

Letter from the Rector



The Holy Season of Lent has begun with our Ash Wednesday services, and the First Sunday of Lent is this Sunday, February 18. In our Gospel lesson we will hear John the Baptist say, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." In John's proclamation, we are reminded of our need for repentance and to believe the Good News, which is the focus of the season of Lent.

If you look up the word "Lent" in a Bible concordance you will be sorely disappointed. The word isn't there. And yet the church has set aside this time of Lent for most of its history. We have fairly clear proof from early historical documents that within the first 200 years of the church, a period of repentance and preparation for the coming of Easter was practiced by early Christians. By the time of the Council of Nicaea the mention of a 40 day fast for preparation and repentance is mentioned in the documents of that ecumenical council. But, whether or not the word Lent is found in the Bible or not, the words repentance and preparation are. The Bible is beset with people that are either repenting or in need of repentance. Preparation is also a major theme of both Testaments and we know that Jesus spent time in prayer and study in preparation for his ministry among God's people.

Ash Wednesday is a beginning point. It begins the church's long retreat in preparation for the celebration of the Paschal Mystery: the celebration of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the Christ. The Lenten journey invites us to look within ourselves for the sake of life, not only our lives but the lives of all of God's creation.

It begins with repentance, which is the admission that our sinfulness leads to brokenness and separation from God, and this separation from God and this living for our own selves without regard to God or to the other is what deadens and what kills. Repentance is truth-telling. Repentance is witness. Repentance denounces, and in this, somehow we find hope.

The hope comes in glimpses of the kingdom, in those moments when the cacophony of suffering is drowned out by the playful laugh of a child or the smile from an adversary or the restoration of a penitent sinner. Repentance, restoration, healing, and justice are our collective focus during this Holy Lent.

Like Jesus asked the Pharisees, Jesus asks us:

Are we doing this for show or do we really want to repent and return to the Lord?
Are we doing this for ourselves or are we doing this for all of God's creation?

I hope you had joyful Christmas and Epiphany seasons. Yet, the season of Lent is just here and it is time for repentance, fasting, and growing closer to the God who created us, loves us, and reveals God's self to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

Peace, Father Steve

Priest Associate Letter

Centering Prayer via Zoom for Lent



If you're looking for something to enhance your spiritual life and are disenchanted with the whole thing about "what are you giving up for Lent?" maybe this year you'll decide to take something on. This year we're going to try our hand at a Zoom based Centering Prayer group.

Maybe you are well acquainted with Centering Prayer and have a regular practice. Or perhaps you've heard of Centering Prayer but don't really know what it's all about. Either way, this opportunity is designed for you.

Once a week, beginning on Tuesday February 13, 2024, and extending through Lent, (last session will be March 26) you are invited to join a Centering Prayer group via Zoom. The sessions will be every Tuesday from 4:00-4:40. We will begin with a short spiritual reading and then have 20 minutes of silence. There will be an opportunity for brief reflections at the end of each session.

Centering Prayer is a type of contemplative prayer that involves sitting in silence and opening oneself to the presence of God. Individuals use a sacred word or phrase to facilitate the process. The goal is to quiet the mind and cultivate a deeper connection with the divine, essentially giving God a chance to be heard above the chatter of our busy lives. The practice encourages a state of inner stillness and openness to the presence of God. It's a form of meditation that aims to foster spiritual growth and awareness.

At the first session we will spend most of our time in an introduction to Centering Prayer, its theological basis, technique, and why we find it valuable. So especially if you know nothing about Centering Prayer, this is a good place to start. We're hoping you will find this a convenient and compelling way to hit the "pause button" in your day.

No registration is required and all are welcome. The Zoom link can be found by going to stmatthewsgj.org and then navigating to "worship" in the top menu bar and then to "Lent and Easter." Scroll down the page to "Centering Prayer via Zoom" and you'll find the link in the first line after the title. We'll also put the link in the Monday email you receive about Brewery Theology.

The sessions will be led by The Rev. Jan Head, Dr. Richard Morgan, and Dr. Lyn Fraser. Because of the nature of these 40 minute gatherings, latecomers will not be able to join the group once the meeting has started.

Each week's session independent of all the others so you do not need to attend every meeting. The first session on Feb. 13 will provide teaching on the history and theology of Centering Prayer, how the sessions will be structured, and the simple guidelines of Centering Prayer.

Youth & Family

Nursery:

Nursery care will be available for all of the Wednesday Lenten Studies.

