



St. Matthew's Messenger

MARCH 2016

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

To receive the monthly Messenger and Constant Contact 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 9am-4pm and Tuesdays and Fridays till 12noon.

Our Town Hall Style Meeting in February

On Sunday, February 7, we met in a Town Hall meeting facilitated by our former transition consultant, the Rev. Bud Holland. We met in order to listen to one another and to entrust to one another that which was important for the good of the whole. Thank-you to each and every one of you who participated. Thank-you to each of you who shared what was important to you. Thank-you to each of you who listened. It took trust and courage to enter into this conversation together. By it, we honored one another.



A few times a year we will provide this Town Hall forum as one way for us to listen to God and to one another, and for the honing of a vision for sharing Jesus' mission of love, reconciliation and the transformation of our lives from darkness to light, from confusion to joy, from stuck to free, from hurt to whole, and from death to life.

Discernment can only come through listening. Being obedient to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst calls me and you to the humble stance of listening. "Not my will, but your will be done, Oh God."

The overwhelming message that came out of our time together was the depth of love and care we have for each other, this parish, and for the work of communicating God's love to the world around us. You shared your gratitude for and your struggles with where God has been leading us over the past year. These touched on many areas of our common life together, some of which include:

- our collaboration with the wider Episcopal church
- ecumenical partnerships
- collaboration with our neighbors
- stewardship of our planet
- music and worship styles
- the benefit of hearing different voices from the pulpit
- stewardship
- New Consecration Sunday
- pros and cons of the rector knowing what parishioners pledge
- time, talent and the tithe

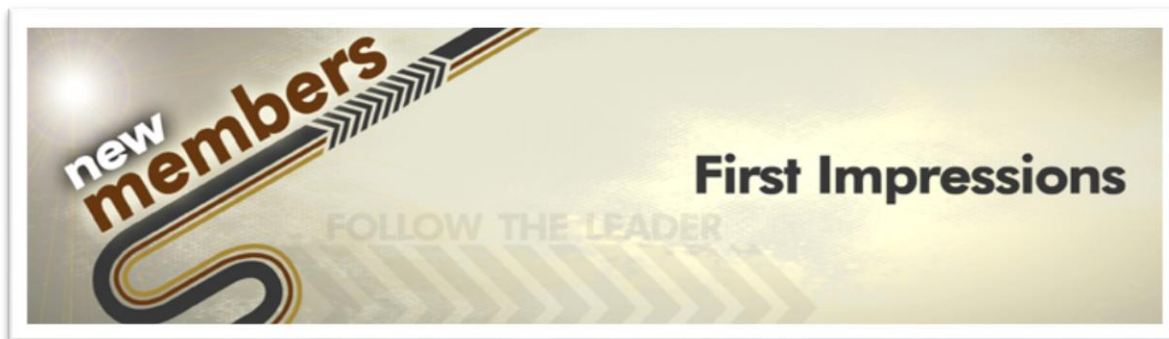
These topics have been taken up as part of our ongoing work of prayer, listening and discernment in vestry leadership and in our sharing in Jesus' mission.

A music visioning team has been convened to ask questions about music and worship in the larger context of mission, youth, and formation.

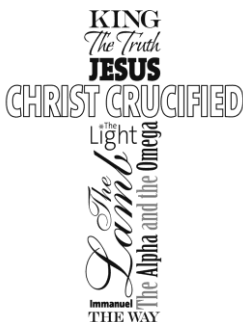
I have been reflecting on how it is that many people tend to talk easily about their gifts of time and talent and yet have a harder time speaking about their financial gifts. How might God be inviting us to find more joy, fun, and freedom in our financial giving? Your wardens, vestry, rector, stewardship committee and NCS chair have been humbly open to the direction of Holy Spirit in our conversations. We deeply believe and trust that God has gathered us here for our mutual growth—and intends for us to thrive in God’s love so we can go out into all the world to share the story of how Jesus Christ shows us how much God loves everyone without exception.

