



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

PARKER, COLORADO

2024 PARISH PROFILE



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“Behold who you are, become what you receive.”

This exhortation, our final blessing before the Eucharistic meal is served each Sunday, captures the spirit and vitality that animates us at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church.

St. Matthew’s is a gathering place. It is a small enough community that on Sunday mornings the ushers are able to greet everyone with a smile and the gift of their name tag pulled from their homes on the narthex walls. Everyone’s name is known and all are welcome.

We are a theologically diverse group of people, held together by our love for each other and driven by the love of Christ. Hospitality and relationship, these gifts of the Holy Spirit, are the foundation upon which our community draws strength and through which it is nurtured.

We are seeking a rector with a generous, expansive faith. A priest who shares our congregation’s conviction that we are the Body of Christ. A leader who is excited about co-creating with us, guiding our vital congregation as we step out in faith to answer our call from God to serve our community and world.

St. Matthew's Now

We are...

- A warm family where our youth are just as important as adults.
- Adaptable and hungry for continued growth in spirit as well as size.
- Energized, invigorated, and eager to reach out to those on the margins of society.
- Intellectually curious, ready to interrogate scripture and connect it to our lives outside of church.
- Committed to taking care of each other.



OUR MISSION

We embrace all people with the love of Jesus through joyful worship rooted in tradition, ministries for all generations, and outreach to those in need. All are welcome.

St. Matthew's today is a much different place than it was the last time we sought a rector, back in 2004. The rector selected at that time oversaw a long and sometimes difficult period of change, as The Episcopal Church made several important decisions that unfortunately led to schisms across all dioceses and parishes. Closer to home, St. Matthew's struggled with disagreements in leadership style and lost the dynamic energy needed to attract and maintain members.



A small garden on the church grounds went fallow in 2020. As our congregation did the work to renew our spiritual and personal connections, we also revitalized this space.

Our church was challenged again in 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted our usual ways of worship. We were not immune to the effects of these waves of change, but we have proven resilient, united by our bonds of faith and love.

We have spent the past two years in a period of discernment and reflection, led by an empowering interim rector who nurtured a new season of growth. We have done the work necessary to identify sources of past conflict, acknowledge and process those emotions, and prepare for the future. This has brought us to a place of spiritual health and contentment. We are now ready to confidently call our next rector.

You don't have to take our word for it. We enlisted the services of a third-party consulting firm to complete a congregational assessment survey that validated our sense of **high satisfaction and high energy** — two key ingredients in a healthy change journey. We've drawn on that research in this profile to help provide candidates with an honest representation of our congregation's strengths and growing edges.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

- Colossians 3:14



Strengths to Maintain

Hospitality:

Our church welcomes and is enriched by people from many walks of life. When describing their experience at St. Matthew's, members use the words "welcoming" and "friendly" to such an extent that it would feel wrong not to include them throughout this profile!



Diversity and Inclusion:

While our congregation is not rich in racial and ethnic diversity (our demographics align with the town of Parker), we welcome a diversity of theological perspectives and are good at negotiating differences of opinion without creating fractures in our community.

"[St. Matthew's provides] A worship service where everyone is welcomed and accepted as they are. Each person is valued and respected."

Adaptability:

We believe there are many ways to nurture and deepen our relationships with God. We understand that growth involves change, and we are prepared to evolve to accommodate the needs of the people we want to reach.



Empowered Lay Leadership:

We have a balanced vestry that pulls from the diversity of our congregation. Two Lay Eucharistic Visitors provide additional pastoral care. Twenty-four adult members hold Safe Church certification and contribute to our children's ministry.

Opportunities to Build On

Outreach:

Our members have a tremendous desire to practice our faith outside of our small campus. We are generally a parish of thinkers, with a tendency to deliberate carefully about the decisions we make. We need help accelerating toward prayerful action so we can better serve those in need.

“When church is my source of education and energy, I feel strengthened and energized to learn more and participate more fully in the work of God in the community around me.”

Relationship Building:

For a congregation of “thinkers,” we have a surprising amount of warmth toward each other (thinkers can be huggers, too!). That said, many are hungry for more structured activities. For example, small-group Bible study, Sunday suppers, and gatherings for parents of young children.



