

SAINT MATTHIAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Saint Matthias Messenger

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Office Hours
Monday-Friday
10AM-4 PM

Holy Eucharist
Sundays at 8 AM

Holy Eucharist
Sundays at 10 AM

10 AM Services Streamed at
[facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier](https://www.facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier)

The Three-Legged Stool In Application A Personal Experience

There are times when it is impossible not to break rules. In the non-fiction “how-to” writing style the author is admonished not to begin the opening statement with “I” and avoid personal history in the introductory paragraph. I, however, am going to break both rules right away. I was raised in the Southern Baptist tradition and really knew no other type of church tradition or worship style until my early 20s. I was taught to accept The Bible as the result of the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit working through chosen men to reveal the Will of God. It was inerrant in every sense of the word. Faith was exemplified by being born again and being obedient to a set of doctrines in order to show the world you were a good Christian who read their Bible from time to time and tried to be good. During high school, despite my best efforts, the internal dissonance caused by my attempt to reconcile the biblical story of a six-day creation with my growing understanding of the fossil record and the evolution of species along Darwinian lines. This, combined with a very clear awareness of my sexuality, made it difficult to continue to attend church without rolling my eyes. I wondered how the adults dealt with it. It became

clear that the answer for many was to just go along and leave their brains at the door. During my last year of high school, a number of homophobic cultural and political campaigns that sought to “purify our Nation from the evils of homosexuality” most enthusiastically backed by prominent Baptists, drove me from the church. The break was complete when I came out in my first year of college. I walked out of the Baptist church and closed the door firmly behind me. In fact, I had intended to close the door on Christianity entirely. It worked for about two years.

In 1980, I was offered my first professional, paid singing gig, my first “church job”. Every young singer has a church job during their student years and it’s a rite of passage. It was a church job with a small but active Episcopal congregation going through some difficulties. The job was to be a member of a male sextet that sang the entire Ordinary of the Mass, chanted all common prayers using the Church of England text settings imposed on Gregorian Chant and presented at least one offertory anthem each week. . A lot of work! But it was interesting repertoire, exclusively “classical” in nature and it was with a group of my friends from Cal-Arts and other musicians from the Santa Clarita Valley.

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The congregation was from the High Church side of the Episcopal traditions, used the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, the incense rose in great billows, genuflection was encouraged at every opportunity and the communion wine was exceptionally good! We rehearsed for about a month before our first service and during this time, the non-Episcopalians among us received our instructions about the rubrics of the service. Since we were seated collegiate style, in front of and on either side of the High Altar and in full view of the congregation, we were expected to provide the congregation with a proper example of appropriate liturgical practice. I learned all my duties and thought I was ready to go. Nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to experience. From the initial procession, throughout the service, to the final dismissal, I was elated! This was the experience I had been missing all my life! The ordered, beautiful progression of the service from the Word to the Eucharist provided a sense of spiritual depth that was unknown to me. The ultimate mysticism of the ancient Great Thanksgiving and the Eucharistic Prayer of Consecration were pure spiritual awe and joy for me. I was HOME! Soon thereafter, I was introduced to some of the foundational precepts of the Church. I spent time with the Book Of Common Prayer, discovering a beauty of language I had seldom experienced. Rummaging through the back of the book, after the general contents, I found several early documents of the church, a current brief catechism and a summary of the tenants of our Anglican Communion. It was there that I first encountered the concept of the Anglican Three-Legged Stool as a basis for our theology, liturgical practices and the Christian way of life. All things in our faith rest on a stool whose three legs are Faith, Scripture and Reason. All equal, none of lesser importance, none of greater importance. All of one source in pursuit of one goal, a continually growing and sanctified Christian life. Sound familiar? It seemed to be a good way to order my spiritual life. It has been my firm support ever since.

