

# The Epistle

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

March 2024  
Volume 52 No. 6

## STARTLING. OUT OF PLACE. BEAUTIFUL.

While gathered with others to listen in on Debie Thomas' wisdom as our Stern Lecturer earlier this month, I got pulled aside and was asked by a curious attendee, "Why are all the crosses covered?" For reference, she was inquiring about the sheer-ish, purple drapings that were covering each of our crosses within the Church Sanctuary and on Founder's Meadow. The purple being the first of the colors we witness as they are draped on the crosses during Lent and until we say the big "A-----a!" at Easter.

The fabric feels startling. Out of place. Beautiful.  
Our focus automatically heightens.  
Our bodies remember.

These outward and visible signs of draped coverings invite us into this muddlement of reactions as if to shock our cadences into the reality that something big is about to happen. Shocked into the remembrance that we are soon to be in Jerusalem.

Jolted back to God's presence. A jolting that reminds me of a short, simple line that I read back in seminary and that has been stuck with me ever since:

"Liturgy celebrates the mystery of God."

This very first line of the introduction of *A Priest's Handbook* (AKA a most handy "how to" guide of sorts for all things related to one-off special liturgies and traditions of our church) invited me to take a deep breath. A deep breath in knowing that none of us have to define God perfectly or exactly, nor have to celebrate God perfectly or exactly. Because, thankfully, our gracious God cannot be contained into one definition or one order of rituals or one prayer.

Over Holy Week, you are invited to St. Matthew's for a wide variety of prayers, rituals, and motions that, while sometimes seemingly unfamiliar and curious, are our way of celebrating all that is God's mysterious grace to be had. And that's part of what makes it glorious.

*(Continued on Page 2)*



## Startling, continued

There's something so powerful in proactively engaging with the unknown as a way to be invited closer to experiencing God's presence in our lives. I truly hope for you to join us to celebrate the precious mysteriousness of God through all that is happening in this coming week, as we pilgrim together amid the complex story of Jesus' last few days as a human with a yearning for something bigger than ourselves.

And with this invitation comes one small encouragement of a mindset, found in some of Rainer Maria Rilke's writings, that might be helpful from Palm Sunday until we celebrate Christ's Resurrection.

*I yearn to belong to something, to be contained  
in an all-embracing mind that sees me  
as a single thing.*

*I yearn to be held  
in the great hands of your heart—  
oh, let them take me now.*

*Into them I place these fragments, my life,  
and you, God—spend them however you want.*

No worries of enoughness or adequacy. All that it takes for the Resurrection to be had is showing up. Showing up, fragments and all, with a willingness to celebrate and acknowledge all that is God, even when beyond understanding. Even when startling. Even when out of place. And ain't that oh so beautiful?

In Joy, KC+



## Spotlight on Pastoral Ministries



### INTERCESSORY PRAYER GROUP



The Intercessory Prayer Group is comprised of highly committed parishioners who pray daily for fellow parishioners and others connected to our church community. They follow a curated prayer list that is updated each month, and all prayer requests and information are kept confidential.

The time commitment is very flexible, as the members pray on their own schedule and the list length is variable. Also included on the list are good news and thanksgivings, which make this ministry so special to the members as it is both heartfelt and impactful.

If you are interested in learning more about the ministry and possibly joining, and/or would like to add prayers for someone, please contact Daniela Winter via [danieladwinter1@gmail.com](mailto:danieladwinter1@gmail.com) or 310-824-3717.

## STERN LECTURES EXPAND HORIZONS

by Christine F. Purcell

Noted author, columnist and preacher Debie Thomas shared an inspiring vision of the “capaciousness” of God’s activity and grace here at St. Matthew’s over the first weekend of March. Her presentations, taken from her new book, *A Faith of Many Rooms: Inhabiting a More Spacious Christianity*, invited hearers to think in new ways about being lost, how our stories inform our faith, and what sin and salvation may look like through a twenty-first century lens.

