

## 2021 Annual Report



*Do this in remembrance of me.*

**Annual Parish Meeting**  
**February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

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## **Bible Study**

### **Luke 22:14-20**

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'

## Annual Meeting Agenda

February 6, 2022

11:30 am

Call to Order	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Opening Prayer	The Rev. Deacon Don Burr
Bible Study	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Approval of the 2020 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Remarks from the Director of Children, Youth, & Family Ministries	Samantha Trolice
Remarks from the Director of Music Ministries & Organist	Andrew Leslie Cooper
Remarks by the Senior Warden	Brian Angerame
Remarks by the Junior Warden	Pam Ely
Nominating Committee Report	Pam Ely
Election of Vestry, Officers and Delegates	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Recognitions	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Remarks by the Deacon	The Rev. Deacon Don Burr
Remarks by the Rector	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
2021 Financial Review & 2022 Budget	Keith DeAngelis
Questions and Answers	
Closing Prayer	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
Adjournment of Annual Meeting	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach

### 2021 Wardens, Vestry and Officers

Senior Warden	Brian Angerame
Junior Warden	Pam Ely
Treasurer	Keith DeAngelis
Assistant Treasurers	Bruce Beebe, Rob Kyle, Andrea Sato
Clerk	Anne Newton
Diocesan Delegates	Pam Ely, Sharon Ely Pearson
Diocesan Alternates	Chris Perry, Steve Hudspeth

### Vestry Class of 2021

Dodo Roberts  
Jessica Christ  
Tim Jarvis

### Vestry Class of 2022

Pam Ely  
Joe Magnano  
Paul Reis

### Vestry Class of 2023

Pam Carlson  
Vytas Kisieliuss

**St. Matthew's Episcopal Church**  
**February 7, 2021 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes**  
**11:30 a.m.**

**Call to Order:** The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach, Rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, called the meeting to order at 11:32 am.

**Attendance:** The meeting was held virtually via Zoom due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

**Opening Prayer:** **Rev. Deacon Don Burr**

**Bible Study:** **Rev. Marissa Rohrbach**

- Isaiah 43: 15-21
- **First Reading:** what specific word catches your attention? Where do you get stuck? What captures your imagination?
- **Second Reading:** what phrases, lines, themes or ideas do you want to know more about? What is the good news? What do you have questions about?

**Polling Practice:** **Rev. Marissa Rohrbach**

- Due to the online/virtual format of the meeting we will need to run a poll in order to vote on motions
- Marissa used 2 samples for everyone to feel comfortable with the format

**Approval of the 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes:** **Rev. Marissa Rohrbach**

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2020 Annual Meeting was made; it was seconded and approved by parishioners in attendance. 95% Ayes from poll.

**Remarks from the Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries:** **Samantha Trolice**

Full report submitted in Annual Parish Meeting Handout page 25

Highlights include:

- Anything but predictable, world drastically changed
- Flipped ministry on its head without notice
- Transplant programs from live to online via Zoom with good initial momentum
- Switch from program minded to what the kids and families needed in the moment
- Open to a lot of change
- Zoom fatigue, challenges with communication across a screen, it is different than in person
- Changes made to address challenges

- Virtual VBS
  - Found curriculum for virtual setting in collaboration with Nate
  - Supplemented by “camper box” with all needed supplies
- Shifted this idea of monthly “packaging” to church school
- Nate took a call elsewhere and Julie Fowler stepped in to partner with Sam
- Went back to basics of following the liturgical calendar
- Drive thru Nativity: St M’s and WPC collaborated
  - Donations, volunteers, animals
  - Event to bring hope, joy and refreshment
- Pivot as a team
- New, innovative ways to connect with children and youth
- Church is so much more than a building
- Sam shared a reading from Paul to the Ephesians
- Thank you for encouragement for the ministry and for Sam

**Remarks by the Senior Warden:**

**Jen Kepner**

Full report submitted in Annual Parish Meeting Handout page 20

Highlights include:

- 5<sup>th</sup> year on the Vestry
- Remembrance of the day the Vestry was scheduled to interview Marissa, snow storm, no power
- God was preparing us for change
- When our literal doors closed she opened other ones
- Gratitude for Marissa
- Technology: blessed with Dave Cristini and a tech savvy Rector
- Some folks really fed and connected
- Some folks are not as connected but you are important, we see you and we love you
- They will know we are Christians by our love
- Care and love for our neighbors
- Doesn’t mean we don’t disagree
- If we are truly a family we will disagree but we will still be a family
- Much to be grateful for and much to pay attention to
- Shared quote about faith
- Keep following the light
- Here to approve a budget and elect new leaders
- Renewal Works team, read more about it in the annual report
- Thank you to Keith
- Thanks to Brian

**Remarks by the Junior Warden:**

**Brian Angerame**

Full report submitted in Annual Parish Meeting Handout page 23

Highlights include:

- Favors to ask:
  - Send a quick email to Marissa to say thank you
    - Increased pastoral needs of our friends and families
    - Marissa has been tending to these needs continually over these months

- Send thanks to Jen Kepner
- Unapologetically faithful, tireless work, she doesn't hold back with her ideas
- Continue to have patience, we are getting close, we all want to be together
- The coming months may be even trickier, trust in us and we will get there as quickly as we can
- Thank you to everyone for playing a part in helping Brian and family stay sane through this past year

### **Nominating Committee Report:**

**Brian Angerame**

The following slate of Officers and Vestry members was submitted for consideration Annual Parish Meeting Handout page 8

#### **Officers:**

Senior Warden	Brian Angerame
Junior Warden	Pam Ely
Treasurer	Keith DeAngelis
Clerk	Anne Newton
Assistant Treasurers	Bruce Beebe, Rob Kyle, Andrea Sato
Diocesan Delegates	Pam Ely, Sharon Pearson
Diocesan Alternates	Chris Perry, Stephen Hudspeth

#### **New Vestry Members:**

Pam Carlson, Tim Jarvis, Vytas Kisieliuss

Please note: Tim Jarvis will fill a 1-year seat vacated by Brian Angerame when he became Junior Warden

### **Election of Vestry, Officers & Delegates:**

**Rev. Marissa Rohrbach**

A motion to approve the slate as presented was made; it was seconded and approved by parishioners in attendance. 98% ayes, 2% abstained.

### **Recognitions:**

**Rev. Marissa Rohrbach**

- Thank you from Marissa
- Executive Committee: Wardens, Treasurer and Clerk
  - First sounding board
  - Precious resource
  - Wonderful and generous companions
- Social Media: Dave Cristini
  - Thanks to the whole social media crew
  - Dave's leadership has been crucial, patient, empowering
  - Helped us find our footprint
- Finance Chair: Jonathan Woods
  - Openness, asks questions, generosity of spirit
  - Tremendous help to Keith
  - Took on projects this year, generous presence
- Vestry members concluding their terms: Kim Hall, Mike Kaelin
  - Kim has served in many ways: Coffee Hour/Hospitality host, raises her hand with a different thought, very helpful with the survey we completed this summer

- Mike has served in many ways: Co-chair of Recruitment team, parish bylaws, sense of detail to our work
- both words and process
- Excited to see what their next season will bring
  
- Jen Kepner
- Helped to care for us for a long time
- Has seen a lot of transition as both Sr. Warden, Jr. Warden and member of the Vestry
- Something special about the Wardens who call you as the priest
- Thanks to her family who has shared her with us

**Remarks by the Deacon:**

**The Rev. Deacon Don Burr**

Full report submitted in Annual Parish Meeting Handout page 27

Highlights include:

- The people of this place have continued to share themselves:
  - Rapid response to a need Don shared from a group in Bridgeport
- Book group thank you to those who participated and created a safe place for discussion of depression
- Don will be sharing a trip he took
- Opportunity with Norwalk Hospital

**Remarks by the Rector:**

**The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach**

Full report submitted in Annual Parish Meeting Handout page 10

Highlights include:

- Please read full report
- Tough year for all of us
- Moving parts and the number of people it takes to make things happen
- Began meeting with prayer and bible study
  - This is the way we begin all Vestry meetings
  - Reminder of what God is calling us to do
  - Renewal Works group has decided that this is something we will do for all meetings
  - Marissa has laid out a text for each month of the next year that we will all use at every gathering
  - Helpful reminder of why we do this work
  - An engaging way to begin together and get to know each other better
- Renewal Works
  - Thanks to Pam and Joe as leaders and the group as a whole who took on this meaningful commitment
  - This group has wondered together about how to create pathways and on ramps to help create a spiritual journey for all of us
  - Timing couldn't be better to commit ourselves to each other again
- Thankful for how each of us have been part of the journey of 2020
- Thankful for how the community has rallied and stayed together, loved the town, loved each other
- None of us could have predicted how this past year evolved
- Staff rallied, never took a break, worked steadily through the summer, are flexible and dedicated
  - We all rallied, participated in all of the ways we came up with to stay connected
  - God reaches out to us in the midst of all of this and He does that through all of you
- In the year ahead much to look forward to
  - We will be back together
  - Some of our seniors have been vaccinated
  - WEPCO will be serving as the town's main vaccination site

- Caring and accessible place for the whole community
- Thankful for Shannon and the WPC community, richly blessed, partners
- Choir thanks: so present, dedicated, flexible
  - What they do is not easy, up to this challenge, continued to show up
  - Linda Gortz thanks for stepping up to being a liaison for the choir
  - Thanks to the Famous family for their contributions
- We are in a strong financial position
  - Made some difficult decisions in the last few years
  - Generosity of members
  - While there are challenges there is hope
  - Rare to be in the position we are: to have this meeting, share a budget
  - We will face challenges together
  - We are exactly where we should be: making lasting relationships, growing, exploring new things
- Privilege to be your companion and Rector on this road

### **2021 Budget and Financial Outlook**

**Keith DeAngelis**

Full report submitted in Annual Parish Meeting Handout page 47

Several slides presented as well with information on the financials via shared screen:

#### **2020 review:**

- Presented 2020 budget with 34K loss and 29K accumulated deficit
- At the end of 2020
  - Operating gain of 47K vs 34K budgeted loss
  - Income for 2020 626K vs 585K budgeted
  - Pledge receipts, auction and PPP loan
  - Expenses of 580K vs 619K budgeted
  - Campus closed but fixed costs and increased tech need
- Showed list of Restricted funds and dollars in 2019 and 2020

#### **2021 Budget presented:**

- Projected 67K loss
  - Income: difficult to project
  - Total budgeted 79K below 2020 actual
  - As of yesterday 440K, pledged by 83 parishioners
  - We always try to budget below the projected
  - Non pledge donation of 47K (already 30K accounted for)
  - Auction
  - Future PPP loan?
  - Expense: 34K higher than 2020 actual
  - Plant 12K
  - Tech 12K
  - Clergy expense 9K
  - Common Mission Support 7K
  - Youth 6K
  - Music 12K lower r/t transition

## 2021 Endowment:

Distribution 157K  
Mission 41K  
Mortgage principal 23K  
Capital 56K  
Deferred 37K

## Discussion:

- Resources to fund budgeted 67K deficit:
  - 32K surplus from prior operations
  - Endowment distribution: Vestry approved use of Endowment distribution for operations
  - Future PPP?
- Ended 2020 in a strong place due to everyone's contributions
  - Some of our friends have left town, many new member opportunities
- Grateful for Keith, tremendous resource, a "treasure"

## Comments, Questions/Answers:

*Thank you to Marissa for the inspiration of her sermons in this challenging time. To the leadership of the church. Extraordinary to overcome the deficit projected last year. We can overcome deficits. Thanks to Scott. Thanks to Sandy Muschler, great help with Rise Against Hunger and her work for WEPCO.*

*Book of thank you notes to Sandy compiled by Jen as Sandy did not want a Zoom thank you.*

*Sandy's replacement, Andrew. Just started this week. Proactive and ambitious. Speaks Spanish and already establishing a good relationship with Max. Jumped right in to planning with town for vaccination clinic. Thanks to Chris and Gretchen Jeanes.*

*PPP loan for 2021 (40-50K?). Would have broken even without it in 2020*

*Deficit projected at 67K loss but we are starting out with surplus from 2020.*

*Thanks to Samantha for all her work on Church School. Helpful to the families. Encouraged for kids/grandkids who aren't involved.*

*God has created a path in the wilderness*

## Closing Prayer and Adjournment

**The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:57pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Newton, Vestry Clerk

## Report from the 2021 Nominating Committee

### Officers

Senior Warden	Pam Ely
Junior Warden	Anne Newton
Treasurer	Keith DeAngelis
Clerk	Jennifer DeAngelis
Assistant Treasurers	Rob Kyle, Andrea Sato
Diocesan Delegates	Pam Ely & Sharon Pearson
Diocesan Alternates	Chris Perry & Stephen Hudspeth

### New Vestry Members

Beth Baker, Amy Gubner

## 2022 St. Matthew's Committee Chairs

Acolytes, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors & Intercessors	Sharon Ely Pearson
Altar Guild	Betsy Pettit
Building & Grounds	Bill Brautigam
Cemetery Committee	David Hapke, Roger Valkenburgh
Coffee Hour (Virtual)	Dodo Roberts
Communications & Social Media	Mark Gilmor
Endowment Development Committee	Roger Valkenburgh
Endowment Investment Committee	Bob Dalldorf, John Wyman, Roger Valkenburgh
Finance	Rob Kyle
Flower Guild	Jennifer Angerame
Ushers	David Gortz
JCCEC (Joint Children's Christian Education Committee)	Samantha Trolice
Memorial Gifts	Clergy & Wardens, ex officio
Mission	Pam Ely
Pastoral Care	Elizabeth Baker, Pam Ely
WEPCO	Tom Carlson, Chris Perry

St. Matthew's is a large parish with many moving parts.

