

THE TAU CROSS

Connecting the St. Matthew's Community

Episcopal Church and State Celebrate our Semiquincentennial Anniversary

The Rev. Dr. Eric Hinds, Rector

This year, on the 4th of July, our nation will celebrate its 250th anniversary—undoubtedly with great fanfare and enthusiasm. **Independence Day** is one of two National Holidays listed for observance in our *Book of Common Prayer* (Thanksgiving is the other holiday designated for celebration).

Most American school children learn how the signing of The Declaration of Independence established two important principles: First, that the 13 colonies had come together to declare themselves a united, free and independent state; and second, that the new United States of America was seeking political recognition as well as military and economic support from the nations of the world. One of the lessons often neglected in the telling of our country's founding is how a State Church (The Church of England) was transformed by the American Revolution into an independent religious institution (The Episcopal Church) with a polity based upon democratic principles. Briefly, here are three ways in which our nation's independence shaped the "new" Episcopal Church.

1. A Democratic Polity

Not only was a ruling sovereign removed from the governance of the Episcopal Church, but similar to

the new United States government, a bicameral legislative apparatus was established where clergy *and* laypeople were *elected* to participate in the process of establishing the rules and canons of the Church.

The underlying assumption for this arrangement was that the Holy Spirit moves through the entire baptized body of the Church: bishops, priests, deacons, and laity alike



2. A Revised Book of Common Prayer

The first *Book of Common Prayer* was compiled primarily by The Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cramner, and published in 1549. It was a brilliant work that brought together elements of medieval Catholic traditions and

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The Labyrinth at St. Matthew's

The Rev. Jay Sapaen Watan, Associate Rector



During Holy Week, my son, Rowan, and I took a day to refresh the labyrinth located on the north side of the campus near the Bell Tower. It was originally installed during the pandemic

as a gift to the community for the celebration of the Feast of St. Matthew on September 21, 2020. The design is based on a Classical 7-Circuit pattern, also known as the *Cretan Labyrinth*, and is one of oldest known human made patterns.



Father Jay and Rowan W.
Photo credit: Fr. Jay

Our school security team reports that our school and church communities make good use of the path throughout the week, along with visitors, old and young, from the wider community. In the past six years all the walking and the weather have worn the original materials which called for a renewal. I consulted members of our parish garden guild and landscape professionals and we determined that the best way to care for the labyrinth and nearby oak tree was to maintain a more natural aesthetic. Rebuilding the labyrinth required almost 300 feet of new 1.25 inch pro-

Manila rope and over 250 lawn staples to set it. In addition, a wider path was incorporated to expand the labyrinth's footprint.



Photo credit: Fr. Jay

Labyrinths have ancient roots and can be found across many faiths and cultures around the world. They exist in churches, parks, schools, hospitals, home gardens and even as fidget toys. Some health experts swear by the health benefits of walking a labyrinth, saying it welcomes calm in anxious times, encourages wholeness, reduces stress, and invites self-reflection. Labyrinths have long been associated with the idea of pilgrimage because the path leads inward toward the center before returning us outside. The path weaves and meanders, the bends slow pace and breath, creating space for insight and wonder to unfold. For some, the labyrinth reflects the walk with the Divine, *"that Christ may dwell in us, and we in Christ"*.

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... Fr. Eric, continued from page 1

Protestant reform. The beauty and majesty of over 200 years of Anglican worship with the English *Book of Common Prayer* was largely preserved with judicious modifications made to adapt to the needs of the new American Episcopal Church. An obvious change—the prayers during worship that petition for wise and judicious decisions and actions by the king or queen was changed to prayers for our president and other elected officials.

3. Elected Offices

The Constitution of the new Episcopal Church provided for the *election* of bishops by the people (clergy *and* lay) of each diocese. Parishes were given the power to *select* their clergy with the consultation of their bishop. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church was established. Every three years, this legislative body gathers together *elected* representatives from every diocese of the Episcopal Church to deliberate about issues of governance, and to amend the canons of our church as needed.

At Saint Matthew's we will continue our long-established tradition of honoring our nation's birth with a worship service that begins at **10:00am on Saturday, The Fourth of July, in the year of our Lord 2026**. Bring a friend to celebrate the birth of both our Church and our Nation!

Blessings,

Eric+

... Fr. Jay, continued from page 2

Others find a soothing comfort just gazing upon the pattern and visual order. Because it is not a maze, there's no getting lost, though each might find something that needed to be found.

There is no single way to walk a labyrinth. A journey to the deep places can be a holy pilgrimage, a path toward healing and peace. It can also be for fun and fellowship. Prayer and play are both appropriate. The blessing is that the labyrinth is open to for all to walk in prayer, peace, pilgrimage, and in play.

The labyrinth at St. Matthew's is open to visitors throughout the week and is even listed on the World-Wide Labyrinth Locator at <https://labyrinthlocator.org>.

Blessings,

Fr. Jay+

MILESTONES

Celebrations

Rev. Edward "Ted" Dumke

Baptized at St. Matthew's

80 years ago

Sr. Warden's Message

Gary Perkins

As we enter the summer season, we begin our single-service schedule. This change provides a wonderful opportunity for our parish family to worship together as one community.

We are pleased to announce that the *Memorial Garden* has been completed. A brochure providing additional information will be available soon.

Another major project nearing completion is our new church directory. We are making final adjustments, including larger font sizes to better accommodate those with visual challenges. We look forward to making it available to the congregation in the near future.

St. Matthew's was well represented at a recent dinner and worship service hosted by Temple Beth El in San Mateo. (See more on page 8) Over 30 parishioners attended the evening. Following dinner, we participated in a Shabbat service, after which the Rabbi graciously spent time with our group explaining the service and sharing insights into Jewish traditions. It was a meaningful and enriching experience for all who attended.

Our new *Coffee with the Vestry* gatherings have been a great success. Three meetings have been held so far, each drawing excellent attendance. One of the greatest benefits has been the opportunity for members of our 8:00 a.m. service to meet and visit with Vestry members and parishioners who attend the 10:15 a.m. service.

I am pleased to report that all aspects of the management and ministry of St. Matthew's continue to move forward successfully.

Together, we are keeping our church on a positive and faithful path. I extend my sincere thanks to all Vestry members for their dedication and service.

Looking ahead, the Vestry is planning a parish social event on Saturday, October 10. Please mark your calendars and watch for additional details.

Recently, I attended the Day School graduation. The keynote speaker shared a simple but powerful message: "Pursue your curiosity. Discover your interests and what brings you happiness. Then persist in following that passion."

While these words were directed toward the graduates, they offer wisdom for all of us, regardless of our age or stage in life. As we continue our faith journey, may we remain curious, seek the gifts God has given us, and faithfully pursue the paths to which we are called.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the wisdom and leadership of Fr Eric, Fr. Jay, Quincey Grieve, Doug Jolly, Tracy Reeves and the other members of St. Matthew's staff and day school for their dedication and support of our community.



The Graduates of the Parish Class of 2026

The Rev. Jay Sapaen Watan, Associate Rector

We are blessed at St. Matthew's to support our young ones and to see them grow into their fullness.

High School Graduates

Elizabeth Magness

Aragon High School to UC Santa Cruz

Tiara Teekasingh

San Mateo Middle College to College of San Mateo

8th Grade Graduates

Ethan Choi

Bayside Academy to Aragon High School

Milan Noonan

Bowditch Middle School to Junipero Serra High School

Isabella Harris

Our Lady of Angels Catholic School to Burlingame High School

Kieran Belle Watan

St. James Catholic School to Lowell High School

Also **Issac Choi**, **Sophia DeLong**, and **Owen Harrigan** will be moving up to middle school for the fall. Please join us in congratulating our Class of 2026 graduates from St. Matthew's for their accomplishments and hard work, and hold them and their families in your prayers as they go with God in grace and goodness.

A Prayer for our Graduates & Students

Loving God, we ask that you make your presence known to our graduates, students and their families as they celebrate the journey - an ending and new beginning. We give you thanks and praise for the goodness that shines in the relationships formed, knowledge learned, and memories made through school. Empower them to walk into the future with hope, love, courage, and faith, guided by your light so that they too may be a light to others.

Amen.

A Message From Episcopal Day School

Quincey Grieve, Head of School



The 2025-26 Episcopal Day School year ended in a beautiful season of celebrations.

Veteran teachers Toni King and Erin Hudec wrote a lovely letter to the school community describing our 73rd May Day celebration – a letter that captures the essence of the day – and Episcopal Day – so powerfully that I share it with all of you:

The celebration begins as we gather in Chapel.

What unfolds from there is something we've been trying to put into words for 73 years.

The Chapel service belongs entirely to the eighth graders. They wrote it. They'll lead it. Every reflection, every word, every pause is theirs. These are the same students who sat in the pews for years, watching older kids stand up there with such confidence, thinking, someday I will be up there. Their day is finally here. Watch their faces. It's worth it.

The seventh graders move through the morning with a quiet electricity, hosting, serving as acolytes, and emceeing the dances because they know they are only one year away, and they begin to feel it.

After Chapel, everyone spills out onto Mustang Meadow, where something truly beautiful happens. From pre-K all the way through sixth grade, our students perform dances made just for

this morning, curated specially for the graduates. The traditional maypole, which is danced by the sixth graders, with our tiniest Mustangs as helpers, is one of those things you will not forget.

In the weeks between May Day and graduation, we take time to honor our children, faculty and professional community, alumni, and families. One of my favorite events is a relatively new one, the “Sunset Soiree,” where we celebrate eighth grade parents whose youngest or only child is graduating from Episcopal Day. Parents who have raised their children together, some since their children were just three-years-old, share a meal together in the Fireplace Room and reminisce about this magical period of childhood and marvel at the readiness of their children for their next steps.

August will be here before we know it – and soon we'll be celebrating the launch of the 2026-27 school year with our treasured Fall Festival! We love to have members of the Church community join in community events, and I will share specifics in the fall.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all of you for your support and partnership. I wish you all a restful and restorative summer.

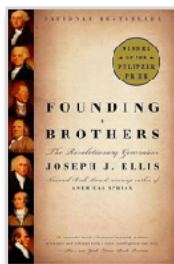
With appreciation,
Quincey Grieve



ECSM Book Group

By Susan Peterson

July 4, 2026 is the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This summer is a good time to consider earlier periods in US history when politicians and the public argued about the role of government and the values that our nation should represent. Below are descriptions of three books about US history that I have read recently.



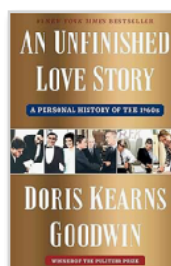
Founding Brothers by historian Joseph Ellis was published in 2000 and won the Pulitzer Prize for History in 2001. It examines issues that our nation's founders faced during the decade after the Constitutional Convention in 1787. The founding brothers of the

title are familiar names: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Aaron Burr. Rather than write a comprehensive textbook, Ellis presents six stories from this era, when the nation was young and its survival was far from certain. Each episode examines an important and controversial issue—choosing the location of the new nation's seat of government, the unresolved issue of slavery, George Washington's insistence on leaving the presidency after two terms, and the events and expectations that led to the Hamilton/Burr duel. Ellis writes in a narrative style, creating detailed portraits of the founders, who held very different views on some important issues. Nevertheless, they worked together effectively when necessary to help the fledgling nation survive and grow. *Founding Brothers* reminded me that some of today's most bitter conflicts have very deep roots.



The Demon of Unrest by Erik Larson focuses on the months leading up to the Civil War. It begins with the election of 1860, which brought Abraham Lincoln to the presidency. It climaxes with the battle at Fort Sumter.

Larson describes the conflict between southern farmers (for whom slavery was a long-accepted practice that they regarded as essential to their financial survival), and northerners (who argued that slavery was morally repugnant and contrary to the Declaration of Independence's statement that "all men are created equal"). Larson sometimes uses a fast-paced narrative style that resembles fictional thrillers, but his work is non-fiction and thoroughly documented. Our book group has enjoyed reading other books by Erik Larson.



An Unfinished Love Story by Doris Kearns Goodwin is a memoir of her long marriage to Richard Goodwin and an examination of the 1960s, when Kearns Goodwin and her husband worked at the White House. I recommended this book in an

earlier edition of the Tau Cross. It is an excellent option for readers who want to learn about more recent eras marked by disagreement over the proper role of government and the values that the United States should represent to the world.

Parish Life

St. Matthew's Parishioners attend Shabbat Services at Temple Beth El

ECSM congregants received a warm welcome at the Friday evening service at our neighboring congregation, Temple Beth El in San Mateo. After a fellowship supper, Rabbi Lisa led the Shabbat service, assisted by the cantor. Afterward, Rabbi Kingston gave an informal and informative talk about the services, faith traditions, and the Torah, sharing with our group the temple's precious and traditionally handwritten Torah scrolls.

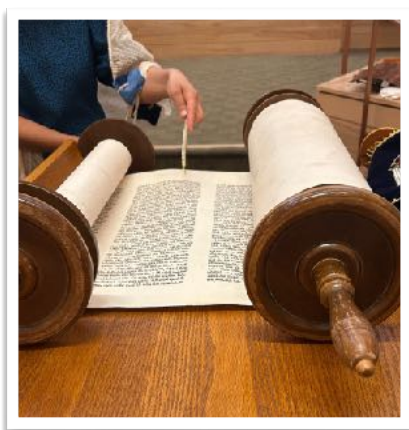


Photo credits: TC Staff

Celebrating Father Eric's Birthday

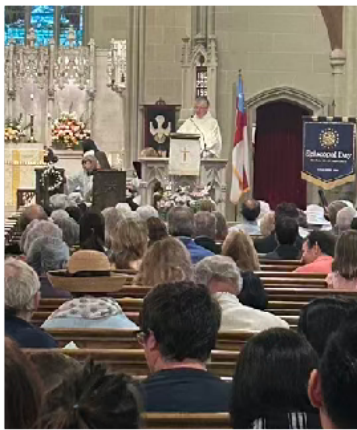


Photo credit: Darlia C.

Easter at St. Matthew's



Ann and Eric H.



Suki J.



Dan & Erin H.



Michael & Caroline M.

Photo credits:
Parishioners: Darlia C.
Sanctuary: TC Staff

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!

Summer Sunday Services

(Beginning July 5, on the lawn)

9:30 AM • Rite I

Regular Sunday Services

(Resume Sunday Sept. 13th)

8:00am Rite I

10:15am Rite II (FB LS)

Upcoming Events

July 4 4th of July Service at 10am

July 5 Summer Services Move Outside

July 7 Taizé service

July 19-25 Camp St. Andrews

Aug 22 Thrift Shop Reopens

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The Rev. Dr. Eric Kimball Hinds, Rector
The Rev. Jay Sapaen Watan, Associate Rector

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