Faithfully, Barbara +

The Rev. Barbara Briggs, Rector



HAVE AN EYE FOR CURB APPEAL? Our Communications Committee is looking for people interested in volunteering to review our current signage, exterior and interior, sign lighting, letterhead, etc. and make recommendations about how St. Matthew’s can create a more visually current and appealing impression to the community. Please speak to Gary Driscoll, chair of the Communications Committee to express your interest or email him at drisc011g@gmail.com.

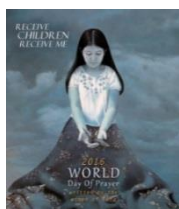


LENT - HOLY WEEK - EASTER SCHEDULE

- March 2**, 7:00am Holy Eucharist
- March 9**, 7:00am Holy Eucharist
- March 16**, 7:00am, Holy Eucharist
- March 20, Palm Sunday** – 8 and 10am
- March 24, Maundy Thursday** – 8:00pm, Service with Foot Washing
- March 25, Good Friday** – 12noon, Ecumenical Service
3:00pm, Children’s Interactive Good Friday
6:00pm, Stations of the Cross

March 26, Saturday - 8:00pm, **EASTER VIGIL**

March 27, Sunday - 8 and 10am, **EASTER SUNDAY**



2016 WORLD Day of Prayer

The Pennington Presbyterian Church has invited everyone to attend a World Day of Prayer with a light lunch and 1pm Worship Service & Music in their Sanctuary. Please RSVP: 609-737-1221 ext. 10 if you plan to attend.



TAIZÉ SERVICE WITH THE HOLY EUCAHRIST, MARCH 13, 5:00PM. A time of quiet, candle-light and meditative chanting in the Christian contemplative tradition.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR THE UPCOMING YOUTH MEETINGS!

March 6: High School Youth Group Meeting, 5-7 pm

March 16: Destinations Meeting, 6-8 pm

March 20: High School Youth Group Meeting, 5-7 pm

KAIROS KORNER

This month our 7th & 8th graders will create beautiful tie dye t-shirts to give to the second grade Eucharist Class. The second graders will wear their one-of-a-kind t-shirts for both sessions of instruction as well as for the Family Worship Service in celebration of their accomplishment.

On March 20th, Palm Sunday, our P2 class (grades Primary – second grade) will bake Empty Tomb rolls after hearing the lesson of the Passion and Resurrection.

Our Children's interactive Good Friday Service will be held on Friday, March 25th at 3pm. This service is appropriate for all ages (including adults!).

We invite families to join in the glorious celebration of Easter on Sunday, March 27th, therefore, we will not have Kairos classes on Easter Sunday.

Kairos Lesson Schedule

March 6 – regular lessons, 7th & 8th graders will make tie dye shirts for second grade Eucharist class

March 13 – regular lessons

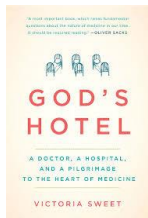
March 20 – regular lessons, P2 class will bake empty tomb rolls

March 27 – EASTER, NO CLASSES

Looking ahead~

Second Grade Eucharist Instruction on Sunday, April 10th and 17th from 11:30am – 12:15pm.

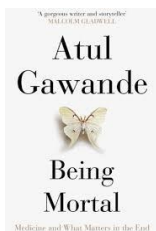
Family Worship Celebration for Eucharist Class on Sunday, April 24th during the 10am service.



St. Matthew's Book Club **GOD'S HOTEL**

A Doctor, a Hospital and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine by Victoria Sweet
March 17, 7:00 pm at the Driscolls' home, 7 Kings Court, Pennington.

San Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital is the last almshouse in the country. Anyone who had fallen, or, often, leapt, onto hard times and needed extended medical care—ended up here. So did Victoria Sweet, who came for two months and stayed for twenty years. Laguna Honda, gave Sweet the opportunity to practice a kind of attentive medicine that has almost vanished. *God's Hotel* revealed surprising truths about the essence, cost, and value of caring for the body and the soul.



