance and Endowment committees
- ❖ Grateful for ongoing partnership with the Rev. Shannon White, Wilton Presbyterian congregation, and WEPCO leadership and staff
- ❖ Thanked Junior Warden, Jen Kepner, for a full and active year as Vestry leaders
- ❖ Extended his appreciation to his family, Allison, Ende, Amanda and Sam for their ongoing support and love during his time as Senior Warden.

Nominating Committee Report Jen Kepner

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Jen put forth for the parishioners' consideration the following Slate of incoming Vestry Members for the Class of 2021:

- ❖ Brian Angerame
- ❖ Jessica Christ
- ❖ Dodo Roberts
- ❖ David Cristini to serve one more year to complete and unfinished term.

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Jen also presented slate for the Wardens and Officers for 2019:

- ❖ Chris Perry, Senior Warden
- ❖ Jennifer Kepner, Junior Warden
- ❖ Keith DeAngelis, Treasurer
- ❖ Andrea Sato and Bruce Beebe, Assistant Treasurers
- ❖ Anne Newton, Clerk
- ❖ Sharon Pearson and Pam Ely Diocesan Delegates
- ❖ Stephen Hudspeth and Chris Perry for Alternate Diocesan Delegates

Jen also presented appointee, Bob Daldorf for the Endowment Committee for 2019 to replace Brian Angerame who is moving to a Vestry position.

Election of Vestry, Officers and Delegates

The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

Once all the candidates were introduced and all slates were proposed, a motion was made to accept the slate. Motion was seconded. The Slates for the new Vestry members, Officers and Delegates were approved by the parishioners in attendance.

Consideration of Parish Bylaws

The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

A committee was created to review and update St. Matthew Parish Bylaws. The committee members were Peter Denious, Stephen Hudspeth, Michael Kaelin, Joe Magnano, and Roger Valkenburg.

St. Matthews was in need of bylaws and this working group made sure that they did the proper research so to distill it down to a version of bylaws that were understandable, effective and relevant. Historical perspectives were garnered and the Committee was also grateful for an independent review of the finished product by Carol Kaelin.

All attempts were made to have the bylaws reflect St. Matthew's flexibility which was accomplished. Several components that were thoroughly discussed included:

- Definition of member which is compliant to that of the Canonical definition; there may be ongoing discussions about this as there are several parts to it. Vestry will take that on.
- Terms for Senior and Junior Wardens
- The most appropriate number of Vestry members. Currently Vestry has 14 members including the Senior and Junior Wardens. A motion was put before the parish regarding amending the Vestry Membership to 11 including Senior and Junior Wardens

A motion was made to the parishioners in attendance at the Annual Meeting to amend the Bylaws Article 4 Section A stating "The Vestry shall consist of eleven members of the parish including the Senior Warden and Junior Warden. Nine will be voting members; a Quorem will be 5 members."

This motion was seconded, no discussion held and then approved unanimously by St. Matthew's Parishioners.

Recognitions

Jen Kepner

Jen recapped a very busy yet productive year for St. Matthew's. It was a time of discovery for all parishioners especially getting to know one another better while discerning, searching and welcoming our new Rector, Marissa and her wife, Lyn.

Jen acknowledged Mary Gow and Jen Angerame for heading up the Social Committee which oversaw the preparations to welcome Marissa and Lyn at the rectory and in small group gatherings with parishioners. Jen thanked Jean Campbell, Lisa Williams and Ginny Valkenburgh for their tireless dedication as Vestry members. Jen also thanked her Warden partner, Chris Perry for his steadfast dedication to St. Matthew's Parish.

Poignantly, Jen thanked the many 'behind the scenes' people who quietly go about their special ministries sharing their gifts in a discreet yet impactful manner. Some of those mentioned publicly were:

- ❖ Sharon and John Pearson with the Acolytes
- ❖ Christy O'Sullivan with Coffee Hour oversight
- ❖ Dodo Roberts and Jen Angerame for the Hospitality Ministry
- ❖ Dave Cristini leading Communications
- ❖ Keith DeAngelis oversight as Treasurer
- ❖ Peter Denious managing Stewardship
- ❖ David Gortz corralling the Ushers
- ❖ Kadee Alonso and Stu Holcomb overseeing Second Day of Service
- ❖ Pam Ely, Beth Baker and Linda Gortz's gentle and compassionate Pastoral care.

Jen also thanked Marissa for "saying yes to St. Matthew's."

Communications Report

David Cristini

Dave provided a presentation about the progress that has been made on St. Matthew's website, social media outreach and general communication. The Communication report is included within the Annual Report but here are some highlights:

- ❖ Many of the website updates were done in order to put St. Matthew's best foot forward during the Recruitment process. At a recent Diocesan meeting, Marissa was pleased that the St. Matthew's website was used as an example of how to do responsible social media!
- ❖ Many organizations beyond St. Matthew's borders follow us on Facebook and Instagram, including the Bishop! This also has a positive impact on the Wilton Interfaith Community.
- ❖ Specific statistics on St. Matthew's social media platforms can be found in the Communication Report.
- ❖ There are numerous ways that St. Matthew's interacts and communicates with our Parish family:
 - Website www.stmatthewswilton.org
 - Narthex TV
 - E-News
 - Instagram
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
- ❖ A Parish Directory is in the works
 - There will be a downloadable app
 - Available through St. Matthew's website
 - Several 'hard copies' will also be available
 - Request to upload photos on your profile
- ❖ St. Matthew's Communication team, Jen Angerame, Dodo Roberts, Jen Kepner, Kim Hall, Sharon Pearson, Lisa Williams and Dave Cristini encourage our parishioners to share photos (photos@stmatthewswilton.com), join in online conversations and help to share the good news happening at St. Matthew's.

Remarks by the Rector

The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

Marissa shared her thoughts on the past 8 months of being Rector at St. Matthew's and her gratitude for being called to be our partner in ministry. Quite often, Marissa experiences what she calls, 'St. Matthew's Moments'.

- ❖ Marissa is encouraged by the response to Pub Theology, a renewed Outreach Ministry approach, and the exploration of a Pastoral Care Ministry.
- ❖ Marissa looks forward to building on a strong foundation and seeking ways to strengthen and renew our parish community.
- ❖ She is grateful to the Vestry and its Leadership's willingness to take a hard look at our financial resources; face the challenges placed before us and work together with a clear vision for the future of St. Matthew's.
- ❖ Knows that God is very much at work here at St. Matthew's and that even with difficult decisions, there is hope that Jesus will guide us to do the best with what we have.

2019 Budget and Financial Outlook

Mark Mathews

A copy of St. Matthew's 2018 Annual Report was given to each family as they entered the Sanctuary today for the Annual Meeting. Several slides were presented as well with information on the financials. For specific details and figures, please refer to the Financial Report included in the Annual Report. The following are highlights from the Financial Report:

Recap of 2018:

- ❖ Pledges were down due to parishioners moving out of Wilton and others right-sizing their pledges to reflect their current financial situation
- ❖ Following an analysis of pledge giving, the 2018 budget reflected a pledge base of \$ 553,675 for a total income of \$642,275.

- ❖ Actual pledge receipts totaled \$510,294 which was down 8% or \$43,380 short of budget;
- ❖ With the help of a successful Auction and other miscellaneous income items, we collected \$587,945 vs. a budget of \$642,275 missing by \$53,230.
- ❖ Expense side came in below budget due to not filling part time admin position right away and lower Rector expenses.
- ❖ Diocesan Assessment included an extra \$15,000 of 2015 obligations which were not forgiven as previously anticipated.
- ❖ 2018 Expenses came in at \$677,967 which was \$19,457 less than budgeted.
- ❖ In all, the 2018 final operating statement shows a net loss of \$32,832 vs. a budgeted gain of \$1,752.

2019 Budget:

- ❖ In preparing the 2019, the Vestry is taking a different approach which will include expense cuts and additional revenue increases. Reductions listed below are based on 2018 budgets.
 - Fixed costs being reduced where possible
 - Diocesan Assessment, Clergy, Fellowships and Office expenses remain steady
 - Christian Education reduced by \$6,936
 - Music reduced by \$14,500
 - Plant reduced by \$9,898
 - Outreach Budget reduction still to be determined as Outreach is in transition
- ❖ Projecting a Pledge income of \$509,916 and a total income of \$580,416. That is ~\$60,000 less than the 2018 Budget.
- ❖ Budget is a work in progress; Vestry’s intent is to balance the 2019 Budget.

Mortgage:

- ❖ Continue to pay down existing mortgage held in St. Matthew’s Endowment reducing the outstanding balance to approximately \$813,000, self-financed at 3.00% interest rate.

Summary:

- ❖ St. Matthew’s is on sound footing with a vibrant parish supporting our next chapter.
- ❖ Under Marissa’s leadership, we are looking at new opportunities while agreeing to face the challenges together.
- ❖ Capital improvements have been made to St. Matthew’s Rectory; will be supporting ones for WEPCO and our own sanctuary.
- ❖ The challenges faced by St. Matthew’s are not unique to us but shared throughout our Diocese and country. We are committed to live within our means.
- ❖ Encourage the parish community to support St. Matthew’s Stewardship to the best of their financial abilities.
- ❖

Questions and Answers

How much is St. Matthew’s mortgage?

- It is \$814,000 and runs through 2028. At that time, approximately \$500,000 will need to be paid or can be re-financed.

In Vestry discussions, what were the priorities for the reductions in the budget? Also, if more pledges come in, where does that money go?

- No priorities were made; it was across the board as far as reductions are concerned. Even if more funds come in, at this point, reductions will remain. If the incoming funds increase a lot, then the Vestry will revisit the 2019 Budget.
- Music is 20% of the budget and still a huge part of the budget. It doesn’t mean that the Vestry doesn’t value Music but in reality, can’t live with this huge deficit. Income has not kept up with expenses. Pledges are down over \$100,000 over the past 6 years. The Vestry made difficult reductions across the board.

There is a concern that the Music cut will take St. Matthew's Music Director from a full time to a part time position which will be difficult. We may also lose some families and we won't have this level of music with a \$20,000 reduction. It will be difficult to lose a full time Music Director. (J. Nobles)

We will lose more families as St. Matthew's is known for its Music Program. (C. Newton)

- The Vestry hears the pain and sadness with your comment and question. We don't have the money; we don't know where to get it. Do any of you have any ideas? (J. Kepner)
- We need to be good stewards and to be more creative (M. Rohrbach)

Haven't heard what to do to raise money; may be new revenue sources outside St. Matthews. Need to spend more time on ways to develop income. (T. Olsen)

- Have some new members and new pledges but need to reign in spending. (M. Rohrbach)
- If everyone pledged and paid, that would help. If 100% of the parish, choir, Outreach and others have pledged, that would help. Many families in our parish have not pledged. Shortfall came from being a parish who we think we are and now realized who we really are. (C. Perry)

We can vote against raising taxes and pledges as we know all may not be able to raise pledges. Let's see if some can increase their pledges. I will increase our pledge by 10% and ask others to do it too. (D. Gortz)

Will raise mine 10%. Also want to know when Outreach will know what their funds will be? (G. Fuller)

- In Outreach Retreat, we will review our mission. Vestry intends to give the funding when Outreach has come to a decision about its new process. (J. Kepner)

When will the agencies know? (G. Fuller)

- Not sure we can give an answer to that question now. (M. Rohrbach)

Here is the same group of people (at the Annual Meeting). The challenge is about those who are not here. Can we get word out to those who have been in Choir, benefitted from Christian Education? (A. Perry)

- All is going to be mailed out to the entire parish. (M. Rohrbach)

Will there be an invite to pledge? (T..Fitzpatrick)

- Our church is in a substantial hole. Everything is on the table and Vestry is looking for where to save money. All the revenue and expenses are on the table. We will need to do a reach out at Easter and Christmas (P. Denious)

Haven't heard the message that its bad here. (J. Nobles)

- We are trying to be as transparent as possible; can't be more optimistic about new pledges. (P Denious)

Don't recall being challenged in Stewardship—only heard happiness. (L. Fitzpatrick)

That is true but need to keep message going. We always hear that people feel we always ask for money. (T. Fitzpatrick)

This Annual Meeting is first time hearing honesty and reality. (C. Newton)

- There are hopes for the future. (K. DeAngelis)
- All will grow if we are honest and stand on the ground...we will grow. Need more than emails as lots going on and easy to forget them. There are 323 parishioner emails on St. Matthew's list. (M. Rohrbach)

Think new ideas of raising money, beyond pledges; need other ideas, email for ideas. (T. Olsen)

Congratulate Peter on his work, hearing what 'you' need to do but it is really what 'I will do' or 'we will do'. (J. Kepner)

Some pledges are based on income tax return; does the Diocese have guidelines on what parish can spend on programs? (??)

- It is up to each parish. (K. DeAngelis)

- We do look at other parishes and St. Matthew's is on the high end. (M. Rohrbach)

Has Vestry voted to make the Music Director position a part time position? (JW)

- In July 2019, Fiona will be reduced to a 4 day week rather than a 5 day week. (M. Rohrbach)

Will that be put in the letter to the Parish? (JW)

We have been approving negative budgets for years! Its nothing new. Money is not going to come because we want it to. We need to face it. (A. Newton)

What happens to Christian Education? (CG)

- We will revision that position and it will always be a priority. (M. Rohrbach)

Always had the finance challenges but we have faith in our leadership to handle situations. Parish always about heart and trust in each other. I feel we can do it as we have quality leadership. (S. Hudspeth)

Who makes the phone calls to parishioners about pledges? What is the average pledge amount? (J. Magnano)

- The Stewardship Committee makes the calls and the average pledge amount is \$2,300. (M. Rohrbach)

The power of prayer that God will inspire us! (AP)

Is there flexibility in the Music budget? Who put that budget together? (K. Jarvis)

- Fiona created the Music budget and can spend the funds as she sees fit. Needed to reduce it responsibly. At the same time as reductions were being made in Music and Christian Education, we were reducing office supplies and will continue to do additional 'nips and tucks.' (M. Rohrbach)

The choir is made up of adults and kids. See the kids depart for Christian Education; in essence cuts to choir, cuts to education. Can't we touch the endowment? Could we borrow from the endowment rather than have cuts? (G. Fuller)

- Vestry can discuss but Marissa does not recommend touching the endowment.

