



St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PARISH PROFILE 2022

Houma, Louisiana

*Mission:
Saint Matthew's Episcopal
Church exists to glorify God
and make Christ known.*

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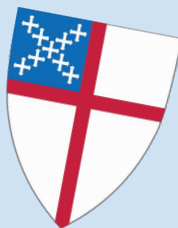
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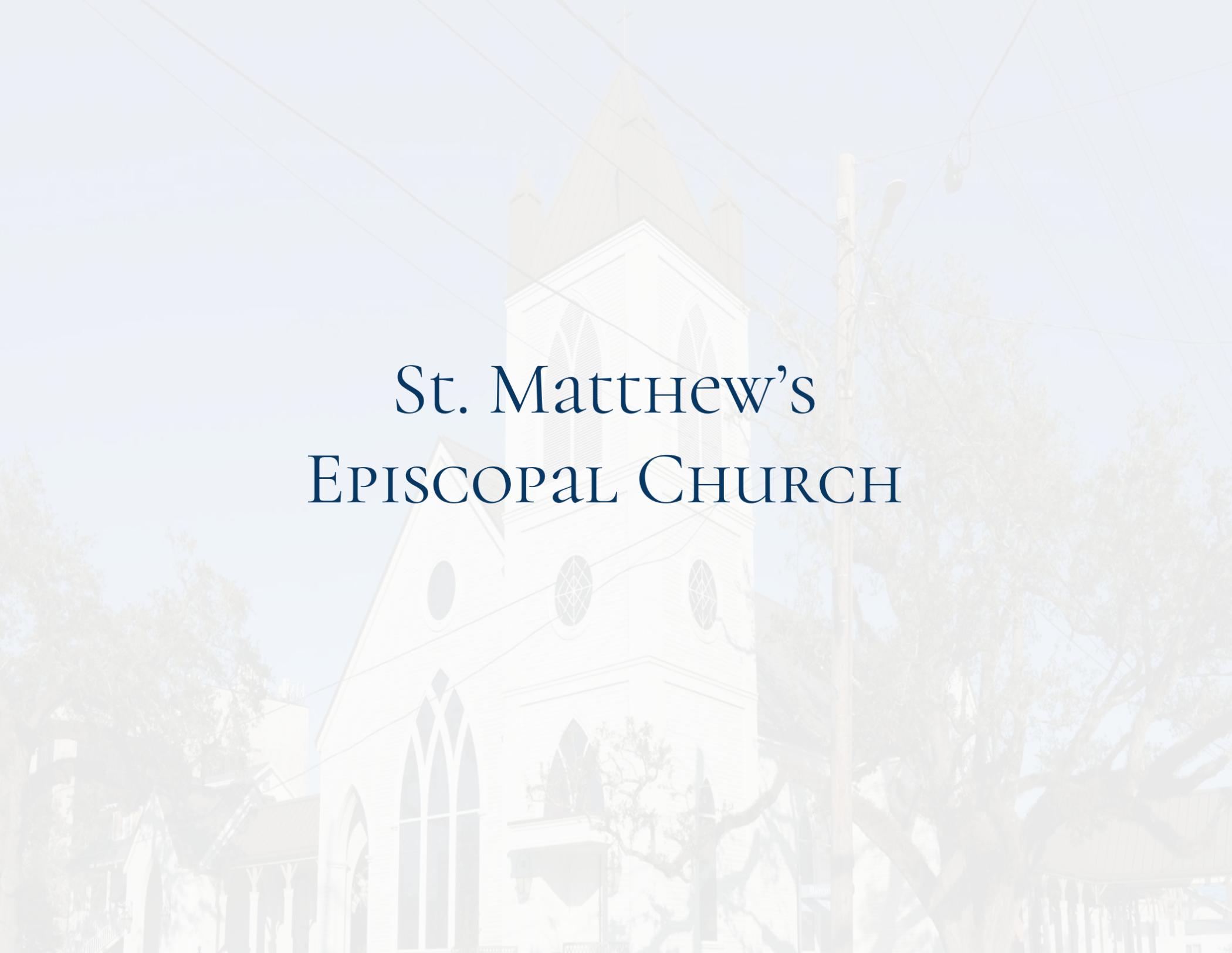
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PRAYER FOR a new Rector

Almighty God, giver of every gift we receive: look graciously on your Church, and guide those who shall discern whom God is calling to be rector of St. Matthew's. Grace us with patience, trust, and hope through the interim times of doubt and uncertainty. We pray that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us to continue, improve, expand, and reach out with our ministries to all whom we can touch; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





St. Matthew's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



THE CHURCH

St. Matthew's is an accepting, welcoming, and loving congregation. The church is unified in a desire to grow the congregation by attracting new parishioners and to create deeper connections with our community. With a small and aging congregation, we pray for leadership to attract and involve young people and families in the church.

Technology is an area where there is significant room for growth at St. Matthew's, and our congregation is ready to learn and embrace it. The congregation is looking for a rector who will embrace, utilize, and invest in technology as a way to reach out to the community and grow the church. We believe that this is a positive way to involve and attract young people. Parishioners want services to be streamed online for those unable to attend in person in order to spread the word of God.

Currently one worship service is offered at 10:00AM Sunday morning. This is a traditional liturgical celebration of the Holy Eucharist, with one Sunday each month dedicated and directed to the children in our church. In our survey and listening sessions with the congregation, it became apparent that there is much interest in additional worship services and adult Christian Education classes at St. Matthew's.

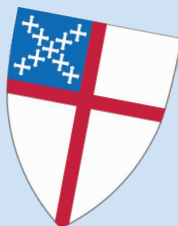
THE CHURCH-continued

Parishioners are seeking a compassionate, prayerful, pastoral rector who will reach out and get to know the congregation as well as the wider community.

