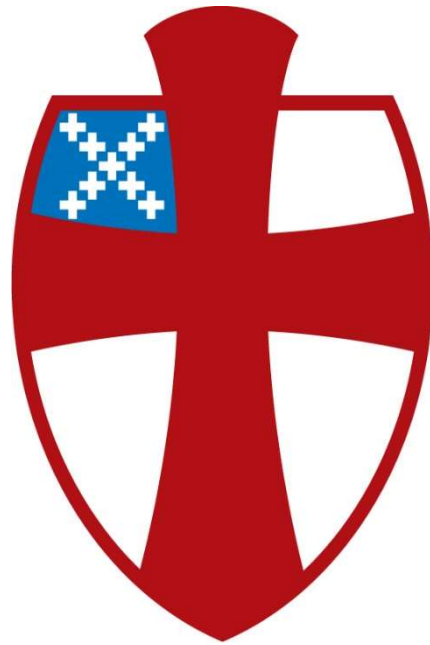


The Annual Report
For 2023

To the Communicants of
Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church



Growing As God's Family
January 21, 2024

**Agenda for the Annual Meeting of
Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church,
Chandler, Arizona
January 21, 2024**

Welcome	Bryce Carder
Opening Prayer	Rev. Andrea Wight
Appointment of the Clerk	Bryce Carder
Order for the Day	Bryce Carder
Acceptance of Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting	Bryce Carder
Elections	Bryce Carder
•Junior Warden	
•Vestry Members	
•Diocesan Convention Delegates and Alternates	
A Word from our Rector	
Financial Report	Joel VanOver
Senior Warden's Report	Bryce Carder
Thanksgivings	Bryce Carder
Election Results	Bryce Carder
Q & A (As Time Allows)	Bryce Carder
Benediction	Rev. Andrea Wight

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church Annual Meeting Minutes January 28, 2023

Topics of Discussion in Agenda Order (not necessarily order of discussion):

- Call to order – 9:41 am
- Invocation Opening Prayer – Rev. Colville Smythe
- Appointment of the Clerk – Tammy Halter was appointed as clerk
- Acceptance of the February 13, 2022 Annual Meeting minutes
 - Motion by Bob Swisher; Mary West seconded;
 - Accepted unanimously
- Review of the Canons for Vestry elections
 - Members of the Vestry shall be elected at the Annual Parish meeting from communicants in good standing in the Parish.
 - All communicants in good standing whose names appear on the Parish register shall be entitled to vote.
 - All communicants of this Church who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be considered communicants in good standing.
 - Bryce reviewed the structure of Vestry and current Executive Committee.
 - Elections were opened at 10:00 am
 - Junior Warden (vote for 1) – Bryce requested
 - Sylvia Smythe & Mary West nominated Darlene Abel, she accepted
 - Leah motioned, Clyde seconded to vote Darlene in by acclamation
 - Vestry Candidates for Class of 2025 (vote for 4 – 5 th highest will serve 2 years for remainder of class of 2024
 - Gloria Adams
 - Justine Austin
 - Christopher Cordes
 - Barbara Michael
 - Paul Sullivan
 - Joel Van Over
 - Sharon Werner
 - Andi Will (eligible to run again after a 1-year term)
 - Sandy Williams

■ No nominations from the floor; Father Colville motioned, Steve Halter seconded, to close the nominations.

○ Diocesan Convention delegates

■ Sylvia Smythe

■ Sandy Williams self-nominated

■ Paul Sullivan self-nominated

■ Heather Stewart, self-nominated

■ Virginia Sample, self-nominated

■ Bob, Darlene all in favor to closed to nominations. Motion voted by acclimation.

● Financial report

○ Bryce shared a summary of 2022 Financial Results. Total giving was \$609,307 (94.3% of budget). This was mainly due to our not following a formal stewardship process in 2021 and budgeting accordingly. Diligently managed and spent 97.2% of expense budget to finish the year with a \$84,815 deficit compared to the - \$68,409 budgeted. We had a strong Stewardship campaign in 2022 and feel more confident with our forecasts for 2023. Operating Account has +\$100K, ministry funds with over \$20K to support deficit years like 2023. The church continues to operate with no debt.

○ Bryce presented the 2023 budget. Forecast at -\$47,682 with worse-case scenario based on a higher Rector salary to ensure our commitment to hiring a well-qualified candidate.

○ Bryce invited the Parish to ask questions. No questions were presented.

● Senior Warden's report

○ Bryce reported on the success of our 2022 priorities. We have been able to continue meeting our spiritual needs both in-person and online. We continued to work as a community with volunteers that support ministries. We conducted a Days of Discovery that allowed our entire parish to participate in setting our goals and wishes for the future. 2022 was a year of "getting things going again since the pandemic".

○ Priorities for 2023:

■ Finish Rector Search and Hiring Process

■ Continued focus on fulfilling spiritual needs of our community – ex: TeleCare, Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEV), Becoming Beloved Community (and much, much more!)

