



THE GIFT OF ANGLICANISM AND THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH TODAY



From recent headlines, a casual observer of church polity might think that the Episcopal Church is in danger

of losing its status as a member of the larger Anglican Communion. A January headline in the USA Today was typical. It read: *Anglicans suspend Episcopal Church over stance on same-sex marriage*. Such headlines never fail to amuse me because they are so clearly written from a dissenting perspective, and imply that our Church must have done something wrong. Looking at the rest of the Anglican Communion's slow pace to fully include women in the Church, and in many regions the outright hostility towards LGBT Christians, I am surprised that at least some of the headlines don't read: *Episcopal Church demonstrates leadership in engaging the challenging issues of our day—while the rest of the Anglican Communion tries to keep pace*.

All Christian churches, in one way or another, see their identity as linked to the foundational ministry of Jesus and his disciples. Although Christianity existed in England by the 2nd or 3rd century, the dawning of our *Anglican* identity could be said to begin in the year 597 AD. That was the year that the Benedictine

monk Augustine, traveling at the request of Pope Gregory the Great, reached Kent as part of a missionary venture. Canterbury became the locus of Augustine's ministry, and in quick order hundreds were converted to the faith and baptized, including King Ethelbert I. Augustine was soon consecrated a bishop, and Canterbury became the historic site for the introduction of the practice and structures of the western Church in England.

In the 16th century, the English Church split from Rome in a way that was different from that of the Protestant reformers. The English Church retained the offices of bishop, priest, and deacon, as well as many of the practices of the Roman Church. This placed the English Church in a crucible of sorts, between the Protestant reformers on one side and the Roman Church on the other. The quality of being in a crossroads between two traditions prompted our strand of Christianity to develop an intellectual tradition articulating a unique blend of Christian thought and practice.

In many ways, our church's unique expression of Anglican identity is rooted in the American Revolution. After our political independence from England was won, the colonial state churches likewise had to devise

a new polity. The new Episcopal Church in the United States incorporated democratic structures into its fabric. Our governance not only allowed us to separate from our English brothers and sisters, but it provided a structure that allows for open and vigorous discussion with the notion that the Holy Spirit moves in and through all of the people of God. Our bishops are elected by the clergy and laity of each diocese. Church policy is debated and decided by clergy and lay representatives drawn from every diocese. The result is that our church maintains deep Anglican roots with a unique Episcopal identity.

Our church's decision to provide for marriage equality through canonical and liturgical changes this past summer (at the 78th General Convention held in Utah) was part of a long deliberative process. At our General Convention in 1976, we affirmed that, "*homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance and pastoral concern and care of the church*." Some within our Communion are clearly uncomfortable with the notion that our church ventures to discern where the Spirit might be calling us. Most Episcopalians treasure the fact that

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GIFT OF ANGLICANISM...

with integrity and a deliberative process, our denomination is able to engage with the important issues of our day. Our new Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Michael Curry, said this in response to the criticism issued by the Anglican primates gathered in Canterbury: *“It may be part of our vocation to help the Communion and to help many others to grow in a direction where we can realize and live the love that God has for all of us, and we can one day be a Church and a Communion where all of God’s children are fully welcomed, where this is truly a house of prayer for all people.”*

At St. Matthew’s, we have sought to be intentional in our efforts to understand what it means to be an inclusive community. This past fall, our parish engaged in the series, Believe Out Loud to better understand how to be a welcoming community and understand some of the barriers and prejudices still experienced by LGBT individuals searching for a church community. As a result of that program and subsequent conversations, our Vestry has worked to craft a statement for our website that seeks to make clear that we are a welcoming community. The statement simply builds upon our current mission statement and reads: *The Episcopal Church of St. Matthew is a community called by Christ to live God’s love, share the Gospel, and grow spiritually. All of God’s children are welcome here, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, income, race, or any other perceived difference.*

Despite what news headlines seem to imply, it is not possible for our church to lose its historic connection to Anglicanism or the Anglican Communion. We are part of a web of relationships that has endured for centuries. I believe that our strand of Anglicanism is a real gift to the rest of the Communion, to the rest of Christendom, and to the world. I continue to value our unique history and the important role that the Episcopal Church plays in the 21st century. *Blessings, Fr. Eric+*

TAIZÉ CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Tuesday, March 1st at 7pm

Everyone is invited to attend this ecumenical service characterized by meditative silence, repetitive songs, scripture and prayer. Taizé is the first Tuesday of every month (year around) in the side chapel. If you would like to be added to our new email list to learn more about Taizé and receive email reminders, please contact Rev. Lindsay at lmhills@episcopalstmatthew.org. Save the dates for future services: April 6th and May 3rd.

MILESTONES

In Memoriam

Neal Crispin, beloved former parishioner, January 26th

Carol Baker, beloved sister of parishioner Kathleen Gantvoort, January 13th

SUNDAY COFFEE HOUR:

The rotation for bringing treats to coffee hour after the Sunday service is as follows:

- March 6:** A-D
- March 13:** E-J
- March 20:** K-P
- March 27:** Q-S

We ask you to please put the food you are bringing on a paper plate (rather than in a package) and place it on the table in Julia Beylard Hall.

WOMEN’S SPIRITUALITY GROUP

Mondays at 9am, Charles House

Women of all ages are invited on an ongoing basis to join us for a new women’s spirituality group. We will be exploring the ever-relevant challenge of Sabbath. We will be using the book *Sabbath in the Suburbs: A Family’s Experiment with Holy Time*, by MaryAnn McKibben Dana, to ground our exploration and reflection. *Sabbath in the Suburbs* “...portrays the challenging quest of living the Sabbath while seeking a faithful balance in the abundance of choices and endless demands placed upon families today.” - Kathleen Long Bottom, Author of *99 Ways to Raise Spiritually Healthy Children*. Books are available for purchase in the church office for \$10 or through Jennifer Buckley jennifer.buckley@me.com. Please contact Rev. Lindsay (lmhills@episcopalstmatthew.org) or Ginger Fortmiller to learn more about the group.

Youth News

Junior High Youth Group (6th-8th Grade)

March 6: Field Trip – St. Gregory of Nyssa (Leave St. Matthew’s at 9:45am, return at 2:00)

March 13: All Youth Agape Meal (5pm, St. Paul’s)

March 20, 27: No Meeting

High School Youth Group (9th-12th Grade)

Monthly Theme: Prayer & Spiritual Practice

March 6: Field Trip – St. Gregory of Nyssa (Leave St. Matthew’s at 9:45 am, return at 2:00)

March 13: All Youth Agape Meal (5pm, St. Paul’s)

March 20, 27: No Meeting

Join youth from St. Paul’s, Burlingame and St. Matthew’s, San Mateo for weekly youth group! Dinner is included unless otherwise specified. Contact Rev. Lindsay at lmhills@episcopalstmatthew.org with questions or concerns. If you would like to provide dinner for our youth please email Rev. Lindsay; your hospitality is appreciated.

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK AND ST. MATTHEW’S

When you go grocery shopping, please consider picking up a few extra canned goods or other non-perishable items. You can leave your food donations either in a basket at the back of the church or at the church office. These donations will be placed in a Second Harvest collection barrel for pick-up.

We appreciate your thoughtfulness and thank you for your donations.

GO GREEN!

In an attempt to streamline our communications and be better stewards of our resources, we would like to encourage you to go green! Please complete this quick form at <http://goo.gl/forms/pNPJZwV9q5>, which will allow us to update your communication preferences.

CELEBRATE SUNDAYS!

Our next CELEBRATE Sundays will be held on **March 20** (Palm Sunday), **April 10** (Day School Sunday), **April 24** (Earth Day), and **May 15** (Pentecost). Children and youth play important roles in the liturgies during the 10:15 service on these Sundays. There is no church school but the nursery is available to children under 4. Together we will learn and grow and CELEBRATE!

BOOK GROUP: MARCH 30TH

A distinctive combination of witty dialogue, strong characters, conflict, and examination of some serious theological controversies, *Glittering Images* by Susan Howatch should produce some lively conversation. We will gather at the home of Susan and Martin Partlan at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, March 30, and you still have plenty of time to read the book. Please join us.

EPISCOPAL 101

What is the Episcopal Church? Why do we believe what we believe? What is the mission of the Church? Why do we do what we do? These and many more questions will be the groundwork for a mini adult formation series, designed with newcomers in mind. If you come to St. Matthew’s from a different religious background this is a great opportunity to deepen your understanding of the Episcopal Church and what we believe.

Adults who participate in the series, and who have been baptized/confirmed in another denomination may choose to be received into the Episcopal Church. Those Baptized in another denomination, but who have not been confirmed, may choose to be confirmed. Those who have not been formally baptized may choose to be baptized. Those who are already Episcopalians may see this time as an opportunity to reaffirm their faith in a public manner. Please see Rev. Lindsay, lmhills@episcopalstmatthew.org if you are interested in participating; dates will be forthcoming.

*Lent at
St. Matthew's:*

**AT THE
TABLE WITH
JESUS AND
WITH ONE
ANOTHER**

One place that community is formed and family maintained is around the table. We have created several opportunities to gather as a community around the table during this Lenten season and we hope you will take some time to join us.

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Sunday, March 6: Adult Forum (9am)

Join us for a bible study and conversation around the importance of the table in Jesus' life and ministry.

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Saturday, March 12: Top Chef (6pm)

Everyone is invited to join in on our regularly scheduled Family Fellowship night as we take on a special culinary challenge, "Top Chef" style. Parishioners will compete in a culinary Olympics to win the title of Top "St. Matthew's" Chef.

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Lenten Supply Drive for Peninsula Bridge

Our Day School offers a summer school program known as Peninsula Bridge. The Peninsula Bridge Program is an academically challenging, tuition-free summer enrichment program created to educate, empower and enthuse students from low-income school districts on the San Francisco Peninsula. In order to help these youth start the school year off on the right foot, the church has decided to partner with our Day School to provide 60 backpacks with supplies for these youth to take home at the end of their five-week intensive summer program.

Over the past few years, we have found it challenging to do a back to school drive in August (when many agencies need the backpacks and parishioners are on vacation). Moving the drive to the Lenten season offers us a new opportunity to connect with Day School families as together we focus on the needs of others. Please select supplies from the list below and place them in the designated box in the church. If you have questions or are interested in helping to compile the backpacks, please contact Rev. Lindsay.



- Sturdy Backpack
- Binders (1 inch)
- Dividers/Sheet Protectors
- Red Pens
- Colored Pencils
- Pencil Sharpener
- Tape
- Notebooks
- Binder Paper (College Ruled)
- Folders
- Person tissue packs/
hand sanitizer
- Ream White Printer Paper
- Mechanical Pencils
- Pencils
- Lined index cards
- Scientific Calculators
- Ballpoint pens
- Flash drives
- Highlighters

Other supplies that would be helpful to donate for the program itself include: tissue boxes, paper towels, and surface wipes.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Palm Sunday, March 20

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I

10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Tuesday in Holy Week, March 22

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

Wednesday in Holy Week, March 23

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

Maundy Thursday, March 24

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

2:00 p.m. Day School Mime -

Stations of the Cross

7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service
with Foot washing

8:30 p.m. Vigil at the Altar of Repose

Good Friday, March 25

12:00 p.m. Good Friday Service

Holy Saturday, March 26

6:00 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter with Baptism

Easter Sunday, March 27

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I

10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

11:30 a.m. Festive Reception, Easter Egg Hunt

BAPTISMAL FEASTS!

There are four major Baptismal feasts in the Episcopal Church (five if you include our paternal feast, the Feast of St. Matthew). Two of them are right around the corner. The Easter Vigil, March 26 (6pm) and Pentecost, May 15 (10:15am) are the next opportunities. If you are interested in being baptized or having a child baptized on one of these special days, please contact Victoria Wolcott in the church office or a member of the clergy.

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SMILE!

We are always looking at ways to increase financial support of the parish. Sometimes that has been in the form of old fashioned scrip sales or more recently eScrip. We are excited now to be linked to smile.amazon.com!

Directions:

1. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com/>
2. Log in to your Amazon account
3. Select Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of California (San Mateo, CA). There are dozens of churches with the same name, because it is based on our tax ID, which happens to be the Diocesan tax ID. PLEASE SELECT "SAN MATEO, CA".
4. Make purchases as desired, always starting at smile.amazon.com.

Once you set your organization to support, you just have to confirm it when you log in to smile.amazon.com, but don't have to search for it every time. St. Matthew's will instantly receive .5% of all your purchases! It's a win-win: you buy the things you normally buy, and in doing so St. Matthew's gets a little bit of money to help support our parish ministries!

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THE TAU CROSS

The Episcopal Church of St. Matthew
is a family called by Christ . . .

*to live God's Love,
to share the Gospel,
to grow Spiritually*

Come celebrate with us!

Services are 8:00 am & 10:15 am every Sunday

*Morning Prayer, 9 am, Tuesdays & Thursdays
Rite I Holy Eucharist, 9 am, Fridays*

UPCOMING EVENTS	
March 1	Taizé Service
March 6	Adult Forum
March 12	Family Fellowship Night
March 20	Palm Sunday
March 24	Maundy Thursday
March 25	Good Friday
March 26	Easter Vigil
March 27	Easter
March 30	Book Group



The Tau Cross is the monthly newsletter of the Episcopal Church of St. Matthew. We welcome submissions that have a connection to the parish. Inclusion is at the discretion of the staff and may be edited for space or clarity. The deadline for articles is the 15th of the month and may be sent by email to Beth von Emster at bvonemster@yahoo.com or deposited in the Tau Cross mailbox in the church office. Entries should follow these guidelines: Include title of event or article; 200 word maximum description including when, where, cost and contact information as applicable; Avoid abbreviations and other "insider" lingo; Further guidelines and tips available upon request. Tau Cross Staff: Editor, Beth von Emster; Associate Editor, Cherie Hammer; Layout & Design //dadalab.com

Or Current Resident

*The Rev. Eric Hinds, Rector
The Rev. Lindsay Marie Hills, Associate Rector
The Rev. Amber Stancliffe Evans, School Chaplain
The Rev. Robert Caughey, Deacon*

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