

ST. MATTHEW'S BY-THE-BRIDGE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IOWA FALLS PROFILE



Located in North Central Iowa, seventy miles north of the capital city, Des Moines, Iowa Falls is situated on the banks of the Iowa River. With its limestone bluffs, twists, turns, and beautiful scenery, the setting provides the motto for our town, "The Scenic City." It has a population of just over 5,000 people. Its citizens are justifiably proud of its recently built regional hospital, fine public schools, beautiful public parks, a large modern public library, a vibrant community college and a historic commercial area which in the past ten years has undergone a city streetscape project. Iowa Falls is surrounded by some of the finest farm land to be found on earth.

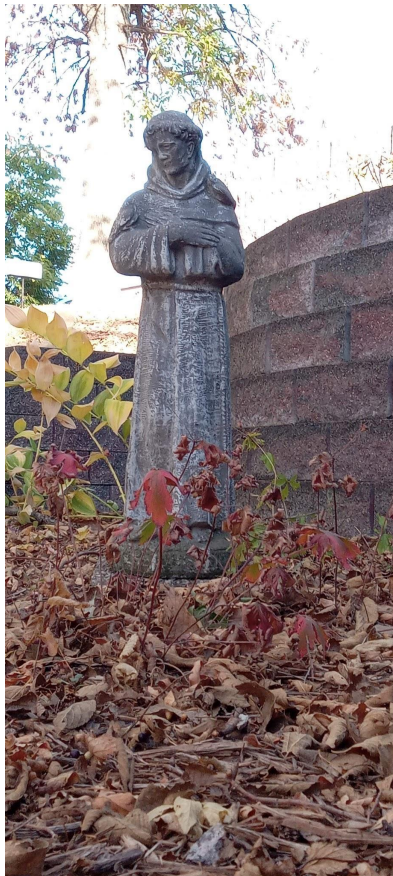
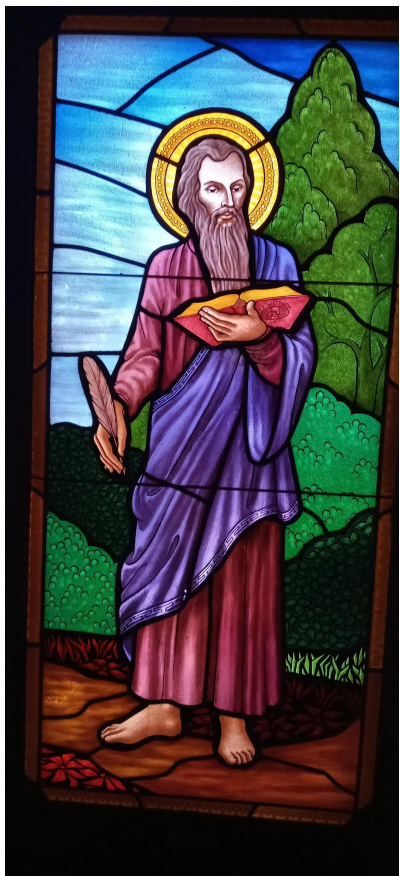
A recently produced video by the Iowa Falls Chamber Main Street gives evidence of the beauty of the city and pride of its citizens. Here is the YouTube link: ["Fall in Love with Iowa Falls!"](#).

The presence of the Episcopal Church in Iowa Falls, dates to 1885 when Mrs. Clarissa Roper, a member of one of the pioneer families, organized an Episcopal meeting and service in her home presided over by a clergyman from Waterloo, Iowa. By 1900, the congregation had grown and prospered which enabled them to purchase land beside the river and next to a new bridge that spanned that river. After sending one of its recent immigrant members back to England to research and sketch village churches, it completed a building based upon that research in 1913. This edifice, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has sheltered the members of the congregation as they have worshiped and been a beneficial influence on the community at large. The church building has a nave that seats around seventy five people, and an undercroft with a fellowship hall, kitchen, two Sunday school rooms, and an office for the rector. Outside is a balcony overlooking the river with a columbarium on the east end of the church and a landscaped terraced garden on the west end.



Here is another link to a recently created [YouTube Video](#) that shows the natural beauty of the town.

St. Matthew's has always been a mission congregation. During its century plus existence it has had full time, part time, and priest in partnership clergy. In the 1990's St. Matthew's was able to raise up a priest in residence from one of its own members. The Reverend Netha Brada completed her studies and was ordained and served the congregation until her retirement in 2007. She was followed by two priests in partnership who served consecutively for the past fourteen years. Both of these priests went well above and beyond their contractual responsibilities and we felt well served by this arrangement. Now, as we approach the quarter century mark of the twenty-first century, we are embarking on a project to find a one-half time priest to help us press on into the future. While we have had some additions to our church family in recent years, we have also seen a goodly number of deaths of faithful members. Thus, our wishes are: We want a spiritual leader for our church community who will maintain our traditional form of worship with its emphasis on excellent preaching and fine music, and yet help make our worship more meaningful to potential new members. We wish for someone who will engage in the larger life of the Iowa Falls community and be a presence in the ministerial association and other civic organizations. We hope that this presence and these activities will help grow our church family.



Our weekly Sunday services consist of Eucharist and Morning Prayer on alternate Sundays during the month, an arrangement that worked for our priests in partnership situation. A half time priest would allow us to offer Eucharist every Sunday. In addition we have Christmas Eve, Holy Week, and Ash

Wednesday services. Presently, we have a Shrove Tuesday dinner which has taken the form of both the traditional pancake supper and more recently a Mardi Gras New Orleans style dinner. In the summer we offer a three concert organ recital series that features fine recitalists from around the United States and also international guest artists. During the fall we have an apple cider celebration where we invite



friends to help make cider with equipment fashioned by two of our members. Our Senior Warden's family hosts a Guy Fawkes Night (November 5). We begin each church year cycle with a celebration of Nine Lessons and Carols presented on the fourth Sunday afternoon of Advent. In the community our members are involved with the Church Women United Thrift Store, serve on the board of the Iowa Falls Historical Society, help deliver Meals on Wheels, and are involved with the Union Cemetery board .

Our two bedroom church rectory is available to the new clergy person, or it can be rented, as it is presently, and the rent can become part of the salary package. The church building and the rectory have been well cared for through the years and are both in excellent condition. Both structures are of a size that makes them an asset, rather than an albatross to a small congregation.



It is our hope that this profile and the accompanying videos will entice you to explore the possibility of becoming the clergy person who helps us be the "hands of Christ" in this community and the bountiful land that surrounds us.



Click [here](#) to view these and other pictures of St. Matthew's By The Bridge.