

Matt's Media



The Newsletter of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Islington

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From the Pastor

Rev. Philip Stonhouse

Hello to my St. Matthew's family,

“Come to me all of you that are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”

(Matthew 11:28)

I think that through most of our lives we turn to the wrong places for the wrong things. Throughout COVID-19 where have we been turning? We turn to the news, the government, medical professionals, and social media for answers. We turn to TV, books, music, or a warm cup of something for comfort. What have you been turning to? These things cannot live up to our expectations and so naturally we feel lost, uncomfortable, and more, often blaming the very things we turned to.

The same result can happen in our lives with the very best things we have: our work, our family, marriage, friends, hobbies, and so on. This is not because these options aren't good, but rather because we are turning to them for something which is bigger than they are. We can find comfort in a good news article or an embrace, but these cannot give us comfort that will last. They are instead meant to be moments that remind us, that point the way towards our lasting hope, our lasting comfort, our lasting rest. We have good news; we have an embrace that is far richer than all of these and it comes primarily through Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

He is the one we need to turn to for all our needs, all our hopes, and all of our work towards the future because He is the only one who can lead us where we need to go. Putting anything else in that role is creating an idol, which in the end will only hurt us and the thing we turn into an idol.

This is not just about being obedient or following what God tells us to do. Instead, this is what we need because God is bigger than all of it. Just look at the Apostles; there we can see that imprisonment, isolation, pain, and worse could neither restrict the Spirit that lives in them, nor defeat their hope or joy. A surprising reality is that sometimes the very things that go wrong are the very avenues whereby God shows himself in amazing and powerful ways. We can live in this undefeatable hope, even now, when we follow Christ first.

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From the Pastor *(continued)*

In this season of Lent, through sermons and Bible Studies, we will be attempting to turn away from the idols that we create, the idols that cannot support the requests we place on them; we will be using a series of common spiritual practices as tools to help us re-centre ourselves on God. These are common practices that many churches observe throughout Lent: fasting, giving, sabbath, praise, and prayer. In this we will be focusing on how we can turn away from our idols and put our trust in God.

It is hard to say how the next weeks or months will unfold, but we can be sure that God will accompany us through all of it and in the end He will lead us to where we need to go.

“The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

(Psalm 18.2)

God bless you all.

Your brother in Christ,
Philip

Rev. Philip Stonhouse Appointed Incumbent

February 6, 2022

Please read this letter on Sunday, February 6, 2022.

To the Churchwardens and People of St. Matthew, Islington,

Grace and Peace be with you.

I am grateful for the creative ways that you continue to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in your community and neighbourhood. Your ministry is vibrant and lifegiving. I am particularly thankful for the ways that you have pivoted in this time of pandemic in order to reach out to each other. You are an inspiration.

The changes necessary to keep moving in these unprecedented times would not have been possible without the devotion of your wardens and key lay leaders who have gone above and beyond the call of duty. In a similar way, your Priest-in-Charge has served with passion and enthusiasm keeping you all together as one.

After consultation with your wardens and with Rev. Philip, I am delighted to announce that Rev. Philip will move from Priest-in-Charge to Incumbent of St. Matthew's Islington. A Celebration of New Ministry service will be organized in the not-too-distant future, once Covid protocols soften.

Please extend a warm welcome and word of congratulations to Rev. Philip. I look forward to joining with you to celebrate in person. Until then, may God continue to bless you in your mutual ministry.

Yours in Christ,



The Right Reverend Andrew J. Asbil
Bishop of Toronto

Wardens' Report

Karen Lee, Stuart Watt, Marguerite Locke, and Lianne Thompson

Congratulations to Rev. Philip on his appointment as Incumbent of St. Matthew's! We look forward to many years of sharing ministry with Rev. Philip and Mary Anne. Thanks to our staff and volunteers for their ongoing dedication to the many ministries of the parish. We thank Tyler Versluis for his continued leadership of our music ministry as well as all those who participate in providing Club Matt and Messy Church programs.

Many thanks to our Tech Team who keep us connected online every Sunday and for many other special events. There is always room for new members to join the team. Should you be interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer on the team, please contact Karen Lee, via email: karen@leeco.ca

Now that pandemic restrictions are being lifted, we are pleased to be able to welcome back many of our tenants. All tenants are required to follow all existing protocols. As our facilities continue to age, we will make every attempt to address repairs as quickly as possible. We thank Tom Travaglini, our Sexton, who keeps a watchful eye on our facility. In the next few weeks, the Youth Room will be receiving a facelift including fresh paint on the walls and additional seating. Thanks to Christine Ivy, our Youth Pastor, for initiating this project.

Please mark April 6th, 11:00 a.m. – 12 noon, on your calendar for our next Touchless Clothing Drive. Clothing for all ages will be collected and taken to the Scott Mission. Please find further details on page 8.

Plans are being developed for fundraising events to be held in 2022 to assist in reducing our deficit and support our Outreach initiatives. Stay tuned. Details will be forthcoming.

May you and your families find this Lenten season a fruitful time of reflection leading to a Joyful Easter Time!

Congratulations to Bruce Gleeson, ODT

Bruce Gleeson has been awarded *The Order of the Diocese of Toronto* (ODT) for 45 years' service in the ministry of St. Matthew's, Islington. "Through his work in children's discipleship, singing, churchwarden, cooking, cleaning, driving, property, and chancel, he is a continual embodiment of the parish motto, "*Sharing Jesus' Love*."

