

# Smatterings

Saint Matthew's  
Episcopal Church

July 2016



## We want our church to grow: the church today

Last month, I discussed some of the key aspects of churches that are growing. Churches that grow do not focus on being growing churches, but instead are more

focused on creating a sense of health and vitality within the congregation. Churches that grow tend to be churches that take their faith seriously and seek to be church to the very best of their ability. They focus on *quality* and not quantity, both in the numbers of people and in the numbers of programs or activities that they offered.

This month, I would like to focus on various models of church. A model of the Church that many of us grew up with and still try to maintain might be depicted as something like:

*Church = Building + Priest + Sunday Services*

The task when operating within this model is to keep the church going by keeping buildings open, finding the money to keep a priest (or at least part of one) and getting enough people into the building on a Sunday to keep the services going.

Archbishop Rowan Williams defined the church as “what happens when the impact of Christ on a situation brings two or more people together.” This definition gets to the heart of what church is all about. The way we understand and envision church shapes not just our understanding of what church is but also how we then participate in its life. In times of major change and upheaval, such as the whole of our culture has been going through for several decades, everything can appear to be threatened. Our instinct is simply to defend what we value.

A better way – but often more painful – may be to go back to the basics and ask the vital questions about what we are trying to do here. What may be needed is for us to adapt to the

changes going on around us; but we cannot adapt ‘it’ unless we are clear what ‘it’ is. So we need to go back to first principles and think again about what church is really about.

When we go back to basics and ask ourselves what it is all about, it may lead us to considering a different model of church. One model might be depicted as something like:

*Church = community + faith + action*

In a model such as this one, the Church is essentially a community of people drawn together by faith in and encounter with Jesus Christ as Lord, which leads them to take action in the whole of life, living by a different set of values from what would otherwise have been the case. This kind of living involves a wide range of actions. Another way of putting these three words (community, faith, action) is to describe the church as an **engaging faith community**.

The church is **engaging** not just in the sense of being attractive, but rather, primarily, as involved with the world around us, following after the pattern of the Incarnation. In what ways are we, as a church, involved in the local community? How far do we do things for the wider community and how far do we do things with them? What do we do to listen to the world around us? How do we find out and draw upon the skills and gifts that church members bring from the whole of life? What do St. Matthew’s sermons and intercessions in Sunday worship say about how the church sees its relationship with the world around us?

**Faith** is not just primarily about what takes place most visibly in the Church on Sunday mornings, but more about providing resources for living. So the vital question to ask is whether those who are involved with St. Matthew’s are finding resources that enable them to make sense of life, receive it as a gift, enjoy it and share in God’s desire to spread goodness, generosity, welcome, justice and peace with others. How are we inspiring

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people to follow Jesus? Does what happens at St. Matthew's help its members live out their faith in the whole of life, not just in what they do in church? Why do people come to St. Matthew's? What do we do to help inquirers explore the faith?

**Community** is what we at St. Matthew's are called to be: to be disciples of Jesus sharing and being the Good News. God's love is far more intimately felt and experienced in communities where people embrace each other than in large organizations and institutions. How far does St.

Matthew's function as an organization that people are invited to *join* or as a community to which they can *belong* and make their *contribution*? Is this a place where people go to find somewhere to be honest, to share pain, joy, doubts and fears; or are we all too nice or too cautious or too afraid to dare to do anything like that? Is this a place where people can be real about themselves and discover their gifts, finding a sense of vocation and freedom to offer what they can rather than fit in with what is required? Is this a place where we do a good job of celebrating our joys and sharing our sorrows?

I believe these are some of the basic questions or first principles that are good to revisit from time to time. Maybe you could add to these questions or share some of your responses to what is being asked. As you have done in the past so well, we can use these same tools to move into the future. Our willingness to revisit the basics, to ask questions, to listen to one another, and to share ideas in this emerging model of church will surely prepare us to move into the next generation of St. Matthew's as a more **engaging faith community**.

*Fr. Frank*

## Reports

### VESTRY

## Vestry has June meeting

The vestry met June 27 to continue work on strategic planning.

