

---

# FOLLOWING FAITH

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*

---

## Interim Rector's Corner

Rev. Susan Sloan

Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

HOSTILITY- that is the word. I don't know about you, but I am wary and weary of hostility. No wonder anger is one of the seven deadly sins. See where it leads: Anger begets hatred then suspicion, division, and retribution. Hostility seems to be a terrible habit of humanity. Someone always gets hurt--- badly. Like me, I soak it all up. How about you?

This is Holy Week--- that devastating slide from hallelujah to horror. As strained as we are, do we really have it in us this year? Will we just go through the motions OR let the reality sink in? And behind it all is that deeply disturbing question: Why? Why did Jesus put himself through the worst to give us the best?

In general, we Episcopalians claim to be Incarnation Christians. Our theology emphasizes the life of Jesus more than his death. Unlike some denominations, you won't find us hanging out at the foot of the cross. Our faith focuses on the belief that Jesus became one of us so that we can become one with Him.

That is how we sum up a life that began in a stable with a pregnant teenager and an earnest carpenter. These parents were good Jews and raised their boy to follow the Torah, the Law. But from the very beginning they were warned. A sword will pierce your side, Mary was told as they presented him in the Temple. We don't know what she thought of the crazy old man who pronounced those words over her baby boy! I suppose she pondered them in her heart ...

Later Jesus left his father's carpentry trade to become a migrant preacher. He gathered up twelve men who were intrigued by his message of Justice, Hope and Love. They left everything- fishing, family, friends, home- and never looked back. It was this same message that drew a crowd everywhere he went. Next Sunday we witness the grand parade they made for him!

But now it seems things have taken an ugly turn. It happened in the great Temple. Jesus really ticked off the religious leaders. He threw out the money changers, overturned their tables and called the priest blasphemers! And they are not going to let it go! They have set an inescapable trap. And what follows is a sad saga of betrayal and brutality, of denial and death. In other words, this week is life on planet earth in microcosm! Welcome to our world!

YES, the Son of God came to take on the full human experience on purpose. He was a victim like many of us. He was brutalized like some of us. He suffered like all of us. In Jesus the LOVE of God ran the whole gauntlet and never from the sidelines. This is the week we learn there is no separation between our life and God's.

God may have the power to change us but not the control. God does not interfere with our choices, but lives into their outcome alongside us- whatever it is. And God uses every single experience- good, bad or ugly- to transform US, to make us more and more like Him! We will see that God has gone to hell and back; we will realize that there is no place God is NOT! And that truth, my friends, is the very gift you and I take as we travel the road ahead. With each step, we are carried along by our God whose love knows no bounds. And at the end, we will know without a doubt: The end is never the end!

YES! Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. EVER! Watch, wait and be amazed!

---

---

## A Farewell from Rev. Susan Sloan

---

For all that has been-thanks. For all that will be-yes!

Former UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold is the author of this wonderful phrase. It is a favorite of mine especially at times like this. The certainty of change is the heart of life. Nothing stays the same. Even now, we live in the midst of change; this is reinforced in us by blooming flowers, blossoming trees, and in response, blowing our noses. But you and I are also creatures of habit; we enjoy the predictability of schedules and routes as we go about our lives. That is why this has become my motto.

For all that has been-thanks!

Whether its daily challenges or big transitions, these words speak to me, reminding me to savor today for the gift it is and to treasure its memory when it passes. St. Matthew's has experienced many changes and challenges in the past. With the dedication and determination of an amazing staff and the diligence of a hardworking vestry, this church has weathered them. In response to change and challenge, the Gratitude Tree emerged and bloomed reinforcing this mantra. Gratitude has become a sort of sacrament here: an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Hopefully in time, the tree of gratitude will grow roots deep and wide as it takes root in the hearts of everyone who sees it.

For all that will be-yes!

The certainty of change is the heart of life. Nothing stays the same. These words are not a threat or a challenge; they are a truth that is sometimes hard to deal with. I have certainly learned this lesson in our year together, both personally and corporately. My task over these months has been to prepare you for the future. For some, it may have been a bit unsettling, and of course it was! To others it has brought a sense of security, and to a few it has been exciting. Personally, I have tried hard and hoped for the best!

And now it is time to say farewell. My last Sunday at St. Matthew's is April 19. But believe me, you are in good hands- the capable hands of a staff who cares deeply and works sacrificially for this parish. Our transitional deacon, Taylor Johnson, is eager to be with you. He will be ordained on April 15 and is more than ready to be your priest associate. He will be continuing in this role once a new rector is called.

Until then St. Matthew's will be meeting the challenges of the future and giving thanks for what has been.

Oh! there is a prayer for that...