The school is a major outreach mission of the church to the community. Parents see the school as a family and want to grow the enrollment while keeping class size small, which we have room to do. Parents seek a rector with strong Christian values who is welcoming, approachable, visible on campus, inclusive, and connects well with children. Parents and children alike are anxious to return to the pre-pandemic music programs at school and church. Children are interested in a Christian education class as part of their curriculum, and we are looking for a rector who understands the impact they can have on a young person's life.

The goals of the church are to:

- Fulfill our mission to glorify God
- Grow the congregation
- Offer more worship service opportunities
- Increase Christian education opportunities
- Improve technology and communication
- Strengthen the church and school bond
- Grow the endowment fund and financial stability of the church
- Welcome all to have a home in our church





What St. Matthew's seeks in a Rector

Experience:

- Experience as a rector
- Ability to create opportunities that involve church, school, and community with each other
- Worked with a school in some capacity
- Experience in church administration

Preaching:

- Enthusiastic scripture based preaching that reaches all members of the congregation-including school children
- Ability to make scripture relevant to everyday life
- Ability to plan worship services that captivate the congregation using the traditional liturgical system

Pastoral Care:

- Willing to visit the congregation in their homes, in hospitals, nursing homes, etc.
- Willing to counsel and visit those in need
- Ability to create venues to help the congregation develop spiritual growth
- Be compassionate, kind, and a good listener

What St. Matthew's seeks in a Rector-*continued*

Communicator:

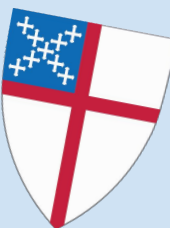
- Maintain good communication pathways in the church and school
- Be approachable, accepting, and accessible
- Relate well to the Vestry, lay leaders of church ministry groups, and the School Board
- Willingness to address and mediate issues that arise in the church and/or the school
- Focus on helping the church grow and reach more people in the community
- Ability to utilize and improve technology

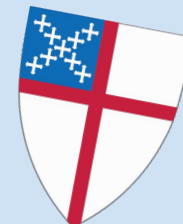
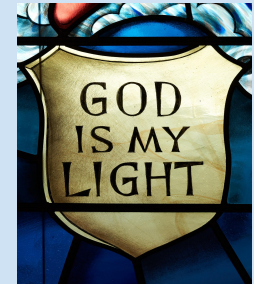
Character Traits:

- Be deeply spiritual and prayerful
- Be self confident
- Have a good sense of humor
- Be open minded
- Be a good listener

“A Rector should be an exceptional listener, able to influence people through involvement, courageousness, and reasoning.”

-SMEC Parishioner





The Community



Terrebonne
Parish

A map of the state of Louisiana is shown, with its various parishes outlined. The Terrebonne Parish, located in the southeastern part of the state, is highlighted in a solid red color. The text 'Terrebonne Parish' is written in a serif font over the red area.

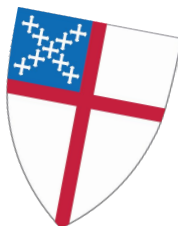


Bienvenue!

A warm welcome to you from the heart of Cajun Country in Terrebonne Parish, Houma, Louisiana. First officially chartered on May 15, 1855. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and School have strived to be a reflection of the resilience, warmth, and grace of God in our area. Our recently rebuilt church and parish hall have become a symbol of God's glory, as well as a local landmark in our historic downtown area.

St. Matthew's School with grades Pre-K through Seventh nourishes the hearts and minds of young people across our area with the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The St. Matthew's Community offers a unique mix of forward thinking progress with deep historic roots which is a reflection of the community we serve.





TERREBonne means “THE GOOD EARTH”

Houma is located in the northern part of Terrebonne Parish, and connects to the Southern part of the parish by acting as the major hub in the parish. Our parish offers quintessential cajun experiences including vibrant festivals such as the Rougarou Fest, hunting and fishing experiences like our very own St. Matt’s Fishing Rodeo, crawfish boils, gumbo cook offs and full out Fais-Do-Dos. Family, friends, faith & food are all hallmarks of a cajun gathering-especially in February.

In February to early March, Mardi Gras is celebrated here in Terrebonne Parish before we practice the most holy time of Lent. While one can drive roughly 60 miles to New Orleans to attend a very flamboyant Mardi Gras, Houma celebrates Mardi Gras with a focus on family and child friendly parades. At this time our Youth Program reaches out to the community by selling food and refreshments at the day parades to raise funds for their mission trips and outreach.

TERREBonne means “THE GOOD EARTH”-*cont.*

Houma is filled with walking parks, museums like Southdown Plantation, boutiques, and plenty of local restaurants both in town or further “down the bayou” for more cajun experiences. Houma also boasts a lot of boat launches and fishing and hunting opportunities; we are not called a Sportsman's Paradise for nothing.

In addition to outdoorsmen activities, Houma also has multiple active civic organizations with St. Matthew’s often acting as a part of the outreach programs into the community. Houma also is home to many youth sports through our recreational districts as well as a YMCA.

Our town is also working on modernizing infrastructure through new power lines and high speed cable lines. Houma also has all the typical chain stores and restaurants while also offering a blend of local flavor; however, if Houma does not have what you are looking for, you are not more than an hour and half drive away from major metropolises like New Orleans, Lafayette, or Baton Rouge.

Though if there is something you need, don't hesitate to ask your neighbor-the hallmark of cajun culture.