We couldn't do all that we do without these dedicated teams. We're so grateful to everyone who serves on a committee, as Chairs, and Co-Chairs. Thank you for your service to God and to St. Matthew's. Your faithfulness and dedication make an important difference in the life of our whole community. Thank you!



## Church Staff 2021

Rector  
 Director of Music Ministries and Organist  
 Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries  
 Parish Administrator  
 Communications Coordinator  
 Bookkeeper  
 WEPCO Facilities Coordinator  
 Sexton  
 Nursery Staff

The Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach  
 Andrew Leslie Cooper  
 Samantha Trolice  
 Nancy Johnson  
 Matthew Henshaw  
 Louann Miska  
 Andrew Arevalo  
 Max Gil  
 Lucia Sato, Kate DeAngelis

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
<b>Sunday Services</b>	63	62	100	108	103	94	105	102
<b>Weekday Services</b>	43	81	30	37	36	37	34	61
<b>Pastoral Visits (Priest)</b>	42	34	20	21				
<b>Eucharistic Visitors</b>	4	3	6					
<b>Total Sunday Attendance</b>	1,894		7,897	8,560	9,714	10,386	11,690	12,491
<b>Baptisms</b>	2	1	2	2	6	9	7	6
<b>Confirmations</b>	10	Postponed	23	23	23	12	26	30
<b>Marriages</b>	1	0	0	0	3	1	3	3
<b>Funerals/Burials</b>	1	5	5	6	5	3	11	11
<b>Average Sunday Attendance</b>			135	164	134	171	176	178

\*Note: 2020 Total Sunday Attendance reflects Sundays May-December in person.  
 It's not really possible to calculate ASA and compare these numbers to previous years.  
 Some digital numbers are included below.

## 2021 Digital Numbers (Sunday Averages from Facebook)

	<b>Jan-May (<u>before</u> in- person worship)</b>	<b>June-Dec (along with in-person worship)</b>
<b>Reach</b>	154	128
<b>Post Clicks</b>	97	81
<b>Comments/Engagements</b>	58	42

\*Note: There is no way to track the number of folks who tune in on the website.

2021 Baptisms  
 Kate Lane, Drew Lane

2021 Funerals and Burials  
 Ken Davis

## Rector's Report 2020

*Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'*

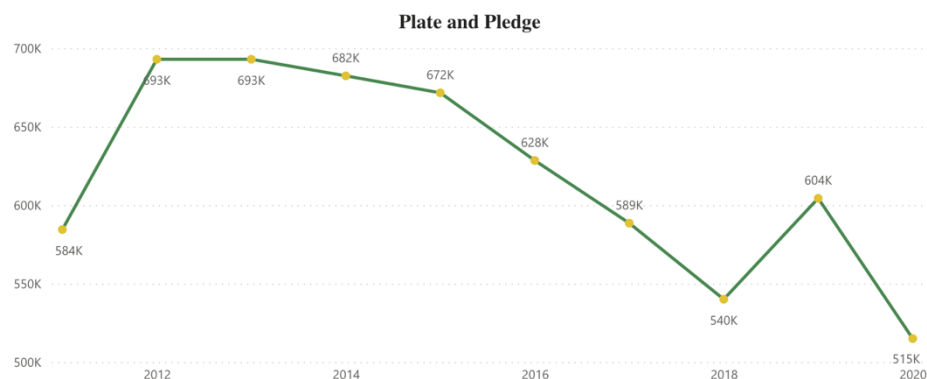
Luke 22:19

Everything that we are and everything that we do comes back to this: to remembering Jesus. In everything we do in our life and work together, from our worship to formation, to programming and fellowship, everything we do is, at its heart, about Jesus. About *remembering* him and his sacrifice. And about *re-membering* him – as we are united by Sacrament and Spirit and live out our vocation as the Body of Christ. Each one of us a member of the Body, each one given work to do. Each one valued and special. Each one beloved. Each one necessary to the work of following Jesus in the world and *remembering* him. This is at the heart of discipleship, and so is at the heart of our journey together as we seek to be ever more faithful disciples to the one who sacrificed himself for us.

### A Quick Look Back

To begin my report, I want us to remember the story arc we've shared over the last two years. We have all been on quite a journey. Now headed into our third year of living with COVID, it is again a huge understatement to say that we're all in a place we never expected to be. None of us could have imagined on March 12, 2020 when I closed the physical doors of the parish that we would still be struggling with COVID today. I distinctly remember saying to you all that we thought it might be just a few weeks before things would be back to "normal." That certainly wasn't the case.

So, before we look at 2021, I think it's important to acknowledge where we've been. And in some ways, to name and to grieve the things that we've lost. It's an important part of telling the story of 2021, to understand where the story picks up. For context, before COVID arrived in Wilton, we had just had our second Annual Meeting together. We were closing in on our second anniversary of ministry together. The parish was growing. We had new members and new families. Our stewardship was growing and so was our footprint in the larger community. We made a series of difficult decisions in order to be more fiscally responsible, to reign in spending and maximize our ministries. And those decisions paid off, putting us in a very strong position. It also



served as a good re-focus for our life together on a grand scale, helping us to prioritize. Just take a look at this graph (made publicly available along with some others by the Episcopal Church, <https://www.generalconvention.org/explore-parochial-report-trends>).

Our work together began in 2018 – and look at how good it was! These numbers reflect new members, greater participation, and positive energy about our life together. And that spike shows us the direction we were headed in! So, for myself – and I imagine for you – I want to just name some grief in this. Numbers aren't everything of course – but they can be a useful tool for us. And while I have been very positive these last two years about our life together, I don't want you to miss the fact that I have some real grief about what we've lost. About the loss of plans and

trajectory. About the loss of motion and freedom we had, the flexibility, what felt “normal”. I had quite a few irons in the fire. And we were exceedingly busy. New projects, new ideas. Among other things, I was working on the foundations of an international relationship so that we could begin an intergenerational mission trip. We were working on new directions in children’s formation, adult formation, music, and fellowship. Opportunity felt like it was everywhere. And by all accounts, we were thriving as we did God’s work together. We were flying – and enjoying it tremendously along the way! We made some changes to help us remember Jesus better – and to help folks be more active as members in this Body.

And then COVID. And while what you might be expecting me to say here is that COVID ruined everything, it didn’t. It did change everything. And there is a lot, still that we all are grieving. Me too. Anyone who knows me well knows that I’m a planner. I had quite a lot planned out for us – and we were moving in the right direction on every front. And so, it is a loss to me too that things are...not what they could have been.

However, having said that, COVID afforded us some new opportunities. Here are just a few: A group of people began to gather to lead us through the RenewalWorks process which continues to bear fruit. A group of people began to meet in the summer of 2020 to read and explore racial reconciliation, that group continues to meet, learn, and discern in the form of our Sacred Ground team. We did more adult formation in that first year and half or so of COVIDtime than ever before. And we tried every new thing we could think of. Some worked, some didn’t. But there were relationships that were strengthened, knowledge that deepened, and ministries that expanded. And because of the great gifts and big hearts of this parish, we came through 2020 in a strong position, which has set us up well for 2021 and into 2022. And there were new people who joined us during COVID as well, bringing us new energy and new gifts – some who dove right in even though they’d never been in the building before! How amazing is that?

## **A Look at 2021**

2021 itself was a bit of a hybrid. The first few months, most of our life took place online, building on the foundation laid in 2020. We improved our technology, expanded our ministries, and dug in more deeply to relationship. And then life in-person began in May and continued through the end of the year. For me, when I consider Jesus’s words to us at the last supper, his instructions to *do this* to remember him – I give particular thanks for the fact that we were able to return to communion in 2021. The months when we didn’t receive communion at all were heartbreaking for me and for many others. So, even though we aren’t sharing the common cup on Sundays, I’m tremendously grateful for the ability to gather around God’s table with you and to actually share the gifts of the Sacrament.

**The staff** has continued to work at an incredible pace in this last year. Keeping up the level of their hard work in 2020, 2021 was another full year. Samantha continues to foster important formation and fellowship opportunities for our kids as she navigates this difficult season with grace and strength. Keep an eye out for her new Children, Youth & Family newsletter – which came out just this week and includes one of her wonderful, thoughtful, theological reflections. You won’t want to miss those. Nancy continues to keep us all on track, helping to produce what we need for worship as well as our weekly communications among a great many other things. One of Nancy’s big projects this year was a huge mailing to everyone who was new to town – 601 letters welcoming our neighbors with information from me, Samantha, and Andrew. And of course, this year we were blessed by the arrival of our wonderful new musician, Andrew Leslie Cooper. As Director of Music and Organist, Andrew has been quick to settle in and begin leaving his mark on all of us. What a wonderful six months we shared getting to know each other and benefiting not only from his tremendous musical gifts, but also his spirit of collaboration and creativity. Andrew has been the perfect addition to our team and I’m so grateful for the ways in which the program staff (Samantha, Nancy, and Andrew) and I work together. For the first time in my time here, there are no silos to our work, we are a team, pulling in the same direction, working together to serve you and build up God’s church together. And the level of creativity only gets better and better – wait until we see some of the things we have planned for you in 2022!

**A few other staff related things to mention.** First, Matt Henshaw continues to serve as our talented and faithful Communications Coordinator, making sure that our livestreams are up and running. We are so blessed to have him with us as a part of our team. When we have occasionally run into a problem, he has always found an intrepid way to solve it. And he is always up for a conversation about my next crazy idea – “How can we make this happen, Matt?” He’s a wonderful addition to our work. And I want you to know that a change has happened in our nursery. While Lucia Sato will continue to care for our kids so well in the nursery, we owe thanks to Kate DeAngelis who has decided to step back and return to worship! Kate, we are all so grateful for your good work and the years you spent in the nursery caring for our youngest members. Thank you for all that you’ve done for us – looking forward to roping you into new projects soon! We will spend some time in 2021 looking at the nursery along with WPC to think through what the direction might look like for the future – a good thing to work on! I’m grateful Lucia will continue to serve as we move forward.

## **My work with you and God in 2021**

As always, the story of the year that has passed is a mosaic of so many – the work of clergy, staff, lay leaders, and volunteers, our partners at WPC and WEPCO, and community partners. It is far from just about my work, and yet I hope that my work undergirds and sustains our life together, helping others to thrive in their work and their ministry. And part of the purpose of the Annual Report is to tell you a little bit about that work, perhaps some things you didn’t see or didn’t know.