Father Frank Impicciche opened the meeting with a reflection on evangelism to set the tone for the work. He explained that the etymology of the word is "good angel" and that prophets who evangelize have two roles—to provide reassurance and to challenge. The ultimate purpose of evangelism is to build up the spirit of community.

With those thoughts in mind, the vestry further refined the vision statement and created a list of high level focus areas for the parish. The current vision statement, which will remain fluid, is as follows:

*As disciples of Jesus, we aspire to open our (arms/hearts) to the community. With love for God and neighbor, we offer restoring, caring (hands/hearts) to send forth the Good News to all with passion and determination.*

(The words in parentheses are under consideration.)

consideration.)

The list of focus areas is as follows:

- Formation
- Community Partnership
- Communication
- Worship.

The next step will be to analyze those areas further and create specific strategies for action.

Various business items were also discussed. Senior warden Natalie Weir reviewed budget information. Due to several factors, there is a \$13,500 surplus, which turns out to be a very fortunate circumstance as air conditioning repairs loom large. Three of eight AC units are in need of repair; at this time, two have been diagnosed with the expensive need of new compressors. The vestry voted \$15,000 spending authority to junior warden Don Runyon for HVAC maintenance.

In other matters, the new tenants of

the rectory, the Alhamwi family, have moved in and are starting to acclimate to the area. They are still in need of a queen-sized mattress and are learning the bus schedules.

Also, the homeless ministry is taking a brief pause. Camp resident Steve (and his dog, Bubbles) have found a home, which is joyous news. Because Steve was the primary contact for parishioner Buzz Hollett to facilitate supply distribution, the ministry is assessing the best way to replace Steve's role.

Lastly, the parish can look forward to service music during July. Organist and choir director George Karst is on his planned hiatus; therefore, Father Frank has contacted some musician friends to be part of Sunday worship.

The next vestry meeting will be July 18. Bishop Cate will make her final visit to St. Matthew's July 31 and will meet with the vestry August 4.

## VESTRY FINANCIAL UPDATE AS OF 5/31/2016

Actuals vs. Budget	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Total income	\$ 82,984.10	\$79,159	\$3,825.10
Total expenses	\$71,355.51	\$ 79,390	-\$8,034.49
Net operating income	\$11,628.59	-\$231	\$11,859.59
<b>Total in General Fund</b>	<b>\$40,321</b>		

## CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

### Centennial update

Calling all painters! Mark your calendars for July 9 and August 13. In preparation for the Centennial, we will be painting the hall to the nursery, the entry way, the stair way to the basement, and if we have enough help, the narthex. We will plan to work from 9am to 3pm both days and lunch will be served. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Narthex. If you can't make either of these days but want to help we can use help prepping the areas, including drywall seam and hole repair. While all helpers are welcome, we really need those who are good at interior painting. If you would like to give a can of paint to the cause, please donate \$40 to the Centennial Fund. Questions - contact Andy Wilkinson.

Centennial t-shirt orders should have been given to Jan Higbie by now but if you are still interested please contact her as soon as possible. The short-sleeved white t-shirt is available for \$12 each and if you are one of the first thirty orders you will receive a \$2 discount courtesy of Jan and Tom Higbie. Once the t-shirts have been printed you will be able to pick them up at church and pay for them at that time. A special thanks to Jan and Tom for coordinating this and for their financial contribution and time for arranging this t-shirt offer.

None of the Centennial activities would be possible without the volunteer and financial support of the parish. Thank you for your continued support. If you made a pledge or partial contribution for Saint Matthew's Centennial celebration please check to be certain you fulfilled this commitment as of June 30, 2016. If you are uncertain about what you still may owe, want to confirm your contribution or make an additional pledge, please contact Steve Albrecht.

## Christian Education

### The Curiosity of Children: A Gift for Us All

from the *Patheos Public Square*

**Editors' Note:** Every week at Middle Collegiate Church in New York City I have the privilege of sitting with dozens of

the greatest theologians I have ever encountered. They don't have fancy degrees (yet). They don't know (many) multi-syllabic words. And their average age is somewhere around eight years old.

