

# THE ORACLE

## SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

### **A Letter from Our Rector, Father Rodney Roehner**

St. Matthew's Family,

This newsletter reaches you as we prepare ourselves for the approaching conclusion of the 'busy' time of the year for church and school activities. We will then enter those long-awaited summer months which are so often filled with outdoor events, vacations, relaxation, and, for many of us, the continual effort to keep children occupied for almost three months!

For churches, summer is a time to not only catch our collective breath, but to also plan for the commencement of our common life in earnest come September. That is certainly the plan at St. Matthew's as well, as we prepare for the first full slate of activities since before the pandemic. Our worship, acolytes, music, Sunday school, youth, adult education, visitations to the homebound, and fellowship opportunities are all areas of focus as we anticipate a continual increase in our ability to come together as the body of Christ at St. Matthew's.

The key word in all of this remains 'anticipate'. We have undoubtedly been doing that in so many areas of our lives for over a year, and we hope and pray to our merciful God that we can be with one another again. It has been wonderful to witness the joy and love expressed on Sundays as our church family slowly returns to in-person worship. The smiles and tears shared in seeing friends for the first time in months have been a powerful testimony to the bonds we share. But, of course, we anticipate the day when we can resume our common life to the fullest.

It is for that day that we will be continually preparing throughout the summer months. That certainly doesn't mean nothing else will be happening at St. Matthew's before then! A Vacation Bible School will be held, outdoor gatherings beginning with the May 2nd Spring Celebration will take place, youth activities and catechesis will be offered, and look for continued upgrades to our physical campus.

As we anticipate and hope for many things during these coming months, one that certainly ranks high on that list at St. Matthew's is a return of many who have not been here since the pandemic started. No doubt, there are many reasons for this, but I encourage and welcome those who have not yet come back, and are able to do so, to prayerfully consider a return. You are loved. You are missed. You are needed.

I write this during the heart of Eastertide, a time that assures us of the fulfillment of the promises given to us through our Risen Lord Jesus Christ; a foretaste of the fuller life that guides our present in the anticipation and hope of God's Kingdom.

With Love in Christ,  
Rodney



ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# SPRING FEST 2021

PETTING ZOO | PONY RIDES | CRAFTS for KIDS  
LIVE MUSIC with BARRY'S BASEMENT

HOT DOGS & HAMBURGERS from the GRILL  
(BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS + OTHER FOOD)  
KONA WATER ICE TRUCK! (1-2PM)

**SUNDAY, MAY 2nd**  
Noon to 2 PM  
"SHINE ONLY"  
COST: FREE

MASKS, SOCIAL DISTANCING  
and CHECK-IN REQUIRED!

Join us  
May 2, 2021 to  
celebrate the 50th  
anniversary of St.  
Matthew's ground-  
breaking!



**SAFETY:** Masks, social distancing and check-in are all required! The check-in form can be completed online: <https://tinyurl.com/smec-spring>. The form will also be available onsite May 2nd. We will have hand sanitizing products available, and the buildings will be open to access restrooms. Please feel free to bring chairs, blankets, etc. to claim an area to sit and relax. Pg 2

# Treasurer's Report

## March 31, 2021

	<u>MTD Actual</u>	<u>MTD Budget</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Nursery S Income	\$38,708	\$31,068	\$93,726	\$94,004
Nursery S Expense	35,912	34,093	100,152	101,632
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>2,796</b>	<b>(3,026)</b>	<b>(6,425)</b>	<b>(7,628)</b>
Pledge and Plate	30,404	25,308	89,894	82,250
Other Income	11,023	7,266	29,132	25,175
Total Expenses	35,068	36,569	107,333	112,550
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>6,360</b>	<b>(3,996)</b>	<b>18,533</b>	<b>(5,125)</b>

*I would like to thank parishioners for their continued commitment to the financial support of St. Matthew's. Both pledge and plate income are ahead of budget as of 3/31. We have made some capital expenditures in the last month, installing a new camera/audio system in the sanctuary that allows us to better livestream services and events, and we made some needed repairs to the piers at the entrance to the narthex.*