† Susan

---

---

## Holy Week

---

### HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday - Sunday, March 29th At 10:00 am.

The palm procession will begin at the columbarium area of the church grounds.

Maundy Thursday - DOK Labyrinth Walk: 5:30 p.m. prior to the service

Maundy Thursday service - Thursday, April 2nd at 7:00 pm in the Nave

Good Friday service - Friday, April 3rd at 7:00 pm in the Nave

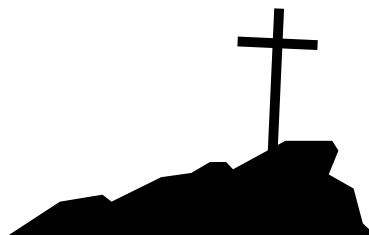
Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday) - Saturday, April 4th at 7:00 pm beginning in the columbarium area of the church grounds

Holy Baptism - This will take place during the Easter Vigil service.

Easter Sunday Services - Sunday, April 5th - 8:15 am and 10:00 am in the Nave

Easter Egg Hunt - April 5th at 9:15 am on the church grounds

\*Monday and Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> - the church office will be closed for the Easter holiday.



---

## Rector Search Committee

---

### Search Committee – Are We There Yet?!?

We hope you have noticed our "Car" progressing along the committee roadmap, marking each key milestone in the rector search process. The poster is in the Narthex and is easy to see as you exit the church sanctuary.

Our group is currently in the process of interviewing and evaluating candidates for the St. Matthew's rector position. We are finishing second interviews and will be moving to in-person visits soon.

The committee is tasked to keep all the nominations in confidence, so our apologies for not sharing too much. As part of our commitment to integrity and fairness we are responsible for maintaining strict confidentiality regarding all candidates. This means that we are unable to provide detailed updates or share specific information at this stage. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we continue our careful discernment.

Please continue to pray for our church and the search committee as we discern the best person for our position.

A prayer: Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your church, especially St. Matthew's, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a rector for this parish. That we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



---

## Episcopal Youth Community

Jann Eich, Director

---



**April 4<sup>th</sup> Hide Easter Eggs with Jenifer W.  
10 am-1 pm.**

**April 5<sup>th</sup> Easter Egg Hunt 9:15 a.m. Teens  
section this year!!**

**April 8<sup>th</sup> Sam and Greg's Pizza 5:30-6:45 pm**

**April 18<sup>th</sup> Game night at Amy West House  
6-8 pm**



# youth news

---

---

# Christian Formation

Jenifer Woytowich, Director

---

Dear St. Matthew's Family,

April is here, and with it comes the joy and celebration of Easter! After a meaningful Lenten journey, we rejoice in the hope and new life found in Christ's resurrection. Thank you to everyone who helped make our intergenerational Lenten studies so special—your time, care, and love for our parish truly made this season meaningful for all ages.

## Easter & Important Dates:

- **Saturday, April 4 – Easter Egg Hiding (EYC Youth)** - 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
EYC youth volunteers are needed to help hide Easter eggs, followed by lunch at Sam & Greg's Pizza. I am also in need of a few adults to help drive the youth to and from lunch.  
*Please RSVP to let me know your availability.*
  - **Sunday, April 5 – Easter Sunday - Easter Egg Hunt at 9:15 a.m.**  
For children through 5th grade – *bring your Easter baskets!*  
I also need EYC youth to help run egg hunt stations. *Please RSVP to let me know your availability.*
- 

## Ladies Bible Study:

All women are warmly invited to join our **Ladies Bible Study, Thursdays from 9:30–11:00 a.m.** This welcoming space offers fellowship and discussion in faith. **Reading the book is not required**—sessions are designed for everyone, and the church has several copies to loan or they may be purchased.

- **April 2<sup>nd</sup>** - NO Ladies Bible Study
  - **April 9<sup>th</sup> – May 14** (6 weeks): *Matthew: The Gospel of Promised Blessings* by Matthew Skinner
  - **May 21<sup>st</sup>** - Final gathering before summer break. We will resume in August.
- 

## Sunday School Information for Parents:

Families with Sunday School–aged children are asked to complete a **Registration & Permission Form** (available from me, the bulletin board outside my office, or CE classrooms).