■ Continue our growth in membership through programming and outreach

■ Focus on all aspects of Stewardship (talent, time, treasure)

○ Bryce shared an update on the Rector Search process.

- Thanksgiving

- To our exiting Vestry members, Tammy Halter, Robert Ide, Virginia Sample and Andi Will for their service for the past three years

- To Beverly Houts for serving as Treasurer

- The amazing staff of St. Matthew's

- All the people of St. Matthew's that volunteered, worshiped, prayed and gave.

- Election results

- Christopher Cordes

- Paul Sullivan

- Joel Van Over

- Andi Will

- Sharon Werner for duration of class of 2024

- Questions & Answers

- Olinda Willis asked if the budget include relocation package of Rector. Bryce shared that there is money allocated in a holding account.

- Leah Jones wanted to thank Father Colville and Sylvia during our interim period.

- Father Colville addressed the parish in thanks for all the work done this last year. He shared how fortunate we are compared to many other parishes he has seen.

- Remembrance of the Faithful Departed

- Benediction

- Meeting was adjourned at 10:38 am

2023 Financial Report, Janet Lyons and Joel Van Over

		2023 Expenditure Estimate	2023 Expenditure Actual	2023 Variance	2023 Variance Percentage
Receipts					
	Interest Earned	-	331	331	0.0%
	Gifts Received	717,074	705,537	(11,537)	98.4%
	Electronic Payments Cost	(10,000)	(9,196)	804	92.0%
	Diocesan Assessment	(119,496)	(114,587)	4,909	95.9%
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	587,578	582,085	(5,493)	99.1%
Disbursements					
	Pastoral	135,889	103,752	(32,137)	76.4%
	Music	86,916	79,078	(7,838)	91.0%
	Christian Formation	82,957	74,886	(8,071)	90.3%
	Other Programs	33,680	29,575	(4,105)	87.8%
	Worship Related	5,700	4,393	(1,307)	77.1%
	Administrative	186,150	174,509	(11,641)	93.7%
	Buildings & Grounds	103,969	79,780	(24,189)	76.7%
	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	635,261	545,973	(89,288)	85.9%
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER DISBURSMENTS					
		(47,683)	36,112	83,795	-75.7%

MINISTRY REPORTS

Adult Bible Study, Ann Port

Saint Matthew's Adult Bible Study Group consists of 36 enthusiastic, welcoming Christians eager to understand the Word of God. From September through May, we meet every Thursday from 10:00 to 11:30 in the parish hall. Whatever we happen to be studying, our goal is to come away with a deeper understanding of scripture which, in turn, will increase our faith. This past fall, we began an in-depth study of the Gospel According to John. If you are interested in joining us or would additional information about this dynamic group or our current study, please contact Ann Port at acport22@gmail.com.

Altar Guild, Wendy Hines, Caren Swisher, Pat Needham

The Altar Guild team works mostly behind-the-scenes to prepare the sanctuary and chapel for services. Duties include preparing the altar before, between and after services, changing seasonal hangings, and cleaning and maintaining service equipment. Seasonal celebrations, especially Christmas and Easter bring extra meaningful activities to the Altar Guild participation. We are also on duty for weddings, baptisms and funeral/memorial services. We were delighted to welcome several new members this year and are always looking for more. We welcome men, women and youth to bring their individual skills and talents. If you are interested in volunteering, we provide training and can partner you with experienced team members. If you would like to be an important part of setting the Lord's table, please consider becoming a member.

Becoming Beloved Community (BBC), Larry Dumka

This past year has been a year of growth for Becoming Beloved Community (BBC) at St. Matthew's. We began collaborating with Valley Interfaith Project (VIP), a nonpartisan coalition of congregations in the Valley, to organize St. Matthew's members to take action to improve community wellbeing. There were two main action directions in 2023.

One was to urge Chandler Unified School District to provide more services to support student mental health and prevent suicides. To this end, BBC members attended school district meetings and hosted a VIP Civic Academy at St. Matthews to educate the community about teen mental health challenges and publicly ask attending school district board members and the assistant superintendent to take specific actions. The civic academy was attended by 150 people from the community including 45 members of St. Matthew's and received front page coverage in two editions of the Arizona Republic! School district policy makers took the VIP asks seriously and responded to all of them demonstrating the power of organizing to do the work of the church.

A second community initiative was to address the lack of affordable workforce, senior, and veteran housing in Chandler. With other VIP congregation leaders St. Matthew's BBC members met with individual Chandler city council members to orient them to VIP, establish ongoing working relationships, and to urge them to support an affordable housing development in Chandler that is being opposed by neighbors. In November, four BBC members were involved in leadership roles in a civic assembly, attended by 100 people, held at Valley Unitarian congregation in Chandler to educate the community about affordable housing and the dire need to increase it to prevent homelessness. Twenty St. Matthew's members attended this action. BBC and VIP continues to work to build support for approval of this housing development.

The progress made by these VIP actions were outward and visible signs that encouraged BBC members to advocate for St. Matthew's again becoming full dues paying members of VIP. BBC members formulated a proposal which was presented to St. Matthew's vestry, carefully considered,

and approved in July. Throughout the year BBC members have benefitted from attending various VIP leader trainings and action strategy sessions.

Importantly, we also invested time to clarify the mission of BBC at St. Matthew's which was finalized and approved in September.

The mission of Saint Matthew's Becoming Beloved Community group is to follow the call of Jesus to restore dignity and autonomy to those deprived of access to sufficient resources to meet their basic needs for physical survival, emotional wellbeing, and human fulfillment. We do this by building personal relationships with members of Saint Matthew's and the surrounding community, identifying needs and opportunities, collaborating with other faith-based groups, and organizing civic actions to influence public policy. The aim is to become a beloved community of love, justice, truth-telling, and solidarity with those in need.

Last December, BBC members contributed to a VIP delegates meeting where member congregations identified directions for organizing in 2024. These include holding small group meetings at St. Matthews to understand challenges members are facing and conducting accountability sessions with candidates running for school board and city council in Chandler.

Becoming Beloved Community meets as a group monthly. For more information, contact Larry Dumka (480-241-4910, ilarion@hotmail.com).

Coffee Hour, Bob & Caren Swisher

Coffee hour at Saint Matthew's is legendary! As a congregation, we don't take serving and being served lightly. If you have a gift for baking brownies or buying goodies at the grocery store, we'd love your help. Coffee hour isn't just a service; it's a life line in our church community.

We hope you'll join us during the 10 o'clock hour for this fellowship in the Parish Hall. Coffee hour teams serve two weeks in a row, three times during the academic year. Please contact Caren or Bob Swisher to join a team today! There's more info in the parish hall kitchen

Comfort Ministry, Shirley Duffy

We support our Parish family by providing blessed and created in prayer comfort lap blankets, prayer shawls, prayer pocket squares and small quilts to surround their loved ones who are dealing with a long-term or terminal illness. If you know of anyone who would benefit by receiving a SMEC comfort item, please speak with clergy on Sunday after the service. To our newest SMEC members at their baptism we provide a keepsake choice of either a small blanket or a Teddy Bear. Our ministry also assists the Memory Café Ministry with fidget items and participates in many community outreach programs by donating crocheted, knitted and sewn items. Come join us. We are a creative fun group! To receive special notifications and updates regarding this ministry, please contact Shirley Duffy, greatpanes1@yahoo.com

Creation Care Committee, Gina Bowers

In 2023 we focused on improving conservation on our campus. With much help from Debby and Janet we were successful in switching most of our disposable products in Matt's Cafe to compostable. It has been encouraging to see many people using mugs for their coffee instead of reaching for a single use cup. Leonard was instrumental in the repair of our dishwasher which was helpful in bringing mugs back into fashion. Compostable garbage bags are also in use on our campus.

We were grateful to have a return visit from Cannon Pam Hyde in March. Although she resigned from her diocesan position in June, she said she would gladly visit and preach at our invitation in the future.

Committee members Gina Bowers, John Wennes and Hallie Trias participated in a diocesan workshop at Trinity Cathedral in April. It was inspiring and encouraging to spend time and share ideas with other Creation Care teams from parishes around Arizona.

In July we hosted our second Family Movie Night, this time showing “Strange World.” With participants bringing their own bowls for popcorn and their reusable water containers, we were successful in making it a zero waste activity.

In August, Gina and John attended a webinar that focused on harnessing rainwater. We will continue to learn as much as we can in this area and hope to make progress when it comes to water conservation.

We created The Green Gift Guide that we premiered after services on November 5th. In addition, we shared the QR code through the bulletin and Welcome Matt. The list of “green” products and organizations/businesses remains on the St. Matt’s website as a resource.

Thank you to Natalie for the beautiful Creation Care presentations she creates on the website. Thank you to both Debby and Natalie for getting the concerns of Creation Care out to our congregation.

Daughters Of The King, Susan Davis

Reaffirming our promises made at Baptism and Confirmation, a Daughter pledges herself to a life-long program of prayer, service, and evangelism. As a Daughter, this pledge is a vow to uphold our commitment to the ‘order’, and is shared with a worldwide community of like-minded women. We usually meet on a monthly Saturday with our meetings filled with lessons to further our scriptural development and fellowship with our sisters. The cross we wear daily serves as a reminder of our vows as we continue our Christian journey. Join us to better know Jesus Christ and make Him known to others.

Family Ministries Kadi Strong and Amy Trias

The Youth and Family Ministry at Saint Matthew's is comprised of Family and Children’s Ministry, for children ages birth through 6th grade, and Youth Ministry, for youth in 6th through 12th grades. Both seek to inform families of ways to promote spiritual growth both at church and at home. We keep parents aware of church programming and events by sending out weekly email communications and with bulletin announcements. The Saint Matthew’s website allows newcomers to see what is offered for the entire family with upcoming events, programs, and philosophy.

