

THE TAU CROSS

Ten of the 101 Reasons to Be Episcopalian

One of the great things about the Episcopal Church is that lay people are involved at every level of our Church governance. At St. Matthew’s, our parish has benefitted from the leadership of a large number of individuals who have served on our Vestry. Lay delegates outnumber the clergy at our yearly Diocesan Convention, and at our National General Conventions the laity have both voice and vote in the entire decision-making process of our denomination.

When I lived in the Diocese of Newark, Louie Crew was a layperson very active in the church. Among his many accomplishments, he collected quotes from Episcopalians across the whole church who answered the question of why they are Episcopalian. Here are ten quotes (all from the laity) from his published gem, *101 Reasons to Be Episcopalian*:



73. “I am so appreciative of the way the Episcopal Church, with its Benedictine roots, keeps me grounded in real life, real relationships, real encounters. Ours is a very incarnational church—insisting on the importance of the Spirit’s embodiment in the ordinary events of each day, and reminding us over and over that God can be found in the most difficult and

improbable places.” Norvene Vest, Diocese of Los Angeles.

37. “Our eighth Sacrament: Fellowship and Good Food.” Amanda Demers, Diocese of Texas

94. “Ours is the perfect church for people who are not perfect.” John F. Schwaller, Diocese of Minnesota

9. “Anglicans do good deeds to increase their understanding of God, not out of fear or to earn admission to heaven.” Robert L. Neal III, Diocese of Chicago

91. “I love the fact that I can have stimulating conversation in class and disagree with the priest, or even the Bishop, and not get kicked because it is all right to use your mind and not be a rubber stamp for anyone. Christ died to save us from our sins, not our minds.” Pat Fortenberry, Diocese of East Tennessee

38. “Our theology is an art form, not a law book.” Paul Gibson, Diocese of Toronto

5. “The seasons are color coded.” Bungee Bynum, Diocese of Lexington

100. “There’s no such thing as a politically incorrect Episcopalian. There are conservative Episcopalians and liberal Episcopalians. There are straight Episcopalians and LGBT Episcopalians. There are Catholics

and Protestants. There are African, English, Asian, and Alaskan Episcopalians. And none of the above. The Episcopal Church doesn’t offer you set dogma or pat answers, or a list of do’s and don’ts. There is room for all kinds of people and all kinds of theologies. What the Episcopal Church does offer is a way of prayer, a way of thinking and asking questions, a way of life in this often confusing, conflicting, and complicated world, a way that may lead you closer to God. Jacqueline Schmitt, Diocese of Chicago

1. “When Anglicanism is at its best, its liturgy, its poetry, its music and its life can create a world of wonder in which it is very easy to fall in love with God.” Urban T. Holmes, III

65. “We find unity in shared worship, not in enforced agreement.” Lou Poulain, Diocese of El Camino Real

*Blessings,
Fr. Eric+*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Fr. Eric’s Message..... 1
Fr. Jay’s Message.....2
Deacon Lauren’s Message3
Upcoming Events: 50+ Anniversary Evensong, February Holy Hike & more4
Angelic Faces5
Christmas Altar Guild6

Reach Out

The majority of phone calls I get on my mobile device seem to be automated telemarketers or scam artists posing as some federal agency. Most people I know have stopped answering their phone calls because of this. Should the call be important, and from an actual person, they would leave a voice mail or call back. In this telephone game, I find myself longing to field a real phone call in which I actually speak with a trustworthy human being.

Some of us may remember when phone calls commanded more attention. Bell Telephone had a slogan, “Reach Out and Touch Someone.” Calls were valued differently than they are today, perhaps because of the per-minute charge on long-distance calls or all of the coins needed for a call from a pay phone. In the day of hard wired phones, most homes had only one device, and many families had rituals in which the person who answered the call would also need to announce throughout the home just who the call was for. I remember my brother and I yelling, “(NAME)...phone call for you!” My family home was a full house that included extended family, so that phone was mounted in the central foyer, and we had to share. From long distance calls from loved ones, to heart-to-heart talks with girlfriends and boyfriends, to grandma gossiping with her friends, to calls from classmates and coworkers, the home was always full of telephone chatter. There was always a genuine person who cared on the other side of the call.

It’s no secret that more people experience the feeling of isolation than ever before. A survey by Cigna in the U.S. a few years ago indicated that, “nearly half report sometimes or always feeling alone or left out.” What a strange thing to have in common. Joy, wholeness, and connection seem elusive in this very complex world. Though we have the modern smart phone to give us



many communication options such as texting, social media, internet browsing, and email, the undercurrent of separation seems stronger than the wave drawing us in. Let’s refrain from saying technology ruined human relationships, when it simply gives us new ways to build strong bonds. A wise friend once said to me, “If you are lonely, then you are not in good company.” This is our cue to reach out and

know that we are not alone. The scripture reminds us in the second creation story of God’s intention that people need people. “It’s not good that man should be alone.” I believe in the broadest sense of “family.” It is not just blood. Family also comes to us through the institutions that build social connections - like marriage, faith communities, and volunteer organizations (including nonprofits, schools, sports clubs, fraternal organizations, and even the military). These institutions or foundations foster stability, support systems, and a spiritual dimension needed for overall health, wholeness, and growth. On the subject of spirituality, if the purpose of religion is to reconnect, than our churches and communities of faith do indeed play a vital role in turning the tide of isolation. Timothy Carney, author of *Alienated America* writes, “On a more fundamental level, research suggests that religious people—all else being equal—are happier than less religious people.” I believe that St. Matthew’s, in all our ministries as church and school, is part of God’s response to a lonely planet. As we answer the call to go forth and share the Love of God in Jesus Christ, may we do what we can to be that genuine presence reaching out for the greater good of all.

God Bless You!
- Fr. Jay+

The Power of Prayer

Prayer in any form can help one to find a special, intimate connection to God. During difficult times, it can be something as simple as praying, “Jesus, please be with me.” I have even just said simply and emphatically, “JESUS!” And when I do this, it helps me to settle my soul and get reconnected to God.



Seven types of prayer are mentioned in our Book of Common Prayer: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition.

Every Sunday morning, we pray together as a parish in the Prayers of the People and in our intercession prayers. We bring forth the needs of others, we acknowledge the holiness of God, we hear God’s Word, and we offer prayers together in community. We pray for people who are dear

to us who may be ill, and we may add them to our prayer list.

I would like to share with you a bit of a miracle story about my friend, Gary, who you have been praying for over the past few months. Gary was first diagnosed with throat cancer in May of 2017. Recently, the cancer had spread to his spine and his doctors at Stanford said that there wasn’t anything else for them to do. They recommended that he try a clinical study at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Washington, D.C. Gary went there mid-December of 2019. Preliminary testing was performed to see if he would be eligible for the study. Unfortunately, the tests found that the cancer had spread to his brain. Gary was ineligible for the study. When I found out about all of this news, I added Gary to our weekly prayer list.

On December 26th, Gary’s doctors at Stanford operated to remove his brain tumor, which was the size of a lime. He and his wife, Lisa, were told the surgery could last as long as six hours, but his lasted only two and a half hours! They were told that he would go home four days later. The next morning, I got a call from Lisa that Gary was doing great and could go home that afternoon. He was only in the hospital for 31 hours instead of 5 days!

I want to thank each and every one of you who prayed for Gary. He knew that we were praying for him, and I believe that gave him some solace, peace, and hope during some very difficult times. As we hear in many of the stories of healings in the Gospels, Jesus tells those that he healed, “Your faith has made you well.”

(Matthew 4:22)

*Peace and blessings,
- Deacon Lauren*

Milestones

Marriages

Parishioners Ildiko Gabor and Joel Robinson, January 4

In Memoriam

Francis Gabor, Father of parishioner Ildiko Gabor, December 30

Second Harvest and St. Matthew’s

Sunday, January 26th



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 the 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.

50+ Anniversary Evensong

Sunday, February 23rd

Grace Cathedral and the Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus invite couples who have been married or partnered for 50 years or more to celebrate their years together. This festal choral Evensong on Sunday, February 23rd will be sung by the Choir of Peterborough Cathedral, on tour from England. Couples are invited to renew their wedding vows during the service, and the bishop will pronounce God's blessing. A celebratory reception follows the service. Interested couples are asked to please contact the church office at 650-342-1481 or office@episcopalstmatthew.org by January 31st.

February Holy Hike at San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturday, February 22nd

Holy Hikes will celebrate Holy Eucharist at the San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park next month on Saturday, February 22. Admission is free for San Francisco City and County Residents; otherwise the cost is: adults \$9; youth 12-17 and seniors 65+ \$6; children 5-11 \$2; children 4 and under free; families \$19. Financial assistance is available. The Garden is stroller friendly; there are smoothly paved trails throughout the area. Parking for cars and bicycles is conveniently located in the Music Concourse Garage; limited street parking is available in Golden Gate Park. No pets allowed and no RSVP is required; just show up and meet outside the gift shop at the main entrance. When: Saturday, February 22, 9:50 a.m. (gather); 10 a.m. (hike). Where: San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave and Lincoln Way, San Francisco. For more information: www.holyhikes.org, www.sfbotanicalgarden.org. Contact: The Rev. Justin R. Cannon, holyhikes@gmail.com. office@episcopalstmatthew.org by January 31st.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Taizé Candlelight Service

Tuesday, February 4th

Everyone is invited to attend this ecumenical service characterized by meditative silence, repetitive songs, scripture and prayer. Taizé starts at 7:00 pm on the first Tuesday of every month (year around) in the church. Please mark your calendar for your next Taizé service on March 3rd.

Women's Spirituality Group

Women of all ages are invited to join us for a women's spirituality group. We meet every week throughout the year at Charles House on Mondays at 9:15 am. This is a small group opportunity to reflect on scripture, God's presence in our lives and the challenges of discipleship, and engage in prayer. For more information, please contact Victoria Wolcott or Ginger Fortmiller via the church office.



Our group has a mission to support and grow in faith the families of the church and Day School communities. Please join us on **Sunday, February 2nd** from 9:00 am - 10:00 am in the church library for "**Loving God as a Child**" - How can we instill a lifelong love of God in our children AND reclaim for ourselves the ferocity of a child's love for God?

Then we will gather on **Friday, February 14th** for an informal **Valentine's Day Family Potluck** in Julia Beylard Hall from 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm - All are welcome!

If you aren't on the mailing list and want to get in on the Fellowship fun, please contact Claire Fry at claire@loudandclaire.com or 617-416-2641. **See you soon!**

Angelic Faces: Raymond Schulz

Raymond and his wife, Casey came to St. Matthew's in 2001 by an invitation from Caroline McNally. What attracted Raymond immediately was, "the people, our classic church and the choir."

Raymond was born in Paris and raised an Episcopalian in Charleston, West Virginia. He has his undergraduate degree in Physics from West Virginia University and his Masters degree in computer science from Columbia University. Raymond works as a senior project manager at Varian Systems in Palo Alto. He and his wife Casey



have a son, Francis, who attended St. Matthew's Day School and is now a Freshman at Loyola Marymount University. Raymond has 2 other adult children, Chris and Will, and 2 grandchildren, Colin and Charlie.

Raymond has served St. Matthew's in many roles: twice as Hospitality Chair, two terms on the Vestry, and as a lay reader, usher, choir singer, and our consummate chef at the annual Feast of St. Matthew's barbecue.

Raymond is a fount of knowledge about the entwined history of the church, school and hospital. As he points out, "our church was founded when Mr. Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States," and the

establishment of St. Matthew's was integral to the founding of San Mateo. He and Casey have a great appreciation for the worship service, sermons, music, choir, lectures, guest speakers, events, coffee hour, and their close friendships with fellow parishioners.

Raymond's outgoing, warm, and friendly nature give him

a special gift for striking up conversations with new parishioners. He warmly welcomes new people, connects them with others, and makes them feel at ease.

Thank you for your time, talent and service to St. Matthew's.

*With sincere appreciation and God's blessings,
Darlia Clerico*

Laundry Love

Your Chance to Strengthen the Fabric of Our Community

Laundry Love is a partnership between St. Matthew's and Samaritan House that helps people who are experiencing financial struggle with their laundry. Our "noisy bucket" collections take place on the first Sunday of every month to raise the funds we use at the laundromat. We work with participants on the second Tuesday evening of the month at the Clothesline Laundromat on 25th Avenue in San Mateo.

If you would like to volunteer or make a donation of funds or supplies (laundry soap, dryer sheets, etc.), please contact Betsy McCall at Elizabeth.h.Mccall@gmail.com.



laundrylove

Many thanks to the Altar Guild Flower Arrangement Committee for their stunning transformation of the church on Christmas Eve!



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!

Sunday Services at 8:00 am and 10:15 am

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 beth.vonemster@gmail.com. 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, Ming Lacey

Upcoming Events

- February 2** Fellowship Parents Group Meeting
- February 4** Taizé Service
- February 9** Celebrate Sunday
- February 11** Laundry Love
- February 14** Family Potluck
- February 22** Holy Hike at San Francisco Botanical Garden
- February 23** 50+ Anniversary Evensong

Or Current Resident

The Rev. Dr. Eric Kimball Hinds, Rector
The Rev. Jay Sapaen Watan, Associate Rector
The Rev. Lauren P. McCombs, Deacon
The Rev. Amber Stancliffe Evans, School Chaplain

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