



St. Matthew's Messenger

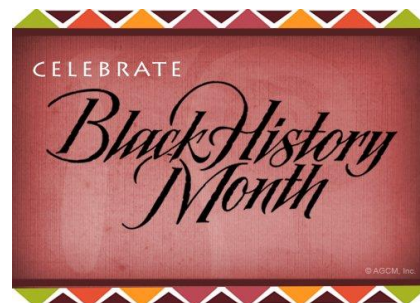
FEBRUARY 2017

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Pennington, N.J. 08534

To receive the monthly Messenger announcements please go to our website <http://stmatthewspennington.org/>, click on the link "sign up for emails" under "About us" to add yourself to our mailing list. *The Church is open for prayer and meditation* during parish office hours on weekdays: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday from 9:30am-4pm and Tuesdays and Fridays till 12noon.

February is African American History Month

The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum join in paying tribute to the generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity to achieve full citizenship in American society.



As a Harvard-trained historian, Carter G. Woodson, like W. E. B. Du Bois before him, believed that truth could not be denied and that reason would prevail over prejudice. His hopes to raise awareness of African American's contributions to civilization were realized when he and the organization he founded, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), conceived and announced Negro History Week in 1925. The event was first celebrated during a week in February 1926 that encompassed the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The response was overwhelming: Black history clubs sprang up; teachers demanded materials to instruct their pupils; and progressive whites, not simply white scholars and philanthropists, stepped forward to endorse the effort.

By the time of Woodson's death in 1950, Negro History Week had become a central part of African American life and substantial progress had been made in bringing more Americans to appreciate the celebration. At mid-century, mayors of cities nationwide issued proclamations noting Negro History Week. The Black Awakening of the 1960s dramatically expanded the consciousness of African Americans about the importance of black history, and the Civil Rights movement focused Americans of all color on the contributions of African Americans to our history and culture.

The celebration was expanded to a month in 1976, the nation's bicentennial. President Gerald R. Ford urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." That year, fifty years after the first celebration, the association held the first African American History Month. By this time, the entire nation had come to recognize the importance of Black history in the drama of the American story. Since then each American president has issued African American History Month proclamations. And the association—now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)—continues to promote the study of Black history all year.

(Excerpt from an essay by Daryl Michael Scott, Howard University, for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History)

<http://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/about.html>

In celebration of African American History month, during the month of February, we will be using some of the music in the hymnal "Lift Every Voice and Sing".



KAIROS KORNER

What is KAIROS? Kairos is the Greek word meaning “God’s Time” and on Sunday mornings we share God’s time with the children of St. Matthew’s Church, ages 4 years through 8th grade.

The curriculum and activities focus on the teachings of the Bible and how to live as kind, caring, good and thoughtful people of God in this big world.

Lessons are tailored for each of the age groups and help to build and foster their knowledge and understanding of our faith. The lesson plans for the year are thoughtfully arranged so that each week builds upon the previous week’s teachings.

Our Sunday mornings begin by gathering around our Christ candle; the candle that we light to remind us that God is with us in our sacred space. We take turns passing our prayer heart from hand to hand as each person shares what is on their heart, or takes a moment of silence. This is our morning’s unique prayer. We then share the prayer that Jesus gave to us, the LORD’s prayer.

Next, we share the lesson. Each grade has a lesson plan for the year. Our curriculum incorporates Godly Play*, as well as original lessons written by our Director of Children’s Ministries, Lori Cooper for grades P2 – 6th and lessons written by our 7th & 8th grade lead teacher, Tim Cooper for his class.

In addition to lessons, each grade enjoys art response time or activities that relate to their lessons, special projects throughout the year and participation in our Family Worship Services.

Family Worship Services offer our children the experience of worship participation beyond the pews. Our youth have ongoing participation in serving weekly as acolytes and certain Sundays as part of our children’s choir. On Family Worship Sundays, our youth participate as ushers and readers as well. These opportunities allow our children to build confidence and character surrounded by a loving and supportive church family.

