

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

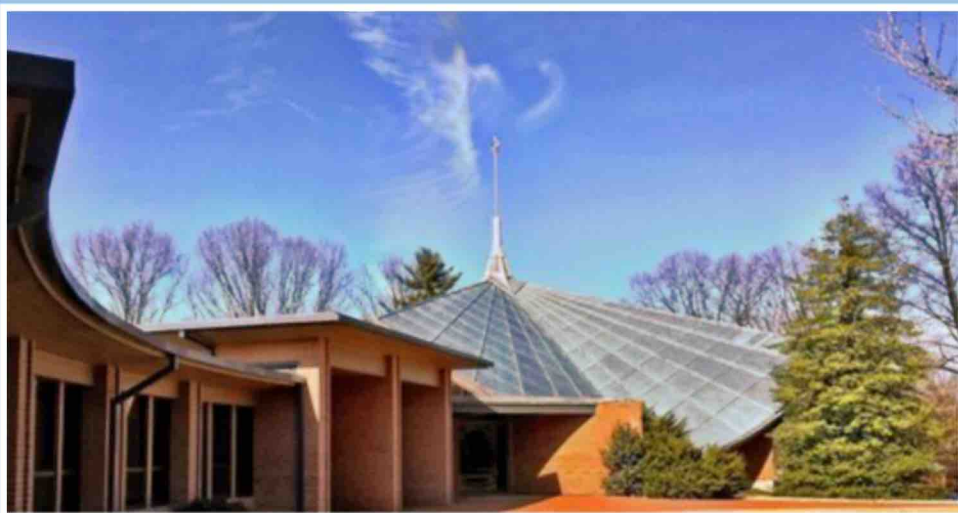
OUR LEGACY OF WORSHIP & SERVICE



# SPREADING OUR ROOTS



AND OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE



75TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church began as a dream and desire of a number of people in the St. Matthews area in 1948. Several organizational meetings were held in the living room of Bishop Clingman's home to plan the way ahead. Approval was given to establish a mission church; the Rev. Wilfred Myll was called as Minister-in-Charge. It was decided to name the new church "St. Matthew's," rekindling a former church of the same name in this area in the 1800s, which also gave the City of St. Matthews its name. The opening service of St. Matthew's was held in the St. Matthews' Women's Club on Sept. 5, 1948.



## OUR BEGINNINGS

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH



In 1949, St. Matthew's purchased a 7-acre tract of land at the corner of Hubbards Lane and Massie Avenue. This photo shows Henry Scheirich, our first Senior Warden, signing the deed for the property on behalf of the 147 members of the church. Undeterred by rain and cold weather, the new congregation held their first Easter service at 6:30a on the new property. In the next couple of years, as the church grew and became firmly established, plans began to be drawn up to build a church of their own. Here, in 1950, the Rev. Bill Myll, Tom Nantz and Henry Scheirich review design drawings for the new facilities. Finally, on July 29, 1952, the Cornerstone for the new St. Matthew's Episcopal Church was laid. Bishop Clingman was on hand to help in that effort, along with the Rev. Bill Myll, who led the first St. Matthew's service.





# AFFIRMING PRINCIPLES

## *We are a caring, inclusive community...*

St. Matthew was an outcast in his time. We honor St. Matthew by welcoming the outcasts of our time. We believe in the value of every person, regardless of physical, economic or social condition, and we strive to be a community which serves the unique spiritual needs of all God's children. We respect and honor others who worship one God. We acknowledge that God created all things and, as God's stewards, we strive to care for all creation.

## *Centered in the Eucharist...*

The Eucharist, at the very core of our community, reveals the truth that we are one in Christ, and strengthens and renews us for service. All persons are welcome to worship with us, to share the Eucharist at God's table, and to assist our efforts in the greater community to proclaim God's word.



## *Grounded in the Gospel...*

Jesus preached a message of compassion, inclusion and love. So do we. We are a community of compassion. Our bonds are based on God's overwhelming love, rather than narrow definitions of doctrine and behavior. We accept people at all points in their spiritual journeys, and support each other as we question and grow in faith.

