

## **Annual Parish Report for 2006**

### **Senior Warden's Report, 2006** Kevin McGillicuddy

St. Matthew's began 2006 with a new Mission Statement, "To know Christ, grow in Christ, and share Christ's love." We end 2006 with a commitment by the Vestry to begin a capital campaign in 2007 that will be called "Building on Our Sure Foundation." Although bricks and mortar issues (which dominated my attention during 2006) may seem superficially not to have much to do with our Mission Statement, I think they have much to do with each other. Our facilities must be comfortable, well managed and safe for our members and for visitors to our campus if we are to carry out our Mission, which only starts at the corner of Steck and Mesa. Our Sanctuary lighting issues have been resolved and HVAC units have been replaced, both of which have improved comfort levels during worship and during events that bring the community into our facilities. Outside lighting has also been improved, which improves safety of all on our campus after dark. The new systems are also more energy efficient – this will ease the impact of our activities on our environment, as well as save St. Matthew's money in the long term. New curb cuts in the Steck parking lot designed to improve access were also added in 2006. All of these relate to our Stewardship of what we have been given, allowing us to better serve those within and outside of our walls.

We have much more to do during 2007. We should be able to begin construction on a new extension to the Education Building, which will lead to a new Youth Center and improved space for the 200 children who attend the Day School. This will benefit not just the Children and Youth of St. Matthew's and the Day School, but others, such as those who come onto our campus for Convocational and Diocesan events, Interfaith Hospitality Network families who are our guests for a time, and so forth. If the support is present during our capital campaign, we may also be able to improve our lighting and sound systems in Huffman Hall and to make improvements to other facilities such as our Bride's Room, Cry Room, and the space that is used by our Altar Guild and Flower Guild to prepare for services (an item that should have been included in our Feasibility Study Survey but was overlooked), as well as many other improvements.

As I have stated on other occasions, while my personal focus this year has been on facilities issues such as these, others on your Vestry have been hard at work on this and other aspects of our Mission Statement. For example, our work on facilities issues has been greatly advanced by the work of our Buildings and Grounds Commission. Our Service and Outreach Commission has done an outstanding job this year reaching out to near and far communities and individuals. Our Finance Commission has been quietly at work helping to manage the "business" of St. Matthew's by overseeing the accuracy and integrity of our books. Our Communications Commission has done great work keeping our Members and others in the community informed of happenings at St. Matthew's. And last, but certainly not least, our Stewardship Commission has continued their good work on fostering year-round Stewardship at St. Matthew's. Good stewardship of all that we have been entrusted with is, and should be, the starting point for carrying out our Mission, "To know Christ, grow in Christ, and share Christ's love."

### **Junior Warden's Report** – Babs Clendenin

First, I want to thank the Vestry for allowing me to serve as Junior Warden for a second year.

Secondly, I would like to thank Merrill for his patience with my volatile nature when I passionately fought for what I considered right and just for St. Matthew's church and communicants.

Thirdly, serving with Kevin McGillicuddy as Senior Warden was a pleasure. His quick wit and calming demeanor proved invaluable in times of decision-making and important actions.

Although several people were involved, Larry Simons made my wish and the wish of many others come true when he assured me we would see our lovely "rose window" in lights Thanks Larry.  
Now for another challenge. Can we do what Cargill thinks we can do? Can we make St. Matthew's the biggest and the best? I vote "yes" because I have faith in you the people of St. Matt's and in God's.

## ***Vestry Councils and Commissions***

### **Building and Grounds Commission** Michael McCollum, Chair

In 2006, new HVAC units and lighting were installed in the sanctuary. Austin Energy provided an energy audit for the main buildings and made recommendations, including these and others, that will save St. Matthew's money through better efficiencies. A priority list of Building and Grounds improvements was developed and presented to the Vestry for consideration.