Most of you know that Kent and I recently experienced a tremendous upheaval in our lives. Kent had a trip to the ER that began with emergency surgery on Monday, June 19 and ran off the rails on Wednesday, June 21 with diagnosis of Stage 4 squamous cell lung cancer. In the space of two days, everything changed. It was an extremely difficult time for us. I experienced extreme anger, stabbing grief at odd times in public places and a

range of stress that I had never known. I experienced anxiety attacks that medication did not effect, let alone control. I raged. I raved, reduced to one raw nerve that quivered under the onslaught. And in my anguish came “that still, small voice and in that voice, onward came the Lord”. And I remembered my stool and its legs.

“Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”,
Hebrews 11:1

Unknown and unexpressed levels of faith are often reached in times of great anguish. Difficult circumstances that threaten our safety, our lives and limbs cause us to seek deeper strength in order to cope with the threat. To surmount a physical threat, we shore up our defenses, bring our physical assets to the peak, preparing for the battle. We have faith that the training will pay off and we will emerge victorious. In our spiritual battles, we must also shore up our defenses by developing a greater sense of the Presence and Knowledge of God. For myself, this type of faith exercise is guided by remembering earlier periods of stress and grief and the way in which God has made Himself available to me. How comfort has been given in doubt, guidance in confusion, balm in anger, and confidence in prayer. When I remember these things, I realize that I have always been provided for, even when the conclusion was not the one I wanted. My faith allows me to continue in the darkness because I know there is a light, however faint, that I will see soon and it will guide me home as it has before. So, rage, rave, deny, doubt God. Question His motivation. God can stand your onslaught, can overcome your doubt, forgive your anger. When the madness subsides, remember how you have been held up before and how that Faith has carried you through until today. Then go forward knowing that your needs will be supplied, no matter the outcome of the battle. Faith gives you that strength.

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”, Psalms 119:11 (KJV).

Scripture is a constant in my life. Not in the traditional sense of hours of study, time spent in contemplation and prayer over particular passages. It is a constant in my mind and heart as music, as present in the prayers and responses in the Book of Common Prayer, our Hymnal and throughout the order of service in our worship. Scripture is constantly flowing through me. I would estimate that 75% of the texts of sacred music of all styles, in all times has been based on scripture verses. Being a church musician for over 35 years, I have likely sung the entire Bible! In moments of doubt or fear, I hear Handel’s setting from *Messiah*, “I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”, Job 19: 25-26. In jubilation, Psalm 150 as set by Igor Stravinsky from *Symphony of Psalms*. It comes unbidden, like a melody on a breeze. Whatever it’s source, I can call upon it at any time and it will come to my inner ears and mind. In this particular situation, *Messiah* again gave me my greatest hope: “Then shall the eyes of the

blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the mute shall sing.”, Isaiah 35:5 – 6. As I found my ground in Faith, Scripture reassured me, helped me work through fear into peace and let me hear the voice of God in his Love and Splendor.

“From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason and skill.”, Eucharistic Prayer C, Book of Common Prayer, 1982

Reason, the last leg of our stool, has been a great source of comfort and reassurance in this difficult time. It is through reason that our doctors have been able to develop all of the treatments Kent will soon take advantage of. Reason helped us to understand the diagnosis and all its ramifications. Reason gives us the ability to discern fact from fiction, so we won't be as vulnerable to those individuals selling false hope in order to line their own pockets. The ability to think things through, to understand information and make intelligent decisions. Without Reason, we would be wandering around in darkness, unable to find the truth, to realize that there is hope and a possible future. God blessed us with large brains so that we might use them for our good and His glory. My mom would tell me when I was troubled about a problem “Honey, don't worry about it. If it nags at you constantly, tell it to shut up and go away. When you are calmer and it returns, think about a solution to the problem, work it over slowly in your mind. Just keep thinking it through calmly and the answer will come.” Pretty good advice for a “high strung” individual like me. It's actually good advice for all of us. Let Reason prevail in our times of trouble. Are there good answers to our questions that we cannot see because we haven't thought things through completely? Slow down and let Reason do her work. God doesn't ask us to leave our brains at the church door, he wants us to bring our brains and question with us.

