

SAINT MATTHIAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Saint Matthias Messenger

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Sunday Worship Services
via Zoom at 10:00^{am}
<https://zoom.us/j/91597283264>
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<https://www.facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier>

What is God Up To These Days?

Do you ever wonder when you look around in the world where God is and ask yourself why God isn't fixing all the things that are so obviously wrong? I certainly do. I have to constantly remind myself about free will. I wonder if God ever regrets giving us that gift.

On the other hand I do think that God gets involved in our messes in some way that we don't recognize until we look in the rear view mirror. "Oh, ok, I get it", we end up saying to ourselves. Looking backwards seems to be the most obvious way to observe God in action. So let's look backwards for a few minutes as I think I can present an excellent example.

About 2025 years ago a little fellow was born by the name of Jesus in Nazareth. He grew up into quite a fellow. When he was about thirty years old or so he started talking about the Kingdom of God. He also preached to folks in the Holy Land about the nature of God and had some things to say about how we might interact with each other and with God. He turned out to be an expert in the Hebrew Scriptures and spent time interpreting them for his listeners.

But, sadly he upset a lot of people who were in charge of things and they decided he had to go. He was just too much trouble and if the people ever really started listening to what he had to say their positions of power might be threatened. So he wound up on the cross. Case closed. Problem solved. A loud mouth had been dealt with.

But it turned out the problem wasn't solved at all. He just wouldn't stay dead and the word began to spread that he was alive again. His followers began to spread the word to anyone that would listen. The story spread like wildfire. Three hundred years later Christianity was born and became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

In the meantime for those first few hundred years during this new religion's gestation time life for the believers could be really hard. Life was already difficult but those in power even tried to make it even harder for the people of the way. Believers were rounded up and thrown in jail or worse. Many were killed in the most horrible ways. There was much suffering. Things were an incredible mess for a really long time.

But the Christian church had been born. It was only in looking back that people could see the hand of God in action. Who would have thought that Christ would be born in a backwater town in a backwater province under the heavy thumb of the Roman Emperor? Who would have understood in the midst of all the suffering that things were changing? Who could have seen at the time that they were in the middle of the birth pangs of a new

understanding about God and God's people?

It turns out that God's way of birth is messy and painful and frightening in the extreme. Just look at Peter's reaction that we heard about in last week's gospel when Jesus told them they were all headed to Jerusalem and that it was necessary that he suffer and die. "No!", Peter screamed. "This just can't happen to you!" It scared him to death. Only in looking backwards after the story unfolded did he understand. He had been in the middle of God's painful and messy birth process. Something new and fantastic was coming. There just was no way he could see it while it was developing.

I don't know how good a metaphor actual birth is for what we are discussing but let's try it out. During the time a couple waits for the actual birth of the child the woman's body goes through some really radical changes. Then when the day arrives the birth itself is painful and messy. But the child that is born makes it all worthwhile. This is what we are talking about. God's way of birthing is painful and it is messy, even as it applies to society.

There are some standards that God has insisted are in our best interest ever since the beginning of time. It seems that every once in a while something needs to happen to remind us of those standards and to improve how we are living in relationship with God and with each other. Everybody is aware of these standards and even agrees most of the time that life would be most wonderful and comfortable if they were followed. So let's casually review a few of them.

Don't take another person's stuff. Tell the truth. Don't kill anybody. Try not to wish you had somebody else's things. Instead, try to earn your own. Get some rest regularly. Listen to and take care of other people, especially your parents. Do your best to have a loving relationship with the creator that already loves you. Give your best effort to have a loving relationship with the world and the other creatures God has created. Love and take care of your fellow human beings. Read about God's prophets and especially God's son if you are looking for examples of how to conduct yourself. Simple huh?

Phyllis Tickle was an Episcopalian, writer, lecturer, and editor. She passed away in 2015. She wrote a number of books, the most famous being *The Great Emergence – How Christianity is Changing and Why*. Her basic premise was that about every 500 years there was, in my terminology, a new birth in Christianity. It started with Gregory the Great, then The Great Schism, and was followed by the Reformation. She believed we are in the next birth process of the church.