- Sanctuary HVAC replacement
- Sanctuary lighting replacement
- Basement HVAC replacement
- Sanctuary roof replacement
- Sanctuary carpet replacement
- Youth center
- Capital Fund reserve to purchase and install pipe organ
- Site drainage improvements
- Landscape Master Plan completion with irrigation repairs and upgrades

In conjunction with the Day School, conceptual building and financial plans have begun for a new addition for the school to include a second level for the youth. A separate committee has been formed to manage this process and includes Michael McCollum, David Barrow, Kevin McGillicuddy, Dave Bowman, Chuck Naeve, with Day School representatives Pam Littlefield, Eileen Cole, Phil Rainey, and Russell Barnett.

The commission is maintaining the Master Plan, Master Landscape Plan, Master Landscape Lighting Plan, as well as a Master Work Plan. The Commission has, and will be, assisted by church volunteers and Dave Bowman, the Business Manager. The Commission welcomes new members to help take care of the church buildings and grounds.

2006 Commission members are David Barrow, Tom Canby, Babs Clendenin, Jim Dettmann, Mary Nell Frucella, Kevin McGillicuddy, Chuck Naeve, John Neiman, David Price, Clive Smith, Marty Robbins, Amy Novak, Anna Morales, and Bob Yeargain.

### **Communications Commission** - Steve Ryder, Chair

We communicate with the world via [www.StMattsAustin.org](http://www.StMattsAustin.org), as well as *Advertising in SBC Yellow Pages*, the Religion Referral section of the Saturday *Austin American Statesman* and the annual *UT Daily Texan* back to school edition. Our most frequent comment from visitors is that they "found us" on the web.

We communicate with our members via [www.StMattsAustin.org](http://www.StMattsAustin.org), the *St. Matt's Email Service*, the *Weekly Word* and the *Monthly Word*.

Special thanks go to Betty Mitchell and Barbara Haynes in the office who do the *Weekly* and *Monthly Word*. Thanks also to Jeri Muhich who is a master at discovering the undiscoverable as well as editing for web presentation. Jeri also produces the weekly email. Thanks to David Hogan who makes the

Weekly Word updates to the web site and John Bindel who records and uploads the sermon each Sunday. I am the one who posts the edited information from Jeri on the web as your faithful web servant.

**Outreach Commission** – Vickie Blumhagen, Chair

The Outreach Commission has been busy sharing Christ's love! Parishioners have been active year round in the following ministries: Kairos, Habitat for Humanity, El Buen Samaritano, Safe Place, West Austin Caregivers, Casa Marianella, Capital Area Food Bank, Foundation for the Homeless, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Caritas, St. James' Episcopal School, Care for the Caregiver, and The Religious Coalition to Assist the Homeless. The Commission also accepted five new ministries: Women's Storybook Project, Hope House, Samaritan Counseling Center, Hope Chest, and Capital Idea. Good Faith Fund, headed by Pat Yeargain, worked tirelessly to help families with rent and utility assistance. Outreach continues to support The Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, General Seminary, Eric Liles who attends Virginia Theological Seminary, and The Diocese of Muncialan.

There were special projects throughout the year: medical mission to Honduras; Heifer Project during Lent; Habitat Episcopal Build in April; collecting 2,117 pounds of food for the Caritas Faith Food Drive in May; hosting IHN guests in the summer and December; providing fifty baskets to El Buen Samaritano for their Turkey Basket Drive; Alternative Gifts Market and Angel Tree Prison Ministry during Advent; collecting coats and blankets for the homeless through The Keep Austin Housed project; Bibles for the graduating kindergarten class of St. Matthew's Day School. The Outreach Commission has continued their support for Hurricane Katrina recovery by having two mission trips to New Orleans through the Diocese of Louisiana, one in June and one in December. A second trip to St. John's Episcopal Church in Silsbee, Texas was taken in January to continue help with relief from Hurricane Rita.