Bruce is a gift to his parish, and the people of St. Matthew, Islington believe they are most fortunate to have him as a member of their community."



Special/New Services

Rev. Philip Stonhouse

Every Lent there are services and practices that help to prepare us for the struggle and good news of Holy Week.

Wednesday nights during Lent: Taizé & Bible Study – At 7:00 p.m. every Wednesday, not Ash Wednesday but including Holy Week, there will be a short Taizé service online and in person. Taizé music is beautiful and repetitive, designed to help us settle in and reflect. The service does much the same thing – it creates space to help us hear what God is saying to us. I remember all the questions and hopes I had when I was first in seminary at Wycliffe College. Taizé was a perfect service for me to search and settle in.

At 7:30 p.m., after the Taizé service, online and in-person Bible Study will look at how we might refocus our lives on Christ. You are welcome to attend one or both.

Maundy Thursday – This is not a new service, but it will look different. Maundy Thursday has long been one of my favourite days in the church calendar, but because so much happens on this day, we barely get to glance at events. This year, the service will focus on three moments of Jesus' last night with his disciples: the Washing of the feet, the Last Supper, and Praying in the garden. Each will have its own moment in the service with a song, a short reading, a reflection, and a practice that we will experience together. It will be a great opportunity to enter into this day with Christ.

Easter Morning Sunrise Service – As we did last year, at 6:30 a.m. at Marie Curtis Park, we will gather on the East Beach before sunrise for a beautiful and simple service of praise, thanksgiving, and communion. It may be a tad cold, but we are warmed by the rising of the Son as we sing with all of creation the praise of a resurrected Christ.

Of course, we will also gather for our Shrove Tuesday Service of Fire, our Ash Wednesday morning and evening services of repentance, our Sunday Services and concerts, our Good Friday Service, and our joyous Easter Celebrations. (please see page 10 for a complete listing of services)

Taizé Services and Bible Study during Lent

Taizé is a beautiful and simple service filled with music, space, and prayer. Originally from the Taizé community in France, this short service is designed to help us enter into a time of peaceful reflection upon who God is and our life journey with Him. As so much of our lives are filled to the brim, join us in purposely making space to find the simple rest of dwelling on God. The service begins at 7:00 p.m.

Following most of the Taizé services, you will have the option at 7:30 p.m. to join our Lenten Bible Study called Re-Turning to Christ: Building Upon the Strong Foundation. This study will explore how a primary trust in God leads us to growth and life.



Living in Darkness and Fragmentation

Tyler Versluis

It is no secret that Christianity in the western world is under serious flux. Church attendance across denominations has fallen steadily since 1945, and it seems church buildings are shuttering their doors weekly in Toronto alone. Every member of an Anglican parish has noticed this, as their church communities age and shrink. In reality, this issue is not recent but has been ongoing for some time. This duress has been described in many ways, as the Great Apostasy mentioned in the writings of Paul, or as a “pruning” of the Church: as the Church’s relevance and power as a social force diminishes in the West, we are left with a smaller core of believers whose faith shines the purest and brightest. Whatever this phenomenon is, it is deeply troubling for those thinking about the future of the Church.

The 21st century is the age of fracture. While previously we beheld a monoculture of Christianity in the West, we are now dealing with a “galaxy of mythologies”, as Joseph Campbell describes in his book, *The Masks of God*. However, to say that humanity has abandoned its spiritual aspirations is demonstrably false, although this is hard to believe when we see empty sanctuaries on Sundays, and more hearses in the church parking lot than bridal parties and recently baptized babies. In Tara Isabella Burton’s book *Strange Rites: New Religions for A Godless World*, she outlines how society in the West is actually experiencing a religious renaissance, albeit in a highly unconventional way. Scores of believers are meeting online and forming “tribes” of religious belief, without buildings, congregations or even creeds to limit themselves. Disillusionment with organized religion is causing people not to abandon their spirituality, but rather to search out new beliefs guided by their intuitions, resulting in syncretisms beyond the confines of most religious denominations: Episcopal astrologists, alt-right Tridentine Catholics, techno-transhumanists, Lutheran yoga enthusiasts, body-building sun worshipers, drag-queen Bible exegesists.

This fall-away from religious orthodoxy may seem disconcerting for the future of traditional churches, but is perhaps tied to a larger, more serious phenomenon that pervades this age of fracture: the worship of the self, the transformation of religion into a type of autotherapy. In the West, the sanctity of personal autonomy, of individual freedom and personal choice, is practically a religion unto itself. If we remove God from the centre of our living, we fill that empty space with ourselves: our own desires, our own self-satisfaction. We build temples of self-preservation, complete with our own priesthood and personal ranks of saints and sacraments.

This Lenten season we are holding a Tenebrae service at Saint Matthew’s. Unless you float in Anglo-Catholic circles, this service is probably unfamiliar. Despite the immense power of this service, and the beautiful settings of music composed for its liturgy, it has fallen out of practice even in Catholic churches where the service was originally developed. But the Tenebrae service still has a powerful message for us, relevant for those living in the age of fracture. The message is: we are scattered in darkness, but there is always hope.