*Please note that capital expenditures are not reflected in the Church Total Expenses shown here. We typically fund capital expenditures from endowment accounts.*

## **MWAMBA** Foundation

The Mwamba students have been significantly affected by the coronavirus, as Kenyan schools were suspended as of April 1 of 2020. Students could not return to school until January 2021, and then were sent home in March when another wave of COVID-19 cases hit Kenya. The schools are slated to reopen in May of this year, and the 2020 school year (which should have paralleled the calendar year) will be completed in July of 2021. The 2021 school year is planned for July 2021-March 2022, and the 2022 school year should be able to run April-December 2022. School terms will run with no breaks.

While COVID-19 has affected learning for children in the United States, it has been devastating for Kenyan children. There is no infrastructure for virtual schooling, so the children have lost nine months of education, and are just now trying to make that up. The pandemic has hit the lower income classes particularly hard, and more families than ever are struggling to pay school fees. The need for scholarships, especially for girls, is more present than ever.

St. Matthew's has supported Mwamba for 20 years, as Father Dave Robinson was instrumental in its founding. We typically run our fundraising campaign in November, but delayed this year until we knew when the students could return to school. **We are now asking for your contributions to fund the 2021 school year, which will begin in July.** The cost for a full scholarship is still \$400 per child, but recall that we pool our donations, so **no amount is too small.** We have supported 15 children for the past two years, and hope to do so again.

Finally, we ask your prayers for our three Form Four students, who are taking critical national exams (similar to British "A levels"), which will determine their ability to attend university or technical college. Their names are **Norah Long'or**, **Daniel Mukelima** and **Tecla Chepengat**. These young people are under tremendous pressure after having missed significant portions of their last year of school.

Donations can be made online <https://tinyurl.com/mwamba-smec>, and choosing Mwamba Foundation from the dropdown menu, or by completing the form on page 8 and writing a check.



# Cookie Ministry, February 2021

When Bishop Daniel "visited," via Zoom, on January 31 he invited questions. One question asked for suggestions of ways to stay connected to members that the Pastoral Care Team visits and to other parishioners who had not been able to venture out during this Covid time. His suggestion: take them cookies!

Connie Dee and I were both inspired by his words. Together we met with Fr. Rodney, who wholeheartedly endorsed this undertaking ... and we proceeded.

A call for volunteers to bake and deliver was met with astounding response. All slots were filled within a couple of days!

The Nursery School was brought on board and the children wrote notes to be included. Connie provided supplies and organized the bakers and deliverers. Many are the ways that this project came together.

The deliverers received many positive comments: "You made my day", "Bless you, St. Matthew's" ... These volunteers felt that they were making a difference in someone's day. Follow-up calls and notes indicate that many were touched by the caring (and deliciousness) of this project.

This endeavor, which brought JOY to many, was a far-reaching ministry. We never know where our seeking to be the hands and the heart of God will take us.

Treva McLaughlin



## *Spring at St. Matthew's*







# Life-Long Learning

SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Maple Glen | Pennsylvania

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

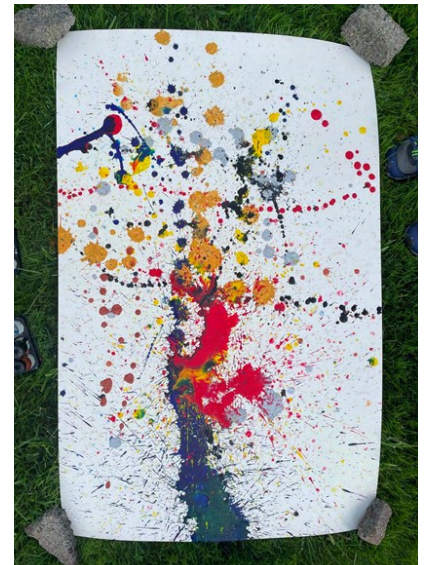
The Sunday school lesson for April - **The Good Shepherd and the Lost Sheep**—is now available! The take-home materials can be picked up from the bins outside the doors to the lower parking lot. Please grab one, and then watch our lesson by heading to: <https://tinyurl.com/saintmattscgs>

We know Sunday School is not the same without physically gathering together in the atria. It is our hope to gather outdoors in June. For April and May, we will continue our pre-recorded lessons to help you and your child on your journey of faith while we remain separated.

