
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

Exciting news! Our Parish Profile is complete, and the St. Matthew's Rector position is now advertised!

The search committee has spent the past six months getting to know our parish's story and our desires for a new rector. Using the data from the parish survey and listening sessions, we have completed our self-study, and our parish profile is complete! If you haven't seen the profile, go to our website or pick up a copy in the church narthex. The profile is also posted in the weekly newsletter for the Diocese of Alabama and listed with the Episcopal News Service (a national job listing). The congregation is invited to nominate potential candidates, as well, by giving names of qualified applicants to the search committee. This is an exciting next phase of the search process and we already have interest!

The church has been navigating through a season of change and challenge, but we pray faithfully for God to direct our next rector to St Matthew's and to guide St Matthew's to our next rector. Please continue to pray for our church and the search committee as we advertise our rector position and start receiving names of candidates.

Sandra Vaughn, Search Committee Chair

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, especially on 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.



Deacon's Corner

Rev. Deacon Taylor Johnson

This month we begin the season of Lent.

Lent is a season of penitence, of self-reflection, confession, and repentance. Traditionally, it is a season of fasting. We choose to give something up, something that, through the aforementioned self-reflection, we think hinders our relationship with God. It could be anything, from giving up soda in order to be more physically healthy, to spending less time on our phones in order to be more mentally healthy.

Doom scrolling is real, emphasis on the doom. Whatever it is that we give up, the point isn't to simply remove something from our lives. Fasting creates spaces, creates a vacuum in our lives, and nature hates a vacuum. Something is going to move in to fill the space created by our fast, and the goal is to fill that space with something holy. Whenever we crave the soda or candy or phone or whatever it is we've given up, we use that moment as a prompt to pray, read a Bible verse, or simply make the sign of the cross. Filling that space with something holy, no matter how small, creates more holiness in our lives. Bit by bit, moment by moment, we are bettering ourselves in body, mind, and soul.

Lent kicks off with Ash Wednesday on February 18 (services at Noon and 7:00 pm) where we are marked with the sign of the cross in ash and reminded that we are but dust, and to dust we shall return. It can be a bit of a morbid service, but it serves a purpose. It's not just to remind us that we are mortal, but to remind us that we can and must make the most of the time we have. We are but dust, and it is to dust that we shall return; but the time in between is precious. It's so easy to let it pass us by, but Ash Wednesday reminds us that Lent calls us to be better than we were before, to make use of the time we have.

Lent can be a somber season, but, as one of my favorite theologians, Alexander Schmemmann, reminds us it is a time of bright sadness. Sadness because we discover the ways in which we don't make the most of the time we have, but bright because every discovery is an opportunity to do better. So, may our Lenten season together be a time of bright sadness, of fasting and reflection, of deepening our relationship to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Episcopal Youth Community

Jann Eich, Director



Wed. Feb 4th @Sam and Greg's 5:30-6:30 pm

Friday, Feb. 13th EYC Friends Party 6-8 pm

Friday, Feb. 20th Lunar New Year Party 6-8pm

Sunday School Feb. 1st- 15th in Amy West House

**Feb. 22-March 22nd Intergenerational Lent Program
at 900 am in Gruman Hall (No Sunday School)**

6th-12th graders are
invited to join us at any event!

youthdir@stmatthewsmadison.org



youth news

Christian Formation

Jenifer Woytowich, Director



Christian Formation: *Jenifer Woytowich, Director*

Dear St. Matthew's Family,

As February begins, we look ahead to Lent, Holy Week, and Easter with reflection and hope, grateful to grow together in faith through Christian Formation.

Looking Ahead to Lent

This Lent, Christian Education will invite children, youth, and adults to come together in an intergenerational journey of learning and faith.

Intergenerational Lenten Study

Walking with Jesus through Love, Prayer, Courage, Service, and Hope

February 22, March 1, March 8, March 15, March 22 / 9:00–9:50 a.m. / Gruman Hall

Each week explores a theme from Jesus' final days—love, trust, courage, and community.

I am **looking for adult parishioners who may be interested in teaching a Lenten study lesson. All lesson plans and materials** will be provided—your role would be to lead the lesson and guide discussion. Please let me know if you are interested in serving in this way.

Please note:

- **Sunday, March 29 – Palm Sunday:** *No Sunday School or Lenten Study*
 - **Easter Sunday, April 5:** *Children's Easter Egg Hunt at 9:00 a.m.*
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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 copies to loan or they may be purchased.

- **January 8 – February 12** (6 weeks): *What My Grandmothers Taught Me* by **Merryl Blair**
 - **February 19 – March 26** (6 weeks): *The Walk* by **Adam Hamilton**
 - **April 9 – May 14** (6 weeks): *Matthew: The Gospel of Promised Blessings* by **Matthew Skinner**
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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.

As we prepare for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter, may we remain open to where God is leading us—through worship, study, service, and community.

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”

Hebrews 10:24

Blessings,

Jen Woytowich

Christian Formation Director

christianed1@stmatthewsmadison.org

Episcopal Church Women

Melissa Barton, President

Happy New Year from the ECW!

We are thankful for another year of service and fellowship at St. Matthew's!

Here are some of the social activities we already have planned. We're having a formal Tea Party on Apr. 25th from 2-4pm and a Back-to-School Ice Cream Social on July 25th from 2-4pm. Both will be in the parish hall. The fourth Tuesday of every month will be a luncheon for senior women at a local restaurant—watch for sign up sheets in the narthex.

