St. Matthias

Episcopal Church

Toccoa, Georgia



2018 Annual Report

Sunday, January 6, 2019

The R. Reverend Robert C. Wright,

Bishop of the Diocese of Atlanta

The Reverend Doris Graf Smith, Interim Rector

The Reverend Gwin Hanahan, Priest Associate

**2018 Interim Rector’s Annual Report**

It has been a busy year at St. Matthias as new and long-term members have shown up to

take on and to inspire the ministries and mission of the parish. New groups have formed around

common interests and through these meaningful activities supportive relationships have

flourished.

I think of The Parish Players, The Piecemakers, The Seniors’ Fellowship, The Breakfast

Teams, the Youth Group, the Spring Inquirer’s Class, The Men’s Wednesday Prayer Group, and

the Advent Wednesday School to name a few. Some of these are one-time groups, some are

long standing groups, and some are groups relatively new to the fabric of the parish. What I

treasure is that each of these groups has a purpose which glorifies God and explores ways to be

more connected to Christ while in fellowship with each other. In an abundance of seen and

unseen ways, the youth and adults in these groups make a difference in our community and our

parish. You have blessed us and you are a blessing.

We have worked diligently to provide meaningful worship services throughout the year,

paying special attention to seasonal changes and the focus these seasons offer to our yearly cycle

of faith formation and worship. We had a glorious Holy Week and Easter season which

reminded us of both death and resurrection in our own lives as well as the life, death and risen

life of our Lord. Pentecost Sunday was a delight even though we had to cancel our outdoor

Eucharist to avoid having church in the mud flats. The Parish Hall provided the perfect setting

for our folk musicians and choir to relax and enjoy the gifts of the Spirit as rousing music and

song put us in a powerful space of worship and praise. The first Sunday of Advent proved an

unexpected blessing when the Rt. Rev. Don Wimberly and his wife came and blessed us with

their presence and confirmed and received the members of the Spring Inquirer’s Class. The day

was truly special and spirit filled.

The parish has been privileged to have the strong leadership of Bill DeFoor as Senior

Warden, and Melanie Struble as Junior Warden. The wardens have more responsibilities during

the interim period which means that Bill and Melanie have had to have a wider vision than had

they served with a rector. I want to make the point that St. Matthias has been faithfully served

and thoughtfully cared for by these two servants of God. Furthermore, our finance team, our

clerk, our various committee chairs and our other vestry members have risen to the task to make

this interim time a smooth running, efficient, and energizing experience all ‘round.

It has been my pleasure to be the Interim Rector. It is my hope that as we begin 2019

together, we will not “rest on the moment,” but move forward and continue to prepare with vigor

for the next rector.

I thank Bob Adams, Jimmy Brown and Jonathan Wright for their amazing service on the

vestry of this parish. With their dedication, talent, time and faith, we are further along in faith

formation, record keeping and stewardship than we would have been without them. We have

been blessed. They have blessed us. You have blessed us. God has blessed us.

dgs+

**2018 Senior Warden’s Annual Report**

The time that a parish spends between rectors is described as an interim, transition, or search period;

and, while we at St. Matthias’ are between and changing and seeking, this parish is definitely not waiting

or standing still. Building on the solid plan prepared by the previous vestry, our ministries have

continued without interruption. With excellent guidance, wise council, and a little prompting from

Interim Rector Doris Graf Smith, your vestry along with a host of individuals and committees has

continued the mission of the Church. St. Matthias’ is thriving during this interim as we are reminded

that we, the parishioners, are the Church.

The Vestry’s responsibilities are divided along the lines of our ministries and the needs of the parish.

Each of these areas - alphabetically: Administration, Buildings &amp; Grounds, Education, Evangelism,

Finance, Hospitality/Parish Life, Outreach, Stewardship, and Worship – has a Vestry Member assigned as

liaison to the committees or groups that carry out the work. Vestry Members Melanie Struble (Junior

Warden), Bob Adams, Jimmy Brown, Betty Daniels, Betty Plagens, Rebecca Howard, Rachel Skilling, and

Jonathan Wright have coordinated the mission and conducted the business of the parish masterfully

with tremendous support from Parish Treasurer and Vestry Clerk Joe Daniels. Special thanks are in order

for three Vestry Members whose terms expire this year. Bob Adams, Jimmy Brown, and Jonathan

Wright have contributed greatly as vestry members and will continue to contribute next year.