Adult Education:

While we take pride in our thriving youth programs, we are less successful in serving other demographics. Our members crave more educational and spiritual formation opportunities for adults at every age and stage of life.

“When my child was facing a challenging time, the youth leaders rallied around them and myself to provide consistent and non-judgmental support”

Accessibility:

Since 2020, we have successfully maintained online streaming of Sunday services, which has been a lifeline for members who cannot attend but who remain connected to the community. However, we want to do more work to improve the accessibility of our community to people with disabilities.



Cornerstone Ministries

As a small, family church, we have tended to focus our talents and treasure in a few areas of ministry.



Worship

Our **music ministry** accompanies each service with a mixture of traditional hymns and contemporary Christian songs. On any given Sunday, you might be treated to four-part harmonies with vibrato or foot-stomping classic rock — if you're lucky, maybe even both. The range and talent of our choir and band are truly remarkable, especially for a church our size. As church participation has rebounded post-pandemic, many members of the congregation have been stepping forward to share their musical talents.

Other groups that enhance the worship experience at St. Matthew's include the **altar guild** and **adult education**. We also make our services accessible to those who are unable to physically worship with us through our **online streaming ministry** and **lay eucharistic visitors**.

Therefore I will praise
you upon the lyre for
your faithfulness O my
God; I will sing to you
with the harp, O Holy
One of Israel.

- Psalm 71:22





Education

Another defining part of St. Matthew's is our **youth ministry**. We are blessed to have a dedicated building to host Youth Group, Children's Chapel, and Godly Play each week. But that doesn't mean our youth are shepherded away or sequestered; they are an integral part of our congregation.

Recognizing the importance of younger generations to our sustained growth, toward the end of 2022, we took a leap of faith and tried something new. The first Sunday of each month, the full congregation celebrates together for a single youth-led service. Youth lectors read scripture from "God's Word, My Voice, A Lectionary for Children" to maximize engagement and inclusiveness. Youth Sunday has quickly become a part of our church culture.



Congregational Life

At St. Matthew's, fellowship is family. Though our **fellowship committee** officially provides breakfast once per month, it's not uncommon to see parishioners gathering around the kitchen after every service, sharing home-baked goods and grabbing coffee.

Likewise, the spirit of our **newcomer committee** stretches far beyond our quarterly welcome lunches. Roughly half of the congregation could be considered "newcomers," having joined within the past two to three years. When asked what kept them coming back, there's a common answer: "I just felt welcome, like I belong."

We have experimented with various ways to spread the word about our congregation, including participating in Parker's seasonal "wine walks," Christmas Parade, and "Trunk or Treat." As we welcome a new rector, we are open to creative ideas on how to introduce even more people to our church.



A new commandment I give to you, just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another.

- John 13:24



Mission & Social Justice

Outreach is an area of opportunity for St. Matthew's. We have no shortage of ideas or passion, but it has been difficult to rally a large enough group to do the kind of meaningful work we desire. To make the greatest impact with available resources, we have recently focused on outreach within Parker, Denver, and other Front-Range communities. In 2023, our Episcopal Church Women group organized a rummage sale that attracted interest across Parker and beyond. In addition to introducing our church to potential new members, it was a boon to stewardship, raising \$3,000. During Lent 2024, we have led a drive to gather donations for the Parker Task Force, a local food bank.

In many ways, our youth group exemplifies the kind of outreach we would like to see adopted more widely across the congregation. While we continue to explore the best ways to minister to those in need, we never hesitate to spiritually and financially support youth mission trips.

One of the longest, continuously running ministries at St. Matthew's, **Prayers and Squares**, is a foundational pillar supporting our congregation. Since 1998, members of the group have made and gifted more than 600 quilts to fellow parishioners and their loved ones.



Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- "Prayer for Social Justice," Book of Common Prayer (832)

St. Matthew's Then

A HISTORY

In the late 1970's, several Parker families who attended Christ Church in Castle Rock decided to establish a mission in Parker. On October 1, 1979, the Diocese officially recognized our fledgling fourteen-family group as a mission. From the list we submitted for consideration, Bishop William Frey chose the name "St. Matthew's."