Two of our goals this year were communication and accountability. The Commission designed and distributed a brochure outlining all of the ministries (including the Millennium Development Goals) and decided to have a budget subcommittee to designate funds and discern which ministries had active participation. Many thanks to all the amazing members of the Outreach Commission for all their hard work, enthusiasm and support! Thank you to Esther Garcia for her friendship and being our Chair-Elect for 2007, to Jack Robertson for his accounting and patience, and Susan Robertson who was always there when we needed her! Thank you St. Matthew's members for enabling the healing power of God's love to be shared with those in need.

**Newcomers Council** – Thilde Smith and Glenda Monroe 2006 Co-Chairs

The Newcomers Council has been in existence for 5 years. The purpose of the Newcomers Council is to welcome visitors and new members to St. Matthews; and to provide them with information on the many councils, ministries and yearly events at St. Matthew's.

We had two "Parish Get Acquainted Lunches" in 2006, where we enjoyed great fellowship, wonderful food and introduced the newest members to the St. Matthews family. We also hosted two "New Members Dessert Parties" at the home of Crystal and Merrill Wade. These parties are wonderful opportunities for fellowship in a comfortable setting. New members get to meet one another, Merrill and Crystal and members of the council. Here new members tell us what brought them to St. Matthews and what they may be looking for in a church, ministry, council. We hope that both of these functions will continue to be traditions for many years to come.

For visitors to St. Matthews we provide "Coffee and Conversation" (C & C.) C & C meets the first Sunday of every other month in the Brides Room after the 10:30 service. C & C provides visitors with an opportunity to ask questions about St. Matthews, tell us about what they are looking for in a church ... and for council members to listen, get ideas and address visitors' thoughts and concerns.

The Council would like to thank all members of the congregation who have brought visitors to the Welcome Table after the service to get their gift bags full of wonderful gifts and information on St. Matthews. This year Jeri Muhich updated the informative video and we converted it from the old VHS format to DVD.

This year (2006) Glenda and I co-chaired the council. It was wonderful to have her support, help and the division of responsibilities. Next year (2007), Glenda will be stepping down as co-chair, however, she reassured me that she is not leaving the council.

This council would not be possible without its wonderful members, parish volunteers and the outstanding office staff – Betty Mitchell and Barbara Haynes. I would also like to thank Jose Prado for all he does for us. Thank you all so much for everything you do.

#### **Stewardship Commission** Kathy Vail, Chair

Being a good steward is one of the commands that we receive from God. Being a good steward basically means that we are to be good managers of all that is entrusted to us, our lives, our families, our money, and our world. The Stewardship Commission is the vestry commission responsible for the fall pledging campaign and providing stewardship training to the congregation. This year we continued with the same plan as last year, making the fall campaign shorter and simpler than in previous years. At the time of this writing, pledges have decreased from last year, from 294 to 269. Of the 269 pledges received so far, there were 50 pledging for the first time, 93 maintaining their pledge, and 78 increasing their pledges. Seventy-nine people who pledged last year, have not turned in pledge cards for 2007. The total amount pledged has decreased from \$1,002,404 to \$933,791. We anticipate receiving new pledges through January and February.

#### **Endowment Committee** – Bert Hooper, Chair

The ten-member Endowment Committee oversees the investment of the funds in St. Matthew's four endowments: (1) the Permanent Endowment (a multi-purpose endowment); (2) the Outreach Endowment (primarily community outreach); (3) the Carl Barlow Huffman Scholarship Fund (scholarship assistance at ETSS); and (4) the Youth Endowment (St. Matthew's youth program).

The total value of all endowments grew from approximately \$169,500 as of January 1, 2006, to approximately \$197,700 (16.65%) through November 30, 2006. Items that increased the total value were Gifts \$24,800, Net Capital Gains \$12,600 and Dividends + Interest \$6,500. The Committee distributed \$3,500 of 2005 earnings. Total 2006 income net of fees was \$17,700 or 10.42% of the beginning balance. Please consider including the St. Matthew's Permanent Endowment in your estate plans. You thereby provide long-term support to the Church and become eligible for membership in the St. Matthew's Legacy Society.

