

THE MESSENGER

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

AN INTRODUCTION TO MOTHER MARY LYNN COULSON



Associate Rector Mary Lynn Coulson is brand new to our team - **turn to page 2** for a getting-to-know-you interview for those who haven't been able to meet her in-person yet!



Turn to page 6 for a message from our treasurer, Carol Zoellner, including an in-depth look at our finances discussed at the Annual Meeting

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AN INTRODUCTION TO MTR. MARY LYNN COULSON



By Asher Bloete Menke

We were able to have this dialogue with our newest priest, Mtr. Mary Lynn Coulson, as she settles into her role as Associate Rector.

What drew you to ministry, and was there a particular moment or experience that confirmed this calling for you?

As long as I can remember, I have been drawn to spirituality. As a child, that looked like feeling safe and held in a pew made of dark wood, the smell of incense hanging in the air, the smooth pages of the hymnal between my fingers as the organ soared, the taste of wine on my tongue at communion. Throughout my life that connection has changed as I have grown and changed, but at the heart of it all, I think I continue to feel called to the ministry because of reasons I can't quite articulate, but feel – a tugging in my heart toward communities seeking to live lives rooted in the ancient and radical life of faith.

Can you tell us about your journey to becoming a minister? Where did you study; what shaped your theological perspective along the way?

I attended St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, a Lutheran school. We had a campus pastor named Jennifer Koenig, and she was the first female pastor I encountered as a young adult. Seeing her live out her ministry of

INTERVIEW WITH MARY LYNN COULSON, cont'd.

preaching, mentoring, and leading worship was an aha moment for me – there is it, I thought – that's what I want to do. She gave me a great gift: she recognized my gifts and encouraged me to attend seminary. I ended up going through the discernment process for ordination at St. Andrew's in Brookside after college graduation, and found myself at Virginia Theological Seminary. My theological perspective has also been shaped by all the world travel I've been lucky enough to do.

How would you describe your approach to preaching and teaching?

My hope is that everything I do – from teaching, to pastoral care, to ministry with children, to preaching and presiding – serves as an invitation to slow down and notice the presence of the holy here in the midst of our everyday lives. A line from scripture, a visit over a cup of coffee, a conversation about grief, the feel of the bread in your palm when receiving communion – it is all an invitation to come back to the present moment, and realize the radical truth that God is present in it.



Any book or film that you think captures the Christian experience well?

A few years ago, I led an intergenerational book club at my church on *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle. It was a wonderful vehicle for conversations about injustice, the struggle between good and evil, and the ultimate power of Love.

You get to have dinner with one figure from Christian history - who is it and what do you discuss?

Pauli Murray, first African American female-presenting person to be ordained in the Episcopal Church. They were an activist for civil rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and so much more.

INTERVIEW WITH MARY LYNN COULSON, cont'd.

What does it mean to you to be an Episcopalian in today's world?

I think the Episcopal Church is a hidden gem, especially for folks in my generation and younger. We are in a moment in history when it is no longer socially expected to attend church, and I think our tradition is uniquely situated to meet the deep spiritual longings of our time, especially for folks who have been hurt by church or who did not grow up religious. The Anglican tradition encourages the embrace of mystery, affirms the goodness of science alongside faith, and invites us into ancient practices that offer stability in a changing world. Our tradition gives us a framework for having conversations across differences that is so essential in today's world, and we must be brave enough to add our voices to conversations happening outside of our parishes – in secular spaces, in politics, in our everyday lives.

Which Bible passages or stories have been most meaningful in your own spiritual life?

I've always loved the story of the hemorrhaging woman encountering Jesus, found in Mark 5. I love it for so many reasons, I love that the exchange of power between the woman and Jesus is not one-sided, with Jesus miraculously healing her. Instead, there is a mutual exchange of power, and Jesus is stopped in his tracks by his encounter with the woman. I love the bravery of this woman, who broke several religious and social codes to come close to Jesus for the sake of her healing. Jesus stops everyone and gave her the opportunity to "tell the whole truth" in the presence of the very community that had rejected her.

What's your favorite hymn?

One that has been on my mind a lot lately goes like this: "Our Mother in heaven, give us your love; We are knocking at your door for love, for love and peace."

INTERVIEW WITH MARY LYNN COULSON, cont'd.

Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

My husband's name is David, and he is the best! We met in seminary, and have now been married 8 years. Our older son is George, a second-grader who loves reading, basketball, and staying at home all day. He's a homebody! Our younger son is Fritz, short for Frederick, and he is in Pre-K. He loves to sneak into our bed every night, loves to sneak cookies out of the pantry, and has a big imagination. They are both currently into music from the 2010s – Usher, the Black Eyed Peas, and Ke\$ha – which we find hilarious. My parents live in Leawood, and my brother lives with his wife and their two daughters not far from our house in Brookside.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not at church?

You can usually find me searching for treasures at thrift stores and used book stores. I also love the library – I read a lot! Currently, I'm in a several-year phase of reading tons of romantasy (romance + fantasy) novels. I have an art desk at our house where I love to make things, especially collage. I'm also obsessed with puzzles, both crossword and jigsaw. You'll also find me singing, playing guitar and ukulele, and spending time in the forest.

