

Rector's Report

2024 was a year of growth and learning for me as your rector and for us as a community. I have now celebrated two years as your priest. I am eternally grateful to God and all of you who continue to make being at St. Matthew's a blessing and an honor.

I remain amazed by our members' engagement and commitment as leaders of our ministries and committees. Lay leadership in our community is strong! I appreciate that people assist when necessary, particularly in pastoral care. We should continue strengthening and promoting lay leadership at St. Matthew's and examining our community to identify its leaders.

God has blessed our community with a strong parish staff. Susan Carson remains a solid rock in the office. I am grateful that Karen Wilson, who joined the staff in June, became our permanent parish registrar in the fall. Susan and Karen do fantastic work and continue to support our community's ministries. Matthew Edwards, our phenomenal organist and director of music ministries, is a wonderful gift. I cannot express my gratitude for his leadership, vision, care, and concern for how music is woven into our worship and the rhythm of life throughout the community. I am excited that Matthew is exploring ways to open the parish to the broader community through various concerts, some of which will be held in the first half of 2025. Our new youth minister, Mandy Johnson, has done an excellent job getting to know the youth community and being present with our young people. She is beginning to develop a vision for the youth program, and I hope many of you will consider being a part of this vital ministry in our community.

Your vestry, finance committee, and stewardship leaders demonstrate good stewardship of St. Matthew's finances and resources. While we anticipated a deficit for 2024, we concluded the year with a healthy surplus. Under the leadership of Chuck Marsh, Mark DiGiovanni, and Terri Hurst, our parish's commitment to responsible stewardship remains a top priority for our leaders.

I am grateful to our senior and junior wardens, Clay Olbon and Susan Jung. Their leadership, presence, commitment, and care for St. Matthew's are evident in the parish business, weekly worship, ministries, committee meetings, and overall parish life. Please join me in expressing appreciation for Clay and Susan's leadership and the vestry's work and ministry at St. Matthew.

We continue to see an increase in weekly in-person worship attendance at Sunday and midweek Wednesday services. We have restarted children's chapel during the 10:30 Sunday service, which provides an excellent opportunity for our children to learn more about our beautiful liturgy and hear the Sunday gospel lesson. I thank all the volunteers who helped jumpstart this program last fall. Our children's choir resumed this past fall under the direction of Karen Whitehead and Deb Herron. Karen and Deb do a wonderful job of encouraging children to love music and become worship leaders like the adult choirs.

Last March, seventeen of our new and existing community members received the sacraments of confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation during one of the diocesan-wide confirmation services at the Cathedral. Later in the spring, we will provide another opportunity for individuals to prepare for this same sacrament over the winter and spring. We also welcome several new members to the community through the sacrament of baptism.

Our community continues to experience the joys of life—such as baptisms, several weddings, and Easter and Christmas celebrations—as well as the sorrows, including funerals and pastoral needs. We are not immune to the realities of the world, but we keep engaging with and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ through St. Matthews. I pray that we remain the safe, welcoming community that the parish leadership and I believe God is calling us to be. Let's continue to share the transformative power of the Gospel, welcome every person to our wonderful campus, and navigate life together.

In 2025, the parish will have many new and exciting opportunities. I eagerly look forward to another outstanding year as your rector and am grateful for the privilege and honor of serving alongside you at St. Matthew's.

God's Peace,

The Reverend Tim Meyers

Senior Warden

Being a good steward

In many ways, I think 2024 has been about stewardship – and when I use that term, I mean how can we leave St. Matthews in a better place at the end of 2024 than at the start. This report will focus on just a few of those things as I open up the curtain and share some areas that you may not be aware of.

Waste Management

Yes – not a fun topic, but a part of church life that we have to deal with. At the start of the year, we were paying for bi-weekly trash and recycling pickup, costing about \$400 per month. Unfortunately, we had many challenges with our recycling (garbage bags full of items, non-recyclables included, etc.) that caused us to face additional charges of \$100-\$200 every month. We made the decision to eliminate recycling and reduce these costs significantly. Now our monthly bill is <\$200, saving money for other ministries!

New Copier

Our copier lease expired in November of 2024. We went through a proposal process with several vendors to identify the best approach for St. Matthews. After analysis and face to face meetings, we decided to go with a vendor with a local presence. We were able to get a faster machine (that can actually print all the bulletins for Sunday without taking a “rest” like our old one!), for a lower cost. We expect monthly savings of \$50 to \$100 with the newer setup. We do encourage everyone to print in B&W where possible (at less than \$.01 per copy vs \$.05 per copy for color).

Telecom

We eliminated our cable TV service (which was not being used), saving ~\$50 per month.

Workdays

We continue to have amazing participation from our parish in our Spring and Fall workdays. This, along with the great work of our building and grounds committee, flower guild, etc. continued to make our campus an amazing place for worship, education, and fellowship. And it saves us from having to outsource this work!

Facilities Assessment

The 2023 vestry commissioned an assessment of the condition of our facilities. We received the results of this at the end of February 2024, and your vestry is taking action on these recommendations. You will hear more about that later on today!

Clay Olbon

Senior Warden

Junior Warden

The role of Junior Warden (aka Peoples' Warden), emphasizes the importance of maintaining a consistently positive attitude that inspires others, resolves challenges, and builds community.

Positive Attitude

Reflecting on this role, I am reminded of Clay Olbon's words from last year's report: "Vestry was fun!" This spirit of joy and purpose guided our work this year as we read and discussed *Jesus on Leadership*. Each Vestry meeting included a chapter discussion, helping us focus on the principle of servant leadership. A quote I keep on my desk as a daily reminder encapsulates this approach: "Today and every day, have fun serving others." This mindset not only brought joy to our work but also fostered deeper connections among us.

Resolution of Problems

Resolving challenges effectively was a key focus for our Vestry this year. Our Facilities Condition Assessment Review identified pressing needs across our campus, which prompted the formation of a Capital Campaign. This effort, supported by our parishioners' generosity, addresses much-needed physical repairs and improvements, ensuring our campus remains welcoming and functional for years to come. Tackling these issues head-on with a collaborative and solutions-oriented approach has strengthened both our resolve and our community bonds.

Recognition of Accomplishments

This year has been marked by several significant accomplishments that highlight the vitality of our parish. The sounds of young children in the church, parish hall, and courtyard are a joyful reminder of the growing number of new families joining our community. The hiring of a youth minister further underscores our commitment to nurturing the next generation. Additionally, we successfully established a workable budget, made possible by the incredible generosity of our parishioners. These milestones are a testament to the dedication and support of everyone in our congregation.

Blessings and Celebrations

As we reflect on the year, there is so much to give thanks for and to celebrate. The increase in new families and young children is a blessing that fills our church with life and energy. The completion of the Facilities Assessment and the launch of the Capital Campaign signal a new chapter of stewardship and renewal. Above all, we are deeply grateful for the collective efforts of our parishioners, whose faith, commitment, and generosity continue to sustain and inspire our mission.

Please pray that we carry forward this spirit of joy, gratitude, and servant leadership into the year ahead, building on our accomplishments and embracing the blessings to come.

Susan Jung

Junior Warden