

SAINT MATTHIAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Saint Matthias Messenger

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Saint Matthias Episcopal Church
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Office Hours
Monday - Friday
9:00^{AM} - 4:00^{PM}

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Sunday Worship Services
via Zoom at 10:00^{am}
<https://zoom.us/j/91597283264>
or - via Facebook at 10:00^{am}
<https://www.facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier>

The Wilderness

What do we think about February? For me the month gets lost after the end of the previous year, and it follows January when the New Year begins and hopes are so high. February feels like "business as usual". All the color has gone out of the landscape. Especially this year as we continue to suffer in this pandemic.

In some parts of the country the loss of color is physically true. Lots of snow, mud, and gray skies everywhere you look. Here in Whittier, it is a little cold, and we can probably expect some rain, but let's face it, the weather in this part of the country is pretty phenomenal year-round. Nice weather is a major reason there are so many people living in these parts.

February 17th is Ash Wednesday and I think it is especially appropriate for Lent to start at this time. We are reminded of our mortality on that date, as if Mother Nature isn't already doing so during this pandemic, and we walk out into the wilderness with Jesus for forty days.

Have you ever spent much time in the wilderness? I don't care what kind of wilderness we are talking about. It could be desert or not, mountains or valleys, cactus or trees. The things that mark the wilderness for me are a lack of other people and an absence of things societal, a location where one is in danger of becoming lost, and the wind.

When we are truly alone it is an odd and disconcerting feeling, especially for those of us who are not country dwellers. That low hum that is heard in civilization, all the time, is gone. On top of that as we look around, we struggle for landmarks and ways to find our way forward or back. Things begin to all look the same. The final insult is the wind that beats at us with its own noise, distracting us from thinking as coherently as we would like. It can add up to a pretty frightening feeling. It becomes pretty obvious, very quickly, that the wilderness can overcome us if we are not prepared.

(Continued on p. 2)



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This wilderness is where we go with Jesus. And that's the good news. We go with Jesus. And that applies to real wildernesses and the desert pandemic we have all been suffering through for the last year.

In the wilderness we can hear the voice of Jesus most clearly. There are no distractions. In addition, we know that we are in some danger and so we are even more ready to accept the guidance of our shepherd. Lastly, this is when we are most real. We are stripped of all the societal mirages that confuse us, and make us believe that we are indeed the masters of our fate. We know most clearly in the wilderness that this is God's world, and a partnership with the creator of the universe is the only true reality of things.

And so, I invite us all to head on into the desert with Jesus. If life has already brought you there keep hanging on to the shepherd and listening to his voice. The rest of us are coming to join you. As they say, the wilderness clarifies our priorities magnificently.

Fr. Bill +

The Jesus Curve

It's hard to believe but we are almost in Lent. Our Lenten journey last year was, to say the least, fraught with changes. It was during Lent that we first learned about the coronavirus. I know that at first I was cavalier about it. Did we really have to be lectured on how to wash our hands? What made people so crazy that they were hoarding toilet paper? We thought we'd be back in church by Easter. And then by Pentecost. And then by All Saints. We flirted with getting back to normal. But the numbers of deaths and hospitalizations just weren't with us. So we learned new skills like mask making and mask wearing. We learned new language. "Zoom" used to be a description more commonly heard at NASCAR. Now it's what we do several times a week to work, study and worship with family, friends, classmates and co-workers.

We've made changes. Have we been transformed?

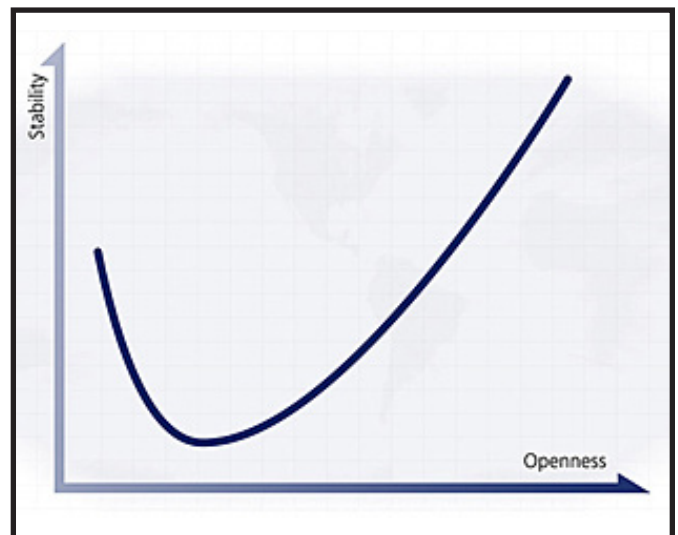
Two year ago we had a small group that looked at wellness in community. One of the ways of looking at the changes in our lives was by something that the program's creator, Fr. Scott Stoner, called the J Curve. Think of it as a capital J leaning hard to the right. We enter the downward part of the J at a time of decreased stability when the predictable comforts of our lives are falling away. At the bottom of the curve it is clear that we are not returning to the old normal but we don't yet have a sense of what a new normal might look like. As we move up along the J Curve's right side we begin to experience renewed energy and a sense of new possibilities.

