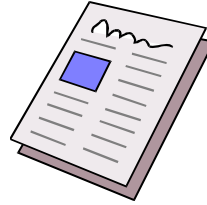


ST. MATTHEW'S ONLINE NEWSLETTER



JUNE, 2009

The Episcopal Church of St. Matthew

Love God and Do as You Will?

By Fr. Rick Wilson



There is a story about a man who after being received into the Church at Easter had some apprehensions. It seemed that in his instruction class, he and the other people had grown into a type of support group. Led by a well-trained instructor, the group addressed many questions regarding faith and morality.

Their "graduation" was their reception into the Church. Afterwards, the man approached the Bishop and shared with him his concern: How am I to live a good life without our group getting together and supporting one another? Bishop Augustine of Hippo in North Africa replied: Love God and do as you will.

The answer may surprise us. No one can accuse Bishop Augustine of being an advocate of moral laxity. We still have many of his written works that show a churchman strongly dedicated to being a responsible shepherd for his people. But his answer may seem to suggest behaviors which are not compatible with Christian living. But if we consider what he said more closely, we can see that his response makes sense.

To love God is to love also what is loved by God. What is loved by God? Well, from our Jewish-Christian tradition, we understand that God loves everyone. The rest of creation is valued by God also.. We are to be responsible stewards of creation. This brings us to another point and that is that all belongs to God We are stewards of what we have, not owners. It is all God's. Keeping this in mind, we need to be aware that how we treat all that we have is how we show ourselves accountable to God. It also shows the love we have for God.

Our Christian identity began with our baptism. As Christians, this is the point that signals our commitment as Christ's own. In our Book of Common Prayer within the baptismal covenant, we have a listing of our

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How am I to live a good life?

The Online Newsletter is the production of the volunteer staff and the Priest in Charge. Please email all articles before the **1st of the month** to: stmattsnewsletter@hotmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Evening Prayer—Wednesdays—6 pm
Growth Group— June 9— 3:00 pm
Knitting Group—June 10 & 24—11:00 am
Finance Meeting— June 11—7:00 pm
Vestry Meeting—June 16—7:00 pm
Prayer Circle—June 18—10:00 am
Abilities Club—June 18—11:00 am

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Meet John Kapp, diaconate intern



Debbi and John Kapp

I am an Arizona native, my hometown is Ajo, and I grew up in Phoenix. After leaving high school I served in the Marine Corps.

When I returned to civilian life, I went back to school on the VA Bill and attended ASU where I earned my Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree. I met and married my wife Debbi while attending ASU. We moved to Tucson in 1974 so that we could attend graduate school at the U of A. I finished my Masters of Fine Arts Degree in 1977 and began working as a local artist.

During this time I became an art instructor at Pima Community College and eventually an Events Coordinator at the Tucson Museum of Art. Debbi also finished her Masters of Education at the U of A and began her teaching career. She is currently teaching at the Sonora Science Academy. I continued working as an artist until our children, Sarah and Joseph, were born.

Needing a more permanent job I began working as a precision optician for a small optical company doing contract work for industry and the government. After several years I moved into optical research and development working for both NOAO (Kitt Peak) and Steward Observatory Mirror Lab. (U of A) where I fabricated test optics for use on several major telescope projects.

The last seven years prior to retiring, I worked as a Juvenile Detention Officer and a Probation Officer at the Pima County Juvenile Court Center. It was during my work as a Probation Officer at the Court that I began to feel the call to the Diaconate. My intention is to work with incarcerated children as a Chaplain. I hope to help them find better paths to adulthood than the paths that they are on currently. Debbi and I attend Christ the King where I was raised up and where everyone in the family was confirmed. I will be at St. Matthew's until October working as an intern with Fr. Rick and Rev. Terry learning how to be a Deacon.

Meet the Newsletter Editor



Julie Neff-Encinas is the editor of the St. Matthew's Newsletter. Julie and her husband, Ernesto, joined St. Matthew's in the fall of 2007. They have a long history of participating in Episcopal parishes in the Tucson area most notably at the now closed Chapel of the Resurrection on the southwest side of town. Julie is a 30 year veteran public educator who, for the meantime, works for Tucson Unified School District. She has been among the more enthusiastic users of "desktop publishing" and other technologies to enhance instruction and she applies that our newsletter. Julie's mother was a journalist with the Associated Press and when she stopped that she volunteered for the school system writing the newsletter. So this is just her nature coming out! If you have any contributions, please don't hesitate to send them to her.



Christian Education Updates!

Our St. Matthews students are unable to attend Vacation Bible School this year, so we have decided not to offer it. Instead, we will be working on the preparations for a new Sunday School Class to serve our pre-school, Pre-kinder, and Kindergarten population.

Parents who are interested in this class should know that we have two very experienced primary school teachers, and a fabulous curriculum. Those who are interested should contact the Director of Christian Formation, Barbara Sanchez, at 647-7703, or leave word at the church office.

Sunday School classes will be available for our regular students as usual, and we are still taking applications for Junior Acolyte and Senior Acolyte Training.

