



The Ivy Leaf

March 28, 2021

Welcome...

to St. Matthew's as we begin our journey through Holy Week. This ancient Christian custom invites us to walk with Jesus through the last week of his life, from his royal entry into Jerusalem through the intimate last supper with his disciples, his arrest and trial, his death on the cross, and ultimately to his triumph over death on Easter morning. It is a week of intense, roller-coaster emotions, through which we come to encounter and experience anew Jesus' death and resurrection. We are glad you have joined us for this holy time, and we hope you will participate as fully as you can in our services this week. A schedule of dates and times is included below.

Holy Week and Easter Services

Maundy Thursday, April 1

5:00 pm Maundy Thursday Service - Premieres on our website

Good Friday, April 2

12:00 noon Good Friday Service - Live-streamed on Facebook

Holy Saturday, April 3

6:00 pm The Great Vigil of Easter - Premieres on our website

Easter Sunday, April 4

10:00 am Holy Eucharist - Live-streamed on Facebook

Services will be available to watch on ECSM Facebook Live webpage (No FB account required) or Facebook Watch TV APP for casting the stream to your TV.

All videos also are available on the St. Matthew's website after live videos conclude:

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

And on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu3LEb_tMIjL6DNKcZDI2Q

Videos are best viewed on Chrome and Safari web browsers.

Pastoral Letter from Our Bishop to All Parishes

The New Life in Christ

I appeal to you, therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2

Dear Relations in the Beloved Community,

I am writing you as we approach Holy Week and Easter to both thank you and encourage you. As I hope you have heard me say, I will always be grateful for the remarkable witness you have given in servant leadership, within your congregations, and within the wider community of the Bay Area during this time of pandemic. You have kept many safe, you have saved people from unnecessary deaths.

“This time of pandemic,” though, has not passed. Would that the graph of the pandemic’s course could be confidently expected to move smoothly down to a normal state. Two factors make such a smooth course to normalcy less than certain: human behavior and the biology of the virus. On the one hand, we all are experiencing a double pull in our hearts and minds. We see more and more people being vaccinated, we see the tiers moving into safer zones, and we see more and more people moving about in ways that we would have agreed even a few weeks ago were unsafe. We are also feeling the intense longing to be back in the presence of friends, co-workers, and those who simply move through the same social space as we do. And we may be feeling the ill effects of isolation – depression in its many manifestations.

With respect to the biology of the virus, the variants are presenting alarming dangers, even within a vaccinated population.

In light of the above, and while there is still a bit of time, I write to urge you to stay on the course which I must describe as holy. As I readily acknowledge, I cannot prohibit you, in most cases, from gathering in our beloved church buildings for worship, following the guidelines established by county authorities. Rather, I am simply *asking* you to hold back. If you have planned indoor worship for Holy Week and Easter, please reconsider. Worship outdoors, on your own church grounds, or in parks or other convenient gathering spaces is not only appropriate for Easter celebrations, it is about 20 times safer than indoor worship.

And moving beyond Easter, my request to you is equally simple, though not easy, I realize — please refrain from indoor worship until the beginning of June. If Covid-19 cases continue to decline, and the rollout of vaccinations continues at its current pace or even better, then I will be among the first to say, “Blessings on you as you regather.” In the meantime, if you chose to celebrate the Eucharist with your congregations outdoors, please refrain from using a common cup. Consecration in real-time is acceptable; however, please follow the face-covering guidelines and other social distancing protocols outlined on Page 21 of the following document from Ministry Matters: [Click here](#) for the English version, [Click here](#) for Spanish. Please also keep all gatherings that include singing, chanting, or use of wind instruments outdoors-only.

I chose the passage from Paul’s Letter to the Romans for the epigram for this Pastoral Letter in order to say that I feel that Paul has described the actual life of the Diocese of California during the pandemic thus far – you have lived in accord with the mind of Christ, sacrificing for the safety of all. As Paul would also say, “Let us run with patience the race.”

With my blessings,
+MHA

Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 3, 10:00 am - Noon

Saint Matthew's Front Lawn and Grounds

While we cannot celebrate Easter as we usually do this year, we do have some fun celebrations in store. Come to Saint Matthew's on Easter Saturday, April 3, at 10 am for a fun outdoor Easter Egg Hunt. Bring your baskets or bags (some will be available if you need them) and we will have our own little Easter Egg Hunt outside. All are welcome. Please wear your mask, and safe distancing practices will be in place.

Blessings and Prayer List Additions

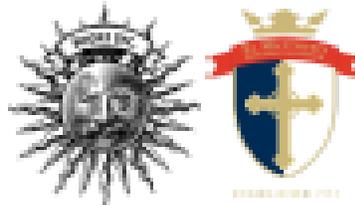
Names for blessings and prayers can be submitted by emailing or calling the church office: office@episcopalstmatthew.org or 650-274-0795.

Contributions and Pledges

Your generous financial support helps St. Matthew’s 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: episcopalstmatthew.org/giving/donate-now/.

ST. MATTHEW'S BOOK FAIR WITH BOOKS INC.!

VIRTUAL AND IN STORE!



**MONDAY, APRIL 19TH
THROUGH, WEDNESDAY APRIL 28TH
AT BOOKS INC. PALO ALTO OR
WWW.BOOKSINC.NET**

|This year we are excited to be offering a Hybrid Book Fair that combines Books Inc.'s well-run Virtual Book Fair program with an in-store shopping component!

The St. Matthew's Episcopal Day School community will have the opportunity to shop online at www.booksinc.net or in-store at Books Inc. Palo Alto during the dates above and a portion of the sales will be donated back to the school.

MORE INFO TO COME!

