

SAINT MATTHIAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Saint Matthias Messenger

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The Cornerstone of Our Lives

These articles are always written before the fifteenth of the previous month. In this particular case I am writing on the sixth of October. Last Sunday I preached a sermon that was primarily based in a passage from Matthew. I will quote it in a minute. As I sit here penning this piece it occurs to me that the passage has great import for November of 2020.

In the passage Jesus quotes from Psalm 118, verse 22. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." He is referring to himself. He knew he was to be rejected by those in power and crucified. But through his death and resurrection he was to become the cornerstone of Christian living.

A cornerstone is incredibly important for the construction of a masonry building. It defines the building. The rest of the structure depends on the cornerstone for much of the building process, and much of the building is defined in one stone. The cornerstone can only be laid once in the building process.



The cornerstone of the Cathedral of Saint Patrick in Norwich, Connecticut
(Photo by Farragutful | Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike)

But thankfully, in the context of a metaphor, the cornerstone may be laid at any time and may be reinstalled if something comes along to take its place in the building that is our lives.

November promises to be a month of challenges for us and for our society. As you read this you may be nodding your head as events are playing out. Knowing who and whose we are has never been more important. The question we Christians ask ourselves is a simple one. "Is Jesus Christ the cornerstone of my life?"

If he is then I suggest strongly that as other cornerstones are offered in his place, we reject them. If he is not, I hope all of us will consider who or what we will choose to inform our lives. My hope is that Jesus Christ will be the cornerstone we chose to reinstall.

Jesus Christ will get us through this. At this writing I don't know what November will look like, but I do know what Jesus Christ will be offering. I suggest we hang on to him.

Fr. Bill+

A Gospel Reflection for Thanksgiving

There are a handful of times in the year when secular celebrations and feast days - the fancy church word for holidays - overlap. Christmas and Easter are celebrated both as secular and religious holidays. Christmas in the secular world tends to focus on the festivities of parties, gift giving and fun decorations. Easter is about bright colored eggs and stuffed bunnies. There's nothing wrong with this. All these activities have distant symbolic ancestors in religious practices. And they lift our spirits and make us smile. That's especially important this year.

But the holiday where the secular world and the church world dovetail together beautifully is Thanksgiving. Traditionally we gather together family and friends including some that we might not see much of the rest of the year. We make food and memories. There are many versions of this --as many as there are families and communities. And I've yet to hear about a single Thanksgiving celebration tradition that doesn't include reflecting on our blessings. In our family, everyone gets a chance to share one thing that they are especially thankful for. Most of the time, what's shared isn't a thing at all, it's a grandma or a brother or a friend or a parent.

Luke's gospel tells us the story this Thanksgiving of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). As carriers of a lethal disease, these ten were outcasts of society but found community together. They were required to announce their presence "unclean!" wherever they went. So as if the physical and emotional pain and the prospect of a premature death from this disease weren't enough, their lives consisted of seeing people run from them in disgust and fear.

But not Jesus. Jesus did not turn away. In response to their pleas for mercy he turned toward them, healing them and sending them to the priests to show that they were now safe to return to their homes and relationships. Nine of them ran off immediately, eager to re-start their lives. Who can blame them? But one, a Samaritan, stayed behind to turn back to Jesus.

What's especially striking about this man is that he did this knowing that his troubles were not over. Yes, he was spared the terrors of the disease. But he was still a Samaritan. He would still be an oppressed member of society with all the challenges that involved. In the face of this, he chose to channel this moment of joy into gratitude prostrating himself humbly at Jesus' feet.

We've had a steady stream of troubles this year like we've never seen before. And as we come to Thanksgiving they are not over. Yet each day we are one day closer to an end to the terrible disease that keeps us from freely gathering together in person. That's quite a blessing. So in the quiet hours of Thanksgiving morning, I pray we can each take just a few moments away from whatever distractions might be pulling on us and, like the Samaritan cured through the mercy of God, turn our thoughts to the source of that mercy and healing to offer thanks for all that was, all that is and all that will be.

Rev. Carole+

Giving Thanks Safely in 2020

Back in March, as our daily rhythms were impacted so severely by COVID-19, a brief thought occurred to me: The fall and winter holidays could look very different this year.

It was an unpleasant thought with no immediate relevance. I brushed it aside.

Alas, fall has arrived, and it appears that Thanksgiving 2020 will occur under the cloud of the virus we can't seem to escape. (As if an election year weren't enough to digest over the turkey and cranberry sauce!)

