Dear Saint Matthew Alums and Friends,

I am writing this on the afternoon of October 15, 2010. This morning the particulars of the restructuring of the Archdiocese were rolled out. Saint Matthew’s and the West Side community are involved in the church restructuring.

Saint Matthew’s and Saint Michael’s parishes will be clustered. “Clustered” means that somewhere down the line, one priest will be pastor of both parishes. The parishes will begin to seriously plan to share resources, staff, programs and ministries. This will allow for a reduction of duplication and, we hope, more efficient and effective delivery of service.

Saint Matthew’s and Saint Michael’s are also charged to enter into a “structural collaboration” with Our Lady of Guadalupe. Again, the sharing of program and resources will lead eventually to a cluster of all three parishes — served by one pastor.

As part of the Strategic Plan for the Archdiocese, the Archbishop has asked all schools to undertake their own strategic plan. He wants to make sure that our schools are sustainable and viable.

Our school is one of ten schools asked to do this work immediately and report to the Archbishop by mid-December.

It is no secret that urban Catholic schools struggle financially. For a number of years Saint Matthew’s parish was delinquent in its obligations to the Archdiocese for assessment, insurance and employee benefits. During the past 18 months, we have been current on these obligations, but have not repaid previous indebtedness.

Increasingly the financing of our school depends on non-parish support. This is true of most inner urban Catholic schools.

School enrollment increased by more than 30% over the past two years. Non-parish funding efforts have grown. Alums & Friends have raised new money, $400,000 for tuition assistance over the past three years. FOCUS (Friends of Catholic Urban Schools) provides more than $140,000 annually to our school. Our education endowment has grown from $250,000 to well over $1,000,000. The Archdiocese provides our school $200,000 subsidy annually. Donor advised gifts from the Catholic Community Foundation and other foundations provide $55,000. Partners in

Continued on page 2
Students on Team Liturgy Organizing School Masses

Every other Wednesday, St. Matthew’s students attend Mass where the students serve as cantors, lectors and gift bearers. What’s different at St. Matt’s, compared to other Catholic elementary schools, is that behind the scenes, the entire service is also coordinated by students.

The work is done by Team Liturgy, a group of six middle school students who’ve assumed all responsibility for organizing the school Masses for the last three years. Their duties include things like: practicing readings with student lectors, writing the prayers of intercession, instructing the gift bearers in their jobs and laying out music for the cantors.

Every job associated with preparing and conducting the liturgy is organized by Team Liturgy students under the supervision of Bonnie Faber, the Director of Music and Liturgy. Bonnie got the idea for the program during her first year at St. Matthew’s when she decided she should get the kids more involved. Bonnie recalls thinking, “I can’t be the only one who takes ownership. Liturgy shouldn’t be the adults doing it for the kids. If you’re a baptized person, the liturgy is your work.”

At the beginning of the year, teachers select two students from each middle school class based on their interest in the liturgy, their leadership skills and their ability to keep up with school work they miss during Team Liturgy meetings. Once a student’s on Team Liturgy, they usually stay until they graduate.
Bonnie is impressed with how responsible the students have been and how seriously they take their jobs. She says, “All I do is show up. They have everything taken care. I’ll do trouble shooting on the day of the Mass, but I won’t do the work. It’s their work.”

Another Team Liturgy duty is to write the Prayers of Intercession; Bonnie has been surprised at what the students have come up with on their own. She recalls a meeting a year ago, “It was before Thanksgiving and there was lot of talk about what we have to be thankful for. They discussed how not everyone has a Thanksgiving dinner, not everyone has grandparents, so let’s pray that those people have a good Thanksgiving, too. That was really touching to me. Junior high kids can be a challenge, but they’re capable of that kind of thinking and caring for the world.”

All the students agree that being more involved makes school Mass more enjoyable. Cokie says, “Some kids see church as boring. But I think we’re lucky to have church during school. It’s a plus.”

Bonnie recalls when she started Team Liturgy, no one was sure what would come of it. Now, three years later, she’s very confident when she says, “Team Liturgy is the grand experiment that’s worked.”

This year’s team members include Cokie Caballero and Lexi Erickson in 8th grade, Pilar Garcia and Monique Plaster in 7th grade, and Amanda Reding and Argentina Lerma in 6th grade. The students meet weekly to plan the next liturgy and are expected to arrive a half hour before Mass to set up, as well as stay afterwards to clean up.

For Lexi Erickson, who’s been on the team since 6th grade, it’s been an eye-opening experience. She says, “Doing Team Liturgy, we realize what an effort it takes to put on a Mass.”

In addition to preparing for each Mass, Team Liturgy gets together afterwards to talk about how it went, what worked, what didn’t and where they could do better next time. Bonnie says, “Team Liturgy acts as kind of the watch guards to make sure that everything for the school Mass goes smoothly.”

