

SAINT MATTHIAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Saint Matthias Messenger

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Saint Matthias Episcopal Church
7056 Washington Avenue
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(562) 698-9741

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
9:00^{AM} - 4:00^{PM}

Rector
The Rev. Bill Garrison
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Web Page:
<http://www.stmatthiaswhittier.org>

Sunday Worship Services
8:00^{AM} - Holy Eucharist Rite I
10:00^{AM} - Holy Eucharist Rite II

Saturday Worship Service
The First Saturday of the Month
5:00pm - Holy Eucharist Rite I

Wednesday Bible Study
10:00^{AM}

Wednesday Eucharist
11:00^{AM} - Holy Eucharist



Culture's Influence in Scripture

I recently preached a sermon about the relationship between culture and the Bible. I mean specifically the culture at the time of the writing of a particular section of scripture, and how it impacts our understanding of God as found in that passage. I suggested then, and suggest here in this space, that an awareness of the societal impact on scripture is monumentally important for a clearer understanding of the nature of God whose nature sometimes gets filtered through the culture at the time of writing.

Let me begin with this. I am a scripture guy. I absolutely love scripture. I love what scripture can and does say to us if we are listening. I have taught Old and New Testament to high school students for years. I have spent many blissful hours in study, especially of the New Testament. I may not be a complete scholar of the Bible, but I am certainly well introduced to the subject.

I am also absolutely convinced of the reality of Jesus Christ. I am equally convinced that he rose from the dead changing everything for all of humankind from that moment forward. Much, if not most, of my foundation for this understanding comes from my own historical examination of the New Testament.

But please also be aware that I have given myself permission to ask questions about what I read in scripture. I wonder about who wrote it. (No it wasn't written by God nor was it dictated to the folks that did write it down.) I wonder when it was written. I wonder who the audience was at the time it was written. I wonder why it was written. What was the point at the time? I also understand that culture and God have gotten mixed together in the writing.

I therefore give myself permission to attempt to separate societal norms from the God we find in scripture. I understand that scripture has been redacted over time as later readers and hearers saw fit to change and augment it to fit the culture at the time. Yet I relish the fact that scripture is like an onion. The more layers we peel back and review the more there is to learn. The process of studying scripture never ends. It only gets better and better as we go along.

And, hang on to your hats as I write something in this space that you already know but seldom say out loud. Self-serving interpretations of scripture have been responsible for supporting some of the very basic ills of society over the millennia. Let me name a few important ones quickly: slavery, the murder of much of the Jewish population on more than one heinous occasion, and the oppression of women. There's more but that's enough I think to list for the moment.

This is what I mean about separating the culture of the society in which scripture was written and the God we worship. God obviously does not support slavery, murder, or oppression. But it's in the Bible and the Bible has been used again and again to support these terrible societal issues.



As an example, as I spoke to in the previous sermon I previously mentioned, let's think about King David and Bathsheba. David saw a beautiful woman in her bath, Bathsheba, from the roof of his house and wanted to become acquainted with her. He asked that she be brought to him. She was and he had a relationship with her resulting in pregnancy. Then in order to take care of the problem created he dealt with her husband Uriah harshly, eventually deciding he must die. He then sent him into battle in such a way that Uriah could not survive, and he didn't.

If we read further we realize that God was not pleased by David's action and Samuel, God's messenger, passed that word along. In addition David was punished for his actions, including the death of the child. Yet, God stuck with David as he became the most important king in the history of Israel. That's the common take away from the story.

But what about Bathsheba? Why was she punished too? She suffered the death of the child to and the loss of her husband. What had she done to deserve her fate?

Amazingly there are a large number of scholars and "thinkers" that over the years have believed Bathsheba was somehow partly responsible for what happened. They suggest that she had seduced him by being naked in the bath, or she accepted his advances and therefore participated.

Clearly there is another reality. Let's think about the cultural component. It was normal for Bathsheba to have been bathing in the evening according to Jewish laws and mores. David had no business looking into neighboring yards at that time of day. Bathsheba was a woman and in that day and from a place of power was only slightly above the level of a pet goat, having virtually no rights in comparison to men at that time. And David was not just a man he was the king. She could not have denied him his conquest in any way, shape, or form. It was ultimate power versus no power whatsoever.

