

Rector's Annual Report for 2019

Accomplishments

This past year, we continued to refine our newcomer program through follow up and three newcomer classes, capably organized by Vicki Conway. In these sessions, we stressed the importance of being involved. We have had good results, with several new members actively involved in ministries in the parish.

The Cafe Theology group continues to thrive. In 2019, the focus of our studies was Anglican theology. Wednesday with the Word is also still going strong, and in 2019, we did a close reading of Paul's letter to the Romans, as well as continuing to read Lindsay Hardin Freeman's book on Women Who Speak in the Bible.

In the Fall of 2019, I assumed organizing leadership of the Lunch Bunch. Lunch Bunch meets on the second Thursday of the month to share food and conversation and all are welcome. We are always interested in hearing of new, locally owned, restaurants that are open during lunch. Please send me ideas, and plan to join us!

Bumps in the Road

In February, I lost my long-time companion, PJ. He was with me for 12 years, and made life in Austin, Santa Barbara, Paris and Snellville much better by his presence. I remain deeply grateful for all of the outpouring a love and support I received at that time: the notes and many cards, the meals, prayers and other gifts, and the loving hugs. I am especially grateful for a hand-made box for PJ's ashes that was offered. I am blessed to be part of such a compassionate parish as St. Matthew's.

In June, I discovered I had a torn rotator cuff that needed surgery. Again, the support from the St. Matthew's community warmed my heart. I must admit I ate better than when I cook for myself! I enjoyed reading all the cards, really put the electric cooling sleeve to good use and appreciate the donation of a hospital bed and later a recliner to help me get some comfortable sleep. Those who have had that surgery know what I mean. The many cards and prayers were wonderful and my sister, who stayed with me during the first week after my surgery, told me how impressed she was by your care and attention.

Transitions

During the year, we welcomed Anthony James Goodman, Faith Chimamanda Ozumba, Ike Kososo Ozumba, and Spencer Noelle Pahali Williams into the body of Christ through the sacrament of baptism. The bishop confirmed Kim Williamson, Andrew Byron, Kelsey Chapman, Daisha Dandy, Nailah Desamu-Thorpe, Morgan Fletcher, Omolara Fyle-Thorpe, Jenny Griffiths, Judy Jewett Hobbs, Walter Hobbs, Jessie Hurst, Katie Jones, and Ben McLaughlan, and received KJ McLaughlan, Deborah Stallings, Jim Stallings and Pennie Drada.

We celebrated the marriage of Tina Couch and Jennifer Staples and we commended to God's care Miles Comer, Jim Raasch, Colin Monteith, Mary Gibson, Clementina Romero and Rose Marie Collins.

On October 1st, we welcomed The Reverend Tommy Matthew's as associate rector of St. Matthew's, who relocated to Snellville along with his wife Debby. Father Tommy, as he likes to be known, gave new definition to the term, "hit the ground running". He has been a wonderful and energetic addition to the work and ministry of this church, and I am grateful for his never-failing good humor, and his flexibility as we worked to find him office space. As you know from his report, Father Tommy will serve in all aspects of parish ministry, but will focus on Youth, Christian Education and Acolytes.

Leadership

Several of our vestry members took the class with Bishop Wright called Learn to Lead for Lay Leaders. The vestry also implemented new financial processes for the parish, based on what was learned in a class on Church Financial Management taught by Professor James Jordan in December of 2018. We expanded our capabilities in managing donations by installing a new version of ACS, called Realm, which allows for on-line giving. We were blessed to have Anita Genung as our Financial Secretary through most of 2019, and later in the year welcomed Mark Allen to that role.

Appreciation

As always, I am grateful to all our leadership heads and those who have worked along-side them to serve Christ in all persons within and outside of St. Matthew's. The work we do makes a difference.

I am blessed by a dedicated and supportive staff and am especially grateful for their managing so well while I was out for surgery. The work and ministry that I offer to St. Matthew's would not be possible without these people. So, a big "Thank You" to Charmaine Warmington, Susan Carson, Kyle Osborne and another warm welcome to Father Tommy.

I want to thank Samantha Renfro, who served as senior warden for two years and in that time, kept things so beautifully organized. The primary reason my deadlines were met was because of Sam's gentle prodding, and I am grateful. A deep appreciation also goes to John Byron, who served as junior warden for two years. His work with youth, along with buildings and grounds has been foundational to their success. Sam, John and I have shared many lunches (I think we have a booth named for us at Panera) as we review and collaborate on parish operations. St. Matthew's is blessed to have their leadership and commitment.

Faithfully submitted,

Mother Liz+