## *So that we can reach out as Christ's hands to the world*

We care about and for others — both within and beyond our community of faith — and always take into account an individual's personhood and need. We believe that there are unique needs of God's people at every stage of their journeys, and we seek to provide programs and support to serve spiritual needs throughout life. We reach out to address the world's physical and spiritual needs, rather than waiting for the world to come to us.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR  
WHO DOESN'T  
LOOK LIKE YOU  
THINK LIKE YOU  
SPEAK LIKE YOU  
LOVE LIKE YOU  
PRAY LIKE YOU  
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR  
NO EXCEPTIONS



ST. MATTHEW'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Our mission is to be a **caring, inclusive community**, centered in the **Eucharist** and **grounded in the Gospel**, so that we can reach out as **Christ's hands to the world**.

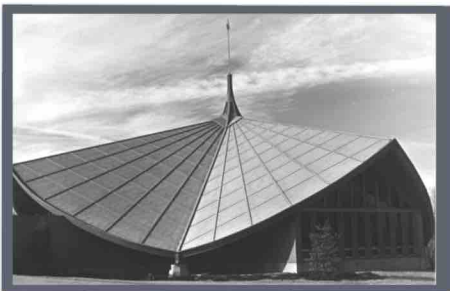
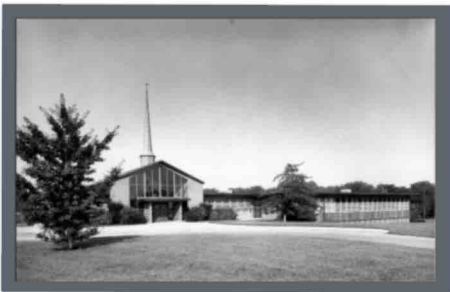
Our first church was completed in 1953 with a main nave, including its soaring steeple, a kitchen and classrooms on the left, and admin offices on the right.

By the late 1950s, the church was well-established, and many beautiful trees and other landscaping began to flourish around the church grounds.

In the early 1960s, St. Matthew's had grown to a size that demanded a larger facility. Fred Louis, a member of our parish and partner of well-known architectural firm Louis and Henry, imagined a very unique, modern design. Together with architect Larry Leis, they created plans for a church in the round, with a floor created in the shape of a cross, pews in three of the four transepts (quarters), four soaring wooden arches, and a roof in the shape of a hyperbolic paraboloid.

Construction on this new facility began in 1963, and here is the completed new nave in March 1965. In addition to the glorious new holy space, this construction effort also included expanded office space, a lounge, narthex, and additional classrooms.

This photo from August 1965 shows the completed nave interior, looking north toward the altar, and well-loved reredos wall. This wall closed off that transept with the sacristy, vesting room, and storage located behind it. This beautiful wall remained until the renovation of the nave in 2007. That effort removed the wall, opened the transept for the choir, organ, and some of organ pipes; the bricks in Clingman were arranged to reflect the same style that were removed from behind the altar in the nave.







# THE EVOLUTION OF OUR BUILDING

The 1970's aerial view shows the new nave, expanded office wing, parking and many plantings. A house would later be purchased for a rectory. The view of the front entrance is from the early 2000s. By this time, it became obvious that it was time to expand. In 2006, a large multi-purpose room, complete with stage, commercial-grade kitchen and program offices, was added. Youth classrooms, a renovated nursery, and a renovation of the main nave, including opening up the fourth transept windows behind the altar, relocation of the organ/pipes, and an expanded narthex was also completed. The beautiful nave features three raised areas under the soaring arches and hanging cross over the altar, which symbolize the three major pillars of our faith: the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist, the pulpit for preaching the Gospel, and the baptismal font, where we all become members in the body of Christ. The windows on all three sides accentuate the connection we share with the beautiful world God created. The aerial view below shows our current campus. The silver-roofed nave is toward the top, the original nave, now Clingman Hall, is the white roof in the center. The brown roof is the expanded administration office area. The silver roof at the bottom is the new Saints Hall. The campus has come a long way from its early beginnings in 1948.





Henry J. Scheirich, Jr.