This is the Message for All Ages.

I lay out a blanket in the front of the sanctuary and invite all the children, youth, and anyone feeling young at heart to join, and I hold up an object or tell them a story or invite them to make a pose. And our theology discourse is underway.

This is not a moment to use kids as a prop to say something to adults (that's my biggest rule). It isn't an episode of "Kids Say the Darndest Things" (although sometimes they do). This is a space for all ages, especially the youngest in our community, to bring their questions and curiosity and discover the ways God is inviting them to join a movement for love and justice.

"How do you show someone that you love them?" "Why do you think people come to church?" "What's your favorite things to make with Legos?"

I always ask them a question or two. And then I actually let them answer. I have a plan of what we'll do together but much of this moment is improv. It's more like good jazz than a well-rehearsed symphony.

Because their answers are the most important part. Their curiosity is a gift to us all. Their point of view offers so much for all of us to see. The gift of an intergenerational worshipping community is in the wisdom of the elder and the wonder of the child.

This Sunday, for Pentecost, I will be turning the mic over to my favorite theologians (though they don't know this yet). Pentecost is the day when we remember the Spirit of God speaking through all the people and not just grown-ups who made it through seminary. And so on this Pentecost Sunday I will be asking our children and youth what they think God wants to say to our church and to our world. Then, trusting the Spirit of God to be in all of us, especially the wide-eyed and wonder-filled young people in our midst, I will hand them the mic and listen as the Word continues to be made fresh from God's breath to their lips to our ears.

The spirituality of children is a gift for us all, an invitation to play and laugh, to be curious and filled with questions, to open our lips and let the Spirit of God speak the good news of love and justice into the world around us. Embrace wonder. Dive into curiosity. Sit with a child and experience life and faith and love and God from their point of view. Because the spirituality of children should not be relegated to a Sunday School classroom or a children's bulletin but should be unleashed in our sanctuaries and pulpits, a gift of God for all the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

# Announcements

## July Birthdays

- July 3 Jacob Dearing
- July 4 Alice Moody
- July 5 Margaret Pollard
- July 6 Susan Teague
- July 22 Elizabeth Matthews
- July 22 Lou Wheeler-Dallas
- July 23 Trevor Lloyd-Jones
- July 28 Samantha Fraser
- July 29 Teny Kissner
- July 29 Dennis Teague



## July Anniversaries

- July 4 Tom and Janet Higbie
- July 8 Dennis and Kaye Palmer
- July 16 Ronald and Martha Cooper
- July 29 Gregory and Linda Sykes



The first Sunday of the month, **July 3**, St. Matthew's nurses will be available for the **blood pressure clinic** starting at **9:00am**.

## NO Book Yarn, and Prayer meeting in July

by Alice Moody



Have a happy and safe holiday. Keep reading, knitting, crocheting, and praying. E-mail the group if you have any special prayer needs

during July.

We will meet at St. Matthew's, Monday, **August 1** at **7:00 pm**. We will finish discussing Susan Cain's book "Quiet" to see what we can learn about relationships and how to work together. Bring a suggestion or two for a book we can embark upon next.

Contact: Alice Moody, Jan Higbie, and Amanda Lloyd-Jones

**Thursday, July 28, 2016**, is the **deadline** for sending in any calendar events, meeting dates and times, articles, and announcements for the August issue of **SMATTERINGS**.



The next **Wednesday Pitch-In** will be on **Wednesday, July 27** following the 10am service. Come join the fun. Bring whatever; there's no set menu.



## Welcome! Welcome! Welcome!

We welcome Carissa Riedesel to St. Matthew's. Carissa is our Interim Parish Administrator. Her office hours are Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 5pm.