There is a long list of accomplishments this year that this report can only briefly describe. The parish

survey was completed, analyzed, and incorporated into the Parish Profile as part of the search process.

A zero-based budget was prepared by the vestry, from which a proposed rector’s compensation package

was developed. The capital campaign was updated and extended allowing us to pay off our second

mortgage and make additional projects feasible. Planning for a youth pilgrimage progressed. The Parish

Register is being updated and consolidated. A new Parish Directory was prepared, complete with

photos (thanks, Stephanie Maley) and an app that puts current information at our fingertips. The Parish

Players offered several dramatic presentations for the community’s enjoyment. The Wednesday night

program evolved into special topics sessions and a well-attended Advent series. Diocesan Council was

highlighted by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s celebrating and preaching. The Matthias’ Piecemakers

made stockings for CASA children and became an ongoing ministry. The recent visit by Assisting Bishop

Don Wimberly and his wife, Wendy, was inspiring and enjoyable. And the vestry has approved a

balanced budget for 2019. There are so many that I’m sure I left someone out.

Finally, I want to thank Doris+ for being much more than a part-time interim rector. She has guided us,

and taught us, and, yes, tested us; but most of all, Doris has become one of us. While we know the plan

is for her to leave St. Matthias’ soon, we also know that her tenure here denotes an important chapter

in the history of this parish.

Peace,

Bill DeFoor

Senior Warden

**2018 Buildings and Grounds Annual Report**

Roger Duncan is the Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds committee. He maintains the church

grounds with dedication and commitment and above and beyond expectation. This year we replaced the

floors in both the women’s and men’s bathrooms in the parish hall, replaced the floor in the kitchen, repainted the eves of the chapel, Sunday school building, and church. We were also able to purchase a new vacuum cleaner, replace the faucet and toilet in the office, and install new shelving in the closet off the parish hall for the Parish Players. The shelving was donated by Nanette Donahue at Cope Closet Inc. Roger continually makes minor repairs and improvements throughout the year and he makes the most of every dollar spent. Roger’s commitment to this ministry has saved us countless dollars which allows us to use it in other areas.

Submitted by: Melanie Struble

Junior Warden

**2018 Evangelism Committee Annual Report**

The Evangelism Ministry Group's mission this year was to share the Good News of Jesus with the Parish and community. The group is made up of three committees:

1) DOK, Daughters of the King, dedicated to prayer, service and evangelism.

Members: Patty Mills, President, Vicki de Martinez, Treasurer, Wanda Miller, Secretary, Mildred Dillon, Fay Hardman, Dee DeFoor, Kay O'Shields, Sharon Shailer, Fairlight Wright, Rebecca Howard, Carol Ross, Gwin Hanahan and Betty Plagens.

Meetings are held at 10 AM on the second Saturday of the month. As a service project DOK we will send birthday cards to all parishioners starting in January 2019. We also prepared casseroles for shut ins and those in need and we sent cards to several people on our prayer list. In May we sponsored a labyrinth walk on World Labyrinth Day.

2) Piecemakers, dedicated to spreading God's love throughout the community.

Members: Bonnie Brennan, Claudia Boyd, Debbie Picone, Eileen Brennan, Fairlight Wright, Fay Hardman, Holly Cooper, Lindy Harrell, Lynn Craig, Maribel Montgomery-Anderson, Rebecca Howard, Sharon Shailer, Wanda Miller and many part time participants who work from home and/or provide goods, services and support for projects.

Meetings are held each Thursday at 10 AM. Our group made several crafts to support the Youth fund raising auction for their pilgrimage, items included hooked mug rugs - each with a coffee cup. One of our members, Claudia, makes special welcome cards for visitors to encourage them to return. Our major project is sewing and filling 135+ Christmas stockings/totes for foster children being served by CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates, in an 8 county area from Rabun to Oglethorpe Counties. The parish provided gifts and our group coordinated filling and delivering the stockings. We also sponsored 18 children as part of the Prison Fellowship Angel Tree where we coordinated providing a gift on behalf of the incarcerated parent. Parishioners provided the gifts, the Youth Group wrapped them and we coordinated their pick up or delivery. In addition, we added one of our filled Christmas stockings. We have also sewn and given baby blankets and hats to newborns.

3) Parish Players is a theatre troupe that focuses on making beautiful art; the troupe uses its time and talents to create an experience between actor and audience that tells a meaningful story, thus worshiping God our Creator and Jesus the Storyteller.

