

SAINT MATTHIAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Saint Matthias Messenger

Published Monthly

Volume 18 Issue 3 - March 2021



Saint Matthias Episcopal Church
7056 Washington Avenue
Whittier, CA 90602
(562) 698-9741
office@stmatthiaswhittier.org
www.stmatthiaswhittier.org

Office Hours
Monday - Friday
9:00^{AM} - 4:00^{PM}

Rector
The Rev. Bill Garrison
bill@stmatthiaswhittier.org

Associate
Rev. Carole Horton-Howe
carole@stmatthiaswhittier.org

Associate
Rev. Carolyn Estrada
poco138@gmail.com

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>

Just Because You Can Doesn't Mean You Should

I am writing this article on the eighth of February. You won't see it for close to thirty days but I am expecting our discussion here to be even more relevant than now.

You see it won't be long till people will be asking, sometimes stridently, when we are going to reopen for worship inside. There is going to be tremendous political pressure and the Supreme Court is going to be letting all of us know that we have the "right" to reopen commensurate with other secular businesses. Additionally, my expectation is that many non-Episcopalian churches will be opening their doors for in person worship in the next few weeks. Their theological rationale for doing this will be one we do not share.

Right now, we seem to be in the eye of the storm. Hospitalizations are falling. Deaths rates are expected to improve soon. Vaccinations are happening and there is hope that the number of folks vaccinated daily and weekly will soon accelerate. However, being in the eye of the storm we suspect that another surge may be coming. We just had Super Bowl weekend and there are Covid-19 variants headed our way.

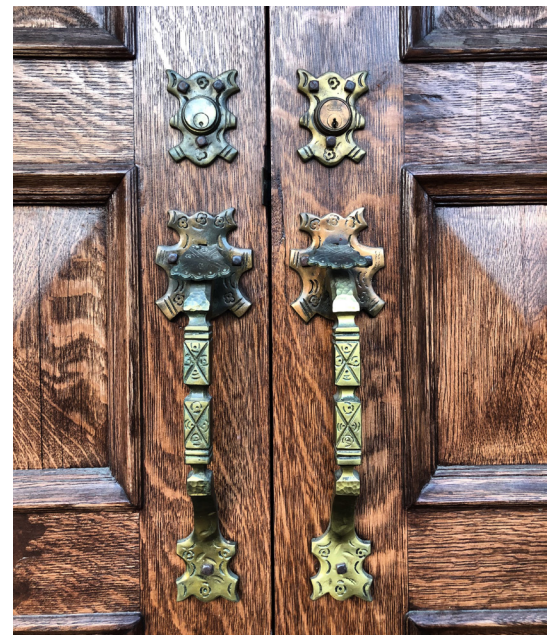
Scientists tell us that vaccinations are the ultimate answer to the pandemic. In the meantime, as the nation is vaccinated, social distancing and masks are our best bet for individual and group safety. We are hopeful that by June or July enough of the population will have been vaccinated that we may begin to lead a somewhat "normal" life again.

In the meantime, we will begin reopening when it appears to be safe to do so. We are keeping a confidential list of parishioners that have taken at least their first dose of vaccine and we do have a plan in place including social distancing and masks when the time comes.

I am reminded of a little joke that goes like this.

A fellow was stuck on his rooftop in a flood. He was praying to God for help. Soon a man in a rowboat came by and the fellow shouted to the man on the roof, "Jump in, I can save you."

(Continued on p. 2)



(Continued from p. 1)

The stranded fellow shouted back, "No, it's OK, I'm praying to God and God is going to save me." So, the rowboat went on. Then a motorboat came by. "The fellow in the motorboat shouted, "Jump in, I can save you."

To this the stranded man said, "No thanks, I'm praying to God and God is going to save me. I have faith." So, the motorboat went on.

Then a helicopter came by and the pilot shouted down, "Grab this rope and I will lift you to safety."

To this the stranded man again replied, "No thanks, I'm praying to God and God is going to save me. I have faith." So, the helicopter reluctantly flew away.

Soon the water rose above the rooftop and the man drowned. He went to Heaven. He finally got his chance to discuss this whole situation with God, at which point he exclaimed, "I had faith in you but you didn't save me, you let me drown. I don't understand why!"

To this God replied, "I sent you a rowboat and a motorboat and a helicopter, what more did you expect?"