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

## YOUTH

Our young people shared a vibrant outdoor youth group meeting this April! In our self-introductions, everyone was invited to share a bit about themselves and what they've learned about the world amid the pandemic. Once we shared with the group, each of us were invited to walk up to the canvas and "make our mark". Once we made our initial marks on the canvas we identified which style of painting it is (abstract expressionist). We wondered about the connections between abstract painting and our experiences throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It lead to a rich conversation and reflection. Youth also took each other on "Five-Minute Journeys" on the campus trails where we learned the three most important things about each person. After we shared these interviews with our group we identified common interests, and we closed our gathering with a contemplative prayer that invited us to set an intention for the next few weeks. Once our intention was clear, we were invited to mark the canvas one final time. As we gathered around the inky piece, light drizzles of rain fell and produced amazing micro splatters! All of us were mystified and moved!



I wonder . . . what would you title this painting?

## GRADUATIONS, HONORS, AND RECOGNITION

As we approach the end of the program year, Saint Matt's wishes to recognize the hard-earned achievements of our parishioners! If you or someone you know is graduating, receiving an award, or celebrating an academic achievement, let us know! We will recognize all of our honorees via the June worship bulletin, a special mailing, and by sending gifts to graduates. Head to <https://tinyurl.com/LLL-honors> to label your achievement.

## ADULT LIFELONG LEARNING FORUM

We are continuing our study of the Gospel of Mark. Each week we will focus on a single chapter.

Please join us at 11:45 a.m. via Zoom for conversation and fellowship! Please note that due to the Spring Celebration we will not meet on May 2.

-- Jon Clark & Karen Randall, Adult LLL Leaders

# Coming Soon: A Saint Matthew's Labyrinth Experience

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

**Nathaniel Mathew, member of Saint Matt's and prospective Eagle Scout.**

**April 16, 2021**

**Anthony**

Can you tell the parish a little bit about the project you are working on for Saint Matt's?

**Nathaniel**

My plan is to build a labyrinth for members of the church and community to communicate with God, focus their thoughts, and meditate.

**Anthony**

And tell us, what is a labyrinth?

**Nathaniel**

A labyrinth is an ancient prayer tool that looks a little bit like a maze, but is actually a series of paths (circuits) you walk through for contemplation. You enter the labyrinth, follow the path, and eventually get to its center. Once you're in the center you might pray, set an intention, or sit in the stillness. Finally, you follow the paths again as you head outwards and exit the experience.

**Anthony**

Some labyrinths are made out of stone. What will your labyrinth, be made out of, and how will you construct it?

**Nathaniel**

My plan is to build the labyrinth out of grass. A portion of our grasses will not be mowed for several weeks. We'll cut out a path with the help of our landscapers and lawn mowers, My Eagle Scout troop will create a small path leading up to the labyrinth, a threshold, and trailhead.

**Anthony**

Wow! What inspired you to create this?

**Nathaniel**

I was looking for a project that would positively impact the St. Matt's family — which obviously I'm a part of. I've heard from various parishioners and leaders that they're very excited about the project and how our community will use it. New additions to our church are exciting!

**Anthony**

Tell us a little bit about your timeline for this project and what it looks like over the next few months.

**Nathaniel**

I've already received the necessary permissions and approvals from Saint Matthews, so over the next few months I'll be working to formally approve the project with my Eagle Scout leaders. In the meantime, the Saint Matt's community will be invited to test out several proposed patterns for the labyrinth, and label which is their favorite. From June through August we will work on creating the structures and paths, with Boy Scouts and the Youth Group members assisting. The church community can plan enjoying the labyrinth in Late Summer and Early Fall.