The central text for the service is the Book of Lamentations, which is either read, recited or set to music. Some popular musical settings are by Marc Antoine Charpentier, François Couperin and Orlando de Lassus. In the Book of Lamentations, the unknown narrator laments the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, a once prosperous place of God-fearing residents, has been desecrated and overrun by its enemies. The narrator laments to God, and God is silent. Jerusalem, the once holy and virtuous princess, is now a forsaken widow, her husband and children killed, abandoned and mocked by her friends.

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Living in Darkness and Fragmentation *(continued)*

The Lenten parallel here is that we are plunged into deep darkness and God seems silent and passive, such as when Jesus breathed his last on the cross, betrayed into the hands of His enemies. Like Jerusalem, our church seems scattered and divided, consumed by a fragmented tribalism and the silly man-made dogmas of “conservatism” and “progressivism”.

The Tenebrae service ends with beautiful symbolism. After the last candle is extinguished, the Christ candle is entombed in darkness, albeit briefly (traditionally taken to the sacristy, or hidden under the altar). From the darkness of the church a loud noise is heard, symbolizing the earthquake after the death of Jesus. The Christ candle re-appears, the smallest glimmer of light in a cavern of doubt and darkness. We depart in silence to reflect on this, as we head into Holy Week.

Join us April 10th at 7:56 p.m. (the exact moment of sunset on Palm Sunday), for our Tenebrae service at Saint Matthew's this Lenten season, to pray, reflect and prepare for Holy Week.



Mel Callender: St. Matthew's Champion of Black History Month

Hubert and Theomansia Spencer as told to Kathie Oakden

Melvin Callender, a long-time member of St. Matthew's Church, retired to Barbados several years ago and is doing well following surgery to correct scoliosis.

For many years, to honour Black History Month, Mel would write a lengthy article for *Matt's Media* about a noteworthy person in Barbados or the Black History Service at St. Paul's Bloor Street (which he never missed attending).

Hubert Spencer calls Mel “The Baron of Barbados,” their native land by birth. Mel was an educator. He taught English and Latin at Bishop Anstey College in Tobago for many years before “lifting anchor” for the bigger island of Trinidad and San Fernando Secondary School for about 10 years. He then spread his wings, ‘Volare,’ (one of his favourite Latin quotes) with the help of Air Canada and landed in Etobicoke. He taught at Martingrove Collegiate until his retirement.

Theo has fond memories of Christmases spent with Mel. His beloved wife, Joy, didn't like the cold and would take off for winter so “Spencer and I would have him over for Christmas. It was interesting to hear them rattling away in Latin: ‘Veni, vidi, vici.’ They would talk about Brutus, Cassius and Casca. After cracking a few jokes, Mel was ready to leave, so Spencer would tell him to use the side door since there were not as many steps. Mel would always answer, ‘Oh, I am going through the front,’ and once he reached the driveway he would say, ‘I am on ‘terra firma’ now.’”

Although living far away, Mel remains on the parish mailing list.

Black History Month

Kareem Forbes

This month we celebrate Black History Month. This is both a positive and a negative cultural tradition in Canada and North America. It is a positive tradition because it acknowledges that we are not introduced in our lives to the contributions which minorities and people of colour have made to our society. We all benefit from those contributions, even though we may not know about them, or acknowledge them. Black History Month can start to rectify this shortcoming. Most people know of the past contributions of individuals like Alexander Graham Bell, or Thomas Alva Edison, but not of the contributions of Lewis Latimer.

The negative side of this tradition is simply that we still need to have Black History Month. Black or Asian or Aboriginal history, is Canadian and American History. These histories should be as ubiquitous as the history of all other peoples, and they should be taught as frequently in order to become part of our collective cultural conscience.

For inspiration during this month of Black History, I look to the great people of colour. We can all look up to and admire their lives, experiences, profound wisdom, and words. What makes me sad is that we have lost many of these great people due to violence, tragedy, or simply time. What is extraordinary is that the lives they lived which spurred them to words and action can still inspire us today – as much as, if not more than, they did in their own times. It was as if the world was not yet ready for them or the equality and societal conscience which they demanded. Frankly, I'm not sure if we are ready yet, but we can still ask the question. Each of us must answer honestly for ourselves and our society.

We can only honour them and then strive for racial equality through our actions towards each other, both now and in the future. We must become allies in the fight against injustice and racial inequality. We can only do this when we have knowledge, compassion, and a desire to improve things for tomorrow in the here and now today. We must educate ourselves on why we are here and how we arrived here, and what the path is forward, together. What is the history of people of colour? The road ahead is as long as the road behind us.

I am sharing some individuals who inspire me and I invite you to learn what they stood for and lived their lives by: Nelson Mandela in the video called *Nelson Mandela's Life Story* (<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=t9xtS57534Y>), the video of Chadwick Boseman's *Commencement Speech at Howard University*, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIHZypMyQ2s>) and Martin Luther King's speech in the video called *MLK: The Other America* (<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=dOWDtDUKz-U>)



“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” ~ Barack Obama

“Racism is still with us. But it is up to us to prepare our children for what they have to meet, and, hopefully, we shall overcome.” ~ Rosa Parks

“We all require and want respect, man or woman, black or white. It’s our basic human right.” ~ Aretha Franklin

The Food Cupboard

Sally and Noel Martin

Thanks to the generosity of several parishioners, we recently filled a dozen or more bags of provisions.