“Terrebonne means “THE GOOD EARTH”-*cont.*



Terrebonne Parish is situated in the Southern part of Louisiana offering unique experiences of cajun culture that can't be found anywhere else in the world. From moss covered oaks, to the stillness of the bayous, to the vibrancy of our food and festivals, the people of our region are a vibrant mix of God's creation.

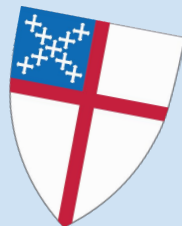
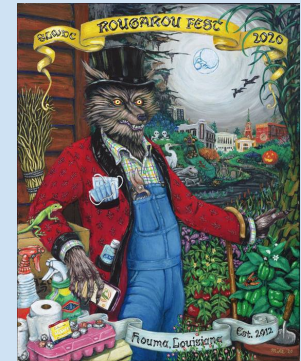


At various parochial schools, students can receive a Christian education from preschool through twelfth grade. Terrebonne Parish also offers a highly ranked public school system where students are able to foster their educational experiences while being a part of a friendly and family-like atmosphere.



The last few years have given St. Matthew's unique opportunities to practice true faith in God and to spread that faith to the surrounding communities. From coming back after a devastating fire, overcoming the unique Covid-19 pandemic, and pulling together through several hurricanes, God has given us chances to rely on faith and become a family with the community around us.

Please know we are praying for you as you listen for God's call to join our St. Matthew's Family. We will continue to rely on faith to help us all grow on our spiritual journey .





HURRICANE Season-Just PART OF LIFE in a Coastal PARISH

To those located anywhere else but along the Gulf of Mexico, June first through November thirtieth may not contain any special seasons, but to us it means Hurricane Season. We understand that to someone unfamiliar with the large storms hitting our coast coupled with the nonstop media coverage which focuses on the pure destruction of the storms, you have to ask the question, why would anyone ever want to face such devastation? Our local community has large flood gates, an abundance of pumping stations, as well as functional levees; our area strikes a unique combination of safety and faith. Our local government agency has offices dedicated to keeping the residences of Terrebonne Parish safe in any weather conditions.

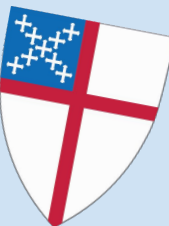


HURRICANE Season-cont.

After a Hurricane in South Louisiana you can see the implementation of Jesus' greatest commandments-love God and love your neighbor. People donate their food, time, shelter, and water to each other without complaint or expectation. Businesses open their doors and hearts to the most needy. Neighbors help neighbors without being asked, and a gratefulness to God for what we have is embedded in our hearts. A post-hurricane Houma is a place where God's love is made real through the kindness of others helping out their fellow man.



***“When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you.” -Isaiah 43:2***





THE CHURCH

STAFF, MINISTRIES, OPERATIONS, HISTORY AND CAMPUS

St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Staff



Erica Polk
Parish Administrator



Brenda Babin
Sexton



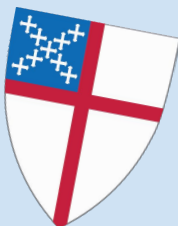
David West
Music Director



Jack Babin
Sexton



Courtney Rulf
Youth Director



St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Vestry

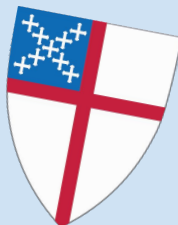
- Rob Alexander, Senior Warden
- Dixon Lewis, Junior Warden
- Keri Kelley, Secretary
- Bruce Jenkins
- Debby Fortier
- Kathy Theriot
- Dana Davis
- Sandra Deroche
- Becky Becnel
- Mike Niette
- Keith Hampton
- Beulah Rodrigue

The Vestry consists of a Rector and twelve Vestry members elected at the Annual Meeting to serve a three year term in a staggered rotation so that four new members are elected each year.

The Search Committee is selected by the Vestry to represent the congregation from congregant volunteers.

Search Committee

- Keri Kelley, Chairman
- Sinclair Buquet
- George Drury
- Gail Duhe'
- Emmalee Hampton
- Ryan Kilgo
- Courtney Rulf



WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

Holy Eucharist Sunday at 10:00 AM

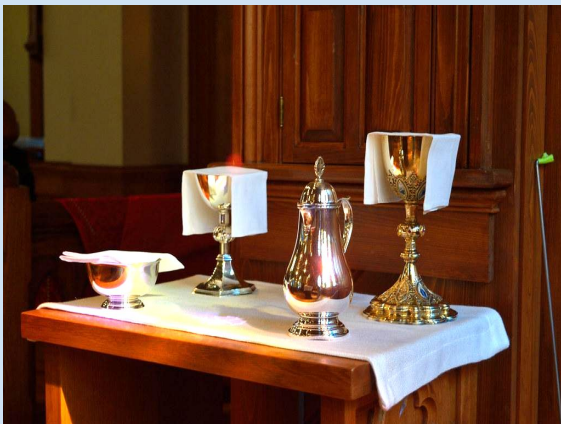
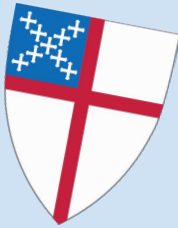
or

Prayer Service Sunday at 10:00 AM

Episcopal Youth Formation Sunday at 10:00AM

Healing Service Wednesday at 5:00 PM

***“St. Matthew’s is a family that cares.”
-SMEC Parishioner***



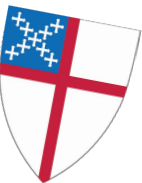
MINISTRY OF MUSIC



The music ministry at St. Matthew's is focused around the Episcopal Musician's Handbook, with some contemporary Christian hymns added in to appeal to all ages. Both are focused around the lessons provided by the lectionary each week. While the organ and piano are the focal instruments, occasionally we have the integration of other musical instruments. Our small, but active choir blesses worship services with beautiful choral offerings each week. Our choir also explores the gifts God has given them through special thematic musical stylings such as a Jazz service. Our Bell Choir performances are musical offerings on special occasions to help us celebrate. Prior to Covid, School Choristers also often performed at special events to the delight of both school and church families. It is the belief of our church that music is a way to both celebrate God and unite his people, so it is our goal to help foster more of these events in the future.



