



# THE ORACLE

SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



## How do we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God?

Peter B. Stube

Paul says, *I beseech you sisters and brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect**.* So how do we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice so that our minds are renewed by God?

A Rule of Life is a set of choices we follow that allow us to focus on what is most important to God and therefore to us; so that we can find what is good and acceptable and perfect to God. If we are to grow in ever deepening faith and love of God, we will have our minds renewed by God so that we might serve God and each other and those whom we encounter on the way. As we follow after God, the Spirit will work out God's purposes through the ways we live our lives for God. Here follow some essentials for the Spiritual journey:

- Prayer: An ever-deepening understanding of the need to pray and how to pray, individually and corporately. Paul says, "Pray without ceasing . . ." and ". . . for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." God is ever present with us teaching us to pray and answering when we call, transforming our lives and the lives of those around us. When we are overwhelmed God, the Holy Spirit prays in our stead. In contemplative prayer our deep calls out to God's deep.
- Scripture: We study Scripture, not as tablets of stone, but as the living book that informs me/us about how God has been known in all human experiences since he created us. By knowing what the first readers of Scripture understood, we can then make the leap

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*continued*

to the current moment and find how the Scripture and the faithful speak to us today. To understand Scripture, we are attentive to the Holy Spirit who teaches us, drawing from the Biblical record what we most need to hear today and how that knowledge shapes how I/we live today.

- Community: We are learning that Christian faith community is to be a place for all people who “call upon God.” It is the place where we encourage and are encouraged in the work Christ has given us today. We realize with the prophets that this all Christian faith community is to be a house of prayer for all people. Isaiah 56. This means all are welcome “in this place.” Our maturation is formed by the ways we learn to love each other although we may be vastly different from each other.
- Community Responsibility: Christ calls each of us to lay aside our own prerogatives and serve each other as Christ did (Philippians 2). We are called to the imitation of Christ, a life of sacrifice, service to others, encouragement, exhortation, and care for each other and our neighbor.
- Study: Paul advises Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.” Daily engagement with Scripture, and study of theology and ethics, and daily prayer prepare us for our mission to each other and the world. We seek truth wherever it leads, whatever it costs, for all truth is God’s truth.
- Listening: I learn to listen to my companions on the journey, as a friend, as one called alongside to help. I am open to all God’s children and I realize that the process of listening takes time, because sometimes trust has to be built where none has existed. I have to hear their stories and they mine. To listen deeply, demands full hearted, unselfish listening that allows the others deep to speak to mine and vice versa.
- Theological Reflection: Informed by our prayer, our study of Scripture, our place in faithful community, we learn to see God’s hand at work in our lives and in the world about us. We learn to trust the Holy Spirit to bring these resources to bear on decisions we must make. We learn that theological reflection is a fluid process of attentiveness to the Holy Spirit in which we allow the Spirit to draw forward in us the proper response to situations. The laws are written on our soft hearts, hearts in love with God (Ezekiel) not on stone tablets we have memorized.
- Missional Action: There is a deep connection between my prayerfulness, the community in which I worship and that calls forth my gifts and skills, and the missional vocation I engage for Christ in my daily life. It is a rich circle of restfulness and intensity of prayer, encouragement, study and support in community. This anchoring prepares us/me to do the work Christ has given us/me to do. After I engage God’s work in the world, I return to prayer and community for encouragement and perhaps healing that the mission may continue.

This then is a possible template for offering ourselves fully to God and to each other, so that we may **grasp the full measure (norm or measuring stick) of God’s mercy** and thereby test and approve God’s will at work in our lives; in humility and service that we may fulfill his purposes in the world around us.





# *Welcome Back to the Sanctuary!*

St. Matthew's continues to carefully move forward with re-opening plans in the safest way possible for all who participate. As we begin in-person worship inside, we do so with the utmost care. Until there is an effective vaccine, the safest thing is not to gather in person. This new schedule is offered in an abundance of caution and love for our neighbors and one another, particularly the most vulnerable. We evaluate our guidelines regularly, and appropriate adjustments will be made as necessary. While the schedule that follows is our plan through Thanksgiving week, it should not be considered absolute.

About that new schedule...We recognize our new fall worship schedule looks quite different than anything we have done before. The new worship schedule and spiritual education opportunities are a result of multiple meetings with the Vestry, clergy, support staff and the committee for in-person re-entry worship. It is not possible to re-adopt the former service schedule while properly disinfecting between services, continuing to offer the livestream service, and offer a non-conflicting education program. Therefore, we are implementing the following new worship and education times.