The Vestry, which is the governing board of the parish, was first established in 1948 under Warden Henry J. Scheirich, Jr., who served until 1954 in that role. Vestry minutes and current Vestry members are kept on the Archives

page of our website. Vestry members serve three-year terms and are elected by the parish.

The endowment was started in 1988 as a general fund and held in trust by the Diocese. In 2002, the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Endowment Fund was established by the Vestry, and five sub-funds were created. Gifts given to an endowment become the principle, which is not invaded. A designated portion of the investment earnings become available for use each quarter, to be used by the following sub-funds:

- General
- Assets, Memorials, & Aesthetics
- Parish Programs
- Outreach
- Dimensions of Faith

# LEADERSHIP AND THE ENDOWMENT

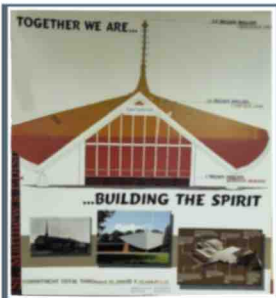
## GROWING OUR FAITH AND COMMUNITY



St. Matthew's Church has been blessed by the very generous support of its members over the past 75 years.



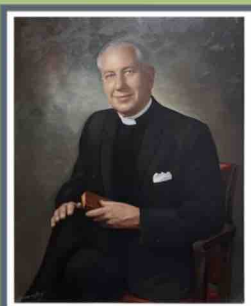
St. Matthew's capital campaigns have raised money to build and expand our current facility. Capital campaigns are a normal method of raising money for building additions, remodeling, and major maintenance expenses in the Episcopal Church. The first campaign was to build the original structure at our present location. The theme for this first campaign was "\$75,000 or Bust." The church was dedicated in 1953. There were also campaigns to build an education wing. The next capital campaign was called, "To Worship In Beauty," which was the \$160,000 campaign in 1962 to build the present church sanctuary. Our nave was dedicated in 1965. Twenty years later, "Mending the Nets" goal was \$575,000 to remodel and add classroom and offices. The next campaign was "Building the Spirit" in 2005, which successfully raised \$2.1M. It was preceded by a candlelight dinner at the Cathedral. Although successful in its goal, additional funds were needed to pay off the remainder of the debt. After the campaign, "One More Year," there were more formal campaigns called "Raising the Spirit" and "Living the Spirit." In 2016, the capital stewardship campaign, "Our Future Our Faith," sought funds for eight needed repair and improvement projects around the building. The debt was eventually retired in 2021.





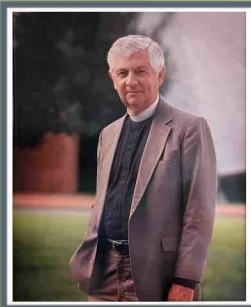
## THE REV. WILFRED MYLL

Wilfred (Bill) Myll (1948-1972) was called in 1948 as priest-in-charge when our parish was a mission and then became the first parish rector. Bill built our parish into a thriving community of believers and shepherded the construction of our first sanctuary in the 1950s and our very unique sanctuary in the 1960s. During his tenure, he organized ECW units, a men's group, encouraged team-building, and created a family atmosphere. He led our first capital campaign ("(\$75,000 or Bust") and oversaw the purchase of a rectory and land to build the church. He was involved in the civil rights movement and championed equal access. He was also a founder and board member of ACLU Kentucky.



## THE REV. RICHARD HUMKE

Richard (Dick) Humke (1973-1996) continued growing the parish and focused on social awareness and outreach. Under his leadership, many groups were formed inside and outside the parish, offering support for Alcoholics Anonymous, Survivors of Suicide, Home of the Innocents, Hospice, and persons with AIDS. He encouraged cooperation with the interfaith community, creating covenant relationships with many. He led the "Mending the Nets" campaign (1986) to accomplish several repairs in our facilities. Dick navigated national issues with the 1989 *Book of Common Prayer*, the installation of women clergy, and St. Matthew's integration of women into services as ushers, readers, chalice bearers, and Vestry officers. He also created the Memorial Garden.