God has sent us doctors, and nurses, and scientists. Let's listen to them.

Fr. Bill +

Living Forwards, Understanding Backwards

I watched a movie recently in which the two main characters were starting out on a great adventure by flying from their hometown in Indiana to Europe. I had been caught up in the story but suddenly I was hit by a strong emotion I can best describe as intense homesickness. Watching them settle into cramped seats and negotiate stowing bags and buckling seatbelts I was aching to travel somewhere. Anywhere! Even though the airport scenes triggered such a strong reaction, I know it's not about schlepping luggage through TSA screening. It's the promise of different air, sights, sounds and stories that I'm longing for.



And at some point in every trip, I'm happy to gather all those experiences to myself and come home. I recall coming back from a trip a couple years ago on a Sunday night. I dragged my jetlagged self to staff meeting Monday morning where Fr. Bill asked me if I'd had a good time. I said I'd let him know in a couple weeks. I think that's a fair answer. Sometimes we can only appreciate what we've had on the road once we're settled into our home. Soren Kierkegaard put it perfectly: "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."

Some of the great travelers in scripture – the Israelites, Abraham and Sarah, Noah and Joseph – found themselves living life forward without fully understanding its meaning. But they lived in faith that they were called by God to keep moving forward. They were each part of something bigger than themselves that would outlast them. And they continue to inspire us.

In this Lenten season, I think we have an opportunity to relate to what our spiritual ancestors experienced and what Mr. Kierkegaard was taking about. Our last year has been a time of moving forward without knowing where we were going or what coming home might look like or when we might arrive there. Now in Lent we have a chance to gather up all the experiences we've had through the long summer, the fall and winter holidays. We have a chance to understand backwards how God has been present day after day as we figured out how to keep moving, walking forward in faith, facing into our reality.

My prayer for all of us is that this Lent will be a time of vision and clarity – a special 2021 version of new air, sights, sounds and stories. Whether we are moving forward or reflecting back, God loves and cares for us every moment.

-Blessings, Rev. Carole+

How to Pray Without Ceasing

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

-1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Did Paul literally mean 'without ceasing' when he told the Thessalonians to pray... or was he exaggerating to make a point?" This is where most discussions of this topic begin — and it is also where my treatment of "praying without ceasing" will decidedly not begin. Rather, I'll begin with pointing out that I (and I suspect you too) deeply want to enter into a life of never-ending prayer. In fact, this might be the deepest and strongest desire inside us.

Why do I think this? Because when I am sitting on my front porch at night, with a cup of tea in hand, wrapped in a blanket, and looking up at the moon... I am able to 'see' myself and God and the world much more clearly than in other times. And on these nights I have often found that my heart is reaching out, pointing me to some other world out there, and desiring to live there.

When I examine this desire closely, I notice that the "world" my heart wants is actually not far away — not separated from me by a thousand years, or a million miles, or the iron curtain of logical impossibility. No, the world I find myself wanting on these nights is very close... possibly even accessible from this porch I am sitting on. Though how exactly "another world" can be so close, I admit is hard to say. Now three observations:



First, I don't think I'm crazy - or just being poetic. Jesus talked a lot about this other world. He called it "The Kingdom of Heaven"... and a large part of his ministry on earth was spent marching around from town to town, announcing that this other world is "at hand." "Nearby." "Within you." Moreover... He taught that this world is "like a treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in their joy they go and sell all that they have and buy that field." Which confirms what my heart has long told me on quiet nights - not only is it true THAT there is another world, but it is unimaginably good. Worth selling everything for.

A second observation: it is in praying — in opening myself to God, to His words and will... in laying my desires, and fears, and requests before His feet — that I find myself most truly stepping into this other world. And living "from" it. Every time I begin to pray, it is as if I have chosen to start existing in that other world my heart wants to live in, and to make decisions "from" that reality. To describe more exactly what is going on here is beyond the scope of this essay — but suffice to say, I have found this to be true.

Third and finally, let's return to the title of this piece: "How to Pray without Ceasing." So how CAN you and I accomplish this? How CAN we live "from" this other world, which is unimaginably good, at every moment of our lives... as we cook dinner, rinse dishes, work at the computer, sign up for new insurance policies, change diapers, and crawl through traffic on our way to the office? Or in other words, how CAN we pray without ceasing?