Kairos is more than church school, more than Christian education. It is a time for children to build relationships with other children in their faith family. It is a time for children to build relationships with teens and adults beyond their core family who care about them and support them on their faith journey. It is a time to discover how to live their faith and make a positive difference in the world. It is God’s Time.

**Godly play is a term coined by Jerome Berryman, Episcopal priest, Retired Director of the Center for the Theology of Childhood (currently Senior Fellow of CTC) and creator of Godly Play, to describe an approach to children’s spiritual formation that is based on creating a sacred space in which to present the stories of our faith, wonder about them together, and then allow the children open-ended opportunities, usually with art supplies, to engage the story on their own terms.*

Here are sample lessons/activities from each grade that will be shared this month:

- Primary-Second Grade (P2): **Jesus and the Storm**. The activity will be creating a stormy sea (of blue fabric) and then calling out “BE STILL!” to calm the storm.
- Third/Fourth Grade: **Music of the Heart: A Lesson on the Psalms**. The activity will be creating a watercolor mural on diffusion paper using colors that express the feelings evoked while reading the psalms.
- Fifth/Sixth Grade: **A Lesson on the Parables**. The class will work together to create their own parable including making the lesson pieces needed to tell their story.
- Seventh/Eighth Grade: **Blessed are the Poor in Spirit: The Sermon on the Mount**. Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is demanding but with God all things are possible. The activity is “It’s All in the Straw”. The class is given a seemingly impossible task, but with brainstorming and creativity, they will successfully complete it.

Looking Ahead:

Children’s Ash Wednesday Service will be held on Wednesday, March 1st at 4:30pm.

Children’s Good Friday Service will be held on Friday, April 14th at 3pm.

Second Grade Eucharist Instruction: April 23rd & 30th with Family Service Celebration on the May 7th.

THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

The separation of church and state has long been held as a founding principle of the Constitution of the United States. Its intent was to ensure that there would be no official state religion, leaving each citizen free to worship according to his or her own religious conviction, without coercion from the government. This clause is also referred to as the Establishment clause, as in, the State shall not establish any religion.

However, the separation of church and state is not absolute. Christmas is a national holiday. Our currency is printed with the words, "In God we trust". Chaplains are paid for official government functions, notably, the military. Some oaths for elected offices include the phrase, "so help me God".



"Religious leaders can run for office without risking their church's tax-exempt status. However, those candidates cannot campaign during official church functions. ¹

"No organization, including a church, may qualify for IRC section 501(c)(3) status if a substantial part of its activities is attempting to influence legislation, known as lobbying; a church risks losing its 501(c)(3) status if it becomes involved in *substantial lobbying* activities. A church lobbies when its leadership contacts, or if it urges the public to contact, legislators *with the intent to sway their votes*. What constitutes substantial depends on the circumstances and a variety of factors are considered, including the time and money spent by the church on lobbying."²

Did your Rector jeopardize St. Matthew's tax exempt status by participating in the women's march on Washington? Were her actions a violation of the separation of church and state rule? No, in both cases. She went on her own time and spent her own money. No St. Matthew's time or funds were used. She did not contact any representatives. She did not attempt to sway anyone's vote.

Your rector applauds you for voting for the candidate of your choice. She respects you and your decision and is grateful for our democracy and for our electoral process, even if it is true that this past election cycle was disappointing in that *both parties* engaged in the vilification of the other. This is against the Gospel command: that we love each other, and against our baptismal promise to respect the dignity of every human being.

When we disagree with one another, whether for political or personally held convictions, it is not an excuse for us to treat one another with contempt. Love the person AND disagree with him or her if you want. The love Jesus asked us to exercise toward each other does not require us to agree. Quite the contrary. It is through listening to one another in our difference that the Holy Spirit can move us to the third point of view that neither party could have imagined before they entered into dialogue with one another. The biggest travesty is not that we disagree. The biggest travesty is when our disagreements tempt us to cease speaking with one another at all.