I hope you found this very personal view of our three-legged stool useful. It's three legs provide us with a foundation upon which we can stand, sit or kneel. It will support us in times of trouble by providing the foundation stones of our faith. The foundation stones of Faith, Scripture and Reason will provide a place of strength, of inspiration and of knowledge and discernment. Our stool is sufficient to meet our troubles, because it is a very accommodating little stool.

By the way, there is an update on Kent's condition. The PET scan revealed that there was less malignancy than originally thought. This downgrades his cancer to a Stage 3b squamous cell cancer. This grade of cancer can be successfully treated and cured. We are extremely blessed and thankful for that outcome. We appreciate your prayers and your support. Rejoice with us now, for God has done marvelous things!

Doug Overstreet
Co-Sr. Warden



A few weeks ago, we had a visiting priest, Father Murphy, that talked about welcoming. As he spoke to us, it took me back to the first time John and I visited St Matthias Church.

John had been going with me for years to the Catholic church in Whitter. He was Episcopalian, but never really practiced it, so he enjoyed going with me.

The year we came to St. Matthias, was during Easter. I told him that for Lent this year, I would go with him to his church. He was shocked. He had tried several times to get me to go. I told him he had always been wonderful about going with me, and thought, I should let him experience his own religion for a change for the Easter Holiday. He was so happy, and I'll never forget the look on his face that Sunday.

I knew, according to my religion, I could not take communion, but John said "It doesn't matter, everyone is allowed to have communion in my church". In the catholic church beliefs, you cannot accept communion in any other church. This continued to be a little discussion between the two of us till we got to St. Matthias.

John wasn't giving up. I said, "We'll see" lol.

I'll always remember seeing Dave, for the first time. He was the greeter that Sunday. The first thing he said was "WELCOME to Saint Matthias". The second thing he said was, "Everyone is welcome here to take communion." I thought that was ironic, but let it go. Everyone was very friendly and smiling at us. I'm so used to a large congregation and this small little church made me feel like everyone knew each other, and us. As the mass proceeded, out of the blue, Father Bill mentioned it, in his sermon, he said, "Everyone here at St. Matthias, is welcome to come to the table and receive communion, no matter where you are on your journey".

We sat up front and I felt like he was looking at me. This was the second time I heard this, on that Sunday morning. This wasn't the last time this phrase was spoken. At the Communion Offering, Father Bill said it again, making it 3 times. I guess, third time is a charm!! Lol.

Then John asked me. “Are you going up?” I said, “yes”. I prayed about it before communion and felt like this is what I needed to do. This was life changing for me. I haven’t received communion in all the years I have been married to John because we were both married before and it was not ALLOWED!

I cannot explain the feeling that went through me. I came to tears and John held me. I didn’t care if anyone saw me. I was experiencing a spiritual moment that I will never forget. And I will never forget the word “WELCOME”, because that is what St. Matthias is about. Welcoming everyone.

This is so important for us to remember. When we see a new face or a new family, make sure you go up to them and say, “WELCOME”. You never know how you may change that person’s life.

I am very grateful and happy to call St Matthias my home.

God bless you all.

Gigi Maidlow

Rooted in Abundance — Stewardship 2023

They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

- Jeremiah 17:8

Rooted in Abundance is the theme of our Stewardship Campaign for 2023. It serves to remind us of all the wonderful Gifts, Ministries, and Services that our Saint Matthias Community bestows on us every day of the year and how these various ministries strengthen our minds, bodies, and spirits to discern God in all worldly interaction and to embody the Divine Love in every thing we undertake.

Each and everyone of the Saint Matthias ministries strengthen an aspect of the Divine Love in us, our compassion, and our respect for each other, thereby fostering our individual growth in life’s journey:

- Consider our rich weekly and seasonal **Sacramental Services** replete as they are with beautiful music, contemporary liturgy, and meaningful homilies highlighting the relevance for our lives of the messages underlying the biblical readings and inspiring us to become stewards of love.