### ***Staff Reports***

#### **Music Department** – Jim Henderson and Jean Farris Fuller

Jim Henderson, Acting Director of Music, and Jean Farris Fuller, Organist, began their new music ministry together December 3, 2006, Advent I. The previous Director of Music/Organist, Tim Smith, our friend and colleague, began his new job at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Corpus Christi, Texas the same day. He passed his blessing on to us and to the new Music Ministry of St. Matthews.

We offer our talents to you and ask for your support and prayers as we support the church with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs for all programs and services of the church. St. Matthew's music program will continue to grow, not only in northwest Austin, but in the greater community.

### **St. Matthew's Senior Activity Center** – Lucy A. Boyea, Minister of Senior Activities

St. Matthew's Senior Activity Center is now in its 13th year. It is open five half days per week and offers a variety of activities which include monthly speakers followed by "pot luck" lunches, quarterly outings for "Lunch at Luby's" and four seasonal parties. Ongoing activities include physical fitness programs, bridge, an art class and Armchair Travel. SAC publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, which is made available to all members of the parish 55 years of age and older.

Non-St. Matthew's members of SAC receive the newsletter as well, and it is also available through the St. Matthew's website [www.StMattsAustin.org](http://www.StMattsAustin.org). One-third of SAC's members are also members of St. Matthew's; the rest are from the community at large and include other faith groups. Young At Heart, a program for members of St. Matthew's age 50 and older, is sponsored by SAC. Meetings are held on the first Friday of each month from January through May and September through December in conjunction with SAC's "First Friday" speaker series. SAC also sponsors monthly defensive driving class, "55 Alive", and a monthly Alzheimer care-giver support group

The Senior Activity Center owes a debt of gratitude to its many dedicated volunteers, some of whom are included in this report; Dee Boswell, who keeps our birthday list up-dated; Barbara Haynes, who creates our signs; Liz Johnson and Gerri Williams, who lead our Art Class; Miriam Margulis, our Seniorcise leader (and her supportive husband, Martin); Jim Newman, who creates our new member badges; Clint Norton, who keeps our Bridge Group on track; R.C. Thompson, who leads T'ai Chi Chih; Nancy Tuck, who reproduces our newsletter; and Anne Yale, SAC's "Kitchen Angel". I have highlighted certain members but there are countless others who help set up and clean up after parties and luncheons, make coffee, etc. SAC's newsletter has a "Kudo's Column" which recognizes a volunteer or volunteers each month.

### **Children's Ministry**

2006 has been a year of transition and growth for Children's Ministry at St. Matthew's. In May we said "Good-bye" to our dear Barbara Pitts. Barbara had served as Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth for the past four years. We thank her for the love, knowledge and devotion she shared with our children.

We began a new Chapel Service during the 10:30 worship service each Sunday. Thanks to the efforts of our team of volunteers, the service was an instant success and now serves between 35 and 45 children each week. Through carefully chosen words, music, daily readings and activities, our Episcopal heritage and the rhythm of our liturgy come to life in the hands and hearts of our children. "Lap Sitters" are always welcome with a parent, however the service is geared to the needs of children ages three years through fifth grade. In fact this service may offer a nice change of pace for "children of God" of any age from 3 to 93 on any given Sunday!

Our Children's Sunday School program offers children from 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> graders an opportunity to interact with the scriptures, build friendships, develop a sense of what it means to be "Episcopalian" and more importantly, "Christian," and most importantly of all, to discover and nurture a relationship with God, and our Savior, Jesus Christ. The curriculum is written "in house" to meet the needs of our own St. Matthew's children and follows the liturgical seasons. The curriculum is interactive and child centered. Classes are taught by a dedicated team of volunteers who commit to working 6 – 8 weeks at a time. We are so grateful to them, and to Clarissa Vazquez, who chairs the Children's Council.