The rainy weather failed to dampen enthusiasm as attendees actively engaged in Q&A after each lecture and enjoyed a hot lunch after the final Saturday session. On Sunday morning, Debie preached a wonderful sermon, then lingered a bit after both services.

This Stern Lecture was made possible through the generosity of the late Dr. W. Eugene Stern, long-time member of the Parish of St. Matthew, who created the Stern Endowment in memory of his beloved wife Libby.



## PERSONNEL NEWS

In February, Craig Ehlers retired from his post as Chief Financial Officer, a role in which he worked diligently on behalf of St. Matthew’s for more than 14 years. The Parish Staff is incredibly grateful for his dedicated attention to the church’s financial well-being over his many years, as well as his effort implementing a modernized finance system for the future.

Craig and his family were already part of the St. Matthew’s community for more than a decade before he stepped up to offer his finance skills, and he shared that he and his wife, Jackie, “are looking forward to 25 more years of life here in this community!” Prior to his departure, the parish staff had a chance to toast all that Craig has provided to the community and to wish him well in his next chapter.

Earlier this month, Rev. Christine Purcell also announced her upcoming retirement from St. Matthew’s, to allow more room to explore her personal spiritual interests and allow more space for writing, travel and time with her family. Though the community will certainly miss her comforting, pastoral presence, Christine won’t be far away, so chances are likely that she will be spotted at St. Matthew’s sometime or other in the future.

In the meantime, be sure to visit her blog, [\(Still\) Walking](#) to read her posts and sign up to receive them regularly by email and be on the lookout for a Bon Voyage celebration in Christine’s honor coming soon!



Above: The Parish Staff celebrated Craig’s retirement together last month; Rev. Christine F. Purcell wearing the “Angel Project” Stole after the 2023 Outreach Partner Christmas fund drive.

# Outreach Opportunities



## 41st Scholarship Benefit "Going Places"



Saturday, May 11, 2024

Parish of St. Matthew, Sprague Center  
1031 Bienvenida Ave. Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Check in, Pop-Up Store, Art Exhibit, Music and Refreshments;  
5:00pm

Reception with Heavy Hors d'Oeuvres Buffet; 5:15pm

Awards Program; 6:00pm-7:00pm

Pop-Up Store, Art Exhibit, Music and Refreshments; 7pm-7:30pm

**SAVE THE DATE!**

## Click Here to Join Westside Food Bank for its Phantom Dinner on April 30

For over two decades, the WSFB community of supporters, volunteers, and friends have gathered in spirit rather than in person to support its vital hunger relief work. The Phantom Dinner allows WSFB to apply the cost of hosting a gala directly to its mission to provide nutritious food for its neighbors in need. This year, thanks to an anonymous donor, every dollar donated through April 30th will be matched up to \$100,000. This means instead of providing food for 4 nutritious meals, every dollar raised turns into 8 nutritious meals for local families and individuals who struggle with food insecurity. Please give as generously as you can to help WSFB meet the urgent need for food assistance in our community.



WESTSIDE  
FOOD BANK



### Jay

When Jay lost his job and was diagnosed with diabetes, he relied on Westside Food Bank's Mobile Pantry program to access fresh, nutritious food that dramatically improved his health and well-being!

**WSFB's Phantom Dinner**



WESTSIDE  
FOOD BANK



### Regina

"I lost my husband and two of my sons so I am alone here in Los Angeles. My eyesight is going so when I come here I can trust that the food I'm getting is fresh and I don't have to worry about prices. My social security can go towards other things. I have no problem paying my electricity and rent now."

**WSFB's Phantom Dinner**

**Have your donation MATCHED through 4/30! Have your donation MATCHED through 4/30!**



**When people sit at our table, they feel at home.**

St. Joseph Center's Bread and Roses Café is a doorway of trust that provides unhoused Angelenos nourishing meals in a warm, homestyle dine-in setting. Due to rising food costs, the Café needs your support to keep running as hundreds of meals are prepared daily for those in need who rely on us.

