

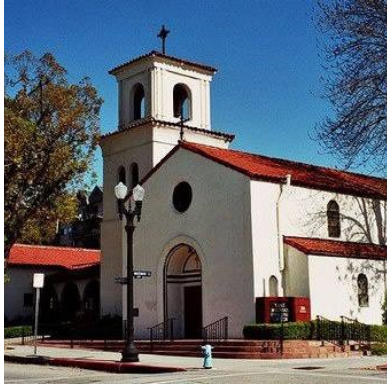
SAINT MATTHIAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Saint Matthias Messenger

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Saint Matthias Episcopal Church

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Holy Eucharist

Sundays at 8 AM & 10 AM
First Saturdays at 5 PM
10 AM Services Streamed at
facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier

Where is the Problem?

Fr. Bill Garrison

I bank at a couple of banks, both of which are national institutions. One of the branches I regularly enter seems to be run very efficiently most of the time. There is usually a quiet and professional atmosphere with enough tellers to satisfy the needs of the folks in line in an efficient way. The other branch mirrors the first but it seems as if the wait in line goes on forever. I have often found myself angry as I wait for the line to move so I can get to a teller.

The same thing happened today. The line seemed stuck. When I looked behind me the line had grown to six people. Up till today I had blamed the problem on mismanagement and not enough tellers. And I admit that may still be something to think about. But at the same time, I realized the customers might be a bit tougher to help in this location than the customers at the other branch I referred to earlier.

It was in that moment that I realized I was on to something. As I watched, and as I recalled previous visits, I realized that the issues the tellers were dealing with in this branch did indeed seem more complicated, and I also noticed that they were having to ask the customers more questions, and were having to do more explaining. In short, the customers at one branch were not as conversant with the nuances of banking as the customers were in the other branch. I intuited immediately that this was a major contributor to the problems I had encountered.

Not everyone is on the same page as we think they are, or at least believe they should be. I think this is a common misunderstanding in most facets of life, and nowhere is this misunderstanding more obvious than in Christianity.



We don't all have the same religious backgrounds. We don't all view the Bible in the same ways, and we certainly don't all have the same basic knowledge of it. Prayer lives, if we have one at all, vary greatly. Some people can sit still for long periods of time and others are uncomfortable doing so. Some adore one type of music and others don't care for music at all in worship. Some people react well to liturgical worship and others react well to the more

(Continued on p. 2)

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“camp style” with a long and entertaining sermon. Some people enjoy the discussion of theology and others couldn’t care less. I could continue with these examples but I think you get the point.

So, what do we do with this realization concerning our differences? Well first of all, and by far most importantly, remember it when communicating with someone else about God and Christianity. Commit the time and energy to find out about their understandings of Christianity. Don’t assume. Just because they are an Episcopalian, or a Baptist, or a Nazarene does not mean they are the stereotype you might have in your mind. They are who they are, a unique creature of God, with their own set of ideas and beliefs. Then share with the other person who you are, what you believe, your own ideas and understandings.

Folks, it’s worth the effort I guarantee. You will have made a comrade in the Christian faith. As long as Jesus Christ and your thankfulness for his life, death, and resurrection is the center of your discussions, you will be able to move forward with each other, learning from each other, and loving each other. There’s not much better than that I don’t think.

Fr. Bill +

How To Pray Without Ceasing—Part VI

J.D. Neal

Last month, Sam described his experience of being suddenly shaken awake and called by God one night on the beach. He called experiences like this 'windows' of prayer. For a time, God suddenly, unexpectedly meets us, the veil is pulled back on the heart of things, and we are changed by what we see and hear. Part of the beauty of these moments, as Sam mentions, is that they happen unexpectedly. We did nothing to conjure them, and when we return to those same places hoping to see through the 'window' again, the magic is gone.

One of the reasons prayer can be so hard is that God is frustratingly unwilling to be pinned down by my expectations of him. The God who reveals himself in Jesus, in the Scriptures, and in those sudden moments of vision is utterly faithful, yes, but also utterly free. He seems to answer even our most honest prayers in ways that we would never have expected and the depths of his being remain mysterious even to those who know him best. He is, in short, a person. And, as the good friends and old lovers reading this know, we have stopped really seeing, knowing, or loving another person as soon as we start communicating with them without honoring their freedom and mystery. Assumptions about what others think, feel, and desire often get in the way of us really knowing and loving them. If this is the case in our attempts to love and communicate with one another, how much more so in our conversation with God! If we are to really pray, we must be willing to receive God in all of the sometimes terrifying mystery that this requires. Good theology can help us clear away the bad ideas we have of God that keep us from remembering the love and faithfulness with which he will always hear us, and it can help us distinguish God's voice from the voice of the lies and fears we are inclined to hear in place of God. But as soon as we stop being willing to receive God's real response to our prayers we have stopped praying and started trying to use God to exercise control over our world.