How could any thinking scholar believe Bathsheba had any culpability? The answer, my friends is pretty simple. Until about 1970 almost all religious scholars of note were men, and primarily white men. They only had their perspective upon which to rely. For the most part they were incapable of understanding the power disadvantage of women because they had never experienced it. It doesn't make white men of that time or this bad people. They just didn't know and frankly still don't get it. We can know something is true and still not entirely understand. But perhaps that is a discussion for another time. Thankfully in the last half century the addition of female theologians and theologians of color has added a much needed perspective.

In any event if one wishes to do so a case can be made to support the supposition that women are inferior creatures to men from the pages of scripture. God we have been told is a He. Women were made from the rib of a man. Eve ate first

of the tree of good and evil and got her husband to do the same. A man that was displeased with his wife could give his wife a bill of divorce. I could go on and on but I hope you get the point. For the most part men have been portrayed as closer to God and godliness than women. Women have been portrayed more often than not as lesser beings and often the source of trouble. They were lovely possessions to be used.

But this is societal culture talking, not the voice of God. In the same Bible, as we clear away the societal influences, we find the voice of God speaking. In the Old Testament we see God addressing the needs of the widow and the orphan. We see the important voice of Wisdom as feminine in nature.

In the New Testament we hear God speaking in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ even more dramatically. Weeding through the societal influences of the First Century in which Jesus had his ministry we again find a compassionate God. We find a God that values every human life, male or female, accepting us as we are and where we are. In the writings of Paul we find women who were mainstays of the early church and classified as saints. Jesus spent most of the nights during Holy Week in the company and home of two of his friends, both women, Mary and Martha.

Our society is struggling mightily with many important social issues, among them race and the equality of men and women to name a couple. When we listen to the God of scripture we have no confusion where God stands on these issues as long as we remove the influence of the culture present at the time of its writing. This to me is Biblical scholarship worth doing. It's life changing and informing. It can help us make a positive difference in the world around us as people learn to view scripture in a more productive way.

Fr. Bill+

Stephen Ministry at St. Matthias

A new training class for Interested parishioners will begin in January, 2019. The 50 hours of training will provide participants competency in the areas of the Caregiver's Compass: COMPASSIONATE, FULL OF FAITH, SKILLED AND TRUST WORTHY. Stephen Ministers have faith in Jesus; they are completely competent; they are 100 per cent committed and they keep Christ at the center of all they do. "Anyone interested in training for this very rewarding ministry should inquire, ask questions and talk with one of the following Stephen Ministry Leaders: Catherine Coutts, Faye Jackson, Stan Jamieson, Kay Lozano, Sally Schacht or Fr. Bill."

Faye Jackson

Worship at Saint Matthias September 2018

- + 8:00^{AM} - Holy Eucharist, Rite I
- + 9:00^{AM} - Adult Christian Education
- + 10:00^{AM} - Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- + 10:00^{AM} - "The Works" - Children's Education

September 2 **The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Scripture: Song of Solomon 2:8-13, Psalm 45:1-2, 7-10, James 1:17-27, Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

September 9 **The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Scripture: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23, Psalm 125, James 2:1-10, [11-13], 14-17, Mark 7:24-37

September 16 **The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Scripture: Proverbs 1:20-33, Psalm 19, James 3:1-12, Mark 8:27-38

September 23 **The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Scripture: Proverbs 31:10-31, Psalm 1, James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a, Mark 9:30-37

September 30 **The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Scripture: Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22, Psalm 124 , James 5:13-20, Mark 9:38-50

"Living Compass" Wellness Ministry is Starting Soon

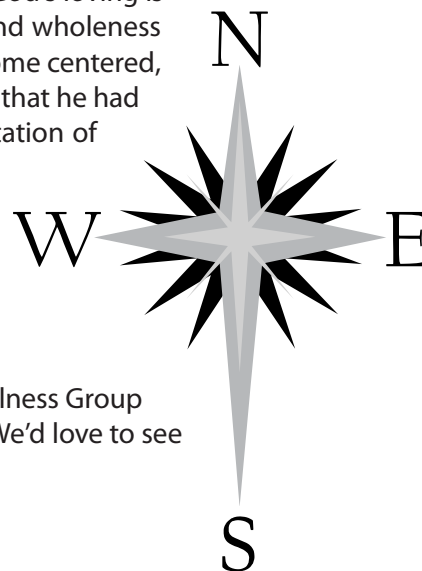
In a previous article I mentioned that a new ministry group is forming at St. Matthias around the idea of exploring together our personal wellness within community. It's going to start at the end of September and I hope you'll join us. I've been working with Terry Dodd and have been inspired by her enthusiasm and knowledge around to idea of wellness. In this group we'll explore the gifts we've been given by God and how we might make the most of those gifts in every aspect of our lives to give us meaning and joy.

