

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES UNDER LEX MATHEWS

- 1970-73 Lex Sterner Mathews served as Chaplain at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- 1973-74 Lex spent a year in Florida as a non-stipendary worker priest, engaged in boat building and repair.
- 1974 The function of the Diocesan Division of Racial and Urban Affairs was broadened and the name changed to Christian Social Ministries (CSM).
- 1975 Lex began in January as the new CSM Director: "Mr. Mathews will be linking needs with resources and people with interests. He will be involved in what we call a brokerage ministry. He will be available to every congregation of the diocese as the Church tries to assume its rightful role in a day of change, uncertainty and need. He will serve as a representative resource of this diocese as the local community and the State call upon the churches for assistance. He will try to guide congregations and the diocese in the establishment of priorities as we serve to be our brother's keeper."
- 1975 In his first report to Diocesan Convention Lex presented a Resolution from the new CSM Committee: "That this Convention itself provide the leadership, the example and the action by asking each parish and mission to raise an amount equal to 10 percent of their local budgets, and that this amount be given at the discretion of each parish or mission to the aid of the poor and hungry locally, nationally, internationally or any combination thereof." Many churches in the Diocese responded immediately with program funding, volunteer involvement, and the formation of parish CSM committees.
- 1975 The first example of "brokering" was a project to promote positive attitudes toward the physically handicapped throughout North Carolina. The CSM Committee brought together the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and St. Augustine's College to fund a program on 90-to-10 per-cent basis.
- 1976 For the CSM Committee Lex reported its conviction that there is plenty of talent in every situation to deal effectively with most social concerns, such as the Aging, the Imprisoned and the Poor.
- 1977 Lay volunteers reported on three major CSM projects in 1976: (1) **Share-A-Home** in Greensboro; (2) **Hospice** in various sites; (3) **Probation and Support Teams for Public Offenders** in Charlotte
- 1978 A new joint endeavor of St. Timothy's, St. Paul's and St. Anne's in Winston-Salem was **Hospitality House** – a place for needy people to spend a a few days while either receiving treatment or visiting critically ill persons in local hospitals. **Migrant Labor Issues** became a priority. **Alcohol Prevention Programs** were a new interest. At the suggestion of the CSM Committee, the Diocese became a full participating member of both the **Appalachian People's Service Organization (APSO)**; and the newly restructured **North Carolina Council of Churches (NCCC)**.
- 1979 Six members of St. Peter's, Charlotte, accompanied Lex to witness the urban outreach of St. Luke's, Atlanta, then started a **Soup Kitchen** at St. Peters with the help of more than 30 volunteers. In response to information that Lex sent on the plight of the "Boat People," All Saints, Greensboro and St. Paul's, Louisburg, were the first of more than 20 parishes to form **Refugee Resettlement Committees** to provide a wide range of services for sponsored Vietnamese families. The Diocese became active in both the studies and the beginning organization of what became the interdenominational **Land Stewardship Council**. The **Parish Grant Program** began taking applications for help with local parish initiatives. [Lex later praised this program for its vital role in providing start-up monies for virtually all outreach projects begun within the diocese. "Enough cannot be said for this innovative fund which has become a sought-after model for other dioceses."] In conjunction with a UTO grant, the Diocese helped the **Women's Center of Raleigh** reorganize, re-locate and become better equipped. Reports on other new initiatives included: **Adult Reading Program**; **Child Care Program**; **Migrant Discretionary Fund**; **Migrant Dental Program**; and the **Appalachian Summer Project**.

- 1980 **“The Other Side of Sunday,”** a professionally produced multi-media show, featured the Soup Kitchen ministries at St. Peter’s, Charlotte, and St. Philip’s, Durham. The Diocese joined Raleigh Area Ministries and several other Wake county organizations to begin the **Community Food Bank** in North Carolina to serve non-profit and charitable institutions. Sponsored out of Diocesan House, a large **Clothing and Child Care Drive** netted between 2 and 3 tons of clothes and more than \$2,000 in cash for migrant workers through the Tri-County Medical Center in Newton Grove.
- 1981 The CSM Committee worked with St. Stephen’s, Winston-Salem and the Rev. Michael B. Curry to set up a **Summer Camp for Black Children**. The Diocese received three UTO Grants totaling \$38,000 for the **Battered Women’s Center** sponsored by Christ Church, Rocky Mount; the **Share-A-Home**, sponsored by Christ Church, Albemarle; and the **Community Food Bank in Wake County**
- 1982 A new program in Wake County was **FIGS (Filling in the Gaps)** to provide medicine for elderly persons whose monthly prescriptions were reduced due to cutbacks. The CSM-sponsored **Peace Network** took on the issues of disarmament, the nuclear freeze and U. S. involvement in Central America. The **Diocesan Urban Task Force** offered advice and consultation throughout the diocese. The CSM office supported two new initiatives: (1) the **Dispute Settlement Program (Mediation Services of Wake County)** whereby trained volunteers help settle grievances between citizens in lieu of litigation; and (2) the **Task Force on Aging**, which began plans for a models workshop and a legislative seminar in Washington, DC.
- 1983 CSM, in consultation with the Episcopal Church Women, convened a group of Episcopalians, mostly women, to identify and advise CSM on **Women’s Issues**. St. Paul’s, Monroe, began a nutritionally-balanced **Food Packaging Program** for people who “fall between the cracks.” Several Greensboro Episcopal churches began a **Substandard Housing Renovation** project among the poor.
- 1984 Lex addressed Diocesan Convention on the issue of **Capital Punishment**. The National Church asked the CSM to manage a **National Conference** (May 1984 at Kanuga) to model “Ten Programs that Work – Helping the Poor in the ‘80s.” Representatives from 37 states and 61 dioceses attended. The CSM brokered funds for a staff person to work under the jurisdiction of Yokefellow to help manage **Probation and Parole Work** in the diocese. CSM became involved with **Solar Energy Workshops**, especially as they relate to the poor. Initially funded by CSM, **Mediation Services of Wake, Inc.** became its own organization with full funding by the State of NC Administrative Office of the Courts. Two new **Slide Shows** were produced, one on migrant work and one on land stewardship. After the 1984 tornado outbreak, the Diocese helped organize the **North Carolina Interfaith Disaster Committee** with \$35,000 from communicants and \$10,000 from the Presiding Bishop’s Fund.
- 1985 Among the other items the Task Force on Women’s Issues **discussed with** Lex on November 6th were: getting more qualified women candidates in diocesan leadership positions; involving women at parish level; and formulating guidelines for a new scholarship program for older women returning to the workplace. Postcards were distributed to write Congressional representatives asking them to support Title X without prohibitive amendments. On November 26th Lex presented Diocesan Council with background information on the **Women’s Issues Task Force’s Diocesan Scholarship for Women 35 and Older**.
- On December 21st Lex died on his sailboat from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. At their meeting on January 3, 1986, the Task Force on Women’s Issues voted unanimously to name the scholarship for Lex Mathews. The first two Lex Mathews Scholarships of \$400 each were awarded for the 1988-89 academic year.