Family and Children’s Ministry, Amy Trias

Family and Children’s Ministry is growing and thriving at St. Matthew’s. We have new families joining our parish family each month. Our nursery serves children, ages birth to 4 years and only closes for 2 weekends each year. We have 23 children registered, and an average of 6 children attending per week. Our littlest parishioners are cared for by loving and experienced caregivers, staffed with one regular caregiver and three fill-in caregivers. Five youth group teens also alternate to help in the nursery and earn credit toward their mission trip costs. Children’s Chapel runs regularly at the 9 and 11 a.m. services, with an average of 17 children participating per weekend. The Gospel is presented in a format to which children can relate, and videos and games are incorporated as well. Each session ends with a prayer, and children are encouraged to pray in church, at home, and everywhere! Sunday School follows the Chandler school schedule with 12 volunteer teachers recruited, 37 children registered, and an average attendance of 14 children per weekend. Because it also follows the Common

Lectionary, many children are getting a double dose of the Gospel each Sunday in Children's Chapel and Sunday School. Saint Matthew's annual Easter event was fun for all, with an egg hunt, games, and treats. Saint Matthew's hosted 47 children for Vacation Bible School, a week-long, half-day camp. The attendance was 17 more children from the prior year, and 14 children were from outside of the parish. The outer space theme (Stellar) was packed with new songs, amazing activities, and many lessons about Jesus. Water Day is always the highlight mid-week, with water balloons, a gigantic water slide, and a chance to look into outer space through a real telescope. The Youth help in almost every aspect of VBS, and the children love their connection with the older kids. In the fall, 4 children and their parents participated in a 4-week Communion Class following an Episcopal-based Curriculum, to learn more about the Eucharist. The highlight was the children being able to go "behind the scenes" with Father Colville to see the Sacristy and Altar up close. Our Acolyte program, which had been inactive for a few years, was revived with 6 children being trained to serve as acolytes for our 9 and 11 a.m. services. These children are proudly wearing red robes, processing with torches, and holding the Gospel book for the Gospel reading. Our annual Fall Festival was well attended by families who enjoyed music, a petting zoo with snakes!, a bounce house obstacle course, a food truck and many fun games. It is always a great event for all ages. Our Lending Library for Children in Room C-1 continues to offer children the ability to check out a variety of Bibles and books about God, Jesus, prayer, and positive values. In mid- December, 38 children (10 more than 2022) performed in our special Christmas Pageant at two packed services. And this year there was an abundance of children confidently requesting speaking parts! A Christmas Craft night was a fun event for all ages to make snow globes and ornaments. Planning for this new year includes exploring new resources and ideas for teaching children about Lent and Advent, examining different Sunday School curriculums, and continuing to reach out to new families and those who attend sporadically to build a stronger connection. Also, summer will be a good time to plan some cool indoor activities such as Bingo or game night, to promote a sense of community and friendships between families.

Youth Outreach, Kadi Strong

Youth Outreach came alive in 2023 as we came out of Covid restrictions that prevented us from serving in the community. Our youth served at Matthew's Crossing Food Bank a few times, Eternal Springs Memory Care Center, The Aris Foundation, Salvation Army Angel Tree Project, as well as a couple others. Our youth love service projects. In June, the youth joyfully spent a week setting up and decorating for VBS, and then showed up full of energy the next week to teach the little kids. When packing bags for Matthew's Crossing, they brought a fun competitive spirit trying to pack more than the youth at the other table. My favorite though was watching the youth interact with the seniors in memory care. They painted finger nails, ran a game of bingo, and worked puzzles with a very vulnerable population in need of interaction. They youth serves with smiles and kind hearts. Outreach is a large part of our youth ministry program.

Youth Mission Trip, Kadi Strong

The summer of 2023 took us to Memphis Tennessee where 17 youth and 6 adults served the Memphis community. We were housed in a dormitory at the University of Memphis. We were provided with several different service experiences. We started at Palmer Home which provides foster care, family care, and transitional care for kids into early adulthood. We built fences and did a tremendous amount of yardwork on several homes to get them looking great for their new family units. Our second service location was Memphis Tilth, a community garden that strives to cultivate action for an economically sustainable, socially equitable, and

environmentally sound local food system. The youth transformed the garden and surrounding area with their hard work. After working in the heat and humidity, the youth rallied some energy to plan and cook a meal for a local episcopal church -Church of the Holy Communion. This was a great opportunity to meet other Episcopalians! Our last service project was at First Presbyterian Church Soup Kitchen. The youth served dinner to about 100 individuals, and once everyone had their food, the youth sat down to eat and chat with those whom they served. In addition to all of our service projects, we also had a chance to go to the National Civil Rights Museum and the Slave Haven Underground Railroad Museum.

