



SUNDAY OFFERING—AND STEWARDSHIP: AN INVITATION TO A DEEPER LIFE

Some words should never be uttered in church. Superficial, shallow, empty, hollow, meaningless, token, cosmetic, facile, trivial, and silly head the list of words that I would never want to hear used in church to describe our common worship together. To hear any one of them uttered to characterize even one of our Sunday services would be for me like hearing the sound of fingernails drawn across a blackboard. The words joyful, profound, engaging, transformative, reflective, warm and inviting community head the list of vocabulary that I hope would be used to describe our gatherings each Sunday.

When you think about it, our worship is an interesting mix of old and new. We are a modern people participating in an ancient ritual. Some of the things that we do in worship may have a fairly obvious surface meaning, but upon closer examination point toward deeper layers of significance. When I arrived at St. Matthew's, the offertory consisted of a single symbol and two actions. The ushers began by passing the plates (first action) with the people contributing money (symbol). After the ushers completed the collection, they processed toward the altar (second action) to offer the collection to be blessed by God. On the surface, this offertory action can seem merely transactional—people giving money to receive God's blessing. Yet at a deeper level, the money in the plates is a symbol of the work, toil and life of the members of the congregation. Thus the collection offered is a symbol that points to something much deeper—offering our lives to be embraced and blessed by God. Eight years ago, we added layers of meaning to our Sunday liturgy when we added bread and wine to the offertory procession. Both bread and wine are the products of human labor. From ancient times comes the image of farmers toiling in the field to grow and harvest

grain which is the basic ingredient that a baker uses to make bread. Likewise, a vintner grows, tends and harvests grapes in preparation for making wine. Taken together, alms (money), bread, and wine combine to provide a much richer symbol of offering. They become richer symbols of our lives and represent the fruit of our labor. Once they are offered by representatives of the congregation, they are taken, blessed and then offered back to the people as both the means and promise by which God nurtures and transforms lives. These simple actions, first performed by Jesus in the context of a meal with his closest followers, have in two millennia only added layers and depth of meaning to our communal actions. This is the season in which we devote time and energy to talk about stewardship and our yearly pledge campaign. On the surface, our talk about stewardship might seem merely transactional—collecting money to support the church budget—without asking more of the transaction than, “what's in it for me?” Yet at a deeper level, stewardship is the foundational part of our weekly offertory actions. It is the thoughtful, generous and collective offering of our congregation that enables worship, education, ministry, outreach and community. Our dedication to, and support of, our community of faith is far more than a transaction—it is an action that enables the transformation our own lives and the lives of others. It is our prayerful response to God's call. We belong to a community that finds its meaning in the sacrificial life and ministry of Jesus. In this context, financial pledging, stewardship, and the offertory are the outward and visible signs that point toward the inward and spiritual graces made manifest in and



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**TAIZÉ CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6TH 7:00 PM**

Everyone is invited to attend this ecumenical service characterized by meditative silence, repetitive songs, scripture and prayer. Taizé is the first Tuesday of every month (year-round) in the side chapel. We hope you will join us October 6th and be sure to save the dates for future services: November 3rd, December 1st, January 5th, February 2nd, March 1st, April 6th, and May 3rd.

SUNDAY COFFEE HOUR:

The rotation for bringing treats to coffee hour after the Sunday service is as follows:

- October 4:** A-D
- October 11:** E-J
- October 18:** K-P
- October 25:** Q-S

We ask you to please put the food you are bringing on a paper plate (rather than in a package) and place it on the table in Julia Beylard Hall.

**SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK
AND ST. MATTHEW’S**

When you go grocery shopping, please consider picking up a few extra canned goods or other non-perishable items. You can leave your food donations either in a basket at the back of the church or at the church office. These donations will be placed in a Second Harvest collection barrel for pick-up. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and thank you for your donations.

MILESTONES

Baptisms - September 20th:

Charles Becher, Vivian Kidd Fraser, Owen Daniel Harrigan, Elizabeth Magness, Melissa Magness, Jack David Pine, Jane Kranwinkle Pine, Ethan Philip Spanjian, Tiara Teekasingh

Confirmations - September 20th:

Charlotte Gerzanics, Carl Michael Noack, Jane Kranwinkle Pine

Receptions - September 20th:

Leda Girardi, Martha Phillips, Ildiko Segreti

In Memoriam:

Bud Purtell, Jr., beloved parishioner and husband of Nancy Fischer, September 11th

William Wang, beloved parishioner.