April 21, 7:00 pm (Sunday school classroom) **Being Mortal** by Atul Gawande

In *Being Mortal*, bestselling author Atul Gawande tackles the hardest challenge of his profession: how medicine can not only improve life but also the process of its ending. Medicine has triumphed in modern times, transforming birth, injury, and infectious disease from harrowing to manageable. But in the inevitable condition of aging and death, the goals of medicine seem too frequently to run counter to the interest of the

human spirit. Gawande offers examples of freer, more socially fulfilling models for assisting the infirm and dependent elderly, *Being Mortal* asserts that medicine can comfort and enhance our experience even to the end, providing not only a good life but also a good end. -Holly's selection

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT ST. MATTHEW'S

“Through the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by baptism into his death, and raised with him to newness of life” (BCP, 292). Join us this Holy Week as we walk through the last week of Jesus’ earthly life and consider how our own lives follow this pattern of life, death, and resurrection:



MAUNDY THURSDAY – MARCH 24, 8:00PM

On this night we celebrate the last meal Jesus shared with his disciples, the communion meal of bread and wine we share each Sunday, and how Jesus showed his disciples he was their servant by washing their feet. (Participation in foot washing is optional.) The service ends in silence with the stripping of the altar.

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR ON MAUNDY THURSDAY SIGN-UP AND REHEARSAL

If you would like to help us with the stripping of the altar at the end of the Maundy Thursday Service, there will be a sign-up Sheet in the narthex. Please help us reverently and solemnly remember how Jesus was taken from his friends and disciples when he was arrested on that night by prayerfully removing the ornaments in the sanctuary. There will be a rehearsal for everyone participating in the stripping of the altar on Wednesday, March 23 from 6-7 PM in the church to coordinate with the altar guild.



THE WATCH – MARCH 24 & 25– 9:00PM TO NOON FRIDAY

The Watch begins in the Chapel immediately following the Maundy Thursday service. It recalls the hours prior to Jesus’ arrest and trial, when he went to the Mount of Olives and Garden of Gethsemane to pray for strength to face what was to come. Sign up for shifts in the Narthex, then come and read Scripture or meditate in silence.



GOOD FRIDAY – MARCH 25– 12:00PM, 3:00PM CHILDREN'S SERVICE

At our Noon Ecumenical Liturgy, we join with other Pennington churches in observing the death of our Savior, experiencing the Passion narrative in its entirety. We face Christ’s and our own suffering honestly, only to find God working in and through it for our healing and salvation. The Children’s Good Friday liturgy at 3 pm will again be a modified, interactive Stations of the Cross service designed to help them experience the meaning of this day.



Stations
of the
Cross



STATIONS OF THE CROSS – MARCH 25 6:00PM

The Way of the Cross is a prayerful meditation on the events that are recorded in the Gospels of Jesus’ passion and death.



THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER AND FEAST – MARCH 26, 8:00PM

Join us for the most spectacular liturgy of the year. From the lighting of the new fire in the deep darkness, we watch as the light of Christ breaks into the world. We hear Israel’s stories of freedom and salvation and celebrate the salvation that is now ours through Christ. After renewing our baptismal vows, we celebrate the Easter eucharist – thus completing our passage with Christ from death to new life. *Don’t forget to bring bells for the “unburying” of the Alleluias!!* Immediately following the Vigil, we will gather in Parish Hall for a potluck feast and celebration.



EASTER SUNDAY , MARCH 27— 8:00AM, 10:00AM

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Join us as we celebrate the victory over sin and death that is ours through the resurrection of our Lord. Our adult choir will join both the 8 am and 10am services with song and celebration. Bring bells!

From the Interim Music Director,

Music is an integral part of the parish life here at St. Matthew's Church. We are fortunate to be able to sing and play all kinds of sacred music together during worship. Congregational hymns and service music selections are drawn from our many different hymnals and other sources, and the music sung and played by our choirs spans the centuries and musical genres. Opportunities for instrumental music exist as well.

The remainder of the current 2015-2016 music program season runs through the beginning of June. There are several opportunities throughout Lent, Easter and Pentecost for parishioners, friends and neighbors of parishioners, and members of the greater community to become involved in the musical life of St. Matthew's Church. Singers are always welcome to join the ranks of our adult and children's choirs. We are blessed to have three octaves of handbells and new ringers are always welcome to join our handbell choir. And if you play an instrument, there are many different ways to share your musical gifts by playing a solo piece or augmenting the music planned for a particular service with one or more instruments.