## THE VERY REV. LUCINDA LAIRD

Under Lucinda Laird's leadership (1997-2012), we embarked on a campaign to grow membership and facilities. "Building the Spirit" and related capital campaigns resulted in the remodeling of Clingman Chapel, general renovation and expansion, Saints Hall and program offices, a youth wing, library and kitchen. She initiated Dimensions of Faith and the Food Pantry. She was a prime mover in opening our church to the LGBTQ+ community and gained Vestry approval to offer same-sex blessings. She also blessed the first Habitat home that St. Matthew's and Holy Trinity co-sponsored.



## THE REV. KELLY KIRBY

Kelly Kirby (2014-present) has focused our efforts on worship, social justice, environmental justice, and community outreach. She balanced our budget and ensured that our \$1.2M debt was paid off. She responded to the COVID pandemic by offering streamed services and kept programs moving forward in a safe environment. She created the Stewards of St. Matthew's to ensure our future through legacy gifts. She initiated a weekly Healing Eucharist. She is a founding member of Empower West Louisville. She completed a Bingham Fellowship, received preaching grants through Calvin Theological Seminary, a 5-year Communities of Calling grant, and was awarded a Pastoral Study Project grant to research philanthropic redlining.



BISHOP CHARLES CLINGMAN was the fourth Bishop of Kentucky from 1936-1954. In the late 1940s, he realized the need to establish an Episcopal mission east of Louisville, in a growing community called St. Matthews, aptly named in 1851 after a church on St. Matthews Avenue. This St. Matthew's Episcopal Church existed in some form from 1839-1913. He hosted several organizations in his own home, and, with his leadership and the determination and desire of several influential parishioners, St. Matthew's was founded. He presided over the first service, the groundbreaking of the first sanctuary, and at the cornerstone laying service for that first church.

# PLANTING SEEDS WHERE WE HAVE BEEN



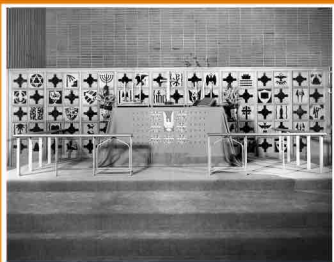
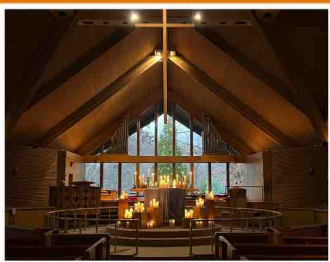
**April Food Pantry**  
Drive-thru and no contact pickup  
Neighbors picking up food must remain in their cars  
Neighbors are asked to wear masks  
No additional volunteers needed





# SPREADING ROOTS

75 YEARS OF  
WORSHIP & SERVICE

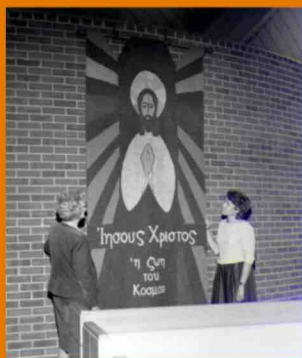




St. Matthew's is a welcoming church with a variety of worship offerings. There are church services throughout the week, including a Wednesday morning healing Eucharist. On Sunday, there are three Eucharists, each unique in style. The 8:00a Eucharist follows the Rite 2 Eucharistic Prayer, and has simpler music without a choir. The 10a Eucharist follows Rite 2 and has a full choir with organ accompaniment. The 5p Eucharist uses a variety of liturgical resources and is more flexible and contemporary.

We have a unique nave, which is visually and aesthetically pleasing. St. Matthew's is fortunate to have had forward-looking architects as members. Fred Louis and Gibbs Reese played an important role in the design and remodeling of our current nave and chapel. Other architects, including Steve Cherry, have assisted. The design of the nave encourages participation and communion with each other. Many parishioners have said that the nave design, the central altar, and the round communion rail encourage connection. Additionally, the outside flora and fauna of God's creation are visible in every direction. Being one level, the nave is welcoming to those with disabilities, and there are designated spaces for people in wheelchairs to worship. We also have t-coil compatible listening-assist technology in our nave for those who are hearing impaired.

