

September 6, 2023

Dear Friends and Families of St. Matthew,

“All Hands On Deck!” The last time I heard that cry was fifty years ago on a 40 Ft. sailboat. We were in the middle of Puget Sound at midnight going to Victoria for Swiftsure. The reef on the mainsail had come out and the boat was heeling to starboard. The starboard light was two feet under water but still burning. I was put on the bilge pump and the rest of the crew wrestled in the mainsail. Pt. Townsend was in the distance.

Our church is in a similar situation. Fifty years ago, we had eighty pledging families and many of the young parents in our neighborhood came to church and brought their kids to Sunday school. Over the years we gradually decreased to sixty, then forty, and after Covid we are down to thirty pledges. We used to have a budget of \$240,000 which allowed us to have a full-time priest. Last year our budget was \$130,000. This allowed for a priest 20% of the time or for a supply priest each Sunday. Thus, can we survive as a parish?

We amazed ourselves when we had our Capital Campaign recently. We raised enough money to pay off our mortgage, put on a new roof and almost had enough money to repave the parking lot. This summer, despite our budget challenges, we were able to offer a week of “St. Matthew Compassion Summer Camp” to the community. We found out we can do much more than we thought we could when we all work together. St. Matthew has found that by trusting God’s guidance and living in the Holy Spirit, miracles do happen.

As we prepare for 2024, please consider making a pledge. Members of the Vestry and the Canvass Team are always available for questions and comments. We look forward to receiving your pledge card by Sunday October 15th. This allows the Vestry to plan for operating expenses and obligations for the coming year. With your help, we will continue to spread the light of Christ in our community.

Sincerely,

Rich Gould

Chair of Canvass Committee