Prior to the pandemic, Lisa, our Church Administrator, distributed bags of food at the side door on Wednesday afternoons. In the past several years, it was found that this offering was rarely used. During the pandemic, Lisa donated 'soon to expire' foods to the local firehall or to St. James United Church on Burnhamthorpe Road.

In the future, we hope to coordinate our efforts with other churches in the area, possibly Christ the King Anglican on Rathburn, St. James United on Burnhamthorpe, or Christ Church St. James Anglican food bank on Park Lawn Road to help meet the needs of the community.

In addition we hope to resume offering food bags at our Church door on Wednesdays as before, perhaps with a notice on our digital sign.

Thank you to volunteers Lianne, Dorothy, Pat, and Helen, who have kindly offered to help in this distribution.

Clothing Collection: April 6 11:00 a.m. to Noon

Cleaning out your closets? We would be happy to receive your discards ...

A Touchless clothing collection

will be held on

Wednesday, April 6th from 11-12 noon
in the WEST parking lot of the church.

Clean

gently used

shoes, boots, clothes

for ALL ages, Any season

(separate Children's from Adult's items in garbage bag)

for delivery to the Scott Mission downtown.

Kindly separate children's goods from adult items in garbage bag
to make it easier for the Mission to distribute to their clients.

Thank you.

Questions? contact Marguerite Locke at mdlocke@hotmail.com



St. Matthew's Tech Team

We are indebted to these unseen parishioners for sending our church services to our home computers so that we can participate in Worship and Coffee Hour.

Blessington Velagapalli, Emily Crump, Helen Frankie, Mary Anne Perta, Lorimer Family – (Michelle, Paul, Sophia, Joshua) and Noel Martin.

Blessington, Mary Anne and Emily
Photo by Anne-Marie May



Thank You for the (Christmas) Music

It is fully two months after Christmas, but still lovely to recall the worship and music leading up to Christmas Day. Thank you to everyone who made the season so meaningful.

Our Lessons and Carols service had a host of readers, some in church and some online far away: Ethan Forbes, Margaret Purser, Ken Boughton, Robert Pooran, Bruce Gleeson, Isabella Shao, David Oakden, Mary Anne Perta and Rev. Philip Stonhouse. The Carols selected were beautiful, diverse in origin and age, and sung by a variety of voices: soloists (Erica Sitko, Rev. Philip Stonhouse, Tyler Versluis, Bruce Gleeson, David Oakden), Choir (assisted by Erica Sitko) and the Congregation. Tyler Versluis and Damien Macedo accompanied on piano and organ.

Our Blue Christmas Service provided solace for many people who appreciated quiet reminiscence rather than celebration. Comforting music was offered by Tyler Versluis.

The Carols and Crumpets Concert was a recital of stunningly beautiful music from the French baroque carol tradition. Tyler gave a brief lecture preceding the performance. The carols were performed sublimely by Tyler Versluis (organ and piano), Leanne Vida (voice) and Émilie Gélinas-Noble (violin). We felt very blessed to be surrounded by such soul-filling music.

Christmas Eve Eucharist was celebrated at three services: Family at 4:00, Choral at 7:00 and Candlelight (Booklight) à capela at 10:00 pm. It was joyful.

Thank you everyone – Congregations, Tech Team, Singers, Musicians, Tyler Versluis and Rev. Philip Stonhouse.

Men's Breakfast

Men's 'Breakfast' is still meeting or eating on Saturday mornings. Some men meet online at 8:00 a.m. and some meet in person at 9:00 a.m. at Montreal Deli at 2055 Dundas Street in Mississauga. Usually the first Saturday of the month: March 5, April 2, May 7 & June 4.

If you would like to join in, contact Colin Hall (647-401-6514, colinhall1999@gmail.com) or Dave Oakden (416-626-7781, dave.oakden@gmail.com) to receive the online link by email on the preceding or same day.

What's Happening

Tues Mar 1	Shrove Tuesday Service: available in a.m.	Posted to YouTube
Wed Mar 2	Ash Wednesday services at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.	In person & online
Sat Mar 5	Online Men's Breakfast: 8:00 a.m. colinhall1999@gmail.com or dave.oakden@gmail.com In-person Men's Breakfast: 9:00 a.m. Montreal Deli	Online or in person
Sun Mar 6	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m. Book of Alternative Services (BAS) Service: 11:00 a.m. <i>Soli Deo Gloria</i> Fundraising Concert: 2:00 p.m.	Online In person & online In person & online
Wed Mar 9	BCP (Book of Common Prayer) Service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Wed Mar 9 - Apr 13	Taize Service: 7:00 p.m. Lenten Bible Study: 7:30 p.m.	In person & online
Sun Mar 13	BCP Service: 8:00 a.m. All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m. BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person Online In person & online
Wed Mar 16	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m. Taizé Service & Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m.	In person In person & online
Sun Mar 20	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m. BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	Online In person & online
Wed Mar 23	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m. Taizé Service & Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m.	In person In person & online
Sat Mar 26	Messy Church: 4:00 p.m.	In person
Sun Mar 27	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m. BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	Online In person & online
Wed Mar 30	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m. Taizé Service & Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m.	In person In person & online
Sat Apr 2	Online Men's Breakfast: 8:00 a.m. colinhall1999@gmail.com or dave.oakden@gmail.com In-person Men's Breakfast: 9:00 a.m. Montreal Deli	Online or in person
Sun Apr 3	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m. BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person In person & online
Wed Apr 6	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m. Taizé Service & Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m.	In person In person & online
Sun Apr 10	BCP Service: 8:00 a.m.	In person
Palm Sunday	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m. BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person In person & online