A long-time friend and teacher of St. Matthew's children, Kathy Dugat has generously filled in as Acting Children's Ministry Coordinator during this time of transition.

**St. Matthew's Episcopal Day School** Pam Littlefield, Director

St. Matthew's Episcopal School is an accredited school for children ages two years through kindergarten. Founded in 1979, St. Matthew's School operates August through May each year and is currently serving 200 students. Our well-qualified staff presently numbers 31, which includes a Director, Office Manager, Office Assistant, 15 classroom teachers, 13 assistants, and 3 teachers that offer extra-curricular opportunities. The thirteen-member School Board is composed of the Rector of St. Matthew's Church, the School Director, and members of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and parents of children attending the school.

The program at St. Matthew's School is designed to promote the child's total development: physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual. Our intent is to encourage in each child a love of God as we know God in Jesus Christ, a positive view of self, creative self-expression, an attitude of cooperation and sharing, and an expanding knowledge of the world in which we live.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Day School continues to feel the unending support of St. Matthew's Church. We are all looking forward to working with the church in constructing a Youth Center Building this coming year.

**Office Volunteer Ministry** by Barbara Haynes, Administrative Assistant

The Office Volunteers are an intricate part of the ministry of St. Matthew's. They all give of their time and their talents to help me and other staff members get our work done. Karen Baker is faithful to come every Tuesday to cover the front desk while we are in staff meeting. Rita Eccles on Thursdays takes the Good Faith calls and updates the Book of Life (Church Registry). Marge Marshall comes every Friday to collate the Weekly Word. And then there are the on-call volunteers who come when I take a vacation, or have a family emergency. They just say yes. They are Babs Clendenin, Diane Sparks, DeDee Norman, Avery Goodgame and again Karen and Rita. There are special project volunteers, too. Liz O'Quin gave several hours to clean the supply room: what a gift that was to the office! There are the ladies who do our special projects, such as Stewardship mailings. They include Anna Dodge, B. J. Drenkhahn, Carol Stolz, Doris Dixon, Phaedra Kline, Jo Ann Cage, Tommye Bertero, Jane Bray--just to name a few. You are all loved and appreciated. If you are feeling a call to this ministry, please give me a call at 345-8314.

**Office Of Youth Ministry** Rebeka Rainwater, Team Leader

In the year 2006, the youth group made a transition in leadership as well as in the youth program. Groundwork was laid for the Sunday School curriculum, M<sup>3</sup> (Ministry, Mission, and ME), and a goal was also set to prepare our youth for Mission Trips. The youth participated in a variety of programs that reflect the mission of this church- to know Christ, grow in Christ, and to share Christ's love. Here are a few examples:

- Libraries of Love- An outreach project to collect and send books to libraries of impoverished schools in Uganda.
- ONE- A movement, in coordination with Bread for the World, for an effort to eradicate global poverty and seek justice by writing letters to Government leaders.
- Jr. High Lock-In- A 24 hour gathering involving community service, worship, and relationship building.
- Parish Roundup- A special youth program provided at the annual parish retreat at Echo Valley, focused on the Kingdom of God and his will for us in ministry.
- Sr. High U2charist: A Eucharist service infused by music of the rock band, U2, in coordination with the UT Student Center at All Saints' Episcopal Church.
- El Buen Winter Break Outreach- A day of community building and service at our local outreach center, El Buen Samaritano.

Thanks to all who have supported and have been a part of the youth team and program. Special thanks to Rev. Susan Barnes and Rev. Merrill Wade, Kate Whitson, Ben Wright, Chris O'Quin, Kristi and Jay Robison, Steven Boon, Matt Abrahamson, Sarah Neely, Jeri Muhich, Steve Ryder, all youth parents, and all those in the office and behind the scenes.

