

*Saint Matthew Parish
Southborough, MA*

2021 Parish Annual Report

*Our parish is a Catholic faith community proclaiming
Christ's message in word and action.*



Parish Web Address

www.stmatthewcatholic-southboro.org

Parish email

office@stmatthewsb.org



Our Parish Family Grows

We are:

- ❖ 1,039 Active families

This past year we shared the joy of:

- ❖ 32 Baptisms
- ❖ 30 First Eucharist
- ❖ 40 Confirmations

We celebrated:

- ❖ 4 Marriages

We mourned:

- ❖ 20 Deaths

Pastor

Rev. James B. Flynn, Ph.D.

Guest Priests

Rev. Anthony Penna
Rev. Daniel Kennelly
Rev. Conrad Pacevich

Parish Leadership

Finance Committee

Under the leadership of John Howard, the Finance Committee is an advisory body to the pastor and operates under the guidelines established by the Diocese of Worcester. The Committee is primarily responsible for monitoring all the financial operations of our parish.

Father Flynn	Jen Burns
Steve Glynn	John Grieco
John Howard (Chair)	John McCabe
John Moynihan	Barbara Murphy

Religious Education Board

Under the leadership of Paul Cimino, the Religious Education Board is an advisory body to the Director of Religious Education.

Maria Casal	Paul Cimino (Chair)
Amy Comcowich	Karen Fournier
John Hurley	Randy Kramer
Sharon McCabe	Suzanne McGourty
Kristin Merrill	Mary O'Brien
Julie Osetek	

Parish Staff

Rev. James B. Flynn, Ph.D. – Pastor
Richard Cunningham, Ed.D. – Pastoral Associate
Cherylann McFetridge – Parish Secretary
Amy Comcowich – Director of Religious Education
Elizabeth Siber – Assistant Director of Religious Education
Robert Carson – Director of Music
Mark Polny – Youth Minister
Karen Fournier – Youth Ministry Assistant
Vincent Keane – Maintenance
Barbara Murphy – Sacristan
Kim Tynan – Coordinator of Safe Environment and Protection of Children
Tony and Joan Provencal – Baptismal Catechists
Barbara Jandrue – Southborough Food Pantry

Each year, it is our pleasure to share with you the highlights of our financial activity for the previous fiscal year - September 2020 to August 2021. The parish is required to submit financial reports to the Bishop's office annually, which contain financial information for the prior fiscal year, as well as our budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Once finalized, both reports will be posted to our web site. We also provide the diocese statistics for census, sacraments and accounting information for their planning purposes. In the interest of transparency and clarity, financial reports for all parishes and institutions are made available to its members.

While this report contains a summary of our financial situation, it is a broader review of our parish life. Over time, we have found that some parishioners are not familiar with who we are or what we do. Within these pages you will find an easy-to-read synopsis of information about staff members, Parish and Finance Councils, ministry work, and parish life along with financial information. Thank you for your interest and taking the time to read about St. Matthew Parish. We appreciate your interest in the matters of your Parish.

Finance Committee Report

We are happy to report that we closed the most recent fiscal year ended August 31, 2021 with operating receipts exceeding operating disbursements by \$154,000, compared to a surplus of \$157,000 in the prior year.

This continued healthy financial performance is due primarily to the continued generosity of so many of our Parishioners. We anticipate that our expenses will increase in fiscal year 2022, so we hope to see offertory growth in the coming year. Please be as generous as you can.

During fiscal year 2021, we funded a number of capital improvement projects including: new computers and monitors, the addition of livestreaming technology; upgrades to the Wi-Fi system in all buildings; new office furniture for the Rectory; and new signage outside the Parish Center.

Capital improvements for fiscal year 2022 will include: repainting of the sign on Southville Road, painting and repairs outside the Rectory, painting inside the Rectory, restriping of the parking lot, tree removal and landscaping upgrades.

We also held two very successful capital campaigns during fiscal year 2021: Partners in Charity and Legacy of Hope. We raised \$81,000 and \$633,000 respectively. See additional details regarding the Legacy of Hope later in this Annual Report.

We continue to operate without any debt, and we ended the fiscal year with \$2.1M in operating net assets and savings. As always, thank you to all of you for your continued, generous financial support of our Parish.