**Reminder:** Pick up children from Sunday School by 9:50 a.m. to allow a smooth transition to worship.

---

## Vacation Bible School

VBS information is coming soon! Dates, registration, and volunteer opportunities will be shared in the coming weeks. **Adults and EYC youth interested in helping, please contact me.**

---

## Looking Ahead – Mark Your Calendars

- **April 12** – Regular Sunday School classes resume
  - **May 3** – Senior Recognition Day
  - **May 10** – Sunday School Teacher Recognition Day
  - **May 17** – Last Day of Sunday School (End-of-Year Celebrations)
- 

**“He is not here; He has risen, just as He said.”** – Matthew 28:6

Blessings,  
Jen Woytowich  
Christian Formation Director

---

---

## Episcopal Church Women

Melissa Barton, President

---

Last month several of us ladies had a wonderful day visiting the Huntsville Museum of art with Sheila Cape being our docent then had lunch at Pane e Vene. Thanks to Sheila for a very informative visit to the museum.

April will be a very busy month for the ECW ladies.

At our last meeting we decided to recognize our military by sending thank you cards to our military overseas and our local veterans. After Easter we will have 2 baskets in the Narthex: One with blank cards and one for complete cards. If you have an address for family or friends overseas, please put it in the ECW mailbox in the copy room. We plan to mail the cards by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

### April Events

4<sup>th</sup> Women's luncheon at Casa Blanco at 11:30am

8<sup>th</sup> General meeting in Gruman Hall

12<sup>th</sup> UTO ingathering

19<sup>th</sup> Reception for Rev Susan after 10:00 service

25<sup>th</sup> Ladies Tea 2-4pm in Gruman hall

30<sup>th</sup> Scholarship applications due, please get them in early.

Scholarships can be found online at [www.Alabamaecw.org](http://www.Alabamaecw.org)



---

## Gratitude Committee

---



We invite everyone to visit and follow our new page, St. Matthews Page of Gratitude!

We'll be sharing regular posts very soon, and we would love for the whole church community to be part of it. You're encouraged to contribute your own stories of gratitude by emailing them to [drmargaretott@gmail.com](mailto:drmargaretott@gmail.com).

Let's come together to share and celebrate gratitude!

---

---

## Prayer List

---

Please pray for St. Matthews's members who are distressed in body, mind, or spirit:

Bill Byrd, Chuck, Lorna, and Roy Vickers, Dottie Aldredge, Gina Centanni, Terry Schuster, David Osmond, Anna Post, Bev Ryberg, David Newton, Jane Prince, Mary Travers, Anne Sullivan, Judy Elkins, Lynda Johnston, Bob & Eileen Bogard, Roger & Rhoda Kitchen, Brenda Kirkendall, Chris King, Eileen Lewis, Molly Killian, Trudie Gruman, Ray and Shirley White, George and Sandra Burgess, Norm Smith, Keith Ulrich, Tyron Newton, Clarissa Dozier, Daryl Carpenter, Carmen M. Colon, Robert Sampson, Deborah Harrison, Dennis and Beth Blanco, Scott Cechovic. Beau Womack and Joan East, Jeff Anderson, Barbara Combs, Robby Brueggeman, Laura Weatherbee

Also pray for our friends and family members, especially:

Brenda Anderson, Diana Parks, Martha Bergmann, Chuck Sewell, Wes Patterson, Richard Hattoway, Jenny Williams, Rosie Brown, Jewell Newton, Ginger Eich, Catherine S. Williams, Joe Allen, Caroline Thomas, Elyssa Nelson, Bill Fischer, Sally Flanigan, Theresa Richerson, Scott Marbut, Todd Newman, Cathy Taveras, Fran Woytowich, BB McCalpin, Stephen Byrd, Bronwen Murray, Katie Ray, Peggy Wagner, Joe Frank Trevino, Emmy & Drew Champion, Ron Mandelbaum, Dave Knowles, Wade Allen, Emily Nebrig, Bobby Paysinger, Barbara Lemley, Steve Sands, Felicia Temple, John David Landin, Mike Bolton, Dr. Mark Bronner, Ashley Jenkins,, John Freedman, Mark Anderson, Judy Tuck, Kathleen Glor, Ann Reid Cronin, Elizabeth Hodges, Jill Kanuchok, Mike Mumfrey, Joyce Lewis, Allan Scott, Christine Van Dyke, Christopher Taveras, Mike Rice, Suzette Rice, Vaughn Cassell, Shannon Carpenter, Jarilyn Alleman, Jake Sowder, Cheryl Lavazza, Margaret McHugh, Shawn and Rachel Blanco Jane Stanland, Wisam Safie, Diego Candia. The Hardin family, Anthony Hardin, Cathy Collier