- Consider the numerous ways we reach out and support our community (via **The Loving Thing** Community Outreach program) by feeding the hungry, by providing clothing and hygiene to the poor, and by finding shelter for the destitute.

- Consider our **Stephen Ministry** providing us and those who enter our lives emotional support in times of turmoil and distress, in times of sickness and death, just as in times of great joy and celebration of each other's birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and other momentous occasions in our lives.
- Consider our **Christian Education and Bible Study** sessions inspiring us to be curious about the mysteries of the world, to ask questions about the wrongs of the world, and to seek radical answers to make them right.
- Consider our many and varied **Adult Discussion and Bibliophile Group** meetings centered on biblical or related literature and world travels, offering us purviews into each other's thoughts and experiences, and thereby enriching our individual world views.
- Consider the varied philanthropic activities of the **Episcopal Church Women** and their incredible impact on our community at large.
- Consider our sessions on the **Divine Connection for Meditation, Movement, and Breath** and how they strengthen ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

And, yes, as we prepare to pledge, let us consider how each of these ministries strengthen our roots in our life, bring us meaning, and embolden us to spread the good news throughout the world.

In order to sustain these vibrant ministries, cultivate new ones and secure a financial foundation for us to fund a full-time rector, we will be setting aggressive financial and spiritual goals for our 2023 Stewardship campaign. At the outset of the campaign, we will share our financial goals and our spiritual goals with you. We will welcome your input and refinements to these goals. Periodically throughout the campaign, we will schedule inspirational talks by those of you who would like to share. We will intersperse these talks with campaign checkpoints to update all of you on how we are progressing towards meeting our financial and spiritual goals.

We plan to start our campaign the second week in September (September 10th) and extend it through the third week in November (November 19th). At the outset of the campaign, we will be distributing to all a pledge packet that will include a cover letter summarizing the campaign theme, our campaign goals, and the **Rooted In Abundance** pledge card.

This year's pledge cards will have two sides: The first side will allow us to formalize our financial promises for the year. The second side will allow us to express how we want to support the existing ministries of Saint Matthias and/or how we want to create entirely new ministries. In other words, the second side will allow us to express how we want to unlock our personal creativity to strengthen and grow our

mission, to collaborate with our fellow human beings, and to make our world a more loving and tolerant place to live.

I thank each of you for granting me the privilege to lead this year's pledge drive and to craft with your assistance the story of our abundance and our gratitude. I look forward to the weeks ahead and experiencing our campaign adventure together. I look forward to sharing our formal and informal interactions on our life experiences. And I look forward to hearing how Saint Matthias has made a difference in your life and how you and your loved ones have flourished owing to its abundant services.

In loving gratitude,
Christopher Lavagnino
(clava)

Food for Thought

No Matter How Deep the Darkness.

No matter how deep the darkness within you, there remains a spark there, and this light wants only this:

the naked God as God truly is, and not ideas about God, however true this might be. This spark wants

the deep ground that is God---
the quiet desert, the simple silence.
And there, in this innermost place

beyond knowing and being, there
the spark desires what it needs,
and finds what it desires.

Meister Eckhart's Book of Secrets
p. 38

Mark your Calendars

On Sunday September 3rd
We will be having an ice cream social! Stay after the the 10 am service, play bingo and put some on your ice cream!

**Sunday September 16th
is Homecoming Sunday!**

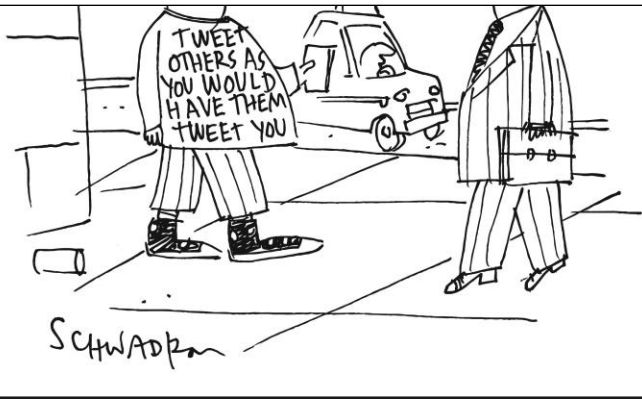
Bible Quiz

In Matthew 13, to what does Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven?

