

Dear St. Matthew's Parishioners,

At our 2008 Annual Meeting, I opened my comments with these words that I find resonate during this time of turmoil. I feel they bear repeating as we move into 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2009, and hope they strike a chord in you too. These words ground me, still my focus, give me hope, and remind me of the call to simply be who I already am.

"It is all about mission – not as *if* our life depends on it, but *because* our life depends on it. Mission in the fullest and most traditional sense, is participating in God's redemption of a sinful and broken world through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth."

Bishop Robert O'Neill

There is no denying most of us are experiencing constriction in some aspect of our individual and corporate lives. In response, we can renew/reaffirm our vision of what it means to be Christians, to take the love of Christ out into the world. Or we can turn inward in fear and frustration. Hmmm... God called me on my attitude. He told me I either believe in mission and stewardship, or I don't. I do believe, and will continue my giving and my work.

We at St. Matthew's share the same kind of commitment and courage shown by the pioneers who settled here in the 1800s. The parish of St. Matthew's was built by people with the same gritty, "never give up" spirit. We share their vision, ingenuity, and willingness to take whatever is available to create and sustain something far greater than ourselves.

I draw great comfort from knowing I am in the company of spirited, hearty folks who are seeking and finding exciting new ways to live and fund our mission and ministries. Our hearts and hands continue to provide for our neighbors as we always have. The Open Gate Thrift Shop is doing a brisk business, thanks to your donations and support. The Community Suppers program is growing thanks to your contributions of food, rides, and fellowship. St. Matthew's continues to be a leader for the Parker CROP Walk and contributed the most financially in 2008. Our support of area food banks and St. Francis Center are examples of our willingness to share goods and food, our time and talents. In many, many important ways we reach out to our community and the world in generosity and love.

This letter comes in the spirit of sharing where we are today financially as a parish, and requesting your help and support. The Vestry and I need your inputs, hearts, hands, and pocketbooks. Please contact any of us at any time with your ideas, questions, and for more information. Careful stewardship of all that is entrusted to us is a shared goal and our commitment is to building a sustainable future for St. Matthew's.

As Bishop O'Neill says (paraphrased)...

It can happen... it can happen because it is already happening, already emerging, already being awakened by the Spirit of God. To bring these from our imagination into reality will require our collective support coming together in a new way:

- Come together knowing we face the same financial challenges... but coming together anyway
- Contribute according to our means, but each of us still contributing our fair share
- Willingly embrace and support our collective and individual work – our mission

Take care and God bless,  
Kandy Halstead  
Senior Warden

Please look at the Finance Picture as presented by the Vestry on the next page!

## St. Matthew's Finance Update 05.12.09

We, the St. Matthew's Vestry, want to keep you posted about parish finances, and hope this open communication will help us sustain current program levels and fund our Ministry Plan. As always, our role is to balance incoming gifts with required financial commitments and our outreach giving. Guiding principles include:

- Maintaining our mission shape and focus in all that we undertake
- Exercising flexibility when possible to accommodate critical ministry needs on a case-by-case basis
- Allocating funds generously back out to our ministries as income rebounds

Given St. Matt's commitment to send as much of our giving as possible outside our parish, we operate within a tight financial structure. Fr. Michael and your Vestry form the *Ministry Plan* carefully each year, based on analysis of our ministry needs and revenue projection. Even the term "*Ministry Plan*," as opposed to "budget," illuminates the way we approach our finances. We are dealing in relationships, not just dollars, as vital as those dollars are for attaining our mission goals.

### The Current Picture

In this economic climate where many are making difficult spending choices, pocketbooks are no longer full enough to provide all that our hearts would like to. We are seeing this in our plate and pledge as well.

As of the end of March the shortfall in our Ministry Plan was \$5,458 and at the end of April it was \$6,178, significant figures, and while our current cash reserves cover this, the year-to-date income shortfall is significant enough to warrant action, however painful. The work falls to the Finance Committee to make appropriate recommendations and the Vestry to take action.

### Ministry Plan Adjustments!

After in-depth, soul-searching analysis, the Vestry has adopted a proactive, flexible "step" approach similar to that being looked at by many businesses and organizations today. We would like to acquaint you with actions taken by the Vestry in March to ensure you are informed and understand what is being done.

#### • Vestry Approved Adjustments

These actions were approved in March 2009 and are in place today

- **Rector Mileage Reimbursement**
  - Reimbursement discontinued
  - **Note:** Fr. Michael has not expensed mileage for more than one year and suggested this change
- **Annual Diocesan Convention**
  - Expenses (registration, hotel, mileage, meals) will be covered for Fr. Michael and Fr. Vern only
- **Diocesan Pledge**
  - 5% of our normal plate and pledge will be available to send to the Diocese (reduction of 3.5%)
  - **Note:** Diocesan pledge **requirement of 10%** remains the goal for St. Matthew's when funds permit
- **Hearts and Hands Outreach**
  - 2% of the non-restricted pledge and plate income will be available (reduction of 1%)
  - **Reminder:** Urgent needs will be considered case-by-case
- **Youth Group**
  - Budget line item reduced, as other funds are available for and/or raised by this ministry
  - **Reminder:** Urgent needs will be considered case-by-case

#### • Other Areas Being Researched and/or Considered

These areas are on the table and being considered for additional changes as warranted

- **Altar Flowers**
  - Measures have been put in place to ensure funds received support the flower order before it is filled
- **Nursery Care**
  - A committee has been formed to look at ways to reduce the current \$5300 annual cost
- **Staff Compensation and Benefits**
  - We struggle to bring compensation and benefits up to standard and to levels that reflect the extensive experience and commitment our greatest assets, our clergy and staff
  - Reductions in this area carry serious impact for these folks and are considered as a last resort