Instead, we must aim to say, like Mary, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” When we do this, like Mary, we make room for Christ's own life to be born in us. God is not content with receiving anything less than our honest selves, and God is not content with giving us anything less than the fullness of God's own self. Do you see? This is the great promise of prayer, that Jesus would take us up and make us a part of his life and action in the world, and that we would receive Jesus' own life and joy in exchange, even when we do not fully comprehend or control how his life comes to us.

We may not be able to recreate Sam's moment on the beach whenever we want, but we can remain open to receiving the God who is alive with mystery and freedom. And if we do this, we might just find God giving us windows into his great beauty and love in all sorts of seemingly mundane and unexpected places.

Instructions for Living

Rev. Carole Horton-Howe

Our Monday night Summer Compline group is one I look forward to. It's a chance close out the day with a collegial group of church family members, to settle our thoughts and to pray for each other and for those we care about. We also share how a passage of Holy Scripture speaks to us in the moment. Last Monday we read Romans 12:14-21:

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."



After a discussion about the meaning of heaping burning coals on someone's head – a literary device meaning to give an "ah-ha!" moment, the opportunity to think about things in a new and redemptive way – we talked about these instructions. To me Paul is offering a follow-up to the Great Commandment given by Jesus: that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength and love our neighbors as ourselves.

There's nothing mysterious about Paul's explanation about how to do this. We all understand intellectually what to do and why these things are important to our carrying out the work that Jesus left us to do as servants building up the Kingdom of God. We are happy to buy in to these beautiful concepts. But our Compline group agreed last Monday that each of these is hard to carry out all day long every day. So. Very. Hard.

Whatever you do, whatever path you're on, I'm sure of one thing: your life is complicated. You have to live in the world where such things as noble thoughts, association with the lowly, having caring thoughts for those who think differently and letting God handle the vengeance piece are not what are valued. It feels almost natural to get distracted, confused or overwhelmed by Great Commandment living. And yet we are asked to try. We are asked to do the best we can to "seek and serve Christ in all persons loving your neighbor as yourself" as our Baptismal Covenant vow asks. The answer is "I will, with God's help." God's help includes the grace of patience, mercy, forgiveness and a chance to start again.

The mystic Thomas Merton beautifully articulates this in his well-known prayer which gives me a burning coals on the head moment each time I read it: "My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

Amen and amen! Keep seeking and serving, St. Matthias family. And be gentle with yourselves as God is.

Blessings, Rev. Carole+

Parishioner Profile: A Conversation with Doug Overstreet

Edited for length and clarity

FINDING SAINT MATTHIAS

I came to Saint Matthias in 1988. My first job as a singer had been in an Episcopal Church. I was raised as a Southern Baptist, so my only prior exposure to liturgical churches had been helping my mom, who was a florist, deliver the flowers on Saturday mornings. I knew what the altar looked like, but I didn't understand what it was all about until I began to sing in one. It was very high church. Their nickname was "Smoky Mary's" because the incense would get so thick in their old building that you couldn't see the altar from the back of the church. Eventually I was hired to sing elsewhere, but by 1988, I was looking to return to an Episcopal church.

I saw the ad on the Master Chorale job board. The name of the church and the city weren't even listed in the ad: just "Tenor Section Leader Needed. Episcopal Church. Must be dependable. Call."

SIGNS?

When I called Frankie Nobert, the organist and choir master at the time, to set up the audition, she asked me where I was coming from, and I said Glendale. Then she asked for the street...then the cross streets... then the address... and then the apartment number. "You're in my apartment!" She had lived in the *exact same apartment* when she was on the faculty at Los Angeles Valley College before going to Whittier College.

I was working for USC radio around that time, and Bill Krenz was one of our volunteers. I knew Bill lived in Whittier, so the next time he was at the station, I asked him, "What do you know about an Episcopal congregation in Whittier called Saint Matthias?"

"Well, let's see... I'm the senior warden right now, I've been going to the church forever, I sing in the choir.... Why do you ask?"

I told him, and he warned me, "I think you'd be a good fit, but whatever you do, don't be late. If you're two minutes late you're not getting the job." So I made sure I was five minutes early.

After the interview, when Frankie told me about Saint Matthias, its history, and the Soup Hour, I went from wanting the job as a musician to wanting the job as a person. I had resigned from my previous job at a very well-to-do church after seeing how the sexton treated a man trying to shelter outside the church one rainy night during choir practice. Saint Matthias has always had a great music program, but we also put our money and our efforts where our mouths were. You saw your contributions have a direct result in a community beyond the people who were within the four walls every Sunday morning at 10. And that was substantially different than anything I'd ever seen before.