Banners are often hung in the nave and brighten up the service. Wall banners, altar frontal pieces, and similar items have been made and donated by parishioners since 1954. A catalog of such banners and other art pieces, including sculptures around the church, are described in a book entitled, *Archival Record of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church*. The book can be borrowed from the church library or viewed in the parish archives.



The congregation participates in many aspects of the Sunday liturgies, including serving as ushers, lay readers, Eucharistic ministers, acolytes, greeters, and intercessors. Youth Sunday is a particularly special day at St. Matthew's because the youth read scripture, preach senior sermons, administer communion, perform musical solos, acolyte, and serve as greeters and ushers at the 10a Eucharist.

# WORSHIP

CENTERED IN THE EUCHARIST





# OUTREACH

## REACHING OUT AS GOD'S HANDS IN THE WORLD

Early in our history, outreach initiatives often started on an individual basis. In response to an article in the *Courier-Journal*, three parishioners began the Clothes Closet ministry in Louisville in 1959. In 1974, The Rev. Dick Humke helped to start the hospice program in our city. St. Matthew's mission statement and outreach philosophy evolved over time, but the church did give money to non-profits in a formal way by the mid 1970s. Offering the use of its facilities for organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous and the Red Cross was considered outreach to our community. In addition to hospice, incubator programs that began at St. Matthew's were Wellspring (mental health services) and Survivors of Suicide. Other outreach has included monetary and volunteer assistance to Wayside Christian Mission, Cornerstone, Habitat for Humanity, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, House of Ruth (Glade House), and CASA (court appointed special advocate). Our youth have also taken numerous mission trips. Additionally, the Dare to Care Food Pantry began in 2010.



Currently, we use outreach funding to help orphans in Kenya go to school; prepare West Louisville youth for college; respond to emergency rent and utility needs here in St.

Matthews; purchase food to cover shortfalls in our monthly Dare to Care Food pantry; buy ingredients that become meals for single parents at LifeSkills as well as backside workers and their families served by our Churchill Downs ministry; and to help build Habitat for Humanity houses.





# MEMORIAL GARDEN



Environmental stewardship informs our vocation to be intentionally good neighbors and stewards of our land and resonates across our grounds. We understand that our concern about our planet begins by demonstrating stewardship of our own land. From the beginning, our landscaping was carefully planned by consulting with the Olmsted Firm in Boston in 1952. Decades later, particular care was given to the development of the Memorial Garden, which was dedicated in 1996 after much planning. This beautiful outdoor worship and remembrance space, where we inter ashes, has been supported by gifts to the Endowment.



# CREATION CARE



Over the years, we have sought to educate each other in environmental stewardship. We have learned through city programs, such as the annual interfaith Festival of Faiths, which focused on Sacred Soil, Sacred Water, Sacred Air, Sacred Fire, and Sacred Change. We have also participated in parish book discussions, Horizon Readers, Women in

Conversation and Going Deeper. Our Creation Care Ministry was also recently established. This ministry works to reduce the church's environmental footprint and educate parishioners on environmental justice issues.



Our social justice mission states that we work to repair unjust structural systems (political, educational, housing, economic, judicial, environmental, healthcare, and immigration) in our community. We strive to bring about community healing regarding social justice through prayer, relationships, and action, with a particular focus on racial justice and creation care. We have worked for social justice, beginning with the establishment of the city-wide clothes closet in 1959, and continue to support Empower West Louisville, Black-owned businesses, Louisville Community Grocery, Black Lives Matter, Moms' Demand Action, Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light, and The Earth & Spirit Center.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE





Many families joined St. Matthew's Church in the early days of its inception. Sunday school classes were held in the Women's Club main room, kindergarten in the lobby and a class for ages 10-12 in the kitchen. The Rev. Myll strongly suggested people bring their children for baptism and choose godparents from the parish; many did, which created an even stronger bond. The result was a real family group and feeling of togetherness in the church. Families without grandparents or parents in Louisville celebrated Thanksgiving and Christmas together. St. Matthew's Church provided true family support and love.

