

St. Matthew's Companion



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
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Pastoral Ponderings

Lent is upon us - already. It is a time to review our commitment to God through discerning our Lenten discipline for another year. Whether we decide to give something up for Lent, or take on something new, what is most important is the process we use to discern our way forward.

I am not going to campaign for any one action we might take, but I will offer a look at what we are doing as a community of faith to aid in your thoughts. During Lent, the adult class is going to explore the *Book of Common Prayer*, looking at what it contains that might lead to further spiritual activities. We will have the traditional Ash Wednesday service with imposition of ashes. During Holy Week, we will offer the full range of services as we have done in the past. And, of course, we will be gathering each Wednesday to offer a wonderful meal to our friends and neighbors, followed by Evening Prayer. Each of these is an opportunity to explore a deeper walk with God.

One thing we each can do during this season is to look into our hearts to see what we are doing to help one another in ministry. What are we doing as a congregation to reach out to others? How is our work impacting our community? None of us can, individually, make as significant an impact on those around us that, as a group, we can. We see that in the faces of the people who receive the wells we help finance through the Marion Medical Missions; we hear it in the voices of those who come for dinner each week; we feel it in the answer to prayers for healing and comfort. Each of these activities is a ministry of the whole - a ministry each of us participates in through our financial donations, our physical efforts, and - most importantly - through our prayers.

Lent is a time for reflection. Therefore, I challenge you to reflect on YOUR ministry to those around you. You might not think you do much, but take some time during this Lenten season to take stock in the little things you do. The smallest gesture, smile, quick prayer - these all

lift someone up who might not be having a very good day. We know prayer changes things - so does a smile or a gentle touch.

OK, I said I wasn't going to campaign for any one action - however, I will encourage each of you to thank God for every little thing you are able to do to make someone's day better. It's not the big, flashy actions that count, but the simple, loving gestures we are all capable of offering. Let this be a part of your Lenten discipline this year.

Rev. Chandler Jackson
Priest in Charge

COMMUNITY DINNERS FOR FEBRUARY



February 7	Sloppy Joes
February 14	Two Soups
February 21	Grilled Cheese Sandwiches
February 28	Spaghetti and Meatballs



*From the Computer of the
Bishop's Warden*

So here we are in February and, believe it or not, Lent will begin with Ash Wednesday on February 14th (also Valentine's Day). And so here are just some suggestions or ideas to help us all grow in this Lenten season. You may choose to do just one or several of the ideas – whatever fits your comfort level. Or perhaps, some of the ideas may expand your comfort level – and that is not a bad idea at all.

In this season of Lent, some sacrifices can be hard to choose which ones to do. It has been said many times that perhaps we should add something to our lives instead of “giving up something for Lent.” But as others have said, “choose modifications that do not mortify others!”

As Christians we believe in discipline in our church life. Such disciplines may include: prayer, fasting, reading through the Bible along with a daily devotional such as *Forward Day by Day*, frequent attendance at St. Matthew's, constant partaking of the Holy Eucharist, praying at St. Matthew's or offering prayer at your home.

And so here are just some ideas to try this Lent. Why not try one or more of them this year. Perhaps you are doing some of them, but there is always time to add at least one more. The following ideas are not my ideas but are paraphrased.

1. *Commit to a traditional prayer or discipline.* Try adding a traditional Lenten practice and commit to doing it regularly. Or perhaps you could try adding prayers while doing a daily Bible reading.

2. *Reach out to build community with our friends.* It seems so easy to let friendships fall by the wayside as we go through our busy lives. However, studies have proven that spending time with friends actually supports our path to happiness and holiness. And so, why not invite a few friends to join in a devotional practice this Lent.

3. *Find a way to make a loved one's life better.* At St. Matthew's, we all seem to have very varied lives and so it is extremely difficult to come up with a couple of suggestions to make a loved one's life better. I will leave it up to each of you to determine how to do this. I just trust that you will at least try.

4. *Give alms with meaning.* Having just had the annual meeting where we found that once again, we are in a deficit budget, this may be difficult for us. However, others have said that almsgiving is one of the three pillars of Lent, but it sometimes does not get as much attention as the other two, prayer and fasting. But here is a suggestion: fast from some non-essential spending or stop buying a specific item you like and instead give the money to a charity.

5. *Take up a new spiritual book.* It is said that St. Augustine said, "Take up and read!" Spiritual reading is a wonderful way to improve your mind and soul, on your own schedule. Pick out a great spiritual book and make time to read it regularly this Lent. May I suggest *Love is the Way* by Bishop Michael Curry, our presiding Bishop. Given that there are forty days in Lent and the book is only 248 pages, that comes out to reading only about six pages a day! Easy. There are also many good books available in the church library downstairs.

6. *A medieval Lenten fast.* In the Middle Ages, most Europeans observed Lent by subsisting on bread, vegetables, salt, beer, and wine. Some would even refrain from having any meal until 3:00 p.m. I am not suggesting that we try that but, if your health allows it and your heart is in the right place, undertaking a rigorous fast can build a deep connection to Christian history and be a powerful sacrificial prayer.

7. *Get ideas from a loved one.* It has been said that nobody understands where we need to improve quite like those who know us best! Talk to the person who knows you best (your wife/husband, your mom/dad, your child/children or your best friend) and implement one small change based on their feedback.