There are two conventional ways to build a church: buy a piece of property and construct a building, or buy an existing building and renovate it into a church. St. Matthew's took a different path. Between 1980 and 1982, the church purchased two adjacent properties: one residential, one commercial.

We then acquired the 70-year-old abandoned Ave Maria chapel that sat on Mainstreet for the low, low cost of free — we just had to arrange (and pay for) moving it to our property. It took parishioners three years of weekend workdays to renovate the chapel and houses, turn the garage structure into a parish hall, and construct a narthex to connect the parish hall to the chapel.

The first service in the chapel was held on St. Matthew's Day in September 1985, and it was consecrated by Bishop Wolfrum. The city of Parker has since designated the chapel as a historical landmark. Because of our unique campus, many people have chosen St. Matthew's as a venue for weddings and funerals.

Over the next decade, we focused on improving the physical facilities. A major renovation project expanded the chapel and parish hall, added a kitchen, demolished one of the two houses purchased with the lot, and built a large education building in its place. The expanded facilities were consecrated by Bishop Jerry Winterrowd on St. Matthew's Day, 1996.



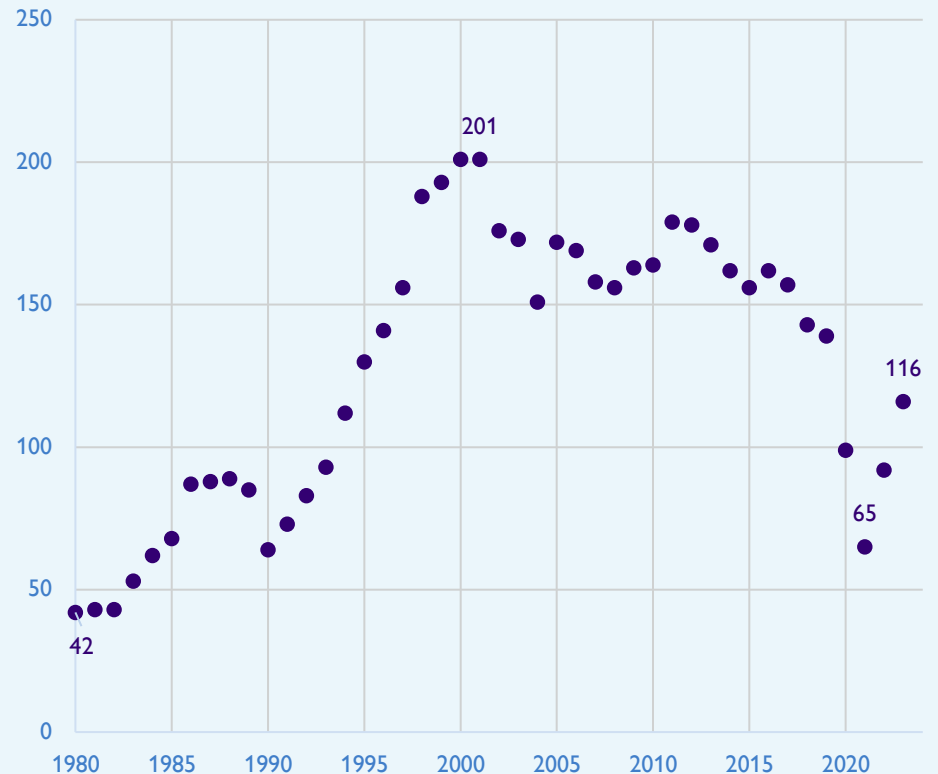
The building projects completed in the mid-1990's required a tremendous amount of energy and financial resources, but they paid off: We were finally granted full Parish status by the Diocese. Our focus shifted to the enhancement of our ministries, especially the development of youth programs.

Despite the energetic beginnings of the parish, we entered a steady period of decline around the year 2000. The rectors who served during a majority of the last twenty-five years led an Education for Ministry series and oversaw some smaller facility improvements including the addition of a columbarium in the chapel, the installation of a donated pipe organ, and a major kitchen renovation.