Core Members: Maribel & Steven Montgomery-Anderson, Fairlight, Cora, Florence, Matthew & Jonathan Wright, Jackie Wertan, Kathy Browne, Rebecca & Seth Howard.

Meetings are held as required. Last summer, the troupe produced Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream with half of the cast coming from outside the parish. We had many first-time actors and technicians, but our story was complete and beautiful. This debut show left cast and crew members feeling refreshed and enthusiastic. In the fall, Dickens’ A Christmas Carol included six additional community members and one additional parish member. Directed by one of the young members of our troupe, this production taught us about communication and collaboration. This second show gave the audience and troupe members a sense of hope. This summer the troupe is doing a small production of Shere Khan: Prequel to the Jungle Book, a play written by one of the troupe. As both an outreach and an in-reach ministry, the mission is to use theatre to worship God through creating and storytelling and to spread God’s love by welcoming all who want to belong.

Submitted by: Betty Plagens

Evangelism Committee

**2018 Finance Committee Annual Report**

2018 was a routine year for the Finance Committee, which is exactly how we like it! No major issues or challenges to deal with, just steady improvement of policies and procedures, and normal recommendations to the Vestry. The annual review of the previous year’s finances is complete, and the few minor items noted have already been addressed. A major accomplishment this year was the completion of an inventory of furnishings and fixtures, which is required for our annual financial review and is important for confirming sufficient insurance coverage.

Many thanks to the Committee Members - Vice-Chair Betty Plagens, Treasurer Joe Daniels, Louis Bourne, Nanette Donahue, Bill Routt, and Connie Wells – for their dedication and commitment to this parish.

Submitted by: Bill DeFoor

Finance Committee Chair

**2018 Stewardship Committee Annual Report**

The Stewardship Committee is grateful to the St. Matthias family for supporting the Church and its mission in such a committed way. The congregation was invited to reflect on the verse from Luke that reminds us, “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The campaign kicked off with an opportunity for each of us to share thoughts about our treasure and what is important in our lives. Bob Adams, Wanda Miller and Lindy Harrell each spoke about their treasures and why giving is so important to them. A barbecue luncheon with a packed house marked the end of the campaign and there was much to celebrate!

The coming year is so important to the life of the Church as we welcome a new priest. In anticipation of new leadership, we have $217,750 in pledges (95% of 2018 with $1, 980 designated as Building Fund; 56 pledge units (matches 2017); and 14 pledges increased, 8 decreased, 7 new and 27 same as 2017. These are very positive results and it is never too late to pledge!

Committee Members: Bob Adams, Cynthia Brown, Lindy Harrell and Betty Plagens.

Vestry Liaison: Jimmy Brown

**2018 Faith Formation/Education Committee Annual Report**

Faith formation happens within the community of St. Matthias' seemingly by accident. My personal experience bears testimony. It's easy to describe; when the folks of St. Matthias' come together; God feels closer. Many have expressed feelings of belonging, acceptance, love...

We almost don't have to do anything more to communicate the good news of Jesus, but we do. We do worship. We do learning. We carry the Good News into the world.

Some of our more intentional efforts at faith formation happen on Sunday morning with our Sunday school classes. Adults, youth, and children learn to recognize God's presence in their lives through learning about the bible, and the traditions of God's church. Participating in Sunday school helps us learn how to follow Jesus.

On Wednesday nights we fellowship and learn through seasonal programs that provide opportunities for depth into topics and scriptures of which Sunday morning lectionary readings alone would barely scratch the surface. Our Wednesday nights are constantly changing or evolving? Why the question mark? If I'm being honest, sometimes it seems like we haven't, yet, figured out how to do it right, but I've never wished I had stayed home.

A new small group is forming with the new year. A sensible description would be an adult Sunday school class that meets at 8:00 instead of 9:30. It's a little more than that, because it represents an effort to create opportunity for more people, to draw the circle wider. My hope is that what we learn from this will help us meet people where they are, and when they are available. This group is open to all adults and the first lessons: "The Way of Love - Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life."