Grateful for this conversation. Need to get better at pledging conversation. We never made the cuts we should have. We need to do pledge, "This is Us...reality is harsh. Should be grateful for this 'come to Jesus' conversation. (B. Angerame)

Going to take all of us not just pledges but meeting new families. We expect people will move away; need all to help new families to join, (G. Valkenburgh)

Closing Prayer and Adjournment of Annual Meeting

The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded and approved by parishioners in attendance. Marissa closed the Annual Meeting with a prayer. Time was 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Campbell, Clerk of the Vestry

Report from the 2020 Nominating Committee

Officers

Senior Warden	Jen Kepner
Junior Warden	Brian Angerame
Treasurer	Keith DeAngelis
Clerk	Anne Newton
Assistant Treasurers	Bruce Beebe & Andrea Sato
Diocesan Delegates	Pam Ely & Sharon Pearson
Diocesan Alternates	Chris Perry & Stephen Hudspeth

Vestry Class of 2022 Pam Ely, Joe Magnano, Paul Reis

2020 St. Matthew's Committee Chairs

Acolytes, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors & Intercessors	Sharon Ely Pearson
Altar Guild	Betsy Pettit, Mary Gow
Auction	Brian Angerame and Jennifer Angerame Colin and Jessica Christ
Building & Grounds	Bill Brautigam
Cemetery Board	Winkie Chesley, David Hapke, Roger Valkenburgh
Coffee Hour	Kim Hall
Communications & Social Media	David Cristini
Endowment Development Committee	Roger Valkenburgh
Endowment Investment Committee	Bob Dalldorf, Jonathan Woods, Roger Valkenburgh
Family Events	Sarah Boatwalla, Sarah O'Malley
Finance	Jonathan Woods
Flowers	Laura Kirkpatrick
Flower Delivery (Petal Pushers)	Dodo Roberts
Greeters & Ushers	Margie Holcombe and David Gortz
Hospitality	Jennifer Angerame, Dodo Roberts
JCCEC (Joint Children's Christian Education Committee)	Samantha Trolice
Memorial Gifts	Clergy & Wardens, ex officio
Newcomers	Kate Jarvis
Mission	Lindsay Wyman
Pastoral Care	Elizabeth Baker, Pam Ely
Stewardship	Tim Jarvis, Peter Denious
WEPCO	Steve Connor, Tim Cummins, Co-Presidents (WEPCO)

St. Matthew's is a large parish with many moving parts. We couldn't do all that we do without these dedicated teams. We're so grateful to everyone who serves on a committee, as Chairs, and Co-Chairs. Thank you for your service to God and to St. Matthew's. Your faithfulness and dedication make an important difference in the life of our whole community. Thank you!



Church Staff

Rector
 Interim Director of Music
 Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries
 Parish Administrator
 Bookkeeper
 WEPCO Facilities Coordinator
 Sexton
 Nursery Staff

The Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach
 Scott Ellaway
 Samantha Trolice
 Nancy Johnson
 Louann Miska
 Sandy Muschler
 Max Gil
 Kate DeAngelis, Lucia Sato

The 2019 Vital Statistics of St. Matthew's Parish

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Sunday Services	100	108	103	94	105	102
Weekday Services	30	37	36	37	34	61
Pastoral visits (Priest)	20	21				
Eucharistic Visitors	6					
Total Attendance	7,897	8,560	9,714	10,386	11,690	12,491
Baptisms	2	2	6	9	7	6
Confirmations	23	23	23	12	26	30
Marriages	0	0	3	1	3	3
Funerals/Burials	5	6	5	3	11	11
Average Sunday Attendance	135	164	134	171	176	178

2019 Baptisms

John James Quinn

Carter Alexander Fritz

2019 Confirmations

Kathleen Louise Angerame
 Nathan Downs
 Skylar Leigh Garvin
 George Caspari Hahn
 Caroline Sophie Kepner
 Annika Louise Mannix
 Samuel James Perry
 Griffin Wells Turner

Ella Veronica Christ
 Grace Duvall
 Kiana Gow
 Virginia Ruth Hastings
 Andrew Christopher Kress
 Grace Laforme Murphy
 Ryan Michael Preisano
 Thomas Charles Walsh

Michael James Cristini
 Erin Marie Cecilia Famous
 Clarissa Elizabeth Greis
 Jane Margaret Hulse
 Jacques William Lucas
 Emerson Beth Pattillo
 Catherine McKenna Satrazemis

2019 Funerals and Burials

Don Davidson
 Barbara Davidson

Catherine Christian
 Harriet Hoskinson

David Close

Rector's Report 2019

A few weeks ago, someone asked me sort of jokingly what I thought my job description was. I don't think they were expecting an answer – but I sort of instinctively said, “Turn to page 531 in the *Book of Common Prayer*, and you'll find my core job description.” Ultimately, everything that I do – whether it's related to fellowship, adult formation, finances, preaching, or anything else you can think of – everything comes down to this:

The Bishop addresses the ordinand as follows

My sister, the Church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. All baptized people are called to make Christ known as Savior and Lord, and to share in the renewing of his world. Now you are called to work as pastor, priest, and teacher, together with your bishop and fellow presbyters, and to take your share in the councils of the Church.

As a priest, it will be your task to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts. You are to love and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. You are to preach, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God's blessing, to share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration of the mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood, and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you.

In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ's people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.

It's really quite the job description; an obligation and a privilege. The last time I read this out loud, my voice broke somewhere near the middle – and I'd rather lost it by the time I'd reached the last paragraph. So, this is the work that I committed to – the work I re-commit myself to every day. And you'll notice in the first paragraph a summary of the work you're called to: the work of the Baptized. You are all called to make Christ known and to share in the renewing of this world. What follows is a report that seeks to tell a story about the ways that we have sought the renewal of the world around us in 2019, and a story that highlights some of the ways I've tried to live into this job description in the last year.

2019 was our first full calendar year together, which brings us to this second Annual Meeting. You won't be surprised to know that I find I have quite a lot to say about all the good news of this place and the hope I see in the unfolding of our story. It was a fulsome, busy year; a year defined by the growth of relationships. And it began with an Annual Meeting last year when the Vestry and I committed to you that we would “live within our means”, that we would be good stewards of the resources we have. I believe we kept this promise in 2019 and I'm looking forward to continuing down that path in 2020. I'm not going to report on the finances or the budget as that's reported elsewhere, but I will say that I'm really pleased with the proposed budget and with the state of our finances. I'm confident in our leadership across the board and grateful for the many gifts of this past year.

In 2019, we began a number of new projects, explored our faith together, said goodbye to staff members, and welcomed new members and new staff into our community. For me, one of the great gifts of 2019 is the amount of time I was able to spend with you – deepening our relationships and investing together in the future God is envisioning for us. While we began some visioning in 2019, there is more that we will seek and unfold in 2020. I am hopeful about both our immediate future in 2020 and about the foundation we're laying for the years ahead. And I am beyond grateful for the ways that we have followed Jesus together in the year and a half or so we've shared in this ministry. I continue to be moved and impressed by the big, open heart of this place and by the deepening of faith and relationship I can see in all aspects of our life together. What follows is an attempt to highlight some (though not nearly all!) of what happened.

Staffing

Perhaps the most visible changes at St. Matt's in 2019 were to the pastoral staff. In May, we celebrated the retirement of Becky Hudspeth, who had so well and faithfully served St. Matt's for 24 years as teacher, mentor, and friend not just to our kids – but to the whole community. It was a beautiful day and a bittersweet moment. I was keenly aware that we would not be able to find another Becky – because there's only one Becky. And there's good news, here. First – that Becky seems to be really enjoying her new view from the pew – and it has been a joyful thing to watch her transition into a new phase of life and ministry amongst us.

And – the other good news came to us in the last part of the summer. I am so pleased and delighted with the person God has called to love and form our kids. Samantha Trolice is a wonderful addition to our community and to our team. Her deep and rooted faith in Jesus is visible to anyone who gets to know her. She shares that faith easily and is already forming strong connections with our kids and teachers. And while she continues to grow in her life with us, she is already enriching our life together with her own ideas and passions. Sam jumped into the work and the pace of St. Matt's in mid-September and in less than six months has made some really important inroads. She's building good and transparent relationships with her WPC counterparts and she's helping us to build on the strong foundation laid for our children, youth, and family programming. Sam also jumped right into Confirmation, working with Jen Kepner, Sharon Pearson, and me to craft a year of discovery for 11 Confirmands. In Samantha, we have found a strong and committed presence, someone who will support and form our kids, someone who understands how important this ministry is to the life of St. Matt's. I want to let Samantha tell you herself about some of what she's learned and enjoyed over these last few months – and some of what she has planned for 2020. So, take a good look at her report, too. I can't wait to see how these programs will grow into the future.

In August, we said goodbye to Fiona Smith Sutherland, leaving open the position of Director of Music Ministries. Throughout the fall and into the winter, I spoke to 48 musicians who were (are) interested in the position and in our life together. The Adult Choir met five of these candidates, and while there were some close calls, we weren't able to find quite the right fit. I believe that we will – and I want us to wait for the right person. God provided for us in the midst of this transition by sending us Scott Ellaway. Scott joined us as Interim Director of Music Ministries in December. For this last season, Scott has supported and inspired the Adult Choir and to lead, and it was a festive, joyful Christmas. In January, Scott and I agreed that it had been a good season – and that there was good reason for us to continue to be in relationship a while longer. So, I'm delighted to share with you that Scott will be here as Interim Director of Music through the middle of June 2020. During this time, he'll work 25 hours a week and begin to put some building blocks in place for the next Director. This coming week, Scott will begin to work with some of our kids, and then eventually with our youth as well. He's making some decisions about Section Leaders and has some ideas for outreach into Wilton. I'm delighted that we are able to partner with Scott for this season, to benefit from his skill and his passion for music. What a gift it is to worship the Lord together. In a few weeks, I'll begin looking again for the person God is calling to be our Director of Music Ministries. The months ahead will offer us the gift of timing – posting the position in August, at the end of the summer was a challenge. And we still had a lot of interest in the position and in the place. So, I'm hopeful that now that we have some time, God will steer us toward the right person.

I hope that by now most of you have met and gotten to know our Parish Administrator, Nancy Johnson. Nancy has been with us since the middle of July 2018 and she is a tremendous asset to the parish. Aside from the normal administrative roles you might imagine, Nancy also takes a leadership role in our communication, contracts, and serves as an important part of our relationship with WPC. Nancy keeps the trains running on time and is the first point of contact when someone calls or visits St. Matt's. She is welcoming and kind, responsive and efficient, and she is a huge help and support to me in the work of running the day-to-day life of the place as well as the ministry I'm called to do with and for you. We are very blessed that Nancy continues in this role with us and supports the life of the whole place.

Across the board, we have been – and continue to be – blessed by staff members who are committed to good news of Jesus, to the life of St. Matt’s, and to their work as part of the team. I couldn’t be more pleased by or impressed with our staff and the ways we work together to serve and proclaim the Gospel.

Our Life Together

The life of the parish shifted and grew in wonderful and stunning ways in 2019. One big change came in the first half of the year as the Vestry and Mission Team worked together to restructure what was “Outreach” into something new – into **Mission**. The language change is intentional, and it reflects a change of focus. As Christians, our work is to be part of God’s mission in the world – a mission that is focused on love, service, and the restoration of right relationship between God and all of us. So, our Mission Team is actively engaged in leading and coordinating the work we do to love, serve, and restore. Sounds like good and holy work, doesn’t it? If you’re not part of the Mission Team, you might consider it! There may yet be some course adjustments or corrections that need to be made to this new model, and still, the change is dynamic. I’m so grateful for the hard work and dedication of many to this process and to the growth of our relationships with our partners and beneficiaries. This new model widens and deepens our impact, enhancing our witness to Jesus and our participation in God’s mission. This is leading us into meaningful relationships and offering us more and more chances for hands-on activities. Stay tuned for more in 2020!

In the midst of our **music transition**, we were exceedingly blessed by the gifts of Mark Famous, Jennifer Famous, and Janet Nobles. And we are always blessed by the gifts and commitment of our Adult Choir. Even though the transition was difficult in the fall, these three folks and our whole choir led us through a beautiful season of song and worship. The Choir was so faithful about meeting with candidates and so helpful as we discerned who might be called to join us. I’m also grateful to Linda Gortz who has stepped in to help lead the Adult Choir in these months with our Interim Director. I am inspired by the gifts and faithfulness of our Choirs. They offer us something very special in worship. And I’ve really enjoyed the chance to spend more time with them, and to get to know this talented group better over the last six months. I’m looking forward to what God has in store.

One of the areas where we will continue to grow and experiment is that of **Adult Education**. In 2019 we tried a number of different topics, times, and approaches. While this isn’t an exhaustive list, here’s a quick spin of a few formation pieces from 2019: In Lent, we had a Monday night book group, focused on reflections and meditations for the season. A group of us met for Bible Study, a few weeks at a time, to explore three different letters of the Apostle Paul. Our new Deacon led a forum called *Deacon 101*. Pub Theologies continue to have strong turn out, providing a meaningful time for connection and conversation, for sharing of sacred stories. We read two books together. In November, our Parish Intern, Meg, led a series about radical discipleship. And in December, I had the great fun of leading a series on the Marys of the Bible. And we tried on some new things – like a Lenten Quiet Morning and a Prayers of the People writing workshop.

We also expanded our **worship**. While we continued to have dynamic worship on Sunday morning, we also added a number of different kinds of worship to the calendar. There were extra services in Lent and Holy Week, Taize and Compline. We created an interactive, inter-generational Lenten service for families that involved the readings from the Vigil and a whole lot of glitter. For the first time, you experienced the whole story of Holy Week and an invitation to worship every day. Each of these Holy Week services was well attended. We had a special service for the feast of All Saints. We repeated our beloved Pajama Lessons & Carols on the Sunday after Christmas. And still there were other unique opportunities for worship throughout the year. Worship is the heart of what we do and in 2019 it was a vibrant, active, beating heart for a growing community of faith.

Speaking of growth, we **welcomed two other people** who aren’t quite staff. Our Parish Intern, Meg Stapleton Smith, joined us just before Easter. Meg’s time with us will end on Easter of 2020 after a little more than a year. During this time, she has preached, taught, and come to know you. We have been blessed by her voice, by her ability to share her faith, and by her earnest desire to be a disciple of Jesus. Having an intern is a special thing – while we get

to help shape her, she is also very much forming us. St. Matt's is a wonderful place to land for an internship – and I know that you would welcome Meg with an open heart. I know that she feels blessed by the welcome, love, and support of St. Matt's. I will miss her when she leaves us, and I know that you will, too.

Also in 2019, we were blessed with the gift of a Deacon. The Rev. Dcn. Don Burr joined us at the beginning of the program year in mid-September. While we are only beginning this walk together, we are blessed that he is among us for a while. A Deacon's job is to call us out of the church building, out of the pews, and into the world – to go and be the hands and feet of Jesus, with a special eye toward those who are sick, lost, lonely, and oppressed. Don's is a special ministry to the least and the last – and it is his job to call us to that ministry, too. I look forward to what our continued journey will bring and I'm grateful for all that Don brings to us.