**Pastoral Care** in 2021 continued to be a very present need. While the immediate adjustments of 2020 were in the past, there were tremendous needs as we all tired of COVID, as the fatigue set in. This created some really heavy burdens for folks, taxing family structures, mental health, and taking its toll on relationships all around. I spent a large part of this year in private zoom rooms, on the phone, outside in the outdoor sanctuary, and occasionally in person with folks in my office or at their homes as we worked through a number of difficult situations. It is always my privilege to do that. I tell folks that I don’t have the answers – no one does. But I do have questions that we can explore together. And I can be your companion on the road, helping you to sustain the challenges and helping you to find God in the midst of them. If you’ve been in need of a companion and haven’t been in touch, please consider it in 2022. I’m here for you. And if you haven’t needed that, please know that your pledge and your support of this place allows other people to have the help and support they need. By giving to the parish financially, you not only live out the discipleship to which God calls you – but you literally make it possible for me, Samantha, Andrew, and Nancy to care for your brothers and sisters in Christ who need care and support. It’s such a crucial thing that often goes unnoticed. Thank you for making that care possible for folks within our walls and some who are outside our walls. For example – this year I attended the death of a woman who was not a member of the parish but was in need of spiritual support as she reached that final gate. This makes a positive impact not only in her life, but in our community. And again, is made possible by the faithful pledging and financial support of members and friends.

As you’ll see in the reports and presentations at the Annual Meeting, we are on secure financial footing. I mentioned above that this is, in part, because of the difficult decisions we made in the first year or two I was here. I continue to be grateful for that process, as difficult as it was – it is because of those difficult decisions your Vestry and I made that we are as solid as we are today. I’ll leave the presenting details to our wonderful Treasurer, Keith DeAngelis, who will walk you through all the details of the year end of 2021 as well as the budget the Vestry has approved for 2022. We are also in a solid position because the core of this parish continues to give so faithfully. Thank you. Thank you for sustaining our life together and allowing us to continue participate in God’s mission. Thank you for living out your discipleship in this way, and to the many of you who raised your pledges not just this year but also last year. **Your big hearts, your generosity in this difficult season is so appreciated – not just by me, but by all of us in leadership. Thank you for your faithfulness.**

In the first part of 2021, many of your lay leaders and other members of the Wilton community gathered for a **training about grief with the Dougy Center**. We explored the difficulties of isolation during COVID as well as

how to companion our kids through difficult times, including when they've experienced a loss by suicide. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have made that available not just to the church, but to the town. It was noticed by some of our Representatives and Legislators who wrote to thank me for our work in the community. I was also blessed to partner with our Superintendent and some other of our educators in town to work through a more thoughtful response to some of these tragedies for our kids, helping them put some of these things into context and know how to keep going. Our kids continue to absorb more losses, making our work with them – to give them open space, to remind them they're loved – even more crucial.

In 2021, we were joined by **a handful of new members and families**. About 8 new households total. This is wonderful news! And so many of them have already jumped in, settled in, and become an important part of our life together. In 2022, my hope is that the Vestry will pursue some new ways of inviting and welcoming new members. We will all need to work on this area together in 2022, so if you have ideas or are feeling particularly called to that work, please consider this an open invitation. Please be in touch! I'd love to have you join the team and help us as we dream up new ways to care for and reach out to our community. And if you're new to this community, and this is your first Annual Meeting, and you're reading this report – know that we're so glad you're here. And we'd love to involve you more. Just be in touch if I can help in any way.

**Our partnership with WPC in this 50<sup>th</sup> year is a wonderful strength for us.** I'm grateful for Shannon's ministry among us and was glad we were able to offer her our love and thanks before she left for the next season of her life. And I'm glad to have the opportunity to build a relationship with Jeffrey for the season that he's here with us. Julie and Samantha continue to be the closest part of this partnership, gathering our kids together across all ages and helping to form, support, and celebrate them. We had a special celebration of our overarching partnership in the fall, literally "under the big tent!" as we proclaimed the year of Jubilee. And there is at least one more thing on the way in March, another chance for us to worship together and celebrate our partnership.

It goes without saying that the **WEPCO Board** has also had their hands full this year. As COVID waxes and wanes, it takes its toll on anyone who is responsible for the stewardship of spaces and people. I'm grateful for their good work and for all the ways they've kept the doors open and kept people safe this year. I was particularly proud of our ability to be a vaccination site in early 2021. What a wonderful way to partner with our community, to invite folks onto our campus, and to be good neighbors. What a gift. And of course, we owe our thanks to Andrew and Max for their hard work on our behalf as well.

A transition is underway for the **Cemetery Committee**. Long under the wonderful leadership of Roger Valkenburgh and Dave Hapke, some new folks are joining the effort and will allow Dave and Roger to take a bit of a step back. While they're not off the hook yet, this leadership planning is important! And I'm grateful to Dodo Roberts & Paul Reis for stepping in help lead this effort going forward. Dave and Roger have done absolutely incredible work on our behalf, aiding and working with the intrepid Winkie Chesley. Some new benches have been purchased for the cemetery – to honor Winkie's many contributions. And some work is being done over there as well, to make the space more lovely and honor our sacred responsibility to the souls who rest there. Donna Merrill, Remi Hahn, and Steve Pettit continue to be involved in this work and Brian Angerame has expressed an interest in continuing to be involved as well. And I'm looking forward to what this group will come up with as we move forward. If you might be interested in being a part of this work, please let me know!

In terms of my work week, while I have been more rigid in the second half of this year (for obvious reasons!) about my day off and some end of work times, I'm still working an average of 70 hours a week. Well over the 48 hours a week I should be working. In part, that's because of the season we're in – there's a lot to do. In part, it's because creative work takes more time. In part, it's because pastoral care needs are so present. And in part, it's because I love my work. And I want to do it well. In terms of continuing education, I took a very different tack in 2021 and pursued a class with the Yale School of Management, specifically for women in leadership positions. It was fun to use

a different part of my brain! And I'm hopeful some of those lessons learned will continue to feed me and form me as we move forward.

And finally, for my part, I think it rather goes without saying that this was a special year in my life as Lyn and I welcomed our little girl to the world. I am able to continue to work as hard as I do and be as present as I am because of my wife and the many ways she makes our life together work. She supports my ministry and enables me to be a better Priest to all of you in ways you don't see and may never know. But she's essential to that work. While you might see my sacrifices sometimes, you will probably never see hers – and they're equally as important to our life and work together. These last nine months since our little girl was born have been full of joy. I'm grateful every day for the privilege that it is to be her mom and for the wondrous and challenging task it will be to raise a fierce little girl in this world. If anything, watching her grow has convinced me even more of the holiness and necessity of our work together. My little girl will have so many opportunities to live into her wildest dreams, and we'll give her everything we can to help her chase those dreams. I feel even more now that every child deserves that chance, to be the full person God dreams for them to be. And for that to happen, we have to do our work well – to continue to worship, study, grow, and help to build a more just world. A world where every child knows that they're made in the image of God and that they are worthy of wild, fierce, and wonderful dreams.

## **2021 into 2022**

Our life and work will continue to be about *remembering* Jesus. And now that we've named some grief, it's really time for us to move forward in hope. We have a lot of work to do in the next few years to reach out to our community, to continue to build this faithful community. And I want to begin to reclaim some of those dreams we had before COVID. It's time for us to take back some of what was, to continue to build, to dream a new dream for the future. So – for example, I'm also doing a little foundational work, and have invited some lay leaders to join me, as we explore some possibilities for an international relationship and some of those other irons that were originally in the fire before COVID. So much of this last year has been about pivoting, re-engaging, and trying to find new paths. I expect that will spill over into 2022. One of the pieces that I hear from folks a lot is, "We're just out of the habit of church." So, Andrew, Samantha and I are working on a few things that we hope will help in 2022. Rather than asking folks to fit into an old habit, we're going to try to start a few new ones – and see if that helps us a bit. We have some new opportunities for adult formation coming in the first half of 2022 as well. And some plans for worship and fun.

I believe that God has new promises, new plans for us. We will continue to be the place that welcomes everyone. That creates safe space for all kinds of people. And that takes one step and then the next on the journey toward more faithful discipleship. We have work to do. But we'll have some fun along the way – we always do. I look forward to discovering all of God's new plans for us with you as we *re-member* the Body of Christ in our gathering, worshipping, serving, praying, and giving. This will be a bridge year – a transition year. A year when we need to plan, work, and invest in ourselves – to put our best foot forward so that we can continue to grow.

Things look different than we might have expected. And we might have been forced to take a different road than we wanted. But if we believe that God is with us – and I do – and if we believe in the magic of this community – your big hearts - and I do - then this road will be a good road for us. We'll try new things. We'll continue to adjust. And we'll make our way down the road together. May God bless us in that work.

## **Thanksgivings**

I am always grateful to our lay leaders, to people who serve on the Vestry, to those who take up the mantle of being Officers, and to everyone who volunteers their time and gifts to make our life together work. I'm always a little amazed, too – that you give so much in the midst of your busy lives. I know that you are all fitting this in to the

million and one other things you need to do with friends, family, work, and other organizations. I know that you're pulled in many directions. And I'm grateful for the ways you give and serve God and St. Matthew's. Whoever you are – whatever your role is – if you chair a committee or do something you think no one else sees – I appreciate it. Whether you teach Church School, prepare the Altar for worship, sing in the choir, whatever it is you do – you are a key part of our life. And we are better because of your gifts. Thank you.

There are a few very specific thank you's I need to say, too.

First, a word of thanks to our Deacon who continues to be an important presence among us. In this third year together, Don continues to be present for you, involved in mission, leading us in prayer by choosing the Prayers of the People each week, meeting you at the Diner, asking questions about the neighborhood, and has a few new ideas up his sleeve for 2022. Thank you, Don, for your ministry among us and for calling us to be mindful of the least and the last whom Jesus loved so dearly.

Next, a special word of thanks to our **departing Vestry members**: Dodo, Jess, and Tim. Each one of them has contributed in their own unique way and given so much of their time and their heart to us over the last several years. For Tim, it was four years! Tim agreed to stay on an extra year this last year and has been incredibly helpful to us with stewardship among many other things! Jess and Colin worked so hard on our super successful auction this year. Dodo has taken on several projects for us over the last three years and is currently the Queen of Virtual Coffee Hour. And all three of them brought their hopes and ideas to the Vestry table. And this was not an easy time to be on the Vestry. In this season, the Vestry was called to advise me on COVID decisions and protocols, they have continued to be mindful of fiscal responsibility, and have had to take up the mantle of leadership in many new ways during this time. So, thank you Tim, Dodo, and Jess – and thank you to all of you who serve on the Vestry during this crucial time.

I hope you'll join me in celebrating (pending your approval at the meeting!) those who have agreed to step into leadership roles this year. I know we will be blessed that Jen DeAngelis is joining us at the Vestry table as Clerk. And that Amy Gubner and Beth Baker will join us as Vestry members. And that Chris Perry has agreed to dip his toe back in the leadership water as a new member of the WEPCO Board. Thank you to all the Perry's for sharing Chris again with us so soon! I'm really excited about our whole slate this year – and so grateful for these good people offering up their gifts.

The commitment of our Officers has also been greater in this time than any of them might have expected. In 2021, the Executive Committee (made up of Wardens, Treasurer, and Clerk) continued to be my best and first sounding board and exceedingly active partners in ministry. I'm grateful for all their extra time, work, and wisdom. Here, too, there are no silos. We have been a team in the best possible sense, integrating different areas of life and helping each other to see the whole picture, to better serve the whole place.

I'm delighted that Keith will continue in his role as Treasurer. He brings so much skill and thoughtfulness to us in this role. Keith brings a faithfulness and a generosity of spirit that I appreciate so much and that have been really essential to all the work we've done as a team in the last few years.

Anne will move from the Clerk's role to the Warden's seat. Anne's been a strong presence on e-comm these last few years, and I was so excited she agreed to take on this new role. I'm looking forward to working with her and with Pam in the year ahead as Pam continues in her role as Warden. Both of them have been Wardens before, both know and love this place deeply. Being a Warden isn't just a big responsibility – though it is that. It can be a tough job, especially in this season. And it's so important that Wardens can work well together and with the Rector. To be a Warden is to have a special relationship with the Rector, to be my confidants and my advisors. The work of the Warden is to support the Rector (in many ways!) and to translate the work the Rector is doing to the parish. I'm grateful to have Pam and Anne in these seats for the hard work and the adventure ahead – and I hope that you are, too!