Maybe it's a coincidence that the metaphor for this transforming process is a J. Because it could be called a Jesus curve. It is the curving path of wilderness, death, resurrection and rebirth. In Lent this is the path that we are invited to walk with Jesus to the cross. It's certainly a path of difficult change. But as Jesus' followers came to understand, it was one of incredible transformation from death into life.

When you look back over the last year what J curves have you experienced? Where are you along the J Curve? Where has God been present for you? Certainly none of us asked for the suffering and division that we've been engulfed in. But God has been and will continue to be with us through every wobbly bit of it. Every day we are closer to the end and the clarity of what our new normal might be.

My prayer for all of us is that we will discern lives strengthened and transformed through this wilderness time and deeper in love with God and all the possibilities that God will offer us.

Rev. Carole +



[The J Curve, Eurasia Group \(Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0\)](#)

Meet the Newest Members of the Saint Matthias Family



Congratulations to Bryan and Nitza Becerra!!! They, along with big sister Olivia, welcomed twins into their family. The twins, a boy and a girl named Oliver and Oliana, were born in August. Since an in-person baby shower was not an option during these COVID times, the Episcopal Church Women showered them with Target gift cards. Nitza was overjoyed and very touched by the loving kindness and generosity of the women of St. Matthias. We can't wait to see their little family coming up the aisle for communion when we all can be together again in church!

*--Janice Webster,
ECW Co-Chair*



A Baby Shower for Sarah Corbitt

You don't want to miss this special celebration! Please join ECW as we shower Sarah (and Ben) with love and gifts to help welcome their little Gummy Bear, as they call her. All are invited. The shower will be on Zoom on Saturday, February 20th at 10:00 AM. They are registered at Target and Amazon:

- Amazon - <https://www.amazon.com/baby-reg/1UDDEQHELMG80>
- Target - <tgt.gifts/GummyBearCorbitt>

You can have your gift sent directly to their home address (listed in the church directory) or you can drop off your gift at the church by Thursday, February 18th.

We hope to see you...on Zoom!

--Janice Webster, ECW Co-Chair



Stimulus Money for the Soup Hour

Dear Friends,

At our January vestry meeting we were discussing the financial reports for this past year, and thinking about the budget for 2021 for both the church and the **Soup Hour**. Towards the end of the meeting our vestry arrived at a terrific idea.

Our government is sending out stimulus money to a large percentage of the population. We talked about the fact that not everyone really needs the money, and that many folks not only need it but could use a lot more than they are receiving.

Personally, I have received mine as a direct deposit to my checking account. I am one of those that really doesn't need the money. I certainly don't need it like others do. I can't help feeling a bit guilty and am led to look for people that do.

As the vestry discussed this issue it occurred to us that we serve a portion of our community in the **Soup Hour** that needs help. Perhaps, we thought, those of us that really didn't need our stimulus money might send some of it to the **Soup Hour** to help put it on even more solid financial footing. And get a tax deduction to boot!

So, please consider your personal situation and decide if you might be one those folks like myself that are willing to put a portion of your stimulus money to work solidifying the **Soup Hour's** financial position. If you need it or have a better idea please don't feel pressure to help out, but I think it's a great idea and hope others will too.

Blessings to each of you, Fr. Bill+



Services and Ongoing Small Groups

If you do not have internet access, you can still join Zoom meetings by telephone. (A standard landline is fine; a smart phone is not necessary.) Just dial (669) 900-6833, and, when prompted to enter the meeting I.D., enter the number that you see below at the end of the web address for the meeting you want to attend.