We'll be using a wonderful program that Terry found called "Living Compass" which was created by an Episcopal priest, the Rev Scott Stoner. His point of view is that wellness and wholeness begin with authentic spirituality. We all have "compasses" pulling us in different directions. Our lives improve when we discern God's direction and are heading that way. As we seek God's holy intention for us we discover how God's loving is presence is with us in our life's journeys. Our souls long for the path to wellness and wholeness which can be revealed when we give ourselves the opportunity to slow down, become centered, and listen to ourselves and to each other. Jesus told the disciples he journeyed with that he had come to give abundant life. Often it seems we reduce that promise into an expectation of "just getting by" instead of living rich, full lives. The Wellness Group will offer a way to pay attention to our whole life from the compass points of heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The program provides a wealth of resources and support for us to seek together the wholeness that God intends for all of us. Reading through it gave both Terry and I some "ah-ha!" moments that we look forward to sharing.

We're excited to get started by hosting an orientation to the Living Compass Wellness Group on Sunday, September 30 in the Chase room between the services. Please join us! We'd love to see you and share more about the program.

Carole+



Come and Join Our Study Group: Psychedelic Christianity

My wife Mary Jo and I joined St. Matthias a little over a year ago, and we just love it here! Everyone has made us feel so welcome. We love the liturgy, the sermons, Bible study, the choir and organ, that the church feeds people, and all the friendly faces. I am honored that Father Bill has asked me to lead a study group on my new book, Psychedelic Christianity this fall, and I hope you'll join us in discussing philosophical and religious questions. This is my third book on the intersection between philosophy and religion, and I'm excited that it has just been published by the Christian Alternative imprint of John Hunt Publishing. Here is a little taste of what we'll be talking about.



It's easy to understand why someone who believes dying is equivalent to going out of existence would wonder what is the point of living in the first place. But we Christians believe we don't go out of existence: we have everlasting life. Does it make sense to ask what is the point of everlasting life itself? That is one of the questions I address in the book and that I hope to discuss with those who choose to join the study group. Here are some others: Can there be more than one ultimate goal? What is under our control and what isn't? Supposing the Devil is your neighbor, should you love him? What does it mean to say that Jesus releases us from sin and death? What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and in what sense is it unforgivable? What did Jesus mean by saying, "My kingdom is not of (or from) this world"? Is it possible to reconcile the claims that some people are damned forever and that God will restore all things and will be all in all?

The "psychedelic" part of the title refers to the fact that I draw on several profound psychedelic experiences I had in the past in thinking about these questions. I have found, after many years of further living, studying and teaching philosophy and world religions (and teaching is just another way of learning), that Christianity, more than any other philosophy or religion that I know about, turns out to be the best expression of what I learned from my psychedelic experiences. But you don't have to be familiar with, or even sympathetic to, psychedelics in order to join the study group.

We will be covering three chapters per meeting. The chapters are not very long, and neither is the whole book, but I promise you will find it interesting if you are intrigued by questions like those I listed above. You may purchase it through amazon or any other online bookseller. You may also visit my website (myiapc.com) for a link to the amazon page and short articles I have written, and, as an added treat, some music by Mary Jo, including last year's Christmas pageant. Just wait till you see this year's Christmas musical! She is working on it as I write this.

We will meet on four Wednesday evenings, 7-9 o'clock, Oct. 24-Nov. 14. Refreshments will be served. I hope to see you there! - *Jack Call*

Funds for the Future

Futures Fund statement dated July 31st indicates we have moved from \$438,232.30 to \$444,992.14 during the month of July or a \$6,759.84 gain.

As promised last month, following is a list of some of the ways you can contribute to the future of St. Matthias:

**CASH, SECURITIES, REAL ESTATE, PERSONAL PROPERTY, RETIREMENT ASSETS,
WILLS AND BEQUESTS, LIFE INSURANCE**

If you have any questions on the above or any other issues regarding the Futures Fund please contact one of the fund members: Larry Christian, Mike Taylor, Doug Halliday, Stan Jamieson or Father Bill.

Stan Jamieson

"The Soup Hour" report

Soup Hour 501(c)3 status: IRS has granted us tax exempt status making us an official 501(c)3 entity. We have met with church insurance agent and now have our own separate policy. We are now official and we can once again begin submitting grant requests for soup hour operations. The soup hour planning committee is still hard at work planning the big fund raiser set for October 13th. More to follow.

Stan Jamieson













PUZZLE

IT'S A MIRACLE!