What excites you most about joining STMAA?

St. Michael's is a parish with a deep culture of caring for one another. The more I learn about this place, the more I learn about folks who commit themselves to service – bringing communion to local retirement communities, sending over 100 cards a month to folks who are lonely or grieving, and those who are committed to praying for the needs of the community.

I feel lucky to join this parish and learn from all of you.



PARISH YOUTH OUT IN THE WORLD

The latest installment of updates from folks who've come through our youth program in recent years. For this edition we heard from alums Ian Boyd and Mick Wiggins.



IAN BOYD

After graduating in May of 2020 from K-State, I began working in the Kansas City nonprofit sector. I currently work on the Community Engagement Team at Habitat for Humanity of Kansas City. I live in Blue Springs with my partner, Laura, and two 5-month-old kittens. I have fond memories of playing music each Sunday morning at Saint Michael's.

MICK WIGGINS

Things have been going well this past year! I live in Waldo with my girlfriend, Peyton, and our yellow lab, Blue. Last year, I got my contractor's license and started my own business renovating homes, primarily focused on larger remodels and additions. I now have a team of 4 people and our projects are continuing to grow in size and scope. It has been a blessing!



A MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER

By Carol Zoellner

For those who missed the January 2026 parish annual meeting – and for those who would like a quick refresher - below is a summary of the financial message presented at that meeting.

2025: Abundant Gifts

As I look back over the years at St. Michael and All Angels, time and again, the actual financial support received has virtually always exceeded the amount pledged and budgeted. This faithful generosity is the norm.

At last year's annual meeting in January 2025, the budget presented included a 2025 pledge income "placeholder" of \$70,000 and a 2024 unpaid pledge placeholder of \$6,000. We planned on "pledged income" that had not been pledged because we felt confident that the congregation would generously give as in the past.

Ultimately, 2025 revenue exceeded the budget by \$121,200, as shown in the chart below.

2025 Revenue Table \$(000)	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	Variance Fav (Unfav)
2025 Pledges	\$745.1	\$886.7	\$71.6
Placeholder (Outstanding 2025 Pledges)	70.0		
Placeholder (Outstanding 2024 pledge payments)	6.0	23.8	17.8
Non-Pledged Income	72.2	104.0	31.8
Day School	54.5	54.5	0
Total Revenue	\$947.9	\$1,069.1	\$121.2

Expenses ended the year at \$982,700, unfavorable to the budget by \$22,000, primarily due to building-related expenses. The vestry considered tapping the Building and Grounds Designated Fund to cover the unfavorable variance, but given the high income, it was not necessary.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER, cont'd.

The only non-operating funds directly utilized by the Church were from an STMAA Foundation grant designated to strengthen several ministries, including Adult Programs, Parish Events/Hospitality, Children/Family/Nursery ministries, Pastoral Care, Confirmation, and the Good Faith Network. Having the Foundation as a partner is a great benefit, and we are very thankful for their ongoing support.

With the high 2025 income, instead of ending the year with a \$12,800 deficit as budgeted, we ended the year with an operating surplus of \$86,400.

2026 Operating Budget \$(000)	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
Total Revenue	\$1,069.1	\$1,026.4
Total Expenses	982.7	1,004.0
Total Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$86.4	\$22.4

Instead of decreasing the operating reserve from \$113,200 to \$100,400 as budgeted, we increased it to \$199,600, as shown in the chart below.

Operating Fund Reserve \$(000)	2025 Budget	2025 Actual
12/31/2024 Operating Reserve	\$113.2	\$113.2
2025 Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(12.8)	+ 86.4
12/31/2025 Operating Reserve	\$100.4	\$199.6

These results are fantastic and reflect the ongoing generosity and momentum we are seeing in our faith community.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER, cont'd.

2026: Trusting in Grace

As we prepared the 2026 pledge income budget, the vestry chose, once again, to respond with faith by adding a placeholder of \$70,000, trusting that God will once again stir hearts toward giving. In addition, an \$8,000 budget was included for 2025 pledges that are yet to be gifted.

So, it is not too late to submit a pledge for 2026, and it is not too late to fulfill your 2025 pledge! The 2026 revenue budget is \$1,026,400, which is a \$42,600 decrease from the 2025 actual income (even with the placeholder).

2026 Revenue Table \$(000)	2025 Actual	2026 Budget	Variance Fav (Unfav)
2025 Pledges	\$886.7	\$816.3	} \$ -
Placeholder (Outstanding 2026 Pledges)		70.4	
Placeholder (Outstanding 2025 pledge payments)	23.8	8.0	(15.8)
Non-Pledged Income	104.0	74.5	(29.5)
Day School	54.5	57.3	2.7
Total Revenue	\$1,069.1	\$1,026.4	(42.6)

As outlined at the service in December, in past years, the primary source of unbudgeted income has been members who give more than they pledged. In addition, significant gifts are realized through current and new members who pledge late or who simply give faithfully after the annual meeting. We appreciate your pledged and unpledged gifts regardless of the timing!