**Anthony**

Your project is still in its early stages, but I wonder if you can tell us how parishioners might support you begin realizing your vision?

**Nathaniel**

I would be grateful if parishioners can donate what they can to support the project because there will be some elements with a cost attached. If parishioners work in the lumber business, or know someone who does, it would be fantastic if they consider donating materials for the project. If they'd like some details, they can contact me. . . or head to <https://tinyurl.com/nathaniel-lab> to donate.

**Anthony**

Awesome! Do you have anything else to share with us?

**Nathaniel**

I'm really looking forward to getting input from the ministry leaders of the church, like the Vestry and Life Long Learning Committee members.

**Anthony**

Nathaniel thank you very much for sharing this with the parish family! We are all looking forward to supporting you in this exciting project. St. Matthews thanks for all you do and for your wonderful ministry.

**Nathaniel** Thank you!

Would you like to help Nathaniel with expenses? Online donation available here: <https://tinyurl.com/nathaniel-lab>



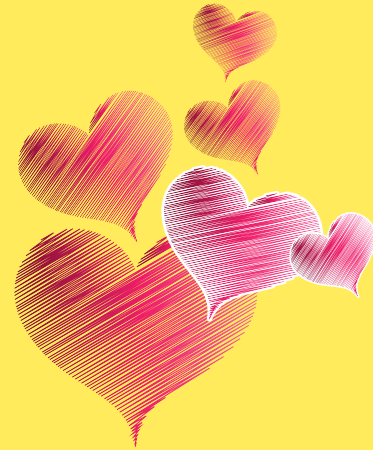
# Nursery School Update

Now that the warmer weather is upon us it is so nice to have the children outside on the playground, black top and grassy area everyday having fun. The children even have gym class outside!



May is a busy month for the nursery school children. Fun and exciting activities have been planned throughout the month.

This year more than ever we want to honor our Moms. We will hold outdoor celebrations at the end of the day on the grassy area for each nursery school class during the first week of May. Moms will bring blankets for their child and themselves to sit on in the grass. The children and their moms will enjoy songs, stories, gift giving and other fun activities that are planned. These are sure to be special celebrations with many memories made!



Our school year will run until Friday, June 18th. Many fun and exciting activities are being planned for June. The last two days, June 17 & 18 we will have our end of year school picnics at Everybody's Playground in Horsham.



Although this year may have looked very different from past years it has truly been wonderful. The staff of the Nursery School are rock stars for what they have done this year. Their courage in coming back to teach during a pandemic and putting the needs of the children ahead of any apprehensions or fears they may have had was extraordinary. Each day these dedicated women came to school excited to provide our in person learning and much needed socialization for our students. This year would not have been possible without the overwhelming support of the Vestry and Father Rodney. I cannot thank Karen Randall enough for all that she did through the spring as acting treasurer to become knowledgeable about the Cares Act and the Payroll Protection Program, along with the guidance given to the staff on applying for and collecting unemployment. In December when the virus hit here at school, Chris Suhy was there to lend a supportive ear and help with some difficult decisions. I will be forever grateful to Carolyn Bedics who has worked tirelessly to ensure that we had a disinfectant sprayer and plenty of PPE and cleaning supplies on hand each and every day to keep the staff and students safe. I am happy to share that over 95 % of the Nursery School staff have been fully vaccinated for Covid 19.

~ Jackie Anderson, NS Director



SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
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Maple Glen, PA 19002  
Church Office: 215-646-4092



Yes, I want to help the girls and boys in Kenya with a gift of:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$400 for a year's education! \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other

Please make your checks payable to: Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church.

Please mark "MWAMBA" in the check memo field.

Kindly submit support by May 22, 2021.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Questions? Please contact Karen Randall, karenrandall830@gmail.com