



ST. MATTHEW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ANNUAL PLEDGE CAMPAIGN 2023

St Matthew's in 2023



2023

ANNUAL PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church | Hillsborough, NC

Dear sisters and brothers at St. Matthew's,

The theme for our pledge campaign this year is **One Bread, One Body**.

The 'bread' refers to the bread of the Eucharist which is our principal worship each and every Sunday, in which we take communion with the consecrated bread and wine. The Eucharist is in fact the heart of our parish life, and it an enactment of our whole Christian faith. In the Eucharist, God gathers and speaks to us; God calls us to prayer, and receives our offered lives. God consecrates us by weaving our stories into the story of Jesus. Finally, God sends us out to take God's life into the world.

The 'body' in our theme refers to the new human community that God makes in Christ. From earliest times the Church has been known as the Body of Christ. This Body of Christ is a redeemed humanity in a right relationship within itself, God, and creation. It is characterized by the equal dignity of each member, a celebration of God's immediate presence in the community, by mutual care, and by opening out to others beyond its walls.

The meaning of our theme, **One Bread, One Body** is thus that our Sunday worship creates a process whereby we become more and more, the body of Christ, a witness to God's redeeming and reconciling work in our world.

At St. Matthew's, our Sunday Eucharist has special power to drive this process because it does not stand alone. Rather, it is set in a context of excellent formation offerings, educational programs, fellowship events, pastoral care, and outward mission. Our worship inspires these dimensions of church life and receives poignancy and meaning from them.

In particular, over the past two years our worship and fellowship has been especially deepened by programming that has taken us deeply into our personal and parish histories, and used both the faithfulness and faithlessness we have found there – both the good, and what has been contrary to God – to help us see where we have yet

to grow into Christ, and, indeed, how God helps us do that. The pilgrimage program has led us into a profound experience of the Holy at the heart of our country's painful history of racism.

In addition, 2023 has been a year of renewed fellowship across parish life and energetic mission outside the parish, including new programs for pastoral care for our oldest and youngest members. Our children's' educational programs and youth programs are flourishing. St. Matthew's has extraordinarily beautiful grounds and buildings which set all our experiences a context that sings of God's glory.

Finally, 2024 is special in that it marks the beginning of our bicentennial celebrations, which will continue through the Summer of 2026. In 1824 a group of laity founded the parish; in 1825 we became a part of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina; in 1826 our church was consecrated. For 200 years God in Christ and Spirit has been shaping this community to become more and more the Body of Christ.

St. Matthew's is a spiritually alive place; everything here is ordered to our becoming for God more and more the Body of Christ. And we need your support! Reviewing proposed budgets for 2024, the Vestry has set our pledge goal of \$475,000 – matching the amount pledged last year. Information about what this supports is in following pages. Please consider the unique mission and the current depth and liveliness of St. Matthew's when setting your pledge for 2024.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth, Rector

The Rev. Lisa Frost Phillips, Associate Rector

Lindsay Efland, Stewardship Campaign Co-Chair

Edward Wright, Stewardship Campaign Co-Chair.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us:

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WE NOURISH, INSPIRE, and SUPPORT

our members through sacred worship, inspiring music, engaging Sunday forums, Christian formation for our children and youth, pastoral care and fellowship programs, and spiritually centered small groups. In 2024 we will continue on the journey of deepening our faith as we start the parish-wide celebration of our bicentennial. The emphasis in 2024 will be on lay people as the foundation of Saint Matthew's and we will explore the years 1750-1850 in our parish history.

In 2024 we also continue with the blessing of our Associate Rector, the Rev. Lisa Frost-Phillips, who has taken on special leadership in pilgrimage programs, social ministries, and outreach. With over twenty years of experience at St. Matthew's, Lisa brings extraordinary wisdom and passion to her ministry.

In 2022, Dr. Jason Wright joined the staff as our Director of Music and Organist. A highly accomplished musician and choir director with over 21 years of experience, Jason has strengthened our Adult Choir in 2023, launched a Youth Choir, and created a regular program of Evensong Worship for the parish and surrounding community.

