



October, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are approaching the time of year when all St. Matthew's parishioners will be asked to make a financial pledge to our church. We prayerfully hope that you will do so. Scroll down to the bottom of this page to find a document explaining the reasons for and process of pledging. We hope this answers any questions you might have about this process. This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of St. Matthew's "Hope Grows Here" pledge campaign. This year, we are focusing on the "here," i.e., hope grows *here* at St. Matthew's Church in Pennington! We have great reason for hope. I would like to highlight 2 exciting components of our ministry together.

First, we have developed a strong, faithful, and committed leadership core. Please take note that we have a fabulous new deacon, the Rev. Carol Rodgers, as well as an enthusiastic and talented seminarian, Ayden Petrone. We are joined also by veteran "retired" priest, the Rev. Bruce Montgomery, who preaches at St. Matthew's monthly. Amazingly, each of these persons serves us in a **volunteer** capacity. How fortunate we are! In addition, our Choirmaster/Organist, Mark Dolan continues to host new, wonderful musical offerings, such as last December's Christmas Carol sing and this fall's Cabaret. Finally, we will soon bestow upon our former Rector, the Rev. Canon Jack Belmont, the title of "Rector Emeritus," to honor his 37 years of faithful service to St. Matthew's.

As if all of this were not enough, our committed and fabulous Kairos (Church School) director, Cheryl Watterson, has agreed to take on a larger role as St. Matthew's Youth and Family Director. In this expanded capacity, Cheryl will coordinate all of the youth and family ministries, as well as be the chief communicator about them. Her new role will begin in January, 2022. I am fully convinced that our already solid program for St. Matthew's young families, will now blossom under her leadership.

Secondly, our technology continues to grow and develop. JC Kinnamon brought his unique gifts and time to us, guiding us through an upgrade that relies on three remote-controlled cameras and supporting hardware and software. Parishioner Lee Bucher volunteered to help JC; together these talented individuals have helped us stay connected throughout the pandemic quarantine by livestreaming our Sunday services to the St. Matthew's Facebook page and our own YouTube channel. JC and Lee are continuously working with parish leadership to refine and improve our online offerings.

***God has blessed us abundantly in these difficult times, sending us just the right people for the right ministries for our growing parish.*** An additional note: Rumor has it that I may be leaving as St. Matthew's spiritual leader when my contract expires at the end of January 2022. Please know that I have no plans to leave. As long as you and I believe that we are a good "fit," we are free to minister together indefinitely.

I believe that we are positioned perfectly to become the dynamic, vibrant church that will serve people inside and outside of our parish community. Your pledge is the critical component that makes it all possible! Please consider increasing your pledge by 12 percent for 2022. If you are a new pledger, please consider making a pledge of \$20/week. Pledge cards (included in a recent mailing, at church and on our website under the "Giving" tab) may be dropped in the offering plate on any Sunday, put into the locked box in the narthex (entryway), mailed in, or *to make a pledge most simply, email John Eckel at [n60aj@yahoo.com](mailto:n60aj@yahoo.com) with the amount you would like to pledge.* All (hard copy) pledges will be blessed on the altar on Sunday, November 21.

Yours in Christ,  
Ophelia

PS: To answer any questions about the why's and wherefores of pledging, click [here](#).