Marley Osgood, beloved former parishioner and wife of the Rev. Thomas Osgood, September 17th

CELEBRATE SUNDAYS

At the 10:15 service on CELEBRATE Sundays, our children and youth will participate actively in the liturgy as ushers, greeters, readers, acolytes and more. These services are a great opportunity for our congregation to connect inter-generationally.

October 4th: Feast of St. Francis and Blessing of the Animals; be sure to bring Fido or Fluffy to church for our courtyard service honoring St. Francis.

November 1st: All Saints Day.

November 29th: Start of season of Advent.

January 10th: Baptism of our Lord.

February 7th: Day School Sunday.

March 20th: Palm Sunday.

April 17th: Earth Day/Creation Sunday.

May 15th: Feast of Pentecost.

Continued from page 1

through Christian community. Joyful, profound, engaging, transformative, reflective, warm and inviting are the words that I hope begin to describe your experience of this community of faith. The anthem or hymn sung during the

offertory ventures to capture and express some combination of our gratitude, joy and longing for a communal life embraced by God. It is our privilege and responsibility to dedicate ourselves to the furthering of Christ’s mission. I invite your

ongoing participation in this community where together we journey toward a deeper life of faith.

Blessings, Fr. Eric+

WISHING YOU A CHAOTIC COFFEE HOUR

The sky is falling! The sky is falling! The Episcopal Church and many other mainline denominations have fallen into what I think of as the Chicken Little Effect. That is the common idiom indicating a hysterical or mistaken belief that disaster is imminent. All over the country, Episcopal churches are behaving as if the sky is falling when it comes to church attendance and growth, almost to the point where an obsession with “failing” and “decline” have become paralyzing to growth, creativity, spirit, mission, and more. Congregations can become so obsessed with dying that they lose sight of the Good News of resurrection. The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (previously known as the National Church) launched a study to look at why some churches are growing, some are maintaining, and others declining. Their findings were released in a document entitled, [New FACTs on Episcopal Church Growth and Decline: A look at the dynamics of growth and decline in Episcopal congregations based on the 2014 Survey of Episcopal Congregations](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/new_facts_on_growth_2014_final.pdf), in conjunction with the Faith Communities Today (FACT) ecumenical/interfaith survey project. The entirety of the study can be found online at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/new_facts_on_growth_2014_final.pdf. Findings are based on Parochial Report data and the 2014 Survey of Episcopal Congregations, which was completed by 762 congregations. Among the facts surveyed were church age, congregants’ race/ethnicity, liberal/conservative theology, presence of purpose-driven spirituality, clergy

age and race, internal conflict, and coffee hour characteristics, all in relationship to growth or decline. The most interesting results concern children and church.



authentic expression of a parish that is “called by Christ to live Christ’s love”?

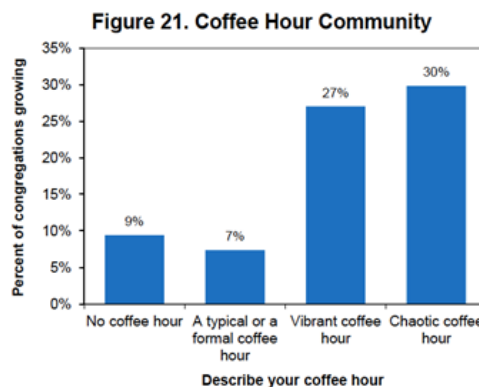
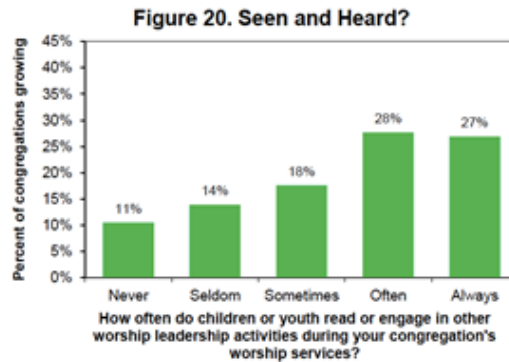
Another surprising insight involves coffee hour.

Churches that do not have a coffee hour tend to be in decline, as do churches whose coffee hour is “typical” or “formal.” Many growing Episcopal congregations had a coffee hour that was much different. They were vibrant rather than stilted situations. In some rapidly growing congregations the coffee hour was almost chaotic, in a good way. A vital coffee hour is a tangible thing that a congregation can do to develop a sense of community and draw new people into it. How does our coffee hour measure up? Would a newcomer feel welcome and excited, or overwhelmed and isolated? Do children run around playing or sit in the corner of the room with their snacks? What could it be in the future?

The study provides helpful insight into the Chicken Little Effect. I have welcomed over a dozen newcomers over the past month. We are not a church in decline. We have deeply involved children and a little chaos at times. That’s not bad—it actually might mean it’s all GOOD!

Some among us have been blessed to help write the history of our parish over the past 50+ years; ALL of us have an opportunity to determine our future. And it begins with quitting “the sky is falling” hysteria, digging in our feet, and being open to the ways the Spirit is alive and kicking within our congregation!

Wishing you a chaotic coffee hour,
Rev. Lindsay+



A question was asked about how often children or youth are engaged in worship leadership roles, including readings, speaking, and music. Congregations that involved children in worship leadership roles (beyond the typical acolyte role) were more likely to experience growth; those that did not were much more likely to be in decline. Involving children did not ensure growth. But among churches that never involve children, only 11% were growing and 74% were declining. Where do we fit in on this chart? What is our level of youth participation in worship? How has that changed over the years? How can it continue to change? Is it an

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS: PET BLESSING AND EUCHARIST - OCTOBER 4TH

Pets of all varieties are welcome to attend the Feast of St. Francis on Sunday, October 4th at 10:15 in the courtyard. For your pet's and other parishioners' comfort, please keep dogs on leashes and crate your pet if it is skittish. Also remember that animals that are normally calm and predictable at home may get anxious or behave differently around other pets or large groups of people.

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS – PET MEMORIAL PRAYER SERVICE

Sunday, October 4th, 2pm

The loss of a pet is often difficult for those of us left behind. Join us as we honor the ministry of pets that are no longer with us in this short but meaningful service marking the Feast of St. Francis.

WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY GROUP

Mondays at 9am, Charles House

Women of all ages are invited to join us for the beginning of a new women's spirituality group. We will explore the ever-relevant challenge of Sabbath. We will be using the book Sabbath in the Suburbs: A Family's Experiment with Holy Time, by MaryAnn McKibben Dana, to ground our exploration and reflection. Sabbath in the Suburbs "...portrays the challenging quest of living the Sabbath while seeking a faithful balance in the abundance of choices and endless demands placed upon families today." - Kathleen Long Bottom, Author of 99 Ways to Raise Spiritually Healthy Children. Books are available for purchase in the church office for \$10 or through Jennifer Buckley jennifer.buckley@me.com. Please contact Rev. Lindsay (lmhills@episcopalstmatthew.org) or Jennifer to learn more about the group.

ST. MATTHEW'S WOMEN'S RETREAT: YOU'RE INVITED

St. Catherine's invites the women of St. Matthew's to a Fall Retreat at Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg. For over a decade, St. Catherine's has been enjoying a biannual weekend retreat at this lovely venue. This year's retreat runs Friday afternoon through Sunday, October 23 to 25. Join us for rest and renewal in the heart of the wine country. \$190 for two nights and five meals. Carpool from St. Matthew's. Contact: Jean Garcia, jeanbeangarcia@yahoo.com.

FAMILY FELLOWSHIP – DINNER GROUP

Saturday, October 17th at 6pm in Julia Beylard Hall

How about a night out—at church! We will gather and share a potluck meal with other families at St. Matthew's. Afterwards, the children have the opportunity to play together while adults socialize. It's a win-win for the entire family. Save the dates for the rest of the year: November 14th, December 12th, January 9th, February 13th, March 12th, April 9th, and May 14th.

Youth News

JUNIOR HIGH (GRADES 6-8)

All youth in grades 6-8 are invited to be a part of the Junior High Youth Group at St. Matthew's. The program focuses on building healthy relationships and offering fellowship as well as exploring worship and service. Youth who participate in the service projects can receive service hours for school. All-youth events throughout the year are designed for junior high and high school students and combine the youth from St. Paul's, Burlingame and St. Matthew's.

Sunday, October 25: All-Youth Event at 5pm. Location to be announced.

HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

The High School Youth Group of St. Paul's and St. Matthew's will be exploring how we live out our Baptismal Covenant. We meet at 5pm at St. Paul's in Burlingame unless otherwise noted.

Sunday, October 11: NO MEETING

Sunday, October 25: All-Youth Group Event at 5pm. Location to be announced.

Contact Rev. Lindsay at lmhills@episcopalstmatthew.org with questions or to be added to the email distribution list for either group.