Both Don and Meg came to us because of the trust and support of our Bishops – because of their desire to encourage the work and ministry of St. Matt's. And I'm grateful for the gift of these voices, for the talent and conviction they bring to us, and for the ways that Christ is glorified because of their faith and their dedication. We are blessed by their presence.

Among the new and revived projects/committees:

We have a new and growing Newcomers Committee, chaired by Kate Jarvis. Welcoming and incorporating newcomers is one of the most vital and important parts of ministry in the church today. When people visit, how do we welcome them? How do we show our care and our interest? How do we incorporate new folks into the life and work of the parish? Learning to do this in some new ways for a new time will help us situate those who come to join us – to help them find their place among us and the ministries that will connect and empower them.

And we convened and trained our **Pastoral Care Team/Eucharistic Visitors**, an effort co-chaired by Beth Baker and Pam Ely. In the spring of 2019, the Pastoral Care Team gathered to envision & train. And in the fall, Eucharistic Visitors were trained so that they can carry the sacrament to our homebound members. Teams of Visitors are doing this work now regularly and it is a gift to all of us, connecting God's people to the meal we share, even when they can't be physically present for church on Sunday morning.

It was a busy year for **pastoral care** all around. It was my privilege this year to walk with so many of you through the joys and struggles of this life. From funerals, to baptisms, to vow renewals, to coffee conversations about prayer, to the deep struggle of pain and sadness, this year has been full of shared moments and stories.

In the coming months, we will finalize plans for a **new Altar**, a **new Baptismal Font**, and a few new pieces for our worship space. These are funded by the same private donation that made our **Soft Space** possible in the fall (speaking of welcome and hospitality!). And I think some funds from this donation will also go toward our Children and Youth spaces & programming as we make our way in 2020. This donation is such a faithful gift – and though it's remained anonymous – it should be an example for all of us. This good and gracious surprise will make a lasting and clearly visible impression on the life of St. Matt's.

There are **a few words of thanks** that I need to share, too. While there isn't enough space – or enough time for me to express all my gratitude, here are a few things that need to be said. First, I'm grateful for the strong leadership of your Vestry. Even though we haven't quite yet hit the two-year mark, we've built a strong, transparent partnership. Your Vestry is dedicated to the life of this place and they work hard on behalf of all of us. They are open minded, they seek consensus, they are patient, they are leaders. And together they form a community of faith and support at the core of St. Matt's that gives life to everything around it. It's a special group and we are blessed.

I'm also particularly grateful to our Wardens. Jen Kepner engages the work of leadership with energy and vibrant hope. Having worked and served in a few other parish settings, she understands the lovely, strange organism a church is. She is full of new ideas, always ready to build, always mindful of the ways we welcome and care for the

folks who are already here – and the folks who haven't quite made their way here, yet. I'm looking forward to Jen's year as Senior Warden and what new things God will grow among us as she continues to lead. And I'm so glad that she's on the mend and will be back to building and working hard for St. Matt's soon – we're blessed to have her.

This year brings Chris's tenure as Senior Warden to a close. As is often the case in the midst of transition, Chris stayed in the position of Senior Warden longer than most in order to offer a sense of stability. He served the parish faithfully and with dedication. The role of a Warden is to interface with the parish, offering to listen and lead, supporting the Rector as she or he tries to do the wonderful and challenging task of casting a vision and then trying (with God's help and the help of the Vestry & congregation) to build that vision. It's a complicated job, even in the best of circumstances. And to do the work of a Warden well, you have to be a person of strong faith and firm boundaries. You need to hold closely a commitment to the place that honors each and every person who is a part of it. And you have to carry a desire to support the Rector in pastoring, serving, and lifting up the congregation. It's really the only way the system works well. And Chris is a rather stellar example of this. He has cared for this place inside and out, he knows all the stories, he scans all the faces, and he has always been a supportive presence for me. He is deeply invested in you – and in us. In many cases, the difficult pieces of transition fell on his shoulders, and for that we all owe him a debt of gratitude. And not just him. We owe our thanks to his family as well – for sharing him with us on all the long nights, early mornings, DC trips, weekend workdays, and for every other little thing in between. Thank you, Chris. And thank you Perry family for your good and faithful service to God and to St. Matthew's.

We are blessed by an abundance of ready hands and open hearts. From all of our members who serve on committees and as committee Chairs to anyone who volunteers for mission projects, coffee hour, as Counters, Ushers, Greeters, Lectors, and more. Everywhere you look around St. Matt's there's someone who stepping up and leaning in – and this is an amazing gift. While we continue to grow and try on new patterns of life, new projects, new ideas, what I hope will never change is the strong, loving heart of this place. We are blessed because of you – because of the ways you give, serve, and support the work we are called to do together.

We are also blessed to share some of this work with our partners around the courtyard. I'm grateful for the leadership of the WEPCO board in 2019, the work of the WEPCO staff, Sandy and Max, as well as our shared Nursery staff, Kate & Lucia. And I'm glad of the continued and growing relationship Shannon and I share as we love and serve these two great communities. I understand we have a bit of an anniversary coming up soon – so we'll have a chance to celebrate this really unique partnership between WPC and St. Matt's – and all the good work you've done together over these last years. What a privilege it is to serve the Lord together.

2020 will be a new year of connection and exploration. And I hope 2020 will be a year of growing relationships, raising up new leaders, and sharing sacred space. We have a full year of plans for fellowship, learning, service, and fun. Thank you for being part of the story that was St. Matt's in 2019. Thank you for all that you did to make this story so faithful, vibrant, and bright. I'm so looking forward to the story of 2020 – to what we will build, and to what God will grow among us. How will you contribute to this story this year? How will you be a part of God's story at St. Matt's? What one new thing can you try – what new habit can you try on – what new piece of our life can you participate in – to help us better tell this good story?

In all that we are and all that we do, we are called to share the good news of Christ and to renew the world. This is the goal, the mission of all of our programming, all our discussion, every dollar and cent, every musical note, every event. We are resurrection people. We believe that light shines in the darkness and that no matter how dark the night is, the light is never overcome. We believe in a God who has defeated death – and who calls you, just as you are, to use the gifts you've been given to share that good news with a world that is literally starving for hope, starving for good news, starving for connection and fulfillment. And we are the keepers of the story. Ultimately, everything that we have and everything we do comes down to this. This is our story. Our parish home. Our place of rest and renewal, our story of goodness and grace to share. We need you. Help us make Christ known and renew the world.

Senior Warden Report 2019

Before I begin, let me apologize for the length of my remarks. I've got a few things to get off my chest and I don't know when I'll have another opportunity.

Wow! It's hard to believe it has been five short years since I became a warden at St. Matthew's. That's a little over 1,800 days and not much has changed. In early 2015, Barack Obama was in the middle of his second term as President. GE was a CT based company with a market cap ~ 4X what it is today. And I began working with a St. Matthew's staff consisting of Mary Grace, Richard, Becky, Rodney and Kristy. So, maybe just a little bit has changed in those 5 years in our nation, in our state and even at St. Matthew's. We've laid some dear friends to rest. We've said farewell to other friends who have retired, moved or taken jobs in other parts of the country. So, with all this change, why am I so excited for the days that lie ahead for St. Matthew's?

We are an inviting community and I'm proud to say that our doors are open to all! That means a lot in 2020. Look around you, I see friends in this room that I did not know five years ago. And it's also nice to see a few faces who have been smiling at me for decades as well. Yes, we have lived through a lot of transitions recently and sometimes that change has been uncomfortable. But here we are in 2020, with a new found vision and clarity. We have welcomed Marissa to lead us and to be our spiritual partner through this next season of our lives. She has established herself as our guide on our shared faith journey. She inspires and challenges us with her words. We marvel at her energy and her leadership by example. She is introducing new programs that will feed us as she collaborates with our dedicated Vestry to live out that vision together. There are green shoots emerging all over St. Matthew's so open your hearts, feed your souls and come on in to explore with us.

As we grow into this new vision for St. Matthew's, you have generously shared God's gifts to allow Marissa and the Vestry to begin to rebuild a team of dedicated staff. Since her arrival just 20 months ago, Marissa has welcomed Nancy, Meg, Samantha, Deacon Don and Scott to her staff. Along with our dedicated WEPCO team of Sandy and Max, they care for us, for our children and for our facilities so that we may be inspired to do God's work.

I have been blessed to work with great partners over these past five years. I started with Mary Grace and Anne, transitioned to Alon and Lisa and have been blessed to partner with Marissa and Jen for nearly these last two years. I am excited for the days ahead as Jen rises to her long overdue role of Senior Warden. Jen is a dynamic woman of profound faith. She will lead us with great compassion and purpose. She has already championed new visions for our Communications and Mission programs. With Marissa just hitting her stride and Jen welcoming Brian to the warden team, St. Matthew's best days lie ahead of us.

There is something else that is special for STM that I am proud to be able to share with you today. For the first time in decades (and I mean several decades), STM is now a parish "in good standing" with our diocese. While our steadfast Treasurer, Keith, has always been timely with our audits, today we can also say that we are paid in full for our Commission Mission Support (formerly our diocesan pledge) and we are now current on all payments. There is a new energy at STM since Marissa's arrival and Don and Meg are here to share their great gifts with us in large part to those efforts we have undertaken these past few years to get back to being in good standing and our diocese also senses something special is happening here.

Now, before I go off into that Warden sunset, I need to share a few parting words. Marissa asked the Vestry to do a summer read before our retreat early in this school year. The book we read was entitled "Searching for Sunday" by Rachel Held Evans and it explores how and where we find church in the 21st century. There was one particular quote that rocked me and has stuck with me ever since. She shares that "Church should be safe for all and comfortable for no one." Now the safety aspect of that quote seems self-evident and has been on our minds recently. You will hear more from your leadership about that throughout the course of the year as we reimagine what a safe church feels like. You've seen some of the first changes this fall with the move of our Nursery from the basement to a newly designed room on the main floor with close proximity to both sanctuaries.

It is this idea that church should be “comfortable for no one” that has challenged me. Really? Church should be uncomfortable? We should feel open and supported at church to share new ideas about our faith. Many of us come to church to hear the Word and challenge our faith, but to the point of being uncomfortable? That idea has certainly tested me this year. I think a certain amount of discomfort prompts me to share a few thoughts as I depart from the warden’s seat. They are not specifically intended to make you feel uncomfortable and there is no intention on my part to offend, but I may tap on a third rail for some of you. Hopefully, my thoughts will lead others to be willing to share their hearts and their voices to the conversation; not today, but as the new leadership of STM wants to lead us. I don’t think we were ready in recent years to have these uncomfortable conversations because of all our transitions, but I see a new stability returning and look forward to seeing how our leaders want to shake things up. I certainly don’t have all the right answers and maybe that has been part of my own discomfort to recognize while listening to other STM leaders that I am as flawed and as faith challenged as the next person. So, let’s be willing to have some of these tougher conversations soon and be uncomfortable together.

Let me start with a first area of discomfort! Stewardship – you had to know I wasn’t going to miss this shot to open up a frank discussion about how we share and return HIS gifts to God. I am often asked by folks how they can help. To be clear, STM is graced with an abundant group of parishioners always willing to roll up their sleeves. Yet, why are we always chasing down people months after we have asked for a pledge and why do so many folks wait until December to pay their pledge? Do you want to know what would alleviate half the stress of the wardens, treasurer and Vestry? When we launch Stewardship in late October and give families 6-8 weeks to respond before Christmas with intermittent reminders and testimonials, please fill out your pledge card on-line or put a hard copy in the plate. The Stewardship co-chairs and most of the Vestry have been sweating for the past month to reach the final 30-40 families to get all of the pledges in hand BEFORE we approve a budget. A lot of people worked hard on stewardship this year and I applaud your Vestry for truly being leaders here, but it just doesn’t need to be quite this hard and take quite so long every year. We are doing well, but we can do better. We all have bills to pay to run our own households and STM is no different with salaries, heating bills, snow plow bills and programs to support throughout the year. Start in January each year and make sure you continue to pay your pledge on a regular basis and don’t wait to drop a check for 100% of your annual pledge in the plate on Christmas Eve.

You will see the financial report soon from our treasurer. 2019 was a much better year than 2018. The biggest difference over the last two years is that parishioners paid their pledges in 2019 while many pledges went unfulfilled the year before. 2020 is shaping up to be a year somewhere in between 2019’s big surplus and 2018’s shortfall. For the Vestry, that provides our own level of discomfort as we “manage” a budget that does not grow in a steady, linear path. It’s a bumpy road to grow into our successes as we say farewell to some parishioners and new parishioners emerge. I definitely see the need in 2020 for new young families to emerge as leaders in our parish and as stewards. Now, what you pledge to STM is a very personal commitment. We all do it and we all (hopefully) spend some time in prayer and reflection to consider what we can and should give back to do God’s work. I ask you to consider your own pledge. Did you respond with “put me down for what I did last year”? Do you think about your spiritual home as just another charity or do you pledge from your abundance and give back to God. How does your pledge rank in your own financial priorities? Do you stretch and sacrifice when you pledge? Is your pledge equal to your annual country club dues, or a family vacation, or a travel sports’ weekend away. Does it rival your Christmas credit card bills? Or do you give from what’s leftover? If you’re uncomfortable, you are not alone. We can all do a little bit better.

Another area of discomfort that I wish to highlight is our wonderful Endowment. Established in 1986, by a steadfast Vestry, looking to retire our initial mortgage from the purchase and building of this campus ~15 years earlier, I am sure the original framers would marvel at how it has grown to just over \$4MM. Originally established to be available for capital and local mission only, that original Vestry had the forethought to recognize that times and needs of STM would change and so they left those self-imposed restrictions in the hands of future Vestries to manage and to lead this parish. I am proud of the fact that three years ago the Vestry agreed with the discernment of our mortgage subcommittee team to restructure our existing parish loan at Bankwell into the fixed

income portion of our overall Endowment. We invested in ourselves. To date, the parish has been making regular monthly payments of principal and interest and we remain current on our loan payments. Those loan payments are at an interest rate nearly half of what we had been paying the bank. Our first year savings on the loan payments was nearly \$25K of unnecessary interest. For the Endowment, we have been achieving a higher yield on our bond portfolio than current market conditions since 2017 and we have avoided asset management fees on those bond assets throughout. It has been a win-win for both the Endowment and the parish operating budget. I've had some folks share with me in the past year that that decision was a "no brainer". Yet, I can tell you that building consensus on that decision three years ago was easily one of the 2 or 3 hardest initiatives I have led in my time as warden. We need to continue to be open to change.