St. Matthew Parish
Statements of Receipts and Disbursements
For The Years Ended August 31, 2021, 2020 & 2019

OPERATING RESULTS

	2021	2020	2019
<u>Receipts</u>			
Parish Collections	566,250	549,593	539,191
Religious Education Income	19,083	30,036	30,053
Contributions	24,113	70,379	77,586
Other Income	61,526	52,470	20,821
Diocesan & Other Special Collections	59,091	29,257	30,055
Total Receipts From Operations	730,063	731,735	697,706
<u>Disbursements</u>			
Salaries - Priests	66,080	61,400	69,387
Salaries - Lay Employees	166,753	190,570	182,382
Fringe Benefits	34,313	38,711	44,952
Church Operating Expenses	121,567	125,711	112,114
Parish Center Operating Expenses	14,009	8,022	17,036
Rectory Expenses	18,694	18,460	22,746
Repairs & Maintenance	27,417	27,832	24,775
Religious Education	11,005	13,079	16,902
Youth Ministry And Other Programs, Net	16,217	25,764	18,321
Parish Administrative	38,043	36,413	36,759
Diocesan And Other Special Collections	61,860	28,679	30,037
Total Disbursements For Operations	575,958	574,641	575,411
Operating Receipts Over (Under) Disbursements	154,105	157,094	122,295

OTHER RESULTS

<u>Receipts</u>			
Parish Improvement Fund	100	4,473	35,894
Investment Income	36,191	44,884	46,760
Net Proceeds From Scholarship Events & Donations	57,949	41,294	28,833
Church Expansion & Renovation Fund	150	8,802	65,338
Total Other Receipts	94,390	99,453	176,825
<u>Disbursements</u>			
Parish Improvements	8,500	10,550	28,382
Scholarships	23,300	22,000	23,500
Church Expansion & Renovations	0	0	69,168
Total Other Disbursements	31,800	32,550	121,050
Other Receipts Over (Under) Other Disbursements	62,590	66,903	55,775

TOTAL RESULTS

Total Receipts Over (Under) Disbursements	216,695	223,997	178,070
Operating Net Assets And DEF Deposits At Beginning Of Year	1,938,337	1,714,340	1,536,270
Operating Net Assets And DEF Deposits At End Of Year	2,155,032	1,938,337	1,714,340

Education and Youth Ministries

Adult Education

Various programs are offered throughout the year to promote a further education or enrichment of our faith as adults.

Bethel Adult Bible Study--The Bethel Bible Series is completing its eleventh year at St. Matthew having graduated five classes of students. The program is an overview of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, designed to help the participant better understand God's plan of salvation and meet the Christ of the Scriptures.

The Bethel Bible Series is a two-year program, the first focusing on the Old Testament and the second on the New Testament. Each year participants receive a separate binder and twenty lessons to help guide their reading. Also, each year is divided into three, seven-week semesters that are scheduled not to compete with the Thanksgiving/Christmas holidays or summer vacations.

In 2021, the Bible study focused on the Old Testament and completed this study in September. In January 2022, a new class will be offered exploring the New Testament. Because of COVID-19 classes were and will be held on Zoom for the immediate future.

Pastoral Associate Richard Cunningham, a certified Bethel Bible Series instructor, leads the class.

Ultimately, the goal of the program can be summed up in its mission statement: "Blessed to be a Blessing."

RCIA--The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is an engaging program for individuals who desire to learn more about the Catholic Faith. The program is a gradual process paced at the needs of the individual. RCIA welcomes anyone who seeks to be baptized into the Catholic Church. In addition, RCIA welcomes individuals who are baptized Catholics and have never received First Communion, First Reconciliation, or Confirmation.

The RCIA process at St. Matthew Parish is ongoing throughout each church year and has been active since 1994. This year we welcomed Donna Hurley into the Church. Please contact the Parish office at (508)485-2285 if you are interested in this program.

Religious Education

During this past religious education year, 337 children and teens participated in religious education at St. Matthew Parish. 44 children completed religious education at home.

In Grades 1-8, religious education was scheduled from September to June for 223 registered children. Online classes, via zoom, and in-person classes were offered and taught by 31 dedicated catechists. Class times were condensed because of the pandemic but the main message of the year was consistent throughout: God loves them and knows what they are going through during the uncertainty of the pandemic. An additional 44 children completed homeschool religious education; many of these parents did not feel safe sending their children to in-person classes and believed that their children were already attending too much via Zoom with their schooling. Curriculum from RCL Benzinger, *Blessed Are We; Faith and Word Edition* was used for all but the sacrament children used *God's Gift* by Loyal Press to prepare for Reconciliation and First Communion. Both sets of curriculums are recommended by the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.