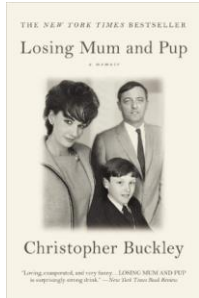
¹ <http://info.legalzoom.com/can-church-lose-its-501c-status-21743.html>

² *ibid.*

Kairos Prayer Hearts Sale!!



On Sunday, **February 5th**, in time for St. Valentine's Day and Lent, Kairos will be selling prayer hearts, the proceeds of which will be given to Good Shepherd Academy in Cameroon, Africa. Information on this wonderful ministry is posted on the Kairos bulletin board. We will have a lovely selection of small and large hearts to choose from. Hearts will be on sale in Belmont Hall between services and following the 10am service.



ST. MATTHEW'S BOOK CLUB

February 16, 7:00 pm *Losing Mum and Pup* Christopher Buckley

In twelve months, Christopher Buckley coped with the passing of his father, William F. Buckley, the father of the modern conservative movement, and his mother, Patricia Taylor Buckley, one of New York's most glamorous and colorful socialites. He was their only child, and their relationship was close and complicated. The book is a fascinating take on parental loss that deviates from the usual clichés.

Corn Hole Tourney and Chili Cook Off

February 25th at 6 pm



Last year's Corn Hole Tourney and Chili Cook Off was such a wonderful success that we are doing it again. Our Corn Hole Commissioners, John Eckel, Denny Rodgers and Bruce Weise, will once again teach us the finer points of this backyard game. We are calling on all our chefs to break out their hot peppers and secret recipes to see if they can unseat last year's champion, Amy Eckel. Plan to bring the whole family to the Second Annual Corn Hole



Tourney and Chili Cook Off Saturday, **February 25th at 6 pm**. Admission is \$5 per person or \$20 per family plus an item for the Arm in Arm food pantry.

**Join us at St. Matthew's
for our
Annual Mardi Gras Pancake Supper
on
Tuesday, February 28th
5 to 7:30pm**

Adults \$8.00

Children (ages 6-12) \$4.00

Children under 6 FREE!

Our all-you-can-eat feast includes pancakes, sausage, fresh fruit, juice and hot beverages.

The Pancake Supper is staffed by our youth groups and our mission trip participants.

All proceeds benefit our summer mission trips to El Hogar and Urban Promise!



LENT 2017

Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017**. The season of Lent can be an experience of God's love, call, mercy, and compassion. During Lent, we are invited to **not** engage in practices that draw us away from loving God and each other, and to adopt practices that **help** us love God and each other. Each of us knows from our own life experience what practices or habits are unhelpful. We intuitively sense what we need to let go of so that we can be more available to ourselves, each other, and God—so that we can listen with compassion to God, ourselves and each other.



During Lent, we can do just that, and get help, support and encouragement from the whole Christian community who are, likewise, trying to respond to the challenge of the season. The invitation is to enter into God's grace, and let God shower us with it. "Come, Holy Spirit, kindle our hearts with the flame of your love. Send forth your spirit and we shall be renewed." "Taste and see that the Lord is good". "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest."ⁱ

St. Matthew's is partnering with St. Luke's, Ewing for one of our Lenten series. (St. Luke's worships on Sundays at 10:30). Beginning on Sunday, March 5, we will gather for a soup and bread lunch at 12:30. At a time in our country when we are divided, fearful, and offended by each other's political convictions, we need some time and space to sink into the grace of forgiveness. As Christians, we are invited to find a way to stay connected to each other, even when we vehemently disagree. There is room for everyone at the table! At 1:00, Bishop Councill will lead us in an exploration of Forgiveness.

Anyone outside the parish who is interested is most welcome to attend.