Our Music Director is always available for other services such as weddings, is always willing to work in tandem with the school music program, and both he and the music program hope to have more opportunities to work together to help celebrate our Lord in song.



St. Matthew's E.C.W.

A Ministry of Ministries



The Episcopal Church Women are an integral part of St. Matthew's ministries. At home, in the community and abroad, the members of the ECW are always ready and willing to help with the outreach ministries of the Church.

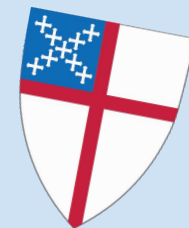
The ECW At Home

It is truly amazing how the ECW has contributed to our Church over the years. After the fire, many needs were identified and supplied by this ministry. The Parish Hall was furnished with tables and chairs. The kitchen was stocked with dishes and utensils for gatherings, as well as every kitchen amenity one can imagine. Kneelers were purchased for the Church and funds were generously donated for the purchase of a stained glass window celebrating this mission. When the stairs at Tucker Hall needed repairs the ECW once again came to the rescue and contributed funds to this project. These are just a few examples of the important work done at home by the ladies of the Church.

The ECW Abroad

The ECW supports Kiva, an international nonprofit organization that supports crowdfunding loans to underserved communities. Kiva allows women to start businesses, farmers to invest in equipment, and students can pay for tuition.





St. Matthew's E.C.W.

A Ministry of Ministries



***“Beautiful Church,
Beautiful
congregation.”
-SMEC Parishioner***



The ECW In the Community

The ECW reaches out to the community in many ways. One example is Beautiful Beginnings, a program in Terrebonne Parish that helps families, usually women and children, get a fresh start in life. The ECW provides these families with a clothes basket filled with personal care and cleaning items necessary to get started in a new home.

Another example is Legion Park Elementary School that is located in an impoverished part of our community. The ECW supports this school with Teacher Appreciation lunches, and welcome back to school lunches. Our church joins another church in a Christmas Angel project which insures each child at the school receives a Christmas gift. Among other things, the church has collected and donated books to expand this school's library.

Recently the ECW has donated funds to St. Andrew's Episcopal Mission, located just south of Houma to aid in their hurricane recovery.

Yet another local outreach ministry is the Haven, a local shelter for victims of domestic violence that provides advocacy, crisis response, and education to survivors of domestic abuse.

EPISCOPAL YOUTH COMMUNITY

Mission Statement

To provide fellowship and fun in a Christian and safe environment for teens in order to find a place of acceptance, discover what makes them unique, and what it means to be a Christian.

ABOUT EYC

Our Episcopal Youth Community (EYC) is for 6th graders and up. We meet the last Sunday of every month after church services for about two hours. The meetings are titled “Pizza With A Purpose” where we eat pizza; pray; discuss everyday topics that affect pre-teens and teens such as bullying, blessings, gossiping, etc.; plan upcoming events and outreach; plan for the next Mission Trip; propose fundraising ideas; etc. It provides a laid-back atmosphere that brings us closer together for our purpose in the church community. Various events are held throughout the year that enable the “older” kids to have close friendships and bonds with one another.

MISSION TRIP

All students entering 7th grade and up are welcome to be a part of our mission team. Every year, our students choose a location to go on a mission trip (within 10-hour drive). We have been on a total of 8 mission trips typically consisting of minor repair work. Our students learn life skills, compassion for the less fortunate, and grow in their faith.





EPISCOPAL Youth Community

Sunday School

We currently have two classes: Pre-K through 5th Grade, and 6th Grade and Up. We use *Weaving God's Promises* as our curriculum, along with the Spark Children's Bibles. It is our hope that through these two curriculums, we can instill a Christian foundation that will impact our children for years to come.



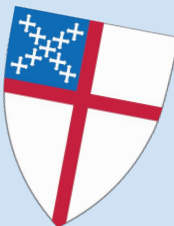
CHURCH Involvement

We have Children's Worship Services the last Sunday of every month and have the children participate by reading, holding the gospel book, and bringing up the offerings. The rector's sermons are directed towards the children to offer interaction with both the rector and other members of the congregation. While the Children's service is often aimed at the youngest members of our congregation, many older members often admit that Children's Services are some of their favorites.



“We are a family who loves and cares for one another through thick and thin.”

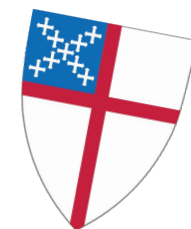
-SMEC Parishioner





St. Matthew's CHURCH Normal Operations

Income	2019	2020	2021
Miscellaneous Income	\$2,693	\$2,097	\$2,300
Pledge Income	\$273,677	\$290,684	\$301,085
Contribution Income	\$12,959	\$5,200	\$3,845
Plate Income	\$5,624	\$1,469	\$1,550
Total Income	\$294,953	\$299,450	\$308,780
Expenses			
Diocesan Giving	\$30,581	\$30,021	\$30,187
Facilities	\$78,851	\$75,775	\$84,846
Fellowship, Mission, Outreach	\$5,724	\$3,526	\$2,342
Parish Administration	\$178,210	\$170,107	\$140,745
Christian Formation	\$135	\$450	\$170
Total Expenses	\$293,531	\$279,879	\$257,790
Net Ordinary Income	\$1,422	\$19,571	\$50,490



HISTORY- A STORY OF RESILIENCE

In 1872, Meneely and Kimberly Bellworks in New York, forged a very special bell that has become a symbol of the faithful resilience enjoyed by St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. After surviving multiple hurricanes and two fires, this bell has been salvaged from debris, pulled from ashes, and to this day still graces the beautiful bell tower of St. Matthew's. The St. Matthew's bell is a testament to the faith and resilience of the community it serves.