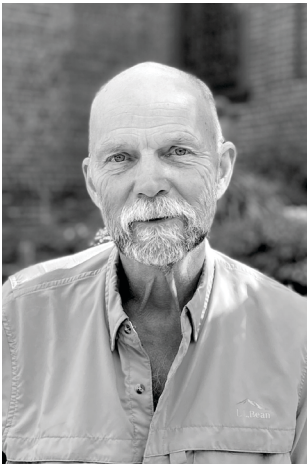




Stephany Lazo, our Director of Formation, continues to enrich all aspects of our ministry for families, children and youth at St. Matthew's. Bringing extraordinary know-how and a delightful personality, Stephany has recruited a full group of teachers for our children, recreated the Youth Program, and works with parents across the parish. She leads our Village Church intergenerational worship.



Sonja Tilley continued in 2023 as our Parish Administrator, bringing her long familiarity of St. Matthew's, extensive experience in church administration, an M.Div degree and strong connections to Duke Divinity School to bear on parish life. Working behind the scenes, Sonja has completely revamped our church database, our communication systems, and our volunteer base.



Finally, Pelham Jacobs continues to care for our buildings and grounds with his decades of experience on our campus and fine sense of land and building stewardship.

This amazing staff, along with our Vestry, our many lay ministry leaders, and our priest associates, all lead, inspire, and support us. In 2024, we want to ensure the necessary financial support required for the outstanding caliber of our clergy, staff, and program support. The 2023 core budget to enable these exemplary services is \$407,100.

WE STEWARD WITH LOVE

the historic buildings, grounds, churchyard and campus with which we are blessed and entrusted. Our church blesses us each day with its remarkable beauty, lifting us to God. Our village-like campus of buildings invite us into relationships with one another on a human, not institutional, scale, and our amazing grounds, set apart yet immediate to Hillsborough, hold us in the splendor of God's creation. The churchyard witnesses to the communion of saints, those living on earth and those in heaven God, that is the deep mystery of the Church.

We are committed to maintaining and enriching our property for present and future generations. We do this with great love and with a sense of the legacy with which we have been entrusted, while we strive to be as efficient as possible. The core budget to remain faithful stewards of these sacred spaces, archives and property is \$86,098.



In 2022-2023 we undertook the huge task of repairing the foundation of our rectory, sealing its crawlspace, providing drainage channels around the house, and renewing the downstairs bathrooms – all funded through a successful capital campaign. Having a rectory adjacent to the church in central Hillsborough allows the rector to integrate family and ministerial responsibilities easily, and to live at the heart of the parish and local community. Thank you St. Matthew's!

WE EXTEND GOD'S LOVE

to communities far and wide through hands-on outreach ministry, dedicated work towards reconciliation and justice, and in providing gifts of financial support to our community neighbors. We also share in supporting the Episcopal Church through Diocesan contributions. As stewards in our community, St. Matthew's is pledging \$87,815 in core outreach. In addition to responding to the Diocesan Ask obligation of \$71,865, we continue to lead in community outreach ministries such as Orange Congregations in Mission, Habitat for Humanity, Alamance-Orange Prison Ministry, Justice United, Iglesia el Buen Pastor Episcopal Church, and our continued partnership with historically black Hillsborough. The funds that are raised by FeST and other discretionary donations received over and above the core budget enable us to extend our support wider into the community.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PLEDGING?

We are glad you asked!

1. Why pledge?

A pledge can be compared to the ritual of a sacrament: it is an outward and tangible expression of gratitude for the abundance of God's love and grace in your life. It is an act of consciously choosing to make giving a priority in your life and to help support the community of faith in which you have made your home. Pledging is a way to truly become an integral part of the family of St. Matthew's, to become fully a fundamental part of the whole.

