

THE ORACLE

SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



St. Matthew's Family,

Let me begin by expressing my own family's heartfelt 'thank you' for the generous welcome you have provided us in so many ways, and all of it during these trying circumstances in which we find ourselves. I know many priests and parishes, and I've never heard of a such a gracious reception for a new rector. In sum, it bears witness to the main draw for us to come and be a part of St. Matthew's, its people; a point I have repeatedly heard from conversations with many of you about why you find this sacred place so unique.

This past 1 ½ months has involved a great deal of listening to your stories about and desires for St. Matthew's. The common themes repeatedly heard are worship services, fellowship, outreach, and youth, which happen to be the same main points expressed by the parish profile and search committee.

Being a cradle-Episcopalian, I can certainly relate to the angst we feel when anyone 'messes' with our services, so let me put any concerns to rest. As we return to in-person worship this month, we will begin with the 8 and 9:30 am services, but eventually return to the three-service schedule with which you are familiar. The 7:45 am Holy Eucharist will be Rite I, the 9 am will be the contemporary service with the Arise Music Team, and the 10:30 am Holy Eucharist will be Rite II with choir. The vibrancy of all three of those offerings is very important to me, as I'm sure it is to those attending them!

Fellowship has been repeatedly mentioned in discussions, and there may be few things we look forward to resuming more than physically joining together with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Space here precludes going into this in depth, but opportunities to gather (inside and outside) are a priority for the Vestry and me.

Of course, one of the ways in which we share fellowship with our St. Matthew's family is by extending it to others. There is a strong desire to find our place regarding outreach in our community. The first place we can direct our attention is no farther than our preschool, and, having always ministered in churches with schools, we will focus on that significant opportunity for interaction right at our doorstep. I've also heard from several of you that more ministering to our neighborhoods is needed, and we are considering areas in which we can make a positive impact that builds up the lives of others locally.



Finally, there is the point repeatedly raised about how to best serve and incorporate into our common life the youth of our parish. Many of you have praised their foundation in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program, but we must make sure we build off that in order to enable our youth to continue to thrive and mature in the Faith up through their high school years (though it doesn't stop there!). As we explore those possibilities, I can say that the youth will be more involved in the life and worship of St. Matthew's, beginning with a Youth Sunday each month, in which they will actively participate in various parts of the services. They each have unique gifts and talents to offer, and it is never too early to encourage stewardship of their own life in Jesus Christ.

There is much wonderful work to be done in this part of the Lord's vineyard, and I am thankful to be among all of you as we minister side-by-side to extend God's Kingdom in this beautiful and sacred place in Maple Glen.

With Love in Christ,
Rodney+

A Message from the Treasurer

St. Matthew's parishioners - you showed your incredible generosity and loyalty this past year, giving from your hearts as we move in a new direction under the guidance of Father Rodney. Our year-end review showed annual pledge income of just over \$300K, and other giving of almost \$24K. Pledges for 2021 have exceeded \$318K, which includes 12 new pledges, and an average increase of 9.24% from those who pledged in 2020. I asked you to prayerfully commit, and you did! Thank you for your dedication and support of our wonderful parish family.

Karen Randall
Vestry Treasurer

Youth Clothing and Supply Ingathering - February 2021 Outreach Project

Now through the end of February, St. Matthew's is gathering new clothing and supplies for children ages infant through 12 to be sent to St. Timothy's Episcopal Outreach Center in Kentucky for distribution in this impoverished Appalachian area. This year, we will be sharing the collection with Cradles to Crayons, a local charity that provides for local impoverished children.

How to Participate:

- Purchase brand-new clothing and drop it off in the boxes by the kitchen, or outside St. Matthew's (919 Tennis Ave, Maple Glen) in the plastic bins at the lower parking lot entrance to the Narthex.
- Purchase brand-new clothing via an online retailer or Amazon (see our Wish List for options) and send it to Tim Walsh. His home address is 126 Morning Walk Dr., Warrington PA 18976.
- Make a donation through our online giving page by choosing "Layette Offering" from the dropdown menu (or click on the button below), and we will purchase clothing for you!

We will be collecting until February 28.

Questions? Reach out to Tim Walsh via email or contact the Parish Office at 215-646-4092.



Lent at St. Matthew's

Saint Matthew's invites your family to observe a holy Lent this year in the ways you are comfortable with. **Lent-at-Home kits** for families will be available for pick-up by the parish beginning on Sunday, February 14. There are two kits to choose from depending on the ages in your household, but all include an adult devotional and ashes for self imposition via Zoom on 2/17 at 6:00 PM

Young Kid's Kit: lenten sheep calendar, coloring book prayer hands, an alleluia banner, a lenten promise poster, and more!

Older Kid's Kit an alleluia banner, a lenten origami sculpture, a lenten promise poster, an illustrated family devotional, and more!

Ash Wednesday / February 17

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary, in-person only

6:00 p.m. Imposition of Ashes Service via Zoom, Mtg ID: 960-2682-5472

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary, in-person & Livestream

In-person registration is required: <https://rsvp.church/r/MZEUeRNk>

Lenten Weekly Offerings

Wednesdays @ 6:00 p.m.

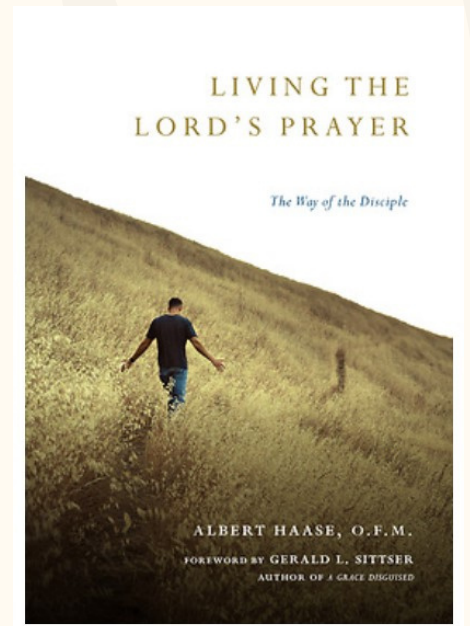
Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary, registration required: <https://rsvp.church/r/MZEUeRNk>.
These services are in-person only. They will NOT be livestreamed.

Thursdays @ 7:00 p.m.

What does it mean to live what you pray? When you pray the Lord's prayer have you often thought about what the words really mean? . . . **(Continued on Pg 4)**

Lent at St. Matthew's

. . . Join us in reading the book *Living the Lord's Prayer: The Way of the Disciple* by Albert Haase, OFM. Father Haase teaches us to think about the words we pray and the meaning our prayers have for our spiritual formation and daily lives. Starting February 25th, we will begin a five-week session from 7 pm to no later than 8:30 pm via Zoom. The book is available at Amazon. If you cannot purchase the book, but would like to attend, please contact the church office at 215-646-4092. Please consider joining us for this Lenten opportunity.



Fridays @ 7:00 p.m., Stations of the Cross on Zoom

Sundays @ 11:00 a.m. - Adult Lifelong Learning Forum, A Video Pilgrimage Through the Holy Land on Zoom (please see detailed information in Life Long Learning Ministry on p. 6)

Full Weekly Schedule:

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| Monday | 7:30 p.m.: Bible Study on <u>Zoom</u> , Mtg ID: 910-1184-9622 (3/1 & 3/15) |
| Tuesday | 7:30 p.m.: Prayer & Share Gathering on <u>Zoom</u> , Mtg ID: 913-5830-9441 |
| Wednesday | 12:00 p.m.: Noonday Prayer & Lunch on <u>Zoom</u> , Mtg ID: 943-8248-6248
6:00 p.m.: Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary, in-person only. * |
| Thursday | 9:00 a.m.: Morning Prayer on <u>Zoom</u> , Mtg ID: 923-4782-3061
7:00 p.m.: Living the Lord's Prayer study group on <u>Zoom</u> , Mtg ID: 989-3231-9987 |
| Friday | 7:00 p.m.: Stations of the Cross on <u>Zoom</u> , Mtg ID: 939-2242-4572 |
| Sunday | 8:00 a.m.: The Holy Eucharist – Rite I Service (In-Person and <u>Livestream</u>) *
9:30 a.m.: The Holy Eucharist – Contemporary Service (In-Person and <u>Livestream</u>) *
11:00 a.m.: Adult Lifelong Learning Forum, on <u>Zoom</u> , Mtg ID: 983-7665-6289 |

*In-person registration is required: <https://rsvp.church/r/MZEUeRNk>



Life-Long Learning

SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

M a p l e G l e n | P e n n s y l v a n i a

However your family chooses to walk through this most holy and penitent season, your Life Long Learning Ministry journeys with you toward the very foot of the cross. Take a look at all that we're offering this season:

SUNDAY SCHOOL

I wonder . . . how will you *Lent* (v) in 2021? Will you take up a Lenten discipline, or engage in a fast? How about ashes ; will you receive them at Saint Matt's, or might you try self-imposing them at home via Zoom? Perhaps you'll unwrap one of LLL's *Lent-at-Home* kits and uncover something totally new! Take a look at [page three](#) for our Lenten opportunities and resources for families.

As new, increasingly transmissible strains of the virus emerge, it is likely that Sunday School will remain virtual until pandemic conditions improve. While we understand that virtual instruction remains challenging for some of us, we press on knowing that safety is our utmost priority — for students, parents, and volunteers alike. To precisely respond to your spiritual and formation needs at this time, we invite your to complete a [brief, anonymous survey](#) by visiting tinyurl.com/pgdft5rt The survey aims to identify the ideal timing, frequency, and application of virtual Sunday School at Saint Matthew's. If you haven't yet received our survey, please contact Linda Baier, Anthony Carrella, or the church office. We understand how challenging it is to safely gather amid the pandemic. Rest assured that our team will continue to provide you with the highest quality programs and resources given the present circumstances.

— **The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Team**

YOUTH MINISTRY

You might remember that Saint Matthew's supported your Youth Group program for a number of years. Despite the awesome mission trips and engaging fellowship, we could only offer a limited array of resources to actively support you in your daily life, vocation, and faith formation. Your vestry and leaders wanted to change that, and they recommitted their attention to you. Over the past year, they've hired a professional —

Life Long Learning Ministry, con't

lay minister to oversee daily programming, and called Fr. Rodney Roehner to serve as your new Rector. Praise be to God. This Winter and Spring, Fr. Rodney and I invite young people like you to forge fresh connections at Saint Matt's — we're going to try new things together! (Isaiah 43:19). Sure, we have lots of great ideas, but we want to hear from you and ask your opinion about where your ministry is headed!

What We're Up To . . .

Over 20 Middle and High Schoolers from 13-14 families joined us on Wednesday, January 27th, at 6:00 PM to meet Fr. Rodney, Anthony, and Rodney's two daughters for a light-hearted game night and introductory session. At our session we got to know each other a bit more deeply, engaged in creative challenges, and brainstormed ideas for 2021.

On February 8th at Saint Matt's, youth were to gather outdoors to produce ashes to go and to assemble Lenten Kits for families. Additionally and in a compliant manner, groups of 3-4 young people would have briefly toured their youth space in the Parish Hall to generate ideas for what it might look like once we fully return to the physical world. Unfortunately, the snow and frigid temperatures had different plans for us! We're rescheduling our gathering for later this month, and planning for March, Easter, Spring, and Summer are currently underway. We can't wait to *do a new thing* together soon!

— **Anthony Carrella**, *Life Long Learning Chair and Youth Ministry Coordinator*

ADULT LIFE LONG LEARNING FORUM | January's Adult Life Long Learning forum participants continued to grow in Christ as we embarked on a 'Journey with Mark'. Our study has been a wonderful way to learn more about Jesus's life, and how to live out the good news of the Gospel. The Adult LLL group meets for one hour on Sundays mornings, and has rich spiritual conversations and moments of fellowship.

Please consider joining us on Sundays in Lent as we take a video pilgrimage together through the Holy Land. Offered by Saint George's College, Jerusalem, The Holy Land video series invites one to experience the beauty, wonder and inspiration of this most sacred region. You can view each week's video at your convenience at any point in the week, and then join us on Sundays via Zoom for conversation and fellowship. The first video in our series is titled: 'A River Through The Desert', and will be released for viewing on February 15th. Our first Lenten forum will begin on Sunday, February 21 at 11:00 am. We look forward to our Journey with Christ together with you!

— **Jon Clark**, **Adult LLL Leader**

— **Karen Randall**, **Adult LLL Leader**

Nursery School Update

This school year has been anything but typical and yet it really does not seem to have affected the children here at school. The little ones are so resilient and have been doing a fabulous job of wearing their masks. They are just so happy to be in school and with their friends and teachers. The school staff has worked extremely hard to maintain in person schooling and to ensure that we are following the CDC and Montgomery County Department of Health's guidelines for best practice.

We are anxiously awaiting the availability of vaccines for our teachers. Our school has enrolled in the Phase 1B Business Vaccination Registry. The school staff will be placed into a prioritization category in accordance with County, State, and Federal guidance. We will be contacted in order of prioritization category to register for an appointment.

Love is in the air as we move in to February.



The children will be hard at work creating Valentines for their friends in their class. Our classes will hold valentine parties in their classrooms and will be sure to have special gifts for their families. The students will also be creating Valentine cards for senior residents in two local long term care facilities. These individuals are having a difficult time without visits from family and friends so the cards from the children are sure to brighten their Valentine's Day!

At the end of this school year Mrs. Karen Griffin will be retiring from St. Matthew's. Karen has taught at the school from its inception 28 years ago first in our 2 1/2's classes and now our Pre-K classes! She will be missed tremendously but her legacy at the school will carry on with her daughter Bridget, a former student of St. Matthew's, now teacher at St. Matthew's and her grandchildren attending school.



I am happy to share that our St. Matthew's family is growing at the end of our school year. Mrs. Washam, our 4's M-TH teacher will be adding another son to her family. She currently has two sons, Jackson (7) and Bryson (5), and one daughter, Emmerson (5). All have attended St. Matthew's!



Registration for the 2021-2022 school year is underway. If you have family, friends or neighbors looking for a preschool please have them call or email the school at 215-646-4466 or nurseryschool@saintmattsec.org

Jackie Anderson, Director





SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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