Seeing as I am already 100 words past the count I was supposed to aim for in this piece, and given that I don't yet have the knowledge required to answer these questions comprehensively — I'll just tell you where to start. Or at least, where I have started: start with realizing that you want it. Start with realizing that prayer transports you into what I have called "another world," and what Jesus called another "Kingdom"... one that is unimaginably good - a place worth selling everything for. Realize this Kingdom is nearby, at all times. And that you can step into it at any moment, by simply opening yourself to God in prayer. The first step in going anywhere is realizing that you want to go there.

-Sam Hayashida, Youth Sunday School Teacher

Parishioner Profile: Carol McCracken

I grew up in the Episcopal Church: baptized, confirmed, and both marriages. Widowed twice, I have 4 grown children, and 14 grandchildren. We came to St Matthias in 1968 or 1969 from a troubled parish. Father Jenkins greeted us at the door, saying, "Well, we don't want to steal you away. If you return next week, try the "Round Table" starting at 9:00." Perfect for us! I also taught Sunday School for a number of years.

THE BIBLE IN MY LIFE

Growing up my mother kept telling me that she had read the entire Bible, and that we should too. I started several times in the King James Version, but couldn't get past the first two or three chapters. During the 60s there was a lot of talk about fresh, new translations. While visiting my mother she offered me a free book from her Book of the Month Club. I saw a new translation of the Torah by Jewish scholars. She was horrified at my choice (I was secretly delighted), but was a good sport and ordered it. By the time I finished Genesis I was hooked! I happily read the next four books, then, on the advice of my Rector, I switched to the RSV. Through the years I have also used the Phillips, Jerusalem, New English and New RSV. I have taken part in several interdenominational Bible Classes, Bible Study Fellowship, WOW, Community Bible Study and currently the Wednesday morning Bible Class. I particularly enjoy hearing other people's take on a given passage.



PARISH TREASURER FOR 25 YEARS

Under the influence of several sermons suggesting we offer up our talents and skills in service to God, (My job was as a full charge bookkeeper) I volunteered for the audit committee. They found that I knew a debit from a credit and knew computers, so a year or so later, after our parish treasurer quit in a huff, I was called to become the next treasurer. After several guys had turned it down, I really have to credit Chet Howe for taking a chance on another female. I well remember Chet and Bill Krenz looking me in the face and claimed that it was really "no more work than being on the Vestry". Ha! I enjoyed my years as Treasurer, and later also as Bookkeeper, feeling it was where God put me. I blew hot and cold on how "religious" this calling was. I was looking for something more faith building. After retiring from Treasurer, I kept payroll, since I can work cheaper than a payroll service, and I enjoy it!

BENEDICTINE ASSOCIATE AND DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

I watched with joy as Shirley Rose moved from DCE through the steps to the ordained ministry. But I have never had the least desire to become a priest. As a child I would have liked to be an acolyte, but at that time girls weren't allowed. I was strongly pulled toward the Lay Benedictine Order. I first heard about this in the late 80s and early 90s when Norvine Vest spoke several times at St Matthias. I wrote a first draft of my Rule of Life, but the commitment to daily prayer seemed too much as I was still working full time, and had the care and feeding of a husband two of my children. When Karen McQueen started this new group in the late 1990s or early 2000s I eagerly embraced all the teaching, rewrote my Rule and expanded my morning ritual by actually reading the assigned readings in Forward Movement. In an age of job descriptions and corporate culture, I found Benedict's Rule a refreshing look at early writing on how a group of people could live and work together successfully. As I have lived with Benedictine spirituality for a number of years I continue feel its influence in my life. After Karen moved on, we formed a Benedictine Group at St Matthias for several years. Under the prodding of Alan Selmanaj, in 2012 I formally became an Associate of Holy Cross at Mount Calvary Monastery in Santa Barbara, a Benedictine Order. Sadly, the retreat house at Mount Calvary had to close, but I am already set up to affiliate with the order that is now housed somewhere back east. Joining an Order is a lifetime commitment.

When Rev. Carole came to St Matthias she started a group to look at the Order of Daughters of the King. The spirituality and requirements for Daughters is very similar to Holy Cross, including the requirement for a Rule of Life, and daily prayers. Daughters adds two things important to me. First is a place to regularly meet and talk with other similar minded people, and the second was the call to evangelism. I am still not very good at evangelism.