... Palm Sunday continued

What's Happening

Sun Apr 10	Tenebrae Service: 7:56 p.m. (sunset)	In person & online
Wed Apr 13	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
	Taizé Service & Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. (final session)	In person & online
Thurs Apr 14	Maundy Thursday Service: 7:30 p.m.	In person & online
Fri Apr 15	Good Friday Service: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Sun Apr 17	Sunrise Service: 6:30 a.m. Marie Curtis Park, East beach	In person
Easter	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m.	In person
	BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Wed Apr 20	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sun Apr 24	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m.	In person
	BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Wed Apr 27	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sat Apr 30	Messy Church: 4:00 p.m.	In person

SOLI DEO GLORIA

A FUNDRAISER RECITAL
OF PIANO & ORGAN MUSIC

MARCH 6, 2:00 P.M.

DAMIEN MACEDO, ORGAN
TYLER VERSLUIS, PIANO

PAY WHAT YOU CAN



Inclusion Working Group

Dawn Mercer

Proposed events for this year:

1. A Book Discussion on Wab Kinew's book, *The Reason You Walk*, February 24.
2. A Time of Reflection (May 29), a discussion of how the various Inclusion Events at St. Matthew's in the past year have changed our thinking or behaviour since we were faced with the dreadful events that brought racism to the forefront.
3. A Session on Reconciliation (Sept 29) will look at why reconciliation is an important way forward and how we might practically and faithfully restore trust and relationship.
4. A Question and Answer session (Nov 13) will be an opportunity for honest and helpful discussion with the whole of St. Matthew's family about questions posed anonymously prior to the session.

The Jubilee Commission

St. Matthew's Indigenous Issues Group (SMIIG)

A call from the Primate's Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice

The Indigenous members of the Anglican Church have spent several years looking for ways to become self determined in their worship and ministry. When the missionaries arrived in Canada from the Church of England and elsewhere in the late 1700s, many indigenous worship traditions and ceremonies were prohibited by all the church denominations. As the indigenous Anglican Church moves forward, certain ceremonies have begun to be used, including smudging, spruce brushing, sweat lodges, etc. To encourage the growth and development of the indigenous church, a Jubilee Commission has been established to review and establish a financial plan. Part of these plans requires research into the accurate history of the relationship between the indigenous and non-indigenous Anglican Church. It is felt that if the truth is understood, then reconciliation can perhaps take place within the country and the Anglican Church.

National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald and Chair of the Commission, Judith Moses, Deputy Prolocutor for General Synod, have gathered a group of people to conduct research into the impact of church finances on the indigenous relationship. Subjects such as the doctrine of discovery and the history of the church missions, day schools and the Anglican residential schools will be studied from a financial perspective. As retired General Synod Archivist, **Nancy Hurn** has been asked to assist in this research. Given her longstanding relationship with many indigenous church members and the Anglican Council of Indigenous People, her experience will prove valuable to this important project. The Commission's duration is a three-year term, renewable by General Synod.

We are delighted that the people of St. Matthew's have benefited in learning about the history of these relationships through our parish group, St. Matthew's Indigenous Issues Group (SMIIG). More information about the Jubilee Commission can be found on the Anglican national website <https://www.anglican.ca/about/ccc/cogs/jubilee-commission/>

Being with God

Christine Ivy

"What does it mean to be present? It means being open and available to others with as much of ourselves as possible, as unguarded as possible."

Mark Yaconelli, in *Contemplative Youth Ministry*

We want to be a church that will listen to youth, not just give advice. We want to be Christians who bear witness – and be present – to our kids, not just offer programs and activities. But in our busy lives it is so hard to find time to just ‘be’ and to be truly present with another person.

The person of Jesus is the one person in our lives who is the safest to just be with. He is infinitely understanding and compassionate. We have his full attention, and he looks upon us with kindness and without condemnation. He is for us, not against us. He is patient with us, he trusts us with his mission, and his presence is always with us.

“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not understand what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because everything I have learned from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit...”

John 15:15-16a, NIV

Spending time in the presence of Jesus paves the way to experience freedom from anxiety. You may have heard that meditation and contemplation can actually rewire our brains. These ancient practices have been around since the start of human history, including in the early church, and such spiritual practices can gradually, radically transform our minds. *Romans 12:2* says, "*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*"

If we don't work against it, we all suffer from being formed by the patterns of this world; we absorb patterns of anxiety, busyness, and striving. During COVID especially, we feel the pressure of more demands, and less energy. Yet the freedom promised in Christ – that easy yoke and light burden – is not achieved by doing *for* God, but by being *with* God.

We must actively combat anxiety and the busyness which keeps us from God. Today I challenge you to set your watch or a timer to ten minutes and sit somewhere quiet. Rather than having an agenda for the time, try to rest in the presence of God's love. A phrase that can help re-centre you to this purpose when your mind wanders is, "Here I am, God." If your mind wanders 1000 times, it's 1000 opportunities to return to the Father. The way we will reach a place where we can be truly present to others – especially those different from us in age, race, or ability – is by learning how to be present to Jesus.

