

the
O R A C L E
LENT 2022



A Seasonal Publication of
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Maple Glen, Pennsylvania



INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF THE
O R A C L E
L E N T - 2 0 2 2

A Letter from our Rector.Pg 3

Lenten OpportunitiesPg 4-5

Parish HappeningsPg 6-8

Interview: Bright Hopes, VestryPg 9

Nursery School.Pg 10-11

A LETTER FROM OUR RECTOR

REV. RODNEY ROEHNER

St. Matthew's Family,

As I mentioned in a recent teaching moment, 'Lent' is simply an old English word for 'Spring', in particular, the daily lengthening of sunlight as warmer temperatures and blossoms greet us following the winter cold. That should be enough to get most of us excited for its arrival, but there is, of course, an even deeper and more meaningful reason to greet the season of Lent with thankfulness. Of all times throughout the Church year, it is the one that offers an invitation, a welcome to draw closer to our Lord Jesus Christ.

During Lent, this is primarily done in two ways. First, we 'take on' new practices, such as reading Holy Scripture daily, saying Morning and Evening Prayer, volunteering, or helping someone you know could use your assistance. The desire behind these efforts shouldn't be to simply get through them during Lent so that we can quickly go back to our old way of doing things come Easter. Rather, may they take root in our souls, in our daily routines, so that they become a permanent part of our life and growth in Christ.

The other way of drawing closer to the Lord during Lent is to 'give up' those things that have an inordinate hold over us. This falls under the Lenten discipline called 'fasting', but it certainly concerns more than merely food and drink. So I ask you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, is there something that controls you more than you control it?

Are there things that hinder your relationship with Jesus rather than strengthen it? Once again, these efforts of fasting during Lent should take on a more permanent character in our lives beyond this season alone.

Lent is an opportune time to come home to the Lord, to draw closer to the one who sustains us, who gives us purpose, whose love for us is unquenchable. How can we draw closer to him? How can we help others do the same?

I pray that all of you will take hold of this Lenten season as a gift, an occasion for clearing away the clutter in our lives in order to see Jesus with renewed faith.

Opportunities to do so in the coming weeks are plentiful at St. Matthew's, details of which can be found throughout our parish publications.

Finally, I invite those of you who are able, but have not yet returned to church since the pandemic began, to seize this season of Lent as an ideal time to do so, to be welcomed by your church family that loves and misses you. May God bless our efforts throughout this Lenten season, and may we rejoice with gladness in the Risen Lord come Easter morning!

With Love in Christ,

Rodney + 3

LENT

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
MAPLE GLEN, PENNSYLVANIA

March 2nd

Ash Wednesday

12:00 PM AND 6:00 PM*
Holy Eucharist

March 6th

First Sunday

7:45 AM AND 10:30 AM*
Great Litany

April 10th -15th

Holy Week

Palm Sunday

7:45, 9:00*, 10:30* AM
Holy Eucharist

Mon. Tue. Wed.

12:00 PM
Holy Eucharist

Ongoing

Weekly Opps.

Fridays at 6:00 PM
**Evening Prayer, Supper
and Program** see page 5

Saturdays at 8:30 AM
Walk to Jerusalem
see page 5

Maundy Thursday

6:00 PM Holy Eucharist and
Vigil at the Altar of Repose

Good Friday

12:00 PM* Good Friday Liturgy

6:00 PM Stations of the Cross via
Zoom www.linktr.ee/saintmatthews

EASTER

April 16th

Saturday

6:00 PM*
Liturgy of Light Service

April 17th

Sunday

7:45, 9:00* AND 10:30 AM*
Holy Eucharist

*also available via Livestream

Weekly Lenten Program

Each Friday during Lent, all are welcome to gather for Evening Prayer at 6 PM, followed by a Lenten supper (meatless). During this time, Fr. Rodney will be leading us through Adam Hamilton's book and accompanying DVD, *24 Hours that Changed the World*, which focuses on the last 24 hours of Jesus' earthly life. Paperback and Kindle versions of the title can be purchased by going to <https://tinyurl.com/24Hours-Lent>. If anyone needs assistance getting a book, please contact Fr. Rodney. A sign-up sheet to bring food can be found in the narthex.

Walk to Jerusalem

Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022, our church family is invited to begin a virtual Lenten journey to walk 5,767 miles from Maple Glen to Jerusalem. We encourage all members to embark on this mission to become more physically active while also fostering spiritual growth. Weekly "walking reflections" will be provided that you may ponder as you walk. Those interested are invited to walk together at St. Matthew's each Saturday during Lent at 8:30 am. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/SMECJerusalemWalk>, or by contacting Karin Davis at (215) 858-4973 or davis266@comcast.net

Mark for Lent

Throughout the weeks of Lent, we welcome you to participate in a congregational reading of the Gospel according to Mark. Each day, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, offers a brief passage that will lead us through the sixteen chapters of Mark. The readings for each day can be followed by using the handout that is available in church, or by using this link: <https://tinyurl.com/Mark-for-Lent>

Life Long Learning Groups

From the Catechists: Welcome back to Sunday school! Classes for age 3 through Grade 5 will resume on March 6th. Masks are required for all children and staff. We hope your children will join us to worship God in prayer and song as we make our journey through Lent. Our preschoolers will hear presentations of the Parable of the Good Shepherd, the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price, the Tracing of the Paschal Candle and the Last Supper. Kindergarten through second graders will be learning about the events leading up to the death and resurrection of Jesus and the places where these events occurred. The children in grades three through five will once again bury the Alleluia Banner and will further their understanding of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem and the Last Supper. All of the children will practice songs and scripture for our joyous Liturgy of the Light service which will take place on the evening before Easter. In this special worship service we will celebrate Jesus as the Light of the world! We hope to see you there!

From the Adult LLL Forum: Adult Forum will be exploring the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles beginning March 6. We will be using a video series from The Bible Project that provides a short introduction for our discussion each week. The series will run for 9 weeks, excluding Palm Sunday and Easter. We meet both in person (parish hall) and via Zoom www.linktr.ee/saintmatthews



T H E P A R I S H

From our Parish Care Team

The Pastoral Care Team is currently phoning or visiting parishioners who are homebound or living in retirement and medical communities. We phone or visit these individuals each month, both to keep in touch, and to remind them that the St. Matthew's community holds them in prayer. Additionally, our team members prepare and send cards to these parishioners on their birthday and for the holidays. Currently, the Pastoral Care Team has four trained members who meet bimonthly in consultation with Fr. Rodney. Together, we communicate about the needs of the parish and serve as a support system for one another. If you are interested in training for this ministry, please speak to the clergy by emailing rector@saintmattsec.org **Sincerely, George Bishop**

From our Parish Treasurer

St. Matthew's is off to a good financial start in 2022! The total net income for the month of January was almost \$20K, with both Nursery School and Church operations making positive contributions. These events resulted in a corresponding increase in our Operating Cash. As compared to the budget, revenues less expenses for the Nursery School were effectively even, and for Church Operations we were about \$5K above budget. The investment markets went up and down during January which ended the month about 3% below last year, but our total Cash and Reserves are still more than \$1.1 million.

Sincerely, Jim Garrison

From our Director of Music

The music ministry at St. Matthew's is a special one. A small, but fervent bunch, the choir at St. Matthew's likes to sing almost as much as they love hosting brunch parties. The members come from myriad walks of life; some are teachers, healthcare professionals, scientists. Some are college-trained musicians; others are hobbyists that took up music later in life. No matter their background, every one of the choir's members is committed to faith and service through this ministry and use the gifts God gave them to make a glorious and joyful noise.