As the years go by, "I do not lose heart. Even though my outer nature is wasting away, my inner nature is being renewed day by day" --2 Corinthians 4:16

On Waiting

A wise philosopher named Tom Petty once said “The waiting is the hardest part.” As I write this, it is two days until the beginning of Lent. I’m currently waiting for the chance to enjoy some pancakes on Shrove Tuesday (which will have passed by the time you read this). I have a printed image of pancakes taped on a countdown wheel in our living room, so you can believe me when I say the anticipation is real.



It’s not just pancakes on my mind, though. My wife Sarah and I are waiting to welcome a baby girl into our lives and the St. Matthias community. There is also a chance she will have arrived by the time the March Messenger goes out. We have been waiting for her since last summer, and now she is almost here. We are so hopeful that the days we feel the need to keep her safely sequestered from the loving community will be few, and that she will one day listen to our stories of the pandemic world she entered with disbelief, or even boredom at how unlike her daily reality it all sounds.

But my personal waiting is also tied into our waiting as a community, because we are all waiting for the day when life will finally start to take on the more familiar contours we remember from a year ago. The day we can take communion together will be a huge milestone. I would not be surprised if our first official service back in person without distancing restrictions rivals Easter Sunday in attendance. There is so much pent-up desire for community in our church and in our broader society.

There are hopeful signs as spring approaches. Vaccines have finally arrived, and as the final days of winter tick away, infection numbers have taken an encouraging dive. We have reason to be hopeful for brighter days this spring

and summer. It would be a welcome confluence if the return of long, sunshiny days on the calendar also heralded the return of the warm hugs and face-to-face coffee confabs that have been missing from our lives of late.

We can’t know for sure what this spring will look like. We can only hope, and continue to wait. I believe that the wait will be worth it.

-Ben Corbitt, Vestry Member

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Silly Rabbit...Easter is for Jesus!

What better way to reflect the love of Jesus than to make and donate Easter Baskets to those in need in our community!

ECW is once again making Easter baskets, and we need your help. We would greatly appreciate donations of individually wrapped snack items to put in the baskets or small, wrapped candy to fill the plastic Easter eggs. If you would rather just make a monetary donation, we will be happy to purchase the items for you. Following is list of examples of the type of individually wrapped snacks that work well:

Cheezits, Teddy Grahams, Goldfish, Fruit By the Foot, fruit gummies, cookies, or granola bars. Any snack item that is individually wrapped will work and be greatly appreciated.

The Easter Baskets will be donated to the Interfaith Food Center and to Shelter’s Right Hand. You may drop off your donations at the church by Friday, March 19th or shop online and have them sent directly to the church. The church address is 7056 S. Washington Ave., Whittier, CA 90602. If you have any questions, please contact Janice Webster at 562-619-3091 or w.webster6@yahoo.com or Kathy Adams @ ktouch52@gmail.com. Thank you for your generosity and for supporting another ECW project!

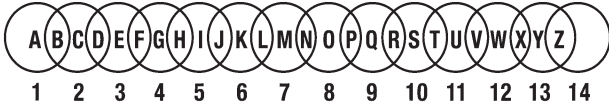
-Janice Webster, ECW Co-Chair



Puzzle!

Use the code to complete the blanks — and find out how God wants us to treat people.

CODE:



1,2 3 6 5 7,8 2,3 1 7,8 2,3

2 8 7 8,9 1 10 10 5 8 7,8 1 10,11 3

10,11 8 8 7,8 3 1 7,8 8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10'

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

8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10' 5,6 11 10 10,11 1 10

5 7,8 2 4,5 9,10 5 10 10,11 4 8 2,3

3,4 8 9,10 4 1 11,12 3 13 8 11'