## Do you have a green thumb and a few hours a month to give to St. Matthew's?

The Columbarium and the raised bed on the west side of the building may be calling your name! The Ministry of First Impressions is seeking a volunteer gardener for routine maintenance of those two spaces: weeding, trimming, tidying, and watering on a regular basis. Visiting weekly would be ideal, but all offers will be entertained gladly!!! Please contact Missy at [missyellis@indy.rr.com](mailto:missyellis@indy.rr.com)

## Coming In July

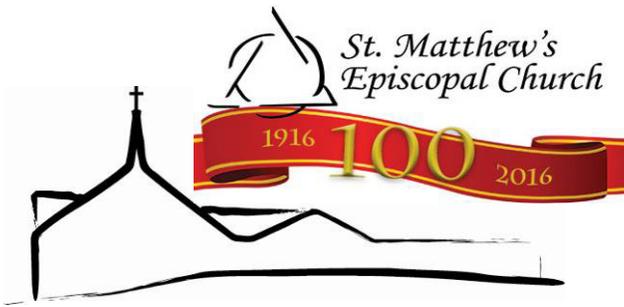
Bishop Cate's last annual visitation to St. Matthew's is **Sunday, July 31**.



# Sunday Ministry Schedule July 2016

Ministry Schedule	July 3	July 10	July 17	July 24	July 31
	9:30 AM	9:30 AM	9:30 AM	9:30 AM	9:30 AM
	Pentecost 7	Pentecost 8	Pentecost 9	Pentecost 10	Pentecost 11
Preacher	Revd Frank Impicciche	Revd Frank Impicciche	Revd Frank Impicciche	Revd Frank Impicciche	
Lectors	Steve Albrecht	Phil Sowder	Joe Hauptmann	Suzanne Kissling	Don Runyon
Lectors	Andy Wilkinson	Natalie Weir	Brenda Runyon	Jeff Higbie	Denny Krauser
Intercessor	Elaine Mattson	Joan Porter	Linda Sykes	Crystal Black	Carolyn Kirkendall
Chalice	Suzanne Kissling	Bill McMahon	Joan Porter	Jan Higbie	Tom Higbie
Crucifer/ Server	Jon Robbins	Jacob Cooper	Devon Teague	Joe Weaver	Bonnie Godfrey
Ushers	Jeff Higbie	Jan Higbie	Andy Wilkinson	Jeff Weir	Greg Staab
	Joe Weaver	Tom Higbie	Angie Wilkinson	Natalie Weir	Missy Ellis
Greeters	Jennifer Albrecht	Angie Wilkinson	Jeff Higbie	Greg Staab	Kaye Palmer
	Carolyn Kirkendall	Zella Rosene	Natalie Weir	Missy Ellis	Denyse Palmer
Oblations	Natalie Weir	Palmer	Greg Staab	S. Albrecht	Andrew Lloyd-Jones
	Jeff Weir	Family	Missy Ellis	Family	Amanda Lloyd-Jones
Counters	Denyse Palmer	Jon Robbins	Missy Ellis	Don Runyon	Joe Hauptmann
	Natalie Weir	Angie Wilkinson	Julie Hauptmann	Andy Wilkinson	Zella Rosene
Coffee	Rocio Carrasco				
Altar Guild	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5

If you are unable to serve, please find a substitute and advise the Parish Office. Thank you.



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# Smatterings

July 2016

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George Karst, *Organist/Choir Director*  
Crystal Black, *Hand Bell Director*  
Carissa Riedesel, *Interim Parish Administrator*

## Services

- Sundays: Holy Eucharist Rite II  
9:30 a.m.
- Wednesdays : Holy Eucharist 10:00 a.m.

Nursery available on Sundays starting at 9:15 a.m.  
Parish Office Hours: Tues. and Wed. 8 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

## St. Matthew's Mission Statement

The mission of St. Matthew's is  
"to restore all people to unity with God and each  
other in Christ."

We do this through worship of God,  
education of ourselves and our children,  
care for each other and outreach to others,  
sharing faith stories with others,  
and caring for all our resources (our time, treasure,  
and talents).

*Smatterings* is published monthly except in the summer.

The deadline is the 15th of the month for the following  
month's publication.