Jesus performed many amazing miracles during his earthly ministry.

Directions: Match the words and pictures of different healings, from one column to the other. Then fit the word pairs in the blanks below to complete Matthew 11:5, NIV.

- | | |
|---|--|
|  blind | hear  |
|  leprosy | walk  |
|  lame | raised  |
|  deaf | sight  |
|  dead | cleansed  |

The _____ receive _____, the _____, those
 who have _____ are _____, the _____
 _____, the _____ are _____.

MATTHEW 11:5, NIV

Answer: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, ... Matthew 11:5, NIV

We Need To Know

Please let the clergy know of any members of the parish that are unable to come to church and would like to receive communion. **The Office now schedules the Lay Eucharistic Visitors and wants to include all who need a visit. Please contact Dottie or Father Bill in the Parish Office to schedule a visit.**

If you know of someone who has been admitted to a hospital, remember to inform the clergy. With the new privacy laws, the clergy can no longer check the roster for parishioners that may be hospitalized. It is "Better We Know Twice Than Not At All!"

Support Our Advertisers

Each issue of the Saint Matthias Messenger is printed at no cost to our Parish, thanks to C&M Church Publications. They are able to do this by selling a single page of advertising in each issue. Please check the back of each issue's calendar and if you are in need of a service listed, consider using one of our supporters.

Miracles happen!

Create this colorful reminder of God's wondrous works.



What you need:

- white cardstock
- white wax crayon
- paintbrush
- water
- watercolor paints

What you do:

1. Across the paper horizontally, write with the white crayon "Miracles happen!" (or a Bible verse such as Job 5:9; Psalm 77:14; Jeremiah 32:27; or Matthew 19:26).
2. Wet the paintbrush and paint over the words with different colors.
3. Let dry and then hang up.

Saint Matthias Staff

Rector

Fr. Bill Garrison

Associate

Rev. Carolyn Estrada

Deacon

Rev. Kay Lozano

Transitional Deacon

Rev. Carole Horton-Howe

Youth / Senior Ministries

Sally Schacht

Music Director

Kevin McKelvie

Parish Administrator

Dottie Andersen

Facilities Manager

Ben Gonzalez

Treasurer

Kathel Harris

Bookkeeper

Kent Meyers

Special Dates in September

- * Labor Day, September 3
- * Grandparents Day, September 9
- * Patriot Day, September 11
- * Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15 – Oct. 15
- * First day of Autumn, Sept. 22



"Just have a seat, Reverend. The search committee will be right in."

Senior Wardens Corner

Fr. Bill advised that attendance is remaining steady with a slight drop in summer, which is to be expected. Fr. Bill also thanked the Vestry and the congregation for the great support and love he received relative to the death of his dear Mother.

- ⊗ Fr. Bill advises that Homecoming will be September 16th and will honor Fr. Kevin Taylor. Please mark your calendars.
- ⊗ The Rev. Carole Horton-Howe reported on the many new Womens Groups which are coming to light at St. Matthias. (See her article in this messenger). Womens activities at St. Matthias are now thriving and we thank God for that.
- ⊗ Stan Jamieson reported that plans are going strong in preparation of the October 13th fund raiser. Flyers, invitations etc. are forthcoming.
- ⊗ Stan Jamieson also reported that "The Soup Hour" is now an official tax exempt 501(c)3 entity with its own separate bank account, separate financials and our grant writer is now advised to continue submitting grant requests.
- ⊗ Andrea Schmid continues to amaze us as Director of Communications. Andrea reported on the many, many steps she is taking to make sure all events, dates and groups are properly reported and advertised. Andreas goal is to make sure no event, large or small, gets lost in the cracks and that all our media (website, Facebook, twitter etc) outlets properly report what is happening at St. Matthias. Much more to come.
- ⊗ Sally Schacht continues to amaze us with all the things (trips, special events) she schedules so that our youth will have a special time at St. Matthias. The youth recently spent a weekend in San Diego, had a pool party at Sallys and there are other great events in the future. Thank you Sally for helping to make our youth population grow.
- ⊗ Ben Corbitt reported on the upcoming events in the stewardship campaign. There will be an upcoming letter mail out (with new pledge cards), a couple of fall speakers (congregation members) and hopefully a stewardship luncheon.
- ⊗ Kent Myers reported on our financials. Kent reports we as a congregation are doing quite well financially and also reports that he has successfully separated the financials for our newly formed tax exempt 501(c)3 "The Soup Hour".

Next meeting is September 11, 2018 and everyone is welcome to come sit in and observe your vestry at work.