Personally I agree with her but I think there's more than just a process for the church here. If we study history we realize that society moves through these birth processes at the same time. And it's messy. And it's painful.

Let's talk some recent history. Beginning in the sixties we had the awakening of the civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam, the awakening of women's issues, the hippy movement, and the loss of some great leaders through assassination. Then as time went along there have been various armed conflicts, the rise of the personal computer, the internet, and the immense impact of social media. Today we are living through a pandemic, the reawakening of the civil rights movement, and the extreme polarization of government and society. Some of us are hanging on by our fingernails to what was and the rest of us are hoping for a very different future. And in the middle of all this messiness there exists great fear, much anger, extreme disappointment, incredible stress, gut wrenching sorrow, and tremendous loss.

Folks I personally have no doubt that we are in the middle of God's birthing process. We may even be nearing the end, in labor if you will, waiting on the arrival of what is to be.

And I think what will arrive are things that are as old as time, things we are already familiar with that will be reemphasized. We will more likely leave other people's things alone. Telling the truth will become much more the way of the world than it currently is. People will stop being so ready to hurt and kill each other. We will rediscover the healing wonders in rest, prayer, and recreation. We will take better care of each other, and take care of our parents who have tried to teach us so much. God will reemerge as the center of our lives and relationship with God will become more important to talk and teach about. We will start taking better care of

the gifts God has given us. We might even love our neighbors as ourselves.

If we draw back from the mayhem around us so that we are able to see the forest and not so much the trees we discover God's birthing process at work. It's messy and it's painful but the world that is going to emerge will be worth it. Hang on. We are almost there. In the meantime remember as were reminded in today's gospel. When two or three of us are gathered together Jesus is among us. Let's hang on to each other and to him.

Fr. Bill+

Meet A Stephen Minister: Terry Dodd

WHAT WERE YOU LIKE GROWING UP AND WHERE WERE BORN?

I was born in Monrovia, California a whole bunch of years ago, to a mom and dad who had recently pulled up stakes in Ohio and moved to be closer to family and citrus. Although they desired more children, I'm all they got; a shy, questioning, left-handed, compulsive reader, and ballerina wannabe, that oddly loved-in my teens, Gershwin, Chopin and the Rolling Stones with equal passion. I still love my taste in music.

DO YOU HAVE A SPOUSE? HOW ABOUT CHILDREN?

I certainly do have a husband, and will be celebrating 42 years this upcoming October. We met at a Presbyterian church in Monrovia when we were thrown together as the new leadership for the junior high aged kids. Young, enthusiastic, with a love for Jesus, we had a great time with all those fantastic kids. I still hate camping, but still love Jesus and Glenn. We have two amazing and at times mystifying adult children. Brian who married Laura, lives in Irvine, gave us our grand daughter Kate, and Erin who married Daniel, lives in Temecula and gave us Rose the Cat.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO NOT GO CRAZY DURING HE PANDEMIC?

I never became a ballerina, but am still a dancer at home. I garden and love both flower/plant and veggie gardening and it's harvest time in our garden, so I'm busy. I'm still reading voraciously, spend 1 day each week with my daughter in law and grand daughter, and thankfully love to cook. Stephen Ministry leadership has kept my mind stimulated as well as being able to see some of my dear friends from church.

WHAT'S ONE THING THAT CAN MAKE YOU DAY INSTANTLY BETTER?

Seeing my freckled face, strawberry blonde, baby giraffe legged grand daughter running toward me with her favorite stuffed animal in her hand screaming, "Hi Mimi!"

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL AT PEACE?

I hike and when I hike I talk to God. The deep meditation, stillness, beauty of our hills allows me to listen to God, and feel his presence deeply. When the problems and questions of this life and world attack my emotions, the hiking boots go on.

WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING IN STEPHEN MINISTRY AND BEING A STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADER?

Think about instantly having friends that actually like to listen to you? That ask how you are, and amazingly want an answer? Just as good, they won't share outside the room, phone, or zoom. That is pretty awesome. I wish that in times of uncertainty and stress, I had had a Stephen Minister to sort things out with me. This precious, very special, well trained group of people that love the Lord so much, and care so deeply for each person in our church is a gift to our church. I am so humbled to help Stan, Faye, and Kay in a leadership capacity, to bring some new ideas, so we can serve God in all that we do going forward.



EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Hear Us Roar!

As I think of how to start this article, in my mind I keep hearing Helen Reddy singing "I Am Woman, Hear Me Roar!" That is so appropriate for this group of women who are ECW - Episcopal Church Women at St. Matthias. We have several activities that we sponsor every year. During this time of unusual and trying circumstances, this group has been able to adapt and adjust to such a degree that we have exceeded expectations and past accomplishments.

An Afternoon Tea Social and a Bake Sale were previously scheduled to take place right at the time the pandemic hit us. Rather than cancelling these events, two members found a way to hold these events within the confines of new rules for social gatherings. Andrea Schmid hosted the Virtual Zoom Tea. We played games and were able to chat and catch up with what we were doing during these times. Mary Ellen de la Vega spearheaded an online baked goods auction. The Bake Sale is usually a fundraiser for ECW. This year it was decided to designate the funds go to the Children/Youth Ministry. That fund was enriched by over \$1,000 as a result of the auction.

In August we had our Sock Drive. In the past people would just drop off socks at Sunday services. This year people could drop them off at the Church or order online and have them delivered to the Church. Thanks to everyone's generosity, including some contributors from out of state, we received 805 pairs of socks that will be distributed to our Soup Hour clients!! That is more than double what we have received in the past.

We are currently working on a Teacher Appreciation project. We just want to give them a little something to let them know we understand these are difficult times for teachers (and students) and we support them.

There is a combined virtual event scheduled for October 3rd. It will be the Blessing of the Animals and an Ice Cream Social. EVERYONE - women, men, children, and of course pets - are invited to attend. Games are planned, and of course time for socializing. Many of you will probably get this issue of The Messenger after the event, but I hope you were able to attend and had a good time.

There is a project planned for January. It is akin to the Sock Drive. The plan is to gather scarves, beanies and gloves for the Soup Hour Clients. The cold weather will be upon us, and these items will hopefully provide a little warmth for them. Timing should be good as there will be after Christmas sales going on. Please make a note to participate in this project. It will be greatly appreciated. So remember: We are ECW, hear us roar!

-Kathy Adams, ECW Co-chair

Services 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.

- ✦ **Sunday Service**, 10am - <https://zoom.us/j/91597283264> or <https://www.facebook.com/stmatthiaswhittier>
- ✦ **Daughters of the King**, 3rd Sundays at 1pm - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/618771589>
- ✦ **Women's Book Group**, 2nd Sundays at 6:30pm - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83390445216>
- ✦ **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.
- ✦ **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.
- ✦ Sunday School - Email Andrea Schmid at andrea@stmatthiaswhittier.org for log-in details.
- ✦ **Episcopal Church Women**, 4th Saturdays at 10am - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85488418955>

Halloween, Day of the Dead and The Episcopal Church

OUR SACRED FAITH AND THE CREEPY HOLIDAYS ARE A NATURAL FIT



To look at Halloween today, with its carved pumpkins and grinning witches, it can be easy to lose sight of the spiritual and religious notions which have always been tied up with the observance. This is a shame, because it would be hard to find a more suitably religious holiday.

All forms of spirituality and religion are concerned with one question – how to properly orient oneself in relation to the inescapable reality of death. Their suggested solutions might differ, but the problem is universally recognized.

The evolution of Halloween, from ancient Celtic harvest festivals to adoption by the early Church as All Hallows' Eve to the secular event of our time, is well known. In addition, Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) has emerged as a well-known blending of Mexican indigenous traditions and the Christian All Saints' Day, celebrated the day after Halloween. Whether secular, holy, or somewhere in between, these traditions share one thing – a focus on those who have preceded us into the grave.

These festivals can also take unique forms within the Episcopal Church. All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena (pictured) has lent its altar as a traditional ofrenda or "offering" for honoring departed family members on Day of the Dead/All Saints' Day. For mainline churches housing a suitably spooky old pipe organ, musical events (often

promoted as Pipe Screams) allow their organists to showcase the organ's mood-setting abilities around this time of year.