As this year has demonstrated, maintaining togetherness is a challenge, but not impossible. I scoured the internet for a few ideas on how to safely celebrate Thanksgiving in the time of COVID.

First comes the obvious: Some might choose to gather in person for the holiday. Large gatherings are not recommended, but if you partake in one, remember that the virus won't take the day off. Stay outdoors if possible, and observe distancing, handwashing, and facemask guidelines if you choose to get together with your loved ones.

For those who will remain physically isolated for Thanksgiving, here are some ideas to help bridge some of that physical distance.

FOOD AND DRINK

- The smells and tastes of Thanksgiving are indispensable. If your dinner will be virtual, ask the traditional family cook to share his/her recipes and cooking techniques over an informal Zoom "class." Sharing the ingredients list

beforehand allows anyone to try their hand at replicating Grandma's pie recipe while following along at home. (Of course it won't be as good as Grandma's. But it could be fun!)

- Have several attendees swap recipes a few days ahead of time, so everyone gets the chance to try something new and show it off on camera.
- Mix up a smaller batch of a favorite libation at home, and enjoy a distanced toast. Bourbon is a personal favorite, and versatile enough to mix nicely with eggnog or apple cider.

THANKSGIVING VIEWING

- For many, Thanksgiving isn't the same without the Macy's parade or a football game in the background. The good news is there will be some version of a parade this year, and the NFL has a traditional tripleheader on deck. Live crowds will be smaller (or nonexistent) at these events, but you can still host viewing parties on Zoom.
- If you're technically proficient, Netflix Party is a browser extension that will share your video and audio with anyone who wants to watch an early Christmas movie with you.

SETTING THE MOOD

- Even if you're apart, a dress code can help establish a sense of community. If your family dresses up for holiday dinners, keep the same expectations for a Zoom holiday. Or if ugly sweaters are more your speed, a Zoom party is a great way for everyone to show off their fashion distaste.
- Decorate! Thanksgiving isn't a typical decoration holiday, but a seasonal centerpiece, tablecloth, or other visual touches can help share your love with those who can't join you.



BLACK FRIDAY

- For better or worse, Thanksgiving means shopping to many. To space out demand and avoid crowds, retailers like Wal-Mart, Amazon, Target and Best Buy announced early Black Friday promotions (both online and in-store) this year. It will be harder to find stores open on Thanksgiving Day than in years past, but there will be plenty of online deals to peruse as you digest.

FAMILY PHOTO

- This year will live on in our memories like few others. If your family is apart for the holidays, a posed screengrab of your Zoom "party" will sum up the reality of 2020 in future years like nothing else could.

(If you like these ideas, I took them from lists on Cosmopolitan.com and TheCut.com.)

-Ben Corbitt, Vestry Member

Parishioner Profile: Musician Charissa Burris

Since March, Charissa Burris' has been one of the few faces that we have been able to continue to see each Sunday morning as we gather for our virtual services. She graciously agreed to answer a few questions for this month's parishioner profile.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT SAINT MATTHIAS? WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT OUR CHURCH?

I believe I started in 2002. Don Brown was the organist, and he was also working at El Camino College. I was taking classes there, and my voice teacher told me that Don was looking for a section leader for the St. Matthias choir. I auditioned, he hired me, and--except for the couple of years when I worked at St. Stephen's and St. Joseph's--I've been at St. Matthias ever since. My daughter, Brooke, was baptized here.

I was one of those people who really felt like I'd come home. The people, the spirit, the vibe--it's a good place! I'm ready for us to be back together.

WHAT MINISTRIES HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN (BESIDES BEING A SECTION LEADER IN THE CHOIR)?

I've been a vestry member for two years. Other than that, I just polish the silver! I had noticed that it was looking tarnished, and that was how I got involved. Lynn [Rostedt, of the Altar Guild] showed me how to set the table, so I help at the 8am service.



(CONT'D FROM P. 3)

WHAT INSTRUMENTS DO YOU PLAY? TELL US ABOUT YOUR CAREER.

I play the organ and piano, sing, and play handbells. I was homeschooled, and my mom started teaching me to play piano when I was four. I started singing when I was around 12 or 13. My first paid gig was singing at a funeral when I was around 14.

I learned to play the organ because my church's organist needed someone to fill in for her while she was away visiting family in Tennessee. I already played the piano, so she trained me to be her sub before she left.

I learned to play handbells at a music camp. I still play the bells; a friend and I have a group called Belle Musique. We'd really like to get on with Disney. There aren't published handbell versions of Disney songs, so we've written some on our own.