This Lent, St. Matthew's will be hosting two different programs. One will be on Sunday on **Forgiveness**, concluding with a Saturday session. (See below)

The other will be **small groups** hosted by parishioners at various times and places. Each participant will be offered the opportunity to try out different spiritual practices, using the book A Spiritual

Formation Workbook.

Please look for a way to register for either or both of these offerings in the coming weeks.

SUNDAY LENTEN Program Schedule

Sunday, March 5	12:30 lunch in Belmont Hall	1:00 session with Bishop Councill
Sunday, March 12	12:30, lunch at St. Luke's, Ewing	1:00 session with Bishop Councill
Sunday, March 19	12:30, lunch in Belmont Hall	1:00 session with Bishop Councill
Sunday, March 26	12:30, lunch at St. Luke's Ewing	1:00 session with Bishop Councill
Saturday, April 1,	9-3 " Restoring Hope: Moving from Resentment to Forgiveness " with The Rev. Dr. Rob Voyle in Belmont Hall	

*To sign up for the **SUNDAY** program, please email or call the parish office by **Ash Wednesday, March 1**. All Sunday sessions are free.*

Register by March 1 for the session on Saturday. (See separate registration page).

To sign up for the small group experience of experimenting with different spiritual practices, please watch for more information about who will be hosting when and where, and sign up with that group leader. The book itself costs around \$9.00. Otherwise, there is no fee.

¹ Here are just a few things you might consider for your Lenten experience. (Remember, don't do more than what is helpful to you). Avoid making a vague plan, such as 'I'll pray sometime this week'. Make your goals measurable and specific, such as, 'I will pray at [time] for 10 minutes'. However, look at your goal as a pleasurable, almost fun time, and avoid rigidity. Focus on your desire, rather than on the activity you have chosen.

Examples of Lenten practices

1. Pray for 10 minutes each morning or evening
2. Write a letter to God, telling him how you feel.
3. Find at least three things every day for which to be grateful, and pray a prayer of thanks.
4. Fast from the television for a week. Use the extra time to notice what is going on around you.
5. Practice the art of saying one positive thing for every negative thing you say.
6. Keep the Sabbath. Sit down with your family and decide on a weekly time of rest and relaxation. Refuse to do any work, not even house projects, cleaning, etc. Resist the guilt and simply enjoy!
7. Discover your spiritual gifts. Read 1Corinthians 12:8-11. Sit quietly and ask which of these gifts you have received or are being drawn to put into practice for the Body of Christ.
8. Pray for the Holy Spirit. Ask that the Holy Spirit may become a more real and life-giving presence in your life.
9. Spend an hour a week exercising your spiritual gifts.
10. For 15 minutes a day, peacefully wait for the Holy Spirit. See what happens.
11. Encourage someone who needs it.
12. Spend an afternoon at Arm in Arm or Task.
13. Go out of your way to help someone.
14. Start a compost bin for all organic refuse. (not meat).
15. Write your elected representatives.
16. Do an energy audit for your home.
17. Buy local, organic food.
18. Serve others with your words. Speak well of them. Protect their reputation. Only use kind words.
19. Be a 'gossip buster'. Whenever you or someone you are with begin to gossip, put a rapid end to it. Steer the conversation in a different direction.
20. Read the Bible for 15 minutes a day.
21. Memorize a verse of Scripture every day.
22. Share your faith with a relative or a close friend.
23. Invite a friend to church.