## ***Parish Life Reports***

### **Good Faith Committee – Pat Yeargain, Chair**

Thanks to the generosity of the parishioners (as of Nov. 26, \$38,595.32 had been donated), the Good Faith Fund was able to provide help with rent, mortgages, and utilities to over 250 families during 2006. The donations came from designated checks and the loose offerings from the collection plate on the first Sunday of each month. Helping so many families would not have been possible without the help of Reverend Susan Barnes, Liz O'Quin, Barbara Haynes, Rita Eccles and the other Good Faith Committee members: Jim Bennett, Judy Dewitt, Susan Fugate, Esther Garcia, Clyde Prestwood, Julia Taylor, and Louise Waddill.

### **The Brotherhood of St. Andrew – Jim Sparks, Director**

The first St. Matthew's Brotherhood of St. Andrew Chapter was organized in the summer and fall of 2005 and installed on November 5, 2005. Installation of officers included Jim Sparks, director; Bill Smith, vice director; Bill Kjellstrand, secretary; Tony Hatheway, treasurer; and 45 Charter members. The primary purpose of the Brotherhood is the spread of Christ's kingdom, especially among men and youth, by prayer, study and service.

Our Brother Harry Witt died during our first year, and we lost three members who have moved from St. Matthew's. With new members being added throughout the year, we now have 49 Brothers and that makes us the second largest chapter in the entire Episcopal Church.

We had monthly breakfast meetings with speakers, men's fellowship dinner, hosted the BStA convocation meeting, monthly Bible studies, workday at Down Home Ranch, hosted the Lenten Dinner with the DOK, attendees at the Diocesan Brotherhood annual retreat; a delegate to the National Brotherhood Convention; help host the BStA booth at the Diocesan Convention, participated in the annual chili cook off at the parish meeting, and held a joint Christmas dinner with The Daughters of the King. During our annual St. Andrew's Day Eucharist we installed officers for the year 2007. They are Jim Sparks, director; Cliff Harrison, vice director; John Bindel, secretary; and Tony Hatheway, treasurer. With our first year behind us, we are anticipating more opportunities to bring men and youth together at St. Matthew's. We have our first retreat scheduled for June '07 at Wessendorf Ranch (between Blanco and Wimberly) and we hope this will become an annual event. We want to invite all men of the parish to join The Brotherhood. It is a wonderful organization and it brings men and youth together in the Lord's name.

### **Daughters of the King - Diane Sparks, President**

The St. Cecilia Chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the King, a religious order for women and girls, meets monthly for a program or time of meditation to assist us in furthering our commitment to a life of prayer, service, and evangelism. Our Prayer List, which is updated weekly, is a vital part of the life of our chapter, and we invite parishioners to leave requests in our Prayer Box in the Commons. The Doves of Christ is our very active and committed Junior Daughters chapter.

In 2006 we welcomed new members Mary Lou Henshaw, Carol Mynes, and Janie McMahan and transfers Lynn Durrenberger and Shelly Stall. Highlights of the year included a visit from our out-going international president Sharon Lundgren; joining ECW in co-sponsoring Susan Chernak McElroy, a

nationally known author and speaker; assisting with the Alternative Gifts Market as a service project; and a joint end-of-year dinner with the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. The president and members have attended the diocesan Spring and Fall Assemblies and Triennial, our international retreat. Special recognition is in order for Susan Barnes, our chaplain, Louise Waddill, our prayer chairman, who also shares her culinary talents so generously; Mary-Lynn Polk, our soup labels chairman, who, as immediate past-president, has unselfishly assisted the president in innumerable ways; and Margaret Carpenter, our decorations chairman for our December dinner.

### **ConneXions Dinner Groups Ministry** by Stefani Minnear, Chair

The ConneXions Dinner Groups Ministry continues to be a popular way for members of St. Matthew's to get to know each other and enjoy each other's company. Twice a year we form groups of 8 to 10 people who meet about once a month in each other's homes to enjoy a meal and spend a few hours together. One couple or an individual is appointed "Group Leader" to host the first dinner and to make sure all the contact information is correct.

This is the first time I organized the groups, and I am grateful to all the group leaders and participants for being patient with the little mistakes I made. Leslie Kjellstrand, Jeri Muhich and Thilde Smith all shared their wisdom and experience with me and taught me how to organize the groups each cycle.

### **The Community of Hope** by Sharon Lowe

(CoH) provides training and ongoing support for lay pastoral care givers rooted in the Benedictine "vows" or practices of *stability, ongoing conversion and obedience* (listening for God). Upon completion of a 14 module training course, the lay volunteers select a place in which to offer pastoral care. "Pastoral Care" is given when a person is "present" in a listening, compassionate, non-controlling manner to an individual or group for the purpose of consciously or unconsciously representing God to them and seeking to respond to their spiritual needs. Monthly Circle of Care meetings offer members opportunities for fellowship, worship, debriefing and continuing education. At St. Matthew's, CoH members have faithfully utilized their pastoral skills in virtually every ministry of the parish and have launched many new ministries over the last six years, such as the Good Faith Fund, Kitchen Angels, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Kairos, Care for the Caregiver, Alternative Gifts Market, and the Women's Storybook Ministry.

During 2006, Bob Ascott and Virginia Hauser facilitated the monthly Circle of Care meetings and training was facilitated by Sharon Lowe, Cynthia Wilson and Anna Dodge. In December we graduated ten new pastoral caregivers: Anne and Len Albertson, Sarah Carpenter, Irene Glass, Christine Joannidi, Bob McCraine, Shirley Meyer, Susan Robertson, Armando Ruiz, and Lynn Stiles. Over the next 3 months, they will be completing at least 6 practice visits in the pastoral ministries of their choice and no doubt will bring their calm, caring presence to many ministries within and outside of St. Matthew's.

### **Library Committee** by Rita Eccles

The library committee has set 2 goals this year:

- (1) To get the word out that we have a library that is useful and available to the congregation. It is available for small groups to meet there and to browse through the available books. Meeting times can be scheduled with Barbara Haynes in the church office.
- (2) We want to get your input as to books you would like to have in the library so that they can be shared with others interested in reading. We think our goals are coming along so that more people are using and enjoying our library.

The Library committee: Anne Albertson, Maddy Bergen, Val Bray, Doris Donnell, Rita Eccles and Sarah Williams will be at work in 2007 to reach our goals.

**Prayer Shawl Ministry** Valorie Bray, Chair

The Prayer Shawl Ministry was established by Ernestlea Williams in May of 2004. Shawls are knitted or crocheted with the idea of the recipient being "covered in prayer". This group of approximately 30 has mailed or delivered over 375 shawls to countries as far away as Pakistan and England or as close as our very own households. Even though the recipients are not always known to us, we offer them with prayer and love. We welcome anyone who would like to be a part of this fellowship.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets every Wednesday morning at 9:30. Please do not hesitate to join us even if you do not know how to knit or crochet. We have plenty of wonderful teachers!

**Tuesday Night Bible Study** Doris Norton, Chair

Tuesday Night Bible Study is a group of about 45 members of St. Matthew's who meet weekly in each other's homes at 7:30 p.m. to study different books of the Bible or other devotional material. Members also share life's cares and joys together. Attendance ranges from 20-30 each week. 2006 marked the 31st year in the life of this group.

**Thursday Noon Bible Study** The Rev. Susan Barnes, Chair

Since its inception in 2001 the Thursday noon women's group has been known for savoring our study of texts. So it was that we spent several months on Marcus Borg's thought-provoking book, "The Heart of Christianity". Nan Harrison led us through several weeks' exploration of different spiritual disciplines. At year's end we were studying Huston Smith's "The World's Religions". Join us!