The students on the team say they feel good when it goes well but as 7th grader, Monique Plaster says, “Everything falls apart if we don’t do our job right.”

Lexi shares an example from that morning’s Mass, “There was a point where a student didn’t know what to do. I hadn’t explained their job very well so they were just standing there.” Lexi quickly addressed the problem and Bonnie never had to get involved. Bonnie says that’s typical, “During the Mass, people sometimes get nervous and make mistakes. Team Liturgy usually catches the problem before I do.”

ABOVE LEFT: Team Liturgy is responsible for getting everything ready for worship. Cokie Caballero lights the candles.

ABOVE RIGHT: This year’s Team Liturgy (L-R): Monique Plaster, Pilar Garcia, Amanda Reding, Argentina Lerma, Lexi Erickson, Cokie Caballero.

RIGHT: Monique Plaster and Pilar Garcia (back row) practice bringing up the gifts with Ashley Cordoba, Brady Seidl and Tiana Ivy.
Alumni & Friends Annual Report
Over $400,000 Raised for Tuition Assistance

Thank you all! From its start in 2007-08 through the end of this fundraising cycle, Alumni & Friends has raised just over $400,000 for school scholarships. That is an outstanding show of support, especially during an economic downturn. We’d also like to thank the many people who responded to our Matching Challenge. Your new or increased gifts, coming at a time when they could be doubled, made a dramatic difference in our final tally.

PILLAR — $15,000+
Roy & JoAnn Ferber,† 1959

PACESETTER — $10,000-14,999
Anonymous,‡ former parent
Jerry & Marilyn Sexton,† 1944

LEADER — $5,000-9,999
Katherine B. Anderson Fund, friend
Boss Foundation,† foundation
Bill & Bonita Frels, friend
Bruce & Jean Johnson,‡ business
John Nasseff, friend

EDUCATOR — $2,500-4,999
AnchorBank †
Joe Cullen,‡ 1978
Paul Haggerty, friend
James Kunz,† 1955
Bill Szlaius, 1981

SUSTAINER — $1,000-2,499
Charles Bohrer, 1970
Jason Bradshaw, friend
Sue Meisinger Brown,‡ 1957

BUILDER — $500-999
Denise Ferber Bohrer, 1973
Jim Bohrer, 1972
Mark DelVecchio,‡ 1973
Elizabeth Richardson French,‡ 1961
Bob & Joan Goggins, friend
David Hottinger,† 1981
Richard Littfin, 1944
Andrea & Larry McGough, friend
Eileen McMahon,‡ member
Eleanor Buechner McSherry, 1934
Marie Riehle, 1962

Loretta Guertin Ringold, 1930
John Scheibel, friend
Ted Snyder, memorial
Clare Vogel,† 1946
Allen Volkenant, friend
Rev. Richard Wolter, former assoc. pastor
Robert & Margaret Wolters, 1951

BENEFACtor — $250-499
Joe Ahern, 1954
George Beran, 1953
John & Kathleen Bins, 1949-51
Florence Mahoney Clancy,† 1934
Clem & Molly Commers,‡ friend
James Curran, 1945
Mary Jane Ferber,† 1962
Jan Mosberger Finnegan,‡ 1964
Daniel Gangl, 1971
R James Gesell, friend
Jackie Breher and William Jackson, friend
Michael Kaess, 1968
Margaret Bastien Kelsch, 1950
Jack Lannon, 1949
Richard O’Gary, 1952
Tom O’Neill,‡ 1958
Russ Sudeith, 1954
Terrance Votel,‡ 1956