In 2019, your Vestry again made a difficult decision to lead this parish albeit with an uncomfortable decision to use part of the annual 4% draw from the Endowment to begin to restore the steady budgetary creep that has led to annual operating deficits that have been present for close to the last decade. That decision was difficult for the Vestry as we recognize the slippery slope that these decisions may have on future generations at STM. If I can share some color on that decision, your Vestry was never willing to consider an invasion of the Endowment principal as we hold that trust deeply to preserve the Endowment for generations to come. However, we did view that the annual Endowment draw, as long as it remains at a prudent 4% distribution rate, should be available to the parish leadership as the original Vestry of 1986 allows in the founding document. After much discussion, your Vestry arrived at a unanimous decision to use a portion of the annual draw to begin to pay down the accumulated operating deficits. I hope that future Vestries will continue to see the annual Endowment draw, not the actual Endowment principal, as a tool with which to help them lead this parish. We must preserve the Endowment principal so that it will care for generations of STM parishioners who follow, but the challenges to lead faced by the Vestries of 1986 or 2019 will likely be unrecognizable to the Vestries of 2050 or 2100. We must put our faith in those Vestries to lead our parish and know how best to utilize our abundant gifts.

Alison and I remain steadfast contributors to the Arbor Society that funds the Endowment. As it reads on the plaque in the Narthex, We are proud to be "planting a tree under whose boughs we shall never sit", but we do hope that our little tree will someday bear fruit for others who follow us and to provide shade to those who seek comfort. What good is it to plant a tree if you can never enjoy the harvest? Isn't that how we grow more trees by showing those who come after us how precious a gift we can achieve with a little sunlight and water? I look forward to more conversations, hopefully not too uncomfortable, that allow for us to have open and honest dialogue on how we utilize our Endowment resources.

The last area of discomfort that I want to touch upon in my closing remarks relates to our spiritual formation and our need to find balance in our lives; especially for our children. Take a look at this photo – Yep, that's me with the lovely white brick backdrop of our Narthex circa 1980. Some of you here still remember my folks, Pat and Endy. My dad here has just completed his year as Senior Warden (1979) and this is about a month after his outgoing Annual Meeting. I am 10 years old in the 5th grade at Cider Mill School and I've got a lot of living ahead of me. I often wonder about how my childhood and how different it might be if I were a kid in Wilton and at STM in 2020. You see I was a gym rat at the age of 10. If there was a sport I could play and a team that I could join, I was on it. I regularly played two sports every season (except winter because I never did learn to ski or skate so instead I just played on three basketball teams). I went on to play three varsity sports in high school and two in college and those were some great life experiences. Don't get me wrong, I loved every minute of it. But, I also went to church on most Sundays back then. The athletic fields in Wilton were off limits until noon on Sundays. I participated in Sunday school, later was Confirmed and then served as an acolyte until I went away to prep school. At an Episcopal prep school in New England, I was going to chapel four times a week, but it wasn't nearly as bad as it sounds! During my summers, I was on the shores of Lake Champlain at Camp Dudley having the best time ever. That included Sunday outdoor chapel, a morning chapel talk in the dining hall, evening vespers in our cabin and the highlight



to our week was Sunday Night Hymn Sing on the floor of our theater hall. Seriously, 350 boys/young men and we loved sitting on the floor and banging out the old Christian spirituals at the top of our lungs. It is a sight to see and hear! My own kids would later be serenaded to bed as infants hearing me sing my favorite camp hymns like “You’ll Never Walk Alone”, “Jacob’s Ladder” and “Climb Every Mountain”. There was plenty of time to be a kid, run around, have fun, play sports and it was never a trade-off with church. There was time for both and my parents fought hard to instill that balance in my life. I worry that we are losing that battle to find balance in the new norm of our over scheduled lives.

Now as some of you know, my Dad passed away from a heart attack just 10 years later while I was in my senior year at Williams and my mom died just six years after that. I had just turned 27, both my parents were gone, and Alison and I found out we were pregnant with our first child (just hours after my mom had passed away). God works in mysterious ways! I’d be lying if I told you that I had all of my ‘stuff’ together in life as I dealt with that heavy load, but we all know that life throws you curveballs from time-to-time. It was definitely hard and it has continued to be a challenge raising my own kids without my parents around. It is the biggest regret of my life. There is nothing I could do about it though as death happens in all our lives. I have reflected back on my days on the ball fields, being a kid in Wilton and as a child of STM. While I certainly take life lessons from all those experiences, I would have been a basket case then and I suspect I would be a shell of my current self if I didn’t have the balance in my life that began in my earliest years at STM and continues each day with my pursuit of spiritual formation. Being a Christian and being on a faith journey with all of you is what keeps my feet on the ground. It is where I find peace and it is where I seek nourishment. Life can be really hard if we try to make sense of all this ‘stuff’ on our own. Without a spiritual compass that always guides me back to the Cross and to God’s table, how could I get through life without being reminded of Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice, of God’s eternal forgiveness, without His life sustaining nourishment and the promise of the life everlasting?

So, I worry today that our lives have gotten too busy. I worry that we are constantly chasing our tails by shuttling our kids to and for to keep up with their over scheduled lives. We have so many two income families out of economic necessity, that neither mom’s nor dad’s ever get a break to just exhale. When is the last time that you could remember that you just did something for yourself or when you had a day with no planned activities? How many of us show up for church at Christmas and Easter always wishing that we had made time to come a little more often? Know that we hear you and we are trying to meet you where you are whether through Podcasts or Pub Theology. There are other ways to stay connected if your Sunday mornings are no longer sacred. I worry as that steady creep of the ‘real world’ continues to deprive us and our kids of a heightened spiritual presence in our lives. Are we equipping them with that same spiritual compass to handle the real challenges that they will face in life? How about coping with a failed marriage, a child with special needs, loss of a job or other real life setbacks? How will our kids handle life when they realize you don’t get trophies anymore just for showing up? I believe that Marissa and her team are doing that good work here at STM and we need to make that discovery and reflection a bigger priority in our lives and for our children. This could be a great season for spiritual growth.

Some of you may be junkies of The Crown on Netflix like we are. In the latest season (minimal spoiler here), Prince Philip has a chance to meet the moon landing astronauts in 1969. It comes at a time in his early 40s where he is dealing with a bit of a mid-life crisis and a life not altogether fulfilling. He is underwhelmed by his meeting with Neil Armstrong and crew as he was expecting some larger than life heroes. It is in that introspection that he shares with the priests at the Deanery that something is “amiss” in his own life. He has lost his faith he says and “without it what is there”? “The loneliness, and emptiness and anti-climax of going all that way to the moon to find nothing but haunting desolation, ghostly silence, gloom. That is what faithlessness is. As opposed to finding wonder, ecstasy, the miracle of divine creation, god’s design and purpose.” He concludes that “the answer is in here (head) or here (heart) or wherever it is that faith resides.” And having previously ridiculed the priests at the deanery he comes back to them to say “I now find myself full of respect and admiration and not a small part of desperation as I come to say help. Help me!” If you are feeling as if something is amiss in your own life, that help is here for you to find that wonder or to rediscover it all over again.

So, as I look around this Sanctuary and think about my own picture from 40 years ago, I wonder who might be speaking to a similar congregation at STM or elsewhere in another 40 years. Can you picture it? Maybe it's Michael Angerame or Lily Kepner? How about Colin Gilmor, Emma Famous or even one of those Perry kids? I'd like to think that may be in their futures for one or more of them. My point for raising it now is that we have allowed this steady creep of over scheduling and travel coaches who demand year-round commitments from our kids or they'll 'never make it'. I challenge that thinking to say what does it really mean to 'make it'? Do we expect all of our kids to receive division 1 scholarships because it's likely that almost all of them won't? Do we expect our kids to study at Julliard or someday be Rhodes' scholars because again the odds are infinitesimal? What are the odds of injury, burnout or resentment? About the same? This is definitely an uncomfortable topic because as most might say, if it's working, then don't rock the boat. I worry about all the kids who frequently are asked to sacrifice that spiritual pillar in their lives for the sake of their other commitments. If they don't have a strong foundation of Christian formation, then someday in the future their wobbly house may tumble. So, how can we restore balance in our own lives and model those healthy behaviors to our children so they grow up with all the tools that we know they will need in life? How can we push back against the new norms and give our kids a break? They need to be kids again. I challenge the leadership of STM to continue this uncomfortable conversation to restore that balance in our own lives and to emulate those healthy behaviors to our children. To make any meaningful change, I have to start with me!

That's a lot off my chest. It's been on my mind and on my heart for a while. As a parish, we were not ready to tackle issues like these before. In 2020, we are ready to dig deeper on a lot of things and know that this parish is full of love and support. Marissa has established herself as our spiritual leader. She has built a great team around her. We are blessed with a thoughtful and energetic Vestry. I have been so impressed with the nature of our dialogue this year. We have had lively debate, respected varying opinions and found our way to consensus in a lot of tough conversations. I've probably done more listening than ever this past year. There is a great energy here and I hope you can feel it too.

There is little time left for me to thank everyone that properly needs to be thanked. Suffice to say that in my down time in the coming weeks that I will have more opportunity to share personal appreciations with each of you. I must quote the Beatles here to say that making it through these last five years of wardenship and a fair amount of transition at STM that I got by with A LOT "of help from my friends. To my bride and my children, thank you for allowing me to serve St. Matthew's during this time. I never forget the sacrifices that you all have made and I am grateful for your love and support. To all at St. Matthew's, partners on the path of our mutual faith journey, thank you for your continued generosity and dedication. It has been my honor to serve you and I humbly thank you for that privilege. Let me close with two final reminders that might get a chuckle out of you, my friends. First, remember to always wear your nametags☺! Second, even though I may be on the sidelines for a while now, **remember there is nothing I won't do for our beloved St. Matthew's.** God Bless!



STM Auction 2016



STM Auction 2017

Faithfully, Chris Perry – Senior Warden

Junior Warden Report

There is a great difference between successfulness and fruitfulness. Success comes from strength, control, and respectability. A successful person has the energy to create something, to keep control over its development, and to make it available in large quantities. Success brings many rewards and often fame. Fruits, however, come from weakness and vulnerability. And fruits are unique. A child is the fruit conceived in vulnerability, community is the fruit born through shared brokenness, and intimacy is the fruit that grows through touching one another's wounds. Let's remind one another that what brings us true joy is not successfulness but fruitfulness. Henri Nouwen

I could list our “successes” this year. Instead, I thought I would talk a little more about the fruits of our community.

After we interviewed Marissa, (now almost three years ago!) I said, “Wow, I could imagine her doing my funeral. I could imagine her walking my family through a tragedy like that.”

I meant it as a comment on how faithful I thought Marissa was. But it became a running joke during that time.

Recently, as I lay in the hospital, struggling with an infection that had turned septic I texted a friend and said, “I feel like maybe I made too many jokes about Marissa doing my funeral.” While I was sick Marissa visited me. She brought dinner to my family and checked on my children. When I was a little bit better, she and Pam visited together and gave me communion. It wasn’t just Marissa who we heard from: during this week, so many of you have reached out, brought food for my family, sent care packages, really just held us up. Did I mention you brought food? So much delicious food. Sam was in touch with my children making sure they were okay.

The blessing and care I received didn’t happen just because Marissa is amazing. (Which she is.) It didn’t happen because I am on vestry. It happened because together we built structures like a pastoral care team and a hospitality team. It’s because by strengthening fellowship we have built a community that loves and cares for each other. It happened because we have a staff person dedicated to caring for our kids.

And what that feels like when you are in need, like I was (am), is that there is this little army behind you. I am so glad that Marissa didn’t actually have the opportunity to do my funeral. But in my darkest moments, I knew that if something ever happened to me, this community would carry my family through.

This sounds awfully morose, and I don’t mean it to be. I mean it to show who we are.

The fruits of our community are love, faithfulness, goodness, gentleness and service. Watching them grow this past year has been a gift.

Our outgoing vestry members really exemplify the fruits of St. Matthew’s

Andrea Sato: The first word that comes to mind with Andrea is “doer.” Andrea is the first one to roll up her sleeves and dive in to help wherever needed, as she did with our mission team. Her logical thinking, her calm leadership, and her willingness to pitch in have made us so much stronger. We are grateful to her for staying on as Assistant Treasurer.

Peter Denious: From when I first heard the click of his glasses, I knew he was someone to whom we should listen. His work on stewardship has been tireless. He will flip pancakes, make calls, write notes. He is in the trenches. Peter tells the truth. And while it is a simple thing, it is a gift. He is a man of integrity who makes every group he is a part of better. I will totally work on his campaign when he runs for Governor.

Dave Cristini: Dave is so much more than the social media or technology guy. We were on the discernment team together as vestry liaisons. Some of you have heard about the meeting in Meriden where we were told our parish profile was all wrong. What you might not have heard is that Dave went home that night and single handedly rebuilt the parish profile in the framework the bishop requested. So yeah, he is why we have Marissa. (kidding, sort of.)

But that is Dave. He sees a problem and he fixes it. He is quiet and kind and constant. Those things aren't always valued by this culture. A process guy, Dave has touched every ministry in this parish, helping us become better and stronger. Always quick to share credit, I think he deserves a moment to be acknowledged for all he has done.

Chris Perry: I mean, how do you acknowledge all that Chris has done for us?

Because Chris loves movies, when I think of how to explain what he has been to us, I think of that scene in Dead Poets Society, where the students stand on their desks and say, "O Captain my Captain!" to Robin Williams.

He has been our captain for five years steering us through a fair amount of uncertainty, a lot of changes and now hopefully into calmer waters. As our captain, he has been steady and calm. I feel like he knows and loves each one of us. He leaves very big shoes to fill.

No one has a heart quite like Chris and it's hard to imagine someone who loves St. Matt's more than he does. Chris, you have loved us through a lot, and now we hope you know it is your turn to be loved and fed.

It has been my privilege to serve alongside with Andrea, Dave, Peter and Chris. I look forward to working with Brian Angerame and our new vestry members in the coming year to continue to grow.

In closing, this is a special place and I'm so thankful to be a part of it.

Jen Kepner – Junior Warden

Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Church School:

4yr olds – 7th grade – Our church school program would not be possible without the dedication and sacrifice of our volunteer teachers and the Joint Children’s Christian Education Committee (JCCEC) board of parents who work tirelessly behind the scenes so Sunday mornings look like a breeze. We currently have four classes that meet in addition to the Nursery room for children three years old and younger. We deeply appreciate our paid Nursery staff, Lucia Sato and Kate DeAngelis. Every week they take loving care of our youngest children.



We’d also like to give special recognition and thanks to the JCCEC members: Kristen Campbell, Kerianne Fanelli,

Amy Gubner, Caroline Greis, Rachel Leung, and Tara Satrazemis. They are a dedicated group of individuals from both churches responsible for overseeing one grade level class. They recruit and schedule teachers, provide wisdom and direction on program decisions, plan mission projects, teach, and maintain a sense of humor. We owe a special thanks to our treasurer Kristen Campbell as she is modernizing our finance reports and helping us make the more efficient use of our funds.

This year we are testing out a new curriculum titled *Feasting on the Word*. Nate Taylor, my Presbyterian counterpart and I feel the style of this curriculum brings an additional level of unity across the greater church as the lessons are in line with the Lectionary. This means that our kids are hearing an age appropriate version of the same story from scripture that the adults are hearing in church. This will ideally help parents and children foster a discussion around scripture that was read that day, the sermon points and church school lesson.

Joint Youth Ministry:

6th & 7th Grade Joint Youth – This enthusiastic group has met about 7 times this year and has discussed a variety of subjects from how Jesus instructs us to pray from the Sermon on the Mount, to the golden rule, to the real definition and attributes of love. This group shows potential to be influencers in our church community and change the dynamic of joint youth group for students in years to come. We are excited to foster their enthusiasm and focus it in the area of missions, to connect spiritual knowledge with faith in action.

High School Joint Youth – This group has met several times so far this year and has discussed topics from mental health and the new Joker movie, to why it’s important to cultivate a service oriented heart and what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us. We have 21 students committed and coming with us to Washington D.C. in a few weeks to serve the homeless population. This will be a year of evaluation as we enter into our 25th year making a pilgrimage to this location. We will be scanning the horizon for other opportunities that will enrich the faith of our students in a new and fresh way.

Confirmation:

This year the confirmation team is comprised of five team members, Marissa, Sharon Pearson, Jen Kepner, Meg Stapleton Smith and myself. We have taken a team approach bringing each of our unique perspectives to the journey of faith. This year we have 11 Confirmands. So far, we’ve discussed topics like: who Jesus is, the parables of Jesus, and unpacked the liturgical calendar and the meaning behind Advent which culminated in the creation of their very own Advent wreaths. In the month of February, Confirmands will be taking two trips to experience a Jewish and Muslim faith community in an effort to help them round out their understanding of other major world religions and where our traditions sits among them. It’s important to us that our kids understand their faith in the context of others, and that they have a healthy respect and understanding for our brothers and sisters who worship and name God differently.

Samantha Trolice - Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Annual Report of the Deacon

Our official parish/deacon relationship began on September 15, 2019 when I arrived for my first assignment following ordination on June 29, 2019; though I have enjoyed connections with this place and its people for decades--through or deanery/region and diocesan common life.

My plan, (in consultation with the bishops and Marissa) has been to spend this (the first of my three years with St. Matthew's) getting to know the current folks of the parish and becoming re-acquainted with the wider community of Wilton. I believe that effort has been successful thus far; as I have enjoyed opportunities to chat with folks during coffee hour or Pub Theology and other events. I look forward to more of the same.



Those present for the September 29, 2019 Deacon 101 presentation were able to hear about the ministry I have been engaged in for the better part of the last 50 years and a bit about me and my family.

I preached for the first time with St. Matthew's on October 20, 2019; following the always successful Rise Against Hunger. I also preached on January 26, 2020; and the current plan is for me to preach quarterly.

I have also been following the development of the St. Matt's Mission team working with Circle of Care, with great excitement for their effort.

On December 20, 2019, I had the opportunity to gather in Norwalk with a few St. Matthew's parishioners and friends at the Smilow Life Center (part of Open Doors Shelter in Norwalk) for the Homeless Persons' Memorial Day Candlelight Remembrance. Those gathered remembered six persons whose deaths may otherwise not have been marked by anyone.

Marissa, Meg and I enjoyed the opportunity to sit together with Delegates from St. Matthew's during the October 26/27, 2019 ECCT Convention and Common Worship in Hartford. While there, we were blessed to hear the Right Reverend Barbara C. Harris (retired Bishop Suffrage of Massachusetts) preach in the 35th year of her Episcopate on Sunday morning. During the ECCT Convention, Marissa and I were both elected as Alternate Deputies to the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church; which will take place during the summer of 2021 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Over the past four months I have participated in ECCT required continuing education studies; one being a two-day pilgrimage to the National Museum of African American History & Culture, which is part of the Smithsonian (November 16-17, 2019). This trip was sponsored and led by the ECCT Racial Healing, Justice & Reconciliation Ministry Network (of which I am a member) in collaboration with the ECCT Season of Racial Healing, Justice & Reconciliation (happening now/concluding Autumn 2020.)

Some seventy-five of us traveled by bus from Connecticut; remaining overnight to allow for a second full day at the museum before returning home. Once pick-ups were made at all three stops (Hartford, New Haven, and Riverside) the pilgrimage began with the Liturgy of the Word while on the bus --with the idea in mind the whole journey would be liturgy. Being one of three deacons on the bus, I had the profound opportunity to proclaim the Gospel (along I-95, in what I think was somewhere in Delaware.) Talk about a moving Gospel!

The pilgrimage continued as we arrived in Washington, D.C.: stepping off the bus--down into the deep soul of such profound story--and followed the history and continued development to current day. Before boarding the bus again Sunday morning, we shared our stories as the sermon and shared Eucharist at our makeshift altar in the world. After

our second day at the museum, we returned home--forever changed. (I will spare you the spoilers, and simply encourage you to make your way to Washington, D.C. as it is well worth the miles.)

The second opportunity for continuing education was to take part in the Province I Deacon Retreat for Deacon Alum (of our deacon school) and Deacons in Formation (January 10-12, 2020) at the Bishop Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center near Keene, NH. Topics for the weekend were Deep Listening and Community Organizing, Telling Our Stories Through Legislative Advocacy, and an in-depth discussion of the book, Tattoos of the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion, by Gregory Boyle. (You may recall the author's name, as he also wrote the book some folks of St. Matt's read in the fall, Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship. Both texts are outstanding! Read them!)

Though deacons are not paid for their ministry and work (by ECCT or by the parishes they serve with) the above opportunities for continuing education are required of me by ECCT; and part of that same requirement is the idea that the costs associated with such be underwritten by St. Matthew's--for this I am grateful. Thank you!

So, where do we go from here? Well, not much is open in Wilton by the time I am finished work during the week--with the exception of Orem's; so I am going to try something new. For the months of February and March, I will hold "office hours" a.k.a. Deacon @ the Diner on Tuesdays from 5:00 p.m. thru 6:30 p.m. at Orem's. My intention is to create some informal space for us to get to know one another; and explore the needs of the larger community. Though reservations are not needed, you are welcome to text me at 203.434.1281 and let me know to be on the lookout. (Please add your first and last name to the text, so I know it's not spam.) I invite you to join my for a cup of tea; and I look forward to hearing more about you, your families, your ministries; and how they intersect with the needs of the world.

Thank you again for welcoming me to Wilton and St. Matthew's. I am excited to see where the Holy Spirit might lead us out in the neighborhood.

Peace,

Don

The Reverend Deacon Donald Field Burr, II

Altar Guild & Flower Committee 2019

During 2019, St. Matthew's Altar Guild members were busy doing the Lord's work of preparing for all worship services held in our church. In addition to the normal weekly Sunday Eucharist, we attend to our celebratory services at Easter and Christmas. In addition to the regular celebrations of the liturgical year, we also provide support for many life-cycle/pastoral care events: baptisms, weddings and funerals/memorial services.

During the year we continued to have an excellent line of communication with our Rector, Marissa, regarding any changes to our Eucharist services and how our procedures would need to be adjusted accordingly. Jennifer Diagonale, Kiana Gow and Janel Downs joined us in 2019 and we look forward to having more members join in 2020.

The Flower Committee is tasked to create the altar flower arrangements for the Sunday services, as well as decorate the church for Easter and Christmas. Using the SignUp Genius each member signs up online for two or three Sundays per year. The Flower Guild graciously offers the opportunity for parishioners to designate the flowers to remember a loved one, give thanks for God's blessings such as a birthday, anniversary or a special event for a suggested donation amount. Parishioners can also use the SignUp Genius for these dedications, call the office or sign up on the calendar in the narthex. Training is always available for anyone looking to enhance the St. Matthew's experience. Please contact Laura Kirkpatrick.

ALTAR GUILD: Nancy Brautigam, Jennifer DeAngelis, Jennifer Diagonale, Janel Downs, Debbie Fuller, Kiana Gow, Mary Gow, Char Griffin, Jan Hapke, Elinor Hauff, Linda Koch, Sharon McKenna, Kimberly Olson, Barb Osterholm, Betsy Pettit, Robynne Quinn, Joy Ruterma

FLOWER COMMITTEE: Jen Angerame, Nancy Dalldorf, Jen Hulse, Carol Kaelin, Laura Kirkpatrick, Elizabeth Walsh, Kacky Theoharides, Kate Denious, Kathryn Groves, Laura Bazarian



Cemetery Committee

St. Matthew's Parish Cemetery is located just north of the Wilton Town Hall on Danbury Road (Route 7). Earliest grave sites date back to 1800. A number of available gravesites remain, and a Memorial Garden is maintained for the interment of ashes.

Winkie Chesley is Sexton of the Cemetery, overseeing the maintenance and improvements ever since her predecessor, George Dean, passed away in 1979. Her generous and tireless dedication is revealed in the peaceful beauty of the place. Handsome stone gate posts now stand at the Cemetery's vehicular entrance, specimen plantings are installed from time to time, cleanup, mowing and tree work are ongoing tasks, undertaken by the Sexton herself, members of the Board and parish volunteers, as well as mowing and tree contractors.

In late 2012 through 2016, a major project under the supervision of Dave Hapke, established a computer program to document and photograph and eventually map all of the gravesites in the Cemetery. Parishioners Endy Perry and Elliott Connors, for their Eagle Scout projects, oversaw putting Cemetery records on computer, painstakingly entering all written records of gravesite information accumulated over decades, into our new software system, and then photographing and cataloguing gravesites into the computer records two years later. We are fortunate to have such invaluable support of the Scouts.

As we turn the page on 2019, our parishioner volunteers cleaned up massive oak limbs fallen along the northern stone wall border, a major undertaking, with only limited professional help at the end, saving cemetery resources for future needs. Projects for spring 2020 include (a) refurbishing the wrought iron gates on Danbury Road, and (b) completion of mapping and marking gravesites in the "new" section of the Cemetery south of the interior roadway.

More information about the Cemetery is available on our www.saintmatthewswilton.org website under "About Us" then under "Properties and Facilities".

An observance is held most years at the Cemetery, usually following the 10:00 am service on All Saints Day in November. This brief but poignant memorial service, held in the Memorial Garden, provides parishioners the opportunity to remember and honor those who have found eternal rest in the Cemetery.

The Cemetery Committee includes our Sexton, Winkie Chesley, Dave Hapke, Steve Pettit, Bill Abrams, Remi Hahn and the undersigned.

Roger Valkenburgh, Chair

Communication/Social Media Update

We had another fun and busy year in 2019 with the St. Matthew's Communications team. It is a team of dedicated volunteers who help to keep our parishioners informed, and share the St. Matthew's message with the surrounding community. The team builds a master calendar in partnership with Marissa, Samantha, and Scott. We plan around major seasons such as Lent, Advent with specific programming and cadence (reflections, photo challenges), as well as creating graphics for different events.

The Communications team also helps to create awareness around other events - such as Family Game nights, Pancake suppers (and breakfasts!), and Formation opportunities. It takes a lot of people pitching in to help accomplish the work and find fun, creative ways to digitally engage our parish! New for 2019, we created Parishioner Facebook group (facebook.com/groups/StMatthewsOnline) - a closed group consisting of only St. Matthew's Parishioners.

On social media, our most viewed posts on Facebook (facebook.com/stmattswilton) included a video in support of New Zealand (3000 people reached), DC Mission trip posts (1000 people), Mission posts (500 people) and Altar Flower dedications (500 people). Parishioners who traveled with Flat Matt posted pictures for us to share from all over the world; places such as Jordan, Switzerland, Bermuda, Alaska, Canada, Iowa, Maine, Nantucket. Flat Matt continues to be a fun way to keep St. Matthew's connected during the summer months; we try and iterate on using Flat Matt for other ways to include the parish - such as "Thankful Matt" this past Thanksgiving season.

Another focus of our Communications strategy has been to keep information up to date for the parish. We've made improvements to the display screen in the Narthex so that it is consistently refreshed with a live calendar feed from the parish calendar, latest photos from our Instagram feed (instagram.com/stmattswilton), and a rotating set of information slides that is updated frequently by the office staff.

In 2019, the Communications team worked on 2 major projects for St. Matthew's; 1/launching a redesigned website and 2/the creation of a new parishioner directory. In 2019, our website served up 21,000 unique pageviews across 5,400 visitors. Messaging that is created on Social Media will often drive traffic back to our website - it can be considered our public face of St. Matthew's to the digital world, so having a modern platform that is easy to use and update is critical.

In the late spring/early summer, the team embarked on a project to upgrade the St. Matthew's website. The current site had become outdated, and we searched for a site provider that would provide an easy to use interface while enabling a more modern look, and mobile friendly page rendering (over half of the traffic to our website is from a phone or tablet).

The team selected a new website provider who is rooted in the Episcopal faith. The website consultant worked with the Communications team guides us on a full audit of the existing site assets, and assisted us in visioning what our new site would look like. As part of this process, the team updated and refreshed existing content, archiving stale areas that were no longer relevant, and simplified sections. The new web platform enabled a mobile friendly pledge experience, as well as online donation platform. Our web upgrade also allows us to now offer the ability to process credit cards for purse donations, pledges, and flower/music memorials without incurring extra fees for St. Matthew's.

One of the most important benefits of the upgrade is enabling the ability to embed social media posts directly on our website, so our message could be communicated more broadly; whenever a post is made on Facebook/Instagram, the team also codes it so it appears on the website (sometimes in multiple places). This ensures our website content is always fresh and current, and reduces that amount of duplicative communications efforts on both the volunteer group and staff.

As part of the new website platform, a new newsletter process was implemented, where updates are made to the website, and then easily selected to be included in the weekly newsletter creation (drag and drop) - reducing the amount of time the office staff needed to spend on formatting and selection of content each week for the e-news.

Another need raised by parishioners was the need for a simple, consistent church directory. Member information existed in several data sources (pledging, website, excel sheets). The team embarked on a large data cleanup effort. They deduplicated and updated member information, and our member directory now has 157 families (some with pictures!). It is maintained by the office staff and is an opt-in subscription that is password protected in order to protect the privacy of our members. You can see more at stmatthewswilton.org/directory, and download the app for your phone or table there, too!

Submitted by David Cristini

The 2019 Communications Team

Jen Angerame
Mark Gilmor
Kim Hall
Nancy Johnson
Jen Kepner
Sharon Pearson
Dodo Roberts
Lisa Williams
David Cristini

ENDOWMENT FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 2019

The Endowment Fund Development Committee encourages and facilitates both planned gifts and memorial gifts to St. Matthew's. Examples of planned gifts range from bequests in Wills to gifts of appreciated stock, to gifts from IRAs, life insurance policies and real property. Examples of memorial gifts range from choral bells to cherry trees to chalices to restoration of precious stained glass windows, in memory and honor of a loved one.

The Memorials Book, which honors those who have committed to the Endowment Fund, as well as those who have made memorial gifts, resides along the south wall of the Narthex. The Tree of Life on the back wall of the Narthex is emblematic of planned giving, of planting a tree under whose boughs we may never sit. It is the symbol of our Arbor Society.

The Committee seeks to advise and encourage parishioners who wish to provide for any special need or purpose within the church. However, the focus of the Committee's efforts is on the growth of the Endowment Fund. The St. Matthew's Parish Endowment Fund was created in 1986, following the completion of a successful campaign to retire indebtedness that had burdened annual operating budgets for more than fifteen years. The Resolution creating the Endowment Fund imposes strict requirements for preservation of principal, and focuses the use of income on either local mission needs (meaning any needs selected through our own mission efforts, as opposed to those subsumed in the Diocesan assessment) or capital needs (improvements to church property), both of which needs had been neglected during the years preceding the Endowment Fund's creation.

In 2012 – 2013, the Saint Matthew's Arbor Society was created, to recognize and give witness to planned gifts and their value in strengthening Saint Matthew's now and for generations to come. This effort was celebrated in the spring of 2014, and a plaque installed in the Narthex to recognize and encourage these special gifts.

The investment of the Endowment Fund is capably managed by a separate Endowment Investment Committee (see its report elsewhere in this Annual Report). The value of investment assets in the Fund at 2019 year end was approximately \$3,300,000, not counting the outstanding mortgage balance due from the church of approximately \$790,000. The Vestry-designated distributions from the Fund in 2020 will total approximately \$150,000, providing more meaningful opportunities for pursuit and support of our core mission as a Church.

A planned gift in the form of an insurance policy given to the Endowment Fund decades ago by Chuck Anderson, a devoted parishioner and former Warden, resulted in an addition to the Fund of more than \$120,000, when Chuck passed away earlier this year.

Our Committee members include: Bill Brautigam, Chris Perry, Pam Ely, Dave Hapke, Brian Angerame, and Wardens and Rector, Ex-Officio. If you have an interest in joining this effort, please contact any one of us.

Roger Valkenburgh, Chair

Endowment Investment Committee

As of December 31, 2019, the account balance of The Endowment Fund of St. Matthew's Parish totaled, \$4,079,910 compared to \$3,516,185 on December 31, 2018. The Endowment Fund's investment return for the 12 months ending December 31, 2019 was 20.78% (net of Vanguard's fees) and was in-line with the return of its performance benchmark, of 21.88%. The Endowment's 3 and 5 year performance is 9.48% and 7.08% vs the benchmarks returns of 9.49% and 7.06% respectively.

As a reminder, in 2017, the Vestry approved the repayment of the St. Matthew's mortgage owed to Bankwell using funds from the Endowment Fund, resulting in substantial savings on interest expense. St. Matthew's continues to make principal and interest payments to the Endowment Fund per the original Bankwell mortgage amortization schedule. The current outstanding balance on the mortgage as of December 25, 2019 is \$792,231. The outstanding mortgage balance as of December 25, 2018 was \$812,899. The outstanding principal balance owed to the Endowment Fund continues to be treated as a fixed income investment of the endowment and carries a 3% interest rate.

The Endowment Fund distributes 4% of the three-year trailing average market value, calculated at September 30th each year, as required by the Fund's Investment Policy Statement. The distribution is made in two equal payments during the year. The use of the distribution is restricted to capital improvements and outreach at the discretion of the Vestry pursuant to the Vestry resolution creating the endowment. During 2019, the Endowment Fund made distributions totaling \$146,000 to the St. Matthew's operating account. For 2020, the Endowment Investment committee recommends an annual distribution of \$151,000, based on the three-year average market value, as calculated on September 30th of the last three years.

The investment manager of the fund, Vanguard Institutional Advisory Services, provides consistent market returns at a low cost. Vanguard provides the Endowment Investment Committee with services including asset allocation models, investment policy consulting, performance reporting, and re-balancing. The Endowment Fund's assets are invested principally in low cost index funds and the parish mortgage.

In January of 2020, the Vestry and the Endowment Investment Committee nominated Roger R. Valkenburgh to serve a three-year term on the committee to replace Tom Kirkpatrick, who has completed his term. We thank Tom for his service to St. Matthew's through this important ministry. And we are grateful for his wise council and wisdom.

Please feel free to contact any of the members of the Endowment Investment Committee with any questions you may have.

Your Endowment Investment Committee,

Tom Kirkpatrick, Bob Dalldorf, Jonathan Woods

RESOLUTION

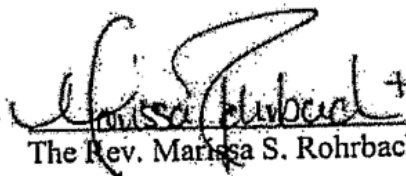
Adopted by the Vestry of Saint Matthew's Parish at its April 11, 2019 Meeting

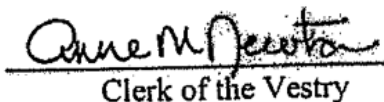
WHEREAS, the Vestry in meeting assembled on October 1, 1986, approved and established on the records of the Parish a new and separate fund known as the Endowment Fund of Saint Matthew's Parish pursuant to resolution (the "1986 Resolution") to be administered by an Endowment Committee (the "Committee");

WHEREAS, the Vestry in meeting assembled on May 1, 2011, modified the 1986 Resolution in certain respects, including separating the Committee from the Finance Committee (the "2011 Resolution");

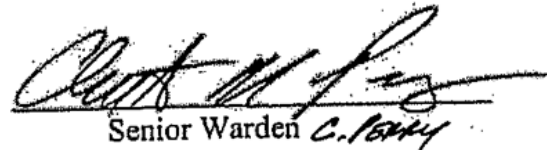
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Vestry in meeting assembled hereby unanimously approves and adopts the following as and for its further Resolution (the "2019 Resolution") further amending but not replacing the 1986 Resolution and 2011 Resolution (collectively "Endowment Resolutions"), and ratifies and affirms the Endowment Resolutions except as specifically set forth below:

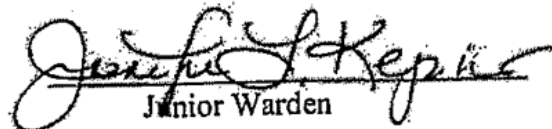
1. The annual income distribution from the Endowment Fund may be used to retire a portion of the accumulated operating deficit of the Parish as of December 31, 2018 of \$121,476.
2. This 2019 Resolution is unanimously adopted by the Vestry of the Parish this 11th day of April, 2019.


The Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach, Rector


Clerk of the Vestry

SAINT MATTHEW'S PARISH


Senior Warden C. Barry


Junior Warden

St. Matthew's Facilities Report 2019

In 2019, the St. Matthew's facilities team tackled projects in all phases of our physical assets (On Campus or Sanctuary/Narthex/Office, Rectory and Cemetery). While some of those projects were smaller in scope to years' past due to increased capital demands with our joint facilities through WEPCO (see their report), we completed a number of pressing needs.

After 3 major phases of Rectory renovation were completed from 2016-18, during our Rector transitions from Mary Grace to Alon (interim) and now Marissa, 2019 was a quieter year at the Rectory as Marissa and Lyn continue to "live" in that space and assess what could be next for our parish home. Our biggest issue at the Rectory in 2019 was tackling the overgrown landscape, affectionately referred to by our Vestry as "The Jungle". In the summer of 2019, we tamed The Jungle by removing a lot of old (in some cases dead) or overgrown shrubbery and brush that had been untended to for years. With newer open spaces, we have planted grass and the Rectory will soon have a yard again. Additional landscape work and tree trimming are proposed for 2020 along with refinishing a wet and underutilized basement to continue the Rectory renovation.

Following completion of the WEPCO 2018-19 moisture abatement project in the ducts along the office hallway, we completed an office renovation that gives Marissa and Nancy cleaner, healthier and more comfortable work spaces than before. You should stop in for a visit!

After our remodel in 2009, our Sanctuary is now Not-so-New and that space is beginning to show some wear and tear which requires planning for the future. While bigger sound and lighting projects loom, we completed a water heater replacement in the Sacristy within the past few months.

Our Cemetery received increased attention in 2019. The Vestry approved capital funding for a digital mapping project recommended by the Cemetery committee to complete a mapping of the remaining available plots on the site (along Route 7 just north of Town Hall). Phase 2 of that project was to install markers of those available plots in the ground and it has been funded and will be completed in early 2020 once the ground thaws.

The Cemetery received additional, unwanted attention later in 2019 when a large tree from a neighboring property fell in a storm and toppled several headstones. I'd like to extend special thanks to Bill Abrams, Andy and Christian Bazarian and Roger Valkenburgh who joined me with their sweat and financial resources to complete the tree cutting and clean-up project well below our initial quotes from the pros. It was a great statement of the many forms of stewardship.

Looking to 2020, we have fewer pressing needs from WEPCO and some bigger projects may be tackled at the Rectory and in the Sanctuary after deferring them in 2019. As always, if you see something that needs tending, please let us know. We are proud of our great facilities!

Respectfully submitted,

Facilities Committee (Chris Perry, Sr Warden and the "E" members of WEPCO: Bill Abrams, Bill Brautigam, Chip Fuller, Chris Jeanes, Chip Newton and newly appointed Brian Angerame)

Liturgical Assistants 2019

It takes countless children, youth, and adults to assist in worship at St. Matthew's. Liturgy (the church's public worship of God) is derived from the Greek (*leiturgia*) meaning the "work of the people" — and that means all the people. St. Matthew's was blessed to have over 50 individuals who volunteered as acolytes, lectors, and Eucharistic ministers (EMs) in 2019. Acolytes assist the clergy and "lead the way" at 10:00 a.m. worship, mentored by John Pearson and I. EMs serve at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. services, as well as other services throughout the year as needed, helping to administer the sacraments. Lectors read the lessons and intercessions (lead the Prayers of the People) at our principal services. Our confirmands also "try on" the role of lector during the year, experiencing this ministry as they learn about Episcopal worship. A training was held in October for acolytes, and one-on-one trainings for all is always available; Steve Hudspeth has been a terrific coach to our confirmand lectors. I am grateful to those who shared their gifts in these capacities during 2019:

Eucharistic Ministers:

Michael Angerame
Beth Baker
Bill Brautigam
Pam Ely
Andy Gaillard
Brad Gow

Dave Hapke
Jamie Hewitt
Vytas Kisielius
Ann Newton
Chip Newton
Andrew Morse

Tom Olson
Sharon Ely Pearson
Debbie Radecki
Meg Stapleton Smith
Ralph Walker

Lectors:

Katie Angerame
Beth Baker
Jean Campbell
Caroline DeAngelis
Mark Gilmor
David Gortz
Simon Hornby
Kate Jarvis

Michael Kaelin
Vytas Kisielius
Janet Nobles
Michael O'Connell
Harry Packman
John Pearson
Sharon Ely Pearson
Amanda Perry

Susan Proctor
Paul Reis
Andrea Sato
August Theoharides
Christian Theoharides
Kacky Theoharides
Lindsay Wyman

Acolytes:

Katie Angerame
Michael Angerame
Jack Barker
Sloan Barker
Sean Carlson
Phoebe Christ*
Lily Cristini*
Adam Famous*
Erin Famous

Colin Gilmor
Ellie Jeanes
Grace Jeanes
Caroline Kepner
Rory Kepner
Drew Lane
Katie Lane
Liam O'Sullivan*
Annika Mannix

Charlotte Mannix
Andrew Morse
Sam Perry
Abbe Ricketts
Lyla Theoharides
Ella Wyman*
*new in 2019

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Ely Pearson

Mission Update 2019

In January of last year, the Vestry and the Outreach Committee gathered for a one day retreat to reimagine and refocus how we might better serve our community outside of our doors. At the end of that day, we emerged with a newly purposed “Mission Team” focused on discerning how we were being called to build the Kingdom of God.

We decided we were called not just to serve, but to develop deeper and more meaningful relationships with our neighbors. To facilitate this, we adopted a Mission partner/beneficiary model. Our partners would be fewer and would receive more resources, both financial and volunteer. Our beneficiaries would be agencies with whom we wanted to continue to have a relationship, but who didn’t meet all of the criteria for a partnership.

The criteria for Mission partnerships were:

- The partner organization promotes opportunities for extensive hands-on involvement
- The partner organization is clearly aligned with St. Matthew’s mission and values
- The partnership requires a commitment to reciprocity by the partner organization
- The partner organization has a clearly demonstrated impact on their targeted community, and our partnership makes a meaningful contribution to the organization
- The partner organization demonstrates a disciplined governance and financial structure

After a rigorous evaluation process, we selected 3 partners: Circle of Care of Wilton, Homefront of Stamford, and Open Doors of Norwalk and 3 beneficiaries: Wilton Social Services, Pivot Ministries and Wi-Act.

We officially launched the partnerships in the Fall with representatives from each agency coming to visit us at a Sunday service. Below is a list of the activities we have completed so far this year!

HomeFront

A group of St. Matthew’s volunteers teamed up with representatives from Clark Construction to provide significant improvements to a widow’s home in Weston in September. There is a wonderful video of the day on the Mission page of our website. The team was able to complete many renovations in just one day including window replacement, screen door replacement, and front step repairs. The Homefront team continues to look for opportunities to engage parishioners in hammer-ready projects, look for them in the coming months!

Open Doors

Our kickoff activity was to supply the funding to regrade and sod the Open Doors backyard so that the children would have an attractive and safe place to play after school. Then the entire parish collected gently used pairs of shoes for all ages over the summer months. We saw an enormous outpouring of love with many, many shoes for those needing this extra help. We have also been continuing with the ongoing bi-monthly preparation of meals for those in need for Open Doors/Manna House. Many hands help with this ongoing project, including shopping, cooking and final prep work every other month. Our middle and high school youth groups have been particularly inspired by this organization and have visited the shelter, raised money for them, and done their own collections for this organization. Open Doors was also a partner recipient of our Christmas Giving Tree. (see more info below) Look for additional Manna House cooking/serving opportunities and our Easter Egg Hunt day of fun in the coming months!

