

# OUTREACH MINISTRIES

'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' - Matthew 25:40



FOR CHILDREN WHO WISH FOR JUST ONE GIFT



## Outreach at St. Matthew

Fr. Mike Smith, former pastor of our parish from 1988-1997, made a commitment of tithing 10% of Offertory income to charity each month. This decision to support our fellow community members in Bulloch County and surrounding areas has changed many lives in the decades since. Our church works within the larger Christian population in Statesboro to provide ecumenical ministries who, by combining prayer and financial and volunteer resources, are able to more effectively address the issues of poverty, life, and spiritual well-being as neighbors. This newsletter provides an overview of our Outreach Ministries, including both financial and volunteer resources needed to make those ministries effective. In some cases, the ministries are transitioning to new volunteer leadership or are brand new! Please pray for our efforts to serve "the least of these" as Christ asked us to do and ask God to give you direction on how you can make a difference in this area.

### Mission Parishes

The Diocese of Savannah is divided into seven geographical deaneries. The Statesboro Deanery includes our neighboring parishes in Claxton, Metter, Swainsboro, Sylvania, Vidalia, and their mission locations in Reidsville, Glennville, Pembroke, and Sandhill. As the largest parish in our deanery, we gave \$13,500 last fiscal year to subsidize the small parishes in Claxton, Metter, and Swainsboro to help them serve the Catholics in their communities.



## Our Tithe:

A Breakdown of our Outreach Spending for Fiscal Year 2021.

Housing/Utilities: \$22,965.00

Mission Parishes: \$13,500.00

Homebound/Community Outreach: \$3,840.83

Pro-Life Ministries: \$2,800.00

Food Assistance: \$2,604.22

Repairs, medical, insurance for parishioners in need: \$2,580.71

**Total: \$48,290.76**

# Area Christians

## Together in Service (ACTS)

ACTS was founded over 20 years ago when a group of local churches recognized the need for a better way to dispense their outreach funds to the community. At that time, those in need would visit one, oftentimes more, local churches asking for financial assistance. This process tied up church office staff in assessing and verifying the needs of applicants and in dispensing the money to the proper creditors. It was also determined that a few people were receiving most of the available funds as they would go from church to church taking advantage of the fact that each church wouldn't know what another church had already provided. By consolidating each church's outreach funds in a centralized location, administration/distribution of those funds could be managed in a more "fair" manner.

### Donations and Volunteers:

ACTS receives monthly donations from area churches and a small grant from the United Way. Individuals and

organizations also donate but that money varies in amount and frequency of donation. Occasionally, ACTS receives large donations from an individual or organization. Everyone who works at ACTS is a volunteer. Overhead expenses are rent, internet/phone, and office supplies. ACTS operates on less than 10% overhead with more than 90% of donations going directly to client assistance. St. Matthew Parish is more than represented within this Outreach ministry both in financial donations as well as volunteer support. **St. Matthew Parish's monthly donation of \$1,200.00** is the 2nd highest of all contributing churches, only exceeded slightly by First United Methodist Church, which has a bigger congregation.

Each donating church is allowed a position on the Board of Directors but many do not take advantage of that opportunity. Before COVID, the ACTS office in the Outreach Center was open on Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9am to 11am. When the office had to close due to COVID, five of the volunteers agreed to work from home so that the program could continue to support those in need. Two of those volunteers were St. Matthew's parishioners and they spent many hours every day to provide much needed assistance. The office was re-opened in the Outreach Center in August. Unfortunately, a number of volunteers decided not to return to ACTS so currently there aren't enough staff to man the office two days a week. It takes 5-6 volunteers per day to run ACTS and there are currently only 9 volunteers total. More than half (5) of the volunteers are from St. Matthew.

**Assistance Provided:** ACTS helps Bulloch County residents with rent, utilities, medication, furniture, food, gas, and a few other necessities. ACTS does NOT pay: deposits, fees, hotels, and Non-essentials (cable, cell phone, internet, etc).

### Why ACTS is Important to our Community:

With Bulloch County's poverty rate of 21.9% (2019 US Census), it is double the national average of 10.5% (2019 US Census). There is an overwhelming need for financial assistance to help our community. ACTS is a wonderful program helping our area churches provide outreach ministry without worrying about duplicating assistance for the same people and without tying up church staff fielding requests for assistance. ACTS maintains a database of more than 32,000 client interactions which provides a wealth of information regarding the needs of the community. ACTS works closely with other agencies in the area in order to refer clients that need additional help.

**Getting Involved:** ACTS needs more volunteers in order to be more available to those in need. Financial Donations can be made directly to ACTS as well. **For more information on volunteering, contact ACTS President and parishioner Beth Kadlec: eekadlec@gmail.com.**

## Homeless Support



In addition to ACTS, St. Matthew Parish addresses the issue of homelessness by sponsoring the Open Hearts Community Mission as a **\$2,500 Gold Sponsor** for the Annual Chocolate Run Fundraiser. We also contribute **\$100 per month** to Habitat for Humanity. The mission relies on volunteers to help provide meals. Toiletries such as shampoo, soap, deodorant, and toothbrushes are also requested. For more information on Open Hearts, contact Delia Mobley at (912) 623-2528. Clothing donations are made to Safe Haven Domestic Abuse Shelter, which provides emergency housing for those escaping violence in the home.



## Blood Drives

**Blood Drive Host:** Our parish hosts 6 blood drives per year. Our cost includes keeping the AC units set at a chilly 68 degrees all day in the social hall. Our goal for each drive is 30 units. Donors of all blood types are always needed. Volunteers are asked to assist with registration on the day of the drive and at the canteen, helping donors safely transition from donation to snack table. If you are interested in helping out, **contact Deacon John O'Malley for more information: deaconjohn@saintmatthewsparish.com.**

## Backpack Buddies

Backpack Buddies provides nutritional support for school age children and their families who are enrolled in the free lunch program at local schools because they fall below the poverty line. St. Matthew Parish provides a bag of food for 28 Mill Creek Elementary schoolchildren and their families each week during the school year. This bag of food gives families protein, fruit, snacks, and milk to help supplement their weekend meals. By utilizing the Second Harvest Food Bank to purchase items at low-cost, our team maximizes the number of children fed. One parishioner drives to Savannah to pick up the food. **The parish spends \$1,500 per year on food. Currently, there are two volunteers who rotate each week to assist with packing the food.**

Volunteers pack the bags on Thursday, a process which takes about an hour and involves moving food from storage to the counter for the assembly process, as well as loading and delivering the bags to the school counselor that afternoon. They are taken home by the children on Friday. For more information, or to get involved, please contact Pattie Beblowski at: [pattieb@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:pattieb@georgiasouthern.edu).



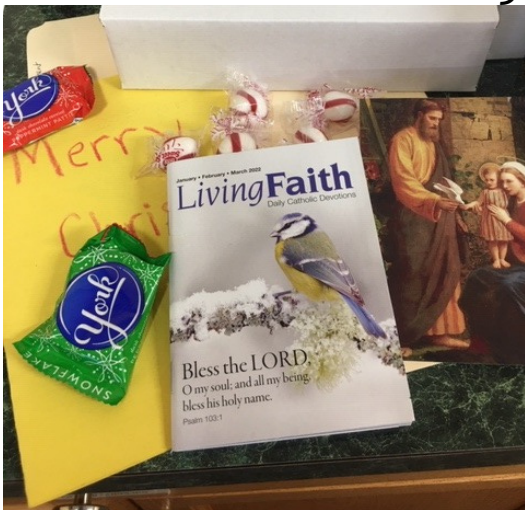
## Consolation Ministry

**Purpose:** To console those in grief, to support Masses for the deceased through the ministry's designated contributions, to pray for and with those who have suffered loss, and to pray the Rosary for comfort and healing.

**Mandate:** "Bear each other's burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2)

The Ministry meets monthly. The Consolation Ministry: sends notes of condolence to parishioners on the death of a family member and to the immediate family of a parishioner who has died, sponsors a prayer session in the Church's chapel on the third Saturday of each month for those who are grieving or experience loss or sadness, and every October, the Ministry sponsors a Rosary for America and a Mass of Remembrance in November on All Souls Day. Members of the Ministry contribute monthly to a fund to offer Masses for parishioners who have died. In addition, the Ministry provides educational materials on grief, domestic abuse prevention, and suicide prevention. Members also help maintain the Marian Grotto, which includes a prayer ribbon wreath for intentions. Currently, Joyce Bergin serves as chair of the Ministry. **For more information, contact Joyce Bergin: [bergjoy@yahoo.com](mailto:bergjoy@yahoo.com).**

## Card Ministry



The St. Matthew Parish Card Ministry is an outreach to our homebound parishioners. The parish office provides an updated list of addresses and asks parishioners to send a card to those who are unable to join us each week due to illness or mobility issues. For special seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, a care package of devotional books, candy, and art from the Religious Education students is sent. **For volunteer information, contact Melinda Cannady at [mcannady@saintmatthewsparish.com](mailto:mcannady@saintmatthewsparish.com).** Ask to be added to our weekly and monthly e-bulletin list! **Ministry cost includes care package items and postage: \$750 annually.**