In our high school program, 98 teens in grades 9-11 were instructed by three catechists using the Bishop's required curriculum, *Catholic Essentials* by Ava Maria Press. Teens were given a choice between attending six, two-hour classes in either the Morning or Afternoon Session. Each session was condensed by an hour from the previous year because of the pandemic. Those who prepared for Confirmation were not required to attend the spring semester of classes while they focused on their sacrament preparation.

Those in grade 12 met separately with Fr. Flynn during both semesters for his popular class, "Morality and the College Experience." There were 16 seniors enrolled in this class.

The Little Church School program did not meet during the 2020-2021 religious education year because of the pandemic. This program is for our youngest students, ages four through kindergarten, to learn about God's love, how special we all are, and the various seasons of the Church using stories and crafts.

Our sacramental programs included 24 children for the December celebration of Reconciliation, 30 children for the May celebrations of First Communion, and 40 teenagers for the May celebration of Confirmation. All of these candidates completed preparation classes and participated in online retreats as part of their preparation process. Six of the First Communion candidates completed their preparation the previous year and simply delayed reception of the sacrament because of the pandemic.

The Office of Religious Education continues to ensure that safe environment training and CORI background checks are completed by all program volunteers according to the child safety standards of our diocese.



Father Flynn offering First Communion in May 2021



Confirmation and First Communion candidates in May 2021

Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry is comprised of a dedicated group of kind and compassionate high school and middle school youth who are committed to serving St. Matthew Parish as well as their local community. Some of the many activities the youth participated in this past year include monthly Youth Gifted Masses, leadership meetings and days of service.

The youth assisted with assembling Thanksgiving Food Baskets for those in need in our parish. They participated in Veterans Day and Good Friday Days of Service. The youth put together and delivered baskets of goodies and floral arrangements to the shut-ins during Christmas as well as organizing a food drive for the Southborough Food Pantry in January called Souper Bowl of Caring.

In addition to supporting the Juniors Helping Seniors Program, the many specialty events the youth run annually include making blankets for the Pernet Center and hosting the annual parish Easter Egg Hunt. The youth ministry continues to offer “15 minutes with God” via zoom every Wednesday evening for middle and high school youth who want to take a few minutes during the middle of their busy week to nurture their faith.

The Youth Ministry year culminated with our Home Mission. We were unable to travel this year so thirty-five youth and ten adults gathered at St. Matthew’s to serve our community. We did projects on the grounds of St. Matthew, made blankets and assembled birthday bags for Project Just Because, prepared meals for Rachel’s Table, baked and visited local shut-ins, worked at the cemetery, corresponded with prisoners through Free Minds and much more. Each afternoon and evening provided the group with an opportunity for prayer and reflection and an ability to share their faith experience.

Juniors Helping Seniors

The Juniors Helping Seniors Program just completed its 11th year. We were lucky to have some of our middle school and high school youth participate in the program this year. We had the opportunity to help several of our senior citizens in the fall and winter aiding in cleaning garages, basements, and doing some light moving. With COVID-19 guidelines in place, our Juniors were still able to help out our Seniors with outside jobs and other jobs with appropriate masking.

Over the past 11 years, our youth have helped clean out attics, basements, helped with moving boxes, and putting up/taking down Christmas decorations. The program continues to benefit our “seniors” with harder jobs around their homes but also gives our “juniors” a sense of responsibility and satisfaction in doing charitable work. It has given them a chance to give back and understand their responsibility to help others. We look forward to another year of service to St. Matthew’s.



Youth ministry volunteering for a day of service



Picture from the Home Mission in July 2021

Church Ministries

Pre-Cana

Low demand and gathering restrictions as a result of the pandemic led to the cancellation of our annual conference for engaged couples. The marriage preparation sessions will return in the coming year with Jessica & Adam Phanuef leading a team of volunteers including Deirdre & Matt Berger, Fr. Flynn, Mary & Dan O'Brien, Joan & Tony Provencal and Chris & Andy Flanagan.

Children's Liturgy of the Word

The Children's Liturgy of the Word is a special celebration of the scriptures with readings from the Children's Lectionary by a high school or adult Lector. After the Opening Prayer at the 10am Mass, the children ages 5-12 are invited to go downstairs for their readings. The readings are brought alive for the children using methods that include drama, props, and interactive homily style. The children return to their families in the Church at the Prayer of the Faithful. This ministry has been suspended during COVID-19.

Eucharistic Adoration

A special opportunity for Eucharistic Adoration is available every first Friday throughout the year after the 8:00am daily mass. Do you have 30 minutes or an hour to spend in quiet reflection with the exposed Blessed Sacrament? Discover the special grace found in slowing down, shutting out distractions and taking time to spend one-on-one time with the Lord in our beautiful church. Interested? Please contact Mary Jordan at (508)786-0468 or j.mjordan@verizon.net to sign up for 30 minutes or an hour from 8:30am to noon. The ministry has been suspended during COVID-19 but will resume as soon as possible.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer shawls are available for those who are in need of being “wrapped” in prayer and need some comfort in time of illness, grief, or experiencing a difficult time. Contact the Parish Office if you would like a prayer shawl for yourself or a friend, family, or coworker, who may benefit from receiving one.

Music Ministry

Our Director of Music and dedicated cantors continue to provide the parish with beautiful music during the masses. The music ministry enhances the worship experience by deepening the Word of God by providing meaning to the liturgy through music. We encourage the congregation to participate and draw strength through the spiritual meaning in the music. We look forward to the coming year and will continue to keep Catholic traditions alive.

This past year has been full of changes with the COVID-19 pandemic. We returned to on-site worship on Pentecost Sunday last year with safe worship options. In limited capacity, we socially distanced and reduced the capacity of the church and music ministry rendered music from the loft to keep everyone safe.

The effort was to present meaningful liturgies with music for those limited number of people who could attend mass and via livestream for those as an additional option. Since the deployment of vaccines, the world has opened up again. Parishioners and visitors are returning to church and the robust singing of hymns and thunderous responses to service music such as Kyrie, Responsorial Psalms, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation and Great Amens to name a few have returned.

With a few modifications such as a new larger hymn board to post the hymn numbers, the addition of livestreaming of mass and to increase the reverence of liturgy, we have ceased announcing the hymns.

The cantors have returned to their rightful place, which is down front at the cantor stand and from there, they lead the sung prayer of the church with joy in their hearts. We express our gratitude to all our music ministry members for their commitment to excellence and consistency in striving to make music as meaningful as possible.

Social Justice and Social Ministries

St. Matthew's outreach to our community and beyond includes: Pernet Center, Southborough Food Pantry, Dismas House, Ministry to the Sick, Charitable Support, and other emergency support, as needed.

Pernet Center – As part of their Holiday programs, Pernet offers over 300 families in need in the Worcester area the ingredients for a complete Thanksgiving dinner and, at Christmas, requested gifts for children in these families. All the food items and gifts are solicited from donors and St. Matthew's has been a long and generous supporter of these programs. The donations of grocery gift cards at Thanksgiving and gifts from the Parish's Giving Tree at Christmas bring joy to families who might otherwise have little or nothing. Gifts from St. Matthew's are overwhelming and are an example of the outstanding generosity of the Parish. St. Matthew's is one of the largest donors to these programs and the staff and clients of Pernet are exceedingly grateful for the Parish's continued generosity and support.

Southborough Food Pantry – The Southborough Food Pantry is a social action outreach mission of the United Parishes of Southborough and was started in 1989. The United Parishes of Southborough is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation and is now made up of five churches; Pilgrim Church, St. Mark's Church, St. Anne's Parish, St. Matthew's Parish and First Community Church. The Food Pantry has always been at Pilgrim Church. There are currently 58 families using the Pantry.

While the five Church Communities, the Town's schools, and the Boy Scout Drive are far and away the largest continuous supporters of the Food Pantry, we also receive donations from individuals and a few local businesses. Smiling Kids, Inc. provides Birthday Gift Certificates for the children, St. Anne's Giving Tree provides for Christmas, Project Just Because provides clothing, St. Mark's provides backpacks, and Cumberland Farms provides bread.

Monetary gifts are also gratefully received and enable us to purchase food and other items not usually donated. With this money we purchased and gave out gift certificates facilitating the purchase of fresh food and other items not handled at the Pantry. Monetary donations also enable us to purchase food from our partners at the Worcester County Food Bank in Shrewsbury at greatly reduced prices and keep our shelves stocked during the times when food donations drop off. Continuing donations of food and money are critical to our mission. We also use the monetary donations to offer one-time utility assistance to our regular families.

The Pantry is open twice a week, on Thursday nights from 6:00-7:00 pm and on Friday mornings from 9:00-10:30 am. People can contact us at (508)485-4847 or southboroughfoodpantry@gmail.com. Each church has a Food Pantry Coordinator and a handful of volunteers who staff the Pantry on a regular basis.