Having said all that about next year, I need to say that we were blessed in 2021 with two fantastic, dedicated, faithful, wonderful Wardens. Pam and Brian made a good team, shouldering along with the Officers quite a lot of extra responsibility while I was on family leave that normally wouldn't have been on their plate. And even though I tried to set everything up as best I could, leaving bulletins and plans, even though I planned everything out, none of that could really stand in for the fact that I wasn't present – and so much of the responsibility fell on their shoulders and on Keith and Anne's shoulders.

And I can't let Brian go without saying a few things about his time as Warden. It's been so much fun to work with Brian. Brian brings his whole heart to our life together at St. Matt's. He loves God, this place, and all of you. And that makes for an excellent Warden. Brian's two years as Warden weren't the easiest – he literally came into the work right as COVID kicked off. And as I've mentioned a few times so far in this report, this is not what we expected! We had very different plans and thought that life would look very different. But Brian has been present and faithful the whole time. He thought of new ways to do things, engaged a virtual auction, then helped with a new spin on the auction in the fall this year. He and Jennifer led the gargantuan effort that was St. Matthew's Day this past fall when we welcomed the community to join us in a day of celebration. And Brian has always been there – for a quick call, for a longer conversation, to map out a vision, to wonder with me about what comes next. I can't say enough about the love he brings to this place and the many, many ways we are better, stronger, and more full of smiles and laughter because Brian is a part of our life and work together. We have a few projects that we still need Brian's help with! So, while he is going to step back (I hope!) and take a bit of breather, he's not going anywhere. We'll still need him and you'll still hear from him in the coming months and seasons ahead. I know you'll join me in thanking him for his service and thanking Jennifer, Michael, Katie, and Patch for sharing him with us in this really meaningful way. Thank you Angerame's for this and for all that you do. Brian, I hope you're proud of the good work you did to support and sustain our life together – we are grateful for you!

#### **A last few words.**

I often say to the Vestry in my reports that “there's always more, but this is enough for now.” That's true here as well. 2021 was a full year, like every other. And there are so many more stories to share, more details to outline, more people to thank. And, I hope this is enough for now.

It continues to be my privilege to be your Priest and Pastor, to serve you as Rector. I give thanks for all that is past, even the challenges and pains. Because it's all brought us here. And here is a place – a moment – that I believe God will bless. Let's *remember* and *re-member* Jesus together, holding on to our hope, holding on to each other, and venturing boldly into God's plans for us in the future. I look forward to sharing this next year with you. And I give thanks for you and for your place in this community every day. God loves you. And so do I.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach

## Annual Report of the Deacon

Dear People of Saint Matthew's Parish:

Last night, after the ice storm...followed by the considerable snowfall, was the coldest night of the year thus far. Folks are living outside, in cars, under bridges. Medical personnel and other "essential workers" are laboring tirelessly to help eradicate the current pandemic. Let us not forget our epiphany of last year, when the world discovered grocery store workers and food service workers, and others often forgotten—many of whom garner the smallest wages—are among the most essential workers of the world's economy. They kept us fed, cleaned our hospitals, delivered our mail, and so on. Some of our favorite restaurants have closed. Small and medium sized businesses have shuttered due to lack of business and staff. Even the IRS is unable to process tax returns with any expeditious turnaround. Even some of our St. Matt's family has felt the crunch or even the crush of COVID-19 and an ever-changing world.

Now in my third and likely final year with St. Matthew's, we continue to get to know each other (or sometimes get reacquainted considering the pandemic, masks, and personal trials.)

I was glad we were able to reconnect for Deacon @ the Diner, and despite a brief pause, we were back at it by the end of January. Before the pause, we had 13 of us (of all ages) for one of them. The conversation is growing—and we have added a bit of homework (to find in newspaper articles or other media ways where St. Matt's can engage beyond its many walls.) The need for us to do this has not gone away due to the pandemic; rather it has become more pressing. Food insecurity has risen as a result of the pandemic and joblessness. The eviction moratorium has ended, so folks run the risk of not having a safe and warm place to live.

By participating in the Diaper Drive, sponsored by the ECCT deacons, during Christmas and Epiphany, St. Matt's has engaged with those experiencing the tightening resources for even basic necessities.

In 2021, like during the 2020 St. Matt's Easter parade, your deacon was busy at Norwalk Hospital on Easter morning, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day ministering alongside other chaplains to bring a bit of joy to staff and patients alike. On Thanksgiving, our recent guest preacher, Erika Hagen joined me for morning rounds. Erika is a Candidate for Holy Orders, on the priestly track and was engaged in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) studies at Norwalk at the time (she has since completed her CPE studies.) You might be surprised at what smiles and how loved the staff members feel knowing that someone remembered that they were working under unimaginable conditions, while the rest of us spent time safe at home or visiting with our families.

I wonder if this winter we might explore the book ***The Selfless Way of Christ: Downward Mobility and the Spiritual Life***, by Henri Nouwen. Perhaps we could discuss the book during Deacon @ the Diner during Lent. It's a short read, only a few hours, yet full of good wonderings.

For April, I'd like to explore a weekly time to gather the men of the parish for a book study. The text is ***5-Minute Devotions for DAD, a Christian Parenting Book for Strength and Calm***. The devotional is prepared by the Reverend Deacon Ronald Steed, a former deacon school classmate of mine.

The ***Whatsoever You Do*** statue continues to tour ECCT and Province I, and is currently at St. John's, Pine Meadow through Easter.

The Mission Team continues to be part of the ECCT Food Ministry Network—which is an up and coming network crossing many barriers in Connecticut.

A few folks have taken to learning more about Laundry Love, so we shall see where that leads. Laundry Love, the ECCT regional ministry, continues in its sixth year of providing laundry resources for those who might need them. Not even the pandemic kept the Laundry Love team from adapting like so many other sites across the country.

Once again, on December 21, 2021, I had the opportunity to join a small and physically distant group in Norwalk at the Smilow Life Center (part of Open Doors Shelter in Norwalk) for the Homeless Persons' Memorial Day Candlelight Remembrance. I offered a closing reflection by Howard Thurman, ***The Work of Christmas***, while those gathered on the longest night of the year remembered persons whose deaths may otherwise not have been marked by anyone. May they continue to rest in peace.

I can feel the season of longer days showing more light and new life; and I thank you again for your hospitality this year and I continue to be excited to see where that new life and the Holy Spirit might lead us out in the neighborhood.

Peace,

Don

The Reverend Deacon Donald Field Burr, II

*The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany: February 6, 2022*

## Senior Warden's Report 2021

I'm not a big Twitter guy. I follow a couple people like my wife ([southernyankee.com](https://southernyankee.com)), St. Matthew's, a couple of sports reporters, and of course, Marissa. About a month ago, Marissa responded to, or retweeted, a tweet from another priest that stopped me in my tracks. It read "This is probably the first time I've actually said this since the pandemic began. I'm not sure my church is going to recover from this. Oh, we'll survive. We'll still be here. But we'll never be what we were."

That tweet has been rattling around in my head for the past month. I can't let go of it. There is a twinge of sadness, but also fear – fear of the unknown. Fear of being changed from what we were before.

I think that tweet keeps rattling around in my head because he's probably right. Or at least mostly right. I don't necessarily agree that we will never have the same attendance that we had. I think we will. But we will certainly never have the same folks that we had. We've had nearly two dozen families that were made an offer for their homes that they couldn't refuse, and they moved away to retirement spots south and west of here. They were all friends of all of ours. We will miss their friendship, and their leadership, and their fellowship.

So, I do think in a lot of ways things will never be the same. But that goes for almost every aspect of our lives! Our schools will never be the same. Our places of work will never be the same. But that is not always a bad thing! And we didn't sit around getting all teary-eyed about it. We figured out how to do our jobs better. We figured out how to be more efficient. We figured out how to use zoom instead of travelling all over the place and commuting. I definitely don't miss that!

But the same holds true for St. Matthew's. How great is it that Jon, Alice and Ted Woods are probably joining us right now on Facebook from South Carolina? The Jarvis's are probably joining us right now too. And last weekend, if you found it difficult to get out of your driveway, or out of your pajamas, you could participate from the safety of your couch at home. Our auction / tailgate / fellowship event last fall probably does not happen if we weren't forced to think about ways to do things differently. But it was a blast and I, and others, are already looking forward to this coming year's event. I think that one's a keeper.

I don't look at the reality that we will never be the same with a defeatist attitude. Just like we all did at our places of work, we need to continue to think about how to do things differently. Get excited about it! How do we work with our mission partners more effectively and have a greater impact on people who are hurting right now? How do we get more of our kids involved in choir? How has Covid-19 changed our family priorities and our faith so that we need to approach adult education differently? How do we reengage with our kids, whose lives have been turned upside down these past two years?

So, we need your help. It's going to take all of us, and all our ideas and experiences. Get involved! If you are not currently involved in any aspect of our church lives together, change that! Not sure who to talk to? Ask Pam, or Anne, or me, or Marissa, and we'll get you in touch with the right person. It seems like there are more people in the choir every week. Sam's working on some great new stuff for our kids and could use your help. We'll be more active in adult ed this year, so get involved there too. We're investing in a memorial garden in the cemetery this year, so there is a lot going on there too. And in the meantime, we've got to take care of this place, and pay for it, so if you are interested in getting more involved there, let me know! If you haven't pledged yet for 2022, or you have already pledged but find yourself blessed with the ability to give more, please share your gifts. I mentioned before that we've had lots of families move away over the past couple of years, and while we miss their friendship, we also miss their stewardship dollars! We need to fill the financial void left by their departures, so if you are able to give more as we go through this transition, please do!

Alright, lastly, as long as I am on the topic of finances, I can't step away as your warden without a sobering reminder. As Keith runs you through our 2022 budget, it should be clear as day to you that our deficit is unsustainable. We and vestries past have been admirable stewards of our assets, including our endowment fund. We repaid all of the deficits we racked up in the years preceding 2020. So, while we had never heard of Covid as we entered 2020, we were in great shape to weather any storm. We were again good stewards of our finances during Covid, keep a strong check on expenses. But the loss of so many families over the past couple of years caused us to run a small deficit in 2021, and we project a large deficit in 2022. We will cover that with accumulated surpluses and more of the payout from our endowment this year -- but that is unsustainable and not optimal. We should strive to grow our pledge base and revenue stream with new members, higher stewardship pledges and continued discipline in our expenses. There have been hundreds of new families move into the homes here in Wilton. They may be younger, drive cars with New York and New Jersey license plates, and church may not be their highest priority at this moment. But they represent a great opportunity for us to continue to grow. Again, we may grow differently, with different faces in the pews, but we will grow nonetheless, and that is exciting.

As Deacon Don pointed out to us in a sermon a few weeks again, the words "do not be afraid" appear in the bible 365 times. Thank you, Don, for opening our eyes to that fact. That is fitting as we stare into 2022 and beyond. I am not afraid. Things may be "different" and "never the same," but I'm psyched for that. I prefer "new again."

The last thing I need to do is thank a couple people. To my partner in crime, Pam Ely, you're the best. There aren't many people who care about this place or this town as much as Pam does. I turn over the keys knowing we are in great hands. The same is true for Anne, who has been around the St. Matthew's block more than a few times. We're in good shape for years to come. To my buddy Keith DeAngelis, who has so faithfully and tirelessly stewarded the finances of this place -- thank you for doing it one more year. And now Jen DeAngelis is coming on as clerk. Good thing the DeAngelis family doesn't get involved in St. Matt's, right?

And then there's Marissa. I say this to all of you, with the utmost seriousness -- NO ONE loves this place, and you, more than she does, except for maybe Jesus Christ himself -- and even then, it's a close race. I think she and I have been pretty tight since she got here. And through these past two years, everything she has done has been with our wellbeing in mind. It hasn't been easy, and we haven't been perfect, but we've gotten through this, and we're in good shape to emerge from this healthy and begin growing again. I've said it before and I'll say it again, she's changed me. And I'm proud to have been able to work beside her, behind her, and I will continue to in whatever capacity is necessary in the future. And I would encourage all of you to do the same. She is the embodiment of love. Marissa, thank you for being you.

Faithfully,  
Brian Angerame

## **Junior Warden Report 2021**

As I wrote this report, I had a hard time wrapping my head around the last 20 months, so much lost time, loss of connections, my mind is in a kind limbo of trying to make sense of what has happened to all of us. Such an odd time to be living. This pandemic has pulled on all our internal resources, and we are still trying to make sense of the repercussions. Every time we think we are out of the woods something occurs to remind us we are all still vulnerable.