However, many families began to feel disillusioned by the general stagnation of the church and felt ostracized from the life of the parish. Some members thought that the church had lost its welcoming feel and the dynamic energy needed to attract new members and maintain existing members. Many left to seek that elsewhere. When COVID came around, there was so much dissatisfaction among members of the congregation that our numbers plummeted, which can be seen in the attendance graph.

Fortunately, some of the long-term parishioners remained and refused to let the parish wither, not giving up on the vision of the founding members. Thankfully, our current interim rector has revitalized the enthusiasm, and the numbers are coming back up. A few families who left prior to COVID have even returned to worshipping with us. We are prayerful that the new rector we call can build on this positive trend.

Average weekly attendance, by year



Note: Average attendance for 2020–23 includes virtual participants viewing live and recorded services on YouTube.

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, consider it all joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and whole, lacking in nothing.

- James 1:2-4



Buildings & Grounds

St. Matthew's is nestled in downtown Parker, Colorado, one block away from vibrant, walkable Mainstreet. The church plant comprises three buildings surrounding a peaceful courtyard, the Chapel and Parish Hall, Balcomb House education building, and the main office.



Additions made to the **Ave Maria Chapel** (above) expanded one of our historical buildings dating back to the early 20th century and created a beautiful, light-filled nave. Our parish hall, whose ramped entrance is reminiscent of the garage once occupying the space, hosts fellowship time, adult education, vestry meetings, and a monthly parish-wide breakfast.

The kitchen in the parish hall, while primarily used by our church family, could potentially be marketed to outside groups.

The two-story **Balcomb House** education building (below) currently houses our youth programs and nursery. For many years, the spacious basement was home to the Open Gate thrift store, which served the needs of our local community. The building has a sizable amount of free space that recently has been underutilized, but in the past has been used for prayer groups, AA meetings, and moms' groups.

The office building was originally constructed in 1911 as a private home and now serves as the center of our operations. Just outside is a playground and a community garden with seven raised beds. Both the playground and garden were built by church youth as Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Gold projects.





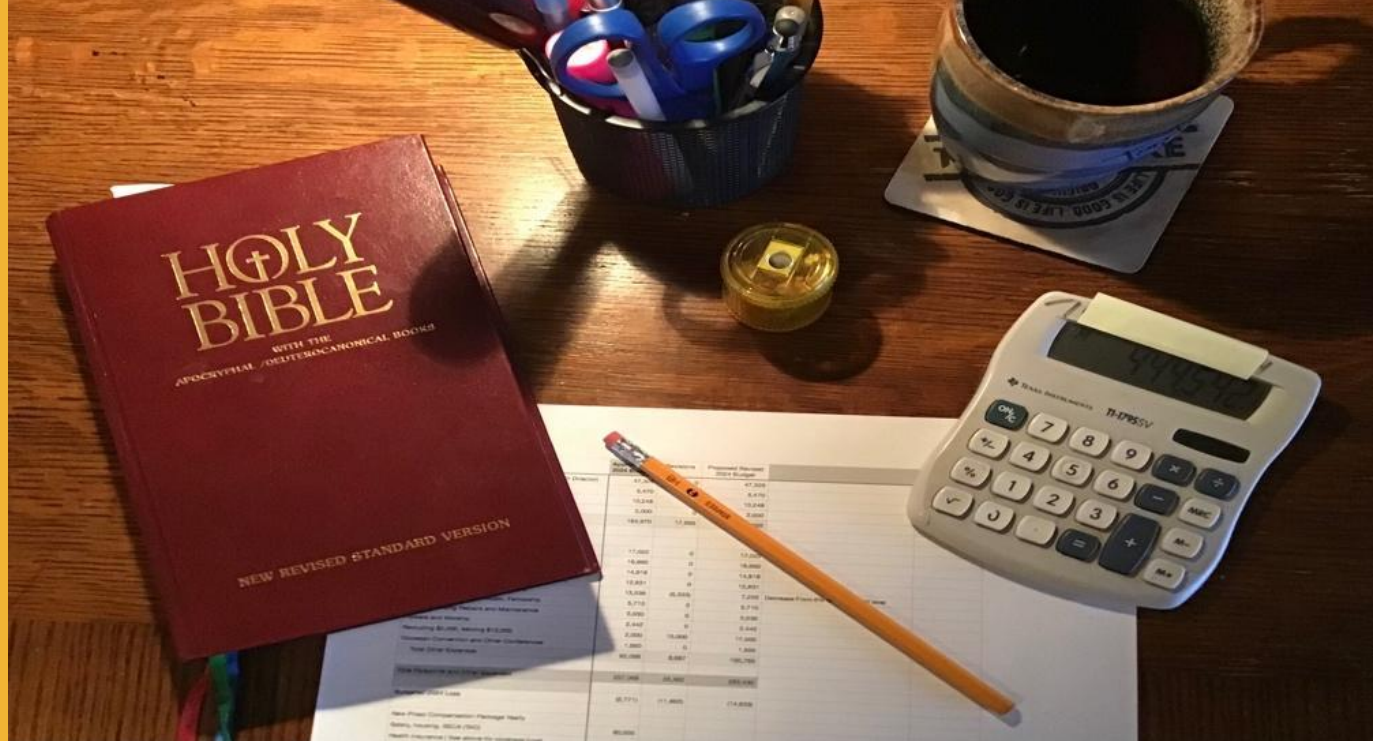
The historic buildings that make up our campus are well maintained in terms of daily care and repair. Junior wardens maintain the grounds and recruit volunteer parishioners to help mow in summer and shovel snow in winter.

