



Epiphany Episcopal Church of Sedan

December 5, 2016

An Open Letter to the Community regarding St. Matthew's Church:

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Cedar Vale, Kansas has enjoyed a long and faithful ministry as a church of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas since its organization in 1874; and it has inhabited its current structure on the southern corner of Cedar Street and Avenue B since 1901.

On June 1, 2000, the governance of St. Matthew's was transferred to the Wardens and Vestry of Epiphany Episcopal Church in Sedan, Kansas by The Rt. Rev. William Smalley, Eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Kansas. This transfer of governance was made because St. Matthew's no longer had sufficient members to form its own Vestry.

In the intervening 16-plus years, under the stewardship of Epiphany Church, St. Matthew's continued to provide worship and support within Cedar Vale amid a changing landscape of ministry and demographics. Among the undeniable changes in demographics were the inevitable deaths of St. Matthew's members; in the past two years we buried her last three members.

Over the past year, several things have changed the landscape of our ministry in Cedar Vale. St. Matthew's funds are about depleted, the retired couple, who were our local presence, have relocated out of state, and I have been called to additional ministries as the dean of the Southeast Convocation and the president of the Council of Trustees.

As a result, the Vestry of Epiphany Church voted in October 2016 to discontinue worship services at St. Matthew's and to begin conversations with the Rt. Rev. Dean Wolfe, Ninth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas about closing St. Matthew's.

As difficult as it is to let these ministries pass away, I believe we are being called to other and more sustainable ministries. It remains to be discerned what precisely those are; but in the mean time there is still much to be done in bringing the kingdom of God near.

Yours in Christ's light,

The Very Rev. Foster M. Mays
Rector