Our St. Matthew's Parish, Marissa, the Choir, the Lectors, and Compline were a reassuring presence online while we made every effort to keep everyone safe. The herculean lift from all the participants made us realize what a gift we are to each other. We were still together. We opened in person in May 2021 first for Senior Sunday and then the bishop who came to confirm our confirmands and baptize the Lane children. Marissa surprised us having her daughter, Laine, early - a very special time for Marissa, Lyn and her newborn. We worshipped outside for the 8:00 service, Brian and I navigating Morning Prayer with the help of the Vestry. Linda Spiers arrived in July and her calm presence helped us navigate the summer.

Marissa returned in late August, we were building a church again, happy to see each other. We had our Sundays back still live streaming and making every effort to gain back our church family. We were still maintaining protocols to ensure the safety of everyone in our Sanctuary, our Sunday mornings were not what we wanted but we were together.

This all speaks to our resilience as a parish as we celebrated St. Matthew's Day, held our annual auction outside with fire pits, good food and a gathering we were so happy to finally be together. All challenges we mastered through our commitment to each other. A big thank you to the Angerame's and the Christ's for all the work and planning to give us such successful gatherings.

### **Mission**

Our commitment continued, though not through a hands-on participation. We continued with the bins outside the door as we collected for Open Door. We were not able to do a room for Circle of Care due to the pandemic, but this spring Jess Christ finally did lead a group to do a room for Maddie O'Farrell who had been waiting so patiently to have it done. Unfortunately, we are on a pause again with Circle of Care. Our partners Open Door and Circle of Care did receive an extra \$5,000 in November. Monies we had held back waiting to see what the urgent need might be. All other monies were distributed to our beneficiaries in May voted on by the Vestry.

### **Pastoral Care**

An important ministry that has been on hold for several months. The team has checked in regularly with parishioners to see if there is any need. Tom Carlson became the magic delivery man having decided that some of our parishioners would benefit from ice cream and other assorted goodies. I seem to remember a Painted Cookie gift to the choir for all their work while we were online. All part of our efforts to stay in touch with each other and honoring the good work. As soon as it is safe to make an in-person visit, the Pastoral team will start up again eager to re-engage.

### **Renewal Works**

This faithful group has continued to meet and map out the year of a commitment of faith for the parish. They have spent many months working on the results of the parish survey with the goal of bringing several on-ramps to the parish to help all of us become a more faithful community. The parish has received cards with the emphasis on Worship, Seek, Give and soon Serve. I have loved working with this group, we have been together a long time and have bonded through our work together...soon you will be invited to our Gospel talks on Sundays in Lent. This is the group that brought prayer to begin every church meeting, we have learned how to center ourselves, and I have shared this practice with other wardens who are bringing it to their church meetings as well, finding it a lovely practice.

### **Thank You's**

The last almost 2 years now have been as challenging as any we have experienced in a very long time. I have been a member of this church for many years, and I don't remember having to navigate so many challenges, all so unsettling for a faithful community. We have learned as a parish to love one another more and value our time together since its still something that one needs to plan. There is a sadness everywhere that this virus has placed on all of us, and we are all so frustrated that we are still having to watch where we go, who we see, making sure we are taking care of the more vulnerable amongst us. Some people have been living in constant fear of getting sick for a very long time. We have parishioners who have lost loved ones during this pandemic and were not able to be by their bedside. All this takes a toll on our faith. Through all this, our staff, Marissa, Nancy, Sam and Andrew have been with us, working to make the Sundays a place of refuge for us. Marissa has led with a steady hand, giving us sermons of hope and faith at a time when we were not sure what to think. Her constant presence and ability to pivot online so quickly, so we were up and running before many other churches speaks to her ability and commitment to us as a parish. Marissa is a true talent as a priest, and I am not sure how we would have kept going without her many gifts. Andrew has brought inspiring music and our choir sings as if they were lifted up, Sam with our youth maintaining a relationship whether online or in person, and Nancy running the office making sure we all still connected. These 4 individuals are one of our major assets, and we need to thank them and keep them in our prayers, without them this Covid time would have been impossible to manage. We owe them a deep gratitude.

I also need to thank the outgoing Vestry, Dodo Roberts, Tim Jarvis, Jess Christ, each contributed to St. Matthew's during their tenure bringing their gifts and talents to all of us. We will miss their presence on the Vestry. A special thank you to Don, for his commitment to mission and of course his Diner Dinners! Also, a special thanks to Jen Angerame who through her gifts with social media kept us all connected, all these months acknowledging our birthdays, and thankfully leaving out our ages!!

### **Brian**

I have known Brian since he was a young father, bringing his children to school, helping with gusto the Day School auctions and parties. I have watched him grow into a wonderful faithful man who loves God and all of us. His big heart embraces all of us and is all encompassing. He will do anything for any of us and is willing to share himself to any parishioner. We have all been touched by his faith and his deep commitment to St. Matthew's. Brian has been a terrific Warden and working with him has been my privilege. I intend to call on him during my tenure in panic as well to celebrate...Just as an aside - you haven't lived until you see Brian with an 80's mullet hairdo - mind-blowing to say the least.

Faithfully submitted,  
Pam Ely

## **Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry 2021**

It's safe to say that no one expected to spend the seven months since our last meeting gathering virtually. We all held out hope that a new year would bring new opportunities to gather again in person. Sadly, that was not the case. More time apart, made it difficult for many to stay tethered to their usual routines and rituals. Zoom and its novelty had worn off. While the Children and Youth program continued to offer virtual experiences, we noticed a decline in participation. Being aware of the needs of our youth, now hidden behind screens, the program continued to reach out and connect to the youth in meaningful ways. We held a space on zoom weekly for drop ins, we sent monthly packages home, filled with materials to follow along with during our lessons, as well as notes of encouragement.

In March, things started to look up. We held space in our woodland sanctuary for youth to process the many losses they were grieving and invited them to take refuge in the presence of God. As we moved towards Lent, families had the opportunity to prayerfully observe Lent utilizing the "Lent In A Bag" kits. This was a fun and accessible way to participate in an important season in the Church year, while at home. There were also "40 Days Of Lent" prayer cards, offered by the Children and Youth program, as an opportunity to move deeper into the heart of Lent with daily prayer practice. During Holy Week, in that same woodland sanctuary, we created an experience surrounding the Stations of the Cross, which included a reflection packet curated to guide parishioners, including youth, through the modern interpretation of the stations. Each station invited participants to use their senses to immerse themselves more fully into the presence of God. As we approached summertime, despite remaining virtual through August for Church School, our parish was able to celebrate Senior Sunday and Confirmation in the Sanctuary.

It brings me great joy, after nearly two years of gathering virtually, to have had the chance to start this school year in person. Over the past four months, the Children, Youth and Family ministry has welcomed a handful of new families into the fold, introduced a Fall Kick-Off Retreat in Northern CT, held 10 Confirmation Sessions, 20 Youth Group meetings, conducted 22 Church School Lessons, introduced Family Fun Nights, put on a Christmas Pageant, sold Advent Bags and are now rehearsing for a Celebration of Children service, utilizing a sermon play written by one of St. Matthew's fifth graders. Needless to say, we haven't wasted any time, and we're just getting started.

In the midst of many obstacles, it has been important to the program to honor the traditions from years past, while also acknowledging that the state of our world has shifted many aspects of our life together, requiring us to build new habits. Starting with communication, this month I have sent out the first monthly Children, Youth and Family Newsletter, which will consolidate our various monthly offerings in one place and highlight new initiatives, celebrate volunteers, and spotlight the wonderful gifts and talents of our children and youth. Additionally, there will be a greater focus on family and frequency, meaning we will begin to increase our family and intergenerational worship offerings, as well as increase the opportunities for St. Matthew's youth to gather together and deepen their relational ties. If we've learned anything from the pandemic, it is that we each need to be deeply rooted in community, as God designed, each part of the body vitally important. It continues to be an honor and a privilege to shepherd the St. Matthew's Children, Youth and Family program and I pray all we do brings glory to God.

Faithfully,  
Samantha Trolice

## Music Ministries 2021

January marks six months since I became St. Matthew's new Director of Music Ministries and Organist. In my time here so far, I have found it to be an exceptional community of kind, generous people who love each other and love God. Music seems to play an indelible role in worship and community life here. I take great pride and great honor in my role as I facilitate this worship and these relationships. Music is God's gift and making music with you has been God's gift to me.

To state the obvious, we are still in the middle of a global pandemic. It would be a mistake to believe that while our worship takes place mostly in-person now, as compared with last year, we are past the pandemic. Rather, we have merely adapted to life in this tragic reality. I state this not to belabor the point, but simply to frame the remainder of this report: to emphasize the Music Ministry's triumphs despite this obstacle, and to reassure readers that the instabilities of the ministry and absences of certain elements will not be permanent but will return better than ever once we truly are "past" the pandemic.

I am thoroughly indebted to our Church Choir, which has worked tremendously hard in recent months and offered sublime performances to lead and enrich our worship. They have met every new challenge eagerly, even when faced with unfamiliar music or styles of singing. They fulfilled every request of their director with optimism and joy. And they have each exemplified what it means to be a caring, welcoming, and loving Christian. I wish to thank them individually here: Nancy Brautigam, Peggy Davis, Caroline DeAngelis, Linda Gortz, Emilie Hannon, Becky Hudspeth, Steve Hudspeth, Alex Koleszar, Brad Newton, Endy Perry, Sam Perry, Susan Settino, Jim Tapscott.

Several notable names are, of course, missing from the above list. Our three dutiful Section Leaders have been invaluable to our music-making and to our whole parish. Janet Nobles has been a linchpin of this choir for years, especially in 2021 between Directors. We owe her a special debt of gratitude. Kelsey Guinipero is an undergraduate at WCSU, studying Voice Performance. We have all enjoyed listening to her superb voice (particularly on Christmas Eve) and spending time with such a cheerful, friendly person. Nathan Rodríguez is a seasoned singer of opera and sacred music who has performed all over Boston and New York. We are lucky to have such a remarkable artist and delightful person in our midst. Both Kelsey and Nathan were new hires in September 2021, and we hope they will keep singing with us forever!

Two highlights of the previous quarter for the Church Choir were the Compline for All Saints' and Christmas Eve. On the first Sunday in November, to celebrate the feast of All Saints, the Choir led a Compline service outdoors in the courtyard. We sang psalms, hymns, and plainsong, and we remembered all the departed members of the parish from the previous year. This was a wholly special service and the presence of God was palpable. The culmination of the Choir's hard work last quarter was two services on Christmas Eve. They prepared a marvellous rendition of James Whitbourn's *Missa Carolae*, a setting of the mass based on well-known Christmas carols. This was *in addition* to their regular duties of singing the Psalms, the anthem, leading hymns, and performing three unaccompanied carols during the Prelude—twice! The evening was truly unforgettable, and I cannot think of a better way to have heralded the birth of Christ to our wonderful parish. If you missed the *Missa* this time, fret not, as it may well become a Christmas Eve tradition.

Historically, St. Matthew's has had a thriving choral program for children & youth. Changes in musical leadership and the pandemic have resulted in the near-total dropoff of participants. I made several attempts over the summer and into the fall to build up the Chorister program again, both from within our parish and beyond it, however, I find myself back at the proverbial drawing board. On the bright side, a highlight of the fall for me was working with Patch, our devoted 8th-grade Chorister. We have been rehearsing together on Thursday afternoons and learning the words of the Lord's Prayer and songs such as "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" and "Kumbaya, my Lord." I pray that more Choristers join our ranks who love choir as much as Patch does. I feel confident that, given enough time and new recruitment strategies in 2022, they will.

In a time like this, we ought to count our blessings. Two of them are the musical instruments in our Sanctuary: a beautiful Steinway grand piano and the magnificent Reuter pipe organ. Both have been crucial to our worship. We were lucky enough to hear the organ played by guest organist Michael Burnette several times in the fall. Michael recently retired as Director of Music at Christ & Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Westport and lives mere minutes

away from St. Matthew's. His talents were an enormous benefit to our music-making. We also heard the organ play itself on Christ the King Sunday—a particularly tricky organ accompaniment was pre-programmed to play while I conducted the Choir. In the fall, I briefly corresponded with the Brock family, to whom I expressed my deep gratitude, on behalf of the whole parish, for funding the construction of the organ 13 years ago. My 2022 plans involve attending to some maintenance on the organ and preparing a solo recital to perform for the parish.