Tips for Staying Safe First in a series of three articles

It never hurts to be careful in this sometimes crazy world..

1. A Tip from *Tae Kwon Do* The elbow is the strongest point on your body. If you are close enough to use it, do!

2. If a robber asks for your wallet or purse, do not hand it over. Toss it away from you. Chances are that there is more interest in your wallet or purse than in you, and s/he will go for the wallet or purse. Then, run as fast as you can in the opposite direction yelling for help to call attention to the situation.

3. If you are ever thrown into the trunk of a car, kick out the back tail lights and stick your arm out the hole and start waving like crazy. The driver won't see you, but everybody behind you will.



Love God and Do As You Will?



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Christian responsibilities as lovers of God to which we commit. These are:

1. To continue in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers
2. To persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever we fall into sin, repent, and return to the Lord
3. To proclaim in word and example the Good News of God in Christ
4. To seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself
5. To strive for justice and peace for all people, and respect the dignity of every human being

As we evidence these commitments in our lives, we illustrate ourselves as a holy people. This does not mean that we are perfect. It means that our identity as a Christian people is revealed through these commitments. As such, we are not people who advocate that might makes right or that money and power are the most important things in life. As a holy people, we are set apart from the advocates of anything that violates the commitments we have made above.

Here at Saint Matthew's, we have a fellowship of people who are committed to living our holy identity. If we mess up, then we refer to commitment number two above but we do not get bogged down in our own guilt. Guilt is an indicator of something we need to address. It is not to be an ongoing companion. That is the Spirit of God's work. And the Spirit is moving us into being more and more lovers of God.

So love God and do as you will. But don't forget number 1 above. We need you!
God's Peace!

What is the Saint Matthew's Growth Group?

Our mission is to encourage visitors to become a part of our Church community and to reach out to new residents in our various neighborhoods. The group recently compiled two pamphlets containing information about St. Matthew's. One of the pamphlets is for mailing to those who have moved into neighborhoods surrounding the church and who might be interested in joining St. Matthew's. Ann Benton is in charge of sending these pamphlets. If you know of new residents, please contact her.

The other pamphlet is being handed out to first time visitors at St. Matthew's. These are being distributed by the greeters along with a St. Matthew's pen. The group is also responsible for the bright yellow Welcome forms on the back of the chairs in the Church. When a visitor completes the form, one of our members contacts them and furnishes them with a Newcomer's Packet, which includes a welcome letter from Father Rick and various forms and information about the workings of the Church. Those interested in joining the church or becoming friends of the church are added to our data base. Newcomers are invited to a dinner held periodically and hosted by the Growth Group so they can become more familiar with St. Matthew's and our members. The group, consisting of Ann Benton, Ellen Kreyns, Evelyn Lyng, Nancy Reynolds, Shirley Rimmell, Helga Small and, of course, Father Rick, meet the second Tuesday of every month at 3:00 p.m. at the Church office. Any one interested in joining us is certainly welcome. New ideas are always welcomed!

Shirley Rimmell, Chair

Pontifications of a Layman



Webster's dictionary defines *stewardship* as:

"The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care."

Last week I spent a few hours of my time helping out at the rummage sale. The hours I spent were few compared to the many, many hours given by volunteers who spent the greater part of several days planning and organizing and working the event. It seems that in every organization there are those who see a need and are moved to fill it. These volunteers give of their time and organizational talents to make good things happen. Our rummage sale volunteers are those kind of people - people dedicated to building up our St. Matthew's community.

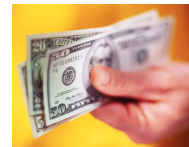
We are taught that God gives us the gift of time, talent and finances, and entrusts us to carefully manage these gifts. Not an easy task for me because I tend to jealously hold onto what I have and that includes my time. The cheerful generous giving by the rummage sale volunteers is an excellent example of stewardship in action, and points the way for me to become a better and more cheerful steward.

Thanks to all the wonderful stewards at St. Matthew's.

Stewardship Ministry Committee's Mission Statement:

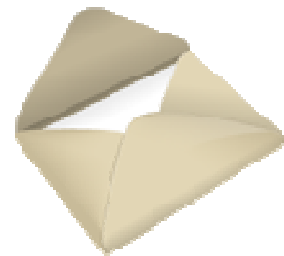
The goal of our stewardship ministry is to help God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to them.

Friendly Reminder from Financial Fred



We so appreciate your generous donations to our church! We also understand your interest in using up old pledge envelopes in order to "waste not, want not". However, we find that your use of the old envelopes confuses our counters who are diligently trying to correctly assign each donation to the right family and type of donation. Some donations are "open plate", others are pledges, others are for designated projects. When money is in a pledge envelope we presume it is from the family assigned that number for this year. However, sometimes the number is crossed out and it turns out it is an old envelope and we don't know to whom to credit the donation.

We don't mean to look a gift horse in the mouth, but we must ask that this year's pledge envelopes be the only ones used. If you wish to put your donation in some other type of envelope, please be sure your intent for the donation and your name are included within.



Thank you for helping us keep things straight!