Once the building was completed, community services began as well, and continuing support was given to parish members. The Ladies' Group continued the Bazaar work, the Nixon family helped establish nursery school classes for ages 3-5. Ballet classes for young girls were offered, Boy Scout packs started, and Phil Ardery led a class for adults on the civil affairs of the day. Groups now met at the church rather than in homes. Confirmation classes were offered, couples' ready mixer groups formed, a Men's Club began, auxiliary meetings for the women of the parish were held, and the first St. Matthew's Church Youth Group was established. A drama group even formed to produce parish plays!

St. Matthew's continues to be a place where families join together in worship and service. Siblings serve as acolytes, parents load boxes alongside their teens at the monthly food pantry, and all watch with joy as toddlers jump in bounce houses on St. Matthew's Day and children run through our fields hunting eggs on Easter. Generations have been baptized and confirmed at St. Matthew's, and generations more will join together to worship and serve as a faith community.

# GENERATIONS OF ST. MATTHEW'S FAMILIES



# DIMENSIONS OF FAITH

## Our Stimulating Biannual Lecture Series

The biannual Dimensions of Faith Lecture Series invites distinguished theologians, thinkers, and writers to lecture on the interface of religion and culture to encourage our parish to challenge our minds and renew our spirits. The purpose of the series is to offer intellectually stimulating and provocative forums on social, ethical, and theological issues. It is intended to reflect the Episcopal tradition of being open to diverse points of view.



Silas House



Ruby Sales



Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove



Nadia Bolz-Weber



*The Very Reverend Ian Markham*



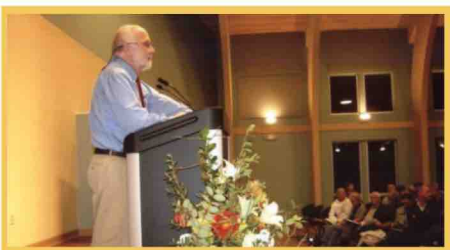
Sarah Bessey



John Philip Newell

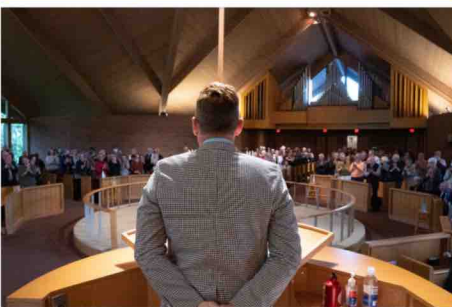


*Walter Brueggeman, Old Testament Scholar*



*Marcus Borg, Biblical Scholar*

The first speaker in 2001, The Rt. Rev. John Shelby Spong, was followed by several speakers over the next two years. Lectures resumed in 2009 with Sarah Miles and have continued on a biannual basis. We have hosted more than 30 speakers.



*Kentucky author & poet laureate, Silas House, receives a standing ovation in 2023*

The St. Matthew's Dimensions of Faith Lecture Series was established thanks to a generous donation by Bo Nixon.





# OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE



For 75 years, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church has been a necessary part of our community—a place for worshipping, serving, and remembering. We worship God with beauty and clarity and make our space one that is open to the Holy Spirit. We have always been a dedicated group of disciples that makes a difference in the lives of the community and city around us. We have been a force for social justice led by the Christ-inspired values that we share.

As we look to the next 75 years of mission and ministry in this place, we are called to continue the mission that has always been at our very heart:

**Our mission is to be a caring, inclusive community, centered in the Eucharist and grounded in the Gospel, so that we can reach out as Christ's hands to the world.**

We are more than just a church; we are a social action engine, dedicated to doing good through a broad swath of programs premised on Christian principles. We put our principles into action. St. Matthew's has a long history of working to make Louisville a better place, especially for marginalized people. We are excited to continue this legacy into the future, as a church deeply connected to our city and those who live and work around us. We will always pursue the Gospel and will endeavor to serve our congregants, greater Louisville community, and the world.



ST. MATTHEW'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