Youth Group, Kadi Strong

Youth group expanded this year with as many as 27 middle schoolers and about 20 high schoolers. We gather each week for fun games, faith lessons and discussions, and to share a meal. (Friends, faith and Fellowship) In addition to weekly gatherings, youth leaders can be found in coffee shops chatting with youth or as spectators at sporting games, concerts, etc. Youth Group is laughter, love, friendship, support, and consistency with God at the center. We decided to test out a new dimension to youth group this year by helping to form EVYG: East Valley Youth Group. EVYG comprises the youth from Epiphany, St. Anthony on the Desert, St. Augustine, and St. Matthew's. We meet once a month to engage youth from our diocese and build a larger youth community. Lastly, we sent 8 youth, along with Kadi Strong to EYE - Episcopal Youth Event in Baltimore, Maryland. It was full of amazing speakers, moving worship, and the opportunity to hear Bishop Michael Curry preach. It was an amazing experience. As one youth said, it was "life changing!"

Habitat for Humanity, Wayne Needham

Since 1998 the Episcopal Habitat Coalition has funded, and provided volunteers to construct 83 houses for 307 people worldwide. In 2023 we started and finished a home in Glendale for a family of 3, and are currently in construction for a new home in Tempe for a family of 3. You can help with construction, or by providing food to the volunteer workers, or by funding a portion of the house.

Healing, Intercessory Prayer and Laying on of Hands, Shirley Duffy

At SMEC we ask our Lord Jesus Christ to walk among us healing what is broken in the human condition (mind, body, spirit). His will for all who come to him in faith, is healing and salvation; in him all darkness is turned to light and all brokenness is made whole. As a disciple of Christ, we are called to participate in his ministry of healing. If you feel empowered to assist in this ministry, please contact the church office, 480-899- 7386 or Shirley Duffy, greatpanes1@yahoo.com

Health Ministries, Helen Amena, BS, RN

Health Ministries - Purpose is to improve and maintain the health, wellness and wholeness of our faith community.

Faith Community Nurse – Purpose is to promote health, wellness, and wholeness through body, mind and spirit while increasing self-knowledge within our faith community through education.

In 2023 the Faith Community Nurse followed approximately 25 people and had a total of 326 hours in visits and phone calls. I additionally make phone calls for St. Matthew's Telecare Minister. Anyone interested in the Health Ministry may contact me at 480-786-8855.

Hispanic Outreach Ministry, Joe Albo

During 2023 outreach to the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras was limited by the Honduran government's limitations on Faith Based medical missions and the 2023 Arizona-Virginia October mission was cancelled. However, St. Matthew's provided funds to assist Bishop Lloyd Allen with his plan to establish a free or low-cost dental clinic at the Iglesia Episcopal de San Marcos in the area of Omoa. Also, Saint Matthew's generously supported a Hispanic Christian congregation in Mesa (Buen Pastor) that provides transitional services for migrant families from Central and South America who either made their way to the area or were dropped off by Customs and Border Protection officers. Both efforts were part of the overall Outreach Committee's program to extend Christ's love to those in need in the area.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors - LEV Deacon Sally Niles

Our LEV team consists of 6-9 dedicated Volunteers who provide both visitation and Holy Communion to our parishioners who are homebound in our surrounding community. The visitation schedule includes monthly, twice a month and sometimes weekly encounters giving our at home church family a choice of how often a visit is desired. By connecting to our neighbors who cannot attend regular worship in person, our LEV team can bring the fellowship and sacred space of presence, companionship, and holy listening.

Our LEV also help with providing other ways to be a part of the community by reminding our friends of:

- a) livestream services at 9am (helping with technology),
- b) Inviting them to be a part of the Tuesday afternoon Happy Hour on Zoom
- c) Bringing the current Sunday Worship Bulletin for reading and prayer time
- d) To expect a friendly Telephone call from our TeleCare Ministry
- e) The prayers and praying for each other within our midst is the living out our faith.

The LEV Team coordinate with Deacon Sally to report their visits and it is recorded in the Parish Record Book. The LEV travel kits that hold the consecrated bread and wine are carefully provided with the help of the Altar Guild (thank you!)

As a group, the LEV team communicate via meetings at least once a year, and regularly through emails, text, zoom, and face to face meetings. We give thanks for the fluid flexibility of this type of service.

There have been between 9-12 homebound LEV recipients this past year. The requests for visits can be made by the individual, a family member or a friend. These requests are communicated through the Church Office, Fr. Colville, and in direct conversations. Though we have said final goodbye to some of our homebound friends this year, we remember them with love in our prayers.

If anyone would be interested in being a part of the LEV team in 2024, contact Deacon Sally, 602-770-3739 or email: amosandspike@yahoo.com

Peace & Blessings, Dcn. Sally Niles

Junior Warden and Liturgy Report, Darlene Abel

This year I had the privilege of serving as your Junior Warden. Some of the things we accomplished together this year include painting the perimeter of the church and lining the foundation with rocks, sprucing up the chapel, patching and painting walls including Fr Colville's office, battling irrigation and hose bibs and plumbing, planting, trimming trees, pruning all sorts of things, fixing doors, putting in misters, working on the memorial garden, and sweeping and patching the roofs which ultimately will culminate in the roofs and A/Cs of our older buildings being replaced very soon! I mostly acted as cheer leader to a wonderful group of servants. They deserve all the credit.