I have been a part of the church my whole life. Many different churches, in fact. I was baptized Presbyterian as a baby, avoided Sunday school at a Missionary Alliance church, made lifelong friends at a youth group at an Associated Gospel church, spent my undergrad attending a Mennonite Brethren "mega" church, and then found myself in an Anglican seminary. Whether at an evangelical, conservative, or more liberal church, Christian community consistently faces a common deep block. *We don't know how to be with God.*

... continued

Being with God *(continued)*

Christine Ivy

We are great at talking about God, praising God, and we love to serve God. Some love to debate or argue, protect, or promote God. The thing we have little time or patience for is actually spending time with God.

Being in relationships is our primary calling as Christians. Our hearts ache for our children and/or grandchildren to know Jesus – and we want them to be involved in our church community – but how can we share God if we're too busy to be with God?

We must slow down and live at God's speed. We must be patient and take the time to pray, to listen to people, and to be humble and willing to wait for the Holy Spirit to lead the way.

Our lives are often characterized by busyness and isolation. Jesus' life is a stark contrast. When Jesus is present, he listens, shares food, spends time, weeps, walks, touches, responds, and cares for others – and the world changes. Jesus enjoys being with people and with his Father. And his ministry was not a pre-planned formula but rose in response to real situations and relationships he encounters along the way.

Ask God today to identify a situation or relationship you are facing and how he wants you to respond – spend some time in silence or with a journal in front of you and see how he responds.

This was originally published as the third and fourth posts in a series on our parish blog. Check out saintmatts.ca to read the first two installments of *Ministry Memos by Pastor Christine*.

Children & Families at St. Matt's

Dawn Mercer

Christmas

Preparing for Christmas began with the Advent Messy Church. Children prepared decorations for the gifts that would be delivered to St. Matthew's seniors and decorated gingerbread cookies to be included in the St. Matt's Toronto Urban Native Ministries' Christmas bags. Families enthusiastically and colourfully iced 150 gingerbread people. They looked great.

Creating things to make Christmas a time of celebration for others was an excellent way for families to begin to think about Christmas. It was really good to have the gym space that allowed families to work together around a table with lots of space between tables and excellent ventilation with the outside doors open.

The well-attended Messy Church events of the Fall attracted new families who were keen to be part of the traditional Christmas Pageant. At the beginning of the planning process, we had 16 families who were considering participation. We were delighted and challenged to find real roles for that many children. And then Omicron arrived! So then we needed to plan the pageant for both online and in-person participation. Co-ordinating in person and Zoom contributions needed great care.

Creating a script required that we include children in roles for which they felt comfortable – some for readers, some not; some speaking parts and some acting only; some at home and some in the church. We realized that a costume is an important attraction for any play but certainly the pageant.



Children & Families at St. Matt's *(continued)*

We distributed costumes to 34 children.

We had sheep, ladybugs, shepherds and angels, three Marys and three Josephs. This year we were also reminded that we needed to be totally inclusive with the main roles such as Mary and Joseph as well as shepherds and other characters. All the people and roles were blended together amazingly by Rev. Philip who orchestrated narrators and actors. We have been so thankful for his experience with children and drama. Thanks to God for his wonderful gifts to our parish.

This was a fun, safe event that allowed families from our neighbourhood and regular St. Matthew's families to participate in putting the celebration of Christ's birth at the centre of Christmas.



Messy Church in January

The theme, *Make a Joyful Noise*, was enthusiastically embraced on Zoom. We made drums from cans, pan pipes from drinking straws, shakers from containers and grains, and guitars from Kleenex boxes and rubber bands. Celebration and worship followed, then noisy snacks.

Looking Forward to Lent

Along with our monthly Messy Church, we are planning activities for families to use at home for Lent. Club Matt will have a special Lent focus. We will celebrate Palm Sunday and Easter with a pageant and other dramatizations for children to be part of. Watch the Friday emails for details.

Liturgical Colours

Mary Gleeson

While chatting with a friend recently, I was asked why the colours of the church hangings and altar frontal were changed from time to time. Then the advice given to me was that I should write something for *Matt's Media* so that she and perhaps others could gain some insight into understanding the reasons for doing this. I cannot claim to be an expert on liturgical colours and their meaning, but this is what basic knowledge I have learned from former Chancel Guild members...and from Google!

Just as we in our worldly lives have different seasons, there are several different seasons in the liturgical calendar. The church year begins in Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas. At St. Matthew's, we use the colour BLUE for our hangings while in other churches and denominations, purple or violet is used. The blue signifies waiting, preparation, and expectation.

The season of Christmas follows next, and the colour WHITE is used to show joy. It is also used for baptisms, weddings, and other special celebrations throughout the Christian year, including Easter and the Baptism of Christ. White is used as well for funerals and is said to symbolize resurrection. Other denominations use silver or gold instead of white.

After the Christmas season, we move into Ordinary Time with GREEN. Most of the church year displays this colour; it represents growth, life, and hope, like regrowth in springtime.