The Episcopal Book of Occasional Services contains a liturgy for All Hallows' Eve, along with suggested readings. Among these are quite frankly some of the creepiest passages in the Bible, like Saul's visit to the Witch of Endor in I Samuel, Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, and the War in Heaven as told in Revelation. Witches summoning ghosts, living skeletons, and dragons fighting angels: Whoever designed this Halloween liturgy clearly had a sense of humor. Of course, underlying all these tales of strange powers and spooky happenings is a consistent message about deferring to the power of God in the face of all manner of weirdness.

I grew up in a conservative religious tradition, where the celebration of Halloween was seen as taboo. I now see this as a missed opportunity. Any faith tradition that shuns the grotesque imagery of death misses the point entirely. Whether we like them or not, those grinning skulls in the Halloween shop or on the ofrendas of Hispanic homes aren't going anywhere. Their silent toothy grins tell a truth which must be accepted. We all must experience death, not just our own but the deaths we grieve while alive. Any faith worth its salt has to look this reality in the face, unpleasant as it may be, and help us prepare for it.

And sometimes, if we're in a particular state of mind, we might even find the wherewithal to look death square in the face, knowing full well that it waits for each of us, and laugh – maybe even throw on a skeleton costume and have a party to really drive home the point. Happy Halloween.

-Ben Corbitt, Vestry Member



All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena has lent its altar as a traditional ofrenda for honoring departed family members on Dia de los Muertos, which coincides with the Christian All Saints' Day. (Photo credit allsaints-pas.org)



A PLANTING PARABLE

Jesus had to explain his Parable of the Sower to the confused disciples.

Directions: Use the word bank to answer the clues. Then fill in the correct words below to complete Matthew 13:23, NIV.

WORD BANK: sow, soil, wither, root, thorn, crop, seed, farmer

1. Plant part that absorbs water _____
2. Contains what's needed to grow a plant _____
3. To plant _____
4. Sharp part of a plant _____
5. What is harvested. _____
6. To dry up and shrivel _____
7. Person who plants _____
8. The earth a plant grows in. _____

“But the _____₂ falling on good _____₈ refers to someone who hears the word and understands it.

This is the one who produces a _____₅, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was _____₃ n.”

M A T T H E W 1 3 : 2 3 , N I V

Answer: root, seed, sow, thorn, crop, wither, farmer, soil; seed, soil, crop, sow

Helpful Information for Voters

Election Day is November 3, 2020. In brief, Gov. Newsom signed Executive Order N-64-20 which, among other things, states that a vote-by-mail ballot be mailed to each voter prior to the November 3, 2020, election, in addition to offering in-person voting sites. In addition to English, the ballot will be available in nine languages.

Currently, Applications to Register must be postmarked or submitted electronically no later than October 19, 2020. Paper voter registration applications may be obtained at the DMV, your county elections office, the library or the post office. Again applications must be returned fifteen (15) days prior to the election.,

For complete information as it applies to all voters, individuals are encouraged to visit www.sos.ca.gov/elections.

Please VOTE! -Tim Adams, Vestry Member

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SEED impressions

Create autumn-themed artwork using items from plants.



What you need:

- Seed pods, nuts, pine cones
- Mixing bowl
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup warm water
- Adult help

What you do:

1. Go on a nature walk and collect seeds with interesting textures.
2. In the bowl, mix flour and salt. Gradually add water. On a table, knead the dough. (If too dry, add more water; if too sticky, add more flour.)
3. Flatten a ball of dough and stamp impressions in it with the seeds.
4. If desired, bake for several hours at 150 degrees until dry and hard. Or, to reuse dough, store in an airtight container up to 6 months.

Worship at Saint Matthias October 2020

October 4

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:7-14, Philippians 3:4b-14, Matthew 21:33-46

October 11

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Isaiah 25:1-9, Psalm 23, Philippians 4:1-9, Matthew 22:1-14

October 18

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Exodus 33:12-23, Psalm 99, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, Matthew 22:15-22

October 25

The Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Leviticus 19:1-2,15-18, Psalm 1, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8, Matthew 22:34-46



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