As verger, I also want to take this opportunity to give thanks for our lay worship leaders, those who read the Scripture, those who serve at the altar, and those who act as acolytes. I also give thanks for our clergy, most of whom work on a voluntary basis. We all appreciate your efforts to make our worship experience rich and inspiring. We continued with our Sunday services of one service that is contemplative, one that is traditional with organ, choir and bells (that is also streamed!), and one that is contemporary with our praise band. We also have a healing service every Wednesday and Thursday evening prayer services throughout Advent and Lent, not to mention special services including some beautiful choir offerings! And we have room for more!

I pray for God's continued blessing on the people of Saint Matthew's as we look forward to the coming year.

Memory Café, Shafeeka Brown

A new ministry started this year at St Matthews. It is a Memory Cafe. This is a social gathering for people with dementia and their caregivers. It opened on December 8, 2023 with games, music and light snacks. It will run every 1st and 3rd Friday of every month from 10 am -11:30 am. Activities will include games, art, music, yoga and much more. There will always be coffee and healthy snacks.

Music Ministry, Rachel Salemi, Saint Matthew's Music Director

St. Matthew's Music Ministry currently includes four ensembles and soloists who provide music for worship throughout the year at the 7:30, 9:00 am, and 11:00 am services, including Adult Choir, Handbell Choir, State of Grace Band, and Youth Ringers/Youth Choir. It was a wonderful year of music ministry.

Rachel Salemi selects and directs the music at the 9:00 service, and leads adult choir, handbell choir, and youth choir. Youth choir had been on hiatus since Covid, so it was a joy to welcome this ministry back. Well over 20 youth practiced weekly and presented their songs as part of our worship services in fall 2023. The adult choir and handbell choir welcomed new members including two flautists/oboist, perfected their praises at rehearsals, and shared their music with the congregation every week.

Sylvia Smythe continued teaching children in 2nd-8th grade in our Youth Ringers ensemble in the spring of 2023. They have been enjoying this fun, team-oriented musical group, while learning to read notes and rhythms. They worked on ringing handbells this year, and played in church several times. **Rachel Salemi** will continue this ministry in the spring of 2024.

Steven VandenBerg, our organist since January 2022, decided to step down in September. We celebrated his final Sunday as organist on Sept. 24th and formed a committee to search for a new organist. With his years of experience and excellent skills, we will greatly miss Steve, but he will continue to bless us with his playing as a "permanent sub." We had many gifted substitute organists fill in for the last quarter of the year. Our hiring committee heard several applicants, and our new and talented organist/accompanist **Gayle Riggert-Harris** was welcomed on January 1st, 2024.

Dave Hecker, our contemporary worship leader, gave us a year's notice of his retirement, and we were blessed to celebrate his many years of ministry with the State of Grace contemporary band on November 4th. He will continue to volunteer with the band as his schedule allows. We formed a hiring committee in the summer of 2023, and after auditioning and interviewing candidates, found our new and talented contemporary worship leader, **Steve Gripp**, who took over as leader in November.

Special musical events this year included:

- Valley Chamber Chorale concert at St. Matthew's in February
- Choral services on Ash Wednesday, Monday in Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday with brass
- Chandler Children's Choir Ad Astra concert at St. Matthew's in April
- Several new anthems composed by women and African American composers
- Central Arizona American Guild of Organist and St. Matthew's co-sponsored Festival of Hymns in September
- Three festive Christmas Eve & Day services, including brass quintet

Necrology, Debby Tartell

The following members of Saint Matthew's entered the nearer presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the year 2023: Jim Downey Sr., Sandy Downey, George Duke, Frances Ferguson, Leo Horn, Judy James, Audrey Kerns, Martha Kichinko, Virginia Naquin, Calvin Rezzonico, Edward Saba, Morgan Rose Turner, Dennis Vermilye, Dama Wimbish.

Newcomer Ministry, Tammy Halter

All new members that submit a yellow information card receive outreach from Father Colville and are invited to join staff, ministry leaders and vestry members for refreshments, to learn about different programming and make some new friends. Between yellow cards and website signups, our three new member events had over 100 combined new members invited, several dozen of which attended! The "welcome bags" that our ushers provide to new members were refreshed with some additional items. Everyone is encouraged to do your part in welcoming newcomers and visitors by saying "hello", introducing yourself and inviting someone you don't know to join you at coffee hour this year. If interested in supporting the mixers or serving on the Committee, please contact Tammy Halter at tammy.halter@gmail.com or 602-570-1115.