The other group that I'm part of is called The Music Companie. We do costumed Victorian caroling. People hire us for events. There's one man who will hire us for a whole day, and we pile into a minivan and drive around to his friends' offices to perform. It's a long day, but it's a lot of fun.

In 2001, I started teaching piano to another homeschooler, and now teaching is my fulltime day job.

DO YOU HAVE ANY INTERESTING OR ADVENTUROUS HOBBIES?

I'm a blue belt in Jiu-Jitsu. When I was a teen, my dad was an accountant and did bookkeeping for Gracie Jiu-Jitsu in Torrance, so our whole family got Jiu-Jitsu lessons. I stopped for a while, but came back to it as an adult and have decided never to quit. Brooke takes lessons, too.

I also recently bought us new bicycles. My goal is to ride all the way down the Strand, from Palos Verdes to Santa Monica.

ONE LAST QUESTION--OF THE MANY WAYS THAT PEOPLE PRONOUNCE YOUR NAME, WHICH IS CORRECT?

My name is pronounced Shur-EE-suh.

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>
- ✦ **Evensong & Feast of Lights**, Sunday, Nov. 1 at 5pm - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89505519221>
- ✦ **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.
- ✦ **Episcopal Church Women**, Saturday, Nov. 7 at 10am - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85805069135>
- ✦ **Sunday School** - Email Andrea Schmid at andrea@stmatthiaswhittier.org for details.



An Unusual Stewardship Season

As you read this, our parish will be well into our 2020 stewardship drive. Since the beginning of October, you've probably received a couple of letters and a pledge card in the mail, as well as weekly reflections in our midweek emails. As your stewardship committee, Mary Jean Christian, Christopher Lavagnino, and I began planning for this season even earlier--back in August-- by attending webinars hosted by The Episcopal Stewardship Network.

When I logged on to the first webinar, I was relieved to find that the speaker was under no illusions about the challenge of asking people to make a financial pledge during a pandemic. He voiced the questions on everyone's mind: First, how can we ask for financial support when so many people are unemployed or facing reduced incomes? And second, how can we ask for a year-long commitment in such an uncertain time?

His responses were straightforward, practical, and—in my opinion—very much in line with the type of Christian community that Saint Matthias exemplifies.

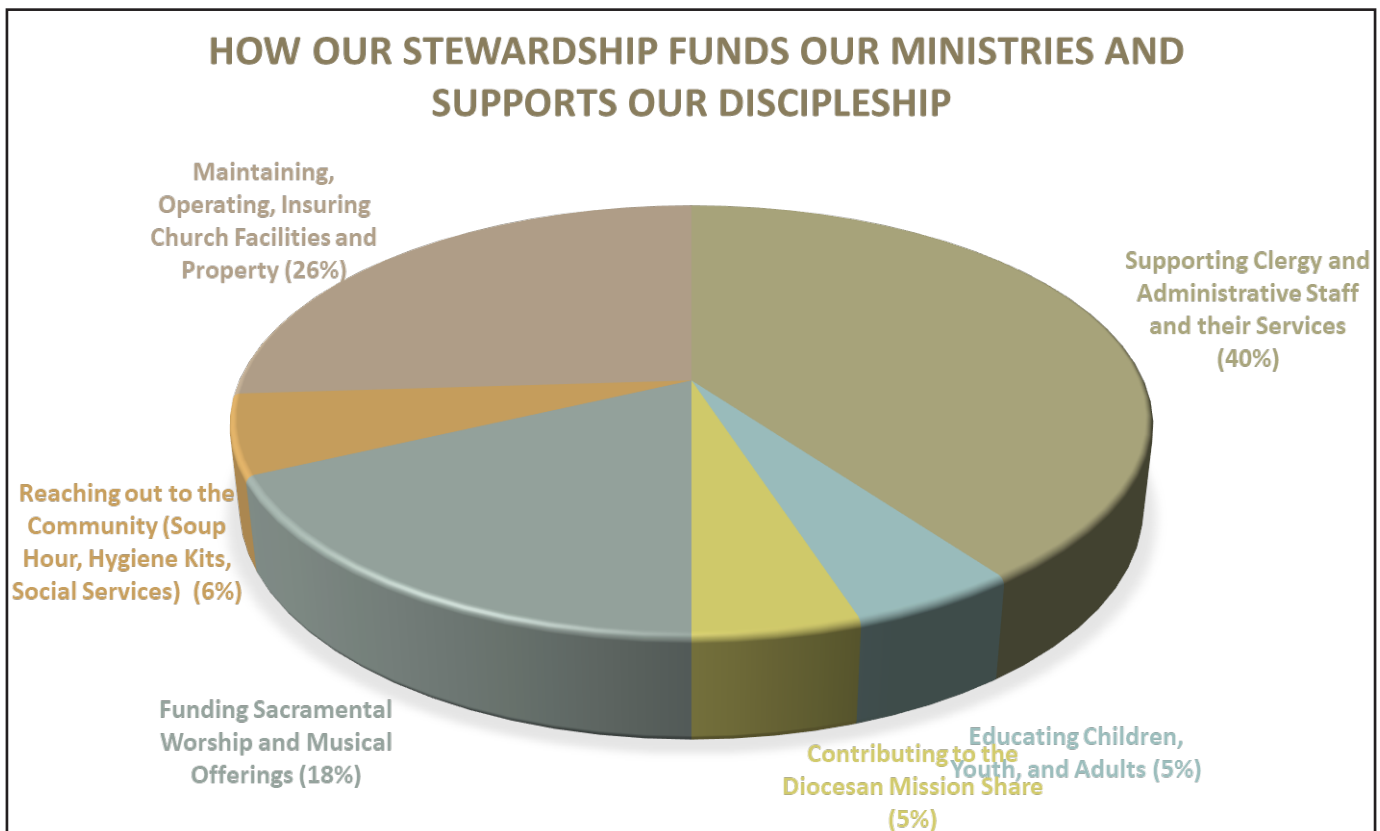
How can we ask for financial support? Because while some of us are struggling with reduced income, many of us are also experiencing reduced expenses—we're spending less on commuting, dining out, and traveling than ever before. For those of us who are able to give, and perhaps to give even more than in the past, pledging is an opportunity to help provide for both the spiritual and material needs of others in our community.