Whether you try one or all of the suggestions above, or have others of your own, my prayer for you is that you have a blessed and holy Lenten season.

In Christ's Love, Rob Barns
Bishop's Warden

Below are the reports from the Bishop's Committee for December.

Bishop's Committee
December 3, 2023
Minutes

Present: Fr. Chandler Jackson, George Keller, Jerry Larsen, Debbie Smith.

Fr. Jackson opened the meeting at 2:05 pm with a devotional on "Christ is coming at an unexpected hour."

Discussion: Annual Meeting - Will be held on January 21, immediately after the service. We will have a potluck brunch before (and during) the meeting. We discussed electing of an additional member of this committee. With only 4 voting members, there are times (like last month) when we can't get a quorum. Two names were suggested - Roland Dobson and Loyal Auterson. Fr. Chandler will talk with Roland.

Reports:

Secretary - October and November minutes - George moved and Jerry seconded motion to approve. Motion passed.

Treasurer - October and November financial reports - George moved and Debbie seconded approval of financial report. Discussion: Jerry stated that there is a 90 day requirement before moving money on most Money Market accounts or a penalty would be imposed if any money is withdrawn before that time. George related that Ron Hall, at Fidelity, states that there are no penalties and checks can be written directly from the account. Last week, these accounts were gaining 5.4%. We could invest as much as \$5000.00. Motion to approve report passed.

Warden - Not present.

Priest - Pledges are mostly in. Possibly as much as \$6000.00 short of projected budget at this point. I had a great visit with Theresa and Luke Walker. I am still helping at Christ Church, but that will end in January. St Thomas a Becket, in Cassville, has a person interested in pursuing ordination as a vocational deacon. Since they do not have a priest, they have asked Fr. Chandler to be the sponsoring priest.

Old Business: Audit - Jerry moved and George seconded that we accept the audit report submitted by Ron Weil, diocesan financial administrator. The major recommendation was that we take photographs of all of the church's possessions. Rob and Jerry will do both still photos and videos of everything we own (tables, chairs, vestments, everything in the sacristy, etc.) and store them on a couple of thumb drives.

New Business: Fr. Chandler's Letter of Agreement - The committee approved the new Letter of Agreement. The major changes from the previous letter are a mandated increase in salary and an increase in vacation time. This will be sent to the diocese offor Bishop Diane's approval.

2024 Budget - A final draft will be brought to the committee for the January meeting for approval to submit to the annual meeting. George moved and Debbie seconded a motion

approving Fr. Chandler to claim \$650 per month of his salary as housing. While this has no impact on the church's budget, this action allows him to deduct this amount from his taxes.

Calendar -

We will have a Blue Christmas service on Tuesday, December 19 at 7:00 pm

Christmas Eve service will be at 5:00 and be joint with the Presbyterians.

December 27 there will be no dinner. Fr. Chandler will do Evening Prayer online only.

Our next meeting will be January 7 at 2:00. It will be hybrid.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Smith, Secretary

Treasurer's Report
December 2024

General Fund		Itemized Expenses:	
Beginning Balance	\$9823.43	OPC	\$1500.00
Expenses	3698.22	Organist	337.50
Deposits	<u>4490.06</u>	Diocese	1451.39
Ending Balance	\$10615.27	Marion Med M	30.00
		Checks	34.90
		Forward Mvmt	31.25
		Copier	299.98
		Stamps	13.20
Dinner Fund			
Beginning Balance	\$1113.43		
Expenses	277.24		
Deposits	<u>201.80</u>		
Ending Balance	\$1037.99		
Discretionary Fund			
Beginning Balance	\$1025.41		
Deposits	0.00		
Ending Balance	\$1025.41		

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

February 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Online services are via the St Matthew's Facebook page. Wednesday evening meals and service are downstairs at the church.				1	2 <i>Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple</i>	3 8A Men's Breakfast at OPC 9A Women's Breakfast at Village Inn, Ozark
4 <i>Kathy BD</i> 9A Holy Eucharist – IN CHURCH & ONLINE 10A Coffee Hour 10:30A Christian Education 2P Bishop's Committee	5	6 12:30P Quilters	7 5-6:30P Dinner 6:45P Evening Prayer CHURCH & ONLINE	8	9	10
11 9A Holy Eucharist – IN CHURCH & ONLINE 10A Coffee Hour 10:30A Christian Education	12 Noon Jubilee Study Group	13 12:30P Quilters	14 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 5-6:30P Dinner 7:00P Ash Wednesday service CHURCH ONLY	15	16	17
18 9A Holy Eucharist – IN CHURCH & ONLINE 10A Coffee Hour 10:30A Christian Education	19	20 12:30P Quilters	21 5-6:30P Dinner 6:45P Evening Prayer CHURCH & ONLINE	22	23	24 <i>St. Matthias</i>
25 9A Holy Eucharist – IN CHURCH & ONLINE 10A Coffee Hour 10:30A Christian Education	26	27 12:30P Quilters	28 5-6:30P Dinner 6:45P Evening Prayer CHURCH & ONLINE	29		

The Bishop's Committee:

Rev. Chandler Jackson, Priest	Debbie Smith, Secretary
Robert Barns, Warden	George Keller, Member
Jerry Larsen, Treasurer	

Church Staff:

Rev. Chandler Jackson, Priest in Charge
Gary Bancroft, Organist