Online Ministry Offerings, Natalie VanDeVeire

Our online group met 16 times in 2023. We also had a separate 4-week hybrid Music and Spirituality class led by Deacon Sally Niles. Typically, this group watches a video together and then answers thought provoking questions as they feel called to do so during the remaining time. An average of 8 people attended these online discussion sessions. Owl cameras were permanently mounted in the Parish Hall and church office to allow for consistent and (mostly) easy hybrid integration for vestry meetings and countless ministry offerings – allowing parishioners to stay connected from across the world due to vacations or their living room due to illness or transportation woes. Technology continues to flourish and grow at Saint Matthew's!

Online Worship Offerings, Natalie VanDeVeire

Our online viewership is level and remains strong! We're always tweaking the audio levels of the 9:00 service to ensure the sound in the sanctuary and on YouTube is the best quality we can offer. On a typical Sunday, 15- 25 households watch our 9:00 service live and an additional 40+ accounts view at least a meaningful portion of the service throughout the week. We also livestreamed several funerals and a wedding! Our online views are up 38% compared to 2022 and we had 90 new subscribers in 2023.

Outreach report, Jennifer Downey

The Outreach Committee focuses on helping people in the surrounding community of Chandler, throughout Arizona and the world. Our congregation funds the work that we do and our committee is open to new projects. We currently support, Matthew's Crossing Foodbank, Helen's Hope Chest, Habitat for Humanity, Border Ministry, Episcopal Relief and Development projects and The Honduras Medical ministry.

The Outreach Committee meets once a month by zoom usually on Wednesdays. We have welcomed two new members this year and are definitely looking for more people who are interested in outreach work in our community, country or internationally. The funds for the outreach committee come from three sources: Vestry allocation once a year, The Diocesan rebates that come quarterly and congregational donations (year round).

In 2023 we completed 5 collection drives: June - diapers and hygiene items for the border ministry, July - backpacks for Helen's Hope Chest (foster children for back to school), October- Thanksgiving food drive (collected all the sides for Matthew's Crossing food bank), November- Gift Cards for Teens in Foster Care at Helen's Hope Chest, December- Toy drive for HopeKids who provided Christmas for families with Children who have life threatening illnesses.

Throughout the year we supported the following organizations: Habitat for Humanity, Helen's Hope Chest, Episcopal Border Ministry, Episcopal Relief and Development fund when disasters strike our donations flow through them, Honduras Medical Ministry, Matthew's Crossing Food Bank, For Our City (clean up Chandler), HopeKids, Outreach initiatives for the Youth Group. We have also supported the work of Becoming Beloved Community and have made a donation for the start up of the Memory Cafe.

The Outreach Community is successful because of the dedicated volunteers who bring ideas to the meetings on how to make a difference to our local, national and international community and then we provide these opportunities to the congregation. We always welcome new ideas and would like to have more participation if you feel called.

Rector Search Committee, Rebecca Daniels

After many months of preparation in 2022, the AZ Diocese Office of Transitional Ministry (OTM) posted the Rector position for St. Matthew's on January 11, 2023, following the holidays. While the position was active, the committee reconvened on Wednesday, January 18, 2023 in a series of in person and Zoom calls to begin the process of reviewing the criteria to create interview questions for the candidates and their references. The Rector Search Committee members were:

- Rebecca Daniels, Committee Chair
- Bryce Carder, Senior Warden
- Shafeeka Brown
- Claude Hayes
- Tammy Halter, Vestry Member
- Rob Hitchcock
- Georgia Merz
- Lisa Oliver
- McKenna Smith
- Jay Tibshraeny
- Susan Wright

The position closed out at the end of February 2023. Due to a lack of qualified candidates, reviewed by the AZ Diocese, the posting was extended. The committee continued to meet to refine interview questions, ensuring they aligned with 'Who St. Matthew's is'.

In early April 2023, the Diocese sent resumes to the Search Committee. Upon review, the Search Committee requested to reopen the search for additional candidates. The AZ Diocese agreed to re-post until May 8 and the Committee created an ad for the Episcopal News Service for the same length of time.

On May 4, 2023, Bryce Carder experienced an unexpected health issue that required immediate surgery and an undetermined amount of recovery time. Tammy Halter, the Vesty Liaison assigned to the Rector Search Committee, filled in for Bryce. Tammy and Rebecca met with Cn. Anita shortly thereafter and received the names of additional candidates. The Search Committee reconnected and scheduled Zoom interviews around various busy summer vacation and travel schedules of the candidates and Committee members to commence in June. And thankfully, Bryce was well enough to join.

On June 29, 2023, a wrap up meeting for final discernment of each candidate and to assign reference checks was held. It was determined that qualified candidates were to be presented in the next Vestry meeting, scheduled August 9.

On July 31, 2023, the Search committee encountered some unforeseen turbulence in their journey. The candidates that were to be presented to the Vestry decided to withdraw their applications citing personal reasons that were not a reflection of St. Matthew's or the work invested. Bryce, Rebecca, Tammy and our consultant, Janet Beason, met with Cn Anita Braden from the AZ Diocese OTM to reopen the position.