We also host seasonal "Clean Up Days" in which members of the congregation of all ages come together to beautify the campus. Despite daily and seasonal care, our buildings have structural issues that will need to be addressed.



Finances

We believe that if we take care of the spiritual needs of our congregation and community, funds will follow.



In overseeing financial responsibilities, the rector will be supported by the vestry, a paid part-time bookkeeper, and an experienced finance committee chaired by the treasurer. We leverage Realm accounting software, which is specifically designed for churches.

For the 2024 calendar year, the Stewardship Campaign **exceeded its \$200,000 pledge goal** thanks to eight new pledges and increases from thirty parishioners. These new and increased pledges helped offset the loss of several large pledges due to deaths and relocations. As a result, we have a balanced financial plan for calling our

new rector and adequate reserves for the year.

Our challenge for the future is to continue to grow revenues to cover increasing operational expenses as we continue to expand our ministry (especially community outreach), maintain our aging buildings, and increase our diocesan tithe to the mandated 10%.

God wants us to be financially free so that we can be more generous and able to serve Him more fully. We strive to do just that by being good stewards of St. Matthew's finances, with a commitment to financial transparency.

Financial Information Dashboard

2023 (Actual)	
Revenue	Expenses
\$255,646	\$256,479
2024 (Budget)	
Revenue	Expenses
\$287,000 <i>Includes \$200,828 in pledges</i>	\$287,000
Net Assets	
\$1,050,000+	

Welcome to Parker

Parker, Colorado, is a vibrant bedroom community located about 20 miles southeast of Denver, within convenient driving distance of the Rocky Mountains.

Population and Vibe

According to the 2022 census, Parker today has a population of 61,222 people and has grown by almost one third in the last ten years. Areavibes gives Parker a livability score of 82. Parker is currently thriving economically, with an impressively low 3.10% unemployment rate and a 2.96% poverty rate.

The town hosts festive events such as Fourth of July fireworks, a honey festival, a Turkey Day 5K Fun Run, a holiday lighting event, and an annual Christmas parade. In addition, Parker is host to a delightful water park and a bustling farmer's market in summer and an outdoor ice rink with a cozy firepit area during the winter. Parker's beautiful climate blesses us with low humidity and plenty of sunshine year-round.



Thanks to its location on the Front Range in Colorado, winters in Parker tend to be milder than in much of the rest of the state, with only occasional snowstorms and blizzards.

Parker is also a transportation hub with easy access to the E-470 highway that will get you to Denver and points north, south, and west. We have convenient bus lines and a light rail station not far away. Many apartment complexes are located within walking distance of the downtown area and St. Matthews Church, and more are actively being built.

