



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Feb 23, 2026)

St. Matthew's, North Carolina

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/23/26.

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) 198	Number of Weekend Worship Services 2	Number of Weekday Worship Services 9	Number of Other per Month Worship Services 4
Current Annual Compensation \$80529	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities \$3850
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
Healthcare Options Full family	Dental Yes	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
Vacation Weeks One month, including 5 Sundays (standard)	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks 2 (standard)	Continuing Education Weeks Details 500
Continuing Education Funding in budget up to/including \$500/year	Sabbatical Provision No	Travel/Auto Account Yes	Other Professional Account Yes

a beautiful rectory walking distance to the church; 450k renovation just completed; 3 bed/2.5 bath

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

Leading up to our bicentennial in 2024, St. Matthew's has been in a process of reckoning with our history of enslavement and racial injustice. The pinnacle of this effort has been what we call "Heaven Practice"—meaning practicing worship and fellowship with historically Black congregations in Orange County in a reflection of Heaven's lack of division based on racial background, socioeconomic opportunity, and church denomination. Our former rector gathered with pastors and ministers from neighboring churches to build relationships through monthly fellowship and Bible study. These meetings resulted in joyful joint ecumenical congregational worship services hosted at St. Matthew's, Hillsborough Presbyterian, Piney Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Bethsada Baptist Church, and others. These connections and opportunities for fellowship across social boundaries have strengthened our congregation and affirmed our commitment to building the Beloved Community of God. Many of our parishioners consider these Heaven Practice services to be the pinnacle of St. Matthew's fulfillment of our mission. The relationships we have built through them are essential for our community's growing in Christ.

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

The parish recognizes that the future presents both challenges and opportunities for us and our new rector. We face an aging congregation, which leads to a broad spectrum of pastoral care needs. To help with this, we have many capable and engaged lay leaders who support pastoral care needs, including Lay Eucharistic Visitors and Lay Chaplains. We also face the challenges of growth. Our Newcomers' Committee works to welcome and engage newcomers. We also value diversity and strive to welcome all to our church. Therefore we offer a wide range of services and ministries. The LGBTQIA+ Ministry is a small yet vibrant part of the parish. Young families are supported by our religious education program and family-centered activities. We offer something for everyone: Village Church, a multigenerational worship service; a simple Wed. noon service; monthly Eucharists at local retirement communities; and a variety of activities via Zoom for those who cannot come to church in person. Finally, we strengthen our parish by reaching out beyond our grounds to other churches through combined worship services and fellowship. Our active congregation wishes to continue all these activities going forward.

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

compassionate, sense of humor, empathetic; approachable

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

Reverence and love for the Eucharist are at the heart of our worship. From there flow worship opportunities in all styles that bring the diversity of our parish into communion with the divine. There are three weekly Eucharists: Sunday Rite I (no music) and Rite II (choir and organ) and a simpler Rite II service on Wednesdays. On Sunday, Family Chapel rejoins the congregation for communion. Monthly multigenerational Village Church services connect to the church calendar. Multiple times per week we gather for lay-led worship on Zoom: Compline, Morning Prayer, and Morning Silence. There are labyrinth walks, Evensongs, Christmas services and Easter vigils, family services, festal Eucharists with incense and special music, and a gamut of Holy Week services. The youth lead a service each spring. There is also "Heaven Practice," where we join historically White and Black churches in joyful worship of our God. Parishioners spoke of their love for each of these services, for the liturgy, for scripture and good sermons, for the BCP, for the quality of music, and for the ways in which our worship practices are inviting to all members of the congregation, especially the children.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

Our practice of incorporating others in ministry centers around our parishioners and lay leaders, who engage in a wide variety of ministries on and off of our campus, and service to our wider community. Ministries often evolve organically, may be inspired by parishioners, and may be led by laity with clergy oversight. We engage one another in monthly labyrinth walks, various in-person and online Bible studies, adult forums, and contemplative prayer services. We have active, committed Lay Eucharistic Visitor and Lay Eucharistic Minister teams. We offer Education for Ministry for those interested in deeper, more academic learning. Our Serve One Another ministry coordinates tangible care between parishioners with needs, like meals or rides, with those able to provide. St. Matthew's engages the local community through monthly contributions of beef stew to the OCIM food pantry, our annual craft and goods sale during FeST that funds our social ministries, and through the Heaven Practice pulpit exchange. Through pilgrimages, St. Matthew's has worshiped in and cultivated deep relationships with other churches outside of Hillsborough connected to its history of enslavement.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

Pastoral care is very important to our parishioners. Direct involvement by clergy in pastoral care is decreasing, which is a concern expressed by many. However, care (meals, visits, etc) is often provided by the community to parishioners during difficult times. We have a number of formal lay networks for providing pastoral care ("Serve One Another," Shawl Ministry, Lay Eucharistic Visitors, Daughters of the King, Pastoral Care committee, Newcomers' programs, Hospitality Committee, book discussions, weekly Bible study). Online lay-led worship services have developed into mutual support networks. Other pastoral care initiatives are led by the clergy: inclusion of names (with consent) in prayers of the people/bulletin/weekly email newsletter, monthly labyrinth meditations, visits/contact by clergy, and monthly Eucharist at local retirement centers. Our style of worship helps ensure everyone's spiritual well-being: neither exclusively "high" nor "low" church, we hold various services both with and without music, and informal services with more "lively" liturgy/music, especially for families with young children/youth. We also incorporate silent prayer into services in difficult times.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

Our ministry to the larger Hillsborough community is grounded in Christ's gospel mission of active participation and witness through multiple community organizations, partner church congregations, and diocesan initiatives. This ministry is led in example, training, and mentorship by clergy in tandem with a committed layperson community that supports individuals, small groups, and organizations outside of SMEC. Training conceived and led by clergy in support of the care network provides an effective web of community pastoral care tools that cater to the individuals and needs within our partner organizations. These include but are not limited to our Heaven Practice community, FeST, Faith and the Arts, Orange Congregations in Mission, the Orange Alamance Prison Ministry, Orange County Justice United, assisted living providers, the Stagville Descendants Council, Hillsborough Community Garden, Orange County Cold Weather Shelter, Habitat for Humanity and the Diocesan Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee.

Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

St. Matthew's has many active ministries that integrate us with the wider Church community and/or the Orange County region. The Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee helps organize Heaven Practice services with our sister congregations in Orange Cnty and is involved with the Alamance Orange Prison Ministry, which helps fund a fulltime chaplain at Orange County Correctional Center in Hillsborough. These activities are integrated with diocesan racial and social justice initiatives. St. Matthew's also participates in Diocesan and General Convention. We have an active Justice United contingent. This nonpartisan group works with other places of worship in the Triangle to organize assistance for those in need and demand accountability from political representatives. JU has worked toward addressing problems of mental health care access and affordable housing in Hillsborough. St. Matthew's also organizes pilgrimages to important sites to help us reckon with our history: most recently, to Charleston, SC. These pilgrimages allow participants to grow spiritually and to make connections with the wider worshipping community. We hope to continue deepening these organizational relationships.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

St. Matthew's has been impacted by many new initiatives. We highlight two here. New programming for young families was implemented (contact: Stephany Lazo) to better incorporate children into worship. Family Chapel helps families with young children worship together using the Godly Play curriculum. Village Church is a multi-generational service that highlights different Saint Day celebrations. Worshippers of all ages appreciate the special, less formal liturgy. A small group pilgrimage to Montgomery and Selma, Alabama, in 2022 flowered into a Pilgrimage Ministry (contact: Elizabeth Hays). The Pilgrimage Ministry provides curricular explorations of racial history and ties directly into St. Matthew's history with the enslaved. Pilgrimages have been made by parishioners to Montgomery/Selma, AL, Charleston, SC, Edenton, NC, and Stagville (Durham, NC). The Pilgrimage Ministry has also hosted Lee Bennett, historian and archivist for Mother Emanuel Church AME Charleston. While many benefits are intangible, participation by pilgrims in St. Matthew's social justice offerings has increased and is energizing a budding relationship with the Stagville Descendants Council.

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

In the past, the parish was financed primarily through endowments. We have since moved from dependence on endowments to pledging, which has broadened “ownership” from a few parishioners to the community as a whole. The Stewardship Committee organizes an annual pledge campaign (out of 240 households totaling 391 individuals, we had 180 pledges in pledge year 2025 and have 163 so far in pledge year 2026). Plate collections go toward operating expenses. We take advantage of financial audits/monitoring to protect against misuse of finances. We are proud of our financial transparency. Our financials are shared with the parish annually, and any member may request to see them at any time. Stewardship of our church buildings and grounds is of great importance. Funds go toward research and care of the historic churchyard and buildings, including a paid sexton and repairs/renovations. Capital campaigns have funded larger targeted renovation projects, like updates to the rectory. Donations of time, talent, and goods within the parish are also plentiful and necessary. Certain percentages of the budget, as well as annual FeST funds, are distributed to programs in the wider community.

What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

In general, our approach to conflict is one of curiosity and respectful conversation. Clergy and lay leaders nurture a culture of care, compromise, and openness; thus, smaller grievances do not grow. Larger conflicts that have been worked through are around social issues. We removed a name from a building after a long discernment process during which all parishioners could share thoughts and be heard. Some of these conversations challenged parishioners to present the position of the other side, an exercise in empathy that many found helpful. Most of the congregation feels that their voice was heard during that process. This slower, educational approach is an example of a positive way we resolved a big conflict. In contrast, we had a conflict around whether or not to join the NAACP during a time with an interim rector. Parishioners strongly felt either for or against. The Vestry voted not to join and the issue escalated to the Bishop. This type of decision making did not take full advantage of an open, educational process. Open discussions are tools we value when resolving interpersonal and parish-wide conflicts. Our next rector should be comfortable with and skilled at both.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

We have already addressed larger changes in the church in our answer to Question 11, but there have also been small changes that illustrate that long open discussions are not a one-size-fits-all approach. One example of this was removing some masculine-gendered language from our liturgy according to the BCP supplement *Enriching Our Worship 1* (1997). These changes were led by the clergy, but the parish was invited to discuss them during one Adult Forum. Some parishioners expressed resistance to the changes, while others voiced support. The updated language was subsequently fine-tuned and has become more or less standard during our Rite II services. Another smaller change was the recent decision to only have paid staff in the nursery with no volunteers from the parish. Many parents of young children view this as a plus, as they are no longer expected to volunteer in order to use the nursery. However, some devoted nursery volunteers lament the loss of opportunity to engage with the children and young families in the parish. When vestry made decisions need to be made, it is still important to contact those who may be affected to hear their concerns.



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended

Church School Yes	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School 5	Number of Students for Children School 30
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Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School 3	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School 11	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School 2	Number of Students for Adults School 35
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Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School
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Worshipping Community Web site:

Media Links:

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

Samuel Rodman

Diocesan Transition Minister

Marion Sprott

marion.sprott@episdionc.org; 919-600-5319

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader