

# The Epistle

THE MONTHLY  
NEWSLETTER OF  
ST. MATTHEW'S PARISH,  
PACIFIC PALISADES, CA

April 2024  
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## EASTER: THE EXPERIENCE OF RESURRECTION

*Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her. (Jn. 20: 11-18)*

This is the first experience of the resurrected Jesus in the Gospel of John. Arguably, it is the beginning of a new way of life and faith. With direct experience of the risen Christ, Mary - and soon after the disciples - experienced God in a new and transforming way. This experience became the genesis of the Christian movement and the reason that it has flourished for some 2100 years.

Today in America the impression of Christians and Christianity by many in our society is tied to political views with which they associate. It's easy to see why. A 2022 Pew Research study found that "about a third of U.S. adults who say the U.S. should be a Christian nation (32%) also think the fact that the country is religiously diverse - i.e., made up of people from many different religions as well as people who are not religious - weakens American society." Those who might identify as Christian nationalists also are connected, at least in the public mind, rightly or wrongly, with conservative issues and perspectives. Thus, it often seems that the Christian faith is known more as a way of advancing political views than on knowing and serving some sort of God or higher power. There is some real truth in this perspective.

So—I want to reclaim the core of our Christian faith as known in the experience of God in the resurrected Christ. It is this experience that informs our understanding of who God is, who we are and what our purpose might be in this very confusing world. All of our actions are meant to flow from this experience. And what IS the experience of God? It is the real connection we feel with the One God, right here and now, that is pure love and eternity. Where do we experience this? In prayer, worship, service, fellowship, stewardship, laughter and tears—in all of the things we do in life that are rooted in knowing and serving God, and which inevitably result in the experience of resurrection and new life.



(Continued on Page 2)

## Easter, continued

Peter Wehner recently wrote in *Atlantic Monthly*: “Christianity doesn’t provide an explanation; what it does is place pain into a larger narrative, one in which the crucifixion of Jesus gives way to his resurrection. Death gives way to life. Fractured lives are repaired. Restorative justice happens.”

The experience of God, of God’s presence is found in the recognition of resurrection happening in our lives in one way or another.

I’ve just recently known and seen resurrection intimately. This month I officiated at two back-to-back events. The first was a funeral gathering on Founder’s meadow for the friends and family of a 20-something, St. Matthew’s Parish School graduate who had died tragically. As we came together on that beautiful day, the initial mood felt very much like the first followers of Jesus as they stood outside Jesus’ tomb—filled with shock, grief and fear. However, as the service proceeded with prayers and readings, a broader perspective took root. In the celebratory reflections about this young person by the brilliant young adults present, things really changed. It was clear that the friend and brother they had lost was still with them. Resurrected and living in them and amongst all of the community gathered. As difficult as that moment was, it was evident that the experience of God had become real. The second event was a wedding. Two lovely adults, aged 84 and 79, committed themselves to each other and asked for the blessing of their families, friends, Church and God. And it was given. Resurrection was profoundly felt in the spirit of joy and hope we all felt.

This Sunday, April 21, we will mark Christine Purcell’s retirement from her active ministry here at St. Matthew’s. On Easter Sunday Christine preached on what resurrection and new life looks like. Using her own story, she vulnerably shared her personal experience of pain, loss and seeming defeat. From there she traced her journey into new life, and resurrection in her life and ministry with us in this community. This experience changed things for her and for those of us who were listening that morning. This was the experience of God, the power of Jesus’ resurrection as known in the life of our beloved parish, showing us a different and life-giving way of faith. Of course, we will miss having Christine and her beloved fiancé Fred in our daily lives. However, what our faith has shown us is that the love Christine has shared with us - and we with her - will continue to flourish in our individual lives and communal experience. Love like this can never be lost or defeated.

In Peace,  
Bruce+

*Photograph below by Lise Luttgens.*

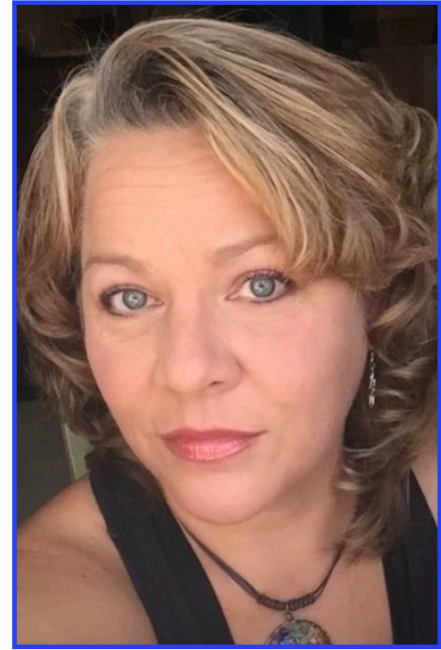


## DIANE PLASTER SINGING A NEW SONG

For twenty-five years Diane Plaster has been singing gloriously at St. Matthew's, devoted to her passion singing in a church choir. On Easter Sunday, Diane sang her last "official" tune as one of the choir's professional singers, having decided to shift gears – and give herself some much-deserved time on the weekends, to say the least.

In the near future, Diane hopes to pursue other singing projects, and possibly focus on some new life adventures and personal projects. Director of Music, Dwayne Milburn said, "Diane's contributions to all facets of music at St. Matthew's have been a major part of our collective success, and – fortunately - she has told me that if we need her, we need only ask."

Diane shared, "Thank you St. Matthew's for providing a church home for my family for all these years. My time as a regular staff singer has been enriching and rewarding. Thanks especially to Dwayne for his friendship and support as I transition into a new direction in my life. Music will still be a big part of my life and - albeit scary - I'm looking to see what God has in store for me."



## JOSH CHAMBERLAIN JOINS THE TEAM



Parishioner Josh Chamberlain recently joined the staff of St. Matthew's as the Coordinator of the Young Adult Residency Program.

In collaboration with the clergy and staff, Josh will be responsible for designing and overseeing the Resident Program, which will provide leadership development and professional training for recent college graduates and young church professionals through collaboration with St. Matthew's Parish School, Troop 223, and St. Matthew's Day Camp.

A lifelong Episcopalian, Josh has served in a variety of roles with the church. During his time as a student at the University of Dayton, Josh worked as a Counselor and eventually Associate Director at Procter Center, the Diocese of Southern Ohio's summer camp and conference center. He also served as a member of the Episcopal Service Corps, during which time he worked as a grant writer for the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

Since relocating to Los Angeles, Josh has worked as a writer and independent filmmaker. As a parishioner at St. Matthew's, Josh plays with the Sultans of String (the resident band at the 10:30am Eucharist), has represented St. Matthew's as a delegate at Diocesan Convention, and is currently working on the development team for a men's retreat to be held in September of this year.

"I'm thrilled to use my wealth of experience to help St. Matthew's develop this program," Josh said regarding his new role. "We have a unique opportunity to equip the church leaders of tomorrow with the skills they need to prove the relevance of our faith in today's world. Together, we can work to ensure our faith and community persists through the 21st Century and beyond."

# Parish News

## THE SPIRITUALS PROJECT

On April 14, Diane White-Clayton, Director of the African American Music Ensemble at UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music, and members of the First AME Church Choir, led the congregation in a musical exploration of African American Spirituals that became some of the most popular hymns sung today.

Diane (AKA "Dr. Dee") travels extensively as a vocalist, pianist, composer, conductor, workshop clinician and speaker, and she has held numerous positions at universities, colleges and churches across the country, where she features choral works from the repertoire of gospel and spirituals and other sacred works by black composers. Los Angeles' First AME Church has been instrumental in civil rights history education, and its choir is highly regarded for its African American spirituals.

Initiated by a group of parishioners of both St. Matthew's and FAME Church, The Spirituals Project seeks to celebrate the rich legacy of this music and raise awareness about its songwriters who were never recognized or compensated for their work. This dedicated team includes Ann Kerr, Colleen McAndrews-Wood, Betsy Anderson, Susan Huser, Elizabeth Fore Keatinge, Nike Irvin, Dawn Kirk-Alexander and Shirley Turner.

April's service is only the first of what is hoped to be many collaborative efforts in the future. St. Matthew's will dedicate all offerings from The Spirituals Project and its ongoing events to the choir programs at FAME as a monetary acknowledgment and appreciation for the spirituals that have been sung for centuries. To make a contribution, please click to donate to [The Spirituals Project](#).



*Diane White-Clayton gave an inspirational talk on the history and importance of African American spirituals before leading the congregation in singing with the talented assistance of members of First AME Church Choir.*

The Parish of St. Matthew  
**The Spirituals Project**



# LEGACY SOCIETY SUNDAY

JOIN US AT 9 AND 10:30  
IN CELEBRATION OF OUR  
LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

**MAY 5, 2024**

Hear from devoted parishioner  
Catherine Carrick, as she shares her message  
on the value of leaving a legacy.

Stay for a light reception on the  
patio, afterwards.



For more information on  
making a Planned Gift in  
support of our  
St. Matthew's Endowment,  
please click [here](#).

# Outreach News



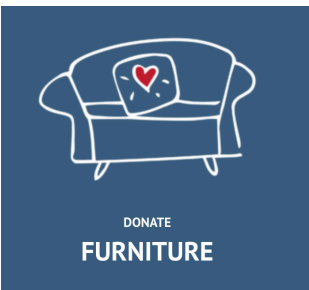
## THANK YOU FROM ST. JOSEPH CENTER

St. Matthew's gifted thirteen azalea plants to the Bread & Roses Café at the conclusion of this year's Easter Services. They were placed on each table of the café, where its clients can enjoy them. St. Joseph Center extends grateful appreciation for the generous donations!

In addition, musicians from St. Matthew's Music Guild recently performed classic songs on the saxophone and keyboard to the delight of diners. To learn more about Bread & Roses Café, visit the [St. Joseph Center](#) website.



## HAVE FURNITURE DONATIONS? TRY *A SENSE OF HOME*



Parish members often ask whether the St. Matthew's Thrift Shop or any of its Outreach Partners take donations of furniture in good condition. To respond to this interest, the Outreach Commission recommends [A Sense of Home](#).

A Sense of Home strives to prevent homelessness by creating first-ever homes for youth aging out of foster care. 50% of those struggling with homelessness are former foster youth, and A Sense of Home believes the homeless crisis can only end through prevention. Donations of furniture and home goods provide a great start to these former foster youth, and help them establish a place to call home.

Donors are asked to provide photos of their items via the simple form on its website to confirm acceptability, and then bring their generous donations to its warehouse in Hawthorne by appointment on Tuesdays, or commission services such as [Lugg](#) or [Dolly](#) to deliver the goods. Thank you from [A Sense of Home](#) and its appreciative clients.

## PROJECT ANGEL 2024 BEGINS APRIL 28

St. Matthew's annual event, Project Angel, provides food cards to its outreach partner, Angel Interfaith Network, and this year's campaign launches on April 28 and continues through May 19. AIN aids patients at LA County + USC Hospital whose lives are disrupted by serious illness or injury. As AIN's Chaplain, Elizabeth Gibbs Zehnder, puts it, "AIN gives patients and their families room to take a deep breath when hospitalization results in housing and food insecurity."

Please help St. Matthew's reach its fundraising goal of \$2,500, which would result in 100 gifts of \$25 dollar grocery gift cards to people in need. For every \$25 raised, an AIN Angel pin is donated to symbolize the number of people Project Angel supports. At the end of the campaign, the angel pins will cover a clergy stole to celebrate!

The Project Angel chairs, Jackie Ehlers and Kim Ling, will be available after Sunday services to accept donations and answer any questions about AIN. Online giving is also available directly through the [Project Angel Fund](#).



19

April



Boris Allakhverdyan, clarinet

[CLICK TO BUY TICKETS NOW](#)

Upcoming Events

# Newcomer Café

**APRIL 28TH AT 11:15AM  
FOUNDER'S PATIO**

KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS LOOKING FOR A CHURCH COMMUNITY? WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MINISTRY AT ST. MATTHEW'S?

COME TO OUR CASUAL CONVERSATION AFTER THE OUTDOOR SERVICE ON APRIL 28!



## Upcoming Events

### SAINTS ALIVE

*Piecing Together History:  
Preserving Mosaics in North  
Africa and the Middle East  
with Thomas Roby*

**MAY 1**  
**11:45 LUNCH**  
**12:30 TALK**

**REGISTER NOW**



## Signposts on the Way

### 2024 Men's Retreat

**RESCHEDULED!**

**Sept. 7th & 8th**  
**Luther Glen Retreat Center**  
**Yucaipa, CA**  
**Registration coming in April**



 **CLARE | MATRIX**  
*2024 Tribute Dinner Fundraising Event*

Sunday, May 5, 2024 | 5 PM  
The Skirball Cultural Center

  
**HONORING**



Shireen Janti



Los Angeles Trial  
Lawyers' Charities



Jeff Greenberg



***Tickets &  
Sponsorships  
Available Now!***

# STAFF DIRECTORY & CALENDAR

## Staff Directory

*The Parish Office is open Monday through Thursday from 10am to 3pm and by appointment. Please call or email to best reach the Parish Staff.*

- Rev. Bruce A. Freeman, Rector (Ext. 130)  
bafreeman@stmatthews.com
- Rev. Christine F. Purcell, Associate Rector  
(Ext. 129) cpurcell@stmatthews.com
- Rev. KC Robertson, Assistant Priest (Ext. 183)  
krobertson@stmatthews.com
- Missy Morain, Director of Program Ministry;  
(Ext. 139) missymorain@stmatthews.com
- 
- Lyris Amador, Director of Human Relations,  
lamador@stmatthews.com
- Andrea Bostick, Director of Development  
(Ext. 182), abostick@stmatthews.com
- Josh Chamberlain, Coordinator of the Young  
Adult Residency Program, jchamberlain@  
stmatthews.com
- Tyler Dituri, Director of Facilities,  
tdituri-HBM@stmatthewsschool.com
- Jennifer McCarthy, Director of Communica-  
tions, jmccarthy@stmatthews.com
- Dwayne Milburn, Director of Music,  
dmilburn@stmatthews.com
- Jeremias Mendez, Special Projects Manager  
Haesung Park, Parish Organist
- Shawn Silletti, Parish Administrator (Ext.  
100), ssilletti@stmatthews.com
- Rev. Greg Brown, Assisting Priest
- 
- Alley Michaelson, Head of School, St. Mat-  
thew's Parish School, amichaelson@stmat-  
thewsschool.com
- Rev. Stefanie Wilson, School Chaplain, swil-  
son@stmatthewsschool.com

### MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Christian community, and  
Welcome all, wherever they are in their jour-  
ney,  
Nourish all who seek unity with God and each  
other in Christ, and  
Serve all, striving to do Christ's work in the  
world.

## Sunday Services and Prayer Requests

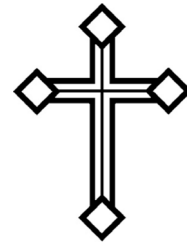
Meet us at St. Matthew's or tune in to  
our programs via the St. Matthew's  
YouTube Channel

### Sundays

- 9:00 am Traditional Eucharist  
In Church and Online
- 10:30am Outdoor Service on  
Founder's Meadow

### Wednesdays

- 10:00 am Wednesday Worship in  
the Chapel



### KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

**Please pray for** Carol Lanning, Ginny and Sam Hill, Kathryn Williams, Sonja and Colin, Megan, Joe Sacco, Jake Seliger, Pete, Elizabeth S, David, Greg Dimit, Alison Hurst, Bob Wessen, Kathy Harrison, Rosa, others facing health challenges.

**We also remember** those who have died in the hope of Christ's resurrection, especially Bernie Orsini, and victims of violence and war all over the world.

Please know that in addition to your praying for these persons, they are prayed for regularly throughout the week by clergy and by members of our Intercessory Prayer Group.

If you would like to add, keep, or re-  
move someone from this list, please email  
[connect@stmatthews.com](mailto:connect@stmatthews.com). Prayer  
requests will automatically be kept on the  
list for one month only.