You will notice 3 major shifts within the fall service times. The "traditional" 7:45 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services have been combined, and moved to 8 a.m. Our 9 a.m. "contemporary" service has been moved to 9:30 a.m. Again, the predominant reasons for these changes are to offer the safest environment possible for in-person worship, and also create an education schedule that dovetails with worship. We are striving to best fill the needs of our congregation while responding to the unprecedented challenges of living and worshiping during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Sundays at St. Matthew's

September 13 - November 22

**8:00 A.M. HOLY EUCHARIST WITH COMMUNION, TRADITIONAL MUSIC**

**9:30 A.M. HOLY EUCHARIST WITH COMMUNION, CONTEMPORARY MUSIC**

**11:00 A.M. ADULT LIFELONG LEARNING VIA ZOOM (SEE PG 8!)**

### What you need to know about attending in person:

1. **You must register** to attend any of our services, and attendance will be **limited to 25**, which includes the worship leaders. A registration form will be available through links in our weekly emails, as well as here: <https://reopen.church/r/MZEUeRNk>. If you are unable to do this electronically, please call the Parish Office, 215-646-4092.
2. All attendees must wear masks from the point at which they exit their vehicles. Please be sure your masks fully cover your nose and mouth.
3. **8:00 a.m.** service attendees will park in the **upper parking lot**, and enter the church through the double doors facing Tennis Ave. **9:30 a.m.** service attendees will park in the **lower parking lot**, and enter the church through the double doors to the narthex. If you require handicapped access, please use the upper lot for both services.

# Welcome Back to the Sanctuary!

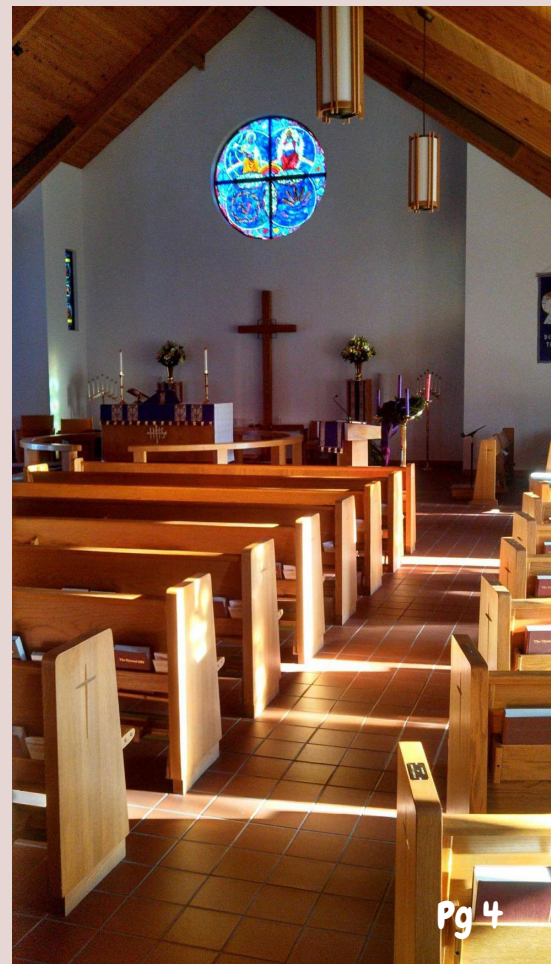
4. You must maintain a minimum 6' distance from others at all times.
5. There will be no social gathering before or after the service.

## **What you need to know about the services:**

1. Pews where you can sit will be clearly marked, and ushers will be available to direct you as needed.
2. Please use the hand sanitizer available in the narthex prior to entering the sanctuary.
3. The service will be the Holy Eucharist, and Holy Communion will be offered in one kind only (bread).
4. If you choose to receive Communion, it will be distributed at the back of the sanctuary, and instructions will be provided as to how to proceed. Always maintain a minimum distance of 6' from those around you.
5. The priest or lay eucharistic minister will be masked and gloved, and will drop the wafer into your hands to avoid physical contact. Remove your mask after receiving, and only to consume the host. Immediately replace your mask.
6. In order to minimize surface touching, we ask that you stand or sit for prayers: no kneeling.
7. There will be a limited number of musicians in attendance, with any singer positioned at a distance of at least 27' from members of the congregation. The congregation is not permitted to sing at this time.
8. There will be no physical contact when passing the peace.
9. There will be a basket available for pledges or donations. The basket will NOT be passed during the offertory. Please place any offertory in the basket prior to the start of the service, or at completion of the service to limit potential interaction with others.
10. A service bulletin containing all necessary material will be emailed in advance, and all are encouraged to print and bring their own. They will also be printed and available on site. You will not have access to hymnals or prayer books.