The Arts at St. Matthew's remains in a hiatus for the foreseeable future. The value of this series to our parish and local community is evident, so I am eager to revive it once it is safe and sensible to do so. The unpredictability of this pandemic, even from one month to the next, has precluded making any plans to book artists or promote concerts.

I view my role as a servant of this parish; I work for you. I am always keen to meet and spend time with members of this community and sincerely hope that you will reach out if I can be of service. To me, the quality that this church exemplifies the most is its team spirit. I relish in that spirit each time I collaborate with my fellow ministers of music—every singer in the Choir, every instrumentalist, every organ stop. And I celebrate working with a staff team that cooperates so successfully—Marissa, Sam, and Nancy. These conditions are the reason I know I am in precisely the right place and why I feel so confident in St. Matthew's mission. This is truly a miraculous place.

Yours,  
Andrew

## Altar Guild & Flower Committee 2021

The duty of St. Matthew's Altar Guild members is to prepare the Altar for all worship services held in our church. With the Covid-19 virus continuing into 2021 our church services remained exclusively on line until the summer, at which time they became hybrid services. At that time the Altar Guild was able to return to do the work we love even though we had to be very flexible with all the changes due to the virus. We are very grateful that during the year we continued to have an excellent line of communication with our Rector, Marissa, regarding any changes to our services and how our procedures would need to be adjusted accordingly.

The Flower Committee is tasked to create the altar flower arrangements for the Sunday services, as well as decorate the church for Easter and Christmas. As we opened our doors again, the altar was dressed with flowers and potted plants. Celebrations and memories were still celebrated with our dedications, and announced via the bulletin and social media channels, and flowers were delivered to loved ones. You can find available dates on our website [www.stmatthewswilton.org/flowers](http://www.stmatthewswilton.org/flowers) Although we said goodbye to Laura Bazarian, we welcomed newest member Lindsay!

ALTAR GUILD: Nancy Brautigam, Jennifer DeAngelis, Debbie Fuller, Char Griffin, Jan Hapke, Elinor Hauff, Linda Koch, Sharon McKenna, Kimberly Olson, Barb Osterholm, Betsy Pettit, Joy Ruterman

FLOWER COMMITTEE: Jennifer Angerame, Nancy Dalldorf, Jen Hulse, Carol Kaelin, Elizabeth Walsh, Kacky Theoharides, Kate Denious, Kathryn Groves, and Lindsay Chaney



## **Cemetery Committee 2021**

For the information of our newest parishioners, Saint Matthew's Parish Cemetery is located just north of and adjacent to the Wilton Town Hall on Danbury Road (Route 7). Earliest grave sites date back to 1800. A number of available gravesites remain, and a Memorial Garden is maintained for the interment of ashes.

Over the years, a good deal of tender loving care has been invested in maintaining the Cemetery and improving it in a variety of modest ways. In the past ten years, stone gates have been installed at the vehicular entrance, the 19<sup>th</sup> century wrought iron gates have been restored and repainted, specimen plantings have been installed, and a great deal of tree work and tree removal has been performed by both generous teams of concerned parishioners as well as by professionals, when storms bring down limbs of trees along the Cemetery borders. Much of this has been done or coordinated by our longtime sexton, Winkie Chesley, who after 40 years of service in this role has begun to pass the reins of this work to others.

Important invisible work has gone on as well. With coordination and oversight of Dave Hapke, and the hard and successful work of Eagle Scouts Endy Perry and Elliot Connors, records of the names and location of those interred have been brought up to date on a software system added to our Parish computerized records. If interested in viewing this on line data base for the old portion of the cemetery, please contact Dave Hapke.

In addition to significant cleanup work required by two storms in late 2020, a layout of remaining gravesites was completed by GCM, LLC marking remaining available sites in "New Section" of the Cemetery, the southern-most section immediately adjacent to the Town Hall grounds.

A subcommittee convened in 2021 to develop a plan to improve the Memorial Garden for the interment of ashes located on the southern border of the Cemetery near the Town Hall parking lot. This committee included Remi Hahn, Donna Merrill, Dave Hapke and Roger Valkenburgh. Remi and Donna developed the plan including a walking path, including locations for two teak benches and new plantings around the perimeter to enhance both the beauty and privacy of the place. With Vestry approval of both the plan and the financing, the final installation of the renovations will be in place by late spring of 2022.

As Roger Valkenburgh and Dave Hapke begin to step back from their leadership roles soon and with help from Marissa, the Cemetery Committee has been invigorated with new recruits. In addition to Vice-Chair Dave Hapke, Remi Hahn, Donna Merrill and Steve Pettit, we have recently added Dodo Roberts and Paul Reis and Brian Angerame. We are so pleased to have such a robust committee for 2022 and beyond!

Roger Valkenburgh  
Chair

## **Communication/Social Media Update 2021**

As it is year one of my chair of our digital group, I will follow the format of **David Cristini** to avoid confusion. First thank you to Dave and the entire team for carrying the ball with no input from me.

For 2021, our digital platform continued to be a source of connection for our parishioners. Our usage of our website has remained the same with an uptick in /Blog reading and a downtick in other areas in general, most probably due to more in-person celebrations. The page that was most frequently visited, besides the home page, was our Live Broadcast page ([stmatthewswilton.org/live](http://stmatthewswilton.org/live)), with 2,142 unique visitors in 2021, a 50% decline in last year's numbers (~4300 in 2020 by comparison). I would venture to guess that this is due to in-person celebration, but we must be sure that parishioners are engaged. My concern is that with the pandemic our parishioners have drifted.

Our Facebook page visits are down 60% YoY perhaps again due to reintroduction of in-person meetings. Instagram is up however by 24%. So great job to everyone posting on Instagram.

Each Sunday, we broadcast worship; **Matthew Henshaw** has been a great addition to the team and taken over the production of our video broadcasts. The audio of the sermons continues to be posted on the website weekly by **Nancy Johnson**, available on iTunes and our website.

Our online platforms also engaged parishioners (and beyond) with worship on other days of the week. We continue to use Zoom for morning coffee hour before church. In the Spring, Evening Prayer was at 8:00pm on Zoom, allowing for conversation before and after as well as interaction as we offered prayers together, many times led by **Sharon Pearson**.

Hootsuite goes well as a social media management platform - enabling our team to use one tool for scheduling all announcements in a single place, and broadcast them to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; we try and leverage content that is published on the website and extend to our social media channels. It is much easier to manage content over time!

Photos of the altar flower arrangements continue to be posted online thanks to **Jen Angerame**.

We will be meeting in the coming weeks to work through our next year's events – and now more than ever we are looking for new ideas and new members; right now, only Sharon and Jen Angerame are manning the ship. I will join in this year but “the more the merrier”. If you would like to join the team, communicate something for your St. Matthew's group through our social media channels, or have ideas on how to engage the parish, please email us ([social@stmatthewswilton.org](mailto:social@stmatthewswilton.org)) - all are welcome!

Submitted by Mark Gilmor & Jen Angerame

**The 2021 Communications Team:** Jen Angerame, Mark Gilmor, Nancy Johnson, Sharon Pearson, Kate DeAngelis, Matt Henshaw.

## **Endowment Fund Development Committee 2021**

The Endowment Fund Development Committee encourages and facilitates both planned gifts and memorial gifts to the Parish. Examples of planned gifts range from bequests in Wills to gifts of appreciated stock, to gifts from IRAs, life insurance policies and real property. Examples of memorial gifts range from choral bells to cherry trees to chalices to restoration of precious stained glass windows, in memory and honor of a loved one.

The Memorials Book, which honors those who have committed to the Endowment Fund, as well as those who have made memorial gifts, resides along the south wall of the Narthex. The Tree of Life on the back wall of the Narthex is emblematic of planned giving, of planting a tree under whose boughs we may never sit. It is the symbol of our Arbor Society.

The Committee seeks to advise and encourage parishioners who wish to provide for any special need or purpose within the church. However, the focus of the Committee's efforts is on the growth of the Endowment Fund. The Saint Matthew's Parish Endowment Fund was created in 1986, following the completion of a successful campaign to retire indebtedness that had burdened annual operating budgets for more than fifteen years. The Resolution creating the Endowment Fund imposed strict requirements for preservation of principal, and focuses the use of income on either local mission needs (meaning any needs selected through our own mission efforts, as opposed to those subsumed in the Diocesan assessment) or capital needs (improvements to church property), which needs were of paramount concern at the time of the Endowment Fund's creation.

In 2012 – 2013, the Saint Matthew's Arbor Society was created, to recognize and give witness to planned gifts and their value in strengthening Saint Matthew's now and for generations to come. This effort was celebrated in the spring of 2014, and a plaque installed in the Narthex to recognize and encourage these special gifts.

The investment of the Endowment Fund is capably managed by a separate Endowment Investment Committee (see its report elsewhere in this Annual Report). The value of investment assets in the Fund at 2021 year-end was approximately \$4,752,000, made up of a balance in investment funds at Vanguard of approximately \$4,005,000 and the outstanding mortgage balance due from the church of approximately \$747,000. The Vestry-designated distributions from the Fund for 2022 will total approximately \$167,000, providing more meaningful opportunities for pursuit and support of our core mission as a Church.

Our Committee members include: Bill Brautigam, Chris Perry, Pam Ely, Dave Hapke, Brian Angerame, and Wardens and Rector, Ex-Officio. The Committee did not meet in 2021.

Roger Valkenburgh, Chair

## **Endowment Investment Committee 2021**

Following is an update from the St. Matthews Endowment Investment Committee. As of December 31, 2021, the account balance (at Vanguard) of The Endowment Fund of St. Matthew's Parish totaled, \$4,004,940. This account balance plus the mortgage bond of \$747,076 brings the total Endowment Fund to \$4,752,016. The prior year balance was \$4,404,270.

As a reminder, in 2017, the Vestry approved the repayment of the St. Matthew's mortgage owed to Bankwell using funds from the Endowment Fund, resulting in substantial savings on interest expense. St. Matthew's continues to make timely principal and interest payments to the Endowment Fund per the original Bankwell mortgage amortization schedule. The current outstanding balance on the mortgage as of December 25, 2021 is \$747,076 while the prior year-end balance was \$770,315 (per the approved loan amortization schedule) and is a correction from our 2020 annual report. The outstanding principal balance owed to the Endowment Fund continues to be treated as a fixed income investment of the Endowment and carries a 3% interest rate.

The Endowment Fund distributed 4 % of the three-year trailing average market value (\$4,177,071) which is calculated annually as of September 30th. The distribution was made in tranches throughout the year. During 2021, the Endowment Fund made distributions totaling \$151,000 to the St. Matthew's operating account. Based on the current calculation, the Endowment contribution to the Church for 2022 will be \$168,000.

The investment manager of the fund, Vanguard Institutional Advisory Services, has provided consistent market returns at a low cost. Vanguard provides the Endowment Investment Committee with services including asset allocation models, and re-balancing. The Endowment Fund's assets are invested principally in low-cost index funds and the Parish's mortgage. With a recent notice from Vanguard that a minimum investment advisory fee of \$30,000 per annum will be instituted in 2022, the Committee will be looking hard at alternative advisory services in the first months of the year.

In September 2021, the Endowment Investment Committee recommended to the Wardens and the Vestry approved that Chris Perry join the committee immediately as a 4<sup>th</sup> member to assist with the investment manager review process in light of Vanguard's recent announcement about a coming minimum fee increase. Chris will continue on the committee in 2022 for a normal three-year term, replacing Bob Dalldorf, who will complete his term as of this Annual Meeting. We thank Bob for his service to St. Matthew's on this important ministry and we welcome Chris to the committee.