LENT - HOLY WEEK - EASTER SCHEDULE

March 1, Ash Wednesday

7:00am, Ash Wednesday Service w/Imposition of Ashes
12 Noon, Ash Wednesday Service w/Imposition of Ashes
4:00pm, Children's Ash Wednesday Service w/Imposition of Ashes
8:00pm, Ash Wednesday Service w/Imposition of Ashes

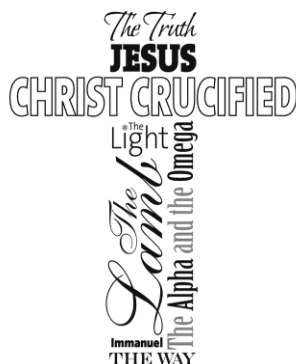
April 9, Palm Sunday – 8 and 10am

April 13, Maundy Thursday – 8:00pm, Service with Foot Washing

April 14, Good Friday – 12noon, Ecumenical Service

April 15, Saturday - 8:00pm, EASTER VIGIL

April 16, Sunday - 8 and 10am, EASTER SUNDAY



Who is Rob Voyle? **(Our April 1 Lenten Speaker and Sunday, April 2 preacher) Read on!**

The Rev. Dr. Rob Voyle is a leader in the development and use of appreciative inquiry in church and coaching settings.

Rob's Approach to Training

Helpful: Training must provide practical, sustainable solutions for today's challenges.

Humorous: Creativity and humor go together as people enjoy new insights.

Healing: I create opportunities for people to experience transformational insights that lead to new ways of living, working, and being in the world.

NO RECONCILIATION WITHOUT REPENTANCE *Posted: December 2, 2016 by Rob Voyle*

There is much talk in our society today about coming together, unity, and reconciliation. And most of the talk is actually making things worse rather than creating unity and reconciliation. My personal response to most of the calls for reconciliation is: "reconciliation, you have got to be crazy ... over my dead body (I hope it doesn't come to that) but my revulsion to the idea of reconciliation is pretty intense because I will never reconcile with hate and the denigration of others."

As those who know of my recent work, I am on a mission to teach the world to forgive, so the issue of reconciliation often comes up in conversation, especially because forgiveness and reconciliation are two very different realities that are often confused.

Forgiveness is how I deal with my past and those who have hurt me. It is totally independent of the offender, forgiveness is how I chose to live today in response to what others have done to me in the past.

Reconciliation is about the future, it is an agreement between two or more people about how they will live and work together in the future. And my basic rule is, never be reconciled to those who violate my values. Jesus forgave the Romans, even as they pounded nails into his body, but he was never reconciled to the mission of Rome.

However, I also believe that we have been given a ministry of reconciliation, not a ministry of tolerance, nor of conflict management, but of reconciliation. So how are we to reconcile.

I don't think there can be any reconciliation until there is repentance. In South Africa, it was Truth and Reconciliation, not denial and reconciliation, nor truth and punishment. We cannot gloss over those acts where lives were destroyed and others profoundly restricted in their access to the resources they need for daily living and thriving.

So, before there can be any reconciliation there needs to be repentance.

To actually repent we need to do three things - the 3Rs of Repentance.

We need to "Recognize" that we have done wrong or are heading in the wrong direction. We cannot reconcile with anyone who does not recognize what they have done wrong, and similarly we cannot reconcile until we recognize that we have also done wrong.

We then need to "Regret" that we have done wrong. This is counting the cost of what we have done. Many people know they are doing something wrong but don't regret it, especially when the cost of their actions is not immediate. Sadly, we may only discover the real cost when it is too late to halt the consequences we have set in motion. With respect to reconciliation we need to regret the enormous cost of sustained hatred. Unfortunately, in our society we put such a huge value on revenge and getting even that we rarely count the cost of our hate-motivated social and political processes.

We need to "Reorient" from what we have been doing and turn to what we need to be doing. We cannot be reconciled unless we turn from our hate based motivations. Here is where we need to reorient from hate to curiosity and compassion to discover the deeper values that we do share and on which we can build a foundation of reconciliation.

At the moment, we are arguing over strategies to achieve something of dubious value, and the real issues are being unexplored. For example when people are living in poverty they are not interested in being great, they are interested in their next meal. And as long as there are people in our world who think a cold, secondhand chunk of pizza would be great I have failed, and we as a nation have failed, to repent and reorient which are the precursors and path to reconciliation.