## **Property Logistics and Safety:**

1. Hand sanitizer will be available in the narthex, as well as in the pews. Tissues will also be in the pews, along with a paper bag for disposal of any items. Disinfectant wipes will be available as you enter the church.
2. All participants must wear masks for the entire service. If you forget to bring yours, we will have some available for your use.
3. The handicapped bathroom, as well as the office wing bathrooms, will be available on an as needed basis. Directions for disinfecting areas that you touch, as well as disinfecting wipes for this purpose, will be available in all bathrooms.
4. The church building, including all bathrooms, is being cleaned and sanitized after each Sunday.
5. Attendance will be monitored via the registration system, and on site, in case contact tracing is required. As a result, it is greatly appreciated that you cancel your reservation if you find that you cannot attend.



# The Lifelong Learning Ministry

*a new, exciting path for Christian Education at Saint Matthew's*

Anthony Carrella, Lifelong Learning Committee Chair & Youth Ministry Coordinator

John Dewey, a venerated American educational reformer, once remarked that **“education is not preparation for life; education is life itself”**. Read that again — **education is life!** What a tremendous and wonderful claim.

Dewey might agree that learning is among the most ancient and fundamental mechanisms possessed by sentient life in the universe. It is a primary driver of animal awareness and decision-making. Where humankind is concerned, it would seem that at the moment God breathed a **breath of life** into the nostrils of Adam, our species entered a most expansive classroom — one of seemingly epic proportions, filled with scores of learners across the epochs. Over the course of time, just **what** and **how** we've learned has not only shaped the human story but has woven our human fabric. But I won't wander too far-off into this metaphysical space; **learning** is simply what we do. It is who we are. It is a space that we encompass. We are born learners, each of us. It would seem that it is only after we breathe our last that the lessons of this life are finally complete.

## What is Lifelong Learning?

**Lifelong Learning** is a new way to frame **Christian Education** at Saint Matthew's. It is a ministry geared to serve each of us — children, youth, and adults alike. It is a space where non-believers, young seekers, new inquirers, and the stalwart alike come together to dwell in the presence and message of Christ. It is a space where we teach and admonish one another to seek out God's call to us and live by Jesus' Way of Love proclaimed by the Gospel. It is a mature and relevant space for wrestling with ideas, and an accessible, safe space for families to learn together. Our diverse team of beloved catechesis professionals, experienced lay leaders, and compassionate clergy are prepared to provide you and your family with consistent programs amid the pandemic. And most importantly, to support your unique Christian call through learning at all stages of life.

## What are the offerings of the Lifelong Learning Ministry?

### Children (K - 5).

**Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:** *students and parents are invited to a live monthly session on Zoom, and to participate in an activity. For those who cannot attend, a recording of the session will be made available on our social media channels for use at home. Zoom links will be posted on the Saint Matt's website, and a reminder e-mail will be sent the evening prior to all families.*

**September: The LORD'S PRAYER: Zoom on 9/13 at 8:45 am.**

**October: THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: Zoom on 10/11 at 8:45 am.**



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## Youth (Grade 6 - 12).

Hey. Saint Matthew's has always had an awesome youth group, but not all of us had a chance to be a part of it because of our age. Some of us wanted to come to youth group, but we were too young. Some of us were old enough, but were really busy with school or work which got in the way. To help solve some of these issues, we are going to shake things up this year and try something different. Something good. Here's why you'll want to join us this year:

### **TWO PARTS...**

**We've got two youth groups now, a Middle *and* a High School group.**

### **... OF ONE WHOLE.**

You'll be invited to two youth group meetings per month: one specifically for kids of your own age group (MS/HS), and another where all of us meet together.

### **RESPECT YOUR TIME.**

The sessions are only forty minutes long, and they're fun. All of us will be sharing conversations, working through the same bible study (a book and materials are provided to you free of cost), and have fun playing games.

### **FEED YOUR CURIOSITY. EXPLORE NEW PERSPECTIVES. SERVE. HAVE FUN.**

We'll explore topics and concepts that are interesting and actually relevant to what's going on in the world right now. We'll explore fresh theological perspectives from contemporary voices, including those of black, latinx, female, LGBT, and gender queer scholars. And we'll have fun doing it on Zoom and in person when it is safe. We have opportunities for performing outreach as well, and we will discuss these in-person at our first session.