We are actively looking for ways to be of service in our community. Since we will no longer be raising money through a rummage sale, we are exploring other ways to help others. There are many volunteering opportunities at First Stop, Habitat for Humanity, the Madison Senior Center and various Veteran's programs. We expect to create many new activities to be of service to others over the course of the year. We continue to work with First Stop to provide meals quarterly. We will continue to do the United Thank Offering and Church Periodical Club collections.

We hope all women in the church will join us for our meetings the second Wednesday of most months. Our next meeting will be Feb. 11 at 10:30 in Gruman Hall.

Blessings!

Margaret Ott

ECW Treasurer



Gratitude Committee



ST. MATTHEW'S GRATITUDE COMMITTEE

MISSION AND VISION

OUR MISSION

The Gratitude Committee's mission is to cultivate a spirit of genuine thankfulness by identifying and celebrating the many blessings within our St. Matthew's family and our daily lives. We strive to recognize God's goodness, encourage appreciation, and inspire joy through expressions of gratitude in all we do.

OUR VISION

Gratitude is the first and most natural emotional response to grace and is an indispensable part of our connection to God.

Gratitude is not a momentary feeling but a way of life that leads to deeper relationship with God and each other.

Gratitude must be shared to flourish.

Gratitude benefits each of us individually, the church collectively, and welcomes newcomers with open arms.

Gratitude is a living expression of God's love in action, as we learn to see each other as God sees us.

We enact this by encouraging people to reflect, write, speak, draw, paint, and sing about experiences that are meaningful to them wherein they felt comforted, edified, loved, heard, helped, or saved from misfortune.

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.

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.



February Servers

February schedule

| | Feb. 1 | Feb. 8 | Feb. 15 | Ash Wednesday | Feb. 22 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>10:00 a.m.</u> | | | | <u>7:00 p.m.</u> | |
| VOD | R.Centanni | R. Franz | M.Ott | | B.Womack |
| Altar Guild | S.Bagwell, D. Kleinjung | G. Lo, A. Coiner | N. Snell | S. Bagwell | A. Coiner, D.Kleinjung |
| Ushers | Harrison,Barton | Anderson,Snell | Cassell,Weaver | | T.Sampson,Barton |
| Lector | S.Fletcher | L.Mack | C.Lanier | N.Lapecek | J. Salmon |
| Epistoler | A. Modrall | T.Clem | T.Sampson | J.Salmon | A. Utt |
| Intercessor | F. Looney | N. Lapack-Trout | L. Lanier | M.Harrison | J. Burch |
| LEM | Vaughn,Barr | Weaver,Lapacek | Loehr,Price | Weaver,Vaughn | Anderson,Barr |
| Crucifer | S. Jones | E. Bruce | A. Maddox | | A. Utt |
| Gospeler | B. Watson | M. Pezzula | E. Maddox | | N. Lapacek |
| Torch Bearer | N. Rasmussen | | | | A. Wales |
| Torch Bearer | M. Rasmussen | | | | C. Trout |
| Counter | Harrison,Cox | Modrall,Cechovic | Barton,Coiner | N/A | Harrison,Lewis |
| Hospitality | K.Hicks | T.Sampson | Odoms | N/A | M.Couch |
| Nursery | Anderson,Brown | Anderson,Brown | Anderson,Brown | Anderson,Brown | Anderson,Brown |
| <u>8:15 a.m.</u> | | | | | |
| Lector | B.Buzby | W. Christopher | B. Pope | L.Mack-noon | B. Carpenter |
| Counter | Christopher,Cooper | Tidwell, Driesbach | Christopher, Byrd | N/A | Tidwell,Driesbach |
| Ushers | R.Buzby, Sampson | Utt, Utt | Stagner, Abercrombie | N/A | R.Sampson,Buzby |
| Crucifer | A. Maddox | A. Utt | M. Pezzula | N/A | E. Bruce |
| Altar Guild | S.Cape | D.Buzby | B. Combs | B.Carpenter-noon | A.Turner |
| LEM | Scheuer, Christopher | Williams,Williams | Smith,Carpenter | Carpenter - noon | Scheuer, Christopher |

February 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

Monday, Feb.2 - Writer's Nook at 6pm in
the C.E. Bldg

Saturday, Feb.7 - Ukraine Bake Sale at
8:30am in Gruman Hall

Monday, Feb.9 - Sewing Sisters at 9am
in Gruman Hall

Thursday, Jan. 12 - Madison Quilter's
Guild - 4pm in Gruman Hall

Saturday, Feb.14 - DAR Meeting at 2pm
in Gruman Hall

Sunday, Feb. 15 - DOK Meeting at 11:15
in C.E. Bldg

Monday, Feb. 16 - Sewing Sisters at 6pm
in C.E. Bldg

Tuesday, Feb.17 - Wing and a Prayer at
Cricket's in Madison

Wednesday, Feb. 18 - Ash Wednesday
Services - Noon and 7pm

Friday, Feb. 20 - NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE

Sunday, Feb. 22 - Intergenerational
Sunday School at 9am in Gruman Hall

Monday, Feb. 23 - Sewing Sisters at 9am
in Christian Ed. Bldg