Submitted by: Jonathan Wright

Education Committee

**2018 Outreach Committee Annual Report**

Mission Statement: Passionately striving to be the hands of God by reaching out to our neighbors in need: locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Chair: Stephanie West (slwest.realtor@yahoo.com)

Members: Wayne & Geri Barrios, Betty Daniels, Dee DeFoor, Wayne & Wanda Miller, Melissa Mitchell, Betty Plagens, Dave Standard, Melanie Struble, Jonathan and Fairlight Wright

In 2018 the Outreach Committee voted to assist CASA, Boys & Girls Club, Camp Mikell, and Neighbors-4-Neighbors on an annual basis and have voted to do the same this coming year. Our "hands on" project this year was (and is) Piecemakers, the prison ministry, and the SOAP Campaign.

Monetarily we have shown our love and kindness as indicated below:

Quarterly donation to CASA 800

Circle of Hope                                    500

Food 2 Kids                                      1000

NGTC Foundation                  250

Power House for Kids  300

TSC Chamber of Commerce 200

Victory Home 200

Toms Creek Baptist Church 200 (Back to School Bash)

Camp Mikell Scholarship Fund 500

Camp Mikell Scholarships 754 (St. Matthias)

Camp Mikell Capital Campaign 300

Lindy Harrell 500 (Hurricane Michael Bainbridge, GA Relief

Doris Graf Smith 12 (Episcopal Marketplace Hope Boxes – $12.24)

Diocese of Atlanta 150 (SOAP-Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution)

ERD Relief Efforts S GA 250

ERD Gifts for Life 250

Hands-on Projects and opportunities to volunteer!

* “**Angel Tree**”. Our Angels in 2018 was for children of parents who are incarcerated, a Program of Prison Fellowship. We hope to see some of these families as a result of their meeting us December 8th when they pick up their gifts.
* **Neighbors 4 Neighbors**. We encourage parish members to volunteer any weekday. You may volunteer on a regular basis or occasionally. It does not have to be a long term commitment. They need help Mondays at 2:00pm to assist with the food delivery truck. Anyone wanting to volunteer needs to contact Jana Cheek at 84teacher@gmail.com.
* **Food 2 Kids Program**. The program currently serves 152 children, which was down from last year at 178 children. They need food delivery people every Friday morning at 9:00am.
* **SOAP (Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution) Campaign**. Gwen Hanahan is on the diocesan committee to distribute soaps with hotline information during the Super Bowl, which is a major event for sex trafficking. Parishioners may sign up, come and be trained, wrap soap with the national hotline number and deliver soap and educational material to the hotels around the Mercedes Benz Stadium in the afternoon of Saturday, January 26, 2019 from 9:30am – 3:30pm.
	+ The national hotline number is easy to memorize for those at risk, 888 37 37 888 (1-888-373-7888). They are staffed and trained to make an assessment of how to help whether they call the police or refer the victim to a safe place. One little bar of soap can save a life.
	+ **Sign up NOW at**<https://tinyurl.com/supersoap2018> and make the commitment to represent your parish and join everyone on Saturday, January 26, 2019 from 9:30am – 3:30pm. Continental breakfast and lunch will be served. It will be fun meeting people from different parishes as we join together to be educated on DMST followed by a tangible outreach that can make a difference in the lives of minor victims.

Our total outreach budget is $7500 of which $7066.24 has been spent as of mid-December. The committee voted to distribute the remainder $433.76 to the Rector’s Discretionary Fund

Many thanks to Outreach Chair Stephanie West and the committee for the work completed this year.

Submitted by: Betty Daniels

Outreach Committee

**2018 Administration Annual Report**

Bob Adams served as the Vestry Liaison for Administration. He assisted the Parish Administrator and the Interim Rector in a multitude of tasks in the church office. Bob is in the process of completing a total update of the Parish Registers (4). The Registers are where records are kept of the arrival and departures of members to and from the parish and each member’s classification as Active or Inactive. This project is nearing completion.

After several meetings with different vendors, comparing plans, and keeping the Vestry informed, a new copier contract was negotiated in August. The new lease and maintenance plan represent a savings to the parish of approximately $150/month in printing and duplicating costs.

A fireproof safe was acquired and placed in the office area. This safe is intended to provide secure storage for important parish records and documents.

After researching actual expenditures in 2018, a 2019 budget for Administration was developed with categories and projections that more realistically represent the department’s activities.

A proposal for renovation of the office space, to include provisions for handicap accessibility, was developed. A rough budget was drawn. Plans continue to explore the availability of Federal and/or state funds for accessibility retrofitting.

Submitted by: Bob Adams

Administration Liaison to Vestry

**2018 Worship Committee Annual Report**No report.

**2018 Treasurer’s Annual Report will be forthcoming**