What if your situation changes after you submit your pledge card? What if you lose your job, or suddenly need to support a family member who's ill? Let the church know that you need to adjust your giving. Tell Fr. Bill, or give Dottie a call. Even if you weren't pledging, we would still want to know so that we could be there to support you.

A third question that may also be on your mind during this very unusual stewardship season is where your money is going while the church is "closed." In response to this concern, Christopher put together the pie chart below, representing an overview of our church's spending during the first six months of 2020—our reality under COVID. You'll see that although our sanctuary doors are closed, our ministries are certainly not.

For more information about how and why to give, or to submit your pledge card, visit <http://www.stmatthiaswhittier.org/stewardship-campaign-2020>.

-Andrea Schmid



PUZZLE

Glad gatherings

The first Christians met together over a meal. Today church families still gather to break bread and thank God.

Follow the instructions below. Then write the remaining words in order from left to right and top to bottom to complete the verses.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	They	found	broke	bread	acts	in
2	houses	their	homes	beautiful	and	round
3	ate	world	beginning	together	follow	thought
4	with	numbers	glad	happiness	lesson	and
5	thanks	sincere	disciples	gathering	hearts	tradition
6	celebrate	good	praising	Christian	God	river

Cross out all words in column E with double letters.

Cross out all words that are books of the Bible.

Cross out all words in column B that end in d.

Cross out all words in column A that have more than 4 letters.

Cross out all words in row 5 with 3 syllables.

Cross out all words in the table with 9 letters.

Cross out all words in column F with 2 or more vowels.

ACTS 2:46-47, NIV

Answer: They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God. Acts 2:46-47, NIV



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Bible Quiz

After Jesus healed 10 men at one time, how many returned to thank him? What had been their ailment?

- A. five; blindness
- B. all 10; deafness
- C. one; possession by demons
- D. one; leprosy



Answer: D (See Luke 17:11-19.)

Yes, Darkness

I
Everything glorifies God
in its own way.
Yes, darkness, too,
the one out there
and the one that
hides within me
in my difficulties
and tribulations.

II
And what, after all,
would God be
without it--
for it is where
God wants to be,
so that light
can have its way
with me and
my darkness.

From M.S.Burrows & J.M. Sweeney, *Meister Eckhart's Book of Secrets*, Hampton Roads Publishing Company, Charlottesville, 2019, p. 19.

contributed by a parishioner

Worship at Saint Matthias November 2020

November 1

All Saints Day

Scripture:

Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 34:1-10, 22; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12

November 8

The Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25; Psalm 78:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13

November 15

The Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture:

Judges 4:1-7, Psalm 123, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Matthew 25:14-30

November 22

The Last Sunday after Pentecost: Christ the King

Scripture:

Ezekial 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46

November 29

The First Sunday of Advent

Scripture:

Isaiah 64:1-9; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37; Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18



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