The colour PURPLE is used during Lent, a time of prayer, fasting, and reflection. We are asked to focus on changing our lives through these practices. An interesting fact is that the term Lent comes from a middle English word meaning springtime, and like spring, Lent is a time of renewal.

On Passion (Palm) Sunday and on Pentecost, we use the colour RED to symbolize blood and fire. It is associated with martyrs who have shed their blood for their faith, and also to recall the fiery tongues of the Holy Spirit.

You will also notice that the stole Rev. Philip wears is changed for the liturgical seasons.

While some other churches and denominations use black and rose at different times, the colours of the hangings we use during the liturgical year at St. Matthew's are blue, white, green, purple and red.

Church Records

Deaths

Doug Hartry
December 4, 2021

Carol Jones
December 14, 2021



June Ziegler
January 20, 2022

Diane Hall
January 21, 2022

*Grant to them Eternal Rest, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine on them!
May they Rest in Peace, & Rise in Glory*

A Different Type of Corona

Michelle Lorimer

In the vortex of these past two years, we've heard some words more than others.

Words often alarming, unappealing and tiring – words that speak of a way of life which we've had to keep on at, to make it through this time. If we were to make one of those cool word montages where the most frequent words used are overlayed in varying sizes and colours, we would certainly see these: *Corona virus*; *COVID-19*; *Delta variant*; *Omicron*; *masks*; *PPE*; *social distancing*; *virtual*; *online*; *Zoom*; and of course, *death*.

But in the din of pandemic lingo and perpetual news headlines, there have been other words, too. And in this post, I want to make the case for our great need to hearken (there's a good unused word these days!) to the other words especially. Words that are inspired, words that help us hear the breath of God's Spirit breathing life and light into our dark places. For these words we turn to the scriptures, we meditate on them, we listen to the Word being expounded and taught and discussed, as we gather, and as we sing its truths together in worship. We read the words of the wise, who have contended with the larger questions that life presents us, who have wrestled with God for wisdom and insight.

We can also read good poetry.

In the spirit of sharing good poetry, I want to share with you a collection of poems that offers a different type of *corona* to contemplate. It's one that has helped me hear the voice of God's Spirit and centre gently in His presence during this time.

***David's Crown, Sounding the Psalms*, by poet Malcolm Guite**, is a poem cycle of all the 150 psalms. His response to each of the psalms is reflected in 15 lines of poetry, with the last line of each poem becoming the first line of the next. So that in this riveting collection, all 150 psalms are interlaced and interwoven into a larger "corona" or "crown of praise" – the final line of the 150th leading us back to the opening line of the 1st. Though the form sounds admirably artful (it is!), the prayers are honest and relatable, easy to access – just like the psalms are in scripture.

Here's Guite talking about his structure and journey through the Psalms:

"Each poem is composed of 15 lines divided into five tercets in 'terza rima', a miniature reflection of the 150 psalms of the psalter and their traditional division. The text of the psalms to which I am responding is Cloverdale's translation in the *Book of Common Prayer*... I hope that this work can also be read as a poem in its own right, divided into 150 linked stanzas, taking you on a journey: from the first invitation to be rooted and fruitful, like a tree beside the waters, then through all the twists and turns of human experience. It is the experience that Christ in his humanity shares with us: the visionary glimpses of heaven, but also the sense of hellish darkness and depression; the delight in the beauties of nature and the warmth of human friendship, but also the awareness of destruction and corruption in both nature and humanity; a journey that leads down to the nadir of despair in *Psalms 88*, and yet recovers and continues through thick and thin, until we renew our courage and return to praise in the great doxology of the five final psalms, and come, as we did in the opening psalm, back 'to the place where every breath is praise' (*Preface xv*)."

... continued

A Different Type of Corona *(continued)*

Michelle Lorimer

Guite captures the rawness of our emotions, our conflicts and our desires as we come before God. But gently and pastorally, he also finds the tone of praise and submission with which all our wrestling with God can ultimately ring. There are glimmers of glory being caught and sustained throughout this collection, even as the psalmist's voice places all the turbulence of his life and this world before God, in honesty.

When's the last time you've meditated on a poem?

I don't know about you, but poems have shaped my life – so much power in such tiny, sublime vehicles of truth. I want to recommend this little collection of Spirit-filled words for its ability to render the contemporary, resonant cry of our hearts, and to point us towards the overarching faithfulness and praiseworthiness of a good and glorious Saviour.

You will be moved as you journey through this collection. I will leave you with some examples from this "corona" and [a link](#) to where you can find out more about Malcolm Guite. In addition to his collections of poetry, which are all beautiful companions to our liturgical calendar, his academic and non-academic writing on beauty, faith and art are full of the Spirit and always surprising.

Psalm 32: XXXII *Beati, quorum*

In your deep silence and your mystery
You led me to confess and be forgiven,
You gave me the relief of honesty.

How long and bitterly I might have striven
With all the guilt that I could hardly name,
How painfully my heart might have been riven

By hidden memories and secret shame.
Instead you blessed me with a new beginning,
Unbound me from the bands and brands of blame,

My false accounts of losing or of winning,
And called me to come forth like Lazarus
And start my life again, rejoicing, singing,

Baptised and born in your mysterious
And all-involving love, a love that lifts,
A love that comforts and embraces us.