2. Why should I pledge instead of just putting money in the plate?

For the church to make mindful and judicious decisions in the creation of the yearly budget, it is essential to have a good idea of how much funding we will have in the coming year. Think of it as knowing the church's "salary." As individuals and families, we

rely on the knowledge of what our salary and assets will be when making our own personal budgets. The church, too, relies on having information about what “income” will be available to support all the functions of the church which form the basis of stewardship: paying clergy and staff, funding education programs, worship expenses, music programs, archives stewardship, outreach programs, caring for the physical structures in which we worship and the grounds on which we worship. While plate offerings are always welcomed and appreciated, they are less predictable, and so offer less reliability for financial planning. The best way for the church to have accurate and reliable finances is through the committed pledging of its members.

3. Does the pledge need to be paid in full immediately?

A pledge does not need to be paid immediately. The pledge is simply a commitment, made after prayer and careful reflection, to contribute a certain amount of money to the church for the year ahead. Your pledge can be fulfilled with monthly, weekly, or annual payments. The easiest way to fulfill your pledge is to divide your pledge into monthly payments and put it in your bill pay system, available online through the GIVE button on the homepage. This enables you to split up the payments while not having to think about it until next year when you may choose to change your pledge or continue with the same amount.

4. Do only members pledge?

In the Episcopal church, while there are many advantages to going through the formal process of becoming a member, you are already considered a part of the church if you have simply found a spiritual home here. You belong to a family of choice and your contributions, either of finances, talents, time or spirit, will serve to bind you in faith with others who share their lives with you. Stewardship is a pledge to share your gifts, whether they be financial, temporal or talent-based, as a tangible expression of faith and gratitude for God’s generosity. While enrolled members have a special responsibility to pledge, all people at St. Matthew’s are welcome and invited to pledge.

5. How exactly do I make pledge payments?

Please see the enclosed pledge card for instructions about how

to make a pledge. An online pledge form is also available through our website, following GIVE button at the top right of the homepage. If you have questions, please ask any of the staff or clergy for further information.

6. I support the goal of gradually increasing our pledges, but this year I'm not able to. Is it okay to keep my pledge the same or decrease it?

Yes, absolutely, and there is no shame in this. There are seasons in life when financial resources are strained and what we can pledge may decrease. The members of St. Matthew's have come together as a whole, year after year, generously supporting our common life. Sometimes we can give more and sometimes less. You are part of a community that supports itself and takes care of all its members equally, regardless of the ability to give.

Jesus' parable of the widow's mite is instructive: the value of the gift is in the sacrifice it entails, not in its size. If someone has lost half of his income from the previous year, and still gives most of the pledge from the previous year, this would entail, spiritually, an increase in giving. The critical thing is to make a pledge, regardless of the amount, as a way of making concrete your membership in the parish.

7. My finances are so unpredictable right now that I can't reasonably make any pledge. Is that OK? Can I make plate donations instead as my situation becomes more clear?

Yes, in some cases, you might not know what amount you can pledge. We encourage you to make a minimal pledge during the Pledge Campaign as a symbol of your commitment to the parish. If you need to wait at this time, that is OK. You can be in touch with the Rector or the Treasurer, Dorothy Wood, as your situation clarifies or changes.

8. I am interested in offering something in addition to, or in lieu of, my Treasure. How may I offer my Time or Talent?

All parishioners are invited to make a pledge of time, talent, compassionate action, or prayer to the parish. We have outreach opportunities through the Shawl Ministry, Habitat for Humanity, and

Parish Work Days, for example. A pledge of daily or weekly meditation of prayer for the church in this challenging season is another way that you can give of yourself. We also encourage you to communicate this non-financial pledge directly to The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth, who will be grateful to hear of your gift.

We are the Body of Christ; every single one of our members adds to our Common Life. No one is more or less valuable in God's eyes. We offer whatever gifts we have with a deep sense of gratitude for the gift of our lives and the abundance thereof, and every gift is welcomed and honored at St. Matthew's.



If you have further questions about pledging, and would like a confidential conversation to aid you in discerning what you would like to pledge, please contact either our Rector, The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth [rector@stmatthewshillsborough.org], or Vestry Members Lindsay Efland [lindsayefland@gmail.com] or Edward Wright [framesbyedwardwright@gmail.com].

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
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