The COVID-19 pandemic ushered in an era of uncertainty and uprooted our very way of life. What would worship look like in the future? Would we ever be able to sing again? These were just some of the questions that were being asked and at the time, no one knew the answer to them. Many people had to become experts quite literally overnight in streaming platforms like Zoom so that worship could continue online in some capacity. I remember the Holy Week Services and how they didn't feel the same as they did in years past, separated from the live music and worship that captured the magnificent story of Lent. Still, the ministries at St. Matthew's persisted. I remember Martha, Joe, and I would record services in the sanctuary every week. Keeping just close enough to sing and play in time with each other. I remember the choir recording their individual parts to hymns so that I could make a small video to play on the livestream. It was certainly far from perfect, but we truly did the best we could given circumstances. The work we did helped bring people comfort in unsettling times. **(cont.)**

H A P P E N I N G S

Today, though not all members have returned, the choir continues to enhance the worship experience through song at St. Matthew's. This relatively "normal" year features regular performances by the choir. Presently, we are looking ahead to the Lenten Season where we are excited to perform new and exciting music. We look forward to facing new challenges and growing both as individuals and as a ministry so that we can better serve the St. Matthew's Community. This ministry is always open to new members. So, if you're looking for a way to service your church community, you've always wanted to sing, or just enjoy brunch, you should consider joining this wonderful ministry. **Sincerely, Phil LeFevre**

Who are the Companions of the Holy Cross?

My name is Treva McLaughlin, and I wish to share with you information regarding the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross. I am a Companion who came to learn about the Society from Anne Murray, one time Deacon at St. Matthew's. The SCHC was founded in the late 1880s by contemplative Emily Malbone Morgan, recognized in the Episcopal Church's lectionary each February. As the story goes, Emily and her friend, Adelyn Howard began praying together each day. When other women began to join their group, a movement was born, founded on the aims that: its members pray daily in thanksgiving and intercession, seek to live lives of simplicity, and work toward social justice. These central tenets continue to serve as the foundation for the SCHC today, now a diverse group of more than 800 lay and clergy women. The Society is made up of mostly Episcopal women, but welcomes women from any church in communion with TEC, or any woman willing to accept and follow the Society's aims and vows. Today, the work of the SCHC continues in local chapters throughout the US. Upcoming programs for the Philadelphia Chapter include a Quiet Day in March, and an April 23rd program with Stephanie Spellers, Presiding Bishop Curry's Canon for Evangelism, Reconciliation and Creation. I would be happy to provide additional information, and you may reach me by emailing trevaal314@gmail.com

To investigate further:

<https://www.adelynrood.org/companions/>
Sincerely, Treva McLaughlin

A Bingo Night to Remember!

What?! Have fun on Zoom? Yes we did! On Saturday, February 5th, St. Matthew's held its second Virtual Bingo night, hosted by Bill and Martha Reynolds. Over 35 players joined us, including families from both the church and nursery school. Amazingly, we even had players join us from Georgia and Massachusetts, playing for almost two hours! There were a variety of different prizes awarded, which winners picked up at church the next day. What a deal; a prize AND a morning of worship! We hope that, next year, St. Matthew's will host this fun evening again, in-person, with plenty of food and beverages! **Sincerely, Martha Reynolds**

Announcing SMEC Photo Directory_ Edition 2022

It has been 15 years since St. Matthew's commissioned a photo directory! This March, we plan to invite parishioners to begin updating their contact information and to provide a recent photo of themselves. To learn more about the project or to participate, stay tuned for a special announcement via email in the coming weeks.

Update from the Little Pantry

Jessica McClard launched the grassroots Little Pantry movement in May 2016 in Fayetteville, AR. She planted the very first Little Free Pantry Pilot, a wooden box on a post that contained food, personal care products, and paper items that her community could access at any time, no questions asked. Jessica hoped her ministry would bring awareness to the issue of food insecurity in her community, by creating a space for caring individuals to meet the needs of those most in need. St. Matthew's is proud to continue the legacy of Jessica's ministry, having built and installed our own wooden pantry in November of 2021. Soon, word spread that the pantry was available to people who need a helping hand after labeling it on social media, and liaising with the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Now, over two months since we installed the pantry, we find ourselves having to restock the items at least 4 times a week. The need is very present in our community, so if you would like to donate, please place offerings in our Parish Kitchen cabinet marked "Little Pantry", or in a storage bin on the porch outside the front of St. Matthew's. Our biggest need right now is **paper towels and toilet paper**, but the needs fluctuate. For a current listing of our most pressing donation requests, please call the parish office at **(215) 646-4092**. Sincerely, Martha Reynolds

Greetings from Kenya!