Sunday School:

The annual Children's Egg Hunt will take place after the 10am Easter service. We are once again asking for chocolate and candy donations for the eggs. A box will be available in the gathering space.

The Sunday school class will be following the lectionary during lent with Godly Play stories and crafts.

Youth Group

The youth group would like to offer a huge thanks to all who participated in our Soup-er Bowl Fundraiser. We were able to purchase bowls for both the Soup Kitchen and supply our own St. Matt's kitchen with some much needed items. We now have new pots and pans and because of the generous response, we were able to purchase our own soup bowls. We are hoping these bowls will be a great blessing to the Lenten dinner studies, Advent studies, WWJD dinners, and all the other wonderful events offered at St. Matt's.

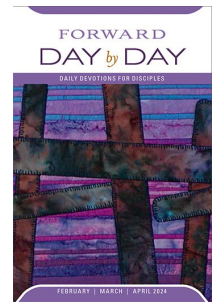
The youth group will be bringing back our St. Matt's yard sale this year. We are hoping to do this in late spring, early summer. Shed clean out to make room for this will be at the end of April.



Ministry News



Dr. Lyn Fraser (former STM member, sister-in-law of Tina Lam, and friend of the Congregation) has been featured in the current issue of Forward Day by Day. She has been asked to write the meditations for the entire month of April. Her entries are southwest Colorado-focused. She also previously published other books, including *Advent Women*, *Water from the Rock* and *Prayers from the Darkness: the Difficult Psalms*. It's quite an honor for our former St. Mark's-er! Congratulations, Lyn!



Holy Week and Easter Services at St. Matthew's

Palm Sunday: Sunday, March 24th at 8:00 AM and 10 AM

Maundy Thursday: Thursday, March 28th at 6:00 PM

Good Friday: Friday, March 29th at Noon

Good Friday Procession of the Cross: Friday, March 29th at 1:00 PM

The Great Vigil of Easter: Saturday, March 30th at 7:30 PM

Easter Day: Sunday, March 31st at 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite I

Easter Day: Sunday, March 31st at 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II

Adult Formation

Confirmation

St. Matt's is hosting the Regional Confirmation this year on August 3rd. If you are interested in adult Confirmation, Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, or Reception into the Episcopal Church, the diocese is offering an Online Confirmation class that begins soon. Although St. Matt's will offer in-person Confirmation classes after Easter, you are welcome to join this online option. Some of you might be a good Lenten discipline. Orientation is February 28. Find the information here:

<http://tinyurl.com/223jbszf>



Wednesdays in Lent: Will You? A Lenten Study of Baptismal Promises

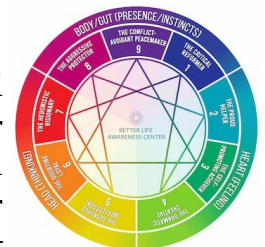
Dates: Wednesday Evenings in Lent--**February 21, 28, March 6, 13, 20 from 5:15 till 6:45 PM** (discussion at 5:15 PM followed by dinner at 6:15 PM) at St. Matt's (no Zoom). Simple suppers will be provided (you may want to bring your own dinner if you have dietary restrictions). Tonya Wren has volunteered to prepare a vegetarian meal to kick off the series on February 21st. Study Book: "Will You? A Lenten Study of Baptismal Promises" by Amanda Perkins McGriff, is available in paperback or audiobook form, \$12.00, order through Christianbook <https://www.christianbook.com/apps/checkout/main>. St. Matthew's will have some books available for purchase in the front office. Moderated by: St. Matt's Clergy. Childcare will be available.

Clergy Coffee Hour

Clergy Coffee Hour meets Sundays at 9:00 AM following the 8:00 AM service. It is led by St. Matt's clergy, offering a new discussion topic each week. All are welcome to attend! **This Sunday join Fr. Emil for a study of The Creation Stories in Genesis.** "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." These words spoken as we receive ashes in the form of a cross on Ash Wednesday signal for us the beginning of Lent. It is a sign like no other of our mortality and our reliance upon God. The creation stories also tell us that we are made "in the image and likeness of God." But what does that mean, and how should that encourage us in our Lenten striving? Readings from the Book of Genesis formed the bedrock of the Church's Daily Office during Lent for centuries; can these stories still speak to us today?

