

## **St. Matthew's Synod Report**

This past February, parishioners came together to pray and discuss the state of the Catholic Church in several in-person and online listening sessions. We reflected on the following questions:

- What is it like for you to experience God?
- How do you experience God in the community of St. Matthew's?
- What is the Spirit saying to you about the Catholic Church right now?
- How is the Spirit calling the community of St. Matthew's to grow?

Here are the general results from these listening sessions:

Most of the people experience God within their souls, as everywhere, as present in their lives through prayer, contemplation, letting go, in daily life, knowing God loves them, in nature, in the poor, and in their families. The people also experience God in sacrament and Word, but fewer said so. The people found there is a need for homilies that are more spiritual and oriented to everyday life.

The people of St. Matthew's also experience God in the community itself and are looking for more opportunities for community and to deepen community. Many felt the parish has done a good job of supporting them.

The people found the Spirit saying there is a need to evolve Church teaching on sexuality, marriage, and the role of women in the church. The people see a need to evangelize, to share the faith with people on the margins. They also vehemently want the sex abuse crisis resolved. The people also want more spirituality and less morality in preaching, teaching.

While the pastoral council and personal communication with pastoral staff are ways for the voices of the people to be heard, the people of St. Matthew's found that the parish can be anonymous at times and lament that there were not many obvious ways for their voices to be heard. While the parish uses consultation through the pastoral council, the people note that there could be room for listening sessions around particular parish issues. They see an area for growth around the pastor and staff creating avenues to listen to and consult the people.

The people participate in liturgy, prayer groups, contemplative prayer groups, and opportunities for service. They also recognize how more support groups and more adult faith formation opportunities could attract and include more people as well as deepen the parish's relationship with God.

The people observe that the Catholic Church needs to work at reaching out to people on the margins. They want the Church to be more welcoming, affirming, and accepting of ostracized groups such as the poor, the divorced and/or remarried, the LGBTQ+ community, and those skeptical of our beliefs.