**Retirement Home Ministry** Milt Williams, Chair

For the eighth year an Episcopal communion service with singing of old hymns was held monthly at the retirement homes, Heartland, Summit, Renaissance and Brighton Gardens. Priests Robbie Vickery and Janna Osborne from St. Michael's, and Joe DiPaola, Jim Williams, Chuck Huffman, Jerry Chapman, Merrill Wade and Susan Barnes from St. Matthews lead the services.

Evening Prayer has been offered once a month at Brighton Gardens by Reid Kirchem. With the help of the Community of Hope ministry, we hope to be able to offer Evening Prayer or Compline to the other three Retirement Homes and in addition, a Visitation program.

**Associate Rector's Report** The Rev. Susan Barnes

The year 2006 saw the clergy and people of St. Matthew's growing fully into our new mission statement. The reports here show how faithfully we are embracing the commitment "to know Christ, grow in Christ, and share Christ's love." I give thanks to God for the loving and able leadership shown by the laity here. It is a stunning witness.

The ECW has broadened its leadership to include representatives of most of the ministries of the church and of the generations of women here. As Carol Mynes turns over the reins we thank her for this initiative, which has greatly strengthened the collaboration and hence the effectiveness of all the ministries. In pastoral care, let me single out two couples for praise as they turn over the leadership of ministries to refocus their efforts on others. For years, Sarah and Milt Williams have faithfully put together and delivered the Baby Bundles for new mothers at El Buen Samaritano. This project will now be administered by the ECW whose annual Christmas Coffee helps to fund it. The ministry of Lay Eucharistic Visitors has benefited greatly from the experience and sensitivity of Reid and Madelaine Kirchem. As they continue their gifted pastoral ministry to individuals, Judy Bomar takes on the administration of the LEVs.

In 2006 we celebrated a special chapter in our life together. The Parish Round-Up, at Echo Valley Campsite, brought nearly 280 of us together to share our stories and to recall our collective story while we

feasted, sang, relaxed and played in the beautiful setting of the Texas Hill Country in October. Special thanks to Paul Williams who chaired the weekend, to Jim Williams, Chuck Huffman, Hink Johnson, and Tim Smith for the program, to the Holy Smokers who fed and cared for us all weekend, and to the dozen other lay people whose dedicated work made the time a spectacular success.

**Rector's Report** – The Rev. Merrill Wade

In July of 2006, I began my 5<sup>th</sup> year as the rector of St. Matthew's. It has been, and continues to be, a privilege to serve with Susan Barnes, a fine lay staff, and the gifted retired clergy and lay folk of this parish. With deep sadness and gratitude, we buried the Rev. George Wilson, a faithful priest whose presence was so healing and restorative to so many of us. God bless you, good and faithful servant!

This past year we have experienced some important staff transitions. Barbara Pitts' tenure as our Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth ended in May. Tim Smith accepted an appointment as Organist/Choirmaster at Good Shepherd, Corpus Christi in late November. Phil Webster has moved on to Ohio to finish his preparations to become an Episcopal priest. Barbara, Phil and Tim were much loved and are missed. I wish to thank Kathy Dugat for giving us excellent leadership for our children's ministry and Sunday school activities. We are now blessed with the presence of Choir Master and pianist Jim Henderson and organist Jean Fuller as our music team. Jim, Jean and I are committed to offering inspirational music week after week and this music team promises to be so important to our future! I wish to thank Rebeka Rainwater, Kate Whitson and Ben Wright for their ministry with youth since Phil Webster left. We continue to search for new ways to strengthen our Youth Ministry and that will be a "first priority" for Susan and me in 2007.

Ultimately, there is no way for me to thank all the persons that make this church what it has been and what it is becoming. I must give a special word of thanks to Kevin McGillicuddy and Babs Clendenin, who have served this parish with such faithfulness this past year as wardens. I also wish to thank three other vestry members who will rotate off this year – Reid Kirchem, Jay Robison and Kathy Vail. Thank you one and all! Serving at St. Matthew's is an immeasurable privilege!