On May 15, 1855, St. Matthew's was organized as a chartered corporation. Land was donated by Mr. Robert Ruffin Barrow in 1857, and the first church was built in 1858, followed by a rectory in 1859. Unfortunately in the 1880's the rectory burned and damaged the church requiring its demolition. Surviving the fire, our beloved bell was recovered from the ashes and was bound to sound again.

A beautiful cypress church was completed in 1892, and a parish hall was added in 1913. And once again, the bell tolled on Sunday mornings at St. Matthew's.

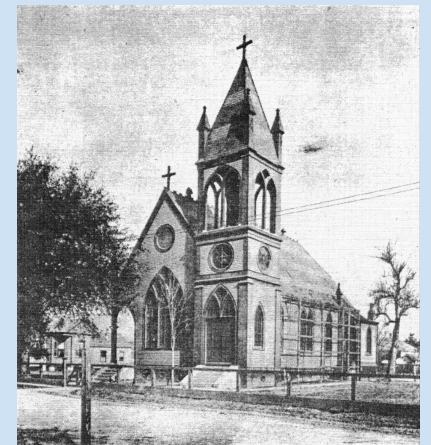
Thirty four years later, a powerful hurricane struck Houma in 1926 causing extensive damage to the church and steeple of St. Matthew's. The faithful of St. Matthew's repaired the church, and eventually the steeple allowing our bell to toll again.



The first church built in 1858.



Bell forged in 1872.



The second church built in 1892.

HISTORY- *A Story of Resilience-continued*

Recovery from the fire and the hurricane reflects the faith, love and hope of the St. Matthew's congregation. For many years, parishioners added to the beauty of St. Matthew's by adding stained glass windows depicting significant events in the life of Jesus, such as "Christ calling Matthew", "Christ and the Children", "Christ the Good Shepherd", "The Nativity", and many other biblical events. The ladies of the church created beautiful, custom designed needlepoint stitched kneelers depicting the seven sacraments. Throughout these many years and projects, our bell tolled on Sunday mornings announcing our worship service to the community and reminding people of God's love for them.

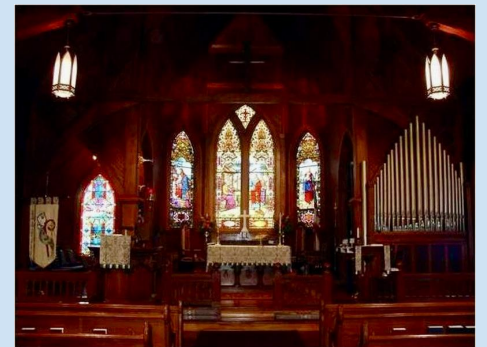
As St. Matthew's flourished, kindergarten classes began in 1947, and moved into a newly constructed educational building in 1957. St. Matthew's Episcopal School was opened in 1970 for kindergarten to third grade. Each year, an additional class was added until reaching the seventh grade. Our school has since established a reputation for excellence in the academic community, and our reputation of excellence sounds just as strongly as our bell.



Second church with temporary steeple in place after the 1926 Hurricane.



Second church with repaired steeple.



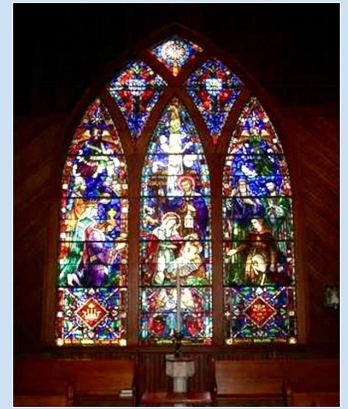
The altar and pipe organ in the second church.

HISTORY- A STORY OF RESILIENCE-continued

St. Matthew's was added to the National Register of Historic Sites, and the stately oaks surrounding the church were added as members of the Live Oak Society of the Louisiana Garden Club Federation in 1989. St. Matthew's enjoyed this historic recognition until November 11, 2010 when fire once again struck our church. The church, parish hall, and educational building were all destroyed, and while our bell was silenced across the rooftops of Houma, it was not silenced in our hearts as our church and community pulled together.

The St. Matthew's congregation, resilient as ever, continued worship services in neighboring Grace Lutheran Church until our new church was completed in 2015 and worship services began again in the new St. Matthew's Church. In years past St. Matthew's had been blessed to host our good neighbors, Grace Lutheran, when their church was under construction.

Rebuilt from ashes, St. Matthew's is a beautiful tribute to the faith, hope and love we have for our Lord Jesus Christ. The new church honors the history of the old church with its architecture, furnishings and stained glass windows; and after being refurbished, our bell sounds again. Tradition is honored at St. Matthew's.



Nativity window of the second church.



The fire that destroyed the second church, November 11, 2010



The burned remnants of the nativity window and the bell tower.

HISTORY- *A Story OF Resilience-continued*

Recently, on August 29, 2021, powerful Hurricane Ida caused extensive damage to our community. Fortunately, the church and main school building received very minor damage. The older school buildings, and our administration building, Tucker Hall, received more damage and all are being repaired. This blessing has allowed us to help our community as our bell continues to provide hope in a devastated but faithful community.