# April Servers

April Schedule							
	Easter Sunday	4/12/2026	4/19/2026	4/26/2026	Maundy Thurs.	Good Friday	Easter Vigil
	5-Apr				2-Apr	3-Apr	4-Apr
<u>10:00 AM</u>					7:00 PM	7:00 PM	7:00 PM
VOD	J.Simoneau	D.Utt	R.Centanni	M.Ott			
Altar Guild	S.Bagwell	A.Coiner, D.Kleinjung	N.Snell	G.Lo	K.Barr, All Members Reset		K.Barr, All Members Reset
Ushers	M.Harrison, T.Sampson	J.Anderson M.Barton	R.Cassell, J.Weaver	T.Sampson, M.Barton	N.Snell M.Harrison	D.Utt,A.Utt	D.Utt,A.Utt
Lector	T.Clem	J.Hawkins	J.Salmon	D.Lawrence	M.Harrison	S.Fletcher	Coiner,Looney,Utt
Epistoler	P.Marques	A.Modrall	S.Peterson	L.Mack	L.Lanier	B.Buzby	N.L. Trout
Intercessor	J.Burch	T.Sampson	P.McGraw	M.Pezzula	C.Lanier		B.Carpenter
LEM	J.Vaughn,K.Barr	S.Weaver. J.anderson	D.Loehr. K.Scheuer	Natalie L-Trout K.Barr	B.Carpenter S.Weaver		B.Carpenter, Natalie L-Trout
Crucifer	A.Maddox	A.Utt	C.Bagwell	S.Jones	N.L-Trout		
Gospeler	E.Maddox	A.Wales	B.Watson	C.Trout		M.Pezzula	B.Watson
Torch Bearer	N.Rasmussen		M.Pezzula				
Torch Bearer	M.Rasmussen		S.Pezzula				
Counter	M.Harrison, P.Lewis	K.Modrall. S.Cechovic	M.Barton, A.Coiner	M.Harrison,S.C ox	M.Barton M.Fennell		
Hospitality	D.Kleinjung	M.couch	M.Brown	T.Sampson,			
A/V	D.Rasmussen	L.Stanbery	G.Beech	D.Rasmussen	L.stanbery	D.Rasmussen	D.Rasmussen
<u>8:15 AM</u>							
Lector	-----	W.Christopher	B.Buzby	A.Turner			
Counter	W.Christopher, J.Cooper	H.Tidwell, C.Byrd	W.Christopher, J.Cooper	H.Tidwell. Driesbach			
Ushers	B.Buzby, R.Sampson	D.Utt,A.Utt	C.Stagner, A.Abercrombie	R.Sampson, B.Buzby			
Crucifer	E.Bruce	B.Williams	A.Maddox	E.Bruce			
Altar Guild	A.Turner	D.Buzby	S.Cape	A.Turner			
LEM	A.Williams. B.Williams	S.Smith T.Christopher	K.Barr B.Carpenter	T.Christopher W.Christopher			
AV	L.Stanbery	B.Williams	B.Williams	G.Beech			



---

## April 2026 Church Calendar

---

### Weekly Recurring Events

#### Sunday

8:15 a.m. - Eucharist/Reflection  
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 am - Sunday School  
10:00 a.m. - Holy Eucharist, Nave

#### Monday

5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. - Scouts BSA #628  
6:30 p.m.- 8:00 p.m. - Bells Angels

#### Tuesday

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. - Men's Breakfast  
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Reunion Group

#### Wednesday

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Reunion Group  
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Noon Eucharist

#### Thursday

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - Ladies Bible  
Study

#### Friday - Office Closed

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Cleaning crew

#### Saturday - Office Closed

### Other Scheduled Events

Thursday, April 2- Maundy Thursday  
DOK Labyrinth Walk at 5:30pm in the  
Prayer Garden

Thursday, April 2 - Maundy Thursday  
service at 7pm in the nave

Friday, April 3- Good Friday Service at  
7pm in the nave

Saturday, April 3 - Flower Guild at 8am

Saturday, April 3 - EYC Easter Egg Prep  
and lunch at 9am at the church

Saturday, April- 4 - Easter Vigil at 7pm  
beginning at the columbarium

SUNDAY, APRIL 5 - EASTER SUNDAY

Monday, April 6 - 7- Office closed-Easter  
holiday

Monday, April 7 - Writers' Nook at 6pm

Thursday, April 9 - Madison Station Quilt  
Guild at 4pm in Gruman Hall

Monday, April 13 - Sewing Sisters at 9am  
in Gruman Hall

Wednesday, April 15 - Taylor Johnson  
Ordination at 6pm at St. Thomas  
Episcopal Church

Sunday, April 19 - Reception for Rev.  
Susan Sloan at 11:30 in Gruman Hall

Monday, April 20 - Sewing Sisters at  
6pm in the Ch. Ed. Bldg

Tuesday, April 21 - Wing and a Prayer at  
5:30pm at Crickets

Monday, April 27 - Sewing Sisters at  
9am in the Ch. Ed. Bldg

---