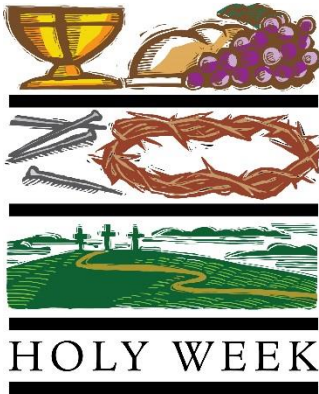
Our Adult Choir is open to singers in high school and above, and they rehearse on Wednesdays from 8-9:30pm in the sanctuary. They lead the congregational music at the principal 10am Sunday morning Eucharist. They also offer at least one choral anthem each week, usually during the Offertory or Communion that is appropriate for that particular Sunday. Occasionally, the adult choir participates in Diocesan Events, including Convention Mass and Cathedral Sunday, in addition to special services with other churches in our Diocese and Ecumenical services with other Pennington area churches.

Our Children's Choir is open to children in grades 2-8, even if not registered in our Kairos program. They rehearse on Sunday mornings in the sanctuary at the conclusion of the 10am Eucharist until 12:15pm. Once the service ends, there is time for them to grab a snack and drink at coffee hour before returning to the sanctuary. At each rehearsal, children get to make music together, learn about Scripture, and receive group vocal training and short music theory lessons. They help to lead worship on Family Worship Sundays and on other Sundays throughout the year, offering their own choral anthem during the Offertory or Communion appropriate for that particular day.

Our Handbell Choir, open to anyone in middle school or above, rehearses on Wednesdays from 7-8pm in Classroom A. The handbell choir offers seasonally appropriate music approximately once a month, playing their own handbell repertoire or congregational and choral music arranged for handbell accompaniment. If you have a child still in elementary school or younger interested in playing handbells, please speak with the Music Director about special handbell opportunities.

Those who play an individual musical instrument are also encouraged to share their gifts, whether they play a trumpet, violin, drum or any other instrument. On Sunday mornings at 10am, organ music is usually played before and after worship (Prelude and Postlude). These are ideal times for a solo instrument to offer a solo piece. Instrumental music can also augment music during actual worship, from playing along on congregational hymns, service music or other songs.

If you or someone you know might be interested in becoming involved in the musical life of St. Matthew's, please do not hesitate to speak with Jim Douglas, Interim Music Director, either after a 10am Eucharist or during coffee hour. You may also reach him by email at jamesjdouglas@gmail.com, or in the church office at 609-737-0985.



HOLY WEEKⁱ

Holy Week is believed to have originated in Jerusalem during the fourth century. Services commemorating the events described in Scripture were held on the original sites for the pilgrims who came to Jerusalem for Easter and the time immediately preceding it known then as the Great Week. Many pilgrims took these services home and adapted them for use in their home churches so that people could symbolically remember the events of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection and enter into the story. The Gospel story is the basis for these celebrations as we move with Christ in stages throughout the week.

These rites were first reintroduced into Anglicanism in the nineteenth century, but mainstream Episcopalians did not have access to them until their inclusion in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, which contains propers for the offices for every day of Holy Week and for the daily celebration of Holy Eucharist, as well as proper liturgies for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and the Great Vigil of Easter.

Of all the times of the Church, including Christmas, Holy Week and Easter is what we do best. In it we enter the story of Jesus gathering the beloved disciples, telling them, "I have ardently desired to share this meal with you before I suffer." (my paraphrase)

On **Maundy Thursday** we get to be the disciples with whom Jesus wants to share everything—the meal, his service, his love, his life. We get to enter the story and imagine what it might have been like to be a disciple at the footwashing, at the Passover Supper with Jesus, and in that moment when all of a sudden he is gone—betrayed and arrested and we are left in the quiet and dark to wait and watch...

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The Easter Vigil, Saturday, 8PM

"On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death."¹

ⁱ For a more in depth history of the Holy Week liturgies, see: [LENT, HOLY WEEK, EASTER, and the Great Fifty Days](#) by Leonel L. Mitchel, which provided the basis for this article.