PATRON — $100-249
Joanne Posavad Asmus,† 1951
Steve Bade, 1975
Charles Bastien,‡ 1938
JoLynn Bieser, 1968
Pataricia Cooper Blaskie,‡ 1964
Julius Bonello, 1962
Mary Sue Hopkins Brass, 1946
James Brewer, 1953
Audrey Brucker,† 1952
Nancy Brunzel,‡ 1967
Joseph & Shelagh Burke, friend
Robert Tessmer Camelot Cleaners, friend
Marie Conlin, friend
Louise & Joseph Connolly, friend
Jackie & Hugh Cosgrove, parishioner
Tim Dalzell,† 1970
Eugene Daugherty,† 1942
Sue and Tom Doyle,‡ former parent
Carol Crisman Englemann,‡ 1952
American Express
JoLynn Schwartz
Frandrup, 1964
Joan Tanzer Gennero, 1949
Teddy and Jim Gesell, memorial
James Guldan, 1946
John Hinding, 1958
Bob Hinze, 1961
Janet Humphrey,‡ friend
Bradley Jenniges,† 1976
Susan Miller Jensen,‡ 1961
Maryls Dressler Joyce, 1949
Thomas Kabesh,‡ 1960
Aileen David Koenen, former parent
Jim Korman, 1955
Mary Ann Kosel, 1960
Janet Leibl Lackner, 1956
Geraldine LaDoucer,‡ 1941
Tom Landsberger,‡ 1952
George Lang, 1956
Roger Lauen,† 1953
John Maeurer, friend
Nancy White Maloney,‡ 1949
Helen Lannon Neinell,‡ 1955
William Mosso, 1942
Mary Ann Lancette Palumbo, 1964
Ellen Buckrey Parravano,‡ 1959
Margaret Abel Probst,‡ 1964
Al Rasmussen, friend
Joseph Schaefer, 1964
Joe Schletty, 1962
Tom Schmidt, 1962
Corinne Gangl Schuster, 1973
Linda Egner Sill, 1964
Eugene Sitzmann, 1936
Tony Sitzmann,† 1957
Georgene Schaps Sorenson,‡ 1960
Janice Cooper Spear, 1967
John St. Martin,† 1936
Steve & Joan Sullivan, memorial
Anita Campa Sweeney, 1944
Robert Tessmer, 1953
Mary Pat Topritzhofer, 1975
Dwaine Troje, 1955
Anonymous, 1968
Jim Vogel,‡ 1956
Al Wenker, 1934
Jean Werden, 1950

A new fundraising cycle has begun. Remember that contributions made now through the end of December will provide tax benefits for this year.
Mary Lou Wallin Wilharber, 1961
Peter Willems, 1943
Marlene Hudalla Yarusso, 1950

**SUPPORT TO $99**

Joe Albert, 1944
Yvonne Allie, 1954

George Altendorfer, 1971
Sheila Haas Anderson, 1965
Anonymous
Stewart Arth, + 1957
Vicki Petschauer Baker, + 1968

**Richard Bandholz**, 1966

**Thomas Beran**, 1949
Kathleen Yanish Bidwell, + 1952
Doris Kammerer Bisciglia, + 1962
Dan & Pat Blaskowski, friend
Christine Haider Blissenbach, 1961
Pat Bloomquist, 1957
Mary Lou Allie Bova, + 1944
Marjorie Bandholz Boyd, 1964

Helen Bukowski, 1943

**Marie Cafisch**, parishioner
Jim Casey, friend
Joan & Andrew Chandler, friend
Ted Collins, friend
Lorraine Cook, 1951

Dorothy Turcotte Tait, + 1953
Mary Vasterling,
Paul Vierling,
A. Thomas Vogel, + 1953
Lynn Volkenant,

**The Good News**

from St. Matthew | November/December 2010
Remembering John Irwin O’Connor (’45)
Submitted by Jim Curran (’45)

John O’Connor passed away last May 31. The following are some memories his classmate and friend, Jim Curran, shared at a memorial held last summer.

John and I went to grade school, high school and into Salesians of St. John Bosco Order together. His mother died at childbirth, his father a year and a half later, and his grandfather about the same time. He was raised by his paternal grandmother.

In grade and high school, he was extremely disciplined. He tried in every way he could to please his grandmother and his teachers. From my point of view, however, he was a Pied Piper, and I was one of those who followed where he led. He was always inventive, always creative, had a million new ideas, and excelled at most everything he did. So I, looking for excitement and something new, fell in behind.

He excelled in grade school at St. Matthews where he graduated in 1945. He was class officer every year, captain of the school police and a great piano player. He took lessons at St. Agatha Conservatory since four years of age in speech, drama, and music. We started having dance parties in 6th grade and later he was voted best dancer in his class at Cretin.

He was big into magic and sleight of hand, spending hours perfecting coin and card tricks. During high school, he was hired to do sleight of hand magic at the tables at the old Diamond Jim’s supper club in Mendota. He built a dummy out of discarded cans he named Wilson McCann and performed as a ventriloquist.

He was active in Boy Scouts and belonged to Troop 107 at St Matt’s; we camped out in the winter and he organized long hikes all over Cherokee bluffs and out to Mendota and beyond. He was selected to the Order of the Arrow on the way to becoming an Eagle Scout.

He asked me to join him in trying out for parts in religious radio dramas that were broadcast locally Sunday mornings. One I especially remembered was “The Life of St. Bridget.” He got the lead, as usual; I was selected to be background crowd noise.

He was the instigator of my becoming Homecoming Queen at Cretin in 1949, a big stunt that no one had any inkling we were doing (including the Brothers at Cretin). He used the CYC mimeo machine and plastered flyers all around Cretin using a phony name and story. I won the election in a landslide.

He realized he was called to be a priest so he left right after high school to join the Salesians of St. John Bosco. I went with him. But the Salesians were the wrong order for both of us. Simplicity and humility were emphasized, but neither of us were that, though we tried. I left the Order after about four years, for I knew I was in the wrong place. He stayed and was ordained . . . Many years later, he left the priesthood and the Salesians. Some might look at that and be critical of him for leaving his vocation. But I know that after all those years, he finally found happiness and fulfillment and peace, and he knew he had made the right decision.

He began working as a teacher in Saudi Arabia, spending over twenty years there. His high school sweetheart, Marquita Finley, who had become a lawyer, joined him teaching in Saudi Arabia, and they married. They traveled the world collecting furnishings for their retirement home in County Clare, Ireland.

When asked what he did, John would say he was a poet and dramatist. He became a noted director of plays in the south and west of Ireland and he directed and acted in plays throughout the country, some of which he had written. He was an outstanding poet; he entered his poetry and won prizes in various European competitions.

He died of cancer in 2010 and left many friends all over the world. He lived a varied, stimulating and wonderful life and he is very, very missed by us all.
From the Editor

So – What About the School?

On the front page of this newsletter, Fr. Steve talks about how the Archdiocese’s consolidation plans affect St. Matthew’s. As part of the process, all schools have been asked to assess their long term viability, and St. Matthew’s is one of ten schools that’s been asked to do so right away. A task force charged with this responsibility will assess the quality of the school’s religious and academic education, as well as its financial sustainability over the next five years.

The fact is, up until a few years ago, St. Matthew’s School was on a trajectory for closing. As recently as the spring of 2008, the school was down to 136 students and had run a deficit for years.

What changed that trajectory was the support of Alumni & Friends. 2008 was the first fundraising year for A&F and since that time, up through September, 2010, A&F has raised a total of $400,000 for scholarships. Because of those scholarships, enrollment has risen almost 40%. What’s more, the money raised by A&F, together with FOCUS grants, a legacy gift from Vivian (Wiler) Byers (’39) along with other contributions, has put St. Matt’s in its strongest financial position in years.

Because of your support, St. Matthew’s can make a strong case for its long term viability. The Archdiocese itself has called the school’s enrollment “exemplary.” St. Matthew’s fits the description of what the Archdiocese calls a “mission critical” school; one that educates low income students of color including a large number of immigrant children. And there is no question about the high quality of St. Matthew’s education.

Another recent example: of the 21 St. Matthew’s graduates attending Cretin-Derham Hall High School last spring, 17 of them were on the honor roll.

The bottom line is that we cannot afford to stop raising money for scholarships while this process unfolds. Yes, there is uncertainty. But by continuing our commitment, we make what is a strong case for St. Matthew’s School, even stronger.

So thank you for your support. Your generous contributions over the past three years have been phenomenal. Now, let’s make next year even better.

— Maggie Lee, Editor

St. Matthew’s Celebrates 125 Years

Throughout the coming year, St. Matthew’s will host a number of events to celebrate! The first event is on March 5, 2011 — 5 pm Mass and dinner with Archbishop Flynn — so mark your calendar.

See the next issue for more details.
EVENTS calendar

EAGAN BARNES & NOBLE BOOKFAIR — November 20
Up to 20% of your purchase at the Barnes & Noble store in Eagan will be donated to St. Matt’s. A great opportunity to support the school and get a head start on your holiday shopping. For more info call the school office at 651-224-6912.

VIKINGS VS. PACKERS — November 21, 11:30 a.m.
Everyone’s welcome at the Men’s Club’s next Border Battle party. The game will be broadcast on a big screen in the Social Hall. Food and beverages for just $5.

MASS ON THANKSGIVING DAY — November 25, 9 a.m.

FEAST OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION — December 8
Mass Schedule is 6:45 a.m., 9 a.m. & 5:15 p.m.

MEN’S CLUB CHRISTMAS AUCTION — December 8, 8 p.m.
Held in the Social Hall, money raised supports the Retirement Fund for the School Sisters of Notre Dame and St. Matthew’s Holiday Giving for families in need.

ROSARY SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE — December 11 & 12
Home baked goods will be available in the Social Hall on Saturday 2-6 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA — December 12, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
The boy scouts will be serving an all you can eat pancake breakfast. Santa will be there so bring your kids and grandkids to get their picture taken.

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CONCERT — December 16, 6:30 p.m.
Join the fun when students in K-5th grade sing songs and perform a Christmas pageant. The concert takes place in the church and everyone is welcome.

COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE (NON-SACRAMENTAL) — December 19, 2 p.m.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE — December 24, 4 p.m., December 25, Midnight (12 a.m.) 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.