We would like to use this Annual Report to say a big thank you to all the parishioners for donating and for all the gifts of time and effort made by the Pantry Volunteers and for your continued support.

Dismas House – Each month Dan Congdon along with high school youth prepare a meal for the clients of Dismas House. Dismas House is a halfway house located in Worcester. The ministry was suspended this year due to COVID; hopefully it will be resumed shortly.

Ministry to the Sick – The mission of the Ministry to the Sick is to visit the sick, infirmed, and the elderly in their homes, hospitals, or nursing homes, praying with them and bringing the Eucharist. There are currently two ministers, Richard Cunningham and Barbara Zebrowski, who regularly visit those in need. To request a visit, please contact the church office. New volunteers to this ministry are always welcomed.

Legacy of Hope – Last year the Diocese launched a campaign to raise \$32,000,000, primarily to support Priest retirement and Catholic education. Forty percent of the money raised by each parish will be returned to the parish to support the goals they chose for their parish campaign. Parishes were asked to determine their own goals. Our goals were to:

- Establish the Reverend James B. Flynn Endowment Fund for Catholic Education
- Charitable outreach to the Pernet Center in Worcester, MA
- Charitable outreach to Our Lady of the Valley in Uxbridge, MA to support the Grace Center
- Charitable outreach to St. Jude Thaddeus Church in Waldon, AR

Our financial goal was \$627,000 which we exceeded. Two hundred families donated or pledged a total of \$633,000. Our share of the monies from the campaign will begin to be received at the end of the first quarter of 2022. Thank you for your generosity and support of this important diocesan campaign!

Charitable Support – St. Matthew's supports several charities, primarily during the holiday season – St. Francis House Clothing Drive, Pernet Center Thanksgiving food, St. Jude Thaddeus Church gift cards, and the Pernet Center Giving Tree at Christmas.

Scholarship Fund Activities

Each year we have two events that support the St Matthew's Scholarship Fund: a Scholarship Fundraiser event and the Annual Golf Tournament. The Fundraiser usually occurs in the spring and the Tournament is in late summer or early fall.

Scholarship Fundraiser – The fundraiser was canceled this year due to COVID-19. We hope to do a fundraiser in 2022.

Golf Tournament - The 19th Annual Golf Tournament had a great turnout. We were able to have the Raffle but the Silent Auction was suspended due to COVID-19. We had 92 players which was our second largest turnout ever! Although we had to postpone the tournament from August to September due to a hurricane, beautiful weather contributed to another sizeable donation to the Scholarship Fund.

Many thanks to all who support these events!

2021 Scholarship Recipients

This year 21 of our St. Matthew high school seniors, who have shown commitment to the parish and their faith, were benefactors of your generosity.

Adriana Baldelli – University of New Hampshire
Avery Barnes – Framingham State University
Elena Battaglini – University of Connecticut
Olivia Battles – College of the Holy Cross
Christopher Carreras – Boston College
Logan Carter – Stonehill College
Ross Comcowich – College of the Holy Cross
Caroline Connell – Clemson University
Patrick Freeman – Keene State College
Emmelia Habib – Westfield State University
Grace Hartnett – University of Maryland
Timothy Howard – University of Rhode Island
Michael Hurley – Southern New Hampshire University
Olivia Hurley – Bridgewater State University
Steve Hyland – Framingham State University
Amanda Kelley – University of Massachusetts Amherst
Isabelle Lagasse – Hofstra University
Luke Osetek – University of Virginia
Shannon Provencal – Tulane University
Jillian Reynolds – American University
Alexandra Selvitelli – Emmanuel College

Bereavement

Sadly, over the past year (November 2020 – October 2021) the following parish members passed away. Please keep them and their families in your prayers as they heal from their loss.

Robert Mealey

Jeri Chartrand

Edward “Thom” McCabe

Margaret Sena

Thomas Sturiale

Redio Bartolini

Michael Paul Cofelice

Jay Zelesky

Lynn Desforges

Ronald Garcia

Robert Clark

George Bailey

Adrienne Beattie

James Urban

Linda Hubley

Jackie Dibouno

Paul Berry

Louis J. Noborini Jr.

Frances McCann

Dorothy Collotta

We have a wonderful parish, one that reaches out to people in need, comforts those in trouble or suffering grief, builds a strong foundation of faith for its children, and celebrates God's promise of life at each and every Mass. **You** make it wonderful, with your prayers, your presence and your gifts.

St. Matthew's thanks you for your steadfast support!



Photo courtesy of Lisa Tommaney Photography