Please donate to the **Bread and Roses Café Have a Seat Fundraiser** today so our neighbors can have the resources to thrive as we serve them with dignity.

Have a Seat at our table! Click now to give – and give \$500 or more to Dedicate a Nameplate on a dining chair at Bread and Roses Café.

Outreach Opportunities

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## COMEDY SHOW FUNDRAISER FOR UNHOUSED YOUTH IN LA



Dear SPY Supporters,

We're thrilled to invite you to an unforgettable evening of comedy and compassion at the [Don't Tell Comedy Show Fundraiser](#), proudly sponsored by Dr. Squatch! Save the date and join us for an uplifting night of laughter and support.

FRIDAY, MARCH 29  
6:00 PM  
VENICE, CA  
21+

Don't miss this chance to make a difference while enjoying stellar comedy. Stay tuned for more details. [RSVP now](#) to reserve your spot and stand with us in empowering our youth!

Warm regards,  
Safe Place for Youth Team

PRESENTED BY



[Buy Tickets](#)

# *Holy Week and Easter Services in 2024*

*All services will be held in the church unless another location is noted  
and many include livestream viewing options.*

*March 24: 9am in the Church; 10:30am on Founder's Meadow  
Palm Sunday Services (Livestream available at 9am)*

*March 25-27: 7am  
Morning Eucharist*

*March 27: 10am  
Weekday Eucharist*

*March 28: 7:30pm  
Maundy Thursday Service (Livestream available)*

*March 29: 12pm  
Good Friday (Livestream available)*

*March 29: 3:00pm  
Stations of the Cross on the St. Matthew's Campus (Beginning in the Church)*

*March 29: 4:00pm  
Stations of the Cross for Families*

*March 30: 9am  
Holy Saturday*

*March 30: 7:30pm  
Easter Vigil and Reception (Livestream available)*

*March 31: 7am  
Easter Sunrise Service on Founder's Meadow*

*March 31: 9am  
Easter Sunday Service (Livestream available)*

*March 31: 11am  
Outdoor Easter Service on Sprague Meadow*

## Upcoming Events

# SAINTS ALIVE

A Brief History of AI:  
Past, Present & Future  
with Professor Greg Pottie

April 3

11:45am Patio Lunch

12:30pm Presentation

[Register Now](#)

*Save the Date for*

## The Spirituals Project



*With special guest Diane White-Clayton, Director of the African American Music Ensemble at UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music, who will lead the congregation in an exploration of African American Spirituals*

# APRIL 14 | 10AM

St. Matthew's will hold only one morning service on April 14 for this very special experience.

19

April



Boris Allakhverdyan, clarinet

[CLICK TO BUY TICKETS NOW](#)

# Signposts on the Way

## 2024 Men's Retreat

May 4th & 5th  
Luther Glen Retreat Center  
Yucaipa, CA

Registration coming in April

# 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)  
kcrobertson@stmatthews.com

Missy Morain, Director of Program Ministry;  
(Ext. 139) missymorain@stmatthews.com

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Lyris Amador, Director of Human Relations  
(Ext. 180) lamador@stmatthews.com

Andrea Bostick, Director of Development  
(Ext. 182) abostick@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 (Ext. 179)  
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

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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

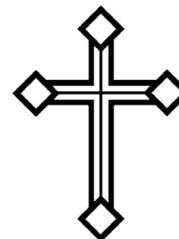
### Sundays

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, Steve Wilson, Bob Wessen, Kathy Harrison, Megan, Joe Sacco, Jake Seliger, Pete, Sue, Elizabeth S, Linda, Larissa, David, Paul, Margaret, Karen Johnson, Chong Lee.

**We also remember** those who have died in the hope of Christ's resurrection, especially the 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 Rev. Christine Purcell at [cpurcell@stmatthews.com](mailto:cpurcell@stmatthews.com). Prayer requests will automatically be kept on the list for one month only.