

Hope Grows Here Stewardship Kick-Off Sunday, October 31, 2021

Listening to Cheryl Watterson's sermon about her new role as Director of Youth & Family Ministries reminds me of Louie Armstrong's song, "It's a Wonderful World." I want to share a verse from that song: *"I hear babies cry. I watch them grow. They'll learn much more than I'll ever know. And I think to myself, what a wonderful world."*

Here at St. Matthew's, we have programs for our youth that lets them learn and grow as they climb the ladder from our Pre-School to our Kairos Sunday School program, to Destinations for Middle Schoolers, to Logos for High Schoolers. We have programs for adults as well, in addition to worship services and pastoral care. We have a Wonderful World here at St. Matthew's.

This Sunday we kick-off the third year of our Hope Grows Here Stewardship Campaign. We have a hard-working stewardship committee consisting of: William Compton, Katie Davis, Virginia France, Bev Tucker & Jim McGuire.

Cheryl started us off this morning with our first stewardship sermon. Our Associate Priest, Bruce Montgomery follows next week and then Ophelia for the next two Sundays. We've also heard our Deacon, Carole Rodgers and Seminarian, Ayden Petrone preach recently. This is more than a line-up of speakers. This is the team that Ophelia has put together these past three years to serve the spiritual & pastoral needs of our parish family. Most of these folks give their time and talent at no cost to St. Matthew's.

This team is a testament to Ophelia's leadership & creativity. Ophelia has led us these past three years to a place where Hope truly Grows Here. And Ophelia is here to stay!

We now ask you to step up & support all that St. Matthew's does for our parish family and for our community. Our needs are significant this year. We estimate we will need \$288,000 in pledges which is \$32,000 more than last year. We were able to close our budget gap these past two years because we benefited from federal grants of \$40,000 each year under the Payroll Protection Program. That Program is over now. Leadership already has stepped up with more than 20 pledges. We must ask our faithful pledgers to consider increasing their pledge by 12% this year to close the gap.

We also need new pledges. Leadership has contributed to a Challenge Fund to provide a \$50 match for the first 10 new pledges with the match being added to the pledged amount to St. Matthew's. We ask new pledgers to consider giving \$20 per week.

In closing, we understand that we all face different circumstances that affect what we can give. We recognize that pledging is a deeply personal matter between you, your family and God. Finally, please know that St. Matthew's is grateful for whatever you give.

Gratefully,
The Hope Grows Here Stewardship Committee