

THE TAU CROSS

Becoming Beloved Community

Two aspects of the Episcopal Church are easy to take for granted. First, our church has been a part of the fabric of our country since the first English settlers established the Roanoke Colony in the 16th century. Second, our church embraces a wide diversity of people who defy simple and easy characterization. Add to this foundation the way that our denomination values intellectual enquiry and discussion, and one realizes that our church is in a strong position to engage in dialogue regarding the complex issues of justice and race.



Becoming Beloved Community is the name of the Episcopal Church’s long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice. The phrase “long-term” is included with intention to acknowledge that becoming a beloved community is not a quick fix but rather a journey. The phrase envisions an ongoing journey taken together over time. The image selected for the journey of racial reconciliation is a labyrinth. Perhaps best known

for the medieval cathedral in Chartres, France, a labyrinth embodies a meandering yet intentional spiritual journey, one that is always moving forward.

Protesting is one way to make the yearning for racial justice visible, but it is a difficult means in and of itself to build community. Churches by their nature are uniquely positioned to encourage conversations and encounters that can lead to deeper insights and forge transformative relationships. I believe that we are living at a time when there is a hunger for deeper community and when we can learn from and support one another in the specific area of race.

This fall, our parish will have the opportunity to participate in a film-based dialogue series on race and faith called *Sacred Ground*. Using the image of the labyrinth, the series invites participants to embark on a journey of discovery with others. The *Sacred Ground* series covers some difficult aspects of our history and at times will likely pose uncomfortable questions.

The designers of the *Sacred Ground* materials concede that conversations about race are seldom simple or easy, yet they uphold “...the vision of beloved community as a guiding star – where all people are honored and protected and nurtured as beloved children of God, where we weep at one another’s pain and seek one another’s flourishing.”

In the weeks ahead, more information will be forthcoming about the Sacred Ground series. We have some logistical challenges to overcome in order to operate any series during this time of social isolation. It is my hope that even with the added challenges of Covid-19, we will attract a group eager to engage

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in timely conversations about race. I look forward to taking a journey on the Sacred Ground labyrinth together.

Blessings,
Fr. Eric+

Relationships Matter!!

A new school year starts this month, and for most students and families it will begin with distance learning and homeschooling. Never without hope, I've been putting together my daughter's uniform for the eventual in-person return to school. But as I was checking the tags for sizing, I thought about our teachers helping students navigate the confusing complexity of our times. We've all had teachers whose legacy continues to inspire us to see what's right in the world.

One such person in my life has been Dan Begonia, Professor Emeritus at San Francisco State University. I first met Professor Begonia over twenty years ago as an undergrad at SFSU. He taught Psychology and Ethnic Studies and his signature class was Asian American Studies 355 – The Psychology of Pilipino Americans. That class impacted my life as



In class with Professor Dan Begonia

well as the lives of my brother Mark and so many other students. He invited students to discover meaning and purpose in their ethnic identity, make sense of their family dynamics, stand against injustice, practice discipline, and embrace responsibility to shape their destiny as people of color in America.



In 2017, I took another class from Professor Begonia, The Psychology of Race and Ethnic Culture. I noticed that Professor Begonia's pedagogy had changed. In his younger days, he was an activist for justice, with a righteous fire to "change the world." But in the late 1990's he experienced "a moment of peace," and began

teaching his classes with a more spiritual outlook. "Changing the world" evolved into "sharing the light within" to build up healthy, connected, and whole people. He focused on helping students create community and encouraged students to find what they had in common with their neighbors. He

introduced drum circles to his students and established service opportunities for community engagement. He still offered everyday life-lessons such as honoring a person's name, creating community through curiosity, and developing one's social intelligence to create joy, purpose, and satisfaction in life.

Relationships matter. In our world of multiple truths, sound bites, and alternative facts, it can be challenging to know who may have our best interests at heart. Teachers hold the public trust, have a code of ethics, uphold a standard for education, and support the building of community and civil society. Next to our parents and close loved ones, our teachers carry a great responsibility for passing on the life-giving culture and encouraging us to live into our

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fullness. I learned from Professor Begonia a proverb he shared many years ago that still resonates in my heart today:

*The poor teacher tells.
The mediocre teacher explains.
The superior teacher demonstrates.
But the outstanding teacher inspires.*

Teachers all over made an amazing pivot to distance learning when the pandemic crisis hit. My daughter’s second grade teacher, Ms. Martinez, not only taught classes online, but coordinated one-on-one sessions and recorded tutoring videos to ensure Kieran and her classmates continued to learn. Her efforts were inspiring. Kieran says she loves Ms. Martinez because of her warmth, humor, and strong faith. So many teachers I’ve encountered have something to do with what is right in the world. Let’s hold them in our prayers.



Kieran with Ms. Martinez

Loving God, source of wisdom and grace, lift up our teachers, mentors, and sages as they begin a new school year answering the call to inspire with wonder, possibility, and truth. Sustain them in goodness and joy. Guard them from cynicism and weariness. Give them strength in family and spirit for balance. Help them to trust that wherever You guide, You will provide, and shine in them Your light and confidence to faithfully walk the way with our students and to love them like their own. This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

-Fr. Jay +

God’s Unconditional Love

Lately, I think that I have come to a spiritual awakening! This revelation has helped me tremendously during these uncertain times. It’s a pretty simple notion, which is to reflect on God’s goodness. Rather than think about what isn’t possible right now, I try and focus on what is possible. I think about all of God’s goodness that constantly surrounds and surprises me.

I think about the love that I share with my two children. Even though Alex lives in London and Katie in Rochester, New York, we are extremely close and talk almost every day. I thank God for the treasure of our relationships. Even though I have not seen them for over seven months, I can still pray for them. At the beginning of each day, I pray for all the challenges that they are facing during this Pandemic, using the prayer from our *Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* entitled, *For the Absent*:

O God, whose fatherly care reacheth to the uttermost parts of the earth: We humbly beseech thee graciously to behold and bless those whom we love, now absent from us. Defend them from all dangers of soul and body; and grant that both they and we, drawing nearer to thee, may be bound together by thy love in the communion of thy Holy Spirit, and in the fellowship of thy saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. (BCP page 830)

I also reflect on the companionship of friends who share my belief in God and faithfully follow Jesus. They recognize how fortunate we are to have our faith during these challenging times. We know that we are not alone. God is always with us, walking by our side in good and difficult times. We share a faith that God’s love for us is unconditional and ever-present. When I am

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facing a challenging situation, I can turn to friends and ask them to pray for me. Knowing that I am being cared for through the power of prayer gives me great comfort to face whatever is in front of me.

We can offer the power of prayer to each other. We can add someone to our prayer list by contacting Victoria Wolcott, our Parish Administrator at office@episcopalstmatthew.org or by calling her 650-342-1481 and leaving a message stating who we would like to include.

I know that many of you have heard this before, but God spelled backwards is Dog! This brings me to my next blessing, my dog June Bug. She is an exuberant two-year-old Saluki Hound rescued from Tehran. She runs like the wind on a track she has created in my backyard. She loves to make me laugh, and when she hears my laughter she repeats whatever crazy thing that she is doing. The love of a dog can be like the love of God. June Bug forgives me when I don't take her for a walk. She is protective of me just as God is. Her love



and dedication to me overflows so that I cannot help but receive it.

Like my dog, God forgives even when we do not do things just right. We all make mistakes, and I encourage you, especially during this time, to be kind and gentle with yourself. Never lose sight of the fact that God loves us unconditionally just as we are. God gives comfort during these trying times even when we may feel desperately alone. God is a

faithful companion who walks with us always on our life's journey.

I close with these comforting words from Matthew's Gospel:

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest

for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

*Peace and love,
Deacon Lauren*

St. Matthew's Land

We are creating "St. Matthew's Land" around the Magnolia tree in the courtyard this summer. Everyone is encouraged to participate by bringing in objects (nothing too precious, something you can part with) that represent St. Matthew's for you. The children are contributing angels, among various coordinated art projects. I'm excited to see what St. Matthew's means to each of you and how collectively as a parish we build something together even as we are apart right now.

- Deacon Lauren



Prayers of the People

During the Prayers of the People portion of the Sunday Service, we ask for God’s redemptive presence in the church, the world, our community, and individual lives. If you would like to add a name to be read during the Prayers of the People at an upcoming Sunday Service, please contact the church office at office@episcopalstmatthew.org or 650-342-1481.

Need Continues for Second Harvest Food Bank

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, the Food Bank is seeing substantial increases in need as community members are furloughed, losing hourly wages, and forced to deplete savings while still providing for their families. If you are able to provide financial support, donations can be made online here:

<https://give.shfb.org/donatenow>



Contributions and Pledges to St. Matthew’s

Your generous support helps St. Matthew fulfill its mission: to live God’s love, to share the Gospel, and to grow spiritually. Thank you for continuing your giving during these times. Contributions and pledges can be mailed to the church or made online at:

<https://episcopalstmatthew.org/giving/donatenow/>

You Shop, Amazon Gives amazonSmile

If you haven’t already, please consider designating St. Matthew’s as the beneficiary of your Amazon orders. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you are familiar with--the same products, prices, and service. To learn more, go to AboutAmazonSmile. Amazon Smile is now available in the mobile app! Go to Settings in the app to link to your Smile account.

Home and Hope Update

Home and Hope is a long-time ministry of St. Matthew’s. With the coordination of the nonprofit organization, Home and Hope, and in partnership with other local faith communities, our church offers support to families in the community experiencing homelessness. Several area congregations (like our partners at Hillsdale United Methodist Church) host the families for two-week intervals, while others (like St. Matthew’s) prepare meals and spend evenings with the affected families.

During the pandemic, many congregations can no longer participate. Our usual host partner, Hillsdale Methodist, is one such church unable to host guest families for the rest of 2020, leaving

our parish without a location to offer our accustomed hospitality. Home and Hope will instead accommodate the families in a motel for the three weeks that our congregations originally committed to serving the families through the end of 2020.

Paul Zen leads this ministry for St. Matthew’s. He has initiated a fundraising campaign to cover some of these motel costs that Home and Hope is unexpectedly incurring. To date he already has raised \$2,500! If you are moved to contribute to this ministry, you may find donation instructions here: <https://www.homeandhope.net/donate.html>

- Beth von Emster

Video Archives on the Website

All the Sunday Service and Morning Prayer videos are available on our website for watching without a Facebook account. The direct links are:

- Sunday Service Video

Archive: <https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/sunday-service-videos/>

- Morning Prayer Video

Archive: <https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/morning-prayers/>

For all video archives including Children’s Chapel Storytime and Organ and Bell Tower Music, and Faith Journeys and Coffee Hour Reflection audio stories, you can find them on the “Multimedia” tab at the top of the website. The direct links are:

- Children’s Chapel Storytime Video

Archive: <https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/childrens-chapel-storytime/>

- Organ and Bell Video Archive: <https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/organ-and-bell-music/>

- Coffee Hour Reflections Audio

Archive: <https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/coffee-hour-reflections/>

- Faith Journeys Audio

Archive: <https://episcopalstmatthew.org/videos/faith-journeys/>

The homepage also has many links to recent videos. The scrolling large

images at the top of the homepage are clickable and will take you to the related webpage for videos or articles. Additionally, the "News & Updates" and the "Watch Livestream Sunday Services" sections will include the most recent Sunday service and Morning Prayer video links.

Please contact Ming Lacey at mlacey415@yahoo.com if you have questions or suggestions.



Milestones

In Memoriam

Nancy Fischer

July 4th

Nancy was a faithful, active, energetic, and generous parishioner for many decades. She served as co-chair of the church archives and as president of the League for Service and St. Dorothy’s Section. Nancy spearheaded exuberant Fourth of July church gatherings and lively First Friday suppers for many years. She had a particular gift for making newcomers feel welcome. Born in 1930, Nancy was a loving mother to her children: Longueville, Anna, Stevens, and Timothy, their spouses, and her grandchildren Emma, Oliver, Nathan, and Jenny. It would be difficult to overstate how central St. Matthew’s was to Nancy’s life. Two of her children were baptized in the church; all attended the Sunday School; two were confirmed at St. Matthew’s; one sang in the children’s choir for five years; two of her children were married in the sanctuary, and then Nancy herself married Alan Fischer in the side chapel. Her mother Suzy Balch’s memorial service was at St. Matthew’s. She hosted several extended family Thanksgiving dinners in Julia Beylard Hall. Nancy and her beloved Bud held a joint 80th birthday party in the hall in 2010. She was ever-generous to the church, loyally supporting annual stewardship and special campaigns, making thrift shop donations, and remembering the church in her will. Nancy is deeply missed by her family and many friends.

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 Service Livestreamed on Facebook
at 10:00 am

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

Tau Cross Staff

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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.

Upcoming Events

Monday-Friday Morning Prayer
9:30 am

Sundays Children's Chapel
9:30 am Zoom

Sundays Livestream Sunday
10:00 am Service

Sundays Zoom Coffee Hour
11:00 am

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