## Giving Tree

Each Christmas, the parish sponsors 125 children and teens to provide Christmas gifts for those whose parents cannot afford them. Area schools gather the information needed for the tags, including age, gender, clothing sizes, and a toy recommendation. Parishioners take a tag from the tree and return the wrapped gifts for distribution. Volunteers are

needed to prepare the tags for the tree, sort gifts as they are returned, and place reminder phone calls for gifts that haven't been returned by the deadline. Help is also needed to deliver gifts to the schools. **Approximately \$200 is spent annually to purchase gifts for those tags that don't arrive by the deadline. Contact Melinda at [mcannady@saintmatthewsparish.com](mailto:mcannady@saintmatthewsparish.com) to volunteer.**

## Feeding the Hungry

The Parish Council of Catholic Women conducts a monthly food drive for the Statesboro Food Bank. A different category of non-perishable items such as dry milk, canned vegetables, canned fruit, peanut butter, and dry pasta, etc. are requested and donations dropped off at the parish office or in the Narthex. We also give \$200 per month to the Statesboro Food Bank to assist with overhead costs.

## Soup Kitchen



**Purpose:** Provide a Saturday lunch to the needy in our community at First Methodist Church.

**Structure:** Volunteers assist with preparation and serving of a lunch on a Saturday from 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. At this time, First Methodist is doing drive through pickup of the meals.

**Needs:** Chairperson and volunteers. The Chairperson would be the St. Matthew contact person for First Methodist Soup Kitchen Coordinator and St. Matthew volunteers, and would be responsible for putting out and picking up the sign-up sheet in the Narthex, scheduling Soup Kitchen dates, which can be done around their schedule, and contacting Melinda about putting the announcement in the bulletin and having it announced at all Masses. We typically staff six Soup Kitchens a year. Volunteers would sign up to assist with preparation and serve lunch for a specific Saturday by signing up on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

**Cost: \$250-300 per Soup Kitchen.**  
**Contact: Melinda Cannady at [mcannady@saintmatthewsparish.com](mailto:mcannady@saintmatthewsparish.com) for more information.**

Statesboro now has TWO Crisis Prenancy Centers: **Foundations Resource Center, founded in 2021 and Choices of the Heart.** In 2017, the Knights of Columbus, PCCW, and the parish purchased an ultrasound machine for Choices of the Heart. Each month, a donation of \$150 each is given to both centers. We also participate in the Baby Bottle Boomerang fundraiser every year, which usually collects over \$1,000 for pro-life efforts in our community. This year, the Catholic Eagles organized a group to attend the Pro-Life March in Macon, GA and toured the Kolbe Center, a pro-life facility supported by the Diocese.

## Sewing Project

The Sewing Project began as an effort to provide simple cotton dresses and gowns for children in the Village of Hope orphanage in Haiti. For several years, the group sewed both at home and on designated "sewing days" in the social hall. They created hundreds of dresses, layettes, and shirt/shorts combinations for boys. These items were delivered by Dr. Randy Smith's and his Medical Mission to Haiti team. Due to recent political unrest making conditions too dangerous for volunteers, the trips were halted. Our sewing group continued to mail items to the Village of Hope Orphanage until the logistics of delivering the items became impossible *within* Haiti.

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, parishioner Diana Ray asked the group to use patterns approved by the hospital to create cloth masks to which medical staff could add medical grade filters during a shortage of necessary surgical masks. The group sewed hundreds of masks used by our local hospital and nurses in nearby towns and even as far away as Pennsylvania!

The team is now exploring the idea of providing basic alterations for children with special needs whose parents have trouble finding off-the-rack clothing that fits well and can't afford to pay for alterations themselves. **For more information, contact Lue Healy at [healysj1@gmail.com](mailto:healysj1@gmail.com).**



## Pro-Life



## Infant Loss

Although somber, holding onto a teddy bear brings some of our patients comfort, strength, and courage, despite a devastating loss. No teddy bear can replace a child. However, a teddy bear can introduce some meaning and comfort into a situation that is otherwise filled with emptiness, pain, and sorrow. We greatly appreciate St. Matthew Parish for their support in believing that no mom should ever leave East Georgia Regional Medical Center with empty arms. Every mom who experiences a perinatal loss will be offered a teddy bear with a note of encouragement attached. **Cost of the bears: \$1,015.69.**



## Alcoholics Anonymous

St. Matthew Parish hosts three Alcoholics Anonymous meetings each week. Outside groups are not covered by our liability insurance policy, so an insurance rider must be purchased to cover non-parish groups that meet in our facility. The parish pays the cost of this insurance for the group, which is \$915 annually.