The physical structures have faced many trials in the history of our church, but the congregation has always been steadfast, and St. Matthew's has always come back stronger. God is at work in our community. St. Matthew's is indeed, resilient, and our bell tolls to prove it.



Third and current church opened for worship services in 2015.



The original bell tolling in the bell tower of the new church.



The Holy Eucharist being celebrated on Saint Matthew's Day in 2016.





RECTORS OF THE PAST

Reverend George W. Stickney
1858-1861

Reverend James Philson
1861-1867

Reverend William D Christian
1876-1887

Reverend Ralph Hylton Prosser
1888-1898

Reverend Gardiner L. Tucker DD
1903-1938

Reverend Charles E. Crusoe DD
1938-1941

Reverend Clarence R Hayden
Jr. 1941-1943

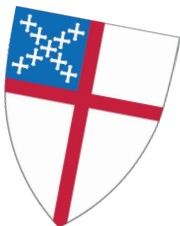
Reverend George E.
Pardington 1944-1975

Reverend Jervis O Burns
1975-1985

Reverend David A Powers
1986-1995

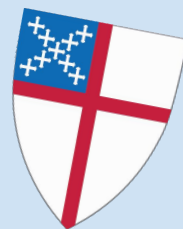
Reverend Fred H. Tinsley
1996-2003

Reverend Craig Dalferes
2004-2021





Click the Image to take
a video tour of the
grounds!





OUR CHURCH and SCHOOL Campus

Nestled among the majestic, historic live oak trees of St Matthew's, known as Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Joseph, Jacob and Israel is the campus of our church and school. These oak trees have shaded our campus as they have grown and flourished over the years.

The Church is literally the heart of the St. Matthew's campus with Alexander Hall, the main school building, adjoining the church on the right, and the Parish Hall on the left. These buildings are state-of-the-art and a beautiful addition to downtown Houma. St. Matthew's is a landmark in Houma, and when the fire took it away, the community responded to return St. Matthew's to the city and to the glory of God.

OUR CHURCH and SCHOOL CAMPUS

Historic Tucker Hall, built as a rectory around 1892, now serves as the church's administrative building, the school reception office, music room, and EYC classrooms. Tucker Hall did have extensive window, roof and water damage from Hurricane Ida, and repairs are nearing completion. This example of resiliency is happening on our campus, and throughout our city and parish.

At the rear of our campus lies the lower school building which is home to our younger students. Several other smaller buildings acquired over the years surround the edges of our campus and offer extra office and classroom space as our campus changes and grows.

Located in the center of these structures is the playground where outdoor learning occurs, as well as recess and physical education classes. This shared green space is where church members gather for outdoor meals, and occasional musical presentations take place in the shade of our ever watchful beautiful oak trees.

OUR CHURCH and SCHOOL CAMPUS



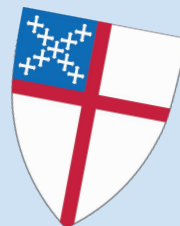
Tucker Hall



Alexander Hall



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church



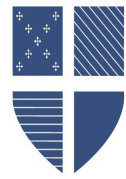
Playground



Playground and Picnic Tables

A faded background image of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, a white Gothic Revival style church with a prominent steeple and large stained glass windows, surrounded by trees and a street scene.

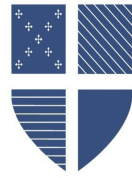
St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL



St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Our school occupies a unique position in the community. We serve the same diverse and vibrant Terrebonne-Lafourche community as several other private schools, yet we are a small school rooted in traditions of Christian service and global awareness. By using a variety of Twenty-First Century instructional strategies and learning opportunities, St. Matthew's addresses the academic, spiritual and psychosocial needs of our students and fosters a strong sense of personal and social responsibility. Our school prides itself on keeping a Christian- family like environment while pushing students to use their God given talents to better the lives of those around them. Students and faculty alike explain that what keeps them coming to SMES is that here they are home; here they are a family.





St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

MISSION

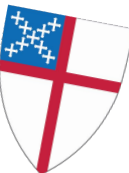
Nurturing mind, heart and soul in a Christian environment.

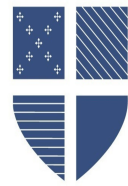
VISION

St. Matthew's Episcopal School provides a nurturing Christian environment that encourages academic excellence and personal creativity. Graduates of St. Matthew's Episcopal School are future generations of socially conscious and responsible individuals equipped to reach their highest potential in an ever-changing world.

“SMES has been our home for going on 5 years, and it means so much to us to have our children at a small, loving school.”

-SMES Parent





St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

PURPOSE

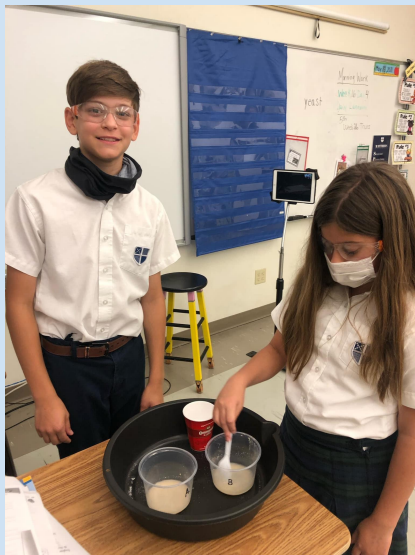
To serve God by serving children.

To couple academic excellence with Christian education in the Episcopal tradition.

To provide each child with the opportunity and stimulation which will bring about maximum development of the whole personality, including all phases of spiritual, mental, social, and physical growth within a Christian environment.

“It isn't just a place to learn, it is a great place for social interaction, activities that encourage individuality and creativeness, and helps build character.” -SMES Parent





***“Loving,
tight-knit,
special”***

-SMES Parent



St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Goal

The goal of St. Matthew's Episcopal School is to create a learner, not only with a strong academic foundation but also one who has ethical character traits and accepts responsibility for his or her actions.

St. Matthew's Episcopal School seeks a diverse student body and welcomes children of all races and religious faiths, but we are by conviction a school of the Episcopal Church under the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. St. Matthew's Episcopal School has a tradition of over seventy years of excellence in education.





“We are very supportive to one another, and there's a great deal of warmth and love both given and received.” -SMES Description



St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

At a Glance

- Pre-K3 through 7th grade
- Class size of 20 or less
- Balanced focus on academic, spiritual, social, physical and emotional development
- Chapel Services
- Dedicated, nurturing, professional faculty and staff
- Service learning focused on integrating meaningful community service to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen community
- Instruction in PE and Health, Music, Spanish, Computer Lab, Science Lab, Library and Art
- Parent involvement and volunteer opportunities





Kindergarten students checked out Library books for the first time this week!



St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Enrollment

2018-2019

Enrollment 185

2019-2020

Enrollment 142

2020-2021

Enrollment 129

2021-2022

Enrollment 125





St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL History

St. Matthew's Episcopal School is an elementary school offering a complete academic curriculum with excellence in education in a nurturing, Christian environment as our primary goal. The school dates back to 1947 when a Kindergarten class opened. In 1970, a day school embracing Kindergarten through third grade became a reality. Thereafter, an additional class was added annually until the seventh grade level was reached. Today, St. Matthew's Episcopal School, under the leadership of Head of School, Tom Soudelier, operates an institution of learning consisting of Pre-K3 through seventh grade.



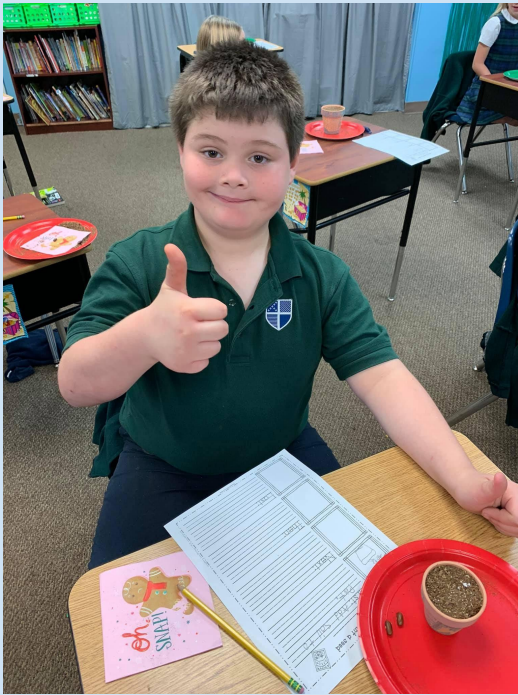


St. Matthew's EPISCOPAL SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Thomas Soudelier - Head of School
- Dr. Elena Mann- President
- Kendall Authement- Treasurer
- Sinclair Buquet- Secretary
- Julia Bourque
- John J. Ditch
- Kristen Engeron
- Emmalee Hampton
- Carolyn Lirette
- Duane Ring

***“Family, worship services, music programs,
and meals”- SMEC Parishioner***



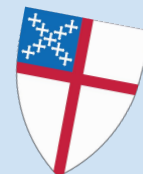


“Love, Honor, & Family.”

-SMES Parent

***“Seeing the
kids faces and
hearing their
experiences in
different
classrooms.”***

-SMES Parent





***“The school is like our second family.”
-SMES Parent***





A Testimony



THE IMPORTANCE OF a **CHRISTIAN** Education - *A Testimony*

Dear Future Rector,

Some of my earliest memories revolve around growing up around St. Matthew's School.

When I was sitting in the church during chapel during first grade, and a Native American man, Mr. Jerome, was playing a guitar and speaking to us, and as we gathered around him the sun shone through the multicolored stained glass windows behind him. He was speaking about someone whom I had never heard of before- Jesus. He told me the story about how Jesus was the son of God, and he loved us so much he was willing to die for us as he explained the story of Garden of Gethsemane.

THE IMPORTANCE OF a **CHRISTIAN** EDUCATION- *A Testimony*

I remember my first grade self learning that his friends, the apostles, would not stay up with him when he was scared. He was alone. I remember standing up in church and shouting a promise that I would stay up with him. Instead of getting in trouble for standing and yelling in church, Mr. Jerome instead gave me a warm smile and told me how kind that was, that being there for someone when they are afraid is exactly what a great friend does. Then the other kids in my class joined with me in saying that they would be Jesus' friend too, and that we would all stay up with him--even past our bedtime. He laughed and continued playing his guitar.

As Mr. Jerome played, we sang the hymn, "God is Love;" as our young voices echoed, "Christians, this is your call," I got a feeling deep inside that, suddenly, I was a part of something bigger than myself. It was the same feeling I got when I looked around the dinner table with my family when we were all laughing. That song showed me that I was part of a bigger family than my own. I was a part of the St. Matthew's family, and I was a part of the Christian family.

THE IMPORTANCE OF a CHRISTIAN EDUCATION- *A Testimony*

As time went on, I wanted to know more about Jesus and being a part of a church. Being an altar server allowed me to have an active part in the church-plus, getting to carry a candle was a sure sign of maturity. I felt like I belonged when I was, as I called it, “helping remember Jesus” at the altar. Whenever I was helping in the church, I felt at peace because I was a part of a family--a family that loved me and helped me grow.