Rob Voyle
Director, Clergy Leadership Institute

Confessions and Repentance for Election Failure! *Posted: November 11, 2016 by Rob Voyle*

My first confession is that this is all in hindsight and comes under the heading: I really should have known better.

Like many in our country I awoke Wednesday feeling physically miserable and distraught because of the results of the election. My emotions ranged from anger, fear, sadness, bewilderment, and concern for those who would be preaching this Sunday.

But my mood has changed and what I would have said this Sunday if I was preaching has also changed.

Here is my personal reflection:

The extreme emotions I and many have felt, are what many millions in our country would have felt if the vote had gone the other way. I now get it!

To bring this home to our churches when people have been in torment over the way a decision, especially on issues of sexuality, has not gone their way and I would stand bewildered by their degree of torment. I now get and have empathy for that distress and I want to know more, to discover the core of that distress.

Here is my personal confession for my failure. Taking responsibility for that which is in my locus of control has actually been helpful in reducing my distress.

My first failing is that for the past year I have focused totally on why Mr. Trump was unfit to be president, and he regularly gave us evidence to confirm my perception, so I kept paying attention to why he was wrong and delighted in the new evidence I could add to my list. As a leading practitioner in the field of Appreciative Inquiry where we say "what we focus on will become our reality," I really should have known better.

My second failing was my utter arrogance in looking down on those who supported Mr. Trump, without considering for an instance what their pain was that would make them want to vote for him. I gave them the tag idiots and then could dismiss their pain, their concerns, their fears.

As the founder of the Appreciative Way, with its foundation in compassion I really should have done better to listen to and understand those who differ from me and to find a common ground of core values rather than argue about strategies to achieve a very temporal solution to perceived problems.

One of my core values is the baptismal promise "to respect the dignity of every human being." I violated that value by despising and rejecting Mr. Trump and more importantly his supporters rather respecting their dignity and seeking to understand what motivated their actions.

From my perspective contrition is not about paying for past mistakes but focusing efforts on new behaviors to create a just and life-giving world, not simply for myself but for all of humanity. So here are my actions in contrition:

To pay attention regularly to whether I am living and behaving from a place of fear or love.

To continue to develop and practice ways of respecting the dignity of every human being.

I will stand fast against those that demean, belittle, and destroy others and I will resist many of Mr. Trumps stated plans if they were to be enacted.

And more importantly I want to continue to develop simple tools for people to actually practice "respecting the dignity of others." How do we actually do "respecting the dignity of others" when they strongly disagree with me, and how can we do it in ways that lead to reconciliation based on our deeper values that we have in common? I am not interested in being naive and having nice feelings about people who violate my values, but I am interested in developing ways for finding common ground with those with whom I disagree and working together to create a shared better world.

Over the past few years I have been adapting Connirae Andreas' [Core Transformation](#) process to exploring the dreams behind people's behaviors from simple volunteerism, to those things that violate our values. I want to continue developing those processes so that our congregations can be a place of healing and reconciliation in a world that desperately needs it.

Rob

Saturday, April 1, 9-3

“Restoring Hope: Moving from Resentment to Forgiveness”

with The Rev. Dr. Rob Voyle
at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church
300 S. Main St. Pennington, NJ
in Belmont Hall



At a time in our country when we are divided, fearful, and offended by each other’s political convictions, judging one another will not help move beyond the hurt, offense, or intolerance. We must find a way to stay connected to each other, even when we vehemently disagree. There is room for everyone at the table! Our viability as a community depends on it!

This program is not just a church event. Although it will be held in a church fellowship hall, it is for anyone from Hopewell Valley and beyond.

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To register:

By March 1 Send **\$25.00** to St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church. Mark “forgiveness training” on the memo line if by check.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Cell: _____

Mailing address: _____

Walk-ins on April 1: **\$50.00**