Psalm 34: XXXIV *Benedicam Domino*

He raises and delivers us from death,
And even now he shows us how to live
That we might savour life with every breath,

That we might taste and see, might truly thrive,
Might see the good days that he wants for us
And make the best of all he has to give.

And so he comes to live as one of us
And teaches us afresh the ways of peace
He lives the fullest life in front of us

And shows us how to break the bonds, release
The captive, seek the truth that sets us free,
To choose the right and do it, to increase

The reach of love, the possibility
Of fruitful life together, and to hear
The poor cry out and help them speedily.

Psalm 33: XXXIII *Exultate, justi*

A love that comforts and embraces us
Is the true theme of every song I make;
How tenderly he finds and places us

Deep into Christ himself for his love's sake.
The strings of all my instruments will stir
My heart to praise. Therefore I rise and take

My harp, my mandolin, my old guitar,
And let them sound a new song in his praise,
Whose word is true, whose works so full and fair,

Are radiant with glory, and whose ways
Are tried and trusted. Every ounce of earth
Is charged and brimming with his goodness. Days

Are all ordained to praise him; by his breath
The stars of night are kindled; by his love
He raises and delivers us from death.

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Malcolm Guite,
David's Crown, Sounding the Psalms

Canterbury Press, 2021. 32-34

<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/blog>

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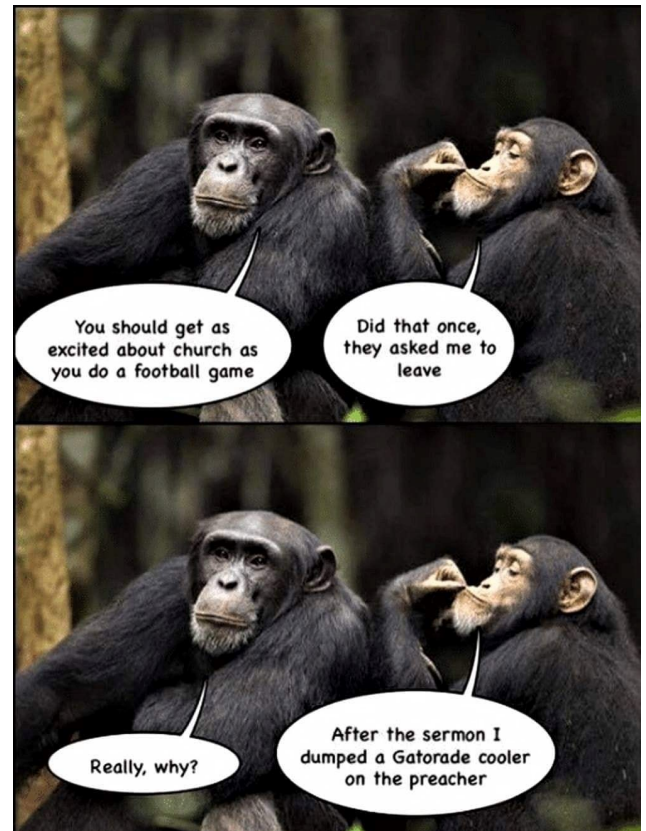
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Humour



We acknowledge that we are in the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Anishnabe peoples, on whose land and by whose waters we gather to talk, listen, learn, worship, share and heal together in the name of our Creator, the Holy One of Blessing.

Pastoral Care: Pastoral visits can be offered over the phone, by email or via Zoom. Due to current pandemic restrictions, we cannot offer visits. Please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca.

Partners in Prayer: Should you desire prayer for yourself or for another person, please make details known to Bob Holloway at 416-253-4909 or rholloway@sympatico.ca. If necessary, the request can be transmitted through the church office.

Cycle of Prayer: “Beloved, pray for us.” This is Paul’s way of asking the Thessalonians to pray for him (5:25) and it expresses the genuine need for believers to support one another through prayer. Each Sunday, we will be praying for individuals and families of St. Matthew’s in the Prayers of the People. Each week, a few names will be mentioned in our prayers and we will have the opportunity to support one another through prayer. Please take the time to remember these people during the week in your own prayers as well. If you do not wish to be included in our “Cycle of Prayer” please let the office know and we will be sure to keep your name off the list.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Prayer Shawls are provided to those who need the warmth and comfort of God and St. Matthew’s. If you would like a shawl for someone, please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca. If you are knitting shawls for this ministry, please contact the office to arrange to drop them off.

Join Us

Wednesday
10:30 a.m. BCP Service
(Posted on YouTube afterward)

Messy Church
Last Saturday of the month
Next Messy Church is March 26

GIFT Groups

The Rev. Philip Stonhouse, Incumbent
416-231-3060 / philipstonhouse@hotmail.ca

The Rev. Gail Marshall, Deacon
The Rev. Merv Mercer, Honorary Assistant
Christine Ivy, Youth & Discipleship Assoc. Pastor
Tyler Versluis, Music Director and Organist
Tom Travaglini, Sexton/Verger
Lisa Tait, Parish Administrator



Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
9:30 - 3:30

The office is operating remotely.
Telephone and email messages will
be checked and returned during
office hours.

Sunday Services

8:00 a.m. Quiet (in person)
2nd Sunday of each month
9:30 a.m. Casual (online)
11:00 a.m. Classic (in person)
12:10 p.m. Online Coffee Hour

3962 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9B 1M3

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