Since approximately 2002, St. Matthew's has partnered with the Mwamba foundation. Mwamba is an organization that works towards transforming lives in both the USA and in Kitale, Kenya, by 'building mutual partnerships that enhance human capacity through education, sharing of resources, and cultural exchanges'. Mwamba's three main projects include: funding high school education for children in need, leadership development, and women's development. Mwamba is a swahili word for 'rock', expressing the stability the foundation seeks to establish in the Kenyan people. Recently, St. Matthew's received a beautiful set of letters from the Kenyan beneficiaries of Mwamba's programs. Read the excerpts below:

Dear St Matthew's Maple Glen,
Receive greetings from me, I hope you are fine and highly favoured by God. I am also good and going on well with my education. I take this chance to really thank you for everything that you have always done for me, especially paying my school fees. I can

My family at home are doing well. My mother never ceases to appreciate you for all your kindness. I promise to get good grades that will make you proud. I wish all the best in this year and the next coming years. May God bless ^{God} you and grant you long happy life.

A HAPPY
NEW YEAR
TO YOU !!

BRIGHT HOPES

Anthony: **Tell our readers a story about the first time you came to St. Matthew's. What attracted you to our parish?**

Jim: I grew up in the Methodist Church. Jeanne grew up in the Episcopal Church at St. Anne's Abington, which is considered a "high" Episcopal Church and therefore quite different from my own church upbringing. When we got married, we decided that we would meet somewhere in the middle. After moving to the Hatboro-Horsham area, we were looking at churches and went to St. Matthews. While it met that 'meet in the middle' goal, additionally, the Interfaith Housing program made a big impression on me. It just seemed like the kind of thing that a church should be doing.

Toni: I discovered St. Matt's after attending Father Dave's son's wedding, which was beautiful! I remember enjoying the community here, but I was attending another church at the time. After Alan and I moved to a home on Tennis Avenue, and in seeking a faith home for our kids to grow up in, we found that St. Matt's was the perfect fit for our family.

Anthony: **Tell us about your ministry at St. Matthew's prior to joining the vestry. Any highlights to share?**

Jim: A long time ago, I was the parish treasurer. I've also been an usher and a reader at services for several years now. Additionally, over the past few years, Jeanne and I have facilitated our **Tuesday Night Prayer and Share Group**. When our kids were involved with Sunday School and Youth Group, we chaperoned mission trips, and other youth activities

Toni: I'm in the military and was raised Catholic. During my first deployment, I was asked to serve as a Eucharistic Minister. After praying about that, I accepted the role, working under a Lieutenant Colonel who was an incredible mentor and who showed me the depth of the Christian message. Later at St. Matthew's, I began helping with children's and youth activities, particularly with Vacation Bible camp. I really enjoy teaching biblical messages to our children and building community for them and their families. I've also recently served on the Parish Search Committee.

Anthony: **How might you use your unique talents and gifts as a member of the Vestry?**

Jim: I recently retired, and [. . .] I don't want to sit around and clean the garage all day, (although goodness knows it needs it!). Having spent the last 14 years of my professional life doing accounting for nonprofits, I feel like I do have experience and knowledge to share this gift at St. Matthew's. I'm happy that I have the opportunity to do so.

Toni: I am a highly relational person, so I'm really hoping to connect again with our younger families whether in our parish or in the community at-large. I'd be interested to work a little more on promoting community-wide opportunities and events where we can all engage and be present together. I look forward to serving as that conduit.

Anthony: **I wonder if you have one or two 'bright hopes' for the future of St. Matthew's that you might like to share?**

Jim: Jeanne and I both served on the Parish Profile Committee. When we shared conversations with our parishioners, we asked them: "what do you like and what might you like to change about St. Matthews"? While some people wanted 'more of this,' and others requested 'more of that,' some people wanted nothing to change at all. In my experience this is normal, because human beings typically do not like change. Indeed, making positive changes is an art form - it is hard to do. So, I think the bright hope centers around the fact that we have a new priest with new ideas. Fr. Rodney has a great sense of which changes might be considered such that our parishioners might accept and embrace change. So, my great hope is that new and different things will be embraced at St. Matthew's.