EPHESIANS 4:32, NIV

Answer: Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32, NIV

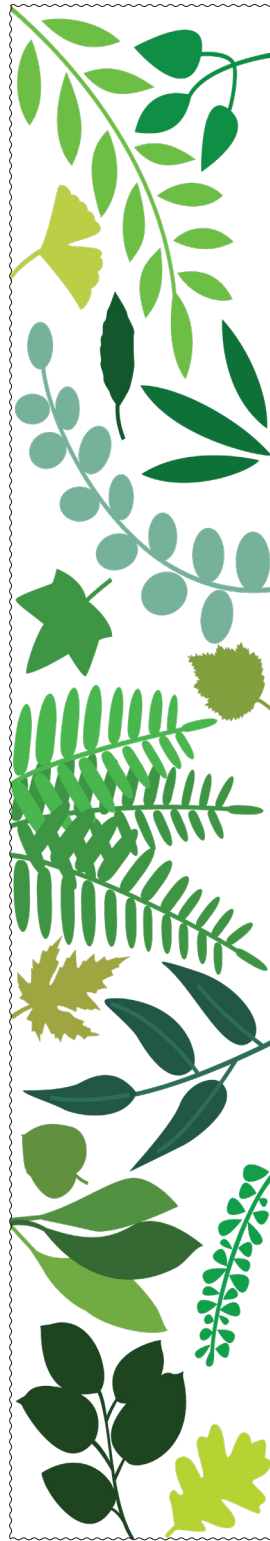
Bible Quiz

As the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, they longingly remembered some of the foods they'd had in Egypt. Which foods were not mentioned?

- A. carrots and potatoes
- B. onions and garlic
- C. fish and leeks
- D. melons and cucumbers



Answer: A (See Numbers 11:4-6.)



FOR THE BIRDS

Display this recycled craft to care for feathered friends.



What you need:

- Peanut butter or vegetable shortening
- Plastic knife
- Empty toilet paper tube
- Bird seed
- A plate
- String

What you do:

1. Spread peanut butter or vegetable shortening on the tube, covering the entire outside surface.
2. Pour bird seed on a plate and roll the tube in the seeds.
3. Thread string through the tube and tie it to make a loop.
4. Hang the bird feeder outside. When seeds are eaten, coat the roll again.

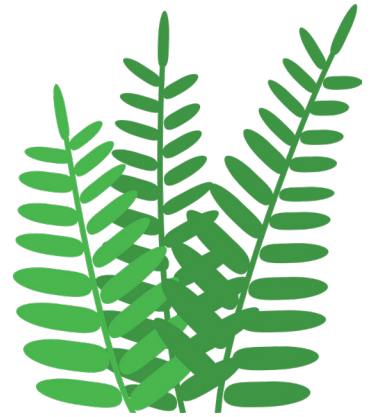
Daylight Saving Time Begins Sunday, March 14





All services will be held on Zoom and streamed live on the Saint Matthias Facebook page.

- ✦ **Palm Sunday** - March 28, 10am
- ✦ **Tenebrae** - Wednesday, March 31, 7pm
- ✦ **Maundy Thursday** - Thursday, April 1, 7pm
- ✦ **Good Friday** - April 2, noon and 7pm
- ✦ **Easter Sunday** - April 4, 10am



Services, Events, and 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>
- ✦ **Holy Week Services**- <https://zoom.us/j/91597283264> or <https://www.facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier>
- ✦ **Lenten Compline**, Mondays at 8pm - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89017563804>
- ✦ **Lenten Series**, Thursdays at 7pm - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89470949660>
- ✦ **Women's Lenten Quiet Day**, Saturday, March 13, 9am-noon - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/618771589>
- ✦ **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.

Thank You for Sponsoring the *Messenger*

If you're interested in sponsoring the *Messenger* by purchasing space on this page, please contact Andrea Schmid at andrea@stmatthiaswhittier.org.

CENTURY 21®

Cornerstone



Alan Selmanaj

Century 21 Cornerstone

(562) 587-6131

aselmanaj@roadrunner.com

Worship at Saint Matthias March 2021

March 7

Third Sunday in Lent

Scripture:

Exodus 20:1-17, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, John 2:13-22, Psalm 19

March 14

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Scripture:

Numbers 21:4-9; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

March 21

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Scripture:

Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 5:5-10, John 12:20-33, Psalm 119:9-16

March 28

Palm Sunday

Scripture:

Liturgy of the Palms: Mark 11:1-11, Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Liturgy of the Word: Isaiah 50:4-9a, Philippians 2:5-11, Mark 15:1-39,

Psalm 31:9-16



Non-Profit
Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #204
Whittier, CA

Saint Matthias Episcopal Church
7056 Washington Avenue
Whittier, CA 90602
(562) 698-9741
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL