Saint Matthew's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*"See, I am doing a new thing!*
*Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"*
—Isaiah 43:19a, NIV

November 2, 2026

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

As we begin our ministry together, I have been thinking often about the above words from the prophet Isaiah. What a fitting invitation for this moment in the life of St. Matthew's.

We are beginning a new chapter together, not leaving behind all that has been lovingly planted and faithfully tended here, but watching for the new growth God is already bringing forth among us. I come with deep gratitude for those who have built and sustained this parish across the years, and with tremendous hope for all that God may yet do through us.

As your new rector, I look forward to hearing your stories, discovering the gifts of this congregation, and discerning with you where the Holy Spirit may be leading us. I am especially excited about the ways we might deepen our life of worship and faith by creating space for prayer, formation, music, fellowship, and the holy questions that draw us closer to God and one another.

**At the heart of stewardship is a simple truth: everything we have is a gift from God. Scripture calls God's people to offer the "first fruits" of their labor, not simply whatever happens to remain, but a portion set aside first in gratitude and trust. This is what makes a pledge more than an ordinary charitable contribution. We prayerfully decide what portion of the abundance entrusted to us we will return to God through St. Matthew's. Through that offering, God's love takes visible form in worship that nourishes us, care for those who are hurting, children growing in faith, and a community being formed in the way of Jesus.**

Whether you have belonged to St. Matthew's for decades, recently found your way here, are returning after time away, or participate in ways that do not always bring you through the doors on Sunday, you are part of this community. There is a place for you in this new thing God is doing.

Last year, St. Matthew's received 42 pledge offerings totaling $308,000 in support of our worship, ministries, and shared life. This year, with increasing expenses in many areas, our hope is that our members and friends will come together, offering from their first fruits to broaden and deepen support for both new and existing ministries, while allowing us to maintain a sustainable draw from the endowment and responsibly plan for the faithful stewardship of our facilities.

If you have pledged before, thank you for the faithfulness that has sustained St. Matthew's and made this new chapter possible. If you have never pledged, I invite you to consider doing so this year. A pledge is simply a prayerful intention to give a particular amount during the coming year. It helps the parish plan wisely and can always be adjusted if your circumstances change.

Enclosed you will find a pledge card. I invite you to spend some time in prayer with Isaiah's words and ask: What new thing might God be bringing forth at St. Matthew's? How might I offer back a portion of what God has given me to help it grow?

**On Sunday, December 6, we will celebrate Commitment Sunday.** During worship, we will offer our pledge cards upon the altar as signs of our gratitude, hope, and commitment to the life of this community. If you are unable to attend, you may return your card beforehand or send it by mail.

God is doing a new thing at St. Matthew's. Even now, it is springing up. I am grateful and excited to be here with you, and I cannot wait to discover what God will make possible through our community.

Faithfully,

*Kerith Harding*

The Rev. Kerith Harding
Rector