Stan Jamieson

Feast of Memorial Lights

The St. Matthias Choral Evensong and Feast of Memorial Lights will take place Sunday, November 4, 2018 at 5:00 P. M. This service is an old tradition at St. Matthias. It is held on All Saints Day and is an opportunity to honor family members, friends, and pets that have died. Each loved one's name is read during the service and is represented by a tree light which is turned on after the service in the patio. Following the service the Pastoral Commission sponsors a dinner. The profits from the dinner are used by the Pastoral Commission to provide flowers, meals, and special needs to St. Matthias family members. All of the money goes directly back to our St. Matthias family. This is the only fundraiser that the Pastoral Commission has during the year, and we encourage all of you to attend. This is a family event and children are welcome. Please mark your calendar, Tickets will be sold in October and November. The quotation below is taken from the Jewish Prayer Book:

"We remember with sorrow those whom death has taken from our midst during the past year...

In the rising of the sun and in it's going down, we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter we remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them."

Junior Warden's Update

Many of the initial projects undertaken with the Father Kevin Taylor Facilities Fund are underway, or have been completed. Finishing touches on our newly painted Lewis Hall will be applied soon.

We had obtained new tables for use in Lewis Hall. Upon delivery of the tables, however, we found them to be too heavy and somewhat unwieldy. We have decided to return them. They will be replaced by tables of a lighter weight material that will allow most of us to participate in setting them up for any functions at which they're needed, and breaking them down for storage. Look for their arrival, soon.

We purchased privacy partitions for use by our health care support at Soup Hour. The partitions are portable and will not damage the flooring in Lewis Hall. A new knife sharpener, can opener and food processor have been obtained for the Soup Hour, as well. Painting of the Chapel will be completed soon, as well.

Work is underway on our parking lot. Some bureaucratic issues have slowed the progress a bit. But we will soon fulfill the necessary requirements and the remaining repairs and restriping of the lot will be completed. Chains and chain posts have been installed which will eventually provide greater security on our lot. The garage doors have been replaced and accompanying repairs are underway.

We are in discussion to install security cameras in strategic areas in and around our parish. We will focus, initially, on the exterior of the back of the church and the parking lot. Some vandalism occurred recently, and we want to be able to mitigate further episodes by creating an observant presence that security cameras will provide. This is a PRIORITY!

Our termite extermination and subsequent repairs have been completed. Wiring for the HVAC system has been completed and new installations are forthcoming. John Maidlow has his creative juices flowing as he works on design submissions for a new sign for St. Matthias. We will hear from him soon.

While many of these changes may go unnoticed because of their "behind the scenes" nature, they are significant, and they contribute immensely to our parish livelihood, atmosphere, safety and security. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact Doug Overstreet, Stan Jamieson or me. We are the Vestry-elected Father Kevin Facilities Fund Committee.

The maintenance and improvement of our facilities is ongoing and perpetual. We are continually grateful for the generosity of Father Kevin. You too, can participate in sustaining these efforts. We encourage each of you to consider a special offering to the Father Kevin Facilities Fund.

Tim Adams, Junior Warden



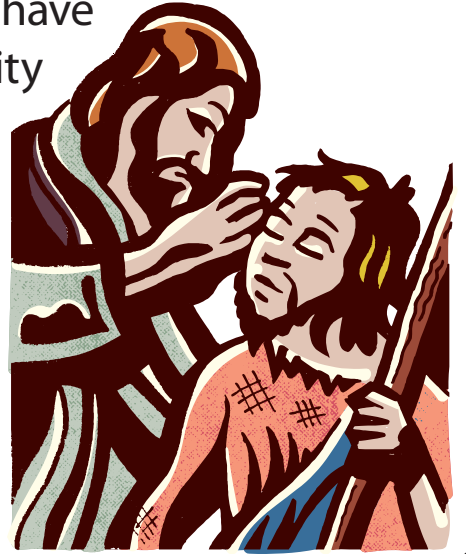
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New Saturday Healing Service

As many of you know, we hold a service at 5^{PM} the first Saturday of every month. It is a Eucharistic Service that mirrors the Sunday services. This will continue to be the case, but starting on September 1ST, we are adding a "Healing Service" component to it.

No, this will not look like something you may have seen on television. It will just be an opportunity to bring our infirmities, or the issues of those we love, to God in a special way at a special service. Healing prayer will be available to those who are interested or feel the need. This does not mean that if you come to the service you must have something ailing you. As always, everybody is invited.



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