- ✦ **Holy Eucharist**, Sundays at 10am - <https://zoom.us/j/91597283264> or <https://www.facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier>
- ✦ **Sunday School** - Sundays after church - Email Andrea Schmid at andrea@stmatthiaswhittier.org for details.
- ✦ **Daughters of the King**, 3rd Sundays at 1pm - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/618771589>
- ✦ **Bible Study**, Wednesdays at 10am - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/778461428>
- ✦ **Men's Bibliophile Group**, 3rd Thursdays at 6:30pm - Contact Chuck Carrillo for the meeting ID and pass code.
- ✦ **Women's Book Group**, next meeting March 7 at 7pm to discuss *The Choice* by Dr. Edith Eva Eger- Email Andrea Schmid at andrea@stmatthiaswhittier.org for details.
- ✦ **Divine Connection Through Body and Breath**, Fridays at 10am, Saturdays at 10:30am, and Sundays at 2pm - Email Cynthia Orsini-Dahl at cynthia@cynthiaorsinidahl.com for log-in details.

Message from the Senior Warden

I have been honored to serve as Senior Warden this year. When I accepted the request from Fr. Bill to serve we had no idea 2020 would be such a transformative year. It was certainly one for the record books. We were able to nimbly switch to virtual meetings for worship, small groups and vestry. We all learned to “zoom”, unmute ourselves and start video. We are grateful for Andrea Schmid, Alan Semanaj and Tom Booth for their tireless efforts to keep us connected.

We continued to feed, provide hygiene kits and socks to our guests at the Soup Hour. And even though we were unable to schedule the annual fundraiser for the Soup Hour we were able to apply for and receive several grants that have helped make up the difference.

The people of this parish never faltered in their support of the many ministries of St. Matthias. We are truly a community of faith that lives out its Baptismal Covenant. Thank you and may God continue to bless us.

*Yours in Christ,
Mary Jean Christian*

2021 Vestry Slate

For your information, and in accordance with Section 3-10 of the St. Matthias Bylaws, The St. Matthias Vestry announces the following people as candidates for Vestry: Tim Adams, Janice Webster, Mike Garabedian, and Doug Halliday.

If you would like to run, or nominate a person who is willing to run, please note the qualifications listed below. The election will be held at the Annual Meeting on Zoom following the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, February 21, 2021.

The following shall be qualified Electors: Any person sixteen years of age or over and attendant upon the services of the Parish, who for the previous twelve (12) months shall have been registered upon the Parish rolls as a baptized communicant in good standing of that Parish; the list of qualified electors shall be published by the Vestry no less than thirty (30) days prior to any special or annual meeting of the Parish. The effective date of the Canon shall be January 1, 2016. (AMENDED February 11, 1972, December 4, 1998, and December 7, 2014)

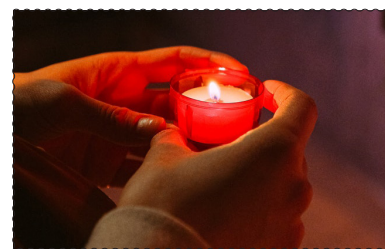
*Secretary of Convention,
Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles*

Why We Lament

In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic struck America during the middle of Lent, a season associated with deprivation. Some people made light of the shutdowns, joking, “I didn’t mean to give up this much for Lent!” Others asked why the suffering was occurring in the first place.

Professor N.T. Wright, in an essay for *Time*, explains that asking “why?” but receiving no answer is key to biblical lamenting. Adding to the mystery, he says, is that God also laments — grieving at the wickedness of humans, despairing over Israel’s unfaithfulness. Jesus cries at a friend’s tomb; the Holy Spirit groans in anguish.

“Part of the Christian vocation,” Wright concludes, is not being able to explain why but lamenting instead. “As the Spirit laments within us,” he says, “so we become, even in our self-isolation, small shrines where the presence and healing love of God can dwell. And out of that there can emerge new possibilities ... new hope.”



Source: The Newsletter Newsletter



join us on zoom for

EVENTS IN LENT

Ash Wednesday	2/17, noon & 7 p.m.
Corbitt Baby Shower	2/20, 10 a.m.
Annual Meeting	2/21 after church
Lenten Compline	Mondays from 2/22, 8 p.m.
Lenten Series	Thursdays from 2/25, 7 p.m.
Vestry Retreat	2/27, 8:30 a.m.-noon
Lenten Quiet Day	3/6, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

look for details and zoom links in the midweek update email

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CENTURY 21[®]

Cornerstone



Alan Selmanaj

Century 21 Cornerstone

(562) 587-6131

aselmanaj@roadrunner.com

Worship at Saint Matthias February 2021

February 7

Scripture:

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39; Psalm 147:1-12, 21c

February 14

Scripture:

Last Sunday after the Epiphany

2 Kings 2:1-12, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Mark 9:2-9, Psalm 50:1-6

February 17

Scripture:

Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2,12-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6,16-21; Psalm 103

February 21

Scripture:

First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9:8-17, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15, Psalm 25:1-9

February 28

Scripture:

Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38; Psalm 22:22-30



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