- A. A farmer sowing seed
- B. A mustard seed
- C. Yeast
- D. Hidden treasure
- E. A merchant who finds a pearl
- F. A fishing net
- G. All of the above



Answer: G (See Matthew 13:24-51.)



Puzzle!

Jesus instructs us to give and serve. What does Proverbs 3:27 (NIV) tell us *not* to do? To find out, cross out all the following letters. Then write the remaining letters in order on the spaces below.

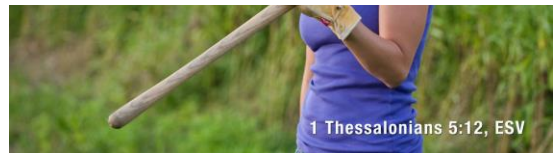
B J K Q X Z

BWJITJHQHOB LZDGBOK
 DKFQROMTBHJOBSQEXZT
 OKXWJHOBMIZTIJSDQKU
 EWXBHEQNITKISIZNYOU
 RPJZOWBEQRTOAXCZTXJ

DO NOT _____

 _____,

PROVERBS 3:27, NIV



1 Thessalonians 5:12, ESV

SEPTEMBER SERVICES, EVENTS, AND SMALL GROUPS

SUNDAYS AT 8:00 A.M. Holy Eucharist (in-person only)

SUNDAYS AT 10:00 A.M. Holy Eucharist (in-person and streaming live at facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier)

BIBLE STUDY/MORNING PRAYER: Wednesdays 10am, Chapel

MEN EATING BADLY: Saturday, September 2nd, 8:00 a.m. Greenleaf Café. Contact Tim Adams.

OUR TIME: Tuesday, September 12th 2pm. Contact Mary Jean Christian.

VESTRY MEETING: Tuesday September 12th, 7:00 p.m. Lewis Hall.

STITCHERY GROUP: Saturday, September 16th, 9:00 a.m. Chapel. Contact Ellen Mykkanen.

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING: Sunday September 17th, Chapel

ST. ELIZABETH'S GUILD: Thursday September 21st. Contact Diana Jimenez.

BIBLIOPHILES GROUP: Thursday September 21st, 6:30 p.m.. Contact Charles Carrillo.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN: Saturday September 23rd, 10:00 a.m. Chase Room. Contact Kathy Adams.

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"Message from the Treasurer"

Did you know that the financial reports are posted in St. Francis Patio? Currently the reports through July 31, 2023 are in the locked poster board for you to review.

There has been the typical dip in pledge income in July suspect it is related to vacations. Please try to "catch up" as soon as possible so we can continue to pay the bills. Remember online donations can be established through Vanco and Stan Jamison would be happy to assist setting up an account.

We will be starting our budget planning later this year and will keep you all informed of what will be needed to attract and hire a fulltime rector. Mary Jean Christian, Treasurer

Thank you for sponsoring The Messenger.
If you're interested in sponsoring
The Messenger by purchasing space on this
page, please contact the church office.

Sunday Worship at St. Matthias: JULY 2023

September 3 Proper 17

Jeremiah 15:15-21; Psalm 26: 1-8; Romans 12: 9-21; Matthew 16: 21-28

September 10 Proper 18

Ezekiel 33: 7-11; Psalm 119: 33-40; Romans 13: 8-14; Matthew 18: 15-20

September 17 Proper 19

Genesis 50: 15-21; Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13; Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18 21-35

September 24 Proper 20

Jonah 3:10-4:11; Psalm 145: 1-8; Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20: 1-16

We look forward to offering our worship services on more than one platform for streaming in the near future. We are awaiting new equipment that will allow us to do so. So please be patient and stay with us till that happens.

SEPTEMBER 2023

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