RETURNING TO SAINT MATTHIAS

I was at Saint Matthias for 20+ years when Kent and I moved into the mountains above Santa Clarita, and it just became too far to drive. Years later, we'd gone to a Christmas Eve party in San Fernando, and on the way home Kent suggested we go to Mass at Saint Matthias.

I told him, "Honey, it's 10:15—it's gonna be really close," and he said, "Then start driving!"

It couldn't have been three minutes after the service ended until Fr. Bill had us cornered: "When are you coming back? Shirley and Jack Haake told me who you are." He didn't leave us much choice!

When we hired Kevin, that was the final factor. Kevin is a phenomenal musician. We've had some major musical talents—Frankie, Peter Fennema,... but Kevin is a step above anyone we've had before. He brings a lot out of the choir. He knows how to work us.

CAREER & INTERESTS

I've been very lucky that my job and my interests have always dovetailed. I've been an orchid grower for 50 years—since I was 10 years old. Six years ago, I started managing an orchid collection—a rather fine orchid collection—for the Huntington. I love classical music; I fell into a job at KUSC. I went from there to the LA Philharmonic, and then to the music department at Disney. One way or another, music has always been a part of my work life, and orchids have always been a part of my work life. They have always been my driving interests.

I also love tropical fish and parrots. The ones you would have seen at church [on Zoom] are Cleo, a Senegal Parrot, and Pete, a cockatiel. Paul, Pete's brother, is shy.

FAMILY & FAITH

My partner Kent and I have been together for 37 years, since February 1984. One of the reasons I felt so comfortable at Smoky Mary's was that it was so welcoming—I looked up one Sunday and I realized that every person on that altar was an out gay man, including the priest and associate. This was in the late 70s and early 80s. They were accepting, but generally people weren't at that time.

I came out in 1978 in the middle of Anita Bryant banning gay teachers and all of that, and that really soured me on the church. C.S. Lewis was my gateway back into Christianity. I made the statement to a friend of mine one night in 1981 or 82 that "no one can be intellectually honest and a Christian." She took exception to that. She asked me, "Have you ever read C.S. Lewis?" I said no, and she went and got *God in the Dock* and *Evidence for Christianity* and handed them to me and said, "I want you to take these two books, and if you can honestly say to me after you've read these two books...that this man is not a first-class intellect and a devout Christian, then I'll never say anything to you about it ever again." She had been prodding me for a long time. She could sense that I wasn't as angry at Christianity as I thought I was. I took the books back to her and said, "Yeah, you were right." And that, combined with my experience at Smoky Mary's, kind of sealed the deal.

How is my religion reflected in my daily life? I've been churched since my earliest memories. I've had some very direct encounters with God in my life, so there's never really been a time when I didn't feel indwelt by God. I am not a good example however. I have a temper, I'm selfish... I'm just not always a good Christian. I try to be. The biggest thing that I'm trying to make inform my life right now is the love of Christ, the love of God, and how that is the root of all things. That authoritarian side of me really wants to dominate, and I understand Paul's argument of making a choice between either living under the law or living by Grace. Human ego would definitely prefer the law because you can say "look at me"; if you live by grace, no. Working that out in my own life is my biggest challenge.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Annual Sock Drive

Janice Webster, ECW Co-Chair

It's August and the ECW Annual Sock Drive is underway! Even though it's sandal wearing season, the colder months are just around the corner. Many of our soup hour clients will be in need of clean socks to keep their feet warm. If you would like to participate, you may bring the socks to church on any Sunday during the month of August and put them in the box in the narthex, or you can shop online at your favorite retailer and have them shipped directly to the church. The church address is 7056 Washington Ave., Whittier, CA 90602. Please only purchase men's white athletic socks as socks with dyes can irritate their feet. Your generosity and contribution will be greatly appreciated by our soup hour clients. Thank you!



PUZZLE

No kidding

Whatever our age, God calls us to model holy living for others.



Directions: Match the animal young with its parent. Then write the letter answers in order below to complete 1 Timothy 4:12, NIV.



- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. ___ bear | 9. ___ monkey | A. fry | I. hatchling |
| 2. ___ frog | 10. ___ platypus | B. fawn | K. foal |
| 3. ___ owl | 11. ___ alligator | C. gosling | L. owlet |
| 4. ___ horse | 12. ___ giraffe | D. cub | M. puggle |
| 5. ___ kangaroo | 13. ___ goose | E. kid | N. joey |
| 6. ___ deer | 14. ___ swan | F. cygnet | O. polliwog |
| 7. ___ goat | 15. ___ dog | G. infant | P. puppy |
| 8. ___ fish | | H. calf | |

“_on’t let any_ne _oo_ down o_ you _ecaus_
 you _re youn_, but set an exa_ple for the bel_evers
 in speec_, in _onduct, in love, in _aith and in _urity.”

1 TIMOTHY 4:12, NIV

Answer: D, O, L, K, N, B, E, A, G, M, I, H, C, F, P



Puzzle!

Answer each statement by circling the letter in the correct column. Then write the circled letters on the numbered lines below to complete the biblical word.

	TRUE	FALSE
1. Naomi is Ruth’s mother.	D	<input checked="" type="radio"/> R
2. Ruth is a Moabite.	T	P
3. Naomi wants Ruth to leave her and return to Moab.	N	L
4. Orpah is Naomi’s hired hand.	H	S
5. Boaz lives in Bethlehem.	C	B
6. Boaz is a farmer.	U	V
7. Ruth makes a living begging at Bethlehem’s gates.	X	E
8. Boaz instructs his field workers to leave extra grain for Ruth to glean.	E	J
9. Boaz invites Ruth to eat with the harvesters.	R	Q
10. Boaz is related to Naomi.	I	W
11. Boaz refuses to marry Ruth.	F	R
12. Ruth is the great-grandmother of King David.	O	G

R

9 7 4 6 1 11 8 5 2 10 12 3

Answer: 1. R, 2. T, 3. N, 4. S, 5. C, 6. U, 7. E, 8. E, 9. R, 10. I, 11. R, 12. O; RESURRECTION



Bible Quiz

What was the name of the queen who refused to appear before the king of Persia and his guests and, as a result, was deposed?

- A. Esther
- B. Jael
- C. Vashti
- D. Milcah



Answer: C (See Esther 1:12.)



September 8: Wednesday Bible Study Resumes

September 18: Homecoming Sunday

- ◆ Children & Youth Sunday School Resumes
- ◆ **New** Adult Sunday School Class between Services

Services and Small Groups

Many of our small groups are currently in the process of returning to in-person meetings, some are using a hybrid model, and others are choosing to stay on Zoom for now. Contact the small group leader or see the church website for the most current info.

- ◆ **Holy Eucharist**, Sundays at 8am (in-person only) and 10am (in-person and streaming live at facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier).
- ◆ **Men Eating Badly**, First Saturdays at 8 am, Greenleaf Cafe - Contact Fr. Bill for details.
- ◆ **Evening Healing Service with Holy Eucharist**, First Saturdays at 5pm (in-person only)
- ◆ **Family Fellowship**, Sunday July 11th at 11:15 am, playground- Contact Andrea Schmid at andrea@stmatthiaswhittier.org for details.
- ◆ **Summer Compline**, Mondays at 8pm, Zoom - Contact Rev. Carole for details.
- ◆ **Our Time**, Third Tuesdays, 2:00-3:30 pm, Chapel - Contact Rev. Carole for details.
- ◆ **Men's Bibliophile Group**, next meeting August 19 at 6:30 pm to discuss *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* - Contact Chuck Carrillo for the meeting ID and pass code.
- ◆ **Stitchery Group**, Third Saturdays, 9am-noon, Chase Room - Contact Ellen Mykkanen for details.
- ◆ **Daughters of the King**, 3rd Sundays at 1pm, Chase Room - Contact Rev. Carole for details.
- ◆ **Women's Book Group**, next meeting September 12 at 7pm at the home of Feppy Rahn to discuss *Absolution by Murder (Sister Fidelma Mysteries #1)* by Peter Tremayne and *The Expats* by Chris Pavone - Email Andrea Schmid at andrea@stmatthiaswhittier.org for details.
- ◆ **Divine Connection Through Body and Breath**, Sundays at 2pm, Zoom - Contact Cynthia Orsini-Dahl at cynthia@cynthiaorsinidahl.com for log-in details.

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Cornerstone



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Worship at Saint Matthias: August 2021

August 1

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Exodus 16:2-4,9-15; Psalm 78:23-29; Ephesians 4:1-16; John 6:24-35

August 8

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

1 Kings 19:4-8; Psalm 34:1-8; Ephesians 4:25-5:2; John 6:35, 41-51

August 15

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Proverbs 9:1-6, Psalm 34:9-14, Ephesians 5:15-20, John 6:51-58

August 22

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Joshua 24:1-2a,14-18; Psalm 34:15-22; Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:56-69

August 29

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; Psalm 15; James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23



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