The 2026 expense budget is \$1,004,000, giving us a planned operating surplus of \$22,400.

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Total Expenses	982.7	1,004.0
Total Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$86.4	\$22.4

A MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER, cont'd.

2026 Revenue Table \$(000)	2025 Actual	2026 Budget	Variance Fav (Unfav)
2025 Pledges	\$886.70	\$816.30	\$ -
Placeholder (Outstanding 2026 Pledges)		70.4	
Placeholder (Outstanding 2025 pledge payments)	23.8	8	(15.8)
Non-Pledged Income	104	74.5	(29.5)
Day School	54.5	57.3	2.7
Total Revenue	\$1,069.10	\$1,026.40	(\$42.6)

As outlined at the service in December, in past years, the primary source of unbudgeted income has been members who give more than they pledged. In addition, significant gifts are realized through current and new members who pledge late or who simply give faithfully after the annual meeting. We appreciate your pledged and unpledged gifts regardless of the timing!

The 2026 expense budget is \$1,004,000, giving us a planned operating surplus of \$22,400.

2026 Operating Budget \$(000)	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
Total Revenue	\$1,069.10	\$1,026.40
Total Expenses	982.7	1,004.00
Total Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$86.40	\$22.40

A SEASON OF RENEWAL FOR FR. DAVID AND OUR PARISH

Fr. David has served among us since 2013 and as our Rector since 2019, and we are deeply grateful for his faithful ministry. Because of this long, shared life together, the Vestry believes now is the right time to begin planning for a season of renewal for him and for our parish.

The exact timing and length of the time away has not been determined; however, in 2027, Fr. David will take a clergy renewal sabbatical, stepping away from day-to-day responsibilities for a defined time of rest, prayer, learning, and reconnection with God, family, and vocation.

A grant proposal is being prepared for submission to the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program which provides grants to congregations to underwrite both the pastor's renewal activities and congregational renewal while the pastor is away. This is a competitive process and, if we are successful, Saint Michael's will have the opportunity not only to support Fr. David's renewal journey, but also to imagine how God might renew all of us in the years ahead as the grant would help fund not only Fr. David's time away, but also guest clergy, parish events, and opportunities for our community to grow during this season.

The Grant Process and Timeline

The program is administered by Christian Theological Seminary, which receives proposals from congregations one year before the planned sabbatical. For sabbaticals beginning in 2027, applications are due in March 2026, and congregations learn the results near the end of the summer 2026. Between now and the March deadline, a small parish committee, together with Fr. David, will be working on completing the grant proposal which includes developing a rationale and design of the proposed sabbatical not only for Father David but for the congregation of Saint Michael's, providing a picture of our parish through both a historical lens as well as current ministries, and creating a budget that will support both Father David's renewal activities, but those of the parish as well.

CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM, cont'd.

If a grant is awarded, the details of the 2027 sabbatical year will be clarified, including coverage for worship and pastoral care and ways to celebrate both the sending and the return.

We are all a part of this—starting now This is not just Father David's sabbatical—it is an invitation for our entire parish to enter a season of renewal together. The Clergy Renewal Program emphasizes that pastors and congregations design these experiences in partnership, so all of our voices are essential. [Please make some time to complete the survey via this link.](#)

We will not be waiting until next year to begin this journey. Please pray for Father David and for our parish, reflect on where you sense God at work in your own life, and watch for invitations to conversations, listening sessions, and discernment gatherings in the months ahead. Together, we trust that this season—both the preparation and the sabbatical itself—will be a gift of renewal for Fr. David, for our parish family, and for the wider community we are called to serve.

**Respectfully submitted by the
Renewal Grant
Proposal Committee.**

**Linda Brown, Wayne Matthews,
Bob Barton, Leslie Malle, Jaime
Keltner, Margareta Knopic, Ken
Walker, and Addrianne Conway.**



REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR 2026 MEGA CAMP

Mega Camp is a one-week overnight summer camp experience for young people who have finished grades 3-12. There's boating, horseback riding, archery, climbing tower, hiking, arts & crafts, plus Episcopal worship and formation. The camp community is like nothing else: campers will feel accepted and loved for who they are and be able to build their faith with others their age.

When: May 31-June 6, 2026

Where: Camp Wood YMCA, Elmdale, KS

Who: Students in grades 3-12 for 2025-26 school year (you must have finished third grade to attend); Camp is not restricted to Episcopalians or regular churchgoers. All are welcome, so feel free to invite friends and family.

Cost: \$550 through May 1, 2025; \$600 after May 1. There is a \$25 non-refundable deposit due at registration.

Registration: Priority deadline is May 1. **Register by clicking here.**

Scholarships: Available to apply for via the registration form.

Episcopal Summer



MEGA CAMP

Join us for a week full of fun activities,
meaningful connections, and worship!

May 31-June 6, 2026
3rd-12th Graders
@ Camp Wood YMCA

edokformation.wordpress.com/camp
Registration opens January 1!

