



ST. MATTHEW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PARISH PROFILE

We invite you to join us.

The Rector we seek



St. Matthew's is a loving, sacramental community, welcoming all to share life's joys and challenges as a family; to learn and grow in Christ; and to passionately serve each other, Austin, and the world. *We invite you to join us.*

This is our mission statement. But you probably already know that as these are also the first words people see on our website. That site has plenty of information, from service times to minutes of meetings, similar to much of the information you could likely find on most other church websites, so what do you say we cut to the chase here?

Thriving Episcopal Parish in ~~one~~ of the greatest city in America seeks an inspiring, joyful, and spiritual Rector to serve as priest, leader, friend, and fellow follower of Christ. Must be a thinker, a challenger, a delegator, and collaborator, and someone who can both be serious and not take themselves too seriously. Inclusive at their core, willing to be traditional and not-so-much when called for, is quick to love, makes haste to be kind, and smiles and laughs a lot. Must be a counselor, have a shoulder to cry on, be a fallible human who is not afraid to be consoled or ask for help, and is firmly called to be a true vessel of Grace. Being a lover of live music and barbecue isn't required, but, if so, you'll likely enjoy us, and Austin all the more.

All are welcome to apply.

Interested? Does it sound like we may be a fit for each other? If so, here is a bit more context before things get too serious:

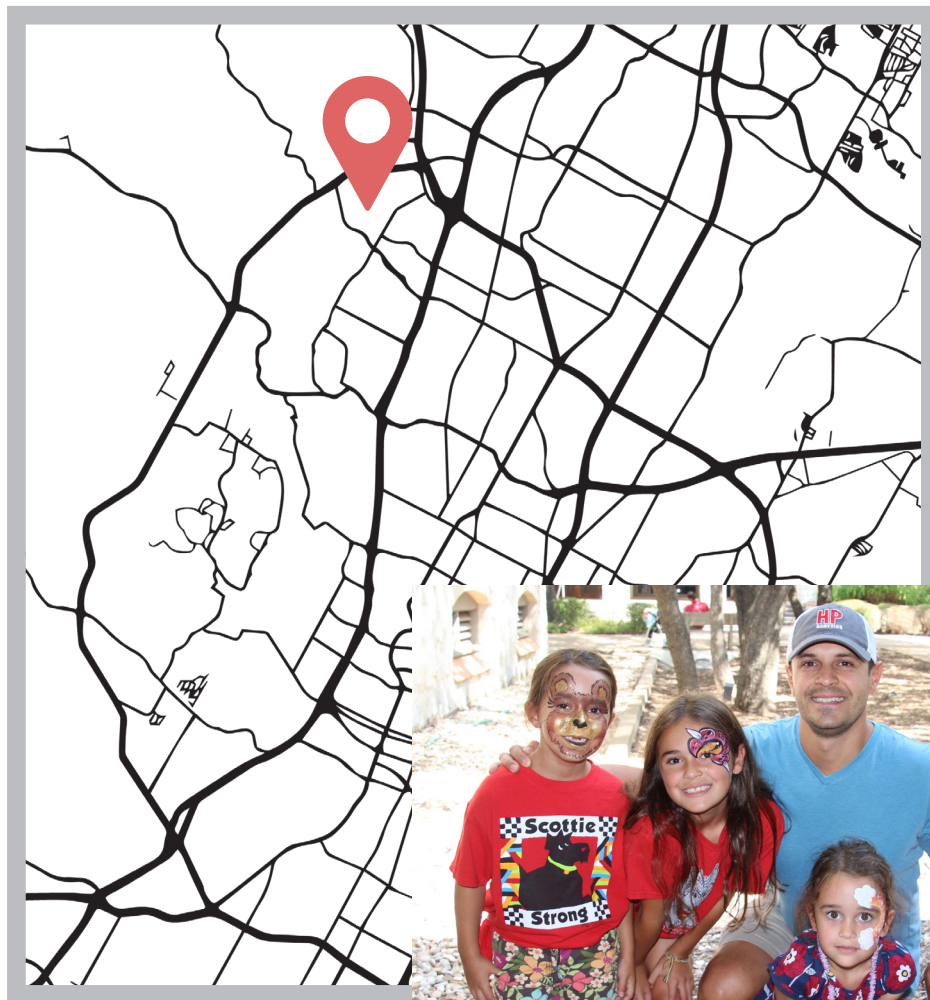
We've been around for a while - 62 years to be exact. While we may be set in our ways in some respects (we tend to sit in the same general places in the sanctuary out of habit), we're open to experimenting and trying new things. In fact, our family service, which runs concurrently with the traditional "big" service, started a few years ago and now leads the way in bringing new members into our church, often having 60-100 people on a Sunday.

Overall, we're a relatively large "cardinal" parish in the Diocese of Texas with an average Sunday attendance (ASA) of 375-ish which has grown over the past few years but admittedly not as much as we'd like. We could use your help there, because while we have new members, some others had to move, some sadly leave us to join the Heavenly Kingdom of Saints, and some can have other life issues get in the way of full participation from time to time.

Financially, we're growing year-over-year and have a total 2020 operational budget over \$1.3 million and an endowment of over \$600 thousand, the proceeds of which support new initiatives and ministries in the Parish. Our last three stewardship campaigns were the three highest in our parish history, even with the retirement of our long-term rector. And of note, we're debt free. With no deferred maintenance. A few years ago, we had a capital campaign that funded everything from a new roof and air conditioners (important when you live in Texas), lights, new signage, a new organ, and more. A few years before, we raised money to build a youth center which we also share with our Day School as well as a commercial grade kitchen which we use for parish events. With a professional chef at the helm, our volunteer kitchen staff not only provide meals for our communal gatherings, they also cook for various charities such as homeless shelters. All and all, we are a mostly up-to-date campus featuring a bell tower chapel that hosts nightly prayers and a memorial garden with a columbarium where we remember those who have gone before us and an outdoor chapel for services or reflection. Altogether, our campus spans a bit over 6 acres.



Location & Demographics



While we are located in Northwest Austin, our congregation extends throughout the city and even to some neighboring ones with members willing to drive farther to be a part of our church family. (About 50% drive more than five miles to come to St. Matt's.)

Our age range skews to the older side, and while over 30% of our members have been at St. Matt's for more than 20 years, we have about the same percentage who have been members less than four years (and both ends of the spectrum tend to look out for the other.) More than 80% of us are in church twice or more a month, so you'll get to know us pretty quickly.

We gravitate to thought provoking conversations and teachings, and with almost 90% having a college degree or higher, we can sometimes get too much into our own heads. We can use your help there.

Admittedly, our congregation remains rather monochromatic color-wise. Whether that is a reflection of our neighborhood or not can be debated, but let's not. Rather, let's say we'd like to work together to make sure that we continue to invite others and that we mean it when we say, "*All are Welcome.*"

Discernment as One Body

This historic commitment to inclusion was highlighted last spring when we embarked on a several months long Unity In Mission process, outlined by our Bishop of Texas, to discern if a parish is ready to host same-sex marriages in its Sanctuary. The overwhelming majority did, and, in the process, we learned more about each other, our journeys, and even our vulnerabilities. It also taught us how to have a challenging conversation as a parish. That's not to say that all views were the same or that there weren't disagreements, but rather that the congregation was healthy enough to have the discussion. And that we are loving enough not to let such a disagreement keep us from sharing our common life.



Personalities



One person on the vestry was particularly interested as well in highlighting to you that we are a patient people. Some of us may be hindered in some way and may not be like the rest of us whether because of our hearing, mobility, life experiences, health or anything else - and that's ok. Everyone has challenges. To help some of these, we have devices to help people hear; we assist in helping people move about; we take more time to explain when needed for understanding; we have support groups both formal and informal; and we take communion each Sunday to some of those who aren't able to make it to the service to help ensure all know that we are One Church, One Body.





Our worship personality is certainly “Broad” as we are just as comfortable with incense on Holy days as we are featuring a local singer/songwriter in our summer services, which is a favorite for many in the pews.

Oh, yes, and in the pews . . . you’ll find people from all different walks of life and all different backgrounds from cradle Episcopalians to converts from Catholicism to people without much (or any) religious background but who are searching for something missing in their life or wanting to make sure their kids don’t miss it. That tenor who performs on special occasion is our Rector Emeritus (the parish hall on the other side of campus is named for him). We are fortunate too that we have several retired priests and ministers that have chosen to be a part of our community and we’re blessed that they choose to serve with our priests when required. That guy who sits on the aisle, the one with an infectious laugh? He’s a Nobel Laureate whom you can thank for extended battery life in mobile devices. That column you read in the New York Times opinion pages? The author often sits in the back left. We have a number of current and retired professors, so if you are interested in discussing anything from theology to accounting, we have some of the top experts around. And see the small clusters of folks who always sit together in about the same spot? Well, they are lifelong friends who both laugh and cry together. During the worst and best moments of their lives, they have been there to support each other. And let’s face it, all of us, despite achievements, are human, and all have been or are going through a lot. From the pulpit, you’ll see people in health crises, having marital or parenting issues, who are in mourning, or that may be still searching for their way. When we’re together, it’s those things that mean more than any resume filler.

See that couple, sitting to your center left? They have been members for nearly 50 years. They got married here, baptized their kids here and now their grandkids sit next to them when they are back from college (boy, have they grown over the years). The list goes on – full of faithful stewards and kind hearts, this congregation is a community of friends, extended aunts and uncles and cousins and grandparents to all. It’s a really special group, one that needs to be sustained, fostered, and supported while also growing to include new friends and neighbors.

Music & Outreach



Also, usually sitting in the back right from the pulpit's point of view, is a well-known artist. Sitting beside her, her spouse is the architect who designed most of the buildings on the campus including the Sanctuary, which is renowned for having among the best acoustics in the city – and that's saying a lot in the "Live Music Capital of the World." Music is a fundamental part of our worship and enjoyment, in and out of church. It

admittedly helps make it easier when we have such talented people at the helm of the program (our organist is kind of a big deal and our choir director literally teaches the subject as part of his day job) joined by graduate students in voice on the path of their future profession, local Austin guest musicians, and talented people in the Parish who, together, can transform art into grace and regularly cause the congregation to applaud. Or tear up. Or both.

Similarly, our Sanctuary is part of our outreach (outreach is BIG in this parish) in the community as well as it is used by many non-parish music groups and events and, along with our basement rooms, youth center, or parish hall, hosts everything from grief support groups to those struggling with addiction to our long-sponsored Boy Scout troop. The outreach activities aren't limited to church property: they extend to contributions of time, talent, and treasure to dozens of groups, from Helping our Neighbor, to refugee services, to a variety of prison ministries, to providing backpacks to school children in need, and much, much more.



Day School



Speaking of school children, a love of them is a central part of this community, made even more so since the St. Matthew's Day School plays such an important role in our Parish. Instead of having a Shared Space agreement and some of the parish-school tensions found other places, we have a Shared Life agreement that recognizes the interdependent nature between us. It's not just a great service to the community; the Day School is a great school, period. Teachers have been awarded top prizes in the city, enrollment is at capacity, and its alumni not only still get together but are now sending their children there too. Preaching to those impressionable 18 month-Kindergarten aged minds is a shared clergy role on Wednesdays and Thursdays and is reported to deliver spiritual growth both to the students and the priests. The sound of young, enthusiastic voices is a mainstay from early morning to early afternoon, providing energy and optimism throughout the parish on weekdays. Currently, the Day School is leading a significant outdoor classroom landscaping project on part of our Parish grounds focused on "Exploring Nature, Expanding Community." The Rector's office backs up to the mini-amphitheater being constructed, which will provide you with, literally, the best seat in the house - and likely dozens of waves daily.



Leadership & Traditions

Father Hawley, our senior associate rector and current Locum Tenens, is providing those waves for now. A former Air Force officer, civil engineer, and now also a new father (not a new priest but a new Dad type of father, that is), he has a deep-seated love of nature, so this Exploring Nature project to help shape young minds is right up his alley. He believes that "scripture is best shared outside" and has led us on Christmas Day hikes, Stations of the Cross in St. Edwards park, parish camping retreats, and even a canoe-charist for those particularly well-balanced congregants that don't mind getting splashed en route to the elements. He is beloved and respected and working to make sure the parish is ready both physically and spiritually for our new rector. We're excited with him as we await your arrival.



We can talk about so much more - moments of grace, laughter, and support, to reflecting on a sermon days later because it makes us think or touches our souls in unexpected ways, or that we have a group of parishioners called the Holy Smokers who get up early in the morning to help prepare parish lunches, how our Christmas children's pageant can be both semi-controlled chaos and a reminder of the wonders of the Birth, how when we all wear red for St. Matthew's Day and Pentecost we can get odd looks from first time visitors, how we view knowing Christ as different than just knowing things about him, or how we enjoy sponsoring seminarians and having curates because even though we'll have to say goodbye faster than we'd like, it's a way for us not just to get to know extraordinary people but to give back to the Diocese and National Church by helping to prepare them to be rectors, missionaries, or canons for others. And even though they will leave, they will always remain one of us and will always get a warm welcome back "home."



Ok, so our enthusiasm may be making us a bit too wordy, but trust us that there is a lot more we can say about our church family and its abundant blessings. Until then, here are a few things the surveys such as the Congregational Assessment Tool and small group sessions have highlighted regarding who the congregation is and what we're looking for in our next rector:

Overall, we have High Satisfaction / High Energy Rating with no critical success factors identified.

On a descriptive map, we are considered "More Progressive, More Adaptable"

Scores in the 80+ percentile in most performance indices (Spiritual Vitality is an exception in part because we are...)

Considered a "Magi" Parish, which in the wording of Holy Cow! Consulting, means among other things that we:

- Are ultimately concerned with the rational integrity of faith and just application of faith to life
 - Value deep knowledge, open discourse and intellectual curiosity; frequently exhibits a penetrating analytic culture
 - Have the capacity to be a powerful ally for those with minority status or who lack power to protect themselves
 - Are capable of embracing meaningful changes necessary to engage a changing society
 - May need to get over the temptation to overthink issues (which we largely agree to be the case too...)
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Top Three Priorities for us are to:

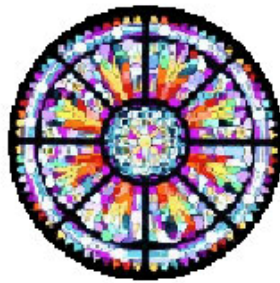
- Reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
 - Attract families with children and youth to our church.
 - Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.
-

And the Top Characteristics we're looking for in a rector are:

1. Preaching
 2. Strategic leadership
 3. Pastoral care
 4. Teaching/Training
-

Hopefully, this gives you some idea of who we are and what we're looking for, and should you think you may be a fit, please let Rev. Cn. Christine Faulstich, Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Texas, know at cfaulstich@epicenter.org.

After all, as our mission statement says, "*We invite you to join us.*"



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Contact us

8134 Mesa Dr.

Austin, TX 78759

Phone: 512-345-8314

Web: www.stmattsaustin.org

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facebook.com/stmatthewsaustin

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