Please feel free to contact any of the members of the Endowment Investment Committee with any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted by your Endowment Investment Committee

Bob Dalldorf  
Roger Valkenburgh  
John Wyman  
Chris Perry

## **Education for Ministry 2021**

[Education for Ministry](#) (EfM) is a four-year program in group reflection and study to support formation for Christian ministry in daily life. Offered by the School of Theology of the University of the South in Sewanee and sponsored by the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, St. Matthew's has an active group of seven individuals: four from St. Matt's (Jean Campbell, Pam Ely, Linda Gortz, Char Griffin, and Samantha Trolice) and two from Christ & Holy Trinity in Westport. One is currently enrolled in *Year One: The Hebrew Scriptures* while those continuing in *Year Two: The New Testament*. EfM provides an education in the content of the Christian tradition through reading the Bible alongside some basic biblical commentary, church history, and practical introductions to Christian theology and ethics. EfM also explores a wider concept of ministry, based as it is in an understanding that baptism, the fundamental rite of entry into Christianity, marks our call to minister to one another in Christ's name in the course of our daily lives.

We meet on Mondays from 7:00-9:00pm beginning with prayer, followed by discussion of our weekly reading assignment, theological reflection, and closing with prayer. From January thru May 2021 we met on Zoom, with meeting in person from September thru December 2021. Examining life through a theological lens is the central discipline in Education for Ministry. We do this by looking at our life experiences (Experience/Action), the world/society around us (Culture), and our cherished beliefs and values (Position) all alongside the Christian tradition that has been passed down through the centuries.

In the spring of 2022, we will invite members of St. Matt's (and surrounding parishes) to discern whether EfM is of interest. Our current group will begin *Year Two: The New Testament* or *Year 3: Christian History* in September (if they so choose) and new members will begin *Year One*. A multi-year group is very enriching as we meet as one group and learn from each other.

As the group's mentor (trained and acting on behalf of the School of Theology), I am not the group's "teacher" but a facilitator who walks alongside the group as we pray, learn, and discern God's call together. I am happy to answer any questions. As a graduate of the program in 1998 and a mentor from 1997-2013 in various congregations, I am grateful for the opportunity to return as a mentor at St. Matthew's.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Ely Pearson  
[sharonepearson@gmail.com](mailto:sharonepearson@gmail.com)  
203-984-1228

## **Liturgical Assistants 2021**

Usually, this report includes acolytes and Eucharistic ministers, but here's hoping 2022 will see the resumption of these ministries. We were thankful to have acolytes at our 4:00pm Christmas Eve service and hope to begin having our youth serve in this way this Spring. If you're in 4<sup>th</sup> grade or over and interested in being a crucifer or torch bearer, please be in touch with me!

In 2021 lectors were flexible to the max – recording on Zoom in advance, then in person and adapting to a hybrid version that included the continuation of our service being broadcast live from the sanctuary. Since October we have had our confirmands read the Hebrew Scriptures (first lesson) with expert coaching from Steve Hudspeth. I am grateful to all those who continue to offer their voices and smiling “eyes” through their masks as we join in worship together wherever we may be. If you feel called to join this “cloud of voices” please feel free to get in touch: [sharonepearson@gmail.com](mailto:sharonepearson@gmail.com) or 203-984-1228.

Brian Angerame  
Beth Baker  
Jean Campbell  
Caroline DeAngelis  
Pam Ely  
Andy Gaillard  
Adair Garis  
Amy Gubner  
Kim and Lydia Hall  
Simon Hornby (who moved back to the UK in July)  
Kate Jarvis (who moved to Vermont in August)  
Vytas Kisielius  
Anne Newton  
Janet Nobles  
Michael O'Connell  
John and Sharon Pearson  
Susan Proctor  
Paul and Anna Kate Reis  
Andrea Sato  
Kacky and Lyla Theoharides  
Lindsay and Ella Wyman

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Ely Pearson

## Social Justice & Racial Healing (aka Sacred Ground) 2021

In the spring of 2021 about a dozen St. Matt's folks participated in [\*Sacred Ground\*](#), a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Over Zoom we walked through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity. The 10-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories. In studying together, we had an opportunity to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope, and love.

Following our 10-week study, many of us chose to keep learning and seek ways to engage with the wider community. Via Zoom, we meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month from 7:30-8:30pm. A list of some of our study and activity:

- Connected with *St. Paul's on the Green in Norwalk's Racial & Social Justice Coalition* to learn about their history and ministry.
- Offered an additional prayer to our *Prayers of the People* each Sunday beginning in July that were also shared over St. Matt's social media platform.
- Held a *Theology on Tap* session at Marley's focused on Galatians 3:27-28 in August.
- Watched *Traces of the Trade: A Story of the Deep South*, a documentary by Episcopalians Katrina Browne with the hopes of offering a screening at St. Matt's open to the community in the future.
- Read numerous articles and books individually and as a group including *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman and *The Sum of Us* by Heather McGee.
- Learned about the *Witness Stones Project* with its roots in Guilford, Connecticut and began the process of learning how we might participate in its mission. You'll be hearing more about this in 2022!

*Sacred Ground* is part of *Becoming Beloved Community*, The Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. If you are interested in St. Matthew's offering this course again, please be in touch with any of us.

Susan Abrams  
Brian Angerame  
Eleanor Arnold  
Pam Ely  
Char Griffin  
Becky Hudspeth  
Kate & Tim Jarvis  
Joe Magnano  
Sharon Pearson, convenor  
Paul Reis  
Marissa Rohrbach  
Lindsay Wyman

## **St. Matthew's Stewardship Report as of 1/30/2022**

The 2022 Stewardship campaign reflects the ongoing challenges that the COVID pandemic has placed on both our parishioners in their personal lives as well as our collective ability to worship in an optimal manner. A year ago we were not even able to worship together in the sanctuary, which thankfully we have largely been able to address, albeit with the utmost caution for the health and safety of all our St. Matt's family members. In addition, the Stewardship drive has witnessed the financial impact caused by the migration of a few families who had historically made very faithful and generous contributions to the pledge roll. Whether due to relocation to different states or different churches, or simply by not being able to afford the same level of pledge commitments as they had historically, the loss of this pledge income (upon which St. Matt's heavily relies upon to fund all its operations), is a reflection of the times in which we live, not just at St. Matt's but across the country. Fortunately, St. Matt's is still supported by a strong and faithful core of families who continue to provide the financial resources required to drive our worship and programming further ahead despite the transformational turbulence. And new families continue to express interest in joining us in our faithful journey, setting a foundation for replacing the pledge income we have unfortunately lost due to factors beyond our control.

The 2022 Stewardship campaign kicked off in late November (a few weeks later than usual) with the distribution of pledge cards containing key metrics of the 2021 campaign as well as the appeal below:

*Giving is a gift.*

*Through the gift of giving to St. Matthew's,*

*we live out our faith and continue on our spiritual journey together.*

*Through the gift of giving, we express our gratitude and trust in God.*

*Through the gift of giving, we offer prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of life*

*and for the myriad of blessings bestowed upon us by God.*

*Through the gift of giving, we are made one with God and our neighbor,*

*in appreciation and care for one another, St. Matthew's and all of His creation.*

*How will you share your gifts?*

By the time we reached the Blessing of the Pledges celebration on December 19, 2021, we had received only 47 pledges totaling \$314,597 (compared to 85 families pledging \$443,617 during the 2021 Campaign). Following a spectacular Advent/Christmas season, and proactive outreach by St. Matthew's leaders, below is the current status for both 2021 collections and 2022 pledges:

### **2021 OUTSTANDING PLEDGES:**

- As of 1/31/21, a balance of \$25,655 (5.8% of the total 2021 pledge commitment) from 19 families (full or partial) remained uncollected.

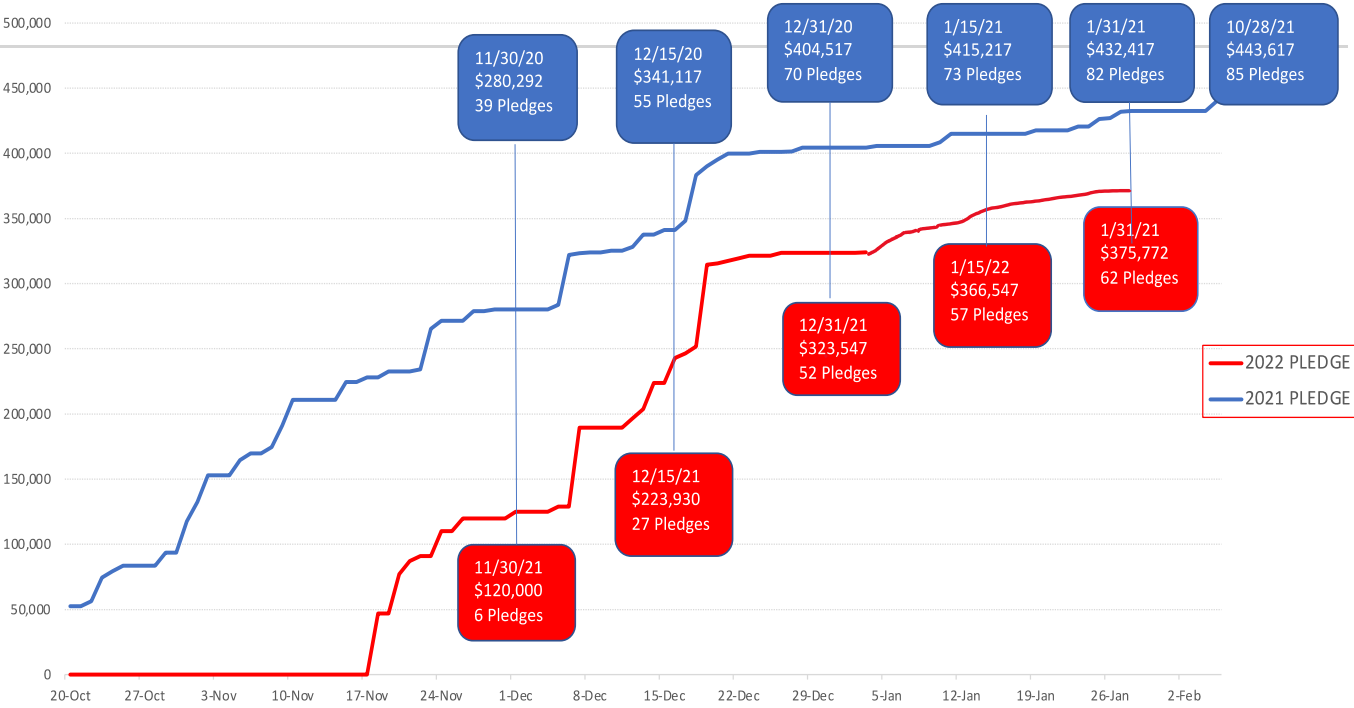
### **2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN:**

- As of 1/31/21, \$375,772 has been pledged by 62 families. Thus, we are \$67,845 behind last year's final pledge total.

- Despite all the pressing challenges we face on the Stewardship front, there is a positive trend amongst the 62 families who have pledged to date: 29 families have increased their pledge from 2021 or made a brand-new pledge in 2022 (net increase of \$33,655), 29 families have matched their same pledge from 2021, and only 4 families have decreased their pledge compared to 2021 (net decrease of \$6,500).
- It needs to be noted that the 2022 Stewardship will actively continue until the 2023 campaign kicks off next fall. There are currently 20 families, still considered to be St. Matt's parishioners, whose pledges in the 2021 drive totaled \$58,600 (91.6% of which was paid), who have not yet pledged in the 2022 campaign. We faithfully trust that at least some of these families will be able and motivated to pledge again, perhaps during this 2022 drive, along with new families joining our spiritual home throughout the year.



# 2022 vs. 2021 Pledges by Date



## **WEPCO's Annual Report for 2021**

WEPCO (Wilton Episcopal Presbyterian Corporation) works on behalf of both Wilton Presbyterian Church and St. Matthews Episcopal Church. WEPCO is responsible for maintaining the shared spaces at our church complex which includes the outdoor grounds and all indoor spaces except for the two sanctuaries. The upper core, the lounge, parish hall and all church school spaces are examples of the 15,000 square foot complex that WEPCO maintains. WEPCO functions via operating and capital budgets approved each year by both churches.

2021, like 2020, was a challenging year for WEPCO managing through the Covid pandemic restrictions which entailed establishing masking, social distancing and vaccination policies. Our permanent tenants returned to the building in June, 2020, following strict guidelines, while renters (i.e., Boy Scouts, AA, Kiwanis) returned in June, 2021. Andrew Arevalo assumed the role WEPCO Facilities Coordinator in February after the retirement of Sandy Muschler who served in the role for 22 years.