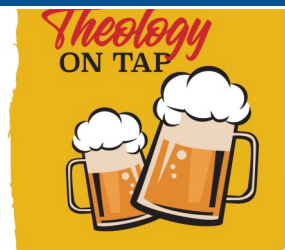
Ongoing Enneagram Learning Community

We are exploring the three Centers of Intelligence and the Types that are associated with each Center. With our spiritual practices we will to see how relaxing our minds enables us to make changes in our behaviors. This session will be facilitated by Deacon Charlotte Shepic and Fr. Steve Hood. Everyone is welcome whether or not you participated in the classes earlier this year. Please bring a lunch. **The next 4 meetings are scheduled for March 3rd & March 17th, and April 7th & April 14th at 11:30 AM.** All are welcome!



Continuing at St. Matthew's

Brewery Theology - The purpose of Brewery Theology is to provide a safe place for spiritual seekers, including Episcopalians, Christians from different church traditions, people of other faiths, and "Nones," to engage in thoughtful conversations about the Christian faith in an informal setting that celebrates the goodness of life, including enjoyment of craft beer. We will meet **every Thursday at 7:30** at a brewpub (or a home on occasion). Each week either a podcast episode or an article will be sent out for that upcoming Thursday. Materials used in Brewery Theology 2.0 will feature a diversity of Christian voices and traditions, including Episcopalian/Anglican. Those who miss their "homework" for the week are welcome to come anyway and will not be shamed or given a bad letter grade. The only expectation of participants is to enjoy one another's company, listen graciously, and engage with differing perspectives on the discussion topics honestly and respectfully. Brewery Theology is being co-facilitated by Richard Morgan, John Hatch, and Steve Hood. We hope you will join us!



Men's Bible Study - Mondays at 7:30 AM. Starting your Monday off with fellowship, prayer and mutually led Bible study can make for a satisfying week. All men, well-studied or not, are invited!

Tuesday Morning Gospel Study - 10:00 AM. The group meets in the gathering space and is currently studying the **Gospel of Mark**. The class is led by Fr. Steve. All are invited to attend!

Noon Service of Eucharist and Healing - Wednesdays at 12:15 PM. This is a small, priest led service perfect for those who prefer not to worship in larger crowds.

Wine, Women, Jesus & Dinner

All women and their friends are welcome to come to a monthly dinner (**first Monday of the month**) to socialize with other women in the parish. A small cooking team is formed each time to prepare soups, salads, chili, chicken, or any simple meal. More than the food, it's about making new friends and enjoying a night out with no cooking. The \$10 entry fee defrays food costs, and the remainder is donated to local agencies serving women. WWJD meets September through June. For questions contact Sue Van Voorhees at sukeyvanv@gmail.com

St. Matthew's PieceMakers



We are a small, but talented group creating quilts for "No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town", a part of the national organization, "Sleep in Heavenly Peace." Since January 2023 we have pieced, finished and donated more than 40 quilts to the Central High School's chapter. Our members meet on the second Saturday of each month to work on our various projects. We are thankful to other local quilters who have donated fabric and quilting supplies. We meet the second Saturday of each month from 1:00 - 5:00 PM at the church. Join us! For questions, contact Kathy Morgan at kathleen.morgan@yahoo.com

Sunday Morning Ministry Opportunities

Acolytes

Acolytes, or servers, assist the celebrant at the altar during the Eucharist. This ministry provides a meaningful expression of service, especially for youth, as well as a learning opportunity. The goals of this ministry are to include youth and adults so that they can serve together as equals and to prepare youth to serve in other lay positions such as altar LEMs. Serving as an acolyte is meant to be spiritual, educational, and fun. A progressive training program is in place that pairs less experienced acolytes with mentors for on the job training. If you are interested in becoming an Acolyte, please contact Jim Sidwell at jimnsue1965@gmail.com.

Altar Guild (St. Margaret's Guild)

There are four Altar Guild teams who serve one week per month and one extra per year when we have a five Sundays in the month. In particularly busy weeks they all chip in so that a team will not be overloaded. The Altar Guild also coordinates receptins for weddings and funerals. There are both men and women serving, so if you would like to learn more about the way you can enhance worship feel free to contact Merrilyn Simpkins at merrilyn41@gmail.com with any questions.

Altar Ministers (LEM)

An Altar Minister is a lay person authorized to administer the consecrated elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Minister acts under the direction of the priest or deacon, or a member of the clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation, or other community of faith. If you are interested in being an Altar Minister, please contact Fr. Steve at stmattsgj.steve@gmail.com or Deacon Rich at richpaul84@gmail.com.

Choir

St. Matt's Choir meets at 5:30 pm on Wednesdays. If you are interested in joining the choir, please contact Katie Walters at stmatts.katie@gmail.com. Come, join us! No experience needed.

Coffee Hour - 8:00 AM & 10:00 AM

Coffee hour is held weekly immediately after each service. Coffee and lemonade are served along with pastries or cookies. The third Sunday of every month is designated as Ice Cream Sunday and the children look forward to this monthly treat. On this Sunday, after the 10:00 AM service, ice cream and toppings are served along with the usual fare. If you would like to join this ministry, it's as simple as bringing a package or plate of cookies or pastries. Of course if you would like to volunteer to set up, serve, and clean up, that would be great, too! For questions see Deacon Judy Schneider at the 8:00 AM service, and Kathy Lyn at the 10:00 AM service.

Eucharistic Visitors (Brown Bag Communion)

Eucharistic Visitors are lay people authorized to take the consecrated elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, are unable to be present at the Celebration of the Eucharist. A Eucharistic Visitor acts under the direction of a deacon, if any, or otherwise, the member of the clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. If you would like to be a Eucharistic Visitor, please contact Deacon Rich Paul at richpaul84@gmail.com.

Sunday Morning Ministry Opportunities

Greeters

Greeters are the people who take time to chat with visitors and new people and make that personal connection that we all appreciate. Our only job is to be friendly and interested in our visitors in a low key way! If you enjoy and are comfortable meeting new people, consider joining the Greeter Ministry. We need Greeters at both the 8 and 10 o'clock services. Contact Marty at mismcdaneld@gmail.com or 720-238-5145 for more details.

Lectors

Each week the lessons are read to the congregation by a volunteer lector. The readings are provided in advance so the lector can become familiar with the passage. If you are comfortable with stepping up to the podium and would like to be scheduled for either the 8:00 AM or the 10:00 AM service, please contact Deacon Rich at richpaul84@gmail.com or Desiree in the church office. You can be scheduled as often or as infrequently as you choose.

Media

St. Matthews is seeking Media Ministers to help ensure we are able to provide our services to the parish of St. Matthews in any form that is safe and functional for each individual. A Media Minister can take many forms. Specifically:

- Audio console (operate the audio system)
- Video control (operate the video system)
- Online Host (Host the Zoom meeting)
- Virtual Usher (Monitor the Zoom and Facebook chats, interact with online attendees, resolve disruptions)
- System designer (Assist with design and implementation of all multimedia systems)

You don't need to know how to do each of these. We will schedule people based on their capabilities and interest. We will put together a comprehensive training for those interested in serving in this way but we need to know who may be interested and willing to participate in this ministry. Please contact Rebekah Feigh at jrwardenoftechnology.stmattsgj@gmail.com to discuss and get signed up. Our goal is to staff a large enough group that when put into rotation each minister would only need to fulfill a duty once every 4-6 weeks. Anyone 16 or older is welcome and encouraged to minister in this way.

Ushers

Ushers are a critical and integral part of the mission of St. Matthew's because it is very often that the ushers are the first point of contact for anyone visiting our church for the first time. As we all know, first impressions are very important! If you are interested in looking into this vital ministry and becoming a real ambassador for our church and our faith, please consider volunteering to become an usher. Training is thoroughly accomplished until each new individual feels comfortable in their role and any new staff will always be paired with someone experienced during services. Please contact Dave Emerson, our head usher, directly to let him know of your interest at ziautz@gmail.com. All are welcome!

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
3888 27 1/2 Road
Grand Junction, CO, 81506

Clergy

The Right Reverend Doctor Kimberly (Kym) Lucas, Bishop
The Reverend Stephen D. Hood, Rector
The Reverend Janice Head, Priest Associate
The Reverend Rich Paul, Deacon
The Reverend Teri Shecter, Deacon
The Reverend Jamie Galbasini, Deacon

Assisting/Retired Clergy

The Reverend Emil Belsky
The Reverend Nick Mayer
The Reverend Judy Schneider
The Reverend Charlotte Shepic

Vestry

Jason Vroman, Sr. Warden
Heidi Plank, Jr. Warden Building & Grounds
Kathy Lyn, Jr. Warden Community Life
Rebekah Feigh, Jr. Warden Technology
Bruce Noble, Treasurer

Janet Azbell
Blake Bickham
Dave Emerson
Cora Galbasini
LaReina Kalenian
Terry McDanel
Sandy Moore
Matthew Ross

Church Office Hours
Monday thru Thursday, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm,
Friday 9:00 am - noon.

Finance Office Hours
By appointment only.
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Email: stmattsgj@gmail.com
www.stmathewsgj.org