Circle of Care

This summer we started by collecting 23 backpacks to be given to children connected to Circle of Care (children currently undergoing treatment for cancer) on their first day of school. A group of 7 people from St. Matt's has met with the Circle of Care staff to learn about and be trained in the process involved in the *Art from the Heart* room renovation process for a child with cancer. The amazing staff spoke to us about the 130 rooms they have renovated to date and the incredible love and care that goes into each room and each family. We are waiting for our first room assignment, and are currently engaged in fundraising for that project. We invite all to join us in this exciting opportunity! We have plans to do 2-3 rooms for Circle of Care this year. Circle of Care was also a partner recipient of our Christmas Giving Tree. (see more info below)

SEASONAL PROJECTS

Rise Against Hunger: We once again supported WiAct's annual Rise Against Hunger project! 750 volunteers packed 160,000 meals in just a few short hours. It was an incredibly inspiring day with so many members of our town and our Wilton interfaith community. Special thanks to WiAct for bringing us all together to provide meals for so many mouths in Africa!

Thanksgiving Baskets: We donated 8 overflowing Thanksgiving baskets to Wilton Social Services, full with all the Thanksgiving fixings for 8 Wilton families. This cherished tradition continues, and we are so grateful to be a part of providing a happy holiday to families in our community who need a little help.

Christmas Giving Tree: What a response we received to the Giving Tree this year! With our new Mission structure of partner and beneficiary organizations, we chose 3 organizations that were interested in receiving items via our Giving Tree. By these organizations participating in our Giving Tree program during the Christmas season, it gives our parish yet another opportunity to engage with them in deeper and meaningful ways by providing items that they need for their clients.

Open Doors mentioned that our donations of silverware, sheets, pillows, etc. were particularly important right now as they have several families moving into their own homes right after the New Year. Every single donation was appreciated more than we could know, and our partner/beneficiary organizations are so very grateful to St. Matt's. Thank you to all who participated in this wonderful giving opportunity!

The Mission Team is just getting started -- there is so much more to come this year so stay tuned. We are enormously grateful to **Lindsay Wyman** for her leadership!

Hospitality Committee Annual Report 2019

The new Hospitality Committee was formed in November 2018 with Jennifer Angerame and Dodo Roberts as co-chairs. The initial goal was to bring under a more formal umbrella those activities that might generally be viewed as part of hospitality such as delivering meals, providing rides, and organizing events. While 2018 was a very active year for meeting the parish needs of receptions and meal deliveries, 2019 was very quiet. The ad hoc activities were met mostly by the parish participating in coffee hours.

While SignUp Genius continues to be used by the Altar Flower teams with some success we hope that the Ministries and Coffee Hour series in March will enable more parishioners to connect and learn about this space.

Pastoral Care Committee

The Pastoral Care Ministry is an ongoing commitment to the members of the St. Matthews's community. Eucharistic Visitors are trained to bring the Eucharist to the homebound, hospitalized or to those who cannot be present at a celebration of the Eucharist. All the Eucharistic Visitors at St. Matthews's are trained in Safe Church and spent several hours learning about the different needs and spaces they may find themselves. They work closely with the Rector Marissa Rohrbach to ensure confidentiality and appropriate times to make the visitations. At the moment, there are several teams going to the homes of parishioners to offer communion generally on a monthly basis. This a ministry that will continue to grow as the parish becomes more familiar with its offerings .

To date the members of the Pastoral Committee are:

Beth Baker
Becky Hudspeth
Don Burr
Jen DeAngelis
Sharon Pearson
Susan Proctor
Pam Ely

Submitted by Beth Baker, Pam Ely Co –Chairs

Newcomers 2019

Newcomer committee members met several times in 2019, along with Marissa, to discuss the purpose of the committee, and ways of reaching and welcoming Newcomers to St. Matthew's. The Newcomer Committee's purpose is: (1) to ensure we, as a parish, welcome visitors to St. Matthew's in engaging, appropriate and friendly ways. We as a committee defined Newcomers as regular visitors who are committed to attending church services and engaging in the life and work of the church and (2) The committee is also designed to divide the responsibility of welcoming newcomers, amongst Newcomer committee members and "Section Captains" who can identify newcomers and visitors in the pews, in their particular section of church. These section captains have been identified and will be kindly asked to assist the Newcomer Committee. This is to ensure the job of welcoming newcomers doesn't fall entirely to Marissa as Rector, nor only to a select number of Vestry or long-standing parishioners who know the parish very well.

The Newcomer Committee is **Lisa Williams, Kim Hall, Kate Jarvis, Brian Angerame, Chris Perry, Jen Angerame and Pam Ely. Marissa Rohrbach**, our Rector, organized and guided the creation of the committee. She prompted discussion of best ways to welcome newcomers, including which past and current practices to change or keep. Most of the work of the Newcomer Committee in 2019 focused on reviewing the history and past practices of welcoming newcomers to St. Matthew's in the past decade. We questioned and analyzed how well these worked. Committee members suggested alternatives, and we generated new "best practices". Some incorporate past ideas and others are completely new and fresh. For the Newcomer Welcome service, **Jen Angerame** created graphics for the website and Facebook page. She also designed and ordered St. Matthew's merchandise including reusable shopping bags and coffee mugs. **Lisa Williams, Kim Hall, Brian Angerame, Chris Perry and Pam Ely** provided knowledge of parishioners and knew many of the newcomers. In November, Marissa asked and Kate accepted the position of Newcomer Committee Chair.

THE FEAST OF ST. MATTHEW was celebrated on Sunday, September 22, 2019.

We were delighted also to welcome Newcomers after the 10:00am service. "Newcomers" are parishioners who have joined St. Matthew's during the past couple of years, or who have recently returned to St. Matthew's after a time away. Some are clergy and were fairly newly arrived at St. Matthew's at the time, and some are families or individuals.

We had 6 newcomers at the service: 2 families, 1 couple and 3 individuals. 3 families could not attend that weekend, for a total of 9 Newcomer families, new or newish to St. Matthew's during the past few years.

At the service were Meg Stapleton-Smith, our Parish Intern; Don Burr, our Deacon; Samantha Trolice, our Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries (we didn't get to welcome her during the service, but that was our intention!) Our families were Dove & John Quinn, Cyrus & Sarah Boatwalla; Alyssa Morrin and Steve Bosies. The newcomer families away that weekend were Lindsay and John Wyman; Keith and Janessa Morriss; and Kaitlyn and Brandon Fritz.

NEWCOMER WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

For the Newcomer Welcome service, Pam and Kate interviewed newcomers for biographical details. This included where they worked, their family members, where they lived, their interests outside of church, and what drew them to St. Matthew's in the first place. Pam and Kate crafted their stories and welcomed newcomers at the end of the service. Pam invited the newcomers down to the front of the church. We introduced them to the assembled congregation with a quick biography of fun facts. We presented gifts to each of the 6 new families. The gifts were a burgundy reusable St. Matthew's shopping bag featuring Flat Matt and church contact information. The bag held a wrapped St. Matthew's coffee mug, and a St. Matthew's recipe book. Nancy, our Office Coordinator and Kate created newcomer name tags which were presented then as well.

The reusable shopping bags and coffee mugs were designed and ordered by the awesome Jen Angerame. She and Pam suggested adding a St. Matthew's recipe book, since we had extra inventory. Kate Jarvis wrapped and labeled

the mugs. Nancy Nelson and Stan Kovak hosted Coffee Hour with Tim and Kate Jarvis. It featured a sheet cake from Costco, with “Welcome Newcomers” in icing, and other treats including for the kids' refreshment table.

NAME TAGS

We encourage both Newcomers and long-standing parishioners to wear their name tags so we can all get to know each other without the embarrassment of not knowing a parishioner's name!

UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2020

The Newcomer Committee intends to welcome Newcomers who were unavailable that September weekend, or accidentally omitted, at an upcoming service. The Committee also intends to organize a “Newcomer Brunch” hosted by Marissa, at the Rectory, in Spring. The date is still to be decided, pending other obligations and events. Additional events will be organized pending further meetings of the Newcomer Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Jarvis
Newcomer Committee Chair

Stewardship

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. [Isaiah 61:3b]
Our 2020 Stewardship campaign kicked off at a Vestry retreat in September with the theme “Rooted in God, our faith grows, spreading branches that Shelter, Heal, and Nourish.” Leading up to our Pledge Sunday Pancake Breakfast in December, we were once again blessed by a series of speakers (thanks to Paul Reis and Lindsay Wyman) and a video presentation inspired by parishioners’ reflections on the theme “What has St. Matthew’s Given You?” Infographics materials demonstrating St. Matthew’s “By the Numbers” have also supplemented the 2020 campaign and provide greater transparency into how pledge dollars are translated into the various ministries that our St. Matthew’s community supports.

As of mid-January, we have heard from more than 100 families who generously made their 2020 pledge. Of those, approximately 32% percent increased their pledge from 2019, which was great news. We also had eight new families contribute to the 2020 campaign.

We are so grateful for all those who have pledged to date, but if you have not yet had the opportunity to do so, it is easier than ever: go on line: www.stmatthewswilton.org/give or fill out a pledge card and leave it in the office.

Faithfully,

Peter Denious and Tim Jarvis
Stewardship Co-Chairs



Rooted in God, our faith grows,
spreading branches that
shelter, heal and nourish.

WEPCO's Annual Report for 2019

WEPCO is short for Wilton Episcopal Presbyterian Corporation, and works on behalf of both Wilton Presbyterian Church and St Matthews Episcopal Church. WEPCO is responsible for maintaining the shared spaces at our church complex which includes the outdoor areas and all indoor spaces except for the two sanctuaries. The upper core, the lounge, parish hall and all church school spaces are good examples of the 15,000 square foot complex that WEPCO maintains. WEPCO functions via operating and capital budgets approved each year by both churches with any excess operating funds returning to them each year-end.

2019 was a difficult year for WEPCO as budget pressures continued and we continually looked for ways to reduce expenses. Faced with a significant budget shortfall and no other viable options to turn up the necessary savings, we were forced to reduce the Facilities Coordinator's work week from 5 days (40 hours) to 3 days (24 hours), this was effective as of August. Since it will be impossible to accomplish 5 days' work in just 3; we ask for your help and patience. It should be noted that over the past three years WEPCO will have decreased expenses by 16% and the churches' contributions to the WEPCO budget will have decreased from 91% (2017) to 78% (2020), due to lower expenses and increased rental income.

Two major capital expenditure projects were completed in 2019. We remediated the moisture problem detected in the church offices, the adjoining hall and the copier room. By installing individual ductless split HVAC units in all the rooms it will help with future utility costs as each unit can be individually controlled. We were also able to incorporate improvements; insulate walls, upgrade electrical and install new carpet. Fortunately, these significant costs were covered by insurance. The second project consisted of replacing the existing boiler and the in-ground oil tank. We now have three new high efficiency boilers and four inside oil tanks. These new boilers should reduce future oil usage generating cost savings. The old in-ground 5,000 gallon oil tank was removed in January, a couple of years ahead of the required date.

Another project that we undertook was to move the Nursery school upstairs to the Discovery Room (Sandy's old office) which was modestly upgraded. This move was done for security/safety reasons and to make it more convenient for the parents. Concomitantly with the nursery move we upgraded (new carpet and paint) the Butterfly room which is the additional space that MOTH now rents. Additional 2019 improvements include the purchase of carpet cleaning equipment, adding baby changing stations to the restrooms, a second water fountain/water bottle filler and internet access point upgrades.

WEPCO had a strong year generating rental income, which in turn decreases the churches contributions to the WEPCO budget. The Abilis Leap programs, an organization that provides assistance to adults with developmental disabilities, began their lease in June and current tenant MOTH (Music on the Hill), expanded their rental space as well. We had two productive (Spring and Fall) Clean-up days. These days rely heavily on the participation of our Boy Scout troop and parishioners from both churches. These Clean-up days help maintain our beautiful campus and avoid additional costs. We encourage all parishioners to participate.

WEPCO officers will now rotate on an April 1st-March 31st basis instead of Jan 1st-Dec 31st. This better aligns with the churches' budget cycle. Thanks too to everyone on the WEPCO Board, the Clergy, Staff, Session, Vestry and parishioners of both WPC and STM for their efforts that makes our church complex the exceptional place that it is for the missions of faith and our civic community. A BIG thanks to Sandy Muschler who was instrumental in most of these initiatives. Respectfully submitted, Stephen Connor and Timothy Cummins

Officers and members in 2019:

Co-Presidents: Stephen Connor, Timothy Cummins

Vice President: Chip Newton

Treasurer: Bill Brautigum

Other members: Bill Abrams, Chip Fuller from St. Matthew's; Bill Matthews, Andy Driver, Berta Hull from WPC

Facilities Coordinator: Sandy Muschler

Secretary: Chris Jeanes

Sexton: Max Gil

Finance Committee – 2019 Report

The 2019 budgeting process had a goal of rightsizing our expenses to reflect the reality of the current pledge history as well as the goals and mission of the church. We incorporated a discount factor to account for recent pledge collection slippage as a way, hopefully, to properly reflect a conservative final result in pledged income. We projected a pledged income of about \$510k, including prior year pledge income, and a total income of about \$580k, about \$60k less than 2018's budget.

Fixed costs were reduced where possible and the savings were relevant, coming in about \$20k below budget. We had significant savings in Diocesan assessment through a \$10k accrual, Christian Education reduction of \$10k and an additional \$10k in Music savings. A few items, such as plant/infrastructure, professional fees and office expenses were nominally higher, adding \$10k to the expense side.

Revenues exceeded expectations by over \$80k through a fantastic, heartfelt growth in pledge receipts being up by nearly \$70k and the Auction generating \$10k more than budgeted.

The good news is that because of the better than expected pledge receipts and auction results, combined with lower than expected expenses, we generated an operating surplus of approximately \$70k, instead of the budgeted \$31k loss. The vestry has set aside \$30k of this surplus to cover most of the projected deficit for 2020, should a deficit occur. We hope that is not necessary, and instead the budgeted deficit is erased by higher pledges received.

As a reminder, we reported at the 2019 annual meeting that we had accumulated a deficit in our restricted funds of approximately \$120k, a result of both legacy costs and pledge collection shortfalls for many years. At that time, the Vestry committed to using a portion of the endowment draw (\$40k) to reduce that deficit, with the intention of future vestries continuing to do likewise until the deficit is erased. In 2020, the Vestry has approved using \$40k of the 2019 surplus, not a portion of the endowment distribution, to further reduce the accumulated restricted fund deficit.

2020 Operating Budget

A successful pledging season has returned us to a place of much more clarity with the revenue side of the budget. While the budgeted pledge receipts and other donations are quite similar to our 2019 budget, we feel much more comfortable in the forecast as so many families have made their commitments known. We believe the discount factor applied and the conservative estimate for the auction (flat year on year), give us room to grow while accurately forecasting our current situation. Total income is forecast to remain close to flat from 2019, at approximately \$585k (up \$5k).