On September 1, 2023, the Search Committee received additional candidates from the OTM. The Committee met in person and scheduled Zoom interviews with the qualified candidates. A series of calls were made to check references on each candidate.

On September 21, 2023, the Search Committee informed the Diocese of the candidates that would be presented to Vestry on September 27 to schedule onsite visits.

In late November 2023, Vestry discernment led to a vote to offer Rev. Monica Whitaker the role of Rector.

On December 3, 2023, it was announced that Rev. Monica Whitaker had accepted the call to be the next Rector of St. Matthews Episcopal Church, beginning February 1, 2024.

Saints In Action, Shirley Duffy

We are a committee of caring parishioners who hope to make a difference when it comes time to have a reception following a celebration of life or memorial service at Saint Matthew's Church. At the request of a grieving family, we will help them manage everything needed for a reception, thus removing this burden from the long list of things to do at a difficult time in life. If we may be of assistance to your family, please contact the Church Office, 480-899-7386 or Shirley Duffy at greatpanes1@yahoo.com

State of Grace Band, Steve Gripp

I'm very excited to have been directing the State Of Grace band at Saint Mathew's since November. Working with the dedicated and talent group of volunteers here at St Matt's has been a pleasure. I'm grateful for all the kindness and support from the congregation and staff. I am very much looking forward to learning new material and favorites in the band's repertoire in a new year in music at the 11:00am service.

Thanks to all!

Stewardship Committee, Donnie Provost

The Stewardship Committee helps educate our church on the spiritual practice of giving of time, talent and treasure as well as initiate and monitor our giving performance. This committee must be chaired by a vestry member (currently Donnie Provost) and volunteers including Justine Austin, Lindsey Brown, Tim Skarupa and Andrea Wight collaborate together to serve our St Matt's community.

A large focus for 2023 was on reinitiating St Matt's annual Ministry Fair, which we hadn't done since before COVID. The Ministry Fair provides an opportunity for all parishioners to learn how best they can get involved in the many ways of doing God's work through St Matt's. We are thrilled to announce that nearly 70% of our Ministries (or 24 of 35) had parishioners sign-up to volunteer! There were 103 sign-ups comprised of 54 different parishioners. We're hoping to have this year's Ministry Fair on April, 28th, 2024. (Save the date now!)

We also ran our annual pledge drive known as "Consecration Sunday" in the Fall of 2023, which helps St Matt's plan for the coming year. It is with overwhelming joy in our hearts and privilege to report that you all, our St Matt's congregation, were moved to respond with an abundance of generosity yet again! This year's Consecration Sunday yielded 162 pledges in total, with 19 of those being first-time pledgers and 13 of those being returning pledgers (parishioners who didn't pledge in 2023 but did in 2022). The pledge amount received for 2024 will help get St Matt's income back to Pre-COVID levels, which is wonderful! Special thanks to the Stewardship Committee as well as Debby Tartell and Natalie VanDeVeire for their efforts.

If you'd like to join the Stewardship Committee, or just have questions on how you can get involved, please call or text Donnie Provost at (480) 628-7608.

Telecare Ministry, Audrey Bennett

Fr. Timothy Dombek, at the invitation and with the assistance of our interim rector, Fr Colville Smythe, trained several volunteers to serve as our first Telecare team in the spring of 2023. It has grown now at year's end to ten members, and most members of St Matthew's have each received at least two phone calls. This ministry has been designed to keep communication channels open and flowing between members of our congregation and its clergy and lay leaders and to provide spiritual support in the form of prayer. Each parish family listed in the directory will be contacted three times a year —after Christmas, after Easter, and during the fall months. The purpose of these calls is simply to see how members of St Matthew's are doing, to address any prayer needs, and to provide an opportunity to inform the clergy or parish leadership of any concerns. If the call is not answered, the team member will identify themselves and leave a number and invitation for a return call. If prayers are requested, the first names only will be given to Debby for a four-week insertion in the church bulletin. If intercessory prayers are needed, they will receive daily attention by team members after permission to do so has been granted by the requester. If a hospital, home visit, or phone call by a member of the clergy is desired, this will also be communicated by the team member.

We hope the congregation will appreciate the pastoral support this ministry is designed to provide. We, the Telecare team, all look forward to serving the parish in this way throughout the church year. In addition, if anyone wishes to volunteer to serve in this ministry, please feel free to contact the coordinator by email Ash244@icloud.com. As a reminder and to insure our team can reach you, please be sure your church directory information is complete and up to date.

Ushers, Jeff Pavlica

2023 was a good year for our ministry as we gained a number of volunteers to welcome, direct and assist parishioners for our Services throughout the year. Ushers provide a range of services before, during and after each service to ensure a positive experience for all who attend. We continue to welcome new volunteers and encourage those interested to join our ministry.