Toni: I envision our church as being a place where we support not only individual spiritual journeys, but whole communities - [a place that enables us to] take up causes that make a huge impact as a collective. Surely, this work will enable our church's growth, and people will see that we're working outside of its walls. My bright hope for the future of St. Matthew's is that we might serve as a beacon of light throughout the socioeconomic, geographical, and engagement spectrums. Let's learn, grow, and meet people where they're at. I'm really looking forward to doing a lot more to support the health and vibrancy of our church.

A LETTER FROM THE NURSERY SCHOOL

J a c k i e A n d e r s o n , D i r e c t o r

As we move into March, we hope that the weather cooperates and we are able to enjoy the playground outside as much as possible! Our nursery school children will be busy little leprechauns as we approach St. Patrick's Day - the halls and classrooms will be adorned with green shamrocks and rainbows with pots of gold. Before we know it, we will also celebrate Easter with bunnies, chicks, Easter egg hunts and fun parties.

The Nursery School plans to support the Ambler Food Cupboard from now through April. In March, families are invited to send in donations of bath soap. In April, donations of toilet paper will be accepted. Children will offer these donations in our Chapel with Father Rodney.

As a reminder, **school will be closed on Thursday, March 24th** for a Professional Development Day for our nursery school staff. There, teachers will gather virtually with their peers in 22 preschools in our area. Together, we plan to attend a "Back to the Basics" workshop, and topics will include "Equity and Inclusion," "Red Flags for Preschool Teachers" and "Teachable Moments Through Singing."

We are excited to announce that, while most classes have reached their capacity for the 2022-2023 school year, there are still a few openings remaining for enrollment. Slots are available for: the two and a half year old age gr-

-oup Tues. through Thurs, as well as our age three group on Tues. through Thurs. in the mornings and all afternoons. If you know of a parent or caretaker who is seeking a vibrant and nurturing preschool, please have them call the school at **(215) 646-4466**, or email us at **nurseryschool@saintmattsec.org**

Most sincerely,

Jackie



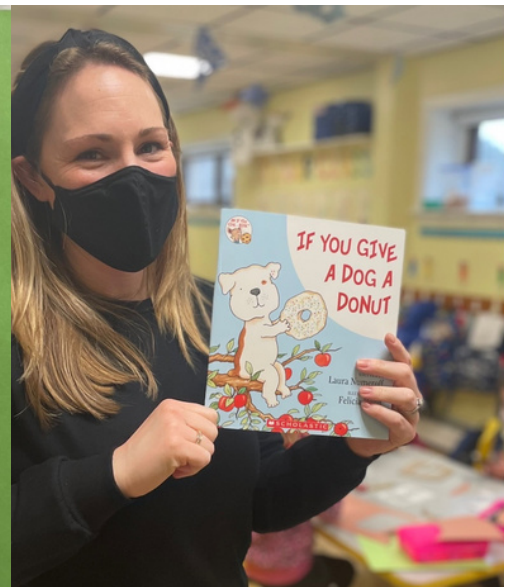


SHINING A LIGHT ON Mrs. Lindsey Washam



This month the spotlight is on Mrs. Lindsey Washam, our Pre-K Teacher! Lindsey has been teaching at St. Matthew's for four years. She began teaching in the 3's T-TH class before moving to the 4's M-TH and now the Pre-K. Lindsey has a natural teaching ability and brings a positive attitude to school everyday.

Lindsey enjoys collaborating with the other Pre-K teachers to bring creative and exciting lessons to her students. This week, Mrs. Washam is working on the letter 'Dd' with her class. Children read "If you Give a Dog a Donut" and made a dog out of a letter 'Dd'. Children also enjoyed a motor activity in which they had to place a particular number of spots on their dog.





ST MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Maple Glen, PA 19002

Parish Office: (215) 646-4092