Expenses are growing slightly and, we believe, in the way the parish would guide us to grow. Diocesan Assessment continues to shrink (down \$5k) as a direct reflection of the pledge receipts of 2018. As St. Matthew's stabilizes this should no longer be a headwind to contend with and will grow as the church grows, without being a burden. Clergy expense will grow (up about \$8k) as we are able to benefit from our Deacon and intern availability from seminary. Worship, fellowship and youth are all increasing their budgets (\$10k, total) to aid Marissa and St. Matthew's in growing our community into what we envision it to be.

While we are forecasting a \$35k budget deficit, it is with the strong understanding that we are building the foundation on which to grow our parish. The combined efforts of the parish and vestry have nearly erased the 10 years of shortfall in a year and we believe that this signal of hope and faithfulness should be heeded. We invest a great amount into our facilities, we should and are now investing in ourselves for spiritual and community growth.

Mortgage

We continue to pay down the principal on the existing mortgage held in our Endowment, reducing the outstanding balance to approximately \$792k, self-financed at a 3.00% interest rate.

In Summary

St Matthew's continues to strengthen the foundation with a vibrant parish supporting our sacred programs and ministries. Rev. Marissa Rohrbach has finished her first full year at St. Matthew's and is doing a fantastic job energizing the parish and broadening our programs. We are thankful for all we have and that we can share with others through our own outreach and outreach through the Diocese.

We have maintained our Capital Reserve Fund from the Endowment draw and feel much more secure in our ability to handle future capital needs to protect our parish facilities.

We continue to experience many of the challenges that a vibrant parish must address. For so many of us, St. Matthew's is our spiritual home and our community home. With that in mind, the Stewardship of St. Matthew's is all of our responsibility. We must be willing to give our time, our talent and our treasure, if we want St. Matthew's to continue to serve as a beacon in our lives, our children's lives and for those who seek comfort and solace at our doors.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Mathews, Finance Committee Chair

2020 St. Matthew's Summary Budget: Final

	Operating Fund				Funds			Parish		
	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	Bud to 2019 Actual		2019 Actual	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	
				%	Var					
Income										
Total Pledge Receipts	509,916	579,879	510,791	(12)	(69,088)	-	509,916	579,879	510,791	
Plate Donations	8,500	8,704	8,500	(2)	(204)	-	8,500	8,704	8,500	
Other Donations	11,000	10,004	15,000	50	4,996	-	11,000	10,004	15,000	
Auction	48,500	60,051	48,500	(19)	(11,551)	-	48,500	60,051	48,500	
Arts at St. Matthew's	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
All other income	2,500	3,099	2,500	(19)	(599)	-	2,500	3,099	2,500	
Total Income	580,416	661,737	585,291	(12)	(76,446)	-	580,416	661,737	585,291	
Expense										
Discretionary Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Arts at St. Matthew's	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Outreach ¹	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Diocese	74,655	65,100	59,729	(8)	(5,372)	-	74,655	65,100	59,729	
Clergy Expense	145,819	143,883	154,123	7	10,240	-	145,819	143,883	154,123	
Christian Education	66,732	56,260	68,351	21	12,091	-	66,732	56,260	68,351	
Worship Expenses	2,500	1,463	8,500	481	7,037	-	2,500	1,463	8,500	
Fellowship	1,275	1,702	4,000	135	2,298	-	1,275	1,702	4,000	
Youth	3,700	4,313	4,700	9	387	-	3,700	4,313	4,700	
Music	94,709	84,699	95,000	12	10,301	-	94,709	84,699	95,000	
Office Expense	45,036	51,056	54,408	7	3,352	-	45,036	51,056	54,408	
Computer Expense	3,700	4,734	3,756	(21)	(978)	-	3,700	4,734	3,756	
Interest Expense	24,106	24,106	23,469	(3)	(637)	-	24,106	24,106	23,469	
Professional Fees	17,500	19,250	19,040	(1)	(210)	-	17,500	19,250	19,040	
Plant	128,576	132,655	120,710	(9)	(11,945)	-	128,576	132,655	120,710	
Workman's Comp	1,338	1,872	1,836	(2)	(36)	-	1,338	1,872	1,836	
All Other expense	1,500	526	1,500	185	974	-	1,500	526	-	
Operating Expense	611,146	591,619	619,121	5	27,502	-	611,146	591,619	619,121	
Surplus (Deficit) from Ops	(30,730)	70,118	(33,830)	(148)	(103,948)	-	(30,730)	70,118	(33,830)	
Non-Oper Cash Changes										
WEPCO Rebate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Interest & Dividend	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Mortgage Principal	(19,492)	(19,492)	(21,915)	12	(2,423)	-	(19,492)	(19,492)	(21,915)	
Avail Capital & Mission	(126,508)	(126,508)	(129,085)	2	(2,577)	-	(126,508)	(126,508)	(129,085)	
Endowment Earnings	146,000	146,000	151,000	3	5,000	-	146,000	146,000	151,000	
Other Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Est. Capitalized Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Other - Net	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Non Oper Surplus (Deficit)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	
Cash Surplus (Deficit)	(30,730)	70,118	(33,830)	(148)	(103,948)	-	(30,730)	70,118	(33,830)	

Notes:

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
 Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison
 As of December 31, 2019

	<u>Dec 31, 19</u>	<u>Dec 31, 18</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings	361,457	251,615
Endowment Mortgage Receivable	792,231	812,899
Total Current Assets	<u>1,153,688</u>	<u>1,064,513</u>
Fixed Assets		
Buildings	728,151	728,151
Furniture & Furnishings	1,264,508	1,264,508
Land	25,064	25,064
St. Matthews Expansion	2,629,785	2,629,785
Total Fixed Assets	<u>5,744,442</u>	<u>5,744,442</u>
Other Assets		
Collections	14,450	14,450
Endowment Life insurance	76,527	148,754
Total Investments	3,286,880	2,709,027
Total Other Assets	<u>3,377,857</u>	<u>2,872,232</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>10,275,987</u></u>	<u><u>9,681,187</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	2,705	7,654
Credit Cards	(192)	-
Restricted Funds & Reserves *	297,765	124,201
Prepaid Pledges	92,191	66,699
Other Current Liabilities	4,617	10,068
Total Current Liabilities	<u>397,086</u>	<u>208,621</u>
Long Term Liabilities		
Endowment Mortgage	792,231	812,899
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>792,231</u>	<u>812,899</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>1,189,316</u>	<u>1,021,520</u>
Equity		
Fund Balance **	8,409,191	8,990,819
Temporarily Restricted	250	-
Net Income	677,229	(331,151)
Total Equity	<u>9,086,670</u>	<u>8,659,668</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>10,275,987</u></u>	<u><u>9,681,187</u></u>

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church
Wilton, Connecticut
By – Laws

Article I

Names and Business Affairs

- A. Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church of Wilton, Connecticut (hereinafter "the Parish") is a parish of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, Diocese of Connecticut (hereinafter "the Church").
- B. The business affairs of the Parish shall be governed by the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church Diocese of Connecticut (collectively, as they may be amended and in effect from time to time, the "Canons"), and these by-laws.

Article II

Membership and Voting

A. MEMBERS AND VOTING MEMBERS

- 1) A member of the Parish, and those allowed to vote at Parish meetings, shall be determined as provided in the Canons.
- 2) A member may not be a member of any other parish or mission in the Diocese.

B. VOTING AT PARISH MEETINGS

Matters requiring a majority or 2/3 vote of the members at a Parish meeting shall mean and refer to a majority or 2/3 of those voting members present at such Parish Meeting.

Article III

Meetings

A. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

- 1) The annual parish meeting shall be held on the first Sunday in February, unless a different date is set by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Vestry.
- 2) The purpose of the annual parish meeting shall be to transact such business as may legally come before the Parish including, but not limited to, the election of persons to fill the following offices:
 - i. Senior Warden
 - ii. Junior Warden
 - iii. Members of the Vestry
 - iv. Clerk
 - v. Treasurer
 - vi. Assistant Treasurers (if any)
 - vii. Lay delegates and alternate delegates to the Diocesan Convention

B. SPECIAL PARISH MEETING

A special parish meeting may be called by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Vestry or upon written request signed by ten (10) percent of the voting members of the parish.

C. NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AND SPECIAL PARISH MEETINGS

Notice of the annual meeting or a special parish meeting shall be provided to every member of the parish at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting date and shall contain the date, time, and place of the meeting. Notice of a special parish meeting shall also contain a statement of the business to be conducted at that meeting. At all meetings of the Parish, the Rector, if present, shall preside.

Article IV

Officers/Vestry

A. VESTRY

The Vestry shall consist of eleven voting members of the Parish, including the Senior Warden and the Junior Warden. The treasurer, assistant treasurers and the clerk are elected nonvoting members. A quorum of the Vestry shall consist of five of the voting members of the Vestry. Matters before the Vestry shall be enacted by a majority of voting members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present. Matters requiring 2/3 or a unanimous vote of the Vestry shall mean 2/3 or all of the voting members of the Vestry, respectively, at a Vestry meeting at which a quorum is present. The Rector shall be chair ex officio of the Vestry, and the Rector (and, in the absence of the Rector, the Senior Warden) shall preside at all meetings of the Vestry. The Rector shall not have the right to vote at Vestry meetings except to break a tie. Any action requiring attendance or a vote of any Vestry member may be taken by electronic means including, but not limited to, audio or video conferencing, email or text communication or other electronic means, pursuant to procedures approved by the Rector and Wardens.

B. OFFICERS

The officers of the church are the Rector, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Clerk, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer(s). All officers except the Rector are elected by a majority vote at the annual Parish meeting.

C. VACANCIES

A vacancy in any office (other than the Rector), or on the Vestry, may be filled for the remainder of the term by the Vestry.

D. TERMS OF OFFICE

- 1) The Senior Warden and Junior Warden shall serve a one (1) year term and shall be nominated by the Rector and approved by the Vestry. Unless otherwise approved by the Rector and the Vestry, the Senior Warden and Junior Warden may not be elected or appointed to more than two consecutive terms in the same office and must wait at least one (1) full year after expiration of his or her second term prior to serving or being re-elected or reappointed to the same office.

- 2) The Clerk, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers shall serve a one year term and shall be nominated annually by the Rector in consultation with the Wardens, and approved by the Vestry. There shall be no limit or restriction on consecutive terms with respect to the Clerk, Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer.
- 3) Vestry members shall serve staggered three (3) year terms.
- 4) Unless otherwise approved by the Rector, no Vestry member may be elected or appointed to two consecutive three (3) year terms except when a Vestry member is appointed to serve out another Vestry member's unexpired term. In this case, the appointed Vestry member may serve a full three (3) year term at the conclusion of the partial term. At least one (1) year must elapse prior to a Vestry member's being reelected or reappointed to the Vestry.
- 5) Vestry members may be removed after missing three (3) consecutive meetings, upon approval of the Rector and the remaining Vestry members.
- 6) An officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members of the Parish. The Vestry must give written notice of the proposed termination and its reasons for such termination to the officer at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled vote. The officer shall be provided with an opportunity to be heard on the issue of termination at the meeting at which a vote on that issue will be held.
- 7) Terms of committee members shall be set by the Vestry.
- 8) The Vestry, with the approval of the Rector, may from time to time, subject to the Canons and these by-laws, appoint a Nominating Committee having such responsibilities as determined by the Vestry and the Rector. The slate of nominees will be presented to the Parish at the annual meeting, at which time the new Vestry members and officers will be elected if approved by a majority of voting members present.

Article V

Duties of the Officers and Vestry

A. THE VESTRY

The Vestry shall have the following responsibilities:

- 1) To direct, manage and control the property and all business affairs of the parish.
- 2) To approve the minutes of the annual parish meeting and any special parish meeting; and,
- 3) To authorize any person or entity to conduct financial affairs on behalf of the Parish and to suspend such authority by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

B. THE SENIOR WARDEN

The Senior Warden shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of the duties of the Vestry and shall also perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Rector and Vestry to his or her office. The Senior Warden occupies a special leadership role, serving as the partner to the Rector, and participating in the work of planning and prioritization necessary for the life of the Parish. Along with the Junior Warden, the Senior Warden assists the Rector in executing the Vestry's agenda and in visioning the future.

C. THE JUNIOR WARDEN

The Junior Warden shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of the duties of the Vestry and shall also perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Rector and the Vestry to his or her office. Along with the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden assists the Rector in executing the Vestry's agenda and in visioning the future.

D. VESTRY MEMBERS

Each Vestry member shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of the duties of the Vestry and shall also perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Rector and the Vestry.

E. CLERK

The Clerk shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Rector and the Vestry to his or her office, including but not limited to:

- 1) Making and preserving the minutes of the proceedings of the annual parish meeting and any special parish meetings;
- 2) Making and preserving the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Vestry.

F. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Rector and the Vestry to his or her office, including but not limited to:

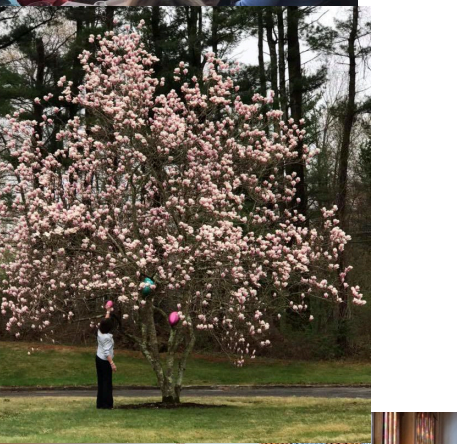
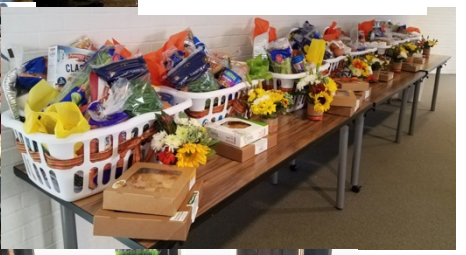
- 1) Collecting, receiving, keeping custody of, and disbursing all monies belonging to the Parish;
- 2) Making records of collections, receipts, and disbursements in such a form and manner as will provide a basis for satisfactory accounting;
- 3) Maintaining records of all trust and permanent funds of the parish; and,
- 4) Furnishing the Vestry with a financial report on a periodic basis.

The Vestry may appoint one or more assistant treasurers to help and assist with the duties of the Treasurer.

Article VI

Amendments

- A. Action regarding these by-laws, including adoption, alteration, amendment, or repeal may take place at any validly called parish meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present, provided the proposed action is sent to all members of the Parish in accordance with the notice provisions contained in these by-laws.



2019 was a full and faithful year at St. Matt's! Thanks for being a part of our story. We can't wait to see what God has in store for 2020!