When I was nine or ten, I begged my mom to let me be baptized. She was less than thrilled, as the only reason that I attended private school was that the public school in my neighborhood was rough. St. Matthew’s provided the only church services I attended while growing up, and this situation may still be true for many of the students you will shepherd, Future Rector. You may very well be the only experience they have with church, the Bible, or Christ--not that the area is not Christian.

Please don’t misunderstand: my mom was not anti-Christian; she was anti-church. She had a lot of past trauma and hurt with other churches that made her leary and distrustful of those she called “church people.” You will find, Dear Future Rector, that her story is not uncommon in our area. My mom made it a point to show me that being a good Christian was being a good person and that you did not need a church or prayers to talk to God. However, I still craved the sense of belonging that St. Matthew’s provided, so, eventually, she yielded, and I became what I called “an official member” of the church family.

THE IMPORTANCE OF a **CHRISTIAN** Education- *A Testimony*

Sadly, soon after my baptism, I had to switch schools. I was sent to a nearby Catholic school. I walked into that church, ready to feel that familial connection again, but it was not there. Since I was not baptized Catholic, I could not participate in a lot of events with the church or school. As time passed, I started to feel that I was not allowed to talk to Jesus anymore, because I was not the right religion. I clung to the feeling of being an outsider for the rest of my school life, including into college. This part of my story echoes that of many in our area. As I grew up, I looked for that familial connection everywhere, but never truly found another that brought the same sense of peace as those days at St. Matthew's. I was searching for that feeling again, but I did not realize it.

Please understand that I am not saying this to disparage the Catholic churches in our area; we have many who help spread the message of the gospel. I am merely letting you know, Dear Future Rector, that my story is one of many. There are so many people in this area who have lost their connection to the church, Jesus, and God. There are so many people who are desperate to belong to a church family, but, like me, are clueless on how to find the sense of connection again or even realize that they are missing it. Family runs deep in South Louisiana, but even we are not impenetrable to the need for a connection to something larger than ourselves or our kin.

THE IMPORTANCE OF a CHRISTIAN EDUCATION- *A Testimony*

In the lowest point of my life, I had just graduated college in a recession, quit my first “adult” job in a very childish manner, was struggling with what to do with my life, and felt just generally lost and alone. I was so desperate for connection. I then heard about the fire at St. Matthew’s from co-workers. I felt this strange pain in my heart like I would never feel a connection to anything ever again.

I eventually learned that St. Matthew’s was holding services at a nearby church. To this day, I am still not a hundred percent sure why I went--what called to me. Did I want to say goodbye to that sense of peace it brought me so long ago, did I want to see people just as hurt and lost as I was in the world, or was it simply God’s call? Whatever it was that called me there, I was met with a surprise. I was met with joy. I was met with people of resilience, and, even though something terrible happened to them, they were grateful for what they had and for each other. I watched them greet each other, chat, laugh, and pray before service. They welcomed me with smiles that harkened back to the accepting smile of Mr. Jerome and his guitar, and as the hymn books opened and the piano music started, I heard the voices carry through the air--that feeling of long ago washed over me. I somehow knew the beat of the hymn, and I felt it. I felt home.

THE IMPORTANCE OF a CHRISTIAN EDUCATION- *A Testimony*

Eventually, Dear Future Rector, I was able to make good on my promise of long ago to stay up with Jesus when we observe a late night vigil on Holy Thursday. My mother eventually learned that good people and church people can be the same people; she even joined me several times at church as well and was eventually confirmed at St. Matthew's. Now, after all this time, my son, my husband, and I are home.

I tell you all of this, Dear Future Rector, to let you know that as you are steeped in prayer about your decision, please imagine all the seeds of Christ's love that you can plant in the children of St. Matthew's School and our community as you help to grow our church and school. If we continue to teach and practice the love and acceptance of the Gospel and act in accordance with God's will, those seeds will grow--even if dormant for years. With God's grace, they can grow and bloom to become a part of a wonderful family. I know that if we continue to live out the hymn that first called me into this wonderful family and "love our neighbors as ourselves," we will continue to impact our community with your help.

Please know, Dear Future Rector, we are praying for you, and we cannot wait to welcome you to our family and welcome you home.

Sincerely,

A Member of the St. Matthew's Congregation





HELPFUL LINKS

***“St. Matthew’s is a
prayerful church of
openness and love for
the Lord, each other and
our community”-SMEC
Parishioner***

Church Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewshouma>

Church Website: <https://www.stmatthewshouma.org>

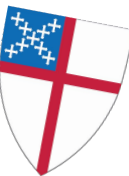
School Website: <https://www.stmattsschool.com>

School Facebook :

<https://www.facebook.com/smeshouma>

Church Flickr:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/141341409@No3/albums>



How to Apply

Thank you for your interest in the position of rector at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and School in Houma, Louisiana. If you wish to apply for this position, please send the following documents in electronic form to The Reverend Canon Shannon Duckworth, The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, at sduckworth@edola.org and to Keri Kelley, Search Committee Chairman, at kerimackey@hotmail.com.

- Current Office of Transition Ministry portfolio. This is from the Episcopal Church website and must be completed in full.
- Resume
- A list of three references, at least two of which are to be lay people, one of whom must be related to your current place of ministry. Please add contact information for each.
- A one paragraph statement as to why you are interested in leaving your current call.
- A one paragraph statement as to why you are seeking a call to St. Matthew's.
- A two paragraph statement as to your understanding of priesthood in the Episcopal Church.