Chris Jeanes resigned his co-president role in April due to his family's relocation to Florida. Tom Carlson took over Chris's role on the Wepco Board at that time.

On the financial front WEPCO continues to be diligent about monitoring operating expenses having reduced them by 30% over the past five years. WEPCO, through WPC's application, received and was forgiven a PPP loan of \$21,000.

### **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

WEPCO, along with WPC and STM, completed the upgrade of the Wi-Fi system which will greatly enhance live streaming capabilities of Sunday services and to accessibility to the internet.

Tuckpointing, roofing repairs and painting projects were completed which will prevent future water damage.

WEPCO completed a campus-wide landscaping project of shrub and tree pruning in December. We will see the results of this effort in the Spring.

Spearheaded by WEPCO, and joined by the churches, we will be implementing an Integrated Calendar/Work Order software program (eSPACE) which will make scheduling the use of rooms more efficient and alleviate conflicts. The system should be operational in early 2022.

WEPCO started the installation of a security system which will include a card-key reader, panic alarms and surveillance cameras, which should be completed by March, 2022. We received a \$48,398 grant from the State of CT Non-Profit Organization Security Infrastructure Competitive Grant Program for this project and as a result, there will be very little cost to either church.

The parking lot was re-stripped.

### **OTHER**

WEPCO successfully hosted The Town of Wilton Vaccination Distribution Clinic serving the general public during the months of March and April.

WEPCO attracted a new renter, The Montessori Pre-School (serving 2-6 year old children), who replaced MOTH. Many hurdles had to be overcome including safety, zoning, insurance, health and inspection issues. This will generate significant additional revenue thus reducing the churches' WEPCO contributions. In addition, Montessori upgraded the playground area adjacent to their space at their cost.

The Spring and Fall 2021 Clean-Up Days were limited in their success due to COVID. These days rely heavily on the participation of parishioners from both churches and the Boy Scout troop. We will address the future feasibility of Clean-Up days to determine if a third-party contractor is needed to assist us in our efforts. These Clean-Up days help to maintain our beautiful campus and avoid additional costs. We strongly encourage all parishioners to participate.

Thank you to everyone on the WEPCO Board, the Clergy, Staff, WPC Session, St. Matthew's Vestry and parishioners of both churches for their efforts to make our complex the exceptional place that it is for our missions of faith and the way it serves the broader community. Also, we appreciate everyone's patience as 2021 was a year of transition amid the pandemic.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas Carlson  
Stephen Connor

2021 Board Officers and Members:

Co-Presidents:	Thomas Carlson, Stephen Connor
Secretary:	Chip Newton
Treasurer:	Bill Brautigam
Other Voting members:	Andy Driver, Tim Cummins, Ed MacEwen
Ex-Officio Members:	Berta Hull (WPC), Brian Angerame (STM)
Facilities Coordinator:	Andrew Arevalo
Sexton:	Max Gil

## **Finance Committee 2021**

Fellow parishioners,

As I look back at my first year as chair of the Finance Committee, I want to start by expressing my sincere gratitude for the faithful service of my fellow committee members. It's not easy work, but we are blessed to have a group of conscientious members who do it well. I believe we all also owe a special debt of gratitude to Keith DeAngelis, who does an excellent job as our Treasurer, and to Marissa, for her diligence and fiscal prudence.

It should come as no surprise to you that 2021 was another challenging financial year for St. Matthew's. Nevertheless, thanks to generous contributions from our parishioners, careful and conservative fiscal management, some help from the government in the form of a second PPP loan, and the ongoing benefit from our budget "right-sizing" exercise several years ago, we came through 2021 in reasonable financial shape.

Indeed, there is some good news to report on 2021. Nearly all pledges were fulfilled, and a handful of parishioners were able to donate more than they had pledged, a few significantly more, which is especially helpful in times like these. Our auction, with a fun new football tailgate theme, was a success. Thankfully, we were able to hold it in-person, but outdoors, a welcome change from our Zoom auction in 2020. By the end of the year, our revenues were roughly \$20,000 (4%) more than we had budgeted. As noted, we also received a second Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP") loan from the Small Business Administration, thanks to significant effort by Keith DeAngelis and our bookkeeper, Louann Miska.

On the expense side of the ledger, we continue to operate as leanly as possible, with a careful review of any increased or new expenses and a continuous effort to lower our ongoing and recurring expenses. Marissa's attention to the financial details has been key here. Due to these efforts and a conservative budget, by the end of the year we spent about \$25,000 (4%) less than planned.

In total, with modestly better than expected revenues and expenses, we ended 2021 with an operating deficit of roughly \$21,000, which compares favorably to our budgeted deficit of \$67,000.

Looking forward to 2022, there are several factors that will likely make it even more challenging than 2021. On the revenue side, with the big turnover in Wilton real estate in 2020 and 2021, a number of longstanding members of our parish have moved away. To-date, 61 families have pledged for 2022, down from 85 in 2021. We are hopeful that families who have yet to pledge for 2022 will do so over the next week or two. There also won't be another PPP loan in 2022, but we should see a revenue benefit when the 2021 PPP loan is officially forgiven. Lastly, on the expense side, inflation is higher now than it has been since 1982. As a result, we're budgeting an operating deficit of roughly \$114,000.

The Finance Committee is viewing 2022 as a "rebuilding" year, which is why we're comfortable with a budget that forecasts such a large deficit. We are hopeful that some of the families that recently moved to Wilton will join our vibrant and fulfilling parish. Please help us spread the word about this wonderful place.

As has been discussed in recent years, it seems likely that the church will need to use a portion of the annual draw from our Endowment to help fund our operating needs in 2022. We feel that this does make sense for a portion of the draw going forward, especially in times like these, but the amount allocated should be realistic and conservative. It should not be considered as a substitute for a vibrant stewardship campaign.

In closing, here are some ways you can help:

- Pray for an end to COVID and a return to full in-person worship
- Spread the word about the good things happening here
- If you haven't already, please PLEDGE
- Volunteer to join the Offering Counter team

Respectfully submitted,  
Rob Kyle  
Finance Committee Chair

# St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

## 2022 Summary Budget

	2021 Budget	2021 Act	2022 Budget	22Bgt vs 21Bgt	22Bgt vs 21Act
<b>Income</b>					
Pledge Receipts	439,553	431,581	397,069	(42,484)	(34,512)
Plate Donations	2,000	2,882	5,000	3,000	2,118
Other Donations	46,619	65,022	31,000	(15,619)	(34,022)
Net Auction	55,000	64,003	57,000	2,000	(7,003)
Other Income	4,000	3,416	38,240	34,240	34,824
Total Income	547,172	566,904	528,309	(18,863)	(38,595)
<b>Expense</b>					
Administrative	36,658	38,413	37,996	1,338	(417)
Cemetery	2,500	2,500	2,500	-	-
Christian Ed	72,997	74,642	77,457	4,459	2,815
Clergy	159,446	154,323	181,005	21,558	26,682
Common Mission	66,763	66,768	63,002	(3,761)	(3,766)
Fellowship	2,000	722	2,000	-	1,278
Mortgage Interest	22,793	22,793	22,077	(716)	(716)
Music	80,684	75,481	108,284	27,600	32,803
Office	18,363	17,701	18,085	(278)	384
Other	500	-	-	(500)	-
Payroll	1,000	1,005	1,000	-	(5)
Plant	107,681	97,959	91,739	(15,942)	(6,220)
Professional Fees	19,000	21,218	20,000	1,000	(1,218)
Tech	17,016	8,846	10,516	(6,500)	1,670
Worship	2,000	2,628	2,000	-	(628)
Youth	4,700	3,872	4,700	-	828
Total Expense	614,100	588,871	642,360	28,260	53,489
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>(66,928)</b>	<b>(21,967)</b>	<b>(114,051)</b>	<b>(47,123)</b>	<b>(92,084)</b>
<b>TRANSFERS</b>					
Endowment Distribtn	157,000	157,000	168,000	11,000	11,000
Mission	(41,000)	(41,000)	(24,000)	17,000	17,000
Mortgage Principal	(23,238)	(23,238)	(24,641)	(1,403)	(1,403)
Capital	(55,850)	(55,422)	(40,000)	15,850	15,422
Unallocated	(36,912)	(37,340)	(79,359)	(42,447)	(42,019)
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-
<b>CASH SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>(66,928)</b>	<b>(21,967)</b>	<b>(114,051)</b>	<b>(47,123)</b>	<b>(92,084)</b>

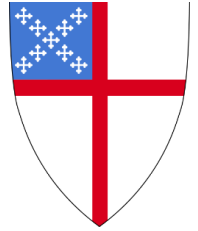
# St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

## Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2021

	Dec 31, 21	Dec 31, 20
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings	458,765	466,276
Accounts Receivable	218	-
Endowment Mortgage Receivable	747,077	770,315
Total Current Assets	1,206,060	1,236,591
Other Assets		
Collections	14,450	14,450
Endowment Life insurance	78,321	77,818
Endowment Investments	4,004,940	3,637,757
Total Other Assets	4,097,712	3,730,025
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>5,303,771</b>	<b>4,966,616</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	2,663	10,063
Credit Cards	-	(422)
Other Current Liabilities		
SBA PPP Loan	34,240	-
Organ Donation Fund	16,458	16,458
Altar Guild Fund	213	213
Arts of St. Matthews Fund	10,400	10,312
Capital Reserve Fund	156,298	144,999
Cemetery Fund	19,142	23,473
Discretionary Funds	11,981	12,842
Flower Fund	8,000	6,471
Ian Harleman Memorial Fund	35,306	35,306
Memorial Fund	22,312	21,787
Music Fund	9,579	9,529
Mission Reserve Fund	7,046	7,394
Unallocated Distribution	8,000	-
Youth Fund	1,105	1,105
Copier Deposit	3,137	3,137
Payroll Liabilities	7,107	1,229
Prepaid Pledges	79,018	143,590
Total Other Current Liabilities	429,343	437,846
Total Current Liabilities	432,006	447,487
Endowment Mortgage	747,077	770,315
Total Liabilities	1,179,083	1,217,802
Equity		
Fund Balance	3,667,308	3,244,494
Temporarily Restricted	-	250
Net Income	457,380	504,070
Total Equity	4,124,689	3,748,814
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>5,303,771</b>	<b>4,966,616</b>

## Worship Schedule at St. Matthew's

Holy Eucharist on Sundays at 10am



*Please keep an eye on our website and social media as well as our e-news. There you'll find information and opportunities to connect for friends and members of all ages.*

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### **Staff**

Rector	The Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach, <a href="mailto:marissa@stmatthewswilton.org">marissa@stmatthewswilton.org</a>
Deacon	The Rev. Deacon Don Burr, <a href="mailto:don@stmatthewswilton.org">don@stmatthewswilton.org</a>
Music Ministries & Organist	Andrew Leslie Cooper, <a href="mailto:andrew@stmatthewswilton.org">andrew@stmatthewswilton.org</a>
Parish Administrator	Nancy Johnson, <a href="mailto:office@stmatthewswilton.org">office@stmatthewswilton.org</a>
Children, Youth & Family	Samantha Trolice, <a href="mailto:samantha@stmatthewswilton.org">samantha@stmatthewswilton.org</a>
WEPCO Facilities Coordinator	Andrew Arevalo, <a href="mailto:wepco@optonline.net">wepco@optonline.net</a>
Bookkeeper	Louann Miska, <a href="mailto:louann.miska@gmail.com">louann.miska@gmail.com</a>
Media Technician	Matthew Henshaw
Nursery Staff	Lucia Sato
Sexton	Max Gil

### **Wardens and Officers**

Sr. Warden	Brian Angerame	Clerk	Anne Newton
Jr. Warden	Pam Ely	Asst. Treasurers	Bruce Beebe, Andrea Sato
Treasurer	Keith DeAngelis		Rob Kyle

### **The Vestry**

Vytas Kisieliuss	Pam Carlson	Joe Magnano
Dodo Roberts	Tim Jarvis	Paul Reis
Jessica Christ		

**36 New Canaan Road, Wilton, CT 06897**

**Phone: (203) 762-7400**

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