### **HELP US DISCERN MISSION TRIP 2021**

Who knows if we'll be able to go on Mission Trip in 2021. It could be possible, and because mission trips take planning, and planning takes time, we will need your help and input week after week to discern how we might serve next summer. How we might make a community decision to embark on a trip, or to plan an alternative activity? How would we make others comfortable to travel amid COVID-19? What extra considerations do we need to take? How will creatively raise money for the trip? We need your help figuring all of this, and much more, out.

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When gathering together is formally declared *safe*, we have a action plan ready to go that will invite us to gather for meetups and hangouts in-person. You might be saying: "*Well, Anthony, it's safe enough for me, so...*". I hear you, but gathering IRL is complex right now. Here's why:

We have to wait for Bishop Daniel to tell us when gathering will be okay, and like all good things, this will happen in God's time. Even though we *are* able to gather in-person at Saint Matthew's for worship, including those of us who are aged 18 and under, our Diocese strongly discourages us from holding any other meeting at the church other than our worship service. Unfortunately, this includes youth group. We are bound by this special obligation to treat your safety and well being as a higher priority than the very real need to gather in-person.

And we're sorry about this.

The world can feel like a hard place right now. But there are many of us going through the same things. If you need a safe spot to express your feelings and find some support, come join us. Seriously. We're trying to impart a *spread the love* vibe here. All are welcome. No matter who you are. Connection information will be sent via postcard to your homes, and email/text reminders will be sent out as well.

Join us on Wednesdays at 5:00 - 5:40 PM through the end of December.

Log in to youth group week after week: **<https://zoom.us/j/91363746529>**

To register for your free materials please visit:

**<https://forms.gle/hKKJrqUwSyKzU4Xo7>**

Signup for text communications by visiting:

**<https://www.remind.com/join/acarrella>**

	September	October	November	December
High School	9.16	10.14	11.11	12.9
Middle School	9.23	10.21	11.18	12.16
All Youth	9.30	10.28	11.25	12.23

## **Adults**

New comers and regulars alike gather in the Saint Matthew's virtual ministry space each week to pray, provide pastoral counsel, and to teach each through Jesus' Way of Love. Lay leaders and clergy support this work by offering a ministry of presence, and by providing opportunities for lifelong scriptural and theological education for adults.

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## ADULT LIFELONG LEARNING FORUM

- Held on Sundays after services at 11:00 AM over Zoom
- We will begin on September 13 at 11:00 am.
- You can join us on Zoom here week after week: <https://zoom.us/j/98791689123>
- You can access the materials here:  
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cEb77sPLdg012jTiQGc9RPEzGdc38XDF?usp=sharing>

This is a unique season in ministry. We are prepared to offer the adults of Saint Matthew's a stimulating, Christ-centered education that empowers them to seek out their Christian call and discern their Christian identity. Throughout this Fall and winter, we will be reading and reflecting on important texts, listening to and discussing on podcasts, and sharing our own thoughts and experiences as we journey together. We will utilize several wonderful resources developed by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry to guide our feet. One of these tools is called **The Way of Love**, and the other is called **Becoming Beloved Community**. These two programs will beckon God's people to consider the ways we commune with the Spirit and how we live according to Christ's message of radical love and compassion through acts of mercy and humility. If you have ideas about what you want to talk about or discuss, or to lead a session, please reach out to Jon Clark, Karen Randall, or Fr. Peter.

## PRAYER GROUPS

The people of Saint Matthew's gather weekly for prayer and conversational gatherings.

**Mondays** at 7:30 PM (every other week): is Bible Study, currently studying the Gospel of Matthew, Zoom Login: <https://zoom.us/j/94688281383>

**Tuesdays** at 7:30 PM: is the Prayer and Share group.

Zoom Login: <https://zoom.us/j/91358309441?pwd=ZE9TekhITINsNTFkTjBOVEFhaU84QT09>

**Wednesdays** at 12:00 PM: is Noon Day Prayer

Zoom Login: <https://zoom.us/j/94299702146>

**Thursdays** at 9:00 AM: is Morning Prayer

Zoom Login: <https://zoom.us/j/93689641213>

## Who's Who in Lifelong Learning?

Introducing members of the LLL Committee:

Linda Baier, Lead Catechist  
Anthony Carrella, Co-chair  
Jon Clark, Adult Education Leader  
Marie Clark, Vestry Liaison

Judy Groben, Committee Secretary and Catechist,  
Karen Randall, Adult Education Leader  
Rvd. Peter Stube, Co-Chair





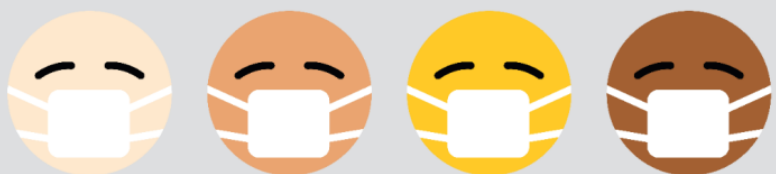
# Nursery School News

This year the Nursery School will open on Monday, September 14, 2020 for its 28th year in the community! The success of the school is due to the creative, talented and dedicated staff that work with the children. Although this school year will look much different than others, we are overjoyed to be back together in our building. To begin the year we will have far fewer families than usual, but are thrilled to have found creative ways to offer our traditional preschool program to our families.

To keep the staff and children as safe as possible we will be following all of the guidelines and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, Department of Human Services and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. This means that all children and staff will wear masks, temperatures will be taken upon arrival, drop off and pick up will be car line only utilizing both the upper and lower parking lots, and only the staff and students will be permitted in the school during school hours. The school will be cleaned at times during the school day, and will be cleaned and disinfected at the end of every school day.



The 2 ½ year old classes begin with a visiting day in which one parent or guardian will come into school with their child and stays for a short visit with their teacher and aide. The 3 year old classes begin with a short session in which half of the children in the class come by themselves for an hour and then the other half of the class comes for an hour by themselves.





# Nursery School News con't



The 4-year old and Pre-K classes begin with regular full day. By the second day of school, almost all of the children are settled in and happy and ready for lots of fun!

The Nursery School children will again be participating in Music with Mrs. Martha Reynolds and Gym with Mrs. Kim Gehlhaus.

Enrichment classes are held weekly for children in the 4 year old classes and include: Mathemagic, Science, Kreative Kids, STEAM and Reading Writing and Fun. The 3 year old classes can participate in the following enrichment classes: Kids in Motion, Sensational Art and STEAM.

For the foreseeable future, any celebrations will take place with the children only.

There are still openings in our classes, if you have friends or family looking for a nursery school. Please call or e-mail the school with any questions at 215.646.4466 or [nurseryschool@verizon.net](mailto:nurseryschool@verizon.net).



**~ Jackie Anderson, Director**  
**St. Matthew's Nursery School**  
**919 Tennis Avenue, Maple Glen,**  
**PA 19002**  
**215-646-4466**

# Rector Search Committee Update

As of August 27th, St. Matthew's has been blessed with many responses to our posting for a new full-time rector. All of the candidates are in various stages of discernment, with the Search Committee meeting multiple times per week to keep the process moving for each Candidate. Each Candidate provides us with a cover letter, a resume, and an OTM Profile from the Diocese which details his/her religious history, after which the Search Committee follows an identical set of steps.

- Review of all of the candidate's materials, and then meet as a committee to discuss content and determine any follow up written questions we have.
- Review the written responses, and determine if the candidate moves on to the next step: Zoom Interview
- The Search Committee divided into two teams, each team responsible for conducting the Zoom Interview with specific Candidates. The Interviews are recorded, with the Candidates permission, so that the rest of the Search Committee can view if unable to attend in person.
- The Search Committee reaches a consensus on whether to continue with each Candidate, and if so, schedules a second Zoom Interview to ask any outstanding questions.
- If we decide to proceed past the second interview, the next step will have the candidate schedule an onsite visit at St. Matthew's Church.

It has been an exciting, and busy, time since the posting went live in May. The original position posting expires on August 28, but we are going to extend the application window for another month to allow more candidates to apply while we continue to screen and interview the current applicants. We are receiving some excellent responses and are witnessing the breadth of experiences and skill sets available to us.

We have completed many zoom interviews so far and we have recently started on round 2 of interviews with select candidates!

More news to come as we proceed with round 2 of interviews.

Faithfully,

Search Committee: Jon Clark, Trent Coombs, Connie Dee, Antonia Green-Edwards, Gabrielle Pascuzzi, Karen Sawyer (co-chair), Manny Sevilla, Roger Sumner, Tim Walsh (co-chair), Nancy Williams





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