SPEAKER SERIES CONTINUES

St. Matthew's and Books, Inc. are pleased to present bestselling author William Paul Young on Saturday, October 17 at 2 pm in the Sanctuary. Mr. Young is the author of The Shack, the book that (in the words of his publisher) shattered readers' limited perceptions about God. Mr. Young is coming to talk to us about his new book, Eye, a novel that will challenge misconceptions about gender roles and reshape our thoughts on creation.

Ticket price of \$21 includes a paperback signed first edition of Eve. Tickets are available at: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2128250>

Tickets will also be sold at the door.

Up next, we will begin the new year with Bishop William Swing speaking on his new book, A Bishop's Quest. Bishop Swing will be with us on Saturday, January 16th at 1pm.

ADULT EDUCATION FALL FORUM SERIES

Understanding and embracing what it means for the Church of St. Matthew to be a safe place to worship - becoming a "Be Out Loud" parish.

The Vestry and Clergy of St. Matthew's invite you to participate in the process to determine whether or

not we should become identifiable as a "Believe Out Loud" parish. We hope that you will join us for a series of adult forums seeking to educate and answer questions (October 4th and 11th at 9am) and an afternoon of discernment and decision making (October 18th, 11:30am - 2pm). Lunch will be provided.

The Vestry feels that the discernment process around LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) welcome will allow us to better talk about how we welcome all people to St. Matthew's and especially reflect on the needs of LGBT seekers. This series will guide us through a period of education about what welcoming looks like in the context of our LGBT brothers and sisters. The process was designed

by Integrity USA, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to "inspire and equip the Episcopal Church, its dioceses, congregations, and members to proclaim and embody God's all-inclusive love for LGBT persons and those who love them."

To become a "Believe Out Loud" parish, a welcome statement is created. Currently the closest Episcopal Churches to St. Matthew's that have gone through this process are Good Shepherd (Belmont) and Epiphany (San Carlos). LGBT people looking for safe spaces to worship often refer to Integrity's maps of supportive congregations when looking for a spiritual home. <http://www.integrityusa.org/welcoming-congregations>.

Linda Doherty - Senior Warden

FEAST OF ALL SOULS SERVICE

Monday, November 2nd

Join us as we celebrate and honor the saints who walked among us and are now part of the "Great Cloud of Witnesses." We will read the list of parishioners and loved ones who have died in the past year. Contact Parish Administrator Victoria Wolcott at office@episcopalstmatthew.org if you would like to include someone on the reading of names. All are invited to participate in this moving candlelight service.

FIRST FRIDAY ALL PARISH THANKSGIVING

Friday, November 6th

Details will follow in the Ivy Leaf at a later date. Contact Nancy Fischer for further information: 650-552-9402.

"THE LIGHT FROM WITHIN"

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. MATTHEW
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND A
GALLA CELEBRATION AND FUNDRAISER IN
HONOR OF ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2015
JULIA BEYLARD HALL

5:30 pm Cocktails and Hors D'oeuvres
7:00 pm Dinner
8:00 pm Live Auction
8:45 - 10:00 pm Entertainment
Coctail Attire
Please RSVP by October 2

Family name: _____

Yes, please reserve ____ tickets at \$125 each \$ _____

Unfortunately, we will not be able to attend but would like to make a tax-deductible contribution \$ _____

Childcare is available at a cost of \$20 per child \$ _____

Total amount \$ _____

Please circle form of payment: **Check** **MC** **Visa** **Amex**

Credit card # _____

Exp _____ CVS _____

Cardmember signature _____

Please make checks payable to:
Episcopal Church of St. Matthew

Please respond on or before October 2, 2015





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!

Services are 8:00 am & 10:15 am every Sunday

*Morning Prayer, 9 am, Tuesdays & Thursdays
Rite I Holy Eucharist, 9 am, Fridays*



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 bvonemster@yahoo.com or deposited in the Tau Cross mailbox in the church office. 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. Tau Cross Staff: Editor, Beth von Emster; Associate Editor, Cherie Hammer; Layout & Design // dadalab.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 4	Feast of St. Francis/ Blessing of the Animals Pet Memorial Service Adult Education Forum
October 6	Taizé Service
October 10	St. Matthew's Gala
October 11	Adult Education Forum
October 17	Author Presentation: William Paul Young Family Fellowship Dinner
October 18	"Be Out Loud" Parish Discernment Meeting
October 23-25	Women's Retreat
November 2	Feast of All Souls Service
November 6	First Friday All Parish Thanksgiving

Or Current Resident

*The Rev. Eric Hinds, Rector
The Rev. Lindsay Marie Hills, Associate Rector
The Rev. Amber Stancliffe Evans, School Chaplain
The Rev. Robert Caughey, Deacon*

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