Parker hosts a thriving cultural community, with shows and exhibitions at the Schoolhouse Theater and Art Gallery and plays, musicals, and concerts at the Parker Arts, Culture and Events (PACE) Center. The downtown branch of the Douglas County Library also hosts events such as Storytime and Camp DCL.

There are also excellent healthcare options, including AdventHealth Parker, a state-of-the-art hospital, along with numerous private practices and urgent care locations. The town contains about a half dozen care homes ranging from independent living to memory care facilities.

Parker by the Numbers



20,083

Households

\$120,075

Median household income

\$150,370

Average household income



35.6

Median age

28%

Under age 18

9%

Over age 65



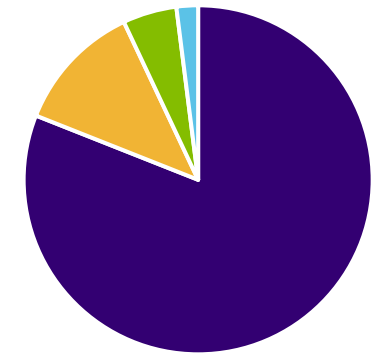
52%

Have a bachelor's degree or higher

96%

Graduated high school

Race and Ethnicity



■ White

■ Hispanic/Latino

■ Asian

■ Black

Source: 2022 U.S. Census

Calling Our Next Rector

The next rector of St. Matthew's will have an exciting opportunity ahead of them. We are not running toward change because we don't like the way things are; rather, we are open to change because we see the potential to become even better. Our ideal leader will be as energized as we are — and capable of giving that energy shape and purpose.

OUR IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Work alongside the congregation to **craft a clear vision** and **lead the church** towards its realization.
- Keep us focused on **why we do what we do** — keeping God and the Bible at the center of our decision making.
- **Communicate effectively** with a diverse group of people, sometimes serving as a bridge across the theological aisle.
- **Inspire** and **connect people to God's word** through their preaching and their actions.
- Proactively **identify** and **resolve potential sources of conflict** that may fracture our community.
- **Apply the Bible to modern contexts** while maintaining political neutrality.
- Continue to **foster a spirit of hospitality and openness** by welcoming everyone, including children, as equal and important members of the congregation.
- Recognize the gifts and talents of the congregation and inspire us to **bring out the best in each other**.
- Maintain a healthy sense of **humility** and **humor**.
- Lead long overdue congregational conversations regarding **inclusivity**.



Gracious God,

You are the source of the love that we live within, which binds us together. We thank you for sustaining us with that love as we have worked together to paint a picture of our community. We pray that the profile we created captures the vibrancy with which your Holy Spirit infuses our church and accurately reflects the energy that draws us all together in your service.

May it catch the attention and ignite the imagination of the Rector you are preparing to lead us as we take the next step of our journey together. We pray this and all things in the name of your Son.

Amen.

Appendix: Members of the Vestry, Search, and Profile Committees

Vestry (2023–24)

Sarah Hamel (Sr. Warden)
Kevin Parker (Jr. Warden)
Kyle Kucharski (Jr. Warden)
Chuck Shoemaker (Treasurer)
Cassidy Chambers (Clerk)
John Hourigan
Lynn Jankura
Martha Jentz
Steve Murphy
Wendi Scheier
Jody Shoemaker

Profile Committee

Diana Norton (Chair)
Leslie Vinson (Co-chair)
Amy Forestieri
Tom McNish
Steve Murphy
Jenny Roth
Whitney Tomlin

Contributor: Steve Smith

Vestry (2024–25)

Martha Jentz (Sr. Warden)
Kevin Parker (Jr. Warden)
Kyle Kucharski (Jr. Warden)
Chuck Shoemaker (Treasurer)
Cassidy Chambers (Clerk)
John Hourigan
Lynn Jankura
Steve Murphy
Wendi Scheier
Jenny Shaffer
Leslie Vinson

Search Committee

Tim Flanagan (Co-chair)
Jenny Shaffer (Co-chair)
Jim Forestieri
Missy Hourigan
Jean Kelminson
Chuck Shoemaker
Jan Worrall