Most of us are tired - tired of the pandemic and adhering to a set of rules and procedures designed to prevent new surges of the coronavirus. We are tired, despite knowing that our caution and diligence have helped keep our larger community safe. Good Friday would seem the appropriate day to ask if the dark confines created by the tomb of the pandemic will ever end. As Christians, we know that the darkness of Good Friday and the tomb is followed by the joy and promise of Easter. After over a year of languishing in the tomb of sheltering in place and isolation, we are finally making preparations to safely regather to worship as a community.

I am happy to announce that we are making plans to gather for worship outdoors. There are several logistical considerations that affect our first gathering date. After working every week and weekend without a break for a year during covid, I will be taking time off during the first two weeks of April (Fr. Jay and Philip have also worked without a break and are also overdue for time off). Not long after I return from time away, I will have the joy of undergoing surgery to repair my broken nose (if you remember, early on during Covid I tripped and broke my nose; the follow-up surgery was postponed until hospitals could handle “non-essential” cases). My surgery is scheduled near the start of May with an anticipated two weeks of recovery. With the logistics of staffing in mind, we are looking at gathering for our first outdoor service on our front lawn at 9:30am on Sunday, May 16th. We will then have one outdoor service under our belts when we gather to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost on the following Sunday, May 23rd. When we begin outdoor worship services, we will also continue to conduct a livestream recorded service with a start time of 11:00 am. By now a sizable portion of our congregation has been vaccinated, and one can sense the pent-up demand to regather and regain a sense of community.

I am aware that some of our neighboring congregations may gather in person a couple of weeks ahead of us. For the past year, our staff has been working with great effort and dedication to try to make connections and maintain a sense of community. There will be many regulations and logistics that we will have to comply with to make our gatherings smooth, safe, and secure. As of this date, our diocese cautions that no indoor services should be contemplated before June at the absolute earliest.

Our regathering has been a long time coming. It is fitting that our first in-person service in over a year will be during the season of Easter. The celebration of new life, joy, and promise lies at the heart of the Easter Story. I look forward to our emerging from the tomb into the light of joy and promise.

Easter Blessings,
Fr. Eric

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A Note of Thanks from Fr. Eric

In a March issue of the Ivy Leaf, we acknowledged Deacon Lauren’s move into a new chapter of her life. In this publication I want to repeat my expression of the great thanks of our parish for Lauren’s dedicated and creative ministry in our midst. Beyond her serving in worship, hosting Zoom coffee hour, and attending the Children’s Story Time, Lauren found other imaginative ways to engage the faith of our parish. She created “St. Matthew’s Land,” organized a scavenger hunt, and posted Coffee Hour Reflections, to name a few of her offerings. I am deeply appreciative of Deacon Lauren’s ministry, especially during the challenges of the pandemic. On behalf of the entire parish, I express our deep gratitude and offer our thanks and blessings.

Fr. Eric+

A Note from Deacon Lauren

As many of you know, my first granddaughter, Eloise Patton Adams, was born on February 18th in Rochester, New York. I am currently meeting Eloise for the first time in Rochester. During the time that I have been here, I have come to realize that I want to focus my time and energy on my daughter Katie’s family in Rochester. As such, it is with a heavy heart that I must tell you that as of March 15th, I will not be serving as your Deacon at St. Matthew’s any longer. I have thoroughly enjoyed serving at St. Matthew’s since September 2019. And as a parish, we have faced some challenging times during the pandemic. My work changed after March 2020 when we could no longer be in church together, but I believe that it has expanded by spreading God’s love through Chapel Time with the children, leading a Sacred Ground Group, and creating our Zoom Coffee Hour Group.

In addition, I especially appreciate the combined ministry that Father Eric, Father Jay and I have created over the past 18 months. Serving as your Deacon at St. Matthew’s has truly been a blessing in my life. St. Matthew’s will always be my home parish as all of you hold such a special place in my heart. As it says in Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Peace and love,
Deacon Lauren
The pandemic has brought upon us layers of challenge and complexity in our lives together. Times like this have a way of revealing both the very best and the absolute worst in us. This pandemic has exposed the ugly virus of white supremacy and racism that has sickened the soul of America. The killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many other African Americans have revealed the insidious nature of the racist structures and systems in our society. People of color understand that the infections of racism and hate have been with us for generations.

The dramatic surge of violence against Asians Americans during the pandemic, particularly against the elderly and women, has brought to light a painful truth - this is not new. The recent murders in Atlanta are the latest example of a long history of violence and discrimination against Asians in America. That history includes the “Yellow Peril” fueled by imperialists and news media in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the burning of a Chinese fishing village in Pacific Grove in 1906, the Watsonville anti-Filipino riots of 1930, the government’s enactment the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and the internment of Japanese Americans in World War II. But to find these stories, one has to be intentional. In the American consciousness and discourse, Asian Americans remains on the margins of visibility. Outside of Bruce Lee and Kamala Harris, how many Asians do we see featured in popular media or celebrated for their contributions to the national narrative? Despite the growing awareness of our God-given diversity, conversations about discrimination and race in this country often still center on the relationship between black and white. Why do we need tragedy to open up the discussion?

According to San Francisco State University’s #StopAPIHate research, we have seen a 155% increase in incidents of outright hate toward Asian Americans in the past 12 months. Ranging from verbal abuse and spitting to physical violence, most occurrences have been in California and New York. Over 3,800 anti-Asian hate crimes were reported during this period, with 68% of the victims being women. As we wonder why, my concern for the safety of my elders and children grows. The San Francisco Bay Area has not been immune to this. At the beginning of the pandemic, my mom was accused of spreading the “China virus” while walking at her local park in San Francisco. Just a few months ago while coming out of a parking lot in Daly City, the driver next to me yelled out racist names and told me to “go back where you come from.” I yelled back, “Fool, I come from here! (San Francisco, California, USA).” I know many Asian Americans are more fearful and anxious these days.

The myth of the model minority, what I consider “fake privilege,” only adds to the culture of contempt and tells an incomplete story of the great struggle to make the dream real. While there’s truth to the narrative of success rooted in hard work and having the support of family, Asians in America are as diverse as the rest of humanity in ethnicity, culture, class, orientation, religion, education, personal interests, and life experiences. As an undergraduate at San Francisco State University, I minored in Asian American Studies. This program broadened my appreciation of my family’s ethnic and cultural values and deepened my
awareness of the rich history of Asian Americans. It also helped me understand and name the realities of racism, inequity, and violence. Many Americans still see Asian Americans as foreigners. Ronald Takaki, the late UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies professor and author of *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, related a story of a cab driver who asked him, “How long have you been in this country?” Born in Hawaii, Takaki responded, “All my life... I was born in the United States, my family came from Japan in the 1880’s.” Astonished, the driver remarked, “I was wondering because your English is excellent.” Asian people do not look “American” to a lot of Americans. The first time I remember being called an “American” was in Ireland among a group of German, Australian, and Japanese travelers. America being America, we have a lot to overcome when it comes to who’s in and who’s out.

I believe racial healing will be part of the core of our church’s mission post-pandemic. As Christians in the Episcopal tradition, we return to Easter because the truth of a better tomorrow begins in the way of love. Love restores and revives. But Love is scary. It asks us to carry our cross just like Jesus. And because love is hard, we learn to lean on God for help. In this pandemic, if we are to rise up from this cesspool of ignorance and hate to honor all people, we’ll need to dive into the healing balm of joy and gratitude. We will take courage to share our story, reveal truths, celebrate life, and listen. At the heart of our faith is the life-giving power of Christ crucified. Love is the way to win over all hatred. Racism and violence will not destroy our humanity as long as love is the way!

-Fr. Jay

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**Easter Egg Hunt**

*Saturday, April 3rd, 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.
Easter Week 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 Facebook 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_tMIjl6DNKcZDl2Q. Videos are best viewed on Chrome and Safari web browsers.
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.

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/

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

You Shop, Amazon Gives
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. AmazonSmile is now available in the mobile app! Go to Settings in the app to link to your Smile account.

Morning Prayer and Children’s Chapel Premieres on YouTube
Morning Prayer premieres on Facebook Live, YouTube, and our website at 9:30 am Mondays through Fridays.
Children's Chapel videos premieres on on Facebook Live, YouTube, and our website at 9:45 am on most Sundays.
ECSM's YouTube Channel is at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu3LEb_tMI1jL6DNKcZDLzQ
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 Livestreamed on Facebook at 10:00 am

Upcoming Events

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**Morning Prayer Video**

FB/YouTube Premiere

**Children’s Chapel**

Zoom

**Sunday Service**

FB Livestream

**Coffee Hour**

Zoom

The Rev. Dr. Eric Kimball Hinds, Rector
The Rev. Jay Sapam Watan, Associate Rector
The Rev. Amber Stancliffe Evans, School Chaplain

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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.